Sustainable community engagement within the Arts:
A conceptual framework

Yvonne-Marié Brand# and Janelize Morelli
North-West University
#Corresponding author: YvonneMarie.Brand@nwu.ac.za

Abstract

This conceptual paper explores the complexities of fostering sustainable community engagement within the Arts by developing a theoretically grounded framework informed by the literature and practice. Our engagement with the topic emerged through an iterative process of critical reflection and qualitative document analysis. Rather than offering prescriptive models or fixed outcomes, we present this framework as a contribution to the ongoing dialogue about the role of the Arts in higher education contexts in advancing sustainability. We begin by positioning our work within current debates on community engagement and sustainability, followed by a discussion of the theoretical framing that guided the conceptual development of our argument. The framework is structured on the basis of six interrelated themes – culturally responsive practices, integrated cross-disciplinary collaboration, dynamic impact assessment, synergistic community alliances, systems integration, and reflective practice. We offer these as entry points for further reflection and refinement, particularly for scholars and practitioners navigating the intersection of the Arts, education and sustainable community engagement.

Keywords: Arts, community engagement, impact evaluation, social responsiveness, sustainability,

Introduction

The role of higher education institutions (HEIs) has evolved, progressing from their traditional role as custodians of culturally valued knowledge, to a focus on addressing workforce demands that they be providers of skilled labour aligned with workforce planning and, more recently, embracing their role in ensuring sustainable development and social innovation by contributing towards addressing socio-economic challenges (Grau, et al., 2017; Kumari, et al., 2019; Saric, et al., 2023). University community engagement has gained considerable momentum in recent years as is evident in the growing number of universities worldwide implementing initiatives to foster sustainable, mutually beneficial connections with local communities (Koekkoek, et al., 2021). In the South African context, the Council on Higher Education's (CHE) 20-year review of

higher education (2016) similarly indicated the increased integration of community engagement into the universities' core functions (Bidandi, et al., 2021; Fongwa, 2023).

Sustainability in the Arts is essential for fostering meaningful community engagement, strengthening cultural identity, and promoting environmental awareness (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020; Zhang & Shen, 2024). When viewed as a continuous process rather than a fixed goal, sustainability positions artists, designers, and art educators as key agents of social transformation (Pavlou & Vella, 2023). Community-based art and design encourage participatory approaches that empower local voices and contribute to long-term social impact. The use of innovative materials and experimental artistic methods can promote responsible practice and influence policy and institutional change (Zhang & Shen, 2024). In regions such as the Arctic, Arts and culture serve as important tools for engaging with indigenous rights, regional development, and cultural revitalisation (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020).

Artistic practices and art education emphasise the importance of shaping the self and our relationships with others, often leading participants to transcend conventional boundaries through critical reflection, creative thinking, and the imagining of alternative futures (Pavlou & Vella, 2023). Partnerships forged between art educators and diverse stakeholders, both within and beyond formal educational settings, can create new experiential spaces that empower communities to initiate and sustain change. Digital technologies further expand opportunities for engagement, particularly in areas with the necessary infrastructure (Abdoh, 2024). Additionally, embodied and Arts-based methods integrate lived experience with diverse knowledge systems, fostering critical reflection, imagination, and co-creation - processes essential to sustainability transformations (Bentz, et al., 2022). In this way, sustainable community engagement in the Arts emerges as a dynamic, relational practice that cultivates agency, dialogue, and shared responsibility for shaping the future (Pavlou & Vella, 2023). As higher Arts educators, we consider this link in our framework. This framework is born from our own practice and need to explain how we conceptualise sustainability in community engagement within higher Arts education in South Africa.

Theoretical and conceptual framing

In this article we adopted Power's framework of three key relationships between sustainability and the Arts to arrive at our operational definition of sustainability (Power, 2021). These three key relationships refer to sustainability *through* the Arts, sustainability *in* the Arts, and sustainability *of* the Arts. Sustainability *through* the Arts employs the Arts as a means to advance 'sustainable development' goals (Power, 2021: 3), such as raising environmental awareness or fostering social and economic development. Sustainability *in* the Arts refers to a broader framework of addressing the environmental impact of the Arts sector itself by incorporating sustainable practices within Arts production, such as reducing waste and using eco-friendly materials, which can include recycled materials. The sustainability *of* the Arts emphasises the longer-term viability of the Arts sector in terms of financial and organisational stability, career

support for artists, and the preservation of the cultural value inherent in various forms of art (Power, 2021).

Power's framework is considered in conjunction with the second report of the King Committee on Corporate Governance, commonly known as King II (2002). The King II report marked a substantial shift from a traditional single bottom line, focused solely on profit for shareholders, to a triple bottom line approach (King Committee on Corporate Governance, 2002). The approach encompasses economic, environmental, and social dimensions, presenting a broader perspective on corporate responsibility and sustainability in relation to organisational activities. According to Power (2021), whereas both the sustainability *of* the Arts and sustainability *in* the Arts work within the framework of 'triple bottom line' sustainability, the former - sustainability *of* the Arts - does not necessarily demand a direct association with environmental concerns. Therefore, in this paper, we address this shortcoming by suggesting a conceptual framework to enhance sustainable community engagement within the Arts, taking into account micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level considerations. On the micro-level, we consider the sustainability *of* community engagement in the Arts by focusing on the individual livelihoods of our students as they transition into the workforce. We also consider the relationships between higher education institutions and individuals who work together through community engagement initiatives to create sustainability *in* the Arts through community engagement. This functions at a meso-level – where linking capital (Claridge, 2018) is employed to leverage the power of the higher education institution to create sustainable community Arts programmes. At a macro-level we consider the sustainability *of* community engagement within the Arts by considering the affordances of institutional and national policies, and how these may contribute to or detract from sustainable community engagement practices.

Positioning of framework in relation to existing models and approaches

While this paper proposes a sustainability-oriented framework across the micro, meso and macro levels of community engagement in the Arts, it is also important to recognise existing models that guide practitioners from an operational perspective of engagement. Approaches such as the Kellogg Foundation Logic Model (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004) and Michigan State University's typologies of community-engaged scholarship, offer structured methods for designing, implementing and evaluating engagement processes in higher education contexts (Michigan State University, n.d.; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Similarly, Arts-based engagement initiatives highlight principles of civic dialogue, ethical participation, empathy and reciprocity, all of which underpin responsible community-engaged Arts practice (Korza, et al., 2005).

Within recent scholarship, participatory visual and Arts-based methodologies (e.g., photovoice, storytelling, collaborative Arts processes) have further demonstrated their value for amplifying participant voice and fostering socially responsive learning. Berman's (2024) work on empathetic, community-led pedagogies and McGarry's (2014) writings on transgressive social learning provide contemporary examples of how Arts engagement can cultivate agency, critical reflection and ecological citizenship among students.

The framework presented in this paper does not seek to replace these well-established approaches. Rather, it offers an integrative, meta-level structure that brings together culturally responsive practice, interdisciplinary collaboration, dynamic impact assessment, systems integration and reflective practice. In doing so, it complements existing models by providing a holistic conceptual scaffold that supports more coherent, ethically grounded and sustainable community engagement within the Arts.

Methodological approach

We employed qualitative document analysis to create the conceptual framework presented in this study. We analysed the literature identified from the fields of sustainability in the Arts in higher education and community engagement, adopting a thematic analysis approach. Sixty academic articles, encompassing diverse disciplinary perspectives, were selected based on their relevance to sustainability in community engagement and the Arts. These documents provided a foundation for developing a conceptual framework that addresses the intersection of sustainability and the Arts.

Thematic analysis was conducted through well-established methodological guidelines (Christou, 2022; Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). We employed novel methods to familiarise ourselves with the data. Initial explorations included creating various AI-generated podcasts using Google Notebook LM, first-round AI-assisted coding in Atlas.ti 25, and conversational explorations using ChatGPT 4.0. AI was used for preliminary coding to enhance efficiency and comprehensiveness, particularly in identifying latent and manifest patterns across the dataset (see Table 1 for examples of machine learning operations and AI prompts used). However, final conceptualisations were generated manually, ensuring critical engagement and reflexivity through iterative coding cycles and collaborative discussions among the research team members (Rahmouni, 2024; Wood, et al., 2020).

Table 1: Examples of machine learning operations and prompts used in exploratory AI assisted coding.

Machine learning operations used in Atlas.ti25
1. Concept identification – using machine learning algorithms to detect significant noun phrases.
2. Creating word frequency lists to export to ChatGPT.
Example of prompts used
1. Use the imported word frequency list to create collocation tables.
2. Taking this collocation table, identify a set of possible relationships between key concepts.
3. Now, create three more sets op plausible relationships.
4. Analyse the provided sets of relationships and identify possible critiques.

The integration of AI was approached with caution, with recognition of its limitations and potential biases in qualitative research (Borger, et al., 2023). As Rahmouni (2024) explains, ethical considerations around AI use necessitate researcher involvement in validating outputs and

maintaining academic integrity. We employed collaborative critical conversations to validate our findings and engage more deeply with the initial phases of AI-assisted coding. AI-supported coding served only as an initial layer, enabling deeper manual refinement of themes, consistent with Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis framework (Morgan, 2022). This layered approach aligns with Eaton's (2023) concept of postplagiarism. We loosened control over the process during the initial phases of data analysis, thereby expanding human creativity and identifying new emerging codes we had not originally anticipated. However, despite this initial absence of control, we did not forgo ultimate responsibility for the trustworthiness of the findings (Eaton, 2023).

Emerging codes were iteratively refined into themes through constant comparison and collaborative dialogue. This analytical approach enabled us to generate nuanced insights into the complexity of ensuring sustainable community engagement in higher education (Moldavanova, 2013). To ensure rigour, we continued analysis until thematic saturation was achieved (Wood, et al., 2020). Regular team meetings facilitated critical examination of thematic relationships, contributing to the conceptual clarity and coherence of the final framework.

To address potential ethical concerns associated with AI-assisted research, we choose to discuss the use of AI in our data analysis approach transparently (Rahmouni, 2024). This transparency aligns with evolving standards of academic integrity in the postplagiarism era, where human-AI collaboration must be navigated critically (Eaton, 2023).

University-community engagement policies: Affordances and limitations

To better understand the current landscape of community engagement at public universities in South Africa, we critically analysed the community engagement policies published by various institutions. This first step was important in this project, since these policies shape our community engagement and artistic practices. Through this analysis, the following nodes of equal affordances and limitations stood out:

1.   Resource allocation and funding;
2.   Alignment with the academic project;
3.   Ethical challenges faced by academics;
4.   Monitoring, evaluation and impact; and
5.   Ensuring reciprocity and social responsiveness.

This section of the paper will discuss each of these nodes, considering both enablers and disablers for practitioners that we encountered in the policies. These nodes will be examined in terms of Power's (2021) three-dimensional definition of sustainability to illustrate the connection between these policies and the conceptual framework for sustainability *in* the Arts that we developed from the scholarly literature.

Resource allocation and funding emerged as contested areas in various policy documents. The North-West University Community Engagement policy (2021) acknowledges that the

intangible and tangible processes involved in community engagement demand a range of resources. Many of the policies show a commitment to ensuring that equitable and sustainable resources (mainly financial resources) are made available for the scholarship of engagement as well as engaged teaching and learning (NWU, 2021; UNISA, 2013; UNIZULU, 2018; UP, 2018). Throughout these policy documents, financial investment in community engagement is framed in terms of social responsiveness (NWU, 2021; UNISA, 2013; UNIZULU, 2018; UP, 2018), given the legacy of universities as exclusionary spaces, as well as enriching the student experience (UP, 2018).

While all the policies reviewed demonstrated a commitment to ensuring sustainable resource allocation – particularly financial resources – we, as practitioners and academics, have experienced that accessing these resources can often be frustrating. These frustrations could be understood as a broader symptom of the funding model used for higher education in South Africa. Space constraints do not allow for an in-depth discussion on this topic; suffice it to say that higher education institutions face challenges related to financial sustainability as well as equity and access (Salmi & D'Addio, 2021). In South Africa, funding is often used as a mechanism by the state to 'drive outputs in the system and to size and shape it to try to meet the demands related to both equity and efficiency' (Boughey & McKenna, 2021: 48). This has resulted in a landscape where, despite institutions proclaiming a commitment to funding community engagement, funding for such initiatives is primarily driven by funding generated through research funding (producing research outputs) or teaching and learning (producing teaching outputs).

On the one hand, aligning community engagement with other academic activities may be an opportunity since this will necessitate the deep, critical engagement necessary for genuinely sustainable community engagement in the Arts. Historically, community engagement has been led through discipline-based volunteerism. However, during our analysis of the various institutions' policy documents, it became clear that discipline-based volunteerism is no longer the preferred form of engagement for universities with their communities. Therefore, the North-West University's Community Engagement Policy (2021) explicitly states that proper social responsiveness cannot be cultivated solely through volunteerism. Similarly, the University of the Free State (2006, 2021) and UNISA (2013) emphasise that integration between teaching, learning, and research is necessary to address the various transformation goals universities set for themselves, again noting that volunteerism is insufficient.

On the other hand, this alignment does pose various challenges for practitioners. Engaged research can be challenging within the confines of the assessment principles applied by research ethics committees. These research committees may often hinder true reciprocity and challenge the collaboration and fluidity required of academics who practise a scholarship of engagement (Teixeira, et al., 2021). The same can be said for quality assurance practices in teaching-learning spaces. Therefore, an engaged scholar may need to navigate various institutional policies while balancing the inherent challenges of engaged scholarship, teaching, and learning. This balancing act places an extra administrative burden on engaged scholars (UNISA, 2013).

The administrative burden of sustainable community engagement is compounded by quality-assurance requirements. While acknowledging the importance of monitoring, evaluation, and impact measurement, these processes add complexity to engagement practice. Policy documents vary in focus - from institutional oversight (UJ, 2019) to participatory evaluation - yet all place responsibility on practitioners to align with institutional mandates. These challenges also extend to measuring social impact (Clifford & Barnes, 2022), as practitioners are expected to demonstrate outcomes despite the inherent difficulties of assessing impact in complex social contexts (Taffere, et al., 2024). Given these challenges, it is unsurprising that many policies emphasise alignment with institutional strategies over measurable social responsiveness (Taffere, et al., 2024). Because it is difficult to demonstrate the impact of the work unambiguously, it may also be challenging to measure social responsiveness. This may be why many of the policy documents included in this analysis focused on alignment with institutional strategies and priorities.

Power's (2021) three-dimensional framework of sustainability – sustainability *of*, sustainability *through*, and sustainability *in* – provides a lens for analysing how South African public universities approach the long-term viability, societal impact and procedural integrity of community engagement. These three dimensions are reflected in the policies we analysed, but we contend that there are still significant gaps. We hope our conceptual framework contributes towards addressing some of these gaps.

Sustainability *of* Community Engagement

The sustainability of community engagement emphasises the long-term survival and institutionalisation of engagement initiatives. While many universities prioritise this, their approaches often need more practical strategies for operationalising these goals.

For instance, North-West University (NWU) highlights the importance of structured systems and strategic funding for long-term sustainability (NWU, 2021). However, the policy needs to address how funding constraints will be overcome, especially in a higher education system plagued by financial instability. Similarly, Stellenbosch University emphasises partnerships as a mechanism for sustaining engagement (US, n.d.). However, there needs to be more recognition of how uneven power dynamics in these partnerships might affect sustainability, particularly when communities are resource-constrained or cannot engage equally.

Furthermore, while the University of Zululand links sustainability to quality assurance and resource allocation, the policy needs to explore how these mechanisms will adapt to shifting economic and institutional priorities (UNIZULU, 2018) Such shortcomings reflect a broader trend in these policies: they often proclaim sustainability as a goal, but fail to address the systemic barriers – such as bureaucratic inefficiencies and underfunding – that undermine long-term viability.

Sustainability *through* Community Engagement

Sustainability through community engagement reflects the potential of such initiatives to drive societal transformation. While this dimension is prominent in the policies, the rhetoric often overshadows the realities of achieving meaningful societal impact.

The University of Pretoria (UP) emphasises fostering citizenship and societal transformation through community engagement (UP, 2018). However, the policy does not explicitly address the societal inequalities and the legacy of apartheid that taints all community engagement initiatives in South African higher education. Similarly, the University of South Africa positions engagement as a tool for addressing socioeconomic challenges (UNISA, 2013); however, despite an emphasis on sustainability, it does not provide enough practical mechanisms that practitioners could use to ensure their engagement remains sustainable. The use of memoranda of understanding or agreement is laudable, but they may fall short or merely become another bureaucratic, administrative step - falling into the trap of imagining that more administrative oversight automatically leads to higher quality.

Rhodes University (RU) connects community engagement to social justice (RU, 2005). While laudable, the policy needs to address more effectively the complexity of measuring and achieving social justice outcomes. In practice, such outcomes often require long-term commitment and iterative processes, yet the policies are short on clarity as to how universities will sustain these efforts in the context of financial and administrative constraints.

Sustainability *in* Community Engagement

Sustainability *in* community engagement involves embedding sustainability principles within processes and activities. Although some policies make this a priority, they often fail to address the practical challenges of implementation.

The University of the Free State (UFS) highlights the integration of social justice and environmental responsibility into engagement activities (UFS, 2021). However, there is little discussion of how competing institutional priorities – such as research outputs or funding pressures – might hinder this integration. Similarly, the University of Cape Town (UCT) advocates for aligning engagement with environmental and social priorities (UCT, 2012). However, the policy does not critically explore how academic workloads, resource constraints or institutional inertia may limit the ability of practitioners to embed these principles effectively.

While Stellenbosch University (SU) frames engagement as a process of mutual learning and co-creation, the policy does not address the question of the potentially unequal participation in these processes (SU, n.d.). Communities often lack the resources or expertise to fully engage as equal partners, which can result in an engagement initiative that prioritises institutional goals over community needs.

South African university policies express a strong rhetorical commitment to sustainability in community engagement yet often overlook the practical and systemic challenges practitioners face. Underfunding, bureaucracy, lack of mechanisms to address structural inequities, and limited means to assess long-term impact all undermine sustainable engagement. Furthermore,

institutional priorities and resource disparities hinder the integration of sustainability principles. To move beyond rhetoric, policies must confront implementation barriers and offer actionable strategies. We propose that Arts-based community-engaged scholars adopt a sustainable engagement framework to inform and strengthen practice within higher education.

A conceptual framework of sustainable community engagement within the Arts

To create this conceptual framework, we considered key concepts emerging from the literature on the Arts and sustainability as both an integrated and discrete field. These concepts were organised into six interrelated themes: 1) Culturally responsive practices; 2) Integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices; 3) Dynamic impact assessment; 4) Synergistic community alliances; 5 & 6) Systems integration and reflective practice. Given their conceptual interconnection, the final two themes are discussed together.

Culturally responsive practices

Culturally responsive practices in community engagement are essential for designing interventions that resonate with the unique cultural contexts of the target populations (Chen, et al., 2013; Moayerian, et al., 2022). This approach enhances the effectiveness, acceptance, and sustainability of interventions within the community they aim to address (Chen, et al., 2013; Oino, et al., 2015; Zheng, et al., 2021). The primary objective of *culturally responsive practices* is to develop programmes that are closely aligned with the values and norms of the community, thereby enhancing both their acceptance of the programme and its impact (Hunter, et al., 2018; Moayerian, et al., 2022).

The key components of *culturally responsive practices* include *cultural sensitivity*, a *tailored approach*, and *responsiveness to individual needs*. First, *cultural sensitivity* requires that community engagement programmes acknowledge and respect cultural differences (Moayerian, et al., 2022; Oino, et al., 2015). Failing to recognise these distinctions can significantly undermine the sustainability and effectiveness of interventions (Zheng, et al., 2021). Secondly, according to (McFerran, et al., 2018), a *tailored approach* requires developing strategies and interventions specifically designed to address each community's unique cultural context. This component recognises that communities differ in their needs and values, necessitating customisation for effectiveness (Zheng, et al., 2021). Finally, *responsiveness* ensures that programmes meet the real and expressed needs of the community. This element involves continuous dialogue with community members to adapt and refine interventions, securing ongoing relevance and impact (Ceptureanu, et al., 2018).

Integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices

The second theme concerns the collaborative practices across multiple disciplines in developing solutions that bridge the gap between different fields and sectors in addressing complex sustainability challenges (Kohl, et al., 2021; Menon & Suresh, 2020). This approach utilises a

diverse range of knowledge bases and perspectives to ensure innovative, holistic solutions that enhance effectiveness in achieving sustainability goals.

The key components of integrated practices include *collaboration*, *diversified funding* and *interdisciplinary collaboration* (Compagnucci, et al., 2021; Mancini & Marek, 2004; Moayerian, et al., 2022). *Collaboration* across cultural and sectoral boundaries is essential for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This entails combining local knowledge and expertise with broader global sustainability initiatives, effectuating a more cohesive impact (Arora-Jonsson, 2023; Kohl, et al., 2021; Zheng, et al., 2021). *Diversified funding* is crucial for overcoming financial obstacles in implementing sustainable practices. By attracting funding from a variety and diverse sources, programmes can enhance stability and longevity, facilitating ongoing progress towards sustainability (Akerlund, 2000; Donelli, et al., 2023). Ultimately, interdisciplinary collaboration highlights the importance of integrating knowledge from diverse fields, particularly at the intersection of sustainability and the Arts. This interdisciplinary approach provides the necessary depth to address intricate sustainability issues, which is essential for more effectively addressing complex sustainability challenges (Menon & Suresh, 2020; Wright & Liang, 2019).

Dynamic impact assessment

Dynamic impact assessment is a process-oriented approach that focuses on the continuous and adaptive evaluation of a programme's impact, taking into account both immediate and long-term effects on all stakeholders involved, as well as the broader environment (Ceptureanu, et al., 2018; Mancini & Marek, 2004). The purpose of *dynamic impact assessment* is not only to ensure that programmes remain relevant but also effective through adapting to changing circumstances and incorporating ongoing feedback (Chen, et al., 2013).

The key components of *dynamic impact assessment* include *programme quality* (Akerlund, 2000; Mancini & Marek, 2004), *ongoing and holistic evaluation* (Ceptureanu, et al., 2018) and *stakeholder-centric evaluation* (Ramachandra & Naha Abu Mansor, 2014). First, *programme quality* involves maintaining a high standard within sustainable programmes by integrating regular needs assessments with robust administrative and fiscal management, enabling these initiatives to adapt and thrive over time (Akerlund, 2000). Secondly, ongoing and holistic evaluation highlights the importance of continuous evaluation to document achievements and make adjustments in response to evolving programme requirements and stakeholder needs (Akerlund, 2000; Ceptureanu, et al., 2018). Finally, *stakeholder-centric evaluation* emphasises the importance of assessing community engagement initiatives from the perspectives of all stakeholders, ensuring that their needs and contributions are valued and considered throughout the program's lifecycle (Ramachandra & Naha Abu Mansor, 2014).

Synergistic community alliances

The fourth theme, *Synergistic community alliances*, emphasises the need to form strong, mutually beneficial partnerships between the communities and diverse external stakeholders, including NGOs, government agencies and private sector organisations. Such alliances aim to effectively

pool resources, knowledge, and expertise to address the community's needs while preserving its interests and culture in all initiatives (Hunter, et al., 2018; Ramachandra & Naha, 2014; Voges, 2016).

The key components of *synergistic community alliances* include *community engagement*, *community ownership*, *cultural change*, *stakeholder involvement*, and *self-reliance*. First, *community engagement* through involving the communities seeks to ensure that the programmes are tailor-made to fit the specific needs and contexts of the local setting, which is essential to be relevant and impactful within local contexts (Oino, et al., 2015; Ramachandra & Naha Abu Mansor, 2014; Shabalala & Ngcwangu, 2021). Secondly, *community ownership* requires active participation and support from the community to ensure sustainability (Hunter, et al., 2018; Moayerian, et al., 2022; Oino, et al., 2015). This also includes *community partnerships*, which are crucial for sustaining educational and Arts projects through collaborative engagement models that offer mutual benefits (Hunter, et al., 2018; Nicotera, et al., 2011; Voges, 2016). Stakeholder Involvement at every stage of programme implementation enhances accountability and fosters a sense of ownership critical to long-term success (Oino, et al., 2015; Ramachandra & Naha Abu Mansor, 2014; Voges, 2016). Finally, the principle of *self-reliance* emphasises the need and importance of equipping local governments with the capacity to manage and sustain programmes independently, thus minimising continued reliance on external support (Malik, et al., 2022; Oino, et al., 2015).

Systems integration and reflective practice

Systems integration and *reflective practice* entail a holistic approach that incorporates various subsystems, such as educational, social and economic, into a unified framework with a commitment to continuous reflection (Hunter, et al., 2018; White & Robson, 2020). This process supports ongoing learning and adaptation, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and flexibility of the systems involved. The goal of this approach is the application of systems thinking to understand the interactions within the system, while adopting reflective practices to continuously adapt and improve strategies based on real-time feedback and changing conditions (Hunter, et al., 2018; Menon & Suresh, 2020).

The key components of *systems integration* and *reflective practice* include *critical thinking*, *holistic integration*, *institutionalisation, and systems thinking, as well as strengthening*. The first component, *critical thinking*, is fundamental for addressing complex social and environmental challenges. Arts education nurtures critical thinking, promoting sustainability and fostering innovative problem-solving (Hunter, et al., 2018). Secondly, *holistic integration* emphasises the importance of comprehensively embedding sustainability within higher education systems, from curricula to operational practices, ensuring integration across all levels (Hunter, et al., 2018; Kohl, et al., 2021; Menon & Suresh, 2020; Voges, 2016). *Institutionalisation* focuses on embedding successful and effective interventions within local systems to secure their long-term viability and sustainability (Malik, et al., 2022). Finally, the concept of *systems thinking and strengthening* emphasises the interconnectedness of various system components, encouraging a deep

understanding of complex societal issues and enhancing the capacity to respond effectively (Hunter, et al., 2018; Malik, et al., 2022).

This framework aims to explain how these themes - *culturally responsive practices*, *integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices*, *dynamic impact assessment*, *synergistic community alliances*, *systems integration* and *reflective practice* – contribute towards creating a coherent framework. Together, these dimensions interact and influence one another, adding depth to the conceptual framework to enhance our understanding of sustainable community engagement in the Arts.

Exploring relationships within the conceptual framework of sustainable community engagement within the Arts

Culturally responsive practices significantly contribute to the framework by ensuring that community engagement is closely aligned with the cultural needs of diverse populations. In combination with *integrated, cross-disciplinary collaborative practices, insights from multiple disciplines provide varied perspectives, adding to the cultural adaptability and* effectiveness of interventions.

The ongoing success of *culturally responsive practices* is closely related to *dynamic impact assessment*, which provides a mechanism for continuously evaluating the cultural relevance and impact of initiatives. This assessment helps to ensure that interventions remain aligned with the evolving needs of the communities they serve, maintaining their relevance and effectiveness.

Moreover, *culturally responsive practices* help to enhance *synergistic community alliances* by fostering a sincere respect for cultural diversity, which is crucial for building trust and cooperation among diverse stakeholders. This cultural sensitivity strengthens alliances, facilitating more cohesive and mutually beneficial partnerships. Additionally, *culturally responsive practices* complement *systems integration and reflective practice* by embedding cultural considerations within the systems integration process, enhancing reflective practices, enabling continuous adaptation to cultural nuances, and ensuring long-term effectiveness in sustainable community engagement.

Building on *culturally responsive practices*, the theme of *integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices* brings together a diverse range of expertise, further enriching the cultural sensitivity and adaptability required for effective community engagement. By integrating insights from multiple fields, this theme enhances the responsiveness and flexibility established by culturally informed approaches.

Integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices foster connections between different disciplines and enriching other thematic practices within sustainable community engagement. This approach enhances *culturally responsive practices* by incorporating insights from various fields, allowing for a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and strengthening the adaptability of interventions to meet community needs more effectively.

The success of *integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices* often depends on dynamic *impact assessment,* which provides a mechanism for adjusting strategies in response to

real-time evaluations and evolving project requirements. Continuous assessment ensures that collaborative efforts remain aligned with the evolving needs of the community, therefore maintaining relevance and impact.

Additionally, *integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices* are closely associated with synergistic community alliances. Through the integration of subsystems from multiple disciplines, this approach requires ongoing reflection and adaptation, optimising the performance and interactions among all stakeholders involved. Moreover, *integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices* support systems integration and reflective practice by fostering collaboration across various sectors, building trust, aligning goals, and enhancing the resilience of community alliances, which promotes a cohesive and sustainable approach to complex challenges.

With the foundation provided by cross-disciplinary practices, the focus on *dynamic impact assessment* adds a layer of ongoing evaluation and feedback. This process ensures that cross-disciplinary efforts remain optimised and relevant, continually evolving to meet the needs of communities. Through regular assessment, dynamic impact assessment reinforces the framework, ensuring each component remains aligned with shifting community dynamics.

Dynamic impact assessment plays a key role in ensuring that each component of the framework remains relevant and responsive to changing community needs. By offering continuous feedback, dynamic impact assessment enhances culturally responsive practices, ensuring that interventions are culturally aligned and effectively address the evolving needs of diverse communities.

In the context of *integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices*, *dynamic impact assessment* is vital for evaluating the effectiveness of interdisciplinary efforts. By incorporating feedback from various fields, it allows for ongoing adjustments, ensuring that collaborative strategies remain optimised and impactful over time.

Dynamic impact assessment also strengthens *synergistic community alliances* by providing essential data on the effectiveness of partnerships and alliances. This information enables stakeholders to refine strategies, deepening the collaborative impact and fostering stronger, more sustainable community relationships. Moreover, *dynamic impact assessment* supports *systems integration and reflective practice* by offering a structured mechanism for evaluating the integration of different systems, enabling data-driven adaptations and aligning system modifications with long-term sustainability goals.

With a foundation in assessment and evaluation, *synergistic community alliances* extend the framework by fostering strong, collaborative partnerships among stakeholders. Building on culturally responsive and interdisciplinary practices, these alliances gain strength from *dynamic impact assessment*, which helps refine strategies and enhance the mutual impact of partnerships.

Synergistic community alliances play an essential role in building robust partnerships among diverse stakeholders within the framework. These alliances depend on *culturally responsive practices* to ensure that collaboration is culturally appropriate and sensitive, fostering trust and cooperation across diverse community settings.

The effectiveness of *synergistic community alliances* is further enriched by *dynamic impact assessment*, which facilitates ongoing evaluation to improve their responsiveness and overall impact. This continuous process enables alliances to adapt to evolving community needs and refine strategies over time.

Synergistic community alliances also strengthen *integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices* by bringing together varied expertise and resources. This cross-disciplinary collaboration enriches community alliances, enhancing their capacity to address complex sustainability challenges. In turn, *synergistic community alliances* benefit significantly from *systems integration and reflective practice*. By incorporating systematic and reflective approaches, these alliances are better integrated within broader systems and remain adaptable to changing conditions, thereby promoting sustainable and cohesive community engagement.

In the final element of the framework, *systems integration and reflective practice* unify the elements of cultural responsiveness, cross-disciplinary collaboration, dynamic assessment, and synergistic alliances. Focusing on adaptability and cohesion, this theme provides a structural foundation for sustainable community engagement, ensuring that all components work seamlessly together in addressing complex challenges.

Systems integration and **reflective practice** are essential components of the interconnected framework, allowing adaptability and cohesion within community engagement efforts. These themes are enriched by culturally responsive practices, because integrating cultural considerations ensures that systems are tailored to meet the diverse needs of the community effectively.

Additionally, *systems integration* and *reflective practice* rely on *dynamic impact assessment* to provide ongoing feedback, supporting the reflective aspect of the practice and ensuring that integrated systems remain responsive and effective over time as community needs evolve. *Systems integration* and *reflective practice* also facilitate *synergistic community alliances* by designing systems that reinforce and support community partnerships, enhancing the stability and effectiveness of alliances within the broader framework.

Finally, **integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices** further enhance *systems integration* and *reflective practice* by incorporating knowledge derived from a wide range of disciplines. Cross-disciplinary integration nurtures holistic understanding and more effective management of complex systems, thus enhancing the capacity of the framework to handle sustainability challenges comprehensively.

This visualisation of our conceptual framework for sustainable community engagement within the Arts was developed to illustrate the dynamic and interconnected nature of key components in this space. Each relationship is visually represented to reflect its groundedness, with variations in line strength or prominence indicating the significance and interdependence of the connection. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how different elements reinforce one another in building long-term, inclusive, and meaningful engagement through the Arts.
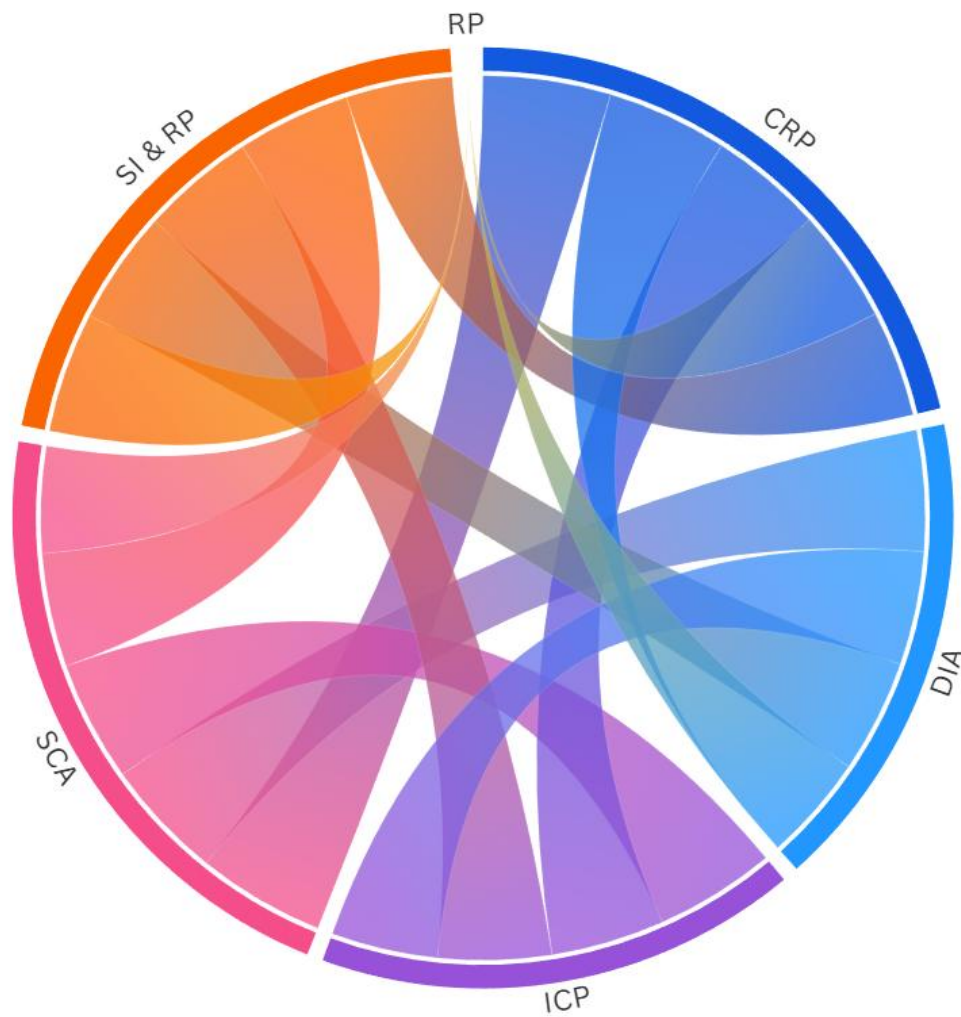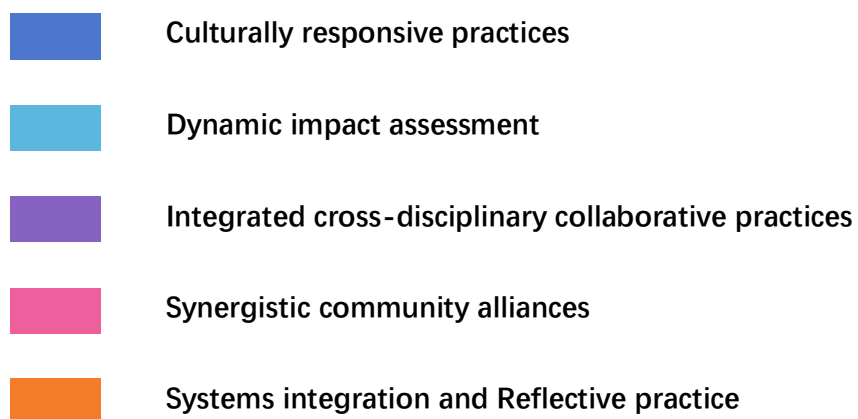
This framework is visually represented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Interactive visualisation of conceptual framework: Right-click on the image to access the interactive conceptual framework online.

Culturally responsive practices

Dynamic impact assessment

Integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices

Synergistic community alliances

Systems integration and Reflective practice

The absence of a direct relationship from *dynamic impact assessment* to *culturally responsive practice* can be understood in the context of how these themes interact within the framework. While *dynamic impact assessment* is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of various initiatives, it is primarily focused on the ongoing evaluation and adaptation of programmes based on their impacts. The text emphasises that *dynamic impact assessment* enhances *culturally responsive practices* by ensuring that interventions remain culturally aligned and effectively address the evolving needs of diverse communities. However, the lack of a direct relationship may suggest that *dynamic impact assessment* is not solely dependent on *culturally responsive practices*; rather, it serves as a broader evaluative mechanism that can apply to various practices, including – but not limited to – *culturally responsive ones*. This indicates that while *culturally responsive practices* benefit from *dynamic impact assessment*, the latter's scope extends beyond just this theme, making the relationship less direct.

Similarly, the absence of a relationship from integrated cross-disciplinary practice to reflective practice can be attributed to the specific roles these themes play within the framework. Integrated cross-disciplinary practices focus on collaboration across various fields to develop holistic solutions to complex challenges. This theme emphasises the importance of diverse perspectives and expertise in addressing sustainability issues. Reflective practices, on the other hand, centre on continuous learning and adaptation based on experiences and feedback. While integrated cross-disciplinary practices can inform reflective practices by introducing diverse insights, the literature does not explicitly state that they are directly linked. This absence may suggest that reflective practices can occur independently of cross-disciplinary integration, drawing instead on other forms of evaluation and learning processes. Thus, while both themes contribute meaningfully to the overall framework of sustainable community engagement, their relationship may not be as direct or central as others.

Conclusion

Positioned as a meta-level framework, this approach functions less as a prescriptive model and more as a generative lens through which Arts-based community engagement can be theorised and enacted. Ultimately, this interconnected framework attempts to emphasise the holistic approach which is needed in the commitment to sustainable community engagement. Each of these themes – *culturally responsive practices*, *integrated cross-disciplinary collaborative practices*, *dynamic impact assessment*, *synergistic community alliances*, *systems integration*, and *reflective practice* – plays a significant role, particularly in terms of their complementary nature. Each theme contributes different strengths while simultaneously drawing on the insights and support of the others.

Together, these thematic components provide an interconnected structure that fosters adaptability, cultural alignment, and effective collaboration across diverse community settings. By integrating these practices, not only are present needs at the community level met, but resilience for longer-term sustainability is also afforded. This integrated approach offers a holistic model, relevant to the multi-dimensional nature of sustainability, addressing the complex

challenges inherent in sustainable development. It is therefore a valuable tool for advancing meaningful and lasting change in community engagement efforts.

Despite the meta-level this framework functions on, there are some practical implications. For research and innovation, the framework encourages methodologically plural, reflexive, and community-co-produced inquiry that aligns artistic practice with broader social and environmental justice goals. Such inquiry may position the human and social sciences as central to impactful research. For teaching and learning, it invites curricula that cultivate students' ethical sensitivity, creative agency, and capacity to work relationally within diverse context. Given the disruptive impact of technology in higher education, community engaged teaching and learning, may play a more central role in imparting the needed critical thinking skills and soft skills. It is our hope that future research will explore this framework in empirical settings. Such research could examine its operationalisation across diverse communities, refine its components through participatory evaluation, and assess its impact on long-term sustainability and mutual benefit within Arts-based community engagement.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work the authors used ChatGPT4 and Atlas.ti as discussed in the method section of the paper. Please also find example prompts and machine learning processes in the methods section. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Author Biographies

Yvonne-Marié Brand holds an MMus (Trumpet) and MBA from UCT, and a DMus from NWU. After performing and teaching brass extensively in Cape Town, she joined NWU in 2013, establishing one of South Africa's largest brass departments. She directed the School of Music (2016–2023) and is Senior Lecturer in trumpet and brass pedagogy. iD

Janelize Morelli (PhD) is an associate professor in music at North-West University and the director of the NWU Centre for Digital Humanities. She supervises postgraduate students interested in critical topics in music education and community Arts. Janelize's research explores critical posthumanism in community Arts. iD

Reference list

Abdoh, S.A. 2024. Art and sustainability: Can digital technologies achieve sustainability? *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, 14(4): 555-562.

Akerlund, K.M. 2000. Prevention program sustainability: The state's perspective. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 28(3): 353-362.

Arora-Jonsson, S. 2023. The sustainable development goals: A universalist promise for the future. *Futures*, 146: 103087.

ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH. (2023). ATLAS.ti (Version 24) [Computer software]. ATLAS.ti. Available at: https://atlasti.com

Bentz, J., Do Carmo, L., Schafenacker, N., Schirok, J. & Corso, S.D. 2022. Creative, embodied practices, and the potentialities for sustainability transformations. *Sustainability Science*. 17(2): 687–699.

Berman, K.S. 2024. Teaching and learning for sustainable futures: Reclaiming, collaboration and empathy. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the South*, 8(2): 118-137.

Bidandi, F., Ambe, A.N. & Mukong, C.H. 2021. Insights and current debates on community engagement in higher education institutions: Perspectives on the University of the Western Cape. *Sage Open*, 11(2): 21582440211011467.

Borger, J.G., Ng, A.P., Anderton, H., Ashdown, G.W., Auld, M., ⋯Blewitt, M., Brown, D.V., Call, M.J., Collins, P., Freytag, S., Harrison, L.C., Hesping, E., Hoysted, J., Johnston, A., McInneny, A., Tang, P., Whitehead, L., Jex, A. &Naik, S.H. 2023. Artificial intelligence takes center stage: exploring the capabilities and implications of ChatGPT and other AI-assisted technologies in scientific research and education. *Immunology & Cell Biology*, 101(10): 923-935.

Boughey, C. & McKenna, S. 2021. *Understanding Higher Education: Alternative Perspectives*. Stellenbosch: African Minds.

Ceptureanu, S.I., Ceptureanu, E.G., Luchian, C.E. & Luchian, I. 2018. Community based programs sustainability: A multidimensional analysis of sustainability factors. *Sustainability*, 10(3): 870.

Chen, E.K., Reid, M.C., Parker, S.J. & Pillemer, K. 2013. Tailoring evidence-based interventions for new populations: A method for program adaptation through community engagement. *Evaluation & The Health Professions*, 36(1): 73-92.

Christou, P.A. 2022. How to use thematic analysis in qualitative research. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Tourism*, 3(2): 79-95.

Claridge, T. 2018. Functions of social capital – bonding, bridging, linking. *Social Capital Research & Training.* 1-7.

Clifford, J. & Barnes, K. 2022. Why and what to measure? The justification for social impact measurement. In Hazenberg, R. & Paterson-Young, C. (Eds.). *Social Impact Measurement for a Sustainable Future: The Power of Aesthetics and Practical Implications*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 49-73.

Compagnucci, L., Spigarelli, F., Coelho, J. & Duarte, C. 2021. Living Labs and user engagement for innovation and sustainability. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 289: 125721.

Donelli, C.C., Rentschler, R., Fanelli, S. & Lee, B. 2023. Philanthropy patterns in major Australian performing Arts organizations. *Journal of Management and Governance*, 27(4): 1367-1396.

Eaton, S.E. 2023. Postplagiarism: Transdisciplinary ethics and integrity in the age of artificial intelligence and neurotechnology. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 19(1): 23,

Fongwa, S. 2023. Universities as anchor institutions in place-based development: Implications for South African universities engagement. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 37(1): 92-112.

Google Research. (n.d.). *Notebook Language Model (LM)*. Google. Available at: https://research.google

Grau, F.X., Goddard, J., Hall, B., Hazelkorn, E., Tandon, R. & authors, other. 2017. *Higher Education in the World 6. Towards a Socially Responsible University: Balancing the Global with the Local*. GUNI.

Huhmarniemi, M. & Jokela, T. 2020. Arctic Arts with pride: Discourses on arctic Arts, culture and sustainability. *Sustainability*, 12(2): 604.

Hunter, M.A., Aprill, A., Hill, A. & Emery, S. 2018. *Education, Arts and Sustainability: Emerging Practice for a Changing World*. (SpringerBriefs in Education). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

King Committee on Corporate Governance. 2002. *King Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa, 2002*. Institute of Directors in Southern Africa.

Koekkoek, A., Ham, M.V. & Kleinhans, R. 2021. Unraveling University–community engagement: A literature review. *Journal of Higer Education Outreach and Engagement*, 25: 3-24.

Kohl, K., Hopkins, C., Barth, M., Michelsen, G., Dlouhá, J., Razak, D.A., Sanusi, Z.A.B. & Toman, I. 2021. A whole-institution approach towards sustainability: a crucial aspect of higher education's individual and collective engagement with the SDGs and beyond. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 23(2): 218-236.

Korza, P., Bacon, B.S. & Assaf, A. 2005. *Civic Dialogue, Arts & Culture: Findings from Animating Democracy*. Washington, DC: Americans for the Arts.

Kumari, R., Kwon, K.-S., Lee, B.-H. & Choi, K. 2019. Co-creation for social innovation in the ecosystem context: The role of higher educational institutions. *Sustainability*, 12(1): 307.

Malik, M., Graham, K., O'Donnell, L., Nyachae, P., Sama, D. & Reid, M.C. 2022. RAISE: A management and organizational sustainability tool for local governments to systematically self-evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 28(5): 550.

Mancini, J.A. & Marek, L.I. 2004. Sustaining community-based programs for families: Conceptualization and measurement. *Family Relations*, 53(4): 339-347.

McFerran, K.S., Crooke, A.H.D. & Hattie, J. 2018. Understanding sustainability in school Arts provision: stakeholder perspectives in Australian primary schools. *Music Education Research*, 20(3): 342-359.

McGarry, D. 2014. Empathetic apprentice: pedagogical developments in aesthetic education of the social learning practitioner in South Africa. In Corcoran, P.B. & Hollingshead, B.P. (Eds.). *Intergenerational Learning and Transformative Leadership for Sustainable Futures*. London: Brill, 189-200.

Menon, S. & Suresh, M. 2020. Synergizing education, research, campus operations, and community engagements towards sustainability in higher education: A literature review. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 21(5): 1015-1051.

Michigan State University. n.d. *Common Types of Community Engaged Scholarship Reported by Faculty. Common Types of Community Engaged Scholarship Reported by Faculty*.

Available at: https://engage.msu.edu/about/overview/common-types-of-community-engaged-scholarship-reported-by-faculty (Accessed: 20 November 2025).

Moayerian, N., McGehee, N.G. & Stephenson, M.O. 2022. Community cultural development: Exploring the connections between collective art making, capacity building and sustainable community-based tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 93: 103355.

Moldavanova, A. 2013. Sustainability, ethics, and aesthetics. *The International Journal of Sustainability Policy and Practice*, 8(1): 109-120.

Morgan, H. 2022. Conducting a Qualitative Document Analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(1); 64-77

Nicotera, N., Cutforth, N., Fretz, E. & Thompson, S. 2011. Dedication to community engagement: A higher education conundrum? *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, 4(1).

North West University (NWU). 2021. *North West University Community Engagement Policy*. Available at: https://www.nwu.ac.za/sites/www.nwu.ac.za/files/files/i-governance-management/policy/2021%20Update/CE_Policy/CE_Policy_2021_e.pdf (Accessed: 15 November 2024).

Oino, P.G., Kirui, K.K., Towett, G. & Luvega, C. 2015. The dilemma in sustainability of community-based projects in Kenya. *Global Journal of Advanced Research*, 2(4): 757-768.3

OpenAI. 2023. *ChatGPT (Version 4.0)* [Large language model]. OpenAI. Available at: https://openai.com/chatgpt

Pavlou, V. & Vella, R. 2023. Art, sustainability and partnerships. *International Journal of Education Through Art*. 19(1):3–10.

Power, K. 2021. 'Sustainability' and the performing Arts: Discourse analytic evidence from Australia. *Poetics*, 89: 101580.

Rahmouni, L. 2024. Rethinking research ethics in the Humanities: A critical examination of ai-assisted research. *Afak for Sciences Journal*, 9(1): 228-239.

Ramachandra, A. & Naha, A.M.N. 2014. Sustainability of community engagement – in the hands of stakeholders? *Education + Training*, 56(7): 588-598.

Rhodes University (RU). 2005. *Rhodes University Policy on Community Engagement*. Available at: https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/institutionalplanning/documents/Rhodes_University_Community_Engagement_Policy.pdf (Accessed: 15 November 2024).

Salmi, J. & D'Addio, A. 2021. Policies for achieving inclusion in higher education. *Policy Reviews in Higher Education*. 5(1):47–72.

Saric, J., Breu, T., Fokou, G., Gass, S.-J., Kiteme, B., Masanja, H., Utzinger, J., Zeleke, G. & Käser, F. 2023. Research−implementation organisations and their role for sustainable development. *Sustainable Development*, 31(3): 1401-1416.

Shabalala, L.P. & Ngcwangu, S. 2021. Accelerating the implementation of SDG 4: stakeholder perceptions towards initiation of sustainable community engagement projects by higher education institutions. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 22(7): 1573-1591.

Taffere, G.R., Abebe, H.T., Zerihun, Z., Mallen, C., Price, H.P. & Mulugeta, A. 2024. Systematic review of community engagement approach in research: Describing partnership approaches, challenges and benefits. *Journal of Public Health*, 32(2): 185-205.

Teixeira, S., Augsberger, A., Richards-Schuster, K. & Sprague Martinez, L. 2021. Participatory research approaches with youth: Ethics, engagement, and meaningful action. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 68(1-2): 142-153.

University of Cape Town (UWCT). 2012. *University of Cape Town Social Responsiveness Policy Framework*. Available at: https://uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/content_migration/uct_ac_za/39/files/Social_Responsiveness_Policy_Framework_2012.pdf (Accessed: 15 November 2024).

University of the Free State (UFS). 2006. *University of the Free State Community Service Policy*. Available at: https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider43/service-learning-documents/policy-documents-documents/community-service-policy-357-eng.pdf?sfvrsn=7d33f021_0 (Accessed: 15 November 2024).

University of the Free State (FS). 2021. Available at: https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider20/engaged-scholarship-2021/strategy-of-engaged-scholarship-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=819f7720_2. (Accessed: 15 November 2024).

University of Johannesburg (UJ). 2019. *University of Jahannesburg Community Engagement Policy*. Available at: https://www.uj.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/policy-community-engagement.pdf (Accessed: 15 November 2024).

UNISA. 2013. *UNISA Community Engagement and Outreach Policy*. https://www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/About/Service%20departments/community%20engagement%20and%20outreach/documents/Community%20Engagement%20and%20Outreach%20Policy%20-%20rev%20appr%20Council%20-%2020.09.2013.pdf Date of access: 15 Nov. 2025.

University of Pretoria (UP). 2018. *University of Pretoria Policy on Community Engagement*. Available at: https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/1/Webcenter%20Content/s5102_19-community-engagement-policy.zp211945.pdf (Accessed: 15 November 2024).

University of Stellenbosch (US). n.d. *University of Stellenbosch Community Interaction Policy*. Available at: https://www.sun.ac.za/english/policy/Policy%20Documents/Community%20Interaction%20Ethical%20Code.pdf (Accessed: 15 November 2024).

University of Zululand (UNIZULU). 2018. *University of Zululand Policy and Procedures on Community Engagement*. Available at: https://www.unizulu.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Policy-and-Procedures-on-Community-Engagement.pdf (Accessed: 15 November 2024).

Vaismoradi, M., Jones, J., Turunen, H. & Snelgrove, S. 2016. Theme development in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*. 6(5): 100.

Voges, S.M. 2016. Critical success factors enabling the financial sustainability of South African donor-funded community music development programmes. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation. 2004. *Logic Model Development Guide*. Available at: https://wkkf.issuelab.org/resource/logic-model-development-guide.html (Accessed: 20 November 2025).

White, M. & Robson, M. 2020. Finding sustainability: University-community collaborations focused on Arts in health. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*. 4: 48-64.

Wood, L., Sebar, B. & Vecchio, N. 2020. Application of rigour and credibility in qualitative document analysis: Lessons learnt from a case study. *The Qualitative Report*. (February, 18).

Wright, T. & Liang, Y. 2019. Examining the scholarly literature: A bibliometric study of journal articles related to sustainability and the Arts. *Sustainability*, 11(14): 3780.

Zhang, L. & Shen, T. 2024. Integrating sustainability into contemporary art and design: An interdisciplinary approach. *Sustainability*, 16(15): 6539.

Zheng, X., Wang, R., Hoekstra, A.Y., Krol, M.S., Zhang, Y., Guo, K., Sanwal, M., Sun, Z., Zhu, J., Zhang, J., Lounsbury, A., Pan, X., Guan, D., Hertwich, E.G. & Wang, C. 2021. Consideration of culture is vital if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. *One Earth*, 4(2): 307–319.