



# HECSOs

community engagement

## **D2.1: Courseware: results stemming from a market analysis and develop of course content– Final release.**



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# INDEX

Disclaimer	4
Executive Summary	5
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Hustles and enablers of Community Engagement: the missing competencies</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Market Analysis of the Courses in the field</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1.1 Competitor Analysis:	10
3.1.2 Need Assessment and Market Demand	11
3.1.3 Targeted audience	12
3.1.4 Partnerships and Networks:	12
<b>4. Course Offering</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1.1 Basic Competencies	13
4.1.2 General Competencies	14
4.1.3 Specific Competencies	15
<b>4.2 Teaching Planning for a Master course</b>	<b>16</b>
4.2.1 Description of the Teaching Plan	16
4.2.2 Description of the Modules	18
<b>4.3 Examples of life-long courseware</b>	<b>24</b>
4.3.1 Life-Long Learning Diploma on Community Engagement	24
4.3.2 Thematic Short course on Community Engagement for climate actions	26
References	27

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## Executive Summary

Community engagement has emerged as a critical facet in fields like social work, nonprofits, urban planning, and public administration, necessitating comprehensive courses to meet the demand. Defined as a collaborative process integrating stakeholders' resources for mutual empowerment, community engagement extends beyond traditional university-outreach perceptions.

This report adopts a definition framing community engagement as joint activities addressing societal needs for mutual benefit between universities and external organizations. It encompasses methodologies, principles, and objectives contributing to societal development. The report categorizes university-level engagement into themes like teaching, research, service exchange, student initiatives, and university-level engagement. Focusing primarily on teaching and learning aspects, this report explores universities' diverse activities to bolster their engagement practices. It proposes the development of a new courseware on Community Engagement, drawing from existing community-based learning initiatives and leveraging case studies for implementation.

# 1. Introduction

Community engagement has become a critical aspect of various fields, including social work, nonprofit organizations, urban planning, and public administration. The increasing recognition of the importance of community involvement has led to a demand for comprehensive community engagement courses. Community Engagement (henceforth CE) is a strategic process or a value co-creation process that integrates stakeholders' resources while resulting in stakeholders' empowerment, through participatory action learning.

Community engagement of Higher Educational Institution can be misunderstood as focusing on outreach activities, charitable actions and 'good neighbourliness' between a university and its immediate local community. The concept is in fact much broader in scope and meaning. It encompasses all the university's core activities, and potentially involves local, regional, national and international dimensions. The ambiguity of the concept lies on what Sandmann (2008; p. 101) calls as the problem of 'definitional anarchy' that defines community engagement not as concept but as a multitude of actions takes place in a range of ways in different contexts (from a multitude of university contexts to diverse academic disciplines). The result is that universities may be involved in activities that they would not associate with the label of 'community engagement' (Benneworth, 2013).

In this report the definition used is the one based on the work of Benneworth (2018, p. 17) and Farnell et al. (2020), that defines the Community Engagement as a process where universities engage with external organisations to undertake joint activities that address social needs<sup>1</sup> and that can be mutually beneficial.

Framed in this way, community engagement is simultaneously a method (involving multiple partnerships and collaborative work); a principle (with mutual benefit at its core); and an objective (of contributing to societal development).

This definition sheds light on how the principle of mutual benefit is central to community engagement (Sandmann, 2008; Benneworth et al., 2009; Goddard et al., 2016). The mutual benefit principle underlines the

<sup>1</sup> 'Societal needs' are defined as all political, economic, cultural, social, technological and environmental factors that influence the quality of life in society.

necessity to move away from the old framework in which the university is seen as the 'problem-solver' or provider of charitable donations as part of its corporate social responsibility. According to Benneworth (2018) the principle states that the community engagement frames a mutual exchange, between university and communities, of knowledge, experiences and solutions to specific challenge.

How can this mutual exchange occur? Via embedding partnerships with external communities that entails exceeding the extra-curricular activities (i.e., those activities that academic staff and students take on in addition to their university obligations) and integrating the values of CE into the core activities of the university such as teaching, research and university structures and policies (Holland, 1997; Hollander, Saltmarsh and Zlotkowski, 2001; Garlic and Langworthy, 2008; Furco et al., 2009; Goddard et al., 2016).

According to the project "Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education (TEFCE)", which aims to promote a new approach to assessing and supporting community engagement among European universities (Benneworth et al., 2018), Community engagement practices at the university level are presented according to five thematics:

- Teaching and learning – in which the most common form is community-based learning (or 'service learning'), a teaching methodology that combines classroom instruction, community service, student reflection and civic responsibility.
- Research – in which the most common form is community-based research, a collaborative form of research that addresses a community-identified need, validates community knowledge, and contributes to social change. Another form is citizen science, whereby citizens participate in scientific research by 'crowdsourcing' data or through their full inclusion in all stages of research.
- Service and knowledge exchange – whereby academic staff provide consultancy and capacity-building for community groups or contribute as experts in economic and political debates.
- Student initiatives – whereby students directly address the needs of external communities by launching their own community engagement activities, either via student organisations or through

activism and advocacy initiatives.

- University-level engagement – whereby universities open up their facilities to the community (including as venues for cultural and social activity, or as providers of other public services) and provide open access to educational resources.

This report will delve into the first area of teaching and learning describing the several activities that university can and do perform to increase their Community Engagement. Capitalizing on the case studies analyzed in the previous part of the HECSOs project and on the market analysis of the already existing Community-based learning, the report will present a brand-new courseware on Community Engagement.

## 2. Hustles and enablers of Community Engagement: the missing competencies

The results of the Case Study analysis and the report on Competence Framework have revealed that the operators involved into Community Engagement project need to face 8 hustles that impair its effective. Table [INSERT number] shows how hustles vary from the capacity to identify the community in need, and to build and maintain community partnership, to the expertise of selecting and engaging stakeholders. Additional bottlenecks are provided by the inadequacy of technical skills of evaluation and assessment or by the absence of efficient communication skills.

### BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Engaging with a community requires building trust and fostering relationships with individuals and groups within the community. This involves actively listening, understanding their needs and concerns, and establishing open lines of communication

### IDENTIFICATION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

Identifying and involving key stakeholders is crucial for successful community engagement. Stakeholders can include community members, local organizations, government agencies, businesses, and other relevant entities. Identifying and understanding their interests, roles, and perspectives helps ensure a diverse and inclusive engagement process.

### COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Community engagement often involves collaborating with various stakeholders and establishing partnerships. This includes working together to identify common goals, sharing resources and expertise, and coordinating efforts to address community challenges and achieve sustainable outcomes

### COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

Effective communication is essential for engaging community members. This involves using clear and inclusive language, utilizing diverse communication channels (e.g., public meetings, social media, newsletters), and tailoring messages to different audiences to ensure broad and effective outreach.

### EMPOWERMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Community engagement aims to empower individuals and groups within the community by providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to actively participate in decision-making processes and take action. This can include providing training, facilitating workshops, and supporting initiatives that build community capacity.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Community engagement processes may encounter conflicts, differing opinions, and challenges. The ability to address conflicts constructively, facilitate dialogue, and find common ground is important for maintaining positive relationships, fostering collaboration, and achieving desired outcomes.

## EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Regular evaluation of community engagement efforts allows for continuous improvement and ensures that strategies align with the evolving needs of the community. Seeking feedback from community members and stakeholders helps measure the impact of engagement activities and informs future decision-making.

## SUSTAIN ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is an ongoing process, and sustaining participation and commitment over time is crucial. This involves developing long-term strategies, fostering a sense of ownership among community members, and integrating engagement efforts into broader community development plans and initiatives.

Those hustles are related to the lack of specific competencies enlisted by the participants of the case study analysis. In fact, all participants agreed on fact that running CE project required skills and competencies that were not presented in the university degree they possessed nor in those of their trainees, colleagues and stakeholders, and that most of the time they were developed on the job without a systematic training.

Participants' evaluation data revealed several necessities that are formulated in the following list of competencies:

- Understanding of collaboration techniques, so that community partner voice could be incorporated into engagement processes. Examples of those competency could be techniques of listening, brainstorming, prioritizing, and decision-making approaches for small community groups or large numbers of stakeholders.
- Communicating with public audiences since departmental mentoring

focused almost exclusively on communicating with academic audiences through grants, conferences, and peer reviewed publishing.

- Development of systems thinking and critical reflection.
- Sustainable management skills to enlarge the scale of the project or their duration in time.
- Overarching community engaged expertise, such as community-based and participatory research, community-engaged teaching, diversity management, capacity building.
- Soft skill such as emotional intelligence, active learning, self-management.

The information gathered from the case study is coherent with the literature on competencies and professional figures of CE that has been increasing in the last decade. McReynolds and Shields (2015) defined four roles for community engagement professionals: institutional leader, organizational manager, community innovator, and field contributor.

Suedi and Kaplowtiz (2016) published 33 competencies for extension professionals. Their process skills and competencies tools emphasize program planning, program implementation, program evaluation, and communication skills. Within the sector of higher education, Dostilio (2017) identified and defined six responsibilities for community engagement operators, including (a) leading change within higher education, (b) institutionalizing community engagement on campus, (c) facilitating students' civic learning and development, (d) administering community engagement programs, (e) facilitating faculty development and support, and (f) cultivating high-quality performance. For each responsibility, knowledge, skills and attitudes, and dispositions are defined.

With these different roles and responsibility in mind we have first, run a market analysis on the already existing training course and second, developed a curriculum that could allows students to reach one of the professional figures.

Thus, for the participants, to overcome the hustles and to build a successful CE project the list of competencies can be summarized into three main areas:



- 1) Introduction to Community Engagement and Community Building.
- 2) Design, Management and Sustainability of CE projects.
- 3) Learning, Understanding and Communicating CE projects.

It is on these three areas that the HECSOs' courseware proposal is based. Before delving into the structure of the courseware, the report will expose first, a literature review on the range of university activities in the area of teaching and learning, and second a market analysis on the already existing courseware.

### 3. Market Analysis of the Courses in the field

The range of activities that a university can implement in the area of teaching and learning of CE varies in terms of nature and scope. According to Culum (2018) the university offerings can be summarized in the following list:

- Developmet curricula that support community and social development (Charles and Benneworth, 2002; Benneworth et al., 2009; Doberneck et al., 2017).
- Provision of lifelong learning and adult learning opportunities, especially for hard to-reach groups (Neave; 2000; Bringle and Hatcher, 2002; Benneworth et al., 2009).
- Involvement of community practitioners in devising curricula and delivering teaching as teachers (PRIA, 2014).
- Community-based ore service learning for students (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002; Benneworth et al., 2009; PRIA, 2014).

Among these activities, community-based learning is the most widespread internationally and the one that provides most direct mutual benefits, both for the university and the community. Community-based learning also known as service learning<sup>2</sup> was coined in the U.S. and has become widespread at most U.S. universities and colleges since

the 1990s (Benson et al., 2022). In Europe since the 2000s a growing movement in support of community-based learning has led to the establishment of national associations for communitybased learning and the European Observatory for Service Learning in Higher Education (Cayuella et al., 2019).

For the European Obersatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education (<https://www.eoslhe.eu/what-we-do/>) "Service-learning in higher education is an experiential educational method in which students engage in community service, reflect critically on this experience, and learn from it personally, socially and academically". The observatory has a map with all the service-learning experience in Europe.

Community-based learning is therefore a teaching methodology that combines classroom instruction, community service, student reflection and civic responsibility. A key element of community-based learning is mutual benefit for students, academics, the university and the community involved.

Activities of community-based learning can be applied in any field, from the field of engineering and technology (like the "IngénieuxSud" project at the Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium), to sociology (i.e., "Sociology and service-learning" activities at Nottingham Trent University, UK) to education (like the project "Support to children of mothers in penitentiary centres" from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain), migrant integration (like the projects "Lenguanes" and "Clinina jurídicas" run by the University Carlos III of Madrid).

There are three main models of Community-based learning:

- Service-learning course: Students relate community-based service experience to course objectives using structured reflection and learning activities in a regular academic course.
- University-community partnership: These partnerships are ongoing relationships between the university (department or faculty) and community partners in which students are involved in service.
- Internship, practicum, or field experience: Students are placed in selected service sites where they work individually. They apply their knowledge and skills to complete their hours of service.

<sup>2</sup>We use the two terms interchangeably.

Notwithstanding the positive results of community-based activities, from the evidence of our case study analysis, we found that the widespread models were based on activities of services, internship, and field experience. Furthermore, the case studies revealed that both the students and practitioners' experience could have benefitted from training courses preceding the beginning of the activities. For such reasons HECSOs project has focuses its attention to both the service-learning course and the development of ad-hoc curricula for students and practitioners interested in beeing trained as Community Engagement Project. As a preliminary activity to the design of the courseware, the project proposes a market analysis of the landscape of the teaching and learning activities.

### 3.1 Market analysis

#### 3.1.1 Competitor Analysis:

The analysis is developed by collecting an original sample of case studies composed by 27 curricula present in differen countries (i.e., Spain, Austria, Italy, USA, Romania, Germany, Greece, UK, Scotland). The analysis was run considering several dimensions that all concur to depict the diverse landscape of the teaching and learning offerings of universities.

The dimensions were chosen to understand to what extent the courses were integrating the main activities of CE, that is a strategic process or a value co-creation process that integrates stakeholders' resources while resulting in stakeholders' empowerment, through participatory action learning. In order to implement such process of value co-creation, the ways in which the courses are designed, assessed, implemented, and accredited need to overcome the traditional practice of running university courses and open itself to more contamination with the stakeholders.

The analysis considers the following characteristics (to which correnspond different instances of the definition of CE):

- Typology of the course (is the course a service-learning course, or is mainly a university-partnership or an internship/practice one?)
- Learning styles (is the course achieving learning through a participaroty experience, or through a more traditional approach)

- Coherence between curricula and CE's competencies (is the course concurring in building the professional competencies required to run a CE project? Is the curriculum designed with the help of practitioners?)
- Assessment (is the method of assessment co-design and oriented to assess the practical knowledge, apart from the theoretical one?)
- Accreditation methods (is the accreditation and the ownership of the course exclusively in the hands of university, or other actors are involved?)

For the first dimension, the majority of the recorded courses, about the 38%, are Short professional course (some of them are community-based learning activities, others were courses that support community and social development) run by the university for students. The 35% of the cases is represented by Professional or Executive courses (with different duration) aimed at releasing graduate professional certificate. For what concerns more traditional course, the 4% of the cases is represented by bachelor courses and the 23% by Master courses on subjects close to Community Engagement. Concerning the learning types of the cases, the analysi highlighted that the 64.5% was designed as traditional and social learning activities (the learning is passed onto the students via professors or peers), the 23.1% of courses was designed as service-learning activities and the remaining 11.5% was based on experiential learning (i.e., learning focuses on the idea that the best way to learn things is by actually having experiences such as internships, volunteerism, field experiences).

The learning types and the scope of the curricula can be very diverse, and the analysis reveals that the diversity might be related to the hurdles that Higher Educational Institutions must face when deciding how to implement the services. We will come back on the institutional limitations in the third deliverable of the Project result 2 that is the metoring guide. The third dimension of analysis is the coherence between the curricula and the development of CE's competencies that we highlighted in section 2. The analysis shows that 48.1% of the courses falls short on coherence, while only the 29.6% had curricula designed to cover, partially, those comepetence. Another level of analysis used in the market analysis to assess whether the courses were developing the specific competencies was the assessment procedure used in the courses. Ideally, a CE's courseware would apply an assessment procedure based on the so-called Challenge-based

learning, that actively involves students and lecturers in real and relevant problem situation. Only the 22% of the cases offered a challenge-based assessment via project proposal or practice assignments, while the 56% used basic assessment (of which 52% via testing theoretical knowledge and 4% asking for a report), a 4% had a mixed assessment approach and, the remaining 17% did not apply any knowledge's assessment procedure. Finally, the last dimension of analysis was to assess the type of accreditation body for the course. This dimension gives the measure of how much the practice of Community Engagement is institutionalized between universities and their societal stakeholder. Ideally, if the universities really guide their work in adherence with the definition of CE's practice, they should aim for accreditation with some degree of transferability (i.e., an accreditation that is not just measured in terms of universities' definition of knowledge competencies but in terms, also, of job competencies).

The analysis shows that there exist 3 types of accreditations with 4 degrees of transferability. They are the following:

- University accreditation: orthodox accreditation methods based on the transfer of knowledge from professors to students (i.e., low transferability). It accounts for the 59% of the sample.
- Sponsorship: accreditation based on the transfer of knowledge and practices from professors/professionals to students (i.e., medium transferability). It covers for the 26% of the cases.
- Professional Agency: accreditation based on the practitioner agenda that can be expressed at both national and regional level (i.e., high transferability). It accounts for the 15% of the sample.

To give some example, the courses that are the most similar to the one that the HECSOs project proposes, are:

The Master PROPART from University of Rome La Sapienza (<https://masterpropart.it/moduli-formativi/>), the Master GECOP (<https://master.unibo.it/gecop/it>) and the professional course WCM (<https://site.unibo.it/wcm/it/insegnamenti>) from the University of Bologna. The three courses offer a curriculum that is coherent with the professional competencies required from the CE's job, the training offers is designed in integration between the university and exponents of Civil Society Organizations involved with EC's practices. In conclusion, capitalizing on both the demand (i.e., the case studies from the Project result 1 that reveals the needs of the practitioners in the CE fields) and the supply

side (i.e., the market analysis on the already existing teaching and learning services) of the CE's competencies, it is clear that the development of a curricula that support community and social development might represent a viable solution a multi-items problem that is a better implementation of CE project: i.e., the increasing misunderstanding of the role of HEI in CE project, the growing request of competent CE's operator, and the long-standing issues of strengthening the co-creation dimension of CE projects between HEI and Civil Society Organization. Similar courses exist, but while competitors, primarily, focus on theoretical frameworks without extensive practical applications, the proposed course stands out with its emphasis on practical case studies and real-time simulations. In the next sections, the need assessment, the target audience and the curriculum of a master course on CE are presented.

The curriculum has been corroborated by a process of consultation between the partners of the HECSOs' consortium along with external institutions.

### 3.1.2 Need Assessment and Market Demand

Increasing societal emphasis on community involvement has spiked demand. Professionals seek courses that blend theory with practical implementation, making this course highly relevant. From the results of the case studies in Project Result 1 it was clear the motivations for seeking a community engagement course.

We have already identified the challenges that different operators face in engaging with diverse communities and gathered insights into the specific skills that CE projects require.

#### Consultation procedures

For the realization of the Study Plan proposed below, we have started from the experience of other programs, but also from the suggestions of the case study analysis and HECSOs' partners whose experiences and professional backgrounds extend in different knowledge areas including the Education, Economics, Social Science, Technology and Design, and Labor Law and Social Security. The aim has been to orient it in such a way as to establish a truly interdisciplinary program, to increase the possibilities of cooperation between various disciplines and departments in the establishment and execution of the master's program, to deepen the comparative advantages of the Master's program in terms of methods

and substantive contents and to avoid possible inconsistencies and any possible duplication in the contents of the subjects. Externally, the HECSOs' partners have established contact with researchers of recognized international prestige to gather their recommendations regarding the curriculum. These external members have responded positively to the proposal to create a master's degree. Their experience and knowledge on the subject have been extremely useful for the improvement of the document presented. Likewise, the external members of the Commission offered valuable suggestions regarding the Syllabus, which were reviewed and included in most cases.

### 3.1.3 Targeted audience

The target audience for the community engagement course includes students and professionals seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills in effectively engaging with communities. This could encompass individuals pursuing degrees in social sciences, public administration, urban planning, and related fields, as well as professionals already working in community-based roles.

Three learning personas have been identified, to which different educational offer is provided.

**The NOVICE:** Bachelor's degree students who are considered Beginner in the learning path. They need to acquire basic and foundational knowledge about CE.

Educational Offer: foundational courses (heavy streamline) or guided course curriculum path, within already existing courses (light streamline).

**The ACTIVIST:** Master students who are already knowledgeable in some fields but who want to broaden their expertise on CE. Educational Offer: building on the skills learned in other courses for their own project; experiential learning via internship or project (light streamline).

**The PRACTITIONER:** mid-level professionals (25–40 years old) working (in NGOs, local government, and community-based organizations seeking to enhance their community engagement skills. They possess basic knowledge but seek advanced strategies for effective community involvement (self-improvement goals). They need to acquire ready-to-use knowledge, preferably from professional peers. Educational Offer: either executive programs or ad hoc pills of knowledge or case studies/ social learning practices (medium streamline).



### 3.1.4 Partnerships and Networks:

The course should have collaborations with NGOs and CSOs, allowing access to live projects for participants, enhancing the course's credibility. The partnership is functional to the co-creation process of the course: the partnership should be used to design the content of the course, to identify the perspective trainer and professor of the course, to specify the external validity (and applicability) of the competencies of the course.

## 4. Course Offering

### Title:

Master in Management of  
Community Engagement Project.

### Distribution of Credits:

<b>Compulsory credits</b>	51
<b>External Training Credits</b>	3
<b>TFM Credits</b>	6
<b>Complementary Training Credits</b>	/
<b>Total ECTS</b>	60

**Maximum number of  
new students per year: 35**

**Teaching modality:** in person and  
online

## 4.1 Competences

In this section we present the main  
competencias that the course will  
grant to the future students.

### 4.1.1 Basic Competencies

<b>Code</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Type</b>
BC1	Having and understanding the knowledge that provides a basis or opportunity to be original in the development and/or application of ideas, often in a research context	Basic
BC2	Students know how to apply their acquired knowledge and problem-solving skills in new or unfamiliar settings within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study.	Basic
BC3	Students are able to integrate knowledge and to face the complexity of making judgments based on information that, being incomplete or limited, includes reflections on the social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments.	Basic
BC4	Students know how to communicate their conclusions and the knowledge and ultimate reasons behind them to specialised and non-specialised audiences in a clear and unambiguous way.	Basic
BC5	Students have the learning skills that will enable them to continue studying in a way that will be largely self-directed or autonomous.	Basic

## 4.1.2 General Competencies

Code	Designation	Type
GC1	Ability to apply theoretical and practical knowledge about Community Engagement to relevant political and social phenomena in practice and to foster community and social change	General
GC2	Understanding of the various contributors to community issues, including economic, social, behavioral, political, and environmental factors	General
GC3	Ability to incorporate active listening and empathy skills	General
GC4	Ability to negotiate across community-academic groups and contexts	General
GC5	Ability to use databases, technical methods and tools for multidisciplinary analysis of problems pertinent to Community Engagement.	General
GC6	Capacity to understand the factors, actors and processes at various levels that explain the incorporation of Community Engagement into the agenda of any institutions in which the student will take part.	General
GC7	Ability to apply theoretical and practical knowledge about diversity and inclusion to overcome barriers.	General
GC8	Ability to analyze the institutional context associated with the Community Engagement project to secure its sustainable application. Ability to collaborate with community members in community capacity building endeavors.	General
GC9	Ability to design solutions to the current problems in the different dimensions of Community Engagement, elaborating proposals based on the collection and analysis of the available scientific knowledge and data.	General



### 4.1.3 Specific Competencies

Code	Designation	Type
SC1	Ability to identify and analyze different community engagement models and approaches. Mastery of the theory of communing and the techniques of context analysis and problem setting. Ability to convey clearly to others the meaning of "community" and "community-engaged scholarship"	Specific
SC2	Ability to apply the knowledge of Stakeholder analysis, to identify key stakeholders within communities, and to implement strategies for engaging diverse and marginalized communities.	Specific
SC3	Mastery of the techniques of analysis and implementation of effective communication techniques for community engagement.	Specific
SC4	Ability to work effectively in and with diverse communities through the implementation of analyses of needs, feasibility, and impact evaluation of community engagement initiatives in a multi-institution's interaction.	Specific
SC5	Ability to understand and analyze the role that different organizations (can) play in defining Community Engagement activities and formulating solutions for those while implementing strategies for promoting collaboration and consensus-building.	Específicas

SC6	Ability to analyze and evaluating the Community Engagement Efforts while measuring the impact and effectiveness of the project through the collection of ad-hoc data.	Specific
SC7	Ability to propose strategies, policies, and action plans to broad range of actors (including international and regional organizations, as well as governments, companies, NGOs and activists) while promoting equity and representation. Ability to negotiate across community-academic groups and contexts.	Specific
SC8	Ability to manage the sustainability of the project granting building capacity within communities for long-term empowerment.	Specific
SC9	Ability to write successful grant proposals expressing principles and approaches to community-engaged scholarship. Ability to write articles based on CES processes and outcomes for peer reviewed publication. Ability to prepare, present and properly and individually defend in public an original and rigorous master's Thesis, related to one or more of the subjects entailed by the Course's Program.	Specific

## 4.2 Teaching Planning for a Master course

### 4.2.1 Description of the Teaching Plan

The literature on In Diving Deep in Community Engagement: A Model for Professional Development, McReynolds and Shields (2015) defined four roles for community engagement professionals: institutional leader, organizational manager, community innovator, and field contributor. Suvedi and Kaplowtiz (2016) published 33 competencies for extension professionals in What Every Extension Worker Should Know: Core Competency Handbook. Their process skills and competencies tools emphasize program planning, program implementation, program evaluation, and communication skills. In conjunction with Campus Compact, Dostilio (2017) led a national initiative to identify and define competencies for community engagement professionals, which were published in The Community Engagement Professional in Higher Education. Dostilio and colleagues identified and promoted six responsibilities, including (a) leading change within higher education, (b) institutionalizing community engagement on campus, (c) facilitating students' civic learning and development, (d) administering community engagement programs, (e) facilitating faculty development and support, and (f) cultivating high-quality performance. For each responsibility, knowledge, skills and attitudes, and dispositions are defined. All three of these recent scholarly pieces continue to refine content areas and competencies for graduate and professional students primarily interested in non-tenure track positions in institutions of higher education.

With these four roles in mind, we have developed a curriculum that could allow students to reach on of the professional figures. The master is designed to use a multidisciplinary approach that build bridges among different disciplines and fields of studies and expertises such as humanities and law, social sciences, psychology, design, economics and management.

The curriculum has been configured through three main modules essential to achieve a good level of learning and analysis of Community Engagement (plus, an internship and the Master's Thesis): Module 1 (Introduction to Community Engagement and Community Building), Module 2 (Design and Project Sustainability), and Module 3 (Learning, Understanding and Communication).

In the Hecsos' Case Study Analysis Report "Engagement" represents a multi-dimensional concept, context-dependent state of mind characterized by three specific axes:

- 1) cognitive (thought processing and elaboration);
- 2) emotional (affective);
- 3) behavioral (actions, energy, effort, time).

The three axes of engagement are present in the curricula. In fact, the aim of the course is to achieve a complete profile that combines advanced knowledge in the fields of Community Engagement by developing a curriculum of study that comprises both professional competencies and attitudes and behaviors. Within each of the modules, various subjects have been distinguished:



### **Module 1: Introduction to Community Engagement and Community Building**

The module is divided into 5 thematic courses with a laboratory character, a seminar and a workshop:

- Foundations of Community Engagement
- Strategic and Systemic Thinking,
- Diversity management and Human Rights
- Co-design and community management: methods and tools
- Seminar of Mentoring and Coaching
- Workshop on Public-Private Partnership

### **Module 2: Design, Management and Sustainability of CE projects**

The module is divided into 3 thematic courses with a laboratory character and a workshop:

- Social Innovation
- Theory, Measurement, and Social Reporting in Social Impact Assessment  
Process Design and Project Cycle Management
- Co-design workshops: Promoting social innovation, sustainability, and community-led local development.

### **Module 3: Learning, Understanding and Communicating CE projects**

The module is divided into 4 thematic courses with a laboratory character and a transversal workshop:

- Research methods for Social Science
- Documentation skills (i.e. management of database, report writing)
- Social media Management and Communication for CE engagement (part of the Design course)
- Workshop: Active listening and creative mediation of social and environmental conflicts

### **Module 4: Thesis and Internship**

## 4.2.2 Description of the Modules

Module 1			
Name: <b>Introduction to Community Engagement and Community Building</b>			
Number de credits ECTS	Character of the subject (Compulsory/optional/thesis/etc.)		
21	Compulsory		
List of subjects of the area			
Subject	Credis	Type	Language
Foundations of Community Engagement	4	CO	English
Strategic and Systemic Thinking,	4	CO	English
Diversity management and Human Rights	4	CO	English
Co-design and community management: methods and tools	4	CO	English
Seminar on Mentoring, Active Listening and Creative Mediation of Social and Environmental Conflicts	2	CO	English
Workshop on Public-Private Partnership	3	CO	English

### Content description:

Specific issues and questions addressed in each course are listed below:

#### Foundations of Community Engagement:

The foundational course on CE creates a collective comprehension of fundamental community engagement history, introduces a universally used language spanning various fields, differentiates between various forms of community-involved endeavors, and highlights the extensive scope encompassed within community-engaged academic work. The basic steps and main topics of the course will be:

Introduction to the history of community engagement.

The goal and definitions of community engagement (differentiating CE as principle, method, and as objective).

The institutional mechanisms, tools and channels to foster citizen participation and community engagement.

#### Strategic and Systemic Thinking:

The course delves into the intricate layers of orchestrating and implementing impactful initiatives within communities. It navigates the strategic landscape, imparting tools and frameworks to analyze, design, and execute projects that foster sustainable change. Students explore systemic thinking methodologies to comprehend interconnected elements within communities, recognizing patterns, dynamics, and influences that shape social structures. Emphasis is placed on devising strategies that transcend isolated interventions, aiming for holistic approaches aligned with community needs. The course merges theoretical concepts with practical applications, equipping learners with the acumen

to navigate complexities, collaborate effectively, and drive enduring positive transformations within diverse societal settings.

**Diversity management and Human Rights:**

The course focuses on “ways of developing meaningful collaborations with community partners— across lines of difference” (Warren, Park, & Tieken, 2016, p. 247). The three competencies within this dimension recognize that multiple forms of diversity strengthen community- engaged scholarship and, as a result, demand criticality and reflexivity so that deeply entrenched systems of inequality are not perpetuated during the engagement process.

The course aims at preparing students to understanding individual, social, and cultural differences that influence relationships in community- engaged projects. Both critical reflection (reflective critique on one’s positionality) and critical thinking (reflective critique on theories, conceptual frameworks, or ideas put into practice) are essential elements of CE.

Criticality in community engagement

Engaging with diverse communities

Critical reflection and critical thinking

Ethics in community engaged practices.

**Co-design and community management, methods and tools:**

The central goal of the third foundational course emphasizes respectful and efficient collaboration strategies in engagement endeavors with external partners. Beyond grasping the foundational partnering principles, learners gain exposure to precise methods like stakeholder analysis for identifying partnerships. They also delve into initiating and sustaining community collaborations understanding typical partnership challenges, and strategies to prevent them. Additionally, they directly engage with community partners to glean insights into their perspective on collaborating with higher education institutions. The main topics of the course could be:

Initiating community partnerships

Sustaining community partnerships

Techniques for community collaboration

Stakeholder Analysis

Module 2			
Name: <b>Design, Management and Sustainability of CE projects</b>			
Number of credits ECTS	Character of the subject (Compulsory/optional/thesis/etc.)		
15	Compulsory		
List of subjects of the area			
Subject	Credits	Types	Language
Social Innovation	4	CO	English
Theory, Measurement, and Social Reporting in Social Impact Assessment	6	CO	English
Design Thinking and Project Cycle Management	6	CO	English
Co-design workshops	2	CO	

### Content description:

Specific issues and questions addressed in each course are listed below:

#### Social Innovation:

The course is an exploration into transformative approaches aimed at addressing societal challenges through inventive and sustainable solutions. It navigates the realms of creativity, entrepreneurship, and collaboration, fostering an understanding of how innovative ideas can drive positive change within communities. Students will delve into the methodologies of social innovation, studying successful cases, and analyzing the processes behind impactful initiatives. They explore diverse strategies, from design thinking to participatory approaches, learning how to identify community needs, co-create solutions, and implement projects with a lasting impact.

**Theory, Measurement, and Social Reporting in Social Impact Assessment:**

The module delves deeply into the theoretical foundations and practical methodologies of social impact assessment, focusing on impact theory, measurement, and the critical relationship between impact assessment and social reporting.

The main topics of the course could be:

Social impact assessment, Impact evaluation and financial sustainability

Evaluating community partnerships

Social reporting

**Design Thinking and Project Cycle Management:**

The module aims at presenting the intertwining relationship between design thinking and project cycle management.

The students will be introduced to the problem-solving methodology that places human needs and experiences at the core of the innovation process. Design thinking focuses on understanding the initial problem, and then provides creative and strategic tools aimed at collaboratively designing innovative solutions.

Students will be exposed on how integrating Design Thinking in the

project cycle management. Moreover, they will be trained in the project cycle management (PCM), that involves organizing, coordinating, and controlling the project throughout its phases.

**Co-design workshops:**

Promoting practical work on social innovation, sustainability, and community-led local development.

Module 3			
Name: <b>Learning, Understanding and Communication of CE projects</b>			
Number of credits ECTS	Character of the subject (Compulsory/optional/thesis/etc.)		
13	Compulsory		
List of subjects of the area			
Subjects	Credits	Types	Language
Research methods for Social Science	6	CO	English
Social media Management and Communication for CE engagement	4	CO	English
Workshop on Active listening	3		English

**Content description:**

Specific issues and questions addressed in each course are listed below:

**Research methods for Social Science**  
 The course is comprising of the following topics:  
 Participatory approach  
 Qualitative and quantitative instruments for research  
 Documentation skills such as Management of database, report writing.

**Social media Management and Communication for CE engagement**  
 Communication and scholarly skills  
 Communicating with public audiences  
 Communicating with academic audiences

**Workshop**  
 Active listening and creative mediation of social and environmental conflicts

<b>Module 4</b>													
Name: <b>Thesis and Internship</b>													
<b>Number of credits ECTS</b>	<b>Character of the subject (Compulsory/optional/thesis/etc.)</b>												
9	Compulsory												
<b>List of subjects of the area</b>													
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Subject</b></th> <th><b>Credits</b></th> <th><b>Type</b></th> <th><b>Language</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Thesis</td> <td>6</td> <td>CO</td> <td>English</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Internship</td> <td>3</td> <td>CO</td> <td>English</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<b>Subject</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Language</b>	Thesis	6	CO	English	Internship	3	CO	English
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Language</b>										
Thesis	6	CO	English										
Internship	3	CO	English										

### Content description:

Specific issues and questions addressed in each course are listed below:

#### Internship

#### Thesis

By completing the Master's thesis, the student will have carried out a proper research whose findings will be placed in a report, scientific article, or working paper, given that the thesis will be supervised and then evaluated by experts in the field. Therefore, the student will have acquired the following:

1. Specialization in a particular topic in the area of CE.
2. Capacity to undertake project and carry out an empirical and/or theoretical analysis employing the methods and tools learned throughout the Master's program.
3. Ability to formulate a project or an analytical research question in the fields of CE, based on an interdisciplinary perspective.
4. Ability to use the appropriate empirical data to tackle the said research question and analyze that by using the techniques acquired previously.
5. Capacity to write a coherent thesis with a clear argument, based on rigorous empirical analysis and/or theoretical relevance.
6. Ability to defend the findings of her/his Master's thesis before a jury that would include at least one professor affiliated with the Master's program.

## 4.3 Examples of life-long courseware

The design, management and actionability of a master course depends on the financial (i.e., a conspicuous amount of financial resources) and relational capabilities (i.e., a set of connections with the CSOs and societal communities) of HEI. In the case in which those capabilities were reduced, the university can design a different type of courseware that is more effective.

A lifelong learning diploma falls into such category. It is a formal recognition or certification awarded to individuals who have completed a program or series of courses designed to support continuous education and skill development throughout their lives.

This diploma acknowledges an individual's commitment to ongoing learning, personal development, and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills across various domains. It signifies a dedication to learning beyond traditional educational milestones and emphasizes the value of continuous self-improvement and adaptation to the evolving demands of the workforce and society.

In what follows there are two examples of life-long learning diploma that differ only on the application.

### 4.3.1 Life-Long Learning Diploma on Community Engagement

#### **Description:**

The Community Engagement and Empowerment course aims to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to effectively engage with communities, build relationships, and empower individuals and groups to take an active role in shaping their communities. This course will explore various community engagement models, communication strategies, and practical approaches to fostering community participation and collaboration.

#### **Course Duration:**

8 weeks (can be adjusted as per requirements)

#### **Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this course, participants will be able to: understand the principles and importance of community engagement.

- Identify key stakeholders and build effective relationships within communities.
- Utilize communication strategies to engage and empower community members.
- Design and implement community engagement initiatives.
- Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of community engagement efforts.
- Address challenges and conflicts that may arise during community engagement processes.
- Promote inclusivity and diversity within community engagement practices.
- Develop sustainable strategies for long-term community empowerment.

#### **Overview**

##### ***Week 1: Introduction to Community Engagement***

Understanding the concept of community engagement

Exploring the benefits and challenges of community engagement

Analyzing different community engagement models and approaches

##### ***Week 2: Identifying Stakeholders and Building Relationships***

Identifying key stakeholders within communities

Developing effective communication and relationship-building skills

Strategies for engaging diverse and marginalized communities

##### ***Week 3: Communication Strategies for Community Engagement***

Effective communication techniques for community engagement

Using technology and social media for community outreach

Cultivating active listening and empathy skills



#### ***Week 4: Designing and Implementing Community Engagement Initiatives***

Assessing community needs and interests

Planning and designing community engagement initiatives

Tools and techniques for successful implementation

#### ***Week 5: Evaluating Community Engagement Efforts***

Measuring the impact and effectiveness of community engagement

Collecting and analyzing data for evaluation purposes

Utilizing feedback and incorporating continuous improvement

#### ***Week 6: Addressing Challenges and Conflict Resolution***

Identifying common challenges in community engagement

Conflict resolution techniques for managing disagreements

Strategies for promoting collaboration and consensus-building

#### ***Week 7: Inclusivity and Diversity in Community Engagement***

Understanding the importance of inclusivity and diversity

Promoting equity and representation within community engagement

Addressing cultural sensitivity and overcoming barriers

#### ***Week 8: Sustainable Community Empowerment***

Building capacity within communities for long-term empowerment

Identifying resources and opportunities for community development

Creating strategies for sustaining community engagement efforts

#### **Teaching Methodology:**

The course will incorporate a combination of teaching methods, including:

Lectures and presentations to provide theoretical knowledge.

Case studies and real-life examples to illustrate practical applications.

Group discussions and interactive activities to foster peer learning and engagement.

Guest speakers from community organizations to share their experiences.

Assignments and projects to apply concepts in real-world scenarios.

#### **Assessment:**

Participants will be assessed based on their participation in discussions, completion of assignments, and a final project that involves designing a community engagement plan for a specific scenario.

#### **Note:**

This course design is a general outline and can be customized to meet the specific needs and objectives of a particular community or organization.

### 4.3.2 Thematic Short course on Community Engagement for climate actions

**Description:**

The Community Engagement in Climate Actions course is designed to empower participants with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to effectively engage communities in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. This course will explore the critical role of community engagement in addressing climate challenges, fostering behavior change, and mobilizing collective action at the grassroots level. Participants will learn practical approaches to empower communities, build partnerships, and implement sustainable climate initiatives that resonate with diverse stakeholders.

**Course Duration:**

6 weeks (can be adjusted as per requirements)

**Key Topics Covered:**

1. Understanding Climate Change: Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of climate change, its causes, impacts, and the urgency for collective action. This section will explore the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of climate change and their relevance to community engagement.

2. Importance of Community Engagement: This module will highlight the crucial role of community engagement in climate actions. Participants will learn how engaging communities can drive awareness, foster behavior change, and build resilience to climate impacts. The module will also emphasize the significance of inclusivity and equity in climate engagement efforts.

3. Stakeholder Analysis and Mapping: Participants will learn how to identify and analyze key stakeholders in the community, including local residents, community organizations, businesses, and government agencies. The module will cover techniques for stakeholder mapping, engagement strategies, and the development of collaborative partnerships.

4. Effective Communication for Climate Engagement: This module will focus on communication strategies and techniques that facilitate effective climate engagement. Participants will learn how to tailor climate messages to different audiences, utilize storytelling techniques, and employ digital

platforms and social media to engage and mobilize communities.

5. Co-creating Climate Initiatives: This module will explore participatory approaches for designing and implementing community-led climate initiatives. Participants will learn how to facilitate community workshops, conduct needs assessments, prioritize climate actions, and develop action plans that align with local values, resources, and capacities.

6. Overcoming Challenges and Building Resilience: This module will address the challenges and barriers encountered in community engagement for climate actions. Participants will learn conflict resolution techniques, strategies for addressing skepticism and resistance, and how to foster community resilience in the face of climate impacts.

**Teaching Methodology:**

The course will employ a variety of teaching methodologies, including:

Expert-led presentations and lectures to provide theoretical knowledge.

Case studies and real-life examples to illustrate successful community engagement in climate actions.

Group discussions and interactive activities to promote peer learning and knowledge sharing.

Hands-on exercises and simulations to apply concepts in practical scenarios.

Guest speakers from climate organizations and community engagement experts to provide insights and share best practices.

**Assessment:**

Participants will be assessed through their active participation in discussions, completion of assignments and exercises, and a final project where they will develop a community engagement plan for a climate action initiative.

**Note:**

This course description provides a general framework and can be customized to suit the specific needs and context of communities and organizations engaged in climate action.

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