



Central University of
Technology, Free State

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Issue 12

Community Engagement NEWSLETTER



Message from the Manager: Community Engagement

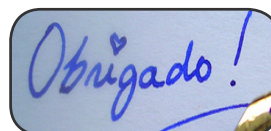
Jeeva Munsamy

As we approach the end of the year, I think it is appropriate to reflect on 2015 and to consider some of the major issues and achievements. The above word cloud characterises community engagement. As you can see, community engagement is expansive. It brings to the fore the many demands it is expected to meet, as well as the many challenges project leaders have to encounter with fortitude.

This fortitude is the key factor in making you, as project leaders, successful. You overcome heavy workloads, tight time constraints and a lack of co-operation in some instances. This is often worsened by transport and funding problems.

With these thoughts in mind, I appreciate the team spirit with which you, as project leaders, executed your duties in 2015. My heartiest congratulations to the team who was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Award 2015 for Community Engagement. More information on this excellent work is provided on the following page. To the other nominees in this category, congratulations, and thank you for your hard work and enthusiasm for community engagement. It is much appreciated. Gracias! Obrigada! In conclusion, I also wish you the best of luck for 2016 and beyond.

Warm wishes

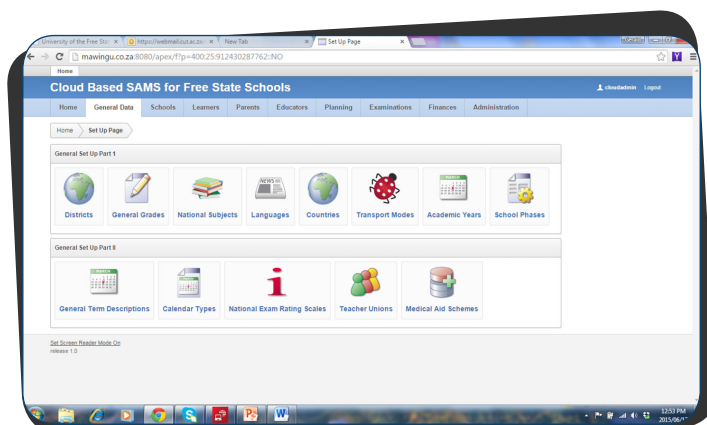


And the winning team is...?????

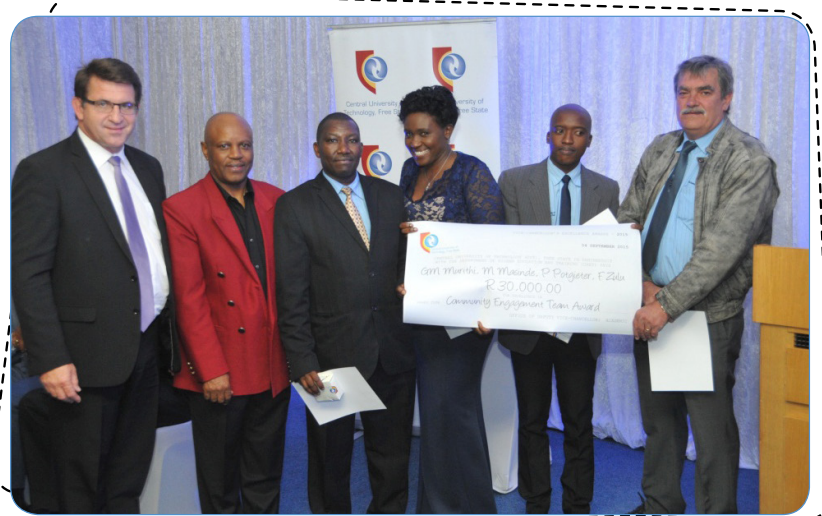
Mr Gerald Muriithi

Cloud SAMS: A cloud-based School Administration and Management System for under-resourced schools in the Free State.

This project involved the development and implementation of **Cloud SAMS**, a cloud-based School Administration and Management System (SAMS), at *under-resourced* schools in the Free State. The *under-resourced* schools fall in Quintiles 1 and 2, and account for over 80% of all schools in the Free State. A dire need for access to an affordable and reliable student system for this category of schools was identified. With the existing system, run by the Department of Education, each school is expected to run a stand-alone copy of a system called SA-SAMS, which is installed on a computer at the school.



This disadvantages the *under-resourced* schools, as they lack the resources for this system. In contrast, Cloud SAMS allows all schools to securely and privately share one copy of the system maintained in the cloud. Apart from the fact that Cloud SAMS supports all the functions currently supported by SA-SAMS, it also has the benefits of being in the cloud (low cost, faster implementation and resilience to failures). Furthermore, Cloud SAMS is accessible anywhere, anytime, by anyone, using anything – all a school requires is an internet connection. Although Cloud SAMS has only been implemented in five schools, the team is closely collaborating with the Department of Education and private organisations to implement Cloud SAMS at more schools. The most significant challenge of fully implementing Cloud SAMS is a lack of internet connectivity at schools.



The project team (Mr GM Muriithi; Dr EM Masinde; Mr F Zulu and Mr P Potgieter) with Profs. HJ de Jager, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Academic and Research, and AB Ngowi, Dean: Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology.

Photos of the project at Petunia Secondary School, Hodisa Technical School, St Bernards School and Heatherdale Secondary School:

The team: Petunia School



The team: Hodisa Technical School



The Team: St Bernards High School



The team: Heatherdale Secondary School



Visit to CLAYSS in Argentina



CLAYSS, the Latin-American Centre for Learning and Solidarity Service (*El Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario*), is committed to strengthening the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education institutions (HEIs).

Buenos Aires and almost the entire Latin America are affiliated to CLAYSS. CLAYSS is actually a non-governmental organisation (NGO), but has earned itself the status of a university thanks to the work they do and the success of their interventions. Of great significance are their partnerships: the Catholic Church (supported by the Pope); the Ministry of Education and community-based organisations.

The entire Latin America and Brazil are influenced by the teachings of Paulo Freire, who believed that education should be integrated and the oppressed working towards transformation and change. The oppressed must regain their humanity.

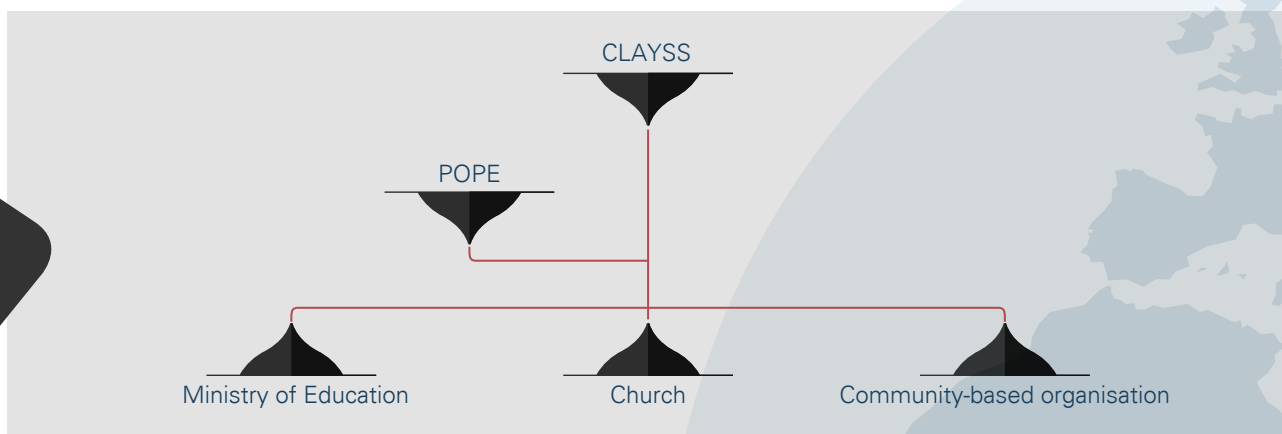
The **main activities** of CLAYSS include the following:

- ➔ Developing capacity-building programmes;
- ➔ Developing research programmes in partnership with local and foreign universities; and
- ➔ Participating in and co-ordinating different networks of institutions involved in service learning.

The CLAYSS model:

- ➔ Being a “socially responsible” institution;
- ➔ Being an institutions that values the social commitment of its students as an important part of their education; and
- ➔ A model that articulates a balanced university mission of teaching, research, and community engagement.

CLAYSS Strategy – Partnerships:

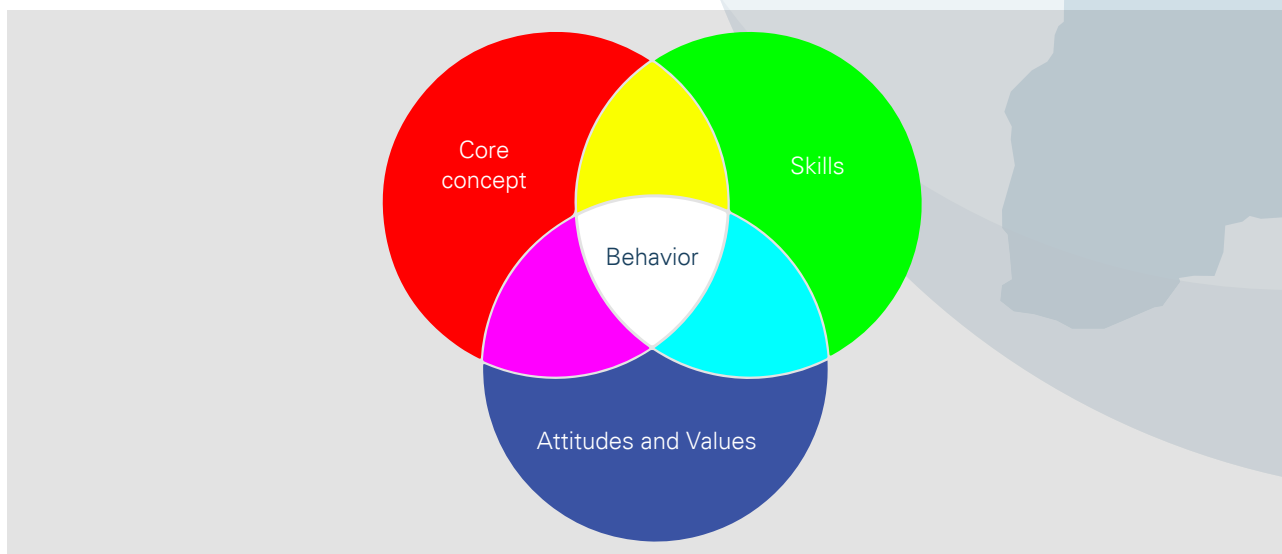


The role of partnerships:

- ➔ The church promulgates the importance of education, and regards it as an educational urgency, with a view of common good.
- ➔ The Ministry of Education promulgates service learning at schools from kindergarten to secondary schools.
- ➔ Community-based organisations regard community engagement as a way of improving their lives, and play an equal role.

In Latin America, the Global Competency Matrix System is used in service learning.

Global Competency Matrix – Learning with the world and not just about the world:



Global Matrix

Core concepts

- World events and global issues are complex and interdependent;
- The current world system is shaped by historical forces;
- One's own culture and history is key to understanding one's relationship to others;
- Multiple conditions fundamentally affect diverse global forces, events, conditions, and issues

Skills

- Investigates the world programming questions, analysing and synthesizing relevant evidence, and drawing reasonable conclusions that lead to further enquiry;
- Recognizes, articulates, and applies an understanding of different perspectives (including his/her own);
- Selects and applies appropriate tools and strategies to communicate & collaborate effectively;
- One's own culture and history is key to understanding one's relationship to others;
- Multiple conditions fundamentally affect diverse global forces, events, conditions, and issues

Attitudes and values

- Openness to new opportunities, Ideas and ways of thinking;
- Desire to engage with others;
- Self-awareness about identity and culture, and sensitivity for differences;
- Comfort with ambiguity and unfamiliar situations;
- Forms opinions based on exploration and evidence;
- Commits- Cont. learning & reflection
- Reflection on context and meaning of our lives in relationship to something bigger;
- Adaptability and the ability to be cognitively nimble;
- Empathy, humility and behaviours;
- Seeks out and applies an understanding of different perspectives to problem solving and decision making;

Visit to programme for foreign participants to service learning

Visitors had the opportunity to witness fieldwork currently being conducted at some local community involvements of the University of Buenos Aires as well as by the National Solidary Education Programme of the Ministry of Education.



Observations/lessons learnt included:

- ➔ Volunteerism and service learning is used in conjunction with each other;
- ➔ A public call/request for projects is made by the university, inviting prospective projects from communities;
- ➔ Interdisciplinary projects and a large numbers of students engage in community engagement projects;
- ➔ Community groups are regarded on the same level;
- ➔ Planning and decision making is conducted in a mutual manner;
- ➔ The church plays a vital role in instilling community engagement in congregation members, and this is reinforced by the Ministry of Education; and
- ➔ Commitment from leadership is important.

Presidential Award: “Solidary Schools” 2015



- ➔ Service learning at schools: This has proven to encourage learners’ school attendance and decrease the drop-out rate at schools.

Gap at CUT

The following gap at CUT was identified during our visit to Argentina, which CUT can implement:

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	PLAN/WAY FORWARD
Mainstreaming community engagement in core academic activities.	Mainstreaming curriculum engagement into the core curricula of Teaching and Learning and Research and Development.	<p>Integrating community engagement into the core curriculum and graduate attributes.</p> <p>Integrating community engagement into the programme and qualifications mix (PQM).</p> <p>Applying community engagement principles to research projects.</p>	<p>Utilising the Global Competency Matrix.</p> <p>Each learning programme should include a community engagement project on at least one of the qualification levels.</p> <p>The introduction of a basic education course on engagement scholarship, which will be the precursor to community engagement projects.</p>

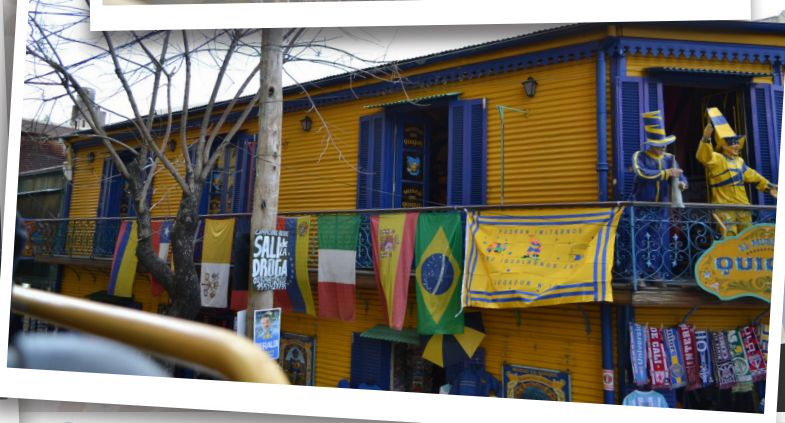
Recommendations:

- ➔ An audit of programmes within faculties should be conducted. Many projects are taking place in silos. This will provide the basis for improving and collaborating in projects.
- ➔ An introductory module/session on scholarship education should be imparted to students.
- ➔ Service-learning training should be offered to academic staff members.
- ➔ Research on community engagement projects should be encouraged.
- ➔ Advocacy and lobbying on community engagement is essential.

WELCOME TO

BUENOS AIRES

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GENERAL ENQUIRIES

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