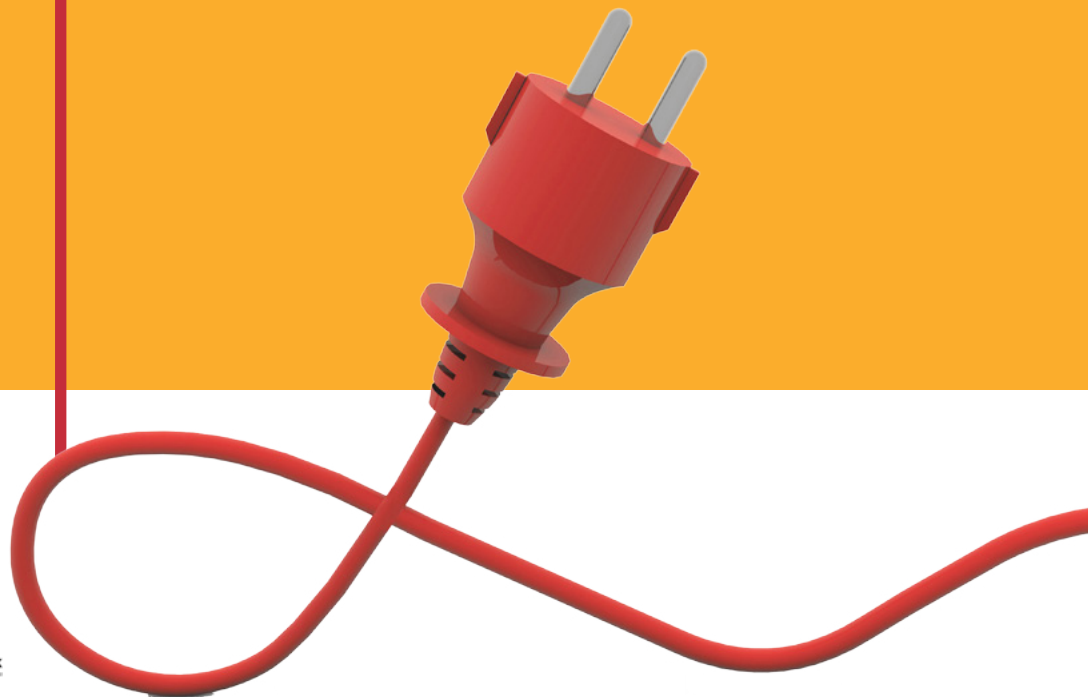


CONNECTORS

WORKSHOP REPORT

NOVEMBER 2023



EH!WOZA.COM

INTERFER

mesh
— community engagement network —

THE GLOBAL HEALTH NETWORK
Enabling research by sharing knowledge

CONTENTS



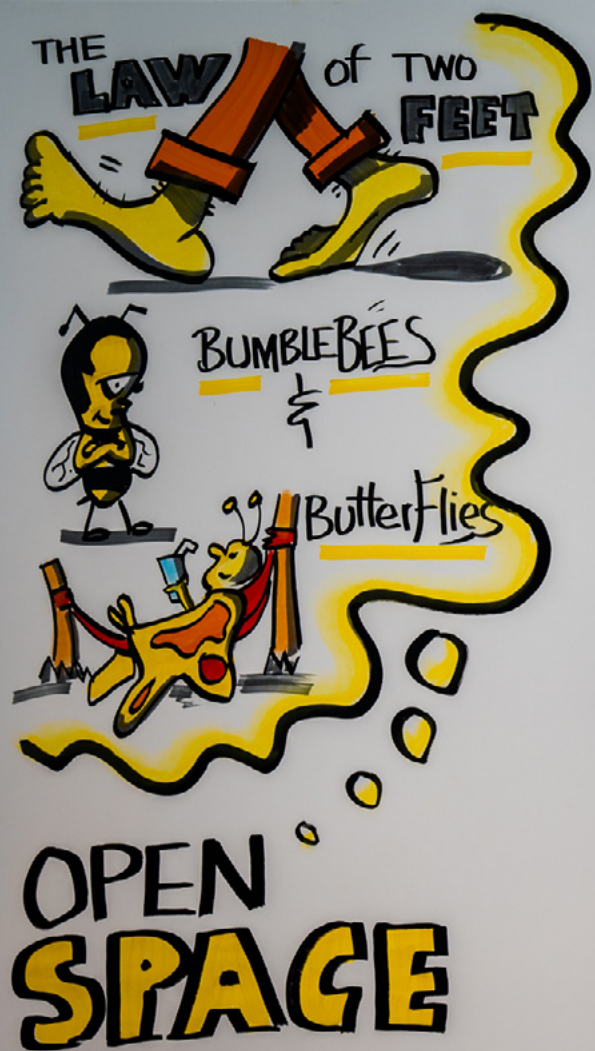
CONNECTORS WORKSHOP TEAM	3	SESSIONS	44
OPENING LETTER	4	What is Community Engagement to You?	45
OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP	6	Innovation in Practice	52
WORKSHOP SPACE	8	The Role of the Connector	54
Workshop Ethos	9	Exploring Barriers and Enablers	56
Interactive Spaces	10	Managing Collaborative Projects	59
Networking and Icebreakers	11	What Challenges do Connectors Face?	63
HOW WAS DATA RECORDED AT THE WORKSHOP?	12	Embracing Creativity	66
DEFINING CONNECTIONS	22	Open Space	69
PARTICIPATING CONNECTORS	25	CLOSING REMARKS	72
		CALLS TO ACTION	74
		COMMON STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGEMENT	76
		REFLECTIONS FROM THE CONNECTORS TEAM AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS	79
		APPENDIX: CONNECTORS FEEDBACK	81

EH!WOZA.com

INTERFER

mesh

THE GLOBAL HEALTH NETWORK



CONNECTORS WORKSHOP TEAM



ANASTASIA (TASHA) KOCH

Co-Director of Eh!woza
Honorary Lecturer, MMRU,
University of Cape Town

Collaboration,
Genuine Impact,
Change



HELEN LATCHEM

Independent Community
and Public Engagement
Consultant

People,
Collaboration,
Creativity



NABEEL PETERSEN

Director of Interfer/
Co-Director of Pivot
Collective

Arts & Interdisciplinary
collaboration, Storytelling,
Participatory Design



ADILAH PETERSEN

Co-ordinator &
Manager of Interfer/
Pivot Collective

Projects,
Logistics,
Coordination



NTANDO YOLA

Community Engagement
Lead at Desmond Tutu
Health Foundation and
Advocates for Prevention
of HIV in Africa

Communities,
Participation,
Evidence-based solutions

OPENING LETTER



We held the first in-person Connectors Workshop bringing together 54 people from all over the world for a three day workshop With support from [Wellcome](#) and [The Global Health Network](#), in November 2022.

Connectors began informally in 2019. After several conversations, Helen Latchem (then [Mesh](#) Co-ordinator), Nabeel Petersen (Director of [Interfer](#)) and Tasha Koch (Co-director of [Eh!woza](#)) realised that they had similar and synergistic plans to convene health and other engagement specialists from around the world to explore and support the role of Connectors in health engagement and research. We use the term ‘Connectors’ to describe individuals, agencies, creatives and other organisations who play key roles in bridging the gap between research and communities.

Our aim was to explore the potential of convening an equitable, supportive and nurturing Community of Practice as this was identified as a collective need based on our

interactions with peers across the globe. We had initially planned to host an in-person workshop in 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a shift in planning and resulted in a series of three online workshops held in 2021. Topics and ideas selected for virtual workshops were developed after consultations with with a broad and diverse group of global Connectors, via surveys, one-on-one discussions and consultation with persons attending other engagement workshops. Videos and materials from the 2021 series can be viewed on the Mesh website: <https://mesh.tghn.org/themes/connectors/>.

Upon lifting of COVID-19 restrictions we were able to begin planning the first in-person iteration of the Connectors Workshop, which offered an opportunity to strengthen and expand the Connectors community that had started to emerge from virtual meetings. We sought to build on learnings and insights gained during virtual sessions and through previous professional experiences. We also sought to bring together a broad group of people - in terms of

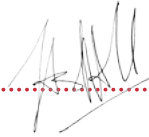
varied geographies, diverse focus areas and different ways of working including engagement professionals, researchers, funders and people working in NGOs. As a point of departure from other workshops, our formative aim was to establish and maintain an ethos based on equity, peer support and co-learning, openness and sharing, critical reflection and problem solving, mindfulness and respect.

Over the course of the three day workshop colleagues (‘Connectors’) presented experiences from their work and engaged in formal and informal discussions and guided workshop activities, as well as casual social activities and even some dancing. Being together in a shared space provided room for spontaneous engagement which enriched the formal discussions. Through these multifaceted dialogues people formed connections, wrestled with challenges faced in their work, shared solutions, offered support and expertise, made jokes, found points of convergence and exchanged creative strategies.

In this report we provide a description of the workshop including detailed documentation of each session, a distillation of key outcomes and themes uncovered during the workshop, post-workshop feedback and a brief description of possible future steps.

We would like to thank Wellcome and The Global Health Network for supporting this work, and all of our colleagues and Connectors who have helped build and nurture this burgeoning Community of Practice. Co-learning and co-creation would not be possible without this invaluable community of Connectors. We hope that in the future, we can maintain and extend this network by documenting a set of guiding principles that will allow retention of key ethos of the community, while facilitating scale of the work across focus areas and geographies, and allow us to meet and collaborate more regularly.

Anastasia Koch



Helen Latchem



Nabeel Petersen



Adilah Petersen

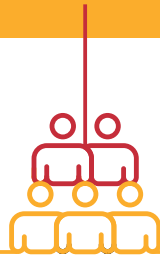


“**Co-learning and co-creation would not be possible without this invaluable community of Connectors.**”

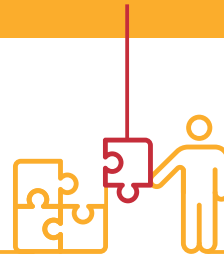
CO-LEARNING



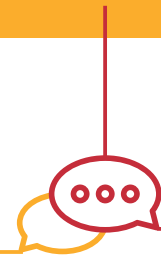
COMMUNITY



CONNECTION



COMMUNICATION



OUTCOMES OF THE CONNECTORS WORKSHOP



The workshop aimed to:

1 Encourage an active and supportive transdisciplinary Community of Practice for health engagement, with emphasis on Global South connections.

The team worked hard, within the constraints of space, time and budget, to bring together a diverse group of individuals and organisations playing important roles at the intersection of engagement, health and research. This mix is foundational to building a transdisciplinary professional Community of Practice that makes a difference and collectively strives toward transformation. The diversity of perspectives and networks was enabled through the unique mix of partner organisations' and funders' networks and connections. This is the power of a professional event stemming from a strong multi-

partner collaboration. The delegation was active and supportive because of the nature of face-to-face meetings. Much of the Connectors' feedback shared the joy of meeting others, sharing meals and making personal connections. Importantly, in post-workshop feedback, colleagues suggested greater inclusion of community members in future workshops. This is something to consider carefully especially with regard to maintaining the ethos of equity and awareness of existing power dynamics. Connectors were positive about the inclusion of funders and the discussions on funding, and encouraged a larger mix and diversity of funders represented at future events.



2 Build a unique and warm spirit of connection within the delegation to support open sharing and encourage future communication.

One colleague said "You can't beat being in the same room as people, to really connect and hear their stories, talk and share in breaks, over meals and drinks. It's so invigorating and motivating and helps massively with idea generation". It is hoped that these personal connections, built within an environment of friendly and open sharing will be more sustainable and impactful. It was perceived as being different from most other events attended by Connectors in supporting open discussions with colleagues from diverse backgrounds and forging new professional and personal friendships.

3 Facilitate new and tangible mutually beneficial collaborations.

Although the formation of new professional relationships or formal collaborations is a longer-term outcome, it was wonderful to learn that many of those who participated had already connected with others they met at the workshop to discuss future collaborations and ideas. The workshop not only facilitated new connections but some of these have already led to tangible projects and successful funding bids. This is the beginning of a Community of Practice with cross-pollination of ideas and actionable projects that could and should be nurtured.

Future events could incorporate more open/unstructured time for idea sharing, project clinics, writing groups, collaborative funding generation, and discussing the support and development of the Community of Practice over time.

“This is the beginning of a Community of Practice with cross-pollination of ideas and actionable projects...”

4 Explore and document the challenges faced by Connectors in health research and engagement AND encourage those attending to work together on problem-solving and exploring new opportunities.

Sessions in the workshop were focussed on exploring current challenges, successes, experiences, innovations, skills, and support structures within health engagement. Previous online workshops and consultations identified many of the common challenges experienced by Connectors in engagement practice. These were explored further within the workshop. Due to time constraints, however, active and/or actionable solutions were more challenging to facilitate. Feedback suggested that a more focussed ‘Connectors Clinic’ should be included, in which those participating could share challenging experiences and receive support and constructive feedback or suggestions from other Connectors. Future investment should be focused on mobilising and inviting funders and philanthropists to explore and discuss barriers to accessing funding for grassroots organisations, and for organised site visits for live troubleshooting/project clinics.

5 Create a lasting network and professional support system (through sharing, learning, creating new resources and piloting ideas)

This final aim represents a longer-term outcome for the Connectors initiative and will remain a work in progress after this first in person workshop. Many of the Connectors who attended the workshop are committed to being part of a growing global professional network, offering an active peer support and learning space, with a focus on building onward collaborations.

There were positive comments on the size of the delegation as not being too big, impersonal and unwieldy. It was suggested that it would be valuable to form regional subgroups or teams based on common interests, to expand the reach of the network and keep colleagues engaged.

An important next step towards the collective Connectors aims would be to support the existing community to develop a set of common goals, ethos and agenda to work towards, regionally and globally.

WORKSHOP **SPACE**



Workshop ETHOS



Equity



**Peer Support
+
Shared Learning**



**Openness
+
Inclusivity**



**Critical Reflection
+
Problem Solving**



**Awareness
of Power
Dynamics**



**Keeping mindful of
specialised jargon and
accessible language**



Interactive SPACES



Central Space

Facilitated discussions and presentations.



Tea Walks

One on one discussions, assigned randomly to encourage spontaneous dialogue, meeting peers and to foster interaction.



Open Space

Impromptu and unplanned presentations and discussions with the whole cohort. This offered room for Connectors to share presentations that were not included in the main programme.



Offers & Needs Marketplace

A space for Connectors to identify and exchange passions, knowledge, skills, resources, needs and opportunities. Colleagues were invited to articulate needs or opportunities on postcards, providing contact details for prospective collaborators. Throughout the three days attendees could explore and populate the marketplace.



Call to Action

This space offered a call to action from Connectors, based on potential collaboration, current challenges experienced by the network or ideation about what 'Connectors' could be.



Social Space

Shared meals, [ZeitZ](#), [MOCAA](#) museum tour, morning walks, icebreaker games and networking exercises.

Networking and ICEBREAKER SESSIONS



ANIMAL FRIENDS (facilitated by Sarah Iqbal)



This exercise involved every Connector being randomly allocated one of six animal names (horse, dog, chicken etc.) through blindly choosing an animal from a cup on their arrival in the workshop space. They were then instructed to move around the room making only the sound of their animal to locate their fellow animals. Once within single animal groups, they responded to set icebreaker questions, such as *"How do you greet each other in your country?"*

BRINGING PEOPLE TO YOUR SIDE (facilitated by Niklas Marzinek)



During this icebreaker the whole group were on their feet. The facilitator marked a line down the middle of the floor, and asked a series of polarising questions instructing Connectors to stand on one side of the line, or the other, depending on their views/perspective, e.g., *"Do you think that Nobel Prizes are a good thing?"* There was a microphone in the middle of the room and Connectors were asked to come forward one at a time and make a persuasive argument as to why others should cross the line to their side.

MOVING TO MUSIC (facilitated by Kristal Duncan-Williams)



This icebreaker involved all Connectors walking, dancing and moving around to an uplifting pop song. Periodically the music stopped, and Connectors were instructed to greet the person nearest to them and both answer a quick prompt, e.g., *"Share a surprising fact about yourself"*. The group then moved around again before stopping again and answering a new question.

HOW WAS
DATA RECORDED
AT THE WORKSHOP ?

Pre-workshop CONSULTATION



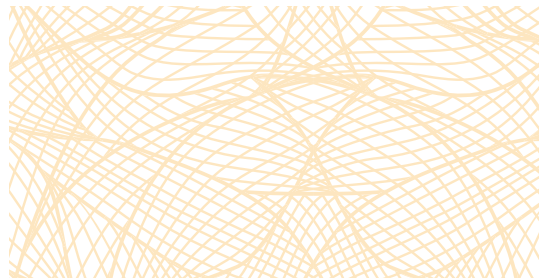
Feedback, thoughts and perspectives from the three online workshops helped inform topics, themes and the ethos of this in-person workshop allowing for a “community-informed” approach to designing the workshop.

Briefly, online workshops covered three key topics:

1 Making the case for engagement and the role of Connectors: Theory, ethics and defining our work

2 Managing collaborative projects: Relationships, hierarchies and collective understandings

3 Practical considerations and skills: Planning, methods/approaches and impact.



Online workshops were overall well-received, supporting the need for further engagement within the emerging Connectors community. Feedback indicated that further opportunities for networking, shared spaces for co-created problem solving and work on the ethics of engagement could be useful.

Further detail and recordings of the online workshop can be viewed [here](#)



Workshop 1 Making the case for engagement and the role of 'Connectors'

WELCOME!
from all over!

SO... WHAT is a connector?
WE WORK OUTSIDE OF FORMAL RESEARCH, FROM ALL KINDS OF FIELDS & SPECIALITIES.

UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINING ENGAGEMENT

THE DRIVE TO DO ENGAGEMENT COMES FROM MANY DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS
CONNECTORS WERE OVERLOOKED IN THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS
PUBLISHED ARTICLES ON THEIR ROLE

REBECCA WALKER MWANGAZA MAMA

TRANSPARENCY ACCOUNTABILITY
MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IS ESSENTIAL
Enabling CONVERSATIONS

TRUST
PARTICIPATORY STORYTELLING
RESULT: 2 QUILTS
NEUTRALITY - NOT AN OPTION

HELPED WITH MATERIAL NEEDS TOO!

21 SEPT 2021

MAKING THE CASE FOR ENGAGEMENT

RESEARCH DOESN'T TAKE PLACE IN A VACUUM. THE INTERFACE OF SCIENCE WITH THE PUBLIC IS ESSENTIAL

SARAH IQBAL

THE BENEFITS OF ENGAGEMENT

Michelle James TB DRIVE
WE HAVE TO ENGAGE THESE PEOPLE WE ARE ASKING THEM SO MUCH...
COMIC BOOK & THEATRE
IT WORKS!

BREAKOUT FEEDBACK
BI-DIRECTIONAL LINK
RESEARCHERS COMMUNITY
NOT NECESSARILY DIFFERENT PEOPLE

NO SUPPORT
INDEPENDENT CONNECTOR
OWNERSHIP PARTICIPATORY

FACILITATING CONVERSATIONS
NEGOTIATING DIFFICULTIES
RESEARCHERS COMMUNITY
CONNECTORS

WE MUST ALL THINK OF OURSELVES AS CONNECTORS

DON'T DO THINGS BETTER. DO BETTER THINGS!

FELIX BIVENS

ENGAGEMENT and THE ROLE OF Connectors

21 SEPT 2021

Workshop 2 Managing collaborative engagement projects

THE GLOBAL HEALTH NETWORK
Creating research by sharing knowledge

INTEREN ENIWOZA mesh

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND COMMUNITIES

TOP TIPS

CHALLENGES

- DO NO HARM ethical principles
- UNREALISTIC, RIGID DONORLED APPROACHES
- STIGMATIZING OTHERS

GOVERNMENTAL CO-CREATION

SH** HAPPENS

OUTCOMES

- 1 DESCRIBE & COMMUNICATE A CLEAR BRIEF
- 2 EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED
- 3 REMEMBER THE SUPER POWER OF THE DEBRIEF

CONNECTORS 2021
Tues 19 Oct

TALKING TREES PROJECT

INCREASING maternal deaths

MANAGING COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

WHO SETS THE AGENDA?

THE GLOBAL HEALTH NETWORK
Creating research by sharing knowledge

INTEREN ENIWOZA mesh

PLENARY FEEDBACK

WHAT ARE THE ROOT CAUSES OF SOME OF THESE CHALLENGES?

- Gaining commitment from researchers
- Partners resisting CHANGE
- Problems with relationships and power dynamics
- Different ambitions and priorities
- Managing logistics, budgets, project planning & ... more

WORKING WITH AN INSTITUTION

There are cultural challenges to overcome

Don't forget the personal stories

HOW MIGHT WE USE FORMS TO BRING OUR PROJECTS TOGETHER?

TIPS

- SET UP THE TEAM
- WHO GETS IN FROM THE START?
- KNOWING INSTINCTIVELY WHO YOU CAN WORK WITH

CONNECTORS 2021
Tues 19 Oct

MANAGING COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

Workshop 3 Practical considerations and measuring impact

Practical Considerations
measuring IMPACT

HOW TO TURN AN IDEA INTO A FUNDABLE PROJECT?

WHAT CHANGES ARE NEEDED TO HELP EXCELLENT ENGAGEMENT TO HAPPEN?

Independent Connectors: Freelancers, creatives, artists

- Support with mentorship
- Support with evaluations
- Accommodate the rise in requests for engagement

Patricia Kingori

- BE DETAILED
 - about the involvement of the community
- WHAT'S THE VALUE to the community
- DON'T PAINT the community in bad & top-down way
- LOSE THE TERM "HARD TO REACH"

Alex Levy
Health/Science Research

- Building trust & engaging in science
- More Training
- Write more targeted articles
- Need more engagement partnerships

Josephine Gubee

- Define the ENGAGEMENT PROBLEM STATEMENT
- Charity, Community or Civil Society
- Grant writing
- Sharing resources
- More capacity-building & collective approaches
- Localise innovation

Chelleka Mpande
WELCOME!

Georgia Bladon
Session Facilitator

3...2...1
LIFT-OFF!!

CONNECTORSworkshop
23 Nov 2021

Practical Considerations
measuring IMPACT

MEASURING impact and SUCCESS

MAKING POSITIVE CHANGES IN COMMUNITIES AND INFORMING POLICY/CHANGES IN PRACTICE

Injunge Karangwa
Session Facilitator

BEATRICE WATERMEYER

R 180=1m → 200,000 **HOUSEHOLDS** Reached

CYCLE OF CONTINUAL IMPACT MANAGEMENT

- 1. HOUSEHOLDS REACHED (get Social In. CBUs)
- 2. HOUSEHOLDS REACHED (Learner NPO)
- 3. HOUSEHOLDS REACHED (CBUs + FBOs)
- 4. HOUSEHOLDS REACHED (Food Vouchers)

Planning Impact → **Collecting evidence** → **Report+improve** → **Analyse evidence**

Quantitative DATA analysis → **Qualitative**

CONTINUAL REPORTS SHOWED US HOW WE COULD CONTINUALLY IMPROVE

90% → **300-187** FOOD PARCELS

Building Systems that support safe transitions for adulthood

INCREASING CHALLENGES FINANCIAL instability

INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES INTEGRATED care

EQUAL ACCESS TO CARE

20% POST Project value-add

FUNDS

HAVE A FRAMEWORK

- Aims
- Outcomes
- Impact

BRILLIANT IDEAS NEED TO BE PASSED ON !!

Nani Mumba

CONNECTORSworkshop
23 Nov 2021

In-workshop DATA COLLECTION



The Connectors organising team used a multi-modal and inter-disciplinary approach to recording and collecting data at the workshop, bringing together varied expertise, including using the following mediums:

Graphic Note Taking



DEON HANNS

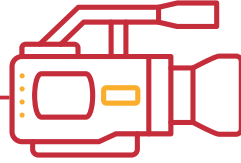
Graphic Note Taker

Graphic Note-taker, The San Scribe

Deon Hanns, the [San Scribe](#), took graphic notes over the three day workshop period. He was stationed in the central space, where he created live graphic notes as presentations and discussions progressed.



Video Recording



Video recordings of the workshop and most of its presentations were documented by three videographers. These recordings were organised and edited by the Eh!woza team, and are available online.



SAM FLANS

Junior Creative Director at Eh!Woza

Advocacy, public engagement, skills development



ALFA FIPAZA

Junior Camera Operator at Eh!woza

Drone operation, camera operation



USIBUSISO MQINA

Intern and photography trainee at Eh!woza

Photography, film making, events

Presentation support and facilitation of **INTERACTIVE SPACES**



Jack De Jong and Kauthar Dramat provided overall presentation and facilitation of the various interactive spaces during the workshop.

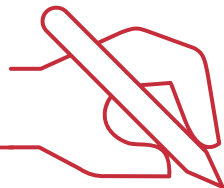


JACK DE JONG
Artist/Facilitator



KAUTHAR DRAMAT
Photographer/Videographer
Tech Enthusiast

Rapporteur and **SCRIBE**



LUCA EVANS

Writer/Assistant At Eh!woza



Writing, Practice, Play

Rapporteur, Luca Evans, took written notes over the three day workshop period. These heavily informed the final report presented here.

A Note from the Rapporteur:

Many of the connections formed over the workshop cannot be captured in a written report; connections beyond formal partnership, in moments of laughter, commiseration over impact reports and short funding cycles, dancing after dinner and spontaneous conversations. In presentations and sessions, colleagues discussed the communities they work with in their research and engagement projects, but it was evident over the course of the workshop that the Connectors

themselves were forming a community of practice with shared values and diverse working strategies. The methodologies and expertise used to protect and engage communities that Connectors work with could be employed to engage and grow the Connectors' community itself. There is immense potential for a network of people whose expertise is in connection.

Post-workshop DATA COLLECTION

A feedback form was sent to all colleagues who took part in the in-person meeting, with the invitation to provide feedback in creative/novel ways. The survey can be found here: <https://forms.gle/aHnAk6tgSboPMBNZ7>

Pre, during and post-workshop data has been synthesised and is presented in this report.



DEFINING
CONNECTORS



What is a **CONNECTOR**?

We have used this term to broadly describe:

- Individuals, agencies, creatives and other organisations who play key roles in bridging the gap between research and communities
- Engagement experts, local charities, creative agencies, artists, business, community groups
- People with unique skills, nuance and experience to work within these intersections and spaces.

“
Anyone can be
a connector.
– **Phuong Nguyen**”



What do Connectors bring to community work?

“Knowledge transfer”, “A form of story-telling”, “Community advocacy”, “simplifying science jargon” “communicating research results in accessible language”, “empowerment” “knowledge transfer”

“
How do we shift from
being a voice for
communities to giving a
voice to communities?”

Why are Connectors IMPORTANT?

- Successful engagement projects often emerge from a collaboration between researchers, community members and professionals from other sectors i.e., interdisciplinarity.
- Connectors can be central to the success of community engagement projects.
- They bring alternative perspectives to health research, reaching new groups and ensuring scientific research is accessible and relevant to everyday life and experiences.



PARTICIPATING
CONNECTORS



ALEXANDRA PARSONS

Funding and Partnerships Manager
at Public Engagement, Wellcome



ANELISA JACA

Specialist Scientist at the South African
Medical Research Council



ANITA SHERVINGTON

Director of BLAST Fest LTD.



Self-Motivation, Problem-Solving, Organisation

Alexandra Parsons leads new and existing strategic partnerships and funding mechanisms, including Wellcome's relationship to global community engagement network, Mesh. She also leads Wellcome's partnership with the British Science Association to deliver The Ideas Fund, which enables communities in the UK to take the lead in developing ideas to improve mental wellbeing. She is currently a trustee of campaigning organisation Stop Funding Hate, and a teacher in contemporary cultures at UCL.

Science communication, Engagement, Research

Anelisa Jaca works as a specialist scientist at the South African Medical Research Council. Her current area of focus is on vaccine implementation research, and in particular factors that drive vaccine hesitancy in South Africa.

Community, Connection, Liberation

Anita Shervington is a community organiser and impact strategist working at the intersection of science, social justice, culture and creativity. She is the founder of BLAST Fest, a UK based community engagement platform that brings together the creative power of science, art and Black culture to instigate social transformation.

ANJA SCHOCH

Head of Falling Walls Engage
at Falling Walls Foundation



Impact, Engagement, Community

Anja Schoch is the Head of Falling Walls Engage at the Falling Walls Foundation in Berlin. Anja leads the programme to build a global platform for science engagement practitioners, activate scientists and policy makers to foster a global perception change.

AMY WARD

Clinical Trials Investigator
at the University of Cape Town



Self-Motivation, Problem-Solving, Organisation

Amy Ward is a Research Medical Officer, and conducts clinical trials and observational studies in the field of Infectious Diseases. She has spent the last 9 years working in the public health sector in Khayelitsha, South Africa in both a clinical and research capacity. She has a passion for community-based interventions and engagement. She is the Primary Investigator (PI) on several grants from a variety of sponsors including the pharmaceutical industry

and NIH-funded networks (HVTN, CoVPN). She has recently focused her career trajectory to improving community access to wellness services, while continuing to conduct important research into prevention strategies that target diseases that heavily burden South African communities. In 2023 she launched Vuka, a Khayelitsha-based clinical research facility and wellness initiative.

ANNA YALOURIS

Engagement Director at the Busara
Centre for Behavioural Economics



**Applied Research, Interdisciplinary Collaboration,
Behavioural Design**

Anna Yalouris is an Engagement Director at the Busara Center for Behavioral Economics in Nairobi, Kenya. Anna's work focuses on applying behavioural science and experimental methods to answer questions in public health policy. Anna has over 10 years experience working across Africa and Asia, in project management, research methods, experimental design, randomised evaluations, and policy advisory roles.



BELLA STARLING

Director of Vocal



Listening, influencing, facilitating

Bella Starling is the Director of Vocal, which connects people and health research into mutually beneficial partnerships. She is a member of the Mesh global community engagement Steering Group, and originally set up the International Public Engagement programme at the Wellcome Trust. She is passionate about inclusion and democratisation of health research.



BARTHALOMEW WILSON
Social Mobilization,
Communication And Community
Engagement Manager At
Partnership for Research on
Vaccines and Infectious Diseases
in Liberia (Prevail)/ Family Health
International (FHI)-Clinical

Collaboration, Problem-Solving, Communication

Barthalomew Wilson is the Social Mobilization and Communication (SMC) Manager of the Partnership for Research on Ebola Vaccines and Infectious Diseases in Liberia (PREVAIL), a clinical research program between the governments of Liberia and the United States. Before joining PREVAIL, he volunteered with the case management unit of the National Ebola Response Program at the Liberian Ministry of Health, supporting case investigation, case management and contact tracing during the 2014 EVD outbreak in Liberia. A graduate of Harvard University with a Master's degree In Global Health and Social Medicine, Barthalomew is a promoter of good participatory practices in clinical research and is focused on ensuring that community perspectives inform research. Barthalomew is skilled and experienced in qualitative and mixed methods research, community-based participatory research, public health communications, and good participatory practices in clinical research for emerging and re-emerging pathogens.



BULELWA MNYANGO

Community Liaison Officer at Vuka
Research Clinic, University of Cape Town



Community, Youth Empowerment, Female
Reproductive/Maternal Health

Bulelwa Mnyango is an experienced Public Management/ Administration and Applied Communications professional. She has worked in the public, private and NGO sectors, specialising in applied communications, public relations and marketing. She is currently the Community Liaison Officer for UCT Vuka, focusing on clinical research trials and studies in the community of Khayelitsha as well as surrounding areas. She is passionate about health advocacy and community engagement.

DANIELLA KENNY

Communications and Marketing Officer at
Stellenbosch University



Mutuality, Diversity, Innovation

Daniella Kenny leads the Societal Impact Task Team within the Division of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics at Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. She manages the Centre's science engagement activities which aim to promote meaningful interactions to advance knowledge and empower communities by way of inclusive, sustainable, and transformative engagement with the individuals, social groups, organisations and institutions.

ED YOUNG

Co-director of Eh!woza



Creative strategy, Film editing, Conceptual art

Ed Young is a visual artist and Founding Director of Eh!woza. Ed manages the creative, conceptual and strategic aspects of Eh!woza, with a particular focus on film production and capacity development. He is currently pursuing a PhD in medical microbiology.

GABRIELLE ALLEN
Portfolio Manager
at Impact on Urban Health



GASPAR COMÉ
Project Coordinator
at VillageReach



GUSTAVO MATTA
Full Public Health Researcher at the
Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ)



Alternative, Creative, Methodologies

Gabrielle Allen is the Portfolio Manager at Impact on Urban Health. She also leads a partnership with Wellcome Trust, focusing on shifting power in research. Over the last two years she has managed investments in building capacity and testing new models for community-led research and funding.

Communication, Leadership, Problem-Solving

Gaspar Comé is a Project Coordinator for the community based participatory research project at VillageReach Mozambique. Gaspar has a background in health research, working for consultant firms evaluating programs across the country. At VillageReach he helps increase demand for routine immunisation services for underserved children, engaging community leaders in planning and executing equitable mobile bridges.

Interdisciplinarity, Community Engagement, Social Equity

Gustavo Matta is currently a researcher at CIDACS / IGM / FIOCRUZ and coordinator of the Zika Social Sciences Network and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Studies and Research on Public Health Emergencies (NIESP / CEE) at FIOCRUZ. He is a permanent professor at the Postgraduate Program in Public Health at ENSP / FIOCRUZ and Coordinator of the Integrative Network to Combat Inequalities in Health. He has experience in Health Policy and Planning, Humanities and Social Sciences in Health and Global Health, particularly on decolonial approaches and methodologies.

HAIDEE BELL
Public Participation Lead
at Wellcome Trust



Community, Mutuality, Change

Haidee Bell is a social change strategist, with 25 years of experience in public engagement. She leads the Public Participation team at Wellcome Trust, which forms partnerships that facilitate the public playing active and impactful roles in health research.

HIMALI DIXIT
Researcher in Social Science at the
Nepal Public Health Foundation



Close Listening, Communication, Connection

Himali Dixit is an anthropologist currently working on issues of food systems and rural livelihood. At her current project with the Nepal Public Health Foundation, they are taking an integrated approach to health, education, agriculture, ecology, and rural livelihood, working through very close community engagement. The starting point has been with a group of women who are trying to solve the problems that massive rural out-migration poses to agriculture and community.

JACQUELINE GOLDIN
Professor at the
University of the Western Cape



Water, Citizen science, Art

Jacqueline Goldin is a “numerate anthropologist” and professor. She has conducted numerous large and small scale poverty surveys and evaluations across government and community projects, covering a wide range of developmental topics. She is dedicated to participatory research and uses art to emphasise new ways of learning and communicating.

JULIO CANARLO
Director
at Fundación Etikos



Innovation, Changemaking, Problem-Solving

Julio Canarlo's research interests are in the broad field of public health, the design of behavioural and health interventions, and the study of psychosocial issues with critical human rights implications (gender-based violence, violence against children, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, COVID-19, Reproductive, Maternal Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health), as well as the ethics of the research implemented with vulnerable populations in low and middle-income countries.

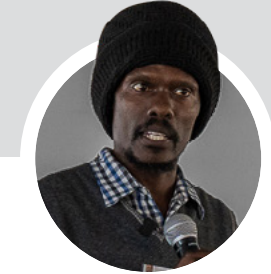
KATHERINE SORSDAHL
Director of the Alan J. Flisher
Centre for Public Mental Health



People, People, People

Katherine Sorsdahl is the Director of the Alan J. Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health at the University of Cape Town. Her research focuses on adolescent mental health. She is committed to developing innovative approaches to ensuring access to mental health services for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

KEVIN KIMWELLE
Community Architect
at Indalo World NGO



Design, Architecture, People

Kevin Kimwell's architectural studies and professional experience span from Kenya to South Africa, with collaborations in USA, Germany and India. He is currently based in South Africa, working in community development. His work explores alternatives in both design and development, grounding an environmental agenda in affordable and low-tech, sustainable solutions that service communities.

KIM WADDILOVE

Communications Lead at Sub-Saharan African Network for TB/ HIV Research Excellence (SANTHE)



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Storytelling, Collaboration

Kim Waddilove works to translate science into accessible terms for the public to excite and inspire people to engage in science. She manages the communication strategy for the Sub-Saharan African Network for TB/ HIV Research Excellence.

KRISTAL DUNCAN-WILLIAMS

Project Lead at Youth Capital



Data, Youth, Solution Driven

Kristal Duncan-Williams has over ten years of research experience across the fields of molecular biology, public health and youth employment. She has a particular interest in research-driven advocacy and is passionate about making data accessible and engaging for everyone. She is currently the Project Lead at Youth Capital, a campaign advocating for youth-centred and evidence-based solutions to youth unemployment.

LINDSEY REYNOLDS

Co-director of Pivot Collective



Knowledge translation, Epistemic justice, Collaboration

Lindsey Reynolds is the co-founding director of the Pivot Collective and senior research officer in Global Health Ethics at the University of Cape Town. A critical medical anthropologist by training, she has over 20 years experience as a public health and social science researcher.

MARIA MALOMALO
Senior International Research Manager at
Restless Development



Youth, Research, Advocacy

Maria Malomalo is a communication, gender and development professional with over fourteen years' experience in community development, gender inclusive programming, civic engagement, political advocacy, project development and management, resource mobilisation, action research and adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights. She is currently the Senior International Research Manager for Restless Development where she heads the creation of relevant and high-quality youth-led research. She is the founder of Mwana Pwo, an organisation focussing on Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Angola, and a Lusophone Africa Advisor for Urgent Action Fund-Africa, a feminist grant-making organisation.

MOITREYEE SINHA
CEO and Founder of
citiesRISE



Creative Entrepreneurship, Collaboration, Openness

Moitrayee Sinha is a humanitarian, scientist and social entrepreneur. Moitreyee led the GE Foundation's Global Health portfolio in 22 countries, where she brought an integrated approach to maternal child health and underpinned rapid transformation by bringing together disparate practices of the public, private and philanthropic sectors. From there, Moitrayee developed the Beyond Health portfolio at the Global Development Incubator to mobilise social entrepreneurs and large institutions to work together on large-scale global health issues. These experiences revealed the centrality of mental health to overall wellbeing, which became the *raison d'être* for citiesRISE. CitiesRISE represents the culmination of a lifelong project of breaking down barriers and unifying people, communities, and institutions in the service of helping others.

MUDHUSHREE KAMAK
Programme Manager
at Science Gallery Bengaluru



Empowerment, Creativity, Inter-disciplinarity

Mudhushree Kamak is a maverick scientist, illustrator and information experience designer. She was part of the Berlin Biennale Curators Programme 2022, a Khoj Curatorial Intensive South Asia Fellow 2021 and a member of the Arts Electronica Creative Producers Programme 2021. She developed the “xperimenter programme” a learning and mentorship programme at SGB, a 2022 Finalist at Falling Walls Berlin In the Future Learning category.



NIKLAS MARZINEK
Project Manager
at Falling Walls Foundation



People, International connections, Creativity

Together with his colleagues at Falling Walls Engage, Niklas Marzinek manages an international hub network and platform for Science Engagement practitioners worldwide. He is passionate about cultural exchange and exploring innovative ways to engage audiences with science.

NOMA MAJOZI

Head of Public Engagement at
Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI)



Enlightening, People-Centred, Transformative

Noma Majози is the Head of Public Engagement at the Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI). She is responsible for ensuring that the local communities, and wider publics engage with the science and research that takes place in the Institute. This is done through various public engagement activities, including Community Advisory Board (CAB) meetings, community dialogues, community meetings and roadshows. She ensures that support is rendered to scientists and researchers when they engage with the public. She also provides capacity training for the scientists to assist them in becoming champions in public engagement; and ensuring that science and research is appreciated and valued by AHRI research communities.

NTOKOZO YINGWANA

Doctoral Researcher at the Africa Centre for
Migration & Society at the University of the Witwatersrand



Media, Advocacy, Research

Ntokozo Yingwana is a Doctoral Researcher at the Africa Centre for Migration & Society, specialising in sex work and migration. Ntokozo also serves as the Communication and Research Uptake Officer for the Migration and Health Project Southern Africa (maHp), which is based at the ACMS. She has experience in journalism, online media, advocacy and research. Her main passions include gender, sexuality and sex worker rights' scholar-activism in Africa. Ntokozo has conducted and published research with the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT), the African Sex Worker Alliance (ASWA), and the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP).

PATRICK MDLETSHE

Head of Community Programs at Comprehensive International Program of Research on AIDS (CAPRISA)



PATRICK WILSON

Head of Global Health Communications and Stakeholder Engagement at the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)



PAULA YARROW

Global Development Director at Waves for Change



Accountability, Change, Access

Patrick Mdletshe is the Head of Community Programs at CAPRISA, as well as national deputy general secretary of the Treatment Action Campaign. He is a community leader, leading KZN civil society as chairperson for the provincial AIDS Council. Patrick Mdletshe describes himself as a “catalyst for social justice striving for social change”. He has over 20 years experience in advocacy, community engagement and activism.

Connecting, Engaging, Learning

Patrick Wilson has over 20 years’ experience in communication and engagement leadership roles in research institutes, universities, NGOs and charities, with a particular focus on science, health and international development.

Mental health, Participation, Power redistribution

Paula Yarrow has ten years of experience working with grassroots NGOs in Eastern and Southern Africa. She specialises in grant writing, child protection and strategy building, supporting organisations to develop skills and systems that comply with international standards. She is the Global Development Director at Waves for Change.



PHUONG NGUYEN

Senior Project Coordinator at the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit



RENÉE HOLLEMAN

Researcher at the City of Cape Town
- Arts and Culture



RICHARD KILPERT

Museum educator at Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art in Africa (Zeitz MOCAA)



Empowerment, Diversity, Support

Phuong Nguyen has an educational background in law and development. She has been working with grassroots organisations since 2014, focusing on LGBTQI+ communities, ethnic minorities and women. In 2015, she co-founded Hanoi Queer – a community-based organisation working towards LGBTQI+ inclusivity in Vietnam. Hanoi Queer received the Organization of the Year 2015 Award by the Vietnam LGBTQI+ Appreciation Awards. Her approach to development projects is centred on embracing diversity, respecting target groups, and empowerment.

Creativity, Participation, Interdisciplinarity

Renée Holleman is a researcher, artist and writer, working in the fields of urban culture and visual arts. She is currently writing on cultural policy, exploring how culture and creativity can play an integrative role across urban development frameworks towards more equitable futures.

Networking, Playing, Teaching

Richard Kilpert is the Museum Educator in the Centre for Art Education at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa. He works to establish educational partnerships across the continent, building relationships with art training and research organisations.

ROB BURNET
CEO of Shujaaz Inc



ROBIN JUTZEN
Arts and Culture Manager at
the City of Cape Town



RODRICK SAMBAKUNSI
Public Engagement Manager at
the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust
Clinical Research Programme



Youth, media, scale

Rob Burnet is the CEO of Shujaaz Inc. He is passionate about music, project design and development, storytelling and behavioural science.

Thinking, Imagining, Doing

Robin connects people and ideas, working mainly in the area of creativity and culture. He has worked on small, hyper-local ideas and large global projects. Robin is currently the Arts and Culture Manager for the City of Cape Town.

Trust, Ethics, Fulfilment

Rodrick Sambakunsi is a Public Engagement and Science Communication Practitioner, with many years of experience working with diverse audiences including scientists, students, health professionals and policy makers. He is the Public Engagement Manager for Mucosal Pathogens Research Unit and Project Manager for One for All: All for One based at the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme.

SALIM MWALUKORE

Community Liaison Manager at Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI)–Wellcome Trust Research Programme



Facility, Communication, Engagement

At the KEMRI–Wellcome Trust Research Programme (KWTRP), Salim Mwalukore manages the Community Liaison Group which facilitates engagement activities for research studies. Salim sits in protocol development meetings and in the communication and consent committee to advise on consenting processes, ethics and engagement for studies. Salim also supports research activities under the Health Systems Research and Ethics group at the KWTRP, in Kilifi, Kenya. He has facilitated deliberative consultation projects with communities on research benefit and payments; data sharing, human challenge studies and community perceptions about bio-banks. He also facilitates research ethics, communication and consent training within the KWTRP interlace staff who seek consent from potential research participants.

SARA KENNEY

Creative Director at Wowbagger Productions



Storytelling, Collaboration, Learning

Sara Kenney is a creative with 25 years of experience in broadcast and science engagement. Sara uses creative storytelling strategies to engage with science and medicine. In 2020 she co-led Planet Divoc-91.



SARAH HYDER IQBAL

Senior Consultant at the Foundation for Advancing Science & Technology



Problem-solving, Adaptability, Active Listening

Sarah Hyder Iqbal is a trained researcher in life sciences and currently works as a science engagement consultant. She is currently working as a consultant for the not-for-profit Foundation for Advancing Science and Technology (FAST India) in New Delhi, as well as serving as a strategic adviser to the India Science Festival (ISF). Sarah is interested in developing creative, inclusive, and participatory tools and approaches to enable public and policy engagement with science in order to build a healthy, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

SHAUN DANQUAH

Director of Innovation at Centric Community Research



Rethinking, Reshaping, Reimagining

Shaun Danquah is the founding director of Centric Community Research. He has 15 years of experience conducting social research in hostile environments. He has successfully established networks across various underserved communities.

STACY HARDY

Writer



Collaboration, Instigation, Creation

Stacy Hardy is a writer and editor with/for the pan-African collective Chimurenga, and educator. She has published with various international and local publications. She has a particular interest in collaborative research, teaching and performance.



STEPHANIE AJWANT OKEYO
Director of Under the Microscope



Science Improving Lives

Stephnie Ajwant Okeyo is the founding director of Under the Microscope. She is a microbiologist and science communicator. She is passionate about science engagement for planetary good, and advocates for gender equality in STEM.



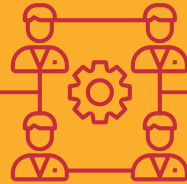
MERCEDES RUMI
Latin America and Caribbean Manager,
The Global Health Network



Health Research Capacity Strengthening

Mercedes Rumi is a medical doctor and researcher from Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her inspiration lies in discovering and helping advance medicine in LMICs.

SESSIONS



What is COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO YOU?

Throughout the workshop, 'Community Engagement' was used as an umbrella term to describe a wide range of activities that seek to bridge the gap between research and communities, from simple involvement to active and creative co-production of knowledge.

During our first thought-provoking session three colleagues shared their perspectives on what engagement means to them.

Community Engagement

What is community engagement to you? Patrick Mdletshe presented on six integral components of ethical community engagement, with a particular focus on engagement and research: meaningful engagement, empowerment, co-creation, accountability, ownership and fair research agenda. He emphasised the vital importance of including communities in every stage of the research process, from first conceptualisation to the final outcomes.

“ Don't research on a community, research with a community ”
- Patrick Mdletshe



PATRICK MDLETSCHE
Head of Community Programs at
Centre for The Aids Programme of
Research in South Africa (CAPRISA)



1

Meaningful Engagement

If community engagement is misunderstood by the community it can cause harm, stifle existing work or foster resentment. It is crucial to see the community as equals and maintain principles of honesty and understanding.

2

Empowerment

It is important to recognise the power that communities already have. Mistrust grows when the community members do not feel there is a reciprocal relationship with researchers. If the relationship is not reciprocal, community members perceive researchers as **“blood takers”**, extracting from communities without offering anything in return.

3

Co-creation

Consult the communities you are working with, and take the time to understand the pre-existing hierarchy and leadership structures in the community. Knowledge is created together, and the results are owned by the researcher and the community.

4

Accountability

We need to be held accountable to the community we are working with. It is important that senior researchers engage with the community directly, using accessible language to discuss the research.

5

Ownership

Throughout the research process, researchers must interrogate: Whose interests are being met? Who needs the research? Who owns the outcomes?

6

Research Agenda

Interrogate whose research agenda is being addressed.



BLOOD TAKERS:

a term used by some South African communities to describe doctors and medical researchers, stemming from situations of mistrust, misinformation and extractive engagement with communities.

BARTHOLOMEW WILSON

How do you empower communities to set their own agendas, or at least be involved in the setting of the research agenda, particularly when it is funders who are making the decisions?



STEPHANIE AJWANG OKEYO

How do you put communities at the centre?



“ We need cognisance of the communities we’re working with, thinking about how we are including them. Before we start the research we need to speak with the community. If we only start to think of the community at the end, then obviously whatever we’re doing will not be impactful, because they were not part of conceptualising that vision. ”

- PATRICK MDLETSHE



Flipped Engagement



“The key words that come to mind when thinking about community engagement: relationships, emotions, identity, trust, motivation, purpose, positionality.”

– Anita Shervington:
Director of BLAST Fest

Anita Shervington pulled together references from a multitude of writers and thinkers from different disciplines, alongside the story of BLAST’s genesis.

She described the catalytic moment in the organisation’s founding, attending the British Science Festival in Birmingham and seeing no engagement with the neighbouring communities.

“ I couldn’t see myself in that space. I saw no-one from my community which was a short walk away. ”

From this experience she developed an idea for ‘flipped engagement’, which centres local communities and understands that community stories and knowledge are an integral part of science resources.

Dr. Tara Yosso’s SIX Forms of Cultural Wealth

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1 Aspirational | 4 Linguistic |
| 2 Navigational | 5 Familial |
| 3 Social | 6 Resistant capital |

The Ideal Academic

Alex Bruton’s Flipped Academic:

The academic who informs first and publishes later, seeking usefulness as well as truth in their research, and strives to publish only after having an impact on students and society.



STEPHANIE AJWANG OKEYO

How do we go about having transformative action in science spaces?



“ I think that the responsibility for engagement shouldn't be in the hands of researchers, I think it should be in the hands of the connectors and cultivators. In the field of community engagement all of the investment and resources have gone into building the capacity and the capabilities of the research sector, and nothing has gone into building a community-based infrastructure to exist and grow and develop to do that work.

You can't give empowerment, you can give resources to help create the conditions for empowerment to emerge. ”

- ANITA SHERVINGTON



HAIDEE BELL
Public Participation Lead
at Wellcome



“ How could community relationships strengthen if we shifted from thinking in one or two year project cycles to ten year cycles? ”

Haidee Bell introduced Wellcome's new shift in their approach to community engagement, moving from community engagement to community participation. This new strategy prioritises community-led data, strengthening and augmenting scientific knowledge through community input and contextualised research. In her response to the prompt, "What is community engagement to you?" Haidee highlighted three core principles in Wellcome's approach to community engagement:

- 1 It is participatory and inclusive by design:** Wellcome works from the understanding that communities have expertise to bring. If research and engagement is designed with the most affected communities in mind, it tends to work for broader populations. Models that focus on the average do not work for marginalised communities.
- 2 It is relational:** Wellcome recognises the complexity of working with multiple stakeholders, and focuses on engagement work that is informed by contextually specific and community-centred relationships.
- 3 It brings value across various states of the research lifecycle:** shifting to centre communities at every stage in the research cycle.

The Realist Review for Community Engagement has found empirical evidence of how engagement supports research outcomes (<https://mesh.tghn.org/programme-hubs/real/>)



SARA KENNEY

Language is really important, but does not always translate to action. How do we ensure that what organisations say translates to what they do? How do we ensure that we look at the assets that already exist in communities?



ANITA SHERVINGTON

There's a quote by James Baldwin: "I can't believe what you say because I see what you do." There is praying work and building work. It's important to pray; influencing and trying to get other people to think differently. But we must build what we want to see as well.



HAIDEE BELL

There is a tendency to put things in boxes. How do we give enough space to create the kind of middle ground where we don't necessarily know what the language is, or what the kind of meeting points are and who the people are that need to be part of that kind of change? We need to find the space for funders to be comfortable with some of the iterative, emergent opportunities to come together.



PATRICK MDLETSHE

We need to start transforming the actual research. We need to look at who is actually leading the research. When academics start to see themselves as part of the community, then we will be able to build those bridges and start to think through the lenses of the community.

Innovation in PRACTICE



What do innovative engagement practices look like? How do we push the boundaries of traditional approaches?

This session explored creativity and innovation in community engagement through exciting case study presentations and small group discussions.

Planet Divoc-91

Planet Divoc-91 is a nine-part allegorical webcomic. It was first conceptualised in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when Sara and Bella observed that young people's voices were not being heard and represented in the reporting of the pandemic. They started discussions with young people in various communities, posing the question of what medium they would want to use to engage with the pandemic in terms of science, history, and sociology. From these discussions the consulted young people proposed a comic. These participants were paid for their contributions.



SARA KENNEY
Creative Director at
Wowbagger Productions



BELLA STARLING
Director
of Vocal

“ You cannot give people power,
but you can provide tools
for empowerment. ”

With additional support from Wellcome, they brought together collaborators in the UK, India and South Africa. This international collaboration, and the diverse approach to story-telling, is the strength of the project.

This project really emphasises that there is no standard blueprint for community engagement, and there is room for creative strategies when project leads are receptive and flexible to community input.

“
Community can be digital. ”
.....



ED YOUNG
Co-director, Eh!woza

Reasons for Knocking on an Empty House

Ed Young presented on Eh!woza's innovative strategies for public engagement, emphasising the vital importance of centering public engagement in research and public health initiatives.

Eh!woza is a Cape Town-based NGO working with urban youth in Khayelitsha, a local township, with a focus on public health, youth advocacy and storytelling. Eh!woza has developed an interdisciplinary workshop programme, providing lab-based biomedical education and media training. Eh!woza's methodology is embedded in the intersection of the biomedicine of disease and its social impact.

“ It is important to think of public engagement as a professional field because it is often seen as a sideline to academic research. ”

In his presentation Ed highlighted Eh!woza's diverse mediums for science education and public engagement: learner documentaries, music videos, schools programme, engaged scholarship and academic research, educational animations and documentaries produced by Eh!woza's team. This presentation demonstrated effective strategies for using creative media for science education.

What is public engagement?



“ An umbrella term that broadly describes activities that aim to include the perspectives, wishes and opinions of non-specialist groups in health research as a mechanism to achieve greater impact and innovation. ”

- Doreen Tembo

Importance of accessible science communication:

“There's no way to combat stigma and decrease disease spread if people don't understand the diseases”

Stephanie Ajwang Okeyo:
What do you think is the role of arts and culture in public engagement?



“ The people we work with are all artists. Artists have an interesting way of thinking about the world. There's a creative way of thinking and problem solving. ”

- Ed Young

The role of THE CONNECTOR



During this session we delved further into the different roles 'Connectors' play in health engagement.

We heard from two Connectors, Shaun Danquah and Anelisa Jaca, who shared their personal journeys to health engagement, and described their different engagement strategies. The session broke off into small group discussions, exploring the benefits Connectors bring to community engagement and what other terms could be used to describe the role.



SHAUN DANQUAH
Director of Innovation at
Centric Community Research

What is one word that describes the connector's role?

"Bridge" | "Co-creators" | "Communicators"

Human-centric research

Shaun Danquah presented on community research and engagement, emphasising the crucial importance of accessibility and empowerment. Shaun addressed the issues in research where under-resourced communities become the subjects of extractive research, rather than equal partners in the research design and implementation.

Straddling of the Paradigm

Engagers need to balance close relationships with communities while providing feedback to institutions.

Dual Critique

Researchers and engagers are held accountable and interrogated by both community members and academic institutions.

He talked about his experience working with urban youth in the UK. Shaun discussed the important role connectors and engagers play in bridging communication and understanding between community members and academics.



ANELISA JACA
Specialist Scientist at the
South African Medical Research Council

Medical In-Sight

Anelisa Jaca introduced Medical In-Sight, a public engagement platform developed as a tool to bridge the gap between the medical community and the general public, and to make science more accessible.

Realising that science expertise alone was not enough to develop the platform, Anelisa invited a team of media experts to collaborate on the project. Together they strategized creative ways to engage the public with accessible health-related content. The team created a home-studio as a cost-effective production solution for the platform. Anelisa presented on the challenges of using social media for community engagement, and their proposed solutions.

Why do we collect research?

“ Not for ourselves, but to better the community. ”

“Through social media you can communicate with a much larger audience.”



Exploring barriers AND ENABLERS



This session sought to uncover some of the barriers and enablers of good engagement practice.

This was framed within the ethical, political and historical context of community engagement. The case study presentations described support mechanisms for engagement professionals and ways of building communities of practice.



LINDSEY REYNOLDS
Co-director of
Pivot Collective



Ethics and Politics of Community Engagement in Global Health Research

Using social theory and by posing a critical lens on engagement, Lindsey Reynolds posed a series of questions, shaking up the Connectors group by interrogating assumptions. She took the time to unpack terms often used loosely in engagement work: *“What makes a community? What is engagement? Is it always positive? Why does representation matter? What are the unintended consequences of research?”*

What constitutes a community?

- Shared identity or interests
- Exchange relationships
- Ritual practice
- Geographic proximity
- Political authority
- Illness/health condition
- ‘Risk groups’
- Audiences
- Research participants

Why does representation matter?

- Acts of representation and engagement produce a field of social relations that make the conduct of long-term, transnational health research continually possible
- It ensures participation, consent, and ‘community buy-in’
- Understood to be fundamental for ethical and just research in the postcolony
- These practices also shape and reshape social life and power dynamics
- Behind technologies of research lie a massive amount of physical and emotional labour, shaped by a complex constellation of patronage, obligation, generosity, and debt.



STEPHANIE AJWANT OKEYO
Director, Under the Microscope

Under the Microscope

Stephanie Ajwant Okeyo introduced herself, describing her personal journey of becoming a scientist and science engager.

As a student and young researcher, she watched a lot of educational video content online. But in these videos there was no representation of Black, young, African, female researchers and scientists. From this experience, Stephanie connected with collaborators to establish Under the Microscope, a Kenyan NPO working with science engagement and research.

Stephanie highlighted the importance of local initiatives, emphasising that engagement is not limited to scientists. Important engagement work is being done by people in

Under the Microscope (UTM)

WHAT: Educational science engagement platform

WHO: Youth-led science-based non profit organisation

MISSION: Nurturing African science with and for society

AIM: Advance science and innovation in Africa

HOW: Leveraging education, engagement and research

all fields. At Under the Microscope there is an emphasis on networking, helping to locate and connect engagement efforts all over Africa.

Stephanie introduced Under the Microscope's latest research project. She outlined the challenges with funding, and the distinction between science capital and funding for science engagement. Under the Microscope is undergoing an extended research project on this topic, interviewing participants from all over the world on their experiences with funding. They explored participant's working experiences, identifying the gaps and correlating information. Funding challenges stem not only from a lack of funders, but also a lack of information about access to existing funding streams. The long term aim of this project

"It is the one who lives in the house who knows where it leaks"

It is important to work with community knowledge and support local initiatives.

is to produce a funding toolkit for researchers and science engagers.

Stephanie highlighted the importance of developing government grants in African countries, to help strengthen independent science engagement work and reduce the reliance on international funders.

Who (usually) sets the research agenda?

The person who provides the funding.



ANJA SCHOCH
Head of Falling Walls Engage at
Falling Walls Foundation



NIKLAS MARZINEK
Project Manager at
Falling Walls Foundation



Falling Walls Engage Mission:

- COMMUNITY
- ACTIVATION
- CHANGING PERCEPTIONS
- GLOBALLY CONNECTED
- LOCALLY EMBEDDED



Falling Walls Engage

Niklas Marzinek and Anja Schoch presented on the Falling Walls Engage Hub Network.

The Falling Walls Engage Hub Network promotes co-learning in the community. They also activate public engagement work in existing research projects, and work to change perceptions in public and academic spaces.

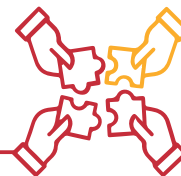
The Falling Walls Engage Hub Network is constituted of a series of in-person and virtual activities, ranging from community building to activation events. The activities are aimed at three main target groups: Science engagement practitioners and researchers; science-related institutions and the general public.

The global network has 9 hubs, reaching 3300+ community members in 142 countries. They recently launched a World Engagement Map, an interactive web-based platform that showcases engagement projects and enables connections between like-minded practitioners based on mutual missions, locations and approaches.

The next step in the project will be determining how to transform this knowledge base and global network into action. The team welcomes critical feedback and input from Connectors.



Managing COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS



During this session the speakers shared their experiences of the realities of managing collaborative, inter-disciplinary engagement projects.

They reflected on the successes and challenges they encountered.



PAULA YARROW
Global Development Director at
Waves for Change

“Moving from treatment
to prevention and
intervention.”



KATHERINE SORSDAHL
Director of the Alan J. Flisher Centre for
Public Mental Health

Waves for Change x Alan J. Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health

Paula Yarrow and Katherine Sorsdahl presented on a collaborative project run by Alan J. Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health and facilitated by Waves for Change. Waves for Change is a community-based mental health service which works primarily with adolescents. They focus on prevention based strategies, offering support to adolescents to prevent mental health issues in adulthood. The project is part of an ALIVE project, funded by Wellcome.

The ALIVE project is an ongoing study which aims to develop and pilot-test interventions that equip adolescents with skills and strategies to deal with the challenges of living in under-serviced urban settings, to help them self-regulate and prevent anxiety and depression. Waves for Change is just one of a number of organisations collaborating on the ALIVE project.

Causal Mechanisms

Causal mechanisms
What are the causal mechanisms linking poverty, self-regulation, depression and anxiety among adolescents in low- and middle-income countries?

Modular Intervention

What are the key components of a modular intervention that can address the mechanisms linking poverty and self-regulation to anxiety and depression?

Instruments

What valid and reliable instruments are needed to measure eligibility, intervention implementation, mediators and outcomes?

Evaluation

What is the feasibility, acceptability and cost of the intervention?

Waves for Change uses surfing to provide evidence-based mind/body therapy to provide community-based health services for under-served adolescents. The Alan J. Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health recruited young people to an Adolescent Advisory Board, which steers the project toward young peoples' needs to support their mental health and to ensure that the research project is suited to and responds to these needs. They are the experts on their experiences. Waves for Change ensured that this recruitment process was accessible, using Whatsapp and accepting video applications from youth who struggled with written applications. The methodology focuses on amplifying young people's voices. The long term goal is to provide thorough advice for governments and health-care providers on what kind of interventions work for youth living in poverty.

What started as an informal surfing club developed into an extensive mental health research and intervention project. Working in Khayelitsha township, Waves for Change found that 9 out of 10 people are in need of mental health services but were not receiving it. They found that a lot of interventions had high costs and low reach. They came up with an accessible solution, to work with existing sports clubs and after-school programmes, training the coaches and facilitators to provide mental health support. They use a five pillar method to train coaches for health care provision.





ANNA YALOUIS

How do we build a scalable model that is not reliant on special individuals? How do we distil the special qualities that we find in individuals, in a way that can be trained and passed on to others?

A **PAULA YARROW:** We asked youth what they needed and they provided us with five pillars: Caring, consistent adults; safe spaces; fun activities; coping skills and connection to other opportunities. We have a training process for coaches from communities. We're making it scalable by equipping existing coaches and mentors with specific skill sets, to provide these pillars of need for the youth they work with.



GUSTAVO MATTA

How do we manage the intersection of poverty and mental health? How do we ensure that States bring in public policy that protects people?

A **KATHERINE SORSDAHL:** It can be really disheartening when we do a wonderful, effective intervention with someone but then they return to their community where there is exposure to adversity, poverty and violence. The ALIVE project is novel in that it does not only look at emotional regulation but also at more structural ways of working with the government to address these issues.



SHAUN DANQUAH

How do you deal with issues of stigma and institutional exclusion?

A **PAULA YARROW:** We have a lot of diversity in our organisational structure, which ensures that the children see themselves represented in the safe adults they are working with. We work on finding collaborative, community-based strategies.



JACQUELINE GOLDIN
Professor at the
University of the Western Cape

Diamonds on the Soles..... of their Feet

Jacqueline Goldin presented on *Diamonds on the Soles of their Feet*, a research project working with farmers and citizens in Limpopo measuring water levels in their wells.

Jacqueline describes the challenges of working with people from very different backgrounds (in a context where there is still a lot of racial tension in the community), in spaces where engagement and connection does not come easily. The process is slow. Through these agonistic learning spaces Jacqueline found that water served as a connector between people. She found art a useful tool for connecting participants.



Citizen Science

Scientific research conducted with participation from the public

“Taking science from the library and from the laboratory into life.”

Agonistic Learning Spaces

Where there are existing social tensions between people. Often connecting work involves mediating collaboration with antagonistic groups of people.

For the next phase of the project, they secured funding to support citizen scientists. Two volunteer community participants in the first phase of the project were trained and employed to administer the next phase. In this next phase they will also be training youth to measure water quality, which they will report to community leaders and tribal authorities. The project aims to connect people to their environments. When people feel connected to their environments they are more likely to be custodians in the future.



GUSTAVO MATTA



How do we identify priorities in local contexts? In my context, 90% of our funding comes from the government and 80% of our funding has been slashed since the pandemic. It's a science genocide. How do we influence policy? How do we push priorities with policy makers and donors?

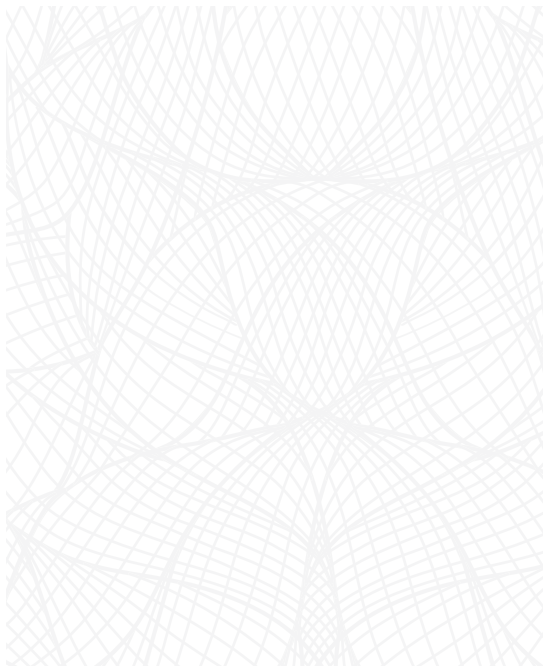
A

JACQUELINE GOLDIN: I think there is increasing pressure on governments, and things are changing. We must keep our hope and keep lobbying governments and donors. We need to have that conversation. I think things are accelerating and we can make it a better world, and we are doing it.

Messy Work

“Connection isn’t a straight line.”

During the consultations with the community of 'Connectors' in 2021 and as part of the online workshop series, the workshop team documented the most often discussed challenges faced by Connectors working in health engagement.



What are the most mentioned challenges to engagement work?

- 1 Need for people to explain the value of engagement
- 2 Relationships and power dynamics: funders, institutions, government
- 3 Differing ambitions and aims within collaborations
- 4 Managing logistics, budget and project planning
- 5 How to show the impact of engagement in measurable terms
- 6 Tension in gaining commitment from researchers
- 7 Partners being resistant to change/adaptation

Discussion Activity

Each group of Connectors was given one of the most mentioned challenges, and asked to determine possible solutions.

1

Challenge:
How to explain the value of community engagement

Solution:

Relationships are a resource, which have a different kind of value.

When engagement initiatives are too fast it hinders engagement.

Strong relationships take time, and need to be built organically and meaningfully.

2

Challenge:
Power dynamics

Solution:

"Knowledge is power" but people with power decide what knowledge they will listen to. How does one create a flat hierarchy? This requires involvement from all sides toward a shifting of power dynamics. Community insight and indigenous knowledge needs to be incorporated into frameworks. We should be listening to people's insights.

Internal Disempowerment:

Sometimes researchers and engagers appear to have power when viewed from the outside, but internally they are struggling with power dynamics within their institutions.

3

Challenge:

Differing ambitions

Solution:

It is important to recognise and acknowledge differing needs, agendas and purposes. These differences do not need to be an issue if they are made transparent. Different ambitions can bring different perspectives and strengths to a project. It is more important to have shared values than shared ambitions.

“You can have shared values with your collaborators, even if your ambitions differ.”

4

Challenge:

Managing logistics, budget, project planning

Solution:

Be inclusive in your budgeting, with an intersectional approach to funding. The ideal solution would be unrestricted funding, but that is not always possible. It is important to be transparent with the community about your budget and other limitations.

“Often there is a tension between trust and rapport with your community and the requirements of funders and institutions.”

5

Challenge:

How do you show the impact of engagement?

Solution:

There are a lot more questions than answers. There is a hierarchy of knowledge with impact measurement. Quantitative data is preferred over qualitative reporting. This is challenging because true impact is often better reported in a story or an anecdote. A big challenge is short funding cycles, as most engagers know real and meaningful impact takes time.

“Funders favour spreadsheets over stories.”

6

Challenge:

Gaining commitment from researchers

Solution:

Engagement efforts should be a requirement in the ethics section of a research report. It is often a requirement from funders but not for academic institutions. Engagement work needs to be appreciated and acknowledged in the academic community. Institutions and funders should offer support for engagement work, so that researchers do not view it as a drain on time and resources, or an activity to implement post-research only. At academic institutions, students and prospective researchers should be educated and trained in community engagement, so that they understand its value.

7

Challenge:

Partners being resistant to change/adaptation

Solution:

Often institutions want to change, but this is not brought into action. It can be frustrating when institutions ask researchers to provide feedback, but no changes are implemented from that feedback. There needs to be representation of young voices in decision-making processes and positions. If there are representatives from affected communities in institutions, they are more likely to be open to transformation.

Embracing CREATIVITY



This session offered an introduction to some of the dynamics of working in creative spaces when exploring health and community engagement.

The three speakers had very different creative or artistic practices, each sharing how their methods developed and shifted. This was followed by a guided tour of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa.



STACY HARDY
Writer

PULMONOGRAPHIES

a collaborative project that explores the biographies, geographies, politics and poetics of breath.



Pulmonographies

Stacy Hardy tells the story of her journey to working in health, coming from the personal experience of living with undiagnosed tuberculosis for eight years. This led to an interest in the histories and politics of the disease, and particularly the stories of those affected by the disease.

Stacy connected and collaborated with Kaushik Sunder Rajan, an anthropologist at the University of Chicago, and

Neo Muyanga, a Cape Town based composer, to develop a research- and performance-based collaboration, titled Pulmonographies. The research methodology had to be reconfigured when travel restrictions were imposed during the initial COVID-19 wave. The context of COVID-19 broadened the scope of the project to the question and politics of breath. Collaborative work shifted from in-person visits to remote “letter” writing. The project has been developed into a multi-disciplinary university syllabus.



KEVIN KIMWELLE
Community Architect at
Indalo World NGO

Community Architecture

Kevin Kimwelle presented his practice of community architecture, employing an action participatory research methodology. He outlined a number of case-studies to demonstrate the interventions that are possible with community architecture. Kevin has developed an impactful approach to design that looks deeply at the community's needs and activities. Kevin emphasised the importance of designing projects that are valuable to both academic institutions and communities.

In one case-study he worked with the Joe Slovo Community Project in Cape Town, building a new community centre that functions as a kindergarten and mobile clinic. Members of the township community used wooden

pallets and waste material to build shacks or informal housing. Rather than introducing new materials, Kevin and his team used the existing materials that were accessible and familiar to the community. They then shared lessons and advice on design techniques to elevate what could be done with the materials they had at hand. They used broken glass, a common waste item in townships, as a substitute for sand to strengthen the concrete when laying the foundations for the new dwelling. This case study offers an exemplary example of community engagement that is grounded in existing community resources. The design strategies elevate the community's existing resources (recycled building materials, old glass bottles, etc.), maximising the efficiency of the materials and restoring dignity and beauty.

Action Participatory Research

The researcher is embedded in the community



Kevin presented an anecdote of a teenage girl who they connected with while working on her grandmother's house. After a period of conversation, education and engagement with Kevin's design work she went on to study civil engineering. These are the kind of stories that are not represented in impact reports, but show the immense power of community engagement not only on the community as a whole but on individual community members.

.....

**“Social impact can
be tangible”**

.....



RICHARD KILPERT
Museum Educator at Zeitz Museum of
Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA)

The Role of Museums

Richard Kilpert presented the role of the museum, exploring the connectors to reach out to museums for community outreach projects. Most museums have outreach and education portfolios. He presented an example at Zeitz MOCAA, "MOCAA on the Move". It was a workshop-based education program that is taken out into schools to explore research and museum making with learners. The long term aim is to produce a mobile museum.



Open SPACE



During this session there were three 'Open Space' areas running in parallel. Colleagues had the opportunity to connect in smaller groups and choose which space they wanted to join.

In the central workshop space attendees could present their projects and engagement work. Concurrently, small discussion groups and peer support sessions were held in the refreshment area. Two longer discussions were held in a breakout room.

Community-led funding

Gives local community members decision-making power and provides funding for people to use on community-driven projects.



GABRIELLE ALLEN
Portfolio Manager at
Impact on Urban Health

Impact on Urban Health

Gabrielle Allen offered a presentation of a funder's perspective. She is the portfolio manager at Impact on Urban Health, and leads a partnership with Wellcome. She provided an example of one project, The Giving Lab, outlining the principle of community-led funding, and Impact on Urban Health's commitment to investment in local knowledge systems. She presented research into the process of relinquishing power through the deliberate dissolution of funds, posing questions of what an alternative governance framework could look like.



ANASTASIA KOCH

We've discussed at length challenges that community engagers face in their work, what challenges do funders face, particularly in terms of a redistribution of power?

A **Gabrielle Allen:** There have been massive leaps internally, but the big challenge is doing it at a pace that suits those we're serving.



RENÉE HOLLEMAN
Researcher at the
City of Cape Town – Arts and Culture



RODRICK SAMBAKUNSI
Public Engagement Manager at the Malawi Liverpool
Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme



Interviewed by Patrick Wilson,
Head of Global Health Communications
and Stakeholder Engagement at the NIHR

Creative Ecosystems and Wellbeing

Renée Holleman presented on cultural ecologies and culture’s value to urban development, explaining how culture enables development when initiatives acknowledge and respond to the local context. Creative methodologies can be implemented in diverse fields.

Participatory Design

“We don’t do research, we create knowledge together”

“Across the spectrum, from health to education, gender empowerment to youth engagement, transformative and sustainable change can occur more effectively, equitably and inclusively when the cultural context is taken into account”

One for All: All for One

Patrick Wilson interviewed Rodrick Sambakunsi on One for All: All for One, a vaccine co-production engagement project, funded jointly by Wellcome and the NIHR. The project interrogates factors affecting vaccine hesitancy in Malawi. The project is composed of multiple collaborators and stakeholders. These stakeholders were not just the funding partners, but included community members who participated in the project. This included young mothers, students, local leaders who cared for communities but

did not understand vaccines and religious leaders. Following extensive dialogue and participatory workshops with communities in Malawi focused on immunisation, community protection, misinformation and research involvement, an education comic book was co-produced. The comic book was written by Planet Divoc-91’s collaborator and writer Nabeel Petersen and illustrated by Mohamed Hassan. It is available online in English and Chichewa.





ROB BURNET
CEO of Shujaaz Inc

“When youth leave school they lose access to learning.”

“The more trust our audience has, the more likely it is that there will be an effect.”

Shujaaz

Rob Burnet presented on Shujaaz Inc, a network of social ventures that targets post-school youth in East Africa (namely Kenya and Tanzania). The aim of the project is to reach youth and provide accessible information on social platforms.

Founded in 2009, the project has reached over 9.5 million youth, and is the largest youth outreach brand in East Africa. They produce free media: comic books, films, Tiktoks, radio content, etc. The project is not limited to one media medium. As the brand grew, so did the research capacity. They currently have eight full time researchers in their employ. This research is centred on a Theory of Change. They have found that trust and dialogue affect change. In the data they have found indirect outcomes.

For example, their audience is almost three times less likely to marry as teenagers, even though they have never produced direct content on marrying young. This is because there are numerous factors (surrounding agency and identity, rather than direct access to information) that affect life choices around things such as contraception use, teen pregnancy and teen marriage.

The project is guided by a player-first principle, which states that their audience is placed first in every decision. Ventures are designed ground-up alongside their audience. During COVID-19, young distributors and fans were trained as citizen scientists, capturing data on how young people were being affected by the pandemic in their daily lives.

“The key variable that leads to an outcome is a conversation.”



WORKSHOP **CLOSING REMARKS**





GUSTAVO MATTA
Full Public Health Researcher at the
Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ)

Researcher and Connector, Gustavo Matta, shared his reflections on the third and final day of the workshop.

In his opening words, Gustavo highlighted the importance of 'connecting' with others to share our stories, noting the difference he felt being part in this workshop; *"In international meetings like this it is usually very formal. We don't have time to share, to introduce ourselves, to be connected, to discuss, to tell our stories, to share our difficulties, especially our suffering when we talk about for instance the COVID-19 pandemic..."*

Gustavo explained the context in Brazil where his field of work is not defined as 'Public Health', but instead it is called Collective Health which is an interdisciplinary fertile space

focused on social participation and the common good. He said, *"It is impossible to do something in Collective Health without involving people..When I introduce myself as a social science and public health researcher, it seems strange to me because social science is not (and should not be) split from public health (in our context)"*. Gustavo explained how technology, policy, social science and social participation are the foundations for Collective Health and should be our guiding principles that we strive toward as a community.

By describing the impact of the Zika outbreak in Brazil, Gustavo asserted that science must respond to social needs so we can think more collectively about health. He urged the group to stay together on this mission. He said, *"we were connected for 3 days, especially at night. We connected with dance. We were very inclusive. It was amazing. It was a special moment for me"*.

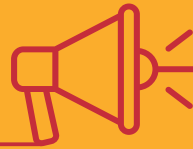
The reality is that science is not always positive; it is action oriented, oriented for profit, oriented for the Global North in a colonial approach. Gustavo suggested that we can only challenge and disrupt these systems and hierarchies of power in Collective Health by working together, by responding to social needs of people and building bridges toward trans-disciplinarity. He also highlighted the importance of forging new collaborations, and active,

supportive Communities of Practice. He concluded, *"Funding is not the main issue. This is about solidarity. What we need is solidarity."*

Gustavo's call to action was for an active social investment in people, redefining public health to be more inclusive and adopting a whole-of-society approach to address social and health needs. He called for Connectors to become an active Community of Practice for sharing and collaboration and gave a warm invitation for the next Connectors meeting to be hosted in Brazil.



CALLS TO
ACTION



Following the workshops, presentations and discussions the Connectors gathered for a closing session, looking at the 'Calls to Action' wall and future steps.

Everyone agreed that they hoped to sustain the connections made during the workshop, although they acknowledged that it is challenging putting these hopes into action, particularly when Connector's are stretched with demanding work. When asked whether they would like to join the next Connector's Workshop, attendees unanimously agreed that they would.

Thinking of next steps, the Connectors proposed an idea to put together a toolkit. Ideas for the toolkit included: funding strategies, information on effective impact indicators, case studies and mentorship opportunities. Everyone

agreed that it would be immensely beneficial to develop platforms, like this Connector's Workshop, where strategies, experience and knowledge can be shared between fellow community engagers.

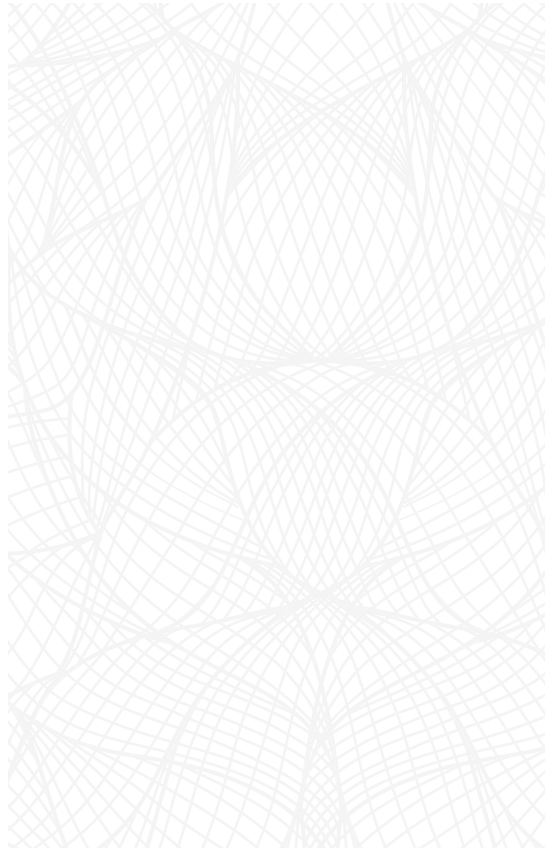
It was apparent over the course of the workshop that many organisations share comparable challenges. In discussions and presentations, in formal sessions and over meals together, Connectors found points of commonality and connection. Thinking of the importance of community knowledge, there are a number of strategies and solutions that can be learned from the Connectors community. The points of convergence demonstrate the extent of shared experience between Connectors' work all over the world, and the points of divergence present an opportunity to learn different strategies and practices.



COMMON STRATEGIES FOR **ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE CONNECTORS**



Common engagement approaches that emerged in the workshop.



Use Existing Structures

The communities that we engage with are the most knowledgeable about the issues they face, and they usually have existing structures and solutions for these challenges. Engagement that builds on and strengthens existing structures is often more effective, more accessible, and more likely to be sustained once the project period has concluded.

Co-creating Knowledge

The communities we work with are experts in their contexts. Consult community members, and take the time to understand existing knowledge systems. In order for community members to be invested in the research, they need to hold active roles in the research process.

Citizen Scientists

Training and implementing citizen scientists is a simple and effective solution for research. As an engagement strategy it empowers community members and strengthens the sustainability of the project.



Building Trust and Understanding

Interventions and engagement strategies will only be effective if there is a foundation of trust from the community. These relationships take time! A community can only trust a project if there is clear understanding of the project's aims and objectives. It is important for researchers and engagement practitioners to explain their work in accessible and honest language.

Creative approaches to Science Communication

Creative media offers effective and accessible modes of communication. Consult with communities about what modes of communication they prefer. Information does not only need to be accurate and available, it also needs to be presented in a format that is engaging and effective. There is a lot of generative room for engagement in collaborative projects between scientists and creatives.

Challenge of Invisible Work

There are extensive crossovers between multiple projects across various fields. There is immense room for connection and collaboration, but the challenge comes with locating each other. Initiatives such as the Connectors Workshop or the Falling Walls Hub demonstrate the potential for a wide network of engagers to be connected. Nobody is working alone, and even when engagement practitioners are working independently from institutions there is always collaboration in the work.

Community Engagement cannot come as an afterthought

Community engagement needs to be included in every stage of the research or project process, from early conceptualisation and design to final outcomes.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE
CONNECTORS TEAM
AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS



For us, the term 'Connectors' is needed to define the diverse individuals, agencies, creatives and organisations playing key roles in bridging the divides between research and communities. As Connectors we often feel isolated and frustrated in our attempts to reconcile these seemingly incompatible spaces in a hierarchical knowledge system toward a mutually beneficial approach that centres on the communities we work within.

However, in interaction with all of you via one-on-one meetings, online events and this first in-person workshop, we find solidarity and a sense of professional community with each other. Beyond this, a need and movement has emerged toward connecting and re-connecting to each other working in these intersections. We are not alone, and realize perhaps we never were.

Connectors is not simply about working between communities and research, but continually building the case for this need and the absolute necessity to engage with communities to transform a system. Our interactions, sharing stories and learning together, eating and dancing with each other has illustrated the need for Connectors to be connected and to remain connected. These relationships and interactions should be nurtured and sustained.

In the final session of the workshop, there was a call for a co-created Ethos, Guiding Principles for Engagement

and a Connectors Manifesto. This Manifesto would be a plan and/or declaration of action that binds us all for the greater and necessary good. This can only be done together in a collaborative and iterative effort, and calls for regular Connector interactions, sharing, co-learning and co-creating. It requires regular meetings – whether online or hybrid – with an emphasis on in-person workshops that could and should be hosted in different regions around the world. Furthermore, it should adopt the similar approaches of intensive consultation with all of you who are keen to be involved, and others globally, to ensure that the shared learning remains relative to the collective need to create a legacy.

As the organizing team, we hope that these Calls to Action are realized and we commit to advise and support this evolution and iteration of this space – which was never intended to be owned by us (we simply saw the need, and aligned our funds, to be connected). We do not own or wish to own these spaces, and only want to support its evolution and collectively continue to forge an active and supportive Community of Practice. One that is centred on sharing (including failures and struggles), co-building, co-creating, and sustaining the network in solidarity with inspiring colleagues from around the world.

We hope that this is only the beginning and we are excited by the future of Connectors and what it could become.

APPENDIX: **CONNECTORS FEEDBACK**



Feedback and reflections were gathered from those who participated in the workshop via a post-it note wall in the workshop space and also in a google form circulated after the meeting.



What worked well during the in-person workshop?		
"Networking, bringing together so many other engagers"	"The face to face interaction and the chance to network with new people"	"Different activities stations, the open creative and interactive discussions"
"Eating meals together"	"You can't beat being in the same room as people, to really connect and hear their stories, talk and share in breaks, over meals and drinks it's so invigorating and motivating and helps massively with ideas generation"	"It was the first time I had taken part in a physical workshop and it was wonderful to be able to talk and eat together. So many things emerge when we are in physical proximity."
"There was a broad variety of speakers and participants too and the structured but informal nature was very well planned."	"Many opportunities to share experience in person, getting to know each other on a more personal level."	"The engagement - open discussions with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. Networking and getting to meet new friends, very unlike most of the other workshops I have attended."
"Fantastic programme - pulling together such a vibrant group of people and making everyone feel so welcome and involved."	"I appreciated hearing so many views about funders/funding"	"Incredible experience to share knowledge and learning with people from around the globe. Very well run sessions with thoughtful and diverse curation of topics."

How could the workshop be improved?

<p>“All the participants should have had a chance to share their experiences with the group”</p>	<p>“Some sessions the group could have been divided into areas of interest to save time”</p>	<p>“More group visits to actual projects. Maybe not a large group because this could be intimidating for the people we visit but some sort of sign up system to visit a number of projects in an inclusive manner.”</p>
<p>“Coming up with clear action points and perhaps a road map of how we should stay engaged as a community.”</p>	<p>“More time dedicated to workshopping ideas together”</p>	<p>“Lean into the ‘knowledge exchange’ idea. But also highlight how we need to credit each other if we learn something new that we can use in our work.”</p>
<p>“As someone from the Global North I feel like I need to be part of the change to shift more power to the Global South. Perhaps more thinking and discussions about how we actually start to shift that power?”</p>	<p>“Maybe funded opportunities for members of projects who are not connected with universities or organisations (e.g. young people or community members who are leading work independently from institutions) would strengthen the event”</p>	

Did you form any new connections?

<p>“Yes”</p>	<p>“Strengthened existing relationships and started to forge some new ones”</p>	<p>“Very much so. It was a fabulous group of people and lovely contacts that will continue into the future.”</p>
<p>“Yes, formed a collaboration that we have been pursuing and a very good output has come out of it. It will be interesting to share the outcome in future workshops.”</p>		<p>“Yes, I have built new relationships. To what extent those could translate into positive collaboration is something I am still looking forward to.”</p>

Do you have suggestions for future Connector's workshops?

<p>"For this to be not a once-off event. Bring back together the same - and perhaps a few new - participants so that we can grow in this 'space' and really build a lasting network"</p>	<p>"Maintain the diversity of participants"</p>	<p>"In future we could have a connectors clinic within the workshop where participants could share challenging experiences for support from other participants"</p>
<p>"For a lot of us grassroots workers one of our biggest barriers is access to funding. A workshop inviting some of the big funders and philanthropists into the space would be amazing."</p>	<p>"I would love to see more breakout sessions aimed at developing collaborative ideas."</p>	<p>"Perhaps forming regional subgroups or teams based on common interests would help to expand the reach of the network and keep us more engaged."</p>
<p>"Just the same all over again. Would be wonderful"</p>	<p>"I would like to see the network meet on a yearly basis. But find ways to 'meet' virtually quarterly?"</p>	<p>"Global professional network"</p>
<p>"I would like to see it developed into a community with a common goal and agenda to promote research/ public health engagement and social participation."</p>	<p>"An active peer support and learning space, with a focus on building onward collaborations, hopefully globally oriented."</p>	<p>"I like the fact we are not too big and unwieldy. But I also realise that perhaps there are people missing from the room."</p>
<p>"A community engagement group. A place where community engagement practitioners have a chance to present their work, opportunities and create partnerships."</p>	<p>"We need to tell the story of our work. This takes time/ effort, although it's a horrible word we need to start thinking of the group in terms of 'branding for social impact'. Could we as a cohort develop to present at the Global Health Network Conference - as a collective for good?"</p>	

Would you like to be involved?

"Yes" - from all the responding participants

THANK YOU

Report authors:

Luca Evans, Tasha Koch, Nabeel Petersen
and Helen Latchem

With special gratitude to **Wellcome**
for supporting this first in-person
Connectors Workshop



The workshop was held in November 2022 at:

Workshop 17
Watershed
17 Dock Road
V&A Waterfront
Cape Town, South Africa

Many thanks to team at Workshop 17 for hosting us

EH!WOZA.com

INTERFER

mesh
community engagement network

THE GLOBAL HEALTH NETWORK
Enabling research by sharing knowledge

Connectors Workshop Report, Cape Town 2022

Authors: Luca Evans, Anastasia Koch, Nabeel Petersen
and Helen Latchem

Date: November 2023

Building on the success of the online Connectors Workshop series, Mesh, Eh!woza and Interfer held the first in-person Connectors Workshop in November 2022. It brought together 54 people from all over the world in Cape Town, South Africa.

doi.org/10.48060/tghn.128