Academic Research, Regional Development And Me!

Prof Thomas Cooney
TU Dublin (Ireland)

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THE EVOLUTION OF ACADEMIA

"I'm afraid the building next door might be undermining your foundations."

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ACADEMY

COMMUNITY

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Engaged Research

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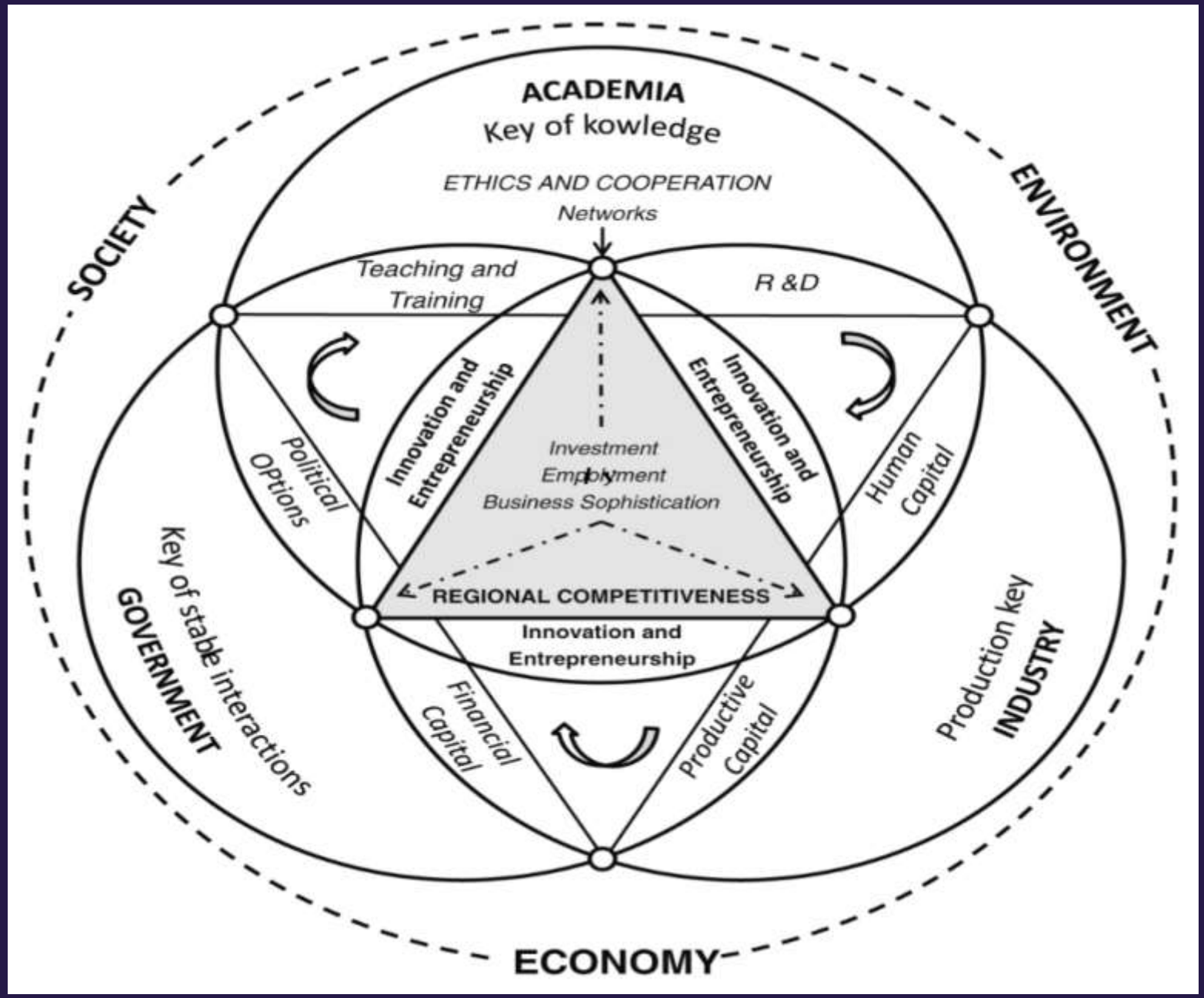
Triple Helix Model



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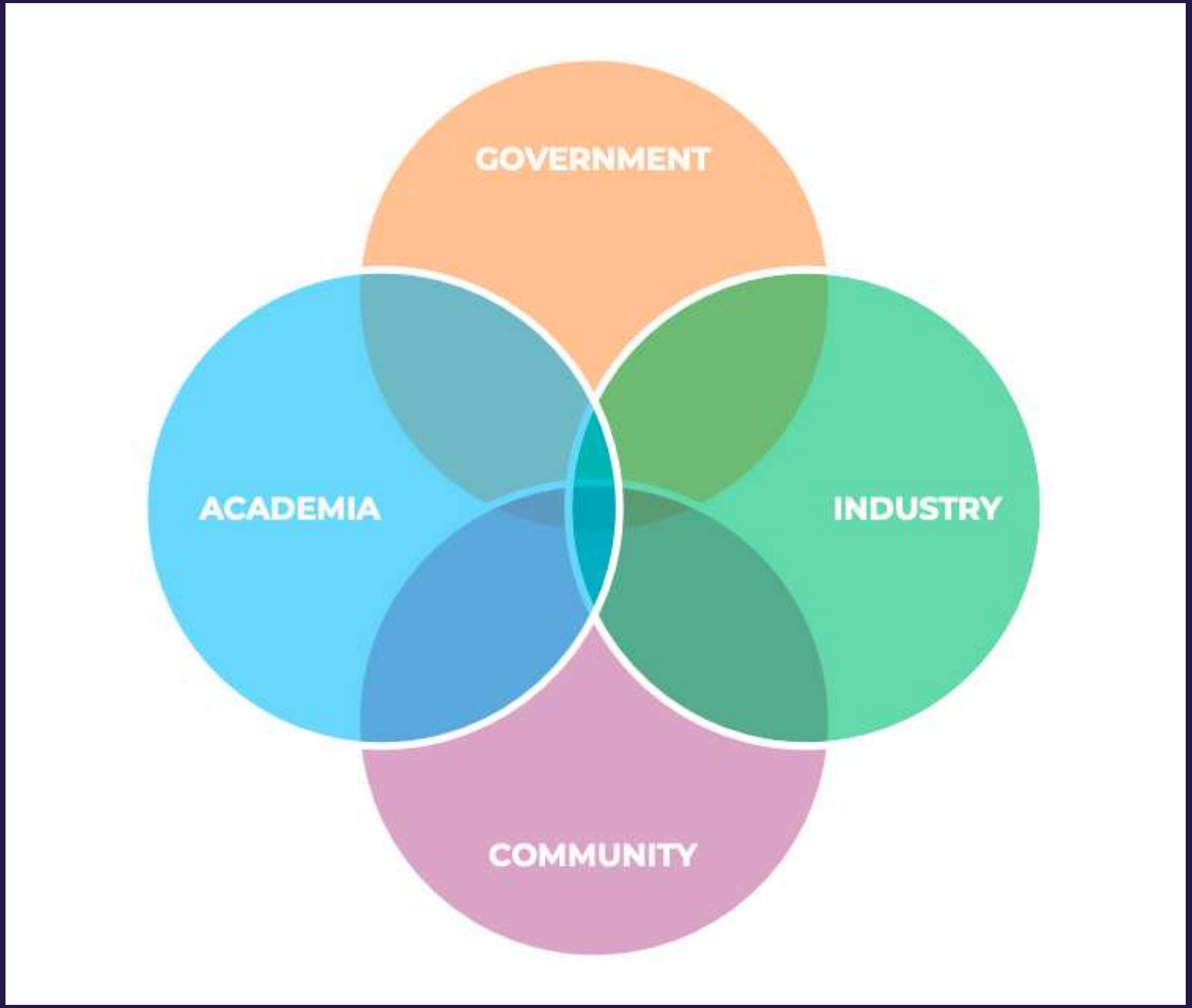
Quadruple Helix Model



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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH RESEARCH

Actively involving the public in the research activity of the institution

ENGAGED TEACHING

Developing teaching activities which positively impact on the community, and enhance students' engagement skills

The engaged university

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Increasing the two-way flow of knowledge and insight between the university and wider society

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Seeking to maximise the benefits that the institution can generate for the public

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"Traditional" Scientific Approach

- Recruit Participants
- Run Study
- Conduct Analyses
- Present at Scientific Conferences
- Publish Results in Scientific Journals
- Repeat

A Community-Engagement Citizen Science Approach

Key Elements

- Community helps develop question(s)
- Participants feel engaged in the research
- Results disseminated to participants and broader community
- Nontraditional expertise used in presentation and dissemination of findings
- Effort is made to use findings to benefit the community

Benefits

- Creates a public that values science
- Raises awareness about findings
- Increased support for science funding
- More invested participants
- Higher participation rates
- Expanded job opportunities for trainees

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Framework Supporting Inclusive HEI Community Enterprising Behaviour (O'Brien and Cooney, 2020)

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“Engaged research delivers excellence through collaborative rather than individualised approaches, across departments, institutions and sectors. Tangible benefits and the flow of ideas are emphasised across society rather than just within disciplinary groups. This helps to encourage greater public support, trust and understanding of the importance of research in our everyday lives.”

Campus Engage (2022)

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Challenges to Engaged Research

- Lack of appropriate institutional infrastructure to support and maintain quality research partnerships
- Little institutional reward or recognition for engaged research activities
- Few career pathways for sustaining or growing engaged research
- Few structured opportunities to network and engage with diverse stakeholders
- Competing timelines for researchers and research stakeholders
- Irregular funding opportunities and over-reliance on competitive funding calls to support engagement activities
- Focus on one-off engagements, rather than long-term involvement
- Little or no training to facilitate and support engagement and involvement by community partners
- Failure to value the time, contributions and lived experiences of community stakeholders
- Confusion regarding the benefits, roles and responsibilities in partnership approaches for all collaborators

CASE STUDY 1 – Research Centre

MaREI
(Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine)

University College Cork

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Corca Dhuibhne/ Dingle Peninsula 2030

is an ambitious and exciting multi-partner initiative based on the Dingle Peninsula, in Co. Kerry.
It was established in early 2018 by the following organisations:

The Dingle Creativity and Innovation Hub

ESB Networks

MaREI

North East West Kerry Development (NEWKD)

Corca Dhuibhne/Dingle Peninsula 2030 was essentially launched as an experiment and is in many respects a 'living lab', where we endeavour to learn from a series of pilot projects and practical experience.

Partners actively collaborate with each other and with the local community, schools, business, transport and farming sectors to support and enable the broader societal changes required for the sustainable transition.

ENERGY
Fuinneamh
2030

AGRICULTURE
Talamhaíocht
2030

MARINE
Mara
2030

TRANSPORT
Iompar
2030

TOURISM
Turasóireacht
2030

200+
multi-disciplinary researchers across our institutional partners

13
institutional partners combining Ireland's best talent in energy, climate and marine

40%
of departees moving to industry as a first destination

75
industry partners including start-ups, SMEs and large enterprises

36
collaborating countries across industry, academia and government

€55m
funding secured from industry, exchequer and non-exchequer sources

CASE STUDY 2 – Individual

Prof Tom Cooney

Technological University Dublin

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Work Relating to Entrepreneurship For Minority / Disadvantaged Communities

- Work with women, immigrants, ex-prisoners, people with disabilities, marginalised youth, seniors, gypsies
- Undertake research and deliver customised programmes
- 10 completed PhDs, 8 under supervision
- Substantial research and programme funding from different sources
- Multiple publications through books, reports, journal articles, etc
- Host conferences, events, webinars, workshops, etc
- Media attention – national television tomorrow night
- Get the opportunity to influence policy – Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan (pillar on Inclusion), governments (Ireland, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Albania), European Commission, OECD
- Collaborate with municipal authorities, enterprise support agencies, community-based organisations, advocacy organisations, etc
- The Minority / Disadvantaged Communities benefit as they are receive tailored support that is customised to their specific needs
- Increase the number of start-ups from these communities, but also increase levels of emancipation

Entrepreneurship for People with Disabilities

- Delivered 2 online courses – 40 participants
- Wide variety of community partners
- Use of role models (successful entrepreneurs with a disability) was a huge success
- Only tailored support available in Ireland
- Received funding of €100,000 from a national bank
- 6 start-ups per course
- Participants feel more empowered
- Reports, journal articles, PhD study, government policy all stemmed from this work

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The Missing Entrepreneurs 2021
POLICIES FOR INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT
OECD
The Palgrave Handbook of Minority Entrepreneurship
PATHWAY TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN IRELAND
Supporting People from Marginalised Communities into Employment

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Closing Thoughts

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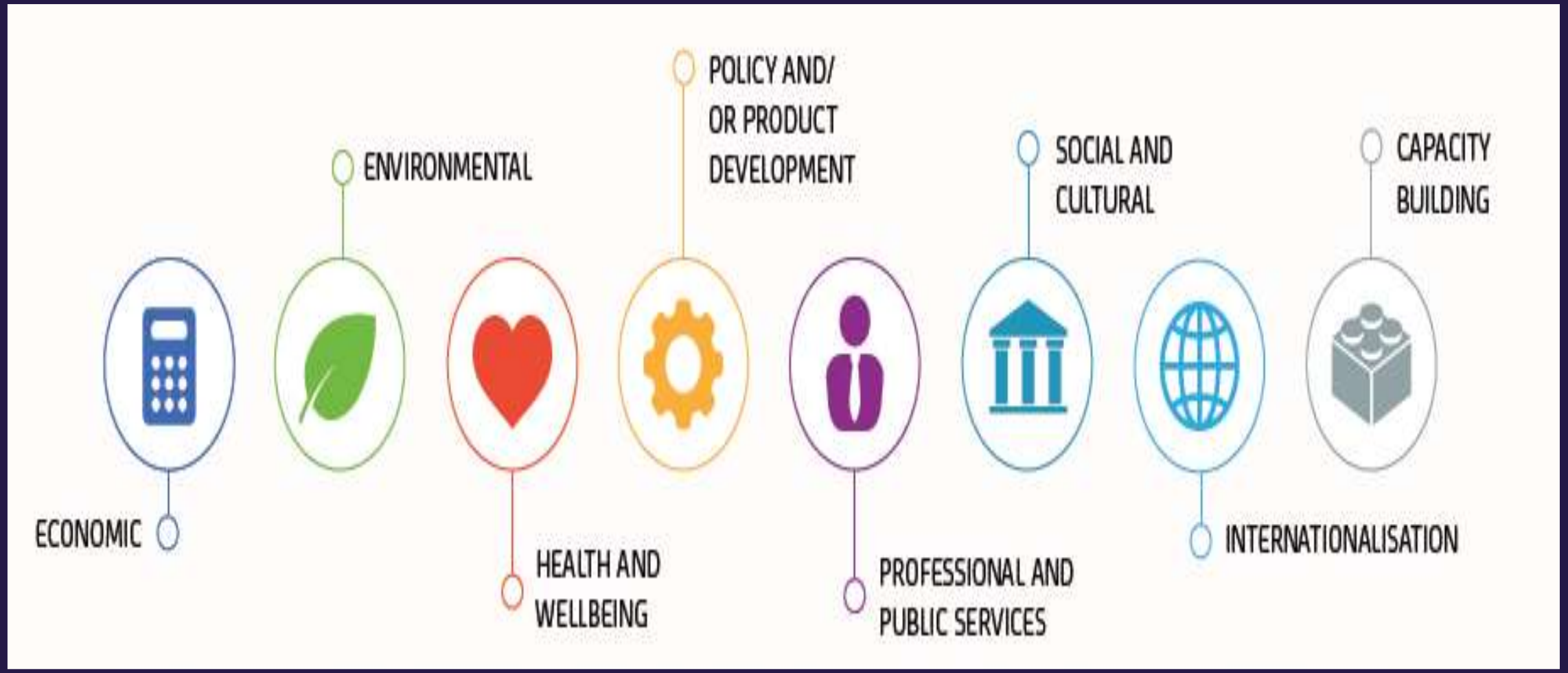
Impact of Engaged Research



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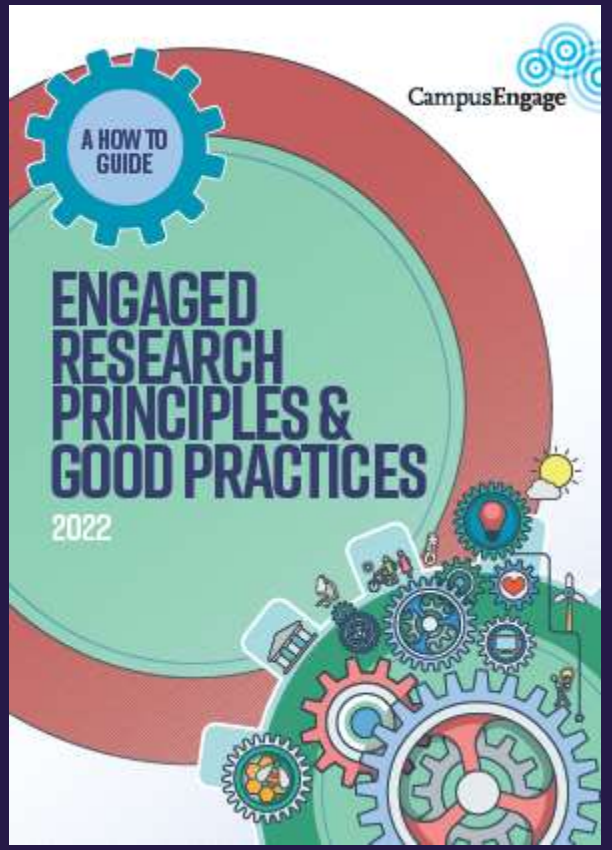
Recommendations for HEIs

- Include a clear commitment to engaged research in institutional strategic plans
- Identify a senior leader to strategically implement engaged research policies
- Broaden research metrics to recognise and reward the impact of engagement in realising societal benefits
- Provide institutional reward and recognition for engaged research and reflect this in hiring and promotions
- Identify and develop research career pathways to encourage sustained engagement between researchers and community partners
- Accommodate flexible scheduling and timetabling of workloads to facilitate engaged research activities
- Ensure engaged research is integrated into undergraduate curricula, and postgraduate and doctoral training



Reports available at
https://www.campusengage.ie/3256-2/

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“Diversity is inviting people to the dance; Inclusion is asking them to dance. Indeed, true inclusion is inviting them to help pick out the music. And why not have them put on the dance. Shall we dance?”

Norris Krueger (2020)

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