

PLACE-BASED ENGAGEMENT IN A GLOBAL UNIVERSITY



SCAN CARD · 16

DESCRIPTION

As universities become more international and globally networked, awareness is growing of the importance of place-based engagement. Local communities expect universities to contribute directly to regional development, social cohesion and place identity. This includes cooperation with municipalities, local NGOs, schools, cultural institutions and regional development agencies — often focused on locally defined challenges like urban regeneration, rural development, social inclusion or environmental sustainability.

Universities face tension between global visibility and local responsibility. Strategic priorities set at national or international level don't always align with local needs. This dynamic will intensify as global competition and internationalisation grow.

RELEVANCE

Place-based engagement strengthens universities' social legitimacy and relevance in their immediate environment. It also helps address inequalities between regions.

However, without institutional support, local engagement risks becoming fragmented and dependent on individual staff commitment.

NEED

Universities need clear strategies connecting global ambition with local responsibility. Long-term partnerships with regional stakeholders and dedicated resources are necessary to make place-based engagement sustainable.

This requires explicit decisions about how local engagement is prioritised alongside internationalisation goals — including allocation of resources, staff roles and evaluation criteria. Without this, tensions between global and local priorities may weaken place-based relationships and reduce legitimacy in communities.

CATEGORY

Social

SIGNAL STRENGTH

Medium



SCANNING METHOD

Policy analysis · Regional case review

SOURCES

EUA (2019) Regional Innovation · Goddard et al. (2016) The Civic University · Benneworth & Fitjar (2019) Regional Studies · Fonseca (2021) Regional Development