



NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

HUBS OF CONVERGENCE

**Public Relations Management
Handbook**



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Catalytic Moment

Vice Chancellor Inaugural Speech, Prof. Sibongile Muthwa (2018)

The HoC endeavours to co-create
**“physical spaces where the
University meets the community to
engage on common platforms to
find solutions to problems that
affect our immediate communities.”**



About Us

The Hubs of Convergence

Aligned to the Nelson Mandela University's Vision 2030 Strategic Intention, to achieve "transformative engagement", the Hubs of Convergence (HoC) is a project located within the Engagement and Transformation Portfolio (ETP).





Engagement and Transformation Portfolio

Deputy Vice Chancellor, Prof. André Keet

Nelson Mandela University has repositioned itself as a transformative, responsive university; in service of society. To achieve this ambition, the university established a new portfolio rooted in the interplay between engagement and transformation, and their interlinkages with research, learning and teaching. As such, the university is responding to a key dilemma facing the higher education sector, nationally and globally. That is, if not immersed in society, universities will find it near impossible to engage authentically and, thus, productively with the current socio-economic, environmental and political challenges of our time, our place. The core purpose of this portfolio is to provide intellectual and strategic leadership and oversee engagement and transformation in support of the vision and strategic objectives of the University.

Our Mandate

Currently, the HoC is mandated to lead and manage the Community Convergence Workstream (CCW) as an institutional response to Covid-19:



Convergence
Fund



CCW



CE Research



Fostering an Engaged University

In Service to Society

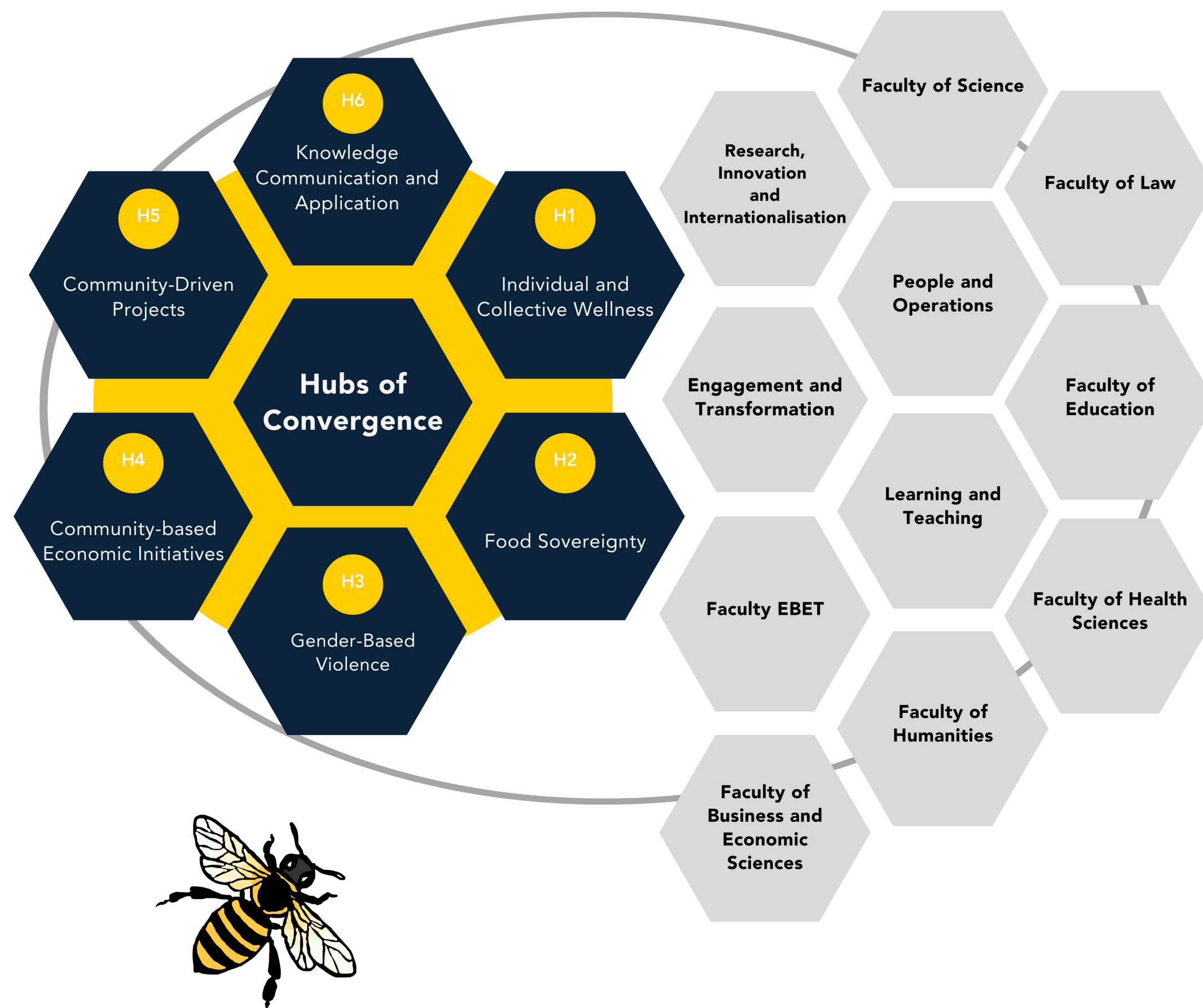
The HoC presents exciting multiple opportunities for the institution to deliver on its broader operational mandates while reimagining how to become a truly engaged space responding to the complexities facing our world - starting with our immediate communities. By experimenting with how best to converge the space of existence and life of the university and society, the HoC provides options for transdisciplinary collaboration which will enable the university to give effect its vision, mission, and strategic priorities and re-create itself in service of society



Stakeholder Environment

Beehive Model 2.0

Through organizing, facilitating, coordinating and managing the work of the CCW, a Beehive Model has emerged as an expression of this transdisciplinary collaboration and multi-stakeholder environment. This Beehive Model encapsulates the convergence of the University with the community through the HoC's thematic hubs. The structure represents the project work of the HoC together with its related institutional nodes as a closely packed group of hexagonal cells as a modality of university-community engagement. The Beehive Model demonstrates the unique and elaborate disposition of the HoC as an apparatus of translating ways in which the University can become responsive to societal challenges. Like a beehive, the HoC provides an architecture for co-creation, participatory action and a philosophy of relationality.





Our Communication Strategy

Physical and Intellectual Presence

As the HoC positions itself as a site of co-construction, central to its learning and ethos, is how communication with stakeholders is both envisioned and managed to meet its strategic objectives. Communication refers to the sharing and exchanging of information in a mutually meaningful way. This process relies heavily on the strategic expression of our work and celebration of our communities, stakeholders, and audiences. In this way we aim to bring to life HoC from the institutional boundaries of the University to the broader public, in effort to cultivate our physical and intellectual presence.



PR for Community Engagement

Brief Guidelines

In this handbook, we aim to articulate a rethink on the role of text, media and other forms of expression in communicating the depth and importance of engagement work in universities. We endeavour to represent various communities of the University in a humanizing way that seeks to honour not only the work, social and intellectual space of communities, but also the dignity of the people. The purpose of the handbook is to assist the HoC to connect our various communities and audiences across multiple platforms, equally in a socially conscious and creative way. Here, we explore the value of written and visual communication as key instruments of conveying the HoC concept and process, in theory and practice.



PR Philosophy

This handbook intersects with the following core philosophies:

Deepening contemplations over the usage of mindful and inclusive language.

Reimagining relationships between the University and community in socially just ways.

How that such intelligences can foster more open and fluid ontologies.



The HoC Voice

Institutional Alignment

The process of the HoC conceptualisation is iterative, non-linear, messy, human and material resource-intensive, and contested. But it is through these processes, that all voices are heard, honoured, recognised, validated, and that an opportunity is presented for their critical examination and use. Here, we describe the distinct identity and voice that the HoC intends to embody in its engagement with diverse communities. We desire to build a consistent but evolving presence and spirit as we believe that this will facilitate an interface for meaningful connections. As the University positions itself as being a dynamic, African university in promotion of the public good, as underpinned by the legacy, ethos and values of Nelson Mandela. Therefore, the Hoc, aligns with the University exertions of :



**EXPANDING
HUMAN
UNDERSTANDING**

**UNCOVERING
THE
FRONTIERS OF
KNOWLEDGE**

**CULTIVATING
SOCIALLY
CONSCIOUS
COMMUNITIE
S**

**PROMOTING
RESPONSIBLE
GLOBAL
CITIZENSHIP
AND
LEADERSHIP**



Visual Communication

HoC Imagery

Photography is a universal language, that provokes emotions, informs perceptions and shapes our memories of events, people and experiences.



1. Storytelling: we hear you

We aim to portray images that capture moments with tension, inspiration, and emotions. Through storytelling images, we want to invoke a reaction and stimulate people to think more deeply about social issues and injustices. We will use these images to bring awareness to the grand challenges of society.

2. Intimacy: we feel you

The HoC aims to foster mutual trust, as well as build and nurture new and existing relations with its stakeholders. To achieve this, we want to move away from photography void of emotional depth between photographer and 'subject'. The HoC believes that photography should be done in a way that represents an exchange of knowledges, realities and experiences as opposed to exhibiting traditional extractive practices which aim to benefit the sole interest of the photographer/ organisations.

Photography

In alignment with the HoC principles of convergence, reciprocal solidarity and engaged scholarship, HoC imagery should be premised on the following relational senses:

3. Honesty: we honour you

The HoC aims to honour the true experiences of communities by rejecting highly edited and modified images in favour of slower, more honest approaches to showing everyday complexities and ordinariness. Without limiting the creativity of the photographer, we encourage low manipulation or alteration of photographs to maintain the authenticity of the image in reference to reality.

4. Valuing the body: we see you

The HoC recognises that 'subjects' bodies are not just biological constructs but are also culturally and socially rooted. Our photographers should be both cognizant and careful of creating a hierarchy of bodies which typify different codes of power through the different ways in which the body is socially categorized. In other words, images should not reflect bodies in a way that intentionally subjects them to physical, racial or systematic violence by race, sex, age, ability, shape and size



HoC Iconography

Iconography contains signs and symbols to generate a narrative to reflect deeper meanings in simple representations. Icons are a crucial part of communication design because they help us quickly navigate through messaging. They are also the foundational building block of illustrated content, but they are also highly technical. As such, we intend to commission graphic designers to create iconography as mental maps that are specific to the identity and voice of HoC, and in alignment with the HoC Voice.





Pilot Project

**We have collaborated
with the Department
of Visual and
Performing Arts to
explore
interdisciplinary
methods for
documenting
Community
Engagement
Initiatives driven by
the HoC.**

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

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