

Engaged Research:

A vehicle for engaging with community and policy makers

Catherine Bates PhD, Research Engagement Lead, TU Dublin

Mary Deasy PhD, Head of Research & Innovation for Engagement & Impact, TU Dublin

Flora Laszlo, Director, Civic Engagement, Arts And Culture Unit, Central European University



Our goal today is

- To raise awareness of Engaged Research, and its benefits and opportunities as a vehicle for engaging with community and policy makers
- To support participants to identify benefits and challenges (internal and/or external)
 - for supporting and embedding engaged research in their universities
- To look together at pathways to overcoming barriers

Workshop Format

- Introduction to Community Engaged Research and case studies from CEU and TU Dublin
- Introduction to discussion topics, decision as to what to explore
- Reflections on challenges in your university
- Brainstorming solutions to challenges.
- Wrap up.

Introducing Engaged Research

- Engaged research is designed collaboratively by researchers and stakeholders (those who are affected by, interested in, and have the potential to influence, the research topic, particularly people whose voices don't feature very often in research), to maximise societal impact.
- Engaged Research aims to improve, understand, or investigate an issue of public interest or concern, including societal challenges. It is done *with* community partners rather than *on* or *for* them.
- 'Community' refers to public research stakeholders, including public or professional service and product users, policy makers, civil and civic society organisations (CSOs) and actors

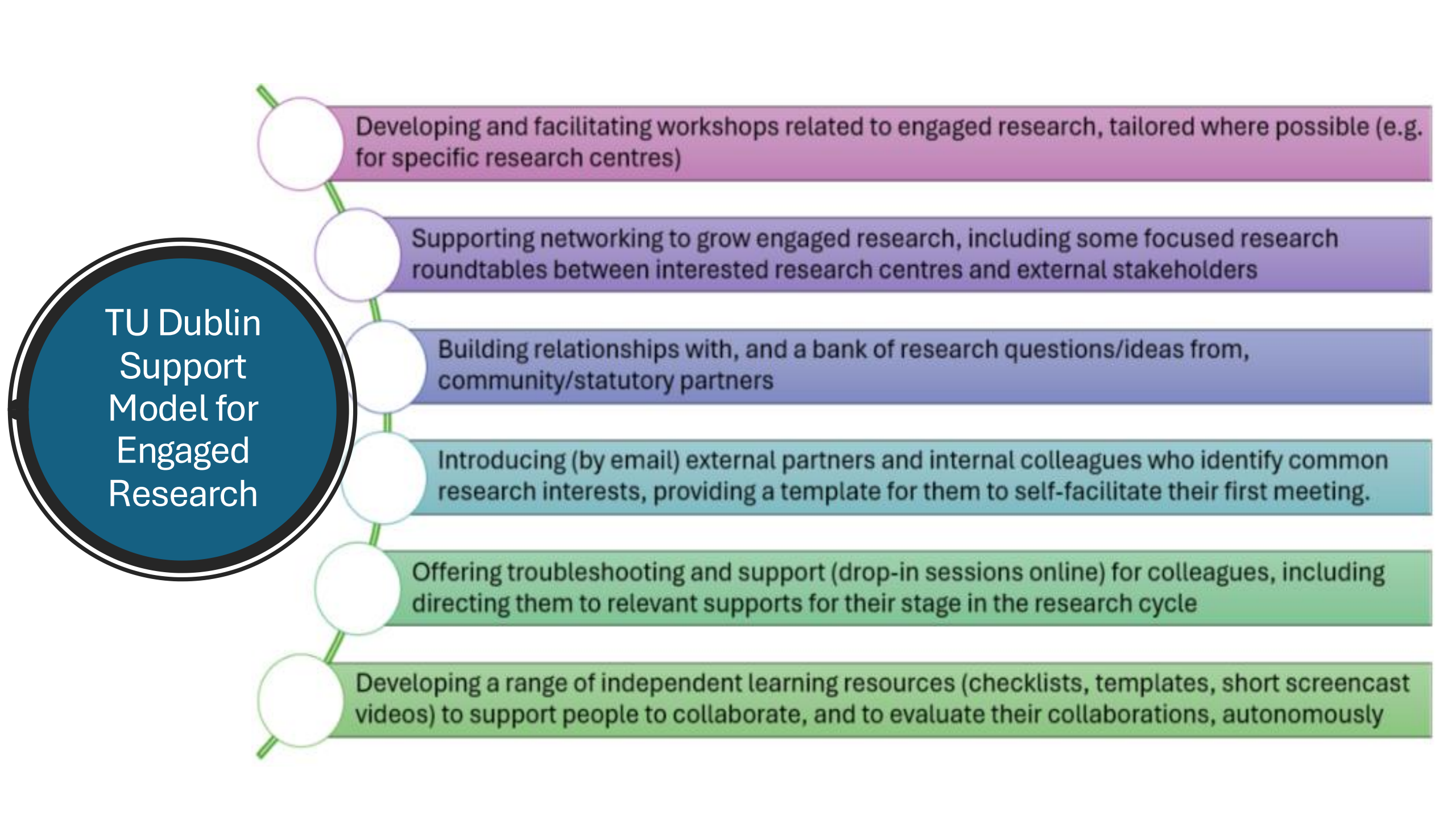
(adapted from Campus Engage)

(How) is engaged research supported in your university? Put up your hands please if:

- There are structured supports in your university for community engaged research/science shop projects
- There is engaged research with communities, but no formal supports yet
- There is no engaged research yet, as far as you know

Benefits and opportunities of engaged research

- Research projects and research questions are developed based on the experience and practical expertise of knowledge users. Demand driven and bottom-up topics.
- Students and faculty members are integrating these activities into course assignments, internships, capstone projects, thesis work or independent research projects (including research funding applications).
- Co-creation of knowledge in a participatory and collaborative way, increases the relevance of research.
- Supporting the community, and effecting positive change together.
- Experiential learning opportunities for students to develop practical and applicable skills.
- Enhancing skills and knowledge about open science, citizen science, engaged and service-learning, civic engagement and community-based participatory research.



The diagram features a central blue circle with a black border containing the title. To its right, a vertical green line with circular nodes connects six horizontal bars of varying colors (purple, blue, teal, green). Each bar contains a descriptive text item.

TU Dublin Support Model for Engaged Research

Developing and facilitating workshops related to engaged research, tailored where possible (e.g. for specific research centres)

Supporting networking to grow engaged research, including some focused research roundtables between interested research centres and external stakeholders

Building relationships with, and a bank of research questions/ideas from, community/statutory partners

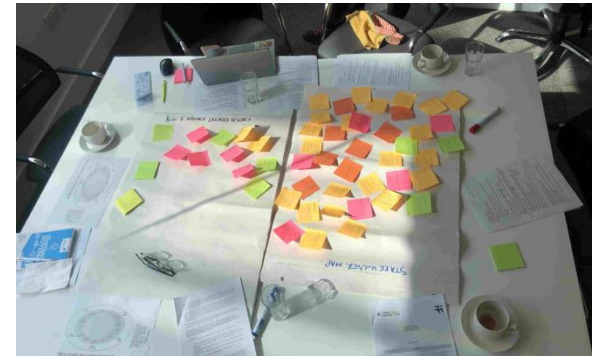
Introducing (by email) external partners and internal colleagues who identify common research interests, providing a template for them to self-facilitate their first meeting.

Offering troubleshooting and support (drop-in sessions online) for colleagues, including directing them to relevant supports for their stage in the research cycle

Developing a range of independent learning resources (checklists, templates, short screencast videos) to support people to collaborate, and to evaluate their collaborations, autonomously

TU Dublin case study – building relationships for cancer research collaboration

- TU Dublin Radiation and Environmental Science Centre (RESC) manager wanted to build capacity for ER with communities
- Ran a workshop on ER and Research Impact for centre staff
- Brought together 2 CSO networks (Men's Health Forum in Ireland, the Wheel) to plan a roundtable event to introduce RESC researchers to NGOs – co-created roundtable format. Focus on building relationships.
- Held 3 roundtables over 6 months, with charities and statutory policymakers, culminating in 2 funding applications to do ER with Men's Sheds to explore prostate cancer testing, diagnosis and treatment.



CEU Science for Society Hub – CEU Vienna



- How the university's move to Vienna impacted engaged research?
- Science for society Hub as the successor of OSUN Science Shop.
- OSUN Science Shop as a network initiative (CEU, EHU, BRAC).
- Goals:
 - 1, To make science and academic knowledge open, accessible and inclusive to the public and to people of all backgrounds.
 - 2, To promote citizen science and socially responsive research conducted with and for the society in partnerships with communities and civil society organizations.
- The Hub is not just a matchmaker but accompanies the whole process.
- Results: 21 projects with 19 partners in Vienna. (AY 2024/25)

More information: <https://www.ceu.edu/ceu-science-society-hub>



CEU Research Lab – CEU Budapest



- What can you do for engaged research at your university without students?
- Research Lab as a tool for social responsibility.
- Well functioning incentives for researchers.
- Why is it beneficial for civil society to collaborate?
- Structure/Methodology: 1-3 bilateral meetings at CEU, facilitated by Research Lab.
Process follow-up and supervision.
- Results: 6 researchers involved, 5 NGO collaborations in AY 24/25.
- Both initiatives are capable of building bridges between the two CEU locations.

More information: <https://democracyinstitute.ceu.edu/teaching-training/di-research-lab>

Discussion topics relating to ER

- Finance/resourcing/funding
- Traditional research and engagement practices with communities – the University research culture
- Support structures for ER – where does this work fit? (include educating people about engagement, e.g. time required).
- Incentives for engaged research.
- Fostering and sustaining collaboration - with community partners, and with other HEIs, and networks, and policymakers (e.g. between universities who are interested in civic engagement and engaged research)

Decisions (show of hands):

- Would you like to explore 1 or 2 of these issues today?
- Which issue(s) would you like to explore?

Which topic(s) would you most like to explore?

- Finance/resourcing/funding
- Traditional research and engagement practices with communities – the University research culture
- Support structures for ER – where does this work fit? (include educating people about engagement, e.g. time required).
- Incentives for engaged research.
- Fostering and sustaining collaboration - with community partners, and with other HEIs, and networks, and policymakers (e.g. between universities who are interested in civic engagement and engaged research)

Now move to the small tables

Table discussion (1) reflection on challenges in small groups, and feed back

- Start by taking 5 minutes to discuss in your small group about how this issue might/does work in your university, identifying any challenges, teasing these out. Pick one or two key challenges you have in relation to this which you'd like to share with the bigger group.
- Discuss and then choose the most significant challenge.
- Choose a rapporteur from your group and feedback to the plenary – 1 minute per group.
- Plenary discussion on which one or at most two challenges to bring to the next table discussion, as these will be the basis of our brainstorm.

Table discussion (2) Brainstorming solutions

- Together we will brainstorm solutions, discuss any relevant good practices or enablers that we or participants feel are relevant to the challenges.
- Capture these enablers on a flipchart page.
- If the plenary has chosen to look at 2 challenges, we will do the same for a second one (time permitting).

Plenary - wrapping up

- What have we covered?
 - We will read out the challenges and solutions proposed, making small changes for clarity
- Check if rapporteur needs any clarifications
- Quick feedback on the workshop (voluntary)
 - Pick one thing you would keep or change about this workshop? Write on a post-it and stick it on the wall beside the door on the way out.

Thanks for your participation!



Contact details:

- Flora Laszlo: LaszloF@ceu.edu
- Mary Deasy: mary.deasy@tudublin.ie
- Catherine Bates: catherine.bates@tudublin.ie

