

---

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIVENESS AWARD**

---

The Social Responsiveness Award provides an institutional signal to members of the University that social responsiveness is an important priority.

### **SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE**

In response to the challenges in South African education, the Schools Improvement Initiative - one of the Vice Chancellor's four Strategic Initiatives - was launched in 2012. The intention of the initiative is to extend the University of Cape Town's engagement in schooling with the explicit aim of making a positive impact on the quality of education in the classroom.

Drawing on university-wide resources and expertise, the Schools Improvement Initiative (SII) works in close collaboration with groupings inside and outside the university, in particular the Western Cape Education Department, and currently partners with three primary and two secondary schools in the local community of Khayelitsha.

The SII's theory of change is based on a whole-school improvement model and includes leadership and management support offered in conjunction with teacher professional development. Using the services of the Schools Development Unit in the School of Education, the initiative offers university courses coupled with school-based mentoring.

The SII is fully committed to interdisciplinary collaboration with faculties and departments across the university, enabling students to undertake their service learning in the partner schools. This includes Occupational Therapy; Speech & Language Therapy; Audiology; Social Work; the Knowledge Co-op; Library & Information Sciences; the School of Architecture; as well as student organisations such as Ubunye, SHAWCO and Students for Law & Social Justice. These collaborations not only directly benefit our partner schools but have also allowed students and academic staff to explore new ways in which community engagement might inform curriculum transformation and social justice.

The SII's activities over the past six years have contributed towards knowledge production. This includes three symposia, four peer-reviewed journal articles and presentations at three international and four local conferences. One PhD and three master's students have undertaken their research in the SII partner schools. Furthermore, a three-year NRF Community Engagement Grant awarded in 2015 resulted in a multi-authored book to be published by the HSRC Press later in 2018. This publication showcases the insights gained on community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration in the SII.

A further key aspect of the Initiative is 100UP. This university access programme has had a significant impact on UCT enrolments from both Khayelitsha and the neighbouring community of Mitchells Plain.

---

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIVENESS AWARD (CONTINUED)**

---

Since the first group of Grade 10s were recruited in 2011, over 1000 learners have participated in the programme, and a measure of its success is that of its 963 matriculants who obtained B-Degree passes, 851 (or 88%) have gone on to study at university, 446 at UCT. This year sees 63 first-year students drawn from 19 out of the 20 secondary schools in Khayelitsha registered at UCT – an almost three-fold increase in enrolments from before 100UP was put into place.

Through the multidimensional nature of its work, the SII fosters partnerships, harnesses resources, improves schools and crucially, opens the doors of higher learning – thus embodying UCT’s commitment to social responsiveness. It is for these reasons that the SII has been chosen as a worthy recipient of the 2017 Social Responsiveness Award.