

# Adaptive leadership, service learning & community engagement

Julia Preece, Desiree Manicom, UKZN  
September 2013

# Funding acknowledgement

- This work is supported in part by the National Research Foundation of South Africa UID 85435 and also the UTLO TLRGC 9 funds
- The grant holder acknowledges that opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in any publication generated by the NRF supported research are that of the author and that the NRF accepts no liability whatsoever in this regard



# Policy context for SA

- Government policy: White Paper 1997; HEQC 2004; 2007
  - promote and develop social responsibility and awareness amongst students of the role of higher education in social and economic development through community service programmes
- University strategic Plan 2007-2016
  - Contribute through knowledge to the prosperity and sustainability of our province ... committing ourselves to the communities we serve in a manner that adds value ...

# UKZN context

- UKZN's Strategic Plan 2012-2016. Goal 2: Responsible community engagement
  - Recognise, promote & reward CE
  - Develop formal training for human capital development in communities
  - Promote & expand education & training activities for students
  - Build strategic partnerships that enhance relevance and impact of academic activities, especially with government entities

# Definitions: community

- Hall (2010):
  - Cluster of households or an entire region, as an organisation ranging from a provincial government department to an NGO, as a school, clinic, hospital, church or mosque or as a part of the university itself

# Policy context: College of Humanities

- Goal 2:
  - Institutionalise CE within university structures
  - Produce inventory of CE work
  - CE as track for promotion
  - Build research and scholarship around CE through collaborative research with communities and across disciplines

# Definitions: CE

- SAHECEF (2011):
  - An ongoing interactive process characterised by dual commitment (Universities and communities) to address communities' needs and interests.
  - Should be a process in which engagement will be achieved according to the following continuum:  
Consultation -- Representation -- Participation  
--Empowerment -- Sustainability

# Definitions: SL

- Stellenbosch University (adapted) 2012:
  - A curriculum-based, credit-bearing and carefully structured educational experience in which students:
    - Participate in an organised community interaction activity that meets identified and agreed upon community goals, and
    - Reflect on the service activity in order to gain a deeper understanding of module content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of social responsibility towards society as a whole
- Service Learning Clearing House (2012):
  - Value of team work in developing employability skills



# Research objectives

- To ascertain current understandings of CE and SL in the university (PMB & Qwa campus)
- To develop SL case studies that are community-led
- To encourage students to work in teams and with more than one discipline
- To explore what works and what could be improved

# Starting point

- Meeting with NGOs and academics
- Report on last year's study
- Invitation to present case study ideas according to project need
- **Survey of academic perceptions of CE & SL**
- Visits to NGOs to discuss parameters
- Visits to classes to take part in case studies
- Initiation of case studies in August

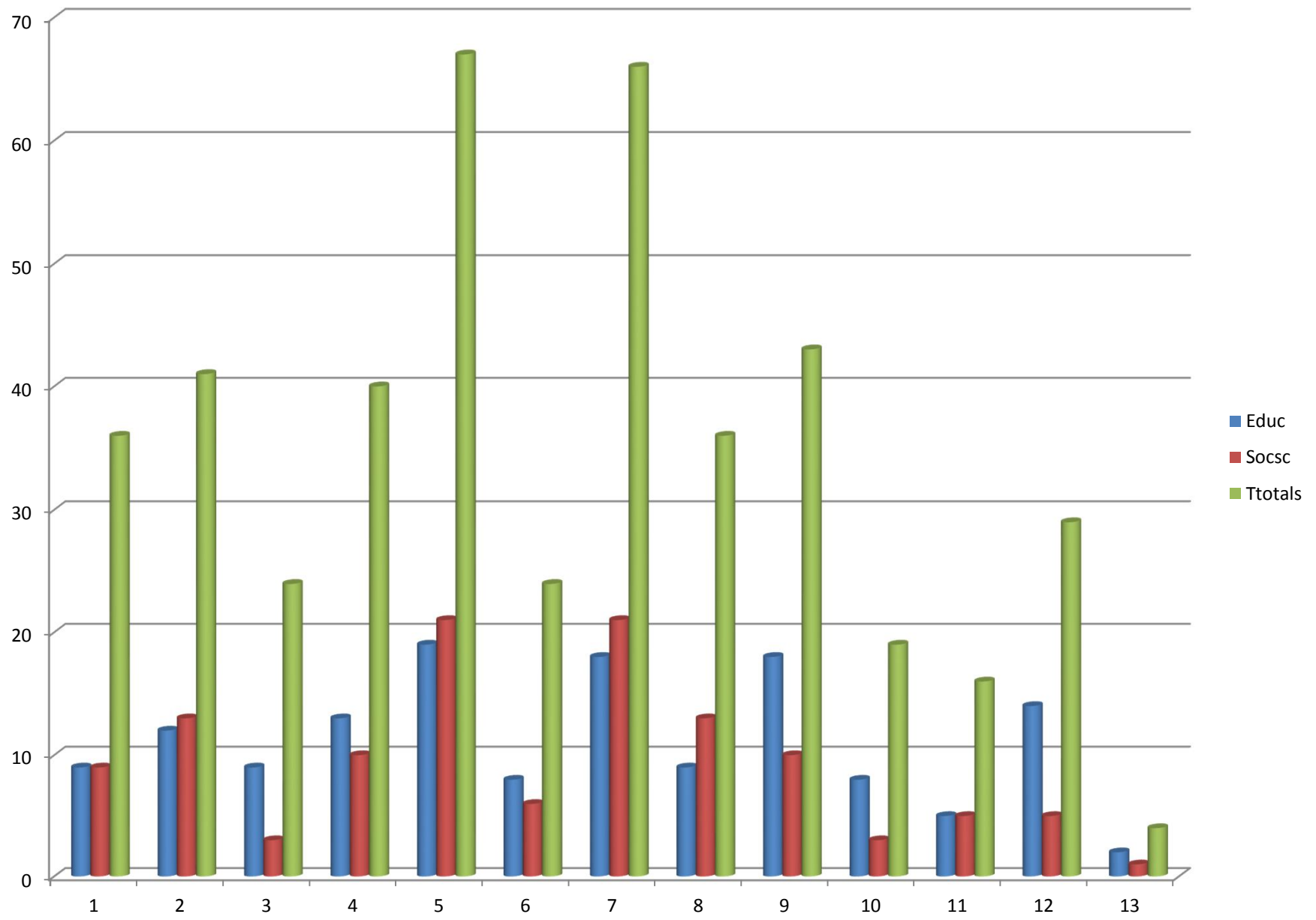
# Survey findings

- Current understandings of CE and SL
  - UKZN (PMB campus, plus some questions to Howard College [Humanities disciplines])
- Total number of questionnaires distributed:
  - 144
- Total number of replies:
  - 77 (53.4% response rate)
    - Excluding Howard College – 64.4% response rate

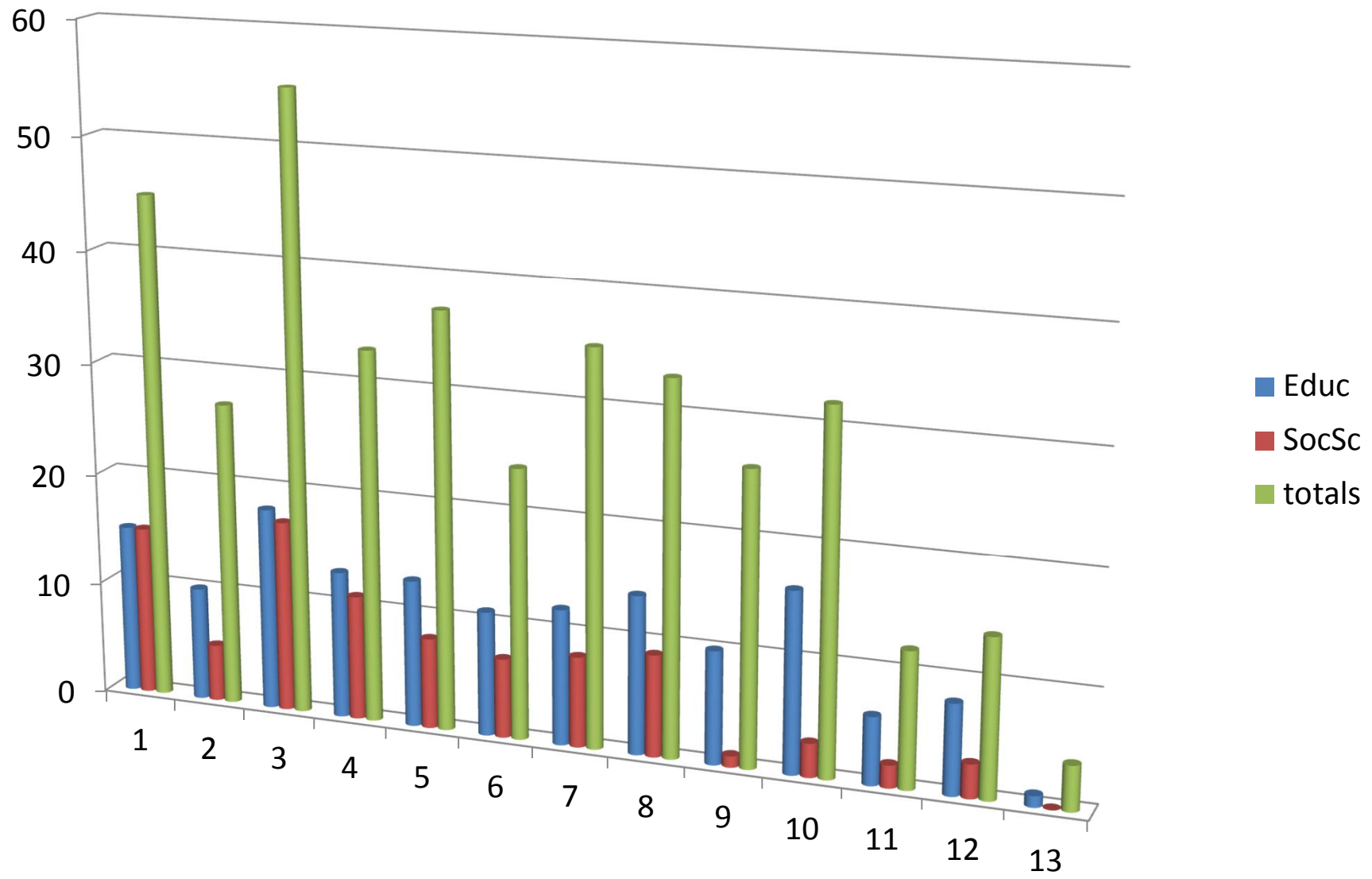
# Disciplines involved

- Main disciplines
  - Education
  - Social Science
- Others:
  - Anthropology, Development Studies, Howard College IPA cluster, English, Information Studies, Gender, Law, Environmental Science, Language, Commerce, Psychology, Theology

| No | Understanding of CE  | Educ      | socSc     |
|----|--|-----------|-----------|
| 1  | A student research project in a community/off campus location                                    | 9         | 9         |
| 2  | <b>Individual staff undertaking charity work in an NGO or poor community</b>                     | <b>12</b> | <b>13</b> |
| 3  | Individual students on placement with an organisation  | 9         | 3         |
| 4  | <b>Students responding to NGO request for assistance</b>   | <b>13</b> | <b>10</b> |
| 5  | <b>Staff and students working together on a project in the community</b>                         | <b>19</b> | <b>21</b> |
| 6  | A project which is undertaken as a result of student research                                    | 8         | 6         |
| 7  | <b>Students &amp; staff negotiating with community based organisations to do a specific task</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>21</b> |
| 8  | Students and staff working with government ministries  | 9         | 13        |
| 9  | <b>An ongoing project</b>  | <b>18</b> | <b>10</b> |
| 10 | A one-off project  | 8         | 3         |
| 11 | A consultancy  | 5         | 5         |
| 12 | <b>Non-formal education</b>  | <b>14</b> | <b>5</b>  |
| 13 | Other:   | <b>2</b>  | <b>1</b>  |

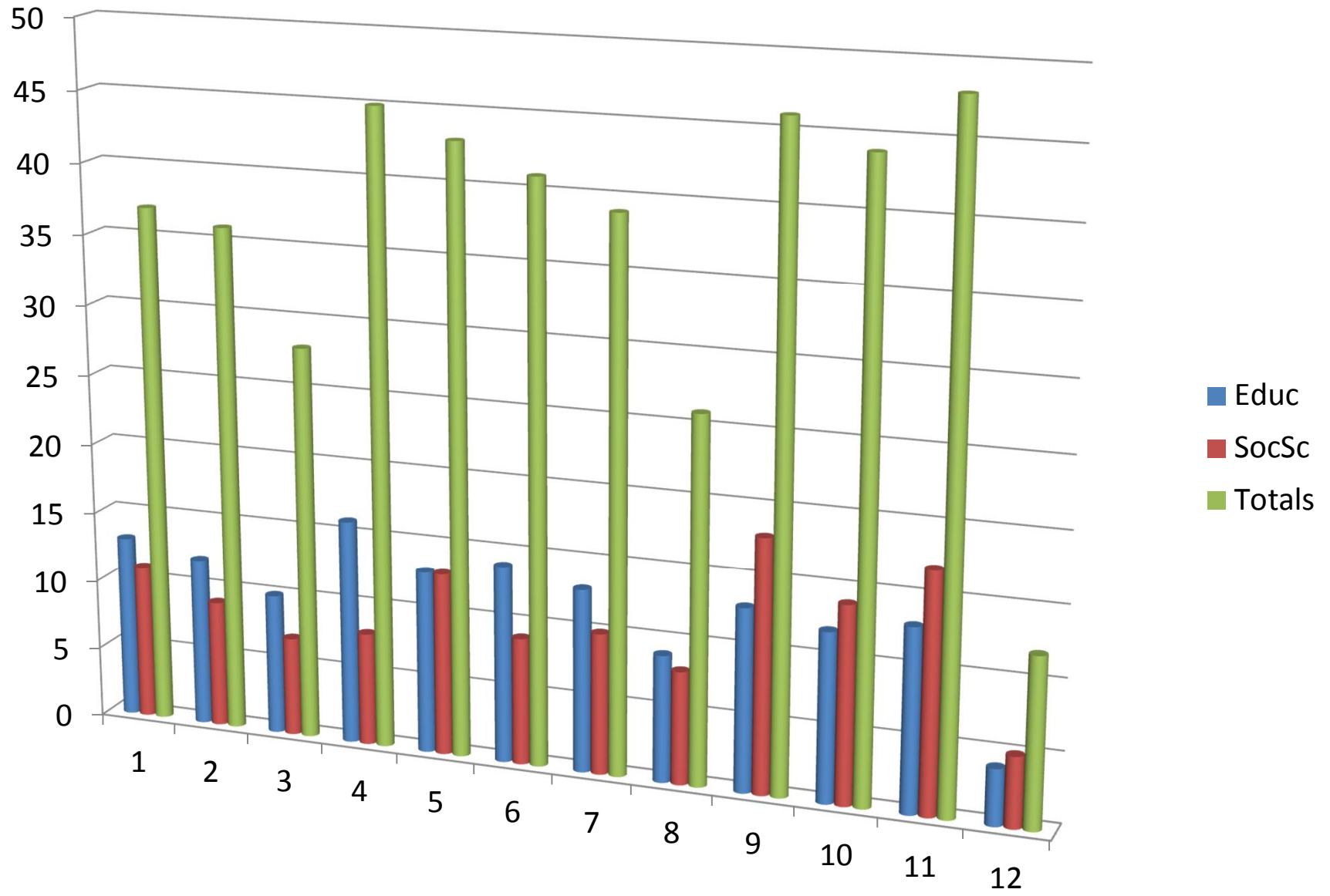


|           | <b>Understanding of service learning</b>  | <b>Edu</b> | <b>SocSc</b> |
|-----------|---|------------|--------------|
| <b>11</b> | <b>A student research project in a community/off campus location</b>                  | <b>15</b>  | <b>15</b>    |
| <b>2</b>  | Student self assessment of their involvement in a short term placement                | 10         | 5            |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Students working together on placement in an organisation</b>                      | <b>18</b>  | <b>17</b>    |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Students responding to NGO request for assistance</b>                              | <b>13</b>  | <b>11</b>    |
| <b>5</b>  | Staff and students working together on a project in the community                     | 13         | 8            |
| <b>6</b>  | A project which is undertaken as a result of student research                         | 11         | 7            |
| <b>7</b>  | Students & staff negotiating with community based organisations to do a specific task | 12         | 8            |
| <b>8</b>  | Students working in government ministries   | 14         | 9            |
| <b>9</b>  | Students working together in multidisciplinary teams                                  | 10         | 1            |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Students finding their own placement as member of an SL course</b>                 | <b>16</b>  | <b>3</b>     |
| <b>11</b> | A student consultancy   | 6          | 2            |
| <b>12</b> | Non-formal education  | 8          | 3            |
| <b>13</b> | Other   | 1          | 0            |

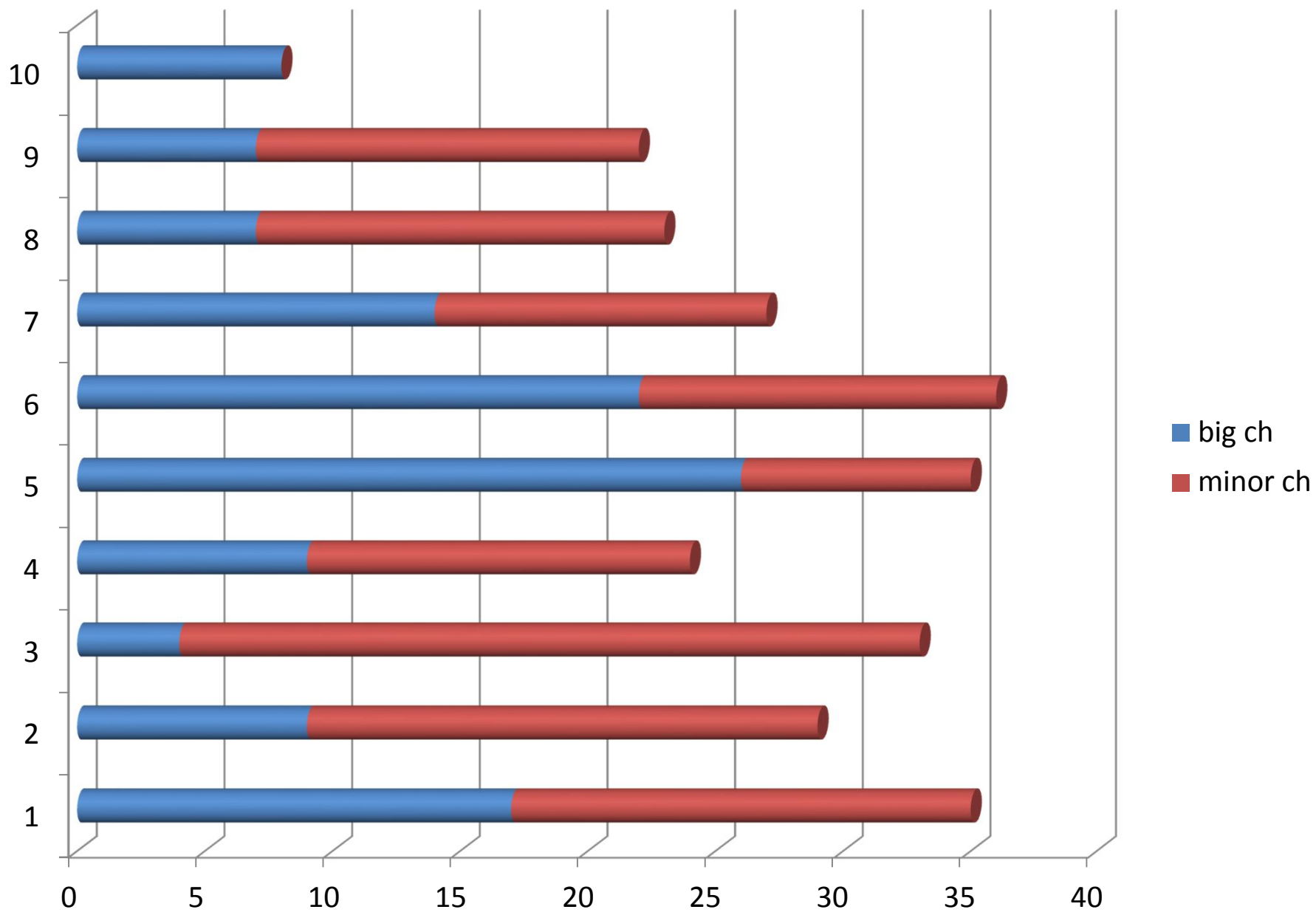




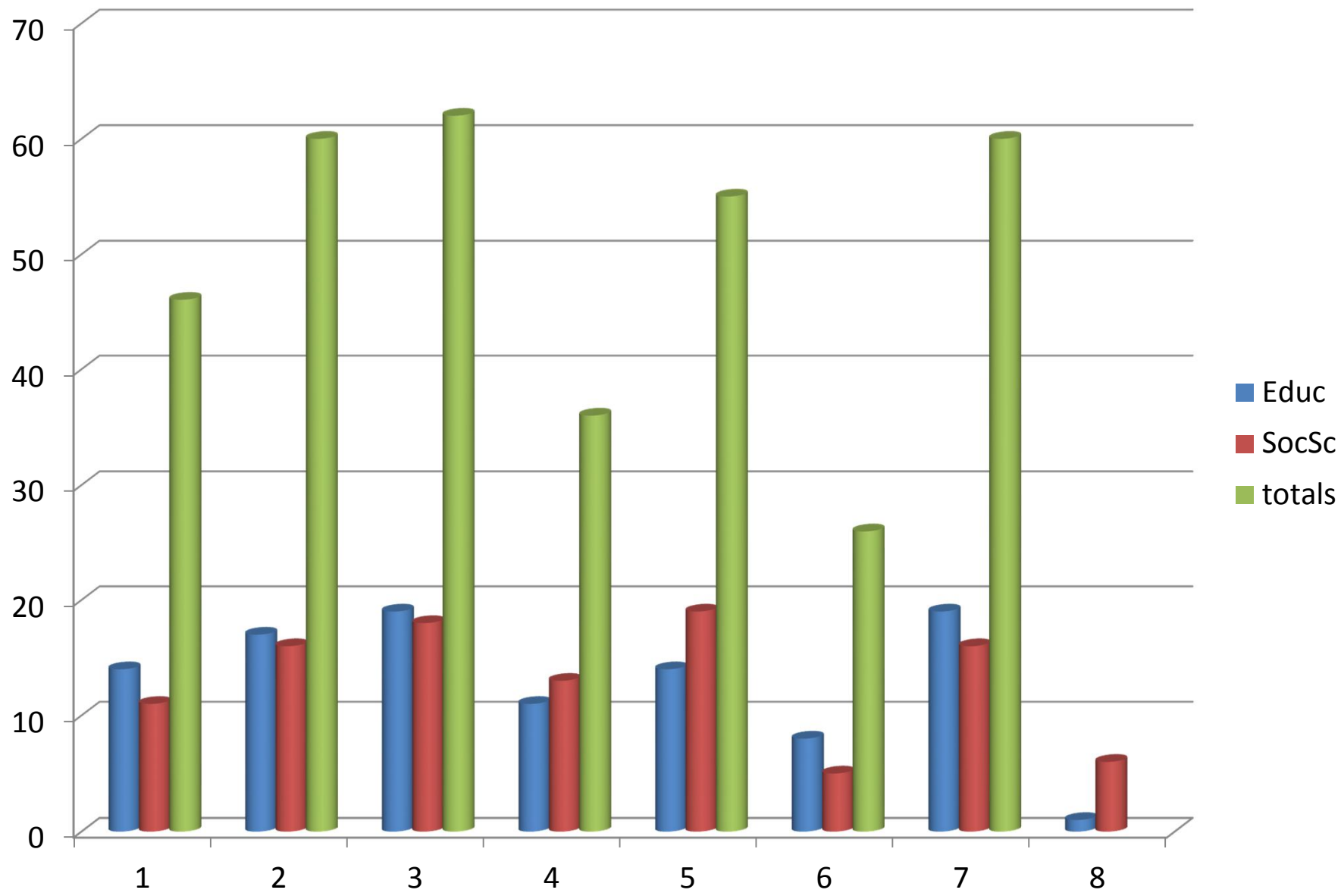
|    | understanding of 'community' for CE purposes                           | Educ      | SocSc     |
|----|--|-----------|-----------|
| 1  | <b>The immediate area surrounding the university</b>                   | <b>13</b> | <b>11</b> |
| 2  | Specific geographical locations  | 12        | 9         |
| 3  | Specific geographical locations of disadvantage                        | 10        | 7         |
| 4  | <b>Community based organisations (CBOs)</b>                            | <b>16</b> | <b>8</b>  |
| 5  | <b>Non governmental Organisations (NGOs)</b>                           | <b>13</b> | <b>13</b> |
| 6  | Schools  | 14        | 9         |
| 7  | <b>Churches</b>  | <b>13</b> | <b>10</b> |
| 8  | Government ministries  | 9         | 8         |
| 9  | <b>Specific communities of practice (eg clergy; environmentalists)</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>18</b> |
| 10 | Social movements   | 12        | 14        |
| 11 | <b>Targeted social groups (eg orphans, sex workers)</b>                | <b>13</b> | <b>17</b> |
| 12 | Other (please specify) univ does not know what community means         | 4         | 5         |



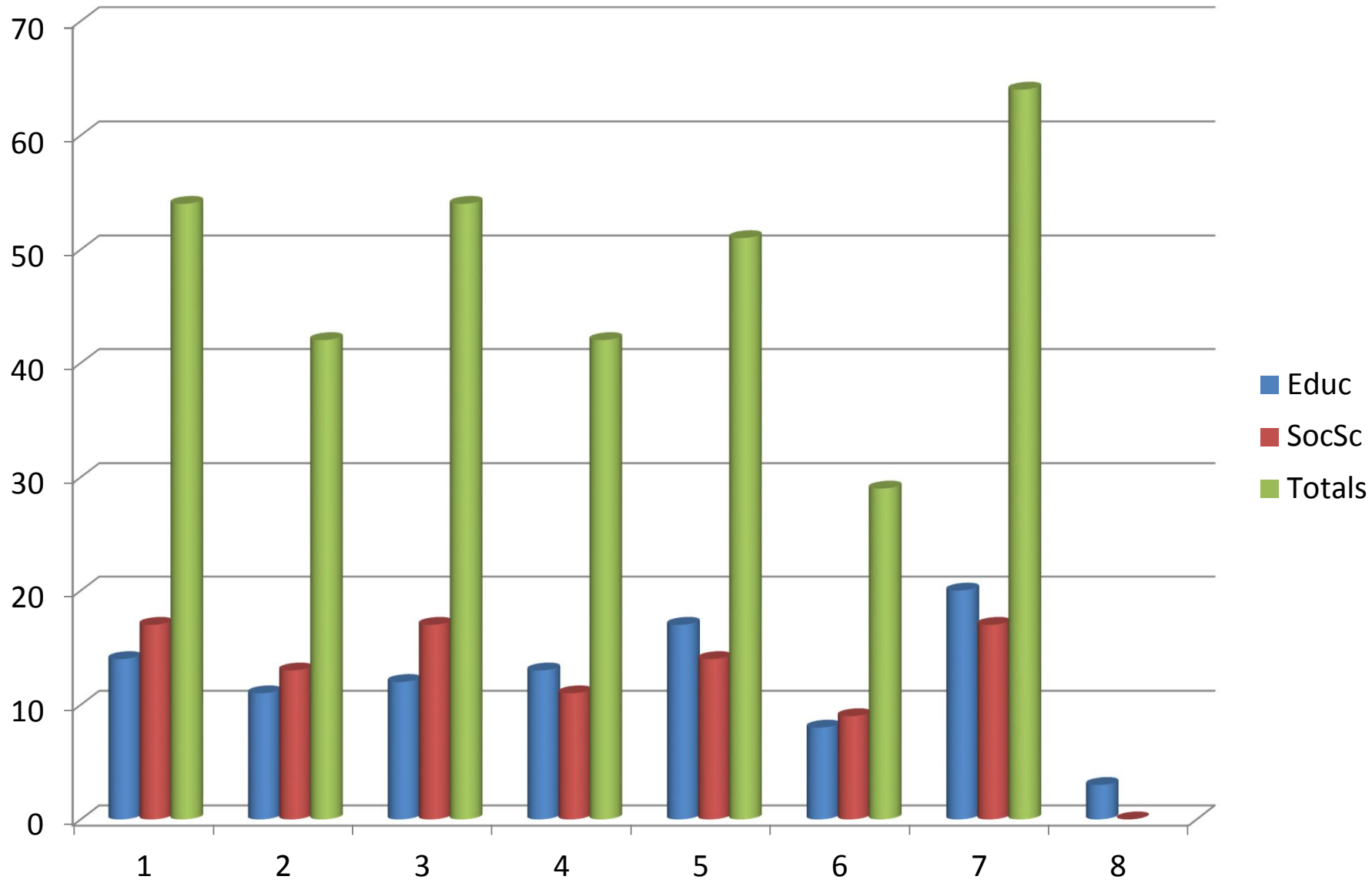
| Current challenges   | Big challenge | Somewhat challenge | Manageable challenge | Not a problem |
|--|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. No champion to promote CE and/or SL   | 8             | 9                  | 5                    | 13            |
| 2. Not knowing where to start  | 1             | 8                  | 4                    | 16            |
| 3. Not knowing who to contact  | 2             | 2                  | 11                   | 18            |
| 4. Time to manage SL students on my current CE activities  | 2             | 7                  | 8                    | 7             |
| 5. Lack of funds   | 13            | 13                 | 8                    | 1             |
| 6. Time to organise links with community   | 9             | 13                 | 13                   | 1             |
| 7. CE work is not recognised in promotion criteria   | 4             | 10                 | 4                    | 9             |
| 8. Insufficient understanding of CE/SL   | 1             | 6                  | 8                    | 8             |
| 9. Too many students in class  | 6             | 1                  | 9                    | 6             |
| 10. Other : admin/tech support, identifying appropriate activity, too much supervision and focus on publishing | 7             | 1                  | 0                    | 0             |



|   | Purpose of service learning  | EDUC | SocSc |
|---|--|------|-------|
| 1 | To develop responsible citizens                                    | 14   | 11    |
| 2 | To promote experiential learning                                   | 17   | 16    |
| 3 | To raise student awareness of community needs                      | 19   | 18    |
| 4 | To meet the institutional community engagement requirements        | 11   | 13    |
| 5 | To discover new knowledge  | 14   | 19    |
| 6 | To raise the image of the institution                              | 8    | 5     |
| 7 | To contribute to community development                             | 19   | 16    |
| 8 | Other (please specify) reinforce s-d lng, put theory into practice | 1    | 6     |



|   | Purpose of community engagement  | Educ      | SocSc     |
|---|--|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | <b>To develop responsible citizens</b>                                   | <b>14</b> | <b>17</b> |
| 2 | To promote experiential learning   | 11        | 13        |
| 3 | <b>To raise student awareness of community needs</b>                     | <b>12</b> | <b>17</b> |
| 4 | To meet the institutional community engagement requirements              | 13        | 11        |
| 5 | <b>To discover new knowledge</b>   | <b>17</b> | <b>14</b> |
| 6 | To raise the image of the institution                                    | 8         | 9         |
| 7 | <b>To contribute to community development</b>                            | <b>20</b> | <b>17</b> |
| 8 | Other (please specify) To develop independence, dignity, personal growth | 3         | 0         |





# Some conclusions

- CE:
  - Students & staff negotiating with community based organisations to do a specific task
- SL:
  - Students working together on placement in an organisation
- Community:
  - Community based organisations (CBOs)
  - Specific communities of practice (eg clergy; environmentalists)
  - Targeted social groups (eg orphans, sex workers)

# Continued ...

- Challenges
  - Time, lack of funds
- Purpose of SL
  - To raise student awareness of community needs
  - To contribute to community development
  - To promote experiential learning
- Purpose of CE
  - To contribute to community development

# Implications

- Sufficient commonality to facilitate partnership arrangements
- Need for proper funding arrangements to integrate SL with CE
- Need for dedicated time allowance to motivate staff
- Need for appropriate promotion incentives to motivate staff

# Case study issues

- N.B. development of case studies raised a number of other issues:
  - Negotiating competing agendas
  - Practicalities of timetabling
  - Financial costs (travel, materials)
  - Monitoring demands
  - Multiple layers of communication
  - AL as constant re-negotiation