

Mapping UNSW Impact Global Development

Primary SDG	4: QUALITY EDUCATION
Broad theme	Helping future academics
Research	Conducting workshops, advising and mentoring research students, and arranging symposia with domestic and international academics
Impact region	South Africa, Africa
Faculty	Business School
School/Institute	Taxation and Business Law
Academic	Professor Chris Evans
Project partners	University of Pretoria, National Research Foundation (South Africa) – funding of \$10,000, PricewaterhouseCoopers, South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (symposia sponsors)
Related SDGs	10: Reduced Inequalities

Elevator pitch

Chris conducts workshops for tax research students at the University of Pretoria, advises and mentors PhD students, and arranges symposia where they and other academics from across Africa can learn from international stars of the tax research world, lifting research, education and publication standards.

The Challenge: Lack of international research exposure for African tax academics and students

Academics in South Africa and other African countries are internally focussed when it comes to tax, to their detriment. They are not familiar with the latest in research and the majority have not completed PhDs. As a result, students are not getting access to top quality education, and tax education and practice in the country is not evolving as well as it could. The male-dominant society also sees female academics limited in meeting their potential.

UNSW's solution: Conducting workshops and advising researchers, holding international symposia

In 2013, Chris undertook an evaluation of the tax department at the University of Pretoria, where he was a member of the evaluation panel. In 2016, the university asked him to conduct research seminars and mentor and develop research students as an Extraordinary Professor (pro bono) for a quarter of his time (0.25 FT). The role includes conducting workshops on research methods and research engagement.

In this role, Chris has also been arranging symposia for local and international academics. At the symposia around 15-25 tax academics from Pretoria, South Africa and across Africa are matched with 10-15 senior international academics specialising in tax from universities like Oxford and New Orleans. African academics from Tanzania, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Namibia have attended these symposia. Subjects to date have included VAT in developing countries, tax and corruption, and in 2018 they will address tax and simplification. Participants present 14 papers over two days. In 2018 Chris edited a book featuring the best research that has been presented at these symposia.

The Impact: Lift the standard of research and education, boost academic confidence

Chris's work over the last three years is helping the University of Pretoria's Tax department to lift the quality of its research and education. Researchers benefiting from Chris's tuition will be able to pass on skills and knowledge learned to future researchers, raising the educational standard and the university's ranking.

Symposia provide an opportunity for local academics to learn from and be inspired by renowned international academics. It also expands their networks, aligns them to best international practice, sees them co-writing papers with international academics, and ultimately, builds their confidence. As a result of these symposia local academics have gone on to attend conferences internationally and get work published in Australia. Female academics have also benefited from the presence of female international academics, reshaping their understanding of what they can achieve in academia internationally.

Researcher

Chris Evans is Professor of Taxation at UNSW and former Head of the Australian School of Taxation (Atax). Chris has researched and published extensively in taxation. He is also an International Research Fellow at Oxford University, an International Fellow of the Exeter University - Institute for Fiscal Studies Tax Administration Research Centre, a Senior Research Fellow at Monash University, and has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand and the Vienna University of Business and Economics, Austria.

Ben Falkenmire 15.05.18