

Creativity, Community and the Unstereotype Movement

Red & Yellow's 2025
Community Engagement Report

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*"Her Harvest"
- Allegra Carrara*

Introduction

Engaged scholarship, as articulated by Boyer (1996), emphasises the intentional connection between academic inquiry and the needs, experiences and aspirations of broader society. Similarly, Giroux (2017) argues that higher education institutions carry a responsibility not only to develop professional competence, but also to cultivate graduates who are critically aware of their social agency and capable of contributing to more just, inclusive and reflective societies. At Red & Yellow Creative School of Business, this perspective informs the institution's educational philosophy: community engagement is not treated as an optional extension of academic work, but as a central component of preparing creative professionals who understand the power of communication, representation and narrative in shaping public perception and social outcomes.

Within the creative industries, the stories that are told - and the ways in which they are told - have a profound influence on how individuals and communities are understood. For this reason, Red & Yellow's approach to community engagement is closely aligned with the principles of the Unstereotype Alliance, which advocates for communication that challenges harmful stereotypes and promotes more authentic, inclusive and empowering representation. Through community partnerships, applied student projects and socially engaged research, the institution encourages students to interrogate dominant narratives, question

assumptions and develop creative work that reflects the complexity and dignity of the communities they engage with.

In January 2025, Red & Yellow formalised this commitment through the development of a comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy designed to guide social impact initiatives over a five-year period. The strategy recognises that meaningful engagement requires coherence, ethical grounding and sustained partnership rather than ad hoc or once-off interventions. It establishes a structured framework that connects community engagement with the institution's academic mission, emphasising ethical research practices, reciprocal collaboration, experiential learning and projects that generate tangible benefit for community partners. Central to this approach is the principle of reciprocity: communities are not positioned as passive beneficiaries of student work, but as collaborators whose insights, lived experiences and needs shape the direction of engagement.

This strategic vision is reflected in the diverse range of projects undertaken across Red & Yellow's programmes during 2024 and 2025. Students collaborated with organisations and communities to address real-world challenges through creative communication and strategic thinking. These initiatives included brand strategy development that challenged gender stereotypes in sport through collaboration with SA Rugby's Springbok Women's team, neuro-affirming social media campaigns developed with the Neurodiversity Centre to promote understanding and inclusion, and community-informed visual identity work exploring the heritage and evolving identity of the Salt River community. Across these projects, students were encouraged to critically engage with questions of representation, voice and cultural sensitivity while producing work that contributes meaningfully to the organisations and communities involved.

Together, these activities illustrate how Red & Yellow is progressively embedding the principles of engaged scholarship and unstereotyped representation within its academic culture. By integrating research, teaching and community partnership, the institution creates opportunities for students to develop not only technical expertise, but also the ethical awareness and social imagination required of responsible creative practitioners. This report documents these efforts across Research, Teaching and Learning, and Community Engagement, highlighting how Red & Yellow continues to position creative education as a catalyst for more inclusive, thoughtful and socially responsive communication practices. approach to building an institution embedded meaningfully within its community.



Research

This section indicates how community engagement is incorporated into curricula at Red & Yellow Creative School of Business.

The feedback received from lecturers on community engagement projects undertaken by students at Red & Yellow illustrates how community engagement is at the heart of our teaching and learning. The feedback focuses on projects completed during 2025.

Research Committee Initiatives: Representation and Unstereotyped Communication

The Project

In 2025, the Red & Yellow Research Committee prioritised strengthening the relationship between academic research, industry practice and broader societal conversations around representation and inclusion. As part of this effort, the committee initiated a research project titled Exploring Neurodiversity in Advertising: A Critical Review of Representation, Engagement, and Ethical Practice. The study is currently in progress and seeks to examine how neurodivergent individuals are portrayed within advertising and marketing contexts.



The research responds to growing recognition within the creative industries that communication plays a powerful role in shaping societal perceptions of difference and identity.

Through a mixed-methods approach, the project aims to investigate patterns of representation in advertising, identify where stereotypes, misconceptions or exclusionary narratives may persist, and explore opportunities for more ethical, inclusive and authentic portrayals. By critically examining representation within advertising, the research initiative contributes to broader industry conversations about the responsibility of creative practitioners to challenge harmful stereotypes and produce communication that reflects the diversity and complexity of contemporary society.

The Community

The research engages multiple communities and stakeholders, including advertising and marketing professionals, creative practitioners and neurodiversity advocacy networks. As the project develops, it seeks to create opportunities for dialogue between academic researchers and industry practitioners around the ethics of representation and the impact of creative communication on public perception.

Through this engagement, the research aims to contribute to wider discussions about inclusive representation within the creative sector. The project also aligns with broader global initiatives, such as those championed by the Unstereotype Alliance, which advocate for communication practices that challenge stereotypes and promote more authentic and empowering narratives across media and advertising.

The Scope

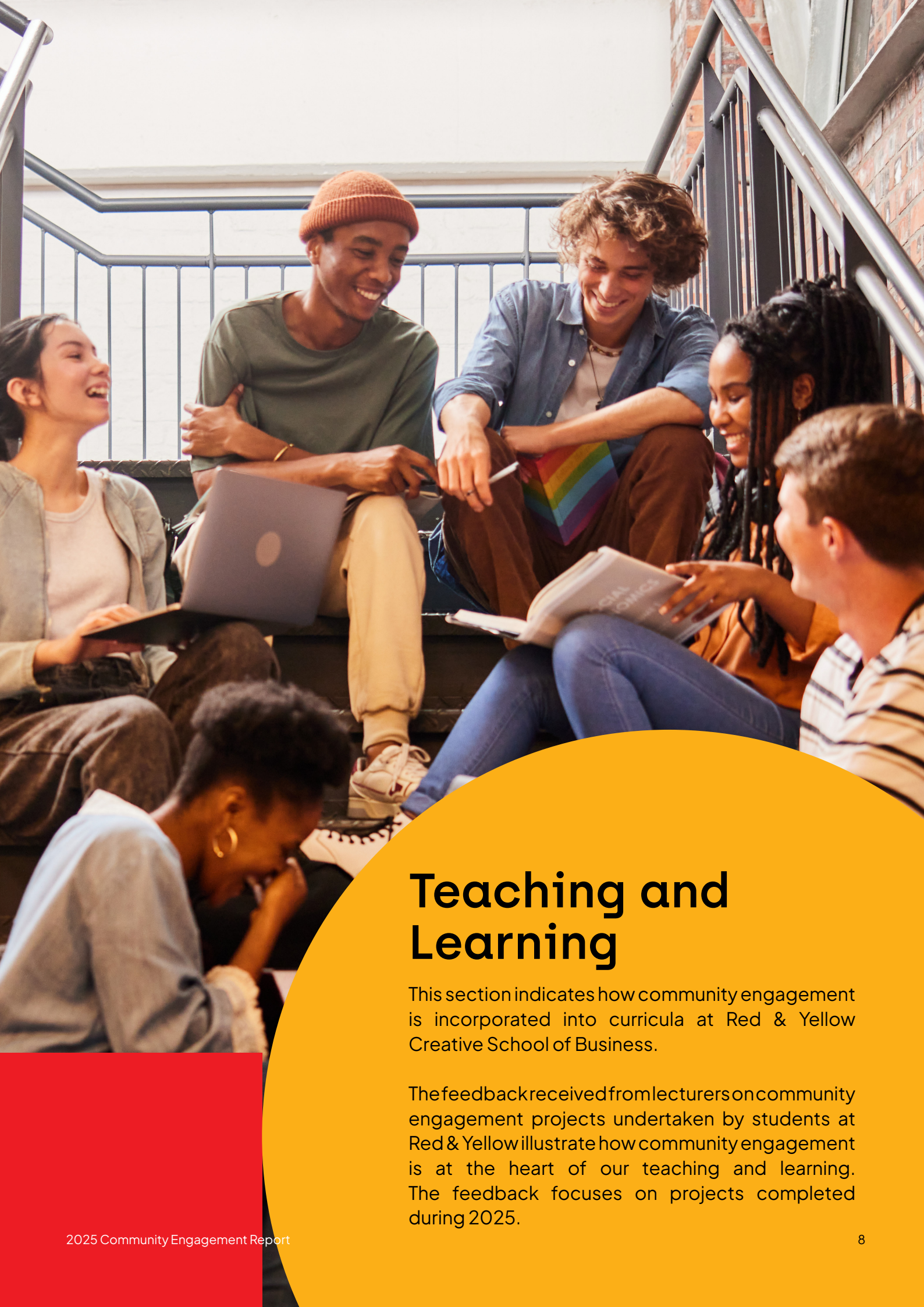
The research project is expected to result in a report of approximately 20–25 pages and employs a mixed-methods research design to analyse representation, engagement strategies and ethical considerations within advertising and marketing contexts. The study examines current portrayals of neurodivergent individuals in advertising, identifies representational gaps and explores opportunities for more inclusive communication practices.

As the research progresses, the findings are intended to provide actionable insights for industry bodies, creative agencies and marketing practitioners seeking to move toward more responsible and unsteretyped representation in their work.

Red & Yellow's Involvement

Red & Yellow has played a central role in initiating and facilitating this research project. The study is currently being conducted by members of the Research Committee with additional editing and design support from the Marketing Department.

Through this ongoing work, the Research Committee demonstrates the institution's commitment to advancing research that engages meaningfully with contemporary social issues affecting the creative industries. By exploring how representation functions within advertising and marketing, the initiative supports Red & Yellow's broader mission of preparing creative professionals who are capable of producing ethical, inclusive and unsteretyped communication.



Teaching and Learning

This section indicates how community engagement is incorporated into curricula at Red & Yellow Creative School of Business.

The feedback received from lecturers on community engagement projects undertaken by students at Red & Yellow illustrate how community engagement is at the heart of our teaching and learning. The feedback focuses on projects completed during 2025.

Springbok Women's Rugby Brand Challenge

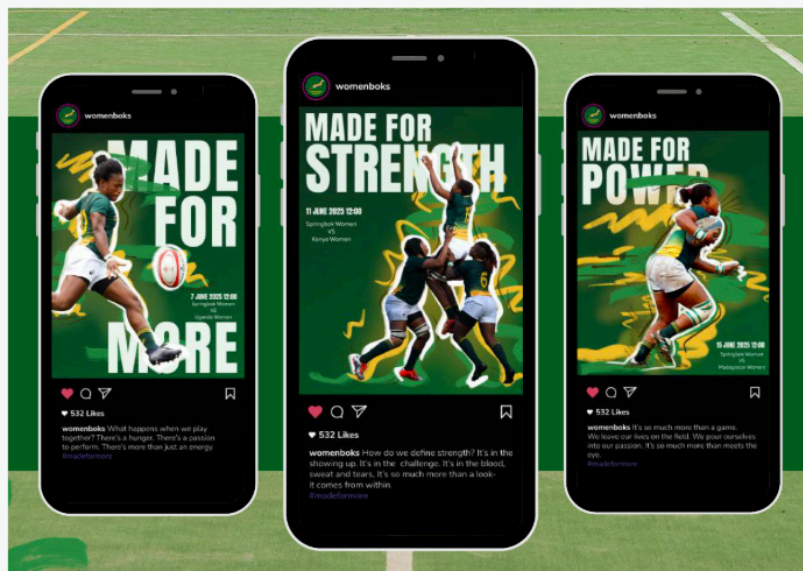
Advanced Diploma in Marketing & Advertising Communications (Full-Time)

The Project

The project involved ADMAC students responding to a strategic brand challenge from SA Rugby, centred on increasing visibility and dismantling stereotypes surrounding the Springbok Women's Rugby team. The brief highlighted the team's lack of media exposure, limited commercial partnerships, inconsistent brand identity, and exclusion from mainstream sporting culture. Students were tasked with transforming the Springbok Women from a team positioned on the margins into a movement capable of capturing national pride, emotional resonance, and public support. This process required in-depth research, strategic analysis, and the development of creative brand solutions, supported by full media plans. The project culminated in formal group presentations to SA Rugby, where students delivered integrated strategies aimed at enhancing fan engagement, improving public sentiment, and positioning the team as role models for young women across South Africa.



Source: (Zimemo, Lightening, Herbert, Forde, Deeb, Radford, Maehler, Andrew, Vos, McCarthy, Jerome, Smith, Bennett, Loitering, Solomons, 2025)



The Community

Community engagement centred on understanding and responding to the stereotypes and gendered assumptions that surround women in sport, particularly women rugby players. Students explored public perceptions, societal biases, and barriers to representation, using these insights to shape strategies aimed at shifting cultural narratives. The solutions presented effectively challenged these stereotypes, a contribution recognised by the client as meaningful and timely, given the project's proximity to the Women's Rugby World Cup and the team's strong performance. By addressing the cultural and social factors affecting visibility, the project contributed to broader conversations about women's empowerment, recognition, and equity in South African sport.

Scope

The scope of the project required students to interrogate the macro environment, identify brand and communication challenges, and conduct audience and perception research. Students were expected to construct comprehensive brand strategies that incorporated both analytical insight and creative execution. Their work involved assessing current narratives around the Springbok Women, proposing innovative brand-building approaches, and designing integrated communication solutions that extended beyond match-day visibility. Robust feedback sessions allowed students to refine their recommendations, ensuring strategic alignment and practical applicability. The final solutions, presented across three groups, demonstrated a depth of research and creativity aimed at elevating the Springbok Women's brand and its long-term legacy.



Source: (Jonsson, Cimato, Nicolau, Davidson, Loubser, Norman, Rynkiewicz, Hendricks, Rabheeni, Thompson, Baar, Hudson, Lancaster, Eksteen, Jackson, 2025)

Red & Yellow’s Programme Involvement

The project was facilitated and overseen by three Red & Yellow senior lecturers: Di Charton (Marketing & Advertising Communications), Heloise Bottomley (Visual Communication), and Craig Strydom (Copywriting). Each played a central role in guiding the students through research, strategy development, and creative execution. Regular review sessions ensured academic rigour and supported the application of theoretical knowledge to a real-world brief. Through this structured facilitation, students were able to produce compelling, strategically grounded solutions that directly addressed SA Rugby’s challenge. The collaboration proved mutually beneficial, providing SA Rugby with valuable insights while reinforcing Red & Yellow’s commitment to experiential learning and industry-integrated education.



Source: (Songe, Henderson, Friedman, Stubbs, Kerby, Malcolm, Johnston, Cheshire, Storm, Delpont, Daniels, Levin, Ncwadi, Jansen, 2025)



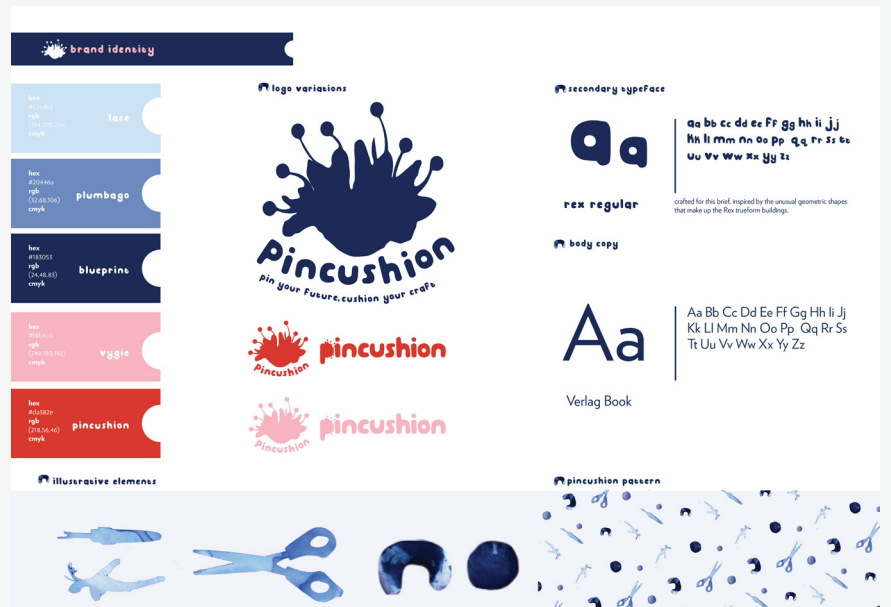
Source: (Zimemo, Lightning, Herbert, Forde, Deeb, Radford, Maehler, Andrew, Vos, McCarthy, Jerome, Smith, Bennett, Loitering, Solomons, 2025)

Salt River Illustrated Visual Identity Project

Bachelor of Arts in Visual Communication (BAVC) – Illustration & Graphic Design

The Project

The Salt River Illustrated Visual Identity Project is a longstanding community-engaged design initiative that has been incorporated into the BAVC Illustration and Graphic Design curriculum for more than five years. Each year, third-year students are tasked with creating an illustrated visual identity for Salt River, commissioned by the Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism.



Source for Pincushion: (Blomerus, 2025)

Students are required to develop a hand-rendered typeface, logo and accompanying visual language that communicates the complexity and character of Salt River as a community shaped by apartheid-era displacement, industrial development and ongoing gentrification. The brief positions students as “outsiders” who nonetheless spend substantial time in Salt River and therefore carry a responsibility, as critical creative citizens, to contribute thoughtfully and meaningfully to the area’s visual narrative.

Over the years, the project has evolved into a sustained engagement between Red & Yellow students and the Salt River community, emphasising illustration as a human-centred approach to brand identity. Students are encouraged to merge image and text in a bespoke, expressive and contextually grounded way that reflects the layered histories, identities and everyday experiences of the community.

The Community

Students engaged directly with the Salt River community through intensive primary and secondary research. This included exploring the political and social history of the area, studying academic articles and reports, and conducting interviews with local residents, business owners and workers. Through this

engagement, students were encouraged to build authentic understanding while remaining conscious of their positionality and responsibilities as designers entering a vulnerable and historically marginalised community. The research process intentionally foregrounded ethical engagement, centred on respect, informed consent, accurate representation, reciprocity, and sensitivity to trauma and displacement. The project thus cultivated responsible community-focused design thinking while honouring Salt River's lived experiences and cultural resilience.

The Scope

The scope of the project requires students to conceptualise and craft a full visual identity system for a chosen theme integral to Salt River—such as religion, education, heritage brands, culture, food, public spaces, domestic life, architecture or trade. Students were expected to:

- produce a research-driven insight and single-minded message addressing a community-centred problem
- design a hand-rendered logo (icon + wordmark)
- develop an illustrated alphabet/typeface including uppercase or lowercase letters, numerals and punctuation
- select a complementary secondary font
- create a supporting graphic system (illustrations, textures or patterns)
- apply the identity to at least three innovative applications such as a website landing page, app, social media identity, apparel, merchandise or maps
- produce a type specimen poster and one physical branded item

This rigorous scope encourages students to build a visually coherent, ethically grounded identity system rooted in community realities rather than generic stylistic trends. The continuation of this project over multiple years has also allowed the brief to be refined and strengthened, ensuring that each new cohort

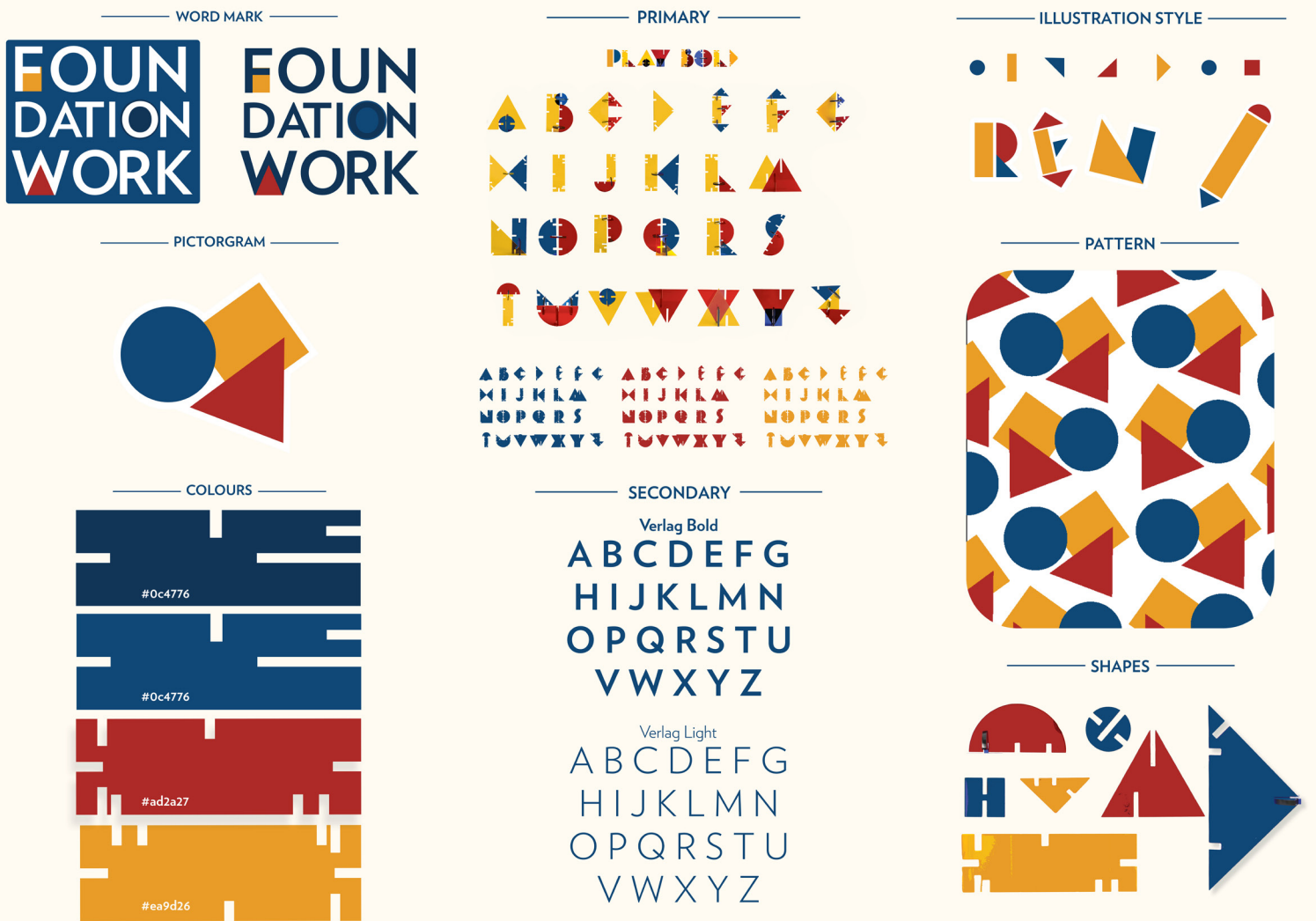
Red & Yellow's Programme Involvement

The brief is led by Red & Yellow lecturers Stephanie Simpson and Wilna Combrinck, who guide students through both the research and hand-rendered design processes. Their facilitation ensures that ethical practice, cultural sensitivity and rigorous craft remain embedded throughout the project.

By framing Salt River as a living community rather than an aesthetic backdrop, the lecturers support students in producing work that acknowledges the

complexities, histories and strengths of the area. Over the past five years, their ongoing stewardship of the project has helped establish it as a signature example of community-engaged design education within the programme.

Through this sustained initiative, students are encouraged to reflect critically on the social impact of visual communication and to develop the skills required of responsible creative practitioners. The project therefore stands as a key example of Red & Yellow's commitment to ethical engagement, community awareness and meaningful, context-sensitive design education.



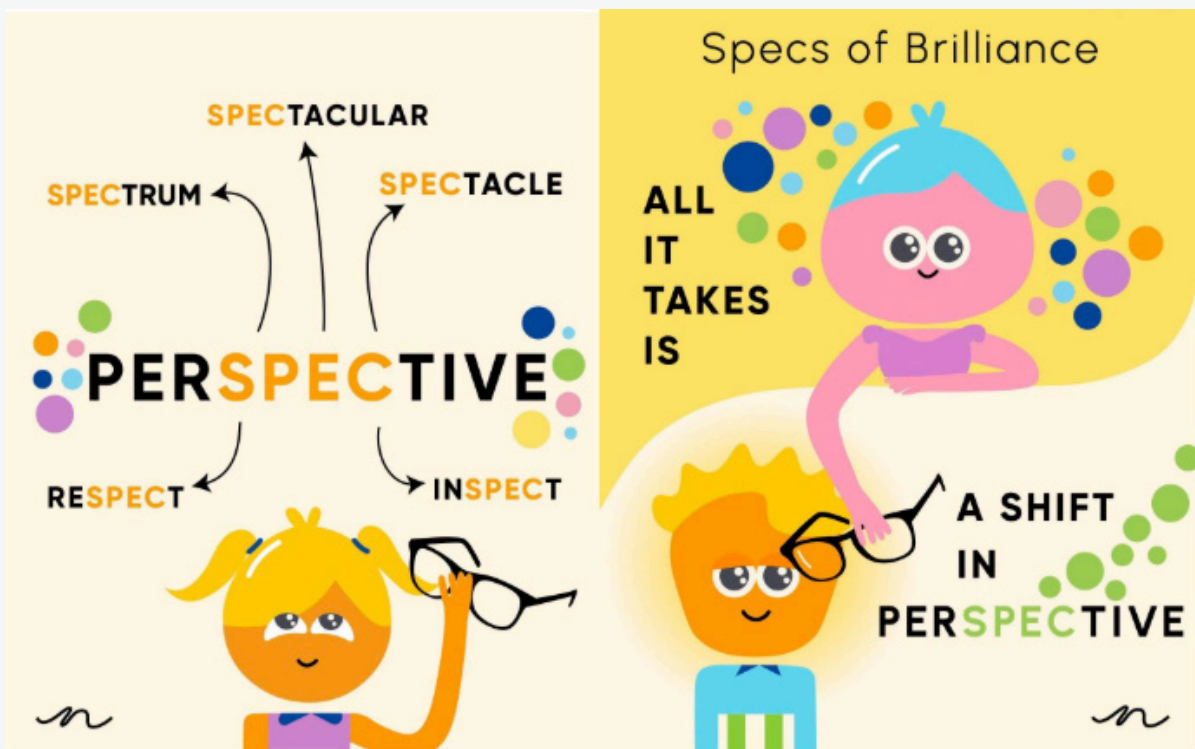
Source for Foundation work: (Pedegana, 2025)

Neurodiversity Centre Social Media Awareness Campaign

Higher Certificate in Graphic Design & Higher Certificate in Creating Digital Content

The Project

The project involved students from the Higher Certificate in Graphic Design (HCGD) and Higher Certificate in Creating Digital Content (HCCDC) in developing a social media awareness campaign for the Neurodiversity Centre’s “Our Neurohood” initiative. The Neurodiversity Centre is a multidisciplinary organisation providing clinical support, community outreach and neuro-affirming educational work for individuals with neurodevelopmental differences. The brief required students to create an imaginative, stereotype-challenging campaign for Instagram and TikTok that celebrates the strengths and creativity often associated with neurodivergence. Students were instructed to design bold, narrative-driven content including visuals, motion reels and captions while using the organisation’s brand identity. The campaign aimed to debunk misconceptions, highlight the “cool” aspects of neurodivergence, and promote a more inclusive and affirming online environment.



Source for Specs of Brilliance: (Mouskides, Domingo, Njamela, Van de Ven, De Faria, 2025)

Community

The community engagement component centred on amplifying the voices and lived experiences of neurodivergent individuals. Students consulted friends, siblings, parents and peers with neurodivergent conditions—including neurodiverse students and lecturers within the Higher Certificate programmes to gain a deeper understanding of how these conditions are experienced, perceived and stigmatised. These insights informed the tone and direction of the campaigns, ensuring that the narratives produced were respectful, representative and neuro-affirming. The campaigns sought to reduce stigma, challenge misconceptions and build public understanding, thereby supporting the Neurodiversity Centre’s mission to promote inclusion and celebrate the strengths of neurodiverse communities.

Scope

The scope of the project required students to conceptualise and produce a comprehensive social media campaign for Instagram and TikTok that challenged harmful stereotypes and celebrated the strengths of neurodivergence. Key deliverables included:

- a bold, imaginative campaign concept,
- a quirky slogan and a clear call to action,
- static visual designs, motion-based social media reels and engaging caption copy,
- consistent use of Neurodiversity Centre branding and logo placement,
- optional integration of hashtags into the campaign identity.



Source for Unstung: (Hendricks, Hove, Du Plessis, Falake, Trout, Hingston, 2025)

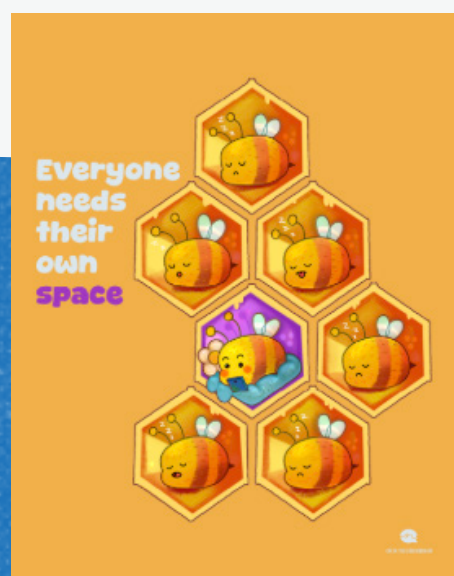
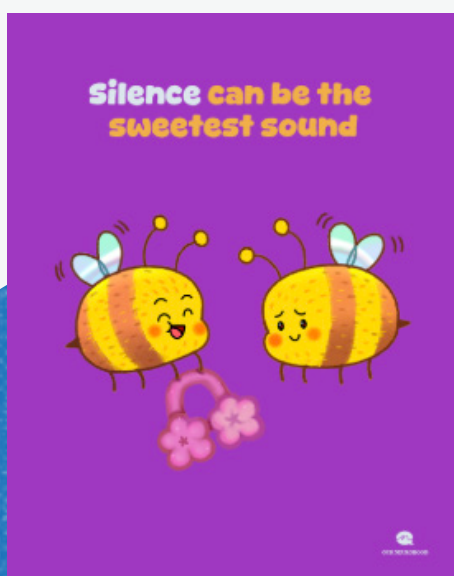
Students were encouraged to draw on a wide range of neurodivergent conditions including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, Tourette syndrome, OCD and broader neurodevelopmental differences to determine the focus and voice of their campaign. The overarching objective was to create platforms for empathy and understanding while modelling inclusive communication for a neurotypical audience.



Source for Specs of Brilliance: (Mouskides, Domingo, Njamela, Van de Ven, De Faria, 2025)

Red & Yellow’s Programme Involvement

The collaboration was facilitated by Higher Certificate lecturers Nini van der Walt (Graphic Design) and Melissa Fuhner (Digital Content Creation), who supported students throughout the research, design and production phases. Their guidance ensured that students approached the topic ethically, creatively and with cultural sensitivity, aligning the project to best practice standards for community engagement. The Neurodiversity Centre provided highly positive feedback, commending the students’ creativity, insight and neuro-affirming approach. They expressed appreciation for the meaningful impact the project had on the students themselves, and acknowledged the influential role of both lecturers in shaping the success of the work. The organisation expressed strong interest in implementing selected student campaigns on their official platforms and indicated enthusiasm for a larger collaboration in the future. This partnership highlights Red & Yellow’s commitment to social justice, unsterotyping and the empowerment of students through purposeful, real-world projects.



Source for Unstung: (Hendricks, Hove, Du Plessis, Falake, Trout, Hingston, 2025)



Community Engagement

At Red & Yellow, additional community engagements (also known as community impact) means identifying needs and creating meaningful change. By partnering with organisations and initiatives, we foster real connections that drive transformation. Collaborating with students, we empower future leaders to actively support and uplift surrounding communities, ensuring our contributions are purposeful, lasting, and impactful.

Mandela Day

Bowls of Hope Initiative

The Project

The Mandela Day Bowls of Hope initiative invited staff and students to participate in a hands-on community outreach activity aimed at supporting St Francis Soup Kitchen in Salt River. Stations were set up on the Red & Yellow rooftop, where participants gathered throughout the morning to prepare bowls of nutritious meals. The event centred on the ethos of Mandela Day making a meaningful contribution through simple acts of service that reflect collective care and social responsibility. The completed Bowls of Hope were delivered to St Francis Soup Kitchen the same afternoon for distribution through their community outreach programme. The initiative successfully demonstrated how small, coordinated efforts can create tangible and immediate impact.

Photographs of Red & Yellow staff packing bowls of soup ingredients at Red & Yellow Creative School of Business (Source: Red & Yellow Creative School of Business (Pty) Ltd, 2025b)



Community

St Francis Soup Kitchen serves individuals and families experiencing hunger and food insecurity in the Salt River area. By preparing Bowls of Hope, the Red & Yellow community contributed directly to supporting the soup kitchen's mission of providing daily nourishment and dignified care to vulnerable residents. The initiative fostered connection between the institution and the local community, reinforcing the value of solidarity, compassion and shared humanity. Through this outreach, staff and students gained a deeper awareness of the challenges faced by many households and the critical role that community organisations play in addressing these needs.

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Scope

The scope of the initiative involved coordinating a non-campus food preparation event in which all ingredients were supplied for staff and students to assemble Bowls of Hope. The activity took place between 09:00 and 12:00 on Mandela Day, with participants working across multiple stations to prepare meals efficiently and collaboratively. Once completed, the bowls were packaged and delivered to St Francis Soup Kitchen for same-day distribution. The initiative was intentionally designed to be accessible, time-bound and aligned with Mandela Day's 67-minute ethos, demonstrating how purposeful, structured engagement can yield immediate benefit to community partners.

Red & Yellow's Programme Involvement

The event was facilitated by the Human Resources Team, with support from staff and student volunteers who coordinated logistics, set up preparation stations and ensured the timely delivery of meals to St Francis Soup Kitchen. The initiative reflects Red & Yellow's ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of service and social responsibility within the institution. By actively participating in Mandela Day, Red & Yellow strengthened its relationship with a longstanding community partner and provided staff and students with an opportunity to engage in meaningful, hands-on support. The success of the Bowls of Hope initiative reinforces the institution's dedication to community-centred engagement and its broader mission to cultivate compassionate, socially aware citizens.

St Anne's Home

Christmas Drive

The Project

The Community Engagement Committee at Red & Yellow Creative Business School has established St. Anne's Home as a long-term community engagement partner, supporting women and children who have experienced gender-based violence and have limited access to safe shelter. For the second consecutive year, the Committee, together with Red & Yellow staff, implemented a festive-season donation drive in November to support the 21 women currently residing at St. Anne's Home during a particularly vulnerable time of year.



Photograph of Community Engagement members presenting gifts at St Anne's Homes (Source: Red & Yellow Creative School of Business (Pty) Ltd, 2025e)



Building on learnings from the previous year, the 2025 initiative reflected improved planning and operational processes. Collection commenced earlier in the year, and the introduction of SnapScan as a centralised payment method ensured consistency in purchasing. As a result, all Santa Boxes

were standardised, containing the same value and type of items, reinforcing dignity, fairness, and equity for each recipient. A total of 21 Santa Boxes were wrapped and delivered, along with additional clothing and baby items to support both immediate and ongoing needs.

This project forms part of a sustained and evolving partnership with St. Anne's Home, with a commitment to ongoing refinement, increased participation, and long-term impact.

The Community

This initiative directly supports vulnerable women and children within the local community, providing essential items, emotional affirmation, and dignity during the festive season. By continuing the partnership with St. Anne’s Home for a second year, the project deepens trust, continuity, and meaningful engagement with a local organisation addressing gender-based violence.



Photograph of Community Engagement members packing giftboxes at Red & Yellow Creative School of Business (Source: Red & Yellow Creative School of Business (Pty) Ltd, 2025c)

The initiative fosters a strong sense of collective responsibility and compassion among Red & Yellow staff and students, reinforcing the value of sustained engagement over once-off interventions. Through ongoing involvement, the project contributes to community wellbeing while cultivating a culture of empathy, care, and social accountability within the institution.

The Scope

The initiative’s scope includes the provision of essential food supplies to students, focusing on accessibility and destigmatisation of food assistance. It has expanded from a lecturer-managed project to a student-led initiative, inviting greater participation and collaboration among the student body. The SRC is currently developing design collateral to enhance the project’s visibility and effectiveness, with an emphasis on communication and engagement within the student community. This shift allows for a broader impact and more sustainable support for those in need.

Red & Yellow's Involvement

The Red & Yellow Community Engagement Committee led the planning, coordination, and execution of the initiative, with active participation from staff across the institution. Committee members oversaw stakeholder coordination, fundraising mechanisms, and logistical planning, including procurement and wrapping of the Santa Boxes.

As part of Red & Yellow's broader commitment to sustainable community engagement, the partnership with St. Anne's Home has been identified as a long-term engagement focus, with plans to increase Student Representative Council (SRC) involvement in future cycles. This project reflects the programme's commitment to ethical engagement, continuous improvement, and meaningful social impact grounded in long-term relationships rather than short-term interventions.



Photograph of Community Engagement members wrapping gifts at Red & Yellow Creative School of Business (Source: Red & Yellow Creative School of Business (Pty) Ltd, 2025d)

Conclusion

This Community Engagement Report reflects a year of deliberate, value-driven work through which Red & Yellow Creative School of Business has continued to embed engagement as a core expression of its academic, ethical and social mandate. Across research, teaching and learning, and community outreach, the initiatives documented in this report demonstrate a clear commitment to sustained, reciprocal and contextually responsive partnerships. Guided by the Community Engagement Strategy formalised in 2025, the institution has strengthened its ability to align creative education with social relevance, ethical practice and measurable community impact.

The projects outlined throughout this report illustrate how engaged scholarship at Red & Yellow operates in practice. Research initiatives have contributed to industry conversations around representation and ethical communication. Teaching and learning activities have enabled students to apply disciplinary knowledge to real-world challenges, cultivating critical awareness, empathy and professional responsibility. Community outreach initiatives have foregrounded dignity, continuity and care, particularly through long-term partnerships such as St Anne's Home, where sustained engagement has strengthened both impact and trust.

Central to these efforts is a recognition that the creative industries play a powerful role in shaping the stories societies tell about themselves. In this context, Red & Yellow's approach to community engagement aligns closely with the principles of the Unstereotype Alliance, which advocates for communication that challenges harmful stereotypes and promotes more inclusive and authentic representation. Through research, applied student projects and community partnerships, the institution encourages students to critically examine dominant narratives and to develop creative work that reflects the diversity, dignity and complexity of the communities they engage with.

Collectively, these initiatives affirm Red & Yellow's commitment to reciprocity and responsible engagement, ensuring that communities are not positioned as passive beneficiaries but as collaborators whose knowledge, lived experience and perspectives shape the work undertaken. At the same time, students develop the competencies required of socially conscious creative practitioners: ethical decision-making, cultural sensitivity, collaborative problem-solving and the ability to challenge stereotypes through thoughtful and inclusive communication.

As the institution moves forward, this report serves both as an account of progress and as a foundation for continued growth. The partnerships, practices and structures established during this period position Red & Yellow to deepen its engagement, expand student participation and further integrate community-informed learning across programmes. In doing so, the school reaffirms its role not only as a provider of creative education, but as an active contributor to building a more inclusive, equitable and unstereotyped creative landscape.

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