Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships: Global Perspectives by Hall, B., Tandon, R. and Tremblay, C. (eds.) 2015. Victoria, BC.: University of Victoria Press. 306pp. ISBN 978-1-55058-562-9

The edited book *Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships: Global Perspectives* came together as a result of much collaboration and extensive partnership, a direct testament to what the editors are looking to promote. This book methodically and thoughtfully presents research findings, largely in the form of case studies, of institutional arrangements that facilitate and support research partnerships between civil society organizations (CSOs) [the 'community'] and higher education institutions (HEIs) [the 'university']. An online global survey, along with the gathering of in-depth case studies from around the world, was conducted during 2013-2015 in order to assess how community-university research partnerships are (or aren't) operating globally.

The book uniquely and effectively combines voices from the global South and North and from scholars and community leaders who work in a variety of disciplines. By combining policy and practice as well as specific examples of partnerships from a variety of specific universities, the book comprehensively achieves its purpose to demonstrate that high quality research can and is being done in many universities around the world, and provide practical and achievable guidelines as to how this can be achieved despite challenges. The book is presented in a clear and matter-or-fact tone and is objective, yet analytical, in its presentation.

Overall, the book is scholarly yet accessible, and would be quite useful for students, academics and community organizers alike who are looking to partner to do research in a more community-based or participatory way. Policy and decision makers in HEIs (who focus on community engagement) would likely benefit the most from this book as it describes, in great detail, the different policies, funding streams, incentives, capacities and organizational strategies that institutions globally have put in place (or begun to) to ensure communities and universities collaborate. Innovation and creativity are found within this book with respect to what many individuals and institutions around the world are doing to make research more meaningful and impactful to civil society.

Situated against a well-developed backdrop (Chapter 2) of the challenging institutional and political realities of HEIs (particularly in the Global North), and current global trends in university-community partnerships (Chapter 3), the editors introduce three core themes (Chapter 4) from each case study: policies, institutional practices in HEIs and civil societies and community networks. Twelve (12) detailed case studies (organized by country) then follow, which were selected "based on prior information, and also from the broad findings emerging from the survey" (Tandon & Singh, 2015, p.45). The countries highlighted throughout the book were placed into two categories: 1) those wherein national/provincial policy for supporting community engagement and partnership already existed (Argentina, Canada, Indonesia, Netherlands, Palestine, South Africa, United Kingdom and USA); and 2) those wherein such policy was in the making or the possibility of securing institutional policy was high (Brazil,

India, Ireland, Jordan).

Each case study presented incorporates the same information presented in similar order, which makes the book predictably easy to follow. The case study is presented as 1) an analysis of policy framework with respect to community-university research partnerships; 2) an analysis of two HEIs selected from each country with respect to institutional structure and provisions in place for community-university research partnerships; and 3) an examination of the local civil society network that has been actively partnering with HEIs. While helpful to know in advance how each case study will be presented, the length and amount of detail in each case study, at times, is repetitive and extensive. I suspect the editors had a hard time choosing which countries to highlight, and therefore decided to include more than they likely needed to. While the book includes a comparative analysis chapter (Chapter 5) and a conclusion, a summarizing table or chart of key findings would have been nice to see at the end. By the end of the book, the unique characteristics of each country became difficult to recall, with the exception of extreme outliers. Indonesia stuck out as having the most progressive institutionalization of community-university research partnerships, while the country of Jordan appeared to have the most challenges.

This research project was supported wholly by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) as well as the UNESCO programme on Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education hosted at the University of Victoria. The editors themselves are contributors to the research and are well-established, engaged scholars in community development, community-based research and participatory action research. Their experiences as researchers with civil society organizations and as leaders in their respective academic institutions make them invaluable sources and conveners on this topic. As far as I could tell, this is the most up to date book on the current state of university-community research partnerships as well as the most 'international' book in scope within this field of research.

This edited volume of 12 case studies contains rich data. The authors used a variety of sources for each case study including interviews, field visits, focus groups, secondary sources and knowledgeable persons who were vital to the local scene. The methodology was appropriate for gathering as much information as possible, in a variety of ways. The online global survey indicated which countries and cases were to be elaborated further.

In closing, this book provides more answers than questions for those interested in pursuing and promoting community-university research partnerships, but also realistically exposes the reader to the varying challenges that come along with doing this type of research. I was left feeling more hopeful than discouraged, although institutional buy-in and financial resources will likely continue to act as deterrents for this type of research within the academy. As someone who believes this academy could do more to reach out to its local civil society (community) in an equitable, meaningful and non-hierarchal conversation, I was grateful to read a book that demonstrates that more is not only possible, it is achievable.

References

Tandon R. & Singh, W. (2015). Introduction to case studies. In B. Hall, R. Tandon & C. Tremblay (Eds.), *Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships: Global Perspectives* (pp.41-52). Victoria, BC: University of Victoria Press.

Brianna Strumm,
Carleton University
Email: brianna.strumm@carleton.ca