

Global Community University Networks Call for Increased North-South Cooperation



The Talloires
Network



Living Knowledge
The International Science Shop Network



GUNI
GLOBAL UNIVERSITY
NETWORK FOR INNOVATION



The Association
of Commonwealth
Universities



Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London



University
of Victoria



Global Alliance on
Community
Engaged Research

Hosted by the Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) at the Institute of Education, London, England.

On September 23rd 2010, eight international networks supporting community university engagement across the world gathered to participate in the first Global Video Dialogue on Enhancing North-South Cooperation in Community-University Engagement. These networks, some of which did not know of each other, represent several thousand universities, professional bodies and civil society organisations. Networks that gathered for the Global Dialogue on Enhancing North-South Cooperation in Community-University Engagement are both university-led and community-led and were as follows: the Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios, Commonwealth Universities Extension and Engagement Network, Global Alliance on Community Engaged Research (GACER), Global Universities Network for Innovation (GUNI), Living Knowledge Network, PASCAL International Observatory, Participatory Research in Asia, and the Talloires Network.

In this age of faltering financial economies and particular attention to environmental sustainability, the video platform of the dialogue intentionally set out to explore a new way of working together by gathering from various corners of the globe without taxing already limited resources. The Global Dialogue was hosted by the Institute of Education at the University of London and Co-Chaired by Professor Sir David Watson, with the Centre for Higher Education Studies and Principal of Green Templeton College at Oxford University and Dr. Rajesh Tandon, President of PRIA and Chair of GACER. David Watson describes the exercise as having “all the joy of good professional companionship, along with the excitement of an innovative format and the reassurance that we were achieving results without burning significant natural or financial resources.” Rajesh Tandon noted that, “as higher education in India and China expand dramatically to meet the needs of our rapidly changing nations, the responsibility of higher education to their communities and regions must be a central concern.” The idea of gathering internationally focused Community-University Engagement networks to discuss the unique role and perspective of each network, tensions and challenges faced, and ways in which such networks can work together to make an impact on complex issues affecting local, national and international communities originated with Budd Hall from the University of Victoria's Office of Community-Based Research and GACER Secretary.

Complementary and Collaborative

The dialogue provided a space to begin a conversation about how knowledge created in both communities and other sites as well as our higher education institutions can be respected in the process of responding better to the needs of our communities; on how to address needs and demands for alternative appraisal systems to existing global 'League Tables' for ranking universities; brainstorming appropriate roles and contributions of international agencies such as UNESCO, World Bank, bi-lateral aid agencies, philanthropic foundations and religious institutions towards broadening the practices of community-university partnerships; beginning to strategise how the networks can reach out to missing voices, regions and vulnerable communities, as well as establishing relationships to address how such an alliance of networks can support future scholars, activists and administrators.

Among the outcomes of the Global Dialogue is the understanding of ways in which networks, such as those that participated, are complementary. Each network present, expressed a collective desire to develop ways of working together as a critical mass of knowledge communities representing multiple knowledge communities. With such a critical mass, the potential exists to collectively influence institutions, governing agencies and bodies to broaden the scope, visibility, practice and impact of community-university partnerships making a real difference in the lives of people in local and regional communities across the world. The informally named "Big Tent" group has agreed to give visibility to each others networks, conferences and projects, to continue to organize a series of video dialogues and podcasts and to explore a time for a face to face meeting something in the future.

Communiqué

Months before the Global Dialogue took place, networks and their community and university partners contributed in a collaborative process to develop a Communiqué of principles and agreements that could serve to enhance North-South cooperation in community-university engagement. It was drafted then discussed and revised in the space of the Global Dialogue. Subsequent iterations were made with further revisions reflecting the voices of a broad spectrum of networks and their partners recognising that different networks have quite different constituencies. The Communiqué belongs to all the various networks to use within their own networks to demonstrate that we are all part of a wider world of theory and practice. International community and university networks are encouraged to use it strategically wherever it might be helpful. For example, it is being used to alert international funding bodies of these kinds of strategies for investment and support and to send to national research granting higher education councils and bodies and local government. Translations in Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Danish are available. Translations into Chinese, Japanese, Swedish and German are underway. Additional offers to translate the Communiqué are most welcome. Please feel free to issue releases and distribute it throughout your networks, use it for policy and climate enhancing purposes and in ways it may be most effective within your circles.

Finding the right language and the right means to provide a space for exchange and dialogue can be a challenge. As a first step, we celebrate the act of coming together through the Global Dialogue and we focus on the strengths of our collaboration.



Top L-R: Liam Roberts (ACU), Budd Hall (GACER), David Watson (IOE, Co-chair), Rajesh Tandon (PRIA, GACER, Co-chair), Paul Manners (NCCPE). Video L-R: Christina Escrigas and Yasmin Cruz (GUNI), Henk Mulder (LKN), Vice-Chancellor Razaq (University Sains Malaysia) at London Studio.

Bottom L-R: Nirmala Lall (GACER), Alison Peacock (IOE-CHES), Lean Heng Chan (GACER), PASCAL: Michael Osborne, James Powell and Chris Shepherd. Audio only : Chandrakant Puri (ACU – Mumbai), Elizabeth Babcock (Talloires) and Norbert Steinhaus (LKN).

Enhancing North-South Cooperation In Community-University Engagement

We, international community and university networks representing several thousand universities, professional bodies and civil society organisations: the Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios, Commonwealth Universities Extension and Engagement Network, Global Alliance on Community Engaged Research, Global Universities Network for Innovation, Living Knowledge Network, PASCAL International Observatory, Participatory Research in Asia, and the Talloires Network, held a global dialogue on North-South Cooperation in Community-University Engagement on September 23 2010; **Deeply concerned with** local, national and global challenges in the form of complex issues of an economic, social justice, health, cultural, environmental and sustainability nature; **Taking Account** of the growing interest in global higher education circles of the importance of the expansion of and support for structures, practices and policies to support community-university engagement; **Respecting** previous statements of principle by each of our networks; **Aware** that while there are some extremely innovative examples of community-university partnerships in the majority world, nevertheless there remains a significant imbalance in resources for strengthening strategic knowledge partnerships especially in vulnerable populations and poorer countries of the global South; **Supported by Evidence that** the co-creation of knowledge, the use and sharing of such knowledge through the engagement of our students and scholars jointly by our higher education institutions and our community partners is a critical contribution to meeting the challenges of our times; **Recognizing that** knowledge is created in multiple sites such as universities, communities, the private sector, civil society organizations, government agencies, international organisations and social movements; **In Respect of** Indigenous knowledge systems and other ways of knowing and being; **Understanding Community-University Engagement to mean** respectful and genuine collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of domestic partnership and reciprocity;

Underscore the following principles in our Call to Action:

1. All higher education institutions express a strategic commitment to genuine community engagement, societal relevance of research and education and social responsibility as a core principle.
2. Community engagement activities be based on two-way communication and guided by values of inclusion, mutual respect, integrity, freedom and democratic decision-making.
3. Recognise and support the role of community partners in the creation and co-creation of knowledge.
4. Scholars, researchers, students, practitioners, communities and their networks be enabled to participate in public engagement activities through appropriate training, and support.
5. Scholars, researchers, students, practitioners, communities and their networks be recognised and valued for their involvement with public engagement.
6. In the interest of achieving global targets and world equity challenges as expressed by the Millennium Development Goals and other such statements, investment be strengthened to build community-university engagement capacities especially in the global South with attention to vulnerable populations and less wealthy countries.
7. Rather than world-ranking systems for higher education that are often ineffective in advancing engagement practices, we support appraisal systems such as the Alternative University Appraisal system (in collaboration with the United Nations University) as development tools.

We believe that the transformative potential of our community sector organisations and our higher education institutions is enhanced when we combine our collective knowledge, global connections, skills and resources to address the myriad of social, economic, cultural, health and environmental challenges in our places and regions.

For further information, please contact Budd Hall, Secretary of the Global Alliance for Community Engaged Research at bhall@uvic.ca or any of the 'Big Tent' Global Dialogue partners.

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