Mobilizing Community and Academic Knowledge for Transformative Change:

The Story of the UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education

A Reflection Paper for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO
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About the Authors

Dr. Budd Hall

Dr. Budd Hall is the Co-Chair of the UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education and Professor of Community Development in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. Budd was the founding Director of the University of Victoria Office of Community-based Research and is a Senior Fellow in the Centre for Global Studies at the University of Victoria. Former Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria, Budd has worked in Nigeria, Tanzania, Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Germany, Thailand, Yemen, Uganda, England, and the United States. He has done both theoretical and practical work for almost 40 years in various aspects of community-based adult education and learning and participatory research. Budd is a member of the International Adult Education Hall of Fame and was selected for the 2005 Canadian Bureau of International Education Innovation in International Education Award. He was granted an Honourary Doctorate by St. Francis Xavier University in 2011. His most recent books include *Learning and Education for a Better World: The Role of Social Movements* by Sense Publishing, *Knowledge, Democracy and Action: Community University Research Partnerships in Global Perspectives* by Manchester University Press, *World Report on Higher Education 5* by GUNi and Palgrave-Macmillan, *Teaching Learning Community Based Research* by the University of Toronto Press, and *Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships: Global Perspectives* by UVic and PRIA press. Budd is the husband of Dr. Darlene Clover, father of Dana and Shawn Hall, Grandfather of Quincy Pugh Hall, Leo Pugh Hall, and Ashton Edward Hall. He is also a poet.

Dr. Rajesh Tandon

Rajesh Tandon is an internationally acclaimed leader and practitioner of participatory research and development. He founded Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), a voluntary organization providing support to grassroots initiatives in South Asia and has been its Chief Functionary since 1982. He has recently been appointed Co-Chair of the prestigious UNESCO Chair on Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education. He has championed the cause of building organizations and capacities of the marginalized through their knowledge, learning and empowerment. He has contributed to the emergence of several local, national and international groups and initiatives to promote authentic and participatory development societies. He has authored more than 100 articles, a dozen books and numerous training manuals on democratic governance and management to NGOs, participatory research and people-centred development. For his distinguished work on gender issues, the Government of India honoured him with the prestigious Award in Social Justice in March, 2007. The University of Victoria, Canada, awarded Dr. Tandon the degree of Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa) in June 2008. He is the first Indian to be inducted to the International Adult and Continuing Education (IACE) Hall of Fame (class of 2010).

Introduction

The UNESCO Chair as a Strategic Advantage

Before moving into a discussion of the history of this particular Chair, we would like to say that the creation and designation of this shared Chair has provided us will an outstanding platform for policy influence and advocacy both within our own organisations, our two countries (Canada and India) and within the international scene. While both of the Chairs have been quite well known for their many years of work in the field of research, development and action, it is fair to say that the creation of the UNESCO Chair has provided us with visibility and an additional sense of legitimacy and gravitas that we had not experienced previously. Among the many policy initiatives that we have undertaken are:

- Invitations to edit two of the World Reports on Higher Education (GUNi-UNESCO-UN University)
- Invitation to advise the Government of India on a major plan to create community university engagement centres in public universities
- Invitations to advise and serve on the jury for the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Research programme
- Invitations to advise universities and their partners in Canada, India, Ireland, Italy, UK, Uganda, Indonesia, South Africa, Hong Kong, Bangladesh and Korea
- Invitations to contribute to policy conferences in India, Italy, Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, UK, Colombia and Korea
- Invitations to contribute to more than 30 books and journals on Community-Based Research
- Downloads of over 10,000 copies of our free and open access reports and publications
- Keynote addresses at international conferences in over 30 countries

Roots

Rajesh and Budd have been working together on issues of knowledge, democracy, social transformation and community-based participatory research for nearly 40 years.

In the 1970s, Budd Hall (who was working in Tanzania at the time) and Rajesh Tandon (who was working in rural Rajasthan, India), had similar experiences as young researchers. Both had been trained in state-of-the-art social science research methods—Budd at UCLA in California and Rajesh at Case Western Reserve in Ohio, both in the USA. They did not know each other. Each was working in community settings with the hope that their research might contribute to community development in positive ways in those local settings. They were fresh from PhD training programs, skilled in the latest survey research methods, and committed to a social justice vision of their work.

Rajesh was working with tribal farmers in southern Rajasthan, researching how they were being supported by government policies, services and structures. Born in a middle-class family in a city and educated by elite higher education institutions, Rajesh found that illiterate tribal women and men in the villages of southern Rajasthan had more knowledge about many aspects of rural life and farming practices than Rajesh had. The formal knowledge that Rajesh could bring to the situations they were facing had limited benefit. On the other hand, the knowledge that these rural families had which Rajesh needed to survive, let alone learn, was practical and transformative. Some thousands of kilometres away, Budd was working with the Institute of

Adult Education in Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania) to plan adult education courses for communities of the nation that was being led by the then President, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. Budd found that the sophisticated questionnaires and surveys, tabulated by the single University of Dar-es-Salaam computer, produced data that was totally out of line with what the villagers themselves were seeking.

Rajesh and Budd discovered through their engagement directly with communities in India and Tanzania that research methods, which they had been trained in, with emphasis on the researcher identifying the research questions, the methods to be used, and the ways to present the results in an academic form, were not effective at the community level. What they learned is that most social science research methods were designed with an implicit understanding that knowledge was needed for authorities to make decisions on behalf of farmers, young mothers, out-of-work youth, the poor and the excluded. Research methods were seen to be objective, neutral, scientific, unbiased ways to create knowledge. And the natural audience for much research of the day was seen to be other researchers. From the Tanzanian experience, Budd wrote an article titled "Participatory Research: An Approach for Change". In that article, participatory research was articulated as an approach that combined social research with learning and action. Rajesh, who was reflecting on his similar personal knowledge insights as he completed his PhD, got in touch with Budd. That chance contact led to an intellectual and creative partnership that has lasted nearly 40 years.

The International Participatory Research Network was born with Rajesh as the Coordinator and Budd leading the implementation. Through this early network (from 1977-1992), the theory and practice of Participatory Research was spread globally through social movements and civil society networks. In the intervening years, Budd played a role as Chair of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Toronto and later the Dean of Education at the University of Victoria. Rajesh founded and continued to build Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) as the preeminent global participatory research and training institute in India. They re-engaged as a team in 2008 when the Global Alliance for Community Engaged Research (GACER) network was launched, which eventually led to the creation of the UNESCO Chair.

Between the 1970s and up until the very late 1990s, it was rare to find a mention of participatory research (PR) within universities, despite strong theoretical contributions from Latin American intellectuals such as Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda. While social movements and grassroots practitioners had taken up PR with enthusiasm and the international development community had adapted similar participatory principles throughout their professional networks, universities were slow to recognize the intrinsic values of PR. PR was a critical challenge to the research orthodoxies of the day, but offered many advantages for researchers who wanted to see the production of knowledge linked to policy changes, political action or community development. This resistance from academia to incorporating PR in its curriculum/teaching and practice of research was largely because of the heavy hand of an academic knowledge culture that is both discipline-bound and self-referential; it thus resisted the understanding that knowledge is created every day by people living in their multiple realities as farmers, mothers, youthful informal sector workers, those struggling for shelter and clean water.

The 21st century saw the creation of funding opportunities in Canada from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) for what they called 'Community University Research Alliances (CURA)'. In Europe, the Science Shop movement of the 1970s was recognized by the European Council as an important approach to developing 'science with and for society'. In USA, building on the very early

experiences of the Land Grant Institutions, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation released reports that were to open up attention to 'engaged' research, participatory action research and to the principles of co-construction of knowledge for enhancing the public good. These breakthroughs were amplified by demands from Indigenous peoples for a new approach to research, from people living with HIV and AIDS to lead research on their own lives and to community health workers who saw links between PR and principles of social determinants of health.

The UNESCO Co-Chair is Born

Budd and Rajesh were invited to contribute papers on and to participate in the conference on "Role of Higher Education in Human & Social Development", convened and published by the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) in 2008. GUNI was created after the first UNESCO Conference on Higher Education in 1997, and has its secretariat in Barcelona. This partnership with GUNI led to the participation in the Second UNESCO Conference in Higher Education in Paris in 2009. The conference communiqué made significant references to importance of Indigenous knowledge and partnerships with communities:

"Higher Education Institutions, through their core functions (teaching, research and service to the community) carried out in the context of institutional autonomy and academic freedom should increase their interdisciplinary focus and promote critical thinking and active citizenship. This would contribute to sustainable development, peace, wellbeing and the realization of human rights [Higher Education] must not only give solid skills for the present and future world but must also contribute to the education of ethical citizens committed to the construction of peace, the defense of human rights and the values of democracy (UNESCO, 2009) ''.

During this period (2008-2011), Budd and Rajesh had engaged very actively with their national, regional and international networks which focused on community engagement in higher education. These networks invited Rajesh and Budd to consider joining the UNESCO Chairs Network, due to their previous involvement with GUNI and the UNESCO Secretariat in Paris.

There are more than 700 UNESCO Chairs so far in the world. The UNITWIN/Chair programme of UNESCO has just celebrated its 25 year anniversary. There are less than a dozen Chairs focused on higher education, with GUNI as the designated facilitator for this smaller network. All UNESCO Chairs are allotted to a single academic based in a single university.

Given the core value of linking practitioner knowledge with academic knowledge, and sustaining the collaboration between Budd and Rajesh, a Co-Chair arrangement was proposed to UNESCO, with Budd based in a northern university in Western Canada (University of Victoria) and Rajesh based in a southern practitioner organisation (PRIA) in Delhi India. Such a unique proposal for a Co-Chair status was actively supported by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. The UNESCO Secretariat in Paris agreed to make the necessary changes in the protocol, and the UNESCO Chair on Community-based Research & Social Responsibility in Higher Education became a reality in July 2012.

To our surprise, we discovered that a UNESCO Chair is 'coronation without throne or kingdom'. We were allowed to use the UNITWIN/UNESCO logo, and that is it. We had envisioned an ambitious four year programme of research, policy advocacy and capacity enhancement.

Our work has been influenced by the pedagogical thinking of the Indian Nobel Prize winning Poet, Rabindranath Tagore and by the work of the Brazilian educational visionary, Paulo Freire. The primary goal of our UNESCO Chair is to build research capacity in the fields of CBR and Social Responsibility in Higher Education in the Global South and the excluded North. But our concern is not only with the content of this work, but the process of the work. Like the structure of our Chair itself which draws attention to the values and principles of CBR, our goal is to work in ways that promote and respect community university co-construction of knowledge. We promote these values in several important ways:

> 1) *Committing to open access, free downloadable publishing;*
> 2) *Supporting CBR as a place based and culturally centred approach;*
> 3) *Working with and supporting already existing regional and international networks;*
> 4) *Encouraging the creation of autonomous research hubs that are partnerships between community sector organisations and universities;*
> 5) *Deepening our understanding of Indigenous and other subaltern knowledge systems; and*
> 6) *Underscoring the critical importance of learning in the improvement of our effectiveness. Our work is organic, place-based, and links global and local with the academy and the community.*

Support and Engagements

We have been fortunate to receive overwhelming support from several directions. First and foremost, our host institutions—University of Victoria (UVIC) and PRIA—generously offered human, physical and modest financial support to carry forward our activities. We had to find our own chairs!

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO has been a constant source of support, by encouraging regular communication of our activities, and organizing meetings with the other UNESCO Chairs in Canada, including sharing information with fellow members of the commission.

Nationally, Rajesh has been able to secure wide recognition and support from Higher Education fraternity in India. University Grants Commission (UGC) invited him to support the formulation of a new Scheme for Establishing Centres for Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement (CFSRCE) in Indian Universities in 2014 (UGC, 2014). The Association of Indian Universities (AIU) co-hosted several events and shared our work through their journals. Furthermore, Rajesh was invited in 2016 by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FICCI)[1] Higher Education Committee to conduct a Master Class on '*Living in Harmony: Universities & Communities; Strategies for Successful Community University Engagement (CUE)*' (UNESCO Chair, 2016a). This Master Class was part of the pre-conference deliberations for the FICCI Higher Education Summit 2016.

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[1] FICCI is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India, and plays a leading role in higher education policy advocacy and debates in India; among other sectors it engages in.

In 2017, the FICCI Higher Education Committee constituted a Taskforce on 'Social Outreach in Higher Education', which was chaired by Rajesh. The taskforce produced a knowledge paper on '*Social Outreach in Higher Education'* (FICCI, 2017), which was formally released in the inaugural session of the FICCI Higher Education Summit 2017 on November 9, 2017 at New Delhi.

We have regularly received encouragement and appreciation from UNESCO Director for South Asia and his team in Delhi.

GUNI has been very supportive of our Chair in several ways. We were appointed as Guest Editors of GUNI's 5th World Report on Higher Education in 2012. Budd hosted a seminar in March 2013 in Victoria to prepare the intellectual base for the Report, and we also participated in the 6th International Conference on Higher Education (themed, '*Let's build transformative knowledge to drive social chang*e') hosted by GUNI in Barcelona in May 2013. This Report was published in March 2014, entitled, '*Knowledge, Engagement & Higher Education: Contributing to Social Change'* (GUNI, 2014).

We were again invited to serve on the Editorial Team of GUNI's 6th World Report on Higher Education in 2015. It was published in March 2017 entitled, *'Towards a Socially Responsible University: Balancing the Global with the Local'* (GUNI, 2017).

Programmes of the Co-Chair

We have developed our programme of work in three broad categories: knowledge production and mobilisation, policy development and advocacy, and individual and institutional capacity enhancement.

Knowledge production and mobilisation

Knowledge production and mobilization on various aspects of community-based research as a contribution to knowledge democracy has been a prime research agenda to enhance the global understanding of social responsibility in higher education (UNESCO Chair, 2016b).

(i)   Strengthening Community Engagement in Higher Education Institutions[2] (UNESCO Chair, 2015a)
(ii)   Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships[3] (Hall, et. al., 2015; UNESCO Chair, 2015b)
(iii)   Building the 'Next-Generation of Community Based Researchers[4] (Tandon et. al., 2016a; 2016b)

In addition, we have written several papers based on our joint work:

(i)   Higher Education and Community-based Research: Creating a Global Vision (Munck, et. al., 2014)
(ii)   Beyond Epistemicide: Knowledge Democracy & Higher Education (Hall, 2015)
(iii)   Knowledge Democracy & Excellence in Engagement (Tandon, et. al., 2016c)

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[2] Read more about the project here: http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/index.php/2015/05/11/community-engagement-in-higher-education-institutions/
[3] Read more about the project here: http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/index.php/2014/04/30/project-strengthening-community-university-research-partnerships/
[4] Read more about the project here: http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/index.php/2014/07/18/building-the-next-generation-of-community-based-researchers-the-nextgen-project/

(iv)   Decolonization of Knowledge, Epistemicide, Participatory Research and Higher Education (Hall & Tandon, 2017a)

(v)   Impact Assessment: Community-Engaged Research (CER) at the University of Victoria, 2009-2015 (Tremblay, 2017)

(vi)   Gauging the Impact of Community University Engagement Initiatives in India (Singh, 2017)

(vii)   Participatory Research: Where Have We Been, Where Are We Going? − A dialogue (Hall & Tandon, 2017b)

(viii)   Making the Commitment: Contribution of Higher Education to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Tandon, 2017)

The traditional mode of academic knowledge production in many areas of social, economic, health and sustainability matters has been severely limited in terms of impact by the fact that the dominant mode of dissemination has been through specialized journals with limited readerships, presentations at conferences composed entirely of other academics and writing in a style which is inaccessible to most policy makers and community leaders. Our Chair, working within our knowledge democracy framework, believes that much more work needs to be done on making sure that co-construction of knowledge between community stakeholders and academics is supported and that all knowledge undertaken within higher education circles is made available free of charge to the public.

We have committed ourselves to:

- Open access publishing of all our UNESCO Chair books and guidelines. Partners: University of Victoria Press and PRIA.

- Open Access Repository for all UNESCO Chair documents guaranteeing free and open access to anyone in the world with internet access (http://dspace.library.uvic.ca/handle/1828/5949). Partner: UVic Library and PRIA Digital Library.

- Enhanced portal, app development and social media presence through the creation and dissemination of our UNESCO Chair blogs. We will enhance the interactivity of our web portal and develop a CBR smart phone application that could give users access to curricula sources, places for CBR training, regional research centres, names of scholars working in the field and so forth. We will expand our Facebook and Twitter support and study expanding into Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn and other related social media platforms. Partners: PRIA and University of Victoria.

- Global Webinar Series. We have pilot tested delivering webinars from a single centre and from regional locations during our previous four years. We intend to launch a global webinar series on "Knowledge Democracy and Social Responsibility in Higher Education" with four webinars being offered per year in Spanish, English, Hindi and French.

Policy advocacy
Policy advocacy is central to the UNESCO Chair's work. Through policy dialogues in India, Canada and internationally, the Chair has helped to advance innovative policies and systems that incentivize and enable community engagement, community-based research and social responsibility in higher education in different

contexts (UNESCO Chair, 2016b). Our policy advocacy activities broadly include: policy dialogues; global communiqués on Community University Engagement; technical support to policy makers; and support to regional higher education networks.

Recently, we have carried out two activities in support of our deepening work on knowledge democracy:

- The Confluence at the Source of the Nile[5]:

Confluence witnessed a gathering of Indigenous and Mother Tongue Scholars from Africa, the Afrikan diaspora and from the lands of Indigenous Peoples in other parts of the world. The Partner at this event was Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity.

- The 50th Anniversary of the Cartagena Conference on Participatory (Action) Research[6].

The late Columbian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda held the most important global meeting on the subject of action research and democracy in Cartagena, Columbia in June of 1997. This meeting marked a turning point in the world of engaged scholarship, a turn away from a Marxist emphasis on leadership of a vanguard of intellectuals to recognition of the wisdom and knowledge making capacities of ordinary people engaged in struggles for their rights. This conference was hosted by the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA).

Capacity Enhancement
Training and Capacity Enhancement is the third pillar of efforts in this regard, utilizing knowledge created through the research as well as linked to policy development work described above. This has focused on both human and institutional capacity for engagement, community-based research and social responsibility.

Looking Ahead
UNESCO renewed our Chair for another term of four years in 2016, based on its assessment of excellent work carried out in the first four year term 2012-16. At the India launch of the K4C initiative in New Delhi, the Director of UNESCO Office for South Asia, Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi remarked: "*This UNESCO Chair is one of the most active and important UNESCO Chairs in the world*".

Therefore, we would like to suggest that UNESCO, its Head Quarters and regional offices and its national commissions pay greater attention to UNESCO Chairs. Their support can make a huge difference towards mainstreaming this important intellectual work into the worlds of practitioners, policy-makers and academics. Additionally, we have found that having an international network of allies and supporters who are doing similar work is a great value addition to our collective impacts. In some cases, national commissions and regional/national UNESCO offices can facilitate such linkages.

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[5] More on this event is available here: http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/index.php/2017/05/22/confluence-2017-jinja-uganda-may-18-21-2017/

[6] More on this event is available here: http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/index.php/2017/06/20/arna-conference-cartagena-colombia-june-12-16-2017/

In the field of higher education, UNESCO Chairs can benefit greatly by the contributions and networks of GUNI. However, in recent years, GUNI's global outreach has weakened. As one of its parents, United Nations University (UNU) can play a stimulating role, along with UNESCO Paris, to enhance the capacities and outreach of GUNI in advance of the forthcoming 3rd UNESCO conference on higher education in 2020.

Our experience as a UNESCO Chair has been very positive in carrying forward the movement of community-based participatory research. Within a short initial period, it became clear to us that higher education can fulfill its social responsibility while performing its core missions of teaching, research and service in a societally engaged manner. A university's social responsibility is not to be separated from its core everyday functions; they need to learn to do it differently, in an engaged manner.

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