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Knowledge, democracy and action: an introduction

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In the city where I live, Victoria, Canada, a wealthy city in a wealthy country, there are 1,500 women and men (in a population of 250,000) who do not have a place to sleep at night. In spite of the creation of a Coalition to End Homelessness, the numbers of people who suffer from poor health, violence, substance abuse as a result of poverty and homelessness continues at about the same level.

In India, one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, 600 million people live without literacy, adequate water and sanitation, poor health facilities and insecure food security. Indigenous people in North and South America, Africa and Asia have dramatically lower life expectancy and higher levels of health difficulties than non-indigenous members of their communities. Their languages are disappearing daily and, with the languages, extraordinary parts of our human knowledge base and culture.

Climate change is having a more dramatic impact on the poor and marginalized persons in all our communities; one has only to look at the earthquake in Haiti or the floods in Pakistan to see how natural disasters have an impact on the poor.

Concerns with the protection of the wealthy from risk, the protection of access to non-renewable resources and water occupy the minds of vast numbers of the world's inhabitants and a dramatically disproportionate level of government budgets.

The neo-liberal global economic machine produces wealth in historically unheard of quantities but exacerbates the gap between the rich and the poor both within and among nations.

These situations exist in spite of bodies of recent quality research on the impacts of inequality in our lives at both local and global levels. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's exhaustive study of inequality and its impacts around the world is but one of the many technically competent and evidence-based studies which illustrate what many of us see in our work in communities on a day-to-day basis. According to Wilkinson and Pickett (2009), on almost every index of quality of life, or wellness, or deprivation, there is a strong correlation between a country's level of economic inequality and its social outcomes. Almost always, Japan and the Scandinavian countries are at the favourable 'low' end, and almost always, the UK, the US and Portugal are at the unfavourable 'high' end, with Canada, Australia

and continental European countries in between. What is so powerful in their research is evidence that both the rich and the poor fare better in societies with less inequality. And this is true whether one speaks of mortality and morbidity, educational outcomes, mental health, obesity, violence or the status of minorities.

It is the unequal world, however, that we live in. It is a world where greed continues to be celebrated and economic growth stubbornly put forward time and time again. This is the world that our work as researchers, as teachers, as activists, as scholars and intellectuals, as higher education (HE) administrators, must address. Gandhi used a Sanskrit word in his teachings to say that we must measure the success of our work in terms of how it serves 'Antyodaya', the last person. This is the challenge of our generation.

The organization and structure of this book

There has been a significant increase of writing on community–university engagement over the past five to six years. Ernest Boyer laid down some of the conceptual foundations with his development of the concept of *engaged scholarship* (2006). The Kellogg Commission, on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, shifted the terms *research, teaching and serve* to *discovery, learning and engagement* (1999). Susan Ostrander from Tufts University did a study of civil engagement on five campuses in the United States during 2001, which resulted in the articulation of a number of necessary components for effective engagement (2004). David Watson, former Vice-Chancellor of Brighton University, initiated a robust Community–University Partnership Programme (CUPP), but is also an eloquent spokesperson for the links between lifelong learning, communities and university engagement (Watson, 2007; Watson *et al.*, 2011). Angie Hart, formerly academic director of CUPP, has added much to our understanding of how community engagement works, and has also given useful ideas about how to evaluate the impact of this work (Hart *et al.*, 2008). Barbara Holland and Judith Ramaley have reviewed community engagement approaches in the UK, Spain, Germany, India, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Australia, US, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and South Africa. From their reviews they have created a typology of how universities approach community–university engagement (2008). Lorraine McIlrath and Iain Mac Labhrainn of the National University of Ireland, Galway, leaders of the Community Knowledge Initiative, have also pulled together a very useful collection of papers of international perspectives entitled *Higher Education and Civic Engagement* (2007). The strength of the collection is in the depth of analysis of how student engagement or 'service learning', as it is referred to in the United States, is working to transform higher education. John Goddard and Paul Vallance from Newcastle University have elaborated on the idea of the 'civic university' as an effective way of reuniting the city and the university (2010). The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) initiated a major programme of work related to supporting the contributions of higher education institutions (HEIs) to regional development. This programme has involved conducting in-depth reviews in fourteen regions across twelve countries.

The key aspects of the reviews looked at the contribution of research to regional innovation; the role of teaching and learning in the development of human capital; the contribution of HEIs to social, cultural and environmental development; and the role of HEIs in building regional capacity to act in an increasingly global competitive environment (Goddard and Puukka, 2008).

This book offers several new contributions to the literature. First, its focus is on community–university *research partnerships* rather than the broader community–university engagement. Second, it is based on a global empirical study of the role of community–university research partnerships within the context of poverty alleviation, the creation of sustainable societies and, broadly speaking, the Millennium Development Goals. Third, we have gone further to frame the contribution of community–university research partnerships within a larger knowledge democracy framework, linking this practice to other spaces of knowledge democracy, such as the open access movement, the new acceptance of the methods of community-based and participatory research and the call for what is sometimes called *cognitive justice* or the need for *epistemologies of the Global South*.

The chapters in this book are of two kinds: conceptual and analytic chapters which have emerged from the several years of research by our partners around the world (Part I), and summaries of the case studies themselves (Part II), so that readers can have a look at the diversity of examples we have drawn on and know who they might contact for further information. This introductory chapter provides a theoretical framework for the study and important contextualizing background. Chapter 2 contains lessons on building partnerships drawn from the case studies from the North and South summarized in the latter half of the book. Chapter 3 takes a particular look at the variety of structures that have been created in the various universities and civil society research organizations to facilitate and enhance research partnerships. Chapter 4 offers readers a more detailed look at how one of the best-known civil society community-based research organizations in the world, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), builds capacity with grass-roots NGOs in India. Chapter 5 provides evidence of the impact of community–university research partnerships on the curriculum in several HEIs. Chapter 6 tells us about the policy dance that community–university research partnerships are engaged in, by looking at the work of the European science shop movement. Chapter 7 is an evaluation framework for partnership research that has emerged from important work in Quebec. Chapter 8 reviews the variety of approaches to measuring impact of community–university research partnerships, drawing on the empirical work of the study and the literature. All of the remaining chapters, save the final chapter, are the case studies that, in their fuller form and details, provided the bulk of the data for our study. The final chapter offers some thoughts on the future of community–university research partnerships within the context of a knowledge democracy movement.

Knowledge economies and knowledge societies

The contemporary use of the concept of *knowledge economy* is most often attributed to Peter Drucker. In his 1969 book he noted that 'knowledge had become a fundamental driver of society. . . We have moved from an economy of goods to an economy of knowledge' (pp. 242–9). He drew on earlier work by Friedrich Hayek, in his 1948 study, *The Use of Knowledge in Society*. Further development of the knowledge economy concept has been done by scholars working on what has been called *new growth theory*, which strengthened the ascendancy of the view of knowledge as a critical factor in economic growth. Paul Romer, best known of the new growth economists, noted that, 'knowledge is the basic form of capital. Economic growth is driven by the accumulation of knowledge' (1990, p. 80). The World Development Report of 1999 expressed the relationship as follows:

For countries in the vanguard of the world economy, the balance between knowledge and resources has shifted so far towards the former that knowledge has become perhaps the most important factor determining the standard of living ... more than land, than tools, than labour. Today's most technologically advanced economies are truly knowledge-based. (p. 16)

National governments have one after another taken up this language as they seek to build more skilled workforces, invest further in scientific and technological research and strengthen links between business and universities in the interest of global competitiveness. Adult education, lifelong learning policies and higher education strategies around the world are often linked to the argument that developing a more skilled workforce will better position a given individual, region or even nation, in the global economy.

This is not to suppose that the understandings of the role of knowledge in our societies have arisen in an ideological vacuum. As Sörlin and Vessuri note, 'if knowledge is as potent a source of social power as the concepts knowledge economy and knowledge society seem to suggest, we would certainly expect different interests to occur in the workings of how knowledge shapes societies' (2007, p. 1). Their book explores the differences between the discourses of a knowledge economy and that of a knowledge society. They suggest there is a democratic deficit in the notion of a knowledge economy that they believe is overcome by the use of the concept of knowledge societies.

Knowledge-based economies are growing all around us, but they do not always acknowledge the democratic deficit and normative dimensions of science and scientific institutions. The knowledge economy is market driven and performs according to a market ideology, which stands in a problematic but not necessarily conflicting relation to the norms and ideas of the knowledge society (Sörlin and Vessuri, 2007).

UNESCO's report, *Towards a Knowledge Society*, further makes the case for differentiating between the idea of a knowledge economy and a knowledge society: 'Knowledge societies are about capabilities to identify, produce, process, transform, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for

human development. They require empowering social vision that encompasses inclusion, solidarity and participation' (2005, p. 27).

Abdul Waheed Khan, senior UNESCO specialist in the area of communication and information at the time of the World Report, went further in noting that 'knowledge societies include a dimension of social, cultural, economic, political and institutional transformation and a more developmental perspective' (UNESCO, 2005). Mala Singh (2007) notes, however, that universities have been dethroned as the sole agency for the management of knowledge and, in order for them to find their new roles within a concept of social engagement, 'the terms of the knowledge society will themselves have to be emancipated from the monopolistic demands of the market, and reconceptualized to include political, social and ethical considerations that are currently absent or only weakly gestured to' (see Sörlin and Vessuri, 2007, p. 7).

Ecologies of knowledge

Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Portuguese sociologist and legal scholar, provides us with a way to emancipate the concept of a knowledge society. He has expressed a broader, more inclusive understanding of knowledge and our world. His narrative begins with his observation that, in the realm of knowledge, *abyssal* thinking 'consists in granting to modern science the monopoly of the universal distinction between true and false to the detriment of two alternative bodies of knowledge: philosophy and theology'. Although this exclusionary action is the source of much contemporary debate in epistemological circles, it actually is a debate taking place on what he calls 'this side of the line' (2007, p. 47). The global lines he is referring to are those that separate the visible constituents of knowledge and power from those who are invisible. Popular, lay, plebeian, peasant, indigenous, the knowledge of the disabled themselves and more cannot be fitted in any of the ways of knowing on 'this side of the line'. They exist on the other side of the 'abyss', the other side of the line. Because of this invisibility they are beyond truth or falsehood. The 'other side of the line' is the realm of beliefs, opinions, intuitive or subjective understandings which at best may become 'objects or raw material for scientific inquiry' (p. 52). This understanding of knowledge goes beyond the formulations of Sörlin and Vessuri (2007) in linking knowledge to values or transformation and illustrates the limits of the knowledge society discourses. De Sousa Santos makes the link between values and aspiration in saying, 'Global social injustice is therefore intimately linked to global cognitive injustice. The struggle for global social justice will, therefore, be a struggle for cognitive justice as well' (2007, p. 63). On an epistemological front, he sees a return of the colonial or the colonizer in the form of resistance to what is perceived to be too much intrusion by the colonial (or any from 'the other side of the line') into metropolitan societies. Terrorism is a threat to the West. Waves of undocumented workers pouring into Europe or the United States are a threat. Refugees from natural and economic disasters are a threat.

A way forward lies in the concept of *ecologies of knowledge*. Post-abyssal thinking is linked to the notion of subaltern cosmopolitanism, or what de Sousa

Santos refers to as an ‘epistemology of the South’ (p. 65). An ecology of knowledge framework centred in the knowledges from the ‘other side of the line’ is based on the idea that the diversity of the world is inexhaustible, that this epistemological diversity does not yet have a form and that the contribution of knowledge is to be measured through knowledge as intervention in reality rather than knowledge as representation of reality. ‘The credibility of cognitive construction is measured by the type of intervention in the world that it affords or prevents’ (p. 73). Influenced by the work of intellectuals-activists linked to the World Social Forum, de Sousa Santos feels that the global movement of indigenous knowledge has, as a form of post-abysal thinking, the most hope to provide us with a strong indication of how ecologies of knowledge might function. The achievement of post-abysal thinking will depend, according to de Sousa Santos, on the achievement of a radical co-presence of all knowledges with an understanding of the incompleteness of knowledge.

A knowledge democracy movement?

Building on de Sousa Santos’s radical recognition of ecologies of knowledge, we turn towards thinking about the use of knowledge in a strategic, organizational, intentional and active way. John Gaventa, a theoretician on power and citizenship, a pioneering participatory research leader, past Chair of Oxfam UK, and Director of Canada’s Coady International Institute, was the first person in our experience to speak of social movements using a ‘knowledge strategy’ as their core political organizing strategy (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2008, p. 90). Early work at Highlander Research and Education Centre in the US Appalachian Mountains involved the support of citizen researchers going to local courthouses to search the ownership of local coal mines. Absentee landlords owned all mines in question, from New York to London. And while profits were good, taxes were very low for these absentee landlords, and resources were not sufficient to cover the costs of good schools, health services or other social services to allow mine workers and their families to flourish. These citizen researchers, using a ‘knowledge strategy’ for organizing, pooled their knowledge across six or seven Appalachian states and produced an important study on mine ownership. This had the impact on changing tax structures in some states. Highlander and Gaventa were later to move into a campaign for environmental justice using many of the same principles (see Cable and Benson, 1993).

Gaventa’s linking of knowledge to the organizing of a people’s movement is similar to the thinking of the late Julius K. Nyerere, the philosopher-founding President of Tanzania, who is purported to have said that poor people do not use money for a weapon – they use knowledge and leadership. Freire articulated a faith in the embedded knowledge of people living lives of poverty, exclusion, oppression and disadvantage. His central theme was that the ability to understand and articulate the experience of lives of struggle was not only possible, but a necessary condition for organizing and transformation. He did not speak of a knowledge movement per se, but his poetic illuminations of the role of dialogue

and learning based in the daily-lived experiences of people looking for more gave us tools and approaches to support a knowledge movement.

Rajesh Tandon, one of the collaborators in this book, and Chair of the Global Alliance on Community Engaged Research (GACER), founded a civil society-based research institute more than thirty years ago, based on principles of knowledge democracy. PRIA has gone on to become one of the most influential independent not-for-profit research centres in the Global South. Based on the belief that knowledge is power, PRIA has worked with grass-roots movements and their civil society partners to create activist and practice-based research in fields of health and safety in the workplace, violence against women, rural planning, the empowerment of women politicians and much more (Tandon, 2008).

How can we understand a concept like a 'knowledge democracy movement'? First, we are working on an assumption that social movements remain at the heart of local and global change, that they are important sources of power to shift the way people imagine various relations of power. With that argument we are building on the long tradition of learning and social movement theory and practice, including much that has been written about in earlier forms (Hall, 2009 a, b, c, d). Here we are not referring to engaged scholarship or HE and community engagement itself as a movement, although there are movement elements to the ways in which community–university partnerships are expanding. We are also not thinking of the access to knowledge movement on its own (Ostrom and Hess, 2006). And we are most certainly not using other words to speak about the 'knowledge economy'.

A knowledge democracy movement is an action-oriented formation that recognizes, gives visibility to and strengthens the knowledge created in the context of, as Marx said, people trying to 'change the world'. A knowledge democracy movement would recognize, value and support the recovery and deepening of indigenous ways of knowing (Wangoola, 2002; Williams and Tanaka, 2007). A knowledge democracy movement would recognize the epistemic privilege of the homeless themselves as a key to taking action on issues of homelessness. It would celebrate the intellectual contributions of young people who are differently abled. It would honour the early work of Engels, gathering the insights of workers in nineteenth-century factories of Manchester, England, or Marx's work in the Moselle river valley of Germany, learning from vineyard workers. It would recognize that the Gay and Lesbian and HIV/AIDS movements have been built fundamentally on the knowledge of gay and lesbian citizens themselves.

A knowledge democracy movement or a movement that uses knowledge as a key mobilizing and organizing strategy is centred within the lives and places of those who are seeking recognition of their rights, land claims, access to jobs, ecological justice, recovery or retention of their languages. Knowledge itself within such a movement formation is most likely place based and rooted in the daily lives of people who increase the knowledge of their own contexts. By sharing what they are learning with allies and others like themselves, they move, as Freire says, towards being agents in the *naming* of the world. The proliferation of discourse and practices within the world of community–university knowledge partner-

ships, in this conceptualization, would be contributors to the broader knowledge movement. The extensive and important access to information developments would also be supportive of and a contributor towards a variety of knowledge movements. But neither access to information developments nor community–university engagement advancements form a knowledge democracy movement by themselves, but are part of the necessary conditions for knowledge movements to gain footholds and to flourish.

Higher education and society

Higher education institutions are institutions to which society has entrusted the main responsibility for knowledge management. As the awareness of the role that knowledge plays in economic development has grown, so has the strategic importance and investment in higher education grown. There are many excellent books on the state of higher education. Two such respected scholars are Schuetze and Inman (2010). They provide a concise list of trends having an impact on the role of higher education and society in Great Britain and North America. Major trends that they note include: advancement in communications technologies, development of a global market for students, worldwide ranking systems, commercialization of knowledge, rise of ‘managerial’ or ‘entrepreneurial’ models of governance. To this list of trends we would add what may be implied by Schuetze, that is, the trend of extraordinary growth of higher education provision itself over the last twenty years, driven particularly by enrolments in the emerging economies, the so-called *massification* of higher education. And, perhaps implied in Schuetze’s list, there is the proliferation of private universities throughout the world. In Africa, for example, there are over sixty private universities in Ethiopia, over twenty in Tanzania, and more than thirty-two in Nigeria. The numbers of private universities in Latin America, India and elsewhere in Asia would run into the thousands. Quality becomes an issue: also, risk of exploitation of students as well within this sector of the market. Philip Altbach, one of the most influential scholars in the field, assesses the impact of globalization on higher education:

In some ways globalization works against the desire to create a worldwide academic community based on cooperation and a shared vision of academic development. The globalization of science and scholarship, ease of communication, and the circulation of the best academic talent worldwide have not led to equality in higher education. Indeed, both within national academic systems and globally, inequalities are greater than ever. (2008, p. 4)

Jamil Salmi, coordinator of tertiary education at the World Bank, notes that, in addition to the issues raised by Schuetze and Altbach, leaders of today’s institutions have to meet competing demands of diverse and more active stakeholders in the name of accountability. These include society at large, various levels of government, employers, academic staff and students themselves (2007). Among the OECD nations, HEIs have faced anything from status quo budgets in places like Canada (which does not take account of inflation) and dramatic cutbacks in jurisdictions such as England, with 80 per cent of the support for the humani-

ties and the social sciences being cut as governments struggle to find the funds to cover the costs of bail-outs of the financial sector. Yoshiaki Obara, President of Tamagawa University in Japan, notes that the combination of continuing slow economic growth linked to an ageing population is threatening the future of some universities. He notes that, 'With no sign of extra assistance from the government directed to small/rural institutions, it is likely that some ... of them will be driven out from the market' (2009, p. 18).

India is one of the emerging economies with a remarkable year-by-year GDP growth performance. It also contains one of the largest numbers of the world's 'bottom billion' of the poor, with huge gaps between the rich and the poor. Pawan Agarwal, Secretary of Science and Technology in West Bengal, characterizes higher education in India as being at the crossroads. He notes that, 'Institutions of higher education produce ordinary graduates with hardly any employable skills' (2008, p. 14), even though the enrolment rates in HEIs have risen by 11 to 20 per cent in recent years. There has been an explosive growth of private HEIs, but he and Altbach are not encouraging about a role beyond the barest minimal response to access that will come from this sector.

Higher education in Africa has suffered much since pre- and post-independence. The extramural departments of African universities were important places for independence leaders to hone their debating skills and discover the discourses of freedom, social and political justice. The older public universities in Africa were the hopes for beacons of change at independence as a new generation of women (not so many, actually) and men would emerge with knowledge and awareness of their own nations and aspirations. Many writers have described the deterioration of the conditions and the physical infrastructures during the 1980s and 1990s as the World Bank and other donors decided to put most of their funds into primary education (Mohamedbhai, 2010; Samoff and Carroll, 2002).

William Saint (2009) is the co-author of the World Bank's report on tertiary education and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. He notes that the emergence of a globally integrated knowledge-driven world economy has shifted the priority given in higher education by donors and national governments. His work highlights studies showing trends in rising rates of return to higher education in Africa. Investment to higher education from the World Bank and a host of other donors into African universities is making a difference, even though African universities are facing serious competition from Western universities overseas and within their own countries, in the form of 'franchise' or 'branch plants'. The proliferation of private universities, which offer questionable quality and little social engagement, is also a concern. The report in conclusion posits that, 'Tertiary institutions in Africa will need to transform themselves into a different type of educational enterprise: networked, differentiated and responsive institutions focused on the production of needed human skills and applied problem-solving research' (Saint, 2009, p. 15).

There is a great deal of innovation in the higher education field. Much of it is maximizing of profit by private and for-profit universities, such as the massive Phoenix University, based in the US, with 450,000 students. But there are other

kinds of innovative universities emerging, which offer models for another way of understanding the potential for higher education in the context of a more just and inclusive society.

One of these is the newly established Universidade de Intergração Internacional da Lusofonia Afro-Brasileira (UNILAB) in Redemption, Brazil. Redemption is where slavery was first banned in Brazil. Afro-Brazilian International University was created as a distance education university to serve the combined higher education needs of the Afro-Brazilian community in Brazil and those of Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. UNILAB is designed to enrol 350 students divided equally between Brazil and Africa. It will start with courses in nursing, agriculture, public administration, electrical engineering, natural sciences and mathematics.

Another is the village-based Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity with its campus in a village in Eastern Uganda. Founded by Paulo Wangoola, a former Secretary-General of the African Association for Adult and Literacy Education, Mpambo exists to support mother-tongue scholars, women and men who have developed deep intellectual lives of learning and sharing through the means of African indigenous languages. The professors at Mpambo are leaders of traditional spiritual life – Elders who know the stories of the clans, herbalists and healers and musicians, story-keepers and dancers. Wangoola himself has spoken extensively in the United States, Canada, Asia and India on the need for and the ways to support the revitalization and recovery of Africa's indigenous knowledge (Wangoola, 2002).

Community–university engagement

Cristina Escrigas, Executive Director of the Global University Network for Innovation, who produced the 2008 report, *Higher Education in the World, Higher Education: New Challenges and Emerging Roles for Human and Social Development*, says that it is time to 'review and reconsider the interchange of values between university and society; that is to say, we need to rethink the social relevance of universities' (see Taylor, 2008, p. xxviii). Humanity, she goes on to say, 'is now facing a time of major challenges, not to say, serious and profound problems regarding coexistence and relations with the natural environment. Unresolved problems include social injustice, poverty and disparity of wealth, fraud and lack of democracy, armed conflicts, exhaustion of natural resources and more' (*ibid.*, p. xxiv).

Martha Piper, former president of the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, Canada, brings the question much closer to home when noting, 'even as we pride ourselves on our achievements, there are those who argue our influence in the world stage is waning. A walk down Hastings and Main in Vancouver is a sober reminder that poverty, homelessness and drug abuse lie, in the heart of one of the most affluent cities in the world, steps away...something is wrong' (2003, p. 128).

There are many examples of recently created community–university structures in other parts of the world. In Spain, the Instituto Paulo Freire, a national community–university research network, has its organizational base in several Spanish universities including Valencia, Gerona and Seville (see www.institutopaulofreire.org). The Centre for Theories and Practice in Overcoming Inequalities (CREA)

was one of the sources of inspiration for the University of Victoria, Canada, when it started its Office of Community-Based Research. CREA is located in the Scientific Park at the University of Barcelona (<http://creaub.info>). In France, there is a tradition of *universités populaires et universités libres*. The Institute of Adult and Continuing Education at Makerere University is home to outreach strategies. Stellenbosch University in South Africa and the University of the Western Cape are both well respected for their work in engagement and community-based research. The University of Science in Malaysia and the University of Malaysia both have community engagement units headed by deputy vice-chancellors.

Not all the structures or organizations that facilitate the creation of community-university partnerships are located within universities. It is critically important to note that much of the early history of community-based research, participatory research and similar approaches originated within and/or were supported by civil society organizations. If we look at the science shop movement in Europe, for example, we will find that a majority of the science shops are based in universities, but not all. The Bonn science shop is a cooperative NGO that had its origins in a university, but found more freedom for progressive research and social action when located as an independent community organization. It works, as do other science shops, to link university students and researchers with community activists and organizations that need research to be done.

Based in New Delhi, PRIA is nearing thirty years of operations. Its motto is *knowledge is power*. It is legally structured as a non-governmental civil society organization. PRIA carries out research with communities of excluded and oppressed people. It provides capacity-building workshops and training opportunities for local government workers and grass-roots NGO workers in participatory research and evaluation. It works on issues of citizenship and governance, on health and safety in the workplace, on sustainability and local economic development and in local planning. Because of its long-term skills and reputation for ethical and democratic research approaches, universities in India have sought out PRIA to provide teaching and field placement opportunities for students who are going in to work in rural areas, in fields of social work or as community-based researchers. PRIA brokers community-university research partnerships but from the community side.

In Canada, the Community-Based Research Centre was established nearly twenty-five years ago as a local NGO. It has grown over the years to have a staff of twenty-five to thirty persons working on behalf of community organizations, to serve their research and evaluation needs. They work on issues of anti-racism and multicultural health, employment and cultural issues. They draw on the resources of several universities in the Waterloo region of Ontario (about one and one half hours west of Toronto). In May of 2011, they hosted the fourth Community-University Exposition (CUexpo 2011), a national and international space for community and university partners to meet to share with others (www.cuexpo2011.ca).

Let us be clear that the relationship between knowledge and power has not been lost on global capitalism itself. 'Market forces' are often held out at both a global level and local level to be almost magical in their abilities to shape social

needs, including learning needs. Indeed, the rise of interest in the role of higher education in our societies over the past thirty years is illustrated by the emergence of concepts such as the ‘knowledge economy’ or the ‘knowledge society’. Universities in the Global North were urged to create technology transfer and business-incubating structures some thirty years ago, by the private sector. Pharmaceutical companies, engineering and science industries, computing and information technology companies are strongly linked to their counterparts in universities. A very useful 2010 study on university–enterprise partnerships within the European Union provide ten case studies on the ways that these structures are working (Mora *et al.*, 2010). Global competitiveness is the game, we are told, among cities, regions and nations, with success being dependent on the creation and support of large numbers of well-educated, disciplined and flexible workers and managers.

It is also critically important to note that, over the past twenty-five years, we have seen the dismantling of many of the structures put in place in our universities as early as the late nineteenth century, for the sharing of knowledge with communities. In England, *liberal education* is a song sung by increasingly nostalgic voices. The independent funding of extramural studies in England was similarly eliminated some years ago and the many historic departments of adult education and extramural studies have disappeared from Manchester, Leeds, Hull, from Nottingham and elsewhere. In 2011, there are enormous pressures at the University of Glasgow to cut adult education provision in the last of the UK institutions to combine academic research and provision in a single administrative unit. In Canada, Continuing Education units in our universities have moved nearly totally into a revenue–recovery and market-oriented world.

A look at Canadian developments

In Canada, Edward Jackson at Carleton University has conceptualized what he calls the ‘CUE (Community–University Engagement) Factor’. He writes of the dynamic triangle of community–university engagement being community-based experiential learning, community-based research and community-based continuing education. He calls on universities across Canada to, ‘increase their CUE factors by deepening and broadening their teaching, research and volunteering activities with the external constituencies that have the greatest need for sustainable solutions to the challenges they face every day’ (2008, p. 1).

One of the three legs of Jackson’s CUE Factor, community-based research (CBR), has a particularly strong Canadian history and specificity. In the mid-1970s, a group of researchers based in Toronto, associated with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), created the *participatory research project*. Hall, Jackson, Marino, Barndt, Conchelos and others had a variety of community-based research experiences in Canada and other parts of the world. They were supported by the late Drs J. Roby Kidd and James Draper, professors in the Adult Education Department at OISE and, in the case of Dr Kidd, the Secretary-General of the newly launched International Council for Adult Education (Hall, 2005).

The term CBR in use at the University of Victoria encompasses a spectrum of research that actively engages community members or groups to various degrees, ranging from community participation to community initiation and control of research. From a university perspective, CBR refers to a wide variety of practices and is supported by several academic traditions: academic or scientific knowledge put at the service of community needs; joint university and community partnerships in the identification of research problems and development of methods and applications; research that is generated in community settings without formal academic links at all; academic research under the full leadership and control of community or non-university groups; joint research, which is conceived as part of organizing, mobilizing or social advocacy or action.

The University of Victoria uses a modified definition published by Kerry Strand and others in 2003:

CBR involves research by community groups with or without the involvement of a university. In relation with the university, CBR is a collaborative enterprise between academics and community members. CBR seeks to democratize knowledge creation by validating multiple sources of knowledge and promoting the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination. The goal of CBR is social action (broadly defined) for the purpose of achieving (directly or indirectly) social change and social justice. (2003a, p. 5)

Inspired in part by Canada's early work in participatory and community-based research and by the experience of the science shops in the Netherlands, the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council created the SSHRC Community–University Research Alliance (CURA) funding structure. The CURA model has become known widely throughout the world and has resulted in a unique meeting space called the Community–University Expositions (CUexpos) which have now taken place in Saskatoon in 2003, Winnipeg in 2005 and Victoria in 2008. Out of this combined energy has come the recently created Community-Based Research Canada (CBRC) and the Global Alliance for Community-Engaged Research (GACER) (www.uvic.ca/ocbr).

Within our universities, CBR has begun to become institutionalized. The University of Victoria in January of 2007 created the Office of Community-Based Research as a university-wide structure reporting to the Vice-President of Research (<http://uvic.ca/ocbr>). The Harris Centre at Memorial University in Newfoundland serves a similar function throughout Newfoundland and Labrador (Fitzpatrick, 2008). The Trent Centre for Community Education, the Institute for CBR at Vancouver Island University, the Community–University Partnership at the University of Alberta, the Centre for Community-Based Research in Kitchener, the Centre for Community Research, Learning and Action at Wilfred-Laurier University in Waterloo, the Service aux Collectivités at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and others have sprung up across the country (www.sac.uqam.ca/index.aspx?ID=accueil).

Knowledge democracy and higher education

On a global scale, universities, higher education institutions and systems of tertiary education have become the focus of intense national and international systems planning and priorities over several decades. The state sees public research universities as key players in the competition for global markets, both from a human resource point of view and a research and technology perspective. The market is looking to universities as sources of high-quality, low-cost research and development. They would like to see universities closely linked to the bottom-line expectations of capital accumulation and profit generation.

We also see, however, that cities, regions and places are looking at their universities with new eyes. Given the persistence of chronic social and economic issues at the local level and with no new money likely to come from various levels of government, universities are seen as being resource rich, given the numbers of students, sources of knowledge and access to global information and policy networks. Universities are responding sometimes by dusting off earlier policy statements, as in the case of Land-Grant universities in the US or civic universities of the UK. Sometimes they are responding by reinventing themselves in new ways never tried before, such as the Universiti Sains Malaysia's commitment to the 'bottom billion' people in the world and to supporting an Asian community-university network. The most recent world conference on Higher Education held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris called for priority to be given to the idea of social responsibility in higher education (UNESCO, 2009).

In China, India and other parts of the rapidly emerging Asian economies, the focus is on growth. New public universities are said to be emerging at a pace of one per week. Private universities of dubious quality, perhaps even exploitative in nature, quite literally are growing like mushrooms. The demand for higher education in Asia, Latin America and Africa is well beyond the supply.

But we also know that the virtual monopoly of the global market economic model produces periodic booms and busts as was predicted in the late nineteenth century by various economists, most notably Marx. We have to contend with persistent issues of ill health, poverty, violence against women, racism and intolerance, homelessness and deep issues of sustainability and climate change. We have seen a dramatic unfolding of democratic aspirations in the Middle East.

Knowledge is more than expertise passed down from those who know to those who do not know. Knowledge about a more just world is being created, co-created and co-generated in social movements, in communities, in homes, in governments and in businesses. Knowledge and its creation and flow is linked to economic development, but is also the most active ingredient in our thinking about acting in our world to deepen democracy, promote inclusion and build just and sustainable communities. Communities and universities are reinventing each other, and the new forms of research partnerships are an important means by which reinvention is happening. Among the lessons to be learned from our study and this book is the proposition that communities and universities working together in new forms of respectful co-creation of useful knowledge have an enormous potential to contribute to a growing knowledge democracy movement.