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Building blocks of partnerships: lessons from case studies from the South and North

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It is said that practice makes perfect. Indeed, we are convinced that it is only by doing community–university partnerships that engaged academics, reflective practitioners, progressive policymakers and innovative funders can both understand and strengthen this approach to mobilizing knowledge for livelihoods, sustainability and democracy. While, as Paolo Freire showed, action and reflection are two mutually reinforcing and dialectical forces, permanently entwined, we believe that practice takes precedence. Action, in our view, is *primus inter pares*.

In putting this book together, we were informed by the rich experiences of a group of diverse case studies of community–university partnerships, diverse in terms of their context, form and substance. They take place in both urban and rural settings in Canada, the United Kingdom, Europe, India, the Philippines, Bolivia, Brazil and Senegal. Some take the form of projects, others are programmes, and still others have grown into permanent centres. And the substance of what these interventions work on varies, as well – indigenous municipal governance, economic cooperation by small forest producers, student engagement in sustainable agriculture, environmental enforcement by local government officials, improved resettlement policies in hydro-power projects, and education for village development through rural libraries – all these issues and more are addressed by the cases.

While practice makes perfect, however, it rarely *is* perfect. Perfection is not the point. Learning and results are at the core of what makes community-level action valuable. Certainly, important learning stems from strategies, tactics and methods that are found to be successful. At the same time, some of the most valuable lessons arise from experiences or actions which don't succeed, or from unanticipated problems or conflicts. The case studies we review here offer both types of experiences.

It should be recognized that, as Edmund O'Sullivan said, 'the dream drives the action.' The leaders and animators of these partnerships share a common commitment to expanding the democratic space for actionable knowledge production – *co-production*, as most refer to it. Their work is focused locally, in villages and neighbourhoods, in regions, in provinces. Their essential dream is that, through the co-production and application of new knowledge, community–university partnerships can help achieve improved livelihoods, environmental integrity and

more responsive forms of governance. The case studies show that these key players are making demonstrable progress in realizing this shared dream.

Community–university research partnerships can enable the co-production of valuable, actionable new knowledge, especially in the areas of livelihoods, environment and governance and their intersection.

A main theme addressed by the Southern case studies is *strengthening local governance*. In Bolivia, the Bolivian Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies (CEBEM) worked with municipal officials to plan and implement indigenous governance and management systems, policies and practices in the Indigenous Municipality of Jesus do Machaca. In the Philippines, Bukidnon State University researchers partnered with local government units to enhance the capacity of local policymakers in environmental governance and enforcement. Biodiversity and sustainable farming systems were important topics in training designed by this partnership.

Three other cases worked more explicitly at the interface of *livelihoods and environmental sustainability*. In one of these initiatives, CEBEM cooperated with three municipalities in Bolivia's Chiquitania region to generate knowledge that enabled small wood producers to increase their revenue from value-added products. In another, the civil society group PRIA joined with Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University in Srinagar to set up the Mountain Development Research Centre (MDRC) to support local communities in managing natural resources and developing themselves, including intervening in a major resettlement dispute arising from a hydro power project. In the region around Dakar, in Senegal, the Sub-Saharan Africa Participatory Action Research Network (REPAS), Cheikh Anta Diop University and the University of Brighton piloted a new student engagement project, where students contributed to local agriculture and soil erosion efforts in partner villages. A sixth Southern case, in Sriniketan, India, involves a network of thirty-four rural libraries, affiliated to a Rural Extension Centre (REC) that provides information and education in support of almost forty village development societies.

The two cases from Europe also demonstrate a similar trend. Danish Society for Conservation of Nature (DN) in Frederikssund and Roskilde University Centre (RUC) worked together to analyse and improve the quality of water in a village pond with support from the local residents. Quality and quantity of water supply to communities in Iasi, Romania, was the focus of a second case study where the Academic Organization for Environmental Engineering (OAIMDD) partnered with a local NGO, InterMEDIU, with a view to assess and propose improvements in the water supply to the town residents.

The UQAM case (Quebec, Canada) is focusing on social economy in the region, and ways to improve the livelihoods and investment in social economy enterprises.

That valuable knowledge is maintained and produced by non-academic partners is not a new insight. For more than three decades, the participatory research movement has proved this truism thousands of times. It has examined in detail the theory underlying the process of knowledge production by community members, social movements, governments and other segments of society that

are not universities or colleges. What is new, in this sense, about the cases in this book?

First, at a very basic level, each research partnership is a new test of how such knowledge is produced and also how it can make a contribution to a better world – a better life for citizens, households, enterprises and communities. Second, the cases focus on a particular cluster of issues – most cases group around environment, governance and livelihoods – that respond to challenges currently faced by communities under twenty-first-century globalization. Third, these cases illustrate the latest set of participatory methods, including web-enabled technologies. Fourth, the scale of these initiatives is substantial, covering regions or clusters of communities rather than single villages or neighbourhoods. Finally, unlike much early participatory research experience, which often involved oppositional efforts in conflict with the state, the cases reported here work extensively with government, especially at the local and regional levels, as an integral component of their partnership strategy. Taken together, these features constitute a body of practice that is very new.

Successful partnerships demonstrate the value of non-academic knowledge that arises from practice in the community – and the value of new knowledge co-produced by cooperating social participants

All of the Southern cases confirm that new knowledge co-produced by non-academic and academic stakeholders is valuable. As the two Bolivian projects illustrate, effective co-production of knowledge requires trust among the key players, and confidence of and incentives for community and professional members to participate fully. These projects found that the core of the process is what they refer to as a sustained and open ‘dialogue between knowledges’, that is, between the knowledge systems of the interests involved in the issue being researched. As CEBEM has observed, its teams learn as much as community members do in these processes. Yet it is also clear that the skills and knowledge of the CEBEM teams are also critical to the success of these initiatives.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of recognition of the value of non-academic knowledge is found in the MDRC case. With the approval of the governor of the state, an 80-year-old local practitioner of innovative, mixed forest management and a traditional-knowledge expert was invited by Garhwal University to assume a teaching position at the university. He is currently teaching there.

The most significant contribution of community participants to knowledge production came from the CUPP project (Brighton, UK) on resilience therapy (RT) for ‘disturbed’ children and their families. The champions of this approach to health and mental well-being of children and their families involved parents and other practitioners of care in developing knowledge from their own experiences; they emphasized the process of converting tacit soft knowledge into practical tools and methods for RT. The new knowledge had special relevance to those children who faced multiple disadvantages in their physical, mental, social and economic well-being. The recognition of such knowledge by a university was demonstrated in the invitation parents and practitioners received to provide training and education to a new generation of care providers.

In the social economy case from Quebec, several practitioners from social movements – housing, labour, women – were active partners in framing the research and undertaking investigations. The research coordinators at UQAM have acknowledged the deep and systematic knowledge contribution from their partnership.

This is an important aspect of such community–university research partnerships since it focuses on co-production of knowledge which is based on the acceptance of the value of knowledge in practice, from those who are non-academic. Traditionally, many such partnerships have continued to treat community partners as ‘service users’ or ‘beneficiaries’ of knowledge provided by the academic partners, and their roles have been limited to providing ‘evidence’ of validity or otherwise of the academic knowledge. This interplay of academic and non-academic partners helps to produce new knowledge which neither partner had before. Such a perspective in these partnerships respected the active engagement of community partners in knowledge production, not mere ‘consumers’ – and passive beneficiaries – of knowledge and related services offered by academic partners.

Participatory methods are at the core of successful community–university research partnerships. The Southern cases underscore the central role that participatory methods for inquiry and engagement play in the success of community–university research partnerships. Overall, the picture that emerges is that partnerships select the mix of participatory methods that best suit their objectives and context, and are consistent with the expertise of their resource persons and organizations.

We have already highlighted the importance of the steering or coordinating committee as a vehicle for multi-stakeholder planning, implementation and monitoring of partnership activities. Other methods utilized in the cases include: needs assessments through stakeholder engagement (Machaca, Chiquitania, Senegal, Bukidnon, MDRC and Sriniketan); participant-oriented and problem-based training (Machaca, Senegal, Bukidnon, MDRC, Sriniketan); integration of learning into action plans (Machaca, Bukidnon) and new policies (Machaca, Chiquitania, Bukidnon, MDRC); field exposure and field projects (MDRC, Senegal); public hearings (MDRC, workshop-based SAS2 tools: Chiquitania, Machaca); co-production of systematized knowledge products such as books (Machaca) and training manuals (Bukidnon); and creation of an accessible knowledge pool (MDRC, Sriniketan). The CEBEM projects also used logical frameworks, in-depth interviews and stakeholder analysis charts. For its part, Sriniketan’s REC made extensive use of grass-roots seminars, cultural programmes and the performing arts, dialogue with schoolteachers, parents and readers, wall magazines and newsletters.

The cases also reinforce the view that online tools can facilitate stakeholder collaboration across time, space and sector. One example was the use by stakeholders from different countries of CEBEM’s Forestry Development Platform, to coordinate their work on the Chiquitania small forest producer project and related projects in Latin America. The two Bolivian projects also took advantage of the sliding scale of complexity and technical language in the SAS2 tools, and used the tools easily understood – diagrams and symbols to engage the widest

range of stakeholders. At the other end of the online tools experience, however, the rural libraries project in Sriniketan found that it had insufficient funds to fully lever the benefits of information and communication technologies.

One promising area for future experimentation in community–university research partnerships is social media. At this point, it isn't clear the extent to which tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube can be deployed. There are still real limits on the population's access to such technology in poor regions (often rural or isolated) with low household income and underdeveloped communications infrastructure. Nonetheless, a growing percentage of Southern citizens of all ages own and utilize mobile telephones, in particular. Moreover, currently, most organizations in all sectors – post-secondary institutions, government agencies, NGOs – have at least minimal, and often very substantial, computing and internet capacity. The experimentation that could prove most productive involves testing various combinations of technology to expand and deepen citizen engagement (blending cell-phone and FM radio systems in sub-Saharan Africa, for example). In addition, ways and means of *paying for* additional online capacity for partnership stakeholders should also be tested and refined. It may be that a greater percentage of future budgets of partnerships should be allocated to social media expenses.

The CUPP initiative in Brighton evolved an extremely innovative method of Community of Practice (CoP) where participation of students, faculty, practitioners, parents and service providers was enabled. CoP became the vehicle for co-production of knowledge, specially systematizing tacit knowledge. This participatory innovation was possible only because the leaders of the project were ready to 'deconstruct' academic assumptions. In the science shop-enabled cases, the 'objectivity' of research was seen as necessary to influence the government; therefore, 'scientific' methods of enquiry were preferred. However, in the study of water quality in village ponds, residents became informants and collaborators of students, 'surveying' ponds in their boats. In addition, the findings of the study, though presented as objective research, were presented in a form that residents could understand and discuss. The case from Quebec made very innovative use of colloquia as a forum to share emerging findings, to generate new analysis and frame new questions. These colloquia were jointly designed and facilitated by researchers and practitioners in the coordinating team.

In cases where science shops acted as intermediaries, it is useful to note that the research questions were posed by the community, on water quality. Residents, their associations and NGOs working with them were interested in finding answers to these questions, and the researchers from universities felt accountable to them for the same. Residents of these communities also took charge of the findings, and used them in the public domain to work towards cleaner water in their communities.

An important lesson from these cases is to be open to innovation in designing participatory methods – innovations happen when constraints arise; finding new spaces and sites for innovation also enables accountability of research findings to academic and non-academic partners and stakeholders as well.

Government matters a great deal, both in terms of the engagement of policy-makers as partners, and also in terms of implementing and scaling up the knowledge that is co-produced by the partnerships.

The Southern cases show that community–university research partnerships can advance government policies to promote better livelihoods, environmental sustainability and indigenous culture. Most Southern partnerships display strong functional linkages with local and state or provincial government agencies and officials, in particular. The two Bolivian cases and the Philippines project are the most well developed in this regard. However, both Indian initiatives also demonstrate strong working links to governments, as well. Partnerships involving universities, civil society groups, communities and governments – including multiple levels and sectors of the state simultaneously – can achieve broader and deeper results than actions taken without government involvement. Indeed, the activities of such partnerships can and do serve as policy experiments whose models and methods can be adopted as mainstream policy and scaled up efficiently.

At the same time, universities and their civil society and community allies can use research partnerships to challenge governments. MDRC in Srinagar has used a series of public hearings to determine, first, the perspectives and demands of local residents who would be displaced by a hydro-power project. Then the centre brings together community representatives, government officials and the private power project company. In one case, MDRC pressured the company to raise its compensation rate from Rs10,000 to Rs30,000 per acre, a significant gain. University faculty and social workers drafted a broader proposal to guide compensation and resettlement in future power projects, submitted this to government, and met with the Chief Minister to discuss the proposal.

In the CUPP initiative in Brighton, several statutory agencies and National Health Service staff were actively involved; it ensured that RT as a methodology and CoP as practice were used by official agencies; it further enabled new knowledge so generated to be included in the curriculum of teaching for new public service providers. In Romania and Denmark, the local municipalities were actively engaged in sharing the findings from the study. In Romania, Water Works Company was invited to engage with residents in a public dialogue about the research findings. In Denmark, the local municipality initially showed no interest in the research, but later agreed to discuss its findings.

In Quebec, the research on financing of social economy enterprises was regularly engaging with federal, provincial and municipal governments; these engagements focused on finding answers to various research questions, as well as exploring solutions to the challenge of new capital investment models for social enterprises in the region. As a consequence, a major ‘patient capital’ fund of \$10 million for social enterprises was sanctioned jointly by federal and Quebec provincial governments, which has since resulted in enhanced investments and job creation in social enterprises.

Promoters of community–university research partnerships must make the necessary efforts to include local government agencies as co-producers of knowl-

edge; that partnership can also enhance their sense of ownership of the findings, thereby creating enabling conditions for relevant government action. Large-scale impacts of such outcomes can only be generated through multiplier policy impacts, necessitating active government engagements in the partnerships.

These partnerships can be operationalized through a variety of vehicles, such as projects and centres, though institutionalizing their functions and funding can be challenging.

Half of the Southern partnerships were carried out as projects. The Bolivian partnerships were part of CEBEM's overall project portfolio. The Senegal partnership was framed as a pilot project in student engagement. However, the two Indian partnerships were operationalized through centres – the MDRC in Srinagar and the RECs in Sriniketan. Each centre, in turn, managed a group of programmes and projects. The Philippines initiative was run as a project but triggered the creation of an Institute of Environmental Governance to continue training of local officials and conduct research on priority issues, in coordination with relevant government bodies.

In the three European cases, centres were enablers of partnerships. In the case of Romania and Denmark, the centre was a science shop established to promote such partnerships between community and university to address some specific problems faced by the local communities. In the case of the University of Brighton, UK, the Community–University Partnership Project (CUPP) has been the anchor for their work on ‘resilience therapy’ with children and their families; even though called a project, CUPP has evolved into a working centre over its eight-year evolution.

The advantage of the centre option is that it is a more permanent structure through which a range of specific partnership initiatives may be carried out over time. The challenge is that it requires ongoing funding, typically with a budget that is larger than that of a project. The partnerships reviewed here understood there are two sources of this kind of long-term support: universities and government. The rural libraries attached to the REC in India receive annual non-matching grants from a national library foundation, plus additional matching grants. The centre itself is supported by an annual recurrent budget from the Institute of Rural Reconstruction, part of Vishva-Bharati, designated as a central university.

For its part, the MDRC has had the support of senior university-level officials. In the short term, the ‘nodal agent’ at MDRC has been paid a stipend by the university for his work, and the centre runs otherwise on external project funds. However, a proposal for the expansion and permanent status of its budget and staff compliment has been delayed by politics related to the government of India's decision to classify Garhwal University as a central university.

The partnership in Quebec began with RQCC (microcredit network of Quebec) and researchers in UQAM created a coordinating mechanism for the CURA-funded research in 2003; it resulted in the emergence of Le Chantier de l'Économie Sociale as a coalition to focus on financial investment issues in social enterprises. The consortium became so effective that it won the contract from the government of Quebec in November 2006 to hold the patient capital fund for such enterprises. The consortium was also able to undertake political engagement and

negotiation with various government agencies on the basis of emerging findings from research.

The science shops in Denmark and Romania had been set up over a period of time since the late 1990s (while these projects were conducted in 2001 and 1999 respectively); these science shops had received some funding from governments (Dutch government in case of Romanian science shop) and some infrastructure type of facilities from the universities. CUPP had consistently raised research grants from various government or foundation sources in UK, with active support from the University of Brighton.

Thus, institutionalizing the functions and funding of partnerships can itself become time-consuming and complex. Partnership champions, managers and activists should be prepared for this set of challenges.

Coordination of research partnerships can be achieved through multi-stakeholder working groups, management units embedded in key institutions, or informal, consultative arrangements.

Several Southern interventions were guided by multi-stakeholder working groups, usually called steering committees or coordinating committees. In particular, the Senegal project's steering committee was the heart of the initiative, including senior stakeholders from all key partner groups. In the case of Machaca municipality, the partners established a coordinating committee and also a technical committee of experts; it was necessary for CEBEM to coordinate both across and within these committees. Since this project was also part of a national network, it formed a working group of international partner representatives. In the MDRC case, the formation of an ad hoc committee organized by Garhwal University and local community experts, supported by PRIA, was followed by the establishment of a more formal committee to guide the work of the newly incorporated centre to serve students and faculty from multiple universities in the area.

At the same time, other approaches were used. In the Chiquitania forest producer initiative, responsibility for project direction was lodged in the natural resources unit of the area government, complemented by a dedicated management unit in the national government. In the Philippines case, the Institute of Environmental Governance worked informally, on a project basis, with key government units, including municipalities, councils of indigenous elders, and city government, as well as the national Department of Environment and Natural Resources. In yet another model, the Rural Extension Centre and its rural libraries support and are guided by the decisions and activities of village development societies.

In Brighton's CUPP initiative, an innovative approach of CoP was utilized to enable research partnership. CoP, comprising community volunteers, parents, students, faculty and service providers, would meet monthly to share knowledge, ensure coordination and identify challenges ahead. In the Romanian case, in addition to researchers and NGO staff and volunteers, the private sector – Green Consultancy – was also involved in the partnership. Coordination became a shared responsibility, and communication with the community was regularly maintained in this manner. Quebec's CAP Financement became a major multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism in the project; it included some private sector participa-

tion from the capital markets as well, so that research could benefit from their perspective, experiences and knowledge, too.

Regardless of what coordination or management model is used in research partnerships, the potential for stakeholder conflict is always present and must be managed. This is illustrated most strikingly in the Senegal project, when the university students went on strike for higher salaries and their case was vigorously supported by a steering committee member. The issue was eventually resolved, but a solution had to be negotiated by the committee. It is interesting to note that, when asked about the success factors in this project, the case-study authors point to the 'democratic spirit' of the committee.

Multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms are designed to overcome the limitations of single-participant management; such multi-stakeholder mechanisms generate ownership of all the stakeholders in the timely and effective delivery of project results, as well as facilitate timely deployment of capacities and resources of all stakeholders in the project. However, such multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms in any partnership face differences in style, priority, approach and standards, thereby generating conflicts. Community-university partnerships deploying effective multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms need to be prepared to deal with conflicts in a constructive and transparent manner. Intensity and complexity of such conflicts, and therefore capacities required to deal with them, increase substantially where serious differences in power remain unresolved (like those related to use of resources and patenting of results).

Investment in an effective intermediary is critical as partnership catalyst

One common theme linking the Southern cases is the importance of substantial, ongoing staff time to coordinate all partnership activities, including its methodological efforts. At one end of the spectrum is the example of the Machaca municipality project, to which CEBEM assigned three full-time staff members and supported the hiring of a number of part-time consultants. In the case of MDRC, the nodal agent undertakes all coordination, management and liaison functions in support of the centre's activities; other resources may be engaged on a project-by-project basis. Other partnerships, such as the Chiquitania and Bukidnon cases, benefited from significant staff time contributed towards project coordination and management by government officials at multiple levels of government.

In Europe, effective intermediation has been possible through investment over a decade. The science shops in Romania and Denmark (like hundreds of science shops in other European countries) have been invested in over two decades with capacities of staff who are able to act as partnership catalysts. The science shop in Iasi, Romania, had staff who knew how to communicate across various partners, academic departments and different universities, a private consultancy firm and the township residents. Similar intermediation functions were performed by the science shop in Denmark as it entailed working with multiple participants and keeping them regularly informed and involved. In CUPP, the project had staff dedicated to support the CoP, the key coordination mechanism. Staff time

(including those from the community) was compensated from project funds as continued involvement of capable facilitators would not have been possible without it. The mechanism of intermediation in the Quebec project is recognized by those involved as most valuable; they refer to it as 'mediation' between the two different worlds of research and practice. Active facilitation of communication, meetings, minutes and capacities enabled the social economy project to mediate both technical and relational aspects of the partnership. CURA funding enabled this process significantly.

More specifically, the staff of what we will call partnership catalyst organizations – CEBEM and PRIA being the two most prominent examples; the African Participatory Research Network (REPAS) is another – play a unique role in coordinating the methodological work of the partnerships. This requires expertise in and a commitment to facilitating knowledge co-production by the partners, especially among community members with local knowledge and technical professionals; facilitating the dialogue and mutual learning not only among academic and practitioner knowledge, but also across content areas and between content and process fields. Finally, these specialists must coordinate methods and knowledge co-production vertically, from the local to the state or provincial levels to the national and international levels. This set of skills and capacities among partnership catalyst organizations is invaluable. As some are doing already, these groups must train new staff cohorts in the years ahead.

In this sense, it is critical to ensure that effective intermediaries are essential as partnership catalysts in any community–university partnerships intermediation ensures that hitherto separately and independently acting partners (university faculty, students, community, NGOs, etc.) enter and remain in partnership to achieve shared goals. Intermediation thus is critical (Gaventa and Tandon, 2010); it doesn't happen spontaneously; it requires sufficient investment in building, nurturing and deploying key staff capacities. Intermediation is also critical in creating and sustaining relationships across dissimilar others; in a community–university partnership, the value addition comes from the diversity of participants; they need to learn to build and maintain relationships. Partnership catalysts are intermediaries that facilitate relationships – the essence of partnerships. Over time, as PRIA, CEBEM, CUPP and science shops have shown, such intermediaries have their own web of relationships across diverse sectors, thereby facilitating new partnerships over time.

A common characteristic across many of these intermediaries in the cases described here is their civil society character: they are independent entities which promote this perspective of research partnerships; they may be funded by a university or government or foundation, but they maintain autonomy from their donors; they bring flexibility in their operations (to overcome institutional inertias in universities or governments); they can transcend institutional and thematic boundaries; they are committed to this perspective of co-production of knowledge.

All of these civil society organizations (CSOs) came to the partnership process with an impressive track record of expertise in community-based and partnered

research, and a deep commitment to applying participatory methods to the co-production of useful knowledge. Equally important, they all seem to have been quite willing to step back at the appropriate point in time to permit university, community and government interests to assume joint control over the partnerships. The CSOs then adjusted their roles as other stakeholders took over and set in motion decisions to institutionalize the partnerships or their functions. This, too, is an invaluable set of skills that can be learned. A new generation of CSO leaders, managers and activists must be trained in this important set of abilities.

Community–university research partnerships benefit from the involvement of university executives, professors and students from a wide range of academic disciplines and fields. In the Southern cases, engaged academics and students came from many disciplines and fields, including public administration, local development, training and information technology (Machaca); public administration, sociology, forestry, business and law (Chiquitania); applied economics and sustainable development (Senegal); rural extension, science, ecology, geography, training, monitoring and evaluation (Bukidnon); education, business management, anthropology, journalism and mass communication, horticulture, environmental science, social work and rural development (Srinagar); and rural extension, information technology and library sciences (Sriniketan). One of the notable features of this experience is the mix of content and process fields that they entail, both within and across the cases. Rural extension, rural development, social work, training and evaluation can be considered process-oriented fields of academic knowledge and practice. In some cases, NGOs provide this expertise, as well. At the same time, there are also content-rich fields of study – forestry, business, ecology, geography, business – which figure prominently in the Southern cases. Both types of engaged scholarship seem to have been necessary in order for these partnerships to achieve meaningful gains.

It is interesting to note that European cases suggest much engagement of students and faculty from multiple disciplines of enquiry. In CUPP at Brighton, faculty members from mental health, community service, child development and social work came together initially; some students got involved as well, but new faculty engagement depended on resource availability.

In the two cases which involved science shops, students were the prime drivers of enquiry and partnerships; students from multiple disciplines (environment, engineering, chemistry, etc.) began the project initiative, and then found supportive faculty supervisors. In the Romanian case, students contacted social science faculties from another university to prepare a social enquiry survey tool. Some faculty supervisors initially resisted such multidisciplinaryism; the students pushed for it, since the problem definition required use of multiple knowledge domains (like environmental chemistry and social inquiry in the Romanian case). Most faculty members are discipline based, not problem focused as community–university research partnerships require.

This is an important lesson for those working on developing and facilitating such partnerships. Be prepared to transcend disciplinary and departmental boundaries; be aware of the resistances that arise in any such collaborations; and

students can be valuable champions of boundary transgressions, so critical in producing effective outcomes in community–university research partnerships.

Sustained support from senior-level leaders is crucial to the success of community–university partnerships. Successful research partnerships benefit from sustained support by senior-level leaders in universities, governments and civil society. In the case of MDRC, the support of the Vice Chancellor of Garhwal University in Srinagar was instrumental in bringing together the original committee that initiated the centre. The state governor has also been active in key decisions concerning the centre, including approving the appointment of the local community-based forest expert to teach at the university. In addition, the chair of MDRC has always been a dean or department head. In the Philippines, the Institute of Environmental Governance is administered directly under the Office of the President of Bukidnon State University. State politicians there supported a total logging ban, including the transport of out-of-state logs across their state. Moreover, the area chief executive of local government units has provided financial support to the institute's work.

While the key university partners in the Senegal case were faculty members as opposed to university executives, local politicians and religious leaders, particularly imams, were mobilized to support partnerships in participating communities. With regard to the Senegal project's international allies, CUPP, at University of Brighton, had enjoyed strong and visible support from that University's Vice-Chancellor, who himself was a leading advocate of partnered research in the United Kingdom (see Watson, 2007). For its part, the Bolivian project involving indigenous governance in Machaca benefited from the strong, ongoing support of that municipality's mayor, support including the project's book featuring local peoples' presentation of Aboriginal systems, culture and management practices. Municipal officials also solidly supported the work of CEBEM and its partners on cooperation of small forest producers in Bolivia's Chiquitania region. Senior leadership of UQAM supported this project as they saw value in contributing to the growing significance of social enterprises in livelihood generation in Quebec.

It is critical that the top leadership of universities appreciate, value and support such partnerships. Their support can open doors; help overcome parochial resistances; enable energy to flow towards risk taking; inspire students and motivate faculty to engage with the community in an open manner. Leadership support is also essential from governments and donors; research councils and professional academic associations can indicate their interests in such partnerships, creating an enabling partnership environment. Therefore, promoters of community–university research partnerships would do well to identify critical top-level support needed to make these partnerships work well.

International cooperation can be very useful to local partnerships

International cooperation can provide financial and methodological support for community–university partnerships. For its part, the indigenous governance project in Bolivia's Municipality of Jesus de Machaca benefited from a regional

initiative funded by the European Union and coordinated by CEBEM. The same project also used methods and tools from the SAS2 group (www.sas2.net), based at Carleton University in Ottawa, funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). CEBEM's other project, on small forest producers in the Chiquitania region of Bolivia, was funded by Spanish Cooperation, Spain's aid agency, through the University of Cordoba. It, too, utilized SAS2 methods whose development and dissemination was supported by IDRC. In both projects, CEBEM played a catalytic role in negotiating and managing international funding flows and access to methodological expertise.

In addition, international cooperation resulted in important funding, expertise and solidarity for the Senegal student engagement project. Through the Global Alliance for Community-Engaged Research, REPAS, the sub-Saharan Africa network based in Dakar, developed a link with CUPP, University of Brighton. Together, CUPP and REPAS were able to access funding through the Education Partnership Project Grants window of the British Council. Moreover, CUPP provided additional knowledge in the strategy and tactics of partnership management and activities, particularly with regard to student engagement techniques – and important solidarity when this project experienced challenges.

At the same time, research partnerships may be successfully undertaken *without* foreign cooperation. In particular, the cases of the MDRC and REC in India, and the environmental governance initiative in Bukidnon State, the Philippines, did not utilize international cooperation to design or implement their interventions, funding their activities through local and national resources. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that PRIA, the NGO think-tank, was itself funded by international agencies as well as local sources during the MDRC project. The science shop in Romania was funded by the Dutch government; the science shops movement in Europe has been actively supported by the European Union. When national funding sources (like social science research councils or other government agencies) are risk averse, and focus on traditional academic knowledge, international cooperation can nudge these new partnerships. Seeking support from international agencies, however, has to be handled in a manner that doesn't create perceptions of external domination (especially northern domination) in research enterprise itself.

Political advocacy is distinct from partnered research, and is essential for research to influence policy. The experience of the Community–University Research Alliance in the Social Economy in Quebec, coordinated by the University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada, has emphasized the importance of distinguishing between research partnerships and the broader process of social change, which is usually led by social and political movements. As Fontan and Bussires advise in Chapter 7 of this volume: 'The expectation for change far surpasses the research objectives specific to the research partnership, and involves different participants and actions that differ from the basic research process. Some of these include community facilitation, training, citizen action, and the formation of coalitions with others in the community who are not involved in the research' (see, p. 81).

Accordingly, the tool they propose to use to evaluate such research partnerships also makes this distinction. Indeed, the final question in the tool asks

whether the research partnership 'has a positive effect on the area targeted for change' (*ibid.*, p. 85).

Active advocacy with local municipality and regional government was pursued in Iasi, where quantity and quality of water supply to communities had suffered due to indiscriminate industrialization. Local media used the findings to generate public debate and create pressure on the government to improve the water supply. One of the newspapers presented the findings in a manner as to sensationalize the issue. However, public debate in the town hall helped to focus the real issues.

In Quebec's social economy case, political engagement was key to success in securing a fund for investment in such enterprises. At an opportune time when research fundings were available, the consortium invited then-Prime Minister Paul Martin to a colloquium where findings and possible solutions were shared.

When there is sufficient political space to engage in advocacy and other change processes, for example, in Canada or India, this is a very useful distinction. However, what is to be done when the context is politically repressive? It may be in such a case that the community-university research partnership will only be able to achieve modest objectives in terms of political or social change. However, at some point in the future, allied organizations outside the immediate partnership may be able to use the research results to bolster efforts towards change. The timing and tactics used to make such an advance will likely depend on the ebb and flow of local or national politics. So, it is essential that the community-university partnerships – that originally co-produced the knowledge together – also serve as joint stewards of this production until such time as conditions permit further action. Staying power, resilience and focus on the end goal of change are all important factors of success in this situation. Building larger alliances within the country, and even beyond, can assist in redefining the relations of power with political authorities and related vested interests.

It is possible, and necessary, to systematically evaluate community-university research partnerships.

At the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, economics matters everywhere, all the time. Funding agencies, especially governments, are very interested in social interventions that have measurable economic impacts. In the current context, therefore, those interventions that can demonstrate credible economic results are more likely to attract ongoing resources. This applies to the Southern case studies. One of the lessons from the Senegal student engagement project was that the collection of real data by the partnership is an important means of optimizing longer-term funding. The project did some of this, but could have done more. What was the value, in terms of additional income and better nutrition, to villages and households of reducing soil erosion and expanding food production? Similarly, if other projects had collected more detailed, granular data on the economic impacts of partnership activities on individuals and households, the positions of those partnerships would have also been further strengthened.

For example, what impact on poverty reduction would an increase in resettlement compensation from Rs10,000 to Rs30,000 per acre exert on village households in the Srinagar area? Or what economic benefits would accrue to the households

of entrepreneurs and workers deriving income from value-added forest products in the Chiquitania region? In the years ahead, community–university research partnerships should be better equipped to collect and utilize such data.

Chapter 7 demonstrates that not only are engaged scholars and reflective practitioners around the world designing and implementing a wide range of community–university partnerships, they are also working on ways to evaluate and improve these initiatives. The UQAM team presents a tool, based on extensive partnership work in Quebec over the past five years, which is aimed at assessing the research partnership process. This instrument comprises a questionnaire that requires *yes* or *no* answers to twenty-four questions organized according to the phases of a partnered research project: co-definition, co-implementation, mobilization of the knowledge produced and results of the research. The questions hold partnerships to a high standard of design and performance. Upon completion of the questionnaire, a diamond diagram is produced for each partnership evaluated. The raw scores and diagrams for each partnership assessed can then be compared. The authors indicate that: ‘Primarily, the model is targeted at the protagonists in research partnerships, to give them tools with which to reflect on their research partnership experience and identify areas for improvement’ (*ibid.*, p. 88).

Other strategies and tools can be deployed to evaluate community–university research partnerships. In terms of facilitating stakeholder engagement in the evaluation process, PRIA’s participatory evaluation work over thirty years is a valuable source of methodological experience and techniques. Other sources in this area include Chevalier and Buckles (2009); Gaventa and Tandon (2010); Jackson and Kassam (1998), and others. With regard to results-based management, logic-model analysis is also a potential approach to evaluating research partnerships. So, too, is cost–benefit analysis, especially in the field of economic development. In terms of the social dimensions of the costs and benefits of community–university research partnerships, the emerging tools for measuring social return on investment may also prove useful (see Mook *et al.*, 2007).

The development of a knowledge democracy movement worldwide can benefit from ongoing, robust and independent evaluation of research partnerships at all levels. The tasks of designing, testing and refining strategies, methods and tools for this purpose are crucial to the long-term success of the movement. This area deserves concerted effort in the years ahead.

From local partnerships to a knowledge democracy movement, there is no macro without micro. It is said that all politics are local. Likewise, all movements – at least all effective ones – are based on and informed by local action. A global knowledge democracy movement must be rooted in local-level experiences and organizations. The case studies in this book demonstrate the vitality, creativity and relevance of local community–university research partnerships. They and hundreds, perhaps thousands, more like them around the world constitute a solid platform upon which a global knowledge democracy movement can be built.

They can be improved, too. We have seen that there are key strategies or tools for strengthening these partnerships. Once strengthened, they can then be replicated and scaled up to generate broader and deeper impacts. Facilitating their

exchange of information and experience among local partnerships is an important step in making this happen. So, too, is the training and mentoring of leaders and activists in this field, within universities, in civil society, in the state and, yes, even in the private sector – and proactive networking across and within these constituencies.

These cases are thus valuable in multiple ways. Not only have the cases reviewed here achieved important practical gains on the ground for local people and policies, which they have done impressively. These interventions have also made contributions to the building of the theory of democratic knowledge (co-) production and application. And, above all else, they vividly bring to life what a knowledge democracy can – and actually does – look like in practice, and what it can deliver in order to create better livelihoods, cleaner environments and more effective governance.