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**De-westernising Research Methodologies:  
Alternative Approaches to Research for Higher Education Curricula  
in Developing Countries\***

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## Abstract

### **De-Westernising Research Methodologies: Alternative Approaches to Research for Higher Education Curricula in Developing Countries**

This paper looks at the impact of western research methods in training researchers in developing countries and how much of the research carried out in universities in developing countries is directly relevant to their needs and suitable to their socio-cultural context.

The paper focuses on **research utility**, which looks at research quality from a society's or a region's specific knowledge needs, placing attention on external factors such as the value of **western education, knowledge** and **research methods** and the role of **foreign research training**.

The author is particularly interested in looking at **alternative** perspectives that reflect different socio-cultural contexts that can inform relevant research approaches alternative to the **predominant western research paradigms**. It also discusses how higher education institutions can promote research as part of their curricula in ways that nurture local research.

The paper is informed through emerging literature from different parts of the world that is affirming the existence or the potential for developing alternative ways of learning and distinctive understandings of local knowledge and the need to make them part of formal educational curricula.

There is a need to build on this work and encourage young **local researchers** to provide their insights on the role of research in their countries development and encourage them to seek local alternatives to studying their cultures and societies.

There is also a need to acknowledge the significance of **indigenous** perspectives on research and discuss how to strengthen them through at Higher Education level and re-examine western research methods as they reinforce dependency and unfit solutions to development for local cultures. It is argued that research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of western dominance as it is now expressed through globalisation and neo-colonialism is both regulated and realized.

'**Development**' is included in the argument as the paper refers to developing countries mostly and most research in these countries is linked to or has an impact on development. Examples will be drawn mostly from the south pacific and the field of communication research.

The author suggests that more emphasis and efforts should be put on fostering a locally informed research culture at an undergraduate level by creating curricula that are based on local knowledge systems and encouraging young people to be more involved in their communities as active participants in the research process.

# **De-Westernising Research Methodologies: Alternative Approaches to Research for Higher Education Curricula in Developing Countries**

## **1. Introduction**

This paper looks at research quality from a society's or a region's specific knowledge needs, placing attention on external factors such as the value of western education, knowledge and research methods and the role of foreign research training. The paper, theoretically informed through emerging literature from different parts of the world, examines the existence of or the potential for developing alternative ways of learning and distinctive understandings of local knowledge and the need to make them part of formal educational curricula.

The paper reflects the author's interests generated by her experiences in teaching research methods and conducting research on issues of higher education curricula and communication developments in countries where western research models have not produced the desired outcomes in terms of facilitating sustainable and appropriate to local societies' development.

The author is particularly interested in looking at alternative perspectives that reflect different socio-cultural contexts that can inform relevant research approaches, alternative to the predominant western research paradigms. The paper also looks at how higher education institutions can promote research as part of their curricula in ways that nurture local research. It suggests that the focus should be shifted more on fostering research at low cost research methodologies and at an undergraduate level, generating a broader skilled group of people that can apply basic research knowledge at different levels in their societies (private, public, NGO etc sectors).

### **1.1 Main issues**

Research is the process by which new knowledge is created and as such it influences the direction in which a society moves (Conti, 1997). It is through enhancing the production of knowledge and know how, that research becomes an engine of endogenous and sustainable development (Traore, 2004).

Education should involve use of societal knowledge that is expected to contribute to curriculum content (Ma Rhea, 2004:5). The teaching and learning of how to conduct research in a local context should thus be based on and reflect that societal knowledge. It is expected to contribute to the production of new knowledge that is a continuation, expansion and enrichment of endogenous (local, indigenous, traditional) knowledge, cross-pollinated with exogenous knowledge.

However, the West's dominance in the production, organization, and dissemination of the world's knowledge and information contributes to the heavy reliance of developing countries on this knowledge and information (Teferra, 2001). This dominance has had an enormous impact on higher education systems in non-western societies, particularly so in formerly colonised and developing countries, resulting

often in the exclusion of local knowledge systems from the higher education curricula and the teaching of inappropriate research methods that fail to be in line with local epistemologies.

There is a need to create curricula that promote awareness of the social and cultural significance of local knowledge that has been taken either for granted or dismissed as irrelevant in a modern and increasingly globalized world. Along with the ever increasing dissemination of western education and knowledge through globalization and the internationalization of higher education, there is also an increasing awareness that the western educational system and ways of conducting research have their limitations. New approaches need to be devised or explored within local contexts. There seems to be a paradigm shift towards integration of local knowledge into educational systems albeit slow that calls for a need to adapt research priorities and practices to better reflect local points of view (see Kawagley & Barnhardt, 2006; Ma Rhea, 2004; Huffer & Qalo, 2004; Thaman, 2006; Tuhiwai Smith, 2003; Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Maguire, 1987)

There are mainly two issues in this problematic situation as described in this paper. There is the issue of finding appropriate research methods for non-western societies which poses the obvious question of whether different epistemologies require different research approaches. There is also the issue of finding appropriate research methods for developing countries. Here the question is what adjustments need to take place and how the research community should resolve the concerns of their community (Samik-Ibrahim, 2000).

These issues are affected by internal and external, to these societies, factors, which work at different but interrelated levels (societal, institutional, curriculum and individual). Below is a summarised presentation of these factors and the issues involved, as perceived by the author.

- **Internal factors:**

- *societal level - issues involved:* internalization of westernization as a synonym to modernization which is still seen as the way to development; lack of confidence and respect in local knowledge systems and learning processes; foreign education more highly respected; prioritization of primary/secondary education over HE (higher education) in developing countries; lack of confidence in research related to development issues due to past failures; lack of distinction between research in societies based on communities as opposed to societies based on individuals;
- *institutional level - issues involved:* increased demand for HE resulting in chaotic development of the HE sector with many private universities competing for students but offering little in terms of research; low research quality due to low research capacity caused by the absence of incentives to do research (limited funds, high teaching load, small salaries etc); lack of collaboration between schools and institutions; lack of data dissemination through local data basis; dependence on external/foreign aid/trainers for research training, preferred mode of training in Western universities through a system of government and foreign scholarships; preference for staff with Western degrees;

- **curriculum level** - *issues involved*: emphasis on transferring imported knowledge rather than generating knowledge; research methods courses ill adopted to local needs, predominantly western in approach; limited local material and access to it; low priority for research in undergraduate curricula; poor integration of research activities with undergraduate education level; not enough instructors trained in teaching research methods; lack of a supporting curriculum that enhances research with courses on local knowledge systems;
  - **individual level** - *issues involved*: lack of confidence of local researchers in conducting research linked to issues of resources, training, funding, feelings of inferiority relating to the perceived superiority of western knowledge and research ensuing in preference to study in a western institutions;
- **External factors:**
    - **societal level** – *issues involved*: the general impact of West’s dominance in the production, organization, and dissemination of the world’s knowledge and information; impact of donor agencies in defining what is right for local development needs in terms of education; the wider impact of colonialism and new forms of western hegemonic practices reinforced by globalisation on local knowledge systems and learning through transmission of ideas, knowledge, information, cultural and social values; impact of cross border education that undermines further local knowledge; lack of distinction between research in societies based on communities as opposed to societies based on individuals;
    - **institutional level** – *issues involved*: impact of donor agencies in defining educational/research priorities; impact of the internationalisation of higher education that forces local HE institutes to follow a prescribed western formula of curricula in order to remain ‘relevant’ and ‘competitive’; impact of Western scholars’ recruitment as academic staff/trainers/consultants;
    - **curriculum level** – *issues involved*: impact of western textbooks on local curricula; impact of western research approaches, predominately quantitative research methods in training local future researchers;
    - **individual level** – *issues involved*: Lack of understanding/respect/recognition by foreign researchers of the value of local knowledge systems; enthusiasm and good intentions are not always sufficient qualities in transferring to and sharing knowledge with non-western societies; impact of western academic journals in the validation of individual academic work;

## 1.2 Clarifications on main concepts and terms

In this paper, a distinction is made between *western and non western educational systems*. The former refers mainly to formal, standardised, compartmentalised, specialised and systematic ways of imparting knowledge to individuals. The latter refers mostly to traditional, indigenous ways of education that are less formal, more holistic and based on local knowledge systems and addressing the needs of a community and not individuals (see Kawagley & Barnhardt, 2006; Ma Rhea, 2004; Huffer & Qalo, 2004; Thaman, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 2003). The western or western based educational system is seen as the predominant model of education around the world today.

The term '*local*' is used here interchangeably with those of '*indigenous*', '*traditional*' '*native*' to indicate other than Western (referring to societies or educational systems and knowledge). Although this is a very broad and arbitrary way of putting together all these different terms that may have distinctive meaning to different people and disciplines, in this case they are used as a comparing means to the predominant, mainstream Western ways of thinking and doing (see above cited for different definitions of these terms; also Crewe & Harrison, 2003:30).

Similarly, the term 'de-westernize' is used interchangeably with those of 'decolonize', 'diversify' and 'alternative', signifying a trend in creating new approaches to doing and teaching research in non-western contexts (for an extensive debate on 'decolonizing' research see Tuhiwai Smith, 2003).

Perhaps the term that helps bring all above concepts and terms together is culture which here is seen as including also the means of acquiring, transmitting and maintaining a group's beliefs, values, accumulated knowledge and language (Thaman, 2003:4). A cultural group shares a cultural history maintained by its own epistemology and ways of seeing the world and as such education is of primary importance as it helps cultural survival and continuity (ibid:2). As most developing countries have experienced colonization and the imposition of western educational systems, the continuation of this cultural history and ways of knowing has been brought into jeopardy (see Kawagley & Barhardt, 2006). It is considered thus important in finding ways to de-colonize, de-westernize knowledge producing systems by looking at alternative and indigenous options.

Development and developing countries is another set of terms that are linked to those mentioned above. There inherent problems with defining developing countries, so here the term will be used interchangeably with South and to broadly describe those of the poorer and less technologically advanced countries as opposed to richer, industrialized states. But it is also used to refer to the disparities in information and knowledge flow (see Chan & Costa, 2005:143).

We should remain aware that hierarchical connotations of the above terms such as local, indigenous, traditional, developing, modern, outsiders/foreigner expert do exist and persist despite efforts to 'de-problematize' the local and free it from external intervention i.e. donor aid, foreign expert/consultant (Crewe & Harrison, 2003:30; Tuhiwai Smith, 2003).

## **2. Context & Discussion of the Issues Involved**

While most developed countries are in the process of acclimatizing their higher education systems to new challenges presented by globalisation, the increasing importance of knowledge as a main driver for growth and the information and communication revolution, most developing countries are left behind struggling with difficulties arising from inadequate responses to old but persisting challenges (World Bank, 2002, p. 1).

Sustainable expansion of higher education, reduction of inequalities of access and gender, improvement of educational quality through updated curricula and relevance to their society's needs and inconsistent planning and funding on an-ad hoc basis are

some of the challenges that most of these countries continue to face (Rooney & Papoutsaki, 2004:1).

Most developing countries having inherited the colonisers' educational systems are still facing the challenge of shaping their higher education system that is adapted to its national needs. Thaman gives us as an example of this the south pacific islands which like most developing countries share the experience of European colonialism and its concomitant educational values and practices, including its languages that has resulted in the evolution of education systems largely Eurocentric in outlook (Thaman, K 2004:1).

Colonialism is argued to have undermined ways of knowing and doing and that the next stage of decolonization should be de-hegemonization. This can be done, as Gegeo & Watson Gegeo argue from the south pacific, 'by finding research and epistemic frameworks that are indigenous', 'by asserting the validity of local ways of knowing' and 'being in resistance to the intensifying hegemony of mainstream epistemology from metropolitan powers' (2001: 55-57). These ways of knowing involve how knowledge is theorized and constructed, encoded and passed on to the next generation.

Western based education systems, even when localised as Ma Rhea argues, contribute to the de-legitimisation of traditional, indigenous knowledge and a legitimisation of the knowledge that enables people to enter the industrial economy (2004:4). This is one of the main dilemmas developing countries are facing: the acceptance of a western education that is expected to bring the perceived benefits associated with the advanced economically societies. Research has shown that foreign education (whether that if offered locally or abroad) is more highly respected and perceived to be of higher quality (Marginson & McBurnie, 2003).

Langton & Ma Rhea (2003) indicated in their research that many governments in Asia and the Middle East attach high status to western knowledge because they perceived it to be important for capacity building in national education systems. Western knowledge is given higher status which makes it more difficult to incorporate local knowledge in local curricula.

With the increasing internationalization of higher education, developing countries are ill prepared to absorb and appropriate yet more foreign influences and demands from international organizations to integrate in an international framework. The needs of institutions to develop within a global academic and research community and thereby adopt the predominant Western models of higher education and the developmental needs of these countries are often clashing, posing a dilemma between satisfying market forces and the need to nurture education within the socio-cultural specificities of the country (Rooney & Papoutsaki, 2004:1). The challenge of how to be locally relevant and at the same time with an international standing is a big challenge for these Higher Education Institutions. Internationalization of HE is making it more difficult for local knowledge to prevail (see Thaman, 2004).

Universities are part of the national intellectual capital and while it is accepted that knowledge does not have borders and that there is a need to compare, borrow, absorb foreign knowledge, it is also important to nurture a core of local knowledge through

local faculty that can provide a cultural and intellectual gravity to these institutions (see Fong & Lim, 2003). The importance of teaching how to do research in a local context using local epistemologies is very vital in the documentation of indigenous knowledge for future use (Ma Rhea, 2004:4). As Gegeo & Watson Gegeo have argued, there is a difference between how, for instance, pacific islanders use their native epistemologies to construct and theorize knowledge and how cultural outsiders do this using Anglo-European epistemologies (opcit).

Although one of the prerequisites in building high research capacity in a university is to have competently trained researchers, one needs to question what that 'competence' means and by whose terms. Research is more likely to benefit a society's knowledge needs if its objectives and priorities are determined in the country itself. That is where the problem has always been, in the use of western epistemologies and research methodologies in conducting research in non-western contexts reinforced by the lack of local resources and local training; exasperated with training in western institutions and use of western textbooks and records of non-western knowledge traditionally done by western anthropologists; and aggravated further with the dependency of donor agencies for funding research activities.

The dependency on donor agencies for funding research activities poses risks for the independence of academic research, forcing academics to tailor their research depending on donor needs. This dependency is not sustainable, as research is carried out not on a continuous basis but whenever the funds are available (Rooney & Papoutsaki, 2004).

Scholarships, fellowships and other similar programs that aim to bring academics from these countries to western institutions abound. Most Aid programs facilitate this learning mode. However, there are limitations as there is a danger that the topics of study are insufficiently relevant to the local institutions and/or the formal position of the training recipient (see Boeren, 2005).

Research into donor based programs of 'cooperation' between institutions from the North and South has indicated an inequality in the relationship. "Because the Northern donor provides the funding and the Northern higher education institution provides the knowledge, the North often decides on the model and activities to be chosen, despite the fact that the Southern institution is obviously being better placed to determine the needs and priorities" (Boeren, 2005:15). The Northern institutions benefit from these programs in terms of the internationalization of courses, attracting researchers, establishing collaborations with partner institutions in the South, and getting access to research ground in developing countries. Some have broader aims than just training people from the South, such as the SIDA International Training Programme which is also meant to communicate information about Swedish society and culture (ibid:19).

As part of these partnerships, 'experts' from the Northern institutes come to teach and distribute western curricula. The author's experience as a Visiting Faculty Fellow with Civic Education Project (an NGO linked to the Open Society Institute, [www.cep.org.hu](http://www.cep.org.hu)) in post-communists countries and as a development worker with a British organisation supports this position. Foreigners, as the author herself experienced first hand, are often put in positions of authority that gave them power to revise and develop curricula simply because of their foreignness and Western

education and despite their apparent lack of experience in non-western settings. These experts bring with them the western textbooks they are familiar with and use them as the main instruction sources. This contributes further to developing a Westernised intellectual outlook. People tend not to question or interrogate critically the appropriateness of the training/materials that given to them as part of donor funded educational activities as that might be interpreted as ungrateful (see Thaman, 2003).

Development related research has its pitfalls. As Crewe & Harrison have characteristically put it, “for those working in development, whether they seek modernity or greater respect for local people, ‘primitive’ has been replaced by ‘traditional’ or, more recently, indigenous and local, and ‘civilised’ by ‘modern’. ‘Locals’ are problematised, portrayed as deficient in various ways and this deficiency is referred to when legitimizing the intervention of expatriates” (2002:30). This has an impact on locals academics which are seen lacking skills and ‘it is very difficult to shake off the idea that we know more than them and accept that we might even learn from them’ (ibid). Some methodologies regard the values, beliefs and practices of communities as ‘barriers’ to research or as exotic customs with which researchers need to familiarise themselves in order to carry out their research. This attitude is passed on to locals who believe that culture is a barrier to development.

There is a need to build on local knowledge and encourage young researchers to provide their insights on the role of research in their countries development and to seek local alternatives to studying their cultures and societies. There is an increasing need to generate indigenous research in order to balance western views and interpretations and address the overpowering foreign and donor driven research agendas. The expansion of theoretical and research studies from alternative perspectives would contribute to developing interlinked indigenous/non western research cultures in various disciplines amongst these countries.

### **3. Research Approaches: from mainstream to localized research**

I think being taught Research Methods at an undergraduate level in PNG is really exciting. It is beneficial for a developing country like ours because we need to find solutions to a lot of problems that hold us back. What better way to do that, then through research? The best part of it all is that WE do it ourselves! It is way better when we Papua New Guineans find solutions to our own problems and help ourselves out. It saves a lot of money and resources, plus we know our country better than anyone else. We have always had the potential. Research Methods has provided us with a sense of direction, in that we see now where our country should be heading, in terms of development and what is holding us back. Only through research can we really know our struggles and what should be done to solve some of these problems. (C.Ove, 4<sup>th</sup> year CA students, DWU, PNG, Oct 2006)

Being a local researcher going back into the community was something special. It felt like I was giving something back to my country by helping the rural people. I, as a local researcher, understand better why they do what they do and try to make recommendations to ignite development. That, I think, is the difference between a local researcher and an expatriate researcher who would want to apply western ideas that do not suit the

environment. What I liked most was that I was a black skin, like them and we talked the same language. (C.Hawigen, 4<sup>th</sup> year student, CA dept, DWU, PNG, oct 2006)<sup>1</sup>

There is a need to acknowledge the significance of indigenous perspectives on research and discuss how to strengthen them through HE curricula. It is argued that research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of western dominance as it is now expressed through globalisation and neo-colonialism is both regulated and realized. Research should be reflective of local communities and their values, knowledge and should involve perspectives and paradigms that nor always mainstream research.

The dominant approach to social science research, called ‘traditional’, mainstream’ or ‘classical’ is based on the view that recognizes only facts and observable, ‘objective’ phenomena. The acceptance of this research method has left little space for consideration of alternative approaches in the production of social knowledge (Maguire, 1987). The emphasis on objectivity, researcher distance, generalizations or universality, quantitative methods, social control and impartial advice have shared generations of researchers both in western and non-western settings.

These approaches to doing research are reflecting on the kinds of epistemology that underlie for instance survey research without posing to think what happens when the results are translated to a context that values the ‘correct answer’ rather than the ‘diversity of opinion’, ‘group thinking’ rather than ‘individual opinion’ (see Pratt & Mannheim, 1988 for doing communication research in community based societies). It is also reflecting on approaches to research that see objectivity and neutrality as a pre-requisite to conduct research which creates problems for local researchers that can do valuable research in their own communities by bringing their insights as insiders.

Alternative research approaches that focus on subjectivity, closeness to subject, uniqueness, qualitative methods, local self determination and solidarity and action (Maguire, 1987) are providing space for accepting that other realities exist in people’s perception of themselves and the world. They also provide space for the local researcher to conduct ‘valid’ research because of his/her closeness to the communities she/he researchers and knows thus better than an outsider. They also allow the local communities to be participants in the research process. As Tanton puts it, ‘although people have historically generated their own practical knowledge, modern technology and science have developed the myth that this function is reserved for trained experts’ (in Conti, 1997). New forms of doing research such as participatory research are based on the belief that people are capable of reacting their own knowledge and that the researcher is a collaborative learner in this process (Conti, 1997).

How do we incorporate these approaches to HE curricula in non-western contexts? As Ma Rhea (2004) argues, national curricula tend to reflect the worldview of the dominant group and as the western worldview assumes the superiority of the production of knowledge through the collection and analysis of data, knowledge about people and things should be representative of empirical evidence. This approach has developed a significant body of documented evidence which is brought into the

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<sup>1</sup> This is part of a survey that the author is currently conducting on the impact of introducing research methods and research projects in undergraduate curricula and on students’ perceptions of their role as future researchers in developing countries.

educational system. In many societies and communities this knowledge is not documented but passed on orally. In bringing this knowledge into education it becomes data and this has been happening for some time but mostly through using western social scientific methods and dominated by western researchers, cultural outsiders. This raises the important question of what theoretical and methodological approaches should be adopted when recording this knowledge which will have an impact on the production of future knowledge.

Students who learn how to document this knowledge and do research in their communities should be aware of the difficulties and sensitivities involved in documenting and integrating past knowledge with new one. Allowing the community to be an active participant in this process and share the results of the research is a way of ensuring trust and respect. The intellectual value of local knowledge should be credited and given equal prominence in curricula (see Rhea, 2004; Kawagley & Barhardt, 2006).

Further, there are issues to be considered when research is linked to development and incorporated in research curricula in order to raise a more critical stance towards development and research. Samik-Ibrahim expresses accurately this problematic in the following questions: are research activities the same as in developed countries? If not, what adjustments need to take place and who should adjust its research focus with whom? How should the research community in the developing country resolve the concerns of their community? What alternative knowledge dissemination mechanisms should be employed in order to guarantee maximising of knowledge use among the local/regional research groups? (Samik-Ibrahim, 2000)

Research in developing countries cannot be separated from higher education. They cannot afford to have separate research agencies for many reasons, funding being the main reason but another one might be that it's best to have those people teaching and training future researchers, interacting with them, fostering local research instead of being separate and distant. Research can be fostered throughout the system, not simply reserved for educational elites.

More emphasis should be placed at incorporating research training at an undergraduate level where students can be trained for undertaking research not only in formal academic circles but in their work environment such as NGOs (see Neave, 2002). It is also the best way and time to do/invest in capacity building for future researchers. The biggest part of population in developing countries are young people where lies the greatest reserve of talent (Neave, 2002:15)

Any research methods course should emphasize usefulness/utilization of research in local contexts and participation of local community members in research the research process. Introducing research methods as a course and a research projects as a method of learning at an undergraduate level, attention is needed to be put in creating a supporting curriculum, carefully planned to lead gradually up to the research project, assisted with courses both theoretical and practical such as theories in the chosen field, and academic writing, critical thinking, courses in development issues etc. but most importantly, courses on local knowledge systems from a contemporary point of view in order to change the perception that traditional knowledge is static and such is good to study as something that belongs to the past.

In education the tendency is to look for immediate solutions to problems that are often the product of long-term generational shifts, for which the solutions, too, must be understood at a multi-generational level. Western research systems tend to be too specialized. There is therefore the need for curricula with a more holistic approach. (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 2006)

The paper was partly stimulated by an experiment that introduced research at an undergraduate level in Papua New Guinea. The results indicated that despite the lack of resources and students' limitations in terms of insufficient secondary and higher education, students were capable of producing original research and succeeded in getting employment in areas that have the potential to impact positively their society.

The results show also that an increasing number of these students are now employed to do research in the NGO sector or on specific research projects linked to development. This sector cannot always afford to hire people with higher degrees and in most cases there is a lack of trained people with MA and PhDs. We cannot afford to wait to produce research at that level because of lack of funding.

The other advantage of encouraging research at that level is that students learn how to do research in their communities, trained to work with limited resources and develop a sense of pride and confidence in themselves. Even if they go abroad to undertake further studies, they will be less inclined to copy without a critical eye western methods of enquiry.

Research is production of knowledge, but in most developing countries problems have started not with the production of new knowledge but lack of respect towards indigenous/local knowledge systems. Research therefore in these settings should resurface these knowledge and build on it new one.

#### **4. Conclusions – Recommendations**

There is a growing awareness that western models are irrelevant to conditions of non western societies. There is also a growing awareness that alternative perspectives and models exist and they are evident, as Reddi argues, in the recognition that it is necessary to study social structures and cultural contexts prior to proceeding with research (1993:77). On an epistemological level, an examination of indigenous concepts may contribute to a renewed understanding of current social and cultural phenomena as their deep roots are unearthed for scrutiny and thought.

Efforts towards de-westernization of non-western social and behavioral research have been relatively recently organized. Such efforts as Chu argues (1993:136), however, by no means suggest that one ought to assume an ethnocentric stand in conducting research. Nor as he continues, do such efforts presume a disregard for the contribution of western theories and research. The argument is rather on calling for a refocus of present research conceptualization in order to give greater consideration to the *chineseness* or *Indianess* or *arabicness/islamicness* or *pacificness* etc of social phenomena and human behavior.

As Kawagley and Barnhardt (2006) argue in the case of native people, you cannot deny the need to understand western science, but not at the expense of what these

people already know. Non-western educators/scholars/researchers, too, need to recognize the existence of multiple worldviews and knowledge systems, and find ways to understand and relate to the world in its multiple dimensions and varied perspectives. Western researchers cannot do the changes for locals, they need to do that for themselves, but they can be more humble and modest and less 'omniscient', that they do not know everything and that they can also learn. If western universities are to continue being providers of training/education to non-western students or those from developing countries, they should then raise awareness/cater for them with appropriate courses.

Research methodologies should be informed of the alternative options, base their foundations on local epistemologies and urge young people to produce research that borrows knowledge from their communities and benefits them directly by sharing the findings with them.

Along with creating locally informed curricula that enhance research with understanding of local knowledge systems and teach research methods that bring the student back into the community, some other recommendations for enhancing research at a policy level can include an in-country pre-graduate training program in order to improve the quality of entering graduate students, a young academic program which the objective to facilitate integration of young scholars into research programs in their own universities and an in-country merit fellowship designed to attract highly qualified students into domestic graduate education programs (see the Indonesia URGE program, Koswara, 2004:7)

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