

# Knowledge, Engagement and Higher Education: The Civil Society Point of View

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*“Education for Life,  
education through life, &  
education throughout life*



**Mahatma Gandhi**



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Knowledge is Power  
PRIA

# Be Knowledgiastic!

- An attitude of 'being'
- Being knowledgiastic is to show enthusiasm about and actively encourage the co-creation of transformative knowledge
- Change the way we handle, use, build and understand knowledge



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# Knowledge Resides in Multiple Sites



- Practitioners and civil society produce knowledge

- Universities & HEIs not the sole sites: media competes



- Indigenous knowledge gains renewed recognition



- Private financing of research for corporate profits



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# Multiple epistemologies

- Not merely instrumental rationality of cognition,
- Action & emotion too



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# Typology

- Intergenerational accumulation
- Endogenous conceptualization

knowledge  
economy

knowledge society

knowledge  
democracy

--- quo vadis?



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# Lingnan University, Hong Kong: Community Based Academic Research



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# Lingnan University

- First university in Asia to launch **Service-Learning Research Scheme (SLRS)**
- SLRS mission: To cultivate social responsibility and awareness in young people
- Scheme provides real-life opportunity for students to apply knowledge and skills gained from coursework in the community, and integrate useful knowledge with practice
- Between 2006 and 2013:
  - Over 3,000 students
  - Over 300 service learning projects
  - Reached over 25,500 people



# Lingnan University

- SLRS features:
  - Embedded in credit-bearing courses
  - Students work closely with community partners to design and implement service projects that address urgent needs in Hong Kong
  - Academic knowledge translated into quality service through students' active engagement
  - Creates mutually beneficial bond between the University and the community



# PRIA



- Located in civil society
- Knowledge is power, empowerment from below
- Valuing local knowledge



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# PRIA and CUE

- *Multitude of interventions, bringing community and practitioner knowledge into the portals of traditional research institutions and processes*
  - Linking ‘formal’ learning and the local community
  - Researching with the community
  - Sharing knowledge with the community
  - Designing new curriculum and courses
  - Involving local practitioners as teachers
  - Building capacities on Participatory Research in academia and influencing academic thinking

# BPS Women's University Sonepat, India

*“Community engagement in societal development has always been the mainstay of our university. We believe that engaging with the community should be an integral part of the University activities”*

-- Dr Pankaj Mittal

former Vice Chancellor, BPS University, Sonepat, Haryana  
at the GUNi Report Launch at the Planning Commission, New Delhi, March 2014



# BPS Women's University

- Institutionalized initiatives by establishing ***Centre for Society University Interface and Research (CSUIR)***
- Founded on the belief that there needs to be a connect between the University and society; University must engage in a direct give and take relationship with the latter
- Funded by the University itself
- Add-on courses offered



# BPS Women's University

- Four courses offered
  - Integrated Energy Resource Management,
  - Microfinance practices and women
  - Folk medicine
  - Co-operative Management
- Approximately 50 students in each course
- Graded through a test conducted in each semester, which includes classroom work and field work activities

# PRIA and BPS Women's University

**PRIA connects communities with academic institutions to form an extensive network of organizations working towards a common goal**



Cross-linking engagements through workshops, seminars, meetings, trainings and awareness programs

**BPS University engages with PRIA's youth-led campaign to end violence against women**

- BPS students part of core group of youth who design and implement the campaign
- Students involved in teaching the community (micro finance, farming techniques)
- University has also pledged to achieve 100% female literacy within 1-2 km radius of the University



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