

Reflections on Decolonizing Paternalistic Research Methods for International Projects

Homegrown Solutions Project

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- This project seeks to contribute to the theoretical development of Rwandan Homegrown Solutions (HGS) as a framework to evaluate socio-economic development initiatives in post-genocide Rwanda
- International partnership project, including Canadian and Rwandan researchers
- Engaging with:
 - Existing literature (global and Rwanda-based)
 - Policy makers, government officials, academics, students, community volunteers involved in HGSs
- Project objectives:
 - Generate knowledge about institutionalization process of HGSs
 - Develop a local value-based evaluative framework
 - Assess social impacts of main HGSs at grassroots levels & how Rwandan values and practices contribute to these changes
 - Facilitate knowledge mobilization on HGSs



Key Findings

- Existing gap in the recognition and application of traditional knowledge at the national and local level
- Lack of global examples that show patterns of acknowledgement and application of local knowledge
- The practice of deductive approach is undermined and minimal
- Use of Eurocentric discourse (i.e., democracy, development, participation, Indigeneity) to describe policy and practice
- Rwanda homegrown solutions unique from global traditional knowledge policies and practices in social development

How does this then impact us as international researchers and how we approach the Homegrown Solutions Project?

Conclusion & Recommendations

International researchers face various challenges:

- Having to go through detours when attempting to make sense of phenomena taking place in the non-Western world
- Misleading discourses; even when we say "global knowledge" we are only referring to the Eurocentric epistemology and geographies
- International social work research and practice has been shown to replicate paternalistic tendencies (Deepak, 2012)

Recommendations for international research:

- Decolonial practice in research processes (i.e., ethics, literature review, data collection and analysis, and interpretation)
- Conduct research that gives voice to locally produced knowledge
 - Build partnerships with local organizations and individuals
 - Include local perspective/feedback in understanding of scoping review findings

Scoping Review Process

- Began the study with a global scan of literature review that looked at:
 - Interdisciplinary writings
 - Traditional/Indigenous Knowledge
 - Socio-cultural factors
 - National Development
 - Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Focused on Indigenous socio-cultural regions (i.e., Asia, Central & South America and Caribbean, Pacific, and Africa) (United Nations, n.d.)
- Explored international development agency reports & documents (i.e., United Nations, World Bank, OECD, Oxfam)
- Discovered limited access to non-western led literature, particularly those that were government led



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