Educator Activists:
Bridging Transnational Advocacy and Community Mobilisation -Learning from Movement Organisers in the South

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Educator Activists: Bridging Advocacy and Community Mobilisation - Learning from Movement Organisers in the South

Author: Prasad Reddy

Abstract

This dissertation establishes the basic arguments for: the need to cultivate identities as educator activists; learning from the South and related educational and pedagogical aspects. One may object to this initiative, arguing that most people involved in transnational advocacy issues are aware of S-N inequalities and, therefore, it is anachronistic and superfluous to talk of such issues. The aim here is not to contradict the presence of such awareness. It is, rather, an invitation to search for alternative, just and co-operative ways that would reduce such inequalities. Therefore, it is not old fashioned, anachronistic or unrealistic to talk of S-N inequalities. If such a search is not undertaken, it would amount to a blatant denial of centuries of oppression undergone by the South and a neglect of the injustices imposed by the knowledge and economic structures of western colonialism. Implementing Southern alternatives to dominant Northern viewpoints helps co-operative, S-N efforts counter the continuing colonialism in the name of "one-world", " world economy" or "multilateralism".

Those involved in south-north development co-operation and the related educational and training structures need to develop an educator activist identity through a conscious effort to involve oneself at the grassroots level and not just remain mere theorists or mere activists. Current developmental efforts from the North in the South, owing to unequal power and financial relations between the "developed" and "developing" world, are in need of improved structures and ways that lead to more just and sustained transnational advocacy and action. Sustained rhetoric of politicians and the media produces and propagates an image of the South as "needy, violent, chaotic and helpless" in both governmental and non-governmental developmental circles in the North, mainly United States and central Europe. There is a need for a more differentiated and fine-tuned image of the South. What can the North learn from the South in order to improve development co-operation? What is the relationship of Northern individuals and institutions with the migrant intellectuals, experts and practitioners living in their midst? What kind of educational and training material and methodologies are needed to increase this participatory and transnational efforts to facilitate south-north developmental work on a more equal footing?
Using the *philosophy of Participatory Action research and the* techniques of Grounded Theory methodology the Dissertation qualitatively analyses 29 problem-centred interviews with theorists and practitioners in India and Germany. A concrete example of a current, intensive social movement in India, the Dalit Movement, is highlighted as providing good learning material for Southern and Northern theorists and activists.

The findings of the Dissertation will be useful both for theorists and practitioners in the field of development co-operation in the South and in the North. Practical educational and training methodologies and ideas in the field of transnational advocacy and practise are suggested for future implementation by governmental and non-governmental institutions. New avenues of thinking are opened up to fill the lacuna in learning and communicating methods for all stakeholders searching for sustainable ways to South-North learning.

Brücken zwischen sozialkritischer Theorie, Advocacy Arbeit und Basisbewegungen: Von Bewegungsorganisator/innen im Süden Lernen

Autor: Prasad Reddy

Abstract

Die Zentrale These des Promotionsvorhabens ist, dass die Steigerung der politischen Partizipation und die Stärkung zivilgesellschaftlicher Strukturen die Entwicklung eines politischen Identifikationsmodells voraussetzt. Dies soll am Beispiel von **Bildungsengagierte** ausgeführt werden, und zwar anhand **der Fragestellung**, wie diese sozial-politische **Theorien und Praxis verbinden**. Durch diese Verbindung - so eine **andere These** der Arbeit - intensiviert sich die **politische Beteiligung von Theoretiker/innen** und vertieft sich der theoretische Hintergrund der Basisbewegungen, wodurch Mobilisierungseffekte entstehen können.

Die Trennung zwischen **Theorie und Aktion** selbst ist ein Phänomen des Abendlandes, ein schwer zu durchbrechender Diskurs. Ausgangspunkt des Vorhabens ist die Beobachtung, dass in Europa und den USA sehr gute wissenschaftliche Analysen zu sozio-politischen Problemen existieren, die sozialen Bewegungen und politischen Basisorganisationen aber nach den 80er Jahren viel an Größe und Durchsetzungskraft verloren haben. Im Süden, der sogenannten „Dritten Welt" dagegen gibt es eher die Tendenz, dass Aktion entweder der Theorie voraus geht, oder Hand in Hand mit ihr. Sozialkritische Theorie ist hier eher das Produkt des Engagements, das sich den Problemen des Überlebens an der Basis stellt.

Theoretische Interessen und praktische Mobilisierung sollten ineinander greifen und sich gegenseitig befruchten. Um das Gemeinwesen mobilisieren zu können, müssen Pädagog/innen (der schulischen und außerschulischen Bildung und Erziehungswissenschaftler/innen) eine Identität als Aktivist/innen entwickeln. Es braucht Theoretiker/innen und Lehrende, denen es ein Anliegen ist, dass ihre Theorien ihr Aktionspotential in der Praxis entfalten. Theorie, Kenntnis und die Analyse von sozialen Bewegungen und Organisationen, denen Aktion vorausgeht und Engagement auf der „Graswurzelebene" mit Empathie und Veränderungsbereitschaft bilden gemeinsam die Identität von Bildungsaktivist/innen.

Die Analyse der **Rolle von Bildungsaktivist/innen** für **Menschenrechtsbewegungen im Süden** wird auch dazu beitragen, die Möglichkeiten des transnationalen Aktivismus in den kommenden Jahren zu erforschen. Es wird ein besonderer Schwerpunkt auf die Bewegung intellektueller Dalits in Indien gelegt, da diese Akteur/innen in den letzten sechs Jahren der Dalit-Bewegung in Indien auf eine Weise zu internationaler Aufmerksamkeit verholfen haben, welche der Vorgehensweise von Bildungsaktivist/innen Modell stehen könnte.

Die **methodische Bearbeitung** ist deshalb **interdisziplinär und interkulturell**. Für das Thema relevante Literatur wird aus den Bereichen der Pädagogik, der Soziologie, der Philosophie, und der Geschichte herangezogen. Eine besondere Bedeutung haben Mobilisierungs- und Wirkungsanalysen sozialer Bewegungen und zur Rolle von Universität und Wissenschaft für den gesellschaftlichen Wandel im Sinne von Demokratisierungsprozessen. Ergänzend zu **wissenschaftlichen Analysen und historischen Texten** sollen **Schlüssel-Interviews mit Organisator/innen sozialer Bewegungen**, insbesondere der Dalit-Bewegung und mit herausragenden **Pädagog/innen im Norden und im Süden** geführt und ausgewertet werden.

Foreword

Writing a dissertation is often considered an intellectual exercise. However, a lot of my practical, life experience and lessons learnt, thereby, have gone into this research project. Significant among these experiences are my pursuits, along with family, friends and colleagues, to dream of and work to realize a form of life where humans, especially those holding unprivileged access to financial, knowledge and military powers, could realize their common origins and devise ways to build and maintain peaceful and just relationships, even in and out of times of chaos.

While I am thankful to all who supported me during the project, I mention some in person here. Personal and professional sharing has been intense and deep with my wife, Anita. Thanks to her for her challenging thoughts and practical help that accompanied throughout this research process. I wish also to thank Prof. Gerd Hoff, my first guide for his constant support during the last seven years-right form the time I began finding my way into German University circles. His probing questions regarding various aspects of my dissertation helped enrich my work. Prof. Christoph Wulf, my second guide, deserves a special thanks for his critical and creative thoughts and hints to improve my work.

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Prasad Reddy
Bonn, 25 July, 2005