



HIFA Discussion on When will developing countries stop importing knowledge?

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SHORT EDIT

There were 33 messages from 19 contributors in 12 countries (Cameroon, Germany, India, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Uganda, UK, USA, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

1. Introduction

Charles Dhewa, Zimbabwe: I will be very grateful if the HIFA group can engage with my latest post and provide constructive feedback. Here is the link - <https://emkambo.wordpress.com/2018/09/24/when-will-developing-countries-...>

Musafiri Rogers, Rwanda: What is knowledge? Is every knowledge in developing countries truly imported? I think in every part of the world, there are discoverers, if I may call them so, from whom their discoveries are shared. How do people discover? If every knowledge in developing countries is imported, then this will stop the moment these countries will start generating their own knowledge.

2. Why do developing countries rely on importing knowledge?

Najeeb Al-Shorbaji, Switzerland: Developing countries rely too much on foreign imported science. Monolingualism is part of that; lack of good research and publishing industry in developing countries is another part.

3. Why is locally produced research important?

Armand Seraphin Nkwescheu, Cameroon: There is a constant need for health systems and health services research in developing countries - and this really should be done locally, and written up for publication locally.

Charles Dhewa, Zimbabwe: We probably need a rich blend of imported and local knowledge, the same way some countries are insisting on foreign content being a lower percentage than local content in finished products. Due to advances in technology, the West can certainly see opportunities faster and run faster than local knowledge holders. Imported worldviews that are currently being reinforced through formal education systems will not build the capacity of developing countries to localize knowledge from other parts of the

world. In other words, developing countries will always be called developing countries because they will be trying to play catch up all the time.

4. Should countries stop importing knowledge?

Joseph Ana, Nigeria: But why should developing countries stop importing knowledge, anyway? Knowledge is created for dissemination, no matter where it is developed. In the last few years the developed countries have been asking themselves what they can learn from developing countries, in other words what knowledge can they import from developing countries?.

Sandy Oliver, UK: My country, the UK, imports knowledge all the time and benefits from it. Rather than importing knowledge unthinkingly the value comes from importing knowledge critically, taking into account our own circumstances.

5. The difficulty of disseminating knowledge

Charles Dhewa, Zimbabwe: Knowledge cannot be easily disseminated the way we disseminate information. It is easier to disseminate prescriptions like "take three tablets daily after a meal" or a manual on how to assemble & operate a dialysis machine. The most important missing knowledge in developing countries is how to produce those tablets using local herbs, what to put in tablets & why as well as how to produce a context-specific dialysis machine from scratch, for instance. Without focusing on knowledge, most development efforts just contribute to information overload.

6. Should we think in terms of Knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange?

Obi Egbuniwe, USA: What if the topic was revised from "knowledge importation" to "knowledge transfer"? Will your opinion remain the same?

Knowledge transfer/importation drives quality care; therefore, should be encouraged.

7. Information transfer in Zimbabwe

Charles Dhewa, Zimbabwe: I think the issue goes beyond different experts blaming corrupt politicians. Africans who have been exposed to other parts of the world, like you and me, have to rise up and be counted. We can start leading transformation in our small ways from wherever we are. It is easy to blame politicians as if they are standing in the way of predictable progress yet the entire society should play its role.