



Another World is Desirable

We – people from diverse countries* in four continents – met in your lovely city of Penang for three days from June 27-29, 2011. We were invited by Universiti Sains Malaysia and Citizens International to discuss the future of our universities and how we could decolonise them. Too many of them have become pale imitations of Western universities, with marginal creative contributions of their own and with little or no organic relation with their local communities and environments. The learning environments have become hostile, meaningless and irrelevant to our lives and concerns.

In all humility, we wish to convey to you the gist of our discussions.

We agreed that for far too long have we lived under the Eurocentric assumption – drilled into our heads by educational systems inherited from colonial regimes – that our local knowledge, our ancient and contemporary scholars, our cultural practices, our indigenous intellectual traditions, our stories, our histories and our languages portray hopeless, defeated visions no longer fit to guide our universities – therefore, better given up entirely.

We are firmly convinced that every trace of Eurocentrism in our universities – reflected in various insidious forms of western controls over publications, theories and models of research must be

subordinated to our own scintillating cultural and intellectual traditions. We express our disdain at the way 'university ranking exercises' evaluate our citadels of learning on the framework assumptions of western societies. The Penang conference articulated different versions of intellectual and emotional resistance to the idea of continuing to submit our institutions of the mind and our learning to the tutelage and tyranny of western institutions.

We leave Penang with a firm resolve to work hard to restore the organic connection between our universities, our communities and our cultures. Service to the community and not just to the professions must be our primary concern. The recovery of indigenous intellectual traditions and resources is a priority task. Course structures, syllabi, books, reading materials, research models and research areas must reflect the treasury of our thoughts, the riches of our indigenous traditions and the felt necessities of our societies. This must be matched with learning environments in which students do not experience learning as a burden, but as a force that liberates the soul and leads to the upliftment of society. Above all, universities must retrieve their original task of

creating good citizens instead of only good workers.

For this, we seek the support of all intellectuals and other like-minded individuals and organisations that are willing to assist us in taking this initiative further.

Thank you for hosting us, the Delegates of the International Conference on Decolonising Our Universities, June 27-29, 2011, Penang, Malaysia.



For more information please access www.multiworldindia.org

*AUSTRALIA | CHINA | INDIA | INDONESIA | IRAN | JAPAN | MALAYSIA | NIGERIA | PHILIPPINES | SINGAPORE | SOUTH KOREA | TAIWAN | TANZANIA | THAILAND | TURKEY | UGANDA | UNITED STATES OF AMERICA