

Questioning Northern Advice: 3 Steps Back, One Ahead

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Step 1: neutral knowledge is an illusion!



Image: African Studies Centre Leiden

“One can be classed an ‘international expert’ (and I have been) without knowing the language or having ever visited a country before. Understanding the particular local context is not what counts, but knowing ‘the rules of the game’, the language and culture of the international development ‘community’. This shows materially in the very different pay and conditions provided to ‘international experts’ and ‘local counterparts’ even when working in parallel on the same project. It also helps to sustain a whole structure of subordination whereby ‘local’ realities are materially re-cast and symbolically re-presented in ‘global’ terms.” (White 2010: 63)



The ‘international’ consultant

Step 2: the knower matters!



Image: World Food Programme

Step 3: Western 'gaze' contributes to post-colonial domination



Images: <http://postcolonialist.com>, <http://furtheradventuresofindigored.blogspot.com>

Step 4: De-centering Europe!

Post-colonial critique
critiques, resists &
reverts western
hegemonising gaze



- Towards 'pluriversal' knowledge
- Critical gaze at North from its 'borders'
- Enabling marginalised to speak

De-colonial option
de-links from Europe
as reference point



Thank you !