



## **Indigenous Knowledge Dissemination-Still Not There**

Ibrahim Ahmad BAJUNID  
INTI Laureate University



## Abstract

We have robust partial knowledge about what we know and in this strength, we are proud and arrogant about what we do. However, we are ignorant of alternatives and complementary knowledge, education and training. We know little of alternative or complementary medicine-Chinese traditional medicine, Ayurveda and Islamic traditional medicine. We know little of the arts of self-defence and the martial masters, and other training forms beyond WestPoint and Sandhurst. It is possible that people from the dominant knowledge mainstream will go through their lives without “having had to operate outside of the dominant knowledge systems or shift the paradigm through which a [person] views the world in order to make sense of things.”

Indigenous Knowledge is not about the aborigines as subjects but it is about man’s knowledge from another perspective, at the fringe of, or aside of dominant knowledge systems. It is about the use of the inherited and evolving knowledge corpuses. To understand the importance of the knowledge of “the other” we have to understand their ways of knowing, of happying, of facing the trials and tribulations of change, often disruptive to their ecology. In some ways, in popular literature regarding the natives, (or in some other art forms), actors are made to articulate some perspectives and wisdom of native, marginalized and alienated people. The disconnect in contemporary civilization, especially, in educational enterprises is not about merely the obsolescence of their tools or thoughts, but about the embedded strengths of the native potentials and philosophies, interpretations and meaning-findings in their lives. Their struggle is not just about survivance, but also about celebrating their best thoughts and best practices, when their indigenous knowledge is validated in education systems driven by technology and middle class values of success and styles of living. There is so much of elicited wisdom from metaphors in nature regarding educational leadership. Such metaphors are lessons observed and learned over the ages regarding the Squirrel during winter, or the Bamboo and coconut palms or the African Lion. So much of the past was indigenous but is today, universal and global, striking the collective memories in the indigenous chords of various cultures. As there are science fiction, which stimulate creativity, imagination, myths and ideals of Indigenous Knowledge Systems of Old and the Future create



exciting, interesting, and mind boggling paradigms. In sum, we have not, as yet, universalized the language of Indigenous Education, which is really Global Knowledge.

### **Introduction**

We have robust partial knowledge about what we know and in this strength, we are proud and arrogant about what we do. However, we are ignorant of alternatives and complementary knowledge, education and training. We know little of alternative or complementary medicine-Chinese traditional medicine, Ayurveda and Islamic traditional medicine. We know little of the arts of self-defence and the martial masters, and other training forms beyond WestPoint and Sandhurst. It is possible that people from the dominant knowledge mainstream will go through their lives without *“having had to operate outside of the dominant knowledge systems or shift the paradigm through which a [person] views the world in order to make sense of things.”*

### **Globalizations, the Homogenizations of Culture**

The homogenization of cultures is one effect of globalization, and whilst it brings with it many benefits, it subsumes the knowledge, traditions, and identities of the original inhabitants of regions-the indigenous peoples and indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). The notion of Indigenous knowledge has to be located in a wider comparative context, alongside the kind of knowledge that characterises larger-scale, industrialised societies, commonly referred to as ‘Western’. Serious and in- depth studies of IKS will provide a tapestry of rich seamless ideas, theories, paradigms and worldviews. Against the insights and paradigms of indigenous knowledge, specifically, in the ways educational systems are managed, people can assess whether the admired educational systems, in policies and practices are humane, advanced and developed. To have a sound understanding of indigenous knowledge and education, scholars need to examine the various indigenous cultures with strong indigenous traditions, specifically, African, Mexican, Australian, Asian, and Native American. It has been observed that three dominant themes in indigenous cultures and settings are, *“struggle, strengths, and survivance.”* *Survivance* is the notion of survival, which emphasises remembrance, regeneration and spiritual renewal. The sites,



struggles, strengths, and survivance are understood emphatically by Ray Barnhardt thus:

*...As Indigenous people reassert their world views and ways of knowing in search of a proper balance between ..."two worlds," they offer insights into ways by which we can extend the scope of our educational systems to prepare all students to not only make a living, but to make a full-filling sustainable life for themselves (pp.113-114).*

The hegemony of metropolitan knowledge marginalizes, relegates indigenous knowledge to the past, and discredits such knowledge from the curriculum of schools and universities because they are not regarded as sources of intellectual authority. Metropolitan sciences and theories are distributed through global networks, which celebrate western intellectual traditions with its grandeur of universal science of human and organizational behaviour and society. Mainstream social science and education disseminate worldviews as understood by the educated and affluent of the western world. On the other hand, Southern Theory records how the world at the periphery has power and relevance for understanding the changing world as people encounter modernization, class, cultural domination, violence and the structure of knowledge itself. While there is excitement regarding the global dynamics of knowledge and the social sciences, there are also paradoxes. One such paradox is about three seminal works related to education in Malaysia. While the authors are champions of indigenous knowledge, their works are for the most part, about global knowledge. Of the three works, only the one by Wan Zawawi, an anthropologist shows focus on indigenous knowledge, while the other two works by educators approach their subject from the global educational knowledge paradigm and frameworks. (See, Bajunid (2008); Hussein (2012) and Wan Zawawi (2010).



### **Local Wisdom and Indigenous Science and Global Wisdom**

Universities in Malaysia, specifically Universiti Sains Malaysia, and Universiti Islam Malaysia, [as universities in other ASEAN countries], have begun to do work on Indigenous knowledge and Global Wisdom. The University of Science Malaysia has embarked on a Project described as follows:

The Long-Term Research Grant Scheme (LRGS) covers the period from August 1, 2012 until July 31, 2016. Titled “Conceptualizing Local Knowledge: A Study of Sustainable Values in Local Wisdom and Indigenous Science.” This research consists of five projects:

- Project 1: Studying The Aspects of Malay Traditional Healing & Its Comparative Study with Chinese and Indian (headed by UMK).
- Project 2: Studying Performance Aspects in Malay Traditional Healing Practices (headed by USM).
- Project 3: Holographic Transdisciplinary Conservation (headed by UKM)
- Project 4: Contemporizing Transdisciplinary Knowledge Transfer & Management (headed by USM).
- Project 5: Innovative Local Knowledge Repository Support System (headed by USM).

Each project is made up of a team of researchers (professors, senior lecturers and postgraduate assistants) from USM and various other Malaysian public institutions of higher learning. The project is driven by the realization that “... *The modern ethnocentric basis for classifying knowledge has resulted in rejection of knowledge not founded upon Western epistemology. This is evidenced by widespread separation between Western and local knowledge, physicality and spirituality.*”



Universiti Islam Malaysia, a postgraduate university, sees the significance of wisdom in today's world. Therefore, underlying all its programmes and research endeavours will be the pursuit of wisdom. Wisdom is not regarded as beginning and ending with philosophers like Socrates, but it is a living dynamic phenomena of the present and the conceivable future. Wisdom is regarded as a unique quality of the human species. It is expected that many of the recurring and newly emerging problems of humankind can be solved, not just with understanding and knowledge, but more so, with Wisdom. The ideal and belief is that if there is acquisition of wisdom and people from all backgrounds and at all levels of society were to practice decision-making based on wisdom, there would be world peace. Based on its foundational and driving ideals of the pursuit of wisdom as both local and global knowledge, UIM promotes comparative studies in all fields of inquiry, such as, Comparative Laws, Comparative Heritage, Comparative Finances, Comparative Management, Philosophy of Knowledge, Comparative Sciences with Emphasis on Knowledge and Wisdom. To achieve its articulated goals, the university established the *Global Wisdom Academy* and initiated the *Global Wisdom Research Network (GWRN)*. Through GWRN, scholars are invited to conduct comparative studies, not only on religious matters, but also on other significant research problems. One of UIM's most ambitious projects is the long-term project on the *Encyclopedia of Wisdom*. The encyclopedia is to capture the diversity, multidimensionality and transdisciplinarity of local and global wisdom.

### **World Decade of Cultural Development.**

In the mid-1980s, UNESCO proclaimed the World Decade for Cultural Development. Then, the cultural dimension of development was recognized and became a key concept in development strategy. New ways were sought to incorporate cultural components effectively into development plans and programmes. Increasingly academe began to record, document, and make accessible the contextual information on indigenous knowledge systems, from the points of view of different disciplines. Indigenous knowledge systems are visualized as a more dynamic conception of culture and as the ultimate foundation upon which decision-making takes place. To date, there does not seem to be coherent significant studies in educational management and leadership on the roles that indigenous organizations and cultures play in



policy-making and decision-making processes, especially in creativity, innovations, entrepreneurship, and experimentations, conflict resolutions, character building. There are, however, studies of indigenous knowledge in the literature in past decades, in the areas of agriculture, rural development, customary conflict resolutions, traditional medical, psychological counselling and natural resource management. It is now 35 years after the launching of the World Decade of Cultural Development. It is sensible to ask whether there been an increase of awareness, and a reorientation of thinking, especially among knowledge leaders regarding the importance of the corpuses of indigenous knowledge, particularly in education. If there has not really been an awareness, there is a need to know why. If there have been significant thinking on the matter, there is need to know how far the reorientation has come, and, who are the champions who are leading indigenous leader knowledge and practices in education and educational management and leadership.

### **UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE Sites as Indicators of Past Applications of Indigenous knowledge**

There are hundreds of ethnic groups in ASEAN who are in isolated villages, in islands, and, on the mountains, [and, even in the cities-alienated] with their own indigenous languages and indigenous knowledge systems. If they were provided with schooling, they would be moulded by the national formal curriculum with national values, often alienating their native and indigenous cultures. These various ethnic groups were part of some earlier lost and forgotten civilizations, whose memories are left as UNESCO world sites. There are several other sites, which are applications in the making in the tentative list of new UNESCO sites. The UNESCO World Heritage Sites reflect the symbolic, practical cultural relevance of Southeast Asia with its 37 UNESCO World heritage Sites listed as follows:

Indonesia: Borobudur, Komododat Parks, Prambanan Temple, Ujung Kulon National Park, Sangiran Early Man Site, Lorentz National Park, Tropical Rainforest, Sumatra, Cultural Landscape Bali and Subak System. Vietnam: Complex of Hue Mountains, Ha Long Bay, Hoi An Ancient Town, My Son Sanctuary, Phong Nha-Ke Bang Natural Park, Central Sector of Imperial Citadel of Thong-Long, Hanoi, Citadel of Ho Dynasty and, Trang An Landscape Complex. Philippines: Baroque



Churches, Tubbataha Reef Natural Park, Rice Terraces of Philippines-Cordilleras, Historic Town of Vigan, Puerto-Princesa Subterranean River Natural Park, and, Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary-Davao. Thailand: Historic City of Ayuthai, Historic Town of Sukkhothai and Associated Historic Towns, Thungyai-Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuaries, Ban Chiang Archaeological Site, and, Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex. Malaysia: Gunung Mulu National Park, Kinabalu Park, Melaka and Georgetown Historical Sites, Archaeology Heritage Lenggong. Cambodia: Angkor Temple of Preah Vihear. Laos: Town of Luang Prabang, and, Vat Pro-Champasuk Cultural landscape. Myanmar: Pyu Ancient cities - Location: Mandalay, Magway and Bago, Myanmar. Singapore: Singapore Botanic Gardens.

Any serious studies of those sites will reveal the ecology of high indigenous and global knowledge civilization in the sciences, in management, in philosophical thought, in educational endeavours, in health and medicine, in relationships with the environment, and in all areas of human activities.

### **Nations in the Making and Nations in Waiting: Interrogating the Educational Past and the Possibilities of Educational Futures.**

The artefacts and natural parks constitute the Civilizational Frames and generational Meanings of ASEAN peoples with Hindu Heritage, Confucian Heritage, Buddhist Heritage, Christian Heritage, Islamic Heritage, Indigenous Received Wisdom Heritage, Colonial Heritage, Secular Modern Heritage, Communism-Democracy Cold War Heritage Society and Futures Vision Heritage/Society. As nations form various kinds of blocs for security and economic development, ASEAN nations had developed their own ASEAN Community. Leaders and scholars had conceptualized Asia Rising and collective awareness of Global and Regional citizenry, visualizing futures of the:

- ✦ Creation of new perspectives and possibilities for civilization development.
- ✦ Recognition of the Big Picture of the bottom billions worldwide as well as realities of poverty and disenfranchisement in ASEAN.





- ✦ The narratives of education in ASEAN states which have to recognize the contributions of the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO).
- ✦ In addition, the narratives are incomplete without recognition of the mutual bilateral relationships of states with former colonial nations.
- ✦ Recognition that nations regard themselves as accountable for educational global education, and the importance of indigenous knowledge.
- ✦ The critical need for the ASEAN narratives to be contextualized within the narratives of ASIA, and beyond.

Regarding The Asian Century and the role of ASEAN, leaders and scholars are asking such questions as follows:

- What is the place of Indigenous Imagination in both the Arts and the Sciences.
- What does it take to move from Dream to Imagination to Vision, to Agenda to Reality?
- How? How Long?
- *Education for All* was in Domtien, Thailand. Where would Education for ASEAN be?
- John Naisbitt asserted: “*Asia is about learning. The West is about Teaching.*” When and which niches would be ASEAN’s contributions globally, especially through research and best practices?
- What and how would the “Future Focused Role Imagery” of ASEAN be?
- In addition, where is the place for Indigenous Knowledge of ASEAN peoples in the New World Order?



**Big Data Global Knowledge in Education and Indigenous Knowledge.**

High levels of attainment in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) surveys made Finland the benchmark for other national systems of education. Pasi Sahlberg, Director General of the Centre for International Mobility at the Finnish Ministry of Education, identifies some factors that account for the Finnish phenomenon. Among the factors are Finland's well-established nine-year comprehensive schools, attention to pupils with special needs, local autonomy and – especially – a professional, highly qualified and uncompromisingly committed teaching force. In Finland, only ten per cent of teacher training applicants are accepted and the teachers must then continue to Master's level. There are many factors which create success which have to be understood in emic, inside out perspectives. Finland [and other nations'] success has to do with a complex set of inter-related contextual factors. Aspiring nations cannot simply be 'borrow', 'transfer' and 'adopt' from elsewhere and believe that new and dynamic educational systems will emerge. Comparative educationist Michael Sadler noted in 1900:

*We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant.*

*A national system of education is a living thing, the outcome of forgotten struggles and difficulties and of battles long ago. It has in some of the secret workings of national life, it reflects, while seeking to remedy, the failings of national character. By instinct, it*



*often lays special emphasis on those parts of training which the national character particularly needs.*

(International Handbook of Comparative Education. P. 40)

There are, nevertheless, many instances of the successful learning of lessons from elsewhere. What is needed is a proper comparative pedagogy that will look not at the grand scale of systemic or institutional patterns, but examine in-depth the intimate details of successful classroom practices – leadership in teaching, in learning, and in assessment. Teachers and pupils alike would surely benefit from determined efforts to investigate ‘what works’ and teacher thinking and decision-making, in classroom techniques in other countries. Scholars have to investigate whether critical success factors identified, are culture –specific or context-bound or might be easily replicated to improve practice at recipients’ sites.

The works of comparative educationists are so very important in providing colleagues with evolving, holistic and emic insights regarding both indigenous and global knowledge. The comparative educators contribute from the Historical-Philosophical-Cultural and Liberal Humanist Motifs as mapped out in Comparative Education’s schools of thought. Among academic and thought leaders in the field were, Michael Sadler, Isaac L Kandel, Nicholas Hans, Robert Ulich, and Andreas Kazamias. They search for definitions and meanings in comparative perspectives noting, epistemological, ideological and methodological commonalities. In some respects, like other leaders in other fields, these distinguished scholars have become Forgotten Men, and the themes of their concerns and research have become Forgotten Themes.



### **Universal Indigenous Knowledge from the Past: China's Contributions**

Taking from the pages of Indigenous Chinese Cultures (which has universal resonance), good education was centred on Four Books, Five Manuals, Six Arts of Confucius. The Four Books were *Da Xue (Great Learning)*, *Zhong Yong (Doctrine of the Mean or Doctrine of Moderation)*, *Lun Yu (Analects of Confucius)*, and *Meng Zi, (Analects of Mencius)*. The essence of the four books is focused thus: "Give me your children, and I will return to you young boys and young girls with character". Character building is of utmost importance

Ecology, filial piety, happiness, respect are essential elements in traditional Chinese education. The essence of *Du Xue [Great learning]* are the four processes of *self-cultivation [xiushen]*, *putting the house in order [qijia]*, *administering the state [zhiguo]*, and *calming the world [pingtianxia]*. Self-cultivation or character building in Confucianism can be divided into three main domains, namely, 1. Eagerness in Learning. 2. Vigorously practising what one preaches. 3. Having a sense of shame. The objective of Confucianism is to nurture a person to be a gentleman, kind hearted, persevering, and with integrity. With self-cultivation and integrity, a gentleman with character can be respected to lead and ensure self-control, to put the house and family in order and to strive for peace in the world. Many of the ideas and ideals of Confucianism are resonated in the Abrahamic Faiths and Great Religions and vice versa. The main differentia in terms of Faiths and Beliefs would be the emphasis on the divine, the holy and sacred books, on piety and the role models of the prophets. Religions lay claim to be universal. However, in their schools of thoughts, doctrines, policies and practises, in knowledge bases and paradigms, the adherents to those religions are parochial, denominational and local.



### **Language Vulnerability, Endangerment and Extinction, and Loss of Indigenous Knowledge**

In Indonesia alone, for instance, UNESCO has identified at least 187 endangered languages. A language that it is at risk of falling out of use, generally because it has few surviving speakers is considered an endangered language. If a language loses all of its native speakers, it becomes an extinct language. The UNESCO definitions of four levels of language endangerment range between "safe" (not endangered) and "extinct", specifically, Vulnerable, Definitely endangered, severely endangered, critically endangered. As language, is the major means of communication of native speakers, the loss of the languages also means the loss of their worldviews, their relationships with the natural environments and their indigenous wisdoms.

### **Sectors of strengths of Indigenous Knowledge Systems**

In traditional communities and communities undergoing development, Indigenous knowledge is part of the livelihood of people. The people depends almost entirely on specific skills and knowledge essential for their survival in sectors such as follows: traditional medicines, primary health care (PHC), preventive medicine and psychosocial care, agriculture , animal husbandry and ethnic veterinary medicine, use and management of natural resources, Poverty alleviation, saving and lending, education and community development. Indigenous knowledge (IK) is the local knowledge unique to a given culture or society. IK contrasts with international knowledge system, especially in technology and the sciences, generated by universities, research institutions and companies, which conduct research and development. Educational Television channels such as History, National Geographic and Discovery Channels are about the indigenous global and indigenous rediscovered and evolving knowledge. The new global indigenous would be TIMSS and PISA with globalization and English as global language. Mohd. Yunus obtained the Nobel Prize because of his work on economic development, which took into account cultural imperatives, in particular, the gender factor. Gender, age, hierarchical relations, perspective of time and space, success and failure, ways of conflict resolutions, and customary laws, life and death are unique indigenous knowledge corpus. Embedded in indigenous knowledge systems, ways of learning and living are inherited and



cherished living values. Prayer element in counselling and preparedness for examinations like prayer before blessing for food received is part of the enduring Indigenous knowledge system.

Today, many indigenous knowledge systems are at risk of becoming extinct because of rapidly changing natural environments and fast pacing economic, political, and cultural changes on a global scale. Cultural practices vanish and many ideas and ideals are considered obsolete as they cannot adapt or become inappropriate for new challenges of rapidly changing societies driven by technology in the Digital Era. Foreign technologies or development concepts and disruptive changes cause upheavals to traditional societies, which cannot sustain indigenous knowledge systems. The tragedy of the impending disappearance of indigenous knowledge is most obvious to those who have developed indigenous knowledge considered obsolete in development, as new occupations and professions emerge. Traditional worldviews, skills, technologies, artefacts, problem solving strategies and expertise are considered irrelevant and are lost when the dominant economic models of development are supreme. Cultural development and especially, the coherence of the integrated holistic development of society, communities, families and individuals become displaced, to the detriment of self-confidence and integrity, and personal and societal identity.

Conventional approaches to development imply that development processes always require technology transfers from locations that are perceived as more advanced. The notions of technology transfer and transfer of knowledge have overlooked the capacities, competencies and potentialities in local experiences and practices. Although there is increasing attention that indigenous knowledge is receiving by development institutions and academic scholars and researchers, indigenous knowledge is not yet fully utilized in the development process. In the field of education and educational administration, the concept has not received adequate rave attention. This is because in the emerging competitive global knowledge economy, it is assumed that a country's ability to build and mobilize knowledge capital, especially in the sciences, technology and businesses, physical and financial capital for sustainable development, depends on its relevant knowledge corpuses. Although it is often argued that the basic component a country's strengths are its skilled and education human resources and its



knowledge system, the arguments regarding indigenous knowledge systems which encompasses the competencies, experiences and insights of the people, applied to maintain or improve their cultures and livelihood have not been made convincingly.

It has been argued with evidence of people's understanding of nature and the environments, significant contributions were made in the fields of medicine and veterinary medicine. Indigenous knowledge was developed and adapted continuously to the gradually changing environments, interwoven with people's cultural values, and transmitted from generation to generation. Indigenous knowledge is in fact the knowledge and social capital of the citizenry. In the past (and it is possible to be in continuity today), indigenous knowledge is the asset for food production, shelter construction, health keeping and security control of communities, families and individuals.

Interest and study of indigenous knowledge is located within the field of knowledge systems. Indigenous knowledge for educational leadership is an area not studied in educational systems bent on being the best amidst the rhetoric of *"no child, teacher or principal left behind"*. As stated earlier, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the United Nations and UNESCO gave focus to the cultural factor in development, which had mainly, until then, emphasised on the economic development focus. The study of indigenous knowledge system is actually located within the cultural development system. Until now, even OECD has not received much attention on Progress in International Reading Literacy study (PIRLS) regarded as an important aspect of the cultural system.

In education, for instance, it has not been argued that significant contributions to global knowledge have originated from indigenous people. However, scholars all over the world quote Socrates, Ibn Khaldun, Buddha, and others for philosophies and Principles of education and character building in education and for educational leadership. Arguments have to be made and consensus found by leaders at global and local levels on the importance of indigenous knowledge. However, the arguments must be based on evidence, local as well as global.

In the philosophies, theories, policies, curriculum, pedagogies and assessment of teacher and principal education there has to be the decisions, which consider the underlying assumptions that the development process and design of standards



*“relies entirely or substantially on indigenous knowledge”; “overrides indigenous knowledge” or, “incorporates indigenous knowledge.”* To be able to make such informed decisions, there must be recognition, acknowledgement and value of the mature and relevant generation and documentation of indigenous knowledge. Of course, there has to be critical validation of such knowledge against international knowledge or indigenous knowledge from other traditions considered superior.

When it is argued and believed that a particular society’s indigenous knowledge is part of the global knowledge, then, that knowledge corpus has value and relevance in itself and can be maintained, transferred, adopted or adapted elsewhere. Foreign or local knowledge which have been developed as indigenous practices and applied under similar conditions elsewhere can be regarded as best practices likely to be adopted faster and applied more impactfully, chosen appropriately for rate and degree of adoption. When indigenous knowledge is contextualized within the paradigm of knowledge management and knowledge intelligence, there can be the capture and validation of indigenous and foreign knowledge, indigenous and global knowledge and the eventual transfer, dissemination and appropriate exchange of indigenous knowledge.

Indigenous societies, which transmit indigenous wisdom in oral traditions often, cannot sustain and share time honoured insights, which are lost in the sweep of history with technological changes in its wake as well as the defining of new classes, professions, occupations and lifestyles in contemporary society. The scholarly traditions of the Margaret Mead, Robert Jay, and Clifford Geertz are foreign to the new Digital and IT based scholars and intellectuals, enamoured with big data analysis. However, the seminal works of philosophers, anthropologists, comparative educationists remain as seedbeds of insights and inspirations for those who seek deeper meaning of change and human destinies. The ways of knowing, thinking, and feeling, decision making and behaving of indigenous people are not known to and are not documented by teachers or educational researchers. The curriculum of teacher training and education typically do not include cultural knowledge and indigenous knowledge. Glimpses of the indigenous knowledge and norms available are from anthropologists and other field scholars who study isolated tribes and endangered languages.





### **Conclusion: Looking Back and Forward**

We just cannot go to educators to seek, elicit and understand the indigenous knowledge forms, but we must acknowledge that anthropologists, and ethnographers, have done much work, sometimes with folly, and other times with much wisdom. However, since the anthropology and even ethnography of education have lost influence and even disappeared from some education systems, there are serious gaps in the endangered knowledge forms, like the cases of endangered species. Comparative educationists too tend to focus on comparing education systems, policies and practices and not on the indigenous knowledge bases. What educational leaders, especially political leaders want to know is how and what educational systems of those who fare well in TIMMS and PISA do. By default the domain and global knowledge benchmarks are those measured by big data and global ranking criteria. The importance of the unique and rare, alternative and complementary indigenous knowledge system, is diminished, dismissed, trivialized, and marginalized.

Indigenous Knowledge is not about the aborigines as subjects but it is about man's knowledge from another perspective, at the fringe of, or aside of dominant knowledge systems. It is about the use of the inherited and evolving knowledge corpuses. To understand the importance of the knowledge of "*the other*" we have to understand their ways of knowing, of *happying*, of facing the trials and tribulations of change, often disruptive to their ecology. In some ways, in popular literature regarding the natives, (or in some other art forms), actors are made to articulate some perspectives and wisdom of native, marginalized and alienated people. The disconnect in contemporary civilization, especially, in educational enterprises is not about merely the obsolescence of their tools or thoughts, but about the embedded strengths of the native potentials and philosophies, interpretations and meaning-findings in their lives. Their struggle is not just about survivance, but also about celebrating their best thoughts and best practices, when their indigenous knowledge is validated in education systems driven by technology and middle class values of success and styles of living. There is so much of elicited wisdom from metaphors in nature regarding educational leadership. Such metaphors are lessons observed and learned over the ages regarding the Squirrel during winter, or the Bamboo and coconut palms or the African Lion. So much of the past was indigenous but is today, universal and



global, striking the collective memories in the indigenous chords of various cultures. As there are science fiction, which stimulate creativity, imagination, myths and ideals of Indigenous Knowledge Systems of Old and the Future create exciting, interesting, and mind boggling paradigms. In sum, we have not, as yet, universalized the language of Indigenous Education, which is really Global Knowledge.

*Dedicated to Yah and Anniz (7 March 2016).*



## References

- Bajunid, I. A. (Ed.) (2008). *Malaysia: From traditional to smart schools*. Shah Alam: Oxford Fajar.
- Barnhardt, R. (2005). Creating a Place for Indigenous Knowledge in Education: the Alaska native knowledge Network. In G. Smith & D. Gruenewald (Eds.). *Place-based education in the global age: local diversity* (pp.113-133). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Connell, Raewyn (2007). *Southern Theory-The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*. Crown Nest, NSW. Allen and Unwin.
- Hallinger, P. (2010). *Leadership for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools: From instructional leadership to leadership for learning*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Education.
- Ho Nee Yong (2009). *East Meets West in Education*. Petaling Jaya. Pearson Malaysia. Sdn.Bhd.
- Hussein Ahmad (2012). *The Mission of Public Education in Malaysia-The challenge of Transformation*. Kuala Lumpur. University of Malaya Press.
- Naisbitt, John (2006). *Mind set*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Roxana Waterson (2007). *Southeast Asian Lives-Personal Narratives and Historical Experience*. Athens. Ohio University Press.
- Villegas, M; Neugebauer S. R.; and Venegas, R. Kerry (2008). *Indigenous knowledge and Education-Sites of struggle, Strength, and Survivance*. Cambridge. Harvard Educational Review, Reprint Series.
- Wan Zawawi Ibrahim (2010). *The Anthropology of the Malay Peasantry: Reflecting on Colonial and Indigenous Scholarship*. Kuala Lumpur. University of Malaya Press.



**Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Ibrahim Ahmad BAJUNID**

*INTI-Laureate International Universities, Malaysia*

Email: [iabajunid@gmail.com](mailto:iabajunid@gmail.com)

Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid is the President of the Malaysian Association for Education (MAE) and Director of IAB Global (Inspiring Authentic Benevolence). He was the Deputy Vice Chancellor INTI-Laureate International Universities and Professor of Management, Education and the Social Sciences. Dr. Ibrahim was Director of the Regional Centre for Educational Planning, United Arab Emirates, Professor of Management, Leadership and Policy Studies and the Founding Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at University Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR) and former Director of Institut Aminuddin Baki (IAB) - The National Institute of Educational Management and Leadership. He is Distinguished Fellow Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Distinguished Associate of the Institute of Educational Leadership, Consultant, Centre for Civilizational Dialogue, University of Malaya and Senior Fellow, Universiti Islam Malaysia. For more than three decades, he has been the key figure in the field of Educational Management and Leadership in Malaysia. He has supervised Masters and Doctoral Degree Students and has written several hundred academic and general articles. He is the recipient of the National Educational Leadership Award, the highest Educational Leadership Award in Malaysia awarded only to a few individuals who have demonstrated distinguished and exemplary leadership across institutional, national and international contexts. Also, for his leadership and contributions in academia, he was awarded the Honorary Doctorates by the Education University of Malaysia and by the University of Malaya. He is Member of Board of Governors of the Sultan Idris Education University, Panel Member of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency, Senior Fellow of Universiti Islam Malaysia and Member of the Global Wisdom Project, Visiting and Adjunct Professor at a number of Universities, Member of Academic Board of the Razak School of Government, and Board Member of the National Institute of Integrity (IIM).