

# Indigenous Research:



## Indigenous Youth, Change and Sustainability



World Indigenous News and Education Coalition

Journal 2012

# **Indigenous Research: Indigenous Youth, Change and Sustainability**

**World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium**

Journal 2012

## **World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC)**

Sámi University College, Hånnoluohkká 45, Guovdageaidnu,  
NO-9520 NORWAY Phone: +47 78 44 84 00, Winhec@Samiskhs.no. [www.win-hec.org](http://www.win-hec.org)

### **Copyright ©**

Copyright to the Papers in this Journal reside at all times with the named author/s and if noted their community/family/society. The author/s assigned to WINHEC a non-exclusive license to publish the documents in this Journal and to publish this document in full on the World Wide Web at [www.win-hec.org.au](http://www.win-hec.org.au). Further use of this document shall be restricted to personal use and in courses of instruction provided that the article is used in full and this copyright statement is reproduced. Any other usage is prohibited, without the express permission of the authors.

**ISSN: 1177 - 1364**

**ON-LINE ISSN: 1177 - 6641**

### **Editor**

Professor Veronica Arbon

Chair of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin University  
[veronica.arbon@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:veronica.arbon@adelaide.edu.au)

### **Art Work**

The cover of this WINHEC Journal includes the artwork of William John Leisha, whose tribal name is Cungelella Dura Danji and who is a Gungulu, Bidjarra man. The eldest son of Cungelella (Jean) & John Leisha, William has strong ties to his tribal practices and protocols that are ingrained deep within him. His art is based on stories passed down to him by his paternal grandfather, with whom he hunted on country as a young boy, his maternal grandmother and his mother Cungelella from who he takes the first part of his tribal name, given to him before the passing of his beloved mother to join her ancestors.

### **Printing and Funding**

The WINHEC Journal 2012 is supported by Indigenous Education at La Trobe University, Australia.

## Table of Contents

<b>Prologue .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Indigenous Epistemology - Creating an International Indigenous Higher Education Space in the Wake of the Western “University of Excellence” <i>Boni Robertson, Berice Anning, Veronica Arbon and Gary Thomas</i> .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Celebrating and Sustaining Indigenous Knowledges through Research <i>Boni Robertson, Berice Anning, Veronica Arbon and Gary Thomas</i> .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Celebrating and Sustaining Indigenous Knowledges through Higher Education <i>Berice Anning, Veronica Arbon, Boni Robertson and Gary Thomas</i> .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Elderly-Youth Indigenous Deeds Channeling Scheme of the Oromo and for Healthy Youth Development <i>Zelalem Nemera Bultum and Tamene Kenei Walga</i> .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Sustaining Generations of Indigenous Voices: Reclaiming Language and Integrating Multimedia Technology <i>Candace Kaleimamoowahinekapu Galla</i> .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Paradigm shift in the view of duodji in the 21st century: Higher education in <i>duodji</i> <i>Gunvor Guttorm</i> .....</b>	<b>68</b>

## Prologue

*Dr Veronica Arbon*

The call for papers for the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) Journal, 2012, directed authors to the theme *Indigenous Youth, Change and Sustainability*. This call for papers also drew articles for the inaugural WINHEC Research Conference and it was decided that all papers accepted for presentation at that conference be published in the Taiwan, *Journal of Indigenous Studies* (TJIS). All received papers were forwarded to the anchor of the WINHEC conference in Taiwan, Awi Mona, Assistant Professor at the College of Indigenous Studies, National Dong Hwa University. Most of the papers received were presented by the authors and published in the TJIS or within the Conference proceedings document and DVD. This was a mammoth effort for all concerned as three and possibly a fourth form of publication existed. As well I, as the Editor of the Journal, have suffered ongoing ill health during 2011-2012. Therefore, considerable delay in the publication of the WINHEC Journal 2012 occurred.

These matters have made it difficult to identify what was to be published in the WINHEC Journal. Professor Robertson, the WINHEC Education and Research Portfolio leader and a member of the Executive, then recommended that those articles not presented at the WINHEC Research Conference, a number of Australian papers (which may have been presented and published at the Conference) along with a number of other important articles would be published in this Journal. Hence, three articles not previously presented nor published along with three articles previously presented have been included in this Journal.

The papers in this Journal address the importance of an Indigenous higher education system underpinned by ancient Indigenous knowledges and therefore, standards and protocols to inform powerful curriculum and research approaches to address the sustainability of knowledges for present and future generations. This, of course, does not deny what should be occurring locally and within one's own culture, language and knowledge and learning across the generations nor does it deny the need for deep recognition and subsequent actions in numerous areas of society. This fundamentally includes the reinforcement of relational responsibilities and respect to be found within that knowledge. For example, in the area of age leadership local knowledge systems are important to informing western knowledge as well as local practices and culture through the respect of Elders.

The World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) plays an important role in respecting the diversity and scholarship of Indigenous peoples within nations and across the world. In this Journal, Indigenous peoples speak back to the western canon from within epistemologies inclusive of their own spiritual positions. Change is becoming incrementally obvious as such representations, arguments and new knowledge is being documented. Articles in this Journal also highlight a fundamental acknowledgement and deep awareness of diversity and dispersal, often created through colonial and global pressures.

This WINHEC Journal has as its first article a paper that flags the failures of western universities and the need for new Indigenous educational sites. The second article speaks of the work of the WINHEC Research and Journal Working Group over the past ten (10) years outlining core research standards and protocols along with the aimed of the group to raise the place of Indigenous scholarship across the world by putting in place research protocols and guidelines and an annual Journal. The third article takes this notion of Indigenous sustainability further by outlining fundamentally important research and development in the curriculum field. This article speaks of the work undertaken to provide an outline for an Indigenous University and a nested set of postgraduate coursework and research awards. The aim as argued was to offer high standard qualifications which respond to the local knowledge of the student while interrogating western disciplinary knowledge through interactive technological facilitated engagement and learning. The fourth article warns of the power imbalances that lurk at every turn within the systems within which many Indigenous peoples now work and reside. In this case, the nuanced threat is held in the disciplines and practices of the west which the author identifies as quite different to the Oromo practices in age grade individual development. The author suggests there is much to learn from such epistemologically informed Indigenous knowledge. The fifth article reminds all of the importance of own language and raises the possibility of utilizing technology to maintain same through time. The final article draws on Sámi practice of teaching to develop spiritually and relationally based curriculum, learning and practice within the Sámi University College.

This is a valuable and timely Journal that moves through several papers which identify areas that are critical to the sustainability of Indigenous societies across the world. In saying that, it is also important to work locally to affirm and strengthen youth and all others in times of rapid change.

As Editor, I again offer my apologies for the complex delays suffered during 2012. Thank you to all who have contributed to this journal in the spirit of their ancestors.

# **Indigenous Epistemology - Creating an International Indigenous Higher Education Space in the Wake of the Western “University of Excellence”**

*Boni Robertson, Berice Anning, Veronica Arbon and Gary Thomas*

## ***Abstract***

*Interest in the participation of Indigenous peoples in higher education has, in recent times, gained momentum with an increasing number of advocates challenging the global history of culturally inept policies and practices imposed within the western higher education system. To address the challenges being presented by Indigenous communities and other groups (often relegated under the banner of disadvantaged or equity) Western Universities are promoting a shift toward inclusive policies and practices. Frustrated with the offerings of the Western Higher Education system, a global movement of Indigenous academics, Elders and knowledge holders are developing strategies to meet the educational needs of their own communities, in order to find a way forward. The mobilization of Elders and Indigenous academics has resulted in the development of a global higher education network which is proving to be a significant force in changing the position of Indigenous participation in higher education. The World Indigenous Network Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) has presented a significant challenge to those barriers within the western higher education system that has historically demonstrated an inability to develop culturally inclusive practices within their institutions. This paper examines the development of a world Indigenous higher education movement and its contribution to the history of the “university” within the context of western higher education institutions. Outlined in this examination will be a synopsis of the development of the “University of Excellence” and the creation of an international Indigenous space within higher education.*

**Key Words:** Indigenous Epistemologies, World Indigenous Higher Education, Inclusive practices

## **Introduction**

The structure of a university based upon a commitment to teaching and research as a mechanism to obtain an objective analysis of issues came into being in nineteenth-century Germany, laying the foundations for the dominant model that is evident in contemporary society. Historically the concept of the university became the beacon of social elitism as access to education was based upon both a social and gender bias. With the influence of various advocacy movements calling for greater equity in accessing education, universities eventually moved to a system where women and men were able to enjoy the benefits of tertiary education and intellectual freedom in research and teaching and independent disciplines with their own standards and priorities became the norm.

The Robbins report (Committee on Higher Education 1963) sought to democratize the model without radically changing it, and until the 1980s university expansion was contained within this pattern, with polytechnics providing an alternative ideal.

Research has increasingly become detached from teaching, and the concentration of research funding widens the divisions within the system. Demands for research to be economically and socially relevant challenge accepted views of academic freedom.

The end of the binary system in 1988 brought together liberal and vocational forms of education. In Britain, unlike many other advanced countries, policy is opposed to the recognition of hierarchies within the higher education system, though in reality there are wide variations of social and intellectual prestige, Anderson "The 'Idea of a University' Today" (1968). Although universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century may claim to have found an ideal nexus between both historical and contemporary values, there continues to be a distinct cultural and social disparity in the transformative processes that have taken place.

As part of the process of developing pedagogies in the 21st century that accommodates the diverse needs of students, universities need to move beyond the traditional educational framework and adopt an approach that encompasses research, teaching and administrative practices that are transformative and cross-culturally apt. In order to provide such a facility, Universities need to re-evaluate the appropriateness of their research, teaching and learning models and re-conceptualise alternative pedagogies and their underlying epistemologies.

Despite all efforts over the past 3 decades to cater for such change, universities have demonstrated an inability to keep pace with the changing social and cultural requirements within its student cohort.

Globally, Indigenous educators and Elders concerned with the cultural ineptness of the western university system are embracing the challenge of developing a bicultural educational framework. This will equip students with the skills and knowledge that encompass both western and cultural pedagogical requirements, reinforcing the student sense of cultural identity and scholarship of Indigenous knowledge.

If we track the Humboldtian University of Culture (Humboldt, 1791-2 (though it was not published until 1850, after Humboldt's death)) and Newman's Knowledge University (1873) to today's "University of Excellence", it would appear that the contemporary University serves nothing other than being a self serving corporation more aligned to a world of transnational exchanged capital. The globalised notion of the 'University of Excellence' is sweeping 'culture' out into the open in terms of current debate and the changing nature of what is deemed to be people friendly within higher education as *excellence* defines the terms of reference, perversely transcends an imminent culture. For Indigenous people a



University sector devoid of 'culture', *excellence* becomes an institutional goal that is difficult to accomplish.

Whilst a number of factors have contributed to a cultural ineptness in the University sector, Indigenous epistemology has a clearly defined canon based on a triadic relationship of people, land and spirituality that is not only impenetrable to market forces but it has the potential to shape those very same market forces in the dissemination and practice of cultural knowledge. A University of Excellence that is respectful of Indigenous knowledge not only provides an environment where Indigenous students can achieve excellence within the confines of a western framework, but can also be a conduit to the adoption of more traditional form of administration within the university.

Since the 1850s there have been two streams of thought that have existed, often in conflict on the idea of "what constitutes" a University. The first relies on epistemology and culture while the second is an economic/utilitarian/technological argument.

The publication by John Henry Newman (1873) "The Idea of the University" first appeared as a lecture series in 1854. A further analysis was documented by Jaroslav Pelikan in his publications "The Idea of the University: A Re-examination" and "The Christian Tradition". Pelikan, a professor of history at Yale, conducts an ongoing dialogue with John Henry Cardinal Newman's book "The Idea of a University". Written more than 150 years ago by the towering 19th century thinker whose efforts to establish a Catholic university in Dublin were cruelly frustrated, Newman's book offers illuminating parallels to, and contrasts with the current university crises. Pelikan drew further attention to these issues in latter publications wherein he adhered to the format of Newman's discourses, embracing their theological as well as scholarly dimensions as he sought to characterize the university's aims, functions, and place in society. Pelikan considers the interrelations of knowledge and technology, the conflict between ideology and pluralism and the need for community felt by teachers and students--concerns as pressing in Newman's day as they are now. Shaped by Pelikan's personal identification with Newman, whom he calls "the most influential English-speaking theologian who ever lived," calls for a traditional understanding of the University that is mainly based on epistemology.

Since the failure of the 1968 Paris Commune/Revolution, the traditional home of social critique, the University has been in crisis. The Universalism of Newman et al has shattered leaving a fractured philosophical school in the humanities, the social sciences and to some extent science. Paradise Lost or postponed? Since the theoreticians have been unable to supply a sustained agenda on the role of thought in society, the counter-revolutionaries, that is the technocrats of the state have opened up the academy to market forces. Since then the University has been developed along capitalist/economic lines. It has conformed to the needs of Industry since the 1850s but it was not until 1968 that this idea had become

triumphant. This is further complicated by the role of the University expanding after the 1950s and the introduction of working class students that did not take up the agenda of class struggle of the theoreticians but conformed to the needs of the state (contra see Herbert Marcuse (1964) "The One Dimensional Man").

Wissenschaft (or the theory of academic disciplines) has been developed by critics but largely ignored by University administration. In the last 50 years the most important works in this field have been:

- Polyani's *Personal Knowledge*, 1958
- Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, 1960
- Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1962
- Luckmann and Berger's *The Social Construction of Reality*, 1966
- Foucault's *The Order of Things*, 1966 and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1969
- Habermas' *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 1968
- Toulmin's *Human Understanding*, 1972

None of these texts have had any influence in the construction of academic disciplines since 1968. The University of the Critique has given way to the University of Technology, which is the Technology of the capitalist state. Collegiality has been replaced by managerial and policy dominance, prioritising administrative dominance. The Office of Vice-Chancellor, once deemed to be a position of educational reverence, has increasingly developed into that of a Chief Executive Officer of a corporate institution.

In Australia this reached its logical conclusions with a number of political strategies but the one that is of most prominence is the Dawkins' Report in 1988, a white paper by the then Minister for Education. Dawkins merged the parallel systems of technology and critique by imposing market demand on Higher Learning Institutions through the redistribution of funds for research and teaching in addition to the amalgamation of both systems. The merger between the Institutes of Technology and Colleges of Advanced Education with the Universities led to learning communities becoming strictly demarcated between consumers and producers and the "Newman styled Universities" being replaced with the "University of Excellence".

This has however left a unique opportunity for Indigenous people. During this time of change Indigenous Epistemology has not experienced a similar crisis but rather a renaissance can be observed, possibly due to the Western epistemologies heightened sense of skepticism. Due to sustained coherence through people, land and spirituality and the struggle for existence, Indigenous epistemology has flourished in the New University. It has not succumbed to market forces because of:

- The demarcation between producers and consumers has not been able to usurp Indigenous people's sense of community, culture and tradition;
- Indigenous interpretative strategies have the ability to subvert market technologies for the service of Indigenous people;
- The Indigenous University has been able to bridge the gap between the New University of Excellence and the traditional Idea of the University through the sustaining coherence of Indigenous Epistemologies;
- The struggle for Indigenous education facilities has not been to conform to the market but rather to demand that the market conform to Indigenous epistemology.

While education within the western university has increasingly become a commodity that can be influenced by market forces, Indigenous education is underpinned by community practices and cultural protocols that have helped to sustain Indigenous identity and heritage.

The transition by western universities, in more recent times, to adopt more culturally inclusive practices and curriculum may provide some comfort that a systemic change is afoot. However, little can be accomplished to meet the educational needs of Indigenous people while commodity driven forces underpin the "University of Excellence". This anomaly has provided an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to redefine the educational needs of their communities and to develop institutions based upon their own epistemologies.

### **Indigenous Hermeneutics; the reinterpretation of the 'University of Excellence' through the context of the Indigenous Community**

For Indigenous people culture is 'a priori' it is not something that is naturalised by dominance but rather an historical process that is defined by a distinct community of descent rather than assent. It is passed on from Elders to the young. It has defined knowledge systems that have external and internal framework that is taught in specific cultural contexts and place. Anything that is non-referential in the new University has the potential to be re-interpreted by Indigenous Knowledge to serve the needs of the Indigenous community.

To exemplify this, The University of Excellence, exists within a market of entrepreneurial teachers and discerning consumers thus a major concern for the new University is the way in which it can provide both western and cultural assurance of quality and accreditation. In her paper *Remembering our Future: Higher Education Quality Assurance and Indigenous Epistemology* (2005) Manu Meyer of the University of Hawaii argues that due to the unfixed meaning of "Quality and Assurance" with regard to higher education systems, Indigenous people are not only able to colonize these practices through a Indigenous hermeneutic

based on culture, but also to bring about a transformative higher learning that moves from ...*chaos into coherence, justice into healing, and individuation into interdependence*. Meyer further comments "*the Triangulation of Meaning, an ancient way to exhibit an embodied epistemology extending into spiritual acumen is brought forth to invigorate indigeneity and its role in the world awakening*".

The global mobilization of Indigenous higher education through bodies such as WINHEC and community tribal colleges and universities are presenting a challenge to the western "University of Excellence" as they take charge of their own education that is inclusive of their own cultural hermeneutics. This is excellence indeed!

### **Who is the consumer and who is the producer?**

Indigenous anthropology does not rely on Cartesian notions of the self; therefore reduction of culture into individuals buying and selling in a market place has little use. Under Contract Law even a corporation is understood as an individual. This type of market lacks any coherence within an Indigenous context. This is not to say that the market does not have coherence but protocols of human interdependence or reciprocity take precedence in determining identity and the market. In the new University a strict demarcation between producers and consumers of knowledge has become necessary to conform to western notions of the market. This opposes historical notions of the University being a knowledge community with a free interplay of ideas, values, knowledge systems and epistemologies.

This demarcation has failed to take a hold within the Indigenous space of the New University. A question that never seems to be asked is ... *Does the market need to conform to Western Individuality?* Indigenous economic and exchange systems have existed for millennia but due to the retention of protocols involving reciprocity Indigenous knowledge systems have not suffered from exploitation or alienation. Indigenous communities do not demarcate between producers and consumers, nor is knowledge something that can be individually owned as often evident within a western system. Rather, within an Indigenous framework there is an undeniable link between respect and knowledge and between knowledge and responsibility to the community. These are the guiding principles of knowledge exchange. In Indigenous Knowledge Exchange it is possible to a return to the traditional knowledge community of Newman within the University of Excellence that incorporates both students and teachers.

### **Indigenous Assimilation of Capitalism: Is this a way forward for the University of Excellence?**

Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. (Article 14, UN Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples, 2008).

In recent years there has been conjecture by non-Indigenous commentators for Indigenous communities to become more entrepreneurial and to conform to western ideas of economic exchange. What many of these commentators fail to realize is firstly, their own cultural bias in determining the protocols of the market and secondly, that it is not the market that should determine Indigenous culture and protocols but in fact the complete reverse. If Indigenous communities are to have any success in the global market it will be through the adoption of their own cultural protocols and epistemology within the structure of their own businesses and how they are run, not the other way around. This is yet to be realized and accepted by many people within Government and Universities advocating an interest in adopting more culturally astute policies and practices.

In the context of the “University”, does the prioritizing of culture and ideas devalue or enrich the market? This is an issue for the economists to grapple with within the western university framework. Across the globe there are numerous examples where the level of engagement and productivity of Indigenous people is substantially enhanced when Indigenous values, knowledge framework, culture and epistemologies are duly recognized. In these circumstances the rich contribution of Indigenous knowledge and knowledge holders are respected and valued. The inability of western education systems to adopt a bicultural education framework denies all students access to a more culturally enriched education.

The move by World Indigenous Network Higher Education Consortium to establish a Indigenous higher education institution offers a strategic and innovative opportunity for Indigenous students to participate in a global ‘University of Excellence’ based upon an epistemology that acknowledges the value of western and traditional knowledge systems. Such a model will require Indigenous leaders and educators to be visionaries, adopting an approach that provides a level of “quality and assurance” that meets bicultural standards; the aspirations of their people; protects and preserves traditional values, history and knowledge systems and produces graduates that are both professionally and culturally grounded and equipped.

## **Conclusion**

Indigenous people practice a culture of descent as opposed to western notions of ascent. Western epistemology has often failed to meet the challenges that intrinsically accompany the service of culture due to its inability to coherently critique the changing market. The “New University” has ironically created a space for Indigenous epistemology due to the end of the systemic dominance of Western culture and the increasing search by students for a more culturally and professionally enriched education. Ironically, this may be interpreted by some to mean that the coherence of Indigenous culture is in a struggle to locate its place in

a global educational context. Indigenous educators, however, recognize the fallacy in this regard. Indigenous epistemology is inherently anti-imperialist and it can provide a framework through which global economic trends can demarcate between the practice of the market and the shared human values that inform that market. This is a critical point within the delivery of services within higher education. It could be a way for the new “University of Excellence” to exist within 21<sup>st</sup> Century realities while offering a bridge to older notions of a University of Culture and Ideas. The determination by WINHEC to develop an international Indigenous higher education entity in its own right may also encourage western universities to adopt a more inclusive approach within the complexities that accompany a socially demanding and culturally challenging market. The WINHEC model will provide an economically and culturally viable educational framework that will readily accommodate the production of knowledge within a context of transformational policies and practices and competing market demands that underpin the concept of a socially responsive “University of Excellence”.

Note: This paper builds upon the unpublished paper by Robertson, B (2002) *Indigenous Epistemology within the University of Excellence: Living in the ruins of the Western University*.

## References

- Anderson, R. (1968). The 'Idea of a University' Today. *Connecting historians, policymakers and the media*. Retrieved from <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-98.html>
- Committee on Higher Education. (1963). Higher education: report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins 1961-63. London.
- Dawkins, J., & Department of Employment Education and Training. (1988). Higher Education: a policy statement (Dawkins Report). Canberra: Australian Government.
- Durkheim, E. (1897). *Education for Social Change : From Theory to Practice*.
- Foucault, M. (1966). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1969). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Routledge Publishing.
- Gadamer, H G (1960). Truth and Method Retrieved from [www.continuumbooks.com](http://www.continuumbooks.com)
- Habermas, J. (1968). *Knowledge and Human Interests*. Boston (USA): Beacon Press.
- Humboldt, W. v. (1791-2 (though it was not published until 1850, after Humboldt's death)). *On the Limits of State Action*.
- Kuhn, T. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago (USA): University of Chicago Press.
- Luckmann, T, & Berger, P. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Marcuse, H. (1964). *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- Meyer, M. (2005). Remembering our Future: Higher Education Quality Assurance and Indigenous Epistemology. *WINHEC Journal*.
- Newman, J. H. (1873). Lecture Series: The Idea of the University.
- Pelikan, J. (1971-1989). *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine (Five volumes)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pelikan, J. (1992). *The Idea of the University: A Reexamination*. New Haven (Connecticut): Yale University Press.
- Polanyi, M. (1958). *Personal Knowledge -Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. London (UK): Amazon Press.
- Robertson, B. (2002). *Indigenous Epistemology and the University of Excellence: Living in the ruins of the Western University*. (Unpublished).
- Toulmin, S. (1972). *Human Understanding: Volume 1: The Collective Use and Development of Concepts*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, American Edition Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- United Nations. (2008). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Retrieved 11 May 2012, from [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)

# **Celebrating and Sustaining Indigenous Knowledges through Research**

**Boni Robertson, Berice Anning, Veronica Arbon and Gary Thomas**

## ***Abstract***

*This paper reports on the growth of research within the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC). The focus is the research and later, research and journal working group. The intent is to discuss the publication of the WINHEC Journal, discussion papers and other activities such as the development of the Research Standards while analysing the underpinning imperatives to such work. The paper will also examine the complexity of progressing research, founded in local knowledge, aligned internationally to broader conceptions of Indigenous knowledge. The suggestion underlying this paper is that if research is undertaken from a position of Indigenous knowledge and epistemology, it will celebrate and sustain Indigenous people.*

## **Introduction**

As a strategy to limit the impact of negative colonial power which has prevented Indigenous success on almost every front, including within higher education and research, the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) was established with representation from Indigenous Aotearoa, Australia, Canada, the United States and Norway. The Consortium was founded in Canada, in 2002, by these Indigenous educational and research leaders to accelerate the articulation of Indigenous epistemology (ways of knowing, education, philosophy, and research) within the academy and across nations. In the subsequent years strategies have been progressed through the Accreditation (Affirmation) Committee and the Research and Journal Working Group. WINHEC, among others, to provide an international mechanism concerned with the sustainability of Indigenous peoples and the continuity of knowledges through transformed education and research.

Built on respect rather than powerful dominance or competition, WINHEC represents the diversity of the nations from which it was formed. WINHEC, through its committees and working groups, also responds to the dispersal of its members through multiple methods which included the circulation of draft statements or discussion papers, electronic circulation of ideas in draft documents and locally based face-to-face collaborations at annual meetings. This committed approach enacted by all members has resulted in collaborative development of numerous documents including the WINHEC Journals, the Cultural and Research Standards and several other papers which honour the fundamental relationships of most Indigenous societies.



The purpose of this paper is to tell the story of WINHEC and in particular the focus of the Research and Journal Working Group through a discussion on the publication of the WINHEC Journal, highlighting the papers developed and commissioned while bringing to light other developments such as the Research Standards. The underpinning imperatives to such work will also be raised along with an acknowledgement of the importance and celebration of the knowledges and languages of those involved.

## **Background**

The World Indigenous Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) was founded on the principles outlined in the following Articles of the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

### Article #12,

Indigenous Peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of human remains.

### Article #13,

Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

### Article #14,

Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

### Article #15,

Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information. States shall take effective measures, in consultation and

cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.<sup>1</sup>

In addition the Consortium supported the Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Rights in Education (1999)<sup>2</sup>, developed after the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE) was held in Australia. The Coolangatta statement highlighted Indigenous people's right to be Indigenous.

It is important to pause here for a moment and consider that the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) was established to address a very big agenda. This is identifiable in the foundation documents upon which the Consortium is formed and the need to *accelerate the articulation of epistemology* identified above and the additional aims outlined below:

- Protect and enhance Indigenous spiritual beliefs, culture and languages through higher education;
- Advance the social, economical, and political status of Indigenous Peoples that contribute to the well-being of Indigenous communities through higher education;
- Create an accreditation body for Indigenous education initiatives and systems that identify common criteria, practices and principles by which Indigenous Peoples live;
- Recognise the significance of Indigenous education;
- Create a global network for sharing knowledge through exchange forums and state of the art technology; and
- Recognise the educational rights of Indigenous Peoples.<sup>3</sup>

WINHEC established its place in the world by setting this massive agenda. To do this WINHEC aimed to progress subsequent strategies from multiple sites of Indigenous vision and commitment focused through annual meetings and technology. Through this model much has been achieved.

All achievements cannot be documented in this paper suffice to say a brief overview will be provided with the main focus being the Research and Journal Working Group. Briefly, over the past ten years, WINHEC has focused on education and the endorsement of the WINHEC Cultural Standards (*exemplar*) and related institutional or programmatic accreditation mechanisms for Indigenous education along with the development of an Accreditation (Affirmation) Committee. This has permitted numerous organisations, including curriculum

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf) (accessed 14.08.12)

<sup>2</sup> Available at [jaie.asu.edu/v39/V39I1A4.pdf](http://jaie.asu.edu/v39/V39I1A4.pdf) (accessed 14.08.12)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www1.iprtc.ndhu.edu.tw/2012winhec/goals.html> (accessed 14.08.12)

and programs, to evaluate against locally developed standards modelled on the WINHEC Cultural Standards. A number have identified the WINHEC Cultural Standards as being open enough for application in their local context and have therefore evaluated against same. This has been ground breaking work which has been affirming of local knowledge, cultural and language realities and the importance of same within education.

The research area became a focus in the second full year of WINHEC's operations through the establishment of the loosely formed Research Working Group. The first meeting of this group proposed the publication of an inaugural WINHEC Journal for 2005, a statement of research was also developed and placed on the organisational website. Then with a name change the Research and Journal Working Group developed or commissioned a number of papers to work toward the development and publication of the WINHEC Research Standards. A number of other working groups established to discuss the use of technology, finance and 'own language', among other matters, were also active. More recently, the Academic Committee has proposed a nested series of postgraduate awards to progress and support the visions of Indigenous people across the world.

In all of the committees and working groups Indigenous knowledges presented as much more than content alone as the very operations within WINHEC exhibited as Indigenous processes while the outcomes of each and every activity aimed at bringing to fruition Indigenous advantage, at the local level. This aspect will be lightly explored later in this article, as we now turn to the Research and Journal Working Group.

### **Research Journal and Research Standards Development**

The Research and Journal Working Group grew out of the developments within and around WINHEC. This Group was responsible for the publication of the Journal, Research Standards and a number of other papers. The publications highlighted the importance of establishing Indigenous higher education and research as valid and, often, inter-connected streams of scholarship on a myriad of concerns for Indigenous people.

The WINHEC Research and Journal Working Group operated on the basis of minutes and recommendations and, at each meeting, considered the matters previously identified in recommendations to measure achievements. For example, at the 2005 WINHEC meeting, it was noted that a Research Statement developed to guide the work of the Group had been accepted and the successful launch of the first WINHEC Journal, edited by Danica Waiti, from Aotearoa (New Zealand), was celebrated. Discussion also circulated around the use of the internet to promote achievements in member nations such as the information from Australia concerning "two PhD students who had won the right for elders...to receive honorary degrees in recognition of their mentorship and co-supervision" and the importance of holding on-line discussions. The recommendations in these minutes, subsequently outlined the theme of the next Journal as *Indigenous Values*, identified the

need to publish doctoral completions and requested the Research Statement be posted on the WINHEC website.

This very cyclical form of action is also identifiable in the notes of the 2008 WINHEC meeting, held in Melbourne Australia, which proposed that the next Journal be titled, *Indigenous Voices: Indigenous Symbols*. One then is able to identify that the 2009 WINHEC Research and Journal Working Group minute's recorded that editor, Dr Rachel Selby and Te Wananga o Aotearoa were thanked for the work in developing a powerful series of papers within the Journal. This Research and Journal Working Group meeting, in Tyendinaga, Canada, also confirmed the need to continue work on the establishment of a web-based searchable database of potential Indigenous higher degree examiners and supervisors. The naming of the next Journal as *Indigenous Voices: Indigenous Research* was recorded. Also documented was a thank you to members from Australia<sup>4</sup> who had tabled two documents on Indigenous research: *The Indigenous Research, Principles, Protocols, Ethical Domains and Guidelines* and a commissioned paper by Terri Janke, 2009, titled *Writing Up Indigenous Research: Authorship, Copyright and Indigenous Knowledge Systems* to inform the discussion on the development of the WINHEC Research Standards along with a note that the tabled draft Research Standards were to be placed on the WINHEC website with the final document to be posted when development was concluded.

In the case of the WINHEC Research Standards the process of development had begun in 2004, where the need for Research Standards had been flagged in early discussions on research. This process of developing the WINHEC Research Standards provides a clear picture of the complex of activities undertaken to obtain an agreed outcome. Turning to this area the *Indigenous Research, Principles, Protocols, Ethical Domains and Guidelines*<sup>5</sup> provides a detailed discussion around research, stating:

WINHEC is committed to research activities which ask and find answers to locally, regionally, nationally or internationally raised questions while honouring, affirming and advancing knowledge through Indigenous scholarship. WINHEC is committed to research undertaken by and with Indigenous people for Indigenous outcomes. Researchers may be Indigenous and, may also be undertaken by members of the community. WINHEC therefore promotes best practice in the conduct of research. Such practice in research is to be guided by fundamental principles at all stages and levels of activity. The application of these principles to the Indigenous research programs or those undertaken under its auspices of WINHEC will be a significant component of a distinctive form of Indigenous scholarship and intellectual work.

---

<sup>4</sup> Professor V Arbon, Professor B Robertson, Professor B Anning and Mr G Thomas

<sup>5</sup> This document with modification is presently submitted as: Arbon, V., Anning, B., Robertson, B., and Thomas, G., 2012, *Research and Research Protocols and Guidelines*, Indigenous Press

The following principles are intended to:

- (a) Ensure research arises from Indigenous authority and knowledge;
- (b) Promote research scholarship and methodologies that honour and affirm own knowledge while contributing to knowledge more generally;
- (c) Impact positively international, national, regional or local issues and outcomes of concern to Indigenous peoples;
- (d) Ensure research complies with the requirements of WINHEC and where applicable local regulatory bodies (e.g., National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in Australia or other relevant bodies in other States); and
- (e) Advantage Indigenous peoples and their communities.

*The second* commissioned document identified that there are numerous and complex matters in the research field. The document also highlights that there are a “growing number of protocols which guide the relationship between the researcher and the researched, however, they lack sufficient details about authorship, copyright, and the future use of research”.

Twenty five or so copies of the above documents were circulated to those present on the first day of the Research and Journal Working Group meeting in 2009 for overnight review and reading. On the second day, through a workshop format, discussion circulated around the readings and an agreement was reached that a first step was to establish a set of standards. The second part of the workshop was then focused through a rough draft of a possible Research Standards document. This focus provided comment and improvements to the document. The draft once updated was provided support subject to some change therefore it was circulated to an email list of those who had attended the meeting for comment and additional improvements. The document was again emailed out to an expanded list of those involved after additional suggestions for up-dates had been addressed.

The *WINHEC Research Standards First Edition*, (2010), was then posted on the WINHEC website for one year and included a basic outline of Indigenous research, clarification of the role of researchers and identified ways to enact research. The final WINHEC Research Standards, First Edition, (2011), emerged from the next meeting at the Sami University in Guovdageaidnu, Norway. This document was further edited through an email process and was posted, as the fully endorsed document, on the WINHEC website in February 2011. The core WINHEC Research Standards contained in this document are:

### **Indigenous Research**

- (a) *respects local Indigenous authority particularly that of Elders and respected knowledgeable others;*

- (b) recognises knowledge as part of a living and constantly adapting system that is grounded in the past, but continues to grow through the present and into the future and reinforces this in research approach;*
- (c) uses the local language respectfully as a foundation for interpretation and meaning;*
- (d) understands relationships across knowledge derived from diverse knowledge systems;*
- (e) acknowledges multi-ownership and levels of knowledge; and*
- (f) addresses community and individual responsibility/ownership of knowledge.*

### **Individual Researchers**

- (a) work with local Indigenous Elders and Respected knowledge holders;*
- (b) ensure prior and informed consent;*
- (c) recognise their responsibilities and the ongoing influences of Western knowledge;*
- (d) build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve success;*
- (e) engage responsibly and effectively in research activities that are grown from/based on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing;*
- (f) demonstrate appreciation of the relationships, connections and processes of interaction of all elements in and of the world;*
- (g) situate one's self and define ones purpose for undertaking research competently; and*
- (h) develop a critical self awareness.*

### **Research Process and Practice (Enacting Research)**

- (a) addresses requirements outlined in this document and locally;*
- (b) incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and practicing in its work linking what is being researched to everyday lives;*
- (c) works closely with individuals and communities to achieve a high level of complementary research outcomes and expectations;*
- (d) honours Indigenous Elders and respected knowledge holders scholarship and authority;*
- (e) recognises the potential of individuals and communities and provides the training as necessary for them to participate powerfully in research; and*
- (f) accepts responsibility to protect sacred sites, secret and sacred knowledge and other artefacts.*

### **Organisational Practice (Facilitating Research)**

- (a) has high level of involvement of Indigenous staff and Elders and respected knowledge holders in lead organizations;*
- (b) fosters on-going participation, communication and interaction between researchers, programs and community researchers and personnel;*

- (c) *recognizes and assures ownership of intellectual knowledge – ownership of data needs to sit with the Indigenous community;*
- (d) *provides remuneration for time and other costs and, dispersal of publication profits to community; and*
- (e) *ensures sacred sites, secret and sacred knowledge and other artefacts are protected.*

#### **Community Practice (Linking Research)**

- (a) *recognises local Indigenous Elders and Respected knowledge holders;*
- (b) *honours the primacy and validity of Indigenous knowledge as it is defined and articulated locally;*
- (c) *takes an active authoritative role in research while nurturing family responsibility, sense of belonging and cultural identity;*
- (d) *assists new members in learning and utilizing knowledge and information generated through research;*
- (e) *contributes to all aspects of research design, implementation and outcomes for local advantage; and*
- (f) *ensures sacred sites, secret and sacred knowledge and other artefacts are protected.*

This final document is very similar to the original although it brings into the standards notions of sacred knowledge and is introduced through the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007), which highlights Indigenous peoples have the right to free, prior and informed consent. Furthermore, the UN Declaration's Article 31.1 on the rights of Intellectual Property is also quoted for it states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

International mechanisms such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)<sup>6</sup> 1992, were also drawn on to inform the WINHEC Research Standards. Notably, *The Tkarihwaié:ri*<sup>7</sup> *Code of Ethical Conduct to Ensure Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous*

---

<sup>6</sup> see [www.cbd.int/history](http://www.cbd.int/history)

<sup>7</sup> Pronounced (Tga-ree-wa-yie-ree), a Mohawk term meaning "the proper way".

and Local Communities”,<sup>8</sup> which points to the *UN Convention on Biodiversity* adopted in October 2010, is also sighted for it states:

Indigenous and local communities should have the opportunity to actively participate in research that affects them or which makes use of their traditional knowledge related to the objectives of the Convention, and can decide on their own research initiatives and priorities, conduct their own research, including building their own research institutions and promoting the building of cooperation, capacity and competence.

In recognising Indigenous peoples’ inherent and prior rights to their lands and resources and respecting their legitimate authority to require that third parties enter into an equal and respectful relationship with them, based on the principle of informed consent, the WINHEC Research Standards document set out to advocate fundamental requirements for research activity to ensure not only protection but local research initiatives are permitted to develop.

It is important to note that Indigenous Knowledge is not bound by time as it is continuing, dynamic and is simultaneously accessed through past, present and future. This is noted by Janke<sup>9</sup> (1999), who states:

*Indigenous knowledge systems form part of a living heritage. Indigenous knowledge systems contain a wealth of information including traditional arts, crafts, dance and cultural expressions, belief systems, customary laws, environmental knowledge of plants and animals and kinship systems...under Indigenous laws, knowledge may be held by one person, a family or community, and the right to share or disseminate that knowledge is subject to a complex system of consents. There is also a cultural obligation to pass on knowledge, and to guard its cultural integrity.*

This point is included in the WINHEC Research Standards as the primacy and validity of Indigenous knowledge, as it is defined and articulated locally, is a fundamental requirement in all research activities.

In this context the tensions of epistemology must be addressed through translation, dialogue and negotiation to achieve not only informed consent but outcomes of Indigenous relevance through research. As Porsanger (2010) argues and which is also included in the Research Standards:

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-42-en.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Janke Terri, 1999, *Our culture: our future – Report on Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights*, Michael Frankel and Company, written and published under commission by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Sydney



Research protocols for each research project on indigenous issues must be negotiated with indigenous and local communities with regard to the following key issues: Respect, Reciprocity, Reliability, and Relevance

Interestingly Smith, a Maori scholar, lists several different principles that must be considered when carrying out research in the Maori arena. These principles are: (i) prior rights; (ii) self-determination; (iii) inalienability; (iv) traditional guardianship; (v) active participation; (vi) full disclosure; (vii) prior informed consent and veto; (viii) confidentiality; (ix) respect; (x) active protection; (xi) precaution; (xii) compensation and equitable sharing; (xiii) the support of Indigenous research; (xiv) the dynamic interactive cycle; and (xv) restitution. This list is also similar to those captured within the WINHEC Research Standards document and were considered in its development.

Protocols and guidelines emerged within Australia through the support of the Special Purposes Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Committee (NHMRC) and the Menzies Foundation to hold a conference in Alice Springs in 1986 which outlined a list of research recommendations that called for community control of research, for the outcomes of same to be provided to the community and for improved ethics (NHMRC 1991, Arbon 2008). This initial activity was soon progressed through a national workshop at Camden, Sydney which resulted in the *Guidelines on Ethical Matters in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research* since been up-dated (NHMRC 1991; NHMRC 2007). A number of aligned documents include the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (AIATSIS), *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies* (2011) also emerged and have recently been up-dated. The WINHEC Research Standards also finds alignment with these Australian standards.

Finally and importantly the WINHEC Research Standards, in identifying many of the points raised by WINHEC members and many Aboriginal people across the world including Australia, state that researchers must increasingly hone their knowledge and skills in order to work “respectfully and collaboratively within Indigenous knowledge and within the relationships of all”. Additionally, this document notes that Elders and Knowledgeable others can also be the researcher, the advisors or the focus of research and they too are “required to maintain deep obligations to their knowledge and the balance of all within the environment” as they engage within this practice of research.

The process of developing this document was very complex and drew on papers, expertise, discussions, two meetings and at least three electronic circulations to up to thirty five or forty people across the world. This process was required for underlying knowledge, cultural and language reasons that apply to all activities undertaken within many an Indigenous context.

The WINHEC Research Standards underpin and contribute to Indigenous knowledge continuity through proposing ways of respectfully working with Indigenous knowledges while guiding the researcher/s through awareness of the research principles, protocols and ethical domains and noting the importance of Indigenous people being a researcher/s within any project.

This same complex process of development has been utilised to move toward the publication of the WINHEC Journal. For example, a process of on-line announcements and follow-up emails over several months called for papers, these were then received, reviewed and re-viewers feedback was then provided and authors then submitted the final to create the journal publication through the ongoing work of an Editor and other support peoples and funding. This collaborative process has created and celebrated a number of high quality journals over the years.

Before going further it will be noted that some recommendations that have arisen over the years have not been taken up or remain in the, to do basket. However, the work of the Research and Journal Working Group has certainly celebrated Indigenous knowledge and creativity through the recommendations it has addressed.

### **Underlying reasons for and support of standards**

In a statement made to launch the WINHEC Journal in 2010, the authors and Professor Mark Rose point to the importance of the content of that particular Journal, in the following statement:

The articles are thought provoking and capture cultural messages while addressing a range of matters of relevance across our diverse nations. You know, very recently, this form of publication would not have been possible. However, because of a similarity of historical experience we are able to gain the clarity or pointers to address matters through a shared articulation despite each article being rooted in far off nations and quite different knowledge positions of the local Indigenous people. The articles bring not only knowledge complexity but an analysis of the importance of own language, information on sustainability, stories and papers that reflect a fundamental reciprocal connectedness or relatedness of all in the research domain and much more. The articles identify the centrality of ceremonies, songs, dance, metaphors and numerous other activities within Indigenous existence which can be drawn on within methodologically. The authors have made this possible. WINHEC has made this possible. I thank each for freeing their words and their stories to bring clarity of thought to many.

In this dispersed environment Indigenous standards promoting collaboration, among other matters were always required as an affirmation to the work being undertaken. Placed-based

knowledge and language and the holders of same could only be central within project development, including the text of various documents, when Indigenous protocols and guidelines were honoured. Notably, responding to the diversity of those involved underscores the philosophy of WINHEC. This Indigenous ethos made it very rare to find a paper that was not accepted for publication or an action not openly discussed at a meeting or a denial of collaboration across the diversity of WINHEC. This critical component of the WINHEC ethos – or philosophy if you wish - called for respect of diversity, for respect of knowledge and for the respect of dispersed populations or individuals in the activities being undertaken for the advantage of Indigenous people.

The focus in WINHEC and therefore, the Research and Journal Working Group, has been the representation of the dignity, diversity, relatedness and dispersal of our peoples across the world as knowledge outcomes were produced. The development of the WINHEC Cultural Standards supported and responded to this reality. The WINHEC Research Standards, while being consignant of all that has and, was occurring around its development, also responded to the committed and collaborative activity required to honour fundamental collaborative relationships to be found within many an Indigenous world.

These activities were undertaken by committed individuals, scholars and authors from across the world, a group of colleagues from across Australia and numerous 'blind' reviewers who herald from a large number of Indigenous nations. This respectful collaboration arises from the primary force of 'relationships' deep within the ethos of WINHEC which have been critical to the completion of complex, often joyous and sometimes, challenging work for our people. These relationships are also central to the work required in the disruption of negative theoretical and colonial power within higher education and research.

As Indigenous researchers operating within methodological approaches, relevant to WINHEC ethos, it is clear that reciprocal and collaborative relationships are a critical factor to our very existence and, therefore, are important within research. There are also relationships between all and between peoples as mediated within Western research, historical ideology and colonialism. It is therefore suggested that when research is undertaken from a position of Indigenous knowledge and epistemology, it will celebrate and sustain Indigenous people and in doing so will challenge imposed research positions, as appears to have been evidenced in the activities of the Research and Journal Working Groups and the papers it has been able to disseminate. However, relationships as understood within Western research require vigilant work to challenge research that subjugates and oppresses through its inability to recognise, work with or represent diversity, knowledge and dispersal of peoples.

## Summary

This paper has documented the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) with a focus on the research and later, Research and Journal Working group. The intent was to discuss the publication of the WINHEC Journal, discussion papers and other activities such as the development of the Research Standards while analysing the underpinning imperatives to such work. This paper also examined the complexity of progressing research, founded in local knowledge, aligned internationally to broader conceptions of Indigenous knowledge. This paper has addressed these topics and, in doing so, has endorsed the suggestion underlying this paper that research undertaken from a position of Indigenous knowledge and epistemology challenges the very core of Western knowledge and that this occurs when the concept of relationships is understood from many perspectives within research analysis.

Note: This article has been published in the *Journal of Indigenous Studies (TJIS)* and *World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) Conference proceedings document and DVD*.

## References

- AIATSIS, 2011, *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies*, accessed [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)
- Arbon, V., 2008, *Arlathirnda, Ngurkurnda Ityrnda, Being, Knowing and Doing; De-Colonising Indigenous Tertiary Education*, Post Pressed, Teneriffe, among others
- Janke Terri, 1999, *Our culture: our future* – Report on Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, Michael Frankel and Company, written and published under commission by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Sydney
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 1991, *Guidelines on Ethical matters in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research*, NHMRC, Canberra
- NHMRC, 2007, National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, Nation Health and Medical Research Council and Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, Canberra
- Rigney, L 1999, 'Internationalization of an Indigenous Anti-colonial Cultural Critique of Research Methodologies: A Guide to Indigenist Research Methodology and Its Principles', *Wicazo Sa* 14 (no 2).
- Smith, L., 1999, *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, University of Otago Press, Dunedin, (see p. 142-161)
- Watson, I., 2002, *Looking at you Looking at me... an Aboriginal History of the South East*, Irene Watson, Adelaide

Wilson, S., 2001, *What is an Indigenous Research Methodology*, *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, v25(2),

Janke, T., 2009, *Writing Up Indigenous Research: Authorship, Copyright and Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, Terri Janke and Company. (accessed [www.terrijanke.com.au](http://www.terrijanke.com.au))

# **Celebrating and Sustaining Indigenous Knowledges through Higher Education**

*Berice Anning, Veronica Arbon, Boni Robertson and Gary Thomas*

## ***Abstract***

*In its intervention at the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2010, the World Indigenous Network Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) acknowledged that despite a history of protracted but limited attempts by Governments globally to address the low participation and graduation rates of Indigenous peoples from higher education at post graduate level, this continues to be an area of considerable concern.*

*This paper speaks to the development of an innovative academic process that profiles the ground breaking work of WINHEC and a cohort of Indigenous academics in developing academic programs designed to address this systemic failure. The concept of these programs was endorsed in 2006 at a WINHEC conference where Indigenous representatives from across the world met to discuss in part, historical and contemporary impediments to Indigenous success within higher education. The goal of WINHEC has been to develop a nested suite of inventive postgraduate awards founded within the scholarship of Indigenous Knowledge which encapsulates an epistemological approach. This has been a ground breaking process that has included collaborative and intellectual contributions of Indigenous academics from diverse cultural nations across the globe and, in particular, Australia.*

*In 2012 the culmination of this dream and the suite of courses developed, honours and embrace the uniqueness of Indigenous Knowledge and the cultural integrity of Indigenous Leadership.*

## **Introduction**

The World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) is a world-wide educational organization. WINHEC pursues self-determination for the World's Indigenous Peoples through education by remaining strongly grounded within their own knowledges and cultures for the protection and promotion of Indigenous knowledges; academic and research frameworks; epistemologies; and cultural integrity.

WINHEC's mission is to develop and support academic programs, research and initiatives and opportunities that assist Indigenous Peoples at the national and international level to pursue their educational goals and community and familial aspirations through higher education. WINHEC through its set of principles aim to empower and transform local and

global education through innovative Indigenous-based postgraduate educational programs that sustains Indigenous leadership through education and research.

Since its formation in 2002 WINHEC has become a lead international accrediting agency for Indigenous tertiary education and research initiatives and systems that identify generic and specific criteria, practices and protocols by which Indigenous Peoples live. WINHEC, through its Accreditation Committee and sub-committees, has established goals and objectives in the development and establishment of international cultural standards for programs that affirm and honour Indigenous Knowledge.

In 2007, WINHEC members endorsed the development of postgraduate programs as the next step in expanding the mission of WINHEC by offering a suite of professional and graduate programs specifically for Indigenous peoples.

Within the suite of programs are specific research programs that have a substantive research component/s.

The broad intentions of the programs are to develop Indigenous only awards for the purposes of:

- developing and sustaining Indigenous leaders & professionals who are scholarly, culturally astute and practiced in fields relevant to, and specific to Indigenous leadership, education and research;
- establishing and sustaining Indigenous professionals in areas related to Indigenous leadership and education including systems and system interactions that embrace Indigenous and non-Indigenous frameworks; and
- providing Indigenous professionals with educational leadership who are practical visionaries possessing knowledge and skills to sustain Indigenous leadership and Indigenous knowledge by implementing quality programs, policies and systems.

Development and preparation of the postgraduate programs by a cohort of Indigenous Australian academics for WINHEC in a collaborative thesis<sup>1</sup> was through a process of developing frameworks for: teaching and learning including the programs; research and research development; policies for academic and research governance. Each framework was underpinned by cultural integrity, achieved through the WINHEC Cultural Standards<sup>2</sup> and an established consultative and collaborative standard and indicators.

## **Rationale and Background**

Since the beginning of higher education within the western academy, Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, have been largely ignored or negated by mainstream education.

---

<sup>1</sup> Anning, B.; Arbon, V.; Robertson, B.; and Thomas, G. 2012, *Collaborative Thesis: Indigenous Futures: Sustaining Indigenous Leadership, Knowledge and Education through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

<sup>2</sup> *WINHEC Sample Cultural Standards by* WINHEC Accreditation Authority, 2004. WINHEC Accreditation Handbook (pp. 25-35).

Indigenous peoples of the world have either been forced away from their languages, cultures, customs, families and lands or alternatively have had to contend with a system of education that has failed to provide a framework that is reflective and respectful of Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews. However, in recent years the Indigenous peoples of the world have begun to reclaim their sovereignty and right to educate their own people in a way that it is culturally relevant and meaningful, maintaining their knowledges revitalizing their languages, and taking control of their own destinies. The Indigenous peoples of the world have begun challenging, redefining and reinventing education beginning from birth to higher education. Indigenous peoples continue to challenge western systems to address the cultural ineptness of its programs, policies and practices that fail to include and acknowledge the scholarship of Indigenous Knowledge and do not meet the needs of Indigenous peoples and communities. The emergence of Tribal-controlled colleges across the world such as United States of America, Canada, Saamiland and New Zealand are helping local Indigenous communities to reclaim their heritage/s and to establish quality control of scholarly activities that impact their nations. Ironically, in order to create these changes, Indigenous peoples had to acquire scholarly credentials from the very same mainstream institutions that have failed to include the scholarship of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. Whilst, acting as complicit agents in the misappropriation, at best, at worst, the theft of Indigenous Knowledge.

Thus, the systemic failure is evident in the disparity that exists world-wide in the numbers of Indigenous people attaining postgraduate awards compared to non-Indigenous people. To that end, WINHEC has begun offering its own accreditation – Indigenous peoples of the world are using their own expertise and authority to validate the scholarly exploration of their own worlds. By offering postgraduate programs in Indigenous leadership and education, Indigenous peoples of the world, through WINHEC, are taking responsibility to raise the levels of their scholarly work in education and other areas through researching and recording their traditional knowledge/s, histories and stories.

This is aligned with the principles and spirit of international treaties and conventions, which WINHEC has been founded upon. The Articles of the 1993 United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>3</sup>, including Articles 13 to 16 have been used as WINHEC's founding principles. The founding documents of WINHEC affirm these also within their Goals, Objectives, Vision and Mission. The WINHEC also acknowledges and supports the Coolongatta Statement on Indigenous Rights in Education (1999) that Indigenous people have the right to be Indigenous (WINHEC, 2003).

---

<sup>3</sup> The UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was passed on 13 September 2007 and adopted by the UN General Assembly.



There are more than 265 million Indigenous peoples worldwide<sup>4</sup> on 6 continents and covering more than 85 countries {627 Goehring, Brian 1993}. As more and more of these Indigenous communities reclaim their right to educate their own people, the need for individuals with higher degrees will increase exponentially. Indigenous people cannot rely upon mainstream education to provide the necessary experts nor initiate the development of the programs. However, it is important that Indigenous people work collaboratively with host site-institutions to develop their own pipeline into higher education and produce their own experts from their own communities in order to preserve their Traditional Indigenous Knowledges, languages, histories and cultures.

### **Comparative Advantage**

Although there were several centres or programs for World Indigenous Educational Leadership, a web search yielded no formal Indigenous postgraduate programs in the world that were developed based on sustaining Indigenous leadership through education whilst incorporating cultural standards at the graduate level; teaching and learning levels for instruction, curriculum and operations; as well as ensuring Indigenous community involvement. WINHEC, through its status as a leading Indigenous education organization, felt compelled to address this area of identified need. Given the emergence of colleges and universities controlled by Indigenous communities around the world, the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century must be the time to create and accredit such programs. The need for faculty/academics and administrators with degrees at all levels is growing at a rate faster than mainstream educational programs can produce. The postgraduate programs aim to produce qualified faculty/academics and administrators who are well-grounded Indigenous leaders but who are also top researchers and scholars in their areas of expertise. Additionally, the programs ensure graduates are culturally sound Indigenous leaders and are developed within frameworks for teaching and learning that enforces cultural integrity and includes the Indigenous knowledge and epistemologies of individuals, their families, communities and Elders.

The postgraduate programs and the structure of the curricula and policy frameworks, underpinned by WINHEC Cultural Standards, will address the issues currently experienced by Indigenous peoples when they enter the mainstream university programs. That is, the institutions' programs and even those managed and delivered in Indigenous Centres tend to conform Indigenous students to western based learning that is inflexible with Indigenous knowledge and does not readily allow for culturally specific programs to be offered. These institutions do not adequately embrace establishing and resourcing programs that allow Indigenous students to draw upon their own knowledge base and to document their own

---

<sup>4</sup> Indigenous, as defined in a formal publication on the World Bank website and with statistics on the number of Indigenous peoples, world-wide. [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTINDPEOPLE/Resources/407801-1271860301656/HDNEN\\_indigenous\\_clean\\_0421.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTINDPEOPLE/Resources/407801-1271860301656/HDNEN_indigenous_clean_0421.pdf) (March, 2012)

Indigenous knowledges. The postgraduate programs will provide instructional and design structure that empower the Indigenous learner as they allow for Indigenous ownership of their learning and ensure educational sovereignty for Indigenous peoples in their communities or at the institutional level. Rather than wait for the western institutions to evolve to meet Indigenous peoples' educational needs and their right to document their Traditional Indigenous knowledges, WINHEC has endorsed the development of the suite of postgraduate programs that will make Indigenous educational sovereignty real from 2013 and will be offering enrolment in the postgraduate programs from 2013. The network of Indigenous Nations and countries within WINHEC's membership will provide local Indigenous sites for the delivery and support of the Indigenous students / research candidates. Localising the programs, under the WINHEC international umbrella, allows for the Indigenous knowledges to be local and/or national and/or international. The importance of developing the programs' curricula framework to achieve educational sovereignty allows Indigenous students and research candidates; communities; Elders; Indigenous academics and staff to: incorporate their Indigenous ways of understanding; self-determine and self-manage educational outcomes; value knowledge; respect each group's traditional culture and languages; and, provide ways to transfer these.

There will be a high level of accessibility to these programs for potential students in and near the WINHEC identified sites. A combination of multiple modes of delivery will provide flexibility for students who may elect to continue full-time employment. As is often the case for Indigenous peoples, travel, finances and educational resources can be a barrier to completion. Having postgraduate programs developed and delivered for and by WINHEC in world-wide locations, has distinct advantages.

### **A Conceptual Framework for the Postgraduate Programs**

A conceptual framework of the postgraduate programs was developed with the concept of cultural integrity embedded in the programs. The framework includes overarching principles, goals and objectives; curricula – unit content, learning outcomes and assessment; Cultural Standards; graduate attributes; and governance policies. The framework is underpinned by Indigenous Knowledges and Leadership, the elements of the programs are mapped to the WINHEC founding Goals and Cultural Standards. The programs provide the framework for undertaking units of study. Successful completion of the units, results in attaining graduate attributes that demonstrate the protection and preservation of Indigenous Knowledges, builds and engages Indigenous leadership capacity and fulfills cultural obligations such as being responsive to an area of community need.

## Description of the Postgraduate Programs

The postgraduate programs are unique in a number of ways:

- A theme of inclusiveness is woven throughout required programs. WINHEC, site institutions, staff and students will have rich connections with the Indigenous communities and Indigenous experiences to advantage Indigenous intellectual and scholarly work as well as address diversity issues throughout the curricula.
- The programs will be accredited by WINHEC:
  - as the accrediting/sponsoring agency;
  - in joint partnership with host site-institutions and WINHEC.

WINHEC's oversight of the accreditation is to ensure the cultural integrity of the programs is not eroded by individual institutions.

- The programs combine a traditional core of research and practical application of theory. As an example, the teaching of leadership theory will include an emphasis on Indigenous: research; methodologies; knowledge; educational leadership; epistemologies; and worldviews.
- The programs provide an opportunity for Indigenous educational leaders to conduct their research and writings around existing challenges in education systems.
- The degrees are designed to meet the needs of various constituents and stakeholders:
  - Community based colleges' staff and secondary classroom teachers will learn best practices in education and come to a better understanding of how their Indigenous students learn.
  - Students interested in P-12 teaching and or administration can complement their educational theory and enhance the skill sets required for developing and sustaining Indigenous leadership and providing culturally integral services.
  - Academics/faculty and professionals in discipline specific professions will benefit from the interaction with educators, especially with those career aspects related to training and leadership. Educators will benefit from the interaction because of the increased awareness and the opportunities provided for civic engagement. Students in the programs can expect opportunities for similar types of collaborative research.
- The programs will prove useful to students having educational or other roles in different agencies, as well as those in educational institutions who aren't focused on a career in administration. The theoretical core of the programs, articulating Indigenous

specific skills and knowledge, distinguishes the programs from postgraduate programs offered through other universities and or colleges.

The **postgraduate programs in Indigenous leadership and education** are:

- (i) academically applied programs that are taught and assessed within the academic frameworks applicable to WINHEC and the site institutions.
- (ii) higher degrees for the professional development of Indigenous birth-12, community college, university academics/faculty and administrators.
- (iii) models of holistic transformational leadership/education expressed in postgraduate degrees, enabling graduates to effectively and appropriately experience the world and make it real.

The full-time programs include research only or coursework with a dissertation over three to four years. The part-time programs include research only or coursework with a dissertation over six to seven years. As previously mentioned, flexibility in assessment and evaluation is an imperative consideration. Indigenous cultures have strong oral traditions which should be utilized within formal assessment. Also, new technologies and assisted mediums can be used to develop electronic theses or lead to assessment for the completion of theses. It will satisfy the requirements of similar programs at the various WINHEC identified site institutions.

The units in the postgraduate programs are designed to be transformative, to build an integral Indigenous knowledge base and to give Indigenous leaders, education practitioners and professionals appropriate professional, academic, cultural and research skills that can be applied to their work in institutions, organizations and communities. **One of the skills of transformational leadership or educational leadership is to recognize cultural wisdom that supports the total stock of cultural knowledge and its conventional application.**

No culture has dominance over knowledge and wisdom. For Indigenous peoples, educational leadership relies upon challenges to conventional or western models of education and knowledge. The most fruitful dialogue between Native and Western modes of thought will take place not under the scorching light of scholarly Western intellectual analysis but individually and internally. It will be within individual human minds, through mental and emotional processes of personal transformation that take place as culturally different ideas and values collide. Also, it will occur without the need for any final “proof”, mutual exclusion or conclusive “conquest” of one tradition’s versions over the other”<sup>5</sup>.

Hence, the postgraduate programs seeks to privilege Indigenous ways of knowing and being and does not need another system to legitimize its validity but is complete within and unto itself where the Elders and members of Indigenous communities provide cultural

---

<sup>5</sup> Knudtson D and Suzuki D, 1992, *Wisdom of the Elders*, (p.185)

authenticity to the program. The WINHEC cultural standards, the Board of Accreditation, the inclusion of Indigenous Elders and members of Indigenous communities provide the cultural authenticity for integrity to the programs.

### **Cultural Standards and Graduate Attributes**

The postgraduate programs are developed to ensure students will be immersed in scholarly activities of academic studies and research on Indigenous leadership and education with a focus on engaging the philosophies which underpin worldviews. Students will acquire the attributes of knowledge and skills needed to perform with cultural integrity within in their own professions, educational organizations and communities.

The WINHEC Cultural Standards were developed, based on a number of guiding principles for the WINHEC Accreditation Authority (adopted by WINHEC Executive Board on November 10, 2002).

The overall WINHEC Cultural Standards were developed based on the Alaska Cultural Standards and Indicators<sup>6</sup> for program graduates; teaching and learning practice; curricula design; operational characteristics and community involvement. The cultural standards that apply to program graduates have been used to underpin the postgraduate programs' graduate indicators. This ensures their learning outcomes are measured for attainment of knowledge and skills based on maintaining cultural integrity to sustain Indigenous knowledge and culture through developing greater Indigenous leaders. The WINHEC Cultural Standard and indicators used to establish cultural integrity as the underpinning of the programs included: Program Graduates and indicators<sup>7</sup>. The program graduate standard ensures:

- A. *Program graduates are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community.***
- B. *Program graduates are able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life.***
- C. *Program graduates are able to actively participate in various cultural environments.***
- D. *Program graduates are able to engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning.***
- E. *Program graduates demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.***

---

<sup>6</sup> WINHEC Sample Cultural Standards by <sup>6</sup>WINHEC Accreditation Authority, 2004. WINHEC Accreditation Handbook (pp. 25-35).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

A further cultural standard (**F**) that includes a group of six indicators was developed<sup>8</sup> to add to the existing WINHEC cultural standards for program graduates. These new indicators within the standard are based on program graduates becoming stronger leaders:

**(F) Program graduates are leaders and well grounded in the Indigenous and professional knowledge of leadership. Graduates who meet this standard are able to:**

- 1) acquire knowledge through a culturally legitimating process;
- 2) apply knowledge to advantage Indigenous people;
- 3) take responsibility for continued transmission of knowledge, tradition, culture and practices;
- 4) demonstrate capacity to operate within a cultural framework respectful of local protocols;
- 5) exercise authority to protect and preserve Indigenous worldviews; and
- 6) act responsibly on a local, national and international stage/level.

Through the methodology applied in developing the postgraduate programs, Anning, Arbon, Robertson and Thomas<sup>9</sup> identified a further overarching cultural standard and set of indicators based on consultation and collaboration. These are fundamental to the accomplishment of the current WINHEC culturally responsive standards and indicators. The cultural integrity that underpins the performance of Indigenous leaders to engage in culturally astute /appropriate consultation and collaborative practices must align with local Indigenous protocols. The additional and new cultural standard and indicators will assist with establishing the consultative and collaborative framework, necessary to engage Indigenous people, privilege their voices and embed their knowledge and experiences within programs and projects developed.

The new cultural standard and indicators includes the following:

**A) Cultural protocols require consultation and collaboration to underpin the practices of Indigenous leadership.** An Indigenous leader who meets this standard:

- 1) *consults and collaborates with Indigenous peoples, communities and organizations on shared outcomes;*
- 2) *recognizes and involves Indigenous people and the community through consultation and collaboration in identifying important matters that impact working and living in Indigenous communities;*

---

<sup>8</sup> Anning, B.; Arbon, V.; Robertson, B.; and Thomas, G. 2012, *Collaborative Thesis: Indigenous Futures: Sustaining Indigenous Leadership, Knowledge and Education through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

- 3) *are respectful, responsible and reciprocate;*
- 4) *values and privileges Indigenous peoples' voices and position on matters;*
- 5) *recognizes and privileges the scholarship of Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous voices and the wisdom of Elders and knowledgeable others; and*
- 6) *respects the cultural protocols and practices of consultation.*

**B) An Indigenous leader who consults and collaborates, respects the cultural protocols and practices of engagement for effective communication.** An Indigenous leader who meets this standard:

- 1) *enables Indigenous people to share their knowledge, experiences and ideas;*
- 2) *provides opportunities for Indigenous people to be consulted and collaborate on issues affecting local, regional, national and international affairs;*
- 3) *provides reports back to the community/ies on decisions and outcomes;*
- 4) *maintains and sustains the principle of cultural preservation and protection;*
- 5) *establishes cultural integrity as the foundation to developing Indigenous programs; and*
- 6) *uses a consultative and collaborative framework to demonstrate integrity and a high level of involvement of Indigenous peoples.*

With regards to assessment of the postgraduate programs and curricula by the WINHEC Accreditation Authority<sup>10</sup> and in line with the Cultural Standards, the following points are a pre-condition for a review and assessment of a program and are examples of:

- locally appropriate and accepted cultural standards against which the cultural integrity of the institution/program can be reviewed and assessed;
- defined sets of guidelines, principles and/or values reflecting the cultural essence to which goals of this program are directed; and
- appropriate cultural contexts that affirm the performance of Indigenous serving institutions and programs.

### **Graduate Attributes**

A set of Graduate Attributes<sup>11</sup> were developed to provide a broad framework for the postgraduate programs and are intended to be interpreted and defined more precisely in the context of each academic program. The Graduate Attributes emphasize attributes which are more amenable to being taught and assessed, so that their gradual development can be measured and documented, and so that students can record them as part of a portfolio of achievement at graduation.

<sup>10</sup> WINHEC Accreditation Handbook Higher Education, Third Edition, 2010, WINHEC Accreditation Authority, World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium.

<sup>11</sup> Anning, B.; Arbon, V.; Robertson, B.; and Thomas, G. 2012, *Collaborative Thesis: Indigenous Futures: Sustaining Indigenous Leadership, Knowledge and Education through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

The list of Graduate Attributes included a set of thematic knowledge domains. These are considered essential for effective learning throughout the postgraduate programs and the continuing development within academic programs and the broader WINHEC and host site-institutions' experiences. The experiences will equip graduates to be culturally adaptable learners throughout their personal and professional lives.

The postgraduate programs and unit approval processes require curriculum documentation to show how this is done, both in mapping where particular attributes are reflected in program and unit design, and in relating how teaching and assessment processes make these explicit.

Similarly, the WINHEC academic program review and assessment processes will be informed by Graduate Attribute outcomes. The processes of gathering student feedback on their experience/s will invite students to consider how much their cultural capabilities and Indigenous knowledge for lifelong learning have been developed. The Graduate Attributes will ensure that on completion of the appropriate units in the programs the graduate will be expected to demonstrate knowledge, protocols and skills at advanced levels of understanding for application.

Learning outcomes and objectives were developed for each unit and in accordance with the goals and objectives of the programs. These will also be assessed and measured to graduate student outcomes in accordance with the WINHEC Cultural Standards and Graduate Attributes and/or each host site-institution's Graduate Attributes.

Cultural and academic supervision share equal weighting. This will require research students to have a cultural supervisor who may be an Elder as well as a discipline supervisor, and who are culturally competent, practicing cultural integrity in all areas of their lives.

Curriculum mapping is undertaken at the program and unit levels against the Postgraduate Programs' Goals, Objectives, Cultural Standards and Graduate Attributes. This mapping contributes most prominently to achieving the latter through explicit content development in the curricula and the teaching and assessment towards these.

### **Pedagogical Principles**

The postgraduate programs, including at the unit level are established with the concept of cultural integrity embedded in the programs': Principles, Goals and Objectives; Curricula – unit content, learning outcomes and assessment; Cultural Standards; Graduate Attributes; and Governance Policies. The delivery of the unit will take into account how the unit provides students with content and experiences from a strong Indigenous knowledge position and lens. Of central importance will be the development of communication skills, at the same time, recognising that Aboriginal people embody multi-literacies.



The use of technology within these units assumes Indigenous peoples have always been developers and users and discoverers of multiple technologies. In the modern world this also incorporates technology for teaching and learning.

Self-discovery and self-analysis is embedded in the beginning of each unit to allow students to centre themselves as Indigenous people from and within their own culture and knowledge. Texts and readings for student study will include substantial Indigenous references within each unit to ensure the privilege of Indigenous knowledge and ways of doing and learning is achieved.

### **Delivery Model**

The postgraduate programs will be delivered using specific models and modes of delivery. For example, face-to-face, mixed mode delivery of online and distance education; and Indigenous Australian community-based through block mode residential delivery. It will be important that any mode offered by host site-institutions will not disadvantage Indigenous students' participation.

Fundamental to teaching and learning within the programs are pedagogical techniques that produce a community of learners, capitalizing on a sense of shared wisdom. There is an emphasis on the role of learners and instructors/supervisors in critical reflection and dialogue, using appropriate learning and teaching systems and tools. Given the diverse locations of Indigenous communities across the world, teaching and learning approaches need to be specific and generic to encompass the diversity of locations.

An engagement and mentoring framework, inclusive of cultural affirmation, is planned to be incorporated into the teaching and learning framework of the programs to help inexperienced faculty/academics or students to develop a broader base of Indigenous knowledge expertise. Based on the collaborative development and implementation of the engagement and mentoring framework, syllabi and pedagogical techniques will facilitate learning and teaching methods, and will assist with the evaluation and assessment of students' work.

Teaching, assessment, supervision and research in the postgraduate programs will be underpinned by:

- (i) WINHEC's Cultural Standards;
- (ii) WINHEC's Graduate Attributes;
- (iii) WINHEC's Ethics and Research Standard and subsequent policies;
- (iv) The local Indigenous community protocols;
- (v) Host site-institution's research ethics standards and policies where relevant to achieving quality without denying Indigenous knowledge and ways of doing;
- (vi) National and international Indigenous research ethics standards; and

- (vii) Protocols of recruiting Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff to deliver the program and supervise research.

### **Proposed Enrolment and Offering of Units**

The proposed units and offering of units within each postgraduate program have been identified and developed by Anning, Arbon, Robertson and Thomas for WINHEC<sup>12</sup>. Students have a choice of enrolling in units and can tailor the context of their study to a special area of expertise/ professional discipline that can enable them to develop their own Indigenous knowledge. Individual units can also be used as a pre-degree study option if students do not initially meet the admissions criteria.

### **Program Overview Summary**

An integral element of the programs will be the development of group based learning, whereby collaborative academic study, research and analyses between students and supervisors will be encouraged. In this process students will be encouraged to explore their own worldviews and experiences.

The programs provide the students with the skills to orally and textually defend the spirit of their research, their cultural position as leaders and the place of Indigenous knowledges within higher education. The programs consist of a required number of credit points consistent with those required by host site-institutions for postgraduate programs. This will direct the specific application, progression and examination requirements of the program. The programs have a solid core of research design and methods, including Western and Indigenous Knowledges that will enrich the ability of graduates to conduct appropriate study of challenges and their potential solutions. WINHEC is committed to expanding knowledge of Indigenous education and leadership and empowering Indigenous people to reclaim control over the educational system that impact the world's Indigenous populations. This commitment permeates the curriculum and provides the opportunity for student growth for active roles in the world's Indigenous leadership and education arena at local, national and international levels. Finally, the programs are course work and research focused or solely research-focused with real world applied knowledge to better assist students to become strong Indigenous leaders in Indigenous education around the world.

It is not enough that Indigenous peoples only access Western institutions of education and engage in study that is established within Western knowledge. To build strong Indigenous leaders requires an education system that provides not only western knowledge, but incorporates Indigenous knowledge/s as well as ensures that Indigenous students' develop

---

<sup>12</sup> Anning, B.; Arbon, V.; Robertson, B.; and Thomas, G. 2012, *Collaborative Thesis: Indigenous Futures: Sustaining Indigenous Leadership, Knowledge and Education through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

strong characters with cultural integrity that includes values of: respect; responsibility and reciprocity.

### **Program Quality, Assessment and Improvement**

The quality of the postgraduate programs is assured through the implementation of WINHEC policies in conjunction with the WINHEC frameworks for teaching, learning and research, and the capacity of host site-institutions to facilitate these policies within their own governance models.

As with any postgraduate program, the programs will be periodically reviewed, internally and externally. WINHEC has accrediting criteria similar to that of any other higher education accrediting agency. Evaluation and continuous improvement across all of the courses will include:

- Evaluation of aggregate student characteristics on admission to the program;
- Unit evaluations at the end of each semester in the program;
- Exit interviews with all graduates;
- Data on program students including access and retention rates and their overall performance in the programs;
- Established checkpoints for progression of students and final research document and assessment; and
- Follow-up of graduates after one and three years, as well as follow-up with employers and supervisors of the postgraduate programs' graduates; and attending and participating in annual Indigenous programs' moderation sessions involving all countries offering the postgraduate programs.

### **Research Frameworks and Development**

WINHEC, through the WINHEC Research and Journal Working Group, established, developed and published the *WINHEC Research Standards* First Edition (2010)<sup>13</sup>. The document is a compilation of information relevant to research by Indigenous peoples, programs, including the Postgraduate Programs and Indigenous-serving tertiary institutions. It sets out a number of research standards and indicators as a guide to fulfill the requirements of Indigenous peoples' research and their knowledge communities. They include the following:

#### ***Indigenous Research***

- (a) *respects local Indigenous authority particularly that of Elders and respected knowledgeable others;*

---

<sup>13</sup> WINHEC Research Standards First Edition (2010)

- (b) *recognises knowledge as part of a living and constantly adapting system that is grounded in the past, but continues to grow through the present and into the future and reinforces this in research approach;*
- (c) *uses the local language respectfully as a foundation for interpretation and meaning;*
- (d) *understands relationships across knowledge derived from diverse knowledge systems;*
- (e) *acknowledges multi-ownership and levels of knowledge; and*
- (f) *addresses community and individual responsibility/ownership of knowledge.*

### **Individual Researchers**

- (a) *work with local Indigenous Elders and Respected knowledge holders;*
- (b) *ensure prior and informed consent;*
- (c) *recognise their responsibilities and the ongoing influences of Western knowledge;*
- (d) *build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve success;*
- (e) *engage responsibly and effectively in research activities that are grown from,/based on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing;*
- (f) *demonstrate appreciation of the relationships, connections and processes of interaction of all elements in and of the world;*
- (g) *situate one's self and define ones purpose for undertaking research competently; and*
- (h) *develop a critical self awareness.*

### **Research Process and Practice (Enacting Research)**

- (a) *addresses requirements outlined in this document and locally;*
- (b) *incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and practicing in its work linking what is being researched to everyday lives;*
- (c) *works closely with individuals and communities to achieve a high level of complementary research outcomes and expectations;*
- (d) *honours Indigenous Elders and respected knowledge holders scholarship and authority;*
- (e) *recognises the potential of individuals and communities and provides the training as necessary for them to participate powerfully in research; and*
- (f) *accepts responsibility to protect sacred sites, secret and sacred knowledge and other artefacts.*

### **Organisational Practice (Facilitating Research)**

- (a) *has high level of involvement of Indigenous staff and Elders and respected knowledge holders in lead organizations;*
- (b) *fosters on-going participation, communication and interaction between researchers, programs and community researchers and personnel;*

- (c) *recognizes and assures ownership of intellectual knowledge – ownership of data needs to sit with the Indigenous community;*
- (d) *provides remuneration for time and other costs and, dispersal of publication profits to community; and*
- (e) *ensures sacred sites, secret and sacred knowledge and other artefacts are protected.*

**Community Practice (Linking Research)**

- (a) *recognises local Indigenous Elders and Respected knowledge holders;*
- (b) *honours the primacy and validity of Indigenous knowledge as it is defined and articulated locally;*
- (c) *takes an active authoritative role in research while nurturing family responsibility, sense of belonging and cultural identity;*
- (d) *assists new members in learning and utilizing knowledge and information generated through research;*
- (e) *contributes to all aspects of research design, implementation and outcomes for local advantage; and*
- (f) *ensures sacred sites, secret and sacred knowledge and other artefacts are protected.<sup>14</sup>*

The paper titled, *WINHEC Indigenous Research, Principles, Protocols, Ethical Domains and Guideline<sup>15</sup>*, has been written to affirm the WINHEC Research Standards. The Guideline underpins and contributes to Indigenous knowledge continuity through respectfully working with Indigenous knowledges, guiding the Indigenous researcher/s through awareness of the research principles, protocols and ethical domains. The paper positions Indigenous Knowledge as a parallel system to Western Knowledge.

Additional related documents and policies for research that have been developed<sup>16</sup> for the postgraduate programs and for WINHEC in order to provide a framework for research and research development include:

- *Research Standards;*
- *WINHEC Research Integrity Policy;*
- *Student Supervision Policy;*
- *Property Policy;*
- *WINHEC Research and Research Ethics Protocols and Guidelines (addresses Intellectual Property and Copyright);*
- *Candidature for Higher Degrees by Research Policy;*
- *Postgraduate Student Support Policy; and*

<sup>14</sup> WINHEC Research Standards First Edition, pp. 5-7, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Anning, B.; Arbon, V.; Robertson, B.; and Thomas, G. 2012, *Collaborative Thesis: Indigenous Futures: Sustaining Indigenous Leadership, Knowledge and Education through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

- *Examinations and Dissertations Policy.*

## **Standards and Policies Framework for Academic Curricula and Research**

The postgraduate programs will provide instructional and design structure that empower the Indigenous learner as they allow for Indigenous ownership of their learning and ensure educational sovereignty for Indigenous peoples in their communities or at the institutional level. Rather than wait for the western institutions to evolve to meet Indigenous peoples' educational needs and their right to document their Traditional Indigenous knowledges, WINHEC understood the importance of developing the programs' curricula framework. This was needed to achieve educational sovereignty that allows Indigenous students and research candidates; communities; Elders; Indigenous academics and staff to: incorporate their Indigenous ways of understanding; self-determine and self-manage educational outcomes; value knowledge; respect each group's traditional culture and languages; and, provide ways to transfer these.

The postgraduate programs have been established under an academic and research 'Standards and Policies' Framework. They are developed within the context of WINHEC's foundation documents, including the standards for cultural affirmation and accreditation<sup>17</sup> and those for ethical research practice<sup>18</sup>. The development and delivery of curricula and conferral of awards requires activities, actions and decision-making that is supported in policies and governance. The policies, which relate to the academic governance of the development and delivery of the postgraduate programs, cover a range of educational matters including:

- Academic and Research Governance;
- Cultural Accreditation and Affirmation Standards;
- Postgraduate Curricula Development;
- Research Guidelines and Research Standards;
- Candidature for Higher Degrees by Research;
- Student Supervision;
- Student Policies;
- Examinations and Dissertations;
- Academic Rules;
- Assessment; and
- WINHEC Cultural Standards.

---

<sup>17</sup> *WINHEC Accreditation Handbook* Higher Education, Third Edition, 2010, WINHEC Accreditation Authority, World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium. The document includes the WINHEC Cultural Standards which is appended as Appendix 2.

<sup>18</sup> *WINHEC Research Standards* First Edition, 2010. WINHEC Research and Journal Working Group, World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium.

## Conclusion

The postgraduate programs are developed to address the issues experienced by Indigenous peoples when they enter the mainstream university programs. Indigenous culture and specific Indigenous programs are not embraced in the mainstream. Indigenous peoples are expected to assimilate and embrace the western cultures and become immersed in the non-Indigenous knowledges and their disciplines. The postgraduate programs of Indigenous leadership and education will ensure students will draw on their own knowledge base as they are designed to empower the Indigenous learner; allow for Indigenous ownership of their learning and doing; and allow for Indigenous educational sovereignty to be a reality from 2013.

The postgraduate programs of Indigenous leadership and education ensure graduates are leaders and well grounded in the Indigenous and professional knowledge of leadership. The WINHEC Cultural Standards have been used to encapsulate the postgraduate programs of Indigenous leadership and education to ensure the protection of the cultural integrity of Indigenous Peoples' globally.

The steps taken by Anning, Arbon, Robertson and Thomas<sup>19</sup> to develop a suite of academic programs for WINHEC will prove to be an invaluable and innovative approach to addressing the systemic anomalies that have impeded the progression of Indigenous peoples in higher education at both the national and international level. The postgraduate programs build upon a series of strategic initiatives that have been sequentially developed since WINHEC created a Global Higher Education Model that affords Indigenous people the opportunity to engage in a sector that will address both their academic and cultural aspirations and needs. The model created for WINHEC by Anning, Arbon, Robertson and Thomas<sup>20</sup> is designed to assist Indigenous people to maintain and sustain their traditions and knowledges, to build a rigorous cohort of future Indigenous leaders that are culturally and professionally astute, and capable of accomplishing the goals of the United Nations Declaration and the Rights of Indigenous peoples

Thus, the future of Indigenous peoples can be maintained and sustained in the traditions and knowledges of the past. Sustaining Indigenous leaders, in order to maintain Indigenous knowledges, is the right of Indigenous peoples to provide their own educational models that allow for their ways of learning and of doing, reinforcing and promoting the right of Indigenous peoples to protect their traditional ways of learning, languages, knowledge systems and world views.

---

<sup>19</sup> Anning, B.; Arbon, V.; Robertson, B.; and Thomas, G. 2012, *Collaborative Thesis: Indigenous Futures: Sustaining Indigenous Leadership, Knowledge and Education through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

Note: This article has been published in the *Journal of Indigenous Studies* (TJIS) and *World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) Conference proceedings document and DVD*.



# **Elderly-Youth Indigenous Deeds Channeling Scheme of the Oromo and for Healthy Youth Development**

**Zelalem Namera Bultum and Tamene Kenei Walga**

## ***Abstract***

*This article presents the “gada age grades” as an Indigenous theory of lifespan development in which Indigenous socio-cultural, economic, spiritual and political deeds of the Oromo, the largest single ethno-nation in east Africa, are channeled from elders (seniors) to child and/or youth (juniors) for leading smooth secular and spiritual life and maintain the endurance of their Indigenous deeds. Gada system, in which ‘gada age grade’ is one of its components is a complex Indigenous institution that guides the Oromo in every aspect of life. According to gada age grades, all male members ought to pass through eleven age grades structured from birth to death and every member is expected to accomplish lifespan developmental role (s) associated to each age grade. It provides a clear structural reference that enables the Oromo to develop a consistent and stable sense of self and others. This article discusses the way in which gada age grades enable Oromo youth to learn their Indigenous deeds from elders and apply them in leading secular and spiritual life and in due course maintain the continuity of their Indigenous deeds. Having discussed ‘gada age grades’ in relation to modern western theories of lifespan development, particularly, Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, the article draws implications and lessons that might be helpful for healthy child and youth development. It is deduced that a lot can be learned from the gada age grades for youth healthy development. It sets a clear elderly-youth knowledge channeling scheme with a comparable status to modern lifespan development theories in terms of its stage-orientation and theorization. It yields rich preventive, intervention, instructional, positive parenting and healthy child and/or youth development. Analysis of the result stipulated that the relationships and interactions across generations in gada age grades are transactional, democratic and mutual. The young cohort is obliged to respect the older generation and at the same time have the right to learn from, be mentored and cared for by the older generation, and able to peacefully and successfully succeed to their roles and responsibilities. The smooth and mutual relationships and interactions among successive generations in gada age grades might lessen the present tensions among generations which might be an obstacle to healthy child and/or youth development in the world of today.*

**Key Words: Gada age grades, elderly-youth deeds-channeling, life span development**

## Introduction

Gada system, an Indigenous institution of the Oromo (the largest single ethno-nation in east Africa) has three interconnected meanings that include the grade during which a class of people assumes socio-cultural, economic and politico-ritual leadership; a period of eight years during which elected administrators take power from the previous ones, and the institution of Oromo society (Legesse, 1973 & Hassen, 1994). It is viable spiritual, economic and sociopolitical systems of government where leaders are elected to assume authority that succeed each other every eight years through the will and active participation of the people they represent (Hassen, 1990; Baissa, 1994; Jalata, 1996 & Lewis, 1994). Gada holds a central place in the thinking of the Oromo, both because it represents the essence of Oromo-ness, a distinctive set of institutions uniquely theirs, and because it stands as a statement of the values they want to stress “egalitarianism and democracy” (Lewis, 1994). It is a system with several sub-systems that enable it to accommodate all domains of the Oromo people’s lives.

The gada system shares several features and principles of modern democracy (Jalata, 1996 & Hassen, 1994). At first place, it allows the Oromo people to formulate, change or amend laws and rules every eight years. The rule of law is the key element of the *gada* system. It accepts the people as the ultimate source of authority and believes that nobody is above the rule of law. The other important aspect that makes gada resembles to the modern democracy is that officials are elected by the people from one of the gada grade named Qoondalas. It is the fourth gada grade in which members are elected for leadership and preparation for holding offices start through rigorous training in *gada* philosophy and governance (Legese 1973 & Baxter, 1978). The *gada system* has also the principles of checks and balances of power among its officials as well as periodic transfer of power every eight years and balanced positions among the five *gada* cycles, and power sharing between higher and lower administrative organs to prevent power from falling into the hands of despots. Elected authorities are not only expected to abide by the laws and rules of the land but are also accountable for every decision they make during their term. Other principles of the gada system have included balanced representation of all clans, lineages and confederacies, accountability of leaders, the settlement of disputes through reconciliation, and the respect for basic human rights and liberties.

The other unique feature of the gada system is that it recognizes the three government organs of modern democracy that include executive, legislative, and judiciary. The structural complexities of the gada system have been officiated by the assembly of democratically elected officials known as *Salgan ya’ii Borana* (the nine Borana assemblies) that include *Abbaa Bokku* (carrier of the scepter holding a position similar to that of the president), two vices of *Abba Bokku*, *Abbaa Chaffee* (the chairman of assembly or father of legislative assembly), *Abbaa dubbii* (the speaker), *Abbaa seera* (the memorizer of laws or a

parliamentarian), *Abbaa Alangaa* (the judge or attorney *general*), *Abbaa duula* (the army commander or war leader), and *Abbaa sa'aa* /the economy/finance chief officer (Legesse, 1973).

As the gada system is an exclusively male institution, Oromo women had the *sinqe* institution or sisterhood, a parallel institution to the *gada* system that functions hand in hand with gada system as one of its built-in mechanisms of checks and balances (Kuwe, 1997). If the harmony between men and women was broken, a *sinqee* rebellion was initiated to restore the law of the land, the moral and ethical order of the society. The exclusion of female from gada system is with convincing argument that is related to women's fertility and reproductive duties. At the fourth and fifth gada grades, members are expected to take part in defensive or expansionist wars that may involve blood shading. Hence, the Oromo believes that women are "life givers and savers, and not life takers" and thus, they have to not kill or pass lives.

In spite of its merits aforementioned, currently, the gada system is not functional in most parts of Oromia due to the alien attacks against it though some of its aspects are still active and functional in some zones of Oromia, especially among the Borana where the *Gumii Gaayyo* (the assembly of multitudes) brings together gada leaders to make, amend or change laws and rules of the land every eight years (Legesse, 1973). All scholars and researchers who have worked on the gada system unanimously recommend it as a viable source of Indigenous knowledge to handle ill issues related to democracy and democratization, youth healthy development, conflict, parenting and intra and intergenerational relationships.

This article aims at exposition of gada age grades classification as an Indigenous theory of lifespan development in which youth learn their Indigenous deeds, knowledge and skills from elders and apply them in secular and spiritual life and; maintain their culture, tradition, Indigenous knowledge and systems. It then, tries to draw implications and lessons from the Indigenous system for positive child and youth development.

### **An Overview of Gada Age Grades**

There are eleven gada age grades, to which a person belongs to, on the basis of age and all Oromo males are compulsorily recruited to the age-sets starting from birth. Males born in the same eight-year period belong to the same age-set even if; some may join an advanced grade at birth (Legesse, 1973). The age structure provides clear structural reference so that the members develop a consistent and stable sense of self and others and thus, identity confusion is unthinkable among the Oromo as any age set strictly provides values and ethos that guide all. At all the age grades, there is knowledge channeling from the seniors (elders) to the juniors (youth). Each grade may have different names in different parts of Oromia; nonetheless, the essence and meaning of it remains the same across the locales. In this

article, gada age grade nomenclature of the Borana who maintained the gada system to date has been used.

### **Grade 1: Daballe (Birth to 8)**

*Daballe* age grade comprises all sons whose fathers are in the sixth age grade called *gada* grade (45 to 52 years old). It is a grade in which all members share a common identity by virtue of the fact that they are all the sons of the *gada* class who are in power as leaders. The *daballe* is characterized by striking hairstyle, known as *guduruu*. They are not only wearing like girls and grow their hair like girls but also they are considered as girls (*intala*). *Deballe* is defined as a play age and the age at which proper care is accorded to the children. They are not allowed to go far from home for close supervision. There are no major roles and responsibility imposed on them and it is strictly prohibited by custom to punish them physically.

### **Grade 2: Gamme Didiqoo/Junior Gamme (9 to16)**

It constitutes male children whose fathers assumed the position of gada officials for 8 years and in the first stage of retirement (grade 7). Transition to the stage of junior *gamme* is performed at sanctuary with a big ceremony in which naming of the members takes place. The naming ceremony of the oldest son is called *Gubbisa*, while the naming ceremony of the other sons is called *Moggassa*. The *gamme* hairstyle is also shaved during this occasion in the middle, and the rest is left to grow longer, and treated with butter be wavy. The members are no more viewed as “girls” but recognized ‘boys’. Members are also expected to act independently and take responsibilities that match their age under close parental supervision.

### **Grade 3: Gamme Gugurdoo/ Senior Gamme (17 to 24)**

At this grade, the shaven (*gamme*) part of the hair during junior *gamme* is cut into smaller style. The oldest boys (usually those from 20 to 24) in the age grade are permitted to go on war parties that target territorial defense and cattle raids called *fora* backed by older gada classes. It is the time when young men take the family herds into the untamed river valleys. The age grade is characterized by different ceremonies. At the beginning of the grade, the small clusters of age-mates begin to celebrate the ceremonies of *harriyya*, group of people born in the same eight-year period. Many of the *fora* youths return to their bands before the ceremonies start. The whole process is repeated annually over a period of five years and during the last three years, the *gamme* themselves go through a ceremony that closely resembles the *hariyya cuch*. The ceremony is called *wal’argi* (to see each other) in the first year and *nachisa* (feast) in the last two years. It ends with celebrations known as *china* that takes place at a number of prescribed sites.

The effect of these ceremonies is to make the members of the senior acutely aware of the society and their deeds.

**Grade 4: *Kusa/ junior warriors (25 to 32)***

This age grade begins with a big ceremony that marks transition to *Kusa* at which fathers shave the hair of their sons and on the fourteenth day of the ceremony, the *Kusa* (members of the grade) emerge wearing adult ceremonial customs and carrying whip to which they had attached a small scepter (*bokku*). The *Kusa*, who usually cannot marry for different reasons are allowed to keep mistresses from married women. It is appropriate however for *kusa* to search for wives, which they may marry when they enter next grade, *Raba*. *Kusa* thus, marks the transition from adolescent to adulthood. Candidates for gada officials are elected as senior councilors (*adula*) from this grade and for the next eight years they will be offered with rigorous training on leadership. The election is based on different criteria that include knowledge of tradition (history and laws), skill in arbitration, and popularity, hospitality, patience, within approved institutions, balance of generosity and skilful management, and military skill.

**Grade 5: *Raba/ Senior Warriors (33 to 44)***

The *raba* is an age grade at which the members move to a big camp with defensive responsibility. Those members who are of the appropriate age (32 years) are allowed to marry, however, throughout the first eight years they are not allowed to give birth and raise children until the fortieth year. Unlike all other grades that last for eight years, the *raba* grade lasts for thirteen years.

**Grade 6: *Gada/ the Stage of Political and Economic Leadership (45 to 52)***

This is the grade at which elected officials hold the actual leadership power for the next 8 years. The power take-over (*balli*) occurs in the forty-fifth year during this grade. At this grade, circumcision of members also takes place.

**Grade 7-10: *Yuba/ Partial retirement (53 to 80)***

Yuba stage covers twenty-seven years from 53 to 80. It encompasses four sub grades that include Grade 7-Yuba1 (3years), Grade 8-Yuba 2 (8 years), Grade 9-Yuba 3 (8years), and Grade 10-Yuba 4 (8years). Youba are retired and they retain advisory authority, oversee political and military activities of the *luba*, the grade in power.

**Grade 11: *Gada-Mojji /The terminal sacred grade (80+)***

Members of the grade are the fathers of those in *luba* grade the grade in power. They preclude themselves from material and/or secular life and become ritual leaders. They

should not carry arms and kill any living creatures. People seek their blessing and wherever they go they are highly respected.

**Discussion: Gada Age Grades - an Indigenous Theory of Lifespan Development vs Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development**

Now, let us pick each *gada age* grade one after the other and compare with Ericson’s theory of human life development and see what lessons can be learned from it in facilitating elders-youth knowledge channeling so as to help youth acquainted with their Indigenous culture, tradition and knowledge; and apply them in their secular and spiritual life, and maintain the sustainability of their Indigenous society and deeds. .

In convergence with Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, ‘Gada Age Grades’ views development as decades-journey that occurs in identifiable patterns of universal socio-culturally constructed stages. Put simply, in both cases, development is viewed as a life-course process which occurs in universal stages. According to Erikson’ s view of development (see table1), an individual passes through eight maturational-based but socially influenced stages of psychosocial development beginning from birth through death and an individual is expected to accomplish a series of psychosocial developmental tasks in each eras of the life cycle. Similarly, in the *gada age grades* an individual ought to passes through eleven socio-culturally constructed age grades across the lifespan and the individual is expected to accomplish developmental role (s) associated to each gada grade. But, the two diverge slightly in terms of the number of stages an individual is required to go through i.e. eleven in *gada age grades* and eight in Ericson’s psychosocial development theory.

Table 1: Summary of Gada Age Grades

Stage	Age grade	Typical feature
<b>Daballe</b>	0-8	Play age
<b>Gamme Didiqo</b>	9-16	Right to name
<b>Gamme Gugurdo</b>	17-24	Adolescent and role socialization
<b>Kusa</b>	25-32	Adolescent-adulthood transition
<b>Raba</b>	33-44	Early adulthood
<b>Gada</b>	45-52	Middle adulthood
<b>Yuba 1-4</b>	53 -80	Partial retirement
<b>Gada Mojji</b>	80+	terminal sacred

*Source: Summarized from literature by the authors*

As can be seen from table 1, gada age grade classification begins with *dabballe* which spans the time from birth to age eight. Individuals in this age bracket are entitled to special rights and privileges. Members share a common identity by the virtue of the fact that they are the sons of the gada class, the generation in power. The *dabballe* are identified by their hairstyle that signals members deserve special care and protection from the larger public. For example, among the Borana where the gada system currently is active, a child is seen as the Borana's child or minor, not somebody else's child, and every adult member is equally responsible to care for a minor Borana. The *dabballe* wear like baby girls and they are regarded as girls. This is to communicate that they are "delicate and weak physically, and immature mentally" implying that they need care and protection. This practice however, seems to elevate masculine ideal that considers women as care seekers. Punishing the *dabballe* corporally is strictly forbidden by custom and their *guduru* along with their girl-like wearing style shield them from corporal punishment and mistreatment in and outside home. Thus, child maltreatment is unthinkable in Oromo culture where the gada system is active. The *dabballe's* task is to learn some important norms and values of the society and other important skills such as counting via closely supervised play and child tales in the neighborhood. Data from Borana show that *dabballe* is considered as a ground-work for all later age grades and that is why a special care is accorded to them. Erikson's first three stages of psychosocial development correspond to the *dabballe* age grade. The two have several features in common. For example, Erikson emphasizes the importance of the quality of cares, supports, and guidance rendered to children in the first three stages of psychosocial development in laying foundation for later stages. The same holds true for *dabballe* in the gada age grades. Erikson advises parents to be sensitive, responsive and consistent in caring for and socializing children in the first three stages of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1968; Feldman, 2009). He also advises to avoid mistreatments, discouragement and other disciplinary practices that may interfere with children's present and future healthy development. Similar instructions and advices are found in the gada age grades either explicitly or implicitly.

As seen earlier, the second gada age grade, *Gaammee Didiqqoo* spans from 8 to 16 years of age. An individual child's passage from *dabballee* to *Gaammee Didiqqoo* at the end of eighth year is marked by the rite of passage held commonly for all *dabballees* in a given village; all *dabballees* in a particular village are promoted from *dabballee* status to *Gaammee Didiqqoo* status officially and now they are no more treated as *dabballee* but as *gaammee-didiqqoo*. Two important events that take place at the festivity of the rite of passage are naming and hair shaving. Each member of the *dabballee* is now given a personal name through *Gubbisa* (for the first son) and *moggaasaa* (for all sons other than the first son). Each member of the *dabballee* grade undergoes hair-shaving; their *guduru* is shaved partially from all sides of head and some hairs are left unshaved on the top. This hairstyle is not without purpose. It is to signal and communicate to the larger public that the

individual is not a *dabballee* but a junior *gaammee*. But they are not entirely dependent but partially independent. They are neither *dabballee* (dependent children) nor senior *gaammee*. They should be treated neither as dependent children nor as fully independent adults. They are also no more considered as girls as in the previous stage, but attained the status of maleness to communicate that the child is now partially strong and mature both physically and mentally but still deserves some support. This particular point reflects the way masculinity and femininity develop in the society. Compared with Ericson's theory, the grade, *gammee-didiqqoo*, corresponds to some parts of Erikson's fourth and fifth stages of psychosocial development i.e. it covers some parts of childhood (9-12) and of adolescence (12-16) and the assertion that the individual is not independent enough is acceptable from developmental point of view. This age grade can be taken as a preparatory time for adolescent role socialization. It is the stage at which the junior *gaammes* prepare themselves for the next stage under the mentorship of the senior *gaammees*. The scope of socializing agents widens and includes older adolescents who are ahead of them by one age grade in addition to immediate family members and neighborhoods since the junior *gaammes* are allowed to go far away from home still under close supervision. They are now able to assume some age-appropriate roles and responsibilities, for example; herding calves, sheep, goats, and cows. All these points are apparent in Erikson's fourth and fifth stages of psychosocial development.

The third gada age grade, *Gaammee Gurguddoo*, an extension of the second grade, *gaammee didiqqoo* extends from 17 to 24 years of age. Junior *gaammes* are promoted to the *gaammee gurguddoo* (senior *gaammes*) after undergoing extensive preparations under the mentorship of the senior *gaammes*. Promotion from junior *gaammee* to senior *gaammee* is marked by a hair-shaving as a rite of passage. At this grade, the shaven part of the hair of the junior *gamme* is cut into smaller style than in the previous grade to communicate that the individuals in this stage are more independent, strong, and mature than those in previous stage. This age grade also corresponds to some parts of Erikson's fifth and sixth stages of psychosocial development. All members who belong to the grade need to make intensive and extensive preparations through a series of assemblies and ritual festivities that take place throughout the first five years of the grade. This is because they are nearly to enter a grade in which they assume some extended roles and responsibilities. The senior *gaammes* make the necessary preparations and apprenticeships under minimal supervision and around the end of the age grade they are allowed to go far away from home with their herds. Overall, they are required to possess as much as possible knowledge and skills that enable them to accomplish the roles and responsibilities ahead of them in the *Kusa* grade.

The fourth age grade, *Kusa* extends from 25 to 32 years of age. Transition to the grade is marked by hair-shaving ceremony in which a father shaves the hair of his sons in the grade and they are kept in isolation in a camp or at home for fourteen days. On the fourteenth



day, they come out of the isolation camp wearing adult custom cloths and carrying *bokkuu* (symbol of heading leader) to announce that the *Kusaa* are independent, strong, and mature and are at the level in which they can contribute to the well-being of their society. However, the *Kusa* are not yet fully deemed as independent beings; they are junior warriors in that they are not allowed to marry even if they are allowed to keep mistresses. This may be perhaps because of the fact that a serious responsibility of the society is ahead of them. Here, it can be said that the system gives a prior attention to the public over the private. They are allowed to keep mistresses of already married or widowed women to permit them to acquire sexual behaviors and skills necessary for formal marriage ahead of them. *Kusa* is also the grade in which members are required to make intensive and extensive preparations for about eight years that enable them to fulfill the roles and responsibilities in the next grades. The *kusa* grade corresponds to young adulthood featured in Erikson's sixth stage of psychosocial development- 'Intimacy versus Isolation'. According to Erikson, the developmental task of this stage is to form positive close relationships with others. Erikson underscores the importance of fulfilling such developmental task for success in developmental stages ahead. Similarly, in the gada age grade classifications, success in the next grade is premised on the preparations and fulfillment of roles and responsibilities in the *kusa* grade. For example, to discharge military and defense roles and responsibilities required in the next stage as adequately as possible implying that success in prior grades is believed to be crucial.

The fifth gada grade, *Raba* extends from 33 to 41 years of age. The *raba*, individuals, who belong to the grade are senior warriors and thus, the *raba* grade is an extension of the *kusa* grade and yet it is a preparation grade for the next stage. The *raba* are now allowed to get married but they are not allowed to give birth to child. This is because, the *raba* grade is a grade during which individuals are mainly required for military and defensive roles and at the same time make all the necessary psychosocial preparations for fatherhood and leadership roles in the stage ahead. This grade also converges with sixth stage of Ericson's theory.

The sixth gada grade "gada age grade also called *luba*" spans from 45 to 52 years of age. Members of this grade are termed as *Lubaa* and it is a grade at which individuals are deemed as "full adults"; they are now a member of the gada generation in power and are expected to shoulder actual economic and socio-political roles and responsibilities. From developmental point of view, this grade corresponds to the middle adulthood during which individuals are assumed to reach climax in terms of cognitive and psychosocial development. This age grade overlaps with Erikson's seventh stages of psychosocial development- *Generativity versus stagnation*. Generativity is a means by which middle-aged adults achieve a sense of immortality by leaving legacies to the next generation. It is adults' desire to leave legacies to the next generation which can be expressed through childbearing (biological generativity), nurturing and guiding children (parenting Generativity), developing

and passing skills to others (work Generativity), and renovating and conserving some aspects of a culture (cultural Generativity). Contrary to generativity, stagnation develops when middle-aged adults are not satisfied with what they have done during their past life times; when they feel that they have done nothing for the next generation (Dacey & Travers, 1999; Erikson, 1968; Hoyer, et al., 1999).

In convergence with Erikson's theorization, generativity appears implicitly to be a crucial issue of middle adulthood in the *gada* lifecycle. In the *gada* system, every generation is responsible to care for, nurture, mentor, and guide the next generation-set. For example, the junior *gaammes* are responsible to care for and nurture the *dabballees* who are successors of them. But, the responsibility to care for and prepare the next generation-sets appears to peak during the *gada* age grade. Unlike Erikson's theorization, in the *gada* lifecycle generativity is not an issue unique to middle adulthood. But, rather it is an issue that an individual is required to deal with beginning earlier in the lifecycle probably in the second *gada* age grade. In fact, later theorists who expanded Erikson's theory hold the view that generativity is a psychosocial developmental issue that preoccupies adults at varying degrees at all ages. These theorists have further argued that generativity is a developmental issue of the entire adulthood years. But, it may be particularly intense during specific periods and may take different forms at different adult ages. According to the *gada* lifecycle, generativity is a developmental role of the entire lifecycle which emanates from societal and cultural demands and gets intense with age grade. The *gada* system keeps each generation set responsible to nurture the next generation on the basis of the age grade to which it belongs and generativity begins at the second age grade, peaks at the sixth age grade and then, begins to decline.

The seventh *gada* grade, *yuba* lifecycle extends from 53 through 80 years of age. Unlike the other *gada* age grades, *yuba* covers about 27 years and is further subdivided into three sub-stages: *yuba 1*, *yuba 2* and *yuba 3*. In the *gada* lifecycle, retirement is a gradual process. Once they enter the *yuba* cycle, individuals stop direct involvement in leadership and military but they remain a key player in advisory roles. Especially, during the first phase, *yuba1*, individuals are required to be actively involved in leadership and military issues as close advisors to the generation in power. As they move to the second phase, *yuba 2*, however, their advisory roles decline to arbitrations, mediations and conflict resolutions. After 80 years of age, individuals enter the final phase of *gada* lifecycle, *yuba 3*, known as *gadamojiii*, literary mean oldest old. Individuals at this cycle are totally retired from any secular roles but they do spiritual roles yet. They are considered as sacred symbols that possess extraordinary wisdom and spirit that enables them to bridge the Oromo with their *Waaqaa* (God). It is believed among the Oromo the *Gadamojiii* are righteous spiritual symbols whose role is to maintain peace between *Waaqaa* (God) and the Oromo. Therefore, the elderly are respected and all the young generations are expected to care them. As a

result, elderly abuse is minimal among the Oromo as a whole and it is unthinkable in locales where the *gada* system is still functional enough.

### **Conclusion and Implications for Healthy Youth Development**

Gada system is a blue-print with which the Oromo used to direct secular and spiritual life in which healthy development of youth is its central part. Childrearing and socialization into productive adults, is one aspect of lifespan development. Socialization of children is not a task and responsibility that is left to parents and families; rather it is a difficult task that demands the concerted efforts of the entire society to which the child belongs. Gada system was cognizant of the notion that socialization of children for adult roles is a society's responsibility long before the emergence of the concept childhood in Western literature. According to Feldman (2009), the concept childhood came into existence in Europe as late as the seventeenth century. But, the concept of childhood was built in the gada system very earlier and historians claim that gada system was in existence long before the first century AD. Childhood and the uniqueness of the period compared to adulthood were recognized among the Oromo so long before its recognition in Western theories of lifespan development. Built in the gada system are socio-culturally constructed gada age grades, eleven in number, also termed as gada lifecycle, through which male members are expected to pass in all the grades from birth to death. These socially constructed age grades serve several functions.

First, it was believed among the Oromo that a member who is not able to go through the *gada* age grades is not and cannot be able to be a productive and responsible warrior, leader, advisor, and contributing citizen. The *gada* age grades are the path through which an individual should pass in order to become a competent member of the Oromo. Passing through these sets of grades allows an individual to learn behaviors, skills, values, virtues and other personal and interpersonal qualities that the Oromo value; maintaining one's place in the Oromo ladder is closely tied to successful transitions and promotions on part of the individual.

Second, they are socio-culturally constructed stages by which age-appropriate tasks, roles and responsibilities are assigned to an individual or a group of individuals. By doing so, the *gada* age grades protect an individuals from engaging in tasks, roles, and responsibilities that are beyond their developmental level and entitle them to rights, privileges, cares and protections they deserve due to their age or grade. For example, in the *gada* lifecycle children under 8 years are not allowed to participate in field works or even domestic works; they are entitled to play around residence under special care and supervision. The society imposes sanctions on those who violate this custom. Any type of abuse and neglect, including corporal punishment, against the *the child* is considered not only as a crime against the victim child but also a crime against the Oromo and the "*Waaqaa*" (God). In the languages of developmental psychologists such as the authors of this manuscript, in the

*gada* lifecycle, roles and responsibilities are developmentally-appropriate. Child maltreatment, such as child abuse, child trafficking and child labor, is a high profile social and human rights problem in poor countries such as Ethiopia. In spite of few preventive and intervention endeavors, the problem remained high to date. These preventive and intervention programs put in place appear to be derived from non-Indigenous approaches but were not found to live up to their name and therefore, incorporating such best practices extracted from the *gada* lifecycle might be a panacea for such kind of high profile social and human rights problem.

Third, it dictates and obliges parents, leaders and the entire society to render the care, privileges, apprenticeships and protection that children deserve due to their age grade. The *gada* lifecycle regards the task of nurturing and guiding the successive next generations as a collective responsibility. This in turn might lessen the childrearing burden of parents. In many ways, the *gada* age grade, which is an element of the entire *gada* system, is comparable to modern stage theories of child/lifespan development in terms of its stage-orientation, theorization and thus, it can yield rich preventive, intervention, instructional, positive parenting and child/youth development.

Fourth, in the *gada* lifecycle the relationships and interactions among all generations are transactional, democratic and mutual. The young generations are obliged to respect the older generations and at the same time have the right to learn from, mentored and cared for by the older generations. These smooth mutual relationships and interactions among successive generations in the society might lessen the tensions among generations which might be an obstacle to positive youth development across the modern globe.

Fifth, in the *gada* lifecycle special respect is accorded to the elderly whose ages are eighty or so and a responsibility to care for such sect of the population is collective. Therefore, it can be adopted into elderly welfare system and can be used to reduce elderly abuse which is becoming a world-wide problem of our planet. The *gada* system encourages “*guddifachuu*” means adoption and “*Oroomsuu*” making an Oromo. The *gada* system as institution keeps all Oromo families responsible to adopting orphaned and abandoned children of Oromo origin or outsider. When orphaned or abandoned child of outsider origin is adopted the process ends in *Oroomsuu* which means making him/her an Oromo. This is done with purpose to avoid discrimination that the child adopted from outsider society is likely to face. Once made an Oromo the child adopted from outsider society is no more considered as Non-Oromo and therefore, any discrimination against him/ her is considered as crime against the Oromo and *Waqaa*/God. This can be incorporated to child policy to overcome the problem our world is currently facing specially-child trafficking and deprivation of rights. Though, it is difficult to know the exact number of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Ethiopia, the country stands first in terms of the number of OVC it contributes to the world (Haile, 2008; Selman, 2009). 13 percent of children (4.6

million) in Ethiopia have lost one or both of their parents for various reasons (Haile, 2008; Selman, 2009). Ethiopia also stands first in sending children to the U.S.A. for inter-country adoptions from Africa. This problem can be addressed by encouraging in-country adoptions and a lot can be learned from the gada system.

## References

- Barissa, L. (1994). Gada Values: The Building Blocks of Democratic Oromo Polity. *The Journal of Oromo Studies*. Vol.1, No.1 Winter 1994
- Baxter, P.T.W. 1978. Age, Generation, and Time: Some Features of East African Age Organization. St. Martin's Press, New York.
- Dacey, J.S., & Travers, J. F. (1999). Human development across lifespan (4<sup>th</sup> eds.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Dahl, G. 1996. "Sources of life and identity". In PTW Baxter, J Hultin, A Triulzi (eds.). *Being and becoming Oromo*. Asmara: The Red Sea Press, Inv.
- Erikson, E.H. (1968). Identity, youth, and crisis. New York: Norton.
- Feldman, R. S. (2009). Development Across the Life Span. 5<sup>th</sup> eds., New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Haile, Z. (2008). Review of the legal and policy frameworks protecting the rights of vulnerable children in the EFDR. Addis Ababa: Save the Children UK.
- Hoyer, W. J., Rybash, J. M. , & Roodin, J. F. (1999). Adult development and aging. 4<sup>th</sup> eds., Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Hassen, M. 1990. The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History, 1570-1860. The Red Sea Press, Trenton.
- Hassen M. (1994). Some Aspects of Oromo History that Have Been Misunderstood. *The Journal of Oromo Studies*. Vol.1, No.1.
- Jalata, A. 1996. The struggle for knowledge: The case of emergent Oromo studies. *African Studies Review*, 39 (2): 95-123
- Kuwee Kumsa. 1997. "The Siiqqee institution of Oromo women". *The Journal of Oromo studies*, 4:115-52.
- Legesse. 1973. Gada: Three approaches to the study of African society. London.
- Lewis Herbert S. (1994). Aspects of Oromo Political Culture. *The Journal of Oromo Studies*. Vol.1, No.1.
- Selman, P.S. (2009). Adoptions from Ethiopia 1998 – 2008: Countries ranked by number of children received in peak year 2008. *International Social Work*, 2009.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our informants whose information has a crucial place in the success of this study.

## **Sustaining Generations of Indigenous Voices: Reclaiming Language and Integrating Multimedia Technology**

*Candace Kaleimamoowahinekapu Galla*

Today, there are approximately 7,000 languages spoken throughout the world, each varying in size from hundreds of millions of speakers to languages with all but a few speakers remaining. Nearly 97% of the world's people speak 4% of the world's languages, which includes English, Mandarin, Hindi, Spanish, Arabic, and German, among others. Conversely, approximately 96% of the world's languages are spoken by 3% of the world's people (Bernard, 1996, p. 142). It is estimated by 2100, more than half of the languages currently spoken will disappear. Some of these languages have not yet been documented, and if these languages cease to exist, a "wealth of knowledge about history, culture, the natural environment, and the human brain" (National Geographic Society, 2009) will be lost.

For many Indigenous language communities and language learners, a general topic of concern in today's society is how technology can contribute to language revitalization. This subject provokes discussions resulting in a dynamic that at times may be very challenging. At one end of the spectrum, it is common to see younger generations using technologies of all sorts, and communicating in ways that were unavailable to the world ten or more years ago; this includes texting, blogging, chatting, tweeting, and so forth. However, at the opposite end of the spectrum, it is common to presume little or no use of the latest technologies by elders.

Generally, when thinking of Indigenous language revitalization and education, the utilization of technologies is frequently viewed as the following: an unnecessary distraction, a favorable and positive tool that engages language learners, especially youth, or a combination of both. The role of technology in language revitalization includes preservation of the Indigenous language; material development and dissemination; multiple modes of communication; and achieving relevance, significance and purpose (Galla, 2009). For technology to have a role in an Indigenous community there needs to be a collective understanding of its purpose and use.

Since little has been written about the integration of multimedia and Indigenous language revitalization (see Lockee, 1996; Obonyo, 2009; Slimane, 2008), this paper reveals the role technology plays in bringing together elders who are the language and knowledge holders and youth who are technologically savvy users to perpetuate their respective languages and cultures. The data is based on an earlier international study comprising 80 survey respondents who indicated use of multimedia technology for Indigenous language revitalization (Galla, 2010). The direct quotes are from anonymous survey participants unless otherwise noted.

## **Technology and Indigenous language communities**

The state of Indigenous languages, according to Krauss (1992) indicates that majority of the speakers are in the grandparental generation or older. Youth, on the other hand, are not learning the language and/or growing up in the language. With these statistics constantly in the minds of community and language advocates, teachers, and parents, technology is now a highly considered option as a supplementary teaching tool. It is important to note that the use of technology for language revitalization is a supplement to language teaching, since technology cannot replace intergenerational language transfer, teach or save a language single-handedly. Consideration of technology should be ruminated on following discussion of the community's language goals and available resources. Additionally, the adapted technacy framework, which includes examination of social, economic, environmental, technological, linguistic and cultural factors will help to identify the context in which multimedia technology is utilized (Galla, 2010). With the assistance of technology, the teaching possibilities and learning opportunities can be much greater than spreading any human resources thin.

Using the language for everyday communication and all functions of life are key to revitalizing and sustaining Indigenous languages. In this culturally diverse and technologically enhanced world, it is difficult to anticipate the survival of Indigenous languages in the 21<sup>st</sup> century without supplemental support of multimedia. Technology is a concept that encompasses a wide range of artifacts, methods, systems, tools, and practices, which extends from low- to high-end advancements (Zhao, 2003). These types of technologies include "wax cylinder recordings to digital audio recordings, e-mail to chat, video recordings to interactive audio video conferencing, and/or surfing the Internet to playing interactive computer games" (Galla, 2009, p. 173). Moreover, three categories of initiatives are described to capture these various types of multimedia technology. Low-technology or uni-sensory initiatives "emphasize one sensory mode, allowing the learner to receive the Indigenous language through sight or hearing. More specifically, the user visually sees the language either in printed material (e.g., books) or on a screen (e.g., subtitles), or audibly via a speaker or sound system" (p. 173). The second level, mid-technology or bi-sensory initiatives are "bisensory, allowing the learner to receive the Indigenous language through sight and hearing and/or require the use of a keyboard and mouse (point and click), and access to the Internet" (p. 174). The final level, high-technology or multi-sensory initiatives allow for "asynchronous communication, synchronous communication or multimodal interactivity between the user and the technology. In this category, input and output of the Indigenous language are key factors" (p. 175). The application of technologies in one level does not in any way suggest that a community is more advanced than another; rather indicates the level(s) used by the given community and/or Indigenous language advocate.

Multimedia technologies among Indigenous communities are viewed in contrasting ways, as a double-edged sword, whereby it is viewed either as a benefit, aid or supplement to language learning or as a distraction and unnecessary tool (Bennett, 2003). At one end of the continuum, technology can be beneficial; however at the other end, a problem with technology is that it has no potential of making an impact if the tools are not accessible. In many Indigenous communities, access to technology is limited to the school and/or community centers. At other times, the technology is too old or out of date. Although the digital divide between generations of Indigenous communities seems to be getting narrower, as well as between teachers and students, the effectiveness is only as good as its access and availability of computers and the Internet, knowledge, skills and attitudes crucial to make use of the technological resources, and the knowledge of the Native language (Eisenlohr, 2004). Oftentimes, technological products and/or software are accepted and utilized without considering the possible ramifications, which have included “the invasion of privacy, digital public domain used for personal gain, the misuse of control, ... and manipulation” (Delgado, 2003, p. 94). Thus the integration of technology requires ethical awareness and an understanding of its role within the Indigenous community.

With the many changing faces of literacy, it is most common to find that youth are very familiar with technology. Children now grow up in multiliterate environments that consist of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and computing. Social, cultural and oral traditions have decreased tremendously amongst Native youth, inhibiting intergenerational language transfer (Real Bird, 2001 as cited in Wiburg, 2003). However, with the advent of the Internet, technology provides possibilities for documentation, preservation, conservation, stabilization and perpetuation of endangered languages, distribution of cultural information, conversation in new domains and so forth (US Congress, 1995). Technology offers opportunity for Indigenous voices to be heard worldwide, whereas much of what has been published and disseminated about these communities have been from the perspectives of non-Natives (Ingle, 2003). Technology has been influential in bridging the digital divide that is prevalent within Native American communities (Cultural Survival Quarterly, 2005). Though, major challenges continue to exist, case studies of Indigenous communities offer a glimpse at how communities are using technology to their advantage in empowering ways, while discussing issues related to the planning and execution of projects (Dyson, Hendriks & Grant, 2007).

Technology is not critical in producing Indigenous language speakers, however it gives learners additional ways in which to communicate and interact using the language. For example, Leokī, a Hawaiian electronic bulletin board system has provided effective communicative interaction in the written language through e-mail, chat and open discussions. These types of interactions have been found to be beneficial to language learners (Warschauer & Donaghy, 1997). When using technology in conjunction with language learning, the technology chosen should supplement the lesson and not be the



lesson. Therefore it is important to know the purpose, function, and potential of each technology that is being considered.

### **Empowerment, ownership, and engagement of language learners**

Youth born in the 21st century are surrounded by a multitude of technology and cannot live without it: cell phones, Internet, e-mail, and iPods. Schools and universities have fewer textbooks to read and take home, but rather students are directed to the Internet with links to pertinent websites full of relevant information. More often, instructors are using course or content management systems to deliver the instruction and content of the class. Schools are becoming wireless laboratories, where information is placed at the student's fingertips. A reality however is that youth today are not learning their Native language. Youth may not be interested in learning the language because of many factors that include: their family's history of attending boarding schools, punishment their family members received when speaking their language, viewing the language as an accessory that is something that is revealed at cultural events and ceremonies, succumbing to the youth pressure and wanting to "fit-in", believing that speaking their Indigenous language has no economic value, and so forth. To some, these are sound reasons for not continuing to speak or teach the language, while others may "continually pick at the lock" (Zepeda, 2008, p. 64). Additional studies show that many Indigenous youth do express interest and yearning to learn their language (McCarty and Wyman, 2009). However, youth are also aware of ideological countercurrents stigmatizing their languages and often do not have enough opportunities to learn their language. Some want to use any means necessary to preserve the language in hopes that future generations will be able to grow up in the language, while others may want to learn the language for ceremonial purposes or communicate with the elder generations, and so forth.

The major concern of most, if not all endangered language communities, is that the language is no longer being transmitted to the younger generations. By integrating technology with language learning, this will attract youth to engage with the language, even at a minimal level, as well as "stimulate youth as this is the media they prefer to work with." As a participant noted,

[Technology] gets youth involved even if they are remotely interested in the language itself; the lure of technology is one reason, and their skills are valued by language practitioners, especially the elders who may not be comfortable directly using technology.

The methods used to engage future generations should involve creative and innovative techniques and strategies that stimulate both language speakers and learners. By making learning enjoyable, the practice does not become intimidating or overwhelming for any language learners. Rather the learning process is more of an acquisition of the language, as

noted by one participant,

New technologies have the capacity to make learning engaging and fun. The right balance of learning, pleasure and engagement has to be struck if younger speakers of local languages are to take up the mantle of their language.

This standpoint can influence youth in learning their language and heritage culture. In addition, technology can bring together youth and elders to collaboratively work on language projects. Elders bring their knowledge of the language, while youth bring their understanding and proficiency of technology, thus allowing for an extraordinary opportunity for the language community. As one respondent noted,

Elders see the ‘passion’ of the youth in learning and using the language through technological mediums and appear to be more inclined to use the language. The time between elder and youth meetings is not as few and far between because there is more of a “common ground” for communication.

Not only does this opportunity bring together generations of language speakers and learners, but it also introduces technology to these generations as well, particularly adults and elders. This is an empowering moment for the community and it is this invested interest in the language and culture that results in a sense of ownership among the devoted stakeholders: the community, youth, adults, elders, teachers, tribal government, and so forth. When people become invested, they are more likely to come together to work on language projects, develop materials and create curriculum knowing that they have control on what is done. The feeling and knowledge of ownership can go a long way, even despite the challenges of any community. As one participant indicated,

If technology can be the main thing [role], which empowers our people to be directly involved with language activity, we [can] retain ownership and the knowledge of what is withheld in our languages.

Indigenous peoples are taking the initiative to learn what is necessary to revitalize their languages and discover technological tools that can assist in the process. Control is in the community’s hands as they become educated about these new technologies. Traditionally, in the past, it was common for “outsiders” to conduct research on Indigenous peoples, without permission, consultation, approval, discussion, verification and documentation of their findings. Indigenous people can now do research for their own communities. Professionals, such as linguists and anthropologists can serve as consultants and advise the community, so that authority and ownership lies within the community. Communities have control in creating their own education, teaching materials, and curriculum. This act alone empowers Indigenous peoples, so that they have complete control, ownership, and rights of what is taught developed, used, disseminated, shared, and so forth.

## **Collaborative and reciprocal learning**

Bringing together elders who are the language and cultural experts and pairing them with youth who are the primary users of technology provides for a great opportunity for collaboration and reciprocal knowledge exchange. The ideal outcome for this team would be to establish proficiency in the language, as well as to increase capacity in multimedia technology.

It's like a double advantage for us, we're learning how to use new tools, like new technology and new tools, at the same time we're doing it in Hawaiian language, and so we get to learn two things at once. We learn new technology, and implementing it with the Hawaiian language, which I think is really, really good. (Hawaiian language student in Warschauer, 1998, p. 146)

By making the language available in traditional as well as new domains, the community, language learner, youth and so forth feel that there is a purpose for their language. If the language is portrayed as functional, useful and has a place in the larger world, they are more inclined to engage in learning the language or at least feel that the language is a necessary part of their Indigenous well-being. For youth and those who have not learned their language, the assistance of a technological tool can be empowering in that the tool never judges the learner. For first-time learners of the language, this can be an incentive of the technology. To some, technology may give a language status; such that the Indigenous language is worthy and is able to feel "normal" around other languages of wider communication.

The use of technology in developing curriculum and materials may also attract the younger generations who would not otherwise be interested in the language alone. A way to attract youth, who are not speakers of the language, is to utilize the tools they are most comfortable with. By bridging both worlds, this can be a win-win situation for the language community at large, by contributing their technological skills and knowledge to document, create, and develop language resources, while simultaneously learning the language and culture as well. This view was shared by a respondent as well.

The curriculum guides the nature of materials to be prepared and used, and often technology helps in the development of materials. The use of technology in documentation and materials development tend to attract community people (esp. the younger ones) to become a part of the language revitalization team.

Since youth are the future of our languages, creative and innovative ways are necessary to engage them in the language revitalization and reclamation process. With appropriate software, communities no longer need to depend on outside publishing companies to print language materials. Printing costs, which include paper, toner, and binding, are relatively

inexpensive. In addition, another option includes saving the language materials as a digital file to be used and interacted with on computers or mobile devices in community centres, school computer labs, homes, and beyond. This later alternative eliminates paper altogether, preserves the language, and allows for greater distribution to community members who are separated by distance.

By creating this type of collaboration between youth and elders, a reciprocal relationship is formed. The time spent together contributes to language and multimedia technology sharing and teaching; thereby youth learning their Indigenous language and culture and elders learning about multimedia technology. Traditionally the elder would provide the language, while the language learner would be adept in computer applications, making this team effort a successful one for both. This partnership will lessen the pressure of the elder in learning something new, and instead precious time can be spent on working with the language together and learning from one another. An additional benefit to this partnership is that there is always a support system where they can assist one another in times when there is criticism, opposition, and resistance.

## **Conclusion**

Much of the world is immersed in global technologies that have at times hindered or suppressed Indigenous and heritage languages. This not only provides extreme challenges, but also fosters opportunities in finding strategies and techniques that will best suit the community based on their goals and available resources. Many communities face language endangerment and extinction and are looking towards ways that will preserve, document, revitalize, reclaim, perpetuate, and maintain their languages. One way to contribute to the aforementioned efforts is to integrate multimedia technology with Indigenous language teaching and learning.

Technology may not be enough to learn or teach a language, but some only have that to rely upon, thus making technology an important component to carefully consider in contemporary language contexts. Pairing elders and youth together results in a powerful, collaborative, synergistic and reciprocal partnership, ensuring that language is transmitted to younger generations, whilst providing opportunities for elders to learn new technologies and engage with multimedia.

## **References**

- Bennett, R. (2003). Saving a language with computers, tape recorders, and radio. In J. Reyhner, O. Trujillo, R. L. Carrasco & L. Lockard (Eds.), *Nurturing Native languages* (pp. 59-77). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.
- Bernard, H. R. (1996). Language preservation and publishing. In N. H. Hornberger (Ed.), *Indigenous*

- literacies in the Americas: Language planning from the bottom up* (pp. 136- 156). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Cultural Survival Quarterly (2005). *Indigenous peoples bridging the digital divide*. 29(2).
- Delgado, V. (2003). Technology and Native America: a double-edged sword. In G. Solomon, N. Allen, & P. Resta (Eds.), *Toward digital equity: Bridging the digital divide in education* (pp. 88-98). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Dyson, L. E., Hendriks, M., & Grant, S. (Eds.). (2007). *Information technology and Indigenous peoples*. Hershey, PA: Information Science Publishing
- Eisenlohr, P. (2004). Language revitalization and new technologies: Cultures of electronic mediation and the refiguring of communities. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33, 21-45. doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.33.070203.143900
- Galla, C. K. (2009). Indigenous language revitalization and technology: From traditional to contemporary domains. In J. Reyhner & L. Lockard (Eds.), *Indigenous language revitalization: Encouragement, guidance & lessons learned* (pp. 167- 182). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.
- Galla, C. K. (2010). *Multimedia technology and indigenous language revitalization: Practical educational tools and applications used within native communities*. The University of Arizona. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, 271. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/docview/815237006?accountid=14656>. (815237006).
- Ingle, H. T. (2003). Connections across culture, demography, and new technologies. In G. Solomon, N. Allen, & P. Resta (Eds.), *Toward digital equity: bridging the digital divide in education* (pp. 75-87). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Krauss, M. (1992). The world's languages in crisis. *Language*, 68(1), 4-10.
- Lockee, B. (1996). *Development of a hypermedia template using whole language instructional methods for the preservation of Native American languages*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (AAT 9637452)
- McCarty, T. L., & Wyman, L. T. (Eds.). (2009). Indigenous Youth and Bilingualism [Special issue]. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 8(5).
- National Geographic Society (2009). *Enduring voices project, endangered languages, map, facts, photos, videos*. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/mission/enduringvoices/>
- Obonyo, V. (2009). *Smartpen technology and revitalization of the Myaamia language*. (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from <http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Obonyo%20Victor.pdf?miami1260321780>
- Slimane, M. B. (2008). *Appropriating new technology for minority language revitalization: The Welsh case*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from [http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/diss/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/FUDISS\\_derivate\\_000000004510/Dissertation.pdf?hosts=local](http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/diss/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/FUDISS_derivate_000000004510/Dissertation.pdf?hosts=local)
- United States Congress, Office of Technology Assessment (1995). *Telecommunications Technology and Native Americans: Opportunities and Challenges, OTA-ITC-621*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Warschauer, M. (1998). Technology and Indigenous language revitalization: analyzing the experience of Hawai'i. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 55(1), 139-159.
- Warschauer, M. & Donaghy, K. (1997). Leokī: A powerful voice of Hawaiian language revitalization.

*Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 10(4), 349-361.

Wiburg, K. M. (2003). Factors of the divide. In G. Solomon, N. Allen, & P. Resta (Eds.), *Toward digital equity: bridging the digital divide in education* (pp. 25-40). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Zepeda, O. (2008). *Where clouds are formed*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press.

Zhao, Y. (2003). Recent developments in technology and language learning: A literature review and meta-analysis. *CALICO Journal*, 21(1), 7-27.

# Paradigm shift in the view of duodji in the 21st century: Higher education in *duodji*<sup>1</sup>

*Gunvor Guttorm*

## Introduction

In this article, I intend to elaborate on one cultural expression and the position it has taken as a university discipline. That cultural expression is *duodji*, which can be roughly translated as Sámi arts and crafts. The case that I use as an example in the presentation is based on my work at *Sámi allaskuvla*, the Sámi University College in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) in the Sámi area of Norway, where we have designed new bachelor and master programmes in duodji. In the first part of the article I discuss indigenous knowledge and the content of duodjias a paradigm shift within the art education discourse. In the second part I present some examples of how we have developed an indigenous art programme at the bachelor level that has a Sámi point of view.

The Sámi University College was established at Guovdageaidnu, Norway, in 1989 as a result of Sámi political mobilisation in 1970s and 80s. The Norwegian government gave the Sámi University College a special responsibility for providing higher education in Sámi art. Duodji was one of the first courses at the Sámi University College. The Sámi University College is not the only indigenous college in Norway; there is one in Sápmi also. The Sámi language is the main language in both teaching and administration in the university college. Most of the practical instructions and the written teaching instructions are also in the Sámi language. Those who choose to work at an institution like this aspire to develop certain areas in their professions that will benefit Sámi education. We all have different ways of doing this.

My own experience of being part of the Sámi society and the duodji society may make me somewhat “blind” as researcher, but on the other hand, very observant. I started to work with duodji when I finished highschool. But it was while I was studying for my master’s degree in duodji that I realised that there was a need to emphasise Sámi knowledge in higher education. I did my PhD at the University of Tromsø art faculty. At that time, in the beginning of 2000s, there was little study being done on indigenous theoretical frameworks in art studies at the university, so the journey through my PhD thesis was quite so literary (Guttorm, 2001).

My experience of being marginalised as a student/researcher has forced me, and given me the courage, to take duodji seriously and give it a chance to be a field on its own in an academic context. My approach to this is to first of all try to understand the kind of frames

---

<sup>1</sup> Duodji refers to Sami cultural expressions.

in which duodji has existed and exists today, and second, how it can become an independent discipline within higher education.

### **Indigenous knowledge frameworks**

When discussing a starting point for developing an indigenous art programme the methodologies of indigenous peoples and knowledge production are crucial aspects. How indigenous methodology is understood is connected to what group of indigenous people is being discussed and what that indigenous group has experienced.

The Cree scientist Margaret Kovach considers that a researcher's self-location is important information for the indigenous peoples who are involved in the research. In self-location, researchers share their belonging to a group (identity), the kind of cultural experience they have, or how they have based their understanding on knowledge established by indigenous peoples (Kovach, 2009, p. 110). Kovach emphasises that in indigenous peoples research, self-location is important because the researcher has made a decision to view elements from an indigenous people's point of view. As I understand this, Kovach means that this way, the researcher recognises his/her own starting point and experiences, and that these are a part of the indigenous people's knowledge production and research. She is saying that indigenous methodologies are not about organising knowledge, but rather about the position from which the researcher understands knowledge (Kovach, 2009, p. 55). Many of the approaches in indigenous methodologies are similar to Western approaches, but it is the relationship between the researcher and the researched that make the indigenous visible (Kovach, 2009, p. 55).

Maori scientist Linda Tuhiwai Smith has outlined a model for indigenous research methodology that can also be adapted to indigenous education (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). For her, self-determination in the research agenda becomes something more than a political goal (TuhiwaiSmith,1999, p. 116). Also, she can see similarities between common and indigenous research, although there are elements that she sees as different and which involve the process of transformation, of decolonisation, of healing and of mobilisation as peoples (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 116).

The common issues that become present are experiences, decolonising and healing. The experiences are based upon personal commitment. But what experiences are we discussing? As I understand Linda Tuhiwai Smith, she is referring to a certain nation's experience of colonisation and how this has affected the people (1999, pp. 1-3). Her opinion is that since the knowledge of indigenous people has not been visible in the building of knowledge, the consequence is that the indigenous people have rejected their own system of using knowledge. Once a system of knowledge has been rejected, in order to restore it, it is necessary to raise awareness, make changes and improve it (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 3). Asta Baltoand Vuokko Hirvonen see the same tendency in the Sámi context (Balto &



Hirvonen, 2008, pp. 104-126). Kovach also observes the experience of the entire nation and agrees with Smith in this. But she adds that individuals also have their own experiences, and these influence the opinions of each and every scientist. When she discusses experience, Kovach states that everything that affects people is worth taking into account, for example issues that come up during knowledge collection.(Kovach, 2009, p. 113).Shawn Wilson has used storytelling, alternating between his own personal stories of life and how these have affected his choices in the process of collecting knowledge (Wilson, 2008). His conclusion is that story is not a matter of unique ways of functioning, but rather a matter of behaviour and traditions (Wilson, 2008, pp. 80-125).

### **Duodji versus dáidda, craft versus art**

In the course of time, the concept of *duodji* in the Sámi language has assumed several meanings. We can say that *duodji* refers to all forms of creative expression that require human thought and production, but it cannot automatically be translated as *art*.

However, the term is mostly used to describe a specific work that is created by hand and anchored in a Sámi activity and reality. *Duodji*, then, has its origin in “everyday life” in Sápmi, the activities, the conventions; the aesthetic understanding has been formed within this “everyday life”. When the needs of everyday life were fulfilled through *duodji*, it was important to be able to obtain materials, and to design and use the needed items, and repair them as necessary.

Both the Greek term *techné* and the Latin term *ars* consisted initially of aesthetics and technique. Thus, craftspeople and artists were equally important. At present, we can also say that *techné* is, in terms of its content, much closer to *duodji* than art. In the Western classical period, *techné* meant all work that could be finished. In that time, ordinary craft and art were not yet seen as different things. Thus, *techné* is a general term, but there are also *technés*, the levels and value of which can vary (Shiner, 2001, pp. 19-24). As concerns the difference between art and craft, Shiner argues that, initially, there was no difference between the Latin word *ars* and the Greek word *techné*; the same applied to *artist* and *artisan* (craftsperson). However, by the late 1700s, art had become the opposite of craft and artist the opposite of artisan (Shiner, 2001, p. 5). Shiner also sees the rise of aesthetics as a separation, as special and ordinary enjoyment became different things. Contemplative enjoyment was called aesthetics and could be found in “fine arts”, where as ordinary enjoyment was connected to everyday life (Shiner, 2001, p. 6). According to Shiner, this division means much more than just giving new content to a term; it means a change in a system, and, as it affects both practices and institutions, its influence goes far beyond adding a meaning to a term.

## **Indigenous art and craft education**

Higher art education based on indigenous peoples' ways of expression, thinking and everyday life is a real challenge for indigenous studies in academia. In a Sámi context it is necessary to take duodji as the starting point when it comes to higher art education with an indigenous perspective. For years, indigenous peoples around the world have argued that self-determination indicates education on all levels and subjects of the educational systems (May, 1999, pp. 42-63). Academic art education has a strong position in Euro-American history (see e.g. Hansen, 2007; McEvelley, 1992; Vassnes 2007, pp.6-15; Vassnes, 2009, pp.19-23). In fact, art history, with its European or Euro-American approach, is Eurocentric, and art education is often based on this perspective.

In 1988 Alfred Young Man wrote that the history of art in America has many steps to take before it can also acknowledge the basis of indigenous peoples, even though museums of art have started to embrace indigenous expressions of art into their collections (Young Man, 1988, p. 5). In universities and higher education, indigenous knowledge has seldom been visible, and artistic expressions of indigenous peoples have very rarely been part of art studies. Even when they have been included, it has been the result of the Euro-American view of art and Euro-American art programmes. When it is included at all, indigenous art is generally only a minor subject within a "real" art programme. In the past thirty years, indigenous peoples have demanded that their cultural expressions (and knowledge) be included in higher education. To achieve this, they have applied diverse strategies. This integration is, however, a complex process, as universities and other institutions of higher education often have to follow national programmes and regulations. This applies to comprehensive schooling as well (see Balto & Hirvonen, 2008; Hirvonen, 2004, pp. 110-137; Keskitalo, 2009, pp. 62-75). *For the Sámi, the Sámi artists association pointed out in the 1970s the need for higher education in art with a Sámi perspective.* On the other hand, in the early 1980s, when the engagement to include more subjects in school arose, a demand for teacher education in duodji was raised. This has led, over time, to the planning and establishment of two *different "schools" of art, one based upon duodji, and the other based upon art.*

Nevertheless, many indigenous peoples have attempted, in their regions, to create art programmes for higher education, often as part of existing art programmes or as independent programmes. When the Maori of Aotearoa, New Zealand, began to build their own educational system in the 1980s, they did it through art. This indigenous art concept has a holistic approach, which integrates both the process of defining and exercising indigenous self-determination and the discourse about art in general (Jackson & Phillips, 1999, pp. 38- 40). The same applies to the aboriginal peoples of Canada, Central and South America, the USA and Australia (see e.g. McCulloch, 1999, pp. 45- 47). There is a clear effort to make cultural expressions visible and, through them, to have a discussion with the global

art community. When Pueblo scholar and artist Gregory Cajete elaborates on indigenous education, he simply points to the “eye of the beholder”, which for him “reflects the perspective and worldview that I believe have to begin to teach in environmental education, which also includes to be critical to the colonial past, and the healing process through education” (Cajete, 2000, pp. 181- 191).

Here we can find a parallel to Sami conditions. By using the Sámi word *duodji* instead of *handicraft* or *art*, we have already assumed a Sámi approach – which involves a broad perspective – to art education. By using the term *duodji* we also launch a discussion on how the term itself was used in the past and the links it has to the contemporary world. My main argument and claim is that as we want to have *duodji* as a discipline in higher education, we need to use the content of *duodji* itself and the way it works in society as a basis. The building of indigenous knowledge in general deals with such questions as who “owns” knowledge, who uses it and what kind of knowledge is valid. This is a common indigenous challenge that has been elaborated by many indigenous scholars working within the indigenous paradigm (see Balto, 2008; Kuokkanen, 2009; Wilson, 2008; Young Man, 1988;). In that sense, *duodji* is one of the narratives in many parallel art stories. This is part of the integration of higher indigenous education.

## **Relationships**

Shawn Wilson states that the methods of investigation do not necessarily determine how to reach new starting points. When he describes the paradigms of indigenous peoples, he says that it is the relations that are the core issues. He divides relations into several aspects, including human relations (relatives, family, clans and so forth), created relations, relations between nature and the surroundings, and connection to the universe and to certain ideas (Wilson, 2008, pp. 80- 97).

Cajete writes that education is a process, learning is a struggle and a process in life and that life and nature are always about making things connect (Cajete, 2000, p. 23). This connection leads to the fact that the scientist or the teacher is never left alone. In Sámi life it is evident that connections are spoken about, especially when dealing with traditional knowledge. For example, mention is made of connections to certain areas, specific places, and how people have used the area and made their life there possible (Guttorm, 2011. pp. 59-61). Solveig Jokshas written about the upbringing of children and described how teaching is carried out, and has also written about the connection between what one learns, who is teaching, and where the learning takes place, and how all of these affect the learning (Joks, 2007).

Rauna Kuokkanen has suggested the Sami term *láhi* (gift) as an entry point for understanding the relationship between humans and nature. Kuokkanen suggests that the system of sharing the richness of nature (*láhi*) and what has been gathered or caught can be

transformed into a model of how to share knowledge (Kuokkanen, 2006, p. 24). Asta Balto has studied how schools can adapt their work so they take into account human relationships and connections to nature. She stresses that this learning must be seen as benefiting parents, children, teachers and the surrounding environment (Balto, 2008, p. 53). Her research is taken from primary school, but it can also be comparative with contemporary higher education.

### **The strategies for achieving higher education in Sámi craft**

What, then, are the strategies that we have chosen when creating a higher education programme – especially a three-year programme – in Sámi craft? Most important has been to strengthen different relationships in the establishing process. I will now elaborate on some of these strategies. As mentioned earlier, the Sámi University College had long wanted to start a three-year study programme in Sámi craft and art, but under Norwegian state regulations, it was not possible for the university college to get financing for such a programme. However, when all the specialised university institutions and universities of Norway were granted the right to formulate their flexible bachelor's degree programmes, we got the chance to create a bachelor's programme in duodji. The university college was able to begin its higher education programme in art in the autumn of 2008.

### **Invite organisations to join in the planning process**

We invited the duodji associations to join us in planning the education programme. This gave us the opportunity to understand what they regarded as important, and it helped to create goodwill and understanding in the surrounding society. This goodwill was especially crucial with respect to certain issues from an indigenous point of view. One part of this starting point involves changing the prevailing feeling that one's own experiences are not worth anything and to begin a process of healing.

We also wanted to engage trained artisans and artists in the planning. We appointed a reference group, which had two members, one from Swedish Sápmi and the other one from Finnish Sápmi. During the planning, we formulated the training guidelines.

### **Relationship between SUC and Honoured Artisan**

In the Sámi language, *eallilanolmmoš* means a person who has lived for a certain time and has gathered wisdom of life. An *eallilanolmmoš* is a person with unique knowledge and her/his authority is closely connected to her/his spirit of sharing knowledge.

Older artisans have knowledge and experience that need to be passed down to students and all of us. Instead of appointing an honorary doctor or artist, we wanted to use the word *duojár* (artisan) and give it a content of high value in the academic world, and we appointed an *ávvuđuojár* (honorary artisan) for our university college. We appointed Jon Ole

Andersen/Jovvna Ovlá as our honorary artisan, because he had already been a skilful member of the school staff; he had worked as an examiner both in undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Ever since the 1970s, he has worked enthusiastically on strengthening education about and the trade of Sámi craft at all levels. Jovvna Ovlá has also worked on bigger projects. He has, for example, built catering facilities that are in the shape of the Sámi tent, or *goahhti*, reconstructed ancient sealskin boats, and decorated new public buildings. He has assumed a humble approach to Sámi duodji. He is a master of the discipline, and he has always been eager to pass down his knowledge to new generations.<sup>2</sup>

### **Relations between students and elders**

As long as we have had education in duodji, we have recommended that our students look for information and knowledge in their own environments. For example, in 2001 we had a project in which students worked together with elder artisans in creating a large product. The project had two goals: the students would experience how traditional skills can be transferred from one generation to another, and they would learn a traditional way of making handicrafts that they could then pass on to other students. However, it is not always possible to send a whole group of students to study with artisans. Therefore, we chose another option; we invited elder artisans to come to the school.

In my opinion, it is important to make use of the wisdom of our honorary artisans and elder craftspeople in teaching. However, the students also need to acquire tools for assessing their handicrafts and different types of craft tasks. Therefore, we have attempted to combine the practice of creating with the building of theory on the basis of this practice, which again provides meaning for contemporary students. It is extremely important that we who are responsible for the craft studies in our school succeed in ensuring that these two aspects become interlinked.

### **Relations to other institutions**

In Sápmi there are many institutions that promote the Sámi culture. The institutions that are situated locally have an advantage in cooperating and thus strengthening the local economies in areas outside more heavily populated centres. And when each institution has experience managing to be a small local institution in the "periphery", then this strengthens the efficiency of both the local community and all the small institutions to be visible. But building good relations is also important when preparing the students for the work ahead of them. And when students become aware of what each institution has to offer, then they come to value their education more highly.

---

<sup>2</sup> Jon Ole Andersen was also nominated and appointed to the WINHEC Order of the Circle of Scholars of Indigenous Knowledge in 2010 for his work as a traditional knowledge holder and as the *ávvuuojár* (honorary artisan) of Sámi allaskuvla/Sámi University College.

We also contacted other indigenous educational institutions in order to find lecturers and to learn about the content of similar education programmes in other areas. This allowed us to create professional networks in the field of indigenous arts and crafts. For instance, the first course on indigenous handicraft and art was run as a separate project with external financing, which meant that we could travel more than usual and invite guest lecturers from other regions.

### **The curriculum**

When we started working with the education programmes we had to take into account what parts of the duodji that function today in the Sámi society could be transferred into higher education, and how to make the situation adaptable for the students. Sámi duodji knowledge is a heritage that has been and still is important for the Sámi people; it changes over time in an ongoing dialogue about what really becomes a tradition. For instance, parts of the reindeer, such as skins and antlers, are used in all kinds of duodji and are common among different Sámi groups. How to prepare the materials is also common knowledge. When it comes to the creation or production of a certain kind of item, the understanding of collective traditional knowledge can differ from one family, group or region to another. In an institutional world it isn't possible to convey all possible views of Sámi knowledge, and it is perhaps not wanted or necessary in any case. However, the goal is to make the students aware of this. Actually, some of the traditional views of duodji cannot be applied in an institutional world. The challenge in the process of education is still to find avenues to convey essential parts of the traditional skills and knowledge in an institutional context and develop new platforms for knowledge and creativity. While designing a curriculum that is open-minded and that allows us to work together with other and different kinds of institutions, it is essential to respect indigenous points of view in education, and to include traditional experts' knowledge and skills that will be useful in the education and that can be applied in the modern world. While making the plan we also had to consider the regulations that must be observed by indigenous and higher education institutions in Norway and elsewhere in Europe.

The conditions to be accepted into the programme were a general or "real" competence. Another condition was that the students should have basic knowledge of duodji, or that they had a certificate showing they had learned duodji in another school or at home.

### **How to use the relations in an educational setting**

In the following I present how different relations have been beneficial for the students' work and how the curriculum functions in "reality". In the example that I present here, we took part in the building of a goahti (traditional turf hut). One objective of the duodji education is for students to learn about both the history of Sámi architecture and how to use the materials that are to be found in the environment nearby.

Sámi allaskuvla ran a traditional knowledge project in partnership with people in the local districts.<sup>3</sup> The partners, other Sámi institutes all over the Norwegian side of Sápmi, run different projects that collect, preserve and transfer traditional expertise. Riddo Duottar Musea (RDM) is one partner, and they ran a project where they worked with elders to put up a goahti (turf hut) in Gilišillju (a local museum) in Guovdageaidnu. The Sámi allaskuvla students were invited to join in and be a part of the project. There are many aspects to building a goahti and the knowledge connected to it, such as where to find the material, when to collect it, where to build knowledge and in what direction. Once the goahti is finished and people move into it, there is knowledge to be built regarding how to behave inside a goahti and what rules apply there. The construction of a goahti requires knowledge of the area, the materials, the earth, the seasons, the rituals in staying in a goahti, etc. At the same time, a goahti, with its architecture, can also be regarded as an embodiment of traditional knowledge. For this project, the RDM could call upon three experienced and talented goahti builders (*goahtečeahpit*): Aslak Anders Gaino, Per Utsi and Jon Ole Andersen (who is also Sami University College's honorary artisan. Parts of the building process were filmed, such as the fetching of *bealjit* (curved poles), the construction process, choosing the birch bark, obtaining *lavdnji* (turf), demolishing an old goahti and constructing the new one. The bachelor course includes the learning of various traditional skills, and the *Goahtehuksen* Project offered the possibility of a large-scale learning activity such as building a goahti. Through the participation of the students, another factor in the *Goahtehuksen* Project was realised, namely the transmission aspect. The students were to work with the tradition bearers Aslak Anders, Per and Jon Ole. Jon Ole's role was to transmit the knowledge, and in this way he was also the authority on *goahtehuksen*. At the same time, Aslak Anders and Per were transmitters of knowledge of the work process. The first meeting between the RDM, *árbečeahpit*, the film-maker Solveig Joks and the college students took place on the land where the goahti would be built. Karen Elle Gaup, the director of RDM, presented the project, its objective and the roles of the people involved in it. This sequence was of great importance for the project, as everyone present came to realise what the project consisted of and all could feel involved in it. Jon Ole, Per and Aslak Anders had an overview of the elements of the work process and said that we would be able to build the goahti in a week since the students were taking part. They oversaw the process at all times, while we (the students and I) could only follow the instructions they gave us (see Joks, 2010).

---

<sup>3</sup>More about this project can be found at <http://www.arbediehtu.no/>



*Figure 1: Students and Jon Ole Andersen working with the goahti (traditional turf hut).*

The place where the goahti was going to be rebuilt was close to Sámi allaskuvla and could be seen from the windows of the duodji studios. The building of the goahti was a physical outcome of the week's activity, but a lot of other things happened and were tied together while learning. There were a lot of coffee breaks, and the fireplace was an important gathering place as well. By the fireplace stories were told from the time when people lived in lávvus. The question of how people originally invented the hut's design came up on occasion.

On the last day of building, the students had a moment to sit and reflect on what they had experienced over the past week. In the following week they moved that reflection to a new duodji, where they created pictures of what they experienced. Those who worked with wood carved a story into the wood, and those who worked with thread used that to show their story. One of the students, Katarina, embroidered a pillow. She had reflected on her own experiences living in goahti. On one side she embroidered a picture showing rats and dirt because that was what she remembered from her life in a hut. She remembered that always when they came up to the mountains in the summer and were going to stay in the hut, the rats had been in there making a mess and they had to clean it up. On the other side of the pillow she showed all of the good memories, such as when she met her relatives, fished and lived a "simple" life in the mountains. The pillow represented exactly how life was inside the hut, with everyone on the same level, on the floor sitting on their knees on birch branches and reindeer skins, and if they felt like lying down, then they just needed to find something to put under their heads.





Figure 2: Katarina's pillow.

Another student, Ann Majbrittes, reflected more about what happened during the work of building the gohti. She noted that she was working on top of the hut most of the time, and that she saw a lot from there. At the end of the building process she shaped the *reahpenráigi* (smokehole), where she had a new experience with the environment and the

landscape. Even though she had known of Gilišillju, she had never noticed it the way she now saw it. A new dimension of Guovdageaidnu had opened up for her; she had “placed the place”, so to speak. She could also watch how the hut little by little got tighter and smaller towards the opening at the top and how she actually moved upwards with the construction. At the same time she heard and saw what was happening around her. She had an overview of the fireplace, and could see the guests coming, the other students, etc., and she could also see how the river runs downstream. She also reflected on the reahpenráigi. The reahpenráigi makes it possible to have a warm goahti, without too much smoke, and from inside the goahti it is possible to look out. So this was what she wanted to express when she embroidered a reahpenráigi, to celebrate her own feeling of being on the top of the goahti, and the importance of the reahpenráigi she was shaping for those staying inside the goahti. She had placed herself on the top of the hut, and had the view from there; it was opposite to the view of Katarina, who expressed what happens inside the goahti.



*Figure 3: Ann Majbrittes' piece.*

In this project, where the Sámi allaskuvlla traditional knowledge project and Riddu Duottar Museums were involved, the aim was storing and documentation. The goal for Sámi allaskuvlla duodji education was to cooperate with skilled artisans, learn how to build a goahti and in that way get acquainted with Sámi construction traditions. In addition, students themselves were to come up with their own goals for new and personal work. Each of the participants therefore had their own intentions regarding what to achieve and how to achieve it, and had to establish good conditions for that. Here I can see that there are many levels in creating the necessary conditions. It's again like Shawn Wilson presents it, in that one makes connections and uses them in a positive way when setting out to do something

(Wilson, 2008, pp. 80-91). Asta Balto has researched how Sámi teachers transfer traditional knowledge to the next generation, and notes that the basis for creating good conditions to achieve that is to strengthen the will to learn (Balto, 2008, p. 53). Long before we started to build the goahti, we had contact with Riddu Duottar Museat and also with the honorary artisan Jon Ole Andersen. This way of working, when we communicate with other institutions and skilled craftspeople, has proven to be very useful. I can see many advantages to working like this in the higher education in duodji; we maintain relations with elders and other institutions, and the students can work together on bigger projects, learning from elders and making their own reflections through new expressions.

## **Conclusions**

In this paper I have presented how duodji education has been built up in Sámi Allaskuvla and considered what kind of paradigm shift in art education may come about. As mentioned previously, duodji has its basis in Sámi everyday life. When the activities of duodji, duoddjon (crafting) and discourse move from everyday life and become an institutional practice, it is itself a paradigm shift too. In process and in a Sámi approach to art education, the choice of terminology (duodji) is a strategy. As an academic discipline duodji has elements of both production of traditional and contemporary arts and crafts and theoretical approaches to the task. The challenges are to take care of the heritage expressed through duodji and to develop students' artistic skills. Here we deal with a problem that is common in all kinds of training programmes in academic contexts, that of refining already existing skills and creating new experiences and expressions. We have to have an ongoing critical discourse, because the choices are not unproblematic.

When emphasizing duodji in art education and art research, we can talk about a paradigm shift in two ways: first, we produce new knowledge by using our own Sámi experiences, and second, we are subjects in the knowledge building and research. I have chosen a contextual approach to knowledge and epistemology. By taking a minority and indigenous approach, and by using cultural artistic expression within a specific culture, education itself creates the space for diversity of ideas and opinions. In order to be able to achieve the goals that have been set, it is also necessary to use certain approaches that open possibilities that do not make the gates of the institution close.

Note: This article has been published in the *Journal of Indigenous Studies (TJIS)* and *World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) Conference proceedings document and DVD*.

## References

- Balto, Á.M. (2008), Sámi Oahpaheaddjitsirdetárbevirolaškultuvrraboahhtevašbuolvvaide Dekoloniseremaákkšuvdnadutkamuš Ruođa Sámis. *Dieđut 4/2008*. Guovdageaidnu: Sámi allaskuvla.
- Balto, A. & Hirvonen, V.(2008).Sámi Self-Determinatin in the Field of Education.In John B. Henriksen (Ed.),*Sámi Self-Determinatin: Scope and Implementation. Journal of Indigenous Peoples Rights No. 2/2008*. Guovdageaidnu: Gáldu, 104-126.
- Cajete, G. (2000). Indigenous Knowledge: The Pueblo Metaphor of Indigenous Education. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Guttorm, G. (2001).*Duojbálgát – en studieiduodji/Kunsthåndverksomvisuellerfaringhoseurfolk*. Tromsø: Universitetet i Tromsø.
- Guttorm, G. (2011) Árbiediehtu (Sami traditional knowledge) – as a concept and in practice. In J. Porsanger & G.Guttorm (Eds.), *Working with Traditional Knowledge: Communities, Institutions, Information Systems, Law and Ethics. Dieđut 1/2011*. Guovdageaidnu: Sámi allaskuvla, 59-76.
- Hansen, H. H.(2007).*For telling eromsamisksamtidskunst*. Karasjok: Davvi Girji.
- Hirvonen, V.(2004). How to Sáminize the School? Evaluating Reform 97 Sámi. In G. Guttorm & J. Sandven (Eds.),*Sløyden, minoritetene, det flerkulturelle oget internasjonalt perspektiv. Techné serien B:13/2004*. Notodden: NordFo, 110-137.
- Jackson, M E/ Phillips R B 1992: Art in Politics/Politics in Art. *New Territories 350/500 Years after an Exhibition of Contemporary Aboriginal Art of Canada*. Montreal: Vision Planétaire.
- Joks, S.(2007).BoazodoalumáhtutáiggisáigáiEtniiddoaimaárbevirolašoahpaheamisboazodoalus.*Dieđut 3/2007*. Guovdageaidnu: Sámi Instituhtta – Sámi allaskuvla.
- Joks, S.(2010).*Turfhutbuilding in Sami traditional way*.Karášjohka: RiddoDuottarMuseat. (Videofilm)
- Kovach, M. (2009).*Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Keskitalo, J.H.(2009).Sámi máhttu ja sámi skuvlamáhttu: teorehtalaš geahčastat(Sami knowledge and Sami schoolknowledge: A theoretical consideration),*Sámi dieđalaš áigečála 1-2, 2009*. Guovdageaidnu: Sámi allaskuvla, 62-75.
- Kuokkanen, R (2006): Láhi and Attáldat: the Philosophy of the Gift and Sámi Education. Marie Battiste & Cathryn McConaghy (Eds.): *Thinking Place: The Indigenous Humanities & Education. The Australian Journal of indigenous Education Volume 24-2005*. Queensland: The University of Queensland.
- Kuokkanen, R.(2007).*Reshaping the University Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes and the Logic of the Gift*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Kuokkanen, R.(2009).*BoarisdegoeanaEamiálbmogiiddiehtu, filosofijatjadutkan*. Karášjohka: ČálliidLágádus.
- May, S. 1999: Language and Educational Rights for Indigenous Peoples. S. May (ed): *Indigenous Community-Based Education*. Clevedon- Philadelphia – Toronto – Sydney: Multilingual Matters LTD.
- McCulloch, S.(1999).*Contemporary Aboriginal Art:A guide to the rebirth of an ancient culture*. Crows Nest: Allen &Unwin.

- Shiner, L.(2001).*The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*. Chicago &London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Tuhiwai Smith, L.(1999).*Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*.London & New York: Zed Books Ltd.
- Vassnes, B.(2007).Det store kunstranet. *Marg nr 7 -2007*.Tromsø: Margmedia DA. 6-16.
- Vassnes, B.(2009).“Kunstteorien – rasismenssisteskanse”.In E.SkotnesVikjord (Ed.),*Gierdu-bevegelserisamisksamtidskunst*(pp. 18-30).Tromsø: Skinn –RiddoDuottarMuseat..
- Wilson, S (2008):*Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*Halifax, N.S. : Fernwood Publ.
- Young Man, Alfre 1988: A Brief Historical Overview – Alfred Young Man (Ed.),*Networking Proceedings From National Native Indian Artists´Symposium IV July 14-18, 1987, University of Lethbridge*. Lethbridge: University of Lethbridge. S 5.
- ([www.samiskhs.no](http://www.samiskhs.no)).
- (<http://www.win-hec.org/?q=node/16> ) (09.06.2010).

## Biography of the Authors

**Veronica Arbon** [veronica.arbon@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:veronica.arbon@adelaide.edu.au) is a proud Arabana woman from west of Lake Eyre in South Australia who was born in Alice Springs and spent most of her early years in remote Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory around the Wilton/Roper River region before moving into Darwin. Dr Arbon has been employed within higher education for over 30 years as a tutor, lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Professor. Dr Arbon was the first Aboriginal Director of Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education during 1999-2005, one of the inaugural Chairs of Indigenous Knowledge Systems at Deakin University during 2008-2012 and, is presently the Associate Professor and Director of Wilto Yerlo at Adelaide University. Actively collaborating in research and studies which have focused on the quality of the Aboriginal content, processes and practices within academic systems and all its activities including research, Dr Arbon submitted her doctoral study in August 2006. This is now published as, *'Arlathirnda Ngurkarnda Ityirnda: Being-knowing-doing: De-Colonising Indigenous Tertiary Education'*. Dr Arbon is involved on a number of national and international committees and has acted as the editor of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium Journal over the past three years.

**Berice Anning** [Berice.anning@uws.edu.au](mailto:Berice.anning@uws.edu.au) Berice Anning is the Dean, Indigenous Education and Director, Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education, University of Western Sydney. Associate Professor Anning was initially employed as the Associate Director (Academic) developing and implementing an Indigenous Graduate Attribute across the University. Berice has worked in the specific educational areas of early childhood teaching/training and management, primary teaching, secondary teaching and tertiary education. At the higher education level, Berice Anning's has included the leadership and management of academic and research development at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Charles Sturt University, New South Wales and the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba. Associate Professor Anning has held professional roles which have included Chair of the National Indigenous Higher Education Network (NIHEN); member of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC); Chair of the WINHEC Academic Programs Committee; member of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSHIEC); member of the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee (AVCC) and inaugural member of the Federal Minister for Education's Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC).

**Boni Robertson** [b.robertson@griffith.edu.au](mailto:b.robertson@griffith.edu.au) is a strong and proud Aboriginal woman from the Kabi Kabi Nation in Queensland Australia, who has spent the past thirty five years working in Indigenous Affairs and Indigenous Higher education at the State, National and International level. Boni is the Professor and Director of Indigenous Community Engagement, Policy and Partnerships at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. She has

extensive research and community advocacy experience, having established major initiatives and programs to enhance the emotional and social well being of Indigenous women, children and families. Professor Robertson has made a significant contribution to social policy at the state and national level improving the lives of Indigenous people through research. Professor Robertson is frequently sought out by members of Parliament, Government, the private sector and industry to provide advice on matters pertinent to Aboriginal Australians, cross-cultural engagement and community development and social policy and administration.

She has Chaired international and national committees pertinent to Indigenous Affairs, working extensively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and other representatives addressing the needs of their respective community groups and agencies. Professor Robertson has successfully engaged in productive dialogue and debate with diverse stakeholders in order to develop Global initiatives to highlight the contributions of Indigenous women and Elders to research and other scholarly pursuits in higher education.

**Gary Thomas** [gary.thomas@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:gary.thomas@latrobe.edu.au) is the Director, Equity and Student Support Services & Director, Indigenous Education at La Trobe University in Victoria. Gaining qualifications in Music, English literature and Education from the University of Queensland, Gary was a Secondary Teacher in Far North Queensland before joining the higher education sector. He has undertaken roles including academic, student advisor, manager and executive at three universities. Gary has been an auditor for the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) 2006 - 2012. He has a particular interest in the contributions diverse groups make to the construction of quality within complex organizations. Gary was invited to provide an Indigenous Australian perspective on Quality Assurance at *the Second Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications*, Paris 2004 organized by UNESCO. Gary was Chair of the National Indigenous Higher Education Network (NIHEN); now the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC) from 2005 – 2008. He has participated in the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium since 2005 as a member of its Academic, Journal and Research Working Parties. Gary is currently a member of a number of advisory boards to institutions and programs in Indigenous Education.

**Zelalem Nemera** [bultumzn@yahoo.com](mailto:bultumzn@yahoo.com) is one of the key founders of a nonprofit making nongovernmental organization, Partnership for Sustainable Development (PSD). He has been managing the organization with a position of Executive Director since 2010. Besides, has been serving as part-time lecturer at different colleges and universities in Ethiopia. His research and pragmatic interests are human and democratic rights with special focus to the rights of women, children and Indigenous people. He contributed an article for the 2011 edition of WINHEC journal.

**Tamene Keneni** [tkwg11@gmail.com](mailto:tkwg11@gmail.com) graduated with a BA in Educational Psychology and an MA in Developmental Psychology from Addis Ababa University in July 2003 and 2008 respectively. He worked as a teacher educator at Mickey Leland College and as a lecturer at New Generation University College. He has been lecturing psychology at Debre Birhan University since 2008 and currently he's a PhD student at Addis Ababa University, Institute of Psychology. His research interests include developmental impacts of early childhood / childhood adverse family environments across the lifespan, resilience, vulnerability, positive lifespan development, Indigenous knowledge related to parenting and cross-culture research in psychology.

**Candace Kaleimamoowahinekapu Galla** [candace.galla@ubc.ca](mailto:candace.galla@ubc.ca) (Native Hawaiian) was born in Hilo and raised in Pahala, Ka'ū on the island of Hawai'i. Her areas of interest include language revitalization, education, performative arts, multimedia technology, and applied linguistics as it pertains to Indigenous communities. She is an Assistant Professor of First Nations Languages & Education in the Department of Language & Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada.

**Gunvor Guttorm** [gunvor.guttorm@samiskhs.no](mailto:gunvor.guttorm@samiskhs.no) is Professor in *duodji* (Sámi arts and crafts, traditional art, applied art) at the Sámi University College in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino in Norway. She has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses in *duodji* at Sámi University College level, both practically and theoretically. She has written several articles about how the traditional knowledge of sami art and craft is transformed to the modern lifestyle.



