



# Title: The *Mandala* in Higher Education: Higher Education that Leaves No One Behind

PIMA Bulletin No. 41 - March 2022

Special Issue Editors: Maéva Gauthier (University of Victoria) and Niharika Kaul (Participatory Research in Asia)

<b>MESSAGE FROM THE PIMA PRESIDENT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEMOCRATISING HIGHER EDUCATION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE: A NEW HORIZON FOR HIGHER EDUCATION .....	3
ABOUT THE WORLD HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE (WHEC22).....	6
KNOWLEDGE DEMOCRACY AND ITS COMMODIFICATION: WHERE FROM AND WHERE TO FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs)? .....	10
KNOWLEDGE FOR CHANGE GLOBAL CONSORTIUM (K4C) .....	13
LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND: REPOSITIONING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ACHIEVING SDGs .....	14
INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES ON OPEN SCIENCE AND THE DECOLONIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE .....	16
<b>REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES .....</b>	<b>21</b>
THE LIMERICK K4C HUB: A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE .....	21
GRANDPARENTS AND ACADEME.....	23
DEMOCRATIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE: A WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT CRISIS IN HIGHER EDUCATION.....	26
TRANSFORMING RURAL COMMUNITIES WITH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE.....	28
IIUM FLAGSHIPS: SHARING AND LEARNING OF KNOWLEDGE WITH THE COMMUNITY .....	31
EUROPEAN TO MATCH WITH 'NORTH AMERICAN' .....	35
CROCODILE'S GIFT: DIFFERENT WAYS OF KNOWING.....	39
<b>LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS .....</b>	<b>41</b>

# Message from the PIMA President

By Shirley Walters

Living with multiple and interrelated economic, political, cultural, and environmental crises, many educational policymakers, teachers, researchers, and scholar-activists recognise the need to develop new and different ways of knowing. Central questions for those concerned with transformation are: which ways of knowing and what kind of knowledge are most helpful for these times? This PIMA Bulletin Special Issue, jointly produced with the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, addresses these questions amongst others.

Through the co-chair holders, Drs Budd Hall, and Rajesh Tandon, Maeva Gauthier (University of Victoria) and Niharika Kaul (PRIA) were invited to be co-editors. We thank them sincerely for undertaking this task with great aplomb. The timing of the Bulletin is planned to feed into the UNESCO's 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference in Higher Education, Barcelona, 18-20 May 2022. We encourage all those concerned with 'knowledge democracy' to share the ideas within the bulletin far and wide.

PIMA members look outwards to engage real-world crises as active citizen-educators-scholars towards greater socio-economic and ecological justice. If you would like to know more or consider becoming a PIMA member, please consult [www.pimanetwork.com](http://www.pimanetwork.com)

This jointly produced Bulletin is another example of the cooperative spirit amongst networks and organisations, which PIMA applauds. We thank warmly the co-editors and the UNESCO Chair for this collaboration.

# Global Perspectives on Democratising Higher Education

## Introduction to the Special Issue: A New Horizon for Higher Education

By the Editors: Maéva Gauthier and Niharika Kaul



(Fig 1: A Yamantaka Mandala, symbolic representation in Tibetan Buddhism. Credits: VTibet.com)

The *Mandala*, a Sanskrit word meaning “circle” or “discoid object,” is believed to represent different dimensions of the universe and holds symbolic value in Buddhism and Hinduism. It is believed that by entering the mandala and proceeding towards its center, one is guided through the cosmic process of transforming the universe from one of suffering into one of happiness, by restoring inner peace and wisdom within (Invaluable Blog, 2018). The Mandala’s symbolism holds particular relevance for this Special Issue, as we call upon higher education institutions to take a reflective approach, and bring about the change within their institutions, for building a higher education ecosystem which is inclusive, sustainable, and equitable.

The Pandemic has caused social, economic, political, and cultural upheaval across the world over the past two years. However, it has also given us a chance to rethink the present for a better, fairer, and more equal future. Higher education institutes (HEIs) are now playing a greater role in creating a socially responsible cohort of next generation individuals. As Prof. Dzulkipli Abdul Razak states in his Forward for the book *Socially Responsible Higher Education: International Perspectives on Knowledge Democracy*:

In short, this is an exciting time where higher education is pit against the search for the much-touted 'new normal'. This includes new approaches to health and well-being, as well peace and harmonious living.

The [3<sup>rd</sup> UNESCO World Higher Education Conference](#) (WHEC22) is taking place in May 2022 at a critical juncture, as higher education institutions around the world are finding new ways of reorienting their three missions, i.e. teaching, research and service. The Conference will focus on the impact of Covid-19 on higher education; higher education and the SDGs; inclusion in higher education; quality and relevance of programmes; data and knowledge production among other themes.

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Higher Education**

The theme 'Higher Education and the SDGs' holds particular relevance as higher education institutions are increasingly recognising the value of implementing SDGs in a locally and contextually relevant manner for addressing global crises such as climate change, hunger, poverty, gender inequalities and so on. The Knowledge for Change Global Consortium (K4C), an [initiative](#) of the UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, brings together academics and practitioners in locally based hubs around the world to conduct Community-based Participatory Research with their local communities. It has exemplified how expert knowledge by academics that is built on local communities' knowledges can together address locally relevant societal challenges through mutually beneficial relationships between academia and the community.

Universities around the world are using innovative means to implement SDGs through their teaching, research, and engagement initiatives. For instance, National Law Universities in India are implementing several SDGs through 'Centres of Excellence' for Research and Development, which initiate activities with social impacts (Hall and Tandon 2021). Similarly, Ecole des hautes études en santé publique (EHESP), the leading public health higher education institution in France has been institutionalising SDG implementation; its professional education offerings include 60% of programmes related to SDG 1, SDG3, SDG 10, SDG 16 and SDG 17. Every public health registrar is now expected to show evidence of leadership in sustainable development during

the training. Such examples are testament to the growing relevance and responsibility of HEIs in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda.

### **Inclusion and diversity: Leaving no one behind**

In addition, the themes of decolonization of knowledge and open science are crucial to the process of reshaping our institutions and moving forward in achieving the SDGs. Being inclusive of a diversity of knowledges, accepting Indigenous knowledge as science, creating education opportunities outside of the academic walls, ensuring that knowledge is accessible to all, are all important themes that play an integral role in creating an inclusive higher education ecosystem, and are discussed in detail in this bulletin.

In this issue, we bring together different perspectives on higher education's contributions to building a knowledge democracy. We highlight what changes have been taking place in various regions of the world, and in what ways civil society has influenced and continues to influence research and teaching. We look at ways in which higher education institutions are becoming open to communities around them and are partnering with institutional and community stakeholders to learn from diverse forms and types of knowledge systems and co-create contextually relevant solutions.

Let us take advantage of this interconnected world to share our vision for the future of higher education, dream big, and mainstream those ideas in institutions of higher education. We hope to see you in person or virtually at the World Higher Education Conference in Barcelona in May 2022!

## About the World Higher Education Conference (WHEC22)

By Maéva Gauthier, University of Victoria; Research Assistant, UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education

The UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC2022) aims at reshaping ideas and practices in higher education to ensure sustainable development for the planet and humanity. The 3rd World Higher Education Conference (WHEC2022) will bring together relevant stakeholders to define and prepare a roadmap for a new era of [higher education](#). This roadmap will respond to the challenges faced by humanity and the planet, with special attention to the [global disruption created by the COVID-19](#). It will look at both the higher education systems (norms, policies, structures, stakeholders) and institutions (universities, specialized entities, networks). UNESCO is organizing the WHEC2022 to offer new knowledge, innovative ideas, creative alliances, and produce an enlarged and reinvigorated coalition of the global higher education community in favour of the [2030 Agenda for Development](#) and beyond. The WHEC2022 is organised by UNESCO and in partnership with GUNi/ACUP.

Higher education systems have dramatically changed in the last two decades. Since the 1st World Conference on Higher Education in 1998, the places, spaces, and modalities of higher education have changed immeasurably. The 1st Conference called upon Member States to find answers to emerging challenges to higher education and undertaking in-depth reforms to address them with urgency and relevance. Considerable progress was achieved in terms of greater attention to higher education as a responsibility of States. A decade later, the Communiqué of the 2009 2nd World Conference demonstrated a commitment by all stakeholders to recognise higher education as a public good, and the major force in building inclusive and diverse knowledge societies and advancing research, innovation, and creativity.

The key themes of the WHEC2022 will be:

- Impact of Covid-19 on Higher Education
- Higher Education and the SDGs
- Inclusion in Higher Education
- Quality and Relevance of Programmes
- Academic Mobility in Higher Education
- Higher Education Governance
- Financing Higher Education
- Data and Knowledge Production
- International Cooperation to Enhance Synergies

- The Futures of Higher Education

The UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education (also known as ‘the Chair’) and partners are planning and supporting a series of events during the main technical Conference and the Higher Education Week. Readers will find additional information about the Chair’s events below in this Bulletin. With the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCU), the Chair supported a series of consultations with higher education partners, Indigenous leaders in higher education, which will take the form of short reports submitted to the Conference. In addition, the Chair and its partners prepared policy briefs which touch on the topic of Inclusion, Open Science and Data and Knowledge Production, Higher Education and the SDGs, and Social Responsibility in Higher Education.

### **Events proposed by the UNESCO Chair in collaboration with Partners for WHEC22**

A series of events are being planned by the UNESCO Chair and their partners as part of the World Higher Education Conference (May 18-20) and the Higher Education Week (May 14-20). The exact day and time for the events are still under development, but we can share the event description and participants (in-person or virtually). You can contact Maeva ([maeva@uvic.ca](mailto:maeva@uvic.ca)) or Niharika ([niharika.kaul@pria.org](mailto:niharika.kaul@pria.org)) for more detail as we get closer to the conference.

#### *An Indigenous Perspectives Circle on the Future of Higher Education*

Led in person by Dr. Lorna Williams, a Lil’wat scholar and Dr. Marie Battiste, Potlotek First Nation, Cape Breton University in Canada with participation from:

- Dr. Elmer Guy, President of the Navajo Technical University and co-Chair of the World Indigenous Higher Education Council,
- Dr. Laurie Robinson, Executive Director of the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council in Ontario, Canada and
- Dr. Sonajharia Minz an Indian academician and an Adivasi activist. from Chotanagpur and Vice-Chancellor in Sido Kanhu Murmu University, Dumka
- Dr. Elisabeth Kaine, Huron-Wendat First Nations, UNESCO Chair in the Transmission of First People’s Culture to Foster Well-Being and Empowerment, Quebec,
- Robin Rowe, Anishinaabe-kwe, Indigenous Data Lead, Health Data Research Network, Canada
- Tracy Herbert, CEO, First People’s Cultural Council
- Wangoola Wangoola Ndawula, Nabyama, Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity, Busoga Kingdom, Uganda

### *Decolonization of Open Science and the Future of Higher Education*

- Led by Dr. Leslie Chan, Knowledge Equity Lab, University of Toronto with:
- Dr. Liette Vasseur, UNESCO Chair in Community Sustainability and President of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO,
- Dr. Rajesh Tandon, PRIA, India, UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research
- Robyn Rowe, Anishinaabe-kwe, Indigenous Data Lead, Health Data Research Network, Canada
- Dr. Laura Czerniewicz, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Prof. Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, Vice-Chancellor International Islamic University, Malaysia
- Dr. Sonajhira Minz, Vice-Chancellor, Sido Kanhu Murmu University, Dumka, India
- Dr. Muzaimi Mustapha, School of Medical Science, Universiti Sain Malaysia, Malaysia

### *Bridging Knowledge Cultures-Examining the differences between academic and community modes of knowledge creation, validation and use*

Led by: Budd Hall and Rajesh Tandon, Co-Chairs of the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education with:

- Dr. Walter Lepore, Director, Bridging Knowledge Cultures Project, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria
- Dr. Muzaimi Mustapha, School of Medical Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia
- Dr. Andrea Vargiu, Professor of Social Policy, Sassari University, Italy
- Dr. Nabila Naili, Professor, Sunan Ampel University, Surabaya, Indonesia
- Dr. Lesley Wood, Professor, NorthWest University, South Africa
- Dr. Irma Flores, Professor, University of the Andes, Colombia

### *The Justice Imperative: Knowledge Democracy, Higher Education and the SDGs*

Led by Dr Andrea Vargiu, Sassari University, Sardinia, Italy and Dr. Rajesh Tandon, PRIA, India with:

- Dr. Rocio Cos Garduno, Ibero Americana University, Mexico City
- Dr. Maura Adshead, Director of Engagement, Limerick University, Ireland
- Dr. Mahazan Abdul Mutaib, Islamic Science University, Malaysia
- Dr. Victor Paul, Christ University, Bengaluru, India
- Prof. Alfonso Reyes Alvarado, Rector, University of Ibague, Colombia
- Dr. David Monk, Knowledge for Change Hub, Gulu University, Uganda



- Dr. Rene Oosthuizen, Engaged Citizen Programme, Rhodes University, South Africa

*Shifting Architectures of Knowledge through Community-University Engagement and the Future of Higher Education*

Led by Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Co-chair UNESCO Chair in CBR/SR, New Delhi, India and Dr. Thomas Farnell, architect of the TEFCE European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education, with:

- Dr. Maura Adshead, Head of Engagement, University of Limerick, Ireland,
- Dr. Nabiela Naily, Professor, Sunan Ampel Islamic University, Surabaya, Indonesia,
- Prof Irma Flores, Head of Colombia K4C Hub, University of the Andes, Bogota, Colombia,
- George Openjuru, Vice-Chancellor, Gulu University, Uganda,
- Prof Lesley Wood, NorthWest University, South Africa

# Knowledge Democracy and Its Commodification: Where from and where to for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)?

By Chris Duke, Editor, PIMA Bulletin

The idea that **knowledge** is a commodity to buy and sell underpins the world of intellectual property (IP) and copyright, where knowledge is a tradeable property. It was not always thus. Nor were universities always as we know them today.

As other instincts and understandings stir, we begin again to respect and even understand a little about what knowledge was and meant to First Nations peoples. In pre-literary times knowledge and its use as applied wisdom depended on verbal transmission via the elders of nations, communities, and societies. With writing, knowledge came to be recorded and gradually democratised with the widening of literacy.

Preservation was essentially conservative, initially as a specialism on behalf of the society. Cultural transmission widened as more people came to gain access, moving to mass literacy and 'three Rs' campaigns as we know them. In the remembering, was identity: knowing who and what we were, how to live and behave. We also learnt to create new ideas, put things together in different ways, and learn from one another, past and present, in putting knowledge to work. But other ways of knowing and learning persisted.

**Universities** evolved over recent millennia in different places and forms: vehicles for conserving, teaching, and transmitting knowledge. Small, and few, they grew with the specialisation and professionalisation required for governing and managing modern states. As well as storing knowledge they taught essential skills of their era. As the world was opened and connected up, they became more complex, building identities and status through pre-industrial into post-industrial revolution eras.

The university, as we now know it, along with the Higher Education Institution (HEI) system, is barely two centuries old, swept up in the political, philosophical, and economic wave of the mercantile and colonial era to guide and mirror modernisation. It acquired what is now a dominating function of creating as well as transmitting knowledge and skills: research. Alongside, a social function evolved less obviously: the socialisation of a class of men and later also women preparing to be rulers; making connections and acquiring the status, manners, and knowledge of those 'born to rule'.

These two relatively new functions – **research and social stratification and reproduction** – reflect, align with, and reinforce the characteristics of modern societies and came to serve them. **Systems of HEIs** rapidly morphed into ‘mass HE’: internally diverse, hierarchical, with many thousands of institutions where there were few.

**The new world of universities.** This transformation altered the character and social role of universities as creators as well as repositories of important high-value knowledge. That knowledge could be turned to financial profit attracting high fee-paying students worldwide, having specialised understanding, knowledge, and skills of high market value in competitive and wealthy countries, and enrolling wealthy citizens, draining human resources from countries in greater need. Teaching and student numbers remained ‘core business’ as HEIs marketed themselves to sell places worldwide.

Rankings grew that serve to rank-order HEIs. Indicators vary between competing ranking agencies and change over the years. The agencies have become competitive enterprises: a whole industry with the paraphernalia of professional bodies, conferences etc. (For more insight into the global rankings industry see the work of Ellen Hazelkorn.)

For all the churning and changing of ranking criteria, it is research input and output (grant income and refereed papers in high-rated journals) which determine fortunes, literally and figuratively. The **ratings industry** has captured prestige-giving to institutions, and tenured appointment and promotion to individuals.

In this process, just preceding the main information and communications technology (ICT) explosion, ‘research assessment exercises’ provided the means on which HEI success depended. Their ‘really useful knowledge’ was commodified, given a market rating, and sold, while big publishing houses acquired control of much of this marketable product. Scholars and their employers provided and polished the material at little cost to prestige journals which then fell under market and IP laws.

An **unintended consequence** has been to undervalue other kinds of knowledge. ‘Non-research intensive’ universities provide mass education without the status and rewards of ‘good’ and ‘great’ institutions. The universality of national and global rankings tempts HEIs away from work with and for local communities, in order to be conventionally successful. HEIs and their scholars may still work with local communities, especially in popular knowledge creation and in participatory action research put to immediate use, but they swim against the tide.

The price of top-ranked universities’ knowledge is high. Much of it is locked away where only those with wealth can afford access. The rules and conventions governing publishing and disseminating knowledge tend to concentrate wealth and power within

highly specialised scholarly and professional communities, and in wealthy institutions and libraries that can afford to buy the knowledge they have themselves created. The plight of an unstable and poorly governed world is deprived of the full range of knowledge essential for sustainable and effective progress. The curriculum of the top universities no longer lives up to the *universal* promise of its name.

**Game and set but not match?** Knowledge thus commodified is far from the 'knowledge democracy' that champions of access and equity, empowering people, producing knowledge together and putting it to good use, favour. A new irony however is that new ICT and big data systems applied to the world of HE, that enabled their survival throughout the global Covid-19 Pandemic by 'virtual teaching', also creates massive new learning – and knowledge-making – opportunities via the Internet and social media.

A Google search used with moderate judgment opens a worldwide open library to a worldwide community of users. It outranks the storehouse of great HE libraries and the listings of big publishers. The movement towards flexible, decentralised and minimally regulated open access publishing uses the same new ICTs but it opens the making, owning and practical use of knowledge to all.

The collusive power of 21<sup>st</sup> century HE systems and the 'good universities' will no doubt sustain momentum for years to come. But there has already been loss of control of knowledge, and the stranglehold of universities and publishing houses over academic knowledge is breaking down. Universities and HE systems are gaining new freedoms, choices, and potential. There is keen interest in understanding the wisdom and ways of older societies; and local community learning for action has been enriched not only by the direct engagement of university scholars and the need for local community co-learning with covid-19 - silver lining to a global cloud.

The modern university may already have had its heyday. It is witness to and sometimes an active player in the process of breaking through a fiscalising stranglehold which 'knows the price of everything and the value of nothing', allowing universities to evolve as new centres for collaborative global-local learning.

This may appear naively simple. Big changes have however proved to be rapid and simple, as the popular culture of whole societies evolves, the 'narrative' alters, and a 'new normal' takes shape. Each HEI and HE system then face a choice of direction: to close in and tighten up further; or to choose a new identity, rebalance its profile towards not less but more participatory democracy.

## **Knowledge for Change Global Consortium (K4C)**

By Rajesh Tandon and Budd Hall, Co-Chairs, UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education

Our UNESCO Chair was created in 2012 at the request of UNESCO with whom we had worked on the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education. During the first five years of our work as Chairs, we carried out two major international research projects to gain insights into the 'state-of-the-art' around the world in the field of community-university research partnerships and training for community-based participatory research. As a result of these studies, which can be found as free downloadable books in our website ([www.unescochair-cbrsr.org](http://www.unescochair-cbrsr.org)), we learned that young people working in community sectors as well as in universities had a difficult time accessing learning opportunities that provided insights into the complexities of this kind of work. University courses most often lacked engagement in community. Community-led courses often lacked the theoretical aspects of the work.

After consultations with our partners in various parts of the world, we decided to design a pedagogical model that could offer opportunities for the next generation of young people to learn both the theories and practices of community-based participatory research. We named this the Knowledge for Change (K4C) Global Consortium for the Training of Community-Based Participatory Research. At the heart of the consortium, we placed the K4C Hub. A K4C Hub is a formal partnership between a community organisation and a higher education institution whereby the partners agree to work together to provide learning opportunities to both community workers and university students. The hubs are aligned as well with one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the years since the Global Consortium was launched, potential hubs have indicated their interest to our Chair. Upon working out their own MoUs between community and academic partners, the hubs have nominated up to five mentors to take the Mentor Training Programme (MTP) that is offered as a 21-week on-line and face-to-face basis (COVID permitting). Upon completion of the MTP, the hubs are free to begin teaching their own courses in their regions. We offer two cohorts of the MTP each year.

We invite anyone interested in exploring the creation of a K4C hub in their part of the world to contact our Chair.

## **Leave No One Behind: Repositioning Higher Education for Achieving SDGs**

By Dr. Andrea Vargiu, Rector's Delegate for Public Engagement, University of Sassari and Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Founder-President, PRIA and Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, on behalf of the Knowledge for Change Global Consortium (K4C)

UNESCO's Third World Conference on Higher Education (WHEC22) that will take place in Barcelona on May 18-20, 2022, sets the ambitious goal of "reshaping ideas and practices in higher education to ensure sustainable development for the planet and humanity". The Conference programme is organized around ten thematic streams. Inclusion in higher education is one of them. The UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility of Higher Education is conveying a wide range of contributions from the Global South and the excluded North on inclusion in relation to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To do so, we are promoting policy dialogues and conversations based on stories and experiences from the Knowledge for Change Consortium (K4C). Evidence from case studies analysed against theoretical and empirical insights emerging from our inquiry on socially responsible higher education (Hall and Tandon 2021) provide some food for thought.

### **A Critical Approach to SDGs**

The Sustainable Development Goals provide a coherent framework to steer inclusive action and to orient responsible institutional change within higher education. They also favour the positive alignment of the different components of higher education systems. SDGs act as hinges in so far as they favour the connection between policy and research agendas with societal needs, and ensure their finetuning at different scales: local, regional, and global. In connecting research and teaching to well charted societal challenges, they also help overcoming fragmentation of knowledge and favour more holistic and pragmatic approaches which solicit dialogue, exchange and contamination among diverse disciplines, epistemologies, knowledge cultures and practices.

The Conference motto “Leave no one behind” is an unequivocal incitement to abandon the unreasonable idea that competition can act as the major driving force of science

---

SDGs are not a static set of prescriptive intents and tasks, but rather a dynamic system of goals under constant revision and transformation. Critical thinking is a traditional capacity of higher education, that can contribute to progressive improvement of SDGs through their regular testing in teaching, research, and service. Continuous scrutiny is necessary to prevent incongruous appropriation of SDGs aimed at serving homologating and discriminatory practices and purposes, like, for instance, their incorporation in global rankings.

The Report of the Independent Expert Group on the Universities and the 2030 Agenda eloquently calls for HEIs to value all forms of life, embrace sustainable forms of life, and become open to society, by putting these values into practice in their teaching and research activities. By focussing knowledge on equity and sustainability, first and foremost is the need for HEIs to put cross-disciplinary teaching as a primary goal of their teaching and learning approach (Expert Group Report). In addition, rankings and assessments are important motivational factors for HEIs, and valuing HEIs' contributions and collaborations with societal partners for achieving SDGs within the ranking metrics can hugely incentivise such initiatives (Expert Group Report).

Finally, training teachers to understand the relevance of SDGs in HEIs' 3 missions, and how to implement SDG-related curricula and pedagogical approaches at their institutions is equally crucial (Expert Group Report). Community-based Participatory Research training models such as the K4C model are effective training strategies which can be used for training faculty and students at HEIs. Sensitisation of teachers and students about the value of sustainability in their local contexts, in mutually beneficial partnerships with their local communities, embedded in local cultures and languages, can help trickle down the impact of SDG implementation at ground level.

The appropriation of SDGs by higher education institutions needs to take place from below, to serve contextual responsiveness, rather than being yet another pre-formatted standard enforced from above.

## **Indigenous Perspectives on Open Science and the Decolonization of Knowledge**

By Dr. Lorna Wanósts'a7 Williams, Lil'wat First Nation, Professor Emerita, University of Victoria in collaboration with UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education; Indigenous Nations Higher Educational Council; Canadian Commission for UNESCO; Indigenous Advanced Education, and Skills Council, Ontario, Canada

Indigenous Perspectives on Open Science and the Decolonization of Knowledge is an important contribution to theme 3 (Inclusion in Higher Education) at WHEC 22. It is the product of The World Virtual Indigenous Circle on Open Science, and the Decolonization of Knowledge which took place November 12, 2020. It was organized by the UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, co-hosted by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium. The format was designed by Lorna Wanósts'a7 Williams.

The Circle featured nearly 20 Indigenous speakers and attracted some 300 registrants from around the world. Its purpose was to inform UNESCO's drafting of a recommendation on open science and, in turn, to ensure that Indigenous knowledge is incorporated respectfully and with integrity to help reshape how higher education institutions recognize and use it. The aim of this brief is to share our recommendations on the next of many steps toward ensuring that Indigenous knowledge is better recognized worldwide, so that it can guide individuals and institutions in higher education, in research, and in protecting the Earth.

### **Why this policy conversation is needed**

We are sharing this contribution with you in words which come from our circle. Our circle has been shaped to name the bundle of knowledge that will guide the way in which Indigenous peoples' knowledge is continued and created from all over the world. Our knowledge systems, our languages, our identities, have been under assault for generations and generations. And it was in a prophecy that the time would come when we would join together to ensure that our knowledges would continue. As Indigenous People, we have been working with our ancestors and with the lands, with all our



relatives, so that our knowledge systems continue to be used and known, and to be gifted by us to our descendants. We're here to add our knowledges to the world.

Each of the words shared in this article helps to shape what inclusion of Indigenous knowledge looks like in the context of higher education and beyond. We share so that that knowledge is used in a respectful way—and so that it doesn't become distorted, that it's honest and full of integrity; so that it's protected, but it is also a part of the world. We're coming out from the shadows. Each of these words will add and shape that knowledge so it can be remembered, and so it can be a guide for all of us continuing forward in education and in research, in studies and in the reshaping of institutions to protect and to uphold our mother, the Earth, our father, the Sun and all our relatives.

### **Key Messages**

Although each webinar participant brought a unique perspective - connecting Indigenous knowledge to political activism, the importance of storytelling and cross-cultural dialogue, the global class struggle, the intersection of Indigenous language and mental health care, and more - some central themes emerged:

- The knowledge that Indigenous people accumulated for thousands of years before the emergence of “civilization” is not only valuable, but necessary for the continued existence of humans on Earth. Science can no longer ignore the wisdom that comes from Indigenous knowledge systems that have been around since time immemorial and can benefit future generations.
- The Earth is facing a crisis. The broader scientific community can help to address this crisis and restore equilibrium by supporting Indigenous scientific communities. A central goal of Indigenous knowledge is sustainability, and it is built on relationships rather than on what can be measured.
- Western science is linked to money. Indigenous science is about love of land. The continuity of Indigenous science is therefore linked to the continuity of life on Earth.
- Indigenous people around the world will explain science in different ways and emphasize different aspects, but all operate from the same paradigm and share a way of understanding themselves in the world, including how they come to knowledge and self-understanding.
- Indigenous language and knowledge are intertwined, and both are at the heart of cultural survival and identity. A reinvigoration of Indigenous languages and

cultures can help Indigenous populations reclaim space, dignity, equality, justice and liberty.

- Despite long traditions of Indigenous science that are now being appreciated and reimplemented, the practice of Western science has systemically excluded Indigenous thought, Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous peoples. Western knowledge and its proponents continue to seek to privilege it over other forms and origins of knowledge, both in mainstream media and in formal education.
- Indigenous knowledge can help communities to regain autonomy and self-governance by improving cross-cultural dialogue.
- The effects of colonization are alive and well in many of the world's Indigenous communities. The starting point for decolonizing knowledge is to decolonize countries, nations, peoples and their languages.

### **Central discussion points**

Indigenous People in many parts of the world have experienced what one webinar participant termed “the long assault”: a 500-year-long attack on their territories, cultures, languages, and knowledges. This systematic move to silence and devalue Indigenous perspectives can be seen as a form of intellectual colonization.

Today we are engaged in the work of educating people that Indigenous knowledge has value, and that considering other knowledges does not jeopardize their own. It is an effort to appreciate that the Indigenous knowledge that people continue to hold is precious, and to recognize that it has continued despite a centuries-long effort to silence it.

Indigenous scholars and activists around the world have diverse languages, cultures, and histories, but they take strength from important commonalities that emerge in their epistemologies. They agree on the importance of decolonizing knowledge and establishing a shared infrastructure to support the re-emergence of and renewed respect for their languages and knowledges.

The importance of this work is gaining recognition among Canadian pillars and funders of research, such as the tri-agency composed of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council.

Speakers agreed that language is an essential starting point for reasserting the value and application of Indigenous knowledge, as they are indivisible. They agreed that the

richness of Indigenous knowledge systems arises from an intimate tradition of knowing and caring for the land and relationships, with a focus on continuity, and that it is time to for these traditions to be brought into the mainstream and given the same serious consideration as “western” knowledge.

Some speakers touched upon the intersection of western and Indigenous knowledges, drawing attention to the value that can be derived from bringing traditional knowledge into universities and having Indigenous institutions work alongside western ones. These ideas are connected to the need to ensure access to quality education for Indigenous people everywhere, and to ensure Indigenous ways of knowing are incorporated into educational institutions so that they can be considered universal rather than western. That said, mainstream agencies must be pushed to reflect on the need to develop an ethical space from which to frame a relationship between themselves (and the State) and Indigenous peoples.

Many presenters spoke of the persistence of colonization, or its effects in their communities in physical, linguistic, economic and cultural domains. All spoke about the daily challenges of pushing back to hold space in their minds to engage in the important work of cultural survival and to remain involved in supporting cultural reclamation.

We are aware of the struggles involved in bringing Indigenous languages into the light. The reclamation and use of language and the participation of people in Indigenous cultural work is in itself a political act. As Kevin Lowe phrased it in his summation of the webinar: “We need to never forget that the ongoing work of the neo-colonial state has been to deny prior occupation, sovereignty and intimate connectedness between Indigenous People, their country and knowledge systems.”

We recommend that you read the full report of by Chan et al. (2020) and access the webinar cited below to read all the contributions from the speakers involved in the circle.

Our policy recommendations for Higher Education Institutions that will be shared at WHEC22:

- Acknowledge Indigenous Knowledge as science
- Recognise Indigenous spiritual practices as vital to guide and inform Indigenous Knowledge
- Support the revitalization of Indigenous cultures and languages, recognizing that they are integral to Indigenous Knowledge
- Work towards an understanding of science that prioritizes relationality – relationships with people, community, land, and all Creation

- Recognize an Indigenous conception of time that ensures longevity of relationships and sustainability for future generations

## References

Chan, L., Hall, B., Piron, F., Tandon, R., and Williams, L., “*Open Science Beyond Open Access: For and with communities. A step towards the decolonization of knowledge*”, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO’s IdeaLab, Ottawa, Canada, July 2020  
([https://unescochair-cbrsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/OS\\_For\\_and\\_With\\_Communities\\_EN.pdf](https://unescochair-cbrsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/OS_For_and_With_Communities_EN.pdf))

Canadian Commission for UNESCO World Indigenous Circle on Open Science and the Decolonization of Knowledge – Webinar Report ([https://www.unescochair-cbrsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/IndcircleWebinar\\_report\\_Final\\_01.pdf](https://www.unescochair-cbrsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/IndcircleWebinar_report_Final_01.pdf))

# Regional Perspectives

## The Limerick K4C Hub: A European Perspective

By Niharika Kaul, Research Associate, PRIA (on behalf of the Limerick K4C Hub members)

The University of Limerick (UL) has been actively promoting civic engagement in Irish higher education, especially through the Limerick Hub established through the Knowledge for Change Global Consortium (K4C). Through the Campus Engage Initiative at the university, it offers a 'life cycle approach' to existing engaged activities - in schools' outreach, university access initiatives, community-based learning and engaged research (ABC to PhD!) - recognizing that university investment in one area may ultimately deliver benefits to another, and over a longer time frame than is currently acknowledged. The K4C Global Consortium's framework will enable greater coordination of current engaged activities, in a way that enables the University to recognize the longer time horizons necessary to achieve a positive social impact in local communities.

Not only does this model create an enduring relationship but it will also enable the university to expand some existing activities and rationalize others, providing an organizational infrastructure that facilitates a better coordinated, more consistent, and sustainable university presence in local communities. Using the K4C training programme to support the re-purposing of current staff roles has also enabled the Hub mentors to revise existing curriculum content, to build both disciplinary and trans-disciplinary capacity for effective and impactful engagement, by 'up-grading' existing programmes with engaged content. Two initiatives of the Limerick Hub have gained particular attention as successful examples of community-university engagement: *Comhrá* Project and The Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life skills (CWELL) diploma.

*Comhrá* (conversation) offers a series of short video vignettes featuring community practitioners in conversation with UL staff. The project, which is led by the K4C

mentors in Languages and Culture, Dr Deirdre Ní Loingsigh and Dr Orfhlaith Ní Bhriain, focuses on developing a set of teaching and learning resources for staff and students interested in best practice community engagement.

As if foretelling the move to online teaching that COVID-19 necessitated, the vignette design was intended to provide a more creative narrative approach to teaching and learning, incorporating storyboarding and video-production into bespoke thematic topics concerning Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR). Focusing on a variety of themes and key issues in CBPR, including for example: research reciprocity, interculturalism, reflective practice, transformative learning, and use of language, the vignettes will be used as discussion triggers and in flipped learning activities.

This vignette design and knowledge exchange will inform other T&L initiatives, at UL and beyond, where curated conversations, video-production, and tailor-made activities, using a theoretically sound pedagogical framework, are of interest. The personal accounts and real-life experiences of some of the issues that require attention in CBPR are addressed in an authentic way in the *Comhrá* project and that these resources will be a welcome contribution to UL curriculum resources. Stage two of the project will involve the creation of a supporting tutor guide. This initiative was awarded FAHSS Teaching and Learning Board funding 2020-21 and is also supported by UL Engage.

The Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life skills (CWELL) diploma is a unique academic programme that has been co-designed with local Limerick communities to address their community-identified needs. The CWELL diploma programme represents a long-term university commitment to supporting both individuals and communities in under-represented parts of Limerick. The course acronym reflects the curriculum content, which is designed to apply to both individual and community needs in terms of: managing physical and mental well-being; empowering individuals and groups to identify and advocate for their needs; and developing the necessary leadership and life skills to address personal and community development objectives in a proactive and strategic manner.

CWELL presents more collaborative way of learning in the community, one where local knowledge is recognized as having a real value. The ambition of the University is to engage with the community, utilizing the store of tacit knowledge and experience that already exists in local communities, and combining this with university support and expertise. In the second year of their CWELL diploma, CWELL students are joined by students on the MA Community Research+ programme. Together both cohorts of students work in teams, supported by a network of local partnerships, to co-design and deliver local projects which address an identified need. Each year students design and delivery projects in their own communities based on the needs they have identified.

The Limerick Hub's innovative community engagement initiatives have successfully addressed SDGs in their local contexts, and in the process also integrated the three missions of higher education.

## Grandparents and Academe

By Darren Lortan, Associate Prof. of Mathematics and Durban University of Technology, South Africa

In my many conversations with colleagues and partners within the sphere of community engagement and social responsibility in higher education, I have often tried to illustrate the notion of knowledge democracy by likening it to language democracy. For the purposes of this article, I will loosely describe language democracy as the means by which communication (both oral and written) is promoted without any prerequisite levels of sophistication being allowed to impede the communication process.

This is a working definition and as part of this process I welcome others to help me refine the description of language democracy. Simple examples of language democracy in action are the types of conversations that take place between a grandparent and grandchild. Early in such relationships the elder may accommodate the other with age-appropriate conversations. Midway through such relationships, the teenager may be the one doing the accommodating, while in the latter stages of the relationship accommodation may not be necessary.

A less familial example would be the conversations that may take place between a teacher and a student across the early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary phases of the education spectrum. Some may posit that for such conversational settings to be meaningful, it is the student whose understanding should be centred and engendered. To facilitate this, the teacher needs to be accommodating in the appropriateness of conversations (*what to teach and how to teach it*). Some may argue that the teacher's understanding should also require some foregrounding, especially in the contexts of those being taught (*who is being taught and how do we teach them*). As any grandparent or teacher may know, the other partners in their relationships – grandchildren and students - are different from each other. In other words, no two grandchildren are the same even if they are genetically similar; neither are two students the same even if they are from the same household. Consequently, grandparenting and teaching should not be one-approach-fits-all activities. Over time these partners (grandchildren and students) change, and grandparenting and teaching should not be a one-approach-for-all-time activity.

Both relationships described above are steeped in power asymmetry. At times these are difficult to ignore, and necessary in terms of accountability and responsibility. Language plays a major role in balancing power differentials in these relationships. Language may be condescending or empowering; divisive or embracing; empathetic or distant. A good grandparent recognises the experience implied in the difference in age between grandparent and grandchild, without exploiting it, as does a good teacher. A good student recognises the difference between what is understood and what is not; and like a loving grandchild feels comfortable expressing in their language when they understand and when they do not. The transition from not understanding (when it appears complicated) to understanding (when it appears simple) needs to be enabled. Thereafter it needs to be confirmed, by the replacement of sophistication with simplicity. The impasse is traversed, the penny drops, and most importantly communication is restored. The objective of language democracy is the valuing by each of the partners of each other's language, and the commitment to sustain communication throughout the duration of the relationship.

My understanding of the Freire approach to education is the recognition of these differences over space and time, and the concomitant development of appropriate approaches to these changes. Encouraging the learner to teach and thereby demonstrate understanding is as important as enabling the teacher to learn and thereby demonstrate compassion and empathy. Similarly, the grandparent may show a grandchild how to fix a broken toy, while the grandchild may show the grandparent how to fix a cell phone. At the heart of the sustainability of these relationships though, is the choice of language.

By choice of language, I do not mean Hindi versus Arabic. I am referring to condescending versus engaging; simple versus complex; and inclusive versus divisive. As a teacher, I continue to hold the view that if I have to clarify any of my explanations more than once, then I must be open to the possibility that previous attempts by me to communicate effectively have been unfruitful. I must be open to learning from my students. I may be teaching or explaining well but not communicating effectively. Effective communication is always interactive and usually learned from experience, experience that is drawn from time spent in a particular space of engagement. For example, it matters when, where and how I engage with people who are not in employment, education, and training (NEETS). In my work in articulation within and across the arena of education, training, and employment, I have encountered among the people described as NEETS some who are seeking a second chance to access one or more of the three categories. Their first attempts are often described as failures and usually ascribed to them.

In a chapter in the *Seventh GUNi Report on Higher Education and the World*, a colleague, Dr Savathrie Maistry and I report on lessons we learned from some of these



second chance learners. Our many exchanges with students of the Jirah Academy, located in the neighbourhood of Wentworth in Durban, are summarised in the Guni Report. The chapter omits our failure to maintain our professional demeanour during tearful conversations, or our failure to limit joyful interruptions during recorded conversations. The recordings from which we extracted data for thematic coding, included tales of hope and triumph against debilitating odds, spoken in a language that was simple, yet eventually reported in a language they would find complex. Their lived experiences were so inspiring that as I recall some of their stories, I smile as I realise what a privilege it was to meet them. Clearly it was the system that had failed, not them.

In successful relationships, the language of choice is dedicated to finding each other and keeping each other in relationship while remaining open to the idea of changing the language as the relationship changes over time. In unsuccessful relationships, language democracy is not promoted, leading to a lack of trust, disharmony and often a breakdown in the relationship. From the national Articulation Policy to the descriptions of articulation in admission handbooks in colleges and universities across South Africa, the language of articulation is not written for those who are intended to be its beneficiaries. If we are not careful in the crafting of our language, soon the people for whom we do this will only be *us*. Cultivating lasting relationships through our participatory approaches may start with us asking what have we been doing wrong, that we must continually change our explanation of why we are here to help?

In conclusion, I must point out that my choice of relationships to illustrate the notion of language democracy, was intentional. I chose two typical relationships entrenched in power asymmetries. Some of you reading this may be wincing at the thought of being portrayed as a child or a student in the metaphorical relationships depicted. I apologise to my colleagues from the hallowed corridors of the academy and government for doing so. It was not intentional.

To be honest, I think the communities with whom we work have been patient grandparents and teachers in our community-university partnerships for far too long. It has been my experience though, that with time our language usage has been coalescing. I remain hopeful that soon we will have an opportunity to demonstrate to them that we understand. What was so complex is beginning to fade into simplicity.

## References

Lortan, D.B. and Maistry, S. M. 2019. A Humanistic and Integral Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics. GUNi Higher Education in the World 7 Humanities and Higher Education: Synergies between Science, Technology and Humanities:479-486.

## **Democratization of Knowledge: A Way Out of the Current Crisis in Higher Education**

By Irma Alicia Flores Hinojos, Associated Professor, University of los Andes, Colombia

In the last three years, the Covid 19 Pandemic showed us the permanent vulnerability to which we human beings are exposed. In this sense, education in general and particularly in higher education is faced an extraordinary challenge to sustain the attention to students during the chaos produced by this event.

In the case of the countries of the Global South, the existing gaps in the educational systems to attend to low-income students became evident in an emergency that made it necessary to meet the demand through virtual education. This, together with the lack of training of teachers to design online courses, and the lack of equipment and infrastructure on the part of both universities and students, significantly affected the educational processes.

At that moment, it was up to the universities to link the different community members to the reality resulting from the Pandemic in an ethical and committed manner, with a professional practice characterized by creativity, and by organizing teams that made use of technology and new educational trends as a basis for dealing with the crisis.

Now that the effects of the Pandemic on the population have been brought under control, universities with organizational resilience are needed. This concept refers to the capacity of any institution to respond in the short, medium, and long term to situations of adversity, to strengthen itself from these situations.

Given the above, several questions arise for higher education institutions: how to create the necessary conditions to achieve organizational resilience; how different stakeholders in higher education institutions should participate in this task; how to democratize knowledge.

These questions cannot be answered from a classical conception that considers the link between the university and the social environment from a predominantly unidirectional model of communication, in which it is the university person who

elaborates the diagnoses, identifies the problems, and the ways to solve them, and on whom the decision-making falls in front of a passive recipient-beneficiary.

From this perspective, it is the University, then, that establishes which knowledge can be culturally promoted, even in areas that fall outside its competence. To change this obsolete logic, it is required to open possibilities, by listening to social demand as a particular form of co-construction of knowledge through dialogue, respectful of different kinds of knowledge, committed and permanent.

To achieve the above, universities and academics must revalue the knowledge produced in other spaces that range from the specific activities of the professions to local, oral, and everyday knowledge, as well as traditions, among others. In this sense, the legitimacy and hegemony of the production of knowledge, historically a task of the University, are in crisis. That is why universities must act within the framework of what social responsibility proposes, reflecting on their role in the democratization of knowledge.

# Transforming Rural Communities with Indigenous Knowledge

By Victor Paul, Professor, Dept of Sociology and Social Work, Christ University, Bangalore, India

## Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in India have a pivotal role in transforming rural communities through creation and integration of Indigenous knowledge. Promoting interaction between higher education institutes and local communities for identifying and solving the real-life problems faced by the communities in a spirit of mutual benefit is important. Exchanging and facilitating collaborative knowledge between higher education institutes and local communities, teachers and students can facilitate learning new knowledge from each other. Higher education institutes can undertake various research-based projects through community-based research methods, test old knowledge, and create new knowledge for addressing the local issues with a participatory approach. There is a clear shift now in interactions between HEIs and Civil Society. Recently India's UGC has introduced Community Based Participatory Research in all the affiliated Universities and colleges in India. This step taken by UGC will certainly improve the interaction between HEI and the civil society and transform the Higher Education landscape in India by co-creating indigenous knowledge.

Keeping the grounded realities in view, higher education institutes should have to develop new approaches which will be more relevant for the local community as well as for students from local areas. This will not only be helpful to education institutes. It will also create new knowledge that is useful to the local community to lead their sustainable life on their own. Christ University Bangalore demonstrated a model of rural development through women's empowerment in 11 villages at Hoskote Taluk of Bangalore Rural district, by creating and demonstrating knowledge through implementing development activities.

## Hoskote Experiments by Christ University, Bangalore

The University, through its centre for social action (CSA), a student voluntary action wing of the University, started a project named 'Chetna' (means **consciousness** that

consists of mind, thoughts, beliefs, and attitude) in the year 2004 in Hoskote Taluk in Bangalore rural district. A major focus of this project was to empower the community, developing the socio-economic situation of the area by implementing sustainable models through community participation and engagement in Primary Education, Nutrition, Sanitation and Hygiene, Health, and livelihood areas. Students and teachers in the University played a significant role in facilitating change through awareness-building and social action activities. A holistic functional approach was developed, 'force and Service'. The project activities lead the community in generating knowledge to address developmental aspects like public health, environment, housing, climate change, sanitation, water management, livelihood, gender equity, and so on.

### **Chetna project model - an example of civil society influences in teaching, research and social action**

Chetna project's initial strategy was to involve every age group in the community viz. children, adolescents, youth, women and aged. Understanding the power of women in the local community to influence change, the project started women empowerment as its strategy for development in the locality. Thus, 62 Self Help Groups (SHGs) were formed, and registered a federation named "Chetna Women and community development Multi-purpose Cooperative Ltd" for sustaining the development activities after the project period from 2012. Currently, this federation is managing the development activities independently in the area of primary education, health, hygiene and sanitation and livelihood in those 11 villages in 5 panchayaths of Hoskote Taluk in Bangalore rural district. They have also started a cooperative bank to help the village community members with financial support for meeting their immediate financial requirements.

The knowledge generated and the experience gained by these local women Self Help Groups (SHGs), over the last 18 years by actively participating in the project is now helping the students to learn from the locality and conduct research on the socio-economic development aspects in the villages. Chetna federation has constructed two community halls in the locality for organising training sessions, meetings, and other community gatherings. Their rapport with the local panchayats and related government departments is helping the village community to get their land and agriculture-related works done smoothly. Faculty and students from the university regularly visit these villages, where women leaders from the federation take sessions on community organisation, SHG, cooperation, rural development, hygiene and sanitation in the villages, financial independence for women etc. Students are also placed in the federation for internships and research works.

The knowledge available with local people and the knowledge with professional teachers and students, when shared, is creating a new horizon of community knowledge for holistic and sustainable development. Student and faculty members

are engaged in research in the areas of land, agriculture, basic amenities, hygiene and sanitation, rural technology, culture, livelihood etc. The University has adopted 6 villages in this project area under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (<https://unnatbharatabhiyan.gov.in:8443/new-website> ) initiated by IIT Delhi ,and demonstrated several projects like providing safe drinking water facilities, improvement of agriculture and promoting solar lamps. Chetna federation is taking up the ownership and supporting all such activities.

### **Knowledge Creation in Community Economy and Livelihood Components**

Through education, academicians and local people can analyse community sources of income generation, livelihood opportunities within the community, challenges, and develop possible ways to overcome them through collaborative efforts of local people and educational stakeholders. Some of the challenges are.

1. As we know the knowledge is co-created or constructed by both academicians and local stakeholders in CBPR. However, the major challenge was engaging the community stakeholders in constructing the knowledge, since the motivation and purpose of the academicians and stakeholders is different.
2. The CBPR recommends that academic researchers and stakeholders equally participate throughout the research process. However, involving the community stakeholders in the whole process is difficult since they were interested in giving the information but not in other processes such as analysing and disseminating. It was challenging to make them understand that they are equal partners and have equal authority and control over the research. building rapport is very important.
3. Other challenges are the lack of time given by the community partners since they are from an agrarian society and their livelihood depends on the day-to-day work and earnings. Hence, it was challenging to engage them continuously in the research and knowledge creation process. Researchers need to plan the meetings as per the convenient time of the community members.

### **Sharing and accepting community members as co-creators of knowledge.**

Experiences from the Hoskote model reveal that the research approach must be a joint partnership with the local community, academic institutes, and civil organizations. Community members and Higher Education Institutions can undertake participative research that can access the local knowledge and generate new knowledge solutions. Local community people can be involved as co-researchers in accessing existing knowledge of the community and generating new knowledge with appropriate findings of local issues.

Higher Educational Institutes can enable the community and its people to acquire knowledge of their own interests. Education helps the community to demonstrate their multiple skills and competencies which are required in their day-to-day life to resolve their problem on their own.

## **IIUM Flagships: Sharing and Learning of Knowledge with the Community**

By Muhammad Faris Abdullah, Romzie Rosman, Abazazilah Mohd Abbas, Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

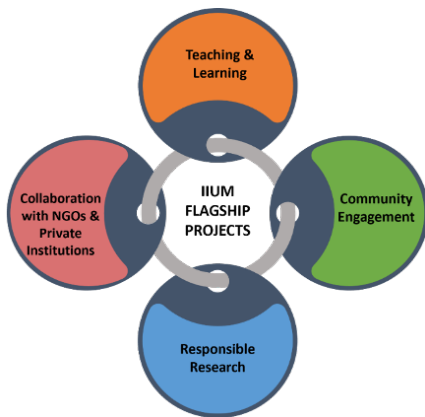
Education at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) has been refashioned in recent years to re-embrace the roles of university for community, or also dubbed as *communiversity*. This involves heightened emphasis on learning and sharing of knowledge with the community to resolve societal problems and uplift the living quality and wellbeing of the community. To this end, the IIUM Flagships programme was established as one of the major platforms for the University community, both staff and students, to work together to engage and empower communities.

IIUM Flagships are a collection of unique and impactful community engagement projects devised to integrate experiential teaching and learning, responsible research, collaborations, and high-touch community engagement (Fig. 1). These are projects that are designed and implemented by the University community themselves. The University only plays the role of strategic coordinator and facilitator, as well as in monitoring the performance of the projects. The first round of the programme, which was from 2019 to 2020, consisted of 29 flagship projects. Currently, the programme is already in its second iteration (2021 to 2022) with 46 flagship projects in operation addressing various societal problems at local, national, and regional levels.

Also critical to each IIUM Flagship project are the elements of transdisciplinarity and indigenisation. To ensure comprehensive solutions to problems, each flagship project consists of project members from various academic faculties, including students, making up pools of talent and expertise to address the problems. Additionally, collaborations with external parties including government agencies, NGOs and private entities also enrich the experiences and ideas in designing the solutions.

Solutions put forward to the communities are locally contextualised by drawing upon the local knowledge, culture, and wisdoms. Ongoing dialogues and discussions between the project members and the community are common, not only to profile the community and the problem at hand, but also to extract local knowledge and culture that can be utilised in the formulation of solutions to ensure that they are acceptable

to the community as well as effective in addressing the problems they are intended to solve.



(Fig. 1: IIUM Flagships as integrated platform for sharing of knowledge)



(Fig. 2: IIUM Flagships coverage of SDGs, the five necessities of human existence, and the IIUM 7 mission statements)

Designed to become one of the main initiatives to propel IIUM towards realising the roles of a *communiversity*, the IIUM Flagships programme is targeted towards addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the five necessities of human existence (or *maqasid shari'ah*), and the University 7 Mission Statements (MS).

Being impactful as they are, all the flagship projects are found to address multiple SDGs, *maqasid shari'ah* principles and the University Mission Statements, although there exists somewhat heavier focus on SDG 4 Quality Education and SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing, and on the protection of intellect and the protection of life principles of the *maqasid shari'ah*. This inclination towards education and health aspects of the society is rather expected, given that IIUM is an educational institution with a dedicated campus for science and medical programmes. In terms of the University mission statements, heavier coverage is afforded to MS2 and MS7. The former focuses on becoming the agents for balanced progress and sustainable development, and the latter deals with inculcating deep sense of social responsibility among staff and students of the University.



As an integrated initiative, IIUM Flagships are also linked to formal and non-formal education at the University to provide the necessary experiential and values-based education to the students. This are done by linking the flagship projects to compulsory University-wide courses related to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the elective courses offered at faculty level. Similarly, to promote responsible research and innovation, dedicated research grants are also offered to researchers working on the flagship projects.

Since its introduction in 2019, the IIUM Flagships programme has been able to capture the interest of the IIUM community as an integrative platform, for them to work together among themselves and with the communities. This is evident in the high number of participations by IIUM community in the flagship projects. The advent of the COVID-19 Pandemic has somewhat affected the recent performance of IIUM Flagships implementation. Many of the community engagement activities had to be put on hold due to restrictions on movement and other limiting COVID-19-related standard operating procedures. Despite the Pandemic, the current iteration of IIUM Flagships has successfully conducted almost 200 community engagement activities involving over 800 community members, 750 IIUM staff and 800 IIUM students.

IIUM Flagships has also been successful in pushing IIUM towards greater height and putting the University on a global stage. The flagship projects contributed significantly to getting IIUM recognised as the Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) on ESD. On 1 April 2020, IIUM was officially recognised as RCE Greater Gombak, focusing on leading the whole community transformation through spirituality and *Sejahtera*. *Sejahtera* is a Malay concept that encompasses aspects of wellbeing, happiness, gratitude, prosperity and more, involving the body, mind and soul. Through IIUM Flagships and other initiatives, IIUM is actively propagating the concept of *Sejahtera*. Additionally, the flagship projects also helped IIUM to win the Sustainability Institution of the Year Award by the International Green Gown in 2020.

The quality and impacts of IIUM flagship projects are also recognised at global level by virtue of some of the projects being awarded the RCE Awards for Innovative Projects on ESD in 2020. These winners included projects that involved eradicating poverty by empowering parents to be financially independent and so to enable children to have access quality education, working with the community to create a network of responsible consumption; providing shelter and rehabilitation to animals; tackling the issue of mental health especially during the Pandemic and beyond; building capacity against extremism, terrorism and conflict through education for sustainability; and exchanging knowledge with indigenous community for sustainable lifestyle.

Knowledge-sharing through IIUM Flagships occurs in several forms. Sharing of knowledge occurs when knowledge and outputs from flagship-related responsible research are transferred to the community either formally or informally through

training, talks, demonstrations, conversations, and others that form parts of the solutions designed for the community.

Knowledge-sharing also occurs when local knowledge is obtained from the community. These are often indigenous, informal, and tacit knowledge, which can be prevalent among the community and thus under-valued by them, but once structured and organised, become highly meaningful and add values to the design of the solutions and education at the University. Knowledge and experience captured through IIUM Flagships are turned into formal and non-formal curriculum modules and academic publications, hence making IIUM Flagships one of the platforms for experiential community-based learning where students get involve with the projects by going to the ground to meet the community and to experience real-world problem-solving first-hand.

At the national level, community-based learning is also increasingly being given emphasis by the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia. In this respect, one of the more established programmes by the Ministry is Service Learning Malaysia (SULAM) – University for Society. Introduced in 2016, ‘SULAM is a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which the student participates in a structured service activity that meets identified community needs, reflects on the service activity and experiences to achieve desired learning outcomes, in such a way as to gain deeper understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility’ (Malaysia Higher Education Department, 2019).

While SULAM is limited to credited course-based programmes and focuses on student experience, IIUM takes a different approach by mainstreaming community engagement projects, including IIUM Flagships, to spur knowledge creation and knowledge-sharing between the University’s staff and students with the community, both formally and informally. In doing so, not only has IIUM been able to realise its potential as a *communiversity*. It also pushes the University to higher levels both locally and globally.

**References:**

- IIUM (2019). IIUM Roadmap 2019-2020 – Whole Institution Transformation.
- IIUM (2021). IIUM Roadmap 2021-2022 – Leading the World.
- Malaysia Higher Education Department (2019). SULAM Playbook: Service Learning Malaysia-University for Society

## European to match with ‘North American’

By Maéva Gauthier, University of Victoria; Research Assistant, UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education

(Based on dialogue on openness of science, with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Leslie Chan, Budd Hall, Florence Piron, Rajesh Tandon, Lorna Williams)

As part of a dialogue on openness of science proposed by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO pursuant to a consultation paper prepared by Leslie Chan, Budd Hall, Florence Piron, Rajesh Tandon and Lorna Williams in July 2020 for the Commission, a series of international webinars took place. The Open Science Webinar Series aimed at understanding different ways of viewing science as a dialogue between knowledges, rather than a knowledge that exists only insofar as it silences or eliminates other knowledges.

Interestingly, the three dimensions of science openness—to publications and data, to society, and to excluded knowledges—are rarely considered together. In fact, they tend to be ignored by the proponents of one or the other. For instance, many action-research scholars do not really check if their work is accessible to society, since many choose to publish in ‘prestigious’ journals or costly books published by for-profit publishers that only people linked to a university can access. Conversely, open access practitioners, most of whom are from the Global North, tend to ignore the plurality of knowledge or even the fact that some interesting and important knowledge could exist outside of mainstream science.



(Fig 1: World Virtual Indigenous Circle held in 2020)

It is desirable to include all three dimensions in UNESCO's future Recommendation on Open Science. This piece highlights some of the key concepts discussed during the North America/Europe Webinar on November 20th, 2020 with Moderator Dr. Leslie Chan, associate professor, University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada, rapporteur Ms. Suriani Dzulkifli, Knowledge for Change Consortium programme manager from our UNESCO Chair, Ms. Ellie Haine-Bennett, Natural Sciences programme officer, Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO), and speakers Dr. Romina Istratii, senior teaching fellow, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK, Dr. Jude Fransman, research fellow, Open University, UK and co-convenor, Rethinking Research Collaboration, and Ms. Angela Okune, PhD candidate, University of California Irvine, USA.

Leslie Chan emphasized during that webinar that there is a need to question the existing structures of knowledge systems and how to challenge these existing barriers; but more importantly, how to reimagine and to think about redesigning some of these knowledge systems. Dr. Romina Istratii highlighted the journey to an Open Access decolonial knowledge production model which needs to be a systemic, people-centred approach. The current system has some issues: the main problem is the disconnect between scholarship and lived experiences. Coming from her experience from a low-income family in Eastern Europe, this contributed to a two-tier knowledge system – non-experts or members of the public typically have access to less rigorous information compared to the privileged scholars.

The dominance of English language is another problem as language and epistemology are interlinked. This influences the standard of theorising and what is valid knowledge, not just terminologies, and can be seen in citation politics, peer review norms, forms of knowledge production and sharing. Funding asymmetries also contribute to this complex multi-dimensional system, as funders' priorities on what was 'excellent research' and what should be funded were primarily informed by northern standards, since funders are mostly based in the Global North. Finally, geographic distribution of publishers is also problematic. Western euro-centric publishing module, citation, indexing, etc. are designed so that Global North research is favoured, intentionally or unintentionally.

So, how do shifts to Open Access and the decolonisation movements affect this system? Efforts have been organised to decolonise knowledge production through a more substantive engagement of non-western, Indigenous, female, and other marginalised voices. Additionally, there have been new publishing initiatives to promote Open Access and knowledge that was immediately accessible; and the diversification of publishing formats, such as films, poetry, ethnographic notes. There have also been efforts to promote Indigenous languages and to connect knowledge production to communities, as a way to ensure that knowledge was relevant to real communities and people. The main concern for Dr Istratii remains the shift to Open Access publishing which despite being presented as a panacea of evenness is still an

initiative that started in Western Europe, primarily informed by the 'hard' Science, not necessarily Social Science and Humanities. It seemed that it has become another publishing business model for large publishers to continue their profit-seeking practices and capitalistic behaviours. She highlighted the need for a more collegial attitude towards Global South colleagues, and an openness to learn from them and with them together.

Ms. Angela Okune spoke to the two concepts of 'situated openness' and 'inclusive research'. First, there is still a high imbalance in regional representation in published academic work in the web of Science. She found, via her work at the Open and Collaborative Science in Development Network (OCSN net), that for many communities, 'open' was not always desirable. Among Indigenous groups in South Africa, 'openness' was associated with colonial extraction of land and knowledge. Rural children and teachers in Kyrgyzstan were suspicious of open practices because of the country's history of authoritarianism. In Argentina, social movement activists feared political prosecution, preferring to protect rather than share information.

Thus, openness must be situated within political, social, cultural and legal relations of possibility and inequality. Situated openness is recognising that openness is not universal, and it is important to acknowledge how history, contexts, power relations and structural inequality condition all scientific production and sharing in a particular context. We must pay attention to the different power relations and perspectives rather than just having one universal 'truth'.

Dr. Jude Fransman highlighted that local and global approaches were important to this discussion of Open Science, and how we could move in local spaces and the different interpretations and manifestations of what the global was, and who had been controlling it. Global South is significantly underrepresented in terms of global research outputs, and this problem has been publicised and informed major funding drives especially in Europe and North America to encourage transnational collaborations in research. Despite this, they were often framed by an agenda set in Europe and North America; and in many cases they might also exacerbate inequality by supporting 'elite' scientists or 'elite' universities, which would create more divide in the Global South. Dr Fransman proposed a framework whereby we think about Science itself as a system based on four interrelated dimensions:

- **Agenda-setting:** who gets to decide what research is important? Which priorities should be funded? Similarly, the decision-making around systems of peer review and evaluation of research
- **Knowledge production:** the design and implementation of Science through different types of methodology and practices in different geopolitical spaces
- **Communication:** which includes publication and patenting, and the uptake and adaptation of research output

- **Use and impact:** learning, assessment, and attribution, for example who is recognised for this Science when processes are highly collaborative and long-term extending over different research teams and contexts?

To access the complete report on this fascinating webinar and discussion, visit this [link](#) and watch the recorded webinar [here](#).

To access the Open Science report that was published in 2020 after the Open Science Webinar Series, visit this [link](#). As the report highlights, “we call for science to be a dialogue between knowledges rather than a knowledge that exists only insofar as it silences or eliminates other knowledges. We call for science that is based on values of cooperation, sharing, friendship, compassion, understanding and refusal to separate personal life and values from research. Science can support cognitive justice and situations where everyone contributes knowledge, regardless of their country, social class, gender, and language. We call for science as a pluriversal and plurilingual open space—a science that is with and for communities, and where knowledge is open and empowering.”

## Crocodile's gift: Different ways of knowing

By Shirley Walters

Sicelo Mbatha and his friends walked 5 km to school each day from their rural homestead. They had to cross three rivers there and back. They knew to look out for logs before crossing as they were likely to be crocodiles. One day the group of 7-year-olds were in the middle of the river. In a terrifying moment, the leader of the group, Sanele, who was Sicelo's best friend, was grabbed by a crocodile. His shirt was found several days later. For years after the terrifying, brutal loss of Sanele, Sicelo vehemently and violently hated crocodiles and he swore to avenge his friend's death.

Twelve years later he was working as a volunteer in the Hluhluwe-IMfolozi park in order to learn about nature conservation. They were walking on patrol. They heard deep hissing and jaws snapping a soft body. A shocking sight confronted them. A big male buffalo was sunk in a muddy pool, while crocodiles feasted on his flesh. It was a horrifying scene made even worse for Sicelo, as memories of Sanele's loss came flooding back. But as Sicelo stood watching, vultures circled high above waiting patiently for their turn to eat, with the hyenas whooping in the reeds beyond. The buffalo's life had ended, but its death was giving life to other beings – and so the circle of life would continue.

At that moment, Sicelo saw crocodiles in a new way, and he let go of his hatred. When Sanele was taken, from the crocodile's vantage point, it was an opportunity for a meal – it was not acting out of cruelty or vengeance. He also recognised that crocodiles are formidable survivors, able to live without water for several days and to survive without food for months. Rather than hating them, they were worthy of respect. They had helped him let go of the hatred, sorrow, and anger. Sicelo saw through new eyes.

This true story of the crocodile's gift is told by Sicelo Mbatha (2021) in his book *Black lion: Alive in the Wilderness*. Sicelo is now a wilderness guide and his book which is both a memoir and philosophical reflection, is a powerful reminder of our connectedness with all beings. Drawing from his Zulu culture and his own yearning to better understand humanity's relationship with itself and with nature, Sicelo has forged a new path, disrupting the conventional approach to nature with an immersive, respectful, and transformative way of being in the wilderness. As Ian McCallum says of the book, it goes to the heart of the meaning of ecological literacy.

Living with multiple and interrelated economic, political, cultural, and environmental crises, many adult educators and lifelong learning scholar-activists and professionals in PIMA recognise the need to develop new and different ways of knowing. As our colleague, Elizabeth Lange, argues we need to move from the `separation paradigm` which carries the techno-industrial values of Western Eurocentric culture towards the `relationality paradigm` that can take us beyond entrenched ways of thinking and being. She describes indigenous knowledge systems as profoundly relational.

An African worldview and philosophy, known as ubuntu in southern Africa, is an African-wide ethical paradigm. As an ethics of interrelationships, it is situated in the communitarian social fabric of caring and sharing. Historically, ubuntu has been misappropriated and co-opted for opportunistic ventures; however, there are contemporary moves to tease out those tenets of ubuntu that could catalyse a project of radical transformation to a more ecologically just future. Ubuntu reflects the interrelationships amongst people, and amongst people and Mother Earth. There is complementarity between ubuntu and Latin America's *buen vivir*. Both reject modernity's nature-society duality and regard restorative justice as the principal mechanism to achieve harmony with the cosmos.

Vandana Shiva argues that the way we understand the world is the way we relate to it. So, if we see ourselves as disconnected from other life forms and do not understand planetary limits, we will violate and destroy Nature for our own ends. If we have deep recognition of our interconnectedness we will act to conserve and preserve Nature. As she says, oneness and connectedness are the politics of our time. Sicelo Mbatha acknowledges that he is part of Nature: his stories don't come from him but are told by the rivers, the lonely buffalo, the fluttering butterflies, 'I am one with them. I breathe the same air as the lion roaring for the moonrise and the dung beetle foraging underfoot'.

Central questions for those concerned with transformative adult and lifelong learning are: which ways of knowing and what kind of knowledge are most helpful for these times? In addressing these questions, uncovering and remembering ancient knowledges, including Indigenous knowledge, may hold transformative possibilities, as will listening closely to local people most affected by the particular circumstances.

**Reference:**

Mbatha, Sicelo. (2021). *Black lion: Alive in the Wilderness*. Jonathan Ball Publishers



## List of Contributors

- Abazazilah Mohd Abbas, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM); Email address: [azizaha@iium.edu.my](mailto:azizaha@iium.edu.my)
- Andrea Vargiu, Rector's Delegate for Public Engagement, University of Sassari; Email address: [avargiu@uniss.it](mailto:avargiu@uniss.it)
- Budd Hall, Professor Emeritus with the School of Public Administration, University of Victoria; Co-Chair of the UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education; Email address: [bhall@uvic.ca](mailto:bhall@uvic.ca)
- Chris Duke, Editor of PIMA; Email address: [dukeozenay@gmail.com](mailto:dukeozenay@gmail.com)
- Darren Lortan, Associate Prof. of Mathematics and Durban University of Technology, South Africa; Email address: [dlortan@dut.ac.za](mailto:dlortan@dut.ac.za)
- Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM); Email address: [dzulrazak@gmail.com](mailto:dzulrazak@gmail.com)
- Irma Flores, Head of Colombia K4C Hub, University of the Andes, Bogota, Colombia, Email address: [ia.flores24@uniandes.edu.co](mailto:ia.flores24@uniandes.edu.co)
- Lorna Wanósts'a7 Williams, Lil'wat First Nation, Professor Emerita, University of Victoria; Email address: [lornawil@uvic.ca](mailto:lornawil@uvic.ca)
- Maéva Gauthier, Ph.D Candidate, University of Victoria; Research Assistant, UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education; Email address: [maeva@uvic.ca](mailto:maeva@uvic.ca)
- Muhammad Faris Abdullah, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM); Email address: [mfaris@iium.edu.my](mailto:mfaris@iium.edu.my)
- Niharika Kaul, Research Associate, Participatory Research in Asia; India Co-ordinator for UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education; Email address: [Niharika.kaul@pria.org](mailto:Niharika.kaul@pria.org)
- Rajesh Tandon, Founder-President, PRIA, Co-Chair of UNESCO Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education; Email address: [Rajesh.tandon@pria.org](mailto:Rajesh.tandon@pria.org)
- Romzie Rosman, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM); Email address: [romzie@iium.edu.my](mailto:romzie@iium.edu.my)
- Shirley Walters, PIMA President; Email address: [ferris@iafrica.com](mailto:ferris@iafrica.com)
- Victor Paul, Professor, Dept of Sociology and Social Work, Christ University, Bangalore, India; Email address: [victor.paul@christuniversity.in](mailto:victor.paul@christuniversity.in)