

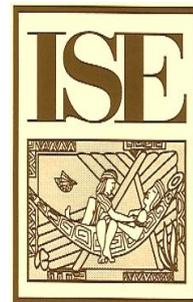
Together Keeping Continuity
From Our Roots

15th International Congress of Ethnobiology

Theme: Ethnobiological knowledge for improved human wellbeing and development

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Kampala Statement Regarding Children's Ethnobiological Knowledge and Education

At the just ended 15th Congress of the International Society of Ethnobiology held at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda (1-7 August 2016), the session's organizers and participants came up with the following recommendations for improved education planning and practice with regard to children's rights in different cultural settings.

The Kampala Statement was adopted by the congress participants at the closing ceremony on 7 August 2016.

“Transmission of knowledge — whether academic or traditional — is a complex process where children (ranging from early childhood to adolescence) take an active part in acquiring, reshaping and reformulating the culture of the society in which they live.

Nobody contests the importance of formal education to be provided by state educational bodies in national official language to the children populations of Indigenous Peoples, Traditional Societies and Local Communities (hereafter called IPTSLCs). Nevertheless, both ethnobiologists and IPTSLCs recognize the crucial need to pursue the acquisition of local knowledge by children and to encourage the practice of their mother tongues that are vital carriers of the cultural diversity of each country. Any attempt to replace one education system by the other is counterproductive in essence and will inevitably penalize the personal development of IPTSLC children, as well as impair the fate of local knowledge and related cultural heritage. Children should not be forced to choose between having access to formal education versus being the gatekeepers of local knowledge. They would instead gain in benefiting from both systems.

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is an urgent need to put an end to the classical opposition between formal and informal education.
2. There is an urgent need to admit that formal schooling is not the only means for the acquisition of valid and valuable life skills and knowledge.
3. There is an urgent need to consider the paramount value of horizontal transmission among children as a means to preserve a corpus of local knowledge that adults no longer possess.
4. There is an urgent need to rethink communication and foster mutual respect between those who are in charge of teaching academic knowledge (teaching staff and state academic bodies) and those who hold local knowledge within the various IPTSLCs in order to strengthen the complementarity and synergies between the two educational systems.
5. There is an urgent need to acknowledge that children are accomplished household actors as resource providers and keepers. Their contribution to the domestic economy elicits an undeniable expertise that mediates their interactions with their natural and social environment.
6. There is an urgent need to stop considering children just as adults in **preparation**: they engage actively with their surrounding world. Children's perceptions, knowledge and practices should be better understood and incorporated into international and state policies.
7. There is an urgent need to assess the involvement of children in the domestic economy on a culturally-specific basis.
8. There is an urgent need to recognize the difference between children's contribution to the domestic economy and child labour. The reinforcement of international children's rights

mechanisms and the eradication of child-forced labour are an absolute and uncontested necessity. Nevertheless, these rights should not be reinforced at the expense of the integrity of the domestic economy and of the local expertise that is in the exclusive hands of children.

Emerging from the above recommendations, there is an urgent need to foster research on children's ethnobiological knowledge and to encourage aspiring ethnobiologists to further explore this overlooked issue.

Together keeping continuity from our roots”



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