# Quality Adult Education Benchmarks for Indigenous Education

**Prepared as a Discussion paper for ASPBAE**

**Written by Sandra L. Morrison,** Te Pua Wananga ki te Ao, The University of Waikato and **Dr. Timote Vaioleti**, Faculty of Education, University of Waikato for ASPBAE and reviewed by **Nafisa Goga D'Souza.** The Paper compiles discussions and inputs on Quality Adult Education Benchmarks for Indigeneous Education from the Core Group amongst ASPBAE membership that attended the Workshop on Building a Shared Understanding on Benchmarks for Quality Adult Education in the Asia Pacific, held at Jakarta from November 20-22, 2010.

## Introduction

In November 2010, in Indonesia, Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) brought together a number of educators from across its region to discuss benchmarking quality adult education for indigenous peoples. Educators came from across the ASPBAE region including the Philippines, India, Nepal, New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, Indonesia and Uzbekistan to share experiences and to build a collective understanding of what constitutes a good quality adult education program for indigenous peoples.

Discussions were informed by a broader ASPBAE Quality Adult Education Framework, which had its origins in discussions held in 2009. The Core of the Framework is grounded on ASPBAE's commitment to education as a right, adult education for transformation, and adult and basic education as integral and inter-connected components of the vision of lifelong learning (Guevara, 2010). Other frameworks promoted by ASPBAE for education to be empowering, pro-poor, gender just and sustainable were also important considerations.

The 2010 gathering served as a nodal point to discuss the ASPBAE framework more deeply and to reaffirm or create a set of benchmarks for indigenous education which can be validated through a subsequent national and regional consultation process.

## Quality education

The 2000 World Education Forum, Dakar, agreed on six Education For All (EFA) goals. The sixth goal concerned Education Quality, "improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills."

This is especially important as in many contexts  the problem of 'quality education', apart from unsuitable infrastructure, methodology of teaching-learning and assessment standards lies in the curriculum content which is unsuited to the life reality of the indigenous learner.

According to Aikman and Rao "policies and practises of and for quality education are varied and contested" (2010, p.2).  Guevara is of the opinion that in the Asia Pacific, the vast differences in learning contexts creates a challenge to define what constitutes adult learning and adult education and more so in defining what 'quality' adult education means (2010).  He further states that efforts to argue for greater funding has been challenged by the inability to provide robust evidence of what constitutes 'quality' adult education which therefore impedes reliable

estimates of the financing requirement to meet policy and programme targets in adult education (2010).

The definition of what constitutes 'quality' has largely in UNESCO forums focussed on what needs to be done, but the definition of 'quality' is left to the countries to ponder.

The development of benchmarks while not new is but one tool on which common agreements on the topic of quality education can converge. Many governments are engaging in the process of benchmarking in an effort to review mainstream quality standards for education generally. Indeed both Australia and Aotearoa NZ has in place a quality education framework; for New Zealand it is under the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. ASPBAE will link up with DVV (German Adult Education Association) and the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) on their own review and lobbying on the European Union's quality adult education framework. This is particularly strategic as the ASEAN is considering modeling its own framework on that of the European Union.

For indigenous people, quality and standards has been measured in a number of ways and not just through benchmarks. Many tribal groupings will have even if informally, tribal expectations in terms of cultural standards. This would raise subsequent questions regarding definitions of culture, who defines such definitions, what constitutes standards, how they will be measured, by whom and on what basis? In Aotearoa New Zealand, some tribes have elected to substitute the term cultural standards and to adopt Māori terms that describe more precisely what they understand cultural standards to mean (Jahnke, 2006). Jahnke also states that:

> The notion of standards associated with state schooling is highly contested generally and is particularly contentious for Māori. This is because standards are inextricably linked with measurements. Standardized tests and public examinations are among the chief sorting mechanisms for evaluation and assessment procedures in schools that are usually set against highly selected, often taken for granted sets of 'acceptable norms.' The outcomes of such procedures have tended to pathologise Māori educational achievement thereby raising questions about whose interests have really been served. Evaluations and assessments per se may not be the problem, but what counts as 'acceptable norms' and faulty or inappropriate measures may well be (Jahnke, 1996, p.3)

Another indigenous community which has produced sets of standards to measure their effectiveness in providing for the educational and cultural wellbeing of the students in their schools is the Alaska Native Educators. They hold the assumption that grounding in the heritage

language and indigenous culture specific to a place is fundamental to the cultural health and wellbeing of students and communities who live or are associated with that place. (Jahnke, 1996)

### Adult education and quality benchmarking for indigenous education

Indigenous peoples are distinct peoples who have historically determined for themselves their specific ways of life and living. This distinctiveness is also marked by an almost unbroken continuity both in time and space. This historical continuity is based on their special relationship to a territory and its resources which they persistently insist upon. They define their development based on their relationship with their ancestral territories and the resources contained therein and through the autonomous exercise of self governance over themselves and their ancestral domain. (Aspbae, 2007)

Although there can be no one single definition, there are three common definitions which are found in ILO Convention No 169, the Martinez Cobo report, and the work of Mme Erica-Irene Daes (Dev-Zone 2006). Largely these definitions refer to a collective who has been subject to colonization; has rights to collective ownership of land; desires the maintenance and development of their own identities, languages and religions and desires the freedom to determine their relationships with States in a spirit of co existence, mutual benefit and respect.

Adult education for indigenous people goes beyond the education realm and is an integral part of a larger political agenda which often runs simultaneously but may not be in synergy with, the nation's broader development agenda. For indigenous peoples, adult education is about perpetuating cultural and linguistic practices, reclaiming power over their own lives and destiny and progressing towards self determining pathways.
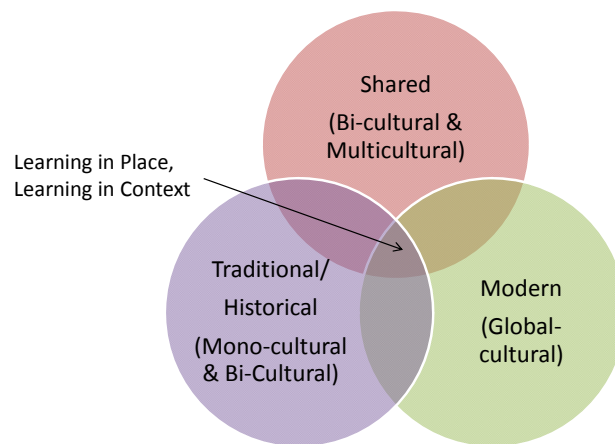
Thaman (2009) and Vaioleti (2011) state that many of our indigenous cultures have evolved over thousands of years and today the biggest challenge for us educators is to how best to prepare people to live in an increasingly changing and globalised world while at the same time develop systems that will ensure the continuity and sustainability of their futures and cultures. Similarly, Mason Durie has raised similar issues for Māori at national and regional Māori education forums. The Hui Taumata Mātauranga was aimed at planning pathways for Māori education advancement. In 2001 the Forum unanimously adopted a framework for the advancement of Māori education proposed by Professor Mason Durie based on three broad but concurrent goals; to live as Māori, to actively participate as citizens of the world and to enjoy good health and a high standard of living. A set of guiding principles suggests how these goals

might be reached in terms of best outcomes, integrated action and the principle of indigeneity (Durie, 2001).

Thaman (2009) in her paper on 'Making the Good Things Last': a vision of education for peace and sustainable development in the Asia Pacific region suggests that in the language of Delors, that in our teaching and learning to live wisely and sustainably, that we should look within ourselves and our cultures for the knowledge, values, and behaviours that will help guide us to a new beginning.

Tony Dreise, an Australian aboriginal educator who participated in the ASPBAE Quality Adult Education Forum in Jakarta provided the following model as a basis for discussion. Similarly to Durie, he advocates that indigenous peoples are also citizens of the world and are therefore exposed to a range of bicultural and multicultural realities. He acknowledges the diversity within indigenous peoples themselves and the importance of cultural and indigenous grounding as a reaffirmation of identity. Global exposure presents both challenges and opportunities and these all impact on education provision. Learning therefore occurs within a layering and convergence of traditional, multicultural and global contexts and must be responsive to these contexts. (Dreise, 2010)

## Indigenous Knowledge

Shared
(Bi-cultural &
Multicultural)

Learning in Place,
Learning in Context

Traditional/
Historical
(Mono-cultural
& Bi-Cultural)

Modern
(Global-
cultural)

tony.dreise@gmail.com

Following the 1997 World Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA V, a summary document was produced by UNESCO named Cultural Citizenship in the 21st Century: adult learning and indigenous

peoples. This document provided a framework on the thinking of indigenous peoples as applied to the popular De Lors Framework of Learning namely: learning to be, learning to know, learning to do and learning to live together. For indigenous people, the De Lors framework had been adapted in the following way**:**

- Learning to be = for indigenous people, this is the right of self identification and self definition;

- Learning to know = the right to self knowledge;

- Learning to do = the right to self development;

- Learning to live together = the right to self determination.

    (UNESCO, 1999).

Several years later when the Declaration on Rights for Indigenous People was accepted (finally) after years of negotiation then as far as education is concerned the Declaration speaks to the following commitments contained in Article 14:

- Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning;

- Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination;

    States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language. (United Nations, 2007)

Both the Delors framework and Article 14 in the Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous People provide appropriate standards on which to categorise issues impacting on indigenous peoples.

At the ASPBAE workshop, there were several presentations by the participants and much discussion on what could be considered to be appropriate benchmarks for indigenous education  Important issues presented by various countries noted the following characteristics as being integral:

| **Thailand** | **India** |
|---|---|
| • Intergenerational transfer;<br>• Modelling and practise; | • Political and policy advocates-empowerment;<br>• Rights based-involvement with |

| | |
|---|---|
| • Reinforces identity and belonging;<br>• Concretised in local context;<br>• Succession- youth;<br>• Culturally grounded pedagogies.<br><br>**Indonesia**<br><br>• Generational gap therefore transfer;<br>• Perpetuation of culture and language;<br>• Territories and stories;<br>• Community organised;<br>• Leader/facilitator/resource person;<br>• Hierarchical?<br>• Connections to wider issues- political, social;<br>• Engagement in village thru elders-reconnections;<br>• Distinctiveness of territory e.g. Disaster area.<br><br><br>**Fiji**<br>• Presentation to communities by invitation<br>• Approach to heads of villages to present the program<br>• Call for enrolment<br><br>**Nepal**<br>• Traditional costumes.<br>• Traditional art and architecture.<br>• Traditional way of life.<br>• Language and literature.<br>• Indigenous Knowledge.<br>• Indigenous system of governance. | communities;<br>• Crisis of values based leadership- tensions;<br>• Capacity building;<br>• Political decisions.<br>• Conflict between mainstream development and self-determination<br>• Conflict between eminent domain and communities on control of resources and entitlements<br><br>• Tribal healers, strengthening grass roots democratization process, solidarity support to other groups<br><br>**Philippines**<br><br>• Community organized - Paaralang Bayan;<br>• Ancestral domain - mapping the struggle;<br>• Leadership for next generation - tribal leaders;<br>• Identity and life;<br>• Proof of certification v ancestral domain;<br>• "Back to baranguay"<br>• Balancing indigenous education v mainstream education;<br>• Elected leaders v traditional leaders;<br>• Accountability - serve the community;<br>• Educate to empower;<br>• Disaster risk reduction from indigenous knowledge.<br><br>**Australia**<br><br>• Past and future<br>• Localism and globalism<br>• Rights and responsibilities<br>• Self-determination and global citizenship<br>• Culture and economics<br>• Individual and institutional<br>• Identity and commodity<br>• "Development" and sustainability<br>• "Elders and Eminem"<br>• Gender Just: Girls in some places, Boys in others<br>• Spirituality |

(Fig. 1: Participants at ASPBAE Workshop on Benchmarking Quality Education for Indigenous Peoples, Jakarta, November, 2010).

## **Quality Adult Education Framework for Indigenous Peoples**
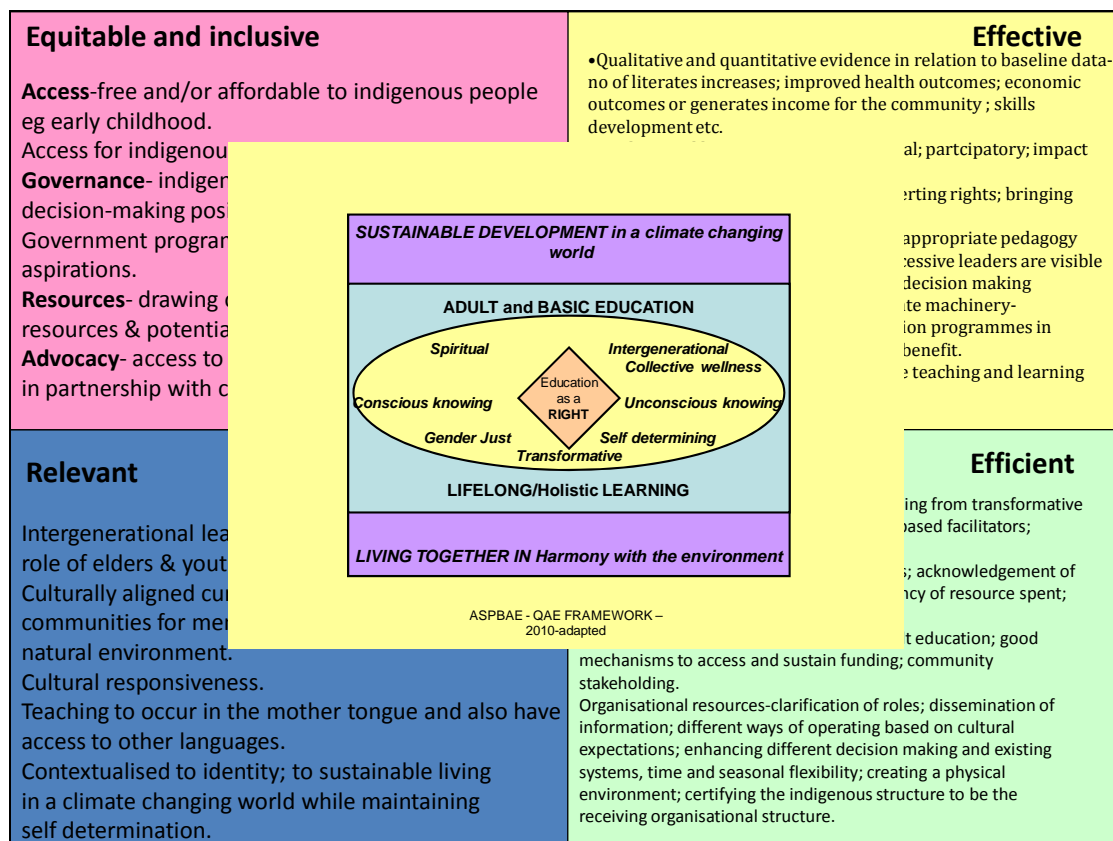
If we now reshape Guevara's Proposed ASPBAE Quality Adult Education Framework (2010) as it relates to indigenous people and inclusive of the participant outputs then a possible framework

would be:

| Equitable and inclusive | Effective |
|---|---|
| **Access**-free and/or affordable to indigenous people eg early childhood.<br>Access for indigenous women.<br>**Governance**- indigenous people being in decision-making positions at all levels, in all aspects; Government programme is in synergy with cultural aspirations.<br>**Resources**- drawing on indigenous people community resources & potential.<br>**Advocacy**- access to relevant adult ed; States to fund in partnership with community. | •Qualitative and quantitative evidence in relation to baseline data- no of literates increases; improved health outcomes; economic outcomes or generates income for the community ; skills development etc.<br>•teaching and learning- intergenerational; partcipatory; impact that is visible<br>Political intervention; engaging and asserting rights; bringing positive change<br>•Cultural values are reinforced through appropriate pedagogy<br>•Clear succession plan- leaders and successive leaders are visible including youth and women. Collective decision making<br>•Credibility in community and in the State machinery-<br>•Validating and resourcing adult education programmes in families and communities for collective benefit.<br>•Documentation, oral and written, of the teaching and learning process conducted |
| **Relevant** | **Efficient** |
| Intergenerational learning which acknowledges role of elders & youth.<br>Culturally aligned curriculum; learning spaces in communities for men and women; learning spaces in natural environment.<br>Cultural responsiveness.<br>Teaching to occur in the mother tongue and also have access to other languages.<br>Contextualised to identity; to sustainable living in a climate changing world while maintaining self determination. | Human resources- elders as teachers; learning from transformative experiences and trained to be community based facilitators; modelling and practise of role models.<br>Financial resources-using existing resources; acknowledgement of voluntary help from community; transparency of resource spent; specialised skills to managing resources.<br>State responsibility to fund indigenous adult education; good mechanisms to access and sustain funding; community stakeholding.<br>Organisational resources-clarification of roles; dissemination of information; different ways of operating based on cultural expectations; enhancing different decision making and existing systems, time and seasonal flexibility; creating a physical environment; certifying the indigenous structure to be the receiving organisational structure. |

(Fig. 2: ASPBAE Quality Education Framework for Indigenous Education).

Guevara also reminds us that in ASPBAE's model that these characteristics emanate from a core, and therefore will inform and are informed by selected core elements of the quality framework. For indigenous people, the core is underpinned by an indigenous consciousness comprising of collective memory which has been handed down intergenerationally. There are narratives and spirituality, sacred rituals and sacred spaces. The adaptation of ancestral knowledge responds to the changing contexts in which indigenous peoples find themselves. It is the desire to revive, restore and recreate traditions within a sustainable development framework which has benefit for the collective. This core is represented as shown below:

**Equitable and inclusive**

**Access**-free and/or affordable to indigenous people eg early childhood.
Access for indigenou...
**Governance**- indiger...
decision-making pos...
Government progran...
aspirations.
**Resources**- drawing ...
resources & potentia...
**Advocacy**- access to ...
in partnership with c...

**Effective**

•Qualitative and quantitative evidence in relation to baseline data-no of literates increases; improved health outcomes; economic outcomes or generates income for the community ; skills development etc.

...al; partcipatory; impact

...erting rights; bringing

...appropriate pedagogy
...essive leaders are visible
...decision making
...te machinery-
...ion programmes in
...benefit.
...e teaching and learning

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT in a climate changing world**

**ADULT and BASIC EDUCATION**

*Spiritual*          *Intergenerational Collective wellness*

*Conscious knowing*   Education as a RIGHT   *Unconscious knowing*

*Gender Just*         *Self determining*

*Transformative*

**LIFELONG/Holistic LEARNING**

**LIVING TOGETHER IN Harmony with the environment**

ASPBAE - QAE FRAMEWORK – 2010-adapted

**Relevant**

Intergenerational lea...
role of elders & yout...
Culturally aligned cu...
communities for me...
natural environment.
Cultural responsiveness.
Teaching to occur in the mother tongue and also have access to other languages.
Contextualised to identity; to sustainable living in a climate changing world while maintaining self determination.

**Efficient**

...ing from transformative
...ased facilitators;

...; acknowledgement of
...ncy of resource spent;

...t education; good
mechanisms to access and sustain funding; community stakeholding.
Organisational resources-clarification of roles; dissemination of information; different ways of operating based on cultural expectations; enhancing different decision making and existing systems, time and seasonal flexibility; creating a physical environment; certifying the indigenous structure to be the receiving organisational structure.

(Fig. 3: ASPBAE Quality Education Framework Core for Indigenous Education)

**Benchmarks for Indigenous education**

**CORE PRINCIPLES BENCHMARKS**

Benchmark 1 :     Indigenous Education as a Distinct Knowledge System

- Indigenous education is a distinct knowledge system which has developed over thousands of years by indigenous people who are inextricably linked to their territories and resources. Indigenous education desires the maintenance and development of indigenous peoples' identities, languages and religions.

Benchmark 2 :     Continuity of learning

- Indigenous education relies on the intergenerational transfer of knowledge. It is seen as a continuous process that is holistic, acknowledging the spirit world and the natural world just as importantly as the current contemporary world. Indigenous education draws on its distinct knowledge system to prepare people to live in an increasingly changing and globalised world while at the same time develops systems that will ensure the continuity and sustainability of their futures and cultures.

Benchmark 3 : Self-determination

- Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State, relevant to their particular context without discrimination;
- Indigenous peoples have control over their own life and cultural wellbeing through education. They make choices and decisions that reflect their cultural, political, economic and social preferences.

**RELEVANT ADULT EDUCATION BENCHMARKS**

Benchmark 4 : Culturally responsive education

- Indigenous education starts with the identification and analysis by indigenous people of their needs and aspirations. This will lead to the enhancement and maintenance of their quality of life and active citizenship while maintaining their right to be indigenous.

Benchmark 5 : Culturally preferred pedagogy

- Curriculum must be culturally aligned and culturally relevant to indigenous people in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning;
- The curriculum acknowledges the contemporary continuity of indigenous/customary laws and knowledge in changing contexts;
- It is cultural congruent within a sustainable development framework; It involves learning from the elders and learning from community activities.

Benchmark 6 :     Culturally responsive educators

- Culturally responsive educators incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching in their work;
- Culturally responsive educators use the local environment and community resources on a regular basis to link what they are teaching to the everyday lives of the students;
- Culturally responsive educators participate in community events and activities in an appropriate and supportive way.

Benchmark 7 :     Culturally responsive providers

A culturally-responsive provider provides opportunities for students to learn:
- In and/or about their heritage language;
- A culturally-responsive provider has a high level of professional involvement Staff who are of the same cultural background as the students with whom they are working;

- A culturally-responsive provider consists of facilities that are compatible with the community environment in which they are situated;
- A culturally-responsive provider fosters extensive on-going participation, communication, and interaction between the provider and community personnel.

(Benchmarks 4-6 are sourced and adapted from Castagno & Brayboy. (2008). *Culturally Responsive Schooling* .Downloaded from http://rer.aera.net at University of Waikato Library on November 8, 2010).

Benchmark 8 :     Cultural contextualization of education

- Learning is contextualised to identity; to sustainable living in a changing world while maintaining self determination.
- Learning for active citizenship is an integral part of the learning experience.

Benchmark 9 :     Bilingualism/Multiculturalism

- Teaching should occur in the mother tongue and yet have access to other languages;
- In bi-lingual and multi-lingual contexts it is important at all stages that learners should be given an active choice about the language in which they learn. Active efforts should be made to encourage and sustain bilingual/multilingual learning.

**EFFECTIVE ADULT EDUCATION BENCHMARKS**

Benchmark 10:     Effective Teaching and Learning Practice
- Provides multiple avenues for students to access the learning that is offered, as well as multiple forms of assessment to demonstrate what they have learned including oral assessment;
- Participatory and interactive approaches are conducted as part of the adult education program;
- Critical reflection on historical discourses and colonial interventions is  an integral part of the learning process;
- Cultural aspirations are  reaffirmed and identity is enhanced.

Benchmark 11 :    Achieved Outcomes match cultural aspirations
- Participation rates increase and are successful;
- Literacy and numeracy rates improve;
- Culturally-knowledgeable participants are reaffirmed in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community;

- Culturally-knowledgeable participants are able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life;
- Culturally-knowledgeable participants are able to actively participate in various cultural environments;
- Culturally-knowledgeable participants are able to engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning;
- Culturally-knowledgeable participants demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.

(Much of Benchmark 8 is sourced and adapted from Castagno & Brayboy. (2008). *Culturally Responsive Schooling.* Downloaded from http://rer.aera.net at University of Waikato Library on November 8, 2010).

Benchmark 12 :   Monitoring, Evaluation and Integration of Lesson
- Documentation, oral and written, of the teaching and learning process conducted in appropriate ways;
- Evaluation during, on-completion of the training and of the program is  conducted with different individuals and organisations, communities and elders involved;
- Evaluation results are conveyed back to key stakeholders  including communities;
- Evaluation results are integrated into future trainings and programs;
- Results enhance daily living.

## EFFICIENT ADULT EDUCATION BENCHMARK

Benchmark 13 :   Efficient use of Human Resources
- On-going professional development, including cultural issues, of teachers and facilitators are planned, funded and conducted;
- People from communities are appropriately given access to facilitate training and skill enhancement;
- Teachers and facilitators are appropriately and timely remunerated.

Benchmark 14 :   Efficient use of Financial Resources
- Financial accountability mechanisms are incorporated into standard operational processes;
- Regular audits of funds for adult learning are conducted.

Benchmark 15 :   Efficient use of Local Resources
- Alternative sources of funding and materials are identified and secured;

- Local partners to resource adult learning programs are identified, approached and secured.

Benchmark 16 :   Efficient use of Organisational Resources
- On-going monitoring and evaluation of Adult Education programs are conducted in culturally appropriate ways;
- Lessons learned are integrated into new plans and programs.

**EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE ADULT EDUCATION BENCHMARKS**

Benchmark 17 :   Access to Adult Education Programmes
- Access-free and/or affordable to indigenous people eg early childhood;
- Access for indigenous women;
- Sustained participation of adults in adult education programmes;
- Impacts noted on families and regard for education.

Benchmark 18 :   Governance of Adult Education
- Adult education policies are in place, implemented and evaluated which embrace indigenous worldviews;
- Funding of adult education is committed and sufficient to address identified needs and priorities;
- Indigenous people being in decision-making positions at all levels, in all aspects; Government programme is in synergy with cultural aspirations.

Benchmark 19 :   Advocacy for Adult Education
- Gaps in the policy framework, enabling environment and funding are identified;
- Advocacy capacities are developed within civil society organizations and in ways that are culturally appropriate;
- Advocacy programs are planned, implemented and evaluated
  - access to relevant adult education;
  - able to determine own aspirations
  - States to fund in partnership with community.

## Conclusion

Indigenous epistemologies (systems of knowledge) are dynamic, adaptable and responsiveness. They are rooted in the lands, forests and waters of ancestors. The creation of benchmarks in education is but one strategy to ensure the preservation and perpetuation of knowledge which

will assist in actualizing self determination.  While there are negative connotations associated with benchmarking, the ASPBAE's benchmarking framework as it relates to indigenous education becomes a nodal point for indigenous educators to come together and to discuss commonalities and quality indicators. This then becomes a powerful advocacy tool to enhance and improve education, basic and adult, for indigenous peoples and for indigenous peoples themselves to celebrate, affirm and validate their own knowledge systems.

We look forward to further discussion and inputs as a result of this working paper.

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