An African Indigenous Knowledge System's Perspective for Education Transformation: A Paradigm Shift

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In the current discourse on education transformation and decolonization in Africa, the tendency is to focus on the teaching and learning process at the expense of the role of culture including indigenous languages and the place-based nature of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS). In spite of the fact that a large proportion of African rural and other marginalised communities depend on their local knowledge systems for education and livelihood, the impact of globalisation, especially the role of digital connectivity in the revitalization of IKS in teaching and learning processes, tends to be neglected. Contrary to western conceptualisations on cultural diversity as a developmental problem, this IKS-based paradigm shift on promoting complementarity and democracy of knowledge systems in the global pool of knowledge, cultural diversity and associated IKS, are an asset in education transformation. Therefore, the paper uses specific cases, across Africa, demonstrating the importance of cultural diversity in teaching and learning, with special reference on AIKS: (i) Importance of diversity of African indigenous languages and art forms as repositories of indigenous science, technologies, innovations, spiritual, socio-economic and political thought; (ii) The role of IKS-based digitisation in re-visioning the knowledge lifecycle in the 4th Industrial Revolution, building bridges across cultures and promote inclusivity and global epistemic justice in teaching and learning. These cases will be useful to educators as part of their continuous professional development and for learners to appreciate their lived experience (culture) in the learning process.