

UNESCO Chairs / UNITWIN Networks Consultation Report Form (Draft)¹

Under the III World Higher Education Conference (WHEC 2021)

Basic information

Date of consultation	14th July 2021			
Location of consultation	Zoom, hosted by The International Creole Research Network (TICERN)			
Hosting UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network (include webpage if applicable)	TICERN was invited to participate in this call & host a small consultation event by: Professor Alexis Weedon Director of the Research Institute for Media Arts and Performance, UNESCO Chair in New Media Forms of the Book, University of Bedfordshire			
Name and email address of key contact person	Dr Violet Cuffy Senior Lecturer, University of Bedfordshire, Business School, Luton violet.cuffy@beds.ac.uk			
Complete name, title, and affiliation of moderator(s)	Senior Lecturer, International Business, Tourism & Marketing, University of Bedfordshire			
Language of Consultation	English			
Time spent in consultation (minutes)	120 minutes			
Number of participants	A total of 15 participants and 3 breakout groups were held on sub themes during the consultation			
Participants' profiles (please, briefly describe the composition of the group)	The International Creole Network (TICERN) was formed as an output from an Arts & Humanities Research Council Networking grant (2018-2021) of stakeholders across Creole Speaking countries with a focus on promotion and safeguarding the Creole and indigenous cultural heritage and language. Among our members include Professors, Chair of research Institutes, Researchers, Heads of Schools, Senior academics, Public Servants, doctoral candidates, authors, artists, government officials and practitioners.			
Countries represented by participants	United Kingdom, Commonwealth of Dominica, Haiti, Seychelles, Réunion Island, Mauritius, St Lucia, Trinidad, Germany, and Sri Lanka			
Stakeholder groups (please mark with a "x" as appropriate)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Professors/ Researchers	Students/Youth	Higher education managers/authorities	Private sector
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	NGO/civil society	International organizations	Policy makers/government	Others (please, specify):

¹ This template includes some elements used by the consultation developed by [The Futures of Education](#) initiative.

Which theme did you choose for this consultation?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theme 1: Impact of COVID-19 on higher education | <input type="checkbox"/> Theme 7: Financing higher education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theme 2: Higher education and the SDGs | <input type="checkbox"/> Theme 8: Data and knowledge production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theme 3: Inclusion in higher education | <input type="checkbox"/> Theme 9: International cooperation to enhance synergies |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theme 4: Quality & relevance of programmes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theme 10: Preparing for the future of higher learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theme 5: Academic mobility in higher education | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please, specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theme 6: Higher education governance | |

Synthesis of contributions

Kindly synthesize that best summary reflecting the ideas provided by all participants. There is no need to identify participants. Responses should not exceed 1,200 **words**, including the three responses. As an average, each response would have a limit of 400 words. If necessary, add attachments. Remember that question 1 is general, but question 2 and 3 should refer to the specific theme you have chosen (see list in **Annex 1**).

Question 1: *What should be the present and future role of higher education to favour wellbeing of humans and sustainability of societies?*

In response to SDG 1, HED systems need to be fully inclusive and responsive to the particularities, governance structures, traditions and cultural practices of indigenous populations. Notably, as an aftermath of colonialism and slavery most indigenous and creole peoples live in extreme poverty and are severely disadvantaged in education, including HE (Andersen et al. 2008). HED should promote indigenous and traditional values and ways of living closely linked to nature. In response to the negative consequences of modernity on the environment, HED needs to conceptualize, and embrace “traditional culture” often misunderstood as primitive culture, developing a shift of mind-set and knowledge advancement in indigenous international development.

New indigenous research approaches are required to promote an explicit understanding of Indigenous and Creole Knowledge Systems and their inclusion in HE curricula as a step towards inclusive and decolonized curricula (Katundu 2020). This will facilitate knowledge sharing and culture attitudinal evolution. This requires offering new courses and modes of delivery, train the trainer programmes and teacher/lecturer training in indigenous language systems.

Safeguarding language development is pivotal to the survival Indigenous populations. The negative impact of modernity has transformed and, in some cases, totally eradicated or threatens many mother tongues across different populations globally (Crystal 2000; Krauss 1992). Acknowledging the existing creole bilingualism of international students and embracing this as an individual as well as societal resource (Ruiz 2010), regardless of the colloquialism attached, will greatly facilitate breaking of barriers to HE and dismantling of boundaries between indigenous populations and western academic elitism.

In the COVID and post pandemic era, with the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, and EDI initiatives across the sector, decolonization of the curriculum has become “trendy”. HED needs to go far beyond this. It must transcend a tick box exercise. We need to question the conceptualization of decolonization for meaningful implementation and not just as window dressing. Is it patronization of the indigenous voice by inclusion of the indigenous researcher and a sprinkling of publications into western HED systems or the empowerment of indigenous academics and researchers to build on their own cultural traditions, languages and knowledge systems to enhance and advance their ways of living within their communities? HEI can be

THE place to give space to transformative indigenous knowledge and language development so transcending the errors of modernity, demolish stigmatization and to embrace news of being, learning and teaching for inclusion of all people.

Question 2: *What are the main **challenges/problems/gaps** in relation to... [rephrase content relative to the main theme you have selected]?*

One of the major challenges faced in the inclusion of Kreyol languages and cultures in HED is stigmatization - negative language attitudes and a strong lingering perception that Creoles do not have their place in our amphitheaters (Lockwood 2016).

There is lack of intrinsic value perspective held by many indigenous people, with preference for the former colonial language a “grass is green over the fence” syndrome as a gateway to poverty alleviation and rural sedimentary living. Moreover, the creole culture and heritage suffer from the fact that people find it more worthwhile to learn European languages that are perceived to hold greater international and professional value.

For instance, Seychelles has only introduced creole education at the primary level since its introduction in 1982. In Mauritius, the teaching of the language began in HED and introduced in 2012 at primary then secondary levels. In the Commonwealth of Dominica and St Lucia, very little formal education of the indigenous languages exists. For both, English is the dominant language, despite a strong French-based creole indigenous culture, tourism, festivals and performing arts. In Réunion Island, many teachers do not seem to be aware of the fact that they can teach Kreyol or even speak Kreyol in the classroom.

Another major problem is also the neoliberal cost-efficient model of our HED which excludes creole and indigenous languages. Monolingual bias remains as dominant thinking. This is further strengthened through globalization and pressure of English, the universally accepted language. Moreover, for some countries of the Global South, heavy dependency on donor-aid initiatives plays a key role in maintenance of the status quo at the detriment of lesser developed countries and poorer and disadvantaged indigenous populations.

No language policy is neutral (Cobarrubias 1983), all languages including English, come with their culture and socio-economic impacts, and biased assumptions. Hence, such “neither ... nor” thinking hinders significantly Kreyol or any indigenous languages, rather a “as well as” thinking must be developed. As early as 1953 UNESCO highlighted the pedagogical importance of teaching through mother-tongue (UNESCO 1953). UNESCO emphasized this policy position numerous times and highlighted in 2010 a publication with special focus on Africa and multilingual education to include the mother-tongue(s) or first language (L1) of the majority as Language of learning and teaching (LoLT) (UNESCO 2010).

Question 3: *What needs to **change** or be **created** to face these challenges **within** and/or **outside** higher education institutions?*

HED institutional strategy, executive management ethos, and unbiased curriculum/programme leaders’ is critical in setting the right tone and attitude, in ensuring inclusion, scheduling and appropriate content delivery.

HED should valorise creole cultures and heritage to the younger generation. This requires measures from the ground up to establish foundational platforms for growth to build on, and later explore at the level of HED. In this regard:

1. Using Creole languages as LoLT to enable an inclusive and meaningful education first in schools and then at HED is essential.
2. Promoting specialist courses or modules, in HED which promote the Creole knowledge, skills and understanding.
3. Promote IT and digital formats for documenting indigenous traditions.
4. Research in HED by indigenous peoples themselves which underpin, validate, and innovate these tasks.
5. Cultural exchanges and inter communication via online platforms. Adopting a holistic approach to language planning/policy to include economic and employment factors, cultural knowledge, and awareness.
6. Educate citizens who are in tune with socio-economic and socio-cultural development through indigenous cultural values. Hence, citizens will seek training in areas where their country's needs can be best met thus avoiding brain drain
7. Educate/Train citizens for the world who see value in contribution of their cultural traditions/practices to world culture & development.

Innovative ways of combining indigenous knowledge, new technologies and skills are essential, for instance, digitalization of existing content, particularly where languages and traditions are near lost or extinct. Engaging software technologies such as apps for knowledge sharing is key as is access to archiving. Where possible, opportunities for engaging elders and technical experts in language and cultural tradition revitalizing is pertinent. Government driven policy as well as bottom-up initiatives such as NGOs with broad stakeholder involvement is required.

HED should formulate accreditation and certificate programme to support less formal partner localized programmes at all levels of the school, college, industry, and policy level. Specialist and professional courses and modules should be offered utilizing new technologies and modalities.

Major changes in social and political attitudes need to occur among the leaders and drivers of HED of the Global North who benefited during colonialism or might be still benefiting from unequal power structures and therefore exploitation of indigenous peoples (Rodney, W 1969 and Williams, E 1964). To facilitate such shifts in attitudes more awareness is required. A clear strategy in change management in collaboration with UNESCO and HED UniTwin networks is recommended.

Which Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were particularly emphasized during this consultation?

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal 1: No poverty | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 2: Zero hunger | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 13: Climate action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 3: Good health and well-being | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 14: Life below water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 4: Quality education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal 10: Reduced inequality | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 15: Life on land |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 5: Gender equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 16: Peace and justice strong institutions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal 17: Partnerships to achieve the goals |

You may provide additional feedback...

Are there any other issues that should be considered in relation to higher education challenges and options in your community, your region, the world?

As a network we focus on Creole and indigenous cultures who are often marginalised and experience limited access to further and higher education. Accordingly, our work centres on the promotion and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and traditions in a view to further and advance livelihood within Creole and indigenous populations worldwide.

Is there any other comment you wish to share with UNESCO or the organizers of the WHEC2021?

Our main focus was on Theme 10: Preparing for the future of higher learning
However, some of our discussions was also aligned with Theme 4: Quality & relevance of programmes thus we have also ticked this off in recognition of overlap with this area as a sub theme.

25.01.21

List of participants

Mr./Mrs.	First name	Last name	Title/organization	Email address (if the participant wishes to receive information about the WHEC2021)	Indicate with an "NO" if the participant DOES NOT want to be publicly identified as participant in this consultation.
Dr	Violet	Cuffy	Senior Lecturer, International Business, Tourism & Marketing, University of Bedfordshire, Luton	violet.cuffy@beds.ac.uk	Yes
Dr	Jane	Carr	Head of School, Media & Performance, University of Bedfordshire, Luton	Jane.carr@beds.ac.uk	Yes
Prof	Georges	Veronique	Professor emeritus, Aix-Marseille University, Chair of Comité International des Etudes creoles (CIEC)	georges.veronique@orange.fr	Yes
Prof	Hazel	Simmons McDonald	Writer and linguist; former Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal of The University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus	h.simmons.mcdonald@gmail.com	Yes
Prof	Shihan	de Silva Jayasuriya	Visiting Professor, Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto), Senior Research Fellow (Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London)	shihan.desilva@sas.ac.uk	Yes
Dame	Pearlette	Louisy	Former Governor General, Educator, Creolist Linguist	pearlette.louisy@gmail.com	Yes

25.01.21

Dr	Michael Marc	Kretzer	Research Associate, Human Geography, Ruhr University Bochum	Michael.Kretzer@ruhr-uni-bochum.de	Yes
Dr	Daniella	Police-Michel	Creolist and Vice-President Green Reparations Foundation, Mauritius	dln.michel@gmail.com	Yes
Dr	Clara Rachel	Eybalin Casséus	Consultant, author	rceus777@yahoo.fr	Yes
Mrs	Penda	Choppy	Director, Creole Language and Culture Research Institute, University of Seychelles	Penda.Choppy@unisey.ac.sc	Yes
Mr	Morgan	Dalphinis	Consultant, author	dalphinism@hotmail.com	Yes
Ms	Aneesa	Vel	Researcher, Creole Language and Culture Research Institute, University of Seychelles	aneesa.vel@unisey.ac.sc	Yes
Ms	Lindy-ann	Alexander	Educator, creolist, language trainer/researcher	caprilad@gmail.com	Yes
Ms	Zephrine	Royer	Université des Antilles CRILLASH research lab; Creative Sun Films	zkr.royer@gmail.com	Yes
Ms	Laurence	Deleau-Gauvin	Agrégée de langue Créole, Réunion Doctorante en sciences du langage, Université de la Réunion	laurence.deleau.gauvin@gmail.com	Yes