Understanding the "Local" in Indigenous Taiwan

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The study reported on in this paper aims to understand, challenge, and deconstruct what the "Local" means for the development of Indigenous education in Taiwan. More precisely, it will question the idea of the Local in this context, as Indigenous people do not necessarily all hold similar views about Local Indigeneity and its place in educational development in Taiwan. As research shows, Indigenous people's views are influenced by intersecting factors, such as class, gender, rural and urban location, education, and profession. While some Indigenous people may identify Local as the identity and interests of their Indigenous community or as their family, others may seek allegiance, construction of identity, and learning with and from the transnational Indigenous movement.

The paper starts with a philosophical overview of what is Local and what is Indigenous. It then analyses the Taiwan case from the historical context of Indigenous people to contemporary views and perspectives on indigeneity, Indigenous development, and education. Indigenous perspectives on development and education are presented based on primary research conducted with Indigenous people in eastern and western parts of Taiwan, including data from in-depth interviews, informal discussions, and observations. The paper concludes by considering the implications of these understandings for Taiwan's development and education, and for what is meant by the Local Indigenous and its influence on education in this case.

Keywords: indigeneity; Indigenous education; Indigenous knowledge; language policy; Taiwan

INTRODUCTION

Localization as decentralization of education, from the government to small-scale, is an emerging trend in research and educational governance (see Zajda, 2007). Political and economic views see localization as a better practice to a top-down approach, because it can bring about greater efficiency, transparency, and accountability (Barber, 2013, 2017). From a philosophical and cultural perspective, localization has positive implications for cultural and identity recognition for the benefit of non-dominant and culturally-different communities (Taylor, 1992) whose education is then built on their own cultural references and contextual relevancy.

Over the past three decades, localization discourse in Taiwan has aimed to reorient the system historically established under colonialism and martial law and develop a new national identity. This discourse has framed Taiwan as a unified homogenous entity, a

fusion of Indigenous, Han Chinese, and Global that has mixed and formed over centuries. However, in pursuit of this identity, sight was lost of the concerns, needs, and knowledge(s) of Taiwan's Indigenous people. Localization discourse has overlooked the need for cultural recognition and for de-centralization of educational authority for Taiwan's Indigenous people.

In 1992, Taiwan's Indigenous peoples were recognized as a distinct group—called *yuan-chu minzu* in Chinese, or "the people who lived here first." Since then, 16 groups (2.3% of the total population) have been officially recognized by the Government and provided their own legal authorizations and powers. A number of laws and policies have been issued since to respond to the needs of these Indigenous groups, now viewed as the most marginalized and vulnerable economically, politically, and socially. These include the *Indigenous Peoples Basic Law* (2005) and *Education Act for Indigenous Peoples* (1998). In 2016, President Tsai officially apologized for the subjugation and assimilation of Indigenous people and its oppressive legacy of colonial and authoritarian policies in their communities.

Yet, an ongoing challenge in these efforts relates to Indigenous education. So far, education for Indigenous people has not effectively addressed the issues of low socio-economic status, economic instability, poor health, and risked loss of cultures, languages, and knowledge systems (Caster, 2016; Chi, 2012; Chou, 2005; Vinding & Mikkelsen, 2016). Indigenous children and youth still find it challenging to adjust to mainstream education that is built around the cultural heritage of the Han Chinese majority at the expense of Indigenous minority's traditions, knowledge, and cultural references. This omission has led to lack of motivation to study, low academic achievement, high drop-out rates, strained relations with non-Indigenous teachers and peers, and erosion of self-concept and self-esteem (Cheng, 2004; Human Rights Council, 2013; Pawan, 2004, 2009; Yen, 2009).

Grounding education in the Local—local ownership, languages, knowledges, and contexts, for local benefit—can ameliorate inequalities in educational experiences and outcomes. But whose conceptions of the Local should be used to redefine and reform education? Can multiple understandings of the Local co-exist efficiently? What the Local is in relation to education in Taiwan is not straightforward. Yet, it is important to consider as Indigenous people aim to revive their communities and reform education to meet their needs. This article explores what is meant by the Local and its implications for education in Indigenous contexts in Taiwan. The paper starts with a philosophical overview of what is Local and what is Indigenous. It then analyses the Taiwan case from the historical context of Indigenous people to contemporary views and perspectives, before presenting Indigenous perspectives on development and education based on primary research with Indigenous people in eastern and western Taiwan; including data from in-depth interviews, informal discussions, and observations. The paper concludes by considering the implications of these understandings for what is meant by Local Indigenous and its influence on education in this case.

Understanding the Local and the Indigenous

Local oversight of the structuring and development of education is often seen as an efficient way to ensure education is empowering to the communities it serves. The use of a local language as the medium of teaching also helps ensure that education is effective in early years and can later help children learn and study in a second language. Mother

tongue education can also help students increase their sense of respect and dignity for themselves and their communities, and transmit cultural heritage (see Bagga-Gupta, 2010; Hornberger, 2009; Kamwangamalu, 2016; Papapavlou & Pavlou, 2005). Local language policy can thus empower minority linguistic groups such as Indigenous people.

Understanding the Local for the Indigenous, however, is more political than it is for groups who simply seek decentralization or local language/mother tongue education. The concept of "Indigenous" is often misunderstood as simply referring to people who, over a long period of time, have lived in a certain territory and developed a group identity attached to that territory. The people who are recognized as Indigenous, however, lay claims to a different definition of Indigenous and the powers and rights attached thereto. They assert that their lives, identities, and cultures are linked to their ancestral lands that they are presently prevented from controlling because of domination and oppression by the jurisdiction of nation states. Indigenous claims to self-determination and ownership of land, territories, and resources, as well as cultural and collective rights, are unique in nature. This is a demand for a unique identity rooted in the Local, and protection from the era of colonization characterized by slavery/cheap labour, physical and cultural genocides, dismissal of Indigenous knowledge systems and viewpoints, and racism against Indigenous people. Such subjugation and oppression led to destitution, low socio-economic and political status, academic underachievement, substance abuse, prostitution, and other issues Indigenous people presently experience across the world, including in Taiwan.

One of the core paths to re-build Indigenous communities and cultures and address structural disadvantage at a national level has been by focusing on the Local dimension of people's lives and returning to Indigenous identity. This cannot be done through modern education, however. First, education in its present form is oriented towards the promotion of dominant knowledge and perpetuation of the status quo at the expense of what the indigene has to offer or needs to recover from. Second, there is no recognition and clear understanding of who Indigenous people are and of their knowledge, language, and worldviews in modern education, as people identified because Indigenous are treated as relics of another age to be integrated into settler communities (Mika, 2017).

Ownership and self-determination of education in smaller units—localized Indigenous communities or families attached to a particular Indigenous area—is considered by Indigenous people as a way to revival and healing. This call to Localization and Indigenization in education is the call to focus on the foundations for Indigenous socialization and interaction in an Indigenous society built on common local language, culture, needs, and interests of allegiance to the Indigenous world. These allegiances and interests can be different from and, at times, in opposition to the sphere of the dominant, non-Indigenous group. The work of Paulo Freire (1972) is relevant to understanding the relationship between the Indigenous Local and non-Indigenous National/dominant. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire discusses how the interests of common people differed from those of the government that intended to maintain the status quo. In the same vein, the local interests of Indigenous people can be seen as being at odds with the national interests of the state. In terms of education, Freire considered that teachers were transmitters of knowledge that did not benefit local people.

Freire's solution to break the status quo was to develop a pedagogy that would focus on the needs, lives, experiences, and problems of people. One challenge here, however, is the essentialism of the Indigene or the Local in relation to education. Viewing Indigenous

people as one group with a common goal and needs prevents one from recognizing that Indigenous people are a diverse group with differing perspectives, experiences, and needs. As Carl Mika (2017) notes,

> As to the term *Indigenous*, there are anecdotal accounts of Maori expressing their discomfort when it arises in various settings. It may well be that the term is the most extensive leveller of them all, given its almost phenomenal ability to glide over highly varied landscapes and their inhabitants—to gloss globally over difference. (p. 10)

Although Indigenous people have common characteristics, experiences, and needs compared to the groups that colonized them, their standpoints vary. To better understand the situation of Indigenous people in Taiwan, the context of Taiwan and the cases of diverse Indigenous people there is now described in more detail.

The case of Taiwan

Taiwan is a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country hosting such groups as the Han Chinese, which can be further divided into Hoklo, Hakka, and mainland Chinese, and Indigenous peoples, who are currently divided into 16 recognized groups, with ten groups in the process of gaining recognition. The Han Chinese comprise over 95% of the population and the Indigenous people comprise 2.3%. The remainder of the population are recent immigrants from across the world. The official language and language of tuition in Taiwan is Mandarin, which uses traditional script. There are also two groups of national languages, the Hakka and Formosan languages, including around 42 Indigenous languages, and two regional languages, Hokkien and Matsu.

Indigenous people in Taiwan belong to the Austronesian family that is distinct linguistically, racially, and culturally from the Han Chinese. These Austronesian people inhabited the island for thousands of years, according to archeological accounts, until the first colonial power (the Portuguese) established a settlement in 1624. Other European colonial powers followed (the Spanish and the Dutch), together with settlers from the mainland of China (during the Zheng and Qing periods), the Japanese empire, and the Chinese Nationalist Party, whose imposed martial law ended 1987.

The centuries of colonization (1624–1945) and decades of Nationalist rule (1949-1987), saw military subjugation of Indigenous people, forceful removal of these groups from their ancestral lands, and assimilationist policies. The policies, especially those aiming at integration through education, expected Indigenous people to abandon their cultures, languages, traditional institutions, and knowledge bases, and internalize the dominant ideology, lifestyle, ideas of progress, and development (e.g., *Five Year Plan to Subdue the Barbarians* designed by Japan in 1910). The result was devaluation of Indigenous cultures, languages, knowledge, traditional structures and spaces, and dismissal of Indigenous identity and history.

Since the early 1990s democratic changes in legislation and policies have allowed re-evaluation of the education Indigenous people received and enabled studies on the causes of their academic disadvantage. Cultural deficiency was claimed to prevent Indigenous children from adapting to the learning environment and adjusting to educational expectations of the schools (Lee & Chen, 2014; Chen, 2015). To correct such problematic experiences, education policies re-oriented to a multicultural path. Multiculturalism has since aimed to provide equal access to quality institutions and equal educational outcomes

to lift Indigenous people from the socio-economic and political bottom of the society. This education has focused on preservation of Indigenous cultures (Wang, 2004, 2014) to create a friendlier environment for Indigenous children to acquire social and cultural capital and skills to achieve success in mainstream society. This focus on culture, however, has disregarded the needs of Indigenous communities by ignoring the prejudice of teachers and peers, who are mostly Han Chinese (Yen, 2009); focusing on developing Chinese identity in Indigenous students through language and curriculum (Huang, 2007); and providing inadequate resources and unqualified teachers (Chou, 2005) in Indigenous schools.

Inclusion of Indigenous students into mainstream education has presented them with synthetic, culturally-insensitive, and contextually-irrelevant curriculum, pedagogy, and knowledge. In addition to mono-cultural content of teaching and learning, institutional structures remain largely resistant to change, and education continues to emphasize textual literacy and standardized curriculum, testing, and competition (Fenelon & LeBeau, 2006). Taiwan's institutions are built on the customs, thinking, and justice conceptions of the Taiwanese people of Han Chinese origin, and Indigenous peoples hold limited rights (including the control of their education) within this framework (Chi, 2012). As a result, Indigenous knowledge and cultures are devalued, measured by non-Indigenous concepts of economic production and consumption prioritized in the current system. Indigenous difference from the mainstream is still seen as a deficit, not a potential richness (Taddei, 2013).

As a response to the failure of the mainstream education system to accommodate Indigenous identity(ies), culture(s), language(s), and needs, some Indigenous groups have been working on re-establishing their own education spaces that are rooted in Indigenous mythology, traditions, and languages. This space is hoped to help revive what was lost and engineer an academic structure that could benefit Indigenous students. Yet, as the next section shows, while Taiwan's Indigenous people identify collectively as Indigenous, they do not necessarily see development of their communities and the society at large in the same way. Divergence in standpoints are evident between and within Indigenous groups, in historical trajectories, socio-economic status, educational level, perceptions, and local (collective and individual) responses to community and national development.

Let us consider a few examples. The Amis Indigenous group is the largest Indigenous group in Taiwan, with 177,000 people (Hsieh & Wu, 2015). Amis people have historically inhabited the eastern part of Taiwan that, for a considerable amount of time, was not affected by colonization. The contact with the dominant Other was relatively recent and less harmful. Amis is currently one of, if not the most, advanced and powerful Indigenous groups in the country. They were recognized in 1992 when the *Constitution of Taiwan* was amended and, since then, its members have worked to re-establish themselves politically and economically, spread their language and culture through formal and informal education, and challenge state education for its cultural irrelevance.

On the opposite side of the spectrum is the Saaroa Indigenous group that was recognized in 2014. The group has 393 members as of 2017 and inhabits the southern part of Taiwan. The Saaroa's territory and population were drastically reduced in the centuries of incursion from colonial powers and neighbouring Indigenous groups (Zeitoun & Teng, 2014). The incursion also led to a negative impact on the language, culture, and traditional structures. As the group was recognized relatively recently, it has not been able to benefit

to a similar extent from government assistance as have other Indigenous groups. Unlike the Amis, the Saaroa has not attempted to develop their own education or influence state education, perhaps because of the urgency to address other matters and establish their own legitimacy in the country among other Indigenous groups. As a result, the group is more assimilated and faces more challenges and limitations in its development.

Other groups have had different degrees of success or failure in facing non-Indigenous influence, negotiating conditions of engagement and communication, recovering from subjugation and assimilation, and re-claiming space. The outcome of such engagement and influence in relation to the dominant Other (i.e., Japanese and Chinese) now translates into how each group sees its place in the society and in the development of education. But along with collective interests, there are individual differences in understanding the significance of the Local and Indigenous in education within groups as well. These differences are often a result of individual social and cultural capital determined by education and family's standing (class), residency (urban vs rural), and gender. This Indigenous education movement in Taiwan, its views of Localization, and its internal diversity is explored in more detail in the following sections.

METHODOLOGY

Twenty-three Indigenous contributors participated in a study exploring education provided to Indigenous people in Taiwan, and its limitations, challenges, and ways forward for sustainable development of Indigenous peoples. The participants included Indigenous professors, government officials and policy makers, activists, and educators (teachers, curriculum developers, and school principals) who have been working for Indigenous communities in various locations in Taiwan. The participants occupy rather privileged positions in comparison with the majority of Taiwan's Indigenous population. They come from urban, middle class backgrounds, have had opportunities to successfully progress academically in Taiwan and study in English-speaking countries. Because of their educational backgrounds and fluency in English, they are able to represent Taiwan's Indigenous people in international academic and professional circles and in the transnational Indigenous movement. To complement the understanding provided, informal discussions with the same participants and with ordinary Indigenous people at local community and family events were also included.

The data were collected in August 2016, August 2017, and April-May 2018 in cities across Taiwan (i.e., Taichung, Taitung, Hualien). Each participant participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews lasting a few hours. The interview protocol was developed with the help of two interpreters from Indigenous communities, who also assisted with recruiting the participants. The criteria for participant selection included substantial work in Indigenous affairs for the benefit of Indigenous communities (at least 15 years), leadership in their respective communities and on projects related to Indigenous rights and development, and experience with government institutions. Content analysis informed by postcolonial and decolonial theories was used to understand their viewpoints.

FINDINGS

Scope of Localization

Although the participants acknowledged the need for society-wide Localization, for them, Localization essentially meant oversight and development of education for Indigenous people by Indigenous people. All the participants, therefore, proposed that to develop an education model that could benefit and empower Indigenous communities, efforts should be localized in the hands of Indigenous communities and smaller units, namely families. Localization for these contributors meant that, geographically, schools should be located in the communities they serve, local circumstances of communities are accommodated, and knowledge, teaching strategies, and teaching material are based on local wisdom. The first reason for Localization is Indigenous peoples' belief that they are connected to the land they come from and this connection shapes their historical experiences, culture, and values as well as how a group behaves, operates, and makes decisions. The other reason is that learning to understand themselves and their history from their own perspectives and cultural values and principles can help Indigenous people re-build identities, self-esteem, and self-respect. Geographical localization of Indigenous schools would also allow two factors of Indigenous education to be fulfilled: Indigenous elders could be in the classroom to pass down wisdom, and learning could happen in the community, outdoor and indoor for further exploration and connection with the environment. It would also address the needs and wants of those Indigenous students who are reluctant to leave their families and communities for mainstream schools in other areas, preferring to stay in the areas that are connected to their ancestors.

Participants expressed that Localization can be reflected in the curriculum, text books, and pedagogical approaches. These should be culturally appropriate, emphasize multi-generational involvement of parents and elders and their wisdom, and focus on the environment around students and their own experiences. Epistemologically and pedagogically, it should reflect Indigenous peoples' beliefs, values, and cultural and linguistic richness. Significant aspects of knowledge- and meaning-production in the classroom should be interwoven with their physical environment. Thus, Indigenous students can internalize the social behaviour of their communities, acquire financial skills, manage relations with family members, maintain good health, master their language, and learn to communicate efficiently with outside communities. School subjects should be relevant and promote self-determination, self-esteem, and legitimacy of Indigenous groups and their knowledge. The study of Indigenous history, language, culture, art, philosophy, and legal and policy issues can enable understanding of local realities and allow students to prepare and work for the betterment of their people.

Decisions on all elements of education should be influenced by families and communities with the help of Indigenous educational experts. What is crucial is that teachers should come from these local Indigenous communities, regardless of whether they have formal qualifications. Their main qualification is the knowledge of Indigenous ways of being and doing, not the knowledge of a subject. As one Indigenous participant observed,

> Indigenous teachers know more about the language and culture. It is better for children to learn that from the teacher. If the teacher doesn't know anything about the culture, and the language, it's just general.

Debates over language, culture and identity

Language is the most urgent issue on the Indigenous agenda, as the revival of cultures, identities, knowledge, and traditions is strongly linked to fluency in Indigenous mother tongues. A strong theme in interviews was that strengthening Indigenous identity and self-respect is linked to the revival of local languages, because language helps correct understanding of and relationship with their culture. All participants emphasized the need to know who they are as Indigenous people. As one of them reflected:

> You need to know you are Indigenous. You need to know your culture, you need to learn your language. Only your language will correctly interpret your culture.

Yet, despite the understanding that mother tongue education helps master a second language and protect knowledge systems and traditions, many people desired education in more dominant languages (e.g., Chinese and English) that, they perceive, bring greater value and social capital to their children to succeed in society. Similarly, local Indigenous knowledge of traditions, mythology, environment, hunting, and gathering are not viewed by some Indigenous people as currencies to advance socially and economically. The challenge is multiplied by the fact that many Indigenous groups have lost or are losing their knowledge systems and their sense of Indigenousness. As one participant noted:

> [A]nother challenge coming from Indigenous communities ourselves. Because we are used to the value concept from the colonizers. We need to change that. It's like internal colonization, colonization of the mind, of the way of thinking. We all lost our traditional Indigenous perspectives. It will be very hard, very hard.

In our study, the people who placed a greater value on revival of local Indigenous languages, identities, and cultures were mostly those who came from educated urban backgrounds. These people at the forefront of the development of Indigenous education and advocacy in Taiwan observed that they found their inspiration in the international Indigenous rights framework, the transnational Indigenous movement, and best practices in Indigenous communities across the world (for example, they listed Aotearoa New Zealand and Canada). As the participants reflected on their own standing in relation to other Indigenous people in the country, they noted that knowledge and the vision(s) they had were acquired because of their and their families' socio-economic position in the country, which allowed them to succeed academically and, later, with family investment of resources, receive advanced degrees (often at doctoral level) in English-speaking countries. It is this combination of social and cultural capital, advanced educational achievements, access to high level and intellectual jobs, and fluency in English which allowed these participants to communicate with Indigenous academics and activists across borders, making it possible for them to focus on language and identity issues in education.

As one Indigenous participant involved in developing a local Indigenous school put it, "We need to design an exemplary school that will persuade the parents to send their kids to learn the Indigenous way." Another participant supported this idea by expanding:

> You need to be competitive with other people, and if the school does not provide, parents will not choose it. They will choose a better Chinese school, not Indigenous school. This school will teach them to speak Chinese and be Chinese. They will learn English and world affairs. If Indigenous school won't do it, Indigenous parents will not want it.

For such participants, it is evident that their intention and willingness to educate their children in what all the participants called "the Indigenous way" would not bring potential negatives. Their children already had the capital required to flourish in the mainstream society provided by educated parents with adequate resources. As the participants suggested, for Indigenous people with less education, who work in urban areas as migrant manual workers (which are the majority) or in rural areas as farmers (if they have work at all), education in mainstream non-Indigenous schools remains a chance for their children to acquire skills and knowledge to be competitive, when they as parents cannot provide these elsewhere. As a result, other Indigenous people's needs, the participants shared, lay largely in fighting for survival in an unfriendly environment and not for revival of local languages and identities.

This context becomes even more complicated when considering the viewpoints of Indigenous people who migrate from rural to urban areas for manual work. As their Local experience and identity change, their perspectives on the position of Indigenous languages, cultures, and identities may shift as well. In circumstances where a family is lacking financially, or family structures become compromised due to migration from rural to urban areas, the sense of collectivity and belonging to a collective Indigenous entity becomes weaker, and people tend to focus on individual success or simple survival, rather than on group or collective Indigenous identity, well-being, or revival of the lost languages. This is a contrasting position to what the Indigenous elite represented. Their challenge of more advantaged Indigenous people in Taiwan, therefore, is not only to persuade non-Indigenous people that Indigenous is a self-standing concept for Localization to lead to their empowerment. Their challenge is also, as one participant shared, "to persuade our peoples themselves."

CONCLUSION

In Taiwan, the mainstream discourse on Localization has been a kind of response to the historical legacy of Chinese-centric authoritarian rule that lasted from 1949 to 1987. The new Taiwanese identity the government set since then has focused on blending the identities of all ethnic groups inhabiting the country (i.e., Indigenous people and Han Chinese) into one. This is contradictory to the belief of Indigenous people of the island, that, for their communities to move out of cycles of poverty and marginalization, there needs to be a special attempt to Localize "the Indigenous way," starting with education.

This is, however, not an easy task. While there are similarities across and within Indigenous groups, which includes a common history of subjugation by dominant powers, resistance to oppression, fight for their status, land, and the revival of their cultures and languages, their levels and ways of engagement with the dominant Other (represented currently by the Han Chinese) have differed throughout the centuries of intercultural contact. For individuals and families, it largely depends on socio-economic class, education level, whether they reside in rural or urban areas, and what profession they occupy. For Indigenous groups as communities, the starting point is their numerical, political, and economic power, and their years of recognition and engagement with Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups, among other factors.

Given the differences in viewing the basis of Indigenous cultures and development, the challenge is to determine what foundation education for Indigenous people should be built upon and what elements it should have. Essentially, the question is, in developing "Indigenous education", whose voice matters? Indigenous people in Taiwan agree on the

concept of "Indigenous," which they have collectively fought for in legal recognition and constitutional change, and have since started benefiting from that recognition—although the benefits are limited. In this context, it may be natural for some people to assume that their concerns and their preferred or recommended ways to address them are all the same, or similar. In conceptualizing Indigenous education, one might hope that Indigenous people can draw their unity and solidarity from colonial and postcolonial experiences, and the matters that such a legacy brings.

It is, however, dangerous to essentialize the plights of Indigenous communities in Taiwan, and their responses to them. Indigenous leaders in Taiwan tend to understand that. Non-Indigenous people working with them may lack the same level of awareness. As a result, they see Indigenous people as a static system, and overlook essential developments and changes in communities and individuals as societies, identities, and cultures shift, and people redefine their lives. Focusing on Indigenous identity and culture, instead of the plurality of these forms, contents, and expressions, is misguided and dangerous, as it can lead to exclusion and further marginalization of these individuals and groups when they are not seen as authentically fitting the box which non-Indigenous people have comfortably placed them in.

Educators working on behalf of Indigenous youth in Taiwan also need to be mindful that relationships between and within Indigenous communities can be political, too—there is nothing neutral or impartial in Indigenous definition and re-definition of the world they are living in collectively and individually. Approaching Indigenous education and development in the country may then be seen as a daunting task as so many ethical questions emerge. Who is to speak on behalf of the community or Indigenous people as an entity? Whose vision of education is the vision to build upon? Or can multiple visions or models of education co-exist? There are no correct answers to these questions. What can be assumed, however, is that by devoting time and resources to listen to and work with the smallest and often most marginalized units of Indigenous communities—a family and a child—is a way to start a conversation and action on re-orienting education that will solidify Indigenous identities, respond to their local needs and interests and, in the long run, will benefit the communities and the society.

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