

Today, as the post-colonial states face collapse and many are referred to as 'failed states', there is a clear need for the traditional institutions of governance and justice to be restored and recognised in the same way their Indigenous Knowledge Systems are also recognised. As the modern states decline, there has been a new trend towards the revival of these institutions in which the people have trust. — PROFESSOR DANI WADADA NABUDERE

Professor Dani Wadada Nabudere, a respected academic and educator from Uganda, dedicated his life to applying and spreading the notion of 'community sites of knowledge', which simply means using indigenous tools of knowledge to revitalise the lives of Africa's people. He staunchly believed that the liberation of Africans depended largely on self-reliance, and that any dependence on imported knowledge and material instruments could only lead to the entrenchment of colonial stereotypes, which dictated that ideas and knowledge that emanate from the West are superior to those that originate from the continent.

His commitment to life-long learning and to finding African solutions to historical and structural African problems, underlined his faith in the value of indigenous knowledge. He understood that African indigenous knowledge carries in its DNA the roots of 'complex ecosystems' that require the inputs of a diversity of expertise and experiences and that it seemed counterproductive to maintain the language of inclusion and exclusion inherited from colonialism.

This work explores Nabudere's strong belief that we can reclaim the future by producing knowledge that is relevant for society, and for the continued participation in civic causes designed to assist the wretched of the earth.

This monograph is an expanded version of a paper written for presentation at an agricultural conference at the Walter Sisulu University in Mthatha, Eastern Cape, South Africa in 2011.



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FROM AGRICULTURE TO AGRICULTURE PROFESSOR DANI WADADA NABUDERE



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Towards a Glocal Circular Economy

PROFESSOR DANI WADADA NABUDERE

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FOREWORD

This monograph is dedicated to a Community Site of Knowledge by the name PKWI Community Initiative; whose struggle over a period of 20 years has been aimed at upholding and emancipating their heritage enshrined in their indigenous knowledge systems, which were attacked by the colonial regime, but which they have been striving to recover and restore in their renewed attempt to create a new local 'green' circular economy. This knowledge was degenerated and criminalised so that members of their community who dared to propagate it, and/or dare and try to practise it for their self-sustenance, were accused of practising superstitious and backward ideas and were subjected to prosecution under colonial penal laws. However, the members of this community did not give up the struggle to preserve what was rightly theirs. They organised to rejuvenate the knowledge, which the colonialists thought they had destroyed. But because indigenous knowledge is permanent and self-renewing, the community has renewed itself by utilising it to develop their new economies utilising both the inherited knowledge and new knowledge derived from a holistic science they have been able to mobilise with partners.

The indigenous knowledge systems prevailing in this community include traditional scientific knowledge such as astronomy, which older women of the clans are experts in utilising up to this time. This knowledge is ancient and has been continuously utilised for many millennia throughout the continent. For example, a team of American scientists doing research in Kenya in 1978 uncovered an astronomical observatory on the edge of Lake Turkana in Kenya, which they dated 300 BC. According to them, it resembled the ruins of the Stonehenge in Scotland with huge pillars of basalt like the stumps of petrified trees lying at angles on the ground. Similar findings have been made among the Dogon of Mali in West Africa. All this goes to prove that indigenous knowledge in Africa incorporates scientific knowledge right from ancient times, which knowledge has been transmitted from generation to generation through the 'Living Word' and languages of the people.

Using this knowledge, the Iteso women in the PKWI Community Site of Knowledge are able to observe stars and trace their movements in a beer

calabash, which enables them to predict the weather patterns to be expected in the coming months and thereby determine which varieties of millet or sorghum should be planted in the coming season with very good results. However, the colonialists and the colonisers could not accept such knowledge, which was barred from practise. In enforcing this, the British colonisers targeted a strong woman advocate of indigenous knowledge called Aduso, who was the custodian of the Iteso cultural spirits. Using their inherited knowledge, she fed all the lactating mothers on very nutritious indigenous root plants called *Ikorom* and leaves of a tree called *Edusa* (Moringa). The colonisers regarded these products as a source of superstitious, backward practises and criminal ideas, which opposed 'modernity' and colonial agricultural policies.

Instead, the colonial administration promoted the introduction of the Cassava crop in Teso in 1946, which they regarded as a more 'civilised crop'. Aduso's agricultural knowledge and practises and ideas were demonised, criminalised and abolished by the colonialists in that year. Their law enforcers devised a song that abused, demonised and belittled Aduso. In the song, Aduso was abused as being stupid, backward and barbaric. To spread their message faster, this song was taught in all Teacher Training Colleges and Primary Schools in Teso, and the neighbouring areas, so that the teacher trainees and students would propagate it further by teaching it to other children as innocent agents in killing their own ancestral heritage and knowledge. The author of this monograph can attest to the fact that he was one of those non-suspecting children who were taught this abusive song against African knowledge systems. The song went as follows:

Ebanga Aduso; [Stupid, Aduso],
Chorus; *enyami Ikorom, Aduso x2 [She eats the Lilies-Ikorom, Aduso],*
Aduselena; abotirana; ebangana- Aduso [She is fat and smiling, Aduso],
Chorus; *enyami Ikorom x2 [She eats the lilies].*

The elders, on realising the motive of the colonialists and their law enforcers, decided to preserve the *Edusa* plant but had its name changed to *Elekumare* (which means 'bring out the cow'), which the law enforcers could not know as they were not able to either identify or differentiate between the plant and the new expression, thus preserving the plant and the indigenous knowledge up-to-now. Since then, the two plants have been validated as very nutritious by modern science, thus demonstrating once

more that Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are permanent and self-validating and incorporate holistic scientific knowledge, which does not disturb nature.

The persistence of this community in conserving and preserving their inherited heritage has enabled them to survive and continue to apply their knowledge and resist impositions such as the current Monsanto campaign to impose genetically-modified seeds and plants which are continually forced down the throats of those communities on the false claims that Genetically-Modified Organisms (GMOs) will help the community to combat hunger and global warming. Instead, the community has been able to engage universities and researchers to challenge their experimented 'scientific' knowledge systems. At one point, they succeed in forcing the universities of Makerere in Uganda and Ohio State University in the USA to validate indigenous knowledge systems concerning striga – the millet and sorghum parasite plant – and its control. This validation disproved the 'scientific' theories of the universities, which were being propagated. Since then, the community has continued to engage universities and government research centres to advance their indigenous ideas and practises, as we shall see in the body of the text of this monograph.

It is also important to record that the monograph was first written as a paper for presentation at an agricultural conference at the Walter Sisulu University in Mthatha, Eastern Cape, South Africa in 2011. However, it proved difficult to present the paper because of the formatting of the conference, which demanded more dialogue than the academic approach adopted in the paper. I therefore decided to enlarge the paper into a monograph, which we now present for general readership.

This monograph is therefore also presented in recognition of Professor Luswazi's efforts to establish a faculty of Agriculture and the Centre for Rural Development at the Walter Sisulu University in Mthatha, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Her work has also shown how the university can work closely with communities to promote a new agriculture for the future, which we have called agricology in this monograph.