Foreword

Colonialism, apartheid and other forms of oppression and subjugation contributed significantly to the marginalization and downgrading of African indigenous knowledge systems (AIKS). The colonizer’s education systems portrayed African indigenous systems as primitive, unscientific, sub-standard and good for nothing. The colonized African was therefore forced to believe that African societies had no knowledge to show off to the world. The colonized African was compelled by the prevailing circumstances to blindly worship Western forms of knowledge. One would have hoped that the attainment of independence and the Africanization of curricula in all sectors of education would have led to the restoration of pride and confidence in AIKS. Unfortunately, this has not happened across the board; and as such, AIKS continues to be pushed to the periphery of scholarship whilst Western knowledge is paraded as the norm. This means that the decolonization of Africa has not fully freed some of the African minds from the bondage of wrongly believing that their indigenous systems occupy a junk status in the world of knowledge systems. This African intellectual mind needs redemption, and the current book offers positive hope and cure.

The publication of the *Handbook of research on social, cultural, and educational considerations of indigenous knowledge in developing countries* is a most welcome development in the world of African scholarship. It comes at the right time – a time when, for example, in South Africa, there is a big call being voiced by university students, to have a decolonization of knowledge and scholarship. The students are right! Whilst politically Africa can be said to be decolonized, scholarship in Africa and on Africa is largely dictated by the norms and interests set by the West. The decolonization of knowledge and scholarship means that not only Western scholarship should be offered in our various education systems. African scholarship and African ways of knowing have to take their rightful place in education in Africa. Together, Western knowledge and AIKS should take comfortable seats in African education systems. As this happens, it is important that scholarship on AIKS should be robust and watertight. To this end, scholarship of AIKS should not be reduced to uncritical worship of anything that is labelled African. Doing things the African way should distance itself from intellectual mediocrity. The study of AIKS should be serious academic business, and the chapters in the *Handbook of research on social, cultural, and educational considerations of indigenous knowledge in developing countries* bear positive testimony to that noble goal. This publication is a demonstration of the fact that AIKS is alive, and it is alive across disciplines. This timely publication is strongly recommended to all – those working within academia and those working outside academia.

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