

Concept Note: The eBorneo Knowledge Fair VII Indigenous Communication Across Borders



The eBorneo Knowledge Fair (eBKF) is a biennial event held in the central highlands of northern Sarawak, one of the East Malaysian states on the island of Borneo. It showcases the achievements of the multi-award-winning eBario project that introduced telephones, computers, the internet and Malaysia's first community radio station into this remote and isolated region. It brings together researchers, officials, practitioners with the residents and provides an immersive experience in the realities of life for isolated indigenous communities.

The eBKF unconference is organized, structured and led by the people attending it. Instead of passive listening, all attendees and organizers are encouraged to become participants, with discussion leaders providing moderation and structure for attendees. Together, participants identify the challenges faced by isolated rural communities and the opportunities for sustainable development that might be available for the application of Information and Communication technologies (ICTs).



The indigenous populations of Borneo share common lifestyles and cultures, yet they are separated from their brethren by international borders that create artificial barriers to interactions between them. Increasingly, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are breaking down such barriers and enabling far-flung communities to share their knowledge and achievements so that others can benefit from them. Given the commonality among the lifestyles, challenges and opportunities facing Borneo's indigenous peoples, the time has never been better to foster interconnections between them that leverage on the accomplishments that have been achieved by those with easier access to resources so that other – less fortunate – communities can also benefit.

Moreover, experience is corroborating the value of traditional indigenous knowledge for a variety of

purposes, not least that of better understanding the impacts of climate change on fragile environments and the adaptation strategies that communities are devising to strengthen their resilience to it. Accordingly, there is merit in gathering, documenting and disseminating such knowledge among a wide population so that as many people as possible can make use of it – not only for strengthening the sustainability of their customary lifestyles but also for protecting Borneo's precious and unique environment.



Since 2007, the eBorneo Knowledge Fair (eBKF) has brought together remote and isolated indigenous communities from around the highlands in the Heart of Borneo; stimulating their use of technologies towards development of their own devising. For the first time, in 2019, eBKFVII will cross from Sarawak into Kalimantan, with the aim of bringing indigenous Bornean's from both sides of the border closer together in their quest for locally-relevant development. We will interact closely to examine issues of common concern that are affected by the existence of the border, including; trade, tourism, labour migration, cultural exchange, conservation and knowledge sharing.

