



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR MOTHER TONGUE BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION 2021

PRESERVING PENAN IDENTITY AND CULTURE THROUGH KERUAN PRE SCHOOL

By

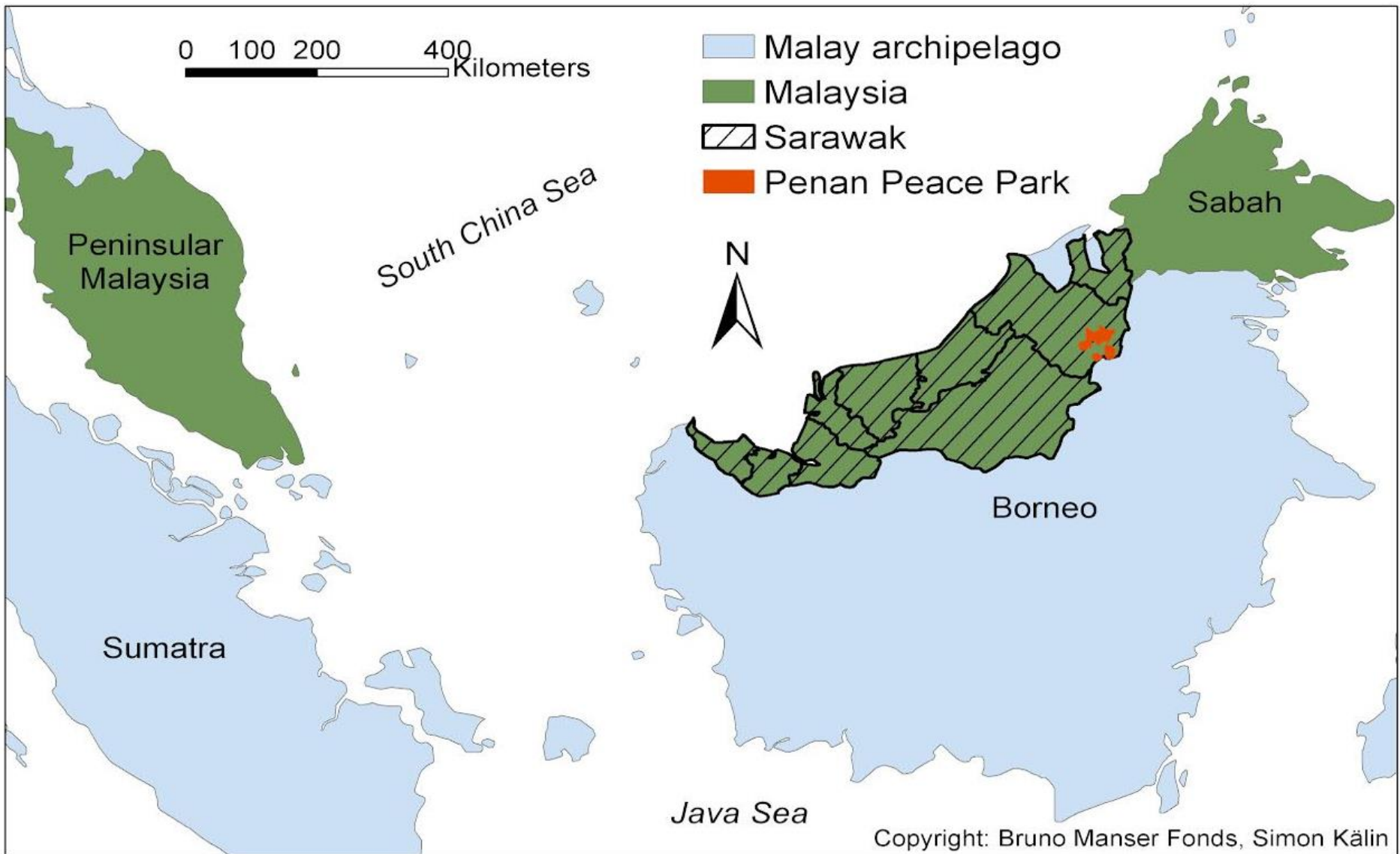
Komeok Joe, and John Phoa



MAP OF SARAWAK

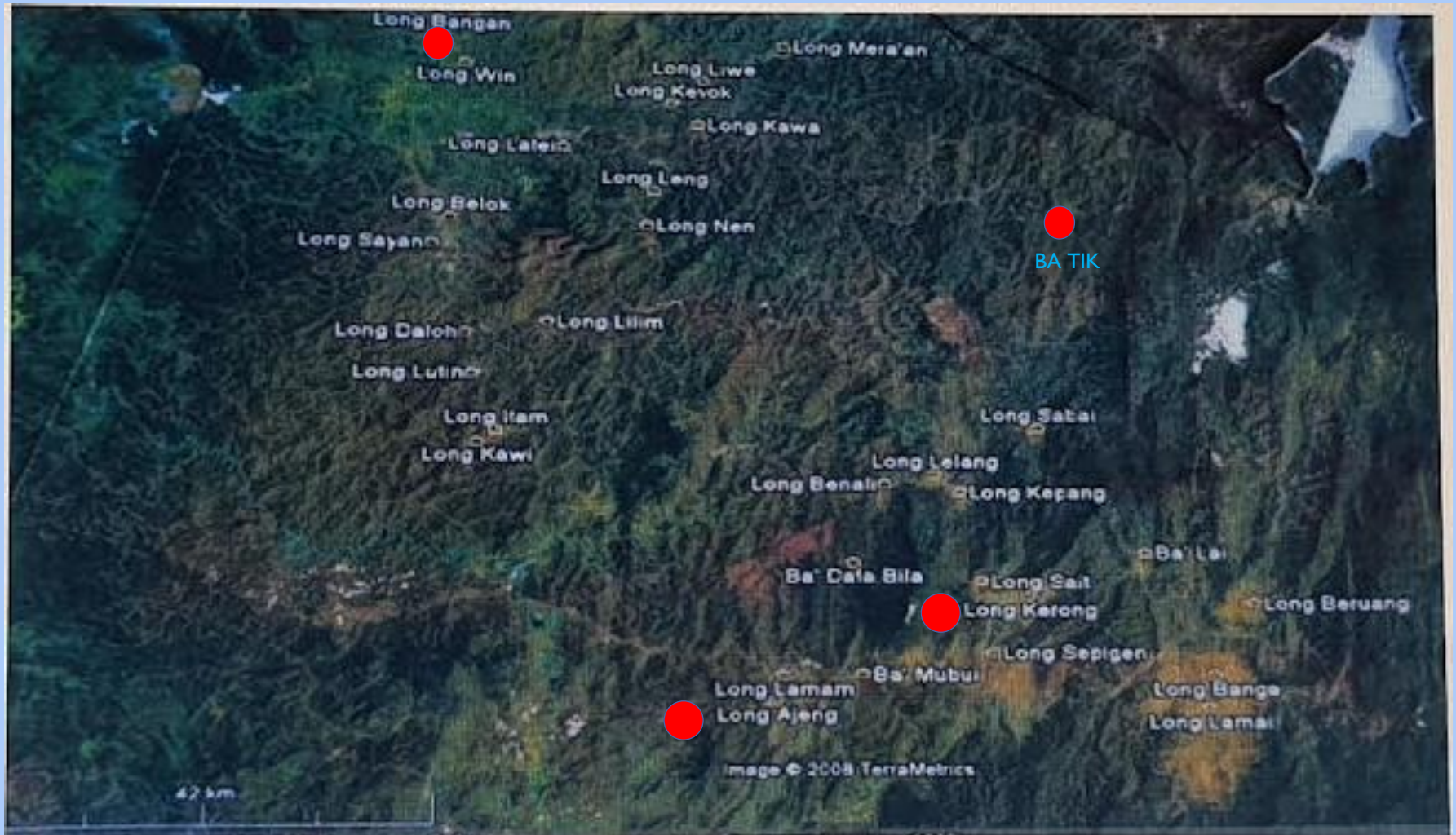
0 100 200 400 Kilometers

- Malay archipelago
- Malaysia
- Sarawak
- Penan Peace Park





MAP OF PENAN VILLAGES





BACKGROUND OF PENAN

- Total population : 27,000
- Total Penan Villages: 80 to 100 Settlements
- Total number of Pre schools in Penan villages
- Estimate 10 to 20 Pre Schools



PENAN IDENTITY

- Who are the Penans?
- The Penan are the last of the nomadic hunter-gatherers living in the Sarawak East Malaysia. Penan have been described as the true Indigenous of the Island of Borneo.
- The Penans are a subgroup of Orang Ulu in the State of Sarawak. Penans are categorized into two groups; Western Penan are those who settle in the upper Rejang River. Eastern Penans Selungo are those living along the upper Baram and Limbang River.
- Known for their longstanding protection of some of the last remaining rainforests in Sarawak against logging.
- Today, the younger generation of Penans are well educated, working in governments and private sectors, many are in the universities and a few have graduated with Masters.
- The Penan language is perhaps the only Indigenous language that is spoken by the entire inter-generational population



KERUAN PRESCHOOL- OBJECTIVES

- In 1996, Keruan started its early childhood education in Penan language in Sarawak with the support of Threshold Foundation, USA. This school started with children aged five and above, using Penan, the mother tongue/heritage language, with the intent of forming a strong foundation for a multilingual education programme.
- By 2000 Several other preschools were built in three communities with the support of Bruno Manser Funds, where only Penan teachers were hired.



KERUAN PRESCHOOL OBJECTIVES

- Between 2000-2012, two other schools in different villages were added.
- A critical aspect of the preschool is to teach the mother tongue-the Penan language.
- The preschool also seek (a) to engage children in the learning process and encourage the development of every child's intellectual, social, physical, artistic and creative potentials





KERUAN PRESCHOOL OBJECTIVES

- c) preparation and adoption to a school environment;
- An important aspect is to teach Penan culture and our relationship to the land.





KERUAN PRE SCHOOL- OBJECTIVES

- (d) Learn basic knowledge/learning basic school Malay, learning basic mathematics;





KERUAN PRESCHOOL OBJECTIVES

- (e) promote social skills and creativity (drawing, planting, weaving, singing, games).





COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- The children's learning process is enhanced through the support of Penan community elders especially in achieving objective (b).
- The schools operated on the basis of community ownership and involvement and are jointly managed by Keruan.
- These communities support the schools by participating in activities such as cleaning the schools compound through self-help (*gotong-royong*). They also support by transporting the teachers to the school by using 4WD vehicle or by boats.



CHALLENGES

- The major challenge faced is lack of financial support for purchasing learning materials, equipment for games and sports, refreshment break etc.
- Another challenge is the transportation need between the schools and the urban area.
- There is a need for training of qualified Penan teachers, not just to hire any school leavers.
- A need for teachers' salary to be equal to the salary of a government teacher in order to retain them in their job, including hard-living allowance.



CHALLENGES

- Government only supports pre-school that are associated with government primary schools. While interior pre-schools aren't
- We desperately need the government to support our pre-school: such as building a more permanent schools and to support their maintenance; paying teachers salaries; provide funds for general support of the school.



CONCLUSION

- An important goal of our Preschool is to prepare our children to go out into the world where they will learn a different way of life. Equipping them with the knowledge of our culture and language, when we, their parents are not there with them.
- Our language comes from the land and our interaction with it. In order to keep our culture and protect our ancestral land, the younger generation must speak our language.
- The UNDRIP affirm our right to maintain our culture and our language.
- A diversity of languages in our society makes it more robust and healthy, instead of pursuing only the language of the dominant society.

Q & A

JIAN KENIN
TERIMA KASIH
THANK YOU