Encouraging youth participation in the revitalization of traditional knowledge and practices: challenges, solutions and recommendations
Sustainable use = one of the 3 main objectives of the CBD

= CBD cross-cutting issue

**Article 10. Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity**

Each Contracting Party shall, as far as possible and as appropriate:

(c) Protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements

10(c) is also a related provision of Article 8(j) on ‘traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices’
FPP 10(c) Cases: Where & Who?

- Venezuela by Sanema and Ye’kwana IPs
- Guyana by Wapichan IPs
- Suriname Lokono and Kalina IPs
- Thailand by Karen and Hmong IPs
- Cameroon with Baka IPs
- Bangladesh with Sundarbans resource users (incl. Munda IP)
So what are some of the challenges and obstacles in retaining and using traditional knowledge and practice of sustainable resource use and transmitting them to younger generations?
Principle challenges

– Lack of recognition of land and resource rights (or no access to and control of resources)
– Lack of recognition and respect of customary laws, use and traditional knowledge
– Conventional protected areas restricts use of territories and resources and may lead to conflict and unsustainable use.
– External threats (e.g. extractive industries and major development on lands and territories)
– Mainstream mono-lingual education solely focused on science and technology generally does not value indigenous peoples knowledge, generating a wide gulf between elders and youth
– Limited or no participation in policy-making that affect IP’s lives and areas
1. No access to and control of resources

Example: Sundarbans mangrove forest (Bangladesh)

- According to forest law the Sundarbans is a reserve forest and any kind of activities are strictly restricted by Forest Department.
- Traditional resource users depend on Sundarbans for livelihoods and have always sustainably harvested forest products.
- Corrupt forest officers issue permits to outsiders while traditional resource users can hardly get a permit.
- Large-scale unsustainable resource collection threatens Sundarbans.
Why are land and resource rights important for customary use?

- Access to and control of resources is a fundamental requirement to maintain and practise customary use and traditional knowledge in the daily interaction with biodiversity.

- Lack of access to lands and resources prevents youths from learning about their customary resource use.
Mainstream education and assimilation policies

- Sedentary, farming lifestyle forced on Baka hunter-gatherers in Cameroon who were removed from forest due to National park.

- Baka education: Transmission of knowledge and skills in the forest replaced by school.

- School system reinforces negative view of Baka way of life and devalues their knowledge and mono-lingual system devalues indigenous language and fails to understand indigenous concepts (eg elephants).

- Karen people in Thailand also taught that their world had no value generating inferiority complex and identity crisis and social problems.

  - Many current education systems are aimed at assimilation and reinforcing non-indigenous languages.
  
  - This can lead to the loss of indigenous languages, local knowledge and related practices and alienation of the youth.
  
  - Loss of language leads to loss of biodiversity knowledge: other languages cannot explain the concepts.
So what are some of the proposed solutions?

Some community initiatives...
Community resource mapping

Community mappers (mostly youth) trained to collect data

Use of GPS/GIS

Fieldwork – youth and elder exchange.

Group discussions, interviews

Community validations

Corrections and revisions
**Cameroon:**

Training to use GPS systems: difficult because most Baka are non-literate

GPS adapted: the computer screens are marked with **symbols** which they can press to record an important site or resource
Thailand: land use map of Khuntae village

- **Total area:** 15,337 Rai
  - **Farming:** 1,730 (11.2%)
  - **Use Forest:** 7,210 (47%)
  - **Conservation:** 5,855 (38.2%)
  - **Govt Project:** 364 (2.4%)
  - **Settlements:** 178 (1.2%)

- **[total forest area: 85.2%]**

- **Paddy:** 795 Rai
- **Rotational fields:** 935 Rai
- **Ritual forest:** 1,593 Rai
- **Burial grounds:** 296 Rai
- **Community conserved forest:** 1,297 Rai
- **Traditional forbidden forest:** 67 Rai
- **Spring area:** 2,602 Rai
- **Government reforestation:** 232 Rai
- **Settlement:** 178 Rai
- **Queen project:** 132 Rai
- **Paddy 795 Rai**
- **Use forest 7,159 Rai**
- **Grazing area**

[Map showing various land uses and their respective areas]
**Entire area:** Wapichan Concept of occupation and use and area requested in 1967 Amerindian Lands Commission.

**Dark grey:** Titles representing government’s concept of community occupation and use.
THINKING TOGETHER FOR THOSE COMING BEHIND US
An outline plan for the care of Wapichan territory in Guyana
Purpose and use of the maps

• Give insight in the scope of traditional territories
• Demonstrate traditional occupation and use of traditional territories
• Exchange between youth and elders (eg Karen).
• Increase communities’ awareness of territory and customary use
• Basis for further management planning
• Foundation for applications to secure legal recognition of customary lands.
Community-based monitoring of illegal logging activities.
Demarcating community land use zones in areas overlapped by the Ob Luang National Park
Initiatives to protect and maintain traditional knowledge and practices (skills) related to sustainable resource use

Karen and Hmong in Thailand: teaching knowledge of edible wild foods and rattan basket weaving
Transmitting traditional knowledge and skills to youth

Indigenous Education Festival, Suriname
10(c) case studies and related publications:

- explain customary management systems and important role of customary laws & institutions.
- demonstrate value of customary practices and traditional knowledge
- Propose concrete recommendations
- Now used in schools to develop culturally appropriate curricula (eg Suriname).

Also: VIDEOS
Recommendations to IPSI

1. Support indigenous peoples and traditional resource users to achieve **secure land and resource tenure** so that they can continue to practice traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use and pass these down to future generations.

2. Support indigenous peoples to develop their **own sustainable use** initiatives (e.g. resource mapping and management plans).

3. Promote **culturally appropriate education** (including by stimulating the use and revitalisation of indigenous languages and traditional knowledge in educational policies and programmes).
Thank You