



International Conference on Forest Education, 22-24 June 2021

Breakout Group Briefing Note: 1.4

“Improving the content of traditional and indigenous knowledge in forest education and strengthening traditional knowledge systems”

Organizer: FAO, Social Forestry Team

Moderator: Marta Gruca, FAO Social Forestry Team

Facilitator: Emma Gibbs, FAO Global Forest Education Project

Rapporteur: Gordon Manu, FAO Social Forestry Team

Dates and times:

Meeting 1: Tues 22 June, 15:15-16:45 Central European Time (CET)

Meeting 2: Wed 23 June, 08:30-10:00 (CET)

Breakout group description:

Indigenous peoples have been managing forests through plant cultivation, habitat management, and in-situ tending of useful resources for time immemorial. Today, they are custodians of much of the remaining forest biodiversity, resulting from time-tested livelihood practices and dedicated efforts to protect the ecosystems upon which they depend. Their traditional knowledge of forests and of the genetic pool of species adapted to local conditions can play a critical role in ensuring the sustainability of ecosystem services and food security, but also support restoration, and biodiversity conservation. However, traditional knowledge systems are confronted with a multitude of threats, including mainstream education systems and rapidly progressing extinction of indigenous languages. This, in turn, may substantially diminish the ability of future generations to identify and benefit from natural resources.

Even though traditional knowledge is beginning to gain prominence in education spaces, with some institutions placing it on equal footing with scientific knowledge, there is still a lack of understanding of, and even opposition to, traditional knowledge and practices in mainstream educational, scientific and professional spheres.

This breakout session will aim to centre the critical role of traditional, local, and indigenous knowledge in forest and environmental management at local and global scales. Innovative approaches will be explored to encourage conversation on how these knowledge systems can be respectfully and consensually utilised and credited within formal and non-formal forest education. The session will also seek to determine pathways for capturing and promoting synergies between traditional and scientific knowledge and strengthening of such harmonized knowledge systems.

Questions to be addressed by the breakout group:

1. Why is it important to include traditional and indigenous knowledge in forest and environmental education (formal and non-formal) and what are the current gaps?
2. How can we better capture and promote synergies between traditional and scientific knowledge, and effectively include such harmonized systems in forest curricula?
3. What can be done to ensure that traditional and indigenous knowledge is adequately credited and used consensually within formal and non-formal forest education?

Speakers:

Meeting 1: Tues 22, 15:15-16:45 (CET)

1. Dr John Parrotta – National Research Program Leader for International Science Issues at USDA Forest Service; President of IUFRO. *Opening presentation.*
2. Dr Joseph Karanja - Associate Project Officer, Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems Programme (LINKS), UNESCO. *Science and ILK holders nexus for effective forest education and management.*
3. Dr Janette Bulkan - Associate Professor, Department of Forest Resources Management Faculty of Forestry, The University of British Columbia. *Cassava agrobiodiversity in the Guiana Shield: ecocultural resilience, global implications.*
4. Tonya Smith - PhD candidate, Department of Forest Resources Management Faculty of Forestry, The University of British Columbia. *Traditional forest knowledge with the Lil'wat Nation of British Columbia.*
5. Dr Nathalie Van Vliet – Associate Researcher at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). *Traditional knowledge and citizen science for environmental education in the Rupununi.*

Meeting 2: Wed 23 June, 08:30-10:00 (CET)

1. Ms Marie Noel Ngoddo - Program Officer, Training and Learning Initiatives, RECOFTC. *Improving the content of traditional and indigenous knowledge in forest education and strengthening traditional forest-related knowledge systems.*
2. Dr Siddappa Setty - Associate Professor, Centre for Environment and Development, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE). *Bridging traditional and scientific knowledge with regards to biodiversity conservation in India.*
3. Dr Margaret Sraku-Lartey, Forestry Research Institute of Ghana. *Bringing forestry education closer home: integrating indigenous knowledge systems into the education system using digitization.*
4. Mr Sparkler Brefo Samar - PhD student, University of Calgary. *Providing an integrated, holistic approach to forestry education: insights from a case study from Ghana.*
5. Dr Fei Jiao - Program Officer, Traditional Knowledge Division, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). *The relationship between intellectual property and traditional knowledge and WIPO's related services.*
6. Mr Yon Fernández-de-Larrinoa - Chief, Indigenous Peoples Unit, PSUI, FAO. *Process of co-creation of knowledge on Indigenous Peoples food systems and biocentric restoration.*