

SE29: Rethinking poverty and rural transformation to include Indigenous Peoples' views and their food and knowledge systems

Organized by: FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit (PSUI)

Summary of the side event

In March 2023, the Resilient and Inclusive Transformation Impact Initiative presented the technical paper: *“Indigenous Peoples: From discrimination and marginalization to inclusion in a meaningful and effective way”*. This paper highlights the differences between Indigenous Peoples' perception of poverty and well-being and those of mainstream approaches, which often lead to the systematic failure of development policies. Poverty for many Indigenous Peoples' communities is tied to the loss of land, cultural identity, and self-determination rather than merely material deprivation. They have a holistic understanding of poverty, which is perceived as a disruption of the harmony between individuals, communities, and their natural environment.

The mainstream approaches frequently cause harm – including the erosion of Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems, deterioration of health and food security, and environmental decline within their territories. Such impacts often result in the migration of Indigenous Youth to urban areas, exacerbating their food and knowledge systems and threatening their right to adequate food, deeply rooted in their traditional practices, lands and territories.

This side event aimed to address Indigenous Peoples' rights, values, and needs in the design, implementation, and monitoring of rural transformation policies and projects. The different speakers shared and discussed the strategies and recommendations to counter these negative trends and enhance the resilience of Indigenous communities. Despite their tied relationship to their lands and territories, many have lost control to them, facing increased violence and displacement.

The main conclusions are:

- We need to review the conceptual framework to measure poverty and development to incorporate Indigenous Peoples views in a way that reflects their notions of wellbeing and poverty
- The circularity of Indigenous Peoples food and knowledge systems maintains essential values of reciprocity, solidarity and safety nets that see page Indigenous Peoples societies across the world.
- It is essential to incorporate Indigenous Peoples in decision-making by advocating for policies and initiatives that foreground their perspectives and uphold their rights.
- Reforming misaligned policies is another critical priority. This requires reforming well-intended but misaligned rural development policies through inclusive dialogues with Indigenous Peoples, ensuring that their voices guide the decision-making processes.
- Promoting equitable partnerships with Indigenous Peoples is fundamental, particularly in the context of climate and biodiversity programmes. True progress will only be possible when Indigenous Peoples lead these conversations.
- Recognizing Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination is essential. Poverty reduction efforts must empower Indigenous communities to address poverty on their own terms through inclusive and participatory approaches.