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INDIGENOUS OPTIONS

Newsletter of the Centers of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge (COD-ILK), November 2020, Vol. 1, Issue 1

THE COD-ILK NETWORK

The Network of the Centers of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge (COD-ILK) is composed of indigenous leaders, experts, professionals and advocates of indigenous and local knowledge as vital for nature and nature's linkages with people. The network promotes the integrity and value of the knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in science and policy. It was organized in 2016 during the 4th Plenary Meeting of the Intergovernmental Platform on on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services in Malaysia. The COD-ILK is building synergies with other IPLCs and institutions to widen reach and amplify their worldviews and knowledge on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Current members of the COD-ILK network:

- Center for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North (CSIPN) ILK Centre, Russia
- Sotzi'l Centre, Guatemala
- Fundacion para la Promocion del Conocimiento Indigena (FPCI), Panama
- MELCA Ethiopia ILK Centre, Ethiopia
- African Biodiversity Network (ABN), Kenya
- P'gakenyaw Association for Sustainable Development (PASD), Thailand
- Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE), Kenya
- Indigenous Peoples and Biodiversity Program (IPBP), Tebtebba, Philippines
- Te Kopu Pacific Centre of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge
- Partners for Indigenous Knowledge Philippines (PIKP), Philippines
- Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Thailand
- Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), United Kingdom

MESSAGES



JOJI CARIÑO

Ibaloy
Coordinator of COD-ILK

The global network of Centers of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge (COD-ILK) was established to synergize actions by organisations of indigenous peoples and local communities with respect to traditional knowledge.

Priorities for collaborative work include 1) engagement with knowledge – policy platforms at all levels (including IPBES), 2) strengthening community participatory research, 3) inter-generational transmission of knowledge from elders to youth and vice-versa, and cultural exchanges amongst communities and organisations on relevant themes.

This newsletter supports all the above-mentioned strategic functions identified by the COD-ILK, by highlighting initiatives and work undertaken by the network and for the purposes of knowledge exchange. Members have committed to produce these newsletters in turn, rotating monthly across different regions.

This first newsletter produced by Philippine-based members – Partners for Indigenous

Knowledge Philippines (PIKP) and Tebtebba Foundation will be followed by a second issue produced by members in central America – Sotzi'l Centre, Guatemala and Fundacion para la Promocion del Conocimiento Indigena (FPCI), Panama.

Great satisfaction accompanies the launch of this newsletter, as it marks continued institutional strengthening and collaboration by the network and with valued partners despite restrictions arising from COVID19 pandemic. Travel funds for global meetings are being put to use for local initiatives and global knowledge exchange. Financial contribution by Swedbio, at the Stockholm Resilience Centre is gratefully acknowledged.



WILFREDO V. ALANGUI

Kankana-ey-Ilocano
Professor of Mathematics,
the University of the
Philippines Baguio
and member of the IPBES Task
Force on ILK (2014-2018)

Many of the complex environmental problems we face today have been brought about by the dogged pursuit of economic growth. This has left behind many of the world's marginalized populations, including indigenous peoples and local communities, with long-lasting and disastrous impact on our territories and communities. We are in a moment where the world is belatedly acknowledging the tremendous importance of indigenous and local knowledge systems. There is growing recognition that indigenous and local knowledge provides useable and valuable information that can help reverse the damage wrought by

current models of development. While it is important to continue making our voices heard at the international and regional levels, at IPBES and other policy-making bodies, it is equally, if not even more important, to ensure that ILK is continually practiced, nurtured and strengthened in our communities. In this, the Centers of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge have a critical role to play.

LIVING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

KASIYANA MUSIC VIDEO SERIES ON CORDILLERA INDIGENOUS MUSIC AND VALUES



The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all communities around the world, resulting in community quarantine and lockdowns of varying degrees. The need for social distancing to quell the spread of the virus has forced people to stay home. Many have lost their jobs and sources of livelihood. Medical frontliners battle the pandemic in healthcare centres, while other organizations and individuals engage in relief efforts to address widespread hardship such as lack of food and scarcity of basic necessities. Strict health protocols have immobilized public transportation while lack of access to communication facilities has caused social isolation. Everyone is affected and needs to do his/her share in battling COVID-19 and addressing its impacts on the people.

Indigenous peoples possess traditional values and practices that have proven effective in protecting their communities from threats. Among the Cordillera Igorot, *kasiyana* is an expression of optimism in the face of hardship or crisis. *Og-ogbo* is a form of community cooperation for a common goal. *Inayan* is the belief of avoiding harmful deeds for the good of the community and the environment. *Tengao* is a practice of quarantine and rest day during the agricultural cycle to allow people and the land to recover. Sustainable agriculture and forest management practices like *lapat* and *batangan* continue to protect the land and resources from over-exploitation and harm. These practices are transmitted and expressed through traditional ways

of learning such as story-telling as well as through music and other art forms.

At a time of enforced community quarantine and social isolation, it is possible and desirable to mobilise indigenous music, culture and heritage as a means to build community solidarity and to spread valuable messages of care for the environment and collective action for sustainable development and for the common good of all.

To do this, Partners for Indigenous Knowledge Philippines (PIKP) is producing a series of music videos to promote and strengthen indigenous knowledge. Entitled KASIYANA, the music videos express optimism of better days ahead and values of community solidarity, sustainability and self-determination. They feature the music of Salidummay Dap-ayan ti Kultura ti Kordilyera (DKK), an organization of cultural activists in the Cordillera formed in 1987. Their songs use traditional tunes called *salidummay*, accompanied by bamboo instruments, gongs and guitar with provocative messages on contemporary issues. DKK's music has persisted through the years and has touched the hearts of indigenous communities far and wide who identify with the tunes and themes of their songs. With these music videos, PIKP hopes to promote traditional values that give hope during times of crisis and are important to pass on to the youth and other people around the world.

Check out the music videos through:

[PIKP's facebook page](#) and

PIKP's website <https://pikp.org>.



THE HUAY EE KHANG MODEL: EMERGING IDEA OF “INDIGENOUS WOMEN’S FOREST” TO EMBRACE BOTH PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE



Huay Ee Khang farmer observes her paddy field. Photo Credit: Lakpa Nuri Sherpa, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)

Huay Ee Khang Village in Mae Win Sub-district of Mae Wang District in Chiangmai is piloting an effort to use its community forest of 60 rai (9.6 hectares) to become an “Indigenous “Women’s Forest” emphasizing varieties of plants for herbal medicine, natural dyes for cloth, and food crops. This idea aims to create a natural classroom for Indigenous Knowledge transmission amongst Pgakenyaw girls and women and to generate supplementary income in the future.

Noraeri Thungmueangthong, a village chief and prominent leader of the Indigenous Women’s Network of Thailand (IWNT), has initiated this project with the idea of creating a forest for Indigenous Women. This was inspired by the Pgakenyaw traditional classification of forest as Keu Neu, which categorizes two types of forest: Keu Neu Mue (hill evergreen forest or Women’s Forest), and Keu Neu Pha (rainforest or Men’s forest). With this interpretation, Noraeri has in mind to create a living Indigenous Women’s Forest accessible to housewives and young girls in particular. This Indigenous Women’s Forest of 60 rai is located about 2 kilometers from the village. On July 1st 2016, additional plants were introduced into the Forest for the first time. Later on, more indigenous species were added every year. These practices allow for easier and more convenient access for the gathering of non-timber forest products (NTFP), such as, sappan wood used for traditional cloth dying.

The Forest is cared for by the women and serves all beneficiaries. It provides food as well as herbal plants for everyone in the community. There are plants for Ow Meh Oo Thi, herbal medicine for babies and



Noraeri Thungmueangthong village chief of Huay Ee Khang Village Photo Credit: Lakpa Nuri Sherpa, AIPP

elderly people, wild fruits for children, ingredients for indigenous cuisine, etc. In addition, the Indigenous Women’s Forest can also feed small and larger animals with fruits, e.g. fig and banyan trees.

The idea has been put into practice for three years and now one can see the positive results. Noraeri anticipates that next year the planted bamboo plants will grow to the extent that villagers can make use of their products. Sappan wood is useful to the women’s weaving group in the dying of cotton thread. She expects that over the longer term the Indigenous Women’s Forest will be the major source of NTFPs, especially from the sale of bamboo for rafting services on the Mae Wang waterway.

Apart from the Indigenous Women’s Forest, Huay Ee Khang Village also implements interesting natural resource management (NRM) via a number of activities mostly based on the revival of customary practices of the Karen people. For example, De Paw Thoo forest (Umbilical Forest) is a unique practice among the Karen people wherein the umbilical cord of a newborn baby placed in a bamboo container is hung on a healthy tree; and, thus, the souls of

the baby and the bamboo tree are intertwined throughout their lifespan, and no one can cut this tree. Such practices can be regarded as the group's stratagem for forest conservation and the survival of both people and nature. This strongly illustrates the indigenous philosophy of equilibrium. It is the duty of a father to identify a healthy tree for hanging the umbilical cord of his baby, with the tree type able to bear fruit. Huay Ee Khang village has identified a certain area as De Paw Thoo forest and as a learning site for younger Karen and outsiders.



De Paw Thoo tree and bamboo container with umbilical cord inside.

Huay Ee Khang not only gives importance to forest conservation, but also water management based on the indigenous belief system. The community has also revived the extension of life of water, or Sue Thee Anee (a Karen ritual) to express gratitude and apologize to the water spirit as well as asking for blessings from the spirit. The basic idea is to protect the water from any kind of damage. Thus, the community has demarcated a fish sanctuary for about three kilometers along the Mae Wang waterway. All kinds of fishing are strictly prohibited, and small fish are released into the stream from time to time. There was a crisis about ten years ago when groups of outsiders came into the area and electrocuted fish in great numbers which almost wiped out all water creatures. Because of that, the community developed regulations for the protection of lives under water, accompanied by ritual performances and control of natural resources based on indigenous knowledge.



Huay Ee Khang villagers and neighbors from nearby villages are participating in their traditional ritual to inform the guardian spirits before releasing fish into Mae Wang stream. Photo Credit: Nakharin Manaboon, IMN.

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HOW THE GOLDEN APPLE SNAIL OR "GOLDEN KUHOL" WAS MANAGED THROUGH INDIGENOUS WAYS IN SAGADA, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE

"Golden kuhol" is native to South America and was introduced to farmers in the Philippines in the 1980s from Argentina via Taiwan, to increase farmers' income and enrich the protein in their diet. However, this species became a pest in the rice fields, eating young seedlings and laying many eggs, capable of damaging whole ricelands when not controlled. It is listed as one of the [world's 100 worst invasive alien species \(IAS\)](#) and in the Philippines, it causes a yearly crop damage estimated at USD1200 million per annum aside from negative impacts on health and environment.

In Tabuk, Kalinga, the rice bowl of the Cordillera Region, where the "modern" and chemical-based farming is prevalent, people resorted to the use of pesticides to control the golden snail but the use of pesticides resulted in additional health hazards (e.g. skin disorders, peeling of nails in the feet and hands, swelling, blindness, and the swelling of reproductive organs in women).

When the snail was introduced in Sagada, Mountain Province in the 90s, it was also seen as one of the worst pests in the ricelands. Aside from damaging or killing rice seedlings, the people attribute the disappearance of about 6 species of edible snails, the mudfish and the "saksaknong", an edible wild plant, to the golden kuhol. People believe that the golden snails eat the eggs of the local snails and fish. Their disappearance is a loss of diversity of food sources available in the communities.

The tradition of sharing of knowledge and discoveries on ways and means of pest control helped the farmers. Manual picking was first employed, then combined with water management and use of older seedlings. Eventually, people adapted to the taste of the snail and included this in their diet. These control mechanisms are made more efficient with the practice of community rituals. The rice production cycle opens with the ritual of *begnas di lakat* which is a go signal to start the land preparation. During this time farmers collect and kill the snails, they hunt for the eggs and crush them. While done in individual farms, it results in a collective

action throughout the whole rice landscape.

By the 21st century, the snail was seen as beneficial as it now serves as food, and women need not weed the rice fields because the weeds are eaten by the snail.

However, the snail has now become a major obstacle in the promotion of systems rice intensification (SRI) which has been proven to increase rice yield by three to five times. One fundamental principle of the SRI is to plant young seedlings of 18 to 22 days and these are very vulnerable to the golden apple snail.

For more information please contact: flor@tebtebba.org



LAUNCHING OF THE BAENG PROJECT

Representatives of the Onjon ni Ivadoy and the Partners for Indigenous Knowledge Philippines (PIKP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on September 1, 2020 to collaborate on developing a Baeng Learning Garden at the Ibaloy Heritage Garden at Burnham Park, Baguio City. The garden will demonstrate practical skills and knowledge on keeping a home garden to provide fresh and healthy food for the family and community.

NEWS and EVENTS

PARTNERS FOR INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN THE PHILIPPINES JOINS THE INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE DIALOGUE WORKSHOP FOR THE FIRST ORDER DRAFT OF THE IPBES ASSESSMENT OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

Despite the continuing problems caused by COVID 19, the Partners for Indigenous Knowledge Philippines (PIKP) participated in an online indigenous and local knowledge dialogue on the First Order draft of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) that took place on 29 September to 1 October 2020 organized by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

IPBES has recognized that indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) possess detailed knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem management. In the work programme of IPBES from 2019 to 2030, one of its objectives is to enhance recognition of and work with indigenous and local

knowledge systems. This work plan reflects a substantive agenda to address much-needed ground action.

PIKP together with other indigenous peoples and local communities welcome this development and are eager to collaborate and to advance the work on approaches and participatory processes such as engagement in dialogues. The participation of IPLCs in the IAS assessment was a good opportunity to share first-hand knowledge of the impacts of invasive alien species on people and nature. Some IPLCs have employed their knowledge of governing their lands, territories and resources including management strategies for invasive alien species for decades.

The dialogue is seen as a good step in enabling and amplifying greater sharing and widest-possible participation to provide evidence and relevance to the assessment. It tackled how IPLCs experience and understand IAS, their adaptation and management practices and how the knowledge of alien species assessment can be useful.

Some recommendations were shared regarding future elements of work on IAS in particular, and long-term resilience of both societies and nature. One critical issue is to build bridges between local-level realities and national-level policy processes. Attention to IPLCs values including their linguistic, cultural, ethical and spiritual perspectives should be included in the process.



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CALL FOR CLIMATE ACTION AMIDST GLOBAL PANDEMIC

In September 2020 the Asia Indigenous Peoples' Pact (AIPP) and International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) through a joint submission to the UNFCCC, called for the full consideration and engagement of Indigenous Peoples in climate action. The call reiterates a holistic view in making the Paris Agreement work and responsive not only to climate change but even in the midst of pandemic.

"The climate crisis is not just an environmental and scientific matter. It is also a social, political and cultural agenda. In this regard, climate action should take account of our distinct worldviews and lifeways, rather than relying only on so-called science. What is climate science and from where does that knowledge come? The roots of our knowledge, or science, derive from our culture and values. Our values and knowledge are deeply entangled with our social, environmental and political ecology. They have been sustained for centuries through balancing harmony between nature and human beings. However, climate action is ignoring our lifeways and values. We need synergies between western lab-based science and our indigenous knowledge to combat the climate crisis. This requires a paradigm shift with 'technology transfer' safeguarding those distinct sciences."

- NEFIN National Coordinator Tunga Rai Bhadra

The submission reflects the experiences of Indigenous Peoples from the Asia region and beyond. It presents a range of specific and implementable recommendations directed to State Parties and the UNFCCC Secretariat. The submission also reflects views and recommendations from the [Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities](#) (NEFIN) and [Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together](#) (POINT) as voices of Indigenous Peoples from Nepal and Myanmar, respectively.

Read the [full submission here](#). For Spanish version click [here](#).

FIRST WEBINAR WORKSHOP ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES HELD BY COD-ILK

The COD-ILK network conducted an online webinar on Invasive Alien Species (IAS). Held on October 26, 2020, the online forum among IPLCs was convened to increase understanding of the IPBES Assessment process on IAS and its control, and how IPLCs can contribute.

The workshop explored ideas on IAS, lessons from community experiences and engagements with governments and international processes in addressing the impact of IAS.

Presentations focused on the role of IPLCs in monitoring and reporting about IAS and contributing to the IPBES assessment. Knowledge, needs and views of IPLCs should be properly considered in both research and management of IAS. Key recommendations and other overarching comments on the First Order Draft of the IPBES Assessment on IAS were shared.

ASIA-PACIFIC COD-ILK MEMBERS SUBMIT CONTRIBUTIONS ON ILK TO IPBES

The Asia-Pacific members of the Centers of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge (COD-ILK) contributed a list of materials and experts on indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on September 15, 2020.

These resource materials are composed of books, videos, online information on indigenous and local knowledge from the Philippines, Thailand and New Zealand, which will serve as input to the biodiversity assessments being developed by IPBES. Names of knowledge holders and experts from different indigenous and local communities were also submitted.

INSPIRING WISDOM

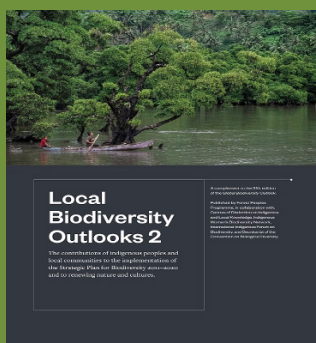
Ow Meh Oo Thi. This is a traditional practice among the Pgakenyaw Karen in Huay Ee Khang Village in Mae Win Sub-district of Mae Wang District in Chiangmai for restoring the health of a woman after giving birth, who is normally required to stay in the room with a warming fire. It is believed that this will help her to regain energy in both mind and body. It also will help to relieve pain and restore the uterus, considered as good postpartum care.

WEBINARS

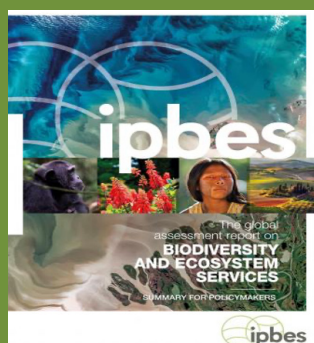
The COD-ILK is organizing a global webinar on IPLCs' perspectives and experiences on Invasive Alien Species on **December 18, 2020**.

The webinar will provide participants with an opportunity to jointly review, reflect on and articulate a range of reactions or experiences to the arrival of new species in their territories. IPLCs have their spiritual beliefs and values, which affect perceptions and responses to the arrival of new species in their territories that need consideration. They are aware of the harm that newly arrived species can cause to their lands, territories and resources including the social costs that invasive alien species can bring. Indigenous peoples in some cases find uses for these new arrivals, and in other cases expend considerable effort to control, or eradicate them.

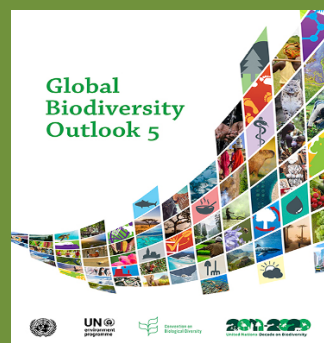
LATEST RESOURCES



<https://www.cbd.int/gbo5/local-biodiversity-outlooks-2>



<https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>



<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/global-biodiversity-outlook-5-gbo-5>

This newsletter is produced by members of the COD-ILK network.

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