

LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES PLATFORM

Concept note: LCIPP workplan activity 3

Identify and disseminate information about the development and use of indigenous peoples' curricula and materials that incorporate indigenous knowledge and languages in formal and informal education systems, and/or incorporate traditional and local knowledge systems, related to addressing and responding to climate change

Version of 14 June 2021

1. Introduction

As part of the two-year workplan of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP), the Facilitative Working Group (FWG) is tasked with identifying and disseminating “information about the development and use of indigenous peoples’ curricula and materials that incorporate indigenous knowledge and languages in formal and informal education systems, and/or incorporate traditional and local knowledge systems, related to addressing and responding to climate change”.

This activity falls under the LCIPP’s function of “Knowledge” whereby the platform promotes “the exchange of experience and best practices with a view to applying, strengthening, protecting and preserving traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems, as well as technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, taking into account the free, prior and informed consent of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices”. This activity, and the work of the FWG, as a constituted body under the UNFCCC, is being undertaken in the context of addressing the diverse challenges of climate change, to help to reduce the adverse impacts.

Studies have shown that indigenous peoples, through their customary institutions and governance systems, have been key contributors to climate change adaptation and mitigation, including sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems. Indigenous knowledge systems, which have been shaped by cultural values passed down for generations, are directly derived from their surrounding natural environment, and thus, are essential resources as we respond to the continued effects of the climate crisis in specific ecosystems. As place-based curricula, Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices from around the globe are vital resources for climate change adaptation and mitigation, whether they exist as formal or informal resources. Indigenous curricula are unique and often diverse in form and function when compared to the Westernized curricula and educational materials we more commonly engage with when it comes to climate action.

In collecting Indigenous resources, we must recognize that many Indigenous peoples and institutions are working to decolonize their educational systems and approach to knowledge sharing. These curricula are place-based, ancestrally derived, decolonial bodies of information, that cannot be separated from the environments that birthed them, the Indigenous bodies’ that foster them, nor the political conditions that once allowed them to flourish. Despite continued efforts by indigenous communities to decolonize education systems and introduce indigenous curricula, most youth on the planet are still solely exposed to Western education models derived from capitalist worldviews. As such there is a global need to balance Western education systems with Indigenous epistemologies, particularly those that have contributed to sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity, livelihoods, and climate change resistance.

In undertaking this activity, it is important to emphasize the ethics involved in utilizing the information and knowledge contained in the relevant curricula, and respect for the protocols set for engagement.

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Additionally, the political implications of the continued colonization of indigenous peoples should lead discussion of curricula. Seeing as colonization is the main impediment preventing Indigenous peoples from enacting their solutions on the ground, in their own communities, there should be pointed discussion on colonization and enacting Indigenous rights, when it comes to sharing these resources and materials within and beyond the UNFCCC.

Article 31¹ of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* affirms that indigenous peoples have the “right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions...”. In addition, there is a corresponding responsibility of UN member states “to take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights.” Therefore, in the context of the UNFCCC, in the exercise of this right, indigenous peoples must be in control of the access and use of such knowledge. In identifying and disseminating indigenous curricula, these points must remain at the forefront.

The knowledge systems of indigenous peoples are intimately tied to their profound spiritual and material use of their environment and the ecosystems that they are an integral part of. Therefore, these knowledge systems are related and respond to the increasing and diverse impacts of climate change. These knowledge systems are substantively and procedurally distinct from what is regarded as formal education and this reality has to be understood in the context of this LCIPP activity. Many indigenous peoples are actively working to “decolonize” educational systems that have been imposed upon them by the states that have emerged on their lands and territory.

In addition to Parties and observers under the UNFCCC and those already connected with the LCIPP and its operationalization, the audience and participants of this LCIPP activity will extend to indigenous knowledge holders, indigenous educators, institutions of indigenous education, community leaders, elders, as well as educational institutions, universities, other research organizations or bodies with access to and knowledge of indigenous curricula, and relevant bodies outside of the UNFCCC (e.g. IPCC), as appropriate.

Objectives

The objective of this activity is to:

- Identify indigenous peoples’ curricula and materials that incorporate indigenous knowledge and languages in formal and informal education systems, or if appropriate incorporate other knowledge systems, related to addressing and responding to climate change;
- Disseminate information about the development and use of such curricula.

¹ *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, article 31: 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. 2. In conjunction with indigenous peoples, States shall take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights.

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2. Approach/methodologies for planning and implementing this activity

This activity focuses on indigenous curricula, used for educational purposes, in the context of climate change.

A central approach for planning and implementing this activity will pivot on efforts to identify and disseminate a variety of curricula, which may come from formal or informal education institutions. Given that the materials and curricula identified and disseminated as part of this activity will be diverse in topic, approach, format, language, and more, we should expect a wide array of educational materials to come in, from a variety of individuals, institutions, and organizations. The curricula and materials should be open to incorporating chants, songs, rituals, and cultural values in the form of stories and lived experiences of indigenous elders and experts. It should also be recognized that these materials are not relics of the past, but are lived knowledge systems that younger generations continue to learn and pass down.

“Indigenous curricula”, as referred to in the LCIPP work plan, refers to:

“Curricula created, composed, and upheld by indigenous peoples, whether recently or in ancestral times, that reflects generational place-based knowledge, indigenous language, and other elements of an indigenous worldview and culture.”

Furthermore, the indigenous curricula on climate change being identified may include the following:

- Curricula and materials created by indigenous peoples that reflect or embrace indigenous knowledge and language, for indigenous peoples;
- Curricula and materials created by indigenous peoples that reflect or embrace indigenous knowledge and language, for non-indigenous peoples;
- Curricula and materials by indigenous peoples that incorporate non-indigenous science and other knowledge systems in addition to indigenous knowledge and language;
- Curricula and materials created by non-indigenous peoples that reflect or embrace indigenous knowledge and language through consultation with indigenous peoples;

Considering the breadth of existing materials, this overall exercise should not be limited to curricula for a particular age-group or level of education but rather materials at all levels of formal and informal education will be included.

Both a survey and a call for submissions through the UNFCCC’s submission portal will be used as methodologies to gather materials. The information and materials collected may form the bulk of items that will be featured in the LCIPP web portal after an initial summary of the materials is conducted by the FWG (with support of the secretariat), in consultation with the relevant contributors, as necessary

A virtual webinar or in-person session will be held to summarize the materials available, provide owners of materials a chance to speak to them and their use, and share direction about how these materials should or should not be used. This session will be recorded and posted alongside the materials on the web portal.

As a way to guarantee wide participation, FWG members, observers, and others should work with the UNFCCC secretariat to ensure communication of the call for submissions reaches their regions. Additionally, a special effort should be made to add indigenous educational experts from all regions to the lists we have, to ensure their participation. The secretariat will disseminate all relevant communications widely through the webpage and relevant mailing lists. It may also be worthwhile to include a “mail in” option for submissions, as many around the globe do not have consistent internet access. Additionally,

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given that not all materials may be in a written format, video and audio submissions should be allowed for those who do not have written materials to share.

In addition to identifying and disseminating curricula related to Indigenous knowledge and climate change education, information about access and use of such materials will accompany communications upon the dissemination through appropriate outlets, e.g. formal and informal educational institutions, specialized entities, and others. This may include notes on use of materials to ensure the ethics of engaging with Indigenous knowledge is understood and well respected.

A wealth of materials has been developed in relation to engaging with indigenous peoples and their communities and this LCIPP activity will endeavor to identify and compile such materials as they relate to the phenomenon of climate change and its interrelated impacts. Indeed, there are numerous texts, articles, and resources on this topic, and those should be identified and shared along with collected curricula and materials.

In connection to this activity, the FWG and Secretariat should take additional steps to ensure that those who engage with these materials are also exposed to the realities that prevent the knowledge holders from enacting them. We should not only be looking at what solutions indigenous peoples have to offer, but what obstacles prevent them from enacting those solutions at home, and what ways the UNFCCC can help. While this is not a mandated objective for activity 3, it is an important recommendation we are making for future work connected to this activity. Moving forward on our workplan, the FWG and secretariat should work to identify how they can add this intersection to future work and related activities.

3. Deliverables and Results

- A call for submissions will be launched on the UNFCCC web portal.
- A survey will be developed and widely disseminated to indigenous peoples' organizations.
- Examples of curricula that can be replicated in other areas will be identified.
- Model curricula and materials will be communicated and disseminated via:
 - The LCIPP web portal;
 - The activities in the LCIPP workplan, as appropriate;
 - Other channels.
- A virtual webinar or in-person session (recorded) that summarizes the materials available and provides owners of these materials an opportunity to speak to them and provide additional context and information.

4. Timeline and milestones

Month and year	Deliverable
September-October 2020	Finalize concept note and publish online
	Develop and send out a survey
	Initiate a comprehensive literature review
	Launch the call for submissions
September 2020-September 2021	Review and compile the materials, create summary

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September 2021-December 2021	Cataloging materials by keyword
During 2021	Establishment and maintenance of webpages for this activity on the new web portal
January 2021	Development of communication guidelines on ethical use of Indigenous knowledge and resources
Feb-Mar 2021	Webinar to summarize and speak to materials and use of these materials

Activity 3 is mandated to be implemented over two years, 2020 and 2021.

5. Partners

Indigenous educators, institutions of indigenous education, relevant organizations and bodies outside the Convention such as Climate Education, Communication and Outreach Stakeholders Community (ECOs), and relevant bodies under the Convention such as Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE).

6. Linkages with other activities

This activity has linkages with LCIPP work plan activity 4: “Organize annual thematic training workshops to build capacity for engaging indigenous peoples, and local communities in the relevant work under and outside the UNFCCC process” and activity 5: “Develop an outreach/dissemination plan and thematic training materials”.