

**Report on the Workshop on climate change  
and indigenous peoples:  
Risks, impacts, and resilience  
26th September 2018, Bonn**



The Workshop on *Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples: Risks, Impacts, and Resilience* was coordinated by the German Institute for development Policy (Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik - DIE) with the support of INFOE and realized in cooperation with the Centre for Development Research of the University of Bonn (ZEF) and the Institut für Naturpflanzenwissenschaften und Ressourcenschutz (INRES) on September 26, 2018 in Bonn. The Workshop took place in the context of the establishment of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) within the Paris Agreement and the recent meeting of the UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage. The objective of the workshop was to foster an exchange among indigenous peoples and local communities, scientists, technical persons, policymakers and development researchers on issues of climate risks and impacts and to open discussions about challenges on the ground alongside existing local solutions.

The Workshop brought together a total of 20 representatives from indigenous peoples from the Philippines, researchers from Venezuela, Alaska and Maine, representatives from the German Society for Development Cooperation (GIZ), German NGOs and research institutions such as DIE, ZEF, INRES as well as the UNFCCC secretariat and students from Ghana, India and Bonn University. The diversity of the participants, their background, experiences and perspectives was reflected in the presentations and discussions and accounted for an engaged and intense exchange.

*Dr. Denise Matias* from DIE opened the Workshop and after a round of introduction set the scene for the future deliberations with a concise presentation on the difference and implications of climate risks and hazards. She particularly pointed to the difference of fast versus slow onset events, an issue which was picked up on later in the discussion.

The main part of the morning was then filled with the presentation by *Norlita Corlili and Arnel Ignacio* and their inspiring experiences from wild bee hunting and swidden farming in Mindoro and Palawan in the Philippines. Norlita and Arnel described the challenges facing them including population growth and decreasing land for swidden farming, the necessity of using herbicides and pesticides etc. in swidden farming instead of the traditional burning and the restrictions and rules regarding the use of non timber forests products (NTFPs) in protected areas. They mentioned that the irregular weather patterns no longer provide the good heat that swidden farming needs. In the following discussion it was highlighted that the traditional farming practices can help to cope with some of the climate impacts particularly at a short term perspective but that they do not offer sufficient possibilities and solutions at a larger and longer term or from an economic perspective. A crucial question was the compatibility of traditional practices with economic interests. There is a need for bridging that gap and developing traditional practices in such a way that they generate more income - and thereby perspectives also for the younger generation to stay in the communities - while maintaining their cultural meaning and sustainable approach.

One of the strategies of indigenous and local farmers to unite in facing the challenges is the founding of the Non-Timber Forest Products-Task Force, the Philippine programme of NTFP-EP

(Non-Timber Forest Products - Exchange programme) Asia in 1998. „It started as a mechanism responding to emerging needs of communities and assisting organizations working on NTFP Development. Now, it has grown into a collaborative network of 15 NGOs and Peoples' Organizations (POs) working on providing livelihood needs of forest dependent communities“<sup>1</sup> The network promotes exchange on crops, insect repellents, honey hunting etc. among the members and thereby strengthens the maintenance of the traditional practices and the joint development of strategies by forest dependent peoples and communities. It was stated that the wild bee honey harvesting as best traditional practice is maintained while other traditional practices such as tree tapping are being prescribed and changed.



*Towards an intercultural and participative management and conservation policy: The value of local indigenous knowledge for sustainable management and conservation of natural resources in Canaima National Park, Venezuela.*

Bibiana Bilbao, Universidad Simón Bolívar, Venezuela

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Foto ©Bibiana Bilbao, Cover presentation

After the discussion round following the Philippine presentations, Prof. Bibiana Bilbao from the Simon Bolivar University, Venezuela reported on her experience working with the Pemón indigenous people in Venezuela in a participatory and intercultural action research project called 'APÖK' on the ecological and traditional knowledge bases of fire of the Pemón people and their potential as local solutions for global climate change problems. Prof. Bilbao explained that the research and National Park (30.000 km<sup>2</sup>: the 6<sup>th</sup> biggest park worldwide). The indigenous peoples have had restricted access and rights to use their traditional practices.

Fire is an important element of the daily life and swidden farming of Pemón people, as part of their millenary culture. However, the long time existing discourse on indigenous fire management was, that fires are a threat to forests and therefore fires must be prevented and controlled. Policy and funding focused on fire exclusion and firefighting.<sup>2</sup> Through the participatory action research project based on a long-term fire experiment that valorises the relevance of these ancient practices for forest and biodiversity conservation as well as adaptation to climate change and the collaboration and exchange of different stakeholders perspectives over more than 10 years, a shift of the fire paradigm was successfully negotiated with the participation of indigenous peoples and their knowledge. Today, indigenous representatives are consulted and participating when government policies and actions on fire management are discussed and developed.

Mr. Erwin Diloy from NTFP-EP Philippines then related the experience from working with indigenous honey hunters. Mr. Diloy pointed to the richness and complexity of indigenous knowledge on bees and honey harvesting. He emphasized the importance of organization among indigenous honey hunters as a means to strengthen and promote their traditional knowledge and practices as well as to further develop them as income generating practices. In NTFP-EPs work with the honey hunters they promote bee keeping with native bees. They carry out capacity-building and training as well as annual meetings. It can be observed that through these activities and the exchange, the honey quality could be improved and processing techniques are being further developed. They also created 'Quality Standards' and a 'Do's and Don't's Poster' to further improve the quality management of the honey and thereby marketing possibilities.

<sup>1</sup> <https://ntfp.org/where-we-are/philippines/>

<sup>2</sup> Presentation by Bibiana Bilbao: *Towards an intercultural and participative management and conservation policy: The value of local indigenous knowledge for sustainable management and conservation of natural resources in Canaima National Park, Universidad Simón Bolívar, Venezuela.* October, 2017, Potsdam

After the morning session, there was the opportunity for further discussion and exchange during a walking meeting to the lunch venue. Participants gathered and walked in small groups and discussed questions on the interaction of science, traditional knowledge and practice, and climate policy.

After lunch, Mr. *Raúl Fernández* from Munich Climate Insurance Initiative (MCII) introduced the issue of 'Resilience building through Community-based organisations (CBOs) and Climate Risk Insurance'. He first gave an introduction to climate risk insurance (CRI), the different mechanisms and levels involved and the different insurance risks and forms. "*CRI is a legally binding, regulated, mandatory or voluntary contract in which a government, organization, or individual (the insured) transfers the monetary risk for an agreed upon value (the insured sum) of a potential weather event occurring over a specified period of time to another party (the insurer) in exchange for the advanced payment of premium.*"<sup>3</sup> He then outlined what CBOs are, their strengths and vulnerabilities. As member-based organizations, they are ideal for adaptation measures also because of their scale and livelihood diversification activities. However, CBOs are extremely vulnerable to idiosyncratic and correlated risks, i.e. climate risks. These characteristics point to the benefits of using CBOs for risk transfer. Mr. Fernández explained why describing the case of a Caribbean Fishing Cooperation with members along the value chain. CBOs can serve as a vehicle for CRI with a pro-poor focus. There are different measures of risk transfer, including on small scale and products are tailored to meet the needs of beneficiaries which also means that CRI is linked to livelihood activities. The requirement for CBOs however is, that they need to be registered and follow law (insurance laws).

In the following discussion, concerns were raised as towards the possibility of CRI undermining traditional practices and strategies as well as community structures. The question was raised whether and how indigenous risk reduction strategies are taken into account and built upon and the possibility of problems of introducing new systems or institutions were mentioned. In general, there seemed to exist doubts regarding the benefits from insurance and the motivation of the insurer was not clear. Also, it was asked whether insurance is mitigation or adaptation.

Mr. *Mathias Bertram* from GIZ then presented the work of GIZ on Ecosystem Based Adaptation (EbA) as a response for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to address climate risks. Mr. Bertram first painted the big picture and picked up upon the earlier issue of Climate Change Hazards as slow onset and extreme events in a landscape. He then explained what EbA means and how it relates with IPLCs in the context of climate resilience as well as the SDGs, including by drawing on the CBDs work, definition and guidelines for EbA.

He then referred to governance issues and levels for EbA and mentioned the example from Peru where indigenous peoples initiated the EbA process and then took it to the national government level and maintain the process through cooperation with a local protected areas organization, IUCN and funding from an ICI (International Climate Initiative) Project which also includes other countries. A further example presented from Vanuatu exemplified an ideal case where community members themselves decided on the EbA measures, practices and involved knowledge to be supported and protected, including the protection of coral reefs and their practices of coral harvesting.

In the course of his presentation Mr. Bertram mentioned a number of relevant documents such as the *UNFCCC Loss and Damage Guide*, the *CBD Voluntary guidelines for the design and effective implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction* which specifically acknowledge the role of IPLCs. Furthermore, the study

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<sup>3</sup> Presentation Raúl Fernández, 26.9.2018

on mainstreaming EbAs by GIZ: *Entry points for EbA mainstreaming GIZ, 2018: Country reports (South Africa, Philippines, Peru, Mexico)* and the publication by IUCN *Nature based solutions* as well as the IUCN managed site [www.panorama.solutions](http://www.panorama.solutions) .

In the following discussion, questions were raised as towards how the compilation of case studies and experiences from good practices in EbA feed into practice on the ground? In particular, how they feed into Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) measures as these also apply a landscape approach. Work by GIZ in this regard is focusing on advising governments and towards strengthening governance. The experiences from EbA do feed into FLR measures, in particular through the landscape perspective and there is a continuing exchange between the sectors working on EbA and FLR.

Other points of discussion centred on the issue of intellectual property rights and the use of traditional knowledge in/for adaptation. In the example of Vanuatu this seems to have been circumvented as the process was community driven and owned. Another question was how the value of traditional knowledge can be measured in terms of biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

It was further suggested, that taking one concrete case and discussing different adaptation strategies and measures could provide further understanding and assessment on the usefulness, appropriateness and potential for solutions of the different approaches.

The three main functions of the Platform:

(a) **Knowledge:** the platform should focus on validating, documenting and sharing experience and best practices, respecting the unique nature of and need to safeguard indigenous and local community knowledge systems;

(b) **Climate change policies and actions:** the platform should facilitate the integration of diverse knowledge systems, practices and innovations in relevant climate change related actions, programmes and policies, and engage indigenous peoples and local communities;

(c) **Capacity for engagement:** the platform should build the capacities of indigenous peoples and local communities to enable their engagement in the UNFCCC process, including the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and other climate change related processes.  
[UNFCCC/SBSTA/2017/6](http://unfccc.org/Docs/2017/6/SBSTA/2017/6)

Last but not the least, *Mrs. Tiffany Hodgson* from the UNFCCC secretariat outlined the steps in the establishment of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) of the UNFCCC. She explained where the process currently stands and said that after the first multistakeholder workshop in May 2018, there still needs a lot to be done to define what the Platform is and should be. The task for the COP in Katowice therefore is to decide on questions such as: Will there be an expert/facilitative working group? How often this would meet? What kind of activities will be carried out and what could a possible work plan be? She briefly

explained the three functions of the Platform (see box) and highlighted the importance of strengthening the role of indigenous peoples and their knowledge in the formulation and implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs). So far, indigenous peoples' knowledge does not feed much into the NAPs and only 10 NAPs submitted include information on indigenous peoples.

In the following discussion, possible objectives of the Platform were mentioned, including to promote that national adaptation or mitigation plans should address or include indigenous peoples and their concerns or that one chapter on indigenous or traditional knowledge is included in the IPCC report. In general, it means that there is still space to shape the Platform which also means space for cooperating and lobbying with governments to make sure indigenous peoples' own objectives, ideas and concerns will be part of the Platform and its work. There are a number of opportunities where this can happen and be addressed such as the UNFCCC Research Dialogue, the Suva Expert Dialogue, the meeting of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Executive Committee. Some forms of dialogue which could

serve as examples are the CBD Dialogues, the Talanoa Dialogue or the ‘Village of Hope’. It was also mentioned that there will be ‘Friends of EbA Knowledge Days’ during UNFCCC COP 24.

In the closing feedback round, participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this compact and enriching Workshop. A number of inspiring ideas, strategies and useful information were shared. What was missing, also due to time constraints, was some more discussion on the practicability of strategies on the ground and how to continue dialogue and feed results into policy and at the science-policy interface. Further constructive discussions in this regard are necessary and there is a general disposition to continue the dialogue and exchange. COP 24 in Katowice will not necessarily be the place to do that as only very few of the workshop participants will attend the COP. However, education for young indigenous leaders to engage at the different levels and train them in different knowledge systems and policy processes was mentioned as one important issue and necessary step forward.

*Report by Sabine Schielmann, INFOE and Dr. Denise Matias, DIE*

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