Indigenous Peoples' Leadership Programme

WELL GROUNDED

Lessons learned in supporting Indigenous leadership development

A global study to inform the design of an Indigenous Peoples leadership programme in the Congo Basin

Research report prepared for Well Grounded by Catherine Clarke, with a Foreword by Timothee Emini, NOVEMBER 2023
Executive summary and practice note prepared by Well Grounded, SEPTEMBER 2024

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Executive summary and practice note

Key lessons and recommendations from the study, and an update on how Well Grounded and partners have adopted these in the design of the Congo Basin programme

WELL GROUNDED, SEPTEMBER 2024

Well Grounded is launching an innovative leadership programme for Indigenous People in the Congo Basin, with the aim of supporting Indigenous Peoples in exercising their right to self-determination, preserving cultural practices, and fostering collective visions for the future.

As part of the programme's development phase, we commissioned research in 2023 into lessons learned from programmes around the world that are supporting Indigenous leadership, with the aim of identifying recommendations for the Congo Basin programme.

The study inventoried 28 Indigenous leadership initiatives worldwide, encompassing themes such as youth leadership, women's leadership, territorial governance, Indigenous rights, and traditional ecological knowledge transmission. Fourteen initiatives were selected for in-depth review.

This synthesis report presents the detailed findings of this research. Since the research was completed, Well Grounded and Indigenous Ambassador Circles in key Congo Basin geographies have completed the co-design phase of the Congo Basin Indigenous People's Leadership Programme, informed by the findings contained in this report. In this executive summary and practice note, we present a summary of the headline lessons learned, as well as how we have incorporated key recommendations into the programme design.

Key lessons learned:

Participatory design, and horizontal learning approaches

It is essential that the curriculum is adapted to the local and national context, ideally through a collaborative design process. Facilitating internal reflection on leadership is effective, from personal reflection through to collective. Horizontal training styles were highlighted, where participants are seen as fellow educators, and co-learning is emphasised, with participatory tools.

Valuing of Indigenous knowledge

Indigenous knowledge and concepts of leadership can serve as a springboard to leadership development, giving a sense of legitimacy and ownership, while increasing confidence.

Importance of aligning practicalities & logistics

Indigenous leadership programmes should take place within Indigenous territories or communities - so not in conference centres in the capital city – as this enables the programme to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and value traditional practices and rituals. The format, duration and modality of the programme should be carefully adapted to the participants' contexts and the objective of the programme, with grassroots community-based programmes tending to benefit from longer-term programmes.

Ensure inclusivity

Ensuring women's participation is a common challenge and limitation for programmes, due to a range of barriers. Successful strategies to overcome this included: awareness raising, women-only training, and activities being hosted closer to home. Inclusivity should also extend to mixing youth and elders, and a range of people with different roles in the community. Participant selection should take into account Indigenous community governance systems to ensure legitimacy.

Long term support

The long term impact of leadership programmes will be greater if the programme has a long term support strategy for leaders, including building connections with a range of actors such as community development partners, formal education providers, as well as offering mentoring support.

Focus on rights

Integrating development of leadership skills with a focus that aligns with participants' priorities and those of their communities, makes the training relatable and useful, and maximises lasting impact. This focus can be incorporated via work on real/concrete projects, which helps make the training seem less abstract.

Key design recommendations and their application in the Congo Basin programme

The study produced a number of specific recommendations for the design of the Congo Basin Indigenous Peoples' Leadership Programme. During the programme development and design phase, we have incorporated these recommendations in a number of ways. Here we present each key recommendation and how our programme design has taken these on board:

METHODOLOGY

Realistic timeframes, curricula reflecting IP priorities, connection with communities, variety of methods, learn by doing, ensure legitimacy and mandate, build alliances and support

- Programme focused at grassroots community level, will be delivered over 24-36 months with each participating community
- Programme design and delivery via strong partnerships and collaboration with communities, and IP-led CSOs
- IP Ambassador circles advising on programme design, methodology and content

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Continued FPIC process throughout programme, in-depth scoping, advisory groups

- In depth scoping and co-design process led by IP Ambassador Circles
- Strong emphasis on community engagement process based on free, prior & informed consent, with ongoing regular feedback
- Co-created leadership curricula, adapted for each context drawing on Indigenous understanding and realities, and defining terms in Indigenous languages
- During co-creation workshops, communities had full prerogatives to set limits on what should not be crossed during discussions, (for example choosing not to share aspects of culture and spirituality that are sacred to them)

THEMATIC FOCUS

Respond to priorities of communities and leaders, including foundational elements of IP own laws, governance, teachings and knowledge, as well as relevant national and international law.

- Overarching leadership curricula designed through participatory process, based around Indigenous concepts of leadership, and adapted to each context including their rites, traditional practices, local governance and priorities.
- Engaged communities are primarily interested in securing the land, forests and other living spaces that enable them to thrive according to their spiritual and cultural connection to these elements of nature. Specific interests and priorities include: securing and managing community forestry areas as living cultural museums; and securing legal rights and recognition and/or advocating for legal or policy reforms.

FORMAT

For grassroots, a long term programme (e.g. 12 months), anchored in territory, interspersed with practical exercises in own communities.

- Programme is focused at community level, based around a series of workshops delivered in communities over 24 to 36 months.
- One of the major learnings from the Co-Creation workshop in Cameroon is that Indigenous reflections on leadership begin with the mind, then move to the hands/feet, and finally to the heart. The programme framework will therefore follow this: from Intentions & Thoughts to Training & Action to Continuous Engagement, with members of the Ambassador Circles, who are trained in Community Facilitation, leading the training practices and supporting leaders with community initiatives.

PARTICIPANTS

Combination of youth, elders and experienced leaders, ensuring a gender balance. Develop criteria with communities.

- Thorough process deployed by community facilitators to engage community in the process with careful consideration of the key groups that make up a community (women, youth, elders)

FACILITATION AND TOOLS

Mobilise experienced Indigenous facilitators, ideally delivering training in Indigenous languages directly; Include women facilitators; Horizontal / co-learning approach

- Programme will be delivered by trained facilitators from connected community-based organisations, who can facilitate in local Indigenous languages
- Approach is based around facilitation of personal/ collective reflection

IMPACT

Develop impact M&E system during design phase; Focus on participants own priorities; Integrate practical projects led by participants; Collaborate with formal education institutions; Integrate economic/ community development skills

- Theory of change developed with Ambassador circles and informing M&E system design
- Leadership programme will accompany communities in implementing their own priorities
- Diverse partnerships being formed to support broader long-term impact.

There is a growing international interest in supporting Indigenous leadership and empowerment for community conservation and natural resource management. We believe that the experiences gathered in this report provide useful lessons for the Well Grounded programme in the Congo Basin, as well as other initiatives being developed in a range of geographies and contexts. We are now launching this programme in Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and are committed to continuing to share progress and learning as we proceed.

Acronyms

AIPP	Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact
AMAN	Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago / *Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*
CBI	Congo Basin Institute
CPA	Cordillera Peoples Alliance
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
ICOLT	Indigenous Community Organising and Leaders Training
IIFB	International Indigenous Forum for Biodiversity
ILED	Indigenous-led Education
ILI	Indigenous Leadership Initiative
IIWF - FIMI	International Indigenous Women's Forum / *Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas*
IP	Indigenous peoples
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights
OPIAC	Organización Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonia Colombiana
PFGTI	Indigenous territorial governance training programme
PFII	Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
REPALEAC	Network of Indigenous and Local Communities for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa / *Réseau des populations autochtones et locales pour la gestion durable des écosystèmes forestiers*
TEK	Traditional ecological knowledge

Background

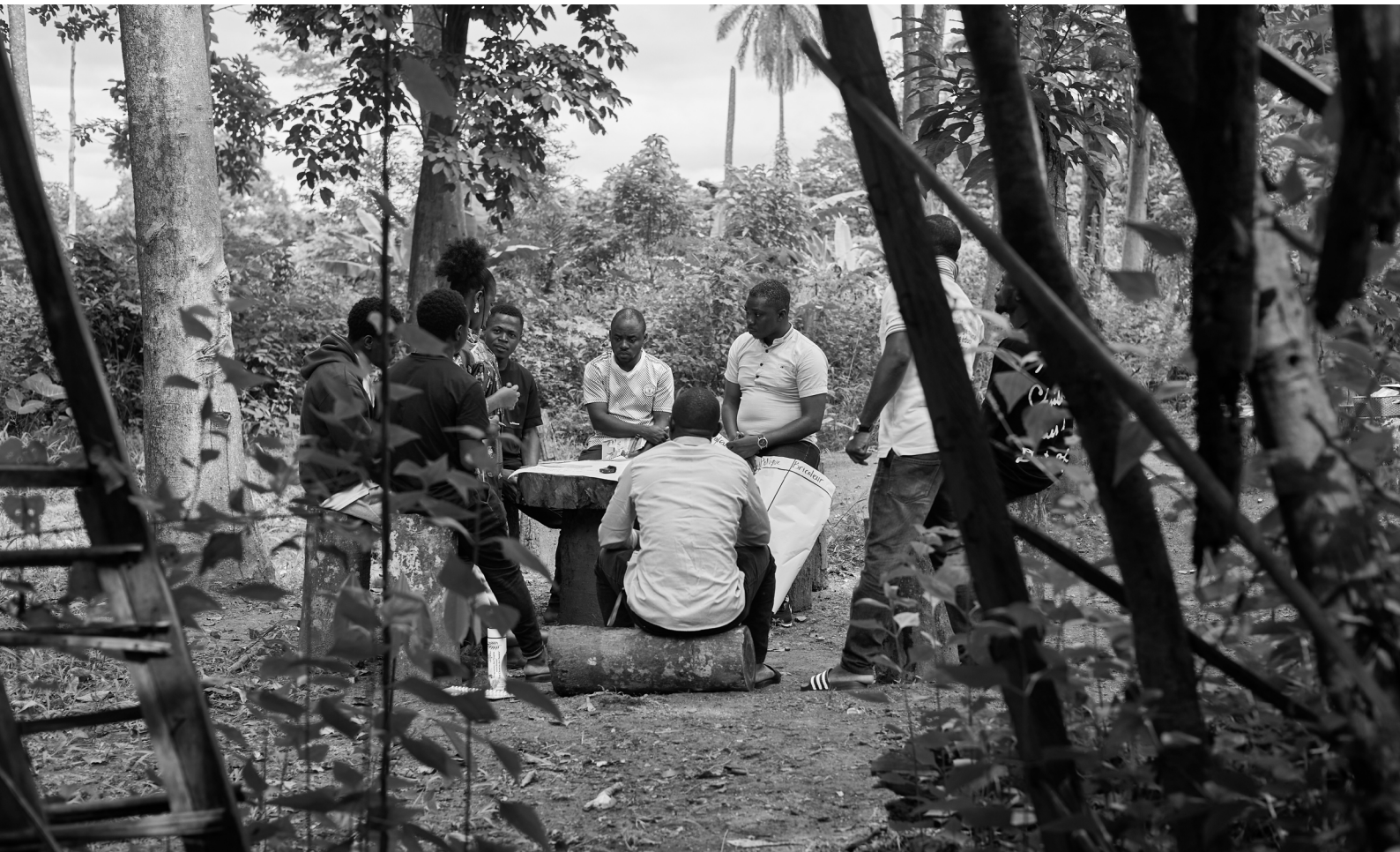
Research report: a global study of lessons learned in Indigenous Leadership development to inform the design of a programme in the Congo Basin,

CATHERINE CLARKE, NOVEMBER 2023

Well Grounded implemented a pilot phase of its Indigenous Peoples leadership development programme from 2019 to 2020 in Cameroon. The objectives of this initiative were to accompany Okani, an Indigenous-led civil society organisation based in Cameroon, to develop a strategy for its leadership centre and to design an Indigenous leadership development programme that aims to strengthen self-confidence and decision-making in the Indigenous communities with which the organisation works. One of the aims of the initiative was the co-creation of a leadership curriculum based on Indigenous culture. So far, a draft of the content and format of a strategic self-leadership workshop has been created, with anecdotes, stories and Indigenous games to be adapted for use as materials for future Indigenous leadership development programmes.

Well Grounded is now developing this programme further and taking this "Indigenous leadership" programme to a regional level, with the collaboration of actors recently identified in the mapping of Indigenous-led, or Indigenous-issues-focussed, civil society organisations.

This synthesis report brings together an overview of Indigenous Peoples' leadership initiatives that have been developed around the world, drawing on a document review and individual interviews with practitioners and participants. It collates best practice examples, provides short case studies highlighting particularly interesting approaches, tools and methodologies, and presents a variety of approaches that have been tested, different thematic focuses, challenges that have been faced by practitioners and lessons learnt to inform Well Grounded's programme development in the Congo Basin.



Youth Leaders Rising: Perspectives of a young Baka leader from Cameroon's East region

My own story begins in a small Baka family, annexed to a large Bantu village called Andom. Growing up here, my whole family was looked down upon. Every time I spoke to the Bantu neighbours, I was mockingly reminded of my Baka identity. This situation challenged me to surpass myself, so that one day I would be one of the Indigenous Peoples who would defend the Indigenous cause in Cameroon and internationally. In my academic progress, I set myself a goal: to study law, to become a lawyer and to defend the human rights of Indigenous forest communities. In this race for knowledge, I became the very first Indigenous Baka person to obtain a university degree in Cameroon. Today many of my younger brothers and sisters are enrolled in universities and higher institutes – this is a great strength for our generation.

In 2006, an Indigenous Baka association – Association Okani – was created to defend the rights of Indigenous forest peoples in Cameroon. I joined as a youth leader. From then on, I received teachings from Indigenous elders and trainings on the rights of Indigenous Peoples at the national, regional and international levels. These trainings enabled me to position myself in the Indigenous associative movement in Cameroon. In my dedication to the Indigenous cause, I received encouragement from leaders of local Indigenous associations, communities and many other actors (including national and international partners) to commit myself to Indigenous youth leadership. Thus, in 2016, with the establishment of our platform of Indigenous Peoples of the forests of Cameroon – Gbabandi – I was mandated Coordinator of the Youth Forum.

Indigenous communities, leaders and associations have enormous potential to make a positive difference. We just need to rethink the current leadership approach and build our leadership based on our assets and not on our needs. Culturally, Baka communities are not hierarchical in nature, rather, societal organisation is formed around the roles and skills of different individuals. For example, elders (kobos) take the lead in initiations, the transfer of knowledge and skills, while among the women there are those who lead fishing activities, and there is a certain well-structured organisation around the associated spirituality which leads up to the fishing activity. All these considerations contributed to the consolidation of traditional Baka "leadership".

The history of Indigenous community-based leadership in the forests of Cameroon is relatively recent though. The first local Indigenous associations emerged in Cameroon in the early 2000s, to carry out community-based projects. Presidents were elected to coordinate these associations who became what we identify as Baka "leaders" today. But this generation of Indigenous forest leaders is losing effectiveness and pragmatism. As a result, only sporadic actions are carried out and real leadership is diminished. In most cases, the inactivity of the associations reflects the ageing of the leadership teams, whose succession has not been sufficiently prepared.

From another point of view, the leadership in Indigenous traditional-cultural spirituality is also quite fragile today. There is a real intergenerational conflict due to new contemporary aspirations. Young

Indigenous People no longer find reference points or a real interest in the conservation of authentic culture, rites and tradition. Also, the ancestral practices that gave a certain prestige to Indigenous knowledge holders are no longer practised enough, in part due to restricted access to traditional forests, thus endangering this side of traditional and cultural leadership practice. The conflict between generations and the rural exodus of young Indigenous People have become real obstacles to the practice of knowledge transfer between Indigenous elders and youth.

But it must be acknowledged that in some cases there has been a real investment in youth leaders, who have been accompanied by the associations, and several forums of reflection have enabled a gradual reappropriation and revalorisation of authentic leadership within the Indigenous associative movement – particularly within the Gbabandi platform.

I have been involved in many different advocacy actions with Indigenous communities – I know now that we can initiate action and it bears fruit. Two examples stand out for me. The first one is Gbabandi's experience of drafting and publishing a declaration on the violations of Indigenous Peoples' human rights in Cameroon's protected areas. This Declaration made international headlines and today, on the ground, there has been a significant change in behaviour. The second example is when we organised a listening event on this same topic. We brought international conservation organisations, CSOs and state institutions together for an inclusive dialogue, where we told our story, on our own terms. It was the first ever such event successfully organised by Indigenous forest peoples ourselves in Cameroon. Subsequently, we have seen that there has been a positive response from local decision-makers, with significant changes in their interactions with Indigenous associations and communities.

I believe in the unprecedented capacities of Indigenous Peoples, and I know that the multiple learnings that are developing, and examples we are seeing from Indigenous Peoples around the world, will bring about a convincing change. I put all my hope in the Indigenous youth, who are increasingly mobilised and who want to take the lead, bringing a breath of fresh air and a new dynamic to Indigenous leadership. I hope that there will be a smooth transition between generations, where the elders will occupy a place of wisdom, and the new generation will take over with an approach of shared governance within Indigenous organisations. I believe that the new vision will be built around a decentralisation of power, as in the egalitarian tradition of Baka communities. Finally, I am hopeful that Indigenous leadership will be strong enough, and that our actions will influence government policies in key areas.

Timothée Emini is the Indigenous Peoples Leadership Programme Coordinator with Well Grounded. He is also a PhD student in International Law and former Facilitator of Gbabandi – Cameroon's national platform of forest Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Leadership

"A leader is like a stream; it runs day and night and never sleeps."
BAKA WOMAN, CAMEROON

Strong Indigenous leadership is an indispensable building block for Indigenous Peoples to exercise their right to self-determination, safeguard their cultural practices and articulate collective visions for the future. At the same time, Indigenous governance systems are under severe strain due to a multitude of factors, including colonial legacies, restricted access to customary territories, forced displacement, discrimination, marginalisation and physical abuse, to name but a few. These factors also have profound implications for the intergenerational transmission of traditional ecological knowledge.

Indigenous Peoples' rights to their lands and territories are protected under international law, and yet, in many places, including the Congo Basin, this is far from a reality. Instead, Indigenous Peoples in the Congo Basin are faced with the seemingly insurmountable challenge of sustaining leadership and cultural resilience, without territory. And yet, as we saw in the forward, there is reason to be hopeful.

The Indigenous movement is slowly growing at national levels (e.g. the Gbabandi platform in Cameroon), there have been some positive policy and legal reforms (e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo's Loi 5), and Indigenous youths are motivated and engaged to drive forward the shift from colonial modes of governance to self-determination. There is also increasing momentum and mobilisation at the regional level – 2023 saw the creation of the new *Alliance for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities for Conservation in Africa* (AICA) and the first Indigenous Peoples' and local community-led conservation congress held in Namibia.

This synthesis report seeks to collate best-practice examples of Indigenous leadership training initiatives from around the world, to inform and inspire the development of an Indigenous leadership training initiative tailored for the Congo Basin. The vision is for an Indigenous-led initiative, formulated and implemented in harmony with Indigenous priorities and ways of working. To this end, the conceptualisation phase is supported by four Indigenous Advisory Circles (one each for East DRC, West DRC, Republic of Congo, Cameroon), composed of Indigenous leaders and Indigenous organisations working in the Congo Basin at local, national and international levels.

A critical step in this programme development process will be to reflect upon (collectively and collaboratively) how the concept of leadership tallies with the egalitarian nature of many Indigenous Peoples in the Congo Basin, and their internal governance systems, so that participants have legitimacy in the eyes of their communities and have their mandate as leaders.

The challenge appears to be how to revive the "leader-full" potential of many, while staying true to Indigenous ways of leading and knowing

1

Methodology

The methodology used to produce this Synthesis report is outlined here.

Document review

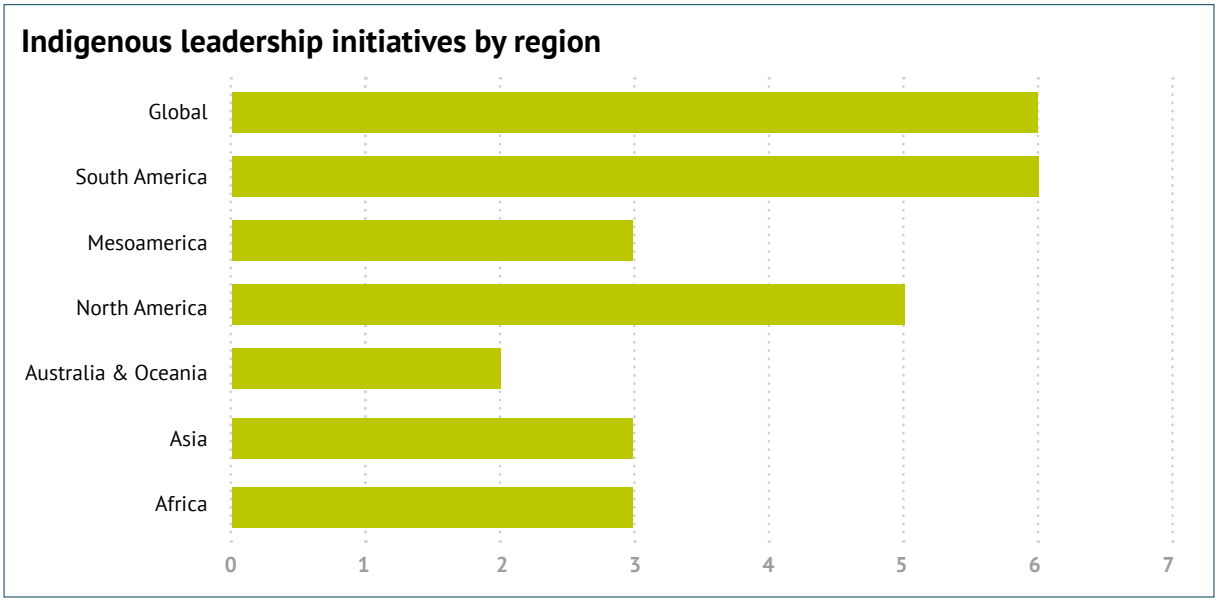
Existing indigenous leadership training initiatives were identified in two different ways. Firstly, through discussions with individuals within indigenous organisations, in particular members of the International Indigenous Forum for Biodiversity (IIFB), to hear of programmes their members have been involved in. Secondly, through online searches using key search terms. Search results were reviewed to identify the most relevant hits, which were then analysed in more detail. Analysis of results included reading available information on organisation websites and learning resources produced, with a specific focus on the criteria mentioned below.

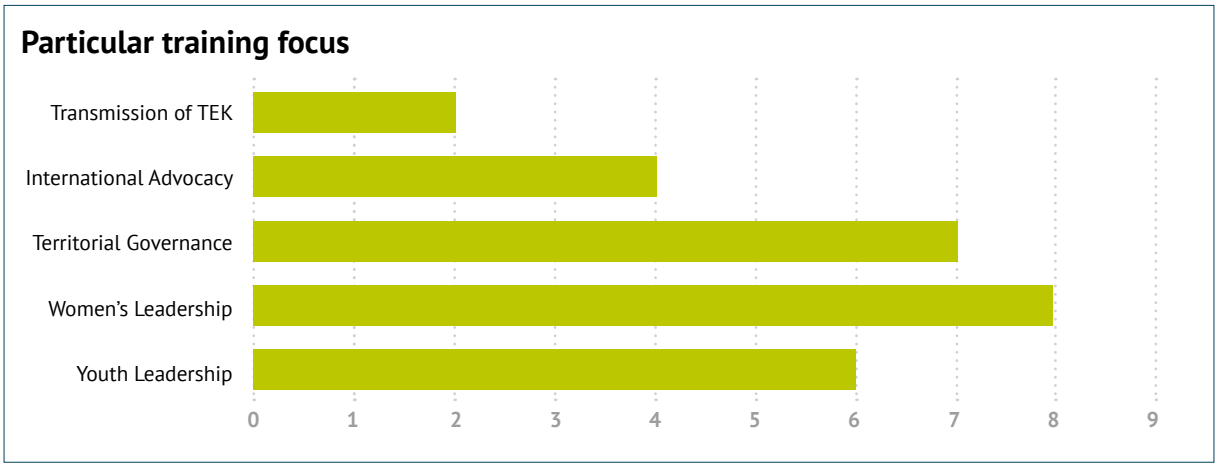
Inventory of IP leadership initiatives

An inventory of leadership initiatives was compiled, presenting a diverse selection of indigenous leadership initiatives from around the world, identified during the document review, focusing particularly on the following training themes:

- Indigenous youth leadership
- Indigenous women's leadership
- Territorial governance / land guardians
- Indigenous peoples' rights and engagement at the international level
- Intergenerational transmission of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)

The inventory was not exhaustive, rather it focused on giving an overview of high quality and diverse initiatives, where sufficient information was available. A total of 28 initiatives were identified and included in the inventory – as presented in the figures below. Of these, 14 were of particular interest to Well Grounded and were selected for in-depth review.





Individual interviews

Individual interviews were carried out with representatives from organisations involved in the design and implementation of leadership training programmes, and with programme participants to hear their personal experiences, including recommendations for future initiatives. Interviewees were selected purposively to include a varied mix of initiatives from around the world, also considering different thematic focuses of the training programmes and different methodological approaches used.

Sharing and feedback sessions

A draft report was prepared and shared with Well Grounded's Leadership Programme Advisory Circle and with four Indigenous Advisory Circles composed of pre-identified indigenous leaders and organisations in the Congo Basin involved in the design and implementation of the leadership programme that Well Grounded wishes to develop. The report's key findings and recommendations were presented in four online sessions to each Advisory Circle – east DRC, west DRC, Republic of Congo and Cameroon. Feedback from the online sessions was integrated into the final report, along with comments from Well Grounded.

Limitations

This Synthesis Report of Indigenous leadership training initiatives and programmes around the globe is necessarily partial and incomplete. The nature of community-based and grassroots training can mean that reports of initiatives do not make it out of territories. Indigenous knowledge transmission, including of leadership, is often ad hoc, spontaneous, and undocumented. Further, it was not always possible to speak with the facilitators of specific training programmes, due to availability, or with participants of training programmes, due to their location in remote areas. In these cases the report relies upon secondary material, such as reports, videos, website text.

2

Content: different themes

Youth leadership and intergenerational transmission of knowledge

Youth leadership training initiatives, also called "next generation" leadership trainings, have been trialled in various contexts, including Ecuador, Suriname, Cameroon, Indonesia, the Philippines and the USA. These trainings tend to include a parallel focus on the intergenerational transmission of traditional ecological knowledge.

Congo Basin Institute – School for Indigenous and Local Knowledge (SILK) in Cameroon

"I feel like I added many things to my own knowledge during [the SILK] course. There were many things I myself had forgotten and realised that there were so many things in the forest that are important for us the Baka. Another thing that was important for us in this forest course was that we taught the kids and Mama Ruksan [CBI's SILK Project Director] also taught them and us [Western science] in the evening and we added them together and could learn both these things. So I feel that I can be the most knowledgeable person because I have both types of knowledge, I can have access to both ways of knowing and know more."

BAKA MAN, CAMEROON AND SILK PARTICIPANT [1]

The Congo Basin Institute's (CBI) School for Indigenous & Local Knowledge (SILK) started in 2020 and works with Baka youths and elders around Cameroon's Dja Reserve, to preserve Indigenous and local knowledge of the Congo Basin Rainforest. Baka traditional ecological knowledge is transmitted in the forest through bè (song and dance), likano (stories) and ma (traditional medicine), but this transmission is dwindling due to various external pressures which displace Baka communities from the forest.

The SILK programme has experimented with different methodologies to reinforce knowledge transmission from elders to youth through collaborations with CBI researchers, as outlined in the box below. Their focus is on developing collaborative research projects with Baka youth to mirror Indigenous

1 https://www.cbi.ucla.edu/silk

ways of learning by doing and by observation, using the forest as the classroom. CBI describes their programme as follows:

> *A long-term project involving recording multi-year ecological and ethno-biological data, SILK aims to give Indigenous Baka communities agency and provides livelihood opportunities linked to preserving their bio-cultural heritage and food security. We collaborate with Baka as fellow educators, fostering path-breaking interactions between communities, researchers & conservationists.*

To this end, the Baka youth spend 10 days each month in the forest with elder Baka and researchers, learning a combination of TEK and specific skills such as GPS, data collection on plants (phenology) and animals (census of frugivores). The SILK team also facilitates intergenerational field courses once a year.

Photo credit: Ruksan Bose

SILK methodology

Baka-led documentation: CBI are in the process of training Baka youth to draw, write, and record elder Baka sharing their knowledge. This includes youth training in basic video techniques, which they can use to record Baka elders in situ using traditional hunting and gathering techniques, preparing traditional medicines. CBI plan to procure basic solar powered computers that the Baka can store and view this documentation on in their community so it is accessible to them.

Curriculum development: Through a series of dozens of interviews with men and women, SILK Project Director Dr Ruksan Bose documented key TEK related to food gathering and preparation, cultural practices, and plant and animal identification. She is currently working with Baka elders to turn the results from the interviews into curriculum that could be used across Baka communities in the region.

Formal education: CBI hosts multi-day field courses at Bouamir Research Station where Baka elders teach TEK to youth. The courses include forest walks, where sight, smell, and sound are all used to identify the presence of flora and fauna. These field courses were the first time many Baka children saw gorillas and other primates, and learned their role in the forest ecosystem. In the evenings, traditional stories, songs, and dances are shared.

Employment: As the Baka are increasingly integrating into the local market economy, CBI has hired Baka to act as guides, collaborators, and researchers on projects. This demonstrates to the Baka youth that there is also economic value in the TEK they are learning, and provides additional learning and practice opportunities. There are also efforts to integrate western science where possible. For example, the Baka working on projects have learned the Latin names for most of the animal and tree species and have also gained experience working with western scientists. This increases their employment opportunities with other scientists and conservationists. In addition, we are working to provide advanced educational opportunities to Baka communities.

Informal education: The project encourages both elders and youth to take advantage of myriad opportunities for education that occur in unstructured settings. For example, CBI pairs Baka elders and youth to conduct regular floral and faunal surveys, creating additional opportunities for elders to mentor the youth.

Source: https://www.cbi.ucla.edu/silk

Most of CBI's SILK activities take place at the Bouamir Research Station, a 30km walk into the Dja Reserve from the village. The team has been trying to find ways of including more Baka women in SILK activities, since they find it difficult to leave their children / families in the village for extended periods. Dr Ruksan Bose explained that at the start of the pandemic, access to the Dja was restricted, so the team set up a phenology monitoring activity in the village forest, which they discovered was a great way to train and employ more women. Women were extremely enthusiastic to take part and are now regularly engaged in this work. Baka women report that there's more chance women will use their earnings to invest in the household, health or children's education then men. CBI has also been supporting the participation of Baka women at Gbabandi[2] meetings, and other events, such as inter-village exchanges with other Baka communities around the Dja, and report that "their increased confidence in public is visible".

CBI has also started to support young Baka who have attained the necessary level in high school education to access formal training at the National Forest and Fauna School (ENEF) at Mbalmayo and the

2 https://www.gbabandi.org

Foumban National Zootechnics and Veterinary Training Centre. So far CBI has supported the integration of two Baka students into these programmes and plans to continue and expand this programme of work. According to Dr Ruksan Bose:

> *"The employment of Baka as skilled knowledge-holders challenges ingrained views of these communities and generates awareness of the relevance of their TEK for conservation. Working through national Forest and Fauna schools to include eligible Baka youth in mainstream structures and introducing curricula that recognises the importance of weaving Baka TEK and scientific knowledge will contribute to this paradigm shift over time. Network and associations creation will also strengthen the capacity and voice of local organisations and significantly empower them and their members."*

Part of the strength of SILK is that it is anchored in one place, with activities developing gradually over an extended period of time. Although at a distance (30km), through this project, communities have access to the forests of the Dja Reserve as a site to practice, maintain and transmit their traditional ecological knowledge – for many Indigenous forest communities in Cameroon this is not the case anymore. The fact that SILK is part of CBI's wider programme of research also means that there is ample opportunity for collaboration between researchers and community members, and for meaningful local employment opportunities.

Photo credit: Ruksan Bose

Okani and Forest Peoples Programme – A cultural awareness workshop to inspire a new generation of Baka leaders in Cameroon

Okani (a Baka-led Cameroonian organisation) and Forest Peoples Programme ran a pilot leadership training programme[3] in 2020 for Baka youth. Each session brought together 10 young Baka women and men for a 5-day residential leadership workshop in Cameroon's southern forests, hosted at Okani's Indigenous Peoples Centre for Leadership and Sustainability. The workshops used different facilitation techniques to encourage participants to regain self-confidence and pride in their Indigenous identity as a first step towards building strong community leadership. Techniques included: role play, dancing, singing and forest spirit incantations, learning through likano (exploring traditional stories and myths relating to leadership), drawing/illustrations, guest speakers (e.g. kobos, Indigenous leaders), forest walks, meditation and participatory mapping.

The methodology developed, termed "Self, Problem and Solution", began with individual introspection, before moving towards a group exploration of collective identity, and onto external threats to culture and territory through mapping of ancestral lands and external relationships. The objective was to create a safe space to facilitate deep collective reflection of recurrent problems facing communities, and to develop action plans to guide community leaders. Baka elders collaborated with the facilitation team, both to ground the workshop through spiritual meditation and song, and to encourage intergenerational exchange between participants.

Photo credit: FPP

3 FPP & Okani, 2021, Exploring Indigenous Leadership: A cultural awareness workshop to inspire a new generation of Baka leaders. Report

"When I go back to the village, I hope to inspire others with this courage I have acquired this week. The courage to speak out on issues facing us. I am asking the gods to help me mobilize my fellow villagers so we can talk about our forest, our customs and how losing this culture will mean losing our livelihood and thus our lives."

BAKA WOMAN (CAMEROON) AND OKANI LEADERSHIP TRAINING PARTICIPANT[4]

The workshop provided a powerful experience for participants, however, one of the key challenges faced by the facilitation team was how to ensure lasting impacts of the training, including supporting participants to feedback to their community – a common challenge, explored further in section 3.

Okani Workshop Structure

Day 0
Arrival of participants
Shared evening meal

Day 1: Who Am I? Exploring Self-Identity
Morning meditation Spiritual invocation Self-introduction

Day 2: Who Are We? Exploring Collective Identity
Morning meditation
Who are we?
Why are we different?
How do we experience others?

Day 3: Our Culture: Strong for Now?
Morning meditation
Are the Baka losing their identity and culture? What makes me proud to be Baka?
When was I not proud to be Baka?

Day 4: Our Territories: Exploring Connections to Land and Threats to Forest
Morning meditation
Participatory mapping
Facilitated discussion and restitution

Day 5: Our Commitments
Morning meditation
Personal commitments

4 Ibid.

Life Mosaic – Next generation trainings

Life Mosaic has been facilitating "Next generation leadership trainings" since 2014, as they put it:

> *We help create unique trainings for Indigenous youth, focused on awakening their calling to defend their territories and providing them with the skills to facilitate participatory processes grounded in their own cultures.*

Their work began in 2010, when they conducted over 100 interviews with Indigenous leaders, predominantly in Indonesia, but also in the Philippines and Latin America. Leaders reported that there was only a small group of activists who were "dying young, selling out or burning out". When asked what was needed at the territorial level the answer was leadership training. Life Mosaic carried out further discussions with Indigenous leaders, looking into methods that could be used, exploring how communities conduct their rituals and ceremonies and how traditional ecological knowledge transmission currently takes place.

They noticed that many Indigenous leaders were being trained in international human rights and national policies, for example by organisations such as AMAN[5], but that the natural progression was for young leaders to then go and find employment in NGOs, contributing to a "brain drain" in Indigenous territories.

Life Mosaic understands this to be symptomatic of an emphasis on "capacity building", which has a managerial and professional emphasis, as opposed to "popular education" or "education for critical consciousness" (more common in Latin America), which is concerned with movement building, cultural resilience, and unity in defending territory.

A new understanding was developing that recognised the need for different kinds of leadership, with elders expressing the need for young leaders rooted in their territory, in their culture.

The leadership programme Life Mosaic developed sought to address this and was informed by education for critical consciousness methodologies. The intention was not to replace traditional ways of transmitting leadership (such as hereditary systems or traditional systems of leadership), but to foster an additional kind of grassroots leadership.

The methodology is loosely based around Joanna Macy's "despair and empowerment work" (now called the "Work that Reconnects"), whereby gaining knowledge about (or consciously acknowledging) a threat (to territory, culture, life) can generate feelings of anger, fear and loss (despair), which in turn provides fertile soil in which to grow constructive and collaboration action (empowerment).

People in every walk of life, from every culture, feel grief over the condition of the world. Despair is this constellation of different feelings. One person may feel more fear or anger, another sorrow, and another guilt, but the common thread is a suffering on behalf of the world or, as I put it, feeling "pain for the world".

JOANNA MACY

Workshops commonly begin by an exploration of threats and crises faced by the Indigenous community in question, at local, national and global levels, before moving onto exploring critical consciousness and its application to territory. Participants are invited to engage in an analysis of different leadership styles, including the "top-down" approach of mainstream society, Indigenous forms of leadership and alternative

5 AMAN has its own leadership framework, where it has developed modules for entry level leaders, movement builders and senior leaders.

approaches. The objective of the programme is to support Indigenous youth to engage with the dual cultural and territorial crises facing their communities and to develop alternative visions for the future.

The workshops are structured around the following core components:

- Becoming self-aware as an IP youth to threats and crises (local, national, global)
- Understanding the process of critical consciousness (e.g. political opportunity to apply for individual land titles versus benefits of collective tenure)
- Exploring different types of leadership
- Self-determined development / life plans (plan de vida)
- Developing skills to facilitate a similar process in a community
- Finding your own mission (what are you drawn to do in the Indigenous movement)

Life Mosaic has tried many different approaches over the years, adapting to local needs and priorities, however, their trainings always take place within communities and with an overarching emphasis on the equality between facilitators and learners. The transferal of knowledge from facilitator to youth is less important than creating a space where youth can explore their own truth within their own culture. In this way, the territory itself becomes the key space for learning.

Life Mosaic has been facilitating trainings in this way since 2014, extensively in Indonesia, with some trainings also in Tanzania with the Masaai and increasingly in Peru, for example with the Wampis. They have recently been approached by Nia Tero to facilitate trainings for participants across Northern Amazonian Territories.

Life Mosaic's leadership trainings are facilitated by a combination of Life Mosaic staff (including local staff) and 3-4 Indigenous youth co-facilitators: "in all of the work we've tried to build and support local facilitators". Training duration varies, with 1 month being the longest period tested in Indonesia. Longer trainings have led to greater impact than shorter trainings. One of the month-long trainings inspired a group of youth to set up Indigenous training schools in their territory, where youth work with elders. There are now 90 such Indigenous school set up, without any external funding.

The key facilitation "tool" used by Life Mosaic is simply "Circle" – sitting in a circle or standing in a circle, a formation which underscores the lack of hierarchy between facilitators and participants. Life Mosaic videos are also screened and discussed, and role play techniques are used, for example, acting out different leadership styles. They also use theatre of the oppressed methodology.

"Up until now we have tested and shared over 75 methods for participation. Many of these methods that we have been developing are from Indigenous

Peoples themselves, including rituals, eating together, traditional games and poetry, and traditional approaches to tracking. Other methods are from the Misak, Paulo Freire, landless movements, Theatre of the Oppressed, Theory U, Art of Hosting, Joanna Macy, Thich Nhat Hahn, Nature Connection games, and other sources. The methods used include social analysis before trainings, circle, world café, songs, harvests, talk-shows, soul circle, river of life, poetry, collective art, group shelter building, overnight forest meditation, role-play, night market, collective mind map, shared declaration writing, and methods that make the trainings rich and vibrant."

LIFE MOSAIC

One of the challenges they've faced has been encouraging the participation of women, especially on longer residential trainings – "it can be uncomfortable for many community members for their young women to leave villages". Two ways in which Life Mosaic has sought to address this is through conversations with village elders and through screening their "Women Champion of the Buffalo River" film, the story of a women-led movement for Indigenous land rights in Loliondo, Tanzania.

In Indonesia, Life Mosaic offers workshop participants follow-up mentoring, which allows the team both to offer continued support to youth leaders and to evaluate the impact of their trainings. Mentoring can take the form of regular phone calls, or simple check-ins when they meet at events.

"My main inspiration is the many leaders, like my father, who have been fighting in defence of our territory. However, all of them will at some point grow older and leave us, and we as young people must continue these processes and duties that our leaders have assumed. That is why the initiative of training community youth is very important. In the future, it is us who will be the ones who will assume that path of struggle."

17-YEAR-OLD WAMPIS WOMAN[6]

Life Mosaic is also involved in facilitating leadership sessions in Peru, for the Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation's "*Sharian* Academy of Leaders"[7]. The Academy is designed for Indigenous youth aged between 18-35. Their curriculum consists of two complementary programmes, one focusing on socio-cultural knowledge and the other providing more technical training on Indigenous Peoples' rights. The Academy is named after one of the Wampis Nation's last warrior leaders, Sharian, revered for both "defending the rights of the Wampis Nation" and establishing "meaningful peace"[8]. So far, the project has developed a curriculum and trained 40 young people on diverse subjects including: public policy, the right to participation, monitoring municipal investment plans and local government consultations. The training programme is comprised of three different sessions which take place over a two-year period. Life Mosaic facilitates sessions on threats and leadership, and senior Indigenous leaders offer training on Indigenous rights and national legislation.

6 https://localbiodiversityoutlooks.net/sharian-the-wampis-academy-of-leaders-peru/

7 Funded by the EU Commission through the IWGIA-led Indigenous Navigator Project.

8 https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/stories/promoting-youth-leadership-Indigenous-community-peru_en

The ILED Network – Grassroots stories of Indigenous-led education

"How much we lose when our elders die? It is so much. It is like having our libraries on fire and the fire is spreading so fast."

A YOUNG SENGWER LEADER (KENYA), ILED MEMBER[9]

Established in 2020, ILED is a global network of organisations developing and delivering Indigenous-led grassroots education. Primarily located in tropical forest regions, ILED's membership base includes organisations from India, Kenya, the Philippines, Thailand, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Uganda and Costa Rica. ILED focuses on three different priority areas: promoting cross-cultural networking, knowledge sharing and exchanges; administering an accessible Small Grants Fund for inspiring Indigenous-led education initiatives; and raising awareness and increase visibility of Indigenous-led education initiatives. ILED's first publication (2022) presents 6 case studies showcasing local Indigenous-led education initiatives to revive Indigenous languages, oral histories and traditional knowledge.

Although not an Indigenous leadership training initiative itself, the ILED network draws together and creates a platform for Indigenous-led initiatives developed to affirm and sustain cultural resilience. It is a space where ideas and approaches can be exchanged and co-created, and where diverse funding opportunities navigated.

Earth Guardians – Indigenous youth leadership initiative (USA)

In the USA, Earth Guardians has been running its youth leadership initiative since 2018. The training targets Native youth – one of the most at-risk populations in the country – and seeks to support them to take on leadership roles, both within their local communities, and within the broader environmental justice movement, as well as providing specific guidance on key issues, such as decolonisation, cultural resilience, healing and environmental justice. Their 5-day programme runs every year and is attended by 20 youth leaders between the ages of 18-25, from over 20 tribal nations across North America.

Training contents is overseen by the Earth Guardians Indigenous Youth Committee (graduates of the leadership programme), structured around 3 broad themes: Traditional Indigenous knowledge, Non-violent direct action, and Reclamation of story. The Committee is composed of four graduates of the Earth Guardians leadership initiative. This programme also provides year-long support through virtual monthly group meetings and one-to-one mentoring.

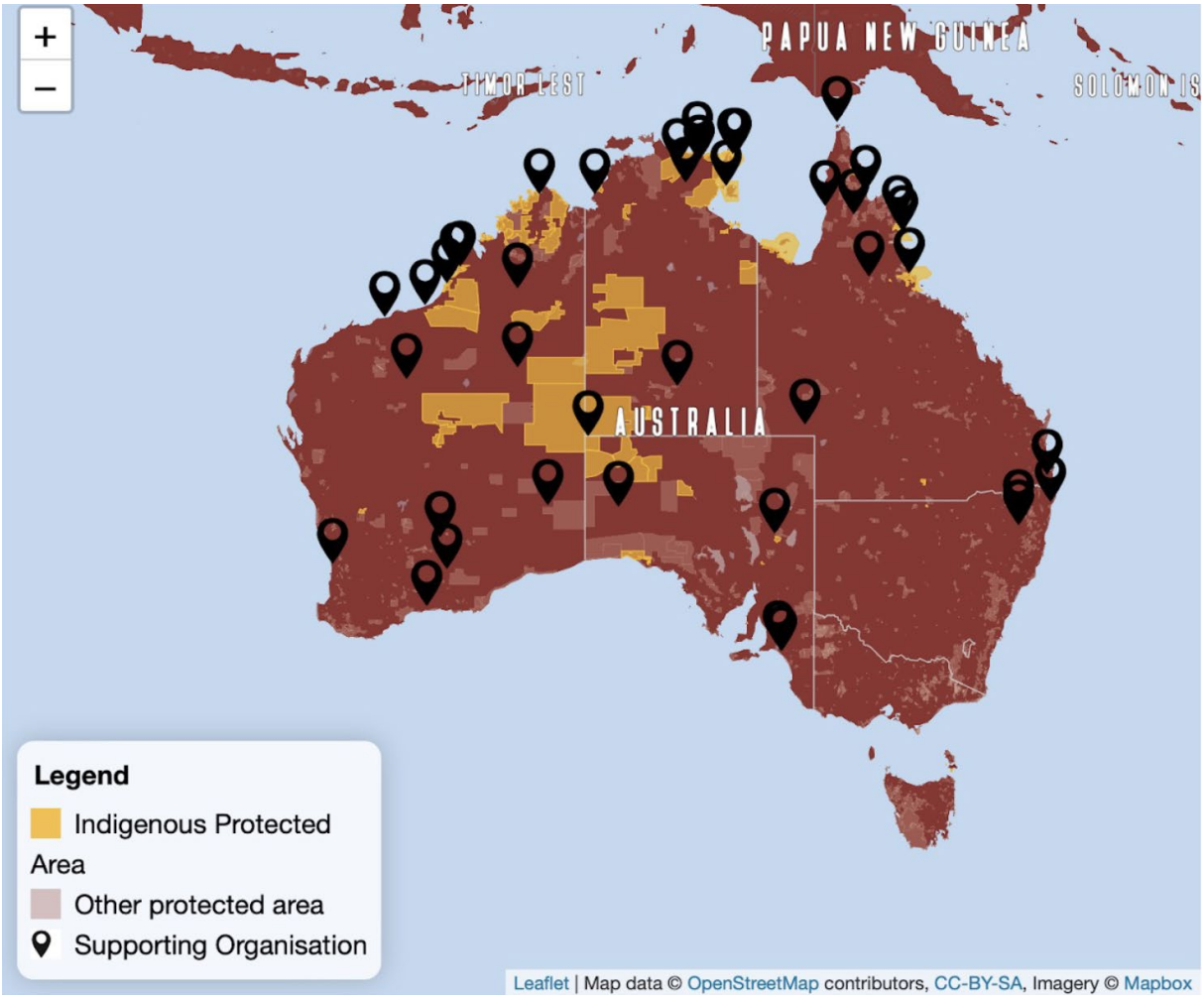
9 https://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/default/files/documents/July%202022%20-%20ILED%20Publication%20Indigenous%20Languages%20ENG.pdf

Territorial governance

Training initiatives taking a territorial governance approach to Indigenous leadership are common across Australia and Canada, where national-level legislation offers provisions for the creation of Indigenous Protected Areas. Here, Indigenous-led conservation is central to national conservation policy and many Indigenous protected areas have been established in recent years. Training programmes (often state-funded) centre the importance of independent Indigenous governance, rooted in the stewardship of traditional territories, as a necessary condition for self-determination.

National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) – Working on Country in Australia

In Australia, 75 Indigenous Protected Areas make up 45% of the national protected area estate, covering over 68 million hectares.[10] An estimated 20% of Australia's total land is under the collective ownership of Indigenous Peoples.[11] Indigenous Protected Areas are cared for and managed by local Indigenous communities, much of which is funded through the federal government's "Working on Country" programme, set up in 2007. Indigenous Rangers are trained to protect native plants and animals, control



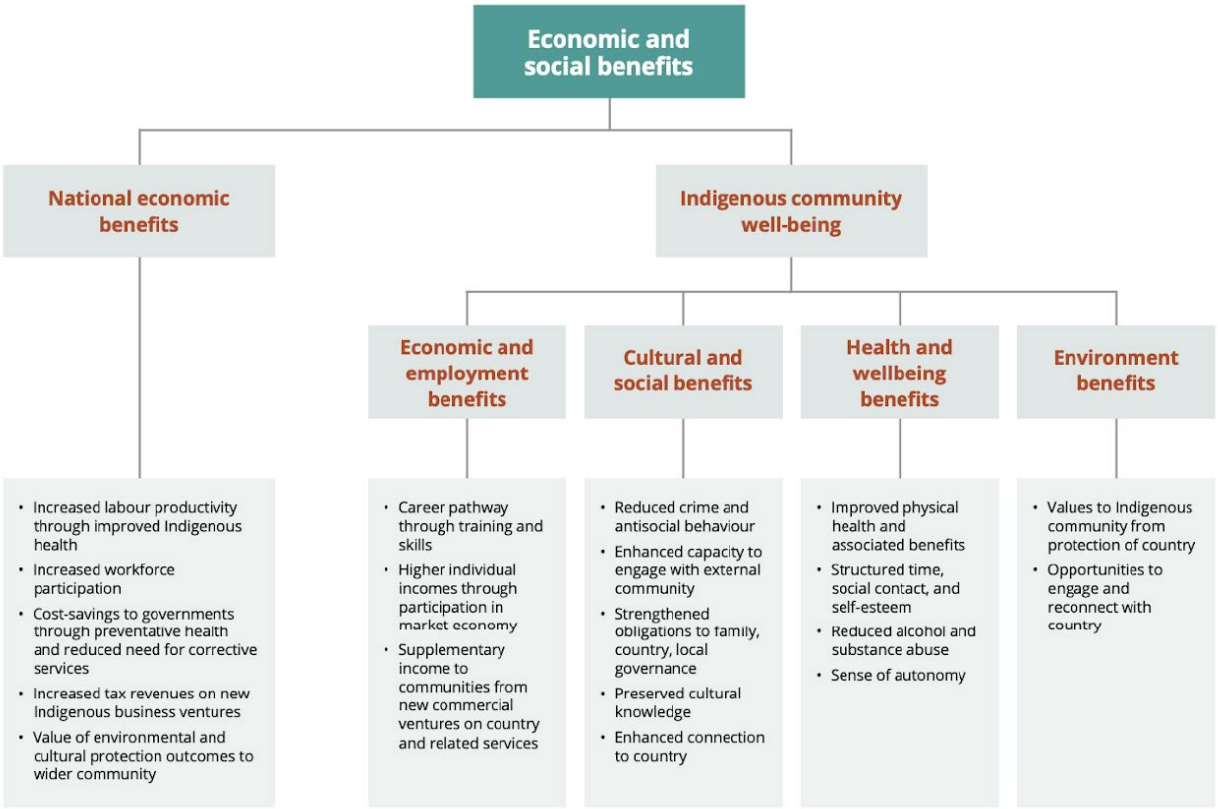
Map showing Indigenous Protected Areas in Australia (Source: countryneedspeople.org.au)

10 NIAA website

11 Country Needs People website

invasive species, reduce wildfires and maintain cultural sites, combining traditional knowledge with modern techniques. According to the Country Needs People website, the Working on Country Programme funds over 2,500 jobs and associated training in land and sea management (including casual, part time and full-time roles), spread across 118 ranger groups.

In 2016, an independent review[12] of the economic and social benefits of Indigenous land and sea management was conducted. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities reported increased pride and self-worth, improved mental and physical health, stronger culture, safer communities, empowered women, ability to find meaningful employment and more role models for youth as a result of the programme.[13] It found that: "most Indigenous Ranger groups are highly motivated by the opportunity to embrace meaningful work that also enables their people to reconnect to country and retain cultural knowledge".



Source: Synergies Economic Consulting summary[14]

The report also noted several national-level economic benefits, including cost savings through lower government expenditure on public health, housing, and policing (e.g. lower alcohol-related crime), and economic returns generated through new Indigenous businesses.

12 https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/thecountryneedsitspeople/pages/131/attachments/original/1452565983/Working_for_Our_Country_report__2016.pdf?1452565983

13 Country Needs People website

14 https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/thecountryneedsitspeople/pages/131/attachments/original/1452565983/Working_for_Our_Country_report__2016.pdf?1452565983

Timeline of Indigenous land and sea management in Australia[15]

Prior to 1970	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples shape and manage land and sea country over millennia.
1970s	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples work to re-establish connection, occupation, use and management of traditional land and sea country
1980s	Grassroots-driven 'caring for our country' model in northern Australia begins
1996	IPA Program established
1998	First IPA declared – Nantawarrina IPA in South Australia
2007	Working on Country (WoC) programme established and managed by the environment department
2012	1423 people employed in WoC funded ranger positions in mix of full-time, part-time and casual roles
2020	Federal government commits funding existing Indigenous ranger teams to 2028
2021	78 IPAs covering over 74 million hectares of land and 4 million hectares of sea country

Women as carers of country

"The role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women around Australia in caring for our country is a little known but inspiring story. Women as carers of country is more than a romantic notion, it's a real confirmation of what we have always known: As Aboriginal women, we have a responsibility to our lands and seas and we bring a unique, essential and powerful contribution to their protection and management."

PAT ANDERSON AO, ALYAWARRE WOMAN[16]

Flexible working arrangements and the creation of specific women ranger groups has meant that Indigenous women rangers now hold close to half of all ranger positions in Australia. Country Needs People's "Strong Women on Country" report presents a variety of stories showcasing the work of Australia's Indigenous women rangers.

Crocodile Islands Women Rangers' work includes:

- Recording traditional knowledge and Indigenous ecological knowledge.
- Facilitating a junior ranger programme which takes young people on country to learn cultural skills and knowledge.
- Creating books and short videos for children to learn cultural and ecological knowledge and associated language.
- Harvesting and propagating traditional food and medicinal plants.
- Maintaining stewardship of country, for example through turtle conservation, cane toad control, biosecurity and revegetation projects.

15 Adapted from https://assets.nationbuilder.com/thecountryneedsitspeople/pages/4026/attachments/original/1655353980/CNP_StrongOnCountryReport_140622_Digital%28web%29.pdf?1655353980

16 From the Strong Women on Country report

Some testimonies from women rangers[17]:

"To me, being a ranger coordinator strengthens me and the women rangers and the community and the country. I'm a good role model to women - and not only to women, to some men, that's what they've said to me - and my family. Nothing is impossible for me."

ANMATYERR RANGER

"We need to teach our young people about culture so when they have kids and grow them up, they can teach them about the country they live in."

KARAJARRI SENIOR CULTURAL RANGER

"Since I have been working as a ranger I have learnt a lot of things, gone for training and workshops, I've been to conferences and I would like to learn more. Now I am standing up in front of biggest mob of people and speaking aloud. I had never used a microphone before but now I am strong and I can do anything."

NORTH TANAMI RANGER

STRONG WOMEN ON COUNTRY

The success of women caring for country as Indigenous rangers and on Indigenous Protected Areas

COUNTRY NEEDS PEOPLE

Protecting nature, transforming lives

17 From the Strong Women on Country report

Indigenous Leadership Initiative (ILI) – Indigenous Guardians

"Indigenous Guardians help Indigenous Nations honour the responsibility to care for lands and waters. They serve as the "eyes and ears" on traditional territories."
ILI[18]

In Canada, First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have been developing a network of Indigenous Land Guardians across the country. The Indigenous Leadership Initiative (ILI) has made significant headway through its Indigenous Guardians programme, which trains Indigenous experts to monitor and protect key ecological and cultural sites within their traditional territories through community-based stewardship initiatives. Connections to culture and language are reinforced through connection to land, promoting community wellbeing. Over 110 Guardians' programs now provide practical support across an array of themes. According to ILI, Guardians "now oversee at least 120 protected lands and waterscapes across Canada",[19] many supported with funding from the Canadian federal government. ILI and partners have created the National Indigenous Guardians Network, which invites collaboration and funding from the State, flipping the usual funding dynamics.

Indigenous Guardians activities include:

- Gathering and application of Indigenous laws, teachings and knowledge.
- Maintenance and support of Indigenous relationships with lands, waters, animals and plants.
- Capacity building, outreach, education and training of Indigenous youth, tourists, and community members.
- Emergency response.
- Data collection and monitoring related to the use of lands, waters and other earthly gifts on traditional territories, including cultural sites.
- Species and habitat identification, monitoring and protection.
- Habitat stewardship for maintenance and improvement of ecosystem services.
- Conservation, land use and land relationship planning.
- Enforcement and compliance support through observation, recording, and reporting.

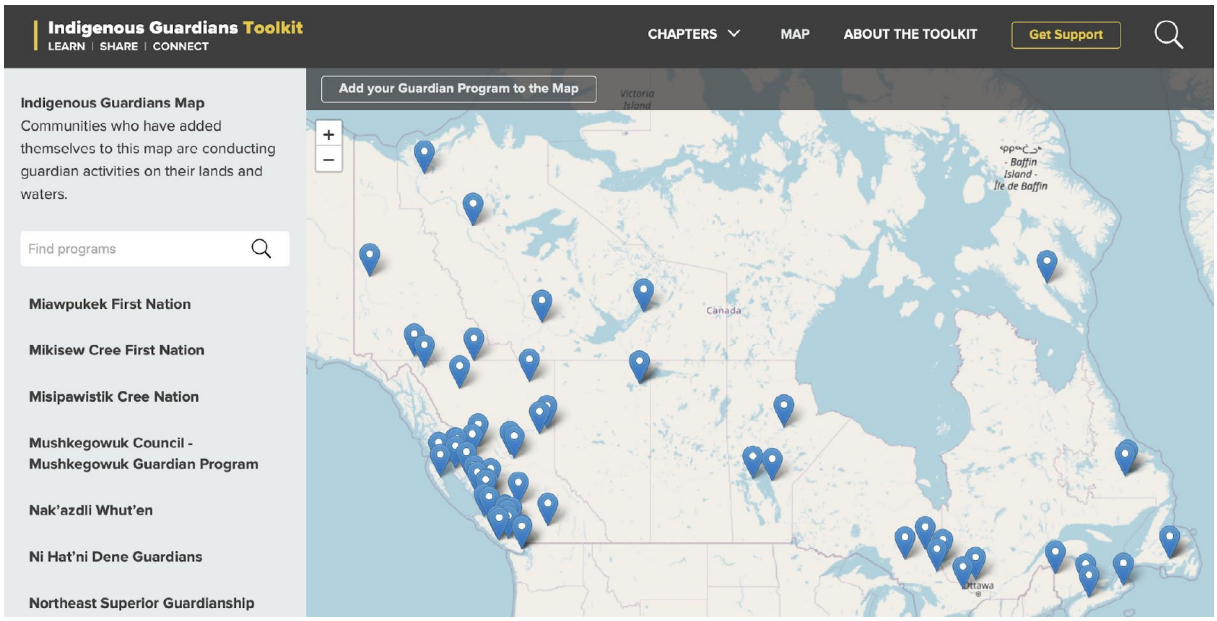
Source: Government of Canada website

The Indigenous Guardians approach is tied in with the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) – a term chosen by the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE)[20] to describe different forms of Indigenous-led land governance, including Tribal Parks, Indigenous Cultural Landscapes, Indigenous Protected Areas, and Indigenous Conserved Areas across Canada. ILI supports Indigenous Nations to create IPCAs, including negotiations with Crown governments. In seeking to build relationships with government actors with respect to territorial governance, the ICE acknowledges the associated risk and hesitancy expressed by Indigenous Peoples across Canada, due to the historic dispossession of Indigenous lands and territories and non-respect of Indigenous systems of knowledge and governance.

18 https://www.ilinationhood.ca

19 https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-Indigenous-led-conservation-efforts-could-make-canada-a-global-leader/

20 "The Indigenous Circle of Experts was formed […] to make recommendations and offer guidance on how IPCAs could be realized in Canada and contribute towards Canada's conservation goals." See: https://www.conservation2020canada.ca/ice



Source: Indigenous Guardians Toolkit

The ICE suggests that ICPAs can be interpreted as "a living example of reconciliation" and the potential for the creation of a new "ethical space". As they put it:

> *ICE came to understand that the newly evolving [IPCA] framework has the potential to enable an "ethical space" that respects the integrity of all knowledge systems. This ethical space provides a venue for collaboration and advice, sharing and cross-validation (where one side validates the other's decisions).*[21]

Indigenous Circle of Experts definition of "Ethical Space"

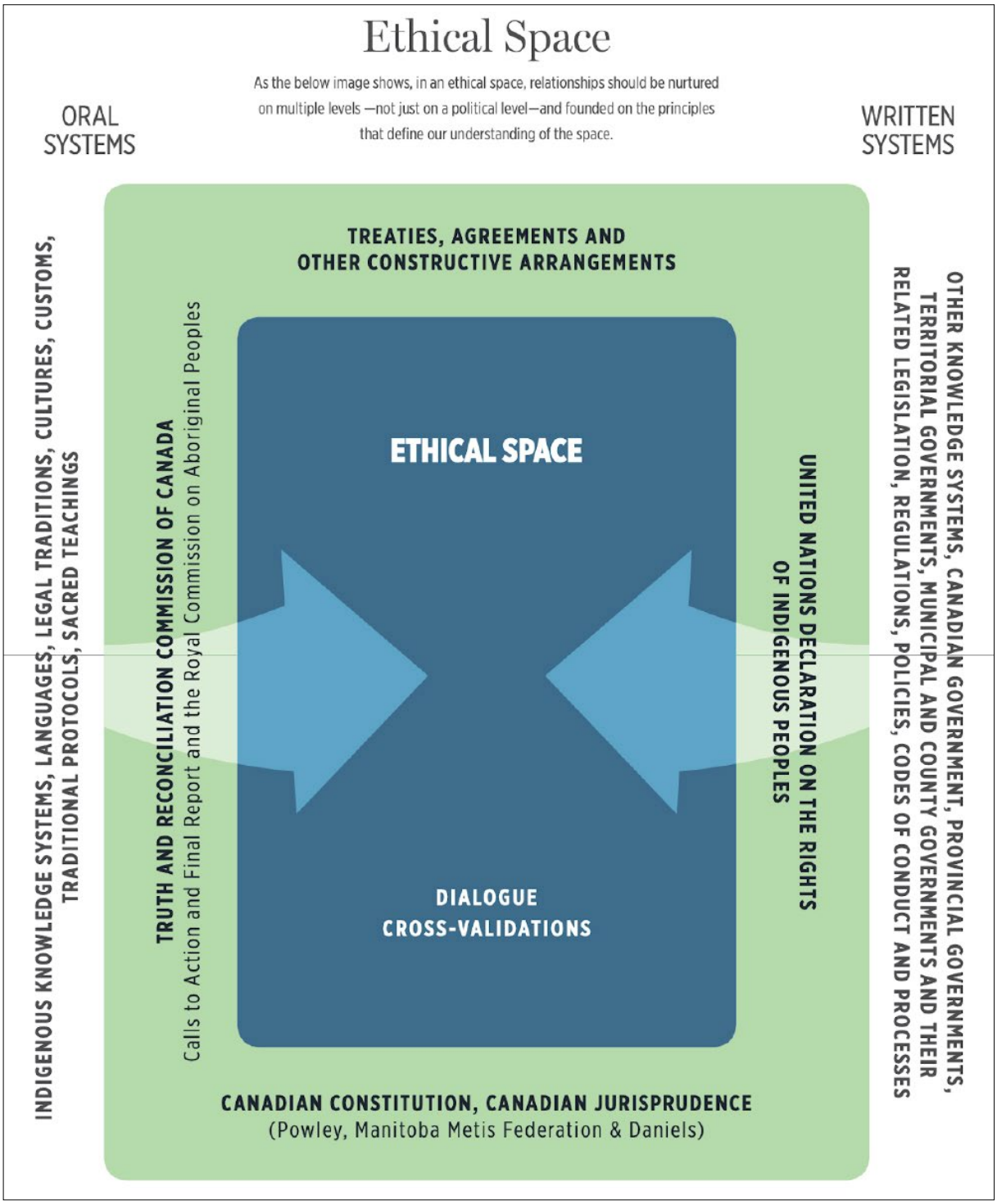
- The focus of ethical space is on creating a place for knowledge systems to interact with mutual respect, kindness, generosity and other basic values and principles. All knowledge systems are equal; no single system has more weight or legitimacy than another.
- One system does not need the other to "corroborate" it to achieve internal validity. For example, the written system does not always need archaeological evidence to provide sound "proof" of an Indigenous practice or story.
- While agreeing to formally enter ethical space may be straightforward for most parties, actually being within that space together requires flexibility. Parties may frequently need to adjust to change, surprise, and other factors that cannot be envisioned at the initial stage.
- While engaged in ethical space, no party can claim to have achieved (or even entered into) processes of consultation or accommodation as defined under existing or previous provincial or federal legislation or policies. That is not the purpose of ethical space.

Source: "We Rise Together", ICE Report, 2018

Reflections on reconciliation and the importance of co-defining "ethical space" on the basis of mutual respect are widely relevant and offer inspiration as Indigenous Peoples seek to return to self-determination from colonial governance regimes around the world. However, significant political barriers in other contexts (for example, in the Congo Basin) underscore the principle that successful initiatives must be deeply informed by socio-political specificities at regional, national and local levels.

21 "We Rise Together", ICE Report, 2018.

Grassroots community guard initiatives have also emerged in South America. In southwest Colombia the Nasa people have formed the Indigenous Guard of Cuaca (Guardia Indígena del Cauca) and have been training community members (including children) to peacefully defend their territories from external threats from paramilitaries and guerrilla groups. In Ecuador, the Cofan have formed a community guard to actively monitor and protect their ancestral territory, for example from gold miners. In 2022 Ecuador's constitutional court ruled to suspend 52 formal gold mining concessions on Cofan territory. Similar actions are being taken by Siona, Secoya and Waorani communities, accompanied by Amazon Frontlines' Indigenous Rights Defenders programme.



Source: "We Rise Together," ICE Report, 2018

Forest Trends - Indigenous territorial governance training programme / (PFGTI)

"This training changed my dreams. Now I know I can do more for my people and my community. I hope to be a woman leader of the community, to assume a position, because nowadays women also have the right to assume a position in the organization."

WOMAN PARTICIPANT FROM PERU

Also in the Amazon, Forest Trends has developed a 12-month Indigenous territorial governance training programme (PFGTI). The design phase began in 2014 and lasted for two years. Forest Trends, WWF, Indigenous Peoples' representatives and researchers from universities from the four project countries (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) met to discuss and develop the methodological approach and to develop the programme curriculum. Two reflections came out of this process, firstly that training on governance cannot take place over just a weekend, it has to be a continual process, and secondly, not only do such trainings have to be long term, they have to be place-based (within a specific community or territory) so that participants can easily relate the training to their reality.

The programme goal is "Strengthening capacities for the management for Indigenous territories in a changing world". It is structured around the following core components which are adapted to local contexts:

1. Legal Framework/ Rights
2. Globalization & Territory
3. Development & Wellbeing
4. Indigenous territorial governance and communal governance
5. Gender & Generations
6. Life plans and other instruments of territorial governance
7. Administrative & financial management
8. Indigenous economy & markets
9. State, public policies, & governance
10. Climate change

Each training brings together 32 participants across 8 communities within a particular region. Participants meet with facilitators at a central location for 1 week every other month (6 sessions), over 12-month period. In between these facilitated sessions, there are 5 interval sessions within each individual community with the support of an Indigenous mentor. These interval sessions focus on practical exercises in territorial governance within their community. Programme participants are then required to develop a territorial governance project with their community – one that does not require outside funding. Topics have included strengthening women's role in the collection of native seeds, intergenerational knowledge transmission and community monitoring of external threats to protect sacred sites. Forest Trends estimates that it has trained between 500 and 700 people.

Training content is adapted to local contexts with help from local university partners and each curriculum is reviewed by a pedagogical committee (with at least 1 academic and 1 Indigenous person). Completed training results in the issuance of a certificate, recognised by local educational institutes, with the endorsement of the university partner.

Source: PFGTI

Similar to initiatives in other contexts, the programme team has faced challenges in ensuring the participation of women, which has been met with local resistance – "how can we continue to respect their social norms, and yet challenge that, because cultures don't need to be static, even IP cultures". Forest Trends has addressed this by requesting that each community select four training participants, of which there must be 1 young person, 1 woman, 1 elder (with living memory of TEK) and 1 community authority (for example someone active in a local association). They have observed that this has been an effective approach and estimate overall participation to be approximately 40% women and 60% men. Having 4 individuals follow the training from the same community is also a way of ensuring that they can support each other in implementing their learnings and in restitution to the wider community.

The programme aims to use entirely Indigenous trainers, something which is increasingly possible as the number of programme graduates grows. The programme has seen some concrete impact, with programme graduates now occupying leadership positions within local IPLC organisations, and one programme participant now the president of AIDESEP. There have also been a couple of cases where graduates have had a direct impact on an evolving policy.

Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) – Leadership Training School (Escuela Mesoamericana de liderazgo)

AMPB has trained over 300 young Indigenous women and men of Mesoamerica with its Leadership training programme, designed as an itinerant school, which travels across countries and community communities. The training methodology is structured around four phases:

1. Creation of identity and high group empathy
2. From self to us: personal identity and collective identity
3. A community for learning and inquiry
4. Entrepreneurship practice

FSC Foundation – Indigenous fellowship programme

The FSC Indigenous Foundation is setting up an Indigenous Fellowship Programme (IFP) which will start in 2024. There are four different fellowship opportunities covering the topics of environment/ climate change, land rights and Indigenous economies designed to support "long-term Indigenous self-development, self-governance, and self-reliance". Training programmes last from 2-4 months, with the youth training taking place at the FCS-IF headquarters in Panama.

AIPP – leadership training

The Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) published an Indigenous Leadership Training Module[22] in 2011. The Module is based on a leadership training programme originally developed by CPA, which was refined on the basis of participant feedback, national-level workshops and pilot project implementation across Asia by the Indigenous Community Organising and Leaders Training (ICOLT) project (2005-2007) – a collaboration of different IP organisations (AIPP, PACOS, the Cordillera Peoples Alliance and Kalumaran of Mindanao). The training module was finalised during a workshop in 2011, where organisations fed back their experiences of implementation (e.g. IMPECT and JOHAR).

The Module includes sub-topics on leadership, organisational management, advocacy of Indigenous Peoples' rights and community development and management of activities and projects (see Annexe for curriculum). It also contains a section on facilitation skills and methods used during trainings. Depending on the prior experience and education level of participants it is anticipated that the basic training can be conducted over 24-36 hours. They share some general recommendations for organisations preparing to conduct their training, for example, to include a mix of seasoned Indigenous leaders and potential leaders, to encourage women to attend and take an active part in the training, and to conduct the training in local languages.

AIPP has also developed and is implementing a self-governance training for Indigenous Youth in Asia.

22 AIPP & CPA, Leadership Training Module, 2011.

Women's leadership

In response to the particular barriers that Indigenous women face in taking on leadership roles at local, national and international levels, leadership initiatives tailored specifically for Indigenous women have been set up around the world.

In Canada, the Coady Institute runs the Indigenous Women in Community Leadership Program (IWCL) for 15 First Nations, Metis and Inuit women each year. The programme takes place over 5 months with a combination of online components and in-person residency on-campus. Training is located at Saint Francis Xavier University in Mi'kmaki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. Entry requirements include a diploma/ undergraduate degree and a minimum of five years' experience in community work, but limited exposure to leadership training.

The programme employs many participatory and experiential methods to create a supportive space for connection, collective learning and exchange. For example, the programme uses a "Two-eyed seeing" or "walking in two worlds" approach where "teaching and learning practices are grounded in Indigenous worldviews, values and teachings while sometimes using western tools and methods that align with those practices". Other facilitation tools include: "Land-based activities, Sharing Circles, Elder/Knowledge Keeper teachings, storytelling, ceremonial opportunities, skill-building exercises, and visits to local Mi'kmaw communities".

The Alianza Mesoamericana de Pueblos y Bosques (AMPB) has developed a women's leadership programme, called Coordinator of Territorial Women Leaders of Mesoamerica (*La coordinadora de mujeres líderes territoriales*). Set up to strengthen AMPB's local leadership trainings for territorial governance, the Coordinator of Territorial Women Leaders works with Indigenous and forest-based women from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. Work themes include the participation of women in political spaces related to their territories, capacity building (technical, political, business), impact on public policy (e.g. REDD+), defence of territory, preservation of cultural identify and strengthening business capacities of Indigenous women and community based organisations.[23]

> *"Women, [faced with] exclusion, have chosen to organize ourselves to achieve participation. These forms of organization are aimed at rescuing culture through the elaboration of handicrafts, traditional foods, collection of forest products, the promotion of the mother tongue, traditional dances, rural community tourism, the elaboration of traditional clothes and the cultivation of traditional seeds. Carrying out these activities gives us some financial and political freedom, which reduces the disadvantages of being a woman, poor and Indigenous in territories affected by climate change. These business and organizational activities have made us key territorial actors due to our relevant contribution to territorial dynamics. This is why it is necessary to think about forms of participation that lead us to get involved in local structures, which allow us to influence the territorial governance process in favor of women. In Guatemala, there are organizations of women who collect seeds from Ramón, Xate, producers of basic grains and handicrafts; in Costa Rica, women cocoa and banana producers; in Panama, women producers of traditional clothing and handicrafts; in Nicaragua and Honduras women producers of honey, natural oils, corn; and in Mexico women producers of organic coffee, cinnamon and spices, as well as other products on a smaller scale."*[24]

23 https://www.alianzamesoamericana.org/en/cwtlm/

24 Ibid.

The programme aims to confront women's exclusion across several fronts including from environmental policies related to their territorial rights, within Indigenous organisations and in community-level decision-making. Activities aimed at strengthening women's economic activities are also included, recognising the limited access many women have to capacity building, and the direct relationship between financial and political freedom.

Since 2016, Cultural Survival has been organising trainings on Indigenous women's leadership focusing specifically on community journalism. The programme is called: "For a visible life in a limited world". 22 trainings have been implemented in Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Mexico and Nepal. The initiative focuses specifically on developing community radio skills through training in broadcasting, interview techniques, recording, audio editing and technical skills and encouraging dialogue on intercultural gender issues.

Other Indigenous women's leadership initiatives include Tribal Links Foundation and Brighter Green's East African Women's Leadership Initiative, for Masaai women from Kenya and Tanzania. This multi-year programme provided leadership training and mentorship for 9 young Masaai women.

In Peru, Bolivia and India, the International Indigenous Women Forum (IIWF-FIMI) and FAO have been training women through their Leadership School of Indigenous Women. Training includes food security, human rights and advocacy, so far 97 women have received training. In the USA, Native Action Network also provide various trainings, one of which is the "Young Native women's leadership academy" which covers the following:

- The Power of Leading Your People
- Discover Your Strengths & Embrace Yourself
- Tribal Sovereignty
- Build Habits to Last
- Group Artwork Project & Networking Opportunity
- Invest in a Healthy & Balanced Life
- Important Issues in Indian Country
- Engage with Your Community
- Find Your Voice in a Virtual World
- Thrive in Adversity

Other Native Action Network programmes include: Advocacy training; Native women's leadership forum; Enduring spirit awards; Young native women's leadership academy; Legacy of leadership cohort; Ambassador programme; Non-profit capacity building; Women warrior luncheons; Native-led grant makers forum.

International advocacy

"The FIMI training was, for me, a really unique opportunity to connect. It was 21 women from 16 countries around the world, coming together with our traditions, with our stories, with leadership experience in our communities, different advocacy styles. We were able to come together and find out that really we are facing the same issues. But most importantly we were able to come into this United Nations permanent forum session, together, strong and with a collective voice."

ANISHNABE NATION WOMAN (USA) AND FIMI PARTICIPANT[25]

Perhaps of less relevance to Well Grounded's objective but still interesting to mention briefly, these programmes focus on developing the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives at the international level.

The International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF, or FIMI) hosts the "Global leadership school of Indigenous women" which takes place annually over 2 weeks in New York. The Global School aims to strengthen participants' knowledge of international human rights instruments and their practical application, through the development of advocacy strategies. To-date, over 140 Indigenous women from Africa, Asia, the Arctic, the Americas and the Pacific have participated in the programme. The first part of the programme is theoretical and takes place online and in-person at Columbia University. The second part of the programme is practical, with participants joining in with the sessions of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII).

Another key training for Indigenous Peoples in international advocacy is the Indigenous Fellowship Programme run by UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), since 1997. The Fellowship aims to train Indigenous representatives on international human rights and Indigenous Peoples' issues within the UN system, included specific mechanisms. Training takes place over 4-5 weeks in Geneva each year, with interpretation in English, Spanish, French and Russian, coinciding with the annual meeting of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, providing the opportunity for individuals to participate in this mechanism.

25 https://fimi-iiwf.org/en/Indigenous-women-of-the-world-win-the-global-agenda/

3

Lessons Learned: Guiding principles informing diverse approaches

"Learning together as one
Asking questions together as one
Working together as one
Everybody is a teacher
And nature is our school"
INDONESIAN SONG

Indigenous leadership initiatives span the Earth's regions and have taken diverse approaches – from training land guardians and community monitors, to equipping Indigenous women with the skills to participate in international policy spaces – and yet they also share many commonalities. Central to almost all the initiatives discussed is a commitment to a holistic approach to knowledge, one which values both Indigenous knowledge and its transmission, and other forms of knowledge, or two-eyed seeing. An explicit emphasis on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and, specifically, on cultivating an applied understanding of rights and context-specific advocacy strategies is also an overarching theme. These initiatives are also all anchored in territory – either through a thematic focus on territorial governance, through the location of trainings within Indigenous territories, or through the sharing of lived experience of threats to territory (and associated rights) in international fora.

Common challenges have also been faced. The difficulties associated with ensuring training inclusivity was the most often cited, specifically, how to ensure the participation of women. Another key concern was with the long-term impact of the initiatives – how to ensure that knowledge or motivation "sticks"? Or that the leaders trained will be supported by their communities? The following brings together some key lessons and guiding principles.

Curriculum development

Different approaches to curriculum development have been trialled with some processes lasting up to two years (Forest Trends) – or longer even, if pilot trainings, feedback and fine-tuning are considered (AIPP, Life Mosaic). These approaches begin with a deep analysis of needs, which includes both the local and the national context, done in close collaboration with Indigenous communities, leaders, elders and their Indigenous representative organisations, including an analysis of how traditional knowledge transmission occurs.

Several of the more community-based programmes share a similar structure, whereby the facilitation team carries participants through a process of internal reflection through to collective reflection, including raising awareness of threats and the development of plans for action. Practitioners underscored the need for curricula to be tailored to each context, and "to be open-eyed about differences".

Practitioners also underscored the importance of a horizontal training style, where participants are seen as fellow educators and co-learning is emphasised. Participatory and interactive methods were also central to workshop facilitation, and many different kinds of tools have been tried and tested, often drawing on and incorporating elements of Indigenous practice, such as sharing circles, exploration of traditional myths and songs, collective art, poetry, forest meditation, rituals, and storytelling.

This underlines the importance of a collaborative programme design, which includes Indigenous elders, leaders, women and youth – several examples point to the importance of supporting Indigenous communities to *define their own priorities* as a basis for informing Indigenous leadership.

In order to ensure that curricula are tailored to the specific national context and are aligned with local needs and priorities, several initiatives have set up a "curriculum committee" ("Indigenous Youth Committee" or "pedagogical committee") to advise and oversee curriculum development.

Indigenous Peoples and leaders defining their own priorities must be a fundamental principle of any engagement and any building of legitimate leadership.

Indigenous knowledge

Several of the examples presented in this study point to defined expertise in Indigenous knowledge serving as a springboard to increase the confidence and empowerment of Indigenous Peoples, and particularly women, to engage in decision-making processes and negotiations.

Whatever the substantive focus of capacity building and development of leadership skills therefore, Indigenous leadership can partly be built on individuals' own Indigenous knowledge. This gives a sense of legitimacy and ownership that can enable leaders to emerge and be strengthened.

Practicalities and format: location, duration, facilitation

Both practitioners and participants emphasised the importance of leadership workshops taking place within Indigenous territories or within Indigenous communities (i.e. not in a conference centre in a regional capital). The importance of this cannot really be overstated. It gives the opportunity to incorporate elements of the local landscape – for example, forest meditations, plant identification, or traditional rituals – and makes the programme easily relatable to the local reality. This could be challenging to translate to certain contexts within the Congo Basin, however, particularly where communities have been displaced from their lands, or live in close proximity to dominant ethnic groups.

Training programme duration varied greatly, lasting from a couple of days to 1 or 2 years. Clearly the duration of the training is often determined by training objectives. For example, it could make sense for international advocacy trainings, or trainings that focus on one specific element of leadership, with individuals who already have some leadership experience, to be shorter. However, leadership initiatives which focus of developing grassroots, community-based leadership will generally benefit from longer-term programmes, where formal trainings are interspersed with space for practical implementation in communities, coupled with continual accompaniment from experienced mentors.

Facilitation ideally should be carried out by an Indigenous and gender balanced team. This isn't always feasible, at least initially, but some programmes (e.g. Forest Trends and Life Mosaic) have been able to work towards this by gradually including Indigenous facilitators who have participated in previous training programmes. In line with this, it could make sense to develop a separate training of trainers programme as a follow-on option for interested graduates of the leadership training initiative. Combining the two in one training programme seems ambitious. Also, being an effective leader and being an effective facilitator/trainer are not necessarily coterminous.

Participants: ensuring inclusivity

The challenge of ensuring women's participation in trainings is context-specific and different communities and cultures will have different expectations and norms to consider. However, women's participation was a challenge cited by programmes implemented across Asia, Latin America and Central Africa. Commonly cited barriers included the difficulty for women to leave their homes due to care commitments, cultural constraints associated with travelling alone, and economic marginalisation, where trainings are perceived as a way of obtaining cash (e.g. per diems) or status. Workarounds tested by different initiatives included awareness-raising, such as talking to elders and community film screenings (Life Mosaic), imposing quotas (Forest Trends and Okani), setting up women-only groups or trainings (Ranger groups in Australia), and hosting activities closer to home (CBI). When efforts were made to increase women's participation, practitioners reported that women actively engaged in the trainings and confidence levels soared.

Training inclusivity doesn't just speak to women's participation, but also to people with different experiences and roles within communities. This is important for intergenerational and inter-experiential exchange. Initiatives often included a mixture of youth, elders, and seasoned leaders in trainings (e.g. CBI, Okani, Forest Trends, Life Mosaic). Moreover, if these individuals (e.g. youth, elder, leader) are from the same community, there is a greater chance that the initiative will grow legs of its own, as participants can support each other and initiate action together within their community.

Careful thinking will be needed around how participant selection, and the concept of leadership, tallies with the egalitarian nature of many IPs in the Congo Basin, and how their internal governance works, so that participants have legitimacy in the eyes of their communities and have their mandate as leaders.

Long-term impact: how to ensure continued accompaniment beyond training

Impact of leadership initiatives is not always easy to monitor. However, many initiatives have seen positive changes, such as an increase in Indigenous youths holding leadership roles at local and national levels, the initiation of community-based projects (e.g. on intergenerational knowledge transmission), and increased confidence and wellbeing, to name a few. Factors cited by programme leads as increasing long-term impact included the length of the programme, the embeddedness of the programme within local institutions and whether or not on-going mentorship is provided.

Some initiatives try to increase the impact of trainings by creating links to formal education, for example CBI, supporting Baka youth to integrate into National Forest schools, and Forest Trends, whose courses are certified by local partner Universities. Several initiatives explicitly link leadership trainings with economic empowerment, supporting communities to develop specific skills which can be used to gain meaningful employment or to generate income (CBI, Forest Trends, Rangers, AMPB). This has had the additional benefit of strengthening cultural resilience.

Cultivating an applied understanding of rights through context-specific advocacy came out strongly in several of the initiatives. This is perhaps one of the most effective ways of achieving lasting impact – by not attempting to "build capacity" in a vacuum, but rather to build leadership skills with a specific focus that aligns with participants' own priorities and those of their communities, makes the training both directly relatable and useful. This could be anything from negotiating with local authorities about land access, to negotiating access to national parks so that IPs can access their traditional resources, to engaging with legal reforms. The key is that it's something concrete to focus on developing leadership in, rather than just focussing on workshops, which may seem abstract. This will likely also have implications for how and where participants are identified.

Guiding principles

Following from the examples and conclusions of the study presented here, guiding principles of any Indigenous leadership programme and its Theory of Change would need to include the following:

- Building a sense of pride and ownership of Indigenous collective identity and knowledge, much of which is rooted in territory;
- Indigenous resilience in the face of discrimination and marginalisation;
- Building negotiation and engagement skills;
- Building representational and presentation skills;
- Supporting Indigenous leaders in setting their own (and their communities' own) terms of engagement;
- Building skills in facilitation and restitution to ensure the ability of leaders to engage effectively with their communities and external actors.

4

Context: Indigenous Peoples of the Congo Basin

"A leader is someone who pulls others towards development, someone who carries the problems of the community, fearless, ready to die for his people and serves as a bridge between his community and the outside world."

BAKA MAN, CAMEROON[26]

The objective of this study is to collate best practice examples and lessons learned from initiatives around the world, to inspire and inform the development of a new Indigenous leadership programme for the Congo Basin. While it is beyond the scope of this study to consider the relative contextual opportunities and challenges experienced by Indigenous Peoples across regions (America, Asia, Africa, etc), it is important to take account of the governance, political, environmental and social contexts of Indigenous Peoples in the Congo Basin in order to design a programme that is both realistic and transformative.

The Congo Basin is characterised by a highly influential political context and high levels of State corruption. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo (RoC) and Cameroon all rank high on Transparency International's Corruption Index[27] (166/180; 164/180; 142/180). DRC is also one of the most dangerous countries to be a human rights defender.[28] The Congo Basin is also characterised by its great biological and cultural diversity, including one of the most extensive and biodiverse rainforests on earth, which is home to Indigenous hunter-gatherers and former hunter-gatherers (e.g. the Aka, Baka, Bagyeli, Bakola, Bedzang, Batwa, Mbuti, Mbenjele), and the Mbororo pastoralists, who range between rainforest and the Sahel.

Indigenous Peoples of the Congo Basin are (and have historically been) exposed to diverse and well-documented human rights violations and discrimination, at all levels. This includes exclusion from (or severely restricted access to) citizenship, education, health care, state-recognised leadership systems, decision making; and increased exposure to forced labour, slavery, rape and sexual abuse of women and girls.

In addition to this, across the Congo Basin customary land rights receive very limited recognition and protection under national legal systems, which instead maintain colonial-era property systems, privileging formal registered titles with minimal recognition of customary rights. As a result, most customary lands remain unregistered and technically "unallocated", leaving them vulnerable to State appropriation and reallocation (e.g. for agro-industrial concessions or protected areas).

Further, unlike Indigenous Peoples in some parts of the world, who are geographically separate from non-Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Peoples in the Congo Basin live alongside non-Indigenous communities,

26 https://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/default/files/documents/Exploring-Indigenous-leadership-ENG.pdf

27 https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/index/lby

28 https://www.frontlinedefenders.org

often co-occupying the same lands and territories. This arrangement is the result of complex social, political and historical factors, including but not limited to sedentarisation policies pursued under colonisation and in the second half of the 20th century, by which Indigenous communities were required to move out of the forest and live in road-side settlements, and subsequent land evictions associated with the establishment of protected areas.

Despite living in close proximity, these two groups have maintained distinct cultural and livelihood practices, with Indigenous communities living primarily from forest activities (hunting, fishing and gathering), supplemented by a small amount of agriculture, and non-Indigenous (or Bantu) communities living primarily from agriculture, supplemented in small part with the use of forest products. Forest Indigenous Peoples of the Congo Basin have sophisticated and in-depth knowledge of the forest and are often sought by neighbouring communities (or external actors) for their skills, as trackers or hunters.

However, it should be noted that the relationship dynamic between the two groups is marked by the marginalisation and exploitation of Indigenous communities, many of whom were historically considered the "property" of Bantu neighbours and used as forced labour. Exploitative practices remain commonplace today and are clearly visible in the strong culture of discrimination of Indigenous Peoples by their neighbours who have comparatively greater social and political capital, higher education levels and greater opportunities to gain formal employment. This historic marginalisation is also apparent in various institutional structures. Of most relevance for this study, Indigenous communities do not have distinct representation as individual communities at the administrative level. Rather, the State treats Indigenous communities as part of the same "village" as the neighbouring Bantu community. This means that forest Indigenous communities are usually represented by a Bantu chief and are thus effectively deprived of self-representation vis-à-vis the State and other external actors (e.g. logging and safari companies) in local consultation processes.

Indigenous Peoples' advocacy successes at national level

DRC's law on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Indigenous Pygmy Peoples (2022)[29]

The adoption of this law was a landmark achievement for Indigenous rights and Indigenous-led advocacy in the Congo Basin. The result of 14 years' work by a network of 45 Indigenous organisations it is a highly significant moment for DRC's Indigenous Peoples, who for the first time have legal recognition as a distinct people with rights.

The next steps at the national level will involve the translation and dissemination of the law at community levels, and the hope is that it will be a key tool to help strengthen Indigenous leadership in DRC. As part of this process it will be important for Indigenous Peoples' groups across the DRC to understand its legislative context, how they are relevant to their situation and to take ownership of it.

It could also be an important moment for collective reflection on how Indigenous organisations contributed to the drafting of the law, and what can be learned from the leadership of Indigenous Peoples' organisations and allies in this process. Some key elements appear to be:

- Long-term collaborative work
- Ongoing consultations
- Sharing of knowledge and experience between different Indigenous leaders and organisations.

29 Loi n°22/030 du 15 juillet 2022 portant protection et promotion des droits des peuples autochtones pygmées

Despite this seemingly dark picture, growing mobilisation is perceptible across the sub-region, with increasing advocacy led by Indigenous organisations and renewed aspirations for the respect of Indigenous rights and for restoring pride in Indigenous identity. Examples include the work of the Gbabandi platform around conservation-related human rights abuses in Cameroon, the advocacy work of RACOPY and the Gbabandi platform to have Indigenous chiefs officially recognised by the State, and the long-term and collaborative work of Indigenous organisations in DRC, which culminated in the passing of a law on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2022.

Reflection

Gbabandi – the name of Cameroon's national platform for forest Indigenous Peoples – is the Baka word for termite mound. This name was chosen as it is evocative of Indigenous communities coming together to work for joint objectives. Termite colonies are capable of creating complex structures in spontaneous, self-organising ways – they are leaderless. The image of the termite mound provides an interesting image to reflect upon when thinking about Indigenous leadership in the Congo Basin. The goal being not to replace Indigenous and traditional modes of learning and leading, imposing rigidity and hierarchy, but to harness the "leader-full"[30] potential of many.

It could be interesting then to conceptualise the Congo Basin Indigenous Leadership Initiative around the cultural forms of traditional hunter gatherer communities – that is, egalitarian, nomadic. One avenue then, could be to frame the initiative as an "itinerant school", which moves responsively between Indigenous communities, adapting content to context, foregrounding co-learning and an intertwining of Indigenous and other forms of knowledge. The programme could aim at self-renewal and resilience, by combining a long-term leadership training and mentorship programme with a secondary training of trainer's initiative – leading to the programme eventually being facilitated by a team of experienced Indigenous facilitators.

Crucially though, programme development must grow out of deep reflection with IPs (women, youth, leaders and elders) on what their needs are and how best to co-create an Indigenous-led initiative. Of course, this may look nothing like the above…

30 The Indigenous Advisory Circles underscored the importance of a "pre-programme" phase, which would work to build a relationship of trust between actors. It would also provide a space for Indigenous participants to articulate their aspirations (at local and national levels), constraints and priorities in terms of leadership.

5

Recommendations

Well Grounded plans to develop a regional Indigenous leadership training programme, to be implemented in Cameroon, the DRC and RoC, with the collaboration of actors recently identified in the mapping of Indigenous-led, or Indigenous-issues-focussed, civil society organisations. The following recommendations have been made to inform this process, based on the findings of the study, outlined in previous sections.

Methodology

1. Ensure timeframes for leadership activities are realistic and in line with Indigenous Peoples' own ways of reaching consensus, reflecting and making decisions.
2. Build leadership curricula on Indigenous Peoples' own priorities.
3. Ensure Indigenous leaders are deriving their priorities from communities themselves.
4. Use different methods (nature walks, participatory mapping, videos, illustrations, discussions and dialogue, presentations, written material, exchanges with others, etc), as appropriate to the level of literacy of selected leaders or focus communities and themes selected for the Leadership initiative.
5. Learn by doing, not in a vacuum. Focus to the extent possible on building capacity through actual engagement, rather than simply training. For example, if a community wants to negotiate access to natural resources with local authorities, build some of the leadership training around this.
6. Build on Indigenous Peoples' own concepts to ensure better community understanding.
7. Build and ensure ongoing legitimacy, and mandate from Indigenous communities themselves.
8. Build alliances and support networks of both Indigenous (other communities, other Indigenous leaders) and non-Indigenous (academia, politicians, CSOs, others) allies to support leadership.

Curriculum development process

1. Outline how the Free Prior and Informed Consent of participating individuals and communities will be integrated and upheld throughout the programme, starting from the design phase, noting that FPIC is something that will be continually negotiated and revisited throughout the programme lifespan.
2. Conduct an in-depth scoping mission in each context (Cameroon, DRC, and RoC), interviewing elders, Indigenous leaders, those working in Indigenous associations, young men and women to understand local needs and priorities in terms of both leadership and intergenerational knowledge transmission. This should include a somewhat specific analysis for each group of IPs (e.g. Baka, Bagyeli, Bedzang, Mbororo, Batwa, Mbuti, etc.) that the programme will work with. This could include the facilitation of participatory workshops, which could subsequently feed into a "pre-programme" phase exploring programme specifics in more detail.
3. Set up an advisory group for each country, including representatives from Indigenous groups and experts to assist with the programme design phase (including content, methodology and facilitation).

Programme specifics should be based on the above process, however, the following overarching recommendations should be considered.

Thematic focus

In terms of thematic focus of any leadership programme, this would be entirely dependent on the thematic priorities identified by the Indigenous communities and leaders, at local, national and international levels. However, some foundational elements identified in the study as essential for Indigenous leaders and communities to define their own terms, and support other areas of leadership, representation, and negotiation are:

1. Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples' own laws, governance, teachings and knowledge.
2. Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples' rights and how they are protected in national and international law.

More generally, a combination of guided self-reflection, collective consciousness raising, exploration of external threats to territory, local advocacy strategies, exploration of leadership styles, and the setting of personal intentions, could all be interesting avenues to explore.

Format

The findings of this study indicate that a long-term training programme, anchored in territory, is the most appropriate model for **grassroots** leadership building. The exact format would need to grow out of the pre-programme consultations; however, a possible template could be:

1. A 12-month training programme structured around a series of week-long, residential learning workshops (6 in total), interspersed with practical exercises for participants to carry out in their own communities.

For more experienced Indigenous leaders whose interests lie more at the national and international levels, the format of any leadership training programme would most likely look quite different to this and would need to be informed by the participants, their priorities and availability.

Participants

For grassroots leadership building, the findings of the study suggest that participants should include a combination of youth, elders and experienced leaders, ensuring a gender balance between participants. Discussions of participation criteria and selection process can be sensitive and should be subject to open and collaborative discussion among the programme team and partners (i.e. developing criteria with communities that respond to their real needs and priorities). The following are some recommendations for participants of grassroots/community-based leadership trainings, to be considered during this process.

1. Include between 3-4 participants from each community, so that participants can support each other on their leadership journeys at the community level. Ideally participants should be selected by communities themselves, based on the above criteria, to ensure that they have the mandate and backing of their communities.
2. Study findings suggest the optimal number of participants for trainings is around 20-24. Accordingly, the recommendation is for no more than 24 participants per cohort, which would represent 6 communities (4 participants per community).
3. Learning workshops could be hosted by each community in turn (as possible) or at an appropriate training centre located close to communities and the forest (for example, Okani's Leadership Centre in Ntam).
4. A secondary training of trainer's programme should be developed for graduates of the 12-month programme, who express interest in becoming leadership facilitators. They can then integrate the leadership training facilitation team.

Facilitation and tools

1. As above, where possible, learning sessions should be delivered by a team of experienced Indigenous facilitators in Indigenous languages. Where this is not (yet) possible, facilitators must be experienced in working with the Indigenous groups in question (and respected by local communities), with interpretation into Indigenous languages.
2. The inclusion of women facilitators on the facilitation team, particularly Indigenous women, is important and provides a visible role model for young women.
3. Facilitation style can be reflective of traditional ways of learning and leading – in this context this might mean a horizontal, collaborative and interactive facilitation style, centred around co-learning. Different interactive methodologies, such as those described in this study, can be explored, incorporating traditional practices (e.g. story telling or forest walks). The Indigenous Advisory Circles also stressed the importance of training Indigenous leaders in the use of social media, to amplify their voices and other tools, such as GPS, to produce evidence of rights violations or document resources of cultural or ecological importance.

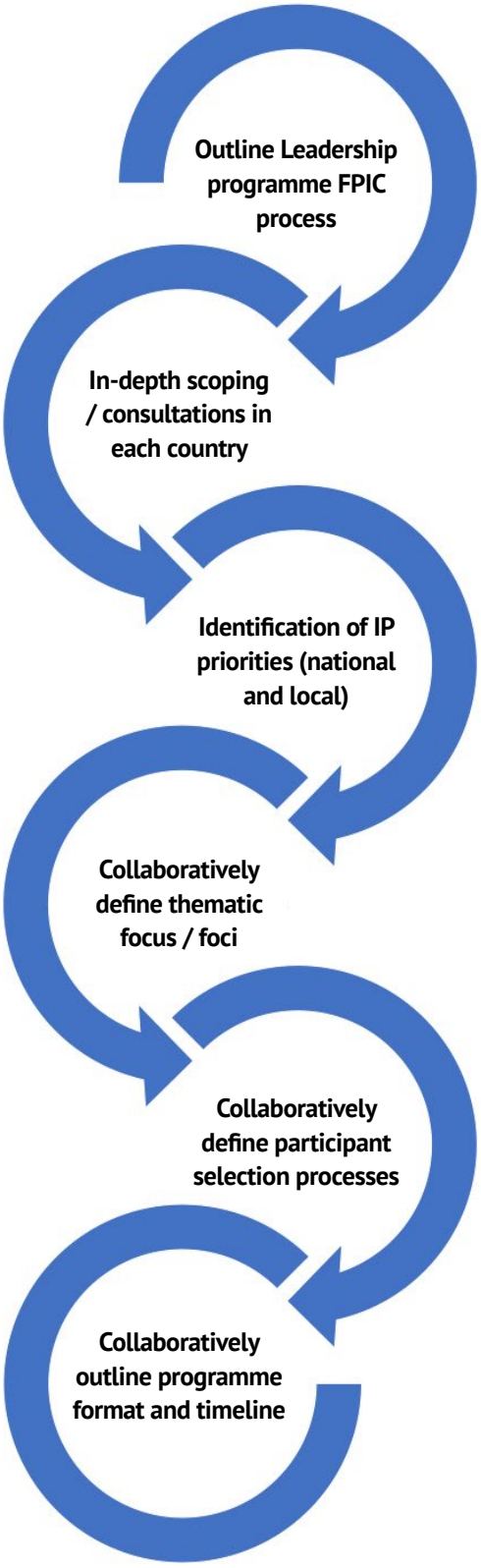
Impact

1. Consider during the programme conceptualisation phase how impact will be monitored and evaluated and put appropriate systems in place.
2. Build leadership skills with a specific focus that aligns with participants' own priorities and those of their communities (e.g. negotiating land access with local authorities, negotiating access to traditional resources within national parks, engaging with legal reforms, etc.).
3. Participants could consider setting up small projects in their communities, that do not require external funding, as part of the programme. Examples could include seed saving initiatives, knowledge transfer sessions between youths and elders, or simply feeding back on the training contents to the wider community.
4. Include a "mentorship", or "continued accompaniment", component. For example, assigning an experienced Indigenous leader to each community, who will proactively follow up with the programme participants on a regular basis, or assigning a member of the facilitation team this role, who would make periodic visits to new leaders in their communities.[31]
5. Consider collaborating with local universities, research institutes or other formal education providers in order to collaborate on certain elements of the curriculum (e.g. specific skills) or to facilitate access to follow-on training programmes or research assistant roles.
6. Consider integrating economic empowerment activities into leadership training by teaching marketable skills (e.g. GPS use, plant identification, transformation of NTFPs, etc) that can enhance cultural resilience.

31 Potential logistical challenges will require further reflection as the programme develops and participants are selected.

6

Process & Theory of Change




Pride & ownership of IP collective identity & knowledge
Resilience in face of marginalisation
Negotiation & engagement skills
Respresentation & presentation skills
IP leaders set their own terms of engagement
Facilitation & restitution skills
Strong leadership

7

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