



IPCCA Local Assessments

December 2010 Update

As an indigenous led and managed initiative, the foundation of the IPCCA is the local community processes that are empowering communities to build their own responses to climate change. The IPCCA Local Assessments have grown in number and in scope during 2010. Currently, we support nine (9) local assessments, which are being implemented in a diversity of ecosystems from the arctic to tropical rainforests. Each of the assessments faces different challenges and each is seeking their own creative process to overcome them. The IPCCA methodology was designed to support synthesis across these diverse biocultural realities. Here we share the latest news from the IPCCA local assessments and communities, highlighting progress made and challenges overcome during their first year of implementation. For more information on each please visit our website at www.ipcca.info

Local Assessments

Currently there are nine IPCCA local assessments under implementation in a variety of biocultural systems worldwide. Local partners are facilitating assessments of climatic conditions and trends within local biocultural systems and their impacts on livelihoods and well-being, and are systematically documenting the role of indigenous knowledge and practices for building evidence-based community adaptation plans.

Kuna Yala, Panama
In Kuna Yala, sea level rises are threatening the food sovereignty, health and survival of the Kuna People.

'Skolt Sami Nation' Lapland, Finland
Providing adaptation and survival mechanisms for the Sami community who is endangered by melting permafrost by documenting alternative traditions render herding solutions and innovative solar methods.

'Huay Manao', Thailand
In Huay Manao, Thailand, a warmer climate, decreased rainfall and reduced water levels (due to government policies) have resulted in a need to develop indigenous adaptation strategies.

'Pacific North Western Tribes' Pacific North America
Assessing the environmental, cultural and socio-economic impacts of climate change and community adaptations employing traditional knowledge (TK).

'Zapara Territory' Amazonia, Ecuador
Aim is to evaluate environmental impacts of climate change on indigenous subsistence, especially on agriculture, hunting and gathering as well as the impact of oil extraction activities and its contribution to local and global climate.

'Parque de la Papa', Cusco, Peru
In the Potato Park, climate change is affecting agrobiodiversity, especially native potato and wild varieties, and thus food sovereignty. Therefore the potato system with the Pachá Mama (Mother Earth) and 'Buen Vivir' is endangered.

Maasai, Kenya
Longer cold seasons, frequent droughts and the loss of indigenous knowledge has meant a need to create coping mechanisms among the pastoralist Maasai people in Kenya.

'Adivasi' Andhra Pradesh, India
In Andhra Pradesh, India, Adivasi communities aim to assess the impact of climate change and strengthen resilience by securing rights to natural resources.

'Tugao' Cordillera, Philippines
Collecting traditional climate change adaptation mechanisms and identifying the observed Climate Changes and the impact in recent years on community ecosystems, livelihoods and culture.

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IPCCA Local Assessments in the Americas

Potato Park, Peru

Facilitated by Asociación ANDES

The local assessment being carried out in the Potato Park was the first IPCCa local assessment to commence in June 2009. After a full year of implementation, the Potato Park has adapted the IPCCa conceptual framework and developed a base-line for future assessment of climatic conditions and trends. This work is part of a wider process of implementation of the Park as an indigenous biocultural territory.



In November 2010 the Park took an important step in sharing their experience and supporting other indigenous communities in their struggle against climate change with the second South to South Exchange on establishing biocultural territories and undertaking climate change assessments. The exchange brought together international participants from Ethiopia, Colombia, Tadjikistan and Kirgistan for a week of learning and sharing. As one of the leading IPCCa assessments, this recent event in the Potato Park illustrates how the IPCCa network can empower indigenous communities across the world through horizontal knowledge sharing to find common solutions.

Comarca Kuna Yala, Panama

Facilitated by Fundación para la Promoción del Conocimiento Indígena



The IPCCa local assessment being carried out in Kuna Yala was one of the initial group of assessments to commence in 2009. The impacts of climate change have become a bitter reality to the Kuna who face severe flooding after unprecedented rainfall in the Comarca at the beginning of December. Within the challenging context of sea level rise threatening the viability of Kuna communities located on small coral reef islands off the Caribbean coast of Panama, and the empowering context of an autonomous indigenous territory, the Kuna have been making important progress in facilitating local dialogue on how to best deal with the

impacts of climate change. During the first year of implementation, work in Kuna Yala has focused on building local understanding of climate change and mapping the areas where recent floods have occurred on the island communities. This has led to formal discussions in several communities regarding the need to relocate island communities to the mainland. The IPCCa local assessment is enabling an unprecedented local process of planning relocation based on traditional knowledge and indigenous governance, in preparation for continued sea level rise.



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Now in the second year of implementation, the Kuna Yala assessment is being supported with funding from the Ford Foundation to expand assessment activities into the forest ecosystems of the Comarca. As a REDD+ country, Panama provides an opportunity to analyse the role of local processes for safeguarding indigenous rights within climate change mitigation projects such as REDD+ initiatives. This work will be fully underway in 2011.

Sarapa Territory, Ecuador

Facilitated by Land is Life and Nacionalidad Zapara del Ecuador (NAZAE)



The Sapara people, located in the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazon have survived a cruel process of extermination and genocide since the beginning of the 20th Century. Currently, the Sapara are creatively and intensely recovering their language and cultural expressions, as well as initiating a formal process for legal recognition of their ancestral land in order to recover their territoriality. Within this challenging context, the Sapara have focused their initial activities under the IPCCA local assessment on exploring climate change from a local understanding, beginning to develop a base-

line of traditional knowledge and practices related to climate for later assessment of climatic conditions and trends. This process is leading to the first systematic documentation of Sapara traditional knowledge of biodiversity and climate. As the local assessment approaches the closing of the first year of implementation, this initial information gathering is leading to organisation of a workshop to help consolidate the information into biocultural systematics to classify and enable use and promotion of this knowledge.

Pacific North Western Tribes, North America

Facilitated by The Indigenous Peoples' Restoration Network (IPRN),

The Pacific North American assessment is being carried out in an expansive geographical and biocultural area (Pacific coast, coastal islands, and coastal mountains from northwestern California to Haida Gwaii and continental semi-arid interior mountains, shrub-steppe, Great Basin, Columbia Plateau from northwestern Nevada to south-central British Columbia). Due to the expansive region it will cover, the first year of implementation has focused on conducting a pre-assessment. During this initial information gathering stage it has been shown that climatic conditions have been changing over the past century in the region, with an average recorded temperature rise of 0.84°C with some areas experiencing increases up to 2.23°C. Forecasts project further increases of between 1.68°C to 5.56°C during this century. Changes in temperature and seasonal precipitation is impacting the timing of runoff and interfering with salmon life cycles. Further, higher summer temperatures and earlier





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spring snowmelt are expected to increase the risk of forest fires leading to an increase in the frequency and intensity of mountain pine beetle and other insect attacks. The ecosystems and livelihoods in the region are under severe threat and the local assessment will begin to understand local climate prediction and capacity to deal with extreme weather events during its second year of implementation. Main activities undertaken this year have consisted of visits to communities all over the region by Dennis Martinez, a member of the IPCCa Steering Committee, to build understanding of the IPCCa approach and initiative and pave the way for a full assessment of climate change impacts on the biocultural systems focusing on the role of traditional knowledge in building adaptation strategies.

IPCCA Local Assessments in the Arctic

Skolt Sami Nation, Finland

Facilitated by [The Snowchange Cooperative](#) and [Sami Nu'ett Skolt Sámi Central Organisation](#)

The first IPCCa local assessment to be carried out in the Arctic region is unfolding in the village of Sevettijärvi, a Skolt Sami village, the only village in the world where Skolt Sámi language is still in daily use. In this exceptional area of cultural richness, the Skolt Sámi possess long-term oral histories and knowledge of weather and climate. However, the changes of the past 100 years, including the end of a nomadic life and forced relocations from Russia to Finland in 1944 as well as modernization which impacted reindeer herding have caused changes to their knowledge systems. A strong focus of the IPCCa work in this area has been to support the documentation of oral histories and traditional knowledge and a renewing force for the living knowledge of subarctic weather and climate relate to on-going subsistence fishing practices, reindeer herding and hunting.



In the Finish context, the chances of traditional knowledge influencing national, regional or municipal policies are very low due to low recognition of Indigenous rights and the larger colonial situation in Finland. The IPCCa is therefore an excellent start in raising international attention to the situation of the Skolts. An important accomplishment of the facilitating organizations is the recent release on December 13th in Helsinki of a new scholarly publicatin on the Saami titled "Drowning Reindeer, Drowning Homes – Indigenous Sami and Hydroelectricity Development in Sompio, Finland".

IPCCA Local Assessments in Africa

Maasai Territory, Kenya

Facilitated by [Mainyoito Pastoralist Integrated Development Organization \(MPIDO\)](#)

This African IPCCa local assessment process is being undertaken with pastoralist Maasai communities in arid and semi arid regions of Kenya. Pastoralism is a way of life and an economic system for the Maasai.



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The main focus of this initial phase of implementation has been on documenting traditional knowledge of climate change. The Ilchamus Maasai recognize climate change as change of winds, change of air and change of “earth”, in their local language, they call it ‘Enkiwatwat E siwo” or Enkiwatwat E nkop”. There is a deep awareness of the changing climate and many of the participants in the local assessment area believe that the climate is changing due to “something wrong” (Kinyiala Enkai) that human beings are doing to nature. These changes are impacting on their traditional practices which are normally based on their seasonal calendar, for example,

most marriages in the community are held during wet seasons when there is plenty of pasture and good health of animals as bride wealth is paid during this season. The IPCC work is helping to document the changes as they are understood by the Massai people, and this will provide valuable input into the following stages of developing adaptation strategies.

IPCCA Local Assessments in Asia

Adivasi, Andhra Pradesh, India

Facilitated by Antra, Adivasi Aikya Vedika and Yakshi

The Adivasi context of Andhra Pradesh in India provides a vast diversity of biocultural realities, which have been the setting for the Adivasi IPCC local assessment. This local assessment has just culminated its first year of implementation, during which it has used innovative methodologies based on local systems of governance and knowledge management, bringing together Adivasi elders and youth. The Adivasi researchers involved in the activities of developing base-line information for assessing impacts of climate change, have reflected upon the generic IPCC conceptual framework which provides a focus on ‘Buen Vivir’ to build local understanding based upon the “Life Cycle/ Seasonal Cycle”, an ancient cycle that establishes the relationship between the tribe and their natural and biological world- the land, the forest, the water, the air, the crops, the livestock, the wild life, the flora, the fauna and relationship to ancestors and spirits. With this clear focus on traditional livelihood and spiritual practices, the team has now documented indigenous knowledge of weather to build analysis of its use in adaptation planning. The IPCC process has also supported generation of community research maps, a necessary step for indigenous communities in India to assert their community rights to their forests, according to the newly legislated Forest Rights Act, 2006. In this regard, the IPCC process is contributing to long term resilience and territoriality of the Adivasi tribes.





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Karen people, Huay Manao village, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Facilitated by the Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment



The name of the village where the IPCCa local assessment is being carried out in Chiang Mai province in Thailand, in the native language of the Karen people "Hin Lek Fai" means 'fire-making stone'. This name reflects the location of the village in a valley, surrounded by forest, with abundant natural resources. Community members still maintain and practice traditional resource management systems using indigenous knowledge in this area which is located adjacent to a Protected Area. Their knowledge of biodiversity and climate have been documented during the initial stages of

the local assessment, in order to produce a base-line for assessment of conditions and trends in later stages. What has been shown thus far is a wealth of local knowledge for reading weather conditions using indicators of animal and plant behaviours that continue to enable forecasting of climatic conditions to maintain livelihoods practices. This local perspective of climate knowledge will be fed in to the process for developing the National Adaptation Plan of Thailand, enabling locally appropriate response strategies.

Ifugao, Philippines

Facilitated by Tebtebba Foundation and Montanosa Research and Development Center

The Philippines local assessment commenced in June 2010 in Ifugao province. In recent years drastic changes in weather were felt in the region, such as the continuous rain of 2009, and prolonged summer months (from the usual 2.5 months to 6 months) of 2010. The former led to a significant decrease in rice yield and the latter prevented cultivation in the rotational agricultural areas. In response to these impacts the IPCCa local assessment is undertaking actions to document experiences of local communities in coping and adapting to climate change as far back as communities can recall; to identify and analyze the observed climate changes and their impact in recent years on



communities ecosystems, on their livelihoods and culture and other systems found in the communities; and, to support community resilience through climate change adaptation and policy reforms. In the interest of supporting a sustainable process, a strategy is underway to build an ad-hoc body for the formation of a municipal level indigenous people's organization that will assume the responsibility of overseeing the efforts of building community resilience to climate change and promoting sustainable livelihood systems. Local researchers, from the youth sector have been identified and are now facilitating the implementation of the phases of the assessment.



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