

Respecting Indigenous Rights and Practices: Ways to a Better Planet

Copyright

© 2024 by Commonwealth of Learning.



Respecting Indigenous Rights and Practices: Ways to a Better Planet is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 Licence (international):
<http://creativecommons.org/licences/by-sa/4.0>.

For the avoidance of doubt, by applying this licence the Commonwealth of Learning does not waive any privileges or immunities from claims that they may be entitled to assert, nor does the Commonwealth of Learning submit itself to the jurisdiction, courts, legal processes, or laws of any jurisdiction.

Commowealth of Learning

4710 Kingsway, Suite 2500
Burnaby V5H 4M2
British Columbia
Canada

Fax: +11 604 775 8210
Email: <https://www.col.org/contact-us/>
Website: www.col.org

Acknowledgements

The Commonwealth of Learning wishes to thank those below for their contribution to this course:

Concept & Planning: Frances Ferreira, Kuntal De, Damodaram Kuppuswami

Project Manager: Philip Uys

Author: Dr Sundari Ramakrishna

Editor: Lesley Cameron

Administrative support: Adriana Puente Pol & Veronica Sudesh

Contents

About this course	1
How this course is structured.....	2
Course overview	5
Welcome to Respecting Indigenous rights and practices: Ways to a better planet	5
Respecting Indigenous rights and practices: Ways to a better planet—Is this course for you?.....	5
Course outcomes.....	6
Timeframe.....	6
Study skills.....	6
Need help?	7
Assessments	8
Getting around this course	9
Margin icons	9
Unit 1	11
Indigenous practices and their relevance to habitat conservation.....	11
Introduction	11
Indigenous communities and their dependence on nature.....	12
Indigenous practices that aid in the conservation of nature	13
Indigenous practices and animal conservation	13
Stone bunding by tribal communities in Koraput District, Odisha, India ...	14
Unit summary	16
Assessment.....	16
Unit 2	17
Indigenous rights: Why we need them and why they are important	17
Introduction	17
Rights of Indigenous communities.....	18
What are Indigenous rights?	18
Indigenous rights that lead to a healthy planet.....	19
Conserving biodiversity	20
Protecting forests	20
Climate action	20
Custodians of the land to ensure protection.....	21
Improve soil fertility	21

Unit summary	22
Assessment.....	23
Unit 3	25
Adapting and mainstreaming Indigenous practices	25
Introduction	25
Indigenous practices that can be adapted locally	26
Buja indigenous community in Mutoko district of Zimbabwe.....	26
Traditional and Indigenous Farming practices in Sri Lanka.....	27
Develop skills and roles in total biomass utilisation	28
Total biomass utilisation	28
Unit summary	29
Assessment.....	30
Unit 4	31
Making conservation a personal habit and community culture	31
Introduction	31
Why should we conserve natural and human habitats?.....	32
Individual and community conservation habits.....	33
What can plants and animals do?.....	34
What can people do?	34
Unit summary	36
Assessment.....	37
Indigenous communities' spirituality and respect for nature: A crucial part of climate action.....	39
Indigenous communities: Their philosophy and spiritual connections with natural habitats.....	40
Indigenous respect for nature as a necessity for climate action	42
Answer key	45
Multiple choice questions: 1.....	45
Multiple choice questions: 2.....	45
Multiple choice questions: 3.....	45
Multiple choice questions: 4.....	46
Multiple choice questions: 5.....	46
Unit 5	40
Indigenous community's spirituality and respecting nature - a necessity for Climate action.....	40
Introduction	40
Indigenous community- their philosophy and spiritual connections with natural habitat	41
Indigenous respect for Nature as a necessity for climate action	43
Unit summary	45
Assessment.....	46

About this course

This course is one of six related but independent courses that are included in the Strengthening Communities to Attain Resiliency and Food Security (SCARF) project. The SCARF project focuses on transformative learning for climate action through developing and digitising learning resources and fostering social and ecological awareness that helps learners move from practising individual behavioural changes to achieving wider social change by targeting the root causes of climate vulnerability and risk.

Addressing climate change and promoting environmentally sustainable livelihoods is imperative if we are to protect the world's poor and their rights to food and decent livelihoods. The SCARF project aims to:

- change the attitudes and behaviour of communities to mitigate against and adapt to the impact of climate change;
- provide solutions and responses not only to tackle the climate crisis but also to transform societies for a better future;
- provide new insights and opportunities to put into practice the new knowledge and skills gained for mitigating climate change and conserving the environment; and
- enhance the reach to marginalised communities, facilitating lifelong learning among learners and providing them with knowledge, attitudes and skills that will prepare them for the present and future context.

The six courses will enable participants — grassroots-level volunteers, community leaders, field workers and economically disadvantaged women and girls with varying levels of literacy — to:

- use the knowledge they gain in their everyday lives,
- develop a sense of strong personal connection to the issues of climate change,
- understand the value of solutions grounded in human rights,
- critically question the actions and responses of leaders, and
- take appropriate action to respond to climate-related issues.

The six courses and their objectives are:

- **Course 1: Climate Change and Taking Action.** Explains climate change, its impact in the local context, its anticipated impact on human lives and how to mitigate its negative impacts through actions and policy advocacy.
- **Course 2: Small-Scale Traditional Food Production and Food-Processing Techniques for Sustenance and Survival.** Explains how to mitigate the impacts of climate change and achieve sustainable livelihoods. Discusses food and nutrition, local best practices and how to adapt such practices to attain family and community resiliency.
- **Course 3: Gender Equality in the Context of Climate Change and Food Security.** Discusses why women and children suffer most from the impacts of climate change, and the role of women as food growers



and providers for better community resiliency and sustainable livelihoods.

- **Course 4: Creating Gender-Sensitive, Climate-Responsive, Sustainable Livelihoods to Build Self-Reliant, Resilient Local Economies.** Explains the importance of climate-responsive and gender-sensitive livelihoods for building a self-reliant, resilient local economy.
- **Course 5: Using Innovations and Climate-Responsive Actions to Build Community Resilience.** Explains the role of innovation in livelihood design and local conservation efforts.
- **Course 6: Respecting Indigenous Rights and Practices: Ways to a Better Planet.** Discusses Indigenous practices and the integration of natural habitat conservation through such practices. Describes Indigenous rights and their importance in mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Each of these six courses can be done independently from [\[https://opentextbooks.colvee.org/respectingindigenousrightsandpractices/\]](https://opentextbooks.colvee.org/respectingindigenousrightsandpractices/) as a downloadable PDF or online in Moodle.

Respecting Indigenous Rights and Practices: Ways to a Better Planet was produced by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). All modules produced by COL are structured in the same way, as outlined below.

How this course is structured

The course overview

The course overview gives a general introduction to the course. The information it contains will help you determine:

- if the course is suitable for you,
- what you need to know before you begin,
- what you can expect from the course, and
- how much time you will need to complete the course.

The overview also provides guidance on:

- study skills,
- where to get help,
- course assessments,
- icons used in the course, and
- the content of units.

To increase your chances of success, read the overview *carefully* before you begin.

The course content

The course is broken down into units. Each unit comprises:

- an introduction to the unit content,
- unit outcomes,
- new terminology,
- core content of the unit with a variety of learning activities,
- a unit summary, and
- assessments, as applicable.

Resources

Resources for further reading — for example, books, articles or websites — are provided throughout this course.

Your comments

After you complete this course, we would appreciate it if you would take a few moments to email womenandgirls@col.org with your feedback on any aspect of it. Your feedback could include comments on:

- content and structure,
- reading materials and resources,
- assessments,
- duration, and
- support (assigned tutors, technical help, etc.).

Your constructive feedback will help us to improve this course for future users.

Course overview

Welcome to Respecting Indigenous rights and practices: Ways to a better planet

This course is intended for field workers and practitioners who are working with rural communities that are affected by climate change and seeking sustainable solutions to its impacts. The conservation of nature, including natural resources and natural processes, is based on a clear understanding of Indigenous communities and their strong relationship with nature. Indigenous practices and traditions preserve nature because they are based on respecting and adapting to natural cycles and local climate conditions. Understanding and acknowledging Indigenous community rights also contributes to human respect for nature. Indigenous communities have age-old traditions and practices that signify a spiritual and emotional connection to the natural environment. Adapting certain Indigenous practices will help to support other conservation efforts. We can implement and adapt small but steady steps based on Indigenous practices and traditions at a local level. If we are to change our behaviours and attitudes towards the conservation of Earth, we must understand the rights and traditions of Indigenous Peoples both locally and globally. This course contains both individual and group exercises to develop the learner's skills in total biomass utilisation.

Respecting Indigenous rights and practices: Ways to a better planet—Is this course for you?

This course is available to any member of the community. It is aimed at individuals with low literacy levels, including grassroots-level volunteers, community leaders, community health workers and others in positions to support women and girls at the community level. Such individuals could use the course for themselves or for working with their community/communities.

The learner or facilitator should have an understanding of how climate change affects the local area and the people living where this learning is to be used. Learners need to have a reasonable knowledge

of conservation in relation to livelihoods at the village and community level.

Course outcomes



Outcomes

On completion of *Respecting Indigenous rights and practices: Ways to a better planet*, you will be able to:

- *recognise* and value natural resources and habitats and the need for integrating conscious actions to conserve them.
- *value* and respect Indigenous rights and recognise how they can improve the health of the planet.
- *identify* Indigenous practices that you could adapt to fit your context and the benefits of adapting such practices.
- *develop* relevant skills for roles in total biomass utilisation.
- *identify*, adapt and promote small but effective steps towards making conservation both a habit and a cultural practice.
- *develop* knowledge about Indigenous ways of understanding nature and respecting natural habitats.

Timeframe



Time

You will need approximately 7.5 hours to complete this course.

This course contains five units. Each unit will need approximately 1.5 hours of learning time.

An additional two hours of self-study time may be required.

Study skills



As an adult learner you will take a different approach to learning than you did when you were a schoolchild. You will choose what you want to study, you will have a professional or personal motivation for learning and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities.

Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. You will therefore need to think about how issues such as time management, goal setting and stress management will affect your performance. You may need to review skills such as essay planning, coping with exams and using the Web as a learning resource.

Your most significant considerations will be time and space — that is, the time you dedicate to your learning and the environment in which you engage in that learning.

We recommend that you take time now — that is, before you begin your self-study — to familiarise yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the Web that can help you. For example:

- <http://www.how-to-study.com/>

This website has a list of resources about study skills, including taking notes, strategies for reading textbooks, using reference sources and dealing with test anxiety.

- <http://www.howtostudy.org/resources.php>

This website has useful links to resources on time management; efficient reading; questioning, listening and observing skills; “hands-on” learning; memory building; staying motivated; and developing a learning plan.

These two websites can get you started on your learning journey. At the time of writing, the links to them were active. To find more options, go to www.google.com and type in phrases such as “self-study basics,” “self-study tips” or “self-study skills.”

Need help?



Help

At the learning centre you will receive the same support as you would from any classroom teacher, or you might find a more experienced tutor to support you during a contact session.

Assessments



Assessments

At the end of each of the five units in this course there is a self-assessment with two to three questions in multiple choice question (MCQ) format. The MCQ assessment will take 15 minutes to complete. There are no teacher-marked assessments.



A formative assessment (individual or group-based) is also included for each of the five units to enhance further understanding of the unit topic and information.

Getting around this course

Margin icons

As you work through this course you will notice the frequent use of margin icons. These icons serve to “signpost” a particular piece of text, a new task or a change in activity. They have been included to help you to find your way around this course.

A complete set of icons is shown below. We suggest that you familiarise yourself with the icons and their meanings before you begin.

			
Activity	Assessment	Assignment	Case study
			
Discussion	Group activity	Help	Note it!
			
Outcomes	Reading	Reflection	Study skills
			
Summary	Terminology	Time	Tip

Unit 1

Indigenous practices and their relevance to habitat conservation

Introduction

Indigenous communities (also referred to in some areas as tribal or Aboriginal communities or Natives) are the earliest known inhabitants of an area. The people who make up these communities are sometimes referred to as Indigenous Peoples. They have unique traditions, and many of them have social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are different from those of the wider societies in which they live. The Indigenous community represents 5 per cent of the world's population; approximately 370 million Indigenous people, comprising 5,000 cultures, live in 90 countries worldwide (see Sangha et al., 2020, and World Bank, 2023, for more information). Indigenous communities' ways of life — including the buildings in which they live and their daily activities — are naturally woven into the local climate conditions and the natural resources available where they live.

Indigenous communities are rich in practical knowledge that links the survival of every human being to the wholeness of nature and the natural elements — for example, wind, rain, soil and water — that support life.

On completion of this unit, you will be able to:



Outcomes

recognise and value natural resources and habitats and the need to take conscious action to conserve them.



Terminology

Native:	A person born in a specific place or associated with a specific place by birth.
Nutrient:	A substance that provides nourishment essential for growth and the maintenance of life.
Nomadic:	Describes someone who travels from place to place in search of work or shelter.



Conservation:	Careful and thoughtful use of a resource.
Manure:	Animal dung used for fertilising land.
Species depletion:	When a certain species of animal and plants is either significantly reduced in number or no longer found.
Interconnectedness:	Linkage and relationships.
Exotic species:	Plants or animals that have been introduced into an area where they do not live or grow naturally.



Reading

Sangha, K., Duvert, A., Archer, R., & Russell-Smith, J. (2020). Unrealised economic opportunities in remote indigenous communities: Case studies from Northern Australia. *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2020, 12 May). <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3596050>

World Bank (2023, 6 April). *Indigenous Peoples*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/indigenouspeoples>

Indigenous communities and their dependence on nature

Indigenous communities depend solely on the natural resources found near or around where they live to build shelters that can withstand the ever-changing weather patterns and seasons — that is, dry or wet, cold or hot — and for food. Their food is locally grown, hunted in forests or caught in rivers or the sea. Some Indigenous communities are nomadic. They move from place to place according to the weather conditions to obtain and grow their own food. They practise simple farming and fishing methods and use home-made tools and techniques, rather than relying on heavy machinery. Therefore, they do not disrupt nature or deplete the natural resources they depend on.

Traditional Indigenous farming and fishing knowledge and practices are passed down through the generations. Through keen observation of their surroundings — for example, learning how plants survive to produce seeds, flowers bloom and fruits ripen — Indigenous communities developed a strong bond with nature. They build their lives around conserving nature because everything they need to live originates from it.

The knowledge passed down from their forefathers equips the community with a deep understanding of soil and water conservation and respect for living things. Indigenous communities adapt to local environmental conditions and live in harmony with nature.

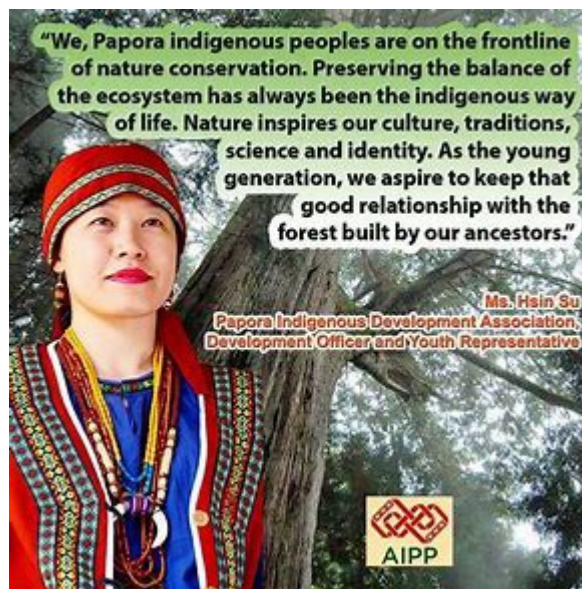


Image source: Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Defenders–IPHHRDs Network, Asia. (2018, 26 March). *We, Papora indigenous peoples are on the frontline of nature conservation. Preserving the balance of the ecosystem has always been* [Image attached]. Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/iphrdnet/photos/a.767868239930227.1073741828.765337060183345/1803137569736617/?type=3&theater=&epik=dj0yJnU9MFZXamhOSHpcMmlyWEZCTGJFallMX2MzdmYzTFdGRllmcD0wJm49LTZRdklTX2JlVjRlcZtTlJSYVZ6QSZ0PUFBQUFBRlZQVGRj>

Licence: Facebook: Open access.



Reflection

Think about the following two questions. Make notes about your thoughts in your personal journal.

- 1 Why do Indigenous communities respect and value nature?
- 2 Think about the natural resources — for example, plants, including crops and vegetables that are grown, fruit trees, animals reared for milk, eggs and meat, types of soil found on the land and water in ponds or rivers — in the area where you live. Which ones can you conserve to ensure villagers have enough to meet their needs?

Indigenous practices that aid in the conservation of nature

Indigenous practices and animal conservation

Indigenous communities' "knowledge of the natural world — the land, plants, animals, seasons and cycles of nature — has been a central tenet of their lives and worldviews since the dawn of time. Their understanding of the natural world is complex and comprehensive. The natural world, now commonly referred to as the 'environment,' is not viewed as a separate entity but one, interconnected aspect of the whole. This interconnectedness is a moral responsibility to care for, live in harmony



with, and respect the natural world” (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2016).

Indigenous communities have traditionally respected “the natural lifecycles of the animals they shared the Earth with” and did not hunt, fish and collect more than they needed to meet the needs of the community. That meant they did not overharvest and deplete stocks. In addition, they did not waste or discard any part of any living that they ate. They ate not only the flesh but also the blood and bones of the animals they hunted or fished (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2016).

Source: Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. (2016, 4 April). *What is the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and animals*.
<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/what-is-the-relationship-between-indigenous-peoples-and-animals>

Stone bunding by tribal communities in Koraput District, Odisha, India

Farming on hilly slopes is not an easy activity, but the tribal community in Koraput District in Odisha has been using stone bunds to improve soil quality for many generations. Water moving down a hill at high speed removes the top soil, thereby reducing soil fertility. The tribal people build small stone embankments — using stones broken off from large rocks — along the agricultural field boundary and sometimes across the slopes to reduce both soil erosion and siltation. The embankments also prevent animals from entering the fields and feeding on young plant shoots. The tribal community constructs a suitable outlet to remove the excess water after periods of rainfall. Water is collected in the spaces between small stones, which form the embankment, and an outlet is constructed so that water seeps through and moves downhill to lower parts of the agricultural land. The soil thereby remains wet — an ideal situation for planting and growing crops. The embankments hold water for extended periods, so as water seeps through, the lower parts of the hills remain wet long after the rainy season is over.

Adapted from Satapathy, M., & Bisoi, S. (2021). Indigenous knowledge and practices on conservation of natural resources by tribal communities of Koraput District, Odisha, India. *Journal of Environment and Ecology* 39 (1(A)), 216-229.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353464262_Indigenous_Knowledge_and_Practices_on_Conservation_of_Natural_Resources_by_Tribal_Communities_of_Koraput_District_Odisha_India

The Amazon is the largest tropical forest in the world — and it plays a key role in our collective survival. It is home to an extraordinary biodiversity, regulates the climate, absorbs carbon and helps purify water. Watch the video *Columbia's Amazon: A Story of Hope*, by the United

Nations Environment Programme, to learn about the work being done in Colombia to protect this vital habitat and how Indigenous practices like planting native species of trees and using native seeds for food can help conservation efforts.

Licence: YouTube: Open access.



Reflection

Think about how you can conserve the habitat around you. Walk around and observe the environmental situation in the vicinity of your village or household and then write your ideas in your journal. What type of conservation activity could you carry out on a regular basis?



Group activity

Formative assessment 1: Group activity

Discuss with a facilitator or village leader what conservation activities your household or village could carry out regularly. For example:

- planting native species
- collecting dung from farm and domestic animals to use as manure in the fields or vegetable gardens
- cleaning up rubbish: separating out items that can be recycled, such as plastics, paper, tin cans, and disposing of non-recyclable rubbish in a responsible manner
- using kitchen scraps — for example, fruit and vegetables peels, egg shells, bones, coffee grounds, etc. — as fertiliser in vegetable and fruit gardens

Unit summary



Summary

In this unit you learned how Indigenous communities' ways of life are in harmony with the nature that surrounds them. This means, for example, that resources that are consumed are not wasted or depleted. Using Indigenous practices and knowledge can help us to conserve nature.

Assessment



Assessment

Multiple choice questions: 1

1. Which of the following statements best describes Indigenous practices and knowledge?
 - A. Indigenous practices are based on 21st-century inventions.
 - B. Indigenous communities plant exotic or invasive species in tribal lands.
 - C. Indigenous communities depend solely on their land where they live alongside the plants and animals found there because they understand natural cycles and respect nature.
 - D. Indigenous communities gained their knowledge about nature from reading books.
2. Indigenous knowledge is understood as local or traditional knowledge that Indigenous people have passed down through the generations via the oral tradition.

True or false?

Unit 2

Indigenous rights: Why we need them and why they are important

Introduction

One third of the Earth's surface is in the care of Indigenous Peoples and local communities – and that third is in better environmental shape than most of the rest of the world. Maybe we could learn something from Indigenous Peoples about how to care for our world?

Indigenous Peoples have been given unique rights to help ensure that their cultures — including their right to speak and teach their native languages and customs, live on their ancestors' land and look after sacred sites — continue to exist into the future.

Indigenous Peoples around the world have called for their land rights to be recognised and respected because their lands define them — their knowledge systems, culture and governance systems are all defined by the land. Without their land, they are no longer Indigenous.

Adapted from: Velde, B. V. (2016, 6 September). *Why Indigenous rights matter*. <https://www.conservation.org/blog/why-indigenous-rights-matter>

On completion of this unit, you will:



Outcomes

value and respect Indigenous rights and how such rights can improve the health of the planet.



Terminology

Governance:

The structure and processes used for decision-making and managing the behaviour of people in a certain group.

Cultural legacy:

Cultural practices dating back centuries that have been passed down through the generations.



Custom:	An activity, a way of behaving or an event that is usual or traditional in a particular society.
Custodian:	A person who has responsibility for taking care of or protecting something.
Millennium:	One thousand years.
Resilient:	Able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions.
Agro-ecological:	Relating to the application of conservation principles to farming systems.
Biodiversity:	The variety of all living organisms from microbes to mammals.

Rights of Indigenous communities

What are Indigenous rights?

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights declared that “The close ties of Indigenous Peoples have to the land must be recognised and understood as the fundamental basis of their cultures, their spiritual life, their integrity, and their economic survival. For indigenous communities, relations to the land are not merely a matter of possession and production but a material and spiritual element which they must fully enjoy, even to preserve their cultural legacy and transmit it to future generations” (cited in United Nations, 2013, p. 6).

The rights to the land where Indigenous communities live and the natural resources on that land reflect the essential quality of the communities’ way of life and protect their ability to live in natural surroundings and territories such as in hills, mountains, riverine areas, deserts and coastal areas.

Source: United Nations. (2013). *Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations human rights system*. Fact Sheet No. 9/Rev. 2.
<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/fs9Rev.2.pdf>



Photograph: Quizizz.com. (n.d.). *Tribal communities*.

<https://quizizz.com/admin/quiz/5ee10b1b8edfad001b68c6bd/tribal-communities>

Licence: Open access.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the result of almost 25 years of collaboration between United Nations Member States and Indigenous Peoples from around the world. Indigenous leaders from Canada played a significant role in its development, including drafting and negotiating the contents of the declaration document.

The United Nations Declaration on the *Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* created a robust, action-oriented framework to advance the federal implementation of the Declaration in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous peoples. Watch the video [*The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Explained*](#) by the Department of Justice Canada.



Activity

- 1 Speak to your village community members about Indigenous rights that they have heard about or know about. Write what they tell you in your journal.
- 2 Try to arrange a visit to a nearby tribal group or Indigenous community to learn about their Indigenous rights and the importance of those rights. Take notes during your discussions.

Indigenous rights that lead to a healthy planet

Indigenous rights can lead to a healthy planet in many ways. The following paragraphs describes how Indigenous rights are good for Earth.

Conserving biodiversity

“Nearly half of the world’s endangered mammals live on land owned and protected by Indigenous people. In many countries, the richness of animal and plant life found on indigenous people’s land is comparable to protected nature reserves” (Broom, 2023, section 3: Protecting biodiversity).

“Indigenous Peoples have conserved biodiversity for millennia. They have created much of the world’s agricultural biodiversity, including thousands of crop varieties, livestock breeds and unique landscapes. These practices continue today in many of their territories, creating new varieties of crops and livestock that are often more resilient than modern equivalents” (Swiderska, 2020, paragraph 3).

Sources:

Broom, D. (2023, 3 August). *5 ways Indigenous people are protecting the planet*. World Economic Forum.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/08/indigenous-people-protecting-planet/>

Swiderska, K. (2020, 14 February). *Protecting indigenous cultures is crucial for saving the world’s biodiversity*. The Conversation.

<https://theconversation.com/protecting-indigenous-cultures-is-crucial-for-saving-the-worlds-biodiversity-123716>

Protecting forests

Indigenous people also play a key role in protecting Earth’s forests. A recent whitepaper found that rates of deforestation in areas inhabited by Indigenous people were three to four times lower than in neighbouring lands (World Economic Forum, 2022).

Adapted from World Economic Forum. (2022). *From aspiration to action: Credible corporate climate leadership and the net-zero imperative* [White paper]. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/from-aspiration-to-action-credible-corporate-climate-leadership-and-the-net-zero-imperative/>

Climate action

Just by pursuing their traditional methods of cultivation, Indigenous people are acting to reduce carbon emissions which cause climate change. . . . [t]he re-introduction of traditional controlled forest-burning methods by indigenous peoples of Northern Australia had halved the volume of carbon-emitting wildfires (Broom, 2023, section 5: Taking climate action).

Source: Broom, D. (2023, 3 August). *5 ways Indigenous people are protecting the planet*. World Economic Forum.
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/08/indigenous-people-protecting-planet/>

Custodians of the land to ensure protection

“In Suriname, Indigenous people took the initiative to declare 7.2 million hectares of rainforest as the Indigenous Southern Suriname Conservation Corridor, acting as rangers to ensure its protection. The government subsequently gave the Corridor official status by recognising their declaration” (Broom, 2023, section 4: Custodians of the land).

Source: Broom, D. (2023). *5 ways Indigenous people are protecting the planet*. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/08/indigenous-people-protecting-planet/>

Improve soil fertility

The Indigenous community of Lake Chad-Sahel in Africa are a group of “nomadic cattle herders that have learned, from centuries of living in harmony with nature, that protecting nature is investing in our children’s future. We stay for two or three days in one location, while our cattle migration restores fragile ecosystems and their dung fertilizes the land. We have extensive knowledge about the local flora and fauna, and we gather information about the impact climate change is having on them. Our way of life follows the rhythm of seasons and gives space to nature to regenerate. When we leave a piece of land, it’s more fertile than before, thanks to our ancestral agroecological practices” (Ibrahim, 2021, Solutions).

Ibrahim, H.O. (2021). *How can we use indigenous knowledge to help save the planet?* World Economic Forum.
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/08/indigenous-communities-climate-change-environment-biodiversity/>



Group activity

Formative assessment 2: Group activity

- 1 Gather together a group of village members who are interested in understanding Indigenous practices and rights.
- 2 Invite an Indigenous community leader from your region or country to speak to the group.
- 3 Write down the main points from the guest's speech.
- 4 Write down the Indigenous rights that the speaker identified and ask your village head or group facilitator to assist in documenting the different rights of Indigenous peoples from your geographical region.
- 5 Working in smaller groups, discuss which Indigenous rights are applicable to your local village and could help in conservation efforts in your area.

Unit summary



Summary

In this unit you learned to value and respect Indigenous rights and understand why such rights are important. You read extracts from published material that illustrated how these rights also lead to a healthy planet in different ways.

Assessment



Assessment

Multiple choice questions: 2

1. Which sentence **does not** describe Indigenous rights?
 - A. Indigenous rights are key to their community culture
 - B. Indigenous right to the land ensures there is sufficient food for the Indigenous communities who live there
 - C. Indigenous rights are recognised by the United Nations Declaration
 - D. Indigenous rights are old and must be replaced by 21st-century rules and laws
2. Which of the following **is not** an example of how the rights of Indigenous communities can lead to a healthy planet?
 - A. Climate action
 - B. Forest conservation
 - C. Varieties of crops
 - D. Extinction of animal species

Unit 3

Adapting and mainstreaming Indigenous practices

Introduction

Indigenous knowledge is a set of observations, oral and written knowledge, practices and beliefs, and new knowledge that promote the responsible use of natural resources through strong relationships between people and their landscapes. During group meetings, Elders in Indigenous communities discuss new ideas and later implement them, and the “new ideas” eventually become part of the group’s Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is at the heart of all the practices that Indigenous communities observe in the lands and territories where they live.

Indigenous Peoples have developed their knowledge systems over millennia, and they continue to practise the knowledge and skills they have acquired from direct contact with the environment, long-term — that is, per generation, or 40–50 years — experiences, extensive observations and lessons learned. Their practices are both relevant and beneficial to modern-day humans and can be adapted quite easily to suit varying needs.

On completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- *identify* Indigenous practices that could be adapted for a modern context.
- *identify* the benefits of adapting Indigenous practices and encouraging their use.
- *develop* the skills you need to play a role in total biomass utilisation.



Outcomes



Terminology

Precautionary:	Describes an action to prevent something unpleasant or dangerous from happening.
Regeneration:	Formation of new plant or animal tissue.
Encroach:	To intrude on someone’s or something’s territory or rights.
Unfelled:	Not cut down.



Ancestral:	Belonging to, or inherited from, family or community members from earlier generations.
Sustain:	To support an activity or action so that it keeps going.
Scarecrow:	An object that resembles a human figure and is used to scare birds away from a field where crops are growing.

Indigenous practices that can be adapted locally

This section contains examples of Indigenous practices that can be adapted and applied locally.

Buja indigenous community in Mutoko district of Zimbabwe

The Indigenous “culture-based mechanisms that are implemented to adapt to climate change are passed from generation to generation. As a result, in so doing the community will be observing their history . . . [The Buja] community had turned to growing millet and sorghum instead of maize because with maize they constantly got low harvests as it often dries before it is ripe [as a result of low rainfall]. However, with millet and sorghum they get good harvests even though they receive low rainfall and have extremely hot days. [The community] acknowledged that they have considered millet and sorghum to be a perfect alternative because these crops enable the community to continue practicing their activities, for example, during ceremonies they use sorghum to prepare traditional beer, and the sadza [a thickened porridge] that people eat will be from millet” (Mugambiwa, 2018, p. 7).

Source: Mugambiwa, S. (2018). Adaptation measures to sustain indigenous practices and the use of indigenous knowledge systems to adapt to climate change in Mutoko rural district of Zimbabwe. *Jambá: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies*, 10(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/jamba.v10i1.388>

Licence: Open access. CC attribution 4.0

What can you learn from the Buja people and adapt to use in your village? If a certain crop or grain fails to grow or produces a low harvest because there was not enough rain and dry conditions lasted longer than usual, a community will need to grow alternative, drought-resistant crops. Ask the Elders in your community what crops the community could grow to adapt to changing weather patterns.

Traditional and Indigenous Farming practices in Sri Lanka

“One of the oldest traditional cultivation methods in Sri Lanka is known as chena. This technique involves clearing patches of forests through slashing and burning to cultivate vegetables and grains. While this practice may appear to contribute to deforestation, it is actually more sustainable compared to modern agricultural practices. Chena farmers adopt a rotational approach, moving their farming activities from one piece of land to another, utilizing each plot for a limited duration. This allows for the regeneration of soil and forests over time.

When selecting land for chena cultivation, farmers often avoid areas with large trees, as these trees are used to construct their tree houses. They also avoid regions with intensive wildlife as a precautionary measure. Prior to clearing any land, chena farmers employ various traditional methods to keep away any animals in the area, thereby safeguarding wildlife” (Traditional and indigenous farming, 2023, paragraphs 1 and 2).

Source: Traditional and indigenous farming practices show Sri Lanka the way to sustainable food production. (2023 June, 5). *Asia: Sri Lanka. Agrospecials editie 9*. <https://magazines.rijksoverheid.nl/lnv/agrospecials/2023/01/sri-lanka>

What can you learn from the chena farmers of Sri Lanka and adapt to use in your village? Using slash-and-burn techniques and moving from one plot of land to another to allow the land to regenerate naturally will benefit the environment. Respect old trees by not cutting them down and prevent animals from encroaching on human communities by using traditional methods such as a scarecrow to scare away birds and small animals.

The image below shows a traditional scarecrow used in chena cultivation.



Photograph: [no author]. (2018, 3 June). Chena cultivation: A traditional farming system. *Sustainable Farming Systems for Development*.



<https://sustainablefarmingsystem.blogspot.com/2018/06/chena-cultivation-traditional-farming.html>
Licence: Open access.

Develop skills and roles in total biomass utilisation

Total biomass utilisation

Biomass is renewable organic material from plants and animals. Plant biomass contains stored chemical energy from the sun that plants produce through photosynthesis. Animal biomass consists of bones, soft shell (and similar coverings), soft tissues and excreta which can be composted and used in the fertiliser industry. Biomass can be used as an energy source. For example, the by-products from forestry, vegetable gardens and farm crops, animal dung from farms and even sewage can be burned as fuel or used to generate electricity.

Industrial processes are used to convert biomass into products such as foods, fuels, chemicals and electricity. These processes are usually developed by local entrepreneur(s). Sometimes the government finances the industrial process.

Watch the video *How does biomass work?* by ACCIONA.

It explains several advantages of using biomass energy:

- It is 100 per cent renewable.
- It reduces the use of fossil fuels, helping to reduce a community's carbon footprint.
- It creates employment and promotes development in rural areas.

Here are some key points to remember for effective total biomass use:

- 1 The biomass material you collect at the village and household levels may be enough to use as manure for crops and vegetable gardens. In farms with large agricultural crops, government agencies may need to train the landowners in how to collect and store plant and animal biomass.
- 2 Sort and store biomass in suitable containers, boxes or crates — for example, plastic containers or buckets with airtight covers or lids — in farm sheds.
- 3 Biomass that is being used to generate power may have to be transported in trucks from farms to an industrial site and unloaded at the site.

- 4 People who work in a biomass power plant will probably need training on how to operate the machinery. A government agency or entrepreneur may fund and provide this training.

To find out more, watch the video [Renewable Energy 101: How Does Biomass Energy Work?](#) by Green Mountain Energy.

The great thing about biomass energy — also called bioenergy — is that its sources are plant and animal waste. So not only does biomass energy divert this organic matter from the waste stream, it also turns it into something we all need — without polluting the planet.



Group activity

Formative assessment 3: Group activity

Invite an expert in total biomass utilisation to speak to the members of your community.

- Ask the expert to collaborate with participants to identify one or two methods of carrying out total biomass utilisation in a local context.
- Divide into smaller groups to discuss in detail how to carry out biomass use with:
 - ▣ crops and plant material waste and
 - ▣ waste from domesticated animals such as poultry, deer, sheep and cows.
- Remember to think about how to treat animal waste so that it does not harm human health.
- Later, ask the expert to facilitate local hands-on training in the total biomass utilisation method(s) that were identified.

Unit summary



Summary

In this unit you learned that Indigenous practices can be adapted to suit local contexts and that your community will benefit from these practices. The whole community has an important part to play in carrying out these practices. You also learned key points about practising total biomass utilisation.

Assessment



Assessment

Multiple choice questions: 3

1. The Buja community cultivated sorghum and millet as a way to adapt to climate change.

True or false?

2. Chena farming practices in Sri Lanka include using slash-and-burn techniques to grow new crops.

True or false?

3. Which of the following **is not** an example of biomass?

- A. Old twigs and branches that have fallen on the ground
- B. The husks (the outer layer) of crops like maize and rice
- C. Dung from sheep and cows
- D. Small stones collected in hilly areas

Unit 4

Making conservation a personal habit and community culture

Introduction

Conservation of natural resources is important in every community, and it brings many benefits. It can help us conserve water, increase the food supply and provide shelter for animals, birds and insects, but it can also bring together people who want to work together and lead others. By working individually or collectively to improve our environment, everyone can develop good habits that will last a lifetime and persuade other members of community to do the same.

Conservation habits are regular actions that can help us to protect and manage our natural resources. For example, they can help to establish and maintain healthy habitats, which are healthy places for animals, plants and humans to live.

On completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- *identify*, adapt and promote small but effective steps towards conservation as a habit and culture.



Outcomes



Terminology

Habitat:	A place where a certain living thing lives.
Silt soil:	A type of soil that is slippery when wet, not grainy or rocky.
Mulch:	Materials such as dead leaves, twigs and bark used to cover the ground.
Pollinating:	The process where pollen is deposited on plants or crops to produce new young plants through fertilisation.
Shrub:	A woody plant that is smaller than a tree.



Recycling:	Taking materials that are ready to be thrown out and using them again or making them into a new material or product.
Landfill:	Dumping ground or a site where waste materials are taken.

Why should we conserve natural and human habitats?

Healthy habitats provide an abundance of resources for the organisms that live in them. For example, soil — whether it is silt, sand or clay — provides nutrients and so helps to maintain life. Native plants such as grasses, shrubs and trees can be a sustainable source of food and protection. Birds and insects pollinate plants, and animals live in balance, eating any available food and often being eaten by larger animals.

Every day you make choices. Many of them relate to the conservation of natural resources and the immediate environment that you live in — for example, whether to clean up your garden or collect dead leaves and twigs to use as garden mulch, or whether to grow your own vegetables and fruits. Those choices influence your thoughts and actions, and your thoughts and actions develop your habits. Your habits then become a part of the daily activities that you choose to do.

We also need to protect and conserve marine life. Some Indigenous communities live by the sea or ocean, and all their needs are met by them.



Image: Clearwater Marine Aquarium. (2021, 3 September). *Six ocean-friendly habits to protect marine life*. Blog post.

<https://mission.cmaquarium.org/news/six-ocean-friendly-habits-to-help-protect-marine-life/>

Licence: Open access (for non-commercial purposes).

Watch the video [What Is Habitat Conservation? Tips For Conserving Habitats](#) by Dynamic Earth Learning to learn more about habitat conservation. Habitat conservation means protecting the places where plants, animals and humans live. We must keep these places healthy and fix them when they have been damaged. Many plants and animals would die if their natural habitats were destroyed. When we conserve habitats, we give plants and animals a chance to live healthy lives. When we lose or destroy habitats, animals, plants and the environment in general can suffer.



Reflection

Take a few minutes to think about what choices you can make to clean, conserve and protect your dwelling or household area and the wider area where you live. In your personal journal, write down five choices you can make and that you can use to form a habit of helping to conserve the area where you live.

Individual and community conservation habits

The natural environment has many components — for example, air that living organisms breathe, carbon dioxide for plants, soil that provides nutrients to plants, a variety of organisms, including insects, birds and other animals, that live alongside humans, and last but definitely not least, water. All living organisms need water in order to survive. And all organisms play a role in keeping the natural environment healthy.



What can plants and animals do?

Plants can:

- remove carbon dioxide from the air.
- release oxygen into the air.
- provide food, shelter and a place for some animals, including humans, to raise their young.

Animals, birds and insects can:

- pollinate flowers.
- eat fruit and berries and eliminate the seeds as waste; the seeds then grow into new plants.
- eat dead plant material and provide nutrients for the soil so more plants can grow.

What can people do?

People can act alone or as part of a community and:

- make a small pond to provide a water source for birds or other animals.
- plant native flowers, trees or shrubs, and especially plants that produce foods like berries, nuts or fruits.
- leave a corner of their back garden to grow wild to provide shelter and food for small birds, worms, frogs and insects.
- plant grass or ground cover on bare patches of soil where erosion has occurred.
- install or build a rain container to collect rainwater.
- consider using porous (allows water to pass through) concrete for pavements and walkways.
- recycle as much material as possible so that habitats are not destroyed to create additional landfill space.
- volunteer to plant trees or develop habitats in their communities.
- protect natural resources in the community from pollution or contamination.

Earth Day is 22 April of each year. Do not wait for 22 April in order to clean and conserve your human habitats — that is, the place where you live. The infographic below shows five ways you can conserve and protect Earth every day of the year.



Infographic: Gupta, M. (2022, 21 April.) 5 ways kids can contribute on this World Earth Day 2022. *Vedantu Blog*. <https://www.vedantu.com/blog/5-ways-kids-can-make-a-difference-this-world-earth-day>
Licence: Open access (for non-commercial use).



Group activity

Formative assessment 4: Group activity

Gather together up to 15 community members. Make sure you have a mix of young and old and male and female members of the village.

Ask a member of a local NGO or civil society who is familiar with the villagers and landscapes in your vicinity to act as facilitator. The facilitator takes you out for a walk as a group to observe what conservation activities could be carried out in the area where you live and work — try to include as many parts of your area as possible, such as farms that raise animals or grow crops, hillsides, beaches or riverside areas. The activities you choose should be manageable for village members — for example, picking up rubbish and separating the waste into paper, plastic and metal for recycling; collecting animal dung, diluting it with water and using it in the fields as manure or fertiliser to add nutrients to the soil; or collecting dead twigs and leaves, letting them dry and using them to cover the soil where vegetables or fruit trees grow. Planting trees is an exciting group activity that can any member of the village community can become involved in.

Unit summary



Summary

In this unit you learned about daily and weekly habits that can help to clean, protect and conserve the natural areas where you live. These habits can be done individually or as a group, but when they are done consciously, they will ultimately lead to changes in behaviour.

Assessment



Assessment

Multiple choice questions: 4

1. Which of the following is a conservation activity?
 - A. Throwing plastic rubbish into the river
 - B. Collecting animal dung and use it as a fertiliser
 - C. Using heavy machinery to plough the fields
 - D. Cutting down trees along river banks
2. Habits that are associated with caring for nature can be developed into daily activities.

True or false?



Unit 5

Indigenous communities' spirituality and respect for nature: A crucial part of climate action

Introduction

Philosophy is “the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline” (see <https://www.bu.edu/philo/academics/>). Indigenous communities have their own philosophy based on the belief that every living thing on Earth was created from earth, air, fire and water, otherwise known as the four elements (see Suzuki et al., 2002, p. 22, for more information).

As we learned earlier, Indigenous knowledge refers to the knowledge, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interacting with their natural surroundings. Indigenous and rural communities draw on their community knowledge when they are making decisions about key aspects of daily life.

The philosophy of Indigenous communities is based on Indigenous knowledge, which is rooted in nature and natural events such as the changing of the seasons, weather patterns and lunar movements. This philosophy is key to the whole concept of respecting nature and the elements that are part of it, such as water, air, soil and fire.



Reading

Suzuki, D., McConnell, A., & Mason, A. (2002). *The sacred balance: Rediscovering our place in nature*. Greystone Books.

On completion of this unit, you will be able to:



Outcomes

explain how Indigenous communities understand nature and show respect for natural habitats.



Terminology

Interdependent:	Describes two or more living things, including people, that depend on one another.
Cosmology:	A branch of physics that studies the origin of the universe and how it has evolved.
Sequestering:	The process of capturing and storing carbon.
Regulating:	Adjusting or controlling something to help achieve a particular outcome.
Taboo:	An activity or topic that should be avoided because people find it offensive.
Strategies:	A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term goal.

Indigenous communities: Their philosophy and spiritual connections with natural habitats

“In the culture of the Maori people of New Zealand, humans are deeply connected with nature; the two are equal and interdependent, even kin. The idea is reflected in the Maori word ‘kaitiakitanga’, which means guarding and protecting the environment in order to respect the ancestors and secure the future” (UNEP, 2017, paragraph 1).

Source: UNEP. (2017). *Indigenous people and nature: A tradition of conservation*. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/indigenous-people-and-nature-tradition-conservation>

In some parts of India, sacred trees have been conserved for generations because of the human community’s religious beliefs (see Kandari et al., 2014, for more information). Similarly, in Bangladesh, some wildlife species such as the black soft-shell turtle, mugger crocodile, rock pigeon and rhesus macaque have been protected for generations because of local beliefs (see Mukul et al., 2012, for more information). In some rural communities in Africa, certain natural resources that are important as a source of food and other domestic products — for example, woodlands, water and mountains — also influence cultural beliefs and were considered sacred (see Udgaonkar, 2002, for more information). In the Lower Songkhram River Basin in Thailand, the Indigenous people who live there believe that natural gods and spirits play a unique role in regulating and using the wetland resources. They express this belief through spiritual practices such as taboos, rituals and treating certain places as sacred (see Cox et al., 2014, for more information).

“When land is owned, managed or occupied in a traditional way, the word ‘traditional’ refers to a knowledge that stems from centuries-old observation and interaction with nature. This knowledge is often embedded in a cosmology that reveres the *one-ness* of life, considers nature as sacred and acknowledges humanity as a part of it. And it encompasses practical ways to ensure the balance of the environment in which they live, so it may continue to provide services such as water, fertile soil, food, shelter and medicines” (UNEP, 2023).

Source: UNEP. (2023, 19 September). *Indigenous Peoples and the nature they protect*. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/indigenous-peoples-and-nature-they-protect>



Reading

Cox, M., Villamayor-Tomas, S., & Hartberg, Y. (2014). The role of religion in community-based natural resource management. *World Development*, 54, 46–55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.07.010>

Kandari, L. S., Bisht, V. K., Bhardwaj, M., & Thakur, A. K. (2014). Conservation and management of sacred groves, myths and beliefs of tribal communities: A case study from North-India. *Environmental System Research*, 3(16). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40068-014-0016-8>

Mukul, S.A., Rashid, A.M., & Uddin, M.B. (2012). The role of spiritual beliefs in conserving wildlife species in religious shrines of Bangladesh. *Biodiversity*, 13, 108–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14888386.2012.694596>

Udgaonkar, S. (2002). The recording of traditional knowledge: Will it prevent “bio-piracy”? *Current Science*, 82, 413–419. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24106653>



Activity

Meet with your community or village elders. Ask them about the spiritual connection and beliefs connected with soil, trees, air, animals and movement of the moon. Write their responses in your journal and think about how these beliefs bring about respect for nature, which in turn eventually leads to conservation of the land.

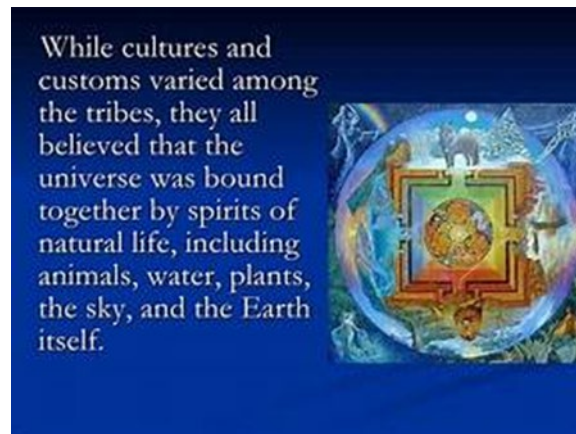


Image: Cool Teacher. (2009, 29 August). *Native American myths*. Slideshare. <https://www.slideshare.net/CoolTeacher/native-american-myths>
Licence: Open access.

Indigenous respect for nature as a necessity for climate action

The Maori — also spelled Māori — are the Indigenous community of New Zealand. “Their traditions and belief systems often mean that they regard nature with deep respect, and they have a strong sense of place and belonging. This sustains knowledge and ways of life that match up well with modern notions of nature conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources” (UNEP, 2017, paragraph 4).

Source: UNEP. (2017). *Indigenous people and nature: A tradition of conservation*. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/indigenous-people-and-nature-tradition-conservation>

Nature provides humans with food and materials to build homes and shelters. Respect for nature means that humans should take from nature only what they need for the current period. If they take more than they need, they reduce what nature can provide for future generations. Indigenous communities throughout the world respect nature in this way and practise traditional methods of farming.

Some people “think of nature as our supermarket: it produces the grass we use to feed livestock, the food we eat, the water we drink, and also the medicine we need. But nature is more than that: it inspires our culture, our traditions, our science and our identity. For instance, traditional knowledge based on observing nature, such as birds, bugs and trees, helps nomad communities to define their seasonal migration. . . . This is why we indigenous people are on the frontline of nature conservation. Preserving the balance of the ecosystem has always been the indigenous

way of life. Even in the tropical forests of Africa, where some communities use wood products to build settlements, they do so without negatively affecting the nature around them” (Ibrahim, 2016, paragraphs 1–3).

Source: Ibrahim H.O. (2016). *Why indigenous people are key to protecting our forests*. World Economic Forum.
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/indigenous-people-forest-preservation/>

“Scientists say that restoring the world’s forests by planting a trillion trees is by far the most promising — and cost-effective — means of tackling climate change. But this has to be done right, with the right trees and the right place and time. Beyond sequestering [capturing and storing] carbon, these trees can guard against extreme weather events; protect endangered species; and bring shelter, food, money and cultural preservation to communities around the world” (UNEP, 2019).

Source: UNEP. (2019). *When we protect nature, nature protects us*.
<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/when-we-protect-nature-nature-protects-us>

Planting trees is the simplest way to mitigate climate change and is often seen as a community activity. For example, communities can plant native fruit trees to provide fruits and berries or shrubs to stabilise river banks and slopes.

Watch the video [Respecting the Land – Indigenous Teachings](#) by Cheyenne Tehkummah. It discusses a number of Indigenous cultural teachings that foster good relations with Mother Earth and provides examples of how these teachings have been turned into laws in some countries. These laws will be crucial to helping us deal with climate change and stop the destruction of the environment.



Group activity

Formative assessment 5: Group activity

Ask a village leader to facilitate this activity. Organise groups of four community members to walk around different areas of your village or the surrounding area. Try to include different parts of the village — for example, areas where people live, farm areas where livestock is kept, ponds, rivers or streams. Ask the group members to identify the tree species they see and to count how many trees are in each location that they visit. Afterwards, bring everyone together to discuss what type of trees could be planted, as well as how many could be planted and where they could be planted. Ask the village leader to ask the local government agency to buy the seeds or young seedlings of the tree species that you have decided to plant.

Unit summary



Summary

In this unit you learned about the philosophical aspect of conservation and respect for nature, and why these are important. Indigenous communities' spiritual connection with nature is behind their deep respect for it. Nature provides everything that humans need to survive. The greatest climate action that you can take is to plant trees where you live.

Assessment



Assessment

Multiple choice questions: 5

1. Which of the following **is not** part of the philosophy of Indigenous communities?
 - A. Knowledge
 - B. Existence
 - C. Relatives
 - D. Nature
2. Which of the following is the most effective way to mitigate climate change?
 - A. Hunt wild boars in the forest
 - B. Plant native trees in your village
 - C. Fish for shrimps in the river
 - D. Observe the movement of the moon

Answer key

Multiple choice questions: 1

1. Which of the following statements best describes Indigenous practices and knowledge?

C. Indigenous communities depend solely on their land where they live alongside the plants and animals found there because they understand natural cycles and respect nature.

2. Indigenous knowledge is understood as local or traditional knowledge that indigenous people have passed down through the generations via the oral tradition.

True

Multiple choice questions: 2

1. Which sentence **does not** describe Indigenous rights?

D. Indigenous rights are old and must be replaced by 21st-century rules and laws

2. Which of the following **is not** an example of how the rights of Indigenous communities can lead to a healthy planet?

D. Extinction of animal species

Multiple choice questions: 3

1. The Buja community cultivated sorghum and millet as a way to adapt to climate change.

True

2. The chena farming practices in Sri Lanka include using slash-and-burn techniques to grow new crops.

True

3. Which of the following **is not** an example of biomass?

D. Small stones collected in hilly areas



Multiple choice questions: 4

1. Which of the following is a conservation activity?

B. Collecting animal dung and use it as a fertiliser

2. Habits that are associated with caring for nature can be developed into daily activities.

True

Multiple choice questions: 5

1. Which of the following **is not** part of the philosophy of Indigenous communities?

C. Relatives

2. Which of the following is the most effective way to mitigate climate change?

B. Plant native trees in your village