

Agriculture, Aquaculture, Livestock: Protecting Traditional Occupations in Indigenous and Local Communities

Status and Trends in Traditional Occupations

By [Forest Peoples Programme](#)

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Theme: [Environment](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

FPP has produced a [new report](#) presenting the outcomes of preliminary research on the practice of traditional occupations in indigenous and local communities. While the rapid assessment only provides sample insights (from 17 experts in 13 countries), it brings together unique and diverse stories, experiences and views on these occupations from a ground-level perspective.

The research categorised key occupations in clusters like hunting, fishing, collecting wood and gathering non-timber forest products; agriculture, aquaculture, and livestock; traditional medicine; preparing and storing of traditional foods/dishes; traditional crafts/skills for utensils or household equipment and construction; spiritual and ceremonial knowledge; traditional art, drama, music; and teaching and transmission of traditional knowledge.

In terms of the degree of current practice, a majority (50%) reported that traditional occupations were in decline, while 31% stated that there has been a recent increase in the practice of traditional occupations in their communities, but there can be a lot of variation within a community between different occupations.

The research explored the gender dimensions of traditional occupations, and investigated policies, regulations and government support for traditional occupations. The research uncovered many government laws and regulations in various countries that are aimed at preventing traditional occupations from continuing and/or which actively put traditional occupations under pressure. 69% percent of the survey respondents confirmed the existence of such laws or regulations.



The study also looked at whether formal education paid attention to traditional occupations, as well as at community-led initiatives for the transmission of knowledge and skills related to traditional occupations. In nearly all of the communities there were formal or informal educational activities to promote and enhance traditional knowledge and skills, in particular among youth. A clear trend among the survey responses was the revival of interest in traditional knowledge and skills.

The respondents also reflect on the main threats to traditional occupations and reasons people abandon them and/or seek other jobs or leave the community. These threats

included pressure to assimilate and 'modernize' from mainstream/dominant society (in particular on youth); land conflicts and land tenure insecurity and deterioration of areas where occupations are practised; opposing government policies or lack of government support; employment and economic reasons; lack of appreciation, respect, and understanding of traditional occupations, or circumstances specific to the communities themselves. Key opportunities identified for improving the status of traditional occupations were, among others, greater recognition of traditional occupations; special national measures, including sustainable economic incentives for traditional occupations; and support for indigenous values in education systems.

This publication was developed in response to a request for information and data on status and trends in traditional occupations related to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD. Traditional occupations are one of the elements of the CBD's Programme of Work for Article 8(j) and related provisions that deal with the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities.

FPP has submitted the report as an input for the planned review of progress in implementation of the Programme of Work for Article 8(j), and will present the publication at the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity where this review will take place (2-6 May 2016, Montreal, Canada).

Status and Trends in Traditional Occupations: Outcomes of a Rapid Assessment is available for download in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#).

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