

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN TANZANIA

Dependency on land resources and reverberation of climate change

Key Messages

1. Indigenous peoples are dependent on the environment and natural resources. Their close relationship with mother earth means that they are often among the first groups to suffer the consequences of climate change.
2. Indigenous communities face particular geographic, demographic and political obstacles in responding to and preparing for climate change risks. In particular, physical isolation, limited economic diversity, poor political representation and higher poverty rates, combined with an aging population, increase the vulnerability to native communities.
3. Declining land area among hunter-gatherers is causing significant impacts, including increasingly risky travel and hunting conditions, damage and loss to settlements, food insecurity, and socio-economic and health impacts from loss of cultures, traditional knowledge, and homelands.
4. Indigenous peoples should have their place in global climate change initiatives and international bodies must listen and respond to their concerns on environmental related issues.

"Indigenous pastoralists and hunter-gatherers communities in Northern Tanzania have been living off the land for 40,000 years, sustainably, coexisting with local wildlife and protecting the ecosystems".

Edward Loure¹

"For generations, we have protected all of the animals in our territories. We are pastoralists [and] our way of life depends on the land".... "This is where our sacred sites are found and where we hold our cultural camps. It's where we conduct our youth training about Maasai culture. We don't keep livestock just for food. There is a strong connection between our animals and culture. If you don't have cattle you must find a way to acquire them. In our lives, three things are inseparable: land, animals and people".

Kooya Timan²

¹ The 2016 Goldman Prize winner and defender of indigenous land rights in Tanzania.

² A Maasai woman from Ololosokwan Village as interviewed for film, *Olosho*, 2015.

Key message 1: dependency to nature and climate change repercussion

Indigenous peoples are dependent on environment and natural resources. Their close relationship with mother earth means they are often among the groups to suffer the consequences of climate change.

Indigenous communities in Tanzania

Indigenous peoples distinguish themselves by entirely depending on nature (Photo 1) and identifiable option to resources conservation. In Tanzania, two community groups – hunter-gatherers (Akiye and Hadzabe) and pastoralists – (Barabaig and Maasai), have had their indigenous status been endorsed by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) ³.



Photo 1: Hadzabe men celebrating a hunt (<http://www.lbah.com/RwandaTanzania2011/Hadzabe2011mainpage.html>)

The peoples, lands, and resources of indigenous communities in Tanzania, face an array of climate change impacts and vulnerabilities that threaten livelihoods. The consequences of observed and projected climate change have and will undermine indigenous ways of life that have persisted for thousands of years. Key vulnerabilities include the loss of traditional knowledge in the face of rapidly changing ecological conditions, increased food insecurity due to reduced availability of traditional foods, changing water availability, and relocation from historic homelands.

Indigenous peoples in Tanzania represent only about one percent of the country's population, yet many of the country's biodiversity hotspots coincide with areas owned, occupied or managed by them⁴. Several studies highlight that indigenous peoples' effective stewardship over biodiversity has kept significant amounts of carbon in the trees and



Photo 2: Dusted pasture-land as a result of prolonged drought (<http://www.maasai-association.org/drought009.html>)

underground including carbon-neutral practices or even carbon-negative lifestyles⁵.

It is generally recognized that poor, natural-resource dependent communities including indigenous peoples, particularly in the developing world, are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change and suffer disproportionate impacts⁶. Indigenous peoples are often highly dependent on

their lands and natural resources for their livelihoods. Their intricate relationship with their environment, lands, territories and resources is the very basis of their economic, social and cultural systems, their ecological knowledge and their identities as distinct peoples. They often live in diverse but fragile ecosystems, and at the same time in economically and politically marginal areas. The environments they choose or are forced to live in are often

physically isolated and harsh – often as a consequence of historical, social, political and economic exclusion. This places them among the world's most marginalized, impoverished and vulnerable peoples, having minimal access to resources

"significant impacts of climate change [are] already being experienced by indigenous peoples and local communities' including 'increased weather extremes and variability, prolonged drought, increased floods, strong winds, and delays in the onset of regular weather events including monsoons and dry seasons. Changing weather and climate patterns have impacted both domestic and wild plants and animals, resulting in decreased agricultural yields and loss of hunting opportunities, as well as exacerbated health and disease threats to people and animals, including expanded habitats of vector-borne diseases. This disruption of ecological calendars and traditional planting seasons has led in many cases to increased food insecurity" (UNU-IAS et al. 2008, p. 16).

³ ACHPR, *Report of the African Commission's Working Group of Experts on Indigenous Population* <http://thegroundtruthproject.org/tanzania-icij/s/Communities>, (2005).

⁴ Little, Peter D. "Pastoralism, biodiversity, and the shaping of savanna landscapes in East Africa." *Africa* 66.01 (1996): 37-51.

⁵ "Impact of climate change mitigation measures on indigenous peoples and on their territories and lands." *renewable energy* 31.40 (2008): 12.

⁶ IPCC (2007c): *Climate Change 2007: Mitigation*. Working Group III. Contribution to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

to cope with the changes.

To pastoralists, survival is highly dictated by availability of pasture and water

Many semi-arid areas of northern Tanzania are frequently affected by prolonged droughts resulting in more dust storms, and sometimes to excessive rainfall with floods. These changes result in dramatic damage to vegetation and

hence the livestock of nomadic indigenous peoples (Figure 2), leading to food security problems and malnutrition. The area becomes less viable even for indigenous peoples with still vast adaptive capacities, and much more for those whose adaptive capacities have already been eroded, often leading to migration, further marginalization or conflicts.

Key message 2: marginalization and vulnerability risks

Indigenous communities face particular geographic, demographic and political obstacles in responding to and preparing for climate change risks. In particular, physical isolation, limited economic diversity, poor political representation and higher poverty rates, combined with an aging population, increase the vulnerability of native communities.

Exclusion from mainstream national development programmes

Hunter-gatherers and pastoralist communities lack appropriate opportunities such as education, communication infrastructures, health services and market networks which are essential to join the general growth agenda. Illiteracy poverty rates are the highest in the country, with up to 95% of the population excepted from formal education and live on less than two, low standard, meals per day. Road network, telecommunications and social services comprising water, power and health facilities are extremely in short supply. Pastoral women are particularly vulnerable during shocks such as drought. They are the 'hidden hands' of production, responsible for many resource management tasks (Figure 3).

Political engagement is challenging too, due to government policies in which only majority rules. For the hunter-gatherers for instance, there has never been an individual who succeeded to seat as member of parliament, minister or any prominent political figure. Their voices or interests, as a result, are easily



Photo 3: When situations worsen, hunting water in dry-river bed becomes the only option: Maasai women collecting muddy-water, one cup at a time! (Aid Tanzania)

disregarded. It is no wonder, therefore, that the county's constitution makes no mention of their exclusive rights as minority groups.

Minorities considered invaders in their own land

Since colonial rules, indigenous groups in Tanzania have been subjected to compulsorily evacuation without proper compensation. Responsibility for the current livelihood crisis and increasing pastoral vulnerability is mainly directed at the state. Pastoralists construct an image of governments that misuse their power, ignore pastoral rights,

disturb pastoral livelihoods and lack any form of legitimacy. There has been cases where the government actively involved in forcibly displacing pastoralists from their settlements to pave way for large agricultural investment⁷ and hunting projects. For example, three cases of such involuntary

"Land is the foundation of life. It holds everything together animals, people and culture. Losing the land would mean losing everything. We would rather die than have our land taken". Maasai statement in Loliondo case, 2015.

⁷ Displacement in Tanzania: 'It as if we don't exist', the ground truth project, 2016. <http://thegroundtruthproject.org/tanzania-icij/>

relocation include Ihefu basin, Loliondo landscapes, and Hanang' plains. Other conspicuous circumstances in which pastoralists are caged comprise Ngorongoro conservation

area where livestock movements for water, pasture and salt licks are restricted to unproductive parts the area.

Key message 3: damaged settlements, restricted travel and hunting

Declining land area among hunter-gatherers is causing significant impacts, including increasingly risky travel and hunting conditions, damage and loss to settlements, food insecurity, and socioeconomic and health impacts from loss of cultures, traditional knowledge, and homelands.

Hadza community under threat as their land is diminishing

Numbering between 1300 – 1500, many of the Hadza live in a remote stretch of Tanzania, where most of their daily life style is spend on foraging and hunting (Figure 4). The techniques used for finding sustenance are passed down generation to generation through practice storytelling. The men favour handmade bows and arrows, while women dig up roots and gather berries.

Unfortunately, the Hadza way of life is under threat. In the last 50 years, they have lost 90% of their land to conservation, farmers and cattle herders. Much of the local forest and bush, for example, has been burned to make way for crops, or has been razed to produce water holes for irrigation. As a result, a lot of the big game animals and local plants that traditionally have made up the bulk of the Hadza diet are disappearing.

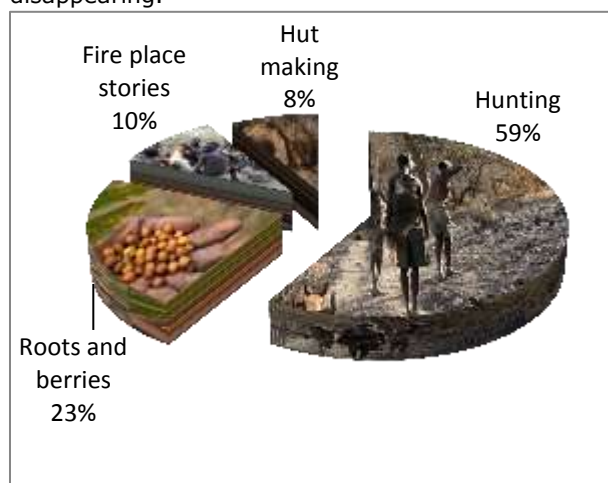


Figure 1: Daily life style of Hadza

Hope restore as land titles issued.

Though the threat is real for the Hadza, hope for sustainable livelihood is underway following successful efforts to restore some of the lost land. In 2011, with Ujamaa Resource Team (UCRT) led initiative; the Tanzanian government issued land titles to a community of Hadza living in Yaeda Chini.

UCRT pioneered an approach that gives land titles to indigenous peoples as a collective unit instead of individuals using a provision called Certificate of Customary Rights of Occupancy (CCRO) provided in the Tanzania Village Land Act. Edward Loure, former Director of UCRT and Environmental Gold Prize Winner, said when interviewed during Prize reception: " I had what it takes to fight for the marginalized community's land rights to ensure that their territory is protected from land grabbers," [in so doing] " we identified specific areas for hunting, gathering and grazing. Then, we prepared all documents and through lobbying and advocacy, we finally achieved ownership of our land".

But even with land titles, responding to additional challenges from climate change impacts will require significant adaptation within land use transportation and infrastructure systems, as well as health and emergency response systems. Local community empowerment is essential especially due to limited community institutional capacity to respond to, plan for, and anticipate climate change impacts.

Key message 4: Global climate change negotiations and indigenous peoples concerns

Indigenous peoples have their place in global climate change initiatives and international bodies must listen and respond to their concerns on environmental related issues.

Indigenous peoples and global climate change negotiations

The central international policy framework for addressing global warming is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC 1992, entered into force in 1994) and its Kyoto Protocol with legally binding measures (adopted in 1997 and entered into force 2005). The UNFCCC enjoys near universal membership, with 192 countries having ratified it. An important article from a rights perspective is Article 3.1 which calls upon parties to adhere to the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities', pointing to the special vulnerability of developing countries to the adverse effects of climate change and the greater responsibility of developed country parties. In contrast to its sister Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the text of the UNFCCC contains no explicit consideration of indigenous peoples, local communities or similar, although the issue is vitally important to them. The same applies to the Kyoto Protocol. Indigenous peoples' organizations and their spokespeople have complained about a lack of space for participation in the process of the UNFCCC. They state that they have been largely excluded from the climate change negotiations and were not consulted in the creation of the UNFCCC or in the negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol (E/C.19/2008/10).

However, in the last decade opportunities began to emerge for greater engagement of indigenous peoples in the UNFCCC process. Indigenous and traditional peoples' representatives have been participating at UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties (COPs) since 1998 (Macchi et al. 2008). Since 2001 indigenous peoples' organizations have been acknowledged by the Secretariat as an observer constituency within climate negotiations of the UNFCCC and have been provided with special support such as a direct line of communication with the secretariat, invitation to workshops which are open to observers and provision of an opportunity to make statements to the Plenary under the agenda item for NGOs (UNFCCC

2004a and 2004b). This provides indigenous peoples with some opportunities for articulating their concerns, but they state that it is often difficult to get their perspectives integrated in final recommendations (E/C.19/2007/CRP.6, p.8). Indigenous peoples' organizations have released a number of declarations and statements in which they have expressed their concerns and discontent related to climate change implications on their cultures and livelihoods.

In pursuing their global campaign, they called upon the COPs of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol to recognize their role, rights and positions and to include them in decision making processes.

The UNPFII has called for the establishment of an ad hoc Working Group on Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change by the UNFCCC. Other references showing some emerging recognition of indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge within the UNFCCC process are found within the COP 12 through the Paris Agreement - COP 21. The COP 12, in particular, recognizes the importance of local and indigenous knowledge and recommends to collect, analyse and disseminate information on adaptation actions and measures including local and indigenous knowledge, while Paris Agreement speaks of indigenous peoples' territories and climate change impacts mitigation.

Indigenous peoples' and the Paris Agreement⁸ on Climate Change 2015

Indigenous communities recommendations to the zero draft of Paris Agreement admit that indigenous peoples' territories are in the front line of climate change and indigenous peoples already feel the consequences of changing weather patterns. The proposed 2°C goal will increase hunger and poverty of millions of indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples thus demand States to take urgent action to tackle global warming and

⁸ (IIPFCC) Recommendations to the zero drafts of Paris agreement and COP decisions, October 2015, Bonn, Germany.

climate change and commit to keeping global temperature increase below 1.5° C both in the Paris Agreement and in their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions.

Indigenous peoples also demand that Parties should ensure an overarching human rights approach to all climate change interventions, procedures, mitigation strategies and adaptation.

"There is a big problem with cows. The animals are scared of them and they run away. That's why the hunters have to [travel] far to even find little birds."

Shani Msafii-Sigwaze – university graduate and translator for the tribe.
