

Land grabbing: An urgent issue for indigenous peoples around the world

Around the world, approximately 2.5 billion individuals, including 370 million indigenous people, rely on collectively owned, used, and managed land and natural resources. This makes up one-third of the global population and puts them at risk of dispossession by more powerful actors.

According to the "Land Rights Now" campaign, native people safeguard over half of the world's land but possess legal ownership of only 10%. Many countries and companies have taken or exploited lawfully secured territories. The utilization of practices like logging, mining, fracking, and intensive farming causes pollution and sickness to these territories, as well as neighbouring lands, waters, and people. The UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights includes the right to self-determination and control over their lands and resources. However, some governments still do not acknowledge these rights or the importance of informed consent, and have not put this declaration into action.

For indigenous peoples "land" is much more than the place where you farm, fish, gather, or hunt your food. As members of the Indigenous Terra Madre network repeatedly emphasize, *"land is identity. It is traditional culture and knowledge. If you take us away from our lands you kill our identities and cultures and our food sovereignty, producing poverty, displacement and conflicts. Well-being is linked to land. Peace and harmony will only come if we are connected to our land."*

Even as we face the consequences of climate change, the current development paradigm continues to displace indigenous peoples and local communities to make space for big new projects that exploit forest, water, mineral, and pasture resources; develop the land for tourism; and set aside huge areas as nature reserves. This issue is real and urgent for indigenous communities on every continent. Recognising the land rights of local communities is vital for fairness and justice. Furthermore, traditional land management and food production methods are not opposed to preserving landscapes and biodiversity. In fact, they are a crucial element of any genuine effort to achieve sustainable development in our world.

Whenever an Indigenous Terra Madre network member speaks publicly, the land issue arises. At the 2016 Terra Madre conferences Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, a member of the Igorot indigenous community from the Philippines and the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, highlighted how government policies fail to acknowledge the significance and benefits of these food systems. She

emphasized the desire of indigenous peoples worldwide to maintain their cultural practices and stressed the importance of traditional knowledge for food security and a healthy environment. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz believes that a cultural shift is needed, a "change in the mindset of people regarding how they think of food and how they think of managing these resources, which cannot be privatized or owned by a few people."

Food networks are a crucial piece of the puzzle. Elifuraha Laltaika, a Tanzanian Maasai who teaches law and is a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, is optimistic about the role that networks such as Terra Madre can play. As he puts it, "*Terra Madre is an extremely important forum because it advocates for traditional ways of life including food production; and awareness raising.*" He is confident that as more people come to understand Terra Madre's message, it may eventually be possible to change the minds of policy-makers around the world. Part of the role of networks like Terra Madre is to counter the productivist point of view, which so deeply misunderstands traditional management practices based on a sense of long-term responsibility and stewardship.

Tanzanian Maasai Edward Loure said that without food, there can be no life, "*therefore, we must secure land for our livestock to ensure they have a great pasture and remain healthy. This results in healthier human beings, since we can derive products from our cows like meat and milk, which provide complete nourishment.*" Mr. Loure specializes in community planning and management of land and was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2016. Mr. Loure and his colleagues at Ujamaa Community Resource Team show that they can achieve a mutually beneficial outcome where pastoralists, their livestock, and Tanzania's wildlife can coexist and flourish on the same land with a well-planned and detailed land management scheme.

Aretta Begay, a Navajo youth leader and the coordinator of the Navajo-Churro Sheep Presidium, explained that land grabbing indiscriminately affects pastoralist, farmers, gatherers, fishers, wild plant resources, and sacred lands. When corporations and industry move into their lands, indigenous communities, and the resources that they maintain, and on which they depend, are threatened.

Solving these problems requires a coordinated effort by all, based on the principle of reciprocity. It also needs acknowledging that "community" means an appreciation of the past, from which much of our knowledge and insight comes; and a sense of responsibility for the future, so that as Ms Tauli-Corpuz says, "*whatever we do now, we don't end up destroying the community seven generations ahead of us*".

Quelle: Bei dem hier angeführten Text handelt es sich um eine vereinfachte, gekürzte Version des Artikels „Land grabbing: An urgent issue for indigenous peoples around the world“ von Francisco Luis Prieto vom 25.01.2018. Der Originalartikel ist hier zu finden:

<https://www.slowfood.com/land-grabbing-urgent-issue-indigenous-peoples-around-world/>