



TOOLKIT ON INDIGENOUS EVALUATIONS FOR ASIA PACIFIC REGION



Asia Pacific Evaluation Association and EvalIndigenous

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Foreword

It is with great enthusiasm and respect that I provide this foreword for the “Toolkit for Indigenous Evaluations in the Asia Pacific Region.” This toolkit represents a significant milestone in the Asia Pacific Evaluation Association’s (APEA) ongoing efforts to honor and empower Indigenous communities through thoughtful, culturally responsive evaluation practices.

The toolkit for Indigenous evaluation is a practical guide and advocacy tool. It invites all stakeholders—evaluators, researchers, practitioners, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, development agencies, and community members—to utilize this toolkit when working with Indigenous communities.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to the development of this invaluable resource. Your dedication and expertise are a testament to the power of collaboration and the collective commitment to advancing Indigenous rights and well-being.

This toolkit on Indigenous evaluations is a profound step towards a more just and inclusive future. May it serve as a source of inspiration, guidance, and empowerment for all those who seek to create positive change in partnership with Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific Region. Together, we can build a world where Indigenous knowledge is respected and their voices are heard in evaluation studies.

With heartfelt respect and hope,

Dr. Asela Kalugampitiya
President of APEA

Acknowledgements

Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) would like to thank EvalIndigenous, EvalPartners, and Ford Foundation for all the support given in developing this toolkit for Indigenous evaluations for the Asia Pacific Region. The work done in the development of this toolkit was funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation to EvalIndigenous. Furthermore, we would like to thank all the survey respondents and interviewees that took part in this study and contributed to the development of this toolkit. In addition, we appreciate the support provided by the Indigenous communities in Sri Lanka and Philippines during the fieldwork for this study. APEA would like to acknowledge the authors of this report: Randika De Mel, Dorothy Mae Albiento, Prabin Chitrakar, Madhuka Liyanagamage, Hasithi Samarasinghe, Ana Erika Lareza, Karlo Baingan, Dulmina Chamathkara, Aulvin Joe Tindaan, Christina Joy Omas, and Zairamie Segundo. We are extremely grateful to Dr. Fiona Cram and Serge Eric, Co-Chairs of EvalIndigenous, for all the guidance and support they provided the APEA team in developing this toolkit.





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Acronyms

APEA	Asia Pacific Evaluation Association
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
DS	Divisional Secretary
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
GN	Grama Niladari
GND	Grama Niladari Division
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
VOPE	Voluntary Organization for Professional Evaluation



Executive Summary

[EvalIndigenous](#) and [Asia Pacific Evaluation Association \(APEA\)](#) collaborated to implement a Ford Foundation Project, “EvalIndigenous to index and promote Indigenous approaches in service of equity-centered evaluation,” the Asia Pacific Region. The long-term goal of this project is for

Concepts, theories and practices of Indigenous evaluators and knowledge holders to be curated and disseminated for a global audience of Indigenous peoples, evaluation funders and decision-makers and strengthen demand for culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation practices.

To achieve this goal, the following activities below were conducted by APEA.

- Establishment of a web-based directory of Indigenous evaluators (ATLAS project) to enable evaluation commissioners and contractors to locate local evaluation expertise.
- Facilitation of a toolkit for Indigenous evaluations in the Asia Pacific Region.
- Curation of the voices of Indigenous knowledge holders and Indigenous evaluators.
- Provision of seed funding and support for collaborative projects.
- Facilitation of a peer-to-peer (P2P) session during the 4th APEA Conference and EvalVisionAsia 23 in Manila, Philippines.

I Purpose of the toolkit

In order to research indigeneity and decolonize evaluation and to amplify Indigenous evaluation project practices this comprehensive toolkit on Indigenous evaluations in the Asia Pacific Region was developed. This toolkit serves as a practical guide that consolidates the existing knowledge and experiences of selected Indigenous communities and evaluators working with Indigenous communities in Asia Pacific. Also, this toolkit serves as an advocacy tool that seeks to promote culturally responsive evaluations in the region.

I Study Locations

For the development of this toolkit, the APEA team conducted primary data collection through interviews and focus group discussion with Indigenous community leaders and Indigenous community members in Sri Lanka (Dambana, Rathugala, Pollebedda) and the Philippines (Sta, Fe Nueva Vizcaya).

I Methodology

To develop this toolkit, the APEA team used multiple data collection methods. Below are the data collection methods used.

Document reviews: Previous studies done by EvalIndigenous were reviewed for the development of this toolkit.

ATLAS survey: The survey was sent through multiple Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs), and EvalYouth chapters and the information gathered in this survey also fed into the creation of this toolkit.

Focus group discussions (FGDs): Five FGDs were conducted with male and female Indigenous community members in Sri Lanka to learn more and understand the experiences and insights about Indigenous approaches and culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation practices.

Interviews: 17 interviews were conducted with Indigenous community members and Indigenous evaluators from Sri Lanka, Philippines, New Zealand, Nepal, and Fiji in order to understand the experiences and insights about Indigenous approaches and culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation practices.

Observations: This included the observations of the Ikalahan Tribe situated at Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines of their decision-making, discourse, dialogue, conflict resolution, and adjudication activities unique to the tribe.

I Key Lessons Learned from the Asia Pacific Region

Based on the data gathered for this toolkit, below are key lessons that evaluators and researchers need to keep in mind when working with Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific region.

Lesson 1: Honor and respect cultural traditions and norms of the Indigenous community- Evaluators working with the Indigenous communities need to understand, honor, and respect the cultural norms, traditions, and practices of these communities. As each community is unique and has its own distinct set of culture, language, ways of life, and traditions, evaluators need to consider these intricacies when planning evaluations.

Lesson 2: Secure approval and consent from key stakeholders before the start of an evaluation or research- Securing the approval of key stakeholders is a critical step to accomplish prior to starting a research or evaluation with an Indigenous community. This not only helps ensure that evaluators adhere to ethical principles but also fosters the community's trust, acceptance and ownership of the process and results.

Lesson 3: Plan to involve the community in the evaluation process- Indigenous community members should not only be considered as respondents in evaluation studies. They should be part of the evaluation team and involved throughout the evaluation study. Evaluators can learn the cultural practices, norms, and preferred methodologies having Indigenous people are part of the evaluation team.

Lesson 4: Decolonize evaluation/research approaches and methodologies- Indigenous communities have their own knowledge systems and have their own way of measuring progress and making decisions which might be different than the Western frameworks. Hence, evaluators need to integrate the perspectives and approaches of the Indigenous community that is being studied into their methodologies.

Lesson 5: Engage Indigenous communities in dissemination of evaluation findings- It is of utmost importance for evaluators to keep the Indigenous community leaders and members informed about how the collected information will be used and the outcomes of these studies. By doing so, they will not only build their trust but also ensure that they feel valued and included in the evaluation process, thereby enhancing their satisfaction with the support provided.

I Peer to Peer Session Learnings from the 4th APEA Conference

The P2P session on “Amplifying Indigenous voices: Advancing equity and inclusion in evaluation practices.” was organized during the "4th APEA Conference and EvalVision Asia 2023" in Manila on Tuesday, 05th December at 3.30 pm Manila time. The session aimed to strengthen creative partnerships, particularly focusing on Indigenous voices and their involvement into evaluation practices across the Asia Pacific region. The session was moderated by Dr. Fiona Cram and Serge Eric, Co-Chairs of EvalIndigenous. The session focused on presentations and discussions regarding Indigenous evaluation initiatives implemented under the seed grant fund project in Asia and the Pacific region that included Nepal, Sri Lanka, Fiji, and the Philippines.

In the session, each of the presentations emphasized the need for inclusive evaluation practices by involving Indigenous communities in shaping evaluation frameworks and methodologies. There was a strong emphasis on aligning evaluation with Indigenous values, preserving cultural heritage, and strongly understanding local contexts. In the session, highlighted the challenges that included the lack of cultural sensitivity in research and evaluation with limitations in engaging diverse Indigenous communities.

The presentations during the session reflected the collaboration and partnerships with different stakeholders such as government bodies, UN agencies, INGOs/NGOs, local authorities, and especially with the Indigenous and local communities that can enhance the process to foster the targeted communities.

The Q&A session highlighted challenges in engaging diverse Indigenous communities, ensuring safety measures for collaborations, and managing data generated by communities for policy implementation. Discussions also highlighted the complexity of conducting evaluations in culturally diverse landscapes and the importance of inclusive and community-led approaches.

Overall, the session concluded with the realization of the importance of ongoing dialogue, collaborative efforts, and policy advocacy; and the continued needs of capacity building to bridge gaps in Indigenous evaluation practices to truly amplify Indigenous voices in the evaluation landscape across the Asia Pacific region and globally.

Key Recommendations

Below are key recommendations provided by Indigenous evaluators and evaluators working with Indigenous communities on how EvalIndigenous Global Network can improve practices on how Indigenous communities are engaged in evaluations.

- By promoting culturally responsive and participatory evaluation approaches, EvalIndigenous can guide evaluators in engaging Indigenous communities in respectful and inclusive ways.
- EvalIndigenous can help shed light to the challenges of Indigenous peoples and evaluators working with Indigenous peoples and present ways to address these challenges in order to ensure that perspectives and positionality of both are documented in research/evaluations.
- EvalIndigenous can provide a platform for sharing best practices and lessons learned from evaluation initiatives involving Indigenous communities, fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration, including:
 - Setting guiding principles for Indigenous evaluators and supporting the contextualization of these principles across Indigenous communities and countries.
 - Implementing Indigenous community engagement policies to safeguard community interests.
 - Working closely with Indigenous peoples to develop evaluation methodologies that are respectful of their culture.



Background of the Project

In partnership with [EvalIndigenous](#), [Asia Pacific Evaluation Association \(APEA\)](#) implemented the EvalIndigenous - Ford Foundation project, “EvalIndigenous to index and promote Indigenous approaches in service of equity-centered evaluation.”

EvalIndigenous, formed as part of EvalPartners, is a global movement to support the evaluation discipline to become a core instrument for social, economic and environmental transformation. EvalIndigenous is a multi-stakeholder partnership built on the foundation of the knowledge and expertise of Indigenous peoples around the world, seeking to:

1. Bring awareness to and celebrate the cultural traditions, values and languages of Indigenous Peoples
2. Acknowledge the legal/political governance practices of Indigenous Peoples
3. Appreciate ways of life of Indigenous peoples wherever they live
4. Ensure that policies and evaluation practices for Indigenous peoples are based on equity, fairness and justice.

APEA is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that aims to improve the theory, practice, and use of evaluation across the Asia Pacific region. Its members are national and thematic voluntary evaluation associations who represent 40+ countries in the region.¹ APEA is the leading implementer of the [Asia Pacific Regional Evaluation Strategy](#) which has eight themes. One of these is the [“Strengthening Community Ownership in Evaluation”](#) which aims to empower marginalized groups, including Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific and recognise their role in evaluation.²

The long-term goal of the EvalIndigenous-Ford Foundation grant project is for concepts, theories and practices of Indigenous evaluators and knowledge holders to be curated and disseminated for a global audience of Indigenous peoples, evaluation funders and decision-makers and strengthen demand for culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation practices. To achieve this goal, the project aims to:³

- **Research indigeneity and decolonize evaluation** through the establishment of a web-based directory of Indigenous evaluators (ATLAS project) and by facilitating the development of local Indigenous evaluation protocols and agreements.
- **Amplify Indigenous evaluation project practice** by curating the voices of more Indigenous knowledge holders and Indigenous evaluators (EvalIndigenous voices project).
- **Strengthen creative partnerships** by providing seed funding for collaborative projects and encouraging peer-to-peer (P2) collaborations.

¹ APEA (2023). About us. Retrieved from <https://asiapacificeval.org/>

² APEA (2023). Asia Pacific Regional Evaluation Strategy. Retrieved from <https://asiapacificeval.org/programs/regional-evaluation-strategy/>

³ EvalIndigenous Ford Foundation grant proposal (2022).

In line with these objectives, APEA worked closely with EvalIndigenous to develop this **toolkit on Indigenous evaluations** for the Asia Pacific Region. The following components are covered in this handbook:

- About the toolkit
- Indigenous communities in Sri Lanka and the Philippines in the Asia Pacific Region
- Experiences of Indigenous evaluators and evaluators working with Indigenous communities in Asia Pacific
- Lessons learned from the Asia Pacific Region
- Summary of Peer to Peer Session Learnings from 4th APEA Conference 2023
- Recommendations to EvalIndigenous Global Network
- Indigenous stories and voices from the field
- Glossary of Indigenous terms
- Resources on Indigenous evaluations



About the Toolkit

Purpose of Toolkit

This report captures the experiences of evaluators/researchers working with Indigenous communities as well as views about evaluation/research collected from selected Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific region.

This document is both:

- a practical guide that consolidates the existing knowledge and experiences of selected Indigenous communities and evaluators working with Indigenous communities in Asia Pacific, and
- an advocacy tool that seeks to promote culturally-responsive evaluations/ culturally responsive Indigenous evaluations in the region

Target Users

This toolkit is aimed at:

- researchers, evaluators, young and emerging evaluators, humanitarian and development practitioners, policymakers, and government officials working with Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific Region, and
- Indigenous communities who are working with researchers and evaluators

Key Terms

The following key terms appear throughout the report. We use them in the context of the following definitions.

Culturally Responsive Evaluation

“Culturally responsive evaluation [CRE] and culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation [CRIE] both contest the assumption that Western-derived evaluation methods can be universally applied and argues that evaluations need to ensure the cultural relevance of the methods being used (Howe, 1994; Chouinard & Cram, 2020).⁴ CRIE, which is described by Waapalaneexkweew (Bowman, Mohican/Lunaape) and Dodge-Francis (2018) as a ‘partner to CRE’, ‘uses traditional knowledge and contemporary Indigenous theory and methods to design and implement an evaluation study, so it is led by and for the benefit of Indigenous people and Tribal nations’.”⁵

⁴ Howe, D. (1994). Modernity, postmodernity and social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 24(5), 513–532 and Chouinard, J. A., & Cram, F. (2020). *Culturally responsive approaches to evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

⁵ Waapalaneexkweew (Bowman, N., Mohican/Lunaape), & Dodge-Francis, C. (2018). Culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation and tribal governments: Understanding the relationship. In F. Cram, K. A. Tibbetts & J. LaFrance (Eds.), *Indigenous Evaluation. New Directions for Evaluation*, 159, 17–31. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.20329>

Indigenous Evaluation

“Indigenous evaluation refers to the use of Indigenous ways of knowing and community involvement when assessing or evaluating an effort’s effectiveness or community impact. Indigenous evaluation may be a better alternative to Western evaluation approaches within Indigenous settings because it ensures community-specific knowledge and perspectives are identified and included in the evaluation process.”⁶

Indigenous Peoples

“Indigenous Peoples [Native people, Aboriginal people, first nations etc] are distinct social and cultural groups that share collective ancestral ties to the lands and natural resources where they live, occupy or from which they have been displaced.”⁷

Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous knowledge refers to “knowledge that is generated, preserved and transmitted in a traditional context and between generations; and associated with a traditional or Indigenous community through a sense of communal ownership, custodianship or cultural responsibility. It may also refer to the performances, inventions and information resulting from intellectual activity of the local community. It builds upon and is inspired by the traditional knowledge base.”⁸



⁶ Seven Directions, A Center for Indigenous Public Health, University of Washington (February 2023). Indigenous Evaluation Toolkit: An Actionable Guide for Organizations Serving American Indian/Alaska Native Communities through Opioid Prevention Programming. Retrieved from <https://www.Indigenousphi.org/tribal-opioid-use-disorders-prevention/Indigenous-evaluation-toolkit>

⁷ The World Bank (06 April 2023). Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/Indigenouspeoples#:~:text=Although%20they%20make%20up%20approximately,19%25%20of%20the%20extreme%20poor.&text=Indigenous%20Peoples%20are%20distinct%20social,which%20they%20have%20been%20displaced>

⁸ EvalIndigenous (26 January 2021). Final-Protocol-Indigenous African Ethical Protocol for Evaluations.

Methodology



Data Collection Methods

To develop this Indigenous evaluation toolkit, the APEA team undertook data collection using the methods described below.

1) Document Reviews

The APEA team reviewed the following reports in order to understand some of the work done on developing Indigenous evaluation approaches and culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation practices supported by EvalIndigenous.

- Brief report on EvalIndigenous mission in Sri Lanka (08 November 2018) by Serge Eric Yakeu and John Njovu.
- 10 Questions Indigenous Communities Should Ask Evaluators by EvalIndigenous Network.
- Indigenous African Voices from Kenya (2022) by EvalIndigenous Network.
- EvalIndigenous origin story: Effective practices within local contexts to inform the field and practice of evaluation (2020) by Larry Bremner and Nicole Bowman.
- Final Protocol-Indigenous African Ethical Protocol for Evaluations (26 January 2021) by Dr. Awuor Ponge.
- Case Study on Rathugala Non-Commercialized Indigenous Community in Sri Lanka (09 November 2020) by Sri Lanka Evaluation Association.

2) ATLAS Survey

APEA worked closely with EvalIndigenous on establishing a web-based directory of Indigenous evaluators (Atlas project) to enable evaluation commissioners and contractors to locate local evaluation expertise in the Asia Pacific Region (Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands). The purpose of this survey was to build an online directory and gather information about the experiences of evaluators working in Indigenous contexts in the Asia Pacific Region. The survey was sent through multiple Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs) and EvalYouth chapters and shared through social media. The information gathered in this survey also fed into the creation of this toolkit. A copy of the survey questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix A.

3) Fieldwork

The research team also conducted primary data collection through interviews, focus group discussions, and observation in selected areas in Sri Lanka and the Philippines as shown in Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2.

Table 1: Description of Study Locations

Location	Description
Dambana, Sri Lanka	Dambana is located in the Badulla District, Uva Province of Sri Lanka. There are 746 Indigenous community members who live in Dambana. 196 families have both parents who are Indigenous to Dambana, and 152 families have one Indigenous parent. ⁹
Rathugala, Sri Lanka	Rathugala is located in the Monaragala District, Uva Province of Sri Lanka. A total of 258 Indigenous people reside in this community. There are about 26 families where both parents are Indigenous, and 28 families, where one parent is Indigenous. ¹⁰
Pollebedda, Sri Lanka	Pollebedda is located in the Ampara District, Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. A total of 300 families live in this community. The majority of these families have one parent who is Indigenous.
Sta Fe, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines	The Municipality of Sta. Fe is located in the mountainous province of Nueva Vizcaya and home to the protected ancestral domain and the Indigenous tribe of the Ikalahan.

⁹ Data provided by the Grama Niladari of Dambana.

¹⁰ Data provided by the Grama Niladari of Rathugala.

Study Locations

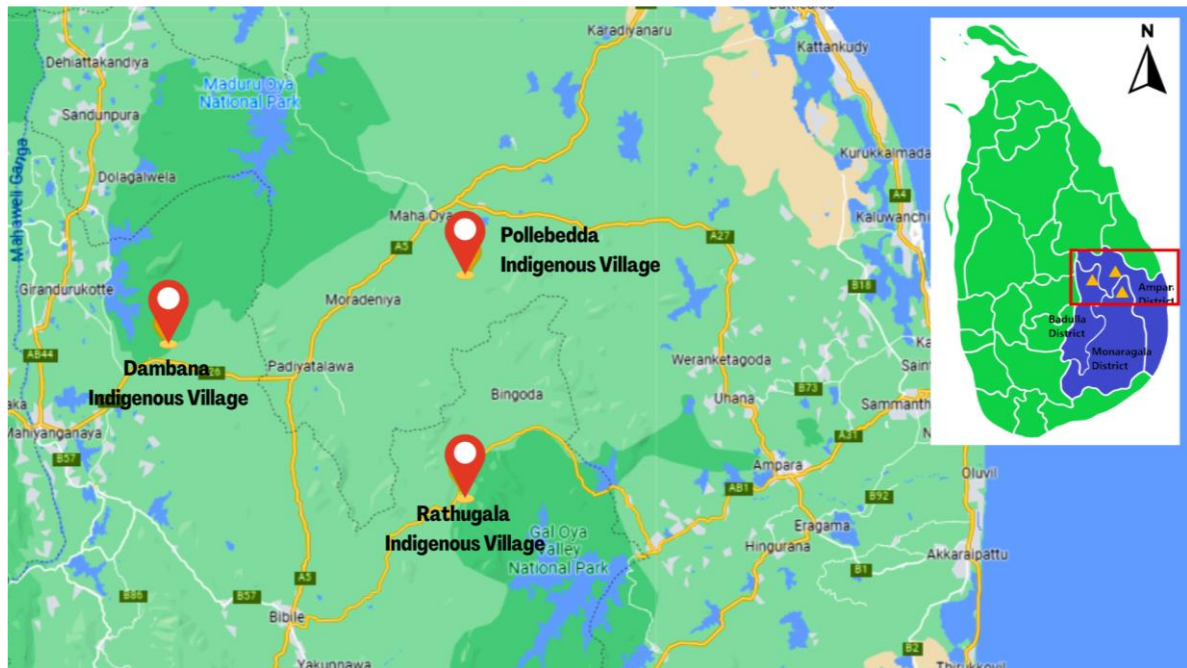


Figure 1: Study Locations in Sri Lanka

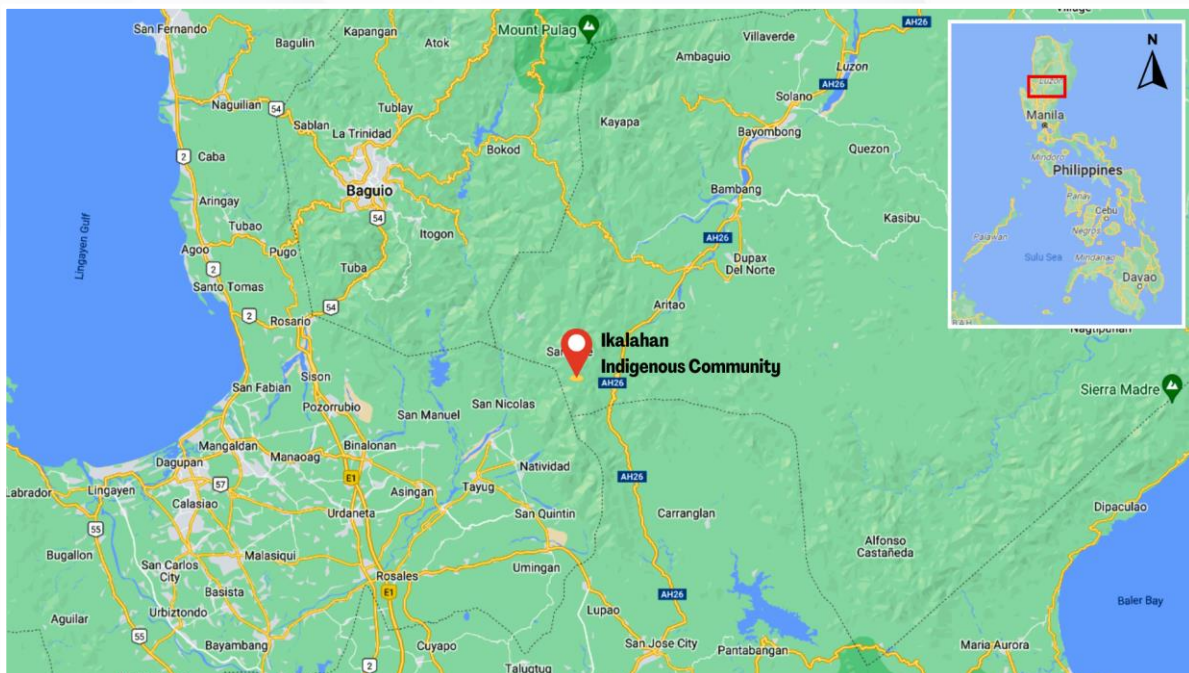


Figure 2: Study Locations in the Philippines

To learn more and understand the experiences and insights about Indigenous approaches and culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation practices, seventeen (17) interviews and five (5) focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted (See Appendix B and C). These were inclusive of all ages and gender. The informed consent form and interview protocols used for this study can be viewed in Appendix D.

To amplify Indigenous evaluation practice, [written and audio-visual content for the EvalIndigenous and APEA social media \(e.g., YouTube channel\) and website](#) were curated based on the interviews. These were leveraged to highlight the importance of culturally responsive evaluations practices and further amplify the voices of Indigenous knowledge holders and Indigenous evaluators in the Asia Pacific Region.

Data collection with the Ikalahan Tribe in the Philippines also involved the observation of decision-making, discourse, dialogue, conflict resolution, and adjudication activities unique to the tribe. This included the observation of a two-day dialogue between the elders and youth on self-determined development projects, and a transect walk within the residential area of the ancestral domain, including tours on their heritage and tourism sites. Indigenous cultural rituals were also observed, including Indigenous wedding practices and dances.

Limitations

This research does not aim to capture the rich diversity of Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific Region and the intricate dynamics within these contexts. It should be noted that fieldwork was only conducted in selected Indigenous communities in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. Thus, examples and quotes used to illustrate principles and/or protocols are mainly from these communities and are tagged properly throughout the report. Additionally, survey respondents were not spread out across the region. As such, experiences shared are only limited to the countries and communities they have worked with.

Nonetheless, we hope that the principles we found to be common with the communities we visited and the sharing of evaluators who have worked with Indigenous communities will spark further discussions around the need for culturally responsive evaluations and culturally responsive Indigenous evaluations in the Asia Pacific region.



Focus on: Indigenous Communities in Sri Lanka and the Philippines in the Asia Pacific Region

Asia Pacific Region is the home to around 260 million Indigenous peoples which is more than 70 percent of the global Indigenous population¹¹. Based on Figure 3, China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan have the country-wise largest number of Indigenous populations in the region. India has over 700 ethnic groups identified as Indigenous communities while China has around 55 ethnic nationalities. Other than these four, all the other countries in the Asia Pacific Region have Indigenous populations which are a considerable percentage of each countries' total population.

The Indigenous population in the Asia Pacific Region is rich with a diversity of ecological and cultural wisdom that can provide insight to modern day socio-economic issues in the region. However, as natural ecosystems across the region are threatened from unsustainable human activity, so are the Indigenous people who are closest to it.

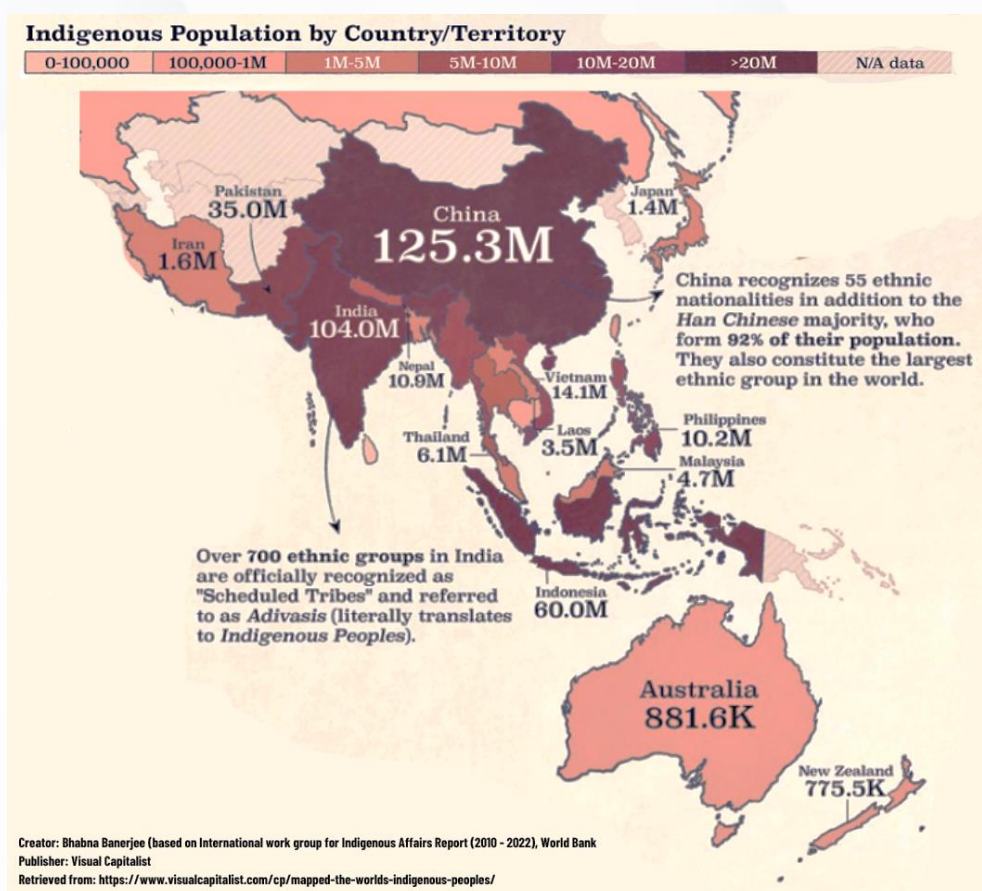


Figure 3. Indigenous Population in Asia Pacific

¹¹ FAO (2018). Indigenous peoples in the Asia Pacific Region. Retrieved from <https://www.fao.org/3/ca2045en/ca2045en.pdf>

I The Indigenous Community of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, a South Asian Island nation, is home to a complex tapestry of cultures and ethnicities. The Indigenous people occupy a distinct place among its thriving communities. These Indigenous people, known collectively as 'Veddas', have a distinct cultural legacy and ancestral ties to the island. The Veddas, who are said to be the Indigenous inhabitants of Sri Lanka, have a history dating back thousands of years. They are thought to be descended from the island's first hunter-gatherer populations. However, due to circumstances such as colonization and encroachment on their ancestral areas, the Veddas' population and power has diminished through time.¹²



Traditional Vedda territories were primarily concentrated in the remote and forested regions of the central and eastern parts of Sri Lanka. These areas, including the Pollebedda, Padawala, Bakinigasduwa, Dambana, Bulughadena, Henebedda and Rathugala are known for their dense jungles, mountains, and river valleys, which have provided the Veddas with a suitable environment for their hunting and gathering lifestyle.¹³

While the Veddas of Sri Lanka are most generally linked with the country's inland forests and mountains, it is vital to recognize the existence of a separate group known as the Coastal

¹² De Alwis, M. (2003). *The Veddas of Sri Lanka: An Account of Their History, Culture, and Ancient Scripts*. Vijitha Yapa Publications. Selvanayagam, S. (2012). Being and becoming Indigenous in Sri Lanka: A case study of Vedda identity. *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 168(2), 265-282. Dilmah Conservation (n.d.) Indigenous communities in Sri Lanka: The Veddas, 22-35.

¹³ Dharmadasa, K.N.O., & Samarasinghe, S.W.R. de A. (1990). *The Vanishing Aborigines: Sri Lanka's Veddas in Transition*. International Centre for Ethnic Studies Series: 2. Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd.

Veddas. These Indigenous people have historically occupied Sri Lanka's coastal regions, adding to the Vedda cultural landscape's richness. The Coastal Veddas are mostly found along the Eastern Province's shore, including the districts of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Ampara. Their traditional ranges include sandy beaches, lagoons, mangrove forests, and estuaries. These distinct biological settings have influenced the Coastal Vedda way of life and traditional livelihoods, which revolve around fishing, farming, and gathering coastal materials.¹⁴

The Sri Lankan Indigenous community has a distinct cultural identity that is reflected in their language, music, dance, and spiritual traditions. Veddaham, the language of the Veddas, is an Austroasiatic language with a distinct grammatical structure. Their traditional music and dance styles, such as the Vannam and Raban Padha, show their close relationship with nature as well as their hunting and gathering lifestyle. Spiritual beliefs rooted in animism and ancestral veneration are woven into their cultural fabric.¹⁵

Despite their cultural importance, the Veddas confront several threats to their way of life. Modern development projects' encroachment on their ancestral grounds, deforestation, and displacement have all affected their customary livelihoods. Other issues experienced by the Indigenous Community of Sri Lanka include economic marginalization, limited access to education and healthcare, and social prejudice.

Efforts have been made to conserve the Indigenous community of Sri Lanka's cultural history and to empower their identities. Vedda rights, education, healthcare, and cultural preservation are all promoted by organizations such as the Vedda Foundation and Sarvodaya.¹⁶ These groups work with community leaders to document traditional knowledge, rituals, and customs so that future generations might benefit from them. In addition, initiatives such as cultural festivals and tourist projects have tried to bring Vedda culture to a wider audience while also offering economic prospects for the community. These efforts not only help to preserve their legacy, but also enable the Veddas to be proud of their heritage and active participants in defining their future.

The Veddas, Sri Lanka's Indigenous community, play an important role in the island's cultural richness and legacy. Despite the obstacles, they are working hard to preserve their traditions and strengthen their identities. It is critical to provide ongoing assistance and recognition to maintain the survival and flourishing of this unique Indigenous group.

¹⁴ Dilmah Conservation (n.d.) Indigenous communities in Sri Lanka: The Veddas, 22-35.

¹⁵ De Alwis, M. (2003). The Veddas of Sri Lanka: An Account of Their History, Culture, and Ancient Scripts. Vijitha Yapa Publications. Selvanayagam, S. (2012). Being and becoming Indigenous in Sri Lanka: A case study of Vedda identity. *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 168(2), 265-282.

¹⁶ Vedda Foundation. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.veddafoundation.org/>
Sarvodaya. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.sarvodaya.org/>

I The Indigenous Community of Philippines

The Ikalahan Community of Northern Luzon

The Ikalahans (meaning “people of the forest”) are Indigenous people belonging to the Kalanguya tribe who live in the Cordillera and Caraballo mountains in northern Luzon, Philippines.¹⁷ They are one of the numerous ethnic groups found in the northern region of the main island of Luzon in the Philippines.¹⁸



The Kalanguya-Ikalahan tribe resides within the Ikalahan ancestral domain. The domain spans 38,000 ha in Nueva Vizcaya and around 10,000 ha in Nueva Ecija, and it includes the Kalahan Forest Reserve. The area, being entirely mountainous, receives rainfall from 3,000 to 5,000 mm per year. The majority of the region is covered with forest, largely made up of dipterocarp species, although pine makes up the majority of the western edge. A large portion of the east is barren due to logging done by outsiders decades ago.¹⁹

¹⁷ Rice, D. (1 April 2008). The search for abundant life. *Anthrowatch.org*. Retrieved from <https://anthropologywatch.blogspot.com/2008/04/search-for-abundant-life.html>

¹⁸ de Luna, C. C., Garcia, J. E., & Pulhin, J. M. (2019). The Kalahan Educational Foundation: On the Ground Initiative for Forest Conservation and Culture Preservation. FFTC Agricultural Platform. Retrieved from <https://ap.fftc.org.tw/article/1607>

¹⁹ Villamor, G. B., & Lasco, R. D. (2006). Case Study 7 The Ikalahan Ancestral Domain, the Philippines. *Community Forest Management as a Carbon Mitigation Option: Case Studies*, 43–50. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/1c68c240-d84b-3a86-a8ca-241116c0f991?seq=1>

The Ikalahans can be traced from a tiny group of hunters—probably less than 300 individuals—who lived in a high valley encircled by pine and mossy forests during the 14th century. They supplemented their food with cultivated and wild vegetables from the slopes as well as flora and wildlife from the Agno River, which raced through the valley's middle. Their way of life was comfortable, but the valley was tiny, and population pressures forced them to look for new areas to reside.²⁰ Due to various reasons, these groups of people kept on dispersing towards various areas of Pangasinan, Baguio, Nueva Vizcaya, Nueva Ecija and other provinces where they are located at present.²¹

The ceremonies and practices of the Ikalahans make *Li-teng* as their top priority. *Li-teng* is an Ikalahan term that has no appropriate English, Greek, Latin, or Ilocano equivalents though it has a Hebrew term for it - shallom. An 'abundant life' is the English translation that is most accurate, although the Greeks typically interpreted it inadvertently as peace.²²

To ensure their *li-teng*, the Ikalahan people favored the remoteness and plentiful food supply of the forest. In the Tinek area, the Ikalahan had cleared camote (sweet potato) fields and constructed *payaw* and *bineng*. In addition, they built sturdy homes and irrigation systems. While the men took care of their families and went hunting for wild meat, the women oversaw the agriculture. But when their *li-teng* was threatened by violence, the Ikalahan people didn't hesitate to leave their homes in Tinek and moved to other areas.²³

In 1970, they learned of another threat to their *li-teng*, which could really turn bad. A court in San Nicolas, Pangasinan granted two politicians from the lowland's rights to roughly 200 hectares of Ikalahan ancestral lands in Malico and Salacsac. These areas, together with another 6,000 hectares, were to be used by the Philippine president to build a summer retreat for his friends.²⁴ In an endeavor to grab the land from the Ikalahan, relatives of prominent government officials exploited fake land titles.

Ikalahan leaders were made aware of the situation and knew that the threat was something not to be taken lightly. The Ikalahans ultimately made the decision to initiate a lawsuit in order to persuade the government to acknowledge their claims to ancestral lands. The government tried to have the case dismissed, but the Ikalahan people won a judicial win in 1972. The government's efforts to promote the area as a holiday destination were eventually abandoned after the court annulled the lowlanders' titles.²⁵

The Ikalahans' triumph cleared the way for the creation of the Kalahan Forest Reserve and the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) No. 1 between the government and the Ikalahan tribe.

²⁰ Rice, D. (1 April 2008). The search for abundant life. *Anthrowatch.org*. Retrieved from <https://anthropologywatch.blogspot.com/2008/04/search-for-abundant-life.html>

²¹ *ibid*

²² *ibid*

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ de Luna, C. C., Garcia, J. E., & Pulhin, J. M. (2019). The Kalahan Educational Foundation: On the Ground Initiative for Forest Conservation and Culture Preservation. FFTC Agricultural Platform. Retrieved from <https://ap.fttc.org.tw/article/1607>

“The MOA legitimized the prior vested rights of the Ikalahan tribe over their ancestral lands, recognizing their claim and assured that they will not be driven away from their ancestral lands and that they were given the complete control and authority to manage the land and its resources. And in return, the Ikalahans will take responsibility for protecting the watershed.”²⁶

Following the Ikalahans' triumph, the Philippine government took the lead in implementing community-based forest management techniques, especially to reforest areas that had been logged. The issuing of MOA No. 1 served as the foundation for the 1993 delineation of ancestral lands and domain claims through Administrative Order No. 2 Series of 1993, and it later served as the inspiration for the 1997 Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) Republic Act No. 8371.²⁷

Challenges Faced by Indigenous Communities in Asia Pacific



According to the responses provided by the members of Indigenous communities, Indigenous leaders and Indigenous evaluators interviewed for this research, the following are some of the main challenges faced by Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific region. These challenges can vary in their significance and impact across different contexts and regions within the Asia Pacific, but they represent common themes and struggles faced by Indigenous communities throughout the region.

²⁶ de Luna, C. C., Garcia, J. E., & Pulhin, J. M. (2019). The Kalahan Educational Foundation: On the Ground Initiative for Forest Conservation and Culture Preservation. FFTC Agricultural Platform. Retrieved from <https://ap.fttc.org.tw/article/1607>

²⁷ *ibid*

1. **Land rights and displacement:** Due to urbanization, infrastructure development and implementation of new policies, Indigenous communities often face formidable challenges concerning their land rights. These challenges manifest in the form of denied ancestral domain rights and forced displacement from their native lands, profoundly affecting their way of life, including their cultural ties and livelihoods.

Living closer to the town is a major disturbance and, in addition to that, today hunting and going to the forest are prohibited actions by the law

- Indigenous community member of Sri Lanka

Another emerging challenge confronting Indigenous communities centers on the transfer of land rights to non-Indigenous entities, often driven by financial interests. This not only undermines the historical and cultural significance of these lands but also diminishes the ancestral lands passed down to future generations of Indigenous people. Consequently, this process exacerbates various other challenges faced by Indigenous communities in the region.

For instance, in the 1980s, the Mahaweli project in Sri Lanka displaced the Veddas from their ancestral lands to an area closer to Dambana village. In addition to the loss of their ancestral lands, the national restriction on hunting and gathering activities in forest left a significant impact on the cultural connections and livelihood of the Vedda community.

2. **Cultural erosion and assimilation:** The preservation of values, practices, and languages of Indigenous groups faces continual threats from commercialization, economic pressures, and the influence of outside cultures. In addition, efforts to promote local culture and knowledge to the younger generation in Indigenous communities are often impeded by various constraints such as limited access to resources and capacity gaps in effective knowledge transfer.

We can't speak our (Indigenous) language... I study in Sinhala and I can't speak our (Vedda) language.

- Indigenous community member of Sri Lanka

3. **Limited access to resources and services:** Indigenous communities often face barriers in accessing public and private services such as education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. This leads to socio-economic disparities and inequalities and further perpetuates cycles of poverty and marginalization contributing to their struggle for sustainable development and well-being.

4. **Lack of participation and representation:** Power dynamics have shifted over time, reducing the decision-making authority of Indigenous leaders over their ancestral lands. Indigenous communities are also often marginalized and underrepresented in decision-making and development planning processes, including in evaluation. Their capacity to effectively address their particular needs and concerns is hampered by this lack of participation.

The law states that the Indigenous people have the priority rights to utilize the natural resources within their ancestral domain. This is what we are trying to invoke but the government insists on overseeing our lands and resources. We used to be able to manage our own lands. We have registered foresters for agro-forestry and proper land management, including management of permits for logging and kaingin (slash-and-burn). Now, our rights [to govern our lands] are being questioned

- Indigenous elder in the Philippines

5. **Climate change and environmental degradation:** Climate change disproportionately affects Indigenous populations, heightening their vulnerability and jeopardizing their livelihoods and cultural heritage. Their traditional way of life and relationship to the environment are threatened by deforestation, shifting weather patterns, resource degradation and modern development.
6. **Discrimination and marginalization:** Indigenous groups frequently experience systematic oppression, violence, discrimination and marginalization. Their rights and interests are frequently neglected, and their ability to protect their land is often undermined by denial of participation and representation in policy and decision making processes.

For example, responses from the Indigenous community members in Sri Lanka indicate that their community is often seen as different and have had to change their culture to adapt to society and avoid derogatory terms. Their rights and interests are frequently neglected, leading to systematic oppression and limited opportunities for development and well-being.

We are seen as different in Sri Lanka. Hence, we have been forced to change our culture to adopt society.

- Indigenous community member

Feature Story: *Thala Bandaralage Indrawathi - A Voice for an Indigenous Community's Struggles*

Thala Bandaralage Indrawathi, a dedicated member of an Indigenous community in Sri Lanka, shares her story of resilience and determination. Living in a village with approximately 475 families, Indrawathi highlights the hardships faced by her community. Despite promises from the government to provide farming lands in "Rambuken Oya," many families, including hers, have not received the support they desperately need. This dire situation has resulted in their inability to send children to school and provide adequate food. The rising cost of essential items like rice has also made everyday life a struggle.



Decision-Making and the Community's Unity

Within the Indigenous community, decisions are made through a collaborative process. Both men and women actively engage with the community's leader and deputy leader to resolve issues. In critical situations, the involvement of local authorities, such as the police, is sought. The decision-making process emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and unity among community members, ensuring that everyone has a voice.

Overcoming Challenges and Pursuing Initiatives

The community faces several challenges, including economic issues, inadequate water supply, and a lack of proper housing. To address these concerns, various initiatives have been undertaken. Thala Bandaralage Indrawathi sheds light on the community's efforts to seek support from government offices and the Attorney General's office. Though promises have been made, the delays in receiving assistance have left many community members in dire conditions. The community appeals for more authorized officers to address their urgent matters effectively.

Studies and Unfulfilled Promises

While the community has not participated in formal evaluation studies, they have encountered instances where promises of support were unfulfilled. Two foreigners once visited the village, documenting traditional dances and customs. Despite assurances of assistance, no support materialized. However, the community showcased their traditions, including hunting, honey extraction, and the captivating "KiriKoraha" dance. Additionally, campus students engaged in various programs, primarily participated by men, providing limited benefits to the community.

Longing for Change and Recognition

Unfortunately, the community has yet to experience significant changes in their lives due to evaluation programs or external support. Their resilience remains their primary source of survival, as they continue to rely on their own hard work. They express a need for evaluators to respect their culture and involve the community's leaders in planning and executing initiatives. They urge visitors and evaluators to recognize their customs and traditions while providing adequate notice before engaging with the community.

Striving for Equality and Inclusion

Indrawathi highlights the discrimination faced by the Indigenous community, both in public places and within society. They face differential treatment from some Sinhala villagers and are often marginalized. A plea is made for a responsible officer to address their issues effectively and to be treated with dignity and equality. Additionally, they stress the importance of inclusion in funeral societies, as exclusion can lead to a lack of consideration for their future well-being.

A Call for Support and Recognition

In conclusion, Thala Bandaralage Indrawathi calls upon compassionate individuals and organizations to support her community in their time of need. The community longs for basic necessities, such as food and shelter, and seeks recognition for their unique cultural identity. By providing assistance and treating the Indigenous community with respect and fairness, we can work together towards a more equitable and inclusive society.

Focus on: Experiences of Indigenous Evaluators and Evaluators Working with Indigenous Communities in Asia Pacific

This section provides a glimpse of the motivations and challenges of working with Indigenous communities shared by Indigenous evaluators and evaluators working with Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific Region who responded to the Atlas survey.

Joys of working with Indigenous communities



Engaging with Indigenous communities offers a remarkable journey of understanding and partnership. When working with them, it is imperative for the evaluation team to delve comprehensively into the core values and principles that define Indigenous Peoples, transcending conventional evaluation theories and practices. This engagement is an opportunity to gain profound insights into their knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

Distinctive in their perspectives on events, reality interpretation, information sharing, and decision-making, many Indigenous communities exude openness and a welcoming spirit. Depending on their language and cultural characteristics, their beliefs and attitudes vary. Accordingly, they can be considered as the eye openers, in the way they bring new perspectives to the many challenges faced within their communities and the alternative solutions they propose to issues.

Working with the Indigenous community in my country is a joyous experience. It is a privilege to be able to work with a community that has such a rich and unique culture and history. The Indigenous people of my country have a deep connection to the land and a strong sense of community. They are passionate about preserving their culture and traditions, and it is inspiring to witness their commitment to their heritage.

- Evaluator from Afghanistan

Indigenous people deeply value their heritage. We must support Indigenous groups in preserving their language, culture, and tradition. Working with them not only offers valuable learning experiences but also allows us the privilege of working alongside the world's oldest people and being a part of preserving them in many ways, especially their language and culture.

Evaluators always need to be contextualized within cultures and languages. The real joy is to see how people see the change happening rather than trying to find the change that is expected from a non-community perspective.

Working alongside the Indigenous communities in my country is an immensely rewarding endeavor, yielding profound personal satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. Indigenous communities exhibit remarkable positivity, sincerity, and openness toward development interventions, expressing genuine contentment with even modest contributions, such as the introduction of technology, knowledge, and skills.

- Evaluator from Nepal

This journey entails a profound comprehension of local contexts, accompanied by the acquisition of new wisdom. For some evaluators, working with Indigenous communities who live in isolated areas, offers insights into their aboriginal and socially secluded circumstances.

Working with the Indigenous community as an evaluator brings immense joy and fulfillment. Their cultural richness and diversity provide a unique opportunity to learn about customs, traditions, and art forms. Interactions with the community members are joyful and welcoming, creating a positive working atmosphere

-Evaluator from Bangladesh

Varying according to their language and cultural nuances, beliefs, and attitudes, Indigenous communities invariably act as catalysts for fresh perspectives and alternative solutions to multifaceted challenges. As evaluators, this interaction is a conduit for imbibing invaluable lessons from the Indigenous community, fostering an enhanced grasp of their culture, values, and way of life. Documenting their practices and beliefs further enriches this experience, nurturing a more profound comprehension of their needs.

“ The main joy working with the Indigenous community in Sri Lanka is raising awareness on the problems they are facing and advocating for their rights. Also, learning about their culture and way of life has been interesting as well.”

- Evaluator from Sri Lanka

Endowed with trustworthiness, self-motivation, and diligence, these communities are resolute in their pursuit of learning and the betterment of their livelihoods. The role of being a conduit for the voices of Indigenous communities is a privilege and a source of contentment.

“ As an Indigenous person myself, I'm always honoured to be a part of an evaluation project that affects the Fiji Indigenous people. It always provide me with an opportunity for renewed appreciation of my culture, traditions, knowledge systems, governing structure and the overall way of life. It's often a very humbling yet proud experience and it also reminds me of why i do what i do: for the overall wellbeing of the iTaukei.

- Indigenous Evaluator from Fiji



Challenges Faced by Evaluators Working with Indigenous Communities/ Indigenous Evaluators

Establishing trust and cultivating relationships within Indigenous communities can prove challenging for evaluators, primarily due to cultural and language barriers, particularly when the evaluator is not a member of the Indigenous community.



Different Indigenous communities have different languages; hence, communication becomes difficult without translators. The language barrier makes it difficult for evaluators to build trusting relationships with Indigenous community members. Additionally, when evaluators depend on translators, sometimes there might be miscommunication if the translators do not translate what community members say. Further, if the translator does not have a broad picture about the evaluation, they might miss important information when translating.

Indigenous communities often also lack awareness about the field of evaluation. Thus, evaluators need to describe for them the importance of conducting evaluation studies and how these may help improve their lives. When talking to the Indigenous community, evaluation must be explained in simple and easy to understand terms or language to avoid fear and confusion. Even when evaluation is explained, some community members, particularly women, may be reluctant to openly express their views due to cultural and religious barriers.

The challenge of accessing some Indigenous communities due to their remote locations and inadequate infrastructure poses a significant obstacle for evaluators. Furthermore, this accessibility issue is a contributing factor to the exclusion of these communities from the evaluation process, including in data collection efforts. Additionally, the bureaucratic process

required to obtain approval from relevant government authorities to visit these Indigenous communities further compounds the problem.

In certain instances, Indigenous communities have been accustomed to receiving donations, material goods, or monetary assistance from evaluators, researchers and other visitors in exchange for information. As such, some may be less inclined to participate in discussions without these incentives. However, when offered such support, their enthusiasm for engaging with the research team becomes evident, and occasionally, they may even expect more assistance beyond what they have received. This can pose challenges for field activities, although it is important to note that this is not a universal situation. There are Indigenous communities who support and engage in research without expecting such benefits.

| Feature Story: Empowering Indigenous Voices Through Evaluation

In the world of evaluation and community development, Kanchan Lama stands as a beacon of change, dedicated to uplifting the voices of Indigenous communities. As the Chairperson of the Community of Evaluators of Nepal (CoE-Nepal), Kanchan Lama has been passionately working with Indigenous communities since the early '90s. Her journey as an Indigenous evaluator has taken her across borders, collaborating with various Indigenous peoples (IPs) and communities, making a significant impact on the ground.



Kanchan Lama's journey as an evaluator began in 1993, but her dedication to Indigenous communities dates back to 1995 when she first engaged with the Thaman community in Nepal. Over the years, she expanded her reach, working with Hazaric communities in Afghanistan and Banjari communities in Pakistan. Her extensive work also includes collaborations with the Tamang, Gurung, and Limbu communities in Nepal.

Why Work with Indigenous Communities?

Kanchan's motivation to work with Indigenous communities stems from their wealth of knowledge and skills. She believes that by engaging with these communities, she not only learns from them but empowers herself to become wiser. Furthermore, Kanchan recognizes the marginalization of Indigenous peoples in the development process. She is driven by the desire to include their voices in local governance, aligning with her country's national interests.

... the reason I want to work with them is to learn from them by knowing them and empower myself to become wiser... Indigenous communities are very much marginalized in the development process.... Indigenous people's voices can be included in the local governance that benefits our country's national interest.

Community Perception of Evaluations

Kanchan acknowledges that Indigenous communities initially approach evaluations with hesitation. However, through participatory tools and a focus on the community's interests, they gradually embrace the process as a means of self-improvement. Women tend to accept evaluations more readily, while some men remain skeptical, citing past experiences.

...these voices were very important in developing the evaluation report and to inform the policy makers...

...they should really consider the needs of local communities.

Challenges in Indigenous Evaluations

Based on her extensive work, Kanchan identifies three major challenges faced by evaluators when working with Indigenous communities: difficulty engaging women, language barriers, and establishing trust as an outsider. She stresses the importance of understanding the community's context and ensuring the participation of the right respondents.

Effective Methodologies for Indigenous Evaluations

One of the key takeaways from Kanchan's experience is the importance of participatory evaluation tools. She emphasizes the need to build trust with Indigenous communities, where women often open up about family issues, while men focus on concerns related to natural resources. Kanchan's impactful work on evaluating a hydro project's social and economic impact on Limbu communities in Nepal highlighted the significance of considering cultural values in development projects.

Kanchan Lama's toolbox for effective Indigenous evaluations includes storytelling, participatory mapping, and resource mapping. These methodologies help bring out crucial information while respecting the community's culture and beliefs.

.....Understanding the context of the community is also very important. We need to understand all kinds of the dimensions of the communities.

“ Sometimes I feel the real participants who should be in the evaluation, do not come to the interviews. So ensuring the participation of the right respondents is also a big challenge ”

Ethical Considerations in Indigenous Evaluations

Ethics play a pivotal role in Kanchan's work. She emphasizes the need to respect Indigenous culture, beliefs, and religious practices. Seeking permission, ensuring appropriate time and place, and separating men and women during evaluations are some of the ethical principles she adheres to.

For Kanchan, these ethical principles are vital to building trust and empowering respondents. She believes that evaluations should be a collaborative process where the community members feel ownership and control over their development.

“ To build up the trust and empower the respondents to own the process that they benefit from the evaluations. They feel the ownership of the process..... making the respondent into a controller of the whole system and evaluator become just the facilitator and creating an enabling environment is very important in all kinds of evaluations, especially in Indigenous evaluations as most of the time they are marginalized and left out. ”

Kanchan Lama's dedication to Indigenous evaluations is not just a profession; it's a mission to empower marginalized voices, preserve cultural heritage, and drive positive change. Her work exemplifies the transformative power of evaluation when rooted in respect, trust, and a genuine commitment to the well-being of Indigenous communities.



Protocols and Guidelines for Conducting Indigenous Evaluations: What has been done so far?

Core Ethical Principles for Evaluators in the African Context²⁸

- **Credibility of Accountability Mechanisms:** Any external Evaluator should ensure that they establish credible accountability mechanisms appropriate to the local context, with consideration given to social, cultural and gender norms that may affect reporting.
- **Meaningful Consultation and Participation:** In order to ensure the participation of the Indigenous communities, meaningful consultations with individuals and groups should make efforts to fully include all groups and sub-groups, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised. Participation is not only that Indigenous peoples and local communities should be invited to participate in a project, they should also be involved in the design process of the evaluation in order to get mutual benefits.
- **Curb Misappropriation of Indigenous Knowledge:** Measures should be established to curb the misappropriation of Indigenous Technical Knowledge to prevent the misuse of the local knowledge by the Evaluators, without the authorization of the holders of the knowledge.
- **Respect for Diversity:** The External Evaluators should recognise the diversity of the people and the contexts in which they work. The need to obtain feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, not leaving behind the most vulnerable.
- **Promote Respect to Rights:** Evaluations should promote respect and adherence to Indigenous rights and rights of the local communities. Evaluators should be sensitive to the cultural and social environment of all stakeholders and conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to this environment.
- **Enhance Individual Sense of Agency:** The evaluations should as much as is practically possible, enhance the individual's sense of agency, as well as their ownership of the issues raised, and the solutions found.
- **Respect for Indigenous Knowledge:** The evaluators should recognise the specialist knowledge of particular community members and their potential contributions to the research endeavour and involve such persons wherever possible and appropriate.
- **Respect for Confidentiality:** The Evaluation Team must ensure confidentiality is respected at all times. The Evaluation should be guided by the principle of “do no harm” so as not to expose the respondents.

²⁸ Ponge, A. (26 January 2021). Final-Protocol-Indigenous African Ethical Protocol for Evaluations. EvalIndigenous.

- **Prior Informed Consent:** The Evaluator(s) should at all times make sure they obtain prior informed consent of the local community through their leadership. They should obtain this after making the case by presenting the purpose of the evaluation, the methodology, and the expected benefits both for the organization and the local community. Communication on this, should be made in a language that is understandable to the local community, and they should be given ample time to make a decision on this. Informed consent may be sought from a legally authorised representative if a potential research subject is incapable of giving informed consent for example children or persons with intellectual impairment). However, the involvement of such populations must fulfill the requirement that they stand to benefit from the research or evaluation outcome.
- **Inclusivity:** Evaluation should involve the Indigenous African people in all levels of the evaluation, from design phase right through to analysis and communicating findings. It should include stakeholders in the identification of the core focus and questions an evaluation. Evaluators have the responsibility to understand and respect differences among participants, such as differences in their culture, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and ethnicity, and to account for potential implications of these differences when planning, conducting, analyzing, and reporting evaluations.
- **Trust:** Build trust with participants by demonstrating to the local communities, the value and benefit of the information they will share as part of the evaluation. Working on the principle of trust, the Evaluator should strive to gain an understanding of, and treat fairly, the range of perspectives and interests that individuals and groups bring to the evaluation, including those that are not usually included or are oppositional.
- **Reciprocity, mutual benefit, equitable sharing:** The evaluation purpose provided by the evaluation commissioner should ensure that the community's purpose for the evaluation is included. The evaluator should negotiate with the local community, ways in which the evaluation could consider strengthening their capacity. This can include, but not limited to mentoring, peer coaching, reflective practice and learning circles. Participants giving their information to evaluators should reap some benefit. The findings of the evaluation should be made available and where possible presented to participants, providing information of benefit to them and their wider community.
- **Community-led Evaluations:** These should address the needs of the community. Local Evaluators should be the leaders of the Evaluation process and advise the Evaluation Team on the community needs for the evaluation.
- **Positive Working Relationships:** Evaluations should seek to promote positive working relationships that enhance or build mutual respect, trust and cooperation between the local communities and the donors or project implementers.

Community-Up Approach to Defining Evaluator Conduct²⁹

- Respect people-allow them to define their own space and meet on their own terms
- Meet people face to face, and also be a face that is known to and seen within a community
- Look and listen (and then maybe speak)-develop an understanding in order to find a place from which to speak
- Share, host, and be generous
- Be cautious-be politically astute, culturally safe, and reflective about insider/outsider status
- Do not trample on the “mana” or dignity of a person
- Be humble-do not flaunt your knowledge; find ways of sharing it



²⁹ Cram, F., Kennedy, V., Paipa, K., Pipi, K. & Wehipeihana, N. (2015). Being culturally responsive through Kaupapa Maori evaluation. In S. Hood, R. Hopson & H. Frierson (Eds.), *Continuing the journey to reposition culture and cultural context in evaluation theory and practice*. For the Evaluation and Society Book Series. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. pp. 289-312.

Indigenous Evaluations: Lesson Learned from the Asia Pacific Region

Based on data gathered from the survey, interviews, focus group discussions and observation with selected Indigenous communities and evaluators from Asia Pacific, we have identified key lessons that evaluators and researchers need to keep in mind when working with Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific region.

Lesson 1: Honor and respect cultural traditions and norms of the Indigenous community

Evaluators working with the Indigenous communities need to understand, honor, and respect the cultural norms, traditions, and practices of these communities. As each community is unique and has its own distinct set of culture, language, ways of life, and traditions, evaluators need to consider these intricacies when planning evaluations. It is also important to recognize the enormous diversity of Indigenous communities in each country.

As previously mentioned, Indigenous communities in Asia Pacific have been marginalized and are losing their rights to their lands due to economic development. Thus, evaluators working with Indigenous communities must also respect their rights to their lands and worldview. It is important to take time to listen to Indigenous communities and learn from them instead of imposing our own ideologies and views. Evaluators should show genuine respect to the communities' beliefs and traditional practices, build trust and establish a comfortable talking environment with Indigenous communities.

For instance, in Sri Lanka, as a sign of respect, evaluators must greet the Indigenous community members by saying "Mama Kachchak Hodamai" and this must be done while holding their hand.

“ Indigenous communities are respectable people and we need to respect them when talking to them. We should not use derogatory terms when talking to them. Actually, they are a group that is high up in Sri Lankan society and we need to honor and respect them and we should not treat them as a minority. ”

- Government Official, Sri Lanka

As an outsider, we should not judge them, or preach them. We have to be open that their practices, values, culture will be different than ours. Priorities will differ. We have to be open, understanding and responsible in how we affect the community. As we are only observers, we should not do anything which will later have problems for the project implementors.

- Indigenous Evaluator

Being friendly is very important. We do not give information or share our thoughts with egoistic people even if we know. Sometimes such people will pay a price for their behavior because when they show attitude to male members they tend to take money for the information they provide.

- Indigenous woman in Dambana

Lesson 2. Secure approval and consent from key stakeholders before the start of an evaluation or research

Securing the approval of key stakeholders is a critical step to accomplish prior to starting a research or evaluation with an Indigenous community. This does not only help ensure that evaluators adhere to ethical principles but also fosters the community's trust, acceptance and ownership of the process and results. Attention should be given to knowing and following local protocols and processes such as completing required forms from government agencies who are promoting and protecting the rights of Indigenous communities as well as seeking approval and collaborating with traditional governing structures within the community.

Prior to starting an evaluation study in an Indigenous community, one key step that evaluators need to do is visit the Indigenous community to get permission from the Indigenous community leader/s. This entails providing key information about the study such as its purpose and what the benefit/s will be for the Indigenous community, including in terms of preserving their culture and upholding their rights.

For instance, a government official and Indigenous community members who were interviewed in Sri Lanka mentioned that the Indigenous community leader must be notified before any study is conducted as they must be aware of what's going on in their community. They also shared that the evaluation team must personally visit the Indigenous community leaders' home to seek permission and approval that will be carried out with their community.

Six (6) things that Indigenous community members should ask from evaluators or researchers who are interested to do studies with their community, according to a Sri Lankan government official:

1. *What is the purpose of the study?*
2. *What is study all about?*
3. *From this study, how does it benefit the Indigenous community?*
4. *How long will this study be conducted for?*
5. *What kind of data collection methods will be used for this study?*
6. *Through collecting this data, will it harm our culture? Especially, once the report is published?*

Ethical protocols must be put in place prior to conducting the study. This includes securing informed consent for surveys and interviews and maintaining confidentiality and privacy. Evaluators must receive verbal or written consent from Indigenous community leaders and members before the start of a survey questionnaire and interviews. The informed consent should clearly explain the purpose of the study, the organization conducting the study, and the guidelines for the interview. Additionally, evaluators must maintain confidentiality of the responses given by participants during data collection and ensure that no harm is done to participants. The data also should be stored in a password protected file that is only accessible by the core evaluation team.

Lesson 3. Plan to involve the community in the evaluation process

Indigenous people/communities are concerned about the evaluation and research carried out with them and how the outcomes will impact their community. As such, it is critical to engage them throughout the whole evaluation process - from conception to dissemination. Indigenous community leaders and members should be part of the design, data collection, analysis and reporting stages. Following this process ensures that their voices are not only heard and considered but are also a vital part of the decision-making process that goes through in the evaluation - including who to approach, and timing of visits, among others. This will also help them feel a sense of ownership of the evaluation study. This will help them feel a sense of ownership of the evaluation study.

Moreover, Indigenous community members should not only be considered as respondents in evaluation studies but as part of the evaluation team and involved throughout the evaluation study. Evaluators can learn about the cultural practices, norms, and methodologies that can be used as input to the evaluation design when Indigenous people are part of the evaluation team. This will also help to build the capacity of Indigenous people, not only in the evaluation process, but also in understanding the uses of the evaluation results for the benefit of their community.

Evaluators often perceive the Indigenous community as mere respondents rather than valued members of the evaluation team. This exclusionary mindset can lead to a lack of collaboration, failing to leverage the community's expertise and experiences to enhance the evaluation process.

- Indigenous Evaluator

Lesson 4. Decolonize evaluation/research approaches and methodologies

Indigenous communities have their own knowledge systems and have their own way of measuring progress and making decisions which might be different than the Western frameworks. Hence, evaluators need to integrate the perspectives and approaches of the Indigenous community that is being studied.

When conducting evaluation studies with Indigenous communities, evaluators should consider using a participatory evaluation approach, including adapting and applying data collection methods based on Indigenous or traditional games, drawings, songs or poems.

In Sri Lanka, conducting participatory focus group discussions (FGDs) with Indigenous community members was an effective method when collecting data. But, in order to have a good discussion and to get the best answers from the community, evaluators should develop a good relationship by having informal discussions (Talking on some general topics such as their day to day lives, agriculture or livelihood, weather etc.). Further, being polite and friendly should be the basic rule for having a better discussion. Mixed FGDs (both male & females) are better when discussions are on some general questions such as livelihood, culture or traditions, but separate FGDs with men and with women should be conducted when discussing particular questions (for example, teenage pregnancies, marriages), especially when Indigenous women are not comfortable talking about such issues in front of Indigenous males.

If the FGDs are mixed, female Indigenous community members hesitate to open up. Also, if the evaluator is from the same gender, community members are more willing to talk and open up their issues, especially the women. The Indigenous women in three field sites in Sri Lanka showed different levels of engagements in FGDs. For instance, Dambana, which is the main habitat of Indigenous community in Sri Lanka, is more commercialized now. Thus, the Indigenous women in Dambana are more socialized and educated. They are more like the women in rural Sinhala communities. But when it comes to the other two field sites, Rathugala and Pollebedda it was evident that Indigenous women were reluctant to engage in the discussions. They were shy and took some time to start talking, especially the Indigenous women in Pollebedda, which is one of the most rural locations compared to the other two locations, were very shy to start talking. And one of the reasons for poor participation of women in Pollebedda, might be, because it was a mixed FGD. As a result, the following strategies below can be employed when conducting FGDs with Indigenous communities.

- Having separate FGDs with males and females even for general discussions as it will be useful to get responses from different views and angles.
- Evaluators or research team members from the same gender should facilitate the FGDs (especially for women FGDs, they are more open and willing to talk with female evaluators).

Including some simple activities in the FGDs where they can express their ideas by drawings, graphs etc. (As most of them cannot write or read it should be some kind of easy and simple). For example, Indigenous community members in Sri Lanka stated that they do not keep a record or track of their yield for agricultural crops, but they keep a note of it in their heads. However, the interviewed Indigenous community members in Sri Lanka mentioned that on national Indigenous people's day, a community council called "Wariga Sabha" takes place in order for Indigenous community to discuss the issues they face. This community council is led by the Indigenous leader and decisions are made collectively for the problems faced by the Indigenous community. Thus, this example illustrates that when evaluators are designing evaluation/research methodologies, they need to work closely with Indigenous community members to ensure that the local context and cultural practices are taken into account.



“ Evaluators must also acknowledge the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization, and work with sensitivity and respect. ”
- Indigenous Evaluator

Lesson 5. Engage Indigenous communities in dissemination of evaluation findings

Leaders from Indigenous communities shared that numerous individuals and evaluation/research teams have visited their communities to conduct interviews and gather information from them for various studies. However, more often than not, they are left in the dark about the subsequent developments and actions taken based on the gathered information. In some cases, this lack of transparency and feedback has eroded their trust in evaluators/researchers. Thus, it is of utmost importance for evaluators to keep the Indigenous community leaders and members informed about how the collected information will be used and the outcomes of these studies. By doing so, they will not only build their trust but also ensure that they feel valued and included in the evaluation process, thereby enhancing their satisfaction with the support provided.

“ The dissemination of the results should take place the way it shows that we are not forgotten and it makes us proud. Sharing the results is useful to know if steps have been taken to preserve our culture. This way, we can show these to our younger generations as well. If the results are not shared we don’t know what is written about us and our culture. ”
- Indigenous Leader, Rathugala

“ I worked as a Research Assistant for researchers who came to study our community. After they collected the data, only a few came back to explain the findings ”
- Indigenous youth leader, Philippines

After a research, there should be a validation exercise before the final write-up or printing of the research results to ensure that the information in the reports are correct. Copies of the research should also be given to the community. Most of the researchers who promised to give us a copy of their research never came back

- Indigenous leader, Philippines



10 QUESTIONS INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES SHOULD ASK EVALUATORS



When evaluators show up at your door, wanting to evaluate an initiative that's been funded in your community, you might want to ask them some of the following questions to see if they're able to work well in your community and to genuinely find out about what people in your community think about the initiative.

- 1 Who do you know in this community?**
Do the evaluators have any relationships with people in your community? Have they come with someone who can guide them in behaving respectfully? Is there someone in their team from your community?
- 2 What do you know about this community?**
Have the evaluators done 'homework' to get to know your community's cultural, historical, political context? Do they understand your worldview and how you live? Do they know what it means to be Indigenous?
- 3 Where are you from?**
Are the evaluators willing to introduce themselves and share about themselves? Do they have an understanding of how their own background might differ from and be similar to the communities?
- 4 Do you speak our language?**
How will the evaluators communicate and understand you? Do they know your language or are they reliant on interpreters? What language will the evaluation be conducted in and the evaluation report be written in?
- 5 What do you know about the history of the initiative?**
Do the evaluators know how the initiative came to be in your community and whether or not the community needed or wanted it? Do they know about the decision-making behind the initiative? If not, are they curious?
- 6 What relationship will you have with us during this evaluation?**
Are the evaluators interested in working alongside community advisors? Will they be spending time in the community, both formally (for the evaluation) and informally (getting to know the community)?
- 7 Will people in our community get work in the evaluation?**
Will funding for the evaluation be spent locally, employing community members to help collect evaluation information? How will the community members be compensated for the time spent on this evaluation?
- 8 Will we have a say in the design of the evaluation?**
Has the evaluation design already been decided, or will the community be able to have input into the evaluation design, the methods used, the people who are talked to, and the way information is collected?
- 9 Who will be analysing the evaluation findings and writing the report?**
Will the evaluators collaborate with the community to analyse and report on the evaluation findings? Will community members be involved in dissemination activities (e.g., conferences, funder meetings)?
- 10 How will you support our use of the evaluation findings?**
Will the evaluation findings be available to the community? Will the community be supported to use the findings to improve the initiative and/or to advocate for change (including more funding)?

Source: EvalIndigenous Network. 10 Questions Indigenous Communities Should Ask Evaluators

CREATING ADVISORY GROUPS FOR INDIGENOUS EVALUATIONS

Evaluators working with Indigenous communities should consider having an **advisory group** involving key project stakeholders such as Indigenous community leaders, Indigenous community members, religious leaders, and government officials etc. throughout the different stages of the evaluation studies.

“An advisory group constructed from within the community where a program evaluation is conducted can be an invaluable resource to an evaluator, particularly if the evaluator is an outsider and of a different culture.”³⁰

Use advisory groups within ethnic/racial communities to assist on the following evaluation tasks:

- Develop, frame, and refine the evaluation questions
- Identify community sources of data and advise on how best to collect it
- Identify and define important, practical outcomes and indicators that are meaningful to their community
- Identify, make referrals to, and help recruit community members for roles as translators, focus-group facilitators, interviewers, and observers in conducting the evaluation
- Identify prospective key informants, interviewees, and focus-group participants or community-specific directories and membership and client lists from which these can be drawn
- Identify appropriate honoraria, wages, incentives, and types of recognition
- Make sense of the data, distinguishing between the important and trivial from a community perspective
- Imagine and describe practical applications/uses of the data that would benefit their community and any related technical, political, and cultural issues this may involve
- Plan when, where, and how best to disseminate findings in their community and roles they might play in doing this as credible and trusted messengers

Advisory groups can:

- Provide the evaluation context, explaining the community’s historical and social landscape
- Lend legitimacy and credibility to an evaluation and vouch for the evaluator’s trustworthiness
- Explain cultural protocol including the minimum essentials for respectful and appropriate attire, conduct, and discourse in an evaluation

Seek advisory group support or insight for the following:

- Give evaluation context, explaining the community’s historical and social landscape
- Provide introductions and entrée into community groups and organizations
- Explain cultural protocol, providing information on the minimum essentials of respectful and appropriate attire, conduct, and discourse
- Vouch for the evaluator’s credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness

Source: Cohen, B. B. (2012). Advisory Groups for Evaluations in Diverse Cultural Groups, Communities, and Contexts. In R. VeLure Roholt and M. L. Baizerman (Eds.), *Evaluation Advisory Groups. New Directions for Evaluation*, 136, 49–65.

³⁰ Cohen, B. B. (2012). Advisory Groups for Evaluations in Diverse Cultural Groups, Communities, and Contexts. In R. VeLure Roholt and M. L. Baizerman (Eds.), *Evaluation Advisory Groups. New Directions for Evaluation*, 136, 49–65.

Summary of Peer to Peer Session

Learnings from 4th APEA Conference 2023

Part of the EvalIndigenous Project with APEA is the provision of seed grants to local organizations such as VOPEs, EvalYouth Chapters and other groups to contribute to knowledge transfer activities (in person workshops, trainings, webinar, zoom meetings etc.) that **promote the agenda of EvalIndigenous and strengthen community ownership in evaluation with Indigenous communities**. The funding was aimed to increase the profile of Indigenous evaluation, including the use, relevance and validity of evaluation within local Indigenous contexts in Asia Pacific.

In order to strengthen creative partnerships, a P2P session was organized by APEA and EvalIndigenous during the 4th APEA Conference and EvalVision Asia 2023 in Manila, Philippines. The session was titled "Amplifying Indigenous voices: Advancing equity and inclusion in evaluation practices" and took place on **Tuesday, 05th December at 3.30 pm Manila time**. It was moderated by Dr. Fiona Cram and Serge Eric, Co-Chairs of EvalIndigenous. The session focused on presentations and discussions regarding Indigenous evaluation initiatives implemented under the seed grant fund project in the Asia Pacific region that included Nepal, Sri Lanka, Fiji, and the Philippines.



Opening Remarks

Serge Eric Yakeu, Co-Chair of EvalIndigenous

The session began with an opening remark by Serge Eric Yakeu, Co-Chair of EvalIndigenous. Mr. Yakeu highlighted the evolution of EvalIndigenous, which is a global network of Indigenous evaluators established in 2017 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, as the fifth network of EvalPartners. Mr. Yakeu also highlighted the origin of the network with diverse members that included representation from Canada, the U.S., Cameroon, Brazil, Colombia, and Zambia.



Mr. Yakeu outlined the activities and the growth of EvalIndigenous, and also shared about the ongoing projects in different regions including Central and South America, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific under the support of different foundations.

Presentations

Bhuban Bajra Bajracharya, Secretary of APEA

The first presentation of the session was presented by Dr. Bhuban Bajra Bajracharya, Secretary of the APEA, on an "Orientation Program on Evaluation for Parliamentarians from the Indigenous Nationalities' ' that was held in Nepal. The orientation program aimed to introduce recently elected parliamentarians from Indigenous nationalities with evaluation concepts and OECD criteria; the constitutional rights of Indigenous nationalities and the role of Indigenous Nationalities Commission in their monitoring and evaluation; and establishment of evaluation system and institutional set-up in Nepal on monitoring and evaluation.



Dr. Bajracharya stated that the orientation program was conducted with the involvement and collaboration of key organizations such as the National Planning Commission, the Parliament Secretariat, the Indigenous Nationalities Commission, etc. He further stated that the presentations in the orientation program covered various topics, including evaluation concepts, Nepal's evaluation system, and Indigenous rights.

Dr. Bajracharya highlighted the necessity of future activities including an orientation program focusing on evaluation criteria and the country's system for parliamentarians from the Indigenous nationalities; pilot training program aimed at provincial and local governments for evaluation and evidence-based planning; developing a concept note for a website facilitating self-learning on evaluation criteria and systems, targeting local governments; review of internal evaluation studies by the National Planning Commission for the coverage and treatment of Indigenous nationalities; and initiating dialogues to connect with communities.

Dulmina Chamathkara, Co-Founder of EvalYouth Asia and EvalYouth Sri Lanka

Mr. Dulmina Chamathkara, Co-Founder of EvalYouth Asia and EvalYouth Sri Lanka, presented the results of the EvalIndigenous projects implemented in Sri Lanka. He also presented the findings from the "Study on the Rathugala Non-Commercialized Indigenous Community." In his presentation, he highlighted the effects of commercialization to Indigenous communities on their livelihoods, traditional values, languages, and addressing social and gender issues like discrimination, teenage pregnancies, and school dropout rates.



Mr. Chamathkara shared about the frustration of Indigenous communities with research and evaluations for several reasons like the lack of cultural sensitivity, the failure to follow proper permission channels, limited contact only for data collection visits, and the absence of tangible outcomes from any research or evaluations conducted.

Mr. Chamathkara emphasized the necessity of cultural sensitivity and the involvement of Indigenous communities in the evaluation process, and proposed future actions including dissemination of the Toolkit among evaluators, researchers, and relevant institutions; extending outreach to other Indigenous Communities in Sri Lanka, such as Vakareii; translating the Toolkit into local languages; and conducting workshops with Indigenous Communities to review, adopt, and educate on the essential steps for evaluators/researchers to follow.

Prabin Chitrakar, Chairperson of Community of Evaluators - Nepal (CoE-Nepal)

Mr. Prabin Chitrakar, Chairperson of Community of Evaluators – Nepal (CoE-Nepal), presented the outcomes and learnings from the "One-day workshop on Indigenous Evaluation in Nepal" which aimed to establish a collaborative platform in Indigenous Evaluation practices, and to enhance the capacity on Indigenous Evaluation in Nepal.



Mr. Chitrakar highlighted the sessions of the workshop that focused on various aspects such as promoting Indigenous Evaluation in Nepal including ethical considerations. He shared the key outcomes of the workshop that included the collaboration and networking with the organizations such as Government of Nepal, UN Agencies, INGOs/NGOs, University, Indigenous evaluators, and evaluation experts; and commitment of stakeholders for their initiatives on Indigenous evaluation. He further mentioned the achievement of the event to be the capacity enhancement through knowledge sharing and open dialogue and recognition of the importance of aligning evaluation practices with Indigenous values and priorities.

Mr. Chitrakar emphasized the necessity of the evaluation practices aligned with Indigenous values, and outlined future activities that included studying of current status and needs on M&E capacity enhancement of local government of Nepal; enhancing the existing online repository with updated information and Indigenous values; conducting training and workshops to enhance the capacity of different sectors on Indigenous Evaluation; formation of a National Network; and plans for policy dialogues with governmental bodies, and parliamentarians.

Asenaca Blake and Eroni Wavu, Co-Leads of EvalYouth Pacific

Ms. Asenaca Blake and Mr. Eroni Wavu, Co-Leaders of EvalYouth Pacific, shared the insights from a workshop in Fiji focusing on Indigenous Evaluation Frameworks and Methodologies. The workshop gathered a diverse group of participants including village elders, provincial development think tank members, academics, students, development practitioners, and MEL experts. Through discussions framed by Indigenous perspectives, the workshop demystified terms like Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), emphasizing their significance within individual contexts. The utilization of Indigenous "ways of knowing" frameworks and the Talanoa research methodology enriched the dialogue, allowing authentic conversations that respected the unique needs and values of Indigenous communities.



The presenters highlighted the learnings from the workshop to be the importance of understanding these communities deeply and recognizing the challenges in applying Indigenous frameworks to mainstream evaluation practices. The workshop emphasized gaps in current evaluation methods, reinforcing the need for long-term engagement, capacity building, and respectful collaboration with Indigenous partners.

Ms. Blake and Mr. Wavu outlined their next steps with high-level influences to create a positive and lasting impact, ensuring that Indigenous evaluations are not only recognized but also woven into the fabric of the country's evaluation landscape with, policy advocacy that aimed at policy changes to integrate Indigenous evaluation principles into national or regional frameworks and sharing success stories from Indigenous-led evaluations making real-life examples of the positive outcomes that can be achieved through Indigenous evaluation processes. Furthermore, the presentation showcased a shift toward prioritizing and integrating Indigenous evaluation frameworks within broader evaluation landscapes, emphasizing respectful engagement, policy advocacy, knowledge dissemination, and practical tool development as crucial steps towards achieving this goal.

Dorothy Mae Albiento, Co-Leader of EvalYouth Asia

The final presentation was from the Philippines by Dorothy Mae Albiento, Co-Leader of EvalYouth Asia on "Intergenerational Tongtongan (Dialogue) for the continuity of the Ikalahan Heritage". In her presentation, Ms. Albiento shared about the efforts of the Ikalahan community to preserve the Ikalahan heritage through intergenerational dialogue underscoring the crucial role played by youth in safeguarding cultural knowledge.



Ms. Albiento also highlighted the necessity of evaluators and researchers to be highly mindful of their influence on Indigenous communities. Additionally, she emphasized the importance of the active involvement of Indigenous communities as essential stakeholders in the entire evaluation journey, from initiation to conclusion. Furthermore, she highlighted the value of raising awareness among Indigenous community members, particularly the youth, about the significance of culturally responsive evaluations and research.

As for the next steps, Ms. Albiento aimed to finalize and share the Toolkit with the Ikalahan community, and plans to extend similar intergenerational dialogue sessions to other villages.

| Discussant

Moses Qasenivalu, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, United Nations Population Fund Pacific Sub Regional Office

Mr. Moses Qasenivalu expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to discuss enlightening presentations that showcased the efforts in promoting Indigenous evaluation in different contexts. He stated that the presentations highlighted key aspects of effective Indigenous evaluation: capacity building, cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and the value of Indigenous knowledge.



Mr. Qasenivalu further stated that it is essential to continue supporting learning initiatives like the ones presented in the session, and emphasized the significance of Indigenous-led development and evaluation approaches. He believed that the lessons shared in the session will contribute in preserving and empowering Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific region and globally.

Questions and Answers Session

The Q&A session highlighted challenges in engaging diverse Indigenous communities, ensuring safety measures for collaborations, and managing data generated by communities for policy implementation. Below are some of the key insights from the Q&A session.

- There is a challenge in defining Indigenous communities in Sri Lanka due to cultural changes to commercialization.
- Fiji has adopted the term Indigenous as it has been introduced in the development space. Anyone born in Fiji are defined as a local.
- The Indigenous community in the Philippines has its own traditional governance but also ties with the local government and actively participates.
- The identification of Indigenous communities involves specific criteria set by the government in Nepal.
- Collaboration with government bodies and local governments ensures safety when engaging with Indigenous communities.
- Challenges faced in engaging with the all the Indigenous community in Sri Lanka due to language barriers and limited resources.
- Conducting Indigenous evaluations requires a diverse team that reflects the community's diversity and relationships.
- Evaluation approaches vary based on relationships and may require certain team members to step back due to traditional ties.
- Studies on Indigenous communities in Nepal are available in micro-levels that use diverse indicators and there is a challenge in integrating these diverse data sets and using them effectively.
- There is a need for awareness building and capacity development to effectively utilize the data generated by research and evaluation from the communities and also those data which are generated by the community themselves for their use.

Key Takeaways

The P2P session on “Amplifying Indigenous voices: Advancing equity and inclusion in evaluation practices” organized during the "4th APEA Conference and EvalVision Asia 2023" in Manila had delivered different presentations which emphasized the need for inclusive evaluation practices by involving Indigenous communities in shaping evaluation frameworks and methodologies. There was a strong emphasis on aligning evaluations with Indigenous values, preserving cultural heritage, and strongly understanding local contexts. The session highlighted the challenges that included the lack of cultural sensitivity in research and evaluation with limitations in engaging diverse Indigenous communities.

The presentations during the session reflected the collaboration and partnerships with different stakeholders such as government bodies, UN agencies, INGOs/NGOs, local authorities, and especially with the Indigenous and local communities that can enhance the process to foster the targeted communities.

The Q&A session highlighted challenges in engaging diverse Indigenous communities, including ensuring safety measures for collaborations, and managing data generated by

communities for policy implementation. Discussions also highlighted the complexity of conducting evaluations in culturally diverse landscapes and the importance of inclusive and community-led approaches.

Overall, the session concluded with the realization of the importance of ongoing dialogue, collaborative efforts, and policy advocacy; and the continued needs of capacity building to bridge gaps in Indigenous evaluation practices to truly amplify Indigenous voices in the evaluation landscape across the Asia-Pacific region and globally.

Dr. Fiona Cram, Co-Chair, EvalIndigenous - Keynote Speech

In addition, during the 4th APEA Conference, Dr. Fiona Cram, Co-Chair, EvalIndigenous delivered the keynote speech focusing on "Indigenous Evaluation: Decolonizing Evaluation Ecologies." Dr. Fiona Cram in her keynote speech focused on the significance of the environmental crisis and Indigenous perspectives in evaluation practices with an example of a frog seeing in the middle of the road as an epistemology. Dr. Cram highlights that what a frog in the middle of the road represents varies depending on one's cultural background.



Some of the **key takeaways** from Dr. Cram's keynote speech are as follows:

- Indigenous knowledge has been misrepresented, misappropriated, and sometimes disregarded, therefore, there's a need for evaluators to engage with Indigenous communities respectfully and collaboratively to understand their perspectives accurately.
- Indigenous evaluation methods should involve participatory and collaborative approaches that respect and align with the priorities of Indigenous communities. This involves engaging with communities on their terms and respecting their self-determination.
- Avoid misappropriation of Indigenous knowledge, emphasizing the importance of relationships and understanding within communities. Evaluators are encouraged to build meaningful connections, acknowledge community priorities, and collaborate rather than impose external agendas.

- Beyond the traditional reports, practices of innovative methods in disseminating evaluation findings and knowledge, such as using visual representations, cartoons, videos, and other methods connect with Indigenous communities.
- Emphasized to focus on the local initiatives tailored to specific communities rather than scaling up generalized solutions. Indigenous evaluations should prioritize local empowerment and self-sufficiency, fostering environments where successful initiatives become models for other Indigenous communities.
- Indigenous people have deep knowledge about taking care of the planet both locally and through their cultural practices. The future of our planet lies with Indigenous people, not with science, technology, or big data. Therefore, to make a positive impact, we should learn from Indigenous wisdom, honor their perspective, and build strong connections with Indigenous communities.
- Key questions should be asked by Indigenous communities to evaluators such as, where are you from? What do you know about this community? Who do you know in this community? These questions are based on the 10 questions that has been developed by EvalIndigenous.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

APEA, in partnership with the EvalIndigenous network, initiated this project to document, promote and strengthen practices and demand for culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation practices in the Asia Pacific region. The following points summarize some of the key insights gained from the project:

1. This toolkit was only able to capture the experiences of selected Indigenous communities in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. As Asia Pacific is an extremely culturally diverse region, there is so much to explore, learn from and document in terms of experiences of Indigenous communities in evaluations and use and practice of culturally responsive Indigenous evaluations. This points us to the need to expand the study to capture and include experiences of other Indigenous communities in other countries and sub-regions and of evaluators working with these communities.
2. The experiences shared by Indigenous communities visited during the fieldwork in Sri Lanka and the Philippines and by evaluators in the Atlas survey underline the need for guidance on the conduct of Indigenous evaluation and research. Although this research was only confined to the two countries, anecdotes we have heard from Indigenous evaluators and researchers across the region also show that Indigenous communities in other countries in our region have also experienced the same.
3. There was also a realization from listening to the experiences of Indigenous leaders and community members with evaluations and research that they need to be aware of the purpose and process of evaluations as well. This underscores the need for a toolkit that should not only target evaluators but also Indigenous communities themselves so they can be guided on how to better interact with evaluators and researchers and ensure that studies done with them and for them will truly benefit their community.
4. Finally, it is the team's hope that the principles found to be common with the communities we visited and the sharing of evaluators who have worked with these communities will spark further discussions around the need for culturally-responsive evaluations in the region. The result of this project calls for more conversations around the importance of developing and using Indigenous evaluation frameworks and promoting culturally responsive Indigenous evaluations in Asia Pacific. There is a need to advocate for it more through webinars and knowledge sharing activities, setting up of policies for engaging with Indigenous communities, documenting good practices, and capacity building for Indigenous evaluators.

Recommendations to EvalIndigenous Global Network

In the Atlas survey, respondents were asked to comment on how EvalIndigenous can help change or improve practices on how Indigenous communities are engaged in evaluations. Below are some of the recommendations provided by Indigenous evaluators and evaluators working with Indigenous communities on how EvalIndigenous can help improve practices in engaging Indigenous communities in evaluations. By promoting culturally responsive evaluation approaches, EvalIndigenous can:

- Guide evaluators in engaging Indigenous communities in respectful and inclusive ways. In doing this, the network can also advocate for the recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems and the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives in evaluation frameworks. Ultimately, EvalIndigenous can contribute to a shift in evaluation practices towards more equitable and empowering approaches for Indigenous communities.
- Help shed light to the challenges of Indigenous peoples and evaluators working with Indigenous peoples and present ways to address these challenges in order to ensure that perspectives and positionality of both are documented in research/evaluations.
- Provide a platform for sharing best practices and lessons learned from evaluation initiatives involving Indigenous communities, fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration.
- Set guiding principles for Indigenous evaluators and support contextualization of these principles across Indigenous communities and countries.
- Implement Indigenous community engagement policies to safeguard community interests.
- Work closely with Indigenous peoples in order to develop evaluation methodologies that are sensitive to their culture.
- EvalIndigenous can provide a platform to ensure that the views of Indigenous community members are taken into consideration in the evaluation process.
- Provide trainings for development professionals from Indigenous communities on evaluation, data collection, and report writing.
- Conduct knowledge sharing activities such as webinars in order to share learnings from other countries on Indigenous evaluation practices and collaboration among evaluators from different countries.
- Raise awareness on the importance of evaluation in the context of Indigenous peoples.
- Provide evaluation capacity training programs for Indigenous evaluators on Indigenous evaluation practices and methodologies.

Indigenous Stories and Voices from the Field

Story of Uru Warige Wannia Aththo: Preserving Sri Lanka's Vedda Ancestry

Introduction

Uru Warige Wannia Aththo, the esteemed leader of the Indigenous ancestry in Sri Lanka, welcomes us into his world, shedding light on the rich history and challenges faced by the Vedda community. With a lineage tracing back 37,000 years to the Yaksha tribe, Uru Warige Wannia Aththo shares his vision for preserving their unique culture and overcoming the obstacles that threaten their way of life. In this exclusive interview, he discusses the community's struggles, decision-making processes, initiatives undertaken, and the importance of respectful evaluation.



A Glimpse into the Past and Present

Uru Warige Wannia Aththo introduces himself as the leader of the Vedda community, encompassing 62 villages and approximately 500,000 individuals. Delving into their ancient history, he highlights the presence of Yaksha, Naaga, Dewa, and Raksha tribes in Sri Lanka. As descendants of the Yaksha tribe, the Vedda people face a unique challenge of balancing the aspirations of young individuals who seek to integrate into modern society while also protecting their ancestral heritage. The encroachment of reserve forests, restrictions on forest access, and instances of violence against their people pose significant barriers to carrying their ancestry forward.

A Delicate Balance of Decision-Making

Uru Warige Wannia Aththo explains that decision-making within the community has evolved over time. Previously, the leader held significant power in decision-making, guided by customs rather than laws. However, since 1931, the authority of the Vedda ancestry leader

has been diminished, with government-appointed officials such as the Gamarala, Arachchila, and Disapathi assuming decision-making roles. Land allocation for Chena cultivation, a traditional practice, was historically decided by the aboriginal leader, but now requires permission from the Colombo Wildlife Department. Despite these changes, the community still values the leader's input in important matters, with unresolved issues being referred to the country's legal system.

Overcoming Challenges and Initiating Change

Uru Warige Wannia Aththo identifies the primary challenges faced by the Vedda community. Firstly, he highlights the erosion of traditional language and knowledge, with some villages losing touch with their ancestral language. The limited availability of space and resources within their villages leads many young individuals to seek opportunities in urban areas, resulting in a disconnection from their cultural roots. Furthermore, restrictions on forest access and the degradation of natural environments impede the passing down of traditional customs and knowledge from older generations. To address these challenges, various projects and initiatives have been undertaken, but their effectiveness remains a point of concern.

Cultivating Respectful Evaluation Practices

The Vedda community has participated in numerous research studies conducted by different organizations, including those appointed by the United Nations. These studies aimed to explore and protect the Indigenous societies worldwide, including the Vedda community in Sri Lanka. However, Uru Warige Wannia Aththo highlights the disappointment in the lack of tangible outcomes from these studies. He emphasizes the need for genuine commitment, honesty, and transparency from researchers/evaluators, as promises made in the past have often failed to yield meaningful changes for the community.

Uru Warige Wannia Aththo emphasizes the importance of respect and responsible behavior when collecting data within the Vedda culture. Evaluators should approach the community with genuine intentions, seeking to understand their customs and traditions. The leader urges evaluators to recognize the symbiotic relationship between the Indigenous community and their environment, emphasizing the need to protect the natural resources during the evaluation process. He calls for evaluators to uphold the integrity of the community's way of life and stresses the importance of bridging the gap between their customs and the laws of the country, respecting their unique cultural differences.

Conclusion

In this eye-opening interview, Uru Warige Wannia Aththo advocates for the preservation and protection of the Vedda community's ancestral heritage. Through a delicate balance of decision-making, initiatives to overcome challenges, and respectful evaluation practices, he highlights the urgent need for support from national leaders and society at large. The survival of their Indigenous culture relies on the actions and commitment of those in power to uplift and safeguard the Vedda community and their invaluable legacy.

| Story of Uru Warige Somawathi: Preserving Culture and Nurturing Change in a Vedda Village

Introduction

Uru Warige Somawathi, the only daughter of the main Indigenous leader, a member of the Vedda community, offers a unique perspective on her community's way of life. In this interview, Somawathi sheds light on her experiences, challenges faced by her community, decision-making processes, and the need for respectful evaluation practices. She highlights the significance of preserving their cultural heritage while embracing opportunities for positive change.



Introducing Somawathi and Her Community

Somawathi shares her name and introduces herself as a member of the Vedda community. Living in a secluded village, she expresses her limited knowledge about the larger community beyond her immediate surroundings. She discusses her educational background and language proficiency, emphasizing her familiarity with the Sinhala language but not with the language commonly used by her brothers and father.

Decision-Making in the Community

Somawathi describes the decision-making process within her community, highlighting the role of her father as a respected figure. Whenever issues arise, other Veddas approach her father, seeking his advice and guidance. Women typically do not participate in the "Wariga Sabha" (community council meetings), but their issues are also discussed and addressed through her father's guidance.

Challenges Faced by the Community and Initiatives to Address Them

Somawathi identifies one significant challenge faced by her community—the struggle of individuals who leave the village and then struggle to readapt to their cultural roots upon return. She discusses the need for initiatives that support these individuals and help them reconnect with their community's culture and way of life.

Community's Experience with Evaluation Studies

Somawathi shares that neither she nor the women in her community have previously participated in evaluation studies. Studies are typically conducted with her father or brothers, while women's issues are addressed through her father's advice. This lack of inclusion prompts Somawathi to express the need for women's voices to be heard and considered in future evaluations.

Impact of Evaluations on Life and Community

As evaluations have not been conducted with her community before, Somawathi acknowledges that she has no personal experience of their impact. However, she emphasizes the potential for evaluations to bring positive changes and invites evaluators to approach the community with respect and friendliness during data collection.

Respectful Data Collection and Partnership Considerations

Somawathi emphasizes the importance of evaluators showing respect during data collection, particularly by conducting interviews in a friendly manner. She expresses that there are no specific customs or traditions evaluators need to recognize or honor during the process, but overall respect is essential.

Education and Gender Equality

Somawathi highlights the community's progressive approach to education, where there are no gender-based separations. Girls are encouraged to pursue their studies alongside boys, promoting gender equality within the community.

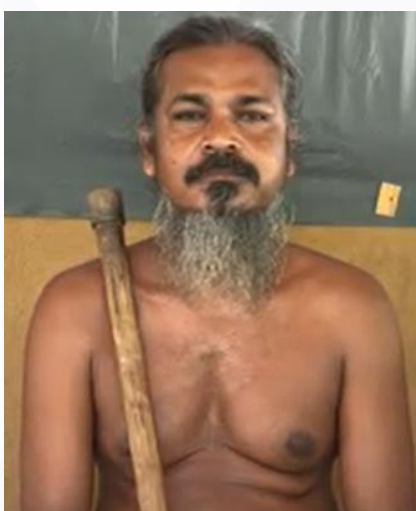
Conclusion

Uru Warige Somawathi's insights provide a valuable glimpse into the unique Veda community, emphasizing the need for inclusive decision-making, addressing challenges faced by community members, and respecting cultural heritage. Her perspective invites evaluators to approach their work with sensitivity, fostering respectful partnerships that empower the community and foster positive change.

I Story of Uru Warige Gunabandiya Aththo: Nurturing Tradition and Preserving Generational Legacy

Introduction

Uru Warige Gunabandiya Aththo, the deputy leader of the Indigenous Vedda community, shares his insights and concerns in this interview. Gunabandiya Aththo provides a glimpse into his community's way of life, the decision-making processes, challenges faced, and the importance of respectful evaluation practices. He highlights the struggles his community has faced in preserving their traditions and emphasizes the need for protection and support to ensure the continuity of their generational legacy.



Introducing Gunabandiya Aththo and the Vedda Community

Gunabandiya Aththo introduces himself as the deputy leader of the Vedda community, consisting of 62 Indigenous village communities. He shares details about his village, highlighting the farming activities and the community's connection with the forest, which provides for their needs. He emphasizes the engagement of children in these activities alongside their studies, and the evolving employment opportunities within the village.

Decision-Making in the Community

Gunabandiya Aththo discusses the leadership structure within the community, where he holds a significant responsibility across the 62 villages. Decisions are made collectively, involving village leaders and conducting "Wariga Sabha" when critical situations arise. Traditionally, women have not participated in these decision-making processes, but their issues are discussed and resolved through communication with Gunabandiya Aththo.

Challenges Faced by the Community and Initiatives to Address Them

Gunabandiya Aththo identifies the impact of governmental rules and boundaries imposed on their traditional way of life as a significant challenge. The restrictions on hunting in forests have disrupted their simple and contented lifestyle. He also expresses concerns about the influence of external factors, such as children leaving the village and the arrival of outsiders,

which have introduced changes and modernization into their community. Gunabandiya Aththo stresses the need for initiatives to protect and preserve their culture and language, highlighting the efforts made by his generation since 1983.

Community's Experience with Evaluation Studies

Gunabandiya Aththo shares that his community has not been involved in formal evaluation studies before. While outsiders have come for various purposes, such as videography and collecting information for books, this is the first time they are being evaluated as a generation. Gunabandiya Aththo expresses the lack of previous programs specifically aimed at protecting their generational traditions and customs.

As there has been no previous experience with evaluation programs, Gunabandiya Aththo states that there have been no changes in his life or his community's life due to such evaluations.

Ensuring Respectful Data Collection and Partnership

Gunabandiya Aththo emphasizes the importance of evaluators respecting their traditions, language, and customs when collecting data, conducting interviews, or working in their village. He urges outsiders to maintain cleanliness and protect the village environment, emphasizing the Vedda community's deep connection with nature and its significance for the entire nation. Gunabandiya Aththo invites outsiders to visit their village with respect, and he assures them of the community's support and willingness to share their traditions.

Considerations for Partnerships and Recognition of Customs

Gunabandiya Aththo highlights the need for evaluators and researchers to respect their traditions and personal space when partnering with their community. He requests prior communication with the village leader and understanding of the limited facilities available. The utmost respect and protection of their traditions, customs, and rights are paramount when collaborating with the Vedda community.

What's more?

Gunabandiya Aththo expresses his hope that future generations will continue to protect their environment, traditions, and heritage. He emphasizes the importance of caring for parents who have dedicated their lives to raising their children and stresses the need to safeguard nature and cultural legacy for the future.

I Preserving Cultural Heritage: Prof. Kennedy's Journey with the Vedda Community of Wakare/ “Unveiling the Struggles of the Indigenous Vedda Community in Wakare”

Introduction

In this exclusive interview, we sit down with Prof. J. Kennedy, an English professor from the Eastern University of Sri Lanka, to discuss his unique connection with the Indigenous Vedda community in Wakare. While Prof. Kennedy is not a professional evaluator, his close ties with the community have given him invaluable insights into their challenges and the urgent need for cultural preservation. Through this interview, we hope to shed light on the plight of the Vedda community and raise awareness about the threats they face.



Background

Prof. Kennedy shares a special bond with the Indigenous Vedda community in Wakare, which spans over 50 years. His family has paddy fields in the region, where the community has been working for generations. Over the past 25 years, Prof. Kennedy has actively engaged with the Vedda community, offering support to university students and staff members conducting studies on their culture and way of life.

Unveiling the Wakare Indigenous Vedda Community

Prof. Kennedy provides us with a deeper understanding of the Wakare Indigenous Vedda community and highlights their unique characteristics that distinguish them from other Vedda communities in Sri Lanka, such as Dambana, Rathugala, and Pollebedda. According to Prof. Kennedy, the Wakare Veddas settled in the Eastern part of the country, taking advantage of the abundant jungles in the area. Their language differs from other Vedda communities and bears resemblance to an earlier version of Tamil. Additionally, their worshiping system revolves around nature and deities such as 'Lord Muruga' and 'Skandan,' setting them apart from other Vedda communities in Sri Lanka.

They had different language and worshipping systems compared to Dambana and other vedda communities. Their language is a bit closer to the earlier Tamil version but not the modern version. However, it is still a distinct language compared to the other languages that they use now.

The Urgency to Preserve Indigenous Cultures

When asked about his motivation for working with Indigenous communities, Prof. Kennedy expresses his passion for cultural studies and a deep-rooted attachment to the Vedda community. Having witnessed their dedication and support throughout the years, he feels compelled to contribute to their well-being and cultural preservation.

Challenges Faced by the Wakare Vedda Community

Drawing from his extensive experience and observations, Prof. Kennedy outlines the major challenges faced by the Wakare Indigenous Vedda community. He emphasizes that globalization and urbanization have posed significant threats to their language, culture, and physical appearance. The community members feel hesitant to speak their language, even among themselves, and are increasingly adopting modern lifestyles. Prof. Kennedy mentions the desire among community members to alter their physical appearance through cosmetic products, influenced by media portrayals of fair skin. These challenges have led to a gradual erosion of their unique identity and cultural practices.

Losing their language, losing their culture and losing their own colour. This community had its own Indigenous identity and ideology maybe 50 years back. But with globalization and urbanization, they are now trying to lose their identity including their colour.

The Role of Researchers and Evaluators

Prof. Kennedy reflects on his interactions with the Vedda community and shares insights into their perception of research and evaluation. While the majority of community members are unfamiliar with these concepts, a small number of individuals studying up to the A/L level possess some understanding. Prof. Kennedy highlights the importance of building trust and rapport with the community to encourage open dialogue and genuine responses during research and evaluation processes.

“ You have to give them some time to get to know you. They won’t talk to you overnight and they might even run away without facing you. ”

Successes and Lessons Learned

Recalling a successful evaluation study conducted five years ago, Prof. Kennedy narrates how the community initially felt apprehensive about sharing their ceremonial practices with foreign researchers. However, with time and a welcoming approach, the researchers were able to create a comfortable environment, fostering greater participation. Prof. Kennedy notes the importance of understanding and respecting the community's unique dynamics to ensure the success of such studies.

Overcoming Challenges and Ensuring Cultural Preservation

Prof. Kennedy acknowledges the importance of addressing the challenges faced by the Wakare Vedda community. He emphasizes the need for community members, particularly the younger generation, to understand and appreciate their own identity and heritage. Prof. Kennedy has taken personal initiatives, such as employing community members in his paddy fields, to support them economically while maintaining a connection to their traditional livelihood. He encourages researchers to spend ample time with the community, fostering mutual understanding and trust.

“ They should understand their own identity, especially the younger generation who are below the age of 20. Until they understand this, they can’t overcome these challenges. ”

Ethical Considerations

Prof. Kennedy sheds light on the ethical principles that evaluators must uphold when working with Indigenous communities. He emphasizes the significance of not disrupting their daily lives and respecting their traditional systems. Prof. Kennedy warns against the marginalization caused by ill-conceived policies and interventions. He advocates for evaluations that offer pathways to community betterment without compromising their ethical identity, culture, and way of life.

“ Even as evaluators, after our evaluation, we should make a pathway to the betterment of their society but it should not disturb their ethical identity, culture and system. We should know what we are exactly doing before we intervene. ”

Conclusion

Prof. Kennedy's deep connection with the Indigenous Vedda community in Wakare and his commitment to preserving their culture serve as an inspiration. Through his work and insights, we hope to raise awareness about the challenges faced by Indigenous communities and encourage a more inclusive and respectful approach to research and evaluation. The urgency to protect and celebrate the unique identities of Indigenous communities remains an essential task for researchers, policymakers, and society at large.



| Exploring Indigenous Wisdom: An Interview with Mr. Mahesh Weeraman

Introduction

In the lush landscapes of Mapakada Village Hotel, nestled amidst nature's bounty, Mr. Mahesh Weeraman, a dedicated Naturalist, has been delving into the captivating world of Indigenous communities. With a keen interest in understanding their harmonious relationship with the environment, Mr. Weeraman has embarked on a journey to study the Veddas, an ancient tribe known for their deep knowledge and cultural heritage. In this exclusive interview, we uncover Mr. Weeraman's experiences, challenges, and aspirations as he works with Indigenous communities.



Unveiling the Naturalist

As we sit down with Mr. Mahesh Weeraman, we discover the essence of his role as a Naturalist at Mapakada Village Hotel. Engaging in wildlife studies and focusing on the Veddas, Mr. Weeraman has researched unraveling their lifestyles and cultural existence.

Embracing Indigenous Communities

Delving deeper, we learn about Mr. Weeraman's fascination with Indigenous communities. Through extensive research and practical interactions, he has embarked on a quest to explore how these communities maintain a sustainable relationship with the environment, understanding their knowledge of weather changes, and how they fulfill their needs and wants.

A Bridge Between Cultures

Mr. Weeraman sheds light on an innovative initiative at Mapakada Village Hotel that not only preserves the Veddas' culture but also provides them with a sustainable income. By sharing their knowledge and cultural heritage with visitors, the Veddas can earn a living, ensuring the preservation of their ancestral wisdom.

Immersed in Indigenous Wisdom

With a sparkle in his eyes, Mr. Weeraman shares his enthralling experiences working closely with the Veddas. Through their interactions, he has gained invaluable insights into their deep understanding of the environment, their use of medicinal plants, and their mastery of

agricultural practices. His time spent with the Veddas has proven to be an enriching journey of knowledge exchange.

Embracing Evaluations

Drawing from his experiences, Mr. Weeraman sheds light on the passionate commitment of Indigenous leaders, exemplified by the fearless Wannila Aththo. With his tireless efforts, he has fought to protect the Veddas' cultural heritage and ensure their voices are heard.

The Path Less Traveled

While Mr. Weeraman's journey is still in its early stages, he highlights the need for more comprehensive evaluations and researchers within Indigenous communities. By documenting and sharing success stories, evaluators and researchers can provide valuable insights into what works well for local and Indigenous people.

Overcoming Challenges

Mr. Weeraman reflects on the challenges faced by evaluators when working with Indigenous communities. He identifies societal issues faced by the Veddas as they navigate a changing world and struggle to protect their culture. On a personal level, language barriers have been manageable, and the shared bond with nature has facilitated a smooth rapport.

Unveiling Research Methodologies

In his quest for knowledge, Mr. Weeraman shares his perspective on effective research methodologies with Indigenous communities. He proposes nature-focused projects, immersing oneself within the community for an extended period, and observing their lifestyles firsthand. By delving deep into the Veddas' culture, a greater understanding of their history and wisdom can be attained.

Seeking Documentation

Despite the abundance of knowledge surrounding the Veddas, Mr. Weeraman discusses the lack of comprehensive documentation and research on their culture. While research papers by foreign scholars exist, there is a need for more extensive and focused studies to shed light on this ancient community.

Embracing Ethical Principles

Mr. Weeraman emphasizes the importance of ethical principles when working with Indigenous communities. Respecting nature, as the Veddas do, is paramount. He suggests engaging in activities such as potato digging, traditionally performed by women, as a means to bridge the gap and gain the trust of female Veddas, thereby enabling more comprehensive data collection.

In conclusion, Mr. Mahesh Weeraman's dedication to studying Indigenous communities and his profound respect for the Veddas' cultural heritage shines through in this interview. Through his research and interactions, he strives to bring forth a deeper understanding of the Veddas' wisdom, while also contributing to their sustainable livelihoods. With each step, he honors the intricate bond between humanity and the natural world, paving the way for a harmonious future.

| Story of Danigala Maha Bandaralage Suda Wanniya Aththo: Preserving Cultural Heritage and Overcoming Challenges

Introduction

In the heart of Sri Lanka lies Rathugala village, home to the Indigenous community led by Danigala Maha Bandaralage Suda Wanniya Aththo. With a rich history dating back to the Danigala generation in 1938, this tight-knit community comprises 140 families. In an exclusive interview, Aththo opens up about the challenges faced by his community, their decision-making processes, and the urgent need to preserve their cultural heritage.



A Glimpse into Rathugala Village

Danigala Maha Bandaralage Suda Wanniya Aththo introduces himself as the leader of Rathugala village, highlighting the village's history and the number of families residing there. With deep roots in the Danigala generation, the community has embraced Rathugala as their home, nurturing their traditions and culture.

The Decision-Making Process

Aththo sheds light on the decision-making process within the community. Known as the "Wariga Sabha," the villagers gather to discuss both family and village matters. However, despite their efforts to seek assistance from government officials, they have found little support or solutions to their problems.

Overcoming Challenges

The interview delves into the top three challenges faced by the community. First and foremost, economic instability plagues Rathugala village, impacting the livelihoods of its inhabitants. Secondly, they face difficulties regarding wildlife and the lack of responsible officers to address these concerns. Lastly, cultural challenges arise as the community struggles to preserve their heritage amidst economic hardships.

Evaluation Studies and Their Impact

Aththo reflects on past evaluation studies conducted by various organizations. While these studies shed light on the hardships faced by Indigenous communities like Rathugala, little has changed as a result. The pleas for help and preservation of their cultural heritage have fallen on deaf ears, leaving the community disillusioned and losing their traditions.

The Unchanging Landscape

Despite evaluation studies, the interviewee explains that nothing significant has changed in the lives of the community members. The lack of attention and support from the authorities has resulted in a gradual loss of their Indigenous cultural heritage. Their concerns have been brought to the attention of local officers, but they have shown little regard for the Indigenous population.

Respectful Data Collection

Aththo emphasizes the importance of respectful data collection by evaluators. He requests evaluators to respect their generation, traditions, and culture. Communication should occur directly with the community leader to avoid misrepresentation or manipulation by third-party individuals. By providing unbiased and accurate evaluations, evaluators can help the community protect their heritage.

Partnering with the Community

To establish effective partnerships with the community, Aththo advises evaluators to engage directly with the community and disregard rumors spread by others. Recognizing and honoring the customs and traditions of the Indigenous people is crucial for fostering trust and understanding. The community yearns for tangible solutions that address their concerns and safeguard their heritage.

Conclusion

Danigala Maha Bandaralage Suda Wanniya Aththo's interview sheds light on the challenges faced by the Rathugala village community and their unwavering determination to preserve their cultural heritage. It calls for urgent attention from authorities, evaluators, and society as a whole to support and empower Indigenous communities, ensuring their voice is heard and their way of life is protected for generations to come.

I Story of B.M. Wijesekara: A Principal's Passion for Indigenous Communities

In a remote village nestled amidst the lush green landscapes of Rathugala, B.M. Wijesekara has been leading the charge in transforming the lives of Indigenous communities through education and evaluation. As the principal of Rathugala Primary School, Wijesekara has dedicated his career to working with Indigenous communities and understanding their unique needs and challenges.



Working with Indigenous Communities: A Transformative Journey

Having taken on the role of principal in 2018, Wijesekara's curiosity about Indigenous communities led him to immerse himself in understanding their culture, economy, livelihoods, and aspirations. He spent months visiting the homes of each student, researching their living conditions, and identifying areas for improvement.

With his dedicated efforts and the support of the government and other stakeholders, the school witnessed a remarkable transformation. Student enrollment increased from 12 to 35, and the teaching staff grew from 2 to 7. The school became a nurturing environment, instilling qualities such as politeness, hospitality, respect, and active participation in classroom activities. The students' remarkable scholarship examination results, now standing at 100%, serve as a testament to their growth and development.

Challenges and Solutions in Indigenous Community Evaluation

Wijesekara's experience shed light on several challenges faced by Indigenous communities. The primary obstacle hindering economic development was the lack of knowledge and training in effective cultivation practices. Indigenous individuals often faced immense difficulties due to wild animals, particularly elephants, damaging their crops. To overcome these challenges, Wijesekara emphasizes the need for formal training programs that provide comprehensive knowledge and practical guidance, enabling Indigenous communities to cultivate effectively and protect their crops from wildlife threats.

Furthermore, Wijesekara identified economic hardships, food scarcity, and inadequate housing and sanitary facilities as pressing issues that hinder the community's progress. While the government has initiated development projects, comprehensive training on healthy living practices, such as sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition, remains crucial for sustainable improvement.

*...they came from the forest to this society and they still don't have enough awareness about how to cultivate properly...
...they don't tend to do cultivation due to challenges with wild animals.*

“ So, if there is any formal method which can give good training to this community, it would be helpful to improve their economy. Otherwise, they will always go backward with the economy. ”

Ethical Principles for Evaluators in Indigenous Communities

Reflecting on his experiences, Wijesekara stresses the importance of ethical considerations when conducting evaluation studies with Indigenous communities. Respecting the Indigenous leaders' authority and seeking their participation in any program is paramount. Establishing a respectful relationship with the community ensures that evaluations are conducted with their consent and cooperation, fostering trust and fruitful engagement.

Indigenous communities hold a deep connection with their environment, relying on forests for sustenance and resources. To engage effectively with Indigenous women, who often face educational barriers, Wijesekara highlights the need for clear and culturally sensitive communication. Using local languages and simplifying complex concepts ensures inclusivity and equitable participation.

Documentation and Research: Ensuring Impact and Knowledge Sharing

While research and evaluation efforts have been undertaken by universities and other organizations, Wijesekara emphasizes the importance of knowledge dissemination. Unfortunately, he has not received copies of research conducted in the area. Sharing research findings with Indigenous leaders or the village school would help ensure that community members benefit from these activities, encouraging their participation and continued engagement.

A Call for Collaboration and Economic Empowerment

In conclusion, Wijesekara extends a call for collaboration from government entities and private organizations to consider the cultural aspects of Indigenous communities when aiming for economic development. Balancing economic progress with the preservation of cultural heritage is crucial to maintaining the community's identity and fostering sustainable growth. Wijesekara proposes initiatives that provide economic opportunities without compromising Indigenous cultural practices, such as supporting nearby hotels that contribute to the community's economy while respecting their traditions.

B.M. Wijesekara's unwavering dedication to the education and evaluation of Indigenous communities has demonstrated the transformative power of understanding, collaboration, and cultural preservation. Through his efforts and the support of various stakeholders, Rathugala Primary School has become a beacon of hope, providing education and empowerment to Indigenous children and laying the foundation for a brighter future.



Glossary of Indigenous Terms

Country	Name of Indigenous Community	Indigenous Terms
Aotearoa New Zealand	Maori ³¹³²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Ahuatanga Māori</i>: Māori characteristics ● <i>Ako</i>: learn, teach ● <i>Aotearoa</i>: New Zealand, often referring in particular to the North Island ● <i>Aroha ki te tangata</i>: love for the people ● <i>He kanoahi kitea</i>: a face that is seen ● <i>Hui</i>: gathering ● <i>Hunaonga</i>: in-laws ● <i>Ihi</i>: essential force ● <i>Iwi</i>: tribe ● <i>Kaitiaki</i>: guardian ● <i>Karakia</i>: prayer ● <i>Kaumātua</i>: elders ● <i>Kaupapa</i>: topic ● <i>Kaupapa Māori a Māori way</i>; by Māori, for Māori ● <i>Kawa</i>: customs ● <i>Kanoahi ki te kanoahi</i>: to see a person face to face ● <i>Kaua e takahia te mana o te tāngata</i>: do not trample on the dignity of people ● <i>Kaupapa</i>: a topic, agenda ● <i>Kaupapa Māori</i>: a framework and way of working built on a Māori world view ● <i>kia mahaki</i>: be humble ● <i>kia tūpato</i>: be careful ● <i>Koha</i>: gifts ● <i>Kōrero</i>: Offering of thanks ● <i>Mana</i>: esteem, status

³¹ Paipa, K., Cram, F., Kennedy, V., & Pipi, K. (forthcoming). Culturally responsive methods for family centred research. In S. Hood, R. Hopson, K. Obeidat & H. Frierson (Eds.), *Continuing the journey to reposition culture and cultural context in evaluation theory and practice*. For the Evaluation and Society Book Series, Information Age Publishing.

³² Cram, F., Kennedy, V., Paipa, K., Pipi, K. & Wehipeihana, N. (2015). Being culturally responsive through Kaupapa Maori evaluation. In S. Hood, R. Hopson & H. Frierson (Eds.), *Continuing the journey to reposition culture and cultural context in evaluation theory and practice*. For the Evaluation and Society Book Series. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. pp. 289-312.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>manaaki ki te tangata</i>: being generous, looking after the person ● <i>Māori</i>: Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand ● <i>Maramatanga</i>: enlightenment, understanding, insight ● <i>Mātauranga</i>: education, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill ● <i>Mātauranga Māori</i>: Māori knowledge ● <i>Mauri</i>: life principle ● <i>Marae</i>: traditional meeting place ● <i>Moemoeā</i>: dreams ● <i>Mōhiotanga</i>: knowledge, understanding, awareness, intelligence, insight, perceptions ● <i>Mokopuna</i>: grandchildren ● <i>Ngākau</i>: the seat of affections, heart, mind ● <i>Pākehā</i>: New Zealander of European descent ● <i>Pepehā</i>: tribal saying ● <i>Pakeke</i>: adults ● <i>Papa-tū-ā-nuku</i>: mother earth ● <i>Pōwhiri</i>: ritual of encounter ● <i>Rongo</i>: to hear, sense ● <i>Tamariki</i>: children ● <i>Tangata</i>: person, people ● <i>Tangata Maori</i>: ordinary people ● <i>Tangata whenua</i>: Indigenous peoples of the land ● <i>Tangi</i>: burial rituals ● <i>Te ao Māori</i>: the Māori world ● <i>Te reo Māori</i>: the Māori language ● <i>Tikanga Māori</i>: Māori custom ● <i>Tino rangatiratanga</i>: self-government, sovereignty ● <i>Tēina</i>: younger relative ● <i>Tikanga</i>: protocols of engagement ● <i>Titiro</i>: look ● <i>Tīpuna</i>: ancestors ● <i>Tuakana</i>: older relative ● <i>Waiata</i>: songs ● <i>Whakapapa</i>: genealogy ● <i>Whakawātea</i>: clearing or cleansing ● <i>Whakaae</i>: agreement ● <i>Whakamana</i>: enhancement of esteem/status ● <i>Whānau</i>: Māori family
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Whānau Māori</i>: extended family/ies ● <i>Whanaunga</i>: relative ● <i>Whanaungatanga</i>: family and kinship support networks ● <i>Whare Wānanga</i>: university/place of higher learning ● <i>Whakaputa mōhio</i>: know-it-all ● <i>Whakarongo</i>: listen ● <i>Whanaungatanga</i>: kinship, family connection ● <i>Wehi</i>: something awesome
Sri Lanka	Veddas ³³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Arecanut</i>: gaigedi ● <i>Arrow</i>: morian ketiya ● <i>Ashes</i>: alupojja ● <i>Axe</i>: galrakiya ● <i>Bee</i>: kanda arini ● <i>Betel</i>: pangirikola ● <i>Bird</i>: cappi ● <i>Bow</i>: malaliya ● <i>Burn</i>: Pucakadal ● <i>Cave</i>: Galkabala ● <i>Cry</i>: hitpojja ocadamala ● <i>Cut with axe</i>: galrakiying ● <i>Dance</i>: otadamanya ● <i>Deer</i>: kabereya ● <i>Elephant</i>: botakanda ● <i>Fire</i>: gini pojja ● <i>Honey</i>: kanda arini ● <i>Jungle</i>: kelepojja ● <i>Monkey</i>: butwandura ● <i>Tree</i>: gaspoja ● <i>Water</i>: diaraca
Nepal	Tamang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Good morning, good afternoon, good day</i>: phyaphulla/phyaphulji/ lassoo ● <i>Thank you</i>: thujuttchhe ● <i>See you again</i>: pheri bhethabari yankhai/ pheri bhethala ● <i>Let us work together</i>: pre-pren ghyat lage/ pre-pren ghyat lala

³³ Seligmann, C. G., & Seligmann, B. Z. (1969). *The Veddas*. Anthropological Publications and key words verified during Fieldwork with the Indigenous community in Dambana, Sri Lanka by the APEA team

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Best of luck:</i> jyaba lasai/Jyaba danba/Jyaba takhai
Nepal	Gurung	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Good morning, good afternoon, good day:</i> chyazolo ● <i>Thank you:</i> orohe/gysaje ● <i>See you again:</i> tohole ● <i>Let us work together:</i> ba lon/ke la le/pre Le ● <i>Best of luck:</i> chhyanba ladaun
Nepal	Sherpa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Good morning, good afternoon, good day:</i> tashi delek ● <i>Thank you:</i> thuchi chhe ● <i>See you again:</i> long thetu ● <i>Let us work together:</i> ba lon/ke la le/Pre Le
Fiji		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Yaqona (Kava):</i> Traditional Fijian ceremonial drink made from the root of the yaqona plant, used for social gatherings and rituals. ● <i>Vakamau:</i> Fijian cultural concept of respect, loyalty, and adherence to social norms and customs. ● <i>Turaga:</i> Traditional Fijian chiefly system, which denotes a person of high rank or authority. ● <i>Veidokai:</i> Traditional Fijian practice of storytelling and oral history, passed down through generations. ● <i>Vakavanua:</i> Sense of national identity and pride in being Fijian. ● <i>Vanua vaka Bau:</i> Specific Fijian social structure and political system associated with the island of Bau. ● <i>Mana:</i> Spiritual power or energy believed to be possessed by chiefs, objects, or natural elements in Fijian culture. ● <i>Matanitu:</i> Kingdom or realm, often referring to the historical Fijian kingdoms and the concept of sovereignty. ● <i>Veitavono:</i> Fijian traditional system of reciprocity and mutual support among kinship groups. ● <i>Soqo ni yavusa:</i> Fijian concept of gathering and meeting of a clan or extended family for various purposes.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Vale ni Bose</i>: Traditional Fijian village meeting house used for communal discussions and decision-making. ● <i>Vakabauta</i>: Fijian belief system, often associated with Christianity, encompassing faith, spirituality, and religious practices. ● <i>Matanigasau</i>: Fijian concept of hospitality and generosity towards guests and visitors. ● <i>Veitokani</i>: Cooperation, unity, and collaboration among different communities or groups in Fijian society. ● <i>Tagimoucia</i>: Fijian endemic flower symbolizing beauty, resilience, and uniqueness. ● <i>Mataqali</i>: Fijian clan or extended family unit, often sharing common ancestry and land. ● <i>Vakarau</i>: Traditional Fijian practice of preparing for a special event or occasion, involving rituals and preparations. ● <i>Vakamalua</i>: Concept of forgiveness, reconciliation, and resolution of conflicts in Fijian culture. ● <i>Vakabula</i>: Fijian notion of wellness, well-being, and holistic health. ● <i>Talanoa</i>: Fijian form of storytelling and dialogue, emphasizing open communication, understanding, and empathy. ● <i>Veitaukei</i>: Indigenous Fijian people, reflecting the cultural, social, and historical heritage of the land. ● <i>Vakarorogo</i>: Act of listening attentively and respectfully, valuing others' perspectives and experiences. ● <i>Vakarokoroko</i>: Fijian custom of showing reverence, respect, and deference to elders and those in positions of authority. ● <i>Vale Levu</i>: Traditional Fijian chief's house, symbolizing power, leadership, and communal identity. ● <i>Vakavinavinaka</i>: Expressing gratitude, appreciation, and thankfulness in Fijian culture. ● <i>Vakarereivalu</i>: Fijian warrior culture and martial traditions, showcasing bravery, skill, and honor.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Veitauviti</i>: Fijian concept of extended family or kinship network, encompassing multiple mataqali (clans) and individuals. ● <i>Vakasama</i>: Fijian value of wisdom, knowledge, and discernment in decision-making and problem-solving. ● <i>Vakadewa</i>: Fijian concept of independence, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency. ● <i>Vakasaututaki</i>: Fijian custom of publicly recognizing and honoring individuals or groups for their achievements or contributions. ● <i>Vakabauta (Faith)</i>: Fijians value faith and spirituality, which often play a significant role in interpersonal relationships and community life. It involves belief in higher powers, ancestral spirits, and the spiritual interconnectedness of individuals. ● <i>Veivuke (Helping one another)</i>: The willingness to offer assistance and support to others in need is a fundamental value in Fijian culture. It includes acts of kindness, generosity, and collaboration within the community. ● <i>Turaga (Chiefly system)</i>: Fijian society traditionally had a hierarchical structure centered around chiefs (turaga) who held authority and played a significant role in community leadership. Respect for the turaga and adherence to their guidance and decisions are integral to communal harmony. ● <i>Vakarokoroko (Respect for communal spaces)</i>: The value of maintaining and respecting communal spaces such as village meeting houses (Vale ni Bose) and sacred sites. These spaces hold cultural and historical significance and are considered important for community gatherings and decision-making. ● <i>Vakavinavinaka (Gratitude)</i>: Expressing gratitude and appreciation for communal efforts, contributions, and shared resources is deeply ingrained in Fijian culture. Recognizing the collective contributions and showing appreciation fosters a sense of unity and reinforces communal bonds.
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Philippines	Ikalahan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Halammatt</i>: Thank you ● <i>Halammatt ni atang</i>: Thank you very much ● <i>Pahad ni agsapa</i>: Good morning ● <i>Pahad ni maaggaw</i>: Good afternoon ● <i>Pahad ni malabi</i>: Good evening ● <i>Nangkaama</i>: elders (man) ● <i>Naama</i>: old man ● <i>Nangkaba-kol</i>: elders (woman) ● <i>Naba-kol</i>: old woman ● <i>Ungnga</i>: youth/children ● <i>Dayyomti</i>: Traditional song / poem ● <i>Tongtongan</i>: Conference / dialogue ● <i>Istorya</i>: History / stories ● <i>Arapaap</i>: Dreams / aspirations ● <i>Hapit ni addalan</i>: To learn the language ● <i>Pangmanehar ni pitak</i>: Land management ● <i>Inum-an</i>: A farming system based on shifting, or slash and burn clearing of forest for the planting of agricultural and agro-forestry crops ● <i>Makan</i>: Food ● <i>Bakol/Ubi (Kamote)</i>: sweet potato ● <i>Tapay</i>: rice flour wine ● <i>Watwat</i>: A traditional meal. A slice or slices of boiled meat ● <i>Gangha</i>: Gong ● <i>Tayaw</i>: traditional dance ● <i>La-tok</i>: an act in which an elder speaks blessing to people while they are dancing <i>tayaw</i> ● <i>Malabbah kami</i>: An act of courtesy when passing through someone's house which means "We're just passing through" ● <i>Nanlapuan mo</i>: Where did you come from?
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Appendix A: ATLAS Project Survey Form

Survey for Establishing a Web-Based Directory for Indigenous Evaluators

[Asia Pacific Evaluation Association](#) in partnership with [EvalIndigenous](#) is working on establishing a web-based directory of Indigenous evaluators (Atlas project) to enable evaluation commissioners and contractors to locate local evaluation expertise in the Asia Pacific Region (Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands). The purpose of this survey is to gather information about and experiences of Indigenous evaluators and evaluators working in the Indigenous contexts in the **Asia Pacific Region (Except India)**. This survey will take around **15 minutes** to complete.

This survey covers the following sections:

Part 1: Details of respondent and experiences working with Indigenous communities

Part 2: Experiences of Conducting Evaluations with Indigenous Community

Part 3: Additional information

The data collected in this survey will be used to create an online directory of evaluators working in Indigenous contexts. It will also feed into communications materials that curate the voices of Indigenous evaluators and publication/s (e.g., toolkit/ guidebook, protocols) on Indigenous evaluations.

If you have any questions about the project or your involvement, please contact: Randika De Mel: apea.manger@gmail.com or Madhuka Liyanagamage: apea.coordinator@gmail.com

Please **complete this survey by 01 April 2023** to the best of your ability and knowledge.

Consent:

I understand how my personal information will be used and give consent to the use of this information for the purposes stated above. Yes/No

Part 1: Details of the Respondent and Experiences Working with Indigenous Communities

(According to The World Bank, *“Indigenous Peoples [Native people, Aboriginal people, first nations etc] are distinct social and cultural groups that share collective ancestral ties to the lands and natural resources where they live, occupy or from which they have been displaced.”*)

1. Email address:
2. Name (First & Last name):
3. Whats app number:
4. Education and professional qualifications:
5. Role/ Designation:
6. Name of the organization/agency (VOPE, NGOs, Government Agency etc.):
7. Nationality:

8. Country of Residency:
9. Are you an Indigenous evaluator? Yes/ No
10. Are you an evaluator working with Indigenous communities? Yes/ No
11. Years of experience working as an Indigenous evaluator or as an evaluator with Indigenous communities:
12. Countries worked as an evaluator with Indigenous communities:
13. Name/s of Indigenous communities you've worked with:
14. Who commissioned/managed these Indigenous evaluation context studies that you have worked on?

Part 2: Experiences of Conducting Evaluations with Indigenous Community

15. As an evaluator, what are the joys of working with the Indigenous community in your country or in the Asia Pacific Region?
16. Please list the THREE most important current challenges faced by Indigenous communities in your country or in the Asia Pacific Region
17. What are the challenges faced by evaluators when working with Indigenous community?
18. How can evaluators overcome these challenges when working with the Indigenous community?
19. Based on your experience or observation, what are the top 3 lessons that can be learnt about evaluation in the Indigenous contexts?
20. How can EvalIndigenous help change or improve practices on how Indigenous communities are engaged in evaluations?

Part 3: Additional Information

21. If we need further information, can we contact you? Yes/ No
22. Help us find others! If you know other Indigenous evaluators or evaluators working with Indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific Region, please share their contact details with us so we can contact them as well.

Name:

Email address:

Thank you for taking this survey!

Appendix B: List of Interviews Conducted

Name	Designation	Location	Video Interview
Ms. W.M.G.S Wijekoon	Grama Niladhari (GN) of Dambana	Dambana, Sri Lanka	
Mr. Mahesh Weeraman	Naturalist of Mapakada Village Hotel	Dambana, Sri Lanka	X
Mr. Uru warige Vannia Aththo	Leader of the Indigenous Community of Sri Lanka	Dambana, Sri Lanka	X
Mr. Uru Warige Gunabandiya Aththo	Deputy Leader of the Indigenous Community of Sri Lanka	Dambana, Sri Lanka	X
Ms. Uru Warige Somawathi	Daughter of the Leader of the Indigenous Community of Sri Lanka	Dambana, Sri Lanka	X
Mr. Danigala Maha Bandaralage Sudawannia Aththo	Leader of the Rathugala Indigenous Community	Rathugala, Sri Lanka	X
Mr. B.M. Wijesekara	Principal of Rathugala Primary School for Indigenous Children	Rathugala, Sri Lanka	X
Ms. Thala Bandaralage Indrawathi	Wife of the Deputy Leader of the Pollebedda Indigenous Community	Pollebedda, Sri Lanka	X
Prof. J. Kennedy	Professor of English, Department of Languages, Eastern University , Sri Lanka	Batticaloa, Sri Lanka	X
Ms. Caroline T. Quinomes	Youth Leader of the Ikalahan Tribe	Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines	X
Mr. Aulvin Joe Q. Tindaan	Youth Leader of the Ikalahan Tribe	Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines	X
Mr. Tamano B. Bugtong	Elder of the Ikalahan Tribe	Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines	X
Luz B. Tindaan	Elder of the Ikalahan Tribe	Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines	X
Ms. Asami Segundo	Researcher, Youth Leader of Ikalahan Tribe	Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines	X
Dr. Fiona Cram	Co Chair of EvalIndigenous	Auckland, New Zealand	X
Mr. Eroni Wavu	M&E Officer of the iTaukei Affairs Board	Suva, Fiji	X
Ms.Kanchana Lama	Chairperson of Community of Evaluators-Nepal	Kathmandu, Nepal	X

Appendix C: List of FGDs Conducted

Type of FGDs	Total	Description
Female Indigenous community members	2	In Sri Lanka, two FGDs were conducted in Dambana (3 members) and Rathugala (3 members) with female Indigenous community members.
Male Indigenous community members	2	In Sri Lanka, two FGDs were conducted in Dambana (5 members) and Rathugala (3 members) with male Indigenous community members.
Male and female Indigenous community members	1	In Sri Lanka, one FGD was conducted in Pollebedda (9 members) with male (2 members) and female (7 members) Indigenous community members.

Appendix D: Interview Protocols

Key Informant Interviews Informed Consent Form

Date/time	
Location Village/Town) _____	Community name: _____
Interviewer(s)	

Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) and EvalIndigenous (a network of EvalPartners which seeks to bring awareness to, include, and celebrate the cultural traditions and values, languages, legal/political governance practices, and ways of life of Indigenous peoples wherever they live) are developing a handbook/toolkit on Indigenous evaluations in the Asia Pacific Region.. The main purpose of this interview is to learn and understand your experience and insights about Indigenous evaluation practices which will serve as input to the handbook/toolkit.

The interview will take around 45 minutes.

- We would like to seek your permission to record it.
- Your participation is voluntary.
- There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply asking for your thoughts and personal experiences.
- You can ask questions at any point during the interview.
- You can skip any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can leave the interview anytime if you decide that you no longer want to participate.
- We will take notes during the interview. The interview notes and transcripts will be kept confidentially and privately.

Do you consent to participating in this interview?

Do you have any questions before we start? If none, let's proceed.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Indigenous Community Leaders Key Informant Interview Protocol

Interview Questions

- 1) Please explain your role in the community?
- 2) How do you see your community as connected to other communities?
- 3) What are the top 3 challenges faced by your community members? Who addresses these challenges? and how?

Probe: Culture, language, rights, livelihoods etc.

- 4) Do you think government officials can address some of these challenges for the benefit of the Indigenous community? If yes, how?
- 5) How do you make decisions within your community?

Probe: use of data/information, roles of various community members, criteria used when making decisions, questions asked before making judgments and decisions

- 6) Has your community been part of evaluation/research studies before? If so, please explain? What happened? How were community members involved in these studies?
 - a. What did you like about this experience? Why?
 - b. What did you not like about this experience? Why?

- 7) Do you have any stories about partnerships with outsiders and/or Indigenous evaluators that went well?

Probe: What made this different/why? What did you like about this partnership/project/ experience?

- 8) Do you have any stories about such partnerships with outsiders/or Indigenous evaluators that didn't go well?

Probe: What did you not like about this partnership/ project/ experience?

- 9) What can evaluators do to make sure they are being respectful when collecting data with your culture and community?

Probe: When conducting interviews, use of language etc

- 10) What should evaluators take into consideration when partnering with your community for evaluations?
 - a. What customs or traditions do you want evaluators to recognize and honour?

Closing: These are all of the questions we have for you. Do you have any questions for us?

Thank you so much for your time!

Government Officials Key Informant Interview Protocol

Interview Questions

- 1) Please explain your relationship with the Indigenous community?
Probe: How often do you meet them? How effective are the interactions?
- 2) Please explain the challenges faced by the Indigenous community members?
Probe: Culture, language, rights etc.
- 3) How do you think government officials can address some of these challenges for the benefit of the Indigenous community?
- 4) Please describe if any research/evaluation studies have been conducted with the Indigenous community in your area?
Probe: Any stories of good and harmful practices done by researchers/evaluators
- 5) What can evaluators do to make sure Indigenous evaluators are being respectful when collecting data in the Indigenous community?
Probe: When conducting interviews, use of language etc
- 6) Please explain what recommendations do you have for evaluators that want to conduct evaluations studies with the Indigenous community?

Closing: These are all of the questions we have for you. Do you have any questions for us?

Thank you so much for your time!

Demographic Questions

1. Name of your community? _____
2. Title in the community? _____
3. Profession? _____
4. Gender? _____
5. Age? _____

Indigenous Evaluators Key Informant Interview Protocol

Interview Questions

1. As an evaluator, what are your motives or interests of working with the Indigenous community in your country or in the Asia Pacific Region?
2. Please list the three most important current challenges faced by Indigenous communities in your country or in the Asia Pacific Region?
3. What are the challenges faced by evaluators when working with Indigenous community?
4. How can evaluators overcome these challenges when working with the Indigenous community?
5. Based on your experience or observation, please describe the top three lessons that can be learnt about evaluations in Indigenous contexts?
6. What can evaluators do to make sure Indigenous evaluators are being respectful and culturally sensitive when collecting data in the Indigenous community?
 - a. Probe: When conducting interviews, use of language etc
7. What ethical practices should evaluators need to consider when conducting evaluations studies with the Indigenous community?
8. What evaluation or research methodologies have you used that have worked well with Indigenous communities? Please share how you used them and what was the result.
9. How can EvalIndigenous help change or improve practices on how Indigenous communities are engaged in evaluations?

Closing: These are all of the questions we have for you. Do you have any questions for us?

Thank you so much for your time!

Demographic Questions

1. Name of the Indigenous communities you have worked with? _____
2. Role/designation? _____
3. Education/professional qualifications? _____
4. Gender? _____
5. Age? _____
6. Email? _____
7. Name of the community: _____

EvalIndigenous: Indigenous Voices Project

CONSENT FORM

Statement of consent: I have read this information sheet and consent form. I have had the opportunity to discuss this project with a project coordinator or project team member. I have had my questions answered by them in a language I understand. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I believe that I have not been unduly influenced to participate in the project. Any relationship (such as employer, supervisor, colleague or family member) I may have with EvalIndigenous has not affected my decision to participate. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form after signing in. I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that I may choose to withdraw at any time. I understand how my personal information will be collected and used. I agree to be **video recorded / audio recorded / photographed / notes taken** (please circle your choices). Signing below indicates that I am willing to participate in this project.

Participant signature:

Participant printed name:

Date signed: (day/month/year)

I, the undersigned, have fully explained the relevant details of this project to the participant named above and believe that the participant has understood and has knowingly given their consent.

Interviewer name and signature: _____

Protocol for Video Interviews with Evaluators

Introduction and Consent

Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) and EvalIndigenous (a network of EvalPartners which seeks to bring awareness to, include, and celebrate the cultural traditions and values, languages, legal/political governance practices, and ways of life of Indigenous peoples wherever they live) are developing a handbook on Indigenous evaluations in the Asia Pacific Region. The main purpose of this video interview is to collect stories about evaluators' experiences in and insights about evaluations with Indigenous communities. Your video will be used to develop audio-visual content that highlights the importance of culturally sensitive evaluation policies and practices. Your quotes or write up may also be included in the handbook as examples to help illustrate a point or principle on Indigenous evaluations.

Please confirm that you consent to having your video taken for the purpose stated (Wait for interviewee's consent).

Do you have any questions before we proceed? Yes _ No _

If yes, please what do you want to know further?

Guide Questions:

1. What is your name, designation and organizational affiliation?
2. How long have you been working as an Indigenous evaluator or evaluator working with Indigenous communities? Which IPs and in which countries have you worked with?
3. As an evaluator, why do you want to work with Indigenous communities?
4. Can you tell me about your experience with Indigenous communities for an evaluation?
5. In general, based on your experience or observation, how do local/Indigenous people feel about evaluations?
6. Can you tell me about a time(s) when an evaluation with an Indigenous community has been done really well? What worked well for local/ Indigenous people?
7. Based on your experience, what are the (top 3) major challenges faced by evaluators when working with Indigenous communities?
 - What did you do to overcome these challenges?
 - What else should be done to overcome these challenges?
8. What evaluation or research methodologies have you used that have worked well with Indigenous communities?
 - Please share how you used them and what was the result.
9. Has anything been documented (writing, video/audio/pictures) about good evaluation practice in your country? e.g., by a local evaluation organisation, or by evaluators or local people themselves (e.g., ethics / protocols)
 - If yes, can you share this document with us?
10. What ethical principles and/or practices should evaluators need to consider when conducting evaluations studies with the Indigenous community?
 - Why is it important for evaluators to practice these principles?

Protocols for Video Interviews with Indigenous Leaders (Indigenous Knowledge Holders)

Introduction and Consent

Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) and EvalIndigenous (a network of EvalPartners which seeks to bring awareness to, include, and celebrate the cultural traditions and values, languages, legal/political governance practices, and ways of life of Indigenous peoples wherever they live) are developing a handbook on Indigenous evaluations in the Asia Pacific Region. The main purpose of this video interview is to collect stories about Indigenous communities' experiences and insights about local evaluation practices. Your video will be used to develop audio-visual content that highlights the importance of culturally responsive evaluation policies and practices. Your quotes or write up may also be included in the handbook as examples to help illustrate a point or principle on Indigenous evaluations.

Please confirm that you consent to having your video taken for the purpose stated (Wait for interviewee's consent).

Do you have any questions before we proceed? Yes_ No _
If yes, please what do you want to know further?

Guide Questions:

- Tell me about yourself and the community you live in
- How do you make decisions within your community? How did such practice come about?
 - Probe: use of data/information, roles of various community members, criteria used when making decisions, questions asked before making judgments and decisions
- What are the top 3 challenges faced by your community members?
 - What projects/ initiatives have been done to address them? Who initiated these projects/ initiatives?
 - Probe: Culture, language, rights, livelihoods etc.
- Has your community been part of evaluation studies before? If so, what kind? What happened? How were community members involved in these studies?
 - What did you like about this experience? Why?
 - What did you not like about this experience? Why?
- Has anything changed in your life and/or your community's life because of the evaluation?
- What can evaluators do to make sure they are being respectful when collecting data with your culture and community?
 - Probe: When conducting interviews, use of language etc
- What should evaluators take into consideration when partnering with your community for evaluations?
 - What customs or traditions do you want evaluators to recognize and honour?

Focus Group Discussions Informed Consent Form

Date/time	
Interviewees (list of participants by gender to be added)	
Location Village/Town)	
Name of community	

Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) and EvalIndigenous (a network of EvalPartners which seeks to bring awareness to, include, and celebrate the cultural traditions and values, languages, legal/political governance practices, and ways of life of Indigenous peoples wherever they live) are developing a handbook on Indigenous stories and ethical guidelines for Indigenous evaluators in the Asia Pacific Region. As a key stakeholder of this study, we would like to ask your permission in order to participate in this interview voluntarily. The main purpose of this focus group discussion (FGDs) is to learn and understand your experience in and insights about evaluations which will serve as input to the handbook/toolkit we are developing on Indigenous evaluation protocols.

The interview will take around 60 minutes.

- We would like to seek your permission to record it.
- You can ask questions at any point during the interview.
- There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply asking for your thoughts and personal experiences.
- You can skip any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can leave the interview anytime if you decide that you no longer want to participate.
- We will take notes during the interview. The interview notes and transcripts will be kept confidentially and privately.
- During the FGD, only one person at a time should answer the question.
- If you want to speak during the FGD, please raise your hand.

We are asking for your verbal consent in order to participate in this interview. Thank you in advance for your time.

Indigenous Community Members FGDs Interview Protocol

Interview Questions

- 1) How do you see your community as connected to other communities?
- 2) What are the top 3 challenges faced by your community members? Who addresses these challenges? and how?

Probe: Culture, language, rights, livelihoods etc.

- 3) How do you make decisions within your community?

Probe: use of data/information, roles of various community members, criteria used when making decisions, questions asked before making judgments and decisions

- 4) Has your community been part of evaluation/research studies before? If so, what kind? What happened?
 - a. What did you like about this experience? Why?
 - b. What did you not like about this experience? Why?

- 5) Do you have any stories about partnerships with outsiders and/or Indigenous evaluators that went well?

Probe: What made this different/why? What did you like about this partnership/project/ experience?

- 6) Do you have any stories about such partnerships with outsiders/or Indigenous evaluators that didn't go well?

Probe: What did you not like about this partnership/ project/ experience?

- 7) What can evaluators do to make sure they are being respectful when collecting data with your culture and community?

Probe: When conducting interviews, use of language etc

Facilitator/s, please go around and ask them what kind of questions they propose.

- 8) What should evaluators take into consideration when partnering with your community for evaluations?
 - a. What customs or traditions do you want evaluators to recognize and honour?

Closing: These are all of the questions we have for you. Do you have any questions for us?

Thank you so much for your time!

Demographic Questions

Name of the Group Member	Profession	Gender	Age	Phone Number



APEA

Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association



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