

**A SUMMARY REPORT**

**AFRICA, RUSSIA, AND ARCTIC  
CONSULTATION: CO-CREATION OF  
AN INCLUSIVE CONSERVATION  
ACADEMY**



LAKE BOGORIA, KENYA. PHOTO CREDIT: CARSON KIBURO



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# AFRICA, RUSSIA, AND ARCTIC CONSULTATION: CO-CREATION OF AN INCLUSIVE CONSERVATION ACADEMY

On June 10, 2021, Tribal Link Foundation, in collaboration with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), led a consultation on Inclusive and Indigenous-led Conservation in Africa, Russia, and Arctic. The information garnered from the consultation will assist in the proposed development of an Inclusive Conservation Academy. There were 41 total participants from 14 countries.

**Session moderators:** R. Múkaró Borrero, Tribal Link Foundation, Winnie Kodi, and Carson Kiburo, Jamii Asilia Centre.

**Technical team:** Sandra Patricia Visbal, WWF, Joost Van Montfort, WWF; Ghazali Ohorella, Tribal Link Foundation; Washington Barasa Kiptoo, Jamii Asilia Centre

## Consultation Objectives

The objective of the Africa, Russia, and Arctic Consultation on Inclusive Conservation was to a) Report on and catalog best practices, challenges, and gaps in conservation practices, b) Identify areas and approaches for capacity building initiatives for IPLC and non-IPLCs, and c) Provide recommendations on how Indigenous Peoples can take the lead in building capacity in inclusive conservation.

## Program Agenda

The program agenda included a welcome; a presentation on Inclusive Conservation by WWF; a first Q & A round; 2 breakout groups focusing on 4 cases studies; reconvening to discuss breakout groups; and final round of discussion.



Bikin National Park, Russia. Photo Credit: Olga Ukhvatkina

**For related documents, videos, and other resources, visit**

<https://www.triballink.org/inclusive-conservation-academy>

# AFRICA, RUSSIA, AND ARCTIC CONSULTATION:

**Inclusive Conservation, Sandra , WWF:  
Presentation summary:**

Inclusive conservation is conservation that is led by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities who see nature and people as one. It embraces the rights, needs and values of the communities and groups whose knowledge, practices and innovations have preserved biodiversity and ecosystems. Within this context, the initial concept for an Inclusive Conservation Academy (ICA) is a capacity development mechanism to support the strategic agenda to shift away from "fortress conservation" and into conservation approaches that are IPLC-led and rights-based in approach.

While initially starting to build such capacity in the WWF network, and especially for those involved in landscape/seascape conservation, a proposed goal is that initiative should become a multi-organizational platform that not only is led by and serves Indigenous Peoples, but also other big international conservation organizations, government agencies, donor institutions, and even the private sector.

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CONSERVATION THAT IS LED BY  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND  
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NATURE AND PEOPLE AS ONE."  
- SANDRA VISBAL, WWF***

## **Breakout Session Case Studies**

**Indigenous Peoples and Conservation in Russia: Alexander Arbachakov, presenter:**

There are about 200,000 Indigenous Peoples across a vast territory in Russia. Russian legislation on conservation and Indigenous Peoples includes articles in the Constitution of the Russian Federation. These articles address the importance of natural resources and the environment,

responsibilities of citizens to the environment, the right to a favorable environment, compensation for damage, and a guarantee on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Other regulations and codes support these constitutional provisions. The challenge is implementation of these laws and provisions. The government organizes "Days of Protection from Environmental Hazard", which brings positive awareness about environmental issues to the general public. This is a time for activists to raise concerns about environmental issues. Inclusive environmental protection in Russia can include legislation, program development, some inclusion of the public in decision-making, public discussions, monitoring, and the creation of protected areas.

In the Republic of Mountain Altai; for example, the diverse, cross-sectoral working group produced protected zones for natural monuments. In the Primorsky Territory, a multi-sectoral working group that included representatives of Indigenous Peoples to create Biken and Ugede Legend national parks. These parks have community advisory boards. There are continued challenges; however, as Indigenous Peoples territories are still exploited for resources without adequate consultation. The Norilisk Nickel's coal extraction and oil spills are examples of this exploitation, which led to environmental disasters.

## Breakout Session Case Studies

**Madagascar: Ambodivohitra Kobaina** is a community-based organization (CBO) established in 2013 which manages 3,201 ha of humid forest in the COMATSA protected area in the northern highland landscape of Madagascar. It has responsible and respected leaders and active members from the community that engage with other stakeholders such as private sector, savings groups and municipalities, and together, plan activities, implement and monitor them. The CBO conducts patrolling activities to monitor deforestation and control illegal hunting, they also carry out reforestation activities. A committee made up of multiple levels of authorities (mayor or deputy mayor, deputy of local community government, and representative of CBO) has been set up and imposes sanctions on people who have created crimes in the forest. The CBO has sustainable funding that comes from growing vanilla beans, annual bonuses paid by community savings groups, and contributions from the municipality. Community members are more aware of the importance of forest conservation and also receive benefits from its conservation. As a result, deforestation in the Ambodivohitra Kobaina village has decreased over the last 3 years.

**Community-led Conservation in Namibia, Eric Xabeb, Chief of Conservancy Manager, Tsiseb Conservancy:** Post-independence conservation laws in Namibia granted rights over wildlife and natural resources to rural community groups called conservancies. This has led to the expansion of community-led conservation in Namibia. Conservancies are collective joint efforts from the communities, in which people come together to decide how to conserve their own natural resources and wildlife, and they benefit from these decisions they are taking.

Conservancies are recognized by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. The Tsiseb Conservancy, in Erongo Region, was gazetted in 2001 and is one of the largest conservancies in Namibia with 7,913 km<sup>2</sup>, a population of 2,636 and around 509 members. The Tsiseb Conservancy has seen tangible benefits that go directly to the community from agreements with private partners, like the tourism sector, generating their own revenue. Additionally, they have been able to generate their own revenue in order to work independently.

**Indigenous and Local Community-led Conservation in Kenya, Mali Ole Kaunga, Director of IMPACT, presenter:** IMPACT stands for Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation. IMPACT works with local communities and marginalized groups in Laikipia, Samburu, Marsabit and Isiolo counties in building community resilience advocating for human and land rights, good governance, policy formulation and social justice. For IMPACT, we consider the term Inclusive Conservation to be “holistic conservation.” This form of conservation needs to “include the recognition of the people (communal sector) and their legitimate rights.”

These include the rights to natural resources and people need to represent themselves. There are several pillars that need to be considered including: 1. Harmonious, healthy connection between people and place. 2. Flourishing culture, language, traditional expressions and institutions. 3. Strong kinship, between peoples, and between peoples and other living things (between species), as well as with land and water. 4. Identity: What makes people thrive. 5. Understanding and recognition of shared spaces (e.g. two different communities sharing territory). 6. Consideration and respect of spirituality and “place as sacred” (land linked to traditional stories, religious shrines, etc.).

For IMPACT, "inclusive" means we speak about people, animals, soil, water, traditional knowledge, and spirituality, among others, together within developing legal frameworks. Inclusive Conservation is good for everyone. In Kenya, the 2016 Community Land Bill is a way that communities can legally register their land to plan and conserve resources in a form of collective title to their ancestral lands. IMPACT is also working on an Elders/traditional knowledge academy to assist in this shift of power and paradigms.

## **Guiding Questions for Breakout Groups**

### **a) What are the capacities that Indigenous Peoples should develop to be able to manage IPLC-led approach partnerships with non-IP entities?**

Participant responses included: There is a need to understand how to pass laws and legislation (e.g. Community Land Act in Kenya) as well as the development of negotiation skills. Examples of successful inclusive conservation initiatives should be shared or promoted so others can learn from them; Training of community conservancy IPLC officials and other community leaders on basic knowledge of project management, institutional governance, and technical support. People should be empowered to accept their role and "take ownership" of and sustain their conservancy over a long term. This is linked to legal reform and pro-community legislation. There is a measurable difference in conservation efforts, for example, in Namibia. Wildfire in Namibia has increased outside of national parks into communal lands. This is partly the result of communities taking pride and ownership along with the recognition and respect of rights.

### **b) What are key elements that should be developed for pilot training modules or activities for both non-IPs and IPs engaging in inclusive conservation?**

Participants responses included: Communities should learn how to develop their own plans (eg community based resource management plans); How to apply cultural practices in management and conservation so that this idea is or does not become an alien concept; Some legal training or orientation and lobbying skills; Understanding of trans-boundary issues; How can community initiatives operate independently from the government; Strengthen institutional policies to overcome governance challenges; Training of conservation officials and community members on CITES and related instruments; Monitoring compliance with the provisions of gender equality and affirmative action concerning wildlife management and conservation; On developing training modules, they should also include issues of traditional knowledge and that integration and linkage with the vast knowledge systems that are out there. Issues about Indigenous Peoples and sustainability is also a good module.

### **c) Besides the presentations that were shared here, are there other best practices to learn from?**

Participant responses included constitutional reform and the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (2013) in Kenya. The protection of monuments of nature such as Bikin National Park in Russia was also highlighted. The Udege people in Russia are directly involved in Biken and the management plan calls for protection of the forest, animals, and the way of life of the Udege People.

This required actual change in legislation, which is very difficult in Russia. Partnerships were required such as the support of WWF. This was different from UDEGE LEGEND, which originally did not take into account the special situation of Indigenous Peoples and their connection to the land. Non-inclusion mostly leads to negative examples, like NORILSK, causing environmental disasters like oil spills in the KRASNOYARSK territory. Additional challenges, such as in the case of Crimea, also include the lack of recognition as Indigenous Peoples and the lack of political will to work with IPLCs.

Community based organisations can promote conservation and generate sustainable funding. In Madagascar, for instance, a CBO provides seeds and grows for vanilla or TSARARAVINA. They also receive contributions at the local level from the municipality. This makes community members more aware of the importance of forest conservation and also allows them to access and share in the benefits from the conservation of forests that are nature based. This awareness and benefit sharing is also important to shift from reliance on chemical products.

An additional successful initiative in Madagascar is a committee that is made up of the local community government officials and representatives of community organizations, which respects and includes multiple levels of authority. This committee organizes patrols through the forest and is able to impose sanctions on people that committed crimes in the forest. This initiative includes an official reporting mechanism for these violations. Most of the people violating the forest protocols come from outside of the community, so it is not a reflection of the local community.

These sanctions make people afraid to commit a crime and it creates more of an atmosphere to respect the forest and the law.

Another example shared was one from the International Whaling Commission which, during the 1980s, was trying to understand how best to protect the bowhead whale. Consultation was conducted among the Inuit people, as they have depended upon the bowhead whale for their livelihoods for centuries. They went to see what rules the Inuit people followed in the Arctic to continue to live in harmony with the bowhead whales for centuries.

In Kenya, the Endorois have a memorandum of understanding with the Kenya Wildlife Service, Baringo County Council and the Kenyan Commission to UNESCO that recognises Lake Bogoria as Endorois ancestral land and requires Endorois inclusion in land management. Constitutional reform in Kenya has also facilitated more opportunities for community-led conservation; however, political will for implementation of these laws are critical.

Learning from community heroes, like Wangarĩ Muta Maathai, was also highlighted. Maathai was a Kenyan social, environmental, and political activist and the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.



Inuit standing beside umiak on sled, Point Barrow, Alaska

## Guiding Questions for Discussions

**a) What is it that non-IPs (Conservation NGOs, donors, government, private sector) should understand well when working with Indigenous Peoples (IPs).**

Participants' responses highlighted that initiatives should include a focus on "transferring power" rather than just capacity building. This means resources should be transferred directly to IPLC communities and or organizations. In addition, participants also highlighted the need to understand legal reforms that have granted inclusivity, as well as the recognition and respect of rights that has by extension given IPs strength. Some questions to consider are; What is the historical context of the community and country? What are the legal challenges? Is there a governmental infrastructure to facilitate the necessary steps needed (e.g. Land tenure system in Namibia; Community Land ACT 2016 in Kenya)? In Namibia, when inclusive conservation was applied endangered wildlife (Elephants, rhinos, lions) numbers doubled; Capacity support often starts and ends with those in leadership, but it should also benefit the local community.

It is key to understand that respecting individuals and their customs can go a long way to help communities conserve local ecosystems. One example presented was that "if you ask people that live in the middle of the forest to change their behaviors" it is not as likely to succeed. The rationale for this statement is that these communities can be more vested in their traditional customs, strategies, and their own authorities regarding sustainable forest management.

Florent Diary Elizara, President, Ambodivohitra Kobaina >

The speaker continued by stating that if you ask people who live on the edge of the forest to change their behavior, they may be more willing to accept changes that will lead to sustainable forest management.

In Kenya, and other countries in Africa, Indigenous Peoples and local communities have long been disproportionately affected by State entities, as well as conservation measures and policies, because large areas of IP's lands lack official title and have remain under-developed from the perspective of the State. Additional challenges include the reality that some Indigenous Peoples view wildlife conservation as an alien concept that only serves the interests of the State and tourists. This exacerbates the endemic incidences of human and wildlife conflict and competing land ownership claims between Indigenous Peoples and the State. In the past and into the present, there remains a lack of legal frameworks for benefit sharing and continued denied access into protected conservation areas for religious and or cultural practices and grazing rights. (e.g. See Endorois case versus the government of Kenya <https://bit.ly/3yzO6Sc>).

Some concern was raised around the use of the word "conservation" and it was questioned whether another word or term could be considered such as long-term sustainability.



## Guiding Questions for Discussions

The word inclusion was also questioned, particularly on who is being included within this term: is it IP (who have recognized by everyone that they are effective and have the capacities for stewarding for their lands) including others like conservation organizations; or is it conservation organizations saying they have all the science and power and are coming to Indigenous Peoples to say they are including them in their programs.

To the question of inclusivity another participant replied that it means (from the Kenyan context) going beyond wildlife conservation and ensuring that those cultural practices that have enabled Indigenous Peoples to conserve the ecosystem and natural resources are being taken into consideration, it is how IP conserve their territories in a holistic way. He also highlighted the importance of having governance systems that bring together science and traditional knowledge. Additionally, it was noted that defining or redefining the word inclusive conservation is part of the process of having a consultation and shaping of the academy.

Conservation organizations should ensure that the advocacy efforts they engage in should support Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Efforts should be made by partners to help facilitate getting IPLCs to international forums where issues related to IPLC land and culture are being discussed and regulated. Non-IPs should, whenever possible, support IPLC advocacy efforts towards government reform at the national level, as well as influencing governments to be wary of engagement with the private sector, especially extractive industries. Indigenous Peoples should be a part of these conversations if these engagements affect the territories of Indigenous Peoples.

Lack of recognition, lack of voice, lack of space and access are all extreme challenges toward making positive change for IPLCs.

### **b) What skills and values would be important in these engagements?**

Participant responses included: Understanding of negotiation and legal skills; the inclusion of Elders and traditional knowledge in these initiatives; establishing community conservancies, especially the ones that follow country specific legal frameworks, require some capacity building.

One additional question to consider in terms of inclusivity is who is being inclusive? For example, IPs are internationally recognized as having the capacities and knowledge to manage their lands. This is affirmed as IP territories remain rich in biodiversity. Another perspective, beyond capacity building, is for conservation organizations who have access to resources, especially financial resources, should shift those resources to IPLCs directly. It is a different approach than “we (conservation organization) have the resources, we will include you (Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities).



## Guiding Questions for Discussions

This would address the power imbalance that existed or continues to exist in many of these types of “partnerships” between IPLC and others.

An additional perspective on being Inclusive, beyond what is currently being invested, is that IP holistic perspectives include not only wildlife management but the conservation cultural practices and traditional knowledge that would be applied concurrently to water, soils, and plants. It is important that both science and traditional knowledge work together for the benefit of the people and the environment.

### **d) What organizations and capacity building programs/projects already exist that can provide support?**

WWF’s role in supporting Russian Indigenous Peoples during the Biken National Park process, as well as in Namibia and Madagascar was highlighted. Minority Rights Group International was also mentioned as supporting the Endorois case in Kenya. ICUN and Conservation International were highlighted for their support of IMPACT’s initiatives in Kenya.

### **e) What resources, in terms of manuals, guide materials, presentations, and other such capacity-building materials are already available?**

Participants did not mention any resources, in terms of manuals, guide materials, presentations, and other such capacity-building materials, already available. However, understanding supportive national legislation was highlighted as a capacity building tool.

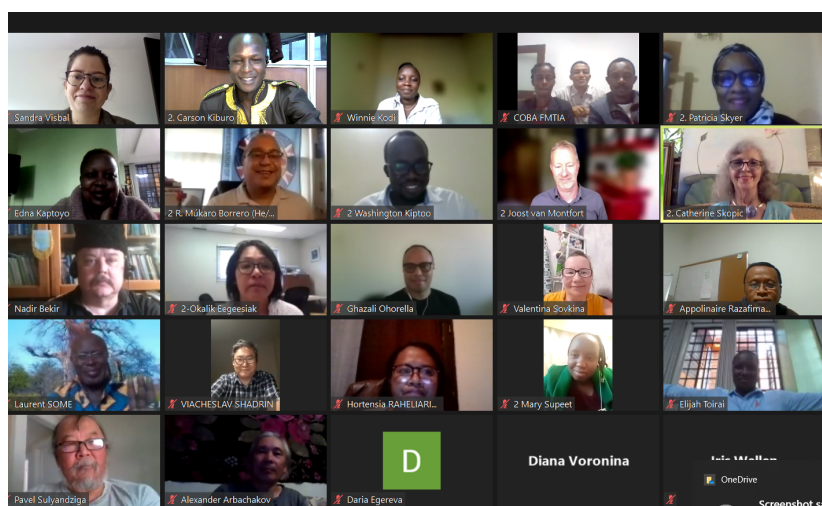
### **f) Is the idea of a pool of IP expert leaders being the trainers or “faculty members” of an Inclusive Conservation Academy feasible and desirable? Who can be in the initial pool of such IP faculty for the Academy?**

Participants agreed the Academy should be led and designed by IPs. It was continually noted that IP inclusion in any and all conservation initiatives is critical for positive change not only for the environment, but for the people themselves.

### **Q: Would you like to receive follow-up on this consultation and the process for the establishment of an Inclusive Conservation Academy?**

Most attendees expressed great interest in the subject and the possibility to continue to engage as the process moves forward.

In photo, some of the participants attending the 10 June virtual consultation. There were 41 total participants from 14 countries. >





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