

Founding meeting of a  
**Work Theme on ICCAs and sustainable livelihoods for the ICCA Consortium**

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June, 9:00-18:00 hours EST

Room H1252 Concordia University, Montreal (Canada)

**Synthesis of the minutes and preliminary conclusions**  
**first draft for circulation and enrichment by all meeting's participants**

**Participants**

- Paul Sein Twa—Honorary member and representative of Member KESAN (Burma)
- Dave de Vera – Member of the Council of Elders of the Consortium and representative of founding Member PAFID (The Philippines)
- Dr. Zelealem Tefera Ashkenazi – Member of Council and representative of Member Guassa Community Conserved Area (Ethiopia)
- Dr. Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend (Global Coordinator)
- Dr. Mike Ferguson – Honorary member (Canada)
- Dr. Aili Pyhälä—Member of the Executive Committee (*attended only part of the meeting*) (Finland)
- Li Bo—Honorary member and co-founder of the Consortium (China) (*attended only part of the meeting*)
- Dr. Rosie Cooney – Honorary member (Australia) (*attended one hour via skype*)

**Apologies**

- Prof. Colin Scott – Representative of Member CICADA (Canada) (*CICADA keen to pursue work*)
- Vivienne Solis – Member of Council (*keen to pursue work, specially in the marine environment*)
- Albert Chan Dzul – Regional coordinator for Mesoamerica and Representative of Member U Yich Lu'um (*called to attend the Secretariat meeting*)

**Background**

The Council of the ICCA Consortium has discussed in various occasions the importance of clarifying the links between ICCAs and sustainable livelihoods and has stated to be keen to support a Work Theme on the topic, which it considers of crucial importance for the meaningful understanding and promotion of ICCAs. The Council suggested that the Theme identifies **needs, challenges and unique opportunities of indigenous peoples and local communities who are custodians of ICCAs with regards to meeting and maintaining their livelihoods meaningfully and sustainably**. It also suggests translating this understanding into recommendations for policy and practice to be promoted as part of various international policies conventions and events (e.g., food policy, CBD NBSAPs, etc.). The Theme is expected to work at a global, regional, national and local level, identifying and highlighting meaningful lessons and examples, promoting communication and networking among all levels and leveraging resources for specific lines of research and action. The Council believes that a deeper understanding and analysis of the links between ICCAs and sustainable livelihoods, matched by the advocacy power of the Consortium as a global member-based association, are likely to result in enhanced policy and practice at a scale closer to matching current needs. To respond to the decisions of the Council, two relevant individuals in the Consortium were sounded in the Spring 2018 for their willingness to take on a co-leader function. A first exploratory meeting was also called among various Consortium affiliates with specific experience and concern.

## The meeting

The founding meeting of the Theme took place in Montreal in the occasion of CBD SBSTTA and the Consortium Extraordinary General Assembly. It started by a round of introduction that provided an occasion for the recounting of specific “cases” of ICCAs and livelihoods, including telling and sometimes extreme cases. Some bullet-point notes from the discussion that went on the entire day are reported below:

- The “infamous” resort of Cancun (Mexico) started as an ecotourism project...
- Inuit elders are holders of exceptionally detailed livelihoods knowledge and skills... they used to be a nomadic people for the sake of sustainability and to address change...
- In general, IPs in Canada are re-building and re-inventing their livelihoods
- The Aita negrito peoples of the Philippines used to survive on food gathered in their forest ICCA and were highly discriminated upon (e.g., most of their children were bullied out of school)... Now because of a PES scheme that pays for water from their ICCA, they all have filled refrigerators, free electricity and water, solar power and medical care, and they all send their kids to school with private cars... These benefits are hugely appreciated by the Aita, although there is a worry that their link with the forest gets reduced to monetary benefits and their deeper, existential link will weaken and possibly vanish...(the Alta say that this is impossible, it will not happen even if they will no longer go and gather food there...)
- As a contrast, the Kogi of Colombia resist development with all their strength
- An ICCA is an insurance policy for a community-- the centre of culture and traditional knowledge for survival and identity
- The more formalised the system, the more vulnerable to attack! The strongest systems are those that did not bend to modernity at all.... But others say that that only those institutions that adapt do survive!
- Sustainability is the capacity to respond to change... which is not a matter of management but of governance—**having a governing institution capable to respond/ adapt/ survive change...**
- Sustainability is a matter of responsibility, respect and reciprocity. These are core values!
- Many ICCAs are ancient examples of sustainable livelihoods, but other are modern examples...
- For many the key question is: “how much we have?”. For the Inuit is “Do we have enough?” This is a world view standing on core values that ensure sustainability!
- What are the core values of a community? They are usually embedded in a vision and *plan de vida* (life plan)... but change will happen as life is change...
- We need both the recognition of land/ tenure security and to be able to cope with change
- At times, external destructive forces are overwhelming, and the ICCA will die...
- Maps of great precision are crucial if we want to file any court case...
- What do we mean by sustainable livelihoods? Is that food and water sovereignty? Is it a stable climate? Health and wellbeing? A viable relationship between a community and a territory? Is it avoiding collapse?
- The ecovillage movement is inspiring but – with respect to ICCAs – it misses the focus on the governance aspect, and the internal solidarity...
- CICADA has a programme on sustainable livelihoods and food sovereignty... we should learn from them and not re-invent the wheel...
- The information revolution is changing all, including sustainability...
- Shall we reason in terms of the 5 capitals framework (social, human, physical, networking and financial)?

- Should we drop “sustainable livelihoods” and talk about “**resilient life**” instead?
- When we talk sustainability, we actually talk about ICCAs, as we can argue that sustainability means: 1. a community that is strong and in full internal solidarity; 2. a territory that has ecological integrity and 3. a governing institution that is adapt and function well under challenging circumstances (is resilient) ... All this together is the ICCA definition... in other words, the relationship we are seeking to understand is a chicken and egg relationship...

ICCAs	← →	Sustainable livelihoods
<i>Community solidarity</i>		<i>Resilience</i>
<i>Territorial integrity</i>		<i>Governance vitality</i>
<i>Functioning governance institution... with core values of capacity, respect, reciprocity...</i>		<i>Not only “earning our bread” but also “earning our identity and wisdom”</i>
		<i>The good life</i>
		<i>Coping with neo-liberal growth</i>

After discussing this relationship for quite some time, we recognised that “sustainable livelihoods” is a world into itself and could have several diverse interpretations. We do not wish to choose one definition over another... We’d also wish to influence the SDGs to recognise ICCAs and include ICCA-related indicators...

### **What problems are we to address?**

What do we mean by “ICCAs and sustainable livelihoods”? Topical issues may span from sustainable use of wildlife to food sovereignty, from the design of sustainable settlements to water and waste management systems... Shall we focus on any one topic or pursue them all?

**Do we know the answers to the question “how do ICCAs influence livelihoods”** and need to communicate them, or do we need to work out the answers to the question first, i.e., there is there a lack of understanding about how ICCAs support sustainable livelihoods? If yes, is this by the Consortium members or by others who need to be "educated"?

### **Do we know the answer to the question “What makes an ICCA endure?”**

Possibly soon, nothing will remain the same... these are chaotic times, we do not know where we are heading, livelihoods styles are changing... Our first priority should be answering the question ourselves, and identifying the barriers to achieving better sustainable livelihoods through ICCAs. After this, the Consortium may evolve a broader campaign of communications and advocacy. We should note that ILC has resources and is committed to supporting locally governed ecosystems...

**Do we understand the struggles/challenges that ICCA custodians face in achieving and maintaining their livelihoods?** Are there resource-people or institutions that that could provide support in terms of best practices, lessons learned, other information, tools, models, capacities, inspirations & examples & experiences to strengthen/ revitalise livelihoods based on a collectively governed, managed and conserved ICCA (e.g. via food, energy, shelter, socio-political-economic organisation, health, culture, etc.)?

### **Do we need and want primarily an approach focused on experience-sharing, "sense-making" and inspiration, or a policy advocacy approach (strengthening our arguments), or both?**

We want experience sharing... but we also shall make a difference...we want to demonstrate alternatives to the mainstream neglect of ICCAs and livelihoods..

## **A way forward**

We may start by a **self-identified and Consortium-appointed Core Team that will lead and oversee the Work Theme's activities**. The Team may soon wish to **fundraise**, and **commission case studies** identified and designed to enable not only experience sharing but also to **articulate and understand how/when/why ICCAs support livelihoods** and find ways to **capture lessons in a way that can be broadly shared and inspire/ empower others**. The lessons should be oriented towards policy development but also local application.

## **Possible Core Team**

Dr. Rosie Coonie (Australia)

Paul Sein Twa (Burma) co-chairs

Dr. Aili Pyhälä (Finland)

Neema Pathak (India)

Dr. Mike Ferguson (Canada)

Dr. Ameliyali Ramos (Mexico) – *(pending confirmation)*

## **The first proposed steps**

Grazia prepares and sends out the minutes and core initiative to all the participants in the meeting of the 28 of June and all that may be interested in taking part (**for comments, please!**) -- the final minutes are uploaded in the Consortium web site -- by end of July 2018.

The co-chairs draft a **slim plan** (key objectives for the Work Theme, initial activities and needed budget) discuss it and get it approved within the Core Team – by end of August 2018. The slim plan is likely to include case studies of ways of recognising ICACs that have has an impart (positive or negative or complex) on livelihoods.

The co-chairs diffuse the slim plan to the overall Consortium list and recruit Theme members based on willingness to volunteer at least *some* time and efforts. They also gather comments and suggestions about how to fund and implement the slim plan and adjust it as they see appropriate – by end of September 2018.

With the help of the Consortium Secretariat the Core Team develops a concept project and submits it to various donors – by end of October 2018.

The Core Team meets at the Consortium GA and assess its own progress and follow-up – by end of November 2018.