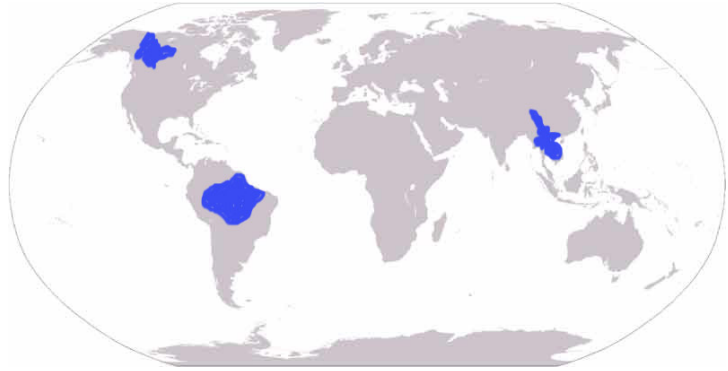


Tracking Change – Summary of Issues

Public Presentations at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (April 29-May 4, 2019)

Tracking Change is a six year initiative funded through the *Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council* (2016-2021). Guided by a Traditional Knowledge Steering Committee (of elders, Chiefs and other leaders), it currently comprises a network of more than 60 Indigenous, Caboclos and ethnic Lao/Thai communities and partner organizations from northwestern Canada (Mackenzie), Tapajos (Lower Amazon) and the Lower Mekong River Basins. The purpose of the project is to build capacity for Indigenous peoples and local fishing communities to document and share their own knowledge about changes in the sustainability of freshwater ecosystems and the associated impacts on local fishing livelihoods and well-being. Community-based projects have resulted in new insights about these river basins as well as methodological innovations for documenting and sharing local and Traditional Knowledge.



UNPFII MANDATE	ISSUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF TRACKING CHANGE
<p>UNPFII Principles on Data Collection and Indicators: https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/data-and-indicators.html Indigenous peoples should <i>fully participate</i> as equal partners, in all stages of data collection, including planning, implementation, analysis and dissemination, access and return, with appropriate resourcing and capacity-building...</p> <p>UNPFII Mandate on the Environment – Community-Based Monitoring and Information Systems (CBMIS) https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/environment.html Community-based mapping, monitoring and information systems (CBMIS) - There is a need to strengthen and further the application of community-based mapping, monitoring and information systems ...</p>	<p>We offer Tracking Change as a <i>best practice</i> of how Indigenous peoples can lead and/or participate as equal partners in ecological research and monitoring. Over the last four years, communities have conceptualized research objectives, developed culturally meaningful indicators, implemented research, and carried out analysis and reporting of their own data and stories. Although this is done at local scales, communities have also worked together to determine meanings at larger scales (i.e., watershed to global scales). All projects in Canada involved youth (as knowledge holders and/or trainees) and affirmed or engaged Indigenous languages and cultural practices.</p>
<p>UNPFII Mandate on the Environment – Climate Change Climate change threatens very existence of indigenous peoples. For many indigenous peoples, climate change is already a reality, and they are increasingly realising that climate change is clearly not just an environmental issue, but one with severe socioeconomic implications. The World Bank also sees climate change as having the potential to hamper achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including those on poverty eradication, child mortality, combating malaria and other diseases, as well as environmental sustainability. For many indigenous peoples, climate change is a potential threat to their very existence and a major issue of human rights and equity.</p>	<p>Tracking Change may also be a <i>best practice</i> in demonstrating how local and Traditional Knowledge systems can contribute to a better understanding of the complexity and significance of climate change for Indigenous peoples and their homelands. For example, community-based projects in the Mackenzie River Basin revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decreased access to traditional fishing areas (due to lower water levels, melting permafrost, ice safety); - changes in the abundance and distribution of valued fish species (e.g., new species observed, changes in migration patterns); - changes in the ecology of lakes and streams.

<p>UNPFII Mandate on the Environment https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/environment.html</p> <p>The cost of unsustainable development. Large dams and mining activities have caused forced displacement of thousands of indigenous persons and families without adequate compensations in many countries. Several communities have been moved out of national parks against their will, while tourist development in some countries has resulted in the displacement of indigenous people and their increasing poverty. When indigenous peoples have reacted and tried to assert their rights, in most instances they have suffered physical abuse, imprisonment, torture and even death.</p> <p>Land rights in law, but not in reality. Only a few countries recognize indigenous peoples' land rights, but even in those countries, land titling and demarcation procedures have often not been completed, suffer delays or are shelved because of changes in political leadership and policies. Even where indigenous peoples have legal title deeds to their lands, these lands are often leased out by the state as mining or logging concessions without consultation of indigenous peoples, let alone their free and prior informed consent. The lack of legal security of tenure remains a crucial issue for indigenous peoples almost everywhere.</p>	<p>In the Mackenzie-Amazon-Mekong basins, hydroelectric development projects have been constructed (and others planned and developed) without the consent of Indigenous peoples and fishing communities whose livelihoods depend on the sustainability of freshwater ecosystems. Mining activities also significantly impact on Indigenous communities and ecosystems. We offer Tracking Change as a <i>best practice</i> of how local and Traditional Knowledge research and monitoring can produce new insights about the impacts of large-scale resource development on Indigenous peoples. Specifically,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Implications of forced resettlement and displacement (e.g., from hydroelectric development);- social, economic, cultural and spiritual costs of land and resource disturbance and degradation (e.g., loss of fish species, degraded source drinking water);- human health and nutritional costs of loss of access, availability and health of traditional country foods. <p>The network and its supporting partners (e.g., Government of the Northwest Territories, in Canada) may also be considered a useful example of how Indigenous voices (including voices of youth) can be heard at different levels of decision-making (e.g., regional –global). Traditional Knowledge documented has also been used in implementing a trans-jurisdictional water agreement between provinces-territories in Canada.</p> <p>However, more work needs to be done to ensure that high standards of environmental and social practice are part of the planning, management and decommissioning of large scale developments (e.g., mining projects) and are enforced to ensure the protection of Indigenous peoples and their homelands.</p>
<p>UNPFII Mandate – Children and Youth https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/children-and-youth.html</p> <p>Indigenous children and youth have much to contribute to the world as empowered individuals with a profound understanding of their indigenous identity, cultural heritage, sustainable living and connection to their lands and territories. At the same time, many indigenous youth face immense challenges as a result of the intergenerational effects of colonisation and assimilation policies, as well as the continued struggles to ensure their rights and identity as indigenous peoples.</p>	<p>In the Mackenzie-Mekong-Amazon basins and elsewhere, youth networks can contribute to building new knowledge and increased capacity to sustain their communities and the environment locally and globally. We offer Tracking Change as a <i>best practice</i> of how to engage youth in learning and leadership. For example, Youth Knowledge Fairs have stimulated youth research and action in local communities across the Mackenzie River Basin; a group of Indigenous youth (Grade 10-11) from the network traveled to 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 24) to have their voices heard.</p>