

Eco-cultural maps and calendars as tools for transmission of Indigenous and local knowledge

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Experience in transmission of ILK

- * Over time, there has been disappearance of:
- * Earth spirituality – there has been systematic demonization of the practice and destruction of sacred sites
- * Indigenous biodiversity – ILK is embedded in indigenous socio-ecological systems

Tools to address the situation:

- * **Eco-cultural maps**
- * **Eco-cultural calendars**

Integral strategies for eco-cultural maps and calendars

- * Community dialogues
- * Biodiversity tracking
- * Rituals
- * Cross-knowledge interactions

1) Eco-cultural map – space and territory

Eco-cultural mapping is a participatory process aiming to reveal:

- * the deep geography
- * cultural vision
- * meaning of territory

Process develops a collective vision which helps to reconnect the past with the understanding of the present and visioning of the future;

Maps help the wider community to hold a collectively agreed vision of the relations of different elements that interact in the territory over time

Eco-cultural map – space and territory

A participatory process **led by elders** and aimed at revealing:

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Logical process of eco-cultural mapping

It helps to bring back the original knowledge and the ancestral order;

It shows the way the ancestors used to live according to customary laws, distilling their culture from interactions with the territory

**Map of
the
ancestral
past**

Map of the present

It facilitates the analysis of the impacts, transformations and changes that the territory has suffered over time;

It includes the modern state and the new structures and foreign ways of governing which the community has brought to the territory



Logical process of eco-cultural mapping

Map of the future

It depicts the desired state of the territory which the community must strive to reach;
It represents the community's vision for the territory;

It is accompanied by envisioned actions, processes, restoration initiatives, ways for recreation and resurgence;

It helps to move forward towards a local, collectively agreed and connected vision of the future;

Enables community to consciously choose what future they want to create (vision) and how they can bring those positive elements from the past into the future

Eco-cultural map

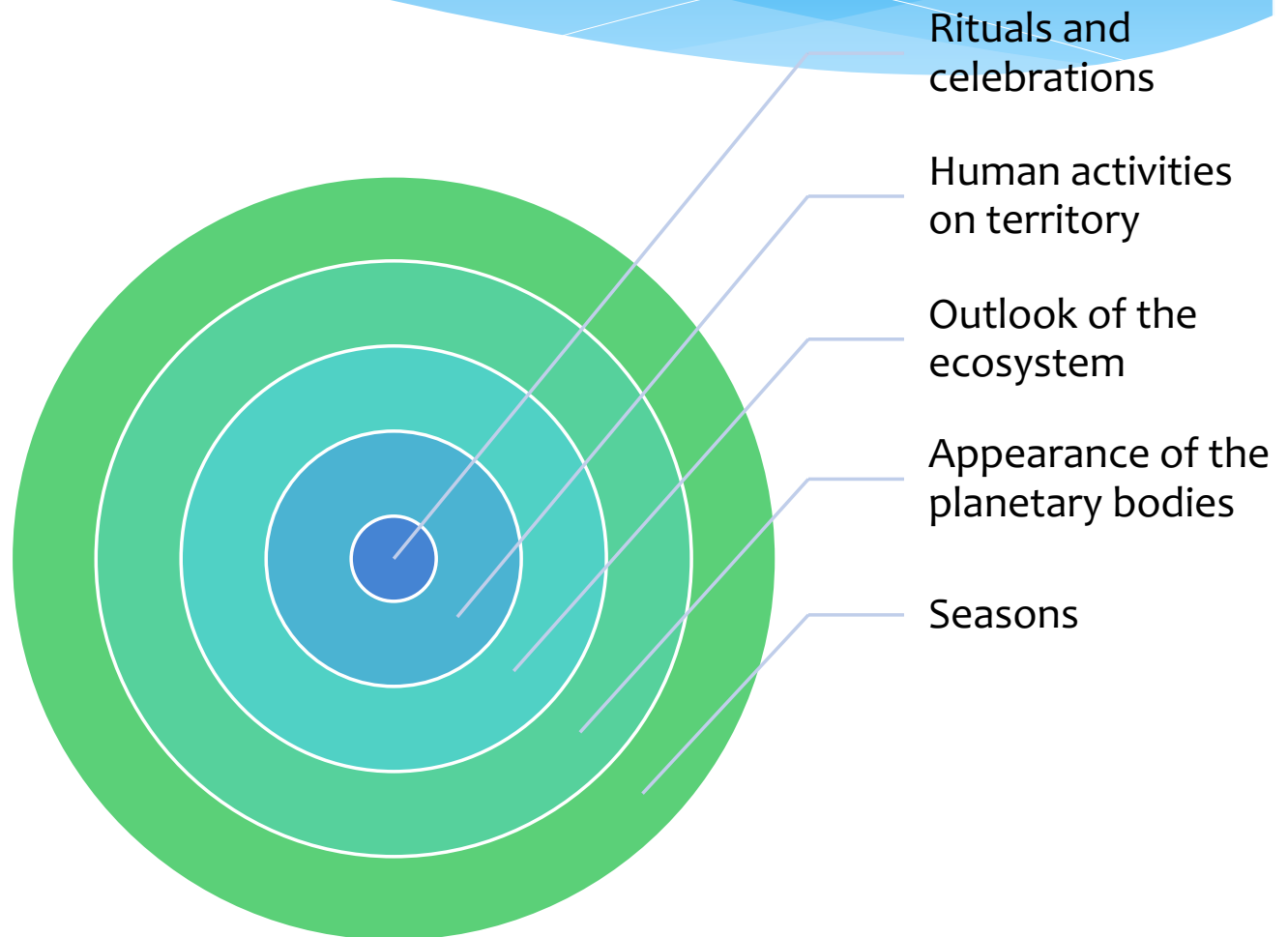


2) Eco-cultural calendar – time and seasons

- * World's original cultures relate to time and space naturally;
- * Since ancestral times, the sky and movement of celestial bodies have inspired humans to read the signs of change;
- * In cultural resurgence, calendars capture the holistic world view which sees relationship between all elements;
- * Cyclical time marks social practices, rituals and celebrations, leadership roles and the dynamic relationship between territory and culture

Eco-cultural calendar

- Outer circle shows what is happening at the cosmos, with the celestial bodies (stars and the moon, etc)
- Next layer is what is happening in the ecosystem
- The following layer of the circle shows what is going on with the domesticated crops and livestock in each season
- The innermost circle represents rituals and ceremonies



Relationship between eco-cultural maps and seasonal calendars

- * Calendars give life to the maps
- * Calendars and maps stimulate the memory of community
- * Zooming in on either calendar or map enables a community to focus on specific aspects of the territory
- * One can draw maps and calendars of the past, present and future, then combine these to get a rich picture of the territory over time

Reflections on:

Eco-cultural mapping

- * Eco-cultural mapping is a potent community-driven process for mobilization of people and knowledge, which leads to people believing in the potency of their indigenous or local knowledge.
- * Cross-knowledge participation builds trust across knowledge systems, making joint problem definition and analysis easy.
- * Maps manifest the knowledge and understanding of territory and enable community-based ecosystems assessments.
- * Maps enable articulation of a set of rights and responsibilities for communities which are reflected in the actions.

Eco-cultural calendars

- * Eco-cultural calendars support community research to revive socio-ecological systems as they embrace the whole “universe”.
- * Eco-cultural calendars support development of community ecological governance plans towards revival of socio-ecological systems
- * Eco-cultural calendars highlight cross-gender collaboration areas as they show the different but complementary roles of men and women, boys and girls. The roles of either gender need be fulfilled for those of the other gender to be useful.

Outcomes and achievements:

- * Re-igniting eco-cultural practices such as earth stewardship and ancestral worship
- * Massive community mobilization
- * Preparation and implementation of life plans (including conservation actions)
- * Respect for elders by youth
- * Cross-knowledge interactions (ILK, science and practitioners knowledge), e.g: gazettement of sacred sites, MEB process, recognition of agro-ecology in Kenya

Underlying cultural issues and problems:

- * Demonization of culture especially by new religious formations
- * Hijacking of certain cultural practices by the church, which are done with no regard to cultural practice
- * Pop up of groups posing as cultural groups but which cause chaos leading to stigmatization of cultural mobilization

Main challenges and obstacles:

- * Co-production with the holders of ILK
- * FPIC
- * Validation of ILK
- * Respectful referencing of ILK sources
- * Intolerable intolerance
- * Safeguarding economic and livelihoods value of ILK
- * Transmission of ILK – informal vs formal

Safeguarding and protection of ILK:

- * Strict adherence to FPIC protocols
- * Limited documentation for now
- * Re-enacting the indigenous learning process