Co-LABorate 2 Stakeholder Workshop:

Preserving and Transferring Indigenous Knowledge in a Digital World

10-12 March 2025
Room: 243
German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA)
Jungfernstieg 21, 20354 Hamburg

Link: https://uni-due.zoom-x.de/j/64470595060?pwd=m5yeFH6FtmNisa14CiVMS0SDbBWPa0.1

Background

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) define "indigenous" as referring to people, cultures, and communities native to a particular geographical region, having existed there for a long period before the arrival of outside populations or influences. Key aspects of the UN's definition include unique traditions, languages, and social systems that are distinct from those of the *society-at-large*, as well as a deep connection to their ancestral lands.

In the context of global sustainability transformation, there is a need to reclaim—or decolonize—the meaning of "indigenous" and "traditional" and how they relate to human flourishing and sustainability. Indigenous communities are often perceived as traditional, backward-looking, and underdeveloped, partly because of their historical marginalization, lack of access to modern infrastructure and education, and the preservation of their traditions and rituals (Smith, 2012, Escobar, 1995).

Traditional and indigenous wisdoms offer holistic views of care, integrating community, environment, and spirituality (Storm, 2021, Chang and Bai, 2016), which can effectively complement modernist views for example on technological innovation and climate protection. Furthermore, indigenous wisdom is not homogenous, and there are significant differences between the bodies of knowledge of indigenous communities. In their own way, diverse indigenous perspectives challenge Western paradigms by emphasizing relationships and interconnectedness, presenting care as an all-encompassing practice rooted in the symbiosis of human and natural systems.

To fully harness the rich knowledge of indigenous communities, it is essential for us to navigate with them the challenges and seize the opportunities presented by today's rapidly evolving digital age. Historically marginalized, these communities often face limited access to modern technologies, which can deepen their exclusion. Moreover, the digital era introduces new risks, including the misappropriation and exploitation of their traditions, rituals, and practices, adding to the injustices they already endure.

At the same time, the digital age offers unprecedented opportunities for Indigenous peoples to preserve, revitalize, and share their cultural heritage while also gaining new tools for education, economic development, and self-determination. By embracing digital platforms, Indigenous communities can document and disseminate their languages, stories, and traditional practices, ensuring they are passed down to future generations. Moreover, digital tools provide a means to connect with a global audience, fostering greater understanding and collaboration across cultures.

Goals and objectives:

The main goal of the workshop is to identify and address the essential challenges and opportunities for global transformation towards sustainability through the preservation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge in a digital age.

To achieve this goal, the workshop adopts innovative dialogue and knowledge transfer formats inspired by indigenous communities. These approaches foster active listening, respect for diverse perspectives, integration of personal experiences and traditional knowledge, consensus-building, and a strong emphasis on relationships.

The workshop brings together leading scholars, practitioners and representatives of indigenous communities to answer important questions:

Session 1: State of the Art: Current Challenges and Opportunities for Indigenous Knowledge in the Digital Age

In the digital age, indigenous knowledge faces several challenges and opportunities. Challenges include lack of reliable access to internet and computers, and digital literacy education as well as cultural appropriation and misrepresentation. Opportunities include preservation and revitalization through digitization of traditional knowledge, oral histories, and cultural artifacts as well as community empowerment through digital storytelling and advocacy in social media.

In this panel, we want to set the stage for all discussions. We call on representatives from various indigenous communities to present the current challenges their communities are confronted with and which opportunities they see for preservation through the integration of indigenous knowledge with modern (digital) technology.

- *What are the current challenges that confront indigenous communities and how does digitalization exacerbate the negative effects of their marginalization?*
- *What are the knowledge tools used to record, disseminate and preserve stories, myths, traditions and practices that embody indigenous people's wisdom?*
- *How can digital platforms be designed to facilitate the intergenerational transfer of indigenous wisdom within communities?*

Session 2: Indigenous Knowledge as Enabler of Global Sustainability Transformation

Indigenous communities, with their deep-rooted knowledge of sustainable living, are key drivers of global sustainability. Their traditional ecological practices offer vital insights into resource management, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience. As guardians of some of the planet's most biodiverse regions, Indigenous peoples are leading efforts to protect our global commons. By blending indigenous wisdom with modern sustainability practices, they are shaping a more sustainable and equitable future, making them essential partners in addressing global environmental challenges

In this session, we explore how indigenous knowledge can offer new and alternative imaginaries on social institutions - *politics, economics, technology, religion, gender, and education - that underpin contemporary societies*, which are key to global sustainability transformation. In this regard, we want to ask the following questions:

- *Which alternative ways of seeing and designs of social institutions are offered by indigenous knowledge that can help dismantle path dependencies and dominance structures such as toxic hypermasculinity?*
- *How can indigenous knowledge systems inform and enhance modern technological, entrepreneurial, educational, and scientific practices to promote global sustainability transformation?*

Session 3: Strategies for Addressing New and Old (In)Justices to Indigenous People

Indigenous people around the world face a variety of injustices, often stemming from historical colonization, systemic discrimination, and ongoing marginalization. The emergence of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence may endanger their cultural preservation through language loss, and cultural appropriation. Furthermore, new challenges are emerging in the digital age as some existing guardrails for the preservation of indigenous knowledge are removed. At the same time, digital innovation can offer opportunities to help indigenous people achieve representation, autonomy, economic inclusion and adaptation to climate change.

In this session, we focus on the interface between the public and private sector to identify good practices from various stakeholders to address injustices to indigenous communities. These practices include capacity building, policy and legal reforms, fair business models and community-led initiatives.

- *Which new injustices towards the indigenous communities are emerging in the digital age?*
- *How can digital innovation help address injustices that confront indigenous communities such as the misappropriation and exploitation of indigenous wisdom?*

Session 4: Connecting Global and Regional Visions with Local Solutions – Improving the Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Shaping Global Interactions

The connection between global visions of sustainability and local solutions is a crucial aspect of global transformation to address complex challenges such as climate change and social justice. Preserving and transferring indigenous knowledge is important in finding context-specific strategies and actions that meet the unique needs of individual communities.

This session aims to understand how to enhance the potentials of indigenous knowledge in leveraging local knowledge, resources, and expertise to realize global visions of sustainability and human flourishing.

- *How can digital innovation help connect global and regional visions with the local solutions offered by indigenous knowledge?*
- *How can international cooperation support the digital preservation and transfer of indigenous knowledge (and vice-versa)?*

Session 5: Indigeneity models of a sustainable future

Indigenous knowledge is essential to shaping the future we envision. Indigenous thinkers provide transformative models in finance, economy, innovation, education, governance, international relations, and social cohesion that have the potential to revolutionize our world.

This session showcases groundbreaking models of indigeneity, presented by dynamic young thinkers, activists, and practitioners who are driving these visionary ideas forward. The session asks the following question:

- *So, how can indigenous knowledge bring us into the future we envision?*

Outcome of the workshop:

By bringing together scholars, policymakers, and representatives of indigenous communities, the workshop seeks to strengthen existing networks and advance human flourishing and global transformation. Specifically, it aims to produce a workshop report, a journal article, and a policy brief based on insights from impulse talks and discussions. However, participation in these publications is optional, allowing attendees to opt out if they wish. Additionally, leveraging a digital platform, the workshop will showcase indigenous wisdom alongside digital tools and projects that capture stories, myths, terminologies, rituals, and practices—offering alternative perspectives for reimagining social institutions and driving sustainability transformations.

HERE: Link to the website of pilot visualization (construction site)

Agenda

March 10, 2025

8:30	**Welcome Coffee**
9:00 – 10:30	***Welcome and Introduction (Room 243):***

Welcome:
- **Eckart Woertz** (Director, GIGA Institute for Middle East Studies)

Keynote Address:
- **Victoria Tauli-Corpuz** (Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2014-2020) *Preservation of Indigenous knowledge as human right and as key to global transformations (TBC)*

Introduction (10 min. each):

- **Ariel Hernandez** (GIGA) Why are we here? Participatory approach for knowledge transfer
- **Daniela Osorio Michel** (GIGA) Critical self-reflection on research on indigeneity
- **Eduardo Valencia** (GIGA) What do we want to do? - Digital databases and visualization on indigenous knowledge

10:30 – 11:00	***Coffee break***
11:00 - 12:30	***Session 1 – State of the Art: Current challenges and opportunities for Indigenous Knowledge in the Digital Age (Room 243)***

Format: Ancient wisdom council/ six hats
Moderators: Wakanyi Hoffman (Uni Utrecht) and Ariel Hernandez (GIGA)

Impulse Givers (10 min. each):

- **Juana Arely Romo López** (Zapotec community) *Can a positivist market-driven approach to renewable energy be translated into Zapotec language and culture – Social media, (dis)information, and clashes in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico* (in Spanish with real-time translation)
- **Analyn Salvador-Amores** (University of the Philippines-Baguio), *Digital repatriation and the Cordilleras - Accessing cultural materials through digital tools*
- **Laura Soto** (Meli), *Climate justice in the Amazon region*
- **Aina Helene Guttorm Einarsen** (Sámi community/University of Oslo) *Differentiation between Sámi and Norwegian/Western scientific practices and ways of knowing*

Discussion Format (45 minutes):

After the talks, all participants are given a perspective of one of the six hats[1]. The participants will explore through these lenses the needed changes to face the challenges and materialize the opportunities presented (and beyond).

12:30   LUNCH

14:00 – 16:00   *Session 2 – Indigenous Knowledge as Enabler of Global Sustainability Transformation (Room 243)*

Format: Digital indigenous storytelling
Moderators: Ariel Hernandez (GIGA) and Daniela Osorio Michel (GIGA)

Impulse Givers (10 min. each):

- **Ian Hughes** (University College Cork) Conceptualizing global cultural transformation – The role of indigenous knowledge
- **Maggie O'Neill** (University College Cork) *Indigenous knowledge and hypermasculinity*
- **Richard Hecht** (UC Santa Barbara), *Stories and Myths as Drivers of symbolic communication*
- **Modestha Mensah** (University of Cape Coast, Ghana) *Intersectionality for global transformation – The value of African, feminist, class lens*

Group work: Digital Storytelling (60 minutes)

Storytelling is crucial to most indigenous communities. Participants are divided into five groups. Within an hour, each group will develop and record a digital story (2-3 min. long). The story can 1) explain a concept, 2) reflect on a personal experience, 3) retell a historical event, or 4) make an argument, addressing any issue related to the impulse talks. The stories will be heard in the plenary. The steps to create a digital story are: brainstorm what you want the digital story to be about, create a script and a storyboard (use the boards provided), create a video by recording a

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[1] The six hats are (1) Planning, (2) facts, (3) ideas, (4) benefit, (5) emotion, (6) critical judgement

voiceover, gather or create images or videoclips, choose music and sound effect and put all the elements together and enjoy the final product.

16:00 – 16:30   Coffee break

16:30 – 18:00   *Session 3 – Strategies for Addressing (In)Justices to Indigenous People (Room 243)*

Format: Civic Engagement
Moderator: Maggie O'Neill (UCC) & Ariel Hernandez (GIGA)

<u>Impulse Givers (10 min. each):</u>

- **Kert Stavorn** (Haris & Associates/ Thai Legaltech X) *Emerging technologies for justice – Lessons from indigenous communities in the Asia Pacific Region*
- **Paola Velasco Herrejon** (University of Oslo), *Outlook on energy (in)justice from the Sámi and Zapotec communities*
- **María Alvarez Malvido** (Digital Democracy) *Co-designing mapping tools with Indigenous Earth Defenders for socioenvironmental justice and data sovereignty*

Discussant (from indigenous lens): Analyn Salvador-Amores (University of the Philippines-Baguio) (5 min.)

After the impulse talks and discussant input, the plenary asks the question "How can the needs and demands be translated to be better heard in the policymaking world?" and "which commitments are needed to be fulfilled by all stakeholders?"

19:00   Event dinner, Halo Restaurant, Colonnaden 104, 20354 Hamburg

<u>11 March 2025</u>

9:00 – 12:30   Session 4 - *Connecting global visions with local solutions – Capacity building for indigenous knowledge to help shape global cooperation (Room 243)*

Format: Study circle

Moderator: Ian Hughes (University College Cork) and Ariel Hernandez (GIGA)

<u>Impulse Givers (10 min. each):</u>

- **Charmaine Misalucha-Willoughby** (De la Salle University), *International relations as framework for indigenous knowledge*
- **Sangeeta Mahapatra** (GIGA), *Large language models for platforms to preserve digital knowledge and local languages*
- **Ana Rosa de Lima** (Omágue community/Meli) *Scaling up regenerative practices starting from the Amazon indigenous communities*

- **Tlou Maggie Masenya** (Durban University of Technology), *Revitalization and digital preservation of indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa*
- **Wakanyi Hoffman** (Utrecht University), *Ubuntu ethics for sustainable AI use and design*

(10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break)

Circle Discussions (60 min.)

After the talks, the participants will be divided into groups, each of which represents a study circle. Inspired by the talks, members of each group will come up with a "manifesto" of the priorities of indigenous communities for them to help shape global cooperation.

Circle 1: Laura Sotto (Meli) (moderator)

Circle 2: Wakanyi Hoffman (Utrecht Uni) (moderator)

Circle 3: Modestha Mensah (Uni Cape Coast) (moderator)

Circle 4: Julia Kramer (GIGA) (moderator)

12:30	*Lunch*
14:00 – 16:00	***Session 5 – Indigeneity models of a sustainable future*** **(Room 243)**

Format: Townhall dialogue

Moderator: Wakanyi Hoffman (University of Utrecht)

Impulse givers (10 min. each):

- **Ariel Hernandez** (GIGA) *Homo Curans – A future based on care*
- **Shirlley Mamani** (Aymara community) *A future of agri-food systems – opportunities from the high Andean "superfoods*
- **Rami Zurayk** (American University of Beirut) *A future of indigenous agroecological knowledge – Insights from Bilad al Sham*
- **Enoc López Toledo** (Zapotec community) *The role of indigenous language and knowledge in consultation processes of energy futures*
- **Kenneth Amaeshi** *(European University Institute/ THE NEW INSTITUTE) A future of economic development – Community-based businesses as drivers of sustainable capitalism (tbc)*

Discussant: Evans Awuni (GIGA) (5 min.)

This participatory and interactive approach allows for direct interaction between speakers and the audience, encouraging a free flow of ideas, questions, and concerns.

16:30 – 17:30	**Closing Panel (Room 243)**

Moderators: Wakanyi Hoffman & Ariel Hernandez

9:00 – 12:30   **Roundtable with the Hamburg Representatives and EU-LAC Foundation**

12:30 – 13:00   **Lunch Break**

14:00 - 16:00   Visit at the "Museum am Rothenbaum – World Culture and Arts"((MARKK) (Rothenbaumschaussee 64, 20146 Hamburg)

Participants can choose one of the two tours:

1) **The Representation of Others** (90 minutes)

During a tour of current exhibitions, it is shown how beliefs dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries influence the perception of cultures. Historical connections to colonial contexts are highlighted, as well as contemporary perspectives that invite reflection on perception and representation of societal contexts. A joint discussion will follow the tour.

2) **Benin: Stolen History** (90 minutes)

In 1897, the Kingdom of Benin lost thousands of its artworks due to a British punitive expedition. These looted treasures ended up in museums around the world, including the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg. Many of these pieces hold significant historical and cultural value for the people of Benin. As part of the planned restitution of these artworks, the entire Benin collection at MARKK is being showcased in a special exhibition. This tour explores the artistic, historical, and emotional significance of the objects from multiple perspectives, as well as the history of their provenance.