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"Indigenous Peoples' Concerns About Loss of Forest Knowledge: Implications for Forest Management"

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Although indigenous populations' participatory rights are recognised as a worldwide priority in forest management, local practices vary in interpretation, scope, and efficacy. The next generation of sustainable forest policies will require a greater degree of self-determination from indigenous groups (i.e., the ability for use, ownership, management, and control of their traditional lands and resources). Our case study provides insights into how an indigenous population, the Baka in Cameroon, face barriers to participation in policy making, hindering recognition of rights to traditional forestland. The Baka interviewed herein expressed concern for how forest management impacts their livelihoods, threatens traditional ecological knowledge, and limits self-determination. Educational opportunities may provide co-benefits for indigenous stakeholders in forest management. To motivate indigenous inclusion specifically in forest management, we recommend educating forest managers in cultural competency and the importance of indigenous inclusion and knowledge. We recommend development of Baka educational programmes that are focused on promoting greater self-determination and enriching understanding of the forest management processes. These findings would help develop better relationships between indigenous peoples and forest management worldwide. (Text from authors' abstract)

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