Forest is Life

A Story on Climate Change, Forests and Communities

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Climate change and our weather
Whenever will it rain? The rice will all die.
Where have the fish gone?
These days, the rain doesn't come with the season. Some years there is a shortage. It is hard to guess.
When will it stop raining? My house and all the paddy are flooded.
This year there were heavy rains and soil erosion. In the upper village, the road, school and rice fields were flooded and six people died.

Before, life was abundant and rich

There were many forest products and wildlife

Many crabs and fish

The rivers ran abundantly

People lived together happily

Herbal medicines treated diseases

There was enough food, and some to sell for profit

Livestock was strong and propagated

Currently, the weather is changing a lot. I suspect our world is heating up. Many things are changing in our lives and livelihoods

Dry conditions, little rain, and it does not come seasonally

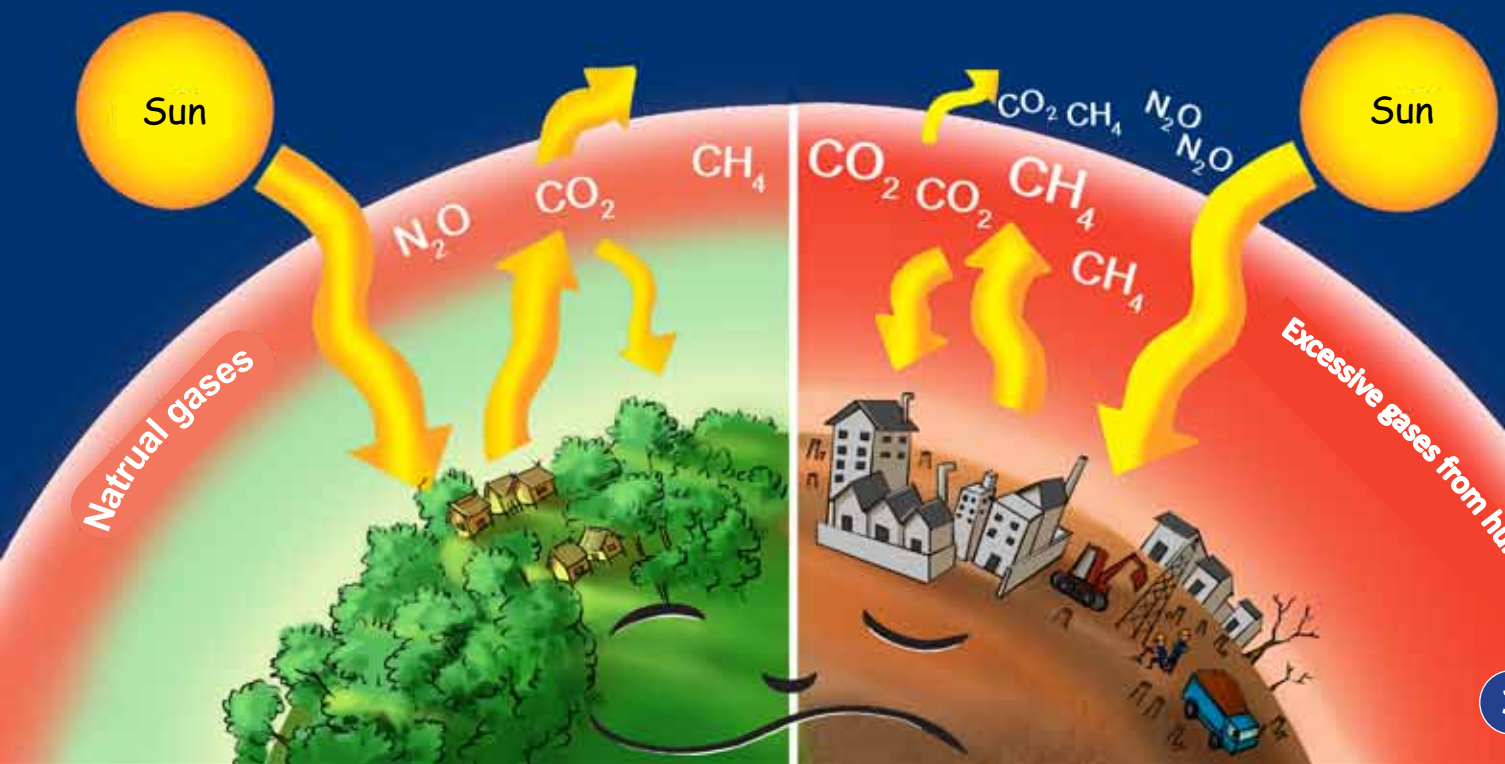
Many diseases spread

We work harder

Men must find work in other places, causing family problems

There is less food security and more poverty

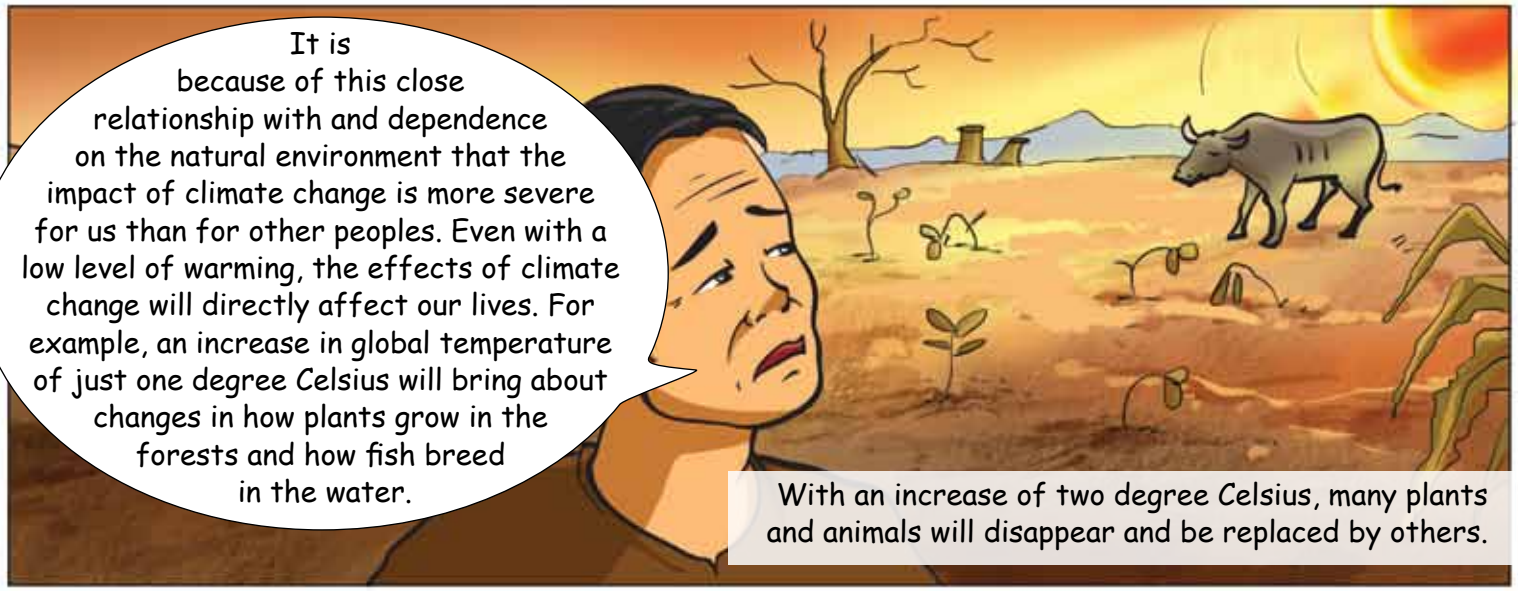
The earth, as we already know, goes around the sun. It is the sun that warms the air surrounding the earth, bringing about different types of climate in different areas. The air that surrounds the earth is called the atmosphere and it is composed of a combination of different gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrogen. Naturally, these gases will absorb the sun's heat and keep the earth warm so that life can exist. But if there are too many of these gases in the atmosphere that come from human activities (such as factories, cars and aeroplanes, burning garbage or cutting and burning forests) it will make our world hotter and bring global climate change.



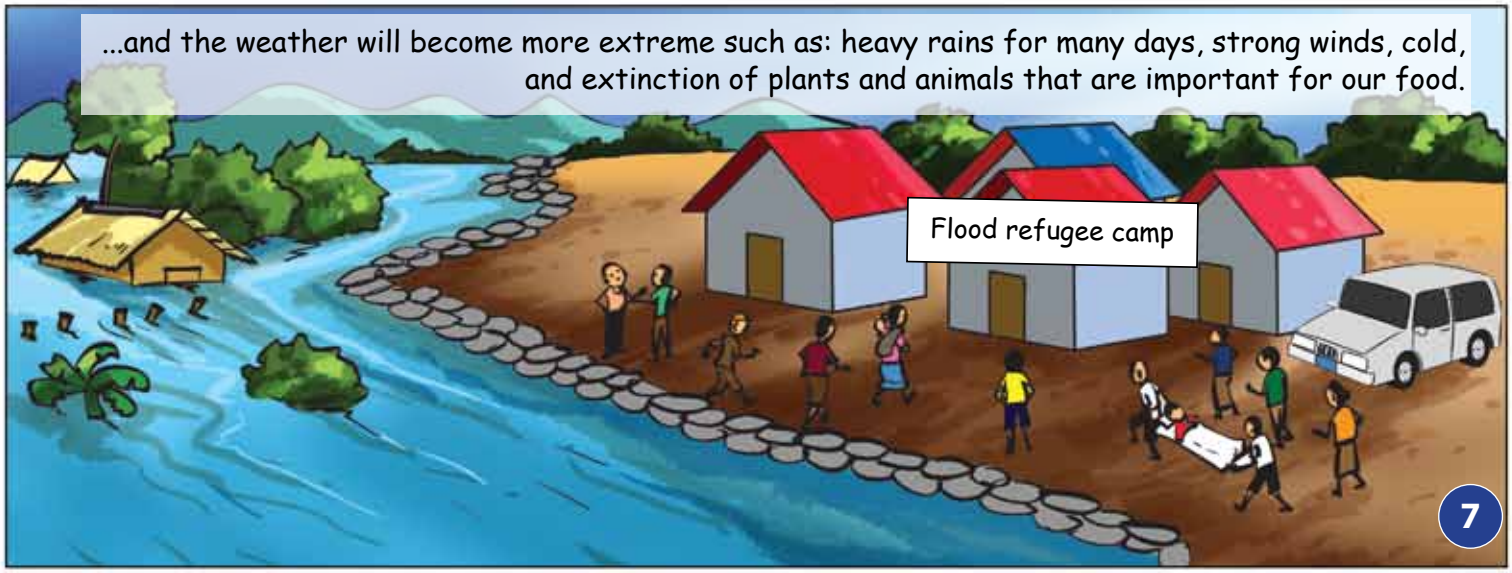

CO_2
CO_2
CO_2
Gases act like the glass walls of a greenhouse, allowing some of the sun's rays to enter, reflecting back harmful radiation from the sun and keeping some warmth close to the earth, making the earth a place where we can live. Some of the heat that comes from the sun is reflected by the greenhouse gases and by the earth and goes back into space. Some of the warmth of the sun is trapped by the greenhouse gases and stays in the atmosphere, keeping the earth warm. If this was not the case, it would be very cold on Earth – too cold for humans to live. This natural process is called the greenhouse effect. However, humans are adding more of these gases into the atmosphere with activities such as burning oil and gas to run factories, to generate power and for transportation, land development or simply farming. The greenhouse effect becomes stronger. The result is global warming.
How do the gases make the world hot?


How does the CO2 make the world warmer, and where does it come from?
Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas and its main source is the burning of woods and fossil fuels such as oil, gas or coal that we use to run machines such as cars and to produce electricity. Another major source of carbon is from activities that destroy or damage forests. These activities include large scale logging, mining, building dams, forest fires, cement production and expansion of agricultural land. As humans and their activities emit more carbon dioxide, the temperature goes up even more.

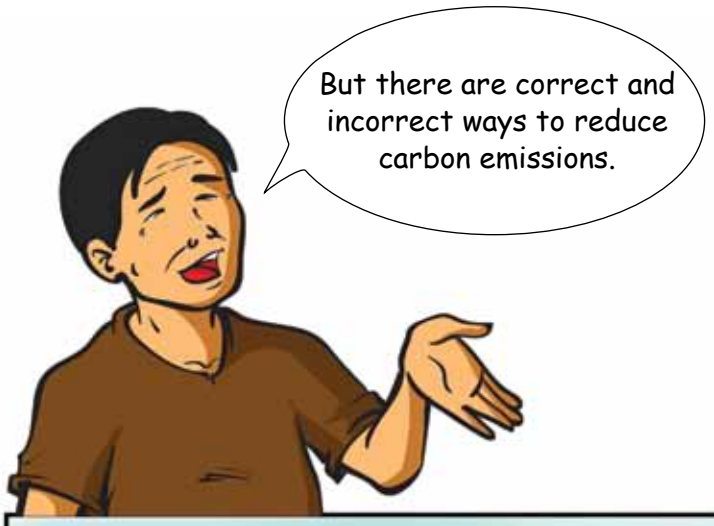

Why is it that indigenous communities receive the worst effects from climate change?
Child! We have lived our lives closely with nature. with the land and the forests, for thousands of years.
Sacred forest
Many plants and wild animals around the village serve as foods and medicines in our daily lives.
The rivers and each piece or land is important for us, and has also been held as sacred by our ancestors. Most of us live our lives simply, taking only what we need to eat, and preserving the natural resources for our children and grandchildren. This is living and using resources sustainably.
Our traditional way of life does not use much external inputs in the form of machines, fuel, fertilizers and other industrial products. We produce much of what we need ourselves, and we do not consume a lot. This means that our ways of life emit+ very little carbon or other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere

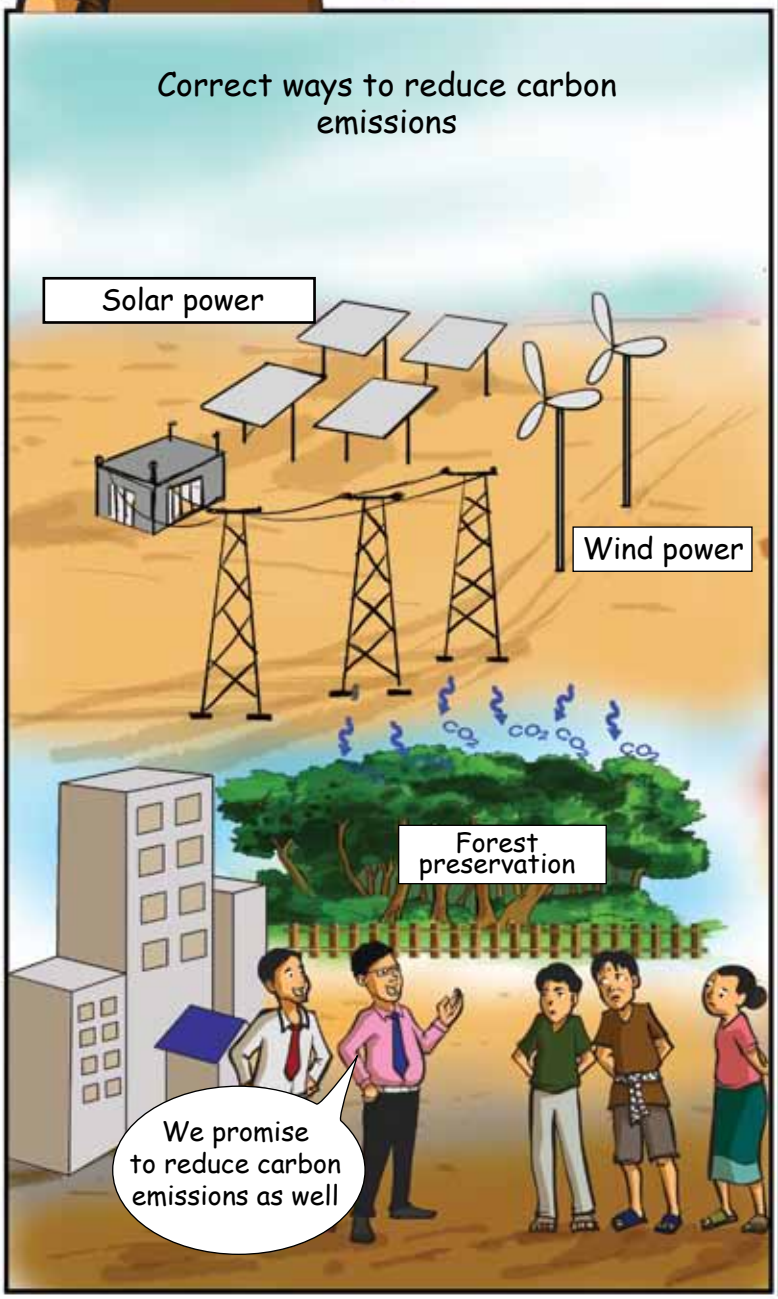

It is because of this close relationship with and dependence on the natural environment that the impact of climate change is more severe for us than for other peoples. Even with a low level of warming, the effects of climate change will directly affect our lives. For example, an increase in global temperature of just one degree Celsius will bring about changes in how plants grow in the forests and how fish breed in the water.
With an increase of two degree Celsius, many plants and animals will disappear and be replaced by others.


If it becomes even warmer, more and more people will be affected by flooding and diseses...


...and the weather will become more extreme such as: heavy rains for many days, strong winds, cold, and extinction of plants and animals that are important for our food.
Flood refugee camp


What can be done to deal with climate change?
We cannot prevent climate change anymore. For that it is too late. But we can make sure that the climate is not changing too much. There are many ways to do that. Above all we need to reduce the release of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide. This we can do by using less oil and by using alternative sources of energy instead, like solar power or biofuels. And we need to preserve and replant forests, which absorb carbon.
Wind power
Solar power
Forest preservation
Plantations
Biofuel plant


But there are correct and incorrect ways to reduce carbon emissions.


Correct ways to reduce carbon emissions
Solar power
Wind power
Forest preservation
We promise to reduce carbon emissions as well


Ways to reduce carbon emissions that are not correct and might have negative impacts on the rights and freedom of communities, their livelihoods and well-being, and threaten biodiversity and the environment
Cutting the forest to plant oilpalm and other biofuel plants
Fencing off our forests while continuing to release greenhouse gases from burning oil
Rules for managing the forest reserve:
- No upland farming or gardens,
- No grazing of livestock or hunting,
- No cutting of trees or gathering of firewood
Do not enter

How will we adapt ourselves to this climate change?

People have long been able to cope with the impacts of changing climate. But the poor will always be more affected than the rich and powerful, because they don't have modern tools or a lot of money. Hence, poor people have more difficulties in dealing with climate change.

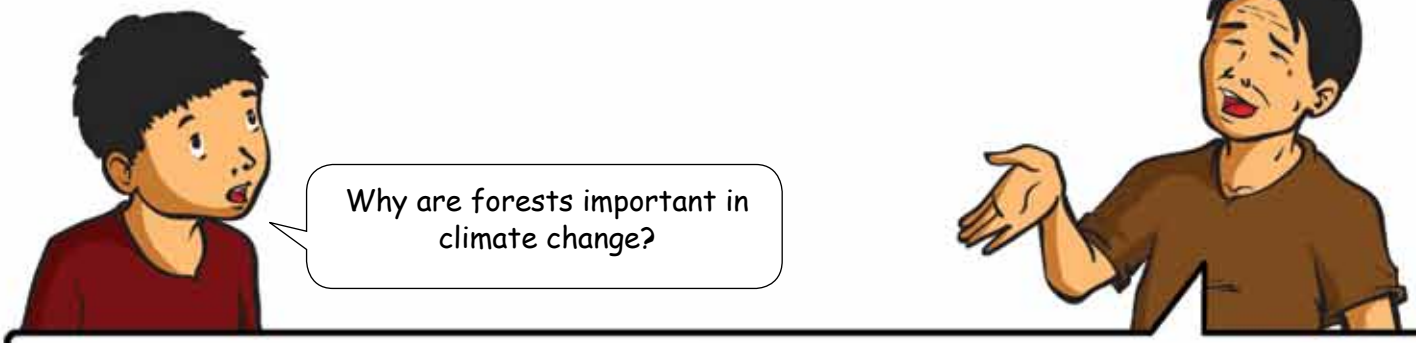
Indigenous and other local communities have great abilities. Some live in the highlands and other remote places, but are able to adapt to difficult conditions. They grow many kinds of plants and vegetables, and rotate the planting areas. They explore new ways to hunt and fish, and also adapt to social conditions such as: study and education, and seeking employment. They adapt to climate change by using their knowledge and their own local methods.

But because their land rights are not recognized and their land and forests are given to companies and others...

...because they are not allowed to participate in decision making about their land and territories, and because of poverty it is now more difficult for them to adapt to climate change.

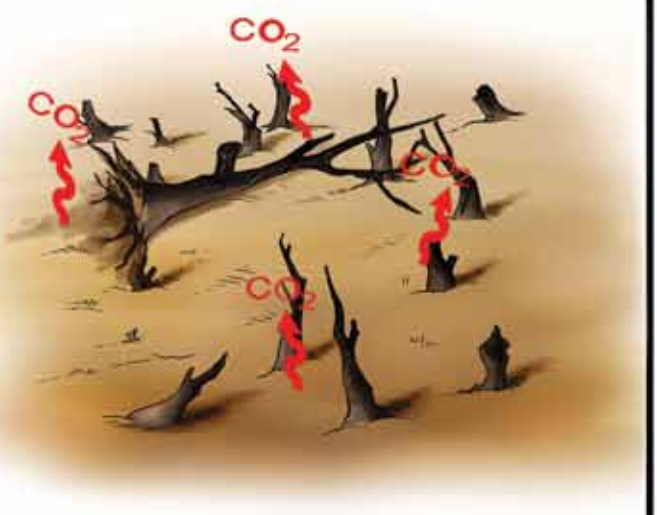
Since climate change is a global problem, our government is part of an international agreement signed by almost all countries in the world to respond to climate change. Many meetings and conferences have been held to negotiate how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Developed countries have historically contributed more to greenhouse gas emissions than developing countries and they are asked to reduce their emissions more drastically, and also to provide funds for helping the developing countries make their own emission reductions and to adapt to climate change. However, the developed countries are not ready to do what is necessary and no clear agreement has yet been reached. One particular new program aims to provide funding for developing countries to prevent deforestation because forest protection can play a crucial roles in lowering the effect of climate change. This program is called REDD: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation.

International meeting to prevent climate change



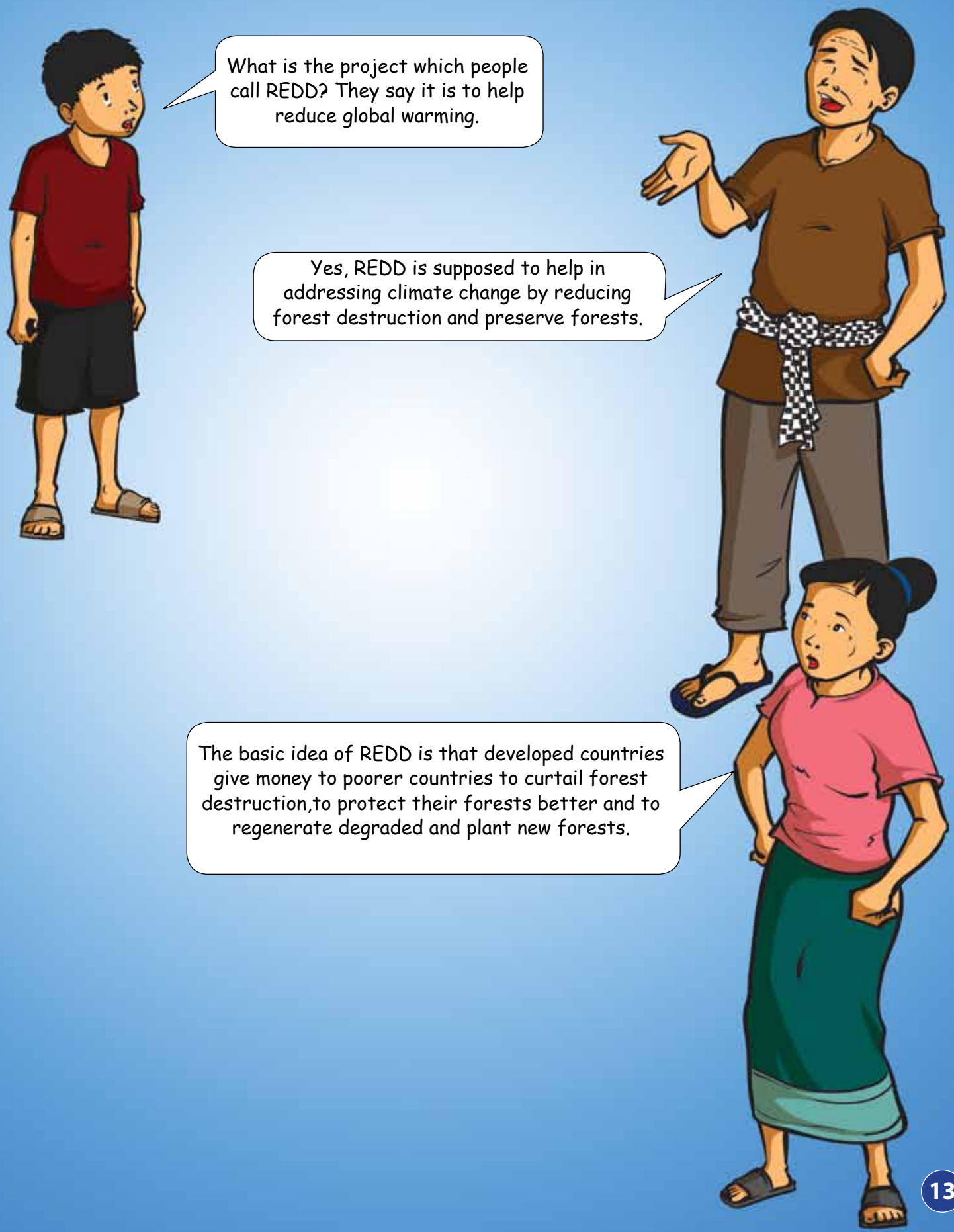
When trees grow, they absorb CO_2 from the atmosphere and use it to build stems, branches, leaves and roots.

When trees die, carbon is released back into the atmosphere



Burning the forest causes the stored carbon to be released back into the air.

So when forests are destroyed, large amounts of carbon are released into the atmosphere.


What is the project which people call REDD? They say it is to help reduce global warming.
Yes, REDD is supposed to help in addressing climate change by reducing forest destruction and preserve forests.
The basic idea of REDD is that developed countries give money to poorer countries to curtail forest destruction,to protect their forests better and to regenerate degraded and plant new forests.

But how does REDD work? What does it actually do to reduce global warming through forest conservation?

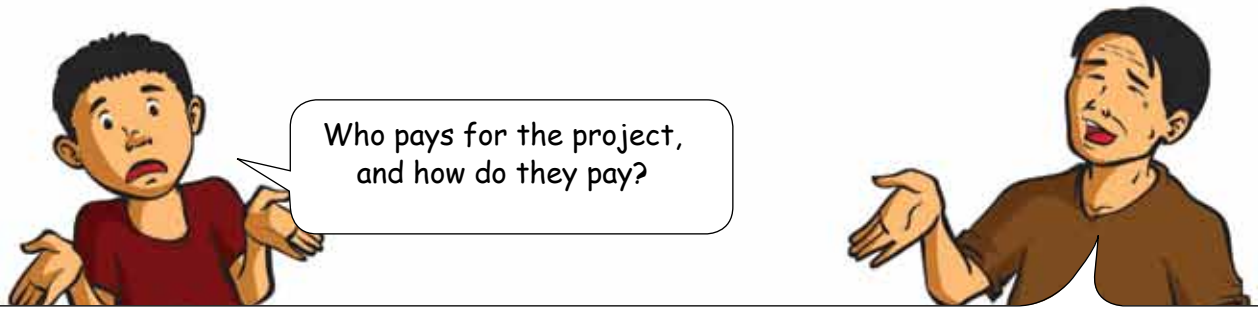
Developing countries must apply for assistance from developed nations to implement projects that protect forests. They will measure how much carbon this has prevented from getting into the atmosphere, and then calculate how much money they will pay for that. It is quite complicated, with a lot of rules that a REDD country has to follow.

Who will implement the forest conservation projects? What about our communities? What role will we play in these projects?

REDD projects can be implemented by governments, private companies, international development agencies or NGOs, and villagers can cooperate in this. Or they can do it by themselves.

If the project is done through cooperation with outsiders, how will we know what the positive and negative effects on our livelihoods are?

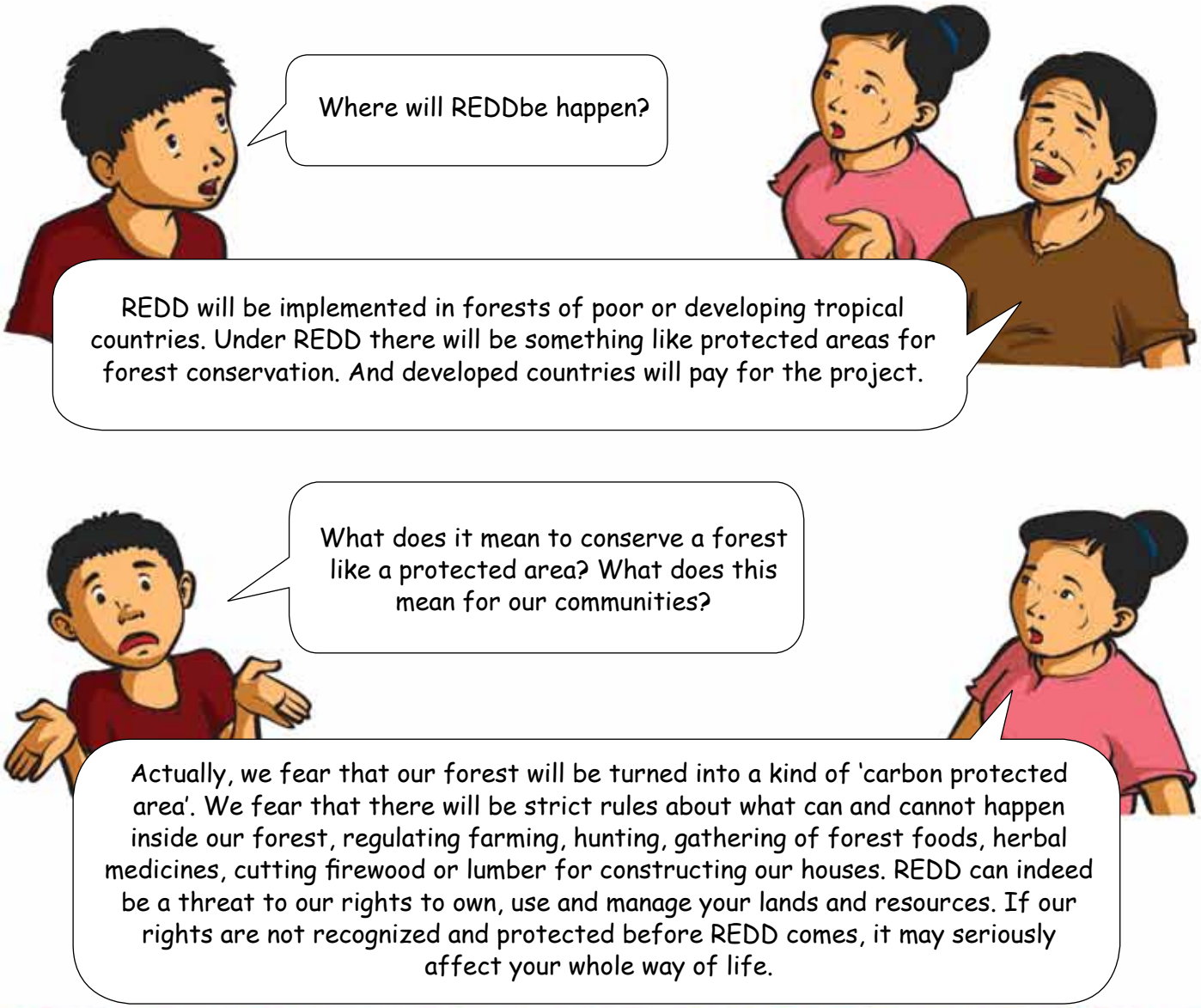
Those who want to start a REDD project must come and explain everything clearly, including the possible impact, our roles and all the rules and policies. They also must give us time to discuss among ourselves before we take a decision. Indigenous communities have the right say yes or no to a project implemented on their territories. This is called the Right to Free Prior Informed Consent - FPIC.



Basically, there are two positions in the discussion on where the money for REDD should come from. The first is financing through market mechanisms. It works like this: A country or company or community engaged in REDD is preventing the emission of carbon through forest protection - like by stopping logging or a plantation. The amount of carbon saved in the forest is measured and for that amount a REDD project gets a certificate. This is called 'carbon credit'. One carbon credit is equal to one ton of carbon. These carbon credits can then be sold. Carbon credits are traded between 'buyer' countries, or companies, and 'seller countries', or companies, just like other goods. However, many people and organizations reject the carbon market because it allows rich countries and companies to use the credits they buy in order to continue to pollute and release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Instead of reducing their own emissions they just buy carbon credits from developing countries. This does not reallty help in reducing global warming and the impact of climate change.

The second method proposed for funding REDD is through funds. A fund is established when governments, banks and other companies, foundations or just wealthy persons donate money to be used for a particular purpose. It is proposed that such funds are also created in order to raise the money needed for REDD. The amount paid to a REDD project from such a fund will also depend on the amount of carbon that is saved by protecting forests.

Financing REDD through funds has the same goal like the financing through the carbon market: to promote forest conservation and therefore to reduce carbon emission and increse carbon storage in forests. The problem with the proposal to set up funds for REDD is that we cannot be sure that there will be enough money. Companies or countries may not be willing to give money without getting anything in return, like carbon credits.


Where will REDDbe happen?
REDD will be implemented in forests of poor or developing tropical countries. Under REDD there will be something like protected areas for forest conservation. And developed countries will pay for the project.
What does it mean to conserve a forest like a protected area? What does this mean for our communities?
Actually, we fear that our forest will be turned into a kind of 'carbon protected area'. We fear that there will be strict rules about what can and cannot happen inside our forest, regulating farming, hunting, gathering of forest foods, herbal medicines, cutting firewood or lumber for constructing our houses. REDD can indeed be a threat to our rights to own, use and manage your lands and resources. If our rights are not recognized and protected before REDD comes, it may seriously affect your whole way of life.


Rules for managing the forest preserve:
- No upland farming or gardens
- No grazing of livestock or hunting
- No cutting of trees or gathering of firewood
No hunting
No cutting of firewodd
Protected forest
NO ENTRY
What rights do we have in this protected forest?

However, if REDD is based on the recognition of indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights, it may also help us in protecting our way of life. REDD could also be used to promote progressive reforms of laws and policies on land and forest rights, or on protected areas. For that REDD has to fully respect indigenous peoples' rights, including the right to culturally appropriate consultation and free, prior and informed consent.

- Important is that local communities and indigenous peoples' positions are included in international and national processes related to REDD

- With indigenous peoples' full and effective engagement and participation, REDD can assist indigenous communities to get their rights to land and resources recognized, and their land titled

- REDD could be used as a way to gain recognition, support and funding for community conserved territories or community conserved forests. Funding could support conservation and resource management practices as well as village development activities

- REDD can also lead to the strengthening of traditional knowledge and biodiversity conservation activities

REDD and other carbon partnership agreements are usually long-term contracts, extending over several decades. Once an agreement is signed, it will probably be very difficult to make changes with respect to land use and management in the area covered by the agreement. Communities should therefore be fully aware of what is covered by an agreement, what each paragraph means and what the implications are of the specific terms used in the agreement. This is especially important with respect to control of land and resources, and the protection of people's livelihoods. There are a number of critical issues which communities have to consider before entering into any agreement. Here is a short check-lists with a few of the most important things a community needs to keep in mind.

1. Information about the project

- Where is the project? How big an area does it cover?
- What is the time period of the contract? Is it the same as the length of the project?
- What kind of land rights do your people or community hold over your lands and territories?
- Are you being proposed as a party to the contract selling the carbon credits?

2. The financing mechanism

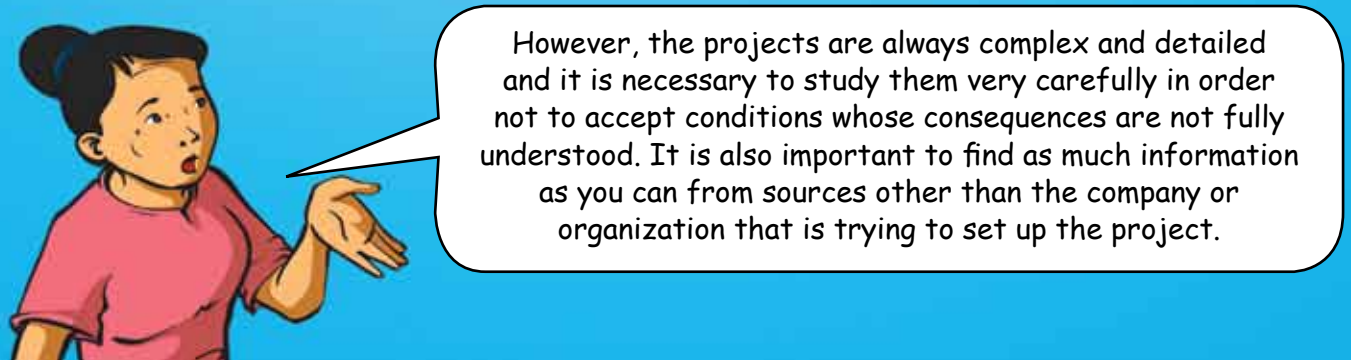
- Who is the buyer? Who pays for the carbon rights which the community is considering to sell and at what average price? What are the prices for comparable projects?
- Is the buyer of the carbon credit purchasing the right to continue to release fossil fuel emissions at home by paying the community to change behavior and thereby reduce emissions which they are responsible for?
- If the project is financed through a fund, who is providing the funding? Are those providing the funds getting carbon emission offset rights in return for their contribution?

3. Consultation and negotiation process

- Who has negotiated for you or is proposed to negotiate for you? Will you negotiate by yourself?
- Did the consultation process allow for feedback from community members? Was the consensus of the people of the community obtained in accordance with their custom and tradition? If not, why not?
- Who will be signing the contract on behalf of your people or your community? How has this been decided?
- Who carries the risk if something happens to the forest/trees? What happens if the trees are lost through accidental events like a wildfire? Would you have to pay money back to the contract partner?

4. Implementation and monitoring

- Who is responsible for the implementation of the rules and regulations agreed on in the contract? Who is monitoring the implementation?



Do you know the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples? It is usually referred to by its acronym, UNDRIP. It says that before any project is implemented, there must be participatory consultation, consideration and decision-making by indigenous communities.

What is the UNDRIP ?

The UNDRIP is a declaration signed by almost all member coutries of the United Nations. It sets the standards for the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. The most important provision of the UNDRIP are:

1. Right to land, territories and resources - Indigenous peoples have the right to lands, territories and resources. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources with due respect to customary land tenure systems of indigenous peoples.

2. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) - Indigenous peoples have the right to free, prior and informed consent on the following:

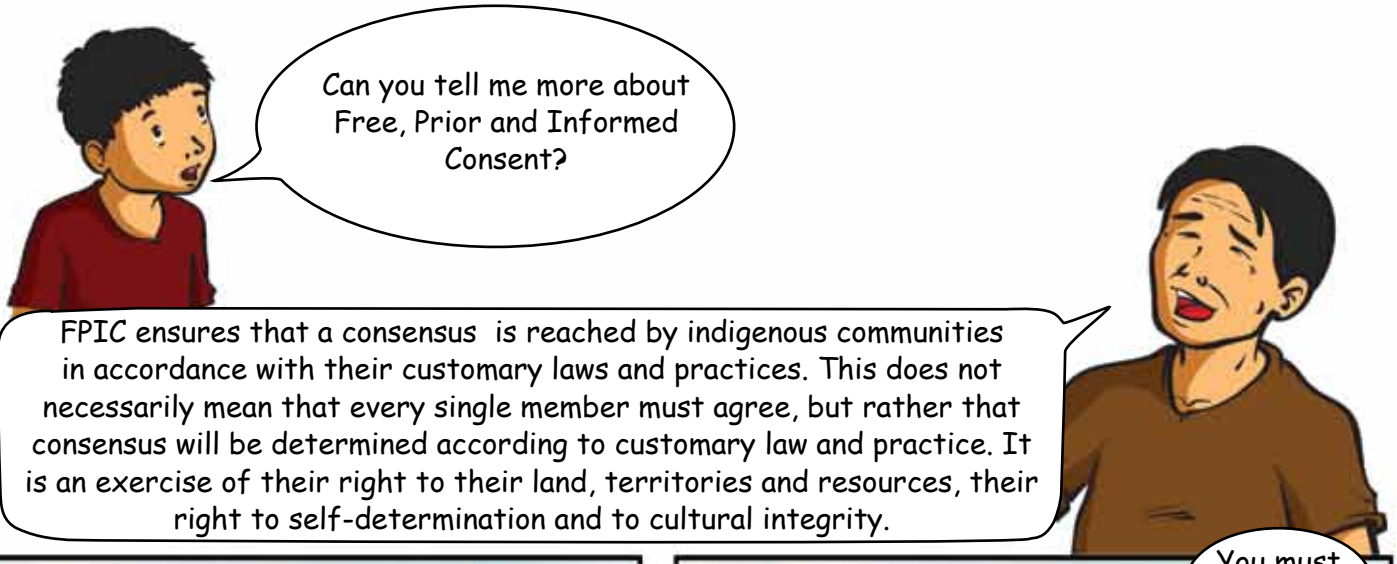
   a. Any action pland that would result in relocation from their lands or territories.

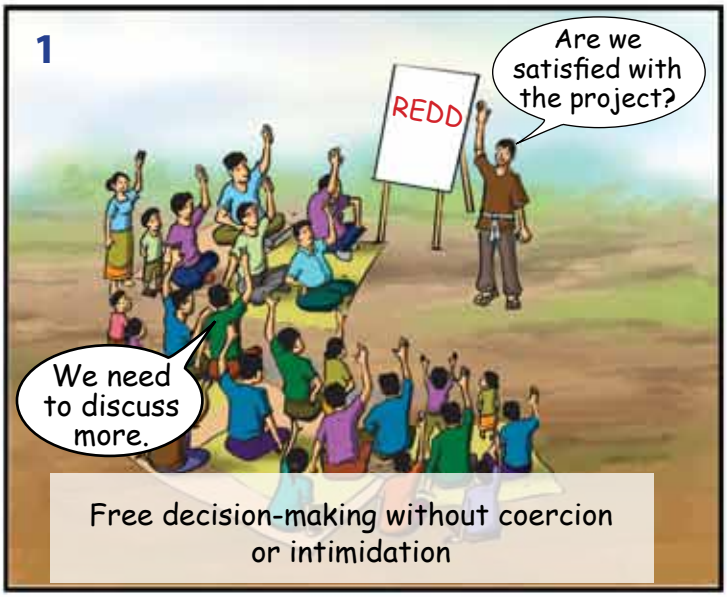
   b. Any change in existing or creation of new laws or regulations by the government that affects them.

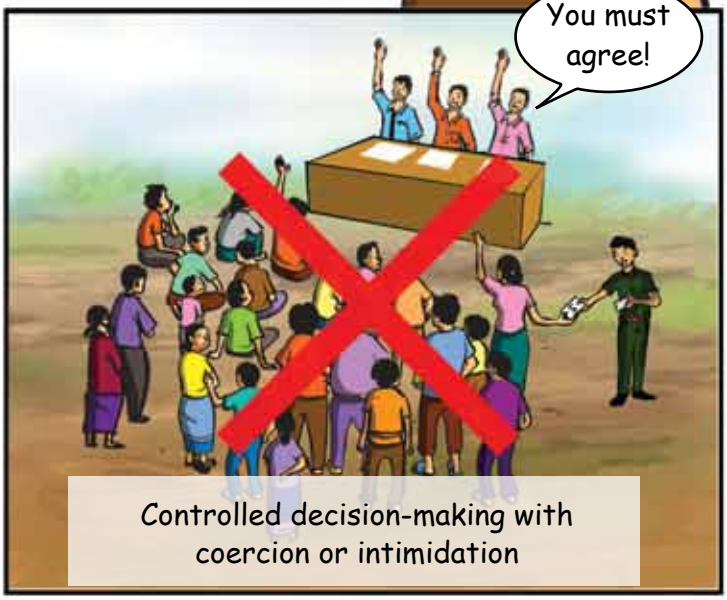
   c. Any projects affecting their lands and territories particularly with the development, utilization or exploitation of minerals, water or other resources.

   d. Any storage or throwing away of anything that is poisonous or dangerous on their lands or territories.

FPIC means that indigenous peoples should freely determine whether they want a project or not, or set conditions for project implementation based on their collective decision making processes.


Can you tell me more about Free, Prior and Informed Consent?
FPIC ensures that a consensus is reached by indigenous communities in accordance with their customary laws and practices. This does not necessarily mean that every single member must agree, but rather that consensus will be determined according to customary law and practice. It is an exercise of their right to their land, territories and resources, their right to self-determination and to cultural integrity.

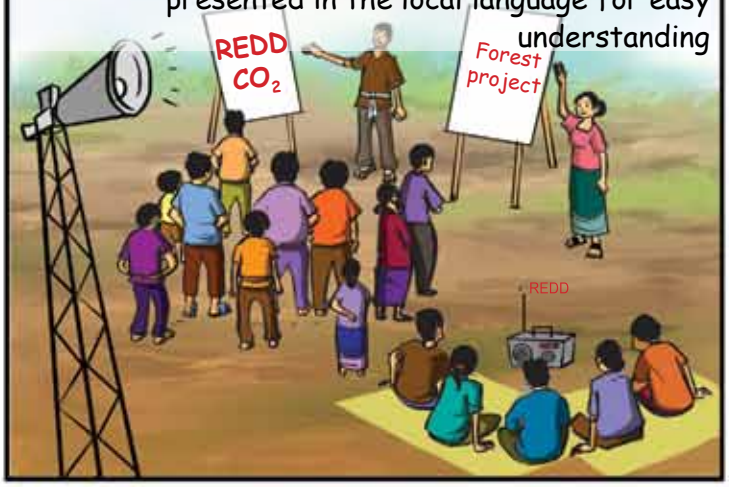

1
REDD
Are we satisfied with the project?
We need to discuss more.
Free decision-making without coercion or intimidation


You must agree!
Controlled decision-making with coercion or intimidation

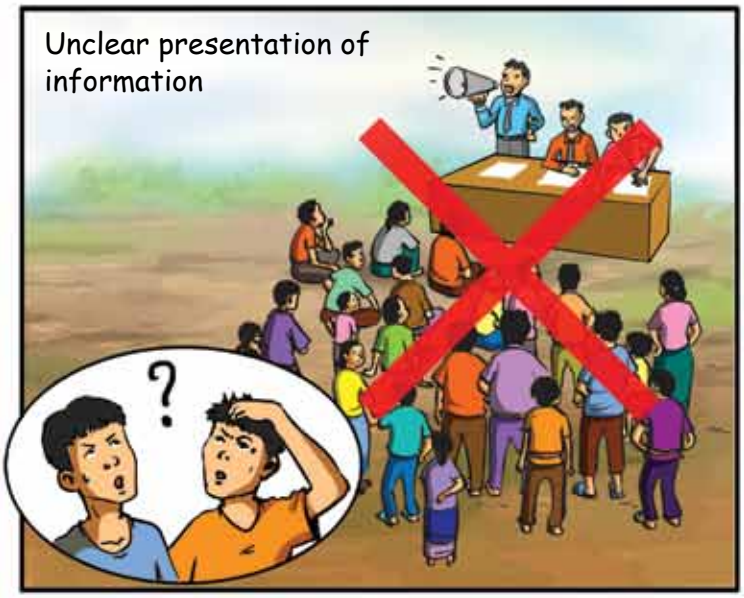

2
Communities havetime to decide and tell their opinion before the project starts


Communities do not participate and are not able to speak or exercise their rights in the consultation and decision-making

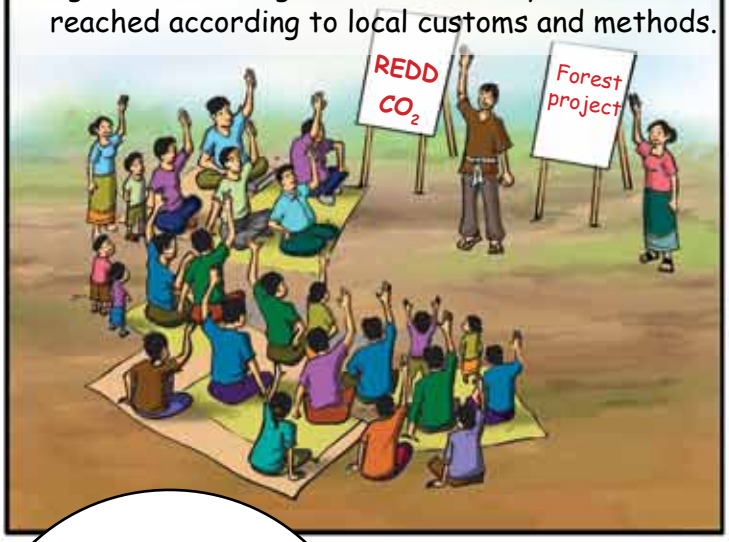
3 Both positive and negative information about the project must be clearly and transparently presented in the local language for easy understanding



Unclear presentation of information



4 Agreement among men, women and youth must be reached according to local customs and methods.



Agreement only among some powerful groups

Climate change has become an environmental problem affecting people throughout the world. Climate change is mainly the result of increasing glboal temperature, which results in shifting weather patterns such as unseasonal rains that affect agriculture, droughts, floods, plagues and diseases. Global warming is mainly the result of the increase of greenhouse gases, above all CO_2, in the earth's atmosphere. Scientists say that 17% to 20% of the global CO_2 emissions are a result of the destruction and degradation of forests. REDD (Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries) is one of the mitigation measures currently promoted for helping decrease emissions of carbon into the atmosphere.

This comics book discusses climate change and REDD from the perspective of indigenous communities. It is intended primarily for communities as a simple guide to help them understand climate change and REDD. It discusses the importance and the roles of forest in climate change, the concept of REDD and how it relates to and affects indigenous communities. It points at potential negative impacts of REDD for the recognition and exercise of the collective rights of indigenous peoples, especially on the right to land, territories and resources. Finally, it shows why and how the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) can be used to uphold and protect the rights of indigenous communities in REDD.

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