

# Revitalising

## knowledge across generations

**Education programmes are important for human development,** but they may also compromise the transmission of indigenous knowledge.

With formal education, children learn passively in classroom settings, rather than engaging in hands-on learning on the land. Teachers replace parents and elders as the holders of knowledge and figures of authority. National languages are the medium of instruction instead of vernacular languages. Formal education may therefore contribute to the erosion of cultural diversity and social cohesion, and heighten the alienation and disorientation of indigenous youth.

There is an urgent need to enhance the intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge, alongside and within formal education. Efforts are being made to bring indigenous language and knowledge into school curricula, as well as to move learning back into the community, thus reaffirming the status of elder men and women as knowledge holders.



**AN INUK BOY LEARNS** to butcher caribou by helping his father in Arctic Quebec, Canada.



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**THE MAYANGNA COMMUNITY** in the BOSAWAS biosphere reserve brought their language and knowledge of biodiversity into the classroom.



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**THE CANOE IS THE PEOPLE** project promotes indigenous knowledge of navigation in Pacific schools.



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