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# Bush Food - Traditional Knowledge

**You can't talk about traditional food without talking about traditional knowledge.**

“Every bush food has its own creation story, its own song and dance and cultural knowledge that has been handed down by our ancestors for thousands of years. The challenge for us is how do we bring our ancient foods into a contemporary industry while maintaining our connection to our culture, because for us, it's not just about money, it's about our identity.”



# Knowledge, Innovations & Science



**The knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous Peoples are the foundation of much of the world's modern science** and continues to provide a significant and valuable source of inputs. It is increasingly recognized that unlocking the potential of traditional knowledge can help modern society address significant challenges ranging from climate change and sustainable agriculture to new pathways for sustainable development for ensuring the livelihoods of Indigenous and local communities.



# Valuing Knowledge



Gubinge is the Nyul Nyul language name  
for Kakadu Plum



# Harnessing the potential of traditional knowledge and bush food

Need to develop successful strategies for harnessing the potential of traditional knowledge and bush food.

Indigenous Peoples' complex traditional knowledge systems have been critical to the preservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the ecological integrity of ecosystems.

Harnessing traditional knowledge practices is therefore an important piece to achieving SDG 13 on Climate Action, SDG 14 on Life below Water and SDG 15 on Life on Land.

Moreover, given that 80% of the population in Africa and 65% in India depend on traditional medicine to help meet their health care needs attention to traditional medicine will be essential to achieving SDG 3 on Good Health and Well-being.

# Superfood from the bush



# Women's Knowledge

Women's knowledge of wild vegetables- an important component of traditional food systems- is key to food security and nutrition for their families.

African women possess knowledge which helps to maintain household food security, in times of drought and famine. They develop coping strategies, such as relying on plants and crops more tolerant to droughts to secure food for the household during periods of increased hardship.

In India, Adivasi women's knowledge is important for forest conservation, as they know exactly which type of product to collect depending on the season and the time of the day in order not to overexploit the forest.

Capturing and managing these practices owned by women is therefore critical for both transmitting and sustaining traditional knowledge across generations.



The Tsimané living in a lowland region of Bolivia provide an example on the profound impact the loss of traditional knowledge can have on a community that is integrating into non-indigenous societies. The Tsimané rely on their knowledge of local plants for construction, tool-making, medicine and food.

Researchers recently assessed the health of 330 Tsimané children, **aged 2-10**, and tested their mothers and fathers on both their knowledge about local plants and their skills at using them. The findings revealed **that children with plant-savvy parents** – mothers in particular – were **much healthier** than those with **less plant-savvy** parents. Children from the **less plant-savvy parents** had higher levels of an immune system chemical called C-reactive protein, which accumulates in the presence of frequent infections. They **had smaller fat reserves** to draw on for growth or fighting off disease, which makes them more likely to have stunted growth, a sign of infections or malnutrition.



# Barriers - Supply not able to meet demand



# Bridging science with traditional knowledge

Bridging science with traditional knowledge systems can lead to approaches that can more accurately and coherently address social and ecological challenges.



# Growing this Market Demand for Ingredients

- It is important that the global bioeconomy revitalize local indigenous food systems.

There's a real need to grow this market.

The demand for these ingredients for cosmetic, nutrition, health, medicinal, preservative is huge, and growing. Current growers are unable to meet demand, and most indigenous enterprises just don't have the existing cash and in many cases the risk profile to be granted grants and or loans to invest in the infrastructure needed.

## Supply chain representation

- Indigenous representation in the native botanicals supply chain – **from growers to farm managers and exporters is less than 1%.**
- Only 1% of the industry's produce and dollar value is generated by Indigenous people.
- 1-2% of indigenous people are at the harvest end of the supply/ value chain, receiving the lowest possible amount for native ingredients, while non indigenous businesses make highest mark up through other areas of the supply chain, including processing, distributing, storage, product manufacturing and selling and brokering.
- There is huge potential in the growing phase of the supply chain for Indigenous peoples to practice their cultural traditions in caring for Country, while at the same time harvesting native botanicals for product development and selling.
- Indigenous growers and harvesters unable to get the benefits of value adding their raw material because they don't have the processing infrastructure and/ or industry networks.