

Biocultural landscapes activity

Strategies for maintaining biocultural landscapes

Author: Professor Jay Mistry

A-Level Syllabus

AQA Ecosystems under stress: ecosystems and sustainability, biomes, case study of a specific region experiencing social-ecological changes.



Introduction

There are many challenges in maintaining biocultural landscapes. In the Rupununi, Guyana, for example, they include mining activities (pollution and social impacts), climate change (droughts, greater risks of fire), large-scale infrastructure projects (road-building, dams, commercial farms), remoteness (access to services), land tenure and rights (access to resources and sacred sites), and Indigenous representation in decision-making (to voice concerns and opinions about development and conservation interventions). What are some of the strategies to address these issues, and what are our roles and responsibilities to help the situation?

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Exercise

The following exercises aim to explore the sustainability of biocultural landscapes.

1. Watch

Watch [this video](#) made by Indigenous researchers in the Rupununi, Guyana on traditional farming. Make brief notes on the following:

- What makes this practice a community owned solution? (Look back at the lecture to remind yourself what we mean by a community owned solution)
- Why is traditional knowledge important?
- How does this practice sustain the biocultural landscape?

2. Listen

Land rights are critical for maintaining biocultural landscapes. Without rights to land, Indigenous peoples and local communities cannot access the places and resources that are vital to their livelihoods and cultural practices. They are also vulnerable to large-scale extractive activities such as logging, and infrastructure projects such as road building.

Listen to [this podcast](#) about Indigenous land defenders in Canada fighting to protect land against invasive development. Make notes on the following:

- What responsibilities and to whom do the Indigenous land defenders feel they have?
- What factors are impacting their territories and their lives?
- How are they responding to invasive development?

3. Reflect

Reflect on your answers to the above two tasks. Then discuss, in groups, the following questions:

- What is our responsibility (as countries, as individuals) towards sustaining biocultural landscapes?
- What direct actions (big or small) can we take?

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