

## Tool 3.2



# Learning from Indigenous Peoples

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### **CLARITY Competence Area:**

Embracing values that sustain the lives of all living beings

### **GreenComp Competence Area:**

Embodying sustainability values

### **Why use this tool?**

This tool is meant to support reflection on the historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples face, and to encourage respectful engagement with Indigenous Peoples' knowledge systems and practices when it comes to growing climate resilience and fostering ecosystem regeneration.

It is essential to note that Indigenous Peoples are communities who have been experiencing colonization, in most parts of the world. Yet, they still carry a deep sense of responsibility for the lands they have inherited from their ancestors, which includes ecosystems that have been exploited and those that have remained intact. While colonization is often associated with empires exploiting territories and people overseas, it has occurred within Europe as well. The Sámi in Sápmi, present across parts of four countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia) and the Inuit of Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland – a self-governed territory within the Kingdom of Denmark) are examples of Indigenous Peoples who still suffer from the burden of European colonization.

Today, one of the biggest challenges faced by many Indigenous Peoples is "Green" or "Climate colonialism" as a result, many Indigenous Peoples see their territories once again plundered for rare minerals or to install wind power, now with the excuse of saving the planet. It is important not to exoticize Indigenous Peoples' cultures, while recognizing their knowledge as vital to our shared journey towards a more climate-resilient world.

## Activity 3.2.4

# Listening to the Land: Exploring your own roots

### Overview

This activity invites learners of all ages to engage with and learn from Sámi perspectives on land, time, and identity through storytelling expressed in art and music.

Through this experience, learners are encouraged to listen with curiosity, honour diverse worldviews, and consider how traditional ecological knowledge can inform climate resilience and sustainability today. They are also invited to explore their own relationship to land and place, reflecting on the values, memories, and responsibilities that shape their roots.

### Curriculum linkage

History, Geography, Biology, Sustainability & Climate Education, Arts and music.

### Competences built

Self-reflection, perspective taking and humility

### Prep

- Watch this video before deciding whether to introduce it to your learners: [Who Are The Sami?](#) (25 minutes). Also familiarise yourself with the materials you want to share with the students. Suggestions below.
- If you would like to add other materials, we encourage you to explore resources on local



### BASIC INFO

#### Age range:

6+

#### Duration:

2.5-4 hours

#### Group size:

Flexible

#### Level of difficulty:

Advanced. When engaging with Indigenous Peoples, representing their stories, artistic expressions, and cultural heritage, requires careful consideration of many complex questions. It is essential to reflect on and address underlying assumptions, biases, and power dynamics that may influence this engagement.

#### Materials/space required:

Tools to play/view the art. Text (when pdf is available) might be better to offer printed.

#### Location:

Indoors

#### Engagement of external stakeholders:

No



Indigenous Peoples (if any), environmental racism, and authors engaged in decolonial studies (see references). Also reflect on your own representations, assumptions, and biases related to Indigenous Peoples.

**Competences/activities to practice first by the teacher:**

- To be better prepared to support learners who may experience emotional distress, you can practise using 'Moving to reduce climate anxiety' (1.3).

**Steps in the activity**

1. Set the scene
2. Experience & listen
3. Reflection
4. Your relation to a place and space

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**Step 1: Set the scene**

Begin by sharing these three essential facts:

1. **Biodiversity & Stewardship:** Over 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity exists on lands cared for by Indigenous Peoples. These communities often hold deep, place-based knowledge about sustaining life.
2. **Diversity of Lived Experience:** Indigenous Peoples, including the Sámi, live in both rural and urban areas today, and their practices, languages, and art forms continue to evolve.
3. **History & Injustice:** Most Indigenous Peoples have faced historical and ongoing oppression. For the Sámi, this includes land dispossession, assimilation policies, and efforts to erase language and culture.

You may also want to share the recommended video as part of your own preparation. While it is produced outside of Indigenous communities, it offers valuable insights and can serve as a starting point for learning.

**Step 2: Experience & Listen (25–30 minutes)**

Watch or listen to the selected materials.

1. Introduce the works: those suggested below related to the Sami culture, or others that you have chosen (for example in 'resources' you can find similar



items highlighting Inuit art and culture from Greenland). After the introduction it is possible to let the learners choose one or two that they would like to engage with:

- a. **Sofia Jannok – *Yoik of the Wind***: A musical performance blending traditional Sámi yoik with modern influences. Explain the concept of yoik as more than a song – it's a way of remembering and honouring people, places, and moments. Discuss how visual and musical storytelling can carry knowledge, resistance, and care for the Earth. Joik - video: [Yoik of the Wind](#)
  - b. **Britta Marakatt-Labba – *Gádjunbáttit/Lifelines***: Embroidery art depicting Sámi mythology, everyday life, and historical events. One example here: <https://arcticartssummit.com/articles/11-sweden-based-sami-artists-addressing-indigenous-pasts-presents-and-futures/>
  - c. **Victoria Andersson – *Årsringar (Growth Rings)***: Textile art reflecting personal narrative on time, identity, and connection to place. <https://arcticartssummit.com/articles/11-sweden-based-sami-artists-addressing-indigenous-pasts-presents-and-futures/>
2. Invite students to write down any questions or emotions that arise. For instance:
    - a. When you see or listen to (these works):
    - b. What are your feelings?
    - c. What are your thoughts?
    - d. What would you like to know more about?
  3. Let them know there's no need to understand everything immediately – it's about taking part and listening with openness.

### Step 3: Reflection (20–30 minutes)

1. Facilitate a circle or small group dialogue using the following prompts:
  - a. Did this artwork stir any feelings or thoughts about land – like how people live with it, care for it, or belong to it?
  - b. What surprised or intrigued you?
  - c. How is the relationship to nature expressed in these works?
  - d. How does this challenge your understanding of land and ownership?
  - e. What would you like to learn more about?
2. If necessary, the activity can close here, but we strongly recommend Step 4 if you have the time and resources.



## Step 4: Your relation to a place and space (45-90 minutes)

Invite learners to create their own drawing, textile artwork, (digital) collage, or music reflecting their relationship with land, ancestry, or time. You can follow these steps:

1. Invite the learners to recall meaningful moments, places, or relationships that connect them to land, ancestry, or time.
2. Encourage them to connect their ideas or feelings to those sparked by the artworks they've explored.
3. If they choose artwork rather than music, invite them to sketch a rough layout and choose images, materials, or symbols that tell their story in relation to land, ancestry or time.
4. Create: Use fabric, papers, mixed media, or digital tools to bring their pieces to life; or invite experiments with song or instrumental contributions.
5. Optional to add a title and description explaining the meaning of their work.
6. Share and reflect: Let each who feels ready present their contribution to others and reflect on the stories and connections shared in the group.

### Dos and don'ts



#### Do:

- Learn about Sámi and other Indigenous peoples' history and ongoing issues (e.g., mining, reindeer herding rights).
- Present Sámi and other Indigenous peoples' perspectives as contemporary and diverse.
- Acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonization while celebrating Indigenous Peoples' resilience and knowledge.
- Respect the complexity of Indigenous Peoples' relationships with land - each has their own perspective, including adaptations to the demands of the countries in which they are embedded.
- Acknowledge that some learners may have complex or painful relationships to land and roots. Migrant students and others who have experienced displacement or trauma are often present in classrooms. Phrase questions and design activities with sensitivity – for example, avoid assuming a shared sense of home or belonging to a particular place, and offer space for multiple interpretations and stories.



**Don't:**

- Generalize Sámi and Indigenous Peoples' knowledge or practices as timeless or static.
- Reduce the art to "symbols" without acknowledging their historical and political dimensions.
- Romanticize traditional lifestyles without understanding their sophistication and ongoing relevance.
- Assume all Indigenous communities are the same – each has a unique culture, language, and history.
- Assume all learners have a positive or stable connection to a specific place, land, or heritage. Avoid asking questions like “Where are you really from?” or assigning tasks that require students to describe a childhood home or ancestral land without offering alternatives.

**Adaptations:**

Adapt the questions to suit your age group. Questions and prompts are often easier to remember and answer for the learners if they are written down and/or illustrated by pictograms. An alternative for younger children when introducing the artworks is to do it in smaller groups and have pictograms of feelings and emotions at hand for the learners to choose from, when posing the question: Tell me how you feel or how your body feels when looking or listening to this. If your students are young, they can be invited to show the emotion with their body.

We invite you to adapt this activity to the specific needs of your learners, including by taking into account their neurodiversity. When adapting tools and activities for neurodivergent learners, please note it is not about treating others how *you* want to be treated, but how *they* want to be treated. Ask, listen, and stay open to different ways of learning and engaging.

**References**

This tool was developed by Legacy17 in close cooperation with a contributor from the Sámi community, with the intention of being as mindful and respectful as possible regarding cultural appropriation and the broader legacies of colonialism. While every effort has been made to honour Sámi and Inuit perspectives, we acknowledge that a single activity cannot fully encompass the richness or complexity of these cultures. We encourage you to adapt or adjust the activity with care, and please feel welcome to contact us with any questions or concerns.

**If you would like to focus on Inuit culture:**

- The Arctic Summit is a valuable resource. In this selection, we have focused on links that highlight Inuit art and culture from Greenland:



<https://arcticartssummit.com/an-introduction-to-the-art-and-culture-of-kalaallit-nunaat/>

- This link leads to the work of Ivínguak' Stork Høegh, who is a contemporary Greenlandic Inuk artist based in Nuuk. Here the works shown are digital photo collages and the art often addresses political themes and futurity related to Greenlandic society: <https://arcticartssummit.com/articles/how-ivinguak-stork-hoegh-layers-indigenous-futurity-within-her-work/>

#### More resources related to Sámi culture and art:

- About traditional clothes - Sáme Jåhkâmåhke márnánin. Samer på Jokkmokks marknad. The Sami at Jokkmokk Market. 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8l48mo9rN0>
- About the sami culture: <https://www.samer.se/2987>
- A TEDx talk: [Our Rights To Earth And Freedom: Sofia Jannok at TEDxGateway](#)



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