

# **Informal learning and practices of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge among Maasai children in Kajiado County, Southern Kenya**

日常生活における在来生態知の習得と実践—マサイ族子どもの事例から

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## **Abstract**

Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) is reevaluated and recognized as one of the most important alternatives for improving local capacity in response to global climate change. Meanwhile, modernization centralized development have hastened changes in the livelihood and environment of indigenous societies worldwide. The objective of this study is to understand how younger generations of indigenous societies inherit IEK under the influence of social and environmental changes. Four months' fieldwork has been conducted to investigate the processes of Maasai children's informal learning and practice of the IEK.

Under the influence of rangeland privatization, market economy, and modern education, pastoral Maasai in Southern Kenya are experiencing significant lifestyle and socio-economic changes. Most children have participated in formal education; and many households have diversified their livelihoods. However, the result of this study shows that livestock still play an important role in local subsistence and culture through the age-sex division of livestock related daily activities. All the Maasai children continue to participate in subsistence activities since an early age. School children participate in pastoral activities such as milking livestock (with frequency of 5.2 times per week per person) and herding (with frequency of 2.6 times per week per person). The Maasai have abundant ecological knowledge of the environment, most of which are related to livestock management. Children's informal learning and practice of the IEK happens simultaneously through daily activities and communication with different people in spatiotemporal environment. The process of children's IEK informal learning and practice is comprehensive and integrated. Daily changes such as weather, movement of wildlife and livestock, create uncertainties inside of children's daily activities. These uncertainties make the repetitions of the daily activity become new processes of IEK informal learning and practice. Results of this study illustrated the dynamics, continuously repeated but ever-new processes of Maasai children's IEK informal learning and practice.