**Decolonizing Climate Change Adaptation: Exploring Indigenous Knowledge in uMkhanyakude District Municipality, South Africa**

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# Abstract

Indigenous communities in South Africa actively challenge dominant Eurocentric worldviews and embrace the African Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) to respond to climate change impacts. This dynamic knowledge system introduces unique perspectives, objectives, and strategies in relation to adaptation, informed by geographical and cultural considerations. The efficacy of IKS in addressing climate change impacts is evident, underscoring IKS’s significance as a crucial resource for policy-making and interventions, particularly in light of the anticipated detrimental climate change impacts. Regrettably, IK has been relegated to the fringes of mainstream climate governance and policy-making, highlighting the need to liberate African IKS. This is the basis for advocating a decolonial approach that respects and validates the capacity of indigenous communities to establish their adaptation measures by drawing upon their IKS, as opposed to imposing top-down approaches based on Western epistemologies. Leveraging collective efficacy becomes pivotal in liberating these epistemologies, as demonstrated by uMkhanyakude District Municipality small-scale farmers. The process of decolonizing adaptation through IKS challenges existing power dynamics and ultimately leads to the development of appropriate, efficacious, and culturally sensitive climate adaptation measures.

**Keywords**: Climate change; Adaptation; Indigenous Knowledge Systems; Decolonization; South Africa