

# **Indigenous Issues**

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For: Mr. Morrison

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## Preface

The purpose of this report is to identify and explore Indigenous people's issues worldwide. These include; social issues such as education and health, cultural identity battles and economic issues including the loss of land.

Considering the diversity of Indigenous peoples, an official definition of "Indigenous" has not been adopted by any UN-system body. Instead the system has developed a modern understanding of this term based on the following:

- Self- identification as Indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources
- Distinct social, economic or political systems
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- Form non-dominant groups of society
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. <sup>1</sup>

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that:

*"Affirming* that Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such,

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<sup>1</sup>United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/5session\\_factsheet1.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf)

*Concerned* that Indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests,

*Recognizing* the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources,”<sup>2</sup>

By courageously stating the rights of Aboriginal people, the United Nations legitimized the importance of addressing the human rights of Indigenous people around the world. This report will also explore the violation of human rights that Indigenous people face in regard to these issues, and why it is of importance to find solutions to these issues. It will explain, while among other rights stated in the United Nation’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples why the previously stated rights have been violated.

The most prominent issues that Indigenous people face include: the destruction of their land, not having proper access to health care, education, food and water, racial injustices, as well as a constant battle for their cultural and spiritual traditions. It is essential to realize the severity of the issues and the importance of finding solutions in order to re-establish the rights of the Indigenous populations. These issues require immediate action in order to preserve the Indigenous cultures, their valued traditions,

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<sup>2</sup>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.  
<http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/DRIPGA.pdf>

spiritual beliefs and world views, as well as the languages that are associated with the Indigenous communities around the world, and even the Indigenous people themselves. This issue is of importance because Indigenous people have faced, and continue to face unjust treatment. They are human beings and deserve to have rights and freedom, and to have their rights accepted and abided by.

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## Summary

This paper will include an in depth analysis of issues faced by Indigenous people around the world. A description of the term “Indigenous” will be provided, as well as descriptions of the population of Indigenous people worldwide. Following that a background is recognized, in order to establish the beginning of these prominent issues for Indigenous peoples and how these issues have progressed and worsened over time. A renowned expert is presented next to provide insight to the issue and examine the issue further. The role of control is examined among Indigenous Peoples and views on spirituality and religion are discussed in reference to the issues that indigenous people face. Three detailed case studies from Brazil, Botswana, and The Philippines are included. They take an in depth look into the state of these issues affecting the Indigenous populations worldwide. The role of international organizations and their efforts are described as they relate to the issue. Canada is also studied as a fourth case study. Potential solutions are presented and explored. The information presented in this report has been researched from a variety of sources including books, internet journals, websites, and online documents. Newspaper/ magazine articles and news broadcasts have also contributed to the depth of understanding of this important global issue. This report is an attempt to examine and establish the struggles of Indigenous people worldwide.

## Background

In order to accurately understand the issues that Indigenous people face, their background must be thoroughly examined and explored. This will provide information as to how these issues began and provide possible solutions for fixing them. An understanding of the background is essential to recognizing the difficulties the Indigenous people of the world are subjected to. The early fifteenth century marked the beginning of the unjust treatment of Aboriginal societies. During this time colonization and imperialism arose around the world. “This mistreatment of the Indigenous people, through assimilation, still lingers in our world today affecting nearly 4 percent of the world’s population.”<sup>3</sup>

When looking into the background of the Indigenous societies, there are essentially four parts to the development of this issue.<sup>4</sup> The way of living before the Indigenous people were discovered by Europeans, is the first development. The second development entails the European explorer’s mark upon the Indigenous societies and land. Colonization and Imperialism began the third development of this issue about a century ago. And the fourth of their problems deals with the issues affecting them now and how we can improve their way of life. <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Goehring, Brian. Indigenous Peoples of the World: An Introduction to their Past, Present and Future.

<sup>4</sup> Goehring, Brian.

<sup>5</sup>Helin, Calvin. Dances with Dependency.

The first phase of Indigenous issues began after their initial contact with the European explorers.<sup>6</sup> Communities of Indigenous Peoples began to undergo irreparable damage to their societal identity. Before the first contact with European civilizations, many Indigenous societies were nomadic tribes and many Indigenous people did not own or possess a specific region of land.<sup>7</sup> Throughout this period before colonization, they gathered insightful information regarding and understanding their natural environment, medicinal plant usage, and their many natural resources.<sup>8</sup> Indigenous communities were largely associated with their environment and their value systems were based on a close relationship with their surroundings. As the Europeans ventured past the borders of Europe and began the process of colonization, they brought their European ethics and rules along with them. The Western man brought along a necessity to “own” in order to gain dominance over the earth.<sup>9</sup> This began the process of the second development.

The second development brought along explorers from the Western world. The fifteenth century marked the European exploration of the world, as they stepped into a world of unknown potential.<sup>10</sup> They wanted to find new land for claiming and faster routes for trading to help their economies; however, European philosophies and religion experienced a period of expansionism at the same time.<sup>11</sup> As they explored the unfamiliar lands the Europeans brought along with them something that would significantly affect the Indigenous people. Diseases including smallpox, chickenpox, measles, influenza,

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<sup>6</sup>Reed, Kevin. Aboriginal Peoples: Building for the Future.

<sup>7</sup>Davis, Wade. Light at the Edge of the World.

<sup>8</sup>Goehring, Brian.

<sup>9</sup>Hall, Stuart. The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power.

<sup>10</sup>Goehring, Brian.

<sup>11</sup>Goehring, Brian.



pneumonia, scarlet fever, yellow fever, and typhus infected the Indigenous people.<sup>12</sup> Alcohol was also introduced to the Indigenous people at the time of meeting the Europeans and, it significantly impacted the different Indigenous tribes.<sup>13</sup> The Western explorer's knowledge of weaponry and warfare was used to show dominance over the Indigenous societies. It allowed them to control their will and enforce their ideas onto the Indigenous societies.<sup>14</sup> The exploration and expansion of the Western world was delayed until they could set up permanent establishments. In order for Europeans to accomplish this feat they needed to acquire land. Substantial amounts of land were taken from Indigenous communities and were exclusively created for European Governments.<sup>15</sup> The Indigenous people were allotted land by the European dominances. Indigenous societies were taken advantage of by colonizing nations, in order to further their expansion.

Colonization and imperialism began the third development of these issues. The European settlements began to colonize the Indigenous communities and claim the lands as their own.<sup>16</sup> The Europeans divided the communities of Indigenous people and forced them onto specific land. "This domination has had a profound effect upon all Indigenous Peoples of the world. Colonialism, masked as progress and modernity, and its attendant hegemony, has had a destructive effect on pre-colonial peoples."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup><http://www.bookrags.com/research/the-impact-of-european-diseases-on--scit-0312/>

<sup>13</sup>Goehring, Brian.

<sup>14</sup>Goehring, Brian.

<sup>15</sup>Indian Land Ownership. <http://www.landandfreedom.org/ushistory/us1.htm>

<sup>16</sup>Aboriginal Perspectives. <http://www3.onf.ca/enclasse/doclens/visau/index.php?excerpt=612109&expmode=2&film=16933&language=english&mode=theme&submode=about&theme=30662>

<sup>17</sup>Goehring, Brian.

In North America, the Indigenous people were forced onto land spaces called reserves. Reserves are lands set aside for the exclusive use of registered or status Indian and only status Indians can "own" land on a reserve.<sup>18</sup> This was an attempt to disconnect the culture of the Indigenous people from the rest of the nation.

Colonization was taking over the lives of the Indigenous people and began the destruction of Indigenous societies. Their homes, families, languages, and even identities were taken in attempt to change who they were.<sup>19</sup> This leads to the fourth and last development in the history of Indigenous people. Many of the issues faced today by Indigenous people of the world began from early contact with European explorers. Indigenous people of the world still struggle with the inability to find a balance, between the culturally diverse gap of a westernized world and age old Indigenous traditions. "As Indigenous people struggle to find their way in the new order, their very existence as people is being challenged."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup><http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0003980>

<sup>19</sup>Henderson, James. Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision.

<sup>20</sup>Goehring, Brian.

## Renowned Expert

Alison Bradshaw is teacher and principal who currently lives in Orillia and is a mother of 4 First Nations children. Her involvement with Aboriginal people's has included; working in Northern First Nations communities, for 15 years in Oji-Cree, Cree, Ojibway and Sioux communities in Northern/Southern Ontario and Manitoba. She worked first for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and then for First Nations themselves. Today, with the public school board, she is the principal in a school with a high number of First Nation students and one of only 2 schools in the board with an Ojibwe Language program.

She has great interest in the issues of Aboriginals for a number of reasons. These being:

1. Her mother ran UNICEF Ontario for years and she was involved as head writer on a teachers Guide re: Indigenous Children's Literature, which involved Aboriginal stories from around the globe.
2. She spent most of her teaching career and her post graduate work focussing on second language acquisition/learning English for her Cree/Ojibway students.
3. Her children are all of Ojibway or Mik maw background, so she has a vested interest in Indigenous issues for them.
4. Her husband is an aboriginal "activist" and former chief of his community and they have worked together over the years for First Nation issues.

Mrs. Bradshaw shares (similar) opinions of unjust treatment of Aboriginals with those expressed within this report. She feels that in just about every country where Aboriginal people still live, their beliefs, world views and rights have been trampled upon by colonizing peoples. In spite of all of the gains which have been made to right historic wrongs, she has experienced with her family the ongoing racism which still exists. She is aware of racist and outdated legislation still governing the lives of First Nations people today, such as the Indian Act in Canada. For example, to this day, if a person living on First Nation's territory wants to get a mortgage, the documents must be sent to INAC for approval. The strong sense of paternalism still exists in our institutions. She feels that the government has been making up for past wrongs reluctantly, only when forced to through the court systems (land claims), and is only beginning to acknowledge the damage (residential school apology). She believes that in order to fully repair the mistakes made, all Canadians need to be educated on these issues-through text books, explicit teaching and First Nation communities must be brought to the same living standards as those enjoyed by the rest of the country. She firmly believes that if the average Canadian understood the full realities of First Nation life in Canada today, they would not tolerate it.

The solution's that she sees to the issues that Aboriginals face include;

- The Indian Act must be abolished and First Nation peoples must have self determination.
- Treaty rights/land claims must be addressed quickly, fully and in keeping with the spirit in which they were made
- Stop the assimilation policies and paternalism.

-Establish the political will to truly improve things.

-Support maintenance of language and culture.

## Role of Control

The role of control among the Indigenous people worldwide must be acknowledged in order to understand the issues that they face and solutions to these issues. Due to colonization almost all of the Indigenous populations around the world are governed by Eurocentric governments that have diminutive control over their cultures, their lands, and in most cases their futures.<sup>21</sup> “Colonization began the deterioration of Indigenous rights as is took away Indigenous control over land, resources, lifestyles and even themselves.”<sup>22</sup> Governments took control over Indigenous populations, while knowing little or nothing about their cultures and who they are. This issue has been present for many years, yet it has only been recently addressed by some governments in an attempt to repair the damage that has been done. “In many areas of the world the dominant societies have erected bureaucratic entities specifically to directly administer all aspects of the lives of their Indigenous minorities.”<sup>23</sup>

With the current governmental dominance, of the Indigenous populations they are left with very little power over how they want to govern their lives. The Western world has created various problems as mentioned before including: the loss of land, poor health regulations, loss of cultural identity, and educational deficiency. The following passage depicts how the Indigenous people have little control over their lives:

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<sup>21</sup>Goehring, Brian.

<sup>22</sup>Helin, Calvin.

<sup>23</sup>Goehring, Brian.

Each dominant society has identified specific groups of Indigenous People and has labelled these societies as “their” Indigenous People. Each dominant society is, or at least once was, fully intent upon in their own words, “making them more like us,” changing all aspects of the “primitive” societies who live among them to conform to the expectations the dominating society imposes.<sup>24</sup>

The lack of control the Indigenous people have over their society results in more difficulty when trying to solve this particular issue. Indigenous communities must gain a certain level of control over their rights in order for this issue to diminish and progress positively into the future.

Indigenous societies are susceptible to the threats placed upon them by Western civilizations and in order for them to regain control over their lives, self determination is essential. However actualizing self determination and self control is an act of great complication.<sup>25</sup> Self determination is referred to as, the rights to participate in the process of governance, and to influence one’s future not only politically but socially and culturally as well.<sup>26</sup> It is easily recognized that the Indigenous societies should have self-governance over their culture just as we have over ours. The ability to have self governance over their society will positively contribute to continued reparation and impact the development of equality for Indigenous people.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Goehring, Brian.

<sup>25</sup>Goehring, Brian.

<sup>26</sup>Helin, Calvin.

<sup>27</sup>Helin, Calvin.

In order to solve any problems one must first educate themselves about the issue and have a genuine concern to achieve a resolution. Unquestionably, the inhuman circumstances the Natives of Canada have faced, the government in an attempt has put forth billions of dollars in hopes of reconciliation with the Indigenous population.<sup>28</sup> In terms of this particular issue of Indigenous mistreatment, the world should care immensely about their current plight. Not only are they fellow human beings, they also add a diversity to the world that, if, lost can never be regained. However saying this, Indigenous societies are effectively being extinguished as well as being negatively portrayed. Governments should be guided to care about each individual within their borders, ignoring their physical background and culture. This will encourage equality in the future and limit the mistreatment of traditional Indigenous societies.

## Religion and Spirituality

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<sup>28</sup> Hurley, Mary and Wherrett, Jill. The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People.



Religion and spiritual beliefs provide and explain reasons why there are issues prevailing within Indigenous cultures around the world; which threatens the existence of these people. The relationship between the colonizing Western world and Indigenous people was influenced mainly by the Eurocentric need to impose their spiritual and religious manifests on the Indigenous cultures; this form of control systematically denuded their spiritual identity.

Spirituality is a large part of Indigenous people's culture and their way of living. It allows them to live peacefully with their surrounding environments including the plants, land and animals.<sup>29</sup> They were strong believers in "man" not owning land but sharing it with the resources that also inhabit it.<sup>30</sup>

What these cultures have done is to forge through time and ritual a traditional mystique of the earth that is not based on the deep attachment to the land but also on far more subtle intuition - the idea that the land itself is breathed into being by human consciousness. For these societies, the land is alive, a dynamic force to be embraced.<sup>31</sup>

Upon the arrival of the European explorers the Indigenous societies lived not owning land or believing one could own it. The Eurocentric ways were the complete opposite to that and believed that man should rule over nature.<sup>32</sup> These cultural and

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<sup>29</sup>Goehring, Brian.

<sup>30</sup>Goehring, Brian.

<sup>31</sup> Davis, Wade.

<sup>32</sup> Goehring, Brian.

spiritual beliefs differentiated the Indigenous societies from the Western world. The meeting of these differences cultivated the adjustments the Europeans felt needed to be placed upon the Natives. The loss of spirituality largely contributes to the state of affairs the Indigenous people find themselves in currently.

The Europeans wanted to successfully dominate the new explored territory. They started to enforce their ways upon the Natives occupying the land. As a process of colonization the Europeans belittled and humiliated the Indigenous people. The church drove Indigenous religions out of the culture through forcing them to attend residential schools. In the Christian schools the Indigenous children were taught the ways of European living. The European's believed that Christianity was the "right" religion, and due to this it was taught in the residential schools. They were not allowed to speak their language or practice any of their spiritual traditions. Canada was one of many countries in which residential schooling was used to assimilate and destroy generations of Indigenous children and their cultural traditions. They effectively robbed the Natives of their spiritual beliefs, religion, language and family. Certainly the use of residential schools affected the Indigenous populations significantly, as they were stripped of the backbone of their spiritual lives.

Spirituality and religion will not provide a definite answer in solving the plight of the Indigenous populations; however, it allows us to view the ways in which the Western world has manipulated and created these issues that are still prevalent in society. If the

values and the practices that the Indigenous people believed were still used today many of the problems they endure would be not as significant.

### Case Study: Brazil

Brazil is such a large country that people often refer to it as a continent. With an area of 8 ½ million kilometres, Brazil is the fifth largest country on earth.<sup>33</sup> There are currently around 735 000 Indigenous people living in Brazil. These Indigenous peoples are living in different ways: some are living in their own areas, some are living in the city, but most live in complete isolation,<sup>34</sup> within the dense jungles of Brazil, including the Amazon jungle.<sup>35</sup>

The Indigenous people of Brazil face many struggles against the westernized population. These include; assimilation of their culture, violence and issues involving their health, although the most prominent issue that they face is destruction and invasion of their land due to deforestation.

The Brazilian people believe that the forests of Brazil, including the Amazon are completely uninhabited, apart from animals and “a few” Indians.<sup>36</sup> This misconception has led to the ignorance on the issue of deforestation and its affects. In fact significantly more than “a few” Indigenous people live in the forests of Brazil and have been affected by the destruction of their land. Many cases of land violations towards the Indigenous people of Brazil have been reported. These include; Awa-Guajá People- invasions and a railway, Arara People- reducing the indigenous land, and Tumbalalá people- land rights.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Perry, Ritchie. Brazil; the Land and its People. Pg. 8

<sup>34</sup><http://www.gfbv.de/inhaltsDok.php?id=975>

<sup>35</sup>Perry, Ritchie. Brazil; the Land and its People. Pg. 8

<sup>36</sup>Perry, Ritchie. Brazil; the Land and its People. Pg. 32

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.gfbv.de/inhaltsDok.php?id=975>

The people of Awa- Guajá face invasions of their land and a railway intrusion on their land. One of the most important problems is that there is no security of the land, so invaders are entering the indigenous areas all the time without any difficulty. There are wood companies, fishermen and hunters. Deforestation and lack of animals are the direct results. Because of this the Awá have more and more problems finding enough food (hunting animals, fishing, and collecting fruits and seeds).<sup>38</sup>

Besides these invasions there is a railway crossing the Indigenous area. This railway is of the company Vale Rio do Doce, one of the biggest metal and mining companies in the world. The railway has made it easier for people to enter these devastated forests. This has caused more invasions and because of the noise of the trains (every 30 minutes there is one passing by) the animals are leaving the forest.<sup>39</sup>

The Arara people, also known as the Ugorogmo, face the reduction of their land because the government is taking it away. The reduction of their area, called Cachoeira Seca, has been dragging on since 1993. Contact with the non- Indigenous society, which took place during the construction of the Tran Amazonian Highway, also brought the Indigenous people several diseases like influenza and diarrhoea. These foreign diseases reduced the population. Only a few families survived and they started to dispute their right to live on their land with timber merchants, ranchers and land grabbers. Nowadays, hundreds of roads, used to transport timber, cross through the land of these people, and invade and destroy their rights.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.gfbv.de/inhaltsDok.php?id=975>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.gfbv.de/inhaltsDok.php?id=975>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.gfbv.de/inhaltsDok.php?id=975>

The Tumbalalá, who live on the banks of the River São Francisco, in Bahia, have been fighting for the rights to their land for years. The São Francisco Hydroelectric Company has been constructing dams in the River São Francisco on the Indigenous peoples land. These Indigenous people also face around 450 squatters that live on their land, many of which are farmers who were affected by the dams. The building of the dams in the river, have altered people's food production and traditional ways of life.<sup>41</sup>

Cimi stands for Conselho Indigenista Missionário, an organization that supports the struggle of the indigenous peoples in Brazil. This struggle is mainly concentrated on land issues. This is because land is central for the well-being and survival of Brazil's Indigenous population. For all indigenous people land is a condition for life and a full accomplishment of the culture. Priority of CIMI is to support the fight to recuperate, demarcate and guarantee the completeness of the indigenous territories.<sup>42</sup>

The Indian Missionary Council, CIMI, reported that land invasions of Brazilian Indian reservations by loggers and miners has risen since the mid-1990s. Loggers are increasingly trespassing on indigenous lands in search of mahogany, which can no longer be legally logged in Brazil. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, clashes between indigenous peoples and loggers, miners, and oil developers received some exposure in the Western press, notably the on-going saga between the native Yanomani of Brazil and Venezuela

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.gfbv.de/inhaltsDok.php?id=975>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.gfbv.de/inhaltsDok.php?id=975>

and thousands of small-scale miners, known as "garimpeiros" in Brazil, who often illegally mine on the natives' demarcated lands.<sup>43</sup>

The far-flung Yanomani Indigenous tribe inhabits a France-sized area of forest in northern Brazil. The Yanomani lived in virtual isolation after they were first documented by anthropologists in the 1920s until the 1970s when large numbers of gold miners invaded their territory. The miners introduced diseases, like measles, tuberculosis, the flu, and malaria to the resistant-deficient Yanomani, resulting in a significant decline in their population. Whereas an estimated 20,000 Yanomani lived in Brazil in the late 1970s, fewer than 9,000 existed in 1997. Violence between the Yanomani and the armed garimpeiros has also taken its toll resulting in many fatalities. Further, the garimpeiros disrupt the traditional Yanomani way of life by using mercury which pollutes local rivers, wildlife, and the Yanomani themselves. The miners' planes scare away the wildlife the Yanomani depend upon for food. The garimpeiros have also brought guns to the Yanomani meaning that inter-village disputes today are more likely to end in shootings.<sup>44</sup>

In Brazil, United Nation's Population Fund (UNFPA) provided support to a 2005 report, *Satere-Mawe, The Portrait of an Indigenous People*, conducted with the active participation of the native Brazilians. It is a preliminary analysis of conditions affecting

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<sup>43</sup> [http://rainforests.mongabay.com/amazon/amazon\\_people.html](http://rainforests.mongabay.com/amazon/amazon_people.html)

<sup>44</sup> [http://rainforests.mongabay.com/amazon/amazon\\_people.html](http://rainforests.mongabay.com/amazon/amazon_people.html)

some 8,500 people whose traditional way of life is being eroded by economic pressures and the devastation of large parts of the Amazon.<sup>45</sup>

For Indigenous people land is very important. They often refer to it as their mother. Land gives them water, food, a place to live. Without land there is no life. The Constitution of Brazil, of 1988, recognized the original right over the lands that Indigenous peoples have traditionally occupied. It also assured Indigenous peoples a respect for their social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions.<sup>46</sup> Indeed the rights of the Indigenous peoples have been recognized, but they have yet to be put into action. To establish the issues that these people face their land problems must be put at rest and their rights as people must be respected and carried through.

The government doesn't see this population of Indigenous people as important. The government is willing to let these people suffer in order to better the economy, industries and the rest of the population of Brazil.

## Case Study: Botswana

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.unfpa.org/rights/people.htm>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.gfbv.de/inhaltsDok.php?id=975>



Botswana is the oldest African country still being governed by a multiparty democracy. Situated in Southern Africa it is home to nearly 59, 000 Indigenous people compared to the entire population of 1,949,780 people. 55,000 of them belong to the San tribe while the other 4,000 belong to the Nama tribe. These two tribes create the only two tribes presently residing in Botswana. Botswana has a relatively well-developed economic, social security and health care systems along with possible solutions to alleviate the issue of poverty. However, the approximately 59,000 Indigenous people inhabiting Botswana still face many issues including human right problems.<sup>47</sup> This is hard to believe because the Government of Botswana has committed, on paper, to take several actions which would reverse the current state of the Indigenous people. The irony is that the actions occurring, directly contradict those prior commitments promised by the Botswana government. In order to completely distinguish the issues that plague the Indigenous people the government must take a stand and cannot continue to just ignore the issues at hand but deal with them. The San tribal people were believed to be among the first to inhabit the southern part of the African continent. Their presence in this country can be traced back 25,000 years ago.<sup>48</sup> Currently, the San people occupy a large amount of Southern Africa, not just in Botswana, but in Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Angola. Their total population equals approximately 110 000 people.<sup>49</sup> The Nama are a much smaller group of people and occupy mainly southern Botswana. They are significantly different from the San tribe with their own dialect and separate cultural identities.<sup>50</sup> Not only did these two tribes have to cope with the rush of white settlers taking over their land they also had to deal with the arrival of another ethnic tribe

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

<sup>49</sup> Sylvain, Renee. <http://www.iwgia.org/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

called the Tswana tribes. This tribe established permanent residence in Botswana and became increasingly powerful. By the 20th century their well organized political systems had control over most of Botswana with little interference from British Politicians.<sup>51</sup> Presently the San and Nama tribes are still being undermined and continually have to deal with the pressing issues that affect not only future but their continued existence.

Even though the Government of Botswana make claims that they are attempting to put forth an effort to improve the rights of the Indigenous people, their public actions show otherwise. Primarily, they say they will take actions to improve the lives of the Indigenous people of Botswana yet continually these people have been put aside and do not receive any of these rights. The discrimination they are attacked with, not only negatively affects the native people but it also robs them of their land, their culture and many unique customs they carry. Various issues including land rights, hunting and gathering rights, gender issues, health and education issues, as well as political marginalization have plagued the San tribes with difficulties when trying to survive.<sup>52</sup> Many government documents were created to protect the human rights of the Indigenous people. However this issue has clearly been set aside as it continues to remain a problem.

Similar to many other Indigenous people around the world the right to own land continues to be an issue in Botswana. The Constitution of Botswana states that all citizens of Botswana have land rights.<sup>53</sup> The Tribal Land Grazing Policy (TLGP) created

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

<sup>52</sup> [http://www.chr.up.ac.za/chr\\_old/indigenous/country\\_reports/Country\\_reports\\_Botswana.pdf](http://www.chr.up.ac.za/chr_old/indigenous/country_reports/Country_reports_Botswana.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

in 1975 says, “All Batswana have the right to sufficient land to meet one’s needs”.<sup>54</sup> Even though there is a law put in place to recognize that everyone, despite ethnicity, has land rights the San people have been brutally mistreated and continue to have land taken from them. Through the TGLP, the government of Botswana seized land from the Indigenous people and sold it to non-Indigenous people, in order to make a profit from diamond mining (IRIN). Over 30% of Botswana’s total land area is devoted primarily to national parks, wildlife reserves and game reserves.<sup>55</sup> Much of this land is used for the tourism economy and was originally taken from the Native people. Some Indigenous people have been allowed to live on parts of the land, yet under total Government control with little to no control over their future. An example of this is the Central Kalahari Game Reserve that was a wildlife reserve created to protect the Indigenous society; however, it quickly became a land of eviction. After 30 years of establishment the Government began to evict more than 2,000 people from the San tribe and placed them on unknown lands.<sup>56</sup> This shows how the Botswana Government placed profit before the protection of their Indigenous societies and exposed their two-faced morals and lack of social responsibility regarding this situation. The Botswana Government continues to displace the Indigenous people from their homelands and over many years upwards of 65 settlements were created. These housing settlements contain a staggering population of over 20,000 people.<sup>57</sup> The settlements were to provide the Indigenous people with schools, clinics, water and sustainable land; however, the dislocation of these people impacted significantly their traditional way of living and has put a threat on their cultural survival.

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

<sup>56</sup> Sylvain, Renee. <http://www.iwgia.org/>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

Many people have been displaced from their families, as well as torn away from their ancestor's graves and places of significant cultural meaning. Non – Indigenous people have taken advantage of the situation the Native people have been placed in as they use the free water in the settlements. They also hire the Indigenous people for a cheap means of labour. These settlements also offer little to no opportunities for employment.<sup>58</sup> The displacement of all these people has elicited an avalanche of increasing traumatic issues to come about. Not only do these settlements offer a poor quality of living but they are unable to supply the Indigenous communities with living standards that would be acceptable to those of non-Aboriginal decent.

Due to the economic, social and cultural disruption the Indigenous people have gone through, many have become dependent upon alcohol. Alcohol related violence against women has become more prominent.<sup>59</sup> Before, the Government moved the Indigenous people to settlements the San men and women shared equal power, and there was very little discrimination amongst the (two) sexes. However, moving to the settlements has caused severe deterioration in the women's economic status and the rights they have. This view that women were not comparable to men was partially brought on through the government, as men were seen as the head of the household, when allotting plots of land on the settlements. The Indigenous women of the San tribe are continually put through sexual and physical abuse on these settlements. The San women are beginning to take a stand on the abuse and inequalities they are facing. Many have

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<sup>58</sup><http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

<sup>59</sup><http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

attended sanctioned meetings provided by the United Nations and other organizations that allow them to discuss these issues with other San tribe women from other parts of Africa. These group communications allow the women to become more aware of their situations and how they can receive help.<sup>60</sup>

International involvement in Botswana is limited to specific groups that continue to raise awareness of the issues regarding the Indigenous people. The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) is an example of these groups.

The Indigenous people living in Botswana experience many problems facing other Indigenous people in the world. Government discrimination, land loss, and the failure to assimilate and relocate the people can all be found in Botswana. Unlike other countries the spread of non-curable viruses including HIV/Aids is prominent and more and more people are losing their lives to it. The destruction of Indigenous land for profit is also a prominent issue in the Botswana lands. Government corruption is seen to be the main cause of these issues. If the government continues to write documents ensuring the rights of Indigenous people and never following through the fate of the native population is not very promising. When the Government of Botswana begins to acknowledge the importance of the Indigenous people and the cultural diversity that they bring, we will see significant changes in the treatment of these people.

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<sup>60</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>

Case Study: The Philippines

The Philippines are located in Southeast Asia, and consists of many islands varying in size. It was colonized by Spain for approximately 350 years; however, once their country experienced a revolution during the years of 1896 - 1898 they fell under U.S. occupation for almost 45 year before coming an independent nation in 1946. The approximately 7,100 islands have been grouped into 3 regions: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The Indigenous people of the Philippines account for approximately 10-15% of the country's total population.

There are four main Indigenous groups that live within the country's three regions. The Cordillera (Northern Luzon) groups are known as the Indigenous people who reside amongst the mountains, in the highlands, valleys and foothills. The second group is the Central and Southern Luzon and these people are mainly known for their economic dependence upon fishing, hunting and gathering, agriculture, wage labour and trade. They live in slightly more dispersed groups amongst the larger islands of the Philippines. The third group is the Visayas and the remaining group is known as the Mindanao (Indigenous Philippines).

From the sixteenth century onward to the nineteenth century, the majority of the Philippines were colonized by Spain. They left the Philippine lands, when the Philipino revolution took place. Spain handed all of the islands over to the United Stated to be ruled by them. The United States suppressed all nationalist, Muslim, and Indigenous armed resistance in order to rule it as a colony. It became an independent country

following the entrance of Japan into World War II.<sup>61</sup> Through these events and currently in the present day the Indigenous people living in the Philippines suffered countless amounts of human rights violations.

The many years of Spanish rule over the Indigenous people created a separation between the tribes of Christianity and those of Pagan views, also known as “tamed” tribes and “wild” tribes respectively. Indigenous communities in the Northern Luzon area faced the effects of marginalization, and dispersal. As the Spanish took rule over them they wanted to remain as a dignified Indigenous group and continued to live life the way they had been before the Spanish landed upon their soil. Land ownership was a major problem between the two parties as the Indigenous group attempted to keep their cultural practices alive.<sup>62</sup> Under U.S. rule, government laws and programs failed to adequately acknowledge the rights Indigenous people were entitled to and there was a lack of equality amongst the people of the Philippines.<sup>63</sup> Once the United States withdrew their governance from the Philippines the rights of the Indigenous people became somewhat nonexistent. Large-scale land acquiring from the Indigenous people, corrupt government projects, and various human right abuses created problems for the Indigenous populations that are too large for them to resolve on their own. The central issues surrounding the Indigenous people of the Philippines today include: militarization, land titles, and human rights violations. The military corruption in the Philippines has become a growing problem and affects the vast majority of the Indigenous people across the country.

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw16704.asp>

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw16704.asp>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw16704.asp>



Militarized Indigenous areas of the Philippines are plagued with countless human rights violations. The military bombards, burns and forces Indigenous communities to completely relocate living areas.<sup>64</sup> Illegal searches of homes, killings, abductions, and large amounts of torture are all placed upon Indigenous people by the corrupt military. Many victims of these human rights violations tend to be women and children of the Indigenous ethnicity (Philippines). Not only does the militarization affect individual people alike it upsets most aspects of Indigenous life. It destroys community unity; it disrupts farm work and cultural rituals, as well as starts feuds amongst the many different tribes all living in the Philippines.<sup>65</sup>

Almost all Indigenous tribes around the world face land claim disputes with governments, corporations or businesses, and that is no exception in the Philippines. Many Indigenous tribes are being relocated so their land can be used as a profitable resource. In the Philippines under the Indigenous People Rights Act (IPRA) many tribes have received documents allowing them to certain ancestral lands, yet the process to claim this land is extremely slow. During the time when Indigenous tribes have to wait to get the land corporations whom are interested in the land begin to take it, with little or no hassle from the government.<sup>66</sup> Attaining land has been made rather difficult for the native tribes and the corrupt government has not assisted in aiding these people. Without their

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<sup>64</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw16704.asp>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.culturalsurvival.org/ourpublications/csqa/article/indigenous-peoples-ancestral-lands-and-human-rights-philippines>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw16704.asp>

land Indigenous societies lose cultural values and their lives skim the surface of a traditional existence.

The human rights of the Indigenous people of the Philippines are continually violated on a day to day basis. To date approximately 33,000 Indigenous people have fallen victim to human rights abuse. More than 700 people of this 33,000 have been victims of political killings, massacres, or random killings.<sup>67</sup> Amnesty International has concluded that many, to all of the Indigenous killings in the Philippines have been due to political influence.<sup>68</sup> Many Indigenous people have fallen victim to these killings because of their ethnic diversity and the poor decisions made by their government to not support them.

The Philippines joins the rest of the world as the plight for Indigenous communities continues to become a growing concern. (Disregarding the state of the home country.) It is difficult to state possible solutions for the Indigenous people of the Philippines because unlike other countries their Government and overall economy is significantly under developed. The best thing for them to receive is aid from other countries that are further along the path in reaching equality amongst all the people within their borders.

The state of the Indigenous people of the Philippines has increasingly become worse from when the U.S. had control over the country. An example of this is during the

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<sup>67</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/sw16704.asp>

<sup>68</sup> [http://www.amnesty.ca/blog2.php?blog=hr\\_indigenous\\_peoples](http://www.amnesty.ca/blog2.php?blog=hr_indigenous_peoples)

American war in Vietnam. The soldiers intervened in their ways of life, by living and training in proximity to the Indigenous people of the area.<sup>69</sup> It is up to the government and the military to reverse the situation these people sit in. However the way things are going it seems the military is becoming more and more corrupt with little or no chance of helping the Indigenous populations. Organizations including the United Nations and Survival International have attempted to bring peace to these people, yet it is simply impossible with the military terrorism, killing and abusing everyone not belonging to a particular culture. If the Indigenous people of the Philippines hope for a chance of survival, certain amendments must be made to save their culture and ethnic diversity in the world.

## International Organizations

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<sup>69</sup> <http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/text?people=Aeta>

The unjust and unfair treatment towards the Indigenous people around the world has continually left them isolated from the world. Not only are they suffering from human rights violations, but also many forms of discrimination and enormous amounts of loss. In order to completely abolish the problems they are facing many inter-government organizations (IGOs) and non government organizations (NGOs) have been created in the attempt to better the lives of the Indigenous people. Organizations that have been researching, advocating, and presenting possible solutions to fix this problem include, The United Nations (UN) and UNESCO, which is the UNs daughter organization, the World Health Organization, Survival International and the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs. Even though the plight and struggle of the Indigenous people is still happening it is because of these organizations that it is becoming more publicized. Many Indigenous societies themselves are beginning to advocate for their rights to a better life.

The United Nations has a very large role in advocating for proper Indigenous rights. The United Nations is an inter-government organization that is recognized worldwide and its visions are to aid in international security, help develop countries economically, ensure countries progress socially, facilitate cooperation in international law, advocate for human rights and largely keep world peace. In September of 2007 the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People was approved by the General assembly, after 20 years of debate.<sup>70</sup> Their Institutions, cultures and traditions will be strengthened by this declaration as well as they will be able to pursue further developments in personal pursuits.<sup>71</sup> This declaration of rights ensures that Indigenous people maintain their unique

<sup>70</sup> United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session\\_factsheet1.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

identities without the act of discrimination being placed upon them. Sheikha Haya, the General Assembly President, strongly supports the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People yet greatly warns:

Even with this progress, Indigenous people still face marginalization, extreme poverty, and other human right violations. They are often dragged into conflicts and land disputes that threaten their way of life and very survival; and suffer from a lack of access to health care and education.<sup>72</sup>

The development in this declaration has elaborated the fact that many Indigenous people are being unfairly treated and it creates a standard that countries can use to provide equal treatment to these people. The United Nations is known to liberally express its criticism towards countries that are unable to see eye to eye on certain issues, including that of Indigenous rights. Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand were some among other countries that opposed this declaration and have been harshly criticized as they are some of the most dominate countries in the world.<sup>73</sup> Even though the United Nations has advocated for these rights and has come through successfully with this declaration the unjust treatment of the Indigenous people still occurs within the borders of many different countries.

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[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session\\_factsheet1.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session\\_factsheet1.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session\\_factsheet1.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf)

Many non-government organizations (NGOs) have vowed to help improve the lives of the over 370 million Indigenous people affected by human rights issues around the world. Advocating for the rights of these people and educating the general public are the main focuses of these organizations. The two largest most commonly known NGOs advocating for human rights includes: Survival International and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs.<sup>74</sup> Survival International is claimed to be the largest NGO that is internationally known for supporting the rights of Indigenous people. They assist the tribal people through education, advocacy and campaigns. In order to successfully help in abolishing this problem they believe that, “public opinion is the most effective force for change. Its power will make it harder, and eventually impossible, for governments and companies to oppress the tribal people”.<sup>75</sup> As mentioned before there are three ways that Survival International has, to assist the needs of the Indigenous populations. Educational programs include seminars that debunk the myths many people have about Indigenous tribes. They promote the respect needed by the Indigenous people and how it is valuable to the overall world culture. The second way they assist the Indigenous people is through advocacy. Giving the Indigenous people the resources and opportunities to get their voices heard allows them to converse with companies and governments directly.<sup>76</sup> The last way that Survival International is helping Indigenous tribes is through worldwide campaigns fighting for their rights. An example of a campaign they orchestrated was in 2000

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<sup>74</sup> <http://www.iwgia.org/>

<sup>75</sup> Survival International. <http://www.survival-international.org/about>

<sup>76</sup> Survival International <http://www.survival-international.org/about>

when the Indian Government wanted to relocate the Jarawa tribe; however, Survival International encouraged people all over the world to write letters to the Indian Government. After receiving 150 to 200 letters a day from supporters of Survival International the Indian Government abandoned this plan to move their Indigenous population. Their greatest achievement to date would be their continuous support and enforcement of tribal issues into the political and cultural mainstream.<sup>77</sup> The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs advocates for the rights of Indigenous people, self-determination, right to territory, control of land and resources, cultural integrity and the right to development. They combine documentation and publication, human rights work and political lobbying all together in order to provide the above rights to the Indigenous people. The organization continually creates alliances with other various organizations advocating for the same human rights issues around the world and they have been involved in many campaigns and projects due to this.<sup>78</sup> More and more people are being encouraged to get involved with various NGOs to protect those whom can no longer protect themselves from large corporations, businesses and governments.<sup>79</sup> It may seem that these organizations are not directly fixing the problems that face the Indigenous societies around the world; however, they are successfully gaining power through people and educating more of the world about the problems these distinct populations face on an everyday basis.

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<sup>77</sup> Survival International. <http://www.survival-international.org/about>

<sup>78</sup> IWGIA. <http://www.iwgia.org/>

<sup>79</sup> [http://www.amnesty.ca/blog2.php?blog=hr\\_indigenous\\_peoples](http://www.amnesty.ca/blog2.php?blog=hr_indigenous_peoples)

If the amount of people becoming interested in supporting and advocating for this issue continues to increase more organizations will show support for the declaration and prevent future violations amongst these people. The role of various IGOs and NGOs affiliated with Indigenous rights has so far been to educate the public and create awareness of the violations the Indigenous people have been dealing with for many years. They have been successful in the terms of recognizing that there are people being treated unfairly in the world and they should no longer be discriminated against. They have raised and continue to raise awareness about government corruption towards these people and how it can be reversed with the support of people. If these organizations continue to raise large amounts of support and power together with the rest of the world the issue affecting the rights of Indigenous people can be eliminated little by little. Every time one of the issues affecting this population gets eliminated the world becomes one step closer to abolishing the plight and challenges faced by the many Indigenous people everywhere.



## Canada

The struggle of Indigenous people that dominates almost every country is also largely present in Canada. Canada is the second largest country in the world according to land mass and is home to many different Aboriginal or Indigenous groups. According to a 2001 national census more than 1.3 million Canadians have some form of Aboriginal ancestry. This accounts for approximately 4.5% of the nation's entire population.<sup>80</sup> Three main groups of Indigenous people reside in Canada, they are known as The First Nations People, The Métis and The Inuit. The same 2001 national census of Canada took into account the populations of all three groups of Indigenous people. The First Nations People of Canada represent 62% of the Aboriginal community in Canada, with a total population of 608, 850. The census concluded that 1 fifth of this population resides in Ontario. The Métis accounted for 30% of the total Aboriginal population with 292,310 people. The largest populations of Métis people reside in Alberta, while the smallest populations of Métis are accounted for in Ontario. The Inuit people represent the smallest population of Aboriginals in Canada. They account for 5% of the total population of the Aboriginal society with 45,070 residing in Canada. Half of this group's population lives in the Northern Part of Canada, Nunavut.<sup>81</sup>

Canada is internationally renowned as a cultural mosaic, yet Aboriginal people living in Canada receive a lower standard of living than those whom are non -

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<sup>80</sup> Waldram, James. Aboriginal Health in Canada: Historical, Cultural and Epidemiological Perspectives. Pg.3

<sup>81</sup> Aboriginal Canadians. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/caledonia-landclaim/>

Aboriginal. Many conditions including unemployment, infant mortality, poverty and suicide are more prevalent in the Aboriginal society than any other society in Canada as depicted in the following quote:

The economic and health statistics for Canada's Aboriginal people are consistently worse than those for the general population. Aboriginal people are more likely to be unemployed, have low education, suffer from disabilities, die as infants, be subjected to violence, be incarcerated in penal or other institutions, have a low level of educational achievements, live in substandard housing, or have a below - subsistence income.<sup>82</sup>

Although all of these conditions affect many native reserves and Aboriginal societies it is important to acknowledge that these statistics represent the average population, and some communities residing in Canada are more fortunate than others. It is important to recognize the conditions the Aboriginal populations of Canada face in order to put a stop to their problems.

Current problems that face the Aboriginal population of Canada were brought upon them through western dominance over their culture and customs. An example of this would be the unfair and dishonest land treaties signed by the ancestors of the Aboriginal tribes in search of mutual respect, justice and overall protection. Land Claims are agreements between the government and the First Nations, Métis or Inuit people that enable them to have recognition over certain land plots. However many are dishonest and in favour of the government. They are viewed as "legal instruments that extinguished

<sup>82</sup> Franks, C E. Aboriginal Rights and Self-Government. Pg. 103

Aboriginal rights”. This process of negotiating land claims is still present today in Canada. Recently the land claim dispute in Caledonia, Ontario was displayed through the media and showed how the Six Nations Aboriginal Community were being cheated out of a land that was promised to them at a previous date. It all started in 1784 when the British Crown allowed the Six Nations tribe of Canada to settle on 385,000 hectares of land along the Grand River. 12 years later in 1792 Lieutenant Governor Simcoe took some of that land away and left the tribe with only 111,000 hectares. This land claim has lasted for over 200 hundred years and into 4 centuries, yet still today it has not been resolved. Henco Industries purchased 40 hectares of land from a company and wanted to begin developing estates on it; however, the Six Nations tribe sued the federal and provincial governments over this land. The current situation over a now 40 hectare plot of land has caused standoffs, blockades, an increasing amount of tension between the parties. The death of a Native protestor in 1995 also occurred in Ipperwash. It has also involved numerous amounts of developers and companies, as well as non - Aboriginal people inhabiting the Caledonia area. This represents one of many land disputes occurring all across Canada and the conflicts that it brings to the Aboriginal societies. There is no doubt that Canada’s government is reaching more land claim settlements with the Aboriginal populations; however, whether the negotiations show legitimacy or not are still and will still continue to be in question until this problem is completely resolved.<sup>83</sup>

The forced administration of Aboriginal people into residential schools was noted to be one of the roots of all inequalities still faced today by these people. Residential

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<sup>83</sup> Aboriginal Canadians: Caledonia <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/caledonia-landclaim/>

Schools were thought up by the government of Canada in the 19th century as they believed it was their responsibility to ‘properly’ educate the Aboriginal society. These church - run, government funded schools were believed to allow the Aboriginal people the best chance for success in the future. They were taught English and adopted the belief in Christianity and many Canadian customs. It was the government’s view that the Aboriginal people would pass their new lifestyle onto their children and families, and that native traditions would be completely diminished from Canada’s history. These schools were run by the Federal Government under the Department of Indian Affairs, and attendance by all native children was mandatory. This meant that many young children were taken from their families at young ages and forced into boarding school where everything was foreign and their lives were changed forever. The number of Residential Schools located in Canada was astonishing. 1931 brought the peak of the residential schooling system and 80 schools were operating throughout the country. In total approximately 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were forced into these schools from the opening of the first school in the 19th century to the closing of the last school in 1997.<sup>84</sup> The brutality of harm done to the Aboriginal societies went unknown to the public during the time of these schools. Students were encouraged to only speak English and forget their native tongue. Not only did they live in less than adequate conditions, they also had to endure physical, emotional and sexual abuse, as well they were deprived of the chance to live a normal family life.<sup>85</sup> Not only was the idea of

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<sup>84</sup> Aboriginal Canadians: Indian Residential Schools.  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/Aboriginals/residentialschools.html>

<sup>85</sup> Aboriginal Canadians: Indian Residential Schools.  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/Aboriginals/residentialschools.html>

residential schooling a complete disaster of assimilating the minds of the young Aboriginals, but it only brought hardship towards those trying to settle in an urban area as well as devastation to those who spent multiple years in the schools. During the 1990's multiple tribe leaders brought upon the government stories of the abuse faced in residential schools and the after affects that now face the Aboriginal populations. Throughout the past years the Government of Canada has been working with the churches and the Aboriginal communities to compensate for the years of mistreatment, abuse, and theft of their culture.<sup>86</sup> Even though the Government of Canada is compensating for the damage they have caused, money cannot fix what has been done as well as it cannot buy their distinctive language back. The discovered history of the residential school system has left holes in the current state of education for Aboriginal students; however, it is not solely to blame for the present state of affairs with regards to this matter. When we look at our curriculum today there is very little to do with Aboriginal content. Many concepts and ideas taught today in school have been brought from the westernized culture and a lack of cultural sensitivity and inclusion is present. In the year of 2001 only 8% of Aboriginal people had a completed university degree. It is clear that the educational attainment for Aboriginal children is much lower than that of a non - Aboriginal. The Government of Canada has seen this and many things have been put in place to fix this problem. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Development in Canada continue to raise awareness about the Aboriginal education and the severe reality that faces it. Universities have also put into affect Native studies programs. For example, Trent University offers a Doctorate in Native Studies. In order

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<sup>86</sup> Aboriginal Canadians: Indian Residential Schools.  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/Aboriginals/residentialschools.html>

for this issue to be addressed properly one must begin to educate the young minds of Canada by incorporating the history of Aboriginal people into the school curriculum. “Non Aboriginal People cannot fulfill their treaty responsibilities, work for justice, or interact respectfully with the Aboriginal people if they do not understand the history of relations between their people or the basics of Aboriginal cultures”.<sup>87</sup> Another problem facing the Aboriginal population of Canada is the increasing need for proper health care and not having the resources to receive it. When the Europeans colonized Canada they brought foreign diseases that created catastrophic epidemics upon the Aboriginal society. This was mainly due to the fact that the Aboriginals were not immune to the new diseases as well as none of them knew what they were or how to cure them. The Europeans dominated the health care system in Canada and there was limited space for Aboriginals to receive the same treatment. The Europeans also thought poorly upon the Aboriginal medicine practices and many of them were dismissed or even banned.<sup>88</sup> Currently the Canadian Health care system is regarded as one of the most technically advanced in the world, yet quality health care seems to be out of reach for many Aboriginal communities.<sup>89</sup> Government disputes, cultural differences, and geographic locations have all affected Aboriginal people access to a proper health care system. In order to change the future of the health care system for Aboriginals the Canadian Government has put forth various efforts in order to make health care more accessible for these communities.<sup>90</sup> Money was granted to the Aboriginal society in order to have more nurses and doctors tending to the Aboriginal population, promote Aboriginal health, and finally

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<sup>87</sup> Aboriginal Issues

<sup>88</sup> Aboriginal Issues

<sup>89</sup> Alderete, Ethel W. The Health of Indigenous People. World Health Organization. World Health Organization.

<sup>90</sup> Aboriginal Issues

educated on disease prevention.<sup>91</sup> Canada being a developed country should be able to offer adequate health care to everyone, yet the Aboriginal population is being missed. If the government found a way to provide the Aboriginal population with health care at the same level as the rest of the country, the lives of these people would greatly improve.

The Indigenous people of Canada contribute enormously to Canada's heritage and culture. They were the first inhabitants of North America, and they hold valuable ancient knowledge, customs and cultural value. The impact of the Western world views on life has caused the loss to many of the Aboriginal ties and they now must depend on the government through this loss.<sup>92</sup> In order to re-establish these losses the Aboriginal people of Canada are in need of respect, understanding and most importantly recognition towards their way of life and culture. The UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People outlines many of the rights Indigenous people have, including those of Article 15b, "States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous people concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous people and all other segments of society".<sup>93</sup> Canadians and the Canadian Government alike have major roles to fill in improving the quality of life for the Aboriginal community not only within the borders of Canada but worldwide as well. Improvements made on a national level can affect the rest of the world and they too may take it upon them to improve the living

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<sup>91</sup> Alderete, Ethel W. The Health of Indigenous People. World Health Organization. World Health Organization.

<sup>92</sup> Helin, Calvin. Dances With Dependency: Indigenous Success Through Self Reliance. Pg. 66.

<sup>93</sup> The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

quality of their Indigenous people. Canada is a well developed country and with the proper resources it can assure a bright future for the Indigenous people.<sup>94</sup>

### Possible Solutions

Throughout the decades Indigenous people around the world have faced numerous injustices' and inequalities based upon their race and ethnicity. Their human

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<sup>94</sup> Helin, Calvin. Dances With Dependency: Indigenous Success Through Self Reliance. Pg. 66



rights have been violated excessively and their very existence is on the brink of extinction. Losing the over 370 million Indigenous people of the world would highly impact the rest of society. As not only would their culture, language and tribal practices be lost but also the ethnic diversity the world benefits from would be gone forever.

There have been so many injustices and violations of human rights, and so there are many different ways the global plight of Indigenous peoples can begin to be solved. Many of the possible solutions involve changes such as adhering to rules already stated in government constitutions, ending the exploitation of Indigenous peoples or their ‘property’ and recognizing Indigenous peoples all over the world as important citizens who contribute greatly to cultural diversity and treating them as such.

As discovered through the numerous case studies previously documented Indigenous tribes across the world face similar issues. It is unique that a resolution that solved one tribe’s problem can be reused to solve another tribe’s similar problem.<sup>95</sup> Residential schools, slavery, human right exploitation, discrimination and the illegal claiming of land are all aspects in which the Indigenous people of the world suffer through. It is important to realize that while looking at possible solutions, many of them will refer to more than one case. Just as those solutions used in Brazil, Botswana, and the Philippines somewhere else in the world another group of Indigenous people can benefit from the same idea.

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<sup>95</sup> Goehring, Brian. pg. 46

Many Governments worldwide have put in place laws that are meant to abolish the unfair treatment of Aboriginal societies yet fail to follow and meet the criteria of these laws. It is up to them to follow the basic requirements of these laws fully to provide equality to all Indigenous people. In these areas of the world where government exploitation is a large issue NGOs and IGOs need to take a larger part in educating the public and making people more aware of the injustices' taking place. Some of these organizations have already led successful campaigns in which educating the public worked to their advantage because many people followed their lead and helped the problem become less of an issue. A large part of eliminating these issues from the globe is the need for the governments of the world to realize that they in a large way are corrupting the lives of these people and robbing them of their very existence.

Self-determination is another large aspect in regaining the rights of the Indigenous people of the world. This allows the people who have been suffering countless years to finally take control of their own future. If Indigenous tribes were granted the right to self-govern themselves most of the government biases and corruption would be eliminated, therefore eliminating most of the problems Indigenous people today face. It would end all human right and land exploitation issues, as well as cultures and ethnicities would no longer be in jeopardy. To bring to an end to the exploitation of Indigenous traditional lands and resources, governments need to first learn about the problems and to effectively deal with those exploiting the people. In such cases where it is the government exploiting

indigenous peoples, international NGOs and IGOs need to educate the public on these issues/situations and step in to prevent further destruction. To some degree, this has been happening with Survival International and the outcomes have been successful in stopping exploitation and stealing of land. In order to support and improve the situation facing Indigenous societies, self-determination is essential. Governments, international organizations, and all citizens must be determined to support the efforts of Indigenous peoples to improve their futures.

The discrimination against them will hopefully be eliminated therefore allowing the Indigenous communities to live in synch with the rest of the world. The reality of this issue disappearing in the near future is slim due to the biases that governments hold against the native tribes however progress is progress and little by little this issue can be undermined until it is completely wiped of the surface of the earth. All in all once both parties are equal and Indigenous people are recognized with the same rights other people have right now, their cultural and ethnic diversity will hopefully continue to flourish the earth and allow for intricate worldviews.

The history of the mistreatment of the Indigenous people of the world is long and the attempt at ethnically converting them into the mainstream culture has failed more than just once. The day when Indigenous people are thought of as equal amongst every other human being will be the day that the issues facing Indigenous people will begin to be resolved.

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