International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is observed on 9 August each year to raise awareness about protecting the rights of the world's Indigenous populations as well as to recognise the achievements and contributions that Indigenous Peoples make to improve world issues such as environmental protection. The day was designated by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in December 1994, marking the day of the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1982. Today, GWI aligns with the UN to mark this day with an emphasis on the 2022 theme: “The Role of Indigenous Women in the Preservation and Transmission of Traditional Knowledge”.

While Indigenous Peoples own, occupy, or use a quarter of the world’s land, they safeguard 80% of the world’s remaining biodiversity. They hold vital ancestral knowledge and expertise on how to adapt, mitigate, and reduce climate and disaster risks. (The World Bank 2022)

There are an estimated 476 million Indigenous Peoples worldwide. Although they make up just 6% of the global population, they account for about 19% of the extreme poor. (World Bank 2022)

Over 46% of Indigenous women, work in the informal economy. (ILO 2022)

Globally, 53.5% of Indigenous women in employment have no formal education, a much higher rate if compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts (17.8 per cent). (ILO 2022)

The lack of clean, safe drinking water in Indigenous communities is one of the greatest violations of the UN-recognised human right to water and sanitation. (The Council of Canadians)

Around the world, the systematic cultural genocide of Indigenous Peoples has taken place over decades. This genocide is the underlying cause of the contemporary murders and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls. (The Conversation)

Join Graduate Women International (GWI) in celebrating Indigenous Peoples traditional knowledge and working in partnership with Indigenous women for a sustainable future.
Education for Indigenous Peoples

2013, No. 9

"National Federations and Associations (NFAs) should urge national, provincial, state, territorial and Indigenous governments to work together to create a system of accountable, funded and quality education."

International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples

9 August 2022

Working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples is key to achieve all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A focus must be put on SDG 4, quality education. Indigenous women and girls must be provided with culturally appropriate education in order to lead healthy lives, earn a higher income, participate in decision-making, and build better futures for themselves and their families.

Call for action

GWI calls on states to participate in the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples traditional knowledge, particularly Indigenous women and girls, in decision-making processes, in order to move towards sustainable development for all. Indigenous women are suffering from extreme poverty, gender-based violence, unequal access to education, land, natural resources and employment, which are crucial to their survival. Respecting and promoting their collective rights to their lands, self-determination, and consent is vital to strengthening their role as agents of change. States must empower Indigenous women and girls, through listening and learning from them and working together to create a sustainable world.

GWI Resolution

Education for Indigenous Peoples

(2013, No. 9)

“National Federations and Associations (NFAs) should urge national, provincial, state, territorial and Indigenous governments to work together to create a system of accountable, funded and quality education.”