



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-Determination

9 August 2023



Join Graduate Women International (GWI) in celebrating Indigenous youth as global changemakers.

What is International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples?

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is celebrated annually on 9 August, with 2023 marking the 28th year since its creation by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1994.

The UN estimates that **476 million Indigenous individuals** reside in **90 countries**, constitute less than **5% of the world population**, speak most of the world's **7,000 languages**, and represent **5,000 different cultures**. However, the somber reality is that **19% of the world's poorest** are part of Indigenous communities (World Bank).

Embracing the significance of fostering youth as positive changemakers within indigenous communities worldwide, **Graduate Women International (GWI) embraces this year's theme, Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-Determination.**



"GWI advocates for governments to work in partnership with Indigenous leaders and non-governmental organisations to establish a system of responsible, well-funded, and high-quality education. The funding should be regularly adjusted for inflation to ensure equitable education opportunities for Indigenous youth, leading to self-determination".

Patrice Wellesley-Cole, GWI President



Did You Know?

The Indigenous population has a relatively young age demographic. According to the United Nations, nearly half of the world's indigenous population is **below the age of 25**.

In schools in the U.S.A., Indigenous students are over **10 times more likely** to receive exclusionary discipline related to emotional disturbance while challenges related to **disability and trauma often go unnoticed**.

Forty-seven percent of **all Indigenous peoples** in employment have no education, compared to **17% of their non-indigenous counterparts**. This gap is even wider for women.

Indigenous youth are recognized for their **ability to navigate both traditional Indigenous peoples' culture and contemporary society**, allowing them to coexist between both worlds.

Sources: UN, National Association of School Psychologists, FAO



GWI thanks intern, Salomé Delsaux, for her contributions to this infographic.

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Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change: Challenges and Achievements



Indigenous youth face challenges as they navigate between their traditional cultures and modern societies. They are threatened by external pressures affecting their livelihoods, cultures, identities and rights.

Nevertheless, Indigenous youth possess a unique ability to bridge technology and social gaps and serve as vital representatives and mediators for their communities.

Indigenous women and girls play a vital role as agents of change in the pursuit of self-determination for their communities.

Their contributions allow them to assert their rights, preserve their cultures, and promote social, economic, and political empowerment.

Indigenous youths are often activists for climate change adaptation, ecosystem preservation, and traditional knowledge.

States upholding their voices and working in partnership with them in a culturally relevant context is essential to drive structural change to education policies.

Indigenous women can preserve culture, inspire pride and a sense of belonging among Indigenous youth, encouraging their academic success and aspirations.

With their unfailing determination, Indigenous women lead efforts to reclaim their educational rights, supporting a more equitable educational environment for their communities.



United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Indigenous Peoples



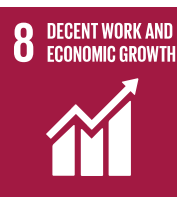
SDG 1 is interconnected with issues related to land rights, cultural preservation, & traditional resources, **not just income**. It calls for inclusive policies to address poverty among Indigenous peoples.



The empowerment of Indigenous youth is essential to achieving SDG 5. It is crucial to **address Indigenous women's specific injustices**, such as high levels of domestic & sexual violence.



Food security is intricately linked to Indigenous people's rights to land, resources, & traditional knowledge. Supporting their food systems, preserving their cultures, & increasing their decision-making helps to achieve SDG 2.



To achieve SDG 8, we must support Indigenous economic activities, promote their job market participation, & **ensure fair working conditions**. Marginalisation exacerbates economic disparities.



Inclusive, equitable, & culturally relevant education is crucial for all Indigenous youth. **Access to education reduces unemployment rates**, improves economic scale, & improves girls' futures.



Indigenous youth face inequalities, including lack of culturally-appropriate education, high illiteracy rates, & drop-outs that urgently be addressed to **protect their rights & achieve SDG 10**.

How Can You Support Indigenous Youth?

It is crucial to support Indigenous youth to help and encourage them contribute positively to their communities, address their challenges and futures.



Amplify their voices by listening to their perspectives and experiences. You can raise awareness in your community of the issues they are facing and offer tailored support.



Support initiatives that are led by Indigenous youth and communities. **Work with local media to promote their activities.**



Contribute financially to organisations that are working to support Indigenous youth. **Funding is essential to develop programmes** and initiatives that are beneficial to them.



GWI urges governments to take decisive action for the well-being and education of Indigenous women and girls. [9 August 2023 press release here.](#)



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