

# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

## 9 AUGUST 2025

### WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES?

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is observed on 9 August each year to raise awareness of the needs of Indigenous communities. The date marks the anniversary of the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, held in Geneva in 1982, and was officially recognised by a UN General Assembly resolution in 1994.

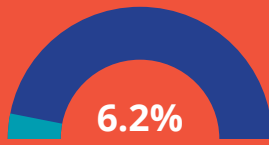


**THIS YEAR'S THEME: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND AI: DEFENDING RIGHTS, SHAPING FUTURES**

### FAST FACTS

**Indigenous Peoples** are **6.2%** of the global population and play a vital role in conservation, yet Indigenous students face significant barriers to education. Equitably supported **Indigenous-led AI education** tools can expand access, preserve traditional knowledge, and improve lifelong learning opportunities.

Source: UN DESA 2024



**Seventy** countries are home to Indigenous Peoples, and **22%** of global land area is owned, occupied, or used by them.

Source: UNESCO



**Indigenous Peoples** speak **7,000** languages across 5,000 cultures, yet many aren't taught in schools. **Funding AI tools** designed by Indigenous communities is essential to preserve and revitalize these languages.

Source: UN DESA/UNESCO 2025



Globally, **122 million** girls are out of school, including millions of Indigenous girls, often invisible in global data. Using AI designed with **Indigenous data** and participation can make these girls visible and ensure **inclusive education solutions**.

Source: UNESCO 2025



## Indigenous Peoples and the Struggle for Educational Equality

The right of Indigenous Peoples to education is upheld by the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, along with other international human rights instruments. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and on Civil and Political Rights, as well as several anti-discrimination conventions. Despite these legal protections, Indigenous Peoples continue to face serious educational disadvantages. **Lack of access to quality education contributes significantly to their social marginalisation, poverty, and dispossession.** In some cases, education systems promote assimilation into mainstream society, leading to the erosion of Indigenous cultures, languages, and ways of life. **Indigenous girls are particularly affected, often facing greater barriers to education than boys.**

Source: United Nations

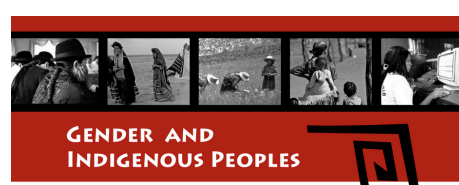
## GENDER AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Briefing notes from the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues highlight the **multiple and intersecting challenges faced by Indigenous women.** Indigenous women are subject to **widespread discrimination, experiencing limited access to education, healthcare, and ancestral lands.** They are disproportionately affected by poverty and face high levels of violence, including domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and violence during armed conflict.

**Gender issues are vital within Indigenous communities, shaped by distinct cultural values and social structures. Today, Indigenous-led AI education tools can help restore equity by amplifying girls' access to culturally relevant learning and leadership opportunities.**

Historically, Indigenous women held equal rights to land and resources under communal ownership. However, the shift towards private ownership and the breakdown of traditional economic systems has resulted in the **marginalisation of women.** In many communities, men have become the sole inheritors of land and resources, excluding women from their traditional rights. The notes stress that **development must not force assimilation but instead uphold Indigenous Peoples' human rights, respect their cultures, and engage them as equal partners.** True development should reflect Indigenous values and ensure that women regain their rightful place within their societies.

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Graduate Women International (GWI)

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### Quotable Quote

"On this day, let us remember that Indigenous Peoples are actors of change, guardians of natural resources and carriers of unique worldviews, knowledge and skills. We must protect their traditions and ways of life - while respecting their rights."



Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO

### EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: GWI RESOLUTION NO. 9 (2013)

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At its 31st Conference in 2013, GWI adopted **Resolution No. 9**, proposed by the Canadian Federation of University Women to **promote equitable education for Indigenous Peoples**. The resolution urges National Affiliates and Associations (NFAs) to call on governments to collaborate with Indigenous leaders and provide **sustainable, culturally sensitive educational funding**. This includes resources for early childhood education, school infrastructure, technology, and skills development. GWI also calls for systems of **accountable and high-quality education, indexed funding adjusted to population growth, and full implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**.

### UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Indigenous children and youth often face barriers to quality education due to remoteness, cultural marginalisation, and underfunding. Inclusive, culturally relevant education is key to achieving equity and empowering communities.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



Indigenous women and girls face intersecting inequalities, including gender-based violence, discrimination, and limited access to services. Their voices are vital in preserving culture and leading change. True gender equality must include them.



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Indigenous Peoples continue to face systemic inequalities rooted in colonisation, exclusion, and discrimination. Many lack equal access to services and opportunities. Reducing inequalities requires respecting their rights and ensuring inclusion.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Indigenous communities are often denied equal access to justice and excluded from decision-making. Historic injustices persist through systemic discrimination. Peaceful, just, and inclusive societies must centre Indigenous rights and voices.



### ADVOCACY IDEAS

Donate to organizations like GWI and initiatives that support Indigenous Peoples through education by funding Indigenous-led AI projects that ensure culturally relevant learning, language preservation, and greater access for Indigenous girls.

Widely share GWI's materials with educators, students, and networks to raise awareness about the rights of Indigenous Peoples and promote inclusive education. Explore a previous GWI infographic and press release: [2024 infographic](#) [2023 press release](#)

Write to policymakers urging the implementation of laws that protect Indigenous rights—including culturally relevant education supported by Indigenous-led AI tools, alongside land rights and representation in governance.

GWI thanks Célia Cherel, GWI spring intern, for her valuable contribution to this infographic.

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