



For tribes, for nature,  
for all humanity

A Survival International Report

# Factory Schools

Destroying indigenous people in the name of education

“

Whoever controls the education of our children  
controls our future

**Wilma Mankiller** Cherokee, U.S.

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	03
<b>Chapter 1: Historic Factory Schooling</b>	04
Historic Factory Schooling	05
Killing the child	07
Dividing the family	09
Destroying the tribe	10
Leaving a devastating legacy	13
<i>Case study 1: Denmark</i>	15
<i>Case study 2: Canada</i>	16
<b>Chapter 2: Factory Schooling today</b>	18
Tribal & indigenous Factory Schooling today	19
Killing the child	20
Dividing the family	22
Destroying the tribe	24
Going to school can prevent learning	27
Going to school often provides only low quality learning	28
<i>Case study 3: Malaysia</i>	31
<i>Case study 4: Botswana</i>	32
<i>Case study 5: Indonesia</i>	35
<i>Case study 6: French Guiana</i>	36
<b>Chapter 3: Prejudice</b>	37
Prejudice in schooling policy and practice	38
“Unschooling means uneducated”	39
“School should be compulsory”	40
“Schooling should follow a single model”	41

<b>Chapter 4: Control</b>	42
Schooling as a means of control	43
Control over land and resources	44
Control over people	46
<i>Case study 7: India – adopted by a steel company</i>	47
<i>Case study 8: India – the world's largest tribal school</i>	48
<b>Chapter 5: Resistance, self-determination and indigenous education</b>	49
Towards the future	50
Reclaiming indigenous languages in education	51
Education and self-determination	53
<b>Chapter 6: A call to action</b>	54
Education that respects indigenous peoples' rights	55
<i>Case study 9: Brazil – Yanomami</i>	56
<i>Case study 10: Canada</i>	57
<i>Case study 11: Brazil – Enawene Nawe</i>	58
<i>Case study 12: Mexico</i>	60
<i>Case study 13: Indonesia</i>	61
<i>Case study 14: Australia</i>	62
<i>Case study 15: U.S.</i>	64
<i>Case study 16: India</i>	65
<b>Annex</b>	67
<b>Endnotes</b>	69
<b>Photo credits</b>	75

## Introduction

*"I looked outside, my mom was flailing her arms, and she must have been crying, and I see my dad grabbing her, and I was wondering why, why my mom was struggling."*

Lynda Pahpasay McDonald was only five years old when she was taken from her Ojibwe family and sent to one of Canada's notorious Indian Residential Schools.

Over 6,000 children died in Canada's Residential Schools – that's one child in every 25 who attended these institutions. Survivors and their families remain traumatized to this day, suffering high rates of mental illness, addiction, and suicide. Similar schools have had devastating impacts on indigenous peoples across the Americas, Russia and Australasia.

It seems inconceivable that such schools could exist today, yet right now there are thousands of them across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Like the brutal boarding schools that existed in the U.S., these "Factory Schools" aim to "reprogram" tribal children to conform to the dominant society. This systematic cultural erasure masquerading as education damages millions of children, their families and communities worldwide.

Many tribal children in Factory Schools are today suffering emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and the loss of family and community life. But there is another way: When indigenous education is in indigenous hands, children, families and tribes can explore their potential together and flourish.

Survival International is campaigning to end Factory Schooling and give tribal children the education and future they deserve, under their control.

**The education system does not ask us how our children should be taught and it gives us no way of influencing their lives anymore... Soon we will all be gone, and they will have become confused children, and their children will find themselves to be people without a history... This process is happening, and this is a dangerous education.<sup>1</sup>**

**James Tshabu Morris, Ncoakhoe Bushman** Botswana

**The present schooling system is destroying our society; we only have 10 or 15 years left until our children are no longer part of our society.<sup>2</sup>**

**Sona Nondruka, Kondh** India

# Historic Factory Schooling



## Historic Factory Schooling

Residential schools for indigenous children first appeared in North America in the 1600s with the arrival of Christian missionaries. By the late 1800s, it had become government policy to remove children from their families for schooling in Canada, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand.

In the U.S. and Canada, demand for cheap labor was a driving force behind “civilizing” and “educating” “Indians,” as was “pacifying” them to decrease resistance to colonialization.<sup>4</sup> In Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada, for example, children’s schooling only lasted two hours. The rest of the day was spent in religious instruction or agricultural training (for boys) and domestic training (for girls). The school had to raise much of its own funds from the labor of the children. It even made a profit in some years.<sup>5</sup>

In Australia, two overt aims of the policy were to segregate Aboriginal people from “white” Australia, and to train up Aboriginal children to be “useful” as domestic and farm workers. School was seen as a one-way trip: Children were taken from their homes, never really to return.

Children were often taken by force, and draconian laws enabled this to happen legally. Officials choked off supplies to tribal communities and arrested elders to quell resistance.

The unimaginable trauma that this system caused to individual children, their families, and their tribes has left a legacy which is still painfully raw in many communities, manifesting in high rates of depression and suicide, alcohol and substance abuse.

This model of forced residential schooling was exported across much of the colonized world.

In India, British colonists also used schooling as a tool to control and “pacify” tribal peoples. For the Great Andamanese, residential schooling was especially fatal. In 1858 there were around 5,000 Great Andamanese under the “protection” of the British Empire. The British established the Andaman Home – a residential home and school – to “pacify,” educate and “civilize” the tribe. Of 150 children born there, none survived past their third birthday. By 1970, the tribe numbered just 23 people who were dependent on government handouts to survive.<sup>6</sup>

**When your innocence is stripped from you, when your people are denigrated, when the family you came from is denounced and your tribal ways and rituals are pronounced backward, primitive, savage, you come to see yourself as less than human. That is hell on earth, that sense of unworthiness. That's what [residential schools] inflicted on us.<sup>3</sup>**

**Richard Wagamese, Ojibway** Canada



In Africa, French colonial administrations kept close control of schooling, ensuring all teaching was in French and conducted by government-certified teachers. This situation continues today in the overseas regions of France. In the rainforests of French Guiana, the national curriculum is taught exactly the same way as it is in metropolitan Paris. There is no allowance for the cultural or linguistic differences of the Amerindian population.

Once free of colonial rule, newly independent governments largely maintained existing schooling systems. Most former French colonies still use French as the only language in primary schools and, as we will see later in this report, the residential school model is still widely used in India and beyond today.

**The night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard. The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom... The bullet was the means of physical subjugation. Language was the means of spiritual subjugation.<sup>7</sup>**

**Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Kikuyu** Kenya



## Killing the child

America's first and "model" residential school, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, had the explicit aim to "kill the Indian and save the man."<sup>10</sup> It sought to destroy all that was "savage" in the children and mold profoundly different, "civilized" people. It destroyed lives: 186 children from 50 Nations were buried in the school cemetery; thousands of survivors were traumatized.

The Carlisle model was considered so effective that it was expanded across North America. By 1926, 83% of indigenous children in the U.S. were in residential schools,<sup>11</sup> suffering experiences remarkably similar to those of indigenous children across the colonized world – from the Sami of Northern Europe, to the Aboriginal peoples of Australia. Schools took away the child's identity: cutting their hair, changing their names, imposing an alien religion, language and world-view.

Churches and states claimed they were alleviating poverty and hunger. Yet, ironically, where poverty and hunger were rife, it was as a result of contact, colonialism, land theft and forced assimilation. For example, in Peru, the Catholic Church forced Arakmbut children into Spanish-language residential schooling in the 1950s – after decimation by imported diseases.<sup>12</sup>

Conditions varied, but there were high levels of sickness and death in many schools, largely caused by poor food and sanitation. Tuberculosis was a major killer. Some schools were designed with cemeteries, as deaths were so common. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) concluded half the schoolchildren died in the early years of the system, and 6,000 children died in total.<sup>13</sup> One school had a death rate of 69% over one decade.<sup>14</sup> Children were often dead and buried before their parents were informed – denying grieving families even the right to treat their child's body according to their customs. Those who tried to run away often died before reaching their families due to extreme weather and great distances.

Abuse was rife in these residential schools. Corporal punishment (including tarring and feathering, beating and forcing older children to whip younger ones), emotional bullying and sexual abuse have all been widely reported. Little children who lost continence through fear would have their faces rubbed in their own waste; bedwetters would be paraded with wet sheets on their heads. 38,000 claims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse have been submitted to the TRC in Canada.<sup>15</sup>

**[In the Carlisle school] I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair. I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit.<sup>8</sup>**

**Zitkala-Sa Lakota U.S.**

**If a pencil fell on the floor, they would tell me, "number 65, pick that up, you stupid."<sup>9</sup>**

**Chief Wilton Littlechild, Cree Canada**



# Historic Factory Schooling

**1:2** 

ratio of children who  
died in the early years  
of Canada's  
residential schools

  
**6,000**

number of children  
who died in Canada's  
residential schools  
1883-1996

**38,000**

the number of registered  
claims of physical, sexual  
or emotional abuse  
suffered in Canadian  
residential schools

**83%** 

percentage of  
school-aged indigenous  
children in boarding  
schools in the USA  
by 1926

## Dividing the family

Children in residential schools had little or no contact with their parents and wider family, and so grew up without any of the social learning they would have had in their home communities. They had no experience of parenting that they could then call on as parents themselves, and none of the education they would have received at home about how to live in their communities.

In Australia, for example, authorities tried to stop contact completely and permanently, often telling children that they were taken because their parents abused, abandoned or mistreated them. Frantic parents were denied even written contact with their children.

Elders were denied any authority or responsibility over their children. The state assumed all the power. Children were beaten if they spoke their mother tongue, and hence returned home unable to communicate with their community. They were subjugated into believing that their tribal ways and beliefs were “savage” and “evil.” The bonds between the generations were severely damaged, which had profound and long-lasting implications on the communities affected.

The destruction of the family was an explicit aim of this Factory Schooling. Even when this type of schooling was stopped, family-destroying policies have continued in Australia, the U.S. and Canada where social services and criminal processes remove children from indigenous families and incarcerate them at rates far higher than non-indigenous children.

**I got told my Aboriginality when I got whipped and they'd say, “You Abo, you n\*\*\*\*\*.” That was the only time I got told my Aboriginality.<sup>16</sup>**

**Aboriginal Australian** Australia

“When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write.

“Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men.”<sup>17</sup>

John A. MacDonald, 1st Prime Minister of Canada, 1883

## Destroying the tribe

Factory Schooling threatened the existence of whole tribes, as children were robbed of the songs, stories and skills that rooted them to their culture and land. They were often taught to despise their cultural heritage, and were denied the experiences and connections that enabled them to function as full members of their tribe. Even when they returned from residential school, state control continued: Lakota children, for example, were forbidden from participating in tribal dances when on leave from the notorious Carlisle School.<sup>19</sup>

There were three specific ways in which residential schooling explicitly tried to destroy tribes: by missionizing children, by forbidding them from speaking in their mother tongues, and by working to fundamentally change their way of life.

### Missionizing

Some missionizing schools saw tribal children as “empty vessels” into which they could pour Christian teachings and values, and belittled indigenous religions as “superstitions.” Others considered the children’s native religion as evil and in need of exorcizing. Salesian mission schools in Brazil pressured the Xavante to abandon their spirits, their rites and their communal ways of living and sought the “death of their beliefs and sins.”<sup>20</sup>

In the Rio Negro, the Salesians “initiated campaigns of defamation and ridicule” against the shamans, and so terrified them with visions of hell that they did not pass sacred knowledge on to their children. Yanomami were shown images of Yanomami-like people burning in pits of fire to intimidate them into accepting protestant missionizing.<sup>21</sup> Similar images were shown to Aboriginal children in Australia and Canada.

### Language

In many schools, children were forbidden from using their mother tongue and beaten if they did not obey. In Norway, laws were passed in the late 1800s which made it illegal to speak Sami languages in schools, and these laws were only fully rescinded in 1959.<sup>22</sup> In Sweden, Sami languages were forbidden until the 1970s.<sup>23</sup>

This policy robbed children of their first languages and stopped

**There's beauty in our traditional ways. There's honor, honesty – no lies, no judgment, no exaggeration. No one can tell you what is good or bad. That's where the Church confused a lot of our people, conditioning them to think the traditional way of prayer was evil, the devil's way. And if you didn't believe them, they'd beat you.**<sup>18</sup>

**Sherwyn Zephier, Yankton Sioux U.S.**



them being able to talk with their families. Hundreds of languages have gone extinct as a result. At the beginning of colonization in Australia there were an estimated 250 languages, each with several dialects. 160 of these languages have been declared extinct; some experts estimate that as few as 20 will survive.<sup>26</sup>

There was a strong link between language and religion: Indigenous languages were seen as “dirty” or “evil” in Christian schools in Canada and Australia. In Alaska, Presbyterian missionary S. Hall Young stated in the 1880s:

“We should let the old tongues with their superstition and sin die, the sooner the better, and replace these languages with that of Christian civilization, and compel the natives in all our schools to talk English and English only. Thus we would soon have an intelligent people who would be qualified to be Christian citizens.”<sup>27</sup>

The intended impact of this policy was to undermine the future of the tribe completely.

### **Way of life**

Schools also aimed to profoundly change the ways in which tribal people lived, especially communal ownership and living. Church and state schools tried to create “private citizens” by preaching the importance of private property and the accumulation of wealth – part of a wider “divide and conquer” strategy.

Missions and governments in South America would attempt to “lure” Indians and “tame” them by first building a school at an outpost. Through the school they would aim to “civilize” the children and make them “good citizens,” loyal to the state.

In Labrador, Canada, Innu families were paid a monthly welfare allowance in order to sever the community’s link with the land and generate dependence on the national economy. One priest withheld this allowance if families failed to send their children to school.

**And at the end, I understood, and she told me, “That’s a dirty language, that’s the devil that speaks in your mouth, so we had to wash it because it’s dirty.”<sup>24</sup>**

**A Pierrette Benjamin, Innu** Canada

**They used to tell us not to talk that language, that it’s devil’s language. And they’d wash our mouths with soap. We sorta had to sit down with Bible language all the time. So it sorta wiped out all our language that we knew.<sup>25</sup>**

**Aboriginal residential school survivor**  
Australia



## Leaving a devastating legacy

The damage done by residential schools does not stop with their closure, or when children leave. A devastating legacy has been left in all communities that lost children to forced residential schooling.

In 2008, Canada established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address this issue. It showed that these schools, and the policies behind them, have not only deeply damaged the individuals who attended them but also the families they were taken from and the families that have been raised since. It concluded:

“That policy was dedicated to eliminating Aboriginal peoples as distinct political and cultural entities and must be described for what it was: a policy of cultural genocide.”

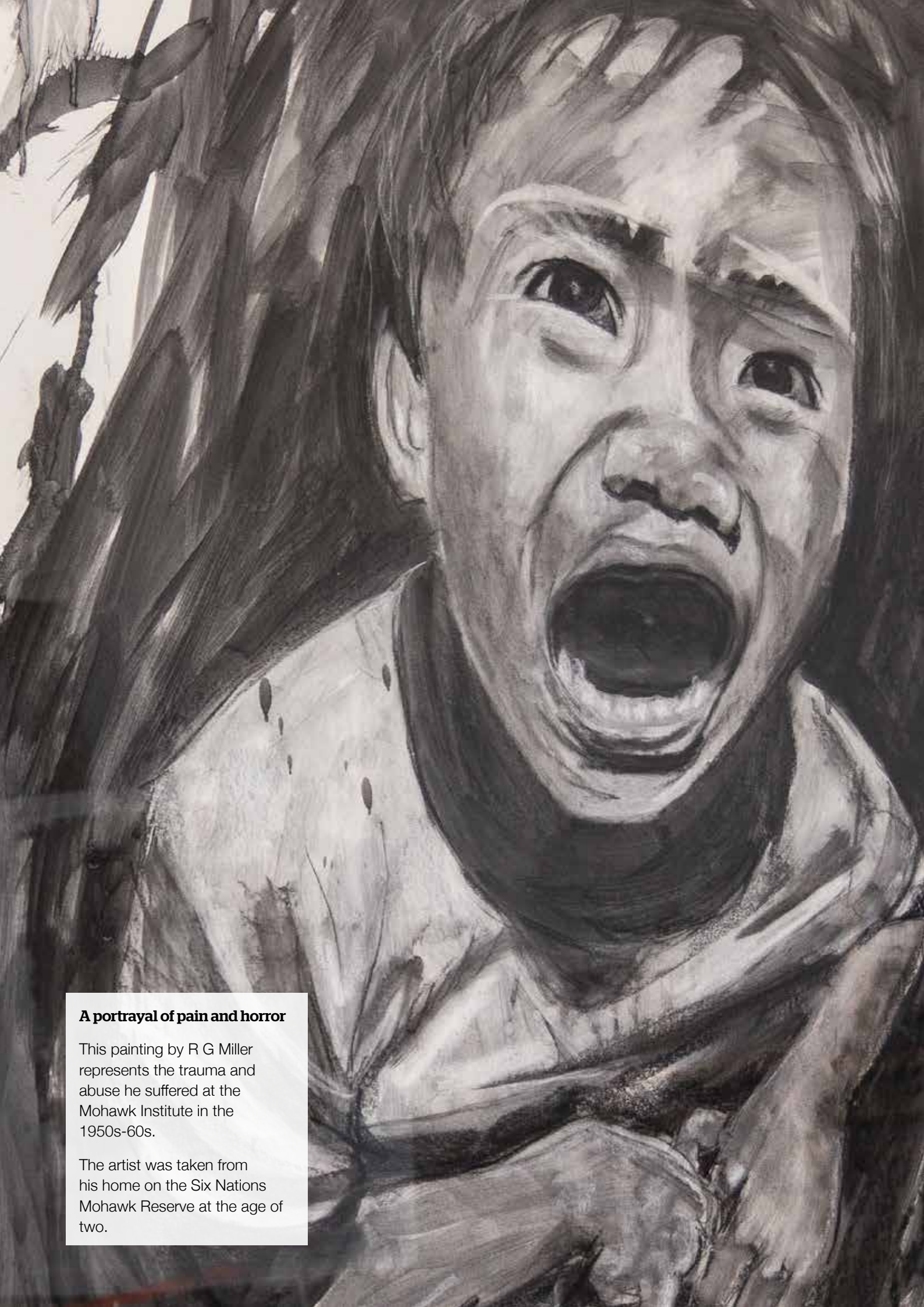
A study into the high rates of suicide among indigenous Canadians concluded:

“The institutional violence and sexual abuse that were pervasive throughout the history of the residential school system have been linked to much of the current suffering in Aboriginal communities. Central to this violence was the active suppression of Aboriginal culture and heritage that Aboriginal children were forced to endure at residential schools. Some scholars have concluded that cultural suppression was so severe at residential schools that it should more appropriately be examined within the frame of **genocide**.”<sup>29</sup>

Aboriginal people in Australia talk of the “Stolen Generations”: The children who were removed from their families between the 1890s and the 1970s, and the subsequent generations who are living with the legacy of that damage. Aboriginal children are still being removed from their homes at 10 times the rate of non-Aboriginal Australian children and thousands still attend residential schools far from home, where they experience racism and cultural dislocation.<sup>30</sup>

**My God, the pain and abuse and spiritual confusion out there in Indian Country is horrific. The effect of those infamous residential schools is spreading through successive generations like wild fire. Lives are being destroyed daily. Suicide, sexual abuse, physical abuse, and spiritual confusion are pandemic... What other group in Canada was brought up minus their parents, languages, and cultures?... It's something we will never recover from, only survive.**<sup>28</sup>

**Gilbert Oskaboose, Serpent River First Nation** Canada



**A portrayal of pain and horror**

This painting by R G Miller represents the trauma and abuse he suffered at the Mohawk Institute in the 1950s-60s.

The artist was taken from his home on the Six Nations Mohawk Reserve at the age of two.

## Case study 1

Denmark's experiment on Inuit children leaves them totally alienated from their parents

**When the ship docked in Nuuk, I grabbed my little suitcase and rushed down the bridge into the arms of my mum. And I talked and talked about all that I had seen. But she didn't answer. I looked up at her in confusion. After a while she said something but I couldn't understand what she was saying. Not a word. I thought, "This is awful. I can't speak with my mother any more." We spoke two different languages.**

**Helene Thiesen, Inuit** One of the 22 children in the experiment, Canada

**When we look at what happened, it was a clear violation of children's fundamental rights. There's hardly a rule that hasn't been broken here. Their well-being was set aside in favor of a project.**

**Mimi Jacobsen** Secretary general of Save the Children, Denmark

Colonial governments tried various experiments with "re-educating" indigenous children.

The Danish government, with the involvement of Save the Children and the Danish Red Cross, conducted a high-profile experiment in the 1950s, taking 22 Inuit children from Greenland and sending them to Denmark for re-education.

After only a year, the children were confused, traumatized and dislocated from their families, traditions, language and identities.

Sixteen of the children were then taken back to Greenland, but after a brief meeting with their families they were taken to a children's home, where they remained until age 16 and were forbidden from speaking their first language. The remaining six were adopted by Danish families.

The impact of the "experiment" was devastating for the children. One survivor, Helene Thiesen, explained: "Some of them became homeless and some just broke down. They lost their identity and they lost their ability to speak their mother tongue and with that, they lost their sense of purpose in life."<sup>31</sup>

## **Case study 2**

### One child's experiences of a Canadian residential school

"The first day there was a bus going around at the village. It wasn't a bus. It was a big green Army truck. They gathered all the young people. They took us down to the school.

When we came into the school I remember us all lining up. It was boys on one side and girls on the other side. I was scared. I didn't know why I was going there. I didn't know I was going to school. I remembered seeing my sisters on the other side in the line. I tried to go over to them but they told me I had to stay on one side and not to approach my sisters. I couldn't figure out why that was happening.

I remember them putting us into the dorms and taking all of our things away, like our clothes and stuff that we went to school with, and giving us some other clothes to wear. Each of us was given a number. My number was 198. I still remember that. After they gave us a number they took us to the showers and we had to take a shower. They started cutting our hair and putting some powder in our hair. I guess it was delousing. That's my first knowledge of going to school.

[Before I went] my life was happy. That's all I can remember, it was happy. Nobody ever hit me before, not in my family or anything. We were always together, doing everything as one; hunting, fishing, everything was done on the land.

It was like going to a different world when I went into that school. My whole life and everything changed drastically because of the different teachings. One thing I learned down there was all this deep secrecy. That's where I learned about that code of silence. You don't say nothing, you don't get hurt.

First I was physically abused. The second year when I was down there at the school, I started getting sexually abused ... I was about 8 years old at that time. I remember after that I ran away from school so many times."

Extracts from an interview with Roy Dick, Kaska, Upper Liard, Yukon, regarding his time at Lower Post Residential School.<sup>32</sup>





**A totem pole to memorialize  
Canada's residential school  
system**

This photograph shows a small section of the enormous Reconciliation Totem Pole carved out of an 800-year-old cedar tree by Jim Hart, his sons and other carvers from the Haida Nation.

This section shows a residential school imposed onto the indigenous peoples of Canada.

The school building is studded with copper nails which were hammered in to commemorate the thousands of children who died in these schools.

The pole tells the story of the trauma and the legacy of these schools.

Survivors, their family members, representatives of different Nations and local children all contributed to the making of the pole.

At 55 feet (17m) tall, the pole now stands on the campus of the University of British Colombia. <sup>33</sup>



# **Factory Schooling today**



## **Tribal & indigenous Factory Schooling today**

One would hope that the huge efforts by indigenous peoples in Canada, America, Australia and New Zealand to expose and heal from the horrors of Factory Schools would have ensured that such schooling would never again be inflicted on children.

But around the world today, tribal schoolchildren are enduring physical, sexual and racist abuse. These children are suffering the deep psychological trauma that comes from being removed from their homes and families and taught to be ashamed of who they are. Thousands of young lives are being ruined, and lost.

This is most acute in India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Botswana, where children report experiences hauntingly similar to the testimonies of children in Canadian residential schools. The situation is especially problematic in these schools, where children are kept from their homes and families for up to 10 or 11 months of the year. But even if children return home each day, schooling can cause profound damage if it aims to “reprogram” tribal children to fit the cultural, economic or religious “mainstream.”

This is not a minor issue. In India alone there are over one million tribal children in residential schools.<sup>35</sup> In Indonesia a government project sent 600 Papuan children to Java for education in 2016, focusing on the “concept of nationalism”<sup>36</sup> and a religious organization has taken a further 2,200 Papuan children to Jakarta for conversion to Islam.<sup>37</sup> Few of Bangladesh’s hundreds of thousands of indigenous children attend schools that use or respect their languages or knowledge. For French Guiana’s 19,000 indigenous people, there are two schooling options: Catholic boarding schools or state schools which teach the same curriculum in the same way as mainland France, with no allowance for indigenous differences. In Botswana, many Bushman children are sent to “remote area dweller hostels,” and separated from their families and languages [see case study 4].<sup>38</sup>

We estimate, therefore, that approximately two million tribal and indigenous children today are in schools which alienate them from their cultural identity and undermine their languages and knowledge. The effects are felt by individual children and their families, and profoundly endanger the future of these tribal peoples.

**The children lose their language, their culture, their home and at the end lose their originality as a tribal person. Is this education? This education corrupts their heart and mind. They forget who they were and get trapped in the world of who they have become. This education is destroying them and not developing them**

**Anonymous tribal activist** India

**How can we talk inclusive education if some students are in classes but not listening to the teacher because of the pains and traumatic experiences they are going through in those hostels? The extent of sexual abuse could be a contributory factor to the high dropout rates in these communities.<sup>34</sup>**

**Eureka Mokibelo** Botswana

## Killing the child

Suicide statistics provide a stark expression of the misery that such schooling can inflict on tribal children. In Canada, suicide is the leading cause of death among Indigenous youth and in Australia, 75% of child suicides are by Aboriginal children.<sup>40</sup>

Schooling alone does not explain all child suicides, but residential schooling – either of the victim or a member of their family – is a factor in many cases. In Canada, children whose parents attended residential school are more likely to make attempts on their lives.<sup>41</sup> In Australia, indigenous people removed from their families as children are the highest risk group.<sup>42</sup> Communities that commonly use their mother tongue have the lowest levels of suicide, whereas communities that have lost their own language have the highest suicide rates.<sup>43</sup>

Thousands of residential *ashram* schools have been established across India to create “urban and employment-oriented aspirations” for the vast tribal population. These schools endanger children’s physical and mental health. A UNICEF study of two states in India reported squalid conditions “shockingly below the minimum standard of human dignity for any child.”<sup>44</sup> Poor food and sanitation explain some of the high numbers of child deaths in *ashram* schools: 1,463 deaths were reported in the state of Maharashtra alone between 2001 and 2016.<sup>45</sup>

Sexual abuse in residential schools and hostels has been reported across India, where the “immorality” of the girls is often blamed, rather than the perpetrators.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, there are reports of Bushman children in Botswana being sexually abused in hostels and schools.<sup>47</sup> Many Papuan children stay in hostels to attend schools in distant towns. Regular absenteeism by teachers and hostel wardens makes the children more vulnerable to abuse. Cases of rape are alarmingly frequent.<sup>48</sup> 11 staff were arrested at one school in Maharashtra for sexual abuse.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to this physical abuse, tribal children suffer racist bullying and verbal abuse – some are even taught that their people are “backward,” “primitive” and “doomed.” In Botswana and Uganda, for example, there are reports of high rates of verbal abuse by teachers, hostel and kitchen staff against Bushman and Batwa children.<sup>50</sup> This leaves children deeply troubled, damaged and likely to drop out of school completely.

**It’s a genocidal situation, it feels like our youth are going up in smoke.<sup>39</sup>**

**Jocelyn Thérèse** French Guiana



## Dividing the family

Residential schooling has a profoundly negative impact on tribal families. Often the schools are far from the home community, and it is prohibitively difficult for children to come home regularly or for parents to visit. Many schools prevent family visits and only allow children home once annually. The children must then bridge two totally different and disconnected worlds, while parents can feel totally alienated from the universe of the school.

As primary education is made internationally compulsory, parents face a bleak “choice.” They either send their children to the state-provided school, or break the law, facing whatever sanctions the state wishes to impose. Parents want the best for their children and wish for a valuable education for them, but are often made to pay an utterly unacceptable price: the loss of their culture in exchange for mediocre schooling.

A UNICEF analysis of schooling in Namibia found:

“[T]he dominant model of education provision in Namibia is based on providing learners with instruction in classrooms in fixed sites. This leaves some social groups such as the San [Bushman] with a difficult choice between maintaining their culture and lifestyle at the expense of their children’s education, or giving up their culture and lifestyle so that their children can attend school. Given that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects the right to both culture and education, this is not a choice that people should be required to make.”<sup>52</sup>

A similar “choice” faces Baka parents in Cameroon. In January, many families travel for extended fishing trips. They must decide whether to leave their children behind for school, take them out of school completely, or give up this part of their lives altogether and struggle to make ends meet in the village. Throughout the year, schooling forces them to make choices that no parent should have to make.

Some parents make a pragmatic choice: Keep one child at home to learn the skills and knowledge of their people and send one to school, to be educated in the ways of the outside world.<sup>53</sup> Needless to say, this has radical effects on the family, including future generations.

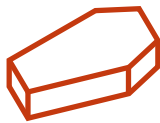
**The education system does not ask us how our children should be taught and it gives us no way of influencing their lives anymore.<sup>51</sup>**

**James Tshabu Morris, Bushman**  
Botswana



# Current Factory Schooling

**1,463**



official number of children  
who died in residential  
schools in Maharashtra,  
India between 2001-2016

**40%**



percentage of the world  
population who lack  
access to education in  
a language they speak  
or understand

**2**  
**million**



estimated number of  
children in Factory  
Schools worldwide today

**11**



number of staff arrested  
from one school in  
Maharashtra on charges  
of sexually abusing girls

## Destroying the tribe

In some areas, the schooling tribal children receive is teaching them to be ashamed of – and reject – their language and religion, and to aspire to a future outside of their tribe. This is destroying whole tribal communities. The Remote Area Development Programme in Botswana, for example, overtly aims to assimilate Bushman children into the “mainstream,” linguistically, economically and culturally. Its methods have been described as “internal colonialism” – a term that could equally apply to the approaches of many other countries.<sup>55</sup>

**From dawn to night, they made us recite mantras to make us forget our own culture. So that they could pull us into the Hindu fold, and deny we have our own distinct culture. It took me years to see I had so much to love and cherish of my own.**<sup>54</sup>

**Ghasiram Hembrom, Santhal** India

### Language

UNESCO estimate that 40% of children do not have access to an education in a language that they understand.<sup>56</sup> Many children are forbidden from speaking their mother tongue in class and are taught exclusively in the national or regional language. Many of these children are not even able to speak their own language at home, because their parents and grandparents were also forbidden from using their language themselves whilst growing up and they have lost fluency, or are scared to speak it having been punished for doing so as children.

Between 1975 and 2005, 20% of the world's linguistic diversity was lost. The decline is steepest in the Americas. More than half the people in the world now speak only 16 languages and many languages are no longer being learnt by children – endangering their future.<sup>57</sup> An indigenous language forms the vital foundation of a community: It holds the key to the wealth of knowledge a people has about their past, their land, their livelihoods and ways of understanding the world. When it is lost, the tribe's future is imperilled.

### Religion

Religious or missionary primary schools are often the only schools available to tribal children. Christian, Hindu and Islamic mission organizations are schooling tribal children with the aim of erasing their tribal beliefs and converting them and their families.

Since the 1960s, Catholic missionaries working in Cameroon have enforced schooling on to the Baka, with the apparent intention of changing the ways in which Baka hunter-gatherers live. To this end, they also encouraged communities to settle in permanent villages and take up farming.

In the 1950s, Guarani children from Brazil were taken to Salesian residential schools from the age of 8. They were forbidden from speaking their own language and the aim was to divorce the children from their indigenous beliefs. The last of these missionary schools closed in the 1980s. The Guarani-Kaiowa have one of the world's highest youth suicide rates.<sup>59</sup>

In India, over 100,000 tribal children are being taught in schools run by the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram. The People's Union for Civil Liberties concludes that this organization "targeted the tribal belts of the country to see that Adivasis lose their identity, culture and traditions of worshiping nature by asserting that they are Hindus."<sup>60</sup> Making the national curriculum more focused on Hinduism is a policy of the current national administration, and of many of the organizations providing tribal schooling in India.

In Indonesia, Papuan children have been taken to *pesantren* (Islamic residential schools) in distant Jakarta, often against their – or their parents' – will. Indonesia's Economic Affairs Minister Hatta Rajasa was quoted as saying the abduction of these children for religious education is "one of our ways to obtain a ticket to heaven."<sup>61</sup> Similarly, in Bangladesh, traffickers are taking Chittagong Hill Tribe children to Islamic missionary schools to convert them and their families.<sup>62</sup>

Much of this missionizing is based on a racist disregard for the religions and worldviews that tribal children have. The impact on the whole tribe is profound and often irreversible.

## Aspirations

Most schools aim to assimilate tribal children economically, by teaching them to desire "mainstream" jobs, western goods and individual wealth. The message that children receive from the curriculum, their books, and the attitudes of their teachers is that the only future is a "mainstream" one. Tribal values, livelihoods and collective ways of living are not incorporated into school life. This, combined with the poor quality of teaching that tribal children receive in most schools, means that the aspirations these schools instil are wildly unrealistic. This leaves children feeling like failures and lost between two worlds.

**Day by day you are torn between two worlds. You look through your many textbooks but find no reflection of yourself, your family or your culture. Even in the history books your people are invisible. They exist only in the shadows - or worse, if they are mentioned at all it is as "obstacles to settlement" or simply as "problems" for your country to overcome.**<sup>58</sup>

**Ole Henrik Magga, Sami** Norway



## Going to school can prevent learning

Schools often stop children from acquiring their people's knowledge, skills and language by taking them away – physically and metaphorically – from their tribe or by brainwashing them into thinking such knowledge is dirty, wrong, “backward” or doomed.

There are many studies that show a significant loss in local environmental knowledge among children who are educated in externally-run schools. For example, Evenki children from Siberia were taken to boarding schools from as young as two years old during much of the 20th century. By the time they returned home from these schools, they could not function in their communities because they had none of the necessary skills. This has had profound and lasting impacts on the Evenki as a people.<sup>64</sup>

The skills and knowledge needed to herd reindeer across the Arctic tundra cannot be learnt in residential schools. Without them, Evenki children cannot grow up to continue the livelihood of their forefathers but must find other ways to try to make a living in, or outside of, their challenging homelands.

Similarly, Bushman author Kuela Kiema tells the story of his cousin who nearly died in their homeland of the Kalahari desert, despite being in an area rich with wild foods. Kuela's cousin had been denied the education by his people that would have taught him how to thrive on his land.<sup>65</sup>

The loss of knowledge, experience, language, songs, stories, pride and self-determination doesn't just endanger the individual child, but the survival of the whole tribe, as a distinct people. What's more, when their knowledge about how to care for and protect their land is lost, it's dangerous for the environment and, by extension, us all.

The great irony is that in exchange for the loss of knowledge and learning, many schools for tribal children don't even offer them a quality education in other respects.

**I guess one day the children will find out what they have gained and what they have lost from school. They will learn that they have lost more than they've gained.<sup>63</sup>**

**Gathering Voices Report, Innu Canada**



## Going to school often provides only low quality education

Schooling for tribal children worldwide is under resourced and substandard. Classrooms are often cheaply constructed and double-up as hostels for boarding students. Many teaching materials are poor in quality and quantity and have little, if any, relevance to tribal children's lives. These resources alienate the children and fail to hold their interest as a result.

In Maharashtra, India, for example, residential schools run on a budget of \$37 per child per month, which covers everything except teachers' salaries. Unsurprisingly, the food is minimal and nutritionally poor, and the amenities are basic or dangerous.<sup>68</sup>

### Poor teaching

Many governments prescribe that teachers must be government trained and appointed. Tribal areas often get the least able and least motivated teachers because these areas are considered "punishment postings" for civil servants, due to their remoteness. In the tribal heartland of India, it is not unusual for teachers to attend work only a handful of days a month.<sup>69</sup>

Less than 1% of teachers in Australia are Aboriginal, and fewer Aboriginal people are joining the profession. Yet studies show that being taught by an indigenous teacher massively increases the motivation and achievements of indigenous children.<sup>70</sup>

Teachers who are brought in to communities from outside also often bring deep-rooted prejudices. This can also apply to indigenous teachers who have been taught to see their tribe through the lens of a "mainstream" education – and to feel superior. Matsigenka teachers employed to teach in Manu National Park, Peru, for example, have themselves attended Spanish-language missionary schools. They wield considerable power over the local communities through their connections, pay and language skills.

**The most difficult situation is [Udege] who've lost identity and connection with the land. They've had education from boarding schools and are facing a life in settlements, in "so-called civilisation." These people feel unwelcome everywhere, they've lost their hope for a better future.**<sup>66</sup>

Pavel Sulyandiga, Udege Siberia

**He didn't learn a thing except a few Oriya letters in two years. This education has no use for us. I taught him dongar [shifting cultivation], how to plant ginger and turmeric, to separate the edible roots from poisonous ones... My children can survive a drought year on wild roots, tubers and mushrooms. I know the forests will look after them after I am long gone.**<sup>67</sup>

Lodu Sikaka, Dongria Kondh talking of his son, Dombu, who ran away from a government hostel aged seven India



### High “drop out” and “failure” rates

All the mainstream indices show that tribal children are struggling in these schools: They are less likely to be literate, have lower rates of graduation from all levels of schooling and must repeat more years of schooling than non-tribal children. The indices of success and failure are, like the rest of the schooling system, designed by non-tribal people with a “one-size-fits-all” model.

In Canada in 2004, only three Innu children – out of hundreds – finished secondary school in one community.<sup>72</sup> This pattern is repeated in many North American communities, and beyond, and not because of lack of capability in the children.

Roughly 90% of pastoralist children drop out of primary school: They neither gain enough knowledge to equip them for a “different” future, nor enough practical experience or knowledge for the complexities of pastoralist life.<sup>73</sup>

States bemoan the high “drop-out rates” of tribal and indigenous children from school and seek ways of increasing “retention.” Few studies really ask the children why they leave. As noted in the Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Education, “‘dropout rates and failures’ of Indigenous peoples within non-Indigenous educational systems must be viewed for what they really are: rejection rates.”<sup>74</sup>

**Yolngu drop out in droves at the High School level returning home broken people... Yolngu students are being traumatised and left out in the social wilderness by this failed education process.<sup>71</sup>**

**Richard Trudgen, working with Yolngu communities in Arnhem Land Australia**

## Case study 3

### Orang Asli children in Malaysia found dead after fleeing school in fear

**You pluck young children – 7 year-olds, 8 year-olds – from the village, then put them in a school hostel for three months at a time without seeing their parents, give them a new education, give them a new culture, give them a new language and sometimes a new religion, and in one generation you have people who are no longer Orang Asli.<sup>75</sup>**

**Colin Nicholas, Centre for Orang Asli Concerns** Malaysia

Since 2003, school has been compulsory in Malaysia from the age of 6 to 12. For remote tribal communities this usually means sending their children to distant boarding schools or hostels where they learn a national curriculum in the national language.

The indigenous peoples of Malaysia, collectively known as the Orang Asli, are a diverse group of tribes, including the Temiar, Semai and Batek. In 2015 there was international outrage when a group of seven Temiar children ran away from their boarding school in Gua Masang.<sup>76</sup> The children, aged 7 to 11 years old, ran away in fear after having witnessed teachers beating some children who were caught swimming in a nearby river.

Forty-seven days later, the two starving survivors were found close to the school. All but one of the bodies of the other children were then found: They had drowned or starved.

There was further anger when the authorities took two weeks to start a proper search for the children (they originally believed that their parents were wilfully hiding them), and at the poor judgement that led the authorities to send in heavily armed military teams to track the terrified children.<sup>77</sup>

The official response, one year on, was to build a better fence at the school.<sup>78</sup>

Others have called for these deaths to be “the awful catalyst that ends the Malaysian government’s shameful policy. It must stop removing Orang Asli children from their homes and communities to subject them to culture-eradicating education in captivity.”<sup>79</sup>

## **Case study 4**

### Bushman children suffer abuse at schools in Botswana

**These children suffer in silence. They are disturbed, traumatized and haunted by such experiences leading to self-destruction tendencies.<sup>80</sup>**

**Eureka Mokibelo, University of Botswana** Botswana

Bushman children in Botswana often attend schools far from the lands where their parents live. They stay in very basic hostels where there is usually a serious lack of pastoral care or security. There have been reports of violent maltreatment and cruelty, including sexual abuse.<sup>81</sup>

In one hostel for 7 to 14 year olds, researchers found no electric lighting, no mattresses on the beds and no overnight matron. They also heard reports that local men visited regularly to abuse girls, who were attacked if they refused. Corporal punishment is also widely practiced in these schools: One report detailed the use of canes, whips, electric cables and fists.<sup>82</sup> A Bushman author described graphically how teachers inspected boys' and girls' genitals using rulers, and any "dirt" found was shown to the whole class to demonstrate how unclean Bushman children were.<sup>83</sup>

Given the high incidence of abuse, it is unsurprising that a high proportion of Bushman children drop out of school, are forced to leave because of pregnancy, or are expelled for behavior deemed "unacceptable." By then, considerable damage is already done: They have suffered tremendously, been made to feel like "failures," and have lost so much as a result of being separated from their families, communities and land.



**Our children now know too much, and at the same time too little. They know too much about unnecessary things, and they see a lot of bad things, even from those who are supposed to show them the way of good behavior... They are out there on their own, being taught other people's values and ways without their own people's guidance or involvement.<sup>84</sup>**

**James Tshabu Morris, Ncoakhoe Bushman** Botswana

**Extracts from *Tears from my Land*, by Kuela Kiema, Kua Bushman, Botswana.<sup>85</sup>**

*We were slowly forced into accepting that we had “naturally” lower ethnic status. The teachers said the government wanted to make us human beings and that we should stop being Basarwa [Bushman]. They started teaching us “proper” human behaviors... Anything which went against Tswana [mainstream] tradition or custom was considered inhuman.*

*We were caught between two worlds. We loved our culture and customs, we loved our traditions and our history. We followed with humility our traditional religious rituals and believed in them. But our teachers did not.*

*We wanted to be educated within our cultural environment without having to disown our traditions. Slowly but surely, however, Tswana culture began to influence us. Our parents saw that the school was making us disobedient and disrespectful of our traditions.*

*We children began to feel torn between school culture and our family traditions. Many children, with the support of their parents, began to leave school.*

*As a result, our teachers claimed that Basarwa culture didn't approve of formal education. The truth was that the education system didn't approve of us!*



## Case study 5

### Indonesia attempts to control Papuan tribespeople by indoctrinating children

**Sometimes they slapped us on the face, beat us with a wooden stick. They just told us we Papuans were black, we have dark skin...**<sup>86</sup>

**Andreas Asso** Papuan boy who was taken to a Jakarta *pesantren*, Indonesia

Many observers have referred to Indonesia's colonization of West Papua and its horrific treatment of the indigenous peoples there as "genocidal."<sup>87</sup> Despite the brutal repression, under which at least 100,000 people have been killed, there continues to be a strong resistance and independence movement by the Papuans, who have lived there for over 40,000 years.<sup>88</sup>

Schooling has been one weapon through which the state has sought to control the Papuan peoples. Recently, there has been a trend of schooling Papuan children with an extreme interpretation of Islam. The explicit intention is for these children then to missionize their own communities. The link between schooling, religion and state control of the Papuans is clear. One religious leader, who claims to have converted over 2,000 Papuan children at his schools, said, **"When [Papuans] convert to Islam, their desire to be independent reduces."**<sup>89</sup>

In one case, a Papuan boy was taken to Jakarta for residential schooling by an Islamic organization without the knowledge, let alone permission, of his parents. The boy died, but his family received no information about the circumstances of death, nor was the boy's body returned.<sup>90</sup>

In one of these *pesantren*, or Islamic schools, Papuan children are reportedly kept locked inside, ill-fed and schooled for long hours in the Koran (with only slight coverage of other subjects). They are allowed home only once every three years and are made to work on a nearby construction site. Children who leave, run away or are expelled must find a way to survive on their own, as they are too far from home to be able to get back.<sup>91</sup>

In common with historic residential schooling, children are taken against, or without, parental consent and their names are changed. An explicit aim of this type of schooling is to remold Papuan children as Muslim citizens of the Indonesian state.

## Case study 6

### Colonial schooling continues to endanger children and their tribes in French Guiana

**I already attempted suicide when I was young. I hanged myself but my brother-in-law and my older brother came and got me out of the rope. That was just after I left middle-school and the boarding school I had been sent to. That was when I came back to live here in the village again.**

**Here, when you try to commit suicide, [if] you don't manage, they directly send us to Cayenne by helicopter. [They keep us] in a sort of very closed house, like a jail. They give us loads of medicine and they force us to do physical exercise to calm us down. All of this because I didn't manage to commit suicide. Last week, I wanted to kill myself again, but with a rifle this time. I had drunk too much, did you see how I was?**

**A 23 year old Wayapi youth (name withheld)**<sup>92</sup> French Guiana

French Guiana, an overseas department of France, has a suicide rate that is 13 times higher than mainland France. In the largely indigenous Upper Maroni area, 1 in 200 people commit suicide. Half of all suicides are by young people. A major causal factor is considered to be the education system imposed from France.<sup>93</sup>

France does not recognize the collective rights of any groups in its territories, does not allow teaching in any language other than French and effectively denies the Amerindian peoples of French Guiana any autonomy over the education of their children. All schools in France operate the same calendar, curriculum and philosophy; all teachers must have the same qualifications, whether they are teaching Wayapi children in Amazonia or children in the center of Paris.

In French Guiana, this colonial schooling is geared towards making Amerindians “citizens” of France. For the child, the experience of school can be deeply disturbing, as it is totally divorced from the reality of their home lives. They must communicate in French and learn in a manner that is poles apart from the way their tribe teaches its children.

Families in remote rainforest areas are compelled to send their children to school under French law from the ages of six to 16. For secondary school, they can either send them to stay with host families in towns, or to Catholic missionary schools. Both options deny the children the chance to learn with and from their communities and impose an alien worldview.

Many children return to their communities confused and lost between worlds. Their schooling, coupled with the influx of money from the French state, makes many desire luxury goods and “professional” jobs. But it does not often equip them with the means of achieving these aspirations. If they decide to return to their families, they have missed out on the opportunity to learn the skills needed to live on their land. They have often absorbed a message from their schooling that their ways of life are “primitive” and likely to die out. The total impact of this schooling is endangering the very survival of these tribes.



# Prejudice





## Prejudice in schooling policy & practice

Deep prejudice against tribal people pervades the education system in many countries. Tribal children experience direct racist abuse from other children, teachers, and other school staff. In addition, the entire school system is often built on prejudice against their people.

Three deep-seated and erroneous beliefs underlie the imposition of “reprogramming” schooling on tribal communities.

Firstly, there is a widespread belief that being unschooled means being uneducated. This belief fails to acknowledge that tribal peoples already have their own education systems.

Secondly, there is a belief that schooling is automatically a “good thing” and should be compulsory, at least at primary level.

Thirdly, there is a notion that education is synonymous with school, and that a “one-size-fits-all” model, with static classrooms and a national curriculum, is suitable for all children worldwide.

These beliefs will be examined in turn.

**If only they went to school, they would be people.<sup>94</sup>**

**Non-Bushman person talking about Bushman children** Botswana

**In schools, students and even teachers call us dirty. They call us pigs, they call us dogs.<sup>95</sup>**

**Rahman, Orang Asli** Malaysia

## **“Unschoolled means uneducated”**

Tribal children are often seen as “empty vessels” when they arrive at school, and are regarded as ignorant. The wealth of knowledge they have received via the education systems of their own people is ignored or unvalued.

On their land, tribal children learn constantly with their peers, family, and elders. This education equips them with the history, geography and economics of their people. It also provides them with the skills and knowledge needed to function in their tribe and be guardians of their lands. It gives them an abundance of stories and songs that enrich and give meaning to their lives.

“Mainstream” schooling does not value this education. It values only that which fits the curriculum and is measurable in prescribed, national tests. The knowledge tribal children have is therefore invisible, unvalued and may even be seen as a barrier to the learning of “facts” valued by the dominant society.

Some schools do attempt to provide a connection to the tribal society they serve, but this is often minimal or counterproductive if it is externally imposed or funded. For example, the Australian government cut back bilingual education for the Yolngu in 2000 in favour of a focus on English, leaving only a “cultural festival” for a single week per term.<sup>97</sup>

**Our knowledge has not been written down by us - on the contrary: we dance it, we draw it, we narrate it, we sing it, we practise it.<sup>96</sup>**

**Ole Henrik Magga, Sami** Norway

## **“School should be compulsory”**

In 1990, the World Bank launched an international “Education for All” initiative. Governments worldwide committed to six goals, one of which was to:

**“Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free, and compulsory primary education of good quality.”<sup>99</sup>**

Whilst the rationale for such policies may be noble, this goal is widely interpreted as meaning that families must be compelled to send their children to state or private schools, where they must be taught a national curriculum by officially trained teachers.

Countries around the world have embraced the idea of “Education for All,” but it has often impacted negatively on tribal peoples.

For example, in Bolivia, indigenous teachers without official qualifications are being replaced by outsiders, in the name of “improving standards.” Non-indigenous teachers lack the language skills needed to teach indigenous communities, and may have deep-rooted prejudices about the indigenous people they work with. They are often reluctant to stay in remote areas and therefore attend school irregularly.

Compulsory education potentially violates tribal people’s right to self-determination if children are being compelled to attend school by the state and, therefore, to learn a government-imposed curriculum. Self-determination is perhaps the most important of all the rights of tribal and indigenous peoples.

Autonomy in education is a key part of a people’s self-determination.

**I have found that Education for All is a tool for intellectual and moral intimidation. It humiliates and silences the wisdom of the local communities... So their control over their lands and resources should be handed over to the intelligentsia of global managers to handle.<sup>98</sup>**

**Manish Jain** India

## **“Schooling should follow a single model”**

The World Bank’s “Education for All” initiative also promotes a “one size fits all” approach to schooling. It doesn’t look past the uniform model of a school building, a teacher, and classes divided into age groups, with a national curriculum, calendar and system of assessment. All children are expected to conform, and all schools are expected to fit this prescribed model. The system is geared to producing workers with the skills needed for “the market.” It is, therefore, profoundly dangerous to tribal peoples as non-state societies.

The imposition of this model globally means that we have come to think that education equals school. But there are a multitude of ways of learning, and all risk being erased in the name of “Education for All.”

The mainstream model is particularly damaging for the children of nomadic, semi-nomadic and pastoralist peoples, who need to move with their families and must learn intricate knowledge of their lands and animals to survive.

By definition, tribal people’s ways of life are self-sufficient, land-focused and based on a deep foundation of knowledge, built up over generations and specific to the people’s territory. Tribal societies are also extraordinarily diverse. Their education needs to reflect this specificity and diversity and cannot conform to a single, national model. If it is geared towards market-based skills and employment, schooling is effectively teaching tribal children not to aspire to a self-sufficient future on their land.

**The ones who go away to school don’t know how to do anything here. They don’t know how to take the animals up to graze, how to care for the crops. They can’t do anything.<sup>100</sup>**

**Mother in Ladakh India**

# Control





## Schooling as a means of control

Both historically and today, schooling has been used as a means of gaining control over tribal peoples, their land and resources. By definition, tribal people are largely self-sufficient, autonomous and independent of the dominant state and economy. Their self-determination can be perceived as threatening to states which seek total control of their citizens and lands. Their deep collective attachment to their lands makes it harder for states and companies to get hold of the resources within and beneath those territories.

Schooling is often used to draw tribal and indigenous peoples under state control and sever their connection to their land. The outputs are then “productive,” tax-paying “citizens”; and land which can be mined of its resources for the “greater public good.”

To achieve this aim, states need to persuade the upcoming generation that there is no future for them as tribal people and that their ways of life and beliefs are “primitive,” and then teach them to aspire to a “modern” life in the mainstream economy. This is what happens in the majority of schools for tribal children.

In many areas there is an unholy alliance between schooling, the state and the extractive industries which covet tribal lands. Governments make agreements with the very companies that are displacing tribal peoples from their lands, to be “partners” in their education.

In Indonesia, Bangladesh and India there are overt or subtle connections between schools and religious extremist groups. These schools aim to bring children completely out of their tribal culture and under the control of religion and the state.

Children are then encouraged to return to their tribe and preach the new gospel, whether that be the gospel of market economics, citizenship or a specific religion.

This kind of schooling is a tool for destroying tribal self-determination, autonomy and self-sufficiency and is therefore deeply dangerous.

**We are not educated but we have the knowledge needed to live wholesome lives and we are not fools. But if we get educated, we will also become like others and live merely obeying orders and in the process may lose our bond with the land and the mountain.<sup>101</sup>**

**Lodu Sikaka, Dongria Kondh India**

## Control over land and resources

Tribal peoples depend on their land for their largely self-sufficient livelihoods, and have done so for generations. Their land is at the root of their religion, economy, history and future as tribal peoples. The connection between a tribe and their land is fundamental and vigorously defended. Industrial companies the world over can attest to the extent to which many tribes will go to resist efforts to remove them from their lands.

But if that connection is broken – often deliberately – by schooling, it becomes easier for future generations to be convinced to give up their land and resources.

It is therefore unsurprising that there are many partnerships between schools and extractive industries in areas where tribal lands are rich in resources. Logging companies in Congo proudly boast of the schools they have built for local communities, while the tribal peoples face their forests disappearing around them. In Botswana, De Beers – the diamond mining company – is supporting a residential primary school for Bushman children, whose ancestral lands in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve are rich in diamond deposits.<sup>103</sup>

The Dongria Kondh tribe in India has become a symbol of tribal peoples' struggle worldwide to protect their lands. A mining company, Vedanta Resources, attempted to mine for bauxite in the tribe's Niyamgiri Hills, but was stopped by the strength of the Dongria's resistance. Their eloquent and passionate determination to protect their lands inspired people worldwide.

The inability of Vedanta to access the bauxite in the Hills caused the company to lose over \$100 million in three years.<sup>104</sup> It then announced it would spend \$37,000 a year to send 100 Dongria children to the giant KISS school [see case study 9].<sup>105</sup> Is this "Corporate Social Responsibility" or was Vedanta hoping to invest in schooling to change the children's relationship with their land and attitudes towards mining?

It is not only the extractive industries that wish to control tribal peoples' lands. The conservation industry is also responsible for evicting millions of tribal people, and also uses schooling as a tool to achieve this. Some Matsigenka children from within Peru's Manu National Park, for example, attend a boarding school outside the Park which was established with funding from the

**[If we lose] our language, we will lose our identity, our forests, our rivers and our mountains. The government will get an opportunity to say that there is no tribal language, so there is no tribal population here, and take away our land<sup>102</sup>**

**Lodu Sikaka, Dongria Kondh India**

Frankfurt Zoological Society.<sup>107</sup>

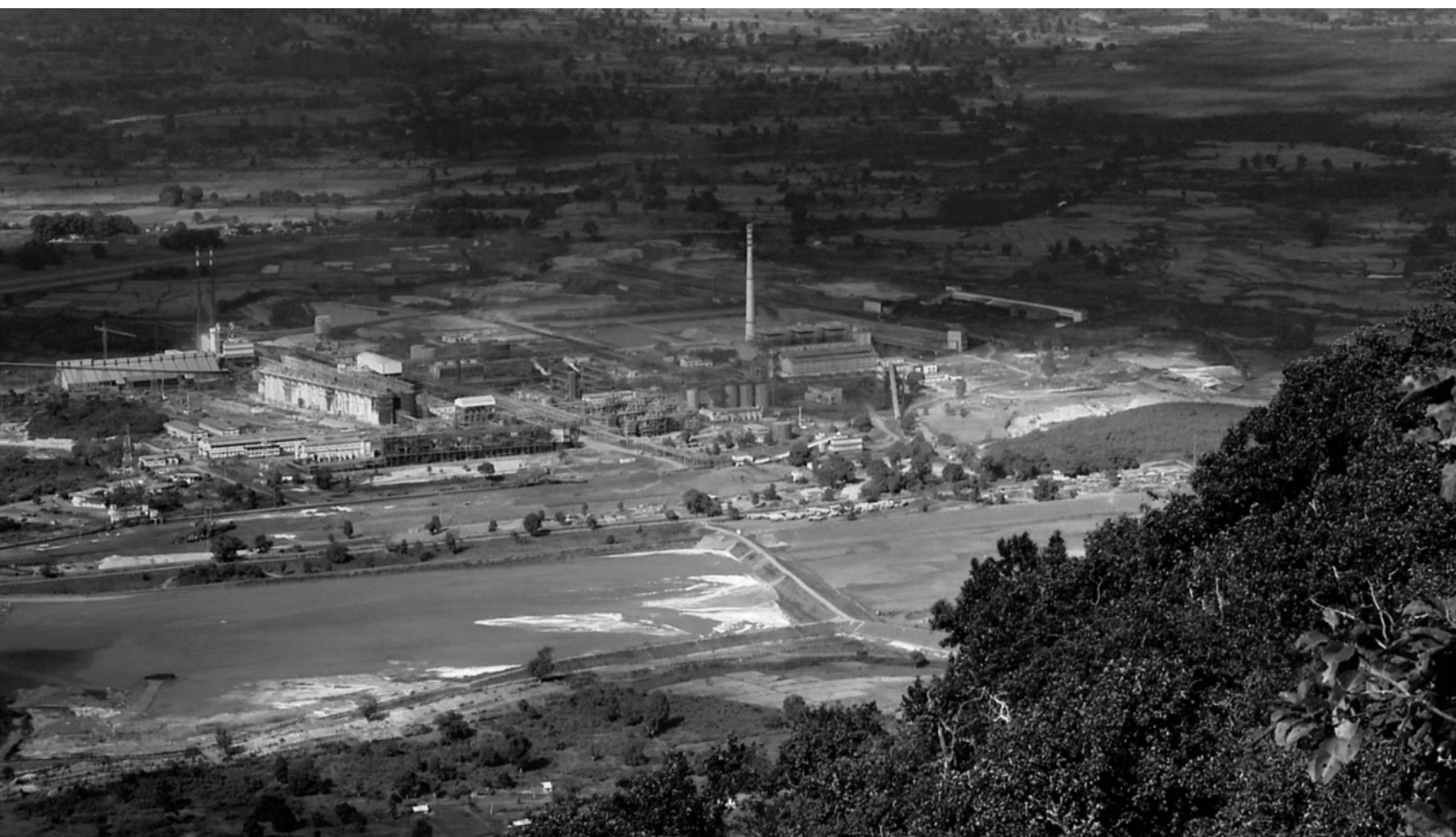
A clear aim of this school is to encourage children, and their families, to leave the park, under a misguided notion that external conservationists would manage the park better than the Matsigenka. Yet the tribe has lived there for countless generations, with an intricate knowledge of their homelands that no outsider could match – no matter how good their intentions.

The children board for nine months during one stretch, and therefore lose the chance to live and learn on their land. The schooling project endangers the tribe's guardianship of this precious forest, at great cost to both them and the biodiversity of the area.

Once outsiders get their hands on a tribe's land, a vicious circle is then established: Without access to their land, elders cannot teach their children the skills and knowledge they need to live well on that land. The future of the tribe as an entity is severely jeopardized as a result.

**It was land - it has ever been land - for which the white man oppresses the Indian and to gain possession of which he commits any crime<sup>106</sup>**

**Luther Standing Bear, Lakota U.S.**



## Control over people

Governments also use schooling to control people as citizens. Strongly independent, autonomous or separatist communities are often seen as a threat to the integrity of a nation, and may therefore be particular targets for government programs that aim to educate children into the mainstream. For example, the Indonesian government aims to “pacify” Papuans through schooling projects; the Bangladesh government seeks to assimilate the Chittagong Hill tribes through enforced schooling; and Mexican political parties have tried to suppress Zapatista autonomous education.

Schooling, as a tool to bring tribes into the tax-paying, voting mainstream, has been pushed with a zeal akin to missionizing. In the 1880s, Merrill Gates explained the U.S.’s approach to dealing with “the Indian problem” thus:

“We need to awaken in [the Indian] wants. In his dull savagery he must be touched by the wings of the divine angel of discontent. Then he begins to look forward, to reach out. The desire for property of his own may become an intense educating force [...] We are going to conquer the Indians by a standing army of school-teachers, armed with ideas, winning victories by industrial training, and by the gospel of love and the gospel of work.”<sup>109</sup>

This philosophy, which continues today, aims to make children productive, employable, and hungry for consumer goods through re-education. Such schooling explicitly teaches children they should be wage-earning, tax-paying workers. This implies that they should reject a self-sufficient, communal life on their land. It takes from them the dream of a future in their tribe and replaces it with often unrealistic dreams of jobs in urban centers or foreign countries.

Public-private partnership deals between governments and industries have developed from this mindset. In Malaysian Borneo, for example, the Sarawak government’s education department has partnered with a dam company which has displaced over one thousand Penan from their homes. The aim is to fundamentally change the young generation into “modern” people – erroneously, and racistly, assuming that the Penan are less “modern” than the dominant population.<sup>110</sup>

**Traditionally, the Penans are hunters and gatherers. We have to move them to the 21st century. And because of that, we have asked Sarawak Energy to provide a fund so that we can transform them from being hunters and gatherers into what we are today.**<sup>108</sup>

**James Masing, Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak, 2016** Malaysia

## Case study 7

### Indian steel company “adopts” children to improve its image

**This is what comes to our share in return for the land we gave up – contaminated water to drink, ash-loaded air to breathe, no electricity, no jobs and no land.<sup>111</sup>**

**Mohammed Ashfaq of Kanchandih village (affected by Bokoro's steel plant)** India

Bokaro Steel company, has felt the need to improve its image since it took over 12,000 hectares of land in Jharkhand state – displacing and impacting tens of thousands of people.<sup>112</sup>

As a PR gesture, the company “adopted” 14 boys from the Birhor tribe in 2012, laying bare the link between the interests of industry and the Indian government’s interest in schooling tribal children.

The company claims: **“In a uniquely sensitive gesture of social care, Bokaro Steel has adopted children belonging to the primitive Birhor tribe. These children live under the love and care of Bokaro Steel, getting free board, lodging, dresses and education.”<sup>113</sup>**

An enthusiastic Times of India article on the adoption reported that the children were turned from “junior tarzans,” “shabbily dressed” with “long unkempt hair” into smart young men in “jeans, shirts, shoes and with nicely cropped hair.” These children, aged six to nine, were returning home to their families for a summer break after not seeing them all year. The article notes, “The villagers were stunned to see their transformation. In fact, some of them couldn’t even recognize these children.”

Caretaker of the Birhor hostel, Bahadur Singh, is quoted as saying:

**“For the first two months, we had a tough time trying to discipline these kids. They would indulge in mischievous acts like coming out naked after a bath, hiding themselves underneath the beds and inside cupboards... It took a while but they slowly started understanding the ways of the civilized world and started behaving decently. When they had come, it was very difficult to communicate with them. They would speak typical Birhor language, which was hardly understood by anyone of us.”<sup>114</sup>**

Earlier, in 2001, the company had “adopted” 15 Birhor boys. At least 5 dropped out of school. Interviews with the boys who stayed at school showed that they felt disconnected from their families and couldn’t return to their former lives.<sup>115</sup>



## Case study 8

### India's Kalinga Institute of Social Studies aims to turn 25,000 “liabilities” into “assets”

**If education does not reach them, they will remain liabilities and would end up as Maoists [armed extremists] or die of malnutrition. Only education can convert them into assets.**<sup>116</sup>

Achyuta Samanta, founder of KISS school India

**[Students at KISS]'s whole minds have been brainwashed, by a kind of education that says, “Mining is good,” “Vedanta is good,” “Consumerism is good,” “Your culture is bad.” Still - still! - KISS writes in its magazine that tribal people are primitive.**<sup>117</sup>

Former KISS employee India

The world's largest residential school, the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), houses over 25,000 Adivasi children from over 60 different tribes in India's eastern state of Odisha.

The children, even in kindergarten, spend 10 months of the year away from their families. They are taught to aspire to join the “mainstream,” linguistically, culturally, economically. India's human development minister congratulated KISS for “transforming the children to become worthy citizens of the mother land.”<sup>118</sup>

A stated mission of the school is “to transform ‘liability’ into ‘permanent asset’ and ‘tax consumers’ into ‘tax payers’” by molding the children to fit the jobs market.<sup>119</sup> Its promotional materials claim the school gives a “KISS of life for the children of lesser god” to help each one become “a complete human being.”<sup>120</sup> Another advert claims:

**“Life for them [tribal people] had been of not much meaning. They lead mostly a listless life... KISS... is indeed transforming tribal mindset and triggering their joining the mainstream society... for seamless coexistence.”**<sup>121</sup>

KISS is big business: Founder Achyuta Samanta is Odisha's sixth richest person<sup>122</sup> and aims to reach **two million** children in a decade via the construction of many similar schools.<sup>123</sup> The school has consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Council, showing that such a model still finds favor among global education policymakers.<sup>124</sup>

In 2017 a report by the state Child Welfare Committee found that the school had not been inspected once for child welfare – despite the numbers of children there, that dormitories were unhygienic, overcrowded and under-supervised, and that the children were undernourished and anaemic.<sup>125</sup>

Beyond these immediate problems, the deeper effects of divorcing so many tribal children from family, community and tribe will inevitably be profound and generational.

# Resistance, self-determination and indigenous education



## Towards the future

Globally, many indigenous and tribal people have striven to resist outsiders taking control of the education of their children. The Yanomami and the Enawene Nawe of Brazil, for example, have maintained their autonomy over education and have developed programs on their lands, in their languages, on their terms.

Others have reclaimed control of education, working to alleviate the damage wrought by separating young people from their lands, elders and identities and indigenous skills and knowledge.

The Yekuana of Brazil established their Aramare school to teach children how to be Yekuana, by re-establishing the importance of elders and bringing in and sharing new skills.<sup>127</sup> In the Alto Rio Negro area of Brazil, indigenous communities have been reclaiming their schools from the Salesian missionaries and developing an education system based on their language, according to their needs. Some lessons are taught whilst hunting, fishing or gathering, with these activities becoming the basis for teaching a range of other subjects.<sup>128</sup>

For many communities, a priority has been to train up their own teachers, so that they can autonomously teach their own children. The Ticuna, for example, now have trained teachers and their schools have Ticuna language and culture at their core.

Several NGOs have helped tribes develop their own education programs. For example, DEED, an NGO in southern India, has spent years developing education projects focused on developing tribal children's pride in themselves and their forest skills and knowledge.<sup>129</sup> Many tribes need and want skills they cannot provide from within their communities, including math, microbiology, mapping techniques and legal training to protect their lands, lives and rights from multiple threats. External agencies must ensure that the community controls how this new information is brought in and disseminated.

For pastoralists and other mobile tribal peoples, there are plenty of innovative approaches to schooling, from radio-based learning in Somalia and Colombia to eLearning packages worldwide.<sup>130</sup> Technological solutions are not magic bullets; the technology must be fully in the control of, understood by and tailored directly to the needs of the community.

**We love our ancestral land. We want our kids and grandchildren to attend school from where they are, as other [people] do, from their mother's home. We too love our culture, and we want to pass it to our children and grandchildren. We know that development must come where human beings are, not humans following development.**<sup>126</sup>

**Moeti Gaoberekwe, Bushman, 2002**  
Botswana

## Reclaiming indigenous languages in education

Worldwide, indigenous peoples have fought hard for their rights to autonomy, self-determination and the freedom to educate their children as they wish [see Annex 1]. Successful resistance to inappropriate and imposed schooling often starts with a simple demand – the respect for children’s right to be taught in their mother tongue.

### Linguistic rights and language provision

Indigenous children are legally entitled to an education which is: rooted in their language, history and culture; appropriate to their specific needs; and under the control of their people. There are clear legal guidelines for governments, which indicate the kind of education they should be providing for tribal children in complete collaboration with their communities [see Annex 1].

Some governments are more respectful of these rights than others. In Namibia, for example, the Nyae Nyae Village Schools teach Bushman children in Ju’hoansi for the first three years.<sup>132</sup> But across the border in Botswana, the government is categorically opposed to Bushman children learning in their own language. In fact, across much of Africa it is still forbidden to speak tribal languages in school.

Some government schemes, especially those that are externally imposed, sound better on paper than they perform in practice. For example, the ORA schools for the Bayaka in Congo should teach in the children’s first language, but this rarely happens. Many government-sponsored mother tongue language programmes stop after the early years and are only used to improve tribal children’s adoption of the dominant language.

### Our language, our future

Language resurgence is occurring in tribal and indigenous communities in the U.S. (especially Hawai’i), Canada, India, Norway, Papua New Guinea and beyond. In New Zealand in the 1980s, fewer than 5% of Māori school children spoke *te reo Māori*. To save their language and culture, Māori communities established preschools and Māori immersion schools. The second biggest tertiary education college in New Zealand is now a Māori institution, and there are strong signs of a resurgence in use, understanding and respect for *te reo Māori*.<sup>133</sup>

**They say our language is simple, that we should give up this simple language of ours and speak your kind of language. But this language of mine, of yours, is who we are and who we have been. It is where we find our stories, our lives, our ancestors; and it should be where we find our future, too.<sup>131</sup>**

**Simon Anaviapik, Inuit** Canada

In Mexico, laws were passed in 2003 to include indigenous languages and cultures in the curriculum and these directives were incorporated into the Constitution in 2014. Indigenous children are able to access a bilingual education throughout primary school, but secondary and further education is not available in indigenous languages.

In Nunavut, the newly independent Canadian territory passed a radical education act in 2008. This act decreed that all schools would offer bilingual education – with one Inuit language – and that Inuit culture and knowledge systems would be fully incorporated in to the education system, complete with input from elders and the community. Teaching is in Inuktitut until grade 3 and then English from grade 4, with Inuktitut as just a “subject” thereafter.

Generations of Factory Schooling have taken their toll as many parents and grandparents were schooled in English rather than Inuit languages. This makes it hard to find enough fluent speakers to revive mother tongue learning. There is also a serious lack of resources in Inuktitut.<sup>135</sup>

A similar problem could have been faced in Papua New Guinea, but was avoided when the government bowed to indigenous pressure: In 2000, it announced that early-years teaching would be provided in 380 indigenous languages. The difficulty they would have had in finding sufficient government-trained, bilingual teachers was overcome by allowing communities to choose a local person to teach in their mother tongue.<sup>136</sup>

All these examples show how passionate many tribal and indigenous communities are to reclaim their education and rekindle their languages. It is vital that their right to do so is upheld and that all governments allow greater educational and linguistic freedoms to indigenous and tribal peoples.

**Our language is like a pearl inside a shell. The shell is like the people that carry the language. If our language is taken away, then that would be like a pearl that is gone. We would be like an empty oyster shell.**<sup>134</sup>

**Yurranydjil Dhurrkay, Galiwin'ku**  
Australia



## Education and self-determination

Compulsory government-delivered schooling, using a national curriculum, fundamentally undermines self-determination – after all, what can be more foundational to a community than *what* it teaches its children, and *how*?

Tribal and indigenous people have the right to self-determination which is denied if they lack the freedom to control the education of their children. For many communities, reclaiming control of their children's education is central to their fight to exist as a people. It is about reconnecting generations; connecting individuals to their land and history; and entails propagating the knowledge and skills that allow them to live as they choose.

Indigenous people in America, Australia, Brazil, Canada and beyond are influencing educational policy and practice in their countries – not just for the indigenous communities, but for the whole country, so that all children learn about their histories, philosophies, knowledge and languages.

For tribal peoples to be able to teach their children on their land and on their terms, however, their land rights must be recognized and upheld. It is difficult, if not impossible, for a tribal community to pass on their knowledge and skills if they have been divorced from the lands that sustain and underpin them, or if their ways of life have been criminalized. Land rights, therefore, must be considered fundamental to the realization of all their other rights, including their educational rights.

**For us, to build a school was not to construct a building. Regular schools forget that there are learning spaces beyond stifling classrooms. We want to make use of all such spaces. For tribals, this means making their hudloos (houses), their haadi (villages) and their forest a place of learning for children; and their parents to be treated as reservoir of knowledge and not as ignorant illiterates.<sup>137</sup>**

**Dr S Sreekant, DEED India**

# A call to action



## Education that respects indigenous & tribal peoples' rights

Ending one-size-fits-all schooling must be a priority. If not, there is a real risk it will bring about the end of tribal peoples altogether.

Education is the root of society and if humankind values diversity in identity, lifestyle, belief, language, culture and knowledge then schooling must promote it.

For tribal and indigenous children to have schooling that educates, empowers and embeds them in their cultures, it needs to:

- Be under indigenous control, including the curriculum, timetable and calendar;
- Contribute to, rather than undermine, their self-determination;
- Use and nurture their own language;
- Be local to the community and enhance children's connection to their land;
- Help them understand their rights so they can better defend their lands and determine their own futures.

**Schooling should give a feeling of love, care, nurturing and joy to the indigenous child. I would wish that all of us should have an education system that promotes, protects and enhances humanity and mother earth. As a child feels confidence in her mother's lap, so an indigenous child should feel confident in their identity and where they are.**<sup>138</sup>

**Nicholas Barla, Oraon Adivasi** India

### **Factory Schooling must end.**

Survival International is campaigning to end Factory Schooling so indigenous children get the education and future they deserve.

Please join our campaign:

**[survivalinternational.org/FactorySchools](https://survivalinternational.org/FactorySchools)**

## Case study 9

### Brazilian Yanomami exert autonomy over their children's education

**We want schools to defend our forest, our language, our culture.**<sup>139</sup>

**Davi Kopenawa, Yanomami** Brazil

The Yanomami people live in the Amazon forest straddling Brazil and Venezuela. For years, the tribe has suffered devastating impacts from the illegal invasion of their land, including from 40,000 gold-miners. One in five Yanomami died from violent conflict and diseases brought by the miners in the 1980s.

Today there are over 36,000 Yanomami. Many want to learn external skills and languages to help them to defend their lives, lands and future. Their language has not, historically, been written. Their knowledge was passed down from elders in stories, songs, myths and ceremonies. In the 1990s Davi Kopenawa, a Yanomami shaman and leader, approached the NGO CCPY (Pro Yanomami Commission) for help developing an education program on their land and on their terms.

Since then, the project has established schools across the Yanomami's territory and has focused on training Yanomami teachers. Crucially, Yanomami is taught as the primary and principal language, with the addition of Portuguese. Yanomami culture and shamanism are central to the project: Their knowledge of plants, their understanding of the cosmos and their songs and stories are the foundation of the school.

"School" in this context does not mean a separate building, with desks and a strict timetable. Learning occurs in the communal houses, or *yanos*, with both adults and children, and takes place according to a flexible calendar that fits around other community activities.

The project is founded on a deep respect for the communities' shamans and their knowledge. The teachers are paid by the state government and the children are supposed to take state exams, but the reality is that the schooling is largely controlled and shaped by the communities.

There are still significant threats to the Yanomami's rights, but this education program has helped many Yanomami to address their needs themselves. The program has helped the tribe come together in the interest of the greater community.<sup>140</sup>

## Case study 10

### Canada's Innu youth heal their wounds while learning on their land

**Tshikapisk believes that Innu youth must be given the opportunity to reach a point of cultural self-confidence where they can face the future securely tethered to their identity and history.<sup>141</sup>**

**Tshikapisk Foundation, Innu organization** Canada

The Innu, a mobile hunting people indigenous to Canada's Labrador peninsular, were made to settle in the 1960s. Their children were forcibly taken to residential schools and their hunting and trapping lifestyle was severely curtailed by mining, dams, military activities and government controls. The adults lost their autonomy and the ability to continue to live on, and tend, their lands. The children, their families and whole communities suffered the devastating effects of residential schooling. The Innu spiralled into despair, which manifested in high levels of substance abuse, domestic abuse and suicide.<sup>142</sup>

In the 1990s a group of Innu came together to find ways to turn the situation around. They identified lack of self-esteem and powerlessness as central problems and established the Tshikapisk Foundation. The foundation seeks to re-establish self-reliance – rather than dependence on the state – and to reconnect people to their lands.

They started with young adults, rather than children:

**“[The program] set out unabashedly to equip young Innu adults with knowledge of Innu history, hunting culture and nutshimiu [land] skills and learning, subjects which were, and still remain, entirely absent from the Newfoundland and Quebec curriculums taught in the schools.”<sup>143</sup>**

The objective of the program is for young adults to be taught the skills and knowledge that they were denied through state schooling, and to then equip them to teach children in and out of school. To break the cycle of dependence on the state, the foundation also provides fee-paying tourists with Innu hunting experiences.

Young Innu often start the program as “failures” of the school system, with addiction problems and hopelessness. Out on the land, they learn about their history and gain practical skills that they can excel at, returning mentally and physically stronger.



## Case study 11

For the Enawene Nawe of Brazil, schooling involves the whole community – on their terms

**Experience with other indigenous groups has shown that if you put children in uniform, feed them, educate them to make them economically viable you will de-skill and de-culture them. Their knowledge of religious ceremonies which are fundamental to their culture and the skills they need to survive would all be lost.<sup>144</sup>**

**Heggy Wyatt, nurse & anthropologist involved in the OPAN project** Brazil

The dominant, western model of schooling is so pervasive that it can be hard to conceive of different approaches that may be more suitable for different communities. Among the Enawene Nawe of Brazil for example, with the help of Brazilian NGO OPAN (Operation Native Amazon), the community has set up evening learning sessions for anyone who wants to take part. The focus is on teaching adults, in acknowledgement of the fact that the children already have a lot to learn from their elders and each other.

At the request of the community, outsiders helped establish literacy in 1994, first in the Enawene's own language, and then in Portuguese. Mathematics was taught through the example of buying goods with money, a need which is increasingly arising among the Enawene Nawe. The decisions over what was taught, and how, were made by the community, with topics varying from national economics to legal protections for their rights. An important topic was health, with members of the community being taught the use of western medicines in conjunction with, and not instead of, the knowledge of their shamans.<sup>145</sup>

The whole ethos of this approach is radically different to most other schooling projects which aim to “help” tribal peoples: It focuses on adults, not children; it seeks only to be an addition to the learning already occurring in the community; and the curriculum, teaching methods, location, time and pace of learning is all dictated by the community.

This begs many questions: Why should children be separated from their elders for education, when they could be learning with and from them? Why should national curricula be imposed upon people who are, by definition, distinct from the mainstream? What is the real agenda of compulsory schooling?





## Case study 12

### In the Zapatista schools of Mexico, “A” is for “autonomy”

**After the conquest, the missionaries forced the indigenous population to accept their customs. The injuries are still felt... And we do not want it to happen any further. That's why we must focus on teaching our children about our roots, about our traditions... about the meaning behind our daily practices.**<sup>146</sup>

**Pati, Tojolabal** Mexico

**I like the autonomous school because they respect my word and the teacher doesn't say ugly things.**<sup>147</sup>

**Julia, 9 year old pupil at a Zapatista school** Mexico

From the 1920s, education policy in Mexico had been aimed at bringing indigenous communities into the dominant, Spanish-speaking society. Boarding schools, Spanish-language education and cultural missions were all geared to this end. Pressure from indigenous peoples led to the adoption of bilingual education in the 1970s, but there was no change in the overall direction of the government's mission. The education in these schools often continued to be Spanish-dominated and delivered by teachers with little (or negative) interest in indigenous cultures.

In the 1990s, the Zapatista movement mobilized around a call for a “world in which many worlds fit,” combined with an education system based on self-determination and autonomy that respects, enlivens and serves indigenous cultures.

In the Zapatista autonomous schools, teachers are from, and fully embedded in, the communities they serve, and are elected – not appointed. They are not paid, but are materially supported by the community. They teach the history, rituals and knowledge of their people in their mother tongue.

Unlike most schooling provision, the Zapatista schools' timetable and calendar is designed to fit with the agricultural system. Younger students have school only three days a week, so they are with their families and able to learn the practical skills of farming. Older students are at school for 15 days and at home for 15 days, working the land.

This radical approach is strongly geared towards protecting the indigenous culture: Communities are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to continue living independently on their land and defending their rights. But they face serious threats from those opposed to the Zapatista movement, and some families have received harassment and violence for asserting their right to educate their children as they choose.<sup>148</sup>

## Case study 13

The Jungle School, Indonesia, brings the school to the child and fits lessons around the family

**The goal of education is to empower people.<sup>149</sup>**

**Butet Manurung, founder of the Jungle School** Indonesia

In contrast to the terrible suffering of many Orang Rimba and Papuan children in state education, some tribal children in Indonesia are now receiving education on their terms and on their land. WARSI and *Sokola Rimba* – the jungle school – are two such organizations offering this type of education. *Sokola Rimba* starts by asking what the children and their community need, and then aims to fill those gaps.

Much of the work is done by volunteers who slowly build up trust with the communities by staying with and learning from them. In this way, the volunteers gain a greater insight into what the additional educational requirements of the community are. This is radically different from most projects which assume they know what schooling tribal children entails. Learning is seen as a two way flow: from the community to the volunteers, and back again.

One main subject taught is “life skills,” which is tailored according to each community’s needs. For example, where illegal logging is a major problem, legal skills are a major priority. At the heart of the *Sokola Rimba* approach is building children’s pride in themselves and in their tribal identity.

The children are taught by the *Sokola Rimba* teachers only when they are receptive and free from other activities. Family time and learning within the community come first. The volunteer teachers adapt to the children, the community and the season to deliver the skills the children need.

The children are then able to read contracts from logging companies, for example, or to help parents in their financial dealings with outsiders. The volunteers train up members of the community as teachers, so that the learning spreads from within the community rather than being imposed from outside – or necessitating the removal of the children.<sup>150</sup>

The organization has developed different approaches for the diverse tribes of Indonesia – from West Papua to Sumatra.

## Case study 14

### The Yiriman Project, Western Australia, “builds stories” in Aboriginal youth to root them to their land

**When you on Country, you walk with a spring in your step, you walk with your head high, you not afraid of anything. In order to find yourself you have to get lost. So best place to get lost is Country.**<sup>151</sup>

**William Watson, Nyikina Aboriginal Australian** Australia

In 2000, a group of older Jarlmadangah Burru Aboriginal members of four language groups in Western Australia thought of a way to help the spiraling crisis of suicide, drug abuse and self-harm engulfing their young people. They established a project to reconnect the generations, reconnect youth to their land and revitalize a sense of pride in their community. Through the project, known as Yiriman, 12-30 year olds are taken out to their Country where they can regain an awareness of their culture, history, and relationship to their land. They are also taught practical skills to these ends.

The project then supports those individuals over the long term, helping them to break away from their problems and to become mentors and role models. It aims to “build stories in young people” which ground them to their land.

Everything is different for the youths who go on Yiriman trips. They have to hunt, gather and cook their own food, which is far healthier than the processed, cheap food many rely on. They also cannot access alcohol or drugs, which creates space for them to reconnect with their languages and experience a profound sense of belonging. Young people can ask to go on Yiriman trips or can be referred by doctors, teachers or the courts, which is a testament to the recognition the project is gaining in both health and judicial circles.

Yiriman also teaches bush medicine, trains young people up as rangers to care for the land, and helps people set up sustainable, land-based businesses.<sup>152</sup>





## Case study 15

### In New Mexico a school is educating indigenous children holistically

**Critical in the process of language and cultural maintenance is the inherent right for Native peoples to educate their children in their own languages and through their own world view.<sup>153</sup>**

**Keres Children's Learning Centre**  
New Mexico, U.S.

**You know why it is so important that we save the Keres language? I think we're saving ourselves - it's for our survival. It's everything to us - it's the story of who we are and the story that we should be giving to our children so that we know where we came from and where we are going.<sup>154</sup>**

**Jeff Suina, Cochiti father & potter**  
New Mexico, U.S.

The Keres Children's Learning Center in the Pueblo de Cochiti in New Mexico has a radically different approach to schooling.

Children at the center are nurtured in the heart of their community, are taught in their language and are supported to find their own gift that they have to share with the world.

Parents and other members of the community are fully involved in the school and the wider language and cultural revival that it is a central part of.

The spiritual development of each child and their deep grasp of traditions of grace and courtesy are valued alongside their academic and emotional development.

The school's founders had taught in the mainstream schooling system which, they felt, perpetuated the cycle of assimilation. They therefore began the process of working with the community to establish the center to nurture the "whole Pueblo child" and strengthen their whole community.

The Keres Center provides children with a deep immersion in their language and culture, a pride in their identity and therefore a strong platform to launch from. Once the children reach six years old they move into the dual language elementary classroom, which is still embedded in their community and culture.<sup>155</sup>

**"Our language dictates a way of having relationships with one another. There is nothing in the English dictionary that can hold as much weight as this one word in Keres. Keres is really a language of love. Love, a genuine wish for the well-being of others."** – Tracy Cordero, one of the founders of the center.

## Case study 16

### A tribal school unites traditional and external knowledges in India

**What use is your education to us? It will only take away our children. Your schools talk about changing the environment for the better, but is this not the best? We want to preserve it just as it was given to us by our ancestors. Who will be here to protect the trees, the streams, fish, the elephant and deer when we are gone?**<sup>156</sup>

**Paniya tribal elder. His words, spoken 25 years ago, were the inspiration behind the development of Vidyodaya school** India

Across India, there are several schools which work with tribal families to unite the learning of indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge. These schools aim to build pride among Adivasi (tribal) children for their culture, traditions and language. One such school is Vidyodaya in the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu.

Adivasi children in the area typically had a low level of school attendance and a high drop-out rate due to fear and alienation in the mainstream schools and a lack of teaching in their mother tongue.

At Vidyodaya, there is not a separation between their home culture and the school: Children are encouraged to speak their own language, and teachers speak or learn the local languages. The school is run by Adivasis with strong involvement of local elders and teachers from the local communities.

Children are both prepared for mainstream exams and further schooling, and are immersed in the songs, dances, knowledge and values of their tribes.

Children learn at their own pace in mixed age groups and across a wide range of subjects and practical skills.

Although the school is only small (with less than 100 pupils) it reaches out to the area's 200,000 Adivasi population. Staff encourage families to send their children to local schools and help them access the resources they need. Children who attend other local schools can use Vidyodaya's facilities, such as the library and the cultural center and attend camps, and the school trains teachers and produces materials in local languages.<sup>157</sup>





## Annex: International law and indigenous education

**Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.**

**Article 15, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Tribal and indigenous children's rights to an appropriate education, in their own language and on their own terms, are clearly enshrined in international treaties.

Under the Geneva Convention, genocide includes the "deliberate separation of families." This was explained by one of the delegates in 1948 thus:

"The forced transfer of children to a group where they would be given an education different from that of their own group, and would have new customs, a new religion and probably a new language, was in practice tantamount to the destruction of their group, whose future depended on that generation of children... if the intent of the transfer were the destruction of the group, a crime of genocide would undoubtedly have been committed."<sup>158</sup>

Some of the schooling discussed in this report clearly fits this description.

In 2014, the General Assembly of the UN adopted a resolution on Indigenous Peoples, including the following commitments:

"We commit ourselves to ensuring equal access to high-quality education that recognizes the diversity of the cultures of indigenous peoples... We intend to empower indigenous peoples to deliver such programs as far as possible.

We commit ourselves to promoting the right of every indigenous child, in community with members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion or to use his or her own language."<sup>159</sup>

The preamble of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes "in particular the right of indigenous families and communities to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, training, education and well-being of their children, consistent with the rights of the child." Article 15 (see right) explicitly recognizes the right of indigenous communities to control the education of their children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child declares that states must ensure education is "directed to... the development of



**The content and objective of education to indigenous peoples in some instances contributes to the assimilation of indigenous peoples into mainstream society and the eradication of their cultures, languages and ways of life.**

**Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values..." Article 9 states that children should not be separated from their parents unless it is in the best interest of the child. Article 30 of this convention further states that indigenous children "shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language."

This right is further enshrined in the Civil and Political Rights Covenant, Article 18, under which states must undertake to "have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

The ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples makes three important commitments on education: firstly, that the communities should be in control of the education of their children; secondly, that children must be taught to read and write in their own language; and thirdly, that their own knowledge should be central to their education.

In several countries, education in the mother tongue is a constitutional right. India's Constitution, for example, states:

"It shall be the endeavor of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups.

Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.

All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice."

But sadly, these rights are largely ignored across India.

In Brazil, the right of indigenous children to learn in their first language and with their "own learning methods" is enshrined in the constitution.

The implementation of these national and international legal protections is generally weak – hence the need for this campaign.

**Endnotes**

- 1 J.T. Morris, "Traditional education of San Children and how it differs from the modern education system in Botswana," in Thari ya Bana: Reflections on Children in Botswana 2010, ed. UNICEF & University of Botswana (Gaborone, 2013), 27-30. [https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/Thari\\_ya\\_bana\\_2010complete.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/Thari_ya_bana_2010complete.pdf)
- 2 Interviewed by Survival, 2012
- 3 R. Wagamese, "Indian Horse" (Douglas & McIntyre, 2012)
- 4 J. Wilson, "The Earth Shall Weep: A History of Native America" (Grove Press, 2000)
- 5 C. Segerholm & I. Nilsson, "Schooling as genocide. Residential schools for First Nations in Canada 1900-1980" paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, University of Hamburg, 17-20 September 2003. <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003249.htm>
- 6 For more information about the Great Andamanese see Survival International report "Progress Can Kill" <http://assets.survivalinternational.org/documents/1511/full-report.pdf>
- 7 Quoted in B. Brock-Utne, "Whose Education for All? The Recolonization of the African Mind" (Routledge, 2000)
- 8 Zitkala-Sa, "American Indian Stories" (University of Nebraska Press, 1985 – first published in 1921)
- 9 J. Rice, "Lift each other up: An interview with Chief Wilton Littlechild, Commissioner for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada" (Cultural Survival Quarterly, March 2011) <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/lift-each-other-interview-chief-wilton-littlechild>
- 10 Captain Richard H Pratt, the founder of the Carlisle School, famously stated, "A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one... I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man." An extract from the speech in which he made this statement, in 1892, is available here: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4929/>
- 11 The history of Carlisle and the wider residential school network in the USA has been widely researched. See for example D. W. Adams, "Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875-1928" (University Press of Kansas, 1995); W. Churchill, "Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools" (City Lights, 2004); L. Peterson, "'Kill the Indian, Save the Man,' Americanization through Education: Richard Henry Pratt's Legacy" (Colby College, 2013). The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition have collated statistics on the schools, concluding that 83% of Native American children were in these schools by 1926. <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/us-indian-boarding-school-history/>
- 12 S. Aikman, "Intercultural Education and Literacy: An ethnographic study of indigenous knowledge and learning in the Peruvian Amazon" (Studies in Written Language and Literacy: John Benjamins, 1999)
- 13 Canada's Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Chair, Justice Murray Sinclair, concluded that approximately 6,000 indigenous children died in Residential Schools, although the exact number could never be known. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-by-the-numbers-1.3096185>.
- 14 Over one decade, 69% of the children at File Hills Industrial School died of TB. Source: A. Smith, "Indigenous Peoples and Boarding Schools: A Comparative Study" UN document No. E/C.19/2009/CRP. 1, 2009
- 15 See references in note 11 and note 13. The Independent Assessment Process was established in Canada under the TRC to resolve claims of serious physical, sexual or emotional abuse in the Residential Schools in Canada. It has processed 99% of the 38,000 claims it received. <http://iap-pei.ca/story-eng.php>
- 16 From a testimony (confidential evidence no. 139) submitted to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission report, "Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families" (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997). [https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social\\_justice/bringing\\_them\\_home\\_report.pdf](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf)
- 17 From a speech by Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald in the House of Commons in 1883. Quoted in Canada's Truth & Reconciliation Commission Report, 2015
- 18 S. Woodward, "South Dakota Boarding School Survivors Detail Sexual Abuse" (Indian Country Today, 28 July 2011) <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/south-dakota-boarding-school-survivors-detail-sexual-abuse/>
- 19 L. Standing Bear, "Land of the Spotted Eagle" (Bison Books, 1978)
- 20 S. Garfield, "Indigenous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil: State Policy, Frontier Expansion and the Xavante Indians, 1937-1988." (Duke University Press: Durham, 2001)
- 21 P. Epps, "Language endangerment in Amazonia: the role of missionaries" in J. Wohlgemuth & T. Dirksmeyer (eds) Aspects of Language Death (Berlin, 2005). Chapter available here: [http://jan-wohlgemuth.de/lehre/sprachentod/Epps\\_Vaupes.pdf](http://jan-wohlgemuth.de/lehre/sprachentod/Epps_Vaupes.pdf)
- 22 M. Newth, "Norway: Beacon for Freedom" (Oslo, 2002) [http://www.beaconforfreedom.org/liste.html?tid=415&art\\_id=552](http://www.beaconforfreedom.org/liste.html?tid=415&art_id=552); L. Welch, "Language Policy and the Sami Languages: an Investigation Using the Comparative Perspective" (Sami Culture, no date) <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/sami/dieda/ling/languagepolicy.htm>
- 23 H. Pikkarainen & B. Brodin "Discrimination of the Sami – the rights of the Sami from a discrimination perspective" (Swedish

Equality Ombudsman, 2008) [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/ExpertMechanism/3rd/docs/contributions/SwedishEqualityOmbudsman\\_2.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/ExpertMechanism/3rd/docs/contributions/SwedishEqualityOmbudsman_2.pdf)

24 Quoted in “The Survivors Speak” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015) [http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Survivors\\_Speak\\_2015\\_05\\_30\\_web\\_o.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Survivors_Speak_2015_05_30_web_o.pdf)

25 Unnamed testimonial in *Bringing Them Home* (op cit)

26 M. Walsh. “Languages and their status in Aboriginal Australia” in M. Walsh & C. Yallop (eds) *Language and Culture in Aboriginal Australia* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 1993)

27 Quoted in L. Demer “Presbyterian Church apologizes at AFN for boarding school abuses” (Alaska Dispatch News, 24 October 2016) <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2016/10/22/presbyterian-church-apologizes-for-boarding-school-abuses-as-afn-wraps-up-its-convention/>

28 Quoted in K. Brooks “Considering Cultural Collision: Education and the Innu of Labrador” PhD Thesis submitted to Department of Sociology University of Essex, January 2012 (date of quote: 2000)

29 L. Kirmayer et al, “Suicide among Aboriginal People in Canada” (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2007) <http://www.douglas.qc.ca/uploads/File/2007-AHF-suicide.pdf>

30 For more information see <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/#axzz4fMOebqsd>; J. Rogers, “We need to know the true cost of Indigenous boarding school scholarships on communities.” *The Conversation* 12 June 2017. <https://theconversation.com/we-need-to-know-the-true-cost-of-indigenous-boarding-school-scholarships-on-communities-74622>

31 Quoted in E. Otzen “The Children Taken from their Home for a Social Experiment” (BBC Worldservice, 10 June 2015) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-33060450>

32 Roy Dick’s interview can be watched here [http://wherearethekids.ca/en/stories/#story\\_37](http://wherearethekids.ca/en/stories/#story_37)

33 A. Siebert “Haida master carver James Hart tells the story of Indian residential schools in reconciliation totem pole” (The Georgia Straight, 31 March 2017) <https://www.straight.com/arts/888571/haida-master-carver-james-hart-tells-story-indian-residential-schools-reconciliation>; K. Ward “Reconciliation Pole Installed at UBC” (Aboriginal Portal UBC Vancouver, 7 April 2017) <http://aboriginal.ubc.ca/2017/04/07/reconciliation-pole-installed-at-ubc/>

34 Quoted in C. Baputaki “Sexual Abuse Rampant at Seunou Hostels – Report” (Mmegi, 17 May 2010) <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=2398&dir=2010/May/Monday17/>

35 There are almost half a million tribal children in residential schools in just the one state of Maharashtra, and almost as many in Odisha. See <http://www.ipeglobal.com/downloads/publications/Residential-School-Report-13-01-16.pdf> and <http://www.firstpost.com/india/tribal-schools-of-maharashtra-students-live-and-study-in-abysmal-conditions-3213706.html> for more details.

36 The ADEM is a secondary schooling programme. See <http://supriononono.blogspot.co.uk/2016/07/earn-scholarships-student-papua-going.html> for more information.

37 The organisation Al Fatih Kaaffah Nusantara is just one religious organisation that targets Papuan children for conversion. For more information see M. Bachelard “They’re Taking our Children” (The Age, 4 May 2013) <http://www.theage.com.au/lifestyle/theyre-taking-our-children-20130428-2inhf> and <https://dakwaahafkn.wordpress.com/wawancara/budaya-koteka-adalah-pembodohan/>

38 R. Hitchcock personal communication; S. Stidsen, “The Indigenous World, 2006” IWGIA.

39 Jocelyn Thérèse, president of the Advisory Council of Amerindian and Bushinengue Populations of Guyana, quoted in L. Hanggi, “Les jeunes Amerindiens de Guyane victimes d’une ‘epidemie de suicides’” (Reporterre: Le quotidien de l’ecologie, 30 November 2016)

<https://reporterre.net/Les-jeunes-Amerindiens-de-Guyane-victimes-d-une-epidemie-de-suicides>

40 For Canada, see factsheet by the Centre for Suicide Prevention <https://www.suicideinfo.ca/resource/indigenous-suicide-prevention/> For Australia, see <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/people/aboriginal-suicide-rates#axzz4fMOebqsd> Another source puts the figure at 80%: <http://www.australiantogether.org.au/stories/detail/indigenous-youth-suicide>

41 A. Bombay, “The intergenerational effects of Indian Residential Schools: Implications for the concept of historical trauma” (*Transcultural Psychiatry* 51(3):320-338 June 2014) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4232330/> and C. Hackett et al, “Canada’s residential school system: measuring the intergenerational impact of familial attendance on health and mental health outcome” (*Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*. November 2016 70(11): 1096-1105)

42 G. Georgatos, “Children removed from families are at highest risk to suicide” (The Stringer 27 September 2016) <http://thestringer.com.au/children-removed-from-families-are-at-highest-risk-to-suicide-12154#.WQCe5GTysy6>

43 For a summary of studies on this connection, see C. Parker & J. Schertow, “Preserving Language Key to Overcoming Native Suicide Epidemic” (*Intercontinental Cry*, 14 April 2016) <https://intercontinentalcry.org/preserving-native-language-key-overcoming-native-suicide-epidemic/>; G. Galbat-Newry, “Miriwoong waniwoogeng! Language is the only way to understand our ancient culture” (*Guardian*, 3 September 2016)

44 P. Veerbhadranaiika et al “The Education Question: From the Perspective of Adivasis: Conditions, Policies and Structures” (NIAS and UNICEF Bangalore, 2012) <http://eprints.nias.res.in/333/1/R7-2012.pdf>

45 S. Salunke “Report Of Technical Committee Constituted For Recommending Corrective Measures To Be Taken For Prevention

Of Deaths Of Students In Ashram Schools Of Maharashtra" (Public Health Foundation of India, 2016). 1077 deaths were reported in government-run schools and 386 in government-aided schools over the period from 2001-2016 according to the statistics submitted to Dr Salunke by the Tribal Development Department.

46 K. Bhanumathi, "Impact of Globalisation on Adivasi Women and Children in Andhra Pradesh." Report produced by Samata, India. [http://www.samataindia.org.in/documents/MRG\\_PAPER1.PDF](http://www.samataindia.org.in/documents/MRG_PAPER1.PDF)

47 Baputaki, op cit

48 B. Anderson, "The Failure of Education in Papua's Highlands." (Inside Indonesia 113 July-September 2013). <http://www.insideindonesia.org/the-failure-of-education-in-papua-s-highlands>; A. Smith, "Indigenous Peoples and Boarding Schools: A Comparative Study. Paper presented for Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues." (Eighth session New York, 18 - 29 May 2009) [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/E\\_C\\_19\\_2009\\_crp1.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/E_C_19_2009_crp1.pdf)

49 M. N. Parth, "Tribal schools of Maharashtra Part 3: Abysmal security, sexual assault cases remain an alarming concern." (First Post 18 January 2017). <https://www.firstpost.com/india/tribal-schools-of-maharashtra-part-3-abysmal-security-sexual-assault-cases-remain-an-alarming-concern-3209148.html>

50 P. Mopati, "Minorities on the margins: School dropout in remote areas of western Botswana." (Paper presented at Khoe and San Development Conference, University of Botswana, 10-12 September 2003). Batwa organisations have informed us of the racial abuse their children suffer in government schools and their desperate desire for schools of their own.

51 J.T. Morris, op cit

52 P. Ninnies, "Improving Quality and Equity in Education in Namibia: A Trend and Gap Analysis" (UNICEF Namibia, 2011)

53 For example, some Turkana parents decide to "stand with two legs" by keeping one child at home to learn their pastoralist ways and send another to school. J. Ng'asika, "Why Kenyan children aren't getting what they need from their early school years." (The Conversation. 5 September 2016). <https://theconversation.com/why-kenyan-children-arent-getting-what-they-need-from-their-early-school-years-63660>.

54 Quoted in S. Chattopadhyay, "Inside a Hindutva Hostel: How RSS is Rewiring the Tribal Mind" (Catch News 14 February 2017) <http://www.catchnews.com/india-news/exclusive-inside-a-hindutva-hostel-how-rss-is-rewiring-the-tribal-mind-1450354461.html>

55 L. Mafela, "Education and Perceptions of 'Other': Colonial education of Batswana and formal education of indigenous San in Botswana". (AlterNative Journal of Indigenous Peoples. 10(1): 45-57, 2016)

56 See <https://en.unesco.org/news/40-don-t-access-education-language-they-understand>

57 See <http://terralingua.org/our-work/linguistic-diversity/>

58 Preface to L. King & S. Schielmann, "The Challenge of Indigenous Education: Practice and Perspectives" (UNESCO, 2004) <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001347/134773e.pdf>

59 See <http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/10261>

60 Quoted in Chattopadhyay, op cit

61 M. Bachelard, "Papuan Children taken to Jakarta to be converted to Islam" (Brisbane Times, 2 March 2014) <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/world/papuan-children-taken-to-jakarta-to-be-converted-to-islam-20140301-33soq.html>

62 Kapaeeng Foundation <http://kapaeeng.org/indigenous-children-at-risk-of-forced-religious-conversion/>

63 Innu Nation and Mushuau Innu Band Council "Gathering Voices: Finding Strength to Help Our Children." (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1992)

64 A. Smith, op cit

65 K. Kiema, "Tears for My Land: A Social History of the Kua of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Tc'amnqoo." (Gaberone: Mmegi. 2010)

66 Interviewed by Survival, 2010

67 S. Bera, "The Life and Times of Lado Sikaka" (Down to Earth, Delhi: 4 September 2013) <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/life-and-times-lado-sikaka>

68 M. N. Parth, "Tribal Schools of Maharashtra, Part 2: Students stare at Malnutrition due to poor food, filthy kitchens." (First Post, 17 January 2017) <http://www.firstpost.com/india/tribal-schools-of-maharashtra-part-2-students-stare-at-malnutrition-due-to-poor-food-filthy-kitchens-3207572.html>

69 V. Xaxa et al, "Report of the High Level Committee on Social, Economic, Health and Educational Status of Tribal Communities of India." (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2014.)

70 For more information see <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/#axzz4fMOebqsd>

71 R. Trudgen, "Breaking of a People: Submission to Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory." (March 2017)

72 Brooks 2013 (op cit)

73 Save the Children USA, "Dryland Voices: The School of Life: Education in a Pastoralist Community". [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/drought/docs/School%20of%20Life%20\(email\)\[1\].pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/drought/docs/School%20of%20Life%20(email)[1].pdf)

- 74 The Coolangatta Statement was delivered at the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education Hilo, Hawai'i August 6, 1999. <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/IKS/cool.html>
- 75 Quoted in L. Ash, "The Runaway Children Malaysia Failed to Save" (BBC Magazine, 24 December 2015) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-35161791>
- 76 See for example, S. Scawen, "Malaysia: Outrage after 5 Indigenous Children Die" (Al Jazeera, 15 October 15.) <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/10/malaysia-outrage-5-indigenous-children-die-151015094936769.html>
- 77 "They sent in soldiers used to hunting down enemies and smugglers. If you really put yourself into the mind of a child and you see a bunch of guys looking for you in military fatigues and armed with machine guns - are you going to shout out, 'I'm here'? Of course not!" Colin Nicholas from the Centre for Orang Asli Concerns, Quoted in Ash 2015 (op cit).
- 78 "66 Orang Asli Pupils Avoid School after Jungle Tragedy" (Free Malaysia Today, 13 March 2016) <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2016/03/13/66-orang-asli-pupils-avoid-school-after-jungle-tragedy/>
- 79 E. Mirante, "An Education in Captivity" (New Mandala, 3 March 2016) <http://www.newmandala.org/an-education-in-captivity/>
- 80 Baputaki 2010 (op cit)
- 81 "The San want education for their children" (Mmegi, 15 November 2007) <http://www.mmegi.bw/2007/November/Thursday15/9.php>
- 82 P. Mopati. 2003. "Minorities on the margins: School dropout in remote areas of western Botswana". Paper presented at Khoe and San Development Conference, University of Botswana, 10-12 September 2003; S. Nguluka, & A. Gunnestad "San children – in or out of School: Baseline Study On Why Children Drop Out And How To Keep Them In School In The Gantsi District". (Thuto Isago Trust Botswana, 2011)
- 83 K. Kiema, "Tears for My Land: A Social History of the Kua of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Tc'amnqoo". (Mmegi, 2010)
- 84 Morris 2010 (op cit)
- 85 Kiema 2010 (op cit)
- 86 M. Bachelard, "They're Taking our Children" (The Age, 4 May 2013) <http://www.theage.com.au/lifestyle/theyre-taking-our-children-20130428-2inhf>
- 87 For a summary, see E. Brundige et al, "Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control: A paper prepared for the Indonesia Human Rights Network." 2013; G. Harvey, "The Human Tragedy of West Papua". (The Diplomat, 15 January 2014.) <http://thediplomat.com/2014/01/the-human-tragedy-of-west-papua/>
- 88 For more information, see the Free West Papua website, <https://www.freewestpapua.org/info/> and Human Rights Watch's reports on Indonesia, such as their 2015 report, available here: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/indonesia>
- 89 Fadzan Garamatan quoted in Bachelard 2013 (op cit)
- 90 Bachelard 2013 (op cit)
- 91 Bachelard 2014 (op cit)
- 92 Source withheld
- 93 A. Archimbaud & M. Chapdelaine, "Suicides des jeunes Amérindiens en Guyane française: 37 propositions pour enrayer ces drames et créer les conditions d'un mieux-être" Submitted to the Prime Minister 30 November 2015 <http://gitpa.org/web/RAPPORT%20.pdf>; P. Carlier, "Les jeunes Amérindiens, plus nombreux à se suicider" (France Guyane, 27 November 2013) <http://www.franceguyane.fr/actualite/education-sante-environnement/les-jeunes-amerindiens-plus-nombreux-a-se-suicider-179713.php>
- 94 R Lee et al "Foragers to First Peoples: The Kalahari San Today" (Cultural Survival Quarterly, March 2002) <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/foragers-first-peoples-kalahari-san-today>
- 95 M. Kaur, "Anthropologist Decries Bigoted Attitude towards Orang Asli" (Free Malaysia Today, 24 September 2017) <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/09/24/anthropologist-decries-bigoted-attitude-towards-orang-asli/>
- 96 O. Magga et al "Indigenous Children's Education and Indigenous Languages" Expert Paper submitted to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. 2004. [http://www.tove-skutnabb-kangas.org/pdf/PFI\\_Expert\\_paper\\_1\\_Education\\_final.pdf](http://www.tove-skutnabb-kangas.org/pdf/PFI_Expert_paper_1_Education_final.pdf)
- 97 S. Kubota, "Rethinking transmission of clan knowledge in the Northern Territory (Australia): Yolngu rituals in the classroom". (10th Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies, Liverpool, 2013); R. Trudgen "Why Warriors Life Down and Die: Towards an understanding of why the Aboriginal People of Arnhem Land face the greatest crisis in health and education since European contact" (Aboriginal Resource and Development Services, Darwin, 2000)
- 98 M. Jain, "McEducation for All: Whose agenda does Global Education really serve?" (Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices 7(1), 2013)
- 99 For a full list of the Education For All goals, see <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/efa-goals/>
- 100 Lost People Films "Schooling the World: The White Man's Last Burden" 2010
- 101 Quoted in K. Kumar, "Vedanta's Rs 50,000-cr Odisha investment: How not to go about executing a mega project in India" (Economic Times (India), 18 August 2013) [http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/21884111.cms?intenttarget=no&utm\\_](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/21884111.cms?intenttarget=no&utm_)



source=contentofinterest&utm\_medium=text&utm\_campaign=cppst

102 A. Patra "Niyamgiri Parab (Festival) 2016 & Lado Sikoka Denounces Vedanta" 1 March 2016 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZsC0\\_7Q0wY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZsC0_7Q0wY)

103 J. Hays "Owners of learning: The Nyae Nyae village schools over twenty-five years" (Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2016)

104 J. Dash "Vedanta's Loss on Odisha Refinery Crosses 4,000 Crore" (Business Standard, 28 November 2015) <http://www.pressreader.com/india/business-standard/20151129/281590944483043/TextView>

105 Press Trust India "Vedanta Funds Education of 100 Underprivileged Tribal Children" (The Hindu Business Line, 29 August 2012) <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/vedanta-funds-education-of-100-underprivileged-tribal-children/article3835378.ece>

106 L. Standing Bear, "Land of the Spotted Eagle." (Bison Books, 1978)

107 In its 2009 annual report, FZS announced that: "The FZS donated a teacher to the Machiguenka schools in the communities of Yomibato and Tayakome in Manu National Park, and we are also pleased to report on the development of the Centro Maganiro Matsigenka, which was financed and established in large part by the FZS. Last year this small boarding school on the edge of Manu National Park sponsored six Machiguenka children who wanted to continue their education." See FZS annual reports for 2009 and 2010. <https://fzs.org/en/news/publications/>

108 K. Bong, "SEB committed to supporting education of Penans in Belaga" (Borneo Post, 30 November 2016) <http://www.theborneopost.com/2016/11/30/seb-committed-to-supporting-education-of-penans-in-belaga/>

109 This quote comes from two speeches by Merrill Gates at two Lake Mohonk Conferences of the Friends of the Indian, in 1891 and 1896. See J. Wilson, James, "The Earth Shall Weep: A History of Native America." 1998 Picador: London; D. Adams, "Land Law & Education: The Troubled History of Indian Citizenship 1871-1924" in D. Warren & J. Patrick, "Civic and Moral Learning in America." Springer 2006.

110 Sarawak Energy and the Ministry of Education have partnered in building two primary schools for Penan families displaced by the Murum Dam. See press releases from the company such as <http://www.sarawakenergy.com.my/index.php/news-events-top/latest-news-events/latest-media-release/2226-sarawak-energy-contributes-to-charity-fund-in-aid-of-children-in-rural-sarawak> and <http://www.sarawakenergy.com.my/index.php/news-events-top/latest-news-events/latest-media-release/1807-literacy-for-social-inclusion-programme-for-murum-penan-students>

111 Quoted in S. Kanchan "Bokaro's Displaced still await Compensation" (Down to Earth, 24 October 2011) <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/bokaros-displaced-still-await-compensation-34322>

112 Kanchan 2011 (op cit)

113 From the steel company's website, <http://www.sail.co.in/bokaro-steel-plant/community> accessed 23 March 2016.

114 It is worth noting the biased positivity of journalist, Divy Khare in this article, which is indicative of the way much of the "mainstream" media portrays the issue of educating Adivasis. D. Khare, "BSL Programme helps children of primitive tribe" (Times of India, 20 May 2013) [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-05-20/ranchi/39391804\\_1\\_dumri-vihar-villages-birhor-villages-chotki-sidhiwara](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-05-20/ranchi/39391804_1_dumri-vihar-villages-birhor-villages-chotki-sidhiwara)

115 "Tribal picks Wages over Books" (Telegraph (Calcutta), 19 November 2010) [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1101119/jsp/jharkhand/story\\_13194792.jsp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1101119/jsp/jharkhand/story_13194792.jsp); See also B. Bonta, "Birhor Boy Returns to his Village" (Peaceful Societies, 25 November 2010) <https://cas.uab.edu/peacefulsocieties/2010/11/25/birhor-boy-returns-to-his-village/>

116 A. Kannan, "Education, the only weapon to slay any evil: Achyuta Samanta" (The Hindu (Coimbatore), 29 May 2012, updated 11 July 2016) <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/education-the-only-weapon-to-slay-any-evil-achyuta-samanta/article3467848.ece>

117 Quoted to Survival 2018.

118 Quote from a letter to the school from Minister Prakash Javedekar. A scan of the letter was posted on the school's facebook page on 1 September 2017.

119 Part of the stated Mission of the school as stated on their website <http://www.kiss.ac.in/mission.html>

120 Quotes from a promotional film about the school posted on their facebook page 18th September 2017.

121 This was part of the text of the "About Us" page on KISS's website. <http://www.kiss.ac.in/aboutus.html>. It is no longer available, but can be accessed via the Wayback Machine for January 2017.

122 As reported on Odisha Diary, 28 August 2017. Can be accessed via youtube [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_w5J-60LE0w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_w5J-60LE0w)

123 "Kalinga Institute Of Social Sciences Declared First Tribal University In World" (Business World, 13 September 2017) <http://businessworld.in/article/Kalinga-Institute-Of-Social-Sciences-Declared-First-Tribal-University-In-World/13-09-2017-126058/> and see "Samanta's KISS Spreads Wings Far and Wide" (Daily Pioneer, 18 April 2015) <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2015/state-editions/samantas-kiss-spreads-wings-far-and-wide.html>

124 There is a long list of "VIPs" who have visited KISS and praised the school, available on their website. The School gained ECOSOC Special Consultative Status in 2015, see "UN Grants Special Consultative Status to Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Institute

of Social Sciences" (DNA India (Bhubaneswar), 31 July 2015) <http://www.dnaindia.com/locality/bhubaneswar/un-grants-special-consultative-status-bhubaneswar-kalinga-institute-social-sciences-65965>

125 The Child Welfare Committee report was obtained by a Freedom of Information activist and posted on his website <http://headlineeveryday.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/inquiry-report.pdf>

126 Quoted direct to Survival staff

127 J. M. Finger (ed), "Poor People's Knowledge: Helping Poor People to Earn from Their Knowledge" (World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003.)

128 A. Guilherme, "Indigenous Languages, Cultures and Communities in the Amazon: Strengthening Identities" in Evans, D. (ed.) *Language and Identity: Discourse in the World*. (Bloomsbury, 2015)

129 "Schooled in Self Rule" (Down to Earth, 30 August 2004) <http://indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/content/43661/schooled-in-self-rule/>

130 S. Krättli & C. Dyer "Mobile Pastoralists and Education: Strategic Options. Education for Nomads Working Paper 1." (International Institute for Environment and Development. London, 2009) <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10021IIED.pdf>

131 Quoted in Survival article "You can't Google it and get it back" (2013) <http://www.survivalinternational.org/articles/3161-you-cant-google-it-and-get-it-back>

132 J. Hays "Owners of learning: The Nyae Nyae village schools over twenty-five years" (Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2016)

133 D. O'Sullivan "Maori Education and Principles of Self-Determination in the 21st Century" (Waikato Journal of Education 7, 2001) <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/6274/O%27Sullivan%20Maori.pdf?sequence=1>;

134 E. Furniss "Perspectives on Practices and Policy: Indigenous Language and Education" (Educate A Child, June 2014) <http://educateachild.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Indigenous-Language-and-Education-Online-Version-2.pdf>

135 I. Martin, "Inuit Language Loss in Nunavut: Analysis, Forecast, and Recommendations" (Glendon College, York University, Toronto. 7 March 2017) [http://assembly.nu.ca/sites/default/files/TD-307-4\(3\)-EN-Inuit-Language-Loss-in-Nunavut-Analysis-Forecast-and-Recommendations.pdf](http://assembly.nu.ca/sites/default/files/TD-307-4(3)-EN-Inuit-Language-Loss-in-Nunavut-Analysis-Forecast-and-Recommendations.pdf) ; R. Weber, "'Why have Nunavut if we're not going to protect Inuit rights?': Battle over bill to delay bilingual education" (National Post (Canada), 19 March 2017) <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/why-have-nunavut-if-were-not-going-to-protect-inuit-rights-battle-over-bill-to-delay-bilingual-education>

136 D. Wroge, "Papua New Guinea's Vernacular Language Preschool Programme" (UNESCO Policy Brief on Early Childhood No. 7, October 2002.) <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001373/137383e.pdf>

137 "Schooled in Self Rule" Down to Earth 30 August 2004 <http://indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/content/43661/schooled-in-self-rule/>

138 Directly quoted to Survival, April 2019

139 Directly quoted to Survival, December 2011

140 For more information about the Yanomami, please see <http://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/yanomami>; D. Kopenawa & B. Albert "The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman" Harvard University Press: 2013

141 "Innu Experiential Education" Tshikapisk <http://www.tshikapisk.org/home/11>

142 Brooks 2013 (op cit); C. Samson et al "Canada's Tibet: The Killing of the Innu" Survival International 1999 <http://assets.survivalinternational.org/static/files/books/InnuReport.pdf>; C. Samson "A Way of Life That Does Not Exist: Canada and the Extinction of the Innu" Verso Books 2003.

143 Tshikapisk Foundation Background <http://www.tshikapisk.org/home/10>

144 Directly quoted to Survival.

145 For more information about the Enawene Nawe, please see <http://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/enawenenawe>

146 S. Shenker, "Towards a world in which many worlds fit? Zapatista autonomous education as an alternative means of development" (International Journal of Educational Development. 32 (3), 432–443 2012)

147 Quoted in A. Rico, "Educate in resistance: the autonomous Zapatista schools" (ROAR Magazine, 2 January 2014) <https://roarmag.org/essays/zapatista-autonomous-education-chiapas/>

148 Shenker 2012 (op cit); J. Davies, "The Assault on Autonomous Education in Southeast Mexico." (Open Revolt, 28 December 2011) <https://openrevolt.info/2011/12/28/zapatista-autonomous-education/>

149 B. Manurung, "Epilogue to The Jungle School" (Sokola Rimba, 2014)

150 B. Manurung, "The Jungle School" (Sokola Rimba, 2012); <http://www.sokola.org>

151 Yiriman Story <http://www.yiriman.org.au/yiriman-story/>

152 D. Palmer, "'We know they healthy cos they on country with old people': demonstrating the value of the Yiriman Project." Submission to the Commission into the harmful use of alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. 2013 [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/\(Evidence+Lookup+by+Com+ID\)/CE6B9A9ADFD67A1C48257FD8000CE525/\\$file/Submission+to+Inquiry.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/(Evidence+Lookup+by+Com+ID)/CE6B9A9ADFD67A1C48257FD8000CE525/$file/Submission+to+Inquiry.pdf)

153 Quote from the Philosophy Statement of the Keres Children's Learning Centre <https://www.kclcmontessori.org/index.html>

154 Quote taken from film about KCLC produced by WK Kellogg Foundation in 2018, available here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tmFVX12RT0>

155 For more information visit the KCLC website, [www.kclcmontessori.org](http://www.kclcmontessori.org)

156 P. Rollins & R. Varghese, "Gudalur's Vidyodaya School and outreach programme" posted on 17th July 2016 on <http://www.indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20611>

157 For more information, see Vidyodaya's website: <http://www.vidyodaya.org/vbvt/school/model-school/>

158 Quote by the Venezuelan delegate at the 1948 meeting of the General Assembly, referenced as UN Document A/AC6/SR83 (1948) at 195 as quoted in the "Bringing them Home" report (see Note 16).

159 Resolution adopted at the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly 25 September 2014, UN Document A/RES/69/2

### **Photo Credits**

Page 04 Carlisle Indian School, U.S. 1884 © Cumberland County Historical Society

Page 06 Gravestone of unknown child in cemetery at Carlisle Indian School, U.S. © Alysa Landry/Navajo Times

Page 08 Infographic by Aimee Capstick © Survival

Page 11 Antlers placed high in tree by Innu hunters, Canada © Survival

Page 14 Screaming Child by R G Miller, Canada © RG Miller/Survival

Page 17 Reconciliation totem pole on the campus of the University of British Columbia, Canada © Survival

Page 18 Norieen Yaakob, Malaysia © Survival

Page 21 Semai boy, Malaysia © Survival

Page 23 Infographic by Aimee Capstick © Survival

Page 26 Batek child, Malaysia © Survival

Page 29 A classroom in a deserted and vandalised school, Davis Inlet, Canada © Dominick Tyler

Page 34 Bushman children, Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana © Survival

Page 37 Papuan boys at an Islamic residential school in Jakarta, Indonesia © Michael Bachelard

Page 42 Children in lines, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, India © NGOAdvisor.net

Page 45 Vedanta's Lanjigarh refinery at the foot of the Dongria Kondh's Niyamgiri Hills, India © Survival

Page 49 Children learning with Sokola Rimba, Indonesia © Jefri Amakia

Page 54 Baka children, Cameroon © Sarah Strader/chasingtworabbits.org

Page 59 Enawene Nawe Yakwa ritual, Brazil © Survival

Page 63 Aboriginal child, Australia © Sinem Saban/Survival

Page 66 Baka family, Cameroon © Survival

