

Module 2 Response *For Our Common Home*

## Lesson 4

# United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

**What are the main themes in the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?**

**Why is an understanding of UNDRIP important to all Canadian citizens?**

**How is the meaning in some of the articles of UNDRIP relatable to you?**

**What role does UNDRIP have in the case of the Mura People of Manaus and the Vox Atlas video that we watched?**

## TEACHER PREPARATION

### **Download and Set Up**

the accompanying PowerPoint presentation

### **Print**

this lesson plan, so that you can follow the power point as directed herein

### **Print/Copy**

Appendix UNDRIP Important Themes, one copy per two students

### **Print/Copy**

Appendix UNDRIP 8 Articles, one copy per student.

### **Teacher Background Information**

View and familiarize yourself with the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as well as the historical context

## LESSON PLAN

### IGNITE

Project Slide 2

**Introduction to UNDRIP:** UNDRIP is an agreement among UN member governments stating that the human rights of Indigenous peoples will be respected. It was drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, including Indigenous Peoples themselves. A Working Group began drafting it in 1985, and it took over 20 years until the Declaration was formally adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, on Sept 13, 2007. At the time of the vote, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States were the only countries who voted against it.

**Ask:**

Why do you think that is?

Canada has since signed the declaration, but the government has not yet ratified it into Canadian law.

**Ask:**

Why do you think this is?

*(In May 2016, Canada removed its “Objector” status from UNDRIP. As of 2017, Canada “pledged” to the principles of UNDRIP, but argues that the declaration is aspirational and not workable in Canada. Hence the stall in moving it through the legal channels so that it can be enforced through Canadian law.)*

Project Slide 3: Who are Indigenous peoples?

Project Slide 4

**Ask:**

Why does the UN believe it is important for Indigenous peoples to have a separate declaration from the UN Declaration of Human Rights?

The UN recognizes that the Indigenous way of life, culture, language, traditions, and identity suffered substantially in the process of colonization. Studies outlined the oppression, marginalization, discrimination, and exploitation suffered by indigenous peoples throughout the world. This declaration, which includes both collective and individual rights, reinstates the respect and attention that must be given to Indigenous peoples’ civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

It is very important that *all peoples, Indigenous and non-Indigenous*, understand and support the work in countries around the world to fully implement UNDRIP as *we seek reconciliation and a path forward together*.

It is also important for Canadian citizens to recognize that Canadian companies operate in many areas of the world. In all cases and in all countries, the rights of indigenous peoples must be respected.

### IMMERSE

Project Slide 5

Explain that there are 46 Articles in the UN declaration. The articles describe specific rights and the actions that the government must take to protect these rights. All the articles are very important and link to each other.

**Take two minutes and do a free write:**

*Given what you know of the negative impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples worldwide, what do you think would be in some of these articles?*

**Think, Pair, Share.**

Teacher facilitated discussion:

Invite students to name what they wrote and to explain their reasoning.

**Ask:**

Why is an understanding of UNDRIP important to all Canadian citizens?

Teacher hand out the Important Themes of UNDRIP document and go through them.

**CONNECT:**

Which of these did the students also mention?

*Unpack the meaning* of each theme by asking questions like: Do you want to be able to have a say in your own future? What rights do you have as Canadian citizens that you maybe take for granted? Do you want to be certain that you won't be discriminated against? etc.

**COALESCE**

Hand out the Declaration: 8 Articles- one per student.

*Story-time. Form groups of four.* Each person will select two of the articles and claim them in the group. All eight articles have to be spoken for.

Each student reads the article silently, and carefully chooses one word or phrase that holds much meaning for them. Circle the word or phrase.

One by one, article by article, *each person shares the word/phrase that holds such meaning for him/her and tells the story of why (by sharing a personal example).*

To bring the exercise to a meaningful synthesis, when it appears that most students have told their stories, invite each student to come and write their word/phrase on the board. Look for commonalities and draw conclusions about why these themes in UNDRIP are so important for Indigenous Peoples in the world.

**Ask:**

- Think about the video that we watched a few days ago, and the Tableau with the Mura peoples and the Potash mine.
- Which of these 8 articles of Indigenous Rights have been violated in these stories?
- Give evidence for your reasoning.

**PROJECT Slide 8**

What are the *connections* between the CST of Participation in Family and Community, UNDRIP, and what is going on in the Amazon biome? What is in the central point where all three connect? (*It will probably be the right to free, prior, and informed consent or subsidiarity or both, but invite students to fully engage in the thinking here.*)

**COALESCE**

The teacher should give an example of the process. Example for Article 20 from Louise Bitz: I choose the words "seek justice". When I was teaching, one day I walked into school and discovered that one of my beloved students had been expelled from the school because he had gotten into a fight in the school grounds with another student. The rule was: no fighting is tolerated; the consequence is expulsion. I was shocked that this student had been involved in fighting. I really liked this student and I could not believe he would fight when he knew the school rules. Then I discovered that he had been bullied- quietly, invisibly, consistently, for a few months prior. He finally reached a breaking point, and when challenged to fight, he did. When I heard the story, I was so upset. My whole body was so angry that he had been bullied by students in my own class, though outside of class, and no one told me. I felt so betrayed by the students sitting in my class every day. I thought we were long past the "cone of silence" when bullying occurred. A deep anger rose in me right from my belly and to the surface and I challenged that justice be served for the bullies. I urged administration to strategize for a staff plan to address the issues with students in a meaningful way because we were all affected or implicated. I sought a way for the "no fighting" rule to exclude this student in this case (though I was unsuccessful). The words "seek justice" really resonate with me.

## CREATE

Invite students to consider organizing a visit to their MP, or writing a letter to their MP, to register their concern and participate in dialogue. Meeting elected members of parliament is important so he or she is aware that there are people in his or her constituency who are really concerned about international issues, especially young people. It will also allow your students to learn more about the MPs whose ridings are in the school catchment area. For Development and Peace, every meeting held across Canada adds further pressure for MPs to take action on our campaign issues. Here are a few suggested questions.

Given the importance of the Amazon in regulating global climate and the Bolsonaro government's undermining of Indigenous land defenders' rights, what will your party do to *pressure the Government of Brazil to protect the environment and respect human rights*, including the rights of the Indigenous Peoples for prior, free, and informed consent?

The Trudeau government had promised to create an *independent ombudsperson* empowered to investigate alleged human rights abuses linked to the overseas operations of Canadian resource and energy companies. So far, this ombudsperson has not been given enough power and independence to be truly effective. What will your party do ensure that the new Canadian ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) is effective in ensuring that communities suffering from the impacts of Canadian mining operations have access to justice?

The importance to all Canadian citizens that the Canadian Government *ratify UPDRIP* into Canadian law.

On the Development and Peace website we have an [advocacy section](#) where you can find our [MP meeting guide](#), a sample letter requesting a meeting and if students meet with an MP, they are asked to [submit a report](#).

Please consider making a donation to support our mission at Development and Peace – working with partner organizations in the Global South who promote alternatives to unfair social, political and economic structures, and educating Canadians about the causes of poverty and mobilizing towards actions for change.

# United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

## Article 7

### **Right to life, liberty and security**

Every indigenous person is born with the right to life, to live freely (liberty) and to be safe and secure.

Indigenous peoples as a group have the right to live freely, be safe and secure, and not exposed to violence.

For example, the children of an indigenous group may not be taken away from their family by force.

## Article 10

### **Forceful Removal and Relocation**

Indigenous peoples may not be removed or relocated by force from their lands. If they are relocated, then only with their free, prior and informed consent, meaning that they have the right to make decisions on relocation freely, without pressure, having all the information and before anything happens. They also have the right to compensation for their relocation, and the option to return to their land, if possible.

## Article 12

### **Right to spiritual and religious traditions and customs**

Indigenous peoples have the right to practice their spiritual and religious traditions. Governments will, with indigenous peoples, ensure that indigenous peoples are free to practice, protect and revive and keep alive their cultures, spiritual, religious and knowledge traditions.

## Article 18

### **Participation in decision-making**

Indigenous peoples have the right to take part in decision-making in all matters affecting them. This includes the rights of indigenous peoples to select who represents them and to have indigenous decision-making processes respected.

## Article 19

### **Free, prior and informed consent for laws and policies**

Governments must seek indigenous peoples' views and opinions and work together with them through their chosen representatives in order to gain their free, prior and informed consent before laws are passed or policies or programs are put in place that will affect indigenous peoples.

## Article 20

### **Subsistence and development**

Indigenous peoples have the right to their own political, economic and social systems, and to follow their own traditional ways of growing food and other activities that help them in their daily living. They have the right to seek justice where this right is taken away.

## Article 25

### **Spiritual relationship with traditional land and resources**

Indigenous peoples have the right to their special and important spiritual relationship with their lands, waters and resources and to pass these rights to future generations.

## Article 29

### **Conservation and protection of the environment, lands and resources**

Indigenous peoples have the right to their environment being protected. Governments will respect and protect the right of indigenous peoples to develop and protect their lands, water bodies and other natural resources. No dangerous materials should be placed on indigenous peoples' lands without their free, prior and informed consent. Governments will protect the health of indigenous peoples who are affected by dangerous materials placed on their land.

# United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – in brief



## PART 1: IMPORTANT THEMES IN THE DECLARATION

### ARTICLES 1-6

The main themes are: (i) the right to self-determination; (ii) the right to be recognized as distinct peoples; (iii) the right to free, prior and informed consent; and (iv) the right to be free of discrimination. These themes are important to keep in mind as you read the Declaration.

### The right to self-determination

The right of indigenous peoples to self-determination is fundamental to UNDRIP. While there are different interpretations, self-determination generally means that indigenous peoples have the right to decide what is best for them and their communities. For example, they can make their own decisions on issues that concern them and carry them out in the way that will be meaningful to indigenous peoples, while being respectful of the human rights of their community members (including children) and other peoples as well.

Indigenous peoples have the right to be independent and free. They have the right to be citizens of the country they live in and at the same time to be members of their indigenous communities. As citizens, they have the right to choose to build relationships with other peoples and to take active roles in the country in which they are living.

### The right to cultural identity

Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, but they also have the right to be different, for example in the way they dress, the food they eat and in the language they speak.

### The right to free, prior and informed consent

Free, prior and informed consent means that indigenous peoples have the right to be consulted and make decisions on any matter that may affect their rights freely, without pressure, having all the information and before anything happens.

### Protection from discrimination

The right to be free from discrimination means that governments must ensure that indigenous peoples and individuals are treated the same way as other people, regardless of sex, disability or religion.