



The right to Self determination and development of Indigenous Peoples

Published by
Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)



Copyright © AIPP 2014

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

There are at least 350 million indigenous peoples around the world, which is 5 % of the global population. However, 15 % of the poorest of the poor are amongst indigenous peoples.

The majority (2/3) of indigenous peoples are in Asia who are not legally recognized as distinct peoples and continue to be marginalized and discriminated. Indigenous peoples also account for having the lowest literacy level, and very low access to health and other social services. The main reasons for this include the continuing dispossession, destruction and exploitation of their lands and resources, the lack of access and provision for appropriate basic social services, systematic discrimination, which are serious violations of their fundamental rights as indigenous peoples.

As the same time, indigenous peoples have contributed enormously in the conservation; and sustainable use and management of natural resources, including in food security due to their simple and sustainable lifestyles and values. However, **indigenous peoples are again invisible in the current negotiations of governments in setting the goals to achieve sustainable development for all (known as United Nations post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals). It is thereby important to understand and respect the rights and perspectives of indigenous peoples as critical partners in achieving sustainable development.**

This publication is supported by SIDA-Swedish International Development Corporation Agency



AIPP also acknowledges the continuing support of its core donors—the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), Tamalpais Trust, and OXFAM- Australia.

Editor: Joan Carling
Script: Alex Boyesen

Production: Digital Mixes
Tanasawan Wannothai
Jatupom Kawsamare
Somkid Jaisea
Sunida Nisaphanant

Disclaimer: The contents of this comic book are the sole responsibility of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of any donor mentioned above.





So what do you think about the meeting last night?



Well it certainly surprised me.



Why would anyone want to change us? What's wrong with the way we are?

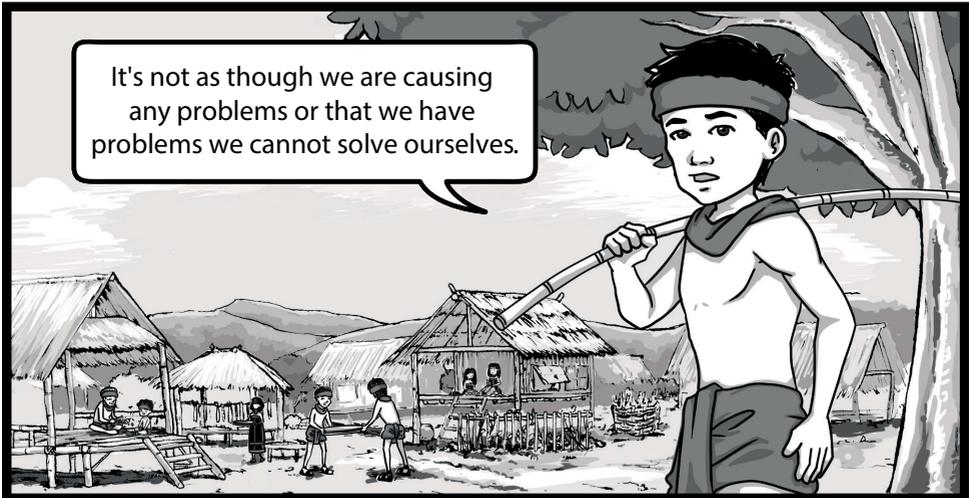
I think they want us all to be the same.



It's easier to tell us what to do if we are all the same.

But can't we just stay as we are and just work out how to get along with other people?

It's not as though we are causing any problems or that we have problems we cannot solve ourselves.



But they said they would build a school, provide electricity and medical services.



Only if we let them use the forest to grow that palm oil.



And what's that going to do to our forest?

I really don't know Tunga, it all seems we would be losing so much. What are they really offering to us?



A chance to join the modern world.

But what does that mean?



It means we get schools, electricity...



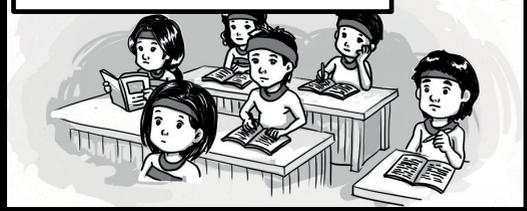
But it's our right to have these things...



...the things that all people in this country have been promised...



I want my child to be educated.



But I will always be an indigenous woman.



I want medical care for my sisters when they are pregnant.





That's who I am.



You know we have a lot of bamboo weavers in our village.



We should grow bamboo instead of palm oil.



We should work for ourselves and it will keep our forest healthy.



I have also been thinking about the forest...





...when I was growing up I went into the forest with my mother every day.

I spent my childhood learning about the forest.



About the plants we could eat.



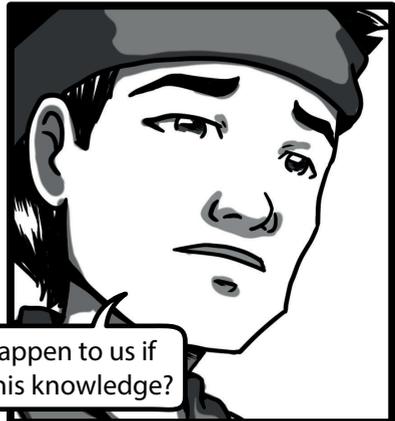
I am thinking about the stories that were told around the camp fire.



About the plants we could use for medicine.



About how we paid respect to the forests and how we honoured our ancestors.



What will happen to us if we lose all this knowledge?

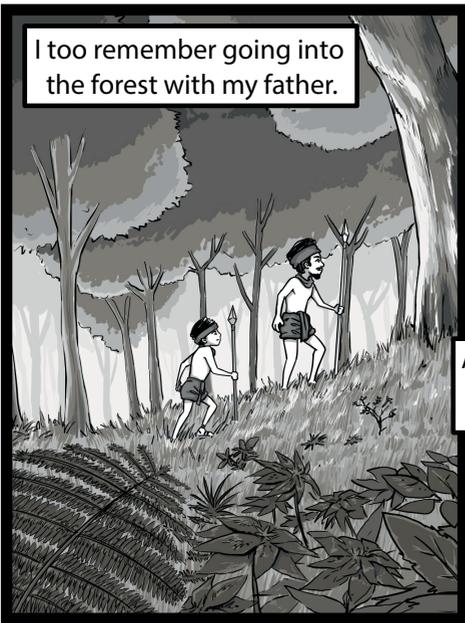
I too remember going into the forest with my father.

I learned how to hunt and trap.

And work with the forest without killing it.

We are shaped as a people by the land that surrounds us. If we change the land or who we are we will no longer fit in anywhere.

Do you remember that time when your father was a guide...



...and he was working with a member of the government and his son...

...they came to study some of our medicine plants.

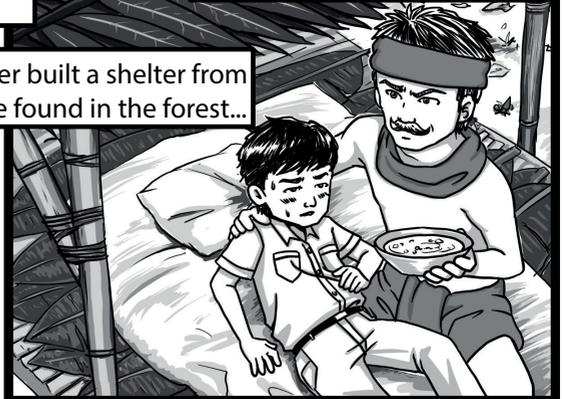


The son got ill with a fever far away from where they were staying.

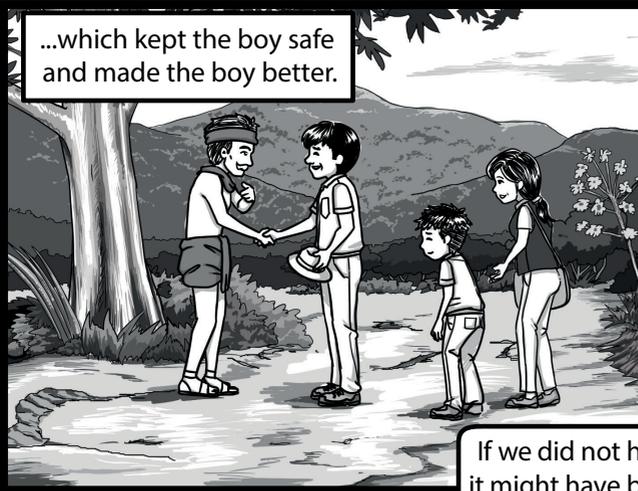
...and then made medicine...



Your father built a shelter from things he found in the forest...



...which kept the boy safe and made the boy better.



If we did not have our knowledge it might have been a different story.



What was it they said at last night's meeting about their laws protecting our people better?

They were saying the world needed new laws because the world was changing.



Well the way we live has not changed, I'm not sure why it would need to...



Like when Tareng wanted to hunt our sacred birds for that man.



I am sure they don't have the same problems as us.



When we found out the village simply said no...

...and he respected the decision.

Not the kind of problem you'd find in a town. We need to keep our right to deal with local problems.



Surely there must be a way...

...that we can stay who we are and still be part of the country we find ourselves in.

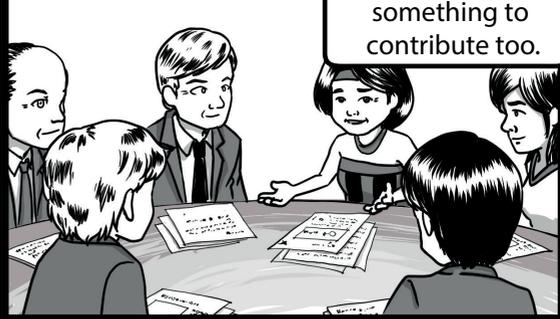


We have lived here for generations, these are our lands.



As a woman I also want to be listened to...

...because i have something to contribute too.





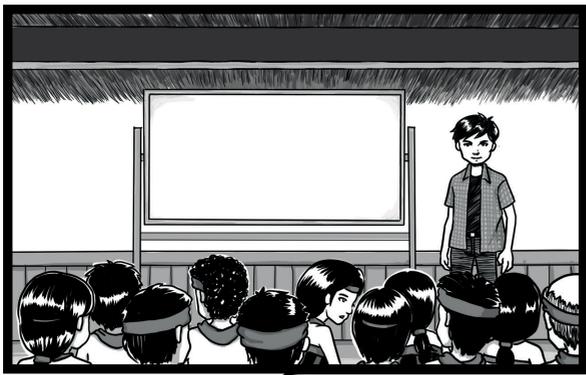
...and to let our way of life continue and to honour our spirits.

Let's wait until tomorrow, the village chief has organised a meeting...



Next day...

...with peoples we can trust to talk about the meeting we had yesterday.



My name is Raniag, I too am an indigenous person like you.

The rights of indigenous peoples living in a changing world.



I grew up in the forests not far from here where I learnt the stories of my ancestors...



I was lucky enough to study at a university and can see there are many good things outside of the village...

...I also learnt there are many great things about village life and our culture and that these things are worth protecting and saving for those that...



...will come after us.



There is nothing wrong with many things the modern world can bring to us...



But how can we stop them from just doing what they want?

Yes, we are just small people they are big people...



We cannot just stand by and watch our lands, culture and knowledge destroyed.



As indigenous peoples we do have rights.



For over 25 years Indigenous Peoples lobbied the governments to secure our rights. Finally in 2007 they adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



This Declaration sets obligations for states to respect, protect and fulfill our rights and be equal with others.

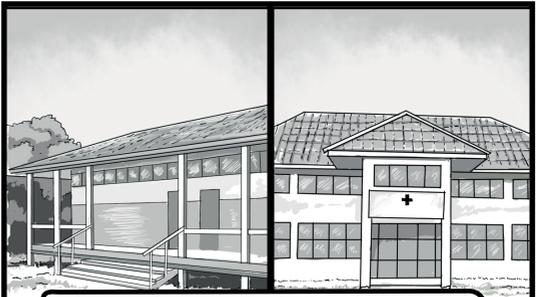
'United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples'

UNDRIP

Rights to our land, territories and resources, to self determination and to our cultural integrity.



It affirms the protection of our culture and for us to control our lives.



The Declaration includes the right to an appropriate education and other support provided to other citizens.



Listen carefully.



That we should not suffer discrimination for who we are. That we have rights over our ancestral lands.



So they cannot take over the lands we have protected and rely upon?

That we can run our communities in the ways we have done so for generations. That our customary laws, suited to us, remain in place and can be developed.



So that means they are not going to tell us how to run our lives.

Within your lands...no.

That we have rights to our own distinctive culture.



I am proud of who I am and the people I belong to.





And you have the right to pass this pride and your knowledge on to your children.



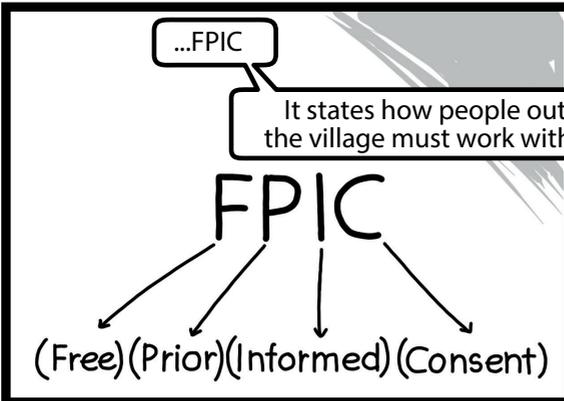
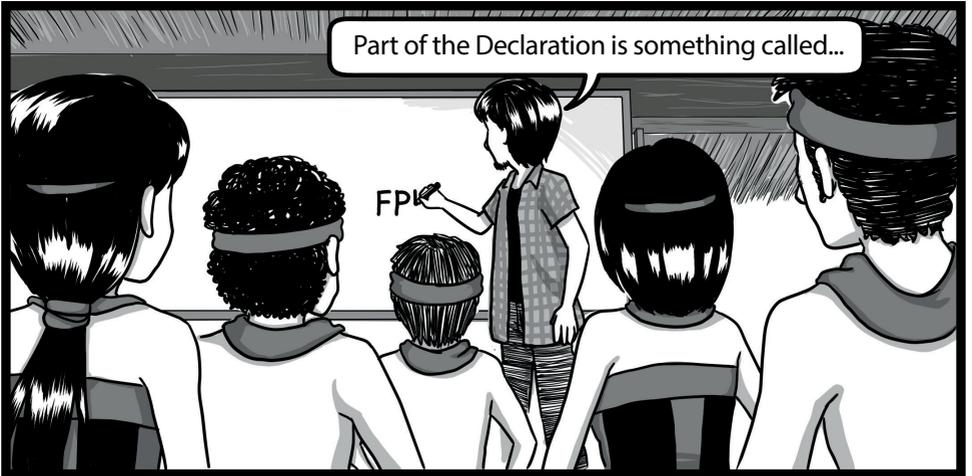
The right to say no on any project that may affect you or your lands.



But in the past...



...people have come to the village without warning and demanded to have their way immediately.



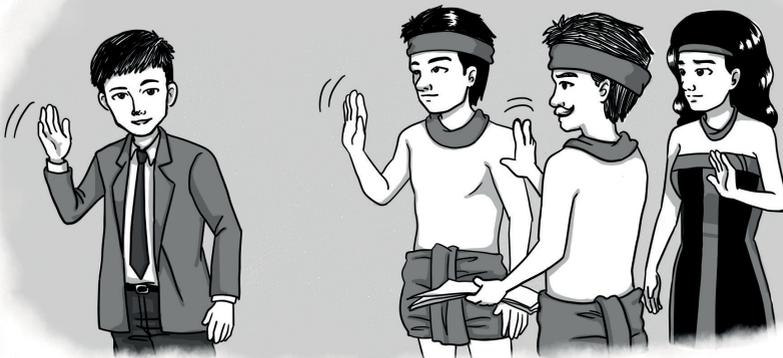
...if they have a project that will affect your way of life or lands.



They must give detailed information about the project free of charge.



They must do this before the project starts and let you make decisions in your own time.



All the information must be given to you in ways that you can understand.



And if you need more information...



...they will give it to you freely.



It is then up to you as a community to decide if the project goes ahead or set certain conditions.



The final decision...

...is yours and should be respected.



We know the world is changing.



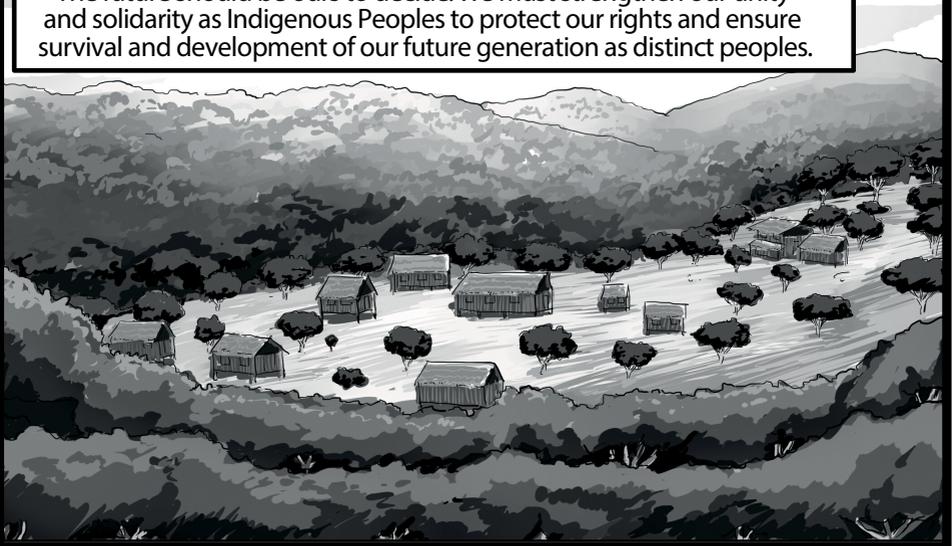
We know we must adapt and we can do this in partnership with others.



But there must be respect for who we are and the way we want to develop.



The future should be ours to decide. We must strengthen our unity and solidarity as Indigenous Peoples to protect our rights and ensure survival and development of our future generation as distinct peoples.



Provisions relating to Development in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Concerned that indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, the colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their rights to development in accordance with their own needs and interests, (Preambular Paragraph 6)

Convinced that control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs, (Preambular Paragraph 10)

Recognizing the respect for indigenous knowledge, culture and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment, (Preambular Paragraph 11)

Article 3

Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 20

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
2. Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress.

Article 21

1. Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.
2. States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

Article 23

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

Article 29

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent.
3. States shall also take effective measures to ensure, as needed, that programmes for monitoring, maintaining and restoring the health of indigenous peoples, as developed and implemented by the peoples affected by such materials, are duly implemented.

Article 32

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.
2. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.
3. States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

AIPP at a glance

The Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) is a regional organization founded in 1988 by indigenous peoples movements as a platform for solidarity and cooperation. AIPP actively promotes and defends indigenous peoples rights and human rights, sustainable development and management of natural resources and environmental protection. Through more than two decades, it has developed an expertise in grassroots capacity building, advocacy and networking from local to global levels and strengthening partnership with indigenous organizations, support NGOs, UN agencies and other institutions. At present, AIPP has 47 members from 14 countries in Asia with 14 National Formations, 15 Sub-national Formations and 18 Local Formations. Of this number, six are Indigenous Women's Organizations and four are Indigenous Youth Organizations.

Our Vision

That indigenous peoples in Asia are fully exercising their rights, distinct cultures and identities, are living with dignity and enhancing their sustainable management systems of lands, territories and resources for their own future and development in an environment of peace, justice and equality.

Our Mission

AIPP strengthens the solidarity, cooperation and capacities of indigenous peoples in Asia to promote and protect their rights, cultures and identities, and their sustainable resource management systems for their development and self-determination.

Our Goals

- To empower indigenous peoples in Asia to promote and defend their human rights and fundamental freedoms and claim legal recognition to their identities, collective rights under UNDRIP and other international human rights instruments
- To build the broadest solidarity and cooperation of indigenous peoples in Asia to strengthen indigenous movements
- To promote and protect the integrity of nature and the environment and enhance the sustainable resource management systems of indigenous peoples including their traditional knowledge, food sovereignty and biodiversity by having full control over their land, territories and resources
- To attain full and effective participation and representation of indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women and youth at all levels of decision-making
- To strengthen solidarity and cooperation with other social movements towards achieving equity, equality, peace, democracy and justice

AIPP Programme: - Human Rights Campaign and Policy Advocacy - Communication and Development - Regional Capacity Building - Environment - Indigenous Women - Organizational Strengthening.

AIPP is accredited as an NGO in special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and as observer organizations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

AIPP is also a member of International Land Coalition and Global Environment Facility NGO Network.

The contents of this comic book may be reproduced and distributed for non-commercial purposes, if AIPP is notified and the author and AIPP are acknowledged as the source.

Learn more about Indigenous Peoples Rights at:

www.aippnet.org
www.ccmn.aippnet.org
www.iphrdefenders.net
www.iva.aippnet.org

Printed by: AIPP Printing Press Co., Ltd.

