

## **Indigenous peoples module: detailed study guide**

Developed by G R Dobbs

- 1) The online video from the UN
  - a) "They don't recognize that we are peoples"
  - b) "When our land is taken from us, it is our life"
  - c) Collective structure of indigenous societies
  - d) "Targeting our communities...committing genocide"
  - e) Voluntary isolation, self-determination, territory/land base
  - f) Who is supposed to protect indigenous peoples' human rights, and who limits them?
  - g) Are victims of human rights abuses able to get help at the international level?
  - h) Relationship between indigenous peoples' locations and biodiversity "hotspots"
  - i) Economic world-system in relation to IP
  - j) Options IP want regarding development; relationship to self-determination
  - k) Land, land, land (and relationship to self-determination)
  - l) Free, prior, informed consent
- 2) What are the differences between *person*, *persons*, *people*, *a people*, *peoples*?
- 3) The readings about identification of indigenous peoples and the issues that face them
  - a) What does "disadvantaged" mean in this context? Does this refer to a structural position affecting a people because of major forces like colonialism, or conditions affecting some individuals because of immediate circumstances in their own lives?
  - b) What is the role of colonization in setting off indigenous peoples from other peoples?
  - c) Even though indigenous peoples have prior rights to their territories, what has happened? If some indigenous peoples live in remote areas today, does this have any relationship to what has happened since colonization?
  - d) Where it says that many IP live on land which is rich in resources, do you think the significance of this is that they sought out such land, or that other people might want those resources?
  - e) What are the basic ideas of the three approaches given regarding the identification of IP (the ILO approach, Mr Cobo's approach, and Ms Daes' approach)? What things do the three have in common? Where do they differ?
  - f) Why is land such a major issue for IP? Is the importance of land for IP restricted to the question of economic livelihood?
  - g) What does "development" have to do with the threats to indigenous peoples' land?
  - h) Why is a system of individual ownership of land (as opposed to what?) a threat to indigenous peoples' land security?
  - i) How does the website define *self-determination*?
  - j) Is this something that applies only to indigenous peoples?
  - k) If indigenous peoples get self-determination, does this mean they will secede from the state in which their communities are located?
  - l) Why is "poverty" a problematic concept for IP? What forces and conditions create or exacerbate poverty for these groups?
  - m) What does racism have to do with IP?
  - n) What is sustainable development?
  - o) Why do indigenous people care about it?
  - p) What roles can indigenous people play in this matter? What often happens instead?

- q) What is commonly the position of IP in relation to the political system of the society that was imposed on them by colonization or state formation? What effect does this have on their ability to create change through political channels?
  - r) When we think about intellectual property rights, we most often phrase it in terms of copyright. In the case of potentially valuable knowledge held by indigenous people—knowledge about medicinal plants, for instance—are such laws likely to protect the indigenous knowledge-holders and bring them compensation for sharing their knowledge?
  - s) How is the health of IP in relation to the other people in the same states? Is this true only in rich countries, or only in poor countries, or in all cases? Does the health of IP show up on world statistics on health issues?
  - t) Looking at the graph, can you identify any major world area or any continent that does not have indigenous peoples? Does this graph show numbers of IP, or IP population as a percentage of the population as a whole?
- 4) The two yearbook editorials
    - a) Describe the events (positive and negative) mentioned in the editorials. How do these illustrate the issue themes you've already learned about? Do any patterns emerge? How is globalization being turned to advantage by indigenous peoples?
  - 5) What rights are supposed to be guaranteed to peoples (remember the definition from earlier) by UN documents such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?
  - 6) According to Leaflet No. 5, what reasons are there for indigenous peoples to want some additional rights codified? How does this relate back to a theme from the UN video?
  - 7) About the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
    - a) How long did it take for the group working on this document to complete a draft they were all happy with?
    - b) What happened regarding this document in June 2006?
    - c) What then happened in November 2006?
    - d) What countries have opposed the adoption of the document, and why? How does this situation relate to colonization?
    - e) Why are transnational (or multinational) corporations interested in this document? What are they doing in relation to it, and with what desired outcome?
  - 8) The definition of genocide in international law
    - a) The term *genocide* is most often understood popularly as "mass killing". Does this legal definition support that understanding?
    - b) What actions can qualify as genocide? ("the physical element")
    - c) What is the role of intent? ("the mental element") How is this different from motive?
    - d) What forms are punishable under the law?
    - e) What groups does the law protect?
    - f) What is the significance of the phrase "in whole or in part"?
    - g) Think back to the comment made by a Canadian indigenous man in the UN video about genocide. Now that you understand the definition of genocide, do you think the actions described qualify as genocide? Why or why not? Have you seen any other actions in the video or in the readings that you think qualify?