

The background of the page is a photograph of two children in a rural, dusty environment. In the foreground, a young girl with long dark hair is looking down. She is wearing a blue jacket and carrying a green bag that has the UNICEF logo on it. In the background, a young boy is visible, wearing a red jacket and holding onto a grey metal frame, possibly of a bicycle or a cart. The sky is overcast and there is a utility pole in the distance.

UNICEF

Topic: Protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous children in circumstances of inequality and exclusion

Director: Romina Alejandro

Moderator: Sofía Rodríguez



Committee: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

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I. Committee Background

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) is a UN agency specializing in protecting the rights of children and adolescents and ensuring they grow up healthy, safe, and with opportunities—regardless of where they are in the world. All of UNICEF's work is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which establishes that every person under the age of 18 is a child and deserves to be cared for, protected, and given the opportunity to fully develop.

Governments that have signed this convention are expected to design their policies with these rights in mind. To make this possible, UNICEF provides technical and financial support to countries. It works with funding from UN member states, as well as donations from individuals and organizations around the world. Founded in 1946, UNICEF was created to protect children's rights, meet their most basic needs, and open more doors for them to reach their full potential. Today, UNICEF is present in 190 countries and territories, with a special focus on the most vulnerable and frequently abandoned children.



II. Topic Information

Lately, issues affecting indigenous people have gained more local and global attention, and there has been progress in protecting their rights. While this is encouraging, indigenous children often do not receive the specific attention they need. In many cases, their situation is overshadowed by broader issues. Indigenous communities focus on concerns such as land rights and political representation. While these are crucial, it is equally important to protect indigenous children's unique identities and human rights.

a. History of the Topic

Historically, indigenous peoples have been excluded from full participation in social, political, and economic life. People with disabilities face a higher risk of poverty, lower-quality education and healthcare, and violations of their rights. Similarly, indigenous communities have often been left out by governments and rarely have the opportunity to learn in their own language or preserve their culture. These problems are made worse by poverty, forced displacement, or violence. As a result, indigenous children face a higher risk of exclusion in health, education, protection, and cultural identity preservation.

b. Current Issues

Indigenous children continue to face deep-seated prejudice and exclusion that prevent them from fully developing, even with international promises to safeguard their rights and promote social integration. Often trapped in poverty, these children receive little education, healthcare, or support, and face serious hardships.



Unfair treatment based on systemic inequality and the absence of laws that consider cultural nuances presents a major challenge. Indigenous children often never get the chance to study in their own language; many drop out of school and lose contact with their heritage. Many school systems fail to include indigenous languages, customs, and perspectives, making it difficult to integrate them into the curriculum.

Health inequality remains a serious concern. Particularly in remote or rural areas, indigenous children lack adequate access to healthcare, making them more vulnerable to malnutrition, preventable diseases, and infant mortality. Poor and marginalized children are more likely to face child labor, injury, or violence. A lack of birth registration is also a major issue, as unregistered indigenous children are denied fundamental rights such as attending school, receiving legal protection, and accessing healthcare.

Indigenous lands are severely affected by climate change and environmental degradation, forcing many families to migrate or abandon their traditional way of life.

Finally, factors such as gender, place of origin, and language further complicate these challenges. Indigenous girls face additional barriers, including early marriage, unequal access to education, and a higher risk of gender-based violence. Addressing these problems requires inclusive policies that respect indigenous rights, ensure access to quality healthcare and education, and strengthen legal and institutional structures that protect all indigenous children.



c. Bloc Positions

Argentina: Promotes the safety of indigenous children by guaranteeing their right to education, healthcare, and respect for their culture. It supports community-based initiatives and works with UNICEF to fight discrimination, as well as the use of indigenous languages and customs.

Brazil: Emphasizes protecting indigenous children from violence, discrimination, and displacement. It supports domestic programs that ensure wellbeing, education, and children's rights, in collaboration with international organizations.

Belgium: Advocates for global equality and security for indigenous children. It supports initiatives promoting inclusion and access to education and endorses the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) worldwide.

Canada: Acknowledges its responsibilities toward indigenous groups and supports measures that provide indigenous children with equal access to education, mental health services, and opportunities to preserve their culture. It favors actions focused on truth and reconciliation.

China: Supports the protection of minority and indigenous children through poverty reduction, as well as access to education and healthcare in rural areas. It emphasizes respect for national sovereignty and local development plans.

Egypt: Supports the protection of indigenous children worldwide and calls for international cooperation to guarantee equal opportunities in education and healthcare, in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

France: Advocates for strong international mechanisms to defend the rights of indigenous children. It promotes non-discriminatory education and encourages partnerships between states and NGOs to empower indigenous youth.



Germany: Supports inclusive education and equal access to social services for indigenous children. It funds programs that address inequality and promotes the global implementation of human rights standards.

Mexico: Recognizes the size of its indigenous population and is working to reduce inequality through bilingual education, healthcare access, and respect for indigenous cultural values. It requests UNICEF support to expand community-based programs.

Morocco: Supports equitable opportunities for all children, including ethnic minorities, through international cooperation aimed at improving fair access to education and healthcare while valuing cultural diversity.

Russia: Promotes programs protecting indigenous minority children through education, housing, and healthcare. It emphasizes assistance based on respect for national sovereignty and equality.

Spain: Supports educational models for indigenous children and encourages cooperation between countries to foster social inclusion. It funds programs in Latin America that promote culturally sustainable development.

South Africa: Endorses programs that protect indigenous children and minority families through social inclusion, educational reform, and anti-discrimination measures. It recognizes its ongoing partnerships with UNICEF in rural and developing regions.

South Korea: Believes that equitable education and digital access are key to reducing inequality for all children, including indigenous ones. It strongly supports development initiatives linked to technology and capacity building, particularly those supported by UNICEF.

Switzerland: Leads in supporting international child protection standards. It funds UNICEF programs focused on inclusion and equality, and promotes data collection and collaboration with indigenous communities.



United Kingdom: Promotes strong international standards for protecting indigenous children’s rights. It strongly supports UNICEF’s global educational, healthcare, and cultural protection programs.

United States: Emphasizes indigenous children’s access to education and healthcare. It supports both national and international efforts promoting equality, community empowerment, and child protection.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, indigenous children are among the most vulnerable groups due to a combination of structural inequality, historical discrimination, and social, economic, and cultural exclusion. Despite the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and intercultural bilingual education programs, significant gaps remain in health, nutrition, education, legal protection, and access to basic services.

IV. Essential Questions

1. How is access to justice guaranteed for indigenous children within the framework of their protection?
2. What mechanisms should be implemented to ensure that indigenous communities have a voice in child-related policies?
3. What role should states play in protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous children?

V. References

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