United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

*Topic A: The Global Treatment of Indigenous Peoples*

MUNUC 31

*Update Paper*

**The Importance of Reconciliation for Indigenous Peoples**

The term “reconciliation” has become a large buzzword for the indigenous rights movement in Canada over the past few years. In 2018, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau created a national Day of Reconciliation, and has used it to draw attention to issues indigenous people face. He used the term and day to create a conversation about ending the 1876 Indian Act, which gives Ottawa major control of indigenous land in the region.¹

While many have praised Trudeau’s effort, some indigenous people have taken problem with branding the term “reconciliation.”² Reconciliation implies the repair of a relationship that was good but later was broken. However, the relationship between Canada’s government and the indigenous groups was never good, making the term feel dismissive of past troubles.

Sandlanee Gid, a professor of Reconciliation Studies at the University of British Columbia suggest adopting the term conciliation to be used for the basis of the movement.³ Conciliation is

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² Ibid,
³ Ibid,
defined as, “the act of mediating between two disputing groups.” Conciliation is needed in order to take action to make up for the troubled past (and current) actions of the Canadian government against indigenous people. ⁴

Beyond the branding of reconciliation, many have criticized Trudeau’s very public support of the movement with little action. ⁵ Many indigenous people believe that the Federal Government needs to give back what was taken from indigenous people to help start the movement. While conversations are important, actions are critical if changes are to be made.

Many complain that reconciliation efforts feel dishonest, as there have been many recent injustices against indigenous people in Canada, namely a controversial court decision: a white farmer killed a young unarmed indigenous man and was acquitted by an all-white jury. ⁶ Parents now fear for their children’s safety, as it was a sign of how indigenous lives were not valued. While branding 2018 as a year of reconciliation, it often undermines the work that still need to be done.

Reconciliation is the restoring of a friendly relationship between two parties. However, this relationship has historically been abusive by the government. The language used around the issue can be very important for understanding what is at stake. Whether conciliation, reconciliation, or another term is used as a branding tool for the movement, it is important to consider how it will affect actions.

⁴ Ibid,
⁵ Ibid,
Bibliography


President of Brazil “Declares War” Against Indigenous Peoples in Brazil

The Beginning of Jair Bolsonaro’s presidency was riddled with injustices towards the country’s indigenous people. He began his term by taking the land demarcation away from the Department of Indigenous Affairs, and gave it to the department of agriculture. This in turn will result in a lot of indigenous land being taken from groups in order for the state to use them for agriculture. Many families with deep ties to the Amazonian land will be stripped of their homes, which is likely to cause conflicts between indigenous families and the government. According to a senior researcher at Survival International, “The theft of indigenous people’s lands could mean genocide and the complete wipeout of tribes.”

In Brazil, nearly 13% of the nations land belongs indigenous people, and has been settled by past governments. In the country’s constitution from 1988, any territory settled for an indigenous group grants exclusive use of the land to the group. Many of the nations ruralists have fought against

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9 Ibid.
this policy, as the land has the great potential for agricultural growth. However, the land is also heavily tied to important rituals of the indigenous people, and has already been fully granted to them. President Bolsonaro plans on taking away this “exclusive rights” policy, and allowing for the private ownership of indigenous lands by the highest bidder, which will likely be large farming conglomerates.

The indigenous groups in Brazil are not taking Bolsonaro’s actions lightly, as they have already made efforts to fight back against his policies. Three large tribes have gotten together to leave an official message for the president, saying, “We are people, human beings, we have blood like you do, Mr. President… We’re ready for dialogue, but we’re also ready to defend ourselves.”

The Association of Indigenous People’s in Brazil (APIB) has created a petition for to not have any of Bolsonaro’s proposals go into effect. Many groups have vowed to taken action against Bolsonaro if he begins stripping away indigenous people of their land because of how extreme his policies’ outcomes could be.

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11 Ibid.
Bibliography


The question of women’s education stands as one of the main controversies in the modern world. While the issue is mainly ethical, recent World Bank reports demonstrates that the issue also has a major economical impact. Around the world, nine in ten girls complete their primary education, but only three in four complete their lower secondary education. The situation in low income countries is drastically worse: less than two thirds of girls complete their primary education, and only one in three girls completes lower secondary education.

Primary and secondary education is vital for all children, but its impacts for girls is especially high: not educating a child, whether it is a boy or a girl, leads to losses in the child’s future earnings. But not educating girls is especially costly because of the interconnectedness of education attainment, child marriage and early childbearing.

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While primary schooling is necessary, it is not sufficient: In many fields of study, the difference between having only primary education and no education at all is quite small. One study shows that women with primary education earn only 14 to 19 percent more than those with no education at all. In contrast, women with completed secondary education earn twice more than women with primary education only.16

Lower earnings for women lead to losses in total earnings of the labor force. Considering only those women that are already present in the workforce, the effects of universal secondary education to women are too colossal to dismiss: the estimated loss ranges between US $15 trillion to US $30 trillion globally. Also, universal secondary education, by lowering the fertility rate and population growth rate, results in around US $3 trillion gain in human capital in the first year after achieving universal secondary education.17 Moreover, each additional year of secondary education is associated with lower risks of marrying as a child and having early childbearing. Achieving universal secondary education could virtually eliminate early marriage and consequently drastically decrease early childbearing. Universal secondary education could also lead to an increased use of contraceptives, which in combination with eliminated child marriage will eventually lead to a reduced population growth.

The first recommendation of The World Bank is to ensure that by 2030 all girls and boys complete free and quality primary and secondary education. However, the report also notes that it is

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unlikely that many countries are able to achieve this goal by 2030. More measures need to be done to improve education for all children, boys and girls alike. This report is not new in bringing forth economical benefits of investing in girls education: Development Report on gender (World Bank, 2012) and in many other studies before that (for example: World Bank, 2011) have made this point earlier. This study serves as a mere reminder that the world still has much room to grow when it comes to investing in girls’ education.


United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Topic B: Education of Women

MUNUC 31

Update Paper

General Update on Women’s Education Obstacles

In 2018 women and girls continue facing obstacles with getting an education equivalent or comparable to the one that is available to a larger percentage of boys and men. While for the most part this affects primary education access, in places where a secondary higher education is often expected before entering the workforce, women continue to be underserved.

Even though women now earn 60% of baccalaureate degrees and 46% of doctoral degrees, a phenomenon coined the prestige gap has been shown to contribute to unequal representation to women in particular academic fields. The prestige gap measures fields based on representation, finding that while on average men are over represented by a factor of 1.06, in certain fields such as mathematics, this overrepresentation factor rises to 1.50. In graduate fields, this disparity can raise to a factor of 2.12, with women being overrepresented by that amount in fields such as art history and language studies, but underrepresented by that factor in fields like aerospace and biomedical engineering. In addition to these numbers being indicative of the failure of education systems to equally engage or be accepting of women and a social stigma against women in STEM, the lack of

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19 Kim A. Weeden, Sarah Thébaud, and Dafna Gelbgiser, Degrees of Difference: Gender Segregation of US Doctorates by Field and Program Prestige, PDF, Cornell University, 2017.
representation creates a self-perpetuating cycle that discourages women to enter fields in which they are underrepresented.

Beyond simply being an educational crisis, this issue impacts other aspects of women’s lives; education, the lack thereof or the quality of it, undeniably affects women’s economic, social, and political lives. This shows in the scarcity of female leaders worldwide, with women currently occupying 22.8% of all parliamentary, congressional, and government positions around the world. Additionally, attention has been brought to the gender wage gap, the absence of rigorous gender equity laws, and lack of representation in government. Because of this, addressing issues in the education of women must be done equitably and with taking care that solutions not only theoretically provide women a level of education comparable to the ones available to men, but also work practically in a way to ensure that women are represented in academia and beyond.

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