VISIT NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.ORG

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC I BLOG

CHANGING PLANET

As children return to school – photographs of tribal children around the world.

In Changing Planet September 21, 2011 7 Comments



On every continent, from the green depths of the Amazon basin to the icy reaches of the Arctic tundra, children raised in tribal communities are taught the skills and values that have ensured the survival of their peoples for generations.

Tribal children are the inheritors of their territories, languages and unique ways of seeing the world; human repositories of their ancestors' knowledge. As they are typically brought up in communities where the solidarity of the group is crucial to survival, children are taught that life is about 'we', not 'I', and balance with nature, not destruction.

We are not here for ourselves, said Roy Sesana, a Gana Bushman from Botswana. We are here for our children, and the children of our grandchildren.



Over recent decades, however, many tribal children have witnessed – and experienced – dispossession, disease and despair due to land theft, forced assimilation into mainstream societies and 'development' schemes. If their homelands continue to be threatened by destructive external forces; if their values and ways of life are not granted greater respect, the the future of tribal children will be as precarious as their childhoods have often been traumatic.

In Malaysia, Penan children help to build homes from tree saplings and giant palm leaves; beneath the bluegreen surface of the the Andaman Sea, Moken children learn to catch dugong, crab and sea-cucumber with long harpoons; in Mongolia, Tsaatan children are taught the ancient herding skills of their parents by corralling reindeer on the grasslands.



Most tribal peoples have a long-term view of life; they take into account in their daily decision-making the future health of the environment and the wellbeing of successive generations.

If the lives of today's tribal children are to be uncorrupted by oppression, exploitation and racism, the governments and corporations that currently violate their rights must adopt similarly sustainable thinking, and look far beyond immediate political or commercial gain.

Recent successes – such as the reopening of the Bushman water hole in Botswana and the Dongria Kondh's victory over Vedanta in India – show that tribal issues are being increasingly pushed into political and cultural arenas. But there is a long way to go. Tribes are still vulnerable, largely because their lands are still coveted. Their urgent need is for people worldwide to join Survival's movement and help in its unflinching fight for them to be seen as equals.

A world where tribal children are free to live on their own lands in the way they choose is their prerogative. And it starts with the recognition of two basic human rights: to land and to self-determination.

Think not forever of yourselves, o Chiefs, Nor of your own generation Think of continuing generations of our families, Think of our grandchildren And those yet unborn, Whose faces are coming from beneath the ground.



(Quote by Peacemaker, Iroquois Confederacy, USA)



MEET THE AUTHOR

Joanna Eede was an editorial consultant to Survival International with a particular interest in the relationship between man and nature and tribal peoples. She has created and edited three environmental books, including Portrait of England (Think Publishing, 2006) and We are One: A Celebration of Tribal Peoples (Quadrille, 2009). Joanna writes for newspapers and magazines on subjects such as the repatriation of wild Przewalski horses to Mongolia, the whales of the Alboran sea, the chimpanzees of the Mahale rainforest, uncontacted tribes of the Amazon rainforest and the Hadza hunter gatherer people of Tanzania. Future ideas include a book about Tibet's nomads.



Previous Post

Jane Goodall Celebrates International Day of Peace

Next Post

Carving my Dreams into a Gourd: Mother Earth & Climate Change

RELATED POSTS

Tribal languages on International Mother language Day

"You say laughter and I say larfter," sang Louis Armstrong. The difference is subtle. Across the world, however, from the Amazon to



Uncontacted Tribes: The Last Free People on Earth

The key to conservation lies with indigenous peoples, according to the World Bank.

'I was born in the forest, and I grew up there. I know it well, ' says Davi Kopenawa, a Yanomami spokesman from the Brazilian Amazon, who has

National Geographic Society Blog Comment Policy

Please read our **Comment Policy** before commenting.

7 Commen	ts National Geo	ographic Society Blog	Login -
💛 Recomme	end 🛃 Share		Sort by Best 👻
	loin the discussion	on	
LOC	G IN WITH	OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS ?	
	National Geographic Blog	Name	
		Email	
		Password	

By signing up, you agree to the Disque Basic Rules, Terms of Service, and Privacy Policy.



Morten • 6 years ago
Amazing pictures. Thanks for sharing them with us!
• Reply • Share •



Jean Du Plessis • 6 years ago Well done Joanna!

∧ ∨ • Reply • Share →



Stefanie Zehnder • 6 years ago

Children should never witness despair. They should grow up free and happy. This pictures are so amazing! Thanks!!

 \land \lor \cdot Reply \cdot Share \cdot



Danny Turi • 6 years ago

I love the photo of the handstands in the desert. All of these kids look so free!

∧ ∨ • Reply • Share →



Lara • 6 years ago Great pictures!



Danny Turi • 6 years ago I love the photo of the handstands in the desert. All these kids look so free!

∧ ∨ • Reply • Share →



Steffi Lønskov · 6 years ago

Such amazing pictures!!!!

It is so important that the knowledge of these tribes does not get forgotten. The long-term view of life is something that we often forget when all we want to do is make money.

∧ ∨ • Reply • Share →

ALSO ON NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY BLOG

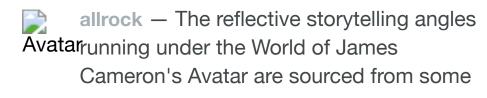
Australia and Pakistan: A Neglected Relationship?

1 comment • a month ago

Ghazanfar Ali — Nice article i got Avatarscholarships in Australia about 25% and i am rally happy here

Connect to Protect: How Pandora – The World of Avatar at Disney's Animal

1 comment • 6 days ago



1 comment • 18 days ago

- . . -

George Solem — Isn't one hypothesis that AvatarNeanderthal did in fact make art and other things, but for a long time scientists simply

Groundhog Day 2017 Celebrated With a Portrait From the National Geographic

2 comments • a month ago

Areyanna Hinrichs — you are a good manl Avatarlove groundhog's day so much that i prank my sister

ABOUT THE BLOG

Researchers, conservationists, and others share stories, insights and ideas about Our Changing Planet, Wildlife & Wild Spaces, and The Human Journey. More than 50,000 comments have been added to 10,000 posts. Explore the list alongside to dive deeper into some of the most popular categories of the National Geographic Society's conversation platform Voices.

Opinions are those of the blogger and/or the blogger's organization, and not necessarily those of the National Geographic Society. Posters of blogs and comments are required to observe National Geographic's community rules and other terms of service.

Voices director: David Braun (dbraun@ngs.org)

@NATGEOEXPLORERS

Nat Geo Explorers 📀 @NatGeoExplorers · 1h

More than 100 years ago, writer & photographer Eliza Scidmore became our first female board member. "I raise her up today because she deserves to be recognized," writes @InsideNatGeo board chair @jeancase in @Forbes. #InternationalWomensDay https://t.co/PgDmLxiKbA



Jean Case 📀 @jeancase · 2h

"Many of these intrepid women have chosen to go to the front lines of the unknown, often at great peril, to bring back stories, findings and images that have helped to change the world." @NatGeo @NatGeoExplorers #InternationalWomenDay https://t.co/8DQpXZmdhU

1 1 8 **1** 24

Nat Geo Explorers 📀 @NatGeoExplorers · 8h

It only takes one woman to inspire a generation.

#InternationalWomensDay #PressForProgress #TimeIsNow

INSTAGRAM



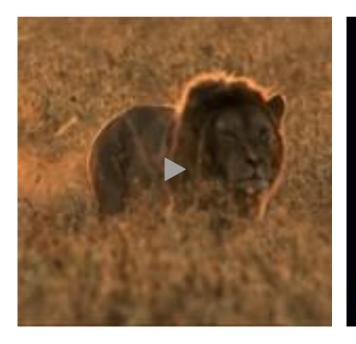
















© 1996 - 2018 National Geographic Society. All rights reserved. Privacy Policy Sustainability Policy Terms of Service

See our stories at <u>NationalGeographic.com</u>