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Topic 1: Indigenous Peoples, Healthcare, Mental Health, and Wellness

Indigenous peoples are prone to diseases such as, tuberculosis, and malaria. There is also a larger susceptibility to infant mortality and mental illness. These widespread illnesses seem contradictory to the rapid advances being made in the medical community; however, due to the lack of funding and recognition of their existence this is an unfortunate reality. With the help and guidance of the United Nation’s Committee on Indigenous People, Laos believes that a program can be created to tackle this problem.

Laos wants to focus on two main solutions to their health care challenges: merging western and traditional healing methods, and improving the lives of students by reducing depression and suicide rates. To begin with, Laos wants to work with other Western countries to create a training program for chiefs and religious healers for execution with their people. In the past, UNICEF has attempted to create a “primary healthcare infrastructure,” however, this attempt failed entirely due to the limited government budget allocations towards the healthcare community. By ratifying an agreement that mandates a higher portion of the government budget (about 10-15%, as opposed to the traditional 5%) towards healthcare, the efforts of the Western community can be amplified creating a facet for positive change. Furthermore, to break the language barrier, visual aids and local translators will be utilized. Pamphlets will be given out, serving as reference material for later use. (World Bank, 2005)In Laos, the Health Sector Governance Program is trying to help provide better healthcare through loans; this is to decrease the number of maternal deaths. This practice can be adopted with other indigenous communities elsewhere.

In terms of youth depression, Laos feels that a majority can be reduced if children are able to go to school. As well, instead of continuing to fetch water from a river miles away, Laos wants to implement the use of technology such as the WaterSeer, which turns condensed water in the air into drinking water. (WaterSeer. 2016) This can be donated by developed countries, and will allow the focus to be shifted from local water collection to education. Schooling can be supplied with the introduction of new educational packages, like the UNICEF “school in a box”.

Topic 2: Indigenous Land Rights, Climate Change impacts and Environmental Protection of Resources

Indigenous people use the land as their sole source of income and sustenance. Due to climate change and large corporations exploiting their local mineral deposits, indigenous people are becoming further isolated from society as their means of survival are threatened. The upshot of this is a lack of land recognition that allows large companies to come and exploit timber, gold, and other gemstone supplies. (Juha Uitta. 2016) Concomitantly, in Laos, a warm mountainous landscape leads to tremendous difficulties adapting to climate change. Laos wants to help by protecting indigenous land rights and to anticipate obstacles that different communities will face in implementing a legal system for their indigenous populations.

To begin with, Laos suggests that this problem can be tackled by having the government purchase the land and allow ethnic groups to access it as if they owned it. This allows the government to regulate the land and keep large corporations from exploiting resources. Other countries can help by donating money to the government to purchase the land. In terms of setting up a legal system, Laos was to work with other UN nations to create a template agreement that will be signed by indigenous peoples, the Laotian government, as well as governments of different countries that are providing assistance. Furthermore, Laos has suggested that other countries donate helicopters and satellite surveillance to make surveying the rough terrain of indigenous land easier.

Topic 3: Indigenous Peoples, Poverty, and Development

Poverty among indigenous people is disproportionately high. Globally, indigenous people make up five percent of the global population and fifteen percent of the world poorest. In Laos’ case, rural indigenous peoples are some of the poorest people in the world. Many people living there make than less than one American dollar a day and struggle to survive, making them susceptible to diseases and food shortages (Rural Poverty Portal, 2016).

Laos suggests that to fix the problem of poverty the people need to be educated, so they can start building more advanced infrastructure and manufacturing. Laos believes in the mentality of “ Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.”, and wants to use the same theory to allow for newer generations to create and establish an economies of scale for their area. This educational venture can be achieved by promoting UNICEF and international charity campaigns within the country, as well as by building positive rapport with more established nations; this will have the ripple effect of an increase in foreign aid and educational stamina. Laos believes that if even a few are properly educated, the rest of the tribe will take part in economic success.

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