



# The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples

## Insights from recent research

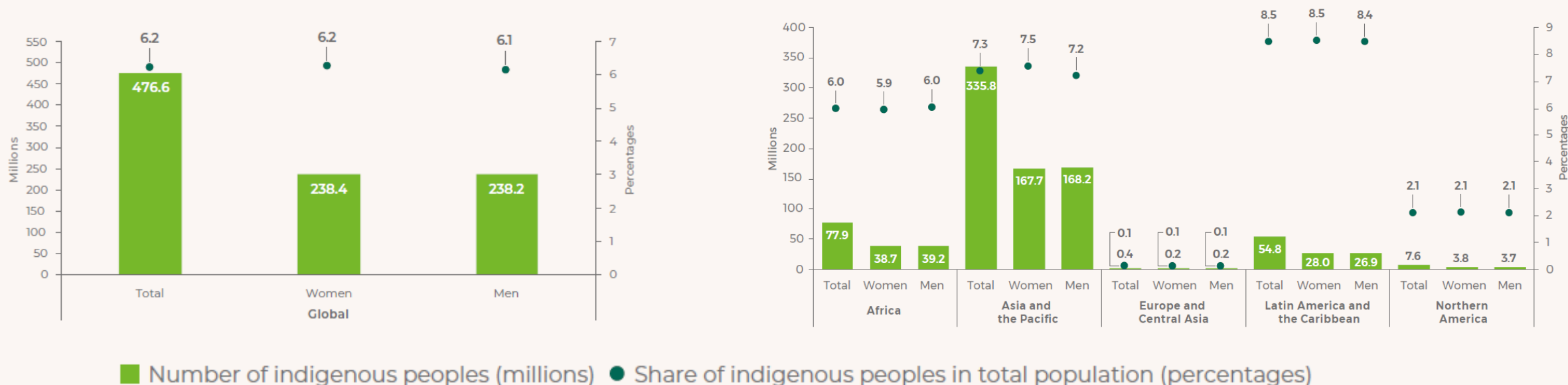
Robie Halip, IPMGSDG

Martin Oelz and Gabriela Balvedi Pimentel, ILO

International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Pandemics  
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## 476.6 million indigenous peoples or 6.2 per cent of the global population



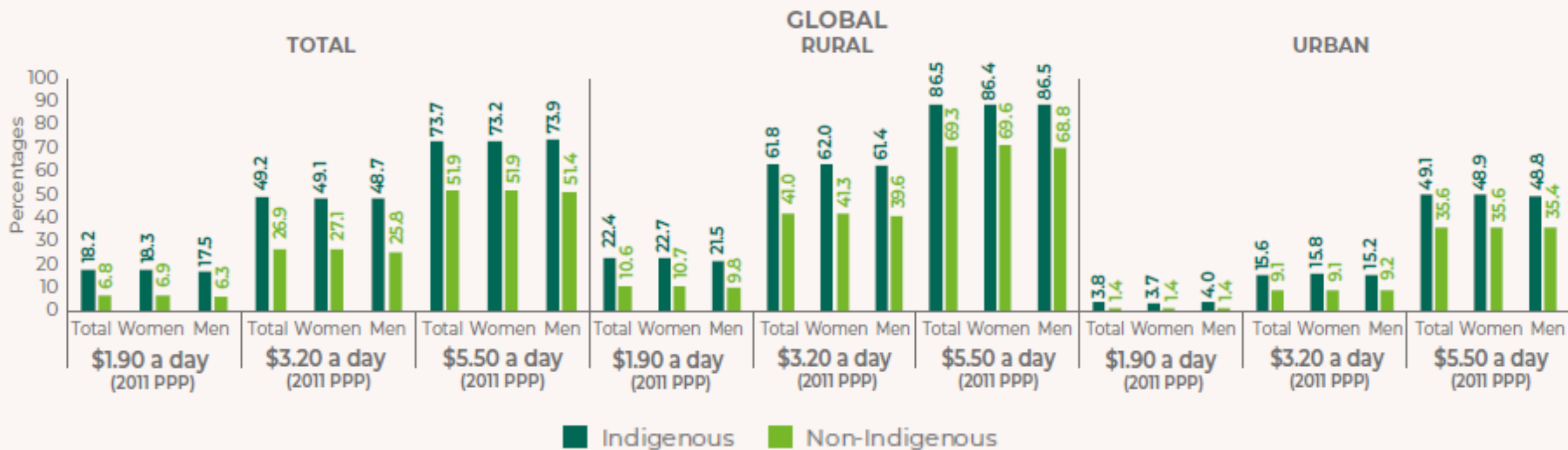
### Number and share of indigenous peoples in total population, 2019

Source: ILO, 2019. Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169: Towards an inclusive, sustainable and just future

**Slightly over 70 per cent of all indigenous and tribal peoples live in Asia and the Pacific**

# Indigenous peoples are three times more likely to be poor than their non-indigenous counterparts

Poverty headcount using the \$1.90, \$3.20 and \$5.50 a day poverty lines



## ► Pre-crisis inequalities translate into disparate COVID-19 vulnerabilities for indigenous and tribal peoples

- The prevailing social, economic, health and environmental vulnerabilities confronting indigenous women and men are playing a key role in shaping the threats and vulnerabilities emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Given their disadvantaged position before the emergence of the pandemic, indigenous peoples are now particularly threatened by poorer health outcomes, exacerbation of their poverty, as well as enhanced instances of stigma, discrimination and violence.
- The Recent ILO data underlines the vulnerabilities faced by indigenous and tribal peoples in the COVID-19 context.
- ILO data findings are corroborated and complemented by data emerging from the Indigenous Navigator framework





## The Indigenous Navigator framework

- ▶ Monitoring framework to track implementation of international standards concerning indigenous peoples' rights (e.g. UNDRIP, ILO C169, SDGs, among other UN human rights treaties)
- ▶ Indicators on: (i) health; (ii) freedom of expression and media; (iii) general economic and social development; (iv) education and (v) employment and occupation
- ▶ Community questionnaires:
  - Collective assessments and data collection on the ground by the communities themselves
  - Self-assessment of the impact of state policies and programmes in the communities

▶ 11

Countries, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Kenya, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Suriname and Tanzania.

▶ 146

Community questionnaires

▶ 280,000

People covered

Source: ILO, IWGIA 2020. The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous communities: Insights from the Indigenous Navigator.

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# **The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples: Insights from the Indigenous Navigator – Selected results**



## Access to health

- ▶ 72% reported some degree of inaccessibility to health facilities
- ▶ Low access to culturally appropriate services: only 5% reported that their indigenous institutions can manage their own health programmes
- ▶ Indigenous women are facing difficulties in accessing reproductive health services and have reported to be increasingly suffering from gender-based violence (Interviews 5 and 2), including obstetric violence.

**Table 8:** How accessible are health facilities for your community?

Country	Highly accessible	Accessible	Moderately inaccessible	Inaccessible	Highly inaccessible
Bangladesh	0	4	24	28	44
Bolivia	17	44	39	0	0
Cambodia	0	0	18	55	27
Cameroon	14	26	29	26	6
Colombia	25	25	0	25	25
Kenya	0	0	50	0	50
Nepal	10	10	50	30	0
Peru	0	11	56	11	22
Philippines	0	0	100	0	0
Suriname	36	36	18	0	9
Tanzania	0	0	0	100	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>

Notes: Data corresponds to the percentage of communities reporting different levels of accessibility by country. Table created using question T2-V117

Source: ILO, IWGIA 2020. The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous communities: Insights from the Indigenous Navigator.



## Land insecurity, food insecurity and lack of access to traditional medicine

- ▶ The majority of communities have indicated at least some limitation in the recognition of their right to land, territory and resources
- ▶ Communities that can produce in their territory are more resilient
- ▶ Significant restrictions in accessing natural resources for the production of traditional medicines:

▶▶ *“In most forest areas today, there is this conservation problem. When communities want to resort to traditional pharmacy, there is this limitation of access to the forest. Suddenly, this means that we cannot have access to modern measures, masks, etc., [or] tests in hospitals. And when resorting to the forest, we have this limitation of access to the forest because the areas are protected.”*

▶ Interview 4

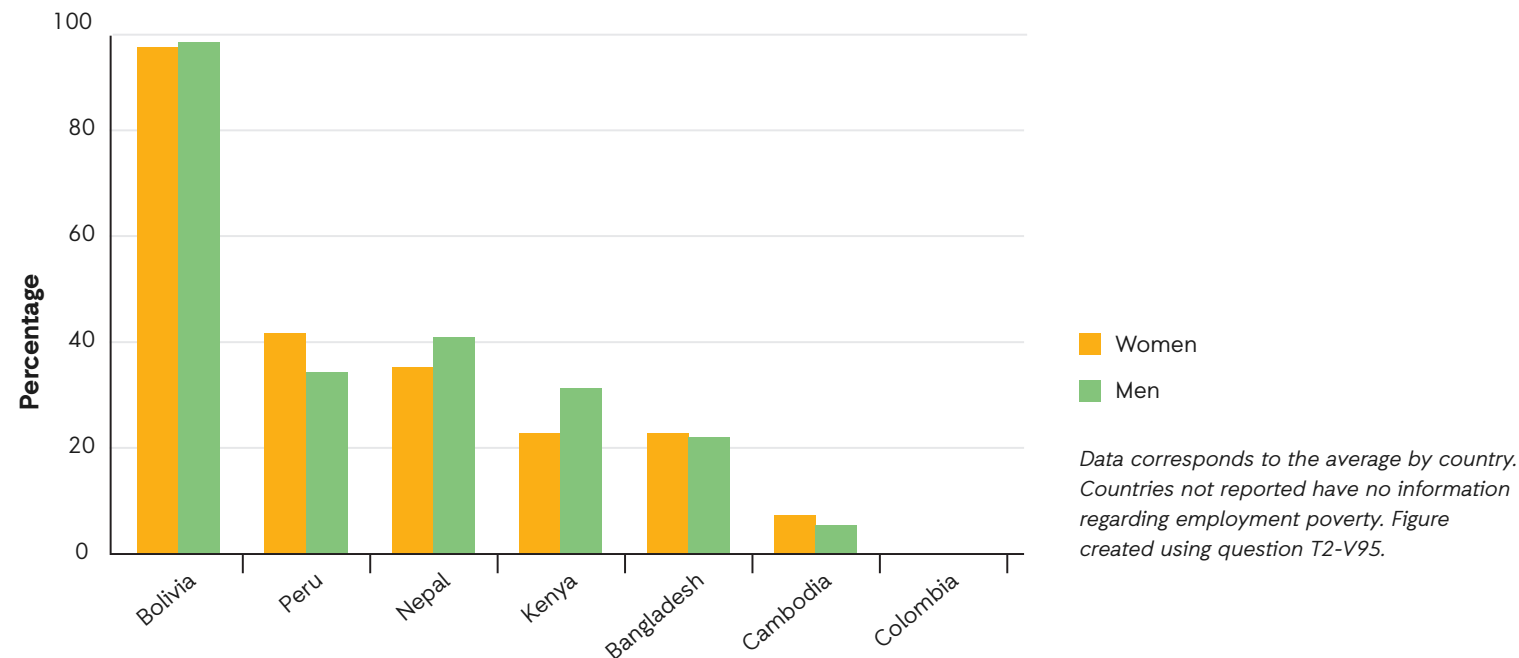
Source: ILO, IWGIA 2020. The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous communities: Insights from the Indigenous Navigator.



## Access to social protection

- ▶ Before the COVID-19, on average respondents' perception was that less than half of the members of their community were covered by some type of social protection programme

**Figure 6:** Population covered by social protection programmes





## Access to social protection

- ▶ In Africa respondents said that no social protection programme was in place.
- ▶ In Asia and Latin America support measures provided by governments were deemed insufficient or inappropriate:

▮▮ *The government supplied villages with a food package. (...) I think they received it once or twice (...) they receive products that they don't even know, they usually don't have (...) canned sardines.*

▶ Interview 8

Source: ILO, IWGIA 2020. The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous communities: Insights from the Indigenous Navigator.

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Indigenous women at work during the COVID-19 pandemic, Bangladesh. Credit: ILO.

# ► **IPMG Report on COVID-19 – Selected results**



## Selected results – IPMG Report on COVID-19

- ▶ Indigenous communities lack access to timely and accurate information on the COVID19:
  - ▶ *What we need now in the community is an intensive awareness creation which should deliberately be carried out by the use of posters carrying different messages which inform the community of the means of preventing the spread of the disease, [as well as the use of] local radio stations, and more dissemination of facilities, including hand washing facilities, sanitizers, soaps and simple masks,”*
    - ▶ Elder from Northern Tanzania
- ▶ Disruption of significant cultural and communal activities



Training on land rights. Credit: MPIDO.

## Selected results – IPMG Report on COVID-19

- ▶ Severe impacts on traditional livelihoods and indigenous youth
- ▶ Discrimination in access to healthcare:
  - ▶ *There's also that aspect [of] discrimination now on access for example, (...) even before COVID when somebody gets sick, when a member of their community gets sick, and they go to the hospital, they're given [the] least attention (...) in terms of medical services. And many of them (...) don't have the transportation also (...) to be able to go to the hospital (...), some have clinics in the villages, but there are no doctors in most instances.(...) It's also the language (...) the difficulty in communication because some of them don't speak (...) the language of the majority.*

▶ Interview 10

Source: ILO, IWGIA 2020. The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous communities: Insights from the Indigenous Navigator.



Families relieve hygiene kits of TJG and Tebtebba, Philippines. Credit: Tebtebba.

## Selected results – IPMG Report on COVID-19

- ▶ Indigenous women are playing a crucial role in the production of preventive mechanisms in several countries
- ▶ Indigenous Peoples are using protective measures to mitigate the negative effects of the spread of COVID-19, through the use of ancestral knowledge
- ▶ Indigenous villages who have land tenure security are able to manage their resources well



Production of herbal soaps and face shields by indigenous women, Philippines. CREDIT: TEBTEBBA





## Building an inclusive response through a rights-based approach - Selected Recommendations:

- ▶ **Ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the planning and implementation of COVID19 responses for indigenous communities.**
- ▶ Increase efforts to provide indigenous communities with the necessary elements to prevent further transmission of COVID-19, including masks, soap, an adequate water supply and safe drinking water, as well as appropriately equipped and culturally appropriate healthcare facilities and services, including access to information in indigenous languages.
- ▶ **Ensure that communities participate in the management of health services and preventive measures are communicated and applied in a way that is respectful of indigenous peoples' cultures.**
- ▶ Undertake inclusive, community-based risk and needs assessments of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on indigenous peoples and include indigenous peoples as an integral component of mitigation strategies.
- ▶ **With indigenous peoples, establish or strengthen state institutions in charge of indigenous issues and ensure that government strategies to tackle the pandemic are respectful of indigenous peoples' rights and responsive to indigenous peoples' realities.**



► **Thank you!**

[robie@indigenouspeoples-sdg.org](mailto:robie@indigenouspeoples-sdg.org)

[uelz@ilo.org](mailto:uelz@ilo.org)

[balvedpimentel@iloquest.org](mailto:balvedpimentel@iloquest.org)