

ONE HEALTH ATLAS

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Indigenous people and (One) Health

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Indigenous community health traditions, which recognize the interdependence of all living things, laid the groundwork for a kind of integrated approach to health. These practices span generations and embody a holistic view of health that includes environmental preservation and caring for one's mental, spiritual, emotional and psychological health.

Living in harmony has given Indigenous people a unique perspective on how the environment affects human well-being. For better ecosystem management and disease prevention, Indigenous knowledge must be incorporated into global health policies, and this traditional paradigm can teach us a lot about how to do just that.

According to Dr. Carol Zavaleta-Cortijo, a Peruvian medical doctor and socio-environmental scientist, Indigenous peoples in Peru, such as the Shawi, were able to endure the COVID-19 pandemic with remarkable strength. These communities successfully navigated the crisis by utilizing traditional knowledge and practising isolation. This approach is in line with the principles of One Health since it draws on Indigenous knowledge to address global health issues and stresses the interdependence of human, animal and environmental

health. More inclusive and resilient public health approaches can be achieved by including Indigenous perspectives in broader health strategies.

Indigenous Canadian viewpoints that value the inextricable link between humans and their natural surroundings are consistent with One Health's multidisciplinary approaches. Nevertheless, there is a clear lack of comprehensive Indigenous knowledge integration in One Health studies. Developing culturally appropriate health interventions that blend traditional ways of knowing with modern health practices is essential for addressing climate change, zoonoses, and the sociocultural relationships between humans and animals through a One Health lens. This requires genuine engagement with Indigenous communities.

When thinking about human health, the One Health paradigm must not ignore the impact of social and political factors. Disparities in human health are, in fact, the product of a complex network of political and economic factors. Among other things, this means that other knowledge systems have not been sufficiently integrated and that One Health frameworks fail to adequately acknowledge or represent Indigenous knowledge.

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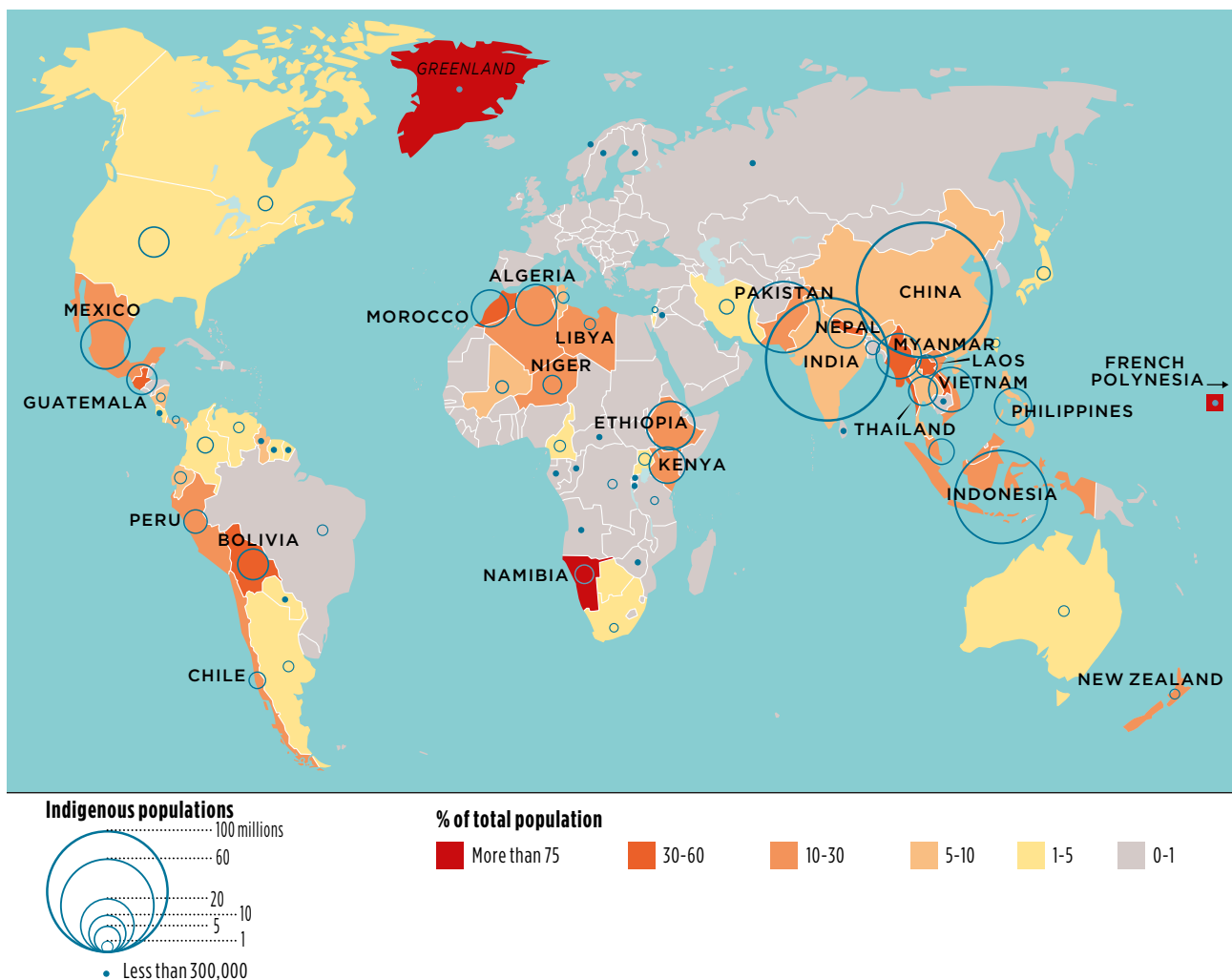


Figure 1. Global map of lands managed and/or controlled by Indigenous peoples. Source: IWGIA (<https://iwgia.org/en/>) and World Bank (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/indigenouspeoples>).

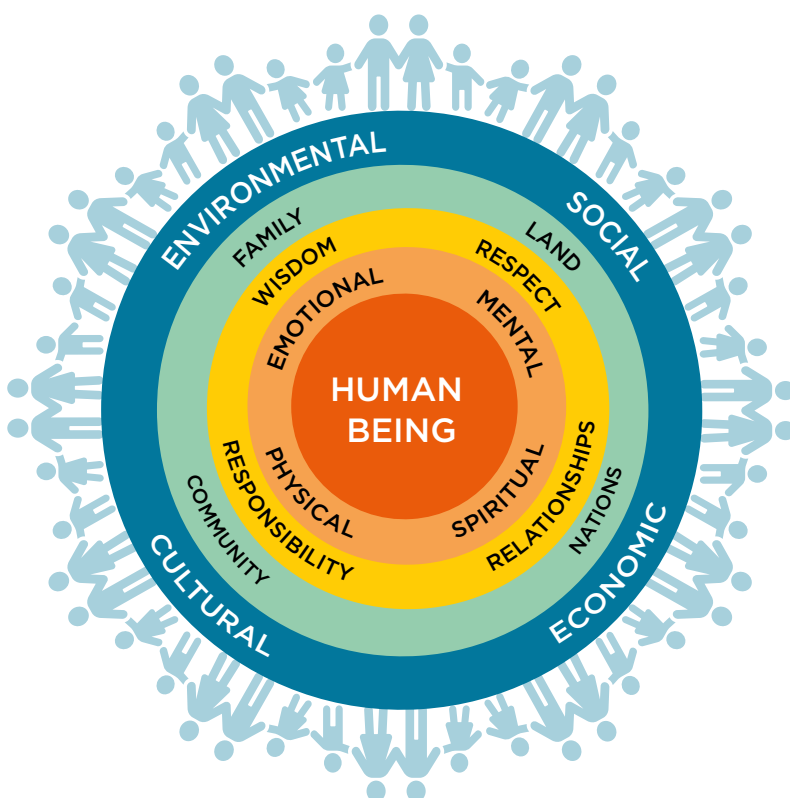


Figure 2. First Nations perspective on health and wellness.

This illustration was developed by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) of British Columbia, Canada. It aims to visually represent FNHA's vision: "Healthy, self-determining, and vibrant First Nations children, families, and communities in British Columbia". This figure illustrates a holistic approach to health. This representation is designed as a tool for FNHA and First Nations communities to create a shared understanding of holistic well-being. It is adaptable and can be freely customized to reflect the needs and perspectives of each community. Source: www.fnha.ca.