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Environmental Activism and Indigenous Populations Case Study: The Indonesian Palm Oil Industry

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May, 2016

Faculty Adviser: Dr. Tom Koontz

Essay completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Global Honors, University of Washington, Tacoma

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Director, Global Honors

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Introduction

Everybody hears the term environmental activism, but they do not know what environmental activism actually is. Environmental activism is the advocacy or work for protecting the natural environment from destruction. As we look around the world, there are many global non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that participate in environmental activism. All of the environmental activism that is occurring around the world helps to bring to light many environmental issues for the whole world to see, but how is all this environmental activism affecting the indigenous populations where all this work is taking place? Indigenous populations are defined by international or national law as having specific rights based on historical aspects to a certain location and are culturally distinct from the prominent population of the nation in which the indigenous population is located.

Within this paper the global NGO that will be analyzed is Greenpeace International, because Greenpeace is a globally recognized NGO. Greenpeace conducts environmental activism projects all over the world and specifically Greenpeace's environmental activism in Indonesia will be analyzed to see how the projects are affecting the indigenous populations of Indonesia. The argument of this paper is that Greenpeace's environmental activism projects within Indonesia are not helping the indigenous populations of Indonesia. Greenpeace should help the indigenous populations within their environmental activism projects within Indonesia because the indigenous populations are directly affected by the destruction of the environment of Indonesia.

Literature Review

While environmental activism can protect ecosystems, it is important to determine whether or not environmental activism projects help or harm the indigenous populations of the countries where the projects are being conducted.

Proponents of environmental activism have argued that environmental activism helps indigenous populations. With many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) taking part in environmental activism projects, it has allowed for indigenous populations to take part in the expansion of globalization. “Environmentalists bring resources, the experience to organize political campaigns, and the ability to mobilize the support of governments and the media in rich countries. Indigenous groups bring their claims to lands on which they and their ancestors have always lived”, (Naim, 2003, pg. 95). As the environmental groups conduct work in various countries, they bring valuable resources and experience to the indigenous communities of these countries and that allows them to find their voices. The indigenous communities only have to bring their claim to their ancestral lands so then the environmental groups can help protect that land. As the various groups are participating in environmental activism activities within a country, that work helps to bring to light some of the major issues that the indigenous populations are facing. “Global and local activism have transformed intolerance for human rights violations, for ecological abuses, and for discrimination of any kind into increasingly universal standards among governments, multilateral bodies, NGOs, and the international media”, (Naim, 2003, pg. 95). With environmental work taking place, that work has helped to change people’s views of major issues that are taking place around the world.

In contrast, critics of environmental activism have identified several major issues that arise due to environmental activism projects,

Many populations have been ravaged by new diseases, by changes in the habitat, by forced displacement from their land, by civil wars, and by the need to adapt to drastically different habits and lifestyles (Naim, 2003). Even the increased attention of NGOs to the plight of indigenous peoples can backfire, when the agendas of large, powerful international organizations clash and often overwhelm smaller and weaker local groups, (Naim, 2003, pg. 95).

With all of these negative effects due to environmental activism projects, one must think of what is the lesser of two evils. To understand the balance of good and harm being done, it is important to look at world recognized NGOs in order to determine whether or not their environmental activism projects are helping or harming the indigenous populations of the countries in which they work. In particular, the world's largest environmental NGO, Greenpeace, has devoted considerable effort to the palm oil issue in Indonesia. In this thesis I describe the contents of Greenpeace's publications since 2004 on the palm oil issue, to answer the following question: How much does Greenpeace publicize the plight of indigenous people when discussing the palm oil crisis? This question will be answered through analysis of 8 Greenpeace publications, including 3 blogs, 4 reports, and a book. But first, it is important to understand the background of the palm oil issue itself.

Background information on the palm oil industry:

When conducting my research, I wanted to outline exactly what is happening to the indigenous populations of Indonesia. The images which are portrayed in regards to the palm oil industry are those of orphaned orangutans, tigers that have died stuck in traps because they couldn't get free, and acres of land that have been cleared to establish plantations. People around the world don't know that there are other atrocities occurring specifically against the indigenous populations of Indonesia that rely upon the natural rainforests for their livelihoods. The indigenous communities are being subjected to human rights violations and having their way of

living torn apart. In 2013 alone, Indonesia made a profit of \$19.1 billion just from the palm oil industry (Libraswulan, 2014, pg. 3).

The palm oil crisis started in 1967 when the New Order Regime came into power in the government of Indonesia. Once the New Order Regime came into power they designated 70% of the country's forests as state land. That action has been the root of all the land conflict issues because the government continues today to give permits to private agencies to clear land that is designated to be the land of indigenous populations (Johnson, 2015). In order to have their land protected, the indigenous populations need to have political backing but as is pointed out within this article, politicians in the New Order Regime only want supporters that can help fund their elections. The corporations within the palm oil industry are able to provide money to get their favorite politician into office or re-elected but the indigenous communities do not have the money to get someone into office that will protect them and their lands. Another issue that has arisen is that the Forestry division of the government does not have a map of the lands that they have given out permits for already, so there is overlap in land that is being handed out for permits. With the deforestation happening at a quicker rate, that leads to even more indigenous communities without homes and resources that they need. The corruption and land mapping for permits is argued to be the leading issues driving the palm oil crisis (Johnson, 2015).

Various newspapers have sent people to Indonesia to investigate what is happening on the ground in order to provide the world with information about how the palm oil industry is changing Indonesia. When the reporters arrive on the ground they conduct interviews with people from various indigenous communities to get their perspective on the palm oil industry and hear what is happening to their villages. Some of the incidents that were told to the reporters by members of the indigenous communities were that they would be gathering resources within

their forests and then they would have to flee because the forest would be on fire and spreading rapidly through the forest (Vidal, 2013). The communities had no warning that their forests were set to be cleared for plantations and that put these communities in direct danger due to the fire. Many of the indigenous peoples that were interviewed for the article said that they were willing to die to protect their forests because their communities rely heavily upon the forests for their livelihoods (Vidal, 2013, np).

Due to the rapid rate of deforestation, the indigenous people had to become plantation workers because the forests in which they relied upon for traditional ways of living have been destroyed and they have to go to local towns in order to get necessities to provide for their families. Living on the plantations did not provide the workers a sufficient standard of living. “The management would lock them in from 10 pm to 4 am. Neither electricity nor toilets were available, so they had to take a leak inside the house”, (Libraswulan, 2014, pg. 4). Laborers are put through harsh working conditions and are not provided with services that will allow them to maintain healthy living. The palm oil plantations are overseen by managers and the laborers are not guaranteed acceptable working and living conditions. “Laborers’ rights have been neglected by the company and state. The lack of appropriate health facilities and access to healthy food are common problems on the plantation”, (Libraswulan, 2014, pg. 5). Knowing that the plantation does not provide health services for their laborers adds more stress to the lives of the laborers because they have to be even more careful when they work because if they do become injured or ill then they know that they will not get the help that they need. The plantation workers are also in contact with many types of pesticides throughout their workdays that could lead to serious illness. The food that is provided to the workers by the plantation does not provide enough nutrition, so the workers could develop dietary issues that need to be examined by a doctor.

As the plantation workers are not being provided with adequate working/living conditions, the women and children of the villages are being taken advantage of. Women and children are being subjected to the sex/human trafficking industry that is being funded by the palm oil industry (Jiwan, 2012). In addition, there has been an increase in domestic violence towards women and children by the men of the households because of the stress of working on the plantations and an increase in the time it takes to do routine household chores because of the lack of access to clean water and other resources needed to conduct these chores (Jiwan, 2012). When traditional means of living are destroyed, that leaves the indigenous populations to try to develop a different way in which to go about their lives that will fit into the fast growing industries. People might say that it is progress to join the palm oil industry in Indonesia because then they can provide for their families and not have to rely on forests to provide for their families. But when traditional practices are destroyed then an aspect of that culture is lost and future generations will not know about any aspect of these practices/means of living. The indigenous populations were also the forest ambassadors when it came to protecting the forests because they would only take what they needed and made sure that the forests were not being destroyed. Indigenous people are forced to become workers for these large palm oil plantations but they do not receive enough money in order to provide for their families, this leads to the women and children having to join the plantations as workers as well. When the women and children join the men working on the plantations, they are not being paid for the labor that they do and if they do something wrong then a reduction in pay is placed against the man who is working for that family (Jiwan, 2012).

With the women and children having to join the men of their families on the plantations, the workers aren't being paid for their labor. "On payday, they did not receive their salaries

because the company deducted all their costs on their labor, such as transportation, food, and accommodation. So, they did not receive a salary for up to two years”, (Libraswulan, 2014, pg. 6). The plantations disregarded their workers for 2 years and used them as free labor because they knew that the workers wouldn’t leave with the promise of potentially making a lot of money from the palm oil industry. An increase in profits from the palm oil industry means that more money is coming into the plantations and that leads to the plantation laborers wanting more pay but the farmers do not want to pay their laborers more money so then they can have more money going into their pockets. “The increase in profit was in line with the escalation of social conflict (between laborers and farmers). Legal avenues are not available because of the absence of pro-labor/farmer regulations. Civil movements usually lead to the criminalization of laborers and farmers by individual police personnel and the military, who receive money from the company”, (Libraswulan, 2014, pg. 6). With the lack of any type of legal avenue for laborers and farmers, they have to resort to civil movements in order to have their voices heard by the Indonesian government and the palm oil companies. By having civil movements, the indigenous people are bringing the issues they face forward because they hold their movements where everyone can see and hear them.

The palm oil industry makes over \$7 billion per year (Pye, 2012, pg.10) because palm oil is used in many items that are used globally such as Girl Scout cookies, many dish soaps, chocolate, pizza dough, laundry soap, and other such products. Even though large profits are being made, the workers at these plantations are not seeing the return in their labor. The workers are putting in almost 12 hours a day of labor on these plantations and are not being paid a living wage because the palm oil companies want to retain more of the profit. With the added stress of receiving low wages for long hours of labor, this stress has taken a toll on the indigenous

populations. “An increase in time and effort to carry out domestic chores through the loss of access to clean and adequate water and fuelwood, an increase in medical costs due to loss of access to medicinal plants obtained from gardens and forests, loss of food and income from home gardens and cropping areas, loss of indigenous knowledge and sociocultural systems, and an increase in domestic violence against women and children due to increased social and economic stresses”, (Jiwan, 2012, pg.69). The palm oil industry does not just affect one aspect of the lives of the indigenous populations of Indonesia, but rather all aspects of their lives.

With the alteration of traditional ways of living, indigenous populations are eager to join the palm oil industry because they are told that palm oil represents an easy way to make money because of the international demand for palm oil. The palm oil companies are taking advantage of that eagerness and exploiting the indigenous people’s resources so then they can get the better deal. “While detailed legislative processes govern the location of oil palm development in Indonesia, the means by which this occurs, i.e. the particular deals offered to communities, vary significantly. Variation in the amount of land given up to the company in relation to that received back as an oil palm smallholding, the amount of debt that the farmer must pay back for the planting of oil palm on the area of land retained, as well as the time period over which this must be done were the main factors characterizing variation in deals within and across our study sites and their associated financial outcomes”, (Rist, Feintrenie, & Levang 2010, pg.1011). As outlined in the previous quote, the palm oil companies are trying to obtain the best possible deal for them while destroying the farmer’s chances of succeeding within the palm oil industry.

The United Nations has established regulations protecting indigenous populations all over the world but the government of Indonesia is not upholding the regulations that the United Nations has established.

The Indonesian Constitution recognizes the rights of the indigenous communities to their customary lands, livelihoods, and systems of law and government, but in practice these rights have been routinely ignored and violated by government and industry. The right of indigenous peoples to control developments on their customary lands was confirmed in 2007 by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and today governments and businesses around the world are being challenged to fulfill this commitment, (Anderson, 2012, pg.244).

Indonesia itself has outlined within its constitution the rights that these indigenous populations have to their native lands but as Anderson (2012) discusses, the Indonesian government routinely ignores this. The rights of indigenous people are not just being ignored within Indonesia, but all over the world the rights of indigenous populations are being ignored. In response, the United Nations created the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In regards to the Indonesian government ignoring the constitutional rights of the indigenous populations, AMAN (the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago) has been established to help. “AMAN is assisting its membership to map their territories so that these communities are better able to assert their rights to their customary lands and demand that governments do not hand out permits for oil palm development covering their territories without their consent”, (Anderson, 2012, pg.245). When the government does not protect the livelihoods of indigenous people, the indigenous people must take actions themselves in order to establish any ground for change against the palm oil companies.

Even though the constitution of Indonesia, acknowledges the rights and lives of the indigenous populations of Indonesia, the stipulation there is that the Indonesian government is

the one power who determines who has rights. “The original Indonesian Constitution of 1945 - a legacy of Indonesia’s own colonization by the Dutch - contains language that on the one hand demands respect for the legitimacy of the customary rights of indigenous communities while, on the other hand, bestows power upon the state to manage and regulate the use of national resources as it sees fit”, (Brainard, 2011, pg.171). The constitution of Indonesia leads to tension amongst the government and the indigenous communities because the decision is up to the Indonesian government to determine whether there are still indigenous communities and whether they have rights to practice their traditional lifestyles and use the forests to obtain their resources. Under the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples, there are still indigenous communities living within Indonesia but the Indonesian government has to formally recognize these communities in order to protect their rights and allow them to continue their traditional lifestyles.

There are many instances in which researchers have found that within the constitution of Indonesia, the rights of indigenous peoples are outlined but the government does not reinforce or protect the rights outlined within the constitution. Even though the rights of the indigenous communities are outlined within the Indonesian constitution, there are laws created by the Indonesian government that undermine the rights of the indigenous peoples. “Other laws provide only weak recognition of customary rights and allow government agencies a great deal of discretion in deciding whether to respect them or not”, (Colchester, et al, 2006, pg. 13). The purpose of this quote is to show that the Indonesian government will undermine their own constitution so then they do not have to recognize the indigenous communities that call Indonesia home. Several case studies were conducted and written about within this publication to better inform the Indonesian government and the general public on how the laws that are in place by

the Indonesian government need to be improved in order to protect the rights of the people living within Indonesia. “Assess the extent to which these laws are adhered to and effectively protect the interests and rights of communities and indigenous peoples”, (Colchester, 2006, pg.13). Having outlined the issues that lay within the laws that the Indonesian government have made and passed, helps to inform the outside world of what is actually occurring in this developing nation that has 60 to 90 million people living in and around forests and who are considered indigenous populations. With resources that outline the issues that are within Indonesia, those issues help large NGOs focus their action plans on specific issues in order to help protect the indigenous communities of Indonesia.

Methods

The original plan was to conduct interviews with several experts from Greenpeace in order to get their insight into the work that Greenpeace is doing within Indonesia, but unfortunately no Greenpeace personnel made themselves available to be interviewed. In order to conduct research on how Greenpeace discusses indigenous rights in the context of the palm oil crisis, I analyzed blogs, reports, and pamphlets authored by Greenpeace over the past 10 years. I analyzed these documents to determine the content of the messages being conveyed. Results are described below. Several publications from Greenpeace were analyzed ranging from blogs that they have written to actual printed work that they handed out to the public in order to spread the message of what is happening within Indonesia. When reading the Greenpeace publications, the ratio of how large the publication was to how much indigenous populations were discussed.

Findings

Analysis of Greenpeace publications about palm oil in Indonesia indicate a relatively small amount of text about the indigenous populations of Indonesia, compared to the ecological

issues. To begin with it is very hard to find any publications by Greenpeace that are directly related to the indigenous populations of Indonesia. After searching through publications and blog posts by Greenpeace, there was only 8 publications and blog posts that briefly mentioned or were solely devoted to talking about the indigenous populations of Indonesia. Within these publications and blogs that briefly mentioned the indigenous populations, there were only roughly 5% of text that mentioned anything regarding the indigenous populations of Indonesia. (see Table 1)

Table 1. Frequency of Indigenous Rights Coverage in Greenpeace Publications

Publication Title	Year of Publication	Main Themes	Total Page Length	Pages Devoted to Indigenous Peoples' Rights
Good Oil: A Solution to Destructive Industrial-scale Oil Palm Plantations	Not Listed	This article looks at the Dosan village in Indonesia that was given a government started palm oil plantation and how the village has been successful running this plantation without outside help.	This was an online publication that did not have page numbers. Word Count: 946	None of the text talked about indigenous peoples' rights.
Indonesia's Forests in Crisis	January 2004	Destruction of the Indonesian forests, global impacts of forest destruction.	4	1/3 of 1 page
7 Steps Companies Must Take to Stop Deforestation	April 2014	The steps in which large corporations need to take in order to protect the forests of Indonesia.	This was a blog post and did not have page numbers. Word Count: 1161	One of the 7 steps addressed how corporations need to protect/involve

				the indigenous populations.
Cutting Deforestation Out of Palm Oil	March 2016	How there is lots of work to be done before corporations that buy palm oil will stop deforestation practices.	This was an online publication that did not have page numbers. Word count: 249	There was no mention of indigenous populations in this publication.
Under Fire Indonesia's fire crisis is a test of corporate commitment to forest protection	November 2015	What is happening within Indonesia in regards to the massive forests fires and how laws are being ignored that prevent deforestation.	38	The only time they mentioned indigenous populations is when they showed a picture of children playing outside in the smog and it was only a little caption for the picture.
In Indonesia, a new tool helps communities protect their land from fire	March 2016	Discusses how indigenous people's land is being destroyed by fire and how a new mapping technology is helping to protect their forests.	It was an online publication that didn't have page numbers. Word count: 686	The majority of this publication focused on indigenous community's rights in order to protect their forests from destruction.
Meet the Indonesians taking climate action into their own hands	December 2015	It analyzes how Indonesians are taking a stand against deforestation.	This was a blog post so there was no page numbers. Word Count: 690	The entire blog was talking about indigenous people trying to take a stand against deforestation.
Down to Zero How Greenpeace is ending deforestation in Indonesia:	June 2013	This talks about all the work that Greenpeace has been doing to end deforestation	116	Combined roughly 5 pages throughout this publication talk about working with the indigenous

2003-2013 and beyond		mainly from 2003-2013.		communities but it's very short little sections.
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Through the various publications, there were only a small handful that talked about the indigenous populations of Indonesia. The most prominent mentions were in the blog post from 2015, which focused entirely on local efforts to fight deforestation. But in the other publications, mentions ranged from 0% to 1 in 12.

Greenpeace has published various writings about the palm oil crisis within Indonesia and how it is affecting the biodiversity of Indonesia, but within those publications they only briefly mention the implications regarding the indigenous communities that rely on the forests. One of Greenpeace's publications *Indonesia's Forests in Crisis* was published for Earth Day in 2004. Throughout this publication Greenpeace tries to appeal to the reader's logical side because they present all sides of the palm oil argument. There is a section includes one page within this four-page publication that mentions the indigenous communities and how they are being affected by the deforestation due to the palm oil industry. Outlined in the small section in this publication, Greenpeace only talks about how the rights of indigenous peoples are outlined in the Indonesian constitution but the government does not acknowledge these rights. Greenpeace also mentions how corporations are exceeding their logging limits that the government has laid out for each corporation. In this section there is no mention of the floods, water pollution, the expelling of indigenous communities from their land and how they have to join the palm oil industry, or the human rights violations that the indigenous populations have to endure due to the palm oil industry.

In a blog entitled *7 steps companies must take to stop deforestation by Joao Talocchi*, (2014) outlined are the steps in which companies that operate in Indonesia regarding the palm oil

industry need to take in order to stop deforestation. One of the steps that Greenpeace outlines is that companies need to operate in a way that will benefit the indigenous communities that rely on the forests that are being sought for clearing by corporations. Greenpeace established an initiative entitled “forest friendly” that the corporations need to follow in order to allow the indigenous communities to benefit from the expansion of palm oil. “To be ‘forest friendly’ a company needs to guarantee that its products are not fueling social conflicts, as land grabs and violations of human and labor rights”, (Talocchi, 2014, np). This is the first mention of protecting human and labor rights that I have found in a Greenpeace publication. Having Greenpeace outline in their ‘forest friendly’ initiative that corporations must protect the human and labor rights of the indigenous populations is a huge step towards protecting the rights of the indigenous populations. Another key component of the ‘forest friendly’ initiative is “It must also ensure smallholders inclusion and guarantee communities and indigenous groups the right to give or withhold their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for developments in their lands,” (Talocchi, 2014, np). By allowing the indigenous communities to have say over their lands and allowing them to have stakes within the palm oil company, it allows these communities to be the decision makers of their forests. Respecting the free, prior, and informed consent of the indigenous communities allows their livelihoods to be protected. Greenpeace’s ‘forest friendly’ initiative is holding all the corporations that take part in the palm oil industry to a higher standard because if Greenpeace does not stand up for the indigenous communities, then these communities may lose their forests and be exploited for cheap labor.

There was a book published by Greenpeace titled *Down to Zero: Greenpeace’s promise to end Deforestation in Indonesia 2003-2013*. Within this book Greenpeace discusses all of the work that they have done to end deforestation practices within Indonesia. Throughout this book

Greenpeace outlined the work that they have done throughout Indonesia and the projects they have done with the indigenous populations of Indonesia. Some of the work that Greenpeace talks about in this book is that they have taught the indigenous communities how to stop forest fires so then the indigenous communities can protect their villages from the fire dangers. Another skill in which the Greenpeace workers have taught the indigenous communities is how to build dams. Greenpeace said that there is a need to build dams in the rivers in order to prevent water contamination because the water runoff from the palm oil plantations is riddled with harmful chemicals. Creating dams within the rivers helps to protect water that the indigenous communities rely upon. Teaching these skills to the indigenous communities helps them to have a way to protect their homes and the well-being of their communities. In this book several small sections totaling about 5 pages talk about the indigenous communities of Indonesia.

Another Greenpeace publication talks about work that they have done with one of the indigenous villages of Indonesia. This publication outlines the problems this village faced, the solution to the problems, and how the village is doing after the implementation of the solution. The Dosan village is the village of focus within this publication. This village is only accessible by boat and the villagers heavily relied upon the forest and river system for the resources that both provide. As Greenpeace states, “Promises of economic development and jobs to local communities have not come true for many”, (Good Oil, np). These promises are made to the indigenous communities by the palm oil plantations but in the end the villagers do not see any of the benefits from the palm oil industry. The Dosan village was the turning point in having local villages run palm oil plantations,

In the early 2000s, the Siak District Government along with a state-owned plantation company, set up an oil palm smallholder scheme that resulted in the

developed plantation being handed over to local community cooperatives. Since 2008 the Dosan community has managed the plantation itself, allowing the profits to return to the village, while also providing full employment, (Good Oil, np).

This is a clear solution to the palm oil industry that has allowed the indigenous communities to be in control of everything. By allowing the local village to have control over the plantation, it allows the people of the village to decide how the money will be managed and allows the villagers to protect the environment better because they decide how to grow the plantation. “The Dosan community has committed to protecting its forests and moving to improved environmental management practices that include zero burning, no herbicide use and improved water management to maintain the peatland water system”, (Good Oil, np). Indigenous communities are the ones who are directly affected by the palm oil industry, so by allowing them to run a plantation and be in charge of environmental practices creates a greater responsibility for them because whatever they do directly affects them. Greenpeace says that due to the success of the Dosan village, the smallholder scheme is starting to be implemented throughout the rest of the country in order to allow the other indigenous communities to have control of their own palm oil plantations.

Local communities are the forest and environmental guardians - they have the most at stake and rely on a healthy functioning ecosystem. In turn, they can provide an example of how growing oil palms with greater local control can provide benefits to communities and environmental outcomes including reduced greenhouse gas emissions, (Good Oil, np).

This quote outlines just how important it is to allow the indigenous communities to be in control of the palm oil industry. By having a strong thriving solution to go about the palm oil industry, it

allows for change to occur and better help the indigenous communities of Indonesia. These three publications are only some of the publications produced by Greenpeace on the topic of palm oil.

Discussion

Greenpeace is one of the largest NGOs in the world. When people hear Greenpeace they think of all of the radical environmental movements that have been plastered all over the media and the memorable ads that Greenpeace itself produces. Greenpeace is one of the world's largest opponents to the palm oil industry. The argument they make is not that the palm oil itself is bad but the practices in which plantations are created, how the palm oil is cultivated, and how the palm oil plantations go about doing their business regarding the palm oil are bad. Many of the publications produced by Greenpeace outline the environmental degradation that follows the palm oil industry. There have been extensive wildfires that lead to greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. These fires are occurring due to palm oil companies setting fire to the forests of Indonesia in order to clear them more quickly in order to start a new palm oil plantation. All of these fires lead to massive air pollution of neighboring countries such as Singapore. Greenpeace also likes to shine a light on the loss of biodiversity in Indonesia due to the palm oil industry. Many of the images that are shown to the public are those of orphaned orangutans and tigers that got stuck in a trap and died because they could not get out. Those images invoke emotions within people because everyone wants to help the animals that cannot defend themselves. If Greenpeace were to show images of indigenous people working on the palm oil plantations, they might not generate as strong of a response as the animal images.

I believe that large NGOs such as Greenpeace should start campaigns to bring to light the atrocities that are occurring to the indigenous people of Indonesia. Greenpeace already has successful campaigns to save the orangutans. If they were to start a campaign about the

indigenous people of Indonesia, then that could possibly lead to a movement of people who will petition the Indonesian government to formally recognize and protect the rights of the indigenous populations that live within Indonesia.

When looking at the Dosan village, that village is a prime example of what can be done in order to provide the indigenous people of Indonesia with a means for partaking in the palm oil industry. The Dosan village is running their own plantation without the help of the Indonesian government and the villagers are the people on the ground protecting the environment and working in sustainable ways. Dosan villagers are all involved in the process of running the palm oil plantation that they were given by the government. Through small steps taken by the government, a village has been able to thrive and provide a strong economy within this remote village. It has been eight years since the palm oil plantation was handed over to the Dosan village for them to run and today it is still a productive plantation.

Conclusion

While environmental activism is often successful at calling attention to ecological issues, effects on indigenous populations are mixed. Environmental activism allows indigenous populations of countries access to resources that they wouldn't otherwise have access to. The downside though is that some of the very remote villages of indigenous populations get ravaged by disease brought in by the environmental activists and sometimes the environmental activists push their agenda ahead of what is actually going to help the indigenous populations of the country that they are working in. Palm oil is one of the most versatile vegetable oils that is produced today and can grow quickly, that is why palm oil production is growing at a fast rate. Scientists are trying to develop a biofuel made specifically from palm oil due to the versatility and growth rate.

The palm oil plantations though are involved in illegal practices and do not treat their workers fairly. Some palm oil plantations are involved in human and sex trafficking and subjecting workers to deplorable working/living conditions. With Greenpeace being one of the largest environmental activism groups in the world, Greenpeace could enact change in order to help the indigenous people of Indonesia. Greenpeace has shown that there is a solution to the palm oil industry by the local governments establishing palm oil plantations and then handing over those plantations to the local villages for those villagers to run. If Greenpeace were to help push this solution forward and help more villages like the Dosan village have their own plantations, then that will allow for the corrupt plantation owners to be cut out of the picture and allow the indigenous populations to have their own economy. By creating this change within Indonesia, it may allow us to create change in other nations that face similar challenges.

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