

Idolize Earth More

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**Summary-** Idle No More is an activist campaign and is one of the largest Indigenous mass movements in Canadian history. The people who are a part of this are reaching out to the public to join their revolution in honoring and building their indigenous sovereignty. Their land and water must be protected by industries and the government because they are harming their environment.

## **Idolize Earth More**

### **Introduction**

Idle No More is an activist campaign that was formed around October and November 2012 in Canada by its founders Jessica Gordon, Sylvia McAdam, Sheelah McLean, Nina Wilson, and Erica Lee. This grassroots movement is reaching out to the public to join in on their revolution. These activists are trying to protect their land and water against degradation, build sovereignty and resurgence of nationhood, pressure the government and industry to protect the land with them, and build allies with different nations by grassroots perspectives, issues, and concerns. Canada is one of the wealthiest countries when it comes to the use of land and resources. Their logging, mining, and oil and fishing companies are the most powerful compared to all other countries in the world. However, even though some of the poorest First Nations communities have the perfect land and resources for mines and other developments, they do not get a share of the profit. This has caused their lands and waters poisoned and their animals and plants struggling to survive.

Losing these important resources is not only killing plants and animals, but could kill the people who call these places home. The government has not been keeping their promises and has been going against their word to get what they want while the First Nations suffer. A bill that was introduced to the Prime Minister called Bill C-45 was categorized as Jobs and Growth and it included the expansion of tar sands production on protected lands and waterways which are located on and near the First Nations reservations. The Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, did not speak to anyone who opposed the bill due to the environmental impacts and treaty violations. These people are fighting to live while the government is trying to take that

away from them. Idle No More should continue what they are doing in order to gain respect and equality from the government and industries and should keep forming and building relationships with multiple nations. They are making an impact and are being heard about this crisis despite of the unfair government through their actions, support systems, rallies, responses, etc.

### **The Support System**

Los Angeles, London, Minneapolis, New York, and many other international cities all shared and discussed their support for Theresa Spence, the Chief of the Attawapiskat Nation, when she went on a hunger strike for 43 days straight when the Prime Minister refused to meet with her to discuss his broken promises. The strike ended because there was political progress that was made. There have even been supporters as far away as New Zealand and the Middle East. Protests all around the world has broken out in order to defend Idle No More, such as flash mobs which have become increasingly popular in North America. There have also been marches and highway blockades all across Canada.

### **The Effects on the United States**

Many could think that this is only affecting Canada; however, it is also affecting the United States as well. North Dakota is on the border of Canada and the Canadian Parliament approved the creation of tar sands which will line up with the American state. The residents in North Dakota are almost in the same state of pain that Canada is going through. Since the treaties to protect the land was very long ago, it has limited the power of the people who call these reservations home. Now, their land is being destroyed right in front of their eyes and they feel as if they cannot do anything about it. Not only is their land and everything they have known are being taken away from them, but their health is deteriorating as well. Building these tar sands is

putting bad chemicals in the air that can cause asthma and cancer. This toxic air can spread and can and will hurt residents of not only Canada, but of the United States of America.

### **Crisis Response**

Crisis responses depend on three things; the public and political environment, the culture and the inner workings of the organization, and human nature. Idle No More addressed bills that would concern the public and political environment. The campaign reached out to the public, gained their awareness, and they joined in on the fight to save Indigenous land and resources that will be ruined. They have turned to the courts to argue about bills that were violated by the government. Courts usually tend to rule favorably on treaty right cases. The protests are usually peaceful because Idle No More is a grassroots approach and they only want to bring their problems of their living conditions to the public's attention. They want aboriginals to gain control over their natural resources instead of having it be taken away. These are their homes and food and water supply that are being destroyed. This also ties in with the human nature of the crisis. This is how these people are; they are not looking for fights, just peace. They like to protest using drums, feathers, and dancing; no violence and they will continue doing it this way because they really are not doing anything wrong.

### **How Others Respond**

When it comes to how people respond, I believe they are more learning favorable. When it comes to the Idle No More campaign people are very moved and touched and have a lot to say. However, they do not do much about the issue. People want to help in this situation because it will affect the world someday, but I think they do not know what steps to take in order to make a

difference. Also, people could feel as if they cannot make a difference, especially if they do not live near this crisis.

### **Types of Crises**

There are four types of crises and the ones that relate to Idle No More are mechanical problems, human error, and management decisions and actions. There have been mechanical problems in Greenpeace Canada where about 1.5 million barrels of tar sands have leaked. These leaks continue in multiple places and can ruin land and drinking water. There have even been leaks in Arkansas. This leads to human error. People are building too many pump stations, and with these increasing the pressure and flow in the pipe rises causing it to possibly rupture. The main problem is management decision and actions. All they care about is money and oil and not our land or water. They believe that we won't know about the rules they are breaking in order to get what they want. The Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper has gone against multiple bills that were passed that would protect Indigenous land.

### **Digital Crisis Management**

Digital crisis management essentials include; micromedia, sharing, and editorial. Within six hours, people who are aware of the crisis right away, such as people, news reporters, or police from the homeland, post their stories about what just happened with the Idle No More campaign. Then, it about 12 hours, it becomes more exposed because multiple people are now seeing what is going on from their peers. They begin sharing these short stories or posting videos about what is happening and it is slowly becoming worldwide. Lastly, once a whole day goes by, people have more information and their stories are being posted on Google, Yahoo, and Facebook pages. Idle No More became a hit and so didn't Attawapiskat First Nation Chief

Theresa Spence for going on a hunger strike. Spence was getting positive attention worldwide because people began sharing her story and posting about it where it became such a big deal that news reporters were interested.

### **The Anti-fracking Protest**

Similar to Idle No More's campaign; an anti-fracking protest in New Brunswick, Canada broke loose on October 17, 2013 when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) showed up on the highway that they protested on to put an end to it. The Elsipogtog and Mi'kmaq First Nation has been upset over the exploration of shale gas on their region by the Houston, Texas based energy company SWN Resources Canada, a subsidiary of Southwestern Energy. These people have been taking a stand to protect their land because the shale gas instillations, also known as hydraulic fracturing will pollute their fresh drinking water. On the day of protest, the RCMP showed up with their dogs, pepper spray, tear gas, and rifles. The aboriginals from First Nation groups planned for a peaceful movement, but there were shots fired, police cars were set on fire, women were attacked, and chaos stirring and about 40 people, including their Chief Aaron Sock for the use of firearms, threats, intimidation, mischief, and violating a court order injunction. The Idle No More campaign has been an influence for these Indigenous people because they must save their land and natural resources.

### **Conclusion**

The Idle No More movement should continue what they are doing to become heard and supported. This is a perfect example of an activist campaign because the Indigenous people of Canada are taking active approaches to get what they want and deserve. Idle No More is not a quiet campaign, the people who are a part of it are opposing and protesting and going straight to

the government to argue what they have to say. Social media has been extremely helpful and powerful to get the word out about the issues Canada is facing. Reaching out on Facebook, Twitter, and blogs have gotten the word out to many different countries and young activists as well. These social networks are bringing everyone together to fight for the rights of the land and water in Canada. Using flash mobs are also a perfect example of being an activist because they are getting directly involved with the campaign and making a statement by attracting attention. If Idle No More continues gaining different nation's support, I think they will make a huge statement to the government of Canada. If many places feel this strongly about this issue, then it could open their eyes to alternative decisions on how to make profit, see that they are actually hurting their country more than doing any good, and to actually gain respect for the Indigenous residents who live on the land they want to destroy.

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