

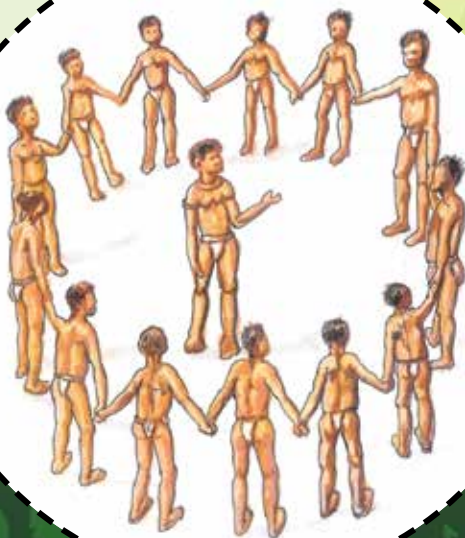
The Circle / Triangle Story



**How Outsiders Destroy Communities
and Steal Our Land.**

Story by the Melanesian Indigenous Land Defence Alliance
Illustrated by Apa Tengere

1.



In the traditional Circle System everyone stands together, facing their community leader in the centre. The leader serves the people and everyone is united in traditional values and customary processes and practice.

Issues are discussed and all decisions affecting the community are made collectively and by consensus.

Livelihoods are based around utilising customary land and sharing.

2.



The Outsider arrives with his economic system of unrestrained greed.

He tries to penetrate the circle so he can get control of LAND to increase his own wealth.

He finds it difficult, because the people have strong bonds and are focused on the leader, in the centre. People are single-minded and are satisfied with their traditional 'PNG way' of doing things.

3.



The Outsider decides that it is no use trying to break the circle by force, because he is viewed with suspicion and faces strong opposition.

He decides instead to approach individual MEN in the circle and offer them “alternatives” to their “primitive” ways.

He walks around the circle trying to entice one man after another.

4.

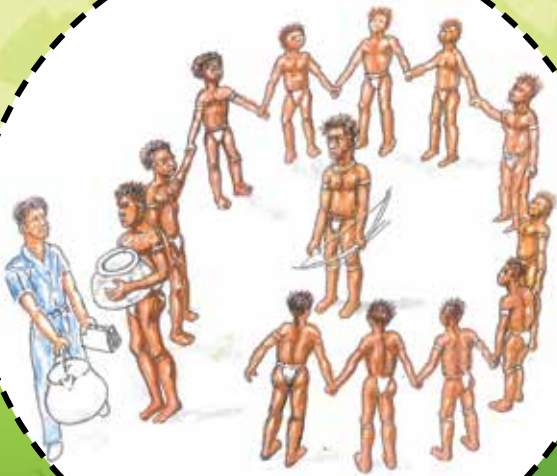


To the first man, he shows a steel axe and how to use it, saying it is more effective than a stone axe.

He tries to convince the man, telling him he has more steel tools in his homeland. He asks the man if he would like to go to the Outsider's home.

The man lets go of the hands he has always held and turns his back on the leader and the community.

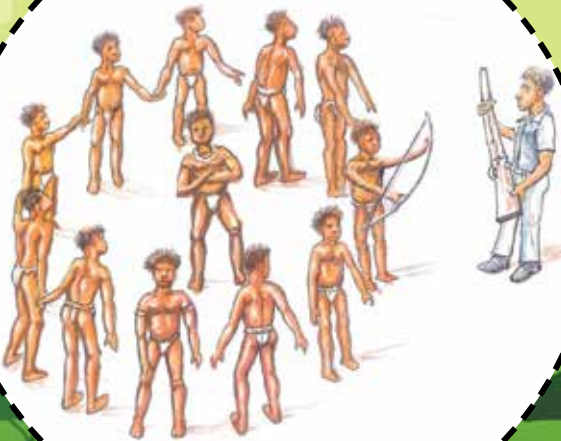
5.



The Outsider now repeats the process, approaching different men in the circle and offering them 'gifts'.

He offers the bible in place of spiritual relationships and bonding with Nature. He offers metal pots, plates and cutlery in place of clay pots and wooden bowls and spoons.

6.



The Outsider offers guns in place of bows and arrows. He offers knitted clothing in place of grass skirts and bark/tapa cloth. He offers beer and alcoholic spirits in place of buai. He offers canned food in place of fresh vegetables, meat and fish.

7.



Every man the outsider bribes, lets go of the hands of the other people in his community circle and turns his back on them.

The men now stand facing outwards, towards the outsider.

8.



The Outsider can now enter the circle through the gaps left by the men he has bribed. He approaches the leader and entices him with 'gifts'. Once the leader receives the gifts the Outsider asks him for LAND.

The leader gives him the land in exchange for trips to the Outsider's home.

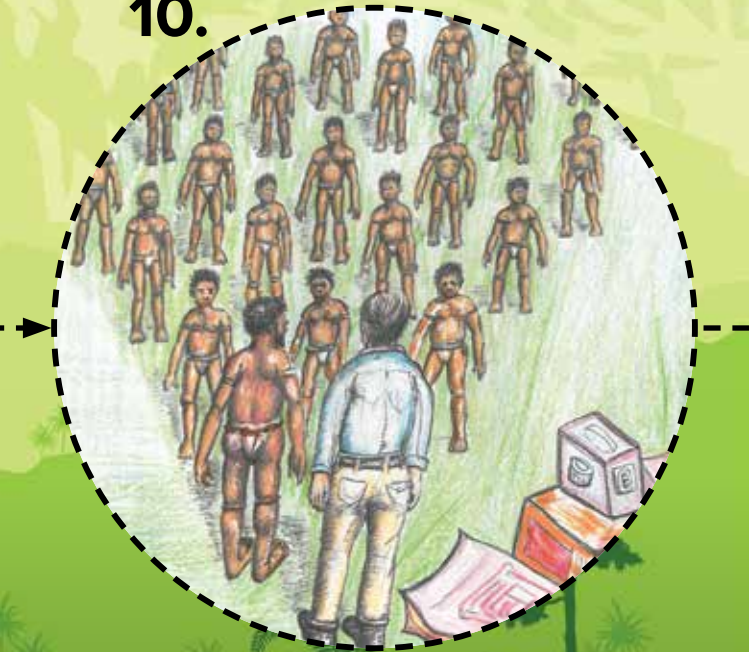
9.



Now there are gaps in the circle and there is no longer a strong reinforcement holding everyone together.

Only the women are left to keep the community together by growing food, selling produce and looking after the children.

10.

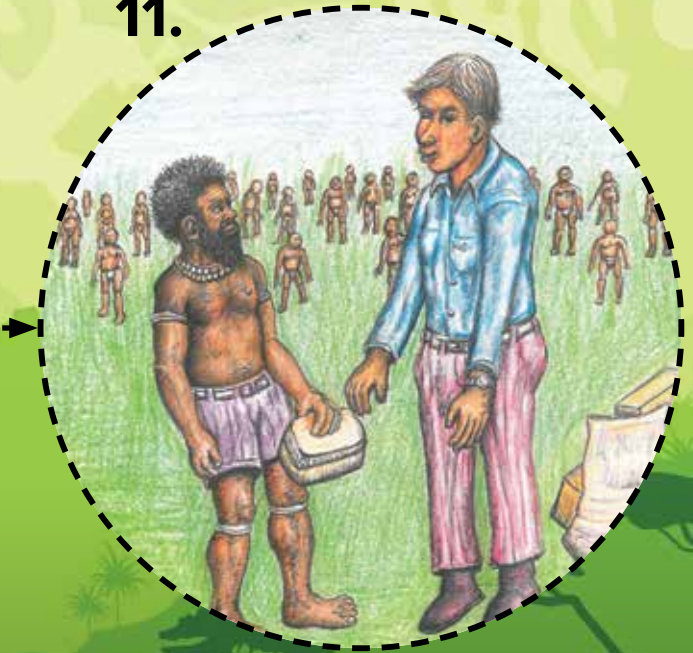


The Outsider goes back to his land and returns with more 'gifts'.

He dismantles the CIRCLE, takes the leader from the centre and forms the foreign governance system in the shape of a TRIANGLE.

He places the leader and his associates at the peak of the triangle and everyone else in a descending order to the bottom.

11.



The Outsider now has everyone's LAND in his control. He hands out gifts to the leader from time to time, but the wealth is accumulated at the top of the triangle and never trickles down to everyone else.

Most of the community are left watching from a distance.

Is this good development? Which system is better? The one where everyone has enough land to provide for their families? Or the system where only a small group at the top of the triangle have more than they need, and others are left landless and hungry?