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Follow-up on the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Study on how the knowledge, history and contemporary social circumstances of indigenous peoples are embedded in the curricula of education systems

Note by the secretariat

Summary

Pursuant to a decision of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its eleventh session (see E/2012/43, para. 105), the Permanent Forum appointed Myrna Cunningham and Álvaro Pop, members of the Forum, to conduct a study on how the knowledge, history and contemporary social circumstances of indigenous peoples are embedded in the curricula of education systems. That study is presented below at the twelfth session of the Permanent Forum.

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* E/C.19/2013/1.

Study on how the knowledge, history and contemporary social circumstances of indigenous peoples are embedded in the curricula of education systems

I. Introduction

1. The initiatives and proposals of the indigenous peoples regarding education have addressed a number of areas: curricular reform, respect for endogenous teaching, the use of indigenous languages, teacher education and training, the preparation of culturally acceptable teaching aids, and other topics. However, the core demand has been for education that, at every level and in all its guises, serves to preserve, foster and develop their diverse cultures and is designed, implemented and executed by the indigenous peoples themselves. That position is in line with the rights recognized in various human rights instruments and with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

2. One of the activities carried out for this study, with the support of the Indigenous Intercultural University attached to the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples (Indigenous Peoples Fund), was a meeting in Managua on 9 and 10 November 2012. Participating in the meeting were representatives of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast (URACCAN), the Amawtay Wasi University, the International Indigenous Women's Forum, the "Campinta Guazu Gloria Pérez" Institute of Intercultural Higher Education in Argentina, the Advanced School of Comprehensive Intercultural Education of Oaxaca, the German Agency for International Cooperation, the Indigenous Peoples Fund, Saúl Vicente and Myrna Cunningham.

3. This study summarizes experiences and learning processes relating to education, promoted by indigenous peoples in connection with their collective yearning to overcome poverty and social exclusion and to boost their knowledge, strengthen their institutions and increase their ability to govern themselves and to negotiate both within and outside their communities for the conditions needed to implement the indigenous peoples' goal of development with culture, identity and self-determination.

II. Presentation

4. Access to education for indigenous peoples as a human right has been amply documented (A/HRC/EMRIP/2009/2). Access, retention, permanence and graduation indicators — whenever the available data are broken down by ethnicity — show that there are gaps between the indigenous and the rest of the population.[1,2] This study attempts to analyze accessibility from a comprehensive point of view, paying particular attention to cultural accessibility. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has pointed out, in this

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[1] Guillette, Hall and Patrinos, Harry (2010). *Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Human Development in Latin America: 1994-2004 (Executive Summary)*. World Bank.

[2] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Regional Monitoring Report on Progress Toward Quality Education for All in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2012).

regard, that among the indigenous peoples educational inequality is manifested in two ways: (a) in exclusion from, or difficulty accessing, the system; and (b) the failure to incorporate either cultural diversity or specific cultural characteristics into the contents of what is taught and in overall teaching strategies. As ECLAC itself points out, in the case of the indigenous peoples, access and coverage are clearly just the starting point, if educational equality is to be achieved. They have to be supplemented with quality, efficiency and relevance in the educational system, that is to say, they have to be imbued with an intercultural approach.

5.   The question of quality in education was taken up in the Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which points out that for indigenous peoples the quality of education is reflected in the extent to which it embodies their cultures, languages, and value, and that, for that to come about, the curricula must either be based on the beliefs and cultural values of the indigenous peoples or adequately reflect them (A/HRC/EMRIP/2009/2). That also presupposes the participation of professionally qualified persons (*los letrados*) in formal training.

6.   Now, indigenous peoples are distinguished from the rest of society precisely because they maintain cultural practices and life styles based on their traditional knowledge, their vision of the world and their spirituality. Their knowledge systems are dynamic: they innovate from within; they encompass all aspects of community and global life; they are linked to management of the natural environment; they are cumulative and represent generations of experiences, careful observation and constant experimentation; but they also use and qualitatively adapt outside knowledge. When experiences work, they are built into collective knowledge. The territory and natural environment make one people's knowledge unique and different from another's.

7.   Language and reliance on oral tradition has been an effective collective mechanism for transmitting indigenous knowledge and shaping the indigenous peoples' cultures. That does not, however, necessarily mean eschewing the practice of writing down and systematizing knowledge, know-how, insights and practices so as to share them with others.

8.   When an indigenous people is capable of controlling its collective cultural heritage it achieves dignity for its members, lays the foundations needed to protect that heritage, and develops the ability to share its cultural manifestations with other peoples, thereby taking the first step toward the forging of intercultural relations.

9.   Within communities and peoples, individual and collective roles and responsibilities are distributed in such a way as to maintain collective control of the cultural heritage. Certain people are responsible for generating new knowledge, others are responsible for communicating with the spirits, and authorities ensure respect for community rules; stones, roots, leaves, and water also play a role, complementing the others. Community rules also establish the role of the bearers of gifts and knowledge. The ways in which knowledge is transmitted, shared and passed from one generation to another are recognized and respected in the community. So each people has its own educational system.

10.   Within that context, the indigenous peoples consider that a school education can help systematize traditional knowledge and make it more accessible and adaptable to the conditions the communities find themselves in today.

III. The knowledge, history and circumstances of the indigenous peoples in human rights instruments

11. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the right of indigenous peoples to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs, including the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures. It also recognizes the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations, inter alia, their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures. To ensure the above, the same Declaration proclaims the right of indigenous peoples to have the diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations appropriately reflected in education. Following are some of the rights that are germane to this issue:

   a. The right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs (Article 11);

   b. The right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; to maintain and protect their religious and cultural sites. (Article 12);

   c. The right to revitalize, use develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures (Article 13);

   d. The right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources (Article 25);

   e. The right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures; and to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions (Article 31).

12. The Declaration also establishes the right of indigenous individuals to have access to education in their own culture and language (Article 14). It is important, also, to point out that the Declaration recognizes the right of indigenous peoples and individuals not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture and that States must provide effective mechanisms for preventing any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities (Article 8).

13. Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organization establishes that Governments shall have the responsibility for developing, with the participation of the peoples concerned, coordinated and systematic action to protect the rights of these peoples and to guarantee respect for their integrity, including in such action promoting the full realisation of the social, economic and cultural rights of these peoples with respect for their social and cultural identity, their customs and traditions and their institutions (Article 2), as well as special measures, as appropriate, for safeguarding the persons, institutions, property, labour, cultures and environment of the indigenous peoples (Article 4).

14.   The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has recognized that the right to education in one's mother tongue is fundamental for the preservation and growth of culture and identity and for cultural and linguistic diversity (E/2010/43, para. 9). The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2005 recognizes the importance of indigenous cultures and, in particular, the contributions made by indigenous knowledge systems to sustainable development. Article 7 of the Convention proposes creating an environment which encourages individuals and groups to create, produce, disseminate, and distribute their own cultural expressions, and have access to them, paying due attention to the circumstances and needs of different social groups, including indigenous peoples.

15.   UNESCO also recognizes that intangible cultural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. (Article 2 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage).

16.   The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions refers to cultural pluralism, the right to be different and the need for States to have cultural policies to protect and respect diversity and contribute to understanding between cultures. The UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage established for each State Party the fundamental duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural heritage situated on its territory (Article 4). The Convention on Biological Diversity also values local communities' knowledge and recognizes the right to benefits arising from the use of their traditional knowledge and technologies.

17.   The Programme of Action of the Second. International Decade of the World's Indigenous People includes the following education-related objectives:

        (a)   It is recommended that global efforts should be made to raise awareness of the importance of mother tongue and bilingual education especially at the primary and early secondary level for effective learning and long-term successful education;

        (b)   The international community should continue to promote bilingual and cross-cultural education programmes for indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, schools for girls and women's literacy programmes and share good practices in the field;

        (c)   UNESCO is urged to identify universities, primary and secondary schools and teaching and research centres for indigenous peoples that fulfil satisfactorily their programmes and projects and grant them recognition and technical and financial support promoting their work.

18.   The International Implementation Scheme of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014 emphasizes that the profound knowledge and continuous use of their surroundings enable the indigenous peoples to make specific contributions to the general discussion and offer their subtle understanding of the practices of human survival and development "management".

In 2003, UNESCO published a position paper entitled "Education in a Multilingual World" aimed at clarifying some key concepts on the subject and presenting the Organization's pertinent recommendations, declarations, and guidelines.

19. For its part, the XVI Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Montevideo on 3-5 November, 2006, adopted the Ibero-American Cultural Charter, which points to the recovery and preservation of languages as a factor strengthening identities. Hence it was deemed necessary at the IV Forum of the Ibero-American Cultural Charter, held in Otavalo, Ecuador, in May 2009, to design and implement bilingual and intercultural education programmes with the necessary political, legal, financial, material and technological support and specific targets to be achieved through their execution (for instance, completely bilingual primary schools within 10 years).

IV. Experiences with incorporating the knowledge, history and circumstances of indigenous peoples in educational systems

Bilingual intercultural education programmes

20. Since language is key to the transmission of cultures, bilingual intercultural education policies constitute the first experiences with attempts to promote alternative educational models that respect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the indigenous peoples. Each experience was the outcome of complex negotiations between the indigenous peoples and States. They also vary in level of institutionalization, degree of control exercised by indigenous peoples' organizations, cultural orientation of the curriculum and importance attached to oral or written education.[3] Also important, in this connection, are endogenous teaching practices, teaching media and their application to schools.

21. Despite four decades of experience in Latin America and the Caribbean, outcomes are fairly heterogeneous. Bilingual intercultural education is practised in 17 countries, either across the board (Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Nicaragua, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) or in a targeted fashion (Argentina, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala).[4] More than half the indigenous boys and girls in third grade in Paraguay and in Guatemala receive at least one hour a day of education in their mother tongue. The proportion is much smaller in Mexico and Peru, but even so it is high compared to such countries as Chile, Colombia, Brazil and Ecuador, where only between 8% and 1% of indigenous children in third grade attend schools in which at least one hour a day is spent teaching in an indigenous language.[5]

22. As regards the incorporation of indigenous knowledge in bilingual intercultural education experiences, the following strategies were identified:

    (a) **Centrally designed curricula with an intercultural approach**. Here experiences varied. One tendency has been to structure the curriculum in such a way that the content revolves around daily life, using a common national core, with local

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[3] Sheila Aikman, Intercultural education and literacy: an ethnographic study of indigenous knowledge and learning in the Peruvian Amazon (1999).

[4] Luis Enrique López and Carlos Rojas, La EIB en América Latina bajo examen (World Bank, 2006).

[5] Néstor López, La educación de los pueblos indígenas y afrodescendientes (UNESCO. IIPE, Buenos Aires, 2011).

contents[6] One documented experience took place in the Plurinational State of Bolivia (see footnote 4), where the idea was to have a curriculum with an intercultural and social constructivist approach, incorporation of the indigenous language, with Spanish as a second language, and active cultural input from design of the curriculum to preparation of the teaching modules. Principles underlying the curricular reform process include heterogeneous cultures, languages, needs and capacities as the basis for skills development; an open and flexible curriculum making it easier for teachers and directors, with the support of the community, to innovate and diversify the courses offered; application of different methodologies for acknowledging the different cultural patterns used to construct knowledge; an intercultural dimension that breathes life into the curriculum because it is open to cultural and linguistic realities; the mother tongue, an essential ingredient of culture, and bilingual intercultural education, which boosts self-esteem, allows one to appreciate languages and cultures, improves the ability to master a second language and makes intercultural dialogue possible; and a school organized according to levels and cycles so as to be able to offer pupils differentiated learning experiences.

(b) **Curricular diversification at the local level**. In these cases, the curriculum includes content relating to local knowledge and techniques. Here, too, importance is attached to working with the pupils' mother tongue. This strategy was used in schools in the Peruvian Amazon by the Programme for Training Bilingual Teachers in the Peruvian Amazon. The best experiences were those in which the curriculum took communities into account and addressed the needs and demands arising from specific contexts, because they offer more viable alternatives and allow for a gradual approach, and encourage the participation of teachers, family members and community authorities and professionals.

Indigenous community members have also participated in research aimed at delving into indigenous knowledge, history, and surroundings, with the findings of that research then being used to advance more diversified curricula that transform local practices in the direction of development with identity.

Study of FISHES AND TURTLES in Nicaragua

The bilingual intercultural education programme in Nicaragua began in 1984. With a view to strengthening transmission of the Mayangna culture, knowledge and language, UNESCO worked with the autonomous regional educational system, the Ministry of Education and the Mayangna communities on the fish and turtles study, the publication of a book on "Mayangna Knowledge of the Interdependence of People and Nature," the development of complementary teaching aids, study plans, students' guidelines and methodological suggestions for teachers. The book is being used in third grade of primary school in the people – culture and nature area and in the mother tongue sub-area. At every stage the activities were conducted by the Mayangna teachers, with technical support from UNESCO.

Source: Paule M. Gros and Nacilio Miguel Frithz, Mayangna Knowledge of the Interdependence of People and Nature: Fishes and Turtles (UNESCO 2010).

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[6] Education Reform Law 1565 of 7 July 1994 (Plurinational State of Bolivia).

(c) **Community Participation**. This involves concrete participation by community experts in traditional knowledge and appropriate technology in such fields as crafts, botany, agricultural techniques, oral history, medicine, music, astronomy, religious practices and art, among others:

(i) **Establishment of indigenous schools**. These are community schools, some of which are based on a self-management approach. At the same time, the government is urged to recognize the right of indigenous peoples to establish their own educational system and that it form part of the national educational system. While the importance of bilingualism is acknowledged, it is essential that the educational model be based on the concepts, methodological practices and techniques supported by their own cultures (see footnote 4). Examples identified in this category include the schools run by the Centro de Documentación e Investigación Maya-CEDIM, an educational project based on appreciation and respect for Mayan culture and spirituality in Guatemala;

(ii) **Establishment of autonomous educational subsystems**. Bilingual intercultural education has been strengthened by legislation and has gone hand in hand with democratization in the region and the decentralization of administrative and political processes promoted by a number of countries.[7]

Indigenous Education in Colombia

The Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca was established in 1971, with the comprehensive "life plans" proposal, which envisaged recovery of indigenous territory, the expansion and strengthening of town councils, non-payment of rent, dissemination of laws and demands that they be duly enforced, recuperation of the indigenous peoples' own customs, traditions and history, the training of teachers to teach in their mother tongues, and, as needed, protection of natural resources and fostering of community-based economic organizations.

An indigenous education programme was developed, geared to endogenous socialization for a reappraisal of culture guaranteeing the survival and reproduction of the people concerned. In it, the curriculum is put together with the help of the community and qualified professionals. The educational model devolving power to indigenous councils and organizations was broadened and strengthened in recent decades by Decree No. 1142 of 1978, which granted the peoples autonomy in educational matters, Law No. 115 of 1994, and Decree No. 804 of 1995, which set guidelines for curricula and established that regional educational authorities were empowered to foster the participation of traditional authorities, and the strengthening of the autonomy proposal of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia. The 1991 Political Constitution of Colombia recognized ethnical diversity and cultural, linguistic, educational and nationality rights.

Source: Source: Fernando Romero, F. La Educación indígena en Colombia: referentes conceptuales y sociohistóricos. Posted at: www.naya.org.ar/congreso2002/ponencias/fernando_romero_loaiza.htm

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[7] Luis Enrique López and Wolfgang Küper. Bilingual Intercultural Education in Latin America: Assessment and Prospects. .December 2000.

23.   The assessment of these various types of experience makes it clear that bilingual intercultural education necessarily refers to two separate concepts — interculturalism and bilingualism — and that a bilingual education is not necessarily an intercultural education. Some of the challenges with respect to boosting the potential for bilingual intercultural education programmes are:

(a)   They continue to emphasize the linguistic component in bilingual intercultural education programmes: in some countries, talk has even begun of teaching a second or third language;

(b)   Bilingual intercultural education is still treated in various countries as an educational programme for the indigenous and not for society as a whole;

(c)   Interculturalism is still conceived in most bilingual intercultural education programmes in terms of the harmonious coexistence of cultures, rather than in terms of empowerment;

(d)   The programmes advocate the need to institutionlize bilingual intercultural education in Ministries of Education, through adequate allocation of human, material and financial resources. There is still a tendency for the programmes to be financed more with external cooperation than with domestic funding;

(e)   The indigenous peoples' demands with respect to changes in bilingual intercultural education programmes are for control or participation in educational and curricular reform. To achieve that, a supplementary strategy is to resume the struggle for legal reform measures;

(f)   There is little coordination among countries on bilingual intercultural education programmes, aimed at promoting learning through the sharing of experiences. There is scant communication among national teams, who fail to take advantage of experiences and progress made in Latin America;

(g)   There is still little coordination between educational systems and sub-systems and between western and indigenous knowledge systems, whereby local knowledge is always underestimated.

V.   In technical, vocational and university education

24.   It has proved more challenging to embed the knowledge, history and contemporary circumstances of indigenous peoples in the curricula of these types of education.[8] There is a high dropout rate of indigenous students between primary and secondary education. Although, generally speaking, data broken down by ethnic group are lacking, the little information available indicates that only a small number of indigenous students are enrolled in post-secondary and higher education for a number of reasons, including economic constraints, the impossibility of combining work with studies and the lack of post-secondary schools and universities in rural areas.

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[8] Inter-American Development Bank, "Access of Indigenous Peoples to Post-Secondary, Vocational, Technical and University Education" (2006). Posted at: http://www.iadb.org/es/noticias/articulos/2006-04-12/acceso-a-la-educacion-postsecundaria-para-pueblos-indigenas,2936.html

25.   The poor quality of primary and secondary schools means that students are ill-prepared and unenthusiastic about continuing their studies (see footnote 8). Moreover, students that go from bilingual intercultural education to conventional post-secondary and higher education establishments face a cultural shock. The move from their communities to urban centres involves a cultural disconnect that tends to raise dropout rates and when students do manage to overcome such barriers, many succumb to acculturation, i.e. adapt to a new culture and lose touch with their own culture and community.

26.   Post-secondary and higher education may also be irrelevant for many indigenous students. Some experiences show that that school drop-out rates may fall if academic and cultural support is provided for indigenous students attending institutions outside their communities, to help them adjust to a new environment while maintaining ties to their own cultures (see footnote 8).

27.   One area in which the incorporation of indigenous knowledge has been encouraged is indigenous teacher training. In Nicaragua, in the Northern Atlantic and Southern Atlantic Autonomous Regions, indigenous peoples and ethnic communities are autonomous under a system that recognizes the right to a bilingual education and is based on diverse cultures. In 1997, the autonomous regional councils adopted the regional autonomous educational system. In that system, in 2000, they began a curricular reform process in teacher training establishments. The objectives included:

    (a)   Strengthening cultural identity by promoting bilingualism, multilingualism, and interculturalism;

    (b)   Developing the ability to analyze the political, social, cultural and economic processes arising at both the national level and in relation to developments on Nicaragua's Caribbean coast;

    (c)   Conducting research into social, cultural, educational, economic, and community development issues and, in general, into autonomous region affairs, with a view to working out solutions to local problems; and

    (d)   Training "agents of change" promoting the sustainable development of the peoples and communities on Nicaragua's Caribbean Coast.

28.   One particularly challenging field is technical and vocational training. One study of Sami adults pointed out the existence of adult education programmes specifically designed to help adults shift from reindeer herding to other professions. The study found no programmes for strengthening the traditional indigenous life. The Sami parliaments and the Sami council have pronounced on adults' right to education and have indicated that it should be imparted in the Sami language and respect Sami culture. However, there are limitations relating to the poor quality of the teachers, the dearth of teaching material in the Sami language and the students' own ignorance of the language. Given the obligation to follow a national curriculum, there is little room for embedding Sami knowledge in the courses. Educational establishments have few incentives to include Sami knowledge and culture in their academic programmes and, in any case, at times restrict themselves to including occasional Sami language courses.[9]

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[9] Svein Lund. Adult education and indigenous peoples in Norway (UNESCO Institute for Education, 2000).

29. In conclusion, one can say that the positive experiences were those that were started by indigenous organizations and communities themselves with a diversified curriculum tailored to local circumstances.

The "Campinta Guazu Gloria Pérez" Institute of Intercultural Higher Education in Argentina

This Institute was founded following an agreement reached by the Assembly of Indigenous Communities and Peoples of Jujuy in 2007. Later on, Provincial Ministry of Education resolution No. 2184/12 officially turned it into a kind of "Social Management" Institute. It has six indigenous knowledge centres offering two courses: a third-level degree ("tecnicatura superior") in indigenous development, which trains professionals to promote "development with identity" in their community and to work on behalf of their peoples, and a diploma in bilingual intercultural education for training facilitators capable of advancing interculturalism and fostering diversity.

Innovative aspects include:

– The institutional management model. The Institute is a member of the Council of Indigenous Organizations of Jujuy (COAJ) and therefore reports to the Assembly of Indigenous Communities and Peoples of Jujuy. Its governing body comprises members of the indigenous communities elected by the Assembly. The rector and academic secretary are elected by the Assembly of Communities and Peoples.

– In order to ensure that indigenous knowledge is embedded in the curriculum, minimum subject matter quotas are guaranteed with an emphasis on issues relating to spirituality, gender and interculturalism. An intracultural approach is applied for one year and an intercultural approach for two years. Half the training time is spent in the field, in practical work, community activities, and research studies aimed at strengthening community ties.

– Emphasis is placed on collective (community, students, facilitators) construction of knowledge, based on reinterpretation (*re-simbolización*) of the research, and the systematization and communal validation of the knowledge acquired. The facilitators comprise a person with academic qualifications and an indigenous wise man or woman, both of whom must be endorsed by the indigenous communities and/or organizations. Those supervising the research are indigenous and need not have an academic degree. The community helps draw up the curriculum, select the teachers and select and endorse the students..

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30. There are few examples of institutes of higher education that manage to embed indigenous peoples' knowledge in their curricula in an appropriate manner. Nevertheless, in recent decades, the number of initiatives has increased in response to a variety of processes related either to academic interest in the subject or pressure

from indigenous organizations. Essentially, it is possible to discern the strategies mentioned below:

Conventional universities with special programmes

31.   In the past few decades, several universities have begun programs aimed at highlighting indigenous peoples' issues. Among other activities, they offer university extension courses or postgraduate courses dealing partly with the knowledge, history and contemporary circumstances of indigenous peoples. In many cases, such programs have come with scholarships for members of indigenous communities and a research component on various issues relating to indigenous peoples. In certain cases, the scholarships come with a support and monitoring system to ensure that the students graduate.

National Autonomous University of Mexico

A "Mexico as a Multicultural Nation" university programme was established, coordinated by the humanities faculty at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and supported by all its faculties and schools.

To familiarize students with issues relating to the multicultural nature of Mexican society, the University teaches the "Mexico, A Multicultural Nation" course on an optional basis in 14 faculties and schools. It is taught by specialists in the different areas (indigenous language and literature, the economic and social development status of the indigenous peoples of Mexico. indigenous women, etc.), many of whom are indigenous academics. Participating in the research done under the programme are indigenous academics, professors and specialists in fields of the courses to be taught.

A scholarship programme for indigenous students exists, with a technical and cultural support component.

Support is provided for community activities, such as the establishment of the Chamber of Indigenous Enterprise and a programme to support the business community.

A Diploma course was developed to boost indigenous women's leadership, entailing: a) participation in the design of a curriculum incorporating the knowledge, history and context of indigenous peoples and women in particular; b) participation in running the course with the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the Alliance of the Indigenous Women of Central America and Mexico, and the Itinerant Indigenous Department/Intercultural Indigenous University; c) the selection and monitoring of participants with community organizations; and d) the use of indigenous teachers.

Mandatory course. Itinerant Indigenous Department at the Intercultural Indigenous University

32. The other strategy used includes mandatory courses in training programmes. An instance of this was found in the Intercultural Indigenous University. The University's Network has 30 associated academic centres and several international cooperation agencies. The centres are conventional public, private, intercultural, community and indigenous universities. A unifying factor is that the programmes all require that indigenous organizations interact with the academic staff at the universities, in a mutual exchange of knowledge.

33. The Itinerant Indigenous Department (*Cátedra Indígena Itinerante*) was formed to ensure the incorporation of indigenous knowledge, its purpose being to provide an opportunity in postgraduate courses for information, analysis and conceptual and methodological insights into indigenous knowledge, wisdom, ideology and perception of the cosmos. The idea is for the Department to provide conceptual, political, spiritual and philosophical support in postgraduate studies. It seeks to analyze the epistemological framework surrounding the indigenous people's world view, their concept of life, by discussing the foundations and the practical and conceptual analytical categories underlying the generation of indigenous knowledge. The Deprtment aims to: a) place the indigenous peoples' knowledge, spirituality and vision of the cosmos on the academic agenda; b) interpret epistemological, ideological and spiritual elements in indigenous knowledge and seek ways to teach them; and c) provide inputs for analyzing power relations and the development of the indigenous movement and lay the groundwork for forging intercultural societies based on relations between indigenous and western knowledge.

34. The Department is organized in five units within the postgraduate courses offered by the University with a duration of 200 hours. The facilitators are 60 indigenous wise women or men, experts, and leaders. The Department's five units are: a) indigenous knowledge, identity and spirituality; b) indigenous movement and relations with States; c) indigenous rights and human rights; d) indigenous peoples and geopolitics; and e) the contribution of ancestral knowledge to the construction of intercultural societies.

Establishment of alternative (intercultural, community, indigenous) universities

35. Another strategy has been to establish institutes for higher education. UNESCO's International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC)[10] pointed out that by 2002 the United States and Canada had reached mature levels of indigenous higher education. The United States had some thirty indigenous colleges and universities, Canada three. There are also indigenous universities in the Arctic and the Pacific. The Samiuniversity at Kautokeino (Norway) was established in 1989 to impart Sami higher education, including courses in education and journalism. Its curriculum seeks to address the needs of the Sami and it receives Sami students from several countries. Starting in the 1990s, intercultural universities also begin to appear in Mexico and Peru.

36. In recent decade, several university initiatives have been advanced by the indigenous peoples. Two of a number of innovative experiences have involved an

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[10] Leonzo Barreno, "Educación superior indígena en América Latina." IESALC, UNESCO, 2002.

autonomous system: the Advanced School of Comprehensive Intercultural Education of Oaxaca and the community universities of the autonomous regions of Nicaragua, the University of the Autonomous Regions of Nicaragua's Caribbean Coast and Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University. There are other universities established by indigenous organizations: Ecuador's Amawtay Wasi University and Colombia's Indigenous Intercultural Autonomous University, founded by the Cauca Indigenous Regional Council. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, through Supreme Decree No. 29664, promulgated in August 2008, the Government established three indigenous universities: Casimiro Huanca (Quechua) in Chimoré, in the Department of Cochabamba; Tupac Katari (Aymara) in Warisata, in the Department of La Paz; and Apiaguaiki Tüpa (Guaraní) in Macharetí in the Gran Chaco region, in the Department of Chuquisaca. They enjoy different degrees of recognition and face the hurdle of going through the university accreditation processes under way in the countries of the region, particularly because those countries lack intercultural criteria and indicators.

37. The indigenous peoples' knowledge, history and contemporary circumstances are embedded in various ways, namely:

(a) The way the curriculum is constructed and programmes are managed and developed are based on an indigenous philosophy and view of the world (*cosmovisión*). An example of this approach is the Amawtay Wasi University, established by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities in Ecuador. It aspires to be part of the living fabric interwoven by cosmic interculturalism, contributing to the formation of human talents that accord priority to a harmonious relation between the Pachamama and the Runa, basing itself on "Sumak Kawsanamanta Yachay" (the living well community), as the foundation of the scientific community;

(b) They arise as the result of historical processes that transform structural relations among the indigenous peoples and States. An example of this experience is the case of the community universities in the Autonomous Regions of Nicaragua, which arose when the Nicaraguan State recognized an autonomous regime for the indigenous peoples and ethnic communities living in the former region of Moskitia. This experience, which bears some resemblance to the case of the Advanced School of Comprehensive Intercultural Education of Oaxaca, reflects a regional setting in which autonomous indigenous rights are implemented;

(c) They are embodied in comprehensive models, encompassing several levels and types of education. For instance, the 2003 decree founding the Advanced School of Comprehensive Intercultural Education of Oaxaca establishes that it is authorized to conduct higher education, senior high school, adult and artistic education, and vocational training;

(d) They are decentralized, in the sense that the courses are conducted in different locations and go out to the communities, use indigenous languages and rely on facilitators who are local indigenous sages;

(e) The curricula and study plans are worked out with the participation of indigenous leaders and sages;

(f) They tap bilingual intercultural education experiences, "language nests," the curricular reform in basic education, indigenous community secondary schools and the comprehensive community baccalaureate programmes;

(g)   They incorporate intercultural approaches. They apply affirmative action measures to promote the participation of women and of members of remote and widely dispersed communities. In some cases, there are school and community areas; in others, 50% of the academic activities are conducted in the communities themselves;

(h)   They foster forums open to discussion on important community issues and exchanges of ideas with the communities aimed at generating approaches with an indigenous identity perspective;

(i)   Management models try to include representatives of the indigenous peoples on the governing boards. In some cases they report to indigenous organizations;

(j)   They include criteria designed to direct educational activity toward social training of the individual regarding history, his or her origin, culture, vision of the world, language and surroundings, the ability to make judgments and to espouse ethical values;

(k)   They seek to apply innovative, intercultural teaching models, such as collective construction of knowledge, deconstruction and reconstruction of know-how, and reconnection. Academic tasks include questioning, challenging, investigating, scrutinizing, describing, linking, explaining, deducing, hypothesizing, complicating, criticizing, acting, reviewing, acting again, correcting, always assessing, learning from problems and interpreting social phenomena.

Formation of university networks

38.   Another strategy used to promote the embedding of indigenous peoples' knowledge, history and contemporary circumstances has involved sharing experiences and networking. A number of universities have linked up to exchange experiences, offer joint programmes, promote scholarships for indigenous students, and so on. The Arctic Universities Rectors' Forum[11] has pronounced on the need to strengthen the individual and collective capacities of the indigenous peoples, by conducting training and research activities based on the peoples' needs and taking into account traditional knowledge and indigenous languages, while increasing knowledge about indigenous peoples, including their history, spirituality and cosmogony in all courses of study.

39.   Australia's National Indigenous Higher Education Network has also committed to protecting the use of indigenous knowledge, knowledge systems, languages and epistemology in higher education curricula, policies, research and student services.[12]

40.   In Latin America and the Caribbean there have been several forums for coordination between indigenous universities and related programmes. The first was convened by the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, URACANN and Costa Rica's University for Peace in 1997 and was attended by 23 institutions. In 1999, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of Costa Rica convened 70 experts from Australia, the Philippines, Benin, South Africa, the Russian Federation and Latin America and that same year

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[11] The UArctic Rectors' Forum 2011 was held in Guovdageaidnu, Norway on 23.-25 March 2011.
[12] http://www.innovation.gov.au.

URACCAN organized the "Indigenous 2000" event. UNESCO's IESALC has organized three regional meetings on higher education of the indigenous peoples of Latin America. As of 2006, the Indigenous Peoples Fund has been promoting the UII Network, which includes, inter alia, the Abya Yala Network of Community Intercultural Indigenous Universities. Indigenous knowledge is still embedded in the collective memory and it is up to all the sectors involved to make it part of the new higher education paradigm practised by the institutions attending such events.

41. The existence of indigenous, intercultural and community universities has meant that the various different training experiences that in the past were conducted by indigenous organizations have now become institutionalized.

Degree courses for the advancement of indigenous women

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a number of indigenous organizations have supported training courses for indigenous women: the Dolores Caguango School run by Ecuanurari in Ecuador, the life-long workshop for Andean and Amazonian women run by the Center of Indigenous Cultures of Peru (CHIRAPAQ), the Political Association of Maya Women and the Guatemalan Widows National Coordination Office, the Indigenous Women's Programme of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC), and so on. Thanks to partnerships among indigenous women's networks — Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas, Alianza de Mujeres Indígenas de Centroamérica y México, Red de Mujeres Indígenas sobre biodiversidad, Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas, Coordinadora de la Cuenca Amazónica, Consejo Indígena de Centroamérica, Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas — with the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the Centre for Research and Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology, the Indigenous People's Fund of the Intercultural Indigenous University, technical assistance from UN Women, the Itinerant Indigenous Department and funding from the Mexican Government's National Commission for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples, Belgian cooperation, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, the Ford Foundation and the German International Cooperation Agency, more than 60 indigenous women have graduated every year for the past four years. These experiences are also coordinated with the Global School for Indigenous Women's Leadership promoted by the International Indigenous Women's Forum, which reaches areas beyond Latin America and the Caribbean.

The programme has made it possible to use a joint curriculum incorporating the knowledge, history and needs of indigenous women, along with an innovative methodology for "reconnection" among identities, knowledge, know-how, cultures, age cohorts and different experiences.

VI. Challenges

Role of research in the generation and reproduction of indigenous knowledge

42.   Indigenous research contributes to the empowerment of the peoples by producing knowledge and developing capabilities. Thereby it contributes, also, to the continuity of the indigenous peoples, with their own cultures, languages, traditional knowledge, philosophies and vision of the cosmos.[13] For each people, the concept of traditional knowledge has its own connotations and terminology. For instance, for the Sami people, the term combines "knowledge" with "inheritance." There are some experiences that have begun to provide deeper insights into indigenous epistemology,[14] such as the methodologies for indigenous research.

The quest for intercultural research strategies

In connection with the Observatory on Violence against Indigenous Women, and in coordination with PATH-InterCambios, the Centre for the Autonomy and Development of Indigenous Peoples, the Wangki Tangni Organization and URACCAN's Centre for Studies and Information on Multi-ethnic Women, the International Indigenous Women's Forum held a workshop to define and discuss intercultural research. Intercultural research aims to restore indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples' ability to produce knowledge. Intercultural research recognizes the view of the world and specific cultural practices as a source of know-how and knowledge. An indigenous woman researcher conceptualizes in her own vision of the world, puts back, updates and generates new knowledge based on the culture of the participants in the research process. She orders and ranks knowledge from her own perspective on the world and her local cultural setting. This is especially enriching as the process of forging theories and concepts advances, based on her own vision of the cosmos, giving rise to concepts that synthesize meanings culled from a unique cultural perspective. Methodological strategies worth bearing in mind include: practices, values and beliefs used to legitimize violence against indigenous and Afro-descendant women (What is learnt? How and where?); positive practices, values, and beliefs in the community that contribute to good living and living well as women; and curing as an intercultural practice to rehabilitate women survivors of violence.

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43.   In the Pacific, there is an important school of thinking and advocacy regarding the decolonization of research methods,[15] which is envisaged as the need to take indigenous concepts and perspectives as the basis for understanding theory and research from the points of view and purposes of those same peoples. Again among the Sami, certain steps have been pointed out, such as (see footnote 13): the decolonization of theories, the development of indigenous methodologies, the use of

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[13] J. Porsanger, "Self- determination and indigenous research: capacity building on our own terms."

[14] http://www.kaupapamaori.com/assets//HutchingsJ/te_whakaruruhau_chpt3.pdf.

[15] www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/journals-and-magazines/social-policy-journal/spj17/17_pages214_217.pdf

indigenous epistemologies, and highlighting what is special and necessary according to the logic and understanding of the indigenous world. According to a few additional recommendations, the research methodology must:

(a) Safeguard the indigenous peoples' intellectual property;

(b) Prevent knowledge from being misinterpreted and misused;

(c) Allow the voices to be heard;

(d) Acknowledge the women and men bearers of knowledge; and

(e) Ensure that findings are returned and put back into the pool of knowledge.

44. In the workshop on intercultural research, it was also pointed out that for intercultural research the preferred investigative methods are: the qualitative method, participatory research-action, the biographical method (stories taken from life, lives led, biographies, autobiographies, and so on) and activist (engaged) research. It was suggested that intercultural research prefers investigative techniques that led women's voices be heard and generate collective knowledge, such as workshops, discussion groups, focus groups, collective interviews and dialogue.

45. An important component is that all research conducted using an intercultural research method envisages making an impact and is accompanied by an action plan for immediate use of the data obtained to transform the issues diagnosed. Likewise, placing the research in a specific territorial setting makes transformation possible, because it is through the involvement of local players in the reflection process that awareness of the problem increases, because already that process is sowing the seeds of change.

46. Another important facet is that intercultural research does not presume to be neutral nor does it attempt to "step back" in order to "keep its distance" and acquire "objectivity." Intercultural research involves commitment and responsibility in the documentation of evidence. Intercultural research does not aspire to be objective in the positivist sense that ignores people's subjectivity. In reality, positivism fails to see that research is not value-free: research is never neutral because it is always undertaken with specific directions and purposes in mind.

Recognition and protection of indigenous knowledge

47. Despite the various instruments recognizing indigenous knowledge, comprehensive experience with protecting it is still scant.

Continue working on and negotiating the criteria for accrediting intercultural higher education

48. The strategies deployed to embed indigenous peoples' knowledge in educational system curricula show that the most successful are those in which the peoples themselves are directly involved. Indigenous universities appear to an option that can meet their needs and demands in this field. However, they are up against the fact that the conventional institutions and States do not fully understand those needs and demands. In many cases, indigenous universities are not accredited and cannot rely on budget allocations. They are forced to adopt an institutional identity at odds with recognized rights and subjected to mono-cultural accreditation

criteria. It is therefore necessary to establish evaluation and accreditation processes based on criteria and indicators that support intercultural educational models, categories of institution suited to the indigenous peoples, and the teaching-learning systems they develop autonomously.

VII. Recommendations

49. It is recommended that States ratify the recommendation that, based on Article 31 of the Declaration, both the World Intellectual Property Organization and the States adopt effective measures for recognizing the right of indigenous peoples to protect their intellectual property, including their cultural heritage, their traditional knowledge, and the manifestation of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games, and visual and performing arts.

50. It is recommended that, based on Articles 14 and 15 of the Declaration, States support indigenous peoples with a view to establishing their own educational systems and institutions imparting education in their own languages and in keeping with their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

51. It is recommended that UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other competent bodies of the United Nations convene, together with the Forum, a meeting of experts on intercultural matters and education and representatives of United Nations agencies aimed at re-launching bilingual intercultural education.

52. It is recommended that States recognize the importance of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative launched during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development of 2012, and incorporate the knowledge, history and proposals of the indigenous peoples in the activities to be undertaken.

53. It is recommended that Governments and agencies of the United Nations system establish specific measures to support indigenous, intercultural and community universities in their academic, organizational, financial and accreditation processes.

54. It is recommended that support be lent to the dissemination of best practices and the sharing of initiatives in indigenous education and intercultural, indigenous research by strengthening networks among indigenous universities and related university programmes.