Indigenous Intercultural University: A place for dialogue on knowledge

Presentation

For decades, the world's indigenous peoples dreamed of how it would be to have an Indigenous University, a university where indigenous knowledge and wisdom were developed and reassessed, and where their own world views and sense of logic were able to establish an intercultural dialogue and debate with traditional western knowledge.

The Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (Indigenous Peoples Fund - IPF) has made this dream its own and is working to make it come true. After a broad process of collective building and various years of experience providing higher education courses, the Indigenous Peoples Fund has been able to position the Indigenous Intercultural University (UII for its name in Spanish "Universidad Indígena Intercultural") within Latin America, where it is gradually gaining recognition and becoming more widely known.

The UII is part of the programmatic actions plan of the Indigenous Peoples Fund. Specifically, it forms part of IPF's Emblematic Program for Education and Training, and from there coordinates with the other institutional programs. This education program aims to strengthen the capacities of men and women from indigenous groups, communities and organizations so they can actively participate in their own development, by becoming part of the governments of their countries and by supporting regional integration processes.

The great challenge that the UII has taken on consists of reinforcing and promoting the diversity of the world's peoples, from within the academy and the universities, in order to contribute to the building of new societies that are fairer, more democratic and that are ever closer to the concept of Well Being-Good Living. In this respect, the initial impacts and results show that the UII is on the right track, but it is also clear that there is still a way to go.

In this 21st century, we can and must make education a truly intercultural tool to facilitate the dialogue between different types of knowledge, starting with the building, re-building and re-valuation of the wisdom of our millenary cultures. For this reason, from the Indigenous Peoples Fund and the UII, we wish to take advantage of this occasion to invite indigenous authorities, State education authorities, members of the academy, members of international cooperation agencies and civil society in general to continue to strengthen this transcendental initiative.

This publication provides updated information about the work that is being done; it includes our vision and mission, objectives, strategies and actions, authorities, characteristics and also the challenges for those who wish to support and become part of this process. Finally, all that remains to say to those who are interested in this experience is that the doors of the UII are open to everyone, without exception.

Luis Evelis Andrade
President of the Fund for the Development of the
Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean

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Part I: General Framework of the Indigenous Intercultural University

Background: a historic aspiration

Foto: Silke Spohn

The aspiration of having an indigenous university is not new. For over 30 years, the indigenous peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean have condemned the situation of educational exclusion that they have suffered, particularly at the higher education level.

Access to higher education and the creation of indigenous universities are demands that have gone hand in hand and, until recently, did not always receive appropriate responses. Although some universities in the region established programs and degree courses aimed at the indigenous population, their offer did not always succeed in fully responding to the needs and priorities of the people.

The indigenous peoples demand a different type of university: one that can respond to their particular needs, with academic programs that are based on and integrated with their own spirituality and world view, and that can help re-value and develop their own knowledge from within the academic arena, but at the same time avoiding the university to become yet another modern means of colonization.

In the light of this situation and consistent with its institutional mandate, the Indigenous Peoples Fund responded to the challenge of this long overdue claim of the indigenous societies of Latin America and the Caribbean, by taking the lead in the creation of the In-

digenous Intercultural University (UII). To this end, the Fund received support from its member States, various regional and national indigenous organizations, and it also negotiated alliances with universities as well as international cooperation agencies.

The project is part of the Fund's Emblematic Program for Education and Training, whose aim is to help provide effective, high-quality indigenous professional development to contribute to the development of the "Well Being-Good Living" paradigm promoted by the indigenous peoples and based on their own proposals and approaches.

The UII seeks to respond to the socio-cultural, political, economic and educational proposals and expectations of the indigenous peoples, without neglecting the academic standards expected at the university level.

Vision

The Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean contribute to the democratization and 'interculturalization' of the social, political and economic structures of Latin American societies and to their Well Being-Good Living, through the achievement of their own strategic objectives and the performance of the indigenous professionals and leaders, both men and women who are acknowledged, within State structures, decision-making levels and spaces where public policies are made, for their high level of academic and political training.

Mission

To contribute to the professional training of indigenous men and women through higher education programs, at a postgraduate level, that respond to the demands and requirements put forward by the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean through the organizations and leaders who represent them, within a framework of an intercultural policy and a dialogue between different types of knowledge.

Strategic guidelines

The UII is a regional initiative driven by the Indigenous Peoples Fund. Its aim is to contribute to the formation of qualified indigenous professionals with leadership capacity, so they can take on coordination, participation and decision-making tasks from an intercultural perspective, and exercise positive influence over the political, economic and social organization of their respective societies.

The UII seeks to support the building of pluralistic societies, where difference is recognized as a virtue that enriches democratic coexistence, and where change is brought about through consensus and leads to the achievement of Well Being-Good Living for the peoples. It is thus that, through the postgraduate programs, it seeks to strengthen those people who are committed to the processes of social transformation and change led by the indigenous peoples of the region.

The strategic guidelines that the UII has developed to fulfill its mission, vision and objectives are the following:

Mateo Martínez,
Technical Secretary of the Indigenous Peoples Fund

The UII Network
The UII is a Network of Associated Academic Centers (UII Network) made up of universities, study centers and research institutes from a number of countries, which develop intercultural postgraduate study programs. The most fundamental aspect of this educational offer is that it responds to the demands and requirements set out by the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean through the organizations that represent them, which also form an integral part of the Network.

The Network is based on an innovative strategy through which the UII seeks to strengthen the universities' capacities to respond to the challenges presented by the cultural and linguistic diversity in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Itinerant Indigenous Chair (CII)
The Itinerant Indigenous Chair (CII, for its name in Spanish Cátedra Indígena Itinerante) is a space

aimed at the dissemination, exchange and collective and systematic building of indigenous knowledge and wisdom, where debate, shared learning and active participation are promoted among students. Developed by indigenous specialists and wise men and women, the CII's purpose is to offer a conceptual and political framework to help each postgraduate program in the approach of their themes by integrating the perspective of the indigenous experience and knowledge.

Recovery and spread of knowledge

The UII contributes to the recovery and production of knowledge in order to promote an integrated development and the affirmation of the identity of the region's indigenous peoples and ethnic groups.

Specialized research and publications

The UII's postgraduate programs generate knowledge and information arising from research studies and the systematization of the traditional wisdom of indigenous cultures and from the intercultural relations. The research focuses on actions to bring about social transformation, under the Well Being-Good Living paradigm. The UII also promotes the publication of educational materials and specialized texts.

Virtual learning platform

The UII Network uses a virtual learning system (through online platforms), with infrastructure and technical support in each university. This system is open to use by those directly involved in the Network and others who are interested in the area of research or professorship, whether they are institutions or individual persons.

Scholarship program

The collective building of intercultural knowledge also requires real exchange between people within the framework of the Network programs. In order to make this happen, there is a Scholarship program that makes it possible for teachers and students to travel to the universities from their diverse countries of origin.

A publication of students' work from the Master's program in Intercultural Health, URACCAN, Nicaragua

Educational principals and philosophy

Adifferent university with a specific logic: that is the UII. It is different because, among other things, it is founded on the collective and integral rights of the indigenous peoples and it is specific because its central axis is the spirituality of these peoples.

Its educational philosophy, framed within the concept of developing intercultural relations among the societies of the region and the world, along with the technical and scientific development of the indigenous peoples, is founded on the following principles, which are also summarized in the UII regulations

Intercultural exchange
LKnowledge-building is a collective act; it takes place through exchanges between, and the articulation of, different thinking structures, types of information, value structures, learning strategies, forms of expression and the understanding of knowledge originated in diverse cultural contexts

Affirmative action
The postgraduate programs give priority to the inclusion of indigenous leaders and professionals.

Epistemological approach
The relationship between indigenous knowledge and conventional academic knowledge is approached through dialogue, encounter and complementariness.

Integral view
The UII's education programs are linked to the historical projects of the indigenous peoples, so that they contribute to promoting and ensuring the effective application of their collective rights and to achieving their Well Being-Good Living.

Collective knowledge-building
Knowledge is built through exchange, through an interactive process of ongoing reciprocity in which each person, from their own particular point of view, contributes with their knowledge. The UII is based on the experiences, symbols, interpretations and different levels of conceptualization that exist around social relations, relations with nature, socialization forms, etc., in order to understand how indigenous cultures create their own knowledge systems, their ways of accessing new knowledge, and how they transfer these to future generations.

The UII promotes the re-valuing of indigenous traditions, including the artistic realm; the CII visited the Temple of the Sun Ceremonial Centre near Quito, Ecuador, 2008.

Pedagogical mediation

Education is conceived as a participatory, creative, expressive process that requires interaction and relations. Within the teaching and learning processes, the UII promotes a methodology of pedagogical mediation; this is a technique that uses all available pedagogical resources in the approach to a certain contents and forms of expression of an issue, and thereby generates an education act.

Research

The UII understands research as a practice that should be developed and aimed at discovering and explaining certain phenomena, at experimenting with and understanding of facts, at the possibility of finding elements to give a response to current incidents, as well as encountering history itself.

Coordination of theory and practice

Within today's globalized context, the UII uses a pedagogical approach that integrates theory with practice, since according to some indigenous cultures, knowledge only has meaning when it is useful in life and corresponds with peoples' material and spiritual needs.

Student guiding a spiritual ceremony; CII, Cochabamba, 2009

Use of languages

The languages of the indigenous peoples are the most appropriate means of transmitting and building knowledge, and they are used as a point of departure in every learning or identity-strengthening process. This is why the UII reinforces the oral and written use of native languages and it promotes the development and standardization of their use in the written form, thereby broadening these languages' social function.

Complementary reciprocity

The UII's logic is community-based; the Associated Academic Centers, as well as the Indigenous Chair contribute with their best capacities to this higher education experience, in order to reach the shared goal.

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in its final recommendations from the 8th session in May 2009, states: "… that States support the creation of indigenous language and cultural studies centers in universities and encourage universities to provide permanent teaching positions for indigenous peoples in those study centers; urges States to adopt a policy of free university tuition for all indigenous peoples; encourages those universities that have not already done so to establish designated places and scholarships for indigenous students; and encourages UNESCO to support those initiatives where applicable"

Part II: Structure and functioning of the Indigenous Intercultural University

What differentiates indigenous peoples from the rest of the world is their particular type of spirituality, which, beyond being a religion, is a way of seeing the world and living in it. "For the Indigenous Peoples, spirituality is energy, essence and action; the spirit is found within matter […and] is the essence that gives life to the material world (human beings, animals, plants and minerals); here it is the intrinsic relationship with the cosmos, where the energy of the beings that inhabit the Earth come together …"

DFrom the point of view of indigenous spirituality, everything that exists in the universe is interrelated, thus giving rise to the integrated nature of the indigenous worldview.

The existence of human beings, as both physical and spiritual entities, is inconceivable outside the context of a human community. Thus, the community is understood as the place within which it is possible to achieve the Well Being-Good Living paradigm for each and every community member, from the youngest child to the oldest adult.

Communities and human beings, as integral parts of the cosmos, need to maintain a relationship of respect and harmony with Mother Earth and with all other physical and spiritual beings that are a part of her as the only possible way of achieving Well Being-Good Living.

Spirituality is the basis of the indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge, and the principles and values that should guide community policies and activities, also emerge from their spiritual basis.

This framework is the central axis of the CII, which is a specific training course that offers information, analyses and conceptual and methodological contributions on indigenous knowledge and world views. This course –which is integrated in the curricula of each UII postgraduate program-, is taught by a team of indigenous people, considered wise men and women, experts, academics, and/or leaders who implement a participative methodology during their classes, based on debate and critical reflection, in line with the UII's pedagogical principles.

The CII is the cornerstone of the UII Network, since through it the UII is imbued, in practice, with the indigenous worldview. This is due to the fact that the Chair is coordinated in such a way that it crosscuts all of the postgraduate programs. Its central themes are:

- Indigenous knowledge and spirituality.
- State, rights and identity of Indigenous Peoples.
- Indigenous Peoples and geopolitics.
- Contributions of ancestral knowledge to the building of intercultural societies

Through case studies, concrete experiences are analyzed in the fields of indigenous education, health, rights and development with identity; however the fundamental input comes from the exchange of experiences and knowledge between the CII members and the postgraduate students, mainly through intercultural and intergenerational dialogue.

Hereby, the CII has been conceived of as an entity for collectively and systematically spreading, sharing and building indigenous knowledge and wisdom. It serves as a conceptual, political, spiritual and philosophical support to the postgraduate courses, guaranteeing that the educational offer responds to the needs and demands of the indigenous peoples. In this way it has also become an element of cohesion between the different centers that make up the UII Network. "This component has helped UII beneficiaries, especially the students, to become aware of their indigenous condition, take up a position, and re-value their identity"; this opinion, according to an external evaluation, is unanimous (Martínez and Jiménez: 2008).

Invocation ceremony, beginning of the CII
Cochabamba, Bolivia, 2008

Indigenous Intercultural University: a university network

The UII Network continues to grow: authorities of the Brazilian Ministry of Education, the Indigenous Peoples Fund and representatives of the federal universities of Rio de Janeiro and Roraima signing the agreement to join the UII. Brasilia, December 2008.

These and other novelties that characterize the UII have generated the trust of the –so far- 26 Associated Academic Centers (CAA for its name in Spanish) that make up the network, as well as that of a number of international cooperation agencies that have joined the initiative.

The Associated Academic Centers

The CAAs are universities, study centers and research institutes that are experienced in developing university-level education programs for and with indigenous peoples.

The CAAs coordinate via a network: the UII Network. The fact that the UII is a network is one of its central and identifying elements: instead of creating a new institution, this initiative is based on existing higher learning experiences and capacities, thus avoiding the duplication of efforts, while inserting a new perspective and contents into the CAAs based on the worldview and proposals of the indigenous peoples. In other words, the Network takes advantage of the CAA's teaching staff, their knowledge and practices, as well as their infrastructure, to develop new curricula and enrich the existing ones to make them more pertinent to indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, it is worth highlighting another fundamental contribution of the Network: the fact that the creation and implementation of the programs requires that indigenous organizations interact with the academic staff of the universities, mutually sharing their knowledge and proposals.

The UII is a higher education initiative that is innovative for many reasons: because its proposal is based on a different logic that re-values and develops knowledge that comes from the Indigenous Peoples themselves, from within an academic space; because it is based on existing experiences and capacities, thereby avoiding the duplication of efforts; and because it includes indigenous organizations and promotes their interaction with the academic staff of the associated universities and the CII.

In this way, mutual collaboration, ongoing learning and joint development are fundamental characteristics of the learning community we call the UII.

International Cooperation Agencies

The support that the UII project received from the indigenous peoples and the governments of the member States of the Indigenous Peoples Fund during its latest General Assemblies has served as an incentive for several development agencies to become involved in the proposal.

The government of the Federal Republic of Germany, through the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), has been a part of the project since the beginning, providing ongoing technical and financial assistance for various components, both during the design phases and through the implementation of the courses.

The government of the Kingdom of Spain, through the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID), is another strategic partner in the general management process and in granting scholarships for the UII.

Other institutions that have also contributed to the UII's scholarship program are: the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Ford Foundation, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), Austrian-supported NGO "Horizontes 3000", and Germany's Bread for the World, The Universidad Carlos III of Spain, and the Universidad de la Frontera of Chile.

The government of France, through the Inter-American Development Bank, has also been interested in taking part in the process and, in besides contributing to the scholarship program, it also provided support to curricular design and development activities linked to the creation of the Development with Identity sub-network.

For a 3-year period beginning in 2008, the government of the Kingdom of Belgium joined the project by contributing significantly to the scholarship program in order to make it viable to train students at the different UII Network centers.

Above: Representatives of the government of the Kingdom of Belgium and members of the Technical Secretariat of the Indigenous Peoples Fund. La Paz.
Below: Inter-agency meeting, Mexico 2008.

The UII started out in 2007 with the launching of several postgraduate programs, incorporating the CII as part of the study program and getting several virtual platforms up and running at the universities responsible for each program. These platforms make it possible to carry out the virtual activities that form part of the blended mode learning that characterizes this education project, since part of the courses are carried out face-to-face and part is done by distance learning. The virtual learning component is based on a methodology called "collaborative learning". From this perspective, knowledge is built with the participation and contributions of all involved; the teacher is not seen as the owner of the information, but rather as the facilitator of the learning process.

CII activity: analysis of the history of Colombian laws on indigenous rights Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Since the outset, the UII has been able to provide relevant, quality programs that respond to the expectations and demands of indigenous peoples. Although only five areas of education were emphasized at the beginning, the current offer has expanded to include the following:

- Intercultural Bilingual Education
- Intercultural Health
- Indigenous Rights
- Governance, Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights and International Cooperation
- Development with Identity for communitarian Well Being-Good Living
- Linguistic and Cultural Revitalization
- Good Governance and Public Administration with Indigenous Perspective
- Indigenous Women's Leadership

These postgraduate programs are mainly intended for indigenous men and women from Latin America and the Caribbean. It is important to highlight that, until recently, this population had limited access to higher education at universities. This has occurred for various reasons, such as the fact that many could not afford to give up work in order to study, the existence of long distances between homes and study centers and the historical discrimination based on ethnic origin.

Thanks to the blended learning mode and especially the use of virtual platforms, "… the system allows access (to the programs) for many people whose living and work conditions would otherwise not allow them to attend face-to-face courses at fixed locations on a regular basis. This is one of the first benefits to become a reality during the first year of using the platforms." (Martínez and Jiménez: 2008).

To enter the UII

Entering the UII is a process made up of several steps. It begins with the posting of openings for and applications to the various postgraduate courses, and it concludes with the selected students formally registered in the university.

The openings are posted on the Internet and can be found at the Indigenous peoples Fund's website (www.fondoindigena.org), at the website of the university that offers the courses (for example: www.proeibandes.org, www.ufro.cl or www.uraccan.edu.ni) or at other associated information sites (e.g. www.reduii.org)

Starting in 2010, applications will be directly submitted to a database, which is also accessed by Internet and forms part of the UII Information System, as explained in pg. 45.

Each posting provides information about the training program and specifies the terms and prerequisites for applying: background, objectives, terms and deadlines for the application and selection process, application requirements, program mode and site, study plan description, teaching staff, number of scholarships and total course seats available. In this way, those interested in taking part in a UII program have a clear overview of the process.

Although general eligibility requirements have been established — common to all postgraduate courses, and which all candidates must fulfill in order to be considered in the selection process -- there are also some requirements specific to each course.

Two of the general requirements are:

- An endorsement letter indicating a commitment of the student to an indigenous people, community or organization (local, national or regional) signed by the authorities of the indigenous organization in question.
- An academic degree or equivalent certificate of studies. For some courses, instead of this certificate or degree, the person is required to have extensive experience as an indigenous leader.

The UII's support focuses on providing postgraduate training to people who are committed to development-with-identity processes for the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. The aim is to strengthen collective social transformation processes instead of individual projects.

Intercultural Health fieldwork.
Bilwi, Nicaragua 2009

Scholarship program

The Indigenous Peoples Fund has a scholarship program to finance the studies of up to 25 students per postgraduate course. When awarding these scholarships, regional balance and gender equity among the study group are important criteria.

Candidates who fulfill the requirements detailed in the postings for the postgraduate programs are eligible for the scholarships. The most important requirement is the endorsement of an indigenous organization along with the candidate's commitment to providing professional support to their people for at least two years once they have finished their studies with the UII.

The selection process, step by step
The process of selecting UII applicants includes the following phases:

1. Review of electronic documentation. All application documents related to UII postgraduate programs are submitted by Internet and in electronic format only.

The documentation must be sent to the Indigenous Peoples Fund at the following email address: convocatorias@fondoindigena.org; as well as to the CAA responsible for the specific course. These institutions will be responsible for reviewing and analyzing the documentation submitted by the applicants, to ensure that they fulfill the posted requirements.

Those who do not meet the requirements or present the required documentation within the specified time period will be disqualified and will not be included in the selection process.

2. Pre-selection In order to guarantee the quality, transparency and objectivity of the process, a Selection Committee is in charge of selecting and admitting applicants. The Committee is made up of UII authorities, coordinators and/or representatives, along with authorities from regional or national indigenous organizations, and from the Indigenous Peoples Fund. The Committee also includes indigenous delegates accredited by the Indigenous Peoples Fund in the country where the postgraduate course is to take place.

The Indigenous Peoples Fund can invite members of international cooperation entities that are linked to the programs to be in the committee as observers, with the right to voice their opinions.

The committee reviews and gives a score to the documents that have been received on time and that include what is stipulated in the posting. As a

result of this phase, a list of pre-selected candidates is drafted and they are put in order according to the points awarded.

It is worth pointing out that in defining the pre-selection list, the committee considers not only the scoring system, but also the issues of regional and ethnic balance (country and indigenous group), women's participation (gender equity) and, in some cases, age issues (preferably no older than 45). In this way, the committee ensures that the course reflect the diversity and multi-cultural nature of the region.

3. Candidate interviews. In order to confirm and expand on the information provided by the applicant and to gain an awareness of their commitment to indigenous development processes, a phone interview is held with the pre-selected candidates. This interview is also scored according to pre-established criteria.

4. Endorsement verification. While the previous step is carried out, the government and indigenous delegates of the Indigenous Fund in each member country are informed about the pre-selected candidates from their respective countries. The delegates are in charge of verifying the links between the applicants and the indigenous organizations endorsing them. This is done in order to ensure that the endorsement is authentic and that the organization does indeed support the candidate.

5. Final selection. The score obtained during the interview is averaged with the score from the pre-selection process. The result is a list of selected scholarship candidates, which then undergoes a rigorous additional process of seeking geographic, ethnic and gender balance. Based on the results of this step, the Indigenous Peoples Fund team notifies the successful candidates of their selection.

6. Confirmation. Within 5 days of receiving notification, the applicant must confirm his/her participation in the postgraduate program. If signed confirmation from the applicant is not received on time, their place is awarded to another applicant.

7. Administrative processing. Once the previous steps have concluded, the Indigenous Peoples Fund takes charge of the administrative and contractual paperwork for the scholarship. In order to qualify for the scholarship, the scholars must sign a contract with the endorsing indigenous organization and the IPF in which they make a commitment to:

- Participate fully in the postgraduate course, in both the face-to-face and virtual phases.
- Share the benefits of their education to their communities, organizations and institutions for a minimum period of two years after graduating from the UII.

In most programs there is the possibility of people paying for the course on their own, without the IPF scholarships. This is handled by each CAA in co-ordination with the Indigenous Peoples Fund, based on the total number of spaces available for the course.

8. Registration. When the postgraduate course starts, the student must go to the CAA that hosts the course and register formally with them. This process will require the candidate to present the original documents that were submitted electronically, such as: bachelor's degree or equivalent, medical certificate, endorsement letter, ID document or passport, etc.

Once these steps are complete … you are in the UII: Welcome!

UII levels of authority

Organigram showing the UII levels of authority:
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FUND → EMBLEMATIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM MANAGEMENT UNIT → INTERCULTURAL SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY (ISGPP) ↔ INDIGENOUS INTERCULTURAL UNIVERSITY (UII NETWORK) → ACADEMIC COORDINATION COMMITTEE (CAA) → THEMATIC COORDINATION SUB-NETWORKS
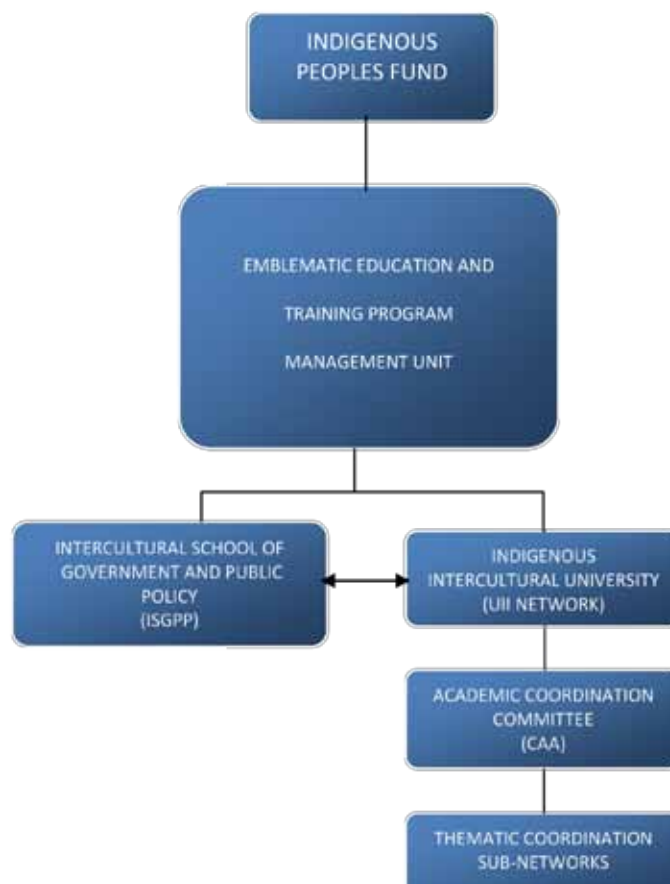
As reflected in the organigram above — and as occurs with every public or academic institution — the UII has a number of levels of authority that are responsible for defining its policies for academic management. Due to their strategic and operative nature, the following levels deserve special attention:

The Education and Training Program
The UII is one of the fundamental components of the IPF's Emblematic Education and Training Program and has its own management unit.

The Academic Coordination Committee (CCA)
The CCA has been projected as the highest authority in terms of creating and enforcing UII policies. It discusses, agrees, assesses and projects. It is made up of representatives from each of the other authority levels that participate in the UII.

The Thematic Coordination Sub-networks
The sub-networks manage course design and implementation.

Organization of the UII into Thematic Sub-networks

AREA THEME / ACADEMIC CENTER	INTERCULTURAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION (EIB)	INTERCULTURAL HEALTH (DSI, SI, MSI)	INDÍGENOUS RIGHTS (DI)	GOOD GOVERNANCE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, HUMAN RIGHTS and INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (Gob-Gest; Gob-DDHH; GOB-CDI)	DEVELOPMENT WITH IDENTITY (MDI)	LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL REVITALIZATION (DRevLing)	OTHER COURSES
COORDINATING CENTER	UMSS Bolivia	URACCAN Nicaragua	UFRO Chile	UNED-CICA Costa Rica U. CARLOS III España	FONDO INDÍGENA	UNMSM Perú CIESAS México	UNAD Colombia
ASSOCIATED CENTERS	URL Guatemala	UFRO Chile	CIESAS México	UASB Bolivia	UAW Ecuador	U. CAUCA Colombia	UNIVERSIDAD CENTRAL Colombia
	UNMSM Perú	U. DE LA HABANA Cuba	URACCAN Nicaragua	UPEACE Costa Rica	UAIIN, Colombia	UAIIN Colombia	OEA
	URACCAN Nicaragua	UATF Bolivia	UAW Ecuador	U. DE LA CORDILLERA Bolivia	URACCAN Nicaragua	UNEMAT Brasil	U. SIMÓN BOLIVAR Venezuela (in process of inclusion into the UII Net)
	U. DEL CAUCA Colombia	UNSAAC Perú	FLACSO Ecuador		FLACSO-EC Ecuador	UFRR Brasil	
	FLACSO Ecuador				UMSA Bolivia	UFRJ Brasil	
	CIESAS México					URL Guatemala	
						BICU Nicaragua	

Current Postgraduate Programs

Third Intercultural Bilingual Education group 2009

Specialization in Intercultural Bilingual Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (EIB)

This program seeks to train professionals who are capable of designing and negotiating Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB for its name in Spanish) projects and policies that are pertinent to indigenous peoples within the development-with-identity framework.

It aims to strengthen social and community participation processes through education, while supporting indigenous peoples, communities and organizations in the exercise of their educational rights. This course is coordinated by PROEIB Andes of the Universidad Mayor de San Simón, in Cochabamba, Bolivia. By the end of 2009, three groups graduated from this course.

Duration: 10 months – blended learning.
See: **www.proeibandes.org**

Diploma in Indigenous Rights

This postgraduate program seeks to develop capacities and deepen knowledge of indigenous rights within the Latin American context and explore how they are complimentary with internationally recognized human rights principles.

First Indigenous Rights group, 2007-2008

It is designed for professionals that work directly with indigenous peoples and their community processes, and who wish to improve their understanding of those rights that help them and that are acknowledged at both national and international levels. It also covers the instruments and mechanisms for exercising and defending rights.

This course represents an effort to strengthen the institutional foundations that govern indigenous legal and political systems as they consolidate their autonomy as peoples. Two groups finished this course by the end of 2009. The Instituto de Estudios Indígenas of the Universidad de la Frontera in Temuco, Chile, coordinates this course.

Duration: 10 months – blended learning.
See: **www.ufro.cl**

Third Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, Governance and International Cooperation group, 2009

Postgraduate Program on Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, Governance and International Cooperation

This postgraduate program seeks for indigenous graduates to acquire the capacities needed to participate in negotiation processes regarding indigenous rights, at national and international levels, as well as to take up leadership in projects for the development of their communities.

The center in charge of coordinating this postgraduate program is the Universidad Carlos III of Madrid, Spain.

Duration: 4 months, face-to-face
See: **www.uc3m.es**

Second Good Governance and Public Administration with Indigenous Perspective group, 2009

Intercultural Government and Public Policy

This postgraduate program seeks to build, from an intercultural standpoint, design, define and implement public policy processes that deal with structural relations with the State and that tend to strengthen the governance mechanisms of the peoples themselves.

This course is based on the initiatives that had already been started by the Indigenous Peoples Fund and the successful "Good Governance and Public Administration with Indigenous Perspective" 4 month-program. It is led by the Consejo Indígena del Centro América (CICA) and the Universidad Estatal de Educación a Distancia (UNED) in Costa Rica, and, so far, has had two graduating classes of Central American indigenous leaders.

The next version of the course begins in 2010 and will also be coordinated by UNED and CICA.

Duration: 4 months, blended learning
See: **www.uned.ac.cr**

First Development with Identity group, 2009-2011

Master's Degree in Development with Identity for communitarian Well Being-Good Living

This Master's degree, unique in its kind, has a community and intercultural focus. Its aim is to strengthen the capacities required to manage development-with-identity processes, by strengthening cultural heritage, own development experiences and projecting an integrated vision of the Well Being-Good Living paradigm within the community.

This course is the result of an intense process of systematizing experiences that led to the publication of the series "Development with Identity" (IPF).

This degree allows for reflection on and interpretation of the visions, meanings and conceptions that the region's indigenous peoples have built based on the notion of Well Being-Good Living. The student acquires academic, pedagogical and cultural elements that allow him or her to respond to the social expectations of indigenous peoples. This can then be done through the formulation of public policies, programs and life plans, based on the respect for one's own development in harmonic coexistence with nature and society.

The first version of this Master's program began in July 2009. It is coordinated jointly by three indigenous universities: the Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural (UAIIN) of Colombia and the Universidad Intercultural de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos Indígenas del Ecuador "Amawtay Wasi" (UIAW) are responsible for running the course and the Universidad de la Región Autónoma de la Costa Caribe de Nicaragua (URACCAN) is responsible for its formal accreditation.

Duration: 18 months – blended learning
See: **www.uii-desarrolloconidentidad.org**

Future postgraduate programs

International seminar "In Search of the Revitalization of Minority Languages", held by the UII in Popayán, Colombia (June 2008): part of the consultation process in developing the proposal for Linguistic and Cultural Revitalization

First group of Intercultural Health students, 2007-2009

In addition to what is currently on offer, three new courses will be added in 2010:

Linguistic and Cultural Revitalization

Within the realm of cultural revitalization, the aim of this education program is to revitalize indigenous languages, especially those that are in danger of becoming extinct.

The coordination of this program is handled through the Instituto de Investigación Lingüística (CILA) of the Universidad Mayor de San Marcos, of Peru, and the Centro de Investigación y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS), of Mexico. The first version of this course will be launched in 2010 at the CILA main campus in Lima.

Duration: 10 months, blended learning
See: **www.unmsm.edu.pe/cila**

Master's Degree in Intercultural Health

This Master's degree seeks to prepare highly trained and committed human resources to take on the tasks of coordination of indigenous issues within the health systems of their respective societies, with an intercultural approach.

It seeks to strengthen the holistic training of professionals from the health sector, by harmonizing technical competencies with human values in terms of respectful treatment of users, recognition of cultural traditions and respect for community organization in the struggle against exclusion and marginalization regarding indigenous peoples' access to health. Through dialogue on traditional knowledge and wisdom, it attempts to respond to the need to contribute indigenous knowledge to the formulation of integrated proposals, policies and plans for intercultural health. The course grants the intermediate degree of Specialization.

It is coordinated by the Institute for Development of Traditional Medicine of the Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la

Costa Caribe Nicaragüense (URACCAN), of Bilwi, Nicaragua. In December 2009, the first group that entered the MA Program in Intercultural Health, graduated.

Duration: 24 months, blended learning
See: **www.uraccan.edu.ni**

First meeting of the Management Group for the
Indigenous Women's Education Program and the Indigenous Peoples Fund

Strengthening Indigenous Women's Leadership

The overall aim of this postgraduate course is to strengthen and develop the leadership and participation capacities of indigenous women in organizational, public and institutional arenas at national and international levels. It will be aimed at female indigenous leaders with a high level of organizational and political potential, so they can contribute to the strengthening of their national indigenous organizations, and also so they can strategically act and advocate in favor of two agendas in regional and global political-organizational processes: that of the indigenous peoples and the rights of indigenous women.

This course will also allow for the creation of an information centre for women leaders so they can connect among themselves at the different levels of organizational work and political activism: global, regional, national and local.

The first version of this course will start in August of 2010. It will be carried out by CIESAS-Mexico.

Duration: 10 months, blended learning

Presentation with the presence of Nina Pacari, Ex-Chancellor of Ecuador

The analysis, reflection and debate on indigenous peoples' rights and issues of strategic interest to them are a priority for the IPF's Emblematic Program on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and also for the UII.

In this framework, academic reflection courses and events are held in order to promote the systematic integration of legal instruments that protect, recognize and promote indigenous peoples' rights within the national legislation of each country in the region.

A joint effort between the IPF, the indigenous organizations, the government of Bolivia and the UII made it possible to hold a cycle of conferences on "Judicial Pluralism: scopes and complementariness between the ordinary system of justice and that of the indigenous peoples", held in La Paz, Bolivia, in August of 2009.

In this Andean country, an intense debate is developing around the adoption of the new Constitution of the Plurinational State and its diverse implications in legal, political, cultural, economic and other realms.

A teachers of teachers, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Ex-UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties of Peoples; Nina Pacari, Ex-Chancellor of Ecuador; Bartolomé Clavero, current member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and David Choquehuanca, Chancellor of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, among other noted international specialists on the rights of indigenous peoples, were speakers at the event, contributing with their accumulated experience.

Rodolfo Stavenhagen and participants on the third day of the Conference Cycle

Article 15:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.

2. States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.

Part III: Progress, news and challenges

Since the idea of creating the UII came up in 2003, the process has gone through various phases: from the preparation of the programs, curricula, materials and teaching teams (2005-2006), to the implementation of the postgraduate courses themselves (starting in February 2007). During this time the UII has been positioning itself in the region as a higher education initiative that specializes in indigenous issues and whose postgraduate courses are characterized for the integration of the peoples' own perspective; this is their own world view, proposals and objectives. In this way the UII has gained growing recognition and it is the basis of actions that today are considered to be of vital importance.

The following table shows some data that reflect some of the results of the postgraduate programs offered so far.
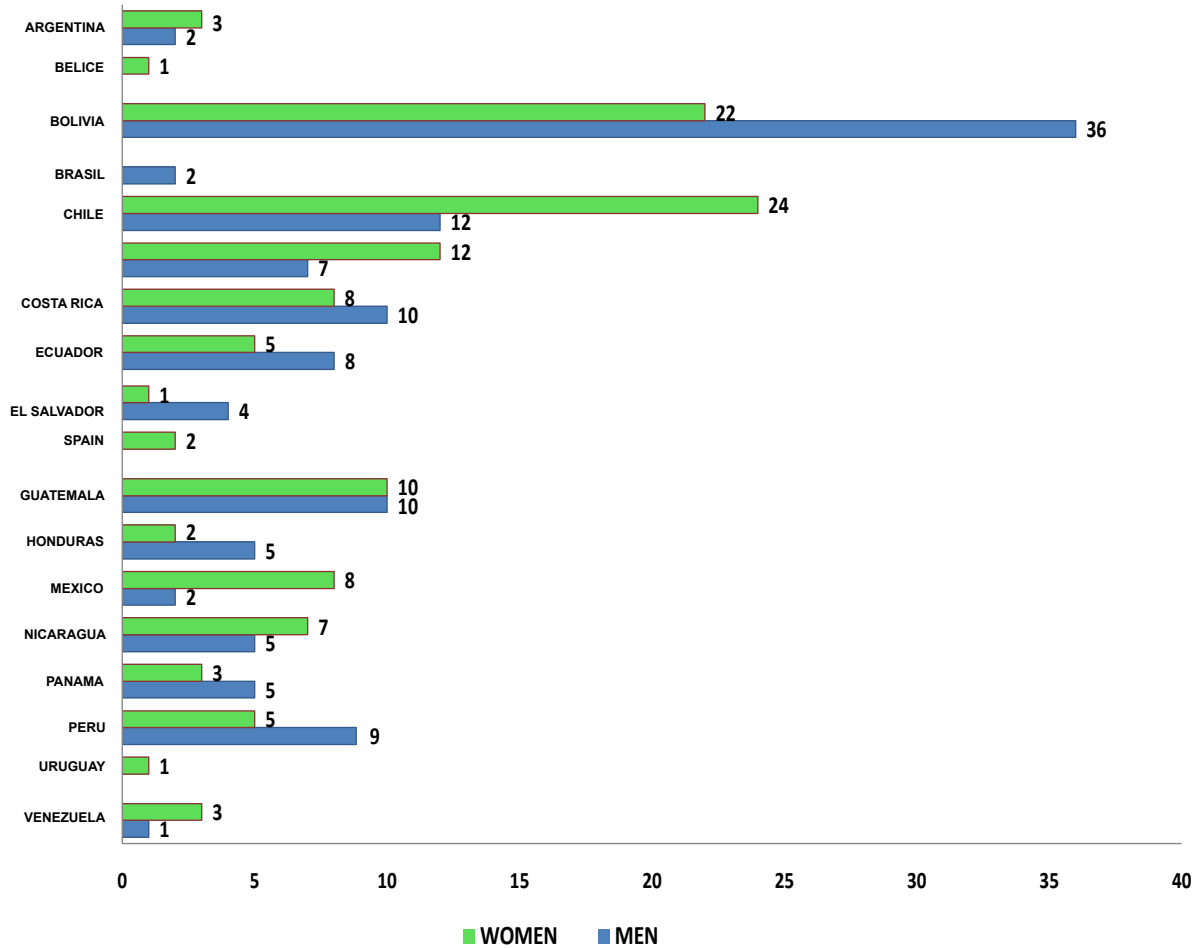
Statistical summary of students registered in and graduating from the UII as of 2009

No.	Year	University	Postgraduate course – Diploma - Masters program	Enrollment 2008/ 2009	Graduates 2008/2009
1	2007	CARLOS III - ESPAÑA	Expert in Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, Governance and International Cooperation (1st edition)	10	10
2		UFRO - CHILE	Diploma in Indigenous Rights (1st edition)	38	31
3		URACCAN - NICARAGUA	Specialization and Masters in Intercultural Health (1st edition)	29	29
4		UFRO - CHILE	Diploma in Intercultural Health	29	29
5		UMSS - BOLIVIA	Specialization in Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB, 1st edition)	24	18
6	2008	CARLOS III - ESPAÑA	Expert in Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, Governance and International Cooperation (2nd edition)	15	15
7		UMSS - BOLIVIA	Specialization in EIB (2nd edition)	25	20
8		UNED - COSTA RICA	International course: Governance, indigenous rights and Democracy (1st edition)	16	12
9		UASB - BOLIVIA	Diploma in Governance, Citizenship and Indigenous Rights	47	42
10		UFRO - CHILE	Diploma in Indigenous Rights (2nd edition)	25	
11	2009	UMSS - BOLIVIA	Specialization in EIB (3rd edition)	28	
12		UAIIN - COLOMBIA	Master in Development with Identity for communitarian Well Being-Good Living	32	
13		UNED - COSTA RICA	International course: Governance, indigenous rights and Democracy (2nd edition)	18	17
14		CARLOS III - ESPAÑA	Expert in Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, Governance and International Cooperation (3rd edition)	13	13
	TOTAL			349	236

Other relevant data:

- Since 2007, an average distribution of 51% men and 49% women has been maintained, both in terms of enrollment and graduation.
- A ratio of 85% indigenous to 15% non-indigenous has also been maintained. A few European students have also attended some courses.
- In total there have been over 1800 applicants.
- The students represent over 85 indigenous groups from 19 countries in the region.

236 graduated students UII, by country: Nov. 2009

Country	WOMEN	MEN
ARGENTINA	3	2
BELICE	1	
BOLIVIA	22	36
BRASIL		2
CHILE	24	12
	12	7
COSTA RICA	8	10
ECUADOR	5	8
EL SALVADOR	1	4
SPAIN	2	
GUATEMALA	10	10
HONDURAS	2	5
MEXICO	8	2
NICARAGUA	7	5
PANAMA	3	5
PERU	5	9
URUGUAY	1	
VENEZUELA	3	1

WOMEN ■ MEN ■

236 graduates by postgraduate program and gender: Nov. 2009

Program	Women	Men
Specialization course in Intercultural Bilingual Education - UMSS - 1st edition	7	11
Specialization course in Intercultural Bilingual Education - UMSS - 2nd edition	7	13
Expert course on Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, Governance and International Cooperation - U. Carlos III - 1st edition	5	5
Expert course on Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, Governance and International Cooperation - U. Carlos III - 2nd edition	6	9
Expert course on Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, Governance and International Cooperation - U. Carlos III - 3rd edition	7	6
International course: Governance, Indigenous Rights and Democracy - UNED/CICA - 1st edition	6	6
International course: Governance and Public Policies from the indigenous perspective - UNED/CICA - 2nd edition	7	10
Diploma in Indigenous Rights - UFRO - 1st edition	17	14
Diploma in Governance, citizenship and indigenous Rights - UASB - 1st edition	15	27
Diploma in Intercultural Health UFRO – 1st edition	21	8
Specialization in Intercultural Health URACCAN – 1st edition	19	10

WOMEN   MEN

Total number of students enrolled in the UII 2007-2009: 349
Men and women, per university
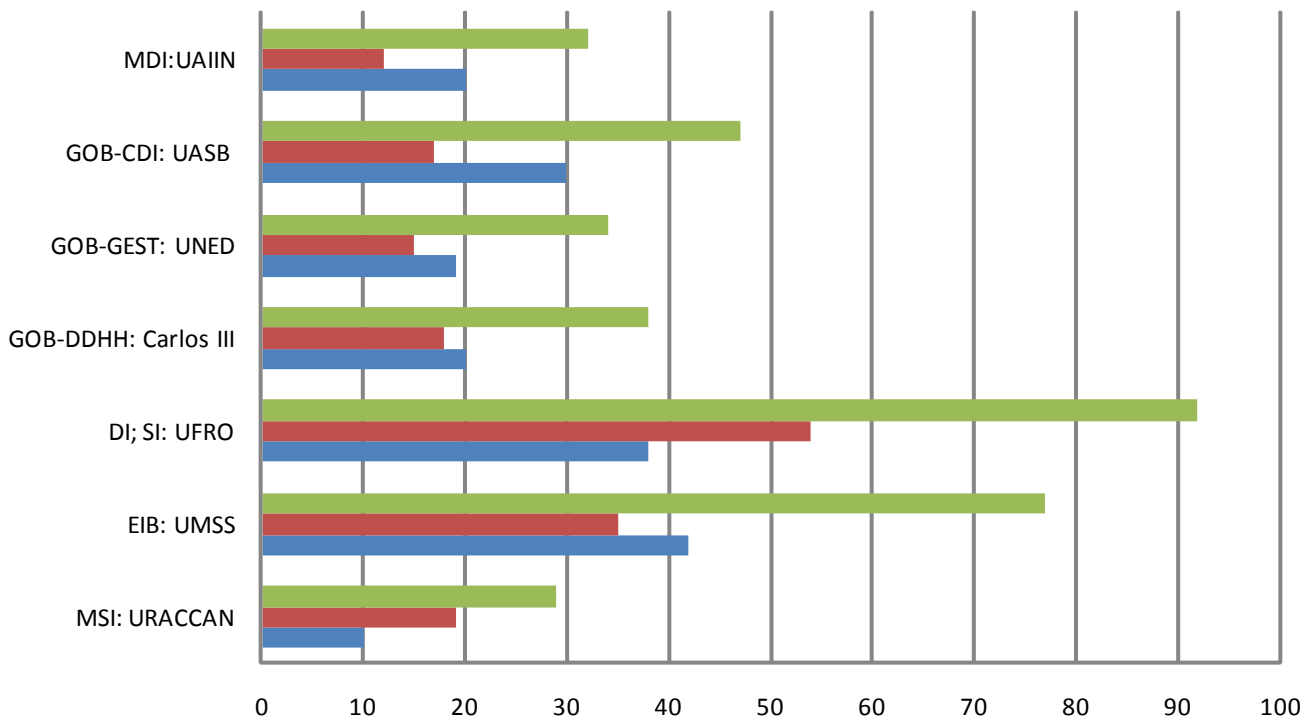
	MSI: URACCAN	EIB: UMSS	DI; SI: UFRO	GOB-DDHH: Carlos III	GOB-GEST: UNED	GOB-CDI: UASB	MDI:UAIIN
Total	29	77	92	38	34	47	32
Women	19	35	54	18	15	17	12
Men	10	42	38	20	19	30	20

UII 2007-2009	
Total	**349**
Men	179
Women	170

Indigenous Peoples represented by UII students

ARGENTINA	ECUADOR	COSTA RICA	BRAZIL
Diaguita	Cañari	Bribri	Pankararu
Kolla	Chachi	Brunca	Wapichana
Mapuche	Kayampis	Huetar	**VENEZUELA**
Tonokote	Kichua	Malecu	Pemon
BOLIVIA	Kichua – Cañari	Terraba	Wayuu
Aymara	Kichua – Chibuleo	**HONDURAS**	**EL SALVADOR**
Araona	Kichua – Panzaleo	Garífuna	Lenca
Chiquitano	Kichua – Purua	Lenca	Nonualco Nahuat
Guaraní	Kichua – Saraguro	Miskitu	Tonanaquetepeque
Kallawaya	Kichua – Waranka	Pech	**COLOMBIA**
Leco	Kichua – Otavalo	**NICARAGUA**	Cofán
Mojeño Ignaciano	Panzaleo	Chorotega	Emberá
Mojeño Trinitario	Puruhá	Creole	Guambiano
Quechua	Salasaca	Miskitu	Guanano
Quechua (Nación Sura)	Shuar	Monimbó	Inga
Tacana	**PANAMÁ**	Suma (Tuahka)	Kankuamo
Weehnayek	Emberá	**PARAGUAY**	Kuna Tule
BELIZE	Kuna	Guarani - Guarayo	Nasa
Garífuna	Ngobe-Bugle	**GUATEMALA**	Pasto
Maya Yucateco	**MEXICO**	Garífuna	Senú
Arapa Azangaro	Hahuas	Kaqchikel	Totoroez - Namtrik
Ashaninka	Huazteco	Man	Uitoto-Murui
Awajun	Masateco	Maya	Wayuu
Awaruna	Maya	Maya Ixil	Witoto
Aymara	Mixe	Maya Kaqchikel	Wuitoto / Bora
Cañaris	Mixe Ayuujk	Maya Mam	Yanacona
Machigenga	Mixteco	Maya Popti	**CHILE**
Poroy	Nahua	Maya Quiché	Aymara
Quechua	Nich'en	Maya Sakapulteka	Likanantay
Quechua Pastaza	Purhepecha	Maya Tzutujil	Mapuche
Shipibo	Chontal	O'eochi	Mapuche Pewenche
Shuar	Totonaco		**URUGUAY**
Wampis	Triqui		Charrua Descendents

19 UII Nationalities, 349 UII students:
URACCAN, UMSS, UFRO, CARLOSIII, UNED, UASB, UAIIN
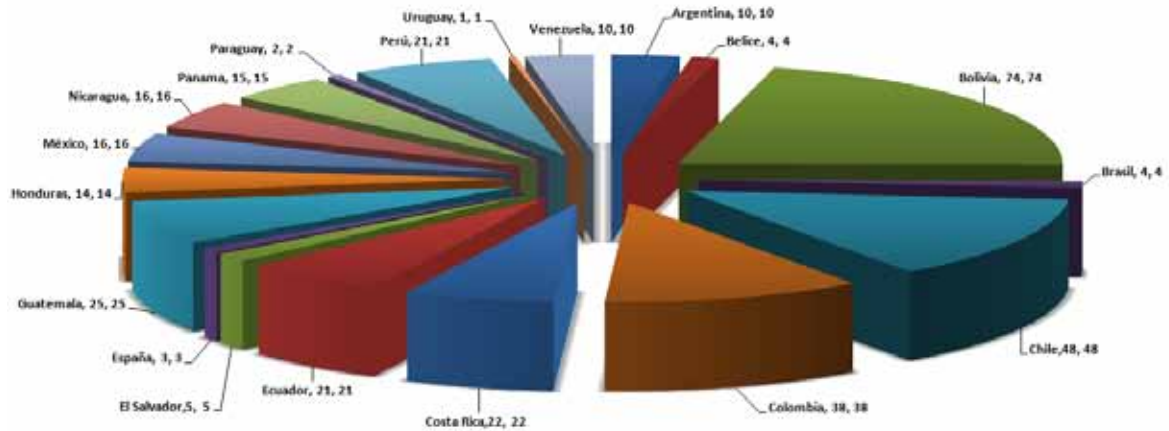
Argentina, 10 ■ Belice, 4 ■ Bolivia, 74 ■ Brasil, 4 ■ Chile,48 ■ Colombia, 38 ■ Costa Rica,22 ■ Ecuador, 21 ■ El Salvador,5 ■ España, 3 ■ Guatemala, 25 ■ Honduras, 14 ■ México, 16 ■ Nicaragua, 16 ■ Panama, 15 ■ Paraguay, 2 ■ Perú, 21 ■ Uruguay, 1 ■ Venezuela, 10

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in its final recommendations from the 8th Session in May of 2009, states: "… that the States (should) encourage universities to create permanent teaching posts for member of indigenous peoples in these study centers (…); and encourage those universities which have not already done so to establish scholarships and posts designated for students of the indigenous peoples…".

The CII, as the central axis of the UII, is a pioneer regarding the first part of these recommendations, since it is a strategy through which indigenous professors (leaders, professionals and others) have been integrated into the teaching process offered by the universities that form part of the UII Network.

Presentation of the UII at the 8th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, New York, May 2009.

The Indigenous Peoples Fund has been working on the second recommendation pointed out above, for example, by encouraging UII-linked universities to contribute in the search for scholarships for post-graduate students.

Furthermore, the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) has referred to the UII as an innovative indigenous higher education experience: "… the UII is an initiative that seeks to recover and institutionalize indigenous wisdom and knowledge through different mechanisms, among which are academic training, promoting the systematization of existing information and research as a means of producing knowledge"[1].

Finally, an important impact of the UII has to do with the fact that many of the graduate students take up positions of responsibility in the Governments of their countries, as well as in other institutions from which they can exercise influence over processes that define, design and/or apply public policies linked to the rights of indigenous peoples. The following pages reflect some of these cases.

[1] Matto, D. (2008). Cultural Diversity and Interculturality in Higher Education, UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, IESALC-UNESCO.

Intercultural Bilingual Education Graduates

Berta Leticia Englenton, Garifuna from Guatemala

Former Vice-minister of Sport, where she promoted recreation projects for indigenous communities. Currently working with the Presidential Secretariat of Planning and Programming, Pluricultural Division, where she promotes the rights of indigenous peoples and women in the territorial planning process for national policies. She is a member of the National Guidance Council of the Guatemalan Indigenous Peoples Fund.

Berta Leticia Englenton showing part of the autobiography activity.
Cochabamba, 2007

Claudia Duarte, Colombia

Member of the Red Cross International Committee: coordinator in providing attention to the displaced population. Also works at a private university on culture and popular education issues. She contributes in the definition of mechanisms for providing differentiated care to Colombian indigenous peoples who have been forced to leave their territories due to the armed conflict in that country.

Claudia Duarte on a field visit, Quillacollo,
Cochabamba, 2009

Julia Ramos, Quechua from Bolivia

Acknowledged leader of the "Bartolina Sisa" National Confederation of Indigenous, Peasant and Native Women of Bolivia. She attended the EIB Specialization Program while serving as member of parliament in the Chamber of Representatives. Currently Minister of Rural Development.

Julia Ramos
Cochabamba, 2009

Good Governance and Indigenous Rights Graduates

Diego Pary, Quechua from Bolivia

Current Vice-minister of Higher Education. He promoted the creation of three indigenous universities in Bolivia.

Diego Pary, November 2008, at his appointment by the Minister of Education, accompanied by national indigenous authorities.

Natalia Sarapura, Kolla from Argentina

General Coordinator of the COAJ (Council of Aboriginal Organizations of Jujuy). Delegate for the indigenous peoples of Argentina to the Indigenous Peoples Fund. Currently working with the Indigenous Women's Jurisprudence in the Americas project, which seeks to establish jurisprudence within the Inter-American System, regarding multiple types of discrimination that indigenous women are subject to. She also contributes ideas in the area of gender and good governance in the academic discussions of the UII.

Natalia Sarapura, during the 8th General Assembly of the Indigenous Peoples Fund Mexico 2008

Paulo Celso de Oliveira, Pankararu from Brasil

Brazilian government delegate to the Indigenous Peoples Fund and General Coordinator in Defense of Indigenous Rights, for the Fundación Nacional del Indio (FUNAI).

Paulo Celso de Oliveira, during the signing of the UII agreement with the universities of Brazil, 2008

Intercultural Health Graduates

Luis Martínez, Argentina

Current Health Minister for the province of Santiago del Estero. Since graduating from the UII, he promoted Intercultural Health as a public policy in Santiago del Estero and organized an intercultural health office on the premises of the Ministry, which serves as a meeting place for traditional authorities of the Tonokote people.

Luis Martínez con autoridades tradicionales del pueblo Tonokoté, 2009

María José Mendoza, Chorotega from Nicaragua

Technical coordinator of a project to revitalize traditional medicine among the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Coast, Centre and North of Nicaragua. The Indigenous Peoples Network and Association of Promoters and Defenders of Indigenous Rights (APRODIN) entrusted her with the coordination of a collective process to create a Healthcare Model based on community experiences within the Nahoa, Chorotega, Cacaopoera and Xiu indigenous peoples of the Pacific-Central-North of Nicaragua.

María José Mendoza leading reflection groups on community autonomies and the Traditional Medicine Draft Law, Nicaragua 2009

Ana Llao Llao, Chile

With an extensive background in the area of community, provincial, national and international organization, she represents the Mapuche community and the national organization Ad-Mapu. She currently acts as Regional Head of Culture in the "Origenes Program".

Ana Llao Llao with the Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberta Menchú

As a centre for indigenous knowledge management, the UII's competencies include research, systematization and the publication of the knowledge that it recovers and generates, so as to contribute to the intercultural debate within Latin American and Caribbean societies.

The UII's publishing policy is a part of the IPF's Information and Communication Strategy, whose objectives include:

- Spreading information about UII management and activities.
- Share the academic and research products presented by teachers and students; this is to let the world know about the advances made in expanding the field of knowledge in each area of the postgraduate programs.
- Contribute to the academic work of the programs, offering high quality, pertinent educational materials.

In line with these objectives, the UII has begun to produce a series of publications such as:

- Periodicals: UII Network Information Bulletin and the CII Bulletin.
- Texts for teachers and other didactic material: CII modules, training modules for the postgraduate courses.
- Publication of students' theses or research papers: specialized thematic texts from the different postgraduate programs.

Through this line of work, the UII has become a means of expressing and publishing its contributions, always with a practical, action-focused approach, in order to contribute to the social transformation processes that the region's indigenous peoples are going through.

A variety of audio-visual materials are also being produced on DVD which are the living memory of the consultation processes, workshops and other events provided by the UII.

Some of the materials produced by the UII

UII News: Information System and Intranet

Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Spain, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua and Costa Rica all have universities that are a part of the UII… and if we count the countries that the students come from, we can say the UII reaches 25 countries in all. But the UII Network extends to a larger geographic area, going beyond the barriers of space and time. Each day the UII Network reaches further, thanks to the technological advances that have been introduced: the web page, the Intranet and the UII Information System.

Web page: the UII territory

Updated information on the UII is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
Where? At the following web address: **www.reduii.org.** In a society that is increasingly familiar with Internet usage, the UII web page is an open door to the world and only a 'click' away. Course postings, news, educational materials… here you can find all this and so much more information of interest.

With this tool, aimed at the UII community as well as the external public — especially the indigenous peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean— the UII has a vast virtual 'territory' in cyberspace.

Intranet: a meeting point for UII members

The UII intranet is exclusively for members of the Network. It was conceived as a 'collaborative environment', which allows teachers, coordinators, indigenous wise men and women and the institutions that support the UII to communicate and share information. The intranet can be reached through the IPF platform or directly.

On one hand, the Intranet facilitates a wider dissemination of the electronic documents that the UII produces. On the other, it allows for collaboration and interaction among members of the network. For example, it is no longer necessary to bring all of the members of an academic sub-network together in one meeting room to draft a document. Thanks to this tool, the members of a team can work together without leaving their offices and, in this case, countries. In this way, the efficiency of collaborative work increases, while costs go down… The Intranet is pure advantage!

The UII web page

The UII Intranet

In summary, the Intranet allows:

- Efficient storage of electronic documents.
- Simple, easy information searches.
- Publication and administration of documents by each member of the UII Network.
- Interaction and communication mechanisms for use among UII Network members.

The Intranet contributes to the dynamics of the UII Network, since it is our meeting point, anytime, anywhere. It represents a qualitative jump towards establishing a truly virtual community.

Daniel Olivera apoyó la creación y el desarrollo del Sistema de Información y de la intranet de la Red UII

UII Information System

How is the student body performing in the educational programs? How many applications has the UII received for each one of its postgraduate programs? How many scholarships has each IPF member country been awarded per year? How many students have graduated? What indigenous organizations are the graduates working in? … These and other questions are now easy to answer, because with the UII Information System the data generated since the first postgraduate program has been consolidated and can be managed effectively.

The Information System is a statistical data base, a technical product based on indicators which can be analyzed to have a clear picture of the situation of the UII in its different areas. This facilitates appropriate decision making while planning to improve the fundamental aspects of the UII, such as coverage or performance.

At the same time the System also allows for follow-up on students to see how they are growing academically; therefore, in addition to analyzing results, it also helps to receive basic alerts about the educational processes.

Through the UII, the Indigenous Peoples Fund faces the task of promoting an education policy capable of transforming relations among societies, cultures and languages, based on curricular equity, pertinence and relevance, and by understanding culture itself as a source and resource. It should be a higher education system that allows one to know, comprehend and systematize one's own culture, and to acquire knowledge of the national and universal cultures[2]. This is a system where multilingual individuals with knowledge of ancient indigenous languages also find a significant work market[3].

As an educational paradigm, the UII seeks to build an indigenous higher education system in Latin America and the Caribbean based on empirical experience, epistemological dialogue and the enriching generation of new knowledge, wisdom and practices – all immersed in the local, national and global search for Well Being-Good Living. This in itself is already a great challenge to the UII.

In this context, in addition to facing the challenge of the digital gap, the UII utilizes the mixed methodology of face-to-face and virtual courses (blended learning) to collectively build up the paradigm of intercultural relations, using dialogue on knowledge, and observing the principles of scientific and technological consistency, pertinence and congruence. This requires the promotion of research and the publication of specialized works on topics of human, scientific and technological interest, within the context of the new paradigm of Well Being-Good Living.

As a novel and unique experience, the UII also faces the following significant challenges:

• Development and consolidation of its academic and scientific platform (network of thematic sub-networks: universities, research institutes and study centers); and of its social and political platform through the expansion and strengthening of national and regional management teams made up of representatives from the CAA, the indigenous organizations, government delegates to the IPF, and international cooperation entities that are associated with the UII.

• Strengthening and expansion of the CII as a transversal academic component and as the fundamental basis for the dissemination of indigenous viewpoints and the universal development of in-

tercultural relations among the societies of the region.

- Financial sustainability and that of its complex and flexible institutional life, based on six components: a) a network of networks: social, academic-scientific and of new information and communication technologies (NICT), b) the CII), c) research, d) publications, e) technological platform, f) scholarship and travel program.

- Consolidation of institutional actions based on the general principles of quality, interculturality and the responsibility of the States to provide higher education for indigenous peoples, particularly to promote the professional development of the leaders in charge of public policy management within their communities and States.

- Definition and ongoing linkage of the UII education programs with the 'Life Projects' of indigenous peoples, communities and organizations, within the context of their national governments.

- Development of a regional indigenous higher education system that coordinates with the national education systems in terms of their legal-legislative, organic-structural, procedural and financial aspects.

- Adequate positioning within the regional academic life through novel scientific-technological contributions regarding the cultures, traditional knowledge and wisdom of the region's indigenous peoples.

- Consolidation of the network of indigenous universities as an essential epistemological and doctrinal support to the CII.

[2] Hamel, Rainer Enrique, Policies on language and indigenous education in Latin America: two historical strategies from colonial times, PPT, prepared for the Specialization Course on EIB, Universidad Rafael Landívar, Guatemala, and Universidad Mayor de San Simón Cochabamba, Bolivia. 2007.

[3] Skutnabb-Kangas 2004, quoted by Enrique Hamel Rainer, Op cit.

12 things that make the UII different

1 **A network of networks.** The UII is made up of 26 universities and higher education centers (CAA) coordinated into one large network: the UII Network. At the same time, the CAAs are organized into thematic sub-networks that are in charge of the development of the postgraduate programs.

2 **Own spirituality.** The CII is the most innovative and differentiating component of the UII. Its aim is to develop the knowledge, wisdom, values and socio-cultural guidelines of the indigenous peoples, which are incorporated into the training programs of each postgraduate course. Its main axis is indigenous spirituality.

3 **Online learning.** The UII uses a blended learning system, where the virtual online component is a real ally in overcoming a variety of barriers. Each university has a virtual platform that fulfils a double purpose: helping centers coordinate between each other and the implementation of distance learning modules, with a collaborative learning focus in each postgraduate program.

4 **Collaborative learning.** The UII understands learning as a collaboration process among teachers, students, indigenous leaders and organizations, academic and political institutions that support the development of indigenous peoples. From this perspective, knowledge is built through horizontal exchange between people who are different, which leads to an intercultural encounter.

5 **Intercultural approach.** The UII has contributed to strengthening the intercultural approach in those institutions and countries where its programs are implemented. In some universities they are creating other undergraduate and postgraduate courses that include an intercultural focus and aim their educational programs at the needs of the indigenous population, based on their experiences with the UII. In Bolivia, Chile and Nicaragua, the intercultural approach is also reaching other environments, such as the State Constitutions (Bolivia and Ecuador), or the Centre for Intercultural and Indigenous Healthcare (Chile).

6 **Higher learning.** The UII offers postgraduate programs that seek to be complementary to the education received during the undergraduate phase and they also place emphasis on the knowledge and issues of interest to indigenous peoples.

7 Regional coverage. The UII's programs are open to indigenous leaders and professionals, and a small quota of non-indigenous people, from various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a few extra-regional countries that are members of the Indigenous Peoples Fund. Gender equity and the diversity of the peoples represented are also important for this coverage.

8 Scholarship program. The UII has a Scholarship Fund. Eligibility criteria include: endorsement from an indigenous organization, academic background and professional experience in the area. Other criteria include regional balance and gender equity.

9 Coordination with regional and national indigenous organizations. Regional and national indigenous organizations play a key role in the UII, from the collaborative building of program content together with the university academics, all the way through to their participation in the selection and follow-up of alumni.

10 Cultural revitalization. The UII fosters intra- and intercultural strengthening, which means it promotes cultural, spiritual and linguistic within the peoples as well as a dialogue of knowledge between cultures. This is based on its intercultural policy that seeks to advance in the construction of more inclusive, pluralistic and equitable societies.

11 Crosscutting indigenous women's rights, without sacrificing specificity. The UII ensures that indigenous women's rights are included as a crosscutting issue throughout its different programs and it also promotes the establishment of specific programs for differentiated treatment.

12 A live process. The UII sees itself as an alternative higher education project that seeks to re-orientate and innovate current learning processes. Furthermore, it is an ongoing joint process of building and learning that is permanently open to the inclusion of new academic centers and countries.

To advance, improve, innovate…
the Intercultural Indigenous University is a collectively construed project
that is constantly evolving towards excellence.
This could not happen any other way, as the UII is not simply and academic initiative,
but rather a space that promotes and accompanies
the social transformation that is being led by the Indigenous
Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.