

## GOAL 4+: INCLUDING ECO-CULTURAL PLURALISM IN QUALITY EDUCATION IN ECUADORIAN AMAZON



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In our project, we integrate the Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure quality education for all, with the principle of epistemological pluralism, as stated by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples adopted in 2007. In the case of Ecuador, a plurinational and intercultural state by Constitution, recognition and equality of indigenous ecological and cultural knowledges is part of the right to quality education. Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) was introduced in late 1980ies in the public education system, but recently suspended by the modernization project of the past decade. In this situation, our project is aiming to study and support the indigenous organizations' effort for a more substantial reintroduction of ancestral and local eco-cultural knowledges and cosmovisions in education. It is important that education include indigenous worldviews and relationalities with nature, their territories, other human and more-than-human beings. Reflecting indigenous ecological knowledges, ways of life, territoriality and timing in schooling, bridges the ontological, cognitive and practical distance between formal education and native cultures that cause a severe dropout of students. Moreover, culturally pertinent programmes elaborated with indigenous organizations help to enforce their agency in front of climate and environmental changes caused by extractive industries and urbanization, cultural erosion and poverty. In the project, we study indigenous young people's spatio-temporal accessibility of upper secondary schools and tertiary education, realization of eco-cultural diversity and *sumak kawsay* or *buen vivir* principles in upper secondary education, indigenous students' transition to tertiary education or working life, and politics of intercultural education. The project has four research components:

- a. Spatio-temporal accessibility of education
- b. Indigenous knowledge and cultural responsiveness in Intercultural bilingual upper secondary education and higher education programmes
- c. Indigenous students transitions from upper secondary to tertiary education and work
- d. Politics of intercultural education and research network on education



The project is carried out in collaboration with researchers from the Universidad Estatal Amazónica based in Pastaza province in Ecuador as well as other researchers and representatives of the indigenous organizations CONFENIAE and CONAIE. Our partners have experience and recognized roles in interculturality and education justice for indigenous nationalities and other minorities. The Ecuadorian partners act as researchers and will co-author the published materials with the Helsinki-based team. They will also facilitate the collaboration with local communities and schools.

The project team is formed by: Paola Minoia (UH), Johanna Hohenthal (UH), Tuija Veintie (UH), Mayra Espinoza (UEA), Ruth Arias (UEA), Simon Leib (UEA), Andrés Tapia (CONFENIAE), Katy Machoa Betancourt (CONAIE), Tito Madrid (Universidad Andina Simon Bolivar), Anders Sirén (Inti Anka Tari-pay), Riikka Kaukonen-Lindholm (UH) and other collaborators.



*Katy Machoa, Tuija Veintie, Paola Minoia and Johanna Hohenthal, August 2019.*

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*Project blog: <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/ecocultures-ecuador/>*