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Intercultural Dialogue in Higher Education in Ecuador

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Pontificia Universidad
Católica del Ecuador

RUHR
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oralidad
MODERNIDAD



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Interculturality Laboratory FLACSO Ecuador Headquarters

Space for **academic debate** and the exchange of **knowledge and understanding** regarding **interculturality** in Latin America.

The general objective aims to promote interdisciplinary **research and academic training** with the purpose of contributing to the **construction of an intercultural society**.



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- It aims to contribute to **new ways of understanding**, not only proposing the integration of knowledge but also promoting **genuine knowledge exchange**. Its purpose is to support the construction of a more **just and solidarity-based society**. Academic reflection closely tied to the reality of human beings, their forms of organization, and nature provides input for decision-making at the level of social and political actors, as well as cooperation.



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What do we understand by Interculturality?

- One topic
- One approach
- A holistic vision
- Takes into account the worldviews of different cultures
- A political project to build a new society





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Is directed to:

- Apprehension of values
- Formation of attitudes
- Expression of feelings
- Ways of understanding the world
- Equitable social relationships





The intercultural person

- Is on the border between one's own culture and another culture
- Self-critical
- Capable of unlearning
- Capable of reconstruction





Interculturality

- It is a **dialogue with good intentions** that aims to generate a change in the attitude of **groups in conflict**.
- It is one of the **most efficient strategies for reducing conflicts**.
- It is necessary to have **knowledge of the foundations of cultures**, codes, values, and the worldview of groups and individuals in relation, in order to act with respect."



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**Conducted academic
research
(Interdisciplinary and
collective)**



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- Analysis of practical experiences in **environmental and intercultural awareness** at the level of educational centers in Ecuador.
- **Building interculturality** from the educational sector – the importance of **teacher training**.
- The construction of a space for **dialogue between science and wisdom** in Ecuador. Cases in education, agricultural production, and health.
- **Agroecology** and Interculturality: the role of **education in intergenerational dynamics**.
- Challenges and possibilities of **intercultural dialogue between traditional medicine and biomedicine** in Ecuador. The case of maternal health.
- Practical experiences: challenges and progress in **intercultural dialogue** in Higher Education in Ecuador.



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Practical experiences: challenges and progress in
intercultural dialogue in Higher Education in
Ecuador



Increase of
enrollments



Retention and
completion

“... only about half of the enrolled students have obtained a degree or diploma by the age of 25-29, and approximately half of the dropouts leave their studies (or switch majors) at the end of the first year” (Lemaitre 2018, 21).



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Political Context



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"It is necessary to promote cultural diversity and interculturality on equitable and mutually respectful terms. The challenge is not only to include indigenous, Afro-descendant, and other culturally differentiated people in institutions as they currently exist but to change them to be more relevant to cultural diversity. It is essential to incorporate the dialogue of knowledge and recognition of the diversity of values and learning styles as central elements of the policies, plans, and programs of the sector (CRES 2008)."



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General Objective

To analyze the challenges and progress of the intercultural approach in Higher Education based on practical experiences since the 2008 Constitution.

1. To systematize the HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) that have an intercultural approach in their institutional identity, academic offerings, curricula, research, or other projects.

2. To identify the strategies designed to establish equitable power relations within the HEI, with the community, and other academic networks.

3. To examine the spaces for dialogue between science and wisdom in the institutional identity, methodologies, pedagogies, and technologies of HEIs and in the training of their professors.

4. To investigate the actions established by HEIs to recognize and strengthen the cultural diversity of those who are part of their system.

5. To examine the impact of national and international legal frameworks on the construction of an intercultural higher education in Ecuador.



- **Case Study Method, Six Cases:**

- Universidad Luis Vargas Torres – Esmeraldas
- Universidad Estatal Amazónica – Puyo
- Universidad de Cuenca – Azuay
- Universidad Nacional de Educación – Azogues
- Universidad Politécnica Salesiana – Pichincha
- Universidad Central del Ecuador - Pichincha

- **Data collection:**

- Secondary information: review of previous studies; international, national, and institutional regulatory frameworks; official websites.
- Primary information: interviews with professors and specialists from various institutions. Participant observation in the institutions.

**Intercultural
approach of
the HEIs**

**Inner,
community,
and academic
relationships**

**Knowledge
Dialogue**

**Cultural
Identity**

**Intercultural
Policies**



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Intercultural Experiences in Other Universities

- Universidad Intercultural de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos Indígenas – Amawtay Wasi: University for and of Indigenous Peoples; **intercultural and community** Management Model.
- Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador – PUCE: **Oralidad Modernidad**, revitalization of indigenous knowledge and languages.
- Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales – FLACSO: Interculturality Laboratory
- Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar: **Interculturality Seminar**
- Universidad San Francisco de Quito – **Ethnic Diversity Program**



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Results



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- **Inclusion through quota policies: scholarships and special admissions for minority groups.**
- **Special seminars or specific courses.**
- **Intercultural education for intercultural professors.**
- **Multidisciplinary research centers, collectives, and engagement projects.**
- **Intercultural Higher Education Institutions.**



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Challenges



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- In Ecuador, higher education has embraced interculturality from a functional perspective and limited to the idea of inclusion.
- Centralization of education in urban areas leads to a sense of displacement among students from communities.
- Projects with the community, collectives, and research groups lack institutional support and specific funding for their development (although there are efforts by teachers).
- In Ecuador, intercultural education with an indigenous focus has made progress despite limitations but education from an Afro or ethno-educational perspective is much more limited.
- Currently, we continue to face limited statistics on the situation of peoples and nationalities.



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- The functional or critical nature of interculturality is not decreed or based on adopting a discourse of interculturality; rather, it depends on concrete practices that are generated.
- "Inclusive policies" and "affirmative actions" must be guided by a profound respect for the "being" in front of us.
- The idea is not to discard modernity and all its knowledge but to question emerging forms, both, epistemological and socio-political.
- Greater strength in the articulation of diverse modes of knowledge production, research, community engagement, academic networks, and context-based learning that generates practical tools.



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- **Basic and high school intercultural education should be continued in higher education. We cannot educate 'intercultural' high school graduates who will later be subjected to a hegemonic mold.**
- **Education should respond to a concrete relationship between basic education, high school, higher education, the community, and the job market.**
- **Training should not only focus on the modern sector of the economy but also on the more disadvantaged segments.**
- **Values should be present as a reference framework from which educational activities are developed, teaching functions are guided, and students are educated."**



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Thank You!

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