
**INDIGENOUS TEACHERS AND THE CHALLENGES OF
INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN BRAZIL: THE CASE OF RORAIMA*****PROFESSORES INDÍGENAS E OS DESAFIOS DA EDUCAÇÃO
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ABSTRACT

Objective: indigenous education has been considered since the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 as a bridge between two worlds. It should provide for the reproduction of the traditional peoples' lifestyle but allow access to the knowledge of non-Indian society. How do indigenous teachers face the challenges of this intrinsically intercultural education? Through the analysis of indigenous education data in Roraima, in the north



of the country, one will understand how the devaluation of indigenous identity, the failures of teachers' training and harsh working conditions challenge them to lead this passage.

Methodology: the deductive method is used, through bibliographic and documental approaches, by way of review of doctrine and the legislation pertinent to the subject.

Results: although fundamental, legislative standards are not sufficient to provide an intercultural education. Indigenous teachers need a favourable environment to develop their important tasks. It can be argued that the implementation of consistent and continuous public policies, reasonably funded and evaluated is the only way to enable indigenous teachers to accomplish their intercultural legal role.

Contributions: this study attempts to elucidate the main challenges faced by indigenous teachers in Brazil to fulfil the legal expectations related to their instructional performance through the examination of the case of Roraima, a Brazilian state located in the North of the country where indigenous issues are strongly represented.

Keywords: Indigenous people education; intercultural education; indigenous teachers; Brazilian indigenous education; Roraima indigenous teachers.

RESUMO

Objetivo: a educação indígena tem sido considerada, desde a Constituição Brasileira de 1988, como uma ponte entre dois mundos. Deve proporcionar a reprodução do estilo de vida dos povos tradicionais, mas permitir o acesso ao conhecimento da sociedade não-indígena. Como os professores indígenas enfrentam os desafios dessa educação intrinsecamente intercultural? Através da análise dos dados da educação indígena em Roraima, no norte do País, busca-se entender como a desvalorização da identidade indígena, as falhas de formação dos professores e as duras condições de trabalho, os desafiam-nos a liderar essa passagem.

Metodologia: utiliza-se o método dedutivo, mediante abordagens bibliográfica e documental, por meio da revisão de doutrina e a legislação pertinente ao tema.

Resultados: apesar de fundamentais, as normas legislativas não são suficientes para proporcionar uma educação intercultural. Os professores indígenas precisam de um ambiente favorável para desenvolver as suas tarefas importantes. Pode-se argumentar que a implementação de políticas públicas consistentes e contínuas razoavelmente financiadas e avaliadas é a única forma de permitir que os professores indígenas cumpram o seu papel jurídico intercultural.

Contribuições: este estudo busca elucidar os principais desafios enfrentados pelos professores indígenas no Brasil para atender às expectativas legais relacionadas ao seu desempenho instrutivo através do exame do caso de Roraima, Estado brasileiro



localizado no norte do País, onde as questões indígenas estão fortemente representadas.

Palavras-chave: *Educação de indígenas; educação intercultural; professores indígenas; educação indígena brasileira; professores indígenas de Roraima.*

1 INTRODUCTION

It is commonly assumed that access to quality intercultural education plays a part in reducing poverty, cultural domination and social exclusion for students who have distinct ethno-cultural backgrounds. Many studies have shown that teachers must master new competences in order to promote dialogue between the dominant majority and those most vulnerable. After all, mounting evidence indicates that there had been a strong appeal to diversify the educational system, through legislative reforms, mainly in Latin America, in order to promote a dialogue interchange between various traditions and cultures instead of the usual adoption of narratives that devalue certain ethnic or racial groups.

Thus, in recent decades, the Brazilian indigenous education legal framework has defined the ideal indigenous school as intrinsically intercultural. The need of indigenous intercultural education has been associated with a possible contribution to the survival of the various indigenous people identities and their inclusion in mainstream society, on their own terms.

Indigenous teachers are perceived in public education policies as bridges between two worlds with different views, habits, desires, and mutual mistrust. They face a huge challenge of leading their people towards greater understanding of the dominant society's knowledge without disregarding their different lifestyle and each indigenous people choice for integration. Although a great deal is known about the switch of the new legal paradigm when compared with the long-established assimilationist view, some critical questions have yet to be answered about the effectiveness of this legal model.

This study attempts to elucidate the main challenges faced by indigenous teachers in Brazil to fulfil the legal expectations related to their instructional



performance through the examination of the case of Roraima, a Brazilian state located in the North of the country where indigenous issues are strongly represented. In fact, its territory comprises 33 indigenous lands, corresponding to a total area of 10.366.857 ha and 13% of its population of 450.479 inhabitants are self-declared indigenous, while in Brazil the indigenous population corresponds to 0.4%. In Roraima, there are eleven ethnic groups that speak 13 indigenous languages (Wapichana, Atoraiu, Macuxi, Taurepang, Ingarikó, Y'ekuana, Patamona, WaiWai, Waimiri-Atroari, Sanuma, lanomamo, lanomam, Ninam) since some indigenous people speak more than one language. Moreover, since the 1980s there has been a vivid indigenous teachers' movement in Roraima to save their group identity from being eclipsed.

The article begins with an overview of how the Brazilian indigenous school legal framework perceives intercultural education as a key element. The normative expectations on indigenous teachers to enhance intercultural education are then discussed, as we intend to relate them to the current challenges faced by indigenous teachers in Roraima, depicted in the next section. The concluding comments suggest how these challenges impact the effectiveness of indigenous intercultural education in Roraima, as an illustrative case in Brazil.

2 INTERCULTURAL EDUCATIONS AS A KEY ELEMENT IN THE INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN BRAZIL

For almost four hundred and seventy years, school education in Brazil had the legal objective of integrating indigenous people into national communion (Anjos Filho, 2009; Leivas and Schaffer 2014) to accomplish cultural uniformity (Silva, 2015). The school system did not acknowledge the diversities between each indigenous people, nor their languages and traditions, as it was founded in the ethnocentric belief that indigenous culture was inferior to the western values which colonized the country.

Nevertheless, three hundred and five indigenous groups (IBGE, 2012) and two hundred and seventy four indigenous languages (IBGE, 2012) are still present in Brazilian demography, despite this enduring commitment to indigenous cultural



annihilation. Luciano (2013) conjectures that the resilience of Brazilian indigenous peoples in preserving their culture as an important collective value, even under adverse conditions, a phenomenon observed in many other national minorities (Kymlicka, 1995), was the most relevant factor for their endurance. Santos (1975) stresses the lack of effective access of many indigenous peoples to schools, and Cunha (2012) argues that the poor quality of school standards effectively offered to the indigenous individuals was also relevant for their survival.

Despite the controversial role of schooling in the transmission of traditional knowledge for indigenous groups in Brazil (D'Angelis, 2006, Sampaio, 2006), some indigenous people began to regard school as a passport to a more egalitarian citizenship (Angelo, 2006), a means of broadening their horizon (Luciano, 2013) and a way to make them autonomous as individuals and as communities in the political dialogue with the surrounding society (Tschucambang, 2014).

Brazil's 1988 constitution, which led to the re-democratization of the country after a long military dictatorship, recognized, for the first time, the protection of the social organization of indigenous peoples, their customs, languages, beliefs and traditions and ensured the teaching in their mother tongues as well as respect for their own learning processes. The politics of cultural recognition through constitutionalism in an age of diversity (Tully, 1995) implies the right of indigenous people to a specific intercultural education, as long as they opt for traditional school education. In Brazil, except the one hundred and seven registered isolated tribes (FUNAI), who live in the Amazon rainforest, most indigenous peoples want to give a new meaning to schools. Several indigenous leaderships contributed to the constitutional switch and the building of the current legal framework, many of them members of the indigenous teacher's movement (Silva and Azevedo, 1995).

The intercultural education approach has also become a trend in international law since the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 on indigenous peoples of September 1989, ratified by Brazil in 2002, determined the adoption of measures on behalf of equality of education for indigenous peoples similar to the rest of the national community, as long as they demand access to schools. In order to promote a more adequate articulation of the rights of indigenous peoples, in 2007, the



United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with the support of Brazil, which states in article 14:

Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. 2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination. (ILO Convention 169)

Besides the constitution and the international rules adopted by the country, the most important laws that integrate the legal framework of indigenous people education in Brazil are: a) the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (1996), which established two main objectives for indigenous school education: preservation of indigenous identity and access to dominant society knowledge; b) the Chamber of Basic Education of the National Education Council Ordinance n. 3 (1999) which created the concept of differentiated indigenous school, with its most relevant characteristics being: indigenous land location, exclusive dedication to indigenous communities, curriculum and specific calendar, bilingual or multilingual teaching, and great participation of the communities in their management; c) the National Education Plan 2001-2011 (2001) which set out twenty important goals that covered fundamental issues concerning indigenous education, some related to intercultural education, such as strengthening indigenous school autonomy and public recognition of the uniqueness of indigenous teachers; e) the Federal Decree n. 6861 (2009), which conceived the ethno-educational territories, so that education policy can be thought from the logic of the indigenous territorial occupation independently of the geopolitical structures of the Brazilian Federation (Bergamashi and Sousa, 2015); e) National Council Education Ordinance n. 5 (2012), that settled requirements for specific calendar, curriculum and pedagogical material for indigenous schools; and, last but not least; and f) the new National Education Plan of 2014-2024 (2014) which adopted strategies to promote indigenous intercultural education.

Therefore, according to Brazilian laws, indigenous schools should preferably be located in indigenous lands; integrate an ethno-educational territory when it is a choice of the indigenous people; respect the school-type option of each indigenous



community as regarding the pedagogical project, monolingual, bilingual or multilingual education, calendar, school supplies and meals; and employ regularly indigenous teachers and provide a good quality educational service at all levels and forms without discrimination (Rodrigues, 2016). It is undisputable that intercultural education is a key element in the legal framework of indigenous school in Brazil.

3 THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS TEACHERS IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LEGAL STANDARDS OF INDIGENOUS INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Although various elements are equally fundamental for the implementation of the normative model of indigenous intercultural education in Brazil, it is beyond doubt that many of the legal expectations rely on the performance of indigenous teachers, because they are regarded as more skilled to be the bridge between the two cultures. They know the language of their people, they understand their traditions, and appreciate the community way of thinking. As studies have shown, bilingual education for indigenous peoples generates important impacts on pupils' development (Gay, 2014).

In Brazilian case, it is hardly possible for a non-indigenous teacher to be able to promote bilingual education. According to official data (IBGE, 2010), out of two hundred and seventy four indigenous languages spoken, only twenty-five have more than five thousand speakers. As it is obviously discriminatory consider that all indigenous peoples are homogeneous, ethnicity of each indigenous teacher is relevant to ensure a proper intercultural education, unless the different indigenous groups belong to the same ethno-educational territory.

At the national level the only official language is Portuguese. Except from anthropologists, linguists, and other academics and specialized public managers, very few non-indigenous Brazilians speak an indigenous idiom.

Even when there is no indigenous language to be preserved, the sharing of traditions and the worldview by teacher and students makes the school environment more welcoming and extends the potential of an effective communication, although



they do not always reflect in the result of the instructional activity (Gay, 2014). Unlike other Brazilian minorities whose differences can be held in integrated schools since the early years of education, the legal preference for indigenous teachers, at least at the primary levels of education, is justified by the uniqueness of indigenous cultures when compared with the dominant society values.

Intercultural education for ethnic groups is not only a question of including diverse curriculum content, it should imply diversity of pedagogical tools and learning strategies compatible with the singularities of each group. Silva (1994) exemplifies that in Waimiri-Atroari schools, the notion that school activities and their assessments had to be relate to each singular pupil was incomprehensible, since individuals with ties of descent and kinship share duties and rights such as ownership, marital relationship, child and elderly care. The tension between the individualistic model of western school and the indigenous community sense is portrayed in the literature that studies the theme of other countries that have native populations (Maldonado, 2006, Colombia; White et al, 2007, USA; Santoro et al, 2011, Australia).

Moreover, for many indigenous peoples, teaching activities are not regarded only as a profession, but also as a political role. As teachers impact the upbringing of young people, they are responsible to preserve their most important traditions. Teachers are considered relevant in the internal political realm because of their potential of upset community life balance. Furthermore, indigenous teachers end up serving as intermediaries between political indigenous demands and the surrounding society. Acting in the political arena, whether as protagonist or in support of other community representatives, is one of the expected competencies of these teachers, especially when issues related to intercultural education are raised. As a consequence, especially in schools located in indigenous lands, the natives claim exclusiveness of indigenous teachers in classrooms.

In addition, school indigenous teachers must also be researchers (Grupioni, 2006) to fully meet the legal expectations of the intercultural indigenous. They are expected to being able to make didactic records of languages, traditions and rites, ordinarily transmitted in the unstructured oral form, to identify academic methodologies that best suit their educational purposes, since almost all pedagogical theories and



methods were conceived for non-indigenous. For instance, the role of singing in the educational process of language study by the Brazilian indigenous peoples Yawanama, Shawdana and Asheninka in the State of Acre (Maher, 2010) demonstrate the relevance of the researching competence to enhance the possibilities of intercultural education.

For indigenous teachers lead students in a profitable dialogue between the two worlds, they must master the surrounding culture, which becomes more complex through the years of education. A quality intercultural education is based on the premise that indigenous teachers must be equally competent to present, from the window of their culture, the usual curriculum of regular school. As we will show below, when we study the case of Roraima, there are challenges to be faced that are related to the initial and continued formation of the indigenous teachers that can frustrate this public policy aim.

Besides, intercultural indigenous school presupposes indigenous head teachers able to handle issues related to proper working hours, architectural conception, meals menu, methods of evaluation, etc. They have to navigate through troubled waters because, although differentiated, the indigenous school must be managed within a state or municipal school system and fulfil several bureaucratic assignments thought in the terms of the majority society.

What is expected, in short, from indigenous teachers in the development of intercultural education, is a Herculean task:

The indigenous teachers have to analyse two worlds, the ethnic and what we usually call Western. They should choose together with colleagues and the community the school model, curriculum, calendar, pedagogy, listening to the wishes of parents, leaders and elders, relying on the collective strength of the people themselves and indigenous or of local, regional and national indigenous teachers. They must reflect on the society they seek and think of in educational ways to achieve them, they must understand the globalized world and the different world of each people, they must teach in their languages and dominate Portuguese, they must acquire contents of knowledge of a educational system, Brazilian or universal, from which until recently they were marginalized." (Mindlin, 2003, 149, free translation)



4 CHALLENGES FACED BY INDIGENOUS TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE PUBLIC POLICY OF INDIGENOUS INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION: THE CASE OF RORAIMA

According to official data on indigenous education (Educacenso 2016), there are twenty thousand, one hundred and thirty indigenous students in Roraima distributed in three hundred and seventy-two indigenous schools, attended by one thousand, nine hundred and twenty-four teachers, one thousand, two hundred and thirty-one of whom are indigenous. Of the total of these schools, 95 per cent are located in indigenous lands, 55 per cent are still monolingual (five schools teaches only in indigenous language, the others just in Portuguese), merely 2.68 per cent use specific teaching materials. Most of the indigenous students (69.8 per cent) are concentrated in the early years of basic education.

Unfortunately, there is no data regarding the impacts of indigenous teaching on pupil outcomes. Not even in the specific indigenous education census held in 1999, but never reedited, the progress of indigenous students, whether related to cultural issues or regular disciplines, has been evaluated. As already identified in other countries and circumstances (D'Arcy, 2014), Brazil's education information system is designed to serve the interests of the non-indigenous majority, more than forty-eight million students nationwide (Educacenso 2016), while indigenous students are about two hundred, thirty-three thousand students. The invisibility of minority differences in education systems reveals a trace of structural discrimination.

The data analysis, although not including all the necessary variables, shows that indigenous school education in Roraima still needs to be improved to meet the regulatory parameters of intercultural education. More than half of indigenous schools have only Portuguese language teaching, and almost none do have specific pedagogic material. The deficit in the implementation of the general legal standards of the indigenous school represents one of the major challenges to indigenous teachers.

When indigenous teachers need to work within the benchmarks of regular education, they have to overcome the absence of an effective intercultural education policy, as a guiding, theoretical and practical principle in the Brazilian educational



system (Candau, 2002). Although in 2008, the study of black and indigenous culture was made compulsory (Federal Act n. 11645) in all schools curricula, especially in the subjects of arts, literature and history, the core of pedagogical practices kept on being framed by Brazilian dominant society values and knowledge (Silva and Rebolo, 2017). More diverse cultural references have not being translated in a truly intercultural approach with the dialogue between cultures and the subjects who experience them (Fleuri, 1999).

Union, States and municipalities have responsibilities in promoting indigenous education in Brazil. While Federal Government structure indigenous education and provide financial and administrative support, indigenous schools are integrated in the State or City education system. State and municipalities education laws must also, hence, adopt intercultural indigenous education perspectives. In Roraima, since 2014 the State Educational Plan sets forth forty-four specific strategies to promote intercultural indigenous education, which are also expressed in local education plans of all municipalities in Roraima (MEC).

Nonetheless, the demands of interinstitutional articulation of this complex three-level educational system are not suitably met. Besides, the administrative bodies in charge of indigenous education are not regarded as priorities within federal, state or municipalities government strategies. For instance, nor National Indigenous Foundation -FUNAI or Indigenous Education Department (DEI) of the State of Roraima, despite their efforts, have accomplished the legal requirement of providing adequate pedagogical material to meet the needs of proper intercultural indigenous education.

Another important example of this administrative disorganization is the non-implementation of the ethno-educational territories already agreed upon for the region: Yanomami -Yekuna and Kayapó (Pykakwatynhere). On that account, the intended pedagogical articulation between schools of one or more indigenous people does not yet occur effectively. Moreover, there is still the risk of embarrassing situations such as the closure of indigenous schools in the borders of states, as happened with ten schools, in the borders of Roraima and Amazonia, in the Yanomami territory, in 2009, fortunately later cancelled (Silveira and Silveira , 2012).



The very hiring of indigenous teachers faces bureaucratic barriers, not yet fully surpassed. In Roraima, unlike ordinary teachers, indigenous educators are contracted temporarily without the ordinary labour rights, despite the legal regulation of their career (State Act n. 892/2013).

In Brazil, public school teacher's recruitment is held through a public selection. Notwithstanding the legal framework of indigenous education, the dominant legal culture, professed by public managers and control administrative bodies, refutes the possibility that public teacher selections can be targeted to a specific ethnic group. In general, non-indigenous teachers are always favoured in public contests that require exclusively the knowledge of mainstream society. The traditional and rigid logic of the Brazilian bureaucracy still prevails without a proper dialogue with the legal standards of intercultural indigenous education. Fortunately, States like Rondonia and Minas Gerais have already implemented adequate public selections that allow indigenous teachers to be regularly hired with all labour rights. At the moment, Roraima is debating a new process of public contest that evaluate indigenous languages and knowledge skills to mitigate the current problem.

Studies have shown high-level dropout rates in the secondary level in Brazilian indigenous education (Guilherme, Huttener, 2015). As a matter of fact, attendance to secondary good quality schools is the main obstacle for minorities' education development (D'Arcy, 2014). The same phenomenon characterizes indigenous education in Roraima. According to Educacenso 2016, only 13.3 per cent of indigenous students are present at secondary schools. This tendency, already identified in other official data collections, weakens the intellectual capital formation of the indigenous community (Silveira and Silveira, 2012). Additionally, most of the secondary schools frequented by indigenous pupils are not located in their lands, are not bilingual and do not practise an effective intercultural education. Thus, students who do not attend indigenous schools with indigenous teachers and managers are submitted to an education that does not value their identity.

Not only this data demonstrates that indigenous intercultural education is more challenging in the more advanced stages of education, but also that it has a tremendous impact on schooling for indigenous teaching. According to the 2007



Census of the teacher (INEP) only 10% of indigenous teachers had specific higher education. Even though these are not recent data, there is a widespread consensus that indigenous teachers master traditional and typical knowledge of their people, but are in need to advance their competences on dominant society knowledge such as maths, Portuguese, chemistry, physics, biology, national and world history (Silveira, Silveira, 2012).

The indigenous teachers of Roraima are fully aware of the importance of their training in intercultural education. The struggle for a quality indigenous school education has a long history in Roraima and indigenous teachers have been important actors in this scene. There are records of intercultural education demands presented by Tuxau teachers since 1985 (Freitas, 2011). In 1990, eighty-four teachers from the Makuxi, Wapichana, Taurepang and Ingarikó peoples created one of the main relevant indigenous teacher organizations in Brazil, OPIR (Organization of Indigenous Teachers of Roraima), still very active today. OPIR and other indigenous social movements contributed to the adoption of affirmative actions by the Federal University of Roraima (UFRR) in favour of indigenous people access to university. (Freitas, 2011) An important outcome of this dialogue between indigenous people and Academy was the formation of the Insikiran Institute in UFRR, coordinated not only by members of the university but also by indigenous leaderships (Carvalho, Carvalho, 2008). Insikiran Institute was responsible for the conception and development of a four-and-a-half year intercultural training course for indigenous teachers, with emphasis either on nature science, on communication and arts or on social sciences. In 2001, Roraima became the first State of Brazil to have a federal institution of higher education with a specific degree course in teaching for indigenous people. The first enrolment of students took place in 2003. In 2005 Federal government provided financial aid to Insikiran Institute in the Program of Support for Higher Education and Indigenous Degree (PROLIND). Until 2016, two hundred and sixty-one indigenous teachers were trained, eighty-two graduated in nature science, one hundred and two in communication and arts, and seventy-seven in social sciences (Freitas and Torres, 2017).

Despite its success, the program confronts various challenges especially related to the need for economic and academic support to indigenous people (Freitas,



2011), as both federal and Roraima state funding policies have been intermittent. Although the training of indigenous teachers at the university level is, in itself, a major advance, there is no reliable data on the current impact on intercultural education promoted by these teachers in the schools (Oliveira, 2016).

Last, but not least, indigenous teachers have to face hard working conditions in indigenous schools in Brazil (Luciano, 2015), but particularly in Roraima. According to Educacenso 2016, 53,7 per cent of indigenous schools in Roraima do not have an adequate building, 24,4 per cent do not have drinking water, 53 per cent do not have electricity and scarcely 6% have internet access. This reality awakens in many indigenous students the feeling that their schools are not as well cared for as non-indigenous schools (Lemos, 2014).

5 CONCLUSIONS

In general, we saw that the Brazilian legal system has acknowledged, since 1988, the importance of indigenous intercultural education as a key element to provide effectiveness for “two important principles that must define every multi-ethnic and multicultural nation-state: pluralism and solidarity” (Addis, 1997, 126). It is unarguable that intercultural education enhances the potential survival of indigenous peoples, their languages and their beliefs and ensures a more egalitarian status of indigenous peoples in Brazilian society.

However, the Brazilian education system is not comprehensively submitted to this intercultural education policy, which inevitably affects indigenous education. Whenever a differentiated indigenous school indigenous is not available, pupils and teachers have to cope with the typical barriers of monocultural education. We can conclude that some of the legal efforts to conceive a singular indigenous education are limited because the intercultural approach does not prevail in the whole educational system.

Moreover, the legal framework regards indigenous teachers as the protagonists of the intercultural dialogue. To fulfil all legal requirements of indigenous



intercultural education, teachers must have complex teaching, researching and management competences.

Although fundamental, legislative standards are not sufficient to provide an intercultural education. Indigenous teachers need a favourable environment to develop their important tasks. It can be argued that the implementation of consistent and continuous public policies, reasonably funded and evaluated is the only way to enable indigenous teachers to accomplish their intercultural legal role. The legal indigenous intercultural education framework must go beyond its symbolic effect, recognized by Neves in Brazilian constitutionalism as “a type of hypertrophy of political symbolic function in detriment to the normative legal function” (Neves 2006 p. 64).

The official data analysis of intercultural education in Roraima allows us to conclude that indigenous teachers face challenges of several orders. There are administrative barriers related to the lack of evaluation of indigenous education outcome; to the inadequacy of articulation between federal, state and municipal government bodies to address indigenous intercultural issues; and to the absence of equal rights hiring conditions.

There are pedagogical concerns associated to the need of improvement of their intercultural training; to the shortage of specific intercultural education material; to the difficulties of practising intercultural education in secondary level; and to the support of development of appropriate teaching and school management techniques.

Many indigenous teachers in Roraima, also, strive against non-ideal working conditions and a discriminatory educational system that ignores their demands and values.

Nevertheless, indigenous teachers movement in Roraima has contributed to many advances of indigenous intercultural education in the state. In this sense, indigenous teachers give us a true intercultural lesson because they, continually, affirm their identities through the dialogue with the dominant society. We can conclude that they are up to the legislative dare. Indeed, they have already done much in burdensome conditions.

We can cite these significant outcomes of indigenous teachers' efforts: a) the beneficial communication with the Federal University of Roraima that resulted in



expanded access to university for indigenous students, and, specifically, the conception of the intercultural indigenous degree; b) the existence of a specific sector dedicated to indigenous education within the state department of education; and c) the placement of the majority of the indigenous basic schools of the state in their own lands.

We can observe that the minority social organization in favour of intercultural education is vital, not only, for the establishment of legal standards but also to ensure their reinforcement.

By any means, the burden to make intercultural indigenous education effective must not reside exclusively upon the shoulders of indigenous teachers. The establishment of legal standards of intercultural education is the first step of a long national journey towards the eradication of stereotyping and misconception of indigenous peoples identities (Pevar, 2004).

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