

So we don't get left behind: Indigenous women in front of SDG

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Con el apoyo de la Unión Europea:



I. CONTEXT



Photo: ONAMIAP (Pablo Lasansky)

Peru is marked by inequalities that have condemned generations to survive in precarious conditions and deprivation. The great promise of "inclusion" has not led to social progress. However, a period of several years of economic boom created the fantasy of Peru becoming a middle-income country and thus, in a position to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). From 2014 onwards, an economic slowdown began to be felt and reduced revenue was collected for the national treasury.

In 2017, after nearly 20 years, the monetary poverty rate started to grow. With enormous ease, that year 400,000 Peruvians fell into poverty. Although the sustained path of poverty reduction was put back on track, this situation warned of the fragility of Peruvian "prosperity".



In their desperate desire to achieve economic reactivation, successive Peruvian governments as their primary measure have concentrated on granting facilities and benefits to investments from large private companies, especially those in extractive and agro-industrial activities, which are based on policies of territorial dispossession of indigenous peoples.

Consequently, with governments focused on economic growth at any social cost, a year prior to Peru celebrating its bicentenary, the country has been unable to guarantee the fundamental rights to dignified work, education, comprehensive health care, safety and a life free from violence. This situation exists despite the international commitments of the Peruvian State regarding the protection of individual and collective human rights, as well as the environment.

In 2015, the Peruvian State, as a member of the United Nations, approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as a roadmap to end poverty and ensure that no one is left behind. Five years later and with the COVID-19 pandemic entering our indigenous communities, the dream that no one will be left behind by 2030 is disintegrating. However, it also represents an opportunity for the State to reduce the enormous inequality gaps that today cause our indigenous sisters and brothers to die not only from COVID-19, but also from the absence of free-of-cost and timely care.







Therefore, as part of the process of presenting the second Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the Government of Peru at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum to report on the progress of implementation of 2030 Agenda in the country, the National Organization of Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Women of Peru (Organización Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas Andinas y Amazónicas del Perú- ONAMIAP) have prepared the report "The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in relation to indigenous peoples and women in Peru". The document focuses on the "Strengthening of human well-being and capabilities" axis and the statistical data presented in relation to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1 and 4 to demonstrate the persistent and historical debt that the Peruvian State has to indigenous peoples.

The coronavirus pandemic highlights the enormous social inequality and the concentration of opportunities and benefits for a few not only affects the well-being of indigenous peoples, but also the general stability of our country. The Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda risk becoming one more of the many commitments that are not achieved. The health and economic crisis generated by the spread of COVID-19 is teaching us that we must raise the bar of these goals and put life and individual and collective human rights at the centre of all public policies, above profit, to make this planet a place where Good Living (Buen Vivir) and a Full Life (Vida Plena) are possible.



Photo: ONAMIAP (Pablo Lasansky)



II. PROGRESS AND PENDING ACTIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Photo: ONAMIAP (Pablo Lasansky)

Officially there are 55 indigenous peoples in Peru, organized mainly in peasant and native communities, which represent 24.6% of the national population (INEI 2017). This demographic weight has not translated into the implementation of public policies that guarantee our individual and collective rights. On the contrary, our history is marked by exclusion and dispossession.

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic has only unveiled the extreme vulnerability in which successive governments have put us. The SDG and 2030 Agenda were presented to us as a great possibility to attain a dignified life around the globe, and again today there is a risk of this being just a promise.



STRENGTHENING OF HUMAN WELL-BEING AND CAPABILITIES

SDG 1: No poverty

Poverty affects 20.5% of the national population, but its highest incidence is among indigenous people, and among children and adolescents.

Among people who have an indigenous language as their mother tongue, the incidence of poverty is 32.4% (5.5% extreme poverty and 26.9% non-extreme poverty), almost double that of people whose mother tongue is Spanish (17.5%). By area of residence, the poverty percentages show more gaps (21% in urban areas and 44.5% in rural areas). The same applies to the ethnic self-perception variable (28%). Monetary poverty affects indigenous women somewhat more (27.2%) than indigenous men (26.6%).

Monetary Poverty of people with an indigenous maternal language in the urban and rural areas, according to age group

Age group/ Area of Residence	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24
Urban	32.7%	29.2%	29.3%	22%	11%
Rural	22.7%	21.2%	20.9%	16.1%	36.4%

Source: INEI - ENAHO, 2017-2018

The levels of the incidence of poverty is associated with the prevalence of diseases such as anaemia and malnutrition, which threaten the current and future full exercise of rights. Childhood anaemia is a multi-causal disease. It is not fully caused by deficiencies in nutrient intake, infections, cultural aspects of health and nutrition, but also by social determinants such as poverty. The Ministry of Health (MINSA) notes the group of children under three years of age is the most affected by anaemia, especially those who belong to impoverished households.

Chronic malnutrition of children under five years of age in urban areas is 7.3% and 27.7% in rural areas (ENDES, 2018). However, indigenous people have the highest prevalence in the country.

A nutritional assessment of children under 5 years of age in three Matsiguengas communities in the district of Megantoni, La Convención province (Cusco region), indicated that 64.7% of children between 6 and 36 months of age had moderate anaemia. The prevalence of chronic malnutrition was 43.4%, identifying two cases of acute malnutrition and two cases of global malnutrition. The study found that 47.5% have some form of malnutrition and 71.2% of children who did not register any form



of malnutrition were identified as facing nutritional risk. This further demonstrates that national progress does not have the same correlation in the communities¹. To be indigenous in a native community is to live in situations of poverty, be malnourished, anaemic and not have access to health services, water and sanitation.

A case study on family malnutrition presented the experience of the "Climate Change" and Agrobiodiversity of Andean Peoples" project by the Centre of Indigenous Cultures of Peru (CHIRAPAQ). This initiative was conducted in the rural communities of San Juan de Chito in Vilcashuaman district and Inmaculada de Huallhua in Saurama district (Ayacucho region), areas in which chronic child malnutrition reaches 32.8%. The following was identified via a survey conducted on food consumption:

- 25% of boys and girls over the age of two minimally meet the diet required for their
- Only 68.8% of this group had a diversified or balanced minimal diet on the day prior to the study. Only 58.8% of children under 2 years of age consumed at least 4 types of food from a list of 7.
- 60.9% of mothers reported eating meat only once a month or on a special day. Only 66% of the children consumed eggs or offal (viscera).
- Mothers strive to improve the nutrition of boys and girls. However, their nutrition is neither regular nor sustained. In a context of poverty and cultural discrimination, families prioritize meeting other basic needs, such as education, rather than appropriate food and nutrition.

Malnutrition is related to more structural problems such as the absence of drinking water and sanitation, cultural discrimination and the lack of quality care in health centres, where hierarchical relations are established with Quechua mothers and indigenous medicine is ignored and undervalued. The analysis of the case study shows the consequences of the absence of intersectional public policies in social programmes and health facilities.

http://aynidesarrollo.org.pe/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Diagn%C3%B3stico-nutricional-en-el-Bajo-Urubamba-Jul-16.pdf





Photo: ONAMIAP (Pablo Lasansky)

SDG 4: Quality Education

According to the National Agreement (2002), by 2014 the education budget should have been 6% of the GDP. Eighteen years have passed since that agreement and the budget allocated to the education sector represents 3.8% of the GDP.

Illiteracy is one of the great unresolved problems in the country. Although the national illiteracy rates have been falling in the country, the constant level of affectation of mainly indigenous women remains constant. A total of 17% of people who have an indigenous language as their mother tongue cannot read or write. In the case of indigenous women, this figure is 24% of all women, and in the case of men it represents only 10%. In other words, 2 out of every 10 women cannot read and write, while 1 out of every 10 men cannot read and write. In 10 years, it is of serious concern that the illiteracy rate in the Amazonian indigenous women remains constant. Of every 10 women who speak an Amazonian indigenous language, 3 cannot read and write².

Using an ethnic self-identification variable analysis, 10.8% of indigenous Andean people aged 15 and over cannot read and write, compared to 3.9% of non-indigenous people. This represents a 6.9 percentage point gap. The illiteracy rate among indigenous Andean women is 16.3% and among indigenous Andean men 4.9%, with a gender gap of 11.4 percentage points. Regarding indigenous self-identification in the Amazon, 15.9% cannot read or write, a percentage that is almost three times higher than that of non-



² Cfr. Defensoría del Pueblo [Ombudsman's Office], 2017

indigenous people (3.9%). Within this, indigenous women represent 21.2% compared to 5.5% of non-indigenous women. The gap between indigenous men in the Amazon and non-indigenous men is 8.1 percentage points. These gaps are accentuated by area of residence. In urban areas, illiteracy among indigenous women in the Amazon is 4 percentage points higher, and in rural areas the gap is 13.8 percentage points higher³.

The exercise of indigenous women's right to education involves addressing economic, social and cultural barriers. A total of 20% of indigenous women who speak Quechua and 16% who speak Aymara have no level of formal education. In the case of men, only 5% of Quechua speakers and 7% of Aymara speakers have no formal education. Indigenous women in the Amazon register the highest percentage of people without formal education. Asháninka women reached 23% and men 18%, the same for 17% of Awajún women compared to 9% of Awajún men, and Shipibo women reached 9% and men 7%. The gaps are repeated in the rest of the Amazonian peoples, always in favour of men.

At the level of regular basic education, the situation changes slightly in favour of women who have an indigenous language as their mother tongue. A total of 37% of Quechua women complete the primary level, while only 34% of men do; in the case of Aymara women and men, the figures are 36% and 28% respectively. For the Awajún people, the proportion is 50% and 44% respectively, and for the Asháninka people both reach 47%⁴.

With regards secondary education, the situation is reversed for indigenous women who speak an indigenous language. The proportion in the Quechua people is 29% of women and 42% of men; in the Aymara people it is 36% women and 48% men. In the case of the Amazon, the ratio among the Shipibo people is 33% for women and 37% for men; among the Awajún people it is 20% for women and 31% for men; and among the Asháninka people it is 20% for women and 25% for men. It should be noted that the percentage of people whose mother tongue is Spanish exceeds that of the Andean indigenous peoples (34% women and 38% men, respectively)⁵.

Indigenous women's educational path starts with difficulties to begin elementary education and to reach a higher level of education. Being an indigenous girl and adolescent is a high risk due to gender and ethnicity, which compromises their life projects. From a very young age, indigenous women must face structural barriers (geographical, economic, socio-cultural, linguistic or organizational) that prevent them from enjoying their right to education, health, justice and a life free from violence.

Ibid.



Cfr. INEI [National Institute for Statistics and Information], Censo 2017

Cfr. Defensoría del Pueblo [Ombudsman's Office], 2017

The school attendance rate among indigenous women aged 12 to 16 is 94.2%, while that for those between 17 to 21 years of age is 51.6%. This represents a gap of 42.6 percentage points. Although the primary school completion rate for adolescents aged 15 to 19 (97%) and young women aged 25 to 34 (79%) is high, this is not the case in secondary school. Less than 50% in both age groups complete this level⁶. According to the mother tongue, the gap between the net school attendance rate of adolescents aged 12 to 16 years based on those who speak Spanish and those an indigenous language is five points in favour of those who speak Spanish. When asked about the reasons for not attending classes, 77.2% of indigenous adolescents said it was due to economic and family problems, compared to 54.4% of adolescents who speak Spanish.

With regard to access to Information and Communications Technology (ICT), 31.3% of indigenous women between the ages of 6 and 17 use Internet, compared to 29.7% of their male counterparts; and in the same age group, but non-indigenous people, women account for 64.4% and men 64.6%⁷.

In response to the quarantine experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Peruvian State has opted for virtual education to conserve the academic year. However, indigenous schoolchildren face greater disadvantages in accessing this mode of education. Although 80.9% of the people who identified themselves as indigenous Andean people make use of cell phones in urban areas (90.9%) and rural areas (59.1%), only 19.8% have an internet connection. And in the case of people who identified themselves as indigenous Amazonian people, 42.9% use cell phones, although to a greater extent in urban areas (85.3%) than in rural areas (21%); only 9.8% have an internet connection.

At the level of the indigenous communities the disadvantage is even greater. A total of 72.4% of the rural communities do not have any communication service, 7.5% have internet, 11.8% have public telephone service and 10.7% have cable or satellite TV connection, and 61% have radio. Similarly, 57% of the Amazonian native communities do not have any communication service, 21% have radio, 19.9% have public telephone service, 4.9% have cable or satellite television connection, 3.6% have a radio station, 2.9% have internet and 0.5% have cellular telephone service.

⁷ http://m.inei.gob.pe/media/MenuRecursivo/boletines/01-informe-tecnico-n01_ninez-y-adolescencia-oct-nov-dic2019.pdf / Consultado el 29 de mayo de 2020



⁶ Cfr. Defensoría del Pueblo [Ombudsman's Office], 2017



Photo: ONAMIAP (Pablo Lasansky)

INDIGENOUS SCHOOLGIRLS' RIGHT TO EDUCATION

A total of 85.8% of rural communities and 93.3% of Amazonian native communities have a pre-primary educational institution; this is 91.3% and 93.3%, respectively, for primary educational institutions. The greatest access gaps are found at the secondary level. Only 40.6% of rural communities and 23.5% of native communities have a secondary-level educational institution. This absence is not only detrimental to achieving higher levels of education, but also to the permanence and timely completion of the secondary level.

It is important to note that only 59.4% of rural communities and 70.5% of native communities have educational institutions with an intercultural focus. Of the total number of educational institutions with Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE), 34% are at the pre-primary level, 54% at the primary level and 12% at the secondary level. This gap in educational levels accelerates the process in which indigenous languages are lost and cultural identity is put at risk.

Continuing to study means daily travel to school or migrating from the community to settle in the nearest town or city. In any of these cases, families need an additional budget for the student's travel or living expenses. In both cases, for security reasons or because of girls and female adolescents' roles to provide care in the home, boys are prioritized for continuing their education. It is at this stage that the communal fabric



begins to disintegrate, as the new generations become disconnected not only from their families, but also from their culture. The educational system trains them to be urban workers. Habitually, they do not return to the community.

Female adolescents who travel daily from the community to school or who live outside the community are exposed to constant situations of danger that could harm their physical and psychological integrity. Sexual harassment and violence is a permanent threat throughout their educational path. Faced with this, the family often chooses to end their secondary education as a protection measure.

In 2015, the Ombudsman's Office noted the very high level of precariousness, overcrowding, lack of goods and furniture, and absence of daily food service in the residences for secondary students. Since then, the Ministry of Education, following the recommendations of the Ombudsman's Office, has established regulations and guidelines to provide better care, creating the model of Service for Secondary Education with a Student Residence (SER). Staff were trained and hired to improve the service. There are currently 80 registered student residences, with the highest concentration in Loreto (37) and Amazonas (24) regions. However, to date not one has been built, which is one of the main recommendations of the Ombudsman's Office. Indigenous female adolescents have the right to student residences with adequate infrastructure to ensure access, permanence and completion of secondary education, in addition to food and security.



Photo: ONAMIAP (Pablo Lasansky)



For indigenous female students, educational institutions are not a safe space. In the Amazon, cases of harassment and sexual violence by teachers against girls and adolescents have been reported. These cases are covered by a veil of impunity. The permissiveness of the authorities and the complicity of the educational community end with the imposition on the victim a coexisting with their aggressors or endorsing sexual relations between teachers and students. The Condorcangui local education unit is one of these scandalous situations in which cases of sexual violence against Awajún schoolchildren have been reported since 2012. As of 2017, 216 cases were reported and only 17 were sanctioned.

The route required to lodge a formal complaint discourages victims and their families due to the economic cost of the judicial process, the time it demands, the distance between the community and the Judicial Branch institutions, the language, and above all the limited guarantee of obtaining justice. Many times, community justice is used because it is the closest space for the administration of justice. In addition, intra-family and economic compensation arrangements have been identified as mechanisms for the punishment of this crime.

Finally, the percentage of female adolescents aged 15 to 19 who are mothers is 32% for those with an Asháninka mother tongue, 31.9% with a Shipibo Konibo mother tongue, 13% with a Quechua mother tongue and 9.6% with an Aymara mother tongue⁸. A data source that could establish the relation between adolescent pregnancies and sexual violence is the one reported by the National Registry for Identification and Civil Status (RENIEC) in 2015. Of new-borns registered by mothers between 11 to 14 years of age, 71% had fathers over 18 years of age. This situation also reveals the lack of a sexual and reproductive education programme with an intercultural focus.





III. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Photo: ONAMIAP

For indigenous peoples and communities, COVID-19 represents a new threat of ethnocide due to their conditions of marginality, exclusion and poverty. Starting in the first two weeks of the pandemic, ONAMIAP has been denouncing the lack of specific measures to prevent, and subsequently contain, the expansion of COVID-19 in indigenous territories. More than 100 days have passed since the declaration of the state of health emergency in Peru, and there is still no official information regarding the state of the pandemic, such as number of tests performed, cases detected, deaths and people who have recovered that is disaggregated by indigenous peoples, gender and age⁹. The Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean

⁹ And this despite the Executive Decree 005-2020-MC, issued on 30 May 2020, approved the "guidelines for the incorporation of the ethnic variable in the administrative records of public entities, in the framework of the health emergency declared by COVID-19"





Photo: ONAMIAP

(FILAC) considers this as a high risk factor for indigenous people, even more so in the context of the pandemic.

According to the Ombudsman's Office, at present, in the Amazon region alone, some 43,000 Awajún, Quechua and Wampú indigenous peoples are in grave danger from COVID-19. As of 26 June 2020, this means that 89 communities have a high level of vulnerability, in which more than 3,500 people have been officially identified as infected by the virus and 255 people have died. Due to the social determinants of indigenous health, the number and rate of infection currently is double that of the urban areas in the countries of the Amazon basin¹⁰

¹⁰ FILAC, FIAY. Segundo Informe Regional. Plataforma Indígena Regional frente al COVID-19. Comunidades en Riesgo y Buenas Prácticas.



A similar situation might occur in the Andes, where doctors in Cusco and Puno11 have warned of the danger posed by COVID-19 in the current cold season, in which cases of deaths from influenza or pneumonia increase. To date, the Cusco Regional Directorate, for example, reports 1,599 confirmed cases and this number is 1,037 in Puno. The number of COVID-19 cases in rural areas and rural communities in the highlands are increasing. In the Andes and the Amazon, the situation of vulnerability of indigenous peoples and communities share common elements: high levels of extreme poverty, lack of basic services and lack of medical centres to provide timely, free-of-cost and quality care.

With the declaration of the pandemic in the country, educational activities were suspended. As the quarantine was extended, the Ministry of Education implemented the virtual education strategy through the "Learning at Home" programme. This programme is transmitted entirely in Spanish. This new situation requires families to have an internet, radio or television connection, technological equipment, such as a computer or cell phone, but also pedagogical skills, especially for mothers to accompany the learning process of their daughters and sons.

The case of the Huancavelica region can be used illustrate the difficulties faced by school children in the Andean and Amazonian indigenous communities. Huancavelica is one of the regions with the highest poverty rate in the region, which is home to 672 indigenous Quechua peasant communities. In this region, 90% of the children cannot access distance education through the "Learning at Home" programme, as stated by the regional director of education himself, Wilfredo Mezarina. With a regional illiteracy rate of 17.5%, higher in the Quechua-Huancavelica communities, they have little access to radio and even less to the internet.

The virtual education "Learning at Home" programmes, implemented by the government in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, has failed indigenous communities. In rural communities, children must walk for hours to the tops of the hills to have cell phone or internet signals. Some municipalities have installed antennas that are insufficient. The Ministry of Education has embarked on a programme to distribute tablets in communities, which still has not reached them. Another problem is that the few indigenous families who have a cell phone have only one while they have children in various educational levels who each require the use of one.

In addition, due to the quarantine, hundreds of entire indigenous families who had lived or were passing through urban areas are in the process of returning to their communities of origin due to lack of housing, work, food and income. As a protective measure, the communities isolate these families and feed them, but the children are unable to have access to education.

¹¹ In Puno, 14.9% and in Cusco 12.4% auto-identifies as indigenous peoples of the Andes. INEI, 2017 Peruvian Census.



To date, it is not clear what measures will be implemented to ensure that indigenous schoolchildren do not miss the school year or drop out.

With the arrival of COVID-19, the lack of access to basic services has been compounded with the impossibility of indigenous communities to sell their products of their work (agriculture, livestock, handicrafts, among others), thus curbing the possibility of obtaining additional income through commercial trade. The communities subsist on production for self-consumption and are unable to purchase other basic products, including those needed for their health care and attention.

Government-distributed food baskets are scarce. There have been reports of corruption in their distribution, which is the reason why these do not always reach the people with the most need, including indigenous peoples, who have also not had access to the cash voucher created by the government, such as the universal family cash voucher and the agricultural cash voucher.

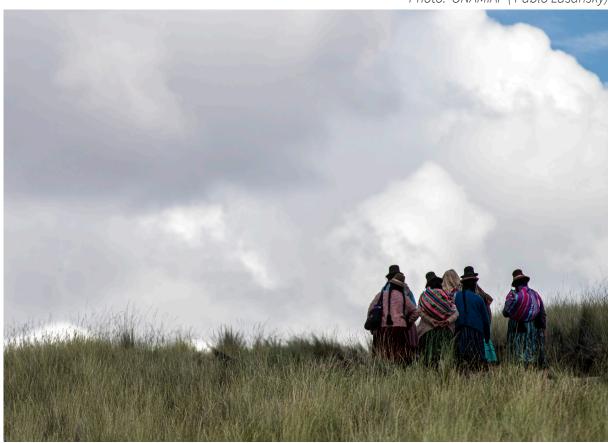


Photo: ONAMIAP (Pablo Lasansky)



IV. CONCLUSION



Photo: ONAMIAP

- Economic growth has not translated into substantially improved living conditions for indigenous peoples and indigenous women. This situation of social inequality that is manifested in the situation of poverty or chronic malnutrition continues to jeopardize the exercise of rights and the broad development of the capacities of future generations.
- Inequality gaps are conveyed in the poverty rates that often double between rural and urban populations, and between indigenous and non-indigenous people.
- The rates of anaemia and malnutrition are particularly high for indigenous girls and boys. This situation is related to other deficiencies such as lack of safe water and sanitation, which affects other diseases.
- Access to education is limited in indigenous communities in general, which are locations where there is a lack of secondary educational institutions.



- There are significant gender gaps in access to and timely completion of secondary education, due to economic problems, the imposition of the role of domestic work and safety.
- The latter is associated with the exposure of indigenous female adolescents to sexual violence in the residences for secondary students by the teachers themselves. These shelters, among other deficiencies, lack minimum guarantees for their safety. Indigenous adolescent females who are victim to sexual violence have little or no access to justice.
- The low level of formal education and the lack of timely completion are linked to the high rates of teenage pregnancy in indigenous peoples. There are indications that many of these pregnancies are the result of sexual violence.
- The highest illiteracy rates are registered for indigenous peoples, and within this group, the highest are that registered for indigenous women.
- All the above has become more manifest and become more acute in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, making the exercise of indigenous women's fundamental rights even more precarious.



Photo: ONAMIAP (Pablo Lasansky)



V. RECOMMENDATIONS



Photo: ONAMIAP

- Ensure that the ethnic variable is incorporated in all official National Institute of Statistics and Information (INEI) studies, as well as in all State data and records, in order to have the real dimension of the situation of indigenous peoples and women, and thus design specific policies for them.
- Public policies with a sufficient budget are needed that are aimed at reducing inequality gaps from an intersectional approach. To this end, strong political will in favour of reducing inequalities, achieving consensus between the State and the various social sectors for this purpose, is required.
- Ensure that programmes against anaemia and malnutrition, gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence, and educational programmes at all levels effectively include a rights-based and interculturality and gender focus.
- Ensure effective measures to end the impunity for aggressors of indigenous women throughout the latter group's entire life cycle.



- Guarantee the implementation of the National Basic Education Curriculum with a gender and intercultural focus, incorporating comprehensive sex education at all levels. Ensure that teachers are properly trained.
- Guarantee access, permanence and completion of the secondary education for indigenous female adolescents, developing measures that make the educational institution a safe place, and provide for the attainment of their nutritional needs.
- Ensure that adolescent pregnancy does not prevent access to and timely completion of education for indigenous female adolescents.
- Design, in consensus with all the actors involved, programmes for the prevention and care of adolescent pregnancy with a rights-based, intercultural and gender focus.
- Ensure, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to health and education services.
- Ensure, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the participation of indigenous peoples, through their representative organizations, in all spaces that decide on prevention and care measures.
- Urgently incorporate the reactivation of the indigenous peoples' economy in the State's economic reactivation plans.







More information:



