

Bilingual Schools Strengthening Ecuador's Plurinational State



Quito, April 03 (teleSUR-RHC) Nearly two thousands schools are now teaching languages of Ecuador's 14 distinct indigenous nationalities, with the number set to grow further in 2015.

At these "inter-cultural bilingual" schools both Spanish and the language pertinent to the specific region where the school is based are incorporated into the curriculum. The inclusive curricula seeks to keep alive indigenous languages and cultures, which are at the risk of disappearing in certain parts of Ecuador.

Carmen Tene, a coordinator of inter-cultural bilingual education of the Ministry of Education said, "There are students who learn indigenous languages at home, as the first teachers of children are their parents," and in such cases "they continue learning here in the institution.

They hone their skill instead of losing it." Schools have shown favorable results, with the 89 percent of indigenous students earning their high school degrees in 2006. Results have increased 96 percent in 2014.

As a continuation of this, indigenous students earning bachelors degrees have increased from 24 percent in 2006 to 55 percent in 2014.

Gisela Nauqui an indigenous student at the *Mushuc Pacari* school in Quito who speaks *Kichwa*, said that she feels like the school is an inclusive environment. "I like it, because other students learn what I already know. And they don't say that I am the only one that speaks *Kichwa*," said Nauqui. Beginning with 95,000 students in 2006, the inter-cultural bilingual schools today count on some 149,000 students.

The success of these schools is thanks to an investment of \$217,000 and the training of some 8,700 indigenous and non-indigenous teachers in inter-cultural pedagogy.

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