

MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION AND RECOVERY OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN BOLIVIA

In Bolivia goes forward the process for the application of the Law Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez approved by the Government in 2010 and establishing the obligation to develop teaching in primary and secondary schools in the native languages of the country.

This Law is part of the Political Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in force since 2009, which establishes Spanish and the 36 languages of the indigenous nations and peasant peoples as official languages. The Constitution also disposes that universities must implement programs for the recovery, preservation, development and dissemination of the different languages.



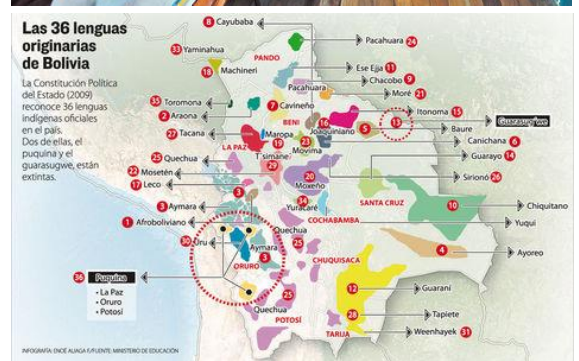
In occasion of the celebrations for the [International Mother Language Day](#) the Head of the Intercultural Policies and Multilingualism Unit (UPIP) of the Ministry of Education of Bolivia has announced that within the strategic goal of the Government to implement the reform by 2018, the process of recovering native languages and to teach them at school had increased of 40%. This result is more than significant in consideration of the complex aspects making the reform proposed by the Law possible.

To face this complexity, the [Ministry of Education of Bolivia](#) is implementing a wide range of initiatives carried out with the collaboration of many actors who play a key role in achieving the established goals.

The Bolivian population is of 10 million inhabitants and the authorities estimate that more than half belong to an indigenous community. The native indigenous languages recognized by the Constitution are 36 and of these, the main ones are Quechua (2 millions of people), Aymara (1,8 millions of people) and Guaraní (150.000 of people).

In collaboration with national institutes the alphabets for 23 among these languages have been already elaborated and approved. Working on the original alphabets, the dictionaries were created so that the languages could be read and written. This large-scale work, not only essential for education in schools, enables the use of native languages in the media, in institutions, services, banks and other contexts of political life and development.

The work of elaboration and approval of the alphabets has represented the basis for the teachers' training. Of the 138,000 educators in Bolivia, 45,000 are enrolled in complementary training, which consists in teaching or improving their capacity to manage the indigenous language verbally and in writing. The Ministry of Education through the [Program of Complementary Training for Female and Male Teachers](#)



[\(Profocom\)](#), trains the teachers, allowing them to give classes in the framework of the approved Regionalized Curricula.

Another relevant aspect is the implementation of the [Regionalized Curricula](#) for the indigenous communities, in order to adapt the education to the culture of each territory and its development needs. The knowledge, history, world vision of all original indigenous people are reflected in the Regionalized Curricula. The process of construction is carried out with the active participation of all local actors: [Educational Councils of Indigenous Peoples](#), community social councils, social organizations, teachers, wise men, fathers, mothers, local and departmental units of the Ministry of Education, among others.

The methodology requires four steps: creation of the regionalized curricula in the territories, where they are approved by the involved actors; delivery of Regionalized Curricula to the Ministry of Education to obtain the Ministerial Resolution; harmonization of Regionalized Curricula with the Basic Curriculum defined by the Ministry of Education; Preparation of plans and programs for primary and secondary schools for their implementation.

12 Regionalized Curricula are already operational in 2018, being approved with ministerial resolutions. Some others are on the way of being finalized. The Departmental Directions of the Ministry of Education coordinate the implementation of the regionalized curricula in the territories, while the municipalities guarantee the provision and management of the funds for their operational functioning.

Another relevant aspect is the production of documents, books, publications and videos about the cultures of the indigenous communities, in the respective local languages, which represent an important tool for teachers in educational activities. This work is supported by the initiatives of the [Instituto Plurinacional de Estudios y Lenguas y Culturas \(IPELC\)](#) whose responsibility defined by the Law is to create the Institutes of Language and Culture (ILC) for each native and Afro-Bolivian nation and indigenous people. 31 ILC are already operational in 2018, undertaking various initiatives in the different territories to revitalize local languages with the [technical and financial support of the Ministry of Education](#).

All the work done to rescue indigenous languages is being used in the adult education activities. The Ministry of Education reports that 2017 closed with an [illiteracy rate of 2.8%](#), the lowest in the history of the country. It was possible to teach [more than one million people](#) through literacy and post-literacy programs carried out in the indigenous languages. Many among the beneficiaries have finished primary, secondary and even higher level studies.

There have also been organized initiatives to implement [bilingual pre-schools](#) in 22 indigenous nations. In these pre-schools mothers and grand-mothers teach languages to children from 0 to 4 years old through ordinary daily activities.

The report of the [First Plurinational Meeting of Intracultural, Intercultural and Multilingual Education](#) published in 2015 by the Ministry of Education of Bolivia, offers a very interesting information about different aspects of the reform in force in the country, about its challenges and results attained.



To know more

[Unidad de Políticas Interculturales y Plurilingüismo \(UPIP\) Ministerio de Educación](#)

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[Article in cecopi-bolivia.org](#)

[Article in en ellibertadorenlinea.com.ar](#)

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[Si no entiendes, ¿cómo puedes aprender? Seguimiento de la Educación en el Mundo, UNESCO 2016](#)

[Conocimiento Indígena y Políticas Educativas Educativas en América Latina UNESCO 2017](#)

