


**WORK OF THE CENTER FOR STUDIES AND DEFENSE OF THE RIGHTS OF  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH AND THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN  
PARANÁ: ASSISTANCE TO INDIGENOUS ACADEMICS AT THE UNIVERSITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

The objective is to contextualize the extension project "Unioeste and Neddij Pedagogy Course: Pedagogy in training", developed by the State University of Western Paraná, Foz does Iguaçu campus, in partnership with the Center for Studies and Defense of the Rights of Children and Youth, in aid of the university's Indigenous academics in the contents and socialization. Indigenous communities fought for their lands and basic education, a fact that delayed the policies for their insertion into higher education. With the creation of quotas, specific courses, and scholarships, these enter the university, bringing with them the fragility of their basic education and the adaptation to a different culture. In Paraná, the Vestibular dos povos indígenas (2001) and the University Commission for Indigenous Peoples emerged, providing unprecedented opportunities for Indigenous peoples to enter state universities through an appropriate form of evaluation that valued their culture.

**Keywords:** Continuing Education. University Dropout. Higher education. Affirmative Actions. Indigenous Peoples.

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## INTRODUCTION

The objective is to contextualize the activities of the extension project "Unioeste and Neddij Pedagogy Course: Pedagogy in training", developed by the State University of Western Paraná, Unioeste, Foz does Iguaçu campus, in partnership with the Center for Studies and Defense of the Rights of Children and Youth, NEDDIJ, and its importance as an aid for Indigenous academics at the university, whether in the disciplines of their courses or the integration with other students and professors or even in the insertion of the knowledge built in the university within their culture, their beliefs and their community, so as not to take away what they bring with them when entering the university environment.

The insertion of Indigenous students in the university environment is still a new topic, which begins to gain a little padding only after the various struggles for the visibility of Indigenous schools as part of basic education, through affirmative policies, which can be implemented through quotas, reservation of vacancies, differentiated scores and specific entrance exams.

Our primary objective with this project was to bring a proposal, in the search to pave the way for a collective, broad, and fruitful debate, which brings this larger theme to the higher education of indigenous peoples, with the use of specific resources and recognition of their rights in a fairer way. To this end, the idea was to listen and debate with Indigenous academics and university professors who are in contact with them, to understand, map the problems, and seek strategies that support the permanence of Indigenous students in higher education courses.

In the current scenario that higher education is going through in Brazil, and especially in Paraná, thinking about a higher education appropriate to different ethnicities, needs, and desires, should be a priority and of paramount importance. Higher education has the opportunity to serve as an instrument of human formation, integration, and social interaction, in addition to the challenge of transforming the reality of many communities and peoples.

The article is divided into five parts, in addition to the introduction and final considerations, in which it seeks to contextualize the work of the Center for the Study and Defense of the Rights of Children and Youth; to demonstrate the perspective of insertion of indigenous education in communities and the creation of indigenous schools; expose the difficulties arising from the departure of indigenous people from their communities to do an undergraduate degree, as well as their entry into universities, in the face of a different

culture, to which they need to adapt at the same time that they are obliged to keep their roots visible and intact. To continue, it is brought how the creation of the University Commission for the Indians (CUIA) and the I Vestibular dos Povos Indígenas do Paraná took place, trajectories of public universities in Paraná in the face of the Indigenous presence; which served as the basis for the implementation of the extension project "Unioeste and Neddij Pedagogy Course: Pedagogy in training", which, as we will expose, had as its initial target audience the academics of the Pedagogy course at Unioeste, Foz does Iguaçu campus, and due to the perceived demands was extended to all Indigenous students on this campus and to the teachers of the Arandu Renda Indigenous State School and the Teko Ñemoingo Indigenous State College.

## **METHODOLOGY: THE PROJECT FOR INTERACTION BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY**

Considering the work and importance that NEDDIJ has in the context of Foz do Iguaçu, the coordinator of the Pedagogy Course, together with the nucleus, teachers, and some academics developed a permanent project with the title "UNIOESTE and NEDDIJ Pedagogy Course: Pedagogy in training", to act in the community as the needs come to us.

## **THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY AND DEFENSE OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

The Center for Studies and Defense of the Rights of Children and Youth, NEDDIJ was created in 2006 by the Government of the State of Paraná, through a partnership between the State Secretariat of Science, Technology and Higher Education, SETI, and the State Institutions of Higher Education, to serve children and adolescents in situations of social vulnerability and risk, violation of rights and/or conflict with the law, aiming at the defense of their rights – in the case of the part that belongs to legal professionals – and prevention strategies – in the case of the part that belongs to Pedagogy professionals –, through projects prepared according to each case, to meet each place based on its reality and specific needs.

The projects take place through lectures and research, for example, to deal with issues related to mistreatment, violence, moral harassment, sexual harassment, abuse, and illicit drugs, among others, to prevent, alert, and inform children and adolescents within the school and social community.

The NEDDIJ of the State University of Western Paraná, UNIOESTE, Foz do Iguaçu campus, includes a pedagogue, two lawyers, and two law students, who must put into practice the theoretical knowledge acquired, research and produce scientific articles and carry out extension activities that provide opportunities to leave the work environment and bring the University closer to the community.

The Legal team also works with the Childhood and Youth Court of Foz do Iguaçu, in the defense of adolescents who respond to the process of investigating the infraction and who are unable to afford a private lawyer, monitor their processes of execution of socio-educational measures, always aiming at the resocialization of the young person. In the civil section, they act in the filing of alimony, custody, and guardianship, among others, in which the child or adolescent is at risk, according to the competence defined by the Court of Justice of the State of Paraná, provided that the responsible person does not have the financial condition to bear the expenses of the process.

The project has a unique characteristic that combines legal practice, extension, and research, law goes beyond everyday practice, that is, there is a debate together with the Pedagogy team on various topics involving childhood and youth, problematizing the legal context, and establishing interdisciplinarity.

The pedagogical team's<sup>3</sup> primary objective is to work with schools and entities in prevention, so that children and adolescents do not come into conflict with the law, meeting the demands of this prevention. It also takes the Pedagogy Course, teachers, and academics to work in these activities since this is one of the functions of the Pedagogue, to work not only in educational institutions but also in informal education. The team must provide the guarantee of the rights of children and adolescents and their respective families, providing pedagogical assistance through analysis of the needs of schools to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents in the municipality and the State.

It also makes possible referrals to other related areas to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of childhood and youth. They work in activities such as the elaboration of pedagogical projects to support the cognitive and social formation of children in Elementary Schools I and II, as well as working interdisciplinarily with the legal area, carrying out research work and theoretical-practical studies, understanding the importance of expanding knowledge in the area of protection and defense of the rights of children and

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<sup>3</sup> This team had been extinguished in early 2023 and returned to work in September 2024, with a newly graduated pedagogue and a coordinator.

adolescents, if possible, together with the authorities, to contribute to the elaboration of public policies.

As well as, in the production, presentation, and publication of works related to the areas of activity of the Center, providing pedagogical assistance through interviews with principals and teachers of the school system, offering guidance, with the legal team, in cases where referrals are necessary to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of the child as well as pedagogical support.

Neddij, as a nucleus linked to Unioeste, always seeks to bring activities into the university field, including academics in projects, as a way to put into practice what they learn in the classroom. Thus, it is perceived that meeting the difficulties of indigenous students is also a way of defending the rights of indigenous children and adolescents, who study in the schools where they work, to a quality education, that values their culture and origins, to the position that prepares them for entry into higher education later, that is, Serving teachers is improving the quality of students.

## INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND INDIGENOUS SCHOOL EDUCATION

Indigenous culture has been ignored since the arrival of the Portuguese colony in Brazil, with the extraction of land and its exploitation. In the quest to exclude the way of life of Indigenous communities, denying cultural differences, languages, and identities, they introduce catechization, as a way of inserting Indigenous people into "society", which searched for public policies that were by the way of life of these peoples and the guarantee of their territories occur too late.

It can be said, then, that schools have always had the function of being civilizing, because, from the first villages, they tried to impose European and Christian culture, with teachings that were of no use to the Indigenous people, since they lived from hunting, gathering, fishing and agriculture, which caused resistance and struggles against this teaching.

In 1845, the Regulation of Catechesis and Civilization of the Indians was published, proposing teaching in mechanical arts workshops, the encouragement of agriculture, military training, and enlistment. In 1870, there was an investment in what they called educational institutes and boarding schools, outside their lands, for basic instruction, necessary for the performance of functions (Amaral, 2010).

With the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of 1988, the Indigenous people began to have their rights guaranteed, as pointed out in Article 231, "The Indians are recognized for their social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions, and the original rights over the lands they traditionally occupy, and it is up to the Union to demarcate them, protect and ensure respect for all their assets" (Brazil, 1988, n.p.).

In the educational field, this same law determines that elementary education must ensure "respect for cultural and artistic, national and regional values" and continues "§ 2 Regular elementary education shall be taught in Portuguese, and Indigenous communities will also be assured the use of their mother tongues and their learning processes." The policies are constructed as a means of "ensuring access to general knowledge without having to deny their cultural specificities and ethnic identities" (Brazil, 1998, p.1), preparing them for contact with other cultures and insertion in a capitalist society, if they wish, with a bilingual and intercultural education that respects their mother tongue and traditional knowledge, as well as adapts to the sociocultural reality of each community, determinations that are reaffirmed by the "Guidelines for the National Policy of Indigenous School Education" (1993) and in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, LDBEN (1996).

The Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, LDBEN, reiterates the defense of Indigenous peoples, their culture, and the right to quality education that considers their specificities, as pointed out in article 78, and aims to,

Art 78 (...) I - to provide the Indians, their communities, and peoples with the recovery of their historical memories; the reaffirmation of their ethnic identities; the appreciation of their languages and sciences;  
II - to guarantee to the Indians, their communities, and peoples, access to information, technical and scientific knowledge of the national society, and other indigenous and non-Indian societies (Brasil, 1996, n.p).

Over the years, several guiding documents for Indigenous school education have been prepared, such as the "National Curriculum Reference for Indigenous Schools (RCNEI)", which was published by the MEC in 1998, the "National Curriculum Guidelines for Indigenous School Education", through Opinion No. 14/99 of the National Education Council, approved on September 14, 1999, which brings the demand for initial training for Indigenous teachers and in the same year the "National Guidelines for the Functioning of Indigenous Schools", published by CNE Resolution No. 03/99, on November 10, 1999 (Amaral, 2010).

The Indigenous School was created by the National Curriculum References for Indigenous Education, in 1999; National Guidelines for Indigenous School Education, in 2000; and National Education Plan, in 2001, which were conquered after the movements of indigenous teachers in Brazil, in the search for an education that meets the specificities, their cultural diversity and the bilingualism present in schools in indigenous lands in the Brazilian territory (Amaral, 2010).

The National Policy for Indigenous School Education states that "indigenous education aims to achieve the socio-economic-cultural autonomy of each people" (Brazil, 1994, p.14), in an education that considers cultural diversity, and among the principles of this law we can mention the valorization of specificity and difference since the more than 200 Indigenous societies are demarcated by specific cultural traditions, with distinct historical processes, identity, and their language, as well as elements that differentiate them from non-indigenous societies; which means that Indigenous schools need to be specific and differentiated (Brasil, 1994).

Other principles are interculturality and bilingual education, with "the positive and mutually enriching exchange between the cultures of the various societies" (Brazil, 1994, p.11), in which each person has "the constitutional right to use its Indigenous mother tongue in school, that is, in the oral and written educational process, of all curricular contents" in return for the "right to learn Portuguese as a second language at school, in its oral and written modalities, in its various registers - formal, colloquial, etc." (Brasil. 1994, p.11).

The education of Indigenous communities, as well as the teaching and learning of other cultures, must take into account the reality of the student and what he already knows; because there is no way to treat extracurricular and school learning as antagonistic; so that contents are endowed with meaning and can be understood and apprehended, in an integrated way, without compartmentalization, "as a process of collective construction of knowledge and involves students, teachers and the community" (Brazil, 1994, p. 12).

To expand the principles of the guidelines, the Ministry of Education published in 1998 the National Curriculum Reference for Indigenous Schools (RCNEI), which is part of the National Curriculum Parameters. The RCNEI is a training proposal, which aims to guarantee diversity, in a pedagogical proposal of intercultural and bilingual education.

It can be said that Indigenous peoples have appropriated educational processes and the school, a creation of the non-indigenous, "as spaces and potential instruments for the



expression of their aspirations, their struggles, their languages, and their cultures" (Amaral, 2010, p. 127).

However, for the most part, schools in Indigenous communities only serve up to Elementary School, which requires that those who want to finish their studies need to go to other schools outside their community. Schools within the communities often rely on teachers without specific training for this, or non-indigenous teachers without knowledge about the specificities of this ethnic group, which makes visible the lack of professionals to work in these villages. In the same way, it occurs in other areas such as health, requiring them to seek medical and nursing help, among others outside the village, even if they have a vast knowledge of medicinal plants, prayers, and forms of healing.

The struggles to improve education within the communities, "the expansion of elementary education and the promotion of the implementation of secondary education in indigenous lands have provoked the need to train and qualify indigenous teachers who will meet this demand" (Amaral, 2010, p. 63), in the perspective that a good basic education is a primary basis for the entry of these students later into higher education, as well as their permanence and quality of learning at the university.

It is perceived that the indigenous people themselves must have access to knowledge, so that they can insert it in their villages, uniting the knowledge of their people with the scientific knowledge passed on, a fact that is not possible when the services are provided by non-indigenous people who are unaware of the specificities of the people.

## THE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN BEING INDIGENOUS AND BEING A UNIVERSITY STUDENT: THE DIFFICULTY IN ENTERING ANOTHER CULTURE AND THE STRUGGLE TO PRESERVE THEIR ORIGINS

The presence of Indigenous students in the university is recent and gradually increases, even if slowly, as well as the emphasis on the movements of Indigenous teachers and leaders in Brazil, for the right to higher education, especially in recent years, because "higher education for Indigenous peoples has been institutionally circumscribed and focused on guaranteeing the training of indigenous teachers who will meet the expansion of the offer of basic education in indigenous lands" (Amaral, 2010, p. 163).

The struggle of Indigenous peoples to occupy spaces in public universities is also a result of the achievements for the legal recognition of Indigenous schools in the public basic education system, especially for the provision of elementary education



based on the National Curriculum Guidelines for Indigenous School Education, among other references (Amaral, 2010, p. 62).

In this regard, as Lima and Barroso-Hoffmann (2007) point out, for a long time, and in many places until today, indigenous leaders thought little about the issue of higher education for their community, since their primary concern was to maintain their lands and ensure the subsistence of the families who live there.

When talking about Indigenous higher education, one perceives paths that must be analyzed, the search for the training of their teachers, to the same extent that the search for the management and maintenance of their lands occurs, that is, the communities go through the school education that was imposed, capitalist and "of the whites" and that generated the training of Indigenous teachers, in contradiction to

Need to have Indigenous professionals trained in the scientific knowledge conveyed by universities, capable of articulating, when appropriate, this knowledge and the traditional knowledge of their peoples, putting themselves at the forefront of the resolution of needs that arose with the contemporary process of territorialization to which they are subjected and which resulted in the demarcation of lands for collectivities (Lima, Barroso-Hoffmann, 2007, p. 7).

In an analysis of the 1990s, it can be seen that the only existing form that appears recorded regarding the entry of Indigenous people into higher education refers to the initiatives of agreements between the National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples, FUNAI, and public and private universities for access to Indigenous students, which remains in the following decade (Lima, Barroso-Hoffmann, 2007).

Subsequently, the admission of Indigenous students to public universities began to occur through the reservation of vacancies, the so-called quotas or supplementary vacancies (Amaral, 2010), and over the years, forms of admission to undergraduate courses have been constituted,

what is operationally evident is the offer of intercultural teaching courses for the training of indigenous teachers and the constitution of policies for access to higher education through reserved or supplementary vacancies, through conventional or specific entrance exams, in public universities (Amaral, 2010, p. 131).

When entering into the creation of intercultural teaching degree courses, there are opposing opinions on the subject, whether to relate the insertion of the Indigenous in a differentiated education or a formal education, since the first aims at a bilingual, community education, which has Indigenous thought, knowledge and practices as its central base, and

formal education aims at the interaction between communities and cultures, in the search for respect for diversity, on both sides and that they obtain new knowledge, learned and produced to contribute to the development of their communities, both necessary, with formal education being defended before

The importance of these subjects in accessing, learning, producing, and socializing academic knowledge linked, organized, and disseminated by the most varied disciplines and undergraduate and graduate courses, which are part of the public patrimony of which it is theirs and their communities by right (Amaral, 2010, p. 532).

Prof. Elias Januário, during the Seminar "Challenges for Higher Education for Indigenous Peoples in Brazil", in August 2004<sup>4</sup>, defends differentiated courses, from the perspective of making teachers' performance more flexible and modifying curricula, as he demarcates that the structure of the public university is often plastered. However, it denounces two proposals for the creation of Indigenous universities, conceived by private initiative, without the participation of Indigenous organizations, the main stakeholders, "aiming at courses that can promote disorderly extractivist in Indigenous areas and the opening to agribusiness" (Lima; Barroso-Hoffmann, 2007, p. 114).

The pioneer in offering the Indigenous Intercultural Teaching Degree course, as of 2009, was the Community University of the Chapecó Region, Unochapecó, in partnership with the Santa Catarina State Department of Education, being offered in several universities later, such as the University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony, UNILAB; the Federal University of Espírito Santo, UFES; the Federal University of Grande Dourados, UFGD; the Federal University of Ceará; UFC; among others, and in 2024, with the first class in Foz do Iguaçu, at the Federal University of Latin American Integration, UNILA.

However, there is a concern with the training of teachers for Indigenous schools in Elementary Schools, an apparent need that should be embraced, but opposed to the other teaching degrees that are necessary for the implementation of Elementary Schools II and High Schools within the villages and that appear little in the training policies for Indigenous people. When analyzing the courses in the areas of health and exact sciences, there are no policies or projects for the training of indigenous doctors, nurses, lawyers, pharmacists, or engineers, who can work with their communities, uniting the knowledge of their culture

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<sup>4</sup> The seminar took place in 2004, but the report was only published by LACED in 2007 after obtaining resources from projects coordinated by Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima, a fact that it is referenced with the year of publication.

with academic knowledge, which can be inserted in the agencies that serve their people, such as Funai, so that these vacancies do not need to be occupied by non-indigenous people (Amaral, 2010; Paulino, 2008; Lima, Barroso-Hoffmann, 2007).

As Gilberto Dalmolin points out, "There is a pressing need for teaching from the 5th to the 8th grade and also for secondary education in Indigenous communities, with Indigenous teachers, which will require qualified teachers" (Lima, Barroso-Hoffmann, 2007, p.115), in the same way, that the conclusions of the seminar point out that "higher education for Indigenous peoples should not be restricted to teacher training courses. In this sense, a demand was already consolidated in other fields, such as health and environmental education, a demand that needs to be met" (Lima, Barroso-Hoffmann, 2007, p. 144 -145).

The university is a place of multiple cultures, in which the connection between them is verified, and it is visible in many cases how Indigenous people are seen and treated by non-indigenous professors and colleagues, with a series of difficulties experienced in being Indigenous and a university student when seeking to enter higher education, in a mixture of,

prejudices, uncertainty and fear, timid and sometimes absent institutional intervention, financial difficulties, fragile schooling, foreignness, as well as the affirmation of ethnic identity, academic recognition and pride, intercultural relations, and the perspective of the possible (Amaral, 2010, p.30).

He reaffirms: "Feeling like an Indigenous student provokes, in this way, to this student, to feel like an Indian amid the hegemonic, homogeneous, majority and massified non-indigenous social and cultural presence in the city and the university" (Amaral, 2010, p. 387). The author points out that when entering the course and relating to the professors, classmates, and university colleagues, the indigenous people are faced with contradictions and paradoxes, because the theories that guide the course and the chosen profession are aimed at the constitution of "a professional identity focused, in most cases, on the capitalist market" (Amaral, 2010, p. 168).

Other relevant points, raised by Amaral (2010), are the financial difficulties that the Indigenous people encounter staying in the cities, for those who live far away and the daily commutes between the villages and the University for those who live in adjacent cities, as well as the coexistence in the urban space, bilingual adaptation, the absence of monitoring of these by the institutions and the most challenging, according to the author, that it would

be fragile basic schooling, which is perceived by the difficulty in keeping up with academic activities, a cause of prejudice by non-indigenous colleagues and teachers, self-prejudice and retention rates in the first years of graduation or even dropout (Amaral, 2010).

In conversations with Indigenous academics from the State University of Western Paraná, they bring up that their will, often a need to do a degree is, for the most part, to help their community. As Amaral (2010, p. 24) points out, "the academic knowledge produced at the university by Indigenous students and researchers becomes strategic for the cultural and political affirmation of the ethnic groups to which they belong, as well as for the development of their communities".

During the seminar "Challenges for Higher Education for Indigenous Peoples in Brazil: Public Policies of Affirmative Action and Differentiated Cultural Rights", organized by the Knowledge Trails Project, linked to the Laboratory of Research in Ethnicity, Culture, and Development (LACED) of the National Museum of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, with the support of the Social Inclusion Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Ford Foundation, Lima and Barroso-Hoffmann (2007, p. 42) point out that

It is not about the universalization of schooling, but about the training of highly qualified Indigenous people committed to the defense of their rights, the promotion of the quality of life of their communities of origin, the management of their territories, and the strengthening of their organizations. Affirmative actions for social inclusion in this area must combine a multicultural perspective that respects diversity and differentiated Indigenous perspectives, under penalty of becoming expedients of bureaucratic control and regulation of the demands of Indigenous citizenship.

It is perceived that in addition to the student's interests in professional growth and success, also observed in black university students or those from public schools, who experience greater difficulties in higher education, in the context and the capitalist social organization, Indigenous students carry with them their experiences, their culture, "the expectations and collective needs of their village or community" (Amaral, 2010, p. 141).

It is observed that "the permanence of an Indigenous student in the university can contribute to the resistance and affirmation of their ethnic group, their community, and their people, having access to important knowledge for their political and cultural emancipation" (Amaral, 2010, p. 147), however, their permanence in higher education is only feasible through what Amaral (2010) calls a double belonging, of the academic being and the Indigenous being of their ethnicity and community, that is, of the Indigenous academic having the need to meet the demands of the university and the molds of Western culture,

but without this taking away their origins, their culture and continuing to help their communities (Amaral, 2010). When academics enter higher education, often leaving their villages, they begin to need to reconcile the relationships and lives of the Indigenous, the university student, and the urban dweller.

## THE FIRST ENTRANCE EXAM FOR THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF PARANÁ AND THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMISSION FOR THE INDIANS (CUIA) AS A TRAJECTORY OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN PARANÁ TO THE INDIGENOUS PRESENCE

In the current scenario that higher education is going through in Brazil, and especially in Paraná, thinking about a higher education appropriate to different ethnicities, needs, and desires, should be a priority and of paramount importance. Higher education has the opportunity to serve as an instrument of human formation, integration, and social interaction, in addition to the challenge of transforming the reality of many communities and peoples, "but it is necessary to remember that if education is an instrument of struggle, it is also an instrument of domination and subordination" (Lima; Barroso-Hoffmann, 2007, p.115), then, more than ever, mechanisms are needed to defend the right to public, free and quality education for all and mostly for minority groups.

Affirmative action policies have the option of being implemented through quotas, reservation of vacancies, differentiated scores, and specific entrance exams, in the search for reducing inequalities. From this perspective, in the state of Paraná, on April 18, 2001, through State Law No. 13,134, the creation of three additional vacancies in each university instituted or created by the State of Paraná occurred in an unprecedented way, "to be disputed exclusively among the Indians who are members of the indigenous societies of Paraná" (Paraná, 2001, n.p.), starting with the entrance exam of the following year. On January 9, 2006, State Ordinary Law No. 14,995 reworded the law, increasing to six vacancies, called indigenous social quota, in "all selection processes for admission as a student in the State Public Universities of Higher Education in the State of Paraná" (Paraná, 2006, n.p.).

The experience of Indigenous students entering the specific entrance exams in Paraná represents the possibility of approximation and articulation of orientations and actions of the state public system and the federal public system, involving professors, researchers, students, programs, projects, and other initiatives that can allow a dialogue among themselves and between them, with the Indigenous peoples involved in this action (Amaral, 2010, p. 59).

Since the publication of the Law in 2001, the State Secretariat of Science, Technology and Higher Education, Seti has entrusted the State Universities with the task of jointly organizing a Specific Interinstitutional Entrance Exam for Indigenous Peoples, currently designated as the Entrance Exam for Indigenous Peoples in Paraná. To this end, SETI, through Joint Resolution No. 001/2001, composed a Commission for the Monitoring of Indigenous Students, composed of one civil servant from each university involved <sup>5</sup>(it began to have three civil servants from each in November) and a representative of the same (Paraná, 2001).

This commission became permanent by Seti Joint Resolution No. 001/2004, being officially designated as the University Commission for Indians, CUIA, later modified to the University Commission for Indigenous Peoples, no longer with only the attribution of monitoring. The attributions are defined by SETI Resolution No. 006/2007, which points out that.

CUIA is responsible for:

- to discuss, evaluate, and propose the adequacy of the legal instruments of the selection process referred to in Law No. 13,134 of April 18, 2001, and No. 14,995;
- carry out the specific and inter-institutional selection process fully and annually, preparing and presenting a conclusive report;
- pedagogically monitor Indigenous students in universities in their respective collegiate courses;
- systematically evaluate the general process of inclusion and permanence of Indigenous students in universities;
- to develop and develop teaching, research, and extension projects involving Indigenous students and their respective communities;
- sensitize and involve the academic community in the Indigenous issue;
- seek dialogue, integration, and inter-institutional partnerships (SETI, 2007, online).

The I Vestibular dos Povos Indígenas do Paraná was held from February 4 to 6, 2002, in Guarapuava, PR, at Unicentro, with the next editions being itinerant, each year at a university, in the order, UEL, 2003; UNIOESTE, 2004; UEM, 2005; UEPG, 2006; UFPR, 2007; UNICENTRO, 2008; UEL, 2009; UNIOESTE, 2010, and so on, with changes in the forms of registration, evaluation, duration and admission (Amaral, 2010). The XXIV edition, in 2024, was organized by the State University of Western Paraná, with 600 candidates,

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<sup>5</sup> State University of Londrina (UEL), State University of Maringá (UEM), State University of Ponta Grossa (UEPG), State University of Western Paraná (UNIOESTE), State University of the Midwest (UNICENTRO) and State University of Northern Paraná (UNESPAR/UENP).



who took the tests on November 24 and 25, in the cities of Cornélio Procopio and Tamarana, in the North region; Mangueirinha, in the Southwest; Manoel Ribas, in the Central region of Paraná; Nova Laranjeiras, in the Center-South; Ortigueira, in the Campos Gerais region, and in Santa Helena, in the west of the state (Paraná, 2024).

For the monitoring and permanence of these students in Higher Education, SETI leaves it up to each institution to search for policies that guarantee control and non-dropout, which causes a differentiation from one university to another and the fragile organization of ways for their permanence.

When students manage to enter higher education, they face another difficulty, that of maintaining themselves. It is known that many need to leave their lands to study in urban centers and others need to travel long distances to go and return every day, which brings expenses that they are unable to afford, aggravated in the case of those who have families that need to subsist. From 2002 to 2003, there was no fixed scholarship to assist indigenous academics in their training, with a scholarship of R\$ 250.00 (two hundred and fifty reais), which was not regulated, that is, the payment of the scholarship depended on donations (Paulino, 2008).

As of 2004, through Resolution No. 016/04, SETI set the amount of R\$ 270.00 (two hundred and seventy reais), which was equated to the value of the minimum wage, in 2006, which was R\$ 350.00 (three hundred and fifty reais), by Resolution No. 029/06, but there was still no legislation that guaranteed that the payment would continue. On December 27, 2007, finally, the government-sanctioned Law No. 15,759/2007, which regulates the granting of scholarships by the Executive Branch, provides for a scholarship to aid Indigenous students, with the value of the scholarship being equivalent to the minimum wage and defines its granting during the 12 months of the year, with its value being doubled in the month corresponding to their entry into the university and increased by another quarter when the student has a family to sustain (PAULINO, 2008). SETI Resolution No. 015/2008, instituted the Scholarship Aid Program for Indigenous Students, setting the value of the scholarship at R\$400.00/month, with a 50% increase in the value for academics who prove custody of children (Amaral, 2010).

The State Cuia made a report of the students enrolled and graduated until the year 2019, divided by each State University, by Ethnicity, Indigenous Land to which they belong, and the training courses, in which the results are brought only from Unioeste, the project's base university. In the year, there were 25 students enrolled, twelve of whom were from the



Guarani ethnic group, twelve from the Kaingang ethnic group, and one from the Terena ethnic group, nine of whom were in face-to-face teaching degree courses and one at a distance learning level, eleven in the area of health and four in the area of applied social sciences (Cuia, 2019).

In an analysis of the data in this report, a total of seven students were among the graduating students, one in literature, one in social sciences, four in pedagogy, and one in medicine, which makes us debate the reasons why enrollments in health courses are higher, but the conclusions are lower, from the perspective that Amaral points out, in the 2010s, the absence of institutional monitoring and the high dropout rate of Indigenous academics existing at Unioeste, especially in the area of health, which is why projects are sought that bring students closer and attract them to continue their undergraduate studies until the end, such as the one done by the authors and explained below.

## **RESULTS**

The initial project started in 2023 as a demand from the Parigot de Souza Municipal School, in the same municipality, to serve a class of 26 students, with high abilities and giftedness. The activity provided the students of the Pedagogy course with the opportunity to learn in practice about serving students with different demands.

After the 6 months of the project at the school, the needs were met, and to continue with it, it was sought to meet other demands that were perceived, among them that of the indigenous academics of the university, especially in the Pedagogy course, who express the difficulties in following the syllabus of the disciplines they take on campus, as well as to put into practice and pass on this knowledge to their classes, in which some of them work in their villages.

In a meeting with the academics of the Pedagogy Course, the interest of Indigenous academics from other courses, including Law and Accounting, and teachers from Indigenous schools in these communities to participate in the project was expressed, which was promptly accepted. Together, there was a consensus that the activities should take place in the communities themselves, and as of September 2023, the workshops began to be held on the first Saturday of each month in the community of the Arandu Renda Indigenous State School, located in the Tekoha Aty Miri Village, in the city of Itaipulândia-PR, to strengthen ties with our indigenous academics, help them with difficulties and support school teachers in the best way to transmit knowledge to students. Another point

for the insertion of the activities in the village was the interest and curiosity of some non-indigenous colleagues and teachers to learn about indigenous issues and cultures, and the reality of the communities to which the indigenous students belong.

The idea is that intercultural dialogues would take place at the university between indigenous academics from different villages and non-indigenous academics and professors. The project consists of an institutional action aimed at strengthening the visibility and performance of these academics through the offer of workshops, which are being taught by professors from the Pedagogy, Law, Letters, Nursing, Mathematics Courses and external teachers from the municipal and state network invited to be part of the project.

The schedule of actions developed in the Tekoha Aty Miri village includes multidisciplinary, sociocultural, and sports activities, text production workshops, music workshops, film reproduction, and conversation circles with the participation of invited experts in a specific theme linked to the theme, with various activities such as lectures, study groups, among others. The workshops are aimed at Indigenous academics from the Pedagogy Course – and other courses – at Unioeste, Foz do Iguaçu campus, who work at the Arandu Renda Indigenous State School and the Teko Nemoingo Indigenous State School, located in the Avá-Guarani village, in Ocoí, in the city of São Miguel, do Iguaçu, next to Itaipulândia; to the teachers and managers of the two schools and to the public of the villages who wish to participate.

The university provides transportation to take the professors who teach the activities, the monitors, and the community from the Avá-Guarani Village to the Tekoha Aty Miri village, facilitating the participation of a greater number of people since they would not be able to move around with their transportation.

Among the activities developed, we can mention Pedagogical Mediation: games, artifacts, and construction of teaching materials; Mathematical games; Tangran: some possibilities for teaching fractions, areas, and percentages; Storytelling; Breastfeeding; Bullying; Sexual harassment; Human rights and rights of Indigenous peoples.

The extension project, for the year 2025, is being designed with a schedule of classes, one Saturday a month, in the village, so that the monitors can help these students with the difficulties and demands of the university, in a more present way. The intention is to make the interaction between indigenous academics and other students closer, a way to reduce the "shame" of asking for help in activities, and thus reduce the dropout that occurs

in undergraduate courses. The perspective is that instead of wanting them to adapt to the lives of the "whites", they seek to know their reality and culture.

## **DISCUSSION**

The activities were taught by the teachers who were part of the project with the support of the monitors and took place on the same days that the program was organized without any mishap. The success was the mass participation of these in all the activities developed in the workshops.

The activity is also a way to collaborate with the teaching and learning of academics, of what the University has worked on in the disciplines, and to take them to the concrete reality of a classroom so that they can already intentionally visualize what they can do after their training. We can conclude that the project serves as a policy to help and permanent these students at the university, in addition to the monitoring they already have.

Furthermore, when the workshops are developed in the Tekoha Aty Miri village, the broad participation, and the interconnection between the community and the public university, are perceived, with improvements for teachers who learn in practice how to transmit the contents in a satisfactory way to students and for academics who tend to be able to assimilate the syllabus contents passed on in the Pedagogy Course at Unioeste, campus of Foz do Iguaçu, more easily. The results so far have met expectations and are favorable.

## **CONCLUSION**

The desire to start a project with these students had already come with time, an analysis of the difficulties they present in interacting with colleagues and professors, in presentations, and the visibility of a large number of dropouts, especially in the first year of graduation. It is argued that the right is not only linked to the insertion of Indigenous people in the university environment but to the constitution of instruments that guarantee the permanence and success of these academics in higher education.

It is sought that public higher education can be intercultural so that it houses an effective exchange of knowledge. It is expected, with this work, to strengthen the ties between public universities, public schools, and the community, as well as to help improve the quality of education and Indigenous school education. With this, the project certainly has great social relevance, not only because of the scope of the actions carried out by the

university, in addition, because there is a contribution to academic-scientific production and active action within the academic community.

Thus, the joint actions go beyond the barriers of the university campus, broadly reaching society, considering that the project involves different social strata, such as the academic community, the population of minorities, and peripheral strata.

It is argued that diversity should be fully and constantly present in universities because it is at the heart of the production of knowledge that there is the opportunity to bring about changes in the way people act and think. Therefore, the university, in addition to policies for the insertion of these students in the university environment, must prepare itself to receive indigenous people, with policies for the preservation and promotion of their indigenous cultures.

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