

**The challenges of indigenous education in a multicultural metropolis:
the case of Mexico City**

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Abstract:

With officially nearly 800.000 native inhabitants, Mexico City is home to one of the largest and most diverse indigenous populations worldwide – one that has grown especially dynamically in the last decades due to massive immigration from different regions of the country. Recently, the education authorities try to respond to those demographic changes by embedding the native population's cultural and linguistic diversity in the curriculum. Nevertheless, there are many challenges that are still difficult to overcome: indigenous students have lower achievement levels than their non-indigenous counterparts, have much higher school dropout rates, and are often discriminated by both teachers and other students.

The aim of the poster is to present the challenges faced by the education system regarding indigenous people in Mexico City and to propose solutions that could help to improve it. It sums up the results of a five-month research fellowship carried out in Mexico City between October 2017 and February 2018. The research is based on in-depth interviews with representatives of governmental institutions, indigenous NGOs and scholars specialized in education, completed by statistical data from population censuses and an extensive bibliographic research.

The analysis shows that an effective implementation of the new, more culturally sensitive education policy in Mexico City is currently impossible, primarily due to difficulties with identifying indigenous students in schools, the lack of sufficiently qualified teachers, frequent changes in official programmes, high mobility of indigenous students, and discriminatory attitudes towards them. As a result, a more realistic and less declaratory policy may be necessary, and if the objective is to protect and promote cultural diversity, an effective fight against discrimination is fundamental. Nevertheless, such measures would not bring measurable progress in education, at least in short term, and thus it is doubtful if there will be political will to implement them.

Keywords: indigenous people, intercultural and bilingual education, education policy, Mexico City