

# **The Struggle of Indigenous and Afrodescendants Peoples for the Right to Pertinent and Quality Education in Latin America: RUIICAY and the CRES 2018.**

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The Network of Indigenous, Intercultural and Community Universities of Latin America (RUIICAY) is the main regional platform for the advancement of indigenous, and afrodescendants peoples higher education rights and institutions. Ten universities from eight countries conform this network. RUIICAY integrates universities established as part of an effective exercise of right to pertinent, quality higher education and struggle for intercultural citizenship and decolonization. Among the aims of RUIICAY is to establish a regional intercultural higher education system, strengthen in each country indigenous, intercultural and community universities; promote an appropriate recognition and accreditation in accordance with their particular undertaking.

The undertakings of RUIICAY universities are alternative to the hegemonic and mainstream universities, breaking away from social unpinning. They are spaces for local resilience, autonomy and self-determination capacities, community base organizations and self-development processes nurturing; ethnic and cultural revitalization, intercultural dialogue and consensus building for collective action and advocacy advancing wellbeing, human and citizen rights. The inter-generational cultivation and transmission of ancestors, elders and Mother Earth spirits wisdom, knowledge and practice is another important dimension. A knowledge dialogue substantiates education, research and outreach activities in epistemic equality, which also tackles local brain drain, good living needs and new leadership formation.

This year, the Regional Conference of Higher Education (CRES) will take place in Cordoba, Argentina June 11-15. This space is strategic for advancing the visibility and recognition of indigenous, intercultural and community universities. In the CRES 2008 carried out in Cartagena, Colombia, for the first time there was recognition of the need of making higher education intercultural and more responsive to indigenous and afrodescendants needs and wellbeing priorities. The CRES 2018 is expected to do much better in such recognition and visibility. This paper and presentation will share lights into the process leading to CRES 2018, achievements, challenges and final results.