

# **New Students, New Institutions: Challenges for Academic Legitimation and Social Sustainability of Intercultural Universities in Mexico**

**Sylvie Didou Aupetit**  
Cinvestav-DIE  
**didou@cinvestav.mx**

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RIMAC

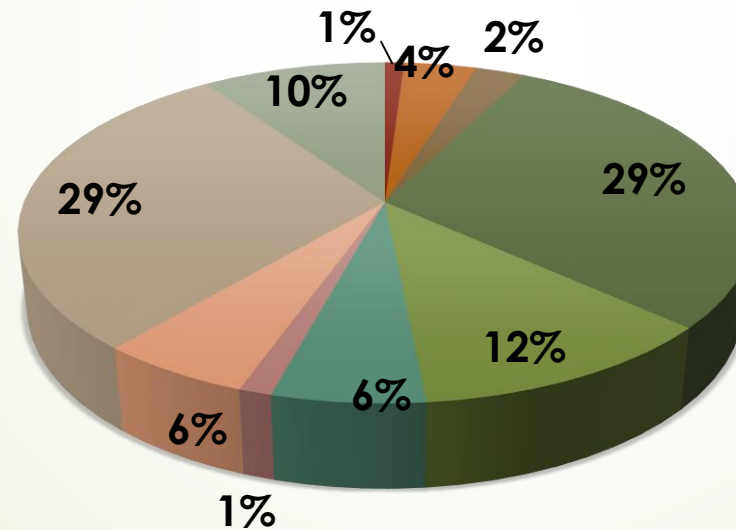
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# Diversification of Public Higher Education Institutions (2014-2015)

## Public Higher Education Institutions (2014-2015)



- State Public Universities
- State Public Universities with Solidarity Support
- Technological Institutes
- Tecnological Universities
- Polytechnic Universities



# New students

For equity purposes and growing enrollment of age group:


In 2000 , 33% of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 were in school; in 2015, 44% of people in this age group were attending some educational center. The gender gap is a little over one percent.  
<http://cuentame.inegi.org.mx/poblacion/asistencia.aspx?tema=P>



# Why to choose intercultural universities to think about the interrelation new HEI/new students?

Central place of innovation in terms of:

- ▶ Mission: Ensure the cultural and linguistic relevance of education, by adopting an intercultural approach (CGEIB , 2015: 12)
- ▶ Vision: Achieve an education system and public policies that guarantees equitable and respectful treatment between all Mexicans through intercultural, inclusive and quality practices for cultural and linguistically diverse populations (Ibid : 13)
- ▶ Principles : Respect the cultural identity of students in the context of quality education , develop skills for civic participation and mutual understanding , ensure appropriate conditions for learning, offer guidance to teachers and authorities in these areas, consolidate an educational community that includes parents and follows quality criteria for intercultural education (relevance / efficiency / equality / efficiency / effectiveness). (Ibid: 17-18)

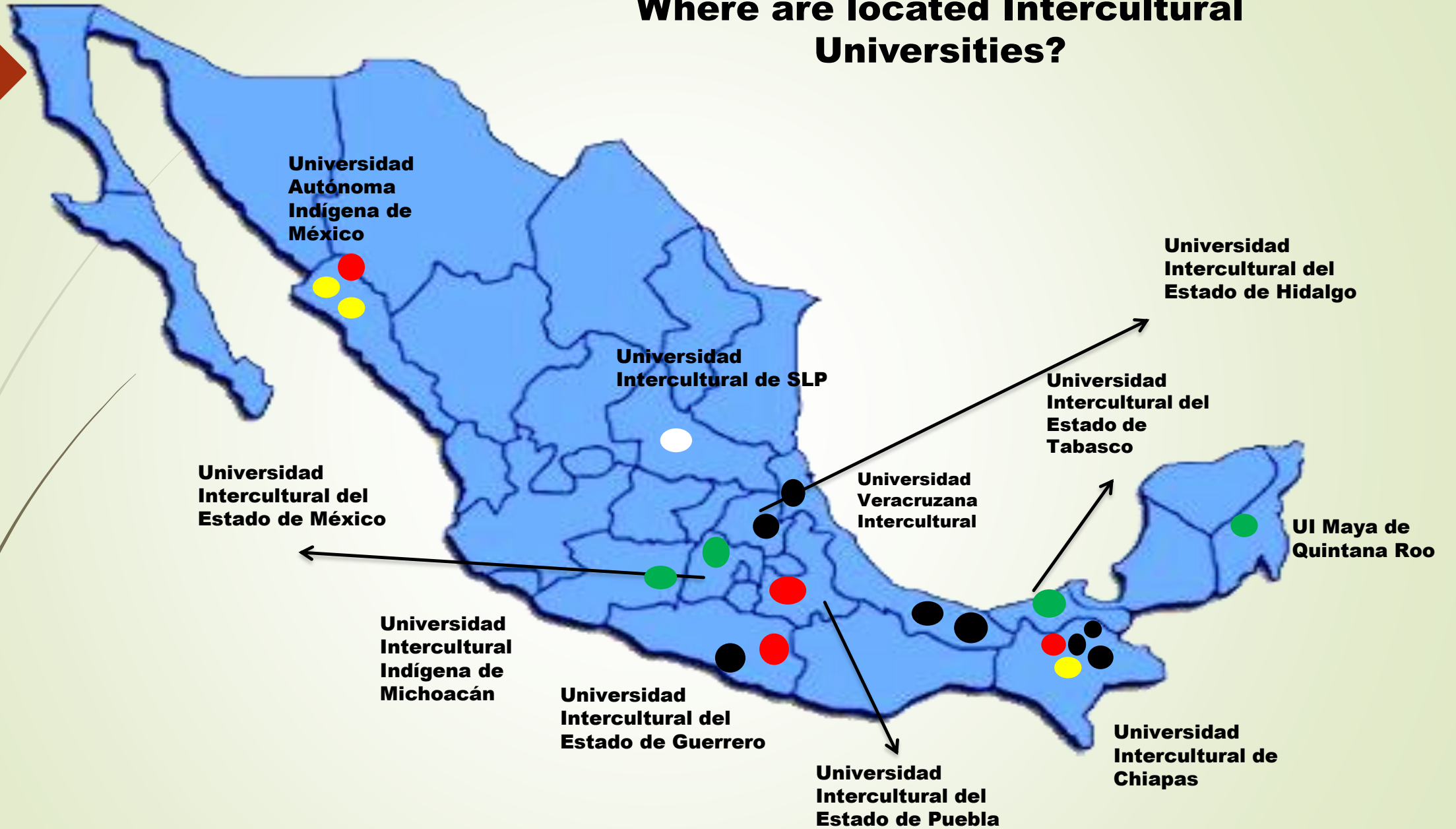


# Some historical and geographical data

- ▶ 2004: First intercultural university opens in the State of Mexico
- ▶ 2015-16: IUS covered 11 institutions and enrolled 14007 students (on a total of 3,741,094 students enrolled in Mexico). 70 % are indigenous students. IU are receiving about one in four of indigenous students in HES (9,800 of these indigenous of a total of 39,743 self-adscribed as indigenous) and aprox. 1.33 % in relation to total enrollment in higher education according to Ministry of Education statistics.
- ▶ Reliability of that estimate is not very high, depending on the criteria used to define indigenous students: self-adscription, indigenous language fluency, household composition, residence.
- ▶ IU have to deal with an age gap: although there is no data for the tertiary level, in compulsory education, the age difference in relation to the regulatory age for all school levels is pronounced in indigenous municipalities (over 40 % indigenous population) and worsens as one moves through up the school system.



# Where are located Intercultural Universities?






# Barriers to innovation and successful practices in IU

- ▶ Lack of information on the incomes/outcomes of IU and employability of graduates
- ▶ Participation of indigenous associations and families is more rhetoric than effective
- ▶ IU are thinking their indigenous students as a vulnerable group
- ▶ Lot of the IU are confronting political and internal conflicts, at local and institutional levels
- ▶ Repetitive offer of programmes
- ▶ Original teaching initiatives for transferring technical, disciplinary and instrumental knowledge to indigenous students
- ▶ Grants and fellowship programs
- ▶ Innovative international networks for empowerment and training of indigenous students and young women
- ▶ Use of international resources for the academic recognition of “indigenous knowledge”, mainly in disciplinary areas as agronomy







# Central issues for a research agenda on IU and students

- Intellectual: Who thinks about indigenous issues today? Anthropologists and ethnologists, educators or indigenous graduates themselves, trained at national and international universities, with purpose of ethnic affirmation
- Pedagogical: Are IU projects strategies for more “inclusive” social reproduction or spaces for the consolidation of emancipatory teaching and ethnic projects?
- Ideological: In what way does the IU participate in the reorganization and reconfiguration of indigenous elites which, in turn, generates tensions between traditional leaders, rooted in communities, and emergent leaders, characterized by their educational attainment level?
- Organizational: How to join social responsibility in relation to students and their environment to an academic project subject to imperatives of quality assurance that in fact deny the very nature of the problems addressed by the IU?



# Conclusions: Where are we? Dilemmas for the future of IU

- Reinforce both social and academic legitimacy as structures for inclusiveness and academic knowledge transmission
- Solve the conflicts between institutionalization versus innovation: IU must demonstrate their relevance and originality,
- Increase social and cultural visibility of IU: as a consequence of a dilution effect, they are yet a relevant initiatives but lose prominence in HE scene
- Address the performance issues: relative stagnation of demand in the second decade of the millennium, high attrition rates and failure to achieve certification, insufficient attractiveness of IU as a place to develop a professional academic career, whether in teaching or in research