



## Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (EIB)

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### What is it?

*Educación Intercultural Bilingüe* (EIB) (Intercultural Bilingual Education) is an educational model that emerged in the 1970s as an outcry for the need to understand, acknowledge, and respect the indigenous cultures, peoples and languages of Central and South America. The EIB model was created with the purpose of promoting, valuing, and reclaiming the culture and languages of indigenous peoples. Unlike traditional bilingual education models, EIB does not seek to assimilate the language and culture of indigenous students into the mainstream culture. On the contrary, EIB is an instructional model of intercultural education where two languages are simultaneously taught within the context of two distinct cultures with the vision of supporting and perpetuating the indigenous students' bilingual and bicultural skills. From an instructional perspective, the EIB model holds four main principles: 1) to develop relevant teaching and learning processes, 2) to develop an autonomous, participatory and articulated management and educational network, 3) to promote the learning of intercultural and favorable coexistence, and 4) to promote close school-family-community relationships.

### Who uses the concept?

The EIB model has been adopted in many Latin American countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. Although budget and governmental support continue to be important challenges, many studies have shown the positive effects of the EIB model in indigenous communities. Furthermore, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has supported the EIB model and has advocated for it in many publications.

### Fit with intercultural dialogue?

The concept of intercultural dialogue involves the exchanges of knowledge and construction of social appreciation among cultures. Similarly, the EIB model was conceived as the educational vehicle to inculcate respect, equality, appreciation, and advocacy for linguistic and cultural exchanges among the indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of Latin America.

### What work remains?

The EIB model has proven successful in some countries such as Mexico, Peru and Bolivia; however, this is not the case for other countries in the region. There are still many questions that remain unanswered about how government and local organizations can better support the efforts of the EIB model in the communities. Also, studies addressing the need for literacy development in indigenous languages, the incorporation of early bilingual immersion programs, and the impact of the EIB model in the cognitive development of indigenous students need further research.

### Resources

- Abarca Cariman, G. (2015). [Educación intercultural bilingüe: Educación y diversidad](#). *Apuntes*, 9.
- Hecht, A. C. & Schmidt, M. A. (2000). *Maestros de la Educación Intercultural Bilingüe: Regulaciones, experiencias y desafíos*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Novedades Educativas.
- López, L. E. (2009). [Reaching the unreached: Indigenous intercultural bilingual education in Latin America](#). Paris, France: UNESCO.