DIPLOMADO OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Economic Autonomy
and Environmental Justice

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MODULE IV

Indigenous Peoples’ Self-Development
DIPLOMA COURSE OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN
ECONOMIC AUTONOMY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

International Indigenous Women’s Forum
Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Carlos III University of Madrid)
Universidad Indígena Intercultural del
Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y El Caribe (FILAC) (Intercultural Indigenous University of the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean)

1ª Edition, 2019

CUADERNO DE TRABAJO
MODULE IV INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ SELF-DEVELOPMENT

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To understand the philosophical and theoretical foundations of Self-development or Living Well, based on the critical analysis of the development models based on the rationality that opposes the human being to nature, and the alternative of harmonization by the Indigenous Peoples between humanity and Mother Earth, as complementary living beings.
UNIT 1.

COSMOGONIC FUNDAMENTALS AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.

Each Indigenous People has a concept of development that reflects their vision of the world. The concept of “living well” (although each people uses a special terminology), not only refers to income or economic growth, but it is also about cultural identity, harmony between human beings and Mother Earth. “Living well” is based on the values of culture of life, coexistence and complementarity, not only among people but also in harmony between them and nature, in relation to the protection of common good and life for the benefit of the set of communities and nations.

For Indigenous Peoples, DEVELOPMENT, under the concept of self-determination, is based on the fact that culture is a way of life and aspects such as survival and relationship with the territory are part of the spiritual life of their peoples. The development with culture and identity is characterized by a holistic and comprehensive approach, seeks to be built on the exercise of collective rights, security, greater control and self-government over lands, territories and resources. It is built on tradition and respect for the ancestors, but with a vision towards the future.

Living well is related to the deep spirituality that the peoples continue to maintain with Mother Nature; the economic conditions based on their distinct systems and institutions, which move the productive life, livestock, and economic exchange relationships; the indigenous identity, which has been the basis for saying who we are, where we come from and where we are going; the social organization systems based on relations established between the same peoples; the traditional authorities, who fulfill their role of service to the peoples and communities.

Living well develops in living conditions established in relation to the environment and natural resources, referred to the right of resources from indigenous territories, which are the spiritual and collective coexistence of men and women in our peoples, under the exercise of the right to control and manage their resources.

The vision of living well or the search for well-being has to do with the conditions of social life, perspectives, quality of life, indigenous peoples, within the framework of the principles of reciprocity, complementarity, redistribution, in the different spaces of the social, economic, cultural and political life of the peoples. The close relationship between indigenous peoples and mother nature is based on indigenous principles such as duality and complementation, just as man and woman are complementary and opposed. It is like the sun and the moon, day and night, male and female in animals, plants and minerals. There is a complementary opposition, both cooperate with each other and create the social unit. It is a dual opposition. Therefore, it is a requirement for reciprocity and complementation.

“Viv
“Living well is to live in harmony with the life cycles and the multiverse, and in balance with all ways of existence. Living well means living in harmony and balance, in harmony with the cycles of mother earth, with the cosmic cycles, with the cycles of history, with the life cycles, and in complementary balance with all ways of existence.”

Artículos del Acuerdo Constituido por el Alcalde, el Presidente Municipal y el Jefe de Gobierno del Distrito Federal (ASUDEH) para la Educación Superior Tecnológica (ATEC)

Artículo 2
Indígenas tienen el derecho a determinar y desarrollar prioridades y estrategias para el desarrollo de sus territorios, así como para el uso de sus recursos. En particular, indígenas tienen el derecho de ser activamente involucrados en el desarrollo y la determinación de programas de salud, vivienda y otros programas económicos y sociales que afectan a ellos y, en la medida de lo posible, administrar tales programas a través de sus propias instituciones.
UNIT 2.
SELF-DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

Characteristics of development from the indigenous perspective- Living Well

The principles of the construction and reconstruction of living well must be understood within the legal framework of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the exercise of the right to self-determination (Articles 3, 4, 5, 32).

It is also important to remember the preamble of the Declaration, which establishes that the right to development is an inalienable human right and by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.¹

Below, you will find some items that characterize Living Well:²

1. THE INDIGENOUS VISION

Nature is a “living being” in which all its components are related, being humans a part of the cosmic fabric. This is an unbreakable and interdependent relationship between the universe, nature and humanity, with an ethical and moral basis in favor of the conservation and development of the environment and society, where harmony, respect and balance are manifested and necessary. Balance. Some foundations of the cosmogonic thought are community, time recording, balance and harmony, consensus, dialogue, respect and legal

¹ Declaration on the Right to Development http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/rtd.htm
Some aspects which this relationship is based on are:

- **To prioritize life**
  Living well means to seek life experiences in community, where all the members care about each other. The most important thing is life. It is intended to seek a simpler life.

- **To prioritize cosmic rights**
  All beings living on the planet complement each other. In the communities, the child is complementary with the grandfather, the man with the woman.

- **To live in complementarity**
  All beings living on the planet complement each other. In the communities, the child is complementary with the grandfather, the man with the woman.

- **To balance with nature**
  Life and harmony between people and nature is the most important thing. For this reason, Living Well aims to have a society with equity and without exclusion, where natural resources such as land, water, minerals and plant life are not tradable. The purpose of production is not only profit, but also life quality. Production is mainly intended for their own consumption.

2. **THE ECONOMIC SUBJECT IS COLLECTIVE**

A fundamental difference from other development models is that, in the case of Indigenous Peoples, the economic subject is collective; although there are many changes due to the growing urbanization of Indigenous Peoples. This characteristic is reflected in the fact that natural and cultural property is collective, being understood as a family and having the community as a reference. Some expressions derived from it are the following:

**Social control.** Each community has mandatory social control mechanisms among the inhabitants of a community. In the ancestral times, everyone was responsible for controlling the functions performed by their main authorities.

3. **THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF THE COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT**

In order to use and manage their resources, communities have established systems of relationships that are expressed in levels of political, economic and social organization allowing them to reach levels of sustainability in food security, through the exchange of products. These systems are based on the principles of reciprocity, complementarity and community work.

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3 CICA. 2008.
4 They are part of the 25 Living Well characteristic elements. Interview of David Choquehuanca. Chancellor of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. 2010.
5 They are part of the 25 Living Well characteristic elements. Interview of David Choquehuanca. Chancellor of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. 2010.
Indigenous economic institutions in the Andean region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>FUNCTIONS</th>
<th>HOW IT OPERATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MINGA</td>
<td>Collective work pursuing a common work</td>
<td>Participation of the entire community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-family participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANTI RANTI</td>
<td>Mutual support, moral obligation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIOSTAGOS CARGOS</td>
<td>They assume, lead and share the party</td>
<td>Collective decision, participation, contribution and social responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPADRASGOS</td>
<td>Commitments strengthening the family relationship</td>
<td>Accept the responsibility to support and guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARKAK TAYTA</td>
<td>They assume a communal responsibility and achieve prestige, appreciation and respect</td>
<td>Accumulate capital for the party, share, find.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some expressions of this characteristic are the following:

- **To know how to work.**
  For indigenous peoples, the concept of work is different. It is considered as a community socialization activity. Work is considered as a party. Work is a way of growing up, that’s why in indigenous cultures you work from a very young age.

- **To work in reciprocity.**
  To pay back in terms of work the help given by a family engaged in agricultural activity, such as sowing or harvesting.

- **To know how to dance**
  Dancing is related to some specific events such as harvesting or sowing. The communities continue honoring Pachamama with dance and music, mainly in agricultural seasons.

4. **INTERCULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE REST OF THE SOCIETY**

Other characteristic of the Indigenous Peoples’ development model is seeking ways of coexistence with other industries, including the Government. This is expressed as follows:

- **Accept the differences**
  Living well means to respect similarities and differences between the beings who live on the same planet. It goes beyond the concept of diversity. It means that similar or different beings should never hurt each other.

- **Reach agreements in consensus**
  Living Well means to reach an agreement among all, which implies that, even though people have differences, at the time of dialogue, a neutral point should be reached in which persons unanimously agree and where no conflicts are caused.

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-Respetar las diferencias
Living Well means to respect others, to know how to listen to anyone who wants to speak, without discrimination, or any kind of submission. Although each culture or region has a different way of thinking, in order to live well and in harmony it is necessary to respect those differences. This doctrine includes all beings that inhabit the planet, such as animals and plants.

5. EQUALITY RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN AS WELL AS RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GENERATIONS

One aspect that has become more relevant in the debates on indigenous development is the need to address relationships between women and men, as well as intergenerational relationships.

-Respect for woman
Living Well means to show respect to woman because she represents the Pachamama, who is the Mother Earth, who gives life and takes care of all its fruits. In communities, women are valued and are present in all the activities oriented to life, upbringing, education and revitalization of culture. The inhabitants of indigenous communities value women as the basis of social organization because they pass on the knowledge of their culture to their children.7

-Listen to the elders
Living Well means to “read the grandparents’ wrinkles” in order to get back on track. One of the main sources of learning is the elders of the communities, who keep stories and customs that are lost over the years. Therefore, the female and male elders are respected and consulted in the indigenous communities in the country.

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7 Choquehuanca, 2010.
UNIT 3.
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BACKGROUND ABOUT CURRENT DEVELOPMENT MODELS AND THE IMPACT ON INDIGENOUS WOMEN.

Living Well means the right of Indigenous Peoples to choose their development model, which is the concrete application of the right to self-determination recognized by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This concept of development is characterized by a holistic and comprehensive approach, seeks to be built on the exercise of collective rights, security, greater control and self-government over lands, territories and resources. It is built on tradition and respect for the ancestors, but with a vision towards the future.

It also refers to the deep spirituality that Indigenous Peoples still maintain, and also the economic conditions based on their own systems and institutions, which move the productive life, the economic exchange relationships, the social organization systems, the structures and practices of governance, as well as the community authorities' role respect to their service role.

What can be the matching points between the proposal of development from the indigenous vision, and the development based on economic growth? We must take into account that the struggles of Indigenous Peoples are not limited to claim their own rights, but also propose a new model of society.

Indigenous Peoples live in a diversity of ecosystems, territorial and demographic realities, with diverse socio-political status. In addition to the structural discrimination, marginality, exclusion and historical poverty they have dealt with, in recent decades, the gaps between them and other social sectors have worsened due to various economic and social transformations and the processes of globalization, added to the historical exclusions linked to the history of colonization.

Their multiple demands include the effective exercise of rights and legal security over their lands, territories and natural resources, the recognition of their collective rights, the accelerated disappearance of their languages, the lack of respect for Free, Prior and Informed Consent, the need for full and effective participation in matters of their concern, the presence of megaprojects and the increase of concessions to extractive industries in their territories.

With the climate change having an impact on their communities, erosion of biodiversity, desertification, ice melting, insufficient food, water and energy, have increased, coupled with a global economic crisis that continues to generate social instability, along with unresolved conflicts and a crisis of values. Despite both legal and political progress experienced in some countries in the recent decades, serious challenges are still pending so that the rights can be valid and fully enjoyed by Indigenous Peoples' women and men of various age groups.

For Indigenous Peoples, gender equality is linked to the shared responsibility between women and men for the protection and conservation of Mother Earth and the “living well” in the community. Indigenous women have said that they can fully enjoy the right to a life without discrimination when the collec-
tive rights of their people\(^8\) are respected, provided that their specific rights as women are acknowledged and respected, since they consider the systematic violation of collective rights of their People is the greatest risk factor for the gender violence they have to deal with, including the violence perpetrated within the communities.

Therefore, it is not a coincidence that they identify with the Earth, as the Mother, linking it to their lives, but assuming the responsibility for enjoying the right to self-determination over the territories as peoples. \(^9\) As transmitters of knowledge, they preserve the culture, means of production and ways of organization of their peoples. They contribute to diversified productive activities. They ensure the operations of reciprocity and complementarity economic institutions and contribute to collective environmental care in the communities.

However, they perceive that their role as traditional caretakers of their territories is being severely threatened by the hoarding of lands, territories and natural resources and the impact of climate change. The consequences are forced displacement, environmental pollution, degradation of the environment and its territories, competition and conflicts over scarce natural resources, as well as serious health disorders. Likewise, forced migration processes violate competition for resources and promote the dismantling of social protection bonds, particularly affecting indigenous girls, women and older women in a differentiated manner due to their position within indigenous communities, and the intersection of discrimination they have to deal with throughout their lives.

These factors have contributed to the erosion of traditional functions and institutions, as well as the principles and values of indigenous complementarity and duality, resulting in and/or exacerbating practices of exclusion and lack of acknowledgement of the contributions of indigenous women in the various community, global and regional processes, contributing to generalize the erroneous concept that the culture of their peoples is a source of gender oppression. Indigenous women realize that there are discriminatory practices in their communities, as a result of external cultural contacts such as military, political, evangelization, or other types of conflicts, but they have repeatedly pointed out that these issues must be eradicated and they are working on it.

They have also pointed out that racism and structural discrimination suffered as members of an Indigenous People contributes to the deterioration of living conditions, poverty, multiple ways of discrimination and sharpens the patriarchal ideology; therefore, there is an intersection between discriminatory manifestations due to gender, ethnic origin, age, geographic origin, socio-economic situation that requires comprehensive attention.

Therefore, they argue that inequalities are reflected in their few opportunities of being fully integrated into political, social, economic and cultural life in their respective countries. Access of indigenous women to spaces for participation in the different public and private institutional structures is still limited in the instances of the Governments.

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8 Collective rights are shared as members of their people, with a common history and values, and are essential for existence, well-being and comprehensive development as peoples. There are certain individual human rights that can only be enjoyed “in fellowship with others.”

9 Beijing Declaration of the indigenous women
Regarding violence approaches, indigenous women have identified different types; for example, violence in the name of tradition, such as female genital mutilation and forced marriages, but there are also different types of institutional and Mother Nature violence affecting indigenous women, such as extractive industries, militarization, trafficking and use of pesticides. Indigenous women reaffirmed that it is necessary to guarantee intercultural health models that follow and implement the traditional health systems and knowledge of indigenous peoples.\textsuperscript{10}

The most important recommendations included in the documentation about experiences of violence that indigenous women have to deal with are the following:\textsuperscript{11}

- Preserve and develop the traditional roles of women, especially in terms of the transmission of knowledge and cultural values. Promote spaces for intergenerational dialogue.
- Strengthen the women self-confidence and their leadership.
- Promote the individual and collective human rights of women and their peoples. Train community members in human rights (women and men).
- Restore their own justice practices, combining traditional practices with the benefits of international human rights laws.
- Provide with conflict resolution programs in the communities.
- Combining the fight against violence with the negotiation of access to land, territorial rights and natural resources.
- Search for justice against the aggressors.
- Strengthen the women’s political mobilization.
- Encourage the women’s participation in community development activities.
- Economic autonomy: develop a system for sharing resources, funds for disabilities, etc.
- Educate young women.

The empowerment of indigenous women must be understood as a process that includes a dimension of individual, but mainly collective, economic autonomy, and it must also have its foundations on acknowledging the power women themselves already possess based on their knowledge, traditional practices and different contributions for the community’s “living well”.

Finally, indigenous women state that in order to encourage their empowerment, it is a priority to revalue their traditional knowledge and ancestral wisdom, and to understand that empowerment is a holistic process where women are the ones that empower themselves, integrating the individual and collective dimensions.

\textsuperscript{10} Conferencia de Mujeres Indígenas, Lima, 2014.
\textsuperscript{11} FIMI. Mairin Iwanka Raya. 2006.
In the light of this scenario, how can the significant progress in the acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples’ rights be fully incorporated into the 2030 Development Agenda?

**Articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in relation to SDG 5: Gender Equality**

Article 21 (2) States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure the continuous improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

Article 22 (1) Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of the indigenous elderly, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.

Article 22 (2): States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.