Indigenous Students and University: realities and challenges to cultural diversity. The case of National University of Salta

Estudiantes indigenas y Universidad: realidades y retos ante la diversidad cultural. Caso de la Universidad Nacional de Salta[1]

Dra. Ana Valeria Hanne is a professor and researcher at the National University of Salta (Argentina), post-doctoral scholarship holder of CONICET (National Council of Scientific and Technological Research- Argentina), (valehanne@ gmail.com) (http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2453-9820)

Abstract

The present article identifies, on the one hand, speeches and actions deployed by National University of Salta in order to favour the processes of social and educational inclusion of indigenous students that are self-recognized in the university, appealing to the analysis of its institutional policy and others initiatives (programs or projects) developed, to attend and promote cultural diversity. On the other hand, some students' appreciations regarding to the university's ethnic approach and its weaknesses and strengths are recovered.

The research from which this article derives, supposed a methodological design fundamentally qualitative, appealing also to quantitative descriptions linked to social, demographic and cultural profiles. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to provide information on institutional, psychosocial and ethnic aspects. Also, qualitative tools were included: lexico-metric analysis and free association of words around central nuclei. Key informants and secondary sources of data were also consulted to enrich the survey and address these topics. The findings made it possible to note the growing presence of indigenous students at National University of Salta and their needs, an interest and commitment from institutional groups to develop strategies to promote indigenous students' access and permanence at the institution, as well as the progressive sensitization that this problematic has deserved in

academic environments. Despite of this, there is still a long way to go in terms of proposals for attention to cultural diversity in order to really include indigenous students at universities.

Keywords: Cultural diversity, university, indigenous students, institutional policies, inclusion, challenges.

Resumen

El presente artículo identifica, por un lado, los discursos y acciones desplegadas por la Universidad Nacional de Salta (UNSa), en aras a favorecer los procesos de inclusión socioeducativa de estudiantes indígenas autoreconocidos en la misma, apelando al análisis de su política institucional y de las iniciativas desarrolladas (Programas/Proyectos) para atender y promover la diversidad cultural. Por otro, recupera algunas apreciaciones que tales estudiantes expresan, en torno a las debilidades y fortalezas de la UNSa respecto al abordaje de la dimensión étnica. La investigación de la que emana este escrito, supuso un diseño metodológico fundamentalmente cualitativo, apelándose también a descripciones cuantitativas ligadas a perfiles sociodemográficos y culturales. Se empleó un cuestionario semiestructurado, a fin de relevar información sobre aspectos institucionales, psicosociales y étnicos. El mismo contempló la inclusión de herramientas cualitativas: análisis lexicométrico y asociación libre de palabras en torno a núcleos centrales. Asimismo, se consultó a informantes clave y a fuentes secundarias de datos para enriquecer el relevamiento y abordaje de estos tópicos. Los hallazgos posibilitaron advertir la creciente presencia de estudiantes indígenas en la UNSa y sus demandas; el interés y compromiso de grupos institucionales por desplegar estrategias que promuevan accesos y permanencias, como así también la progresiva sensibilización que ha merecido la temática en la academia. Pese a ello, queda mucho camino por desandar en materia de propuestas de atención a la diversidad cultural en orden a la inclusión.

Descriptores: Diversidad cultural, universidad, estudiantes indígenas, políticas institucionales, inclusión, desafíos.

1. Introduction

Cultural diversity is a constitutive feature of Argentina, and the way to recognize and respond to it is one of the most imminent challenges of society in general and the educational system in particular. Although the multi-ethnic and multicultural nature of the Nation is assumed and constitutionally proclaimed, its institutions need to genuinely accompany these decisions, acting accordingly. In this context, the Universities, characterized by the historical resistance to the recognition and inclusion of diversities in their academic spaces, acquire today a transcendental role and an unavoidable commitment. While "continue to be conceived as neuralgic centers of construction and dissemination of universal knowledge" (Mato, 2008), are currently called to rethink their meanings, logics, positioning, structures, values and knowledge, and reflect, in addition, the vital changes that they need to manage in order to build and sustain truly welcoming spaces of cultural pluralities, among many others (Dietz and Mateos, 2008). In this sense, this article aims to identify the discourses and actions deployed by the National University of Salta (UNSa), in order to favor the processes of socio-educational inclusion of self-recognized indigenous students who go through their academic trajectories in it, appealing to the analysis of its institutional policy and of the initiatives developed to address and promote cultural diversity. At the same time, it recovers some appreciations that these students express, regarding the weaknesses and strengths of the UNSa, regarding the approach of the ethnic dimension.

The significant and growing participation of indigenous students in Argentine university spaces demonstrates the importance of reflecting on the demands of these actors and addressing the notions of diversity, access and socio-educational inclusion. Such presences are not a recent event, however, in recent years, they have achieved greater visibility and attention from educational institutions, public policies and state agencies, product of incessant and historic struggles for the demand of their postponed and violated rights, after a long history in the country of invisibility and exclusion of these cultural groups (Benito Cuellar, 2009, Zidarich, 2010).

It is worth noting that although the instances of access and inclusion to the university are usually conceived as analogous and simultaneous instances, it is essential to reveal such a euphemism, understanding that they constitute clearly differentiated processes, in which, at times, paradoxically, they operate excluding mechanisms and with opposing meanings. The realities of the academic spaces show that these accesses do not necessarily translate into real inclusions, in "situated" approaches to the educational trajectories of indigenous students, of their processes and pluralities. That is, inclusion must be understood not only as access to the system, not as a mere additive action that seeks to "reveal" omitted presences or address socio-cultural and academic trajectories from "compensatory" perspectives, but as an authentic possibility to generate and strengthen mentalities and attitudes based on equalization and promotion of rights (Yarza de los Ríos, 2010).

Sensitizing the different university actors about the imminent diversity that exists in Argentine society constitutes an imperative need, as it is also propitiating genuine knowledge of the sociocultural and educational profiles of the indigenous students present in said training spaces, who demand university agendas the design of contextualized (Bello, 2009), socio-educational inclusion policies, that structurally favor equity in the educational trajectories of these subjects as a possible way to democratize and "interculturalize" university work (Villasante, 2008).

In this sense, to delve into the role assumed by universities in the face of undeniable cultural diversity, with emerging and complex social/regional demands; the ways of recognizing it, incorporating it and valuing it in its actors, spaces, curricula, relationships and processes; the institutional reception, inclusion and promotion strategies that are deployed in relation to indigenous students (policies, programs, projects); repair their conditions of access and permanence; in the facilitating and impeding aspects along their training itineraries; as well as its

strengths and weaknesses in the socio-cultural-affective and academic plane, are key aspects to be considered for the analysis, debate and generation of inclusive institutional policies.

It is known that the Argentine university level does not yet have guidelines or specific policies that support attention to cultural diversity (Reynaga, 2011, Paladino, 2008). However, the efforts of some universities, or groups within them, that have manifested their intention to favor both socio-educational inclusion and the professionalization of young people from indigenous peoples, through the generation of various types of decisions, projects and supports, are perceptible. Every day there are more universities that, in some way, in recent years have assumed, from different approaches, the indigenous theme in their agendas. The initiatives and/or programs generated by this type of institution, in most cases, constitute experiences that translate into recently conquered socio-educational spaces. The commitment and work of many teams within them is praiseworthy, since "with certainty that each one has accumulated problems, experiences and learning that have given them clearer guidelines than only goodwill towards the indigenous" (Cortés Lombana, 2009, p 46). There is still a long way to go and actions to be taken to make the legal guidelines proclaimed internationally and nationally legitimate, which proclaim the development and execution of social and formative practices that contemplate the cultural particularities of indigenous students, strengthen their identities, attenuate the adversities emerging in their respective trajectories and favor the empowerment of their peoples and communities.

In this framework, the case of the UNSa is presented, in order to know what is the position it adopts regarding the indigenous theme, starting from the consideration that it defines itself as an academic institution "of the frontier" (given the strong imprint of its geopolitical location in its purposes and functions, fundamentally at the moment of its creation) and which is located in the Province of Salta, which brings together the

greatest cultural and linguistic diversity of the country (Buliubasich, 2009). Likewise, to recover some of the indigenous students' own assessments about the weaknesses and strengths that they identify in said University, it is intended to mobilize a reflective analysis of the demands and needs that those subjects express to Higher Education (ES), as carriers of heterogeneous knowledge, practices and worldviews. Rethinking these aspects is an unavoidable commitment to the imperative challenge of promoting greater policies of socio-educational inclusion that welcome and value diversity (Schmelkes, 2012) through the development of legitimate spaces, attitudes and intercultural mentalities.

2. Theoretical basis

2.1 Indigenous peoples and universities. Argentine context

The participation of indigenous students in universities, particularly Argentine and Latin American universities in general, is a recent phenomenon that tends to increase and that is vitally important within the processes of educational inclusion (Cortés Lombana, 2009). However, it is known that this academic space was banned for these subjects, who historically were relegated from the ES.

Argentina tells a story in which universities, from their origins, were conceived as "monolithic and homogenizing" institutions, the exclusive patrimony of a select group of society, characterized by its opulent social, cultural and economic capital. Gradually, this scenario was transformed, and the growing demands of society as a whole, began to question the universities, demanding higher levels of: social and cultural relevance, coverage of enrollment, extension and commitment to the different realities of the context, in which they performed. On the other hand, the processes of indigenous urbanization, among other aspects, contributed to that some young people of the indigenous peoples acceded to the superior level, enrolling in universities

with the intention of professionalization. Such incorporation, however, did not always imply visibility or recognition, even less the awareness on the part of those institutions regarding the need to offer them containment and training with equity and cultural relevance, which is why, in many cases, the Indigenous people chose to hide or deny their identities, in order to avoid situations of marginalization and disparagement.

From the decade of the nineties, after the conquered claims in the matter of rights, the indigenous peoples began to explain their presence in the different socio-academic contexts and to fight for the concretion of their personal and community aspirations (Serrudo, 2010). In this regard, it should be clarified that such a challenge was not without difficulties, on the contrary, there were and still are many adversities that must be overcome in their respective training trajectories. Difficulties linked to personal situations (insecurities, fears, family and community uprooting), academics (low education in previous educational levels, decontextualized academic requirements), cultural (domain of significantly different cultural codes, forms of bonding, and development in the city), economic (scarce and insufficient resources for daily subsistence and to face the personal and educational expenses that city life implies) (Arce, 2010), among many others.

Beyond the fact that in Argentina this level of education can not yet be considered as a true intercultural space and of real inclusion, one can notice that one of the great challenges of university institutions lies precisely in genuinely welcoming diversity, deploying in their spaces and with its actors some "sustainable modalities of intercultural collaboration" (Mato, 2016), which invites to develop initiatives (professional training, research and social linkage) that are relevant to the different needs, cultures, epistemologies and projects of the subjects involved . Not only the question of access is a dimension to be strengthened, but fundamentally the relevance and significance with which the pressing demands of indigenous peoples are addressed

institutionally, in order to promote more democratic and equitable areas.

2.2. UNSa and its relationship with indigenous thematic

UNSa, in recent years, has made remarkable progress in its connection with indigenous thematic. The interest to revisit this topic in the ES has been gaining strength and thus, through projects of social connection, of tutoring, of the actions of teaching teams (by incorporating aspects related to cultural diversity in the syllabuses of the subjects or through proposals for intervention in the field), the interest of researchers in proposing inquiries related to diversity and interculturality, or of particular initiatives (adding adepts and formalizing enriching proposals in the subject), the ethnic dimension has deserved a remarkable attention, gradually incorporating part of the institutional agenda.

Cultural diversity has always been present in the contexts of the academy (although with other nuances and percentages), only that in many cases they were omitted or excluded presences, which is why there was little (or not at all) effort to institutionally addressed the unique cultural realities of those students. That is to say, the UNSa did not count on policies of attention and inclusion to the cultural diversity, nor with specific measures that allowed to contain the demands and needs of the indigenous subjects, that guaranteed their citizen's right to be educated in a framework of equality, quality and equity.

In recent years, faced with the imminent and numerous presence of indigenous university students, it became unavoidable to design and implement different strategies that would facilitate their entry, permanence and graduation processes.

As time passed, and with the accumulated experience in this regard, it can be noticed that the UNSa has gone through clearly identifiable stages, which go from the invisibility/denial of the ethnic dimension in its institutional agenda, through its problematization/systematization, to reach, at present, to the management and institutionalization of attention to diversities. A genuinely intercultural institutional policy is still a challenge for this University, while the processes necessary to forge intercultural relations with equity are still maturing, in the sense that Mato (2009) proposes.

2.2.1 Some references to the policies implemented by UNSa

The recognition of the diversity of student profiles, together with the contexts with marked social and economic inequality from which they come, demands an inescapable reflection on the institutional actions, of the initiatives and measures promoted in pursuit of a true inclusion in the university space, in particular, and society in general, to be later translated into significant practices and interventions.

The UNSa reflects the diversity of the province in which it is located, accusing some ethnic groups of a majority representation, according to the geographical regions in which the academic headquarters are located. Although the presence of students belonging to indigenous communities in this University has been noted for a long time, it is only since 2008 that the Institution reflects on concepts, discourses and practices around cultural diversity, in order to promote more inclusive spaces, which promote the democratization of the ES, above all types of differences. In this sense, various actions and projects began to be outlined with initiatives of attention and promotion to the ethnic dimension, which were channeled through the corresponding organisms of the University. Within the framework of these initiatives, the Tutoring Program for Students of Native Peoples (PTEPO) (CS Res. No. 197/10) was approved as an instance that sought to illustrate the effectiveness of political, social and adopted institutional positioning. Until then, it could be said that there was no institutional policy that had specific targets for indigenous students.

The PTEPO is understood as a configuration space that:

(...) seeks to accompany the processes carried out by students in order to respond to specific needs and problems, encompassing the multiplicity of dimensions that converge: personal, social, academic, cultural, etc. In this way, the joint work that is carried out tends to deploy diverse strategies that make it possible to achieve better academic and personal achievements. This accompaniment is essential at the time of entry. Gradually, by gaining knowledge and safety, the tutors begin to fulfill more strongly the academic orientation and the development of sociocultural activities (Bergagna, 2012, p. 118).

It is important to mention that the aforementioned Project does not have economies to grant full scholarships to the indigenous students, so it works with the socialization of the available information on the different benefits that are offered at national, provincial, levels, as well as other scholarships or grants offered from the faculties or the university or (for photocopies, transport, university food service, etc.) (Ossola, 2014).

Finally, from the coordination of the Project, various extra-academic activities are proposed (participatory workshops on topics of interest to the group, intercultural days of recognition and exchange of cultures, writing workshops, extension projects to the communities of belonging and Intercultural fairs), in order to promote instances of production and cultural exchange; foster an attitude of empowerment and identity reaffirmation in indigenous students; build solidarity bonds and intercultural links between the different members of the university community, and also favor in them a feeling of possibility and equality.

3. Methodological basis

In the present study, due to the particularity of the subject, the profiles of the participants and the purposes that guide it, a methodological approach was chosen that was fundamentally qualitative, also contemplating a quantitative approach, of a descriptive nature (exploratory phase, linked to basic dimensions and to socio-demographic-cultural profiles), in order to recover other data that make possible the enrichment of reading and qualitative analysis. Given the complex network of involved aspects, a flexible and comprehensive methodological design is promoted that makes it possible to address the multiplicity of emerging dimensions.

Indeed, the methodology adopted for this study is Particularistic descriptive and heuristics, while a limited number of subjects is investigated, emphasizing intensive and understanding of some core areas that allow later instances of theorizing analysis.

The qualitative design is concerned with understanding the meanings of human actions and social life in their natural contexts, based on the referential frameworks and points of view of the subjects involved in the investigated problems. To paraphrase Vasilachis (2006), this type of research is an approach that attempts to account for the way, in which social reality is understood, lived and produced. For this reason, in this study, through the use of the designed instruments, we sought to recover all information that made possible those purposes, granting special interest to socio-academic contexts and processes, to the perspective of indigenous university students, to their meanings, knowledge and representations, through the construction of possible analytical categories (Abric, 2001).

The action of qualitative inquiry:

> [...] it moves dynamically in both ways: between the facts and their interpretation, and it is a rather "circular" process and the sequence is not always the same, it varies according to each particular study (Hernández Sampieri, R. et al., 2010, p.7).

In the study Participated "self-recognized"[2] indigenous university students (ILO Convention 169, 1989, INDEC 2001, INDEC-ECPI 2004/2005, Censabella, 2010) who began their academic training at UNSa. (considering the Headquarters-

SC- together with the Regional Headquarters of Oran-SRO-and Tartagal-SRT-), enrolled in different careers of the referenced institutions, taking as a selection criterion the cohort of subjects included in the 2008-2010 period (since it is from 2008 that work is already systematized for these young people). Within this cohort, 61 indigenous students were identified (25 in the SC, 10 in the SRO and 26 in the SRT), of which only 26 agreed to participate in the research.

For the selection of the *sample* intentional theoretical criteria (intentional sampling) were considered, which took into account the outlined purposes and the theoretical relevance of the selected universe, based on the questions posed in the investigation. This is a non-probabilistic sample, which adopts the selection criterion "for convenience" in which all those cases that were accessible to the researcher were considered in the contemplated approach instances.

In order to obtain the information, a survey device composed of different methodological tools was designed, based on the consulted literature and on the problems expressed by some key informants. In this regard, a semi-structured questionnaire was developed, while no background was found in the methodological approach of the topics addressed in this study that could be adapted to the realities investigated during this research.

In the process of information gathering, qualitative tools were used, such as: the Free Word Association and the Lexicometric Analysis, in order to generate a space that recovers "the voice of the participants" and that makes it possible to investigate in greater depth about some central nuclei. Both techniques make it possible to quantify originally qualitative data, by means of the a posteriori construction of explanatory categories that allow to reorganize and give meaning to the expressions from the participants. Specifically, the free association of words allows working with spontaneous conceptual associations from a phrase or inducing term, which exposes the representations shared by the participants of the study (Wagner and Hayes, 2011).

In the survey process, secondary sources of data on the addressed topics were also consulted, reviewing various documents: statistical reports on access to university by the studied population, regulations on ES and its relationship with the indigenous thematic, related legislative frameworks, written by various organizations on policies and programs enacted and implemented, statutes and related academic studies, specific reports designed by programs aimed at native students, among others. In addition, meetings and informal conversations were held with some authorities/managers who contributed or who are still actively engaged with such inclusive initiatives.

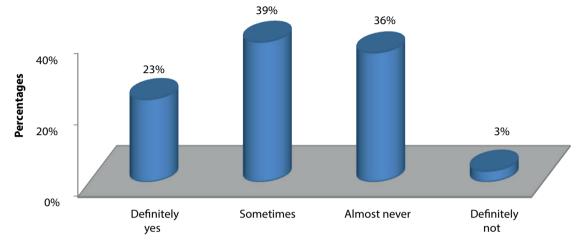## 4. Analysis and results

4.1. Inclusive dimensions

They appealed to the opinions that the indigenous students expressed about the institutional performance regarding cultural diversity and socio-educational inclusion. For the purposes of this paper, only the following node is presented.

Node to: The University and cultural diversity

Here we sought to know the representations that indigenous students presented regarding the University and its inclusive capacity, of attention to diversity. The following question was posed to these subjects: *"Do you consider that the University is an institution that attends and values cultural diversity?"* The categories proposed as response options were: *Definitely yes (b1); Sometimes (b2); Almost never (b3) and Definitely not (b4).* The results shown in the answers tell us that a very small percentage of the indigenous students participating in the study (3%) considered that the University *definitely does not* value or address cultural diversity, while 23% of the total group of respondents said that opposite, that is, confirming that *it definitely*

does. The highest frequency concentration in the answers was obtained by the categories *sometimes* (39%) and *almost never* (36%), which allows us to infer that, from the perspective of the subjects involved, attention to cultural diversity in The University does not represent an instituted policy, or if it is, what is declared is not compatible with what has been done.

Figure 1. The university as an area of attention and appreciation of cultural diversity

Source: Own elaboration

4.2 Facilitating / impeding aspects

In the analysis of the following nodes are exposed those institutional and extra-institutional aspects that, according to the experiences and references of the students of indigenous peoples, acted as facilitating and impeding aspects, both for access, and for permanence in the UNSa.

Node a: Obstructive aspects in access to the University

Some aspects of the university community that, according to the criteria of the surveyed subjects, act as obstacles and imply important limitations for access to the UNSa, were addressed here. We recovered the answers given by them from the instruction of mentioning up to five notions that they associated spontaneously, from the inducing phrase "Aspects that hindered/hindered their access to the University". Once analyzed, explanatory categories of such diversity of collected words were constructed a posteriori.
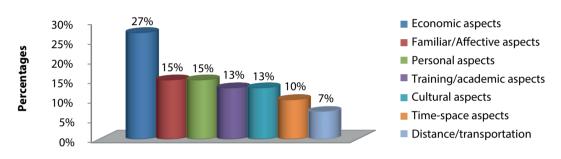
According to the results, the biggest obstacle at the time of accessing the University were the *economic difficulties* (i.e: "economic resources", "economic need", "not having a job to pay for expenses"), with this category registering the highest percentage (27%). The rest of the categories presented similar percentages. Thus, some students (15%) mentioned aspects of a family/affective nature (affective and bonding situations that hindered access to the university space: "family uprooting", "distance with the family", "children", "friends", "fear to leave my family "). While another group, of equivalent frequency (15%), argued *personal issues* (attitudinal aspects related to negative feelings about themselves: "fears", "indecision", "lack of motivation", "my age", "self-esteem" "inability", "not feeling ready to start university", "laziness", "ignorance", "other responsibilities"), among the greatest difficulties that were presented at the time of access to the UNSa. Likewise, on the other hand, two groups of participants (13% respectively) were identified, which manifested as relevant limitations in the initial routes in the

University, issues related to *previous academic aspects* (i.e.: "middle level education"; the new contents"; "previous training - (shelter school)"; "the fact of not having the secondary approved"; "lack of institutional support"; "mode of learning"; "textual comprehension"; "academic performance"; "bibliography"; "lack of career information"). And cultural dimensions that show difficulties of socialization and ignorance of cultural codes (i.e.: "languages", "differences of culture", "customs", "new people", "marginalization", "coex-

istence", "adaptation"; "Ignorance"; "ignorance of life in the city"). Finally, 10% referenced restrictions associated with temporal-spatial issues (i.e.: difficulties in terms of "accommodation", "insufficient time I had", "time (I could not get part-time job)"; "organization of personal time"; "did not have time for work"); while 7% mentioned difficulties of distance and transfer (i.e.: "distance", "distance from the university", "transportation distances", "the roads (are very difficult to reach)", "not being able to travel all the days").

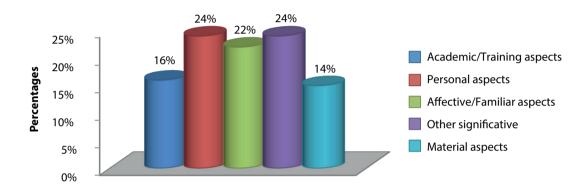*Figure 2. Obstructive aspects in access to the University*

Source: Own elaboration

Node b: Facilitating aspects in staying at the University

The answers given to the instruction to reference aspects that, according to their assessments, facilitated the permanence in the university space, allowed the a posteriori construction of the following representative categories.

The surveyed students recognized that the issues that most facilitated their stay at the University were the *personal* ones, that is, those related to attitudinal aspects or *individual characteristics* (24%), (i.e.: "capacity", "character", "commitment"; "Know my rights", "the desire to have new knowledge", "effort", "proper dedication", "hope", "stability (emotional, physical, economic)", "the strength and will of my part"; "desire to get ahead"; "goal"); likewise, and with an equivalent percentage (24%), they identified the presence of *significant others*, alluding to the

presence of people who played an important role and facilitated their stay at the university (I.e.: "Teaching accompaniment", "health agents", "support of the members of the scholarship program", "personal support of some figures of the university", "people of the university programs"). Then, with the same degree of frequency and importance, personal and social dimensions are combined, that is to say, they reveal that their permanence in the University supposes the consideration of diverse intervening dimensions. 22% of the total participants declared the affections and the family as aspects that favored their stay at the University (i.e.: "family accompaniment", "affections", "friends", "support from peers who came from the communities", "Encouragement from peers to get ahead", "family help", among others). 16% of the students recognized the academic and formative dimensions highlighting positive aspects of their academic careers that

facilitated their continuity in the University (i.e.: "accessibility of taking the subjects"; "support by the tutoring program"; "Training"; "leveling classes"; "study"; "high school"; "being able to enroll in a university project"). Finally, the category referring to material aspects represented 14% (i.e.: "accommodation", "economic sup-

port", "study grant", "photocopy scholarship", "the university is free", "university residence"; "job"). This data is consistent with what was expressed in the previous node, in which the economic/material dimension constituted the main limitation and weakness in the educational trajectories of indigenous students.

Figure 3. Facilitating aspects in the permanence in the University

Source: Own elaboration

4.3 Institutional/organizational dimensions

Node a: Difficulties of the university community that condition the academic trajectories of the indigenous students.

From the emerging categories, we observed a majority group (26%) that recognized as a major limitation of the university community the *relational aspects*, linked to the treatment and coexistence among the different institutional actors (i.e.: "Lack of help"; "Incomprehension", "absence of dialogue", "lack of support in adaptation", "lack of communication", "lack of integration", "bad coexistence", "prejudice"). Next, 22% registered the *material resources* of UNSa as a second aspect that results in a clear restriction in the achievement of the formative and personal purposes (i.e.: "classrooms", "dining room", "lack of bibliography", "infrastructure"; "Lack of new books", "no access

to technologies", "the requested material resources are not available to everyone"), On the other hand, with equivalent percentages (17%), the categories corresponding to *teachers* were raised (i.e.: "Lack of dedication of some teachers", "lack of commitment of teachers", "discouragement of teachers"; teachers"; "lack of teachers (must come from other places)"; "disregard for the economic realities of students"; "some teachers generate fear"), to *formative academic aspects* (i.e.: "incomprehensible bibliography", "contents of the subjects", "entrance exams", "academic requirements", "lack of professional practices", "lack of workshops or courses related to the career"; "Group or field work"; "Regularity system") and, finally, to administrative and organizational aspects of the Institution (i.e.: "Disorganization", "hours of course", "inflexibility in the schedules", "the university is not prepared for students who need to work to study"; "the bureaucratic of the institution"; "the chronogram is not met").
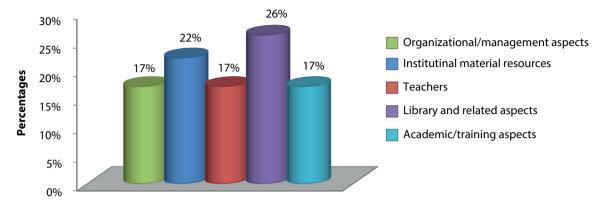
Figure 4. Difficulties of the university community in academic trajectories

Source: Own elaboration

Node b: Suggested modifications for university services

Almost half of the surveyed students (45%) suggested changes for the university service, in terms of *inclusive policies* (that is, they demand higher levels of adaptation to the contextual realities, dissemination and inclusion of the general student body and of native communities in particular. They recognize the need to rethink policies and actions that are inclusive to the different university services). The topic of inclusion proves to be a pressing demand to deal with more thorough and institutional attention. 16% of the respondents requested, as necessary issues to contemplate, modifications with regard to *library and related services* (such as updating materials, provision of larger bibliographic units, modifications and expansion of spaces and times for consultation of reading material). Likewise, 11% acknowledged that the *administrative aspects* deserve substantive changes, in order to optimize the trajectories of the students (they highlighted administrative issues related to the operation of such services.) In this framework, the importance of identity, efficiency and effectiveness is highlighted. the exercise of functions, as well as the flexibility, diffusion, management and facilitation of the various services that are promoted from the University 10% of the respondents stressed that the *tutoring and guidance* services also require rethinking in order to introduce transformations that can translate into improvements for indigenous students in particular and the student body in general (they understand that in order to genuinely improve their educational trajectories it becomes core have more support and advice, both academic and other). Finally, 8% of the participants mentioned the essential need to generate modifications that favor *issues of infrastructure* and material resources (such as provision, conditioning, availability and expansion of different material resources, own and necessary for performance as a university student - scholarships, expansion of physical spaces, operation of student residences, etc.). The remaining 5% raised considerations related to extension proposals and *extra-curricular practices* (modifications at the level of extracurricular activities, that is, through the implementation of other activities that are not properly academic, that allow the realization of various workshops and the deployment of different activities with the Social environment).
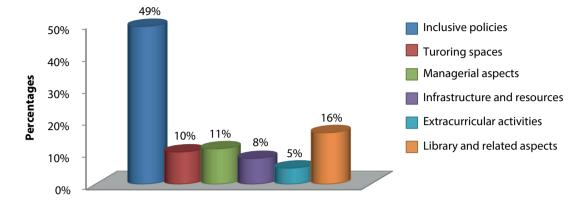
Figure 5. Suggested modifications for university services

Source: Own elaboration

Discussion and conclusions

The reading of the consulted institutional documents made it possible to appreciate that the UNSa, as stated, frames its institutional principles and proposals within policies of attention to cultural diversity, seeking to promote the generation of inclusive practices and mentalities through different types of programs, projects and tutoring spaces. In this sense, the theme of cultural diversity has been contemplated in its institutional agenda by generating some initiatives that base its actions on the current national and provincial legal framework, in order to specifically materialize indigenous rights.

As it was stated in a timely manner, UNSa deploys specific strategies aimed at promoting access for indigenous students (such as the socio-academic accompaniment program and affective containment). The proposal implemented by the PTEPO aims to establish itself as a solid institutional structure of pedagogical, affective and socio-cultural support, principally, that makes it possible to accompany the academic trajectories of those subjects, containing their concerns and contributing to the development of diverse competences and the deployment of their potential. It is emphasized that the instances of containment, of accompaniment in the processes of

adaptation to the university and city life, of educational support before the difficulties found in the academic course, as well as of scaffolding before cultural incomprehensions (allusive to the mastery of markedly different linguistic codes and non-linguistic, social representations, lifestyles, etc.), promoted from this space, were very positively appreciated by the students surveyed, highlighting the substantive value that they have throughout their university journeys, not only in the formative level, but fundamentally in the personal/emotional.

Despite the development of such initiatives, as could be verified in the analysis of the collected information, one cannot yet speak of legitimate proposals of interculturality. That is to say, the different actions developed in this direction are recognized and valued, as well as the progressive awareness that the subject has deserved in such academic spaces, however, there is still a long way to go back in terms of intercultural actions and genuine inclusions.

It is opportune to contemplate that it is not enough to promote access, increase the dissemination of the educational offer in the originary communities, or to dispel the obstacles that may arise at the time of admission, in order to promote the inclusion of cultural diversity in the ES. Undoubtedly, these are praiseworthy actions

that deserve to be sustained and encouraged, complementing also with policies and concrete practices that underpin permanence and subsequent graduation. Problematizing about these aspects makes it possible to understand that the inclusiveness of the ES presupposes the openness to diversity, the acceptance of it through the declaimed and the acted.

The UNSa needs to consider the need to "interculturalize" by transforming its objectives, structures, curricula and social relations, promoting genuine policies of socio-educational inclusion, which value diversity as a true development potential for all. From the perspective of the surveyed subjects, this is a challenge to be determined. The obtained results allowed appreciating that most of them consider that said Institution "sometimes" and "almost never" attend to the cultural diversity present in their academic spaces. These statements invite us to rethink mandates outlined in the light of the actions and policies promoted, as long as they are not confirmed by the representations of the subjects involved.

It is possible to notice that their main demands for an inclusive ES are expressed in 3 dimensions: the academic/curricular, the affective/linking and the accessibility.

En la académica, los sujetos demandan a la ES la consideración e integración de temáticas culturales diversas, de contenidos y prácticas de sus contextos de pertenencia, propias de sus realidades, tanto en el diseño de los planes de estudios, como en la planificación y abordaje de las clases, instando al intercambio de saberes y experiencias culturales, en un marco de derecho e igualdad. Otra cuestión implicada dentro de esta dimensión es la alusiva a las formas y metodologías adoptadas en los procesos de enseñanza y evaluación de los aspectos curriculares. En este sentido, muchos estudiantes han referenciado no sólo el sentimiento de ajenidad de los contenidos brindados, sino también la poca accesibilidad (a nivel comprensivo) de los mismos y de las bibliografías sugeridas.

Affective/linking dimension highlights the importance of forging links and promoting interrelationships between indigenous youth and the different institutional actors, from affectivity, to fostering encounter, listening, dialogue, trust and respect among them. These ideas receive sustenance, according to the responses of those, "the significant others" have been valued as aspects favoring their permanence in the UNSa. It is necessary to understand that the educational trajectories of those indigenous university students, like those of any student, involve not only academic aspects, but also a multiplicity of other aspects, such as affective, family, cultural, economic, etc., intersect in them.

The dimension of accessibility that the indigenous students referenced is linked to the genuine possibilities of access and permanence in the UNSa. This is the responsibility of the promotion and opening at the time of entry, as well as its support throughout the training itinerary. One of the biggest obstacles encountered by these subjects in their trajectories has been those of an economic and material nature.

By way of closure, and in relation to the Institution under study, the importance of problematizing such contributions in a reflexive and situated manner is highlighted, in order to promote improvement strategies in said academic space, in the curricula and in the link dynamics that are generate inside of it. In this sense, it is suggested that the promotion of the inclusion of indigenous young people to the ES be understood not only as possibilities of access to the system, as an institutional proposal tending to "reveal" presences historically omitted, but as an authentic positioning aimed at "interculturalizing" The university spaces, the curricula and interpersonal relations, thus strengthening the development of mentalities, attitudes and policies based on the equalization of rights and in the promotion of the principle of equality, which does not suppose the suppression of differences, but its celebration in a framework of possibilities and opportunities.

The findings of this study intend to be a contribution to the field of inclusive education and a contribution to the approach of cultural diversity in the spaces of the ES, presenting perspectives and reflections on realities that challenge not only academia, but also society as a whole, encouraging to charge protagonisms and active commitments in the construction and implementation of intercultural policies and strategies, to achieve not only universities but also fairer, inclusive and reflective societies of their processes.

Notes

1. Located in the capital city of the Province of Salta, Argentina.

2. The National Population Census of Households and Houses of the year 2001 incorporates this variable for the first time within the framework of a general population census. The "self-recognition" was the identification criterion that was used for the survey of the indigenous population.

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