

# El 2024 Quadrennial Survey on Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Education

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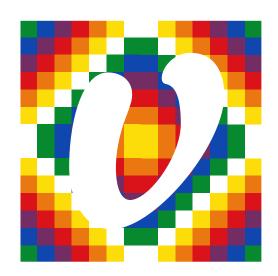
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#### About Education International:

Education International represents organisations of teachers and other education employees across the globe. It is the world's largest federation of unions and associations, representing thirty million education employees in about four hundred organisations in one hundred and seventy countries and territories, across the globe. Education International unites teachers and education employees.





# El 2024 Quadrennial Survey on Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Education

This report was written on the ancestral lands of the **Wurundjeri People** in Naarm (Melbourne) and the **Gadigal of the Eora Nation** in Warrane (Sydney). The sovereignty of the Wurundjeri and Gadigal Peoples was never ceded – it always was, and always will be Aboriginal land.

The symbol used on the cover is based on **Wiphala** square emblem (here in a Chakana shape) commonly used as a flag to represent some native peoples of the Andes that include today's Bolivia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, northwestern Argentina and southern Colombia. (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiphala)

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### **Foreword**

**S** ince El's first World Congress in 1995, the education trade union movement has recognised the importance of solidarity with, and advocating for, the rights of Indigenous Peoples. This means in and through educational systems, but also extends to the broader world of work, in the fight for climate justice, land rights, decolonisation, and more.

At El's 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress, the *2024 Quadrennial Survey on Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Education* aims to collate the work completed by member organisations in promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples within the realm of education and unions since our 8th World Congress in 2019. The survey explores union struggles and how together we can more meaningfully contribute to equity and the realisation of Indigenous rights in education.

We extend our gratitude to the member organisations who participated in this survey. The increased participation in this survey reflects the significant increase in the recognition and engagement of Indigenous issues within unions.

We also wish to extend our appreciation to the research team for their collaboration and flexibility in working across time zones. This report provides a significant contribution to El's advocacy and challenges all of us to consider our roles in advocating for the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the world of work, in trade unions, and in education.

While there has been progress, further steps can be taken regarding work towards decolonisation, networking opportunities, capacity building, and awareness raising amongst El members. The report clearly indicates the importance of differentiated strategies per region, to ensure relevance. As some members have indicated in this survey, making unions more accessible and welcoming to Indigenous educators are key avenues for union renewal. Meaningful engagement with Indigenous members must be the foundation of any work, not merely representation.

We look forward to working with our Indigenous members to make this a reality.

David Edwards General Secretary

## Introduction

"I believe that what is crucial in the work done by EI is solidarity, solidarity with indigenous peoples that we must put into practice and make known." (OTEP-A, Paraguay)

"With the change of government, the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity was eliminated [...] policies against violence against women, education, and health are at risk of disappearing, which doubly vulnerable women and diversities present in indigenous peoples" (CTERA, Argentina, 2024)

"As General Secretary, I admit that as a Union we did not have actions and guidelines in favour of the defence of indigenous peoples, however, after participating in a meeting of indigenous territories of EI and learning about successful experiences in other countries, we came up with ideas and goals, and this exchange of experiences is invaluable." (SEC, Costa Rica, 2024)

his 10<sup>th</sup> Education International (EI) World Congress in 2024, held in Argentina, is another step in EI's longstanding commitment to advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples, specifically in the education sector. This report presents new data about the situation of Indigenous Peoples around the world and is built on the foundation of previous initiatives to push further the agenda for Indigenous rights within and through trade unionism. The findings of this report are based on The Quadrennial Survey on Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Education 2024

and interviews with representatives of El member organisations.

The aim of the Quadrennial Survey is to gather insights on the actions and progress made by member organisations in promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples within the realm of education and unions. It is not an evaluation of how they are doing, but a glimpse of their struggles and how together we can contribute to equity and respect for rights in education systems.

Table 1. Responses by region

Region	Number of responding unions	Number of member unions	Percentage of responding unions
Africa	24	117	20.5%
Asia Pacific	16	63	25.4%
Europe	12	122	9.8%
Latin America	9	34	26.4%
North America and the Caribbean	8	37	21.6%
Total	69	373	18.5%

The survey collected data from member organisations in 55 countries, 10 countries more from the last survey in 2014, from different regions across Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and North America and the Caribbean about the advancement of Indigenous Peoples' rights in education and trade unions. Six semistructured interviews were also conducted to complement the responses to this survey. El received 69 responses to the survey, 15 more than the last survey in 2014. The survey ensures the anonymity of respondents and their organisations unless explicit consent is given for disclosure. It is important to mention that the regional breakdown of responses does not reflect the distribution of Indigenous Peoples across the world, nor a union's level of engagement with this issue.

The definition of indigenous peoples honours the right of each individual to self-identify as one, which may correspond to other terms such as "Aboriginal Peoples," "Indians," "Inuit and Métis," "Native Peoples," or "First Peoples", for example. This approach aligns with the United Nations' usage of "Indigenous Peoples", that acknowledge heterogeneity, richness, and diversity in these populations.<sup>1</sup>

In general, the survey and interviews reflect how unions are committed not only to the defence of their members, but also to the recognition and struggle for equity for indigenous peoples. The discordance between law and practice, political volatility, and budget cuts, are just some of the challenges faced by member unions. The role of EI today and in the future is to accompany their struggles, to share experiences, to support effective, comprehensive, and empathetic capacity building.

Since its 1st World Congress, El has been committed to the rights of Indigenous Peoples and to Indigenous Education. Importantly, El is committed to promoting awareness of the direct relationship between Indigenous rights and planetary health:

the fulfilment of the human rights of Indigenous students, teachers, education support personnel, and all Indigenous Peoples, is fundamental to the full realisation of the rights of all of humanity and the protection of our planet.<sup>2</sup>

Unions provided insight into the extent of recognition of Indigenous peoples in their contexts and discussed current challenges they face. Examples from around the world show what has been achieved in service of Indigenous peoples' rights to education, and the struggles that continue to face Indigenous educators and students. Recommendations are included as to the range of support that can be provided in this struggle, focusing on raising awareness of the importance of indigenous peoples' stewardship of their lands and waters for all global citizens.

<sup>2</sup> Education International. (2023). Draft 10th World Congress Resolution on Asserting and Defending Indigenous Peoples' Rights Within and Through Trade Unions (EB6406.51). 64th Executive Board meeting, 14-16 November 2023.

# A note on terminology: capitalising 'i'

Historically, the phrase "indigenous peoples" has not always been capitalised, with the lower case first letters used to indicate many different groups of people, or when describing issues very generally (for example 'global indigenous issues'). Capitalising 'Indigenous people' or 'Indigenous Peoples' was more often used as a proper noun to refer to specific First Nations who had adopted that term (for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Australia are sometimes referred to in government documents as 'Indigenous people').

In accordance with updated practices, for example by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues (https://social.desa.un.org/ issues/indigenous-peoples/unpfii), since the 2019 El report on *Indigenous* Rights in the Global Education Union Movement at the 8th El World Congress, El uses the capitalised 'Indigenous Peoples' to refer to First Nations people, communities and language groups, and wherever possible to adopt the specific name by which First Nations people themselves wish to be known by (for example, Sámi, Inuit, Hmong, Wurundjeri).

This report adopts the same convention: capitalising Indigenous Peoples when referring to general or global issues, identifying the specific name of the First Nation when that is possible.

#### 1. 2015 Survey

In 2015, El reported on the period 2010-2014 regarding The Indigenous Peoples Action Plan 2012-2015, alongside survey results on diversity and non-discrimination, LGBTI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and other persons whose sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression differ from the social norm) rights and gender equality and equity. In that report (El, 2015), it was noted that:

- The survey on Indigenous peoples' issues received responses from 55 unions in 45 countries.
- Out of these, 33 unions at the time acknowledged having Indigenous peoples in their country and having members who identify as Indigenous.
- At that point, four unions had set up reserved seats and 30% had established advisory committee structures. Approximately 40% had adopted a written policy document on indigenous peoples and the right to education.

The Report on the Quadrennial Survey on Equality and Diversity 2010-2014, described activities and programs implemented by members worldwide in the promotion of Indigenous education rights, including:

- Linguistic diversity and mother tongue education, as well as advocacy for the history, culture, and traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples in school curricula.
- Increasing the representation of indigenous peoples in teacher training programs and universities.
- El was represented at significant international events such as the World Conference on Indigenous Education and

- the UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.
- Unions in various countries participated in campaigns and solidarity actions supporting indigenous rights, such as ratification of the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

The 2015 Report also made the following recommendations on Indigenous issues:

- Networking: Promote an updated directory of indigenous peoples' advocacy contacts within El affiliates and set up an email list for information exchange on indigenous education issues.
- Knowledge Sharing: Advance knowledge, advocacy, and policy work by ensuring a regular exchange of materials, legal tools, presentations, webinars, and good practices.
- Meetings and Events: Continue implementing regional programs by holding regular meetings and an international event to discuss employment, education, and social justice issues for indigenous peoples.
- Operational Committee:
   Activate and make operational the EI indigenous peoples' committee with designated leadership roles.

#### 2. Objectives

The 2024 survey, ahead of the 10th World Congress, aimed to build on and extend the findings from the 2015 report delivered at the 7th World Congress. The 2024 survey was tasked with collecting experiences and insights from El member organisations across regions on their work furthering the rights of Indigenous Peoples, for example, in their work:

- Promoting inclusive environments of Indigenous members within unions, including recruitment and retention, policy development, research activities, networks, advisory structures, and powersharing where possible;
- Promoting the rights of Indigenous teachers, education support personnel, and students within schools and universities;
- Advocating to promote the history, culture, language and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples in school curriculum and universities;
- Advocating and demonstrating solidarity work on the rights of Indigenous Peoples in society at large;
- Collaborating with other Indigenous-led organisations or civil society organisations;
- Promoting and enabling the participation of Indigenous women in union work;
- Understanding successful strategies and challenges across contexts.

Importantly, the 2024 survey and interviews aimed to build a deeper understanding of the ways in which El can better support member organisations in their efforts to advance Indigenous Peoples rights.

# Methodology

The survey methodology sought to deepen El's knowledge of a broad range of issues in Indigenous education, whilst acknowledging that unions around the world are advocating for the rights of Indigenous Peoples in contexts where those rights are under serious threat. The survey questions were designed, in partnership with El, by a group of Indigenous education researchers based in Australia: Associate Professor Nikki Moodie (Gomeroi Nation), and Dr Aleryk Fricker (a proud Dja Dja Wurrung man), supported by Yasser Meneses.

Survey questions were adapted from the Indigenous Navigator Community and National Surveys, in order to allow long-term comparability with assessments of Indigenous Peoples rights. A total of 27 questions were included in the survey. The survey was made available in English, French, and Spanish online to all El member organisations via circular (n=383), and open from 27 February to 29 March 2024. The full survey is provided at Annex 1.

Survey participants were invited to nominate themselves for an interview. Interviews were sought with one or two unions from all El regions with four regions accepting. Interviews were conducted with unions from: Aotearoa New Zealand, Japan, Norway, Argentina, Paraguay and Costa Rica. The interview guide is provided at Annex 2.

#### **Indigenous Navigator**

#### indigenousnavigator.org

The Indigenous Navigator is a collaborative initiative developed and managed by a global consortium composed by the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), Tebtebba Foundation, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, Forest Peoples Programme and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, with the support of the European Union (EU).

The Indigenous Navigator is a set of tools designed for and by Indigenous Peoples to systematically gather their own data and use it for multiple purposes. It is a community-based framework for monitoring and guiding indigenous peoples' rights and development. It is designed to measure the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the outcomes of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and essential aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals.

At its 16<sup>th</sup> session in April-May 2017, the Permanent Forum adopted a recommendation encouraging Governments, United Nations agencies, indigenous peoples and civil society organisations to use the Indigenous Navigator framework and tools in order to strengthen community-based monitoring of global commitments made under the Declaration, the World Conference, and the Sustainable Development Goals (UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2017).

#### Who are Indigenous Peoples?

# According to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues<sup>3</sup>:

It is estimated that there are more than 370 million indigenous people spread across 70 countries worldwide. Practicing unique traditions, they retain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Spread across the world from the Arctic to the South Pacific, they are the descendants - according to a common definition - of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. The new arrivals later became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement or other means.

... The term "Indigenous" has prevailed as a generic term for many years. In some countries, there may be preference for other terms including tribes, first peoples/nations, aboriginal people, ethnic groups, native, adivasi, janajati, etc. Occupational and geographical terms like hunter-gatherers, nomads, peasants, hill people, etc., also exist in some places and for practical purposes can be used interchangeably with "Indigenous Peoples".

In many cases, the notion of being termed "Indigenous" has negative connotations and some people may choose not to reveal or define their origin. The nature of indigeneity is often contested, defined and given meaning very differently in different contexts. Others must respect such choices, while at the same time working against the discrimination of Indigenous Peoples.

According to the UN the most fruitful approach is to identify, rather than define Indigenous Peoples. This is based on the fundamental criterion of the right to determine their own identity, as per Article 33 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007)<sup>4</sup>.

Whilst Indigenous People often share a history of struggle against oppression, and ongoing destruction of their ancestral lands, there are often significant differences between members of these groups.

It is for these reasons that the survey has not provided results in terms of which countries are recognised as sharing jurisdiction with specific groups of Indigenous Peoples. Many nationstates around the world have actively taken steps to eradicate Indigenous, native or tribal peoples; therefore, counting which countries do or do not have Indigenous communities is a complex matter.

This questionnaire survey focuses on questions regarding union support of Indigenous Peoples, rights and actions, ensuring unions can respond in accordance with their own local conventions and contexts.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples https://social. desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples

#### 1. Response rate

69 unions from 55 countries completed the 2024 survey. Slightly more than half (52%) of all respondents indicated that Indigenous issues were rather and highly relevant to their work, with a slightly smaller percentage (48% of respondents) indicating that Indigenous issues were barely or not relevant.

49 out of 69 unions responded from countries which formally recognised some or all Indigenous Peoples in their jurisdictions. Just over 70% of unions considered there were Indigenous peoples in their country, an increase of 10% (or 33 out of 55 unions) since the 2015 survey.

Seven unions requested anonymity; data provided by these organisations has been included for high level analyses and descriptive statistics, but those organisations have been excluded where quotes, low response rates or regional descriptions (for example) might identify those unions.

Table 2. Response count by region

El Region	Number of responses
Africa	24
Asia Pacific	16
Europe	12
Latin America	9
North America and the Caribbean	8
Total	69

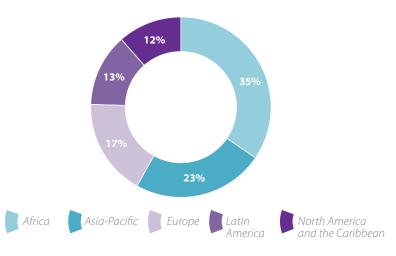


Figure 1. Survey responses (percentage, by region)

# **Findings**

# Current context & union perceptions

The first section explores how different unions perceive the relevance of Indigenous issues to their own context. Results are presented with the aim of describing the Indigenous rights context in which unions operate first, and then move to issues in the recruitment of Indigenous members and the governance of Indigenous issues across regions.

#### Relevance of Indigenous issues

52% of unions indicated that Indigenous issues were rather or highly relevant to their work, with a slightly smaller percentage (48% of respondents) indicating that Indigenous issues were barely or not relevant.

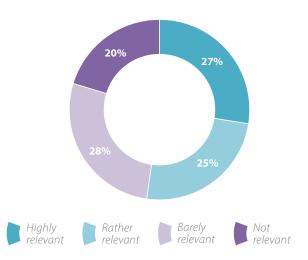


Figure 2. Relevance of Indigenous issues

Explored by region, the responses suggest that recognising Indigenous Peoples in different jurisdictions is not always straightforward. Where there has been considerable internal migration, dispossession or colonisation resulting in the movement of Indigenous Peoples over long periods of time, the category of who is 'indigenous' (in the broadest

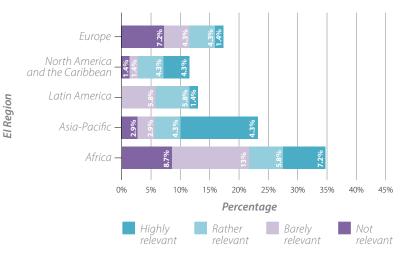


Figure 3. Relevance of Indigenous issues, % by region

sense of the term) may itself not always be relevant. We suggest that this interpretation might be useful in understanding the stated lack of relevance in the African context. Figure 3 shows how survey respondents identified the relevance of Indigenous issues to their context, broken down by region.

Of particular interest is the relatively high rate of irrelevance claimed by European member organisations. We suggest firstly this implies that recognition of Arctic Peoples is not widespread (or not seen as a European issue in the broadest sense); similarly, we suggest that the historical role of European educators and education systems in imperial projects is also not widely seen as relevant to the current work of unions in this region.

#### Recognition

Government recognition of Indigenous Peoples is an important step in the acknowledgement of Indigenous rights to education, language and land. Recognition might take a range of forms, from written acknowledgements in constitutional or founding documents, legal land tenure systems,

legislative or statutory mechanisms or in treaties formally signed between colonial or imperial powers and Indigenous Peoples.

50% of respondents indicated they were working in contexts in which Indigenous Peoples were in fact recognised by governments.

Whilst there have been many gains in Indigenous Peoples' struggle for rights over the past generation, the failure of many governments to—firstly—recognise their own Indigenous Peoples, and secondly to preserve and strengthen Indigenous languages and knowledge systems, is a critical barrier to the fullest expression of Indigenous Peoples rights.

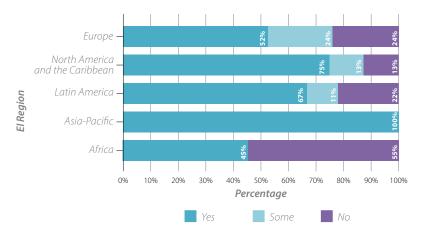


Figure 4. Recognition of Indigenous Peoples in respondent countries

The UN General Assembly has proclaimed 2022-2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages as many Indigenous languages are on the verge of extinction; the freedom of language is not only a prerequisite to freedom of thought and expression, but the fulfilment of the right to education.

In your country or territory, are Indigenous Peoples formally recognised by the government (for example, through constitutional acknowledgement, legal land ownership systems, treaties or policies)?

The *Fijian Teachers Association* (FTA) explains some of the complexity in the struggle to be recognised:

... somebody wanted us indigenous people to be categorized as 'itaukei' and all the other races to be known as Fijian. It is now commonly used because we are no longer known as the real Fijians but now given a name nobody knows the meaning of. We also lost our fishing customary rights and almost our land ownership rights. Election results in 2022 stopped any further damage.

#### **Enumeration**

Rather than attempt to describe which unions are working in countries with identified Indigenous populations, the survey asked if there was some process of counting or enumerating Indigenous peoples or languages in their national context.

The question of enumeration is an important one for Indigenous Peoples globally. Defining who is and is not indigenous is a longstanding tactic of governments seeking to acquire Indigenous Peoples land, remove rights of or obligations to Indigenous Peoples they share jurisdiction with.

While organizations like the ILO and UNPFII attempt to estimate populations and estates of Indigenous Peoples, much data that is necessary to enable Indigenous decision-making and essential to understanding the conditions, experiences, and lifeworlds of Indigenous People simply do not exist (Walter & Suina, 2019). Many national data collections, such as censuses and official statistics, do not enumerate Indigenous Peoples, often to control information about human rights violations or to avoid recognition of Indigenous Peoples' land tenure and right to selfdetermination (Davis, 2016; Peters, 2011).

Moodie, 2022, p. 487

Around 60% of respondents (42 out of 69) indicated that there were national processes in place to count Indigenous Peoples in their jurisdiction, usually through a census or similar mechanism.

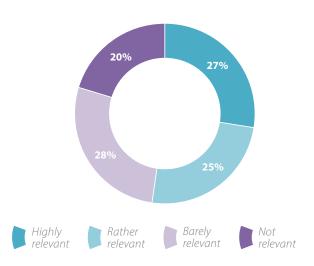


Figure 5. Indigenous recognition in national censuses, total responses

When organisations indicated that Indigenous people were not counted in their jurisdiction, these were often the same organisations that indicated that Indigenous issues more broadly were not particularly relevant in their contexts.

However, three survey respondents (4% of the total) indicated that Indigenous issues were rather or highly relevant, but that Indigenous Peoples were not enumerated in their context (two

respondents from the Africa region and one respondent from the Europe region). This might indicate a long history of minority or ethnic group mobility or the loss of tribal or ancestral lands, for example.

In the case of **Sweden**, where there is no longer a national census, the refusal to count Sámi people is part of a long history of refusal to acknowledge their rights. When Sweden did count Sámi through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it classified:

... Sámi into reindeer herders and non-reindeer herders, combined with race ideologies concerned with determining who were and were not racially 'pure' Sámi, led to a narrow and discriminatory notion of who constituted the group of Sámi in Sweden. The purpose was to limit the group as much as possible, to reduce the number of persons having Sámi rights. (Nilsson, 2020, p. 299)

Nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated that Indigenous Peoples are being enumerated in some way, whether through civil registries, censuses or similar mechanisms.

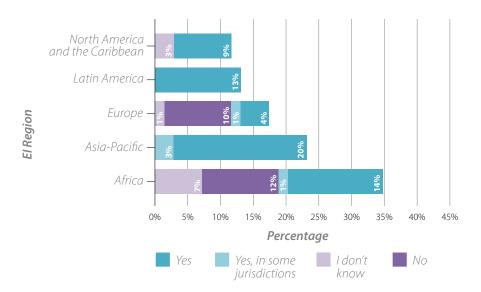


Figure 6. Indigenous recognition in national censuses, by region

# Indigenous staff and governance structures

Among the respondents, nine unions have at least one dedicated staff member focused on Indigenous issues. Unsurprisingly, these were also the unions that had Indigenous advisory committees or power sharing agreements. A small number of respondents indicated that all equity issues are handled by one staff member.

Table 3. Indigenous staffing & governance

	Dedicated staff	Leadership positions	Governance mechanism
Yes	26%	17%	23%
I don't know	3%	1%	3%
No	71%	81%	74%

Two unions specifically stated their entire organisations are wholly dedicated to Indigenous peoples' rights in education, The New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association Te Wehengarua (NZPPTA) and FTA-Fiji:

"The whole of our organization, 100% of us are all focussed on pursuing indigenous peoples' issues" - FTA-Fiji

Of the 16 unions who indicated they had a formal structure in place to guide work on Indigenous issues, these mechanisms ranged from advisory committees, a caucus, or task force, to working groups and formal power sharing agreements. Power-sharing arrangements appear more common in Aotearoa New Zealand than any other context.

#### New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) Te Riu Roa -Aotearoa New Zealand

Te Reo Areare sits in parallel with the National Executive as the Māori governance body of the union. They provide guidance on the direction and work of the union, ensuring that the views of tangata whenua [people of the land] are respected and present in decision making.

#### Recruitment

A total of 36 unions (52%) indicated that Indigenous issues were either Rather relevant or Highly relevant. Of these:

- Seven unions for whom Indigenous issues are highly relevant have specific measures in place to recruit and retain Indigenous members. These unions have either developed or are in the process of developing recruitment material in local languages.
- Fourteen unions 20% of all respondents - stated that Indigenous Peoples were formally recognised in the organisation's Constitutions, bylaws, policies, or resolutions.

#### Advocacy

Unions were asked if they had a formal position or engaged in advocacy on a range of issues that are globally identified as key challenges in Indigenous education, such as cultural workloads, cultural safety in the workplace, educational access and infrastructure.

More than a third of unions - 26 in total - indicated they engaged in advocacy on issues facing Indigenous teachers. This ranged from general advocacy

on cultural safety in the workplace, to the retention of specialist Indigenous language teachers, cultural allowances for teachers leading cultural practices, as well as training for non-Indigenous school leaders. Some examples of unions' advocacy activities were received in the survey<sup>5</sup>:

- Alliance of Concerned Teachers
   (ACT) Philippines "We
   are advocating for a more
   inclusive education policy
   that will cater to the needs
   of [Indigenous Peoples]
   (curriculum, teachers,
   infrastructure, access to
   technology, health program)"
- Syndicat National des Professeurs des Enseignements Secondaires (SYNAPES) -Bénin - [Advocating for] the introduction of national languages in education
- Irish National Teachers
   Organisation (INTO) Ireland -

- exploring issues and barriers experienced by the Traveller community and advocating on the importance of being inclusive and welcoming towards Travellers<sup>6</sup>.
- Fijian Teachers' Association
   (FTA) Fiji "our organization
   strongly advocates on issues
   facing indigenous teachers by
   suggesting policies to improve
   their working conditions
   and pay as they serve in the
   country's most disadvantaged
   areas (rural/remote areas)"
- Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT/ ACCPU) - Canada - advocating for the recognition of Indigenous knowledge in hiring, tenure and promotion.
- Sindicato de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores de la Educación Costarricense (SEC) - Costa Rica - "Costa Rica has a Subsystem

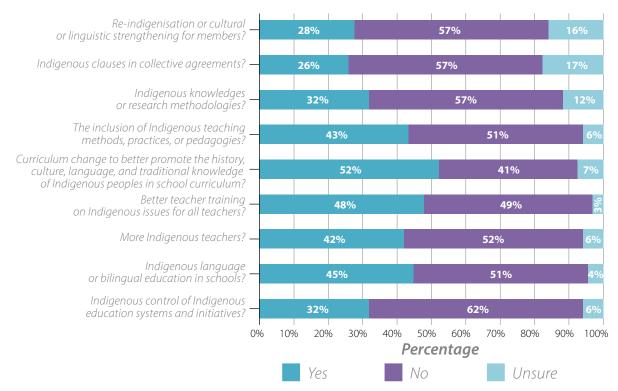


Figure 7. Does your union have a position on or advocate for...

<sup>5</sup> Some responses to the survey were provided in bullet points, free text or in long form. Where possible, full quotes have been included, or summaries have been edit to focus on key points.

<sup>6 &</sup>quot;After years of campaigning by Traveller groups, in 2017 the Irish government granted formal recognition to the Traveller community as a distinct ethnic group – a move hailed by campaigners as an important step towards ending the discrimination faced by the community." https://minorityrights.org/communities/travellers/

- of Indigenous Education and it is in charge of the design of specific programmes that respect the mother tongues of indigenous peoples. However, this sub-system complicates the work of the union in these territories, as the recruitment of teachers and administrative staff is done by the Indigenous Consultative Council. The difficulty I see is that these individuals do not have the academic preparation, the initial training, much less the continuing education. These communities are very far from the areas where they can access training processes. So, it is a good thing that they have their autonomy, but it also makes it difficult for the union to support them."
- Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE) - Mexico - Every year, the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE, for its acronym in Spanish) calls on its members to express their salary, work, professional, social security, and general demands, so the SNTE can carry out the corresponding actions with the

- Ministry of Public Education and the bodies involved in their achievement, which includes the specific needs of indigenous teachers, in the National Parliament of Indigenous Teachers and in the State Parliaments.
- Organización de Trabajadores de la Educación del Paraguay (OTEP-Autentica) – **Paraguay** - the union takes a proactive stance in advocating for indigenous rights, particularly through the formation of the 'Mesa Nacional de Docentes de Pueblos Indígenas' (National Board of Teachers of Indigenous Peoples). This body aims to unify and organise efforts across various departments to address the educational and cultural needs of indigenous communities. The union has also been involved in broader advocacy, pushing for adherence to international conventions like ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (No. 169)<sup>7</sup> and campaigning against the systemic injustices faced by indigenous peoples.

#### 2. Case studies

Case study: New Zealand Educational Institute - Te Riu Roa - NZEI Te Riu Roa -Aotearoa New Zealand

The Aotearoa context is currently complex. Using the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 as a basis to engage with all colonial and Māori contexts, there has been a challenging but steady progression toward reconciliation, justice, and power sharing between Māori and non-Māori populations. In the wake of the Covid lockdowns and the economic and social turmoil that arose, the former progressive Labour government was voted out in 2023 and a new highly conservative three-party coalition government has been formed (Corlett, 2024).

At this point, the new conservative coalition has foregrounded that they will be reassessing the legislation formed around the Treaty and are already signposting major reductions in services to Māori people and communities in Aotearoa. The response to these real threats has meant that the Māori community governance bodies have begun to activate with the Pākehā (non-Māori) comrades to begin to push back against these proposed cuts (Corlett, 2024). Aotearoa New Zealand is at a crucial juncture regarding Māori rights and honouring the Treaty of Waitangi and the union will have a key role to play supporting their members and the students to navigate these complex political and cultural contexts.

"So, just to counteract what the government is doing, Māori are not sitting down, and neither is middle [politically moderate] New Zealand sitting down. Everybody's pushing back and actually saying ... no, we are not going back into that, what used to happen."

NZEI Te Riu Roa explained how their power-sharing governance arrangements enable a genuine partnership between Māori and non-Māori members and executive. These arrangements are seen as an evolution or innovation on established organising strategies, because they allow a different way of thinking about the world that benefits both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

"...two and a half years ago, started a process that we called Mōku Te Ao and the whole idea of Mōku Te Ao is that we put Māori first. In all the work that happens inside our organisation, so when people are developing policy, when they're talking about things, the idea is you put Māori first."

The current political environment in Aotearoa New Zealand is seen to be hostile to Māori rights and advances won over previous decades, and substantial mobilisation will be needed to organise against regressive approaches that seek push back hard-won victories.

"This particular government... ... has done a complete turnaround to be looking in the other direction ... the new Aotearoa Histories curriculum, which was designed to ensure students had a really good understanding of their local area, their local rohe, their local iwi, different perspectives on our colonial history, those things are all under attack."

#### Case study: Japan Teacher's Union - JTU - Japan

In 2019, the Japanese national government passed a new policy impacting Ainu people. This policy, called the New Ainu Policy, was greeted with much positivity and was seen as a well overdue response by the government and as an outcome of decades of activism from Ainu leaders (Charbonneau & Maruyama, 2019).

"The Okinawan and Ainu Indigenous People are very much violated, their rights are violated but their rights are gaining respect and so on, but it's still on the way."

Despite the praise and positivity that this policy was greeted with, there has been a growing recognition that the policy is limited and may not achieve what it was created for. There have been some critiques that argue that the policy as it has been designed and implemented seeks to stymie sovereign Ainu voices through the application of symbolic and performative gestures and that these ultimately contribute to a neo-colonial future where Ainu voices and contexts are continued to be marginalised to prevent any significant self-determination and autonomy (Charbonneau & Maruyama, 2019).

"...the country itself and the people and citizens have grown up in a so-called discriminatory structure against indigenous people. Not only indigenous people but also, we have a buraku, it's similar to

outcasts in India, so we have such serious discriminatory structure in society as a whole."

The JTU recognises that there is still a significant conservative mentality toward indigenous self-determination and autonomy in Japan and that the role of the union is to support teachers to have greater engagement with already existing curriculum content and further lobbying at an international level to encourage the national government of Japan to design better policy and implement it in meaningful and applied ways. The ITU noted that the national curriculum does include guidelines about the rights of Indigenous people, but as in many other nations, the curriculum is overcrowded, and teachers do not have enough time to cover issues in as much detail as is needed.

"At our national conference we had over 7,000 delegates and had 25 breakout sessions as well as a special session for the Ainu people in this year's conference. During this special session we had a symposium on who Ainu people are, what discrimination they have suffered from, as well as background information. Also, Ainu women have a complex experience of discrimination because of their roots and their gender as well."

#### Case study: Union of Education Norway - UEN - Norway

For several centuries the official governmental policy toward the Sámi Peoples was 'Norwegianisation'. This policy was largely driven by religious and eugenic ideologies and resulted in significant missionary and assimilationist policies. In the later part of the 20th Century, the Sámi Peoples were recognised as an ethnic minority in Norway and were awarded cultural and linguistic recognition and protection. This also resulted in an official apology from the Norwegian king in 1997 (Peroni, 2021).

"The most frequent topics that are linked to Norwegianisation are language, discrimination, schooling, and identity. The Norwegian school system has unfortunately played a significant role to carry out the state's intention to assimilate the Sámi and the national minorities, the Kvens and the Forest Finns."

In the last few decades, the hard-won struggles of the Sámi Peoples have resulted in significant reforms allowing for far greater autonomy and recognition of Sámi sovereignty. The Sámi Parliament was established in 1989 and has been an important voice and representative body for the Sámi Peoples to advise the Norwegian government regarding legislation that impacts them. Even with the Sámi Parliament and the opportunity to advise the Norwegian government about contentious legislation, there have still been some high-profile disputes that have lasted several decades before being resolved. One recent example is the negotiations regarding an onshore wind farm that impacted Sámi reindeer herding rights. This was recently resolved after much negotiation (McKeown-Gilmore, 2024).

In the education context, there has been further recent controversy where the Norwegian government passed new education legislation without including any Sámi contexts or guarantees that the Sámi students would be able to access culturally appropriate education.

"Our whole organisation must now contribute to revitalise the language and culture of Sámis, Kvens and Forest Finns – and it must take place in pre-schools and schools."

The UEN has recognised their own complicity in the Norwegianisation of the Sámi Peoples over the last 130 years. As such, the focus of the union is to come to terms with the historical injustices as well as address the contemporary issues facing Sámi people and the education system in Norway. The union is also focused on specifically Sámi contexts including accessing culturally and linguistically appropriate education as well as informing the wider majority Norwegian population about Sámi contexts.

"...with its roots going back more than 130 years, our union organised many of the teachers having Sámi, Kven and Forest Finn children in their classrooms. We must admit the responsibility we have for abuses committed against these children's identity, culture, language and self-awareness. It hurts to fully take it in."

Case study: Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina -CTERA - Argentina

CTERA faces a challenging landscape of indigenous rights and education in Argentina, particularly in light of recent political changes that have led to reductions in funding and support. The interviewees highlight the crucial role of the teacher's union in advocating for and protecting the rights of indigenous communities within this challenging environment.

CTERA describes a worsening situation for indigenous peoples due to a shift in governmental priorities that has resulted in decreased funding and support for policies that previously targeted these communities. They express concern over the rollback of advances made in previous decades, which recognised indigenous peoples as key political actors and acknowledged their pre-existing rights. Recent changes have included cuts to educational funding, particularly affecting intercultural bilingual education, which is crucial for maintaining indigenous languages and knowledge systems.

"We had a paradigm shift in previous decades where indigenous peoples were seen as new political actors who reclaimed and fought for their rights after a great genocide... This 21st century has seen a regression because all the advances that had been made are now being lost."

CTERA and its affiliate, Sindicato Unificado de Trabajadores de la Educación de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, (SUTEBA) have been critical supporters of indigenous rights, particularly through its involvement in education policy and its advocacy for maintaining and expanding intercultural

bilingual education. The union has been active in national protests against budget cuts and has worked to ensure that indigenous perspectives are included in educational content and policies. The union's efforts are framed as part of a broader struggle to maintain the gains achieved in past years, amid current policies that threaten to erode these advancements.

The commercialisation of rights and the loss of sovereignty are happening at an accelerated rhythm, putting indigenous communities at risk, especially in terms of education rights and communal land ownership."

The interviewees call for stronger support from EI emphasising the importance of international solidarity in their struggles. They suggest that EI could help by providing resources, supporting educational projects, and reinforcing the presence of international union delegates at congresses to legitimise and strengthen their advocacy efforts.

"It is very important because in the crucial moments we have lived through these months, the presence and solidarity of EI and the international union federations have been there, which strengthens us knowing that we are not alone in this struggle."

#### 3. El support

A key objective of the 2024 survey was to build a deeper understanding of the ways in which El can better support member organisations in their efforts to advance Indigenous Peoples rights. Firstly, respondents were asked how they currently perceive El's efforts to support unions' work on Indigenous issues. Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they perceived El's work as rather or highly relevant.

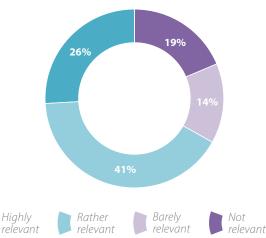


Figure 8. Relevance of El's efforts to support unions' work on Indigenous issues

#### SEC, Costa Rica

Crucial support is needed from EI particularly in providing international backing and sharing successful experiences from other countries. This support is vital for strengthening the union's initiatives, helping to exert pressure during negotiations, and providing a platform for exchanging knowledge and strategies.

Respondents were asked to identify and describe the type of support that might increase their union's activities on Indigenous issues. The most frequent responses related to more information training, expertise and knowledge about Indigenous issues, closely followed by increasing the financial resources to support union' activities. Some unions

Table 4. Support to increase activity on Indigenous issues

What is needed to increase your unions' activities on Indigenous issues?		
Access to training on Indigenous Peoples' rights and history	45%	
More expertise and knowledge	43%	
More financial resources	39%	
A more favourable political context	38%	
Expression of interest in the topic from our members	36%	
More Indigenous members	33%	
More Indigenous leadership within the union	26%	
Change in my country's legal framework	17%	
Expression of interest in the topic from our staff	14%	
Nothing more is needed	7%	
Total	69	

are looking to increase the number of Indigenous members (33%) and Indigenous leadership (25%) in the organisation.

OTEP-A - Paraguay - calls for greater support from El "in the form of solidarity, resources for campaigns, and assistance in raising awareness about the plight and rights of indigenous communities. This support is seen as crucial for empowering local efforts and ensuring that indigenous rights are not only recognised on paper but actively upheld in practice".

# In both the survey and interviews, representatives spoke about the way that Indigenous Peoples rights are integral to fighting climate change.

Indigenous People currently hold some form of tenure (often limited or insecure tenure) over about a quarter of the world's land surface. Those territories hold 80% of the planet's remaining biodiversity (Garnett et al., 2018; Nitah, 2021). Occasionally, government and industry will partner with Indigenous Peoples, or use some element of the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) that belongs to Indigenous Peoples, to address an effect

of climate change (Ingty, 2017; Vinyeta & Lynnn, 2013). An example of this might be the use of Indigenous fire management techniques by Australian governments.

Indigenous Peoples' knowledge of the natural world is embedded in their languages and passed down from one generation to the next. The strength of Indigenous languages is related to the extent of their land rights (Chiblow & Meighan, 2021; Ferguson & Weaselboy, 2020). When Indigenous People are dispossessed of their land and not allowed to speak or write their ancestral languages, knowledge about how to manage the land can be hidden. Governments or industry can sometimes seek to use one aspect of TEK without supporting secure Indigenous land tenures or language and cultural rights.

The global population of Indigenous Peoples is estimated at **476.6** million people (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2019, p. 13), roughly 5% of the global population and accounting for 15% of the world's people living in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2019). Indigenous People occupy a quarter of the planet's surface, and these territories retain 80% of remaining biodiversity; Indigenous lives, knowledges, and cultural and linguistic diversity steward what remains of the variety of life on earth. Yet strong Indigenous land tenures are deeply and violently contested by states around the world, often through the use of military, urban planning, agricultural, or population replacement strategies (Wolfe, 2006; World Bank, 2019). Indigenous gender orders are deeply impacted by colonial ecological violence (Norgaard et al., 2018), which fundamentally restructures Indigenous lifeworlds and requires new forms of resisting and relating.

Moodie, 2023, p. 486-487

From unions that have strong Indigenous membership bases, it was important that colleagues and organisations around

the world understood that Indigenous Peoples rights are a global concern, and impact places and communities that might sometimes seem disconnected from those struggles.

#### **UEN, Norway**

"To know that the teachers' unions worldwide support this kind of work gives us strength. We can learn from each other even if the situations in the countries with indigenous people are different. To join indigenous groups of teachers regularly and listen to their experiences, can contribute to understanding of the situation and the needs for improvement both when it comes to education rights and the needs of the indigenous teachers. Union leaders need this competence to carry out their mission."

#### Five-year priorities by region

Survey respondents were asked to describe three priority areas for El to work on over the next five years regarding Indigenous issues.

Acknowledgement of the importance of specific local and country contexts was a theme across regions, as was efforts to raise awareness about the importance of Indigenous Peoples rights more broadly. Networking and sharing successful strategies, advocating for Indigenous teachers, and raising awareness about the nature and importance of Indigenous rights globally, were among the key priorities identified by survey respondents. Issues and priorities varied by region, which implies the importance of differentiated strategies.

This section discusses findings in two sections: firstly, insights from unions who deemed Indigenous issues less relevant in their contexts, and secondly, a longer discussion of key priorities and themes from respondents who identified that Indigenous issues are more relevant to their work.

Amongst the 33 respondents who indicated that Indigenous issues were not relevant to their specific context, clear priorities nonetheless emerged. Only 3 unions from this group did not provide their perspective on priorities that EI might develop over the coming years. The remaining 30 respondents shared responses that demonstrated their full support of Indigenous peoples' rights. From all regions, unions that do not have a focus on Indigenous issues call for greater awareness of Indigenous issues; acknowledging the right to education in Indigenous languages; for inclusion and non-discrimination; for decolonisation; for the support of Indigenous teachers, including better enabling their participation in their local

The following discussion focuses on key issues and priorities as described by the 36 unions who are working in contexts where Indigenous issues were discussed as (highly or rather) relevant in their survey responses.

#### **Africa**

Nine respondents from the Africa region indicated that Indigenous issues are highly (n = 5) or rather (n = 4) relevant. These respondents suggest El focuses on:

- Advocacy on Indigenous rights, including the recognition of Indigenous cultures, languages and histories in education systems worldwide.
- Protection of Indigenous land and land rights: actively supporting Indigenous communities in their efforts to protect land and resources.
- Cultural recognition and inclusion in education, including the right of each Peoples to their own history, culture and spirituality.
- Training on Indigenous issues for members, including sensitivity guidelines.

 Indigenous teachers: focusing on empowerment and support, including initiatives to increase the recruitment, retention, and professional development opportunities for Indigenous teachers, administrators, and education support personnel.

#### Asia Pacific

Twelve respondents from the Asia Pacific region, who ranked Indigenous issues as highly (n = 9) or rather (n = 3) relevant, described on five key themes that El might prioritise:

- Culturally relevant and equitable educational access: promoting access to various levels of education, developing curricula that respect indigenous cultures and languages, and encouraging the use of indigenous languages within the educational system.
- Cultural preservation and recognition: preservation and celebration of indigenous cultural identities, including supporting initiatives to maintain cultural heritage, promoting linguistic diversity, and integrating cultural recognition in the workplace. These efforts extend to respecting and promoting indigenous rights as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- Local collaboration: an emphasis on the importance of understanding the diverse issues faced by Indigenous Peoples, and collaborating with local communities and organisations to develop and implement effective policies. A key focus on local collaboration was improving indigenous participation in education and economic life.

- Global and regional networks and advocacy: a continued call for the establishment of networks among indigenous groups across different regions to facilitate regular communication and support. This also includes advocating for indigenous rights at international gatherings and through various media to raise awareness of Indigenous issues globally.
- Decolonisation and antiracism: A key theme from this region was a focus on supporting decolonial processes in education, dismantling colonial educational structures, and promoting anti-racism campaigns. This reflects a broader approach to revising how education systems have historically impacted Indigenous communities and working towards a more just educational framework that recognises and values Indigenous knowledges and histories.

#### **Decolonisation & Anti-Racism**

Decolonisation and anti-racism in Indigenous education involve a transformative approach aimed at rectifying historical and ongoing inequalities faced by Indigenous peoples in the educational system. This process entails reevaluating and redesigning curricula and educational practices to prioritise Indigenous perspectives, histories, languages and knowledge systems, to challenge and dismantle colonial ideologies and practices. It also involves actively combating racial biases and systemic discrimination within educational institutions, fostering an environment of equity and inclusivity. Ultimately, this approach seeks to empower Indigenous students and communities, promoting social justice and rights- and strengths-based approaches. Truth-telling and historical research that seek to bring to light the past actions of imperial and colonial organisations are often important in decolonial and anti-racist work.

In a recent UK study aimed at understanding how higher education staff and students understand decolonisation and anti-racism, Hall et al. (2023) described how:

It is clear that it is easier for individuals to focus upon daily, personal and local approaches that may be about challenging racism, however, that is recognised in practice. Engaging in behaviour change, potentially through mandatory training on issues like anti-oppressive practice and micro-aggressions, and having these as goaloriented, feels achievable for many. Here, there is a focus upon the agency that may be enabled through formal policy, and the need for power structures to validate anti-racism. This stands in asymmetrical relation to the work of decolonising, as a long-term process focused upon institutional change, which questions how institutions are embedded inside global ecosystems. Moreover, this process is one of unlearning at deep, personal and institutional levels, with a focus upon refusing and overcoming exploitation, expropriation and extraction. Rather than positioning outcomes as central, decolonising has a process of open questioning and movement at its heart.

Indigenous organisers, writers and philosophers often also focus on the tangible aspects of decolonisation: the return of land, treaty settlements and reparations, language and cultural revitalisation, and legal protections against future rights violations.

#### JTU-Japan

"The Japanese government never apologised officially. So, that is one point where EI could appeal to the national government to do so through international organisations. And the second one is we want EI to demand and suggest the significance of education for each indigenous people and other nation's citizens to support everybody's education. So, maybe, of course EI is doing a lot of things for the member organisations, but together with EI we can appeal for the *United Nations and so on and other* international organisations to mention the significance of education."

#### **Europe**

Fewer unions from this region note that Indigenous issues were highly (n= 1) or rather (n = 3) relevant in their work. However, priorities in this region are similar to those in others, with a strong call for more awareness about Indigenous issues:

- Promotion and respect for Indigenous rights: broadening awareness of Indigenous rights, including developing comprehensive approaches to combat anti-Indigenous racism. Ensuring the safety and security of Indigenous peoples, and promoting policies that foster greater understanding and integration of indigenous history and languages into broader societal contexts.
- Awareness: including specific training for non-Indigenous teachers about Indigenous cultures, traditions, and languages. A key priority is improving the education of teachers about Indigenous cultures, to build broader societal understanding.
- Indigenous teachers: advocating to increase numbers of Indigenous

teachers, and better recognition of the workload Indigenous teachers carry (which often includes cultural and language educational roles, liaising with Indigenous communities, and advocating on Indigenous issues). It was noted that this workload often prevents Indigenous teachers engaging more deeply with their union.

#### Latin America

A small number of unions noted that Indigenous issues are highly (1) or rather (4) relevant to their work. However, advice from this region was clear and extensive, with key priorities identified differently from other regions:

- Training for Indigenous people: empowering all union leaders to defend Indigenous rights, and training Indigenous women and young people in union leadership.
- Education and training on Indigenous issues: a key theme was a need to share practices from unions that have made progress on Indigenous issues.
- Awareness of Indigenous rights: Indigenous peoples help protect our environment, fight against climate change, and build resilience against natural disasters. More information and education are needed to respect their rights, which are not always protected.
- Advocacy on teacher training: the need for teacher training that included Indigenous rights, worldviews, histories and cultures. Supporting teachers with quality teaching materials, funded positions, and appropriate courses.

#### SEC, Costa Rica

"Support us with declarations when we start this fight with the collective convention incorporating articles to defend the indigenous educators; we will need their declarations, support notes of some sort that allow us to develop some kind of pressure."

**OTEP-A - Paraguay** - shared three actions EI can prioritise in the coming years:

- 1. On Solidarity and Awareness:

  "I believe that what is crucial in
  the work done by EI is solidarity,
  solidarity with indigenous peoples
  that we must put into practice and
  make known so that such situations
  can be denounced."
- 2. On Capacity Building and Campaigns: "The prompt presence of El with a campaign to ensure the fulfilment of Convention 169. We need materials, for example, about the convention to analyse and reflect on what that convention means and what it can bring to the community itself."
- 3. Ten-Year Vision: "In 10 years, I believe we can have a large demonstration on October 12<sup>th8</sup> claiming indigenous peoples' rights and telling the world that they have not defeated us and we are still here."

#### North America and the Caribbean

Six unions from this region, who indicated that Indigenous issues were highly (n = 3) or rather (n = 3) relevant to their context, discussed key priorities for EI over the coming five years. This included:

- A focus on Indigenous languages: There is a strong call for the revitalisation, development, and strengthening of indigenous languages as integral to maintaining Indigenous knowledges and cultural heritage.
- Indigenous teachers: Support and advocacy for Indigenous teachers are seen as crucial to retain those teachers, essential for achieving educational success for Indigenous people, and for fostering Indigenous self-determination in local contexts.
- Advocacy on Indigenous rights: this includes advocating for the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples in all matters affecting them, and more broadly on the nature and importance of Indigenous Peoples rights.
- Indigenous representation: increase representation by Indigenous people in educational union bodies and emphasise the importance of modifying educational programs to reflect the Indigenous context more accurately.

B Day on which Christopher Columbus first arrived in America in 1492.

Paraguayan Indigenous people demand right to land and drinking water <a href="https://efe.com/en/latest-news/2023-10-12/paraguayan-indigenous-people-demand-right-to-land-and-drinking-water/">https://efe.com/en/latest-news/2023-10-12/paraguayan-indigenous-people-demand-right-to-land-and-drinking-water/</a>

### Conclusions

The 2019 Education International (EI) report on Indigenous rights in education highlighted how unions play a pivotal role in advocating for and implementing changes that support Indigenous Peoples' rights in education, but explained how organisations require enhanced support, resources, and collaboration to be effective. The earlier 2015 survey provided initial suggestions to scaffold this support. Key findings from the 2015 and 2019 report included a focus on the following issues:

- Recognition of Indigenous Knowledge and Practices: Unions need support to advocate for the recognition and integration of Indigenous knowledge, languages, and practices within national education systems. The report highlights the ongoing marginalisation of Indigenous voices in formal education settings and calls for an education framework that appreciates and integrates Indigenous knowledges, pedagogies and content.
- Support for Indigenous Leadership and Representation: Unions are urged to enhance Indigenous leadership within their structures and at educational policy-making levels. There is a call for the creation of formal mechanisms and spaces within union activities to ensure Indigenous representation and participation. This extends initial calls in the 2015 report for EI itself to include an Indigenous governance mechanism, such as an advisory body, to advance and organise advocacy efforts, research and capacity-building

- activities regarding Indigenous issues.
- Building Capacities and Awareness: Unions require resources to build capacity among their members to address Indigenous issues effectively. This includes training and professional development that focus on Indigenous rights, cultures, and educational needs. The report suggests that unions educate their members to combat biases and promote respect for cultural diversity. The 2015 survey suggested that, for example, an email list for distributing information on Indigenous issues at all levels of education, might increase awareness for interested affiliates.
- Advocacy for Policy Changes: There is a need for unions to actively lobby for the implementation of international human rights standards that support Indigenous education rights at the national level. This includes pushing for policies that combat discrimination against Indigenous peoples and promote inclusive education. The 2015 survey identified an opportunity to support knowledge, advocacy, and policy work by ensuring a regular exchange of materials, legal tools, presentations, webinars, and other good practice across contexts and organisations.
- Research and Data Collection: Unions need support in conducting research and gathering data on the educational needs and

- outcomes of Indigenous students. This is critical to inform policy decisions and tailor educational programs that address specific needs of Indigenous communities.
- Strengthening Alliances and Partnerships: The 2019 report emphasises the importance of strategic alliances with Indigenous organisations, other educational unions, and civil society groups to amplify advocacy efforts. By forming broader coalitions, unions can more effectively push for systemic changes that benefit Indigenous education. The 2015 survey (EI, 2015) also included a recommendation to develop and share a directory of Indigenous Peoples advocates within El affiliates to increase opportunities for collaboration.

The 2024 survey builds on and deepens the past decade of advocacy on Indigenous issues and confirms and extends the issues highlighted across the past decade of work. On the basis of the survey and interviews, this report finds that:

- 1. There has been a significant increase in the recognition and engagement of Indigenous issues within unions, reflected in increased response rates to surveys and the integration of Indigenous rights into union activities.
- 2. The adoption of Indigenous languages and cultural practices in education and union operations highlights a growing awareness and respect for Indigenous Peoples, their rights and contribution to planetary health.
- 3. Challenges such as political instability, budget constraints, and legal discrepancies continue to hinder the full realisation of Indigenous rights

- in education and meaningful advocacy in support of Indigenous Peoples.
- **4.** There is a strong correlation between the recognition of Indigenous rights and improved societal outcomes, including education and environmental stewardship.
- **5.** The 2024 report underscores the necessity for ongoing support and capacity building for unions to effectively advocate for and implement Indigenous rights and education initiatives.

### Recommendations

#### Recommendations for member organisations

The following recommendations can be considered by education unions who wish to further develop their work in favour of the rights of indigenous peoples, and adapted to their specific context and resources:

- 1. Identify and allocate resources to advance their work with Indigenous Peoples and on Indigenous issues.
- 2. Continue to develop and implement recruitment and retention strategies that include Indigenous languages and cultural safety practices.
- 3. Increased training and resources should be provided to union leaders and members to enhance their understanding and advocacy for Indigenous rights.
- **4.** Continue advocacy on the working conditions of Indigenous teachers, in addition to enabling their increased involvement in and leadership of local unions.
- 5. Make a concerted effort to integrate Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies into the mainstream education system to enrich learning environments and promote cultural awareness.
- 6. Organisations located within imperial or colonising nations should consider their historical and ongoing relationship with Indigenous Peoples, knowledges, issues, teachers, students, members, or education policies. They can be agents of imperial or colonial denial of Indigenous Peoples rights, or advocates for Indigenous Peoples rights and decolonial movements.

# 2. Recommendations for Education International

The following recommendations can be considered as Education International further develops its work in favour of the rights of indigenous peoples:

- To initiate a governance mechanism or advisory body to represent Indigenous members and advise on Indigenous issues.
- 8. To continue to advocate for Indigenous education rights, including the right to self-determined Indigenous education systems, and freedom from racism and discrimination on the basis of indigeneity and land rights.
- To promote Indigenous languages, cultures and knowledges, including the right to education in Indigenous languages particularly during the <u>UN Indigenous Languages Decade</u> 2022-2032<sup>10</sup>.
- 10. To increase awareness of the importance of Indigenous land rights and stewardship in the fight against climate change, and for climate disaster mitigation.
- 11. To continue to facilitate information sharing about how different unions approach Indigenous governance, power sharing and advocacy on Indigenous rights. Networking and collaboration among unions internationally should be strengthened to share successful strategies and challenges in promoting Indigenous rights.

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### **Annexes**

#### **Annex 1: Questionnaire**

#### Introduction

Education International's 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress (Buenos Aires July 2024) will review key developments, including progress on achieving equality and inclusion in education and education unions. The Quadrennial Survey on Gender Equality and Diversity Report consists of three surveys on LGBTI+ rights, on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Gender Equality and Equity. The results of the survey help shape the future of El's programmatic and policy work. The results of the Report help shape the future of El's programmatic and policy work.

This survey is focused on EI member organisations' work on furthering the rights of Indigenous Peoples in and through education and in trade unions.

It is estimated that there are more than 370 million Indigenous People spread across 70 countries worldwide. Practising unique traditions, they retain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Indigenous peoples often share a history of struggle for rights and recognition, and education trade unions have often played a central role in this work. This questionnaire survey focuses on questions regarding education trade union support of Indigenous Peoples, rights and actions.

All information you provide in the survey will be confidential and not passed on to third parties. The results will be published by EI and launched at the EI 10th World Congress in July 2024, but the name and/or territory of your union will remain anonymous unless you explicitly agree to its publication. However, the region of your union will be published.

This questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. One representative per union should respond to this questionnaire and this survey should be completed by the individual leading your organisation's work in this area. If you have any questions or want to provide further material or publications, don't hesitate to contact us: <a href="equality@ei-ie.org">equality@ei-ie.org</a>.

#### Part 1. Basic information

1.	What position do you hold in your organisation (eg: General Secretary, Indigenous
	Officer, member etc.)?

2.	Name	of vour	organisation:
۷.	, tuille	o, your	organisacion.

3.		agree with El referring to the name of your organisation in publications and tations of the results?
		Yes No, I want my organisation to remain anonymous.
4.	What E	I regional structure is your organisation part of?
		Africa
		Asia Pacific
		Europe
		Latin America
		North America and the Caribbean
5.	Countr	y or territory of operation:
5.1		agree to El referring to the country or territory of your organisation in ations and presentations of the results?
		Yes
		No, I want my organisation's country or territory to remain anonymous
6	How rele	evant are Indigenous issues for your organisation's current activities?
		1 (=not relevant) 2 (=barely relevant) 3 (=rather relevant) 4 (=highly relevant)
		Part 2. Rights context
Wł	nat are ti	he national policy settings regarding Indigenous recognition?
7.	govern	country or territory: Are Indigenous Peoples formally recognised by ment (for example, through constitutional acknowledgement, legal land ship systems, treaties or policies)?
		Yes
		No
		Some Indigenous Peoples are recognised by government, others are not.
		I don't know

8.		country or territory: Does your country count Indigenous Peoples in a al census?
		Yes
		Yes, in some jurisdictions
		No
		I don't know
	If ye	s, in some jurisdictions, please elaborate:
9.	terms	last five years, has there been any major changes in the national context in of the rights of Indigenous Peoples (advances or setbacks) that have affected nion's work on these issues?
		Yes
		No
		I don't know
	If ye	s, please elaborate:
10.	People	country or territory: Is there a reconciliation process with Indigenous s? (This might be a regional or national reconciliation plan or policy, treaty, nent, truth-telling, tribunal, or reparation process)
	П	Yes
	_	No
	_	In some jurisdictions there is, in others there isn't
		I don't know
		Part 3. Indigenous authority in education trade unions
	w is you mbers?	r organisation responding to the voices and concerns of Indigenous
11.		our organisation have a dedicated staff member/s focused on Indigenous s or issues?
		Yes
		No
		Don't know
	If ye	s, please elaborate:
12.	Does y people	our organisation have dedicated leadership positions for Indigenous s?
		Yes
		No
		I don't know
	If ye	s, please elaborate:

□ Yes				
□ No				
☐ Don't know				
If yes, please elaborate:				
14. Does your organisation have measures in place to recruit and retain Indigenou members?				
or example, recruitment material in local languages, a cultural safety or af policies, an Indigenous caucus etc	ffirmatio	on		
□ Yes				
□ No				
□ Don't know				
If yes, please elaborate:				
<ol><li>Does your organisation have an approach to power sharing, where In Peoples have authority over decisions that affect Indigenous Peoples</li></ol>				
□ Yes				
□ No				
☐ Don't know				
If yes, please elaborate:				
6. Does your organisation include Indigenous Peoples in their Constituti policies, or resolutions?	ions/by	laws,		
	ions/by	laws,		
policies, or resolutions?	ions/by	laws,		
policies, or resolutions?  □ Yes	ions/by	laws,		
policies, or resolutions?  Pes No	ions/by	laws,		
policies, or resolutions?  Pes Don't know If yes, please elaborate:	ions/by	laws,		
policies, or resolutions?  Pes Don't know If yes, please elaborate:	i <b>ons/by</b> i	laws,		
policies, or resolutions?  Pes Don't know If yes, please elaborate:		No		
policies, or resolutions?  Yes No Don't know If yes, please elaborate:  7. Does your organisation have a position on or advocate for:	Yes	No —		
policies, or resolutions?  Yes  No Don't know If yes, please elaborate:  7. Does your organisation have a position on or advocate for:  Indigenous control of Indigenous education systems and initiatives?	Yes	No 		
policies, or resolutions?  Yes No Don't know If yes, please elaborate:  7. Does your organisation have a position on or advocate for:  Indigenous control of Indigenous education systems and initiatives? Indigenous language or bilingual education in schools? More Indigenous teachers? Better teacher training on Indigenous issues for all teachers?	Yes	No -		
policies, or resolutions?  Yes No Don't know If yes, please elaborate: Indigenous control of Indigenous education systems and initiatives? Indigenous language or bilingual education in schools? More Indigenous teachers? Better teacher training on Indigenous issues for all teachers? Curriculum change to better promote the history, culture, language, and traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples in school curriculum?	Yes	No.		
policies, or resolutions?  Yes No Don't know If yes, please elaborate:  Indigenous control of Indigenous education systems and initiatives? Indigenous language or bilingual education in schools? More Indigenous teachers? Better teacher training on Indigenous issues for all teachers? Curriculum change to better promote the history, culture, language, and	Yes			
Policies, or resolutions?  Yes  No Don't know If yes, please elaborate:  Indigenous control of Indigenous education systems and initiatives? Indigenous language or bilingual education in schools? More Indigenous teachers? Better teacher training on Indigenous issues for all teachers? Curriculum change to better promote the history, culture, language, and traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples in school curriculum?	Yes	No -		
□ Yes □ No □ Don't know If yes, please elaborate:  77. Does your organisation have a position on or advocate for:  Indigenous control of Indigenous education systems and initiatives? Indigenous language or bilingual education in schools?  More Indigenous teachers?  Better teacher training on Indigenous issues for all teachers?  Curriculum change to better promote the history, culture, language, and traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples in school curriculum?  The inclusion of Indigenous teaching methods, practices, or pedagogies?	Yes	No.		

18.	-	ur organisation advocate on issues facing Indigenous teachers and on support personnel?
	example astructu	e, cultural workloads, cultural safety in the workplace, educational access and re
		Yes
		No
		Don't know
	If yes	, please elaborate:
19.	Indigend intersec	ur organisation focus on specific advocacy around the rights and needs of ous women and girls, young people, and/or Indigenous People facing other ting marginalisation (for example, environmental degradation and land ligenous peoples with a disability, LGBTI+ Indigenous peoples)?
		Yes
		No
		Don't know
	If yes	, please elaborate:
20.	Does yo	ur organisation engage in advocacy or solidarity for Indigenous activists?
		Yes
		No
		Don't know
	If yes	, please elaborate:
21.		ur organisation conduct or engage with research activities conducted on ous issues?
		Yes
		No
		Don't know
	If ves	, please elaborate: and upload research example:
	,	on to link to the report or upload it]
	[0]01.	
22.	celebra	ur organisation get involved in local, national or international events that te or commemorate Indigenous issues, actions or events (e.g. a national ay, UN sponsored days such as 9 August)?
		Yes
		No
		Don't know
	If yes	, please elaborate:
	If no,	please elaborate:

	Yes
	No
	Don't know
If ye	es, please elaborate:
-	our organisation plan to increase activities focused on the rights of nous Peoples?
	No, we are already doing enough.
	No, because we can't.
	Yes, but plans are still vague.
	Yes, and we have a concrete vision.
	Other:
	is needed to increase your unions' activities on Indigenous issues? {will break r based on question
	Change in my country's legal framework
	A more favourable political context
	More financial resources
	More expertise and knowledge
	Access to training on Indigenous Peoples' rights and history
	More Indigenous members
	More Indigenous leadership within the union
	Expression of interest in the topic from our members
	Expression of interest in the topic from our staff
	Nothing more is needed
	Other, please specify:
	Part 4. El Support
	• •
	aims to increase its efforts to promote Indigenous Peoples rights. How do yo perceive El's efforts to support the unions' work on Indigenous issues?
	not relevant) 2 (=barely relevant)
	erather relevant) 4 (=highly relevant)
,	
	are the 3 priority areas for El to take in the next 5 years about Indigenous

Thank you for filling out the El Questionnaire

If you have any questions or want to provide further material or publications, don't hesitate to contact us: <a href="mailto:equality@ei-ie.org">equality@ei-ie.org</a>.

If you want to tell us more about your unions' activities and needs around Indigenous issues, you can also leave your email address:

## Annex 2: Interview Grid

## **Interview Guide: Indigenous Issues**

# **Background**

This interview is part of Education International's Quadrennial Survey on Gender Equality and Diversity, which also includes a survey on Indigenous Peoples, LGBTI+ issues and Gender Equality and Equity.

The results will be presented at El's 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Buenos Aires and help shape the future of El's programmatic and policy work.

# **Objectives**

These interviews aim to expand on the questionnaire and:

- Gain better understanding of the work unions are doing to support Indigenous rights in education.
- Gain better understanding of the internal work unions are doing on Indigenous rights.
- Gain insights into the challenges unions face when working, or aspiring to work, on Indigenous rights in education.

#### **Duration**

1 hour to 90 minutes

#### **Disclosures**

- Free, Prior and Informed Consent
  - participation is free and optional.
  - interviewees can withdraw their consent at any time up until publication.
  - data will only be used in a report to the 10th World Congress
- Consent for recording: recordings will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team. Audio and transcripts will not be published, but excerpts and attributed quotes may be used in the final report. The primary purpose of recording the interviews is to analyse and contextualise results from the questionnaire.
- Consent to the publication of your organisation's name and country in the final EI report: if consent is not given only information of the region will be provided in the report.
- Ethical oversight: this research is not sponsored by a university or government department and is not required to apply for human research ethics approval. This research is conducted by qualified Indigenous education researchers who abide by the <u>AIATSIS Code of Ethics</u>.
- The interview will be conducted in English.

## **Interview Questions**

## Introduction

Researcher introductions and acknowledgements

## For the recording, could you:

- Introduce yourself, your union and your role in the organisation?
- How long have you been working or active in the union?

## National context

- How would you describe the current state of Indigenous rights in your country?
- How do the political and legal issues currently facing Indigenous people affect your union?
- In recent years, have been there been any changes within the union that have changed your work on Indigenous issues? (e.g. new leadership or personnel changes)

## Union actions & positions

- How have education unions improved the employment and working conditions of Indigenous teachers and support workers in schools and/or universities?
  - (for example, what gains has the union made on Indigenous rights in enterprise agreements or policy settings)
- What types of actions does your union currently undertake on Indigenous issues?
  - (for example, campaigns, negotiations, litigation, solidarity actions, policy positions)

# Challenges & Needs

- In your opinion, what are the main challenges your union faces on Indigenous issues?
  - Within the union?
  - Within the education systems more broadly?
- What support do you and your union need to increase or improve work on Indigenous issues?
- Do you have any suggestions on how El could better support unions like yours?

# **Perspectives**

- What are the main priorities of Indigenous people in your union?
- How do you think your union's work on Indigenous issues will change over the next 5-10 years?
- Is there anything else we should consider?

-end-







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# El 2024 Quadrennial Survey on Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Education



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Education International represents organisations of teachers and other education employees across the globe. It is the world's largest federation of unions and associations, representing thirty million education employees in about four hundred organisations in one hundred and seventy countries and territories, across the globe. Education International unites teachers and education employees.