

**BEING AN INDIGENOUS WOMAN AND MOTHER AT UNIVERSITY:
CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES OF AN AGRONOMY STUDENT**

***SER MULHER INDÍGENA E MÃE NA UNIVERSIDADE: DESAFIOS E
PERSPECTIVAS DE UMA ESTUDANTE DE AGRONOMIA***

***SER MUJER INDÍGENA Y MADRE EN LA UNIVERSIDAD: RETOS Y
PERSPECTIVAS DE UNA ESTUDIANTE DE AGRONOMÍA***



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ABSTRACT: To diversify work options and strengthen indigenous women's political and social position, it is essential to invest in their professional training. One of the ways to contribute to this training has been to facilitate these women's access to federal education networks and courses in the agricultural area, which have the potential to offer them training. However, it is also necessary to reflect on the difficulties faced by these women in remaining at university, especially those who are mothers. This collective and autobiographical writing exercise by the first author aims to reflect the issues related to her stay at the university from her experience as an agronomy student, indigenous person, and mother. This work helps to think about a truly inclusive academy: creative, which values affection, which redistributes power, and which is restorative and transformative. Indigenous motherhood is an invitation to the university to welcome and promote the well-being of mothers, subject to rights, occupying spaces that democratically belong to everyone.

KEYWORDS: College education. Inclusion. Maternity. Affirmative Policies.

RESUMO: Para diversificar as opções de trabalho e fortalecer a posição política e social das mulheres indígenas, é fundamental investir em sua formação profissional. Uma das maneiras de contribuir com esta formação tem sido facilitar o acesso destas mulheres às redes federais de ensino e cursos da área de agrárias, que possuem potencial para oferecer capacitação a elas. Porém, é necessário também refletir sobre as dificuldades de permanência destas mulheres na universidade, principalmente das que são mães. Este exercício de escrita coletiva e autobiográfica da primeira autora objetiva refletir, desde sua vivência como estudante de agronomia, indígena e mãe, as questões relacionadas à sua permanência na universidade. Este trabalho auxilia a pensar uma academia verdadeiramente inclusiva: criativa, que valoriza os afetos, que redistribui poder e que seja reparadora e transformadora. A maternidade indígena é um convite à universidade a acolher e propiciar o bem-estar das mães, sujeitas de direito, ocupando espaços que democraticamente são de todas, todos e todes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação Superior. Inclusão. Maternidade. Políticas Afirmativas.

RESUMEN: Para diversificar las opciones laborales y fortalecer la posición política y social de las mujeres indígenas, es fundamental invertir en su formación profesional. Una de las formas de contribuir a esta capacitación ha sido facilitar el acceso de estas mujeres a redes y cursos de educación federal en el área agrícola, que tienen el potencial de ofrecerles capacitación. Sin embargo, también es necesario reflexionar sobre las dificultades que enfrentan estas mujeres en la universidad, especialmente las que son madres. Este ejercicio de escritura colectiva y autobiográfica de la primera autora pretende reflejar, desde su experiencia como estudiante de agronomía, indígena y madre, las problemáticas relacionadas con su estancia en la universidad. Este trabajo ayuda a pensar en una academia verdaderamente inclusiva: creativa, que valore el cariño, que redistribuya el poder y que sea reparadora y transformadora. La maternidad indígena es una invitación a la universidad para acoger y promover el bienestar de las madres, sujetas a derechos, ocupando espacios que democráticamente son de todos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación universitaria. Inclusión. Maternidad. Políticas afirmativas.

Introduction

According to the IBGE census (2012), Brazil is home to over 305 ethnicities speaking 274 languages, making it the country with the most significant number of indigenous ethnicities in the world. The population is approximately 820,000 indigenous people, with 503,000 living in rural areas and 315,000 in urban centers. Brazil has 505 indigenous territories, representing 12.5% of the national territory. In the Legal Amazon region, 440,000 indigenous people from 180 different groups reside, along with several isolated groups, with around 15% living in cities.

In terms of indigenous peoples, Brazilian statistics are not very precise (DE SOUZA LIMA, 2007). The urban indigenous population in Brazil may be much larger than officially registered, especially as there are villages urbanizing. *Tikuna* villages such as *Feijoal* and *Filadélfia* in the Upper Solimões are examples, facing similar issues to nearby cities.

Both in villages and cities, the indigenous population relies on few specific public policies tailored to their needs. A tiny portion of this population has access to essential services, such as education, which is an important tool for their struggle. In the context of settlements, literacy acquisition was crucial for indigenous resistance strategies, leading them to embrace formal education more vigorously to better understand and navigate relations with the government in the late 19th century (FAUSTINO *et al.*, 2020).

Indigenous women, besides playing significant roles within village social organizations, also have a primary role in the fight, resistance, and attainment of rights, although they are often underrepresented in the historiography of their peoples (MOTA, 1998). Organized indigenous women wield political and religious power in their communities, seeking partnerships in various spaces to be targeted by prioritized governmental actions (FAUSTINO *et al.*, 2020).

Studies indicate that lack of access to education and low levels of schooling are among the causes of poverty, discrimination, and limited access to rights in indigenous communities (PSACHAROPOULOS; PATRINOS, 1993) emphasizing the need for education prioritizing access to information and the retention of indigenous women in school for improvements in their quality of life (FAUSTINO *et al.*, 2020).

According to INEP (2022), only 1.2% of students enrolled in high school and 1.6% of those enrolled in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) self-identified as indigenous. In 2005, only 2.9% of indigenous students attended high school on indigenous lands. Many need to access schools in urban areas near the villages through significant personal effort and that of their

families, subjecting themselves to the typical discrimination found in areas near indigenous lands (DE SOUZA LIMA, 2007).

In the pursuit of higher education by indigenous peoples and organizations, De Souza Lima (2007) identifies two historically intertwined biases: the imposition of formal schooling for the training of indigenous teachers and the growing demand for professional training of indigenous peoples for better political articulation and resolution of land conflicts resulting from demarcations after the 1988 constitution.

After the constituent assembly, Ailton Krenak organized a training center in Goiás⁴ (now defunct) for the education of indigenous peoples in areas ranging from agronomy to law, to mediate and better confront the challenges. From this initiative, others emerged in various other states. However, it was only after 1999, with the breakdown of the tutelary monopoly, that indigenous peoples and organizations achieved greater participation and protagonism in processes. This further increased the demand for training and specialization, driving the struggle for an intercultural, bilingual, and differentiated education, to enter universities and to remain, which has since been the greatest challenge (DE SOUZA LIMA, 2007).

Following the guidelines of the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in 1998, the Ministry of Education (MEC), in close collaboration with universities, embarked on defining equity policies for the inclusion and access of economically vulnerable students and political minorities. They also established educational programs at all levels that recognize and support the rights of indigenous women and girls to education (FAUSTINO *et al.*, 2020).

Since 2002, there has been a growth in the number of indigenous students who have completed high school and began to demand entry into higher education, accessing primarily indigenous teaching courses, which emerged in various parts of the country. In the first term of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government in 2003, significant advances were made at the federal level, with the restructuring of the Ministry of Education (MEC), the creation and implementation of affirmative action policies, and the implementation of quotas in public universities (DE SOUZA LIMA, 2007). In the following term, with the expansion of technical and higher education networks and the interiorization of campuses.

Higher education is a space that is becoming increasingly present in the lives of indigenous populations in Brazil, facilitated by the quota program, mainly as a political

⁴ Available at: <http://ailtonkrenak.blogspot.com/search?q=CPI>.

instrument for defending rights, autonomy, and occupying positions of power, especially for indigenous women, both inside and outside the village (FAUSTINO *et al.*, 2020).

Courses in agrarian areas have the potential to offer training and capacity-building to indigenous women. Although the first Brazilian higher education courses in agrarian areas emerged in the 19th century, the first women graduated only in the 1940s (CAPDEVILLE, 1991). In the Agronomy course, for example, inequality is still significant today. Of the almost 109,000 agronomists who graduated, less than 20% are women (CONFEA, 2022). These data reflect the gender gap in access to agrarian and engineering fields in the country's universities.

When considering black and indigenous women, this inequality is even more evident. Between 2011 and 2021, the participation of indigenous peoples in Brazilian higher education increased by 374%. However, in 2021, the number of students who identify as Indigenous represents only 0.5% of the total enrollment in higher education, of which 55.6% are female. The knowledge areas with the highest number of students who declare themselves indigenous are "Education" and "Health and Well-being," which represent 52.7% of total enrollments. Between 2011 and 2021, there was a 582% increase in graduates identifying as Indigenous in higher education. In 2021, just over 8,700 students who identify as Indigenous completed higher education, representing 0.7% of total graduates (BRASIL, 2022).

Social inequalities that directly impact the lives of women not only continue to be reproduced but are also becoming increasingly complex, placing them in situations of more significant disadvantage, marginalization, and vulnerability. The development of capabilities through individual or collective actions conscious of women can enhance the freedom, power, and well-being of all. When engaged in these processes, women tend to broaden their scope of interest and concern with social issues (VIZCARRA BORDI, 2008).

To overcome the vulnerability of indigenous women, as well as peasant and black women, we must include them in political decision-making, especially in those that propose their inclusion for development. Correcting the subordinate position in which they generally find themselves in these processes, where they are normally excluded as social actors and free, autonomous, and self-recognized subjects (VIZCARRA BORDI, 2008).

Speaking of "indigenous women" is recognizing that they are women who belong to cosmologies that identify them as distinct and that share a common agenda within indigenous women's organizations (BRITO, 2016). Thus, even though these women's struggles intersect

with indigenous peoples' struggles, they need to be addressed through their rights, from their perspective (BRITO, 2016).

Indigenous intellectuals consider quotas to be a valuable instrument for accessing universities, but affirmative action policies, since their inception, continue to face the challenge of understanding and adapting to the specificities of the indigenous situation (DE SOUZA LIMA, 2007). In this sense, the present exercise of collective and autobiographical writing by the first author aims to reflect, from her personal perspective as a woman, indigenous *Tikuna* (*Magüta*), mother, and quota student of Agronomy at a Brazilian public university, on the difficulties faced in entering and remaining in the course and at the university. Additionally, it aims to discuss her dreams and future prospects, contributing to the reflection on a truly inclusive academia.

I, Myrian, Tikuna Woman

My name is Myrian Pereira Vasques; I am a native of the Filadélfia Indigenous Community, belonging to the *Tikuna* indigenous people, from the Santo Antônio Indigenous Land in the *Alto Solimões* region, state of Amazonas, Brazil. I am graduating in Agronomy Engineering at the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar). I am also a scholarship holder of the Climate Project, funded by the Amazonas State Research Support Foundation (FAPEAM), in partnership with the Federal University of Amazonas (UFAM). In addition to all this, I am also developing a small project with the women of the *Tikuna* Indigenous Association - AMIT, trying to introduce environmental education in the communities, aiming to raise awareness among adult women, youth, and children to minimize environmental impact.

The *Tikuna* people (*Magüta*) are the largest indigenous population on the planet, with 47,000 inhabitants, according to the IBGE (2012). My people were fished by the God *Yo'í*, who had three siblings, Deities: *Ipi*, *Mowacha* and *Aicüna*, of whom *Yo'í* was the most powerful. It was he who fished the *Tikuna* people and the rest of humanity on earth (*Tikuna* legend). After fishing the people, he distributed the families into nations and clans, and from there, the *Tikuna* clans emerged. This division or organization remains today, as does the mother tongue (*Tikuna* language), which is still spoken by 80% of the *Tikuna* population in Brazil. The *Tikuna* are also found in Peruvian and Colombian territory.

Today, some *Tikuna* villages closer to a city have stopped practicing their cultures frequently, and they only remember their culture on festival days, such as Amazon Day and

Indigenous People's Struggle Day (Indian Day). Their youth and the children are losing their original identity, and non-indigenous culture is increasingly introduced in these communities. Today, this issue is a major struggle for our grassroots leaders, chiefs, women's organizations, and indigenous youth communicators. To rescue and preserve our cultures and traditions, and most importantly, to protect and pass on our precious *Tikuna* language to the new generations.

What concerns my people the most nowadays is the position of the federal government and the measures it takes to protect (or rather, fail to protect) the environment, including indigenous territories. We, as an indigenous people, despite having our territory already demarcated, know that we are at risk because we have areas rich in minerals and other natural resources, making my people vulnerable. These measures taken by the federal government are increasingly harming our environment, and with the authorization of mining and deforestation, some native communities are crying out for help every day.

I, Myrian, support grassroots leaders in their struggles, and I know very well how difficult it is without support from the federal government and without being able to rely on support from local and municipal authorities. Our greatest challenge today is the fight against the measures taken by this government, to keep our forest standing, ensure its biodiversity, and preserve or reclaim our culture.

In our ancient culture, we indigenous peoples lived as extractivists, meaning we extracted our food from the forest; we survived solely on what the forest provided. Nowadays, this is very complicated; the forest can no longer provide us with what we need for survival. With the arrival of Western (non-indigenous) agriculture, we adapted another way of cultivating the soil, where we learned the new system of slash-and-burn farming. Over time, we realized that this system is not good for our forest. If the forest is not well, our people are also not well. We realized that without the forest standing, our planet begins to get warmer, the soil becomes harder and unsuitable for cultivation, and the animals start to disappear, fish become smaller and smaller.

I, Myrian, *Tikuna* woman, mother, and the journey to Agronomy

I was studying medicine in Cuba; I was on maternity leave with my first child, Leo Yordan, and I returned to my community in 2011. When I arrived in the community, I noticed the difference; the quality of the river and stream water was not as it used to be, and the population consumed much pharmacological medicine instead of forest herbs. The soil for

growing plants had changed a lot, and I could see that most of the people's diseases were caused by industrialized food (cardiovascular diseases, high cholesterol, diabetes, etc.). With the entry of industrialized foods, I also noticed an increase in solid waste accumulation in the communities, which is very worrying.

At this worrying moment, Father Paulo Xavier and my friend Silene Kunrath, originally from Rio Grande do Sul and, at that time, a family nurse (PSF) in the municipality of Benjamin Constant (AM), had already been working with indigenous families in the communities. Previously, Silene had worked for FUNASA/CGTT and was well acquainted with the difficulties faced by my people and our challenges. It was then that they introduced me to Mr. Adán Martínez, director of the *Fundación Camino de Identidad* (FUCAI), from Colombia.

From there, my journey began; I entered the sustainable agroforestry systems (SAFs) field and took advantage of all the information provided by FUCAI. A foundation that works in five areas in indigenous communities in Colombia (environmental education, early childhood education, literacy, food sovereignty, health, community government, autonomy, and family and community planning).

I started as a volunteer interpreter (Spanish to Portuguese and Portuguese to *Tikuna*), which was a very good and knowledge-rich experience. After six months, I began training as a field technician at FUCAI. Six months were dedicated to training in the areas of family planning, environmental education (sustainable agricultural practices, such as slash-and-burn-free farming), and food sovereignty (with an emphasis on traditional cuisine).

FUCAI brought back in me the will to fight for the rights of my people, empowered me to protect my forest, and taught me the path I must take to achieve my goal. It supported and empowered me as a woman and prepared me to be a leader in the future. Thus, I drifted away from medicine and could no longer see myself as a doctor but rather as a farmer and agronomist. Today, I feel empowered, and everything I learned in this foundation has served me well in my decision-making.

For five years, I worked in indigenous communities, implementing sustainable agriculture techniques such as slash-and-burn-free farming and promoting environmental awareness among farming families. This work was incredibly challenging due to my young age (2011 to 2015), and I faced frequent criticism from some indigenous men. Additionally, my reliance on a Colombian agronomist to solve certain problems in the fields made the situation even more complex, as I was committed to seeing my work through to the end.

It was in this context that I met Mrs. Ruth Chaparro, then vice-director of FUCAI, who encouraged and empowered me to become a leader, providing the necessary support for me to continue my work in the field. It was during this period that I developed a passion for agriculture.

Soon after, I met Mr. Rodrigo Garcia, an Agronomist Engineer and Director of *Fundación Cosmopolitana*, in Meta, Colombia, who invited me to a workshop. There, I met various agronomists and experts in SAFs, who also worked in indigenous areas, and that's when I made the decision. It was funny because, in a conversation with Mr. Rodrigo Garcia, he asked me what my dream was. And I replied as follows: to marry an agronomist or to graduate in agronomy to fulfill my dream! He looked back at me and said: Very well, then! Go and fly far with your dream, and I'm sure you'll be a very good professional in whatever area you choose. You're very intelligent, and I'm sure you'll succeed. And those words gave me more strength; he didn't doubt me, he gave me strength, and I flew.

At the workshop in *Cosmopolitana*, in *Villavicencio*, I was able to see the other indigenous people that FUCAI works with in Colombia. FUCAI operates like a web, a star, from one end to the other throughout Colombia, wherever there are indigenous people, it goes. So, I was very inspired and excited about FUCAI and really wanted to create a similar institution here in Brazil. Upon returning, I felt uncertain about how to approach Silene and whether my idea would be well-received by anyone. I decided to visit nurse Silene at her home, thinking: "I'll talk to Silene to see if she has any ideas and if she might like my idea."

When I arrived here at Silene's, in her kitchen, I was by the window, she was sitting having a coffee, then I said: "Silene, you know what came to my mind, I would like FUCAI to operate here in Brazil, do you think we could create a FUCAI here in Brazil?". That's how it was, I really wanted it, it was my inspiration, I really wanted to create a FUCAI here in Brazil, one that would truly dedicate itself to working with these areas: education, health, agriculture, the environment, including everything, literacy, children, that was my ideology. Working with all areas of knowledge, empowerment, family and community planning, and total autonomy for indigenous areas.

When I started talking to Silene, she said, "Of course! Let's do it! Let's help, let's talk to someone." The first person that came to our minds to assemble the team was Dr. Daisy, a Peruvian doctor who was a naturalized Brazilian for the health department. We talked to her, and she accepted our request and our idea. She was also happy.

The second person we approached was Friar Paulo Xavier, from the Benjamin Constant Main Church, to request his support and collaboration. Since the FUCAI initiative started with him and then came to me, he showed great interest in supporting and helping, which made me very happy.

We were already organizing everything and about to put the plans into action when I received the news that I had been accepted at UFSCar (Federal University of São Carlos). With only one month before the trip, I needed to find someone to replace me. At the time, I was already working with Gilton Ayanbu's family from Guanabara 3, and Elazete. There was no better person, at that point, to take my place.

So Mr. Ádan, director of FUCAI at the time, asked me to recommend one of the farmers who I thought could translate from Spanish to Portuguese and Portuguese to *Tikuna*. The recommendation was made for Gilton and Elazete, with her responsible for translating from Portuguese to *Tikuna* and him from Spanish. Additionally, Gilton was already quite advanced in the work with slash-and-burn-free farming. There was no better person to take my place, so I suggested that he continue with the work.

I said to him, "Please, Gilton, I have a dream to fulfill, before I go there, I need you to look for Silene." He didn't know Silene at the time, so I introduced him to her and explained that the responsibility was now with him. I kindly asked him to assist her, and that's how Silene also got involved with FUCAI, being hired as a promoter.

Due to Silene's interest in native food cuisine, she took on the role of nutritionist and nurse at ACAAM (Association Paths of Abundance in the Amazon), as part of FUCAI's initiative in Brazil. Even from a distance, I guided Gilton to remind Silene of the importance of establishing an organization similar to FUCAI from Colombia to work in Brazil. Gilton talked to Silene and restarted the mobilization, resulting in the creation of ACAAM. The process of appointing ACAAM was significant. Although it is already established, ACAAM needs continuous support to progress. We are here to make it happen, God willing.

Myrian, Tikuna woman, mother, and Agronomy student

I returned from the Live Lesson, it was June 2015, and registration for the indigenous entrance exam at UFSCar was open. Without thinking twice, I registered and took the exam. In February 2016, I received the news through my sister Micléia P. Vasques. She sent me several

messages, but I was in *ajuri*⁵ in the *Tikuna* Guanabara 3 indigenous community, where the internet doesn't work. When I returned from the slash-and-burn-free *ajuri*, still by the river, where I could get a little cell signal, I received about ten messages from my sister! And I hurried back to complete the online enrollment.

After that, I began preparing for the trip, rushed to get the tickets, and thanks to God, through FUCAI, I met Father Valério Sartor, a Jesuit who lived in Letícia and supported FUCAI's work in indigenous areas of Brazil and Colombia. It was he who got my ticket and the ticket for my cousin Kelly. Today I am very grateful to this priest, may God bless him wherever he is.

However, since then, I knew that my journey would not be easy, aware that I was entering a distinct universe where women often feel undervalued. Nonetheless, I decided to take the risk and move forward. Upon arriving in São Paulo, I was greeted by some college colleagues at Guarulhos International Airport, who escorted me to the Lagoa do Sino campus (UFScar). During the journey from São Paulo's capital to the university town in Campina do Monte Alegre (CMA), I encountered numerous farms and monocultures, which left me quite concerned. At each passage from one farm to another, initially, I did not see fruits or native forests, which caused me apprehension. It seemed more like a desert! I thought, "How am I going to survive here just eating sugarcane, soybeans, and oranges? Where are the other animals? And where are the other fruits?"

It was a long journey that lasted four hours. When I arrived in CMA, I felt more at ease because the people in this small town, with a population of seven thousand inhabitants, were very receptive and affectionate and treated us very well. Inside the town, I made several friendships and also met various other indigenous people from different places and beginners in the university career, like me. It was perfect to exchange knowledge from my culture with the culture of other people; it was exciting and a great learning experience.

I learned that other people's challenges and daily struggles were not distant from the struggles and challenges of my people. They were very similar, and some were even worse than those of my people. Their culture and customs were very different from those of my people, and sometimes, this also made coexistence within the university dormitory not work as well as

⁵ Joint effort is community work in which families come together to support another family or the community, usually for planting, harvesting, making flour, building, cleaning, or renovating common spaces.

we had hoped. But it is through dialogue that we resolve and through dialogue that we understand each other to succeed.

When the academic classes began, I met several people. My class had only two indigenous students: one *Kambeba* indigenous student (male) and myself, *Tikuna*. Non-indigenous students occupied 98% of the class. It was tough to go against the norms because the majority had always been from the non-indigenous class. Thus began the academic journey; I always participated and was helpful in the classroom. Nevertheless, as indigenous people, we often lagged behind.

The non-indigenous students did not like to interact much with us indigenous students, which left us behind. My colleague (*Kambeba*) and I had never attended preparatory courses before entering university. We had the opportunity to pass the indigenous entrance exam, but the non-indigenous students demanded more knowledge from us, and if you don't try hard enough, you end up without friends and without a group (excluded), and that makes us very uncomfortable within the class.

Not to mention that some professors either lack sympathy or do not want us in the college, and they end up not doing anything, which leaves us in the same situation or, sometimes, worsens it. Often, you have to pretend you didn't hear to avoid listening to the nonsense they say about your people. But life goes on, I would say to my colleague.

Soon, we began to have the freedom to speak about our people within the college. These opportunities were given to us during *Porteiras Abertas*⁶. Professor Fabiana and others, whose names I now don't remember (apologies), conducted a survey through a questionnaire distributed to everyone. There was a question: "What is your suggestion for our next *Porteiras Abertas*?" I took advantage of this and wrote a small project to include the visibility of the cultural heritage of each indigenous person present on campus. We won the space, and my demand was accepted. Thus, we were able to show that on this campus, there were more than eight indigenous peoples with different cultures and customs.

Despite all this, the longing was intense and constant, for our parents and for my son, the food we enjoyed here is different from there, etc. Only after seven months was I able to bring my son and my boyfriend, now husband, Y.F.S.P (from São Tomé and Príncipe), and only then could my heart have a bit of peace. Soon, I became a mother, wife, and, at the same

⁶ "Lagoa do Sino de *Porteiras Abertas*" project. Available at: https://www.saci.ufscar.br/servico_release?id=114284&pro=3.

time, a university student. It wasn't easy, especially with my husband unemployed, but we survived, reinvented ourselves, and managed to stay there for five years.

Almost at the end of the year, we decided to have our other child, Alê Kírik (Wise King). At first, I thought it would be easy, but it wasn't. I had to drop out of college and fend for ourselves to survive, but Lagoa do Sino has a team that I am very proud of, never letting us lack anything during my maternity leave, support we always had, and I will always be grateful for, within the Lagoa do Sino campus there is humanity and we will never forget that, just gratitude indeed.

Myrian, *Tikuna* woman, mother of two, agronomy student, and the pandemic

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and everything came to a halt! At the end of August 2020, we decided to spend the pandemic close to family. Mainly because we were afraid and suffering for relatives whom we had not had the opportunity to say goodbye to; it was too much pain being far from home. Every day we received bad news, and I felt very bad and fell into depression, and just wanted to see my mother and father.

That's why I decided to talk to my friend Silene Kunrath and other friends, who helped us with the expenses of our trips, and it worked. Upon arriving in the village, we went into quarantine, and everything was fine; we arrived without COVID-19. We only caught COVID-19 in the middle of the second wave. My children, my husband, and I had COVID-19, but with the help of the vaccine and the traditional medicine herbs of my people, we managed to heal, and today, we continue here, close to my parents, strong and firm.

But the problem wasn't just the disease that affected us. Here, in the villages, or rather, in our state of Amazonas, the lack of internet network greatly affects everyone, and as academics, it worsens our situation. Our biggest challenge as students, being from Amazonas, is the lack of internet. And the reality of indigenous students is very different from non-indigenous students.

In order to attend remote classes, it costs me and other students who have returned to their villages. Every day, they will have to travel from their town to the city, spending time on transportation back and forth and thus accessing some academic subjects. And if it rains on the day, the trip is lost, and often we have to walk back home. Unfortunately, our situation will never be the same as that of non-indigenous people, who always live in large and well-structured cities.

The academia that I, Myrian, *Tikuna* woman and mother, dream of

Regarding which academia I want, I think that every university or public high school, but mainly universities, to receive indigenous students, the University itself, the professors, the *Prograd*⁷, and the Rector's Office, must be trained first. Training should be done with some indigenous professors, understanding the reality or studying each person. Remember that the treatment that each University should have for each student should be in accordance with their culture, their roots, and their identity.

Because universities, in general, treat us indigenous people as if we were from the same cultures. They generalize our culture; I am from the *Tikuna* people, and my culture is totally different; my customs, my language, my way of thinking, of solving things, and of fighting for our rights are different. It is different from the *Kokama* people; it is different from other ethnicities. So, each indigenous person, each person, has their own culture. The University should prepare for this to better understand each student entering this academic field; in my opinion, I think this is what is lacking in receiving indigenous students and meeting our needs.

In terms of food, there are universities that offer us lunch and coffee. That is not just oatmeal; that has bananas and grilled fish as well. That never happened, and it's very sad. I, personally, don't eat salt, and if I eat salt, it's very little; I don't eat sugar, so everything has sugar or is very salty; these things bother me a lot in the university restaurant. This sometimes made me sad at first, but as time went by and I adapted, I started eating sugar and salt. I think that it's necessary to have indigenous cuisine at least once to please us a little and think about us a little. Make the cuisine of each people. One day, the cuisine of one person; another day, the cuisine of another person, that would be very nice at a university. And not just for us, it would be for non-indigenous people to get to know us, to know our cuisine, to see the diversity of the people, the diversity that Brazil has.

Brazil is a very beautiful country, it's just not attractive because of prejudice, because of racism, because of belittling, because you are indigenous, because you are black, because of that. If we truly became human, if non-indigenous people joined us, Brazil would be the best country in the world. That's my opinion, that's what should be in the University, in every

⁷ Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

University, to receive us. It would be a differentiated reception, a different way of treating each person.

The University should train to do this. And do the Open Gates, as we implemented in Lagoa do Sino, where I am working, at Lagoa do Sino campus, at the Federal University of São Carlos, where we also managed. We claimed space at Open Gates, in the scientific journey, we have the Day of the Indians, which today is the Day of Indigenous Peoples, we managed to have these spaces, I think all universities should have this, for each person to present their graphics, their culture, their language, this is very good.

As a mother in the University, I would like to have a space just for indigenous mothers, that is not mixed with non-indigenous people. Not in the sense of not wanting to live and not wanting to know the culture of the non-indigenous, it's not that. Anyone who is a mother knows, and often, we indigenous mothers, we prefer our space to be freer, with our children, to have a little yard for us to start teaching our children, from an early age, to plant, to take care of plants. A little place for them to do their art, indigenous children really like to draw, that's our thing. I've seen other children from indigenous peoples who also like to draw. To have a small hut, something different or a room, just for the indigenous mother who has children.

In São Carlos, the university offers daycare, but it's not differentiated, it's daycare with everyone, with everyone's children. More importantly, universities should offer for mothers, not only for indigenous mothers, no, it would be for all student mothers because I think there's no difference; a mother is a mother; I think every university should think about that. Do not judge, because when you enter the university, you're already coming with children, and you know you can't study, and this can happen, because I've also heard reports from other mothers. But, thank God, I didn't go through that. My husband went there and took care of mine, my son Leo Yordan, and then another boy came, my son *Alê Kirik*. My husband helped me take care of them, so I could continue with my college, I can still count on my husband today. So I think that's what is needed: a daycare where we can leave the children while we are at school, so we can be calmer and ensure that everything is fine.

The subjects I had the most difficulty with were the exact sciences, which complicated my life in my first year, I couldn't understand, there were too many formulas for me. First of all, I studied my childhood until adolescence life in the community; I only came to the city to finish high school because, at the time, there was no high school in the community. So, in a community where education is very low, unfortunately, this has not changed yet. I see a lot of

difficulty for children, here in the villages, to compete with those who always had support from their parents, who always attended private schools or who always had internet, to be able to study and research and seek help virtually as well. I didn't have that, so I went to university, and I think there should be at least the first month or a month of preparation before classes start, I think there should be some preparatory course.

I still have many doubts, have many difficulties, in mathematics, physics, and chemistry. That made me very upset, and I'm still dragging. I'm taking some subjects from my second year. So I think this initial preparatory should start before the college, the course classes start. Students (indigenous) should arrive earlier. If classes begin in March, students should be there by February 1st or the end of January, to take this preparatory course throughout February.

Let it be this basic preparatory, so that when other students enter, the indigenous students are already there, to be equal, at least, to level with those who are arriving. So an introductory leveling course in mathematics, mainly mathematics and chemistry, would help a lot, really. Of course, some indigenous people also need help in Portuguese, I do, but to speak in front of people, to learn to stand out, learn to loosen up, when it comes to presentation, not to be ashamed, to empower them. I think that should help a lot, a course before starting classes, I think that's what's missing.

Study Conditions

Study and research conditions are very difficult indeed. Being in the villages, I think classes should be via WhatsApp, which, even with little internet access, is possible. I think the university should provide students with the SIM card (provided during the pandemic period) until they finish college. Because it is very complicated for the student to leave the university without a laboratory, arrive at their residence, and not have internet access. For example, there at Lagoa do Sino, I didn't live in the university dormitory because it was under construction. As I lived alone, only after I managed to put another family in my house could we share everything, internet, and other things, to split the monthly cost. So, I think the university should offer internet to students, especially indigenous, black, *quilombolas*, and low-income people, who cannot afford to put internet in their homes.

Although the Ministry of Education pays us R\$ 900.00 (as a permanent scholarship, adjusted to R\$ 1,400.00 in 2023), often, it is not enough, especially for mothers like me, whose husbands are unemployed; it is quite complicated. Many times, people think that the

permanence scholarship is a lot, but in reality, it is not when the person is not living in university housing and has to cover the water, electricity, and food bills. So, I believe providing a SIM card for each indigenous student would greatly solve this issue of research and study.

University Structure

My college is new, it has only been structured for 10 years. It is a college created during President Lula's government, on the farm donated by (writer) Raduan Nassar. He is an environmentalist and preserved the native forests on the farm. So, my university has a very beautiful preserved area around it. It's a place I love dearly. The other part is the farm, where we do our practices, our plantations. In the Program part, the reception people, the directors, the university administration, the pedagogical support, and the health department of the college are very welcoming. I love them; they have been very good to me, my husband, my family, and my children, and they practically took care of us.

During the pandemic, too, although we couldn't receive visitors, they never failed to call to ask if everything was okay at home and if we needed any help. They brought food so we wouldn't have to leave the house. So, really, I have nothing to complain about Lagoa do Sino regarding the people at the forefront of the administration. Truly, I am very blessed, and may God bless these people who always lead, these people who have always welcomed me there, and also the city of Campina do Monte Alegre, a university town where I rented the house to stay with my family, they have always been very welcoming. So, they are a very dear people.

Homesickness and Well-being at University

I only missed the plants from here in the Amazon. The fruits from here. Now that they have started planting the juçara palm tree. At the time we started, there wasn't any. But later, I think about a year after I arrived, they started this juçara plantation project. I missed having açaí, eating heart of palm, eating plantains. There weren't any there; they were only regular bananas, and it was always regular bananas. I had to ask a Haitian friend who grew plantains, and he would send them to me by bus. But that was very rare, maybe once every 6 months. So, I suffered from the lack of plantains and fish. I longed to eat fish; I had to buy tilapia, only tilapia was available. Sometimes, when I went to a friend's farm near the Itapetininga River,

then we would fish there at his farm. We would catch catfish, just to satisfy our longing. And it's hard to find armored catfish (*bodó*).

There, they only had armored catfish from aquariums. I would say: "Wow, grilled armored *bodó* is good." And people would look at me as if I were crazy. They called it catfish. Around the college, on campus, and at the farm, there was also a lack of plant diversity. The flour was not tapioca, and there was no cassava cake. I think every university that hosts students from outside should have indigenous, *quilombola*, and international cuisine. It would be a truly diversified university. This would help end racism and prejudice, starting with the teachers, training the teachers to treat indigenous students differently, for real.

There is a way to better receive and welcome indigenous students

I have visited São Carlos, Sorocaba, Araras, Unicamp, UnB, UFAM, UEA in Manaus, UFSC in Santa Catarina. I haven't seen any other university like the Lagoa do Sino campus. I think what is really missing at Lagoa do Sino is differentiated treatment for indigenous peoples and improved cuisine. Otherwise, they are very good; they always treat us well.

However, we suffer because there are professors who heavily rely on this old method. If you enter university, it's because you already know that you are the best. Because you entered a federal university, you already know everything. In reality, they cannot compare us to those who are not indigenous, mainly because we did not have the same preparation as they did. When they entered, their parents paid for preparatory courses for the entrance exams, and we did not have that opportunity. We entered the way we finished high school. This greatly harms us; if we had preparation before going to class, or even here in the villages, if there were a teacher willing to provide preparation, especially in the areas of Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics, these areas are challenging. For me, these subjects often leave me behind.

Every university should create advanced preparation; students, especially indigenous ones, should arrive a month before classes to have this preparation. At Lagoa do Sino, we have tutoring, but it starts along with the classes, which is disruptive because there are so many subjects that we don't have time to attend tutoring. For example, my classes start at 7 a.m., and I get home at 6 p.m. I already have to go to tutoring at 7 p.m., it's two hours of tutoring, and I get home exhausted. Tutoring is held 2 to 3 times a week, and we end up not being able to participate in all of them. Of course, tutoring should be available throughout the year. But if we had preparation before classes started, it would make it much easier for us, especially for the

most challenging subjects. So, the university must prepare to receive us. I still believe that this preparatory course is the only solution for us indigenous people, for those who will enter STEM courses.

Dreams and Future Perspectives as a Woman, Mother, *Tikuna*, and Agronomist

What I want most today is to specialize in the field of ecology and become an expert in environmental education to combat global warming. My biggest dream is to keep the forest standing, to become the true guardian of the forest, to keep my people healthy and ensure healthy, chemical-free food, and in this way, to be able to help our planet, which cries out for help every day. The future of my children depends on my actions today and on the decisions I make today, and that's why I do my part to leave a better world for them and all humanity. Gratitude! *Moe'intchimã!*

Dreaming of Other Academies

To contemplate freedom and foster equality, as part of our political commitment to social transformation, we, the authors, advocate for the importance of dialogue and diversity through feminism, interculturality (PONTES *et al.*, 2021), and intersectionality.

We are women who share a common struggle, stemming from our academic and maternal experiences, acknowledging the privileged position of the second and third authors, and intertwining our paths in this article to follow this journey. Recording and weaving words, because the conditions may differ, but the struggle is the same, as is the desire to change things and build the feminist movement (PONTES *et al.*, 2021) from the grassroots with class consciousness.

Our voices intertwine from within

I am Thelma, born in the Atlantic Forest, in the mountains of Minas, in Viçosa. I studied in public school during my basic education. My adolescence was in the periphery, in *Morro do Carecão*, in the Bom Jesus neighborhood. I graduated and pursued a master's degree at public institutions, studying Agronomy at UFV and Ecology at INPA. I am autistic and have ADHD, a mother of Eduardo Pjê (9 years old) and Flora Ayni (7 years old), and a feminist. Throughout

my life journey, I lived for 4 years with the indigenous peoples of *Alto Solimões* in the *Tikuna*, *Kokama*, and *Kambeba* territories.

I was a professor at the Institute of Nature and Culture (INC-UFAM), where I enriched my experiences with the knowledge shared by indigenous, riverside, and caboclo students in the Agrarian Sciences and Environment course. In 2016, we moved to the Cerrado, near the territories of the *Karajá*, *Krahô-kanela*, and *Krahô* indigenous peoples. In Gurupi, at the Federal University of Tocantins, I taught in the Agronomy program, and since I set foot in this territory, I felt a strong need to support indigenous and *quilombola* students in their daily struggles to maintain their way of life and stay within the university, in an environment hostile to women and mothers and marked by substantial prejudice against all forms of diversity.

I am Ana Claudia, born in the northwest of São Paulo state, where there is a lot of sugarcane and cattle. I always had a strong desire to walk in the forest, to know the names of the trees in the Atlantic Forest, in the *Cerradão*. My grandparents were all Northeastern migrants who went to São Paulo, fleeing poverty. I studied Biology at Unesp, always interested in plants, influenced by my parents and grandparents who were gardeners and farmers. I did my master's at UFRGS and my Ph.D. at UFMG, both in Botany. I am a taxonomist of angiosperms and have always worked with groups of Asteraceae. In Gurupi, Tocantins, I am a single mother to Raoni, a bright 5-year-old boy. At UFT, I am a professor of Plant Systematics in the Agronomy and Forest Engineering programs.

When I started teaching, I had a mindset, acquired throughout my academic training, that all students needed to excel at university. I was very frustrated when they did not meet my expectations. Over time, I became aware of the mental health issues faced by my students, such as depression, anxiety, and suicide. The *Gurupi* campus has the highest index of socioeconomic vulnerability at UFT, and like the exact sciences campus, it is quite exclusionary towards women, mothers, LGBTQIA+, indigenous, and *quilombola* individuals. So, I began to realize that it was essential to engage in dialogue rather than giving orders. To look into their eyes and ask what each one's difficulties were. This transformed me as a teacher, and I feel that I am evolving every day to be a partner (rather than a boss) in shaping my students' education, as citizens, and as professionals.

Motivated by the publication call and the data on rural women collected by Ana for a presentation at a discussion table on the insertion of female agronomists in the job market at UFT, we invited Myrian to collaborate in drafting this article. The collaboration was facilitated

by Myrian's internet access, enabling the use of platforms and virtual networks to send out generating questions, to which she responded through text and audio. The text revision was carried out jointly using digital documents. We shared our knowledge and daily experiences in this collaboration, recognizing ourselves as knowledge-generating subjects.

The questions addressed various areas, from the necessary changes in the university to accommodate indigenous students, taking into consideration the specificities and needs of each ethnicity, to Myrian's needs as a mother. We also discussed the challenges faced in teaching, research, and administrative processes, as well as issues related to the physical structure of the university and relationships with space and people. We sought to identify areas for improvement in both general and specific contexts, aiming to enhance the quality of life for indigenous students and mothers.

As academic women, this approach represented a way of being in affective company with each other, through a process of active listening, sistering our practice from a different epistemological stance, centering Myrian's words and writing in the discussion. Through this process, we sought to bring our worlds closer together, following principles that unite us, and continuing to learn to interweave voices without colonizing discourses, connecting knowledge from different places of enunciation, and transforming writing and the academic environment into a space of affection and care.

Dreaming of a truly inclusive academy

To begin weaving this dream, we bring a perspective from the *el bosque de niebla*, in Mexico, from the *Grupo de Investigación Acción Socio-ecológica (GIASE)*, where I, Thelma, participate and which is mainly formed by students of the Master's in Intercultural Education (MEIS) at the *Universidad Veracruzana*, originating from indigenous communities and various territories of *Abya Yala*. GIASE (2020) invites us to reflect on the academy we aspire to:

An academy that **values affective ties**, recognizing subjectivity from which we think and act, promoting the integral development of being and caring for the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of its community. We, as authors, feel the need to also consider and respect different worldviews and practices of spiritual well-being care, which integrate the way of life and well-living of traditional peoples.

A creative academy, where processes encourage attentive listening and open dialogue, based on inclusive languages and other pedagogies that transform educational practice.

Providing space for playfulness, for the construction of collaborative knowledge through the exercise of questioning, debate, criticism, respect, and listening.

An academy that redistributes power, grounded in collaboration and transdisciplinarity, values diversity and plurality, and promotes the circulation of power that influences freedom, justice, thought, and action, benefiting everyone.

Finally, **a reparative and transformative academy** assumes its social commitment, repairing historical processes of exclusion and oppression with epistemic justice. It also transforms physical spaces and social activities, stimulating the construction of decolonized and decolonizing transformative processes, both within and outside the university walls.

To consider the realization of this dream

Starting from the feminist thought that "the personal is political"⁸ and the line of thought of Peasant and Popular Feminism⁹, where what truly matters are the daily struggles of women and which, in addition to linking gender to class, invites us to value the knowledge and work of women from rural areas, forests, and waters. In the rich account that Myrian presents to us, we identify proposals to enrich the policy of affirmative action and provide visibility, inclusion, and support to indigenous mothers in public universities across the country.

In her previous experience in academia, Myrian recounts the importance of interacting with other women and various individuals from diverse organizations involved with the indigenous cause and struggle. These interactions provided support, encouragement, and empowerment throughout her journey and decision-making processes, which were crucial for her future and the realization of her dream of creating ACAAM. She also discusses the challenges of being an indigenous woman and an extensionist in communities, facing sexism and the devaluation of indigenous women's skills by men, reflecting the patriarchal norms that also affect power dynamics within indigenous communities.

During the transition from the Amazon to the interior of São Paulo, Myrian's experience of encountering a landscape degraded by monoculture is noteworthy. She also experienced feelings of vulnerability, insecurity, and concerns about food security. However, she highlights the warm and kind reception from the university community in the city.

⁸ Available at: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lo_personal_es_pol%C3%ADtico.

⁹ Available at: <https://viacampesina.org/es/feminismo-campesino-y-popular-una-propuesta-de-las-campesinas-para-el-mundo/>.

Myrian's account contributes to reflections on processes aiming for critical interculturality, emphasizing the need to modify social structures and deconstruct the hierarchy of knowledge (WALSH, 2009). According to De Souza Lima (2007), the inclusion of indigenous students requires a critical review and the development of curricular content, careers, and research areas. This presents an opportunity for the university to reassess its practices and structures based on diversity and ethnic richness, "recognizing the plurality of indigenous peoples and what they contribute to the plurality of Brazilian society" (DE SOUZA LIMA, 2007, p. 28, our translation).

A University that Values Affectionate Bonds

Myrian emphasizes the importance, within universities, of respecting diversities and the different cultural aspects expressed by each indigenous people. The significance of the encounter of these diverse peoples in this space is recognizing themselves from the standpoint of resistance and struggle. This requires managing conflicts in daily coexistence, both among indigenous peoples themselves and between indigenous and non-indigenous individuals, through the establishment of agreements for coexistence and respect for diversities.

The prejudice freely expressed by some professors not only hinders learning and interaction among students but also contributes to low self-esteem and the stigmatization of indigenous students. According to the Kaingang Master in Anthropology, Joziléia Deniza, "teachers need to prepare to receive indigenous research," which requires significant changes, including paradigm shifts, ranging from scientific methodology to the way research is communicated and in which language.

Myrian suggests, as a solution, the prior training of professionals who will directly interact with indigenous students on the different cultural aspects of each received people, by scientists specialized in indigenous cultures and by representatives of the indigenous peoples themselves.

When recognizing the specific needs of the students, the solidarity and institutional care that can be observed in the sensitivity of their actions can be strong allies in the process of eliminating all forms of violence suffered by indigenous women (BRITO, 2016).

A Creative University

Myrian emphasizes the importance of differentiated reception for students, respecting each culture, and the promotion of cultural exchange spaces, including graphics, language, dances, and cuisine, among indigenous and non-indigenous students, as a means of generating knowledge about the diversity of indigenous peoples. Brito (2016) suggests that institutional reflection on the experience of being a student, indigenous woman, and mother in the university requires an enhanced understanding and sharing spaces with the academic community about the reality of these students.

Furthermore, the construction of culturally oriented physical spaces for indigenous mothers and children is proposed, including malocas (traditional communal houses), ethnobotanical gardens, cultivation areas, and social spaces for indigenous families. Such environments would provide a place where, especially children, feel free to express their culture, also serving as pedagogical spaces for the exchange of knowledge.

A University that Redistributes Power

The promotion of unity and interaction among students from different indigenous peoples within universities, for claiming inclusive physical spaces and knowledge generation, and for improvements to existing ones.

Care for food sovereignty, respecting the rights of indigenous students to receive culturally oriented food based on their traditional cuisine.

A reparative and transformative university

However, the demand for the same capacities, without respecting the ontological and epistemological diversity, as well as the prior knowledge of indigenous students, contributes to making their integration with non-indigenous students difficult, leading to low interaction and even exclusion in academic activities. This distance was exacerbated during the pandemic, when emotional instability, lack of support, and limited internet access worsened inequalities. The methodologies adopted, such as online classes, failed to fill these gaps adequately.

There is a need for specific policies aimed at supporting women, mothers, indigenous people, pregnant women, and postpartum women in the university, generated from listening to the needs of each mother. The construction and maintenance of daycares for the children of

indigenous and non-indigenous students. In her dissertation, Brito (2016) also reports that among indigenous women students at UFRGS, there are many similarities, but also many differences, especially in how they relate and interact with the institution and with other ethnicities. This highlights the need to consider this plurality in the actions of permanence and administrative structuring of the strategic instances within the university (BRITO, 2016).

Myrian suggests the creation of a preparatory course in the months before the start of classes for leveling indigenous students. This includes the creation of a reinforcement program for exact sciences (mathematics, chemistry, and physics) and Portuguese.

To facilitate internet access, Myrian suggests that the policy of providing an access chip during the pandemic become a permanent policy for students from traditional and low-income communities. Myrian expresses the financial difficulty of having to support her family, her son, and her husband and of gestating another child with limited resources based solely on the monthly assistance received from the Ministry of Education.

In the study by Faustino *et al.* (2020), indigenous female students from Paraná point out the same challenges reported by Myrian: lack of support in courses and classrooms; insufficient financial resources; inadequate pedagogical support that did not consider ethnic and cultural specificities; rejections and prejudices; distance and time spent away from family and indigenous territories. In addition to the difficulty of balancing the numerous course activities with the activities of being an indigenous woman, participating in the struggles of their peoples, and managing household chores.

Final considerations

We, the authors, understand that to rebuild this territory-university, we need a process of deep listening from the various bodies that comprise it. Our writing comes from just one of these bodies, but its representativeness is such that it makes us believe it echoes the voices of many other "bodies." An indigenous woman, Myrian, originating from a resilient people, the *Tikuna* people, who possess immeasurable knowledge about inhabiting the planet in a complex biome, such as the Amazon. From this place, she transitions to a state that occupies our Brazilian imagination in a very symbolic way, São Paulo, and enters a public university, taking with her a dream, her son, and her husband. And, in this new territory: gestate another child, live through a pandemic, and study agronomy.

From Myrian's account and establishing a parallel with the GIASE article, which urges us to think of a creative academy, valuing affections, redistributing power, and seeking to be reparative and transformative through other pedagogies, transdisciplinarity, and dialogue of knowledge, we identify that to build these new academies, it becomes necessary:

1. Respect for diversity through conflict management, mutual respect agreements, inclusive actions, prejudice combat, and training for all professionals.
2. Create permanent spaces for knowledge and cultural exchange between indigenous and non-indigenous students, and build culturally appropriate physical spaces for the housing, coexistence, and welcoming of indigenous mothers and children.
3. Facilitate political spaces for integration among indigenous students to manage and discuss common issues. Respect basic rights such as access to culturally appropriate food.
4. Implement specific support policies for indigenous student mothers and pregnant and postpartum women, valuing their knowledge, prioritizing access to daycare for indigenous children, either within the university or in the same neighborhood, and providing free and permanent internet access.
5. Establish a preparatory course to level indigenous students before the start of each semester and a specific reinforcement program in mathematics, science, and Portuguese.

Recognizing the centrality of this writing and feeling process in the body-territory-land of an indigenous mother is to understand that the path of intercultural construction of other relationships, other worlds, and other academies starts from the need to create caring relationships, governed by affection, reciprocity, and respect for diversity.

We need to facilitate processes for women like Myrian to enroll, stay, and complete undergraduate courses so they can increasingly gain space, especially politically, visibility, and rights, both within and outside their communities, thus contributing to the transformation of the patriarchal, colonial, and androcentric structures that still pervade these environments.

This also involves listening to and understanding these specific contexts from their potentialities and challenges they present. Indigenous motherhood is an invitation for the university to welcome and promote the well-being of mothers as students and important integral parts of the community, rights holders, occupying this space that democratically belongs to everyone.

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