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The context of the right to indigenous and intercultural education for the *Yoreme Mayo* people of the state of Sinaloa, Mexico

El contexto del derecho a la educación indígena e intercultural para el grupo étnico *Yoreme Mayo* en el estado de Sinaloa

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Abstract

This article subscribes to the thematic axis of the human right to indigenous and intercultural education; in this context, Williamson (2004, p. 25) points out that indigenous education is an educational model for the indigenous and by the indigenous and is not institutionally assumed, while intercultural education is developed by the State as a system to prepare indigenous students to navigate adequately both in their society of origin and in the global society (Williamson, 2004 p. 25). In this study, it is stated that children from the *Yoreme Mayo* indigenous people do not have access to their right to education.

As a general objective, an analysis was proposed on the conditions faced by *Yoreme Mayo* children in basic education schools to enjoy their right to education.

As a hypothesis, it was stated that the distances between the students' homes and the schools are the main obstacle to accessing education. It was found that *Yoreme Mayo* children face other problems that become obstacles to their education, such as absenteeism, alcoholism, violence, and in recent years, cases of drug addiction. Additionally, there are few secondary schools, so *Yoreme Mayo* children have to travel long distances. Regarding the research methods and techniques, the study was conducted following descriptive and reflective approaches and was developed from a multi-method perspective. The research techniques employed were observation and semi-structured interviews with a cluster research strategy.

Keywords: Indigenous education, *Yoreme-Mayo.*

Resumen

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Este artículo se suscribe al eje temático del derecho humano a la educación indígena e intercultural; en este contexto, Williamson (2004, p. 25) señala que la educación indígena es un modelo educativo para los indígenas y por los indígenas y no se asume institucionalmente, mientras que la educación intercultural se desarrolla desde el Estado como un sistema para preparar a los estudiantes indígenas para navegar adecuadamente tanto en su sociedad de origen como en la sociedad global (Williamson, 2004 p. 25).

En este estudio se afirma que niños del pueblo indígena *Yoreme Mayo* no tienen acceso a su derecho a la educación.

Como objetivo general, se propuso un análisis sobre las condiciones que enfrentan los niños *Yoreme Mayo* en las escuelas de educación básica para disfrutar de su derecho a la educación.

Como hipótesis se afirmó que las distancias entre las casas de los estudiantes y las escuelas son el principal obstáculo para acceder a la educación. Se encontró que los niños *Yoreme Mayo* enfrentan otros problemas que se convierten en obstáculos para su educación, como el ausentismo, el alcoholismo, la violencia, y en los últimos años, casos de adicción a las drogas. Además, hay pocas escuelas secundarias, por lo que los niños *Yoreme Mayo* tienen que viajar largas distancias. En cuanto a los métodos y técnicas de investigación, el estudio se realizó siguiendo enfoques descriptivos y reflexivos y se desarrolló desde una perspectiva multimétodo. Las técnicas de investigación empleadas fueron la observación y entrevistas semiestructuradas con una estrategia de investigación en clúster.

Palabras clave: Educación indígena, *Yoreme mayo.*

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INTRODUCTION

For over twenty years, we have been in contact with members of the *Yoreme Mayo* indigenous people living in northern Sinaloa and southern Sonora states in Mexico.

Visiting the *Yoreme Mayo* in their communities has provided firsthand knowledge of the problems they face. Several of these problems have been described, documented, and analyzed in research on the human right to education and indigenous education, such as Ramírez (2022) and the right to housing (Ramírez and Acuña 2025), among others.

These investigations have documented the structural violence (Galtung cited by Sandoval, 2006) suffered by members of the *Yoreme Mayo* indigenous people, but above all, they have documented that the Mexican government is unaware of the problems facing this demographic group. Among the reasons being that the government, to date, has not developed a plan containing concrete actions and guarantees so that indigenous peoples' human rights can be respected, after all, these rights are enshrined in the Constitution of the United Mexican States, and adopted by national legislation as well as international treaties.

For this analysis, the term "guarantee" is understood as defined by Burgoa (2005), for whom the word comes from the anglo-saxon term

"warranty" or "warantie", which means the action of securing, protecting, defending, or safeguarding. Therefore, it has an overly broad connotation, that is, it is something that protects the main thing, according to Padilla (2000).

Furthermore, Fix-Zamudio (Carbonell, 2006) points out that the concept of a guarantee cannot be equivalent to that of a right, since a guarantee is the means, as its name indicates, to assure something, make it effective, or return it to its original state if it has been distorted, violated, or disrespected. In the modern sense, a constitutional guarantee aims to repair violations of fundamental principles, values, or provisions.

For his part, the Italian researcher Ferrajoli (Carbonell, 2006) points out that "guarantee is an expression in the legal lexicon used to designate any normative technique for protecting a subjective right" (pp. 6-7).

For the conceptualization of the research conducted, it was important to define the concept of human rights, which Pérez (2004) describes as a set of powers and institutions that, at each historical moment, embody the demands of human dignity, freedom, and equality, which must be positively recognized by national and international legal systems.

Regarding the human right to education, Juárez et al. (2010), affirm that every citizen, every boy and girl, has the right to be educated, instructed, and accepted in public schools, without social, religious, racial, or physical distinctions. In order to fulfill the universal right to education, special education schools were created. This opinion is reaffirmed by Bolívar (2010), who refers to a broader vision of this right: if the specific needs of the most vulnerable sectors are to be addressed, he refers us to concepts such as positive discrimination, that is, facilitating differential treatment based on the premise that we live in a world of unequals.

The historical context of education for Mexico's indigenous population

In the 1940s, Indigenous people were recognized in the Mexican Federal Constitution as social beings (Martínez, 2015). Thus, efforts were made to assimilate them into Mexican culture.

By 1948, with the goal of "assimilating Indigenous people", the Mexican government began training bilingual educators to achieve a successful indigenous language education, but education remained dominated by the national culture (Martínez, 2015).

The Mexican government implemented a series of actions and public policies regarding indigenous peoples to address the historical and systematic discrimination they had suffered. This reflects the government's

failures and inadequacies to generate guarantees and mechanisms for the protection of their rights within an appropriate legal system (Olivos, 2023). Another action implemented by the Mexican government is the exclusion that was and continues to be conducted with the intention of integrating indigenous peoples into the nation (Rosas, 2007).

Assimilation policies, which according to Rouland et al., (1999) entails another danger for indigenous peoples insofar as the rights recognized for them are essentially individual rights. Acculturation, unlike education, is the primary form of change, as this process determines the transition from a lower social category to a higher status (De la Fuente, 1964).

But the most aggressive of the policies implemented by the Mexican government is that of extermination, which, according to Barié (2000), is promoted by the new political class of the independent Spanish-American states, which tends to see indigenous congregations as just another legacy of the odious Spanish colonial regime. That policy that exterminated them was murder (Olivos, 2023).

The Yoreme-Mayo

The *Yoreme Mayo* are an ancient indigenous people whose territory they currently inhabit is located in northwestern Mexico (Aguilar, 1995), stretching from the municipality of Angostura in the state of Sinaloa to the municipality of Navojoa in the neighboring state of Sonora (Merril et al., 2012).

This political division has separated them. The national government promotes their division by distinguishing between the *Yoreme Mayo* of the state of Sinaloa and the *Yoreme Mayo* of the state of Sonora, when in reality they are a single people.

In the state of Sinaloa, the communities in which the *Yoreme Mayo* live are distributed mainly in the municipalities of El Fuerte, Choix, Guasave, Sinaloa de Leyva, and Ahome, while in the state of Sonora, they occupy the municipalities of Álamos, Quiriego, Navojoa, Etchojoa, and Huatabampo. The *Yoreme Mayo* live primarily in their communities, which are distributed around the current ceremonial centers (Aguilar 1995).

According to the group's oral tradition, the word "*Mayo*" means "people of the riverbank" (Guerra et al., 2018). The *Yoreme Mayo* primarily maintain the cultural heritage of the so-called *Cahitas* (Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples CDI, 2009). The *Cahitas* or *Cáita* (there is none, I do not have) were ancient people who inhabited the northwest of Mexico (López Aceves, 2007). The *Yoreme Mayo*'s oral tradition indicates that when a Spanish conqueror arrived at

one of their villages and asked for food or water, the indigenous people, perhaps because they did not understand Spanish or perhaps out of anger or contempt, would answer *Cáita.*

RESEARCH METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The general objective of the research was to analyze the conditions faced by *Yoreme Mayo* children and youth in elementary schools to enjoy their right to education, in particular to Indigenous and intercultural education.

The specific objectives proposed were, I. To describe the *Yoreme Mayo* indigenous people; II. To determine the distances between *Yoreme Mayo* homes and secondary schools; III. To verify the cost of public transportation in northern Sinaloa; IV. To determine whether *Yoreme Mayo* children and youth have access to transportation to secondary schools, V. To determine whether secondary education programs include Indigenous and intercultural education content.

It was hypothesized that geographic distance between *Yoreme Mayo* homes and schools has a direct impact on these children's education. Therefore, the theoretical approach focuses on what Rawls (1971) pointed out, in that the inequalities that arise in society are especially profound and not merely omnipresent. In this sense, he considered that they do affect people's initial opportunities in life, but that they can nevertheless be justified by appealing to notions of merit or demerit. Thus, for him, it is in these facts that these inequalities in the basic structure of any society are based, which are probably inevitable, and to which the principles of social justice should be applied in the first instance.

This report is descriptive and reflective in nature and was prepared from a multi-method perspective, supported by Llewelyn's school of legal realism thought (Moreno, 2000). A second approach used the historical method which involves the analysis of testimonies, documents, and objects, analyzing the past and characterizing specific eras (Lara, 2005). A third method was a descriptive one which identifies the characteristics of the phenomenon under study and presents the facts as observed (Rodríguez, 1999).

The legal method was used because it is a set of scientific rules suitable for identifying, interpreting, and understanding the vast field of law (Lara, 2005); the deductive method was used put forward by William Whewel (Moreno, 2000), who holds that in deduction we infer particular truths from general truths; and the analytical method was used in the manner of the scholastic school of Saint Thomas, which stated that the investigation of

the necessary assumptions of legal reality represents an inductive path (Preciado, 2008).

The research techniques used included observation and interviews with elementary and secondary school teachers, public officials from the indigenous education system, municipal officials, parents, and, through them, with indigenous youth and children.

In many areas of Mexico, but particularly in the state of Sinaloa, a climate of insecurity and violence caused by organized crime and criminal cartels prevails. In recent months, insecurity has increased due to the war waged by various factions of the Sinaloa cartel. Therefore, the researchers implemented a cluster research strategy, taking advantage of visits to various towns and communities to document and gather information on various issues.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to information provided by Mario Galaviz Valenzuela, head of the Department of Indigenous Education in northern Sinaloa, there are 37 primary schools for indigenous people in the state of Sinaloa. Galaviz (2025) reported that, for his administration, indigenous education schools are grouped by school zones.

It was reported that in the state of Sinaloa, the position of head of the indigenous education department is granted by the Secretary of Public Education and Culture of the state, so the duration of this position has no start or end dates.

Table 1.

Areas of primary school centers in the municipalities of northern Sinaloa, 2025.

Areas:	101	102	103
Teachers:	45	56	58
Students:	631	695	927

Note: Calculated from Galaviz (2025).

Table 2.

Zone 101 of the schools in primary education in the municipalities of northern Sinaloa, 2025.

Municipality	Locality	Name of the school	Number of teachers

Choix	La Culebra.	Amado Nervo	6
Sinaloa	La Bayas.	Primaria indígena	1
Sinaloa	El Cochi	Primaria indígena	1
El Fuerte	Vivajaqui	Alejandro Yuqui Valenzuela	3
El Fuerte	El Naranjo	Juan Ángel Laurean Valenzuela.	5
El Fuerte	La Misión (vieja)	Ambrosio Urías Baca	6
El Fuerte	Las Chunas	Maximiliano López G.	3
El Fuerte	Palo Verde	General Guadalupe Victoria	6
El Fuerte	Tetamboca	Profesora Claudia Gil	2
El Fuerte	Los Capomos	Venustiano Carranza	5
El Fuerte	La Misión (nueva)	General Pablo Macías Valenzuela	1
El Fuerte	Barobampo	Ezequiel A. Chávez	6

Note: Calculated from Galaviz (2025)**.**

Table 3.

Zone 102 of the primary education schools of the municipalities of northern Sinaloa, 2025.

Municipality	Locality	Name of the school	Number of teachers
Ahome	Nuevo San Miguel	Primaria indígena	12
Ahome	El Añil	Lorenzo Robles Montiel	1

Ahome	Bolsa de Tosalibampo 1	Primaria indígena	5
Ahome	José María Robles Quintero	Primaria indígena	2
El Fuerte	Nuevo Carricito	Primaria indígena	2
El Fuerte	Jahuara I	General Felipe Bachomo	6
El Fuerte	El Ranchito	Ignacio Zaragoza	7
El Fuerte	El Carricito	Narciso Mendoza	7
El Fuerte	El Jupare	Narciso Mendoza	3
El Fuerte	Ladrillera	Primaria indígena	3
El Fuerte	La Cruz Pinta	Pedro Bainori	5
El Fuerte	La Línea	Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla	3

Note: Calculated from Galaviz (2025)**.**

Table 4.

Zone 103 of the primary education schools of the municipalities of northern Sinaloa, 2025.

Municipality	Locality	Name of the school	Number of teachers
Ahome	Choacahui	Paulino Basopoli	4
Ahome	Lázaro Cárdenas	Agustina Ramírez	7
Ahome	Goros II	Cuauhtémoc	14
Ahome	La Bajada de San Miguel	Venustiano Carranza	5
Ahome	Camayeca	Primaria indígena	2
Guasave	Las Culebras	Francisco Vázquez	4
Sinaloa Municipality	La Playita	Gil Ávila Valencia	6

Sinaloa Municipality	Quitaboca	Primaria indígena	1
Sinaloa Municipality	Cañada Verde	Primaria indígena	2
Sinaloa Municipality	Los Tastes	Anselmo Moyte E.	2
Sinaloa Municipality	La Tuna de Abajo	Primaria indígena	2
Sinaloa Municipality	El Gatal de Ocoroni	Jacinto Cortez A.	6
Sinaloa Municipality	Santa Ana	Tierra y libertad	3

Note: Calculated from Galaviz (2025).

The field research was divided into several stages. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents; teachers working in primary schools in the municipalities of Ahome, Guasave, Sinaloa, El Fuerte, and Choix; authorities from the indigenous education sector and the listed municipalities; *Yoreme Mayo* leaders and governors; indigenous youth; and, with the support of parents who gave their informed consent, and also, with the support of teachers, children in their final year of primary school.

Using a list of Indigenous communities in each municipality, the safest communities to visit were identified, and from these the following were randomly selected: in the municipality of Ahome, the communities of Nuevo San Miguel, El Añil, and Choacahui were visited, and six teachers were interviewed; one official from the Indigenous Education Department, who is the zone inspector. The questions were requested in writing at the municipal office, which were submitted, but no responses were received; 15 parents were also interviewed, and with the parents' permission and the teachers' support, 22 youths and 9 children were interviewed. A total of 52 interviews were conducted in the aforementioned municipality.

In the municipality of El Fuerte, the communities of Misión Nueva, Misión Vieja, and El Naranjo were visited, and the advisor in charge of the education sector was interviewed. Twelve teachers and ten parents were interviewed. With their permission and support, seven young people and

29 indigenous children were interviewed in this municipality, for a total of 59 interviews conducted in this municipality.

In the municipality of Guasave, the community of Las Culebras was visited; a list of questions was handed out at the municipal office, but no responses were obtained. The supervisor of the indigenous education department was interviewed in that municipality; three indigenous leaders and a traditional governor were interviewed; two teachers were interviewed; and five parents were interviewed. With the help of parents and teachers, seven children were interviewed, resulting in a total of 19 interviews conducted in that municipality.

In the municipality of Sinaloa, the communities of La Playita and El Gatal de Ocoroni were visited, and the municipal Indigenous counselor was interviewed. The mayor's office refused to accept the list of questions. Four teachers and eight parents were interviewed; four Indigenous youth were interviewed, resulting in a total of 17 interviews.

In the municipality of Choix, the community of La Culebra was visited, and the following were interviewed: the person in charge of the municipality's indigenous education department; two Indigenous leaders; the representative of the Indigenous organization "Huites"; five teachers; eight parents. With the support of teachers and parents, 13 youth and six children were interviewed, resulting in a total of 36 interviews.

The stakeholders involved in the problem described were randomly selected to discuss with them and achieve the objectives. All of them were used as units of analysis.

Ninety-five percent of the teachers interviewed believed that the problem is a result of state policies and that it continues to occur in indigenous primary schools in the northern state of Sinaloa, as well as in middle and high schools. They reported that the Secretary of Public Education and Culture of the state of Sinaloa requires them to cover all the topics in the respective educational program and only allows them to work two hours per week on content related to the *Yoreme Mayo* culture and language, which they consider insufficient.

One of the informants, teacher Aníbal from the primary school in the village of El Naranjo, located in the municipality of El Fuerte, reported that perhaps 80% of the children who graduate from his school do not continue their studies due to lack of financial resources.

At this point, it is prudent to report that some of the teachers interviewed requested that their names not be used to avoid reprisals from school supervisors. In this indigenous education system, administrators impose punishments and sanctions, and teachers run the risk of being sent to

villages extremely far from their homes, which means they have to spend a lot of money to live in those villages.

Another teacher interviewed commented that they sometimes teach classes in the *Yoreme Mayo* language. Since 1963, bilingual methods and staff have been used in primary schools throughout the country, but starting in third grade, Spanish was also taught as a second language (Bello, 2009). Once again, the Mexican government's goal of assimilating Indigenous peoples can be observed.

According to Bello (2009), the creation of the General Directorate of Indigenous Education (DGEI) and the National Indigenous Institute (INI) was intended to eliminate illiteracy in Indigenous areas. However, to date, both institutions are on the verge of disappearing because the federal government has not allocated resources for their operations. While it is true that the Secretary of Finance and Public Credit informed that the federal budget for expenditures for the year 2025, from Branch 47, which includes non-sectorized entities such as the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI), will have 221 billion pesos this year, 67 billion more than in 2024 (Secretary of Finance and Public Credit, 2025); however, the visited schools still face the documented and listed deficiencies in this document.

During the years 1979-1982, the Ministry of Public Education, a federal institution in Mexico, proposed ensuring that all children in the country completed their primary education—that is, that all children of indigenous origin entered and completed basic education. However, it also proposed to promote Spanish-speaking communities by providing bilingual primary education to the indigenous population (Bello, 2009).

According to Martínez (2015), as early as 1983, during the administration of President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, 1982-1988, the theoretical approaches to indigenous education were formulated in the document called "General Bases of Indigenous Education", thus giving rise to a new educational model called "Bilingual Bicultural Indigenous Education."

It was in 1993, according to Martínez (2015), that the importance of promoting education in indigenous languages was recognized. However, at that time, there was no academic project that systematized the methodological and curricular aspects of this type of education.

In this context, it is worth noting that, according to Gallart and Henríquez (2006), the Mexican Constitution describes Mexico as a multicultural country. According to data from the 2020 Population and Housing Census by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), 126,014,024 people were counted in Mexico, of which 23.2

million aged three and older self-identified as indigenous; for its part, the organization International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) reports that there are 16,933,283 indigenous people in Mexico, representing 15.1% of the total population. 62 indigenous languages are spoken, along with more than a hundred variants. This is why Schmelkes (in Martínez, 2015) asserts that there is not one Mexican reality, but many, as many ethnic identities as there are in our country. One characteristic shared by indigenous peoples is that they live in poverty, and throughout history they have suffered severe marginalization that limits their opportunities for development (Gallart and Henríquez, 2006).

By denying indigenous peoples, and specifically members of the *Yoreme Mayo* people, access to education—in this case, higher secondary education and indigenous and intercultural education—the Mexican government violates their human rights and places them at an economic disadvantage, as Bailleres-Landeros (2014) asserts.

Poverty, and the consequence thereof, is the cause of the high rate of illiteracy among indigenous peoples. This is the case, as according to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) (2025), in 2023, 19.1% of the indigenous population aged 15 and older was illiterate, while among the non-indigenous population of the same age group, the percentage was 2.8%. Illiteracy by sex showed a difference of 21.1 percentage points between indigenous women (24.2%) and non-indigenous women (3.1%). In the case of men, 13.4% of the indigenous population was illiterate, compared to 2.5% of non-indigenous men, with a gap of 10.9 percentage points. Furthermore, as Carbonell (2005) states, education is necessary to fully exercise political rights since an uninformed vote, for example, is an easily manipulated vote. A voter who fails to perceive the importance of that small exercise of attending the polling station once every three, four, or six years and freely marking the party of their choice on the ballot is a voter who instead opts for exchanging his or her vote for a meal, a hat, a soft drink, or a sack of cement. Mexico's recent electoral history can provide ample examples on this point.

It is in this context that Gallart and Henríquez (2006) report that nationally, only 14.4% of people between the ages of 15 and 64 have had the opportunity to complete a higher education degree. This percentage drops considerably for the indigenous population, falling to 4.9%; that is, it is difficult for indigenous people to gain access to higher education and, therefore, enjoy this human right. According to the Secretary of Public Education (2025), in the year 2024, there were 5,393,387 graduates in higher education in Mexico: 2,909,002 women and 2,484,385 men.

It is important to highlight Gallart and Henríquez's (2006) assertion that among the serious gaps faced by the indigenous population is the educational gap. The majority of the indigenous population faces significant difficulties in accessing basic, indigenous, and intercultural education, which has a cumulative, therefore reducing their access to higher education. This gap is due to the poverty in which they live, the quality of education they get, the geographical distance to educational centers, and cultural barriers and discrimination.

In this context, we interviewed Professor Vianey, who works at the primary school in the town of "La Misión Vieja", in the municipality of El Fuerte. She reported that part of the problems children has concentrating on their education and accessing higher education in the future are the parents' economic circumstances and the distance from their homes to secondary and high schools: "... The parents are extremely poor, they have no education, most of them come from broken families, and the children require psychological support...".

Professor Vianey also commented that "... The activities that parents engage in include fieldwork or selling peanuts, cactus, or oregano. Both parents work from very early on, so they leave the children alone to go to school and do their homework..."

For his part, José, a student at the school in the village of La Misión Vieja, El Fuerte, commented: "My parents leave early to go to the fields (to work) and return late, and sometimes my siblings and I also go to work with them".

Problems found in primary schools

The problems found in the primary schools visited were: no running water, power failures or shortages, and the fact that they no longer have the community dining halls the federal government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador eliminated, classrooms are dilapidated and unmaintained, restrooms are lacking or deficient, the schools do not have internet access, and they lack specialized spaces such as libraries.

According to teacher Miguel, who works at the primary school in the village of El Naranjo, El Fuerte, child absenteeism is quite common, and this happens because parents sometimes suffer domestic violence due to drug or alcohol use. "There is a lot of violence in families, and children see it all; sometimes they learn from seeing it," commented Mrs. Felipa, one of the mothers interviewed in the town of La Misión Nueva, El Fuerte.

In this context, 95% of the parents interviewed confirmed that there are indeed problems with absenteeism among their children, and that this is

due to the fact that they work in the fields or selling vegetables and have to leave for work incredibly early, leaving their children alone. The kids often skip school because they don't want to get up early. Parents reported that the problems cited force them to consider whether it is worth sending their children to secondary school, since, according to them, this would mean having to deal with twice as many problems as the ones mentioned.

Access to middle and high schools

Distances between the homes of the *Yoreme Mayo* to elementary, middle, and high schools range from 2 kilometers to 35 kilometers. Of the 46 young people and 51 children interviewed during the research presented here 42 stated that since they did not have transportation, they walked from their homes to primary, secondary, or high school. This was due to two reasons: one, that these schools were close to their homes, and the other, that they did not have enough money to travel by bus. It is worth noting that in the north of the state of Sinaloa summer temperatures sometimes exceed 45 degrees Celsius, which makes it risky even if the distance to be covered is very short, children and teenagers can suffer from heat stroke that is sometimes fatal.

Furthermore, the cost of urban and suburban transportation greatly influences the distance factor. In the state of Sinaloa, the cost of a ticket relative to the distance travelled is expensive. In Sinaloa, the cost of a single trip ticket is 12.50 pesos, which is the same as that applied in the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco; the difference is that in Sinaloa the very small cities, Culiacán with a million inhabitants and Los Mochis with 600 thousand inhabitants, have a shorter distance traveled compared to larger cities like Guadalajara with 5 and a half million inhabitants. According to the National Minimum Wages Commission CONASAMI (2025), in Sinaloa, the daily minimum wage for agricultural workers is 315.19 pesos.

98% of these teenagers and children interviewed reported that during their primary and secondary education, they had few hours of study dedicated to learning more about their culture and language. Twelve of them reported participating in traditional dances and festivals, thereby learning about their culture and language.

For her part, Vianey, a teacher who works at the school in the village of La Misión Vieja in the municipality of El Fuerte reported that in order to continue their studies, children have to travel to neighboring communities, since only two villages in the region have secondary, junior high schools. "...Children who want to attend secondary school have to go to the neighboring town, since there aren't any here..." Many children are

interested in attending junior high school, so many of them walk or hitchhike to the school. She also reported that school principal and superintendents –zone inspectors—expect teacher to follow the assigned curriculum that only in very few occasions during the school year she dedicates a few minutes to reviewing topics about *Yoreme Mayo* culture.

Regarding the distance between the homes of the *Yoreme Mayo* and the high schools, it is worth noting that these schools are located farther from their homes, which reduces the number of young people from these indigenous communities who manage to enter high schools. In addition to the distance, there is also the prohibitive cost of transportation (see figures 5 through 11).

"I would like to continue studying. I'm going to be like my neighbors who go to the city of El Fuerte to attend high school, because I want to learn more," said Enrique, a young student at the primary school in the town of El Naranjo.

"...If they (*Yoreme Mayo* children and young people) want to attend middle school or high school, they have to go to another community. They usually go by bicycle, hitchhike, or bus," commented Guadalupe, a teacher from the primary school in the town of El Naranjo.

When interviewing the *Yoreme Mayo* youth, they reported on the problems they faced while trying to graduate from junior and high schools. Such as Juan, who commented that he lives in the town of La Misión Vieja, municipality of El Fuerte and that he studied secondary school in the town of La Capilla, El Fuerte, and that due to not having financial resources he walked over 1.5 kilometers to the high school located in the town of Mochicahui. Juan walked because if he traveled by bus, he would 80 pesos a day on transportation tickets.

The information about the excessive cost of public transportation in the state of Sinaloa was reinforced by young people like Sonia, who reported that she lives in the town of San Blas, municipality of El Fuerte, and said that she spends 20 pesos a day on transportation to attend high school. Alicia, for her part, reported that she lives in the town of Charay, El Fuerte, and attends high school in the city of Los Mochis. She spends 60 pesos a day on transportation. Luis also lives in the same town of Charay and attends high school in the town of San Blas, so he spends 20 pesos a day on transportation.

Jesús Omar indicated he lives in the town of La Cruz Pinta and attends high school in the village of Mochicahui. He said he spends 100 pesos a week on transportation. Dayana stated that she lives in the town of

Macoyahui and attends high school in the town of San Blas spending on average 15 pesos a day on bus tickets.

Table 5.

Cost of one-way transportation tickets from various towns in the Municipality of Choix to the city of Los Mochis, Ahome

Municipality	Community/Ejido	Cost
Choix	Choix	$90.00 pesos
Choix	Venicia	$90.00
Choix	Santa Ana	$90.00
Choix	Yecorato	$130.00
Choix	El Aguajito de Bajahui	$75.00
Choix	El Colexio	$70.00
Choix	Baymena	$100.00

Note: Prepared by the authors with information provided by parents, teachers, and young people interviewed during the research.

Table 6.

Cost of one-way transportation tickets from various towns in the Municipality of El Fuerte to the city of Los Mochis.

Municipality	Community/Ejido	Cost
El Fuerte	Estación Hoyancos	$55.00 pesos
El Fuerte	Tehueco	$70.00
El Fuerte	Canutillo	$75.00
El Fuerte	Jahuara II	$30.00
El Fuerte	Jahuara II	$35.00
El Fuerte	Campo Esperanza	$70.00
El Fuerte	Charay	$50.00
El Fuerte	Huepaco-Los Torres	$100.00
El Fuerte	Camajoa	$25.00
El Fuerte	Ejido “La Arrocera”	$22.00

El Fuerte	La Constancia	$20.00
El Fuerte	La Constancia	$30.00
El Fuerte	Mochicahui	$25.00
El Fuerte	Mochicahui	$20.00
El Fuerte	Mochicahui	$13.00
El Fuerte	El Poblado de Mochicahui	$20.00
El Fuerte	Ejido 2 de abril	$18.00

Note: Prepared by the authors with information provided by parents, teachers, and young people interviewed during the research.

Table 7.

Cost of one-way transportation tickets from various towns in the Municipality of Ahome to the city of Los Mochis.

Municipality	Community/Ejido	Cost
Ahome	Ejido Chávez Talamantes	$100.00 pesos
Ahome	Ejido Goros II	$34.00
Ahome	Villa de Ahome	$25.00
Ahome	Choacahui	$23.00
Ahome	Ejido La Florida	$30.00

Note: Prepared by the authors with information provided by parents, teachers, and young people interviewed during the research.

Table 8.

Cost of one-way transportation tickets from various towns in the Municipality of Guasave to the city of Los Mochis.

Municipality	Community/Ejido	Cost
Guasave	Estación Bamoa	$150.00 pesos
Guasave	Ejido “La Trinidad”	$75.00
Guasave	San Francisco de Capomos	$70.00
Guasave	Nío	$50.00
Guasave	Corerepe	$30.00

Guasave	Guasave	$60.00
Guasave	Cerro cabezón	$50.00

Note: Prepared by the authors with information provided by parents, teachers, and young people interviewed during the research.

Table 9.

Cost of one-way transportation tickets from various towns in the Municipality of Sinaloa to the city of Los Mochis.

Municipality	Community/Ejido	Cost
Sinaloa Municipality	La Mesa	$120.00 pesos
Sinaloa Municipality	Porohui	$100.00
Sinaloa Municipality	Ejido Alfonso Genaro Calderón	$55.00

Note: Prepared by the authors with information provided by parents, teachers, and young people interviewed during the research.

Table 10.

Cost of one-way transportation tickets from various towns in the Municipality of Angostura to the city of Los Mochis.

Municipality	Community/Ejido	Cost
Angostura	Alhuey	$110.00 pesos

Note: Prepared by the authors with information provided by parents, teachers, and young people interviewed during the research.

Table 11.

Cost of one-way transportation tickets from various towns in the Municipality of Juan José Ríos to the city of Los Mochis.

Municipality	Community/Ejido	Cost
Juan José Ríos	Juan José Ríos	$60.00 pesos

Note: Prepared by the authors with information provided by parents, teachers, and young people interviewed during the research.

In addition to the aforementioned expenses, other costs must be considered. An example of these extraordinary expenses faced by *Yoreme*

Mayo parents, children, and teenagers is a case that occurred at the elementary school located in the indigenous community of Tabelojeca, in the municipality of Ahome. At this elementary school, the administrators of the "Canuto Ibarra Guerrero" school closed the school doors on June 17, 2025, and did not allow entry to children who did not pay the fees established by the administration a so-called "voluntary fee" and a "custodian fee".

However, in the interviews conducted with education officials of the city councils in the listed municipalities, as well as with administrative staff from the state's Secretary of Public Education and Culture and the department of indigenous education in the north of the state, none of these officials admitted to knowing of any plan or action that the state government has for assuring *Yoreme Mayo* students they would be taught about their culture and language in schools.

The Indigenous leaders and traditional governors interviewed also responded that they were aware that in elementary and high school, students were taught nothing about their culture, and that they had to do a lot of convincing to get them to want to learn about their culture.

As evidenced by the information provided by the teachers interviewed, there is no plan or program by the educational authorities aimed at ensuring that *Yoreme Mayo* students learn about their culture and language. In this regard, 60% of the parents interviewed said they were aware of the situation in elementary and high schools. They also expressed awareness of other aspects of the problem, such as distance to school, absenteeism, alcoholism, and drug addiction among youth and children. The other 40% of parents reported being unaware of the problem described above.

CONCLUSIONS

The *Yoreme Mayo* have been working as agricultural day laborers for generations. The enormous prosperity produced by agriculture in the state of Sinaloa does not benefit the members of this indigenous group. This is because the *Yoreme Mayo* lack access to basic, secondary, and higher education forcing them, generation after generation, to survive in low-paying or odd jobs.

The data collected demonstrated that members of this indigenous community are denied for all practical purposes their right to disseminate their culture and native language among themselves. The Mexican government seeks to seeks to integrate the *Yoreme Mayo* into the national or Mexican culture, disregarding their ancestral culture and language. This policy imposed by the federal government is quite obvious, as none of the

three levels of government—municipal, state, or federal—have designed or implemented a plan that entails actions to ensure that the *Yoreme Mayo* have their rights respected when it comes to disseminating their own cultural expressions. Schools do not teach or promote the *Yoreme Mayo* culture.

If these conditions did not exist, it would be possible for the *Yoreme Mayo* to access better living standards in one or two generations; instead, what has been found is that they live in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty without access to benefits such as the right to health care or a dignified retirement, or the right to know their culture and language, that is, their rights to Indigenous and intercultural education. This historical negligence has contributed to parents and even children to work in subhuman conditions. The burden of unemployment and poverty is unevenly distributed among age groups, ethnic origin, and gender, with the most affected being indigenous people, women, and youth (Sandoval et al., 2012).

In addition to the problems described above, parental absence is compounded, leaving *Yoreme Mayo* children in adverse circumstances and at risk of being co-opted by organized crime groups operating in the communities where this indigenous group lives. This gives rise to a new social phenomenon known as narco-feudalism.

In most cases, where the distance between home and schools is significant children are exposed to high temperatures when they walk to these learning centers.

The Mexican government is failing to protect this segment of society, leaving them completely defenseless against the violence they suffer and the difficult socioeconomic conditions experience on a daily basis.

Given this context and the situation described above, it is very possible that in five years or less, the percentage of *Yoreme Mayo* children and young people who drop out of primary school and use drugs or alcohol will increase significantly. Thus, the present paper showed the lackluster response from governments at all levels to fulfill the education needs of this Indigenous population. Consequently, their socioeconomic conditions remain at the bottom of social ladder.

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