



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Santiago Office
Regional Bureau of Education for
Latin America and the Caribbean

Indigenous Knowledge and practices in Education in Latin America

Exploratory analysis of how indigenous cultural worldviews
and concepts influence regional educational policy

OREALC/UNESCO Santiago





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Foreword

In today's world there is greater preoccupation for equity in education than ever before. In "Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" the international community underscores its commitment to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality, and in a healthy environment. In education this means the intention captured in Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Education 2030 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. For indigenous peoples this means moving towards cognitive and epistemic justice via the redistribution of learning opportunities; the recognition and legitimation of indigenous culture and knowledge, and their inclusion in public policy.

Latin America and the Caribbean is home to over 600 indigenous peoples which have been historically underserved by education systems and overall social policy. As has been confirmed by TERCE, UNESCO's third regional large scale study of learning achievements in Latin America (UNESCO, 2016), indigenous populations lag behind in all social indicators in the region when compared to non-indigenous groups, and indigenous learners have consistently obtained the lowest results in learning achievement in the past ten years. Thus, achieving the goal of leaving no one behind in the region translates into the need for more and better quality education for indigenous peoples, but also for their recognition and representation in education policy.

This means for indigenous peoples to be able to exercise their right to establish and control their educational systems (Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007, Art. 14) and to bring their culture and knowledge to the forefront of educational decision-making in terms of purpose, content and organization. The inclusion of indigenous cultures, knowledge

systems, worldviews and beliefs holds promise not only for making education more relevant, and its organization more flexible, but also for enriching the curriculum with more pertinent and sustainable practices.

However, in practice this has proven difficult as there is a gap between modern Western thinking and other epistemologies which have been rendered invisible or, when acknowledged, they have been considered illegitimate or fictitious as they are not 'scientific'. This kind of 'abyssal thinking' (De Sousa Santos, 2007) obliterates all forms of knowledge that lie beyond the canon of what is considered true and acceptable and, therefore, impoverishes our way of thinking the world, its problems, our options and possibilities as human beings. Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good? (UNESCO, 2015) acknowledges that cultural diversity is humanity's greatest source of creativity and wealth, and highlights the need to explore alternative approaches to human progress and well-being to confront the complexity of current development patterns. The publication calls for the recognition and integration of alternative knowledge systems in order to learn about, for example, the relationship of human society to the natural environment, or about other forms of democracy and social and community life.

In this spirit, the present study explores the idea of an 'epistemic otherness' building from the knowledge and values underpinning indigenous social and educational practices in the region. In particular, it looks at how these values and forms of knowledge have been taken up in education policy in three countries of the Andean Region: Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, which have recently undergone constitutional and political reforms so as to acknowledge their multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual formations.

For every case, an analysis is made of how indigenous cultures and worldviews have been considered in education policy and to what extent they have entered into dialogue with the conceptions of education that preceded their integration. A number of indigenous cultural practices in education are also analyzed in each country along with their potential to enhance cultural and linguistic pertinence, and to provide insight into the feasibility of extending these practices beyond indigenous communities so as to favor inclusion and cohesion among educational communities.

This publication is an invitation to consider indigenous knowledge as a legitimate source of inspiration for education policies that may contribute to the well-being of all and to the sustainability of the planet.



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Presentation

This study presents a preliminary exploration of the approaches, processes and tools through which indigenous worldviews and concepts of knowledge and well-being can and have influenced education policies in Latin America. First, it addresses the principal theoretical approaches used in the area of indigenous knowledge and education policies, taking into account the persistence of an “epistemic otherness” and the need for a dialogue between the predominant approaches. Second, it addresses the normative framework and intercultural educational policies, emphasizing how and to what extent the countries in the region take indigenous knowledge into consideration and include it in their education policies and practices. Third, it presents a number of “relevant practices” in terms of dialogue with indigenous knowledge in education policies, taking into account the factors that favour the relevance of education to indigenous views and cultural practices, facilitating their replicability and sustainability. Furthermore, these practices respond to key criteria like recognizing learners as ‘carriers’ and producers of culture, valuing the use of schools as centres of social and cultural activities and favouring the inclusive learning of indigenous and non-indigenous students. Finally, the study unveils challenges for the advancement of the dialogue between indigenous knowledge and education policies, at the same time proposing key concepts to be approached in depth.

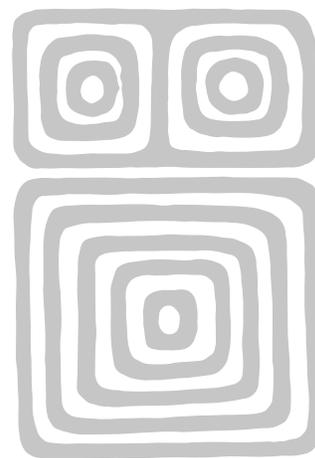


It is important to note that the initial study intended to cover the whole Latin American region, but due to unforeseen logistical issues and time constraints, the study was limited to three countries in the Andean region, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, which were considered to illustrate the issue. Similarly, the proposal expected to include processes, dialogues and inclusion of indigenous knowledge as seen by the State, civil society or academia, but in the end, greater emphasis was placed on government experiences. Nonetheless, when making decisions about methodology and selection of relevant practice, priority was given to dialogue with social actors, focusing on giving details of their participation and of their perception of government-developed processes, recording their points of view and contribution to the initiatives.

Given its exploratory nature, this document does not give in-depth details of the multiple aspects of an issue as rich and complex as indigenous knowledge and culture and their dialogue with public education. Nonetheless, the study provides a general overview of the issue, identifying relevant aspects and indicating the points of analysis that should be approached in future research. In this sense, it would be useful to complement the progress made with a study that covers the experience and knowledge of the indigenous peoples in other regions of Mesoamerica and Aridoamerica. Similarly, although it includes efforts made to dialogue with indigenous knowledge and the public policies that permit this, there still remains the need to establish how indigenous pedagogies, to the extent that they are incorporated into educational provision, would contribute to give greater meaning to learning, facilitating and enriching the act of learning itself. This important point deserves specific and rigorous research, like the challenges posed in relation with education policies and

indigenous worldviews, as occurs with the concept of “living well” (Buen Vivir), which requires an adaptation to norms and institutionalism, and the maintenance of a respectful, articulate and sustained dialogue with indigenous peoples and their organizations.

There is no doubt that these and other issues should be addressed by new, wider-ranging and more in-depth studies; but for the moment we hope to have contributed to the subject and to the establishment of a respectful dialogue of the knowledge of the indigenous peoples of the Andean region, which is an indispensable aspect in the consolidation of democratic societies and a horizon for “living well”.



Introduction

The changes that have taken place in the world make interaction between individuals and societies increasingly complex and challenging. Today's global economy generates a dynamics of increased movement of goods, connectivity and information, at the same time increasing job insecurity and inequalities between and within countries. Simultaneously, together with a greater recognition of cultural diversity, there has been an increase in cultural and religious fundamentalism. We live in a new world context in which the question of what should be learned and is the educational system adapting to these new dynamics becomes increasingly relevant. In this sense, the recent UNESCO publication "Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?" (2015) underscores the need to counter a dominant developmental discourse and reaffirm a humanistic vision of education that gives equal importance to the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of learning, as reflected in the four pillars of learning: to know, to do, to be and to coexist (Delors et al, 1996). In this vision, the fundamental purpose of education is to sustain and enhance the dignity, capacity and welfare of human beings in their relations with others and with nature. It also implies a concern for sustainable human and social development, which includes a concern for an education that does not exclude or marginalize (UNESCO, 2015).



The report then tries to problematize and enrich the conceptualizations, practices and educational policies from a humanistic vision and the respect for diversity, which transcends the utilitarian role of education in economic development, ensuring equity, inclusion and greater interaction between cultures. This challenges current patterns of development in search of other ways to focus on the progress and wellbeing of humanity, as well as alternatives to the dominant model of knowledge which in turn legitimates and is based on a hegemonic system of power. Today, we favour a type of scientific, academic knowledge from Western Europe – one which is derived from scientific hypotheses and methods that are produced by a systematic process of observation, experimentation and validation, and which is considered to be objective, favouring written transmission and which is taken to be universally valid. This form of conceiving knowledge expanded and imposed colonization processes at the expense of the knowledge of conquered societies, which generally occurs through experimentation and trial and error, is transmitted orally, and has a subjective and transcendental spiritual dimension that considers the human being to be a part of nature.

During the process of European expansion, colonizers carried out diverse operations that configured a new universe of relations of domination between the West and the other parts of the world. In this way, the colonized populations were stripped of cultural discoveries which were deemed more apt for the development of capitalism and the metropolises in the West. Similarly, the conquest brought with it the repression of the forms of production of knowledge of the colonized peoples, their sense of producing patterns, their symbolic universe and ancestral knowledge (Quijano, 2000). This led to the construction of an asymmetrical world order based on a horizon of economic progress, which has shown its limitations in the social, cultural and environmental spheres and which is being challenged by the decolonization processes that demand the opening of pathways for dialogue and recognition of other forms of knowledge, traditions, and ways of life and coexistence with nature. This is possible

because, despite the colonial onslaught, many of the forms of knowledge of the indigenous peoples have remained and have continued to reproduce themselves throughout the centuries, sometimes fragmented, other times with new elements that manage to incorporate contacts with other cultures, knowledge that enables them to continue cultivating their ways and forms of life and which demonstrate their capacity for resistance.

In Latin America, countries inherited colonial meanings and practices that were characterized by prejudice and discrimination against the indigenous population, justifying standardizing policies, denying basic rights and stereotyping their knowledge as stagnant or traditional (Guerrero, 2010). During decades, education policies sought to assimilate indigenous peoples in a process of Westernization that had a direct impact on the reduction of speakers of different languages, as indigenous languages were considered inferior, less valuable and less useful than Spanish. This in turn had serious repercussions on indigenous knowledge and its preservation, because as we know, language is the vehicle of culture, the means by which things and beings are named, and of the expression of life conceptions. For this reason, these peoples have also developed diverse forms of resistance, generating significant responses, organizing themselves so as to preserve and revalue their knowledge and worldviews. Today, the challenge to develop education policies that recognize the value and importance of indigenous knowledge still exists in the region, and they are considered to be the foundations of learning for society as a whole. With its unique history and noteworthy cultural richness, Latin America can provide important clues for the establishment of a humanistic and diverse education that promotes sustainable development, the dignity and well-being of all, within a global context of change and complexity. The humanistic commitment to education requires engaging in a horizontal dialogue with indigenous knowledge and traditions, so that they are not unique policy components targeting a specific ethnic groups, but are taken into account by society as a whole, recognizing their epistemological, practical and conceptual contribution.

Currently, despite this cultural richness and the norms that guarantee their rights, indigenous peoples are still among the most disadvantaged populations. State actions have not been able to close the gaps in quality of life, because, for example, in Peru the percentage of poor among the native Amazonian population reaches 60.5% (6 out of every 10 individuals), in contrast with the 15% of the Spanish-speaking population (Gushiken and Campos, 2014). In the case of Ecuador, despite the fact that indigenous poverty has been reduced by 15% in the last six years, it still affects 60% of the rural indigenous populations (INEC, 2014). In the area of education, as informed by the latest report of the Organization of Ibero American States (OEI, 2015), the indigenous populations exhibit lower literacy rates than those of the general population. The greatest inequality for the achievement of literacy can be found in Paraguay and Honduras, where almost one out of every three indigenous persons declares that they can neither read nor write (32.1% and 31.7%, respectively). The indigenous population also has lower levels of schooling than the total population, differences ranging from one school-grade in Nicaragua to four in Panama. At the secondary level, the educational deficit of the indigenous population is noteworthy, a situation that also reduces their possibilities of pursuing higher education. It is likely that these gaps are due, in part at least, to insufficient consideration of indigenous knowledge in the region and to education models that have sought to Westernize indigenous peoples (UNESCO, 2015).

Furthermore, although the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 on indigenous peoples indicates that every administrative and legislative measure that affects indigenous peoples should be consulted, several countries have not implemented the Convention. They do not consult indigenous peoples when developing policies and study plans, nor do they allocate sufficient resources for these purposes.

According to World Bank data, the last round of censuses reveals that there are 36.6 million indigenous people in Latin America, which represents seven per cent of the total population. Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru

have the largest populations both in absolute terms and in percentages, representing more than 80% of the regional total (World Bank, 2014). Also, the same source estimates that there are 626 indigenous tribes, with the Amazonia being the region with the greatest diversity (316 communities) followed by Mesoamerica, the Orinoco River basin, the Andean region and the Gran Chaco region. All these peoples contribute to key worldviews and concepts for community life which would be valuable to follow so as to progress in the fulfillment of the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015), highlighting for example, issues related to quality education, production and sustainable consumption, areas in which the indigenous peoples have much to contribute to and teach.

Precisely, in a context where the predominant route of economic growth threatens biodiversity, ancestral knowledge related to the care of ecosystems can be vital in drawing-up new pathways for relating with nature. Similarly, are also fundamental concepts of "Living Well" or *sumak kawsay* in quechua, *suma qamaña* in aymara, which mean that the good life is not determined so much by material goods or the accumulation of resources, but rather by a harmonic coexistence between human beings and nature, a position we also find in other indigenous peoples, like the *tzeltal* who live in Chiapas and in whose Maya language *lekil kuxlehal*, also means harmony, union and communion among people and nature. This is the same meaning we find among the Guarani people of Bolivia and Paraguay, who speak of *ñande riko*, or harmonious life.

The proposal of these indigenous peoples is based on a relationship of respect and a balance between community and nature which gives another meaning to collective and individual wellbeing. It is important to analyze the way in which states are working on their education policies regarding worldviews, languages and knowledge of the indigenous peoples, whose practices contribute to greater dialogue and inclusion, and to the synergies they maintain with their organizations, so as to progress in mutual valorization and recognition among cultures.

Objectives of the report

On this basis, it is important to carry out a study that identifies the approaches, processes and tools developed by states to work on concepts and practices of indigenous knowledge and practices, analyzing their potential consequences for education, and towards promoting more inclusive and relevant education policies. This is in line with the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda, which establishes the priority task of reducing inequity and poverty through the provision of lifelong quality education, with an emphasis on the cultural richness and diversity of the region (UNDP, 2015).

The objective of this study is thus to carry out an exploratory analysis of how the worldviews and indigenous cultural concepts of knowledge have influenced and can influence regional education policies. It specifically proposes to contribute to the understanding of what has been and is considered “indigenous knowledge” from the point of view of the education process, public policy, academia, and the indigenous peoples themselves. On the other hand, it aims to analyze how and to what extent countries consider and include indigenous knowledge in their education policies and practices, not only those focused on the peoples themselves, but also on national policies. Finally the study presents a number of “good practices” or “relevant practices” for inclusion of and dialogue with indigenous knowledge in education.



Methodology and case studies: Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia

This study required the utilization of qualitative methodology, in which primary and secondary sources were used (see Annexes). It was considered pertinent to select three countries of the central south American Andes as reference: Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. These countries were chosen due to their high percentages of indigenous population, in addition to the processes of mobilization and political reforms developed in pursuit of a greater recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples. It is interesting to point out that this geographical zone housed the development of a millenary culture with strong technological and artistic levels of development. The political organization of the Inca empire spread the Quechua language from the south of Colombia to the north of Argentina, and to coexist, not without tensions, with the Aymara people of the Bolivian Altiplano and the different Amazonian peoples that settled along this extensive basin. Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador concentrate important characteristics in terms of presence of indigenous population, resistance and development of indigenous education policies, together with the revaluation of knowledge and their own traditions, which we consider important to develop as reference cases in the study.



Peru: multilingual and pluri-ethnic country

The 1993 Constitution of Peru declares the country as multilingual and pluri-ethnic. It has a total population of 28,220,764 inhabitants, of which some 13,263,750 could be considered indigenous, and 6,631,879 are women¹. Estimates show that a large proportion of the indigenous population today lives in urban areas, with a total of 46% Quechua and 43% Aymara populations, while the Amazonian peoples live mainly in the rural areas. The Ministry of Culture's Indigenous Peoples' Database currently records 55 indigenous peoples in the country. Taking into account the language variable as an identification criterion, we have departments with a high level of indigenous presence such as Huancavelica, where 56.9% of the population is Quechua, Apurimac, where the level reaches 61.43%, Puno, with 19.74% of aymara population and 31.17% quechua, while in Amazonia, the indigenous population reaches 18.44%.

With regards to access to education, the average years of schooling at a national level for 15 year-olds and above is more than 10.15 years. When separated by geographical location, average years of schooling are 10.7 years in urban areas, and 7.2 in a rural areas. In Peru, education coverage for the 1 to 11 year old bracket is 96.3%. But, differences are marked in the case of indigenous peoples, because 10% of indigenous children in that age group are out of the system. For example, in the case of some peoples, like the Amazonian Ashaninka, 23% of girls and boys of that age group have no access to the education system. On the other hand, coverage at secondary level declines and there are fewer access opportunities, especially in the rural sector, thereby

increasing the gap between the indigenous population with less access and coverage and the Spanish-speaking population. The paper "State of Indigenous Childhood Peru" by Benavides et al points out the following:

" The school deficit among Quechua boys, girls and adolescents and those whose mother tongue is Spanish increases with age, reaching 32 percent (35% vs. 67%) by the age of 18. Although this gap by no means reaches the magnitudes seen among the children for Amazonian ethnic peoples and Spanish speakers" (p.20).

In economic terms, Peru has benefited from sustained growth over the past few years, although there has not been sufficient redistribution to allow Peruvians to overcome poverty. The official figures for 2014 indicate that almost 7 million inhabitants were poor. Of these, the most affected sectors are those with an indigenous mother tongue and who live in rural areas, totaling 35.4% of which 8.5% live in extreme poverty, or twice as much as the Spanish-speaking population.

If we link poverty to education, the situation of the indigenous peoples becomes increasingly concerning. According to the 'Technical Report: Evolution of Monetary Poverty 2009-2014', which was drawn up on the basis of information taken from the national household survey in 2014, 14% of the poor population of 15 years of age cannot read or write; 19% of this population was found in rural areas, affecting more women than men (INEI, 2015).

¹ The latest census conducted in Peru in 2007 does not include ethnic self-identification, so the figures for indigenous populations are based on declarations of mother tongue and settlement in native and farmer communities.

Bolivia: the Pluri-national State

Bolivia has a total population of 10,059,856 inhabitants (National population and household census, 2014), with 50.10% women and 49.90% men. Its population is predominantly young, with 60% under 30 years of age. According to the last census, 41.5% of the population, or 4,176,647 persons identify themselves as belonging to the more than 100 indigenous peoples listed in the census, the most numerous being the Quechua and Aymara peoples with 1,837,105 and 1,598,807 inhabitants respectively. Although the majority of the indigenous population generally reside in rural areas, a large proportion of the Aymara people (48.6%) live in urban areas, but 62.7% of the Quechua population reside in rural areas.

Bolivia, which was considered the poorest country in Latin America in 2005, with 60.6% living in moderate poverty and 38.1% in extreme poverty, however the country lost this status in 2011. By 2013, data compiled by the Social and Economic Policy Analysis Unit (UDAPE) shows that levels of moderate poverty had fallen to 39.1% and extreme poverty to 18.8%. In 2013, 50.3% of the indigenous population (compared with 30.7% of the non-indigenous population) were placed in the moderate poverty bracket and 29.6% (compared with 10.8% of the non-indigenous population) within the extreme poverty bracket.

Access to basic services, which is still rather limited at a national level, is another area which presents gaps between the indigenous and non-indigenous populations. For example, while 70.1% of all the households registered in 2012 obtained their water from public waterworks, this figure falls to 56.83% in the case of the guarani population, 54.13% in the case of aymaras and 50.6% in the case of quechuas. Similarly, if 14.59% of

households nation-wide have no electricity, this figure doubles among the Quechua households (31.98%) and triples among the guarani households (45.62%).

In the area of education, the 2011 National Household Survey (INE, 2011) shows that the literacy rate of the adult population (15 year olds or older) is 92.3% at a national level, and falls to 81.07% among indigenous populations with their mother-tongue being a native language. This gap is mainly produced by the low literacy level of women native language speakers, both in urban and rural areas. Literacy rates among men who speak a native language is relatively high 88.96% (rural) and 92.63% (urban) – among indigenous women these rates fall far below the national average – 64.37% (rural) and 70.69% (urban). With regards to school attendance, the 2012 Census shows that this is relatively uniform amid indigenous and Spanish-speaking children aged 5 to 14. But the gap widens in 15 to 19 year olds. While 23.19% of the Spanish-speaking population of this group does not attend school, the figures are much larger in the aymara, quechua and guarani populations, with respective rates of 33.79%, 40.67% and 41.66%.

Ecuador: Intercultural and Pluri-national State

According to the latest Population and Housing Census of 2012 (CPV), Ecuador has a population of almost 14,500,000 inhabitants, of which 7% - or 1, 18.176 persons - acknowledged their indigenous status. Of this total, 50.9% are women and 49.9% are men. It should be noted that the indigenous population could be greater, but the tendency of miscegenation and racial whitening as elements of social prestige have gained ground as a result of cultural homogenization, greater access to opportunities and discrimination.

Nevertheless, the 2010 census showed an increase in the number of people (187,758) who considered themselves indigenous, compared to the 2001 census. Ecuador has 14 indigenous nationalities and 18 indigenous peoples, the Kichwas being the most numerous. The majority of the population (68.2%) lives in the Sierra - especially in the provinces of Chimborazo, Pichincha, Imbabura and Cotopaxi- 24.1% lives in Amazonia and 7.6% lives on the coast (INEC, 2010).

In the last few years, Ecuador has seen an important reduction in poverty rates – from 64% in 2000 to 34% in 2010. Extreme poverty has fallen from 40% to 13% over the same period, much of which is attributed to the government's redistribution policy². But, there is still concern for the existing gaps related to indigenous peoples, where levels of poverty are still high. According to the UNICEF study "Outlook of the situation of indigenous children and adolescents in Latin America: the right to education and protection in Ecuador" in the case of households with indigenous heads, income poverty reaches 63%; on the other hand, poverty rates only reach 29% among the households with white or mixed heads of households (Velasco Abad, 2014: 19). Similarly, extreme poverty affects 10% of this category of households, but it increases to 40% in households with indigenous heads of households.

With regards to social indicators, despite improvements there are still enormous differences in the population's access to health, with ethnicity being a major factor of vulnerability. For example, we see a high prevalence of delayed growth, which reached 42% of the indigenous

population (INEC and MSP, 2014: 217). On the other hand, infant mortality fell from 29 out of every 100 thousand newborn babies recorded between 1999 and 2004, to 13 recorded between 2007 and 2012 (INEC and MSP, 2015), and maternal mortality also fell by 68.4% between 1990 and 2014 (Senplades, 2015). Improvement of delivery care is seen by the fact that currently only 10% of babies delivered by indigenous mothers are attended by non-qualified personnel.

In terms of education, Ecuador has achieved universal coverage for primary education, with 95% of the school-age population attending, regardless of ethnicity. On the other hand, the proportion falls at the secondary level, with 60% of indigenous women and 63% of indigenous men entering secondary school in the urban areas, and only 52% enrolling in rural areas. Only 38% of indigenous women reach upper-secondary level, a level that must be completed to proceed to tertiary education. These percentages are slightly higher for men, with 43% accessing upper-secondary education in rural areas, and 51% in urban areas (UNICEF, 2014).

2 *Fiscal and tax policies were reorientated in terms of distribution and redistribution of income by means of transfers, taxes, subsidies. Within this framework, social policies that managed to reduce poverty were established. One of the programmes has been the Human Development bond, which is transferred to impoverished families, and which has increased from 30 US dollars in 2007 to 50 US dollars today. Heavy investments have been made in education and health, and a process of land redistribution in favour small-scale farmers, through the "Plan Tierras" scheme has been implemented in Ecuador, which encourages family farmers' access to agricultural land, and is aimed at dealing with land concentration, most of which (80%) is in the hands of entrepreneurial agriculture.*



Chapter I

Theoretical approaches
to address indigenous
knowledge and
education policies

a) Indigenous knowledge and wisdom; coloniality of knowledge and epistemic “otherness”

In order to address the issues of indigenous peoples in Latin America, and especially those referred to their knowledge and wisdom, it is essential to take into account the processes of conquest and colonization that took place with the expansion of the kingdoms of Western Europe to what was then called the “new world”. The arrival and settlement of the conquerors resulted in violent and untimely encounters with new human groups whom they classified according to their biological differences, coining the term “race”. As Quijano says, ‘the formation of social relations based on such an idea produced social identities in Latin America that were historically new: indians, blacks and half-breeds.’ In this way, while indians, blacks and half-breeds were seen as subalterns and did hard labour in conditions of servitude and slavery, the task of producing and reproducing knowledge was assigned to the Western “criollo” intellectual elite, which imposed and legitimized a way of analyzing and understanding the world. Subsequently, the civilizing project of modernity emphasized the idea of ‘science’ as a response to medieval obscurantism, but strengthening knowledge based on an epistemological method and structure that belonged to the Western process of development.

The independence processes brought no great change to the indigenous population, so their knowledge continued to be denied, as they were

considered to be unscientific, inferior and, in general, an obstacle for the prevailing model of progress. This then led to the consolidation of the idea that the form of construction of knowledge of the indigenous peoples, which was based on experience, was invalid or was simply not knowledge, thus delegitimizing indigenous epistemologies. Along these lines, Enrique Dussel (2000) criticized Western rationality because of its closed, or “self-absorbed” character, which considers itself to be more developed and superior. This superiority has the moral requirement to develop the conquered peoples, which are perceived as primitive, through a civilizing process that produces victims and displacement, including the deployment of a violence that is interpreted as an act of inevitability. The governing elites of the new republics maintained the subordination of “the other”, and were unable to hold a dialogue with the conceptions of the world present in “the other” hidden and essential face of “modernity”: The peripheral colonial world that included all those who had been relegated; the sacrificed indian, the enslaved black, the oppressed woman, etc. This situation poses the challenge of putting an end to the theoretical and mental colonialism imposed on periphery countries; assuming that the “other” knowledge and conceptions respond to situations demanded by their experiences, histories and ways of relating, showing that the valuation of knowledge is also a device of power and liberation.

To face this challenge and leave behind the colonial legacy implies to recognize that there are radical differences in the way in which indigenous peoples conceive and construct knowledge; for them it comes from a continuous process based on experimentation and observation. Furthermore, it is constructed on the basis of a collective dynamics that permit the confluence of the elderly and children, who enrich each other mutually and learn from each other; for this reason, the knowledge constructed in this process is not the property of a single individual but of the entire group:

“ The indigenous peoples believe that knowledge is not individual; we start from there, that it is an ancestral knowledge. We speak collectively. Nobody, no elder says that this knowledge belongs to him or her and that s/he will not share it; knowledge is acquired to enlarge the culture or the group”

(Discussion with Abadio Green. Quoted in Álvarez Echeverría, 2007, p. 122).

We then find different ways of conceiving the world, life, relationships with nature and with other beings.

While in Western philosophy nature is an object of control and domination by individuals, for the indigenous peoples, nature is not seen as a being removed from humans, but rather, they experience a relationship of interdependence between all living beings and non-humans, in an attitude of collaboration, reciprocity, and mutual support, which enables them to keep equilibrium and harmony. This poses a communal relationship with no hierarchic relations of domination and subordination, but of complementarity, which must be kept in balance in order to maintain the continuity of life.

For example, the Ashininkas, for whom fishing or hunting for more than is necessary breaks the balance required to guarantee food for the future, teach their children, through orality and via its elders, what will happen if they break the rules on hunting and fishing that have been taught to them. In this regard, Rojas Zolezzi explains that “if a hunter traps too many land mammals or birds, endangering the balance between animal groups and the inhabitants of a given area within the Ashaninka territory, they will be attacked in the forest by a peyari (evil spirit or devil) there will be a fight, and that will make the hunter ill with a disease that can sometimes be mortal”(Rojas Zolezzi, 2003). This example illustrates that Ashaninka children learn about natural balance to sustain future generations, expressing this concern through a daily activity, and their solidarity with the other members of the group and with future generations.

It is about recognizing the importance of the different constructions of alternative ways to Western rationality, dialoguing with the “imaginary” that are formulated on the basis of the social practices of actors who do not claim to be scientists or to have scientific knowledge, but who use their imagination to imagine how the world works, discovering gaps and inadequacies in what we know. In fact, the current globalization process, with its greater opening and connection between different realities, permits greater exchange and dialogue, giving more space for the redefinition of knowledge production and legitimation, and the hegemonic scope of Western science. Following García Canclini, globalization redefines cultural homogenization and renders it more complex, making it possible for different societies to adapt differently to the materials of modernity (García Canclini, 2014). If modernity aspired to scientific knowledge that could organize social totalities and make categorical statements on the workings of the world, the city or a nation, this has changed completely today. There is a growing tendency to problematize the perspective and contextual conditions from which knowledge is generated, entering into the epistemological discussion of imaginaries and knowledge of different social subjects, especially those of indigenous peoples.

Among the indigenous Andean peoples, the expression of an alternative to Western rationality and its pathway towards a predatory modernization that harms nature, is contained in the Aymara concept of *suma qamaña* or *sumak kausay* in Quechua, and translated as “good living”, which reinvestigates the organizational forms and principles of social life aimed at restoring the unity and balance between community and nature. From this perspective, the native peoples of Quechua or Aymara origin propose a

different platform for talking about and understanding the (reproduction of social life, defending community life and respect for the environment based on principles of reciprocity, complementarity and solidarity, elements which are included in their cultural codes, rationalities, learning and forms of discourse. Similar ideas and conceptions were also found among other indigenous peoples on the continent, although they are expressed through other concepts; for example, the Guarani communities of El Chaco (in the ecological and cultural antipodes of the Andean world) refer to *ñandereko*: ‘our way of acting’. In general, this conception of the world imposes a different way of connecting the human being with nature and the understanding of well-being, far removed from the vision that exalts Western progress based on the accumulation of material goods to the detriment of resource exploitation; drawing an ethical horizon that rises above the injustices and crises of today, as for example those derived from global warming and climate change (Uzeda, 2010).

In Ecuador and Bolivia, the constitutional frameworks have adopted the concept of well-being as an ethical-moral principle and aim of national collective life, which must be guaranteed by the State. Nonetheless, in these countries, as is the case in all countries with large cultural diversity, there is still much to do so that actions and policies can be effectively decolonizing and the dialogue with the knowledge and wisdom of the indigenous peoples can take place in conditions of otherness. This implies an epistemological exercise and a gradual change in the paradigms of communal life, development and nature. For Pablo Mamani, the *suma qamaña* refers to a balanced paradigm of life, since we live in an “unbalanced world because other men-women have turned the sweetness of ‘being who you are’ into the harshness of ‘being who you are where you are’”. This would be classed as ‘logical

plasticity' on two levels: how to 'reason with the heart', and how 'to feel with reason' (Mamani, 2011, p. 68). It is therefore an effort to try other methodologies, forms of dialogue and ways of opening new roads to the comprehension of social life and the search for alternatives and solutions to the multiple problems that afflict it, as the solutions applied have preferred to follow the matrix of the Western rationality, described above.

In the field of education, the extension and rethinking of hegemonic teaching, constructional and diffusional approaches to knowledge is presented as a need and a challenge for developing equal education policies that express these and other forms of imagining, knowing and explaining the world, and particularly those developed by the indigenous peoples. Conceptual approaches and worldviews of "living well" help look into and construct new meanings to the dominant vision of globalization, supporting more humane, democratic and communal objectives for nations and their inhabitants, which are aspects that seem to be absent under the current paradigm of globalization.

Following Rizvi the task of disassembling this hegemonic paradigm, with its negative effects on an education focused on cultural homogeneity and the strengthening of global inequalities to the detriment of social welfare is still pending (Rizvi, 2013). Education policy as public policy, in a context in which national systems are immersed in a global order of policy production, requires a critical approach and a constant epistemological vigilance and intercultural dialogue. Hence the importance of explaining and reviewing theoretical and methodological approaches that have framed

the implementation of education policies in the region; and particularly, in reference to addressing multiculturalism, and more recently, interculturalism. For example, in the case of Bolivia, interculturalism is presented, as a key approach in education, proposing ways to address the cultural differences within the framework of respect for differences and fundamental rights.

b) Multiculturalism and interculturalism as approaches to public policies

Multiculturalism as a proposal for dealing with differences

From the viewpoint of traditional liberal politics, the treatment of social diversity has always been an issue of concern, with questions regarding the way of respecting individual or communal differences, while guaranteeing equal universal rights. Thinkers like Rowe (1995) argue that the State must establish limits on the pursuit of personal satisfaction, by providing a general framework of rights and opportunities to facilitate the egalitarian achievement of personal goals. However, the emphasis is placed on an impartial egalitarianism that can dilute differences which, as cultures, are inherent in each individual and prefigure their social development. The multicultural approach reframes the centrality of the individual as the sole referent of freedom, advocating on behalf of the community, in an effort to reconcile universalism and individualism, recognizing that individual identity is always constructed in reference to a cultural community. But, certain specific historical situations have resulted in the fact that not all individuals can freely exercise their identity, having to act within a larger society that supports another culture, therefore considering them “minority groups”. From this perspective, indigenous peoples are considered minority groups even when, as occurs in Bolivia and Guatemala, they can constitute the majority of the population.

The multicultural approach focuses on the issue of cultural minorities, especially those that are embedded in larger national communities governed by liberal states with a dominant culture. Liberal theory considers that all persons deserve the same rights, with cultural specificities being a private matter over which the State cannot legislate. On the other hand, multiculturalism considers the existence of an incompatibility between the right to be different and the principle of equality, because diversity is a feature that is inherent to social coexistence, and therefore it is impossible for justice to treat everyone equally. The enactment of differential rights is legitimate, and should focus on mitigating the effect of the differences that violate the rights of cultural minority groups. Nonetheless, we should remember that diversity does not mean inequality, because diverse inequalities present in society are not associated to any ethnic group, they must rather confront their naturalization.

Looking deeper into this school of thought, Will Kymlicka developed the concept of “multicultural citizenship” that links minority rights to the liberal principles of social equality and individual freedom (Kymlicka, 1996). This philosopher considers that belonging to a community is fundamental, because the individual is unable to decide without a predetermined cultural framework. Kymlicka criticizes

the liberal supposition that the State is ruled by a principle of “ethnocultural neutrality” regarding the identities of its citizens, according to which there should be no official culture, just as there is no official religion. But, in practice ethnoculturally neutral states do not and cannot exist, because ever since their origins they live in a territorial nation, with a shared language, similar forms of life and public institutions that rule their collective destinies. This is why he proposes a model of a liberal democratic state with institutions that make efforts to spread and promote respect for differences. These states would then have to try to assimilate their “minorities” into the larger society, giving them special representation rights (quota laws) and developing permanent affirmative actions. They must also try to ensure that cultural practices do not violate fundamental principles, and act in favor of integration and against the formation of ghettos.

It is important to mention that this “differentiated citizenship” approach proposed by Kymlicka has been questioned by authors such as Velasco who warns of the possible segregationist effects that might arise from each person referring to their cultural roots (Velasco, 2006). This collective struggle for recognition could lead to fragmentation, absolutizing the awareness of belonging to specific communities and encouraging a politization of ethnicity that undermines the national political community. From another perspective, authors like Chandran Kukatahas criticize that multiculturalism and its proposal to protect the vulnerability of minority groups, in the end, shares the patterns established by the liberal principles which are not inherent in every cultural group (Kukatahas, 1997). Hence, there are always limits to tolerance, with the State and the larger society who ultimately dictate what can be allowed in a society with different ethnic groups and cultural practices.

In the educational arena, the proposal of multiculturalism has had wide resonance in countries like Canada, which has become a reference in terms of addressing the particularities of Quebec and the aboriginal peoples, as well as in the European Union, where it has been used to address the increasing migratory waves that endow countries like France and Spain with greater diversity. In such contexts, the school system reveals its shortcomings to the particular situation of culturally diverse groups, and has to introduce partial or global modifications into the curriculum so that the different cultures of the students are included in school activities. In this sense, Muñoz refers to the implementation of multicultural education programmes in Spain as “ethnic additivity”, in which ethnic content can contribute to strengthening the self-concept of minority students, while contributing to the preservation of their culture (Muñoz, 1998). In general, these proposals focus on clearly differentiated minority groups within a dominant society, for this reason dialogue and the valorization of the knowledge and traditions of these groups do not necessarily dialogue with the hegemonic conditions of otherness.. Given this, especially in Latin America, other approaches to the development of public policies, whose emphasis favors interrelation of different peoples in culturally diverse societies emerged.

Interculturalism as a proposal for the acknowledgement of diversity

As opposed to multiculturalism, which places an emphasis on the acknowledgement of differences and admits the rights of those who are different, interculturalism appreciates what is different, acknowledging it as a source of learning and enrichment. Multiculturalism underscores the need to build bridges between diverse cultures, and the need for relations is established in a framework of mutual respect and valorization. At this point, it is important to mention that the concept of interculturalism was first defined by the Venezuelan linguists and anthropologists Mosoyomi and González, who initially related it to bilingual education projects they had been developing with the arhuacos in Venezuela in search of a proposal to face “those who at the time confronted recently incorporated bilingual education programmes developed with indigenous peoples of the lowlands, and had to decide whether to choose open and deliberate acculturation or keep the indigenous peoples in the state they had been found” (López, 2000, p. 140).

During this initial stage in Peru, interculturalism was included in education projects launched by the indigenous organizations themselves, as was the case of the work done by the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDESEP) with the Amazonian peoples. In Bolivia, this perspective was taken into consideration thanks to the pressure exerted by the indigenous organizations on official structures during the process of the construction of state policy. In Ecuador they were incorporated directly into the education sector. In the three countries, the promotion of this approach by academics, universities and research centres was also of great importance.

In recent years we have witnessed the proposal of debates about interculturalism exclusively aimed at overcoming linguistic and educational concerns, opening the discussion on how it should be understood and the results which are revealed throughout the process. The first refers to a functional concept of interculturalism proposed by certain sectors, about which Turbino says:

“ When we say that we have a functional interculturalism we are not referring to all those discourses used by interculturalism to render invisible the structural problems of social justice and unequal distribution of the resources existing in a society. In functional interculturalism the discourse on poverty is replaced by a discourse on culture, ignoring their importance in the understanding of intercultural relations – distributive injustice, economic inequalities and the relationships of prestige and power existent among cultures” (Tubino, 2005, p. 75).

Functional interculturalism would be that which allows the reproduction of the postcolonial system and the continuity of existing gaps without questioning the conditions of indigenous peoples, and without contending for the power of those who define the policies to be followed in these countries. The author instead proposes critical interculturalism, which does not focus exclusively on the dialogue between different cultures, but proposes looking further into the causes of this asymmetry. In this sense, he states that when relations between

different cultures, including the hegemonic culture, are proposed, and considering that dialogue is a key element of interculturalism, we should ask ourselves about the conditions of the dialogue. The aim is to demand that the dialogue of different cultures should always address the economic, political, military, etc. factors that currently condition open exchanges between human cultures. "Critical Interculturalism is therefore a key in the construction of intercultural citizenships" (Tubino y Zariquiey, 2005, p. 7). At a political level, interculturalism proposes the need to work for a democracy that includes every man and woman, and that respects and is strengthened with the perspective, the knowledge and vision of the world of the diverse cultures and peoples that inhabit the country.

In this sense, it should be noted that, in terms of the education proposals, the three countries covered in this study have made efforts to incorporate the perspective of critical interculturalism; one which considers that in addition to the relationship between different cultures, acknowledging and valuing their existence in the established structures, it is a principle that questions the post-colonial system, which also bears evidence of current asymmetries that must be overcome to create intercultural societies. As put forth by Zavala:

“ It is precisely the Andean zones of Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, that saw the development of interculturalism, not as the emergence of cultures that coexist, tolerate each other and maintain an innocuous dialogue, but as a set of social, economic, linguistic and cultural relationships inscribed in a social fabric that is full of

contradictions and in a scenario of power. Therefore, the replacement of these relations in favor of the extension of democracy and of fundamental universal human and cultural rights, which will give meaning and value to this social participation” .

In short, after a long history of exclusion, subordination and negation of the knowledge preserved and produced by indigenous peoples, there is today an important theoretical and epistemological reflection regarding the way in which to revalue this knowledge and dialogue with it, strengthening its different forms of production. Similarly, there has been progress in the incorporation of an intercultural perspective that contributes to implement education policies that are capable of dialoguing with the knowledge and tradition of the indigenous peoples, enriching modes of developing community life and considering human welfare. In this sense, there have also been efforts to project this knowledge from global society. The progress made in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia in terms of the normative frameworks and intercultural cultural policies offers indigenous orientations and experiences that can be key elements in understanding how indigenous worldviews and cultural concepts of knowledge have influenced and have been incorporated into the education policies of the region.



Chapter II

Normative framework and Intercultural Education Policies

a) Opening pathways: background on indigenous education and knowledge

For the indigenous peoples of Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, the 20th century was the scene of dispute between education and the meaning of school for the future of their peoples, within a context in which cultural hispanization and homogenization were considered part of the transition towards the type of development proposed by the dominant sectors.

For many years, the elites in power permanently denied the indigenous peoples the possibility of entering the education system. This decision was based on the fact that excluding resources and systems, like the 'hacienda'³, also included the life of these populations, whose exploitation was the basis of domination.

According to López, in Peru the fact that the indigenous population was not given access to school, also prevented them from learning Spanish. "An indian that can read is a lost indian; an educated indian is a subdued indian" were mottos repeated by the virtual feudal lords of Peru, and which characterized their

attitude towards the indigenous population (López, 1989). Servitude required closing all possible doors leading to the indigenous population's access to reading and writing.

This situation encouraged the indigenous peoples' desire for schooling as a way of liberation, and of taking over the school, in as much as this institution opens access to two of the most valued goods of hegemonic society: writing and the Spanish language. Although the issue was not simply to read and write Spanish, it included an in-depth process, as we must remember that the assimilation and negation of identity of the indigenous peoples was a mechanism for gaining civil rights. López Jiménez explains that in Peru the situation was similar to that in Ecuador and Bolivia: "In Peru, indigenous citizenship has been built at the expense of their identity. In order to become citizens, indigenous peoples must become 'cholos'⁴ - whether they migrate or not – specifically negating their previous identity – their language and costumes – and affirming another cultural identity" (López Jiménez, 1997, p. 442).

But, large sectors within these same indigenous peoples made efforts to preserve and maintain their cultural identities and ways of life, despite the model imposed in their territories. This is how they claim an

3 *The hacienda was the core of the economic, political and social life in vast areas of the Andean region. This space produced godos for the internal market under the control of an owner that imposed the regulations and proceedings for production, and in general ruled the life of the hacienda, the majority of which were Indians. The hacienda is referred to a place of exploitation and usurpation of indigenous labour who worked in conditions of near slavery. Workers lived in a relationship of total dependence on the owners, who in most cases gave them a parcel of land in exchange for their work and a day off to farm for their own sustenance, but they kept them working on the hacienda with no wages, under an alleged debt they maintained with the owner for the basic goods provided to them, like oil, sugar, matches.*

4 *"Cholo" or "chola" is a racial term used in Peru to refer to mixed-race people who come from an indigenous and a white-creole, it can have a derogatory meaning and it is associated with an andean and rural origin.*

indigenous education that recovers knowledge and experiences, but also gives access to the cultural codes of the dominant culture. School is then seen as a place of political dispute between the dominating regime and the indigenous populations, a space that contains a struggle for recovery of ancestral traditions and the affirmation of identity, with the need to get closer to the modern knowledge that had been denied to them. Indigenous leaders understood this early in the process, launching education projects from their communities. In Bolivia, there are precedents in the pioneering experiences of Elizario Pérez, a rural teacher, and of Avelino Siñani, an aymara shepherd who founded the Ayllu Warisata School in 1931. This was an education project created to contest the exclusion of indigenous communities, proposing a community education model in which fathers, mothers, teachers the wise and the elders took part in a technical productive approach related to daily activities and social practices. Elizario Pérez would say “I didn’t go to Warisata to mash the alphabet or have the students locked up in a room. I went there to build them an active school, full of light, sunlight and oxygen, alternating typical classroom activities with workshops, farming and construction” (Bolivian Ministry of Education, 2012). The recovery of the lifestyle of the ayllu, where the key element is the productive responsibility of the members of the community, the daily transmission of knowledge that makes the continuation of knowledge and living well possible, within a framework of the indigenous cultural matrix that puts “us” in the first place and places emphasis on collective practices and mutual cooperation, were also the foundations of this proposal. The tenets and experience of the Ayllu Warisata School were adopted by other experiences of indigenous schools in Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Colombia, and it is currently one of the foundations of the Socio Community Productive Education Model (MESCP) launched by Bolivia.

Indigenous schools run by indigenous teachers were also developed in Ecuador. One of these pioneer schools is the Escuelas Indigenas de Cayambe, developed by the leader Dolores Cacuango, who was convinced that the subjugation of the Indians in the ‘hacienda’ system was because they were not literate and did not speak Spanish, proposing a bilingual education and a chance for all. “Just as the sun shines equally for all men and women; so should education shine on all, rich or poor, lords or servants” she would say. Another experience from 1964 proposed teaching the Kichwa population to read and write by means of the Peoples’ Radiophonic Schools of Ecuador (ERPE), launched by Monsignor Proaño, Bishop of Riobamba. “Important experiences, like the ‘Escuelas Indigenas de Simiatug’, the ‘Shuar Radiophonic System (SERBISH), which started to operate in 1972, among others, took place in different provinces.

In Peru, the denial of education for the indigenous population prevailed for many years. At the end of the 1930s, indigenous literacy and “culturization” were launched, carried out by culturization brigades created through the Organic Law of Public Education of 1941. This effort was contained in a civilizing perspective, an example of which were indigenous languages as a means of achieving a hispanization tending to turn the natives into new subjects of modernization. On the other hand, there was opposition to this civilizing attack, with the appearance of the Indigenous Education Project, whose most important members were Luis Valcárcel, José María Arguedas and José Antonio Encinas, who spent some time teaching at the Ayllu Warisata School in 1932. In 1945, President Bustamante launched this education project appointing Luis Valcárcel Minister of Education, who created the Communal Education Centres (NEC), where teachers had to be speakers of Quechua in order to teach literacy in their native tongue, with a proposition that included education, health and work for the children and the community, following the model of the Ayllu Warista school. “The authors of the indigenous

education project shared the conviction of the absolute importance of literacy. Arguedas considered it to be “a gift” that provided “spiritual light” and “dignified” those who “possessed it” (Contreras, 1996, p. 21).

The struggle for access to school among the indigenous population raised suspicions of the government and in turn, they considered that their privileges were at risk, which started a fierce opposition against this initiative. In the specific case of the Ayllu Warisata School, the government withdrew its support and the authorities disapproved of activities accusing the teachers of being communists. Meanwhile, the *gamonales*⁵ also coerced fathers and mother seeking to convince them that school meant that they would lose authority with their children, or that the State would take them away, and even burning down schools or forbidding them, as was the case of the first bilingual school in Ecuador, which were closed down by the Military Junta in 1963.

This urge for the right to education was born in a context of dispute over rights to prevent the territorial dispossession the indigenous population suffered. It is important to pay attention to this context because it places us in the perspective of knowledge as a key element in the struggle for power and in the framework of territorial defense and of the possibility of being able to produce and reproduce imaginaries and life in this space. In this sense, we must remember the importance of production as the core of the education process in an indigenous school, and in the framework of the ‘*hacienda*’, which as Dávalos points out, encrypts power relationships with highly symbolic contents, but also takes the form of an economic and political unit. It is a nation’s economic stability that dictates its political power. It is the contradictory and paradoxical union

between the Andean world and the Western world, in which the indigenous presence will be relevant (Dávalos, 2008).

These first experiences were configured in an atmosphere of disputes regarding the meaning of life and the need for an acknowledged identity. Spanish language skills were framed in the need to approach that other world which snatched away indigenous peoples’ dignity and future, so they can defend themselves and decode the ‘*libros de rayas y libros de suplidos*’, which in Ecuador were notebooks recording the debts of the indian farm labourers and their workdays on the ‘*hacienda*’. Reading and writing permitted them to analyze if what was recorded there was true and thus liberate themselves from the interminable debts they were supposed to owe. Reading and writing is a form of knowledge that becomes a fundamental factor of protection and defense of their rights. In this respect, Walter Gutiérrez, Head of the Ministry of Education’s Intercultural, Intracultural and Bilingualism Policy Unit, says in personal communication:

“ (...) So then, the Aymara brother, the Quechua brother felt the need to read, to interpret, and this makes him set up clandestine schools, which help him to interpret what was said, and this is how many taught themselves to read. And in 1930, Avelino Siñany and Elizardo Pérez created the Ayllu Warisata School” .

Indigenous peoples’ school experiences were interrupted in the 1950s, when the three countries developed and adopted national integration projects which responded to the ‘indigenous problem’; now,

⁵ *Gamonal is a Peruvian Word that comes into use in the 19th century to refer to the ‘hacendado’, owner of enormous expanses of farmland, and who dominates and controls the land and the social and commercial relations of his territory, in addition to holding political power in the area.*

Spanish education had become the principal medium of integration of the indigenous people. They were encouraged by international organizations to undertake these projects. The assumption that literacy would result in a better integration of indigenous peoples into the world's economic system was arising. The underlying idea behind these projects was to remove the "ignorance" of the indigenous people, and civilize them, liberate them from their traditions and beliefs, hispanize them, which would lead to the development and modernization of society, ideas that had already been planted in the minds of many. There was opposition to indigenous schools and to receiving education in their mother tongues, because education in mother tongue was thought of as delaying learning in Spanish and thus the pace of progress.

This is a key point because of its implications on the education processes in different countries: it imposed on their collective imaginations a way of understanding life, community, development and knowledge, which collided with their own worldviews, learning systems, valorization of their knowledge, accepting with some conflict the modern episteme that implied the discredit of the knowledge of the peoples, demanding from them to unlearn their native languages, cultures and ancestral knowledge. This brings a sort of epistemic defeat for the indigenous peoples, with serious consequences for the identity and self-worth and the valorization of indigenous people to present arguments that are assuming the civilization project, considering themselves to be "uncivilized" and underdeveloped.

On the other hand, an education strategy is imposed which considers the school as the core, locking the students into a limited space, where teachers have complete control of the process, which generally receives no intervention on the part of the community. This breaks the continuity of a form of constructing knowledge based on the daily practices of peoples and which has its own forms, as stated in personal

communication by Gladys Vila, President of the National Organization of Indigenous Andean and Amazonian Women of Peru (ONAMIAP):

"Orality is fundamental. The way in which my grandmother has taught me, how she has transmitted principles, has been through stories. Every night, she would tell us different stories before going to bed. While my mother would say read, learn, study; learning is achieved by watching, listening, doing".

The role played by the school in the homogenizing project that requires the negation of indigenous knowledge can be visualized in a piece of research by Patricia Ames (2001), where she refers to a song she picked up from a school in the area of Llaquepata in Cuzco (Peru) and which was sung by first and second graders. The song is an example of how the modern subject who attempts school is built, as it gives it an aspirational model and social representations that removes them from their identity and culture

***"Little puna Indian
Your were ignorant before
But now that you can read and write
Little puna Indian
You must study hard
To become a professional"
(Ames, 2002, p. 356).***

In this context, it is evident that the divorce between the knowledge of the indigenous peoples and modern knowledge increases, impacting future generations, building models and subjectivities that involve breaking

down the tissue of a certain way of life in which communities are constructed. In view of this, there is a strong emergence in Ecuador and Bolivia, and a weaker one in Peru, of a new political subject who claims and demands the recognition of their cultural diversity and citizenship, a movement of indigenous peoples that starts to support itself in terms of identity, to become visible, to recover its collective meaning, reclaiming a new education model that incorporates indigenous languages and knowledge into the curricula, not only as a means of hispanization, but that feeds on its own contents. This is given in a context in which promises of progress made to the indigenous peoples and which were part of the narrative of the homogenizing project had really meant greater exclusion and material and spiritual poverty, identity loss, loss of their languages and of their ancestral knowledge.

Indigenous organizations at present make more resounding demands for the implementation and development of a bilingual and intercultural education system, that recovers and includes indigenous knowledge and worldviews and the forms of education existing in them. We must point out that this claim, which was born from the indigenous peoples themselves, gave cause to the development of a tendency to relate interculturalism with the indigenous peoples, who had to learn how to relate with other cultures, which despite new policies and the intention to mainstream interculturalism in the entire education system, has not managed to change in its totality.

The demand for interculturalism is a power battleground of the indigenous peoples, who see the rupture of the school with the epistemological pattern of modernity, proposing the recognition of the different knowledges and their similar valuation, supporting the acknowledgement of epistemologic knowledge that exists in the countries, and challenging scientific knowledge as universal and absolute truth.

In the case of Bolivia, the area of education also becomes a key to interculturalism. This implies the revaluation of their own cultures, which must play a central role in the education process in order to strengthen individual and collective identities. In this way, the aim is that the knowledge produced by different peoples can then be shared with other cultures, giving way to real intercultural relationships, in which there is no differentiated valuation of knowledge. The aim is to produce horizontal epistemological bridges between modern science and the science that arises from the indigenous peoples. The issue is not to return to one's own culture and remain locked in it, but to open up in different, non hierarchical conditions.

b) Ecuador, Model of Bilingual Intercultural Education

The different bilingual intercultural education experiences developed in the country, some of which have been quoted above, were fundamental for intercultural and bilingual education to become official in the majority of primary and secondary schools of the indigenous population (established in January 1982, through Ministerial Agreement 000529). A year later, in 1983, the constitutional reform of article 27 was approved. It stated that in areas with a predominance of indigenous populations, the principal language used in the education systems should be Kichwa or another predominant language, while Spanish is to be the language of intercultural relationships. In both reforms, the emphasis was placed on the use of languages and not necessarily on the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into the curriculum.

In 1988, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) submitted an intercultural education proposal to the national government that would set the norm for the changes that occurred later. Thus, the General Regulation of the Education Law was reformed and bilingual intercultural education was institutionalized with the creation of the National Directorate of Intercultural Bilingual Education (DINEIB). This entity had among its functions to develop new culturally pertinent curricula that were appropriate for bilingual education, and suited the requirements of the indigenous peoples; to develop adequate teaching materials; to plan and direct bilingual and intercultural education in

coordination with the organizations of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador. CONAIE played a fundamental role in these processes, through an agreement signed with the Ministry of Education in 1989, under which linguistic research was carried out, and teaching materials for literacy and post literacy courses were developed. This is extremely important because it is one of the first instances of the implementation of a public policy which included active participation of the subjects of the policy and considered their proposals.

In 1993, the Ministry of Education officially announced the Model of Intercultural Bilingual Education (MOSEIB) and the primary school curriculum, a document having the objectives "to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the indigenous peoples, taking into account their knowledge and social practices; recover and strengthen the use of different indigenous languages in all the fields of science and culture and spread the model among the indigenous and Spanish speaking population" (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2013).

At this stage, the National Directorate of Intercultural Bilingual Education also acquired protagonism, as it encouraged the development of education materials that recovered the knowledge of the indigenous peoples. For example, the ethnomathematics materials that recovered the Taptanas, the calculation stones used by the Cañari people before the Incas, and which adapt

to different nationalities, or the production of the Shuar abacus developed on the basis of a bidirectional concept of space, created by the Shuar people.

Mention that the 1998 Constitution recognized the Intercultural and Bilingual Education System (Art. 69) also considering access to quality education and the development of an intercultural bilingual education (article 84, number 11). For its part, the 2008 Constitution maintained the intercultural bilingual education system, establishing in article 57, chapter four, the rights of communities, peoples and nations: “to develop, strengthen and enhance the intercultural bilingual education system with quality criteria, from early childhood to higher education, in accordance with cultural diversity, for the care and preservation of identities in line with their teaching and learning methodologies.” Article 343 of TITLE VII Chapter One, referred to the way of ‘Living well’, stating that: “The national education system will have as its aim the development of the individual and collective capacities and potentials of the population, which make learning, and the production and use of knowledge, techniques, arts and culture possible. The system will focus on the individuals that learn, and will operate in a flexible and dynamic, inclusive, efficacious and efficient way”.

The national education system integrates a multicultural vision based on the geographic, cultural and linguistic differences in the country, and on the respect for the rights of communities, peoples and nationalities. Similarly, its article 347, number 9, establishes that the State should: “Guarantee the intercultural bilingual education system, which will use the mother tongue of each respective nationality as the principal teaching language and use Spanish as the language of

intercultural relationships, under the direction of State public policies and with total respect for the rights of peoples and nationalities”.

While at the beginning, MOSEIB had existed with the direct participation of CONAIE in DINEIB, in 2010 the government put an end to the agreement that had kept this organization alive since 1989. This happened during a time characterized by tension between the government and indigenous organizations, putting in question the work being done by DINEIB. In this respect, Freddy Peñafiel⁶, Vice Minister of Education said in personal communication:

“ In the 80’s, a Directorate of Intercultural and Bilingual Education was established in the Ministry of Education, but the two were separate domains; that was a serious problem for the Ministry. For example, the Directorate of Adult Education was one domain, they approved curricula on their own, administered schools, hired professional staff and graduated. All these things were also done by the Directorate of Intercultural and Bilingual Education), they were isolated processes. And as a country, we had no standards” .

6 Appointed Minister of Education on December, 2016.

Later, the Organic Law of Intercultural Education was enacted in March 2011. Its Title IV on Intercultural and Bilingual Education guarantees the existence of the MOSEIB, establishing guidelines on the operation of the Intercultural Bilingual Education System. In its article one, the law states that Ecuadorian education is oriented by the framework of 'Living Well', interculturality and pluriculturalism, and the relationships between their actors... "And it has among its principles interculturalism and plurinationality which: "guarantee the actors in the system, the knowledge, acknowledgement, respect, valorization, recreation of different nationalities, cultures and peoples that make up Ecuador and the world; and their ancestral knowledge, encouraging unity in diversity, inter- and intra- cultural dialogue, and tending to encourage the valuation of the forms and uses of the different cultures that are consonant with human rights" (Organic Law of Intercultural Education, Art. 2).

In this same way, the Organic law of Intercultural Education establishes that curricular design should always consider the vision of a plurinational and intercultural state, with a curriculum that can adapt to the cultural specificities that exist in the regions and in the education establishments. It also rules linguistic aspect, establishing that education will be carried out in the official languages of each of the diverse nationalities. We should mention that although interculturalism is established as one of the principles that rules all Ecuadorian education, in the fifth chapter on the structure of the national education system, it establishes that the Intercultural Bilingual Education System applies to the indigenous peoples.

The same law (Article 88) establishes that the Vice-Ministry of Intercultural Bilingual Education is the specialized entity devoted to the development of the knowledge, sciences, traditions, technologies,

culture, ancestral languages and intercultural relation languages. It is an administratively, technically and financially decentralized entity.

Another relevant point in this new scenario is that the law (Article 90) establishes the creation of the Institute of Ancestral Languages, Sciences and Knowledge, which has the following functions: a. Use all media to research, systematize, record and spread the sciences, knowledge, and tradition related to interculturalism, plurinationality, identity, history, culture, community economics, community government and other ancestral sciences, with the objective of developing interculturalism and plurinationality; b. research, systematize and keep a linguistic record of the ancestral languages of the Republic of Ecuador; c. Reference traditional processes of knowledge and tradition for their legitimation and patenting, among other functions.

The MOSEIB has included the *allaopao mama* and *pacha mama* (nature and universe) as cores of the model, with the construction of Living Well or *sumak kawsay* as the approach that guides the education process. The model has amply developed its values, aims and curricular foundations and teaching strategies, proposing the design of curricula for each nationality and to contribute to the development of the knowledge, technologies and socio cultural practices and worldview systems of the indigenous peoples in their own languages, etc. The community, wise men and women, and teachers take part in the development of the model, which is followed up from the Ministry to analyze progress and the deficiencies that might persist, and make changes, if necessary.

But, there is still quite a road to travel for this to become a reality that goes beyond good intentions, so that the values and principles of the indigenous

peoples are really internalized. We have a small indicator that is established in the curricular foundations of the Model of Intercultural Bilingual Education System (MOSEIB) in the section referring to the cosmos, which clearly states that “Intercultural bilingual education goes beyond theocentric and anthropocentric visions and is projected as a cosmic vision, in other words, it is a way of conceiving the world in which everything is expressed in terms of living relationships, considering nature, and the Pacha to be live beings, and the indigenous peoples a part of nature”, while on the other hand, it states that: “the education process should take the following as a referent: the understanding of the relationship between living beings and nature” (Ecuador M. d., 2013, p. 41). This once again proposes the discourse of modernity, for which nature is a resource to be used and made the most of, not a living being.

In this respect, in personal communication, the viceminister of Education mentions the progress made in Ecuadorian educational policy with the ceation of the MOSEIB, and the curricular changes.

“ At present, children in EIB (Intercultural Bilingual Education) have all the national subjects, and the same standards, with the only difference that EIB has the additional component of ancestral knowledge and contextualization, but to graduate they must sit for the same national examination, as a way of avoiding these first and second curricula. But I am talking of the 2010 curriculum; by law, we must review curricula every four

years, so we are reviewing, and the new curriculum came into force in 2016. But, we must point out that the greatest challenge is to ensure that all education is intercultural and that indigenous knowledge permeates the national curriculum and becomes part of curricular design in all areas, with resources for its implementation”.

Finally, we must mention that the ‘Good Living’ has been incorporated into the touchstones of the education system and we even have a National Directorate of Education for Democracy and Good Living. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education is launching their “Schools for Good Living”, to put into practice the principles of the National Plan for Good Living, which poses the challenge of the construction of a plurinational and intercultural State, which must “underscore the recognition of interculturalism and participation for a new democracy; offer guarantees of territorial rights to communities, peoples and nationalities; the redesign of public institutionalality, to advance towards the construction of the multinational State; and the elimination of racial discrimination and ethnic and cultural exclusion” (National Secretariat for Planning and Development, 2013).

C)

Bolivia, the Productive Community Socio Education Model

Bolivia's current education model emerged as part of the country's process of political change undergone at the end of the 1990s and leading to Evo Morales' presidency. The education model is based on the decolonization of Bolivian society and the recognition of pluriculturalism in the country.

In this context, it is essential to change an educational model that historically privileged hispanization and validated a hegemonic culture with the subsequent loss of its own knowledge, since the imposition of the modern discourse and its civilizing project legitimated the concept that the indian was a marginal being that lacked knowledge. This position was clearly expressed in Chapter XI of the Peasant Fundamental Education Law, included in the Bolivian Code of Education of 1950. In this way, the code established that: literacy activity will be carried out in zones that have a predominance of vernacular languages, using these languages as the vehicle for an immediate learning of Spanish, which is a necessary factor for national linguistic integration.

For this effect, the phonetic alphabets that were most similar to the Spanish alphabet will be adopted (Art.115)". Similarly, article 118 established that the State will give preferential attention to fundamental education for peasants that included the majority of the Bolivian people, which have been deprived

of the benefits of schooling to this day; who have been marginalized by technology, by the monetary economy and who have not been able to effectively exercise their rights for these reasons.

Therefore, article 120 proposed the following objectives:

1. To develop in the peasant good living habits with regard to nutrition, hygiene and health, housing, clothing and social and personal conduct.
2. To teach literacy through the functional use and mastery of the basic instruments of learning: Reading, writing and arithmetic.
3. To teach them to be good farm workers, using renewed cultivation and husbandry systems.

This code expresses the vision that the government and the Education sector had of the indigenous majorities, which despite their enormous experience as farmers with their own knowledge, 'had to be taught how to be good agricultural workers'

An important education reform process was launched at the beginning of the 1990s, calling in professionals from different sectors, leaders of indigenous organizations and parents. The reform

permitted the development of deep reflections regarding the education demands of the population, with a systematization of the diverse successful and innovative experiences that had been developed in the country by different institutions, and by the Ministry itself. It is important to mention that in the preceding period, the rural school system had suffered the attacks of the crisis the country had gone through on the issue of its foreign debt and which had a strong effect on the communities that demanded the guarantee of their right to a free and quality education consistent with the existing cultural diversity. This situation also led the Trade Union Confederation of Original Settlers of Bolivia (CSUTB) to develop their own education proposal, which is contained in the framework of indigenous movements for territorial defense and which at the time culminated with the signature of ILO Convention 169 on the self determination of peoples.

The education reform process thus encouraged an integral change of the existing education system. As mentioned by López and Murillo (2006, p.5) the principal notions on which the reform was based came from the Intercultural Bilingual Education Programme, which proposed an education process based on the language of the learner, the development of teaching methodologies for teaching Spanish as a second language and the role of the indigenous organizations that participated in the programme.

Within this framework, an Educational Reform Law (N° 1565) was passed in 1995 that recognized that education is “intercultural and bilingual because it assumes the socio cultural homogeneity of the country in an atmosphere of respect among all Bolivian men and women”, and proposed: the construction of an

intecultural and participative education system that provided all Bolivians with access to education, with no discrimination whatsoever.

It also proposed social participation as a key element in the new education system, with the creation of district boards, and the National Council for Education to respond to the pluriculturalism of the country with the Indigenous Peoples’ Educational Council, CEPOS. This process implies the breaking point for the Bolivian education model and establishes the foundations for what would later be proposed as the decolonization of the country, as it offers the possibility that the indigenous languages, which had been denied by the modern civilizing project, are valued and considered vehicles of knowledge, and gives way to the proposals of the indigenous peoples to have an active participation in curricular changes and transformations.

Despite the progress made in that reform, certain conditions still persisted that hampered its implementation, such as administrative discrimination towards indigenous peoples, or teachers’ refusing to accept the processes and the participation of the community, accompanied by an underlying fear of losing their status with regards to a population they considered subordinate. The Constitution of 2009 offers a new framework that encourages the changes in meaning required to make intercultural education possible as a fundamental element for the decolonization process and to tear down the obstacles that prevent the implementation of an integral intercultural bilingual education. In this new Constitution, Bolivia is construed as a sovereign, democratic, intercultural, decentralized and autonomous state (Art. 1) in which education is defined as intracultural, intercultural and plurilingual education throughout the education system.

This point marks a difference in its relations with other countries of the region, where interculturalism is also mentioned in the constitution, as it proposes the need to promote interculturalism in higher education, a fundamental proposal, because professional training is the place of insertion of the modern episteme, with the corresponding social disdain for the indigenous peoples as subalterns on the part of university graduates who are professionals, imbued with scientific thought and universal truths.

On the other hand, given this constitutional framework, the New Law N° 070 passed on 20 December 2010, was called “The Avelino Siñani – Elizardo Pérez Law”, which establishes the following in its article 5:

- Develop comprehensive training of people and strengthen critical social awareness of life for Living Well, relating theory with productive practice. Education will be focused on individual and collective training, with no discrimination whatsoever, developing the physical, intellectual, cultural, artistic, sports, creative and innovative potentials and capabilities, in an atmosphere of vocation, serving society and the Plurinational State.
- Develop comprehensive training of people and strengthen critical social awareness of life for Living Well, relating theory with productive practice. Education will be focused on individual and collective training, with no discrimination whatsoever, developing the physical, intellectual, cultural, artistic, sports, creative and innovative potentials and capabilities, in an atmosphere of vocation, serving society and the Plurinational State.

On the other hand, Art. 70 of the Law proposes the regionalized curriculum that offers the possibility for curricula to adapt to sociocultural and linguistic realities. Similarly, Art. 88 proposes the creation of the Plurinational Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures “to develop processes of linguistic and cultural research and to create language and cultural institutes for each indigenous nation or people for the normalization, research and development of their languages and cultures”.

A new education proposal is developed in this constitutional and legal framework which aims at totally discarding the colonial education model, the “banking” educational model, taking its roots from the proposals of the Ayllu Warisata School, from popular education and from the knowledge of the originary peoples, proposing a new model: The Productive Community Socio Education Projects (MESCP). It also proposes a new curriculum that accompanies and nourishes the decolonization process, a basic tenet of the Bolivian political project.

Among its proposals, this teaching pathway suggest the recovery of other forms of education that are not sustained within classroom walls, since they end up by isolating the students from their social and cultural context. It also proposes the recovery of other forms of education like that existing among the indigenous peoples, which are not based on writing, but on social practice and which occur in other learning spaces.

The foundation is community learning, the core of which is the community itself. Another curricular foundation is epistemological pluralism which proposes the existence of a diversity of knowledge and ways of building knowledge, some of which originate in the

practices, realities and mindset of peoples, where none is superior to the other, but are rather the expression of the plurality that exists in the country.

This is also the perspective of decolonization: the valorization of different types of knowledge and incorporating them at all levels of the education processes. Another foundation of the Bolivian curriculum is Living Well or Suma Qamaña, which establishes: “the search for a harmonic relationship

with Mother Earth, in which the human being will live the experience of being part of her, which implies a new awareness, interdependency, complementarity and relationship with the environment” (Bolivia, 2015 National Review of Education for All: The Plurinational State of Bolivia”, 2014).

These foundations are addressed in teacher training, as can be seen in the following diagram.

Problematizing Diagram: Foundations of the Curriculum

FOUNDATION	PROBLEMATIZING QUESTIONS	ORGANIZING SUBJECTS	THEORETICAL CONTENTS	READING MATERIALS
Epistemological	What indigenous knowledge, tradition and practices have we used in our daily life and how have we learnt them?	Related to capitalism Related to coloniality Related to political autonomy	Modern hegemonic scientific thought	Illescas, José. Regarding some brief considerations
Filosófico (Vivir Bien)	What food do we eat? How is the food we eat produced? Taking into account their production does the food we eat allow us a better coexistence with our environment?	Food sovereignty	Harmony with Nature. Holistic awareness Natural life circuit	Fernando Huanacuni. Vivir Bien / Buen Vivir Franz Hinkelamert. Hacia una Economía para la Vida

Source: Orientation manual for PROFOCOM facilitators. Working Document

The curricular structure of this new education model proposes four fields of knowledge that aim to do away with the fragmented way in which learning was developed, searching to establish links between the different knowledges. The following fields have been developed:

- Life, Land and Territory: aimed at the recovery of the meaning of life, the harmonic relationship with nature, with this perspective working against the concept of appropriation of nature as a mere source of resources.
- Science, technology and production: aimed towards the development and strengthening of technologies, on the basis of the uses and demands of the Bolivian reality, in order to generate the liberation from economic dependency.
- Community and Society: aimed at the recovery of communal life, of the values of the peoples and to counter violence and individualistic tendencies.
- Knowledge, Cosmos and Thought: which express the different worldviews, philosophies, spirituality, vision and interpretation of the world of the different cultures. Contributes to decolonization by bringing together the different worldviews of the peoples.

We should mention that, just as there are efforts for training teachers in the foundations and fields of the curriculum, there are also those that correspond to curricular design, for which objectives, cores and methodological strategies which are coherent with different levels of learning have been developed.

For example, the curriculum from the first to sixth year of community schooling (productive secondary community education) includes the fields of knowledge and traditions, values, spirituality and religions for the first year of secondary education, The first semester shows the effort the ministry is making to interculturalize the education process, incorporating the knowledge and tradition of other/ different cultures.

d) Peru, towards a quality intercultural bilingual education

In Peru, the path towards the recognition of knowledge and cultural diversity presents similar obstacles to those we found in Ecuador and Bolivia, with the rise of an epistemological dispute regarding different forms of knowledge and their diverse forms of construction and valorization, which are an expression of the interpretative frameworks imposed on society by those who have the power to legitimate their visions of the world. In a country crossed by inequalities and ethnic gaps, a series of reforms occurred in the 1970s which had a deep impact on political power and the dignification of a peasant mass that was largely indigenous. In this way, General Velasco's government started to institutionalize bilingual education in 1972, with the approval of the National Policies of Bilingual Education (PNEB). The General Law of Education (Decree Law 19326) was also passed; in its article 12 it stipulates that "education will consider in all its actions the existence in the country of diverse languages that are means of communication and of cultural expression, and will care for their protection and development. The hispanization of the entire population will be carried out with respect for the cultural personality of the diverse groups that conform our national society and using their languages as an education link". This Law clearly states that the issue is not to impose a culture on the peasant indigenous population, but that the task is to revalue the multiculturalism of the country.

In this context of political change, Law 21156 was approved in 1975, recognizing bilingualism in the country and establishing Quechua as the official

language, stating that, as from 1976, bilingual education would be compulsory at all the levels of education in the country. This officialization also implied that all administrative operations were done in this language and that textbooks, dictionaries and other documents had to be printed so that this rule could be complied. Although this reform established the foundations of the future intercultural policy in Peru, there were no great advances in its implementation, not even with regard to education for the indigenous peoples. In the 1980s, Peru found itself with a new political scenario which had already left behind the reforms and meanings of social change framed in the 1972 law, which also established that the aim of education was to eradicate inequalities and poverty in the country. A new bilingual education policy was established in 1989, the intercultural label was added to it, and led to the creation of the National Directorate of Intercultural Bilingual Education (DINEBI) to implement the policy. Madelaine Zúñiga (2002) asserted that: "The novelty of the Intercultural Bilingual Education policy (EBI) of 1989 is that, parallel to the assumption of cultural and linguistic diversity, there is the beginning of the creation of a country 'united by diversity'. So, one of the objectives of the EBI was to "Help in the achievement of a national identity characterized by the awareness of a country united by diversity" (Zúñiga, 2002: 320).

It is important to point out that the acceptance of cultural diversity in the country was possible thanks to the demands of indigenous organizations, especially

of the Amazonian peoples, who had been gaining strength during these decades, creating national organisation like the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDESP) and the Confederation of Amazonian Nationalities of Peru (CONAP), into which various federations and peoples also flowed.

The AIDESP was the organization that began the Programme for Training Bilingual Teachers in the Amazon (FORMABIAP) and received support from international cooperation agencies and a strong commitment from the peoples involved. The programme was launched in 1988 by means of a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Education's National Loreto Directorate, the Instituto Superior Pedagógico Loreto and AIDESP. This was a pioneering experience for intercultural education and for the recovery of indigenous knowledge that incorporates its own forms of education into the process. When analyzing this experience and its contributions in terms of implementation, Lucy Trapnell explained that:

***“ An indigenous education should necessarily consider levels of articulation between the school and the education process that take place away from it. From this perspective, the teacher enriches his or her work with the knowledge, methods and assessment systems of their own people, and at the same time develops a strategy aimed at revitalizing the role the different indigenous education agents had been playing and which had been extremely weakened in some communities and/or regions owing to, among other factors, the presence of the school”.
(Trapnell, 1996, p. 165)***

In 1991, a new Policy for Intercultural Education and Bilingual Education for the 1991-1995 five years period was promulgated, in which indigenous organizations were invited to propose curricular diversification. Here we find the beginning of the denomination intercultural, willing to reach not only indigenous people, but also willing to reach all the Peruvian population. However, the implementation of this policy, is nowadays only being applied in the rural areas, specifically with indigenous people and only in the primary level. In 1993, the new Constitution, which is effective until today, established that the State: “will guarantee the eradication of illiteracy (...) encourage bilingual and intercultural education, in accordance with the characteristics of each zone, preserve the diverse cultural and linguistic manifestations of the country” and “promote national integration” (Art. 17). The subsequent government (1990-2000) showed no great interest in encouraging bilingual and intercultural education. The National Directorate of Intercultural Bilingual Education (DINEBI) was created on the return to democracy, acquiring certain strength and becoming the National Bilingual Education Consultative Body, which is a technical consultation organization in the hands of indigenous and non indigenous expert professionals.

The National Policy on Languages and Cultures in Education was approved in 2002. It had among its objectives: “To contribute to the record, use and development of the diverse knowledges, traditions and practices of the indigenous and Afro Peruvian peoples and communities and their relation with the knowledge of other horizons in order to unchain cognitive and social processes of an intercultural nature” (Art 3.3), and it also established that interculturalism is a principle that rules the Peruvian education system and that the education of all Peruvians at every level should be intercultural. The following year, in July 2003, the General Law of Education was enacted, which in its article 8 established that “interculturalism, which considers the country's cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity to be its richness and finds a pillar for harmonic coexistence and exchange

between the diverse cultures in the world in the acknowledgement and respect for differences, and in mutual knowledge and learning from others”.

Article 20 of the law states that intercultural bilingual education is to be offered throughout the entire education system. The guidelines of the General Directorate of Intercultural, Bilingual and Rural Education (DIGEIBIR) established that its functions include the “development of the intercultural approach in the entire national education system, in coordination with the national directorates and offices of the Ministry of Education and instances of decentralized education management”.

In 2011, the DIGEIBIR developed a proposal for curricular diversification that rules that the implementation of intercultural education requires the renovation of teaching actions, promoting those that encourage the inclusion of the knowledge, traditions, and practices of the different peoples. One of the teaching criteria applied in this intercultural approach states that “local knowledge, tradition and practices, include the concepts, classification systems, teaching methods and communication; they also include symbolic components like worldview, temporality, space, the environment, orality, religion, festivals, forms of social organization, natural protection practices, territoriality, medicine, mathematics, architecture, productive work and technology” (Ministry of Education, 2014).

In one of the axes of the curricular diversification, which is cultural and linguistic diversity, the law proposes “to strengthen and make interact wisdom, knowledges and technologies”. As we can see in these proposals, it’s not about closing on themselves but also opening to other knowledges, not meaning assimilation, but rather the assumption of different episteme that can live together and articulate between them.

Finally, in Peru we must refer to the intercultural bilingual education (EIB) pedagogical proposal known as “Towards a Quality Bilingual Education”, approved and published in 2013. This is an important document that includes the thoughts, proposals and progress made on the subject of intercultural education in Peru. The development of this proposal included consultations with teachers, administrators, specialists, male and female leaders and representatives of indigenous organizations.

A key point is the challenge that must be faced by both Intercultural Education and Intercultural Bilingual Education in the sense that both must contribute to eliminate the political asymmetries and inequities that persist in the country. This is interesting, because it once again places intercultural education in the realm of political and power disputes, contributing to show that enormous inequity gaps between indigenous peoples and non indigenous peoples still remain and that they can be closed with culturally relevant education. One of the fundamental approaches for the indigenous peoples incorporated by this proposal, is that Living Well, land and territory, are presented as the core for the reproduction of their life styles, their knowledge and foundations of their collective identity.

The proposal also includes recommendations for the pedagogical work in each of the areas included, both in primary and secondary education. For example, in terms of communication, it proposes that the development of orality is fundamental; in mathematics, it is necessary to develop education processes based on the mathematical knowledge that exists among the people and which responds to their realities; while in the personal and social areas there is a need to recover the testimonies, narrations and histories of the communities and the peoples, which will guarantee that the collective memory is kept alive among the new generations, contributing to preserve the identity of the peoples.

Chapter III

Relevant practices
of incorporation and
dialogue with indigenous
knowledge in education
policies

Considering the concept of “good practices” or relevant practices of incorporating indigenous knowledge into the education process and national education policies, we must refer to four of these as they have been relevant in the countries under study. Both the production of regionalized curricula according to original peoples in Bolivia, the Mingas in the schools of Ecuador, the school tinkuys in Peru and the construction of community school calendars in all three countries give evidence of processes that produce important results.

In this sense, relevant practices are those that show interaction between school and community, acknowledging to a greater or lesser degree that the students are ‘carriers’ of a culture and allowing the participation of different actors in the education process, together with the inclusive learning of indigenous and non-indigenous students.

a) **Construction of regionalized curricula in Bolivia**

Regarding the administration and management on the plurinational education system, Title III of the Avelino Siñani – Elizardo Pérez education law enacted in 2010 establishes that the Ministry of Education is responsible for the design, approval and implementation of the basic curriculum, which must include the participation of all education actors; it must also support the formulation and approval of regionalized curricula, in coordination with the originary indigenous nations, preserving their harmony and complementarity with the basic plurinational curriculum. In this sense, the law states that “The regionalized curriculum refers to the organized set of plans and programmes, objectives, contents, methodological and assessment criteria in a determined education subsystem and level, that expresses the uniqueness and complementarity with the regular basic curriculum of the Plurinational Education System, giving special consideration to the characteristics of the sociocultural and linguistic context given to its identity” (Art. 70).

The construction of regionalized curricula is a concurrent competition, with the intervention of the central level, autonomous entities (departamental and municipal governments) and the originary peoples. The regular basic curriculum is of an intercultural nature while the regionalized curricula reflect more this interculturalism as they are produced participatively with each of the peoples. In this way, the Ministry of Education (MED) and the organizations representing

the indigenous peoples work on the development and validation of a curriculum-building methodology that ensures the school-community link and, at the same time, permits an adequate approach to the peoples’ own knowledge and tradition. As declared by MED staff, the Ministry’s technical teams play a facilitating role. As a first step in this process, indigenous organizations send a letter to the Ministry in which they request technical and economic support. After the logistical preparation, the MED team travels to the village and holds an initial meeting in which they explain the policy and work structure and then begin to work on each of the items. In the case of large groups, like the quechua or aymara peoples, the process has been extremely well organized, contemplating a preliminary selection of delegates; on the other hand, in the small villages in the lowlands, the entire community has to move, including the mayors, wise people and/or the elders.

The indigenous people and the MED take part in the workshops for the construction of the regionalized curriculum; they organize for knowledge to be collected as it is expressed and lived by the people themselves. The objective of this is to structure knowledge and harmonize it with the own contents of the people, because the indigenous people have generated a knowledge and describe it in another way, as a complete and comprehensive narrative. For example, among many indigenous people, the meaning of the arrow as a symbol of authority is not

separated from the way in which an arrow is made, the types of arrows available, or the types of animals hunted with that arrow. In other words, the explanation of knowledge is symbolic, productive and utilitarian, it is not compartmentalized as occurs in Western knowledge. This is so because indigenous peoples consider that knowledge is part of a cultural system that includes the language, classification system, religiosity and spirituality, as opposed to Western knowledge that separates rationality from spirituality, proposing the rationalist method as the only way of acquiring knowledge.

Once the indigenous peoples have constructed their curricula, working with workshops, and applying the guidelines and methodologies established, the Ministry approves the curriculum by means of a Ministerial Resolution, without changing anything at all, because its contents correspond to what the people decided and determined freely. Subsequently, the basic and regionalized curricula are harmonized. This takes us to the words (in personal communication) of Walter Gutiérrez, Head of the Ministry of Education's Intercultural, Intracultural and Bilingualism Policy Unit:

“ For example, [the indigenous peoples] say that symbology should be a discipline and we say that [it] is impossible, because there are no teachers trained in the teaching of symbology, and we cannot replace them owing to time constraints. This is an issue that you [the peoples] propose, but it is in the community, in society, it is in the social sciences, everything you mention is here. That is what the technicians of the originary peoples believe, and we have already discussed the approval and implementation of the programme”.

According to official information, the Regionalized Curriculum complements the Basic Curriculum, prioritizing customs, language and other important aspects of each region. Andean knowledge and tradition are based on the following curricular contents: Symbology and signs, Music, dance and games, Principles and values, Religiosity, Myths and History, Government and Community organizations, Communication and language, Justice, Health and Medicine, Nature, Space, Territory, Arts and crafts, Production, Calculations and estimations, Technology.

The Bolivian Regionalized Curriculum incorporates a strategy for the recovery and valorization of the originary language, so that it becomes a proposal made by indigenous peoples for the rescue of the political, ideological, economic, social, cultural, juridical and epistemological values of a given region.

In addition to this participative methodology of construction, exchange and consensus between the indigenous peoples and the Ministry, the regionalized curriculum permits exchanges between indigenous and non indigenous children. It is also of a decolonizing nature which includes community, intra and intercultural, plurilingual, scientific, technical and productive elements that apply to all Bolivian schools. Curricular areas, which are the regular disciplines or subjects only come after this process; indigenous peoples start from what they call the ordering principle of their worldview and identity, which also has their ordering axes: the spiritual world and the natural world, as indigenous peoples always consider the existence of what is material and spiritual.

The programme of the Bolivian Regionalized Curriculum includes primary and secondary level contents. As a general proposal, they still have to include contents for some grades or courses. At present, there are eleven regionalized curricula; the Aymaraquillana, the Chiquitano, the Guarayos, the Mojeño, the Guarani, the Ayoreo, the Quechua and Uruguarani. There are still 17 to be developed.

A key issue in the formulation and development of this regionalized curricula is that regarding monitoring of the process, developing actions tending to guarantee their proper implementation and the quality of the education process. With this in mind, the MED has selected eight model districts throughout the country, which include four nations: Aymaras, Guaranis, Quechua and Yaminagua.

The work carried out by the Education Councils of the Original Peoples (CEPOS), the social organizations involved in the education of originary indigenous peoples and nations of Bolivia, which the Bolivian State has legally recognized since 1994, and which carry out coordinated work throughout the country since 2004, includes the monitoring of the education policy, following up the application of the regionalized curriculum in terms of content, community involvement, and operation within the school. Their aim is that all education units have their own CEPOS, and the creation of a community Social Education Council with the participation of parents, authorities, teachers and student representatives.

In the case of inclusion and dialogue with traditional knowledge and the worldview of the indigenous peoples in the regionalized curricula, the CEPOS have identified some urgent points to be addressed. A case in point is the development of Productive Social Projects (PSP); within the education units.

These projects are jointly developed by the school and the community, and must include the participation of wise men and women, teachers and students throughout the entire production process: from the preparation of the soil, to the selection of seeds, etc. However, the development of these projects contemplated in the regionalized curriculum requires a political will in the area of teacher training, so that they become involved in the new education orientation. This coincides with the position of Nancy Claros, Director

of the National Community Coordinating Agency of Original Peoples' Education Councils (CNC-CEPOS), in personal communication:

“ For example, there are no teachers in the lowlands, and if there are any they have been trained in the old system, that uses extremely classical teaching. This is a bottleneck, and the urgency of training human resources has been discussed a lot. The teacher graduates from a training institution and wants to be in a city or near a city, or simply resigns, and does something else. And in the most inaccessible places, you have to hire a Bachelor. It is true that we have started training according to the education model; with a cultural perspective of knowledge, and that is a subjects to refer to Living Well, but there is still a lot to do”.

There is no doubt that the formulation of regionalized curricula in Bolivia is relevant in terms of incorporation, dialogue and revalorization of indigenous knowledge. It is also an ambitious and quite unique proposal, since an adequate development requires the monitoring and participation of the peoples themselves through their organizations. At this initial stage, there are important lessons to be learnt, urgent challenges that need to be addressed by the pertinent sectors. These are explained in detail in the following chapter.

b) **School mingas in Ecuador**

Article 347 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador establishes that it is the duty of the State to guarantee the active participation of students, families and teachers in the education processes. Similarly, the Organic Law on Intercultural Bilingual Education establishes that the State: “must guarantee, in accordance with the principles of social, territorial and regional equity, that all people have access to public education” (Official Record, 2011). Its seventh chapter, regarding the rights and obligations of the Community, refers to the need to encourage a process of sessions, with mutual respect, between the organized community and the education centres located within its territory. In order to do this, the State is responsible, among other things, for producing and maintaining an environment that encourages the development of education activities on school premises, and it is the duty of the community to respect and care for installations and educational resources; and to take part whenever possible in the maintenance and improvement of schools from the point of view of their cultural practices and territorial initiatives.

Schools tend to increasingly organize school mingas within this framework to improve educational infrastructure in places where geographic and climate conditions constantly exposed them to deterioration. As explained before, “minga” is a Quecha Word that refers to reciprocity and community work, relating to mutual help among friends, relations and neighbours

for the attainment of a shared objective. In the past few years, education authorities, parents and students have agreed that the implementation of mingas in education units provides an opportunity to encourage solidarity and community work. In this sense, and in view of the proximity of the beginning of the school year, education establishments in districts like Otavalo, Imbabura and Quito itself, organize mingas to clean and refurbish schools with the participation of parents and teachers and schoolworkers. Ministry of Education staff say that people share different tasks like painting classrooms, sweeping yards, cutting the grass and repairing folders during a minga. Although some parents find difficulty in taking part because of the distance or other obstacles, the aim is to guarantee a basic minimum attendance, and for those who could not show up, to commit to take part in the next minga, thus ensuring a rotational and reciprocal basis.

Once the minga or collective work is finished, its participants share food that has been prepared by the community, encouraging exchange, solidarity and empathy as a basis for overcoming inequity and contributing to collective welfare. The good results obtained with the school mingas have also been valued by other State sectors that work with the school community, choosing this practice as a way of solving common problems. For example, in the case of the Ministry of Health, which in coastal cities like Guayaquil, carries out a national minga against dengue fever,

so that the community comes together to eliminate hatcheries of the mosquito that spreads the disease, including actions in schools. Parents and public administrators and schoolworkers collaborate with health personnel in fumigation and cleaning activities, in addition to creating an awareness on the need to eradicate this viral disease transmitted by vectors, which is one of the most extended diseases in the world and constitutes one of the greatest challenges for world health.

In addition to encouraging the care and maintenance of schools, mingas also contribute to the development of festive activities, permitting the intercultural celebration of national traditions and dates. For example, in December the foundation of Quito is celebrated, with the “Fiestas de Quito” taking place in neighbourhoods and schools. In 2015, the Ministry of Education declared that this celebration (of the Spanish foundation of the city) was the RaymiShungo”, which translates into “Festivity of the Heart”, encouraging a kind of recreational and mutual knowledge minga. In this way, all schools, not only the EIB establishments worked with traditional games and recovered the history of the city before the arrival of the Spanish conquerors, among other activities. The festivity ended with the “Pamba mesa” which is the moment when the indigenous peoples share their food after doing community work. Before going out to work on a minga, families prepare food they will share at a community lunch. Secretary of Education, Margarita Arotingo says in personal communication that this activity is a way of encouraging the exchange of knowledge and traditions throughout the school community:

“The entire education community, including teachers, students, administrators takes part in these

activities, and this is interesting because the Pamba mesa has food ranging from ‘mellocos’⁷ to cornflakes. The idea is that our ‘wawas’, the children from the non bilingual system, should become familiar with these things as daily routines, so that they don’t consider them removed from them. The fiesta de Quito is the Spanish foundation, but we wish to link this with the festival of what we are today, the festival of the heart. These activities are not necessarily included in the official curriculum, but is a hidden curriculum that becomes stronger and lets us see progres”.

Although experts and a large part of the education community consider these practices a contribution to the valorization of knowledge and worldviews of the indigenous peoples, it is also necessary to take into account criticisms and challenges, especially those identified by representatives of indigenous organizations. This is the case of the comments by the heads of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) for whom the proposal of the State does not fully consider indigenous peoples to be “actors of knowledge”, because curricula and study plans don’t enrich themselves with the peoples contribution. The current government’s proposal would be basically academic, validated and implemented by administrators

⁷ Mellocos are Andean tubers eaten in the Andes of Ecuador; they are known as olluco in Peru and Bolivia.

without sufficient intercultural dialogue with the community, the peoples and their representative organizations. But, these reservations are not shared by the National Federation of Peasant, Indigenous and Black Organizations (FENOCIN), whose leaders say that the implementation of practices like mingas express the efforts made to incorporate the indigenous peoples into the education proposal, in addition to representing progress in the articulation of values and practices of the original peoples to the entire national society, encouraging dialogue and exchange. But, the challenges that the Ministry of Education must face include mingas in the school year, contemplating three compulsory mingas per year, which are the moment in which the whole community joins in and experiences this process. It should also be noted that the minga is not an activity removed from the “white creoles” or for the urban world, because they do refer to community work in which the entire neighbourhood participates in the construction of a house of one of the neighbours and then celebrate the wasipichay or celebration of the opening of a new house.

More than a proposal for curricular development, the minga represents a current relevant and concrete practice of how to dialogue with the knowledge and traditions of the indigenous peoples who, after certain social processes like migrations and deployment, are present on wider parts of the territory. Mingas also enable the participation of the entire education community and activate exchange between indigenous and non indigenous population, we can make a collective reflection of their cultural identity, traditions and customs, in a context of increased respect for otherness, innovation, equity and solidarity.

C)

Meeting of traditions: The tinkuys in Peru

In the past three years, the Peruvian Ministry of Education through its General Directorate of Intercultural, Bilingual, Rural and Alternative Education (DIGEIBRA) has promoted the National School Tinkuy Encounter. This gathering has been established by a Ministry of Education (MINEDU) Ministerial Resolution as a space that promotes learning processes and exchanges among students, especially Afro-Peruvians and original peoples. At the tinkuys, sixth grade primary students from different indigenous peoples and Afro-Peruvian communities meet in Lima to exchange experiences, knowledge and worldviews, in an experience that also promotes knowledge, respect and the valorization of cultural diversity existing in the country among students who do not belong to these peoples.

Tinkuy is a Quechua word which can be translated as “gathering”; the MINEDU has taken this meaning and designed a two or three day meeting in Lima, focused on a central discussion subject. In 2015, the central theme was “Our relationship with Nature” and was directed at showing the ways in which the peoples and communities interrelate with nature and how they encourage its care and conservation. In order to take part in the tinkuys, students must first develop learning projects at their schools with the help of their teacher. Then, the Regional Directorate of Education and the DIGEIBIR select the best project that represents the people or community in the national gathering. 148 students, girls and boys, took part in the 2015 version of this activity; they were distributed into 32 student delegations belonging to afro-descendant communities and two communities of Spanish speaking students

from the north of the country, in addition to the students from private and public schools in Lima who can visit the stands during the meeting.

Both the preliminary participation rules and selection of the learning projects and the exhibition and exchange space developed in Lima has made the tinkuys a relevant practice that contributes to the interculturization of national education. Public and private schools can take part in this activity in a process of acknowledging Peru as a culturally, socially and linguistically diverse country, valuing this diversity as a possibility for collective wellbeing instead of construing it as a problem. State authorities consider that the Tinkuys become more successful every year and that they have managed to bring together children from different regions of the country by means of a contest-based selection process that involves the regional networks that choose the schools and their representatives. Lucy Trapnell, Adviser to the Ministry of Education declared in personal communication that:

“ Many boys [and girls] from public and private schools in Lima attend [the tinkuys], including elite private schools ... these boys [and girls] from these schools join in well, showing great interest and motivation. The Tinkuys include a time for games and entertainment, but there are moments when the boys [and girls] that come from

every village set up their stall with their central theme, and sometimes they ask questions, writing in their notebooks, recording, and asking; this is an instance of dialogue and acknowledgement of the fact that this other boy [or girl] knows something you don't know and which you would like to know more about. For example, the stands that were most popular for questions were those related to medicinal plants. There was a lot of interest in knowing more about this" .

For indigenous organizations, the experience of the tinkuys is an important initiative that should be valued and improved, because it has managed to generate greater interaction and mutual recognition between children from different peoples in the country. Along these lines, it is thought that the scope of tinkuys could be expanded so as to improve their potential as an intercultural activity. For example, the case of the greater involvement of the community in the process of producing the learning projects, incorporating indigenous wise men and women or community leaders that enrich the work with their knowledge. This involvement now depends greatly on the attitude of classroom teachers in charge of directing the formulation and development of the projects, so the participation of wise men and women or community leaders is not always contemplated. This is what in personal communication quechua teacher Gabina Córdova has to say on the subject:

" For example, the tinkyus organized by the Ministry of Education, those encounters of

students from different cultures and original peoples who travel to Lima and are attended by students from more affluent sectors, are important because with this exchange those boys [and girls] feel that they are part of our country and are not circumscribed to their communities or private schools. This very specific act, which can seem insignificant, has enormous historical and political weight in the sense that an encounter between boys [and girls] contributes to close the gap between this divorce that has always existed between the State and the indigenous peoples...but, it is in an initial stage, and in order to gain strength it must address what we are recommending" .

In a country like Peru, progress to make interculturalism a pillar of the national education system instead of exclusively an indigenous affair is still incipient, so the Tinkuys represent a relevant practice for dialogue between knowledge and traditions, generating exchanges between the actors of the education system like public and private schools, in addition to including indigenous and Afro-Peruvian organizations. Similarly, in addition to the fact that it is the children who research and show their projects, it implies an interaction with the community, consulting the wise men and women, the elders and preparing exhibitions for a public which despite being their same age, is different.

d) The indigenous calendars

A relevant practice found in the three countries included in the study relates to the collective construction of community calendars, which aim to identify relevant community activities in the dates of the school year. These dates allude to the development of festivities, productive activities or others related to indigenous knowledge or traditions, enriching the school process.

In Peru, there is a pioneering experience developed by the programme for Training Bilingual Teachers in the Amazon (FORMABIAP) of the AIDSESEP (Inter-ethnic Association of the Peruvian Rainforest), a national Amazonian organization which since 1990 has been developing school calendars that are integrated to community activities in the Amazonia, from an approach that emphasizes the idea of developing activities related to a FORMABIAP project. For example, if the teachers propose a project for planting maize, they do not describe the process, instead they take part in activities with the children, based on the social division of labour and of the dates established by the community. The same occurs in the case of making hunting traps, in addition to learning about their use, they are made with techniques that recover the experience of the people. The official calendar established by the Ministry of Education is enriched, including important dates of the communities, like hunting days, fishing days or days related to nature,

like the growth or drying up of rivers. According to the teachers involved in this experience, at the beginning FORMAIEP had difficulty in including these calendars in the schools, because parents did not want their children leave the classroom and learn things that went beyond the established curriculum, but at present the Ministry endorses the construction of these calendars, which are used in most of the bilingual, intercultural schools in Amazonia.

Ecuador has a similar practice, the “Experiential and educational community calendars” which summarize the implementation of the model of the intercultural bilingual education system according to the school year. In this way, the calendars are designed in a participative way by each nationality, with parents, teachers and elders or “yachays” taking part in the process with their ancestral knowledge of time. In addition, the calendars are structured around experiential areas including productive activities like agro-ecologically relevant dates, communal participation dates and finally, the dates of the festivals or “raymis”, both community festivals and the three national raymis. According to the Ministry of Education, there are currently fourteen approved and implemented community experiential calendars, which contribute to interculturalize education and relate it to the community. The calendars are used to guide teaching activities, generating links between

teaching time and community activities; for example, organizing natural sciences education about life and plant cultivation according to the period for sowing or harvesting. These calendars are used in all the schools in the country and contain the ancestral knowledge of the participating peoples, and are an essential part of the new EIB curriculum.

Finally, in Bolivia the implementation of the regionalized curriculum contemplates the need to adapt teaching dates to festive, productive or other important dates. This implies that once the curriculum has been harmonized, the schools propose a calendar according to the Productive Social Projects (PSP), of the education units where the community records agricultural production processes with the participation of the community's wise men and women. For example, a community can develop a project for planting peach trees on an eight hectare plot of land, and the school is in charge of formulating the project and working jointly with the community in the entire process, ranging from preparing the soil, selecting seeds, sowing and harvesting. The same happens with the dates in which the community goes fishing, as occurs with the Amazonian peoples. The curriculum permits this link and dialogue between teaching dates and important community dates, enabling students to know and take part in the transmission of knowledge, placing it on relevant dates or periods.

Chapter IV

Challenges for
indigenous knowledge
and education policies

The interesting normative development, the implementation of reforms and the relevant practices developed in the Andean countries so as to include increasing indigenous knowledge and tradition into the national education policies present enormous progress, but also challenges and difficulties which must be faced when progressively establishing more horizontal dialogues and exchanges. These challenges are identified by the authorities themselves and by native leaders, and require synergies to face them and sustain the progress made. The following are some of the challenges that are considered to be most relevant.

Acknowledging the indigenous peoples in their diversity

A central challenge for Latin American societies and their efforts to re-valorize and include indigenous knowledge, is the recognition of the enormous cultural diversity that exists within each of the countries in the region. Given their size or the political processes they have developed, some indigenous peoples are more visible today or have had more relevance in educational policies than others. Such is the case of the Andean Quechua peoples. Quechua is currently one of the most widely spoken original languages in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, due to its expansion during the Inca Empire and in colonial times through the activities of catholic evangelizers and the new republics which focused indigenous knowledge and teaching on this nation (Guerrero, 2010). This situation affects the fact that today public policies prioritize work with certain peoples to the detriment of others, which are generally less numerous and more dispersed geographically, as is the case of the Amazonian peoples or those of the highlands. Likewise, the opportunity to enlarge the interaction between the different groups is lost,

obviating knowledges that are the product of very specific ways of life and differentiated with nature, and equally valuable for the preservation and reproduction of cultures.

There is an increasing need to develop approaches, practices and records that facilitate the mutual recognition of knowledge, overcoming the great dichotomy between the knowledge of the “indigenous peoples” and that of the west, as if they were two homogeneous entities, denying the diversity existing between peoples. In this sense, Bolivia has made important progress, given its declaration of pluri-nationality, which defines the mandate of implementing an intracultural, intercultural and plurilingual education. It is precisely the “intra”-cultural approach that complements the “inter”-cultural as it makes visible what belongs to each people, and accounting for the attacks on the identities, languages, and knowledge that indigenous peoples suffered under the Spanish colony and the early republic, favouring a hegemonic culture. For Walter Gutiérrez, this associates decolonizing education, taken as leaving behind “the rationale that what is foreign is best and what is our own is worse, with a similar tendency to discriminate against those who are different”. This generates a chain of prejudice based on the exclusion and subordination of indigenous peoples.

Working in the recognition of the diversity of indigenous peoples, dialoguing with their knowledge and wisdom encouraging exchange between different cultures, requires the production of reference information for teachers and students. Without this pedagogical support and with no intra and intercultural orientation it is difficult to move towards the assessment of indigenous knowledge and its possible inclusion in national contexts in the frame of globalization and a wider exchange.

More research into indigenous knowledge and tradition

The adequate implementation of an education reform process that dialogues with the knowledge and worldviews of the indigenous peoples requires comprehensive and systematic research. The historic processes of conquest and colonization of indigenous peoples resulted in the subordination of their knowledge and tradition, to such an extent that they became invisible, with the resulting loss of languages, ancestral medicinal practices, or techniques for relating to and using nature which are important to preserve, and if necessary, recover. Therefore, it is essential that every country pursues research into the languages and traditions of their original peoples, not only in scientific and utilitarian terms, as is done by the pharmaceutical industry, but in terms of their integral operation and dialogue with education. There is a need to formulate, monitor and implement educational policies and the production of teaching materials and textbooks.

In Bolivia, the process of change includes the creation of the Plurinational Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures (IPELC) with the objective of establishing the policies and guidelines for the development of actions to recover, revitalize, strengthen and develop languages and cultures. With this in mind, it proposes the constitution and operation of the Institutes of Language and Culture (ILCs), created for each original indigenous of Afro-Bolivian people, in the framework of the current legislation, under the principles of interculturalism, intraculturality and plurilingualism. The IPELC on its part works jointly with the "parent institutions"⁸ and the Original Peoples' Education

Councils (CEPOS), on the protection, promotion, diffusion and guarantee of the individual and collective linguistic and cultural rights of its citizens. Part of the IPELC's mandate is "to regulate and establish lines of research, record, teach, use, diffusion of languages, cultures and worldviews; it also guarantees the expression and practice of interculturalism, intraculturality and plurilingualism"⁹. IPELC has played a key role in the construction and implementation of regionalized curricula, providing support to contents, materials and methodologies. The institution is expected to continue with this work, but this requires sufficient resources and adequate staffing.

In Ecuador, the Organic Law of Education has created the Institute of Ancestral Sciences and Knowledge (ICSA), which is part of the Ministry of Education and is in charge of the development and promotion of research and the re-valorization of the knowledge and traditions of the original peoples in dialogue with the education policy. The Institute is also related to the National University of Education of Ecuador, since the authorities consider that a research institute with a university status devoted to ancestral knowledge and tradition gives the subject a broader scope, enabling it to work on curricular grids, teaching research activities and the transmission of tradition, among other complex subjects relevant to learning. To date, ICSA has approved statutes that cover the entire state structure and has called a public contest for the appointment of its director, something which should be defined in 2016. The organizations and peoples demand that the Institute start operating as soon as possible, with the State providing guarantees for budget and staffing.

In Peru, there is still no entity in charge of researching and promoting indigenous knowledge equivalent to those developed in Ecuador and Bolivia. This makes intercultural bilingual education extremely

8 The parent institutions are those which the political constitution recognizes as representing the indigenous or original peoples of Bolivia. They are: The Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB) the Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (CIDOB) the Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu (CONAMAQ) the Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia Bartolina Sisa (CNMCI-OB-BS), Confederación Sindical de Comunidades Interculturales (CSCIB) and the Coordinación Nacional de Organizaciones y Comunidades Afro descendientes (CONAFRO)

9 Competencias del Instituto Plurinacional de Estudio de Lenguas y Culturas (IPELC) <http://www.ipelc.gob.bo/origen/2/>

difficult and, in general, limits the possibilities of a greater understanding and greater dialogue with the knowledge and tradition of the indigenous peoples. In the case of the Amazonia, the main source of research is the Programme for Training Bilingual Teachers in the Amazon (FORMABIAP) which is part of The Inter-ethnic Association of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSESP), which despite its scant resources, has tried to maintain research into the Amazonian peoples. In the past two decades, the State has created four intercultural universities which should contribute to the revalorization of indigenous knowledge and research, but none of these is operating yet or has the accreditation required by law to develop research activities. So it is still urgent for the Peruvian State to assume its responsibility in the recovery and revitalization of indigenous knowledge and tradition, creating the research centres that are required for this.

Teacher training and recruitment

Teachers are key actors in all curricular reform and interculturization proposals in education. Therefore, it is essential that the contents of teacher training, and teacher training itself, should be reformulated, changing hegemonic forms of teaching and learning that are strongly rooted in the curricula and methodological proposals. The recognition of the importance of the community and local knowledge should be a key factor to be taken into account in teacher training programmes. This implies the deconstruction of the thought patterns of different peoples and their systems of knowledge, which have generally been considered unscientific or a constraint in the development of the competencies established in official curricula, and analyse their own teaching and learning systems in order to really understand and

develop an inclusive learning process in their teaching. On this point, Gladis Vila, President of ONAMIAP asserts in personal communication that:

“ It is necessary to start using diverse knowledge, as we have transmitted it. On the other hand, we must see how we integrate orality. Our wise men and women have much to transmit to schoolchildren. I always give the example of my grandmother, how she taught me. Every night, before going to bed, she would tell us a story. Which for example, my mother did not do. We have been losing transmission. But in my grandmother’s culture, there was the story to be told or a song to be sung as a way of transmitting knowledge”.

Teacher training should include a cognitive dimension, a methodological dimension that enables the development of intercultural competencies in daily life, and an understanding of the role played by empathy with others, with those other cultures and their members; a dimension that is not fully developed in education curricula and which would enable teachers to get nearer to the conceptual universe of students.

On the other hand, especially in Peru and Ecuador, one of the greatest challenges in teacher training is an overall intercultural perspective on a general level and on every level of the education process, because this training is basically aimed at people who will

work at intercultural schools for native peoples. In the case of Ecuador, this is different because it still does not have a group of trained teachers to develop this legal mandate. In personal communication, Freddy Peñafiel, Vice Minister of Education of Ecuador says in this respect:

“ Today the law says that we are all intercultural, there is even a constitutional mandate for including the teaching of an ancestral language throughout the education system, but this still can’t be implemented because we do not have the teachers, not even for the EIB system...We are training teachers and have the mandate and are going to work on including a second ancestral language in education, although we do not have the teachers. We must work on it” .

Similarly, training a teacher with intercultural perspectives includes the challenge of producing and having the pertinent materials, something which has not been sufficiently developed and which makes progress difficult. This situation is quite clear in Peru, where the staff of the Directorate of Intercultural Bilingual Education admit that although they wish to incorporate interculturalism outside the indigenous environment, they still lack the texts and teaching materials required by teachers, so it is difficult to make progress.

In this same sense, it is necessary to produce digital education materials which should be designed and conceived by the teachers from an intercultural perspective. The alternative is to make use of

technological resources in teacher training, to try to establish networks, exchange experiences and develop team learning through new information and communication technologies, which are valuable instruments for the exchange and diffusion of educational contents and proposals.

This implies that the education sector should allocate budgets for teacher training and for hiring teachers, with the corresponding salary or academic benefits, especially in the case of teachers working in rural areas. Likewise, resources are required to strengthen research with the indigenous peoples which can nourish formative teacher training and the development of intercultural competencies.

Predominant institutional approaches: competency and meritocratic systems

Globalization has brought forth the expansion of a series of assessment guidelines and criteria in the education systems which monitor student progress and failure in different countries. This implies the valorization of some forms of knowledge over others and the standardization of the basic contents students should master in order to be considered within acceptable levels for the development of their countries. For example, one of these elements is the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which aims to assess to what extent students nearing the end of compulsory education have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for a full participation in the knowledge society. PISA results show the countries with good levels of performance, and an equitable distribution of learning opportunities, helping to establish ambitious targets for other countries¹⁰.

10 <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaenespaol.htm> Lima, November 2011.

PISA's standard testing is currently a global indicator of education quality that allows the assessment and measurement of the development of knowledge, but does so on the basis of hegemonic knowledge, in other words from the point of view of the dominant Western knowledge established in "national" guidelines and curricula. It is also framed in a utilitarian perspective of competitiveness in education in which students must learn well so as to be able to gain a place in the labour market. This therefore disregards other forms of knowledge and indigenous peoples ways of learning which are not necessarily involved in a cost-benefit logic of learning, standardizing reading comprehension skills or mathematical skills and rendering worldviews and ancestral practices invisible. When establishing "education quality" rankings and objectives, states enter a kind of competition for obtaining better results, so that they are seen as "developed" or in order to attract foreign direct investment. This generates negative effects in cases like EIB schools in Peru, where students have the worst assessment. A Ministry of Education staff member exemplifies this phenomenon:

“ For example, we saw some EIB school directors in the department of Amazonia who asked their teachers and students to “definitely” improve their scores in sample tests, and that they are responsible for the low statistical performance levels in the area and in the country. When we were doing the investigation (sic) we saw that the awajuncasi devoted no time to the personal, science and environmental areas, only two hours per week while the rest of the time was devoted to language

and mathematics. As directors they have things to do, they change the timetables and give more openings to those areas” .

In the case of Bolivia, since the first period of Evo Morales government, Bolivia decided not to take part in the PISA Evaluation System, maintaining this stance till now. In Ecuador, in October 2016, a pilot test for the PISA evaluation was taken, because the Ministry of Education considered important to collect information through this instrument.

Both the PISA tests and other instruments to measure teaching and learning pose a challenge to education systems in the sense that they must accept institutional agendas concerned with improving their students' performance, while respecting the epistemological diversity and ways of knowing of the indigenous peoples. The prioritization of competitiveness and "excellence", encouraging high performance projects that only value one type of competencies and learning outcomes, affects institutional timescales and budgets, and also establishes a meritocratic paradigm based on competition among learners, in accordance with standards such as gaining access to higher education grants. Alternative knowledge, other ways of seeing and understanding the world, may once again be excluded or subordinated.

It is important to note that both Bolivia and Ecuador (and also Peru) are members of the Latinamerican Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE), a network of National Coordinators which are specialists in educational evaluation in 19 Latinamerican countries, and a coordination team which is located in OREALC/UNESCO, Santiago, Chile.

Since 1994, LLECE applies Regional Comparative and Explanatory Studies, a learning process evaluation whose aim is to contribute to an informed public debate about quality in an education without exclusion, in favour to guarantee the right to education, which gathers all of the UNESCO efforts. For that, they measure learning achievements in mathematics, reading and writing in third grade students, and the same subjects plus natural sciences in sixth grade students. In addition, they identify the associated factors that influence these results, one of them, belonging or not to an indigenous culture. The Latinamerican Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education nowadays is claimend as the main monitoring and monitoring mechanism that the region has in the E2030 Agenda which emphasizes educational quality, inclusion and equity, as to the promotion of longlife learning opportunities.

Professionalization and bureaucratization in knowledge inclusion

The education reform processes carried out in Bolivia and Ecuador require an increasing number of professionals capable of developing competencies for the implementation of the new curricula and education guidelines that include native knowledge and tradition. In this way, it becomes necessary to carry out bureaucratic processes in which a greater part of the environment and conception of knowing and learning of the peoples should be “translated into” the language of management and planning, often losing their original meaning. For example, in the case of the “harmonization” of the regionalized curricula in Bolivia, where the entire process of participatory construction of a nation must be translated into education management codes and teaching processes, at the risk of losing important foundations.

In other cases, like Peru, the process of collecting knowledge for Intercultural Bilingual Education has been carried out by institutions like FORMABIAP, in direct contact with the communities themselves. This information, most of which has been recorded through fieldwork, has not been systematized, so if EIB teachers wish to use it, they must make a double effort: “translate” what has been learned and to make it compatible with the curricular areas. There is still no state policy that enables the collection, systematization and translation of all this knowledge, and the support materials for students and teachers, like textbooks and guides into a pedagogical language.

The challenge is then to research, record and systematise the knowledge of the indigenous peoples so as to make them accessible for education, without limiting them to bureaucratic processes in which the competencies or skills that are valued are closest or removed from that which is considered indigenous.

This process of transfer, translation and harmonization of knowledge may contribute to the loss of epistemologic support, as would be the case of knowledge reproduction systems and finally, the worldviews of the peoples themselves. The achievement of this adequate “harmonization” as a respectful intercultural dialogue and not as an effort of compatibility where the focus is on bureaucratic homogenization is still a challenge.

Gender and indigenous women in the dialogue of knowledge

Despite the fact that in the past years there has been important progress regarding the access of indigenous children, especially girls, to education, not much progress has been made to see, recognize and dialogue with the knowledge indigenous women have constructed, which is important for family and community life.

In the distribution of gender roles in different cultures, it has generally been assumed that women are responsible for raising children, for domestic duties and for caring for the family, although in indigenous communities there is a permanent shift between domestic and productive, which have relatively blurry boundaries. In these daily practices, women have developed a series of knowledges constructed with other women, which are expressed in different forms and in everyday life: weaving, use of colours, symbols of their national visions, the technological development implied in the conservation of seeds, and which has maintained their biological diversity, or their knowledge of plants or their uses to cure the diseases of the body and of the spirit. These practices as weavers, healers, creators are not being fully incorporated into the education processes, and are at risk, while they could really be part of intercultural education processes that could also be developed in urban schools. This would contribute to countering the loss of the cultural identities of the native peoples, which is formed and strengthened by the transmission of knowledge; it would also contribute to enriching humanity with knowledge that can be a common legacy for future generations.

In this sense, it is necessary to study how women's knowledge is valued in our times, because we might see that it is considered inferior in patriarchal societies, where female is equated with inferior. Similarly, these hierarchical relationships and the differences in power that exist in society can lead to an undervaluation of the knowledge and contributions of indigenous women and to the loss of the possibility of delivering knowledge that is valuable for society as a whole.

On the other hand, and taking into account the new learning contexts, opportunities and spaces for indigenous peoples, they must also break gender subordinated cultural mandates and incorporate women into the teaching and learning of aspects that have been considered to be exclusively masculine. The

intensification of connexions between peoples and their local and global environments, and of mobility and migratory flows, have enhanced the roles women have assumed and can assume owing to the changes produced in their communities.

Dialogue and relationship with indigenous organizations

Indigenous organizations have played a fundamental role in the development of proposals for intercultural education, encouraging them and demanding that they become public policy in the three countries under study. This effort has been accompanied by a series of tensions regarding the demands of these peoples, since, as we have mentioned before, the hegemonic and ethno-centered vision of education persists among a large percentage of the administrators in the sector as well as a lack of political will for developing interculturalism in education. The differences between governments and indigenous organizations, which tend to be caused by different views on development or by diverse policies that are implemented and which go beyond the education framework, have affected government relations with these organizations, making it difficult at times to carry out joint endeavours, as differences may intensify which makes it difficult to find the possibility of strengthening positive experiences. From the view of the indigenous organizations, the experience of Ecuador represents what can happen when political differences are enhanced, that is what the leaders of the Quechua People of Ecuador Confederation Ecurunari, have said, for whom the dialogue between knowledges and the recovery of collective memory of the different struggles that had been taking on, were interrupted by the current government, that saw the development of indigenous leadership as a threat.

In Ecuador, indigenous organizations have explained the results of political differences with governments. According to the heads of the Confederation of Quechua Peoples of Ecuador, Ecuarunari, the dialogue of knowledge and the recovery of collective memory, were interrupted by the current government, as it considered the progress made in indigenous protagonism as a threat. This is explained in personal communication by Vice Minister of Education Fredy Peñafiel, when he says:

“ There were contributions, progress had been made in certain aspects, but the EIB had no curriculum, no standard, the experience and memory of the tribal leaders and elders were addressed, but this was not enough to make it part of the national education system” .

On the other hand, in some cases organizations tend to take on the policies designed without questioning them, which puts them at risk of losing both their capacity to contest or propose alternatives, and the distance necessary for a more in-depth analysis of their proposals from the point of view of their own experiences.

So the challenge lies in the fact that despite the differences that might exist between indigenous organizations and the government or its administrators, or of the political differences that might exist between the indigenous organizations themselves, there should be a clear feeling that these organizations represent the feelings and demands of their own peoples. Therefore, their proposals -and representation and participation mechanisms- should continue to be a part of the educational process and of policy designs, and

must remain autonomous, as this is the element that contributes to constructive criticism and to a better scenario for dialogue and negotiation of proposals that might be assumed by the sector. On the other hand, in terms of the organizations, it is also essential that they maintain the issue of education on their agendas, because there is the risk that the urgency of education could be displaced by other issues which have been considered more acute priorities. This is what happened in Peru with the AIDSESEP, an organization that played a decisive role in the encouragement of intercultural education and which today, in view of other problems, such as territorial issues, the progress of extraction industries and investment policies, either lose interest in or abandon the demands for a better quality education and its incorporation into the intercultural perspective. This situation can result in a loss of what has been gained, specially with government changes, when there is no continuity in the policy and in the people in charge of its implementation.

Society and Nation State; respecting and recognizing the value of their indigenous knowledge

In the different countries, the education systems of the indigenous peoples are contained in the classroom – school – teacher model, in other words, in a school-focused education system that ignores or undervalues the education systems, knowledge and tradition of the community, which are not developed in a confined space, and are considered regressions in terms of the modern knowledge proposed at the “western” school. This model, which is framed in the “civilizing” process of the Nation States affects the vision and dynamics of the peoples, developing a negative self-image, and considering integration and modernity as an aspirational model, and the only way to attain development. As put forth by Javier Paredes: “This

hegemony had a direct effect on learning forms – forms of reproduction – and also on the communities' forms of production. The restructuring of the community educational space affected its economic and community activities. The appearance of the school and the curriculum, with all their implications, contributed enormously to the community destructuring processes and to the consolidation of capitalism and colonialism as a system of social and economic organization" (Paredes Mallea, 2011; p. 112). The ensuing undervaluation of knowledge and de-structuring also generate a sense of rootlessness in the young, a need to separate themselves from this which is considered "backward", which ends up facilitating the processes of dispossession of indigenous territories.

One of the great challenges is to allow the education processes with indigenous peoples to be contextualized and framed in the history of the peoples, in their forms of organization, their practices and traditional institutions, and in general in the logical processes that produce this knowledge, but at the same time need to overcome the local character that marks the recognition of indigenous knowledge and make sure that they are incorporated into the national curriculum with the same hierarchy as the knowledge coming from Western culture. This would contribute to change the views on indigenous peoples and to recognize their contributions to the construction of their countries, contributing to change the mentality of the new generations.

In this sense, actions that recover traditional institutions and community practices like the *Minga* or the *Tinkuys*, are ongoing intercultural experiences that express values of collaboration and reciprocity that are different from the competitive approach of national education. An effort should be made to give meaning to these practices in the different contexts in which they are developed, together with the value they have for different societies, taking on the challenge of searching for the articulation of these values and practices with

the methodologies and assessments competitively assumed by education, so they will be unable to contribute to sustainable development, which at the same time assumes "living well".

"Living well" and indigenous worldviews in education policies

Finally, there is the challenge of entering into dialogue with the indigenous worldviews, in other words, with certain perspectives, conceptualizations and valorizations that constitute their way of seeing the world and relating to one another and to their environment. This includes their relations with nature, the understanding of collective welfare and the improvement of ways of life different from those of the dominant group. The *suma qamaña* or the *allin kausay* finally express this complexity and cannot be reduced to ideas of life to be added to a curriculum or which we aim to generalize by decree in our education policies for their diffusion. These notions are part of historical and adaptation processes for generating community links that at the same time sustain the knowledge and tradition transmitted from the community in coexistence with its environment. They are basically decolonizing paradigms of thought that propose other ways of living fully, for which the introduction and inclusion of knowledge into education policies in a dialogue with other worldviews, without taking away their substance, is a challenge.

Likewise, careful attention not to fall into "essentialism" is necessary; to avoid cases in which the understanding and comprehension of indigenous worldviews is inaccessible to those who do not belong to these peoples. Rather, coherent and articulate dialogue is required, for example in public policy, this coherence implies the valorization and assumption of good living and the knowledge of the indigenous peoples

in addition to respecting their territories. In this same sense, as occurs in diverse Latin American countries, congruence is necessary when promoting intercultural education policies, but this seems difficult to achieve when investment and economic policies continue to have an extractive developmental bias in terms of pollution and the displacement of the indigenous peoples. The challenge is for state action to be increasingly articulate and respectful of the existing diversity.

So it is important that the dialogue with the worldviews of the indigenous peoples and with their knowledge and thought in general, should be presented from the point of view of their 'otherness' and not as a subaltern issue. They should be presented as valid knowledge to respond to the needs of their territories, of the country and the world; valuable knowledge for solving different kinds of challenges, in the field of medicine, biodiversity and astronomy, among others. Furthermore, in the case of Good Living, we could say it is a new paradigm for development, with an increasing dialogue with more approaches like sustainable development, extending the possibility of having a better and more decent life, not only for the indigenous peoples but for society as a whole.



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Annexes

Methodology

The methodology entailed the review of education policies and practices related to indigenous knowledge in the three countries mentioned. On the other hand, a total of 24 semi-structured interviews were held with state staff members, indigenous leaders, school staff and students in the three selected countries. This offered direct sources of perception and opinions to contrast with normative development and the implementation of policies aimed at incorporating indigenous knowledge in education policies.

As regards the notion of 'good practices' or relevant practices, these are framed in UNESCO's Guidelines on Intercultural Education, according to which intercultural education cannot be limited to a simple 'appendix' to the teaching programme, since education should be approached holistically (UNESCO; 2004). For example, the importance of the development of integrating education programmes that recognize the teaching of languages, histories and cultures of non-dominant groups should be valued.

In this sense "good practices" tend to be considered those actions or processes that produce outstanding results because they "comply with or surpass the fulfilment of objectives and give expected products,

which are sustainable in time and which can be replicated and applied in other contexts with similar results" (Tocornal et al, 2011).

Nonetheless, in accordance with the objectives of this research, in addition to compliance, replicability and sustainability, a relevant practice in terms of incorporation of indigenous knowledge into education should be conceptualized in the school-community interaction within the framework of the education process, considering UNESCO guidelines and the following criteria.

The acknowledgement that students are 'carriers' and producers of culture

The use of schools as centres of social and cultural activities

The participation of the wise, the elders and the indigenous people artists in the school

Inclusive learning for indigenous and non-indigenous students



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Santiago Office
Regional Bureau of Education for
Latin America and the Caribbean