

Towards an educational agenda for Ayacucho

Municipal and regional elections were accompanied by agreements and governance arrangements between candidates and civil society. It is time for those who were elected to commit to implementing them. The common educational agenda has among its proposals teacher training in IBE (Intercultural Bilingual Education), decentralized education management and policy childcare.

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At the beginning of 2010, in the context of local and regional elections, the Network for Quality Education of Ayacucho¹ together with the Fight against Poverty Forum, the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Network, decided to promote consensus building on regional collective educational goals for the improvement of quality education in Ayacucho and to influence the agenda of candidates for the Regional Government. The purpose was to strengthen institutions, dialogue, good governance and decentralization in order to impact on the discussion among political forces, from the present and unresolved educational agenda, making it possible to advance towards a good education, as expressed in the Regional Education Project (PER), the Na-

¹ The Network for Quality Education of Ayacucho is an important group of institutions who arrange educational efforts for the development and implementation of the Regional Education Project. It is formed by Centro Loyola, Asociación Kallpa, UNICEF, Tarea, USAID/PERU/SUMA, Taller de Promoción Andina-TADEPA, Chirapaq, World Vision, MAN-THOC, among others.

tional Education Project (PEN) and the Local Education Project (PEL) in emergency.

In this context, numerous civil society organizations decided to join to agree on a development agenda in which education plays a key role, and engage elected officials in key policy priority for development. Being education a high priority, institutions committed to developing national and regional education made progress in a single effort that was the basis for what later became the Regional Agreement for the Development of Ayacucho, in close liaison with National Agreement Forum.

ADVOCACY PROCESSES FOLLOWED

From Regional Education Project to an Educational Agenda: Consensus Balance

Consensus Balance was the first step taken, and allowed to convene a group of civil society actors and the State to identify progress in implementing regional educational policies and recognize the challenges and gaps.

The map drawn for this purpose initially proposed was to review the implementation of the PER, to reach an

agreed balance of educational policies, in a meeting that was called "Education First on the agenda of the candidates." In this space, key points to influence candidates were outlined with different stakeholders.

The findings had an impact on issues like teacher training and education from the perspective of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE), viewed from the culture and language, the consequences post-conflict, self-esteem and perception of teachers, strengthening school management, early childhood and process of constructing regional curriculum. This requires the need to have articulated policies to PER of Ayacucho. The actions are related to processes way back in time, experience of previous elections, and work with a concrete proposal to avoid falling into generalities. We had to review documents that were signed in the last elections to learn from them.

This was to ensure a coherent approach - in this case the IBE and historical memory. To do this it was necessary to work a joint communication strategy with other areas to build a development agenda in the region.

FROM THE CONSENSUS BALANCE TO THE FORUM ON "EDUCATION FIRST"

On 9 September 2010 Regional Forum "Agreement for Intercultural Education and Inclusive Regional Development of Ayacucho" was held aimed at candidates for the Regional Government of Ayacucho, thanks to the initial alliance. The priorities of the regional education agenda were socialized with political parties and their candidates for the Regional Government of Ayacucho: From that consensus, urgent political axes in education were achieved.

100% participation of political groups spoke of the importance of this initiative; remarkably "commitments to be signed on education urgent in order not to continue deepening the current gaps that have faces of children, adolescents, women who are waiting for the right to good intercultural education to come."²

The four educational priorities were:

- Inclusion, multiculturalism and coverage.
- Quality education.
- Participative management.
- Investment and financing.

Regarding inclusion, interculturalism and coverage, commitments were: to bridge the gaps in rural education; to give priority to early childhood: increase coverage at preschool level, serve children aged 0 to 3 and 3 to 5, and actively promote the IBE.

Regarding quality education: a) to promote continuous teacher training at regional and local level as an important factor in quality education; b) to establish equal opportunities for rural and urban areas, strengthening quality public education; c) to design a relevant Regional Curriculum for Ayacucho that guarantees quality, involving parents and community; d) to address higher education articulated to regional development; e) to implement innovative projects, incorporating the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) at the regional level; e) to strengthen the Regional Council of Science and Technology.

Regarding participatory management: a) to implement the PER of Ayacucho, allocating a larger budget from the regional government and developing permanent assessment and monitoring in this process; b) to develop a process of reorganization and modernization of regional educational management, a participatory approach that takes into account different levels of government and community participation, promoting inter-agency working (DREA and UGEL restructuring); c) to link local, regional and national educational management; d) to strengthen opportunities for citizen participation such as the Regional Participatory Council on Education (CO-PARE), the Local Participatory Council of Education (CO-PALE) and the Institutional Educational Council (CONEI) to improve education; e) to fight against corruption in the education sector, promoting values from early childhood education; f) to appoint directors of DREA and UGEL through public and transparent open tenders.

Regarding investment and financing: Analysis of alternative financing programs and projects for educational conditions and capacity building conducive to quality education: a) to increase the budget for education in the region; b) to implement libraries and access to ICT, especially in rural areas.

From the Education Forum to the Regional Agreement

On September 22 candidates for the Regional Government signed the Regional Ayacucho Agreement, which includes a set of policies for citizens and the development of the region. Former regional president of Ayacu-

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cho, Ernesto Molina Chavez, and technical secretary of the National Agreement, Max Hernández were present as well as national representatives of the Fight against Poverty Forum and all political groups that participated in the elections of 2010; leaders of grassroots organizations and members of civil society also attended. The policies agreed in the Education Forum were expressed in the document of the Regional Agreement. The axes were:

- 1** Social development, including education, health, nutrition, basic services and housing, in addition to promoting a culture of peace.
- 2** Economic development aimed at improving the road system, agricultural development, tourism, micro and small enterprises, employment and earnings.
- 3** Natural resources and environment, which considers water policy, environment and natural development, as well as reforestation.
- 4** Institutional development and decentralization, political participation, planning and public safety.

To implement the Ayacucho Regional Agreement, candidates agreed to ensure the institutionalization of a Permanent Regional Forum to provide sustainability to commitments of the Agreement.

PERSPECTIVES

These agreements somehow express the aspirations for a more equitable development in general and of education in particular. The challenge assumed in education is the urgency of implementing the PER of Ayacucho and the strengthening of the initiatives being undertaken. On the other hand, concerted action and the willingness of political actors led to the signing of agreements. Yet there is hope that the current administration honours its commitment, as there was disparity between the approaches of political actors in education.

One of the weaknesses of the implementation process of the PER, identified by civil society, is the lack of priority: there are 82 policies for the 6 strategic objectives outlined.

Conditions for the meeting between civil society and the State have been established. Concerted action and the willingness of political actors made possible the signing of the agreement for education, and allow continuing

coordinating efforts for monitoring, surveillance and support to decision-making of education policy and management.

Finally, as highlighted in the report of the CNE (National Education Council):³

Ayacucho is a region that has better articulation between the PER and the Regional Development Plan Agreed (PDRC). However, no PER policy has been prioritized, thus weakening its relationship with other short and medium term management documents.

There is still the need to formulate and prioritize more on development projects and comprehensive capabilities in the region. Ayacucho has made only five Public Investment Projects (PIP) for capacity building between the years 2007-2010 and its investment is S/. 19,385,871, which represents a 28.85% of total PIP budget allocated to education.

The region does not have a Capacity Development Plan for the Regional Direction of Education (DRE-Ayacucho). The training undertaken at the initiative of DREA officials has not meet regional expectations; these have been designed and developed without prior analysis of job demands on issues raised by the system. The result indicates that these skills are not significant and respond to briefings rather than capacity development processes. **■**

³ Monitoring and Reporting System on Implementation of the PER (SSII-PER). Ayacucho Regional Report SSII PER. Available in <http://es.scribd.com/doc/48583200/Reporte-Regional-Ayacucho-VERSION-EDITADA>