

Community-based education in Peru.

Educational policy and trends.

This article explores in community-based education trends in Peru's educational process and policies. Types of education that go beyond the existing pedagogical and formative framework provide an insight into the demands made to the Peruvian State to recognize ancestral knowledge.

La educación comunitaria o la memoria de futuro

Reflexiona sobre la trascendencia de la educación comunitaria, el rol del Estado y de la sociedad y sugiere la necesidad de investigar las pedagogías que se van desarrollando en la educación comunitaria y cómo ésta puede contribuir a renovar el diálogo entre sociedad y Estado, comunidad y sistema educativo oficial. Afirma que la educación comunitaria favorece los aprendizajes intertransculturales.

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Community-based education is likely the most fertile expression of renewal in Peruvian national education. However, public educational policy does not show the political will to take into account ongoing trends, and therefore lacks a horizon to incorporate, promote, recognize and value community-based education.

Until 2014, the State's public policy efforts in this field came principally from the Ministry of Education's former Community Education Department. Now, downgraded to a "Unit"¹ level policymaking division, it has been stripped of the previous authority it was granted by the 2003 General Education Law (28044). Moreover, the National Education Project does not define it as a policy-making division but rather places it under Strategic Objective 6 of the "Educating Society" project's objectives. Without proper policy measures, it will soon become an irrelevant agency. More worrying still is that this development has not caused any concern.

Nor is there clarity about the needs of community-based education in Peru, neither at the Ministry nor the National Education Council, which largely lack the capacity to address the needs of the community-based education experiences underway.

This article presents some key ideas about present trends in community-based education and its relationship with ancestral knowledge in the contemporary Andes and Amazon. It examines how that relationship appears at present, how it is expressed and what is the present context for education and cultural national policies.

To this initial set of questions, we must add some arguments that may trigger a broader debate on these very unusual relationships as part of our reflections about the Peruvian educational process, and the contribution made by community-based education and ancestral knowledges to national schools and communities.

Consequently, we must first gain a clearer understanding of the features of emerging social, cultural and political movements in the field of education. Secondly, born in the provinces of the interior, we need to be aware that community-based education's proposals challenge the national educational system. A third consideration is that community-based education emerges in

territories of dense cultural and historical roots where oral learning -and the community's own oral learning styles and vision of the world- prevail.

A fourth consideration is that those education styles neither want nor should be included in schools as a pedagogy but rather challenge schools and the learnings they instill and process. At any rate, they propose traveling a different path: from the community to the school. A fifth postulate is that those are rather a cultural and political movement than educational and pedagogical, although these last two characteristics may be seen as alternative paths that differ from what schools, education and pedagogy have conventionally done in the last half century.

COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION: ORGANIZATIONS AND ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE

Our reflection has as its point of departure the new General Education Law (LGE 28044) enacted in 2003. The previous one dated back to 1982, and the one before that to 1972. Laws are important because they provide a framework for creating a horizon, and set a political intention about the route that will be taken. The 2003 Law determined what should be done regarding community-based education.

The LGE defines community-based education as a type of education carried out by community organizations that are not educational institutions, i.e. non-school organizations.

Unquestionably, ancestral culture plays a fundamental role in defining Peru as a nation. Learnings have accumulated along centuries and are still a component of people's daily lives. Individuals learn at home, with their families and at work. Certain learnings are not necessarily obtained in the school and this is one of the fundamental components of what is called community-based education in Peru, and which the LGE does not emphasize enough, although community-based education is found all over the nation.

But let us examine first a fundamental precedent to understand the relationship with community organizations and learning processes.

A FUNDAMENTAL PRECEDENT: POPULAR EDUCATION

We should be clear that the law does not actually give birth to community-based education. Organizations had engaged in this type of education for a very long time before (Cussianovich 2006). It has been regarded as a

1 Ministerial Resolution N.º 117-2015-ED that establishes it as a non-organic functional unit within the General Directorate for Alternative Basic Education, Intercultural Bilingual Education and Educational Services in Rural Areas.

number of formative spaces and in the Peruvian case the most similar experience to community-based education are unquestionably the popular universities from the 1920s. Older still are some guilds from the end of the 19th century and beginnings of the 20th century that created the so-called people's libraries. This stage is well documented and should be studied in further detail to identify its connections to what was subsequently called or known as people's education.

We should also bear in mind that the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s saw a significant transformation of cities, not only the national capital but also the provincial capitals where residents demanded living standards similar to the nation's capital. This urbanization process or rural exodus to the cities changed social life in countries around the region. It was a consequence, among other factors, of post-war conditions and these nations' new insertion in the world's economy. It is precisely in this scenario where new types of social and political organization emerged, in the meeting of need for people to exercise their citizens' right and popular education methodologies then in vogue—in the midst of the new rhetoric about change, progress and development, as they were then called.

This popular education methodology, sponsored by Paolo Freire and the followers of his pedagogy, has the motivating question as its emblematic starting point, among other techniques and procedures, to accomplish adult-focused learnings, because as we all know children learn differently. It is possible those adults had never attended school, but work, family lives and daily chores built their capacities and taught them multiple skills. What matters in this regard is recognizing that one of the antecedents of community-based education is its close relationship with popular education experiences to which it pays tribute and which allow a stronger understanding and development of learnings, and engaging in the education within our communities. This explains why the LGE understood education outside the classroom happened through organizations. Despite many experiences since the 1960s, we will here refer to its most emblematic form and what we now know as community-based education. In 1971, the Cajamarca Rural Libraries Network was created to eventually become the most important experience in a rural setting engaging adults and young people and eventually involving whole families in learning outside classrooms. It took place in and for the community.

Nobody studied this experience where male and female peasant farmers learn to read everyday news that impacted them, during the first ten years of rural libraries, from 1971 until 1981, 1981-1982, as reported by their main sponsor,

Alfredo Mires. They published a newsletter distributed in Cajamarca's communities discussing political affairs, such as the land reform by the Juan Velasco administration in the 1970s, a reform that created great interest on how it evolved, its meaning and what benefits it brought to the involved populations.

The newsletter did not only cover political issues but also people's daily life: news about relatives, residents in the small towns or unfair pricing at the local shop, etc. Then they started the so called recovery of peasant and Cajamarca's culture. These newsletters collected and published stories and legends that encouraged people to learn to read and led creating solidarity chains to support people's formal education.

This and other important and significant experiences have been ignored by the State. Their wealth and potential for education and transforming reality has neither been seen nor heard. At most, this initiative was regarded as the result of an organization evolving educational processes, but their social, cultural and political dimensions have been ignored. For this reason, they should be reassessed and placed among the most significant contributions to the national educational process. It is also good to know those contributions came from a popular education experience which, as mentioned above, shared the characteristics of a community-based education experience.

We may call this period and experience the classical stage in community-based education in Peru, the fundamental reference of which is popular education at that time. By this we do not mean that popular education does not exist or is not current anymore; indeed, it has become a vigorous continent-wide movement in permanent renewal by the organizations themselves. It is further nurtured by grassroots educators who theorize, try new methodologies and deepen knowledge about them to create their own epistemologies that engage in dialogue with other pedagogies and theories. Even more so, popular education has contributed, for example, to the emergence of a critical pedagogy, as recognized by Henry A. Giroux, one of its main proponents, in his book *Schooling and the struggle for public life* (1993).

Cajamarca's Rural Libraries—initially conceived as an experience based on the postulates of popular education—were closer to one of the trends now manifest in Andean community-based education. In other words, this was an experience that was born under the influence, among others, of popular education, because of the features present in its institutional practice, its pedagogies



for peasant knowledge, which is nothing but Andean ancestral knowledge and which clearly show that which we call the expression of contemporary community-based education.

It was only toward 2010 when it became increasingly clear that these are the new trends in community-based education. If what happened before can be termed as classic, it is now more visible and almost impossible not to recognize that we are in the presence of the emergence of new community-based education expressions that underscore ancestral knowledges are at the heart of their endeavours and which go beyond what is merely educational and pedagogical, to blaze a trail in the field of culture, and social and political movements.

TRENDS IN COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION²

1. Local knowledge: from communities to schools

A community-based education project that has gradually consolidated in Peru since the 1990s and is now as current as ever, the Andean Project on Peasant Technology (Proyecto Andino de Tecnologías Campesinas, Pratec) has prepared a range of proposals to recognize ancestral knowledge and its convergence with schools, notably the *Una escuela amable con el saber local* (A local knowledge friendly school, 2004) project, both a turning point and a symbolic milestone. For several years, teachers have wondered how they can help create a dialogue between schools and communities. This experience shows that the road goes in the opposite direction: from the community to the school. The itinerary from the school to the community, although we may not like to so acknowledge, is a failed route. This does not date from now. For more than

30 years, teachers have worried about ways to include local knowledge in their programming and to get students to learn from them.

Pratec is among the first institutions to have reflected about this issue and proposed a friendlier relationship with local knowledge to bring it into schools. It reflects on and challenges what is done in schools and the learning it aims to accomplish. Although they are not the first to talk about bilingual intercultural education (EIB is the Spanish acronym) because that story is even older than the modern nation itself, they may be among the first to have tried to recreate and give new pedagogical and conceptual meaning to the ways to approach schools and take ownership of local knowledge. Local knowledge is nothing but culture in its wider meaning; it is the stringing together of knowledge and those who produce it, in other words, peasant women and men and community members who “know”, *yachaq* or “breeders of cultural biodiversity”, as they are called appropriately and emphatically. This production is not limited to the individual, “the one who knows”, but is inextricably linked to nature and the deities that also “teach”, shelter and protect them. It is, in some cases, a reciprocity relationship between these three entities: human beings, nature and the divinity, expressed in the social, cultural, natural and cosmic lives of Andean-Amazonian communities.

Such a triple functionality of local knowledge is clear. However, it does not include the political dimension. Or, perhaps, it is the highest expression of their articulation when it operates and enters into the school and redefines the model for incorporating local knowledges into school learnings.

Grimaldo Rengifo and his team at Pratec had suggested — as also have other experiences — that the convergence between school and community requires leveraging the dialogue between both Western knowledge and the knowledge of Andean-Amazonian communities. They say communities long for both types of knowledge, in contrast to what their discourse back in the second half of the 20th century when

² These ideas matured gradually thanks to our observations and presentations at various community-based education events organized by the Ministry of Education. A longer version was presented at the III National Seminar on Peruvian Oral Tradition and Cultures (Lima, 2012) and the I Meeting of Community-based Education for Childhood, Adolescence and Young People (Cuzco, 2014)

the communities themselves rejected teaching and learning in their native languages. Now, they ask for education in their own languages but also in Spanish; and the knowledge to be transmitted is both that of the Western world but also their own, and that of each community. They became gradually persuaded through observation that they needed both knowledges to talk to each other, a phenomenon they call *iskay yachaq* in Quechua. But this is not only a matter of language. It is the knowledge of culture, nature and the divinities, in other words, a vision from the standpoint of Andean and Amazonian spirituality, which provides the foundation for this project.

Over time, Pratec has sponsored thinking together with teachers and peasant organizations from the provinces and has helped create Andean Cultural Affirmation Nucleuses (NACAs) in at least nine regions (states) of Peru that have become processes now owned by the communities themselves who feel confident in this alternative way to impart pertinent education to help their communities move forward. They hold their own local knowledge, culture and education are still alive in their communities and therefore their cultural education communities, which have existed for centuries, are the place where knowledge resides that is reproduced by each generation.

Schools are one of the areas to which they pay attention as the main source of regeneration. They are where local knowledge is created that will eventually migrate to the school, to be nurtured in the image and likeness of the farm itself. Nurturing the schools, and training the teachers so they will in turn create the learnings with which the new center of knowledge of modern life—the school— must be nurtured under a new light, with a new function and an educational role to make possible the regeneration of ancestral Andean-Amazonian wisdom.

It is evident therefore that a knowledge epistemology is emerging, which is learned at and transmitted on the farm. Thus, human beings, nature and divinities become entities that merge with each other and give rise to a discourse about life in the community and act as a center of inter-learning whose core referral is that which grows at and has to do with the farm.

Although these community lifestyles refer us to a cultural dimension, we may well also wonder about the political dimension. NACAs have decided to change their name and are now called Community-based Education Centers. Organizations in San Martín, Cajamarca, Huánuco, Puno and Ancash have started to discuss and adopt this change. They want to tell the state “when

(it) talks about community-based education, call (the communities) to talk”; “if (the state wants) to introduce a new law, a reform, it should do so with (us).” They defend the right to existence of an educational culture in their communities. This transition from NACAs to CECs implies a political dimension that is not yet clearly seen. The entire process started in 2012.

This project underscores the ancestral culture and knowledge of Andean and Amazonian communities and has allowed to start examining the political side as part of such proposal; their changing status as a strategy to defend their right to decide the fate of their communities, taking as a reference their farms and their relationship with the school which, as we have seen, is not a subsidiary consideration but rather takes us to reconsider the way in which schools are created and exist within a community. Creating schools and members of the educational community in the image and likeness of the farm. Pratec’s bet on the Andes and Amazonia is based on such episteme to reproduce ancestral knowledge and schools in an environment of kindness, affection, love and tenderness as the tri-functional beings we all are. And it is, obviously, a new way of building community-based education in Peru.

2. Bilingual inter-culturality and traditional knowledge as an educational policy

A second trend got underway since 2005 until 2010, although partly it is still ongoing and seeking confirmation. What happened in Peru in this field is significant because it relates to the National Education Project (Proyecto Educativo Nacional, PEN)³, which has set its horizon in 2021. PEN is a state policy.

When PEN was implemented in the regions of the interior, it required to prepare in the first place a Regional Educational Project (PER is the Spanish acronym) followed by the Regional Curriculum Project (PCRs in Spanish) to determine what students should learn in each region (state). Preparing the PCRs is important because they are the way to reassess traditional wisdom and cultural expressions, both are directly related to community-based educational projects. One first such project took place in Apurímac and Ayacucho regions (two similar states of Peru) and another in Puno.

This paper focuses on the case of Apurímac, a region with the nation’s largest number of Quechua speakers (74.6% of the state’s population). Its regional government enacted

3 Supreme Resolution 001-2007-ED, January 7, 2007.

the Regional Educational Project. It also adopted a regional policy requiring teaching and learning in the local Quechua language (Carbajal 2012) so that all students will speak Quechua, and teachers must teach in that language.

This brought back an old initiative from the 1950s that put bilingualism at the core of teaching. Learning, speaking and writing another language may be very important to recover one's identity, but language in itself does not lead to changes in schools nor in communities. Other factors must be taken into account, such as the cultural territory and the language and traditional knowledge's revitalization strategies, among others. Focusing just on the bilingual component was insufficient. As discussed by the Pratec team: "What happens to the language also happens to local knowledge. They have not been discussed in schools as part of a cosmivision where indigenous practices find their meaning, but rather as means to teach modern science and technology" (Pratec 2004).

Interculturality cannot be understood only as learning to talk to the other but rather it should be understood as a political condition which establishes how we talk to the other and under which conditions. So understood, learning a language is not enough. Learning must be intercultural.

Puno is a case of a Knowledge-based Curriculum Project (Proyecto Curricular por Saberes, PCS), which introduces a fundamental change in Peruvian schools because it challenges the scaffolding that underlies learning so far and which, as we know, builds on the foundation of accomplishing certain capacities and skills. From the Western world's rational, Piaget's, and the theorizations of teaching-learning, what we see in the Puno project is a beginning of a new thinking about the educational system and the processes that connect schools to their communities, their ancestral knowledge, and the ways to establish such links and connections.

This proposal born in Peru's southern Andes challenged the National School Curriculum and the Ministry of Education's pedagogical tools, which decide the capacities students must build starting at six months of age. In principle, after staying at least thirteen years in the school system students will graduate having acquired certain skills and become better persons. In fact, as we know, when they graduate, the planned learning goals have not been totally accomplished.

Puno was the first region that, metaphorically, told the rest of the nation: "This is the way they learn in Lima, but here, in the high Andes we learn differently." They

learn based on local knowledge, with their families, while performing the community's daily activities. They are building their own pedagogy. Although that vision has not yet been mainstreamed, this approach is nonetheless part of a movement that highlights the need to recover and revitalize ancestral knowledge as part of teaching-learning processes.

From the margins of society this proposal also tells authorities and policymakers what communities want to have included in educational programs as a right they claim. Once again, culture, the knowledges included in community-based education, they claim must be included as the way each region learns. What predominates is culture. This is also a growing political issue that will continue to gain preeminence until it becomes a regional policy with the sufficient budget allocation to be put into practice.

3. Indigenous communities' education and traditional knowledge

A third experience is underway since 2005 in Datem del Marañón. This is a particularly important experience in Peru because it deepens or perhaps breaks away from the proposal to take the winding road of basic initial education (EIB in Spanish) mainstreamed since 2003 through the General Education Law (LGE). Datem del Marañón province is located in Loreto state's northwest, on the border with Ecuador. It limits to the south with Yurimaguas, capital of the Alto Amazonas province of Loreto, an indigenous territory gradually dismembered since 2005. The new province created there is inhabited by seven indigenous peoples, namely the Awajún, Wampis, Kichwa, Shawis, Achuar, Kandozi and Shapra, who demand respect for their right to their own education, in line with ILO's Convention 169, on the indigenous peoples' right to education, in the first place, and to bilingual interculturality next. Therefore, the indigenous component takes precedence over the bilingual intercultural element. This is another important consideration because these are the first peoples to make such demand with their own educational policy proposal.

The background of these initiatives may be related to the training of indigenous teachers and schools' failure in the Amazon region. A reference may well be Bilingual Teachers Training Program in the Peruvian Amazon (Programa de Formación de Maestros Bilingües de la Amazonía Peruana, Formabiap), introduced in 1998 through an agreement between the Ministry of Education, the Loreto Higher Pedagogical Training Institute and the Selva Peruana Interethnic Association (Aidesep). Trapnel (2008) and Chiroque and Rodríguez (2008) prepared revealing

assessments thirteen years after the program was introduced. The program questioned training teachers in their own language if that training was not very useful when they went back to their communities where the study programs they taught were prepared by the Ministry of Education and were alien to the indigenous populations where the education service was provided.

The Formabiap assessment recommended putting in place three elements in initial education: highlighting research, strengthening the communities' involvement in school management and strengthening indigenous leadership. In particular, these last two considerations were crucial to involve community stakeholders in local education through school councils and networks. In addition, it was required to evolve types of local authority and leadership to strengthen local authorities and leaders involvement in indigenous organization management and governance.

Guided by such clear political intent after approximately eleven years and following these recommendations, almost all cities in this area of the Peruvian Amazon elected indigenous teachers as their district mayors. Datem del Marañón province and its San Lorenzo capital city enforced their right to guide their own education and issued their first education-related municipal ordinance in Peru in 2010. This was the Ancestral Community-based Education, which addressed the issue of building an indigenous school system, openly challenging the national school system. The Local School Management Unit (Unidad de Gestión Educativa Local, UGEL) and the Peruvian Education Workers' Union (Sindicato Unitario de Trabajadores en la Educación del Perú, Sutep), were careful to support such demands backed by local communities and leaders. In some cases, they challenged the appointment of a "mestizo" (mixed blood) school authorities by the regional school authority, and that an education style was imposed which they regarded as a failure. As the *Apus* ("local leaders") say "why do they bring education to my community, if the schools take my children away?" revealing their disappointment with a school system alien to the needs of indigenous communities.

The right to such ECA implies freedom to teach and learn in a way that reflects local realities, rather than creating an equivalent to the official education (Helberg 2012). They further add: "We can have our own certification and accreditation system. Who can do that? The UGEL (district school), the Municipality and Corpi (the coordination body created by indigenous communities). Community houses ("malocas") have been built to teach boys and girls to reproduce their culture. "The ones who know" elders and teachers,

collect that knowledge and create an ethnography of indigenous knowledge, a type of systematized indigenous pedagogy. They have blazed their own trail and worked together to create their own intercultural indigenous university through their local indigenous education system project, they propose to create an intercultural indigenous UGEL to challenge the national school system and is born from their understanding of community-based education, founded on and strengthening their local culture and territory. This is therefore a political response to a failed amazon education policy

4. Historical-cultural memories as community knowledge

This project has its roots in the nation's historical and cultural memories. We examine here two examples. The first is Zaña city's Afro-Peruvian Museum, in Lambayeque state. Although founded in 2005, the project dated back to 1975 when Luis Rocca Torres started a slow and steady recollection of oral history. This was the beginning of an attempt to recover the history of African-Peruvians in Peru's northern coast.

A stereotype that must be overcome holds African-Peruvians only live in Chincha province, in Ica. However, we know now there are 72 communities of African-Peruvians throughout Peru all along the coast, from the north to the south tips. In fact, there is significant evidence of the presence of African culture across the Andes. We must get rid of the idea that they are masterful dancers, because this masks their life as slaves for over 300 years (Rocca 2012). Other historical and cultural experiences from these peoples are shown at the museum including all aspects of African-Peruvians' everyday lives, including their personal side, their tastes, hobbies, work, religiousness, sports, child play, gastronomy, and stories and legends, family life stories and generally the world of sensitivities as an expression of people's happiness and sadness, including their dancing and singing, history and expectations for the future. All these add a value that can be incorporated in community-based education, as Peru is not a country of a single culture or purely Andean and Amazonian, but also incorporates a large African component. In sum, a nation that embraces many cultural expressions.

While Pratec's NACA experience contributes to enhance nature, human beings and divinities, this project contributes to highlighting human subjectivities through art, but also through the dignity that expresses a firm rejection to racism in a country that unfortunately still discriminates without mercy and which various expressions of community-based education struggle against.


Another historical legacy still not recognized is the memory of the Moche people, another major component of Peruvian culture that remains hidden and that only community-based education allows us to see. Why are modern Moches important? Because they have a strong influence on the coastal band running from south of Lima to Tumbes, in the northern Ecuadorian border. The old Moche people and their descendants have made, and continue to make, significant contributions to Peruvian civilizations, through their living culture and, by extension, their knowledge and learnings.

BY WAY OF REQUEST

In Peru, beyond school walls, another type of education is created which nonetheless we deny any recognition or value. Undoubtedly, the value of community-based experiences described here gradually contribute to change the idea that only education and organization matter, and that we should rather make room for the cultural and social expectations reflected by the community-based educational project. We must acknowledge this dimension as well. Community-based education introduces a social dimension by mobilizing such ideas and aspirations. A social dimension that was previously limited to education now incorporates a cultural component and, at its root is a political option. Community-based education has a political intention and therefore a political dimension, and it aims at making culture also share a political intent.

We may recall other examples and wonder why learning only takes place in schools. The education system serves over 8 million schoolchildren,⁴ in a country of over 31 million people.⁵ As Grimaldo Rengifo said in 2011, over 20 million people learn at their homes, workplaces, through interpersonal and group relations, and various life scenarios. The State should also have a way of incorporating those types of education in Peru.

Finally, we must eradicate the notion that schools provide formal education and community-based education is non-formal education, although UNESCO, in its efforts to characterize learning systems, distinguishes formal from non-formal learning. But the formal-non formal distinction does not help much. Peruvian education should recognize several types of education. We should demand the right to have types of education that reflect the various ways of peoples and their communities' types of learnings and knowledge. From this perspective and trends, community-based education requires that we pay attention not only to the process but also think again about its epistemes and their position in the national education scene.

The Ministry of Education and other education-focused organizations have a huge backlog to evaluate and incorporate these emerging community-based education expressions which struggle for the right to be included on an equal footing in the nation's educational process scenario. 

4 The Ministry of Education's School Census of 2015 records 8 474 958 students across all school levels. Available at <http://goo.gl/1DsB1D>

5 The Statistics Institute (INEI) recorded 31 151 643 inhabitants as of 30 June 2015. Available at [https:// goo.gl/hQY9id](https://goo.gl/hQY9id)

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[Schools without citizens, society without democracy. Real conditions of citizenship building in a public school in Peru]

Eduardo León Zamora

This publication narrates the terrible condition of schools where our children and adolescents learn. Through their school life they live conditions of oppression, isolation, unanimity and standardization that jeopardize their development as human beings and, consequently, the future of the society to which they belong. After almost 14 years, TAREA has published again Eduardo León Zamora's study "Condiciones Reales de Construcción de Ciudadanía en una Escuela Pública del Perú", his distinguished thesis research. León's findings are still valid today as they were 14 years ago. This piece of research earned León a master's degree on education research from the Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano (UAHC), in Santiago de Chile.

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