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INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION – AN ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND PERSPECTIVES: A reflection based on the analysis of experiences of intercultural bilingual education projects implemented in Peru by CARE

Sub-theme: New Imperatives for Education, Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

The diversity of cultural backgrounds in classrooms has been increasingly recognized as an important factor in international and national education policy. Different perspectives on intercultural and multicultural education policies are emerging and redefining the role of education in a globalized context, taking into account the growing use of new technologies and economic condition.

The intercultural education models implemented in Latin America, particularly in Peru, seek to respond to the quality and equity issues embedded in the challenge of realizing education as a human right. There are challenges at the level of education management, curriculum, production of learning materials, teacher training, parental and community participation in school and evaluation. Education systems range from monocultural models to bilingual intercultural education for indigenous populations, and emerging trends include building an intercultural education for all as part of the 21st century agenda.

This paper proposes a reflection based on analysis of experiences of intercultural bilingual education projects implemented in Peru by CARE in partnership with the government and local organizations within the perspective of the intercultural curricular framework. These experiences had a transformative effect in traditional teaching-learning processes, improving education outcomes and promoting deep changes in relationships between school and community. After four years of implementation in one of the project sites, pass rates in standardized tests for mathematics and Spanish increased from less than 3% at

the baseline up to 42%. These outcomes contribute to the debate on the relevance of intercultural education and its implications for the teaching-learning process in the post-2015 agenda.

Background – Intercultural Education in Peru

Issues related to diversity in the classroom and quality of education remain prominent in the development agenda for the 21st century. Education movements in Peru and other countries in the Andean region of Latin America are progressively adopting an intercultural approach to address those, through an integrated effort of indigenous groups, academics and civil society. In Peru, education policy has incorporated the intercultural approach through the General Education Law (no. 28044) approved in 2003, which established interculturality as one of the eight fundamental principles of education, making Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) mandatory for the entire education system (Article 20). This approach highlights the added value of cultural diversity and promotes respect and intercultural dialogue, raising awareness for the rights of indigenous peoples and other national and foreign communities living in the country. The 2007 National Education Project seeks to implement the principles of the General Education Law, promoting the intercultural approach in policies related to quality and relevance of education and highlighting the need to “establish a shared national curriculum framework from an intercultural, inclusive and integrated perspective, allowing the existence of regional curricula” (Ministry of Education, National Commission of Education, 2007:68). The right of indigenous peoples to intercultural education is also defended by the international agreements Peru is a signatory of (ILO Convention No. 169 and the United Nations’ Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) and by institutions such as the ‘*Defensoría del Pueblo*’ (Office of the People’s Advocate). In its “Report on Intercultural Bilingual Education”, the *Defensoría del Pueblo* states that the country has the ‘*duty to acknowledge ethnic and cultural diversity as a positive characteristic for learning in a society.*’¹

A Challenge for Education: How to Address Cultural Discrimination

Despite the recent progress on the legal framework, access to quality education remains limited in Peru. Inequality in access to quality education is related to factors such as socio-economic condition, ethnicity, gender and geographic area. Only 6% of the grade 2 students in rural areas were able to perform satisfactorily in a national evaluation of reading skills in Spanish conducted by the Ministry of Education in 2011, and only 4% of the rural 2nd graders achieved expected performance levels in mathematics. The quality

¹ Defensoría del Pueblo Informe 152, page 37 (2011)

gap affects mainly children and youth from indigenous communities. An evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Education (2011) indicated that only 10% of the 4th grade indigenous students are performing at the expected level in tests for reading comprehension of Spanish as a second language.

While over a million indigenous children (645,081 boys and 439,391 girls) are of school age², only 20% of them³ had access to bilingual education. The current government has announced its intention of expanding the coverage of Intercultural bilingual education (IBE) to 50% by 2016. However, IBE is not necessarily leading to improved learning outcomes: an evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Education in 2012 indicated that a maximum of 11% of the indigenous students attending grade 4 were able to reach a satisfactory level in reading comprehension tests in their own languages, and a maximum of 18% had a satisfactory performance in reading comprehension tests in Spanish. IBE students from some groups, such as the Awajún and the Shipibo, performed at considerably lower levels. Therefore, not more than one out of each ten indigenous students attending IBE could read in both Spanish and his/her mother tongue. Among the marginalized groups, girls are the most negatively affected: their progress is hindered by traditional gender norms that limit levels of participation and attendance and result in poor performance. The gender gap becomes more pronounced at upper levels: in average, for each 100 boys completing secondary school at the expected age, only 82 girls do so. The average ratio of girls/ boys completing secondary education at the expected age in rural areas is 0.82, and can be as low as 0.65⁴. Only 15% of the girls in rural areas complete secondary education at the expected age. This scenario brings up an important debate on how to build a transformative education framework for improved learning outcomes.

CARE's Proposal: A Relevant, Non-Discriminatory Intercultural Education Adapted to the Cultural and Linguistic Context

Conceptual Framework and Strategy

CARE Peru's education program targets the most discriminated population groups, seeking to improve access, completion and quality of preschool, primary and secondary

² Vásquez, E, Chumpitaz, A, Jara, C. (2009). *Niñez indígena y educación intercultural bilingüe en el Perú. Estadísticas recientes preguntas (i)resueltas y tareas pendientes*. Lima: CARE Perú, EDUCA, Save the Children, UNICEF y Tarea.

³ In 2010.

⁴ 0.65 in Huancavelica, 0.70 in Loreto, 0.73 in Ayacucho, 0.74 in Ucayali and Cajamarca, 0.75 in the Amazonas and 0.77 in San Martín.

education among indigenous children and youth. The program implements intercultural bilingual education initiatives with a focus on local relevance and empowerment, particularly for girls and female adolescents, seeking to promote gender equality. CARE considers that indigenous children have the right to receive a quality intercultural education that takes into account their cultural background and allows the development of their mother tongue, as well as the acquisition of Spanish as a second language; and an education that transforms existing norms and perceptions towards increased equality. Starting in 2000, CARE started to implement innovative intercultural bilingual education projects in two Andean regions with predominant Quechua population: at the south, in Puno, and in the northeast region of Ancash. Projects reached a total of 12,948 students (6,788 in Puno, 6,160 in Ancash).

The intercultural approach acknowledges the prevalence of a cultural hegemony and the existence of an underlying assumption of symbolic inequality between cultures⁵ in the education system. A transformative approach requires foundational work to recognize and value the existence of several cultures and their contribution to the education system as a whole (not only to IBE), to the public and private sector and to society in general, within and outside school. Therefore, CARE's conceptual framework considers that IBE has to address issues beyond the realm of education. It encompasses three main strategic pillars: (1) pedagogical innovation, (2) social/ community participation and (3) political advocacy, addressed through a perspective of interculturality and gender equality.

The **Pedagogy** pillar considers the need to strengthen teacher training and promote participatory strategies to develop relevant curricula, learning materials to support these and classroom management tools to improve teaching-learning strategies. The pedagogic approach highlights key content from the students' own cultural context and from other cultures, mainstreaming it into teacher training, curriculum development and classroom practices.

Community participation is a fundamental part of CARE's approach, characterized by ongoing exchanges between school and community actors to develop a local education proposal. Community leaders, authorities, parents and other community members are key

⁵ Walsh, C. (2002). Construir la interculturalidad. Consideraciones críticas desde la política, la colonialidad y los movimientos indígenas y negros en el Ecuador. En: Fuller, Norma: Interculturalidad y Política. Desafíos y posibilidades. Red para el Desarrollo de las Ciencias Sociales en el Perú. Lima.

actors in participatory assessments that provide evidence base for advocacy; design community education plans and identify content provided by the community for the curriculum plan. Community Education Committees monitor enrolment, truancy and dropout, and promote the participation of community representatives in official meetings of the Education sector.

The **advocacy component** goes beyond the school and community domains to address structural factors leading to discrimination, influencing education policy development and implementation at the regional and local levels towards the mainstreaming of intercultural bilingual education strategies. Advocacy is implemented through a participatory approach, seeking to organize civil society and education sector actors to influence decision-making processes in an articulated and organized manner. Regional and local Councils for Participation in Education were strengthened as key instances for advocacy planning and action.

CARE's IBE model seeks to address gender inequality in the classroom through changes in classroom practice, development of girls' leadership skills and by building supportive relationships in the community towards the identification and address of the barriers for access, retention and participation in school. Teachers, parents, leaders, education officers and students are engaged in a process of identification, reflection and transformation on traditional gender norms that emphasize girls' and women's domestic and reproductive roles, in the classroom, community and household level.

Experiences

- **IBE Project – Puno Region**

The Project for Quality and Equity in Bilingual Intercultural Education (KAWSAY), implemented in Puno, addressed the issue of low quality of the education services provided in rural and indigenous areas through the development of a meso-curricular IBE proposal, which focused on a decentralized, participatory approach, validated in primary schools, preschool programs and school readiness programs for children under five years of age. The Project's proposal targeted improvement in learning and classroom management, strengthening participatory mechanisms and links between public sector authorities and civil society actors. The Project was implemented in the districts of Azángaro, Chupa, San José and San Antón, in the province of Azángaro.

In order to improve learning quality, a new curricular proposal was developed. An initial assessment of the socio-economic-cultural context of Puno was conducted, followed by workshops with teachers to develop and implement the meso-curricular proposal for Azángaro. This process included the development of curriculum materials for teachers

(workbooks and learning materials), and provision of supplementary materials to classrooms (libraries, learning materials and school materials). A teacher training component was implemented for improved classroom management, including provision of a specialised IBE program through a cooperation with the National Altiplano University, bimonthly workshops through educational networks and pedagogic coaching in the classroom. Education officers were trained to improve the quality of delivery and management of IBE programs.

An intensive process of sensitization, information and training on the IBE curricular proposal was conducted with community leaders, authorities, parents, representatives of the civil society, public sector and municipal governments in order to strengthen participation and coordination mechanisms. The Project advocated successfully to mobilize authorities and community members to conduct a consultation about the curricular proposal at the local and regional levels and develop norms and policies in favour of IBE. This was followed by an in-depth debate on the meaning of education, the curriculum and the discrimination against the knowledge body of Andean cultures. The discussion transcended the local level, becoming a key concern in the regional education agenda, engaging authorities, civil society representatives and political decision-makers. As a result, it was decided that local needs would require the development of a Regional Curriculum responding to regional needs and requirements, not only an adaptation of the National Curricular Design.

- **IBE Project – Ancash Region**

The Mushuq Naanintsik Project (2009-present) seeks to improve quality and equity in Regular Basic Education (preschool, primary and secondary) in Ancash through the implementation of an education proposal considering the need for local relevance, interculturality, gender equality and community participation. It is being implemented in rural communities at the province of Carhuaz. The proposal focuses on improving learning outcomes on bilingual communication (Quechua and Spanish) and mathematics, and on the development of girls' leadership skills.

The pedagogic component was implemented through an intensive program for teacher training, classroom coaching and monitoring, aimed at building the capacity of teachers, principals and local education officers. The component focuses on a process of cultural diversification, contextualized to the local cultural and linguistic landscape. Teachers, principals and education staff participated in a series of workshops, followed by classroom coaching and monitoring, and reinforced by micro-workshops conducted three times a week by teacher networks. Teacher participation was entirely voluntary and training was conducted outside teaching hours.

The Project promoted the design and implementation of Community Education Plans (CEPs) in order to strengthen community involvement in classroom and school management. Authorities, community leaders and members participate in the design of CEPs, linking those to the Curriculum Plan. Community Education Committees (“*Vigilance Committees*”) follow up on children enrolment and attendance. Children’s leadership skills are developed through participation in school spaces and youth leadership clubs at the community level. The Project implemented leadership skills development activities with girls in grades 4-6 and worked with schools and communities to promote the participation of girls and female adolescents aged 8-17 in leadership roles at the youth leadership clubs.

The advocacy component seeks to create a sustainable basis for the pedagogic approach and the community participation component, influencing decision-making processes at the local and regional government levels to develop and approve local and regional Education Projects with an intercultural approach, and to support these through increased allocation of public resources for education in rural areas with high indigenous population in the Ancash region.

- **Advocating for an IBE focusing on girls and gender equality**

CARE Peru contributed to build a National Girls’ Education Network (FLORECER) comprising 19 civil society and public institutions. FLORECER’s influence in education policy is recognized nationwide, having provided significant contribution for the design and approval of the Law for Development of Rural Girls and Adolescents⁶ and recently succeeded to reactivate a Multi-Sectoral Commission to monitor its implementation.

In recent years, CARE Peru, working in partnership with FLORECER, conducted a study to propose the approval of a Strategic Budget Plan to eliminate the gender gap in completion rates of rural secondary education. Key themes such as holistic sexual education, knowledge and demand of rights, leadership and empowerment, have been included in the education agenda, seeking to analyze and deconstruct norms and stereotypes that are at the root of cultural and gender discrimination at the family, school and public spaces.

Results

CARE Peru’s IBE proposal has had a positive impact on learning outcomes and on the development of proposals to improve education’s relevance and equality, as described below.

Effect on Learning Outcomes

⁶ Law No. 27558/2001

Both projects assessed progress on learning outcomes through the administration of standardized tests in specific primary grades (2, 4 and 6⁷). Tests were used to evaluate student skills in Mathematics, Quechua and Spanish. Baseline results indicated extremely poor performance in tests, with progressive increase in subsequent years.

After four years of implementation in Puno, the Project observed an increase in the number of students able to perform satisfactorily in standardized math tests of 42 percent points (4th graders) and 48 percent points (6th graders). The number of 4th graders able to perform satisfactorily in language tests had an increase of 19 percent points (Quechua) and 15 percent points (Spanish). 6th graders results showed an even more dramatic change: 55 percent points (Quechua) and 68 percent points (Spanish). Results are summarized in Figure 1 below.

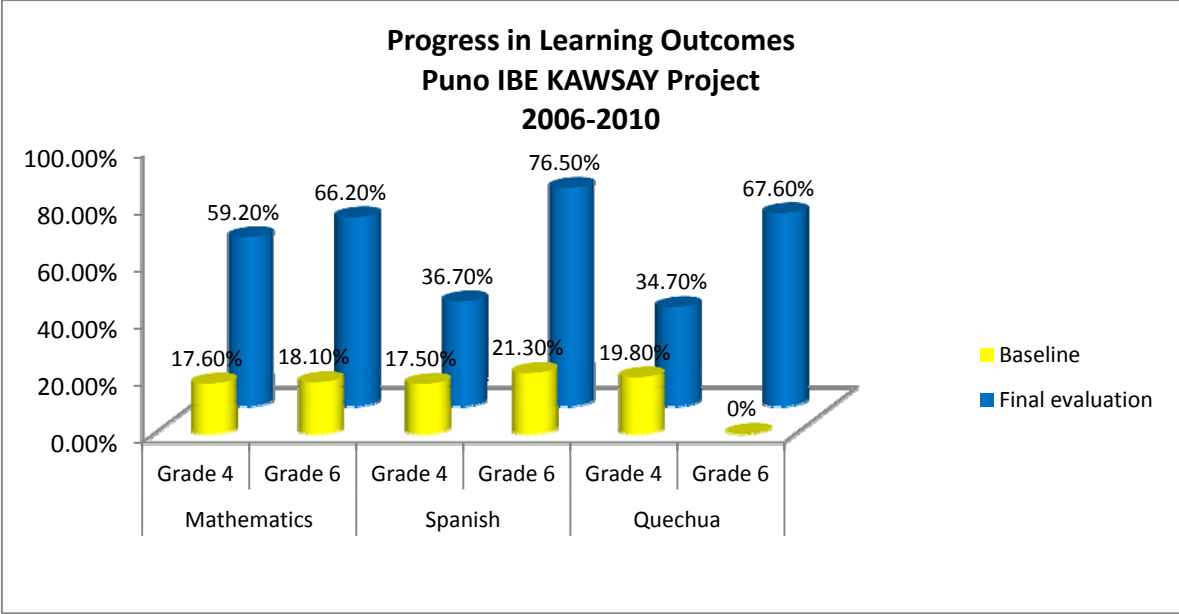


Figure 1 – Progress in final learning outcomes compared to baseline results, KAWSAY Project – Puno.

Baseline results in Ancash were extremely poor: less than four percent of the students were able to perform at satisfactory levels in standardized tests for Mathematics, Spanish and Quechua. After four years of implementation (2008-2012), increases of 24 percent points (boys) and 35 percent points (girls) were verified in the number of students reaching satisfactory results (Level 2) in standardized tests for Quechua (Figure 2). The number of students performing at satisfactory level on math tests (Figure 3) increased 35 percent points (boys) and 37 percent points (girls). Performance in Spanish (Figure 4) also

⁷ In Ancash, grades 2, 4 and 6; in Puno, grades 4 and 6

increased dramatically, with a positive variation of 44 percent points (girls) and 29 percent points (boys) in the number of students performing at satisfactory level.

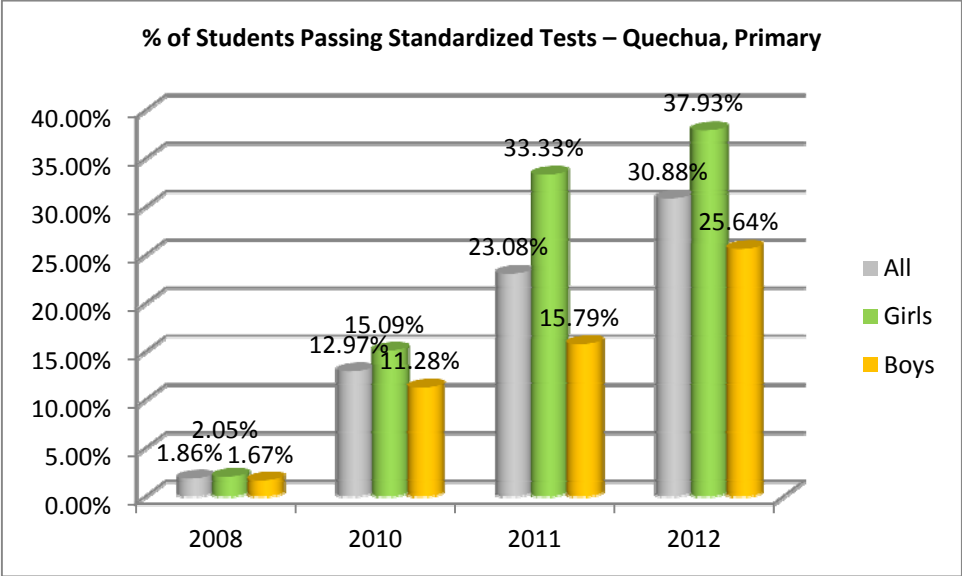


Figure 2 – Progress in final learning outcomes on Quechua compared to baseline results, Mushuq Naanintsik Project – Ancash

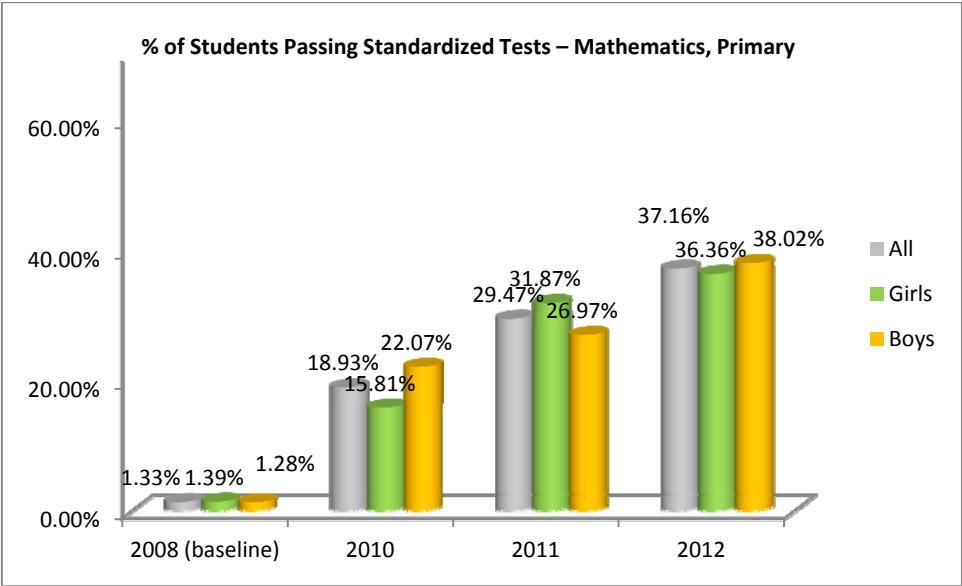


Figure 3 – Progress in final learning outcomes in mathematics compared to baseline results, Mushuq Naanintsik Project – Ancash

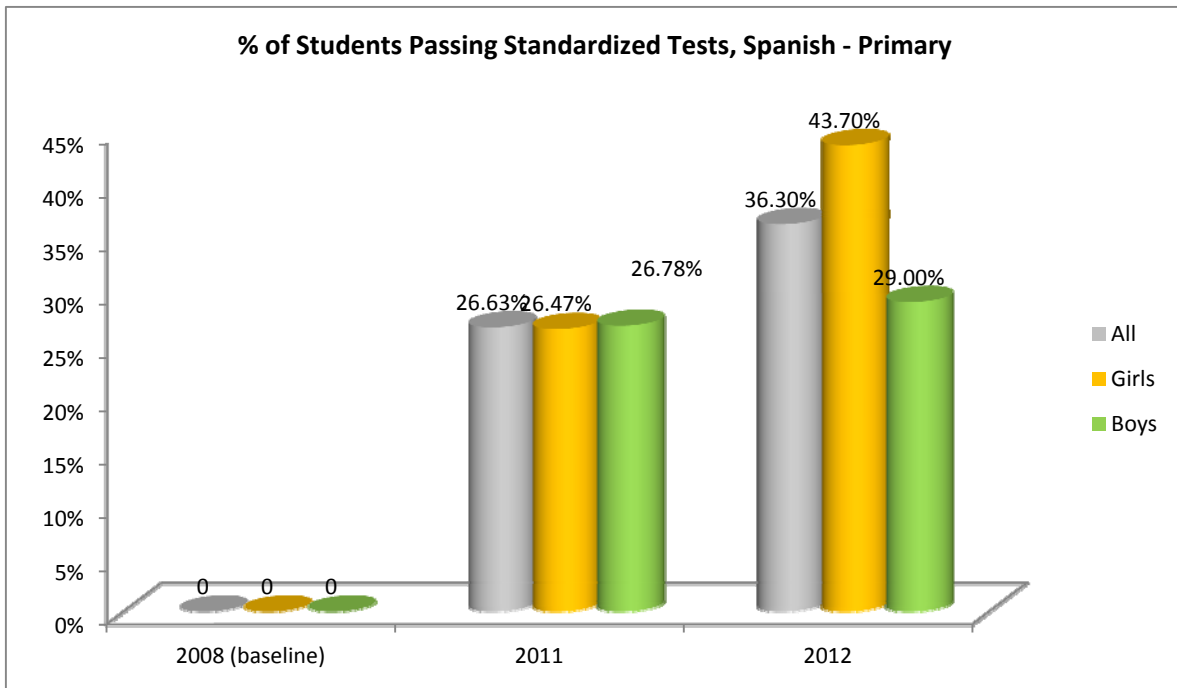


Figure 4 – Progress in final learning outcomes in Spanish compared to baseline results, Mushuq Naanintsik Project – Ancash

Progress on Relevance and Quality of Education

CARE’s IBE experience also led to the social construction of a Regional Curricular Project (RCP) and its approval⁸. The RCP provides a relevant curriculum for the multicultural and multilingual region of Puno, and was elaborated through a participatory strategy. The RCP is an example of a validated, successful experience of building a regional curriculum and has been a reference for similar undertakings in other regions of the country.

The RCP is characterized by its intercultural perspective, linking cultural affirmation to social-economic development. It is based on the four core Andean principles of *Allin Kawsay/ Walijakaña* (live well), *Allin Munay/ Wali Muñana* (seek wellness), *Allin Yachay/Wali Yatiqaña* (learn well) and *Allin Ruray/ Wali Luraña* (do well) and aims at achieving four fundamental goals in education: individual and collective human development, intra- and interculturality of teaching-learning processes, de-colonization of knowledge and promotion of entrepreneurial and productive education. The RCP includes all levels of Regular Basic Education (preschool, primary and secondary) and was designed for use in all public and private, rural and urban schools in the region.

⁸ Resolution 1005-DREP-CR-2009

The positive impact of the Ancash Project resulted in the approval of other Local Education Projects with an intercultural perspective, and in the official recognition of the IBE approach by all official education instances in Carhuaz. Such results can be directly linked to the project's successful pedagogic work and advocacy efforts. The expansion of the IBE coverage in the region is being supported by an allocation of US\$18M in the public budget, which will allow investments to improve quality of education in the provinces of Huaylas and Recuay, in the Ancash Region.

Intercultural Education and Its Role – A Model For All?

CARE's IBE projects focused on improving quality of education through an intercultural perspective addressing directly issues related to cultural discrimination, economic disparities and gender inequality in the pedagogic, social and political domains. Our IBE projects are based on the articulation of three essential strategies (pedagogical changes, participation of social actors and advocacy), aiming at improving quality of education through cultural and linguistic relevance on the students' context. It is an education that acknowledges and values indigenous/community knowledge on an equal footing with the knowledge body originated from other cultural backgrounds, and promotes a reflection on gender perceptions, attitudes and practices.

The results of CARE's experiences provide a solid evidence base for the relevance and efficiency of the intercultural education approach, but also bring up some fundamental questions and challenges for teaching-learning processes under the light of the post-2015 education agenda. The lessons learned are relevant for other contexts not only in Latin America, but also at the global level.

1. In Latin America, as in other contexts, intercultural questions transcend the education sphere. An intercultural approach seeks to deconstruct discriminatory perceptions and assumptions linked to the very origins of the nation-building/ state-building process or even preceding it, which usually resulted in the construction of an education system excluding majority indigenous groups or minority groups. In Peru, as in other Latin American countries, bilingual education has often considered indigenous languages as a tool to improve acquisition of a colonial language (Spanish); the intercultural approach seeks instead to promote bilingual and cultural interaction in the classroom and community, resulting in the development of both languages and in moving beyond a culture of homogenization and assimilation (Valiviezo y Valdiviezo, 2008, Degregori, 2009, Tubino

2005, Lopez L, 2001)⁹. Therefore, the intercultural approach is closely linked not only to a redefinition of the role of education, but also to a change in the State's approach to nation-building and social issues. Several authors (Ansión, 2007, Bolívar, 2004, Schmelkes, 2009, Walsh, 2002)¹⁰ consider that intercultural education has to be a necessary part of a political/ ethical transformation process in a country.

2. The history of the education system in Peru has structural origins that led to a devaluation and invisibility of the cultural capital of indigenous peoples, in a violent and coercive process. As an institution, the school is not neutral and reproduces social hierarchy, as well as serving the State's ideology. The participation of school, civil society and State actors is essential to promote changes towards a freeing, democratic education, although it is acknowledged that this is a process of creative tension, with moments of progress and throwbacks along the way.
3. Is intercultural education only for indigenous groups and only linked to bilingual education, or is it appropriate for all children? This is a key question as intercultural education proposals worldwide focus mostly on minorities and immigrants. In the case of Peru, the intercultural approach is mostly used for IBE and efforts for an intercultural education proposal for all are still very recent. The Ministry of Education is working on a proposal of key learning themes under a national intercultural curriculum framework to reach all Regular Basic Education Students and not only certain groups, aiming at 'allowing intercultural citizenship and living together in a democratic, participatory and representative manner'¹¹.

⁹ Valdiviezo, L. Valdiviezo, L. (2008). *Política y práctica de la interculturalidad en la educación peruana: análisis y propuesta*. Revista Iberoamericana de Educación. Volumen 45 pp. 1-25 Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (OEI).

Degregori, C. (2009). *Panorama de la antropología en el Perú: del estudio del otro a la construcción de un Nosotros diverso*. En: Degregori, C. Editor. *No hay país más diverso*. Compendio de Antropología Peruana. IEP. Lima

Tubino, F. (2005). *La praxis de la interculturalidad en los estados nacionales latinoamericanos*. Cuadernos Interculturales. Redalyc

Lopez, L. (2001). *La cuestión de la interculturalidad y la educación latinoamericana*. Séptima Reunión del Comité Regional Intergubernamental del proyecto Principal de educación. UNESCO.

¹⁰ Ansión, J. (2009). *El desafío de la interculturalidad. Dinámicas interculturales en contextos (trans)andinos* Centro de Ecología y Pueblo andinos.

Bolívar, A. (2004). *Ciudadanía y escuela pública en el contexto de diversidad cultural*. Revista Mexicana de Investigación Educativa.

Schmelkes, S. (2009). *Interculturalidad, democracia y formación valoral en México*. Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa. Redalyc

Walsh, C. (2002). *Construir la interculturalidad. Consideraciones críticas desde la política, la colonialidad y los movimientos indígenas y negros en el Ecuador*. En: Fuller, Norma: *Interculturalidad y Política. Desafíos y posibilidades*. Red para el Desarrollo de las Ciencias Sociales en el Perú. Lima

¹¹ Tubino, F. (2012) (in cooperation with Adhemir Flores Moreno and Vanessa Navarro). *Propuesta de incorporación de la Interculturalidad en el Marco Curricular de la Educación Básica del Perú*. MINEDU, working document.

The key learning themes that are being discussed, which may be relevant for other contexts as well, are:

- Positive recognition of one's identity and of the cultural, linguistic and ecological diversity of the country and the world;
- Critical analysis of discrimination and racism as structural and historical issues in our country;
- Building relationships of complementation and intercultural dialogue between different bodies of knowledge, ethics and sensitivities;
- Learn to empathize (put oneself in another's place), refuting discrimination and injustice, and developing an ethical position of respect and solidarity for others;
- Learn to make decisions, participate in public spaces and solve conflicts through intercultural dialogue, in order to live together in a democratic and pacific manner.

At a moment when topics such as 'fostering global citizenship'¹² and 'promoting awareness and respect for diversity'¹³ permeate the discussion of what should be included in post-2015 education frameworks, IBE presents a potential path for the effective achievement of such goals. It remains to be seen if the successful outcomes of this experience be replicated in different contexts, such as developed countries and conflict/ post-conflict settings; however, the dramatic improvement of learning outcomes in the present project and its successful replication suggests that IBE may be a valuable tool in other contexts as well.

4. Intercultural education being implemented through a perspective of gender equality: This is a fundamental challenge that requires moving from 'education for all' to a proposal of quality education that includes gender equality as a fundamental learning in multiple cultural contexts. Our approach to IBE requires taking into account what education should mean / be for girls and female adolescents in order to allow them to take charge of their own lives. It is a process that demands change in the participation of girls in multiple spaces, creating conditions for the development of their agency and leadership skills; requires discussion and reflection in school, at home and in the community for a holistic sexual development, including the prevention and report of

¹² Education First, 2012

¹³ Center for Universal Education at Brookings (2013). *Toward Universal Learning: What Every Child Should Learn*. Report No.1 of 3, Learning Metrics Task Force.

sexual abuse and harassment; and the development of critical thinking to deconstruct discriminatory stereotypes. Promoting gender equality in education through the Andean perspective of learning to 'live well' requires critical learning for substantial questioning and transformation of patriarchal cultural norms that are silently maintained and reproduced as part of the 'hidden curriculum'. When considering an educational model for the 21st century, it is essential to consider the empowerment of girls and female adolescents, and, as in Amartya Sen's words, to support them in the full development of their freedom.