

# **The Participation Of Indigenous Peoples In The Public Policies Of Rural Schools In Peru And The Challenges Of Intercultural Bilingual Education In The Current Context**

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## **Abstract**

This essay aims to reflect on the types of participation that indigenous peoples have in public policy. Their involvement in each of the stages is important to achieve social, political, economic and cultural benefits. The literature review method was used to understand what the Peruvian state is doing in rural education. A relevant conclusion is that indigenous peoples still participate with limitations in the design and implementation of public policies and that they still suffer ethnocide through illegal and legal mining and logging, which destroys biodiversity, cosmovision and ethnic identity, which becomes the challenge for the development of intercultural bilingual education.

*Keywords:* Participation, public policies, rural schools, indigenous peoples.

## **1. Introduction**

The results of the 2019 student census evaluation (ECE), carried out by the Ministry of Education (Minedu), explained that students in rural schools in Peru, in the fourth grade of primary school and the second grade of secondary school, are at the Beginning and Pre-start level in the areas of Reading and Mathematics (Minedu, 2019). These results, according to the National Plan for Intercultural Bilingual Education for 2021, reflect the little political will of some governments

in power to provide human and financial resources and infrastructure to meet the educational demands of students in rural areas of Peru. This reinforces the historical gaps that exist between students from rural areas and students from urban areas that date back to the colonial era.

The State and civil society must be clear that, in Peru, there is not one rurality but several ruralities. For this reason, there are 55 indigenous peoples spread throughout the national territory. Some have been “successfully” integrated, others are in process and some are resisting (Zariquiey et al., 2019).

The mechanism that the Peruvian State has used since colonial times to integrate indigenous peoples into the nation has been the school. In this essay we will try to analyze the public policies of rural schools from four questions: what makes a problem public? What advances and setbacks have been identified regarding educational policies for indigenous peoples? Who participates in the formulation of the policy? And how do the various positions of recognition that the State has on indigenous peoples influence ?

Each of these questions is described and explained below.

## **2. Development**

First, what makes an issue public? Schillagi (2011) states that “for a problem to exist, then, it must be mentioned as such by some actors, who will mobilize to demonstrate it and who will seek to have the greatest amount of support possible to make their demands publicly prevail” (p. 246). Here some questions arise around what the author raises: who or who can these actors be? Who or who legitimizes that these actors represent the interests of the rural school? Can this actor or actors have a voice and vote ? to say what is scheduled and what is discussed? We consider that these questions are valid so that these actors have legitimacy and

representation and, above all, safeguard the interests of the rural school. It has been seen in some cases that the just demands of indigenous peoples do not prevail on the public agenda because these actors do not have the support and legitimacy of the national population.

So, as Mballa and Gonzáles (2017) state, the public problem in Latin America, Asia and Africa does not find comprehensive solutions because it is not analyzed from its complexity and, therefore, the solutions they propose are fragmented and ineffective. It is enough to review information from the local environment to know the situation of abandonment in which the majority of rural schools that serve indigenous peoples in Peru are: these, regardless of the level and modality, present material and pedagogical deficiencies that affect learning. of students and the pedagogical work of teachers; only 19% of rural schools are in good condition and 20% need a total repair of their classrooms; does not have adequate and sufficient furniture and educational materials; Only 22% of rural schools have access to electricity, drinking water and connection to sewage. In general, the average in rural initial is 12 students and 0.8 teachers, in rural primary there are 28 students and 2 teachers and in rural secondary there are 65 students with 7.7 teachers (Montero and Ucelli, 2020). For its part, Carbajo (2022) points out that, at the time of the covid-19 pandemic, rural schools were the most harmed because they did not have access to the internet and the majority of families did not have the technological means or virtual means to access remote education.

Lorenc (2005) maintains that the stages of a problem in a public policy are: emergence of a problem, legitimation of the problem, mobilization of action with respect to the problem, formulation of an official action plan and the

implementation of the plan. This structure, the author tells us, is not linear and the decisions or plans can be simultaneous or successive.

The participation of actors in these stages is crucial, but in most situations, indigenous peoples only participate in the terminal part of public policy as beneficiaries of transfers conditional on economic issues.

In some cases, indigenous peoples ignore or only know the basics about their rights to political participation. For example, on the right to participate through their representatives in the District Local Coordination Council (CCL). The CCL is a body composed of the mayor, councilors and representatives of civil society that has the function of preparing the participatory budget and concerted development plans; was established by Law No. 28056, Participatory Budget Framework Law (Congress of the Republic, 2003a).

In other cases, the indigenous population assumes a role of passive participant as a beneficiary of the political decisions of social programs that are being promoted in their regions and localities.

The Peruvian State has a conditional transfer program for poor families in rural and urban areas called “Together.” This program provides regular financial compensation to affiliated families in exchange for their children attending school and health centers. Juntos was inaugurated in 2005 in Chuschi – a rural area and symbol of the communities most affected by the internal armed conflict – and currently serves 685 thousand homes, in 174 provinces, 1,325 districts and 40,698 population centers nationwide (Montero and Ucelli, 2020 , p. 9)

Second, what advances and setbacks have been identified regarding educational policies for indigenous peoples? The EIB policy dates back to the 20th century. Not only has its progress not been straight, but there have often been setbacks by

the State. Below, we point out the most relevant milestones of progress: The Literacy Plan for the various language groups of the Peruvian jungle, implemented at the beginning of 1953; In 1972, Minedu promulgated Law No. 191326, Educational Reform Law and its Regulations in the 1970s, considered the most advanced Law of its time on intercultural education; the creation of the Directorate of Intercultural Bilingual Education in 1987 and the promulgation of the EIB Policy in 1989 where the intercultural policy was included in the educational system (Ordóñez, 2014).

Finally, in the first years of the 20th century, Law No. 28044, General Education Law, currently in force, was promulgated, which establishes the guarantee of the right of indigenous peoples to conditions of equality with the rest of the national community. It also establishes bilingual intercultural education as a component of the entire educational system (Congress of the Republic, 2003b).

In subsequent years, we witnessed some important milestones of progress of the EIB, such as the “Approval of the National Policy on Languages and Cultures in 2005, through Directorial Resolution No. 176-2005-ED, policies on the implementation of National Bilingual Education Plan” (Ordóñez, 2014, p. 45).

Consistent with this, Minedu (2016a) designs and implements the National Plan for Intercultural Bilingual Education by 2021 (PLANEIB). In the same perspective, in 2018, the Minedu approved the Bilingual Intercultural Education Service Model to improve the learning of students from indigenous peoples in order to provide better conditions of access, permanence and completion to students who live in dispersed rural areas (Minedu, 2018).

As mentioned, along with progress, policies and actions of setbacks or stagnation were issued. A first policy adverse to the EIB is the promulgation, by the Congress

of the Republic (1982), of Law No. 23384 , General Education Law enacted in the aforementioned year, called the educational counter-reform law, which suppresses the policy of EIB in the educational system that had been established by Law No. 191326, Educational Reform Law.

The trend of reducing the budget allocated for the implementation of the PLANEIB from 2016 to 2022 is also considered a countermovement. If the budget is reduced, it is difficult to implement the aforementioned plan and extend the coverage of the pedagogical support programs for teachers of rural areas. Added to this item is the EIB teaching gap, considered the most serious stagnation. In 2022 there is a gap of 53,470 EIB teachers. Added to this is the absence of political will from the government to develop the EIB (Ombudsman's Office, 2021).

For its part, the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Jungle (AIDSESEP) issued a warning statement about the beginning of the annihilation of schools that provide bilingual Intercultural Education services in the Amazon and the Peruvian Andes, by hiring teachers who do not They know neither the language nor the culture of the students they must teach.

The main demand included in the statement was:

We consider that the decision to appoint pedagogical authorities without knowledge of the language and culture of indigenous children and young people in educational institutions characterized as revitalization EIB and urban EIB is an attack against the rights of indigenous peoples to a relevant education, relevant and quality (AIDSESEP, 2022, para. 3)

A relevant stagnation related to intercultural education corresponds to the indifferent actions of multisectoral public officials, in the rural Amazonian and Andean regions, in the face of the destruction of biodiversity and the environment

caused by mining and illegal logging activities. Not only does it affect the environment, it also exposes the population to diseases caused by mercury, a chemical element used in gold panning. In addition to this, in 2022 there have been clashes against various indigenous peoples, particularly in the Amazonian territories of the Awajún, Wampis, Ashaninka and others. On July 17, 2022, the journalist from Ojo Público reported that the gold violence promoted by illegal mining is affecting their human rights and causing confrontation between the indigenous communities of Amazonas, following the recent attack against the indigenous leader Horteiz Baituges ( [Santos](#) , 2022).

Even when there is a regulatory framework that regulates the prohibition of illegal mining such as Legislative Decrees 1100 and 1451, the authorities choose indifference and do not respond to complaints about gold panning, made by representatives of indigenous communities (Ministry of Justice, 2017).

The consequences of the development of illegal mining and logging produce disruptions and disruption of the imaginaries and worldview of indigenous peoples, leading to the loss of their ethnic identity. Thus, the cultural conception of the territory as a space is being lost, where not only human beings, animals or plants live, but also supernatural beings that exerted influence on the economic and social activities of the communities (Quijano and Veit, 2020). .

The above implies that illegal, and in many cases legal, mining and logging destroy traditional conceptions of territory, accentuating fragmentation and promoting the loss of its social and cultural meaning. All of this contradicts the foundations of intercultural bilingual education.

Third, who participates in policy formulation ? To describe and explain the types, levels and spaces of participation in policy formulation, it is necessary to



characterize the sociocultural, economic aspects and linguistic diversity of the rural world and how this influences the actors when they participate in the development of the policy. policy.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 1981) postulates that in the rural world different ruralities coexist and that their development, integration and modernity depends not only on their proximity to the urban world, but also on their involvement in the State.

In relation to sociocultural factors, in some rural areas inequalities are more evident in terms of access to the benefits that modernity offers, in the development of full citizenship and in the exercise of the rights one has before the law. It is also evident in the economy, in low income levels, in the lack of work for young people, in informal work, in the supply of products to intermediate cities and in export agriculture. It is worth mentioning that in countries where there is great linguistic diversity, this is seen, by some, as a cultural wealth and, by others, as an obstacle to national integration (Anaya et al., 2021; ECLAC, 1981; Ramírez, 2006 ).

These factors, mentioned by ECLAC (1981) and Anaya et al. (2021) manifest themselves in rural schools in various ways: On the one hand, due to their high dispersion, isolation and lack of communication, they choose to have single-teacher schools - which are characterized by being isolated - and multigrade schools - which are distinguished by having no more than three teachers who serve various grades and areas of knowledge. On the other hand, it is not possible to unite the schools because it would stop serving the students who need it most in a town center, community or hamlet.



This high dispersion, isolation, lack of communication and low schooling of the majority of rural populations conditions their ability to exert pressure on national political power and their participation in the cycle of public policy formulation.

Villarreal (2009) defines participation as involvement in state and non-state spaces from their identity as citizens and from the models of democracy and the type of relationship between government and society that is wanted to be established. Fuenmayor (2017) understands, in public policies, the actor or actors as a group, a committee, a bureaucratic team, a coalition or State that interferes or shapes a public policy.

Likewise, it must be considered that participation and actors in the rural world are conditioned by the beliefs that the power groups have about them and by the beliefs that they themselves have about themselves. That is, if they perceive themselves as citizens with rights and equal before the law, then they will be able to exercise or influence a national policy to solve their problems. Otherwise, they would feel inhibited, in most cases, in their claims and proposals. Hence the importance of the more rural population being trained and sensitized on participation issues (Ferró, 2014).

Regarding the types of participation, Villarreal (2009) proposes four. The social, which implies: individual, organization or association that defends the interests of its members. The community, which includes participation in the development of the community and the State, is welfare-oriented. While political participation is characterized by having political representation. Finally, citizen participation as a member of the State that can define collective goals.

In the case of the rural school, it participates in the social and community sphere because its involvement focuses mainly on the defense of its basic rights, such as

language, identity, traditions, knowledge, territory, among others. . Here we can mention some organizations, such as: the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Jungle, which is committed to the training of teachers from a bilingual intercultural approach; the RECREA Network, which defends the right to have quality education; the Lupuna Network, which promotes bilingual intercultural education; the Piura Regional Educational Board, which promotes policy debate to improve educational quality.

Of the participation spaces that exist in rural schools, we find the Parents' Association, the Rural Educational Networks, the School Councils and the Organized Community that ensures the knowledge of the community in the face of Western knowledge.

As can be seen, due to the types, levels and spaces of participation in the rural world, there is no scope for political or citizen participation; It is more local and regional, which does not have much influence in the formulation of policy. They only exercise control over the terminal part, that is, they participate in the functioning of the school and the teacher's work in some cases.

However, in this last decade there have been efforts by the State to incorporate indigenous peoples in the process of making educational political decisions that affect the population. Through their representatives, they have participated in workshops to provide proposals for educational public policies that benefit culture, biodiversity and education.

We present some participatory experiences such as: the design and implementation of the “National Plan for Bilingual Intercultural Education for 2021” (PLANEIB) by the Ministry of Education. It is considered as a management document, designed in a participatory manner with representatives of various organizations

and subject to prior consultation with indigenous peoples through their national, regional and local representative organizations (Minedu, 2016b).

There is also the National Educational Project for 2036, approved by Supreme Decree No. 009-2020-MINEDU on July 28, 2020. This document establishes vital guidelines on bilingual intercultural education, rights of indigenous peoples and active citizenship. Its construction involved holding consultation workshops with educational actors at the national level, including representatives of indigenous peoples. These participatory processes were reproduced with greater intensity in each region, when they designed the Regional Educational Projects (PER) for 2036, as is the case of the PER of Madre de Dios (Gobierno Regional Madre de Dios, 2022).

Fourth, how do the various recognition positions that the State has influence indigenous peoples? As mentioned, the participation of indigenous peoples is only present in the social and community spheres; it is not yet evident in the political and civic spheres due to the negative burden that is placed on them: submissive, inferior people, who only have utility. as cheap labor in the cities and uneducated people; Even a former Peruvian president described them as second-class citizens (Lovón, 2018).

There are international<sup>1</sup> and national<sup>2</sup> regulatory frameworks that explicitly state that the Peruvian State must recognize and guarantee the right of indigenous peoples to education under conditions of equality and equity with the rest of the national community (Minedu, 2016x ). It is also expressed in the National Agreement for 2050: “The State guarantees inclusive, comprehensive and quality public and private education at all levels and modalities. Public education ensures equal opportunities by addressing the cultural, social, territorial and linguistic

diversity of the country” (National Agreement, 2019, para. 8). But there is no political will to provide sufficient human, material and financial resources to implement, monitor and evaluate the programs and plans offered to rural schools and thus reduce the existing educational gaps.

The organizations that defend rural education are still in an initial stage, that is, they are fighting to defend their identity, their language, their knowledge and do not have, in some cases, a national reach due to the stigma attached to it. certain sectors of society. Also, because they are organizations that are born in current contexts in the face of specific issues that, after achieving their purposes, “disappear.”

Likewise, it is important to review and analyze the student census evaluation policy, which has been carried out since 2007 in Peru:

in 2nd grade, in schools that serve Spanish-speaking populations (in Reading and Mathematics); and in the 4th grade of primary school, in the Intercultural Bilingual Education schools, which are those that serve populations speaking some native language (in Reading in Spanish as a second language and in Reading in the native language). Starting in 2015, the ECE was applied in the 2nd grade of secondary school and measured competencies in Reading, Writing and Mathematics (Minedu, 2016x, p. 12).

In a country that has 55 indigenous peoples, it should be evaluated in all languages and not prioritize some dominant languages over others. As indicated, there is a preference for Spanish, Cusco-Collao Quechua, Chanka Quechua, Aimara, Shipibo-Conibo, Awajún and Asháninka (Minedu, 2016x). Here it is vital that indigenous peoples, who are not considered in these student census evaluations in their mother tongue, demand that the State comply with the signed agreements:

Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Countries . Independent Rights (ILO, 2014), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN, 1966), the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance (OAS, 2013) and the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (OAS, 2016).

### **3. Conclusion**

The participation of the indigenous population in the local and national agenda: in the preparation, monitoring and implementation of public policy is limited due to the high dispersion of indigenous peoples in the national territory and the heterogeneity of languages, the unequal treatment of gender, the neglect of educational services and the setbacks in the implementation of the EIB, among others.

Of the four types of participation addressed in this study, indigenous peoples have greater participation in the social and community spheres. That is, they focus mainly on defending the interests of the members and have a welfare State that does not propose comprehensive solutions, making its responses fragmented and ineffective to address intercultural bilingual education.

The participation of indigenous peoples is found in the process of transition from the social and community to the political and citizen. The latter will allow them to influence and influence the local and national agenda and national political decision-making to address and resolve their educational needs. This implies that these actors become empowered and are protagonists of their personal and collective development, in such a way that they feel included in the structure and dynamics of the State.

We consider it important to consolidate the participation of indigenous peoples in the process of developing public policies established by the National Educational Project for 2036, referring to the strengthening of active citizenship, and to guide the lessons learned from the various prior consultation experiences that have been demanded by indigenous peoples, to turn it towards the educational sector.

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