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Reaching the marginalized

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Reaching the unreached: indigenous intercultural bilingual education in Latin America

Commission Background Study for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009

Luis Enrique López¹

Around the world, it is clear that simply stating that equal opportunities exist for all does not ensure equal participation from all. This is so because complex patterns of discrimination act as powerful obstacles to access. These patterns act both through cultural messages given by society and through personal subordinated attitudes. Therefore if educational opportunities are to reach all groups which are discriminated against, then specific obstacles to access must be identified and programmes organised in response to them.

In ICAE (International Council of Adult Education), 2003, *Agenda for the Future. Six Years Later*. Pp. 16-17.

1. Introduction

The paper focuses on the educational situation of the most marginalized children and adolescents in Latin America: those belonging to indigenous homes and communities. To illustrate indigenous marginalization and exclusion as well as the development of intercultural bilingual education (IBE) six countries have been chosen: Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru.

The indigenous inhabitants of Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru, Mexico and Ecuador represent more than 80% of the total indigenous population of the region. These five countries have a long history of bilingual education, but the needs of all indigenous children and adolescents are far from being met.

Paraguay is a unique case, since its indigenous population is a real minority (2.0%). In spite of that, most of the population is bilingual of Guarani and Spanish and the national education system is partially bilingual. But being bilingual in this country does not imply being indigenous. In fact, an indigenous person can be either monolingual in his indigenous mother tongue (L1), bilingual of Spanish and his L1, or trilingual, in the L1, Spanish and the urban Guarani variety spoken by the hegemonic sectors of society, and hence known as Paraguayan Guarani. The indigenous population in Paraguay is the most excluded and the benefits of bilingual education reach only a small part of this population.

¹ Thanks are due to Lucia D'Emilio and Inge Sichra for going over the first drafts of this text and for their valuable comments and recommendations. Not always have I been able to react to them as they would have probably liked me to, hence the responsibility of the final version of this text is all mine. The views and opinions contained in the text are those of the author and they should not be attributed to the institutions he is associated with.

The paper begins with a first section with basic facts and data related to: indigenous peoples and languages in the region, the present educational situation of indigenous peoples in the region, and in particular that of indigenous children, with special emphasis on indigenous women and girls. This first section also presents a regional overview, in order to focus on the six countries selected for the study.

A second section analyzes the situation of IBE, beginning with the discussion of its historical background. From a regional perspective, IBE aims, objectives and strategies are referred to. Differences are established between governmental IBE models and strategies and those implemented by NGOs and/or indigenous organizations. At present this becomes very relevant since government models generally focus on the technicalities of IBE and of school bilingualism, while from grass-roots emphasis is placed on the cultural and political aims of education, thus considerably expanding the underlying notion of educational quality.

A third section comprises three basic profiles of IBE planning and implementation: the first one relates to countries where IBE policy has been mainly government or academia driven (Guatemala, Mexico and Peru), the second one refers to those cases where IBE emerged of indigenous political demand and community involvement (Bolivia and Ecuador), and the third profile describes the specific and exceptional situation of the only truly bilingual country in the region (Paraguay).

The last section is devoted to the assessment of the models and strategies implemented in the six countries studied, in order to derive policy implications both for top-down approaches as well as for bottom-up ones. The paper builds both on specialized literature and technical reports as well as on interviews and information recently gathered by the author in recent study-visits to these countries.

2. Points of departure

With 30 to 50 million indigenous inhabitants, over 650 indigenous peoples and more than 550 different languages spoken in 21 countries, Latin America is one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse areas of the world (López forthcoming). In most of the geographical and cultural areas which configure the region cultural and linguistic and biological diversity go hand in hand, and as there are endangered biological species so are there languages at risk. It is estimated that at least 111 of the remaining 557 living languages (20%) are at the verge of extinction (Ibid.). One last fact with direct incidence on education refers us to 103 transnational or cross-border indigenous languages (Ibid.).

The description presented above is not homogeneous across the region. It rather varies from one sub-region and country to another. On the one hand, most indigenous peoples and populations concentrate in the Andean region and in Mesoamerica (approximately 90% of the total) whereas in the Amazonian basin and the humid forests in general the population average of a single indigenous peoples is no more than 250 (Franchetto 2008).² On the other hand, in countries like Bolivia and Guatemala the indigenous populations constitute demographic majorities (66% and 40% of the total population of these countries, respectively); in others like Salvador and Brazil indigenous populations

² The Quechuas are the most numerous in the Americas with a total estimated population of between 10 to 12 million members distributed in seven different countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. The Mayas living in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras are the second most populated single indigenous peoples, with 6 to 7 million inhabitants.

are real minorities (0.2% and 0.4%) (Ibid.). Politically or sociologically, however, all indigenous peoples are thought of as minorities and thus regarded as subaltern societies or communities (Spivak 1984). Above all, structural racism, discrimination and exclusion and the continuation of colonial policies and practices hinder the exercise of indigenous rights and of human rights in general in most of the region.

Table 1: Indigenous peoples, population and languages in Latin America

Country and date of latest national census ³	Total national population	Indigenous peoples	Indigenous population		Indigenous languages	Political status of indigenous languages
			#	%		
Argentina (2001)	36.260.160	30	600.329	1.6	15	Languages of education
Belize (2000)	232.111	4	38.562	16.6	4	-----
Bolivia (2001)	8.090.732	36	5.358.107	66.2	33	Co-official with Spanish
Brazil (2000)	169.872.856	241	734.127	0.4	186	Languages of education
Chile (2002)	15.116.435	9	692.192	4.6	6	Languages of education
Colombia (2005)	41.468.384	83	1.392.623	3.3	65	Co-official with Spanish
Costa Rica (2000)	3.810.179	8	65.548	1.7	7	-----
Ecuador (2001)	12.156.608	12	830.418	6.8	12	Of official regional use
El Salvador (2007)	5.744.113	3	13.310	0.2	1	-----
French Guyana (1999)	201.996	6	3.900	1.9	6	Languages of education
Guatemala (2002)	11.237.196	24	4.487.026	39.9	24	National languages
Guyana (2001)	751.223	9	68.819	9.1	9	Languages of education
Honduras (2001)	6.076.885	7	440.313	7.2	6	Languages of education
Mexico (2000)	100.638.078	67	9.504.184	9.4	64	Co-official with Spanish
Nicaragua (2005)	5.142.098	9	292.244	5.7	6	Of official regional use
Panama (2000)	2.839.177	8	285.231	10.0	8	Languages of education
Paraguay (2002)	5.163.198	20	108.308	2.0	20	Guarani as co-official
Peru (2008)	28.220.764	43	3.919.314	13.9	43	Of official regional use
Surinam (2006)	436.935	5	6.601	1.5	5	-----
Uruguay (2004)	3.241.003	0	115.118	3.5	0	-----
Venezuela (2001)	23.054.210	37	534.816	2.3	37	Co-official with Spanish
Latin America	479.754.341	661	29.491.090	6.1%	557	

Sources: Adapted from Tables 3 and 6 from Lopez forthcoming, on the basis of official national censuses data. The demographic data for Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras and Panama have been taken from ECLAC in Del Poppolo and Oyarce 2005, and the data for the other countries from Atlas in DVD (Sichra 2009). The Paraguayan data comes from Melià forthcoming; the Bolivian linguistic one from Lopez 2005, and the Guatemalan one from ALMG (Academia de las Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala).

NB. Other sources based on estimates and on non-official data would rather speak of 40 or even 50 million indigenous inhabitants in Latin America. See, for example, Hall and Patrinos 2004 and others quoted in López forthcoming.

It is also important to note that indigenous populations are no longer found only in remote rural areas, in the highlands or in the tropical forests. Indigenous communities and individuals have extended their presence and influence into cities and towns in all countries of the region. Furthermore, there are instances where large sectors of a given indigenous peoples are urban, as is the case of most Nahuatl in Mexico, Kaqchikeles in Guatemala, Aymaras in Bolivia, and also of a good number of Quechuas in Ecuador, Peru

³ Although official, the information given in Table 1 ought to be taken cautiously since many technical and sociological problems persist in data collection. On the one hand, due to the subaltern condition of indigenous societies many opt for denying their ethnic affiliation and even the language they speak most frequently in order to present themselves as mestizos or Spanish or Portuguese speaking before the eyes of the data collector, who on top of all things comes and speaks on behalf of the discriminatory State interviewees do not necessarily trust. In other cases, data collectors themselves, on the basis of their own perceptions and prejudices, decide who is to be registered as indigenous or even as an indigenous language speaker. Additionally, it needs to be considered that when in a census language is taken as the variable determining indigeneity, the question is then formulated in reference only to the population of ages 5 and over, leaving out children under 5, target population of the educational system. Therefore, the data included and analyzed here must be seen as indexical, since it most probably refers us only to figures one must consider as a minimal starting point.

and Bolivia generally living in the outskirts of large cities (cf. Sichra forthcoming). For instance, 44.4% of Peruvian Quechua speakers live in cities and towns as well as 43.6% of their Aymara peers (Peru 2008). Paradigmatic is the case of the Mapuches in Chile and Argentina whose population is mainly urban (75% of the total) (Sichra forthcoming). However, being urban does neither necessarily entail enjoying the rights national legislation prescribes for all citizens, nor that they receive the type of education they need or demand in correspondence to their cultural and linguistic characteristics.

Additionally, exceptional situations are beginning to arise in the present context of indigenous re-location in society and in national politics. Countries such as Uruguay that until recently did not report indigenous population in their territory, registered in the last 2004 National Census that 3.5% of the population re-defined themselves as of indigenous origin or ancestry (López forthcoming). It is highly probable that some of the people that deliberately and admittedly considered themselves as indigenous in the latest censuses through the region did so to signal to the hegemonic sectors of society that mainstream assimilation and uniformed and unitary identity definition are giving way to a more flexible understanding of identity processes in Latin America. In this region until recently regarded as the most culturally and linguistic homogeneous region in the world, identity politics is a new factor in contemporary political beliefs that education needs to seriously contemplate.

Over 80% of the total indigenous population of the region concentrates in the 5 countries, historically considered as the “most indigenous” ones: Mexico, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Peru. In percentages, Bolivia and Guatemala have the highest concentration of indigenous individuals, within an approximate range of 40 to 65% of the total national population. Nonetheless, one can find specific regions and areas in any of these countries and in others where the majority of the population is indigenous in percentages that could be as 95% high or more. Hence, it might be misleading for language and educational planners to base their decisions only on national averages. For a clearer picture and for more appropriate planning, one needs to look into regionally and even locally disaggregated data and explore the demographic and sociolinguistic situation of specific sub-national units.

The remaining 18% of the regional indigenous population is distributed across 16 countries. In relative terms, 7 of them have an indigenous minority. Only 0.2% of the population of El Salvador is registered as indigenous. This country is followed by Brazil, Argentina, Costa Rica, Surinam, French Guyana and Paraguay. In these 7 countries the indigenous population ranges only from 0.2% to 2.0%.

The general sociolinguistic configuration of Latin America and the linguistic structure and functioning of indigenous societies also challenge common beliefs on linguistic diversity and monolingualism. Even after the hegemonic language is acquired the indigenous one might be kept for communication within the family and the local milieu. Most indigenous communities are now bilingual, with indigenous monolingualism being exceptional: only 9.8% in Mexico (México 2005), 12.4% in Bolivia (Sichra op cit.) and 14.3% in Ecuador (Ecuador 2001). The exception to this rule might be Guatemala where indigenous monolingualism is much higher and reaches 43.6% of the Maya population (Verdugo and Raymundo 2009). In general, monolingualism generally persists as a trait of women and children under school age.

Societal multilingualism within an extended and exogamous family structure can be the norm in certain indigenous communities of Brazil (Franchetto op. cit.) and Colombia

(Stenzel 2005, Sorensen 1967), although with sharp differences and with more prevalence in the Vaupes river area of Colombia and Brazil (Stenzel 2005). In such a case a school-age child might speak four or more different indigenous languages when first registering in school. In many other parts of the Amerindian world, indigenous individuals and families speak three or four languages. In Paraguay, for example, this is the case with many indigenous individuals and communities who speak their own language, the neighboring community's one, Paraguayan Guarani --the lingua franca-- and Spanish --the language favored by the elites (Meliá 1992). Societal multilingualism was difficult to understand for early missionaries and educators who found it easier and more convenient to transform this anomalous situation into "normality", adopting a reductionist monolingual perspective.⁴ To this date, limited knowledge on societal multilingualism and on the sociolinguistic functioning of indigenous communities in general hinders adequate and culturally sensitive language education programs for indigenous children and adolescents. The effects of our ignorance and lack of cognitive flexibility are simply devastating and in many ways also ethnocidal.⁵

Nation-state building ideologies had an early impact on all Latin American countries. Hence, monolingualism-monoculturalism was adopted as the "normal" and desirable state (López 1999). From very early on language planning policies took on an orientation of diversity as a problem. In the search for such a societal transformation schooling and education were seen in general as the means to achieve the desired political goal of the elites in government, thus continuing and even strengthening a colonial perspective over language and communication in a multiethnic society (Ibid.).

Educational systems were constructed initially to exclude indigenous children and adolescents, generally under pressure of landowners and although legislation prescribed equality for all. Later mainstream assimilatory strategies were adopted and education was conducted only in the European language of power, thus many indigenous children reiteratively repeated or failed in schools and were also early expelled from the system (Hamel 2008, López & Sichra 2008, López & Küper 2000). Those who succeeded generally fled into the cities. Numerous and diverse strategies were implemented in order to keep indigenous children in schools and to secure more effective assimilation into the mainstream. The rural school's higher order mission was that of incorporating not only the indigenous students themselves but the communities to which they belonged to a new

⁴ Several researches have called our attention to disrupting outside interference which endangers societal multilingualism: "The Salesians "imposed Western-style schooling on the Indians, forcing children into boarding schools where they were made to speak just one language of the area, Tucano (sic) ... chosen because it was, numerically, the majority language ... The Salesians also considered the traditional multilingualism of the area a 'pagan' habit, and strived to make Indians monolingual 'like other civilized people in the world'" (Aikhenvald, 2002:243, quoted by Stenzel 2005:15). "Not surprisingly, in the Salesians' view, the category of "civilized people" included the national populations of Brazil and Colombia, and it was monolingualism in Portuguese or Spanish that was the ultimate intended goal" (Stenzel 2005: 15).

⁵ "The activities of the Salesians in Brazil over the past eighty years have been particularly devastating. Not only did the national government allow the Salesians to intervene in the Indians' way of life by destroying their multi-family longhouses, devaluing and/or prohibiting their ceremonies and use of artifacts, and denigrating their norms of social organization (such as cross-cousin marriage), but they also founded an alliance with the Salesian order in the realm of education. For nearly 80 years, the Salesians were in charge of village grade schools (grades 1-4) and ran three boarding schools for older indigenous children. This 'education program' had serious social and linguistic consequences. First, while it generally discouraged use of indigenous languages—labeling them as 'slang' or 'dialects'—and encouraged use of Portuguese as the language of instruction, it also promoted use of the Tukano language as *the* lingua franca in other settings, bestowing on it a kind of recognition and status no language within the system had previously been accorded and which is completely contrary to the traditional 'egalitarian' status of participating languages. Moreover, the removal of children from their families and communities in the name of 'education' has contributed to the breakdown of transmission of traditional forms of knowledge. Several generations of Vaupés Indians were taught to be ashamed of their cultural heritage and were encouraged to seek meaning and belonging in a national culture which in turn view them as primitives with little to offer" (Stenzel 2005:15-18).

way-of-life: civilized, Christian, productive, industrious, in urban-like lodging patterns and in general integrated into the modern social and economic world.⁶ Nonetheless, after almost 150 years of public education in indigenous territories and rural areas in general, hundreds of indigenous cultures and languages survive, although severely weakened and under threat.

The denial of the right to one's language and culture in schools has certainly had a negative impact on the educational situation of indigenous children and adolescents. Depending on the sub-region and the specific country, indigenous educational deficits range from generalized exclusion to limited access to the upper levels of primary and secondary education, with admittance to higher education being still exceptional. In this context, deficits in the area of adult basic literacy do not yet seem to considerably decrease (López & Hanemann 2009).

Paraguay is a paradoxical case in many ways. On the one hand, it is the bilingual society par excellence in the region, since over 80% of its population speaks both Guarani and Spanish. Guarani is spoken widely, privately and publicly, in urban and rural areas and for different social purposes (Paraguay 2001), although under a still classical diglossic-bilingual structure (Fishman 1967) and thus subordinating Guarani to Spanish. Paraguayans need not be indigenous in order to speak Guarani. Yet the appropriation of Guarani as a national identity symbol by the Paraguayan hegemonic society has led to linguistic distancing between the nationally spoken Guarani variety (Jopará) and the other indigenous varieties belonging to the same linguistic family spoken by minority indigenous communities (Melià forthcoming). *Vis-à-vis* Spanish, Guarani is an official national language, and consequently a language of education but the other 19 indigenous languages spoken in the country are not. Guarani-Spanish bilingual education is official and tends to be generalized in the country (Paraguay 2001 & CPES 1998), but the indigenous communities still struggle for linguistic and cultural recognition and indeed have very limited access to formal education.

In a recent comparative survey of youth and adult indigenous literacy (López & Hanemann 2009), in six Latin American countries (Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, México, Peru and Nicaragua) indigenous illiteracy amongst people of 15 years of age or more spanned from 12.9% (Nicaragua) to 47.7% (Guatemala) when national averages ranged from 7.2% (Peru) to 23.97% (Guatemala). Guatemala with the most critical indigenous illiteracy rate in the region is not that different from Paraguay, where indigenous illiteracy is 38.90% (Paraguay 2009). The communities whose language belongs to the Guarani family are the most illiterate: 44.2% (Ibid.).

In the same vein, an ECLAC regional study identifies the existing divide in terms of indigenous access to health and educational services, as a result of the prevailing discriminatory national structures (Del Popolo & Oyarce 2005). In 3 of the 10 countries studied infant mortality in indigenous homes is twice or three times higher than amongst the non-indigenous. Educational inequalities are also systematic, even in primary education: over 20% of indigenous children between 6 and 11 years of age do not enjoy their rights to education. Paraguay is the most severe case of exclusion since 38% of

⁶ The inception of rural education and of bilingual education in Mexico in the 1930s and 40s was heavily marked by a missionary spirit since the issue at stake was the social, cultural and economic "regeneration" of indigenous communities and individuals (cf. the studies on the matter in Lizama 2007). That explains why the introduction of indigenous bilingual education in many countries was handed over to religious organizations that often imposed the new and supposedly enlightening worldview through boarding schools.

indigenous children are out of school, and only 21% complete primary schooling. “Beyond the heterogeneities observed in the region, [...] in most countries, the scope for achieving the proposed goals established in international agreements is significantly lower in the case of indigenous pupils” (Ibid.).

3. Indigenous intercultural bilingual education

Indigenous bilingual education dates back to the first four decades of the 20th century, when rural teachers and indigenous leaders took it upon themselves to introduce local indigenous languages in youth and adult literacy programs. That was the case in Mexico, Peru and Ecuador. In Yucatan, an area where Maya is the major language, teachers spontaneously used the indigenous language in schools and classrooms to make learning easier for indigenous pupils (Heath 1972). In the Andes two outstanding women designed materials and methodologies and taught indigenous children, adolescents and adults to read and write bilingually, unlike what Spanish-only national policies prescribed: in the mid 1930s, in Puno, a mestizo speaker of Aymara and Quechua became the pioneer of bilingual education in Peru (López 1988) and in the mid 1940s a communist indigenous peasant union leader in Ecuador played a comparable role (Rodas 1989).

In Guatemala the history is somewhat different since a North American protestant missionary taught Kaqchikel adults to read and write in their mother tongue in the 1920s and 1930s while translating the New Testament into that language. In Mexico the option was institutional and bilingual education emerged as the State decided in the early 1940s to overcome the problems encountered with Spanish-only instruction, and subsequent implementation of literacy in Maya, Otomi, Nahuatl and Purepecha was implemented (Schmelkes et al 2009).

The history of IBE in Latin America is heavily marked by the application of linguistics to education, and particularly of phonetics and phonology to the design of alphabets and to second-language teaching. Mexico was certainly one of the first fertile grounds in this process. Due to the discrepancies that arose between the State and the Catholic Church after the Mexican Revolution, the post-revolutionary State and the protestant Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) became allies in the development of the field of indigenous bilingual education. SIL helped the Mexican government implement bilingual education programs for indigenous children and adults in the most heavily populated indigenous regions (Schmelkes et al 2009). Alphabets were designed, teachers trained and educational materials prepared on the basis of a common grid in Spanish or in an indigenous language from which translations were then made to different languages. The methodologies of this period were then transferred to other countries in the continent using the international platform of the congresses of indigenism that Mexico promoted. The first Panamerican seminal congress of this series took place in Patzcuaro in 1940 (Marzal 1993).

The aim was to introduce transitional bilingual education since formal education was to contribute to the nation-making process through the generalization of Spanish and the written word (López 1999). SIL signed agreements with various Latin American governments, provided technical and scientific support and took advantage of the strategic role of bilingual education in order to fulfill their ultimate objective: Bible translation and dissemination. Emphasis was placed on the language issue and not on the cultural context as it was clear that education had to trigger a profound cultural change amongst the

indigenous population (Townsend 1949)⁷. This objective was shared by the Latin American elites in government and SIL, perhaps with the only exception of the religious variable.⁸ Anthropologists and linguists generally agreed on the transitional orientation since the official national policy concerning indigenous populations –known as indigenism-- also had cultural assimilation as a goal (Marzal 1993). One of the areas where SIL missionaries worked the most was the Amazonian basin where they still operate in countries like Brazil and Peru either under the SIL umbrella or other denominations.

Since the early 1940s linguists have been in the forefront of bilingual education design and implementation, followed by anthropologists. Only in the last two decades have educationalists engaged in this type of endeavor. In fact, what we now know about indigenous bilingual education in most countries is owed to university research centers in the fields of language and culture (cf. Hamel 2008, Sichra 2008b, Zavala et al 2007, López 1988, Mosonyi & Gonzalez 1975, Pozzi-Escot 1972, amongst many others). Many times in association with academic centers outside the region (USA, Germany, UK, France, The Netherlands, etc.) dissertations and research projects have contributed to the accumulated knowledge now available in the region (cf. Gustafson 2009, Howard et al 2002, King 2001, von Gleich 1989, Gynan 2001, Hornberger 1988, amongst many others).

Transitional bilingual education is still under implementation in most countries since the main-stream assimilationist political paradigm has not yet been abandoned, despite the undeniable political recognition –both national and regional-- that indigenous peoples now enjoy (cf. Sichra in press).

In the late 1970s and early 80s a change in aims and objectives of bilingual education took place as a result of the increasing demands and active participation of indigenous leaders, intellectuals and teachers, particularly in South America (cf. López & Sichra 2008, López and Moya 1989, D'Emilio 1989). State indigenism was partially abandoned and replaced by critical indigenism (Marzal 1993), with the adoption of cultural pluralism theory and practice.

Indigenous leaders, some of them former transitional bilingual education students, demanded greater and improved attention to their cultures and languages, and strategically regarded the indigenous culture as a political resource in order to gain more visibility and participation in the countries they lived in. The assumption of indigenous culture as a political resource challenged the classical unitary and homogeneous

⁷ "Once he can read, even if he initially does it only in his own language, he loses his inferiority complex. New things attract his interest. He becomes interested in buying manufactured articles –tools, mills or grinders, clothes, etc. To buy such things he needs to work more. Production increases and so does consumption. The entire society profits from it, except for the canteen-tender and the witchcraft doctor. Everyone discovers that an Indian is worth more as a cultivated person than as brutal force submersed in ignorance". My translation of "Una vez que puede leer, aunque al principio sea solamente en su propio idioma, se le quita el complejo de inferioridad. Comienza a interesarse en cosas nuevas. Se interesa en comprar artículos manufacturados —implementos, molinos, ropa, etc. Para hacer tales compras necesita trabajar más. La producción aumenta y luego el consumo también. La sociedad entera, menos el cantinero y el brujo, saca provecho. Se descubre que el indio vale más como hombre culto que como fuerza bruta sumido en la ignorancia" (Townsend, 1949:43). In line with this strategy, SIL's presentation of their bilingual education work in Peru includes a text entitled "Cultural change and development of the whole person: and an exposition of the philosophy and methods of the SIL" (cf. Loos et al 1981). The similarities in view with the Salesian mission in Brazil (cf. foot-note 5) are simply perplexing. Indeed, when the final goal is evangelization, the religious denomination does not matter but the monocultural ideal and the mission of "civilization" do.

⁸ Nonetheless it must be highlighted that in all of these countries local elites opposed bilingual education "out of fear that such schools would undermine their control over a labor force. Some felt that it would be a waste of resources to educate those destined for a life of hard manual labor and would only make it more likely for them to revolt" (Becker 2008: 1).

conception of the nation-State, aiming at its transformation (Varese 1985, Amadio 1988). The arrival and incursion of indigenous voice and agency in indigenist debates practically saved State indigenism from succumbing.

The adoption of the maintenance and development orientation and of the intercultural desideratum resulted from this ideological shift. Thus the acronym IBE –or EIB in Spanish and Portuguese— became common grounds for interventions in indigenous areas. Governments, NGOs and also indigenous organizations committed themselves to educational programs and projects in indigenous territories under this renewed orientation. In so doing, people in the region began to modify their views on indigenous languages and cultures. Laws and regulations were passed recognizing the right of indigenous peoples to education in their own languages. By the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s most national political constitutions were reformed precisely concerning indigenous issues and rights, the reformed or new constitutions of Mexico (1992), Paraguay (1992), Peru (1993), Bolivia (1994) and Ecuador (1998) recognized the multicultural make-up of these countries and granted the indigenous populations certain cultural and linguistic rights.⁹ In Guatemala the constitution of 1985 also recognized the multiethnic composition of the country.

More recently, as of the mid 1990s, embracing interculturalism for all has led to a further change of emphasis: from a problem orientation, to a rights one and from then on considering indigenous languages and cultures as a resource (cf. Ruiz 1984). Within this general context, in some countries IBE is implemented as a national policy and in others it is still the object of focalized compensatory programs and projects. That way the region is moving gradually from indigenous intercultural bilingual education to intercultural education for all (López & Sichra 2008).

Interculturalism in education refers to learning that is rooted in one's own culture, language, values, worldview and system of knowledge but that is, at the same time, receptive, open to and appreciative of other knowledges, values, cultures and languages. The final aim of intercultural education is learning to live together, since systems of knowledge, civilizatory patterns, cultures and languages are seen in complementary distribution rather than from the angle of segregation or opposition.

Although enrichment bilingual education is gaining momentum and moving forward it is still the main characteristic of Latin American elite-bilingualism associated with languages of wide international communication (Mejia 2008). Nonetheless, recent bilingual education innovations as those carried out in the city of Cuzco, Peru, by Colegio Pukllasunchis, a private school where Quechua is taught as a second language alongside with Spanish and English, from pre-school through secondary; the new Purepecha project in two rural communities in Mexico under a participatory IBE scheme (Hamel 2008, 2009) and the introduction of Maya as a L2 in public Mexican schools (Pool Ix 2008) constitute a vivid evidence of the positive impact the notion of interculturalism can have on education. Indeed interculturalism is the factor that has helped move from transition to maintenance and from maintenance into enrichment.

The curriculum is now becoming fertile ground for interethnic and intercultural negotiation regarding the role indigenous ancestral orality and indigenous knowledge and practices were to play in the official educational system (Trapnell 2008, López 2008a, 2008b, 2005,

⁹ Bolivia and Ecuador substantially modified their constitutions declaring their countries as multinational in 2009 and 2008 respectively.

CIESI 2005, Menezes de Souza 2002, López & Sichra 2008). Nonetheless, legal and educational rhetoric does not necessarily match what ministries of education design and implement.¹⁰ Most generally rhetoric, most often sound and appropriate, stands alone while practice and implementation follow different and sometimes unexpected paths.

In general, submersion in the hegemonic language is the most generally followed strategy with indigenous learners. Submersion includes the explicit prohibition to speak the indigenous language at school, thus Spanishization or Portugueseization is forced. When submersion makes room for the implementation of bilingual education, three basic theoretical models or orientations are implemented in the region: transitional bilingual education, maintenance and development bilingual education and enrichment bilingual education (Ruiz 1984, Hornberger 2009), although with major emphasis on the first two.

Strictly speaking, submersion strategies in Latin America share objectives with transitional bilingual education: both aim at the assimilation into the mainstream of indigenous populations¹¹ with the subsequent gradual substitution of their ancestral languages and cultures. They place emphasis on language education and restrict learning and use of the students' L1 to the acquisition of the written language, while either simultaneously or consecutively support the acquisition of the hegemonic language (the children's L2), from an initial oral phase to a written one. Generally by the third grade, once the learners can read and write in the L2, this language becomes the only medium of instruction. Exceptionally, transitional bilingual education can continue in one or two more grades, but never beyond primary school level. Transitional bilingual education can be either early-exit, if offered only during the first one, two or three grades, or late-exit when it goes beyond this threshold.

Maintenance and development bilingual education approaches students' L1 from a double perspective: the indigenous language is seen as a medium of instruction and simultaneously as an end in itself. As a medium of instruction, the indigenous language is used in all curriculum areas: Mathematics, Natural and Social Sciences, Physical Education, etc. In this case bilingual education implies much more than language teaching, but the two languages are also taught towards additive bilingualism. These two languages are dealt with from the beginning of formal education and at least during the complete primary education cycle of 6 years or more. But, ideally the presence and use of the indigenous languages continues in the secondary school level. In other words, the expected outcome is societal sustainable bilingualism.

Maintenance and development bilingual education and enrichment bilingual education have many things in common, and their proposed outcome is the same. Nonetheless, under an enrichment orientation bilingual education is made available also to urban indigenous populations as well as to mainstream children, since the aim is societal bilingualism and interculturalism for all. In other words, the proposed model is a two-way

¹⁰ Over a dozen governments have endorsed intercultural education for all (Moya 1998, Lopez 2001). Peru did it back in 1989, Bolivia in 1994, Ecuador in 1992 (Granda et al 2007), Guatemala in 1995-1996 and Mexico in 1997 and 2001. Nonetheless, little has been done in terms of application and the notion forms part of the extensive repertoire of political and educational rhetoric (Granda 2007, Sichra 2007). Moreover, the national adoption of interculturalism can often be considered an excuse for the lesser attention now paid to the indigenous languages and to indigenous bilingual education in general (Hamel 2008, Lopez 2008a, and López & Sichra 2008).

¹¹ Both submersion and transitional approaches have a common higher order mission: cultural and socioeconomic change of populations seen as backward or even primitive, and which are said to threaten the nation's capitalist economic development.

bilingual education.

Table 2: Bilingual education models under implementation in Latin America

Denomination	Basic argument	Political aim	Target population	Linguistic and cultural aim	Role of the mother tongue (MT)
Submersion	Indigenous languages and cultures are a threat to national unity.	Forced indigenous assimilation into the mainstream.	Indigenous communities and individuals.	Spanishization or Portugueseization. A monolingual and monocultural society.	None or at the most as an auxiliary language to facilitate learners' understanding of basic classroom instructions.
Transitional	Indigenous languages and cultures are a threat to national unity.	Indigenous assimilation into the mainstream. Consolidation of the classical homogenous nation-State and of "a" national culture.	Indigenous communities and individuals in rural areas.	Spanishization or Portugueseization. Subtractive bilingualism. Gradual extinction of indigenous languages. Indigenous languages used to translate and transmit mainstream curriculum content. A monolingual and monocultural society.	Spanish curriculum implementation except for the area of language. Mother-tongue is a bridge to European hegemonic languages. It makes hegemonic language learning more efficient.
Maintenance and development	Indigenous languages and cultures are a legacy to be preserved.	Cultural pluralism. Redefinition of the nation-State model through legal recognition of the indigenous peoples and groups that pre-date European invasion. Recognition of some cultural rights.	Indigenous communities and individuals in rural and urban areas.	Additive bilingualism. Indigenous societal bi or multilingualism. Preservation and development of indigenous languages. Indigenous languages to tackle indigenous cultural content in the curriculum. Spanish or Portuguese as languages of interethnic and intercultural communication. A multicultural / intercultural society.	Bilingual curriculum implementation. Indigenous languages as subjects and media of instruction vis-à-vis Spanish / Portuguese. Proficiency in two languages. Cultural sensitivity and language awareness.
Enrichment	Indigenous languages and cultures are political resources to achieve unity within diversity.	Intracultural reaffirmation. Intercultural citizenship. Redefinition of the nation-State, granting territorial rights and levels of autonomic rule to indigenous peoples. A multi-nation State in-the-making.	Indigenous communities and individuals in urban and rural areas. Society at large, including mestizo individuals and communities.	Additive bilingualism. General societal bi or multilingualism. Preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages. Indigenous cultures and languages as rights challenge the ontology of school knowledge. Spanish or Portuguese as languages of interethnic and intercultural communication. An intercultural society.	Bilingual or multilingual curriculum implementation. Indigenous languages as subjects and media of instruction vis-à-vis Spanish / Portuguese. Proficiency in two or more languages. Cultural sensitivity and critical language awareness.

NB. Strictly speaking, the submersion paradigm is not a bilingual education model. Its inclusion in this table is only for the sake of comparison. Table 2 does not include immersion as a model, since it is not yet in practice in indigenous settings in Latin America as it is in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Depending on the presupposed argument and the political and linguistic aims, immersion in either the L1 or the L2 with indigenous learners could fall into the enrichment category. Elite bilingualism in Latin America can resort to linguistic and pedagogical strategies which form part of the immersion pattern, but always in relation to foreign language learning (Mejía 2008).

An additional characteristic of the enrichment model is its non-linearity or the possibility of multiple access-times into the bilingual process: beginning with primary education, as it has most been the case, or towards the middle or end of it or also by the beginning of the secondary school level. As in some maintenance and development strategies, the indigenous world-view and culture vis-à-vis curriculum transformation and implementation

is given a key role since they intend to go beyond language issue.

Lastly, enrichment bilingual education also appeals to the transformation of non-indigenous students into open, receptive, respectful and appreciative individuals of linguistic and cultural diversity. Hence, the teaching of an indigenous language as a L2, embedded in an intercultural and decolonizing perspective of language teaching (Lin & Martin 2005, Luke 2005) acquires particular attention. Under this type of orientation, the school situates itself in the context of multiethnicity, multiculturalism and multilingualism and considers diversity as a resource and as a value in itself, having the indigenous language or languages as viable and valid resources for developing individual and collective capacities of semantic discovery and of improved mind-openness towards different worldviews, systems of knowledge and languages.

In the region, the boundaries between these models are not always clear cut. Furthermore, a given program or project could strategically begin under a transitional orientation; and once the confidence of teachers and parents is gained and both accept that the indigenous language be used as a medium of instruction, it could embrace the maintenance and development paradigm. Then, in times of more indigenous commitment and engagement, an enrichment orientation could come into play. This three-tier-taxonomy however helps understand government policies with reference to the political aims underlying a specific educational proposal and help us break-away from the supposed neutrality of education.

As in other parts of the world, politics of identity and ethnicity have gradually led to the application of postcolonial theory to indigenous educational critique and intervention. The region has certainly benefited from the fact that popular education and IBE developed almost simultaneously (1960-1990), and that indigenous youth and adult education became a place of common concern, since many formal education bilingual initiatives were either preceded by adult literacy campaigns or these were a byproduct of the implementation of bilingual education at primary-school level (cf. López & Küper 2000). “Paulo Freire’s model of critical pedagogy [...] stands as a remarkable ‘point of decolonization’ theorizing” (Luke 2005: xvi), and for the adoption of an intercultural perspective based on the interests of the oppressed. Indigenous intellectuals and leaders generally approach decolonization through a process of historical reconstruction, conscious recuperation of their historic memory and in the context of indigenous language and cultural rediscovery and revival.

IBE is gradually recuperating the political direction it began to follow at the end of the 1970s when indigenous organizations relocated their own languages and cultures in their struggle for social emancipation. In Latin America enrichment IBE goes beyond pedagogical and language issues and it inscribes indigenous education in the political arena. In so doing, the orientation and structure of the national curriculum is questioned and new indigenous curricular demands and educational proposals are put forward, even demanding government financing (López 2008a).

Indigenous involvement in educational programs has also led to a change of orientation in educational and language planning: from the usual top-down direction to a bottom-up one (ibid., Hornberger 1996). In that process IBE is not the same when it is interpreted and implemented directly by the indigenous organizations themselves than when it is under the responsibility of a government directorate, whether national, regional or local. As one would expect, autonomous IBE models regard educational processes and activities mainly as political while ministries of education consider them mostly as technical and

pedagogical and on many occasions under a compensatory view (López & Sichra 2008). This discrepancy has led indigenous organizations to propose their own endogenous models, which although being intercultural and bilingual, use a different denomination precisely to explicitly mark the difference in approach. Such is the case of the Guatemalan Mayan schools, the Chiapas autonomous municipal schools or of what in Colombia is known as endogenous education or “educación propia” (their own education) (Bolaños et al 2004).

IBE does not only focus on primary and basic education. Indigenous demands have taken it into the higher education domain, first incorporating it into teacher training colleges and later into universities. New intercultural universities have been opened in Mexico and Peru; and in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala indigenous universities or units have been created (Almeida de Carvalho 2008, Mato 2008, López, Hamel & Moya 2007). Similarly, innovative university programs, both pre-graduate and graduate, have been set up to prepare indigenous professionals in various academic fields, with IBE at the forefront. At present, one of the most renowned regional academic centers in this field is PROEIB Andes (Programa de Formación en Educación Intercultural Bilingüe para los Países Andinos), based at San Simón University in Cochabamba, Bolivia, where indigenous professionals from eight different Latin American countries have been trained since 1996 (Limachi 2008, Sichra 2008a, www.proeibandes.org).

Higher education, whether indigenous or intercultural, provides an adequate setting for reinventing and redirecting IBE now that indigenous issues enjoy greater attention and concern than ever, nationally and internationally, and when the UN Assembly adopted in 2007 the Declaration on Indigenous Peoples Rights. Tertiary education indigenous students can formulate theories, objectives and strategies leading to a reinvention of IBE, grounded in a politics of identity, ethnicity and power, after decades of almost only outside intervention. Numerous MA and PhD dissertations from an indigenous perspective have lately been produced.

Freirian radical pedagogy might indeed be a strategy [...] of choice in political economies that are characterized by point-of-decolonisation binary political, racial / ethnic, or ideological division [as is the case in most Latin American countries and even more so in Bolivia, Guatemala and Paraguay]. The deconstruction of master narratives and their hybrid theoretical reconstruction might be particularly significant in those national and regional contexts building indigenous intelligentsia and reconnoitering the division and hierarchy of academic, scientific and theoretical knowledge. A focus on identity politics and ‘strategic essentialism’ could be *the* powerful educational move in a system where the historical silencing and suppression of difference has been enforced” (Luke 2005: xvi-xvii).

Lastly, since 1995 the biannual Latin American IBE Congresses have provided the necessary arena needed for indigenous leaders, academicians and government officers to discuss and analyze the implementation of IIBE as well as to construct a regional perspective for implementation. From the first one in Guatemala, the Congress has met in Santa Cruz, Quito, Asunción, Santiago de Chile, Cochabamba and Buenos Aires (2008). In these congresses policy and politics issues of IIBE are tackled from practical and theoretical perspectives, with attention given also to specific technical aspects of IIBE development regarding for example curriculum development, teacher-training, active stake-holder participation in program implementation, the production of educational materials, and so forth.

4. Indigenous intercultural bilingual education (IIBE) in six countries: policy and implementation

4.1 Top-down IIBE: Government and/or academia driven approaches

There are a number of countries in Latin America where IIBE policies have been formulated or revised, usually after the implementation of specific and focalized projects, mostly of experimental nature. In such cases government and university research centers, religious organizations or in some cases also international cooperation agencies and NGOs have engaged in policy formulation. Three such countries are Mexico and Peru on the one side and Guatemala on the other.

A. Mexico and Peru: two pioneering States

Mexico and Peru are the two countries with the longest history of indigenous bilingual education. Indigenous bilingual education was the result of both governmental and academic concern and projects, programs and national policies date back to the 1920s and 1940s, even before the notion of interculturalism in education had been coined (Schmelkes et al 2009, López 1995, López & Sichra 2008). Mexico is also the country with the longest and strongest national policy of indigenism; in fact indigenism was conceived as the kernel of the idealized mestizo Nation-state (Marzal 1993, Schmelkes et al 2009). In Peru the indigenous question has been at the heart of the nation-making process ever since the country gained independence from Spain; but as opposed to Mexico the Peruvian State never adopted indigenism as a national policy in the same and strong manner as Mexico did. Civil society movements, however, at national and regional levels have on and off challenged the central government on the matter (Reina & Trapnell 2006, López 1989).

Government experiments in Mexico started in the late 1930s. They were meant to provide evidence to national authorities that alternatives to Spanish-only-strategies were possible and that using the indigenous languages in education was beneficial and more effective to achieve the goal of Spanishization. Academicians from Mexico and the United States as well as SIL missionaries were involved in this process from early on (Hamel 2008, Schmelkes et al 2009). Many different alternatives were tried out to Spanishize and assimilate the indigenous population: 'cultural missions', Spanishization campaigns, boarding-schools for indigenous boys and girls, community radios, cultural and linguistic brokers, L1 literacy, indigenous-language-speaking youth and adults teaching appointments and also bilingual education (cf. Lizama 2008).

In the 1970s official transitional bilingual education gradually evolved into bicultural bilingual education (Schmelkes 2006), when a national association of bilingual teachers of indigenous origin became active in the late 1970s and demanded more than language education only (Hernández 2003). Through their advocacy, in 1978-9, the Mexican government created the General Directorate of Indigenous Education (DGEI or Dirección General de Educación Indígena) in the Federal Ministry of Education, as a subsystem of the Mexican educational system (Schmelkes 2006a). Several research and applied linguistic projects were carried out during this period in order to: (i) advocate for L1 teaching on the basis of empirical evidence (Modiano 1974), (ii) validate materials and methodologies for the teaching of Spanish as a L2 (Bravo Ahuja 1977), (iii) design indigenous teacher education programs (Calvo & Donnadieu 1982) and (iv) also set up training programs to prepare indigenous ethnolinguists (Bonfil 1980). Although colleagues

working in Mexico took active part in the debates on indigenous interculturalism and intercultural education in South America through the 1970s and 1980s (e.g Varese 1987, Gigante, Lewin & Varese 1986), it was only almost at the turn of the century that the Mexican national educational policy adopted the notion of IBE: first through national regulations in 1997 (Schmelkes 2006b) and later through the creation in 2001 of specific national government IBE coordination office (CGEIB, Coordinación General de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe). CGEIB's mission is to formulate national strategies on interculturalism for all, promote research, design educational materials and methodologies and to make interculturalism as a cross-cutting issue for the entire Mexican educational system (ibid.). Through CGEIB the Mexican government planned to overcome the generally assumed notion that only indigenous students need to become intercultural. Schmelkes considers it was a mistake to apply the notion of interculturalism only to indigenous bilingual education (2006a:124), since it hindered the possibility of utilizing it as an approach to the education of all citizens from the beginning.

During this long period of IIBE policy implementation, the Mexican Federal Ministry of Education has produced numerous primers and books in most indigenous languages spoken in the country, mostly for the area of language education, and both for children and adult literacy programs. At present four national Ministry of Education departments are responsible for bilingual education in the country: DGEI, CGEIB, INEA (Instituto Nacional de Educación de Adultos) and a special unit working with the poorest and smallest rural indigenous communities where the number of school-age children lies under the nationally prescribed norm (100 for primary school and 500 for preschool). Under multigrade-classroom-organization and pedagogical strategies CONAFE (Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo) develops alternative school curricula and materials for bilingual education, and also trains community teachers of ages 14 to 25, to teach in the local language and to make use of local knowledge in schools (PREAL 2002). INEA is responsible for indigenous youth and adult bilingual education programs, beginning with literacy and then proceeding into basic and vocational education (Schmelkes et al 2009). Whereas CGEIB, DGEI and INEA most generally rely on national budgets and funds, from its inception in 1971 CONAFE has received international aid and operated under World Bank loans (World Bank 2004).¹²

The Mexican political constitution reformed in 1992 defines the country as multicultural and the San Andres accords of 1996 between government representatives and Zapatista insurgent leaders set a new and challenging scenario for the development of IIBE, in conjunction with the official recognition of other indigenous rights (i. respect for the diversity of the indigenous population; ii. the conservation of the natural resources within the territories used and occupied by indigenous peoples; iii. a greater participation of indigenous communities in the decisions and control of public expenditures; iv. the participation of indigenous communities in determining their own development plans, as well as having control over their own administrative and judicial affairs; v. the autonomy of indigenous communities and their right of free determination in the framework of the State).¹³ In 2003 a new law for the linguistic rights of indigenous peoples was passed and

¹² 20% of the rural schools attended by CONAFE have been identified as indigenous bilingual education schools (PREAL 2002). CONAFE services began in 1994. By 2000 it reached students of 60 languages and dialectal variations through their Programa de Atención Educativa a Población Indígena (PAEPI).

¹³ In February 1996, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) and the Mexican Federal Government signed these accords, thereby agreeing to carry out in their totality the provisions stipulated. Both of these signings were done in the presence of both indigenous leaders and representatives of the three main Mexican political parties in the National Commission of Concordia and Pacification (COCOPA) (www.globalexchange.org/countries/americas/mexico/SanAndres.html, retrieved on 06.05.09). Although six

that same year the National Institute of Indigenous Languages was created. As in other countries of the region indigenous political determination seems to be pushing IIBE from a transitional scheme to an enrichment one (Hamel 2008, Rebolledo 2008, Schmelkes et al 2009).

New action-research projects are now under way in different parts of the country sponsored by universities, NGOs and indigenous organizations, in search of improved educational quality with indigenous children both in rural and urban areas (Hamel 2008 & 2009, Lizama 2008, Rebolledo 2008), an indigenous language secondary school curriculum has been prepared, teacher training colleges have undergone IBE curriculum reform, ten new intercultural universities have been opened in places closer to indigenous communities and educational material including video has been prepared to promote intercultural education for all (Schmelkes 2006b). Moreover, the most important public university in the country (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) has created a specialized academic unit to promote research and lecturing activities to raise political awareness in the university community and in the country as a whole concerning Mexico's multicultural and multilingual nature (www.mexiconacionmulticultural.org).

In a qualitative appraisal of what has been done in the last decade, Schmelkes states that: "... achieving more equity in education necessarily entails improving the quality of the education offered to the indigenous population and the great challenge still lies in preschool and primary education. But it is essential to offer an intercultural education to all the population so that the quality improvement of the education offered to the indigenous populations reaches the expected impact in the short and the long term. Interculturalism [...] must be a necessary ingredient of our national education" (2006a:4).¹⁴ As she emphasizes elsewhere: "Our educational system has not led to knowledge of the cultural diversity of our pluricultural country. Students leaving their first level of education do not know how many indigenous groups there are or where they are" (Schmelkes 2006b:125). This acknowledgment and self-criticism applies to the six countries studied and perhaps to the whole region. In Peru, the 2004 national standardized tests on citizenship education revealed that 64% of all students could not name a minimum of three indigenous cultures (Zúñiga 2008). Latin American university-students are not even aware of the intricacies of their country's multiethnicity and do not generally know how many languages are spoken in their country of residence.

In Peru, bilingual education experiments date back to the mid 1930s, but government projects began much later (López 1988). In the early 1950s the Peruvian government contracted SIL for the implementation of bilingual education under an assimilatory strategy mainly in the Amazonian basin, although minor scale experiments were also implemented in some Quechua-speaking areas in the Peruvian highlands. SIL's headquarters in Lima were established in the premises of the Ministry of Education. In the early 1960s and through the late 1980s, San Marcos University, the most prestigious public university, carried out a bilingual experiment with Quechua-speaking children in rural communities of

months later the dialog was suspended and none of the accords were fulfilled, the points raised by the EZLN have made a decisive impact in the Mexican civil-society and have most certainly influenced government decision-making in different fields, particularly regarding the education of indigenous peoples (Schmelkes et al 2009).

¹⁴ My free translation of: "... el logro de una educación más equitativa pasa necesariamente por mejorar la calidad de la educación destinada a la población indígena, y el gran reto todavía se encuentra en la educación preescolar y primaria. Pero para que una educación de mayor calidad destinada a la educación indígena tenga los efectos esperados en el mediano y largo plazo, es necesario ofrecer una educación intercultural a toda la población. La interculturalidad [...] debe ser un ingrediente indispensable de la educación nacional".

Ayacucho, initially under a Spanishization scheme and later placing emphasis on indigenous children's bilingual development (Zúñiga 1989, Pozzi-Escot 1972). During the decade 1960-1970 bilingual education was at the center of academic and political discussion in the country, until the period 1972-1975, when, in the framework of the Peruvian educational reform (Salazar-Bondy 1975), bilingual education became a national policy. In May 1975, Quechua was the first Amerindian language to gain official status. The national bilingual education policy and the officialization of Quechua were part of an integral process of structural transformations, including a profound agrarian reform and reinforcing the role of the State in the Peruvian society and economy, within a framework of national social reconstruction (Salazar-Bondy 1975, Escobar, Alberti & Matos Mar 1975). These reforms brought about new bilingual education initiatives in some of the most indigenous populated areas of the highlands, particularly in southern Peru, attracting international aid.¹⁵

At that time, the now extinct National Institute of Educational Research and Development (INIDE) played a key role in bilingual education research and IIBE implementation in the heavily populated southern highlands (Cuzco and Puno). Thus Aymara and Quechua parents and children became involved in primary school experimental projects (1975-1990) which initially pursued transition to Spanish and later developed into maintenance and development under the EIB scheme (Jung 1992, López 1987). The national bilingual education policy of 1972 was reformed in 1989 precisely to include the intercultural orientation (Pozzi-Escot 1989).

Children learned to read and write in their indigenous L1 and most generally simultaneously learned Spanish orally as a L2. Materials for the 6 primary school grades were developed under an intercultural orientation both in the L1 and the L2 for the four key areas of the national school curriculum (Language, Mathematics, Natural and Social Sciences), accompanied by teachers' guides, both for the Quechua-Spanish modality and for the Aymara-Spanish one (Jung 1992, López 1987). Research of various types accompanied the execution of the projects in Ayacucho, Cuzco and Puno, and program design included in-service teacher training as a key activity. In Puno, in conjunction with the Universidad Nacional del Altiplano, a postgraduate course in Andean Linguistics and Education was founded in 1985, and to date prepares Aymara and Quechua-speaking professionals specialized in IIBE at MA level (Ibid.).

From 1985 to date many other IIBE projects have been implemented in different parts of the country, but with specific emphasis on the Aymara and Quechua-speaking regions, more than often with international support and technical orientation. Although with higher concentration in the southern highlands (Apurímac, Cuzco and Puno), IIBE has also been implemented in the central and northern vernacular speaking areas. Significant contributions in terms of curriculum adaptation and educational material development received support from international NGOs, such as CARE, IBIS, Oxfam, Radda Barnen, Terra Nuova, among others. These projects have been implemented by national and regional NGOs.

¹⁵ During the 1970s and through the late 1980s INIDE, the National Institute for Educational Research and Development played a key role in the implementation of indigenous bilingual education. The Cuzco and Puno projects here referred to were made possible through international cooperation projects particularly negotiated for these purposes. The Cuzco EIB project received technical assistance and partial funding from the United States International Development Agency (USAID), while the Puno one from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GTZ). The San Marcos University project in Ayacucho was also made possible through grants from various international donors, amongst them the Ford Foundation and the British Council.

For over two decades (1990-2000) the Peruvian government tried to disseminate IBE nation-wide, mainly under World Bank, Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) and the German Development Bank (KfW) loans and grants, and restricting it only to primary education. The General Directorate of Bilingual Intercultural Education created in 1985 was consequently downgraded to become a unit of the National Directorate of Primary Education. Official IIBE textbooks were prepared in almost 20 different indigenous languages, IIBE pre-service teacher training started at pilot teacher training colleges in areas where indigenous languages are spoken, and a new scheme for in-service teacher training was set up engaging NGOs, teacher training colleges as well as independent groups of bilingual teachers bringing fresh air into the field and engaging numerous institutions and professionals throughout the country. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education took direct responsibility and control for the bidding-process and the implementation of in-service teacher training had little involvement of local directorates of education. Thus there was little need for the training institutions to coordinate with them, hindering sustainability.

The policies just described continued during the period 2000-2005 and the National Directorate of IBE was re-established as an independent and cross-cutting and cross-sectoral unit. The World Bank and IADB continued supporting the implementation of IIBE and other international donors (UNICEF, GTZ, AECID) and NGOs (Terra Nuova, CARE, IBIS) contributed with technical assistance.

During this whole period (1990-2005), SIL projects lost momentum and other actors became more relevant in the Amazonian region, generally as a byproduct of the presence, demand and action of AIDSEP (Asociación Interétnica de la Selva Peruana), the most important indigenous organization in Peru to date (Trapnell 2008).¹⁶ Through their advocacy and action, starting in the late 1980s a specialized teacher training program was organized in the Amazonian basin to train indigenous community secondary graduates as primary school teachers through an innovative strategy that combines training with applied research in the community of origin of the students, from the very beginning of the process (Ibid.).

The singularity of FORMABIAP (Programa de Formación de Maestros Bilingües de la Amazonía Peruana) draws from its organizational and managerial structure. The program is co-directed by the Peruvian government, through the Ministry of Education, and an indigenous organization (AIDSEP). This unusual partnership in a rigidly-structured country has allowed for indigenous active political participation in decision-making concerning not only project matters but education in general as well as for further innovation in curriculum content and methodology. If it had not been for the strong presence and advocacy of AIDSEP, the Ministry of Education would have been stricter in so far as the application and fulfillment of the official teacher training curriculum is concerned, since the general policy is that one-size-fits-all. Although strategically discrete in its initial activities FORMABIAP has contributed significantly to an epistemological shift in bilingual education curriculum development making the indigenous worldview, culture and language more visible in curriculum implementation through its emphasis on action-research with active participation of indigenous elders and experts sharing the

¹⁶ A limitation of IIBE in the Peruvian Andes is the absence of sound regional and national indigenous political organizations, unlike what occurs in the Amazonian basin. This vacuum is being filled up by the National Association of Intercultural Bilingual Teachers (ANAMEBI) that is in close contact with other recent indigenous political initiative in the Andes and Amazonia.

responsibility of teacher-education and working cooperatively with a team of committed non-indigenous professionals (Trapnell 2008). The impact could have been more limited if FORMABIAP had not received the support of many international civil-society and public donors, whose contributions allowed for indigenous students' academic and personal tutoring and follow-up, action-research in indigenous communities, and above all close coordination between indigenous Amazonian humid-forest community-schools and teacher training activities. Level articulation and coordination is one of the most serious problems experienced by IIBE in most countries since objectives and strategies may not coincide across the system: from pre-school and primary education to the secondary level and most notably between teacher training colleges and primary schools. The result of this lack of adequate continuity is the overemphasis placed on educational theory in detriment of primary school curriculum implementation, didactics and other more pragmatic issues related to effective and efficient learning in classrooms and communities.

Since 2005 the work of the Ministry of Education in IIBE has practically stagnated and other indigenous policies have undergone the same misfortune. According to newer and non-explicitly formulated policies, IIBE is to be offered only in remote vernacular-speaking rural areas of the country¹⁷ and consequently the former national IIBE directorate is now part of the National Directorate of Rural and Intercultural Bilingual Education and not an independent cross-cutting unit as it had been the case until then. Nonetheless, recently implemented decentralization policies and elected regional governments have demonstrated renewed interest in IIBE and in the indigenous languages (L. Trapnell, A.M. Robles, C. López, M. Zúñiga, personal communications 2009).

All indigenous languages spoken in Peru are official, according to the Peruvian political constitution (1993), although restricted to their regions and areas of influence. There is a new law for the preservation of indigenous languages (2003) and another one to protect indigenous knowledge and technologies (2002), but the Peruvian government has done nothing to implement them.¹⁸ Education is the only sector where something is done. The 2006 educational law adopts IBE as a national policy and also assumes the right of indigenous communities to their own education. Numerous educational local initiatives and IIBE projects have emerged in different parts of the country, within the new strong regional decentralization movement mentioned above. Since 2006 regional acts have been passed declaring the most widely spoken indigenous languages official in the regional territories. This has taken place at a period of time when the national government has apparently lost interest in the matter, due to the rapid modernization of the economy and most recent economic growth.

Peru is gradually losing the pioneering role it had in the field, although IIBE is being re-invented from grass-roots and regional levels upwards. Most EIB present innovations fall under the enrichment paradigm and assume an indigenous rights' perspective, fostering closer collaboration between community elders, parents, local authorities and teachers (Zavala et al 2007, E. Pardo, L. Hidalgo, C. Eguluz, personal communications 2008). A national association of IBE teachers (ANAMEBI or Asociación Nacional de Maestros de Educación Bilingüe) organizes massively attended national IBE congresses every two-

¹⁷ Let us keep in mind that 75% of the indigenous population in Peru lives now in cities and towns, including the capital of the country.

¹⁸ This law attracted negative reaction ever since the project was submitted to the Peruvian Congress by the Ministry of Education. Hegemonic voices considered the proposal unnecessary and inapplicable, while indigenous representatives and academics criticized the law once it was approved, because of its brevity, lack of determination and insufficient clarity. Indeed, no comparison can be made between this law and the ones passed in Guatemala and Mexico. There is clearly insufficient political will in the Peruvian hegemonic sectors to come to terms with the country's linguistic and cultural heterogeneity.

years, in different cities of the country, in articulation with other civil-society indigenous organizations, which periodically remind the Peruvian government of the insufficient and partial application of the law.

Although all teachers working in these new projects and members of ANAMEBI are all in the government payroll, investment in terms of research, teacher training, curriculum and materials development receives support from international donors and NGOs. In Peru as in other countries, perhaps with the only exception of Mexico, IIBE would not have been possible if it had not been for international aid.

B. The Guatemalan case

Guatemala is also among the first Latin American countries where bilingual education was tried out, but initiatives did not come from the government or the academic community. USA missionaries conducted bilingual literacy experiments with the Kaqchikel Indians back in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Cameron Townsend, later founder of SIL, developed methodologies and prepared and implemented primers for Kaqchikel literacy. In fact it was Townsend's work in Guatemala that inspired Mexican Secretary of Education, Moisés Sáenz, to adopt indigenous L1 literacy (Schmelkes et al 2009).¹⁹

The national revolution of 1944, its mestizo nation ideology²⁰, the nationalist decade that followed and the efforts placed on the forced Spanishization of the indigenous population, as well the civil war between a leftist and indigenous guerrilla and the Guatemalan army that lasted 30 years (1966-1996), prevented bilingual education from further development. SIL, however, formally arrived in 1952 and stayed practically until the early 1980s with its religious, linguistic and educational activities.

During the civil war the simple mention or use of indigenous languages became subversive and attracted military repression (Richards 2008). Nonetheless, a decade and a half before the subscription of the Peace Accords of 1995-6, with technical and financial support of USAID, a pilot bilingual education project (1980-1984) started in 1980. It began with 40 schools, and four years later it was institutionalized as a national program (1984-1996) first reaching 400 schools, then 800, and finally 1.200 (Dutcher 2003).

When this project started illiteracy was very high among indigenous youth and adults (70 to 100% in most communities) and educational services in rural communities were scarce and inadequate (Richards 2008). This first USAID bilingual education project was influenced by the preceding indigenous kindergarten Spanishization project implemented in the 1960s and 1970s (Dutcher 2003). Focalized in preschool and the first two grades under the early exit transitional scheme, bilingual education reached children of the four

¹⁹ Information on these matters can also be found at www.sil.org/WCT/wct_bio3.html, retrieved on 01.05.09.

²⁰ A quote by Miguel Angel Asturias, renowned Guatemalan writer and Nobel Prize in Literature in 1967, illustrates the idealization of mestizos in the process of nation-making: "The Indian represents a past civilization and the mestizo, or ladino as we call him, a future civilization. The Indian [...] lost his vigor during the long period of slavery to which he was subjected [...]. He represents the mental, moral, and material dearth of the country [...]. The Ladino] aspires, desires, and is, in the final analysis, the vital part of the Guatemalan nation. What a nation, where two thirds of its population are dead to intelligent life! [...] Among the gross errors that were committed (during the Spanish conquest) was the desire that rudimentary Indian intelligence immediately assimilate the civilization of a nation that at that time was the most advanced in Europe. [...] For the Indian, the Independence period represented a change of master and nothing else" (Asturias, 1923: 65-73, quoted by Moore. D. 1989, "The Sociolinguistics of Guatemalan Indigenous Languages and the Effect of Radio Broadcasting. The article was prepared as a term paper for a Graduate class in Socio-Linguistics at Ohio University in the spring of 1989. En <http://www.pateplumaradio.com/central/guatemala/guatlg1.html>, retrieved on 01.06.09).

major indigenous languages: Kaqchikel, K'ich'e, Q'eqchi' and Mam, whose population approximately amounts to 80% of the total indigenous population in the country.

Bilingual education contributed to the preparation of a Mayan professional task-force, active in the advocacy of indigenous cultural and linguistic rights.

Another major accomplishment of Guatemala's bilingual program has been the development of Mayan professionals through scholarships and work opportunities. When the pilot project began [...], there were only a few Mayan professionals; now there are many. They belong to organizations such as the Academy for Mayan Languages, the National Council of Mayan Education, and the Association of Mayan Researchers of Guatemala, organizations that work to preserve and strengthen the place of Mayan language and culture in the country.

The rise of Mayan professionals can be attributed, at least in part, to leadership gained through working in the bilingual programs [...]. Though professional Mayans are still few in number relative to their share of the population, there are now Mayan politicians, officials in the Ministry of Education, professors at the universities, and others dedicated to preserving their language and culture. (Dutcher 2004:7-8)

Other projects sponsored by the international community contributed to the significant increase of indigenous political participation in the country; indigenous access to pre-graduate and graduate higher education programs, in service teacher training programs for community educators and indigenous teachers, literacy campaigns in the indigenous languages, the production of academic literature on indigenous issues as well as of primers and educational materials are all initiatives that have played an important role in moving the indigenous political agenda forward.²¹

The long history of military dictatorships ended in 1986, and soon after an education reform incorporated instructional use of the indigenous language as one of its key issues. In 1996 PRONEBI (Programa Nacional de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural) became a Ministry directorate and in its name and program adopted the intercultural paradigm. In 2003 the government created the Viceministry of Bilingual Intercultural Education, dictated a law of national languages and decreed the generalization of IIBE, although these last two measures have not yet been put into effect. For the past two decades, but more strongly since the Peace Accords,²² the country has adopted neoliberal multiculturalism as a government policy (Hale 2007). New institutions were created: among others, the National Academy of Mayan Languages (1990), the Guatemalan Indigenous Development Fund (1994), and the Presidential Commission on Racism and Discrimination (2003). The national constitution of 1985 recognizes the right of indigenous learners to education in their own language and the legal and official rhetoric is both sound and politically correct, but vast gaps exist between apparent desire and implementation (UN 2008). Consequently, most of IIBE financing depends on World Bank, IADB & KfW loans and grants, as well as on technical assistance from other bilateral and multilateral donors.

To date, official bilingual education at most goes from preschool to the first three grades of primary education, and there are also 24 bilingual teacher training colleges. Three private

²¹ Among the most significant multilateral and bilateral donors in this field one finds the EU, GTZ, UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID and the governments of Finland and Norway. The Basque and Catalanian autonomic governments have also contributed to the implementation of IIBE through the support given to various Mayan NGOs.

²² "Embedded into the Accords were serious, broad commitments to human rights-to dignity, to identity, to health and security, to education (including education in their mother tongue) among many others related to economic, political, and social status. Again, significant pressure was placed on the Guatemalan government by other governments and nongovernmental organizations (UNESCO and the UN among others) involved in human rights and language maintenance or revitalization issues" (Helmberger 2003:81).

universities and the national one offer specialization programs in bilingual education, many times with the support of international donors or in conjunction with NGOs of Mayan orientation. Various NGOs, many of them in the hands of Mayan leaders, support the implementation of a different type of IIBE at grass-root level.

A movement of Mayan education started in the early 1990s and has continued to expand since then, with financial and technical support from international donors and also through partial financial aid obtained from the Ministry of Education particularly for the specials programs they implement at secondary school level in rural areas, a domain historically neglected by the Guatemalan government. These Mayan schools are the result of "generalized disaffection with the official bilingual education program to a growing language revitalization and ethnic affirmation sentiment" (Richards & Richards 1996: 217). Although IIBE forms part of the political and pedagogical agenda of Mayan schools they avoid using the official acronym precisely to establish certain basic differences between the two approaches: (i) Major attention to indigenous worldviews, culture, spiritually and knowledge and to children's self-esteem is part of Mayan education, (ii) the Mayan language can be studied either as a L1 or L2, alongside with Spanish, and through the different levels of education, (iii) Mayan education covers different levels of the educational system from primary education to secondary education and now intends to go to the tertiary level through a Mayan university, and (iv) Mayan education develops in secondary school students leadership capacities deep-rooted in identity and ethnic politics. There is little dialogue and coordination between these Mayan proposals and the government's IIBE.

4.2 Bottom-up IIBE: indigenous-initiated approaches

As opposed to the top-down histories revised above, two of the countries chosen for this study have moved in an opposite direction, with IIBE as a social movement and closely related to the indigenous civil and political rights struggle. Indeed, the contemporary history of IIBE in Ecuador and Bolivia illustrates the political impact the use of indigenous languages and cultures can have. Nonetheless it must be made clear that initially bilingual education in these two countries followed similar top-down paths.

Bilingual education in Ecuador began in the mid 1940s when civil society initiatives used Quechua in a literacy program. Later, from 1953 to 1982, SIL assumed a role similar to the one it had in Mexico, Guatemala and Peru.²³ In the early 1970s in the Amazonian humid forests an innovative bilingual bicultural radio school program started under the impulse of a Salesian Mission but almost a decade and half later it was administered directly by the local indigenous organization: the Shuar Federation (Moya 1988).²⁴

²³ In 1982 in Ecuador a civil society movement led by various well-known Ecuadorian linguists and anthropologists, most of them committed to the indigenous peoples' struggle and to the development of IBE carried out a national campaign to expel SIL (Ruth Moya personal communication 2009). Similar processes took place in other countries of the region.

²⁴ These radio schools were part of a larger project to provide the Shuars "who lived in scattered hamlets, with some type of collective legal protection from colonists who were invading their traditional territory. Forming into nucleated residential groups called *centros* and then into larger subregional associations, the federation successfully petitioned the government for collective land titles. [...] the bilingual radio school program [...] transformed the nature of schooling and education in the rain forest. Before the program was established, fewer than half of school-age Shuar children completed primary school. Not only was it difficult for children to attend schools, because of the long distances from their homes and the difficulties of travel, especially in the rainy season but dropout rates were extremely high because the curriculum did not take into account the children's native language and culture. Over the course of a decade, the federation-managed radio school program proved to be a great success, and the number of schools connected into the radio network and staffed by federation-trained teachers increased from 30 to 177. In the 1980s, the government officially recognized

Similarly, in the early 1930s and after almost two decades of autonomous indigenous community schools mainly in the Aymara region, the Bolivia government created the model of “Escuela Ayllu” at Warisata, in response to the indigenous demand for a school embedded in the social organization and fabric of the Aymara society²⁵ (López 2005). Warisata was the first attempt to intercultural educational management as it heavily relied on indigenous community participation in school decision making. This model was extended to different parts of the country, mainly in the Andean highlands.

In the mid 1950s as a result of a nationalist revolution, the country paid more emphasis to school access and to make Spanish accessible to all, since the aim was to construct a united mestizo nation. In 1955 an agreement with SIL launched the Spanishization of the indigenous population of the Amazonia and oriental territories, in order to incorporate them into “the life of the nation” (Ibid.). That was the beginning of transitional bilingual education in the country, a model which was later applied by various aid programs in the highlands mostly during the 1970s. Radio-schools were an important Bolivian development dating back to the early 1960s. Various radio stations in different parts of the country have contributed significantly to date to the expansion of both formal and non-formal education and also to strengthening indigenous language, identity and political participation. A wide network of community radio stations and some others of regional or national coverage and influence sponsored by the Catholic and Evangelical churches promote and transmit educational programs in indigenous languages and also contribute to indigenous homes and communities’ critical awareness.

When the long history of military dictatorships ended in the early 1980s, Bolivian Indians resurged as a key social and political actor. The democratically elected leftist government introduced the notions of interculturalism and bilingualism in the new Bolivian democratic discourse, in reaction to indigenous and popular demand. A successful national literacy campaign in Aymara, Quechua and a popular variety of Spanish was carried out for over a period of three to four years. This massive campaign raised indigenous peoples’ awareness concerning the importance of their own language and culture, their oppressed situation and inequality in Bolivia. In line with this, in 1991-1992 an effective Guarani literacy campaign took place which derived from the IIBE primary school project carried out in the Guarani territory, and that in turn became a supportive motor for the consolidation of IIBE in most primary schools in the Guarani territory (Albó & Anaya 2003).

In Ecuador, it was also at the beginning of the 1980s that the country searched for a type of bilingual education other than the transitional one, starting with a literacy campaign in Quechua which attracted ample indigenous political support and participation (Moya 1988). A private university was involved in the process, and primers and community adult educators were prepared, like in Bolivia, under the general orientation of the Latin American popular education movement inspired in Paulo Freire’s work. By then various

the program and used it as a model for other bilingual and bicultural school programs in the eastern part of the country” (Davies and Partridge 1999:2).

²⁵ Ayllu, a large and extended family resembling what today one can understand as an indigenous community, was the basic political and social unit of Andean social, cultural and economic life in pre-Hispanic times. In Colonial times the Ayllu experienced political transformation but generally retained its basic socio-cultural organization. Colonial segregation and parallelism under the concept of “Republic of Indians” allowed Ayllus to enjoy internal autonomy so long as taxes were paid to the Spanish Crown and to its “Republic of Spaniards”. In certain regions of Bolivia a combination of Pre-Hispanic and Colonial Ayllu survives to date. They have their own territory, share a common language and culture, worship their own divinity or supernatural being, usually embodied in a sacred mountain, and have their local authorities and their own social, political and judicial organization and arrangements within their jurisdiction.

innovative bottom-up projects were implemented in heavily populated indigenous regions of Ecuador: the Simiatug indigenous schools, under the direct responsibility of the local indigenous organization, the Cotopaxi Indigenous Educational System, with support from a Salesian Mission, and various others in the Amazonian region (see Moya 1988 for a summarized presentation of these projects). In all of them a strong emphasis was given to the use of the indigenous mother tongue as a language of instruction as well as to the in-service training of community indigenous teachers. All of them were under the ownership of local indigenous political organizations. Maintenance bilingual education methodologies, on the one hand, and the intercultural approach, on the other, were developed, both in Bolivia and Ecuador, with indigenous leaders and intellectuals' engagement and in response to their historical needs and demands.

Two direct results of these literacy campaigns radically changed the social history of Bolivia and Ecuador: indigenous ethno-political organization and the introduction of IIBE in schools.

In 1988, this movement led the Ecuadorian government to accept the creation of a subsystem of education under autonomous control of the indigenous organization but under government funding. DINEIB was the result of the advocacy of all of these bottom-up projects. At the same time, DINEIB offered these local initiatives a new official political framework through which they could work and their popular educators be recognized as official public servants, like any other mestizo Ecuadorian teacher. For 20 years DINEIB (Dirección Nacional de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe), a national Ministry of Education directorate, ruled the education of Ecuadorian indigenous children under an IIBE maintenance model, administering schools across all levels of the system including 5 specialized teacher training colleges.

In Bolivia, indigenous and grass root social organizations in general formulated IIBE proposals and in 1989 and 1990 two new bilingual education projects marked the starting point of further popular claims and proposals, leading to an integral educational reform in 1994 (López 2005, Albó & Anaya 2003).

In many ways the Bolivian educational reform was an audacious (Albó & Anaya 2003) and overconfident endeavor aiming at a profound transformation of the Bolivian society. This reform was the result of an accumulative process of IIBE projects and experiments, most of which followed bottom-up approaches. Many of them had simultaneously engaged in promoting active community participation through which indigenous parents and community leaders learned to share power, particularly when they exercised control over community-school staff through indigenous school boards (López 2005). Parallel to the implementation of the educational reform the Bolivian government (1993-1997) launched an aggressive policy of popular participation strengthening collective decision-making at every municipality, vis-à-vis the administration and social auditing of public funds that the central government re-distributed.

IIBE boomed in Bolivia in the late 1980s and through the 1990s. Its social acceptance matched the political will of the Bolivian government after three administrations (1989-1993, 1993-1997 & 1997-2001) decided to implement an integral educational reform within a larger framework of social measures of which IBE was one (ibid.). A few years earlier (1985-1989) drastic structural adjustment measures had saved the country from economic collapse but left Bolivia with a large social debt that mostly affected the poor and amongst them indigenous homes and communities. Bolivian economic neoliberalism emerged and

grew hand-in-hand with indigenous political emergence and the two processes formed part of Bolivia's renewed democracy that ensured governance through party coalitions and right-left agreements that included indigenous political participation. When this system collapsed in the early 2000s and before and after the arrival of the Evo Morales regime in 2006 IIBE was derailed from the itinerary it had followed.

In many ways the Bolivian reform ideology, principles and strategies followed a democratic direction granting power to local communities and for the first time education officially adopted interculturalism for all and gave privileged attention to the education of the most underprivileged: the indigenous children and youth. Millions of pedagogically innovative and richly illustrated educational materials, that depicted the indigenous way of life, reached public school classrooms, both in indigenous and in mainstream communities and neighborhoods. Half of all Bolivian teacher training colleges adopted an IIBE curriculum with the participation of indigenous leaders and after their staff went through specialized seminars on language, culture and active pedagogy (Delany forthcoming). Several cohorts of professional IIBE teachers were trained. Renewed indigenous self-esteem and initial nation-wide positioning of indigenous knowledge, culture and languages practically invaded the educational and social scenario of the country (Albó & Anaya 2003), promoting a form of local indigenous renaissance, which indeed paved the way for the indigenous political impetus Bolivia is now undergoing.

In Bolivia and Ecuador, indigenous leaders negotiated with government authorities and, unlike other bottom-up experiences that remained only as micro-level initiatives, they managed to have some bearing on educational policies as well as on national politics in general. Indigenous educational proposals became national policies influencing the regular educational system, obtained official funding and were extended significantly. Indigenous leaders took advantage of the official educational platform just conquered to push the indigenous political agenda even further. Indeed, IIBE has never been an isolated demand, but part of a bigger agenda which includes other civil and political rights.

When indigenous leaders demand IIBE, simultaneously they claim territorial rights, the right to freely use the water provided by Mother Nature, the right to conduct themselves according to their own social organizations, ways of living and knowing and worldviews. As I stated it elsewhere, the indigenous strategy to make the State assume its responsibility has been one of gradual approximation and of taking advantage of each and every fissure in the State (López 2005). In so doing in both Bolivia and Ecuador indigenous leaders have managed to convince or force the State to assume its responsibility since they also claim their condition as citizens and appeal to the laws governments do not pay sufficient attention to. There is no doubt that Bolivian and Ecuadorian indigenous leaders had it clear from the beginning that their demands on educational transformation were only the first threads of a more elaborate weaving.

As in other countries, in Bolivia and Ecuador indigenous educational demands go beyond basic education and now also place emphasis on the relevance and pertinence of higher education (Mato 2008, López, Hamel & Moya 2007). Being considered as privileged places for negotiating knowledge and for the construction of a new type of citizenship indigenous leaders expect universities to also become intercultural since many of the IIBE graduates and more indigenous students in general are now entering tertiary education. They want to overcome indigenous identity fragility, since a student of indigenous origin who starts a university career is subject to strong institutional and social pressure to give up his indigenous identity and affiliation. By graduation indigenous students generally end-

up identifying with the hegemonic sector and considering it not worth being indigenous, even when social rejection might well continue (F. Alarcón, personal communication 2005).²⁶ Indigenous students who opt for a career in the armed forces face similar discriminatory situations (W. Gutiérrez, personal communication 2007).

The negotiation of knowledge and citizenship has moved upwards in the educational system, from primary school and basic education in the 1970s and 80s to tertiary education, three decades later. The fact is that most indigenous leaders understand interculturalism and intercultural relationships in the framework of constant negotiation of power and power relationships in a multiethnic society, hence the new notion of intraculturalism –or indigenous cultural reaffirmation-- in education and the social imaginary of a multi-nation State.

In both countries the initial drive to democratize society and to transform the educational system came from grass-root movements. In Bolivia the indigenous peoples' educational councils and in Ecuador indigenous leaders and intellectuals have played an influential role in the development of IIBE, as well as in the interculturalization of education for all.

Now Bolivia and Ecuador have new political constitutions that incorporate indigenous principles and guidelines claiming the validity of their civilizatory models and ways of living: "sumaq kawsay", in Quechua, or "suma qamaña", in Aymara. In this context a new educational law is being discussed in Bolivia under the principles of decolonization, intraculturalism, interculturalism and multilingualism. Additionally, the indigenous peoples' education councils have developed new curriculum proposals which they now negotiate with the government (W. Gutiérrez personal communication 2009).

While this is now happening at national level in Bolivia, at the local level IIBE has stagnated and lost the impetus it gained when it began to enjoy nation-wide expansion under the 1994 educational reform law. Curriculum, educational materials and methodologies are now under general revision and no precise guidelines are available to schools, whether rural or urban. In the outburst of the anti-neoliberal popular struggle due to the regrettable correlation Bolivian politicians established between neo-liberalism and IIBE (López 2005), and the fact that IBE reached only the rural areas but not the cities or the Spanish-speaking population (Patzí 1999), the 1994 law was questioned and countermanded before a new one was approved. Most local educational authorities and teachers are now at a stand-still (G. Juárez, J. Zurita, T. Mamani, personal communications 2009), although some local projects and initiatives continue working independently (L. Jiménez personal communication 2009, Zavala et al 2007) as it had been done in Bolivia before the 1994 law was implemented.

Having been part of a severely questioned economic neoliberal government scheme and having received international funding for its design and implementation, mainly from the World Bank and the IADB, the Reform's ill-fated association with neoliberalism first brought IIBE developments to a stand-still and later determined its derailment. Bolivia's teachers' unions had much to do in this process since they opposed reform measures from the beginning and particularly disliked that parents and local communities exercise social control over school functioning and reform implementation, and particularly in relation to the number of days and hours worked. The Bolivian government strongly failed by not

²⁶ "Entramos indios y salimos blancos", or "We go in as Indians and come out as Whites".

having sufficiently negotiated reform strategies and implementation with teachers unions, NGOs and the Catholic church as it did with indigenous organizations.

Due to ideological reasons profoundly rooted in a highly-politically-minded society, indigenous organizations also criticized and suspected of the true will of neoliberal Bolivian regimes concerning educational transformation. Nonetheless, from the beginning they openly and wholeheartedly supported the reform's adoption of IIBE as a key element of societal transformation. By incorporating indigenous organization demands into the process the Reform proved to indigenous leaders that their voice was heard and taken seriously into account.²⁷

For the time being, a very elaborate educational discourse rooted in postcolonial theories and decolonization ideology is being constructed (Saavedra 2009, 2007, Patzi 2006, 1999, Yapu 2006) with a focus on tertiary education (G. Machaca, personal communication 2009). The Bolivian government is in the process of creating three indigenous language-medium universities (W. Gutierrez, personal communication 2009) as part of a strategy to force well-established autonomous public universities to adopt an intercultural perspective and to respond to indigenous knowledge and practices within the framework of decolonization.

The new decolonizing ideals radicalize the old principles of IIBE –and IBE in general– in Bolivia and Ecuador stressing the role of identity, ethnicity and politics in education. In both cases this new itinerary relies heavily on and takes advantage of the accumulative and historical process of national redefinition (Machaca & Cabrera 2008, L.F. Sarango personal communication 2008).²⁸

²⁷ A recent Ph.D. dissertation on IIBE in Bolivia states that: "With the implementation of the Education Reform Program the linguistic and cultural rights of all Bolivians were respected for the first time in modern Bolivian education. Ironically, the history of oppression influenced an automatic response of resistance to the idea of mother tongue instruction. Key stakeholders and opinion leaders were not brought on board in a rush to obtain funding and begin implementation. They then became fierce detractors and used the role of language and culture in the Education Reform Program as a rallying point of their arguments against the new changes. Opinion leaders such as the teachers unions convinced the public to resist 'La Ley Maldita' (The Damned Law) by arguing that Intercultural Bilingual Education meant that their children would only be taught through indigenous languages and that this would create another barrier for them to access from economic and political power. In this way, the role of language and culture was used as a chess piece to fit the agenda of various detractors to the reform program. Gradually, many of the changes that needed to be made to fully implement the Reform [...] have taken place as face to face dialogue between key stakeholders and MEC [...] developed. Indigenous parents have come to understand the true intent of the [...] Reform) as they have learned to share power collaboratively with the schools in their community through a process of 'popular participation.' Unions have lessened their resistance and have begun to comply with the reform. [...]. Parents and communities throughout the country have come to understand how EIB fits into the struggle for indigenous self-determination.

Since the inception of the [...] Reform... many foundational aspects of the change process have been carried out well compared to the elements identified in other successful language based reforms. Sufficient political will and funding have been garnered to take the reform to a national scale and sustain the [...] program [...]. MEC employees trained themselves even as they took on the monumental task of restructuring education in order to bring about a cultural change in Bolivian society. New teacher training institutions have been created along with the development of new curricula and partnerships with universities to provide further economic and social mobility for teachers. Incentives for catalyzing change through such initiatives as the 'Proyectos Educativos,' have successfully forged new collaborative relationships between schools and communities. Teacher and student materials have been developed to truly reflect the Bolivian reality and the goals of the reform" (Noel 2006: 232-233).

²⁸ In the Bolivian core curriculum proposals for the new plurinational educational system, the Ministry of Education and Cultures (2008) state that: "Education for decolonization [...] values and legitimizes indigenous peoples' and urban-popular knowledge, practices and values, as expressions of [our] plurinational identity [...]. It eliminates every kind of ethnic, racial, social, cultural religious, linguistic, political and economic discrimination [which hinders] access and retention of all Bolivians in the educational system under equality of opportunities and conditions. [It promotes] knowledge of the histories of the different peoples [that make up the country], of their liberating and change processes and overcoming postcolonial mental structures, through the recognition, strengthening and empowerment of our true and community identities, towards the construction of a new society free of all discrimination and exclusion" (quoted by Machaca & Cabrera 2008:28).

Therefore, in Bolivia the new basic education proposals in-the-making experience an epistemological shift and include intracultural and intercultural curricula and the teaching of three languages in all schools: the indigenous language of the community or region, Spanish and English (Ibid.).²⁹ Although it is not yet clear how these three languages will relate to each other and will be used in daily classroom activities, Bolivian authorities would rather now speak of multilingual (plurilingüe) than of bilingual education.

Interestingly enough, the indigenous peoples educational councils who were in the forefront of the construction and nation-wide expansion of IBE combine the use of these two terms and also dedicate time and effort to the two educational levels now in negotiation: basic and tertiary education. In so doing they aim at drawing lessons-learned during the two decades of strong IIBE activity (1983-2003) in Bolivia and explicitly refer to redesigning IBE within the current broader epistemological and political framework. To move their agenda further they have decided to strengthen the so called “Indigenous Block” which congregates the seven indigenous peoples’ education councils now in operation as well as some of the most important regional and national indigenous organizations (Bloque Educativo Indígena Originario 2009).

It is worth mentioning that current local IIBE projects reinforce community participation and locally negotiate curriculum objectives and content. Processes of this sort are being conducted in the Amazonia with minority indigenous peoples, contributing to the reinvention of IIBE (P. Plaza, F. Prada, personal communications 2009).³⁰ While at local level the process seems to be retaking momentum at national level all efforts seem to be placed on the transformation of the university system in neglect of basic education, the domain that most attention deserves from the indigenous communities themselves, and on which the eyes of most grass-root movements, community and parents are focused. It remains to be seen whether identity politics and indigenous essentialism give way to a re-evaluation of the strategic importance of basic education and of children and youth in primary and secondary schools.

Once again, it is paradoxical to note that even in times of power-shift and when government authorities are either indigenous themselves or aligned with the current indigenous power-structure and political project, solutions in Bolivia seem to germinate and grow from the bottom-up. Though it might not be politically correct to explicitly state it, the seeds and roots of the on-going political and educational processes of decolonization date back to the neoliberal era when the indigenous movement flourished and IIBE and the popular participation policies received governmental attention. The fact is that at government level it is not yet clear whether IIBE will flourish or perish in this era of decolonization and of strategic alliance of the present Bolivian government with the teachers’ unions that once rejected nation-wide IIBE.³¹

²⁹ Similar provisions were also made in Guatemala in 2005 but the government has been unable to implement them yet. The Guatemalan national core curriculum explicitly prescribes that the area of language and communication should develop skills and competencies in L1, L2 and L3.

³⁰ A multidisciplinary and multiethnic PROEIB Andes research team conducted by Fernando Prada (anthropologist) and Pedro Plaza (linguist) is involved in the preparation of a new school curriculum for five different indigenous peoples in the Bolivian Amazonian lowlands. These activities form part of a UNICEF Finnish-funded regional project which supports the implementation of IIBE in three Amazonian countries: Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. The EIBAMAZ project develops three lines of action: applied research, intercultural materials development and teacher training for IIBE (www.unicef.org/peru/spanish/education.html, www.peruembassy.fi/documents/PP%20EIBAMAZ%20ABRIL%2020%20FINAL.doc, <http://programa.proeibandes.org/eibamaz/investigacion.php>).

³¹ It is troublesome to note for example that in the absence of precise curriculum definitions the Bolivian government recently decided to stop Santillana --the well-known Spanish publishing house-- from producing and distributing primary and secondary school books,

In Ecuador, the government has decided to evaluate the performance of IIBE under partially autonomous indigenous organization through DINEIB. Meetings with indigenous intellectuals and leaders to re-conduct IIBE under Ministry of Education authority (www.dineib.gov.ec) were organized in early 2009. Emphasis is being placed on the analysis of quality of education improvement policies (M. Abram, personal communication 2009). IIBE will continue as an official educational policy from pre-primary to secondary education and on to specialized teacher-training colleges. These efforts form part of the process on structural State reforms that arise from the 2008 constitutional declaration of Ecuador as a multi-nation State. In 2009 a new Bolivian constitution was approved in a national referendum, also recognizing the country as multinational.

In these two countries IIBE is also dependant on international aid. Government activities have received foreign aid and technical assistance from the World Bank, IADB, DANIDA, GTZ, KfW, SIDA, UNFPA, UNICEF, the governments of Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden, and from national and international NGOs. Indigenous organization projects have also received financial and technical assistance from international NGOs (Action-Aid, CARE, IBIS, Intervida, Mani Tese, and Oxfam, among others) and other international donors.

4.3 The bilingual country par excellence

Paraguay's case is *sui generis* and paradoxical in many ways. Bilingualism and bilingual education are national policies (Paraguay 2001). 87% of the national population speaks Paraguayan Guarani either as bilinguals (50%) or monolinguals (37%) (Gynan 2001, 2005).³² But, within the ideology of a unified nation-State, Paraguayan educational bilingualism also focuses mainly on primary education and "teaching methods and curricula do not sufficiently address children's bilingualism. Educational materials are written predominantly in Spanish, the language used almost exclusively in higher grades" (UNICEF 2006:2).³³ Additionally, official bilingualism in Paraguay excludes other types of indigenous bi and multilingualism.

As it has been remarked, being bilingual does not automatically entail being indigenous as Guarani-speaking is a trait of national Paraguayan identity (Melià 1992). Being a minority, the indigenous population is forced to adopt the official understanding of bilingualism constructed by the hegemonic sectors of societies, and language shift tendencies have been observed, whereby certain indigenous sectors gradually abandon their ethnic distinct language in favor of the nationally coupled Paraguayan Guarani and Spanish (Melià forthcoming). This general context of political and social exclusion makes the linguistic and

even when the firm had made an effort to produce textbooks in indigenous languages, which were the only ones available in the country since the distribution of all Reform textbooks was stopped (I. Sichra personal communication, La Razón 07.06.09). Equally worrying is the fact that a Spanish-only literacy campaign was carried out advocating the same notion of decolonization.

³² Since 1994 the Paraguayan educational reform has been gradually transforming the Spanish-only educational system into a bilingual one for all.

³³ One of the problems that might hold back effective use of Guarani in the upper grades is the degree of purism and of linguistic elaboration and "intellectualization" with which Ministry of Education officers and Guarani-speaking teachers prepare educational materials and conduct in-service teacher training workshops. In an informal interview with a local shop owner, when asked if in the nearby-school children spoke and used Guarani he replied positively and remarked that they spoke beautifully and elegantly but in a sophisticated Guarani he was unable to fully understand (López 2006 field-notes). The additional fact that most bilingual speakers consider they speak a mixed variant of Guarani different from "scientific Guarani" (Paraguay 2001, CPES 1998) may inhibit spontaneous school use of Guarani. Nonetheless, when asked if Paraguayans should speak Guarani, 88% of a large sample of informants from different parts of the country replied positively (Ibid.).

educational situation of the indigenous minorities in Paraguay resemble those of the most oppressed indigenous populations of the region.

Indigenous peoples have the worst social development indicators of any segment of Paraguayan society. Another excluded segment is the monolingual Guarani speakers; nearly 60 per cent of households use Guarani as their first language. A significant proportion of children and adolescents do not yet enjoy full exercise of their rights, especially the Guarani-speaking poor and the indigenous, who are subject to exclusion, discrimination and inadequate protection. (UNICEF 2006:2)

The first paradox derives from the fact that the only country that turned an indigenous language into a symbol of national identity is discriminatory of the creators and “owners” of one of such languages. This evidence reiterates that in sociolinguistic struggle the issue at stake is not cultural or linguistic but political. In other words it is not a struggle between languages or cultures but between men and women of different backgrounds, cultures and social classes.

The national education reform which started in 1992³⁴ for the first time introduced Guarani as the language of education for all, within a maintenance bilingual education scheme. But, in so doing it either excludes the indigenous minorities’ right to education in their own languages or forces them to adopt a sociolinguistic pattern different from the one that regulates everyday social relationships in their communities of origin.

School age indigenous children and adolescents are obliged to learn to read and write in Paraguayan Guarani and Spanish as a “second” language. Most generally little or no attention is given to the indigenous language of the communities they form part of (Meliá, personal communication 2009). This fact puts us before a second paradox: bilingual education is an official policy for all Paraguayan citizens but its linguistic and pedagogical principles are not applied to the education of the indigenous minorities. This very fact might lead us into a deeper understanding of indigenous exclusion: the voice of the indigenous is not listened to since they might not even be regarded as true Paraguayan citizens.

This fact was corroborated in 2008 when the Directorate of Permanent Education launched a Spanish-only literacy campaign for indigenous adults. The Cuban “Yo sí puedo” (“Yes I Can”) methodology was implemented through Spanish written materials and television-classes. But since the participants did not always understand Spanish, indigenous bilingual facilitators translated lesson excerpts, sentences and key-messages from Spanish to Guarani (Centeno 2008).

Bilingual educational policy prescribes that literacy should be developed in Guarani as a mother tongue and later proceed to reading and writing in the second language: Spanish. In this case, it was not done this way, though the former Minister stated that ‘it [Yo sí puedo] was only applicable in places where Spanish is spoken’. Under her administration, however, MEC applied it mostly in indigenous communities, following the Andres Bello Agreement pilot plan (Ibid.:4).

A systematization report of this campaign prepared for OEI (Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos) informs that Ministry of Education authorities decided literacy was to take place in Spanish in response to indigenous peoples’ demand. However, there is “no evidence that was the case” (Ibid.:15). The report also concludes that the “Yo sí puedo”

³⁴ That same year Guarani was made co-official with Spanish in the revised constitution (Gynan 2005). Paraguayan legislation, although recognizing the multicultural character of the society, generally refers to the country as bilingual, but *never* as multilingual.

methodology “lacks the necessary global vision and approach to effectively respond to the diversity of modes of communication, languages and learners’ needs in different sociocultural contexts” (Ibid.:20).

The 2008 Spanish-only literacy campaign makes a third paradox evident: in official indigenous education the distance between rhetoric and reality can be abysmal. In this case indigenous adults lean to read and write only in Spanish in a country that has proved the inefficiency and lack of effectiveness of this kind of approach. The situation becomes even worse since Paraguay has accumulated experience in indigenous literacy for Guarani peasant contexts, which could serve as the basis for either designing culturally-appropriate literacy methodologies and materials in different languages, or at least for cultural and linguistic adaptations of the educational materials adopted.

Indeed, Paraguayan civil society organizations and different churches have attempted to approach indigenous youth and adult education from a different angle, applying the general principles of bilingual education. Fe y Alegría, a Jesuit educational NGO, has been one of the most relevant actors in this field in Paraguay, for almost 20 years, particularly with peasant and indigenous communities whose local languages belong to the Guarani linguistic family. Primers and community teachers were prepared to try out an alternative model of bilingual education. Contact was also established with the Asamblea del Pueblo Guaraní (The Guarani Peoples’ Assembly) in Bolivia and a fruitful exchange took place between the innovative Bolivian Guarani project (Gustafson 2009) and the Fe y Alegría project in Paraguay.

The increasing contact of Paraguayan indigenous leaders with their counterparts in different Latin American countries and the awareness they raised regarding their rights in an international more promising context, led them in the last two decades to include IIBE in their political agenda. In 2007, they finally managed to get a law passed creating a national directorate of indigenous education (Law 3.231/07) in a ministry of education in which the idea of only Guarani-Spanish bilingualism was seen as normal. The fact that different local NGOs and international donors became interested in IIBE surely helped them achieve this goal.³⁵

But before the new directorate was created, various preceding initiatives in search of a different type of bilingual education in Paraguay were carried out. One of them was Fe y Alegría’s PREBIR (Proyecto de Educación Bilingüe Rural), working mostly with monolingual illiterate adults in the rural areas of the country.³⁶ Monolingualism prevails in such areas and hence the aim is to foster bilingualism under an additive orientation. The strategy is based on previous experiences the organization has had in other countries as diverse as the Canary Islands and Bolivia, under a Freirian popular education approach. Four key elements are L1 mediated instruction, radio education, engaging community educators and active participation of project beneficiaries in decision making so as to develop self-management and self-reliance.³⁷ PREBIR works mainly with male and female Guarani monolingual peasants although it has also reached certain indigenous areas

³⁵ B. Meliá, from Centro Antonio Guasch of Asuncion, has been one of the key advocators of IIBE in Paraguay and UNDP and the Spanish international cooperation agency (AECID) have been in the forefront of the first official initiatives in this field.

³⁶ Fe y Alegría, a Jesuit educational NGO, present in many Latin American countries, operates in Paraguay since 1992.

³⁷ Up until 2009, PREBIR has worked with 30 radio stations that run daily transmissions of the educational programs prepared and reach rural students from 9 different departments. These youth and adult students work with written educational materials at home during the week and attend week-end sessions where they exchange information and develop different peer-to-peer activities under the assistance and guidance of a community educator (see www.feyalegria.org/paraguay/Internet/02:02.prebir.htm, retrieved on 27.04.09).

where a language belonging to the Guaraní linguistic family is spoken. In many ways monolingual Guaraní peasants are in the same standing as indigenous populations, particularly regarding insufficient educational opportunities.

PREBI (Programa Rural de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural) is the Fe y Alegría program for poor rural Guaraní-speaking children working in 16 schools of six departments of Paraguay. The approach is also bilingual and in many ways similar to the non-formal youth and adult education program PREBIR. Additionally to the formal basic education services (grades 1-6) rendered they also conduct a parents' school in each of the 16 communities attended, in order to raise parents' critical awareness of the importance of education and of the use of their children's mother tongue. They implement the official bilingual education curriculum locally adapted to cater for each community's needs and characteristics. Intensive teacher training workshops are conducted through the school year and local educational materials developed. One branch of PREBIR looks at infrastructure and builds or repairs schools in rural communities.

Working with indigenous populations, however, implies more than an adequate approach and appropriate methodology. For instance, among the Mbyas the school is a highly valued institution since it allows them to understand how the hegemonic non-indigenous society functions. That is the reason why the Mbyas want a combined teaching task force: Mbya community teachers for the first three grades and bilingual Guaraní-Spanish professional teachers for the upper levels. Community teachers would be in charge of L1 literacy and numeracy while bilingual teachers of the teaching of reading and writing in Paraguayan Guaraní (L2) and Spanish (L3), numeracy and arithmetic, as well as of how the country operates (UNDP Paraguay 2007). The fact is that the Mbyas see schooling as complementary to indigenous community education:

The Mbyas share an ample concept of children and youth education / socialization towards cultural identity, communally living together and life within nature. This concept is well known but it does not need pre-programming, it is rooted in tradition and not in programs, it is oral and lives in collective memory. During their enculturation process, children and youth learn all they need: from natural medicine to labor modalities, and also how to be an active member of the Mbya society. We are thus before a complete and robust education. Nonetheless, the challenges they face today in a surrounding context of peasants, landowners, Mennonites, etc. place them before the need to [also] learn to move and live in this setting. (Ibid:172)

The majority of indigenous societies in Paraguay are among the most excluded in Latin America. The problems they face are manifold: 47.1% are 15 years of age or less, only 38% have national identity registration cards and 39.5% do not even hold a birth certificate (UNDP Paraguay 2007), 63% of indigenous children live in extreme poverty (UNICEF 2008b) and the level of schooling they attain is of only 3 years in average contrasting with the 8 years of the non-indigenous population. There are cases like those of the Manjuis and Tomarahaos with an average schooling of only 8 months (Paraguay 2009).

Nonetheless, 78.6% of the indigenous children between ages 5 and 17 attend schools both in the urban and rural areas; of them 88% belong to the basic education level, 10% to the pre-school level and 2% to secondary education. 75% of the indigenous persons speak their own language, but their communities due to discrimination and exclusion have shifted to the dominant bilingual scheme Paraguayan Guaraní-Spanish. Only 1.9% of the Maskoy and 14.6% of the Guana population maintain their ancestral language (UNDP Paraguay 2007).

Although adequate bilingual education programs have not yet reached all public schools in the indigenous territories, the Ministry of Education has decided to hire indigenous community educators to work with indigenous children. Of the approximately 900 teachers working in indigenous communities, 58% of them are indigenous who generally speak the language of the pupils they work with. Of them only 33% are women. Indigenous teachers have limited schooling themselves: 3 out of 10 have only completed basic education and only 2 have a university degree. 91% of them do not have educational materials in the local languages (Ibid.).

Indigenous organizations now demand a distinct and appropriate curriculum, educational materials in the indigenous languages and properly trained teachers in IIBE. They also request the implementation of a recent law that created an indigenous education council. According to a press release of late 2008 the national indigenous education council includes representation from the Ministry of Education, the Paraguayan Indigenous Institute and NGOs with that omission of indigenous organizations and communities. Indigenous leaders consider that the exclusion of indigenous representatives not only violates the constitution and the 169 ILO Convention, but also jeopardizes the implementation of IIBE: “We have the right to proper consultation. We know our reality and need to express our opinions on all indigenous issues” (Angel Vera, Catalino Sosa, Amado Duarte y Nestor Portillo, leaders of Federation of Guaraní Communities, interviewed by ABC 06.11.2008).³⁸

The Directorate of Indigenous Education has incorporated these demands into their 2008-2012 work-plans and in 2008 6.000 primers for six different indigenous communities were produced. In an interview the Director of Indigenous Education stated: “We hope to move forward in indigenous education in the coming 5 years. We are fully aware that needs are enormous, from schools in very deplorable conditions to teachers with a low level of education. I will argue for their dignity, for an adequate budget for this modality and for culturally appropriate curricula, programs and materials. We ought to overcome the present situation where many indigenous pupils leave school right after the first grade. The problem is that Paraguay does not have all the resources needed” (Marilyn Rehnfeldt, press interview Diario ABC 04.02.2009).³⁹

5. Model and strategy assessment

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on primary education universal access are about to be met in the region. Nonetheless severe inequalities persist particularly concerning the ethnic divide: Over 20% of indigenous boys and girls are out of school, indigenous primary educational completion will be almost impossible to reach by 2015 (Del Popolo & Oyarce 2005: 43-44), less indigenous adolescents attend secondary education and only a minority graduates from high-school. Although universal access has been secured for all indigenous girls and boys, ethnic inequities persist with indigenous girls and women, being their exclusion higher in the upper levels of education right after the first four or six grades of primary schooling.

In the six countries of this study, indigenous populations are underprivileged when compared to non-indigenous ones, in relation to the most common chosen indicators:

³⁸ Also see www.fondoindigena.org/notiteca/nota_shtml?x=16557, retrieved on 04.05.09.

³⁹ The first round table on concepts and methodologies of intercultural multilingual education took place in April 2009 and was co-organized by the Ministry of Education and the Center for Anthropological Studies of the Catholic University of Asunción, under UNICEF sponsoring.

higher illiteracy rates, less mean years of schooling, still limited preschool access and insufficient primary and secondary education completion rates. The gap in mean years of schooling between indigenous and non-indigenous people is greater in Paraguay as it amounts to 5 years, followed by 3.7 in Bolivia, 3.3 in Mexico, 2.7 in Ecuador 2.7 and 2.3 years in Peru.

As can be seen in Table 2, illiteracy prevails among the indigenous population of the six countries studied, and the gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous populations are higher in Paraguay, Guatemala, Mexico and Ecuador and smaller in Bolivia and Peru. In Mexico, indigenous illiteracy is five times higher than that of non-indigenous populations, while in Paraguay and Ecuador it is four and three times higher.

In Guatemala, rural indigenous women present the highest illiteracy rate: 65.3% (Rubio 2006). Peruvian illiterate indigenous women represent 75% of all the illiterate population (Zúñiga 2008), and in Ecuador 40% of indigenous women are illiterate vs. 20% of indigenous men (SIISE 2002).

Similarly, inter-country differences in mean years of schooling present a disparity in detriment of indigenous populations ranging from 2.3 years (Peru) to 5 (Paraguay). A fact that may explain indigenous Paraguayan illiteracy is that four out of 10 indigenous persons do not even complete the second grade of primary school (UNICEF 2008a).

In most cases intra-country differences are crucial. In Guatemala, where access rates have generally improved (95%), primary matriculation and completion rates are particularly low in the Departments of Alta Verapaz and Quiché, two of the areas with the largest proportion of indigenous population. Similarly, 43% of indigenous girls do not complete their primary schools as compared to 37% of the boys.⁴⁰

Inter-indigenous peoples' disparities must also be taken into account. In Paraguay, for example, illiteracy among those who have a Guaraní variety as L1 is higher than any of the others: the illiteracy rate for the Guaranís is 45.4% whilst among the Guaycurús it is 27.9% (UNICEF 2008b).

Except for Mexico where DGEI and CONAFE cover most rural indigenous students at preprimary and primary school level, in all the other countries studied the coverage of IIBE is still insufficient to meet the educational needs of indigenous children and adolescents. In Ecuador, IIBE reaches 48.3% of indigenous children ages 6-14 (Garcés 2006). In Guatemala it amounts to 42.0% at the preprimary level (ages 5-6) and in primary education (ages 7-12) coverage can vary from a minimum of 30% to a maximum of 60%, depending on the source of information (Rubio 2006).⁴¹ In Bolivia bilingual schools represent 22% of the national total and 27% of all rural schools, but these schools attend only 11% of all primary school children in the country (Nucinkis 2006). The deficit seems to be greater in Peru, where just 10% of indigenous primary education students are taken care of (Cueto & Secada 2001, quoted in Trapnell & Reina 2006).⁴²

⁴⁰ 93% of the school population (5 to 20 years of age) in Alta Verapaz is indigenous and mostly monolingual or with Q'eqchi' as their dominant language (PACE 2009).

⁴¹ In his report on Guatemala released in May 2009, the UN Special Rapporteur for the Rights to Education states that in 2006 74% of children ages 7-12 received classes only in Spanish, and 13% in Spanish and in a Mayan language (UN 2009).

⁴² See Cueto S. & W. Secada. 2003. Eficacia escolar en escuelas bilingües en Puno, Perú". *Revista Electrónica Iberoamericana sobre Calidad, Eficacia y Cambio en Educación*. 1(1).

Various problems restrain us from reliable access and coverage data. On the one hand, not always is data disaggregated on the basis of ethnicity and IIBE implementation. On the other, the persistence of the transitional orientation, inefficiency in indigenous teacher allocation according to indigenous language knowledge, and rural teachers' extreme mobility make it particularly difficult to consider a school as bilingual. What we end up having is bilingual classrooms or grades rather than full bilingual schools. In the countries studied notable disparities exist: in some schools IIBE can be offered only in one grade or two, as in many Guatemalan schools (Rubio 2006), in others in three or four grades, and in some schools, as in many of those in Yucatan, Mexico (Lizama 2008), IIBE can cover all the six grades of primary schooling.

As shown in Table 2, a considerable portion of the indigenous population now has access to formal education. Access disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous learners have lowered, except for the case of Paraguay. In general, a more notable difference exists regarding learning attainment as in the cases of Paraguay (Paraguay 2009), Ecuador (Garcés 2006) and Peru (Trapnell & Reina 2006), for example.

Table 3: Educational indicators for indigenous and non-indigenous people

Country and census date	Illiteracy rate %	Mean years of schooling 15 years+	Out of school children ages 6-11	Attendance ages 6-11 %	Attendance ages 12-17 %	Primary completion rate. Ages 15-19 %	Secondary completion rate. Ages 20-24 %	IIBE availability
Bolivia 2001	18.8 IPA n.a. MPA 13.3 NA	5.9 IPA 9.6 MPA	n.a IP n.a MPA 05.2 NA	92.8 IPA 93.2 MPA	79.0 IPA 82.9 MPA	85.4 IPA 92.2 MPA 88.7 NA	46.3 IPA 58.0 MPA 58.3 NA	Preschool and 6 first years of primary only.
Ecuador 2001	28.2 IPA 10.5 AEP 04.7 MPA 09.0 NA	6.9 IPA 9.6 MPA 7.1 NA	12.6 RAA 07.2 NA 03.8 UAA	86.3 IPA 90.8 MPA	51.7 IPA 69.1 MPA	87.8 IPA 93.4 MPA 92.8 NA	26.6 IPA 50.7 MPA n.a. NA	Preschool and 6 years of primary. Secondary?
Guatemala 2002	47.7 IPA 18.8 MPA 23.9 NA	3.5 IPA 6.3 MPA 7.0 NA	08.2 NA 20.7 IPA 10.5 MPA	81.0 IPA 89.1 MPA	62.3 IPA 73.3 MPA	41.6 IPA 69.3 MPA 58.3 NA	10.3 IPA 33.6 MPA n.a. NA	Preschool and first 3 grades of primary.
Mexico 2000	24.6 IPA 06.4 MPA 09.2 NA	4.6....IPA 7.9 MPA NA	n.a IP n.a. MPA 7.3 NA	89.1 IPA 96.2 MPA	59.0 IPA 72.1 MPA	90.2 RRA 96.2 URA 93.9 NA	24.8 RRA n.a. URA 38.6 NA	Preschool and 6 years of primary. Secondary?
Peru 2007	19.7 IPA n.a. MPA 07.1 NA	6.6 IPA 9.9 MPA 8.9 NA	n.a IP n.a MPA 0.1 NA	n.a. IPA n.a. MPA	90.7 IPA 94.8 MPA	83.1 RRA 96.0 URA 91.6 NA	57.9 RRA 61.6 URA 75.4 NA	Preschool and 6 years of primary. Secondary?
Paraguay 2002	38.9 IPA 05.4 MPA n.a. NA	3.0 IPA 8.0. MPA NA	21.0 IPA n.a MPA 8.3 NA	61.6 IPA 92.8 MPA 83.0 NA	42.9. IPA 78.6 MPA	21.4 IPA 95.9 MPA 89.5 NA	26.4 IPA 58.3 MPA 48.4 NA	3 first grades only.

NB. IPA stands for indigenous people average, MPA for mestizo or non-indigenous population average, NA for national average, RRA for rural regional average and URA for urban regional average, AEP for Afro-Ecuadorian population.

Sources: Data for the first two columns comes from Hall & Patrinos 2004, except for Bolivian illiteracy rates which come from 2001 National Population Census. Illiteracy rates for Peru come from 2007 National Population Census. Attendance rates come from Del Popolo and Oyarce 2005, based on ECLAC. Primary and secondary completion rates come from UNESCO&SEP 2007. Unless otherwise stated, data on coverage ages 6-19, primary completion rates and IIBE availability and coverage come from national statistics and ministries of education web sites.

These findings make us question the Spanish-only dominant pattern of education implemented in indigenous communities and urban neighborhoods. Latin America is getting closer to universalizing primary schooling and most children ages 5 and 15 are now in schools. However, it is not enough to ensure primary school universalized access, and the aim ought to be placed in the quality of the services offered (Del Popolo & Oyarce 2005).

Indeed, for some time indigenous leaders and parents have been questioning the quality of the education their children receive and from that end they have also come to suspect of

IIEB strategies and models. The emergence in the educational scene of autonomous, endogenous, own or simply indigenous education --or in one case self-denominated Mayan schools-- is a proof of it (Bolaños et al 2004, López 2008b). It is therefore not surprising that the current Bolivian on-going out-loud claim for the decolonization of education falls in fertile ground and has an appeal for many indigenous organizations and leaders through the region.

In Mexico and Peru various studies have reiteratively shown the inadequacy of Spanish-only education vis-à-vis the sociolinguistic contexts and conditions in which indigenous education takes place. "In general terms, sociolinguistic analysis identifies for Mexico, as well as for the rest of Latin America, that a diglossic language conflict between Spanish as the dominant language and the ILs [indigenous languages] as the subordinate ones contributes to generalized language shift and loss, in spite of some language maintenance and revitalization processes" (Hamel 2008: 316). Studies conclude that "the general diglossic orientations shared by the dominant society and most indigenous teachers and parents generate a kind of education that contributes to language shift and does not produce the expected educational skills" (Hamel 2008:318), thus calling for further social and pedagogical transformation. Such conclusions indeed apply not only to Mexico but to most countries of Latin America and particularly to government driven IIBE.

As drawn from the Bolivian experience, the truth is that:

... the assimilationist policies that influenced schooling left most linguistic minority students without a sufficient base in either language to understand and perform well in their schooling. Partly due to the continuous experience of failure in the school system indigenous, language minority status students still maintain high levels of grade repetition and early school drop out. By taking longer to move through grade levels and leaving school before acquiring higher levels of skills needed for higher paying jobs, language minority students have effectively been barred from moving on through the sequence of equal educational opportunity. Through the mechanisms described above, the social policies of monoculturalism and assimilation have translated into unequal schooling experiences that in turn have led to large socio-economic inequities in Bolivian society. This is the case throughout the Latin American region but more evident in countries like Bolivia where the percentage of the population is heavily indigenous. (Noel, 2006: 232)

These policies of indigenous neglect have inevitably had a negative impact on indigenous self-esteem and also on the negative image the non-indigenous populations portray of indigenous ways of being. A regional Andean study, concluded that in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru Spanish-only oppressive and discriminatory educational methods have contributed to a biased image of indigenous pupils as shy, silent, introvert, apprehensive, fearful and marginalized (Howard 2007). But, as we have seen most evaluation reports of IIBE programs and experiments describe these same children as active, participatory, outspoken, extrovert, friendly, etc. since the use of indigenous languages in schools seems to have a positive impact on children's self-confidence and self-esteem (López 1995). Indeed, the traditional image of indigenous children and youth portrayed in the literature seems to be changing radically and the new policy of freedom of expression in the classroom that IIBE has automatically brought about is making everybody perceive the behavior of indigenous children simply as normal as that of any other children. On numerous occasions indigenous children have often pulled my leg simply and teased me because I could not fully understand what they were telling me.

As far as bilingual education models are concerned, in Guatemala and Paraguay government efforts are being placed in early-exit transitional models, whilst the

governments of Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru have adopted the maintenance and development discourse. Enrichment bilingual education is only being implemented with the support of NGOs and of politically committed linguists, anthropologists and educationalists in specific areas of Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. In these last two countries, as well as in Chiapas, Mexico, a further shift is in place as a result of the increasing political participation of indigenous leaders and intellectuals who question the political status quo and defy political exclusion, racism and discrimination. In this new setting, the concept of intraculturalism as different from and complementary to interculturalism has emerged within a wider framework of education for decolonization (Gustafson 2009, López 2008c, Machaca y Cabrera 2008, López 2005). Intraculturalism and decolonization go hand in hand and aim at restoring the indigenous individual's self-respect and ethnic pride, under strategic essentialism (López 2008b). Nonetheless, as we have seen there is a need to bridge the gap between indigenous educational ideology and rhetoric and effective bilingual or multilingual classroom practice.

To improve IIBE must meet at least five basic criteria, which have a direct influence on the quality of education in indigenous settings:

- (a) On-going appropriate curriculum development constructed from the indigenous standpoints and worldviews and through community engagement, which implies relocating indigenous education and the two or more languages that may be socially relevant in every specific community. It also entails pushing indigenous education forward and beyond the language issue. This obviously includes appropriation and socially accepted use of the hegemonic language, necessary for indigenous individuals and communities to understand how the major society functions.
- (b) Intercultural and bilingual teacher education –both pre- and in-service—, rooted in the educators' commitment with the oppressed and their empowerment (Freire 1970, 1973), in order to arrive at closer and richer collaboration between indigenous organizations, community leaders and IIBE school teachers.
- (c) Renewed active local community and parents' involvement in the different stages of educational management: from planning to implementation. Community participation will help establish adequate links and bridges between what happens in schools and in the indigenous real world.
- (d) Improved classroom management and implementation of innovative educational practices conducive to active learning and also to the development of children's self-esteem and respect. These renewed practices need to be enriched through the incorporation into school life of indigenous ways of learning and teaching. And, last but not least.
- (e) Enhanced learning attainment and improved indigenous children school performance in adequate and culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate measurement.

But IIBE is neither a matter of simply adequate and culturally sensitive methodologies nor of only an active and more innovative pedagogy, above all it relates to indigenous peoples' rights. The use and development of indigenous languages and the cultivation and enjoyment of indigenous cultures is a right in itself now internationally sanctioned (D'Emilio 2009). A rights approach to IIBE includes effective, efficient but also enjoyable learning and the development of indigenous self-pride. A rights approach to EIB also implies taking

IIBE concerns beyond the classroom and the school and into the domain of periodic political negotiation and permanent struggle.

5.1 Learning outcomes

Through the long period of IIBE trial and experimentation in Mexico, Peru and Guatemala many national and international research projects have been carried out. One of the first ones was conducted by the rural teacher founder of IIBE in Peru, Maria Asunción Galindo, back in the early 1940s when she proved the effectiveness of L1 literacy and its positive effects on learning among indigenous children and adolescents (cf. López 1988). The longitudinal studies by Modiano (1972) in Chiapas, Mexico corroborated the hypothesis that L1 literacy or bilingual literacy produces better results in learning and reading the L2.

In Guatemala various evaluation projects accompanied the installation of bilingual education in the 1980s and empirical evidence was gathered regarding the effectiveness of L1 use even after only the first two grades of primary education (Dutcher 2003). Such results also helped dismantle the nationally accepted assumption that the use of the indigenous language made learning of the L2 more difficult and led to a “corrupted” use of Spanish, then considered the national language (Stewart 1984). Similar results were also obtained in Paraguay which indeed reinforced the role of Guarani as a school language when the educational reform adopted bilingual education in 1992 (MEC 2001, CPES 1998).

Studies carried out in Guatemala also revealed improved grade promotion, less drop-out and repetition and higher grade completion, as well as improved equity: reducing urban-rural, gender and ethnic gaps, and increased cost-effectiveness (PREAL 2002, Rubio 2005). Gender disparities also decreased in Puno, Peru, where indigenous girls achieved comparable results as those of boys (Rockwell et al 1989).

Similar facts were found in Puno, Peru in the period 1985-1990 regarding both learning attainment in language and math (Rockwell et al 1989), as well as concerning system internal efficiency (López 1995). On-going studies conducted in the Purepecha region of Mexico (Hamel 2008, 2009) give additional support to the hypotheses of a common language underlying proficiency and of L1-L2 linguistic transfer --formulated by Cummins (1979, 2000)—, and on which Latin American and international bilingual research and practice have been based since the late 1970s (Cummins 1979).

Hornbenger (1988, 1989) produced an extensive account of the differences found between two comparable Quechua communities in southern Peru. L1 classroom use triggered more spontaneous active student participation as well as pedagogical and linguistic teacher innovation. More elaborate use of Quechua by bilingual learners was also found, when comparing verbal behavior in the bilingual school and in the comparison school where Spanish was the language of instruction. Others also found that when reading, writing and numeracy skills were developed in the L1 they were easily transferable to the L2, provided there was enough “maturation” time to allow for this process to take place (Rockwell et al 1989). Towards the end of primary school bilingual children were able to produce elaborate written texts in Spanish which also showed appropriation of the discursive elements and rhetoric of the L2 (López & Jung 2003).

In Bolivia extensive research was also carried out to support the implementation of IIBE, at a time when indigenous leaders had not fully made the concept theirs and when the

experimental projects had to prove to local authorities and funding agencies that IIBE was worth investing in (López 2005, 1995, Albó & Anaya 2003, Muñoz 1996). The main results of these studies corroborated international findings regarding: (i) the key role the children's L1 plays both in the appropriation of reading and writing skills as well as in learning the L2 (López 2005, 1995, Muñoz 1996), (ii) the predominant existence of a cordial and engaging classroom atmosphere (Muñoz 1996), (iii) the impact IBE has on the development of children's self-esteem and ethnic reaffirmation (Gottret et al 1995), (iv) the benefits of IIBE for indigenous girls' learning attainment and primary school advancement (Ibid.), (v) the positive effects of IIBE programs on learning in general (Gottret et al 1995), and (vi) the importance of local indigenous community engagement in EFA, particularly when IIBE becomes a collective concern and part of a social movement and of the indigenous political agenda alongside other indigenous rights (territorial, participatory, economic, cultural, etc.) (Ventiades & Romero 2006, Jiménez 2005, Muñoz 1996).⁴³ Nonetheless, pedagogical limitations were also observed resulting from the persistence of traditional ways of teaching (rote-learning, blackboard copying, dictation, strict reliance on textbooks, etc.) and of the improvisation and lack of daily class planning from the part of teachers (Muñoz 1996).

The strong connection found between IIBE and other rights in the context of what Colombian indigenous intellectuals define as "life plan" (or plan o proyecto de vida) (Bolaños et al 2004) reassures us on the need to reinvent IIBE from the bottom-up (López 2008a).

Paraguay studies described the evolution of Guarani-Spanish bilingualism in a 40 year period, to obtain basic sociolinguistic information needed for language and educational planning (Paraguay 2001, CPES 1998). The studies found that positive attitudes towards the Guarani language in parents and teachers gave social support to the implementation of bilingual education. Ample social recognition of Guarani across social classes and urban and rural dwellings reiterated the population's commitment to the Guarani language, though most people interviewed implicitly defined their bilingualism as diglossic and people in the rural areas considered their Guarani as "mixed" and different from the more "genuine" Guarani variety used at school (Paraguay 2001, CPES 1998). The poorer sectors of the population also made false associations between speech and poverty, and considered code-mixing as a direct outcome of illiteracy and "ignorance" (CPES 1998). These attitudes were perhaps induced by the official bilingual policies that insisted on linguistic purism and which also had overcoming Jopará and replacing it with "scientific Guarani" as the hidden curriculum of reform implementation (Paraguay 2001, CPES 1998). Nonetheless, impacts on bilingual learners' Guarani language use were observed: children produced linguistically elaborate expressions and complex sentences in Guarani, a fact which enjoyed social recognition and appreciation (CPES 1998).⁴⁴ Apparently teachers put a lot of attention to Guarani language development, even when they had to overcome practical problems of different sorts (writing in Guarani, understanding linguistic normalization policies, learning 'scientific Guarani' and depurating Guarani of Spanish loan-terms and syntactic calques or loan translations of Spanish syntactic patterns, using coined neologisms and recuperated archaisms, etc.) as well as prejudices in favor of Spanish (CPES 1998).⁴⁵

⁴³ López 1995 and 2005 include an extensive summary of these findings and refer to the specific studies carried out by Gustavo Gottret, Inge Sichra, Pedro Plaza, Ruperto Romero, Nancy Ventiades, amongst others.

⁴⁴ Comparable findings were obtained in Puno (Hornberger 1988, López & Jung 2003).

⁴⁵ The two sociolinguistic studies referred to, and particularly the one conducted by CPES, are full of interview extracts where teachers manifest their initial distress and anguish. Many of them decided to take classes after school hours to learn "scientific Guarani".

In 4th grade tests applied to a sample of 4th and 5th grade students in urban and rural schools, 4th graders who studied under the bilingual education curriculum surpassed 5th graders in both Guaraní and Spanish oral and written tests and almost got closer to their 5th grade peers' results, being the difference in the urban medium greater between bilingual and Spanish-medium schools (CPES 1998).

The bilingual education policy in Paraguay is language oriented and not intercultural: language learning and use is what really matters. Most Paraguayans consider themselves as a unified and homogeneous nation and culture. Hence, the intercultural variable has not yet deserved sufficient attention. Thus the official national curriculum is applied with little modification if any in both urban and rural areas of the country. This strong belief is changing due to two main contemporary factors: the 1992 constitutional declaration of Paraguay as a multicultural country, and the emergence and increased political visibility of indigenous minorities.

Certain studies (CPES 1998) as well as the government appointed National Commission on Bilingualism have reaffirmed the need to overcome the commonly accepted reduced notions of bilingualism and bilingual education, and the Ministry of Education has implicitly accepted the intercultural proposal when the new Directorate of Indigenous Education was created.⁴⁶

One of the most important outcomes of IIBE in Paraguay is the level of pertinence of the proposal derived from the direct engagement of indigenous organizations and community leaders. Project operators now have accumulated knowledge concerning feelings, expectations and experiences of the target population, and shared interpretations of local reality are now common grounds for the beneficiaries and the projects' teams (Demellenne, n.d). Nonetheless, IIBE is just beginning in Paraguay and it remains to be seen if results comparable to the ones obtained with Guaraní-speaking peasant children are obtained. One must bear in mind that the sociolinguistic conditions under which IIBE operates are different and that indigenous peoples are under strong social and economic pressure to shift to the nationally positively valued diglossic Guaraní-Spanish bilingual pattern. Paraguayan IIBE could certainly benefit from the accumulated experience gained in the education of indigenous populations in other countries of Latin America.

Even in this situation, IIBE can contribute immensely to further developments of the national educational policy as it has already contributed to place the intercultural variable in the national discussion. The Paraguayan society and decision-makers are gradually coming to terms with the challenges IIBE must meet: the complexity of the social and linguistic composition of the country defies present national educational policy design and implementation. IIBE can no longer be understood merely as improved language teaching, since the indigenous worldviews and way-of-life, on the one hand, and the strong urban-rural divide, on the other, give shape to a more intricate cultural system.

Nonetheless they developed a sense of achievement and pride when they saw that their pupils spoke Guaraní fluently and 'purely' (cf. CPES 1998:84-86). Gyman (2001, 2005) also observed a positive evolution in favor of Guaraní in the Paraguayan society at large.

⁴⁶ The ferocious general Alfredo Stroessner's dictatorship that kept the country in practical isolation reinforced the social role of Guaraní in the Paraguayan society, stressing the uniqueness of the country, its people and culture. For 35 years the educational sector had the mission of contributing to a unified culture and nation, which deliberately denied multi-ethnicity and fostered a common Creole -- "criollo"-- stance in society. When he was ousted from government, in the transitional regime of 1990 and 1992, intellectuals in universities and research centers took it upon them to reveal the true characteristics of the Paraguayan society --the urban-rural divide, the subordination of Guaraní to Spanish and the difficult and precarious circumstances in which indigenous minorities had survived (CPES 1998). The new constitution approved in 1992 declared Paraguay as a multicultural nation.

In spite of the positive outcomes children in IIBE programs and projects have managed to obtain, it is surprising to observe sharp differences in these same domains when IIBE is under the sole responsibility of a ministry of education after program up-scaling. The Peruvian case dramatically illustrates this situation. In all experimental or focalized programs and experiments indigenous children in bilingual education programs most generally outdo their peers in Spanish-only schools. But comparable indigenous students attending the regular education system confront enormous limitations: they can hardly manage to read and write by grade three, they are not able to process basic, short and decontextualized written texts, and when interrogated on their content they mostly reply only with monosyllables, isolated words or simple expressions, even when classes might be very participatory and children active and also apparently happy (López 2002).

The general results obtained by indigenous children in national standardized testing in Spanish are most generally even worse. In Peru 6th grade students of the regions with more indigenous population obtain the lowest results in reading comprehension and indigenous children who attend rural multigrade schools achieve the lowest scores. In general, Spanish-speaking students outperform their rural counterparts in reading comprehension and Mathematics (Zúñiga 2008).

In México "... only 2.54% of sixth grade students in indigenous primary schools achieve maximum performance levels in national tests in Spanish, and only 0.67% in Mathematics. The corresponding percentages for rural non-indigenous schools are 6.34% and 1.39% respectively. Those for urban schools are 14.09% and 3.12%" (Schmelkes 2006b:123).

In Guatemala, indigenous 6th grade students did comparatively worse than their Spanish-speaking peers in the Spanish reading tests (40.04% vs. 51.57%) as well as in the Mathematics one (55.33% vs. 60.71%). Intriguingly enough in DIGEBI supervised schools the results were either similar or slightly lower than those attained by Mayan students in regular Spanish-only schools. (Rubio 2006: 228-236). At least two factors could help us explain these last discrepancies: (i) IIBE is only offered in the first two or three grades of primary education and the tests were applied when leaving 6th grade, and (ii) internal efficiency is higher in DIGEBI run schools and more students make it to the 6th grade, thus the comparable sample is higher and also includes "the least capable students", where in the regular Spanish-only schools only "the most capable students" reach 6th grade (Rubio 2006:232). In Guatemala it was also found that indigenous students' performance:

... in tests applied in the mother tongue depends on language affiliation as well as on the subject evaluated. In the Guatemalan case, Mayan monolingual students seem to benefit when the reading tests are in their own language [...], but this is no [always] the case in the Mathematics test. Evidence suggests that those who are already bilingual when entering school or who speak the Mayan language as a L2 tend to do better in the tests written in Spanish. (Rubio 2006: 234-5)

These shortcomings in learning-outcomes might be determined by the fact that in none of the countries studied IIBE reaches the internationally accepted threshold of six or seven continuous years of effective bilingual instruction. Moreover, IIBE is not offered progressively and systematically through the primary school system (cf. p. 35) and hence indigenous children are not allowed to develop a sustainable type of bilingualism.

A recent World Bank study that evaluated the situation of the indigenous peoples in the decade 1994-2004 and the latest report of the social situation of the Americas (CEPAL &

BID 2005) verified that although IIBE has experienced a considerable expansion it is not yet offered to all indigenous children. Mention is also made to the low quality of teaching and to the fact that they are poorly qualified and do not receive sufficient in-service training (Hall & Patrinos 2004, CEPAL & BID, 2005). Nonetheless it is also made clear that standardize testing leaves out the knowledge accumulated by these populations as well as what every children learns at home and the community, and they also address the importance of developing social competences in indigenous students. It is argued that stressing only one type of curriculum content might involuntarily reproduce inequity and strengthen inequalities between indigenous and non-indigenous populations (CEPAL & BID, 2005).

Improved student school access, diminished repetition and drop-out as well as student retention, on the one hand, and increased student participation in classroom activities and self-esteem, on the other, seem to be the most generalized assets of government implemented IIBE (Garcés 2006, Rubio 2006, Trapnell & Neira 2006, Albó and Anaya 2003, López 1995). In Spanish-only schools fewer indigenous pupils complete their primary education and even less do so at the expected official age. But it is unquestionable that more effort needs to be invested in the improvement of the quality of the services offered in indigenous schools, under an IIBE scheme.

One must also recall that introducing IIBE into the educational systems has been a slow process and the ministries of education have not yet managed to overcome different obstacles which hold back adequate implementation: (i) lack of properly trained teachers who many times do not read and write in the indigenous language, (ii) deficient teacher allocation in terms of language spoken, (iii) usually rigid and content-full national core curriculum with little or no room for local adaptation, (iv) lack of contextualization and of inclusion of objectives and content related to local culture and knowledge, (v) insufficient bilingual textbooks and other educational materials as well as delay and inefficiency in textbook distribution, (vi) persistence of frontal traditional classroom management, (vii) absence of adequate and appropriate pedagogical coaching by informed bilingual educators, (viii) absence of provision for community and parents' active participation in decision-making and above all (ix) insufficient funding and (x) decentralization, due to the persistence of a highly structured and centralized educational system. Factors such as these have a negative impact on educational quality and get in the way of regular IIBE progression from pre-school and first grade to at least the sixth one. They also determine irregular and inconsistent classroom implementation which in turn has an impact on test results.

Strictly speaking “[...] the highly proficient and highly educated bilingual teachers with sufficient practical knowledge necessary to apply the new curriculum are very few in number. [...] Without committed and skilled teachers [...] reform program is left without change agents that serve as interlocutors of the new program in their communities. Teachers, as change agents need, good pre-service, in-service and on-going training to sustain their changing conceptions of what it means to learn and teach” (Noel 2006: 234).

5.2 The classroom and improved quality IIBE

Contemporary research in most of these countries is now focusing on the classroom since in spite of the positive findings referred to above it is evident that the quality of IIBE calls for substantive improvement particularly regarding active pedagogy and cooperative learning (Zúñiga 2008, Hamel 2008, Lizama 2008, Santisteban et al 2008). When projects

are up-scaled classroom quality and efficiency does not necessarily resemble practices of the pilot phase and the advantages of bilingual education become diffuse and restricted only to the use of the children's mother tongue and to the positive attitude communicating in a language of common understanding brings along.

But, the very concept of mother tongue education does not help that much nowadays. Due to the expansion of individual and societal diglossic-bilingualism many children reach school age speaking two and not only one single language, as it used to be the case when bilingual education set foot in the region five decades ago (López 2007, López & Küper 2000). Most IIBE projects still focus their activities on more monolingual communities and when governments up-scale methodologies and strategies they meet a very difficult match. The fact is that the monolingual ideal of society still prevails and bilingual educational strategies generally have bilingualism as their goal and not as their starting point, as it should often be the case. Indeed, monolingual indigenous communities persist but they are not the majority situation any more. Newer and more creative strategies of IIBE are called for in order to break away from linear and evolutionary conceptions of bilingual education.

Different linguistic and cultural starting points must be accounted for IIBE could well begin as it now does at pre-school or primary-school level but there is no reason preventing it from being offered at upper-primary or even at the beginning of secondary schooling, once the children have acquired a reasonable mastery of Spanish and met social demand. Shifting away from seeing the indigenous language only as a mere learning artifact to considering it as a political resource and, hence, as a right might bring about the possibility of discovering many and more creative bilingual education options.

Reshaping the way IIBE has traditionally been envisaged from the stance of a monolingual understanding of society might also allow for better and more efficient coupling and complementation of indigenous primary socialization –or indigenous family and community education— and formal education. More and improved understanding of the differences and similarities between the way in which community indigenous 'informal' education and Western-like formal education⁴⁷ operate might bring light into IIBE schools and classrooms not only in terms of richer curriculum content but also and more importantly concerning different learning styles, distinct pedagogical strategies, situated and decolonizing language learning and transmission, and above all concerning the indigenous social construction of knowledge (cf. Zambrana 2008, Navarro 2006, Castillo 2005, García 2005, López 2008a, 2008d).

Recent research addresses different topics related to the improvement of the quality of IIBE processes. One shared concern relates to local curriculum construction through action-research processes in which:

(a) Academic researchers and indigenous-language-speaking teachers negotiate

⁴⁷ This traditional educational taxonomy no longer holds since indigenous community educational practices are very well established, follow a given pattern, respond to a formal structure and resort to a specific place, time and event for their realization (see F. Prada's preface to A. Zambrana's book of 2008). We also need to overcome the dichotomy established between L1 and L2 use regarding the level of abstraction of one another. In certain community events, and particularly in ritual, spiritual and educational ones, the use of indigenous language responds to high levels of abstraction and formality. The appeal for more attention on intra-communal educational and social processes, and particularly to careful and unbiased study of indigenous primary socialization, as those being carried out in Yucatan (Lizama 2008) and at PROEIB Andes (www.proeibandes.org), could result in major contributions to the interculturalization of schools, or of what we still call or define as formal education.

curriculum content and methodology and periodically analyze day-to-day results at classroom level, as in the Purepecha project started in Mexico in 1995 (Hamel 2009, 2008). The result of this type of endeavor is a kind of “hybrid curriculum”, since in Mexico teachers cannot totally “escape” from the one and only nationally defined school curriculum (Hamel 2009).⁴⁸

- (b) Responsibility is shared with community elders and leaders through the process of social reinvention of the sense and meaning of formal schooling in indigenous settings, thus impacting on curriculum diversification as well as on situated learning for indigenous children, as it now occurs in different parts of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru (Jiménez 2005, Pardo personal communication 2009, Zavala et al 2007).
- (c) Researchers look into primary socialization processes in order to unveil indigenous community and home educational practices for a more pertinent and intelligent bond between primary socialization and school insertion of indigenous students --into their secondary socialization— (Lizama 2008). Many times these efforts count on indigenous-community-experts’ engagement with whom relevant cultural content and methodology are identified to contribute to an intra and intercultural curriculum based on a better understanding of primary socialization processes and of non-school community secondary socialization processes that run in parallel to what children and youth do in schools (Trapnell 2008, Zambrana 2008, Navarro 2006, Castillo 2005, García 2005).⁴⁹
- (d) The use and revitalization of the indigenous language is analyzed with the different stakeholders involved (community elders and local authorities, parents, teachers and in cases also children and adolescents), and language policies are formulated from the bottom-up; of which some examples come from Bolivia (Ventiades & Romero 2006, López C. 2005), Ecuador (King 2001, Zavala et al 2007), Mexico (Hamel 2008) and Peru (Santisteban et al 2008, Pardo personal communication 2009);
- (e) Teachers improve their teaching of Spanish in schools and discover the importance of establishing similarities and differences between L1 and L2 teaching, within a framework of sustainable bilingualism (Limachi 2006, Marzana 2005, Hamel et al 2004; Sainz 1999). Many times these experiences are based on the need of teacher peer-to-peer support and cooperative learning (Hamel 2009).
- (f) The relocation of indigenous ancestral orality vis-à-vis the introduction of writing in the vernacular, together with the school re-appropriation of other native modes of graphic representation, in order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of what an area of language and communication and written language itself imply in intercultural curriculum implementation with communities that are mainly oral (cf. Garcés 2009, López 2008b, Sichra 2008b, Arnold & Yapita et al 2000).

It is also evident that the secondary level needs urgent attention since there is very little point in pushing the students through bilingual primary schooling if opportunities to go on

⁴⁸ A still undocumented practice of this sort has been carried out in Guatemala since 2007 in 30 pilot schools whose pupils are indigenous and speak an indigenous language. Cooperatively, teachers and a small group of pedagogical coaches contextualize the national core curriculum, on the basis of local content and practices (www.pace.org).

⁴⁹ See www.proeibandes.org for MA theses by indigenous professionals from different Latin American countries that systematize primary socialization processes and community secondary socialization processes to contribute to curriculum diversification and/or to disclose indigenous ways of learning and teaching.

into and through secondary education in their areas of residence are scarce.

Another common concern relates to a better match between educational proposals and practices and the ethno-political expectations of indigenous leaders and intellectuals, since they are related to collective sociopolitical practices that are also educationally meaningful and of which most often indigenous children and adolescents are also part of. Historically indigenous children and youth have always been included in community and organizational activities proper of indigenous political struggle. Their participation, even if it is only as observers, grants them access to varied dimensions of indigenous way-of-life and worldview and above all of the politics of identity and ethnicity. Moreover, when the events are intra-ethnic they may also learn how and when the indigenous languages are used, and when they have the chance to participate in inter-ethnic demonstrations or assemblies they also have the opportunity to discover the social roles the language of power and the subaltern ones play. Events such as these form part of a new extra-school dimension that generates intense and rich learning in everyday-life situations whilst subaltern societies struggle for increased social recognition and respect.

Last but not least action-research also helps overcome the artificial separation between school and community that the imposition of “expert-knowledge” helped shape. Research results for the six countries studied stress the relevance of active social participation and engagement of local communities in school and education quality improvement (Catalán 2007, Jiménez 2005, Santisteban et al 2008, Zavala et al 2007). As it was said elsewhere community engagement is inseparable from improved quality IBE (López 2008a). After almost 50 years of top-down policies locally implemented strategies and practices should help us redefine public policies and arrive at engaging and sustainable solutions, provided that room for permanent reflection and systematization is allocated. Unfortunately, many times records are not kept, information is very scarce and learned lessons are not derived from rich and potentially useful local educational practices of discrete scope and coverage.

But even in such cases the situation is fragile since implementing IIBE can be misunderstood only as L1 and L2 teaching, failing to encompass other areas of the curriculum and dimensions of everyday-life. In other words, in numerous cases IIBE is reduced to language teaching. Consequently, the use of the indigenous language as a medium of instruction is limited to facilitating social and procedural communication in order to allow for minimal responses from the learners. In such cases the indigenous L1 is not always used to mediate decontextualized curriculum content and rarely assumes the role of main learning vehicle as the official rhetoric might very well stipulate (López 2008a, López & Sichra 2008, Hamel 2008, Catalán 2007, Cachimuel 2005). Another problem commonly found in the bilingual classroom relates to a strong teachers’ belief and reliance on translation to the indigenous language of content originally written or thought of in Spanish (Hamel 2008, López 2008b, Limachi 2006, López 2005, 2002, Hamel et al 2004, Sainz 1999). Moreover, many times what teachers understand as bilingual education is simply concurrent use of the two languages in class, mediated by translation from the Spanish to the indigenous language.

The emphasis given by research to unveil what goes on in the bilingual classroom is closely related to the attention teacher education now receives as an unquestionable condition for quality IBE. As a former Bolivian Minister of Education stated: “The quality of education is determined by the quality of teachers” (Anaya, 2004:6, quoted by Delany forthcoming).

Indeed, in this crucial domain the challenges are manifold since teachers need to: (i) begin by transferring to the indigenous language they speak the reading and writing competencies and skills they developed in Spanish, (ii) use the indigenous language freely and spontaneously not only in the classrooms but beyond school activities and concerns, (iii) engage in community social, cultural and productive activities and learn from them, (iv) learn how to articulate local knowledge and social practices with official curriculum content, (v) master the curriculum content they are responsible of, (vi) make use of sociolinguistic, anthropological and pedagogical knowledge and inputs to arrive at new understandings of how politics, society, language and education interplay in multiethnic societies and also to discover new strategies to conduct effective, critical and sustainable bilingual education, (vii) develop active pedagogy and cooperative-learning strategies which contribute to challenging, effective and joyful student learning, (viii) respect and seriously take into account parents' and community elders' opinions regarding the education of indigenous children, promoting their engagement in decision-making and working cooperatively with them, and (ix) adopt a professional position as well as a critical stand regarding indigenous policies and politics and grass-roots' voices, assuming the role of the organic-intellectual indigenous movements and the quality of education in indigenous contexts now call for.

5.3 Community participation as part of quality IIBE

Apart from its academic gains in controlled pilot or focalized or experimental programs, IIBE in general has played a key political role in the national recognition, discussion and analysis of the indigenous question and the traditional and biased configuration of the State. Indeed, from the beginning the notions of interculturalism and intercultural education have questioned the nation-State and its historical role vis-à-vis the indigenous peoples in Latin America (Trapnell 2008, López 1999, López & Moya 1989).

In Guatemala, for example, the first IIBE program had to work intensively to overcome serious, deep-seated mistrust of families and teachers (Richards 1989, Richards & Richards 1996), but also of mainstream political authorities, professionals and intellectuals who to date question the validity, feasibility and political pertinence of IIBE proposals, in fear that IIBE might bring more division to the country. In Bolivia, as a reaction to the ongoing political process of indigenous reaffirmation certain opinions from main-stream middle-class and intellectual sectors question the political pertinence of indigenous revival and raise voices defending the country's mestizo nature and cultural composition and ideology (Toranzo 2006, PIEB 2007). The same applies to most situations in which IIBE programs and projects are carried out, both at national and regional and local levels.

Bolivian contemporary indigenous and political leaders in general reiteratively bring to light that it all has to do with the colonial legacy (García-Linera 2007, Saavedra 2007, Patzi 2006) and with the fact that a feeling of community-citizenship has emerged in opposition to liberal citizenship which the homogeneous nation-State in-the-making promoted (García-Linera 2007). Others add that both indigenous and non-indigenous populations have to overcome the mental colonization process the national education system imposed on them (F. Condori, W. Gutiérrez, E. Camargo, P. Moye, F. Alarcón personal communications 2009). The fact is that indigenous-initiated IBE differs substantially from government-initiated approaches since most governments establish a pedagogical/technical-political divide and intentionally or not fail to remember that IIBE initially grew out of a political concern and struggle vis-à-vis exclusion and discrimination.

With national and international legal and political recognition, increased indigenous

political participation has pushed the debate into epistemological grounds. Unlike recent demands and in comparison to what occurred in the earlier years of colonial cultural clash the issue at stake is the ontology of school knowledge (Gustafson 2009, Howard et al 2002), something ministries of education are not yet ready to understand. The fact is that in spite of changes in denomination, and of more technical and pedagogical sophistication, the dominant official educational model has not really been modified: the general conservative nature of education and educators is undeniably anchored in mainstream assimilation. Therefore, while ministries push for a language agenda indigenous leaders place more emphasis on intra and interculturalism (López 2008a, 2008c).

Nonetheless, it is equally undeniable that differences of opinion exist between indigenous leaders and politicians and grass-roots community leaders and parents since they have not had the chance to de-construct a long history of induced social prejudice against their own culture, language and people and to un-learn political, social and cultural knowledge acquired through formal schooling. Resistance to IIBE persists among many groups of indigenous parents and this same evidence reiterates the need to engage parents in popular education processes through which they could raise critical political awareness regarding the place and role of multiethnicity, multiculturalism and multilingualism in contemporary society.⁵⁰

Regrettably, the turn of the century has brought back Spanish-only national literacy campaigns and one-size-fits-all educational methods for indigenous youth and adults in different Latin American countries, including those of our study (Centeno 2008, López & Hanemann 2009). The lessons learned in this field show that when bilingual approaches are used in youth and adult education programs there is almost immediate repercussion in favor of the use of indigenous languages in primary education. It comes as no surprise that women in general, and particularly those who have children in IIBE primary schools are often eager to learn to read and write in their L1. From this perspective Spanish-only literacy campaigns turn out as counter-productive and bring to the surface an underlying contradiction of educational practice and policy, which makes indigenous people doubt – and all of us for that matter-- of the sincerity of government bilingual education policies.

It is urgent to arrive at a national consensus between Ministry of Education officers, indigenous intellectuals, political leaders and also parents on the most relevant and pertinent educational models and strategies in order to match learners' needs and parents' and indigenous peoples' expectations. As the UN Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Rights states ministries of education must previously and adequately inform indigenous parents and communities of the sense, meaning and advantages of each of the educational models and strategies presented to them.⁵¹

Due to the long history of cultural and linguistic oppression and to on-going colonial

⁵⁰ "A frequently cited reason for rejecting the use of a child's L1 in school is that the parents don't want their children to suffer like they did, either in the labor market or in educational settings (Albó & Anaya 2003). It's interesting to note that in other contexts, some of these same reasons are given in the argument for bilingual education. [...] Even though there are cases of rejection of bilingual intercultural education in Bolivia [...], a recent study carried out 8 years after the beginning of the educational reforms confirmed that 88% of parents want EIB to continue in Bolivian schools" (Delany forthcoming 20).

⁵¹ As D'Emilio (2008:5), a UNICEF advisor, has rightly stated a key strategy when working in the education of indigenous peoples is full participation, since: "The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the right to Free, Prior Informed Consent in any matters that affect them. In this sense 'inclusive education' for indigenous peoples should mean inclusion in the definition of education policies and programs and not necessarily the presence of children of several cultural backgrounds in the same school, unless a different decision is taken by the indigenous peoples themselves".

attitudes, ill- or un-informed indigenous parents might reject the introduction of the children's mother tongue in education, thus affecting their appropriation of school-knowledge and practices, and also hindering the development of children's self-esteem and respect. IBE can be a valid proposal, so long as enrichment bilingualism is promoted and as intercultural educational strategies are made available to all of the students in these countries, regardless of ethnicity, language and social strata (W. Gutiérrez, F. Condori, personal communications 2008/9).

Elsewhere we have stated that the mindset of language and educational planners' must also be relocated: one need not think only in terms of education for minority or indigenous populations. It is more than ever essential to design and plan educational proposals and programs with the indigenous leaders and representatives themselves, stemming from their own common understanding, expectations and life-plans (López 2008 a, 2008b, López & Sichra 2008). In other words, the issue is no longer planning *for* the indigenous populations, but rather *with* them, and, moreover, arriving at proposals stemming *from* their own perspectives and viewpoints.

6. Concluding remarks

In the six countries, the distance between governmental rhetoric and practice seems to mark the implementation of indigenous education. Sufficient adequate laws and regulations now exist but closer work both in the pedagogical aspects of IIBE and in its political positioning in the national educational debate is needed.

Although there has been a positive evolution in terms of indigenous visibility, legal recognition and political participation through the region, assimilationist-transitional strategies still shape the hidden curriculum of IIBE in most countries. That determines a restricted use of the indigenous language in classrooms and schools. In most cases, the first three or four grades are still the privileged but yet limited space for local languages. But even in these cases subtractive bilingualism continues as the only expected outcome. The limited use of the students' languages does not contribute as much as it could to the learners' affective and cognitive development and achievement since bilingual education does not meet the internationally accepted threshold of six to seven years of effective school and classroom bilingualism (cf. Cummins 1979, 2000 and Cummins and Hornberger 2008).

There is even less room to accommodate in the curriculum the local culture and knowledge as well as the indigenous ways of learning and knowing, since in these six countries the abundance and density of the new common-core curriculum does neither leave enough space nor classroom time for this inclusion, let alone for diversifying the national school curriculum in order to meet local needs and expectations. In the near future, an exception to this generalized rule might well be Bolivia, since indigenous leaders and intellectuals are committed to a profound curriculum transformation, and to the implementation of a nation-wide process of mental decolonization. However, it still remains to be seen whether this transformation transcends the discursive arena and positively impacts on classroom practices, social relationships in the classroom and the school in general, as well as on the social re-construction of school knowledge with community engaged participation, and above all self-rediscovery and the consequent development of self-respect and self-esteem. It also needs to be observed how bridges are built between indigenous and Western knowledge and how education moves from intraculturalism –or self-reaffirmation– to interculturalism for all. Due to the general indigenous attraction

present Bolivian transformations now enjoy, this process could impact on other indigenous directorates of education in the region, and with no doubt on the demands of indigenous organizations and leaders, in a similar way as the post Apartheid social and educational transformations in South Africa exerted influence in many different parts of the world.

But if from the government side perspectives are not as promising as they could or should be the number of focalized projects deep-rooted in the spirit of cultural pluralism and linguistic enrichment is on the rise. Promising educational local practices ingrained in the learners' culture and language might help produce viable socio-educational strategies to reach a state of additive, radical and sustainable bilingualism, entrenched in critical language and cultural awareness. Active learner participation in the school and classroom, increased self-esteem and improved attainment both in reading and writing but also in social skills are the results with which culturally responsive and responsible schools can contribute to give shape to the new more democratic, non-racist, intercultural and multi-national States the indigenous peoples of the Americas have been longing for.

In the same vein, the need for social equity in multiethnic societies calls for a broader approach to educational quality. Educational quality ought to encompass indigenous civil, political, cultural and linguistic rights. Hence, an educational model embedded in the struggle against racism and discrimination and in an egalitarian perspective is called for. The concern on educational quality at least in indigenous contexts –if not everywhere— ought to move beyond the appropriation of reading, writing and numeracy skills and should also engage learners in the reflection and cultivation of a basic set of values such as solidarity, cooperation, mutual respect and in general with the development of social competencies that allow everybody to learn to live together.

One of the most important lessons learned from the implementation of educational programs and projects in indigenous contexts is that the direct involvement and participation of indigenous communities, representatives and intellectuals is essential to ensure improved educational quality. Indigenous peoples themselves play a key role in defining the purpose and nature of the education their children and they themselves receive. Given the diversity of histories and the singularity of the circumstances under which educational programs are often planned and implemented there is no more room for one-size-fits-all methodologies. Indigenous-initiated approaches have proved to be more effective, therefore, more attention needs to be given to local solutions thought of by the indigenous peoples themselves and with the active participation of local community elders and leaders.

Being the indigenous people part of a multi-ethnic conglomerate, the non-indigenous sectors of society must also engage in the re-evaluation of cultural and linguistic diversity as a value in itself and as a valid resource for the construction of new social relationships and of an equally new and more democratic society. Consequently they must also undertake the ideals of mutual respect and understanding and begin to learn to live together. Thus, the education of the non-indigenous populations should also be influenced by the re-conceptualization of educational quality claimed above. Non-indigenous people must begin recognizing and respecting the distinctive aspects of the worldviews, cultures and identities of indigenous peoples. Intercultural education and learning an indigenous language --even if it is at a very basic and rudimentary level— might contribute to the mental decolonization of society indigenous intellectuals now demand.

In highly-structured multiethnic societies such as the Latin American ones the

responsibility regarding an indigenous education of enhanced quality transcends the good will of any State or government and calls for active political engagement of civil society and of every single citizen. If the non-indigenous populations do not abandon their non-tolerate and disrespectful attitudes regarding their indigenous counterparts the construction of a true and sustainable democracy will surely be under threat.

The creation of an intercultural citizenship as a place of mutual encounter and common understanding and respect might be a possible way out of racism and discrimination. The assumption of an intercultural citizenship might be the by-product of the necessary awareness education should develop in every citizen regarding the place and role each and every socio-historical, cultural and linguistic sector or group, individually and collectively, must play in a multiethnic society.

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