

## INTERCULTURAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND THE OFFICIALIZATION OF CULTURE IN PERÚ

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examines differing perceptions of interculturalism in bilingual education in Quechua-speaking communities in the Cusco region of Perú and the relative success of state-run and other intercultural bilingual education (IBE) programs. There is general agreement about the importance of the cultural dimension in these programs. Nevertheless, there is a frequent mismatch between government-designed and implemented IBE programs and the attitudes of community members about how such programs should be delivered.

**Keywords:** interculturalism, intercultural bilingual education, Quechua, community attitudes

### ABSTRACTO

*Esta investigación examina las percepciones divergentes sobre el interculturalismo en la educación bilingüe en comunidades quechuahablantes en la región del Cusco, Perú y el éxito relativo de los programas estatales y otros programas de educación intercultural bilingüe (EIB). Existe un consenso general sobre la importancia de la dimensión cultural en estos programas. No obstante, los programas EIB que son diseñados e implementados por el estado frecuentemente son incompatibles con las actitudes de miembros de las comunidades sobre la manera en que se debe efectuar tales programas.*

**Palabras clave:** interculturalismo, educación intercultural bilingüe, quechua, actitudes comunitarias

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## BACKGROUND

As the Latin American country with the fourth largest population of persons whose first language is not Spanish, Perú has provided programs of bilingual education in a number of regions since 1972. However, despite the glowing official rhetoric regarding these programs, their implementation has been spotty and sporadic. To date, few can objectively be considered to have had much success when judged by criteria such as community acceptance and the academic success of their pupils. The programs fall short in many ways. Even after several decades, the needs of the majority of Perú's speakers of indigenous languages are still not being met. Poorly conceived and administered programs with limited funding are characterized by inadequately equipped schools, chiefly in rural areas, with insufficiently trained and occasionally unenthusiastic teachers. Lack of community involvement in the planning procedure often results in resistance from parents which may be perceived as yet another manifestation of the 'backwardness' of the indigenous population.

This paper will examine the implementation of government intercultural bilingual education (IBE) programs in Perú, specifically in the Cusco region, where Quechua is the first language of an estimated two thirds of the population, a percentage which decreases in urban and increases in rural areas. I will comment on the most common problems and limitations of these programs, and then examine two cases where IBE programs are currently being implemented, one in a state school and the other in an externally funded school, discussing how each addresses the difficulties inherent in initiatives of such an ambitious nature. Both the negative effects of schooling in a second language resulting in low achievement and a high drop out rate as well as the improved results for children enrolled in programs of intercultural bilingual education have

been well documented in many studies and will not be discussed here (Crouch 2006; Godenzzi 2003; López 2001; López & Küper 2000).

## INTERCULTURALISM

The direction of Peruvian educational policy in the area of bilingual education programs has shifted in the past years to focus on the ‘intercultural’ element. On the whole, there is consensus regarding the essential meaning of the new buzzword ‘interculturalism’, although the way in which this concept may be put into practice in the classroom is harder to pinpoint. The director of IBE programming for the Cusco Regional Office defines interculturalism as the increased importance given to the learner’s self-esteem and to the inherent value of his or her own culture for the purpose of gaining an understanding of other cultures (Pimentel, 2007). The concept of interculturalism has its roots in a learning process centered in the local language and culture, one which has cultural and social relevance for students for the purpose of developing and furthering dialogue and understanding within national and global contexts. When asked for an explanation of how they interpret the concept of interculturalism, the definitions or explanations offered by a number of people involved in planning or administering IBE programs are conceptually similar: “harmonic coexistence among cultures<sup>i</sup>” (Pimentel, 2007); “mutual respect between two important cultures ... learning together for the purpose of building communities” (Vargas, 2007); “an exchange which is established on an equitable basis, under conditions of equality” (CARE-Perú, 2005). The idea that this is not just a question of learning a second language but rather a process of sensitization to others is stressed: dialogue, self-worth and mutual respect are key factors (CARE-Perú, 2005; Godenzzi, 2003).

The mandate of IBE programs is to strengthen and develop self-esteem and a sense of local identity, and to promote the use of Quechua in government offices and institutions, e.g., in health services, etc. However, it is important to remember that to date all IBE programs have been established in rural schools with vernacular speakers as the target group. Ostensibly a two-way process, in practice IBE is directed overwhelmingly at students whose first language is not Spanish, and it is often perceived by Peruvians to be a type of education for students who speak indigenous languages only (Meneses, 2005). Pimentel (2007) states that the ultimate goal of the IBE program is for all Peruvians to speak two languages. However, at present, the program is designed for use in rural areas where greater educational deficiencies are often exacerbated by extreme poverty. One of the immediate objectives must therefore be to redress an ongoing imbalance in funding for rural, non-Spanish-speaking children in comparison to their urban, Spanish-speaking counterparts. Concrete goals include the provision of better educational services for Quechua-speaking students in order to improve academic performance and retention rates in schools, the development of feelings of self-worth and identification with the autochthonous culture for these same students, and mutual respect among cultures.

Although the enormously ambitious long-term objective may be that of developing a true sense of intercultural citizenship among all Peruvians, the more immediate goals are also daunting. Nevertheless, the fact that the issue is being addressed at all is a positive start. A teacher working in IBE<sup>ii</sup> describes the importance for rural students, who struggle against poverty and discrimination, to develop an identity they can be proud of, while acknowledging the reality of having to move between two distinct worlds: “To *enter the city* we must have a real personality based in our identity” (personal communication – italics mine).

## CHALLENGES

Although there have been bilingual language programs in Peruvian schools for over three decades and there are interesting new developments in program planning with the recent emphasis on interculturalism, there are still many stumbling blocks to the development of IBE programs, and few state schools that do not have external funding can claim in all honesty that they have been successful in their implementation. Some of the principal challenges are old and familiar ones: top-heavy bureaucracy and top-down administration, insufficient and poorly-conceived teacher training, and the ever-present deficiencies in funding. Other issues are specific to bilingual education and arise from conflicting ideas and perceptions as to how, or indeed if at all, these programs should be implemented. There has often been resistance to the initial implementation of IBE programs. Even when they are established, they are plagued by conflicts between the various actors, i.e., between government officials, teachers, parents and community members. These conflicts are aggravated by differing visions of what IBE should be and by the real, or perceived, limitations of the ways in which other actors are performing their duties.

*Proyecto Educativo Regional - Cusco*, i.e., the Regional Educative Project, (PER-Cusco, 2007) reports critically on the general administration of the educational system in the Department of Cusco, commenting on the problems inherent in centralization and the fact that in spite of recent reorganization and the creation of local administrative offices, (hereafter referred to using the Spanish acronym, UGELs), planning decisions continue to be made from above and there is little input into these decisions from local administrators and teachers. The PER-Cusco also indicates a growing regional centralization in the city of Cusco, which results in UGELs becoming even farther removed from real decision-making and limited to implementing (in Cusco) decisions which have already been made. A number of interviewees commented that

teachers with a solid background in IBE were frequently replaced by advisors from the state university in Cusco (UNSAAC) who had no experience, other than their academic qualifications, and notwithstanding their lack of skills and practice of teaching in rural areas (Pardo, 2007b; Vargas, 2007). It was pointed out that as no university in Perú has programs in Quechua studies, and only a few have even Quechua language courses to offer, academics in general are ill-qualified to give advice in the area of IBE. Inefficiency, the lack of evaluation of administrative offices and personnel, and a culture of bureaucracy are ongoing problems. The National Association of Teachers of Intercultural Bilingual Education (ANAMEBI) also criticizes the centralization of the educational system, giving as an example of its deleterious effects that a national 2002 evaluation of Peruvian second-grader, which was given only in Spanish although this is a second language for a quarter of Peruvian children. Unsurprisingly, the evaluation resulted in much poorer outcomes for children with Spanish as a second language. A teacher who has worked both in the Ministry of Education in Lima and as a specialist in primary IBE education in a UGEL in Cusco commented that on the whole, those who work in administration do not identify with the rural people that they serve, “They do not listen to country people”. This teacher also stated that there is no unifying national proposal for education, but rather just a pastiche of ideas taken from other countries. He also commented on the lack of knowledge of IBE on the part of those in charge of the programs. The director of CEPROSI, a local NGO, comments on inefficient administration and delays in funding for IBE programs that have caused the school year, which normally begins in March, to start as late as July or August in some years. The obvious effect of this delayed start is reflected on the number of teaching days available before the end of the school year in December (Pardo, 2007b)<sup>iii</sup>.

If the state has too much control over how IBE programs are implemented, ideas of what culture is or consists of are imposed from above, resulting in what we might term the ‘officialization’ of culture. As will be discussed later, cultural decisions made in Lima are often inappropriate or even incorrect when applied locally. Pardo (2007b) comments that there are even occasional mistakes in the translation of material from Spanish to Quechua. This is exacerbated by the fact that in the state program the concept of culture per se is often considered only in its superficial external manifestations of music, food, and so on, rather than in an examination of the underlying worldview or ‘cosmovision’. As Pardo (2007a) explains, “The national educational model does not take into account the diverse sociocultural realities, and imposes occidental scientific knowledge as a unique and universal truth, devaluing the knowledge of local cultures.” IBE is reduced to teaching a few traditional dances or songs, in a sort of folklorization of culture.

Paradoxically, another drawback of this approach is its very emphasis on tradition in which cultures are defined and limited by outdated mores and cultural manifestations in a process of unintentional fossilization. A teacher who works in a local UGEL comments that the Ministry of Education in Lima does not understand the local reality or context, but rather tries to make these conform to its own definitions in attempts to conserve local traditions. Although this attitude could be interpreted as a response to fears that ancestral ways of life may disappear, the frequent use of words like ‘conserve’ or ‘preserve’ in official documents when referring to culture is significant in its implication that culture is an element that can be maintained unchanging by preserving relics of the past. Culture is treated as a fossil, as something fragile that must be protected from the outside world. However, Tubino (2005) points out that cultures are maintained through the very act of changing: “change is their essence” (p. 88), and he warns

of the dangers of trying to regain that which has been lost and ignoring the ongoing cultural changes in any society. Surely this approach, sadly all too common, is the very antithesis of what interculturalism could and should be - an ongoing and vibrant dialogue among different groups.

At the practical level, there are many inadequacies in the actual delivery of IBE programs, starting with the training of the teachers themselves and with a lack of logistical support for those working in rural and often isolated schools. Teachers whose first language is Spanish often struggle with Quechua and even those who are fluent Quechua-speakers may receive inadequate training in language teaching methodology. Pimentel (2007) comments that as trainee teachers attend Spanish-speaking institutions, 40% of them are not prepared to teach in bilingual education, as they may speak Quechua but do not know how to write it. García (2004) comments that although 10,000 teachers have attended specialized training courses, there is a lack of evaluation of these courses and, moreover, a lack of feedback from the teachers: "...there seems to be a more immediate concern with quantity than with the quality of education and training received" (p. 362). A teacher who has attended some of these sessions remarked that the focus is linguistic rather than cultural; using an approach "which remove[s] people from their communities". The PER-Cusco (2007) elaborates on deficiencies in how teachers are trained: "The problem is reflected in the traditional teaching methods [used] ... and the absence of contextualization for topics and courses in accordance with ... the cultural environment" (p. 34). Training courses in IBE methodology are also inadequate and may consist merely of short seminars or workshops added to the regular teacher training program as a sort of afterthought, after which teachers are sent to cope as best they can in an environment which may well be culturally and linguistically alien to them. One teacher commented on how Spanish-speaking teachers often lacked knowledge of or sensitivity towards the local cultures. As an example, he



mentioned a teacher who, in a mathematics class, had used the example of a fox which had broken into a sheep pen and killed and eaten three out of ten sheep, only to be met with blank stares from the students, who wondered how a fox could eat more than one sheep.

IBE programs are frequently poorly administrated by the authorities in Lima or Cusco. Monolingual Spanish-speaking teachers may be sent to highland schools or teachers with a background in IBE assigned to city schools. There is as yet no financial incentive for teachers to work in isolated rural schools, and to be assigned to one of these schools may seem like a sort of punishment for young teachers or a period of service before they can apply to teach at a 'real' school in the city. One teacher discussed the situation at her own highland school, where there is a high turnover of teachers on short-term contracts because of budgeting difficulties. Only half of the eight teachers at the school are permanent, and the school does not know from one year to the next how many teachers there will be. At times students are left without a teacher, or classes are doubled up. This teacher actually consider herself 'lucky' to teach in a school in which the norm is one teacher per grade level; almost 70% of rural schools in the region are one teacher schools or have multi-grade classrooms.

Teachers also encounter a lack of support from administrative offices and supervisory visits are sporadic and infrequent. Most IBE schools are small rural ones, often in isolated areas, and many are single teacher schools. Teachers may get home as infrequently as once a month because of a lack of transportation. They rarely become involved in the life of the community and tend to spend their free time preparing their classes or playing sports (PER-Cusco, 2007, p. 37). This lack of integration has the added effect of increasing their own isolation and of making them less convincing as figures of authority as they tackle issues of interculturalism with their students. Given these challenges the high turnover of teachers is hardly surprising.

It should be said that in spite of the difficulties they face in their work environment, many teachers are dedicated and committed to their students, and enter into the IBE program with great enthusiasm. However, although their schools officially participate in the program, some teachers and / or school principals may comply perfunctorily or not at all (CARE-Puno, 2005). A teacher that I spoke with commented that “The ones who don’t want to do it, do it superficially”. A study carried out in 2004 found that a large number of the skills targeted in the school curriculum were not developed in the classroom (PER-Cusco, 2007, p. 41). Much time may be spent on cultural events such as traditional dances or sports days. These activities, while valuable, take precious time away from the stated goals of the school curriculum.

One of the central challenges to the successful implementation of IBE programs is the frequency with which conflicting viewpoints or interpretations in the perception of the points of view of others create barriers between different actors. Teachers criticize the administration and vice versa, parents complain that teachers are not doing their jobs and teachers claim that parents are unsupportive and resistant. There are misunderstandings and misinterpretations, frequently but not always, resulting from a lack of consultation.

There is much talk of resistance to bilingual education programs on the part of different actors, including some local and regional education authorities, and teachers, parents, and community members (Back 2004; Godenzzi, 2003). Pardo (2007b) comments on cases in which teachers, confused and frustrated by a lack of structure and guidance as to exactly how the IBE curriculum was to be implemented in the classroom, convinced parents that bilingual education was not in their best interests and encouraged them to protest. Poorly understood or inadequately structured conceptions do not work well in practical terms, and it is easy to blame the IBE

program per se rather than examining more closely the way in which it is, or is not, being implemented.

It is true that parents want their children to learn Spanish “so no one can cheat us” (from personal communication with a teacher), and some may resist having them taught in Quechua as they see this as time-wasting, at best, and the government’s way of keeping Quechua-speakers in their place, at worst. Nevertheless, a closer examination of what is actually said by community members and parents raises doubts about this perception. Vargas (2007) feels that parental reactions have been misinterpreted, and that when time is taken to help parents to appreciate the value of having their children learn in their native language as well as being taught to speak Spanish, and if care is taken to deliver a truly intercultural education with local knowledge incorporated into the curriculum, parents are indeed supportive. What they do object to is the fact that many teachers are unprepared to teach in an intercultural setting, and are simply not doing an adequate job. The problem is not with IBE per se, but rather with the way it is put into practice in the classroom. García (2004) comments on the mismatch between the perspectives of intercultural activists and indigenous parents regarding IBE, and suggests that if activists are serious about intercultural education as a weapon against social injustice, parental concerns should be taken more seriously. Pardo (2007a) comments that the lack of mutual comprehension on the part of both teachers and community members may well be the result of a situation in which the parents’ only contact with the school may be when they are asked to take part in tasks such as maintenance of the school or to participate in fundraising events.

## IBE PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CUSCO

In 2007, IBE programs were in place in only eight of the 13 provinces of the Department of Cusco, reaching approximately 20% to 30% of students with the participation of 700 teachers. Participating schools are chosen depending on the interest shown by teachers and the support of the parents (Pimentel, 2007). Recent changes in the administration of IBE programs at the national level have ostensibly meant greater possibilities for regional flexibility and the incorporation of local cultural or linguistic variations in the curriculum. This, however, is not necessarily accompanied by increased input and participation from teachers and community members.

The situation of one specific school may help to illustrate the current state of the IBE program. This is a highland school in a village, approximately one hour away from the nearest town. Fifteen years ago there was no program of bilingual education in this village, and the population was 100% monolingual Quechua-speaking. According to a teacher who worked there at that time, when bilingual education was implemented children were plunged into a Spanish-speaking environment with Quechua used only as a tool for giving explanations. The end result was that the children had many difficulties in school. Fifteen years later, there have been many improvements both to the school and to the curriculum. In many ways this school can be considered a model for the government's IBE program. The school is multi-grade, with one teacher for each classroom, and class sizes are small. The school has electricity, classrooms are provided with desks or tables and the children have writing materials including color pencils, notebooks, and textbooks. There was a complete set of dictionaries in the Grade 4 class that I visited. The classrooms are bright and have posters and artwork on the walls.

By her own request, the Grade 4 teacher had been working with this particular class since they were in Grade 2. There were only 20 students in the class, an optimal teacher-student ratio. Although the teacher commented that she had no training in IBE, she was enthusiastic about the program. It should be noted that not all of the teachers in this school complied with the IBE curriculum. Some lacked interest, others had little or no training, and they complained that the program ‘doesn’t work’. The Grade 4 teacher commented on the good results that she had achieved with her students, who had been reading and writing in both Quechua and Spanish since Grade 2, i.e., 90% in Quechua, and 60% in Spanish). She planned her classes in accordance with the local calendar of customs and events to encourage respect for tradition. There were occasional difficulties with parents, who did not necessarily support the aims of the program or encourage their children to do the reading tasks that were assigned for homework as they preferred them to help in the house or the fields. Nevertheless, this teacher was optimistic about the IBE program.

A closer look, however, shows that there is still much to do in order for IBE programs to be successful. Although this teacher had made every effort to make her classroom attractive and welcoming, it was poorly equipped by most standards and there were obvious deficiencies in programming and teaching methods. The teacher alternated between blocks of time devoted to learning in Spanish and in Quechua, although she commented to me that the children often did not want to talk to her in Spanish. At the time of my visit, the class had read a short passage on fish in Spanish (quite a difficult task for a Grade 4 class using second language), and had decided together on a list of five words they did not understand. Their task was to find these words in the dictionary and write down the meanings. There were serious flaws in carrying out this activity. The discussion about which words to choose was completely teacher-led. Although each student

had a dictionary, there were three different editions in use, one of which did not even list one of the words that the children were looking for. Worse, the dictionaries were in Spanish and the definitions were often as incomprehensible to the children as were the words themselves, so the activity became nothing more than an exercise in rote copying. The children seemed to have great difficulties in using the dictionary, and many had problems knowing where to look for a particular letter or with the concept of alphabetization as it related to finding words in a dictionary.

Apart from the linguistic challenges presented by this activity, the ideas themselves presented in the reading passage did not appear to relate to the experience of a rural child in highland Perú. This mismatch between materials produced by Spanish-speakers for use by Quechua-speakers is frequent. For example, although there were laminated pictures illustrating the alphabet on each desk, many of the pictures were of objects that would be completely unfamiliar to rural Quechua-speaking children. For instance, elephants were used as the illustration for the letter 'E'.

A number of IBE schools are beneficiaries of funding from non-governmental organizations, which sometimes assume the costs of staffing the schools and improving infrastructure, although projects funded by these external agencies are normally limited both in scope and in duration. The first challenge, one that has been successfully addressed in schools in a number of areas, is to get teachers and community members on board. Many of these projects have had positive results, and the lessons learned from these initiatives could be applied to state schools. A spin-off benefit might be that academic success on the part of students, resulting in cost savings because of the reduction in the number of times that students repeat a grade (a

serious problem in rural areas especially among indigenous children). This frees funding for more, and better, teacher-training programs.

One project that has been successfully implemented in schools in the Vilcanota River basin between the cities of Cusco and Sicuani is *el Proyecto Niñez y Biodiversidad en los Andes*, i.e., the Childhood and Biodiversity in the Andes Project (PNBA), administered by CEPROSI. This program incorporates the traditional local culture into the school curriculum, and in 2007 was working with 381 children, 247 parents, and 27 teachers in one urban and 10 rural school communities with the goal of learning and promoting “*iskay yachay*” or “dos saberes” – two ways of thought encompassing both Andean and Occidental culture. The aims of the project are twofold. First, students learn to read and write competently in both Spanish and Quechua, with teachers using a methodology based on activities drawn from the life experiences of the children, which are later expressed in textual format. Elements from both traditional and Western cultures are covered in the curriculum. In order to cope with the difficulties of trying to express in Quechua concepts that are inherently associated with Western culture and science, such as the idea of the solar system, some topics are taught in Quechua and some in Spanish.

Second, parents, teachers and children work together in carrying out the activities of the agro-ritual festive calendar, which guides them in the learning process. Each school has a *chakra* or small farm, which is cultivated using traditional crops and methods. Everyone participates in work and festive activities as well as in planning and discussions. This project embodies the spirit of IBE in having as its primary focus the local culture and traditions. It differs from the state-run IBE programs in ensuring that cultural elements are contextualized in a concrete and relevant way for both children and community members. Teachers volunteer for the program and form a closely-knit network which holds frequent meetings for planning and assessment. There

are frequent workshops and visits to other communities as far away as Bolivia to exchange ideas and experiences. Teacher-training sessions focus on how to incorporate local knowledge and traditions into the official curriculum, and job satisfaction is a priority. There is much interest in the program from teachers not currently participating, and it is hoped that more secondary schools can become involved.

There have been problems along the way; since its inception in 2005, project members have had to work to overcome doubts and resistance on the part of both teachers and communities. Pardo (2007b), the director of CEPROSI, says that what has been most helpful in gaining support for the project has been the way in which it strengthens local culture. For example, the emphasis on traditional agricultural practices has been a factor in helping to recover some varieties of crops such as potatoes and beans, which had fallen into disuse, as well as the customs associated with their cultivation and the language used to talk to describe the agrarian way of life.

Although there have been as yet no formal studies comparing the results of this program to those of students in the state-run IBE program<sup>iv</sup>, Pardo (2007b) speaks of achievements not only in academic terms but also in a much improved sense of self-worth for children who have continued their studies in secondary school. Although most secondary schools are non-IBE, ‘graduates’ from the PNBA have frequently become student leaders in their schools. Pardo comments on improvements in teaching in general and also in the way in which teachers relate to, and with, the community. There is also greater parental involvement in participating schools. This project demonstrates that with greater attention and sensitivity to the concerns of parents and teachers, and an increased focus on the practical incorporation of cultural elements in the school curriculum, the concept of IBE has great potential.



## CONCLUSION

The current situation of IBE in Perú is precarious and much needs to be done in order to consolidate and improve on the gains that have been made so far. There are mixed reports as to the efficacy of the government IBE program, although people working in planning and administering the program comment favorably on its effect in regard to increased participation by parents in school activities (Vargas, 2007) and an improved acceptance of the goals of the program, especially among parents who are also participating in literacy classes (CARE-Puno, 2005). However, academic results have not been so positive. The PER-Cusco (2007) reports that the results from a study in reading and writing carried out in 2002 with the support of UNICEF show a difference of 3.46 points on the McCall scale, with students from Non-IBE programs performing better than IBE students; the average for Non-IBE students falling within the 'satisfactory' level, and that of IBE students at the 'intermediate' level. It should be noted that this study was carried out before changes were made to the IBE program to emphasize the intercultural aspect, and results of a similar study carried out today might be different. Nevertheless, there is a serious lack of empirical research examining the performance of students in the IBE program as compared to their counterparts in the Non-IBE program.

At present, the state-run program suffers from patchy implementation and a confusing over-reliance on theoretical concepts which can leave teachers floundering when they are faced with a classroom full of students who are learning Spanish as a second language. The very real fact of opposition from parents and community members to having their children study in IBE programs must be accepted as symptomatic of the much larger issue of a historical lack of communication and bureaucratic highhandedness, and rather than being ignored or dismissed, must be addressed, ideally by treating these groups as equal partners in developing a program

that takes seriously their desires and needs when they differ from or even conflict with the official pedagogy. The success of initiatives such as the PNBA shows that this is indeed possible. The underlying issue of poverty, which exacerbates all other problems, also needs to be addressed and should be made an integral focus of IBE programs in rural areas.

However positively it may be presented, at present, IBE is very much a one-way street, whose goal is perceived by many to be that of teaching indigenous children to enter the Spanish-speaking mainstream culture. Although there is talk of introducing classes in Quechua for Spanish-speakers, to my knowledge only one school does this, a private school which is not part of the state system<sup>v</sup>. The situation in Cusco mirrors that in other parts of Perú and, indeed, the situation throughout areas of Latin America where IBE programs exist. If IBE is to live up to its stated goal of being an education for all through dialogue and the valorization of the differences of other cultures, it has a long way to go. So far, all of the dialogue has been carried out by the vernacular speakers. Finally, more thought needs to be given by all actors to the concept of interculturalism itself as being more than just a buzzword or another topic to ‘cover’ in the school curriculum. Rather, it implies a total rethinking of the concept of education itself.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>i</sup> All translations from Spanish are the author’s.

<sup>ii</sup> A number of interviewees wished to remain anonymous and have not been identified here.

<sup>iii</sup> At the beginning of June 2007, when this interview took place, teachers were still in training workshops in Lima.

<sup>iv</sup> The author is currently working on such a study.

<sup>v</sup> Pukllasunchis, in the city of Cusco.

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