

THE PATHS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN PUBLIC EDUCATION:

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES
OF ITS INITIATIVES IN THE PERUVIAN
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

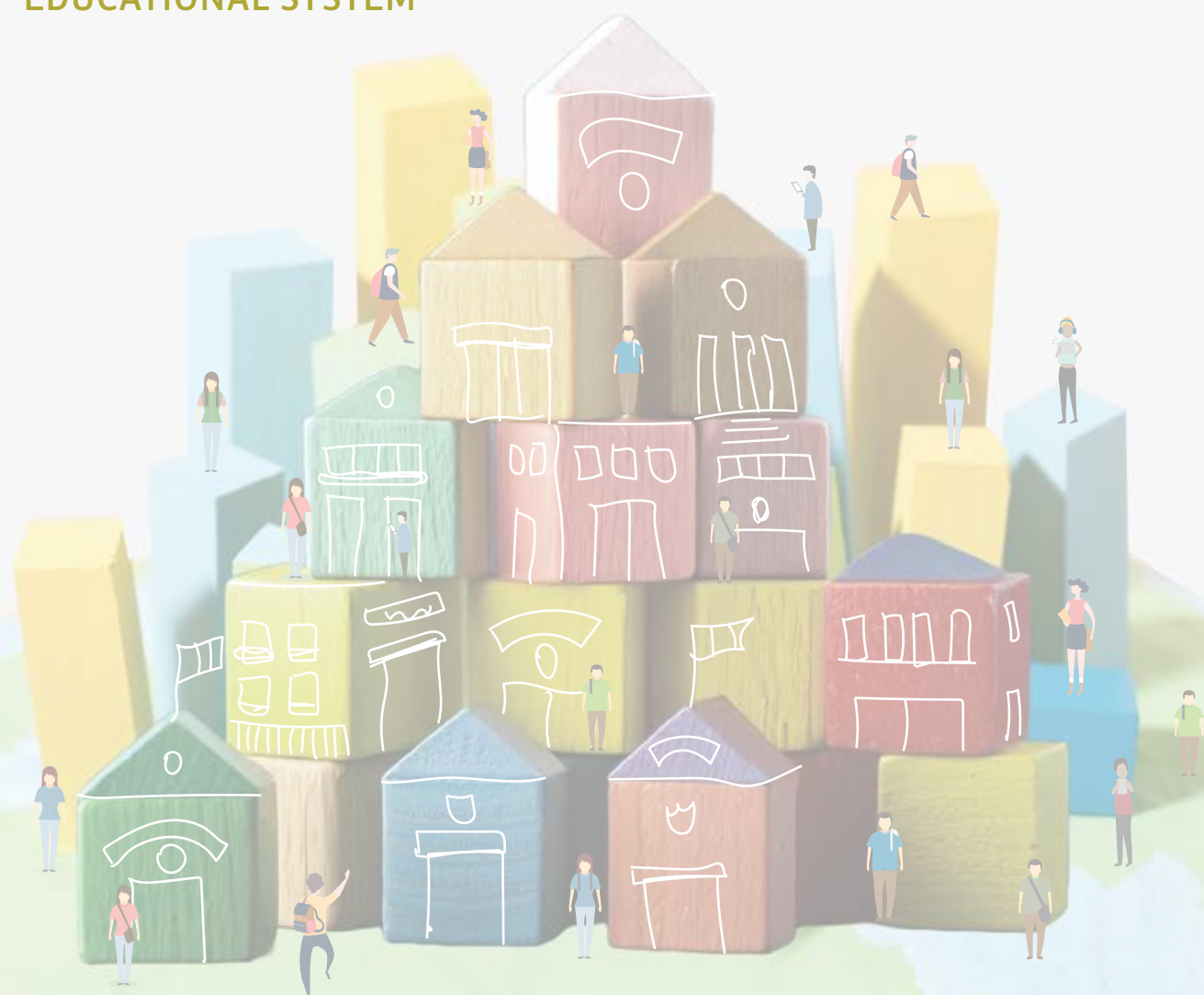


CENTRO DE
**INVESTIGACIONES Y
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Improving education in Peru is essential for the country's social and economic development. However, it faces structural challenges that limit access, quality and educational inclusion. In this context, international cooperation has played a key role in guiding and intervening in the adaptation of the national education system to these challenges. This report analyzes the achievements made, the limitations identified and the opportunities for consolidating a more equitable and sustainable education system. It examines the role of international cooperation in the Peruvian education system, whose contribution has been significant, within a context of unequal negotiation, in which external agencies have exercised greater influence than local authorities in the allocation of available funds. Within this framework, trends and positions of cooperation agencies on the role of education in national and global governance are identified.

Among the persistent challenges of the Peruvian education system is insufficient funding, which restricts investment in infrastructure, teacher training and inclusive programs. Regional gaps remain significant, especially in rural and indigenous communities, where access and quality of education are limited. In addition, there is a persistent shortage of trained professionals, particularly in vulnerable areas. The COVID-19 pandemic widened the digital gap and deepened inequalities due to limited connectivity and restricted access to technologies.

From the perspective of national educational governance, international cooperation has functioned as a strategic ally by providing funding resources, technical knowledge and experience. Agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank and bilateral cooperation have led initiatives aimed at improving educational infrastructure, strengthening teacher training and promoting the inclusion of vulnerable groups. Programs such as Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB, by its acronym in Spanish) and +Inclusión have facilitated access to education for indigenous communities and students with disabilities.

Nevertheless, challenges persist in terms of sustainability. Many initiatives depend on external funding and the transfer of international programs to state management has proven to be complex. These challenges make it essential to strengthen local capacities, as well as the active participation of communities and authorities in project management. The high turnover of officials and the influence of political factors limit the continuity of policies, which highlights the need for institutional mechanisms to ensure stability and consistency with national priorities.

To consolidate the achievements and face the challenges, the report proposes strengthening coordination between international cooperation, the Peruvian government and local communities. It is essential to plan the sustainability of interventions, encourage community participation at all stages and promote strategies aimed at reducing the digital gap, especially in disadvantaged areas. In addition, it is necessary to prioritize inclusive approaches that respect cultural diversity and address the needs of vulnerable populations.

Considering the progress, pending needs and historical, present and future challenges, the improvement of the Peruvian education system requires multi-stakeholder and multilevel cooperation. In this context, international cooperation has had to rethink its role and assume the financial, institutional and continuity liabilities left by its intervention. This has been reflected in the promotion of national policies that incorporate participatory processes and foster more horizontal relations with local stakeholders. Likewise, the current scenario demands that the Peruvian State assume a leading role and ensure that educational interventions are relevant, sustainable and aimed at building a fairer, more inclusive country with greater opportunities for all. This report invites us to renew our commitment to education as a strategic commitment for Peru's comprehensive development.

International cooperation has played a fundamental role in the development of the Peruvian educational system during the last decades. The purpose of this report is to analyze its contribution to the strengthening of the education system, considering its achievements, limitations and opportunities for improvement. Given that the country has faced historical challenges, such as insufficient funding, regional inequalities and a shortage of trained human resources, international stakeholders have been strategic allies in overcoming these barriers. However, these interventions have presented difficulties, including dependence on external funding and lack of long-term sustainability.

The report aims to provide clear guidance to the reader through a comprehensive analysis of the influence of international cooperation on the Peruvian education system and the lessons and recommendations for the future. Throughout five chapters, it examines the historical and structural challenges of the education system, the contribution of international development partners, and the prospects for achieving a more equitable and quality education. The purpose of this analysis is to provide a vision that allows the stakeholders involved to maximize the impact of their interventions in order to contribute to the development of a more inclusive and fairer education system.

The first chapter examines the historical and persistent educational challenges of the Peruvian education system. Through a comprehensive analysis of factors such as insufficient funding, regional inequalities, shortages of trained human resources, and the digital gap, it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the barriers that have limited the state's ability to ensure equitable and quality education. Understanding these challenges is fundamental to contextualize the international cooperation efforts addressed in the following chapters.

The second chapter explores the role of international cooperation in strengthening educational governance in Peru. It presents the types of

development partners, their evolution and the tensions between external aid and national autonomy. It also analyzes how international development partners can contribute to the improvement of educational quality, ensuring a balance that respects the sovereignty of the Peruvian state.

The third chapter addresses the persistent challenges in educational governance and the impact of innovation and new technologies on their improvement, together with the barriers that hinder their implementation. It examines how the integration of technological tools in the classroom can contribute to reducing inequalities and strengthening the quality of learning, as well as the limitations derived from the digital gap and the lack of teacher training. In addition, it highlights the importance of community participation and intersectoral approaches as key components to ensure a successful and sustainable implementation of technologies in the educational process.

The fourth chapter focuses on the sustainability of international cooperation interventions and local collaboration as essential factors to ensure the long-term success of educational projects in Peru. Cases of projects that succeeded or attempted to transition to state funding are examined, highlighting the challenges of preserving the quality and impact of the original strategies once they are managed by the state.

The fifth chapter summarizes the main findings and lessons learned from the analysis developed throughout the report and makes recommendations for strengthening the Peruvian education system and future international cooperation interventions. The achievements made by international cooperation are presented, as well as the pending challenges to advance towards a more inclusive and equitable education system.

With this structure, the report seeks to provide a roadmap that will allow future development partners and educational stakeholders to



optimize the impact of their interventions, with the aim of contributing to the development of a more equitable, inclusive and quality Peruvian education system for all students.

For the preparation of the report, a search and systematization of bibliographic sources was carried out, the analysis of which made it possible to develop the content, conclusions and recommendations. The information available in Peru on the role and impact of international cooperation in education is limited, which required an exhaustive review of potentially relevant sources.



CHAPTER 1

PERSISTENT EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

This chapter analyzes the historical and persistent challenges of the Peruvian education system, which have limited the State's ability to guarantee equitable and quality education, especially in the most vulnerable areas of the country. Through a comprehensive analysis of factors such as insufficient funding, regional inequalities, shortage of trained human resources and the digital gap, it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the barriers that have prevented access to a decent education for the entire population.

The main challenges are presented below, which form the basis for the analysis of opportunities and the role of international cooperation in the following chapters.

1.1 Insufficient Funding

Lack of funding represents one of the most persistent and structural problems of the Peruvian education system. The evolution of resources allocated to education has gone through different historical stages, each with specific challenges and limitations. The following is a detailed analysis of these stages to understand their causes, impacts and implications.

STAGE 1:

Pre-reform Period (up to the 1960s)

At the beginning of the 1960s, the coverage of the Peruvian educational system was extremely limited, especially in rural areas. State investment in education was insufficient and concentrated mainly in urban areas, where the most politically active population resided, thus excluding a large part of the rural population. This urban-centric approach was reflected in the small percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) allocated to education (Lay & Blanco, 2019).





From a political economy perspective, the absence of transformative public investment was due to the dominant political order of the time. Legislation restricted political participation to those who demonstrated a command of literacy in Spanish, an attribute of Creole society and regional elites. Thus, participation was limited to a mostly Creole and mestizo group that, although not homogeneous, was accessible to the ruling classes (Rojas Girón, 2020).

The rural-urban migration process, promoted by changes in land tenure and agricultural production and facilitated by the construction of highways connecting the coast with the highlands (Maguiña Salinas, 2016), deepened inequalities in access to education, which widened the socioeconomic gaps between urban and rural areas. In this context, illiteracy levels were considerably higher in rural areas, limiting their development opportunities.

The 1972 educational reform, promoted during the government of Juan Velasco Alvarado, positioned Peru as a reference in Latin America due to the challenge it represented in terms of educational funding, as well as the high level of political consensus and institutional articulation it demanded. This ambitious project was designed by the Education Reform Commission, made up of intellectuals from various disciplines who shared a humanist and emancipatory conception of education. The military government delegated to this commission the task of proposing deep political and social transformations in the educational field (Rojas Girón, 2020). It was hoped that these transformations would lead to the consolidation of a social fabric oriented towards a more equitable society. One of the main strategies was to expand access to education, particularly in rural areas, where the poorest population and those of indigenous origin predominated. These proposals were part of a critical agenda that sought to reduce the asymmetry of power, strengthen the negotiating capacity to prioritize economic policies aimed at industrialization and provide the country with a national project rooted in its own culture (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, n. d. -a).

One of the most innovative aspects of the reform was its educational proposal, characterized by a critical approach that prioritized training in rights, the strengthening of regional identities and the active role of the





community in education. This approach gave rise, among other initiatives, to the first Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB) proposal (Oliart, 2018). Other relevant milestones included the professionalization of teachers, the formalization of basic education -which until then was delivered heterogeneously across the national territory- and the creation of a national agency in charge of the design and implementation of teacher training courses (Rojas Girón, 2020). During this period, state investment in education experienced a considerable increase, reaching close to 4% of GDP, a proportion that would not be recorded again in the following years. According to Rojas Girón (2020), teacher remuneration increased fivefold between 1971 and 1975. In addition, work-oriented education was introduced as an alternative to humanistic education in early and late secondary school, with the purpose of expanding educational coverage. In 1973, Peru obtained its first project funding through a US\$24 million loan from the World Bank, which allowed the construction of 35 schools and benefited just over 30,000 students. However, due to the dismantling of the reform and the transition between regimes, this project was not completed until 1982 (Benavides et al., 2007).

Despite the significant increase in public spending on education, several factors limited its sustainability and eventually led to the abrupt interruption of the project. On the one hand, the economic difficulties derived from a model based on total import substitution and an intensive industrialization process-imposed restrictions on educational funding from early stages (Castro & Guadalupe, 2021). On the other hand, the search for efficiency in the use of school infrastructure to expand access faced limitations, since the buildings were inadequate for the growing number of students, which generated insufficient funding for the adaptation of these spaces and the provision of necessary educational materials (Lay & Blanco, 2019).

The implementation of the reform faced significant challenges related to the labor force in charge of executing its strategies, i.e., teachers. The absence of early validation of the educational proposal by the unions, together with the inclusion of an ideological component in in-service training, triggered internal conflicts with union leaders. These problems, added to the direct confrontation with other political forces and external ideological pressures that restricted access to funding through





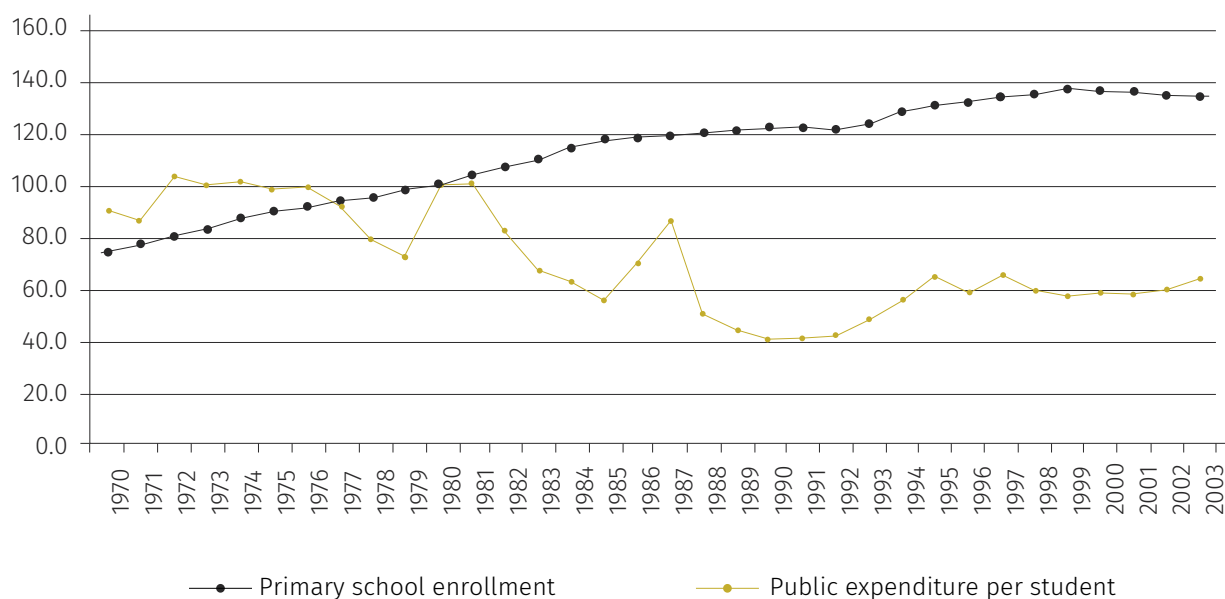
indebtedness, hindered the consolidation of the reform (Benavente Secco, 2019; Rojas Girón, 2020). Moreover, having been promoted under the leadership of Velasco, its fate was conditioned by the change of command. His successor, ideologically opposed to the original project, dismantled the reform in the midst of implementing the training strategies, which weakened both the administrative apparatus and the territorial articulations. The lack of long-term support programs in the new regime, together with the factors already mentioned, prevented a definitive transformation of teaching conditions in rural areas.

In the years following the reform, there was a significant reduction in public spending per student (Benavides et al., 2007). As shown in Figure 1, enrollment at the primary level experienced a sustained increase; however, spending per student, which had increased during the years of the reform (1972-1975) and remained high one year after its completion, began a downward trend. This phenomenon is attributed to several factors. First, the development model adopted by the successor regime, which gradually abandoned the import substitution strategy and suppressed the emerging industrial enclaves. Second, the accelerated growth of enrollment in secondary education, in which the gap was larger, leading to further dilution of public spending. Finally, the reduction of training strategies after the dismantling of the organizational structure destined to teacher training mainly affected educators' remuneration (Benavides et al., 2007; Rojas Girón, 2020).



Figure 1

Comparison of primary school enrollment rate and expenditure per student (in 1997 soles). Peru, 1970-2003



Note: The graph shows trends in the increase in access to primary education, represented by the enrollment rate at the primary level, as well as variations in public spending in relation to the number of students enrolled, expressed in the total education spending/student ratio. Taken from Evaluation of the World Bank's Assistance to Primary Education in Peru. A Country Case Study (p. 4), Benavides et al., 2007, World Bank.

STAGE 3:

Economic Crisis and Structural Adjustment (1980s and 1990s)

The economic crisis of the 1980s profoundly affected educational funding. During that period, Peru faced unprecedented inflation, serious fiscal problems, social unrest and internal conflict. This situation worsened in the first half of the 1990s; however, inflation and fiscal imbalance were controlled through a radical shift in the development model and in the funding structure of essential services (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021). As a consequence of this change, significant cuts in the education budget were implemented, which forced to compensate for the reduction through medium and long-term strategies, as well as



through conditional indebtedness and education investment projects financed by cooperation. This process is discussed below.

During the 1980s, the administrative apparatus in general, including that corresponding to the public education system, expanded in parallel with a growing fiscal deficit. In the education sector, salary spending reached unprecedented levels due to the increase in pensions and the incorporation of a greater number of teachers into the pension system, while the expansion of access to secondary education continued (Benavides et al., 2007; Guadalupe et al., 2017; Lay & Blanco, 2019). In the mid-1980s, during Belaunde's government, it was proposed to continue expanding coverage in primary education. To this end, in 1984 a loan was requested from the World Bank, which approved an allocation of US\$27 million to be executed in the first three years. The program contemplated the adaptation of spaces in primary schools, as well as the improvement of educational quality and management. The first transfer was made in 1985, during the García government; however, due to prolonged delays in implementation and failure to meet the proposed objectives, the transfers were suspended and the project was left unfinished (Benavides et al., 2007).

In the early 1990s, structural adjustment programs promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund -multilateral agencies known for granting conditional loans- were carried out by the Fujimori regime after the authoritarian shift of 1992. These measures prioritized macroeconomic stability over investment in the consolidation of social rights, which affected aspects such as public sector wages and labor rights. As a result, spending on education was further reduced compared to the levels recorded in the early 1980s, falling below 3% of GDP (Pasco-Font, 2000; World Bank, 2001). The cuts in the education budget, added to the abrupt transition from a supply-based to a demand-based funding model, deteriorated the quality of the educational service and drastically transformed the model that, until then, maintained a significant influence of the 1972 educational reform (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021). In this context of reduced funding, strategies were implemented to mitigate the adverse consequences and recover an institutionally weakened educational system.





With this objective, the World Bank, together with other multilateral and cooperation agencies, initiated a series of interrelated projects in Peru over time. These initiatives sought to ensure that public education was managed efficiently, ensuring equity and quality (Cueto, 2021; Guadalupe et al., 2017). The first of these interventions consisted of an educational diagnosis, in which the World Bank (WB), the German for Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Unesco Regional Bureau for Education (OREALC-UNESCO, by its acronym in Spanish) participated. The results of this diagnosis made it possible to design a more ambitious project, for which the third major World Bank loan to Peru was requested, in conjunction with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). With funding in excess of US\$146 million, the Primary Education Quality Improvement Program (MECEP, by its acronym in Spanish) was launched in 1995, covering various dimensions of education policy (Benavides et al., 2007). This program was structured in three main components: 1) quality improvement, 2) administrative modernization and 3) infrastructure improvement. Of these, the infrastructure component acquired greater prominence as its implementation progressed, due to its political attractiveness for the Fujimori regime. This program was followed by two major projects aligned with its objectives, the National Teacher Training Plan (1995 and 1998) and the National Educational Management Plan (1996), both financed by the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) (Benavides et al., 2007).

Although educational coverage was expanded and significant progress in learning was achieved through strategies prioritized in the different programs -such as school construction, distribution of materials, teacher training and administrative management-, the quality of education was compromised by the rationing logic of public spending. The financial and administrative characteristics of the structural reform required that budget allocation prioritized school units and administrative territories with the highest demand, which was influenced by socioeconomic factors, historical inequalities and other variables associated with the lack of access to opportunities (Guadalupe, 2021b). On the other hand, the absence of transfer of functions for the management of funding, added to the lack of a decentralized monitoring





and follow-up system, prevented the establishment of differentiated criteria to prioritize the allocation of resources according to the specific needs of each region (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021; Guadalupe et al., 2017). Although this period ended abruptly due to widespread corruption in the political system, the forms of funding with technical support from multilateral and cooperation agencies, as well as the projects developed, were maintained and deepened in the following stages.

STAGE 4:

Recovery and The Weight of Evaluations and Results (2000s)

Most of the development-oriented projects initiated in the previous phase were maintained in this phase. Programs financed by international agencies were completed within the established deadlines. During the 2000s, other multilateral agencies, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), together with bilateral cooperation agencies, guaranteed sustained and growing funding to cover aspects not contemplated in the national budget, in combination with medium and long-term planning by the Peruvian State. These stakeholders deepened the strategies prioritized in the previous decade, including the evaluation of learning levels and teaching skills, the improvement of school infrastructure and the institutional strengthening of educational management. These actions allowed for a gradual increase in education spending to between 3% and 3.5% of GDP (Guadalupe et al., 2017).

As a result of the cooperation in the previous decade, the Educational Quality Measurement Unit (UMC, by its acronym in Spanish), created almost in parallel to the implementation of MECEP, began the periodic application of census evaluations to students during the 2000s. These evaluations played a fundamental role in the institutional strengthening of the education system, partly because they demonstrated Peru's willingness and commitment to the goals subscribed to in the cooperation projects with the World Bank. Also, at the initiative of the OECD, Peru joined the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), known as the PISA tests.





Another relevant milestone for funding and sustaining the goals, particularly those related to educational infrastructure, was the creation of the Works for Taxes Program (2008), which established conditions to facilitate the participation of the private sector in the construction and maintenance of school buildings. A similar purpose was served by the implementation of a legal framework that allowed the development of public-private partnerships (2008). Finally, among the most ambitious projects concretized with the intervention of cooperation, the creation of the Education Program Learning Achievement of Students in Regular Basic Education (2008) stands out (National Education Council & United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 21017; Guadalupe et al. 2017).

However, these efforts generated a significant dependence not only on funding from cooperation agencies to guarantee the initial investment of the projects, but also on the technical capacity needed for the design and inter-sectoral coordination. As a result, challenges arose for the sustainability of the programs implemented. The fragmentation of interventions and the lack of coordination between the different levels of government and the development partners limited the effectiveness of the initiatives, which prevented the consolidation of a coherent and lasting education policy (Guadalupe et al., 2017).

Another relevant aspect, although with little visibility, was the complexity of the educational gaps, which affected even the strategies designed to promote equity. An example of this was distance education, conceived as a response to the limited availability of trained teachers to teach in contexts that were challenging both in terms of learning and evaluation, a frequent situation in sparsely populated areas with a predominantly Quechua-speaking population (Cueto, 2021).

The use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education, through the integration of computers and Internet access, was presented as an alternative to provide teachers and students with resources to facilitate educational processes. In this context, the Huascarán Project (2001) represented the first attempt to incorporate virtual environments in education and marked the beginning of a recurring commitment by cooperation agencies to the use of ICTs in education.





STAGE 5:

International Commitments, Increased Public Spending and Specialization in Budget Management (2010-present)

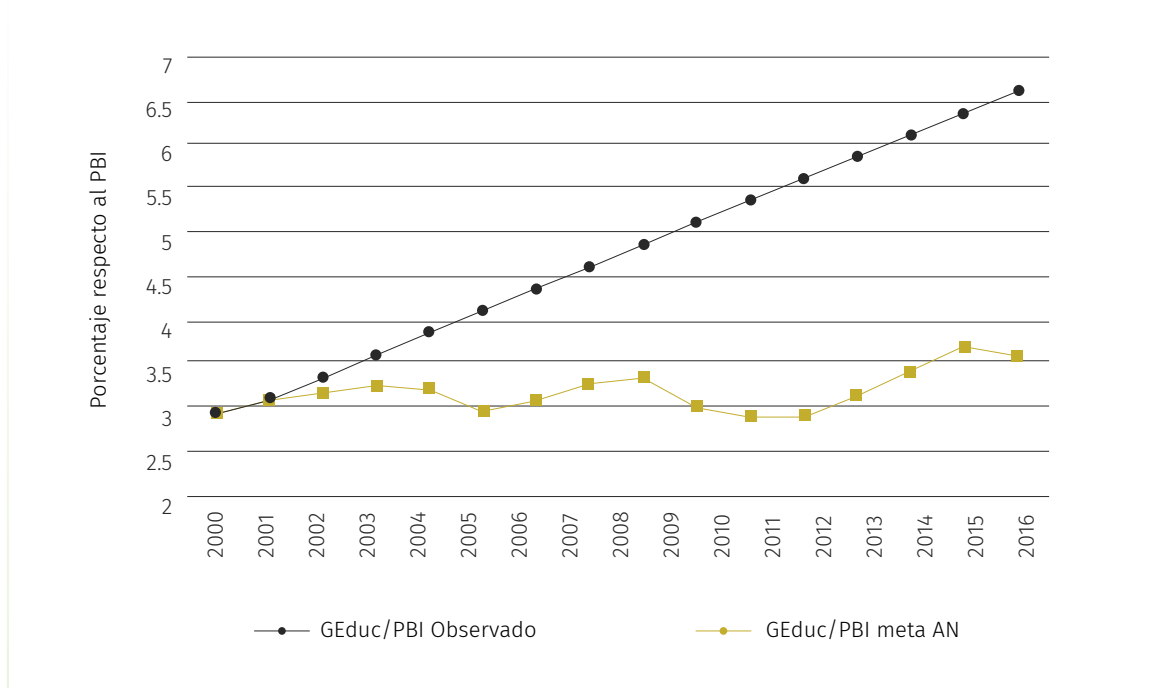
From 2010 to date, the Peruvian government has progressively increased investment in education, driven by international commitments made in the past and renewed in the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG). When examining the conditions under which this increase has occurred, a system of budget planning and expenditure management perceived as efficient is observed, particularly in the Central Government (Cueto, 2021, p. 20; Ñopo & Kudo, 2018). Under this logic, education would have become an area of “calculated and low-risk” investment from the perspective of project management, while at the regional level the perception of efficiency shows greater heterogeneity (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

In contrast to this apparent efficiency, public spending on education remains far from fully covering existing needs. As shown in **Figure 2**, the National Agreement proposed reaching 6% of GDP in educational investment by 2014; however, real spending remained close to the level recorded four years prior to the agreement. By 2021, educational investment represented 4.71% of GDP, an advance over previous years, although insufficient to reduce access and equity gaps, especially in rural areas (Guadalupe et al., 2017).



Figure 2

Comparison between education spending as a percentage of GDP and the National Agreement target. Peru, 2001-2015



Note: The graph represents the distance between education spending as a percentage of GDP executed and the target set in the National Agreement. Taken from Estado de la Educación en el Perú. Análisis y perspectivas de la Educación Básica (p. 165), Guadalupe et al., 2017, Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo.

Despite the budget increase, there are still factors that affect efficiency and equity in the allocation of resources, mainly affecting schools located in highly vulnerable contexts (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021; Cueto, 2021; Guadalupe et al., 2017). Likewise, public investment in education tends to fluctuate according to economic growth or contraction (Ñopo, 2018), which has meant a predictable limit to the increase in spending (Guadalupe et al., 2017).

During this period, several projects that had been born with the support of international cooperation were progressively incorporated into the planning and funding of the education system. Among them, the **Results-Oriented Budget Programs (PPR, by its acronym in Spanish)** stand out, which establish specific educational achievement goals



and link the allocation of resources to their fulfillment (Guadalupe et al., 2017). Such programs are inserted in the general strategy of Public Management Modernization, an initiative that is related to projects supported by the World Bank (National Education Council & United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017; Rodrigo, et al., 2022).

At the same stage, foreign sources of funding have continued to be sought for specific initiatives. For example, in **2011** the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) granted a **US\$74.5 million** loan to strengthen early education in Ayacucho, Huancavelica and Huánuco; the intervention included infrastructure, teacher training and the introduction of a participatory community approach. Then, in **2012**, the same agency granted a Technical Cooperation of **US\$500 thousand** aimed at strengthening educational management in the Ministry of Education and in the regional governments of San Martín, Piura and Huancavelica, with emphasis on budget programming (Observatorio Latinoamericano de Políticas Educativas, 2023).

At the same time, programs for rural education have been maintained and promoted, as well as projects with targeted intervention in highly vulnerable communities. Among these is the CREER program (2019-2024), applied in 32 schools in Cajamarca, initially focused on teacher training and the use of educational materials in multigrade environments, and which later incorporated learning recovery strategies during the pandemic. This project was led by GRADE with funding from the British NGO Old Dart Foundation (Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo [GRADE], 2022).

In **2013**, the **World Bank** approved a loan of **US\$25 million** for the “Basic Education” project, which included actions included in the PELA budget program (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2013). The objective was to expand the coverage of learning assessment in basic education, measure the quality of initial education and continue with evaluations by organizations such as the OECD (PISA) and UNESCO (ILLCE). In addition, efforts were made to strengthen the Ministry of Education’s capacity to monitor and supervise teacher performance (Observatorio Latinoamericano de Políticas Educativas, 2023).

In the area of school infrastructure, the World Bank contributed with the Ministry of Education to determine the infrastructure gap from the





Educational Infrastructure Census (2014) and assess the seismic risk in Lima and Callao. Subsequently, in partnership with the Government of Japan and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), it supported the development of the first proposal of the National School Infrastructure Plan (PNIE, by its acronym in Spanish) in 2016 (World Bank, 2017). This document addresses the reduction of the vulnerability of school premises to natural disasters, the expansion of coverage for early and secondary education in rural areas, the adaptation of spaces for students with disabilities, and the maintenance of existing infrastructure. The aim is to address shortcomings related to sustainability and expenditure optimization, as well as to make the coverage of the available budget transparent and enable additional sources of funding.

Overall, the recent period reflects a progressive increase in the education sector's budget and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation tools for public spending. Nevertheless, the gap between executed expenditure and the goals set -both by national and international commitments- continues to be notorious, as well as the gap in coverage of the most vulnerable areas. The findings also show the existence of structural limits associated with economic fluctuation, dependence on external cooperation and institutional capacity at the national and subnational levels. All these factors have conditioned the progress in equity and quality of education in Peru during the last decade.

Conclusion

Throughout the different historical stages analyzed, insufficient funding for education has persisted as a structural problem, directly impacting educational equity and quality. Although there have been increases in public spending and greater participation of international cooperation in recent decades, progress continues to be limited due to factors such as dependence on foreign resources, the lack of a comprehensive education policy and the high vulnerability of certain contexts. From the first attempts at reform in the 1970s, through the economic crises of the 1980s and the structural adjustments of the 1990s, to the implementation of performance-based budgeting programs in





the most recent stage, educational funding has remained exposed to both economic fluctuations and political changes, which has hindered the development of long-term sustainable strategies.

In this scenario, the collaboration of multilateral and bilateral agencies has made it possible to alleviate some shortcomings and undertake key reforms, but it has not succeeded in eradicating the resource gap or the unequal distribution of resources. The findings also show that the injection of funds tends to be concentrated at certain times or in certain regions, without being consolidated in a homogeneous coverage that would guarantee quality teaching and learning conditions for all communities. Consequently, insufficient funding continues to be a major obstacle that limits the transformative potential of education in Peru and requires structural solutions aligned with international commitments and the country's specific needs.

1.2 Regional Inequalities

The Peruvian education system faces profound regional inequalities, the result of a complex interaction of historical, economic and geographic factors. These disparities manifest themselves markedly between urban and rural areas, especially affecting indigenous communities and less developed regions. The following is a description of the historical stages that have contributed to these inequalities, highlighting the challenges that still hinder educational equity throughout the country.

STAGE 1:

Marked Exclusion of Rural Areas (First half of the 20th century)

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the Peruvian educational system was concentrated almost exclusively in urban areas, while rural areas remained in stark neglect. The lack of educational infrastructure, the limited provision of basic services, and the practice of delivering instruction informally (in community contexts or under parallel systems of micro-governance, such as on haciendas) resulted in extremely low educational coverage in the countryside (Guadalupe, 2021b; Rojas Girón, 2020). This exclusion resulted in very low literacy rates for the rural





population, limiting their socioeconomic mobility and perpetuating social and economic gaps at the national level.

The urban-centered approach of public policies reflected the lack of political will to integrate rural areas into national development, aggravating the condition of poverty of these communities. As a result, rural education was not only relegated in terms of infrastructure and qualified teachers, but also in terms of the formulation of policies that took into account the cultural and linguistic realities of rural territories.

STAGE 2:

Education Reform of 1972 and Rural Inclusion

The Education Reform of 1972, promoted during the government of Juan Velasco Alvarado, sought to reduce regional inequalities and promote the inclusion of rural areas. This strategy contemplated the creation of rural network hub, the construction of secondary schools in remote areas and the adoption of Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB) for indigenous communities (Oliart, 2018; Rojas Girón, 2020). With this, it was intended to make visible and value native languages and, therefore, provide a relevant education to students of Quechua, Aymara or other ethnicities.

Despite its good intentions, the implementation of the reform was hindered by the lack of economic and logistical resources, as well as by the resistance of elite sectors opposed to the government's egalitarian vision. In addition, the dismantling of the reform after Velasco's departure prevented the continuity of rural initiatives and strategies, thus maintaining the gaps in access and quality of education. The accelerated process of migration to the urban centers concentrated the expansion of coverage basically at the secondary level in urban and peri-urban areas (de Belaunde et al., 2024). In addition, unstable planning and the lack of sustained training programs in rural areas exacerbated existing inequalities.





STAGE 3:

Economic Crisis and Evidence of the Fragility of Educational Quality (1980s and 1990s)

The economic crisis of the 1980s, together with the adoption of structural adjustment programs in the 1990s, led to a significant reduction in public investment in education, with particularly negative effects in rural areas. Hyperinflation and fiscal deficits forced drastic cuts in the education budget, while World Bank and International Monetary Fund policies favored macroeconomic stability over social investment. As a result, rural educational infrastructure and resources deteriorated further, and indigenous communities, which relied on subsistence economies, were disadvantaged (de Belaunde et al., 2024).

In response to this situation, various agencies - World Bank, UNDP, UNESCO, IDB, GIZ, among others - promoted programs and plans aimed at counteracting the effects of the reduction in funding and addressing the deficit in the quality of education. Priority was given to rural areas due to their greater vulnerability, with actions in teacher training, provision of materials, improvement of educational infrastructure and decentralization of management. However, important limitations were found in the relevance and sustainability of these strategies: for example, the modular infrastructure built for school premises in the mid-1990s showed quality problems, as did the didactic materials distributed (Rivera, 2021). This highlighted institutional fragility and the lack of a robust approach to ensure continuity and adaptability to local realities.

STAGE 4:

Recovery and Targeting in Rural Areas (2000s)

During the 2000s, there was renewed interest in improving rural education, supported mainly by international cooperation (World Bank, IDB, among others). Projects were launched to improve school infrastructure and train teachers, with the intention of closing historical gaps. However, the weak state capacity to articulate these efforts within a coherent national strategy, together with poor coordination between the various levels of government, slowed the consolidation of progress (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021; Montero & Ucelli, 2020).





Although externally funded plans achieved improvements in specific areas (e.g., reconstruction of premises, continuous teacher training programs, introduction of information technologies, etc.), they were not able to structurally reduce educational inequalities in rural areas. This was compounded by the high official turnover in public administration, which hindered the continuity of interventions and the institutionalization of policies in favor of rural education (Ñopo & Kitmang, 2017).

STAGE 5:

International Commitments and Persistent Gaps (2010-Present)

Despite the commitments made in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), disparities between urban and rural areas are still evident in the Peruvian education system. Rural and indigenous areas face obstacles that include lack of adequate infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers and limited pedagogical resources, conditioning the quality of learning. International cooperation has maintained its support (construction of schools, teacher training, distribution of materials), but the sustainability of these efforts continues to depend on effective coordination between the State, development partners, the private sector and the communities themselves (Robalino Campos & Uribe Salazar, 2024).

In this period, the diversification of programs and the search for a more active role by state agencies -both central and decentralized- have constituted incipient advances, although affected by political instability and the lack of coherent long-term public policies (Cueto, 2021; Guadalupe et al., 2017). The persistence of regional gaps is also explained by the insufficient allocation of resources to remote areas, the limited participation of communities in decision-making and the difficulties in ensuring the continuity of interventions once external funding has ended.





Final Thoughts on Regional Inequalities

Regional inequalities in Peruvian education are the result of a set of historical, socioeconomic and political factors that, to date, have marginalized rural areas and indigenous communities. Although there have been notable achievements in certain stages -such as the 1972 Reform or projects that have focused investment in remote areas-, gaps persist and worsen in the face of economic crises or abrupt changes in political orientation (de Belaunde et al., 2024). At the same time, the cultural and linguistic diversity of each region requires intercultural and contextually relevant education policies that recognize and strengthen local identities and knowledge.

In short, the historical trajectory reveals the need for comprehensive strategies that address not only coverage but also quality and educational relevance. The high vulnerability of rural communities and the ambivalent role of international cooperation (key, but not always sustainable over time) complete the picture of the challenges Peru faces in terms of educational equity. The challenge remains to build a system capable of adapting to the country's diverse realities and offering meaningful learning opportunities to all its students, regardless of their geographic location or cultural identity.

1.3 Shortage of Trained Human Resources

Teacher training has been a persistent and critical problem in the development of the Peruvian education system. The quality of teaching depends to a large extent on the preparation and competencies of teachers; however, this aspect has been historically deficient in Peru, particularly in rural and indigenous areas, where the challenges are more complex. This section examines the evolution of the problems related to teacher training and the availability of human resources in the Peruvian educational environment, from its historical background to the current situation.





STAGE 1:

Teacher Training Initially Neglected (Up to the First Decades of the 20th Century)

The roots of the shortage of trained human resources go back to the early stages of consolidation of the Peruvian education system, when teacher training was not considered a state priority. During this period, teacher preparation was practically nonexistent or concentrated in certain urban centers, which deepened inequalities between urban and rural areas. In addition, various teaching modalities coexisted without a formal order, which made it difficult to register both the spaces that functioned as centers of instruction and the people who exercised the role of instructor (Rojas Girón, 2020).

The educational system, in general, was characterized by the exclusion of rural areas and restricted access to education for the elite sectors. In this context, teacher training was not addressed in a systemic manner, so that the vast majority of teachers had low levels of schooling, especially in rural areas. The absence of specific policies for the professionalization of teachers consolidated a profoundly unequal system, in which rural schools hardly had teachers with sufficient preparation or incentives to remain in hard-to-reach areas. This situation perpetuated social and regional inequalities, generating gaps that, according to various historical studies, would persist for several decades and would mark the future of the Peruvian education system (de Belaunde et al., 2024).

The lack of incentives to attract and retain teachers in rural areas further exacerbated this problem, as teachers preferred to settle in localities with better living conditions and greater possibilities for training or promotion in the teaching profession. As a result, the incipient educational system, far from laying the foundations for inclusion, reproduced pre-existing social disparities, leaving large sectors of the rural population without opportunities for access to quality education.





STAGE 2:

Attempts at Professionalization During the Educational Reform of 1972

The Education Reform of 1972, implemented under the government of Juan Velasco Alvarado, represented a significant attempt to democratize access to education and improve the quality of teaching through the professionalization of teachers. To this end, education and training programs were created especially for teachers in rural areas, with the aim of promoting an inclusive and multicultural education that responded to the diverse reality of Peru (Oliart, 2018).

However, despite initial expectations, the implementation of these initiatives was hindered by the lack of economic resources, infrastructure limitations and political conflicts surrounding the reformist vision. In particular, sectors of the teaching profession itself showed resistance to some measures, which slowed down the consolidation of training programs (Rojas Girón, 2020). Thus, although the Reform set a precedent by recognizing the importance of training teachers with intercultural competencies, it did not achieve a profound transformation of the teaching career nor did it sustainably reverse the inequalities between urban and rural areas.

STAGE 3:

Disinvestment in Teacher Training (1980s and 1990s)

During the 1980s and 1990s, Peru went through an economic crisis and a structural adjustment process that severely affected the education budget (Pasco-Font, 2000; World Bank, 2001). Macroeconomic stability became the priority for the governments in power, which led to a marked reduction in public spending on education. This context particularly harmed teacher training, as training programs and teachers' salaries were drastically cut, discouraging educators from remaining in the system.

The impact was greater in rural and Indigenous areas, where teachers, already receiving little institutional support, saw their opportunities for pedagogical development diminish. Without access to quality





continuous training and facing uncompetitive salaries, many educators chose to migrate to urban areas or leave the profession altogether. Thus, efforts to professionalize the teaching profession were seriously weakened, perpetuating the gap in education quality and equity.

STAGE 4:

Recovery and Promotion of Continuous Training (Since the 2000s)

With the arrival of the new millennium, there was a certain recovery of investment in teacher education and training programs, largely thanks to the support of organizations such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), among others. These initiatives sought to provide teachers with pedagogical tools, especially in vulnerable and hard-to-reach areas, with a view to raising the quality of teaching (Peru. Ministry of Education et al., 2002a).

Although significant advances were achieved -for example, in the introduction of student-centered approaches and in the promotion of interculturality-, coverage was uneven and many rural territories failed to improve learning achievement significantly outside of the improvements (Guadalupe et al., 2017). In addition, weak coordination between different levels of government and dependence on external funding limited the consolidation of long-term achievements. The high official turnover in the education sector, added to the variability of cooperation programs, generated discontinuities in continuous training policies (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021; Rodrigo, et al., 2022).

STAGE 5:

Current Reforms and Challenges (2010-Present)

In the last decade, the Peruvian government has promoted several reforms focused on improving teacher training and guaranteeing educational quality throughout the country. Among other measures, initial and continuous training programs have been created, and periodic evaluations have been implemented to monitor the quality of teaching (Observatorio Latinoamericano de Políticas Educativas, 2023).





However, important challenges remain:

1. High teacher and officials turnover, which affects program continuity (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021; Montero & Ucelli, 2020).
2. Focus on individual performance, which neglects structural problems such as the lack of incentives to stay in rural areas and the limited availability of pedagogical resources (Carrillo, 2021; Castro & Guadalupe, 2021).
3. Dependence on international cooperation to sustain certain initiatives, without local strengthening to ensure the permanence of the achievements (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021; Rodrigo, et al., 2022).
4. Insufficient intercultural training, essential for teachers working with indigenous communities, which limits the relevance of teaching (Oliart, 2018).

In this sense, the contribution of international organizations and NGOs has been valuable but insufficient to compensate for structural deficiencies in teacher training, particularly in remote or culturally diverse regions.

Conclusion

In summary, teacher training in Peru has followed a path marked by historical limitations and episodes of incomplete transformation. From the Education Reform of 1972, which made the importance of professionalization and interculturality visible, to the disinvestment of the 1980s and 1990s and the subsequent recovery through initiatives supported by international cooperation, significant progress has been made, but there are also persistent gaps. Current challenges -high professional turnover, lack of systemic approaches, insufficient adaptation to rural and indigenous contexts and external dependence- continue to hinder the construction of a robust and equitable teaching profession at the national level.

Although recent government reforms have addressed key aspects of initial and ongoing education, the depth of structural inequalities and





institutional fragility make it difficult to consolidate the achievements obtained. For this reason, the future of teacher professionalization in Peru continues to be a determining factor for the quality and equity of the education system, particularly in the most vulnerable areas.

1.4 Digital Gap and Access to Technologies

The digital gap has become one of the most prominent challenges of the Peruvian educational system, a problem that deepened with the COVID-19 pandemic. This phenomenon highlighted the marked inequalities in terms of access, use and appropriation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), especially between urban and rural areas, as well as between indigenous communities and the rest of the population. This subchapter examines the evolution of this digital gap, the strategies to reduce it and the participation of international cooperation in this process.

Pre-pandemic Context

Prior to the health crisis, access to ICTs was already a significant problem, particularly in rural and indigenous areas. The absence or precariousness of connectivity infrastructure (e.g., internet coverage and signal antennas) limited the possibility for students and teachers to use digital tools, while in urban areas there was better access to technological devices (Montero & Ucelli, 2020; UNESCO, 2024). This disparity evidenced structural inequalities that, years later, would become more noticeable when the health emergency forced the implementation of remote teaching.

Impact of the Pandemic on the Digital Gap

The arrival of COVID-19 further widened the digital gap. While in many urban contexts access to computers, tablets or internet networks allowed students to follow their studies remotely, a significant proportion of students in rural or indigenous areas lacked adequate devices and connectivity (UNESCO, 2021).





Faced with this situation, the Ministry of Education, with the support of various cooperation agencies, developed initiatives to **mitigate the effects** of distance learning. Among them are:

- ➔ **Delivery of technological devices:** Tablets and other connectivity equipment were distributed to students and teachers, which were acquired through purchasing processes to bridge the digital gap in the context of the health crisis. In addition, tables were donated by strategic partners such as Fundación Telefónica (Fundación Telefónica, 2020).
- ➔ **Educational support programs:** The “Aprendo en Casa” program, supported by UNICEF, offered content on digital platforms, radio and television, with a multichannel access approach to reach a greater number of students (United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF], n. d).

Despite these measures, inequalities in access to the Internet and technological resources remain unresolved, with a more severe impact on rural and indigenous localities (UNICEF, 2024b).

Digital Competencies and Challenges in Training

Another fundamental challenge in the context of the digital gap is the lack of digital competencies in both teachers and students. Although efforts have been made to train teachers in the use of ICTs, many lack the necessary skills to effectively integrate these tools into their pedagogical practices. Training in digital competencies has been uneven, and insufficient training prevents ICTs from being used as an effective pedagogical tool. This deficit especially affects teachers in rural areas, who must not only face a lack of infrastructure, but also a lack of preparation to take advantage of available technologies (Peru. Ministry of Education, 2016).

Cooperation and ICT

International cooperation has played an important role in trying to reduce the digital gap by distributing technological devices and implementing connectivity programs in the most vulnerable areas.





UNESCO, for example, has developed pilot programs to provide some rural schools with basic digital infrastructure, in order to improve Internet access and encourage the use of ICTs in the educational process. However, these efforts have generated specific improvements, but have failed to comprehensively solve the problem, due to the lack of a sustained commitment to technological infrastructure to ensure connectivity for all students (UNESCO, 2023).

Outlook for the Future

Effectively bridging the digital gap requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses several key aspects:

- *Access to devices and connectivity.* National policies aimed at improving digital infrastructure should prioritize rural areas and indigenous communities, where the needs are greater (Montero & Ucelli, 2020).
- *Training in digital competencies.* Training in the use of ICTs should be a priority for both teachers and students. Training programs should be designed in such a way that they do not replace the work of teachers in lesson planning, but rather provide tools and resources to enrich their pedagogical practice.
- *Participation of local stakeholders.* The active involvement of communities and local stakeholders in the identification of technological needs is crucial to ensure the sustainability of initiatives. International cooperation should complement the efforts of the Peruvian State, promoting culturally and contextually appropriate solutions for each community.

Closing the digital gap will only be possible through equitable access to technologies, adequate training and the active participation of communities in the planning and implementation of educational policies. These elements constitute the basis for moving towards a fairer, more inclusive education system that is adapted to the needs of the entire population.





1.5 Strategies and Policies to Address Diversity

Recognition and attention to diversity in the Peruvian education system have been historically delayed, both in the regulatory sphere and in its effective implementation (Perú. Defensoría del Pueblo, 2019). This section analyzes the development and implementation of strategies aimed at serving the main vulnerable groups: rural communities, indigenous populations and students with disabilities. Despite some progress in inclusive education, policies designed to respond to the specific needs of these groups continue to face challenges in order to be effectively implemented.

Challenges in Education in Rural Areas

Disparities in educational access and quality are especially evident in rural areas, where the lack of infrastructure, educational resources and trained teachers has persisted throughout history. These inequalities are reflected in lower literacy rates and limited access to educational opportunities. Despite the efforts of the State and international cooperation to reduce these gaps, adverse socioeconomic conditions and the lack of basic services continue to hinder the improvement of educational quality (Montero & Ucelli, 2020).

In this context, some targeted intervention programs -such as the Early Intervention Programs (PRITE), aimed at serving children under three years of age with disabilities or at risk of developing them- have faced serious limitations in terms of coverage and funding, which restricts their impact in rural communities. Although international cooperation has supported initiatives to improve infrastructure and teacher training in these areas, significant gaps persist that hinder equity in the educational offer (Peru. Ombudsman's Office, 2019).

Intercultural Bilingual Education for Indigenous Populations

The Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB) approach is essential to guarantee an education that respects and values local languages and cultures in indigenous communities. However, its implementation has faced multiple challenges.





Despite its recognition in educational legislation, coverage is still insufficient. Many schools lack adequate teaching materials in indigenous languages and the specialized teacher training in EIB is limited, which affects the quality of teaching in these contexts (Reyes & Castro, 2023).

International cooperation has contributed to the promotion of EIB through the production of educational materials in indigenous languages and the training of teachers to work in multicultural environments. However, the State should strengthen its efforts in the training and hiring of specialized teachers, as well as in the provision of didactic resources appropriate to the particularities of each community.

Inclusion of Students with Disabilities

The inclusion of students with disabilities represents another critical challenge in the Peruvian education system. Although there are policies and regulatory frameworks that promote inclusive education, their effective implementation is insufficient. The Support and Advisory Services for Special Educational Needs (SAANEE, by its acronym in Spanish) are essential to provide specialized advice to schools and teachers, but their coverage is limited, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas (Cueto et al., 2018).

Likewise, the “+Inclusion” program, led by UNICEF in collaboration with the NGO SODIS, seeks to improve educational infrastructure and train teachers to serve students with disabilities (Proyecto +Inclusión Perú, 2023). However, challenges remain: many institutions lack adequate infrastructure such as access ramps or adapted toilets) and teachers do not receive the necessary training to implement inclusive pedagogical strategies. Coordination between local, national and international stakeholders must be strengthened to ensure the sustainability of these efforts (UNICEF, 2024a).

Food Support Programs as an Educational Recruitment Strategy

Food support programs, such as Qali Warma, play a crucial role in the educational uptake of children from impoverished families. These





programs not only seek to improve child nutrition, but also constitute an important subsidy for the family basket, alleviating the economic burden on families and acting as an incentive for children to attend school. In contexts of high socioeconomic vulnerability, access to adequate food through the school becomes a key factor in guaranteeing the attendance and permanence of students in the educational system. Additionally, such programs fulfill an important social function by supporting children's overall comprehensive development and well-being.

Community Participation and Cross-sectoral Approaches

Active community participation in the identification of needs and in the evaluation of educational policies is essential to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of interventions. In indigenous and rural populations, this participation allows solutions to be culturally appropriate and responsive to local realities. However, the lack of coordination between the different levels of government and the lack of resources limits the capacity of local stakeholders to become fully involved in the educational process.

Addressing these challenges requires an intersectoral approach that promotes collaboration between the education, health and social sectors. International cooperation has supported the implementation of comprehensive strategies in vulnerable communities, but it is imperative that the Peruvian government takes a more active role in promoting intersectoral coordination and strengthening local capacities in order to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of interventions in the long term.

Conclusion on Attention to Diversity

Attention to diversity in the Peruvian education system is a complex challenge that demands a comprehensive and coordinated approach. International cooperation has played a key role in promoting inclusive education and strengthening EIB; however, the efforts undertaken so far have been insufficient to ensure that all students have access to quality education.





A stronger commitment on the part of the State is required, as well as closer coordination between national and international stakeholders, in order to ensure the sustainability of inclusion policies and respond effectively to the real needs of the most vulnerable communities.

1.6 Summary of Identified Challenges

The Peruvian education system faces a series of historical and structural challenges that limit its capacity to provide equitable and quality education to the entire population. The main challenges described are summarized below, which will serve as the basis for the analysis of opportunities and the role of international cooperation in the following chapters:

Insufficient Funding

Public spending on education has increased in recent years, but it does not reach the recommended international levels nor does it fully meet the needs. Slow GDP growth conditions investment in infrastructure, teacher training and inclusion programs, especially in rural areas and vulnerable communities (World Bank, 2022). Dependence on international cooperation, while filling certain gaps, has not guaranteed the long-term sustainability of many projects.

Regional Inequalities

Disparities between urban and rural areas continue to be marked. In rural areas, the lack of infrastructure, the lack of qualified teaching personnel and adverse socioeconomic conditions translate into fewer learning opportunities. Although international cooperation has boosted specific interventions, poor coordination with national policies and limited resources have restricted their impact.

Shortage of Trained Human Resources

Teacher education and training are insufficient, especially to meet the needs of rural and indigenous areas. The quality of teaching suffers





due to the lack of continuous training programs and the high teachers and officials turnover. Despite the efforts of international cooperation, projects tend to be of short duration and are not always adapted to local requirements.

Digital Gap and Access to Technologies

After the COVID-19 pandemic, inequality in access to electronic devices and internet connection became more evident. While some urban areas managed to maintain remote education, a large portion of students in rural areas lacked this possibility. Despite initiatives aimed at distributing equipment and improving connectivity, significant barriers remain that hinder equitable access to ICTs.

Attention to Diversity

The most vulnerable groups -students with disabilities, indigenous communities and rural areas- still face barriers to accessing inclusive and quality education. Policies and programs such as EIB, SAANEE or PRITE have not achieved the coverage or quality needed to guarantee equity. Limited resources, incomplete teacher training, and weak coordination between levels of government hinder the effective implementation of initiatives.

Food Support Programs

Initiatives such as Qali Warma are fundamental to sustain school attendance of children living in poverty. These strategies provide a family subsidy and improve child nutrition, thus contributing to the comprehensive development of students. However, their effectiveness also depends on institutional capacity to manage and monitor food distribution in remote areas.

Conclusion on Identified Challenges

These complex and intertwined challenges reflect the structural deficiencies of the Peruvian education system. Insufficient funding





conditions, the reduction of regional gaps, teacher training and the adoption of technologies. Although international cooperation has played a key role in overcoming some of these difficulties, alignment with national priorities and the construction of sustainable mechanisms are still insufficient. Greater government commitment and better coordination among all educational stakeholders are essential to consolidate effective policies that are adequate to the country's most urgent realities.





CHAPTER 2

THE ROLE OF
DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERS IN
CHANGES IN THE
EDUCATION SYSTEM

This chapter examines the role that international cooperation has played in the transformation of the Peruvian education system, contributing significantly to the funding, design and implementation of policies and programs that address diverse challenges. From strategies focused on literacy to the promotion of inclusive and bilingual education, development partners have influenced the orientation of the country's educational priorities. However, their intervention has reflected tensions related to dependence on foreign resources and the limitations of the Peruvian state to negotiate on equitable terms.

2.1 Evolution of the Role of International Development Partners

Over the last decades, international cooperation has played an essential role in the development of the Peruvian education system. During the 1990s, the country went through a phase of structural adjustments and economic stabilization that directly impacted the State's capacity to finance education (Pasco-Font, 2000). The decrease in public spending in this sector generated a scenario of greater dependence on multilateral organizations, which offered funding and technical support for the implementation of reforms. However, some of these interventions were oriented more to macroeconomic stability than to long-term social investment (Benavides et al., 2007), reflecting the tensions between economic priorities and the educational needs of the population.

In the 2000s, there was a shift in the approaches to international cooperation, influenced by a vision more based on human rights and equity (Canan, 2017). This shift implied a greater focus on educational inclusion and the reduction of access gaps, with emphasis on the rural population, indigenous communities and gender equality (Busso et al., 2017). Various cooperation agencies then collaborated with the Peruvian State to develop programs aimed at training teachers, improving school infrastructure and introducing teaching methodologies focused on student learning.



Since the 2010s, interest in sustainability and educational governance has intensified. Organizations such as the Canadian Cooperation, for example, financed initiatives aimed at strengthening management capacities and pedagogical leadership. The FORGE Project - analyzed in studies such as Tapia and Cueto (2017) - focused on the development of the national curriculum, teacher training and support for educational decentralization, in order to consolidate policies more aligned with territorial needs. For its part, the evaluation of Canadian assistance in Peru (Global Affairs Canada, 2020) reports on the progress made and the importance of promoting greater involvement of local institutions.

This process of evolution in the approach to international cooperation has shown both achievements and challenges. On the one hand, it has facilitated access to education and improved quality in historically underserved areas, which is evident in different evaluations and diagnoses on externally funded programs (Benavides et al., 2007; Busso et al., 2017). On the other hand, the dependence on external funding and the conditions set by development partners have limited the autonomy of the Peruvian state to prioritize its own education policies in a sovereign manner (Canan, 2017; Global Affairs Canada, 2020).

The different stages of international cooperation in the Peruvian education system reflect the relevance of effective and flexible collaboration that responds to the country's changing needs. Although the impact of cooperation has been positive in several areas -for example, early childhood care, teacher training and school infrastructure-, ensuring the sustainability of the progress achieved continues to be a challenge. To this end, it is imperative that foreign interventions are aligned with national priorities and strengthen local institutional capacities, so that achievements can be sustained even when external support decreases (Global Affairs Canada, 2020; Tapia & Cueto, 2017).

2.2 Typology of Development Partners: Past and Present

International cooperation in the Peruvian education system has been marked by different types of development partners, each with different approaches and strategies. Among the stakeholders that have influenced the development of the Peruvian education system are multilateral





organizations, bilateral cooperation and NGOs and foundations. Each has left an important mark on the country's educational development.

Multilateral Organizations

Multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), have been key players in funding and promoting educational reforms in Peru. During the 1990s, given the need for macroeconomic stability, these organizations promoted adjustment programs that influenced educational management and the efficient use of resources (Benavides et al., 2007; Pasco-Font, 2000). Although these programs allowed for some modernization of infrastructure and improvements in teacher training, they also implied conditions that limited the autonomy of the State in designing its own policies.

Already in the 2000s, the focus of multilateral organizations shifted towards inclusion and educational equity, resulting in curricular reforms and programs aimed at improving access to quality education, especially for vulnerable populations (de Belaunde et al., 2024). However, this approach faced difficulties in adjusting to the local reality of each region, given the socioeconomic and cultural diversity of the country (National Education Council & UNESCO, 2017).

Bilateral Cooperation

Bilateral cooperation, led by countries such as Canada and Germany, has followed strategies more adapted to the specific needs of the Peruvian education system. For example, Canadian Cooperation has supported projects aimed at strengthening teacher training and school management, such as support for the development of the national curriculum or the implementation of pedagogical leadership programs (Global Affairs Canada, 2020; Tapia & Cueto, 2017). In turn, the German Cooperation Agency (formerly GTZ, currently GIZ) has contributed to the continuous training of teachers and the promotion of Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB), improving the attention to rural and indigenous communities (Peru. Ministry of Education et al., 2002).

Even so, ensuring the sustainability of these advances has proven to be complex. The dependence on foreign resources and the lack of local





capacities to provide continuity to the programs limit their long-term impact. Strengthening coordination between development partners and local stakeholders (authorities and communities) is crucial for initiatives to be effectively appropriated at the territorial level.

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Foundations

NGOs and foundations have complemented the work of multilateral agencies and bilateral cooperation, focusing on interventions that tend to address gaps neglected by state action. For example, UNICEF and various local NGOs have worked on the promotion of inclusive education and the defense of educational rights in rural communities or marginal urban areas (UNICEF Peru, 2021).

These organizations have been instrumental in ensuring that vulnerable groups -such as girls and children with disabilities- have access to quality education (UNICEF, 2024a). Their initiatives have contributed to making visible the needs of disadvantaged populations and generating awareness of the importance of adopting an inclusive and intercultural approach in Peruvian education (National Council of Education & United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization National Education Council & UNESCO, 2017).

Reflections on the Typology of Development Partners

The typology of development partners in Peru illustrates a diversity of approaches and strategies that have impacted the education system in different ways. While multilateral agencies have provided funding and technical assistance -with the risk of generating dependence-, bilateral cooperation has focused its action on specific aspects such as teacher training or inclusion. NGOs and foundations have promoted closer contact with communities, especially in more vulnerable contexts.

Achieving sustainability of the results achieved requires greater articulation with national policies and effective appropriation by the State. Thus, development partners will be able to align their interventions to a long-term educational project, avoiding dispersion





and ensuring that the benefits last even when external support ends (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

2.3 Relationship Between International Cooperation and Education Governance

International cooperation has been a decisive factor in Peru's educational governance, as it has provided funding resources and support for sector policies and reforms. However, this relationship has been accompanied by tensions, especially concerning the reconciliation of international interests with national priorities (Canan, 2017).

Influence on the Educational Agenda

In the 1990s, given the narrow fiscal margin and the urgency for stability, the World Bank and the IDB played a leading role in the formulation of policies aimed at improving the efficiency of education spending. Although some progress was made in infrastructure and coverage, criticism focused on the dependence on external funding and the limited participation of local stakeholders (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

In more recent times, development partners have pushed for the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, promoting a more inclusive education. Agencies such as UNESCO have collaborated with the Ministry of Education to drive reforms focused on equity and relevance (National Education Council & UNESCO, 2017).

Dependence on and Autonomy from the State

The relationship with international cooperation has been characterized by the tension between financial dependence and the desire for state autonomy. During the 1990s and 2000s, many reforms were subject to conditions set by multilateral agencies, which generated imbalances in the definition of priorities (Benavides et al., 2007).

However, since the 2010s, some development partners -such as the Canadian Cooperation- have shown greater interest in aligning





their interventions with the country's needs and in strengthening local capacities (Tapia & Cueto, 2017). This change has promoted some additional autonomy on the part of the Peruvian State to conduct and sustain its education policies.

Participation of Local Stakeholders

International cooperation has encouraged the incorporation of subnational stakeholders and communities in educational management. Thus, programs have been developed that revalue cultural and linguistic diversity, such as Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB, by its acronym in Spanish) (de Belaunde et al., 2024). Despite these advances, there is still a need for a stronger integration of the regional and local governments. Officials turnover and scarce resources continue to hinder program continuity and the consolidation of robust educational governance (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

Reflections on Educational Governance

The interaction between international cooperation and educational governance in Peru exhibits both benefits - funding, technical assistance and promotion of inclusion - and obstacles to national autonomy and the participation of local stakeholders. The challenge for future interventions is to strengthen coordination with national policies, develop subnational capacities and reduce external dependence, orienting educational management towards the country's development priorities.

2.4 Effects of Cooperation on Educational Inequalities

International cooperation has been fundamental in reducing some educational gaps. However, its intervention has also led to unresolved challenges and disparities, highlighting the complexity of its influence on inequalities.





Attention to Vulnerable Populations

One of the main achievements of international cooperation has been the increase in educational coverage in traditionally excluded populations. For example, initiatives such as the Horizontes project, which has been implemented in rural secondary education with the backing of organizations such as UNESCO and the support of other entities, have enabled students in rural areas to access educational opportunities that previously did not exist or were very limited (Alonso-Pastor, 2022).

Similarly, Canadian cooperation has contributed to the promotion of Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB), increasing the cultural relevance of teaching in indigenous communities (Tapia & Cueto, 2017). Likewise, projects focused on the inclusion of students with disabilities through the improvement of educational infrastructure and teacher training have been promoted (UNICEF, 2024a). These interventions have led to significant progress in the inclusion of the most disadvantaged groups, by directly addressing specific needs for accessibility, cultural relevance and professional development of educators.

Persistent Inequalities

Despite these efforts, significant gaps persist in terms of access and quality of education in Peru. The unequal distribution of resources between urban and rural areas continues to be a structural problem, and not all cooperation interventions have achieved the expected results. In part, this is due to the lack of continuity in funding and the limited capacity of the State to take over the management and maintenance of programs when external support ends (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

Another recurrent factor is the insufficient contextualization of some projects. Sometimes, programs are not adapted to the cultural and socioeconomic realities of the communities, which reduces their impact and even causes tensions between local practices and the objectives of the development partners (National Education Council & UNESCO, 2017). For example, in indigenous communities, resistance has been observed when standardized educational models are





implemented without considering the traditions and cultural values of the area, generating perceptions of external imposition and hindering appropriation by the community.

Disparities in Project Sustainability

One of the most significant challenges for international cooperation in the educational field lies in the sustainability of interventions. Often, projects depend almost entirely on external funds, which hinders their continuity after the withdrawal of development partners (Tapia & Cueto, 2017). This situation is aggravated by high staff turnover at the local and regional management levels, which limits the capacity of authorities to effectively manage programs (Jara Almonte & Mesinas Montero, 2023).

The projects that have shown the highest levels of sustainability are those that involve local stakeholders from the beginning and prioritize capacity building. An example of this is found in the EIB programs developed in coordination with regional authorities and indigenous communities, where the active participation of local leaders has favored the continuity of the initiatives beyond the phase of foreign funding (Tapia & Cueto, 2017).

Final Reflection on the Effects of Cooperation

International cooperation has contributed significantly to the reduction of certain educational inequalities in Peru, especially by expanding access and inclusion of vulnerable groups. However, considerable challenges have been faced in terms of sustainability and adaptation of initiatives to local contexts. To maximize their impact and ensure that the benefits reach all students, it is essential:

- ➔ **Strengthen coordination** with national and subnational authorities,
- ➔ **Consolidate the capacities** of the stakeholders involved in educational management, and
- ➔ **Promote local ownership** of the interventions.





Only in this way will it be possible to build a more equitable and resilient education system, in which the improvements promoted by international cooperation are sustained and deepened over time.

2.5 Sustainability of Cooperation Interventions

The sustainability of interventions financed by international cooperation in the educational field has been a constant challenge in Peru. Although many of these initiatives have achieved satisfactory results in the short term, structural factors such as the lack of national funding, institutional weakness and the limited capacity of local stakeholders to assume project management hinder their permanence over time (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021). This subchapter examines the main challenges linked to sustainability and provides examples of good practices that have contributed to improving the continuity of interventions.

Transition from External to Domestic Funding

One of the most important challenges for the sustainability of educational projects promoted by international cooperation is the transition from foreign to national resources. Many programs in Peru have been financed almost entirely with international contributions, which complicates their continuity after the end of external support. This dependence restricts the State's capacity to incorporate these interventions into its national policies and guarantee their sustainability (Jara Almonte & Mesinas Montero, 2023).

To overcome this obstacle, it is essential that the Peruvian State gradually assume the funding of successful programs. This implies, in addition to adequate financial planning, the inclusion of effective initiatives in national or regional educational development plans. An example of good practice was the support of the Canadian Cooperation for capacity building in local and regional governments through the FORGE Project, which emphasized the education officials and leaders training to assume the management and investment of the projects (Global Affairs Canada, 2020).





Another illustrative case is the Learning Achievement Education Program (PELA, by its acronym in Spanish), which for years had loans from the World Bank. In order to maintain its continuity, this program had to be transformed into a budgetary program after it ceased to receive external funding. Although the transition made it possible for the initiative to survive, it also revealed the State's difficulties in sustaining the quality of the strategies - particularly the pedagogical accompaniment - when the international financial support ended.

Local Capacity Building

Strengthening local stakeholders is essential to ensure the sustainability of interventions. Often, externally funded projects achieve favorable results in the implementation phase, but lack a plan to strengthen the capacities of local stakeholders so that they can continue the work after the cooperation has ended.

One of the most effective methodologies focuses on the school administrators training and authorities in the administration of resources and educational management. For example, GIZ (German Cooperation Agency), when it was still GTZ, together with the Ministry of Education, promoted continuous training programs aimed at officials of the Local Educational Management Units (UGEL, by its acronym in Spanish), improving their competencies to design and execute projects (Peru. Ministry of Education et al., 2002a). This initiative allowed the local technical teams to take on the coordination of interventions with greater ownership and avoid stagnation after the withdrawal of development partners.

Community Participation and Local Ownership

Active community participation is another pillar of sustainability in educational projects. A project that involves families, community leaders and other local stakeholders from planning to evaluation tends to generate a greater sense of ownership, promoting its continuity and adaptation to the specific needs of each territory (Alonso-Pastor, 2022).





A good example is the “+Inclusión” program, promoted by UNICEF in collaboration with local NGOs, which integrates the community in the improvement of infrastructure and teacher training serving students with disabilities (UNICEF, 2024a). Thanks to this participatory approach, communities have progressively taken responsibility for maintaining and promoting the interventions, increasing their chances of lasting over time.

Articulation with National Policies

For cooperation interventions to be sustainable, it is essential that they align with national policies and priorities. When these initiatives are coherently integrated into the education system, it becomes more feasible for the Peruvian state to replicate and expand their results (National Education Council & UNESCO, 2017). The FORGE Project, led by Canadian Cooperation in partnership with the Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE), aimed to align with national teacher training policies, working closely with local authorities and the Ministry of Education (Tapia & Cueto, 2017). This coordination facilitated the incorporation of the project’s achievements into the national agenda and contributed to their long-term sustainability.

Project Evaluation and Lessons Learned

Project evaluations are essential to ensure the sustainability of interventions. Multilateral and bilateral cooperation agencies often carry out periodic evaluations to analyze the impact and effectiveness of the programs they finance (Benavides et al., 2007; Global Affairs Canada, 2020). Although these evaluations may have limitations -for example, the possible bias of the entity funding the project, interested in highlighting achievements-, the information generated is a valuable input for optimizing future initiatives (Busso et al., 2017).

Various impact studies have made it possible to identify areas for improvement and adjust implementation strategies. In the case of Peru, evaluations of teacher training programs or interventions aimed at improving educational infrastructure have revealed strengths and weaknesses, thus helping to redesign technical components or





resource allocation (Benavides et al., 2007). Although the expectation of prolonging long-term partnerships may influence the objectivity of the conclusions, the results of these evaluations help to recalibrate the relevance and effectiveness of the actions taken.

Lessons learned from these evaluations can be used to reinforce the sustainability of projects, adjusting strategies and ensuring greater adaptation to local conditions. In addition, to strengthen the rigor of evaluative processes, it is advisable to promote transparency and the participation of independent stakeholders in the review of the results, so that the findings reflect more objectively the achievements and pending challenges (Global Affairs Canada, 2020).

Final Reflection on the Sustainability of Interventions

The sustainability of international cooperation initiatives in the Peruvian education sector depends on several interconnected factors:

1. Transition from external financing to national funds,
2. Capacity building of local stakeholders,
3. Community participation,
4. Articulation with national policies, and
5. Continuous evaluation of projects.

In order to achieve long-term results, a comprehensive approach is required that incorporates all these elements and delegates to local stakeholders a decisive role in the management and management. In addition to providing funding resources, international cooperation should be involved in capacity building processes and in promoting the necessary institutional framework so that communities and authorities can continue and expand initiatives after the conclusion of external support (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

Ultimately, the consolidation of sustainability mechanisms is crucial for the achievements to become stable public policies, contributing to improve educational quality and equity in the long term. This is the only way to ensure that the benefits derived from international





cooperation transcend over time and contribute to the construction of a truly inclusive and resilient education system.

2.6 Critical Reflection on International Cooperation

The role of international cooperation in the development of the Peruvian education system has been significant, providing financial and technical support to address various persistent problems. However, its intervention has also faced challenges and dilemmas. This section reviews both the contributions and areas for improvement of cooperation, focusing on ethical and political dilemmas, alignment with national policies, evaluation of its impact and the need to move towards a sustainable and equitable model.

Ethical and Political Dilemmas of International Cooperation

International cooperation has played a significant role in shaping educational policies in Peru. However, this influence has raised ethical and political concerns regarding state autonomy and the recipient country's ability to define its own priorities (Canan, 2017). For decades, certain development partners have engaged in Peru's educational agenda with their own interests or approaches, which can be problematic when they do not align with the needs and specific characteristics of each region or community (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

In view of this situation, it is necessary to have a horizontal model of cooperation that promotes the active participation of local stakeholders in the formulation and execution of educational programs. This implies not only the transfer of resources, but also the strengthening of local capacities and the construction of an internal leadership that allows the national and subnational authorities to make decisions based on the country's realities (Tapia & Cueto, 2017).

Alignment and Consistency with National Policies

A key element for the success of cooperation interventions is the alignment of their programs with Peru's national policies and educational development strategies. Coherence between the objectives





of development partners and state priorities favors greater impact and durability of projects (National Education Council & UNESCO, 2017). In contrast, the dispersion of interventions and poor coordination between development partners agencies and local or regional authorities can weaken the impact of investments.

A positive practice in this regard is the creation of areas for dialogue that bring together the Ministry of Education, regional governments and international development partners, in order to ensure that initiatives respond to real needs and are supported by ongoing public policies (Global Affairs Canada, 2020). Likewise, the sustainability of projects is strengthened when the State integrates them into its plans and budgets.

Impact Assessment and Lessons Learned

Evaluations of international cooperation projects are an essential tool to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions (Benavides et al., 2007; Busso et al., 2017). These evaluations make it possible to identify achievements, as well as areas that require adjustments, and to extract lessons to guide future interventions. In the case of multilateral and bilateral agencies, evaluations are usually mandatory to verify the use and effectiveness of funds.

However, evaluations may present certain biases when they are financed by the same entities that implement the projects, generating pressures to show positive results. Despite this, the information gathered is valuable for undertaking continuous improvement processes (Busso et al., 2017). An example of this is the studies on World Bank assistance to primary education in Peru, which have revealed successes and challenges and enabled timely changes to be made (Benavides et al., 2007).

Towards Sustainable and Equitable Cooperation

For international cooperation to really contribute to the development of the Peruvian education system, it is imperative to adopt a sustainable and equitable approach. This implies not only the provision of funding resources, but also the strengthening of institutional capacities and community participation in the design and implementation of





programs. Development partners should play the role of facilitators of local development, supporting Peruvian communities and authorities to take the lead in building policies that reflect their own needs and priorities (Global Affairs Canada, 2020; Tapia & Cueto, 2017).

At the same time, it is essential to promote transparency and accountability in all stages of the projects, as well as in the evaluation of their impact. The inclusion of independent stakeholders in the evaluation process helps to guarantee the objectivity of the results and their usefulness for the design of new interventions.

Conclusion on International Cooperation

International cooperation has been a key driver in expanding coverage, quality, and inclusion in Peruvian education. However, to maximize its impact and ensure the sustainability of achievements, it is essential to move toward a more horizontal collaboration model—one that aligns with national policies and encourages the active involvement of local stakeholders. This requires greater coordination with subnational authorities, the strengthening of institutional capacities, and the participation of communities in the design and interventions management. Only in this way can international cooperation efforts translate into lasting and equitable improvements in Peru's education system.





CHAPTER 3

PERSISTENT
CHALLENGES AND
NEW OPPORTUNITIES
IN EDUCATIONAL
GOVERNANCE

This chapter examines the persistent challenges and new opportunities in the governance of the Peruvian education system. Despite the progress achieved with the support of international cooperation and local initiatives, challenges persist that impede the effectiveness and equity of the education system. Issues such as high officials turnover, dependence on political leadership and weak intersectoral articulation limit the sustainability of improvements. However, opportunities are also identified to optimize educational quality and move towards greater equity, especially through collaborative approaches and the strengthening of local capacities.

3.1 High Officials Turnover and Dependence on Political Leadership

One of the most persistent challenges in educational governance in Peru is the high officials turnover, both in the Ministry of Education and in subnational bodies, which affects the continuity of policies and programs. The lack of stability in key positions causes discontinuity in interventions and hinders the institutionalization of good practices, including those promoted by international cooperation (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

The dependence on political leadership also has a negative effect on the sustainability of educational policies. Government transitions often lead to the review or suspension of programs that require a long-term approach to generate a real impact (Jara Almonte & Mesinas Montero, 2023). In contexts of political instability, the lack of continuity in leadership hinders the implementation of long-term strategies and perpetuates cycles of unfinished reforms.

To address these difficulties, various stakeholders have highlighted the need for mechanisms to ensure the stability of educational projects, regardless of political fluctuations (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021). International cooperation has sought to mitigate these challenges by providing continuous advisory support at high management levels and



incorporating stable technical staff in some implementing agencies, ensuring technical oversight beyond administrative transitions.

3.2 Community Participation and Cross-Sectoral Approaches

Effective community participation and intersectoral approaches are strategic opportunities to strengthen educational governance in Peru. Actively including communities in the planning, implementation and evaluation of educational projects contributes to the relevance and acceptance of interventions, ensuring that they are tailored to the real needs of each locality (UNICEF Peru, 2021; Global Affairs Canada, 2020). In particular, the involvement of families and community leaders has been shown to be effective in increasing the sustainability of policies and improving learning outcomes.

Another major challenge is related to poor intersectoral coordination. Educational problems are closely linked to dimensions such as health, nutrition and socioeconomic development (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021). Therefore, approaches that promote collaboration between different sectors -health, social development, regional and local governments- and that do not limit educational management to an exclusively ministerial field are required.

International cooperation has supported the formation of participatory areas, such as local management committees, where community representatives, authorities, teachers and parents converge (Observatorio Latinoamericano de Políticas Educativas, 2023). These committees help to identify educational needs and prioritize actions, ensuring that initiatives respond to the specific problems of each context. However, there is still a need to strengthen these mechanisms and promote greater articulation between the levels of government and local organizations, so that educational policies are effective and sustainable.





3.3 Innovation and New Technologies in Cooperation

The incorporation of new technologies in the Peruvian education system offers both opportunities and challenges. The digital gap continues to be a relevant problem, particularly in rural and indigenous areas, where access to devices and connectivity is limited (Observatorio Latinoamericano de Políticas Educativas, 2023). Although international cooperation has promoted the provision of technological resources and training in digital skills, there are still barriers that hinder the full integration of technology in teaching and learning processes (UNESCO, 2021).

In addition to the availability of technological resources, it is essential to distinguish between technological innovation and pedagogical innovation. While the former refers to the use of digital devices and tools, the latter involves modifications in teaching methodologies, oriented towards student-centered, collaborative and active learning. International cooperation has supported both types of innovation, but priority should be given to those that truly transform educational practices and strengthen quality teaching (Peru, Ministry of Education, GTZ, Technical Cooperation, & KFW, 2002).

For example, programs have been developed to improve connectivity in rural schools with the support of multilateral organizations, enabling students to access online resources and improve their digital skills. These experiences are often complemented with the training of teachers in the pedagogical use of ICTs, aiming to reduce the digital gap in vulnerable communities (World Bank, 2013). However, the challenge lies in ensuring that such initiatives go beyond mere technological provision and lead to significant and sustainable pedagogical changes.

3.4 Sustainability of Educational Interventions

The sustainability of educational interventions is a critical factor to ensure that the achievements obtained in the short term will last in the long term, especially when such interventions are externally funded. Several initiatives supported by international cooperation have had a notable impact on the improvement of the Peruvian education system, but the absence of sustainable mechanisms has limited the continuity of these advances once foreign funding has ended (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).





Among the most significant challenges in relation to sustainability is the transition from external to national funding. For interventions to be effective in the long term, the Peruvian government must progressively assume financial and operational responsibility for projects originated by development partners. An illustrative example is the Learning Achievement Program (PELA), which initially received support from the World Bank and then became part of the public budget, becoming a budgetary program. Although this transition ensured the formal continuity of the program, it also revealed difficulties in maintaining the quality of the strategies conceived during the international funding phase (Peru. Ministry of Education, 2016).

Strengthening local capacities is another essential pillar of sustainability. This implies not only the teachers and administrators training, but also the consolidation of local institutions capable of managing and supervising the initiatives (Carrillo, 2021). International cooperation has contributed to human resources training, but such training must be sustained over time and respond to the particular needs of each context.

The importance of the evaluations requested by the cooperation agencies themselves should be emphasized. Although the funding of these studies may generate a certain bias in the entity conducting the evaluation, the information gathered is valuable to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement (Benavides et al., 2007; Busso et al., 2017). Similarly, the participation of the community in the management and evaluation of projects strengthens the sense of ownership and continuity of actions. Interventions that actively involve the local population from their design tend to show more successful results in the long term (UNICEF Peru, 2021).

3.5 Final reflection on Persistent Challenges and Opportunities

The Peruvian education system faces several limitations that constrain its ability to ensure quality and equitable education, but at the same time opportunities emerge that can be seized through collaboration between the State, international cooperation and the local community. Among the most pressing obstacles are high officials





turnover, dependence on political leadership, weak community participation and the digital gap.

A major challenge is staff turnover in the educational sector, which has an impact on the stability of policies and programs. To overcome this, mechanisms are needed to encourage the permanence and commitment of technical staff, as well as a greater state effort to consolidate and institutionalize reforms (Jara Almonte & Mesinas Montero, 2023). International cooperation has tried to alleviate this problem with technical advice and training, but a broader commitment from the State is needed to ensure the continuity of successful practices (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

Community participation is another key component. When communities are an active part of project planning and evaluation, interventions tend to be better adapted to real needs and sustained over time (UNICEF, 2024b). Although international cooperation has promoted participatory approaches that include communities at different stages, it is essential to intensify these mechanisms and ensure citizen involvement not only in the implementation, but also in the formulation of education policies.

The digital gap also represents a major challenge, especially in rural and indigenous regions with limited access to connectivity and technological devices (Observatorio Latinoamericano de Políticas Educativas, 2023). Despite the contributions of international cooperation in the provision of technological resources and digital training, coordination of efforts between the State, the private sector and local communities is required so that all students have the tools to boost their personal and economic development (UNESCO, 2024).

In conclusion, although the Peruvian education system faces multiple difficulties, there are also opportunities for improvement through effective partnerships and collaborative approaches involving local stakeholders, international cooperation and national authorities. Overcoming these challenges -from officials turnover to the digital gap- requires a comprehensive vision of educational governance and a renewed commitment to consolidate reforms for the benefit of all students.





CHAPTER 4

PERSISTENT
CHALLENGES AND
NEW OPPORTUNITIES
IN EDUCATIONAL
GOVERNANCE

This chapter presents a review of the achievements and experiences of international cooperation in Peruvian education. Over the last decades, international development partners have played a key role in strengthening the country's education system, contributing both to infrastructure and to the quality and equity of education. These interventions have had a significant impact on access to education, the quality of teacher training and the inclusion of vulnerable populations -such as rural and indigenous communities and students with disabilities-, while at the same time showing challenges related to the sustainability of improvements. Some of the most important contributions are described below, along with good practices and lessons learned.

4.1 Improvement of Educational Infrastructure

One of the most visible contributions of international cooperation has been the improvement of educational infrastructure, with particular relevance in rural and historically neglected areas. Agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank (WB) have financed programs for the construction and rehabilitation of schools in highly vulnerable areas (Benavides et al., 2007; Observatorio Latinoamericano de Políticas Educativas, 2023). These investments have made it possible to improve the physical conditions in which education is provided, contributing to a safer and more adequate environment for students and teachers.



Contributions in Rural Infrastructure and Maintenance Gap

A. School Construction and Rehabilitation:

In many areas of the highlands and jungle, the lack of safe classrooms, adequate bathrooms and recreational areas has been identified as a main barrier to school permanence, especially in highly vulnerable contexts (INEI, 2022b; Rosas Lezema et al., 2022). Several programs financed by international cooperation -through credits and donations channeled by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, among others- have allowed the construction or improvement of facilities, the provision of furniture and the expansion of basic services in numerous rural schools (Observatorio Latinoamericano de Políticas Educativas, 2023). These interventions have contributed to mitigate the precariousness of the infrastructure, strengthening learning conditions in communities that historically faced greater obstacles to access.

B. National Educational Infrastructure Plan:

The World Bank, together with other stakeholders, supported the formulation of a proposed plan that would establish priorities and estimate costs in school infrastructure, with the purpose of making investment transparent and contemplating complementary funding mechanisms (World Bank, 2017). This initiative also sought to generate a planning instrument that would facilitate the efficient allocation of resources and the sustainability of the works, contributing to improve teaching and learning conditions in the most vulnerable areas of the country.

C. Modular Solutions:

Initiatives such as the “modular schools” proposal, analyzed by Rivera (2021), appear as a viable alternative for areas of difficult access, characterized by geographic dispersion and limited resources. These solutions allow for a flexible and scalable design, facilitating the rapid construction of educational spaces and adapting them to environments with high transportation





costs or limited availability of construction materials. In this way, we seek to reduce the educational infrastructure gap in rural and indigenous areas where the construction of conventional schools usually faces major logistical obstacles.

Sustainability and Community Participation

Despite progress, the sustainability of the works continues to be a critical problem. Insufficient funds and maintenance plans, coupled with competition with other urgent sectors, often relegate the conservation of educational infrastructure (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021; Rosas Lezema et al., 2022). In response, local educational management committees have been promoted that involve the community in the prioritization, supervision and projects care (Peru. Ministry of Education et al., 2002). In this way, local ownership is fostered and co-responsibility in the management and maintenance of the facilities is reinforced, ensuring the continuity of improvements once external contributions are completed.

4.2 Strengthening the Quality of Education

Strengthening the quality of education has been another major achievement promoted by international cooperation in the Peruvian education system. The main lines of action include teacher training, the development of student-centered curricula and the implementation of evaluation systems to monitor student progress and the effectiveness of interventions.

Teacher Training and Innovative Methodologies

A. Continuing Education Programs

The German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) and the World Bank have promoted training initiatives aimed at improving teachers' pedagogical skills (Busso et al., 2017; Programas de formación docente en servicio en el Perú..., n/d). These actions include active methodologies, the use of ICT and project-based





approaches, promoting student participation and improved academic performance.

B. Focus on Rural Areas

In areas with less access to training opportunities, international cooperation has provided resources and technical support (Carrillo, 2021). This has made it possible to adjust pedagogical tools to contexts with linguistic diversity and access limitations, increasing the relevance of teaching and reducing the quality gaps that have historically affected the most remote regions.

Educational Evaluation and Evidence-Based Decision Making

International cooperation has also collaborated in the creation of evaluation systems that make it possible to measure student performance and the efficiency of institutions (Benavides et al., 2007). However, challenges persist in contextualizing the grades, considering socioeconomic, cultural and geographic factors (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021). The relationship between assessment grades and educational quality is not linear, which calls for a reasonable use of the results to guide policies (UNESCO, 2022).

Despite progress, territorial inequalities persist, limiting the scope of improvements in the educational quality. Therefore, international cooperation should continue to support the Peruvian State, ensuring that teacher training and reforms focus on reducing the gaps between urban and rural contexts (UNICEF Peru, 2021).

4.3 Inclusive Education and Attention to Diversity

International cooperation has played an essential role in promoting inclusive education and addressing cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic diversity in Peru. These interventions seek to ensure that all students can exercise their right to education without discrimination.





Inclusive Education Programs: “+Inclusión” and “Horizontes”.

A. +Inclusión

Led by UNICEF and the NGO SODIS, it seeks to improve infrastructure and teacher training for students with disabilities (UNICEF, 2024a). Its contributions stand out in the adaptation of school environments (ramps, accessible bathrooms) and the creation of didactic materials that facilitate integration. This strategy has been applied in both rural and urban schools with precarious equipment, also promoting community awareness of disability.

B. Horizontes

Also implemented by UNICEF, it focuses on rural secondary education under an inclusive and culturally appropriate approach (Alonso-Pastor, 2022). In addition to recognizing and valuing cultural identity and native languages, it encourages community participation in school management, underpinning local relevance and sustainability of actions (UNESCO, n.d.).

These initiatives demonstrate the positive impact of international cooperation in making quality education available to students previously excluded for physical, cultural or socio-economic reasons. However, the shortage of specialized teachers and sufficient resources remains a challenge to ensure the continuity and reach of inclusive actions.

Promotion of Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB)

Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB) constitutes another priority for cooperation, as it is recognized that the indigenous population requires a pedagogical approach that respects their language and worldview (Oliart, 2018). The Canadian Cooperation and others have contributed with:

1. **Production of materials in native languages:** books, teaching guides and digital resources adapted to local cultures (Tapia & Cueto, 2017).





- 2. Teacher training:** Training to enable teachers to function in bilingual and culturally relevant contexts, reducing the learning gap that affects many indigenous communities.

Food Support Programs as an Educational Incentive

The development of programs such as Qali Warma, also supported by international cooperation, works as an incentive for children from impoverished families to attend school (Peru. Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, n/d). These programs not only contribute to food security and nutrition, but also have an impact on reducing school dropout rates by providing a direct incentive to families.

Persistent Challenges in Inclusive Education

Despite progress, the teacher training specialized in special educational needs and the adequacy of infrastructures for people with disabilities remain a challenge (UNESCO, 2024). Similarly, the implementation of EIB is limited by the lack of bilingual teachers and culturally relevant materials (Oliart, 2018). International cooperation can continue to provide technical and financial support to address these deficits and strengthen equity in the educational offerings.

4.4 Good Practices and Lessons Learned

The analysis of international cooperation experiences in Peruvian education has identified good practices and lessons learned that can be replicated to improve quality and inclusion in the education system. These elements reflect the achievements and also highlight key areas where cooperation can increase its impact and ensure the sustainability of interventions.

Community Involvement and Local Collaboration

Community involvement in the planning, management and evaluation of educational projects has shown a positive impact on sustainability (GRADE, 2021). The creation of Local Educational





Management Committees, which integrate community representatives, teachers and authorities, makes it possible to adapt initiatives to the reality of each locality and strengthen co-responsibility. This approach contributes to:

1. Greater relevance of actions by aligning interventions with the needs and expectations of the community.
2. Continuity of achievements, since the community acts as the guardian and supervisor of the improvements introduced, preventing them from depending solely on external funding.
3. Stronger links between the school and its social environment, facilitating the mobilization of local resources and the follow-up of agreed strategies).

Cultural Adaptation and Contextualization of Programs

The adaptation of contents and methodologies to linguistic and cultural diversity has been fundamental to promote inclusion and raise academic achievement (Tapia & Cueto, 2017). Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB), for example, is based on the recognition of native languages and indigenous worldviews, ensuring relevant and motivating teaching for students who come from these communities.

Local Capacity Building

International cooperation has supported administrators training and capacity building in Local Educational Management Units (UGEL, by its acronym in Spanish), which has strengthened decentralized educational management (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021). The provision of management and supervision tools increases the resilience of the education system in the face of possible political or financial changes.

➡ Example of PELA

An illustrative case that shows the importance of planning for sustainability is the Learning Achievement Education Program (PELA, by its acronym in Spanish), initially promoted with funding from the World Bank





and later integrated into the public budget (Guadalupe et al., 2017). Although its transition to state funding ensured formal continuity, it faced challenges to maintain the levels of quality and pedagogical accompaniment initially envisaged. This example underscores the need for:

1. Design transition plans from the early stages of the intervention, so that local capacities and resource allocation are consolidated.
2. Ensure coordination with national policies and structures, preventing successful projects from disappearing or being undermined when external funding ceases.

Maintain technical support and coordination with subnational authorities so that pedagogical improvements are sustained over time.

Project Evaluation and Continuous Learning

Project evaluations, despite possible biases due to funding by the development partners agencies themselves, have made it possible to learn lessons and detect areas for improvement (Benavides et al., 2007). In order to enhance their effectiveness:

- Incorporate independent stakeholders in the evaluation process, increasing the objectivity and legitimacy of the findings.
- Return results in an accessible way to teachers, administrators and communities, encouraging feedback and adaptation strategies.
- Link conclusions to concrete actions, so that evidence-based improvement plans are generated and aligned with the diversity of contexts.

In sum, community participation, cultural contextualization, local capacity building and periodic evaluation of interventions are good practices that help raise the quality of education and ensure the continuity of improvements. The example of PELA highlights the importance of planning for sustainability from the beginning, so that the programs do not depend excessively on foreign funding and have sufficient structure to maintain themselves when it ends (Guadalupe





et al., 2017). Only through local ownership, collaboration with the authorities and articulation with national policies can the achievements of international cooperation be consolidated and its benefits extended to the country's most vulnerable communities (Guadalupe et al., 2017).

4.5 Final Reflections on International Cooperation Achievements and Experiences

The analysis of international cooperation interventions in Peruvian education shows that, despite significant progress, challenges persist that condition the long-term impact of these initiatives. The accumulated experiences offer valuable lessons and highlight good practices that can be replicated to consolidate a more equitable and sustainable education system.

Significant Contributions from International Cooperation

1. School Infrastructure Improvement

International cooperation, through agencies such as the World Bank and the IDB, has allowed the construction and rehabilitation of schools in historically marginalized areas. Initiatives such as the formulation of the National Education Infrastructure Plan (World Bank, 2017) and the adoption of modular solutions (Rivera, 2021) have contributed to reduce the gap in the availability of adequate areas for learning. These actions have had a direct impact on student permanence and performance, especially in areas of high vulnerability, although the sustainability of these improvements remains a challenge due to the lack of maintenance plans and resources for their conservation (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

2. Strengthening Educational Quality

Teacher training has been a central axis for raising the teaching quality. Continuous training programs promoted by the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) and the World Bank have introduced innovative methodologies -such as the use of ICT and project-based approaches- that have expanded the pedagogical repertoire of teachers (Busso et al., 2017). In addition, the implementation of educational assessment





systems has made it possible to measure student performance and guide decision making, although it is necessary to continue adjusting these instruments to reflect the diversity of contexts (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

3. Promoting Inclusive Education and Attention to Diversity

Initiatives such as the “+Inclusion” program, led by UNICEF and the NGO SODIS, and the “Horizontes” project have enabled students with disabilities and from indigenous communities to access a more inclusive and culturally relevant education (UNICEF, 2024a; Alonso-Pastor, 2022). The promotion of Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB), supported by the Canadian Cooperation, has allowed the development of materials in native languages and the teacher training to work in intercultural contexts, reinforcing cultural identity and reducing dropout in historically marginalized communities (Oliart, 2018; Tapia & Cueto, 2017).

Challenges in Sustainability and Local Ownership

Despite these achievements, the sustainability of interventions remains a crucial challenge. The example of the Achieving Learning Achievement Education Program (PELA) illustrates how, despite having been initially funded by the World Bank and subsequently integrated into the public budget, the program faced difficulties in maintaining levels of quality and pedagogical accompaniment (Guadalupe et al., 2017). This case highlights the importance of designing transition plans from the beginning, strengthening local capacities and ensuring articulation with national policies.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations for the Future

- ➔ **Sustainability Planning:** The PELA experience highlights the need to incorporate transition strategies from external to national funding from the early stages of the intervention.
- ➔ **Local Capacity Building:** The administrators training and the consolidation of Local Educational Management Units are essential for improvements to last and adapt to contextual changes.





- ➔ **Local Participation and Ownership:** Involving communities at all stages, from planning to evaluation, ensures that interventions respond to real needs and generate a sense of ownership that will drive their continuity.
- ➔ **Critical and Transparent Evaluation:** Periodic evaluations should be complemented by independent mechanisms to reduce potential bias and ensure that findings serve as a basis for effectively adjusting and improving strategies (Benavides et al., 2007; Global Affairs Canada, 2020).

Final Reflection

In short, international cooperation has been an important driving force in expanding access, improving quality and promoting inclusion in Peruvian education. However, for these advances to be consolidated and translated into lasting changes, greater coordination with national policies and the strengthening of state and community capacities are essential. Only through close and sustained collaboration will it be possible to ensure that the benefits of international cooperation transcend over time and reach the country's most vulnerable communities in an equitable manner.





CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the main results of the analysis of international cooperation in Peruvian education, identifying both the achievements and the challenges that remain. The previous chapters have addressed the contributions and limitations of cooperation in areas such as educational infrastructure, teacher quality, and the inclusion of vulnerable populations. Based on these observations, conclusions are presented that allow us to understand the impact of cooperation in the Peruvian education system and recommendations are formulated to improve the sustainability and effectiveness of future interventions.

5.1 General Conclusions

International cooperation has been a key driver in the transformation of the Peruvian education system in recent decades. From the review of the interventions and experiences analyzed in this study, its conclusions are as follows:

Significant Contributions and Successes

➔ Improvement of Educational Infrastructure:

Multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the IDB have facilitated the construction and schools' rehabilitation in rural areas and historically underserved regions. Initiatives such as the National Education Infrastructure Plan have made it possible to establish mechanisms to make investment transparent and prioritize resources in areas of greatest need (World Bank, 2017). Likewise, modular solutions have offered viable alternatives for contexts of difficult access, contributing to reducing the infrastructure gap (Rivera, 2021).



➡ **Strengthening Educational Quality:**

Continuous training programs promoted by development partners such as the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) and the World Bank have improved the pedagogical teachers' skills, especially in rural areas where training was historically scarce. The incorporation of active methodologies and the use of ICTs have made it possible to renew teaching approaches, fostering more participatory and student-centered learning (Busso et al., 2017; Carrillo, 2021).

➡ **Promotion of Inclusive Education and Attention to Diversity:**

Interventions such as the “+Inclusión” and “Horizontes” programs have expanded educational coverage towards vulnerable populations, including students with disabilities and indigenous communities. The promotion of Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB) has contributed to making teaching culturally relevant, strengthening the identity of indigenous students and reducing barriers to access to quality education (Oliart, 2018; Tapia & Cueto, 2017).

Persistent Challenges and Structural Constraints

➡ **Dependence on External funding:**

Despite the increase in public spending and the incorporation of initiatives such as the Results-Oriented Budget Programs, dependence on foreign resources continues to be an obstacle to the sustainability of many interventions. The case of the Learning Achievement Education Program (PELA) illustrates how, although its transition to state funding allowed formal continuity, difficulties were evidenced in maintaining quality levels and pedagogical accompaniment once international support ended (Guadalupe et al., 2017).

➡ **Fragmentation and Regional Disparities:**

Gaps between urban and rural areas persist, evidenced by the unequal distribution of infrastructure, teacher training and technological resources. These inequalities stem from historical and structural factors that, in many cases, have been insufficiently addressed by cooperation





interventions, which often fail to be coherently integrated into national policies (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021; de Belaunde et al., 2024).

➔ **Weaknesses in Governance and Institutional Continuity:**

High officials turnover, dependence on political leadership and weak participation of local stakeholders in project management hinder the continuity of educational policies. These weaknesses are reflected both in the implementation of teachers training programs and in infrastructure management, which prevents achievements from being consolidated in the long term (Jara Almonte & Mesinas Montero, 2023; Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

➔ **Complexity of the Expenditure Management and Planning System:**

In the effort to optimize public spending from the central government, an extremely complex and inflexible budget management and planning system has been configured. This rigidity limits the capacity of local authorities to manage and cover current expenditures, essential for support activities in education, which aggravates conditions in the territories (Guadalupe et al., 2017; Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).

➔ **Limitations in the Evaluation and Adaptation of Interventions:**

Although evaluation systems have been implemented to measure the impact of programs, the lack of contextualization of results and the possible presence of biases due to the funding of evaluations limit the ability to make effective adjustments. There is a need to strengthen transparency and the participation of independent stakeholders so that evaluations more accurately reflect local realities and allow strategies to be adjusted according to the diversity of contexts (Benavides et al., 2007; Global Affairs Canada, 2020).

Synthesis and Future Prospects

In short, international cooperation has contributed significantly to expanding access, improving quality and promoting inclusion in the Peruvian education system. However, structural challenges-such as dependence on external funding, the rigidity of the expenditure





management system, the fragmentation of interventions, and weaknesses in governance-limit the scope and durability of these advances.

For the achievements to be consolidated and expanded, it is essential that the Peruvian government takes a more active role, integrating cooperation interventions into long-term public policies and strengthening local and institutional capacities. Only through close coordination between international development partners, state authorities and communities will it be possible to build a truly equitable, inclusive and sustainable education system over time.

5.2 Recommendations for the Improvement of the Educational System

The previous section has presented the main contributions and emerging challenges that can be attributed to the intervention of international cooperation. For the impact of interventions to translate into lasting and equitable improvements in the Peruvian education system, it is essential to adopt a comprehensive approach that addresses both the structural limitations and the need to consolidate the progress achieved. In this sense, this section will offer recommendations that have been drawn from the literature review carried out, as well as from the exercise of reflecting on the experiences presented throughout this document:

Strengthening Interinstitutional Coordination

- ➔ **Creation of Multisectoral Dialogue Roundtables:** It is recommended to establish coordination areas that bring together the Ministry of Education, regional and local authorities, international development partners and community stakeholders. These spaces will facilitate the alignment of interventions with national priorities and will allow optimizing the allocation of resources, avoiding dispersion and duplication of efforts (Global Affairs Canada, 2020; National Education Council & UNESCO, 2017).





Ongoing Training and Local Capacity Building

- ➔ **Sustained Training programs:** It is essential to promote teacher training initiatives that not only introduce innovative methodologies, but also strengthen educational leadership and management at the local level. The experience of the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) and the efforts of the World Bank have demonstrated the importance of providing teachers and administrators with updated tools, especially in rural areas where they have historically had less access to training (Busso et al., 2017; Carrillo, 2021).
- ➔ **Strengthening UGELs and Other Local Bodies:** The consolidation of Local Educational Management Units is key to ensure the continuity of interventions. The training of technical and administrator staff to manage projects autonomously will help reduce high turnover and ensure that the strategies implemented will last after external support ends (GIZ, 2019; Jara Almonte & Mesinas Montero, 2023).

Promotion of Mixed Funding and Transition from External to Domestic Funding

- ➔ **Diversification of Funding Sources:** It is suggested to promote a mixed model involving the State, the private sector and NGOs, reducing dependence exclusively on international funds. This will allow that, as development partners withdraw their support, state and private funding will ensure the continuity of interventions (Balarin & Saavedra, 2021).
- ➔ **Transition Planning for Successful Programs:** Examples such as the Education for Learning Achievement Program (PELA) show the need to design strategies from the beginning for the gradual transfer of funding and project management to the State. This implies integrating the initiatives into educational development plans and national budgets, ensuring that the quality and scope of the strategies are maintained over time (Guadalupe et al., 2017; Ministry of Education, 2016).





Alignment and Articulation with National Policies

- ➔ **Integration into educational development plans:** Cooperation interventions should be articulated with existing public policies to ensure coherence and replicability. The formation of areas for permanent dialogue between development partners and state authorities will help to ensure that initiatives are framed within a long-term development project, ensuring the relevance and sustainability of achievements (National Education Council & UNESCO, 2017).

Evaluation and Continuous Learning

- ➔ **Develop Inclusive and Transparent Evaluations:** It is recommended to complement evaluations funded by development partners agencies with independent mechanisms, to reduce possible biases and ensure an objective view of the impact of interventions. Evaluations should consider both quantitative and qualitative results, making it possible to identify areas for improvement and adjust strategies on an ongoing basis (Benavides et al., 2007; Global Affairs Canada, 2020).
- ➔ **Permanent Feedback and Adjustment:** The information generated by the evaluations should be disseminated in a way that is accessible to teachers, administrators and communities, so as to generate a culture of continuous improvement that allows adapting interventions to the changing realities of the educational environment (Busso et al., 2017).





Final reflection

In order to consolidate the achievements of international cooperation in the Peruvian education system and move towards a truly equitable and sustainable model, it is essential for the State to assume a more active role in the formulation, management and funding of education policies. Interinstitutional coordination, continuous training, mixed funding, community participation and rigorous evaluation are essential pillars for transforming the system and reducing existing gaps.

It is important to recognize that the main stakeholders in the execution of actions on the education system are government agencies and their staff at different levels of government. However, non-formal support networks, made up of local civil society organizations and leaders, represent a valuable resource that should also be strengthened. These networks provide constant support and allow for greater sustainability of projects, as they act as catalysts for change and foster community ownership of interventions. Only through close and horizontal collaboration between international development partners, state authorities and local communities will it be possible to ensure that the benefits of the interventions are maintained and expanded over time, responding effectively to the real needs of the country.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that, despite the series of limitations and missed opportunities that are conjugated in the collective memory, there is a wide range of expectations at play in education. Not only is it a strategic area for the overall development of Peruvian society, but it is also an area in which families invest many resources, both material and immaterial, in the hope that children and adolescents will achieve development opportunities that previous generations did not have. Education has always had a deep meaning in the imagination of Peruvian society, and is at present both a bet for the future and a mirror of how we see ourselves as a society. There is no place for a fairer country, with greater opportunities for all, without quality education available to all.



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