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**Resumen**

A lo largo de las últimas décadas, la investigación de “*género*” se ha desarrollado ampliamente tanto a nivel teórico como empírico. En tiempos de crisis, sin embargo, a las clases más bajas, a las razas arrinconadas, a la ciudadanía marginada, a pobres y excluidos por causas sectarias, se les plantean más problemas, y mientras tanto, las diferencias entre hombres y mujeres aumentan. Y esto se evidencia con claridad en aquellos lugares en los que el orden global altera los caminos particulares hacia el desarrollo. En áreas rurales de América Latina, a hombres y mujeres se les considera de forma desigual. Partiendo de estos supuestos, para poder referenciar nuevos caminos hacia la igualdad, en el artículo pretendemos investigar de qué manera, bajo qué premisas educativas, y bajo qué organizaciones sociales, se pueden minimizar los rasgos negativos que derivan de percepciones distorsionadas por razón de género. Para llegar aquí, corresponde primero analizar qué significa compartir en espacios públicos y privados en unos y otros contextos y circunstancias. Y por cuanto que los estereotipos de género no son fijos, sino resultado de complejas circunstancias que inciden en relaciones de dominio establecidas bajo un orden de valores colonial que oprime a los oprimidos, no queda espacio para buscar un reequilibrio entre desarrollo de los derechos humanos y participación ciudadana de hombres y mujeres por igual.

**Abstract**

Research on “*gender*” has developed the last decades as an important theoretical and empirical field of research. But in times of crisis, when lower classes, race minorities, citizens on the margin, and the poor, are the excluded for sectarian reasons, disparities between men and women increase. This is particularly observed in those spaces where the internationally defined global dominance order disrupts local paths to development. In rural areas in Latin America, men and women are unequal. In this paper, in order to generate new paths towards equality, we aim to investigate in which ways, under which educational premises, and under what social organizations, gendered negative features can be minimized. To get to this point, we are forced to analyze what means sharing public and private spheres of life in one and another context and circumstance. Evidently, gender stereotypes are not fixed, neither gender heritage. They are a result of mixed circumstances related to how the relations of dominion and dominance are established in a colonial modeled order which oppresses the oppressed and leaves no space to find a balance to develop human rights and citizenship participation for men and women in this time in history.

**Palabras clave**

Régimen de género; Masculinidad; Educación rural; Estereotipos; Exclusión; Participación ciudadana

**Keywords**

Gender regime; Maleness; Rural education; Stereotypes; Exclusion; Citizenship participation

## 1. Gender differences: how practices discriminate.

The concept of gender, rather than sex, is used to emphasize that men and women are socially and culturally reproduced rather than shaped by specific biological differences. Following Connell (1987), gender differences in terms of individual behavior, attitudes, economic conditions, femininities and masculinities, are structurally created and refined at different levels and in different contexts: global, national, regional, institutional, social and individual. And this often culminates in discriminating practices and stereotyped views of women as being tied to their biology, nature and the private sphere of the home. In contrast men are found in the sciences, abstract thinking, and the public sphere of paid work, industry and politics.

That is why, when it is to identify the formal and informal processes of power and policy that affect women and men advancement and (full) development (Marshall, 1997; pp. 2-3), feminist critical analysis is to be supported in clear values. Cultural factors such as gender, or ethnicity, or social class, influence how policies are made and in whose interests (Marshall, 1997; p. 3). However, regulations and policy documentation embody a set of language practices and conventions, and a social set of practices that govern their use which is affected by ideology and power relations. The documentation sets the norms that others are compelled to follow and the language that others must work with. This means that the ideas and ideologies emanating from the norms (when there are) and their less visible discursive and material implications (Weiner, 1994), always makes a difference between policy statements and their interpretations in practice and outcomes.

But to differentiate between policy statements practice and outcomes, we are forced to distinguish between *symbolic* and *material* power, as it is done with human and other capitals (Zembylas, 2007). "*Symbolic*" refers to policies lacking defined measures, whereas "*material*" policies contain measures aimed at policy implementation and change. In this order, the aspirations emanating from policy legislation and their visible discursive and material implications are different. Decentralization can increase citizenship involvement in the decisions, but an increase in management practices in which the individual and the social becomes responsible for maintaining the level of quality of service, is not an optimal solution, because this represents negation of politics for a better society, for equality and for better citizenship participation.

In circumstances when resources become scarce, the extent to which social actors are able to intervene in decentralized open systems of rulemaking, can be seen from another angle. As a result, the possible influence of feminism and gender issues in decision-making at a supra-national, national or regional levels, or in organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, and others, can get lost. The work market is biased from gender perspectives, women salaries are lower, and women professionals, everywhere in the world, work twice as hard whether paid or unpaid. Household and care are not socialized, and women's abilities at work, to share and to cooperate (Luke, 1996) are not really valued.

At this point, no feminist analysis can be neutral. Gender is to be used as a lens through which to conceptualize the policy apparatus that maintains and breeds male oriented systems of perceptions about reality. Penetrating governance from gender perspectives can be gaining acceptance in the world, but policy advances can be easily reversed when the leading aims for change are twisted for one or another reason. And to get to reduce the gap between theorizing and practical issues, activism is important (Maguire, 2006). In the end, positive intervention is necessary. Gender equality is affected by discourses and ideologies, but the interventions of civil society and practitioners are always there. In our paper, women from rural communities, under classed *Inca* and *Aymara*, have all types of difficulties to become equal citizens in a global galaxy of interconnections. Development is biased by class, race, gender, social images, social and cultural values, and this is not acceptable in times of global change.

## 2. Research on feminisms today: are positive practices left aside?

Research on feminism, and/or academic feminism, is concentrating at this point in time, on big issues related to violence, inequality, and similar ideas (Moran, 2011), through sociological research, cultural studies, and issues related to social sciences. The global order of dominion and dominance is advocating feminism research not to engage with the everyday life of ordinary women and their concerns, and is attempting to leave aside (in a way) the space of everyday issues and concerns about how the world of real practices develops in the different fields of research and in the different territorial spaces. However, when dealing with a context in which research on gender makes a difference in engaging in the struggle for equality, research on practical situations (Zufiaurre, Wilkinson, Albertin, 2013; pp. 126-128) is always important.

It could be said that the field of “*Gender*” which has expanded to all spheres of life and all fields of research has, in a way, missed the opportunity to forge a discipline to embrace practitioners and academics, practice and theory, inclusiveness and permeability, consciousness and action (Weiner, 2012; p. 3). Gender studies have moved towards theory, while research about changing practices has been left aside. This means that, while feminist thought has expanded, and while policy making on “*gender issues*” has expanded for overall democratic growing (Zufiaurre, Pellejero & Weiner, 2010; pp. 401-403), feminist activism has become a secondary issue (Hooks, 1989). What real is that theorizing and policy making have changed but practices take a deal to change.

But as it usually happens in situations in which one or another movement gets certain *symbolic power*, apparently successful under one or another circumstance in one or another context and in one or another moment and situation, what remains true is that this form of *symbolic power* can be fruitfully approachable, or not, in the different moments, contexts, or circumstances. Research on “*gender*” has moved forward, but if practitioners and academics do not find a joint space, if theory is not accompanied by the opportune practices or, if this symbolic power is not used properly, research on “*gender*” will not move ahead successfully in different contexts and circumstances. That is why, to clarify the state of the art in “*gender studies*” at all levels with the aim of dismantling the modern gendered biased order is, and will be, always relevant.

However, clarifications are never enough. If the aim is to change attitudes related to discrimination on the basis of gender, circumstances and realities are always present and are to be taken into account. And to change all this, practical actions are necessary (Zufiaurre et al., 2013; pp. 126-130). Research related to practice, or guided by, leads to better results than reflections on issues, which of course are also important, but which evidently are difficult to grasp adjusted to an order of global recipes to opt for in different circumstances, contexts and realities. Knowledge and theory are important, but consciousness and action get further on (Weiner, 2012; p. 4).

“*Gender*” is today a flourishing field of research which pushes to improvement and to social changes (Zufiaurre et al., 2010). But “*gender research*” can take different directions and move backwards. Any movement with aspirations of change has to be rooted. If a movement is not rooted, and if circumstances change, the order of the things, and the priorities, will change, twist, or reverse. This is something which has happened, for example, in policy making and practical developments in the different periods of transition in Spain since the 1970`s onwards (Zufiaurre, et al., 2010). European gender legislation has been the frame for changes these last 40 years, but even so, realities have become entangled with particular political actions in the different periods, be it more progressive, or more conservative.

## 3. Rural communities in times of globalization

In a global world when different countries and particular sectors of the population, such as “*the ignored*”, or “*silenced*” (Torres, 1995), that is, those whose options for life are considered less suitable and are subject to discrimination, the rural arena is not a space to guarantee development. Urban way of life is the model, and rural communities face more and bigger

challenges. Under classed citizens are out of city life. They can perhaps find new spaces in the outskirts of cities, but these spaces (in the margins of everywhere) are open to exclusion. Under these premises, and when confronting development, women, and especially under classed women, face all type of difficulties to be integrated into left out scenarios, for example, city areas or rural spaces. And this is so in spite of many educational interventions backed by progressive national governments and supported by international organizations such as UNESCO and the United Nations.

It is commonly assumed that rural settings are less developed than urban settlements for many different reasons, and it is also assumed that rural communities are less cultured, less involved in technological advances, and more concerned in maintaining ancient cultural patterns of life which are not open to progressive changes. If we look at it from the point of view of the established male - female order, patriarchy and sexism quote ruralities (Balfour, 2012). In rural communities, women have less labor opportunities, and women have to fight more for their rights. In a global networked world we are confronted by new times. There is a broad range of citizens emigrating from cities to rural settlements looking for a better quality of life and abandoning the stressful competitive world. It is a different context in which historical peculiarities at this time, in both rural and urban settings, possibly reproduce new synergies for change. And if little advance can be appreciated, it is probably due to the global social and economic crisis. Today there is an open space for the movement of slow, returning to ecology, to nature, to organic food and to care for the environment, but the global crisis runs parallel.

At this point we have to agree with Bryant and Pini (2011) when they sustain that the interrelationship between gender and class in rural spaces has received little attention. Bryant and Pini (2011) show how values are gendered and classed. Class is emotionally inscribed in gendered features, both economically and morally, and is also represented through symbolic signifiers and cultural narratives. Research by Balfour, Mitchell, Moletsane (2008), demonstrates that the generative and transformative nature of rurality serves both to inform and to delimit the effectiveness of intervention programs designed for education, health care, job creation and poverty alleviation. Balfour et al. (2008) stated that a theory of rurality is to care for contemporary theories of globalization and society. As such, they advocate for a co-generative theory of rurality in dynamic interaction of different variables in which the transitions and social integration of young people: boys and girls, youngsters, men and women, are shaped by the localities, the spaces they are brought in and through, the ways in which they pass on their way to adulthood.

It is in this scenario and immersed in the situation of crisis we live, that we have probably the key for a change of mind and understanding about gender equality for humans living in rural and urban areas. At this point, the possibilities to outline geographical research and education can have a restructuring effect. A decentered outward-looking literature can help to understand what can be achieved when researching on children, youth and families, considered as subjects rather than the objects of education. This demands attention to their current and future life-worlds in both inward and outward looking geographies of education open to mobility and to cultural change. It is in the process of construction of human identities as citizens of the world that the construction of open gender identities can be performed and negotiated.

Change starts opening education not to ignore the voices of some, such as the silenced, as it has been done in modern times (Hamilton & Zufiaurre, 2014). There is an ecology of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1987) in which successful and effective implementation of educational innovation depends on the adequate understanding of the educational work to be done, implementing it in the organizations, and providing the necessary material and human resources for innovation. Inclusive education fails if it is not accepted by the teachers and if it does not reculture the schools and the atmosphere in the classrooms (Hargreaves, 1997). Change must start within schools and the teachers, but the whole society must be prepared to accept and promote cultural change in order to build links with the future. Shaping global identities is the challenge, and the interdisciplinary engagement of rural geographers, physical and natural scientists with teachers and society is a condition move forward.



#### 4. How rural women participate in community life: two case studies in Peru and Bolivia

It is with the aim of analyzing how rural women feel about sharing life in times of globalization that we developed two parallel research projects on rural education, women participation at school and their aspirations for the future. For our research we followed the method of participatory observation. Our investigation was underpinned on Epstein's (2003) cognitive experiential theory and based on the anthropological theory from the point of view of its historical particularism (Del Cairo & Jaraillo, 2008). These models of interpretation of reality have allowed a more complete understanding of the perceptions of the participants in the focus group organized for the two phases of the investigation. The results are presented in the next section.

The research was conducted in northern Peru, in the area of *Piura*, and in *El Alto* in Bolivia from 2009 till 2012. In the two Andean communities, we did research with 44 rural women and their families, 22 in each country. Questions were asked about the way in which these groups and these women interpreted and assumed the models of participation in the educational arena at the time of organizing and distributing school duties and school work, when organizing the school programs, when negotiating the values transferred and the attitudes to confront life for both: men and women and boys and girls, was important, and under discussion. In these communities, men were supposed to be responsible for everything, women had nothing to say, boys had options to being schooled and girls not. The challenge was to reach a consensus about how to organize a regulated system of schooling for boys and girls, a system in which, once being able to transcend the inconveniences of the scarcity of resources and material shortage in the communes, the gender regime and the community aspects related to school life could be openly negotiated inside the communities.

Women, for various reasons, have traditionally been considered more suitable to be responsible for the children and to take responsibility for caring and educating. Women's ability to conceive, bear and nurse children and provide mothering, has linked women inexorably to children. The possession of mothering skills is not acknowledged as a qualification in the labor market. These are skills acquired in the home, that is, in the undervalued female sphere, and motherhood requires no special training. The true reasons, however, are deeply rooted, as Alvesson and Due Billing (1997) argue. Men and women take on different roles in life. The socialization processes, to which they have each been subjected, have some effects which emerge in the behavior and job preferences that they display later in life. In the labor market, the assignment of tasks in patriarchal societies depends on a differentiation between masculine and feminine qualities, which in addition, are considered to be mutually exclusive.

Thus women, the female element, are from the very start relegated to a second place. The predominance of masculinity over femininity is a constant cross-cultural factor. The characteristics considered to be masculine (for example, self-confidence, independence, reasoning, authority, objectivity...) have a greater value, whilst the qualities considered feminine are of inferior value. Men are placed, *a priori*, in a privileged position which allows them to remain superior and in control of women. To perpetuate the patriarchy is an aim, and gender is a basic principle of social organization. However, if boys and girls are offered both female and male role models, if boys and girls receive both sets of values as a part of a natural, balanced process, will it be the same?

When organizing this investigation, several issues were already clear at the starting point for our research. In the *Aymara* and the *Inca* communities in Peru and Bolivia, men and women relate to earth and life. In the public arena, however, clear sexist assumptions coexist. The social participation of women and men in schools is unequal, and the substratum of maleness interferes with social participation. The living space assigned to the women is private. Their house and home life ensure micro productive works, such as, to feed the family and be the support of men. The existing assumption in these communities is that girls do not need to go to school and that it is enough for girls to learn craftsmanship and agricultural work including land, harvest, rear animals... Girls should be taught to become faithful and efficient wives and good

mothers. Thus they will fit into the traditions and values of their communities (Trauger, *et al.*, 2008). From a different perspective, it was also clear for us from the start the research project that in a globally interconnected world as well as in rural spaces and in communities, that both men and women, are to participate in the economic organization, and that school is the route to move into the world of technology.

During our (joint) research in ruralities in Peru and Bolivia, we shared with *Inca and Aymara women* how to conquer a community space for boys and girls to participate in. We discussed with both the men and the women how to share the social organization of formal education including aspects such as programs and school values, curriculum contents and curricular approaches.

## 5. Results and discussion

During the first phase, three different *Focus Groups* were organized in Peru and in Bolivia. The *Focus Groups* were organized in a community style. The topics we discussed were:

- *Why school and school education was not a part of daily lives?*
- *How school and education make a difference between men and women and between boys and girls?*

The results from perceptions of the participants are presented below, indicating the issues and indicators that were analyzed in each case.

### *Sense, meaning and feeling about earth and life – (their community references)*

- *Indicator:* How does Education contribute to develop a sense and a meaning about life for both men and women.
- *Perceptions of participants.* School instills a set of values which introduce a hierarchy about how to progress and how to promote a better life. The community is in charge of the educational efforts to help sons and daughters, boys and girls, to comprehend who they are and how they can learn to integrate and relate with nature.

### *Aspects related to social organization*

- *Indicator:* Interrelation between participation at school and collective values
- *Perceptions of participants.* School, as organized, breaks the community collective values and their sense and meaning. School does not promote cooperative action. When defining the programs of study, school does not care about traditions, and does not consider the elderly and their particular histories. School leadership and organization does not take account of the needs and demands of the community.

### *Beliefs about the world and the earth*

- *Indicator:* School has to teach how to love the world and earth
- *Perceptions of participants.* School teachers (as appointed) do not feel they are sons of the world and the earth. School does not teach to love and respect the earth and the world. School does not prepare students to live in harmony. School does not teach to be happy and in harmony with the world, earth and nature.

### *Beliefs about the Nature and the Environment*

- *Indicator:* Perception of the School, Nature and Environment.
- *Perceptions of participants.* School relates to a dead Nature and a static Environment. This is what is written in the books and what the Educational Laws reference. School does not keep an open dialogue which benefits mother Nature and the Environment for its best. School actions do not integrate Natural development.

### *Beliefs about Men & about Human beings*

- *Indicator:* Men & Human beings: Their social and family function.

- *Perceptions of participants.* Men are born to be happy sharing and loving Nature & the Environment. Men are born in harmony with the world and the earth, in harmony with all humans. It is important to teach the youth to love life and to love humans. It is also important to know about what Nature delivers and what exists in the world. Men have to listen to women. Women are humans and at the same time are companions. School organizes itself according to laws and rights which do not fit in with the natural order of life. When preparing children, differences caused by school are to be avoided.

#### *Beliefs about Women*

- *Indicator:* Women: Their social and family function
- *Perceptions of participants.* Women are born to be happy loving Nature. Women are in harmony with Nature and the Earth, and in harmony with living species. Women share with men the role of educating youngsters. Teaching youngsters to love life and to relate and interact with Nature is to be a shared function. Women support men. Men are equal and they are women companions. Men have to care for home life, home duties and children. When organizing the educational proposals, school curricula do not take into account the role of women.

#### *Family Roles: How to distribute them*

- *Indicator:* Implication of the role of a father and the role of a mother in educational developments.
- *Perceptions of participants.* Formal education and the institutionalization of schooling are in the hands of others. School education and Instruction are not in line with the Communities and according to Community premises. And it does not work. In the schooling processes, families, father, mother..., Community needs, and the optimal requirements of development, are not taken into account.

#### *Perception about School Education*

- *Indicator:* Community Education and Formal Education.
- *Perceptions of participants.* Traditional education, transferred from a father and a mother to their sons and daughters, relates to an upbringing which prepares them for community life. Educational proposals, as planned in the schools, prepare boys and girls according to alien subjects which are not related to their human and cultural realities.

#### *Educational traditions*

- *Indicator:* Inclusion / exclusion of the cultural contents related to community life.
- *Perceptions of participants.* Learning contents at schools do not include community traditions and community values. New values and traditions which are alien to their community norms and rules, are commonly imposed at schools.

#### *Languages of the school*

- *Indicator:* Perception of the languages at schools: Negotiation of notions and concepts.
- *Perceptions of participants.* School language does not name things according to the order of Nature. Notions of collectivity, community, cooperation, nature, environment, society and education, are not agreed. School tends to lose the words with a collective meaning, and alters their significance by bringing in other references. That is how school tends to change the world as humans and communities understand it.

After this *first phase of analysis* in “*Focus Groups*” in which we got a deep understanding of the educational perceptions in “*Tallan*” and “*Aymara*” communities, their beliefs, their sense and meaning about educating, and the implication of women on school organization, we proceeded to a *second phase of analysis* supported on open debate. The idea was to identify how these communities felt about cultural patterns, educational strategies, school programs, curriculum contents, educational values, school participation, cooperative work and the necessary processes of change. To organize this *second stage* of our work, we were forced to consider:



- The perception of school as a space in which father and mother, and the community as a whole, participated dynamically and had different duties;
- The perception of the school programs in its relation with nature, the earth, and the requirements of the community;
- The perception of the educational actions and their relationship with different aspects of daily life, the organization of school routines, timetables, that is, the practical school features.

In our survey, men and women shared a perception that the world and the life vision was to be related to cultural references tied to nature and the earth, that is, tied to specific contexts of development. This perception historically produced differences in their communities. However, at this time in history, changes are needed in order to decide about the roles of men and women, at home and work, how to combine private and public spaces in their personal lives, how to distribute responsibilities and to care about behavior of children. In rural Andean communities, school and school programs are regarded as alien to their cultures and to the relations they establish with nature and earth and, as transferred for generations, men, not women, have overall responsibilities. Their languages: “*Tallan*” the aboriginal language for antique northern Peruvians, and “*Aymara*”, the aboriginal language for Bolivians are not included in the school curriculum. “*Tallan*” and “*Aymara*” cultural values and perceptions are not included either. Instead, modern colonial realities are offered.

The second phase, more in-depth discussions were conducted on topics such as the patterns of participation of men and women, negotiations to change school programs, defining school organization, curriculum contents, and the values involved.

In figure 1, we present the impact analyzed of the educational strategies.

Educational strategies	Impact to be analyzed
1.- Criteria used to introduce school programs for both, boys and girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Negative impact:</i> there is an external, non-authorized voice, taking decisions for the community.</li> <li>- <i>Positive impact:</i> Women can participate openly; are supported by the elderly (the wise), and can propose improvements.</li> </ul>
2.- To get to consensus about how to open school programs for participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Impact Related to values</i> which are useful to analyze, reflect, criticize ..., everything related to the learning processes.</li> <li>- <i>Impact Related to the norms</i> which compromise participation and change.</li> <li>- <i>To redefine educational orientations</i> related to the implication of men and women with nature and mother earth remains open.</li> <li>- <i>Joint participation</i> by peers including boys and girls interacting with nature and the earth.</li> </ul>
3.- Options to adapt the school programs at the different school levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The Programs are not adapted:</i> The programs are interpreted by outside instruction. External pressures define the programs.</li> <li>- <i>The programs are adapted:</i> The school programs safeguard the educational contents with a sense and a meaning shared by the community. It is so that the programs fit in with their descriptions.</li> </ul>
4.- Changes are introduced in the school curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>First approach to curriculum design:</i> Recognize and identify the community spaces, the meeting spaces, family values, popular knowledge, traditions, festivals, etc.</li> <li>- <i>Second approach to curriculum design:</i> Acquire disciplinary knowledge to change the relations between men, women and nature.</li> </ul>
5.1.- Changes are introduced in curriculum contents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>A sense of Approval:</i> The language of the community can be used at school. Other languages can also be used</li> <li>- <i>A sense of Rejection:</i> The curricular contents adapt to the criterion of linguistic dominance. The curricular contents are transferred through textbooks alien to community perceptions.</li> </ul>
5.2.- Changes are introduced in curriculum contents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>A sense of Approval:</i> The contents are related to the requirements of the community. The students share them.</li> <li>- <i>A sense of Rejection:</i> When introducing festivals and celebrations alien to the culture in the community, and to their experiences, there is no motivation.</li> </ul>
5.3.- Changes are introduced in curriculum contents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>A sense of Approval:</i> Practical evidence and evidence of the elderly, myths and legends ... to have a meaning in the curriculum. To live together is important.</li> <li>- <i>A sense of Rejection:</i> The styles and ways of life fit for urban areas and populated school districts, but not in ruralities.</li> </ul>
5.4.- Changes are introduced in curriculum contents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>A sense of Approval:</i> The contents which reference the needs of the community are functional and useful.</li> <li>- <i>A sense of Rejection:</i> The tasks and the functions alien to the ways of life in the community, have not much meaning when it is to prepare boys and girls for life.</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.** Phase II: Can we match educational participation, educational activities and Community requirements? Is change possible?

## 6. Concluding comments

The results of the investigation show clearly that changes in the models of participation of men and women in schools at educational public spaces in rural Andean territories develop positively when school is organized as a natural space, and education becomes part of their daily lives.

To care about contextual factors is important for positive growing. Community attitudes and actions are also important. In our survey, change is related to open spaces for joint reflection and when leaving options opened for men and women to cohabit, share and participate in connection with nature and earth. A sense of belonging, and a space opened to develop diverse identities, introduces the right conditions for the development of rural Andean women.

For Andean women, the practical conditions of teaching and learning are understood and interpreted as a safeguard of collective values in which to protect community building and community participation. And this is especially important in a rural space where gender roles are interfered with social and cultural reproductive practices. In Andean rural settings to change discriminatory educational practices is a challenge

School is a communal space where children and families meet, and where festivals and different happenings can be celebrated. This means that curriculum content is to be scrutinized for its cultural vision, for the values transferred, and for its suitability to enhance the demands of the diverse communities. Curriculum contents should not only be considered for its scientific significance and to bring about modernization and progress.

All men and women, boys and girls, in the communities, have the right to be educated. Education enables boys and girls to achieve the full development of their abilities. In the education provided at school, there are however certain contexts and situations which could cause problems, and there also are institutional constraints and pressures. Each child, be a boy or a girl, comes into the school with an own and unique unrepeatable history and background which influences his or her development. It is through interaction, exchange and understanding that the possibility for boys and girls or for men and women to communicate as equals arises. Children's home circumstances, life styles, their physical, nutritional and hygienic needs, their emotions, deprivations, beliefs, fears and sorrows, can all be recognized and addressed in a positive school environment. In this way, boys' and girls' individual and social needs can be addressed. The mutual understanding and recognition of the specific nature of each individual, opens a wide range of avenues and possibilities for intervention. This intervention could positively attend to the needs of the children, their families, and the community, as a whole.

In a time and in the context of post-modern contradictions, unemployment, the lowering of salaries and when the sense and the meaning of the public function of schooling is reduced, this type of research attempts to highlight and integrate issues surrounding gender, class, race, religion, identities, and living conditions. In times like this, when welfare and social services are challenged, we have to look ahead to find out how children develop early in their lives. This is the way to prepare boys and girls for equality and at the same time the way to develop human rights and democratic citizenship values.

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