

“We Have An Educational System”

The educational system that Indian people had before the Spanish came still exists today. It is an education for life that is lived daily through work, through example, through responsibility, and in the sustained identity of our people.

We Indians are conscious that we have to educate the representatives of the government, especially those charged with what they call “informal education.” We also have to educate our own teachers, many of whom are Indian, but who are now alienated from their identity as Indians. We expect a difficult task of reorienting many people’s thinking. At the same time, we must systematize our own educational processes and establish guidelines. Then we have to think about modifying the existing educational system, starting from the very root, recognizing from the beginning the multinational, multilingual, and multicultural character of Peru.

It is also necessary to have a form of education that rescues the knowledge of our elders, which is unfortunately now being lost as a result of formal education. The knowledge which our elders gained through thousands of years is now going to the grave with them. We must remember that this knowledge serves all of humanity if we keep it alive.

We need to reform the educational institutions, the educational infrastructure, and the educational process. All of this is possible and necessary if we are going to thoroughly regain our form of Indian education, our identity, our personality, and to demonstrate that Western culture is not the only culture, or the best one for us. The work and the thoughts of our ancestors are an example for us all.

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Indian Educational Priorities in Eastern Bolivia

- The need for a recognition on the part of the national government that Indian cultures are a living expression of our people.

- The need to maintain the cultural values of Indian people, recognizing that cultural identity is fundamental to the socio-economic development of peoples and communities.

- The need for bilingual and bicultural education in the schools.

- The need for training of Indian youth in technical skills in agriculture and stock raising, as veterinarians, as accountants for the consumer cooperative, as journalists, and as primary and secondary school teachers.

- In 1987 CIDOB will support the training of three youth in agronomy, medicine, and veterinary medicine.

- CIDOB supports the work of general education and literacy training as a means of raising consciousness, including the full participation of community members in this effort. CIDOB also recognizes the importance of strengthening traditional Indian organizations, structures, and processes.

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