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**TRUTH COMMISSIONS AND
NATIONAL CURRICULUM: THE
CASE OF THE *RECORDANDONOS*
RESOURCE IN PERU**

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1) INTRODUCTION

We must come to understand that the threat of the past repeating itself will continue to exist so long as we deny that the events of the violent past were not solely the product of the actions of subversive groups but rather the effect of profound inequalities, injustices, exclusion and mistreatment that predate the conflict and continually undermine the conditions which make possible a true democracy. From this need to understand comes the necessity to engage children and youth in reflection and moral inquiry about the past as an essential part of the educative process¹.

This paper charts the development of a curriculum resource based on Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (CVR)²).

Following the presentation of the final report of the CVR in 2003, an educational resource, entitled *Recordándonos*³ (in English, reminding ourselves) was developed based on the report. The *Recordándonos* initiative taps into the considerable potential that exists for truth commissions to create more explicit linkages both with education actors and with educational processes, engaging children in the processes of truth-telling, memory and reconciliation that truth commissions aim to foster. A close attention, therefore, to the successes and the challenges of the *Recordándonos* process in Peru is warranted.

Recordándonos, developed through an NGO-University partnership that grew out of and maintained close links with the CVR, was designed for primary and secondary students with the goal that it be incorporated into Peru's national curriculum as a supplementary resource. *Recordándonos* was designed to fit within the existing guidelines of the 2006 National Curricular Design (Diseño Curricular Nacional (DCN)). However, despite close attention close attention to how it would complement established curriculum, the *Recordándonos* remains unapproved by the Ministry of Education. The challenges that faced the *Recordándonos* initiative – and that continue to configure debates around

¹ Former President, CVR, Introduction to each of the *Recordándonos* workbooks. (See for example: *Conviviendo con nuestras diferencias: 1 y 2 de secundaria* 2nd Edition. Lima: Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú y Instituto de Defensa Legal, 2006.)

² The Spanish acronym CVR (Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación) will be used throughout this paper to refer to the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The acronym TRC is also used throughout to refer to truth commission processes more generally.

³ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations throughout this article are my own. This includes the translation of Spanish texts, of all interviews, which were conducted in Spanish, and the English translations of the six *Recordándonos* resources that are included as annexes to this paper. Any errors of translation are therefore also my own. Note that the annexed translations of the *Recordándonos* workbooks are translations of the 2nd (2006) edition in all cases.

teaching about the recent conflict in Peru – are both technical and political in nature. Indeed, the story of the *Recordándonos* resource makes visible some of the fundamental challenges to reconciliation in Peru. This paper, therefore, seeks to highlight and explore these challenges while maintaining a central argument that a partnership between a truth commission and an educational sector holds considerable potential particularly in terms of complex reconciliation goals. Indeed, engaging children and teachers in learning about truth commission processes and the pasts that they seek to clarify is perhaps one of the most active ways that more abstract TRC goals like preventing future human rights violations and fostering reconciliation can be made concrete.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 lays out the rationale using truth commission processes and reports in national curriculum in order to facilitate teaching and learning about recent conflict. It also begins to address the challenges and limitations of developing truth commission based curriculum. Section 3 provides necessary context for the Peruvian case. It briefly discusses Peru’s conflict, the CVR process, its engagement with the educational sector and important developments in Peruvian politics since the CVR. The *Recordándonos* resource itself is the focus of Section 4. The resource’s development, its content and its piloting with teachers and students in eight departments of Peru are outlined. Section 5 concentrates upon the political and technical challenges that faced *Recordándonos* approval as a national curriculum resource. This section also discusses another avenue through which the CVR has entered national curriculum, a secondary textbook distributed nationally by the Ministry of Education.

The Peruvian case demonstrates deep political attachment to national curriculum. In Peru the political and practical challenges of teaching about the violent past - and particularly of teaching about the state’s role within it – are numerous and come through strongly in this case study. The paper finds a strong rationale and considerable enthusiasm for including truth commission based materials in national curriculum in Peru. However, it also finds that for such an initiative to reach students and teachers, it must be accompanied by a conscious, articulated policymaking around teaching and learning

about recent past. In light of the challenges faced in Peru, Section 6 makes recommendations for overcoming or minimizing the political and technical challenges identified in the Peruvian case and opening opportunities for the inclusion of truth commission based curriculum in Peru and elsewhere.

This paper is based on field research conducted in Peru between January and October 2008. It relies upon interviews conducted during those months with key actors from the *Recordándonos* development team, the CVR and the Ministry of Education.

2) TRCs AND CURRICULUM: OPPORTUNITIES AND REALITIES

2.1) TRC materials and national curriculum: A rationale

Deliberate programs of education, teaching materials, books, exhibits, and events, for adults and children – all of these are vital responses to mass violence⁴.

The manuals designed to introduce Peruvian teachers to the curriculum resource *Recordándonos* begin by stating: ‘The *Final Report* of the CVR is a fundamental tool that must be taken advantage of. The report opens the opportunity for teachers to instigate a profound debate around the real causes of violence in the country.’ The authors go on to explain that ‘through the elaboration of educational materials, we believe that schools can stimulate students – the children and adolescents of our country - to approach the violent past as part of their personal and social history. We hope that this material will contribute to strengthening a sense of collective identity and a culture of peace.’⁵

These words, along with the title of the Teacher’s Manuals, *A Country that Forgets its Past is Condemned to Repeat it*, echo sentiments often expressed both in calling for transitional justice processes such as truth commissions and in encouraging the teaching of the violent past in schools. Indeed remembering difficult history and teaching future generations about the conflicts and human rights violations of the past are frequently put

⁴ Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998) p. 144.

⁵ *Manual del Docente Primaria: Un país que olvida su historia esta condenado a repetirla* 2nd Edition. (Lima: Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú y Instituto de Defensa Legal, 2006), p. 3-4.

forward as important components of complex (and difficult to define) processes like reconciliation and peacebuilding⁶.

However, even as components of such broad processes as peacebuilding or reconciliation, the acts of remembering and teaching about recent and violent pasts are in themselves incredibly complex and less than straight forward. As countless cases around the world demonstrate, historical narratives are tightly tied up with group identities and play a role in building and reinforcing these⁷. Thus, the narratives chosen to tell a nation's history through its national curriculum are inevitably political and are often controversial. Therefore efforts to change, modify, open, erase or add to such narratives are likely to be challenged and challenging, particularly following a period of conflict, violence and division. The politics and power dynamics of transition are not likely to be removed from such initiatives. Within the fraught space in which historical narrative is revised, the versions of the past produced by truth commissions, particularly by truth commissions with a high degree of public support, should certainly be of interest.

Truth commissions have among their aims to clarify, bring to light and acknowledge the past. For Hayner 'the most straightforward objective of a truth commission is sanctioned fact-finding: to establish an accurate record of a country's past, clarify uncertain events, and lift the lid of silence and denial for a contentious and painful period of history.'⁸ Truth commissions draw, at least to degree, on methods grounded in historical inquiry and, as Cole and Barsalou point out, they offer 'strong didactic material' since 'they present the voices of ordinary people with compelling stories to tell.'⁹ While it cannot be said that all truth commissions necessarily resolve contention or create consensus, they do accumulate considerable and diverse historical information over a relatively short

⁶ Elizabeth A. Cole (ed.) *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Ltd., 2007); Minow; Sobhi Tawil and Alexandra Harley (eds.) *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion* (Geneva: UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2004).

⁷ Cole; Minow; Tawil and Harley; Sarah Warshauer Freedman, Harvey M. Weinstein, Karen Murphy and Timothy Longman 'Teaching History After Identity-Based Conflicts: The Rwanda Experience' *Comparative Education Review* 52:4 (2008): 665-690.

⁸ Priscilla B. Hayner *Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenge of Truth Commissions* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 24.

⁹ Elizabeth A. Cole and Judy Barsalou, *Unite or Divide? The Challenges of Teaching History in Societies Emerging from Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: USIP Special Report 163, 2006), p. 12.

period and present a version of the past based on that information. Moreover, in their status as officially sanctioned bodies, truth commissions are engaged in the production of what can be (and sometimes is) regarded as an official version of the truth. That this ‘official truth’ is constructed from the testimonies of those who experienced and lived through the past in question speaks to the deep potential of truth commissions as material for educational processes.

Of course, TRC processes are inevitably complex and imperfect and so, by extension, are the versions of the past that they produce. Nonetheless, the very fact that truth commissions distil a version of the past within a charged social and political landscape, seems to situate them as a useful resource for educational actors revising and developing curriculum, particularly given the pragmatic arguments for the timely development of educational material to address recent conflict.

In addition to their potential contribution towards the practical necessity to develop curriculum that addresses the violent past, the use of truth commission based educational resources may also align with the goals of those involved in truth commission processes. Indeed, curriculum resources may be useful in terms of truth commission process and impact. As Laplante and Theidon argue ‘measures which accompany or follow the truth commission process... are indispensable in contributing to reconciliation and to a more just and peaceful future.’¹⁰ Such measures - like prosecutions, reparations, institutional reforms, commemorations and, as will be argued here, teaching and learning materials - are also important in determining the long term impact and perceived success of a truth commission. It is logical to assume that a truth commission’s findings will have wider social impact and greater potential to contribute to peace and reconciliation if they are well-known, accessible and seen to facilitating real social change. The development of curriculum materials based on truth commission final reports can at once simplify and make more accessible the report and disseminate its findings among a significant portion of the population, including children, teachers and families. Curriculum materials based

¹⁰ Lisa J. Laplante and Kimberly Theidon, ‘Truth with Consequences: Justice and Reparations in Post-Truth Commission Peru’ *Human Rights Quarterly* 29:1 (2007): p. 229.

on truth commissions can bring greater longevity to a final report by introducing it to successive generations and, if used by teachers and students, can facilitate learners' exploration of the meanings of the past at a personal and collective level.

Since national curriculum - and its narrative of nationhood, identity and history - holds considerable symbolic, cultural and political weight, the inclusion of the findings of a truth commission within it can be seen as an important sign of the legitimacy that the report holds and of the acting government's acceptance and acknowledgement of its findings. Teaching about the violent past, and particularly about the state's role in human rights violations, can indicate a significant breaking with this past. In Germany, for instance, teaching materials that engage with and condemn German actions during the Second World War 'have frequently been cited as one of the central proponents of a reconciliatory stance towards wronged populations.'¹¹ The inclusion of TRC-based curriculum may similarly demonstrate a reconciliatory position on behalf of the state and may contribute symbolically to the closing of a period of violence or repression.

Of course, as Cole points, out 'a chicken-and-egg problem' exists around questions of teaching about the violence past, since, while learning about the violence past 'can potentially promote reconciliation, a certain stage of reconciliation needs to be reached before textbooks can be revised.'¹² This dilemma is clearly played out in the Peruvian case, where the continued presence in government of people and parties linked to the conflict of the 1980s and 1990s leads certain actors within the state to attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the CVR, due to its personal and political implications for them, rather than to encourage actions that enhance its legitimacy, such as teaching the CVR version of the past within national curriculum.

2.2) TRCs and curriculum: International examples

¹¹ Julian Dierkes 'The Trajectory of Reconciliation through History Education in Postunification Germany' in Elizabeth A. Cole (ed.) *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), p. 33.

¹² Elizabeth A. Cole 'Introduction: Reconciliation and History Education' in Elizabeth A. Cole (ed.) *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2007) p.18.

Despite the strong rationale for including explorations of TRC processes and findings within national curriculum, in only a few cases have such efforts actually been undertaken. Education and educational reform have been the focus of recommendations in the final reports of many TRCs with recommendations for human rights and peace education being particularly common. However, these recommendations have, in general, not resulted in the development of the TRC-based curriculum¹³.

Among the recommendations made by South Africa's 1998 TRC was that the work of the TRC, and its findings, be included in the country's new history curriculum¹⁴. Although South Africa's TRC process did not have a strong focus on education, with the sector excluded from institutional hearings, some commentators expected that the TRC and the large-scale educational reform mandated by the new Constitution and South Africa's negotiated settlement would dovetail¹⁵. Panels were formed within the Department of Education (DOE) following the release of the TRC's final report, one focused upon teaching about the past while another investigated values and citizenship education. These panels and the then-Minister of Education adopted the TRC's definition of reconciliation and worked to bring reconciliation and citizenship to the forefront of DOE policy. Despite this effort to 'reconcile the aims of the TRC and the reform of education,¹⁶' a specific TRC-based curriculum element was never developed. The TRC is mentioned in the grade 9 curriculum alongside lessons about the negotiations leading up to the 1994 election and the adoption of the South African Constitution, however, the curriculum does not include an engagement with the TRC's process and findings¹⁷.

In Sierra Leone, UNICEF supported the development of a Children's Version of the TRC and children participated in its creation. The resource was distributed to schools by

¹³ The Final Reports of TRCs in Chile, South Africa, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste and Peru all recommend human rights and/or peace education

¹⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, <http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2003/trc/>

¹⁵ Glenda Wildschut 'Some Lessons for Adult Education to be Learned from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission' *Adult Education and Development* 68 (2007).

¹⁶ Wildschut.

¹⁷ Wildschut.

UNICEF by 2006, but it has yet to be approved for use as a national curriculum resource¹⁸. In Guatemala NGOs developed teaching resources based on the country's truth commission, but again none of these initiatives have been incorporated into national curriculum¹⁹. In Timor-Leste's there is some momentum to include reference to that country's truth commission report (Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor-Leste (CAVR)) within the newly developed primary curriculum and the evolving secondary one. Though curriculum development and education legislation in general has been a slow process, productive relationships between the Ministry of Education, donors and a post-CAVR secretariat open opportunities for CAVR based curriculum components as does the inclusion of reference to the CAVR report and its recommendations in the 2008 Basic Education Law²⁰. Likewise, in Liberia, TRC actors are considering possibilities for the development of curriculum resources while the TRC is still in process²¹.

The limited amount of research on truth commissions and curriculum despite the strong rationale for TRC curriculum, make this an important area for study. The Peruvian case merits attention given the early links between the *Recordandonos* project, the CVR and the Ministry of Education and the intention of all parties that the resource be approved into national curriculum. It is also important to understand the continued controversy around teaching the recent violent past in Peru, and indeed around the use of the CVR as material through which to teach the past. Understanding the obstacles to CVR curriculum faced in Peru is not only helpful in capitalizing on opportunities to teach about the past in Peru, but can also point to recommendations for overcoming or minimizing similar challenges elsewhere.

3) THE CVR PROCESS IN PERU

3.1) Conflict and the Peruvian CVR

¹⁸ Julia Paulson 'The Educational Recommendations of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: Potential and Practice in Sierra Leone' *Research in Comparative and International Education* 1:4 (2006).

¹⁹ Elizabeth Oglesby, 'Educating Citizens in Postwar Guatemala: Historical Memory, Genocide and the Culture of Peace' *Radical History Review* 97(2007).

²⁰ Personal communication with Ann Linnarsson.

²¹ Personal communication with Saudamini Siegrist.

In 2001 the interim government of Valentin Paniagua established the CVR by a Supreme Decree, which was ratified later that same year by the elected government of Alejandro Toledo. The CVR was made up of 12 Commissioners and 1 Observer, all of who were Peruvian. The President of the CVR was then-Rector of the Pontificate Catholic University of Peru (Pontificada Universidad Catolica del Peru - PUCP) and other Commissioners included academics, religious leaders, human rights experts, a retired Lieutenant and an ex-congresswoman²². While the diversity of the commission was seen by many as a strength, the make up of the commission was also criticized as biased by groups on both the left and the right, who objected to certain appointments.

During its two-year working period the Commission investigated human rights violations committed in Peru between 1980 and 2000 with the mandate to ‘clarify processes, events and corresponding responsibility - not only of those who executed crimes but also of those who ordered or tolerated them - and to propose initiatives that affirm peace and reconciliation among all Peruvians²³.’ The CVR opened five regional offices, collected testimony from nearly 17,000 people, conducted three exhumations and held several public hearings, including a hearing on political violence and the educational community²⁴.

The Commission’s mandate for investigations spanned the governing periods of Fernando Belaunde, Alan Garcia and Alberto Fujimori and therefore the actions of each government were investigated, along with the actions of the Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*, PCP-SL) and Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (*Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru*, MRTA) subversive groups²⁵. The CVR was created as the political space in which to propose and advocate for such an initiative opened following the fall of Fujimori’s regime in 2000. Although Fujimori’s government had captured the head of Shining Path, Abimael Guzman, in 1992 largely debilitating the movement, the

²² Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (CVR) *Informe Final*
<http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ifinal/index.php> 2003.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*

repressive and undemocratic policies of the Fujimori regime continued after the capture of Guzman. It was only upon Fujimori's escape from the country following a serious corruption scandal that a TRC began to be seriously contemplated²⁶.

The CVR's nine volume, 8,000 page final report found that 69,280 were killed as a result of the conflict and that hundreds of thousands were displaced. Shining Path was found to be responsible for 54 percent of deaths while the armed forces were found responsible for 34 percent²⁷. The CVR found that 'veiled racism and scornful attitudes'²⁸ persist in Peruvian society. These attitudes, and indeed the social division within the country, created indifference in powerful social circles and in the 'moderately educated urban sector'²⁹ towards the violence that was occurring predominantly in rural areas and that was mainly directed towards poor, often indigenous, communities.

The CVR found that 75 percent of the victims of the conflict spoke Quechua or another indigenous language as their first language. 79 percent of victims lived in rural areas and 85 percent came from the Andean and jungle departments of Ayacucho, Junín, Huanuco, Huancavelica, Apurímac and San Martín³⁰. Additionally, the TRC found that the educational levels of the dead and the disappeared were far lower than the national average, with 68 percent of victims never having completed secondary schooling. The CVR final report heavily emphasized the embedded, structural causes of conflict in Peru, rooted in inequality, racism and indifference. The *Recordándonos* resource does the same.

3.2) Education and the CVR

The Shining Path movement was born³¹ on the campus of National University of San Cristobal Huamanga University in the department of Ayacucho, where its leader,

²⁶ Laplante and Theidon.

²⁷ CVR.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Guzman broke off from the Bandera Roja Communist Party of Peru (PCP-BR) to form the Peruvian Communist Party for the Shining Path of José Carlos Mariategui (PCP-SL).

Abimael Guzmán, taught³². The movement, initially considered a ‘marginal and fanatical group of little importance’ primarily made up of radical faculty members and students, grew in numbers through the 1980s and 1990s³³. The CVR found that ‘PCP-SL took advantage of some institutions in the educational system as its principal beachhead.’³⁴ Through its influence within the teacher’s union (SUTEP) and at certain Universities, teacher training institutes and technical colleges, Shining Path ‘sought to instrumentalize educational institutions’ by placing sympathetic teachers in schools at which they wished to recruit young people³⁵. The CVR found that authoritarian pedagogy - grounded in rote learning and obedience and long the norm in Peru - lent itself well to Shining Path’s dogmatism and, in some cases, facilitated young people’s alliances with the movement. The CVR also found that the ‘incapacity of the State and the country’s elites to respond to the educational demands of youth frustrated their efforts towards social mobility and aspirations for advancement’ and that this frustration may have motivated young people to join Shining Path³⁶.

In addition to Shining Path’s birth in and use of educational institutions, education took on a powerful symbolic role within Peru’s conflict, one that was often seen expressed violently. During certain periods the state largely equated primary and secondary school teachers, University lecturers and University students with terrorists, presuming guilt where frequently there was none³⁷. This led to the installation of military bases on campuses, the arbitrary detention and disappearance of students and staff from several University campuses around the country, the massacre of eight students and a professor at the National University of Enrique Guzmán y Valle ‘La Cantuta’ (Universidad Nacional de Educación Enrique Guzmán y Valle ‘La Cantuta’) by the paramilitary group *la Colina* and the death of over 100 students at the Central National University (Universidad

³² Kimberly Theidon, *Entre Prójimos: El Conflicto Armado Interno y la Política de la Reconciliación en el Perú* (Lima: IEP Ediciones, 2004).

³³ *Ibid*, p. 27.

³⁴ CVR.

³⁵ *ibid*.

³⁶ *ibid*.

³⁷ Pablo Sandoval, *Educación, Ciudadanía y Violencia en el Perú: Una Lectura del Informe de la CVR* (Lima: TAREA and IEP 2004).

Nacional del Centro) during a fire fight³⁸.

The CVR's research recognized and explored the important role that education played during the conflict in Peru, in the words of its former President:

Education really was an important chapter within the investigations that we [the CVR] undertook because when we tried to explain how it was possible that a movement as violent as Shining Path could popularize and expand itself, we were ultimately faced with education³⁹.

Education, or as the former President of the CVR prefers 'mis-education,' figures prominently within the final report of the CVR and is identified as one of the causes of conflict in Peru. The CVR assigns serious responsibility to the state for neglecting public education, for intimidating and stigmatizing entire communities of teachers and students and for allowing grave human rights violations against them simply because of their status as such.

3.3) The CVR's 'Education Sub-Area' and its recommendations for educational reform

Within the CVR a 'Sub-Area of Education' operated inside the larger area of 'Communications'. Although the Coordinator of this Sub-Area, its only staff person throughout much of the CVR's operation, felt the area was under-prioritized, the Peruvian CVR is notable among TRCs in that it had staff devoted particularly to educational issues. In April 2002 a 'Contract of Institutional Cooperation' was signed between the CVR and Peru's Ministry of Education that facilitated a closer working relationship than many other TRCs have had with Ministries of Education⁴⁰. Before signing this contract, the President of the CVR spoke of the 'confluence of aims and energies' between the Ministry of Education and the CVR. He explained that the Ministry of Education was 'a natural ally in this effort [the CVR process] and since day one of our

³⁸ CVR.

³⁹ Interview with former CVR President, 30 January 2008.

⁴⁰ 'Convenio de Cooperación Institucional entre el Ministerio de Educación y la Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación', (SCO-571-05 available at Centro de la Memoria Colectiva y los Derechos Humanos, Lima, 2002).

work we have encountered a spontaneous comprehension and identification with our work and a natural convergence with our objectives.⁴¹

The Contract itself laid out several areas in which the CVR and the Ministry would cooperate. These included CVR advice to the Ministry on the curriculum review underway at the time (this review resulted in the 2006 National Curriculum Design (DCN)), the production of educational materials (with an emphasis on citizenship education and on the CVR), the development of teacher training materials and the provision of workshops to facilitate development of teachers' skills in teaching about conflict and reconciliation, and the conduct of a national survey of secondary schools students knowledge of themes in citizenship education⁴². Importantly, the CVR was responsible for generating the financial resources for all of these activities and the contract was only vigilant until the end of the CVR mandate.

In 2002, the then-Minister of Education, upon the suggestion of the CVR, coined the 'year of truth and reconciliation in Peru'. The then-Minister explained that 'the relationship [between the CVR and the Ministry] was good, I favoured the CVR. In any way that we could help them, we did.'⁴³ The Coordinator of the Sub-Area of Education confirmed this, stating that:

At this time [beginning of CVR work] it was incredible. The CVR had such power to raise awareness, empathy, to mobilize people, to open doors. I used to work in the Ministry of Education, I went back as the one responsible for Education [in the CVR] and the doors were wide open. People were very committed; they gave you all the support⁴⁴.

However, during the CVR period, the Minister of Education changed, leading, in the words of the former Coordinator of the Sub-Area to 'the bureaucracy of the Ministry making things less fluid' and leaving 'many things stalled.'⁴⁵ Many of the activities listed in the CVR – Ministry of Education contract were left incomplete, including the national

⁴¹ Salomón Lerner Febres, 'Suscripción de convenio con el Ministerio de Educación – Palabras del Presidente de la CVR,' (SCO-571-05 available at Centro de la Memoria Colectiva y los Derechos Humanos, Lima, 2002).

⁴² 'Convenio de Cooperación Institucional entre el Ministerio de Educación y la Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación.'

⁴³ Interview with former Minister of Education, 26 February 2008.

⁴⁴ Interview with former Coordinator of CVR Sub-Area of Education, 27 February 2008.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

survey and the development of educational materials. The new Minister did not share the enthusiasm for working with the CVR that his predecessor did and so does not appear to have prioritized the contract or the maintenance of a close working relationship.

Nonetheless, the CVR did hold several workshops with teachers and with trainee teachers in the five regions of the country where CVR offices had been established and undertook public hearing that focused upon the educational community⁴⁶. The CVR also developed some materials for distribution to schools, including summarized versions of its final report and booklets on values education. These were distributed with the collaboration of the Ministry of Education but were considered additional resources rather than approved texts for use within the national curriculum.

Near to the conclusion of the CVR's work, the Sub-Area of Education was moved from Communications to the Area of Institutional Reforms. There an expert consultant was hired to work in conjunction with the existing Coordinator to develop a series of recommendations for educational reform. The recommendations put forward for 'reforming education to promote democratic values'⁴⁷ were included among the four 'essential institutional reforms' recommended by the CVR. The educational recommendations – which focus upon improving the quality of rural schools, prioritizing inter-cultural education, improving girls' literacy, transforming authoritarian pedagogy and violence in schools, and encouraging learning for citizenship and democratic values – are broadly seen by the Peruvian educational community to have captured the needs and realities facing Peru's educational sector⁴⁸. However, there is strong sentiment that the recommendations should have set forth concrete steps to be taken towards their implementation. This absence, along with the limited timeframe of the CVR and lack of a formal body responsible for follow-up are perceived to have limited the resonance and power of these recommendations.

3.4) Timing and the origins of *Recordándonos*

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ CVR.

⁴⁸ Interviews January - October 2008.

Freedman and her colleagues, reflecting on their work around history curriculum development with education actors in Rwanda, conclude that:

The ultimate lesson for educators may be that, while the debate on best practices focuses on content of material or the process of creating materials, the real concern has to do with timing and context.⁴⁹

The CVR recommendations for educational reform do not specifically contemplate the production of a curriculum resource based on the CVR; the contract between the Ministry of Education and the CVR, however, does. As a former CVR Commissioner explained:

After reviewing earlier TRC experiences in the region – El Salvador, Guatemala – one of the critical themes that emerged was that after the moment in which the final reports were presented, there was no follow up, nothing was continued. And so the TRCs were simply strands that didn't have implications in the future of the country. Therefore, the CVR, with this information from other Commissions in mind, pushed the strategy to leave processes already initiated that would carry on beyond the CVR. With the legitimacy that the CVR generated as a Commission we had, at the time, the power to bring people together and to begin initiatives that we knew would go on beyond the life of the CVR⁵⁰.

The former Commissioner referred to initiatives with the Ministry of Health around mental health, to the development of national standards for exhumations and to the development of educational resources based on the CVR as examples of such ongoing initiatives born as a result of the CVR process.

While work on a formal curriculum resource did not explicitly begin during the lifetime of the CVR itself, the discussion of such a resource among Commission staff and members of the educational community certainly did. In a newspaper article on the *Recordándonos* project, one of its coordinators explains:

The idea was born during the drafting of the CVR's final report with the objective that all the effort of reconciliation and of 'never again it shall be repeated' is not forgotten and so that people can make this part of our history their own. In this context, schools are essential areas in which to work⁵¹.

An agreement between the well-established human rights NGO, Instituto de Defensa Legal (IDL), at which a former Commissioner is based, and the Faculty of Education at

⁴⁹ Freedman et. al., p. 686.

⁵⁰ Interview with former CVR Commissioner, 28 February 2008.

⁵¹ 'Informe CVR en las Escuelas,' *El Peruano*, 14 October 2005.

the University where the President of the CVR served as Rector (PUCP) was signed to begin work on the *Recordándonos* project. Several of the *Recordándonos* manuals include text drafted by the former Education Sub-Area Coordinator, who was involved in various ways throughout the *Recordándonos* project as were other CVR staff, including former Commissioners. Personal and professional relationships (and indeed inter-organizational relationships) developed and solidified during the CVR process were formalized with the *Recordándonos* agreement, which capitalized on CVR momentum as the Commissioner cited above envisioned.

The *Recordándonos* project was initially supported by the Spanish organization Fundación Santa Maria, who funded the development of the first version of materials. Upon completion of the first version, IDL and PUCP convened a meeting between donors and the Ministry of Education at which they presented the material. At this point UNICEF and Save the Children agreed to fund the piloting of the materials and the development of a second version based on feedback from the piloting phase and from the Ministry of Education. The *Recordándonos* project, and its goal to carry on with the development of materials as called for in the contract between the CVR and the Ministry, was initially well received by the Ministry of Education, who committed to work with IDL and PUCP on the project at the same meeting that resulted in UNICEF and Save the Children agreeing to fund subsequent phases.

Several respondents interviewed felt that this enthusiasm on the part of the Ministry of Education was due, at least in part, to international pressure to comply with CVR recommendations and to the feeling that the development of curriculum material would be a good step in this direction⁵². One of the *Recordándonos* project coordinators expressed regret that the Ministry of Education had not been involved in the first stages of the project (in the development of the first version), explaining that this lack of engagement facilitated that Ministry's later distancing from the project⁵³.

⁵² Interviews January - October 2008.

⁵³ Interview with former IDL *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 16 September 2008.

Of critical importance to the consideration of timing and context with reference to the *Recordándonos* process is the fact that the materials were developed and presented during the government of Alejandro Toledo's *Perú Posible* party, which was in power in Peru from mid-2001 to mid-2006. Many respondents stressed that Toledo's government did not have any 'human rights debt'⁵⁴, since his was a new political party, uninvolved in the decades of conflict that preceded its administration. Though, as will be outlined in Section 5, there were certainly political challenges to teaching about the recent conflict within and outside the Ministry of Education during the Toledo period, these have intensified since the government of Alan Garcia and the APRA party took power in June 2006. Alan Garcia was President of Peru from 1985-1990 and human rights violations committed under his earlier administration were subject to investigation by the CVR.

4) THE *Recordándonos* RESOURCE

4.1) The development of *Recordándonos* and its place in the National Curriculum Design (DCN)

The purpose of the material is not to say 'look, this is the truth,' it isn't a historiography of what happened. The purpose of the material is to use a version of what happened so that students can reflect on what they experienced, on what they experienced personally and on what their community experienced, and, from this starting point, to begin to try to understand. And to try to understand so that it will not be repeated, to try to understand in order to build a culture of peace – this is the purpose of the material⁵⁵.

Recordándonos was developed by a team from the Faculty of Education at the PUCP and the IDL, who between them shared expertise in education, pedagogy, human rights and the CVR. Both the former Coordinators of the project at the Faculty of Education and IDL spoke enthusiastically of the partnership and its bridging of knowledge, with the former coordinator from PUCP stating that 'the partnership was stupendous, we worked very closely together.'⁵⁶ Both Coordinators spoke with conviction about the need for children to learn about and engage with the CVR and the past that it distils. The former coordinator from IDL framed this within a broader societal need to engage with and acknowledge the past, explaining that:

⁵⁴ This term ('no tiene deuda en términos de derechos humanos') was used repeatedly during interviews from January – October 2008.

⁵⁵ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

Two things impressed us during the entire process of the CVR, how little many people knew about what had happened and the sentiment that once the period of violence was over, it was seen as something that happened to other people, that it wasn't their problem. So, we thought that especially younger generations, youth, must be seeing this period as even more distant. We thought that it was important within the framework of a process of reconstruction of social ties and of reparation that people could understand this period of political violence as part of our history as Peruvians as well as part of their personal history. That is the objective of this material⁵⁷.

The former PUCP Coordinator highlighted the particular needs of the educational community and the personal challenges teachers face when considering teaching about the violent past:

For our country, the theme of the CVR has not been easy. It has been complicated. And in the educational environment we have a big weakness, we leave the subject where it is and we say 'I don't know how to touch on that,' because the teacher, well, I think teachers are scared because they don't know how to touch it⁵⁸.

Content for the *Recordándonos* material was developed over the course of more than a year and was then piloted in schools around the country that were participating in a larger research project of the PUCP on educational policy and regional development. The results of student and teacher feedback from the pilot study, along with comments from the Ministry of Education, were incorporated into a second version, which, to date has only been published in printable files on CD.

In its second and, to date, final version, the *Recordándonos* material consists of six workbooks - three directed towards students at the primary level and three towards students at the secondary school level - and two teachers' manuals that include instructions for use of the resources at primary and secondary school levels respectively. The booklets are colourful and include many high quality illustrations and, at the secondary level, photographs, most of which are from a powerful photography exhibit assembled by the CVR. Content is nearly always accompanied by activities for students to complete during the lesson or as longer assignments. All the booklets open with an introduction by the former President of the CVR who highlights the importance of learning about the past in schools.

⁵⁷ Interview with former IDL *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 28 February 2008.

⁵⁸ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

It is important to note that *Recordándonos* was developed principally with urban and semi-urban communities in mind. Project Coordinators felt that a third round of revisions would be necessary in order to develop revised materials tailored particularly to rural schools and they planned to include materials in indigenous languages within these materials. This third round of revisions has yet to take place and, therefore, both Coordinators emphasized the urban bias within the *Recordándonos* materials.

When asked how they were able to distil the contents of the TRC's enormous final report into much shorter educational resources, both the former project Coordinators felt that the goals of the materials themselves helped in defining content. The Coordinator from IDL explained that:

The specialists in pedagogy created a first version that tried to present the principal contents of the report in a way that facilitates learning and permits reflection that is appropriate to the content itself and to the student's age. It was our institutional position that students didn't need to know about absolutely all of the atrocities that occurred, what they did need to know were certain examples in order to understand deeply and to be able to analyze why these things occurred and to be able to speak to this truth without generating a lot of anxiety or fear⁵⁹.

The former Coordinator from PUCP said that:

The *Final Report* was enormous and we had to do a revision of the recommendations, extracting the ones that applied to the educational environment and what we finally realized was that what we wanted to come through in these materials was a theme of reconciliation. We wanted this theme to come through strongly and to make sense across different regions of the country. We also wanted the recognition of certain events, events that the Commission recognized, to come through as well. While, on the other hand, we wanted to generate a different kind of values... So, we worked to make these three elements [reconciliation, recognition of the past, new values] come together in a way that would mesh with the curricular structure⁶⁰.

The project seems to have had resonance across the education and human rights communities and to have brought the two together in beneficial collaboration as both the IDL and PUCP invited colleagues to contribute to discussions and revise drafts. As mentioned above, former members of the CVR were involved in the drafting of *Recordándonos* and participated voluntarily to varying degrees.

⁵⁹ Interview with former IDL *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 28 February 2008.

⁶⁰ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

Recordándonos was designed to compliment existing ‘integral communication’ and ‘social personal’ curriculum at the primary level and ‘social sciences’ curriculum at the secondary level. It was also designed to be used as a resource when teaching human rights, which has been approved as a cross-cutting theme across the 2006 National Curriculum Design (DCN) in these subject areas. *Recordándonos* was not, therefore, designed as a mandatory piece of curriculum content, but rather as a curriculum resource to be approved and distributed by the Ministry of Education for use in teaching certain elements of the national curriculum. The *Recordándonos* Teachers’ Manuals explain that the materials were developed with the goal of fostering the ‘competencies and capacities’⁶¹ such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision making and creative thinking that figure as curriculum objectives in the primary and secondary subjects that the materials compliment.

The DCN is very much an outcomes-based document, based upon the objectives of basic education in Peru: personal development, exercise of citizenship, creation of a knowledge society, and linkages with the world of work⁶². It lays out a series of characteristics that education should create in its learners and then creates learning outcomes – such as ‘competencies and capacities’ – to demonstrate and measure the acquisition of these characteristics. *Recordándonos* does a good job of situating itself within this framework and of showing its utility in terms of fostering these outcomes. Importantly, *Recordándonos* does not situate its utility for teachers and students in terms of guidelines in the DCN regarding teaching about the violent past since these are very limited.

History is not a topic in its own right at either the primary or secondary level in Peru. Instead it is integrated within ‘integral communications’ at the primary level and ‘social sciences’ at the secondary one. At the secondary level a syllabus of national and world events is laid out in briefly in the DCN. According to this syllabus, the second half of the twentieth century is dealt with in the fifth (and final) level of secondary schooling. Here a bullet on a list that also includes ‘the cold war,’ ‘the international politics of the United

⁶¹ *Manual del Docente Primaria*.

⁶² Ministerio de Educación, Republica del Perú, *Diseño Curricular Nacional* (Lima: Ministerio de Educación, 2006)

States,’ and ‘processes of decolonialization,’ appears: ‘subversive movements and peace processes in Peru.’⁶³ Later, under the ‘citizenship’ component of the social sciences curriculum for the fifth level of secondary the following appears: ‘violence and internal conflict in contemporary Peru. Truth and justice.’⁶⁴ The limited nature of DCN guidance around teaching about Peru’s conflict offers little support to teachers who reported trepidation when faced with teaching about Peru’s recent conflict. The DCN guidance also does little to quell the political controversy (to be discussed in Section 6) generated by efforts to address the recent past in curriculum,

The *Recordándonos* resources at both the primary and secondary school levels use a similar approach. Each volume opens with an introductory section that promotes reflection and motivates students to discuss their impressions of the themes to be developed in the volume. A section designed to explore students’ existing knowledge about the themes follows. This section often includes stories, case studies and projects to investigate personal and family history. Finally, attention turns to new content and learning in detail the themes chosen for the particular volume. Here most of the historical content is found and students are often encouraged to undertake research projects and to apply their learning to group work. It is important to note that the *Recordándonos* materials take seriously the CVR’s recommendation to transform authoritarian pedagogy in Peru and offer very participatory and largely child-centered lessons. In addition to the content of *Recordándonos*, which might in itself offer personal and professional challenges to teachers, the teaching style *Recordándonos* envisions requires a particular skill set that many teachers trained prior to or during Peru’s conflict may not possess. Those responsible for developing *Recordándonos*, therefore, envisioned teacher training workshops with teachers prior to its introduction into schools.

4.2) Piloting *Recordándonos*

The first version of *Recordándonos* was published in ten bound workbooks printed in black and white with one accent colour⁶⁵. In 2005, this version was distributed to four

⁶³ Ibid. p. 191

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 193

⁶⁵ The first version combines the primary and secondary teachers’ manuals into one volume, the second version splits these into two.

schools (public and private) in each of the seven regions attached to the PUCP's research project on educational policy and regional development to be piloted⁶⁶. Teacher training workshops on *Recordándonos* were conducted in each region prior to the piloting of the resource. Feedback was collected from students and teachers as to their impressions of the workbooks themselves and their feelings about approaching these subjects in the classroom. The whole piloting process was done over a period of between 2 to 3 months, a timeframe that the PUCP former Coordinator felt should have been longer.

Project Coordinators explained that the feedback received from schools was rich and enthusiastic. Teachers sent along projects completed by their students as part of the many activities suggested in the *Recordándonos* materials and the team was impressed with their depth and thoughtfulness. There was considerable regional variation across the feedback received by the project team and the PUCP Coordinator noted that in certain regions the material seemed more appropriate than in others – the material's content is largely focused around urban and Andean experiences, with fewer examples from coastal and jungle regions – and that teachers and students approached the materials with greater enthusiasm and commitment in certain regions than in others. The Coordinator explained:

We could see that in regions like Iquitos, for example, where there wasn't a lot of terrorism, they didn't encounter a lot of importance in the working on these themes, same thing in some of the regions of the North of the country, Chiclayo, Piura. On the other hand the materials were impacting for people in Ayacucho, for people in Cusco, for them these were themes that they really felt. They really appreciated much more the importance of the materials⁶⁷.

Generally, the materials were well received by teachers, particularly those in the public sector. On a scale between 0-1, the lowest rating the materials received from teachers was 0.75 and the highest was 0.91⁶⁸. The PUCP Coordinator explained 'state teachers really appreciate receiving material that permits them to work in a straightforward way with their students⁶⁹.' Feedback from teachers, especially those from Ayacucho Department, expressed both a willingness and a fear to approach the violent past in the classroom and

⁶⁶ The seven regions were: Huanuco, Cajamarca, Cusco, Ayacucho, San Martín, Iquitos and Trujillo. There are 24 regions, called departments, in Peru. Pilots were also conducted in Lima. Instituto de Defensa Legal, *Resultados del Cuestionario de Evaluación Proyecto Recordándonos* (Lima: IDL, no date).

⁶⁷ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

⁶⁸ Instituto de Defensa Legal.

⁶⁹ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

many teachers were grateful for the entry that the materials gave to this topic they were previously unsure how to address⁷⁰. Teachers did suggest that materials should be amplified, should present a more critical view and should be specific to conflict experiences in their region⁷¹. Despite the positive overall impression, the pilot did uncover that in addition to uncertainty about how to approach the theme with students, teachers were very ambivalent about the conflict and its causes.

The teachers' union, heavily politicized during the conflict, continues to be so and many teachers surveyed in the pilot worried about how the materials would be seen by factions within the union. As the former IDL Coordinator explained:

In reality, the teachers themselves did not have a consensus around how to approach the topic or around the causes of conflict. There were teachers who were sympathetic to Shining Path, there were teachers who told us the materials would cause a problem in the union because there were people there from the *Patria Roja* party [the Communist Party of Peru] who did not agree with the CVR's final report. Others said the materials would cause problems with the forces of order in their communities⁷².

This feedback from teachers led the *Recordándonos* team to present the materials to the Ministry of Education with a 'very strong recommendation' that prior to using the materials, teachers 'didn't only need training in how to approach these topics with children, but also a space in which to reflect upon the significance of the period of violence in their own lives.'⁷³

Students, generally, responded positively to both the materials and the opportunity to discuss the violent past in the classroom. An initial study of knowledge about conflict among students found that this varied considerably by region and that students in regions affected by conflict attributed more importance to learning about conflict⁷⁴. The pilot also found that student knowledge of conflict increased across regions after using the *Recordándonos* material with trained teachers⁷⁵.

⁷⁰ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

⁷¹ Instituto de Defensa Legal, p. 3.

⁷² Interview with former IDL *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 28 February 2008.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Instituto de Defensa Legal, *Cuanto saben los niños de la CVR? Estudio en 8 Regiones del Perú* (Lima: IDL, no date).

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

Public school teachers and students complained about the simple formatting of the first version of the *Recordándonos* materials. They stated that the illustrations were not very engaging and that, visually, the materials appeared boring and of low quality. The PUCP Coordinator explained that public school teachers at one teacher training workshop asked ‘why do the poor materials always arrive to we the poor? In the private schools their books have colour photos⁷⁶.’ These comments were certainly taken into account in the revision of *Recordándonos* and the second version is very colourful, with a great deal more illustrations and photographs and does appear much more dynamic than its predecessor. These changes, however, made the second edition materials too expensive to print within the *Recordándonos* project budget and they remain in CD format. This challenge remains to be addressed by the Ministry of Education (and donors) should they eventually approve and distribute *Recordándonos*.

4.3) The primary school resources

The three *Recordándonos* primary school workbooks were designed to be used during classes on ‘integral communication’ and ‘personal social’ subjects as outlined in the DCN to develop the ‘skills, capacities and attitudes’ to ‘live together democratically, develop identity and sense of community belonging (locally, regionally, nationally, with Latin America and globally) and to reflect and understand natural, historical and socio-cultural processes.’⁷⁷ The workbooks cover the six years of primary school education in Peru, with the first volume, *Learning to Respect Each Other to Live Better*, designed for use in the first and second grades (third cycle), the second, *Learning to Live Together in Peace Starting from the School*, for use in the third and fourth grades (fourth cycle) and the third, *Remembering our History in Order to Build Peace*, for use in fifth and sixth grades (fifth cycle).

The primary resources focus on four themes: building identity and learning to appreciate differences, children’s rights, discovering and remembering the country’s past, and participating in building peace. Activities are central to each theme and engage students

⁷⁶ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

⁷⁷ Ministerio de Educación, p. 130.

in discussion with each other and with family members. Activities around appreciating difference focus first upon individual identity and uniqueness before moving on to activities that introduce the uniqueness and dignity of peers and the broader community.

The violent past is addressed in all of the primary school volumes, though the volume for fifth and sixth grade students focuses upon with the past with the most depth. The section ‘*My Heart is Peruvian*’ is the first introduction of political violence in the resources designed for first and second grade students. It focuses on exploring and appreciating Peru’s cultural diversity before introducing ‘the difficult years in our country⁷⁸’. Students are told a story about a child called Rosa, from the department of Ayacucho, whose father was killed in ‘the great fight between Shining Path and the Peruvian state between 1980 and 2000⁷⁹’ and whose family fled their village for a big city. Children are asked to reflect upon how Rosa might have felt and are asked whether they know anyone who had a similar experience. Finally they are asked to draw an illustration to follow the last one in the workbook, which shows Rosa in tears, in order to explain how they think Rosa’s story continued.

The *Recordándonos* Coordinators explained how, at the early primary level, political violence was introduced in terms of children’s rights and in order to develop empathy. By telling stories from a child’s perspective, the resources aim to introduce children to reflection about the violent past without overwhelming them.

In an activity in the volume for the third and fourth grades, students are asked to interview their grandparents and then to work in groups to develop posters that present the diversity of the places their families come from, the foods they eat and the traditions they practice. A section on discrimination and the right to equality includes an exercise that asks children to identify discriminatory stereotypes that exist in Peru around race, language, poverty and gender and to reflect on personal experiences of discrimination. This volume deepens the presentation of conflict and devotes a substantial section to

⁷⁸ *Aprendimos a Respetarnos para Vivir Mejor: 3 ciclo EBR Primaria 2nd Edition.*)Lima: Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú y Instituto de Defensa Legal, 2006), p. 18

⁷⁹ *ibid.* p. 18

interpersonal conflict. Exercises ask students to consider appropriate and respectful ways to resolve several conflictual situations. From here the text explains ‘Several years ago, in Peru there was a period of political violence that demonstrated that we have a lot of work to do in order to learn how to better resolve conflicts and respect difference.’⁸⁰ The resource then provides a brief history of the conflict without introducing specific incidences of violence. The timeline concludes with the formation of the CVR in 2001. The volume explains the CVR’s findings with relation to victims being mainly from poor, rural and indigenous communities and asks students what lessons Peruvians should draw from this period⁸¹.

The final volume of the primary series focuses most heavily on memory, history and reconciliation. The volume opens with exercises about memory, amnesia and personal history and asks students to interview family members and research the history of their communities. The volume then explains that ‘recovering the historical and collective memory of our country is a fundamental task for all Peruvians’⁸². Violent images are included for the first time in the volumes and appear frequently throughout the material from this point forward. The role of the armed forces is also introduced in more depth here with the acknowledgement that ‘bad’ decisions were made. Concrete events are also introduced at this point, including massacres by both the armed forces and Shining Path and the kidnapping of children by Shining Path. Historical text and exercises are punctuated by narratives from a fictional brother and sister, Jackie and Felipe, who tell the story of their family’s experience in a community in Ayacucho department. The volume closes with a lesson about the CVR and national reconciliation and with group exercises about the nature of reconciliation and its possibilities in Peru.

4.4) The secondary school resources

⁸⁰ *Aprendiendo a Convivir en Paz Desde la Escuela: 4 ciclo EBR Primaria* 2nd Edition. (Lima: Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú y Instituto de Defensa Legal, 2006) p. 22.

⁸¹ *ibid.* p. 22-23.

⁸² *Recordando Nuestra Historia para Construir la Paz: 5 ciclo EBR Primaria* 2nd Edition. (Lima: Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú y Instituto de Defensa Legal, 2006) p. 9.

As mentioned above, secondary school *Recordándonos* materials have been designed for use in the ‘social sciences’ component of Peru’s national curriculum. The ‘pedagogical orientation’ provided by the Ministry of Education for social science teachers states that:

An important part of the focus of this area is the emphasis on pedagogical principles to educate about truth and justice, which should facilitate the construction of a democratic cooperation sustained by shared ethical and democratic values on the part of students and their teachers⁸³.

The *Recordándonos* secondary materials have been designed in light of the ‘competencies and capacities’ that the social science subject aims to develop among students, these include: critical thinking, creativity, decision making skills and problem solving. The materials also aim to develop information management skills, conceptualization and space-time understanding and critical judgement. The former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator explained that ‘the materials were always developed with the idea that they would be taken on by the Ministry of Education and so we were very faithful to their curriculum⁸⁴.’

The three secondary volumes cover the full five year secondary education cycle in Peru, with the first volume, *Living Together with our Differences*, designed for first and second year secondary students; the second, *Exercising Citizenship and Rights*, for use in third and four year and the third volume, *Learning from our Past*, for use in the final fifth year of secondary.

Living Together with our Differences develops in-depth explorations of cultural diversity in Peru, drawing upon old newspaper articles, vignettes and students’ personal reflections. At this level, references to human rights refer students directly to Peru’s constitution and encourage them to think about whether rights guarantees are met in the country and how discrimination may exist at institutional levels. Peru’s recent conflict, in this volume, is dealt with very much from the perspective of discrimination and inequality. Students are encouraged to reflect upon the identities of the majority of the victims of political violence and to assess whether inequalities have improved since the period of violence. Here the structural causes for conflict - social exclusion, inequality

⁸³ Ministerio de Educación.

⁸⁴ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

and persistent racism - identified by the CVR are presented and students are encouraged to confront them. This volume also presents, for the first time in the *Recordándonos* series, a piece of testimony given to the CVR – ‘My mother remembers her sons and she becomes very sad, “at least they could have buried them so that my heart would be at peace,” she says. When she says this, my mother breaks into tears⁸⁵’ - and asks students whether they think it is better to remember the events of the past or to forget them.

The volume developed for students in the third and fourth years of secondary schooling focuses heavily on human rights and situates Peru within international human rights frameworks. This volume also addresses massive human rights violations committed by the state, often referring back to international human rights norms and asking students to consider state actions with reference to its rights commitments. The volume includes CVR testimony, drawing on a variety of examples. The findings of the CVR are presented in detail, including the degree of responsibility attributed to the subversive groups and to government forces, and the roles played by various sectors of society are explored. A section on citizenship outlines the efforts of groups such as *comedores populares* (soup kitchens) and *vasos de leches* (feeding programs for children) to resist violence and offer alternative proposals.

The final workbook of the *Recordándonos* series includes longer pieces of CVR testimony and invites students to research a specific event in a detailed timeline of the armed conflict. It relies more heavily on photographs collected by the CVR than on the stylized illustrations present in earlier volumes. Photos of the three presidents in power during the conflict are included alongside a detailed narrative of events through the 1980s and 1990s. At the end of the volume, the Integral Reparations Plan elaborated by the CVR is outlined and the state’s responsibility to undertake it fully is highlighted. The volume finishes with an exercise in which students are asked to design a poster with the theme ‘remembering the past so that it won’t be repeated’.

⁸⁵ CVR as quoted *Conviviendo con Nuestras Diferencias: 1 y 2 de secundaria 2nd Edition*. (Lima: Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú y Instituto de Defensa Legal, 2006) p. 24.

5) *Recordándonos* AND THE POLITICS OF TEACHING THE RECENT VIOLENT PAST

Challenges and controversy around the approval and implementation of *Recordándonos* and indeed around teaching about the recent past in Peru more generally have been foreshadowed through this paper. This section explores these technical and political challenges, within and beyond the Ministry of Education, and highlights the issues and opportunities that they raise for broader debates around teaching about violent conflict and educational reform in the post-conflict context.

5.1) Challenges within the Ministry of Education

... these processes [the incorporation of histories of the violent past into the education system] have a very strong institutional component, since they require reaching a minimum degree of consensus and an institutionally legitimized version of what took place⁸⁶.

The development of a history curriculum in a postconflict country reflects in microcosm the forces that drove the country's conflict⁸⁷.

‘When we arrived with the materials to the Ministry,’ explained the former PUCP Coordinator, ‘we realized that there was a lot of fear⁸⁸.’ A Ministry of Education representative, then Vice-Minister of Pedagogy and Management, had spoken publicly in favour of the materials and their potential to contribute to ‘human rights, tolerance and the search for peace⁸⁹,’ and, in several interviews conducted for this paper, respondents indicated that during the Toledo government there was a lot of support for the materials in the Ministry. However, as the former Director of the Primary Area, who received the first version of materials when they were presented in 2004, explained:

All of these documents were going to be presented with the seal of the Ministry of Education upon them, and they were going to be presented at a national level, so we are talking about them being in the hands of 5 million students and their teachers, so, of course, we had to revise them⁹⁰.

The revision of the first edition of the primary education volumes of *Recordándonos* was undertaken by a team of representatives from various areas within the Ministry, including

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Jelin *State Repression and the Labours of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

⁸⁷ Freedman et. al. p. 684

⁸⁸ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 14, 2008.

⁸⁹ As quoted in ‘Informe CVR en las Escuelas,’ 2005

⁹⁰ Interview with former Director of Basic Primary Area, 18 February 2008.

the areas of: basic primary, intercultural and bilingual education and specialists in culture of peace. The former Director of the basic primary area explained that while the focus of the materials seemed to him to be ‘important and good,’ he and his team had some ‘harsh observations’ as they felt that ‘in many cases the activities generated discrimination,’ that ‘in certain cases the topic of discrimination was not adequately managed’ and ‘actually fostered a situation of violence.’⁹¹

These comments, the *Recordándonos* Coordinators argued, were based on fear that the materials would be difficult for children with family members tied to the police or armed forces and that their peers would accuse their families of violence. The PUCP Coordinator countered that ‘the material was never designed to be so personal. At no time does the material seek that students blame or accuse, on the contrary, it seeks to generate values like reconciliation and peace.’⁹² While it is true that individual blame and accusatory statements are very much avoided in the materials, exercises do repeatedly ask children to engage with their families’ personal histories and to interview family members, a process that may be difficult for children (and their families) whose families were directly involved in the conflict on either side.

The Ministry of Education team was also concerned about content within the *Recordándonos* volumes that refers to the role of the state military and police forces in the conflict. The former Director of the Basic Primary Area explained:

We undertook a full process of revisions and we changed - though not substantively but yes, we did change - certain things because as a part of the state we [the Ministry of Education] cannot openly present information against the state. We cannot. Being very sincere, we simply cannot. So we undertook a revision and we re-wrote the sections about the state without losing their foundation or their denunciation⁹³.

The *Recordándonos* team participated in discussions with the Ministry of Education about the revisions and agreed to many suggested changes when they ‘felt the changes really didn’t modify what the material was trying to say.’⁹⁴ In some cases, the changes were quite substantial. For instance, in the first edition of the volume for third and fourth

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

⁹³ Interview with former Director of Basic Primary Area, 18 February 2008.

⁹⁴ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

grade students a timeline of Peru's conflict included a box that read: 'The government decided to rely on the Armed Forces and the Police Forces to resolve the situation. They also used violence and in many cases did not respect human rights.'⁹⁵ The same timeline in the second edition reads: 'In many cases innocent people were killed in the fight against the subversive groups. Communities organized to defend themselves against this situation'⁹⁶.

In the first version of the volume for grades five and six a passage explains that the armed forces committed a series of human rights violations against civilians and includes in brackets: assassinations, forced disappearances, etc. The passage goes on to say that the military deemed this to be a 'necessary cost' and named certain areas as 'red zones' where anyone suspicious was killed without evidence as to whether they were part of a subversive group⁹⁷. In the second edition, this section reads:

The military had the mission to end the conflict as rapidly as possible and they thought that by responding with equal violence they would reach this objective. The result was bad, many innocent people were killed because the human rights of all people were not respected⁹⁸.

For the former Director of the Basic Primary Area, the PUCP-IDL version was 'a direct attack towards the armed forces, or at least it was easy to identify that the armed forces were not presented in a positive light.'⁹⁹ The PUCP Coordinator explained that they tried to counter this perspective by bringing in human rights and CVR experts in order to argue that what was being presented 'was not a perspective of the *Recordándonos* team, but rather that it was very true to the findings of the CVR.'¹⁰⁰ Certainly, the issue of how to present human rights violations committed by the state is challenging in any curriculum context and curriculum based on TRCs is not exempt from such challenges. However, as mentioned in Section 1, acknowledgement of past human rights abuses by the state in

⁹⁵ *Aprendiendo a Convivir en Paz Desde la Escuela: 2 ciclo Primaria* 1st Edition. (Lima: Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú y Instituto de Defensa Legal, 2005) p. 19.

⁹⁶ *Aprendiendo a convivir en paz desde la escuela*, 2nd edition, p. 22.

⁹⁷ *Recordando Nuestra Historia Para Construir la Paz: 3 ciclo Primaria* 1st Edition. (Lima: Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú y Instituto de Defensa Legal, 2005) p. 12.

⁹⁸ *Recordando nuestra historia para construir la paz*, 2nd edition, p. 14.

⁹⁹ Interview with former Director of Basic Primary Area, 18 February 2008.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

national curriculum can demonstrate a profound break from the past and a desire on the part of the state for change.

The area for Basic Secondary Education did not respond to the materials with the same interest that the Primary Area did. Despite several requests for feedback on content and for suggested revisions, the *Recordándonos* team did not receive any comments from the Ministry of Education on the secondary volumes. This may be because the team and its funders did not have the same already established relationships within the Ministry of Education at the secondary level as they did at the primary level. The second edition of the secondary workbooks, therefore, were only modified based on feedback from the regional piloting of the resources. This means that the secondary volumes, which due to students' ages and maturity go into greater depth about events of the conflict and human rights violations than do the primary ones, do not shy away from presenting the human rights violations of the armed forces or police.

Illustrations in the secondary school version show armed men in uniform loading civilians into a truck, soldiers destroying homes as civilians look on as well as illustrations depicting masked subversives shooting indiscriminately. The middle workbook in the series includes CVR testimony from a woman who was raped by members of the armed forces and includes a three-page section on 'crimes and violations derived from state strategy.'¹⁰¹ This section concludes by proposing two topics for classroom debate. The first asks 'was it necessary to use a 'hard hand' to combat subversion?' the second 'what are the consequences – for the State and Peruvian citizens – of the twenty years of violence?'¹⁰²

As the *Recordándonos* team stressed, all references to state violence are derived directly from findings of the CVR and use similar language - though slightly simpler due to the young audience - to describe crimes. At no point throughout the materials is the name of any member of the police or armed forces mentioned. Photos of the three Presidents in

¹⁰¹ *Ejerciendo Ciudadanía y Derechos: 3 y 4 ciclos de secundaria* 2nd Edition. (Lima: Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú y Instituto de Defensa Legal, 2006) p. 13.

¹⁰² *ibid.* p. 18.

power during the conflict do appear on pages that detail the principal human rights violations committed during their regimes. A photo of Peru's current President, Alan Garcia, who served his first term as President from 1985 to 1990, appears in the book designed for students in the final level of secondary school, below a paragraph that describes how his attempts to condemn military violence at the beginning of his regime failed and how his regime intensified the presence of the armed forces. The paragraph closes describing the massacres at Canto Grande and El Fronton prisons at which 270 people were killed¹⁰³.

5.2) Political challenges to teaching about the violent past

Recordándonos was developed during the government of Alejandro Toledo, the same president who ratified the CVR decree and in 2003 accepted its final report. Considerable momentum existed both domestically and internationally around the CVR's recommendations following the release of its final report and initiatives that used its report and recommendations were encouraged by government and by international donors. As the former Director of the Basic Primary Area at the Ministry of Education explained 'at this time, the Ministry and the educational sector had the mandate to comply with the recommendations of the CVR.'¹⁰⁴ The former Coordinator of the Education Sub-Area at the CVR explained that 'Toledo didn't have any debt when it comes to human rights. In other words, his party was new, he was new to the political scene and therefore he was able to support the CVR with considerable strength because he didn't have any fault in its findings.'¹⁰⁵

This, however, is not the case with the government of Alan Garcia, which entered into power on June 4, 2006 having won the 2006 elections in a run-off. Garcia's first administration as president coincided with part of the period investigated by the CVR and his government was found to be responsible for serious violations of human rights.

¹⁰³ *Apriendo de Nuestro Pasado*, 2nd Edition, p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with former Director Basic Primary Area, 18 February 2008.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with former Coordinator of Sub-Area of Education, 27 February 2008.

Members of Garcia's current administration are named in the CVR report and in some cases their prosecution is suggested.

The process of revision and preparation of the second edition of *Recordándonos* and the eventual partial distribution of the *Recordándonos* resource occurred in the context of the transition between the Toledo and Garcia governments. Even before Garcia's government entered power various sectors of Toledo's administration – including the Intelligence Services, the Chorillos Military College, the Ministry of Defence and Congress¹⁰⁶, which all employed officials with connections to earlier governments, expressed interest, either through letters or in meetings, in learning more about the *Recordándonos* project and its content¹⁰⁷. The former Director of the Basic Primary Area explained:

They all discovered that the Ministry of Education had materials in its hand that were linking the recommendations of the CVR to the educational domain and they were very interested in knowing exactly what we were going to present. They weren't sensing, but the very fact of their questions made us realize there were special interests involved¹⁰⁸.

The Minister of Defence in office during the final year of Toledo's administration wrote a letter to the Ministry of Education, which was copied to IDL and PUCP, stating that the materials were insulting to the armed forces and were therefore not acceptable as national curriculum content¹⁰⁹.

This letter was taken very seriously and is seen by members of the *Recordándonos* team as well as by former CVR Commissioners to have effectively stalled the process of *Recordándonos* approval in the Ministry. Indeed, the Ministry did not defend the initiative nor did it mention DCN guidelines – still being finalized at this time – to teach about conflict, human rights and citizenship. With the advent of Garcia's government, resistance to the materials on behalf of many sectors of the state outside of the Ministry of Education has persisted and the current Vice President, himself a retired Navy Admiral with links to the Fronton prison massacres which occurred during Garcia's previous government, has added his voice to the other internal calls that the *Recordándonos*

¹⁰⁶ Interview with former Director Basic Primary Area, 18 February 2008.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with former Coordinator of Sub-Area of Education, 27 February 2008.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

¹⁰⁹ Interviews, January - October 2008

materials not be distributed. The former Director of the Basic Primary Area, currently heading another area within the Ministry of Education states that to the best of his knowledge there is currently no discussion of the CVR, its recommendations or the *Recordándonos* project within the Ministry. Interviews with other Ministry of Education respondents concur. In its last communications with the *Recordándonos* team in 2006, however, the Ministry stated that it was in the process of validating the materials designed for primary school students, which had been distributed to 2,600 targeted primary schools and that results of the validation would be available by 2009 or 2010¹¹⁰.

5.3) Distribution of *Recordándonos*

The 2,600 primary schools to which *Recordándonos* materials were distributed were schools targeted under Peru's 'educational emergency' policy framework in place from 2004-2006. In 2004, the Ministry of Education declared the country's public education system to be in a 'state of emergency,' largely due to students' poor results on the international standardized PISA tests. The educational emergency, according to the Ministry was demonstrated by the fact that students were not learning basic skills for personal development and subsequent national growth, that many students were studying in suboptimal conditions and that students were not being trained as citizens¹¹¹. This policy frame aimed to address the 'emergency' between 2004 and 2006 and developed a series of actions to do so, which included selecting schools in the most 'marginalized and excluded'¹¹² communities and targeting them with a series of interventions.

In October 2004, the then Vice-Minister of Education announced to a group of representatives from regions affected by violence 'that the agenda of the educational sector coincides with the recommendations of the CVR.'¹¹³ Since the CVR's recommendations also called for addressing educational quality in rural schools and in

¹¹⁰ Interview with former PUCP *Recordándonos* Coordinator, 14 April 2008.

¹¹¹ Susana Frisancho 'La Educación Ética en el Perú. Aportes de la Psicología Evolutiva' *Palestra: Portal de Asuntos Públicos la PUCP* <http://palestra.pucp.edu.pe/?id=132>, 2004

¹¹² Oficina de Prensa y Comunicaciones, Ministerio de Educación, Republica del Perú "Agenda del Sector Educativo Coincide con recomendaciones de la CVR" (<http://www.minedu.gob.pe/noticias/index.php?id=1211> 27 October, 2004.)

¹¹³ *ibid.*

communities living in poverty, the Ministry of Education bundled its obligations towards the CVR into its plan to address the ‘educational emergency’. This bundling included the preliminary distribution of *Recordándonos* to schools targeted within the ‘emergency’, the first step in the materials’ possible validation as a national curriculum resource¹¹⁴.

The former Director of Basic Primary Education explained that:

This group of schools [the 2,600 primary schools prioritized within the ‘emergency’ framework] were privileged with a series of materials [including, among others, *Recordándonos*] taking into account that Shining Path generally took hold in those zones with the greatest need and living in extreme poverty. This is why this material was destined specifically to these schools privileged as a sort of prevention against the possible resurgence of violence within their contexts¹¹⁵.

Certainly there is resonance between the policy goals of the ‘educational emergency’ and the CVR’s recommendations for educational reform. Likewise pilot distribution within the emergency programming was likely most convenient for the Ministry. Nonetheless, it is dangerous to frame the *Recordándonos* material as most appropriate, or worse still, only appropriate, for communities heavily affected by violence or for excluded and marginalized communities. This targeting of CVR material to particular groups can perpetuate some of the very attitudes the CVR identifies as playing into Peru’s conflict in the first place. The *Recordándonos* tools are designed with reconciliation in mind and aim to reach a national audience of students and teachers. The resource seeks to stimulate reflection Peru’s young people, not only in those whose families and communities directly experienced violence. The development of empathy and understanding between children, families and communities who experienced the period of political violence in different ways is one of the goals behind the material. The framing of *Recordándonos* as a ‘preventative’ resource, relevant only to the most marginal communities where violence is ‘likely’ to take root detaches the materials from their emphasis on the deep structural causes of conflict within Peru as a whole and, in many ways, reiterates the very structures of difference, division, regionalism and racism that the CVR identifies.

¹¹⁴ Interview with former Coordinator of Sub-Area of Education, 27 February 2008.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

The ‘educational emergency’ policy framework, always envisioned to be finite, ended definitively in 2006 when Garcia’s government took power and the Minister of Education changed. Not considered by the current Ministry of Education policymakers to have been a successful initiative, the current administration has not continued the various programmes of the emergency. As the former Director of the Basic Primary Area explains:

Because the CVR materials were part of the ‘educational emergency’ framework and because the national program for the educational emergency was an initiative of the previous administration, well, today nobody speaks about the educational emergency at all¹¹⁶.

Thus, the validation of *Recordándonos* by the Ministry of Education for curriculum approval remains stalled within a larger, discontinued initiative that there is little political incentive to resurrect. Pressures to avoid teaching about the findings of the CVR applied by state entities outside the Ministry and the failure of the ‘educational emergency’ both pose serious challenges for the eventual approval of *Recordándonos*. In the words of the former Director ‘what I want to emphasize is that this issue makes waves and this is probably one of the reasons why no one wants to bring it to the forefront again so it will again make waves and polarize everything¹¹⁷.’

5.4) CVR as scapegoat: Further controversy around the CVR in the curriculum

In 2004-05 the process of *Recordándonos* evaluation within the Ministry of Education, and the responses to this process from other sectors of the Peruvian state received some media coverage. From August to October 2008, however the topic of the CVR in curriculum became the focus of considerable (and controversial) media coverage. Media attention sparked when a Congresswoman from Garcia’s APRA party denounced a Ministry of Education approved Social Sciences textbook for the final year of secondary school. This textbook, produced by the Colombian publisher *Editorial Norma* under a Ministry of Education tender, responded to the secondary syllabus in the DCN for the

¹¹⁶ Interview with former Director Basic Primary Area, 18 February 2008.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

final level of secondary education in Peru, which, as mentioned above, does include two lines about Peru's recent conflict, peace process and truth and justice.

The Congresswoman was angry about text explaining Peru's conflict that she called 'an apology for terrorism' and 'ideological contraband.' Her statement against the textbook coincided nearly exactly with the fifth anniversary of the presentation of the CVR's final report and festivities to commemorate it¹¹⁸. Deemed by many to be a political move by the Congresswoman towards a future position as Minister of Education and by others as a move to discredit the CVR on its five year anniversary, the Congresswoman's statements and the Ministry of Education's responses were regularly featured in the media in the weeks following her initial statement.

Initially the debate revolved around the Ministry's responsibility to revise textbooks, with the Ministry attempting to answer for the textbook's content¹¹⁹. Again the Ministry of Education did not take a strong stance in favour of teaching about Peru's recent conflict or refer to its own (albeit minimal) DCN guidelines to do so. The debate changed tenor following statements from a Peruvian historian who drafted the relevant text for *Editorial Norma* and from the former President of the CVR. The historian spoke first, stating that the content of the textbook was entirely based on the final report of the CVR and that the Congresswoman's reaction was unfounded¹²⁰. The CVR President joined the debate, stating that: 'Our work was official, supported by the government of then President Alejandro Toledo, therefore the CVR is a state source.'¹²¹

With these statements the debate expanded its focus such that it not challenged the legitimacy of teaching about the past by accusing the Ministry of Education of being responsible for such content, deemed inappropriate by many commentators including the

¹¹⁸ The CVR five year anniversary was 26 August 2008 and was commemorated through a series of events in the last week of August, 2008. The Congresswoman made her first statement against the level 5 Social Sciences textbook on 28 August 2008. "Cabanillas Denuncia "Contrabando Ideológico" y Exige Renuncia del Idel Vexler" (RPP Noticias, 28 August, 2008).

¹¹⁹ See for example: Idel Vexler, "Currículo Escolar y Logro de Aprendizajes" Perú 21 (30 August 2008); "Chang Renueva Confianza e Vexler y Hoy se Presenta en el Congreso" El Comercio (2 September 2008).

¹²⁰ "Libros: Historia e Histeria" La Republica (8 September 2008).

¹²¹ "Consultan si hay Apología al Terror en Texto Escolar" El Comercio (30 August 2008).

Congresswoman but that it also challenged the very legitimacy of the CVR. Peru's truth commission is widely considered to be one of the most successful of such initiatives and endeavours to delegitimize are more likely to stem from political motives, such as the Garcia government's desire that the CVR fade from popular consciousness, than from genuine fault with its findings. That efforts to teach about Peru's conflict have (albeit inadvertently) opened space to criticize the CVR is troubling, although not entirely unsurprising.

Perhaps more troubling still is that positions defending the importance of teaching about Peru's violent past only emerged from former members of the CVR and from the human rights and educational NGO communities, not from the Ministry of Education. The debate opened an opportunity for the APRA party to attempt to undermine the CVR – the same Congresswoman subsequently questioned the CVR's toll of dead and disappeared and objected to its use of the term 'internal conflict' – while the Ministry of Education discussed procedure – the process by which it commissions and reviews textbooks – rather than its (still under-developed) policy on teaching about Peru's recent conflict.

The very minimal policy direction from the Ministry of Education in terms of teaching about the violent past – two lines within the voluminous DCN – and the Ministry's failure to articulate a public commitment to teaching about conflict in Peru have enabled a situation in which political responses to the CVR final report configure, and indeed usurp, educational debates. This situation limits possibilities for teaching about conflict – indeed the secondary textbook was suspended and *Recordándonos* remains unapproved – along with the symbolic and reconciliatory potential of such teaching and learning.

6) TRCs AND CURRICULUM: LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1) Opportunities and challenges in Peru

As Cole emphasizes, 'perhaps the key actors in the process of history education reform are ordinary people at all levels of society – teachers, principals, parents and students

themselves.¹²² It is unfortunate that the considerable debate generated by both the *Recordándonos* resource and the *Editorial Norma* textbook has not included such voices and their perspectives around teaching and learning about conflict. Were the debate to shift towards discussion of how and why to teach about the recent conflict it may in itself may open space for policymaking.

Should a consensus emerge that not only permits but calls for teaching about Peru's conflict, the existence of an internally piloted, high-quality resource like *Recordándonos* will certainly be useful. In other words, simply because *Recordándonos* is not in wide use in schools today, does not mean that it will never be; the fact that it is already developed and is of high-quality in terms of design, content and pedagogical appropriateness presents a great opportunity for future interest in teaching about the conflict and the CVR. This said, however, the manner in which educational debate has been circumvented in favour of CVR critique in Peru, may suggest that while the CVR should be *an* important source for teaching about the recent conflict CVR content should be accompanied by other sources such as fictional works, historical and scholarly sources, newspaper articles and artistic sources. Indeed Sinclair and colleagues argue that teaching about conflict from multiple perspectives offers entry points for teachers and learners coming from a diversity of perspectives¹²³. An additional benefit to a multiple perspectives approach may be that it diffuses strong political responses that will attempt to discredit all teaching about the past as biased. For the many reasons argued in Section 2, quality truth commission reports should be a central and important source and perspective within such an approach.

The quality of the *Recordándonos* material itself also presents considerable opportunity in that, should the resource be used, it has the potential to promote a nuanced and balanced learning about conflict that at once fosters reconciliatory attitudes without compromising historical and collective memory. Oglesby's work in Guatemala found

¹²² Cole, p. 17.

¹²³ See for example: Margaret Sinclair (in collaboration with Lynn Davies, Anna Obura and Felissa Tibbits) *Learning to Live Together: Design, Monitoring and Evaluation of Education for Life Skills, Citizenship, Peace and Human Rights* (Eschborn: GTZ and UNESCO, 2008)

that NGO educational materials developed based on the truth commission there obscured the agency, resistance and diverse experiences of victims of the conflict and ultimately sacrificed the development of contextual historical memory to the development of a more globalized idea of a ‘culture of peace.’¹²⁴ The *Recordándonos* materials navigate the difficult terrain between the facts of violence and aims of reconciliation well and appear to follow Minow’s advice that ‘by focusing on the history of responses to atrocity rather than atrocity alone, scholars [in this case educators] can underscore that continuing human project of dealing with – and preventing – mass inhumanity’¹²⁵.’ The use of well-developed, thought-provoking and creative activities throughout the *Recordándonos* curriculum appears to chart a course that can aptly guide students through the findings of the CVR in a way that fosters the skills and capacities desired as part of the curriculum the material has been designed to compliment.

However, the trepidation expressed by teachers in the pilot about introducing such discussion into their classrooms, along with their positive responses to the idea of teacher training on the topic, demonstrate not only the need for solid policy direction around teaching about the past, but also for teacher training and support in this area. Cole and Barsalou argue that ‘reforming pedagogy – the way history is taught - should take priority in many contexts over curriculum revision, especially when resources are scarce’¹²⁶.’ Curriculum materials are, after all, only materials and can only be made meaningful and useful by the teachers and students who engage with them.

6.2) Lessons from the Peruvian case

There are several lessons that can be drawn from the Peruvian case that may be useful in other contexts when attempting to develop curriculum content based on the work and findings of a TRC:

- TRC strategy makes a difference. An early strategy to lay the foundations for initiatives that will continue beyond the lifetime of a TRC can indeed

¹²⁴ Oglesby.

¹²⁵ Minow, p. 144.

¹²⁶ Cole and Barsalou, p. 10.

facilitate both the momentum for and development of such initiatives. While the TRC need not single-handedly undertake initiatives that may be more long-term or developmental in nature, such as the development of curriculum resources, they are uniquely placed to initiate them and to use their considerable influence to build the future institutional acceptability of initiatives like new curriculum resources.

- TRC staff devoted to education are important. Having at least one TRC staff member focused primarily on educational issues can be very beneficial for bringing attention to importance of education during the TRC process, building links with Ministry of Education, engaging the broader educational community in the work of the TRC and putting in place the foundations to initiate a curriculum project.
- Partner human rights and educational experts. The partnership of human rights experts with deep knowledge of the TRC findings and process with educationalists with expertise in pedagogy and material development is an excellent one for developing educational materials that live up to the potential inherent in curriculum elements based on TRCs.
- Teaching the violent past can be a sensitive and political process for teachers as well as for students. This is not reason to avoid the process but is reason to ensure that teachers are trained to use the materials and feel comfortable doing so. It is also reason to accompany teachers in a personal process of coming to terms with conflict before they ask their students to do so.
- National curriculum is an incredibly meaningful and politically important area that can transcend the authority of the Ministry of Education. The process of incorporating discussions of the violent past into curriculum can be (and perhaps necessarily is) a slow and difficult and political one.
- Policy around teaching the violent past is as important as materials. Due to the political nature of revising curriculum and of teaching about the violent past and therefore, to the likelihood of political responses to such initiatives, it is important for Ministries of Education to have and to articulate policies that justify and plan for teaching about conflict. Such policies should include the development of materials as well as the training of teachers.

6.3) Recommendations for developing TRC-based curriculum

In light of the lessons learned from the Peruvian case, a series of recommendations can be made for the development of curriculum resources based on TRCs:

- Ensure that the TRC resource will be an important component of a broad look at conflict and its history. This broader curriculum should present a diversity of perspectives and encourage students to not only learn from a variety of sources but to understand the nature of the sources themselves, including the TRC process; thus encouraging students to develop skills as historians as well as to learn about and come to terms with their community's past.
- Encourage open communication with the Ministry of Education from the beginning of the initiative and consider the inclusion of Ministry representatives on an advisory council. Exploit linkages to existing national curriculum and justify content not only in terms of necessary historical learning but also in terms of skills whose development is already required within national curriculum.
- Involve the Ministry of Education in the piloting of the resource as this can work as a first step towards its eventual validation as a curriculum resource.
- Include adequate funds to ensure quality teacher training. Train teachers on new curriculum approaches to history, to teaching about the violent past and on pedagogy.
- Ensure funding for the initiative has contemplated and is in place for: development, piloting, high quality printing, distribution and teacher training.
- Make public the debate about teaching the violent past. Engage teachers, students, parents and communities in considering the challenges and opportunities around developing a curriculum resource based on a TRC process and consider the reconciliatory potential of the debate around the resource a first step in the longer term reconciliation it may foster.
- Ensure the material is of high quality. The resource should be pedagogically sound, age appropriate and dynamic. The print quality and visual aspect of the resource is important as are the creativity and feasibility of the activities within it as these will determine whether teachers and students find it engaging and bring it to life or whether they leave it on a shelf.
- Involve teachers and children in the process from the beginning. Understand the needs, interests and concerns of teachers and students before developing the resource and place importance on their feedback in piloting processes.

7) CONCLUSION

Freedman and colleagues working to develop history curriculum in Rwanda found that the process reflected in microcosm the forces behind that country's conflict. The same can be said for certain episodes in the story of CVR based curriculum in Peru. Toledo's Ministry of Education chose to reiterate and highlight geographic, socio-economic, linguistic and racial divisions and stereotypes that fed into conflict in Peru by directing the piloting of the *Recordandonos* only to communities most likely to have been victims of Peru's conflict. Garcia's government chose to deny the reality of past human rights abuses on the part of the state by reminding Peruvians of the terror suffered under Shining Path; directly implying that any mention of state abuse necessarily sided with the subversives.

In addition to offering insight into dynamics that fuelled Peru's conflict, these episodes paint a picture of the current state of reconciliation in Peru. If acknowledging past human rights abuses in national curriculum indicates a breaking from the violent past, a reconciliatory stance towards victims, a starting over, does refusing to do so indicate the opposite?

Despite its lack of 'human rights debt' and its 'CVR mandate,' Toledo's Ministry of Education did not strongly articulate the importance of teaching about the violent past nor build did it build a strong policy framework to support it. This lack of policy infrastructure, combined with political disincentive to look backwards in Garcia's government – unless, that is to discredit that which came before, like the CVR - has led to a stalemate in terms of teaching about Peru's recent conflict.

Luckily, reconciliation is not static. Nor does teaching and learning occur solely (or even mainly) through Ministry of Education decree. As Cole argues ordinary people – teachers, principals, parents and students – are the most important actors in teaching and learning about conflict and, as the *Recordándonos* pilot demonstrated, among ordinary people the potential for CVR based curriculum is well recognized.

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