

## ACADEMIC REVIEW: THE STATE OF THE EDUCATION IN THE STATE

### Reseña académica: el estado de la educación en el Estado

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## RESUMEN

La obra “El estado de Educación en el Estado”, es un libro realizada por la Oficina de Bolivia de la Fundación Konrad Adenauer (KAS), que examina dos siglos de historia boliviana desde su fundación en 1825 hasta la actualidad, abordando diversas perspectivas y enfoques. Esta edición es el quinto volumen de la colección del Bicentenario, con énfasis en el análisis de una variable crucial para el desarrollo como es la “Educación”. La publicación se organiza en tres secciones de análisis; en una primera, se evalúa la educación, sus reformas y sus transcurrir histórico, demarcando los principales hitos, entre reformas y cambios trascendentales del sistema educativo. Una segunda parte, se examinan las políticas públicas de educación y su financiamiento, presentando estadísticas de interés para ver destinos de gasto, avances e indicadores. Finalmente, en tercera parte, se estudian diversos temas educativos relacionados con el papel de los jóvenes, el empleo, la pandemia y el medio ambiente.

**Palabras clave:** *Educación, desarrollo humano, políticas educativas.*

## ABSTRACT

“The State of Education in the State” is a book produced by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) in Bolivia, which examines two centuries of Bolivian history from its founding in 1825 to the present, addressing various perspectives and approaches. This edition is the fifth volume of the Bicentennial collection, with emphasis on the analysis of a crucial variable for development such as “Education”. The publication is organized into three sections; In the first, education, its reforms and its historical course are evaluated, demarcating the main milestones, between reforms and transcendental changes in the educational system. Second part examines public education policies and their financing, presenting statistics of interest to see spending destinations, progress and indicators. Finally, in third part, various educational topics related to the role of young people, employment, pandemic and environment are studied.

**Keywords:** *Education, human development, educational policies.*

## INTRODUCTION

This important work includes a compendium of scientific articles that analyze education in Bolivia over 200 years, from the creation of the Republic to the present. The study emphasizes that education represents a crucial resource for the progress of the country, where the quality of education plays a fundamental role, since it positively influences human development and, consequently, economic growth, indicating that it is fundamental that this progress is accompanied by improvements in quantitative and educational quality indicators.

The book demonstrates that, despite significant investments in infrastructure, reductions in adult mortality and illiteracy rates, and educational reforms implemented in recent decades, advances in human development during the 20th and 21st centuries have been surprisingly limited.

At length, the work – through empirical evidence – argues that educational disparities persist in Bolivia in terms of access, and the quality of education at its various levels is discouraging. Available resources are insufficient to address needs at both the national and subnational levels. There are market failures, insufficient investment in fundamental aspects of well-being and in the formulation of social policies. The low quality of primary and secondary education in Bolivia, poor technical training and limited supply in the labor market continue to be challenges that remain to be addressed.

### **Document development.**

“The State of Education in the State” is a work of diverse authors, coordinated by the experience of Professor Mario Yapu, Dr. Iván Velásquez-Castellanos and Dr. Ludwing Torres, in a multidisciplinary desire for critical writing on education. over the course of two decades. In its 577 pages of the physical version and its 845 of the digital version, education, its reforms and its historical course are evaluated, examining public education policies and their financing, and addressing various educational topics related to the role of young people, employment, the pandemic and the environment.

The document is made up of three sections with 12 articles, developed by professionals with extensive thematic experience. The first section, which is the most extensive given the period of analysis it covers, relates to education, reform and historical data, comprising five articles.

The first article, developed by Dr. Iván Velásquez-Castellanos, is titled “75 years of incipient Human Development. Instruction and the educational level in the Republic of Bolivia (1825-1900)”, presents data from a period characterized by incipient and limited human development, the result of high political instability and the lack of resources to support the educational system. Velás-

quez-Castellanos points out that various factors contributed to this lag, from the low quality of education to the insufficient resources to maintain it, all accompanied by institutional weakness, few unqualified personnel and deficient infrastructure. Velásquez-Castellanos identifies at least four attempts at educational reform during these 75 years, as well as a reform effort in higher education (Velásquez-Castellanos, 2023).

The second article titled: “Historical and contextual evaluation of the training process in the Bolivian educational system”, was developed by Ludwing Torres, who carries out a comparative historical analysis between reforms and contextual of the training process within the Bolivian educational system in relation to others. Latin American and world systems. His research aims to propose an emerging educational model, focused on comprehensive and continuous training that allows skills to be identified and enhanced throughout life. Through a documentary review that includes a content and discourse analysis, contrasting the educational system with the economic, political and social model prevalent in Bolivia, the study thoroughly examines the training process in the country (Torres, 2023).

The work by Eliana Arauco and Kathlen Lizárraga entitled “Professional Technical Education and Training” is the third article in the first section of the book. The article handles two main theses that try to explain the current situation according to their perspective. The first thesis highlights the presence of a primary export development pattern that does not generate a demand for trained people, which results in a lack of signals to the market, supporting this assertion with extensive empirical evidence. The second thesis points out the influence of power groups at the levels of primary, secondary and university education. This influence is manifested due to the lack of organizations that articulate the interests of the productive and working world. Despite this discouraging situation, the authors contrast these challenges with the efforts and successes recorded in recent years to identify opportunities and overcome obstacles in the field of professional technical education and training in Bolivia (Arauco & Lizárraga, 2023).

Carmen Terceros is the author of the fourth article in the first section of the book, titled: “Teaching-learning for reading comprehension in the Bolivian curriculum.” Third parties carry out an evaluation of the teaching and learning process of reading comprehension in the Bolivian curriculum. Its objective is to expose the situation of the teaching of reading comprehension in the plans and programs of the Bolivian curriculum, especially at the primary education level from the promulgation of Law 1565 to Law 070. In this sense, when comparing the conception of Reading comprehension, content formulation, as

well as the methodological and evaluative approach from the language area, similarities are observed in the goals to be achieved, but significant differences at the methodological level. While Law 1565 exposes and demonstrates greater alignment with theoretical advances on reading comprehension, Law 070 still needs to incorporate that methodology to address the persistent problem of lack of reading comprehension (Terceros, 2023).

The fifth document “Policies and curricular reforms in Bolivia in the last 30 years” developed by Professor Mario Yapu, deepens the analysis of policies and curricular reforms in Bolivia during the last three decades. Its approach focuses on a comparative study between the 1994 reform and that of 2010, highlighting the curricular field as a scenario of power dispute in two different historical moments in Bolivia: the educational reform of the neoliberal period in 1994 and the reform from of 2010 in force, which began in 2006 with the assumption of power by the Movement towards Socialism (MAS). The purpose of their work is to highlight the differences and similarities between the proposed curricula, including their assumptions, objectives, strategies and practices. Likewise, redundancies, innovations and possible future directions in these curricular approaches are explored (Yapu, 2023).

The second section of the book deals with public policies, education and financing, having the first article by Fernando Carrión whose title is “Teaching training and profession policies in Bolivia, 1994-2022” who carries out a descriptive and analytical evaluation of the policies. of teaching training and profession in Bolivia, covering the period between 1994 and 2022. Its analysis focuses on the current situation of teacher training in the country in the context of Law 070 “Avelino Siñani - Elizardo Pérez”. In this process, it makes comparisons, in which there are qualification criteria elements, with the stage prior to the Educational Reform, identifying the structural elements that explain the differences, both in the design and in the processes and results, between both historical moments (Carrión, 2023).

In a second article in the second section, Mario Galindo, in his work titled “Educational Policies in Bolivia. In application of the Productive Socio-community Educational Model Three case studies” carries out an analysis focusing on the implementation of the current prevailing educational model through three case studies. His objective is to evaluate the policies that have contributed to improving the educational level in Bolivia. The conclusion that arises when systematizing the three cases of public policy, and that can be applied in a relatively tight manner to those not analyzed, is that the public policies implemented during the period 2005-2019 were aligned with the conclusions of the Red Book of Education. result of the 2001 Teachers’ Congress in Cobija. Furthermore, they adjusted to the proposals included in the Government Pro-

gram of the three administrations of Evo Morales. According to Galindo, this plan aimed to dismantle the Educational Reform of 1994-95 and recentralize the educational system (Galindo, 2023).

As the last article in this second section, Ludwing Torres is dedicated to the study of Financing, Spending and Returns of the Bolivian Educational System, carrying out a review based on figures that covers the financing structure, the destinations of spending and an estimate of more than 20 years of educational returns differentiated by training levels. The most notable results reveal an expansion of spending that is not in an equivalent proportion to the growth of educational spending, and this phenomenon is associated with reforms that must translate into higher returns. In this article, titled “Financing, spending and returns of the Bolivian Educational System”, it is found that spending on education in Bolivia has two main characteristics, first that it is highly centralized, neglecting destinations and spending needs for subnational governments, whether they are departmental or municipal, and second, that there is an inefficiency in the allocation of administrative spending, which grows more than proportionally than spending for educational purposes. In relation to educational returns, Torres shows improvements in the three educational levels: primary, secondary and higher. However, he points out that the yield differential between the primary and secondary levels has grown by a greater proportion than the differential between the secondary and higher levels. This indicates lower performance, in the Bolivian case, in training oriented to the labor market (Torres, 2023).

The third section of the book touches on educational topics of interest. In this regard, the first article in this third section is by Alethea-Gabriela Candia and Sazcha-Marcelo Olivera, who carry out an analysis of the influence of parents on the educational level and labor income of their children from an intergenerational perspective. Their study “The influence of parents on the educational level and labor income of their children” focuses on the population of young people between 15 and 29 years old who work and share a home with their fathers and mothers, that is, those children who cohabit in the same family environment. A relevant finding for future research is that, in Bolivia, despite having higher incomes, this condition is not necessarily linked to higher educational levels. Although the observation is based on paradigmatic cases, the relationship between income and education seems to fluctuate in various social strata and in specific economic activities that do not contribute to increasing or improving the educational level (Candia & Olivera, 2023).

The second article in the third section of the book was developed by Zohar Duran de Castro, who addresses the issue of special and alternative education

in the Bolivian educational system from an inclusive perspective, considering it as an essential criterion to fulfill education as a right. fundamental. The document, titled “Special and Alternative Education in the Bolivian Educational System” carries out a current review contextualized in global and regional advances in education for all, which is declared universal and inclusive. This approach is applied to the democratization of access, permanence and completion of studies for all people in society, with a particular emphasis on the Bolivian context within the Plurinational Educational System; Likewise, the document questions the institutional operationalization and contribution of national educational policies to guarantee and democratize access and permanence throughout life, especially for children and adolescents with disabilities. The transition of people with disabilities to higher education is also addressed, as well as a more rural perspective from the communities is explored. The research links people over fifteen years of age, producers, social organizations, citizens and people with disabilities, as well as students with learning difficulties. Specific actions that evaluate educational efforts for students with extraordinary talent are highlighted, highlighting the role of Law 070 in promoting transformative, productive and inclusive education (Duran de Castro, 2023).

Álvaro Valverde, in the document “Local knowledge systems as a transversal approach for environmental education planning”, as the third article in the final section of the book, carries out an evaluation of local knowledge systems as a comprehensive approach for environmental education planning. environmental education. For the author, the transversal approach to education for ecology and the environment is established as a commitment to holistic education. In this sense, he seeks to integrate the study of biocultural, economic-productive and geopolitical demands and problems in the scenarios and complex issues that result from previous disciplinary approaches in the environmental field. This implies recognizing the existence of multiple visions and realities to address environmental problems, and points out that in addressing these problems, complementary solutions have emerged from philosophy, science and technology (Valverde, 2023).

Finally, research on education in Bolivia during the pandemic is carried out by Daniel Moreno and Ludwing Torres, it is the last article in the book. Both authors consider that one of the sectors most affected by the health crisis was education, given that its main modality depends on physical interaction in the classrooms. As a consequence, millions of students around the world saw their educational activities interrupted. In Bolivia, in-person classes were

suspended at the beginning of the 2020 administration, and by the end of 2021 they had not yet resumed. This led to the adoption of non-face-to-face modalities, many of them internet-based. The significant limitations in access to this service in the country, both in terms of coverage and in the gaps that condition its access, became factors that hinder education and deepen existing inequalities.

The authors point out that the State has not been able to adequately address this problem, since it has not implemented educational policies that guarantee the right to education of Bolivian boys, girls and adolescents. This has resulted in significant and cumulative delays in expected learning and in widening disparities in access to quality education. All of this occurs in a context of uncertainty about the future, for which a solution is not yet in sight (Torres & Moreno, 2023).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The book constitutes a necessary reading for the educational researcher who wants to know about a historical state of the educational processes in Bolivia. In addition to the relevant topics that are touched on, it has some timelines that demarcate the main ones. milestones, considering that the free downloadable digital version has a comprehensive and updated compendium of educational statistics. The publication enlivens reading with a record of historical photographs, which illustrate important moments in the educational process in Bolivia.

Although numerous studies have shown that progress in education and human development contributes significantly to the well-being of the population, especially those with limited resources, this work supports these arguments with current data in a multi-criteria perspective.

One of the results highlighted in the document is that the education of women, especially those who reside in rural areas, enhances their ability to increase income, improves their reproductive health, increases the probability of having healthy children, reduces maternal mortality and child, and promotes the well-being of the home. Education enables people to manage scarce resources more efficiently, and educated families tend to have fewer children. Quality education also contributes to the protection of the environment, promoting sustainability. In the area of rights, education provides people with greater knowledge about their rights and obligations, allowing them to exercise them, express their needs and have control over the actions of any government administration.

As a notable fact, it is worth mentioning that the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) presented this publication on June 6, 2023, on the occasion of

Teacher's Day in Bolivia, established by a Supreme Decree during the mandate of President Bautista Saavedra on May 24, 1924. This day is commemorated annually on June 6 in honor of the teacher Modesto Omiste Tinajeros, born on June 6, 1840 in the city of Potosí, known as the "father of education in Bolivia", he played a fundamental role in the improving early childhood education through the creation of schools and strengthening teaching quality. We hope that this publication is a valuable contribution to understanding education and educational policy in Bolivia.

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