**Frequently Asked Questions: Violence Prevention in Schools of Perú**

1. How many children have benefited from this project, which has been operating for eleven years?

[Inter-Cambio](https://institutointercambio.com/) as an Institution has developed 10 different projects during these past 11 years, in different regions in Peru. We organized our work either by request of a public or private institution or as a response to a crisis situation in a community. Our group interventions have benefited 3,500 people, primarily, children, mental health professionals (during the pandemic), teachers and communities affected by environmental disasters and civil rights organizations.

1. In what regions in Peru?

Peru has 25 regions. We have developed interventions -through Zoom meetings- that included participants from 18 regions. We have also worked with several underprivileged communities surrounding Lima. Our partner in the current “Prevention of School Violence Project” is an international association called Fe y Alegria, which sponsors schools in 21 regions of our country.

1. Has there been any research about the results of the interventions?

We have published qualitative and theoretical chapters, based on our interventions, in 3 books (see the list below). We also have presented academic papers based on our experiences at 10 international professional conferences in South America.

1. A clearer description of the violence inflicted on children and preventing them from receiving education. Who are the perpetrators?

The violence that children endure is of diverse categories and sources. First, there is physical and psychological abuse. Children in our national educational system are exposed to violence in their homes (physical punishment is still allowed by the culture in most regions, as well as across socio-economic levels). The educational system itself does not provide the necessary conditions to study in a safe and healthy environment. Teaching standards are not met in the Peruvian public education system: There is poor academic training, as well as non-existing training for teachers to handle the different aspects related to emotional problems in the classroom or with individual children. The high risk environments in which these students live also plays a critical role in their mental health. Most children grow up in impoverished communities, where they coexist with street violence, gangs and drug use. There are few spaces available to mitigate or provide care. From a macro-social perspective, Peru has great inequalities caused by corruption in high positions of the state. The impunity and injustice experienced are another source of indirect violence that contributes to direct violence against children.

All of the above interfere with children's learning capacity, which is reflected in the low scores they obtain in all international tests, such as the 2022 PISA test. There is ample research on the impact of violence in learning (see the list below).

1. Are some parents involved in preventing children from receiving education, and if so, why? Do they want their children to work rather than go to schools? Are there any other reasons?

Although there is a problem especially in rural areas where some children are prevented from attending school due to subsistence seasonal work required to provide for the basic needs of the family, this is not an issue addressed by our project. An important aspect that seems relevant to mention in this context is the fact that, in many cases, children arrive at school without the necessary food to sustain their learning experience. In fact, a few weeks ago, Quali Warma (a social project led by the state to battle Anemia and provide food to less advantaged children in the country) not only failed to deliver quality food to a school, but managed to give food poisoning to 16 students in Puno after eating the lunch delivered by this institution (Aguilar, 2024). Therefore, our project includes a section for advising the schools food and nutrition programs, to ensure better results.

1. The work at present is done with teachers who apply group analysis principles. Are we seeking funds to expand this project to also include guidance counselors? Can we also add the need to include other methods that appeal to children, like art therapy and psychodrama?

The project we are developing now, includes group work as well as other methods such as therapeutic mediators. These last are artistic mediums which facilitate affective expression, in order to make it possible to process traumatic or mourning related emotions. The concept of therapeutic mediators was developed at the Centre du Recherche en Psychopathologie et Psychologie Clinique (CRPPC) at Université Lumiere Lyon 2 (France). The research of authors such as Anne Brün and Claudine Vacheret have contributed to this field. An important part of our project is to bring teachers closer to the development of skills that reinforce group work for dealing with the dynamics of violence within and outside the classroom. In our group work proposal, some of the resources shared in our intervention design include a variety of therapeutic mediators such as drawing, music, artwork, puppets and psychodrama which are a structural part of the intervention. We propose a language that starts from sensorial and playful experiences and leads -with the help of the groups and the tools of psychoanalytic understanding of groups- to the expression and verbalization of emotional experiences. This verbalization will allow for an initial processing of emotions and for the transmission of alternate ways to deal with emotions, including how to seek help.

Our current project seeks to have different stages of application. We will approach 3 age groups (children, pubescents and adolescents) and their teachers. Within our project design, there is a pilot intervention prior to each stage, which helps to adapt the material to include community circumstances and cultural diversity, and also to set the criteria for the independent judges of the qualitative variables we will measure to validate our design.

Bellow, please find our theoretical and research references,

A copy of the project's general design will follow.

Some research and statistical data supporting the need for this project.

**References**

**Some data on Nutricional and violence related conditions in the schools**

**Aguilar, A. (2024)**. Qali Warma se pronuncia tras intoxicación de 16 escolares: “No podemos estar en cada colegio controlando.” *Infobae*. <https://www.infobae.com/peru/2024/03/28/qali-warma-se-pronuncia-tras-intoxicacion-de-16-escolares-no-podemos-estar-en-cada-colegio-controlando/>

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**Some references of theoretical and research papers we´ve based our design on:**

**Anne Brün (2003**). Grupo de pintura terapéutica. La realidad del objeto precoz. ERES | " Revue de psychothérapie psychanalytique de groupe " 2003/2 n° 41 | páginas 167 a 176

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