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The worldview and interculturality in the training of entrepreneurs: a model of participatory edu-communication in Ecuador

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The education system in Ecuador has historically been structured in a way that excludes women, especially those living in the urban-marginal and rural sectors, where access and permanence are hindered by socio-economic and cultural factors. The objective of the study is the design of an Intercultural Edu-communication Model for the Training of Women Entrepreneurs (MEIFE), which recognizes and legitimizes intersectionality, Interculturality and the gender approach, as a sustainable path towards Good Living or "sumak kawsay". The methodology used is based on participatory research that includes a qualitative-quantitative method, in which direct observation, interviews and surveys were used as techniques. The design was elaborated considering sources of indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and mestizo thought. The study shows that the education system for women in Imbabura widens the gap in the rural sector: only 33% of the women surveyed have completed six years of basic education, and 15%, although they passed one or more courses, did not finish. Regarding secondary education, 14% of women have completed all years of secondary education, and 17.85% have attended one year of study. Seven per cent of the women surveyed had not attended formal education. In response, MEIFE is a non-formal education tool aimed at women entrepreneurs, developed taking into account the indigenous worldview, who form part of a community where it is necessary to create opportunities and encourage initiatives that allow them to generate income and guarantee their autonomy in coherence with their ancestral culture.

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Introduction

The human being, as a cultural animal, has developed various ways of conceiving and relating to nature, so that, given the almost inevitable human ethnocentric thinking, a great diversity of cultures has been generated on the planet which, under the current globalizing paradigm, must constantly coexist and interact. Hence, concepts such as Interculturality have given rise to various debates in academic spaces and have transcended this discussion to political areas.

In order to understand Interculturality, it is important to discuss the concept of culture which, in the most generalized meaning of the Dictionary of the Royal Academy of Language, is defined as: "(From the Latin. Culture). Culture. Set of ways of life and customs, knowledge and degrees of artistic, scientific, industrial development, in an era, social group […]" (Real Academia Española, 2018).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), from the Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, in its document Our Creative Diversity, points out that culture "is not an instrument of material progress: it is the end and objective of development, understood in the sense of the realization of human existence in all its forms and in all its fullness" (UNESCO, 1996, p.17). Kowii (2011), in the same vein, mentions that culture is "the expression of the vitality of the existence of individuals who share a natural and social environment at a given time. This vitality makes it possible to differentiate and particularize the various human collectivities" (p.25).

A definition closer to the Latin American reality is offered by the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO, 2016), which considers culture as:

> The way of living and thinking of a people, it is in constant movement and is the sum of internal and external experiences, which are nourished by the relationship with the other'. Culture is not a valuable element by itself; it becomes valid when we assimilate it through experience, which generates possibilities for personal, family and community fulfilment. (p.16)

The complexity of the concept of culture determines, in turn, the difficulty involved in defining the concept of Interculturality. In this regard, Rodríguez Cruz (2018) mentions that the polysemy of the Interculturality concept is, a consequence of the various historical contexts in which it has been used, even if in praxis this difference in definitions is not perceived. For example, in Europe, the tendency is to define Interculturality in terms of the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities, while in Latin America, the concept is more associated with relations of colonial domination of indigenous communities (Walsh, 2002).

Interculturality requires that the interaction of the various cultures present in a territory generates processes of social transformation in the political, social and legal spheres that are reflected in the educational processes of the same state, under the practice of recognition, respect and effective communication (Higuera and Castillo, 2015).

Consequently, Interculturality emerges as an alternative to the concept of multiculturality to provide a new methodological approach and a new way of building knowledge, from the recognition of differences, moving away from neoliberal models and providing a look at the resistance and the need for the construction of a new society with better social equity (Arroyo Ortega, 2016).

The study and the formative proposal presented in this work are part of a participatory process that seeks the construction of an intercultural Edu-communication model that relates experiences, knowledge and expectations of indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and mestizo women. The imperative interest of personal and collective improvement through the right to education; the need to implement a relevant system that responds to their socioeconomic situation, and their family role and provides them with tools to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills and abilities, allowing them to overcome barriers in achieving their aspirations and the full exercise of their autonomy.

In this sense, the article provides a historical chronology of the social struggle experienced in Ecuador and the progressive changes in the educational system, which are still insufficient to meet the demands of the population. This is followed by an analysis of the current situation of women in rural areas, to compare the effectiveness of the formal education system with field data. Finally, the dimensions, foundations and transversal axes that integrate the Intercultural Edu-communication Model for the formation of entrepreneurs (MEIFE), an essential element of the research, are established.

State of art

Interculturality in Latin America. To speak of Interculturality is to refer to a heterogeneous dimension of concepts and realities that have been approached in different ways in the continent and Ecuador, thanks to the extensive presence of native peoples who carry in their heritage the history and wisdom of an extraordinary ancestral heritage, and who currently represents between 3% and 10% of the Latin American population (AECID, 2009).

Consequently, the construct of Interculturality is developed from the theoretical as a concept and from the empirical as a practice (Paredes and Carcausto 2022), which is manifested both in communication and in the establishment of relational processes between different cultures that go beyond just contact and are developed in an equitable epistemological framework.

Therefore, it could be said that, the term Interculturality encompasses several distinctions depending on the author or institution that addresses the category. But, it has to do directly with the migratory process and human mobility on the continents, social configurations that colonization unleashed after the arrival of the Spaniards and how the native peoples were displacing their ways of life, territories and languages. Consequently, Interculturality could be said to be "a political proposal born from nationalities and peoples to radically change power structures, which opens the way to the improvement of cultural, social and economic living conditions" (CODENPE, 2011, p.20).

Interculturality in Latin America. At the end of the 20th century, was a fundamental concept as a political construct for the struggle of indigenous peoples against hegemonic monocultural states, which sought to blur cultural differences under the assumption that the political order is subject to universal principles. This approach initially became more palpable in the educational sphere and gradually permeated the construction of plurinational states (Walsh, 2002).

For this ethnic relationship to develop in terms of equality and equity, it is necessary to eliminate in discourse and practice the exclusion and discrimination that have historically marked the interaction of cultures in Latin America.

In this sense, Acosta (2019) states that there is no possibility of intercultural development as long as the principles of modernity-postmodernity are maintained, within which only monoculturality and multiculturality are accepted as hegemonic systems to preserve the civilizational status.

Thus, Interculturality goes beyond the process of interrelation, and constitutes a process for the construction of knowledge, political practices, empowerment, societies, ways of acting and thinking differently and innovatively, bringing together the knowledge of diverse cultures.

Interculturality in Ecuador. In Ecuador, Interculturality has been driven directly and indirectly by the vindictive actions of indigenous movements, who have demanded from governments the development of new modes of social relations that allow the recognition of land, territory, language and education following the preservation of ethnic identity (Rodríguez, 2017).

The country has a population of approximately 17,000,000 inhabitants, self-identified as mestizo 71.9%, Montubia 7.4%, Afro-Ecuadorian 7.2%, Indigenous 7.0% and White 6.01%. Among the indigenous people. There are 14 nationalities, grouped in a set of local, regional and national organizations. 60.3% live in 6 provinces of the Sierra Centro-Norte, and 78.5% live in the rural sector (Ortiz, 2020, p.409).

This demographic distribution led the Ecuadorian state to define itself, through the 2008 Constitution, as intercultural and plurinational, which allowed the issuance of laws and regulations necessary to enforce these principles.

One of the difficulties presented by this recognition process of Interculturality and plurinational in Ecuador is that it has forged greater representativeness of the indigenous people in the face of the recognition of other ethnic groups, which problematizes the actual practice of Interculturality (Higuera and Castillo, 2015; Aceldo and Quito, 2021).

The Magna Carta of 2008, which was cemented in a participatory manner and democratically endorsed by the majority of Ecuadorians, contemplates principles, concepts and dimensions expressed in a vision of society to be built, and it was called "Sumak Kawsay". Subsequently, the government has promoted its implementation through objectives, policies, programs and projects embodied in the National Plan for Good Living (PNBV).

However, even when the country's highest legal document delineates the intercultural role of the nation, the dominant way in which Interculturality is conceived remains linked to traditional positivist thinking, and is evidenced as a process of resistance of this paradigm to the changes proposed by the official discourse (Ibáñez et al., 2012).

According to Quichimbo (2019, p.22), "It is urgent to rethink the concept of Interculturality, without leaving aside, the perspectives of Interculturality from a culturalism and ethnicist vision of indigenous peoples". This new recognition of Interculturality in Ecuador, which emerges in a context of recognition of Interculturality by the State, must find its place in theory and practice, detaching itself from hegemonic positions.

Intercultural Edu-communication. Edu-communication in Latin America has been constructed from different perspectives that gain importance from the political to the technical. Narváez-Montoya (2019) points out that communication, from an ethical and political point of view, is closer to what has been known as popular education and has been constituted more as a pedagogical alternative than a theoretical construction.

This positioning, which has been maintained since the 1960s, supports the idea that audiovisual media are more effective to educate people due to illiteracy rates and possess geographical and social coverage, which prompted Latin American Marxist and Christian movements to use it as an ideological instrument for the education of the masses (Álvarez, 2009).

With the development of Edu-communication in Latin America influenced by popular communication and critical pedagogy, communicologists such as Mario Kaplún and Luis Beltrán, deployed proposals to educate peasant and indigenous communities through radio (Beltrán, 2017), contributing to the formation of the necessary links between Edu-communication and Interculturality.

In this way, Edu-communication is developed through a dialogic space that is linked to other areas of knowledge, which contributes to building spaces for the exchange of knowledge and its sharing, making it an optimal process for the development of Interculturality (Collado-Ruano et al., 2020; Carias-Pérez et al., 2021).

As a consequence of this interdisciplinary relationship, the educational transformation brought about by Edu-communication in the 21st century, and currently supported by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), has facilitated intercultural dialogue and social cohesion (Ipiña and Sagasta, 2011), generating intercultural proposals based on a model that contemplates cultures from a perspective of equity and respect for diversity (Iglesias and Martín, 2020; Martín-González et al., 2020).

Indeed, the Edu-communication we propose is understood as a process of enculturation, socialization, and subjective, in which codes are assumed and under which culture is understood as a code and not as a product (Narváez-Montoya, 2019) so that Edu-communication is developed in a context of Interculturality.

In Ecuador, the Organic Law of Communication (LOC) (2019) establishes a structure that encourages the implementation of communicative spaces, which can be favored with the promotion of community media, which are defined in Article 85 as: "[…] those whose ownership, administration and management correspond to collectives or non-profit social organizations, communes, communities, peoples and nationalities […]" (p.31). In this way, an important space is opened for intercultural education and communication, as well as for the formation of training networks that allow the democratization of knowledge.

Worldview and development. Cosmo vision is the human elaboration that recovers the ways of seeing, feeling and perceiving the totality of reality, that is, human beings, the whole of nature and the cosmos. There are a diversity of worldviews, as many as cultures, but two that are antagonistic have been differentiated. The ancestral indigenous worldview, in which the other diversities are grouped; and the modern western worldview (Atupaña, 2017, p.7). The practices of human beings in the world will depend on each worldview. Worldviews mark the differences between cultures, being these differences the ones that enrich diversity.

The ancestral indigenous worldview is essentially based on the experience of living with nature and the community. Mother Earth's "Pacha Mama" constitutes the big house, generator of life and the whole culture. Thus, their practices with her try to be in harmony and respect natural laws. While the modern western Cosmo vision proposes a state of "civilization and development", in which the most important thing is the accumulation of capital, promoting consumerism as a practice of excessive and unnecessary life. These habits imply the destruction of the planet, since everything becomes disposable merchandise, coming from the industrialization processes that threaten the ecological balance, as well as the green revolutions that transgress the seeds and the productivity of the field (Huanacuni, 2010).

In this regard, it should be noted that, from the perspective of indigenous peoples, the word "development" as such, does not exist in the Kichwa vocabulary, but there is a broader concept that, in this case, is the "Sumak or Allí Kawsay". This paradigm, which has its origin in the dawn of humanity, means the way of living, seeing, perceiving and feeling the universe from the Andes, being aware that everything that happens in the material and physical environment is a reflection of the invisible essence of our being and feeling (Zenteno, 2009).

This primacy is not a Kichwa term that is designed and thought only for indigenous peoples and nationalities, but, being

a constitutional principle established transversally, it becomes a condition of life sine qua non for Ecuadorians; and, as such, the State, through its rulers, is obliged to modify the structure of social, economic and political development of the country towards. This vision of progress is based on the Cosmo vision and harmony between human beings and nature.

The approach of good living or life in harmony is contemplated as a principle of environmental and ecological law, of the social and political regime of the country, which proposes the search for a better life for all, characterized by equity and equality, focused on freedom, through justice and democracy, to achieve sustainability between human beings and Mother Earth, where society is re-humanized. In short, it has a holistic perspective on the well-being of people and the community, as it transcends the barrier of the desire to obtain material goods and access public services (Cruz, 2018).

Role of women in the Sumak Kawsay.

The Andean Cosmo vision has relationality as its principle, based on the fact that everything is in one way or another related, interconnected or coupled, nothing endures in isolation. Esterman (1998) refers to the sexual duality between the feminine (Warmi) and the masculine (Kari).

In the sumak kawsay concept, proposed by the native people, it would seem to be assumed that the relations between men and women, inscribed in the cultural frameworks of family and community functioning, should not be questioned; thus, women's political roles are based on domestic tasks, since then, this is the only thing that confers their status and social prestige as mothers and wives.

However, we assume that, as stated by Vásquez and Saad (2022), Sumak Kawsay is also a conception of life that implies the development of a dignified life, in harmony and balance with the universe, that is to say, the fullness of life.

In the rural sector, the perspective of the sexual division of labor determines that each family member participates in a differentiated and complementary manner. For this reason, it is necessary to bear in mind -when preparing development proposals- the current and potential contribution of the different members of the family, valuing the contribution of each one of them and, from the perspective of equal opportunities, especially that of women. In this regard, it should be noted that the fact that male and female activities are complementary in the objective of earning income and maintaining family reproduction does not mean symmetry in the relations between men and women, because the family is also a space of inequalities and negotiation.

While, through the *Yananti*, a space is presented to justify gender roles and perpetuate inequalities, these same principles of division of labor should not necessarily end in inequalities, as long as gender positions or occupations do not give rise to power relations. The rupture of these relations that produce inequality has led various organizations for the defense of women to rethink the Sumak Kawsay from the equity in all spaces, giving voice to women and establishing shared leadership between men and women (García, 2023).

In the Andean countries, from a cultural point of view, men and women do not have the same ways of relating to the environment. The specificity of rural women in this area is evident in their knowledge, use and preservation of the environment, which is essential for the treatment of diseases, food security, habitat management and soil and seed conservation, as well as water resource management. Therefore, the recognition of the diversity of its inhabitants is not only important in terms of culture and the country's development but also in the valuation of women's activities.

From the perspective of sumak kawsay, as the central axis of well-being and harmony, attention must be paid to gender studies, which is fundamental for the achievement of integral development, in compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that constitute a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of people around the world. This proposal falls under the policies of Objective 5: Gender Equality and Objective 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Entrepreneurship in Ecuador.

Ecuador is a country with a lot of potential for entrepreneurship development, which has been observed as a rising trend since 2016 (García et al., 2018). This led the country to reach first place worldwide among 54 countries analyzed in venture development (Lasio et al., 2018).

The data collected in the analysis of entrepreneurship development in Ecuador indicate that 50% is carried out by young people (León, 2017), but that there is a deficiency in the training of entrepreneurs at the university level or in non-formal education systems, which may be related to the fact that a third of the ventures close before two years from their inception.

In addition to the above, gender equity is an important factor to consider when analyzing the development of entrepreneurship in Ecuador, since this economic activity can favor the local economy in the short term and contribute to improving the situation of women in the social sphere and, consequently, the economic stability of families.

However, the promotion of entrepreneurship requires adequate policies that establish business conditions for entrepreneurs. Maldonado et al. (2020) point out that most of the new ventures fail to achieve stability as new businesses and another percentage are restricted to local commerce and do not expand, as a consequence of the lack of training, little economic support from private banks and an inadequate political and legal framework. Therefore, overcoming the barriers of the domestic market to access the international market is feasible as long as policies are implemented that open up the possibility of executing technical support programs for the implementation and accompaniment of entrepreneurs, as well as the implementation of measures to reduce the limitations created by the formalities (Ruiz, 2021).

Finally, one way to improve the living conditions of communities must be linked to an increase in the number of enterprises, but as mentioned above, in addition to appropriate policies, more training is required to prevent these enterprises from disappearing in their early years. Training for entrepreneurs should reach the different levels and modalities of education, favoring the development of soft and hard skills from basic school to third and fourth-level studies (Ruiz, 2021).

Similarly, in the non-formal educational modality, it is necessary to build a public policy that encourages entrepreneurship that promotes entrepreneurial action and innovation, for the strengthening of human capital that can be articulated between the popular economy sector and the private business sector (Tobar and Grupo FARO, 2018).

Methodology

Imbabura, located in the northern Andes of Ecuador, is a multiethnic and multicultural province marked by different demographic factors, which give it the characteristic of population diversity: 54% mestizo, 32% white, 9% indigenous, 3% black and 2% other (INEC, 2010).

The region has diverse climatic levels and ecosystems ranging from the paramo (high plateau) at an altitude of 3600 meters to the Chota basin, which has a temperate and tropical climate reaching 400 meters above sea level. Due to the presence of

several lake systems, it has earned its name as the province of the Lakes, making it a reference for tourism and product development in the region, while at the same time fostering a growing commercial exchange due to its proximity to the border region with Colombia.

Objectives of the study. Considering the characteristics previously mentioned, the following question is posed: What educational-communicative model that considers Interculturality and cosmovision can be adequate for the training of women entrepreneurs in the community of Imbabura in Ecuador?

In this context, the study presented in this article aims at the design of an Intercultural Edu-communication Model for the Training of Women Entrepreneurs (MEIFE), which recognizes and legitimizes intersectionality, Interculturality and the gender approach, as a sustainable path towards Good Living or "sumak kawsay".

The methodology used is based on participatory research considering that, under this approach, it is possible to obtain a higher quality of the information obtained and, in turn, involve the subjects of the study with the construction of categories and proposals for the development of the research (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). To this end, a quali-quantitative method was implemented (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The subject matter was explored through interviews and surveys, which were subsequently processed for the design of the Intercultural Edu-communicative model. Consequently, the impact of the model was reviewed through the analysis of the effects perceived and reported by the participants, based on the implementation of this training model and the programs derived from it.

Study participants. The construction of the Model started with the exploration of the experiences and knowledge of the participants of 3 women's associations in the region of Imbabura, through the development of workshops, which allowed us to obtain the testimonies and ancestral experiences of the leaders and members of the participating associations. To this was added the development of direct observation through the recording in field notebooks of the researchers and external participants, in addition to the follow-up through recordings. The unstructured interviews began with the women in charge of the various associations, and they referred the researchers to other participants whose information was of interest to the research. These interviews were previously validated to identify their reliability by specialists in the area of instrument construction, entrepreneurship, and education. The information collected and analyzed was contrasted and cross-checked with bibliographic sources of indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, and mestizo thought.

These associations of women entrepreneurs in the province were chosen based on the criteria of having ethnic diversity among their members, maintaining active enterprises, and, in addition, openly expressing their commitment to the research through their informed consent. The following associations were selected: Agricultoras "Frutos de mi Tierra", which operates in Urcuquí; the Women of the Union of Peasant and Indigenous Organizations of Cotacachi (UNORCAC), "La Pachamama nos alimenta"; and, finally, the Women's Association "Las Choteñitas" was selected, made up mainly of Afro-Ecuadorian women from the Chota Valley, Ibarra.

Procedures for data collection and analysis. The construction of the categories of analysis was carried out after discussion and critical analysis by the researchers of the interviews and contrasted with the observations made in the field. Matrices were constructed that allowed decisions to be made for the subsequent

construction of the model and the programs. Once the programs were developed, they were discussed with specialists and with the presidents of the women's associations.

Regarding the quantitative aspect, the information was obtained through a questionnaire consisting of 31 questions, previously validated through a reliability calculation, which was obtained after applying it to a pilot group of women entrepreneurs not related to the associations, but belonging to the province, to avoid biasing the sample. After making adjustments to the questionnaire, it was applied to an intentional sample of 84 women, taking into account the representativeness of each target canton. These data were analyzed through descriptive statistical methods. To know the typology of the associates, the aspects related to their enterprises, as well as their access to and use of ICTs. The use of research techniques made it possible to obtain precise data on the context in which the associations operate and to learn about the existing situation of women entrepreneurs.

With the inputs collected through bibliographic research, critical reading and concept maps, an inference and discussion were achieved that supports the premises of the intercultural Edu-communication model proposed to respond to the training needs expressed by the participants in the study.

Finally, it is important to point out that all the approaches made to the respondents and interviewees were carried out after obtaining the informed consent of the participants, guaranteeing anonymity, the correct use of the data, and the commitment of the researchers to present the analysis of the information collected to the women's associations as part of the social responsibility of the research process.

Analysis and discussion

The construction of models or programs of formal or non-formal education must respond to the commitment of all social, political and intercultural actors of the State, which, according to García and Sáez (1998, p.134), require the following minimum elements for their consolidation:

a. Recognize the right of all ethnic groups to contribute their cultural particularities to the educational system, guaranteeing this right from the legal framework to avoid any discriminatory process.

b. Consider the problems of the cultural identity of migrant groups.

c. Take into account the educational needs of minorities within the same cultural group, that is, diversity within the same diversity, and respond to them.

d. Promote respect for coexisting cultures and reject any assimilationist proposal.

e. Develop intercultural education as content for all members of society and not only as a special educational system for migrants, cultural minorities or dominated ethnic groups.

f. Promote in society the recognition that problems occurring as a consequence of ethnic diversity cannot be addressed unilaterally.

g. Develop an educational praxis based on cross-cultural conceptual frameworks that allow the development of knowledge as common property.

Although the elements described above are the premise for the construction of educational models that can positively transform the reality of entrepreneurs, the study shows that the level of access to the formal education system in Ecuador is exclusive, mainly for women, and widens the gap in the rural sector.

Within this framework, the analysis of the interviews and conversations carried out by applying the focus groups indicate

that women unanimously state that there is a supreme will and an imperative need to be educated. However, the current formal educational system makes it a barrier to the achievement of their aspirations.

The research included the participation of women living in the rural sector of the cantons that made up the sample, 46% of whom self-identified as Afro-Ecuadorian, 39% as indigenous, and 14% as mestizo. Regarding the age variable, 75% of the Afro-Ecuadorian women are between 18 and 55 years of age, 81% of the indigenous women are between 26 and 45 years of age, and 83% of the mestizo women are 55 years of age or older. All of them are part of Ecuador's economically active population (EAP).

This is confirmed by the research, which determines that only 33% of the women surveyed have completed six years of basic education; and 15%, although they passed one or more of them, did not manage to complete primary education. In secondary school, the data establish that 14% have completed all the years required by the system, and 17.85% have completed at least one year of study. Of those surveyed, 7% have not completed any cycle of education, and only 11.5% are currently studying at university.

Concerning education and Interculturality, Urteaga and García (2016) catalogue it as a limited educational policy, at least in the period immediately after the approval of the 2008 Constitution. In it, compliance with the constitutional mandate of Interculturality involves the promotion of policies, programs and projects that allow access of Ecuadorian peoples and nationalities to education, at all levels, which guarantees their permanence and completion. However, the data of the study carried out show that only 11.5% of women are educated at university, 14% have completed high school and 33% have finished basic education.

These data allow us to conclude that public policy in education must be reformed and translated into changes for its effective applicability. Similarly, it can be inferred that formal educational models continue to limit the possibilities and opportunities for improvement, especially for women, with the situation being more alarming for indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women. In addition, the results obtained in the survey demonstrate the existing gap in the right to education, showing that it is still inequitable. Likewise, comparing these data with those offered in the country's statistics, it is established that the years of schooling for indigenous peoples and nationalities in Ecuador is 6.4 years, being the lowest compared to Afro-Ecuadorian peoples who have an average of 8.4 years, and to the mestizo with an average of 9.8 years of schooling (INEC, 2010).

For its part, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL, 2016) emphasizes that economic autonomy and education are fundamental pillars for achieving equity. For this reason, our research addressed the issue of economic dependence, analyzing variables related to the role of women as heads of household, where their economic income comes from (economic activity), and what they prioritize their spending on.

For the variable of the head of household, Table 1 shows what percentage of household needs are met by Afro-Ecuadorian, indigenous and mestizo ethnic groups.

The results show that the mestizo ethnic group outnumbers the Afro-Ecuadorian ethnic group by one-third and the indigenous group by three times. This denotes clear behavioral parameters in their habits and culture. In the indigenous worldview, the figure of divorce or abandonment by a partner is rarely applied. Although polygamy, in their patriarchal behaviors, is tolerated, social conduct, such as adultery committed by women, is censored with ancestral justice practices. This is ratified by Higuera and Castillo (2015), who refers that Interculturality must be reflected in the processes of change in people's behavior. One of the ways to do so is through the educational models of the same

Table 1 Heads of household.

Ethnic group under study	Heads of household	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Afro-Ecuadorian	38.46	61.54
Indigenous	24.25	75.75
Mestizos	66.67	33.33

Table 2 Entrepreneurship motivation.

Ethnic group under study	Entrepreneurship motivation	
	Need (%)	Opportunity (%)
Afro-Ecuadorian	74.35	25.64
Indigenous	78.78	21.21
Mestizos	100	0

State; research contributes to the design of educational models based on Edu-communication, under the practice of recognition, respect and effective communication, changing this reality that is still lived, mainly, in the Ecuadorian indigenous sector due to the economic dependence of women.

The purpose of this relational approach is to move towards a just society in which differences are respected (Rodríguez Cruz, 2017) and the rights of protection and non-violence to women.

In the analysis we are carrying out, one of the factors that determines the decrease in inequalities is economic independence. The research shows that the mestizo ethnic group takes on special relevance concerning the variable economic independence, as it highlights the fact that the members of the Frutos de mi Tierra Association (mestizas), are farmers, whose average age is over 55 years and older and, in addition, are heads of household.

Regarding the variable origin of economic income, it is determined that 100% of the indigenous and mestizo women surveyed and 87.5% of the Afro-Ecuadorian women obtain their income through activities related to entrepreneurship, and if this entrepreneurship is according to need or opportunity, the data, as we can see in Table 2, confirms that women are motivated to achieve economic independence and contribute to their households, considering that most of the resources obtained are used for basic services and food for their children, which is a general trend in the three ethnic groups.

The enterprises, which generate an important income for the women who took part in this study, are mainly developed within the agricultural (production), gastronomic, trade (agricultural products), handicrafts and activities related to culture and community tourism sectors. The latter, fundamentally, is with the Afro-Ecuadorian ethnic group.

However, these productive initiatives are hardly sustainable, since the work they do is developed by intuition and without knowledge of basic management tools. Given this reality, it is urgent to design and implement educational models with andragogical axes and non-formal modalities, which are an effective and viable training alternative for women, especially in the urban-marginal and rural sectors, to acquire skills to improve their entrepreneurial competencies.

This proposal is corroborated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2005), which conceives the educational system as one of the most important contexts for developing and promoting Interculturality since it is the basis of human formation and an instrument not only for the maintenance of a society but also for the development, growth, transformation and liberation of that society and all its human potentialities.
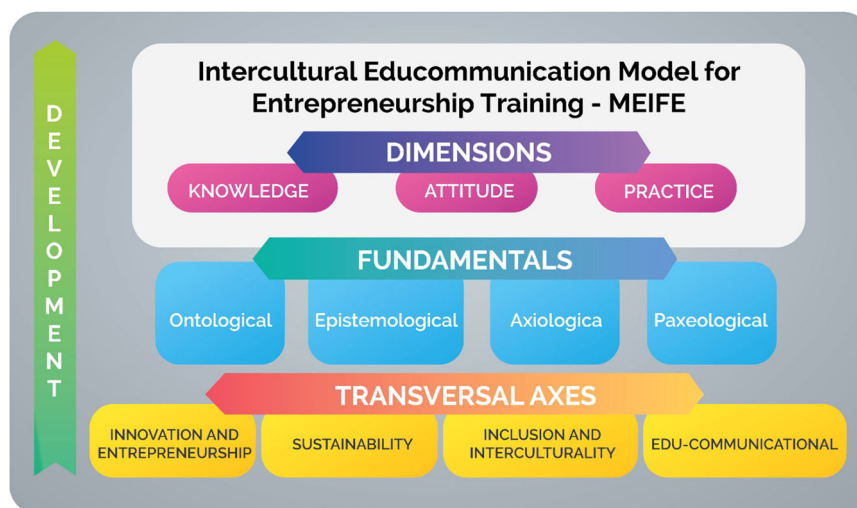
Fig. 1 Components of the MEIFE-model.

In response to these non-formal educational training needs expressed by the women participating in this study. The Intercultural Edu-communication Model for the Formation of Women Entrepreneurs (MEIFE) was designed in response to a regional reality in which women, organized in associations, are part of a sector of Ecuadorian society that, in addition to functioning as a fundamental pillar in family and social development, are part of a community where it is necessary to develop better gender equity.

Our model is based on the ontological, epistemological, axiological and praxeological principles (Fig. 1), which provide an understanding of the characteristics of the MEIFE curriculum design, from which the training of women entrepreneurs will be carried out.

From the ontological foundation, the entrepreneur is the axis on which entrepreneurship models have been developed by authors such as Ajzen (1991) and Bandura (1986), who identify the conditions that drive the development of entrepreneurship, either from the externalities that are related to resources, the market and techniques, or from internal components such as the entrepreneur's capabilities. In these models, the entrepreneur is considered as the one who has internal and external motivations that allow him/her to seek business development, either by necessity or by opportunity, whose personal characteristics are the triggers to drive his/her search for personal economic solutions.

This positioning of the entrepreneur, resulting from a referential framework typical of Western culture, is anchored to the idea of a less collectivist individual, who drives family or group businesses from a personal perspective, visualizing himself as the manager who, incidentally, can favor employees or partners. It responds, in short, to the economic theories that have been developed from the approaches of economic liberalism and incorporated into the schools of economics and management globally.

In a different referential framework, such as the one developed through the Andean Cosmo vision, the subject distances himself from individualism and tends to recognize the needs and advantages of collective development. The idea of social development is associated with cooperation and mutual support, and the subject perceives him/herself more as a product of interactions with others than as the result of individual learning actions.

This understanding of the self under the Andean Cosmo vision leads to the positioning before reality, which translates into praxis, as dialogic actions that lead to concrete activities, such as, for example, the minga, which are cooperative actions for the care

of productive agricultural systems, which respond to tacit norms that imply reciprocity, equity and respect, through the unpaid exchange of labor and knowledge.

The educational model for the formation of entrepreneurs (MEIFE) is based on the premises of the Andean Cosmo vision, ontologically the subject is conceived as an integral part of reality, as a participant who constructs, destroys and reconstructs relationships with its social and natural, tangible and intangible environment, which distances it from the position of externalization of the perception of reality.

Finally, according to Orrego (2008), entrepreneurship is an activity that is associated in a complex way with the essence of being and is manifested in the actions that are executed for the transformation and improvement of living conditions.

Traditionally, the epistemological foundations associated with careers related to entrepreneurship development are linked to the areas of economics and administration as a cultural heritage of classical schools. This implies that the processes are linked to efficiency, control and hierarchization of the subjects associated with entrepreneurship, all measured by international indicators that assume uniform conditions for all entrepreneurs on a global scale.

This is an epistemological positioning typical of positivism and assumes the existence of linearity in the cause-effect relationship (Coq, 2013). The rigidity of the positivist approach, even when it provides the ability to establish elements of measurement for a partial comparison of the efficiency of entrepreneurship systems and education for entrepreneurship, does not fit a process that is fundamentally characterized by emerging from creative and innovative actions. Therefore, more functionalist, but equally positivist, epistemological approaches were weighed for the analysis of entrepreneurship, which considers the role played by subjective elements and organizations within entrepreneurship, but remains tied to quantitative indicators (Hidalgo et al., 2018).

Therefore, in the face of the increasingly widespread recognition of the complexity of the interactions necessary to develop a venture, the assumption of systems theory is required to seek new nonlinear logics in line with what Prigogine (1994, cited by Martinez, 2011, p.7) called awareness of discontinuity, within which dialogic processes are favored.

The approach to this systemic complexity that analyzes the human being and society holistically, as a super system made up of biological, physical, chemical, social, cultural, ethical and spiritual systems, requires a more integrative epistemological approach. Hence, a hermeneutic paradigm is assumed in the

MEIFE to be able to develop the processes of analysis of entrepreneurship and, consequently, of the training of entrepreneurs, due to its greater capacity to deepen the quality of phenomena and contextual relationships, both in externalities and internalities (Larrea and Granados, 2016).

In this sense, the vision of the entrepreneur from an exogenous and endogenous approach seems to be insufficient to cover in a more adequate way complex and dynamic reality (Morua et al., 2015). Therefore, from the exogenous vision, the claim is that the entrepreneur is the result of the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities, as it establishes a reduced vision of reality that attempts to be completed when the endogenous vision of entrepreneurship is incorporated. However, it seeks that individuals possess a universal profile for entrepreneurship, and denies the diversity of human beings and their actions (Bouchikhi, 1993).

A third position focuses on the cognitive theory which, although still anchored to the subject as the modulator of the entrepreneurial process, does not disregard the action of the environment or of the tasks in which it is involved. For this reason, based on the Andean cosmovision and the ontological foundations already indicated, it is assumed that the approach to reality must respond, in principle, to a subject that is part of the complexity of the phenomenon of entrepreneurship.

In this way of approaching reality, the generalized perception is that individual development is the axis that drives social development, and is supplanted by collective development as an action that contributes to social welfare. This change of focus not only implies a more immediate approach to social economic development but also, more significantly, involves the search for social welfare and good living, which are inherent to the Andean cultural approach.

The need for education models for entrepreneurship under a systemic and holistic approach is suggested by Osorio and Pereira (2011), to break with the fragmented visions that try to explain the phenomenon of entrepreneurship from the characteristics of the individual, the context in which it develops or the business problems of the moment.

Under an Andean cosmogonic perspective such as the one presented so far, the reality is not only complex in terms of material, technical and knowledge aspects, but also acquires greater depth in terms of relationships with nature considered from the otherness, in processes of recognition of ontological equality.

Therefore, the training of the subject to be a participant in the process of entrepreneurship should not be conceived as a set of actions that make up a technical process for professional training, as Vargas (2010) suggests, but should be related to the very constitution of the human being.

This training of entrepreneurs must address a complex reality and, consequently, it must be generated from equally complex approaches. Hence, it is necessary to consider the scientific knowledge developed from economic theory, administration and management from a positivist paradigm, but through a multidisciplinary approach that also incorporates aspects of more humanistic training.

In addition, a characteristic of entrepreneurship is its association with high levels of uncertainty as a consequence of being the product of innovative initiatives. For this reason, MEIFE contemplates that training programs assume a posture that encourages complex thinking and enables the subject to react efficiently and effectively to the variability of systems (Hidalgo et al., 2018). According to Timmons and Spinelli (2007), the best business opportunities arise in instability, and change and entrepreneurs must be prepared for it.

Regarding the axiological foundation, education goes beyond the technical training of individuals and is inextricably linked to values, which are manifested in the actions, goals and interactions of subjects during entrepreneurial actions, regulating their behavior (Martinez, 2019).

If entrepreneurship education is assumed through a linear approach, the purpose of the activity is necessarily related to obtaining an economic benefit. This is the defining element of the concept of entrepreneurship and, consequently, the whole model and the colligate educational design will focus its actions on the formation of an economically successful entrepreneur. This utilitarian perspective may be beneficial for the individual and state economic indicators, but, according to Álvarez and Albuquerque (2012), it is necessary to recognize the potential for development that entrepreneurial activity possesses for the formation of a more conscious, proactive and ethical citizen.

This change of approach, from a utilitarian one to a holistic one, is possible only if entrepreneurship training is developed from another ontological and epistemological positioning different from those that have traditionally governed entrepreneurship.

The characteristics of entrepreneurs most frequently reviewed by authors show an individual capable of facing risks, achievement-oriented, able to work in teams and adapt to changes and unforeseen events (Kirby, 2004; Timmons and Spinelli, 2007; Osorio and Pereira, 2011). These characteristics are part of what has been called the entrepreneurial spirit and are associated with the formation of a citizen capable, not only of developing successful economic actions but also of addressing dynamic social realities efficiently and with adequate foresight to promote social development.

For this reason, MEIFE does not only seek the formation of entrepreneurs focused on business profitability but also attends integrally to the education of a citizen strongly related to the progress of the community, balance with the environment and self-confidence. In MEIFE, the importance of the integral formation of the subject leads to the development of solidarity and collectivism.

And finally, concerning the Praxeological foundation, the result of the interaction of the epistemological and axiological frameworks leads to the development of an educational proposal for entrepreneurship which, at the praxeological level, implies the development of a curriculum design for the training of entrepreneurs, supported by experiential and collaborative learning that appropriates the tools of socio-constructivism and enables the development of critical thinking in entrepreneurs.

Bechard and Toulouse (1998) recognize the praxeological level of entrepreneurship as that which combines the practice limited by the axiological foundations and its effect on the development of entrepreneurship. In other words, it is the ethical and moral foundation proposed in the MEIFE that will make it possible to achieve the proposed goals.

Therefore, the action of the theoretical foundations mediated by the ethical elements is based on the considerations that are assumed to form the structure of the educational design for the formation of entrepreneurs. In this regard, Osorio and Pereira (2011), had already emphasized that the entrepreneurial training processes guided by universities should start from the recognition of the intentions and expectations of individuals, but also of personal beliefs and aspects of the environment.

In line with the above, universities have a clear responsibility to consolidate the necessary synthesis of theoretical, ethical and practical concepts for the training of entrepreneurs. Therefore, the academic and research training functions that higher education institutions have been fulfilling have been evolving based on the coordination of actions with industries and the government, which implies, as Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1998) point out, that their contribution to the nation's economy should be considered as an additional function of universities.

MEIFE proposes, therefore, a praxis that manifests itself as a process of lifelong learning that values the opportunities present in the environment, but also those opportunities that can be created by the subject based on an analysis of the complexity of the system. The system, in turn, is a dynamic reality that must be analyzed and constructed from reflective knowledge (Osorio and Pereira, 2011), complemented by a dialogic process.

Consequently, opportunities are not conceived as an element only external to the entrepreneur, but as the result of the training that allows reaching the necessary competencies for the construction of their opportunities from the interiority of the entrepreneur's being, as a complex cognitive process. This dimensioning of the training model presented differs from the rest because it acts within a communicational ecosystem that involves the participation of multiple actors at different levels of relationship through a dialogue of knowledge.

Conclusions

The presence of women among people living in poverty, the lack of sufficient income, the overload of unpaid work, and unemployment rates systematically higher than those of men show that there are still fundamental challenges to be faced for men and women to live in conditions of equality and to enjoy their rights to achieve sumak kawsay.

The construction of an educational-communicative model for the development of enterprises that allow women in Ecuador to improve their economic situation and achieve demands in other social aspects includes dimensions that consider the cosmovision as an identity element. To this end, cultural particularities are recognized and assumed within the training process following the legal framework to avoid discrimination.

This model is the frame of reference for the development of training programs for women entrepreneurs that help to overcome the restrictions found in the group of interest, in which it is observed that the relationship between the level of education and the level of economic income is maintained.

In addition, an average of 78% of Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous women are of economically productive age, which is an indicator of interest because it is related to intra-family poverty, with which MEIFE and subsequent educational programs can contribute to improve the economic level of this population and, consequently, improve family income due to the correspondence that exists between this population group and their position as breadwinners.

Women from the three ethnic groups participating in the study spontaneously stated that there is a strong will and a dominant need to be educated in a system that allows them to integrate their entrepreneurial skills. That responds to their socioeconomic situation, and their family role and provides them with tools to strengthen their abilities and skills that encourage them to overcome barriers in achieving their aspirations and the exercise of their autonomy, that guarantees empowerment at all stages of the process, for its sustainability over time.

The analysis of the information obtained in the working groups with the women leaders of the associations establishes the limitations of the current educational system. They ratify their desire to participate in the construction of non-formal education processes that contemplate specific thematic areas, concrete and following the dynamics of their enterprises, which promote the permanence of the economic-productive initiatives they carry out, through a systematic training supported by ICTs.

Based on this collective pronouncement, the Intercultural Educommunication for Entrepreneurial Training (MEIFE) model is proposed, which consolidates knowledge and skills in the implementation of innovative product ideas with value addition, commercial and business management that allows them to work in dignified and equitable conditions by applying what they have learned in knowledge, practice and attitude.

The model explained in previous texts, promotes its dimensions, foundations and transversal axes, the preservation and reproduction of traditional knowledge maintained for decades in the communities, embodied in the Andean Cosmo vision as a harmonious relationship with mother earth.

Data availability

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Author contributions

The research was designed by both authors. The first author designed and applied the questionnaire and analysed the data obtained from it. She also carried out the fieldwork for the study. The second author reviewed the whole process of the research development and was in charge of revising the writing of the text. All authors contributed to drafting the article and interpretation of results. All authors have revised the manuscript for important intellectual content and have read and agreed to the present version of the manuscript.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Ethical Approval

This study, following the guidelines of the ethics committee of the University of Salamanca, and has been carried out in accordance with the code of ethics for research in education (BERA, 2019) and its subsequent amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent

The authors declare that informed consent was obtained from all study participants. Each of the presidents of the associations participating in the study signed the informed consent prior to their participation in the research.

Additional information

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