EDITORIAL | DESAFÍOS

Academic training and quality education: keys to a sustainable future

Formación académica y educación de calidad: claves para un futuro sostenible

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Education, as we know, is a human right that transforms lives and enables the eradication of poverty, the overcoming of inequalities, and the achievement of sustainable development (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2025). Likewise, it promotes inclusive and equitable education so that people have access to quality information. From this perspective, education must focus on improving educational quality. The International Organization for Inclusion and Educational Quality (*Organización Internacional para la Inclusión y Calidad Educativa*, hereafter OIICE by its Spanish acronym) states that academic excellence in Ibero-America must be strengthened, as well as education globally (OIICE, 2016). In this sense, we may ask: how can quality education transform societies and guarantee sustainable development? The purpose of this editorial is to analyze that question and offer an appropriate response.

Academic training and quality education are essential pillars for building a sustainable future—a topic that must be addressed from the standpoint of equitable access and the application of innovative pedagogical methodologies to improve learning and professional training. Accordingly, the following dimensions must be considered: inclusion, equity, innovation, technology, competency development, and research-based education. Each dimension is outlined below:

a) Inclusion: This is a continuous process developed through systems that focus on access and reciprocal action, sustaining that individuals display unique abilities and potential, ultimately benefiting all. Different types of inclusion exist, such as social, educational, disability-related, financial, labor, and digital inclusion, among others. Social inclusion, for instance, is a process that guarantees equal opportunities regardless of origin, aiming to foster societal integration and participation.

b) Equity: In the educational context, equity ensures that every student, regardless of social background, has the same opportunities to learn and reach their full potential. One of the theories addressing equity is Amartya Sen's (1998) capabilities and freedoms approach, which posits that the State must ensure that each individual develops their capabilities to achieve freedom.

c) Innovation: Educational innovation, according to various sources, refers to significant changes in the teaching-learning process. UNESCO (2016) interprets it as an act of providing solutions to the challenge of delivering higher-quality student learning.

d) Technology: It is an essential tool that optimizes learning and expands knowledge in educational processes. Access to it enables an education that transforms learners' lives.

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e) Competency development: Developing competencies means strengthening students' skills, attitudes, and values to help them perform effectively in various settings. These competencies reflect cognitive, procedural, and attitudinal dimensions.

f) Research-based education: This approach provides alternative pathways for development, particularly through deep, critical, and autonomous learning, promoting knowledge activation and scientific skills.

Competency-based training in education is part of a new paradigm in the educational field, where the actions carried out reflect promising prospects for developing knowledge at different educational levels, both among students and teachers themselves (Concepción et al., 2021). In this sense, training is viewed through programs with a remedial or compensatory purpose, which require stronger implementation efforts along with the development of robust competencies and skills; in other words, educational programs must ensure meaningful support for socially relevant activities. Moreover, they should complement personal ideological beliefs—not just focus on the development of critical thinking (Huaire-Inacio et al., 2023).

Quality education is also viewed through the lens of praxis in interrelationships, where instruction must be prioritized as a core skill throughout the stages of planning, execution, and evaluation (Aiquipa et al., 2023). The quality of education prioritizes the comprehensive development of children, as aligned with the 2030 Agenda, and is considered a right encompassing both learning and holistic development (França Volsi et al., 2022). However, the quality of teaching and the potential for social inclusion are also apparent in professional training, where communication within families and across educational levels needs improvement (Escarbajal-Frutos et al., 2025).

Studies on professional training consider not only new technologies but also new learning paradigms or methodologies to interact with the environment and foster innovation in any emerging trend (Peliza & Sardegna, 2023).

Along the same lines, reducing inequality and achieving quality education through virtual activities—such as the Delfín Program—have led to substantial changes in higher education institutions, particularly in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations. However, development does not occur equally for all at the same time, as not everyone has the same access to digital tools—an element reflected in each nation's progress. Hence the importance of technological tools to reduce inequalities across societies (López, 2024).

In contrast, various studies show that quality education offers numerous advantages for personal development. Thus, whether through in-person or virtual work, learning is reflected in both family and societal activities. For this reason, quality education transforms societies and fosters development. The key advantages for families include: improved quality of life, value promotion, skill acquisition, better opportunities, and more prepared generations. For society, the benefits encompass: economic development, greater social cohesion, reduced crime rates, and advancements in science and technology.

There are also noteworthy proposals, such as the study by Alava-Rodríguez et al. (2021), which argues that designing an academic training plan positively influences the quality of educational services offered by institutions to communities. Moreover, the design supports teacher training by enhancing bibliographic resources for research. Meanwhile, the Peruvian Ministry of Education (2022) published the *Guide for school quality management*, a resource that fosters effective pedagogical leadership—a proposal aimed at promoting self-assessment practices in educational institutions, thereby contributing to quality education.

In conclusion, quality education transforms societies to achieve sustainable development—an attainable yet complex goal. Reaching it requires integrated policies, teacher training, innovative resources, accessibility, equity in education, and a culture of critical research. Notably, the Universidad de Huánuco has taken the initiative to promote research across academic programs, thereby strengthening students' skills and fostering critical thinking.

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