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## Cambio de la matriz cognitiva como arista para la formación de la persona en el Ecuador

### Change of the cognitive matrix for the formation of the person in Ecuador

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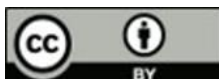
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### Resumen

El presente artículo reflexiona acerca del currículo y la matriz cognitiva del modelo educativo que actualmente orienta a la educación ecuatoriana para lo cual toma como referencia la visión personalista de Gabriel Marcel. El documento se propone replantear las distintas dimensiones del quehacer educativo enfatizando en los principales postulados del personalismo que como corriente filosófica permite la revalorización del hombre y de la educación fomentando la centralidad de la persona frente a la formación pragmática, economicista y consumista que como finalidad última ha promulgado la sociedad actual. Este trabajo consta de tres partes: En la primera se analiza la visión antropológica que orienta a la educación ecuatoriana actual para lo que se toma como referencia algunos postulados expresados en el Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir 2013-2017 y del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo. Toda una vida 2017-2021 y diferentes postulados establecidos en la Constitución de la República del Ecuador del 2008, en la Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior y otras normativas relacionadas con la propuesta educativa. En la segunda parte se reflexiona sobre la propuesta personalista de Gabriel Marcel y sus implicaciones en el quehacer educativo ecuatoriano y en la formación integral del ser humano, teniendo como



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centro fundamental de desarrollo social a la persona. En la tercera parte, se analiza las ventajas y desventajas que trae consigo una propuesta antropológica personalista de educación integral en el Ecuador.

### Palabras clave:

Currículo, educación, formación, Gabriel Marcel, personalismo.

### Abstract

The present article reflects on the curriculum and cognitive matrix of the educational model that currently rules the Ecuadorian education, taking as reference the personalist vision of Gabriel Marcel. The document proposes to rethink the different dimensions of the educational activity emphasized in the main postulates of personalism that allows the reevaluation of the man and of the education, promoting centrality of the individual versus pragmatic training, economist and consumerist, which as ultimate purpose has promulgated today's society. This work consists of three parts: the first analyzes the anthropological vision that guides current Ecuadorian education, taking as reference some postulates expressed in the National Plan for Good Living 2013-2017 and the National Development Plan. Toda una vida 2017-2021 with different postulates established in the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador of 2008, in the Organic Law of Higher Education and other regulations related to the educational proposal. The second part reflects on Gabriel Marcel's personalist proposal and its implications in the Ecuadorian educational work and in the integral formation of the human being, having the person as fundamental center of social development. The third part analyses the advantages and disadvantages of an anthropological proposal for the integral education in Ecuador.

### Keywords:

Curriculum, education, formation, Gabriel Marcel, personalism.

## 1. Introduction

This article proposes a reflection on the current education in Ecuador, and according to the social requirements it is considered necessary to make a change on the cognitive matrix as a fundamental edge for the integral formation of Ecuadorians. In this scenario, it is necessary to make a brief evaluation on the educational changes that have been made during the last twelve years, time in which no real changes have occurred due to the reluctant participation of teachers in the transformations proposed to the education project from the legal aspect, and due to the lack of updated programs to cope with the new educational proposals and their performance in the classroom. But regardless the reasons, it is necessary to be clear on the ultimate goal that education pursues and to walk towards achieving its fundamental objective: to change the way in which education is conceived in Ecuador, opting for the current formation of the human being as a person. It is necessary to find alternatives for one of the main problems evidenced in the educational dynamism: the rejection of the vertiginous unforeseen changes in the state policies that prevent the new proposals from being put into practice. In these twelve years of educational reforms, positive and negative aspects are found; thus, in Aguilar-Gordon (2017) it is observed that a negative aspect of Ecuadorian education was the weakening in the sense of national identity and lack of understanding of the multinational and intercultural nature of the country. Likewise, in Aguilar-Gordon (2019) some critical aspects are mentioned, such as:



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Generation of a rigid curriculum for Initial Education, Elementary school (EGB) and High school (BGU) that teachers must meet to achieve the development of established skills. High school has lost the horizon for which it was created, the students' exit profile is not ideal for subsequent linkage in higher education processes (Aguilar-Gordon, 2019, p. 22).

They have spent some years on executing this proposal and the results have not been positive, since the students who experienced this educational practice have had problems at the time of engaging in the various processes of higher education. High school has not provided the necessary tools for the development of the basic competencies in the student, aspect that has hindered their involvement in universities, generating new problems in the next educational level: high levels of repetition and dropout of the university population of the first years in the different careers offered by the higher institutes and the universities of the country. Additionally, it is found "the entrance examination of the students who finish high school (BGU) aspiring to start a university career" (Aguilar-Gordon, 2019, p. 22). It is a critical situation that causes that a large number of students do not pass the exam, or do not complete the score required for the career they want, or that they do not succeed in entering the University they want, increasing the ranks of unemployment by unleashing new social problems like the delinquency, drug addiction, etc. However, those who pass the exam are not exempt of problems, as some of these students are directed to universities in other provinces creating new conflicts of economic character, mobilization and separation from their homes.

The latter provides the distance between high school and university studies; decontextualized programs are evident at all educational levels; the demand for the use of ICTS without the adequate preparation of those involved and without the infrastructural adequacy of the institutions, aspects that increase inequality at all levels; common evaluation criteria to educational institutions without considering their modality, their specificity, their time of existence, etc. The following is found related to the same aspect:

Programs are changed, teachers have better infrastructure to work with, but the learning process is not revolutionized. The requirement of the doctorate for university professors, when in the country there are no institutions that offer this type of studies. Requirement of doctoral programs with high levels of presence, without considering that the professionals should keep their work (in recent months this situation has changed). Degree validation of postgraduate studies according to listings with names of foreign universities chosen "for their international prestige" but that in fact some of them do not have the scientific and academic rigor necessary for the offer of this type of studies... (Aguilar-Gordon, 2019, p. 22-23).

The aforementioned are a few examples of what has happened in these 12 years in Ecuador, added to others like the university autonomy, the university democracy and other categories that disguised multiculturalism, inclusion and multiculturalism that reflect the ideals of capitalism, mercantilism, bureaucratization of research and fragmentation of the educational system. In this twelve-year period, there is a clear absence of comprehensive training, stimulus and quality-indicator policies that allow the real personal and social growth of teachers and students in the educational system. It has been twelve years in which several educational processes that have stopped individual and social progress have been



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violated, a clear example of this is the "mobility of teachers from the field to the city and abolition of educational institutions of Elementary education (or the First years of basic education) in rural areas or marginal areas with little student population" (Aguilar-Gordón, 2019, p. 23). The process of the so-called educational reordering that started in 2007 and has caused serious problems for the country has only begun to be analyzed in March 2019 by noticing its clear failure and the strong criticisms that have originated as a result of the empire of an "atomized, disarticulated and fragmented educational system in various educational offerings" (Aguilar-Gordon, 2019, p. 25). The Ecuadorian educational system demands serious proposals according to the new social dynamism and the real needs of the Ecuadorian subject.

In this context, this article proposes a change of cognitive matrix in order to improve the quality of Ecuadorian education. The idea to defend that guides the structure of this document is that the change of the cognitive matrix is governed by the conception of the person who is given to the education; in this sense, the Ecuadorian education should worry about training the person by strengthening the cognitive matrix that allows the rescue of the human being as such. It is important to make this change because the center of everything is the human being, everything comes and goes towards the human, and in this socio-historical sway, education must be rethought in a real sense. It is necessary to avoid the instruments of education by reducing the participation of the citizens of a country to the simple election of their rulers. Educational processes that contribute to the strengthening of free thought must be practiced and the positive transformation of society must be proposed from the pursuit of common well-being. For the deployment of the reflections bibliographic-deductive methodology will be used strengthened with the own approaches of the phenomenological-hermeneutic method.

This document is structured in three moments: the first topic: clarification of the current anthropological vision governing Ecuadorian education intended to make a clarification on the vision of the Ecuadorians at the educational level, from this are derived some relevant points such as: philosophical foundations of education in Ecuador from the reform of the 2014; Anthropological Foundation from the National Plan of Good Living 2013-2017; The National Development Plan 2017-2021. *Toda una vida*; The Organic Law on Intercultural bilingual education; and the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador of 2008; possibility of constructivism and the generation of an integral educational proposal in the current context from the aforementioned documents. The systematic review of the aforementioned documents contributed to support the idea that education should be oriented to the integral formation of the human being to improve its quality, this would imply emphasizing in the equity, in the interculturality and in the so-called educational inclusion.

From the aforementioned arises the need to consider as a second topic the critical approach to the personalistic proposal of Gabriel Marcel. For this analysis, it is necessary to look to the approaches proposed by the personalism, especially in the guidelines of the philosopher pointed out, guidelines that give a basic and orderly structure to explain the meaning and the trajectory of the person in the current education. From the personalistic view considered as the transversal axis of this document, the following reflections are derived: philosophical approximation to French personalism; conception of the person from Gabriel Marcel (Me and you); the person as being in relation to the Constitution of an integral society. From these arguments it is necessary to emphasize that it is possible to build a society that encompasses the meaning and incidence of the term justice. It is a priority to



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look back on the centrality that the person and the collectivity should have on economic, political, cultural, etc., which today accelerate and promote human objectification as they obey capitalist policies that from the realism of this current also called with the full extent of the term as *selfish* that degrade the human being. It is therefore conceived that this is the best way and a possible solution that is believed, giving the personalism in front of the contemporary facts with a view to the construction of a better society.

The last issue is about the advantages and disadvantages of a personalistic anthropological proposal in Ecuador. Each of the following sub-themes will be drawn from point-in-time reflections of what might be versus what education is in our country. In this way, it can be seen that one way or another contributes to continue working on improving the quality of education. Education in the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel; the relationship between personalism and education in Ecuador; a re-reading of personalistic thinking in the national plan of good living and in the so-called national development plan 2017-2021. A lifetime; the person as the central value of Ecuadorian education; the formulation of guidelines for a comprehensive education in Ecuador. With all these highlighted elements, a personalistic proposal of integral education in the country is revealed, in which some advantages and disadvantages are analyzed indirectly on which some guidelines could be established that would allow to create a truly holistic education in the country in order to improve educational quality.

## 2. Elucidation of the current anthropological vision governing the Ecuadorian education

Despite the various changes that education has undergone in Ecuador from the observed in the course of history, it can be emphasized that the country is anchored to a traditional, decontextualized and imposed education. It is an education in which when it comes to teach the knowledge, professors only dedicate themselves to fulfilling what is taught without going beyond their capacities, the human person is left to the side by only thinking in the productivity. It is an education that forgets the person as a relational whole. Therefore, this section is intended to make an approximation to the philosophical foundations that govern education in the country, considering necessary to carry out an analysis of the national curriculum of education that governs the Ecuadorian educational reality.

Some sub-themes are presented in in this chapter presented: 1) The analysis of the philosophical foundations of education in Ecuador taking as reference the curricular reform of 2014; 2) An anthropological foundation guided by the proposals that appear in the national plan of good living and the national development plan 2017-2021. *Toda una vida*; 3) Reflections that arise from the good living around constructivism; and finally, 4) provide arguments to originate a possible proposal for comprehensive education that presents the human being as a person in the Ecuadorian context.

### 2.1 Philosophical foundations of Education in Ecuador from the reform of 2014

There are various philosophical approaches – humanism, personalism, existentialism – in education, not only in Ecuador, but at the global level; however, each requiring to adopt certain ways of thinking. Everything can be valid, but it depends on the applicability that can be given when proposing to build a path to recognize the fundamentals that involve education in Ecuador, since the implementation of the educational curriculum designed in 2014 and that requires to accept that education should have as a principle:



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The integral formation of children; this implies the development of the different areas that allow to specify the three-dimensionality of the formation of the human being, i.e., the attitudinal, the cognitive and the psychomotor, with predominant emphasis in the attitudinal, since at this level it is essential to promote the practice of good habits and attitudes as a basis for the construction of principles and values that will enable them to develop as true human beings and properly configure the development of their personality, identity and trust (Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 17).

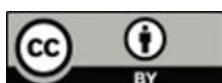
One of the strengths considered in the curriculum of education is that for its elaboration the current constructivism is emphasized with the intention that all the institutions apply this model to their students. In this way, according to Delval it is argued that constructivism raises the formation of knowledge "standing inside the subject" (Delval, 1997, p. 80). This means that the starting point is the human being as the center on which education is thought and all the efforts for its integral formation must be focused on this assumption.

The subject builds the knowledge of reality to the extent that it cannot be known in itself but through cognitive mechanisms that are available and that in turn, allow transformations of that same reality. In this way, knowledge is reached through the action on the reality, experimenting with situations and objects with the intention of transforming them. The cognitive mechanisms that allow access to knowledge are also developed throughout the subject's life. This way of proceeding is based on humanism that has its origins in ancient Greece where Socrates considered that "to know (the true wisdom) consists precisely in freeing of preconceived ideas and to try to describe them, [...] to direct the gaze towards the interior of man, towards human issues" (Dal Maschio, 2015, p. 32), and thus the concern for the human being in the Ecuadorian education is verified from the integral development as a citizen that deserves the best education.

In the preceding philosophical approaches, constructivism is not intended to fit, rather, it can be seen how it accommodates the current era. Nowadays, it is considered that knowledge is built as a vital fortress that has as a reference educating with their previous knowledge; thus, according to Guilar (2009) the task of the teacher is to help mediate what the child contributes from his/her prior relationship with the environment. The previous experimentation would help to strengthen the relationships established in the classroom and to form a critical thought as " pattern development of logical and coherent reasoning [...]intended to determine carefully and deliberately whether a judgement is accepted, rejected or suspended" (Castellano, 2007, p. 72). Constructivism promotes a more structured thought for each student as he/she advances in the learning process according to the evolutionary process. Cognition becomes stronger as the individual abstracts a greater knowledge background.

Among the weaknesses that can be highlighted in the curricular reform of 2014 are:

- The Ministry of Education in proposing this model of curriculum is not leaving room for creativity in the exercise of the subject, but he imposes a model to follow, which can be called as kind of educational dogmatism.



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- That all teachers are not in the ability to apply this theory because many of them do not know what constructivism is. Most teachers continue to apply their traditional and banking model.

While it is argued that formal education presents a range of elements from which it is intended to teach theory in the classroom, this is reduced to a mere scientific narrative since teachers strive to teach reality through theories as presented in the text (dogmatism), this can be reinforced by what Colom says (2002):

The deconstruction of modernity leads us to the deconstruction of the theory and the need to build a new educational knowledge; the construction of this new knowledge is practical, i.e., from the construction of the knowledge in the student (Colom, 2002, p. 188).

It is necessary to break with the vision that fragments true knowledge and precludes the activity of educating (Vivas Herrera, 2013, p. 237). The task of the teacher is to link the construction processes of the student with the collective knowledge culturally organized, and also to promote the critique with the purpose of being aware of the reality that happens, in addition to making possible the development of their potential. This implies that the role of the teacher is not only limited to create optimal conditions for the student, but must to orient and guide explicitly and deliberately this activity.

In the constructivist paradigm that manages the current curriculum, it is necessary to consider the educating as an active subject that knows, taking into account that it possesses knowledge and previous experiences that are validated in the formal education when it establishes that the Educating must know how to relate what you know and what is to know, depending on the stimuli offered by the educational environment and mainly the educator. In this interweaving between educator and education there is a meeting of human beings, people who anthropologically show respect for the other humanity, that is, a clear bidirectional relationship is shown that will be evident in the following Reflections.

## 2.2 Anthropological foundation from the national plan “Good living” 2013-2017 and the national development plan 2017-2021 “Toda una vida”

Immanuel Kant (2000) argues that *man through education can become a true man*, therefore, to achieve this purpose, educational work is a priority, so it must be planned in such a way that the main objective is to stimulate the autonomy of the educational subject. In this line, Rousseau (2008) argues that:

There is always an external purpose to the child foreseen by the same nature, since those who are destined to think on helping him are not rational to suppose that they act manslaughter, but, on the contrary, they will propose immediately ends more or less ambitious of realization at the end of the attendance period, as well as immediate and circumstantial objectives induced in the facts and necessities of each moment. The nature of these purposes is already another problem (Rousseau, 2008, p. 120).

Education aims to condition by educating conformity as a social medium or a state doctrine. In this regard, the ultimate aim should not be to adapt the functions that would be fulfilled



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in the social relations system, either in the role that is glimpsed in any system of private relations. Education does not have the function of making conscious citizens, good patriots or small fascists or communists; their mission is to awaken in humans the ability to live and engage as people in their current society. Man is not only polite, but his special biopsychosocial condition demands his humanization from education.

It must be clear that man is not pure rationality but with the "reason we build what is not possible in the action of our being in the world; what is possible in every moment" (Pérez de Laborda, 2000, p. 68). Reality is seen by the reason, i.e., the way things are. It is possible to observe the others from their humanity to contribute to the full development of their capacities. This idea contributes to the whole vision of the others, where it is accepted from the potentialities that it has as a human being, so that it has a good life that only in that I-you relationship fullness can occur. The search for common welfare is emphasized as outlined in the national plan of good living 2013-2017 under the slogan "All the Better World" (Senplades, 2017, p. 12) which was conceived as a plan envisaged for the building of capacities in the population and was somehow intended to reduce the social and territorial gaps to consolidate the democratic state, in order to empower human talent through comprehensive education processes, and to generate productive capacities through large investments in various areas of infrastructure and strategic sectors for the development. Likewise, in the national development plan 2017-2021. "Toda una vida" is proposed to "deepen, innovate, improve and include to take advantage of what has been achieved, and guarantee the full realization of the life projects, in conditions of equal opportunities, equity and social justice, celebrating diversities in a multinational and intercultural State" (Senplades, 2017, p. 12). Everything that is expressed is made possible in education through the relationship that arises between student and professor when one values the other from the previous knowledge since the mutual learning is a constant from the personal valuation of the other. From this perspective and since the last national development plan, it is argued that: "The center of development is the human being, and not the market or capital; reason for which solidarity raises to face individualism" (Senplades, 2017, p. 12).

### 2.3 Possibility of constructivism from the National Plan of the Good Living 2013-2017 and National Development Plan "Toda una vida"

There are no express ideas about constructivism in the national plan of good living 2013-2017; however, based on the exposed approaches on constructivism it is feasible to present a key thought in the PNBV, then the "good living [...] offers alternatives to build a more fair society, in which the center of public action is the human being and life" (Senplades, 2013, p. 22); from this idea, it is possible to propose that the center of education is man as 'being' for society, the center of life, who is able through skills acquired in education to make society. Thus, the character of sociability that only the human being possesses is emphasized.

Additionally, it is stated that good living is encompassed from the Quichua thought of Sumak Kawsay, a "mobilizing idea that offers alternatives to the contemporary problems of humanity" (Senplades, 2013, p. 23). Proposal that builds solidarity societies, but that this cannot be done but from education. It is thought that the Sumak Kawsay is embracing from a perspective that bets on inclusiveness, where all Ecuadorians can exercise their rights and obligations from the respect of national identities.

It is possible to say that good living is strengthened from those values that drive the human being to reach the maximum possible, i.e., to obtain a comprehensive formation as it was



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presented in ancient Greece for the attainment of the common good and the individual happiness; all this cannot be given from selfishness, rather, it is a work that is done through education, where the other (the student) is very valuable because not only is the future of society, but because the knowledge shared aims to bring out the knowledge the person possesses. The person is a 'being' that builds himself/herself (knowledge) and contributes to the construction of a better society.

From the national development plan 2017-2021 "Toda una vida", there are no explicit aspects of constructivist theory, but educational processes are seen as a lifelong learning right and promotes the "development of personal competencies for resilience, capacity of decision, autonomy, realization, development opportunities, among others" (Senplades, 2017, p. 49), which can infer constructivist processes that consider that the basis of social development derives exclusively from education.

#### 2.4 Possibility of an integral educational proposal in the current context

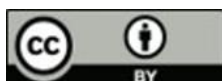
It is necessary to revise the ten-year education plan from 2006 to 2015, which presents the general objective that establishes "to ensure the quality of national education with equity, intercultural and inclusive vision from a focus of rights and duties to strengthen citizen training and unity in the diversity of the Ecuadorian society" (Ministry of Education, 2006:14), this may mean one thing: that education should be oriented to the integral formation of the human being to improve the quality, which would imply emphasizing equity, multiculturalism and inclusiveness.

If the ten-year plan's proposal focuses on inclusion, attention to diversity, strengthening of citizenship, this would imply a joint work with educational institutions to make this objective a reality and not just a sociological narrative, since it is decided to observe the application that may have the ten-year plan and the fulfillment of the proposed objectives. However, all this is not achieved from the proposal of an entity, but a teamwork where both micro and macro institutions contribute to improve the quality of education in the country. Minorities need to be taken into account in order to know the reality of non-urban institutions so that no one is excluded.

Consider for a moment to develop a proposal that links the ten-year plan with Constructivism and Personalism, i.e., that from the ten-year plan it opens step to accommodate constructivism, but from a broad and correct view of what constructivism means. According to Coll, this term becomes "a category where different psychological currents are integrated, which focus on the activity of the subject" (Coll, 1996, p. 155). By unifying these three elements, the comprehensive education proposal is evidenced because:

The learning of knowledge and the formation of cultures included in the school curriculum can only be a source of personal development for the students as long as they simultaneously strengthen the process of building personal identity and the process of socialization, i.e., to the extent that it helps them to situate themselves individually in an active, constructive and critical way in the social context and culture of which they are part of (Coll, 1996, p. 170).

It is verified that a proposal of integral education is possible by unifying what is wanted to be achieved with a ten-year plan, clarifying the meaning of constructivism for a correct application and the objectification of humanization of the human being seen as a personal *being* open to the other in search of the common good and in projection to the personal



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development in the social and cultural context of which he/she is part. This can also be understood from the Bentham's utilitarian thought (1839) who argues that "for the achievement of the social objective, an interest in the individual must be created or promoted that serves as motivation so that its behavior tends to the greater social happiness"(p. 60) while seeking individual happiness.

Elucidating the specific axes that govern the structure of this educational strategy that is part of the Ecuadorian education, it is necessary to continue with the review of the personalism as a philosophical current that will serve to establish an anthropological Education proposal whose specific aspects are considered below.

### 3. Critical approach to the personalistic proposal of Gabriel Marcel

The complexity of the wiles in which we are surrounded by the instrumentalist society that governs in our days requires the revision and confrontation of these technical specificities that are *at hand* -which objectively unify human traits- with the position that the person should have about the progress that so far governs ideologies: social, political, economic and cultural contemporary. It is therefore necessary to rediscover and recover the ontological position that the person must have in the times that are not exempt of influence in the Ecuadorian society. For this pretentious analysis, it is advisable to look at the approaches proposed by the personalism of Gabriel Marcel that provide a basic and orderly structure to base the sense and trajectory of the person in the current Ecuadorian education.

#### 3.1 Philosophical approximation to French personalism

One of the most daring and influential currents that have been built throughout contemporary philosophy is the personalistic "school", proposing a critical review of the manipulation that social advents make of man; reality that manifests itself and remains in force in the circumstantial observances of our days. In relation to this, Burgos (2012) says:

Personalism emerged in the European context as a collective response movement to a complex set of social, cultural and philosophical issues: the rise of individualism and collectivism... The arrogance of a scientific materialism... A strong crisis of knowledge, crisis of values, dechristianization, etc (Burgos, 2012, p. 5).

This approach goes from a consideration of the socio, economic and cultural processes as adverse to a central assessment of the human person, which is presented to this *human being* as paramount, obtaining the privilege of dignity that as a person is his/her responsibility. There is a predominance of conceptions that obeys complex constructs that make the human being a 'condemned' entity to obey. It is insisted under this previous assessment that the personalism as a philosophical perspective is built as a basic and necessary set for the recovery of the ontological position of the human being, since its *commitment* with the society in view of that in the words of Marcel (1987) "The contemporary period is characterized by something that should be called the exorbitantness of the idea of function... Vital functions and social functions" (Marcel, 1987, p. 23); proposition that gives an account of the paradigm shift, i.e., that the human and collective function (in current words) is to produce, to capitalize on reality, change that should be reformed from an evaluative, constructive social function of the dignified and integral human being, without reifying the human nature. It should be emphasized that the personalism as *reorienter* and *recoveee* of the centrality of the person, does not exhaust itself in the complexity of its word, i.e.:



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Personalism encompasses various nuclei united by a common tendency... The most general feature of personalism is its insistence on the reality and value of the person... If I try to explain the reality from this point of view, hostile to naturalistic interpretations... It would affirm human freedom and the foundation of reality (Marías, 1980, p. 162).

From this specification, personalism by being a current that makes emphasis on the centrality of the person, it turns over a realistic conception of the human nature, pretending to restore and to recover the order and the status that human beings must occupy at the everyday events. Without the slightest idea of assuming an epistemological position, it can be said that *the measure of things must be the person*, free and responsible, where the aspects that arise from the contiguous reality are at the service of man and not vice versa.

From these elucidations, a clear idea has been structured to understand that the European personalism is founded in the search and in the reconsideration of the ontological position of the person compared to the *social factum*. All this is an opportunity to reflect on this aspect, because it emphasizes the inevitable valuation of the person like a being who seeks emancipation, i.e., not mediated by purposes that is not the same as *being a person*. Based on this judgement that this current founded, it is ratified the promotion that the human person cannot be reduced to any reifying aspect by reality, given that the personalism according to Burgos (2012) should not be alienated by the various scenarios that the person has established in the world, given that the person is essentially different and superior to animals and things. This is the specific revaluation surrounded by the interstices built by society itself, and that in turn, the person should not be in the midst of it, whose differentiated task is to transcend these aspects in view of that as mentioned, the human person should not be reduced to being treated as an animal, thing, or any other aspect that infringes his/her own human nature. The ontologically understood human being must be valued as a fundamental being in the face of any established social construct.

From this perspective, it is considered pertinent to propose a brief revision of the conception of person from one of the representatives of personalism, recalling that this philosophical doctrine seeks the centrality of the person to legitimize his/her constructs and to promote the aim of this manuscript.

### 3.2 Conception of the person from the personalism of Gabriel Marcel (Me-You)

As mentioned, the personalism aims to reorient the conception of the person from her/his value and centrality that should keep in front of each social conquest. It can be characterized one of the essential aspects that comprises the philosophy of Marcel, whose reference given by person is linked with the *construction*, which according to Urbayen (1997) opposes the Cartesian guidelines, not polarized like *res cogitans* and *res extensa* but formulated in the following way: "Man is an incarnated being... It is a being in the world, and its being in the world is possible because it is a corporeal being" (Urbayen, 1997, p. 331).

Urbayen (1997) defends the main position that the person must have as a *being open* to things, and at the same time emancipated from that reality. Nevertheless, the sequence of this referential-existential conception of being requires the clarification and complementation of it, by means of a specific nucleus, being this *the other*, the you, that like the corporeity, it melts a space of encounter with the other. In this perspective, this conjecture is mentioned from this philosopher:



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I exist; this means that I have to make myself known, be it for another, whether by myself as it affects me to go about a borrowed alterity; and everything is not separated from the fact that there is my body. This body belongs to me, but it is not my body but the spirit that is given to me; the body has the dignity it deserves by virtue of being created by a superior you (Marcel, 1957, p. 227).

In this complex consideration, it is expressed the eagerness of recognition, and also the need of the other where the integral human person can *be, be made and built* as a whole person. It is also important to emphasize that the person does not relegate to the objectification as a means for a particular purpose, but that it identifies itself as a corporeal being, embodied and directed to the discovery of oneself and with what has been given as denomination, you.

In short, the recovery of the existence, of the status and in particular of the integrity of the human person is one of the specific postulates of Marcel, where the person is not conceived – worth the redundancy- as means of which it is available for some purpose but as sole subject provided of an existence and an essence that makes it a person capable of building order, meaning and building its trajectory in the complexity of the contemporary world in which it is inserted.

### 3.3 The person as being in relation to the constitution of an integral society

The proposals set out earlier by the personalism and more specifically from Marcel fall on a declarative inspiration about the development of the person, together with their influence for the social individuals. Not so, it is thought that this sociological-ontological influence that comes from the re-conception of the human person, promotes the construction, not only of specific individualities but also that it contributes to the development and the construction of an integral society, understanding by this objection the achievement of a society that integrates the great diversity of human expressions such as solidarity, the recognition of the self and the other, the emancipation of idiosyncrasies related to the postulation of the human being as a non-thinking entity, etc., in such a way that the building of a world balanced by community ideologies is reached, at the service of the human being and the collectivity as the sole purpose. In this reflective line, it is opportune to emphasize the position of Urbayen (1997) who from the analyses that are made in relation to the Instrumentalist Society maintains that:

Man is conceived as a machine, as a mechanism and not as a spiritual being... This conception promoted by the technical development and by the primacy of the productive categories, attentive to a direct form against the integrity of the person and impedes its complete development (Urbayen, 1997, pp. 333-334).

It is possible to see that this aspect remains in force in the face of the great multiplicity of factors that make up human singularity. In this context, it is appropriate to clarify that according to the contemporary technical and technological boom, the proposal of the centrality of the person does not converge against the technique and its progress, but in what the technique and its variants make of the person; then, from the conception of man, this corporeal unity would be nullified by these exempted implications.

The current advances in technology have placed man as a spectator, there is no action, he has become a passive being that only receives. There is little vision of the future, entrepreneurship perspective, among others. Following these problems, it is urgent to



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rethink the directionality of education in Ecuador, since it is not possible to let the whole society go adrift; hence, there are serious consequences if a more critical, conscious thought is not promoted; thought that is able to provoke changes to seek common well-being. It is necessary to generate commitments for the human person. However, once exposed the current problem of the capitalist system of the world today, it is thought necessary and paramount to look back on the proposals that from the personalism conceived, it presents a reevaluation of the person in front of the world. From this position, it would be worth pointing out that for the objective intended, it is a condition 'sine qua non', recognize that "the person is a being able to collect, to penetrate inside, and this characteristic is the one that highlights the clearest way according to Marcel, that the person is a being able to transcend" (Marcel, 1957, p. 330).

It is important to question what are the only aspects believed to account for the recovery of the integrity and dignity of the person, and of these same social virtues. Therefore, at this point it is pertinent to express what is thought by the achievement of an integral society conceived as:

Society must lead to the unity of its members, not by instrumentalist zeal, but by an eagerness to achieve... an understanding and also the social attitude aimed at empowering the weakest... in a world of inequality, only policies that favor equal opportunities have legitimacy (Arenas & Fernandez, 2015, p. 116).

It is possible to pose these ideas so that they can cope with the social problems that occur. It is possible to understand that unity provides equality of opportunity as something legitimate and proper of the human person, which must be conceived in an integral way, not defined by technical progress but by the unconditional centrality that occupies the world. In addition, there is a desire to recognize each in the *other* through the attainment of democratic policies as they favor and account for the participation and recognition of otherness.

Concluding, it is necessary to emphasize that it is possible to seek a society that encompasses the great significance and incidence of the term justice; it is an elementary priority to turn the gaze on the centrality of the person and the collectivity in the economic, political, cultural, etc., which today accelerate and promote human objectification as they obey capitalist policies that from the realism of this current can be called as 'selfish' that degrade the human being. It is conceived that the personalism and its proposals become an alternative solution to the contemporary facts with a view to the construction of a better society. Hence, it is necessary to establish a specific comparison of these approaches conceived as a requisite for an anthropological proposal for education in Ecuador in conjunction with the "model" of education that currently governs the Ecuadorian educational practices.

#### 4. Comparison (advantages and disadvantages) of a personalistic anthropological proposal in Ecuador

This last sub-topic is ambitious since it seeks to compare two elements that are not present in the national curriculum and that as a proposal can cause reflection in different social actors. Mounier (2007) defended the idea that every person should be committed to *others*, that all human beings must work as a whole and collectively. In addition, human beings from their personal individuality should be directed towards the pursuit of common well-being.



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What happens in the Ecuadorian social context is not different to the same Ecuadorians, alternatives of solution must be sought to improve the educational quality at micro and macro level, in the rural and urban areas, so that all the human beings reach the personal development to be expected. Each of the following sub-themes will be elaborated from reflections of what could be versus what is education in our country, in this way there are glimpses of advantages and disadvantages that in one way or another contribute to continue working with a view to improving the quality of education. It is necessary to understand that the quality of education cannot be improved only from the theoretical proposals but from the reality of the subject, having as center the student, his/her person and dignity as a human being, because only from here it is possible to transcend the conflicting frontiers posed by postmodernity. Subsequently, it will be proceeded to make an approach to the education in the personalist thinking of Gabriel Marcel.

#### 4.1 Education in the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel

This author presents enriching reflections at the educational level because he proposes the integrity of the other. In his work the *mystery of being*, Marcel proposes a recognition for the other that in this case could be conceived as the student in front of the teacher and whose presence does not make the teacher as a mere spectator but a *being concerned to help the other* to deploy all the potentials in order to transcend the social spheres translated into the search for the common good that "it is not about the strangeness that an observer may experience that will check it from the outside, but is felt inwardly by someone who recognizes this situation as his own" (Marcel, 1964, p. 165), hence, the interest of the teacher to ensure that their students have a better education than they had, thus reaching the integral formation of their personal *being*.

This meeting between student and educator is presented as a mystery "something in which I am committed myself" (Marcel, 1964, p. 171) and the educator cannot get rid of that responsibility, in the same way the educating must accept the guide that It means the educator for him because he seeks to reach a higher degree of personal dignity, development in all fields of life. The educating shows a commitment because it accepts the other the necessary guide to become what it proposes to be, always aiming at the maximum good. It is noted that the commitment is mutual and in this way:

The person is in the self to perform. That unity, radical and incommunicable which is the person, performs itself through the complexity of living. And living is living with things, with others and with ourselves. This 'with' is not simple juxtaposition of person and life: 'with' is one of the ontological characters of the person as such, and, in his/her virtue, the life of every human being is constitutively personal (Zubiri, 1983, p. 48).

Zubiri corroborates what was said by Marcel, then the human being seen as a person must be prepared to live, but cannot be prepared only because he/she would return to be an animal, though rational. The concept of person is broader because it discards the ancient vision of the human being as a rational animal because the human being is not an animal but a person who lived and makes society, makes community. The animal can be abandoned but the man from his/her personal being cannot be left abandoned. Therefore, the task of the educator is to dedicate his efforts to the integral education of the person with a view to his realization in the world, for his *me* and the *you*, thus forming a *us*. In defense of the personalism, there is no place more apt to corroborate its application rather than in relation to the education.



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#### 4.2 Relationship between personalism and education in Ecuador

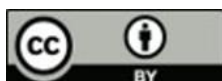
It is clear that the concept of good living could be reformulated from the linkage with the personalism; however, there are certain guidelines that are oriented to the maintenance of the traditional conception as it is the scientific narratives that prevail in the time of teaching and technical procedures, in which teachers are lost in order to comply with the right way of teaching proposed from the Ministry of Education. Now, it is specified what is sought in the education of Ecuador, as is explained in article 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of 2008, which recognizes education as:

A right that people exercise throughout their lives and an inescapable and inexcusable duty of the state. It constitutes a priority area of public policy and state investment, guarantee of equality and social inclusion and essential condition for good living. People, families and society have the right and responsibility to participate in the educational process (Constitution of Ecuador, 2008, Art. 26).

Therefore, it is established that education is intended for the person throughout his/her life because it is inserted in a social environment; this education should be oriented towards the achievement of good living, the guiding principle of any educational project. All Ecuadorians have the right to participate in the educational process; therefore, it is observed that the notion of personalism where everyone is responsible, as a community, to offer all the means necessary for human beings to improve. Another approach is established in article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador of 2008, in which is stated that:

Education must be human-centered and will ensure its holistic development [...]; it will be participative, obligatory, intercultural, democratic, inclusive and diverse, of quality and solidarity; it will promote gender equity, justice, solidarity and peace; it will stimulate critical sense, [...] individual and community initiative, and the development of competencies and capacities to create and work. Education is indispensable for the knowledge, the exercise of rights [...], and it constitutes a strategic axis for national development (Constitution of Ecuador, 2008, Art. 27).

All Ecuadorians are part of promoting an education centered on the human being and in the person, in such a way that it promotes a holistic, integrated and integral development from the recognition of the *other*, not only of the person but of the nature, because man (being personal) can give the degree of dignity that corresponds to the nature to respect, care for and not destroy it, making a conscious use of the resources it offers. Likewise, they are all aware of their democratic participation, attachment to justice, solidarity and peace, but none of these values can be fully lived when the personal dignity of the other is not recognized. If education is indispensable to knowledge, exercise of rights and construction of a sovereign country, then the state is the one who should promote the recognition of the person from their inviolable dignity, as it is. Awareness of the recognition of the dignity of the 'other' cannot only be written but it must be a reality from the daily exercise of the experience of true personal values. In the next section, the current that has been proposed as a guiding thread for the execution of this work will be presented with the national plan of good living 2013-2017 and with the national development plan 2017-2022 "Toda una vida" proposed by our country.



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#### 4.3 Reading of the personalistic thinking in the national plan of good living 2013-2017 and in the national development plan 2017-2021 "Toda una vida"

Previously there were two central ideas that appear in the national plan of the good living 2013-2017, from there it is possible to make a reading of the personalistic thought, although it is not a way to open to other reflections that the authors of this article can contribute. The national plan of the good living 2013-2017 and the national development plan 2017-2021 "Toda una vida" establish that all Ecuadorians must develop their capacities because the center of education is the human being; then, it is necessary to determine operational mechanisms that make reality what is stipulated in article 343 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador of 2008 which states that:

The National education system will aim at the development of individual and collective capacities and potentialities of the population that enable learning, and the generation and utilization of knowledge, techniques, skills, arts and culture. The system will focus on the learning subject and will work flexibly and dynamically, inclusively, efficiently and efficiently. The national education system will integrate an intercultural vision according to the geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity of the country, and with respect for the rights of the communities, people and nationalities (Constitution of Ecuador, 2008, Art. 343).

The good living and "Toda una vida" plans contribute to the achievement of the personal fulfillment of all Ecuadorians; however, it is necessary to change the way in which education in Ecuador is conceived, with a view to achieving the development of the individual and collective capacities and potentialities of the population. It is necessary to change the cognitive matrix to transform the current Ecuadorian society; it is necessary to revolutionize the thinking about the specific needs of Ecuadorians by modifying the teaching and learning processes that generate analytical and critical subjects that will emerge in pursuit of their individual and social project in which the relationship of the *self* in front of *you* is presented and in which two subjects are involved. In this way, a mutual recognition is profiled for the construction of a new society from the concrete situation, in which each one is located, emphasizing the notion of multiculturalism according to the geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity of the country. All of the above will help to appropriate the typical situations and problems of Ecuadorians. The Ecuadorian educational project must aim at the harmonious fusion of theory and praxis, of subjectivity and of reality, it should be oriented towards the search for an "articulation of the vital and the spiritual" (Marcel, 1964, p. 93) for the care of the common good, understanding it from personal spheres to those that involve nature for the respect and care of *others*.

From the conception of the Sumak Kawsay on which the good life has been proposed, it can be considered that the personalism is shown and in both cases what is sought is to give solutions to the problems of the contemporary society. Personalism sees every human being as a binding part of a community (Marcel, 1964); it is a person who seeks the common good and in that search also thinks on himself/herself. For its part, the good living aims to achieve the integral development of all Ecuadorians and is thought as a gear where everyone should contribute to the search for solutions to the social problems that occur nowadays (Senplades, 2013). In the same way, "Toda una vida" is proposed to achieve a holistic and integrative vision so that no one, throughout his/her life, is left behind (Senplades, 2017). In the normative corpus analyzed by means of the selection of the articles established in the Constitution, as well as in the national development plan of the good living 2013-2017 and



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in the national development plan 2017-2021 “Toda una vida”, there are personalistic approaches that invoke the need to achieve greater equity and social justice, promulgate the expansion of productive capacities, the strengthening of human talent, the integral development in a context that project the people towards a common horizon where the rights for all are guaranteed during their life, taking into account the diversity of contexts, typical problems and situations to the particular individual and of his/her different manifestations and organizational expressions.

In this scenario, it is possible to observe the point of encounter between Personalism, Constitution 2008, Good living and “Toda una vida”. They are oriented towards the search for the integral aspect of the human being, towards the respect of their rights as people, the fight against selfishness as an element that destroys and avoids the construction of a more just, equitable, harmonious and peaceful society. All situate human beings and nature in the center of management, prioritize equal recognition of human rights and intend to ensure their fulfillment to build a society motivated by diversity and harmonic relationships with a view to achieving a better social and political coexistence. From this perspective, all Ecuadorians are in the obligation to think critically and as a team to have the country they want where everyone can 'live' better.

#### 4.4 The person as the central value of the Ecuadorian education

In the last twelve years, it has been shown that education is a priority in Ecuador, but it is necessary to make real changes in its fundamental management and implementation policies. It is essential to rethink the basic general education proposals of High School; it is necessary to rethink the undergraduate and postgraduate projects offered by the institutions of higher education, taking as a fundamental center the reflections and the actions of the person in his/her contextual reality. University megaprojects have been built with a view to offering new products (knowledge); millions of dollars have been invested in infrastructure, in the construction of educational institutions, in hiring teachers, scientists and researchers that would contribute to the improvement of education, but in reality behind these projects great plans and programs have been designed that protect and camouflage wastefulness, corruption and excessive dishonesty, aspects that have staggered the meaning and ultimate purpose of education.

Ecuador demands a different thinking with ethical, political and socially well-formed human beings. Fully and integrally formed human beings that foster a true quality education. In the country, it is not enough to create programs of educational updating, it is necessary to promote the development of the conscience and of a critical and constructive thought that promotes the personal and social fulfillment; it is necessary for everyone to be responsible to modify their mental structures and to achieve social transformations. Society requires the involvement of all, and at the educational level it is imperative that there be full awareness that the current context requires new ways of teaching and new ways of learning to be answered without forgetting that the purpose must be fixed on human development "without separating the spiritual from the vital" (Marcel, 1964, p. 171). In the current Ecuadorian society, a diversity of actions and attitudes is observed, it is opted for a voluntarism, emphasizing the educational selfishness in all the levels under the slogan nobody loses and all pass without considering the learning degree and/or the level of knowledge. The risk to lose the place of work, the innumerable reports and the additional work deployed in the different opportunities of pedagogical recovery, of reception of new tests, of design of questionnaires, of planning extraordinary tasks, etc., force the teacher to fall into the system that promotes the promotion of the student who is voided of cognitive, procedural and attitudinal aspects. Currently, the role of the teacher has been distorted,



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even is legally unprotected by the Ecuadorian legislation. It is necessary to revalorize the teacher (in its fair measure) and to strengthen the educational processes considering that education is the same engine of social development, but to achieve this it is necessary to reorient the educational policies, to rethink the role of the family and to work cooperatively and collaboratively in order to build an alternative society that values the individual and worries about the common good.

Consider the ruling that appears in the Constitution of the Republic (2008) that "education will focus on the human being and will ensure its holistic development" (Constitution of Ecuador, 2008, Art. 27), this idea is reconsidered because it is essential to insist on the holistic development of all Ecuadorians where individual and community initiative is boosted, and the development of competencies, skills, critical sense and capacities to create and work is framed in an altruistic thought. It is necessary to recognize the Ecuadorian in its personal *being* in the different instances in which he/she develops, from all the nationalities that exist in the country, languages and forms of being that are manifested. This is part of the valuation of the communities and individualities that make up the identity of the Ecuadorian, none of this would be possible if one does not recognize the other. From that position it is recognized that:

The person is not the most wonderful object in the world, an object that we would know from the outside, as observers, among other things because 'I am not a mere spectator', repeated by Marcel again and again in his works: I do not want to be a spectator who is not committed to the people and with the world (the circumstance) that surrounds him/her. The person is,... the only reality that we know and that at the same time we do from the inside (Mounier, 1983, pp. 22-23).

Even though it is true that the center of education in Ecuador is the human being, in recent times it is essential to carry out a revaluation of the subjects immersed in these processes especially in the teacher. From the personal conception, the person carries a unique valuation that corresponds to his/her personal dignity, for this reason all the efforts in educational subject are oriented to the holistic and integral formation of the person to give answer in each of the areas: biological, social, political, economic, cultural, religious, among others. It is essential not to forget that in education this intimate link established from the pedagogical relationship I-you must be conceived with a view to personal fulfillment.

#### 4.5 Creation of guidelines for a comprehensive education in Ecuador

The integral education of the person has an important place in the current society by the emergency that denotes the loss of moral values. The primacy of the voluntarism has led to the establishment of a weakening of the vision of the human being, it is no longer conceived as *that* someone who should be given the necessary attention to the development of his/her potentialities and turns his/her gaze towards nature; the love for animals arises, nature, all this joined to the *extremes*; before it was thought on the man and now it is thought about the animals and in some cases about the nature, all are reductionisms that cause declines of certain conceptions founded on the existence of humanity.

Because of the problematic arisen, it is necessary to focus the education of Ecuador to give priority to the person and to fulfill the holistic development, for that reason as well as UNESCO, the necessity to educate in the *being* is emphasized, as well as in knowing and doing. This



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triad will govern the following guidelines:

- **Know how to be a person.** This implies awareness of *who you are*, a situation that cannot be given from individuality but from the collectivity, where I meet *another* person who like *me* is recognized in me, thus forming a *us*. It could be said that from the recognition of the *other* I can realize how important it is to *me* and tell the person: *your life is important to me* and vice versa. Only in this way it is possible to achieve the integral education of the person and a better life (good living) (Morin, 1999).

- **Knowing the other.** In this guideline is intended to avoid selfishness, objectivity, relativism, objectification. It raises the possibility of knowing the other as it is and that he/she knows me in the same way, naked, with the flaws I have, with the human fragility I possess. To be empathetic to understand the reality of the other, because you cannot judge from outside but from the interior where you can live *the other* and know oneself from that experience. The *other* is presented not only as a *you* equal to *me* but also as the surrounding nature where this relationship of the *us* is established (Morin, 1999).

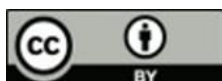
- **Know how to work for the achievement of the common good.** The interiorization of values cannot be given to me alone but to the collectivity, but this collectivity from the personalism is not seen as such, but it occupies a more comprehensive notion: community. This community is formed by people, personal beings that are recognized in their individuality but who are conscious that the community is paramount, because without the others it could not give a life to fullness and it would never attain the personal fulfillment. Only in community is transcendence possible. The person is a donation and this is done in the community the person belongs to, because he/she is not selfish but is a person who loves and values others, hence he/she can do everything he/she can for the community aiming at the best possible (Morin, 1999).

These three realities are the focus of work to carry out the holistic education established in Ecuador, an education that demands the change of the cognitive matrix as main reference to achieve the change and the necessary transformation of the person. It is important to consider that the starting point for the construction and the social change begins with the way of thinking that can be generated in the people, and that reflects the fullness of the human being, the conscience of individual and social change and that promote the understanding of the being as something that is built, as a being that is a project.

## 5. Conclusions

It is necessary to change the cognitive matrix to achieve a quality and contextualized education, in this sense, it can be said that education in Ecuador goes through a good time for its reorientation, and many efforts have been devoted to improve its quality but it is still a long way to go beyond the scientific narrative in which it has been in. It is necessary to break the traditional paradigms and redirect it from and to respond to the needs of the context.

One of the main referents for the transformation is to consider the personalistic postulates inviting to value the person as the center and end of any educational, political and social process. Moreover, it is necessary to rethink the sense and meaning of constructivism with a view to improving the quality of education, as well as to rethink the purpose of the current Ecuadorian education by placing its processes to the politics and the sociology, promoting an alternative education that values the otherness of the other in all his/her dignity; a



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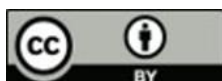
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humanist and personalistic education that practices democratization and free access to education; an education that builds and does not destroy.

To value and apply the postulates stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador and in all the regulations established in the laws derived from: Organic Law of Higher Education, Intercultural Education Law and to realize all the postulates that promote the construction of an integral and holistic education.

To propose guidelines for an integral education in Ecuador according to the established by UNESCO that propitiates the knowledge to know, to be, the know-how, the knowledge to coexist and the knowledge to undertake as main referents that will give place to the development of competencies, potentials, skills in the learning subject and in the subject that teaches as people who "are being".



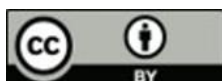
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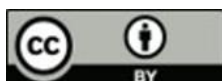
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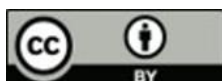
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