

## UNESCO and BBVA Banco Continental Foundation seek to improve reading comprehension skills among Peruvian schoolchildren

The agreement was signed by Isadora Jaramillo de Norden, the UNESCO representative and director of the Regional Centre for Promoting Books in Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal.

*Leer es estar adelante* (Reading Means Keeping Ahead) is a programme developed by the BBVA Banco Continental Foundation in five regions of the country and it has helped over 13,824 Peruvian schoolchildren to improve their reading comprehension skills.

The event also showcased the *Leer es estar adelante* books and educational guides that are being used in 19 schools in Arequipa, Ayacucho, Lima, Loreto and Piura.



UNESCO described the *Leer es estar adelante* programme of the BBVA Banco Continental Foundation as a valuable contribution towards promoting reading comprehension and raising the low levels in the region. This project has been implemented in five regions of the country and benefits 13,824 Peruvian schoolchildren, with the Peruvian Studies Institute (*IEP*) playing an advisory role.

The programme has the backing of the Ministry of Education and of the respective Regional Government where it has been implemented.

In Peru, eight out of every ten children do not understand what they are reading. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), over 50% of Peruvian students are under elementary level and it is the only country in the region where this situation is to be found.

Through the Regional Centre for Promoting Books in Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal (*CERLALC*), UNESCO signed a cooperation agreement with the BBVA Banco Continental Foundation to exchange experiences in order to implement effective strategies to promote reading in the region.

The agreement was signed by Isadora Jaramillo de Norden, the UNESCO representative and director of *CERLALC*, and Carlo Reyes Cestti, manager of the BBVA Banco Continental Foundation.

### **Adelante books**

The event also showcased the *Leer es estar adelante* books and educational guides that are being used in 19 schools in Arequipa, Ayacucho, Lima, Loreto and Piura. Over 542 teachers have been trained in these cities in order to implement the programme. The books are aimed at children from the third to sixth grades of primary education.

One of the main problems detected by the programme is that the traditional texts do not often reflect the child's real world, which becomes a barrier to reading. Therefore, the *Adelante* books

have been written taking into account the typical features and environment of the Peruvian children, and are adapted to their requirements. The teachers have also actively participated in preparing this reading material.

A central aspect of the *Leer es estar adelante* is studying and measuring the results, which is carried out in conjunction with the Instituto de Investigación Cuánto (Cúanto Research Institute).

The measurement seeks to analyse the effectiveness of the intervention of the project from the point of view of the change in the performance of the students, in the area of integral communication. The component aims to provide information about the achievement of the expected learning targets among the beneficiary students individually and also when compared to the students not taking part in the project. It thus provides information about the progress, limitations and successes of the intervention.

At the end of three years, the achievements and components of the programme will be sent to the Regional Governments of the five zones where the project is being carried out so that they are gradually adopted and thus ensure its sustainability.