**Collaborative learning and Buen Vivir in Ecuador: A Case Study**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Education by Cristina Alexandra Delgado Rivera

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## Abstract

The link between collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*/Good Living established in the Ecuadorian National Constitution and further legislation – has not been previously researched. *Buen Vivir* tries to overcome developmentalist perspectives on life in the world system peripheries. Instead, it uses as basis of sustainable development the endogenous/indigenous concepts of common good and collective well-being. As *Buen Vivir* requires educational processes that promote, sustain and contribute to its implementation, collaborative learning can be seen as a pedagogic approach with focus on collective practices, that could operationalize *Buen Vivir* in educational settings. This study explores whether and to what extent collaborative learning can be applied in the Ecuadorian context to enhance teaching and learning practices based on the philosophy of *Buen Vivir*. To do that, in the dissertation I present the results of a case study linking the philosophy and practices of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning as understood and applied by undergraduate students and professors at Universidad Nacional de Educación (UNAE). Based on an in-depth qualitative fieldwork (interviews, focus groups, artwork) triangulated with document analysis, my aim is to analyse and understand better if and how these two processes can be connected in education practice. On this basis, I provide recommendations to improve and implement collaborative learning to enhance *Buen Vivir*.

Following an interpretative analysis, the results of the case study show the tensions and opportunities of collaborative learning from a *Buen Vivir* perspective. The analysis indicates that although there are regulations and intentions to use collaborative learning as generative of *Buen Vivir* in education settings, the actual practices become subject to indicators within a productivist understanding of education, reproduced at various levels. The latter process responds to power dynamics and processes in the global field of higher education, which pose a limit on the implementation of a more endogenous and decolonial philosophy of *Buen Vivir*. Beside these larger processes, I also pay close attention to some collaborative learning practices at UNAE such as *Proyecto Integrador de Saberes* (PIENSA-Integrative Project of Knowledge), peer learning practices (research groups, constructs and peer learning) and rituals (*Chacra* and *Minga*). My inquiry shows limitations to the practice of PIENSA, but important opportunities in rituals and in peer learning. The innovative application of age-old indigenous rituals *Minga* and *Chacra* are presented as an opportunity to learn and teach in collaborative spaces to help solve real community problems. Andean ancestral knowledge expressed in these rituals sheds light on the idea of an education linked to the community in connection with nature. Also, the analysis for *Buen Vivir* through collaborative learning in UNAE shows an important impact on teaching identity, being influenced by an interest in the common good, happiness, and total commitment and involvement in the teaching-learning processes.

The study suggests implementing the theory using collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* through training for teachers, horizontal spaces to interact as a university, using innovative research projects to promote collaborative learning through the lens of *Buen Vivir*. The implementation of these recommendations would need to avoid the reproduction of inequalities and productivist practices. It implies a profound deconstruction of educational practices and understandings, and requires significant state support and resources. Some of the implications of the study have to do with environmental educational processes linked to *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning; a pertinent education for the solution of the current economic and social crisis in a pandemic context; creating and sustaining spaces for international research and innovation to overcome current challenges; and the promotion of

South-North dialogues which allow progress in the construction of a diverse, inclusive, multicultural, fair, and equitable education.

Keywords: collaborative learning, Good Living (*Buen Vivir*), Ecuador

## Acknowledgements

## Glossary and working concepts

**Chacra:** Chacras are familiar agricultural spaces that allow food security and sovereignty, the conservation of biological and genetic diversity, and the materialization of traditional indigenous knowledge typical of the Kichwa culture in Latin America. Even though the farm shares many criteria with definitions such as family gardens or family productive yards, the deep cultural and spiritual anchorage of the traditional farm's inhabitant is established as a differential character. The farm, especially for the Andean and Amazonian inhabitants, is not only considered as a cultivation space but recognized as the representation of the fundamental elements of the construction or upbringing of life. (Carrera, & Rangel, 2018).

**Collaborative learning:** collaborative learning is understood as a teaching-learning method that promotes joint work in small groups, dialogue, the participation of all members to achieve common goals. In collaborative learning, everyone is co-responsible for the task and individual and collective learning (Barkley, 2014). Collaborative learning is a pedagogy, learner-centred, emphasizing the construction of a learning environment, interaction and discussions with peers (Kingpum, Ruangsuwan, & Chaicharoen, 2015).

**Constructs:** Constructs are based on knowledge areas. Faculty members belong to the constructs based on the courses they facilitated. In these constructs, teachers build syllabus, materials for classes and interact with their peers to share teaching experiences and improve their knowledge UNAE (2019).

**Good Living:** Good Living (*Buen Vivir*) is a proposal under construction, which presents a critique of consumption and proposes ways of life linked to the sustainable, the common good, environmental protection and balance (Alcantara, & Sampaio, 2017). Good Living believes in community relations in solidarity, in diversity, in nature, in full life (Alcantara, & Sampaio, 2017, Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo-Capitán, & García-Álvarez, 2016).

**Integrative course "Cátedra Integradora"**: It is in this course where others contribute with their knowledge to respond from the disciplinary and methodological perspective to the needs arisen in the school. Within UNAE the function of articulation between practice and courses is the Integrative course. All other courses must be at the service of the UNAE practice (2019).

**Minga:** The Minga is a form of collective social and labour organization that comes from the Inca Empire. With this system, the community executed the works that benefited the community such as local irrigation canals, cultivation terraces, bridges, temples (Enciso & Mendoza, 2011).

**PIENSA:** PIENSA is an educational research task in which each team of students undertakes projects based on the experiences lived in the pre-professional Practice and the training process developed in the subjects of the cycle. In PIENSA, problems, cases and situations experienced in school are addressed, from which research questions emerge. The answers imply the incorporation of descriptions and analysis, in and on the practices and contributions of each subject. The research activity in Pre-professional practices can adopt the work methodology required by the situation, in the dimensions of the problem nucleus and the integrating axis corresponding to each semester UNAE (2019).

**Pre-professional Practices**: The pre-professional practices model indicates that it will contribute to the development of the teaching and research skills needed in educators (UNAE, 2019). In pre-professional practices, students must observe, accompany and advise the teaching-learning process inside an educational institution UNAE (2019).

**Sumak Kawsay:** Sumak Kawsay represents the indigenous social project, from an epistemic proposal based on the Andean-Amazonian institutions and ways of life. Sumak Kawsay is a way of life that is in balance with all the other elements of the Pacha (space-time). Sumak Kawsay challenges Western ways of life and proposes the deconstruction of its ideological foundations (Lalander, & Cuestas-Caza, 2017).

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**Abbreviation**

HE Higher Education

# 1 Introduction

This introductory chapter contains a summary of the study's background and theory, methodology, positionality, implications, the scope and limitations of the study, research aim and objectives, the outline of this thesis.

## 1.1 Background and theory

Teaching and learning practices have changed in the XXI century, promoting that learners work in changing environments that demand/require critical and creative thinking, self-regulation, and collaborative learning (Wing On, 2014). In this new global scenario, Ecuador promoted policies and plans based on an ancient concept known as *Buen Vivir*. *Buen Vivir* comes from the term Sumak Kawsay, from the native Quechua language (Lalander and Cuestas-Caza, 2017; Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo-Capitán and García-Álvarez, 2016). The term Buen Vivir is already a translation and re-elaboration of Sumak Kawsay. Sumak Kawsay's post-development or ecological trend is characterized by the relevance of sustainability, closeness to nature and the participatory construction of *Buen Vivir*. (Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo - Capitán, & García-Álvarez, 2016; Guzmán Prudencio, & Polo Blanco, 2017).

Sumak Kawsay-Good Living is proposed to overcome the colonisation system, individualism and productivism (Larrea, 2014). In this sense, Marginson (2008) says that colonial dynamics are socially constructed from mechanisms of domination and coercion operated from the instances that represent power. Moreover, they are sustained with the consent of the masses. Rotenberg, (1977) analyzes alienating individualism and reciprocal individualism; the first characterized by separation and distance from others, and the second linked to interrelation and harmony with others. These two patterns of individualism are interwoven and combined in societies according to ethics and culture. Thus, Pulcini, (2012) explains the complexity of the individualism concept due to its diverse meaning depending on history, ideology, society, and politics. In turn, it proposes the individualism of current modernity, as a visible hedonistic degeneration in the erosion of the relational and communicative fabric and in the loss of the social bond and weakening of the community. In regards to productivism, Vogel, (1983) argue that productivism is based on the appropriation of work and the renewal of a subordinate class of direct producers committed to the labour process. Heikkurinen, Russell, Ruuska and Kuokkanen, (2019) examine the proposal of productivity as a management philosophy that not only leads to mental illness, precariousness of the labour, but also to go beyond the environment. These arguments suggest productivism is not sustainable and needs to be overcome by a more holistic and procedural approach, as well as having a goal of peaceful coexistence among all (Heikkurinen, Russell, Ruuska & Kuokkanen, 2019). This means recognizing the care of human and non-human needs both now and in the future by applying the idea of moderation to the production of goods and services.

Then, *Buen Vivir* focuses on community relations in solidarity, in diversity, for a full life and common good (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017; Alcantara and Sampaio, 2017; Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo-Capitán and García-Álvarez, 2016). No English term captures "Sumak Kawsay/Buen Vivir" in a complete way, but in some texts it is translated as Good Living (Cunningham 2012 in Williford, 2018).

*Buen Vivir* seeks justice and social welfare (Lalander & Cuestas-Caza, 2017) in harmony with the environment (Beth, 2018). Moreover, it has also an aesthetic-poetic dimension, that invites us to rethink the learning required to produce, build and perform within happiness and enjoyment (Collado Ruano, 2017). This concept has been incorporated into the National

Constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia (Lalander & Cuestas-Caza, 2017) as a way to develop a new economic model (Beth, 2018). Then, Good Living (*Buen Vivir*) has impacts on several aspects such as economy, health, education, work relations, etc.

New ways of thinking, doing and feeling the academia, has been sought to be implemented in some Latin American universities, such as the Bolivarian University of Venezuela. However, Ivancheva, (2013) explains the challenges of implementing new practices within the traditional viewpoints and indicators of education. In this sense, Brown and McCowan (2018) argue that *Buen Vivir* is an alternative to development theories, although it has not been considered internationally. Marginson (2013) explains how English-speaking policies have guided higher education systems around the world for decades. The centrality in higher education has been competitiveness, financing, and performance evaluation. Moreover, academic capitalism through competitiveness and financing restrictions affects job insecurity, mainly in women, and in practices of care, self-care and full life (Ivancheva, Lynch & Keating, 2019).

The Ecuadorian constitution invites us to work for *Buen Vivir* through collaboration and the flourishing of diversity in unity. In this context, UNAE takes on the challenge of contributing to transform society towards *Buen Vivir* through education. At UNAE collaborative learning and Good Living are found as pillars of the pedagogical model. The classrooms and their furniture are designed to work collaboratively and each speech encourages collaboration and *Buen Vivir*. *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning seek to overcome power issues and work collaboratively for a goal (Barkley, 2014; UNAE, 2017). *Buen Vivir* presents the broad objective for collaboration. A collaboration that seeks the transformation of societies, social justice, equity, a new way of living and understanding education (UNAE, 2017).

Buen Vivir, collaborative learning and social constructivism have common aspects such as the importance of active participation, experience and interaction with others (Barkley, 2014; Meyes &Land, 2006; Smith et al., 2009), the improvement of relationships and emotions, and the creation of reciprocal environments with less power dynamics (Boud, nd; Goethals, Winston and Zimmerman, 1999; Kingpum, Ruangsuwan, and Charcharoen, 2015; Keenan, 2014). This case study will use these three concepts.

The literature indicates that collaborative learning has an impact in several areas (Capstick, 2004, Thalluri, 2016, Boud, n.d, Goethals, Winston, & Zimmerman, 1999). Nevertheless, collaborative learning in Latin America is still under-researched (Willis & Sedghi, 2014). Similarly, there is no research on collaborative learning and its impacts in an Ecuadorian context recognising the perspective of *Buen Vivir* (See Glossary).

Based on the literature review of collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*, some relationships and tensions are analysed. Collaborative learning is based on constructivism, on the need to look at the educational fact from the co-construction of knowledge and horizontally (Barkley, 2014). Collaborative learning generates spaces that allow for the development of critical thinking and other academic, psychological and social skills. In this regard, it is critical to highlight that Rogoff (1998) claims that cognition is a collaborative process developed in a historical-socio-cultural context (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Collaborative learning practices exist on all continents, are relevant to students of all cultures (Keenan, 2014), and vary by context (Arpaci, 2016).  In this sense, it is important to highlight the richness of the social fabric in rural areas of Latin America and its practices of popular economy and solidarity cooperativism (Farah & Vasapollo, 2011). Farah and Vasapollo, (2011) explain that

cooperation is part of the practices in Latin America and it is supported by solidarity, the social fabric that has prevailed despite the complexities of Latin America. Cooperation is seen in Latin America in practices and rituals of solidarity and union for the solution of community problems such as Minga (Enciso & Mendoza, 2011).

Collaborative Learning and Cooperative Learning have common aspects such as the importance given to active learning, the interaction between peers in small groups, and looking at the teacher as a facilitator (Hanson, Trolian, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2016; Vuopala, Hyvönen, & Järvelä, 2016). In these types of learning, teacher and student work together and intentionally for the construction of knowledge (Hanson, Trolian, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2016). On one hand, Cooperative Learning differs from Collaborative Learning in that it reaches the task by division of work (Sulisworo, 2012, Barkley, 2014), is linked to behaviourism and cognitivism (Sulisworo, 2012), promotes individual efforts (Laal, & Ghodsi, 2012), maintains traditional authority relationships (Barkley, 2014), and is more structured (Barkley, 2014; Hajra, & Das, 2015). Collaborative Learning, on the other hand, encourages students to work together in their tasks (Sulisworo, 2012; Barkley, 2014), is linked to constructivism (Sulisworo, 2012; Barkley, 2014), is less structured (Barkley, 2014), promotes horizontal relationships (Barkley, 2014), and considers positive interdependence (Hajra, & Das, 2015). However, collaborative learning varies according to the context. In this regard, it is vital to point out that collaborative learning in Latin America and the particular context of this case study, is founded on the need to build a different education based on *Buen Vivir*. *Buen Vivir* is a concept in permanent construction, which is linked to being an alternative to the development model and promoting emancipation, sustainability and a harmonious relationship between beings and nature, for the common good. *Buen Vivir* in education demands for decolonisation, equity, solidarity, and happiness. From *Buen Vivir,* the collective construction of solutions adjusted to the community needs is fundamental. In *Buen Vivir* practices people learn by doing and solving problems. In this sense, collaborative learning could be a useful tool, a means for the construction of *Buen Vivir* in education, providing spaces for the joint construction of the solutions that communities need. In this construction there are no linear relations, since *Buen Vivir* is a platform where various perspectives are interrelated.

However, collaborative learning does not necessarily reflect in depth on the role of education. Collaborative learning does not question the maximum achievement of the fulfilment of a task. Additionally, as Charbonneau-Gowdy, Capredoni, Gonzalez, Jayo, and Raby, (2016) indicate, learning differs based on contexts and Latin America presents a particular one related with traditional practices and vertical structures (Morales Suárez, Borroto Cruz, & Fernández Oliva, 2005). Conversely, *Buen Vivir* proposes the rupture, on not agreeing with the "efficient" reproduction of the system. *Buen Vivir* does not pretend to reproduce inequalities efficiently, nor does it want to promote academic excellence alone, since the term and its foundation are questioned. *Buen Vivir* requires an education for all, of quality and warmth, that generates new forms of life for the common good. Given the above, it is possible to see that collaborative learning can be a useful tool in the construction of *Buen Vivir* in the formal educational setting, as long as there is a critical and decolonised analysis that leads to a different understanding of education and its role.

It is important to indicate that all the effort to implement a pedagogical model from collaboration and *Buen Vivir*, occurs in the midst of political, social and health crises (generated by the pandemic). Last October, Ecuador experienced protests against economic decisions such as the elimination of gasoline subsidies. The protests continued in various

parts of the country over different legal resolutions. Fast forward a few months, and the country, and the rest of the world, face a pandemic. The pandemic in Ecuador is experienced from the difficulties of a developing country, corruption scandals in different sectors, and a social fragmentation that was not overcome after the October protests.

This study will contribute with recommendations for UNAE to understand and improve collaborative learning practices based on *Buen Vivir*. The research will also contribute with suggestions at the national and international level for improving teaching and learning processes through collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*.

## 1.2 Ecuadorian and UNAE Context

As other Latin American countries like Venezuela, Brazil and Bolivia, in the 2000s and 2010s Ecuador, became an epicentre of the rise of a Left-leaning progressive government. The so-called "pink tide" which has since then been contested by a more or less democratically legitimate counterinsurgece of right-populist fouces, was a trend that became world famous with the election of Bolivarian Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, Brazil Workers' Party Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva , Argentina's government of Nestor Kirchner that cancelled its gruesome foreign debt and challenged its international financial institutionsand Bolivia's rise of the Movement for Socialism under indigenous trade union leader Evo Morales. Rafael Correa in Ecuador, followed the footsteps of these governments, turning toward social-welfare based policies and a markedly decolonial political treatment of social institutions.

Within this framework, the concept of Buen Vivir, which is at the core of the present study, has been presented through the Ecuadorian Constitution, as well as in various other pieces of legislation relating to education such as the Organic Law of Bilingual Intercultural Education, Organic Law of Higher Education, Organic Law of Health, and others *(*Restrepo & Stefos, 2018). In contrast to the 1998 Constitution, which was drawn up without due authorization and imposed anti-democratically, the 2008 Constitution obtained high citizen participation in the design process and was ratified at the polls with more than 60% of the popular vote *(*Restrepo & Stefos, 2018).It was also within this framework that Buen Vivir was a key tool through which Rafael Correa promoted the change in the productive matrix of the country, in which education was one among three core pillars: : the first one sought to take control of non-renewable natural resources particularly in the oil sector; the second one aimed to change Ecuador's its overreliance on hydrocarbons to an economic programme based on hydroelectric energy; the third one, on which the present research focuses, promised to challenge the productivist matrix is education and knowledge production (Restrepo & Stefos, 2018). While the first tow policies aimed to take control of non-renewable natural resources, , and was dedicated to the government's efforts to loosen the neocolonial grip of international corporations over natural resources and strengthen the self-determination and resource sovereignty of the Ecuadorian people, State's ownership of as stipulated in the 2008 Constitution and thus to its road infrastructure, technology, health and education, (Bárcena, 2015), the last policy was mainly dedicated to a renewed investment in education infrastructure. This process has included the construction and inauguration of new Millenial schools across the country (Ministerio de Educación, 2016a; Ministerio de Educación, 2016b). as well as a serious cost-free and universal education to a bachelor's level (Constitución Nacional del Ecuador, 2008).

In the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution, it is established the universal education at all levels and cost-free up to and including the bachelor degree of higher education (Constitución Nacional del Ecuador, 2008). In addition, it is important to remark that during the goverment of Rafael

Correa there was a significant investment in education. In the five years from 2011 to 2016, public education through high school received 3.4 times ($ 14,388 million) the financing it received in the five years from 2002 to 2006 ($ 4,239). Additionally, in the accountability report of the Ministry of Education from 2006 to 2015, Ecuador multiplied by 2.8 the budget allocations for universities and polytechnic schools, in proportional terms to GDP, and multiplied the allocations by 6.4 in absolute terms. Restrepo and Stefos, (2018) also explain that in order to work based on a Constitution of Buen Vivir and comply with the policies designed based in the to change the productive matrix, four new Universities were created, one of them specifically to transform the Ecuadorian educational system: the National University of Education. UNAE is the only university whose creation is included in the Ecuadorian Constitution. (UNAE, 2017). UNAE's role is to contribute to the transformation of the educational system through the training of future teachers and leaders of the Ecuadorian education system by collaboration and *Buen Vivir* (UNAE, 2016).

The Twentieth Transitory Provision of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador establishes that: "The Executive will create a superior institution to promote the exercise of teaching and managerial, administrative and support positions in the national education system. The national educational authority will direct this institution in the academic, administrative and financial matters". Additionally, the Law of Creation of UNAE states "…the President of the Republic will designate the members of the Board of TrusteesBoard of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will act as the highest authority of the National University of Education UNAE, for a non-extendable period of 5 years... The Minister of the National Education Authority or his delegate will be part of the Board of Trustees. Whoever presides over the Board of Trustees will legally represent the National University of Education UNAE for the duration of the transition period. The members of the Board of Trustees will be freely appointed and removed." UNAE was created on December 9 of 2013 and had 4.320 undergraduate students in 2019 (UNAE, 2019).

UNAE is a university comprised of a Board of Trustees that includes two internal commissioners who are UNAE professors and three external commissioners. An external commissioner delegated by the National Secretary of Higher Education Science and Technology and another external commissioner delegated by the Ministry of Education. The Board of Trustees is the university authority in UNAE and those who comprise it are not elected authorities but selected by the government. The rector, who is also selected by the government, is the one who chairs the commission *(*Restrepo & Stefos, 2018; UNAE, 2016).

UNAE understands that *Buen Vivir* in education is related to rights and the common good (UNAE, 2016). UNAE offers seven majors: Initial Education, Basic Education, Intercultural Bilingual Education, Education in the Arts and Humanities, Education in National and Foreign Languages, Education in Experimental Sciences and Special Education. The university was legally created through the Ecuadorian government on December 9, 2013 (UNAE, n.d). UNAE has been admitting students for a few years now and is the only university of education in Ecuador. UNAE has a pedagogical model that focuses on students, collaboration, *Buen Vivir*, rights, critical thinking, horizontal relationships, and innovation (UNAE, 2017). At UNAE it is common to observe projects from different fields of knowledge mediated by rituals and ancestral knowledge. A common tradition at UNAE at the beginning of each semester is the *Pampamesa*, an activity to share food and interact. This activity is led by the university administration, yet it was not mentioned by any participant.

Similarly, at UNAE there are research groups such as TRENDS and TIERRA that research on Education and Good Living. The TRENDS research group focuses its attention on the analysis of the connections that develop from the different types of knowledge linked to education and society. It encourages inter, multi and transdisciplinary dialogue and debate based on reflection on coexistence and autonomy towards the construction of a learning community that promotes quality, intellectual, personal and professional development of its members and its application in educational settings. It also promotes links with technology, fostering the development of critical thinking and putting into practice the principles of Good Living linked to education.

The research group "TIERRA" (EARTH) arises with the desire to tackle, from an integrating vision, the different dimensions of the socio-environmental and socio-cultural problems in which we are currently immersed. It is a transdisciplinary group, whose purpose is to develop research and innovation activities, teaching and connection with society, with an intercultural approach based on education that fosters the harmonious and sustainable coexistence of peoples, cultures and nature, within the framework of an increasingly deteriorated and globalized environment. TIERRA considers the need to increase participation and dialogue among all to promote an education for sustainability.

## 1.3 Methodology: key considerations

This study follows the interpretative paradigm, using a descriptive methodology of case study with qualitative methods (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, Yin, 2017). It was considered that this paradigm and methodology were the appropriate ones for this study based on particularities. First, because it is a university with four years of operation. Second, because its mission is to contribute to the transformation of the educational system. Third because in its pedagogical model, the importance of collaborative learning is highlighted. Fourth, because UNAE's pedagogical model and identity documents are based on *Buen Vivir* as the fundamental basis for education.

In this study, focus groups, artwork, interviews, and documentary review techniques were used. The information was collected in phases. Also, the data was collected progressively with each technique. That is, in each technique used, the information was collected from each group or person, and then analysed before proceeding to gather new information as recommended by Silverman, (2013). The analysis in NVIVO was done with theoretical thematic analysis (Braun, & Clarke, 2006).

For this study, the researcher conducted
- four focus groups with students,
- two focus groups with faculty members, and
- two interviews with faculty members who research or work on topics related to Good Living and Education.
- The artwork was done in the four focus groups with students and in a focus group with teachers
- The documental analysis was done during the entire process.

The need to re-invite the participants of the focus groups and interviews, to the co-analysis was considered to define the sample as Silverman (2014) and Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, and Robson, (2012) suggest. The first focus group with students was piloted as Bloor et al (2012) recommend. This contributes to improving the focus groups process and considers aspects

such as time and the need for ice breakers. Each focus group has a maximum of eight participants and were grouped for having something in common as recommended by Silverman (2013).

To understand the data set as whole, some questions indicated by Braun and Clarke, (2006) were valuable. Asking what does each theme mean? What are the implications of each theme? Why do people talk about it in its particular way? What is the overall story that the different themes reveal about the topic?

To manage the data, the audio of each focus group and interview was transcribed. The data transcribed was read item by item. Then preliminary themes and sub-themes were selected. The preliminary themes and sub-themes were read and reviewed sometimes to ensure the process. After that, the researcher began to reflect on themes to then share the initial themes and sub-themes with the participants. Participants' feedback helps in redefining the themes and sub-themes. Also, the participants' comments helped in deciding if a theme should be kept or not. Finally, the researcher listened to the records, read the initial analysis and co-analysis and redefined the themes and sub-themes. This was a back and forth process and it continued during the chapter writing process.

## 1.4 Positionality

It is important to elucidate that I was part of the analysed dynamic of power, academic colonialism, individualism and productivism, in everyday life. My previous experience in the development of collaborative learning programs at a university of Science and Technology, which was one of the four Universities created to face the challenges of the *Buen Vivir* Ecuadorian plan, as UNAE, taught me that collaborative learning has opportunities in HE that need more attention in my context. As an Assistant Professor, I have implemented collaborative learning practices in my activities. As a researcher, my interest is to contribute to the transformations of education and society. I believe that environments and collaborative relationships are crucial to improve the teaching and learning process, to build joint agreements and to rethink the role of education in this century. So, collaborative learning is an issue that fits with the institution studied and my professional interest. In addition, my previous experience as Director of Education in the Education Ministry in 2018 and, National Director of Drug Policy in the National Committee 2010-2013, in my country, has helped me to understand the importance of implementing and researching the practices that emerge from the philosophy of *Buen Vivir*.

As an insider researcher until data collection, I have assumptions that are important to present. I consider that *Buen Vivir* is a concept still under construction and with little implementation in public institutions. As a professional who has worked in public policy in Ecuador and led educational processes, I believe that in my country we still must implement, train and research on these issues. In turn, I consider that although UNAE intends to generate different and innovative ways of teaching and learning, it still has a long way to go to achieve it. One of the obstacles that I observe for the attainment of education for *Buen Vivir*, is the bureaucratic processes and laws that, although tend to promote *Buen Vivir*, also limit it with some bureaucratic and traditional requirements.

I assume and clarify for the readers that I also consider that *Buen Vivir* has been used by politicians in the last decade without the necessary deepening. In addition, that collaborative learning is not yet understood as a technique in my context and teacher training is required for this purpose. As a researcher, my assumptions impact the topic selected, its literature, and

methodology through the entire research process. My interest in building new ways of interactions, collaboration, horizontality for social agreements impacted in selecting instruments such as focus groups and artwork as data collection tools. I consider that colonialism has permeated academia. Then, it is critical to use tools that allow for new ways of understanding realities and give voice to participants.

As an insider researcher, there was a risk of not recognizing the subjectivity of my perspective, and my preconceptions about the university studied as Coghlan and Brannick, (2014); and Ferguson and Ferguson, (2001) claim. In addition, there was a risk of knowing some participants, and this could affect data collection and interpretation. To face these risks, I reflected critically during my research process and used my research journal as a reflective and analytical tool. In turn, I discussed my notes and my interpretations with external scholars to receive their comments as suggested by McNiff and Whitehead, (2005). Also, I clarified from the beginning, the values and assumptions that guide me in this research process (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). Similarly, I critically assessed existing literature about collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. Furthermore, I invited the participants to review the data and clarify some aspects that could be interpreted in other ways. Likewise, particular attention was paid to interpreting the results. As an insider researcher, there were also benefits, such as the facility to invite participants, the reservation of university spaces to collect information, and the knowledge of the organizational culture that allowed to understand the context and the terms used by the participants.

It is important to mention that I am a woman from a Latin American country who decided to study my doctorate abroad and had the resources (financial, family, work) to achieve it. The decision to study my EdD in the UK responds to a certain logic of seeking quality in my training. However, in the concept of quality, colonial imagery and power are interwoven. In turn, it is vital to declare that my reality allowed me to make a decision about where to study, which is not something all Ecuadorian women can do. Thinking about Good Living (Sumak Kawsay in the Quechua language) implies recognizing that I have privileges and I am also crossed by understandings, decisions and practices that can contradict *Buen Vivir* and alternatives to academic colonisation.

## 1.5 Implications
This case study intends to contribute in the improvement of teaching and learning practices at the institutional level at UNAE, at the national level in the educational policy and programs for collaborative learning by the perspective of *Buen Vivir* and, at the international level with reflections regarding collaborative learning practices and impacts by the perspective of *Buen Vivir*.

This study makes some observations at different levels. At the UNAE level, the results advise deepening the approach to power problems, the reproduction of the productivist vision (that can occur at different stages of practice and from different people) and the motivation of students to collaborate. In turn, the results of the study suggest thinking about the educational process from interculturality and context, for example through rituals like Minga and Chacra. Additionally, the study recommends analysing and accompanying the change in the teacher's identity, as well as promoting research groups. Conversely, the results of the study also advocate evaluating and rethinking the way in which pre-professional practices and PIENSA are established.

At the HE level, the study recommends thinking from local to global. Additionally, the results suggest recognizing the current challenges related to poverty and limited access to technologies. It is recommended that the Ecuadorian HE system reconsider the role of education, quality, teacher training, and resources. The results of the study also advise that teachers' identities and capacities be reviewed according to what society requires, research and innovation.

At the international level, it is important to think that the current crisis invites us to generate dialogues to improve teaching-learning processes in a pandemic and post-pandemic context. The results of this study provide information on practices based on ancestral knowledge such as Minga and Chacra, which would be useful to face hunger in some countries, and collaboration as a way of life. Successively, this study highlights the importance of research and innovation groups as mediators of learning. Research and innovation groups would respond to current research and innovation needs to face the scenarios presented by the current crisis caused by the pandemic and social inequalities.

The results of this study present questions that could be answered through future research. The environmental crisis, poverty and the consequences of the pandemic in education require a deep analysis. It would be important to reflect on the role of education and the teaching identity necessary to face current challenges, linked to the common good and collaboration. In this sense, the present study suggests that it is favourable to research and strengthen research and innovation groups and link them with daily educational activities.

## 1.6 Scopes and limitations of the study

The present study has scopes and limitations. *Buen Vivir* is the umbrella of the National Constitution and educational laws. However, the literature indicates that this concept is still under construction and its implementation is still in process (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017). In relation to collaborative learning in Latin America, the literature indicates that more research is necessary, and research on this pedagogy from the perspective of *Buen Vivir* has not yet been carried out.

The university currently has undergraduate and graduate students, however, for this study I researched only undergraduate students and teachers. This is due to the need to research the practices and impacts on students who have not received prior education training and, for the most part, have not yet worked as educators. At the same time, it is necessary to study the impacts and practices on teachers that facilitate educational processes in the mentioned population group.

Participants were selected for various factors. In the group of students, it was considered that student representatives have validation from their classmates and from the institution. In addition, they have access to university information. In addition, it was important to invite the representatives because they already work together and this helps in the interaction within the focus groups.

In the group of teachers, it was considered important to invite teachers who belong to research groups related to *Buen Vivir* and Education. This was taken into consideration because the literature reviewed suggested that the participants should be interested in the subject under study, however, this implied leaving out of the research the perception of all the other teachers who have no interest in the topic raised. In the group of teachers, it was also important to generate interviews with people considered as experts because they have

researched in the fields of *Buen Vivir* and education. For the cases of students and teachers, it was important to keep in mind that, by belonging to previously established groups, it was possible to count on their participation in the co-analysis process. Therefore, it is important to clarify that this study presents a critical understanding and analysis of the collaborative learning practices and impacts of *Buen Vivir* in a general manner.

The results contribute to understanding the particular scenario of the university studied and its implications for the national and international environment. Similarly, the results will express the perceptions of the student representatives and the teacher who agreed to participate in this time period. Thus, the results cannot be understood without the context and time in which the data was constructed. The study presents some practices such as Minga and Chacra that come from Andean practices and conceptions; however, these are not discussed in-depth as the intention was generally to understand collaborative learning's practices and impacts from *Buen Vivir* 's perspective. Finally, the study is carried out in the midst of local dynamics that are also related to the international context, so the results must be understood in a complex local and global scenario.

## 1.7 Research aim and objectives
This study aim is to contribute to improving teaching and learning practices based on the philosophy of *Buen Vivir* through collaborative learning in the Ecuadorian context.

The general objective of this study is to understand and critically analyse the practices and impacts of collaborative learning in undergraduate students and professors at (UNAE), from the perspective of *Buen Vivir*; and provide recommendations to improve and implement collaborative learning practices and programs in the Ecuadorian context. It will be important to understand how collaborative learning impacts on students and faculty members in a *Buen Vivir* context in a university of education.

The specific objectives to meet the aim and general objective of this case study research are:

1. Critically analyse the literature on collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*, its impacts, conditions, and considerations.
2. Identify and critically reflect on collaborative learning practices at the National University of Education (UNAE).
3. Explore the link between the practices of collaborative learning in UNAE and the philosophy of *Buen Vivir*.
4. Critically analyse the impacts of collaborative learning practices from the perspective of *Buen Vivir*, in students and undergraduate teachers of UNAE.
5. Identify recommendations to improve teaching and learning practices based on *Buen Vivir* through collaborative learning.

## 1.8 Outline of this thesis
*Chapter 1* introduce to the reader the main aspects of this thesis. Chapter 1 presents the background of the research, theoretical frame, methodology, positionality, implications, scopes and limitations of the study, research aim and objectives, outline of this thesis.

*Chapter 2* outline the conceptual bases of this study. This chapter presents the Latin American context, a view of HE and globalisation, views and conceptions of *Buen Vivir*. In chapter 2, *Buen Vivir* values and principles are presented to help the reader understand the broad context of the research. Additionally, it is explained how *Buen Vivir* has been

understood and implemented in Latin America and Ecuador. Similarly, organizations of *Buen Vivir*, international power, *Buen Vivir* considerations in education, Ecuador and in UNAE are presented.

*Chapter 3* presents the theories that support collaborative learning, the terms related, strengths and weaknesses in collaborative learning in academic, psychological and social areas. Additionally, conditions of collaborative learning are presented.

*Chapter 4* presents the theories and paradigms of the methodology, the pertinence of the case study, and methods and instruments used. Additionally, it explains the techniques used, the sampling, data collection and data analysis process. Similarly, in this chapter, the ethical considerations, the insider researcher reflexions, and the limitations are shown.

*Chapter 5* presents the results of this study in five themes, 1) UNAE, Good Living and individualist context, 2) collaborative learning by Good Living: advances, limitations, considerations and tensions, 3) collaborative learning practices at UNAE, 4) Impacts of collaborative learning by Good Living perspective at UNAE, 5) Recommendations to improve teaching-learning practices based on Good Living through collaborative learning made by participants

*Chapter 6* presents a discussion of the results by the five themes mentioned in chapter 5 and conclusions.

*Chapter 7* presents conclusions about the research aim and objectives, implications for UNAE, for the Ecuadorian HE system, for the international scenario, for further research and, a plan for impact.

This chapter positioned the grounds for the thesis. It introduced the background, theoretical frame, the methodology, positionality of the researcher, scopes and limitations, aim and objectives, implications and the outline of this thesis. On these details, the thesis can progress with an in-depth explanation of the research.

## 2. *Buen Vivir*/Good Living

This chapter starts with an overview of Latin Americas' history and present situation and a brief analysis of the global context of Higher Education. Then, I present the definition of *Buen Vivir* in general, to later explore this concept in relation to HE. This chapter explains the views, conceptions, values and principles behind the philosophy of *Buen Vivir* to help the reader understand the broad context of the research. Moreover, it explains how *Buen Vivir* has been understood and implemented in Latin America and Ecuador. Similarly, it analyses *Buen Vivir* and its relationship with education, the universities and the specific context of the university studied. Finally, it examines the challenges, opportunities, relations and tension of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning.

For the realization of this chapter, a systematic search of the literature was carried out in Scopus, Web of Science, and Redalyc. Also, academic papers from the university studied and other papers considered relevant were included because of its contribution to contextualizing the research.

### 2.1 Latin America: history and present

Latin America is a highly unequal region. This has an impact not just on economic development but also on individual and social welfare, on social cohesion, security, health, education, and political stability. Inequality in Latin America has been constant and is mainly present in minorities and rural areas (Klasen & Nowak-Lehmann, 2018). Poverty and inequity are mainly rural in Andean countries, where more than 60% of poverty is present in rural areas (Lopez & Valdés, 2000). A regional study indicates that indigenous populations are in far more unequal and poor conditions than the rest of the population (Hall & Patrinos, 2005). Additionally, indigenous people suffer discrimination and more issues in access to health and education. In the case of Ecuador, even when the indigenous populations are smaller than in Central America and other Andean countries, there is a rich cultural diversity. In general, the indigenous people have more health problems like malnutrition and higher mortality. In addition, this population has problems in the access to education, attainment and the quality of education received (Hall & Patrinos, 2005).

Latin American HE is impacted by the inequity and also by the globalization and the market pressures around the globe. Internationally, there have been problems regarding investment in education and strategies to see education as another market. The lack of investment in education forced universities to compete for "excellence" and for students. The international indicators are examples of the strategies and pressures that universities around the globe must face (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002).

Latin America has had a significant increase in the enrolment in HE per capita, created new universities and promoted policies of massification (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002). However, there is constant pressure for the privatization and control of the States. Latin American universities are forced to compete within international indicators based on productivity but without the basic resources needed for it. The last neoliberal reforms based on the market needs, reinforce the inequities (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002). Nevertheless, despite all the negative context, evidence shows that Latin America has grown in the number of scientific publications. In this regard, there are strains that require attention since researchers have to deal with the pressure to publish in the academic journals based in the Global North, and the need for scientific divulgation in the South. The participation of Latin American researchers opens the possibility of incorporating epistemologies of the South in

the North, nevertheless, colonialized practices are still dominant and challenge the knowledge dialogue North-South (Guzmán-Valenzuela & Gómez, 2019). Additionally, As Charbonneau-Gowdy, Capredoni, Gonzalez, Jayo, and Raby, (2016) indicate, learning differs based on contexts and Latin America presents a particular one related with traditional practices and vertical structures (Morales Suárez, Borroto Cruz, & Fernández Oliva, 2005).

In the last years, a socio-historical process shaped the understandings of the educational role in the region. Within this process some countries promote that some universities find new ways for thinking, doing and feeling academia. An example of the alternatives is the Bolivarian University of Venezuela, based on popular pedagogy and service to the community. The university mentioned shows an opportunity for contra hegemonic practices in HE. But also, it evidences the challenges for implementing these new practices within traditional views of education, international indicators of excellence and the national and international power (Ivancheva, 2013). Ivancheva, (2017) says that the principles that guide this new project were different, however, the system and framework were still traditional, served to power, and were difficult to build a replicable university model.

In the Ecuadorian context, four public Universities were created to contribute to the change of the productive matrix within the National Plan. The intention was to promote an economy centred in the people and in the common good (UNAE, 2017). These new Universities have specific missions; however, the main goal is to build new understandings and practices in HE based on social justice, rights, solidarity and equity. Yet, like the example of the University in Venezuela (Ivancheva, 2017), there is a context that promotes competitiveness and sees universities as a market and education as a service (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002).

## 2.2 Higher Education and globalisation
Globalization impacts on the State's role, promoting social relations centred in production and capital. In this context, the technological and production improvements impact employment conditions and rights. In the North, globalization is related to a knowledge-based society with more specialised workforce with poorer work conditions. The mentioned impacts on economy but also on culture, education and other areas (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002).

In this setting, HE has promoted reforms that intend to face global competition. However, there are specific agendas that lead the reforms and position the indicators that should be used globally. Globalization institutionalizes capitalism trough the relation of business and culture, alliances between international companies and States, and networks for diffusion of the power interest. The above-mentioned has an impact on the role of HE, its relations with the companies and its academic and non-academic practices (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002).

International indicators create new understandings, powers and governances. A statistical and simplistic comprehension of the complexity of education produces the loss of its social goals. The international way to measure education is missing reflection on the impacts of the measurements within organisations, professionals, students, countries. It also forgets in the analysis questioning the interests behind the indicators, and how these measurements should be faced in each context. The audit culture shapes what is considered quality in HE and its finance and political support (Shore & Wright, 2015). Then HE institutions in developing countries must solve the dilemma on how to compete globally while facing students, professors and, community needs (Swartz et al, 2019).

## 2.3 Views, conceptions and implementation of *Buen Vivir*

*Buen Vivir* comes from the Sumak Kawsay term, which has aroused great interest since its incorporation into the Bolivian and Ecuadorian Constitution (Lalander, & Cuestas-Caza, 2017; Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo-Capitán, & García-Álvarez, 2016). *Buen Vivir* is treated in the new Ecuadorian constitution as as a fundamental concept, and within the latter, various rights are included, such as those on food, healthy environment, water, communication, education, housing, health, etc. From this perspective, *Buen Vivir* is expressed plurally by a set of rights, which, in turn, are on the same level of hierarchy with other sets of rights recognized by the Constitution. Conversely, the Constitution has a section dedicated to the *Buen Vivir* practice, in which two main components are indicated, referring to inclusion and equity (Gudynas, 2011). *Buen Vivir* expresses a series of virtues, such as freedom, happiness, celebration in the community, reciprocity, and entertainment. *Buen Vivir* is a diverse concept with various manifestations that are specific to a culture, language, history, and a particular social, political, and ecological context. It is necessary to emphasize that *Buen Vivir* is not restricted to Andean Sumak Kawsay. Similar ideas are found in other villages (Gudynas, 2011).

The literature speaks of three currents that explain Good Living: the indigenous-culturalist, the post-development-ecologist and the socialist-statist (Lalander, & Cuestas-Caza, 2017; Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo-Capitán, & García-Álvarez, 2016). Each conception interprets differently the knowledge related to Sumak Kawsay, which has generated great debates concerning the term and a series of political-environmental criticisms. The socialist-statist is characterized by the preeminence of the state in the political management of *Buen Vivir*, as well as the elements related to social equity, and leaves in the background environmental issues, culture and identity (Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo- Captain, & García-Álvarez, 2016, Guzmán Prudencio, & Polo Blanco, 2017). On the side of the technocrats of the Citizen Revolution, who work for the socialist-statist current, efforts have been made to legitimise the adaptation of their vision of Sumak Kawsay to the assumptions of a real policy based on the intensification of extractivism and a version of nationalist developmentalism. In this sense, Sumak Kawsay has been used and appropriated by the state's developmentalist apparatus. From this perspective, extractivism becomes a transitory necessity to achieve the longed-for Buen Vivir (Bretón-Solo de Zaldívar, 2016) despite the fact that, as Gudynas, (2011) has explained, the classical Western idea of development persists. There are countless negative effects of the practices of the development concept and policies (both social and ecological). Nevertheless, most of the reactions were at a superficial level, attempting to repair and keep the concept and its implications. Gudynas, (2011) states that development became a 'zombie concept', dead and alive at the same time. For example, while many industrialized countries are sunk in a deep multidimensional crisis, their main discussion is still at the level of the financial and instrumental. Even though a series of socialist, progressive or new left governments are found in Latin America, they defend classical growth strategies, such as trading natural resources. The development concept and policies are deeply embedded in modern culture. Therefore, any alternative to development must open paths to move beyond the modern Western culture, and Buen Vivir gives that opportunity (Gudynas, 2011). Bretón-Solo de Zaldívar, (2016) claims that Sumak Kawsay is an alternative to development; the matrix of a new solidarity-based and plural economy with a post-extractivist and post-capitalist vocation. Hence, it is devoid of meaning, and is one of the greatest threats to build *Buen Vivir* practices. Another threat is the rhetorical and propagandistic use of Buen Vivir by progressive governments (Bretón-Solo de Zaldívar, 2016).

The indigenista or culturalist current is characterized by the relevance that its authors give to the self-determination of indigenous peoples in the construction of *Buen Vivir* (Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo- Captain, & García-Álvarez, 2016, Guzmán Prudencio, & Polo Blanco, 2017). From the essentialist positions of indigenous intellectuals, the view of the technocrats of the Citizen Revolution is an attempt to syncretise the different currents into a general one, being so far a civilising concoction with certain cultural nuances. It is understood as an attempt to wrap Sumak Kawsay within socialism. The post-modern Buen Vivir of the 21st century socialists is a variation of the Aristotelian *Buen Vivir*, but has almost nothing of the Andean Sumak Kawsay (Bretón-Solo de Zaldívar, 2016). In the cosmovision of indigenous societies, there is no concept of development. That is to say, there is no concept of a linear progress of life that establishes a prior or subsequent state, namely underdevelopment and development. Nor are there concepts of wealth and poverty determined by the accumulation and lack of material goods (Bretón-Solo de Zaldívar, 2016). Undoubtedly, *Buen Vivir* plays a very important role in indigenous knowledge. However, Gudynas (2011) indicated that once the importance of indigenous knowledge is recognized, various possibilities appear that must be weighed since each one contains different options for encounters and disagreements. It is also important to clarify that the cultural perspective shows that there is no "indigenous" *Buen Vivir* since the "indigenous" category is an artifice and only serves to homogenize within it very different peoples and nationalities, each of which has, or may have, their own conception of *Buen Vivir* (Gudynas, 2011). It is possible to specify that *Buen Vivir* can be understood as a platform where multiple ontologies are found. This common platform can then be built from the practice of an interculturality that looks to the future, to build alternatives to development, another ethic to recognize and assign values, decolonise knowledge, and overcome manipulation and instrumentalization. *Buen Vivir* calls for a dialogue of knowledge, alternative conceptions of Nature, expanded communities, spaces for experiences and affections (Gudynas, 2011). Therefore, it is important to establish encounters and dialogues, mutual learning between all these positions, both between the different indigenous expressions and those developed throughout the continent. However, it is vital to contemplate the danger of modernizing *Buen Vivir*, making it an acceptable form within the modern Western repertoire (Gudynas, 2011)

The post-development or ecologist current is characterized by the importance that its authors give to the preservation of nature (sustainability) and the participatory construction of *Buen Vivir*. This current proposes the active participation of all in the construction of *Buen Vivir* recognizing the postmodern of indigenous conceptions, peasants, trade unionists, cooperativism, solidarity, feminists, pacifists, ecologists, socialists, decolonialists, liberation theologians (Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo- Captain, & García-Álvarez, 2016, Guzmán Prudencio, & Polo Blanco, 2017). Non-indigenous intellectuals and academics claim that Buen Vivir is a condensation of all legitimate expectations and declarations of principles in favour of a better world; a sort of utopian notion to shift from the fierce critique of developmentalism, to a vast agenda of desires in pursuit of a post-capitalist and, therefore, post-developmentalist future (Bretón-Solo de Zaldívar, 2016). The post-development or ecologist current allows for the dialogue, interaction and construction with other theories, and hence this case study is guided by this current. *Buen Vivir* emergent from different positions in different countries and different social actors. *Buen Vivir* is a concept under construction that ought to be adjusted to each social and environmental circumstance (Gudynas, 2011). Acosta (2013) explains that *Buen Vivir* is a project and a path that will have to take shape in

the construction of a plurinational state where the dialogue of knowledge will replace the predominance of the scientific rationality. But despite this plurality, a shared platform on *Buen Vivir* can be reached from different traditions of thought. *Buen Vivir* is meant to recover the experience, the Culture of Life and our life in complete harmony and mutual respect with nature, where we are all part of nature and there is nothing separate (Gudynas, 2011). All aspects of *Buen Vivir* substantially question contemporary ideas of development, economic growth, their inability to solve the problems of poverty, without forgetting that their practices lead to severe social and environmental impacts. *Buen Vivir* implies profound changes in ideas about development that are beyond correction or adjustment. It is not enough to try "alternative developments", since these remain within the same rationality of understanding progress, the use of Nature and the relationships between humans. Instead of insisting on alternative developments, *Buen Vivir* is an alternative to development (Gudynas, 2011; Bretón-Solo de Zaldívar, 2016).

Sumak Kawsay is generally translated as *Buen Vivir*, however, there are other translations such as life in plenitude; harmonious coexistence; the art of living in complement (Papalini, 2017). *Buen Vivir* is different from the occidental concept of wellness that the global market promotes (Papalini, 2017) as it proposes emancipation, co-responsibility (Haidar, & Berros, 2015) and breaks with anthropocentrism (Rodríguez, 2014).

Sumak Kawsay-Good Living arises from the need to overcome a colonizing system (Larrea, 2014) through social construction, planning for the achievement of equality, equity (Guzmán Prudencio, & Polo Blanco, 2017), community relations in solidarity, in diversity, with nature (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017; Pesántez Avilés, Martín Sabina, & Bojorque Chasi, 2015), in full life (Alcantara, & Sampaio, 2017; Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo-Capitán, & García-Álvarez, 2016). *Buen Vivir* redefines basic needs, life goals, the ends of the economy, relations between subjects and with nature; and promotes the common good (Larrea, 2014). *Buen Vivir* is neither indigenous, nor rural, nor urban; and proposes self-consumption, self-subsistence, and solidarity economy (Molina Bedoya, 2015).

The development model proposes categories and classifies countries according to the achievement or not of the indicators considered adequate to measure the quality of life. However, it is important to reflect on who set these indicators and what are the interests behind them. Macekura, (2019) indicates that some governments with economic and political power adopted nationalistic lines to growth and limited the economic possibilities for the developing countries. Additional, Macekura, (2019) states that the development indicators based on GDP cause traffic congestion, toxic pollution, spiritual desolation, and ecological catastrophes. Some movements propose social indicators and equal distribution of wealth to overcome the developmental indicators, though it has not been implemented yet.

*Buen Vivir* emerges as a critique to these indicators and the capitalist system (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017). Within the *Buen Vivir* worldview, there is no state of development to be achieved, there is no conception of poverty associated with a lack of material goods. From the indigenous worldview, social improvement is a category in permanent construction and reproduction (Acosta, 2011). However, some critiques consider *Buen Vivir* a constructed neologism without references, and that sometimes is decontextualized in political arenas. The Ecuadorian Constitution assumes *Buen Vivir* will guide education, economic, political, and social life. However, it is valid to ask if this proposal is possible to implement within capitalism (Acosta, 2011).

Furthermore, *Buen Vivir* is still under construction and some practices show inconsistencies and contradictions (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017, Gallegos Anda, 2018, Mattioli, & Nozica, 2017). The analysis of the contents of the Ecuadorian constitution allows us to point out that among the three currents of sustainability, the Ecuadorian mandate is oriented towards super-strong development (Gudynas, 2011). However, Bretón-Solo de Zaldívar (2013) highlights several contradictions in the political practices of Rafael Correa's government in which indigenous organizations were weakened. Similarly, the extractivist push is so intense that, for example, the Correa administration promoted open-pit mega-mining, and in Uruguay, a traditionally agricultural and livestock country, President Mujica defended as one of his main goals to start iron mega-mining (Gudynas, 2011). Although extractivism distances itself from social justice due to its high social and environmental impacts, leftist governments try to return to it through economic redistribution measures, and especially through the payment of bonds (Gudynas, 2011). Extractivism according to Grosfoguel (2016) involves the violation of rights and violence against human beings who live in the affected communities. Additionally, Grosfoguel (2016) speaks of epistemic extractivism and ontological extractivism as the conditions that make economic extractivism possible. All the extractivism forms aforementioned have in common an attitude of reification and destruction produced in our subjectivity and power relations, facing the world of human and non-human life. Epistemic extractivism implies the appropriation of the ideas of the indigenous peoples of the world to colonize them, assimilating them to Western knowledge. By assimilating this knowledge of the peoples to Western knowledge, political radicalism and alternative critical cosmogony are removed. In turn, Grosfoguel (2016) indicates that extractivism is a way of being in the world, that is, it is a form of existence, an ontology. Grosfoguel (2016) proposes that the decolonisation of the western-centric vision of the cosmos towards more holistic visions is fundamental for the future of life on the planet, an alternative that implies reciprocity and a profound revolution in ways of life (Grosfoguel, 2016). Despite the criticisms of the contradictions, it stands out that, although Sumak Kawsay presents limitations, its inclusion in the constitutional texts represents an opportunity for transformation insofar as it is presented as an alternative to neoliberalism and ethnocidal developmentalism (Bretón-Solo de Zaldívar, 2013).

## 2.4 Values and principles

The values that govern *Buen Vivir* are relationality, complementarity, correspondence, reciprocity, and cyclicity (Lalander, & Cuestas-Caza, 2017). *Buen Vivir* understands that we are all related to each other and nature; we complement and correspond each other. In turn, in this relationship and bond between all of us, we can be reciprocal for the common good, since life is a cycle and we are continually learning cyclically.

The values mentioned and solidarity are fundamental for an economy within the framework of *Buen Vivir,* and as is shown in Figure 1, it had impacts on Ecuadorian reforms. In Ecuador some reforms that were included based on solidarity were free health and education; as well as provisions to overcome machismo, racism and social exclusion; yet, it is necessary to analyse its scope and limitations (Acosta, 2011).

**Figure 1: Good Living Values and its impacts on Ecuadorian reforms**

**Values**
-Relationality
-Complementarity
-Correspondence
-Reciprocity
-Cyclicity
-Solidarity

**Ecuadorian reforms**

-Free and public health and education

-Provisions to overcome machismo, racism and social exclusion
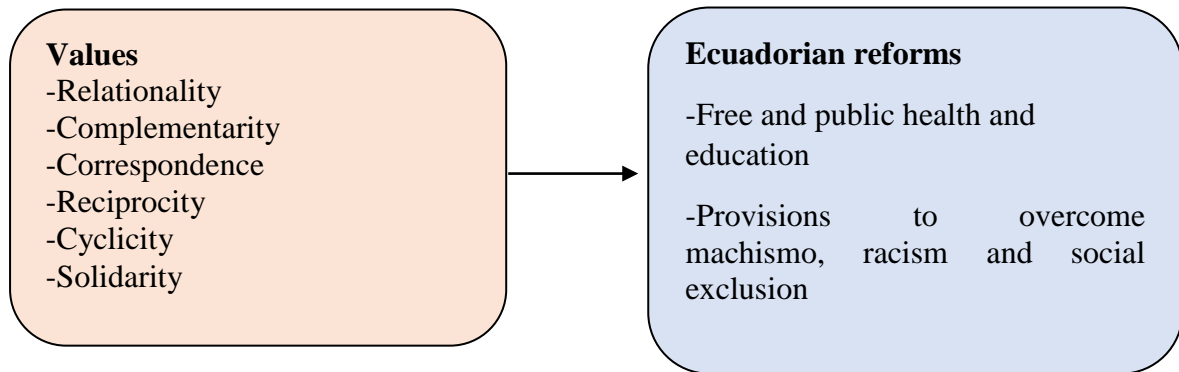
For Álvarez, (2016) *Buen Vivir* gathers principles of the Aymara Cosmovision, which contain ontological, epistemological, pedagogical, and political meanings. Figure 2 shows the main principles and authors. *Buen Vivir* proposes recognizing ourselves as similar to what surrounds us, connected among all, complementary, interdependent, and in total correspondence. This perspective has important implications in the educational field because it invites learning in the complementarity of knowledge, connecting with others and nature.

Rodríguez, Aguilar, & Apolo, (2018) indicate that the principles of *Buen Vivir* invite us to be part of the unity between human beings and nature, to the recognition of the plurality of forms and contents, to a biocentric understanding and the importance of the communal to overcome problems and to learn. This impacts on the way of thinking about the teaching-learning process, since a vision of the individual rather than communal learning has prevailed. *Buen Vivir* proposes collective learning in diversity.

According to Collado Ruano, Morillo and González, (2018), some tensions arise in the construction of *Buen Vivir* as they are the tensions between the community versus the individual, biocentrism versus anthropocentrism, reciprocity versus verticality and domination, and complementarity versus antagonism. Hoi Yan Cheung and Alex Wing Ho Chan (2010) stated that HE trains students to compete nationally and internationally to survive in a globally competitive world. The current system promotes an individual, anthropocentric, vertical, and antagonistic perspective. Then, it is vital to think about what values and principles respond to an ongoing education.

*Buen Vivir* exceeds the metrics that consider the quality of life as the ability to consume and proposes thinking about happiness, education, health, personal satisfaction, security (Cioce Sampaio, Parks, Junior, Quinlan, & Schlemer Alcântara, 2017). This way of understanding life is found in community organizations in Latin America.

**Figure 2: Principles of Good Living**

The principle of similarity, complementarity, inclusion, and correspondence. Good Living gathers principles from the Aymara Cosmovision (Álvarez, 2016).

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD LIVING

Unity, complementarity, communal power, Cosmo-Bio-Vision (Rodríguez, Aguilar, & Apolo, 2018)

Community, biocentrism, reciprocity between equals, unity in diversity, complementarity (Collado Ruano, Morillo and González, 2018)

## 2.5 Good Living in Latin America and Ecuador

### 2.5.1 Organizations of Good Living

In the communities that live according to the principles of *Buen Vivir,* networks of trust and solidarity are built to resolve the difficulties in terms of the distribution of resources, decision-making, and the construction of common projects. This way of life is complex because it recognizes diversity (Álvarez-Litben, 2017). Communities are managed with agreements built from the symbolic, from the history; elaborated in monthly meetings. Conflicts are verbalized in an open, regular manner; procedures are ritualized. The agreements are recorded in minutes and, family, neighbourhood, and community reciprocity guides all processes (Álvarez-Litben, 2017). In these communities, decisions are made in the assemblies and need to be agreed together. If a person abuses power, trust and position will be taken away (Álvarez-Litben, 2017).

Conflicts are resolved orally or in assemblies when they are internal to the community, and in writing, if the conflict is with an official external body. The sanctions and internal control contain forms of compensation, restriction of rights, assignment of communal tasks, fines in money, social censure, rumours, and supernatural punishments. The community works are systematic for the arrangement of roads, communal houses, community parties, among others (Álvarez Litben, 2017). Communities have some practices to face needs such as Minga and Chacra.

The Minga is a form of collective social and labour organization. With this system, the community executed the works that benefited the community such as local irrigation canals, cultivation terraces, bridges, temples, etc. This system involved and forced all members of the community to work for the benefit of the community. During the Inca Empire, cities were built through the Minga. The Minga was fundamental to maintain bonds of solidarity and allowed the community to survive. For this reason, those people who did not comply with the Andean rules were expelled and had no choice but to become beggars, servants or slaves in the service of someone or the state. The families participated in the help of the disabled people, orphans and the elderly (Enciso & Mendoza, 2011). Minga is of community utility. Nowadays, it continues to be practised in Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile, while there are also

very important communities in Colombia that have transcended the concept to a political level, by organizing socially for the claim of their rights, denunciation and reflection on their current situation (Enciso & Mendoza, 2011).

Chacras are familiar agricultural spaces that allow for food security and sovereignty, the conservation of biological and genetic diversity, and the materialization of traditional indigenous knowledge typical of the Quechua culture in Latin America. Even though Chacra shares many criteria with definitions such as family gardens or family productive yards, the deep cultural and spiritual anchorage of the traditional Chacra is established as a differential character. The Chacra, especially for the Andean and Amazonian inhabitants, is not only considered as a cultivation space but recognized as the representation of the fundamental elements of the construction or upbringing of life. It materializes a relational and holistic stance that demonstrates the goodness of the land and where the peasant raises with love and respect not only plants and animals, but also water, soil and climate, a space to regenerate life and consolidate the social fabric (Carrera, & Rangel, 2018). Chacra has several functions, including the economic, social and spiritual function.

In contrast, Chacra is undoubtedly an educational space in which different generations of a family learn and consolidate, shaping an informal, original and ancestral environmental educational process. This way of relationship is shared from generation to generation, incorporating children as companions during the activities of the Chacra, which are not conceived as a sacrificed work but as a need to learn to live in harmony with nature (Carrera, & Rangel, 2018).

For many indigenous groups, domesticated plants were perceived as human beings or were granted by supernatural beings, which explains the care that should be taken with plants and cultural manifestations. Sometimes, the chakra-body relationship is not spiritually different. The spirits that are considered essential for the soil to be fertile also influence the fertility of women, and who teaches the care of the Chacra is the one who teaches the care of children (Carrera, & Rangel, 2018).

In Ecuador, the current constitution and the law of the organization and regime of communes recognizes the autonomy of the communities. However, Álvarez-Litben, (2017) suggest that the productivist vision has permeated the structures of the community reproducing structural asymmetries. The ideal image of the community from *Buen Vivir* does not correspond to reality. Although the law recognizes autonomy, it is also an attempt to regulate the life practices of communities. The aforementioned has led to contradictions between the ideal and the real (Álvarez-Litben, 2017).

### 2.5.2 International power, national policy and Good Living

The implementation of the vision of *Buen Vivir* in Latin America faces the challenges of breaking a colonizing system and international pressure (Williford, 2018). For example, a study conducted by Lewis (2018) shows how media contributed in the construction of imaginaries that invalidated the political and social processes in Latin America that were promoted from *Buen Vivir* and reproduced globalist and neoliberal discourses.

The Constitution of Ecuador of 2008 is based on *Buen Vivir* (Mattioli, & Nozica, 2017, Haidar, & Berros, 2015). Yet, in the National Plan for *Buen Vivir* (2017-2021), there were actions focused on the productive matrix, showing a voiding of the Sumak Kawsay concept,

and the reproduction of the goals of the development model. *Buen Vivir* in Latin America presents advances, contradictions, and significant challenges in its implementation (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017, Gallegos Anda, 2018, Mattioli, & Nozica, 2017).

## 2.6 Good Living considerations in Education
The university around the globe has been changing with time, but its changes have always been linked to capitalism. Professionalization, research, and innovation have been at the service of capital and globalizing development through different practices. Gibbs & Armsby (2011) argue that the accreditation of learning responds to a culture where social capital is attributed to reinforcement through prizes for formal learning. They propose fairness and transparency to evaluate a set of skills, development of nonspecific criteria to measure various achievements and thus avoid hegemony of academic disciplines. The proposal seeks, in turn, to look at learning outcomes from what is transferable in the real world rather than what is known based on the past. Based on the aforementioned, they explain that grading alone may not be sufficient. Álvarez, (2018) said that the university has been an instrument of the system and has reproduced inequalities. Brown and McCowan (2018) argue that *Buen Vivir* is an alternative to developmental theories; however, it has not been considered internationally. Brown and McCowan (2018) discuss that although it is proposed worldwide to overcome inequities and achieve peace, education has been limited to providing more schooling.

Therefore, the challenge of *Buen Vivir* is to unlearn, question, and build a just and sustainable society. *Buen Vivir* invites us to look at education as a right, a public good, and a duty of the State. Education should be emancipatory, transformative, intercultural, and of quality. Education must work towards equity, a biocentric understanding of life, and a construction of collective and sustainable responses, which must all be seen and understood in connection with communities (Álvarez, 2018).

### 2.6.1 Good Living and education in Ecuador
*Buen Vivir* in HE Ecuadorian context needs to contemplate transdisciplinarity, communities, participation, inclusion, quality, and warmth. Ecuadorian HE in its law (LOES- Organic Law of Higher Education) demands to work for gender equity, justice, solidarity, and peace. *Buen Vivir* in HE should stimulate critical sense and, the development of skills and abilities to create and work (Collado-Ruano, Morillo, & González, 2018). Nonetheless, it presents some challenges such as processes and policies to guarantee access and success within the education system, inclusion, equity, and avoidance of the reproduction of inequalities (Pesántez Avilés, Martín Sabina, & Bojorque Chasi, 2015). In the Ecuadorian context, it is critical to rethink the barriers of minorities and, women in HE (Pesántez Avilés, Martín Sabina, & Bojorque Chasi, 2015).

*Buen Vivir* in education promotes emancipation and requires skills that go beyond the technique, such as rethinking how to teach, and what to evaluate, in terms of generating practices and knowledge for the common good (Collado-Ruano, 2017). Education from the *Buen Vivir* perspective should propose new ways of thinking, feeling, and doing, that consider the context, interculturality, rights, complexity and the importance of happiness in the teaching-learning process (Álvarez, 2016). Education within *Buen Vivir* understands the importance of ancestral knowledge and science, where both are complementary (Álvarez, 2016).

## 2.6.2 UNAE and Good Living

The Constitution of Ecuador establishes that education must be centred on the human being and will guarantee its holistic development within the framework of human rights (UNAE, 2017). The 2008 Constitution establishes that quality education is a right and an inescapable obligation of State. Education should guarantee teachers continuous training and pedagogical and academic improvement. Therefore, education constitutes an area of priority interest in Ecuador (UNAE, 2017). For this purpose, Ecuador focuses its efforts on strengthening the role of knowledge in its transforming function, promoting research for a scientific and technological society in harmony with nature (UNAE, 2017).

McKinsey (2007) and PISA (2014), state that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. The studies indicate that the improvement of the quality of the learning process is related to the teacher's training (UNAE, 2017). However, a study made by UNAE indicates that current educators in Ecuador need more training (Restrepo & Stefos, 2018). Then, UNAE has a critical role in the improvement of the educational system through the training of new teachers. The university needs to contribute with the construction of a just, equitable, free and democratic society, generating educational models of excellence, characterized for scientific rigour, focused on rights and interculturality (UNAE, 2016; UNAE, n.d). However, as mentioned in section 1.1 the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador established the creation of UNAE and the president appoints its Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is to serve as the highest authority of the National University of Education UNAE, for a non-extendable period of 5 years from the effective date of this Law, to perform the required academic, administrative, financial and regulatory functions, with the functions of university authority, taking charge of planning, managing, forming, regulate and execute the necessary actions for the initiation and development of the institution's activities. The members of the Board of Trustees were freely appointed and removed. UNAE was created on December 9 of 2013 and had 4.320 undergraduate students in 2019 (UNAE, 2019). The way UNAE has been managed is critical to understand how even though it promotes democracy, rights and interculturality, the authorities are designated by the president of Ecuador, contradicting democracy, rights and institutional autonomy.

UNAE hopes to overcome the encyclopedic, fragmented knowledge; the unique and rigid model for all students, the unilateral teaching process, and the vertical structures for learning and teaching (UNAE, 2017). UNAE's pedagogical model aims to promote teaching and learning practices that encourage collaboration, *Buen Vivir,* rights, critical thinking, horizontal relations, and innovation (UNAE, 2017). In the pedagogical model of the university, it is critical to reflect on the practices and, practice the theory learned; use virtual spaces and the way to organize the classroom (UNAE, 2017).

At the university studied there are some practices like the configuration of each classroom, the pedagogical peers, and the elaboration of PIENSA that promotes collaboration (UNAE, 2019). In each classroom, there is furniture appropriate for co-working. Also, in the Pre-professional practice model, it is mandatory to work in pairs and trios to accomplish academic work every semester (PIENSA). This academic project wants to face real problems found in the institutions of these practices. In order to complete this project, students should work with a teacher in the institutional practices and with faculty members in the university to understand the educational problems and build solutions.

UNAE has developed some principles, ethical values (Álvarez, 2015) and curricular principles (Rodríguez, Aguilar, & Apolo, 2018) to implement *Buen Vivir* in the institution and these are presented in figure N 3.

**Figure 3: UNAE principles, ethical values and curricular model main beliefs**

**Principles**
-Community
-Biocentrism
-Reciprocity    between equals
-Unity in diversity
-Complementarity

**Ethical Values**
-Coherence
-Happiness
-Aesthetics
-Solidarity

**Curricular model main beliefs**
 - The relevance of the practical component
 - The theory as a tool to understand, question and design practice
 - The use of the virtual space
- Proposals and intervention projects
 - The priority to social commitment

As shown in Figure 3, *Buen Vivir* in UNAE is an invitation to reflect on education, the professors' role and the goal of education (Álvarez, 2015). *Buen Vivir* in education recognizes that all the students and teachers are diverse but are linked in the process and complement their skills and views (Álvarez, 2015). UNAE claims happiness and solidarity emerge from the teaching-learning process (Álvarez, 2015). Similarly, practice, virtual spaces, and social commitment are critical (Rodríguez, Aguilar, & Apolo, 2018).

## 2.7 Concluding remarks

Globalization impacts on the role of the nation states, as it means homogenising standards of competition and specific indicators around the globe. In contrast, Latin America is a highly unequal region (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002). This affects the economy, individual and social welfare, social cohesion, security, health, education, and political stability. Inequality in Latin America is mainly present in the minorities and rural areas (Klasen & Nowak-Lehmann, 2018) where more than 60% of poverty is in rural areas (Lopez & Valdés, 2000). A study indicates that indigenous populations suffer more inequity than rest of the population, plus discrimination and more issues in the access of rights (Hall & Patrinos, 2005).

*Buen Vivir* wants to overcome the colonizing system (Larrea, 2014) for the achievement of equity (Guzmán Prudencio, & Polo Blanco, 2017) and redefine basic needs and relations to promote the common good (Larrea, 2014). Conversely, *Buen Vivir* is still under construction and some practices show inconsistencies and contradictions (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017, Gallegos Anda, 2018, Mattioli, & Nozica, 2017). Ecuador promotes *Buen Vivir*, though it is critical to reflect on the implementation of *Buen Vivir* within capitalism (Acosta, 2011).

*Buen Vivir* promotes networks of trust and solidarity to resolve the difficulties in terms of the distribution of resources, decision-making, and the construction of common projects within communities. Ritualities and procedures are important to overcome problems (Álvarez-Litben, 2017). However, a productivist vision has permeated the structures of the community reproducing structural asymmetries (Álvarez-Litben, 2017).

The implementation of the vision of *Buen Vivir* in Latin America faces the challenges of the rupture with the hegemonic system of colonizing. The countries and institutions that represent the global order and that do not recognize the rights of nature, do not understand a different economic model (Williford, 2018).

HE around the globe has been changing with time, yet these changes have always been linked to capitalism. HE has been an instrument of the system and has reproduced inequalities (Álvarez, 2018). UNAE wants to contribute to the educational transformation in Ecuador. However, it is not a possible quality of education without a corresponding quality of the teacher (McKinsey, 2007; PISA, 2014). Then, it is critical to train teachers and UNAE has a particular role in this regard.

*Buen Vivir* in UNAE promotes teaching-learning processes that care about nature and others in horizontal and equal relations. Similarly, it recognizes that all the students and teachers are diverse but are linked in the process and complement their skills and views (Álvarez, 2015). UNAE claims for happiness and solidarity in the teaching-learning process (Álvarez, 2015). Likewise, practice, virtual spaces, and social commitment are critical (Rodríguez, Aguilar, & Apolo, 2018). However, as a four-year-old university still under construction, it requires research on its practices and impacts.

## 3. Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning in the Ecuadorian context could have particular practices, impacts and understandings. However, it is critical to understand what has been researched regarding collaborative learning around the globe.

This chapter presents the theories that support collaborative learning, the terms related, the definition, strengths and weaknesses, considerations and some conclusions. The literature on collaborative learning is extensive, which is why conceptual maps and tables are presented, which facilitate the reading and synthesis of the contributions of literature.

For the realization of this chapter, a systematic search of the literature was carried out in Scopus, Web of Science, and Redalyc. The search was done with the words collaborative learning impacts and conditions all three together. The articles were selected from 2010 to 2019, and only those that fulfilled the criteria of approaching collaborative learning, their impacts and/or their conditions were selected. Also, relevant papers from other bases and other years were included according to their relevance for this study.

### 3.1    Theory that supports collaborative learning and related terms

Collaborative learning is based on sociocultural theories of learning and social constructivism. From this perspective, learning is understood as a social act, where people learn through direct or indirect observation, with social interactions, in collaboration, and from the culture. Given the above, it is understood that people who work collaboratively develop higher skills and learning (Barkley, 2014). From social constructivism, collaborative learning understands that knowledge is constructed collectively, horizontally, in social interaction. It is important to highlight that collaborative learning research has been mainly implemented in the US and UK (Barkley, 2014). Barkley (2014) make extensive research showing the positive impacts of collaborative learning and how to implement it in HE in US context. Similarly, Capstick (2004) research on peer learning in UK context showing some benefits and shortcomings of collaborative learning. However, the literature search indicates that there are collaborative learning practices and research all over the world, varying the fields and way of implementation. Roselli (2016) works on collaborative learning in the Latin American context, particularly in Argentina, nevertheless his work is not exclusively applicable to HE but to education in general and claims for the need of external regulation in collaborative learning. In another context, Chan, Phan, Aniyah Salihan, and Dipolog-Ubanan, (2016) researched on benefits of collaborative learning in University College Sedaya International (UCSI), where tutors and tutees are from various nationalities (Malaysian, Nigerian, Iranian, Chinese, etc.). Keenan (2014) who has done research in the UK and HE context indicated that collaborative learning has been implemented in schools, high schools and higher education in different fields, in all continents.

Keenan (2014) explains examples of peer learning in HE in the UK. The University of Edinburgh set up in 2006, the Edinburgh Law School's peer-assisted learning scheme' (LawPALS) for first-year students to support the transition to the HE life. Sheffield Hallam University implements the BME Students program to increase student retention. The University of Brighton develops a collaborative learning program for building communities of practices. Aston University settled a program to improve math learning through Maths PAL: engaging students, faculty and employers.  The University of Bath established the Placement PAL: supporting students for the placement exams. The University of Exeter implemented a peer learning program to support Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Newcastle University implemented a program for Peer tutoring for

international students in STEM. The University of Worcester set a collaborative learning program for students with disabilities.

Collaborative learning and Cooperative Learning have common aspects such as importance given to active learning, the interaction between peers in small groups, looking at the teacher as a facilitator (Hanson, Trolian, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2016; Vuopala, Hyvönen, & Järvelä, 2016). In these types of learning, teacher and student work together and intentionally for the construction of knowledge (Hanson, Trolian, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2016). On one hand, cooperative Learning differs from collaborative learning in that it reaches the task by division of work (Sulisworo, 2012, Barkley, 2014), is linked to behaviourism and cognitivism (Sulisworo, 2012), promotes individual efforts (Laal, & Ghodsi, 2012), maintains traditional authority relationships (Barkley, 2014), and is more structured (Barkley, 2014; Hajra, & Das, 2015). Collaborative learning, on the other hand, encourages students to work together in their tasks (Sulisworo, 2012; Barkley, 2014), is linked to constructivism (Sulisworo, 2012; Barkley, 2014), is less structured (Barkley, 2014), promotes horizontal relationships (Barkley, 2014), and considers positive interdependence (Hajra, & Das, 2015).

Collaborative learning has advantages in relation to cooperative learning, among which stand out: the development of negotiation skills, the promotion of active learning, the depth of reasoning, the development of skills for solving problems, the development of critical thinking, creativity and relating knowledge with the environment (Hajra, & Das, 2015).

## 3.2    Collaborative learning strengths and weaknesses

Collaborative learning practices exist on all continents, are relevant to students of all cultures (Keenan, 2014) and vary based on context (Arpaci, 2016). In this regard, it is important to highlight the wealth of the social fabric in rural areas and its popular economy practices and solidarity cooperativism (Farah & Vasapollo, 2011). This would mean that collaborative learning in rural areas would be understood based on its social fabric and solidarity.

This case study will focus on collaborative learning in a HE institution that has the goal to train the future school and high school teachers, with seven majors in education areas. However, collaborative learning still have little good quality, theoretical, and evaluative research. In addition, there is little empirical evidence on its effectiveness at the university level (Gokhale, 1995). In the same way, despite its widespread use and that many teachers claim to use it, in one study, only three out of five schools observed a real implementation and several deficiencies were found in the practice of the technique (Roselli, 2016). Nevertheless, Dahri, Vighio and Dahri (2019) indicate that collaborative learning is employed by most educators for the professional development of teachers with well-researched effectiveness. Additionally, Dahri, Vighio and Dahri (2019) made a review through content analysis about the collaborative learning technologies, techniques, strategies and learning environment in teacher education and explain that collaborative learning using technologies has a positive impact on teachers, institutions and students' outcomes and increase the level of confidence and invocations in their abilities. Collaborative learning promotes the self-efficacy of teachers in the teaching and learning process (Dahri, Vighio & Dahri, 2019).

Collaborative learning presents strengths and weaknesses. Collaborative learning has strength in generating reciprocal (Laverick, 2016) and horizontal relations (Goethals, Winston, & Zimmerman, 1999) with fewer power issues (Boud, n.d) and other several strengths (Barkley,

2014). Nevertheless, it requires specific social, psychological (Kreijns, Kirschner, & Jochems, 2003) and academic management conditions (Avello-Martínez & Marín, 2016). Without the necessary conditions, collaborative learning can generate inadequate guidance (Capstick, 2004) and problems in the teaching and learning process (Roselli, 2016).

Laal and Ghodsi, (2012) in its review article organized the collaborative learning benefits in categories (academic, psychological, social and assessment). The authors indicated the importance of collaborative learning in learning how to solve social problems. However, it needs a supportive environment and helps in solving problems. collaborative learning is linked with the reduction of violence and learning how to solve problems in a peaceful manner. While students interact, they learn important skills for problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication skills. Yet, it requires frequency in this kind of teaching-learning process and training. This thesis will use academic, psychological and social categories to facilitate understanding. The assessment category is grouped in the academic category in this study.

### 3.2.1 Strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in the academic area
In this section the strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in the academic area will be presented. In figure 4 the main strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in the academic area are presented.

**Figure 4: Strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in Academic area**
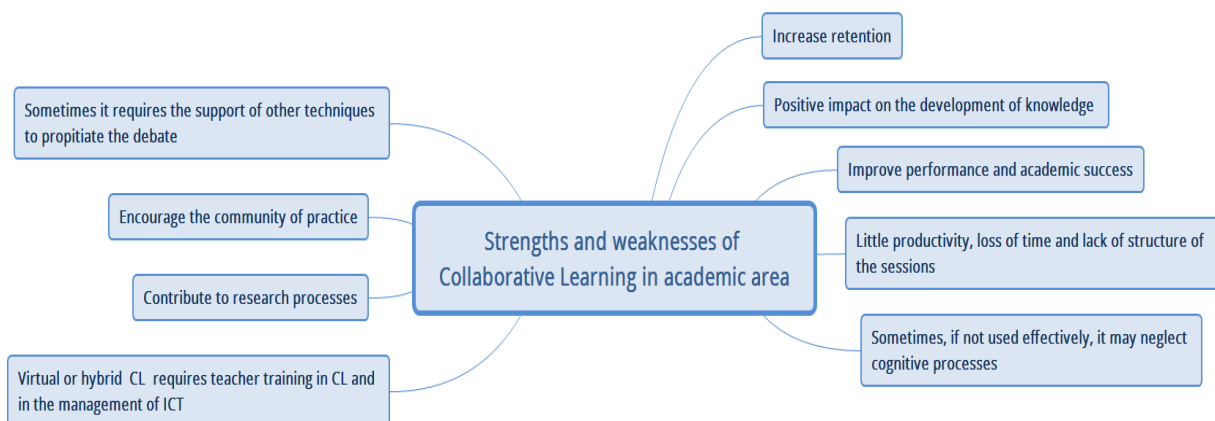


Studies indicate that collaborative learning has a positive impact on the development of knowledge (Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, 2016; Avello-Martínez, & Marín, 2016). Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, (2016) implemented a study using focus group interviews with nine groups of second and third-year students of five different undergraduate life sciences courses in a university of the Netherlands. The study concluded that collaborative learning evoked positive interdependence by increasing autonomy. Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, (2016) also explain that autonomy, combined with a challenging task, evoked interdependence and generated interaction as well as student motivation in these five cases. The authors claim for unestablished structures that are too rigid in collaborative interactions since this could impact the autonomy and natural interactions of students. Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, (2016) claim that the groups with no structured interdependence had significantly more cognitive interactions involving content discussion than the other groups, indicating that structuring interdependence is not always necessary with university students. Within this area there are additionally strengths that include: it improves critical thinking (Laal, & Ghodsi,

2012; Gokhale, 1995; Tai, Canny, Haines, & Molloy, 2017; Ubaque Casallas, & Pinilla Castellanos, 2016), contribute to learning a new language (Tolosa, Ordóñez, & Alfonso, 2015), improves conceptual knowledge of mathematics (Hanson, Trolian, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2016; Olsen, Aleven, & Rummel, (2015), improves writing (López-Gil, y Molina Natera, 2018; Tolosa, Ordóñez, & Alfonso, 2015), improves the involvement of students in the teaching-learning process, teaching-learning results are enhanced, facilitates student problem-solving techniques, large lectures can be personalized and increases motivation in students (Laal, & Ghodsi, 2012).

Other studies indicate that collaborative learning improves performance and academic success (Chan, Phan, Aniyah Salihan, & Dipolog-Ubanan, 2016; Hilsdon, 2014; Barkley, 2014). However, when used uncritically and not effectively it neglects cognitive processes (Roselli, 2016) and generates little productivity and leads to loss of time (Capstick, 2004) unfair evaluations, demotivation of students and shallow learning (De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, 2015). De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, 2015 used a purposeful sampling technique to gather data from different educational programmes. A survey was administered to 235 lecturers of five colleges of a University of Applied Sciences in a large city in the Netherlands and the results indicate that even when most of the lectures used collaborative learning the variety was limited, and implementation of collaborative learning in practice dependss on beliefs of lecturers about teaching and learning and collaborative learning. Within this area, there are additional studies that indicate that uncritical and not well-prepared collaborative learning processes present problems in terms of quality and depth of learning, in the feedback and correction of errors of the peers, cause confusion and wrong orientation, cause superficial discussions, poor attention to exhibitions of colleagues from other groups and, not performing the task.

Collaborative learning supported by virtual environments requires teacher training in the management of ICT (Klein & Vosgerau, 2018). Within the latter, there are additional studies that suggest that collaborative learning supported by virtual environments do not automatically produce high levels of quality in learning and are not useful in all cases.

Other studies indicate that collaborative learning contribute to research processes (Thorsen, 2012; González Fernández, García Ruiz, & Ramírez García, 2015), encourages the community of practice (Pye, Williams, & Dunne, 2016) and sometimes requires the support of other techniques to propitiate the debate (Gómez Sará, 2016).

Regarding the positive impact of collaborative learning on the development of knowledge, studies indicate that students learn better in a group than individually (Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, 2016; Avello-Martínez, & Marín, 2016). Similarly, they explain that collaboration is part of the XXI century skills, and it requires that students and teachers be trained to develop the skills needed to collaborate and learn collaboratively. However, not all group work is collaborative learning. The authors state that collaborative learning requires training, practices, commitment and needs to overcome some errors. The authors recommend training teachers in specific aspects to improve collaborative learning such as theoretical aspects of collaborative learning, design of collaborative learning tasks, how to group students, guidance and support to the students during the collaborative learning process, monitoring of the task, evaluation and the use of ICT strategies to facilitate the collaborative learning process. Klein and Vosgerau, (2018) in its systematic review that analyses publications between 2000 and 2016, an empirical research in higher education, indicate the need for professors training, yet they add the importance of acceptance of

students to this teaching and learning process. Similarly, the authors mentioned that collaborative learning could be mediated by technology. In this scenario, it is critical to train a teacher in collaborative learning and the technological skills to guide it in hybrid or virtual spaces. The training needed should not dissociate the skills needed for guiding collaborative learning and for managing it in a virtual space.

Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, and Wiegant, (2016) agree with Avello-Martínez, and Marín, (2016) in a study related to the positive impact of collaborative learning in the development of knowledge and deep learning. Additionally, they indicate that sometimes collaborative learning is not used properly. Similarly, they agree that grouping students does not always result in effective collaborative learning. The authors claim that individual learning is still the predominant approach in education. Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, and Wiegant, (2016) wanted to find factors to improve collaboration within students. The results showed that positive interdependence, autonomy and responsibility are critical to enhancing collaboration. Additionally, the study indicated that challenging tasks and heterogeneous groups are critically important for collaborating. Then collaborative learning could impact on knowledge generation and deep learning, however, it requires trained teachers to support the process. It is important to flag that both authors suggest that collaborative learning requires an active role of the teacher who leads a complex process setting some conditions and regulations but also promotes autonomy and interaction.

Following this, other studies indicate that collaborative learning improves performance and academic success (Chan, Phan, Aniyah Salihan, & Dipolog-Ubanan, 2016; Hilsdon, 2014; Barkley, 2014). Chan, Phan, Aniyah Salihan, & Dipolog-Ubanan, (2016) study research on peer-assisted learning in HE with the standpoint that collaborative learning impacts on academic performance. The results indicate that peer learning (a form of collaborative learning) impacted positively in the students, mainly because of the close relationships and fewer power issues within peers, yet there were also downsides regarding the quality of the assistance of some tutors. Similarly, Hilsdon, (2014) indicates that peer learning could impact positively in the learning process. However, it needs lectures to support the peer learning process meeting with the leaders and guiding in some respects, such as scheduling the sessions. Capstick, (2004) also indicates that peer learning has several positive impacts. Nevertheless, some students do not consider it necessary and others believe that the guidance is not adequate. Additionally, some students stated that the lack of structure generates a sense of loss of productivity and waste of time.

Roselli, (2016) indicates that external regulations are critical for a real and effective collaborative learning process. The author indicates that many times the socio constructivism is misunderstood leaving students without guidance or accompaniment during the collaborative learning process. The author states that this does not refer to only providing resources and content guidance. The teacher regulation needed is related to composition of the groups, the symmetry of participation, alternation of roles and functions, listening and evaluation of other, collective organisation, negotiation, organisation of time, among others. Nevertheless, De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, (2015) indicates that teacher perception of collaborative learning impacts on its implementation. Similarly, the authors stated that there are differences between what teachers plan and do in collaborative learning sessions. Teachers consider that collaborative learning is a very demanding teaching-learning process, that requires time, planning and training.

### 3.2.2 Strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in the psychological area

In this section, the strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in the psychological area will be presented. Figure 5 shows the main strengths and weaknesses in this area.

**Figure 5: Strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in the psychological area**

Responsibility

Self-regulation, generation of bonds, commitment to the University

CL depends on the motivation of students and what the teacher thinks about CL

Conflicts can generate avoidance and task division

Can generate frustration when it is not well implemented

Strengths and weaknesses of CL in psychological area

Some students participate less because they do not trust themselves

Improves confidence, and self-esteem

Psychological well-being of all those involved

Reduces anxiety

Collaborative learning has psychological strengths and weaknesses. Laal and Ghodsi, (2012) indicate that the interdependence and the continuous interaction within peers are positive for the development of social skills, confidence and self-esteem. In this kind of teaching and learning process, the students take ownership of this learning process. This new active students' role in the collaborative learning process also reduces anxiety (Laal, & Ghodsi, 2012). The above-mentioned also promotes the psychological well-being of all those involved. In a study carried out by Capstick, (2004) the author indicates that in peer learning processes all the participants get benefits in psychological well-being, including the tutors. In this regard, there are also studied that indicate that collaborative learning impacts on health, happiness, satisfaction, sense of belonging, adaptation to university life and motivation. However, collaborative learning, when not well implemented, could cause frustration (Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, 2016). Likewise, other studies indicate that collaborative learning causes a sense of loss of time, little motivation, fear of not complying with the curriculum, uncertainty, and dispersion when not implemented properly. Similarly, the conflicts within peers could mean that the members avoid interaction with others and divide the task into parts in order to not collaborate (Näykki, Järvelä, Kirschner, & Järvenoja, 2014; Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, 2016). Näykki, Järvelä, Kirschner, & Järvenoja, (2014) use a case study approach for an in-depth understanding of collaborative learning in its real-life context. The study was done in Open University of the Netherlands with 22 higher education students during a three-month course. One case group was chosen (one that experienced more and particularly socio-emotional challenges) for the in-depth interaction analysis. Their overruling, statuscentric, undermining and normative interaction created a socio-emotional conflict. Students were unable to maintain a well-balanced atmosphere, which led them to adopt avoidance-focused emotion regulation behaviour and to lower their on-task engagement. As mentioned in section 3.2.1 collaborative learning depends on the motivation of the students and the teachers' beliefs for its implementation (De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, 2015). The motivation and well-being of the members, including teachers is critical.

While collaborative learning helps in self-regulation, commitment with the university and learning process (Cardozo-Ortiz, 2011) and responsibility (Sumtsova, Aikina, Bolsunovskaya, Phillips, Zubkova, & Mitchell, 2018), some students do not participate as desired because of the lack of trust in themselves (Rutherford, 2015). Rutherford (2015) in his review article claims for the benefits of collaborative learning in microbiology teaching in higher education.

As in the academic benefits, the literature suggests that there are several psychological benefits of collaborative learning. The ones that are more interesting and relevant to this study are the psychological well-being elements (Capstick, 2004) and the confidence and self-esteem (Laal, & Ghodsi, 2012). Education for *Buen Vivir* requires satisfied, confident, motivated human beings for the necessary transformations (Álvarez, 2016). *Buen Vivir* invites personal, social, and environmental harmony (Collado Ruano, Morillo and González, 2018; Álvarez, 2015). For this personal harmony psychological well-being, motivation for the realization of a task and to share ideas and work with others is vital. Education from *Buen Vivir* invites us to rethink happiness and joy to learn, to share, and to transform (Álvarez, 2015). collaborative learning could be one of the useful tools to achieve the path towards education for *Buen Vivir* if the subjects that learn are happy, motivated, and confident.

Psychological well-being is critical as it allows participants to interact and learn. Näykki, Järvelä, Kirschner, and Järvenoja, (2014) state that collaborative learning presents socio-emotional, cognitive and other challenges. For the authors, the socio-emotional challenges are critical because when not overcome, they cause avoidance within the group members, no satisfaction with the task realization and lower cognitive achievements. Näykki, Järvelä, Kirschner, and Järvenoja, (2014) note that when students feel that collaborative learning is an unpleasant situation, they avoid other members to restore the emotional balance in the group. Nevertheless, the results are not those expected. The academic achievement and goals are impacted by the emotional balance. Then psychological well-being is critical for the teaching-learning process. Thus, psychological well-being should be considered in the diversity of students and abilities.

### 3.2.3 Strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in the social area
In this section, the strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in the social area are presented. Figure 6 shows the main aspects of the social area in three sections.

**Figure 6: Strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in the social area**



The characteristics of the group, task, and conformation of the groups can determine the conflicts to face and the result of the activity

Increases the participation of students

In the first year programs of the university they provide:
-social support
-social skills necessary for new stage of life,
-group leaders develop employability skills

**Strengths and weaknesses of CL in social area**

CL helps to develop a diverse and collaborative social support system for learners, teachers and staff

Enhanced skills, social and self-concept outcomes and reinforcement of positive attitudes towards future social responsibilities

Feeling that work is not fair, lack of commitment, lack of participation of some members, difficulty in reaching agreements and communication

In Figure 6 the main strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning in the social area are presented. Laal, & Ghodsi, 2012; De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, (2015) indicate that collaborative learning impacts on the development of social support system for learners, improves the understanding and awareness of diversity within students and faculty members, creates a positive environment for learning and contributes in the developing of learning communities. Similarly, a study by Chan, Phan, Aniyah Salihan, & Dipolog-Ubanan, (2016) stated that collaborative learning enhances social and self-concept outcomes and strengthens positive attitudes towards future social responsibilities. However, other studies indicate that collaborative learning has shortcomings in the social area such as the generation of the sense that work is not fair, lack of commitment, lack of participation of some members, difficulty to reach agreements and that communication is complex (Barkley, 2014; Avello Martínez, & Duart, 2016; Thorsen, 2012). Additionally, other authors indicate that collaborative learning has positive outcomes in first-year students (Collings, Swanson, & Watkins, 2014; Babayi & Arshad, 2015; Pye, Williams, & Dunne, 2016; Gómez Sará, 2016) and promotes participation (Tai, Canny, Haines, & Molloy, 2017; Smith, et al., 2009; Gómez Sará, 2016). Nevertheless, collaborative learning is mediated by conditions such as grouping of students, the task and how participants solve the conflicts (Sulisworo, 2012).

*Buen Vivir* requires people with life skills, diverse, flexible, inclusive. *Buen Vivir* invites a practical, inclusive, harmonious, community lifestyle. *Buen Vivir* thinks and acts for the common good, and it needs people to have the social skills to agree, value diversity, and include everyone from their potential. Then the strengths mentioned by Laal, & Ghodsi, 2012; De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, (2015) regarding the impacts of collaborative learning on the development of social support systems for learners, the improvement in the awareness of diversity within students and faculty members, the creation of a positive environment for learning and the contribution in the developing of learning communities are critical.

Similarly, *Buen Vivir* 's claim for social justice and what Chan, Phan, Aniyah Salihan, & Dipolog-Ubanan, (2016) indicated regarding the impact of collaborative learning in the enhancement of social and self-concept and, a positive view of future social responsibilities is essential. The new educators and professionals using the perspective of *Buen Vivir* could promote social changes to overcome inequities (Collado-Ruano, Morillo, & González, 2018).

Meanwhile, Barkley, (2014) notes that students mentioned as a disadvantage that some participants dominate the group while others do not participate actively and fail in their

commitments, which leads to a waste of time. The author also indicated that some participants have mentioned that some groups simply do not match and are dysfunctional. In addition, this author stated that the disadvantages are not enough reported.

Collaborative learning requires structure and considerations such as time, environments, the formation of groups, guiding the process for the participation of all actors, evaluation, facilitation for the generation of quality knowledge, among others. Collaborative learning is a pedagogy that requires, like others, training and capacity to guide and to be linked in the educational process (Roselli, 2016).

In peer-to-peer work, emotional and cognitive conflicts arise such as understanding the other's way of thinking and resolving conflicts, so emotions play an important role in their implementation (Näykki, Järvelä, Kirschner, & Järvenoja, 2014). Even some students participate less because they do not trust themselves (Rutherford, 2015).

Collaborative learning requires the development of emotional skills, which implies complexity in the work of the teacher. collaborative learning challenges both the student and the teacher in the resolution of conflicts and the generation of agreements. Criticism about collaborative learning in the psychological field is that without the emotional tools to deal with frustration, change, and diversities in the workgroups, the fulfilment of the task and its quality are at risk (Näykki, Järvelä, Kirschner, & Järvenoja, 2014). Emotions can become a significant barrier to the achievement of common tasks and objectives, which is possible in human groups.

Social conflicts arise even when the activity is carefully planned (Näykki, Järvelä, Kirschner, & Järvenoja, 2014). The psychological aspects can affect people socially, in peer relationships, communication, and performance. collaborative learning requires the joint construction of knowledge. However, social, collective bonding is not an easy task. Each part of a group has its own needs, ways of relating and interacting with their environment. Therefore, the social is complex and requires the support of the teacher, and also some competencies and responsibilities of each member of the group.

As we can see collaborative learning has strengths but also weaknesses. The uncritical processes could impact on the quality of the teaching-learning and generate socio-emotional issues. collaborative learning requires as Roselli, (2016) claims external and trained guides. These criticisms of collaborative learning must be looked at from the *Buen Vivir* perspective because it requires educators to lead towards emancipation and justice. Teachers using collaborative learning and the *Buen Vivir* perspective are active facilitators so that each student, from a position of its diversity and complexity, achieves their happiness and can connect and live harmoniously with each other and the environment. The educator from these perspectives deepens their technique. Teachers are an active agent for social transformation, who know the pedagogical strategies to get it. *Buen Vivir* requires educators who are motivated, knowledgeable about their teaching duties and their pedagogical strategies, recognizing that knowledge is co-constructed from specific considerations that should be facilitated by the teacher. collaborative learning understood as such, is not something without structure, or spontaneous; it is a process with specific considerations to achieve collaboration.

## 3.3 Conditions of collaborative learning
In this section, the conditions for collaborative learning will be presented. Figure 7 displays the main conditions of collaborative learning.

**Figure 7: Conditions of collaborative learning**
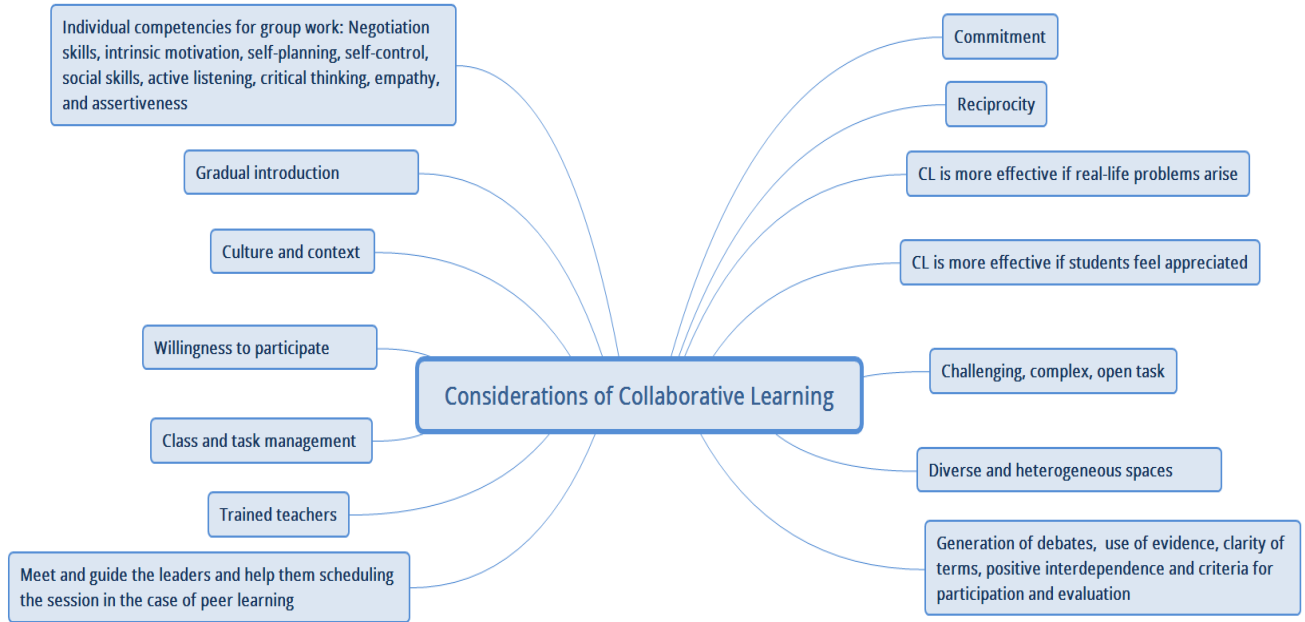


Collaborative learning happens in a complex and heterogeneous environment where debates can take place. However, it requires trained teachers who manage the collaborative learning process, gradual introduction, willingness to participate and the context and culture where it is implemented ((De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, 2015; Avello-Martínez, and Marín, 2016; Roselli, 2016; Arpaci, 2016). Collaborative learning has a vast literature and would meet the need for the implementation of Buen Vivir in the UNAE context. Furthermore, it is important that the individual skills for working in groups such as negotiation skills, intrinsic motivation, self-planning, self-control, social skills, active listening, critical thinking, empathy, and assertiveness (González Fernández, García Ruiz, & Ramírez García, 2015, Vuopala, Hyvönen, & Järvelä, 2016; Bouroumi, & Fajr, 2014), commitment (Smeets, 2017) and reciprocity (East, Tolosa, & Villers, 2012) are developed. Moreover, collaborative learning is more effective when arising in real-life situations (Babayi & Arshad, 2015) and students feel appreciated (Lambertz-Berndt, & Blight, 2016).

Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, (2016) indicate that collaborative learning requires the generation of debates, recognition of context, use of evidence, clarity of terms, positive interdependence and criteria for participation and evaluation (Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, 2016). Then, collaborative learning is a structured process with specific techniques. In collaborative learning it is critical to have trained teachers to facilitate the process (De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, 2015). In this line, Avello-Martínez, and Marín, (2016) indicate that teachers must work on theoretical aspects, design the task, reflect and decide the conformation of the groups, plan the process, and manage time. Similarly, it is essential that the teacher guides the students, moderates and monitors the task and evaluates the process. In the same way, Roselli, (2016) claims to overcome the ingenious vision of socio constructivism and work for collaborative learning processes with serious external regulation. In this view, it is critical to reflect on a strict process for guiding collaborative learning. Teachers should be aware of the composition of the groups, the symmetry of participation, alternation of roles and functions, listening and

evaluation within participants, group coordination, negotiation, critical thinking, and systematization of time (Roselli, 2016).

Collaborative learning is complex and needs also gradual introduction, willingness to participate (De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, 2015), diverse and heterogeneous spaces and; open, challenging and complex tasks (Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, 2016). Also, collaborative learning requires teachers to meet and guide the leaders and help them scheduling the session in the case of peer learning. Correspondingly, it is vital that faculty members question the assumptions, explore the motivations and, generate an environment for critical thinking (Hilsdon, 2014). A study conducted by Arpaci (2016) in Turkey, indicates that culture impacts on collaborative learning. This study employed quantitative methods to investigate the causal relationships existing between cultural orientations and collaborative learning. A total of 401 undergraduate students took part in the study, all of whom were selected by using convenience sampling, from 18 to 33 years. The results indicated that people who come from collectivist cultures are more oriented to collaborate. However, as mentioned above, collaborative learning is a gradual process that must consider the development of students' knowledge, the conformation of the groups, the different learning styles, evaluation of the quality of the collaboration, and the different levels in the learning objectives for collaboration (Roselli, 2016).

Collaborative learning must consider the teaching and learning process management. It means to contemplate the task to face, its complexity, the communication channel, independence-interdependence of the informative material, equity in the task development, socio-affective link, age, socioeconomic level and self-hetero-regulation of the activity (Roselli, 2016). Professors facilitating collaborative learning need to keep in mind that it requires several considerations for it to happen. Similarly, the composition of groups is vital for learning to be effective, thus, the ideal number to be considered should be 2 to 4 (Roselli, 2016). Some activities work best in groups of 3 such as solving logical problems. Other more suitable for tetrads are open tasks, such as learning empirical knowledge, especially social knowledge (Roselli, 2016). It is also essential to think through the symmetry in participation, the alternation of roles, functions, reciprocal listening and evaluation, the coordination of actions, the plurality of points of view, the argument participation and the balanced distribution of time available (Roselli, 2016). Additionally, for this study it is critical for collaborative learning to be taken from the *Buen Vivir* perspective. This requires a critical analysis that leads to a different understanding of education and its role. Education needs collaboration for the transformation and construction of a new way for living within humans, recognizing we are part of nature.

### 3.4 Concluding remarks
Collaborative learning has strengths and weaknesses in academic, psychological and social areas (Laal and Ghodsi, 2012). Studies indicate that collaborative learning has a positive impact on the development of knowledge, academic success (Scager, et.al, 2016; Avello-Martínez and Marín, 2016; Hilsdon, 2014; Barkley, 2014), on the psychological well-being (Laal and Ghodsi, 2012), and the development of social support systems and recognition of diversity (Laal and Ghodsi, 2012; De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer and Admiraal, (2015). Yet, when used uncritically and ineffectively (Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst and Wiegant, 2016) it generates low productivity (Capstick, 2004) lack of motivation of students, superficial learning (De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer and Admiraal, 2015), lack of commitment and participation of some members and difficulty to reach agreements (Barkley, 2014; Avello Martínez & Duart, 2016; Thorsen, 2012).

Collaborative learning does not occur without specific conditions. The literature indicates that collaborative learning is an active process where there are multiple conditions such as planning the teaching-learning process, clarity of the task, building relationships and the environment to collaborate, teachers who have the necessary training, teaching administration of the learning process, the basic individual ability of the participants and the commitment to collaborate (Roselli, 2016). Similarly, culture and context are important (Arpaci, 2016). In the particular case of this study, the context encourages collaboration and proposes *Buen Vivir* as a path. Both concepts invite a gradual process, not instantaneous or simple. *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning are linked on the journey towards collaboration, but *Buen Vivir* establishes and proposes the common good, social justice, equity and harmony.

Collaborative learning is based on constructivism, and promotes the co-construction of knowledge horizontally. However, it varies based on context. In this regard, it is important to highlight the richness of the social fabric in Latin America and its practices and ritualities based on cooperativism. *Buen Vivir* in education demands for decolonisation, equity, solidarity, and happiness. From *Buen Vivir,* the collective construction of solutions adjusted to the community needs is fundamental. In *Buen Vivir* practices people learn by doing and solving problems. In this sense, collaborative learning could be a useful tool, for the construction of *Buen Vivir* in education, providing spaces for the joint construction of the solutions that communities need. In this construction there are no linear relations, since *Buen Vivir* is a platform where various viewpoints are interconnected.

However, collaborative learning does not necessarily reflect in depth on the role of education, justice and decolonisation. Additionally, Latin America still has traditional practices and vertical structures in the education system.  Then, appears it may be possible to see that collaborative learning can be a useful tool in the construction of *Buen Vivir* in the formal educational setting, as long as there is a critical and decolonised analysis that leads to a different understanding of education and its role. Furthermore, it is critical to understand the complexity of implementing Buen Vivir through collaborative learning in a pandemic context with all the social, political and economic impacts in Latin America.

## 4. Methodology

The methodology is the narration of the research process (Silverman, 2013) as all narrative can change according to the context, its actors, and the needs that arise in the study. This chapter aims to present what was done for the development of this study. This chapter will outline core methodological frameworks which have impacted the current research. Additionally, this section will outline the decisions that were taken to carry out this research, both the ones based on the literature review, as well as those made by the orientation and view of the researcher. Decisions that were modified concerning the original proposal will also be presented. In turn, this chapter exposes the research process and critical ethical considerations. The research aim and objectives were mentioned in section 1.7

### 4.1 Research question

What are the nature and conditions of the collaborative practices underpinning the Buen Vivir philosophy at the UNAE?

### Related research questions

1) What are the collaborative learning practices related to Good Living in undergraduate students and teachers of UNAE?
2) What are the main impacts of collaborative learning on students and faculty members?
3) What are the most successful practices of collaborative learning in the teaching-learning process?
4) How is the pedagogy of collaborative learning shaped by the philosophy of Good Living in the Ecuadorian context?
5) What are the necessary conditions for collaborative learning?
6) What are the conditions for teaching and learning from Good Living?

To understand and critically analyze the practices and impacts of collaborative learning in undergraduate students and professors of the (UNAE), from the perspective of Good Living; and provide recommendations to improve and implement collaborative learning practices and programs in the Ecuadorian context, questions were generated that allow dividing the analysis into several elements.

The first question aims to understand the collaborative learning practices from the *Buen Vivir* perspective, and then the second question seeks to undertake their impact on teachers and students. By looking at the practices and their impacts in the UNAE context, it should be possible to analyze the practices that are recognized as successful as proposed on the third question. After the recognition of the practices, impacts, tension and successful experience, it was important to question how collaborative learning has been affected/modified by the perspective of *Buen Vivir* that was proposed on the fourth question since the practices allow us to understand how these concepts are related and impact in the context of UNAE. At the same time, in order to understand the context in which practices are developed and how the impacts of collaborative learning are experienced from the perspective of *Buen Vivir*, it was necessary to reflect on the necessary conditions for collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* practices to occur that were proposed in questions 5 and 6, as this allows us to identify aspects that may or may not be present in the context of UNAE.

## 4.2 Theories and paradigms

The interpretative paradigm understands that reality varies according to individuals, societies and cultures (Cohen et al, 2011) as we all build a subjective reality. In turn, from social constructionism, people learn through social interactions and dialogue (Barkley, 2014). Socio-constructivism understands that learning occurs within social interactions and collaborative learning is a pedagogy based on the mentioned theory as indicated by Roselli (2016). collaborative learning facilitates dialogue and promotes the joint construction of knowledge (Thalluri, 2016, Boud, n.d; Alt, 2017). In collaborative learning practices, group members interact in a structured teaching-learning process to achieve a common academic objective. The theoretical umbrella proposed facilitates the analysis of collaborative learning practices and impacts from the *Buen Vivir* perspective, since it will vary according to individuals, groups, context, relationship dynamics and other subjective aspects. Therefore, the interpretative paradigm, constructionism, and collaborative learning fit well with the needs of this study and will guide the research.

This study follows the interpretive paradigm, using a descriptive methodology of case study with qualitative methods (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, Yin, 2017). It was considered that this paradigm and methodology were the appropriate ones for this study based on its needs and characteristics. As mentioned before, this research wants to contribute to the understanding of collaborative learning practices and its impacts on undergraduate students and teachers of a university of education. Then, it is essential to understand the practices and impacts considering the subjectivity in the perceptions and the need to go in deep in the analysis of the particular scenario of UNAE. As mentioned in chapter one and two, the university studied is unique based on the years functioning, its pedagogical model and the political interest in its creation. With this university, it is clear that the methodology that best contributes to the research objectives is a case study as it allows for an analysis and understanding of the particular reality in depth. The descriptive methodology will contribute to the analysis and a broad understanding of this case study. The results obtained from this study are not generalizable because they respond to a specific context. However, they will report on a pedagogy that can contribute to teaching-learning processes and practices in the Ecuadorian context, from the perspective of *Buen Vivir*.

As a researcher, I have positionality and previous values that originated the present study and accompanied the process of methodological design, as well as data collection and its analysis that were mentioned in chapter one section 1.4 and in this chapter in section 4.11.

## 4.3 Case study

The case study is an instance in action and allows for a deep understanding of a specific phenomenon, its groups and actors, in a unique context (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). This approach is congruent with the needs of this study and is the reason why the case study was the selected methodology. The context of UNAE is particular because of the time of the university functioning, its mission, pedagogical model, pre-professional practice model and its intention to work towards *Buen Vivir* using collaborative learning. Similarly, it is important to flag that UNAE is the only university of education in Ecuador and unique in its mission of contributing to the transformation of the educational system in the country.

This research is a unique and comprehensive case study (Yin, 2017). Yin (2017) suggests a single case study for unusual cases. Initially, a mixed methodology study was considered, but it was found that this approach did not fit at all with the particular needs of the research. The research objectives are better to meet with qualitative case study methodology than mixed

methodology. The research objectives indicate that it is critical to understand the practices and impacts by the lens of *Buen Vivir*, so a mixed methodology was not the best option. Instead, a qualitative case study allows to extract all the information about the case and to know history in-depth and understand it in a specific context. This research is the first study in this field and in this context. Then, it is critical to analyse the practices and impacts of collaborative learning by the lens of *Buen Vivir* within the context. UNAE presents a particular situation that will be better addressed with a case study. As UNAE is a very specific scenario, the fact that this case study cannot be generalizable is not an issue since there are no other national universities of education in Ecuador. Additionally, the intention is to know the practices and impacts of collaborative learning by the lens of *Buen Vivir* because as far as I know, based on the literature review this topic has been not researched before in Ecuador.

## 4.4 Techniques used
For this study, the researcher conducted
- four focus groups with students,
- Four collaborative artworks (with all the participants in each group) with students
- Two focus groups with faculty members,
- One artwork with faculty members and,
- two interviews with faculty members who research or work on topics related to *Buen Vivir* and Education.
- documentary review

Focus groups fit well with this case study since this technique helps to understand a phenomenon based on the interactions within a group. As this research aims to contribute to the understanding of collaborative learning practices by the lens of *Buen Vivir,* it was significant that data collection uses a technique that allows interaction within peers. Regarding the artwork, it helped to understand the representations that participants gave to collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir,* allowing them to contact with their emotions in a free environment. The artwork is considered a technique that motivates participation and the mentioned is linked with collaborative learning and the *Buen Vivir* philosophy. It was essential for this case study to have a deep and complete understanding. It was helpful to collect data from teachers considered experts in *Buen Vivir* and education. These interviews helped to see the differences with what students and teachers mentioned in the focus groups and artwork and what the teachers considered experts indicated. The documentary review helped to understand what has been researched in this field, the understanding of collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* that the UNAE context has formally, and analyse this with the results obtained. All the data collected helped to understand the case as a whole considering the data elaborated in the focus groups (what participants perceive collectively), artwork (the symbolic and emotional area), interviews (the perspective of the teachers considered experts without interaction in groups), and the documents and books from the institution (what is officially stated by UNAE).

## 4.4.1 Focus Groups
Focus groups are economical over time and provide a large amount of data on opinions, attitudes, and values (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The focus group was selected because it presented the opportunity to collect data on the interaction (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2012) of student leaders and teachers working on topics related to *Buen Vivir* or collaborative learning. The interaction between the participants is important in this

study because the collaboration and interactions in the groups are part of what is mentioned in the literature on collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir.*

The focus group samples were made for the research as indicated by Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, and Robson, (2012). As a faculty member in the data collection process, I was provided access to the student groups and the student representatives of the majors.

The focus group data was recorded, transcribed as a narrative, and then analysed in NVIVO using the thematic analysis. Nodes and sub-nodes were recorded, to then analyse each focus group according to the previous nodes and sub-nodes, and to observe deviant cases or confirm the topics as recommended by Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, and Robson, (2012). A semantic analysis was carried out (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2012). The nodes and sub-nodes of preliminary analysis were defined in the first focus group of each sector (students, or teachers), to then contrast them with the information from the following focus group and so on. I also analysed the complementary researcher's notes before each focus group. In the initial proposal, it was considered to record the information through videos. However, Silverman (2014), generated doubts about the amount of information that could be registered, the complexity of its analysis, and the relevance for this study. With this, a voice recorder was used instead of a video recorder as this case study does not require videos for the analysis (body language is not being analysed) and not using videos contributed to the confidentiality of the participants and its interactions.

Then the researcher proceeded with thematic analysis, to finally generate a report that was shared with the supervisor, external academics and with the participants as suggested by Bader, and Rossi, (2011). After the transcription and the analysis, participants were invited to perform a collaborative analysis, which helped in the validity of the information.

For this study, it was important to gather information about meanings and symbols that are related to *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning, because symbols can express what words cannot. Hamel, (2011), indicates that semiotics is the study of meaning and communication, (signs and symbols), information helped to complement what was collected through the word and interaction through symbols.

### 4.4.2 Artwork
Art breaks conventional ways of collecting data and promotes an understanding of the research process through participation (Cole & Knowles, 2008) which is critical for the *Buen Vivir* philosophy and collaborative learning. Artwork presents an opportunity to overcome the traditional way to collect data. Artwork as a data collection technique is revolutionary since it asks participants to connect with their emotions and symbols to build a common answer. Collective construction is vital for *Buen Vivir.* Additionally, artwork allows considering other sources of information and understandings. The mentioned has relation with *Buen Vivir* since this theory promotes diversity for the common good. Research based on art is revolutionary and is related to constructivist methodologies (Finley, 2008). In addition, it connects with *Buen Vivir* due to its focus on collaboration and its intention to face equity problems. Painting as a method of data collection is a process of inquiry that allows us to understand the culture, emotions, symbols, and their interpretations (Sullivan, 2008).

The artwork was done with the student leaders and with a group of teachers. The artistic work was done through a group painting, on cardboard with fingerprints, and it was done in two stages. In the first stage, the participants represented collaborative learning from the

perspective of *Buen Vivir* using art (painting). After that, the researcher facilitated a discussion about the meaning of the paintings and how they decided on their collective construction. With those mentioned above, it was intended to understand how the group reached the necessary agreements for the collective development of the artwork. Eisner (2008) indicates that there are multiple types of knowledge and ways of representing it. Artwork helps in the representation of emotions, empathy, and symbols. It also provides rich and deep data, however, this requires interpretation, and this can be complex.

For the symbolic data collected through artwork, photos were used to record. This was also modified from the research proposal. The main reason for the change was the complexity of the analysis of video information. Also, Silverman (2013) indicates that video should be used based on the study needs and it was considered that it is not the case as the intention was not to present data in videos but analyse the meanings of the participants' representations. Therefore, it was decided to record the visual information of the artistic work through photos, which allowed for an analysis that responds to the needs of this study and permitted more significant interaction and confidence of the participants. Data were interpreted together with the participants, and thematic analysis was carried out. The information of this work was analysed from semiotics.

The artistic representation was analysed by each group to understand the meanings and the symbols related to the artistic expression. The collective interpretations were recorded and then analysed. The artwork interpretation data were transcribed and then analysed by thematic analysis with the help of NVIVO for the determination of the main categories, their nodes, and sub-nodes. Besides, collective interpretations of the work were examined based on the notes taken in each artwork session. Words, meanings, and interactions that emerge from this work were analysed. For this, the participants were asked to explain the meanings of their artistic work and also all participants were invited to the co-analysis as explained in section 4.6.6 in the analysis process.

### 4.4.3 Interviews
 Interviews are intersubjective and fit well with collaborative learning and the interest of this study. Interviews are flexible tools to obtain data with different channels, such as verbal, non-verbal, spoken, and heard (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011). The disadvantage is that they are time-consuming (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011). The interviews at the beginning were thought to be directed to the directors of majors, coordinators, and rector. However, Silveman (2013) recommends the information be responsive to the needs of the study and be collected with criteria that allow covering the needs of the research. For those above, it was considered pertinent that the interviews were made to interested teachers who work, write or research *Buen Vivir* or collaborative learning, as they can make some contributions to the understanding needed for this study.

 The interviews were semi-structured, with open questions and were recorded and transcribed into a Word document. These data were analysed through the thematic analysis through NVIVO. The information was categorized into nodes and sub-nodes. The people who participated in the interviews were invited for collective interpretation.

### 4.4.4 Documentary review
 The documentary review studied data that were not generated for this study; this presents advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that neutral data are observed, although it could have a particular bias because it is the perspective of the institution in this regard.

However, these data helped to understand the context of research, policies, and institutional perspectives as suggested by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, (2011). The data was collected through institutional documents, according to the needs of the study. The case study could be explained by other external documents. However, the official institutional documents helped to understand the specific scenario in depth and analyse the collaborative learning practices and its impacts considering the particular reality in the university studied. The documents analysed were:

- Un acercamiento a una propuesta de identidad. UNAE/ An approach to an identity proposal
- ¿En qué puede devenir la educación a partir del paradigma del Buen Vivir? In Educación, Calidad y Buen Vivir. UNAE/What can education become based on the paradigm of Good Living? In Education, quality and Buen Vivir
- III Congreso Internacional de Educación y Universidad para la transformación social. Balances y desafíos a 100 años de la Reforma de Córdoba. Universidad Nacional de Educación. Declaración de Chuquipata. UNAE/ III International Congress of Education, Education and University for social transformation. Balance sheets and challenges 100 years after the Cordoba Reform.
- Reinventar la universidad para la transformación social. UNAE/ Reinvent the university for social transformation
- Filosofía, Educación y Buen Vivir: un abordaje polilógico a la diversidad epistémica. UNAE. /Philosophy, Education and Good Living: a polylogical approach to epistemic diversity.
- Plan Nacional de formación 2018 - 2021: una propuesta. Cuaderno de Política Educativa 3. Observatorio UNAE/ National training lan 2018 - 2021: a proposal
- Modelo Pedagógico. UNAE / Pedagogical model
- Rendición de cuentas. UNAE/ UNAE report
- Modelo de Prácticas Pre-profesionales. UNAE/ Pre-professional Practices Model
- Educación, Calidad y Buen Vivir. UNAE. / Education, Quality and Good Living
- Estatuto de la Universidad Nacional de Educación/ Statute of the National University of Education

The documentary analysis was done during the process of data collection and analysis. In table 1 the different techniques used, the questions and its relationship with the research objectives are presented.

**Table 1: Relationship between the research objectives and focus groups, artwork, interviews and documentary review**

| Objective | Interview | Focus Group | Art Work | Doc review |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1 Critically analyse the literature on collaborative learning and Good Living around the globe, its impacts, and conditions.** | Q1,13,14 | Q1,9,10 | | X |
| **2 Identify and critically reflect on the practices of collaborative learning at the National University of Education (UNAE).** | Q2,6,8,9,11 | Q,2,6,8 | X | X |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 Explore the link between collaborative learning practices in UNAE and the Good Living philosophy. | Q3,17,18 | Q3,14 | X | X |
| 4. Critically analyse the impacts of collaborative learning practices on undergraduate students and faculty members from the lenses of Good Living in UNAE. | Q4,5,7,10,12 | Q4,5,7 | | X |
| 5. Identify recommendations to improve learning-teaching practices based on Good Living through collaborative learning. | Q19, Q15, Q19 | Q15, Q11, Q12, Q13 | | |

The participant information sheet, and the participant consent form, are in appendix 4 and 5 respectively. These documents have been translated into English. The focus groups were done in Spanish. Then the information provided and the informed consent obtained was done in Spanish because it is the participants' language. Discussing complex topics in English can be daunting for non-English speakers. To achieve as much diversity and authenticity as possible, it was important that I allow the participants to express themselves in their native language. A further, related, reason for including the original language quotes in an appendix is to retain a close distance between the data collected and the data presented.

## 4.5 Data collection and data analysis overview

### 4.5.1 Data collection overview

Bloor et al (2012) recommended that data collection starts with a pilot. Then it was important for this case study to pilot a focus group before data collection. Data were collected first from student representative focus groups (see Appendix 1 with the questions asked) and then from teacher focus groups (see Appendix 2 with the questions asked), this changed the original approach that did not include focus groups with teachers. This change was inspired by Silverman (2013) and was considered necessary to understand collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* from the teachers. As this study aims to contribute to the understanding of collaborative learning, it was critical to allow participants to interact in focus groups and artwork. After that, data were collected from interviews with faculty members who work or research on *Buen Vivir* or/and Education. The artwork data was collected in the student focus groups and the first focus group with faculty members.

It is important to clarify that for the formation of the student focus groups the students' representatives were invited through their student groups (each major at UNAE has a WhatsApp group with all the student representatives). Silverman (2013) mentioned that in the focus groups, it is better to group people who have something in common. Besides, a recommendation that emerged from the pilot focus group was that the focus groups be formed by majors. In the case of the focus groups, the number of maximum eight participants were considered as recommended in the literature, however, there were no problems in this regard since no more than eight participants accepted to participate in each focus group.

Similarly, teachers were invited based on their interest in the research topic. For the focus groups with teachers, these were grouped by specific research groups. In the four students focus groups and in the first teachers' focus groups, the artwork was also done as a final phase (see Appendix 9 with the photos of the artwork). For interviews, teachers considered experts were invited (see Appendix 3 with the questions made). For collecting data Participants information sheet was shared previously (see Appendix 4: Participants information sheet) and Participant Consent was granted (see Appendix 5: Participant Consent form).

### 4.5.2 Data analysis overview

The analysis in NVIVO was done with theoretical thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke, (2006) stated that theoretical thematic analysis is recommended if the intention is understanding data within a theoretical framework. Thus, theoretical thematic analysis was used because it was important for this study to understand data set based on particular interests indicated in the research questions. Silverman (2013) suggests that the information collected must respond to the research needs and objectives. For this research, information was collected progressively to allow understanding some data before continuing collecting data. As an insider researcher, it was necessary to be critical in the research process to prevent the risk of bias of the researcher. Collecting data progressively helped in contrasting the information collected, which helped in critical analysis. Silverman (2013) recommends that qualitative information be analysed as soon as possible to guide the following steps. In this study, the information collected in each phase was analysed before the collection of the following information. The coding was made based on research questions and objectives. NVIVO was used to assemble themes, sub-themes and then to review the data and re-organise it. In the end, reports were generated in NVIVO that served as the basis for preparing the final reports.

Data were collected with four focus groups and artwork with students' representatives, with two focus groups and artwork with faculty members and, two interviews with experts. The initial data set was selected regarding its relation to collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* definitions, tensions, relations, challenges, impacts, considerations, practices and recommendations for improving teaching-learning processes by *Buen Vivir* through collaborative learning. The number of times participants indicate the same information, the relevance for answering the questions and, the information mentioned in co-analysis was taken into account.

After the co-analysis, the data was analysed holistically because the research intention is to understand the students and teachers' perspective regarding collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir,* its impacts, conditions, practices and the recommendations to improve teaching and learning process. The intention is to provide the reader with a big picture of the data. It was useful because it is a case study and this topic was not researched before and it is important to provide a general view of this as Braun and Clarke, (2006) recommend. For this, it was necessary to re-organise the themes and sub-themes.

Themes were identified at a semantic level as Braun and Clarke, (2006) understand. Braun and Clarke, (2006) explain that it is a semantic level of thematic analysis when the intention is to understand a data set in the surface level and do not look anything beyond what the participant mentions. As the study intends to understand the topic in general because there were no previous studies, a semantic analysis fits well with the purpose of the study and its needs. In the analysis, the constructionist perspective was used. This means that the meanings

and the data set were understood as socially constructed rather than an individual point of view as Braun and Clarke, (2006) state.

The analysis was done searching through all the data set and following the recommendations of Braun and Clarke, (2006) about how thematic analysis should follow some steps such as:

- familiarizing with the data,
- generating initial codes,
- searching for themes,
- reviewing preliminary themes,
- defining and naming themes and,
- writing the analysis.

In addition to the recommendations and based on the methodology of this study, there was a step of co-analysis after the initial analysis, which helped in rethinking themes, and sub-themes.

To manage the data, I transcribed the audio of each focus group, artwork and interview. The data transcribed was read item by item. Then preliminary themes and sub-themes were selected based on its relationship with the questions and the main objectives of this study. The preliminary themes and sub-themes were read and reviewed sometimes to be sure that they were coded properly. After that, the researcher started to reflect on themes. Subsequently, the researcher shares a preliminary analysis with participants. For the co-analysis, the researcher shared with the participants by PowerPoint and by Word documents the initial themes and sub-themes for them to contribute to the analysis. Likewise, the researcher sent some reminders in order to get feedback. Participants' feedback helped in redefining the themes. Finally, the researcher read the data set again and the co-analysis and, redefined the themes based on Braun and Clarke, (2006) questions:

- What does each theme mean?
- What are the implications of each theme?
- Why do people talk about it in its particular way?
- What is the overall story the different themes reveal about the topic?

For examples of the data analysis, see Appendix 6. For this study, the data set is understood with their specific aspects. In the next section, the main details of the data collection and data analysis process are explained.

## 4.6 Process of data collection and data analysis

This section outlines the process of data collection and data analysis. In the first part, the Pilot Focus Group and artwork are presented, as well as its process, recommendations and lessons. The second part presents the process of data collection of the four focus groups and artworks with students. The third part displays the data collection of focus groups and artwork with teachers. The fourth part shows the data collection of experts' interview process and specific aspects. In the fifth part, the data analysis process is shown. General concluding remarks are mentioned in the last part.

## 4.6.1 Pilot Focus Group

The pilot focus group had the objective of evaluating the proposed methodology, the questions prepared, the time required, and the logistical details that were used to make the focus groups perform in the best way. In addition, the pilot focus group helped the researcher

gain experience in the management of focus groups, review the relevance of the proposed data analysis, as well as gain experience in the use of NVIVO for analysis. The pilot focus group served to test the proposed methods and make improvements in any aspect of the methodology that required it, to ensure the best use of focus groups for the present study. The data collected in the pilot focus group was not used for the analysis, but is important to state that eleven students participated in this focus group. The process of the Pilot focus group is shown in figure 8.

**Figure 8: Pilot focus group process**



**Pilot focus group process**

- **Approach to groups**
  - The research project was shared with the major's directors
  - The research project was shared with student representatives from Education in Arts and Humanities, Education in Foreign Languages, Initial Education through students groups.

- **Project presentation**
  - Brief meeting (15 minutes) to confirm the participation. Nine students confirmed
  - The researcher allowed 9 students in the pilot focus group.

- **Day and time agreement**
  - It was agreed from 12:00 to 14:00 since it was the best time for them.
  - The researcher agrees to provide lunch to students who participated to reduce the barriers of participating and to contribute with a warm atmosphere to interact.

- **Preparations**
  - A reminder one day before the focus group through a watshap group created.
  - Preparing classroom and materials for the focus group.

- **Focus group implementation**
  - Welcoming participants
  - Guiding questions. Everything was recorded. Also, the researcher took notes of the relevant information.
  - Artwork to represent through painting what CL is from the perspective of GL. The final work was recorded in a photo.
  - Explanation of artwork. Participants indicated what their artwork represented, because they chose it and how they managed to agree on what was painted.
  - Closing focus groups. The researcher indicated that the information sheets contained the contact email in case any questions arose.

- **Information analysis**
  - Transcription of focus group and artwork, including researchers notes
  - Thematic analysis. NVIVO for coding related with the questions asked and the research objectives
  - The nodes were coded for the researcher denominating them with names that group the category
  - Within each node, sub-categories -sub-nodes- were encoded which belong to the node, but have a specific aspect of it.
  - Nodes and sub-nodes were reviewed to analyse if something should be modified

### 4.6.1.1 Recommendation from the pilot focus group

The pilot focus groups provided important recommendations for the next focus groups and artworks regarding the number of participants, the time, the need to group participants that know each other, and the importance of icebreakers for promoting smooth interactions.

*The conformation of a group with people who know each other*: Participants suggested that focus groups should be done with people who know each other. They were somewhat shy in the focus group. The explanation given was that not knowing each other previously impacted on their comfortability and confidence "... maybe we did not know each other; it was something new. We came, and we did not know what to do. So that difficulty was raised, but I think that, despite that, we could do something in common. "

*Establish a suitable duration time for the focus group*: For the students who participated, it seemed that there was not enough time for the focus group. They felt it was too short for everything that was proposed. This could also be because they could not start the work with smoothness because they did not know each other "... we did not have the opportunity to get involved with the other, in a solid way, maybe for the time?" "There should be more time ... "

*Generate icebreakers and presentation spaces*: Participants indicated that icebreakers could help to generate confidence and greater ease in the realization of focus groups "... there should be more time and icebreakers… ".

### 4.6.1.2 Focus group lessons
Based on the recommendation of the participants in the pilot focus groups and the experience, there were good practices that were considered for the focus groups with students and teachers and there were also some practices to improve as indicated below.

***Good practices***
- *Socialize the project with the major's directors to obtain their support and access to the group of students*. It was really helpful since the major directors had access to the student representatives' groups and presenting them the research project opened the option to be included in these groups.
- *Present the project in the student representatives' groups*. As soon as the major directors included me in the students' groups, presenting the project with the students through their groups was a good practice. This helped to invite them for the brief meeting (15 minutes).
- *Invite a 15-minute meeting to engage student representatives*. In this meeting, participants confirmed their participation and this allowed to solve concerns regarding the research but also to confirm how many students were willing to participate.
- *Establish the hours from 12:00 to 14:00 hours for the focus groups*, as long as this facilitates the participation. Students were informed that it was possible to implement focus groups at night or during the weekend. However, they mentioned that the best time was 12:00 to 14:00 to not interrupt their academic activities.
- *Give lunch to the participants to eliminate the barriers for participating*. This helped in reducing the barriers for participating since the time for focus groups was during lunchtime. Similarly, this provided a warm atmosphere for interacting.
- *Reserve the space for the focus group within the university to facilitate the arrival of participants*. The participants mentioned that the best place for focus groups was in the university since this reduced the barriers for participating.
- *Send reminders to the WhatsApp group*. This helped to guarantee the participation and answer some questions of the participants related to the organisation (it was stated previously, however, that participants had some additional questions at the last moment).

***Practices to improve***
- *Invite students by major, so that the interaction arises spontaneously when previously known*. This was an important recommendation to promote a smooth interaction.
- *Present the previous topic to the focus group in a better way.* The presentation of the research in the pilot focus group was fast to go directly to the questions and forgot the importance of creating the atmosphere to participate. This was improved in the other focus groups.
- *Implement icebreakers among students to build trust*. This was critically important and emerged from the recommendations of the participants. It was not considered in the pilot focus group but helped in the next focus groups.
- *Conform the focus groups with a maximum of eight persons*. It was recommended in the literature but also the difficulty in the interaction could be related to an extra participant that did not know most of the other participants.

With these above, there was a need to take good practices as part of the methodology used in the focus groups, as well as to take the practices to change and ensure an adequate process.

### 4.6.2 Selection of sample
 The need to re-invite the participants of the focus groups and interviews, to the co-analysis was considered to define the sample. Silverman (2014) and Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, and Robson, (2012) suggest focus groups with pre-established groups when the intention is to invite them back for a second phase. Those above were considered for this study since it was sought to be collaborative, and the participants were invited to the co-analysis.

In addition, Bader and Rossi (2011) indicate that it is better to invite people who are in some way affected or interested in the research topic to participate. Then the recommendations of Bader and Rossi (2011) were considered and applied with student representatives, faculty members from TIERRA and TRENDS research groups, and faculty members who work and research on topics related to *Buen Vivir* and Education as they would be interested in participating.

In summary, the next section explains the sample to this research.

*Four focus groups, including artwork with a maximum of 8 student representatives*
1) Education in Experimental Sciences
2) Basic General Education
3) Intercultural Bilingual Education
4) Special education

All the student representatives from the majors above were invited. However, seven students from Education in Experimental Sciences accepted, four of them females and three males. Five participants in the first focus group and artwork were within 18-23 years of age and two were 24 years old or more.

Regarding the second focus group and artwork with Special Education, 8 student representatives accepted to participate, six female and two male participants. All of them within 18-23 years of age.

In the third focus group and artwork with Intercultural and Bilingual Education, four student representatives accepted to participate, two female and two male students. Three students within 18-23 years of age and a student with 24 years of age or more.

In the fourth focus group and artwork with Basic Education, six student representatives accepted, one female and four male participants, three within 18-23 years of age and two with 24 years of age or more.

In total, 24 representative students participated in the student's focus groups, thirteen females and eleven males, nineteen within 18-23 years of age and five with 24 years of age or more. With the aforementioned, we can see that regarding the gender there was almost the same number of participants in total, with exceptions in Special education, where most of the participants were females and Basic Education where most participants were males. Regarding age, most of the participants were between 18-23 years old.

*Two focus groups and an artwork with a maximum of 8 faculty members of research groups in topics related to Education and Good Living*
5) from "Transdiciplinariedad, educación y Sociedad, Transdisciplinarity, Education and society" TRENDS research group,
6) from "TIERRA" (Earth) research group. TIERRA group conducts research on education in environmental care from the conception of the Good Living and the Andean traditions.

In order to conform the focus groups-artwork with faculty members, all faculty members from TRENDS and TIERRA research groups were invited. However, ten faculty members agreed to participate. The first focus group-artwork were integrated by six faculty members, four females and two males, all of them between 25-35 years old. The second focus group-artwork was formed by four teachers, two females and two males, three of them between 25-35 years old and one with 36 years of age or more. In total, the number of participants by gender was six females and four males with nine of them between 25-35 years old and one with 36 years of age or more. It was interesting that both research groups were mainly integrated by young faculty members.

*Two interviews with the faculty members that research, write or work on Good Living and Education*
7) An interview with an expert in *Buen Vivir* and educations in Ecuador and Latin America (more details were omitted for maintaining the anonymity of participants).
8) An interview with an expert in *Buen Vivir* and education.

The two interviews provided enough information, so it was decided not to collect more interviews. The interviewees were both males, one with 25-35 years of age and the second one with 36 years of age or more. Although where there are women in management positions at UNAE, it was clear that there were more men in management positions and leading research within the university studied, at least in the research topics related to Education and Good Living.

The people invited to participate were selected for the study. In the case of students were invited to be socially validated and for the university for their leadership role. Additionally, student representatives were invited by major considering that the literature and pilot focus group recommended the focus groups be conformed by people who have something in

common, as much as possible. Teachers were invited to belong to research groups related to *Buen Vivir* and Education. Silverman (2013) and Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, (2012) recommend that people who participate in focus groups are people who have an interest in the subject or are somehow affected by it. The above-mentioned allows deepening in the matter.

People who feel affected by a topic or have a particular interest in it, have previous knowledge in the area, which allows knowing in depth the subject. Besides, as this research is a case study, it is important to deepen the context of the research from the perspective of those who conform the reality studied. The texts reviewed were selected according to the study's need to contrast or verify the results that emerged in the study. The documentary review was included in chapter two to complement the literature review.

Even when the intention was to co-analyse the information, the lack of time of the participants and their multiple activities interfered in getting more contributions. Additionally, it is important to mention that the results were elaborated by selecting the student representatives, which left out the students who were not. Similarly, in the selection of teachers, information was collected by inviting teachers who have an interest in *Buen Vivir*. However, teachers who do not have a particular interest in this subject were excluded from this study. Further research could approach collaborative learning from the *Buen Vivir* perspective in students who are not representatives and in teachers who have no interest in this field.

### 4.6.3   Students focus groups and artworks data collection

Four focus groups and artwork were held with student representatives, as contemplated in the methodological framework of this study. The lessons learned and recommendations from the pilot focus group helped in the development of the four focus groups and artwork. The confirmation was made with student representatives by major. Each focus group including artwork lasted two hours because it was the time students could participate before going back to their academic activities. The researcher facilitated an ice breaker of 5 minutes in each focus group and made an introduction to the topic for another 10 minutes. After that questions were asked in the focus group, the researcher asked to answer through artwork what is collaborative learning by *Buen Vivir*. A photo of the artwork was recorded.

In Table 2, the dates of data collection of students focus groups and artwork, the major and the number of participants are presented.

**Table 2: Student's focus groups and artwork dates, majors and numbers of participants**

| Date | Major | Number of participants | Number of female participants | Number of male participants | Number of participants between 18-25 years of age | Number of participants with 26 years of age or more |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| March 18th | Education on Experimental Science | 7 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 1 |
| March 25th | Special Education | 8 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 0 |
| April 1st | Intercultural and Bilingual Education | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| April 8th | General Basic Education | 5 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
|  | TOTAL | 24 | 13 | 11 | 20 | 4 |

### 4.6.4 Faculty members focus groups data collection

Two focus groups were held with the faculty member of TRENDS and TIERRA research groups and artwork was done with the first group of teachers. Lessons learned and recommendation in the pilot focus group were considered.

1) Using the existing groups, in this case, the research groups of faculty members.
2) Establishing the time from 12:00 to 14:00 hours helped with one focus group. However, the second focus group with faculty members was done from 14:00 to 16:00 hours.
3) Offering something to eat created a warmer atmosphere for the focus group and reduced the barriers to participate. For the first focus group with faculty members, the researcher provided lunch because the focus group was done during lunchtime, and the participants spent three hours in the focus group. For the second focus group, the researcher provided some snacks to promote a warm atmosphere for interacting. Figure 15 presents the process of teachers' focus groups.

In table 3, the dates and number of faculty members that participated in the focus groups and artwork are presented.

**Table 3: Faculty members focus groups and artwork process**

| Date | Number of participants | Number of female participants | Number of male participants | Number of participants within 25 -35 years of age | Number of participants with 36 years of age or more |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| April 15th | 6 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 0 |
| April 22nd | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 10 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 1 |

Data collection and data analysis processes followed the methodology as learned in the pilot focus groups. However, there were changes like the time spent with the first focus groups with faculty members. The researcher presented the option to make an artwork to the two focus groups with faculty members and the first group accepted. It was interesting to observe the level of involvement and the extra time agreed with the first focus group with faculty members.

### 4.6.5 Experts interviews data collection

Two interviews were held with the faculty members who are experts in *Buen Vivir* and/or Education. The two interviews provided sufficient information, so no further interviews were conducted. The selection process of the experts was based on their consent to participate in this study and, their availability for the interview. The first interview was held on April 29th, 2019, at 10:00 am, in order to facilitate the participation of the expert. The second interview was held on May 6th, from 12:00 to 14:00. The experts that participated in the interviews were both males, one between 25-35 years of age and the second one with more than 36 years of age. It was interesting that most of the authors and researchers in Education and Good Living in UNAE, were men and this was the reason for inviting two men to the interviews. The two experts were invited based on their availability to participate in the interviews.

Regarding the experts' interviews, it was not necessary to reserve spaces or to provide snacks or lunch because the interview was a bidirectional environment. All the transcriptions were done manually and it helped to understand the data.

### 4.6.6 Data analysis process

The data analysis process was a back and forth process with multiple steps. In figure 9 the analysis process in general is presented.

**Figure 9: Analysis process**



Analysis process

1. Students focus groups and artwork analysis

- Transcript and preliminary analysis of student focus group and artwork 1
- Transcript and preliminary analysis of student focus group and artwork 2 considering the findings in previous focus group and artwork
- Transcript and preliminary analysis of student focus group and artwork 3 considering the findings in the previous focus groups and artworks
- Transcript and preliminary analysis of student focus group and artwork 4 considering the findings in the previous focus groups and artworks
- Building a report of the preliminary findings in the students group (12 themes)

2. Teachers focus group analysis

- Transcript and preliminary analysis of teacher focus group and artwork 1 (teachers wanted to make an artwork)
- Transcript and preliminary analysis of teacher focus group 2 considering the findings in the previous focus group and artwork in the teachers group
- Construction of a report of the preliminary findings in the teachers group (12 themes)

3. Interview analysis

- Transcript and preliminary analysis of expert interview 1
- Transcript and preliminary analysis of expert interview 2
- Construction of a report of the preliminary findings in the experts group (11 themes)

4. Sharing preliminary findings to participants for co-analysis

- A PowerPoint document, and another Word document with the main themes and and sub themes for students to comment on
- A PowerPoint document, and another Word document with the main themes and and sub themes for teachers to comment on
- A PowerPoint document, and another Word document with the main themes and and sub themes for experts to comment on

**Analysis process**

**5. Getting feedback from the participants**

- no student commented
- four teachers commented
- no experts commented

**6. Re reading the transcripts, reports and Braun and Clarke (2006)**

**7. Re-write and organise the themes looking a general understanding rather than dividing this by data set as recommended Braun and Clarke (2006)**

- Organise and write the themes by group (students, teachers and experts) trying to find common aspects in each group in all the information (focus groups and art work in the students as well in the teachers group, in the experts groups just in the interviews). The mentioned implies that in this new organisation the data is understood in general rather than by data collection instrument.
- Look for common themes in all the groups (students, teachers and experts)
- Re-write the major themes in all the groups (Students, teachers and experts)
- Re-write and organise the sub themes in all the groups
- Re-write the report of the themes and sub themes presenting them as a general understanding rather than dividing the information by groups or by data collection instrument. In the themes and sub-themes, some particularities of each group, when found, were presented.

**8. Generation of five main themes that meet the objectives of the study**

- Review the objectives of the study again
- Re-organise the main themes and sub themes linking them with the objectives of the study to facilitate the reading

**9. Writing chapter 5 and 6 and re-organising some aspects of themes and sub themes**

It is important to state that I consider that analysis begins with data collection. However, in order to differentiate the steps and provide a clearer view of the process for the reader, the data analysis is differentiated from the data collection.

Figures 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 present the way data was managed to finally obtain the themes that are presented in chapter 5 Results.

**Figure 10: Steps for organising the data**



Figure 10 shows the five steps for organising the data in the final themes and sub-themes.

**Figure 11: Organising themes by a group of participants and by questions asked**

1. Organising themes by group of participants and by questions asked

    1.1 Students perspective example

        1.1.1 Listening and collecting data from students.

            In each focus groups and artwork data collection , the researcher listen and took notes of the first ideas to make sense of the data collected.

            After each students focus group and artwork, there was an analysis and making sense of what participants indicated.

        1.1.2 Listening to the data collected

            After each focus group and artwork the researcher listened the record of the participants interventions the number of times needed to make sense the initial data and start thinking the main ideas expressed.

        1.1.3 Transcribing the data collected

            Listening multiple times to the record in order to transcribe the participants interventions as clear as possible respecting what they literally said.

            Reviewing the transcription checking with the records

            Editing and correcting errors during the transcription

            For transcription, participants were identified by letters in order of their first intervention in the focus group.  To differentiate the participation between the focus groups, each focus group was numbered, and that number was added to the letters of the participants. Thus the first participant of focus group 2 was identified as A2; the first participant of the third focus group was identified as A3, and so on. In the interviews the experts were coded as X1,  and X2.

**1. Organising themes by group of participants and by questions asked**

**1.1.4 Organising the data in twelve parts related with the questions asked in the focus group and also the data that was collected in the art work.**

Organising the data in eleven parts based on data collected through focus group

1. CL definition, 2. GL definition, 3. Conditions and considerations for GL and CL, 4. CL and GL relations, 5. Tensions between CL and GL, 6. Advantages of CL, 7. Disadvantages of CL, 8. Challenges, 9. Impacts of CL by the perspective of GL, 10. Practices of CL, 11. Recommendations

Organising data based on data collected through artwork

It was set as an additional theme called symbolic representation of CL and GL

**1.1.5 Reviewing the data that could be part of other themes even if it was not an answer that was expressed directly in a question related**

Reading the data in the organisation and see if could be part of more themes

Adding the data that could be part of multiple themes in each theme

Re-reading the data in each theme to ensure that everything was considered

**1.1.6 Creating sub-themes**

Reading each theme to understand the main aspects

Creating the sub-themes within each theme

Reading each theme and sub-themes to review that nothing is missing and that there are data that could be in more than one sub-theme

Including the data that could be part of multiple sub-themes in each section

**1. Organising themes by group of participants and by questions asked**

**1.1.7 Review of the themes and sub-themes**

Multiple readings to ensure that the themes and sub-themes have the data that support each one

Corrections based on the reflections of the researcher, its notes, its journal and conversations with external academics

**1.1.8 Analising the next focus group and artwork and contrasting with previous information**

The process was similar with each focus group and artwork. Then the process start again in the 1.1.1 with each focus group and artwork. However, after the first one the other data was contrasted with the previous one.

**1.1.9 Changing the sub-themes names and context based on the new information analysed**

Reading the previous themes and sub-themes names and context and reading the new information based on focus groups and artwork. It was done after each new analysis.

Contrasting data

Re-naming and re-organising the content of each theme and sub-theme based on the contrast of the information

Reviewing the changes and pulling some aspects

**1.1.10 Reading the themes and sub-themes after all the initial analysis of students focus groups and artwork in NVIVO.**

**1.1.11 Pulling the themes and sub-themes**

**1.1.12 Making the report**

Making reports in NVIVO

Organising the report by initial themes and sub-themes

Reading and editing in spanish

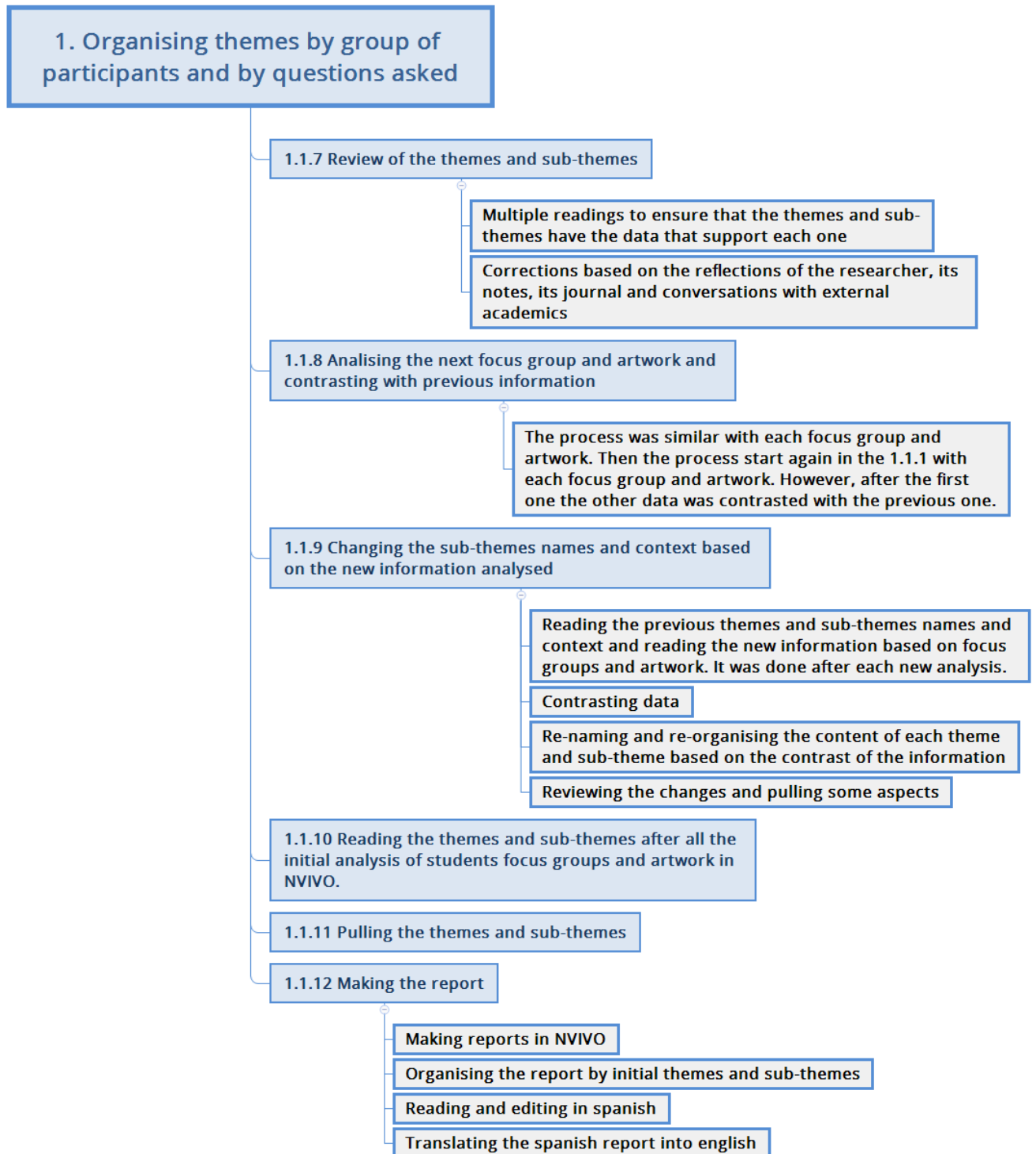Translating the spanish report into english

Figure 11 explains the process of organising the data in the first step. The first step has twelve parts that are presented in the figure above. It is critical to flag that the organisation of the data began as soon as the data was collected, because the researcher was the person who collected it. As a facilitator, I took notes and made sense of what the participants said.
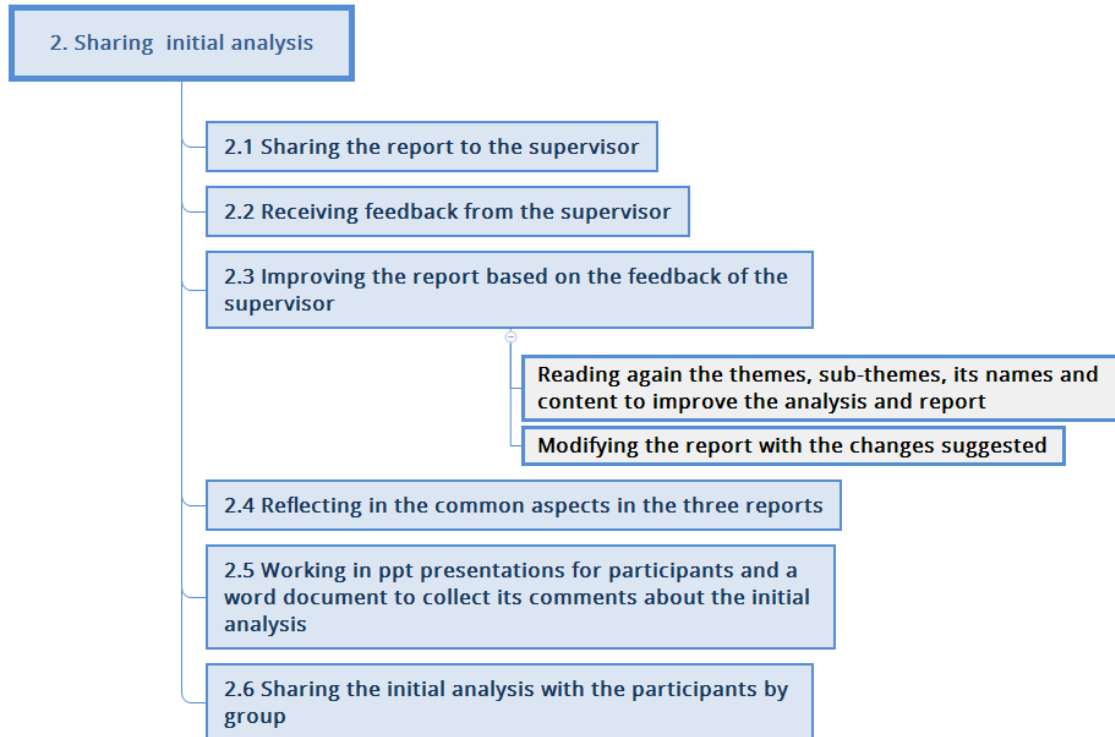
**Figure 12: Sharing initial analysis**



Figure 12 shows the step of sharing an initial analysis to the supervisor and the participants.

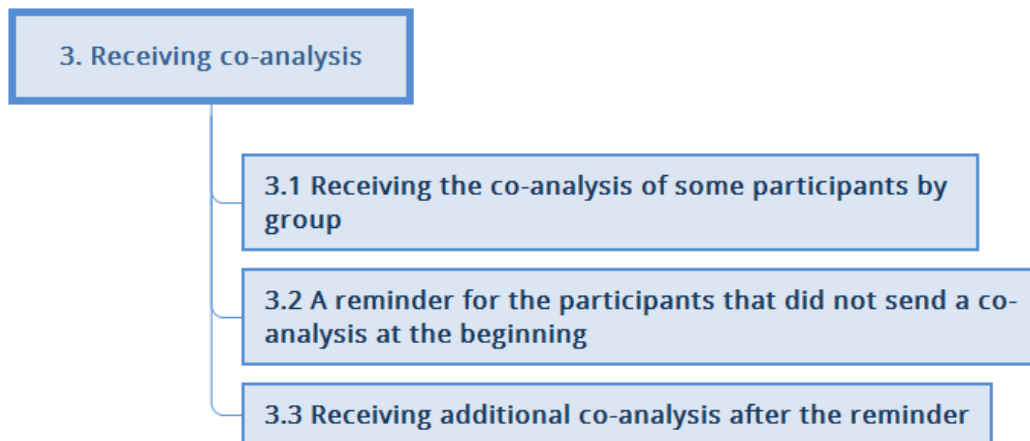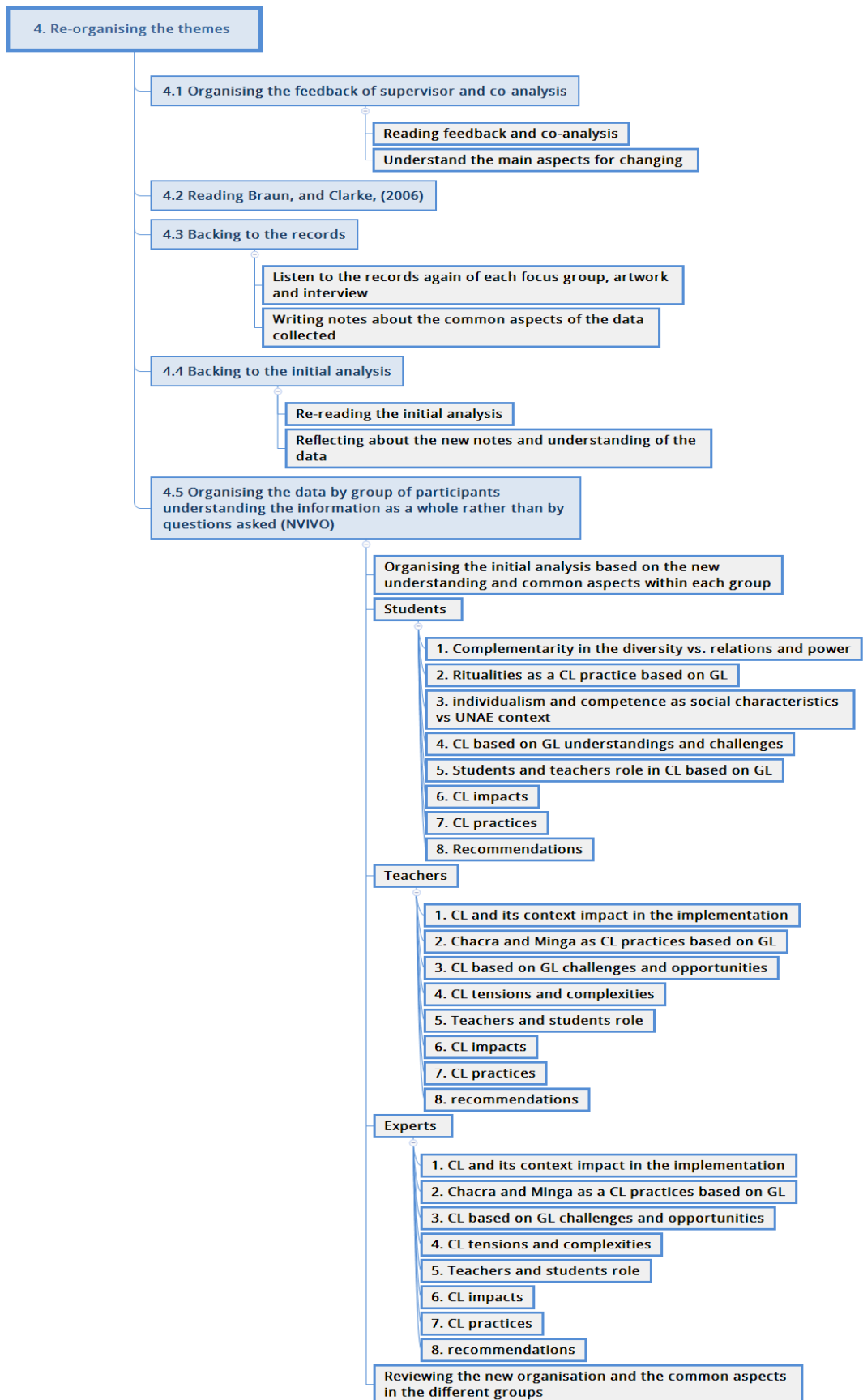**Figure 13: Receiving co-analysis**



Figure 13 shows the step of receiving co-analysis. Not all participants did the co-analysis. However, it helped to re-think the data collected and start working in a new organisation.
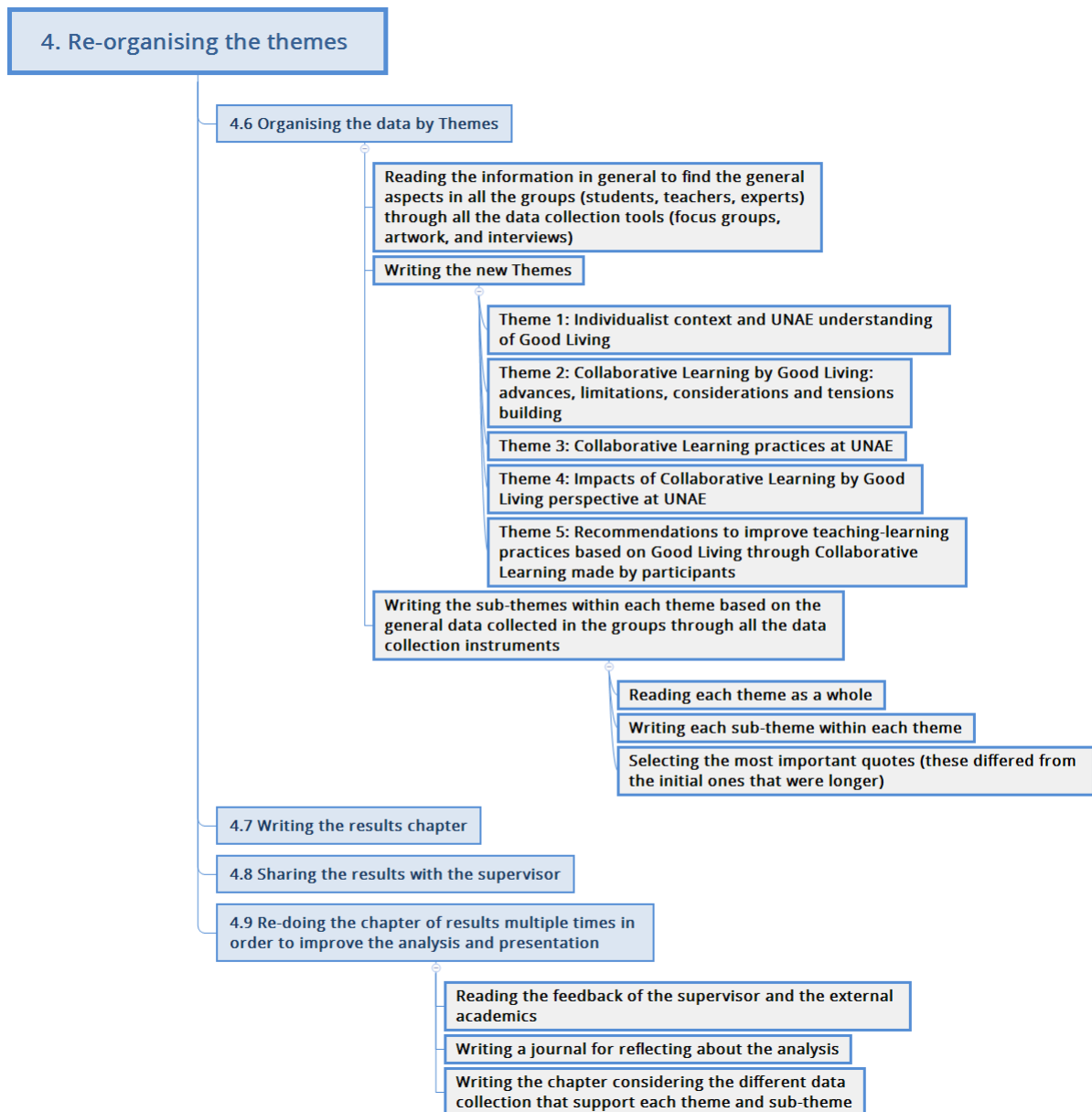
**Figure 14: Re-organising the themes**



4. Re-organising the themes

4.1 Organising the feedback of supervisor and co-analysis

Reading feedback and co-analysis

Understand the main aspects for changing

4.2 Reading Braun, and Clarke, (2006)

4.3 Backing to the records

Listen to the records again of each focus group, artwork and interview

Writing notes about the common aspects of the data collected

4.4 Backing to the initial analysis

Re-reading the initial analysis

Reflecting about the new notes and understanding of the data

4.5 Organising the data by group of participants understanding the information as a whole rather than by questions asked (NVIVO)

Organising the initial analysis based on the new understanding and common aspects within each group

Students

1. Complementarity in the diversity vs. relations and power
2. Ritualities as a CL practice based on GL
3. individualism and competence as social characteristics vs UNAE context
4. CL based on GL understandings and challenges
5. Students and teachers role in CL based on GL
6. CL impacts
7. CL practices
8. Recommendations

Teachers

1. CL and its context impact in the implementation
2. Chacra and Minga as CL practices based on GL
3. CL based on GL challenges and opportunities
4. CL tensions and complexities
5. Teachers and students role
6. CL impacts
7. CL practices
8. recommendations

Experts

1. CL and its context impact in the implementation
2. Chacra and Minga as a CL practices based on GL
3. CL based on GL challenges and opportunities
4. CL tensions and complexities
5. Teachers and students role
6. CL impacts
7. CL practices
8. recommendations

Reviewing the new organisation and the common aspects in the different groups

```
4. Re-organising the themes
    4.6 Organising the data by Themes
        Reading the information in general to find the general
        aspects in all the groups (students, teachers, experts)
        through all the data collection tools (focus groups,
        artwork, and interviews)
        Writing the new Themes
            Theme 1: Individualist context and UNAE understanding
            of Good Living
            Theme 2: Collaborative Learning by Good Living:
            advances, limitations, considerations and tensions
            building
            Theme 3: Collaborative Learning practices at UNAE
            Theme 4: Impacts of Collaborative Learning by Good
            Living perspective at UNAE
            Theme 5: Recommendations to improve teaching-learning
            practices based on Good Living through Collaborative
            Learning made by participants
        Writing the sub-themes within each theme based on the
        general data collected in the groups through all the data
        collection instruments
            Reading each theme as a whole
            Writing each sub-theme within each theme
            Selecting the most important quotes (these differed from
            the initial ones that were longer)
    4.7 Writing the results chapter
    4.8 Sharing the results with the supervisor
    4.9 Re-doing the chapter of results multiple times in
    order to improve the analysis and presentation
        Reading the feedback of the supervisor and the external
        academics
        Writing a journal for reflecting about the analysis
        Writing the chapter considering the different data
        collection that support each theme and sub-theme
```

Figure 14 shows the last step for organising the data in the five themes that are presented in this chapter. This last step could have more details. However, I considered it important to summarise the process for the reader.

After the initial analysis carried out by the researcher, reports were generated to serve as an input for the co-analysis with the people who participated in the study. The reports were presented in PowerPoint with its main results in categories and sub-nodes. This allowed for the integration of the other point of view concerning the collected data and improved the validity of the data. As a study on collaborative learning, it was important to provide an element of collaboration to analyse the data, which is linked to the theories that drive this research. It was not a requirement that students and teachers join in the interpretation of the data. However, a general invitation was sent by the researcher to the participants via email using both, the personal and the University of Liverpool accounts. The collaboration was anonymous, and the participants had the opportunity to review the data collected and contrast, confirm or complement the data set, but not the original recordings, to avoid

identifying the people who participated. Appendix 6 and 7 help illustrate the analysis process, portraying examples and images of how the data was managed and analysed.

## 4.7 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted with all the ethical standards established by the University of Liverpool and the research committee of UNAE. The proposal was reviewed and approved by the committees of the University of Liverpool and UNAE.

During the data collection, I informed each participant that the participation is voluntary and that the information is anonymous. Personal information was not collected in the focus groups, artistic work, and interviews.
Ethical considerations include:
- Get approval from UNAE.
- Get approval from the University of Liverpool
- Get the informed consent of each participant.
- Declaration of confidentiality and anonymity.
- Evaluation of risks/benefits to participants and researchers.
- Scientific quality of the results.
- Disclosure of any conflict of interests.

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), the study is not sensitive. The authors indicated that sensitive studies are those that research on topics where there are minors involved, experimental research and others that could affect the participants in some way. Thus, this study is not sensitive as it does not have risks of impacting participants negatively. To contact people, I used personal channels and the University of Liverpool email, instead of the institutional mail of the university studied. This served to differentiate the roles and avoid confusions and pressures for participation. A digital version of the transcript of the collected data will be protected and saved for 5 to 7 years after the study. Confidentiality is protected and, if a participant wanted to drop out, he or she had the option to do as recommended by Oliver, (2003). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) indicate that informed consent is not enough to guarantee the voluntariness of the participants. This was considered in this study, since being an internal researcher at the time of data collection, represented a risk about possible biases and to the participants feeling pressured. To address these risks, at the beginning of each session to collect the data, emphasis was made on the fact that it was a voluntary space and that those who wished to withdraw could do so at the time they considered appropriate.

## 4.8 Insider researcher

It is important to clarify that I was part of the analysed system and I am no stranger to the dynamics of power, academic colonialism, individualism, productivism, in everyday life. As an insider researcher until data collection, there was a risk of not recognizing the subjectivity of my perspective, and my preconceptions about the university studied (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014, Ferguson and Ferguson, 2001). I clarified from the beginning my values and assumptions that guided me throughout this research process (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). I had a subjective perspective regarding collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* in Ecuadorian context and also regarding the university studied. Every person sees the reality in a specific manner and I am no exception. As I mentioned in chapter 1 section 1.3, my previous work experience helped in the understanding that collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* need more research on my country but also more training. Nevertheless, I also came with the understanding that even with all the challenges that collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*

practices have in my context, it has positive impacts in teaching-learning processes. Additionally, as an insider researcher I knew the university and had preconceptions regarding its practices and reality. I considered that even when the university studied has important political support and practices oriented to *Buen Vivir* and collaboration, there is still need in training and implementation with rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the practices and the results of the teaching-learning processes promoted in the pedagogical model. To face this risk, I had a journal to write my thoughts, ideas, concerns and discuss this with external academics in order to critique my perspective and avoid bias.

Similarly, my assumptions shape the methodology and tools chosen. As a psychologist, I tend to understand life subjectively. I consider that social phenomena cannot be explained completely with numbers but understanding the individuals and communities where the phenomena occur. For this reason, the methodology selected reflects this assumption. Additionally, I believe in symbols and meanings behind each action and interaction. For me, the word is important, but symbols can also help to express and communicate in a much more emotional way. Then, the selection of artwork responds to this assumption. I also believe in the interactions within individuals as a way of learning and creating realities, so the selection of focus groups as a tool of data collection made sense. Additionally, I consider important individual spaces for a deep analysis of the perceptions and understandings of a person. In this sense, interviews were selected for this purpose. Finally, I consider critical to understand reality within the context, so it was crucial to use the literature generated by the university studied to understand its point of view regarding collaborative learning from the *Buen Vivir* perspective.

There was a risk of knowing some participants, and this could affect data collection and interpretation. To face these risks, I invited the representative students from four majors, so the probability of knowing the participants was reduced. Regarding teachers and experts, the participants knew me. However, in all the cases (students, faculty members and experts) when I invited the participants, I was very careful in letting them know that the participation was voluntary. I also shared the information through personal mails and the mail of the University of Liverpool.

Furthermore, I discussed my notes and my interpretations with external scholars to receive their comments as suggested by McNiff and Whitehead, (2005). Important feedback was received regarding co-analysis. At the beginning of the study, I was not going to request co-analysis because of my assumptions. I assumed that teachers and students would not collaborate because it added activities. Additionally, I was not going to invite teachers for artwork because I thought teachers were not going to accept this way of collecting data. However, reflecting on my assumptions in this regard with my primary supervisor and two external academics, I understand this as my limitations. After the reflections, I decided to add the co-analysis part and invite teachers for artwork and give them the opportunity to accept or not (co-analysis and artwork). Similarly, I criticized in the literature all ideas about collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. It was a back and forth process; I read and re-read the literature to contrast them and analyse its limits.

Moreover, I invited the participants to review the data and clarify some aspects that could be interpreted in different ways. Likewise, particular attention was paid to interpreting the results. The co-analysis process was really helpful to give voice to participants in the analysis but also to avoid bias in my analysis.

As an insider researcher, there were also benefits, such as the facility to inviting participants, reserving university spaces to collect information, and the knowledge of the organizational culture that allowed to better understand the context and the terms used by the participants. In some of my reflections, I noted that as an insider researcher I knew some terms that are very specific to the university studied such as pedagogical model, Pre-professional practices, PIENSA, Minga (communitarian collective work for solving collective problems), Chacra (familiar agricultural spaces, recognized as the representation of the fundamental elements of the construction of life). This helped in the understanding of the information produced in the focus groups, artwork and interviews.

I facilitated the focus groups, artwork and the interviews and this presented some advantages and disadvantages. Some of the advantages were that as facilitator-interviewer, I knew the university, its norms, culture, policies, procedures, which facilitated data collection. Knowing the policies, the culture and other internal aspects contribute to a smooth data collection process. On the contrary, some disadvantages included the risk of participants feeling pressured to participate. To address these risks, I sent information from personal channels or the University of Liverpool email and explained in detail that participation was voluntary. The voluntariness was flagged in every aspect of the data collection.

## 4.9 Concluding remarks

This research is qualitative. It is a case study because of the unique characteristics of the chosen university. For the realization of this research, focus groups and artistic work were used both for students and teachers. Interviews were conducted with teachers, and a documentary review of the university studied according to the need of the study. As the intention is to understand collaborative learning practices and impacts holistically, it was important to use various techniques that offered different aspects of the whole case.

# 5 Results

This chapter presents the results of the case study, in particular, the perspective of students and teachers on collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* gathered in the focus groups (students and teachers), including the artwork, and interviews with experts as mentioned in the methodology chapter. In chapters 1 and 2, the UNAE documents for understanding this case study and to respond to the specific objective 1 are presented, thus they will not be presented in this chapter. The process of data collection and data analysis was explained in the Methodology chapter. Chapter five is presented as a whole story of the case study divided into five sections related to the themes.

Sections one and two will help the reader to understand the UNAE context and the understanding around collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir.* Section one will show the challenges of *Buen Vivir* in an individualist context. Section two will show collaborative learning by *Buen Vivir,* its advances, limitations, considerations and tensions.

Section three will present the collaborative learning practices at UNAE. This section will also display the links between collaborative learning practices at UNAE and the *Buen Vivir* perspective. This section is related to the second and third specific research objectives of this case study *"2. Identify and critically reflect on collaborative learning practices at the National University of Education (UNAE). 3. Explore the link between the practices of collaborative learning in UNAE and the philosophy of Good Living"*.

Section four will show the impacts of collaborative learning by *Buen Vivir* perspective at UNAE. This section is related to the fourth objective of this study *"4. Critically analyse the impacts of collaborative learning practices from the perspective of Good Living, in undergraduate students and teachers of UNAE"*.

Section five will present the recommendations for improving teaching and learning practices at UNAE based on *Buen Vivir* through collaborative learning made by participants. The recommendations in this section were given by the participants and contribute with the fifth specific objective of this research *"5. Identify recommendations to improve teaching and learning practices based on Good Living through collaborative learning"*.

The quotes do not necessarily indicate everything mentioned in the focus groups, artwork or interviews, but represent what was discussed in the building of information. The quotes are presented with the code of the person who participated and the number of the focus group, artwork or interview as appropriate. The intent is not to analyse the information collected by majors since not all majors of the university studied are represented in the collected data and the research interest was an overall understanding of collaborative learning by the lenses of *Buen Vivir* in UNAE. Appendix 8 presents the figures that show the themes and sub-themes by groups of participants and by data collection tool (focus group, artwork and interviews). Even when the analysis was done as a whole, there were some differences between the information gathered from focus groups and artwork, and between students, teachers and experts that will be described below.

### Differences between focus groups and artwork
In the symbolic representation, students and teachers expressed enjoyment in the realization of collaborative work as a new theme that did not emerge in the answer during the focus group. The symbolic representation touched their emotions and it was interesting to see them collaborating and integrating their ideas in images. It was also remarkable that some students

who did not interact a lot during the questions of the focus group participated actively in the artwork. This could be explained because they felt fewer barriers participating as it was not related to ideas at all, but painting. Similarly, it could be explained because the connection with their body helped to express and interact with others. Also, it could be because they felt it was not as formal as the questions.

The teachers of one of the focus groups wanted to make a symbolic representation through painting. In the symbolic representation they made, a number of new themes emerged such as: students being the centre of the university, the teaching and learning process requiring emotions, taking care of others, and listening. At the same time, the professors represented that collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* are cyclical processes that generate joy in their realization. Teachers also expressed that collaborative learning from *Buen Vivir* mobilizes all the senses, contacts with nature and has to do with the identity of the country. All the mentioned themes were new and did not emerge in the focus groups. It is important to reflect upon the desire of the faculty members to participate in the artwork. It was really interesting to observe the involvement they had in this activity. Faculty members used their body to paint. Similarly, the understanding of faculty members that collaborative learning is related to national identity was new. It was not mentioned in the answers but it was indicated in the artwork. It will be explained in detail throughout the themes in this chapter.

**Differences between students and teachers, versus experts**
The experts were much more critical and negative regarding collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. They mentioned serious concerns related to the quality of the teaching and learning process in collaborative learning and, the knowledge of teachers regarding collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. Additionally, experts questioned collaborative learning work for everything and since the first years of the university. This could be explained by their greater depth on this topic, and also by being people who are recognized in the university on this topic, and can analyse it more freely and confidently.

To prepare for an action recommendation within the organisation studied, I found it imperative to reduce the vast amount of data gathered through the focus groups, artwork, interviews and the document review to achieve a lucid and manageable report.

After the initial analysis, the preliminary results were shared with the participants to add a collaborative aspect in the interpretation. As explained in chapter 4 they could add, contrast, contradict, affirm, and reformulate the way the information was presented and preliminarily analysed. Although a small amount of feedback was received, it allowed to confirm some aspects and re-structure the information. After this co-analysis process and reflections, the information was organised in five major themes. It is critical to indicate that for this new way of organising information, the data was understood as a whole and was not divided by a group of participants or by the data collection tool. Upon completion of the co-analysis, the record was listened to again, transcripts were read again, and I started working on general categories that captured what was indicated by participants in general. This was done in NVIVO as explained in the methodology. The themes are:

1. Theme 1: Individualist context and UNAE understanding of Good Living
2. Theme 2: collaborative learning by Good Living: advances, limitations, considerations and tensions
3. Theme 3: collaborative learning practices at UNAE
4. Theme 4: Impacts of collaborative learning by Good Living perspective at UNAE

5. Theme 5: Recommendations to improve teaching and learning practices based on Good Living through collaborative learning made by participants

Birks and Mills, (2019) recommend the use of a storyline as a way to present results and as a way of data analysis. Even when this research did not use grounded theory, I considered presenting the data as a whole to facilitate reading and understanding. The remainder of this chapter is structured according to the five themes. I selected verbatim quotations from the transcribed focus groups, artwork and interviews to illustrate the origins of my research findings and, therefore, provide a better foundation for my research results. The process for organising the themes was a back and forth process. After working with all important data from the focus groups, artwork and interview transcripts, grouping statements into major themes and sub-themes, co-analysis and through another round of reflective and comparative thinking, the sub-themes emerged within each theme and finally writing a story that represents the case study as a whole.

## 5.1 UNAE, Good Living and individualist context

In the photo below, of the artistic work of the students of the Bilingual Intercultural Education major, some of the important aspects of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning in UNAE are represented as well as some of the tensions that the members perceived concerning its implementations in the current society. The students represented in the artwork the division between the UNAE context and the social global context. It is represented with the circle that divides UNAE from the general society. They expressed that inside UNAE, diversity is recognized and collaboration is part of the daily practices. This is expressed through different hands with diverse colours that represent diversity and collaboration. However, the global context even when it contributes with other understandings and nature, is not about *Buen Vivir* and collaboration. In the artwork, students painted nature and people outside to the UNAE circle, to express that in society there is knowledge and a natural environment, yet it is not seen from the perspective of *Buen Vivir*. Participants in general flag the difference they perceive between actions taken by UNAE and practices at other institutions.


Bilingual Intercultural Education Art Work

For UNAE members, *Buen Vivir* overcomes theory and proposes a way of life. For them, *Buen Vivir* implies not just knowing *Buen Vivir* theoretically, but living *Buen Vivir* in each practice, which implies caring for others and nature.

> "C3: ... I have seen that many people see it only as rules, just as a document, not as an experience that we can practice daily… I think *Buen Vivir* is very personal actions that make you feel good, but always in contact with nature "

Some participants indicated that the dialogues around *Buen Vivir* have been mainly strengthened in the last 10 years for political purposes of the previous government. *Buen Vivir* was included in the constitution of 2008, as well as in the Organic Law of Intercultural Bilingual Education, and the organic law of HE. "X2: …in Ecuador, the development plan is based on *Buen Vivir* ... they proposed it for the Ecuadorian constitution of 2008 ...". However, the participants mentioned that several speeches lacked depth and, besides, many practices of the previous government were contrary to *Buen Vivir*. "X2… collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* were used, but the meaning has been removed...". In this sense, *Buen Vivir* proposes the overcoming of the productivist and capitalist view, to give way to reflection and the common good. "X1: ... It is to see people, not as simple productive entities ..." Nevertheless, in UNAE it is perceived that today's society does not favour the implementation of *Buen Vivir* in the education system.

To analyse the challenges that *Buen Vivir* has in its implementation in the current context, some participants reflected on the history of Latin America. Experts stated that Latin America and its systems must be analysed from their colonisation processes, which were carried out by oppression of the natives. In these processes, the original culture, ancestral knowledge and *Buen Vivir* practices in the Andean region were affected. Colonisation processes generated rejection, estrangement and ignorance of Andean knowledge, including the philosophy of *Buen Vivir*. In the processes of colonisation, globalization and capitalism have permeated all systems, including education. The aforementioned has generated educational processes focused on individualism and disinterest in others. "X1: the productivist vision has been established in HE and the ancestral knowledge has been hidden...".

At UNAE, most of the participants perceived that the current global system does not promote *Buen Vivir*. The concept of private property has permeated according to UNAE members in the political speeches and practices of each sector. In this scenario, knowledge is not considered a public good for the common good. Education presses for competition, through strategies such as grading. Within this individualistic system, there are teaching and learning practices that promote selfishness and rivalry. Participants also indicated that in other contexts, teachers promote competition and do not wish to share all their knowledge. "C… in our society, every time individualism has deepened... education before was something more communitarian… collaborative learning tries to recover the values of community, of caring for the other ... That is a fundamental component of *Buen Vivir*".

Most of the participants indicated that in order for *Buen Vivir* to be truly implemented, it would require for it to be applied to solve real and everyday problems. The daily implementation of *Buen Vivir* generates motivation to collaborate. At the same time, it is necessary to understand that *Buen Vivir* recognizes the diversity and generates processes of

collaboration and relationship from the potentialities of each person. "X1: ... It's good to know what the other is good for ... Everyone does the work, but they do not all have to know-how to do everything ...".

Most participants assumed that learning collaboratively gives better results than learning individually. However, they also accept that collaborative learning is very complex and challenging. Most participants indicated that working collaboratively is not easy as it requires to appreciate and support others within everybody's capacities for the common good rather than for grades.

> "A2… it is a challenge to break that scheme of wanting to group only with the students who have good grades, and rather to generate a culture to support the other… and recognize what my skills and the other's abilities are to complement..."

Some members of UNAE also indicated their concern regarding the need for developing skills to collaborate and work in a team and, the poor facilities for it in the current society. "C… students working on this model… will have the opportunity to manage of their emotions and get to know each other as well… collaborative learning prepares them for the future because we will never work alone …"

Some participants also mentioned that in Ecuadorian society, verticality and the distrust in others prevail, and this has played a role in education. In daily practices, teachers feel they must demonstrate all the time what they do. "B2: ... a challenge is to break the barriers that make us distrust one another. And that happens on several levels, at the political level of the institutions, everywhere. We are all always showing evidence of everything..."

Interconnection between everybody was considered vital by some participants in *Buen Vivir* since every action has an impact on others. Most members of UNAE members indicated that we are all interconnected and every action impacts the others and nature. "C…  there will always be an impact on the other, through my reactions, my thinking, my way of living ..."

In conclusion, participants understand that *Buen Vivir* is about a way of life that promotes the common good and care for nature, where we are all interconnected. However, the implementation of *Buen Vivir* is limited by the impacts of colonisation processes in Latin America, little study of the *Buen Vivir* concept and its implications, a society that promotes competition and a productivist vision. Participants indicated that there is a difference between UNAE and society, and that although UNAE promotes *Buen Vivir,* the concept has not yet been implemented neither in UNAE nor in society. Members of UNAE stated that building horizontal environments requires responsibility and overcoming mistrust and competition. At this point, the data does invite reflection on the reproduction of the productivist vision of competition and mistrust at all levels and actors in the educational process.

Participants indicated that while *Buen Vivir*-based collaborative learning gives better results than individual learning, it is also more challenging and requires developing the ability to collaborate, which is not facilitated in an individualistic society. It is essential to observe the impact of the aforementioned in relationships, structures, practices, progress, limitations, considerations and tensions in implementation.

## 5.2 Collaborative learning by Good Living: advances, limitations, considerations and tensions

In the photo below, the Special Education students expressed various aspects. The students indicated that the education system, family, and nature are fundamental aspects in the construction of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning. Some of the aspects expressed are related to the different scenarios interacting in education and how it can help and challenge collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir*. Participants expressed emotions, desires and opportunities in each sector. The main reference was related to happiness in collaborating and the desire for common good. The students painted a school, a house, a family, nature and a heart to express that education, family, community and nature are all interdependent. The heart represents *Buen Vivir,* which must be a guiding concept in education, community, family, and nature. However, students indicated that for now the elements are not working as a natural system and *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning present some advances, limitations, considerations and tensions. The aforementioned is represented in the division in each sector.



Special Education Art Work

Some participants indicated that there were advances in public policy, education, and practices of *Buen Vivir* in the university. Yet, most of the participants also indicated that there is a lack of knowledge and deepening of the theoretical and practical implications of collaborative learning from *Buen Vivir*. "X2: ... in Ecuador, the development plan is based on *Buen Vivir* … *Buen Vivir* has gone through the emptying of meaning… people have started using this term without … without knowing the context, or its depth ...".

Most of the participants mentioned that collaborative learning should be gradual and that it starts from the simplest to the most complex, since students must develop the skills and competencies to work collaboratively and respond to the challenges consciously and responsibly. Some participants also indicated that collaborative learning with heterogeneous groups enriches them more than homogeneous groups. "X1: collaborative learning when the

students have not been in such a system, takes time. … First, there must be a process of awareness so that everyone works equally. collaborative learning is a challenge...".

Most of the participants also indicated that in collaborative learning, teachers have the responsibility to promote it with clear objectives, class management, time, the formation of groups, the role of each member in each group and other features that make the teaching role more complex. UNAEs' members indicated that collaborative learning returns the student's voice and power concerning their learning process. Nevertheless, participants stated that not everybody works equally, and it affects collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. This produces anxiety and frustration amongst the other members of the team and social problems.

> "A2: that happens sometimes when they do PIENSA, some students say he or she didn't do the work. The students say that it does not seem fair that the grade is the same for the three students if some do and others don't do anything ..."

There was no agreement on how to implement collaborative learning. Some participants mentioned that collaborative learning requires dividing the work, while others indicated that collaborative learning is about working all together collaboratively for a common good. To some participants, it was not collaborative learning when the task is divided, whereas for others, it was desired to divide the task to monitor individual responsibilities.

> "B4: ... I do believe that a fundamental characteristic of collaborative work is that all collaborate, not only in parts. With everyone collaborating, something new emerges from this collaboration ... "

In the same line, there were tensions as to whether collaborative learning should be mandatory or not. Some participants mentioned that collaborative learning have to be voluntary since it must be related to the need for common good and happiness. However, other participants indicated that it should be mandatory since it is stated in the UNAE documents. Teachers who considered that collaborative learning must be mandatory mentioned specific strategies they use to be able to force collaborative learning such as grades or choosing randomly the person in the group who will present the group work. On the contrary, teachers who consider that collaborative learning should be voluntary and cannot be forced did not indicate how to motivate them in this line, nor indicated alternatives to comply with the UNAE model. "B2: ... I believe that it cannot be forced... So I think you must find the interests, and also that arise spontaneously, by free association …".

The perception is that in HE and in education, in general, there are vertical power relations, mainly between teacher-student. UNAEs' members mentioned that this individualistic, consumer and vertical culture affects the relationships between peers, between students and teachers, as well as between teachers and the institution. "B2: Knowledge has usually been imposed vertically and has always been hegemonic. It has always been transmitted from someone who has power and has been replicated...".

Some teachers indicated that the work overload limits reflection and produces a negative impact on the *Buen Vivir* of the teachers. "C: ... teachers are too burdened by too many things to fulfil and we do not have time to reflect, and I think that is fundamental ......"

In conclusion, participants mentioned tensions regarding 1) horizontality, 2) the division of task in collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* and, 3) the voluntariness in collaborative

learning based on *Buen Vivir*. UNAE's members indicated that collaborative learning from the *Buen Vivir* perspective promotes horizontality and respect for diversity. However, power relations prevail in the daily life of UNAE. The members indicated that collaborative learning by *Buen Vivir* is a process that requires time, resources and develops skills for collaborating. At this point, it is vital to question the possibility of generating horizontal spaces for education in vertical structures, as well as competition and its role in power issues. Finally, collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* comes from the political and philosophical views that have practical implications. In the next section, collaborative learning practices are presented.

## 5.3 Collaborative learning practices at UNAE

*Buen Vivir* in UNAE faces both criticism and praising. However, there are practices that are recognized by the participants as collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir*. In the photo below, the students from the General Basic Education major answer the question of what is collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir*. They indicated several aspects, and highlighted ritualities such as Minga and Chacra as collaborative learning practices based on *Buen Vivir*. They expressed in the artwork the combination of multiple skills and knowledge that are abstractly combined to get the common good through ritualities such as Minga and Chacra. Students expressed that collaborative learning from the *Buen Vivir* perspective is about diversity, collaboration, and solidarity, represented in ritualities such as Minga and Chacra.

> "B3… collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* would look like a Chakra and is the cultivation of the earth. People of all ages participate ... and all collaborate for the common goal. The little ones learn to collaborate by doing. ... everything is a collective decision, and it is to feed, for the food of everybody. Chakra integrates everybody and all the knowledge through work and the relation with nature"



General Basic Education Art Work

The main collaborative learning practices based on *Buen Vivir* in UNAE are PIENSA, peer learning practices (research groups, constructs, and peer learning); and ritualities (Chacra and Minga). It was noteworthy that the rituals generated from the administration of the university, such as the Pampamesas, were not mentioned.

PIENSA's work is accompanied by the teachers of each semester, mainly the teacher of integrative knowledge, research, and Pre-professional practices. UNAEs' members mentioned that the development of PIENSA requires to solve problems and deal with diversity and real life. They find this experience rich and important for their learning process. However, it is considered that this practice could be improved by developing the skills and competences in first-year students. "X1…PIENSA is collaborative learning activities that are most visible. And we could improve that... It is critical to review how PIENSA is implemented in the first years…".

Additionally, most of the participants indicated that there are peer-learning practices such as research groups, constructs (Constructs are based on knowledge areas to build syllabus, materials for classes and interact) and peer-learning that is implemented in UNAE. Participants indicated that these practices allow for collaborative learning between peers and with their teachers, who in these groups are perceived closer and building horizontal relationships. "B4: I also think that research groups would be another very important factor ... where the teacher is not in a higher place with research knowledge and the student is at a lower level of learning ..."

All the practices mentioned were considered important. However, most of students, teachers and experts indicated that Chacra and Minga are the most important and innovative practices of collaborative learning from *Buen Vivir*. Ritualities such as Minga and Chacra mobilize all majors, all actors of the educational community for an end. "A3… the ritualities integrates classrooms and majors. ... Each person assigns themselves a task... … Andean cosmovision is manifested through ritualities… So here at the university, we always try to promote or make these known …".

Participants mentioned that in the realization of Chacra, different points are developed, such as interpersonal relationships, solidarity, the recognition of several voices and knowledge that exceed the academic. In Chacra, the community sows and grows its products. To this end, everyone agrees their part in this collaboration according to their capabilities and potential, always thinking about the common good. For most participants, Chacra is an opportunity to learn by sharing with others, solving real problems and connecting with nature in a real way.

> "C: ... the fact of working on Chacra I feel it helps a lot to education ... I feel a deeper relationship with the students ... Planting plants and interacting with nature, Chacra is something deeper which also integrate aspects of cultural knowledge dialogue ... Chacra is a collaborative learning practice; it is a joint work that has a common goal, something that works for everyone ...".

In turn, most of the participants indicated that Minga is another clear example of collaborative learning where the people of a community collaborate by learning and teaching others about a punctual work for a common goal. Then everybody should collaborate based on their skills and learn other skills from others. "C: collaborative learning is a Minga of knowledge …". Consequently, in Chacra and Minga, there is dialogue and construction of new knowledge in relation with others and nature. Ritualities are a practical implementation of collaborative learning pedagogy based on *Buen Vivir*.

At UNAE there is a project called "Chacra" in which students, teachers, and the community that lives around the university participate. The project works on environmental issues, care for nature, as well as other topics of interest through the collaborative work of everyone involved. People plant and learn to collaborate, connect with nature and different subjects in the natural sciences are mediated by this project. Minga in UNAE is observed in some activities in which everyone who makes up UNAE solves problems or celebrates special events.

In summary, it is possible to say that collaborative learning practices from *Buen Vivir* in UNAE present great opportunities, as long as they are thought to overcome productivist logics. In this sense, the need to rethink PIENSA in terms of the obligation of collaboration, the time allocated for its realization, and the previous capacities that must be developed for its achievement is observed. On the other hand, peer-learning practices (research groups, innovation) prove to be an opportunity for the development of the capacities required for research and innovation from voluntariness. Finally, Chacra and Minga present forms of collaborative learning from *Buen Vivir,* solving the daily problems of the community in union with nature. Chacra and Minga are understood and used to learn by collaborating and solving real problems. The practices implemented in UNAE are related to context and generate impacts that are presented in the next section.

## 5.4 Impacts of collaborative learning by Good Living perspective at UNAE

The main impact of collaborative learning by the *Buen Vivir* perspective in the participants is the change in identity as a future teacher or a teacher. This change is related to happiness in doing collaborative learning and the development of a common good vision. In the photo below the faculty members from the first focus group expressed how they understand collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir*. The faculty members developed the artwork using different parts of their bodies. They meant to state that the teaching process within *Buen Vivir* requires all senses and emotional immersion.

> "D: …we begin by asking what moves us, then… it is listening, speaking, seeing, imagining. We have to look at others … the heart is the core of our work…also, the mobilisation, walking... We try to mobilize many things from the emotions of the feelings as teachers, but also with the students".

Most of the teachers who participated in the artwork expressed happiness in doing collaborative learning, and the common good vision that is represented by the construction of harmonic relations between humans and nature. The teachers expressed happiness with colours, flowers and a heart. The common good vision was represented by the hands and the whole painting that integrates all the senses immersed in the teaching process.

The first group of faculty members Artwork

The identity developed based on *Buen Vivir* is related to greater empathy, horizontal relationships with students, tolerance, recognition of diversity, active participation, deep moments of reflection and self-analysis and a different vision about education. "B1: ... as we are already having the experience and we are already differentiating what happens with a student, when they are silent or why. ...".

Most of the participants indicated that collaborative learning by *Buen Vivir,* helps them to question their role, the way in which they carry out the educational process, what they teach and for whom. Most of the participants mentioned being motivated to generate educational processes that are linked to break with functional education to the system and propose a liberating education. Then the role of the teacher is transformed with collaborative learning. The new identity allows for a new vision in education.

> "B2: ... What I propose is to analyse my ego... I think that this requires a reflection of us, for the change. And this change is within us, with the others, in relationships, to be humbler, to think that change does not come from one, but when collective processes are generated..."

The main impact of collaborative learning by the *Buen Vivir* perspective in the participants is the change in identity as a future teacher or a teacher. The identity shift was considered challenging since it requires being open to thinking different from what was common in the educational system. In the next section, the main recommendations made by participants are presented.

## 5.5 Recommendations made by participants to improve teaching-learning practices based on Good Living through collaborative learning

Most of the participants indicated that collaborative learning from the perspective of *Buen Vivir* requires training and the improvement of the teaching and learning process for the implementation of a lifestyle based on *Buen Vivir*. In the photo below the students from Education in Experimental Science expressed some understandings of collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* that are related to the improvements needed such as the training in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* and, more horizontal spaces that help to understand the university as a whole. The stairs and people going up represent the effort and need to improve the training in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. But also represent that in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* nobody is left behind. The need for horizontal spaces is represented with the men and women painted. Students indicated that this represents equity, horizontality and the need for spaces, practices that guarantee that everybody can participate in equal opportunities. The hands with different colours represent the diversity needed for collaborating and the diverse projects and structures that can be used for implementing *Buen Vivir*. The hands also represent the need for actions rather than just theory.


Education in Experimental Sciences Artwork

Most of the participants recommended implementing the theory by training in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* for teachers, horizontal spaces to interact as a university and, the use of research and innovative projects and other structures for promoting collaborative learning through the lenses of *Buen Vivir*.

Participants considered that it is critical to deepen *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning knowledge and practices that allow to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning processes

considering diversity and collaboration. Some participants indicated that the lack of knowledge can result in the use of collaborative learning without clear objectives. "A4…I also think that we should look at whether collaborative learning serves us for everything and at all times. Maybe it's not always like that ... sometimes teachers use this without clear objectives".

Conversely, to promote collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir,* participants claim for horizontal spaces that include different majors and areas of the university such as workshops, university clubs, fairs, open houses, research and innovative projects. "A3: there should also be common spaces that connect us with other majors such as fairs, open houses, or the same student clubs that can allow us to link ... together". Participants mentioned that it is vital to have more horizontal spaces for meetings and exchanges between majors that allow to understand the university as an integrated system.

Participants indicated that there are some spaces that could be enhanced by using them for collaborative learning by *Buen Vivir* such as innovation, research processes and constructs. The participants that recommended research groups, innovation project and constructs to enhance collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* indicated that research groups and innovation projects are mainly voluntary and group students and teachers according to their interests. Participants indicated that these practices work horizontally and should be used for collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir.*

> "B2: I think a good proposal is to work through research projects. The constructs are also crucial, sometimes their role is not understood, but they are key to generating these encounters. Also, research and innovation projects have also seemed key to generating these meetings and exchange of collective experiences…".

Most participants perceived it is necesary improving the teaching and learning process through training in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* for teachers. The participants perceived that there is the intention for building collaborative learning processes but there are not enough knowledge and experiences for doing so. Similarly, participants recommended spaces for exchange, learning and interaction as a university. The spaces should be horizontal and overcome the old vertical structures of education. Finally, the use of research and innovative projects and the constructs are an opportunity to implement collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir.*

## 5.6 Concluding remarks

As a concluding remark, I will highlight the main points. The participants indicated that the context of UNAE differs from the rest of society. UNAE's members indicated that UNAE has the intention for working towards *Buen Vivir* through collaborative learning but society is individualistic, vertical and promotes competition rather than collaboration. Participants also flagged some advances in the public policy but also some tensions regarding horizontality, voluntariness in doing collaborative learning, and the division of the task for doing collaborative learning. The participants did not agree on the aspects mentioned. Regarding the main practices of collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir,* UNAE's members stated that the ritualities are collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* since in both ritualities the community solves real problems for the common good, learns together and collaborates based on their skills. The practices have an impact on students and teachers mainly in their identity as teachers of future teachers. Participants mentioned that collaborative learning

based on *Buen Vivir* shifts their identity and causes a change in the way they understand its role and education. In the new identity, it is critical to guide the teaching and learning process, mediate the problems for their resolution, common good and happiness in collaborating and learning. Even when the participants indicated some steps toward *Buen Vivir* in UNAE, they indicated doubts related to the knowledge and training of teachers about collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. Then participants recommended training teachers in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* and implementing the theory, peer-learning practices, and more horizontal spaces for collaborating.

## 6 Discussion

In Chapter 5 the results were presented on five major themes. In this chapter, I will discuss, in turn, each of these themes. The chapter is organised in six main sections 6.1) Political economy shaping HE globally and locally: discusses the difficulties of implementing *Buen Vivir* and collaboration in a national and global system focused on production and capitalism. 6.2) collaborative learning by Good Living: analyses the advances in educational public policy in Ecuador, the tensions regarding voluntariness, horizontality, and the division of tasks in collaborative learning from the *Buen Vivir* perspective, as well as important considerations in the teaching and learning process within the *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning, advances, tensions and considerations; 6.3) Collaboration in teaching and learning processes at UNAE: examines the main collaborative learning practices from *Buen Vivir* in UNAE, such as Minga and Chacra. 6.4) Impacts of collaborative learning from the Good Living perspective at UNAE: discusses the main impacts of collaborative learning from the *Buen Vivir* perspective at UNAE, the main one being the change in teacher identity. 6.5) Recommendations made by participants. 6.6) Chapter conclusions.

The chapter argues that although UNAE promotes *Buen Vivir,* it has not yet been implemented due to various aspects such as the reproduction of the productive vision, colonialist practices and understandings that permeates HE, the need for teacher training in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir.* In turn, the chapter presents the most relevant collaborative learning practices from *Buen Vivir* in UNAE such as Minga, Chacra and research groups. Though there are several challenges to achieve the implementation of collaborative learning from *Buen Vivir* in UNAE, there are recommendations to advance the process.

### 6.1 Political economy shaping HE locally and globally

This research confirmed that *Buen Vivir* is seen as a way of life that promotes the common good, care for nature and the connection between all. The related literature suggests that *Buen Vivir* invites the redefinition of human needs and life goals, with a special interest in relationships between subjects and with nature, for the common good (Larrea, 2014). While *Buen Vivir* literature points out that in *Buen Vivir* there are community relationships based on solidarity, diversity and care for nature (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017; Pesántez Avilés, Martín Sabina, & Bojorque Chasi, 2015) several participants mentioned it is mediated by context and the global system. Additionally, the literature indicates that there are several tensions and contradictions in the implementation of *Buen Vivir* such as extractivism that pushes and permeates at various levels (Gudynas, 2011).

The global capitalist system impacts the implementation of *Buen Vivir.* Brown and McCowan (2018) argue that *Buen Vivir* is an alternative to developmental theories, however, it has not been considered internationally. Brown and McCowan (2018) discuss that although it is proposed worldwide to overcome inequities and achieve peace, education has been limited to providing more schooling. Torres and Schugurensky, (2002) state that global power decides the investment for education around the globe. Torres and Schugurensky, (2002) also indicate that globalisation set up and international scenario for competition. However, Latin American universities like UNAE must compete without the resources. In this sense, Ivancheva, (2017) mentions that there have been Latin American universities that tried to overcome capitalism in education but these practices were implemented within international indicators, hegemonic systems and traditional understandings of the role of education. *Buen Vivir* is contrary to the productivist and capitalist system (UNAE, 2017). In this regard Monombe (2005) state that in order to facilitate democratic dialogue between

subjective positions of life, capitalist structures need to be replaced by a democratic one. Monombe (2005) indicates that it is required to build democratic social relations, avoiding divisions and differentiations of polarities such as oppressor/oppressed. Monombe (2005) also argues that the polarity in dialogue will never allow to implement theory and pedagogy differently from the oppressor since it exists within capitalist power. The results seem to support the literature that argues that global powers promote competition and individualism. The results also suggest that the system could use old colonisation processes.

*Buen Vivir* gives a very important role in indigenous knowledge. However, it is important to clarify that the cultural perspective shows that there is no "indigenous" *Buen Vivir* since the "indigenous" category is an artifice and only serves to homogenize within it very different people and nationalities, each of which has, or may have, their conception of *Buen Vivir* (Gudynas, 2011).

Several participants indicated that the lack of theoretical depth of the *Buen Vivir* in social and political arenas has made it difficult to implement *Buen Vivir*. The results obtained in this study on the lack of conceptual and practical deepening of *Buen Vivir* are supported by the literature reviewed. Previous studies indicate that *Buen Vivir* has been implemented with serious limitations and little theoretical and practical depth (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017, Gallegos Anda, 2018, Mattioli, & Nozica, 2017). However, the difficulties in the theoretical deepening of *Buen Vivir* should be analysed in each context.

The results obtained in this study indicate that although *Buen Vivir* has neither been implemented in UNAE nor in society, UNAE intends to motivate *Buen Vivir*. Some participants mentioned that UNAE recognizes and values diversity, horizontality, work on collaborative spaces and promotes *Buen Vivir* and collaboration. UNAE (2017) stated that education needs to overcome the vertical structures for learning and teaching, promote teaching and learning practices that encourage collaboration, *Buen Vivir*, rights, critical thinking, horizontal relations, and innovation. However, participants mentioned that society promotes verticality, competition and individualism through different practices. Gibbs & Armsby (2011) argue that the accreditation of learning responds to a culture where social capital is attributed to reinforcement through prizes for formal learning. They propose fairness and transparency to evaluate a set of skills, development of nonspecific criteria to measure various achievements and thus avoid hegemony of academic disciplines. The proposal seeks, in turn, to look at learning outcomes from what is transferable in the real world rather than what is known based on the past. Based on the aforementioned, they explain that grading alone may not be sufficient.

The results indicated that collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* is perceived more positively than learning individually in the UNAE context. Several participants indicated that collaborative learning allows for more in-depth learning, knowing different points of view on the same topic and, developing critical thinking. It is related to UNAE's pedagogical model that aims to promote teaching and learning practices that encourage collaboration and *Buen Vivir* (UNAE, 2017). However, collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* is perceived as more challenging by several participants of this case study, as it requires developing the ability to collaborate that is not facilitated in Ecuadorian society. In this regard, literature indicated that collaborative learning requires specific social, psychological (Kreijns, Kirschner, & Jochems, 2003) and academic management conditions (Avello-Martínez & Marín, 2016). Despite the challenges presented by *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning, it is

positively perceived in UNAE, and the implementation of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning is mediated by multiple factors and could present difficulties.

The analysis showed that most members of UNAE understand *Buen Vivir* as a way of life that promotes the common good, care for nature and the connection between all. However, implementation of *Buen Vivir* is mediated by the capitalist system and the impacts of colonisation processes in Latin America. Additionally, the lack of theoretical depth of *Buen Vivir* generates contradictions and limits its implementation. Similarly, the results found that although *Buen Vivir* has neither been implemented in UNAE nor in society, it is positively perceived in UNAE, who promotes it through its documents. collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* would have tensions, advances and considerations for its implementation.

## 6.2 Collaborative learning by Good Living: advances, tensions and considerations

### 6.2.1 Advances in public policy

Several participants mentioned as an achievement to have incorporated *Buen Vivir* as a philosophical principle of the Ecuadorian National Constitution and, in various national laws, such as the Organic Law of Higher Education and the Organic law of Intercultural Education. This is supported by the reviewed literature. Some authors such as Lalander, and Cuestas-Caza, (2017); Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo-Capitán, and García-Álvarez, (2016) state that *Buen Vivir* comes from the Sumak Kawsay term, which has aroused great interest since its incorporation into the Bolivian and Ecuadorian Constitution. Additionally, as mentioned in section 1.1 Restrepo and Stefos, (2018) explain that in the five years from 2011 to 2016, public education through high school received 3.4 times ($ 14,388 million) the financing it received in the five years from 2002 to 2006 ($ 4,239). Moreover, in the government of Rafael Correra, enrolment in all levels of education of people from the quintile with fewer economic resources and of indigenous and Afro-descendant population increased *(*Restrepo & Stefos, 2018). Similarly, to comply with the policies designed to change the productive matrix, four new universities were created, one of them specifically to transform the Ecuadorian educational system, the National University of Education. In this regard, it is important to mention that UNAE is the only university whose creation is included in the Ecuadorian Constitution *(*Restrepo & Stefos, 2018). However, even when the Constitution of Ecuador of 2008 is based on *Buen Vivir,* in the National Plan for *Buen Vivir* (2017-2021), some actions contradict the Sumak Kawsay concept and contribute to the reproduction of the goals of the developmental model (Mattioli, & Nozica, 2017, Haidar, & Berros, 2015).

Despite all efforts, there is tension in the implementations of the plans and the pedagogical model of UNAE. For example, UNAE is a university composed of a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is the university authority in UNAE and those who comprise it are not elected authorities but selected by the government *(*Restrepo & Stefos, 2018; UNAE, 2016). The results of this study show that there are power issues between faculty members and teachers and authorities. Additionally, the analysis indicates that in UNAE there are still challenges in implementing *Buen Vivir*, overwhelming activities that limit the reflection required and need for training in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. In this regard, Charbonneau-Gowdy, Capredoni, Gonzalez, Jayo, and Raby, (2016) indicate that learning differs based on contexts and Latin America presents a particular one related with traditional practices and vertical structures (Morales Suárez, Borroto Cruz, & Fernández Oliva, 2005).

Based on my experience in HE institutions in Ecuador, as a staff member and teacher, I believe there is a difference between what is stipulated in the National Constitution and what is being implemented in HE regarding *Buen Vivir*. In this regard, Álvarez-Litben, (2017) explain that the productivist vision exists in the community and it reproduces structural asymmetries that are contrary to *Buen Vivir*. Acosta, (2011) indicates that *Buen Vivir* is decontextualized in political arenas and may not be implemented within capitalism. The difference between what is stipulated in the national constitution and the real practices in Ecuador also has an impact on the *Buen Vivir* implementation at the university studied. UNAE is managed by SENESCYT (National Secretary of Higher Education Science and Technology) the HE body that rules on national policies, investment and training. My view as an insider researcher is that the UNAEs' students and teachers come from a capitalist system and reproduce its dynamic on a daily basis, which makes it difficult to implement *Buen Vivir* in UNAE. The implementation of *Buen Vivir* is still under construction and is mediated by politics and economics. The incorporation of *Buen Vivir* in the National Constitution seems to present an opportunity for implementing the *Buen Vivir* philosophy, yet its implementation carries tensions.

### 6.2.2 Tensions: horizontality, division or not to the task, voluntariness, multiple activities, equity in the work

**Horizontality**

Most of UNAEs' teachers and students mentioned that although UNAE has advanced in the construction of horizontal relationships between teachers and students, this horizontality has not been achieved even among peers (students or teachers) or between teachers and university authorities.

The analysis showed that the relationship between students and teachers at UNAE is horizontal and is related to collaborative learning. Most of the participants indicated that collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* questions the dynamics of power and propose horizontal relationships, which is supported by Chan, Phan, Aniyah Salihan, and Dipolog-Ubanan, (2016) that claim that collaborative learning helps in reducing power issues. Additionally, UNAE's pedagogical model aims to promote horizontal relations (UNAE, 2017).

Likewise, Simó, Parareda, and Domingo (2016) state that relationships based on trust and horizontality between teachers and students are linked with wellbeing and a positive impact on the atmosphere within the educational institution. However, Matusov, Marjanovic-Shane, and Gradovski (2019) indicate that the relations between students and teacher have been mainly hierarchical and they evoke colonialized practices. The results suggest that although teacher motivation has generated horizontal relationships between students and teachers at UNAE, there are still tensions in other relations.

Analysis indicated that most of the participants mentioned tensions with power relations within the students, within teachers and between teachers and authorities in UNAE. Power issues within students are related to leadership and decision making in collaborative learning compliance. Similarly, some teachers indicated that there are issues of power within academics and academics and authorities. Some teachers indicated that power issues within academics are visible during meetings, in opportunities to speak and when each opinion should be considered. Additionally, some teachers stated that power issues and vertical structures are seen in the relations between academics and the authorities where distrust and

vertical practices are still present. In this sense, Álvarez-Litben, (2017) state that *Buen Vivir* invites to overcome colonialized practices and is related to community solutions and reciprocal interactions within peers. Nevertheless, Macekura, (2019) indicates that within a system that presses for individualism, competition, and productivity, it is possible for teachers and students to reproduce it.

As insider researcher, I consider the reproduction of power issues within academics' peers and within academics and their university authorities are related with the pressure from the national system, their mandates, bureaucratic regulations, times and economic resources, but also with colonial views and practices in each member of the university. Power issues, decision-making, and distrust affect horizontal relations. In this regard, the competence and individualism can be reproduced in the relationships of teachers and students, as well as in daily practices of the teaching and learning process, such as the division of the task.

**Division of the task**
The results indicate that although participants want to generate collaborative learning, there are tensions concerning how to facilitate it. The results show opposite criteria regarding whether to divide the tasks within collaborative learning or not. Most of the participants emphasise the importance of reaching a common goal but do not conclude on how to do it. Some participants mentioned that task division allows them to accomplish the task and control the responsibility of each participant. However, others state that in task division there is no collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir.* In this sense, the literature on collaborative learning indicates that collaborative learning does not promote task division as it is more linked with cooperative learning that came from the behaviourism and cognitivism theory (Barkley, 2014). collaborative learning encourages students to work together in their tasks, is linked to constructivism, less structured, promotes horizontal relationships and considers positive interdependence (Barkley, 2014).

Similarly, it is critical to reflect on why the participants are thinking about task division. In that sense, Näykki, Järvelä, Kirschner, and Järvenoja, (2014) indicates that the conflict within peers could generate into members avoiding interaction with others and dividing the task into parts in order to not collaborate. As an insider researcher, I consider that this tension derives from the need for training in collaborative learning, its theory, strategies and conflict management in collaborative learning. However, it can also be explained by the reproduction of certain aspects of the current capitalist system.

It is important to reflect on the division of task from the perspective of the division of labour. The division of labour in Janoski and Lepadatu (2014) view, is the way works are divided to fit within the productivist system that promotes specialization and repetition of a task. The authors flag that in a global system the division of labour is implemented through teamwork as a way to not be perceived as negative. This is critical since UNAE is looking for a teaching and learning process for and within the *Buen Vivir* philosophy. The tensions related to the division or not of the task in collaborative learning could be related to the reproduction of a productivist vision through teamwork.

As an insider researcher, I think tensions are related to the need for training in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir,* and the reproduction of a productivist vision. I tend to think that it would be advisable to train teachers in collaborative learning, *Buen Vivir and* conflict management. I, too, think that a productivist vision ensues at UNAE and is reproduced in some ways. External pressures and the short time to show results could impact on the

reproduction of the productivist vision. *Buen Vivir* requires individual and community skills and understandings, that are possibly not yet developed because it requires process and time.

**Voluntariness**
Regarding voluntariness in collaborative learning by the *Buen Vivir* perspective, results were not conclusory and present tensions. Participants showed discourses in favour and against. Participants that were in favour of the mandatory practice support their answer in the need to accomplish the pedagogical and Pre-professional practice model of UNAE, whereas other participants thought that collaborative learning should be voluntary and motivated by teachers since it is not possible to force collaboration. The teachers and expert that agree on mandatory collaborative learning process indicated specific strategies that they use to force collaborative learning. On the contrary, the teachers and expert that did not agree on the compulsory nature of the collaborative learning process did not mention specific strategies to motivate the collaborative learning process. Literature indicates that acceptance of students (Klein & Vosgerau, 2018) and their willingness to participate (De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, 2015) are critical in the collaborative learning process.

As an insider researcher, I consider the tensions regarding voluntariness in collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir,* derive from the need for teacher training in different aspects. I suggest training in mediation, pedagogy and, learning motivation strategies. I consider critical to understand students and teachers as persons who have rights, internal motivations and educational interest, but also deep-rooted colonial views and practices. Part of the tensions between making collaboration compulsory or motivating it is explained by the desire to comply with the processes established in UNAE. Then, it would be important to reflect upon whether compliance with the established processes is linked to *Buen Vivir.*

**Common good and the multiple activities to do**
The results show that the multiple activities that teachers must carry out contradict and affect *Buen Vivir.* Some teacher indicates that *Buen Vivir* is about common good, deep reflection and connection with nature and others but some others mentioned that the number of responsibilities overwhelmed faculty members and impact and contradict *Buen Vivir.* This is linked with literature that indicates that *Buen Vivir* is about the common good and harmonic relations within humans and nature that overcome the productivist vision (Alcantara, & Sampaio, 2017; Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo-Capitán, & García-Álvarez, 2016). The contradiction presented by the overload of work may be related to the investment in education and the worldwide pressure to produce. Conversely, Torres & Schugurensky, (2002) mentioned that the productivist vision has permeated HE. Additionally, the authors mention the cut in investment in education around the globe and international indicators put pressure on Latin America to compete internationally without resources. The current productivist system and the cuts in HE budgets impact the universities, therefore, it is important to analyse how this is manifested in UNAE. As an insider researcher, I consider that the desire of implementing *Buen Vivir* practices quickly and without enough support and resources could impact on the pressure to do a vast amount of things in little time.

**Equity in the work**
Most of the participants indicated that although collaborative learning requires the active participation of everyone, not all work equally, which causes difficulties. In this regard, Smeets, (2017) mention the importance of active participation and interaction for collaborative learning. Most of the teachers, students and experts mentioned that when not all work equally, it generates dissatisfaction, anxiety, and feelings of injustice. This is supported

with the literature of collaborative learning that indicates that, when not well implemented, it could cause frustration (Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, 2016) sense of loss of time, little motivation, fear of not complying with the curriculum, uncertainty, dispersion and dividing the task into parts to avoid collaboration (Näykki, Järvelä, Kirschner, & Järvenoja, 2014; Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, & Wiegant, 2016).

Results found that several participants indicated that the sense of frustration and discomfort from the fact that not everyone works equally, is related to the grades obtained in collaborative learning. Some participants indicated that some people do not do the work but are evaluated in the same way and obtain the same grade. Literature indicates that unequal participation is one of the frequent disadvantages in collaborative learning (Thorsen, 2012; Avello Martínez, & Duart, 2016). Nevertheless, it is important to reflect on the role of the grades. Results indicated that education based on grades could be contrary to *Buen Vivir* because competition and individualism can be generated. Then, grades would not be as important as the building of new knowledge and practices to overcome the capitalist system (Larrea, 2014). It is essential to analyse the role of grades and other indicators of the educational process in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. In turn, it is essential to understand the considerations to take into account in collaborative learning.

### 6.2.3 Considerations such as time, skills needed, resources, active students and teacher's role

The main consideration for collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* are time, skills needed, resources, and teacher's role. To facilitate the reading each tension will be presented separately.

**Time, skills and resources for collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir***

The analysis showed that most participants indicate that collaborative learning by *Buen Vivir* is a process that requires time and develops skills for collaborating based on the *Buen Vivir* perspective. In this regard, the literature reviews support these findings. De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, and Admiraal, (2015) indicate that collaborative learning is a structured process with specific techniques that requires training. Similarly, Roselli, (2016) claims it is important to overcome the ingenious vision of social constructivism and work for collaborative learning processes with serious external regulation. However, this serious and structured process requires time and investment. Additionally, Avello-Martínez and Marín, (2016) explain that collaboration is part of the XXI century skills and requires students be trained to develop the skills needed to collaborate and learn collaboratively. Likewise, De Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, (2015) indicate that collaborative learning is complex and needs a gradual introduction. As a complement to what is mentioned, Mancebo (2013) claim that knowledge and research cannot be relegated to compete for producing more with less cost. Collaborative learning from *Buen Vivir* is a structured process that requires time, resources and specific skills. In this sense, it is essential to analyse the role of the teacher within the process.

**Teacher's role**

It was found that most of the participants indicated the role of the teacher is active and requires a detailed and meticulous setting and management of the teaching and learning process. Several teachers, students and experts suggest that teachers have various responsibilities in setting and managing the class but also in guiding and mediating the conflicts that could arise. The mentioned is in line with what Roselli, (2016) indicates. The author stated the teacher regulation needed is related with composition of the groups, the symmetry of participation, alternation of roles and functions, listening and evaluation of

others, collective organisation, negotiation argued, organisation of time, among others. The role of the teacher in collaborative learning would contemplate the rigour of the process, to avoid collaborative learning being perceived as a waste of time. However, the role of the teacher is mediated by several aspects.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that this research shows that there have been advances in Ecuadorian public policy regarding *Buen Vivir,* important steps in the construction of horizontal relationships between teachers and students, and the intention of UNAE to promote *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning in its official documents. However, the results indicate power issues, between peer students, academics and with university authorities. In turn, the analyses suggest that it is necessary to deepen UNAE's knowledge of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning, as well as the reflection on how the productivist vision may have permeated UNAE's actions in different daily practices. collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* require a specific time, resources and skills to collaborate. Sequentially, collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* need a teacher role that entails meticulousness, reflection and specific training. After analysing the collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* considerations, an analysis of the main practices in UNAE related to collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* may provide further understanding of the achievements and limits of the implementation of *Buen Vivir* in UNAE.

## 6.3 Collaboration in teaching and learning processes at UNAE

This section will discuss the collaboration in teaching and learning practices at UNAE in its practices such as PIENSA, peer learning, but also in ritualities that are part of the Andean vision of collectivism. As an introduction to collaborative learning practices at UNAE, it is important to mention that several participants indicated that collaborative learning is implemented in everyday life. In this regard, Avello-Martínez and Marín, (2016) indicate that collaboration requires training, practices, commitment and overcoming some errors. Literature indicated that *Buen Vivir* is a lifestyle rather than just a theoretical understanding (Álvarez-Litben, 2017). Nonetheless, as Álvarez-Litben, (2017) indicates, *Buen Vivir* practices imply a specific process to get agreements and solve problems for the community that were not mentioned for UNAEs' members. The analysis showed that most of the participants stated that in each class, students tend to work in groups for a specific task. Yet, working in groups is not necessary collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* and could be used by productivist vision (Janoski & Lepadatu, 2014) as mentioned in sections 6.1 and 6.2. UNAE tries to promote collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* in their daily practices, and with structures that facilitate collaboration.

The results found that UNAE seeks to promote collaborative learning through infrastructure designed for co-working. Some participants indicated that the learning environments and the infrastructure in UNAE promote collaborative learning and co-working with mobile furniture. This is related to the Pre-professional practice model that indicates that the configuration of each classroom promotes collaboration (UNAE, 2019). However, *Buen Vivir* is more than furniture and classrooms. It is related to nature, solidarity, diversity (Larrea, 2014) and it could be practised in classrooms but also outside. *Buen Vivir* promotes communitarian learning, and it requires going out to classrooms. Collaborative learning furniture and environments are an important opportunity to support the teaching and learning process but it does not generate the learning and *Buen Vivir* by itself.

### 6.3.1 PIENSA –Knowledge Integration Project-

The construction of PIENSA is linked to Pre-professional practices and is defined in the UNAE Model of Pre-Professional Practices. PIENSA (integrative knowledge project) is considered by UNAE members as a collaborative learning practice from *Buen Vivir*. The UNAE Pre-professional practice model indicates that each semester, from the first semester on, students will carry out their Pre-Professional practice in an educational institution assigned by the university (UNAE, 2017). Pre-Professional practices are related to axes of knowledge, according to the major and semester the student is studying (UNAE, 2017).

In the Pre-Professional practices model, it is indicated that students must observe, accompany and advise. In turn, UNAE's Pre-Professional practice model indicates that PIENSA must be carried out in compliance with the practices (UNAE, 2017). PIENSA is carried out between student pairs (2 or 3) and academic pairs that guide the process from their courses (UNAE, 2017). PIENSA is held once per semester (approximately 4 months) and aims to contribute to the development of action research skills of UNAE students. In turn, PIENSA intends to build with supplies to improve educational processes in the institutions where the practices are carried out (UNAE, 2017).

Interestingly, the data suggested that having contributions from several teachers in the realization of PIENSA and having more than one teacher in some classes, brings benefits for student learning.  Likewise, most of the participants indicated that the pedagogical peer is used within students and teachers and enriches the discussions around the PIENSA work. It is supported with literature that indicates the interaction and the different points of view help in performance and academic success (Chan, Phan, Aniyah Salihan, & Dipolog-Ubanan, 2016; Hilsdon, 2014; Barkley, 2014). The interaction with student peers and different teachers in PIENSA enriches the knowledge of the students and helps them to develop their criteria. It is important to analyse how PIENSA favours the knowledge of problems of the educational communities.

The results indicate that PIENSA contributes to solving real problems for the improvement of the educational processes of the institutions where the practices are carried out. It is supported by Álvarez (2018) who stresses the importance that the teaching and learning process is related to transformations and contributions for equity and rights. Additionally, Babayi and Arshad (2015) indicate that collaborative learning is more effective in real-life problems. PIENSA provides the opportunity to learn by solving real problems but this requires specific skills.

Results found that some participants mentioned that PIENSA could be improved by developing collaborative learning skills and competencies in the first year before exposing students to a full project. In this regard, Sulisworo (2012) state that collaborative learning is mediated by how the participants solve the conflicts. As an insider researcher, I could perceive that both students and first-year teachers of the university feel anxious and overwhelmed by PIENSA. From what I could sense, for some teachers and students doing PIENSA, in the first year of university, presents challenges that exceed their skills. For the aforementioned, it would be important to deepen the development of the necessary skills to build PIENSA before the students can carry it out. PIENSA requires specific skills that may be developed before completion. In turn, PIENSA may require other conditions for its construction.

The analysis showed that the time stipulated for carrying out PIENSA may be a limitation. Some participants indicated that the time allocated to carry out the entire project is a maximum of 4 months, which is perceived as a limitation. Some participants mentioned that carrying out PIENSA requires time to be accepted by the educational institution where practices will be conducted, to observe, raise the problem and research. In this regard, Álvarez-Litben, (2017) state that in communities that live according to *Buen Vivir* principles, networks of trust and solidarity are created to solve difficulties, make decisions and build common projects.

As an insider researcher, I consider that there are multiple challenges to implement Pre-Professional practices and PIENSA. The main challenges in Pre-Professional Practices and PIENSA in my view is the time established to carry out the PIENSA project; the students' skills to observe, advise and accompany (observing, accompanying and advising demand some skills that could be not developed in first-year students); and not enough participation of the educational community in the solutions of their educational difficulties. I think 4 months for the PIENSA process is a barrier to the contribution to *Buen Vivir*. I would consider it important to rethink the model of Pre-professional practices and the PIENSA process to facilitate learning processes linked to collaboration and *Buen Vivir*.

### 6.3.2 Peer learning (Research groups, Constructs and Peer tutoring between majors)
The results show that there are peer-learning practices in UNAE, such as research groups, constructs organized by knowledge area, and peer tutoring, which most of the participants consider collaborative learning practices based on *Buen Vivir*.

The results of the study indicate that the research groups have valuable benefits. Several participants indicated that research groups are important because they create horizontal and non-formal spaces of collaborative learning based on the research interest of the members. Results also found that some participants mentioned that research groups contribute to the construction of close relationships with teachers. In this sense, Thorsen (2012) and González Fernández, García Ruiz and Ramírez García (2015) indicated that collaborative learning contributes to the research processes. The aforementioned is important because in research groups people participate and collaborate voluntarily based on their research interest. Peer work contributes to collaborative learning, horizontality and closeness between students and teachers; although it has basic requirements.

The analysis showed that constructs and peer tutoring can be opportunities if some limitations such as time are overcome. In this sense, Álvarez, (2016) points out that *Buen Vivir* requires time, happiness in the creation of knowledge and overcoming the productivist vision. However, the lack of time expressed by teachers could be an indicator of the reproduction of the productivist vision within the university and of the institutional ways of facing external pressures. Peer learning demonstrates the possibility of collaborative learning through voluntariness, though it points out the need to have the necessary resources.

### 6.3.3 Collectivism as an Andean vision: Ritualities and collaborative learning
The results found that Chacra and Minga are the most important collaborative learning practices based on *Buen Vivir* at UNAE, since they generate learning connected with nature and, the solution of real problems for the common good. Several participants mentioned that ritualities contemplate diversity, generate new knowledge, produce dialogues and promote the active participation of people for a common goal. Some participants pointed out that ritualities are innovative practices of collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* that mobilize

all majors and members of UNAE. The analysis showed that some participants mentioned that in carrying out the Chacra project, interpersonal relationships, solidarity, contact with nature, the recognition of various voices and knowledge that go beyond academics are developed. In turn, some participants indicated that through Chacra and Minga, people develop their skills to work in a community with a common goal. Several participants mentioned that ritualities present the opportunity to solve real problems with the whole community and to promote the happiness and integration of all members. In Chacra and Minga, dialogue and new knowledge is generated, which is supported by the revised literature.

Torres and Schugurensky, (2002) explain that Latin America is a highly unequal region. However, Farah and Vasapollo, (2011) claim that these unfavourable conditions coexist with an important wealth of the social fabric (Farah & Vasapollo, 2011). Farah and Vasapollo, (2011) explain that cooperation and collectivism are part of the culture in Latin America mainly in the indigenous population. In this sense, the results found that Chacra and Minga are the most important collaborative learning practices based on *Buen Vivir* at UNAE, since they generate learning connected with nature and, the solution of real problems for the common good. Several participants mentioned that ritualities contemplate diversity, generate new knowledge, produce dialogues and promote the active participation of people for a common goal. The analysis showed that some participants mentioned that while carrying out the Chacra project, they develop interpersonal relationships, solidarity, contact with nature, and recognition of various voices and knowledge that go beyond academics.

Enciso and Mendoza, (2011) indicate that Minga is a form of collective social and labour organization. With this system, the community executed the works that benefited the community such as local irrigation canals, cultivation terraces, bridges, temples, etc. This system involved and forced all members of the community to work for the benefit of the community (Enciso & Mendoza, 2011). Chacras is familiar agricultural spaces not only considered as a cultivation space, but recognized as the representation of the fundamental elements of the construction or upbringing of life (Carrera, & Rangel, 2018). Chacra is undoubtedly an educational space in which different generations of a family learn and consolidate, shaping an informal, original and ancestral environmental educational process. Chacra and Minga are collaborative learning processes that integrate and recognize all people in the community, from childhood.

The analysis showed that Minga and Chacra are perceived as practices that value the diversity and potential of everyone. Some teachers, students, and experts at UNAE suggested that collaborative learning by the *Buen Vivir* perspective requires understanding that everyone has diverse abilities. Similarly, some participants indicated that not everyone has to be good at everything. Some participants mentioned that in collaborative learning, the group supports its members to overcome difficulties and use their potential.

Results found that Minga and Chacra are *Buen Vivir* practices that could enhance the collaborative learning process with intercultural awareness. Some participants indicated that Minga and Chacra are part of the ancestral knowledge. However, others indicated that Minga is not understood and implemented as before. In this sense, Álvarez-Litben, (2017) pointed out that *Buen Vivir* has been affected by the productivist vision. Then, it would be also critical to understand how Minga and Chacra are mediated by the global system.

As an insider researcher, I can mention that the Chacra project at UNAE involves various community actors and presents benefits and opportunities. Chacra involves students, children from the community, their parents and, teachers from a research group. In this project, all the people involved plant and harvest food to learn skills related to collaboration, caring for nature and others. Besides, at UNAE there are ritualities such as "Pampa Mesa", which is a ritual in which the entire UNAE community shares food and interacts with others. In this rituality, indigenous leaders guide a spiritual ceremony. However, it is interesting that no participant mentions the Pampamesa ritual. This may be due to the fact that it is a practice generated from the administration, that does not come from everyday life and relationships, so it may not be fully recognized by UNAE members.

As a conclusion, it is possible to argue that there are collaborative learning practices from *Buen Vivir* in UNAE such as PIENSA, peer learning, and rituals like Minga and Chacra. However, the analyses showed that the PIENSA practice may need to be rethought considering the time and skills needed for its proper development. On the other hand, interestingly, the data suggest that research groups and other peer learning practices voluntarily promote collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. Additionally, the results showed that Minga and Chacra are collaborative learning practices from *Buen Vivir* that contemplate interculturality and diversity and that generate knowledge. Collaborative learning in the UNAE context happens related with previous Andean Knowledge and ritualities. Collaborative learning practices based on *Buen Vivir* have impacts that will be discussed in the next section.

## 6.4 Impacts of collaborative learning by Good Living perspective at UNAE

Participants indicated that the main impact of collaborative learning from *Buen Vivir* is the change in the teacher identity that is transformed by the common good vision and happiness, as the engine of the educational process.

Most students, teachers and experts indicated that collaborative learning through the lens of *Buen Vivir* impacts on teacher's identity or in the future teacher's identity. The latter is supported with UNAE documents that invite to overcome the encyclopedic, fragmented knowledge, the unique and rigid model for all students, the unilateral teaching process, and the vertical structures for learning and teaching (UNAE, 2017). In this regard, Nordin and Samsudin, (2017) mentioned that professional identity is related to personal experience and political and social context. The identity in teachers is personally and socially constructed (Nordin & Samsudin, 2017). The teachers' identity for social transformation requires critical reflection and active participation to overcome the challenges of this identity within globalisation (Cardoso, Batista & Graça, 2016).

The analysis showed that in the new teacher identity there is a greater emotional commitment and the intention to generate changes at the social level linked to *Buen Vivir*. Some teachers and students stated that the shift in teachers' identity is related to new views of education role and the construction of equity, horizontality and empathy. In this regard, Collado-Ruano, Morillo, and González, (2018) state that *Buen Vivir* understands that education needs to happen in and for equity in a solidary environment (Collado-Ruano, Morillo, & González, 2018). Similarly, Álvarez, (2016) mentions that learning for *Buen Vivir* implies a deconstruction of knowledge related to colonised vision and promotes emancipation. The shift in teacher identity is confirmed with the literature of *Buen Vivir* and with the UNAE documents. As an insider researcher, I was able to observe the teachers' motivation to analyse and improve their practices. I could perceive that there was a desire for permanent

improvement that motivated self-analysis and practices that implied closer contact with students. Teacher identity at UNAE is driven by desires for decolonisation, empathy and equity. This new identity in turn impacts on the role of the teacher.

The results suggest that the change in teacher identity causes modifications in the teacher's role, being their role as a mediator vital. In this regard, Roselli, (2016) indicates teachers should guide and accompany collaborative learning working for the symmetry of participation, alternation of roles and functions, listening and evaluation of others, collective organisation, negotiation argued, organisation of time, among others. The teacher's role is to be a mediator of the learning processes and a promoter of the appropriate environment to learn in harmony.

The analysis showed that the new teacher identity is sustained by the happiness of teaching and learning through collaboration. Participants expressed through artwork that collaborative learning impacts on happiness in doing collaborative learning processes.  In this sense, UNAE claims for happiness and solidarity in the teaching and learning process (Álvarez, 2015). Similarly, Capstick, (2004) claims that in the peer learning process all participants get benefits in psychological well-being including the tutors.

Finally, the results of this study suggest that the new teacher identity takes into consideration the common good and its challenges. Some participants point out that collaborative learning helps them to think about the common good, even when there are challenges. In this sense, Álvarez-Litben, (2017) claim that *Buen Vivir* communities work for the common good within solidarity and trust.  However, the ideal image of the community from *Buen Vivir* does not correspond to reality (Álvarez-Litben, 2017). The common good vision requires to develop problem-solving and other skills (González Fernández, García Ruiz, & Ramírez García, 2015, Vuopala, Hyvönen, & Järvelä, 2016; Bouroumi, & Fajr, 2014).

In conclusion, in UNAE's context, where collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* are promoted, the identity of the teacher is transformed by the desire for decolonisation, empathy and equity. This new identity, in turn, causes the teacher's role to be transformed by the mediation of the teaching and learning processes and promotion of *Buen Vivir*. The UNAE teacher's identity is linked to happiness, common good and harmony in teaching and learning. In this teaching identity, the connections with others, nature and the common good are fundamental. However, the common good is still a concept that has not been implemented.

## 6.5 Recommendations made by participants

In this section, I will discuss the recommendations made by participants: improving the teaching and learning process by training faculty members, creating and stimulating horizontal spaces to interact and collaborate, implementing the theory and using research and innovative projects for promoting collaborative learning by the lenses of *Buen Vivir*.

### 6.5.1 Improve the teaching and learning process by training faculty members

Results found that it is recommended that the teaching and learning process is improved by training faculty members in collaborative learning, *Buen Vivir* and evaluating the quality of the teaching and learning process. Most participants, mainly the teachers and experts, expressed doubts about the training of teachers in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*, as well as in other aspects that guarantee quality education. Some participants state collaborative learning is a very demanding teaching and learning process that requires time, planning and

training. In this regard, Collado-Ruano, Morillo, and González, (2018) state that *Buen Vivir* in the HE Ecuadorian context contemplates the need for quality in education. However, it is critical to reflect how quality is defined, and for what purpose and interest. Njie and Asimiran, (2016) mention that quality assurance does not yet have a clear definition and has been in debate. Njie and Asimiran, (2016) also indicate that quality assurance responds to international standards that do not consider the particular context and respond to power more than social needs. Conversely, Roselli, (2016) indicates that external regulation is critical for a real and effective collaborative learning process, but it requires appropriate training.

As an insider researcher, I think it is important to reinforce the teachers' training in theoretical and practical aspects of collaborative learning as a pedagogy since the results related with the tensions regarding dividing or not the task, could be related with not enough knowledge about what collaborative learning is and the theory behind it. Additionally, I argue teachers would receive training and spaces for developing the skills for working toward *Buen Vivir* since it is not just a theory. It would require an individual and social process of de-construction and self-analysis.

### 6.5.2 Horizontal spaces to interact

The analysis showed that several students and teachers (including experts) recommended generating exchange spaces between majors such as academic fairs, workshops and others. Participants indicated that integrating the entire university in collaborative learning processes avoiding divisions by majors is highly needed. In this regard, Álvarez-Litben, (2017) says that in *Buen Vivir* communities, the decisions are made with the entire community. Participants also suggested improving the learning process through heterogeneous groups. In this regard, Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, and Wiegant, (2016) state that collaborative learning occurs in diverse and heterogeneous spaces and open, challenging and complex task. Then, it would be important to promote spaces for horizontal interaction and heterogeneity within the university, to overcome vertical structures.

### 6.5.3 Implement the theory

Concerning the recommendation to implement the theories, participants indicated that it is critical to implement collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* discourses since both concepts require more real practices. Most participants pointed out doubts regarding the implementation of *Buen Vivir* in UNAE. Several participants consider that *Buen Vivir* is so far at the conceptual level but not at the practical level. In the same line, the literature indicates that *Buen Vivir* is still under construction and sometimes decontextualized (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017, Gallegos Anda, 2018, Mattioli, & Nozica, 2017). Acosta, (2011) also questions if it is possible to implement *Buen Vivir* within the global capitalist context. Tierney, (2008) and Brennan and Shah, (2000) claim that education is a right impacted by local and global interest. With all the above-mentioned, it would be critical to understand how knowledge is validated, reproduced and appreciated based on the region it comes from. Implementing collaborative learning could require training, but implementing the *Buen Vivir* philosophy in HE would require more than training, but political decisions, philosophical reflections and social and ethical agreements.

### 6.5.4 Use research and innovative projects and other structures for promoting collaborative learning by the lenses of *Buen Vivir*

The results and the reviewed literature indicate that collaborative learning favours research. The analysis showed that some participants recommended promoting collaborative learning through research and innovation projects and, the constructs that exist by area of knowledge. Regarding the recommendation generating collaborative learning through research,

innovation projects and constructs, Thorsen, (2012) and, González Fernández, García Ruiz, and Ramírez García, (2015) indicate that collaborative learning contribute to research processes. The interaction generated in the research and innovation groups promotes collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir.*

The common aspect of research projects, innovation and constructs are that it is all sustained at UNAE through peer learning. In this regard, evidence indicates that peer learning impacts positively in academic performance (Chan, Phan, Aniyah Salihan, & Dipolog-Ubanan, 2016) and reduces power issues. As an insider researcher, I think it is a key recommendation since it is related to the shift in the teacher's identity and the horizontality developed between students and teachers' relations. It is also related to a way to promote voluntary collaboration based on the students and teachers' interest. Peer learning is an opportunity to promote collaboration through volunteering.

In conclusion, the results and literature support the view that it is essential to promote the implementation of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning. However, this requires time, resources, political decisions, philosophical reflections, and social and ethical agreements. For example, it is important to think about educational quality and teacher training, yet this requires deep reflection on quality, equity and *Buen Vivir.* Teacher training requires technical training, but also processes of deconstruction, horizontal and heterogeneous interaction between peers. In this sense, there is an opportunity to use research and innovation groups as collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* facilitators.

## 6.7 Reflections

This study allows us to reflect on aspects such as the impact of global and local economic policy on education, the collectivist dynamics of the Andean region and its relations with collaborative learning, collaboration within the teaching-learning process at UNAE, as well as the implications of collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* in teaching-learning processes. This section will briefly present some reflections on these issues..

**Political economy shaping HE globally and locally**

The results of this study display the challenges of thinking and doing local within a globally connected higher education system. The study highlights the difficulties of thinking and building education for and from *Buen Vivir* in a capitalist system based on production. From its ecologist current, *Buen Vivir* is a platform for dialogues of diverse knowledge, which propose a post-developmental economic model that recognizes the rights of nature and promotes the common good (Gudynas, 2011). However, the higher education system is governed internationally by capitalist and productivist understandings, governed by the idea of producing more and at a lower cost (Álvarez, 2018). Economic policy dictates what is desirable in a society, it promotes indicators and standards, and the universities has been instruments of the system and have reproduced inequalities (Álvarez, 2018). Even though *Buen Vivir* is an alternative to development theories, it has not been considered internationally (Brown & McCowan 2018).

This study allows us to observe that *Buen Vivir* faces as challenges the politics and economy at an international level that promote understandings, indicators and standards based on the developmental, capitalist and productivist perspective. Similarly, *Buen Vivir* confronts individual and local colonizing understandings and practices. The 2008 Constitution of Ecuador is based on *Buen Vivir* (Mattioli and Nozica, 2017, Haidar and Berros, 2015). However, in the National Plan for Good Living (2017-2021), there were actions focused on

the productive matrix, showing a gap in the Sumak Kawsay concept, and the reproduction of the goals of the development model. *Buen Vivir* in Latin America shows important progress, contradictions and challenges in its implementation (Arteaga-Cruz, 2017, Gallegos Anda, 2018, Mattioli, & Nozica, 2017).

Williford (2018) indicates that the implementation of *Buen Vivir* in Latin America is mediated by the challenges of overcoming colonization systems and international pressure. In this sense, this case study shows that the colonization process can be reproduced even in discourses that promote decolonization. The study shows that the way we think, feel and do higher education is based on a colonized understanding of what academia is. Even at UNAE, colonizing ideas have permeated. The study shows how in an institution created precisely to build a way of educating based on Buen Vivir, imaginary and capitalist and productivist practices are reproduced that limit reflection and leave out the meaning of some practices.

Despite all the efforts to create a university for and from Buen Vivir, the study reveals practices that contradict Buen Vivir. As outlined in Chapter 1, UNAE is a university composed of a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is the university authority of UNAE and its members are not elected authorities but selected by the government (Restrepo & Stefos, 2018; UNAE, 2016). The idea of the Board of Trustees, the verticality in decisions, practices that seek to impose collaboration and *Buen Vivir* and the administrative pressure to do more and faster, in fact, contradict *Buen Vivir*. In this regard, Charbonneau-Gowdy and her collaborators (2016) point out that learning differs depending on context and, Latin America presents a particular context with traditional practices and vertical structures.

**Collectivism as an Andean vision and its link with collaborative learning**
This study also highlights the relationships and tensions that exist in regarding collectivism as part of the Andean vision and collaborative learning. Latin America has a wealth of social fabric, mainly in rural areas; popular economy practices and; solidarity cooperativism (Farah & Vasapollo, 2011). The Andean region presents ways of doing, thinking and feeling collectively, and as examples we look at ritualities such as Minga and Chacra, which among other rituals are presented collectively to solve community problems (Enciso & Mendoza, 2011). Minga and Chacra are ways of solving community issues and learning based on cooperation, solving real community problems (Enciso & Mendoza, 2011).

It is important to note that this study indicates that collaborative learning and cooperative learning have aspects in common such as the importance given to active learning, interaction between peers in small groups, and the idea of the teacher as a facilitator (Hanson, Trolian, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2016; Vuopala, Hyvönen, & Järvelä, 2016). In these types of learning, teacher and student work together and intentionally for the construction of knowledge (Hanson, Trolian, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2016). However, there are also significant differences between cooperative learning and collaborative learning. Cooperative learning differs from collaborative learning because it promotes division of work (Sulisworo, 2012; Barkley, 2014), is based on behaviorism and cognitivism (Sulisworo, 2012), and promotes individual effort (Laal, & Ghodsi), 2012), and traditional authority relationships (Barkley, 2014). Collaborative learning encourages students to work together on their tasks (Sulisworo, 2012; Barkley, 2014), is linked to constructivism (Sulisworo, 2012; Barkley, 2014), is less structured (Barkley, 2014), promotes horizontal relationships (Barkley, 2014), and considers positive interdependence (Hajra and Das, 2015). Thus, if the intention is to seek pedagogical strategies to operationalize *Buen Vivir*, it is possible that collaborative learning can be of help.

Learning varies depending on context. In the context of this study, *Buen Vivir* is the pillar described in official documents and daily speeches. Buen Vivir in education requires decolonization, equity, solidarity and happiness (Acosta, 2013). From Buen Vivir, the collective construction of solutions is adjusted to the needs of the community (Cubillo-Guevara, Hidalgo- Captain, & García-Álvarez, 2016, Guzmán Prudencio, & Polo Blanco, 2017). In the ritual practices of Buen Vivir, people learn by doing and solving problems in the community (Enciso & Mendoza, 2011). In this sense, collaborative learning in Ecuador is implemented in a collectivist way of life and could be a useful tool, a means for the construction of Buen Vivir in education, providing spaces for the joint construction of the solutions that communities need. In this construction there are no linear relationships, since Buen Vivir is a platform where several perspectives are interrelated.

## Collaboration in teaching and learning processes at UNAE

The present study reveals UNAE's intention to generate an education for and from *Buen Vivir*. However, as reported, this construction is not free of tensions and contradictions in its implementation. The study shows that there are practices that have been thought to sustain and promote Good Living and collaboration. PIENSA, Minga and Chacra are among the main practices and ritualities at UNAE.

The study shows that PIENSA is stipulated as mandatory in the UNAE model for pre-professional practices. Although the study reveals that PIENSA is the most recognized collaboration practice in UNAE, it is also observed that it has contradictions and challenges that can be reviewed from the perspective of Buen Vivir. This case study highlights that teamwork is not necessarily *Buen Vivir*, as it can respond to contemporary ideas of capitalism and its strategies (Janoski & Lepadatu, 2014). Therefore, the study indicates that it is important to think of PIENSA as a voluntary, emancipating, deeply reflective process. The results of this research highlight the importance to analyze in depth whether the construction of PIENSA responds to emancipation and the common good, or to the need to produce, to achieve and comply with what is imposed, such as the qualification system.

Moreover, this study indicates that ritualities such as Minga and Chacra are presented as collaborative learning practices based on Buen Vivir. These practices were shown to have generated learning connected with nature and the solution of real problems for the common good. The results indicate that ritualities are innovative collaborative learning practices based on Buen Vivir that are capable of mobilizing the entire university community, developing interpersonal relationships, solidarity, contact with nature, recognition of diverse voices and knowledge that goes beyond academic understanding. In line, the study reveals that, through Chacra and Minga, people develop skills to work in a community with a common goal. In this sense, Enciso and Mendoza, (2011) point out that Minga is a form of collective social and labor organization. Chacra is undoubtedly an educational space in which different generations of a family learn and consolidate, configuring an informal, original and ancestral environmental educational process. (Carrera and Rangel, 2018). The study indicates that ritualities are collaborative learning practices based on Buen Vivir that contemplate interculturality and diversity.

**Implications for teaching and learning at the UNAE and beyond**
The results of this study allowed understanding of Buen Vivir and collaborative learning in the context of UNAE, its tensions, practices, impacts, as well as the implications for education in general. The study reveals the potential of collaborative learning for the implementation of *Buen Vivir* in the Ecuadorian educational context. Mostly due to the collectivist organization framework of the country, its traditions and rituals that, although they have gradually turned invisible, are maintained and understood as ways of doing and thinking in the community. This study indicates opportunities for the generation of an education based on collaboration and the common good, which will have to find a place in the current?? vertical, capitalist and colonizing system.

The study portrays the possibility of promoting learning from and for *Buen Vivir*, which cannot be imposed, but as Rodríguez, Aguilar, & Apolo, (2018) point out, it results from the daily exchange and the permanent dialogue of knowledge. This type of learning and teaching is based on the collective good, emancipation, caring for nature and others, which implies deconstruction (Collado Ruano, Morillo & González, 2018). The study reveals that colonizing understandings and practices have permeated each person and system, therefore, in order to build an education for *Buen Vivir* it will be necessary to continually rethink the role of education and of the teacher as a subject who teaches and learns in community. Moreover, based on the study, it is possible to think that education can overcome the anthropocentric vision towards a bio-centric one that will allow us to understand ourselves as part of a whole. This implies thinking about pedagogical strategies that connect the subject with nature, in equal and respectful relationships. An academia that overcomes and reflects on the utilitarian relationship with nature and proposes post-developmental practices and models. Diverse, complex educational spaces where the techniques are designed to produce the common good. However, the possibility of building an education from and for Buen Vivir is mediated by the context. In this sense, Ivancheva, (2017) points out experiences and chanllenges of Latin American universities that have tried to overcome capitalism and colonization in education within hegemonic systems.

## 6.8 Chapter conclusions
The analysis showed that the majority of UNAE members understand *Buen Vivir* as a way of life that promotes the overcoming of developmental theories and colonisation, the common good, care for nature and the connection between all. However, the implementation of *Buen Vivir* is mediated by colonisation processes in Latin America and some contradictions with *Buen Vivir*. Furthermore, the lack of theoretical depth of *Buen Vivir* generates contradictions and limits its implementation. Similarly, the results found that although *Buen Vivir* has not been implemented in UNAE or society, it is positively perceived in UNAE.

It is possible to say that there have been advances in Ecuadorian public policy regarding *Buen Vivir,* like an increase in the investment in education and the higher education system, important steps in building horizontal relationships between teachers and students, and UNAE's intention to promote *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning in its official documents. However, the results indicate power issues and the reproduction of the productivist vision within UNAE prevents further development.

It is possible to argue that there are collaborative learning practices of *Buen Vivir* in UNAE such as PIENSA, peer learning and, rituals such as Minga and Chacra. However, the practice of PIENSA needs to be rethought taking into account the time and skills necessary for its correct development. Alternatively, and curiously, data suggests that research groups

voluntarily promote collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. Furthermore, the results showed that the complexity in the Latin American context is accompanied by riches in the social fabric and solidarity. In this context, it is possible to see practices such as Minga and Chacra. Minga and Chacra are understood as collaborative learning practices based on *Buen Vivir* that contemplate interculturality and diversity and that generate knowledge.

Practices in the UNAE context, impact on teacher's identity. This identity is transformed by the desire for decolonisation, empathy and equity. This new identity transforms the teacher's role by the mediation of the teaching and learning processes and the promotion of *Buen Vivir*. Research indicated that the identity of the UNAE teacher is linked to happiness, the common good and harmony in teaching and learning. However, the common good remains a concept that has not been implemented.

These results suggest that it is essential to promote the implementation of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning. Nonetheless, this requires time, resources, deep involvement in the teaching and learning process, teacher training, political decisions, philosophical reflections, and social and ethical agreements. The results suggest that meeting and integration spaces such as clubs and rituals are favourable for *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning. The analysis indicates that generating common meeting spaces between the entire university allows for collaboration and the construction of *Buen Vivir*. At the same time, the implementation of *Buen Vivir* requires promoting spaces for horizontal encounter and collaboration, such as research groups.

## 7. Implications of the study

In this chapter, conclusions and implications of this study are presented on seven main themes 7.1 Conclusions about the research aim and objectives, 7.2 Implications for UNAE, 7.4 Implications for the Ecuadorian HE system, 7.5 Implication for the international scenario, 7.6 Implications for further research, and 7.7 Plan for impact. The chapter argues that although UNAE needs to rethink some practices to meet *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning goals, there are practices such as Minga, Chacra, and research groups that can contribute to the teaching and learning processes in UNAE, Ecuador and internationally.

## 7.1 Conclusions about the research aim and objectives

UNAE is the only Ecuadorian university of Education and its mission is to face the educational challenges based on *Buen Vivir* and collaboration. UNAE is also a university that has the responsibility to contribute to the training of new teachers and managers in education to improve education in the country. Based on the literature reviewed, there is no previous research on the analysis of *Buen Vivir* and its relationship with collaborative learning. Then, it was important to contribute to the understanding of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning to help in the improvement of teaching and learning practices based on these two concepts.

This study aims to contribute to improving teaching and learning practices based on the philosophy of *Buen Vivir* through collaborative learning in the Ecuadorian context. The general objective of this study is to understand and critically analyse the practices and impacts of collaborative learning in undergraduate students and professors at UNAE, from the perspective of *Buen Vivir* and provide recommendations to improve and implement collaborative learning practices and programs in the Ecuadorian context. The general objective is achieved through the specific objectives.

The specific objectives to meet the aim and general objective of this case study research are:

1. Critically analyse the literature on collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir,* its impacts, conditions, and considerations.
2. Identify and critically reflect on collaborative learning practices at the National University of Education (UNAE).
3. Explore the link between the practices of collaborative learning in UNAE and the philosophy of *Buen Vivir.*
4. Critically analyse the impacts of collaborative learning practices from the perspective of *Buen Vivir,* in students and undergraduate teachers of UNAE.
5. Identify recommendations to improve teaching and learning practices based on *Buen Vivir* through collaborative learning.

The literature reviewed, as well as the information collected through focus groups, interviews and artistic work, allowed to fulfil the objective of this study. The critical review of the literature of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning allowed to know and discuss theoretically the bases of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning as well as their conditions, considerations and impacts. Regarding *Buen Vivir,* the literature shows challenges for its implementation from different angles such as the economic, political and conceptual areas. Regarding the economic and political challenges, the literature indicates global realities and indicators that limit the implementation of *Buen Vivir.* As far as the conceptual standpoint, literature shows that *Buen Vivir* is still in permanent construction. Additionally, the analysis of collaborative learning literature allowed to delve into its advantages, disadvantages, considerations and

conditions. Similarly, the collaborative learning literature review provides the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of the teaching and learning processes with the knowledge of collaborative learning pedagogy. The critical literature review allowed to analyse the challenges, advances, considerations for the implementation of collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* practices.

The information generated by the different data collection techniques of the present study allowed to know the main collaborative learning practices in UNAE and to explore its relationship with *Buen Vivir*. In this sense, the most innovative practice is ritualities, such as Minga and Chacra. The results suggest that these practices collect the knowledge of *Buen Vivir* and in turn are considered collaborative learning. In Mingas and Chacras, people solve community problems through collaboration, contact with nature, recognition of diversity and the vision of the common good. Collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* practices have impacts on UNAE members.

The results illustrate that the greatest impact is the change in teacher identity. The information generated in the study indicates that collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* in UNAE, impacts on teacher's identity, their vision of education and commitment to the educational process. The present study indicates that the change in teacher identity occurs in the relationship with the student and due to the teachers' commitment to generating a different education based on *Buen Vivir*. According to the information generated in this study, the identity of the UNAE teacher is characterized by mediation and generation of learning spaces, where happiness and the common good prevail. The results show that the UNAE members who live the collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* practices, and their impacts, bring recommendations.

The study presents important recommendations for the improvement of the teaching and learning processes. The main recommendations are training teachers in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir;* generation of horizontal spaces for interaction and collaboration; monitoring for the implementation of the theory and use of research projects, innovation and constructs for the generation of collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir*. It is critical to understand the practices, impacts and recommendations within the context.

This study provides an analysis of the context of the university studied, which allows to understand the challenges and opportunities of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning in the Ecuadorian context, as well as to make suggestions at the international level. As an insider researcher, I understand that the context presents challenges more than opportunities. The global educational system pushes for productivism and competition, and hides ancestral knowledge, such as *Buen Vivir*. Latin America is a highly unequal region and Ecuador is a country within this region that still suffers the impact of colonisation, as it can be seen in different aspects such as the exclusion of native people (Indigenous, Afro-descendants). *Buen Vivir* in HE requires recognition of rights and social transformation. *Buen Vivir* promotes equity, rights, solidarity, collaboration, decolonisation, and biocentrism for the common good (Álvarez, 2016). Nevertheless, improving the teaching and learning process based on *Buen Vivir* is about the access of education, building horizontal relations and critically reflecting on the role of education. However, this research is in line with the literature and indicates that *Buen Vivir* is still under construction and requires to implement not only the theory but training and individual and social de-construction. The implementation of collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir* implies achieving rights, however, it is mediated by inequalities.

In conclusion, it is possible to argue that this study has contributed to the understanding of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning, its challenges, advances and considerations, within the Ecuadorian and UNAE contexts. This study has also contributed to the knowledge of collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* practices at UNAE, their impacts and recommendations for the improvement of teaching and learning processes from collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir.* The results suggest that it is possible to improve the teaching-learning process, through ritualities, research groups (teachers and students) and common spaces (clubs, fairs) that allow for learning by solving real problems, based on the common good.

## 7.2 Implications for UNAE

The results of this study allowed to understand *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning in the context of UNAE, their tensions, practices, impacts, the recommendations of the participants and the implications of the most relevant results for UNAE.

Concerning the context surrounding the implementation of *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning in UNAE, the literature review and the study results present important challenges. The global capitalist and production-based system, international and national indicators, and the pressures of the national education system affect the implementation of collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir.* Results show that the pressure for educating more people at a lower cost, limit the implementation of teaching and learning processes based on *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning. It seems appropriate to deal with the UNAE challenges generating strategies of sustainability, university autonomy and internal evaluation of its programs and processes, based on *Buen Vivir.* However, it seems that this may not be completely applicable in the current Ecuadorian reality, which has not yet overcome the atmosphere of protest that began in October. In turn, the aforementioned reality is aggravated by the pandemic and the limitations of a developing country. Consequently, it is advisable to add to these challenges others specific to the institution and the people that comprise it.

The results and the reviewed literature indicate important power issues that would be appropriate to be taken into account. It is suggested to face the power issues between academic peers, student peers, and between academics and the authorities at UNAE. In this sense, the recommendation to create more spaces for interaction and collaboration seem appropriate. It appears that horizontal spaces such as research groups, fairs, innovation projects, and ritualities could help to build trust and overcome the productivist practices that have permeated the organisation. Similarly, to facilitate the attendance and participation of all people, these spaces could be continuous, organized by different actors, and considered within the time and activities of each teacher. Likewise, it seems appropriate to guarantee that each space is safe to speak, debate and disagree. Collaboration spaces could be generated from the proposals of UNAE members, and previous agreements with all actors. In turn, I reflect that it would be pertinent to recognize that *Buen Vivir* is under construction and that it has not yet been implemented in UNAE, and how this could be helpful in the sense that all UNAE members feel that they can contribute in the construction of something not yet finished and reduce tensions.

Another important strain is the perception that in learning groups not all students work equally, which causes frustration in workgroups. In this sense, the results suggest training teachers in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir,* as this training will allow to provide greater pedagogical and theoretical tools to facilitate collaborative learning. It seems appropriate to think and organize collaborative learning in such a way that it can be implemented. Then,

results indicate that all aspects of the task must be thought by the teacher to facilitate the participation of all the members of the group. Similarly, it is recommended that the importance attached to grading be reviewed within UNAE, since several students expressed discomfort at obtaining the same grade as a partner who, in their opinion, did not work as hard. The aforementioned requires an in-depth revision of the grading and other practices that could reproduce a productivist vision.

Regarding the tension related to dividing or not the task in collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir,* the results suggest training teachers and reviewing the practices that reproduce the productivist vision. The theoretical knowledge of what collaborative learning implies will contribute to overcoming the confusion between cooperative learning (which contemplates the division of the task due to its theoretical foundations) and collaborative learning (which does not contemplate the division of the task). In turn, it seems appropriate to conduct a deep revision of the division of task concerning the division of labour and teamwork (not necessarily collaborative learning) as a way of reproducing the productivist vision. It is recommended that UNAE assesses the extent to which teamwork (which is not collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir)* reproduces the productivist vision. In this sense, it is suggested to generate internal evaluations, built by its stakeholders, on the teaching and learning processes within *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning. It is advisable to strengthen teacher training to reflect on the reproduction of the productivist perspective and the participation of students in the educational process.

The tensions caused by looking at collaborative learning as mandatory or not is also an important aspect to overcome. In this sense, it is advisable to think that from *Buen Vivir,* students are actors with rights and capacities, responsible for their learning processes. Although the results show the intention to promote collaboration through PIENSA, the data also show that many times what is implemented is not collaboration or *Buen Vivir.* It appears collaborative learning from the *Buen Vivir* should be a process of teaching and learning for the common good, starting from a personal harmony and harmonic relations with others and nature. Results suggest that collaboration and harmony cannot be compulsory. With the aforementioned, it is recommended to think about training teachers to handle conflicts that can be generated in collaborative learning and turn to consider whether collaboration can be forced or not. It is advisable to review the way PIENSA is set now and to think about collaborative projects that involve the community, considering the required time for working and being accepted by a community and, the skills that students need to generate an appropriate project. In this line, the examples of the research groups denote that it is possible to generate research with students and teachers that face social problems, involving the community, as it is voluntary and based on the interest and skills of the participants. The case study also suggests that constructs would be a recommended space to reinforce collaborative learning based on *Buen Vivir.* However, the institution needs to reflect on how to guarantee the time and resources for better using these spaces. It is recommended to reform PIENSA, expanding the execution times, research and generation of proposals with the school or high school where the Pre-Professional practices are carried out. In turn, it is advisable developing the students and teacher's skills needed before PIENSA and Pre-professional practices. Lastly, it is recommended reviewing the Pre-professional plan. The results indicate Pre-professional plans should consider the professional, student, academic, and economic resources and realities as well as the university support. The implementation of collaborative learning from *Buen Vivir* must be thought about considering the capacities, realities and context, to avoid inconsistencies.

It is important to address the inconsistencies between the National Constitution and the practices implemented. It is recommended considering that although Ecuadorian laws promote *Buen Vivir* and collaboration, there are practices that contradict *Buen Vivir*. The multiple activities that teachers must carry out (at all educational levels, schools, high schools, and universities) the lack of teachers in the educational system (mainly in schools and high schools, which is the system that UNAE students will join when they are professionals) and other challenges generated by inequalities, limit the collaboration processes between teachers, in schools and high schools. The aforementioned needs to be analysed in light of the applicability and function of UNAE's Pre-professional model and the reality where future professionals will work. The results show that collaborative learning practices from *Buen Vivir* should overcome the limitations with coherence, considering the interculturality and diversity of Ecuador.

This study suggests that ritualities, such as Minga and Chacra, are intercultural collaborative learning practices based on *Buen Vivir*. Andean knowledge has some ritualities such as Minga and Chacra that should be considered in the teaching and learning process but also the organisation as a whole. It is advisable that UNAE integrate ritualities in teaching and learning practices with different majors and activities, and monitor its impacts and opportunities. This study suggests that Minga and Chacra should be explored by its contribution to teaching and learning in horizontal relations, attainment, solving real problems, generating common agreements, satisfaction and social welfare. Minga and Chacra re-create new ways of teaching and learning, where it is crucial to act for the common good. The aforementioned would allow understanding education within social realities and promoting activities that help in the communities' transformation. At that point, it would be recommended that UNAE analyse these practices more in depth, use them more in the teaching and learning practices, document it, and understand this impact on the construction of *Buen Vivir* and, in environmental and intercultural education. The results suggest that mainstreaming of ritualities in the educational process, in turn, should be linked to the teaching identity of UNAE.

In relation to the ritualities, it is advisable to reflect on those generated by the administration of the university in a formal manner. It was noteworthy that they were not mentioned by any participant, and this may be due to them not being recognized. For the aforementioned, it would be advisable that the practices and rituals be accompanied from the daily practices, instead of generating them officially from the administration. Ritualities respond to ways of connecting symbolically with others and nature in daily life. Therefore, it may be better to accompany its process instead of forcing it.

It is recommended that the change in teacher identity be institutionally supported and sustained by UNAE. The results indicate that it would require to provide the resources, time and spaces necessary for collaboration, *Buen Vivir,* and research. Similarly, it seems to be appropriate for UNAE to support the teacher identity desired to document and promote the processes that are carried out spontaneously and voluntarily as research and innovation groups.

Concerning research and innovation groups seems appropriate while looking at them as opportunities in the teaching and learning process. In this sense, it is recommended thinking about how research and innovation groups can be articulated with Pre-professional practices, PIENSA and educational processes in general.

In conclusion, it is recommended to understand the power issues, the reproduction of the productivist vision, and the motivation of the students to collaborate, which somehow show inconsistencies with the *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning. It is advisable to think about the educational process from interculturality and context. In turn, it is desirable that what harmonizes with *Buen Vivir* and collaborative learning be promoted, such as Minga, Chacra, change in teacher identity, as well as research groups. It is recommended that UNAE support its good practices of ritualities, research groups and review aspects that are not consistent with *Buen Vivir* and collaboration such as the way Pre-professional practices or PIENSA are set.

## 7.3 Implications for the Ecuadorian HE system

Results show tensions posed by global indicators and the implementation of collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* in Ecuadorian HE. It seems appropriate to consider that the international agenda promotes specific indicators, understandings and practices in HE. However, it is not related to *Buen Vivir* and the ancestral knowledge of the country. In order to meet the principles and goals of Ecuadorian constitution related to *Buen Vivir* in education, results suggest that the HE system reflect on the equity in the country and education rights. It would be recommended to document and evaluate the pilot educational model linked to *Buen Vivir* and the Ecuadorian context, promoted for UNAE. It is advisable to think about a national plan that contributes to the implementation of *Buen Vivir* in HE, monitor it with national indicators and provide enough resources for accomplishing the goal.

The evidence suggests that it would be appropriate for the Ecuadorian HE system to keep in mind the time, resources, and the skills needed for a collaborative learning process based on *Buen Vivir* in the country. Results and the literature reviewed indicates benefits of collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* in education. However, it requires time, enough resources, teachers who have enough training in collaborative learning pedagogy, and the skills for guiding learning based on *Buen Vivir*. It would be beneficial that Ecuadorian HE designs a plan for improving teaching and learning practices in HE and Education in general, and that considers training in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* in an intercultural setting.

Results indicate that the Ecuadorian education system would need to reflect and promote interculturality, knowledge dialogue and ritualities such as Minga and Chacra to improve education. Ecuador is a pluricultural country, and it would be beneficial to analyse interculturality and its role for overcoming national challenges. *Buen Vivir* promotes the harmonic relation between humans and nature and the results highlighted the importance of Chacra for its contact with nature and its opportunities for teaching and learning within the community. In this regard, it would be advisable to think about environmental education through a collaborative learning practice by *Buen Vivir* such as Chacra. Barros, (2004) indicates that several scientific communities around the world have indicated a serious environmental crisis due to climate change. The author indicates severe risks and damages for the life of humans and of all species, which requires immediate attention and education to the population. In this regard, working through Chacra could contribute to environmental education but also for communitarian solutions regarding current social problems. The Covid-19 pandemic has deeply affected Ecuador, as the country has not only suffered consequences from the pandemic but also from social inequalities, which has impacted in several areas. To this date, there is uncertainty about the numbers of people infected and deceased during the pandemic. However, there are data on people laid off, and various budget cuts in the social sector. In this current Ecuadorian context, it would be advisable to think

about a way of life linked to *Buen Vivir*. In this sense, it is recommended rethinking the teaching identity necessary to overcome the current crisis.

It is advisable for the HE system to promote the construction of a teacher identity linked to *Buen Vivir*. The results of this study suggest that teacher identity changes at work for *Buen Vivir* and collaboration. A teaching identity linked to *Buen Vivir* would facilitate the achievement of goals and improvements in educational processes. It is recommended the Ecuadorian HE system promote teachers' identity related to empathy, innovation, continuous reflection, and being a guide and a mediator. In this sense, it would be recommended that the educational system create spaces for teachers and researchers that promote the construction of a teaching identity linked to *Buen Vivir*. In the pandemic, Ecuador has decided to continue with the academic processes virtually. However, in the average educational system, only 40% of students have access to the internet and technological means, and 22% of families do not have water (INEC, 2018). In this context, it is advisable to rethink education and the teaching role and the necessary training in the new reality.

The study pinpoints the gap of training regarding collaborative learning but also *Buen Vivir*. Teachers require training in the pedagogical strategies needed but also in the context where it is used. It is recommended a teacher training plan be generated at the different educational levels (schools, high schools, universities) that respond to the training needs of the country, workspaces, and *Buen Vivir*. It is advisable that teacher training take place in collaborative spaces that favour the resolution of educational and social problems in the current crisis.

The opportunity for research and innovation groups to improve education was an important suggestion made by participants and is an approach that is supported in the literature. The findings indicate it is recommended the HE system promote horizontal spaces through research and innovative project and peer learning. It would be important and helpful to create national networks, spaces and projects that link students, teachers, through research and innovation for the common good. I consider it essential to create spaces for interaction, collaboration and learning among academic peers at the national level, at all educational levels (schools, high schools, universities). Research and innovation groups at national, regional and local levels would be an opportunity for collaboration, up-to-date and relevant learning among teachers, and the construction of educational networks that promote *Buen Vivir*

It is recommended the HE system be thought from local to global. It is advisable for the educational system to recognize the current challenges that are linked to poverty and limited access to technologies. It is recommended the Ecuadorian HE system rethink the role of education, quality, teacher training and resources. The new understandings would result from dialogues of knowledge and the recognition of interculturality. It is recommended that Education respond to current challenges. In this regard, it is advisable teaching identities and capacities to adjust to society. The necessary adjustments would be reviewed through collaboration and practices such as research and innovation groups that provide the possibility of teaching and learning to solve real problems.

### 7.4 Implication for international scenario
Results illustrate the impact of the international agenda in the local realities would be debated internationally. In the international arenas it is advisable to reflect on colonialization practices, sovereignty and the impact of the international agendas on the local context. This study indicates how complex it is to implement collaborative learning practices by the

perspective of *Buen Vivir* within a global scenario with standardized indicators. The hegemonic standards, that push for competing are influencing the educational practices and the welfare of faculty members. Then, it is recommended to rethink quality in connection with the capacity of national HE systems to face the social challenges in its communities and the world. In turn, it is suggested to analyse the impact of the productivist system.

Evidence indicates power relations, productivist vision and inequities have permeated all systems. The results of the study and the literature reviewed indicate the importance to analyse how power relations and productivist vision have permeated HE policies, practices and how they impact on democracy, emancipation and the well-being of the society. Rights are universal, however, are not enjoyed in some regions and this requires global attention. OEI (2020) indicates challenges that the pandemic presents for education. OEI (2020) points out that online education poses limitations in poor students, without internet access or computers. In turn, the pandemic may have an impact on wages in the future (OEI, 2020). It is essential to analyse the impact that the pandemic and quarantine will have on education worldwide and to generate strategies to reduce the impacts. In this regard, it is advisable to increase efforts at the international level to achieve *Buen Vivir* in education, education for *Buen Vivir,* considering the common good. It seems appropriate to consider the contexts and knowledge of each country and region.

The study presents important practices related to ancestral knowledge in the Andean region, such as Minga and Chacra, that would be relevant in improving teaching and learning practices globally, considering each context. Minga and Chacra could be seen as collaborative learning intercultural practices that could be analysed by the knowledge dialogue, in the South-North discussion. The Latin American region would help in the construction of new knowledge for harmonic relations within humans and nature. Similarly, in the international discussions of climate change and environmental care, it would be critical to think about how Andean and ancestral knowledge can bring some lights for developing new ways of life and learning. The *Buen Vivir* philosophy invites us to overcome the anthropocentric vision for a biocentric understanding where nature has rights. In the *Buen Vivir* philosophy, health, education and everything is understanding by the lenses of the common good and the communitarian solutions. In this world crisis, it is advisable to think about the common good, collaboration as a way of life and, the new roles and identities that society needs.

The results of this study also invite us to question globally what the teacher's identity and their role in the current world is. It would be important to consider how a different perspective such as *Buen Vivir* can impact on the identity and its opportunities for overcoming the vertical structures and the professional identities related to competition and capitalism. *Buen Vivir* presents an option of life where no one has more rights than others, included nature. Then, educating for *Buen Vivir* implies to overcome developmental theories and change the way we understand welfare, education and the teacher role. It is advisable for the international level, to reflect on the teacher identity necessary in the pandemic and post-pandemic context and its relationship with the common good and education. *Buen Vivir* and collaboration would help to redefine the way to live and interact with others, the way we solve problems and the educational role. *Buen Vivir* is under construction and would be presented and discussed globally. It would be recommended to generate strategies for their promotion and construction through research and innovation groups.

The results of this study and the reviewed literature suggest that research and innovation groups present an opportunity for the improvement of education. Research and innovation groups allow for collaboration, *Buen Vivir* and the resolution of real and current problems. The study results suggest that research and innovation groups can generate new knowledge appropriate for each context, from collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir*. For this reason, it is advisable to promote international research and innovation groups that generate knowledge and answers to current problems. It is advisable to think of academic, research and innovation spaces that go beyond borders and promote the generation of knowledge and responses to face the needs of current societies, among various countries and regions.

Power relations, the productivist vision and inequalities have permeated all systems. However, the current global crisis moves us to think about dialogues for the improvement of teaching-learning processes in a pandemic and post-pandemic context. The current reality also calls us to reflect on the role of the educator and the identity that allows us to face educational and social challenges. The results of this study bring insights into practices based on ancestral knowledge such as Minga and Chacra, which would be useful to face hunger in some countries, and collaboration as a way of life. In turn, this study highlights the importance of research and innovation groups as mediators of learning. Research and innovation groups would respond to the current needs for research and innovation to face the scenarios presented by the current crisis generated by the pandemic and social inequalities.

## 7.5 Implications for further research

The results of this study present questions that could be answered through future research. The study shows the opportunities of using rituals such as Minga and Chacra to generate collaborative learning processes based on *Buen Vivir*, solving real and current problems. The data show that rituals consider nature as a subject of rights and therefore their practices allow for environmental education based on caring for others and environmental respect. I suggest researching on the improvement of education and environmental education through ritualities such as Minga and Chacra.

Data indicate the impact on teacher identity mediated by collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* and its opportunities. I recommend researching the teacher identity needed to meet the current challenges set out for the common good. Additionally, results show the benefits of research and innovation for the generation of new knowledge and communitarian solutions to current problems. I would recommend research on the impact of research and innovation groups without borders to face the current remains such as the environmental crisis and inequalities.

The serious environmental crisis that the world faces is indisputable. Several organizations have called for generating educational programs to counteract and reduce the environmental crisis. In this sense, collaborative learning practices from *Buen Vivir*, such as Chacra, can be opportunities for teaching-learning processes connected to nature. However, I consider important future research documenting the Chacra teaching and learning process and its connection with nature. Besides, I would suggest research to understand how to implement Chacra in different contexts and the teacher role in these practices.

Teacher identity is a necessary aspect to research regarding *Buen Vivir*. The results of the present study question the teachers' identity that are required in the current context and how it is mediated by the relationship with the student and teachers' internal motivations. In this sense, it would be recommended that future research address the teaching identity that is

required in the current global scenario for the common good and *Buen Vivir.* It is essential to understand the role and the teacher identity necessary to face the current crisis, where research and innovation can be fundamental.

Finally, it would be important to research the impact and opportunities of research and innovation groups. The results of this study show the importance of research and innovation groups for the generation of knowledge, collaboration, and construction of social needs responses. In this sense, I consider essential that future research address methodological, political and pedagogical aspects to favour formation of more research and innovation groups, based on collaborative learning and the common good, worldwide. In turn, it would be important to research the impact that research and innovation groups already existing in the world have had in addressing social needs.

The results of this study present questions that could be answered through future research. The environmental crisis, poverty, and the consequences of the pandemic on education require deep analysis. It is vital to reflect on the role of education and the teacher identity necessary to face current challenges. However, it is vital to consider knowledge linked to the common good and collaboration. In this sense, it is essential to research and strengthen research and innovation groups and link them to daily educational activities.

## 7.6 Plan for impact

The results of this study will be disseminated within the academic and scientific communities throughound tables, conferences, workshops, posters, presentations of the results through scientific articles, and other dissemination activities. The results will be published in peer-reviewed academic journals. The exchange of knowledge will also be carried out through interviews on community radio and television stations and the exchange of data/analysis.

The main findings will be disseminated in different scenarios according to relevance and interests. The main findings of this case study are the impact of the international context, the tensions (horizontality, division of task and voluntariness) the considerations, ritualities (Minga and Chacra as collaborative learning practices), the impact on teacher identity, the need for training in collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir* and, the necessity of creating spaces for collaborating in horizontal relations and using research and innovative projects. The findings mentioned should be shared in different scenarios for informing national politics and decision making, for HE institutions that could be willing to improve teaching and learning practices considering collaborative learning and *Buen Vivir,* for teachers, students and the general community.

I consider that the results can be disseminated at three levels (UNAE, national, international). In this sense, the complete results of the study would be disseminated in UNAE with the delivery of the complete study and academic spaces that allow presenting the results and generating dialogue among UNAE members. The intention of disseminating the results in UNAE is to influence the internal decision making of the university to rethink practices such as PIENSA, strengthen practices that present opportunities such as research and innovation groups, and highlight practices such as ritualities and their opportunities in UNAE's internal learning-teaching processes.

In terms of communication at the national level, the intent is to communicate the results to the National Secretary for Higher Education Science and Technology (SENESCYT) and in academic forums. The communication to SENESCYT will be focused mainly on the results

that have national implications such as those that support the need for a national training plan for teachers, the generation of spaces for research and innovation, among others. In turn, it is planned to present the results in different academic spaces at the national level, which allow the discussion of the main results (teaching identity, ritualities in the teaching-learning process, and research and innovation groups among academic peers). The intention of disseminating the results with Senescyt is to inform for decision-making to the training plans for university teachers, and about the spaces for research and innovation in higher education.

At an international level, spaces for academic dissemination spaces will be looked for, such as congresses and publications that allow sharing the main results that have international implications. The use of ritualities, such as Chacra for environmental education, the teaching identity in the current world and the opportunities of research and innovation groups among academic peers, would be shared. The dissemination of the results of this research at an international level will offer the opportunity to debate and consider practices like Chacra for environmental education, the strengthening of research and innovation spaces through academic peer groups of diverse countries, as well as the revision of the teaching identity under the light of *Buen Vivir* principles. The concept of *Buen Vivir* would have a positive impact in the international debates about education, and social challenges.

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**Appendix 1: Questions from the student focus group**

1) What is collaborative learning for you?
2) What are the collaborative learning practices in the university?
3) Explain the relationship between Good Living and Collaborative Learning.
4) What do you think are the main benefits of collaborative learning from the perspective of Good Living?
5) What are some of the disadvantages of collaborative learning from the perspective of Good Living?
6) Can you describe what happens in your collaborative learning sessions, from the beginning to the end of the year?
7) How does collaborative learning affect students?
8) What do you think is the main challenge for new adopters of collaborative learning with respect to good living?
9) What are the conditions for collaborative learning to occur?
10) What are the conditions for good living in UNAE?
11) What would you recommend to improve the collaborative learning practices in UNAE from the perspective of Good Living?
12 What would you recommend to implement collaborative learning in other Ecuadorian universities?
13) Is the pedagogy of collaborative learning helping in education to transform the national education system in Ecuador?
14) How is Good Living impacting UNAE education and student identity?

**Appendix 2: Faculty members focus groups questions**

1) What is collaborative learning for you?
2) What are the collaborative learning practices in the university?
3) Explain the relationship you see between good living and collaborative learning.
4) What do you think are the main benefits of collaborative learning from the perspective of Good Living?
5) What are some of the disadvantages of collaborative learning from the perspective of Good Living?
6) Can you describe what happened in your collaborative learning sessions?
7) How does collaborative learning affect you as a member of the faculty?
8) Explain what collaborative learning programs and actions are organized and used in UNAE?
9) In a typical collaborative learning group, how many members of the group are involved?
10) What do you think is the main benefit of collaborative learning activities for your institution with regard to Good Living?
11) Share with us an example of an exciting or innovative approach to collaborative learning that takes place in your unit, department or institution.
12) What do you think is the main challenge for new adopters of collaborative learning with regard to good living?
13) What are the conditions for collaborative learning to occur?
14) What are the conditions for good living in UNAE?
15) What would you recommend to improve the collaborative learning practices in UNAE from the perspective of Good Living?
16) What would you recommend to implement collaborative learning in other Ecuadorian universities?
17) How is the pedagogy of collaborative learning based on the philosophy of Good Living in UNAE and in the Ecuadorian context?
18) How does Good Living help in the transformation of education and social welfare in Ecuador?

**Appendix 3: Interview questions**

1) What is collaborative learning for you?
2) What are the collaborative learning practices in the university?
3) Explain the relationship you see between Good Living and Collaborative Learning.
4) What do you think are the main benefits of collaborative learning from the perspective of Good Living?
5) What are some of the disadvantages of collaborative learning from the perspective of Good Living?
6) Can you describe what happened in your collaborative learning sessions?
7) How does Collaborative Learning impact?
8) Explain what collaborative learning programs and actions are organized and used in UNAE?
9) In a typical collaborative learning group, how many members of the group are involved?
10) What do you think is the main benefit of collaborative learning activities for your institution with regard to Good Living?
11) Share with us an example of an exciting or innovative approach to collaborative learning that takes place in your unit, department or institution.
12) What do you think is the main challenge for new adopters of collaborative learning with regard to good living?
13) What are the conditions for collaborative learning to occur?
14) What are the conditions for good living in UNAE?
15) What would you recommend to improve the collaborative learning practices in UNAE from the perspective of Good Living?
16) What would you recommend to implement collaborative learning in other Ecuadorian universities?
17) How is the pedagogy of collaborative learning based on the philosophy of Good Living in UNAE and in the Ecuadorian context?
18) How does Good Living help in the transformation of education and social welfare in Ecuador?

**Appendix 4: Participants information sheet**
**(Alexandra Delgado,** cristina.delgado@online.liverpool.ac.uk; Pauline Armsby, supervisor, pauline.armsby@online.liverpool.ac.uk)

<table><tr><td>PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION SHEET</td></tr></table>

## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND GOOD LIVING IN ECUADOR

You are invited to participate in an (*interview/focus group/artwork*) part of the research for a doctoral thesis at the University of Liverpool. This include (*student leader/ faculty members*) at UNAE who voluntarily choose to take part. This document explains information about this (*interview/ focus group/artwork*). Please ask questions about anything that is unclear to you.

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
Understand and critically analyse the practices and impacts of collaborative learning on undergraduate students and faculty members in a new Ecuadorian University of Education (UNAE), from the perspective of the Good Living philosophy; and provide recommendations for improving and implementing practices and programs of collaborative learning in an Ecuadorian context.

### PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

**Data Collection Procedures**

To achieve this goal, the researcher will collect data through *structured interviews; focus group; institutional documentary review (institutional documents, videos, books and papers related to collaborative learning and well-being); and artwork (painting).*

**Ethical Concerns**

- **Permission Granted**
  Researchers are required to complete an ethical approval process before scheduling the *structured interviews; focus group and collecting organizational documents.* They are to be arranged permission through an authorization letter from the organization (from a confirmable source) granting permission for all relevant data access, facility use, and use of personal time for research purposes.

- **Confidentiality**
  In all cases, company information will be anonymized, no proprietary information will be shared, and the privacy of the interviewee will be safeguarded. Additionally, no results of the research will be made publicly available without specific approval from the organization and the participants. Data will be stored for at least five years with adequate provisions to maintain confidentiality. If the research procedures might reveal criminal or unethical activity that necessitates a duty to report, then the researcher will follow appropriate ethical procedures in keeping with the organization's regulations.

- Interviews or focus group will not last more than 2 hours
- There will be no compensation for being part of this study

- The participation is voluntary and the participants can withdraw from the interview of focus groups at any time with no consequences. Additionally, if the participant decides to withdraw, he/she will decide if the researcher can use the data provided until the time he/she decides to withdraw

You were invited to participate in this study because you are a (*faculty member, student leader*) at UNAE. The participation is voluntary and just will be made if you agree and feel comfortable participating, you can decide to stop and end when you want without any problem.

If you agree to take part and collaborate with this, your anonymity will guarantee. There is no risk of collaborating in this interview. Your participation will be kept as confidential.
The finding from the study will be saved in a folder named COLLABORATIVE LEARNING FROM THE GOOD LIVING PERSPECTIVE IN ECUADOR at UNAE. The data will be no published without the authorization of the university and the participants. There are no benefits to collaborate in this study. If you have further questions, you can contact the researcher Cristina Alexandra Delgado with the emails and cell phone number provided in contact information.

**Payment/compensation for participation**

You will not be compensated for your participation.

**Confidentiality**
There will be no identifiable information obtained in connection with this study. Your name, address or other identifiable information will not be collected. To analyse the data, you be named "A, B..". The data will be stored on a password-protected computer in the researcher's office for five years after the study has been completed and then destroyed.

**Required language:**
The interview will be conducted in Spanish. The researcher, University of Liverpool and UNAE may access the anonymised data.

**Investigator contact information**
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**Supervisors contact information**

pauline.armsby@online.liverpool.ac.uk

**IRB contact information**
Research Office UNAE

**Appendix 5: Participant Consent form**
Pauline Armsby, supervisor, pauline.armsby@online.liverpool.ac.uk

| COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND GOOD LIVING IN ECUADOR | |
|---|---|
| **University of Liverpool** **Researcher: Cristina Alexandra Delgado** | **Please initial box** |
| 1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the Participant Information for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily. | ☐ |
| 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. | ☐ |
| 3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish. | ☐ |
| 4. I agree to take part in the above study. | ☐ |

_____     _____     _____

Participant Name                                Date             Signature


_____     _____     _____

Name of Person taking consent            Date             Signature


                                         _____     _____

Researcher                                      Date             Signature


**The contact details of the Lead Researcher (Principal Investigator) are:**

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alexandradelgado1983@gmail.com
Cell phone: 0993872726

## Appendix 6: Examples and images of the analysis of data

It is critical to explain that the analysis of the data was mainly done with NVIVO 12. The process is explained below in 10 parts.

## 1.Transcription of the focus groups, artwork or interviews

As shown in the images below, the focus groups, artwork and interviews were transcribed immediately after data collection.

## 2. Initial nodes

After transcribing the focus group, artwork or interview it was briefly analysed and preliminary codified. Every preliminary analysis after each data collection step was contrasted with the next data. For example, initial preliminary analysis of student focus group 1 was contrasted with the data obtained in the students focus group 2 and so on.



## 3. Example of initial nodes of collaborative learning impacts and its sub-nodes

After contrasting the data collected in each group (students, teachers, experts), there was a step to work in the initial general understanding by a group of participants. The initial nodes and sub-nodes were determined as shown in the image below.

## 4. Example of the quotes that form the impact on the identity of teachers

To form each node and sub-node, there were quotes that were grouped considering its relation and contribution to the understanding of a theme or sub-theme. The image below shows some quotes that are part of the initial theme collaborative learning impacts and the sub-theme Change in the identity of teachers.



## 5. Reports

In order to organise the data, reports were generated in NVIVO. These reports helped in the general understanding since NVIVO provides the number of quotes in each theme and sub-theme. After doing the reports (students focus groups and artwork, teacher focus groups and artwork and interviews) it was shared with participants and the supervisor. The analysis was done in Spanish to facilitate the co-analysis process with participants (Spanish speakers). However, to share the report for the supervisor the reports were translated into English.

## 6. Sharing the results

The results were shared formally by mail. For this step, the personal mail and the mail of the University of Liverpool were used to avoid confusion with the role in this process.
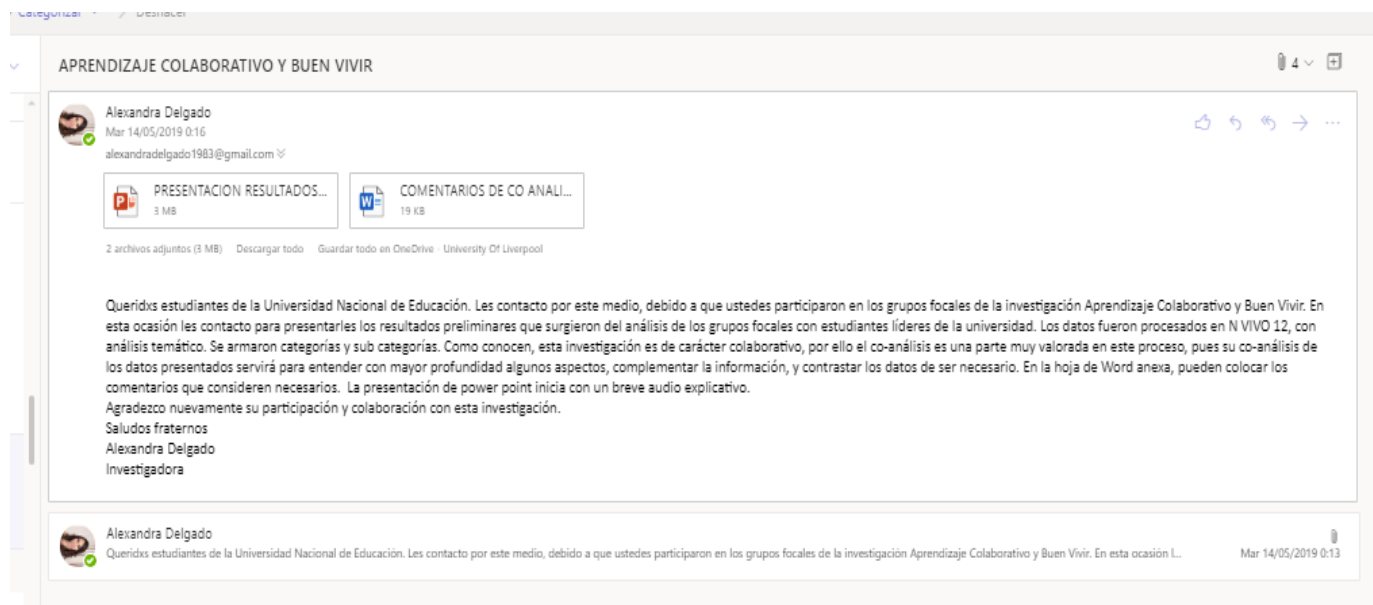


## 7. Receiving co-analysis

After receiving the co-analysis from participants, it was important to add the feedback to the understanding of the data collected and the analysis. Also, after this step, the analysis continued in English since it was not necessary to share the data with Spanish speakers again.

## 8. Re-organising the information, new themes and sub-themes

After reading papers and the transcripts again, themes changed as shown in the next image. The eleven themes changed for example to five themes in the students focus groups. This was presented in figures 10, 11, 14, 15.

## 9. Final themes

After the new organisation- reviewing the data during, the chapter writing process changed the organization and the understanding of the data to the final 5 themes that were found in the different groups of participants (students, teachers, experts) and within different data collection tools (focus groups, artwork, interviews). In the map below the results with the new organisation after reviewing every aspect of the data with a more general understanding based on the recommendations of the literature are presented.

**RESULTS**

**1. Individualist context and UNAE understanding of Good Living**
- Competence, individualism and Collaborative Learning
- How is GL defined in UNAE?

**2. Collaborative Learning by Good Living: advances, limitations, considerations and tensions**
- Advances and limitations of GL in the UNAE context
- CL considerations and tensions: students' role, teachers' role, teachers and students learning collaboratively, not everybody works equally, CL is a process, division or common work?, voluntary or compulsory process?, horizontal learning?

**3. Collaborative Learning practices at UNAE**
- Classroom work
- PIENSA –Knowledge Integration Project-
- Pre-professional practices
- Pedagogical peer
- Learning environments and infrastructure
- Peer learning practices (Research groups, constructs and peer tutoring between majors
- Ritualities –Chacra

**4. Impacts of Collaborative Learning by Good Living perspective at UNAE**
- Students: Development of skills for conflict resolution, change in identity as a future teacher, development of tolerance and recognition of diversity, happiness in doing CL, construction of harmonic relations, common good and active participation and interaction within peers
- Professors: teaching identity and teaching practices, greater empathy with students, teaching-learning process centred on students, CL and GL involve mobilizing with all the senses, happiness in the realization of CL
- Experts: improves the learning of everybody, closest and horizontal relationship with the students, teachers' role, vision about education

**5. Recommendations made by participants**
- Improve teaching-learning process through the improvement of CL knowledge in teachers, monitoring CL and its quality
- Meeting and exchange spaces between careers
- Work through research projects, teaching innovation projects and constructs
- Generate more spaces for dialogue in horizontality and confidence
- University Clubs
- Putting concepts into practice
- Recognize diversity for collaboration

## 10. Analysis through the writing process and revision

The last part of the analysis continued with the revisions of the thesis draft and the feedback provided by supervisors. Writing has been used to continue the analysis, reviewing the data and this involved synthesizing data from different places to develop meaning and use it, expand it and generate theory, as is consistent with a case study methodology.

**Appendix 7: Initial themes and sub-themes**

In the students' group, there were eleven major themes in focus groups and six major themes in artwork, as presented in the Figure below.

**Students perspective: Initial analysis based on questions asked**

Students perpective: Initial analysis

1. FOCUS GROUP

1.1 CL definition
- Group learning for a common task
- Exchanging and sharing ideas from a diversity
- Generation of knowledge

1.2 GL definition
- Harmony between people, community and environment
- Wisdom
- Values of the Sumak Kawsay
- Lifestyle

1.3 Conditions and considerations for CL and GL
- Union, respect, and participation of the members of the group
- Problem-solving skills
- Joint work and communication
- Formation of the working groups
- Motivation
- Teacher Support and guidance
- Time and process
- Self-knowledge and group knowledge
- Defined objective

1.4 Relationships of CL and GL
- Respect for diversity
- Looking for the welfare of the whole group

1.5 Tensions between CL and GL
- Collaborating for a task vs Collaborating and sharing as a lifestyle
- Living in community and with nature vs collaborate on ideas

1.6 Advantages of CL
- Generation of knowledge
- Understanding various points of view
- Development of new skills
- Contributes to the development of identity as a teacher

1.7 Disadvantages of CL
- Difficulty in reaching agreements
- Uncertainty
- Feeling that the performance of work is not always fair and not everyone works equally
- Loss of autonomy

```
Students perspective: Initial analysis

    └─ 1. FOCUS GROUPS

            ├─ 1.8 Challenges
            │       ├─ Change of infrastructure and learning environments
            │       ├─ Acceptance of diversity
            │       ├─ Breaking the individualist and competition logic
            │       └─ Change in identity and lifestyle
            │
            ├─ 1.9 Impacts of CL form the perspective of GL
            │       ├─ Development of problem-solving skills
            │       ├─ Change in identity as a future teacher
            │       └─ Development of tolerance and recognition of diversity
            │
            ├─ 1.10 CL practices
            │       ├─ Classroom work
            │       ├─ Research groups
            │       ├─ PIENSA -Knowledge Integration Project-
            │       ├─ Ritualities
            │       └─ Pedagogical peer
            │
            └─ 1.11 Recommendations to improve teaching-learning
               processes based on GL through CL
                    ├─ Promote the improvement of CL knowledge in teachers
                    ├─ Meeting and exchange spaces between careers
                    └─ University clubs
```

Students perspective: Initial analysis

2. ARTWORK: Symbolic representation of CL and GL

2.1 Happiness in collective work
2.2 Harmony between humans and nature
2.3 Common good
2.4 Union and respect in diversity
2.5 Share and participate
2.6 Chacra as a CL practice from the GL

As it is presented in the Figure above the initial analysis was done by a group of participants, by the data collection tool and by the questions asked that were presented in Chapter 4. In the next figure, the Teachers' perspective is presented by using data collection tool. It is relevant to comment that the initial intention was not to collect artwork data with faculty members. However, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the teacher in the first focus group agreed to do the artwork.

**Teachers' perspective: Initial analysis based on questions asked**

Teachers perspective: Initial analysis

1. FOCUS GROUPS

1.1 CL definition
- Collective work, teamwork
- Significant learning that prepares students for life
- Breaking with verticality and propose horizontal relationships

1.2 GL definition
- Harmonious, equitable and caring relationship between human beings and Nature
- We can all contribute from our diversity
- Interconnection and care of others
- Political purpose
- A work of imagination
- Ancestral values

1.3 Conditions and considerations for CL and GL
- Critically analyse the CL from the GL
- Teacher as a mediator of the teaching-learning process
- Motivation
- Recognize the other's word
- Recognize that you can learn from the other
- Clear goals and objectives
- Break schemes and resistances

1.4 CL and GL relations: both concepts are complementary

1.5 Tensions between CL and GL
- Joy in collaboration vs. conflicts in collaboration
- Good Living for teachers?

1.6 Advantages of CL
- Spaces for reflection and feedback between peers
- Development of life skills

1.7 Disadvantages of CL
- Not all group members work
- Does not develop individual capacities for life or individual learning
- It can be superficial

```
Teachers' perspective: Initial analysis

    1. FOCUS GROUP

        1.8 Challenges

            Break distrust

            Take back the GL in the current era

            Learn what CL is

            Generate a culture of support, respect, and harmony

        1.9 Impacts of CL from the perspective of GL

                Teaching identity and teaching practices

                Greater empathy with students

        1.10 Practices of CL

            Classroom practices regulated by the teacher

            Chacra

            Pre-professional practices

            Infrastructure for the CL

            CL practices in everyday life

            Interaction between University units for CL- research groups
            and constructs

            Pedagogical peers

            PIENSA

            Peer tutoring between majors

        1.11 Recommendations to improve teaching-learning
        processes based on GL through CL

                Improve the teaching and learning process

                Disseminate good practices

                Generate more spaces for dialogue in horizontality and
                confidence

                Rethink the role of the University

                Training in CL

                Work through research projects, teaching innovation projects
                and constructs
```

Teachers perspective: Initial analysis

2. ARTWORK: Symbolic representation of CL and GL

2.1 Heart, listen, look of the other

2.2 CL and GL is cyclical

2.3 Joy in the realization of collaborative work

2.4 CL and GL involve mobilizing with all the senses

2.5 Nature

2.6 Students as a centre of the University

2.7 Identity in Ecuador

As it could be seen in the Figure above, the initial themes for teachers were eleven in focus group data and seven in artwork data. In the next Figure, the initial analysis of the expert group is presented.

**Experts perspective: Initial analysis**

Experts perspective: Initial analysis through interviews

1. Definition of CL
- Participation of all members in learning vs. division of labour
- Does not materialise in practice
- Void meaning
- Weaknesses are minimized with the support of others

2. Definition of GL
- A theoretical concept that has not materialised in practice
- Political Position
- Principles of GL
- Relationship Human-Environment
- Ancestral knowledge
- Sumak Kawsay
- Emptying meaning

3. Conditions and considerations for CL and GL
- Motivation
- Guide the student
- Mind-set to collaborate
- Commitment, responsibility, and discipline
- Define the roles of each member
- Establish process from the simple to the complex
- Classroom management
- Awareness process for everyone to work equally
- Takes time

4. Relations between CL and GL
- CL is the basis for GL are complementary
- The CL and GL promote teamwork, diversity, horizontality

5. Tensions between CL and GL: there are not conceptual tensions

6. Advantages of CL
- More proximity with students
- Horizontal relationships
- Everyone learns

Experts perspective: Initial analysis through interviews

7.Disadvantages

CL is more demanding for teachers

8. Challenges

Understanding the concepts deeply

Linking all members

Coexisting in harmony with everyone

Recognizing the potentialities and diversities of each one

Overcoming the productivist vision

Valuing ancestral knowledge

9. Impacts of CL from GL perspective

Improves everyone's learning

Relationship with the students closest and horizontal

Teachers' role

Vision about education

10. CL practices

CL in the classroom

Constructs

PIENSA

Horizontal decision making

11. Recommendations to improve teaching-learning processes based on GL through CL

Consider that it is a process that takes time, go step by step

Putting concepts into practice

Recognize diversity for collaboration

Monitor CL

Consider CL quality learning

Reaching a balance between the individual and collaborative learning

Use CL in innovation and research processes

In the group of experts, the interview was the only data collection method used. Through the interviews, there were eleven major themes analysed as presented in the Figure above.

**Appendix 8: Five themes organisation**

**Theme 1 Individualist context and UNAE understanding of Good Living**
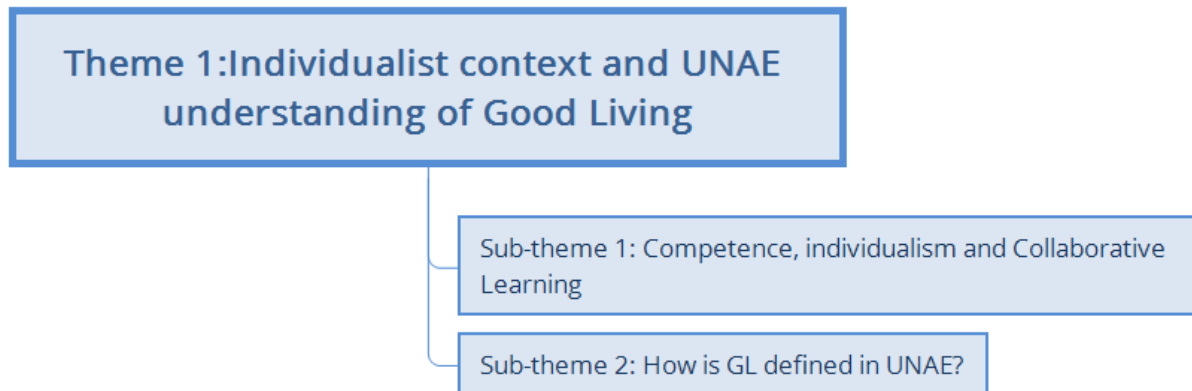


The figure above presents Theme 1 and its sub-themes. Theme 1 was formed with the definition of Good Living in UNAE context and with the understanding of the context by the participants. As both sub-themes are related and help in understanding the context of UNAE, they were grouped in the same theme.

**Theme 2 Collaborative learning by Good Living: advances, limitations, considerations and tensions**

Theme 2: Collaborative Learning by Good Living: advances, limitations, considerations and tensions
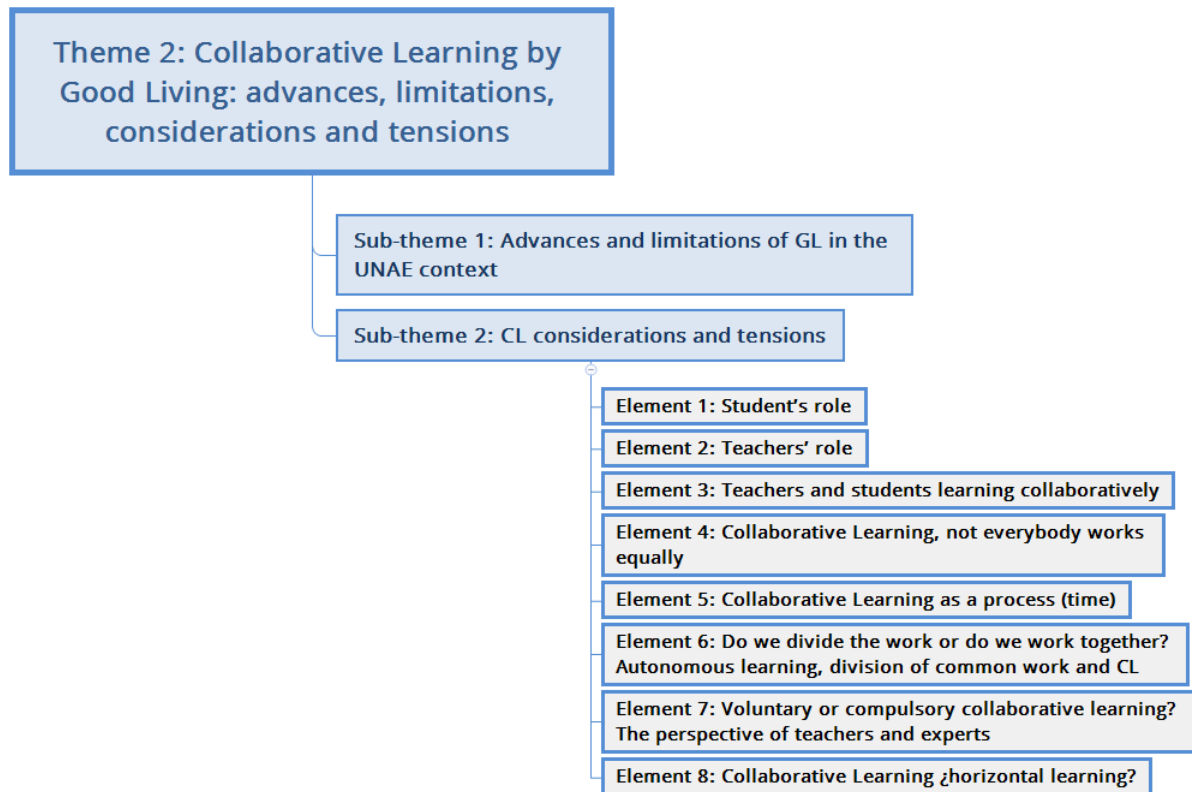
Sub-theme 1: Advances and limitations of GL in the UNAE context

Sub-theme 2: CL considerations and tensions

Element 1: Student's role

Element 2: Teachers' role

Element 3: Teachers and students learning collaboratively

Element 4: Collaborative Learning, not everybody works equally

Element 5: Collaborative Learning as a process (time)

Element 6: Do we divide the work or do we work together? Autonomous learning, division of common work and CL

Element 7: Voluntary or compulsory collaborative learning? The perspective of teachers and experts

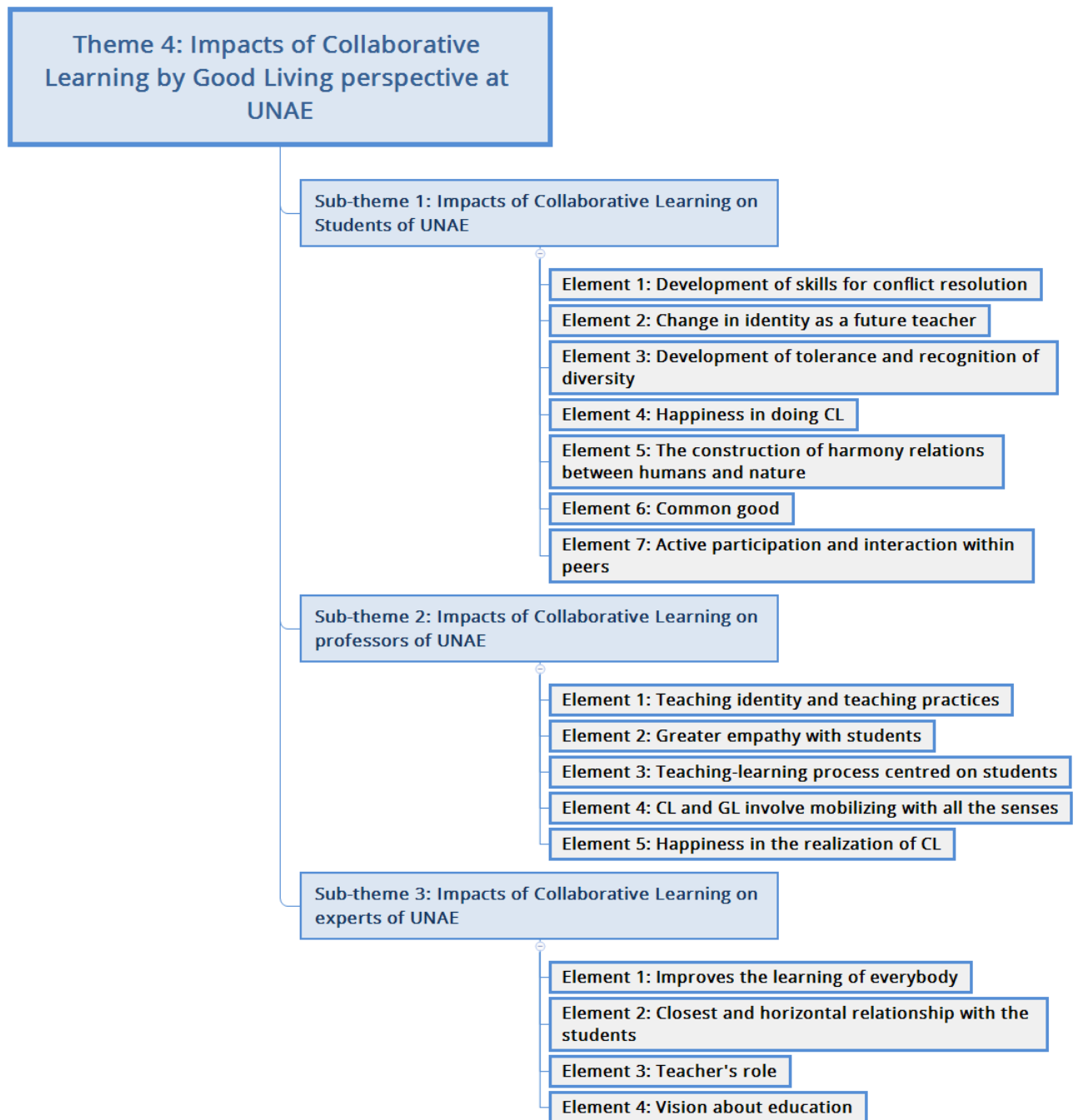Element 8: Collaborative Learning ¿horizontal learning?

The Figure above presents Theme 2 and its sub-themes and elements. For a better understanding, the advances and limitations indicated to contrast the information were grouped. In the same way, the main collaborative learning considerations and tensions were grouped. In the last sub-theme, there were elements to consider that are part of the collaborative learning considerations and tensions sub-theme such as the students and teachers' role, the way teacher and students learning collaboratively through collaborative learning, the tensions regarding the non collaboration of everyone, the voluntariness or not of collaborative learning, the division of the work or not, the horizontality in collaborative learning and the need for a process and time.

**Theme 3 Collaborative learning practices at UNAE**
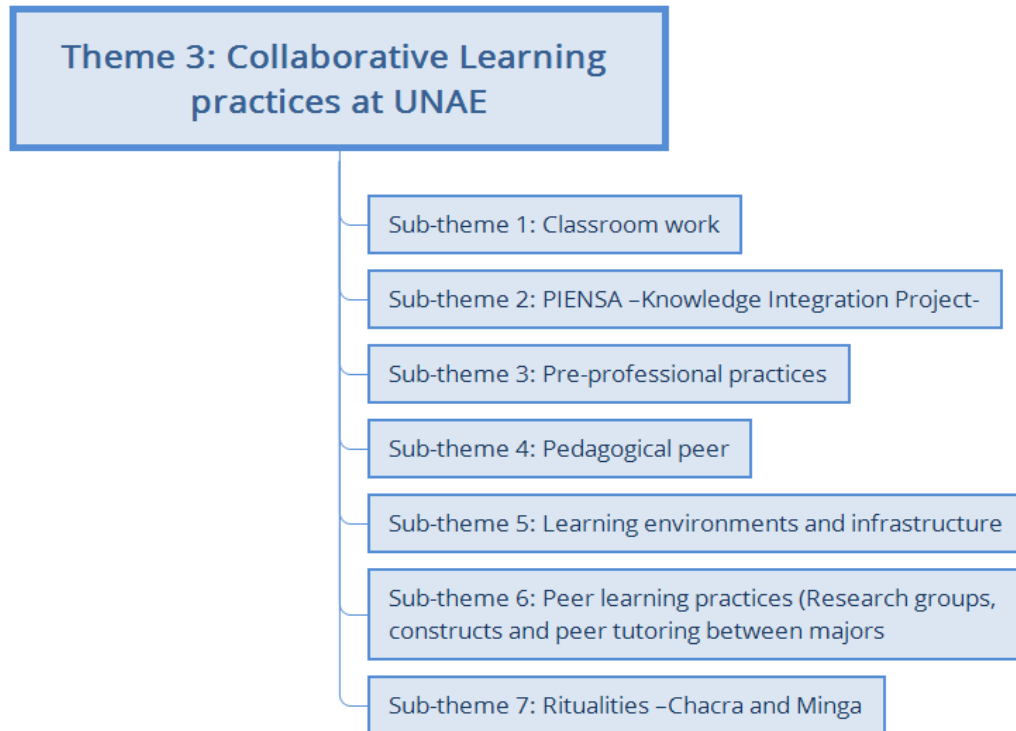


The Figure above present Theme 3 and its sub-themes. Regarding the collaborative learning practices at UNAE, the information was organised based on what most participants indicated as collaborative learning practice. Then each sub-theme represents a practice that participants (students, teacher, experts) indicated are collaborative learning practices at UNAE context. The information was not grouped based on the questions and answers only but based on what participants indicated as collaborative learning practices in the entire data collection process.

**Theme 4 Impacts of collaborative learning by Good Living perspective at UNAE**

Theme 4: Impacts of Collaborative Learning by Good Living perspective at UNAE

Sub-theme 1: Impacts of Collaborative Learning on Students of UNAE

Element 1: Development of skills for conflict resolution

Element 2: Change in identity as a future teacher

Element 3: Development of tolerance and recognition of diversity

Element 4: Happiness in doing CL

Element 5: The construction of harmony relations between humans and nature

Element 6: Common good

Element 7: Active participation and interaction within peers

Sub-theme 2: Impacts of Collaborative Learning on professors of UNAE

Element 1: Teaching identity and teaching practices

Element 2: Greater empathy with students

Element 3: Teaching-learning process centred on students

Element 4: CL and GL involve mobilizing with all the senses

Element 5: Happiness in the realization of CL

Sub-theme 3: Impacts of Collaborative Learning on experts of UNAE

Element 1: Improves the learning of everybody

Element 2: Closest and horizontal relationship with the students

Element 3: Teacher's role

Element 4: Vision about education

The Figure above presents Theme 4 and its sub-themes and elements. To organise the information for this analysis, the questions, the objectives and what participants indicated as the main impacts of collaborative learning by each group (students, teacher and experts) were considered to meet the specific objective.

**Theme 5 Recommendations to improve teaching-learning practices based on Good Living through collaborative learning made by participants**
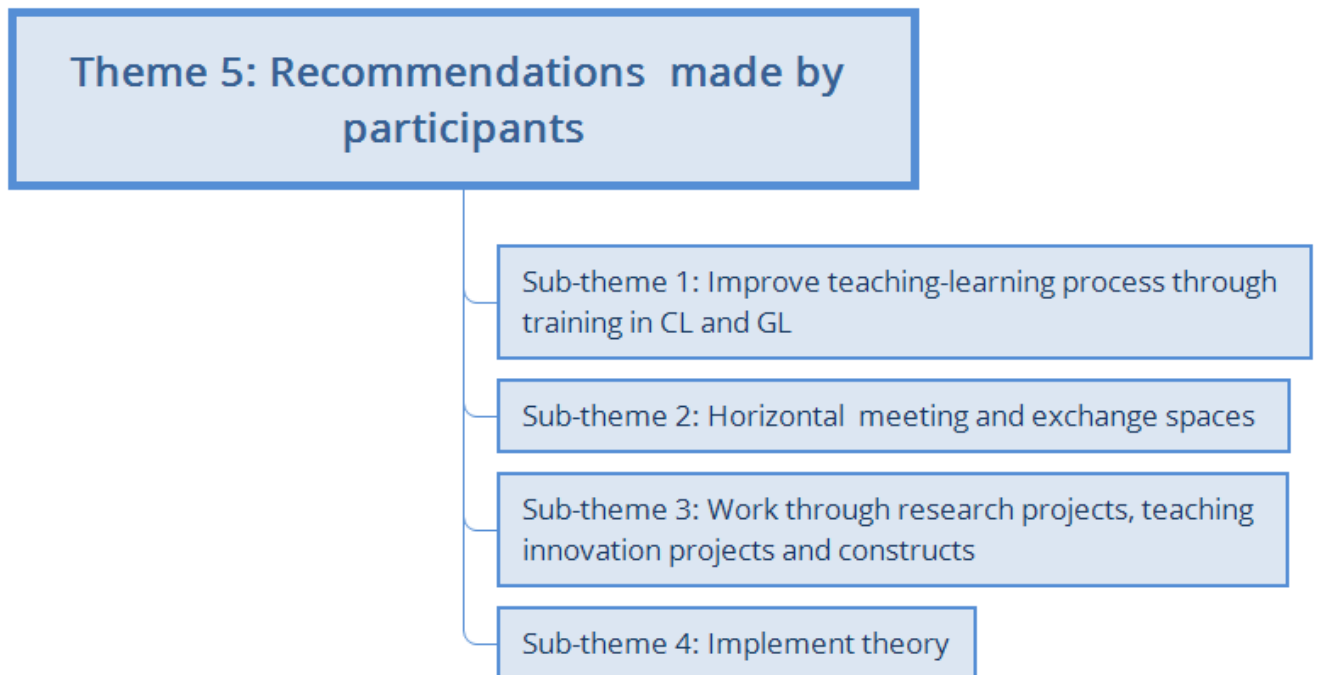


The Figure above presents Theme 5 and its sub-themes. To organise this information, the objectives, the questions asked and the general recommendations made by participants were considered.

**Appendix 9: Artwork photos**

**Painting General Basic Education**



**Painting first group of faculty members**