



MARCH-APRIL 2021

Did you know?

According to Maryanne Wolf, -Director of the Research Center for Reading and Language at Tufts University (Massachusetts, USA) - reading is a cultural creation that began 60 centuries ago.

According to Wolf, the human brain does not have specific genes for reading, and there is no center in the brain that is specifically dedicated to this activity. However, says Wolf, the plasticity of the brain allows:

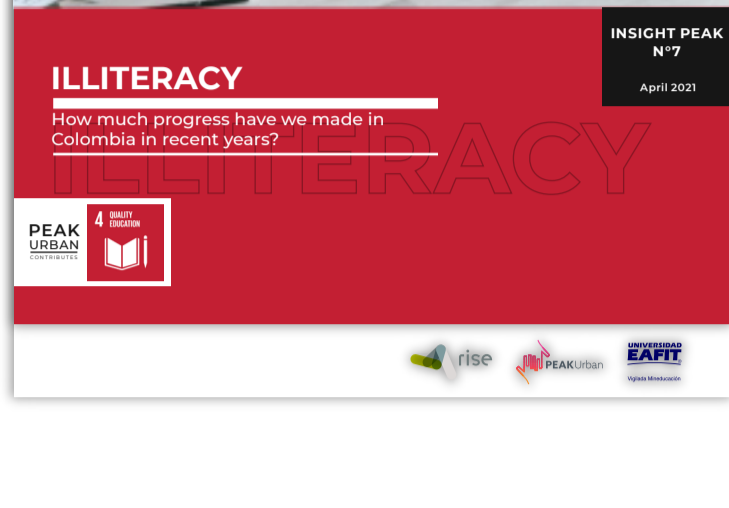
1. Rearrangement to make new connections between perception and language.
2. The recycling of neurons to identify letters, patterns, and morphemes.
3. The automaticity of neurons to quickly learn the value of cooperation.

Knowing how to read is an important skill, which goes far beyond an ability to identify, put letters together, and form words. And among many other things, reading is an ability of the most significant importance to inhabit cities and territories. Reading to allow to recognize the route of a bus or a train, to identify a dangerous message, to know what a bill says, to meet the recommendations of an official statement on citizen prevention, instructions to access opportunities, and to cooperate efficiently.

Know what we do...

PEAK Vision

Series of articles documenting the research we do accessible to all.



Illiteracy

PEAK Vision N°7

The fourth Sustainable Development Goals -ODS- focuses on "guaranteeing an inclusive, equitable and quality education, promoting learning opportunities for all". However, according to the United Nations (UN), with the spread of Covid-19 globally, schools were forced to close their facilities, affecting 91% of school students. That is why in this Peak Vision we dedicate this space to talk about the illiteracy in Colombia and how, over the last 15 years, the rate has been reduced by 2% throughout the national territory.

[Read more](#)

Cityzen

Series of interviews conducted with different researchers and academics involved in the issues around cities and public policies.



Marco Kamiya

Capsule N°6

In our sixth episode of Cityzen, Macro Kamiya, an economist linked to the Innovation Knowledge Branch of UN-Habitat, tells us about the decisions that governments must make after the pandemic and how these changes affect the public policy tools of today's society.

[Watch video](#)

Cities of the future



How will cities grow in the future?

This question motivated researchers from the University EAFIT to develop a model that allows planning infrastructure, designing policies, and guaranteeing sustainable urban growth.

Discover all the details of the study <https://lnkd.in/eef4FXBI>

Latest news

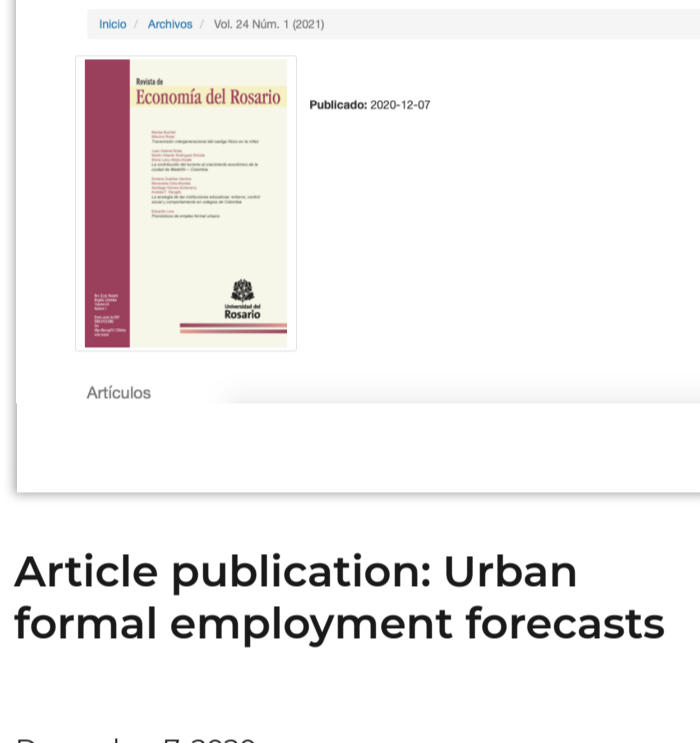


Article publication: Urban Form and Productivity: What Is the Shape of Latin American Cities?. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, (8697).

January, 2019

Duque, J. C., Lozano Gracia, N., Patino, J., & Restrepo, P. (2019).

<https://bit.ly/2RbLMjv>



Article publication: Urban formal employment forecasts

December 7, 2020

Eduardo Lora

<https://bit.ly/3sZ3bkQ>

Blog



The Global Challenges Research Fund: what it's meant for Colombian researchers

<https://bit.ly/3tjSOKR>

PEAK-Urban Retreat 2021



During March 8-12, members of PEAK partner centers and universities worldwide gathered for the annual meeting. In response to the health emergency, this year, the conference was held virtually. Besides, due to time differences (China +13, India +10.5, United Kingdom +5, and South Africa +7), this space did not manage to have its intensity on previous occasions. Even though the activities had to be condensed into a couple of hours a day, the objectives were achieved.

The person in charge of organizing the event was the Peking University (PKU). This was inaugurated with a virtual tour of the city and the university. On the second day, some researchers from the PEAK network presented their work in different virtual rooms. On Wednesday, an expert described the evolution of planning in the city and discussed the different challenges to which administrations have been exposed. The week ended with a work of reflection in teams and with closing words by the project leaders.

Some researchers will soon finish their work on PEAK. Others will continue a little longer. However, one thing that remains clear is that PEAK helped build collaborative networks that will last over time and will allow us to continue addressing future challenges for cities.

<https://bit.ly/3wYyhzv>

From villain to hero: how Colombia's treatment of migrants is changing



While some world leaders have cited the importance of the Covid-19 vaccine for refugees and forcibly displaced populations worldwide, in December 2020, immigrant Iván Duque announced the exclusion of "irregular" immigrants from Venezuelan in such programs. This discriminatory measure cost him much criticism and further damaged his political image in a country with a history of human rights abuses.

However, last month, the president made headlines when he announced a new Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants - in Spanish, Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants, or ETPS - that seeks to provide legal work and access to education services. And ETPS - ten years to Venezuelan immigrants. This will also cover (only) "legal" migrants arriving in Colombia within the next two years.

The ETPS seems like an abrupt change from President Duque, who, with this gesture, has sought to transform himself from villain to hero overnight in an attempt to distance himself from previous anti-migrant statements.

These new plans by the president were particular to one of the RiSE researchers since his project within PEAK addresses the global challenge of forced internal displacement, migration between rural and urban and interurban areas, and growth disruptive urban.

<https://bit.ly/3uQ7tch>

Better with maps:

The use of bicycles in complex terrain by Oscar Mejia

Before starting the Covid pandemic, poor air quality was a general concern in the world's leading cities and many industrialized areas. Moreover, in several cities such as Medellín, the topographic and geomorphological conditions may favor the occurrence of atmospheric stability processes and thermal inversions, which amplifies the problem of air pollution and environmental health. Different studies indicate that the bicycle contributes to improve the bad air quality and constitutes an essential component in sustainable mobility systems.

However, paradoxically, creating a vicious circle, two main concerns arise: First, how to massively increase the use of bicycle as a transportation mode in a city where the topography and the air quality conditions are complex? Second, how to improve the air quality without reducing the pollutants' emissions into the atmosphere?

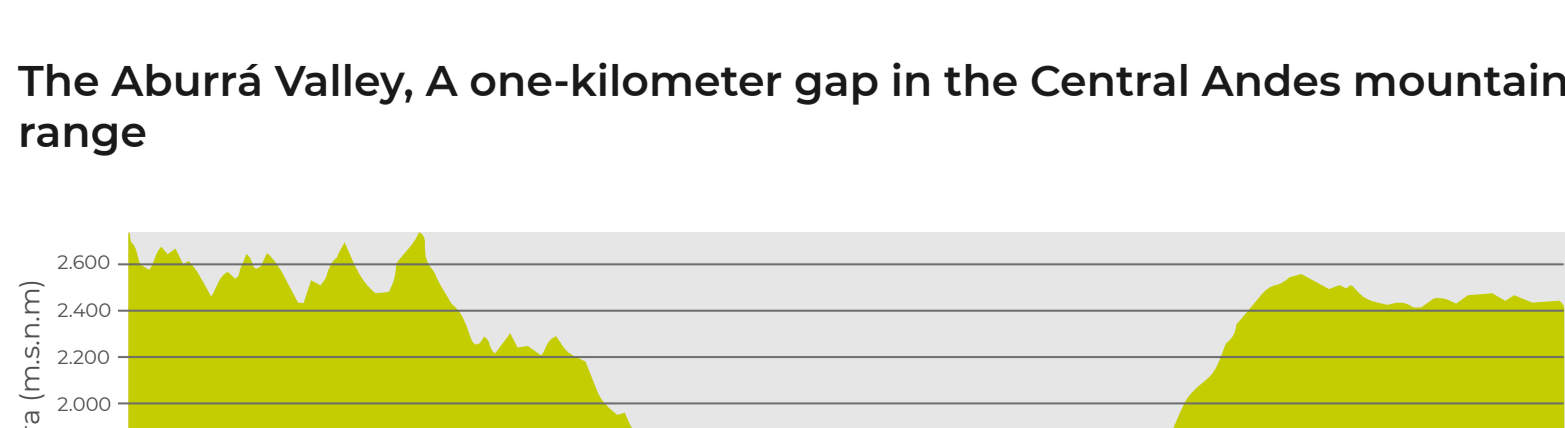
It seems clear that during the pandemic, the bicycle has received a significant boost as a transportation mode in many cities. A city like Medellín has a large proportion of areas suitable for urban cycling, where the slopes are less than 6% (See 3D map), in which most of the current bicycle trips are effectively made. Although, the challenges faced by governments, citizens, science, technology, innovation, industry, and society as a whole are enormous to make the bicycle an inclusive, safe, affordable and nice mode of transportation.

Therefore, in order to guarantee the usability and coverage of the cycloinfrastructure, the densification and the expansion are relevant throughout the low slope areas while considering the directness and continuity of the cycling dedicated infrastructure. In complement, innovative and ambitious strategies need to be developed and implemented in other territories of the cities, including the hillside areas of many cities in the world.

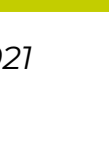
The challenges of Sustainable Mobility in cities with complex terrain



The Aburrá Valley, A one-kilometer gap in the Central Andes mountain range



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