

**2030 Education Agenda in
Latin America and the Caribbean**

**ROADMAP OF THE
REGIONAL COORDINATION
MECHANISM
2022-2025
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4
(SDG 4)**

BACKGROUND PAPER

Santiago de Chile, May 2022

SUMMARY

There is no time to lose in this major challenge of rebuilding education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this regard, the *Roadmap of the Regional Coordination Mechanism 2022-2025* for the *advancement of Sustainable Development Goal 4* proposes to change and strengthen the institutional architecture of educational cooperation of the 2030 Education Agenda in the region.

This *Background Paper* presents information on and contextualizes educational cooperation in the region and its coordination mechanism for achieving SDG4. It is designed to contribute inputs to the discussion of the recovery and acceleration of SDG4, which offers opportunities for deepening regional cooperation.

Contributions to this discussion have been developed with reference to the evidence presented in the *SDG4/E2030 Regional Monitoring Report* (prepared by OREALC, UNICEF and ECLAC), and propose four strategic lines of action: educational justice and inclusion; educational quality; funding; and teachers' work and professional development. To each line corresponds a set of evidence, objectives, results, and priority actions for the three-year period 2022-2025.

In this way, it will provide continuity for the policies that inspired the Cochabamba Roadmap (2018-2021), which now demand new and more ambitious actions on the part of our member States and the organizations that participate in the SDG4-Education 2030 Regional Steering Committee, which ensures that the 2030 Agenda Education Goals are met in the region.

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INTRODUCTION

A variety of information, including agreements, meetings, reports and contributions from the region's member States and diverse international agencies, along with the experience of the region's countries since the adoption of the Cochabamba Roadmap for 2018-2021, prompted the need to envision a bold, viable, shared project designed by consensus that could solidify the progress made to date while defining the enormous challenges that we face in regard to achieving the goals formulated since the construction of that great prospect of development with social justice that the 2030 Agenda represents at the global level.

Latin America and the Caribbean are facing a tremendously complex time that demands urgent decisions and actions. The progress that nearly every country in the region has made on reducing inequality, poverty and extreme poverty has stopped to a great extent, though not solely, because of the catastrophic effects of COVID-19. The pandemic has caused the region to experience levels of inequality that it had begun to overcome two decades ago gradually and systematically. This situation has exacerbated the existing structural educational gaps in nearly every one of our countries, compromising the guarantee of the right to quality education for many of our children, adolescents, and young people.

It is urgent and necessary to strengthen the region's education systems based on the principles of equality and justice. This will allow us to respond to the need that has inspired our shared efforts over the past few years effectively and without delay: leaving no one behind.

The first Roadmap of the Regional Coordination Mechanism was based on the evidence of educational debts in what has been and continues to be the most unequal region in the world. We had to act, and in Cochabamba we agreed on ways forward, as well as objectives and actions that would get us there. Many of these objectives and actions were achieved. Nonetheless, with the COVID-19, the region is facing the greatest educational emergency since the founding of its national education systems.

Millions of children and youth have seen their educational opportunities thwarted, and the promised guarantee of lifelong learning has become a virtually unattainable goal, especially for the poorest. With the COVID-19, educational injustice and inequality were deepened.

Thus, while the roadmap adopted in Cochabamba set out key initiatives and a timeline designed for a climate of urgency but relative stability, the conditions we have inherited after nearly two years of the pandemic now compel us to propose a much more ambitious and focused plan. That plan is informed by the lessons learned over these past few years, considering the exceptional nature of the times and the need to reinstate the conditions that can guarantee a basic right that, for the bulk of our societies, has been damaged by factors beyond our control but also by those inherent to our school systems.

The proposed new roadmap and the contributions to the discussion of the recovery and acceleration of SDG4 are founded upon our belief that we can achieve this goal and that deepening educational cooperation across the region is a major part of supporting countries within it. Its structure reflects the belief that we can move down a path of effective

achievements with political decision and key strategic agreements to respond to the challenges that the educational future of our nations poses today.

This paper sets out the agreements and actions that can help build the urgently-needed political commitment of our governments to a future of wellbeing, justice and freedom for our peoples. Such a future will only be viable if we are able to strengthen our educational systems and turn them into platforms of inclusion, justice and equality, making the right to education the essential condition for exercising active citizenship, which is the doorway to accessing and achieving all of our rights.

This document provides a **background** of educational cooperation for the advancement of SDG 4. It further outlines the strategies for **strengthening the Regional Coordination Mechanism**, based on the online consultation that took place in November and December 2021 with member States and key stakeholders in the education sector. Finally, it synthesizes **some contributions to the educational debate**, translated into objectives, expected results, strategic actions, and key challenges to ensure compliance with the educational goals of the 2030 Agenda for the coming three years.

1. BACKGROUND

Since the United Nations member States adopted the *2030 Agenda* and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, the process of building the agreements and consensus needed to achieve these goals in Latin America and the Caribbean has been a fruitful one. There has been significant progress, but there are also major pending issues and new challenges.

The Agenda's educational component is summarized in Goal 4, "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." It consists of seven outcome targets and three means of implementation:

- 4.1 Free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education for all.
- 4.2 Access to early childhood development and universal pre-primary education.
- 4.3 Equal access to technical/professional and higher education.
- 4.4 Adequate skills for decent employment.
- 4.5 Equal access among genders and inclusion in education.
- 4.6 Universal literacy for youth and adults.
- 4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship.
 - 4.a Effective learning environments.
 - 4.b Expansion of scholarships available for developing countries.
 - 4.c Increasing the supply of qualified teachers.

Since then, UNESCO has observed progress on parts of the Education 2030 Agenda in the region: the sustained increase in pre-primary education coverage; the virtually universal, 90%+ coverage and completion rate in primary education; the increase in teachers with higher education; and the significant increase in literacy rates, which have risen steadily over the past 20 years, reaching near-100% levels.

Despite these advances, [UNESCO](#) has also emphasized that based several indicators, there is a serious risk that the world will not meet the educational goals established for 2030. In Latin America and the Caribbean in particular, [ECLAC](#) has warned that progress has been very uneven, pointing to major difficulties in achieving such goals as secondary education coverage, guaranteeing effective learning environments (specifically in regard to connectivity in schools), and the availability of certified teachers. A complex and urgent situation that requires answers, was worsened with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic ([ECLAC](#), 2020).

While we do not yet have sufficient sources of information to determine the impact that the pandemic has had on the global crisis in educational systems, the different projections and estimations indicate that the consequences will be far-reaching and the effects very long term. As such, it is not unreasonable to think that there is a serious risk that the SDG4 goals will not be met.

Follow up on and monitoring of the educational goals are indispensable for defining the policy decisions and government actions needed to ensure they are achieved. Following the lines of the Education 2030 Framework for Action approved in 2015, at the First Ministerial Meeting held in Buenos Aires in 2017, the education ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean agreed to establish a coordination mechanism and prepare a roadmap to support countries in their efforts to meet SDG4 and to monitor progress and challenges related to it in the region. Later, at the Second Ministerial Meeting held in Cochabamba in 2018, the Regional Coordination Mechanism was created, and the above-mentioned Roadmap was adopted for the 2018–2021 period. The procedures and mechanisms defined were formalized at the First and Second Meetings of the SDG-E2030 Regional Steering Committee Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, which were held in Santiago, Chile in 2019.

Due to the circumstances caused by the pandemic, the meetings held in 2020 and 2021 focused on discussing actions required to sustain education at an exceptionally critical time. The III Meeting of the SDG-E2030 Regional Steering Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean was held virtually on June 3, 2020, to discuss and adopt agreements on proposed actions to be implemented by the Regional Steering Committee, providing support to member States in the region during the COVID-19 crisis.

In October 2020, Heads of State and of governments, ministers and representatives of the international educational community met in an extraordinary session at the Global Education Meeting (GEM 2020), responding to the urgent call to safeguard education during school closures and the restrictions on mobility resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. One outcome of this meeting was the [2020 GEM Declaration](#), a commitment to protect education funding and to implement the priority actions needed to build more resilient, flexible, inclusive and gender-sensitive educational systems.

In March 2021, the Regional Steering Committee issued the statement entitled, [“Prioritizing the right to education will save the present and the future of Latin America and the Caribbean.”](#) The document notes some consequences the region is facing as a result of the most severe economic recession in its history, which threatens to cause at least a decade's worth of setbacks in the educational progress achieved in recent years.

The lifting of the most severe educational isolation measures, the reopening of schools and the reversal of educational gaps worsened by the pandemic represent new challenges for each of our countries and particularly for the SDG4 Regional Steering Committee. A new roadmap will allow us to assist with the urgent task of rebuilding educational systems ravaged by tremendous challenges for social equality.

The seriousness of the present crisis was discussed at the most recent *World Education Meeting (GEM 2021)*, held in November 2021. There, participating countries adopted the [Paris Declaration](#), which reaffirms the commitment of national and global leaders to invest in education and promote policies that accelerate progress towards the fourth Sustainable Development Goal. The meeting also served to entrust the High-Level Steering Committee with identifying strategic and thematic priorities for the global education community through 2025 in consultation with its members at its annual meeting in 2022. The HLSC was also charged with establishing priority actions to fill in gaps in the data needed to effectively monitor progress towards SDG4, and especially to recommend initiatives to increase education funding, make it more efficient and equitable and to follow up on the commitments of the Paris Declaration.

These challenges are reaffirmed in the report [Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education](#) (2021), prepared by UNESCO's International Commission on the Futures of Education. This document invites the world's governments and citizens to forge a new social contract for education governed by two core principles: ensuring the right to lifelong quality education and strengthening education as a common public good.

The post-pandemic period thus presents the urgent challenge to actively work towards educational recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean. This will require designing effective policies for achieving SDG4 and strengthening the mechanisms for regional coordination and cooperation that will enable this goal to be reached. This new roadmap will help move the region in that direction.

2. STRENGTHENING THE COORDINATION AND COOPERATION MECHANISMS OF THE EDUCATION 2030 AGENDA IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The 2018-2021 roadmap set out a coordination and cooperation mechanism that was based on an institutional architecture that presented strengths and results as well as certain weaknesses.

On the one hand, it created a Regional Steering Committee comprised of key allies in the construction of the pathway that had to be traveled to meet the 2030 Agenda's educational goals. Based on the principles of representation, inclusion, rotation and coherence, the committee will have 20 members:

- The member States that represent the region on the Global SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and seven additional member States, including two each from South America, Central America and Mexico and three representatives from the Caribbean, who will be elected by the member States of each region.
- Three co-convening agencies: UNESCO and ECLAC with permanent seats, and a third seat will be held by another co-coordinating agency on a rotating basis.
- Four inter-governmental organizations: CARICOM, CECC-SICA, the OAS, and the OEI.
- Two civil society organizations on a rotating basis in line with the Global SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and with regional and/or subregional coverage.

Additionally, the Executive Secretariat will be held by OREALC/UNESCO Santiago and was created to provide operational and technical support to the Regional Steering Committee for the implementation of the roadmap defined on that occasion.

Lastly, there will be four Working Groups tasked with developing specific activities to advance the implementation of the roadmap “in the following areas: (1) Review, Monitoring and Reporting; (2) Policies and Strategies; (3) Awareness and Communication; and (4) Financing and Governance.”

This structure was based on the need for articulation and coordination of actions to fulfill the 2030 Education Agenda developed at the regional and global levels.

The cooperation and exchange of experiences carried out to date, which are also reflected in the Consultation on the Regional Coordination Mechanism¹ recently conducted by the Regional Steering Committee highlight the need to maintain the regional coordination system while making some relevant changes in their orientation and format, based on the following evidence:

1. 87% of education ministries in the region and key regional stakeholders that support the educational sector agree that the Regional Steering Committee should be maintained with the same representation set out in the Cochabamba Agreements.
2. Despite overall support for the format and structure of the Regional Steering Committee, 63% of ministries and key stakeholders indicated that the Committee's functionality and

¹See the main findings of this consultation in the Annex to this document.

capacity for intervention need to be improved. The critiques are since the Committee's original functions were defined very broadly and with low operational capability. The countries and entities consulted indicated that the Committee's main functions should be to:

- Expand reporting, communication, and awareness actions.
 - Expand the inter-ministerial dialogue on educational policy;
 - Create educational and training opportunities that help strengthen the ministerial teams' efforts to achieve the Education 2030 goals;
 - Encourage and support new and ongoing strategic regional initiatives that strengthen regional cooperation that leads to the achievement of SDG 4.
 - that is conducive to achieving SDG4.
3. Likewise, the communication and consultation mechanisms to the member States sitting on the Regional Steering Committee in their respective areas of representation will be a priority. In such exceptional times, this is an urgent need. Participation on the Committee should allow the member States' demands, needs and contributions to be amplified. As such, there must be more fluid, attentive and reciprocal dialog among the participating member States and their respective representatives.
 4. Similarly, the respondents proposed strengthening and expanding the contributions of both UNESCO and UNICEF (and potentially other United Nations system agencies) in the production of studies with regional or sub-regional indicators, trends, processes, and alternatives to further the Education 2030 Agenda.
 5. Along these same lines, the road traveled since the first roadmap shows us the importance of strengthening and broadening mechanisms for consultation and dialogue with civil society organizations in each country, as well as those acting at the regional and/or international level that help strengthen government actions to achieve the Education 2030 Agenda.
 6. The Consultation has revealed the need to rethink the function of the Working Groups defined in the Cochabamba Agreements, as these have not established a schedule of meetings and joint actions within the timeframe set out in the roadmap. One reason for this may be that their function as essentially operational and organizational entities hindered their effectiveness from 2017 to 2019, and even more so during the pandemic.
 7. The Regional Coordination Mechanism and its Steering Committee should contribute to articulate in a synergic and supportive way the plurality of sub-regional and global agendas established to advance in the educational recovery of the region, thus contributing to avoiding overlapping of agreements or commitments, or duplicating actions, deliberations, programs or strategies. In short, the Coordination Mechanism should help to structure and organize a regional and international public agenda currently dispersed and ineffective.
 8. Regarding the challenge of promoting harmonization or dialogue between the different agendas of the organizations working to support the achievement of SDG 4 in the region, it is a good practice to seek synergies that allow the commitments of the Declaration of

Buenos Aires 2022 to be reinforced with the ones of other regional declarations in the field of education.

9. In this regard, within the framework of the *III Regional Meeting of Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean*, an agreement was reached to analyze and seek convergences with the *Joint Declaration of the Ministries of Education of the SICA Region* (Declaration of San Salvador, May 20, 2022), which is operationalized in the *Roadmap for Strengthening Learning Skills in the SICA Region 2022-2024: Deepening Educational Integration to leave no one behind nor outside*. The topics of analysis for possible joint actions would be around the following priorities:
 - Reliable, efficient, and effective information systems.
 - Learning evaluation systems.
 - Teacher training programs prioritizing autonomous learning, reading, and writing, mathematical thinking and socioemotional skills.
 - Educational repositories.
 - Exchange of experiences and fostering of spaces for technical reflection on the transformation of overloaded and irrelevant curricula, regional educational development measurements, centers of educational excellence, educational models that respond to local realities.
10. The Regional Steering Committee shall promote the development of projects to strengthen the national and regional production of data and information to enable comprehensive monitoring of the set of SDG 4 - Education 2030 targets, with the necessary disaggregation to make visible the educational situation of the entire population, particularly those groups whose exercise of the right to education is violated.
11. In each three-year period, the Regional Steering Committee should plan regional meetings for the coordination of monitoring, follow-up, and evaluation of the SDG 4 targets. For this purpose, the references and contributions provided by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE) of OREALC/UNESCO Santiago and other initiatives of intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, academia, and civil society are available.
12. The Regional Steering Committee shall advance in addressing the four thematic areas identified by the High-Level Steering Committee of SDG 4 and adopted as action paths of the Education Transformation Summit: i) inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools; ii) learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development; iii) teachers, teaching and the teaching profession; iv) learning and digital transformation.

A new structural proposal

- **Regional Steering Committee**

This body will be comprised of 20 members:

- The two member states that represent the region on the SDG 4- Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee, which will co-preside over it.
- Seven member states, with two representatives of South America and Central America and three representatives of the Caribbean. The member States of each sub-region will elect their representatives².
- Brazil and Mexico will represent the C-9/UN³, the world's most populous group of countries.
- Four inter-governmental organizations that work in education: The Central American Educational and Cultural Coordination of the Central American Integration System (CECC/SICA), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI).
- Three representative organizations of civil society in the field of education at the regional level: The Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), Education International through its office in Latin America (IEAL), and an organization that represents students.
- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as executive secretariat.

The Regional Steering Committee will conduct the process of compliance with this Roadmap, and will ensure representativeness, articulation and communication between the Ministries of Education and other relevant actors of the region. Likewise, the implementation of this instrument must be evaluated, reviewed and redesigned for a next period of three years.

In addition to its annual meetings, the Regional Steering Committee will organize two annual meetings for each subregion (South America, Central America and Mexico, and the Caribbean). All member States of each subregion will be invited to take part in these meetings, which are intended to strengthen communication mechanisms and encourage dialogue and exchange among member States on the achievement of the Education 2030 Agenda. The other institutions that comprise the Regional Steering Committee may also participate in these meetings, as may national, subregional or regional civil society organizations that are invited at the suggestion of a member (Each member State may invite up to two civil society organizations.)

² All member States in each subregion shall be elected for a period of three years, which coincides with the holding of ministerial meetings.

³ In addition to belonging to the group of countries in the world with the largest populations (E-9/UN), the permanent presence of Brazil and Mexico in the RSC will also allow greater participation and rotation of the countries belonging to each of their respective subregions.

All the member States of each sub-region will be elected for a three-year term, which will correspond to the holding of the ministerial meetings. The representatives of the member States to the Regional Steering Committee will be high-level authorities (at the level of vice-minister, equivalent or immediately below), who will participate with the support of their designated technical teams and their National Commissions for Cooperation with UNESCO.

The representatives of the region to the HLSC, who are elected through the Permanent Delegations of the member States of UNESCO, will previously validate their positions with the Regional Steering Committee and will communicate the outcome of the deliberations at the global level, with the support of the Executive Secretariat.

- **Executive Secretariat**

This role will be performed by OREALC/UNESCO and will develop technical and operational support tasks, with emphasis on promoting better communication, consultation and collaborative work culture of the Regional Steering Committee, for the development of all actions that contribute to the achievement of the Regional Roadmap 2022-2025.

The Executive Secretariat will support in the coordination among the intergovernmental, academic and civil society organizations to promote monitoring and follow-up actions, studies of trends and the production of evidence that contributes to the fulfillment of the Education 2030 Agenda.

The Executive Secretariat of the Regional Coordination Mechanism led by OREALC/UNESCO Santiago will receive operational support from UNESCO offices in the region, intergovernmental organizations and UN agencies participating in the Regional Steering Committee.

- **Teams or working groups**

The Regional Steering Committee will set-up ad hoc working groups to contribute to the implementation of the Declaration of Buenos Aires 2022 and the development of specific actions agreed to in the context of work schedule, such as consultations, calls to action, coordination channels and the drafting of declarations, among other tasks, projects or programs. The Executive Secretariat shall convene and coordinate the working groups so that they define their objectives, strategies and action plans.

- **Advisory Council**

The Advisory Council shall resolve consultations and develop actions to support the Committee and its working groups on the topics and tasks undertaken at both the regional and sub-regional levels. Its composition will vary according to the work agenda defined by the Committee. It will be made up of:

- The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- A representative of multilateral banks, to rotate between the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), the World Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank and other development financing entities.

- United Nations agencies that, due to their specific mandate and experience, will be invited to collaborate with the Committee or with its working groups.
- Other civil society organizations with regional and/or sub-regional representation that can contribute to the work agenda defined by the Regional Steering Committee.

3. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DISCUSSION REGARDING EDUCATIONAL RECOVERY AND ACCELERATION OF SDG4

The profound educational crisis and risk of not meeting the horizons of equity that sustained the formulation of SDG4 requires an effort to focus on priority lines of intervention, action and development that allow us to achieve effective results in the progressive improvement of our school systems. In the coming years, we must focus all our efforts on educational reconstruction in our region based on equity and the recovery of lost learning, beginning with core knowledge. We must also mobilize all social and governmental stakeholders to enable these efforts and ensure they are adequately financed. We understand that defining this single, strategic objective in a context in which urgent matters and needs are constantly multiplying will allow us to organize the work plan for this roadmap in a more coherent and effective way.

Justice and inclusive education

Evidence

The growing levels of social inequality have a profound impact on education systems, curtailing educational opportunities for the poorest families and gradually debilitating or diminishing educational opportunities for the middle class, who are also suffering deeply from the social crisis. Social inequality is the expression of concentrated structural privilege and the multiplication of scarcity and injustice. Many children and youths in Latin America leave school due to the poverty and exclusion that their families face.

While many of them remain in the system, their effective right to education is often compromised, their school years marked by deprivation, precarious resources and ineffective access to a comprehensive education. Social inequality has many origins. So does inclusive education. Overcoming structural levels of social inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean will require joint, comprehensive action as part of our governments' actions to gradually reduce educational inequality. Effective, decisive action is needed to reverse the factors that prevent millions of children and youth in our region from effectively exercising their right to education both in and out of school.

Our education ministries and the civil society organizations that actively promote education justice should move forward in two directions, which requires them to redouble their efforts. First, they must help to convey in the public debate that many structures that perpetuate social injustice must be deactivated and overturned if we wish to improve educational opportunities for all in our societies. This will include drawing attention to such structures as: the reproduction and expansion of social inequality, poverty and extreme poverty; precarious employment conditions and the systemic informality of the labor market; social and institutional violence and their visible expressions in political violence, violence against women, racism and ethnic and other forms of discrimination; and young people's lack of opportunities and expectations for the future. They also encompass gender injustices; legal insecurity in structures intended to defend the rights of the most disadvantaged sectors; overcrowding in cities and precarious living conditions in rural and peasant populations; the lack of access to a quality public health system; forced migration, which transforms many poor families into

nomads seeking better conditions for survival; and the enormous disparities in access to technology and cultural goods.

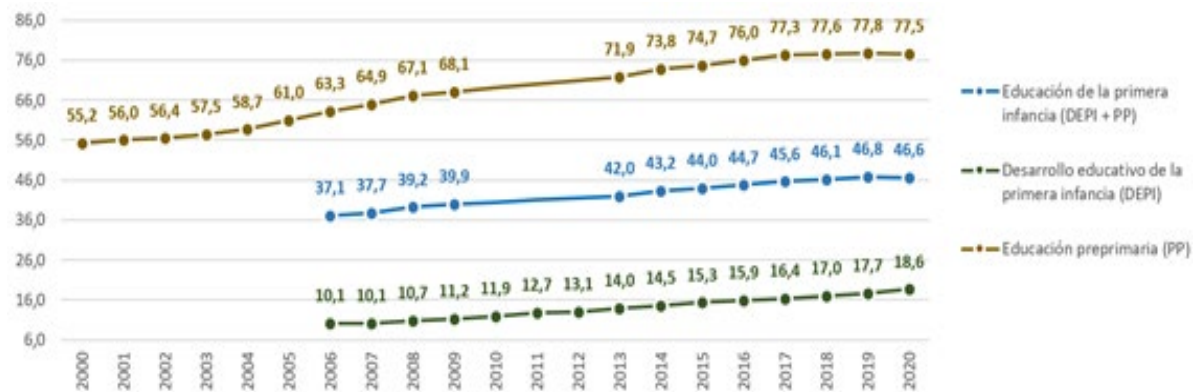
Second, while acknowledging that educational inequality arises from many external factors, we must identify and act decisively to promote public policies that can reduce inequalities that are produced and reproduced daily in our increasingly fragmented and segregated educational systems and in educational practices that deploy mechanisms of segregation and expulsion against the poorest children and youth.

Both areas are closely connected. Decreasing structural social inequality is essential for making our education systems more just and making our schools more welcoming, more egalitarian, more inclusive in terms of learning conditions is a fundamental pillar for the exercise of the effective democratization of our societies.

The pandemic has worsened this situation, making it more complex, unwieldy and structural. As affirmed in the Regional Steering Committee’s 2021 Declaration, [“Prioritizing the right to education will save the present and the future of Latin America and the Caribbean,”](#) government restrictions, the loss of millions of jobs, the deterioration of living conditions and the worsening of poverty and extreme poverty that currently affects more than 40% of our population in the region threaten to cause at least a decade's worth of setbacks in the progress achieved in recent years.

There is broad consensus in Latin America and the Caribbean regarding the need to increase access to and improve the availability of early childhood education. In 2020, the gross early childhood enrollment rate was 46.6%, which means that less than half of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean in that age group was attending school. The data show that there has been a sustained increase in the population that attends early childhood education institutions over the past 20 years. However, we still have a long way to go.

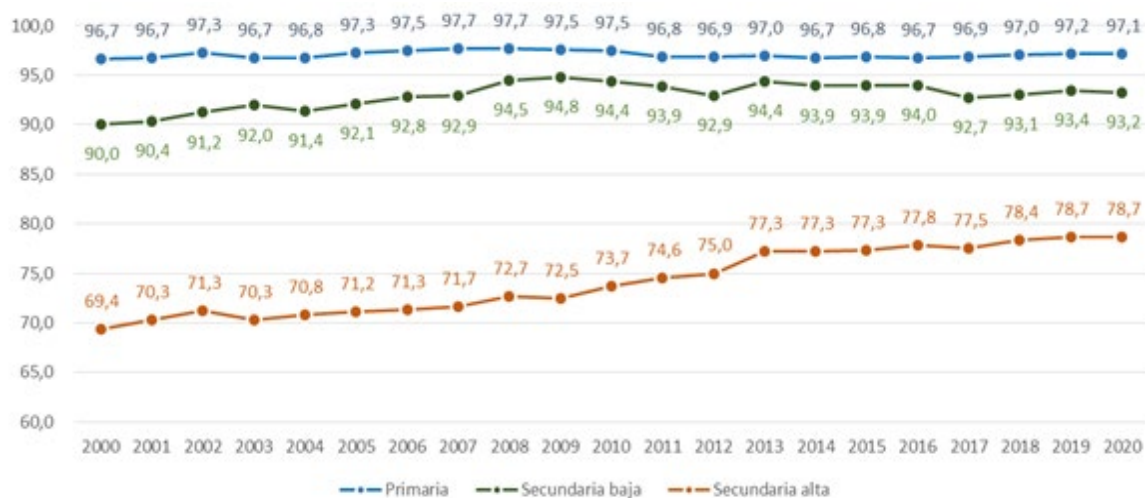
Gross rate of enrollment in pre-primary school and early childhood education Latin America and the Caribbean 2000-2020



Source: UIS Database.

Education gaps and injustices that pose obstacles to achieving the 2030 Agenda education goals persist in primary and secondary education. An estimated 10.5 million children and adolescents did not attend primary and secondary school in 2019. According to recent data from 25 countries in the region, approximately one in every three adolescents does not complete secondary school. Ninety-seven percent of elementary school-age children were attending school in the region, and there has been very little growth since 2015. The percentage for secondary school was 93.2%, and that number has dropped over the past five years. Growth was only observed in the rate of upper secondary coverage, up 1.4 points to 78.7% of the population in the past year.

Total net rate of attendance for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education 2000-2020 Latin America and the Caribbean 2000-2020



Source: UIS Database.

This section has been elaborated with the analytical and statistical contributions of the *Regional Monitoring Report SDG4-Education 2030* of UNESCO, UNICEF and ECLAC (2022), especially its chapter 2 "Access, equity and completion of early childhood education, primary and secondary education"

Objectives

- Focus national and regional public debate on the priority objective of redoubling all governmental and institutional efforts to reduce the profound social and educational gaps that exist in our societies, mainly among disadvantaged populations, which include those with the lowest income, migrant groups, disabled persons, minorities, and youth and under-educated adults.
- Develop actions and programs for inclusion at the national and regional levels that can effectively reduce existing educational inequalities, focusing on access to upper-secondary education, decreasing grade repetition and eliminating dropouts, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Promote regional and subregional cooperation actions that disseminate best practices and learning exchanges and contribute to our nations' shared efforts to combat the educational inequalities that exist in the region, which are associated primarily with high rates of poverty and inequity.

Expected Results for 2022-2025

- Each country will reduce its gaps, recovering the inclusion that existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Each country in the region will implement inclusive educational programs that show effective gains in access, retention and completion among the social segments with the lowest educational levels, paying more attention to access to upper-secondary education, decreasing grade repetition and eliminating dropouts, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Member States at both the continental and subregional levels will organize fora and other opportunities for exchanging their best practices for inclusive education, contributing to the construction of cooperation networks to promote justice in education across the region.

Strategic actions

Develop a Regional Framework of Action for Inclusive Education to promote comprehensive public policies to reduce gaps and inequities in access to education and guarantee the right to education in Latin America and the Caribbean, paying more attention to access to upper-secondary education, decreasing grade repetition and eliminating dropouts, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Promote spaces for cooperation between States, international cooperation organizations and entities, civil society organizations, universities, trade unions, business entities and the media for the development and implementation of public education policies that contribute to reducing the levels of educational inequality existing in our countries.

Establish national Pacts, Agreements and Consensuses on specific goals that must be achieved to reduce existing educational inequalities, mainly among disadvantaged populations in the lowest income brackets, migrants, disabled persons, minorities and other groups.

Strengthen ministry technical teams that promote inclusive education programs through financial resources, the incorporation of government agents and education.

Promote spaces for cooperation among States, international cooperation agencies and bodies, civil society organizations, universities, unions, business associations and the media to develop and implement public education policies that help reduce existing educational inequality levels in our countries.

The Quality of Education*Evidence*

The quality of learning is an inseparable part of the right to education. An education system that does not guarantee equal opportunities and learning conditions for all children and youth ultimately encourages unequal educational opportunities. These in turn are reflected in schools that provide disparate professional environments for teaching staff and unequal pedagogical resources and infrastructure. Such elements also impact student retention and continuity.

The crisis of quality in Latin American education systems has been discussed in numerous national, regional and international studies, and is expressed in poor results on standardized tests in the region; but it does not end there.

The results of the four assessments conducted by OREALC's Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE) in 1997, 2006, 2013 and 2019 show virtually no significant change in learning over this broad period of time. In fact, learning for grade 3 (average of 54.6% in reading and 50.9% in mathematics) and grade 6 (average of 31.3% in reading and 17.2% in mathematics) presented practically no significant differences. This situation is also reflected at the secondary level. The OCED's PISA test results show that approximately half of students achieved the minimum learning levels, while the regional

average in science, mathematics and language scores remained unchanged between 2015 and 2018 in all three areas.

But learning quality must also be analyzed from a multicausal perspective, recognizing that inequalities in life opportunities always impact students' educational pathways. Although the schools of the poorest are not always the ones with the lowest learning performance, clearly they present the most difficulties to promoting more and better educational opportunities for children and youth. For many of their students, school is often a precarious and unstable place of passage. Learning conditions are jeopardized when living conditions are jeopardized. The ERCE 2019 study of associated factors clearly shows this. In that sense, although a fairer distribution of wealth and social wellbeing does not guarantee the fairer distribution of learning, when the two former elements improve, opportunities to fully exercise the right to education also improve for the poorest families. Precariousness in our schools almost always translates into precarious learning opportunities, in other words, into unequal conditions for exercising the right to education. Therefore, the school would have to compensate for these inequalities, not reinforce them.

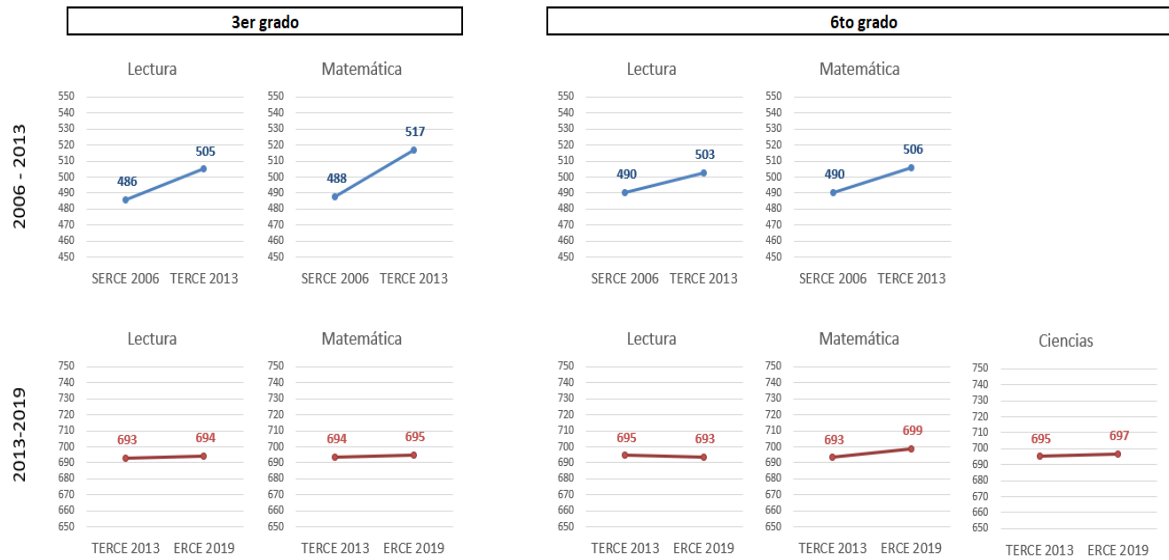
Learning deficits are also expressed as deep and persistently rigid curricular structures within schools. This often includes a lack of holistic pedagogies that encourage a humanistic approach rather than an instrumental or productive view of education. Schools lack the ability to foster autonomy, cooperation, solidarity, self-esteem, and democratic citizenship and multiculturalism, as well as the culture of peace and the value of multiple forms of diversity that make us a society of equals. The rigidity of curricular frameworks, the frequent presence of structurally unequal teaching conditions and the absence of updated teaching practices conspire against educational quality as a public good.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only served to deepen and broaden this deficit. Remote and digital education strategies more effectively reached those who already enjoyed better living conditions and more learning opportunities. We cannot yet precisely measure the impact of the educational disaster that was left to us by pandemic, but there is no question that our region is facing an enormous ethical and political imperative: we either improve the quality of education offered in our schools or risk our future.

The information available in the region allows us to identify learning outcomes for grade 3 - which generally coincides with the stage when initial literacy is established along with mastery of basic numeric operations - and for grade 6, which tends to coincide with the final year of elementary school.

The trends observed in regional assessments (SERCE 2006 and TERCE 2013 on the one hand, and TERCE 2013 and ERCE 2019 on the other) shows the difference between the two periods. While student performance improved in all areas and grades evaluated over the seven years between the SERCE and the TERCE, over the following six years the results remained stable or changed only slightly. It is troubling to see an absence of improvement in learning outcomes in the seven years between the two studies.

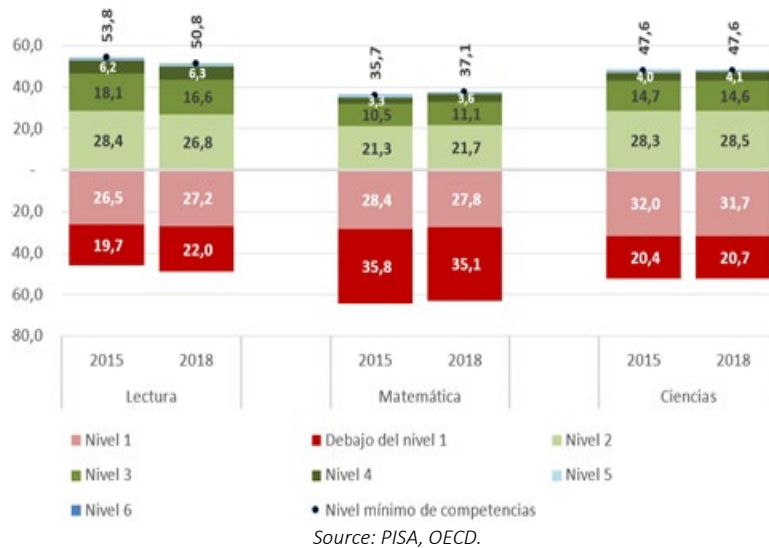
Average reading, mathematics and science scores for grades 3 and 6 on the SERCE, TERCE and ERCE assessments Latin American countries 2006, 2013 and 2019



Source: LLECE, OREALC/UNESCO.

In secondary education, there is no regional assessment of learning, although a relevant group of countries participate in the OECD's PISA assessment, applied to 15-year-old students. According to the estimates, approximately half of students tested achieved the minimum learning levels on these tests. This proportion is slightly lower for science and drops to one-third for mathematics, pointing to lower learning levels in this cognitive field. The results also show that the regional average remained unchanged in all three areas, based on country averages. As was observed at the elementary school level, on balance learning development appears to have stalled over the period.

PISA reading, mathematics and science results by performance level Latin American countries. 2015 and 2018



Source: PISA, OECD.

This section has been elaborated with the analytical and statistical contributions of the *Regional Monitoring Report SDG4-Education 2030* of UNESCO, UNICEF and ECLAC (2022), especially its chapter 3 "The learning of students".

Objectives

- To prioritize the return to face-to-face classes for educational recovery and progress towards the achievement of SDG 4 targets, highlighting the role of education workers and their organizations, as well as the voice of students and the organized educational community as key agents for leading educational recovery and transformation, and promoting their effective participation.
- To promote the progressive improvement of curricular and pedagogical conditions our schools, placing the recovery of core learning and transformative education at the center of educational policy priorities.
- To develop comprehensive institutional interventions that connect socio-educational policies with curricular changes, improved teaching and evaluation practices and access to innovative, effective pedagogical resources, especially the use of Information and Communications Technologies and STEAM skills.
- To expand the relevance of higher education and technical/vocational training, encouraging innovation and employability.
- To improve and expand regional cooperation conditions for exchanging best educational practices, promoting inclusive education strategies associated with learning outcome improvement processes, and exchanging planning policies that contribute at different levels to broadening conditions that foster access, retention and completion within a system of quality education for all.

Expected Results for 2022-2025

- Each country in the region will put forward varied programs and actions designed to systematically improve educational quality. This will revert the cycle of stalling and stagnant core learning outcomes, which predated the pandemic but intensified as a result of it.
- Each country in the region will strengthen and improve its educational quality assessment systems, applying standardized tests as well as comprehensive tools that provide ongoing feedback for public policymaking and for teaching, identifying multidimensional factors that impact learning outcomes and teaching efficiency.
- Each country in the region will strengthen and improve its higher education and technical/vocational training systems with a focus on learning quality and the social acceptance of technical/professional training and education.

Member States will encourage improved educational quality by organizing fora and other opportunities for exchanging best practices at the continental and subregional levels. International cooperation agencies and entities, civil society organizations and academic institutions will support these efforts by systematizing and disseminating the results of the aforementioned exchanges.

Member States, international cooperation agencies and entities, civil society organizations, academic institutions and other agencies working to achieve the Education 2030 Goals will produce regional and subregional research and studies on educational quality to inform evidence-based public policy.

Strategic actions

To develop a Regional Framework of Action to Improve Educational Quality that allows each member State in the region to identify its priorities for action in this field.

To consolidate and expand the actions of the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE), operated by OREALC/UNESCO Santiago, ensuring the continuity for regular assessment activities and producing innovative and experimental new studies in this field.

Promote training and strengthening actions of the ministerial teams in educational evaluation, as well as in the production of indicators on the quality of educational systems, with a special emphasis on the monitoring of learning during the return to face-to-face classes, to identify to what extent fundamental learnings have been compromised during the pandemic and which populations have been most affected.

To expand actions that, in the context of higher education and technical/vocational education, enable the improvement of vocational/employment guidance information and instruments, the implementation of relevant, flexible training programs, the solidification of institutional frameworks that facilitate the navigability of educational offers and levels, identify skills and the availability of information and communications technologies, connectivity and pedagogical capacities for remote learning and hybrid modes.

To systematize and disseminate the best practices of member States at the regional level, focusing on their efforts to improve the quality of their education systems with emphasis on the use of data derived from assessment processes to develop evidence-based public policies on educational quality.

To strengthen and expand opportunities for social and political dialog on the challenges of continuously and consistently improving core learning, calling on civil society organizations, universities, unions, business associations and media outlets to broaden public discussion of the topic.

We need strategic action to address the topic of regional and subregional research and studies. One approach could be to produce regional and subregional studies and research on the effects of lessons learned from and disruptions caused by the pandemic in curricular prioritization processes, training assessment models, teaching practices using digital technologies, public education platforms offering learning resources, and other areas.

Funding education

Evidence

One body of evidence that eloquently expresses the risk that Latin American and Caribbean countries face of not meeting the Education 2030 Agenda Goals shows the persistent imbalances, cuts and adjustments to government budget lines dedicated to upholding the right

to quality education for all. There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced education spending and international education funding. But the alarm bells had begun to sound even before our countries were first faced with those exceptional circumstances in March 2020.

The four years prior to the pandemic (2015-2019) saw steep drops in education funding virtually throughout the region, reversing a virtuous decade of growth and expansion (2005-2014). That decade had not only generated a major expectation that the conditions could be met to advance the achievement of SDG4 in a good part of the countries in the region; it also seemed, in the first five years at least, to reflect the positive response of member States to the first five years of the new century, when Latin American and Caribbean countries had reduced public investment in education to historic minimums in a context of economic stagnation.

It is true that improving education, expanding educational opportunities, promoting policies that effectively impact learning quality and improve teaching practices, and shaping teachers' labor conditions and school infrastructure do not rely solely upon investment in education and government budgetary allocations. However, when States decided to reduce public spending on education, whether for internal or external reasons, because of global and/or national crises, all factors led to setbacks in school systems, resulting in increased inequality and educational injustice. The poorest members of society suffer first and more acutely than any other segment of society when investment in public education drops or stalls. This in turn leads to the loss or deterioration of the ability to exercise a right whose guarantee, in a democratic society, cannot rely exclusively on an individual's own effort or the competitive market dynamics. When governments invest less in education and do so when public investment in education is already structurally unreliable, millions of children and young people see their educational opportunities vanish, and this has dramatic consequences for the democratic future of our nations.

This situation becomes even worse when, in addition to the dearth of public investment in education, spending on education in many member States in the region displays serious shortcomings in terms of its democratic efficiency, meaning that government contributions do not always focus on those who most need the funds.

The period 2015-2019 marked the end of a virtuous cycle, in some countries the growth of investment not only stopped, but decreased, a factor that anticipated the very serious crisis that deepened the pandemic, educational expenses as a percentage of total public spending were reduced in much of the region.

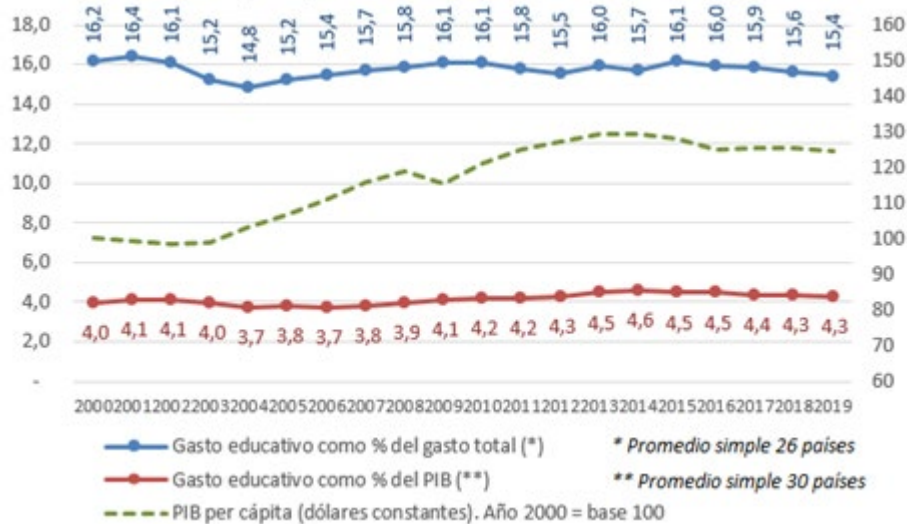
No country could have anticipated the COVID-19 crisis, but its impact on education financing in Latin America and the Caribbean was foreseeable. Each time the region faces a crisis, education systems experience setbacks, decreased investment and adjustments in education spending. Furthermore, crises always impact the years that follow, reducing available government resources. Faced with the devastating effects of the pandemic, governments needed to safeguard education financing even while schools closed temporarily and existing structural gaps in education widened at an accelerated pace. Some countries did so. Others did not.

This concern and unquestionable alarm were expressed during the extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting (GEM 2020), in which participants pledged to “protect education financing.” The statement issued by our Regional Steering Committee and adopted last year includes an emphatic call to “safeguard education funding” in the midst of a crisis whose consequences could no longer be denied.

The monitoring of resources allocated to education is a key tool for moving towards inclusive, equitable, quality education and creating the conditions for expanding lifelong learning opportunities. In this context, it is important to examine medium-term trends in the region's education financing, taking the last 20 years as our frame of reference. In this period, three different periods can be identified:

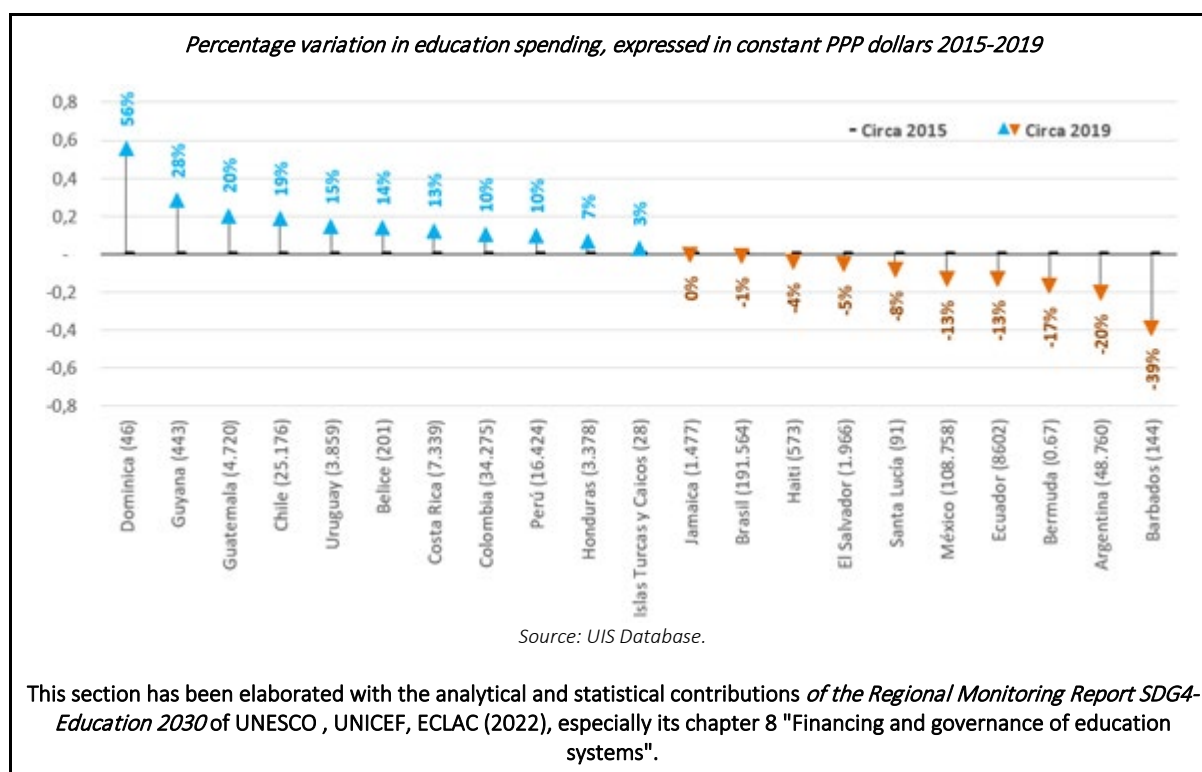
- **2000-2004:** This is a period of relative decline in investment in education, coinciding in the first years with a slight decrease in the indicator of GDP per capita and, from 2003, with the beginning of the expansionary economic cycle of the region. For 2004, the share of educational investment reaches, as a percentage of GDP and as a percentage of total public expenditure, the lowest value in the last two decades.
- **2004-2014:** This was a decade of expansion for the region's economies, with per capita GDP increasing by 25%. During these years, education investment increased in relative terms (from 3.7 to 4.6 percent of GDP and from 14.8% to 15.7% percent of total spending). This period had an initial stage when both indicators rose (2004-2009), followed by a second stage of GDP growth that was not matched by public spending increases.
- **2015-2019:** This last five years is marked by a sharp slowdown in the pace of growth of financing. At the same time that the growth of GDP per capita in countries is stopped – even with a certain tendency to decline – education spending as a percentage of GDP and total public expenditure also stops and decreases.

Education expenditure as a percentage of total spending and a percentage of GDP, variation in per capita GDB, base year 2000 Latin America and Caribbean countries 2000 – 2020



Source: Based on UIS and ECLAC Stats data.

In regard to the variation in resources that each country uses to finance its education system, for the 2015-2019 period one can observe that countries invested 10% more in education in 2019 on average than they did in 2015. However, the variations have been very marked in both cases. Of the 21 countries included in the figure below, 18 presented a trend towards growth in the education budget in real terms for 2010-2015. In most cases, the figures are higher than those observed in the past five years. This means that in practically all countries, growth in educational investment slowed in 2015-2020, or they invested fewer resources than they had in the previous five-year period.



Objectives

- To introduce actions that highlight the educational emergency that Latin America and the Caribbean are experiencing and the obstacles to meeting the 2030 Agenda commitments that will persist unless there is sustained and expanded public investment in education and international cooperation and resources are used efficiently and transparently.
- To develop systematic programs to monitor educational, public and international cooperation investment.
- To carry out studies and analyses that show the impact of education investment at the regional, subregional and national levels, in order to improve educational opportunities for the most at-risk sectors, reduce educational gaps, increase inclusion and systematically and progressively improve educational quality and teaching processes.
- To promote educational policies that enable improved conditions for teachers and administrators.

Expected Results for 2022-2025

- Member States will ensure the protection and expansion of public spending on and investment in education. They will address the regressive effects that existed before the pandemic and accelerated after March 2020 in many countries. The emphasis will be put on the premise of fiscal justice, as an expression and driving force of educational justice.
- Member States will provide education spending and investment monitoring processes and will develop management tools to measure the efficacy and efficiency of education spending to reduce existing education gaps and inequalities.

- Member States, international cooperation entities and agencies, civil society organizations, academic organizations and other entities working to achieve the 2020 Education targets will prepare national, subregional and regional reports with strategies for improving the democratic efficacy and efficiency of education investment and spending.
- Member States will promote training and strengthening of technical teams working on educational financing and planning within their education ministries and secretariats.

Strategic actions

To design the Commitment for the Protection of Education Financing in Latin America and the Caribbean, a pledge to defend public education budgets and a strategy for raising awareness and engaging in public advocacy to raise awareness of the need to sustain and expand education investment and spending to meet SDG4.

To promote training and strengthening actions for the ministerial teams that manage education funding and planning in member States and in their respective education jurisdictions.

To foster new projects, monitoring and studies and planning and verification activities to determine the efficacy and efficiency of education spending and investment at the regional, subregional and national levels.

To organize seminars, fora and opportunities for political and technical dialog on education financing challenges, paying special attention to reducing inequality, enhancing inclusion processes, addressing socially at-risk sectors, prioritizing the improvement of core learning outcomes and the working conditions of teachers and school administrators.

Teaching and Professional Development

Evidence

The expansion of national education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean occurred at a time when there was a structural deficit in the number of teachers needed to meet the region's growing demand for education at mandatory levels. "To increase the supply of qualified teachers" was one of the three implementing measures included in SDG4 to improve and democratize our school systems.

The teacher shortage has been repeatedly mentioned as one of the greatest and most challenging educational issues in the region. Already in 2019, the IDB had reported that over 10 million teaching positions would be needed to meet the demands generated by the growth and expansion of Latin American and Caribbean school systems in the coming years. The pandemic has only accentuated that deficit.

The need to expand teacher training and professional development opportunities arises from the same reasons set out in previous sections: the internal and external inequities present in education systems in a context of unprecedented social and economic crisis; the stagnation

and even decline of learning among children and youth, which hinders access to quality education, particularly in at-risk areas; and imbalances, adjustments and cuts to the public education budget. The most notable expressions of these cuts include the reduction in teachers' buying power, the often precarious conditions of teacher training, and the lack of incentives for entering the profession among new and aspiring teachers. An additional example is the slowness and inefficiency of government actions to provide much-needed initial and in-service training for teachers, to equip them for exceptional situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Latin America, two-thirds of public spending on education is spent on the payment of teachers, as in most regions of the world (in OECD countries it is 74%). This situation represents a challenge to ensure adequate remuneration and training or performance opportunities that allow reversing stagnant levels of school academic performance.

And the region continues to face the challenge of substantially expanding and improving its teaching staff. Although this challenge requires much more than greater investment, during the virtuous decade in which educational investment increased in Latin America and the Caribbean, as witnessed from 2000 to 2004 and from 2007 to 2013, teaching staff increased in most countries, but this was followed by a rate of contraction that now threatens the achievement of the Education 2030 Agenda.

Over the past few years, the countries of the region have progressively and systematically improved training levels for teachers. In some countries, virtually all teachers now have post-secondary foundational training. Furthermore, major advances have been made on continuing education for teachers and administrators in several member States of the region.

In 2017, education ministers met in Buenos Aires and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening and improving teacher training and the teaching career, to make teaching “a profession of excellence, in which teachers and other educational professionals would participate in its design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.” This challenge has become more urgent as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this roadmap seeks to reaffirm and amplify it.

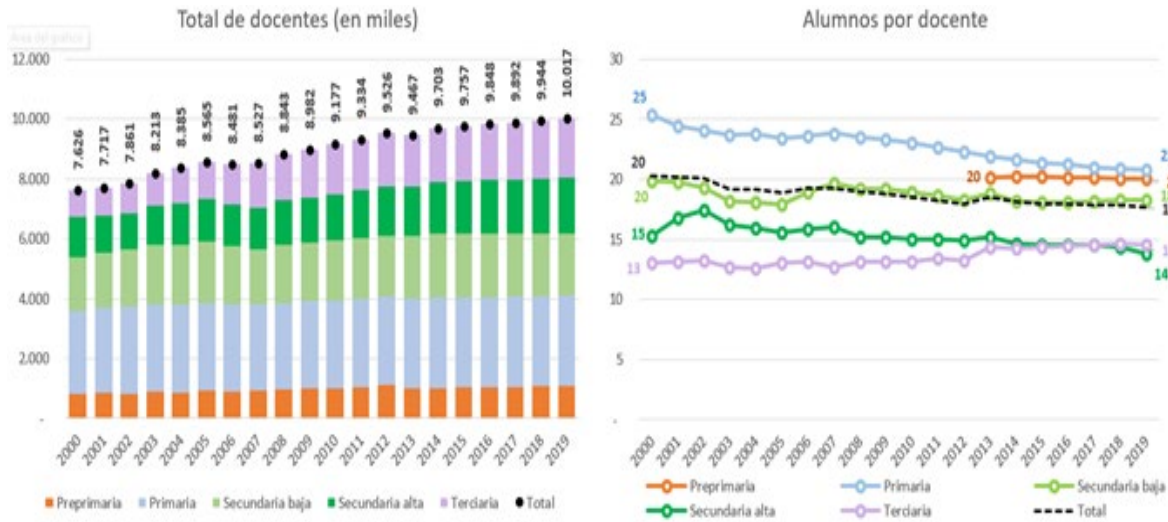
The SDG4 Framework for Action establishes clear guidelines in terms of the requirements for guaranteeing adequate teaching conditions based on the 2030 Agenda. We must provide policies that ensure that teachers have the necessary skills, are adequately recruited and compensated, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated, distributed equitably and effectively throughout the education system and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems. (UNESCO, 2016)

As such, it is not simply a question of expanding the supply of teachers. We must also guarantee that they have quality initial and continuing education, adequate labor conditions, an attractive teaching career that generates expectations of high personal and professional realization and fair compensation and policies for assigning teachers based on criteria of educational justice.

Between 2000 and 2019, 2.4 million teachers joined the region's education system, which

represents a 30% increase. There was a marked deceleration of this trend between 2015 and 2019, with a total increase of 260,000 teachers, an increase of just 2.7% over 2015.

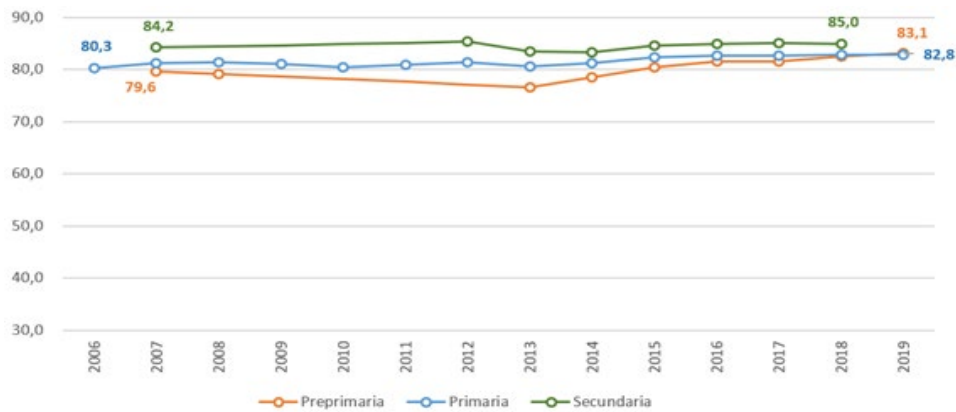
Total teachers and students per teacher by education level Latin America and the Caribbean 2000-2020.



The proportion of teachers with the minimum training required for teaching is around 80% in Latin America and the Caribbean, with some variations between educational levels. The years between 2015 and 2019 are presented as a period where the relative participation of teachers with the required training in pre-primary education has improved, and with a stable behavior in primary and secondary.

This suggests that the past five years saw decreased growth of teacher availability as well as an improvement in staffing by trained teachers.

Percentage of teachers with minimum mandatory qualifications by education level Latin America and the Caribbean 2006-2020



Source: UIS Database.

This section has been prepared with the analytical and statistical contributions of the *Regional Monitoring Report SDG4-Education 2030* of UNESCO, UNICEF and ECLAC (2022), especially its chapter 4 "Teachers and managers".

Objectives

- To promote initiatives, programs and actions that prioritize the need to guarantee better levels of initial and in-service training for teachers in public education policies, valuing and establishing a hierarchy for teaching professionals and the teaching career to ensure it is attractive and equitable and considered on the same footing as other professions.
- To implement special programs and design specific policies for teacher training in curricular areas with vacancies and to promote the hiring of teachers in regions, jurisdictions and territories outside of the capital in which there is a shortage of educators.
- To promote effective and progressive improvement policies focused on working conditions and compensation for teachers, administrators and support staff, incorporating a gender perspective, as most teachers in the region are women.
- Develop programs to monitor teacher and management training and practices in order to monitor good practices and promote evidence-based policies and actions to improve educational quality and the performance of teachers and managers.
- To promote broad political and social dialog to build consensus on public policies that are effective in improving teacher training, valuing teachers' work and compensating teachers and other education professionals at all levels.
- To create and strengthen new lines of teacher training and continuing education in curricular areas linked to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. These lines should be approached from a comprehensive, cross-disciplinary perspective and address the development of teaching skills and abilities in virtual and hybrid environments.

Expected Results for 2022-2025

- The member States and organizations of the Regional Steering Committee will center their actions on the need to improve the social recognition and prestige of the teaching profession.
- Member States will develop an active and effective policy of valuing teachers, expanding and strengthening best training practices for educators and administrators, and progressively and systematically improving the job stability, working conditions, and compensation of the profession.
- With the support of the agencies on the Regional Steering Committee, member States will develop and implement programs to monitor teacher training and teaching practices that foster evidence-based policies that guarantee the right to quality education for all.
- Each country in the region will expand opportunities for political and social dialog that centers the need to improve teacher training and teaching practice on the public agenda. The goals of this effort will be to expand the opportunities available to the poorest children and youth, to ensure that lifelong learning is available and to meet the educational targets set out in SDG4.
- Member States and organizations that participate in the Regional Steering Committee will promote actions, programs and initiatives to broaden curricular fields related to teacher training and continuing education to incorporate content that fosters the

development of the citizenship skills necessary to fulfill the 2030 Agenda in a comprehensive sense.

Member States and organizations on the Regional Steering Committee will develop more and better initial and in-service training tools for teachers in the field of digital education.

Strategic actions

To design the Commitment to Value Teaching in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is intended to provide a framework to promote collaborative, comprehensive actions and policies, incorporating a gender and generational perspective, which will be implemented by the member States and organizations of the Regional Steering Committee.

To develop a monitoring and support network focused on best practices in teacher training and development at the national, subregional and regional levels.

To promote effective national, subregional and regional initiatives to address teacher burnout, exhaustion and resignations resulting from the state of emergency teachers faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To strengthen and ensure the continuity of technical support provided by organizations on the Regional Steering Committee to each of the member States to improve the teaching career as well as initial and in-service training for teachers, administrators and support staff.

APPENDIX:

Summary of the Consultation on the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Achieving SDG 4- Education 2030

At the Global Education Meeting held on July 13, 2021, the participating countries recognized that “the effectiveness of cooperative global action in education over the past two decades is widely considered to have fallen below expectations” and that there was observable “shortcomings of progress and performance in the global system.”

Given this situation, the SDG4 Regional Steering Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean conducted a consultation among education ministries and key stakeholders that support the education sector in Latin America and the Caribbean with a view to improving the regional coordination mechanism.

The survey was conducted online between November 15 and December 15, 2021, with the majority of member States and organizations participating in the regional coordination effort: 18 education ministries from Central and South America, five from the 14 Caribbean countries that are members of UNESCO, two education ministries from Caribbean countries associated with UNESCO, and five multilateral organizations.

	<u>Answers</u>	<u>Total entities</u>
<u>Central and South American Education Ministries</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Caribbean Education Ministries (UNESCO member States)</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Caribbean Education Ministries (UNESCO Associate Member)</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Organizations</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>50</u>

Source: Developed by the authors based on data from the Consultation on the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Achieving SDG4- Education 2030.

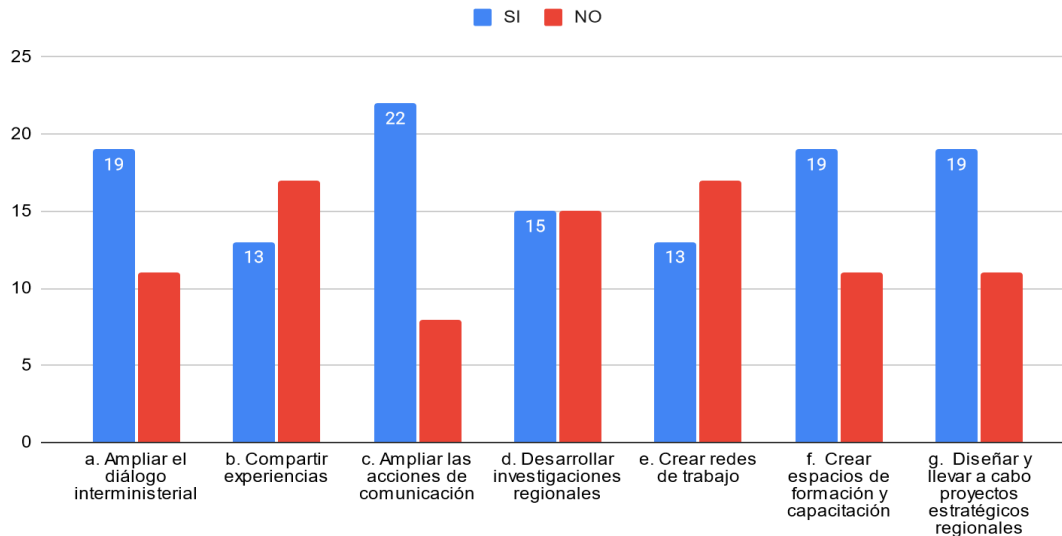
The consultation included questions about the general objective and responsibilities of the Regional Steering Committee; the structure, composition, roles and responsibilities of the Regional Steering Committee; and representation on the SDG4-Education 2030 Global Steering Committee.

Some central findings show that participating countries, agencies and organizations do not question the criteria used to assign representatives or the work mechanisms used for follow-up and monitoring that were established in the initial agreements. Rather, their observations focus on work procedures and internal coordination processes that have prevented them from reaching the expected results.

When asked about the responsibilities of the Regional Steering Committee, 63% believe it has not accomplished its objectives. The most frequently mentioned reasons were that the roles assigned to the Committee were very broad and included aspects that, while aligned with the coordination of educational cooperation, were difficult to operationalize. Respondents also reported that the proposed coordination structure made the responsibilities of representatives in the Regional Steering Committee and the activation of working groups less effective. Despite this, 87% believe that the purpose of the Regional Steering Committee should remain the same. In order to make this happen, the Committee’s main responsibilities should be to expand communication and awareness-raising actions; amplify inter-

ministerial dialogue around educational policies; create opportunities for education and training that reinforce the efforts of ministerial teams to achieve the Education 2030 goals; and design and implement strategic regional projects that solidify regional cooperation for the achievement of SDG4.

¿Cuáles cree usted que deberían ser las funciones principales del Comité Directivo Regional?



Source: Developed by the authors based on data from the [Consultation on the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Achieving SDG4- Education 2030](#).

When asked about the structure, composition, roles and responsibilities of the Regional Steering Committee, 67% stated that “the work should continue, and the current subregions should be maintained” and 93% stated that member State representatives to the Regional Steering Committee should be high-level officials. Forty-seven percent state that the third United Nations agency position should continue to rotate, and 73% believe that the civil society organizations that participate should commit to communicating and aligning their agendas.

A clear majority (83%) believe it is important to return to the Working Groups methodology for Regional Steering Committee members, while the expected results that were mentioned most frequently are “creating specific support for topics agreed to in the Meeting of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean to promote compliance with the 2030 Agenda” and “strengthening regional educational cooperation.” The respondents prefer that these working groups be mixed (56%) and that the Executive Secretariat of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism have operational support from the inter-governmental organizations and co-convening agencies that comprise the Committee (93%). The majority of those consulted affirmed that the term of Regional Steering Committee members should continue to be three years (77%) and that all Regional Steering Committee representatives should serve for the same period of time (87%).

Finally, regarding representation on the Global Steering Committee, most participants were inclined to maintain the criterion of geographical balance over any alternative (80% agreed). There is broad consensus regarding the actions that regional representatives should take before the regional committee: validating their positions in advance with the Regional Steering Committee (93%) and communicating the results of global deliberations to the Regional Steering Committee (100%). Finally, the respondents suggest that the region’s representatives designate the same high-level official and support teams to interact with the Regional Steering Committee (90%) and that regular meetings be held with the Permanent Delegations and National Commissions of the region’s UNESCO member States (97%).