

ALL CHILDREN IN SCHOOL BY 2015

# Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children



## FINISHING SCHOOL

A Right for Children's Development: A Joint Effort  
Executive Summary

Latin America and the Caribbean

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The maps found in this publication do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.

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# Introduction

As a result of political and economic efforts, social demands, and the advocacy and guidance of international organizations, the education systems of Latin America and the Caribbean have become broader in recent decades, and have incorporated great numbers of boys, girls, and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 15. Despite this progress, there are still many present or potential pockets of total exclusion: boys and girls who are late entrants in the education system, who fail repeatedly, who cannot find pedagogic experiences that allow them to develop their capacities, and who live in situations of discrimination. In many cases, on top of those school experiences, these boys, girls, and adolescents endure the suffering of living conditions that are dramatically poor, precarious, and humiliating.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture Institute for Statistics (UIS–UNESCO) launched the Out–of–School Children Initiative (OOSCI) as a contribution to that process of analysis and action that seeks the commitment of ideas and implementation on the part of governments, international organizations, and civil society.

This document presents the most relevant aspects that emerge from the study that was conducted for the OOSCI in Latin America and the Caribbean. The first pages contain a definition of the five dimensions of educational exclusion and the priority policy recommendations to overcome that exclusion. Chapter 1 explains the profiles of the five dimensions of exclusion in education. Then, Chapter 2 addresses the barriers that generate that situation. Lastly, Chapter 3 deals with the policies that would allow diminishing the impact of those barriers, and achieving an inclusive, equitable, and quality education.

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## The global initiative on out-of-school children: a joint effort to overcome educational exclusion

in the last two decades, in the midst of diverse political and economic situations, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean –a region that was burdened by different kinds of relative inequality and backwardness– have made decisions and assigned financial resources that aim to expand schooling opportunities for children and youth. Those efforts and their potential for success must be maintained and enhanced. By 2008, in Latin America and the Caribbean there were approximately 117 million boys, girls, and adolescents of initial (which should begin at least one year before primary), primary, and lower secondary education age. However, 6.5 million did not attend school, and 15.6 million attended school but showed signs of failure and inequality, expressed as two or more years of overage.

In 2010, in order to support the efforts towards realizing the right of all children to education, UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) launched a global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI), which includes 25 countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Timor-Leste, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zambia, Sudan, South Sudan, Morocco, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Liberia, and Nigeria.

The activities include national studies, based on the work of teams from each country (made up of government partners and key decision-makers), an overview of each of the regions, a comprehensive study, and an international conference aimed at mobilizing resources for equity.

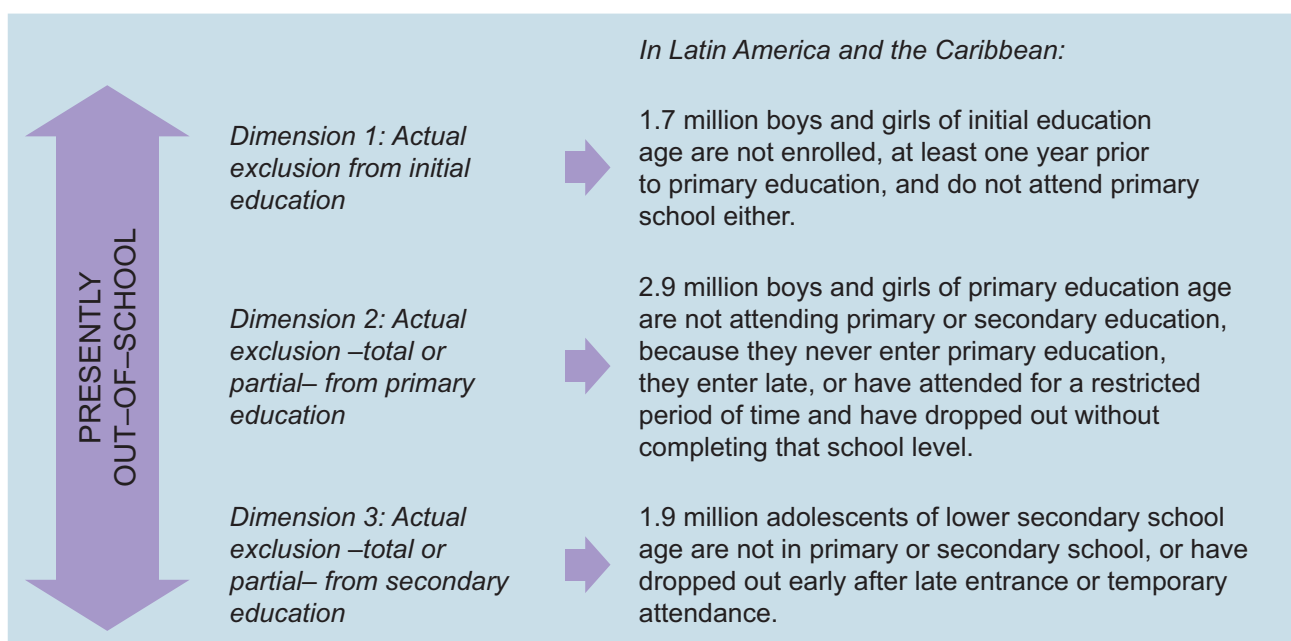


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## The dimensions of exclusion

The global OOSCI takes into consideration the millions of boys, girls, and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 17 who are not attending, that is, who are “out of school”, as well as those who attend an educational institution, but are getting a lacking and precarious education. If effective action is not taken, the latter will be “out of school” in the future. This approach establishes the meaning of “being out of school” as a real, dynamic, and ongoing process.

In the framework of this global initiative, there are five dimensions of exclusion, five ways of being –today or in the future– out of school and out of a schooling itinerary that is desirable for all. The following is the explanation of the five dimensions as they apply to Latin America and the Caribbean:



Source: Developed by the authors, based on data from UIS–UNESCO. Estimates for Dimensions 1 and 3 correspond to 2009. Estimates for Dimensions 4 and 5 correspond to 2008.



It must be noted that the estimate of the number of boys and girls corresponding to Dimensions 4 and 5 considers students who are two or more years overage, and therefore are at *serious* risk. However, for the purposes of this study, it is relevant to point out that there are students who attend primary or secondary school and are one year overage. They will be characterized as being at *moderate* risk. This is the situation of late entrants or students who have failed at one point during their schooling. For this reason, this document includes the analysis of these types of situations in the explanation of Dimensions 4 and 5, since these situations are considered as a warning sign for possible exclusion.

## Main recommendations for action to attain the target of full, timely, sustained, and comprehensive schooling

In line with the analysis of the dimensions of exclusion, the barriers, and present policies, the following 12 recommendations have been developed for Latin America and the Caribbean in the framework of the OOSCI:

- Promoting greater representation of the education sector in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for countries that are lagging behind in this kind of investment.
- Establishing targets for overcoming exclusion in the medium term, but making sure that they can be monitored on an annual basis.
- Articulating the efforts of the education sector with those made by the social welfare, health, and nutrition sectors, in order to face the challenges of inclusion in education.
- Recognizing the role of teaching as key, and the school as the environment where inclusion in education is materialized.
- Mobilizing and preparing for a timely entrance into initial education and first grade.
- Based on the learning–capacities development approach, preventing children from falling behind their peers in school, and protecting those students who are already overage and at risk.
- Concentrating technical, budgetary, and social efforts on back–to–school approaches.
- Supporting rural education.
- Undertaking the challenge of education for indigenous peoples.
- Strengthening the practices of emotional support and sensitive treatment for child and adolescent students.
- Calling for and leading initiatives of knowledge building about the processes and outcomes of educational exclusion.
- Disseminating and communicating the knowledge that has been built or expanded.



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## Summary of barriers causing exclusion<sup>1</sup> and of strategies to overcome them<sup>2</sup>

the above mentioned recommendations summarize the results of an analysis that identifies the barriers that generate exclusion, and that proposes a set of policy strategies to overcome them.

Barriers that generate or worsen exclusion			Strategies to overcome barriers and bottlenecks			
Areas	Groupings	Barriers		Areas	Groupings	Barriers
Economic barriers due to limited family resources	Income is insufficient to make a living	Barriers 1 and 2	➔	Advancing a just availability of resources and opportunities	Balancing family income	Strategies 1 and 2
	Difficulty to cover schooling costs	Barriers 3 to 5			Covering schooling costs	Strategies 3 to 5
Social / cultural barriers in demand for education	Differences about the definition of the right to education	Barriers 6 and 7	➔	Enriching the social perspective on the right to education		Strategies 6 and 7
Material, pedagogic, and symbolic barriers that emerge in the schooling offer	Schools that lack sufficient or basic material resources	Barriers 8 to 10	➔	Promoting schools that are committed to inclusion	Creating material conditions and linking them to learning	Strategies 8 to 10
	Schools where segregation mechanisms are generated or tolerated	Barriers 11 to 13			Considering school organization as an opportunity for inclusion	Strategies 11 to 13
	Schools that offer few learning opportunities	Barriers 14 to 16			Broadening learning opportunities for students	Strategies 14 to 16
	Schools with a deteriorated pedagogic and bonding environment	Barriers 17 to 19			Creating a school environment of respect and tolerance	Strategies 17 to 19
Political, financial, or technical barriers of the education system offer	Lacking, scarce, inadequate, or bureaucratized education offer	Barriers 20 to 25	➔	Managing the education system towards the attainment of inclusion targets	Revitalizing the organization of educational offer for inclusion	Strategies 20 to 25
	Insufficient funding	Barriers 26 and 27			Protecting and strengthening funding	Strategies 26 and 27
	Ineffective technical proposals to attain inclusion	Barriers 28 to 35			Developing a rational pedagogy to overcome exclusion	Strategies 28 to 35

<sup>1</sup> Explained in detail in Chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> Explained in detail in Chapter 3.

# Chapter 1

## Profiles of educational exclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean

This chapter contains the statistical characterization of exclusion for boys, girls, and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean, using the broad definition of the present initiative: it includes the out-of-school population, and the population that attends school in a situation of latent exclusion, who are distinct from the children analyzed in the first group.

### The 5 dimensions of exclusion: initial characterization

The different dimensions of present or potential schooling exclusion affect 22.1 million boys, girls, and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean, considering the figures from the last year of initial education to the completion of lower secondary school in 2008 and 2009, as shown by the chart below:



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Totals of present or potential exclusion		22.1 million	
<i>Dimension 1</i>	<i>Children of initial education age who are not in initial or primary school</i>	1.7 million (*)	
<i>Dimension 2</i>	<i>Children of primary education age who are not in primary or lower secondary school</i> <i>There are 1.4 million who are overage and in initial school(**)</i>	2.9 million (*)	<i>Also at moderate risk:</i> ↓
<i>Dimension 3</i>	<i>Children–adolescents of lower secondary school age who are not in primary or secondary school</i>	1.9 million (*)	
<i>Dimension 4</i>	<i>Children who attend primary school but are at serious risk of dropping out</i>	9.2 million (**)	
<i>Dimension 5</i>	<i>Children–adolescents who attend lower secondary school but are at serious risk of dropping out</i>	6.4 million (**)	<i>Another 8.1 million</i>

Source: (\*) Estimates of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) for the region in 2009; (\*\*) Developed by the authors, based on UIS data for 2008.

## Present exclusion, inequities in access, and permanence – Dimensions 1 to 3. General profile of access and permanence in Latin America and the Caribbean

The high level of primary school coverage in the region does not represent a prolonged permanence of boys, girls, and adolescents in the education system, nor does it imply successful progression at that educational level or its completion.

In that sense, the available information allows the identification –within the schooling flow– of bottlenecks that restrict the right to education for boys and girls in the region.

The age-specific enrolment rate shows the proportion of the population of a particular age that is enrolled in the education system in a given country. From this indicator, three different groups can be largely identified in Latin America and the Caribbean:

- *Group 1: Schooling that is pending:* Boys and girls who are 5 and 6 years of age and remain out of the education system, not having begun their schooling. Around 15% of the population that is 5 years of age is out of school in analyzed countries, which represents a challenge for universal attendance in the last year of initial education. At 6 years of age, 91% of the population will be in school. However, 9% of the children are still out-of-school; most of them will enter the education system late.
- *Group 2: Full schooling:* Schooling rates reach close to 100% for the 8–11 age group. Coverage is almost universal, and the proportion of this age group that is not in the education system is very small.
- *Group 3: Withdrawing from school:* Beginning at 12 years of age, age-specific enrollment rates progressively decrease, a sign of dropping out. At 14 years of age, one out of every six children does not attend school. Of this group, the majority has attended but permanently dropped out of the education system. This situation worsens as older age groups are considered.



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This analysis is complemented by another one that is dynamic, and that compares the number of students from two consecutive grades, allowing for the identification of the following trends:

- *Group 1:* In the first year, there are 8.5 million students who are 5 years of age, and the following year there are 9.7 million students who are 6 years old. This means that 1.2 million new students who are 6 years old did not attend the previous year. This process of first entry to school (late, in many cases) continues until the age of 8.
- *Group 2:* Between the ages of 8 and 10 in the first year, and the ages of 9 and 11 in the last year, there is a stable situation: at the aggregate level there are no new enrollments or dropouts.
- *Group 3:* Beginning at 12 years of age, there is a process of early exit. In the first year, there are 9.6 million students who are 14 years of age, and in the final year there are 8 million students who are 15 years old. This dropout process between age groups is a constant drain.

## Dimension 1: Children of initial school age who are not attending initial or primary education

### HOW MANY BOYS AND GIRLS ARE THERE IN THIS DIMENSION?

Between 2002 and 2008, the number of children who attend initial education increased by 21.6%, a total of 3.6 million boys and girls.<sup>3</sup>

Latin America and the Caribbean		DIMENSION 1	
2009		Total	1.7 million children of initial education age are not in initial or primary education 15.7% of all 5-year olds
		Girls	844,000 girls who are of initial education age are not in initial or primary education (15.6% of the total)
		Boys	890,000 boys who are of initial education age are not in initial or primary education (15.8% of the total)
Brazil	Bolivia	Colombia	
			
832,000 (23.8%)	83,000 (34.2%)	206,000 (23.2%)	

Source: Regional and national estimates of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). National estimates have the following reference years: 2007 (Bolivia), 2008 (Brazil), and 2010 (Colombia).

### WHAT OTHER EXCLUSION PROCESSES CAN BE IDENTIFIED WITH RESPECT TO DIMENSION 1?

Analyzing the data from a different perspective, it may be possible to consider children who attend the first grade of primary education, and ask what kind of educational experience they had the previous year. This allows us to identify the first exclusion processes observed in the school experiences prior to primary education. These processes represent an unequal starting point for boys

<sup>3</sup> According to estimates of the UNESCO-UIS data center for Latin America and the Caribbean, March 2012.

and girls, and raise challenges for education policies. Considering the starting age for primary education, for every 100 pupils who are of that age:

- 17 have not attended initial education.
- 71 start primary school after attending initial education the previous year.
- 12 start primary school early, that is, before the official age.

The inequities present in access to primary education and how this relates to initial education may be summarized as follows:

- Children who will attend primary school without having attended initial education. By 2009, *1.7 million children were attending primary school in the region without having attended initial education at the appropriate age*. There is a gap of 16.7% with respect to pupils who were attending first grade at the proper age.
- Children who will attend initial school, but being overage (they enter the system at primary entrance age, but are enrolled in initial education). Of all children who are of primary school age, 11.6% enter initial education instead of first grade.
- Children who will never enter school, neither initial nor primary education. This is analyzed in Dimension 2 of exclusion.

## WHAT ARE THE DYNAMICS BETWEEN DIMENSION 1 AND DIMENSION 2?

In order to identify barriers and design policies, it is relevant to distinguish different situations of exclusion in this transition:

- Children who will enter primary school late without having attended initial education (they pass from Dimension 1 to Dimension 2).
- Children who will enter primary school late as the inevitable result of having been overage when they attended initial education (they enter Dimension 2).
- Children who enter primary school on time, without having attended initial education (they pass from Dimension 1 of exclusion, but do not enter Dimension 2).

In the region, nearly 83% of students attend school at least from the last grade of initial education. Therefore, of the other 17%, a little over half will enter school, primary or initial, the following year. Close to half will enter late. In absolute terms, 1.7 million children were part of Dimension 1 in 2008, because they were of initial education age, but did not have the opportunity of attending. Of those children, 800,000 became part of Dimension 2 in 2009, since they were not enrolled in any educational level.





## Dimension 2: Children of primary school age who are not in primary or lower secondary education

This dimension refers to boys and girls who are of primary school age, or ISCED 1 (5, 6, or 7 to begin, and between 10 and 12 to complete it, according to each country), but do not attend school or initial education.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> As a way of facilitating the reading of a regional report covering 31 countries, definitions corresponding to the different educational levels analyzed in this initiative have been harmonized. The 1997 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), which UNESCO developed to compare educational levels, is the basis of the nomenclature used throughout this document. INITIAL EDUCATION: Included in category **ISCED 0**. This name is given to the school year before entry into primary education. It has different names in the countries of the region: nursery school, pre-school, pre-primary, preparatory, or initial. PRIMARY EDUCATION: Equivalent to **ISCED 1**. In almost the whole region, it corresponds to primary level or basic education (complete or some cycle) with duration between 5 and 7 years. SECONDARY EDUCATION: It is linked to **ISCED 2**. In countries of the region, it is called the “second cycle” of basic education, secondary or mid-term education, and its stipulated completion age is 14 and 15. **ISCED 3**, with its different names throughout the region (mid-term, vocational, bachelor’s education) is not part of the OOSCI conceptual framework.

## HOW MANY BOYS AND GIRLS ARE THERE IN THIS DIMENSION?

Latin America and the Caribbean		DIMENSION 2	
2009		Total	2.9 million children who are not in primary or lower secondary education. 5% of the total of children who are of primary school age
		Girls	1.44 million girls are not in primary or lower secondary education (5.1% of the total)
		Boys	1.42 million boys are not in primary or lower secondary education (4.8% of the total)
	<b>Brazil (*)</b>	<b>Bolivia</b>	<b>Colombia</b>
	 686,000 (4.9%)	 63,000 (4.5%)	 374,000 (8.5%)

Source: Regional and national estimates of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). National estimates have the following reference years: 2007 (Bolivia), 2008 (Brazil), and 2010 (Colombia).

This dimension combines different situations: late entry to primary education, early exit, and total and absolute exclusion. There are regional and national estimates for the number of children involved in each of these situations:

	Latin America and the Caribbean	Bolivia	Brazil	Colombia
Entered school but later dropped out	300,000 (10%)	14,000 (52%)	77,000 (45%)	92,000 (55%)
Are expected to enter late	1.6 million (56%)	12,000 (48%)	95,000 (55%)	23,000 (13%)
Are expected to never enter school	1 million (34%)	- (0%)	Less than 1,000 (0%)	53,000 (32%)

Source: Regional estimates of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) in 2009, and national statistics developed by each country based on household surveys and population estimates (Bolivia: EH 2008 and INE 2008; Brazil: PNAD 2009). In the case of Brazil, the estimates do not include the population that is 6 years of age.

## HOW MANY FORMS OF LATE ENTRY CAN BE IDENTIFIED?

Two groups can be identified:

- i. "Pure late entry": Children older than the official primary entrance age who enter school for the first time at the primary level, without initial education experience.
- ii. "Late entry that is carried from initial education": Children older than the official primary entrance age who enter primary school as a late entrant as a result of completing initial education late.



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By 2008, of every 100 primary education age children who could go to school:

- 92 attended school, and among them:
  - 81 were enrolled in primary school at the official entrance age or were underage.
  - 11 attended the initial level as overage students, and therefore began primary education with a lag that was carried from initial schooling.
- 8 of them would be overage when they enter primary education, without any previous schooling (late entry rate). Five of those children would be one year overage, and three of them would be two years overage.

Therefore, 19 of every 100 primary school-age children will enter primary when they are older than the official entrance age.

More than half of late entry cases carry their lag from initial education. It is not the first contact of the child with schooling, as is usually thought.







## How many boys and girls enter primary education and then drop out?

A conservative estimate shows that close to 164,000 boys and girls will abandon school before they are 12 years old. These students have had access and some retention, but do not complete the level between their entry and the time when they turn 12.

### Dimension 3: Children of lower secondary education age who are not in primary or lower secondary school

This dimension includes adolescents who are of lower secondary education age, but who are out-of-school: primary education graduates who have not entered secondary education; students who entered secondary education but dropped out; and pupils who dropped out before completing primary education.

#### WHO ARE THE ADOLESCENTS INCLUDED IN THIS DIMENSION?

Latin America and the Caribbean 2009		DIMENSION 3	
	Total	1.9 million lower secondary education age adolescents who are not in primary or secondary school (5.3% of the total)	
	Girls	0.9 million lower secondary education age adolescents who are not in primary or secondary school (5.3% of the total)	
	Boys	1,0 million lower secondary education age adolescents who are not in primary or secondary school (5.3% of the total)	
Brazil (*)	Bolivia	Colombia	
 368,000 (2.6%)	 14,000 (3.1%)	 220,000 (6.3%)	

Source: Regional and national estimates of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). National estimates have the following reference years: 2007 (Bolivia) and 2010 (Colombia).  
 (\*) For Brazil: National estimates conducted by Brazilian authorities based on PNAD 2009 data.

#### HOW MANY ADOLESCENTS DROP OUT OF SCHOOL?

Nearly 6% of adolescents who were in school between the ages of 11 and 14 (the age range that corresponds to lower secondary in most countries of the region) dropped out when they were supposed to transition to the next level. There are 2.4 million adolescents in this age range who abandon school from one year to the next. The numbers are not steady with regards to each age group: the dropout rate increases as the population grows older.

## WHAT EXCLUSION PROCESSES MAY BE STUDIED WITH RESPECT TO THIS DIMENSION?

The latest available information indicates that in the region close to 22% of the students in this age range have still not completed primary education.<sup>5</sup> It is likely that a significant part of those students will drop out before completing that level of schooling.

While it is not possible to estimate the magnitude of the dropout rate precisely, an approximation can be reached by following an age cohort of students in two consecutive years. By applying these estimates, it can be determined that around 100,000 students of lower secondary education age attended primary school and dropped out before completing that level.

## Potential exclusion, progression inequities, and learning – Dimensions 4 and 5

These dimensions include the population that is in school, but at risk of exclusion. This is one of the most innovative concepts of the OOSCI, because it focuses on children who are presently in school, but at high risk of dropping out. This way, actions can be taken at educational institutions before they actually drop out.

### OVERAGE AS AN APPROXIMATION TO THE RISK OF EXCLUSION

It is difficult to measure the risk of exclusion in a comprehensive way that would allow a regional estimate. In the framework of this study, the choice has been to use overage as an indicator of a situation of being at risk of exclusion in the region, because:

- It expresses a dynamic and cumulative approach to exclusion.
- It allows focusing on education policies that can prevent and compensate for overage.
- It allows for the protection of school and life experiences of boys, girls, and adolescents.
- It highlights teaching as a tool for neutralizing school failure.
- It is easy to measure throughout the extension and coverage of the education system.

#### Overage students:

It refers to students who are older than the official age for the grade that they are attending, according to entrance regulations in each country.

### WHAT IS THE GENERAL PROFILE OF OVERAGE STUDENTS?

Three groups can be identified:

- *Group 1:* Access to the education system generates different situations that result in being overage. Pure late entry and late entry that is carried from initial education, to which we must add failure in the first grades of primary education, still endemic in the region. At the age of 8, 28 of every 100 children who attend school are overage.
- *Group 2:* In the 9 to 12 age range, the total of students by age who remain in their respective grades is steady, but overage increases progressively. At the age of 12, 42 of every 100 students are lagging behind, 18 of them by two or more grades. Instead of attending lower secondary, they are in 5th grade or lower.

#### Age condition:

The condition under which a student attends school, taken from the age/grade relationship. It may be: a) The official age, or b) Overage.

Overage may be divided into two sub-groups: one year overage (simple), and two or more years overage (advanced).

<sup>5</sup> It considers ISCED structures of each country. This estimate emerges from estimates of the authors based on UIS data for 29 countries of the region.

- *Group 3:* Beginning at the age of 13, there are parallel processes of worsening of the overage condition and of dropping out of school. By the age of 15, enrolment is about 20% lower than for the 9 to 12 age range. A little more than half of the students are overage, divided equally between simple and advanced.

## HOW DOES AN OVERAGE SITUATION DEVELOP? HOW DOES IT EVOLVE OVER TIME?

The traditional analysis of education statistics only highlights one of the causes of the overage situation: repetition. Late entry is mentioned, but with less detail. The breadth of an overage situation is not thoroughly explained by these two processes. That is why this initiative includes the traditional analysis, but also expands it with indicators that allow the identification of how the overage phenomenon emerges and how it gets worse.

*Grade repetition.* Close to 7.9 millions boys, girls, and adolescents who attend the first six grades of primary education have enrolled more than once for the same grade. Most repeat the first grade of primary (15.9% of repetition in that grade, or 2.1 million children). The intensity of this problem makes up and deepens the situation of at-risk of exclusion of those students in the future. This profile of grade repetition remains –with different levels of intensity– in the countries of the region.

*School failure that is not reflected in grade repetition.* The indicator named *Percentage of repeaters and percentage of students whose overage is not explained by the repetition of first grade of primary* has been designed to address this situation.<sup>6</sup> There are 1.9 million boys and girls for whom their age/grade gap is not explained by the repetition of first grade. Of every 100 students who attend first grade, 33 are overage, but only 16 are repeaters. Of the other 17, 5 have entered school late (pure late entry) and attend first grade; 8 entered late and carry their overage from initial education; and 4 are students who repeated the grade and are not registered as repeaters.

*Students who re-enroll in their grade.* *Students who re-enrol into the same grade from one year to the next, becoming overage or falling even further behind, isolating the effect of late entry and dropout.* Applying this model to estimate the number of re-enrolled students allows us to conclude that 11.3% of primary education pupils and 15.2% of lower secondary education students are not able to complete the full academic period, and the following year enroll in the same grade. The number of re-enrolled students is higher than the number of repeaters in each level. In primary education, there are 5.8 million repeaters and 7.5 re-enrolled students. In lower secondary education, the number of repeaters is 3.9 million and the figure for re-enrolled students reaches 5.1 million.<sup>7</sup>





## Dimension 4: Children who are in primary school, but are at risk of dropping out

### HOW MANY BOYS AND GIRLS ARE THERE IN THIS DIMENSION?

This dimension includes the potential exclusion of students –that is, those who are at greater risk of dropping out– within the range of primary education (ISCED 1). In the framework of this initiative, pupils who are two or more years overage in primary school will be considered as at *serious risk*. Students who are one year overage are considered as at *moderate risk*. While the quantification of Dimension 4 includes only those at serious risk, both situations are addressed, taking moderate risk as a warning sign that can anticipate a worsening of the situation.

<sup>6</sup> This indicator is used similarly in the set of education indicators developed by the Latin American countries. See *Serie Regional de Indicadores Educativos (CECC/SICA)*.

<sup>7</sup> According to estimates developed by the authors, based on 2008 UIS data.

<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b> 2008 		<b>DIMENSIÓN 4</b> 9.2 million boys and girls are at serious risk <i>Additionally, 14.7 million children attend school while at moderate risk</i> <i>Among them, 3.6 million boys and girls are overage while attending first grade. Only 1.7 million are repeaters.</i>
<b>Brazil</b> 	<b>Bolivia</b> 	<b>Colombia</b> 
Serious risk: 3.1 million Moderate risk: 6.1 million	Serious risk: 250,000 Moderate risk: 460,000	Serious risk: 1.3 million Moderate risk: 960,000

Source: Developed by the authors, based on data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

**WHAT PROCESSES OF EXCLUSION MAY BE IDENTIFIED AROUND THIS DIMENSION?**

At the beginning of the primary level there is a significant number of students who attend while being one, two, or more years overage: 3.6 million boys and girls are in first grade while being older than the official age. Approximately 1.4 million boys and girls enter primary education late, and another 2.2 million become overage or increase that condition throughout their schooling period.

In the region, there are more students attending second grade than first grade. Nonetheless, this characteristic is mainly the result of the particularities of Brazil's education system,<sup>8</sup> which modifies regional indicators due to its relative size (it represents more than 30% of the region's students for that grade). If only the rest of the countries are considered, the number of pupils attending second grade is 10% lower than the figure for first grade.



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<sup>8</sup> In Brazil, the change in the primary education entry age –which at the time of this publication was being implemented– has been realized with the creation of an additional grade at the beginning of the primary level. Therefore, in that country the second grade includes not only pupils who attend their second year after entering the primary level at the age of 6, but also pupils who are still beginning the primary level at the age of 7.

From third grade on, there is a progressive decrease in the number of pupils of official age: in sixth grade, there are 1.2 million official age students less than in first grade. This drop comes along a proportional increase in the group of overage pupils. It is the result of repetition and dropout experiences that primary education students have throughout their schooling.

## Dimension 5: Adolescents who attend lower secondary school but are at risk of dropping out

### WHO ARE THE ADOLESCENTS IN THIS DIMENSION?

This dimension includes the potential exclusion of students –those who are at greater risk of dropping out– within the range of lower secondary education (ISCED 2). It considers students of any age. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, 23 of every 100 students are of lower secondary education age. Like in Dimension 4, students who are at moderate risk of dropping out are also counted.

<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b> 2008 		<b>DIMENSION 5</b> 6.4 million adolescents are at serious risk Additionally, 8.1 million adolescents are at moderate risk <i>7.7 million are of ISCED 3 age</i>	
Brazil	Bolivia	Colombia	
 Serious risk: 4 million Moderate risk: 4 million	 Serious risk: 90,000 Moderate risk: 130,000	 Serious risk: 1 million Moderate risk: 700,000	

Source: Developed by the authors, based on data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

Source: Developed by the authors, based on UIS data.

### WHAT PROCESSES OF EXCLUSION MAY BE IDENTIFIED AROUND THIS DIMENSION?

Absolute data reveal a scaled decrease of approximately one million students as the grades go up. For every 100 pupils who attend the seventh grade, only 83 reach ninth grade. This decline in the number of enrolled students is due to a double effect: high level of failure at the beginning of the educational level, which causes increased cases of overage students, and dropout numbers that are progressively higher for this level. Both aspects make up this pattern.

When comparing the decline in enrollment from seventh to ninth grade according to age condition, the ratios for official age students and overage pupils are similar. If percentages were used, it would seem that the situation is stable (43% of total overage for this educational level).



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## DISPARITIES THAT WORSEN EXCLUSION

### THE GENDER SITUATION

In the region, the primary adjusted net enrollment rate (which represents the percentage of primary school age children that attends either primary or secondary school) reaches around 93% of boys and girls. This total for the region does not show inequalities in access. However, in some cases (Jamaica and Guatemala, among others) net rates are higher for boys. In other countries (Ecuador, Honduras), the relationship is the opposite: primary school-age boys are more excluded.

While the situation of access to the primary level is relatively even by gender, inequalities appear during the schooling process, and then become greater in the exclusion of students who are older. In the group of pupils who are one year overage, and in the group who are two or more years overage, the number of boys for every 100 girls is significantly higher than in the total. Also, beginning in seventh grade, which in most countries corresponds to the first grade of secondary school, there is a decline in the number of male students in the total and in each category of age condition: this is a sign of greater dropout rates for boys.

### RURAL AREAS

Some countries still show unresolved coverage issues in rural areas. In the cases of Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, primary school attendance rates in those areas are lower than in urban centers, with differences that range between 5 and 8 percentage points.

While in primary education coverage gaps are relatively small and concentrated in some countries, there is a situation of deep inequality in secondary education. In some countries, attendance rates for the secondary school age population is less than 50% in rural areas. These figures allow us to conclude that there must be significant and generalized levels of overage students, as a result of higher rates of late entry, repetition, and re-enrollment.

## CHILD LABOR

Child labor constitutes a problem at both regional and international levels, and represents a challenge for the protection of the rights of children and adolescents. The trend that is reflected in the data leads to a clear link between child labor and school attendance: pupils who are between 12 and 14 years of age and who work –while many are in school– show attendance rates that are lower than for pupils who do not work.

This document was developed with information provided by *Understanding Children's Work (UCW)* about the situation in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. In two of those four countries (Colombia and Mexico), the school attendance rate of adolescents who work is significantly lower than the total: one out of every three working adolescents does not attend school, which shows that child labor in those countries translates into a higher dropout risk. On the other hand, in Bolivia and Brazil, the gap is smaller: 15% in the former and 5% in the latter. In these two countries, while the dropout risk is still present, it is less intense.

Regarding the profile of boys, girls, and adolescents who attend school and work, boys and girls whose head of the household has had less access to formal education show higher levels of participation in labor activities. In Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico, the magnitude of the gaps is similar: for every working child who comes from a home with a high level of education, there are 3.5 working children who come from a household with a low level of education. In Bolivia, that relationship is 1 to 5.

## INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

In Latin America, it is estimated that there are more than 520 indigenous peoples who speak over 400 languages and represent around 50 million people.<sup>9,10,11,12</sup> Their distribution is considerably uneven within regions and countries. The enormous diversity of peoples and languages makes the scenario more complex. In some cases, like in Bolivia, there is a high level of indigenous presence with over 60% of the total population, and with a medium level of linguistic diversity (33 indigenous languages). In other countries, like Brazil, the size of the indigenous population is relatively small (less than 0.5% of the total population), but there is a very high level of language diversity, with over 241 different socio-linguistic groups.

Presently, there is no updated information in most countries of the region. However, some data show that indigenous populations have lower levels of access, permanence, and completion in the education system. Regarding secondary education, access opportunities of indigenous populations have been reduced, and the gaps persist.

It is important to observe the inequalities that exist within indigenous populations. There is a sustained, generalized, and profound gender gap. With the exception of Honduras, in the rest of the countries female attendance rates are considerably lower. It must be noted that in the non-indigenous population this gap is less intense, and in some cases male attendance rates are the lower figure.

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<sup>9</sup> Del Popolo, F. and Oyarce, A. M. (2005), *Población indígena de América Latina: perfil sociodemográfico en el marco de la CIPD y de las Metas del Milenio*. CELADE–Population Division, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF (2009), *Atlas sociolingüístico de pueblos indígenas en América Latina*, [www.movilizando.org/atlas\\_tomo1/pages/tomo\\_1.pdf](http://www.movilizando.org/atlas_tomo1/pages/tomo_1.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Del Popolo, F. and Oyarce, A. M. (2005), *Población indígena de América Latina: perfil sociodemográfico en el marco de la CIPD y de las Metas del Milenio*. CELADE–Population Division, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF (2009), *Atlas sociolingüístico de pueblos indígenas en América Latina*, [www.movilizando.org/atlas\\_tomo1/pages/tomo\\_1.pdf](http://www.movilizando.org/atlas_tomo1/pages/tomo_1.pdf)

This indicator shows the unequal opportunities that indigenous girls and women have to enter secondary education in the Latin American region. Therefore, they constitute a priority population in the task of identifying and removing the barriers that generate and sustain that exclusion.

## BOYS AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES

The global *Report on Disabilities* that the World Health Organization and the World Bank have developed is a valuable contribution of analysis in the framework of commitments adopted in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force in 2008. That study points out that around 15.3% of the world's population has disabilities, from mild and temporary to moderate or severe, in all age groups. In the region's middle-income countries, the prevalence of the population from 0 to 14 of age with moderate and severe disabilities matches the world average. For the region, and for the same age group, the report offers information about some countries, and confirms that schooling for the population with disabilities is significantly lower (approximately half) than schooling for the population without disabilities.

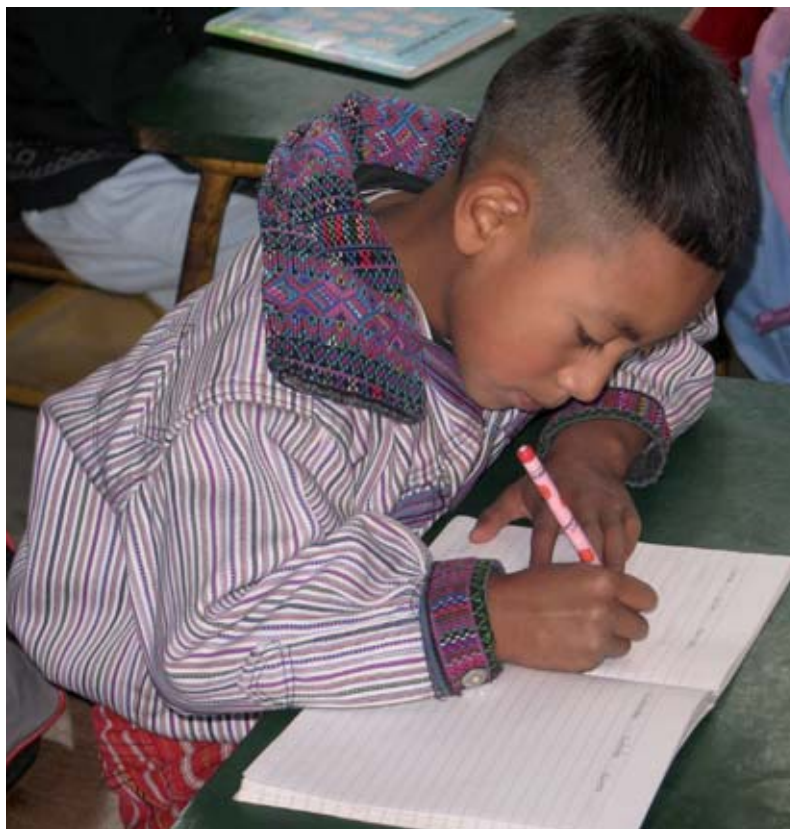
At the primary level, which as has been explained has broad coverage in the region, students with disabilities who benefit from resources of the education system range from 0.4% in Nicaragua to almost 2% in Uruguay. Even in the case of Uruguay, less than half of the population with disabilities is taken care of. It must be noted that coverage in initial education is similar. It drops dramatically in lower secondary education, and it is almost non-existent in higher secondary education.

## BOYS, GIRLS, AND ADOLESCENTS OF AFRICAN DESCENT

With the aim of characterizing the unequal education opportunities of the population of African descent, we present some data –systematized for this initiative– about Colombia and Brazil. In both countries, the population of African descent shows overage rates that are much higher than for the total, which means that boys and girls from this community have frequently faced late entry and failure.

In Colombia, at the age of 9, students of African descent are 50% more likely to be overage than the rest of the population. In Brazil, for the same age group, the figure is 20%.

On the other hand, the total children enrolled –by age– allows the analysis of the levels of progression and dropout. In Colombia, there is a much stronger dropout tendency in the population of African descent: for every 100 children who attend at the age of 9, 62 are in school at the age of 15. It must be noted that in the total for the country that relationship is of 100 to 77. On the other hand, in Brazil, the difference in the total of students is present, but it is not so severe: for every 100 students of African descent of 9 years of age, there are 85 in school at the age of 15 (in the total for the country that relationship is of 100 to 94).



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## Chapter 2

# Barriers and bottlenecks that generate or worsen exclusion

The second step in the approach that has been adopted for the global Out-of-School Children Initiative includes the analysis of factors that influence the processes of current or potential exclusion. This implies reviewing the barriers that operate in the formation of bottlenecks, which in turn block the attainment of schooling targets for each age group.

The categorization of barriers fits into the conceptual and methodological framework of the OOSCI, and considers four areas:

- Area 1: Economic barriers in the demand for education
- Area 2: Socio-cultural barriers in the demand for education
- Area 3: Material, pedagogic, and symbolic barriers in the schooling offer
- Area 4: Political, economic, and technical barriers in the education system offer

Each of these areas contains groupings of barriers, according to the characteristics of the factors from which they are configured.

Below is the explanation of each barrier and the level of impact they have in the exclusion process for each dimension:

Very strong impact
  Strong impact
  Medium impact

## Area 1 — Economic barriers due to limited family income

### Grouping 1: Income is insufficient to make a living

#### B - 1 EXTREME INSUFFICIENCY OF FAMILY INCOME

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
D1	D2	D3	D4	D5

The latest data on poverty and extreme poverty that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has developed for 2009 in 19 countries of the region, indicate that 33.1% of the population was poor, and that 13.3% was extremely poor (ECLAC 2001).<sup>13</sup> Families in these categories are on the limit of subsistence, and therefore find it extremely difficult to face even the minimum costs of schooling for their children.

#### B - 2 TENSIONS WITH THE COST OF SCHOOLING OPTIONS

<i>Con impacto en las dimensiones:</i>				
D2	D3	D4	D5	

Opportunity costs are linked to the “loss of income” for a household of the monetary contribution that a boy, girl, or adolescent could generate during the time that she/he normally dedicates to schooling. There are different types of situations that affect boys, girls, and adolescents in which their activities compete with school time, among them work that is paid for or activities carried out in the own homes. It must be noted that domestic work, with or without monetary compensation, is usually assigned to girls and female adolescents.

<sup>13</sup> ECLAC (2011), <http://www.eclac.cl/estadisticas/>. The countries are: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and Uruguay.

With a convergent effect on exclusion, it is observed that the schools that working children or adolescents attend frequently show different signs of deterioration: in infrastructure, in pedagogic aspects, or in organization. Even when they are in school, primary level students who work obtain in regional quality assessments – in average– between 7 and 22 points less than students who do not work (Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, OREALC/ UNESCO; and Latin American Laboratory for the Assessment of Quality in Education, LLECE, 2010).

Child labor has its most significant impact in the withdrawal of students from secondary education. Low-income students who work face a combination of the deterioration of the school experience and lower personal expectations, both regarding the possibility of maintaining the effort to complete schooling, as well as regarding the potential benefits that they might obtain from that complete schooling, because their social capital to find a commensurate job is lower than that of students who are in a better social position.



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## Grouping 2: Difficulty in facing schooling costs

### B - 3 DIFFICULTY ENTERING AND REMAINING IN SCHOOL

With impact in dimensions:				
D1	D2	D3		

Some indirect costs that limit access and retention, and therefore are linked to the five dimensions, are:

- *Transportation*: This affects particularly rural areas.
- *Meals*: According to data of the MDG 2010 Report, in Latin America and the Caribbean 6% of children who are younger than 5 years of age are underweight (2008 estimate). This may be caused by malnutrition and other health problems.
- *Lodging*: This affects students who are forced to seek residence in the educational facility itself or in neighboring homes, due to the long distance that separates their own home and the school.

### B - 4 DIFFICULTY OBTAINING SCHOOL SUPPLIES

With impact in dimensions:				
		D3	D4	D5

Families spend resources on school supplies such as uniforms, classroom materials, textbooks, and other items. The direct contribution of households to support the public education system –whether it is mandatory or not– and the acquisition of goods and services that are necessary for schooling might violate the commitment of offering compulsory and free education, particularly for children and youth who drop out due to difficulties in bearing such costs.

## B - 5 DIFFICULTY IN FACING ENROLLMENT FEES

With impact in dimensions:				
D1	D2	D3		

All countries of the region offer free education for levels that are compulsory, in the sense that the state does not charge any tuition fees. However, this universal norm is contradicted by common practice, since schools frequently request monetary payments from students. Even in cases in which the state protects the lowest-income sectors by exempting them from these charges, in reality it is usually difficult to avoid them. Also, these payments often are an element of social segregation, because school populations are determined by family income and place of residence (Morduchowicz, 2009).

## Area 2 — Socio-cultural barriers in the demand for education

### Grouping 1: Differences in the definition of the right to education

## B - 6 SUBMISSIVE ATTITUDES IN DEMANDING OR EXERCISING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

With impact in dimensions:				
D1	D2	D3		D5

Definitions about a certain population sector and its behaviors are sets of beliefs and interpretations that are built based on a piece of information, usually incomplete. Those beliefs and interpretations later “pollute” our vision in a way that makes it hard to discard them. For example, some studies assert that families with the lowest income and low levels of education “do not value the education of their children very much.” This is an attempt to explain the causes of repeated absenteeism, late entry, and non-enrollment in initial and secondary education. But one might also argue that the history of such families conditions their possibilities of belonging to the educational world, and places such a distance regarding educational schemes, that they cannot join the type of world that is hoped for.

Another recurrent assertion that is present in the diagnoses and that complements what has been mentioned above is that some families barely participate in school activities. Schools interpret this as a lack of interest, without taking into account that parents with low levels of education –often illiterate– have obvious difficulties accompanying their children. The simplistic analysis is that they are indifferent to their children’s education. This perception diminishes expectations about the students’ chances of success, and instead of strengthening the way these pupils are taught, they are left behind to pay more attention to “those who deserve it because their families make huge efforts.”

Additionally, the climate of violence that surrounds schools seems to be generally considered as a cultural factor that represents an obstacle for schooling, since in some areas violence has dramatically affected the social environment. Gangs, crimes related to drug-trafficking, rural areas that are not completely under the rule of law or of the state, and daily episodes of violence in areas near schools, place thousands of boys, girls, and adolescents in dangerous situations, and this translates into high absenteeism and dropout rates.

On the other hand, some studies mention teenage pregnancy as a socio-cultural factor that represents an obstacle for schooling, with a direct impact on the exclusion processes of young mothers. Research conducted in Chile<sup>14</sup> shows that dropout rates among girls and female adolescents in countries of the region are many times higher than the number of pregnancies for those age groups. Therefore, it is not correct to consider pregnancy as a significant dropout cause in the general framework of OOSCI dimensions. That same research also highlights that, in general, the region’s schools have not developed adaptation strategies for students who are pregnant, and keep attendance and accreditation requirements that are clearly restrictive for them. These requirements –not pregnancy– become the real barriers.

<sup>14</sup> Revista Médica de Chile (2004), printed version, ISSN 0034-9887 Rev. méd. Chile v.132 n.1 Santiago, January.

## B - 7 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POPULAR CULTURE AND SCHOOL CULTURE, WITH LITTLE DIALOGUE AND INTEGRATION

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
D1	D2	D3	D4	D5

There is little research about the gap between school culture and the culture of broad vulnerable population groups, and there is not much information about the effort that those sectors must make to “adapt” and live in a different way in school.

Education indicators show high rates of failure for indigenous boys, girls, and adolescents, even in cases in which schools develop intercultural and bilingual education strategies.

Gender issues that have operated as barriers are related to the traditional upbringing that assigned different roles to boys and girls. Girls are believed to need less schooling because “their place was staying at home”. Although some of these beliefs are still present in some sectors, social processes of the last decades seem to show a different trend. Access to initial and primary education is even for both sexes, and there are more girls than boys in the higher grades of primary and secondary education.

Regarding the age of boys, girls, and adolescents, there are manifestations related to perceptions some families hold, that seem to represent barriers for schooling. On the one hand, there is an excess of concern on the part of some families in the upbringing of their children that leads them to avoid enrolling students in the initial level “because they are too young”. It must be noted that this perception seems to be reinforced by the education system and outdated theories about children’s maturing as a merely age–related process. This is reflected in the situation of pupils who are already overage in initial education. This issue will be addressed again when barriers of the schooling offer are explained.

On the other hand, there seem to be some families who keep their children out of school because “they have grown up”. From a critical point of view, both reactions are to be expected, particularly in cases where the number of years of compulsory education has been increased. A first generation of traditionally excluded population groups –who are anxious to exercise their right to education– will enter school. But there will also be families that have not incorporated that right into their cultural values. As with all transitions, this attitude must not be considered as permanent and unchangeable. It is to be expected, and it may be modified through sustained policies.

## Area 3 — Material, pedagogic, and symbolic barriers in schools

### Grouping 1: Schools that lack basic material resources

#### B - 8 LACK OR DETERIORATION OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
D1	D2	D3	D4	D5

The situation varies among countries and within each country. The following conditions must be mentioned:

- Scarcity of school buildings, particularly for primary education in rural areas, and for secondary education in rural and urban areas.
- Reduced shifts and inconvenient schedules as a result of deficient infrastructure.
- Obsolete infrastructure in education systems that went through early expansion.
- Lack of building maintenance and lack of complementary spaces like libraries or laboratories, in cases in which the need to increase the number of seats drives financial resources almost exclusively to classroom construction.

## B - 9 POOR OR NON-EXISTENT EDUCATIONAL EQUIPMENT

With impact in dimensions:				
			D4	D5

Material limitations are also evident in the lack or insufficient number of spaces and resources that affect the quality and climate in schools. Among them are educational materials and supplies, books, playground equipment, sports spaces and supplies, and resources to work with students with disabilities.

## B - 10 LACK OR SCARCITY OF ADEQUATE BOOKS

With impact in dimensions:				
			D4	D5

Different factors that have to do with the distribution of books may lead to situations where the market or the government prioritize the production of texts for the largest sectors or higher income groups. At the same time, there are no specific plans for less numerous sectors. For example, reading and teaching materials for local languages and cultures. This shortage limits systematic work in intercultural and bilingual education, which affects initiatives that many governments are implementing.

## Grouping 2: Schools where segregation processes are generated or tolerated

### B - 11 WEAK OR UNCONSOLIDATED TEACHERS' TEAMS

With impact in dimensions:				
			D4	D5

It is important to identify deficiencies that especially affect sectors in which the five dimensions of exclusion are manifested most. These deficiencies are: (a) the scarcity or insufficient hiring of teachers; (b) an insufficient number of teachers who are specialized in certain modalities or subject areas, which affects the possibility of expanding the school supply; (c) insufficient numbers of teachers who speak indigenous languages; (d) a high turn-over of teachers who begin their careers in rural or marginal areas, and quickly leave when they find a position that is more to their liking.

### B - 12 ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES THAT PRODUCE HIDDEN SEGREGATION

Con impacto en las dimensiones:				
	D2	D3	D4	D5

Enrollment regulations for primary and initial education are far from being precise, clear, and helpful. There are many spaces for interpretation, which allow schools to choose their pupils. Additionally, there may be processes of "internal segregation" in some schools, by the way in which students are organized in groups. For example, differences are made according to performance (or even according to expected performance). Also, some sections and shifts (usually the evening shift), or repeaters and overage students are grouped together.

Segregated organization has negative effects on the self-esteem of students who are assigned to "the slow group". This also strengthens the perception of teachers who have to teach these groups, since they hold a negative prejudice about the pupils' abilities.

### B - 13 SCARCE OR WASTED CLASSROOM TIME

With impact in dimensions:				
			D4	D5

In general, the countries of the region have assigned 3 to 4 classroom hours a day in public schools, except schools that offer full-day modalities. A high percentage of the few classroom hours are used in routine activities that do not lead to learning (checking attendance, pledging allegiance to the country's symbols, class formations, and meal distribution). The remaining or *instructional* time is what is used in the classroom for teaching. However, this time is not fully utilized, since there are teaching methods that often make students lose interest in learning.

### Grouping 3: Schools that offer scarce learning opportunities

#### B - 14 TEACHERS WHO DO NOT MASTER EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHODS

With impact in dimensions:				
	D2	D3	D4	D5

Classical teaching practices in establishments with higher numbers of children who have been out of school are weak, since they fail to develop methodical ways of helping at-risk students to overcome their situation. There are conceptual barriers that usually hinder the evolution of pedagogy as a science, and the inclusion of its applied approaches in teacher training and teaching programs.

#### B - 15 ERRATIC EVALUATION PRACTICES AND ARBITRARY PROMOTION PROCEDURES

With impact in dimensions:				
	D2	D3	D4	D5

Evaluations are not considered as part of a learning process. Official evaluation and promotion regulations usually reflect an approach to learning and to the learning subject with two main characteristics: i) knowledge is fragmented and the student is made responsible for showing that she/he possess knowledge; ii) students bear most of the burden to reach expected levels of knowledge. Additionally, implicit promotion standards that teachers use are still based on concepts that have long been surpassed by scientific knowledge, namely “cognitive maturing”, which results from the mere passing of time, without any connection to teaching activities.

#### B – 16 TEACHERS WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY ORGANIZING THEIR TEACHING FOR DIVERSE GROUPS

With impact in dimensions:				
			D4	D5

Initial teacher training does not provide much experience for managing the class as a group, which turns into a great source of frustration for both teachers and students. Also, there is a lack of didactic approaches for working with diverse groups in the classroom.



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## Grouping 4: Schools with a deteriorated pedagogic and bonding environment

### B - 17 SCHOOL REGULATIONS THAT ARE UNFAMILIAR AND NOT DISCUSSED WITH STUDENTS

With impact in dimensions:				
	D2	D3	D4	D5

Students who come from sectors that have recently been incorporated into the education system may have difficulties identifying and understanding school regulations, and behaving in ways that are acceptable and appreciated. On the other hand, adults and even other students in the same school may have difficulty recognizing the formal nature of many of those regulations that make up the “school code”, so they may not be able to consider those rules in an objective and comprehensive way. This situation may give rise to prejudices about the capacity or the commitment of students who do not adapt naturally or immediately to the norm.

### B - 18 COMPETITIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

With impact in dimensions:				
		D3	D4	D5

The evidence that was gathered through the SERCE<sup>15</sup> shows that a good school environment has a positive effect on learning in 70.3% of cases that were analyzed using statistical models of associated factors in schools. Regarding students, when they have a positive perception of the school environment, attainment significantly increases to 94.6% of analyzed cases (SERCE, 2008). Despite knowing about the influence of the internal climate/environment, schools still tolerate competitive and disqualifying behaviors among students, and do not establish guidelines of empathy and solidarity to strengthen the chances of success for at-risk boys, girls, and adolescents.

### B - 19 NEGATIVE PREJUDICES ABOUT STUDENTS’ CAPACITIES

With impact in dimensions:				
	D2	D3	D4	D5

The perception that many teachers, directors, and technical staff have about the expected profile of children in school contains numerous elements that belong to the dominant culture and higher income sectors. That perception leads to the emergence and support of the idea that there is a cultural gap, producing lower expectations about pupils who do not fit the expected profile, which becomes another factor of exclusion. The implicit demand that some characteristics and knowledge must exist before teaching begins, generates real inequalities and turns the condition of being equal before the school system into a formality.

## Area 4 — Political, financial, and technical barriers of the education system

### Grouping 1: Lacking, scarce, inadequate, or bureaucratized education offer

#### B - 20 SCHOOLING OFFER GAPS IN SOME LEVELS AND LOCATIONS

With impact in dimensions:				
D1	D2	D3		

Planning and organization processes of the school system offer in the region are crisscrossed by interlaced factors that constitute obstacles in the effort to take positive action and overcome exclusion:

- A strong component of inertia, which leads to prioritizing the functioning and continuity of the current offer.

<sup>15</sup> Second Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (SERCE). The SERCE was organized and coordinated by the Latin American Laboratory for the Assessment of Quality in Education (LLECE), and was part of the activities conducted by the Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago), aimed at guaranteeing the right of Latin American and Caribbean students to quality education.

- Intense pressure on the part of agencies and communities that have the opportunity of materializing their demands.
- Political demands to develop plans that are ambitious in their goals and ideals, with little evidence of results or relation to the assigned budget.

As a result, the communities that are less capable of making their demands heard are the ones that have more difficulties receiving an adequate education offer. This shortcoming is more evident in initial and lower secondary education in rural areas.

**B - 21 TEACHER TRAINING THAT DOES NOT PREPARE FOR INCLUSION**

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
			D4	D5

Initial teacher training does not address the gap between real and formal curricula. This makes new teachers accept school traditions that do not match official curricula and reinforce customary ideas about the organization of groups in school, and about essential and non-essential teaching matters. Regarding the organization of groups, teacher training does not challenge the assumption that all students enrolled in the same grade are –or should be– homogenous.

**B - 22 WEAK REGULATIONS THAT INCREASE THE RISK OF EXCLUSION**

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
D1	D2	D3		

Regulations might represent an obstacle for inclusion when their stipulations leave loopholes or are confusing and overlapping. For example, this might happen in relation to processes of access to the school system, class attendance regimes, and evaluation and promotion procedures. On the other hand, frequently, norms (both laws and regulations) are not accessible in two ways: i) in the sense that directors, teachers, and parents do not have a personal copy of the text, and ii) due to the complexity and dryness of the text.

**B - 23 OVERSIZED AND SATURATED CURRICULA**

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
			D4	D5

For many years, a constructivist approach –centered on capacity building instead of memorized content– has been officially accepted as the pedagogic foundation of curricula. However, curricular contents have been developed from another logic, based on knowledge of each subject matter, thus presenting the education process from a content approach, fragmenting that content by subject and level, and discarding any teaching intervention to promote broad-based integration and cognitive development processes. The result is that, for teachers, curricula turn into a statement of high level of complexity. Complying with the standards proposed in those curricula, which form part of national evaluations, represents an element of tension between official prescriptions and daily routines. This is solved by implementing a superficial, episodic, and speedy treatment of the subject matter.

**B - 24 INAPPROPRIATE DIAGNOSIS AND MONITORING OF EXCLUSION PROCESSES**

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
D1	D2	D3	D4	D5

In almost every country of the region there are standardized mechanisms to collect and process data, and in many cases there is a modern technical support system in place that facilitates data use. Nonetheless, the abundance of data often does not allow the identification and dissemination of information to interpret a process or situation. Addressing data quality problems separately from the conditions and practices to use the data in education management, might turn into the development of resource-intensive policies that do not solve structural problems, and that could even bring additional difficulties.



## B - 25 UNSATISFACTORY RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPORT GIVEN TO SCHOOLS WITH GREATER CHALLENGES

With impact in dimensions:				
	D2	D3	D4	D5

Some ways of conceiving and exercising an advisory role could inhibit its potential and become an obstacle. This happens when there is confusion at the time of identifying processes and outcomes that must be acted upon, due to a lack of objective information; when teachers are overwhelmed by concepts of theory that force them to implement integration and adaptation processes for which they are not prepared and lack enough time; and when there is too much attachment to the “correct” discourse without paying enough attention to pedagogic evidence. Additionally, professionals who provide support often apply the clinical approach they obtained during their training, and tend to consider situations individually instead of observing processes and outcomes in a systemic manner.

### Grouping 2: Insufficient funding

## B - 26 BUDGETARY RESTRICTIONS TO ADDRESS THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE SYSTEM

With impact in dimensions:				
D1	D2	D3	D4	D5

While Latin America and the Caribbean assign little more than 14.4% of total public spending and 4.5% of GDP to education, the most developed countries of North America and Europe assign 12.4% and 5.3%, respectively. Also, there are large disparities within the region (updated by the authors, based on Morduchowicz, A. and Duro, L., 2007).

Funding is necessary to overcome certain barriers like the lack of schools or paying the salaries of the teachers who are needed to expand coverage and enhance different aspects of the service. However, funding must be considered as a tool to achieve goals, and not as an end in itself.

In the analysis of processes of the last few decades, there are two political aspects that must be taken into account:

- Funding for education is usually linked to economic cycles, albeit in an uneven manner: it grows somewhat gradually during positive cycles –generally more slowly than the increase in public resources– and it drops much faster as a result of corrections during stagnation cycles.
- International cooperation has become a key factor with respect to funding destined to overcome exclusion.

## B - 27 INEFFICIENCY AND OVERCOSTS DUE TO EDUCATIONAL FAILURE

With impact in dimensions:				
			D4	D5

Educational failure, which manifests itself in repetition and re-enrollment, generates unnecessary costs for the system: the attainment of a certain grade or academic year is paid for twice or more than twice. This increases the cost of “producing” a graduate, since more years are needed than had been planned. In Ibero-America, costs resulting from repetition reach 19.9 billion dollars, that is, three times the cost of universal coverage targets from initial to lower secondary education, as stipulated in Targets 2021.<sup>16</sup> This represents approximately 0.34% of regional GDP and 7% of education spending in Ibero-America. From these figures, the conclusion is that in Ibero-America re-enrolled students are almost 13% of total enrollment from initial to lower secondary education.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI) coordinates the Targets 2021 initiative, which seeks the commitment of Ibero-American countries to reach specific targets in the improvement of education quality and equity, and of social inclusion.

<sup>17</sup> Developed by the authors, based on UIS-UNESCO data.

### Grouping 3: Technical offer that is not effective and pertinent to attain inclusion

#### B - 28 DIFFICULTY EXPANDING COVERAGE OF INITIAL EDUCATION

With impact in dimensions:				
D1				

Many countries have not been able to spread formal education to all boys and girls due mainly to budgetary restrictions. That is why there have been efforts to extend the education offer in non-formal ways, which reduce the cost per student and include community participation in order to count on physical spaces and adults who can take care of boys and girls. With this aim, didactic materials have been developed to structure the pedagogic offer, and there has been progress in the training of caretakers. New barriers emerge in this educational scheme: an erratic establishment of services, an irregular support for volunteers and caretakers; and difficulties in the timely delivery of materials for children. The education offer –as a whole– is still insufficient, particularly in rural areas and city outskirts.

#### B - 29 DIFFICULTIES OFFERING EFFECTIVE LITERACY AT THE BEGINNING OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

With impact in dimensions:				
			D4	

Students who have repeated one or more grades obtain worse results in regional learning evaluations, showing significant shortcomings. The gaps that exist within countries between repeaters and non-repeaters are greater than the differences between countries with better and worse results on those same tests. Repetition of the first grades is closely linked to teaching problems in reading and writing. This is due to a narrow and backward understanding of language and children's learning processes, and is related to old pedagogic methods. The situation worsens in bilingual or multilingual contexts such as those that are very common in developing countries, where students (and often teachers) must learn (and teach) in a language that they do not know or master.

#### B - 30 DIFFICULTIES GUARANTEEING A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION THROUGHOUT PRIMARY SCHOOL

With impact in dimensions:				
	D2		D4	

Advanced overage, that is, lagging two or more years behind, which affects 9 million students in the region, is the result of the cumulative effect of failure in the education system. In the fifth grade of primary school, 2 out of 10 students are in this condition, and 2 out of 10 pupils are one year overage.

The overage phenomenon affects some groups of students with more intensity. For example, 1 out of 3 students who are between 12 and 14 and who live in rural areas are two or more years overage. It is very likely that they are in primary education when they should be in lower secondary school. For students whose parents have a low level of academic attainment, the chances of being overage are 10 times higher than for pupils whose parents have a high level of academic achievement.

It is worth remembering that age differences in the classroom make teaching more difficult.

#### B - 31 INAPPROPRIATE SECONDARY EDUCATION OFFER

With impact in dimensions:				
		D3		D5

So far, the education system as a whole (including experts) has failed in generating an organizational approach that includes children between the ages of 11 and 15. The countries of the region have taken actions that allowed an increased access to lower secondary education, but retaining students until the end of compulsory education has still not been achieved.

**B - 32 LOSS OF IDENTITY OF RURAL EDUCATION**

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
	D2	D3	D4	D5

Present criteria for urban schools regarding the number of students, teachers’ profiles, grade organization, and curricula are used to compare them to rural schools. Under this perspective the organization of rural schools is presented as lacking. Multi–grade teaching, closely identified with rural schools, is under–appreciated when compared with an urban graduate class. Teachers who work in rural schools usually have not had a specialized initial or continuing education. In many cases, being hired for one of these positions is considered as a first step from which the teacher will want to move on.

**B - 33 POOR AND CONFUSING OFFER FOR INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS, OR GOOD EXPERIENCES THAT DO NOT REACH THE NECESSARY SCALE**

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
	D2	D3	D4	D5

Educational opportunities for indigenous populations are inadequate, both in the number of schooling years and in the failure rate. Also, there are problems with qualitative aspects of pertinence and cultural relevance. Different factors merge in generating that educational lag, which comes on top of the many social, economic, and political forms of discrimination and disrespect that indigenous peoples endure in the region:

- Material conditions are extremely deteriorated.
- Teaching positions take a long time to be filled, there is a high rate of turn–over, and the number of indigenous teachers is insufficient to cover all vacancies.
- The schooling offer does not respect boys and girls, either by imposition or by confusion.
- The education system does not address the particular needs of indigenous populations.

**B - 34 LOW COVERAGE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF APPROACHES TO REINCORPORATE DROPOUT STUDENTS**

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
	D2	D3		

Common or general education schools face pedagogic and organizational difficulties in addressing different backgrounds. The presence of students who have become detached from the education system, who are older than the official age, and who very likely have gone through adverse life experiences, is very difficult to process in a positive way. Schools that keep working with the expectation or illusion of the average student are particularly more at odds in their pedagogic work with these pupils. The predictions of new failures usually follow the pre–established script, which without a new way of teaching tend to become reality.

In a different school modality, the high rates of failure in educational programmes for youth and adults show that strategies to overcome low levels of education of these groups–alternative or compensating– may reproduce exclusion mechanisms that this population has already suffered.

**B - 35 DIFFICULTIES ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN A TIMELY AND PROFESSIONAL MANNER**

<i>With impact in dimensions:</i>				
D1	D2	D3	D4	D5

Different types of barriers converge in the process of seeking access for persons with disabilities. Among the socio–cultural obstacles are current definitions, prejudices, and stigmatizations that society holds about persons with disabilities, and that inevitably affect family efforts to attain schooling. Economic barriers are present due to the increased household budget that is needed to secure health care for a person with disabilities. There are also multiple barriers in the educational offer regarding distance, available equipment and specific resources, and the scarcity of teachers who can effectively implement inclusive practices. With respect to permanence barriers, children who are integrated into special education offers may spend long periods, even into adulthood, without obtaining any kind of degree.

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## Chapter 3

# Strategies to overcome exclusion in education

This chapter includes proposals made from the perspective and the spirit of taking action to overcome barriers, and to turn exclusion in education into realities of inclusion. Policies, strategies, and programs of positive actions that States implement are the concrete tool through which a situation can be built or enhanced, resources are assigned, and persons and groups are mobilized to fulfill the task.

### Area 1 — Strategies to overcome economic barriers: advancing towards a just availability of resources and opportunities

#### Grouping 1: Balancing family income

Recent experiences in social security policies have been consolidating with monetary transfers and other measures that favor access to relevant social benefits, such as health care, food aid, legal protection, and education. In some cases the main priority has been providing incentives and support for the demand for education, and for family efforts to send their children to school. Nonetheless, if present internal bottlenecks –manifested in the interruption of schooling in the poorest sectors– are not overcome, social security policies will not be enough to guarantee compliance with compulsory schooling and, in the end, with the right to education. That is why this set of strategies must be part of those centered on the schooling offer and education policies. That way, full synergy for a comprehensive protection of all the rights of the child will be possible.



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## E - 1 IMPLEMENTING INCOME TRANSFER PROGRAMS (CONDITIONAL OR NOT)

Conditional transfer programs give monetary and non-monetary resources to families living in poverty or extreme poverty, as long as they comply with certain commitments related to improving their human capital. Generally, what is required is school attendance and periodic visits to a health care center, where families receive guidance on nutrition and health. The purpose of these programs is two-fold. In the short run, they decrease the level of poverty, and in the long run they strengthen human capital development (Handa and Davis, 2006).

## E - 2 NEUTRALIZING THE COST BENEFITS OF CHILD LABOR

Policies of income substitution through monetary incentives for children or families are highly recommended to combat child labor, even when those cash allowances are very small. While between 2004 and 2008 the region experienced significant economic growth, this did not have a strong impact on reducing child labor during that same period. This would show some rigidity between both variables, that is, economic growth does not translate into a decrease of child labor in the same proportion. Ministries of Labor and of Development are responsible for implementing policies aimed at eradicating child labor.

## Grouping 2: Covering schooling costs

### E - 3 COVERING THE COSTS OF ACCESS AND RETENTION IN SCHOOL (TRANSPORTATION AND MEALS)

*Transportation:* There are different ways of supporting daily school attendance:

- Establishing a transportation system that is exclusively used for schools.
- Subsidizing public transportation (some sort of token or student pass).
- Assigning resources to families or schools to cover that cost.
- Distributing bicycles, horses, or other means of transportation that are appropriate for boys, girls, and adolescents.

*Meals:* Providing meals in schools, particularly schools that serve populations in poverty situations, is a widespread practice in the region. Managing school meals includes:

- Organizing a calendar to provide meal services.
- Having the physical space to store foodstuffs, to cook, and to serve students; as well as having cooking utensils and cutlery.
- Counting on staff –hired or volunteer– that can plan meals according to certain criteria, prepare the food, and serve it to pupils.
- Managing resources.

In the last few years, there has been growing concern to preserve shared family meals by providing foodstuffs or monetary resources to allow boys, girls, and adolescents to eat at home. It is important to consolidate strategies from a comprehensive perspective, evaluating the quality of processes and outcomes through social and community criteria. Due to its significant effects, the consideration of different strategies to guarantee good nutrition for boys, girls, and adolescents merits a separate and specific study.

*Lodging:* In some cases, especially for families who live in isolated rural areas and in extreme weather conditions, there is the need of transporting students to school and facilitating their residence near educational centers. This modality may be “private”, although in several countries of the region the state takes responsibility. For this purpose, there are different forms of boarding schools, schools that include housing quarters, or temporary lodging accommodations, where pupils live during the academic year, and return to their homes on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis.

## **E - 4 PROVIDING MATERIALS FOR DAILY CLASS ATTENDANCE (SCHOOL UNIFORMS AND SUPPLIES)**

*School uniforms.* In order to secure the availability of uniforms, some countries have decided to implement free mass distribution. This way, they stay true to the very definition of this kind of clothing. Other countries have policies of mass distribution of simple uniforms, such as white aprons. Our suggestion, for countries that require them, is to simplify student uniforms that are mandatory.

*School supplies.* Policies go from centralized acquisitions of materials for students, to the allotment of resources to local entities (school regions or individual schools). In some cases, the criteria are that the costs should be covered by conditional transfers, scholarships, or some sort of monetary contribution for families.

## **E - 5 ELIMINATING ALL ENROLLMENT COSTS IN COMPULSORY EDUCATION**

This may be achieved through programs that assign to schools the resources that used to come from families, so as to avoid a decrease in resources. Also, this way the policy can be implemented with less opposition. Besides enrollment fees, other costs such as the acquisition of textbooks, uniforms, and others should also be eliminated. The concept of free education should not only be part of the legal framework. It should be put into practice.

## **Area 2 — Strategies to overcome socio-cultural barriers: enriching the social perspective on the right to education**

The strategies presented here are organized around one single grouping, with the aim of bridging the differences about how the right to education is perceived, and of mobilizing the commitment and motivation of society. It must be noted that other approaches that are closer to comprehensive social protection strategies –such as the modification of national legislations, holistic care for mothers and children, or legal protection to exercise rights– are or could be significant pillars to overcome the barriers that excluded sectors must endure. Again, the criteria in this report have been concentrating on strategies that are more closely linked to the responsibilities and workings of the education system. Other components of this global initiative go into more detail about pending developments, achievements, and challenges pertaining to social protection activities.

### **Grouping 1: Strengthening understanding of the education system among actors**

## **E - 6 IMPLEMENTING A SYSTEMIC COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO REMOVE SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS**

*Re-establishing/enriching the appreciation of schooling on the part of all social actors.* There is a need to design a communication strategy, in order to remove socio-cultural barriers and broaden conceptions i) that are circulating in society and even in academic circles that justify educational failure in the poorest sectors as natural; ii) that excluded sectors have built –withdrawing from exercising their right to education– while implementing a sort of “passive resistance”, and sometimes even blaming themselves for educational failure. It should be noted that UNICEF enjoys widespread legitimacy and consensus to become the promoter of such communication strategy, in alliance with governments and other entities.

It is worth highlighting the “*Ni uno menos* (Nobody is left out)” communication campaign that has been developed in Colombia, which disseminates and seeks to mobilize the education community around the responsibilities of the state, the family, and society regarding access and permanence in school through the end of each educational level. It was re-launched in 2009 under the slogan “*No hay excusa. Cada niño que no va al colegio es una oportunidad que se le niega a él y al país*” (There is no excuse. Every child who is not in school represents an opportunity that is denied to him/her and to the country).”

## E - 7 PEDAGOGIC INTEGRATION OF LOCAL CONTENTS AND CULTURAL VALUES

The goal is generating a receptive school environment and a strengthened community that can participate in school. For this, it is necessary to combine technical support for school teams, so they can undertake this task, with the authorization to discuss some regulatory aspects such as calendars, use of spaces, and contents, according to agreements reached with the community. We propose:

- Promoting intercultural dialogue and recognition from school.
- Encouraging the presence in school of the different cultural identities of the community.

### Area 3 — Strategies to overcome material, pedagogic, and symbolic barriers in the schooling offer: promoting schools that are committed to inclusion

Addressing the needs of children and adolescents so they can fully develop and exercise their rights, requires the integration, convergence, and harmonization of the different lines of comprehensive protection. Boys, girls, and adolescents who are well-fed and healthy, who enjoy legal guarantees about their identity and a safe environment, and who are taken care of by their family at home, are exercising many of their basic rights. However, achieving this situation is still a challenge in the region.

The right to education feeds from these basic rights and strengthens them at the same time: a comprehensive approach, without a doubt, generates benefits for the community as a whole. The protection of these rights requires demanding that each level of government complies with its unavoidable responsibility and commitment.



The whole population, particularly excluded and at-risk sectors, should be able to find the opportunity of exercising the right to education at any school. That opportunity requires decent material conditions. But above all, it demands a pedagogic and bonding organizational approach –led and encouraged by education policies– that welcomes all students, that allows them to learn, and that accompanies them to the end of their schooling in a tolerant and respectful environment.

## Grouping 1: Creating material conditions for the process to work, and linking those conditions to learning

### E - 8 ADDRESSING THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS

We suggest implementing strategies for a gradual improvement of infrastructure conditions, taking sustainability into account, and involving the education community in the maintenance of physical spaces:

- Launching a broad initiative to build new school buildings, and a massive refurbishing of existing school facilities.
- Establishing a permanent system for corrective and preventive maintenance, and for constructing complementary spaces.

### E - 9 FACILITATING EDUCATIONAL EQUIPMENT FOR INTENSIVE USE

Educational equipment (materials for initial education and the first levels of primary education, simple science labs for primary education and more sophisticated ones for secondary school, basic tools and machines for technical and media centers, among the main ones) gives added value to pedagogic experiences, and generates specific opportunities for experimenting, interacting with other scenarios, manipulating, and simulating. We suggest:

- Exploring ways of selecting and managing materials that allow a leading role for locals.
- Insisting on the intensive use of educational equipment in learning situations.



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## **E - 10 GUARANTEEING THE EXISTENCE OF NUMEROUS BOOKS TO FACILITATE LEARNING**

The availability of books is an important source of support for the progressive mastering of writing that school must provide. We suggest the following actions:

- Selecting and distributing books to facilitate learning.
- Utilizing books in educational approaches and making those books available to students.
- Making sure that there is variety in the provision and availability of books.
- Guaranteeing the quantity and the ongoing replacement of books.
- Allowing the participation of teachers and local institutions in the selection of books.

## **Grouping 2: Converting school organizational processes into opportunities for inclusion**

### **E - 11 STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT AND TEACHING STAFF**

Both at the national and provincial level, the arrival (and departure) of teaching staff to a particular school depends on a procedure that has been determined by law or regulations. At the school level, assigning teachers to a certain grade or class group entails greater decision-making power for directors/managers.

Teachers' unions may resist changing these procedures, more as a generic reaction to modifications of established organizational schemes than for professional reasons. In terms of an equitable work distribution among teachers, it is possible to propose as the main criteria the combination of knowledge and experience with better care for students. At the same time, it is important to promote approaches of appreciation for directors and teachers that lead to student learning achievement and promotion.

Professional growth drives the consolidation of directors as good leaders of teachers' teams. This may be backed by organizational processes at the system level, with strategies such as the ones that are presented below:

- Supporting directors/managers in role building.
- Protecting access, career continuity and professional development for directors/managers.
- Facilitating the arrival and permanence of teachers in school.
- Using criteria of equity and quality to assign teachers to particular class groups.

### **E - 12 AVOIDING DISCRIMINATION IN PROCESSES OF ENROLLMENT AND CLASS GROUPS DISTRIBUTION**

The "annual scenario" that is represented by a stable group of students who share the academic year has a significant effect on learning opportunities. For this effect to be positive, we must combat hidden discrimination and we must propose specific strategies: i) in student enrollment, because admissions practices might be based on prejudices and preconceptions; ii) in the distribution of class groups, where stratification might arise based on performance, which could lead to establishing different "types" of students.

### **E - 13 MAKING THE MOST OF THE SCHOOL DAY**

We propose encouraging a strong appreciation of school time as a strategic dimension that helps protect all educational opportunities, with special emphasis on: i) maintaining and improving the attendance of teachers and pupils throughout the academic year; ii) maximizing time that is used for pedagogic purposes, both in school routines and in classroom situations.

## **Grouping 3: Expanding learning opportunities for students**

### **E - 14 ENCOURAGING COMPREHENSIVE SKILLS IN WORKING TEACHERS**

What is required for teachers is comprehensive action, which includes the school as the daily work environment, and the interaction with peers and experts –who bring their scientific knowledge and methodological approaches personally or in different forms– as a way of enhancing competencies. Looking at the quality of professional development through the learning and retention of students helps to subordinate the whole process to the achievement of full, timely, and comprehensive schooling.

### **E - 15 ENHANCING EVALUATION PRACTICES AND THEIR LINK TO PROMOTION**

The proposed strategies are:

- Strengthening evaluations as an input to improve teaching. Significant progress may be reached if teachers are supported in their professional development for: i) creating mottos that clearly link assessment to teaching practices, and which are geared towards learning attainment that goes beyond memorization; ii) preparing outlines (content and criteria tables or sketches) for the process of grading tests; iii) incorporating test results as an input for future teaching decisions; iv) progressively diversifying the forms of grading and evaluating. At the school level, it is important to encourage agreements on testing practices.
- Adopting a cycle approach for promotions. It implies establishing a pluri–annual deadline (two to four consecutive years) as the comprehensive period in which students have enough opportunities to master complex learning, including the ability to show acquired skills in evaluations and accreditation tests.

### **E - 16 ORGANIZING CLASS GROUPS FOR COLLECTIVE LEARNING**

A collaborative group is an intermediate unit between the full class and the individual student, which allows teachers to combine personalized teaching time with teaching the whole group. This contributes to the building of capacities to work with others, to prevent inter–personal conflicts and violent behaviors, and to promote the acquisition and consolidation of social skills that are necessary to solve those conflicts when they arise.

## **Grouping 4: Implementing a productive, respectful, and tolerant school environment**

### **E - 17 PROPOSING CLEAR, UNDERSTANDABLE, AND RELEVANT RULES**

Schools may strengthen students' identification with social norms. This can be achieved through a progressive journey while children are growing up –from initial education to adolescence in secondary school– in a way that school regulations are introduced and explained, including their meaning, the need to comply, and the assessment of how those rules are complied with. Depending on the issue and educational level, the concomitant presence of parents contributes to improve articulation and the sense of belonging.

### **E - 18 ESTABLISHING A FLUID AND CONSIDERATE COMMUNICATION WITH AND AMONG STUDENTS**

Teachers must be given concrete tools, so they can encourage and appreciate communication as the driving force behind the group. They also must be made aware that the bonding environment generates a flow of energy that helps them in their job.

## **E - 19 REMOVING INERTIA IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST PREJUDICE IN SCHOOL**

Schools are the conveying instrument for knowledge that is considered as basic in a society, and as such they establish a relationship with families, children, and youth who come from rural areas, are indigenous and of African descent, belong to immigrant or displaced groups, or live in situations of urban poverty. Recognizing that these sectors do have a cultural capital that is relevant, unique, and produced in different historic and social conditions, will mean respecting and adopting new vocabularies, definitions of reality, and organizational timings.

## **Area 4 — Strategies to overcome political, technical, and funding barriers in the education system: managing the education system towards inclusion targets**

### **Grouping 1: Revitalizing the organization of the schooling offer by overcoming inertia**

#### **E - 20 ORGANIZING THE SCHOOLING OFFER TO REACH THE WHOLE POPULATION, BY USING RESULT-ORIENTED STRATEGIES**

The following are actions included in this strategy:

- Achieving compliance with compulsory education by organizing a school offer for populations whose rights are not addressed. It is necessary to have schools and teachers, and to eliminate any obstacle that might hinder compliance. Education must be compulsory and free in order to attain this goal.
- Effectively designing and implementing programs and projects that are geared towards overcoming exclusion, and whose results can be evaluated. These projects must be strongly result-oriented, and include complete and fluid school calendars.

#### **E - 21 FOCUSING INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING ON OVERCOMING EXCLUSION**

Initial training for teachers and professors of different levels must include the challenges that have arisen from the democratic expansion of compulsory education, and the struggle against educational exclusion. Issues like the emergence and worsening of educational failure due to pedagogic factors, the strategies to address the diverse ways students have of facing learning processes, and the role of the school as part of a network of comprehensive care and protection of the rights of the child, must be part of the different types of training.

The initial training issues mentioned above are cross-cutting, and as such they must represent mandatory parts of curricula. It is also crucial to include them in teacher continuing education, as is explained in strategies 14 to 16.

#### **E - 22 APPROPRIATELY REGULATING SCHOOLING PROCESSES TO ACHIEVE INCLUSION**

Regulations could support the effective implementation of educational inclusion in a relevant manner, or could also represent an obstacle. This is due to essential aspects of their content, as well as to subjective or functional issues. Inclusive regulations must be understood by large numbers of people, in order to multiply their beneficial effects.

#### **E - 23 FOCUSING CURRICULA ON CAPACITY BUILDING**

Recognizing the gaps between formal and real curricula opens up a broad field of action. In order to enhance curricular effectiveness and facilitate relevant learning, there must be an understanding of the tension generated between curricular documents that are ambitious, long, and organized from

a “collector’s” logic (Bernstein, 1988), and the concrete ways in which teachers make teaching decisions and construct their real curriculum.

*Concentrating the actions of school teams on student capacity development.* Very specific guidelines must be presented to management, teachers’, training, and technical assistance teams, to make sure that they concentrate on developing the cognitive and social capacities of students as an indispensable basic outcome. Focusing curricular management on the development of basic capacities is a crucial strategy to broaden opportunities for full inclusion, while at the same time recognizing the dynamics of the education system and trying to change those dynamics in two key aspects:

- Expanding the temporary limits of learning, by recognizing and going beyond the graduated structure.
- Valuing the selection of relevant content for different populations as the appropriate way of building equivalent cognitive and social capacities.

## **E - 24 USING EDUCATION INFORMATION AS A RESOURCE**

Education information is a powerful tool for the understanding of exclusion situations and for identifying barriers and bottlenecks in the region. The following are the suggested lines of action:

- Learning how to use statistical information on education as a resource for understanding and for taking action.
- Making the most of the territorial map of statistical information.
- Spreading skills for interpreting and applying education information.

## **E - 25 HELPING SCHOOLS IN THE SPECIFIC TASK OF EXPANDING INCLUSION**

Advising teachers in the fulfillment of their duties must be an ongoing and integral part of professional development, particularly in training. It must be oriented towards results that are determined by education policies, and it must *specifically* address key didactic issues in order to achieve quality and equitable education for all:

- The implementation of teaching sequences that support capacity development throughout schooling, and that use curricular contents as a resource, instead of isolated activities that only require memorizing and routine tasks.
- The diversification of duties and activities within that same methodological framework, for students who have different learning timetables or interests.
- The development of didactic evaluations that would help identify the process of capacity building in students, and would provide guidelines and signals to intensify the teaching of pertinent curricular contents.
- The mobilization of students towards cooperation, tolerance, and solidarity, so all can learn in a good class group environment.
- The revision of assumptions, prejudices, stereotypes, and stigmatizations, with growing autonomy for each school team.

## **Grouping 2: Protecting and expanding educational funding**

### **E - 26 FUNDING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

In order to successfully face the challenges of schooling, many countries will have to increase and protect education budgets, since they are still very low in proportion to total public spending and to GDP. It is very important to promote regulations for the macro-assignment of resources, as has been done in several countries of the region. These regulations give priority to the education budget in

times of economic growth and stability, and protect it in times of stagnation. Also positive is the effort to establish clear and transparent mechanisms for the flow of funding among different government levels –central, sub national, local, or school– that participate in the management of the education system. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Chile have these kinds of regulations.

## **E - 27 FUNDING THE SYSTEM TO EXPAND COVERAGE AND TO REDUCE EDUCATIONAL FAILURE**

Generally, policies aimed at making coverage universal and diminishing educational failure are part of regulatory frameworks. The resources that are necessary to achieve these goals may come from different sources, such as higher taxes and the re-assignment of budget allotments from other sectors. As might be foreseen, this could mean the rejection of eventually affected parties. One solution with less political costs could be the one adopted in Argentina, where at a moment when its GDP had increased, a funding law was passed, according to which resources would come from economic growth itself. Also to be considered are resources coming from international cooperation.

*Expanded coverage:* According to our own estimates, based on UIS–UNESCO, ECLAC, and World Bank data, the region would need to spend a total of 6.6 billion dollars to achieve universal coverage from initial to lower secondary education. If the funding period was established between 2012 and 2021, governments could/should invest a cumulative 10% of that amount every year. Taking into account the total investment and GDP growth projected by ECLAC for the next decade, the total cost in 2021 would reach 0.22% of regional GDP. As can be appreciated, universal coverage should not constitute distant targets, at least regarding the financial effort involved.

*The cost of failure:* Recently, several countries of the region and international organizations subscribed medium term goals for education, for example, *Metas 2021*. The cost of the actions that would allow attaining those goals represents a relatively low percentage of regional GDP. Also, since educational failure is a source of inefficiency, the success of policies focused on reducing repetition would generate an additional availability of resources in the medium term. To this, we should add the estimates of regional economic growth for the next few years. In this exceptional context, implementing these actions would not represent a significant additional burden for the countries' GDP. In other words, facing these challenges is economically feasible.

## **Grouping 3: Developing a rational pedagogy to overcome exclusion**

### **E - 28 GENERATING VARIED OPPORTUNITIES FOR INITIAL EDUCATION**

In order to advance, organizational approaches should rest on three main pillars:

- a) Harmony in the family–school transition; guaranteeing that boys and girls –especially in cases of different cultural capitals– are heard, that their families' practices are recognized, and that they are safe with the adults who are in charge of their education.
- b) The promotion of cognitive, emotional, ethical, esthetic, motor, and social development, particularly through games as content and as a medium to learn other contents (pedagogic tool). This should be done through teaching approaches with an intentional, systemic, and planned sequence (building), that enriches and expands (complements and is part of) the individual, family, and community recreational world and repertoire of children, while adopting its own specific schooling goals.
- c) Acting as the point of entry of a particular culture (school culture); this allows boys and girls to become familiar with regulations of time, space, group communication, peer collaborative work, use of materials, interaction with books, relationships with adults in different areas, and diverse focuses of attention, among other aspects of the education system.

## **E - 29 SUPPORTING THE FIRST LEVELS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION**

It is possible to dramatically reduce repetition in first and second grades without resorting to automatic promotion as an administrative measure. For this, it is necessary to enrich current approaches for the teaching of initial literacy and basic math, and to fully discuss the acceptance and assessment of repetition that is part of the teaching community's beliefs. Suggested actions are related to:

- The use of literacy teaching methodologies that are effective even for children who have not had pre-literacy experiences.
- The use of math teaching methodologies that take into account the math knowledge that students already had, and focus on problem solving.
- The revision of promotion regulations to allow processes of cycle promotion.
- The diversification of learning situations, mainly to recover students with low attendance rates.

## **E - 30 FACILITATING PROGRESSION TO HELP STUDENTS COMPLETE PRIMARY EDUCATION**

For students who are in primary school, and who have a background of educational failure, the aim will be to normalize their disturbed schooling. Their history turns them into a group that is at-risk of dropping out, and that should receive special attention and accompaniment in order to guarantee that at least they complete compulsory education. This should be implemented through a rich and challenging approach, which includes:

- Advanced literacy teaching methods.
- Math teaching methods that are centered on problem solving and on the acquisition of mathematical concepts.
- Flexible school groups to facilitate diversified teaching tasks.
- Conquering overage through approaches that allow students to pass to the next grade by attending summer school or year-round school ("Three in two").

## **E - 31 PROTECTING THE TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Regardless of curricular structure or of the area where education is offered, adult society must accompany students in this transition in a very careful and responsible manner, especially when pupils have a background of educational failure, and when they live in situations of poverty or extreme poverty. The following actions are proposed:

- Internal agreements at the school level to achieve more consistency and convergence in students' educational experiences.
- Institutional agreements for priority capacity building.
- Specific teaching of studying strategies for each subject matter.
- Extra-curricular and pluri-annual activities.
- Introduction of cumulative promotion systems.

## **E - 32 ESTABLISHING SUPPORT MECHANISMS FOR RURAL EDUCATION**

The expansion of compulsory education contained in legislation recently passed in the region finds its greatest challenge in rural education: to offer schooling between the ages of 9 and 13 in three educational levels, with a minimum of learning and permanence. The suggested actions are the following:

- Placing the multi-grade modality as a powerful organizational strategy for teachers who receive the appropriate support and training.
- Enhancing the design and use of appropriate didactic and technological resources.

### **E - 33 CONSTRUCTING A STRUCTURED AND STRENGTHENED PEDAGOGIC APPROACH FOR INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS, WITH MECHANISMS OF TRANSITION TOWARDS A FULLY INTERCULTURAL AND BILINGUAL MODEL**

The analysis of this strategy leads to the proposal of the following actions:

- Improving the material and functioning conditions of schools that are attended by students who are indigenous and of African descent.
- Organizing a schooling approach that shows concern and is respectful of the capacities and cultural heritage of boys, girls, and adolescents.
- Planning and managing a quality pedagogic offer.

### **E - 34 ESTABLISHING SPECIFIC MECHANISMS TO SUPPORT THE REINSERTION PROCESS OF DROPOUT STUDENTS**

Organizing proposals for students to return to school implies identifying and overcoming the barriers that have been insurmountable or extremely difficult to conquer. It is necessary to find the best ways of complementing two main actions:

- The reintegration of students into a school (general or specialized) that has enhanced its capacity for inclusion and is able to receive these pupils without degrading or discriminatory practices.
- The preparation of specific educational spaces for this population, showing more organizational and curricular flexibility.

### **E - 35 ESTABLISHING MECHANISMS TO EXPAND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

There is not one single solution, but the proposal is for full implementation of the principle that advises “placing the child in the least restrictive environment”.

This interpretation presupposes that all children can be educated and that –independently of the necessary arrangements or adaptations– all pupils should have access to a curriculum that is relevant and that produces significant results. Also, this access to education must be as early as possible.

Integration into general schools is the main strategy for inclusion. In its practical application, there could be slips that produce new forms of exclusion and segregation: for example, practices and strategies that result in the continuous repetition of the same grade, should be avoided. It is imperative to rethink annual promotions by school grade, to make it possible to be certified for the courses that have been attended, and for tutored and partial promotions.



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## Final considerations

The conceptual and methodological approach of the global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) has the potential of enriching the analysis in regions and countries with different schooling backgrounds, achievements, and challenges. Even in countries that show some positive indicators, going into detail about internal disparities leads to a better understanding and better actions.

To conclude this document, which represents the first systematic effort of applying this approach to the reality of Latin America and the Caribbean, we offer some thoughts about its contribution for learning and intervening with the aim of overcoming exclusion, and attaining full, timely, sustained, and comprehensive schooling for all boys, girls, and adolescents in the region.

**The OOSCI approach identifies the dynamic and cumulative nature of exclusion processes.**

A detailed but complementary analysis of current exclusion (with its obstacles for access and retention) and of potential exclusion in schools (with its obstacles for progression and learning), focuses on the early signs of exclusion. In the region, most students who have dropped out had been in school for many years, and had accumulated different manifestations of educational failure.

**The OOSCI approach provides a cohesive framework for education and protection policies.**

Agencies that are in charge of the education system have as a specific field of action the barriers that are presented in the school supply, and the interaction with others areas of protection of the rights of children and adolescents that support different aspects of the demand of the population for education.

**The OOSCI approach goes beyond the false equity–coverage and quality–learning dilemmas.**

A careful analysis of the data shows that coverage targets cannot be reached without reducing the educational failure that expels the poorest students from school. Also, the improvement of average learning outcomes will become significant only when there is substantial progress in the results of students who are presently failing. That is why coverage and quality are not separate items of the analysis, and much less of the actions that should be taken. They must go together in order to achieve inclusion results.

Considering the situation of students and their families, the aim is to eradicate the idea that dropping out is an opportunistic decision, coming from parents who tell their children: “I have decided that you must stop going to school and you must start working”. This preconception ignores the fact that self-exclusion or dropping out could be the result of the daily accumulation of small failures of boys and girls who carry the burden of not learning, the shame of not knowing, and the sadness of having nobody to take care of them.

**The OOSCI approach integrates current efforts and proposes complementary elements.**

The different countries and funding and cooperation agencies have invested heavily in efforts and resources in the last 15 years, with the aim of strengthening the demand for education, mainly through massive programs of resource transfers for the poorest families and of far-reaching strategies for providing meals in school. Also, there are ambitious projects for building schools, and for supplying technological and didactic resources, as well as other forms of material support for education.

For this reason, and thanks to the accumulation of efforts, it is possible to focus on other aspects of the school supply and of the demand for education. In the case of the supply, it is possible to address the real situation of education, the bonding environment, and the overcoming of prejudice and organization/segregation procedures in schools. Regarding the system and its management, there are key instruments such as curricular information, selection, and prioritization that can be used to address capacity building, support for schools, the economic overcost of educational failure, and the implementation of specific strategies to obtain measurable results.



**The OOSCI approach adds and highlights socio-cultural issues** in the aspect of the demand for education, where there is a negative combination of a submissive attitude on the part of the poor and of racist and prejudiced positions on the part of other social sectors. The contribution of neuroscience and a focused communicational approach are powerful tools to combat stereotypes.

**The OOSCI approach identifies key results indicators.** As a conclusion for this first application of the approach in Latin America and the Caribbean, we propose strengthening the use of available and relevant data: *information about schooling backgrounds based on grade and age data*, in order to identify, quantify, and locate exclusion, making the most of the education system census information, which is broadly backed and financed by international cooperation and funding.

This priority complements other approaches (some that are based on household surveys and others on learning assessments), which make valuable contributions but also have some restrictions due to the nature of their sources, their coverage, and their periodicity.

In the region, the analysis of schooling backgrounds leads to placing the *overage phenomenon* as a key indicator. This indicator must be interpreted along with others (late entry, annual dropout, enrollment rate stability, and failure) in order to appropriately assess the situation of educational backgrounds. Additionally, it is valuable for its simplicity, consistency, and ability to be applied from the national to the school level, and even the classroom level.

**The OOSCI approach advocates a deep trust in the capacities and commitments of people.** The idea is to mobilize the commitment of governments and cooperation/funding agencies to renew their confidence on key actors of the education sector, and to channel that confidence.

*Confidence* that all boys, girls, and adolescents are beings who possess cognitive and social capacities that can be stimulated and developed. This can be done in the professional arena while producing significant learning experiences in a systematic manner, and in a bonding environment that promotes respect and tolerance.

*Confidence* that all families can support their children's development in the framework of their own culture and values, reassuring their love, providing them with the opportunity of safely exploring their environment, and guaranteeing their regular class attendance. We should not forget that families who live in poverty must have support to ensure their children's nutrition and health.

*Confidence* that all teachers can expand their competencies and develop their capacities, as long as they can count on specific technical support, guidelines, and resources that reinforce their enthusiasm, commitment, and knowledge, as well as their love for the boys, girls, and adolescents with whom they share the classroom every day, through the end of their schooling.



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