



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

**Santiago Office**  
Regional Bureau for Education in  
Latin America and the Caribbean

*Regional Strategy for Teachers*  
*OREALC/UNESCO Santiago*

.....  
**Teaching Careers in Latin America**  
**Merit-based Measures for**  
**Professional Development**  
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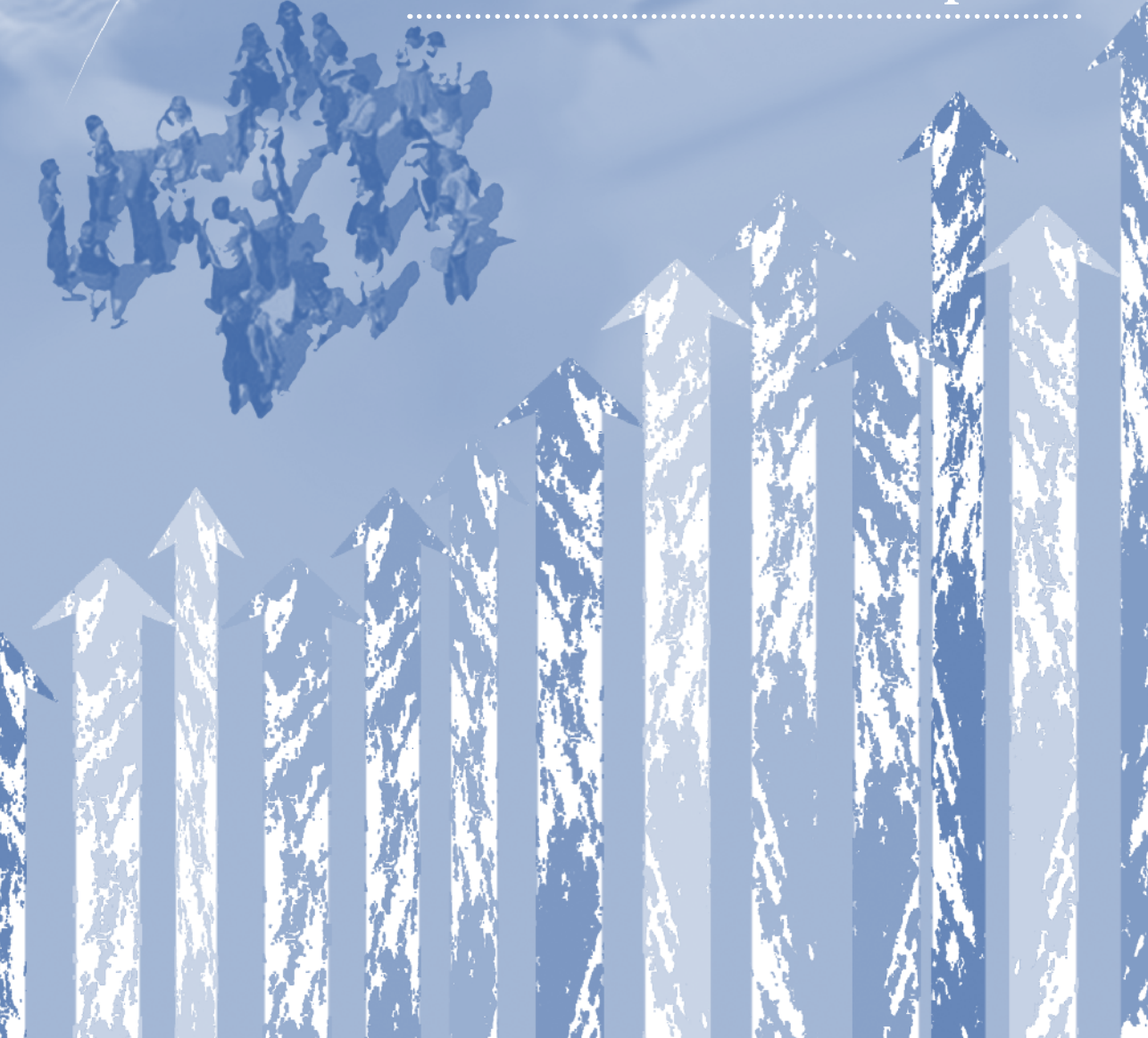


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La acción meritocrática para el desarrollo profesional*

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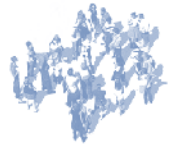
The Regional Strategic Project on Teachers for Latin America has been systematically addressing the central concepts for designing policies that strengthen the teaching profession in order to improve the quality of education for all. Four major areas have been identified in order to address the various issues that arise concerning teachers under a framework of comprehensive education policies: initial teacher training; continuous training and professional development; teaching careers; and, teaching institutions and policy processes.

During the first stage (2011-2012), the research produced the baseline about Teaching Careers regulations, as well as a set of criteria and guidelines for said regulation. This dealt with teacher policies based around the four areas mentioned above. They were discussed with the relevant actors in various countries of the Region<sup>1</sup>. During the second stage (2012-2013), the specific critical aspects of the project were more deeply reflected upon and discussed<sup>2</sup>. Technical assistance was provided to national, inter-institutional groups of Peru and Colombia. Also, a registry was created to gather relevant experiences with the aim of dissemination and presentation to the public<sup>3</sup>.

During the third stage (2014-2015), the project took on new subjects such as early childhood education and citizenship training.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, we propose to encourage discussion in those countries where there is interest about the subjects handled in prior stages. Emphasis would be given to some of the critical subjects concerning

- 1 See "Antecedentes y criterios para la elaboración de Políticas Docentes en América Latina y el Caribe" (UNESCO, 2013).
- 2 Topics were dealt with using working papers that were commissioned from regional experts are the following: A vision of teaching and characteristics of initial teacher training systems; Standards for teacher training; Professional development for teachers and collaborative learning; Assessing teacher performance; Creating policies on teaching; and Economic aspects of the public policies on the teaching profession. See "Temas críticos para formular nuevas políticas docentes en América Latina y el Caribe: el debate actual" (UNESCO, 2014).
- 3 See "Catastro de Experiencias relevantes de políticas docentes en América latina y el Caribe" (UNESCO, 2014).



the profession in the region and new trends and approaches emerging in the international arena. Specifically, there is a focus on the need to value the teaching profession in society, and then establish professional careers in accordance with this goal.

The matter of teaching careers was addressed during earlier phases. During the Baseline definition (Stage I), teaching careers were analysed in places such as Mexico, Colombia and Peru. Specific matters such as workplace conditions, salaries and incentives and the evaluation of teacher performance were addressed. Furthermore, the following guidelines on public policies were formed.

- Design and implement careers that can strengthening the teaching profession and have an impact on attracting quality candidates
- Recognize different development stages and teacher competency during a professional career
- Structure the teaching careers around improving professional performance
- Design and implement clearly articulated policies on salaries and incentives to encourage the teaching professional performance
- Develop valid and agreed upon assessment systems for professional teaching performance
- Have transparent mechanisms for accessing the teaching positions and duty assignments

One key aspect of the teaching career - performance evaluation - was also specifically addressed during Stage II of the project. This was done with a working paper created by Sylvia Schmelkes, a renowned Mexican researcher. The paper examines the international experience in this area, both in Latin America and the developed world. It distinguishes between what is evaluated, the existing models on how to do it, the key actors in related processes and the kinds of consequences that stem from the assessments. Emphasizing the educational side of teacher assessments done under the scope of a professional career is suggested.

Additionally, it is important to keep in mind the Education for All Global Monitoring Report of 2013-2014. This report highlights the need to have an adequate number of teachers in every country. Also, that sufficient preparation

and commitment are necessary for achieving learning outcomes for all girls and boys, particularly for those who come from underprivileged homes. It emphasizes the importance of teachers in handling the learning crisis that can be observed around the world along with the unequal educational opportunities. This is found not only between regions and countries, but within them as well. “To improve learning outcomes for all, national education plans must consider improving the quality and diligence of teaching personnel”, states the report. Along with the need to ensure quality initial and ongoing training, the report suggests measures related to improving teacher diligence.

In spite of the treatment given to the subject of the teaching profession, the Regional Strategy on Teachers considered necessary to deepen this conversation. The decision is taken given the high degree of complexity of the matter caused by the various political, economic and pedagogical matters that are involved. Also, it is a field that produces successive modifications to the legal standards stemming from government staffs and political changes. This makes it necessary to continuously update the information.

This is why the Peruvian specialist Ricardo Cuenca was asked to create this document. Its goal is to provide systematized and updated information on policies concerning both regulations and the promotion of quality in the teaching profession and degree programs in Latin America. Additionally, it proposes general criteria and guidelines to create policies for teaching programs aimed at strengthening and valuing the profession.

OREALC/UNESCO Santiago hopes that by publishing this academic report it may contribute to a much-needed debate on strengthening the teaching profession within the context of the efforts made by the countries in the region to improve the quality and fairness of their education systems.



## Executive Summary

This report reviews the current situation for the teaching profession in Latin America. The regulations of 18 countries in the region were gathered based on four core concepts: the access mechanisms to the teaching career, workplace promotion strategies, assessment processes for teachers and the exit procedures from the field. Afterward, special attention was given to incentives and teaching encouragement programs developed in the region.

The teaching careers in Latin America have heterogeneous legal contexts in terms of their legal nature, technical orientation and internal organization. This is due to the extensive period of time during which these regulations have originated. As of 2014, careers that were designed and approved in the fifties coexist together with the most recent regulations of 2013.

However, it is possible to organize teaching careers in Latin America into three groups using two characteristics: the scope and length of the career measured from the strategies of horizontal and vertical promotion and also the inclusion of evaluation mechanisms that have high-impact consequences; i.e. performance assessments of teachers that may result in the loss of job stability.

The majority of the regulations in the region fall into the first group. For all of them, the career dynamic is based on criteria such as seniority and the accrual of certifications. Not only is performance evaluation not considered. Moreover, job stability is guaranteed by the state except in those cases where there was a problem with moral or ethical behaviour or due to normal retirement processes.

The second group includes those careers that have their foundation in the first generation careers, but also happen to have some of the characteristics of the new careers. In most cases these traits are linked to performance evaluation.

The third group is the second generation of careers. These are the most recent ones and are designed strictly using a merit-based approach. In these careers, job stability is associated with the results of performance evaluations and usually favours horizontal promotions.



The region must develop more research on the results of implementing the new generations of teaching careers. This permits the use of specific information that complements the ideological orientation of the reforms. While this is ongoing, it is possible to have some general ideas that aid in the implementation of said careers and the design of future regulations.

In the future, designing new careers and the most recent regulations should seek to recognize and reward individual good practices, without sacrificing the collective essence of education. This is the first great challenge that the regulatory policies for teaching must deal with. Further challenges should include more options for job promotion and new possibilities for workspaces; the establishment of links between careers and training plans under a comprehensive teaching policy framework; the creation of frameworks for performance, standards and specific competencies on the role and practice of educators; the design of specific regulations aligned with the national legal framework; and the formulation of integrated encouragement and incentive plans for teacher performance.

The teaching profession in Latin America faces the primary challenge of built its grounds upon professional development mechanisms that help strengthen the profession and raise the quality of education as a result.



The Franco-Moroccan philosopher and economist Benjamín Coriat (1992) stated that the incursion of technology on the traditional methods of work produced a transformation in its internal order. The progress made with the “robot in the workshop”, says Coriat, was a result of the union of three storylines that occurred during the second half of the 1970s: the crisis of the intense fragmentation of work - that gave way to new forms of organization-, the end of the demand for standardization - which favoured the rise of competition based on quality - and the search for the reduction of difficulty and effort, which was enabled the development of information technology.

The teaching profession was not immune to these changes. A great deal of technology, even more specializations and demands were all suddenly placed upon the traditional practice of looking at one another “face to face”. The task of teaching took on an industrial form (Feldman 1994) and the productive emphasis associated with the achievement of a certain type of results became the primary characteristic that guided the teaching role (Rizo 2005). In the name of modernization, the work of teaching incorporated technological components that helped strengthen work efforts and promised a road toward professional development. It also substantially modified what it means to teach. Factors such as the upswing in cognitive psychology, the development of constructivist ideas and the education focus based on learning aims (Cuenca 2014) meant that teachers lost their traditional workplace guidelines (Elmore 2003). All of these seemed to indicate that far from fulfilling this promise of improvement, the workload of teaching became more intense and the employment relationships more precarious (Oliveira Andrade 2006, Tenti 2005).

Many countries in the region prioritized reforming the teacher training and salary policies in this context. However, these intentions did not deliver the expected results. In the majority of cases these initiatives were not linked together. Furthermore, they were not connected to a comprehensive

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4 I would like to thank my colleagues Carlos Eugenio Beca, Marianela Cerri, Natalia González and Magaly Robalino for reading and commenting. Their assistance was fundamental for enriching the text. Any omissions that may be found are my responsibility.

perspective on the development of professional teacher training (OREALC-UNESCO 2007).

In spite of the fact that what it means to “be a teacher” was most impacted by these unavoidable structural transformations and the psycho-pedagogical reorientation of the practice, the standards that had been regulating the work of Latin American teachers remained under the same structure that arose in the fifties (OREALC-UNESCO 2013). The discrepancy between change and regulation became apparent.

This paper has the aim of identifying and characterizing the efforts that have been carried out recently in Latin America to value the teaching profession. It analyses the scope and results of policies implemented for this end. It presents a sketch of new policy proposals that encourage a qualitative leap towards a profession of high social standing. Therefore, a compendium was initially made of all the legal mechanisms that regulate the professional life of teachers in Latin America. It is proposed that these regulations be understood using an interpretive framework that considers them to be fundamental elements of professional development. Afterward, some initiatives geared directly toward valuing the profession have been identified.

The report is organized in four sections. The first section lays out a brief conceptual framework that serves as a reference for understanding the analysis of the regulatory corpus related to the teaching profession. This framework proposes a broader perspective of the concept of professional development. The second section is comprised of a specific analysis of the careers. The chosen analytical areas are the access mechanisms to the teaching career, professional promotion strategies, assessment processes of the teaching role and the exit procedures from the field.

The third section seeks to present some of the experiences of promoting and valuing the teaching profession. We have only considered those initiatives that are currently being implemented, even though there are other proposals in some of the countries in the region. The fourth section closes the report. This is where the principal conclusions are set forth along with some recommendations.

The corpus of the work was based on the regulations of the professional teaching practice in 18 countries of the region.<sup>5</sup> The report captures a momentary snapshot. It is a panoramic viewpoint of systematized, updated information of

5 For the case of Argentina and Brazil we have only considered the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and the State of Sao Paulo, respectively. See annex I.



what is happening with teaching regulations in Latin America. The definition of the teaching profession utilized in this text is the same one defined in the legal system regulating their employment.

Furthermore, the methodological work was done in two phases. In the first phase the teaching profession was organized chronologically with the intention of sorting all the countries into two groups. A group of first generation careers (1950 – 1990) and a second group pertaining to the second generation (1990 – 2014) were defined. The second phase was the analysis of each of the types of teaching careers as a function of four subject areas: access mechanisms, promotion strategies, evaluation processes and exit procedures.<sup>6</sup>

This work has been made possible thanks to the participation of various colleagues in the region who have provided information and assisted in resolving questions. Thanks is given to the following individuals for their contributions: Theresa Adrião of Brazil, Lupita Chávez of Costa Rica, Edín López of Guatemala, Paula Pogré of Argentina, Magaly Robalino of Ecuador, Margarita Zorrilla of México and Mariana Villareal of Bolivia. Additional thanks are given to Fátima Barbero who participated closely in the process of the first systematization of 18 teaching careers.

The most recent report published by the World Bank, “Great teachers: How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean”, *Bruns & Luque* (2014), states that the teaching profession is a principal strategy for financial rewards distinguished by greater fiscal efficiency and higher impacts on the performance of teachers. In this report we propose a different starting point, a more comprehensive and unifying one. We propose considering the teaching career to be an instrument of professional development that helps add social value to the profession.

## 1. A Wider View of Professional Development in Teaching

At the start of the 21st century, the concept of professional development tightly linked to teacher training was placed within the educational narrative. It was characterized by the relationship between this training and the learning outcomes of the students as well as the ongoing nature that this training was expected to have in order to encourage changes in employment practices. The idea with the greatest traction in the “life-long training” idea was the in-service training. Although instruction was at the heart of the concept, professional development also included initial training and the processes of incorporating new teachers into the world of employment.

The concept of professional teacher development was defined as continuous education that takes on meaning in teacher performance. In the words of Françoise Delannoy (2000), it is defined as an ongoing learning process — Lifelong Professional Development— in which initial training, beginning teacher training and in-service training were all included.

This concept was forged under the British ideas of education and developed as a public policy proposal by entities such as the World Bank and the OECD (Delannoy and Sedlacek 2001, Darling-Hammond 2000, Delannoy 2000, OECD 1998). It was easily included in the discussion in Latin America. The results of the education reform evaluations in the nineties demanded changes in the policies of teacher training, and the concept of professional development became the guide for undertaking those changes.

The discussion in Latin America allowed for the inclusion of ideas around assigning value to the profession once again, its association to the changes in the role of teacher, workplace conditions, performance evaluations and the teaching career.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the weight of “the training” continued to occupy the central position of professional development.

However, from a sociological perspective, it is possible to understand professional development as the evolution of the professions; i.e. the dynamic process that is continuously modified, pushed by societal demands and by the internal changes of the very same professions.

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7 There is a lot of bibliography on the subject. For a comparative perspective in the region consider Terigi (2009), OREALC-UNESCO (2007), Cuenca (2007), Robalino and Körner (2005), Aguerrondo (2004), Vaillant (2004), PREAL-BID (2001), Ávalos (2001), and others.



Using this perspective, it is also possible to locate the teaching profession. In six decades of considerable analysis and research<sup>8</sup>, an important product of the development of the profession and the construction of its own identity was the acknowledgement that it was not possible to understand the value of the teaching profession solely using the technical training of its teachers. It also would require society's acknowledgement of the profession at the same time as the teachers were taking on the responsibility of obtaining student learning outcomes as a product of their work.

These studies identified how to make the professional more of an expert. This means keeping their professional development current in order to preserve the status of their profession and heighten the importance and acknowledgement of the role that said profession plays in the construction of society. Therefore, the idea of professionalism accompanied the original notion of professionalism in the reflections on the teaching profession. The idea of professionalism maintained its essence in its own areas of technical expertise, specialized knowledge and those skills inherent to teaching. Then the notion of professionalism began to be studied, understood and be strengthened as another dimension of the profession: the relationship with society, the value the public assigns to this relationship, and also the social responsibility of the education professionals.

Linda Darling-Hammond (2001) sustains that it is essential to recognize and understand the professional character of the teaching vocation. In addition to helping raise the low self-esteem of teachers, it would enable understanding of what the development of the teacher and professor practice consists of and how it is developed. Furthermore, Linda Evans states that the notion of professionalism has become the organizing center around the discussions on the professional development of teachers. "[...] it is from a place of professionalism that the initiatives for change should be focused as well as professional development." (Evans: 2008: 10).

In Latin America there is a great deal of clarity that in order for the teaching practice to be converted into author, actor and co-participant in educational changes, more is needed than just salary adjustments and training programs. In recent years, the challenge of implementing policies and strategies to guarantee the sustained professional development of the teaching staff has

8 Refer to Etzioni (1969), Hoyle (1975, 1986), Ghilardi (1993), Goodson and Cole (1993), Hargreaves (1994), Ozga (1995), Fullan and Hargreaves (1996), Hargreaves and Fullan (1998), Hargreaves (1999), Fernández Enguita (2001) and Lawn (2001).

been faced, stressing the need to integrate all the aspects of teaching work as much as possible (OREALC-UNESCO, 2007).

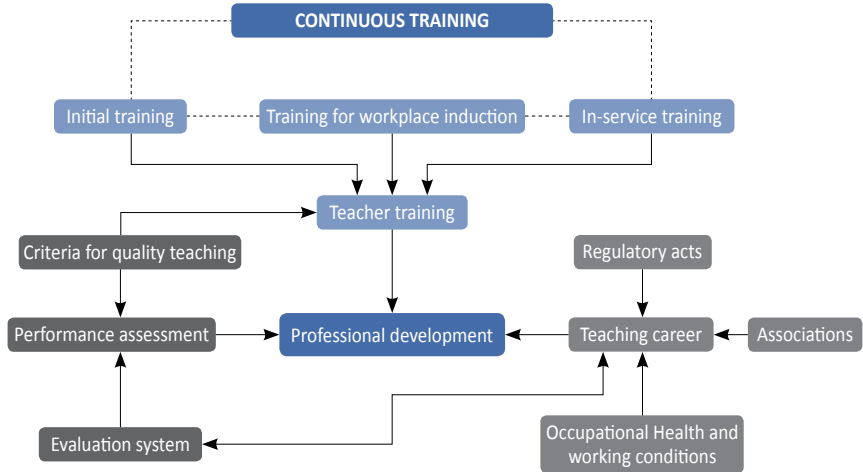
The proposed primary elements of professional development to consider are teacher training, performance assessment and the teaching profession. Each one of these considers processes geared toward professional development. Initial training, induction training and in-service training are included within teacher training, all of which fall under the concept of continuous education.<sup>9</sup> A second essential focus is performance evaluation. It is separate from the career, but still connected to it and to training too. Assessment first includes the creation of criteria for quality teaching and the development of evaluation systems. The third core concept in the teaching profession includes processes for creating regulatory acts, matters of employment conditions and the participation of labour unions.



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<sup>9</sup> Each level may simultaneously include other processes. For example, in the case of initial training, the focus of the curriculum, managing training institutions, work preparation and the status of the training teachers, etc. must be considered. In this document we only identify the most general processes.

**Chart 1**  
**Conceptual diagram for the idea of professional development**



Original	Traducción
Formación continua	Continuous training
Formación inicial	Initial training
Formación para la inserción laboral	Training for workplace induction
Formación en servicio	In-service training
Formación docente	Teacher training
Criterios de buena docencia	Criteria for quality teaching
Evaluación del desempeño	Performance assessment
Sistema de evaluación	Evaluation system
Desarrollo profesional	Professional development
Estatuto	Regulatory acts
Carrera magisterial	Teaching career
Salud ocupacional y condiciones de trabajo	Occupational Health and working conditions

In every case, the aim is to have multiple levels of interaction between each process and their individual and collective contributions to professional development.



Although having a distinct but important trajectory, experiences such as Finland have given evidence that the construction of successful education systems is part of long-term projects. They are supported and accompanied by reforms in the economic and social arenas. They have also shown that training and the maintenance of a highly qualified body of educators constitutes one of the pillars of their successful education system.

Furthermore, over the course of a number of decades, the Finns have created a model that includes high-quality teacher training as well as strict standards for joining and remaining in the teaching profession. At the same time, they have built a social environment that highly respects and values the teaching profession. The workplace has a balance between the individual work of classroom teaching and the collaborative work of all teachers in the school. This creates a space for collective reflection and strengthening of the education process (OREALC-UNESCO 2014).

In 2012, the influential professors Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan published the book *Professional Capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. The authors examine the future of the teaching profession under a context in which the strengthening measures promoted in recent years did not give the expected outcomes. The solution to this problem, as formulated in the book consists of developing what the authors call professional capital over the basis of two premises: the commitment of teachers to rigorous and ongoing training to achieve excellence and an adherence to collective work beginning with the creation of a collaborative culture between teachers.

For Hargreaves and Fullan professional capital consists of the integration of three types of capital. **Human capital** (of teaching) linked to expert knowledge of the profession is one. **Social capital**, which refers to the quantity and quality of the interactions that influence and make sustainable the human capital, is another. The decisional capital understood as the ability to make judgments that can connect theory and practice in the various contexts in which it functions is the third.

The interface created between these types of capital (or the emphasis in one of them) reconfirms the need to have a referential framework on professional teacher development. The proposal of Vaillant (2004) is about building a **professional environment** that lets teacher function in the best possible way. This perspective provides logic to this analysis of the teaching profession in Latin America. It helps to identify how the conceptions of the careers support the growth, evolution, maturity, strengthening, valuing and development of the teaching profession.



## 2. From a Bureaucratic Profession to a Merit-based Approach

The teaching careers are one of set of elements that governed teaching in two areas: the expansion of the education systems beginning in the fifties and the recognition of teaching as part of the functions of the state apparatus.

The growth of the public system made that the teacher officially recognized as a public servant with employment duties and rights. They also had to renounce a degree of freedom in order to do the job. Managing a large contingent of civil servants would require greater levels of control on the part of the employer. This decreased level of autonomy within the professorship impacted the professional identity. This meant the profession of a teacher had been a **liberal profession** and then became a **bureaucratic profession**<sup>10</sup> that had to function within a structure and respond to a set of pre-established procedures (Contreras 2001, Birgin 1999).

We use a general definition of the teaching career in this report. In keeping with the proposal of Terigi (2009) and Murillo (2006), the teaching career is the set of rules that regulates the employment of individuals carrying out the profession. Specifically, this includes the procedures for recruitment, permanence, mobility and retirement of the teachers in the state system of education.

Heterogeneity is the principal characteristic of the teaching profession in Latin America. In the 18 nations under review, we found the coexistence of teaching employment regulations spanning over 70 years. The oldest current regulation is found in Costa Rica dating back to 1953.<sup>11</sup> The most recent one regulates the employment of the Mexican teachers. It was issued in 2013.

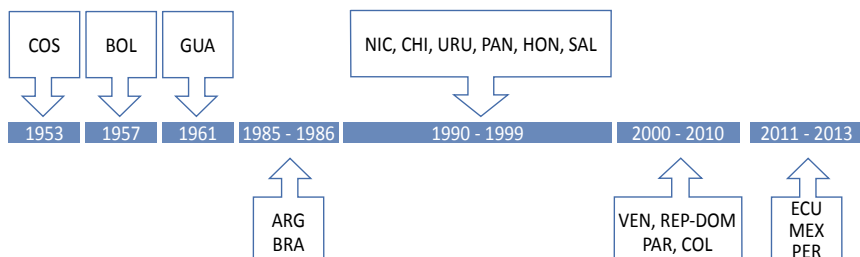
Over these 70 years, the degree of modification to the regulations has been very diverse. There are careers like those regulated in the Chilean teaching statute originally issued in 1991. It has since undergone successive partial modifications (1997, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2011). Contrarily, we have the Peruvian case in which the teaching career was fully modified in 2012 after the two sets of labor regimes in effect from 1990 and 2007 were united.

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10 The Weberian approach of bureaucracy is used, more positive than negative, that assumes professional work based on the value of standards, the formal nature of communications, the recognition of hierarchy, the technical ability and the predictability of the work operations (Weber 2008).

11 In 1970 there were modifications made to the framework of the legal modifications to civil service.

**Chart 2**  
**Timeline of Teaching Careers in Latin America**



We also find diverse legislative levels. Firstly, there is regulation on teaching careers that make up part of the constitutional foundation. This is the case in Guatemala and Honduras which, following the Central American tradition, have linked the professional careers to articles of their national constitutions. There is also a majority of countries, such as Colombia and Peru, wherein the teaching professions are categorized as independent laws. In countries like Argentina and Uruguay, career regulations are regulatory instruments of lesser standing than a law (ordinances). Another case is Ecuador where the teaching career does not have an independent standard, rather forms part of the fundamental law of education. For those countries that have a federal model, heterogeneity is still found. In Mexico there is a general law for all states, whereas in Brazil there are state and municipal level regulations on teaching.

Even given the heterogeneity of the teaching careers in the region makes the work of classification difficult, it is possible to create a general typology of the teaching careers in Latin America. This is done using two categories formulated on the basis of whether or not there is a merit-based approach guiding the implementation of the careers.

Meritocracy is an organizational mode of social institutions in which remaining at a specific level of the structure, losing this position or moving to superior positions are all results of merit. This is conceived of as the individual ability added to the competitive spirit enables one to achieve proposed goals. Using this approach, variables that are external to the professional activity, such as culture, ethnicity or class, should not influence the organizational structure.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> For conceptual information on meritocracy, see: Paes, Ferreira, Molinas and Saavedra 2008, Cordero 2010 and Sime 2012.



The solidification of meritocracy as a system of regulating labour positions occurred during the transformation of the capitalist model in the early years of the 1980's. According to Castells (1995) these changes are observed having three fundamental traits. First, it is seen in the appropriation on the part of capital of an increasingly larger portion of the surplus of the production process. Second, it is seen in the changes to the state intervention model with an emphasis on the political domain and the accumulation of capital to the detriment of political legitimacy and social redistribution. Third, it is seen in the globalization of the economic processes to increase profitability and open markets. Following Castells, capitalism would emerge operating through the new informational mode of development, in such a way as that the source of productivity is based on the quality of knowledge acting upon itself. This has been called the transition from **industrialism** to **informationalism**.

Returning to the teaching career typology, the Latin American literature agrees on the existence of two generations of regulations. The first generation comprises the careers designed between the start of the fifties and the end of the nineties. This first generation coincides with the development of the welfare state and is characterized by the recognition of teachers as workers with labor rights sustained by the state (Terigi 2009). For this type of career, the teaching profession is "career-focused"; i.e. it favors long-term posts and vertical promotion (OECD 2005). Moving up through the career is possible due to a **credentialist** approach that rewards the accumulation of certifications and seniority (Navarro and Verdisco 2000).

Morduchowicz (2002) has identified a set of elements that characterize the careers belonging to this first generation. Among the most important are the automatic promotion based on seniority, labor stability and the salary structures built on basic salaries and raises based on promotions rather than individual performance; i.e. promotion based on seniority and certifications rather than performance.

The second generation of teaching careers in Latin America belongs to the period of the neoliberal state and includes the period between the year 2000 and today. Efficiency and oversight are the organizational principles of educational employment in this generation. This fits what the OECD (2005) recognizes as **public employment based on job positions**; i.e. whoever is better trained will occupy the work post in accordance with previously established indicators. This central focus on position further impacts two fundamental matters: salaries differentiated by performance level and loss of job stability (PREAL 2005).

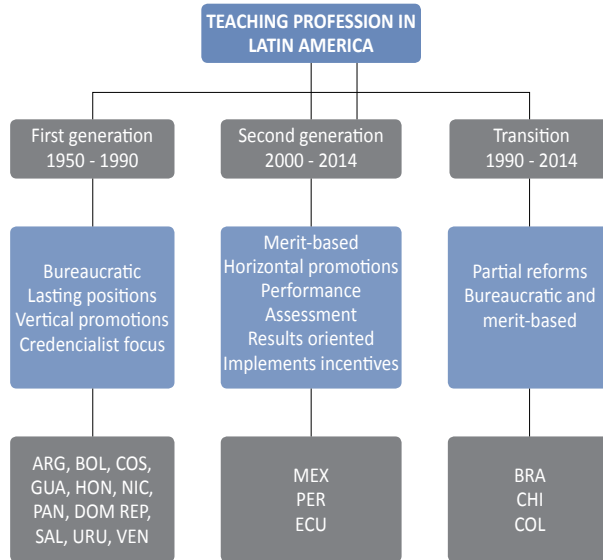
These obviously merit-based careers are characterized by the mechanisms of horizontal promotions, incorporation of performance evaluation processes and the subsequent implementation of incentive schemes (Iaies and de los Santos 2010).

Currently, the Latin American teaching career is situated not only between these two generations, but it is also possible to identify cases that straddle the transition from one generation to the other. This is due to the fact that some characteristics of the careers were only partially modified. The most common one is the high impact of evaluations (losing a job) that coexists with more traditional models of career advancement (credentialism).

The Central American, Argentinean, Bolivian and Uruguayan careers can be placed in the first group. Ecuador, Mexico and Peru are located in the second group. Lastly, the teaching regulations in Brazil (Sao Paulo), Chile and Colombia are found in the transitional space. Venezuela is a special case because in spite of having renewed its legislation in 2000, it has characteristics that are particular to the first generation careers.



**Chart 3**  
**Teaching Career Outline in Latin America**



This introduction to the characterization and typology of teaching careers in Latin America serves as a framework for analysing some of the specific elements of each one of these regulations. This includes career induction mechanisms, strategies for employment promotion, assessment processes for the teaching jobs and career exit procedures.

### 2.1 Mechanisms to Access the Teaching Career<sup>13</sup>

Mechanisms to access the career are those means by which a teacher begins regular employment in the education system. All Latin American countries have established and developed selection procedures for incorporating the best professionals into the sector.

#### *Selection Methods*

Generally, selection methods continue to be the traditional procedures already identified in early studies (OREALC-UNESCO 2013, laies and de los Santos 2010, Murillo 2006). The method that prevails in the region is the **merit-based competition** in which experience, recognized through certification and seniority, is at the foundation of the competition. Using the merit competition

<sup>13</sup> This clasification is based on Murillo (2006).

as a launch point, some countries in the region develop tests to examine the knowledge level of the applicants. This **competitive bid** for positions is always a second level of selection in the countries where it takes place.

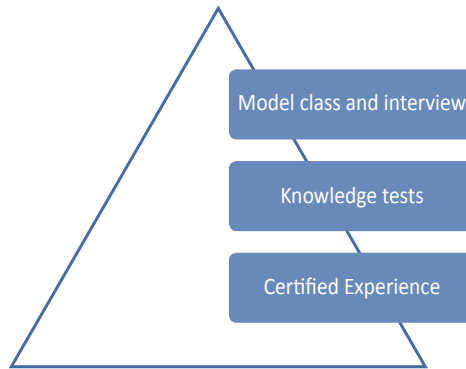
Nevertheless, the more recent teaching careers such as in Mexico, Ecuador and Peru expressly state that the selection exams of “pen and paper” are complemented by demonstrative measures such as **model classes** and **personal interviews**.<sup>14</sup> As this is a process of “selection” stages, only those applicants who have successfully passed the minimum scores established in the knowledge tests will arrive at the performance demonstration stage. These performance evaluations in Ecuador and Peru (unitary countries, unlike Mexico) include local participation with representatives from childcare providers or legal guardians (parents, teachers, local authorities, etc.).



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<sup>14</sup> Colombian regulation includes personal interviews that are more about personal qualities rather than professional development.

**Chart 4**  
**Teacher Selection Processes**



#### *Induction Requirements*

In recent years, career entrance requirements kept the essential characteristics. Matters such as nationality, being an adult, psychophysical ability and certification of appropriate legal behaviour continue to be elements shared by the majority of the countries in the region. Taken together they represent a sort of civil license. Countries that have an indigenous population like Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru have specifications on handling language and local cultural awareness that represents a sort of cultural license.

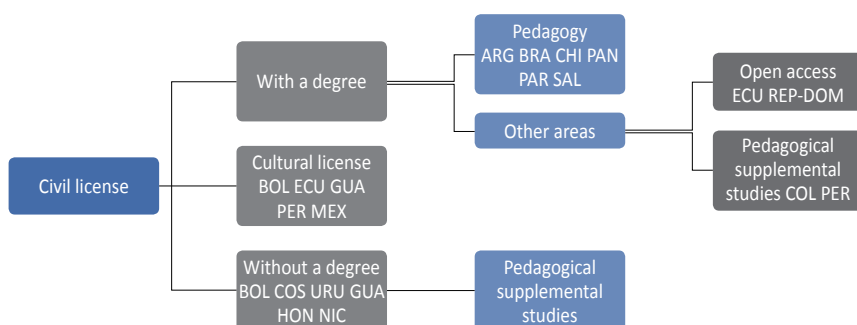
Having a degree is the most important requisite. The majority of countries in the region maintain the position that those who wish to join the profession are professionals who have a teaching degree, especially in the case of primary education. In other cases such as Bolivia, Costa Rica and Uruguay it is possible under certain circumstances for people without professional degrees to enter the career. Similarly, in countries of Central America such as Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua there are flexible regulations for teachers without degrees under the framework of professionalization processes of the teaching body. In some countries such as Colombia, México and Peru there are complementary standards for pedagogical specialization of professionals in disciplinary areas that are distinct from pedagogy. The regulations in Ecuador and the Dominican Republic are more open and clearly state that professionals from other education-related specialties may enter the careers.

In Chile, just as in Mexico and Colombia, there is not necessarily a requirement to have been trained in education to be a teacher in middle school. The right to teach is given to any professional in a related area.



The matter of who enters the teaching career has been creating a discussion around the structural break from the professional identity of teachers. For example, Bellei and Valenzuela (2010) state that in the Chilean case, the entrance of other type of professionals into the field of education is a path toward de-professionalizing the career. It is counterproductive to policies of strengthening the social estimation of the profession. This begins with the supposition that teachers must be of such low quality that anyone with an undergraduate degree would be better. Furthermore, Cuenca (2014) sustains that the inclusion of professionals from different disciplines into pedagogy would be creating a new identity of the career based on technical merit, which would impact the creation of a career professional teacher.

**Chart 5**  
**Outline of Entrance to the Teaching Career in Latin America<sup>15</sup>**



### *Design for Managing Access*

Handling access mechanisms to the career are closely related to the level of educational decentralization that has been implemented in each country. Except in the case of nations with federal systems (such as Argentina, Brazil and Mexico) with the exception of El Salvador, which maintains a model of school autonomy, the remainder of the teaching career in Latin America is characterized by the significant inclusion, managing and decision-making capacities of the central, national-level authorities. Most of the time, the education ministries are primarily responsible for developing mechanisms to enter the career by directing competitions, setting requirements and hiring teachers.

<sup>15</sup> This chart was created based on primary school teachers. There are distinctions by level in various countries in the region. Particularly, at the level of secondary education the regulations are more flexible. Countries such as Chile, Guatemala and Peru, as well as Mexico, for Senior High School, Mexico lets professionals from other areas enter the profession.

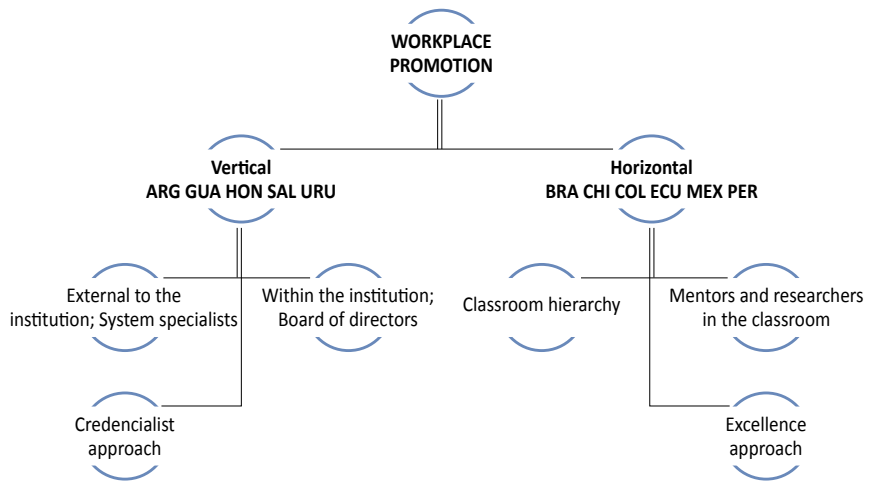


Additionally, another regional trend is the inclusion of intermediary authorities that essentially participate in running competitions, as is the case with the qualifying commissions at the community level in Chile and regional commissions in Paraguay. In some of the other countries like Colombia and Peru the intermediary authorities have greater responsibility for selection in terms of induction mechanisms to the career.

**2.2 Strategies for Workplace Promotion**

The strategies of workplace promotion are an essential aspect for developing the profession. Its relevance is not only due to being a defining factor for classifying the public teaching profession in the region, but it also demonstrates the “spirit” of the standards. The strength of one or another promotion strategy determines the approach taken by the career. As has already been discussed, it may be geared toward vertical promotions (traditional approach) or may include promotion options within the same level.

**Chart 6  
Outline of Teaching Job Promotions in Latin America**



*Vertical Promotion*

Vertical promotion continues to be the more common job promotion strategy of Latin American teaching careers. This type of promotion includes mobility towards director positions in the school (directors, assistant directors, etc.) or outside of the school (supervisors, administrators, etc.).

This kind of promotion has its origin in the old career structures belonging to the first generation group. Strictly speaking, vertical promotion began with the idea of attracting the best teachers to leadership positions and management of the school and the system. Murillo (2006) sustains that vertical promotion has a dual purpose for keeping the instructors permanently motivated and for recruiting the best to be the school heads.

In Argentina and Uruguay vertical promotion is the central core of the career. In Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, except for assignment by work areas, this type of promotion is the only possible road to job promotion.

While promotion to director roles can cause one to think that the system is losing out when the best teachers are removed from the classroom, in actual practice the number of those who move into these positions does not reach significant numbers of teachers. It is also expected that those who are promoted to these positions can produce the same qualities and excellent job skills in the teachers under their employ. For this reason, one of the requirements for being promoted to a director role in nearly all countries is having worked in the classroom. In Latin America, the average number of years' experience required is five. This ranges from two years in Puerto Rico to El Salvador where the requirement is as high as twenty years (Murillo 2006).

### *Horizontal Promotion*

Horizontal promotion as generally understood, means improvements in the economic and employment conditions of a teacher working in the classroom. Traditionally, horizontal promotion is represented in the hierarchy, i.e. a category structure that one ascends based upon seniority or merit and has relevance to the salary. Another part of horizontal promotion is the salary increase based on additional wages for specific workplaces (emergency zones, rural or border areas), temporary director responsibilities or additional professional studies. However, concerning this last item, it has now been several years since the warning has been sounded about the lack of more regulation and accreditation for Training Programs that guarantee the quality of service and the real impact on improving teacher abilities and knowledge. (Jornet, J., Suárez, J., and Perales, M.J. (2002). One example is that Argentina established the Federal Network that sets out the teacher training institution standards paying attention to quality parameters. The Secretary of Education of the State of Sao Paulo, Brazil created the Pedagogical Teams comprised of excellent teachers who will train their peers (Vaillant 2007).



In the majority of countries in the region there is a hierarchy that varies in the number of levels they have, but not in the general requirements for promotion. Basically, it has a credentialist approach (degrees, experience, certifications) that favours seniority in the teaching role as the base to move up. However, there are changes afoot in those countries that have regulated, established evaluation systems for promotion purposes, as is the case in Brazil and Colombia. In the more recent careers as in Ecuador and Peru, there are more established levels in the hierarchy (10 and 8 respectively).

However, the most recent versions of the career such as the case of Ecuador, Mexico and Peru are including new possibilities for horizontal promotion that are distinct from the hierarchy or special wages. In Ecuador, the job of a mentoring teaching has been standardized meaning that a classroom teacher also assists in the training process of other teachers. Mexico finds itself in a similar situation with the horizontal promotion towards roles of technical-pedagogical advising. In the case of the Peruvian careers, there is a possibility to remain in the classroom and also carry out tasks in the area of research according to new legislation. In both cases, in addition to greater financial compensation as part of the promotional ladder, the teacher does not leave the classroom despite achieving a higher level in the hierarchy.

As can be seen, job promotions for teaching careers in Latin America are closely connected to the overall orientation of the career. The greatest amount of possibilities for horizontal promotion is found in careers that move closer to the second-generation standards.

### **2.3 Processes for Evaluating the Teaching Role**

Evaluating the teaching role is one of the more hotly debated and discussed activities in the region. The different types of evaluation associated with entering the career, promotions and performance exist in all teaching careers in the region. It is more notable and sophisticated in the transitional careers and those of the second generation.

In nearly all the careers in the region, the evaluation processes include the participation of various actors. Some of them include regional authorities, parents or labour union representatives. These actors participate in a number of ways and with varying levels of responsibility. One can see an example observing the career entrance evaluations. In El Salvador, the responsibility is fully taken on by the school board councils, which are internal entities made up of the directors, teacher representatives, parents and students. On the other end is the regulation in Ecuador, which places responsibility for and execution

of assessments at the central level through the National Institute of Education Assessment. In Peru, representatives from the teachers' union participate as assessment process observers, while in Nicaragua the union forms part of the assessment commissions.

The situation in Cuba is not very different from other Central American countries like El Salvador; however, its practice is a bit older meaning it is more deeply rooted. In agreement with Corrado, this dates to 1997, although it took the form of the Teaching Assessment Commission in 2002. The institutional board of directors runs these commissions, and nearly all of the community participates in them: students, parents, labour organizations, the most qualified teachers of the collective and experts in the ministry (Corrado 2010).

The utilization of assessment tools is rather homogenous. In most cases, although with some important distinctions, the assessment process includes traditional written knowledge tests, both pedagogical as well as content. For those careers in the transitional space between the first and second generations, direct observation and demonstration class protocols have been gradually incorporated. To a lesser extent, Chile, Colombia or Peru incorporated assessment instruments created by the very same teachers, such as the portfolio or filming of classes.

Specifically, it is important to call attention to a more recent kind of assessment connected to professional teaching work. Evaluating teacher performance has become a common sense matter for political decision-makers, the very same teachers, families and students. These days it seems to be impossible for an education system not to have assessment of teachers' work, even though only Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru have detailed standards that regulate the process and the assessment tools (Corrado 2010).

Héctor Valdés (2004) defines teacher performance assessment as a set of principles, concepts and methods that systematically provide valid, trustworthy data. The purpose of this process is to evaluate the results produced in the student body when taking together the teaching skills, its emotions, on-the-job responsibilities, and the nature of the interpersonal relationships between students, parents, administrators, colleagues and representatives from community institutions.

In a comparative study looking at 50 countries, Murillo (2006) concluded that the various decisions made in each education system concerning the performance assessment system depend on two factors: the educational



tradition of each nation and the main education needs. In the case of Latin America, this consisted of raising the quality of teachers. This is why external assessment systems were kicked off to incentivize improvements.

In another comparative study of six countries (Argentina, Colombia, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Honduras, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic), Vaillant and Rossel (2006) recognize the trends at the international level to demonstrate a great deal of diversity in programs and the teachers' assessment and certification mechanisms. The author estimates that one of the reasons to justify said diversity stems from the standards that regulate the teaching career. So the question is: How can a framework of standards guarantee that those entering a career do so with the skills and competencies needed to perform as high quality teachers?

There are three ideas shared by the countries that evaluate teacher performance in daily practice. Firstly, assessing the work of teachers presupposes an *a priori* definition of what good performance is. Countries such as Chile and Peru<sup>16</sup> have officially created and approved matrices that record a set of quality standards organized around various areas or arenas of work.

In Chile the **Framework for Good Teaching** includes 20 criteria and 70 descriptors distributed over four domains that define the teaching-learning cycle (preparing to teach, creating an environment conducive to proper learning, teaching so that all students learn and professional responsibility).

In Peru the framework for teaching performance is comprised of four domains (preparing for student learning, teaching for student learning, participation in guiding the school together with the community, professional development and teacher identity) that make up nine competencies and include 40 performance markers.

Secondly, performance assessments are defined as opportunities for teachers to improve. The periodicity of these evaluations, which averages every three years, offers a road toward improvement by demonstrating the skills that have been strengthened or presenting newly acquired abilities. In cases such as Ecuador or Colombia, good results on performance assessments mean bonuses and incentives, as well as elements that lead to workplace promotion.

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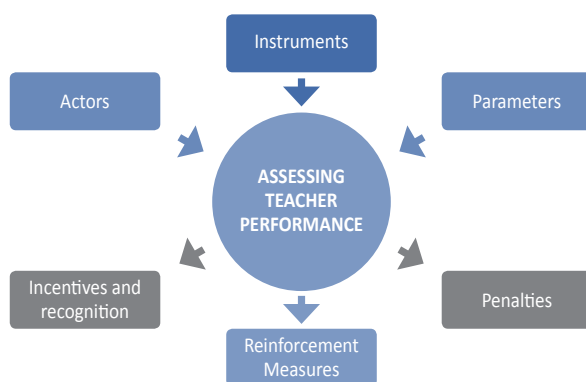
16 In Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico there are profiles that are created *ad hoc* and are defined by the authorities that correspond to the national and regional levels.

Finally in third place, the teacher performance evaluation is conceived of as a strategy for retaining the best teachers in the system since implementing salary-based incentives as a function of results began, as well as other types of recognition. At the same time, both in Colombia and in Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru, deficient results on these assessments have a high impact on consequences concerning job stability for teachers.

In every case, after taking advantage of training opportunities for those teachers with deficient results, if they continue to receive negative assessments<sup>17</sup>, their teaching careers are terminated. However, in practice arriving at this point hasn't been very common. This extreme measure has overall been exceptional in all countries that have implemented teacher performance assessment systems, among other reasons due to the resistance that has arisen over time in the labour unions. Furthermore, in various occasions these assessments have had poor results that have questioned the effectiveness of the education system as a whole.

This high impact consequence is the element most representative of the careers that have been designed with a merit-based approach. Therefore, in spite of the problematic implementation, this does represent a break from the bureaucratic tradition of the professional employment by the state associated with job stability and the value of experience represented by years of service that still characterizes the majority of teaching careers in Latin America.

**Chart 7**  
**Conceptual Map of Teacher Assessment in Latin America**



<sup>17</sup> The number of evaluations before ending a career varies between two and three in a period of six years.



## 2.4 Procedures for Exiting the Career

For all of the analysed regulations, the career exit options all have specific rules. In an attempt to reorganize these procedures, a set of exit criteria linked to the contractual relationship can be identified. Herein are included the resignations on the part of the teachers and in compliance with the functions and responsibilities described in the standards. The more common ones include unexcused absences, leaving the post, inappropriate conduct (morally unsound) and aggressive behaviour. Following this logic, some countries have specifications such as in Nicaragua where having another position that is considered to be incompatible with teaching is reason for removal. In Costa Rica it is considered a serious offense to directly or indirectly incite the students to participate in activities that threaten the public or institutional order. As stated by Quinteros (2007), the flip side of this is the case of Uruguay where complicated regulations mean the teacher absenteeism level in middle school can reach 30% without facing any real penalties. This situation occurs in other countries as well.

Another set of criteria exists for leaving the career through retirement. This matter is discussed in all regulatory systems in the region, even when the precision of those standards varies. There is a group of countries (among them are El Salvador, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Venezuela, Honduras, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Colombia and Argentina) wherein the teacher retirement norms refer to the general retirement and welfare laws of the country. For the other group of countries, the conditions and requirements for retiring are determined by specific regulations on the teaching career. Panama, Uruguay, Peru, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Paraguay and other belong to this group.

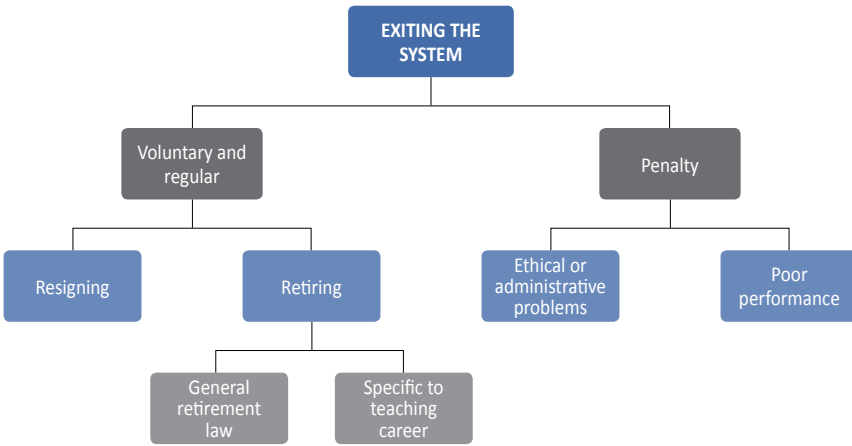
The general trend establishes the retirement age around 65 years. The outliers include Uruguay at 70 years and Paraguay at 40 years in the case of women. Along with retirement age, some countries such as Panama, Uruguay and Nicaragua consider service years as an alternative, ranging between 25 and 30. Every case has exceptions so that the age or year limit may be extended. The most common exceptions result from high quality work or the need for service provision. Bolivia also has an exception connected to service years. Working in border or rural areas gives greater credit for service years, which are considered in retirement matters.

In countries such as Panama, Paraguay and Chile retirement age is different according to gender. On average, women can retire five years earlier than men. Specifically in Paraguay, one service year is recognized per child born.



In addition to the above-described procedures, for the second-generation careers there is a trend toward linking the profession with performance evaluations.<sup>18</sup>

**Chart 8**  
**Outline for Leaving the Teaching Profession in Latin America**



<sup>18</sup> See prior section

### 3. Valuing the Teaching Profession

Recognizing the fundamental role that teachers play in quality education motivated many countries in the region to seek ways to elevate the status of the teaching profession. Therefore, strategies of encouragement, incentives and rewards were developed with the double purpose of attracting and retaining the best teachers while simultaneously encouraging society to value the importance of the profession once more.

Experiences implemented in Chile and Peru to attract young people of high academic performance to the teaching profession stand out. The strategy is nearly the same and consists of giving attractive scholarships to study pedagogy and employment offers within the education system upon graduating. This is how the Scholarship for the Teaching Vocation (BVP is the Spanish acronym) in charge of the Division of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education in Chile. It has attracted roughly 9,000 students between 2011 and 2013 (OREALC - UNESCO 2014). The Scholarship for the Teaching Vocation in Peru promoted by the Ministry of Education is very similar. The National Program of Scholarships (PRONABEC) manages it. The scholarship is for students who have finished high school with top grades and offers them a program of study in pedagogy at six highly prestigious universities in the country. These measures are intended to improve the image of the teaching profession, which is not very attractive for standout students. They are part of the government policy strategies to fix the degraded social image of teaching.

Generally, there were three factors that had the most impact on the deterioration of the societal estimation of the teaching profession. The first factor is structural and associated with the crisis facing the profession. Societal changes, the rise of cognitive psychology and constructivist tendencies along with the power of the media directly struck at the heart of the professional identity of teachers. This occurred without allowing these teachers to quickly readapt their sense of self in the workplace.

The second factor refers to a new limitation on benefits that the teaching profession began to have. Intensification of work duties and employment insecurity, oftentimes a result of very disorganized expansion of the education systems resulted in poor work conditions and a serious decrease in salaries.

A third contributing factor arose due to the results of standardized learning outcome evaluations. Evidence of low student performance focused attention on teachers. The importance of teachers in the achievement of student learning goals arose, in many cases, in excessive expectations of responsibility

being placed on teachers, creating an inappropriate cycle of victimization and blaming.

Generally, the literature on this matter resulted in two grand strategy concepts for esteeming the profession once again. The first group includes those related to monetary matters, such as salary incentive schemes and bonus programs. The second group includes those measures of a non-monetary, symbolic nature such as awards and public recognition. These strategies can be applied directly at the level of the teaching career or externally. The latter case would include general government regulations or programs, or from private institutions.

**Chart 9**  
**Organization Chart of Incentive Types**

	Social wellbeing		
Within the profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awards/recognition</li> <li>• Benefits to cultural consumption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirement benefits</li> <li>• Occupational health and safety systems</li> </ul>	External to the profession
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bonuses and incentives</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bank loan plans</li> </ul>	
	Economic wellbeing		

Both strategies are conceptually based on motivation as a process to instigate change “from the teachers” in order to have a knock on effect on the societal perceptions of them. The extensive literature on the subject agrees that for whatever kind of encouragement or incentive offered, it is always considered as an external factor that is used to promote certain types of behaviour or to reduce the occurrence of any conduct that is considered to be negative (Eccles and Wigfield 2002, Deckers 2001, Reeve 2001).

However, for these changes in workplace behaviour to happen, the incentive programs must comply with certain requirements. Odden and Kelly (2002) suggest there are three conditions that need to be considered when designing these kinds of programs. First, there must be the real likelihood (subjective) of achieving the goal. A second condition is a direct connection between the effort and goal achievement. Lastly, the value of the goal must be perceived



as a significant benefit for the person trying to achieve it. This may be adjustments or increases in salary, the possibility of earning alternative types of compensation or the development of greater professional skills.

In Latin America, the incentive programs have been developed using less complex conceptual frameworks. The fundamental orientation has been on monetary schemes with a priority on incentives linked to teachers' skills, and to a lesser degree, on student performance (Morduchowicz 2011, Vegas 2006, Mizala and Romaguera 2003, Navarro 2002).

The incentive programs in the region have been designed using three perspectives: as a strategy for better teacher performance, as a reward for achieving good results and/or as a means of incentivizing improvement. Using any of these modalities, evaluating this subject has led to the conclusion that the teachers in Latin America do not always respond to incentives in a predictable manner (Vegas and Umansky 2005). In countries where the impact of incentives<sup>19</sup> has been measured using student performance, it has not been possible to assume direct relationships between teacher incentives and student results (Cueto, Torero, Deustua and León 2005, Carnoy, Brodziak, Molinas and Socías 2007, López-Acevedo 2004, Núñez, Steiner, Cadena and Pardo 2002).

Along with monetary incentive schemes, initiatives based on non-monetary recognition have been developed in the region as a strategy to promote the best teacher performance.

Vaillant and Rossel (2010) have studied the recognition initiatives for effective teaching in various countries.<sup>20</sup> Although they point out that the evidence concerning the effects of these initiatives is still emerging and limited, the rewards are considered to be an interesting and complementary tool to other policies that seek to improve recruitment, retention and in this last instance, effective teacher performance. The authors sustain that non-monetary incentives are particularly relevant when links are made to improving the wellbeing of teachers.

The public recognition implied by these awards given for teaching best practices impacts the self-esteem of teachers. At the same time it improves the value of public opinion toward the profession. They are aimed fundamentally at improving occupational prestige, status and esteem (Hoyle 2001). While these areas have the greatest impact on improving teacher performance, a lack

19 This report makes reference to Peru, Chile, Mexico and Colombia.

20 These experiences are the Note 10 Educator Prize (Brazil), the Teacher Sharing Award (Colombia), the 100 Points Teacher Award (Guatemala), the ABC Prize (Mexico) and Prize for Teachers who Make a Mark (Peru).

of evidence persists on the impact these programs have on student learning outcomes.

Countries such as Colombia, Chile, El Salvador and Mexico have implemented monetary incentive programs in the teaching profession over the last decade. Generally, these programs have opted to give incentives both individually and collectively. In Mexico, the programs are voluntary, whereas in El Salvador the incentives are linked to the student learning outcomes. Chile has a mixed experience because the collective results are associated with the learning outcomes of the students, as is the case in El Salvador. But furthermore some countries implemented in 2004 the Variable Individual Performance Allowance. This is given voluntarily just as in Mexico, and means passing pedagogical knowledge tests as well as exams for the specific disciplines and levels taught by said instructor (Corrado 2010).

Morduchowicz (2011) sustains that the trend in Latin America is leaning toward the idea of offering incentives to the education community as a function of the results obtained. For example, in Chile since 1996 rewards are given with monetary allowances to those teachers at educational establishments with improved scores on the National System of School Performance Evaluation. In 2008, Mexico implemented a system of Incentives Alliances, which offers an increase above regular wages to teachers in educational institutions in rural or marginalized areas that achieved better results on the National Assessment Academic Achievement. This is due to the fact that evidence in this area shows that individual incentives do not impact student performance (Mizala and Romaguera 2003).

Additionally, in countries such as Peru this has gone hand in hand with efforts to increase all teaching salaries. However, they continue to remain behind in comparison to the income earned in other similar professional sectors “in percentages that oscillate between 25% and 50%” (Bruns and Luque 2014). The salary increases also form part of the measures taken by the majority of governments, although this has been motivated primarily by labour union pressure. Nonetheless, in spite of efforts that have been carried out, there is still a huge gap to overcome, as it happens in Chile. Recent research in that country shows that teaching salaries and the outlook is similar for those who have only done two years of technical study compared to the five years required for education professionals (Bellei and Valenzuela 2010). Also in Brazil where Abuchaim (2014), making use of a historical figures over the last decade, shows that education professionals in this country receive on average half of the salary that other professionals in healthcare or exact sciences receive, in spite of the fact that they have the same number of years of schooling. This discourages young people from choosing the teaching profession.



On the other hand, the large quantity of non-monetary incentives given in the region requires greater efforts of systematization. All of this seems to indicate that the incentive structures have impacts on education results (Vegas and Umansky 2005) while at the same time strengthening the status of the profession (Vaillant and Rosell 2010). Something similar has happened in Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador. Despite multiple issues with teaching salaries and job stability, in some cases the number of teaching hours has increased as a result of a closer relationship and interaction with students' parents who participate on a daily basis with the administration of education establishments. This closeness motivates and exhorts them to appropriately comply with their duties as teachers. However, the evidence also shows respective failures.

It should be pointed out that for strictly symbolic incentives such as public recognition for good performance, which everyone supposes brings out even more dedicated work ethic, a rigorous, empirical demonstration of this has not been done. Rather, everything has stayed in the testimonial and anecdotal arena, claiming many teachers feel motivated to maintain and improve excellence at work as they thoroughly value said recognition (Andrew 2006).

Put simply, the monetary and non-monetary schemes of the various countries in the region such as Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru and the Dominican Republic are creating and discussing proposals for reward and incentive plans designed to accompany the implementation of new teaching careers. In any case, these proposals all recognize the need to have the best, most varied number of rewards and incentives of different types that seek to improve learning outcomes for students without handicapping the strengthening of the profession. Taking together all of the lessons learned from monetary incentive and symbolic reward programs initiated in the region, these proposals reassert the importance that the plans adhere to principles of equity, transparency and opportunity. In every case it is also necessary to reform the institutional architecture of the state in order to launch these plans. In summary, there is an accumulation of data in the region that needs to be systematized so that it can directly support the creation of public policies.

## 4. Final Reflections

This paper has sought to characterize the efforts that have been carried out recently in Latin America to raise the social value of the teaching profession. It analyses the scope and results of policies implemented for this end and a sketch of new policy proposals that encourage a qualitative leap towards a profession of high social standing. Eighteen teaching careers were reviewed as well as some specific policies about valuing the profession. This last section presents some concluding thoughts and input on the design of new policies for strengthening the teaching profession.

*Teaching careers in Latin America have not been substantially modified.*

Reviewing the current career options shows that eight out of 18 countries have changed their regulations in the last 12 years.<sup>21</sup> Of these eight, four have changed the regulations but have not shifted toward a merit-based approach that characterizes the new careers.<sup>22</sup>

This is why the **various teaching careers are diverging more and more**. On one end of the spectrum are those careers linked to traditional approaches fundamentally characterized by specifically using vertical employment promotion, job stability and favouring seniority and certifications. The other end includes those careers with the opposite characteristics; i.e. an emphasis on horizontal promotion and stability based on performance.

This career classification is due to the fact that **the current teaching careers regulations in the region have been issued in a time period of 60 years**. The oldest existing profession dates back to 1953, while the most recent is from 2013.<sup>23</sup> In some cases, career tracks that have existed for twenty years have undergone partial modifications in order to be aligned with the merit-based approach.<sup>24</sup>

However, there is still a trend in the region to lean towards careers of a technocratic nature. Countries with careers typical of the first generation style have created regulatory proposals with merit-based approaches. Guatemala and the Dominican Republic are two such examples. In the first case, the teacher training school at the Universidad San Carlos de Guatemala and the

21 This refers to Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Venezuela.

22 This refers to El Salvador, Paraguay, Dominican Republic and Venezuela

23 This refers to Costa Rica as the oldest and Mexico as the most recent.

24 This refers to Chile.



Teachers Union with the help of USAID created a proposal for the teaching profession in 2011. In the proposal they suggest a career that, guided by professional development, will promote the social and academic prestige of the teaching profession. The proposal includes the primary aspects that characterize the technocratic careers: horizontal promotion, assessments with high consequences and mechanisms for incentives or punishments stemming from “poor performance”.

In the Dominican Republic, the Ministry of Education (2014) has created a new proposal for the teaching profession. The regulation is geared toward professional development and seeks to do more than simply standardize the contractual relationship of teachers with the state. In this new proposal one can see the inclusion of a wide range of matters related to teacher training, establishing frameworks that define the correct way to fulfil the role of a teaching professional, as well as the inclusion of performance assessment modalities.

*Regulation on the teaching profession in Latin America is heterogeneous.*

Specific regulations for teachers along with those strictly linked to political constitutions and sections within the general education laws coexist in the region. In this same legislative vein, the variety of standards is evidenced when looking at the teaching careers that have different legislative levels that go from regulation defined by the executive branch up to specific laws. This gives rise to the fact that those countries with specific and wider-ranging standards need to have specific regulation spelled out in maximum detail of the employment history of the teachers.

Another hallmark of heterogeneity is linked to **political entities of the state and the levels of decentralization in decision-making**. In federal nations the governments structures make available and allows professional specification. This is done sometimes on top of the general regulations of the country whereas others create high degrees of fragmentation. In unitarily structured countries on the other hand, the general standards are applied to the entire teaching body. The levels of regional decision-making depend upon the degree of decentralization reached. In most cases, actors at the regional administrative level have limited roles to play in implementing the teaching professions.

One matter in particular pertains to those teaching careers in countries that have both a public and a private system, with the latter currently in expansion in Latin America. Strictly speaking, this situation means that the teaching



regulations are applied to careers in the public service sector, whereas in the private sector they are regulated by general labour codes.

*The incentive strategies continue to primarily favour supplies and monetary bonuses.*

In spite of the fact that the region has had incentive programs since the second half of the nineties, the national trends in the region are characterized by strategies based primarily on process ahead of results and in financial stimulus before any non-monetary recognition. The incentive plans are typically associated with the careers without thinking about strategies promoted outside of the system that directly support achieving the shared goal of performance improvement.

In the region there are limited research results on the implementation of specific teaching careers or guidelines from the most recent regulations. This lack of a systematic building of knowledge around the subject is made up for with the sweeping guidelines proposed for educational reform in Latin America. The Region has continued to implement these reforms since the decade of the nineties. Under the hypothesis of **assessing to improve, of making efforts (individually) to achieve goals and showing results to demonstrate success**, teachers' careers are passing through new transformations that directly impacts the nature of the teaching profession.

The region must develop research on the results of implementing the new generation of teaching careers. This should enable the utilization of specific information that is complementary to the ideological structure of the reforms. There is not sufficient evidence concerning whether or not in the case of vertical promotion the "excellence approach" always takes precedence (e.g. to be promoted to positions of direction) or if it is also combined with a "credentialist approach". Furthermore, it is hoped that under the modality of horizontal careers, the excellence approach is effectively what guides these professions.

Meanwhile, it is possible to bear in mind some of the general considerations that help implement said careers and the design of future regulations.

The merit-based approach that will characterize future teaching careers in the region must be understood and implemented with an understanding of the cultures of the school and of teachers. The inherent individualistic stance of this type of approach, in addition to going against the grain of the teaching culture, could be hurt by the contradiction of the requirements made by this very



system on the teachers who carry out work in teams. **Trying to recognize and reward merit without losing the collective essence of education constitutes the first large challenge that teaching regulation policies must face.**

Another consideration is connected to the emphasis that must be placed on the conception of teaching careers. The context is characterized by initiatives to promote the societal appreciation of the teaching profession. In this context it is essential to conceptualize the teaching careers as instruments of professional development, and not only documents that regulate the contractual relationship of the state with the teaching staff. **Including alternative careers in the job promotion options and the new possibilities of workspaces are fundamental in designing the new teaching regulations.**

It is essential to associate teaching professions with the teacher training processes. Thorough functioning of the standards shall have to address ongoing training and/or teacher in-service, but initial training as well. Training from the very start under a merit-based framework requires a set of basic skills that will not be obtainable with only post-initial training. **A third element to bear in mind is the connection of the careers with the training plans and, even better, their establishment in a framework of comprehensive teaching policies.**

The shift toward merit-based careers should be accompanied by defining what it means to perform as a good teacher. To the degree that the regulations are connected to assessment, a nearly complete agreement on what good performance means will be required. **Creating specific performance frameworks, standards or competencies about the teaching role and practice is the fourth challenge that the education systems have to solve to strengthen the teaching career.**

Another consideration to bear in mind for teaching regulations is concerning the legal nature of the regulation. There is a trend toward specifying teaching regulations (i.e. isolating the teaching legislation from general education standards). It is essential not to disconnect the logic between legal mechanisms; i.e. between the specific regulations on the teaching career with the macro legislation of the sector (general education or budgetary laws), or with specific regulations on teacher training and the legal provisions such as the civil service laws or legislation on healthcare and retirement. **A fifth challenge for policy designers is to create specific regulations aligned with the national legislation.**

In the sixth place, the trend toward more merit-based teaching careers must include the creation of **integrated incentive plans for teacher performance.** Specific yet disconnected norms may not help to comply with the goals proposed

by incentives. Those plans must also consider guidelines on performance and results, various types of incentives (monetary and non-monetary) as well as links with public or private initiatives developed outside of the career.

This is an overview of the teaching -profession and measures taken by governments to modify it, reform it or to create new careers. It is made to help as a ground to ask ourselves how these new generations of careers include a perspective that promotes the professional development of teachers.

The initial reflections of this report considered the narrative built around the development of the teaching profession. We have showed political decisions in various countries willing to walk to this end. They include attempts for the technical strengthening of the profession as well as the specific means of the state to promote its appreciation by society. Both of these approaches cannot be avoided. If we advance in the making a professional teacher more of an expert, but without the needed social recognition will make this process truly difficult.

Careers geared toward professional development under a merit-based approach should be able to show more and more that teacher training is a key element of this development. It should try to define assessment as a tool associated with rewards and penalties incorporated into the profession. Making teaching assessment a mechanism for strengthening teacher training is a conceptual and operational challenge for teaching regulations in the region. In addition to developing the teaching careers organized around a technocratic procedural basis, these countries also have the challenge of building, reconstructing and recreating the definitions of teacher performance. It is essential to have clear definitions in this regard. Otherwise this type of career, far from promoting professional development, could end up pushing what the profession “should be” instead of building a consensus around what the profession “is”.

The challenge of the merit-based teaching careers is, ultimately, to reaffirm that the mechanisms based on merit are the means by which to achieve greater goals, such as the very teacher development that will help create better learning outcomes for the students. Taking up the suggestion once more of Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), the merit-based careers should have the goal of professional development in terms of increasing professional capital; i.e. the personal, professional and social development of teachers.



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#### Annexes

Annex I: List of participating countries in the study and regulatory frameworks

Annex II: Registration chart and criteria for analysis

## Annex I

List of participating countries in the study and regulatory frameworks

Country	Year	Specific Regulation
Argentina (Autonomous City of Buenos Aires)	1986	Ordinance N. 40.593 and amendments
Bolivia	1957	Supreme Decree N. 04688
Brazil (State of Sao Paulo)	1985	Supplementary law N. 444
Chile	1991	Law 19.070 and amendments
Colombia	2002	Decree law 1278
Costa Rica	1953	Law N. 1581 and regulations
Ecuador	2011	Constitutional Law on Intercultural Education
El Salvador	1996	Decree N. 665 and regulations
Guatemala	1961	Decree 1485
Honduras	1999	Executive order N. 0760-SE-99 and regulations
Mexico	2013	General Law on Professional Teaching Services
Nicaragua	1990	Law N°. 114 and regulations
Panama	1995	Law 34 y amendments
Paraguay	2001	Law N°. 1.725 - 01
Peru	2012	Law 29944 and regulations
Dominican Republic	2000	Constitutional Law on Education
Uruguay	1993	Ordinance N. 45
Venezuela	2000	Decree N. 1.011



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