Background and Criteria for Teachers' Policies
Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Original title: *Antecedentes y Criterios para la Elaboración de Políticas Docentes en América Latina y el Caribe*

This is an unofficial UNESCO translation.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to present a state of the art and guidelines for teachers' policies in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, in the framework of the Regional Strategic Project on Teachers initiative, which at the same time is part of UNESCO's worldwide "Teachers for Education for All" strategy.

For the development of this report, OREALC/UNESCO Santiago established a working method that is based on the contributions of Latin American teachers' policies experts and of consultation and deliberation groups from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago, that are made up of government, academic, and labor union stakeholders. The countries were selected using criteria of sub–regional representativity and of accumulated experience in education policies.

Thus, the present report is the result of an interaction between two sources and types of knowledge and criteria: specialization on regional teachers' issues and the experience of national groups.

First Part: State of the Art

The First Part of the report seeks to characterize the situation of teachers and public policies related to them in the Region, and to identify the main critical knots that countries face to be able to count on the teachers they need. Although the document has a Regional vision, the focus is on the eight countries mentioned above, which represent typical Regional situations, but obviously do not explain the whole reality. Teachers' policies are analyzed by distinguishing three areas that are basic and inextricably linked: teachers' initial training, continuing education and professional development, and the teaching career. Regarding each of these areas, we present a general characterization of the Regional situation, while pointing out aspects of each of the eight countries, and identifying critical knots from a policy perspective. The diagnosis concludes with an analysis of traits and institutions in the process of generating and implementing teachers' policies in the Region, and questions about their stability, consistency, and quality.

❶ The first chapter of State of the Art describes the main characteristics of the situation of teachers in the Region, which include an overwhelming presence of women educators; a middle–class or lower middle–class background; a higher education training; low salaries, in comparison with similar professions; and few opportunities for professional development and promotions within the classroom teaching sphere. There is also a description of teachers' organizations and labor unions, and their links to public policies through dialogue, negotiations, or confrontation with central and local education authorities.

❷ The second chapter addresses initial teacher training. It is pointed out that although originally it was implemented at the secondary school level, in the last few decades –with some exceptions– it has been carried out at the higher or tertiary education levels. The duration of pedagogical studies fluctuates between three and five years. In some countries, there is a supply of teachers that is higher than current needs while in others there is a scarcity of educators, particularly in rural areas and in the scientific field. There are significant weaknesses in basic skills among students who enter pedagogical careers and, something that is more serious, weaknesses are also noted in the quality of teacher training. This is expressed in the lack of subject specialization for the training of basic education teachers, and –generally– in the absence of the necessary skills to put the profession into practice. Although regulations for university level pedagogical training are weak or non–existent, in most cases, in the last few years there have been efforts in some countries to implement accreditation systems, graduation and licensing tests, and standards which provide guidance for the development of training curricula.

Critical knots that have been identified in relation to initial training are: a) students who enter pedagogical careers have a low level of training; b) training programs are of low quality; c) there is a universal training that does not consider any differences for working with students from vulnerable social groups; d) public institutions lack sufficient capacities to regulate the quality of initial training.

❸ Chapter 3 of State of the Art addresses continuing education. On this issue, the analysis reaffirms the consensus that this kind of training represents an unavoidable need in the teaching profession. Therefore, it must not be considered as an accessory element, but as a component of educational policy that is as relevant as initial training, and both must be articulated. The review of implemented policies shows that continuing education –offered mainly in public programs in the Region– is broad and diverse regarding contents, modalities, and methodologies. However, it has a systematic approach, it does not address the needs of all educators and of those who need it most, and quality and impact standards are lacking.

An analysis of curricular and pedagogical models leads to the conclusion that, continuing education curricula do not offer enough specialization, have chronic problems regarding relevance requirements of schools, and show a predominance of theory and general approaches. Presently, there is in many countries of the Region the intention of promoting training policies that are school–centered, in which teachers' collectives have a leading role, and where hands–on practice is a source of reflection, analysis, and learning.

Among the main critical issues in continuing education are: a) lack of relevance and articulation for its different modalities; b) low impact of actions that are implemented; c) lack of knowledge about the heterogeneous nature of teachers; d) unregulated offer; e) not enough consideration of schools' particular situations and of peer learning; f) difficulties in regulating graduate degrees and in establishing their relevance.

❹ Chapter 4 of State of the Art deals with the teaching career. Along with examining the importance of counting on a professional career that can attract skilled youth and retain good teachers, there is an analysis of working conditions, salaries and incentives, and the assessment of teacher performance.

Regarding the critical issue of how a teacher advances in her/his profession, it is ratified that, in the Region, there are vertical and horizontal promotion modes. The former have to do with the possibility of leaving teaching to take on other responsibilities, such as becoming a principal or a supervisor. The latter refer to the opportunities for professional development, without having to quit as a classroom educator. This is not very common. Usually, the most decisive criteria for a teacher to be promoted are her or his seniority and whether she or he has completed specialization courses or a graduate degree. Professional performance is not taken into account as much.

Critical issues of the teaching career are: a) difficulty in attracting and retaining good educators; b) lack of acknowledgement of different stages of teaching; c) dissociation between the career and professional development; d) tension between common salary scales and differentiated remunerations; e) difficulty in generating consensus for performance evaluations.

❺ The last section of State of the Art –Institutions and Processes of Teachers' Policies– identifies recent trends, particularly regarding factors and processes that affect policy formulation and implementation. We ratify that although teachers' policies are described as a priority, in reality they are not at the center of government action. This happens because teachers' policies represent a high cost when they are aimed at changing teaching as a whole, they are not publicly visible when implemented, they are politically complex, and they achieve their objectives in the medium and long term.

Two critical issues that are considered in this area are policy lack of coordination or consistency, and policy instability. The lack of coordination and of harmony are associated to institutional dispersion among responsible agencies. There are attempts to solve this problem through the implementation of coordinating committees, but effectiveness depends too much on the personal willingness/availability of committee members. The lack of a long–term approach in teachers' policies, reflected in programs that are announced as great solutions but that are soon abandoned or replaced, without having conducted detailed assessments, diagnoses, or studies to back the new initiatives, jeopardizes capacity building in the profession, which necessarily requires periods that go beyond one government's term in office.

The second part of the present document contains guidelines for the formulation of teachers' policies in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, around the same areas that are analyzed in State of the Art. For each of these areas, there are specific guidelines and a general statement.

The challenge of proposing particular guidelines on teachers' policies is undertaken knowing that some of them will be more relevant for some countries. Also, in general, if some countries wish to adopt these guidelines as their own, they will do so within different timelines, and with the modifications required by each national context. This means that in each country there must be strong efforts to contextualize and to consider the particular political, social, and economic system, as well as cultural identity. Moreover, guidelines must not be considered in isolation, since they touch on aspects of a reality that policies should seek to address in a systemic manner.

❶ Four general guidelines are proposed regarding initial teacher training:

a. **Promoting the entrance of better candidates in the teaching profession, by establishing stricter admission requirements in pedagogical studies[1].** This way, the efforts made in education policy and at training institutions must be geared towards candidates who fulfill the minimum requirements in order to become good educators. Also pointed out is the need to search for formulas that block any form of discrimination against indigenous or low–income students.

b. **Strengthening the quality of teacher education programs, particularly in curricular content, training strategies, learning assessment, and the skills of teacher educators.** This requires the commitment of public and training institutions. Key elements for quality teacher training are the generation of agreed upon standards, and the association of training institutions with schools in the development of practices and in their assessment.

c. **Offering relevant quality training for educational work with disadvantaged social groups.** There is a special need for training future teachers to work in diverse and complex environments, including rural and indigenous sectors.

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[1] Argentina's consultation group has questioned this general guideline. The group maintains that "the state cannot overlook the educational results that youth with the required credentials achieve. The state is obligated to find solutions that guarantee the right to education, if those results do not match the expectations of the education system." General Report on the State of the Art, Buenos Aires, 20 February 2011, p.10.

d. **Ensuring appropriate systems to regulate quality in training programs and in the skills of students who graduate from them.** The proposal is for the establishment of assessment and accreditation systems for training institutions, besides offering them conditions that will allow them to acquire the necessary capacities.

❷ Regarding **professional development and continuing education,** the following six general guidelines are proposed:

a. **Ensuring the right to relevant and pertinent continuing education for teachers, focusing on comprehensive training and student learning.** It is necessary to offer teachers professional learning opportunities that improve their capacity to respond to new educational challenges. It is important to make progress in the construction and agreed upon definition of standards that can serve as a reference for teachers' professional development and the assessment of their performance. Also, there must encouragement and conditions to promote the participation of teachers in training activities.

b. **Ensuring a significant impact of continuing education in teaching practices and student learning.** This guideline is associated to the need of promoting the development of learning communities; focusing on the connection between training activities and classroom practice; reaching appropriate coverage; and utilizing new technologies in professional development activities.

c. **Building professional development road maps, while acknowledging stages in the teaching career.** Emphasis is placed on the need to support and accompany new teachers as they enter the profession, and assigning educators with a high level of professional development in advisory roles to back their peers, particularly beginning teachers.

d. **Implementing regulatory mechanisms for the continuing education offer in order to ensure quality and relevance.** The proposal is for advancing in the consolidation of training and professional development public institutions, in order for them to coordinate agencies involved in continuing education, and to develop the capacities of agencies that offer the different programs.

e. **Promoting collaborative learning in the school context.** Taking into account the context in which teachers work is the foundation for effective training actions, the motivation, and the commitment that are essential for professional learning. The isolated work of teachers in the classroom must be overcome through collaborative action. For this to happen, school directors must lead professional development and properly organize teaching activities.

f. **Regulating the relevance of graduate degrees' offer.** The recent evolution of teacher demand towards the desire to obtain graduate degrees, presents new challenges. Among the most significant is the need to incorporate new criteria related to the relevance and impact potential of teaching practices; awarding scholarships to conduct studies in priority areas; and considering teachers' merit as well as the needs of educational centers.

❸ The following six guidelines are proposed in relation to the **teaching career:**

a. **Designing and implementing careers that are focused on strengthening the teaching profession and on advocating for the recruitment of good candidates.** Teaching careers should be conceived as part of policies that are focused on an effective appreciation of teaching, and on social appreciation for the profession. This should be achieved by improving salaries and working conditions. We propose designing promotion modalities that would prevent the abandonment of classroom duties.

b. **Acknowledging different stages in the development of the teaching career and of competencies.** Categories for classroom teachers must be introduced, according to the level of experience and competencies development. It is especially important to consider a period of accompaniment or induction for beginning teachers, as well as the creation of conditions for educators with high performance levels to conduct technical tasks and to support less experienced teachers.

c. **Structuring the teaching career around the enhancement of professional performance.** It is important to assess and acknowledge teacher performance as the cornerstone of promotions in the career. Experience and quality improvements must be appreciated, as long as they turn into professional learning. It is essential to encourage the creation of more spaces for training and debate within teachers' collectives.

d. **Designing and implementing a policy of salaries and incentives that is clear and articulated, in order to encourage professional teaching.** An attractive professional career should mean that as the teacher progresses, she/he should get a decent salary and pay rises, and have access to new professional development. It is also important to motivate highly qualified teachers to have access to and remain in schools that serve students from the poorest sectors and students who come from areas that are far away from urban centers.

e. **Developing valid and agreed upon systems for the assessment of teacher professional performance.** Education systems need to have in place mechanisms to assess performance and to promote its improvement. It must be assumed that this represents

a complex challenge. For this, it is necessary to develop and implement an objective and transparent assessment system, built with the participation of teachers, and based on standards that are validated by the teaching community. Teacher assessment must be educational. It is essential that improvements in practices are acknowledged, and that measures are taken regarding educators who enhance their teaching practices.

f. **Counting on transparent mechanisms to fill teaching positions and to assign duties**. Establishing clear policies for entering the profession, which entails setting basic requirements nationwide, based on compliance with the minimum standards. There must be unbiased and transparent open calls for filling teaching vacancies. It must be guaranteed that, in each school, teachers are assigned to the position where they can make their best contribution.

❹ Four general guidelines are proposed regarding **institutions and processes of teachers' policies:**

a. **Prioritizing teachers' policies in a systemic approach.** The strong influence of teachers as a factor in the quality of education, forces us to give teachers' policies a strategic and central role. It is essential to devise teachers' policies in a comprehensive and systemic manner, directing them towards the public interest, in a way that they can contribute to overcome unequal learning opportunities.

b. **Achieving more effectiveness in teachers' policies, by reconciling continuity and change criteria.** Defining the purpose of teachers' policies, long–term and mid–term goals, and reasonable levels of stability, as well as flexibility margins and room for innovation and improvement.

c. **Promoting the participation of stakeholders in policy generation.** Generating dialogue and participation that help to reach nationwide agreements. These pacts should include representatives from different education and social sectors, in order to address the need of education systems to adapt to new and rigorous external demands. It is particularly important to create and maintain dialogue platforms and collaborative relations between governments and teachers' organizations.

d. **Strengthening public institutions for the development of teachers' policies.** Developing public institutions that are robust in terms of their capacities, attributions, resources, and managerial continuity. Promoting those institutions to be influential in the different dimensions of teachers' policies. It is important to concentrate on the institutions and processes that help to generate, implement, monitor, and evaluate policies, and not only on their content.

Introduction

1 Regardless of the institutional arrangement and the resources of an education system, its quality cannot be better than the quality of its teachers[2]. The quality, assignment distribution, and organization of teachers have a direct effect on equity. From both perspectives, the ways in which future teachers are selected, the characteristics of the training and certification process as education professionals, the manner in which the career is organized, and the level of support for continuing education constitute the most pressing challenge for today's education policies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Among the factors that can influence education as a tool to overcome inequality, and to establish basic cultural capacities for economic development and democratic citizenship, is teacher availability, not only in sufficient numbers, but also in training. This training is intellectual as well as moral, and theoretical as well as practical. Today, it is challenged by new requirements that Latin American and Caribbean societies present to their respective education systems, independently of their level of development, history, politics, and culture. Those requirements converge in presenting more rigorous demands to education professionals and, among broader conditions, are the result of: higher expectations of all groups and a greater socio–cultural diversity of the student body; weaker family bonds and community fabric as socialization structures; greater coverage of subject areas and depth of curricula; higher learning targets to be generally achieved.

The greater demands that teachers face are ultimately rooted in the decades–old changes that can be summarized as "globalized society; knowledge society". These demands put direct pressure on the main stakeholders of education policy –governments and teachers' unions– and force them to provide answers that match the new conditions, which requires new policies as well as new ways of relating between teachers and the state.

Given the basal nature of the greater capacities that are presently required from teachers throughout the Region, and of the policies and institutions that are needed to achieve and develop those capacities, the present document –like the project on which it is based– articulates a diagnosis about the situation of teachers in the Region, and also provides a set of action guidelines for policies, structured in four dimensions that are considered as key: initial teacher training, continuing education, the teaching career, and the policies that are needed to articulate all of them.

2 In the last few years, concern has been growing around the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean, about the challenges of strengthening the teaching profes-

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[2] The terms "teachers" and "educators" that are used throughout this document cover both male and female education professionals.

sion. International bodies like UNESCO, OECD, the Organization of Ibero–American States (OEI)[3], the Organization of American States (OAS), MERCOSUR, the World Bank, and the Regional Education Project for Latin America (PREAL) have made their efforts by developing and conducting studies, research, and meetings, and issuing publications about this subject. The converging lines are: the concern about attracting students with better conditions for a good professional performance; improving the quality of teachers' initial training; strengthening continuing education; promoting careers that facilitate professional development and ensure appropriate salaries; conditions for an effective teaching work; and performance evaluation systems based on agreed standards and criteria.

During the last decade, UNESCO's deliberations revolved around the need to have a high–quality performance–oriented initial teacher training in different contexts, which will attract talented young people by improving working conditions with an effective recognition of the teaching career. For this to happen, it is necessary to guarantee comprehensive policies that will link initial training, jobs, and continuing education. The proposal is for a teacher performance evaluation system based on basic standards that are agreed upon with educators' unions and social organizations. Also, there is a need to develop incentives and wage policies that lead to a new social and professional appreciation of educators (UNESCO 2007a).

❸ UNESCO's worldwide strategy named "Teachers for Education for All" highlights the existence of a triple gap regarding teachers in the developing world –policy gap, capacities gap, and funding gap– which is putting the targets of Education for All at risk.

In this global context, and considering the public policy needs of education in the Region, in 2010, OREALC/UNESCO established the initiative named "Strategic Project on Teachers in Latin America and the Caribbean", with the aim of helping to close teachers' policies and capacities gaps. Towards this end, the project –whose results are presented in this document– seeks to contribute with analysis and evidence–based prospective vision in the development of teachers' policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Specifically, actions are directed towards three goals: i) developing a State of the Art that covers what has been learned in the Region about efforts and critical knots linked to teachers issues; ii) based on those lessons and using prospective criteria, developed by comparative research such as the use of national focus groups whose members are later de–briefed, offering guidelines for the design of teachers' policies that are relevant for the Region; and iii) as an additional contribution, generating a regional network of stakeholders that can

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3 The 2021 Education Targets that Ibero–American Education Ministers set in 2008 mention "strengthening the teaching profession" as a general target, and "improving initial training for primary and secondary school teachers" and "promoting continuing education and developing the teaching career" as specific targets.

provide relevant vision, categorization, and criteria for the renewal of the public policy deliberation and formulation field in the Region.

For the development of this report, OREALC/UNESCO established a working method that is based on the contributions of Latin American teachers' policies experts and of consultation and deliberation groups from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago, that are made up of government, academic, and labor union stakeholders. The countries were selected using criteria of sub–regional representativity and of accumulated experience in education policies. Consultation groups met twice in 2011 to analyze the documents provided by the Technical Secretariat –which OREALC/UNESCO established for this project– and made improvement suggestions[4]. Thus, the present report is the result of an interaction between two sources and types of knowledge and criteria: specialization on regional teachers' issues and the experience of national groups.

At the request of OREALC/UNESCO, the development of this report and of the preliminary documents is under the responsibility of the Centro de Políticas y Prácticas Educativas (CEPPE) of Chile's Pontificia Universidad Católica[5], which is where the above mentioned Technical Secretariat was established.

In the framework of the outlined purposes and working methods, the following inputs have been considered to develop the present report:

a. A set of five documents that have been produced by educational and teachers' policies Latin American experts, which deal with the following specific issues: initial training (Beatrice Ávalos, from Chile); continuing education and professional development (Sylvia Ortega, from Mexico); teaching careers (Denise Vaillant, from Uruguay); teachers' organizations (Mariano Palamidessi, from Argentina); and institutionalization of teachers' policies (Simón Schwartzman, from Brazil)[6].

b. A discussion that was held at the Regional Seminar organized in Lima, Peru, on July 7th and 8th of 2011, based on the experts' presentations.

c. Answers provided by some countries (Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago), at the request of OREALC/UNESCO and the Technical Secretariat, in order to complement and update the information on those countries' situation.

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[4] During this process, Argentina's and Brazil's consultation groups questioned the strategy's methodology. The groups members thought that a state of the art should have been developed for each country first, instead of using an analysis conducted by experts and based on secondary sources, as has been done.

[5] The Technical Secretariat's members are Cristián Cox (CEPPE's director), Carlos Eugenio Beca, and Marianela Cerri.

[6] A significant part of these documents has been literally used in the development of the present report.

d. A summary of discussions about the draft of State of the Art, conducted by national groups in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago.

e. A summary of discussions about the draft of Policy Criteria and Guidelines, conducted by national groups in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru.

f. A document written by José Luis Guzmán and Marcela Gajardo, in representation of PREAL, about the situation of teachers in Central America.

g. A discussion that was held during two virtual meetings about teachers' policies that PREAL organized, with the participation of ministerial, academic, and labor representatives from Central America and the Dominican Republic.

4 Both in its diagnostic dimension and in its public policy guidance criteria, the present report is based on the premise that teachers' policies should not be addressed separately from other education policies. While in the last few years there has been a thorough analysis of the powerful influence of good teaching on education quality, it is clear that teaching can only reach its full potential in a school environment that offers favorable conditions for its development. In this sense, an effective teachers' policy, in terms of quality and equity, cannot be conceived apart from relevant curricula, the appropriate infrastructure and resources, and efforts in the institutional, financial, and organizational dimensions of education.

The need to have good teachers' policies is part of the ultimate goal of building education systems that can guarantee the right to quality education for all children, youth, and adults. This goes beyond the necessary condition of ensuring enrollment and continuance in school, and takes into account the relevance and quality of learning opportunities that are offered to all. The right to education is considered as enabling for exercising all other human rights, and as key for exercising citizenship, as well as for securing the foundations of economic development.

5 Consistent with its objectives, the present report is structured in two parts. The first part is the State of Art on Teachers' Policies in the Region. The second part contains a proposal for Criteria and Guidelines for Teachers' Policies, that should be considered according to each country's reality. Both parts of the report are organized in four thematic subjects: initial training, continuing education, the teaching career, and institutions and processes of teachers' policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, the report combines three conventional focuses in the analysis and discussion of teachers' issues like

initial training, continuing education, and the teaching career, with a newer subject –and therefore more difficult to document and analyze– such as the institutions and processes of policy generation, implementation, and evaluation.

While examining and applying the guidelines for the formulation of teachers' policies –second part of the report– it is important to keep in mind the different educational situation and political agenda of each country. In the Region, there are countries that face the challenge of having all teachers trained in pedagogy at the university level. This might happen because training has been offered at a secondary school level, or because a lack of teachers has led to the hiring of staff who have a secondary or higher level training, but have not studied pedagogy. For other countries, the challenge is not the institutional building of achieving a tertiary level education for all teachers. In some cases, the contents and practices that are in place at that level are not responding appropriately to the requirements of the school system and of society.

Obviously, the national context determines the most pressing problems, and these problems establish the relevance –differentiated for each national case– of the guidelines that the present report itemizes in its Second Part. As has been explained, these guidelines are based on the analysis of the Region's evidence as a whole, and on the policy experience and the assessment and prioritization criteria of eight national cases.

Nothing could be more historically and culturally accurate than responding to teachers' issues according to the reality of each country. At the same time, there are many obvious common traits, both globally and within the Region. This double approach permeates the whole report. In order to apply it in each country to improve teachers' policies, there must be strong efforts to put things in the national context. However, that contextualization should be able to benefit from the regional dimension and from the comparative analysis that has been carried out throughout this collaborative construction.

I

First Part

State of the Art of Teachers' Policies in the Region

State of the Art of Teachers' Policies in the Region

While teachers' policies must be conceived and analyzed in a comprehensive way, as part of an educational policy, for this study we have identified three key dimensions: first, initial teachers' training that is implemented at higher education institutions; second, continuing education for active teachers; and third, the teaching career conceived in its broadest sense, that is, regulations for professional performance and actions and norms that determine and promote social appreciation.

Regarding each of these dimensions, we present a general characterization and the critical issues that emerge from the situation that has been described.

However, an isolated approach to each of these dimensions will not allow us to reach the goal of having highly qualified educators, who are committed and responsible, as education systems require in order to guarantee a quality education for the whole population. The comprehensive or systemic design of policies is a necessary condition, so that the efforts that have been made in initial and continuing education are not fruitless due to the existence of an unattractive, poorly paid career. At the same time, initiatives for recognition, evaluations, and incentives to improve teacher performance will be sterile without a training that is solid and demanding.

Before the analysis of the dimensions that have been pointed out, we present a general characterization of teachers and their organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a general background of the Regional socio–economic context.

Finally, a dimension that is usually forgotten, but is of strategic importance: the way in which public policies for teachers are generated, particularly the existence or lack thereof institutions that are in charge of designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating those policies.

While generating and implementing these teachers' policies, it is essential to analyze the participation and influence of different social and political stakeholders. Undoubtedly, among them is the internationally recognized significance of educators' labor unions and professional organizations.

❶ General characteristics of educators and their organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean

▶ 1.1. Elements of the Regional context

Despite the efforts and progress of the last few decades regarding economic growth, social development, and the democratization of political systems, high levels of poverty and inequality persist in Latin America. In 2009, 33.1% of the Region's population lived in poverty, including 13,3% whose poverty condition was extreme. Income distribution in these countries is among the most unequal in the world (ECLAC, 2010).

The reality of each country in the region varies according to its level of development and to its socio–economic characteristics. World Bank data for 2009 show that Trinidad and Tobago's per capita GDP is 25,698 dollars; Argentina's is 14,559; Mexico's is 14,337; and Chile's is 14,331 dollars. There is a sharp contrast with countries like Nicaragua, which has a per capita GDP of 2,664 dollars; Honduras, with 3,849 dollars; and Bolivia, with 4,426 dollars[7]. At the same time, in Latin America there are big differences regarding the poverty level. In 2008, Chile's poverty index was 13.7%; Uruguay's was 14%; and Costa Rica's was 16.4%, while in countries like Honduras, Nicaragua, and Paraguay, those figures were 69.9%; 61.9%; and 58.2%, respectively. The same happens with the capacity of the state to combat poverty. Social public spending per capita averages 1,209 dollars in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Panama, and Uruguay, while it reaches only 181 dollars (in average) in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Paraguay (ECLAC, 2010). Education is one of the factors that can contribute the most to overcome poverty and inequality. "It is the main tool at the disposal of States to dissociate an individual's social background from the well–being he or she can attain throughout life. But the Region has not harnessed the education system as a driver of equal opportunity. Advances in coverage, access and progression through education cycles in recent decades have caused stratification in learning and attainment within educational systems." (ECLAC, 2010: 25).

The challenges present in the way of advancement towards universal educational opportunities are very different from country to country, according to the level of school coverage that has been achieved. While some countries have reached almost universal primary education and high enrolment rates in secondary education, others still do not have universal coverage at the primary level, and are very far from achieving it at the secondary level.

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[7] http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/POP.pdf
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP_PPP.pdf

Moreover, it is key to fully consider the Region's existing differences in school system coverage, and consequently in the level of literacy and schooling of young and adult populations; more specifically, in the different systems capacities to provide learning opportunities. In practically all countries of the region, the net enrollment rate for primary education is higher than 90%. However, there are significant differences regarding a two–year or bigger delay in the school level that children attend, and that does not correspond to their age. That level of overage reaches 26% and 25% of children in Guatemala and Nicaragua, respectively. In contrast, the rate is 5% in Costa Rica and 3% in Mexico (OEI 2010).

Access and timely progress towards and within lower–level secondary education is considerably weaker, and the situation in different countries is more heterogeneous. It goes from coverage of 97% and 94% in Brazil and Chile, respectively, to 41% in Guatemala and 47% in Nicaragua. This diversity is even broader in the case of higher–level secondary education. While in Brazil, Cuba and Chile the net enrollment rate exceeds 80%, in El Salvador and Guatemala it reaches 33% and 32%, respectively, and in Nicaragua is only 15% (OEI, 2010). A review of the information provided by studies like the SERCE (Second Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study of OREALC–UNESCO) and PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD) allows for a confirmation that educational inequities not only manifest themselves between those students who have access to the education system and those students who do not. There are also differences in the levels of quality of the education that is received. These differences are present within each school system, which multiplies the selective and inequality–reproducing nature of educational practices in our Region (SITEAL, 2010).

In terms of the quality of learning opportunities, there are also noticeable differences among the countries of the Region. In fact, according to SERCE results, for the 3rd grade of primary education, Cuba only has 7% of students at Level 1 or lower in Reading, and 11% in Math. The Dominican Republic has 78% and 90% of students at Level 1 or lower in Reading and Math, respectively.

▶ 1.2. Characteristics of educators

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there are 6.4 million teachers in primary and secondary education. At the primary level (International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED1)[8], is where the largest proportion of teachers work: 2.9 million, which corresponds to 45.6% of the total.

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[8] In its International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), UNESCO defines ISCED1 as the level that is usually intended to provide students a solid base in Reading, Writing, and Math. ISCED2 is the first level of secondary education, which usually continues with the basic programs of primary education, but is generally more divided into subject areas and counts on teachers who are more specialized in the areas that they teach. ▶

TABLE 1: Number of teachers for each education level in Latin America and the Caribbean (2008)

EDUCATION LEVEL	TEACHERS		
	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
PRIMARY ISCED1	643,000 | 22%	2,276,000 | 78%	2,919,000 | 45.6%
LOWER SECONDARY ISCED2	750,000 | 37%	1,277,000 | 63%	2,027,000 | 31.7%
HIGHER SECONDARY ISCED3	626,000 | 43%	831,000 | 57%	1,457,000 | 22.7%
TOTAL	2,019,000 | 31.5%	4,384,000 | 68.5%	6,403,000 | 100%

SOURCE: Developed by the authors, based on information from the global Education Digest 2010, published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Montreal.

One predominant trait in Latin America and the Caribbean is that teachers are over-whelmingly female. In fact, as Table 1 shows, 68.5% of educators are women, and that percentage is higher in primary education, where it reaches 78%. Table 2 shows figures for the eight countries selected for this State of the Art. Argentina and Brazil are the two countries with the highest rates of women teachers, while Guatemala, Peru, and Mexico have the lowest percentages.

TABLE 2: Percentage of women teachers according to education level in eight countries / regional average (2008)

EDUCATION LEVEL	PRIMARY ISCED1	LOWER SECONDARY ISCED2	HIGHER SECONDARY ISCED3
COUNTRY	% OF WOMEN TEACHERS	% OF WOMEN TEACHERS	% OF WOMEN TEACHERS
ARGENTINA	87	73	65
BRAZIL	91	73	62
CHILE	78 (2)	-	55
COLOMBIA	78	-	50 (1)
GUATEMALA	65	45	43
MEXICO	66	50	44
PERU	65	-	44 (1)
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	79	N/A	65
REGIONAL TOTAL	78	63	57

(1) It includes ISCED3 for Colombia and Peru. (2) It includes ISCED1 for Chile.
SOURCE: Developed by the authors, based on information from the Global Education Digest 2010, published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Montreal.

ISCED3 is the last stage of secondary education in most countries. It is usually organized by subject areas, and teachers are required to have a higher level of specialization than in ISCED2.

One of the factors that most influence teaching is the number of students that each educator must take care of in the classroom. While there is no comparative study on this situation, existing data on the student–teacher ratio shows 23 students per teacher in ISCED1, 18 pupils per teacher in ISCED2, and 15 in ISCED3. A great variation among countries can also be appreciated. In ISCED1, the fluctuation goes from 8 students per teacher in Bermuda to 33 in Honduras and El Salvador.

Some countries like Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico stand out because their ratios are above the Region's average, with 28 students per teacher in ISCED1, while Argentina and Trinidad and Tobago have ratios that are below the Region's average, with 17 students per teacher at that level. It must be pointed out that these ratios do not show the differences that are present within countries with respect to the number of students per classroom in urban and rural areas. For example, in Mexico, some urban schools have 50 children per classroom, while multi–grade rural schools might have less than 10 pupils.

Recent studies about the teacher population conducted in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean show how heterogeneous it is, by identifying its differences and common points at the Regional level. This helps to point out the kind of intervention that would be more appropriate according to socio–demographic and labor profiles, training experiences, performance contexts, and particular moments in the professional career of the sub–groups[9].

In countries like Argentina and Chile –among others– that are in "advanced demographic transition", broad coverage in primary and secondary education and the aging of their populations, with the resulting decrease in the number of boys and girls of school age, will demand moderate rates of teacher reposition (CELADE–ECLAC, 2000; Summits of the Americas, 2010), although Argentina foresees a deficit of graduated teachers in eight provinces, especially in secondary school. However, in a second group of countries, which are in "full demographic transition", among them Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago, there will be a demand for new teachers, in order to reach the goal of universal secondary education coverage, and to improve educational services at the primary level. Countries that are in "moderate demographic transition", like Guatemala, or "incipient demographic transition", like Bolivia and Haiti, there will be a need to increase the number of teachers in primary school. Finally, Trinidad and Tobago, among other countries, will demand teachers for early childhood care and education.

At the same time, in some countries it is possible to anticipate a generational change in the teacher population in the not so distant future. For example, in the case of Mexico, almost two fifths of basic education teachers have begun their careers less than ten years ago, and are younger than 35. On the other hand, over a fourth of them are of retirement age. The conclusion is that in around a decade there will be a generational change, which opens interesting opportunities (Ortega, 2011).

According to UNESCO's Global Education Digest 2010, taking into consideration the teacher population in five countries –as can be observed in Table 3– Chile and Jamaica

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[9] Only some of these aspects will be addressed. Specifically, those that are of special interest in the design of policies and programs.

have higher rates of primary school teachers who are 50 years of age or older, with 39.7% and 34.4%, respectively. In Brazil and in Argentina, this segment of the teacher population is 13.1% and 15.9%, respectively.

TABLE 3: Teacher's age and education levels in which they work (2008) / (Countries in WEI* and in UOE**)

	ISCED1 PRIMARY LEVEL %				
	YOUNGER THAN 30	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	OLDER THAN 60
ARGENTINA	14.4	41.6	28.0	12.8	3.1
BRAZIL	19.6	35.4	31.9	11.5	1.6
CHILE (a)	13.4	21.6	25.3	29.1	10.6
JAMAICA	16.7	30.9	18.0	28.7	5.7
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (b)	8.4	36.9	25.6	26.9	2.3

	ISCED2 LOWER SECONDARY %				
	YOUNGER THAN 30	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	OLDER THAN 60
ARGENTINA	16.2	35.0	30.0	14.7	4.0
BRAZIL	19.4	36.6	31.4	13.5	2.1
CHILE (a)					
JAMAICA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (b)	24.2	28.7	22.4	21.4	3.3

	ISCED3 HIGHER SECONDARY %				
	YOUNGER THAN 30	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	OLDER THAN 60
ARGENTINA	13	31.3	32.4	17.9	5.3
BRAZIL	17.9	33.3	31.7	14.7	2.4
CHILE (a)	13.7	26.4	28.8	23.7	7.4
JAMAICA	21.6	32.4	20.7	21.4	3.9
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (b)					

* World Education Indicators Programme
** Information on higher and middle–income countries in UNESCO/OECD/EUROSTAT database.
(a) ISCED1 data includes ISCED2 teachers.
(b) Information provided by the Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago.
SOURCE: Developed by the authors, based on information from Table 22 of the Global Education Digest 2010, published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Montreal.

On the same table, it can be observed that the proportion of older teachers is very high in Chile, where over a third of educators are 50 or older. The situation is totally different in Argentina, and even more so in Brazil, where around 15% is older than 50. On the other hand, the number of secondary school teachers who are younger than 30 is less than 20%, with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, which has 24.2%, and Jamaica, with 21.6%. Mexico and Peru were not included in Table 3, because no information is available for the base table.

The territorial distribution of teachers by age may vary in each country. Usually, older educators who are more experienced are concentrated in urban areas, and younger teachers, with less experience, work in distant or rural areas (UNESCO, 2006).

As it is known, teachers' experience, along with age distribution, has a strong impact on performance. Thus, this variable is key for the design of actions pertaining to professional development.

In initial training, there are differences regarding the proportion of teachers who have a tertiary education degree. The present trend indicates that, in the not so distant future, all members of the teacher population in most countries of the region will have this level of training.

The average percentage of teachers who complied with national certification levels to teach at the primary level was 74.6% in 2008, while the average of teachers who complied with the same requirements to work at the secondary level was 64.4% in that same year (UNESCO–UIS, 2009). Nevertheless, given the heterogeneous nature of teacher initial education that will be analyzed below, the graduation of teachers in many countries must not be necessarily considered as a guarantee of proper training.

In the English–speaking Caribbean, the number of certified teachers varies according to each country. It fluctuates around 50% for all levels in Belize and Saint Kitts and Nevis, between 60% and 80% in Barbados, between 80% and 90% in Trinidad and Tobago, and between 90% and 100% in Bahamas (UNESCO–UIS, 2006).

Interestingly, about teachers' working hours, 28% of educators who teach the 6th grade of primary school in the Region also have another job, which makes it more difficult to be available for extra–curricular activities or for continuing education (SITEAL, 2010). In Trinidad and Tobago, the distance between the teacher's residence and her/his place of work affects availability for extra–curricular activities.

It is important to remember the diversity of teachers regarding school and specialization levels, which represents differences in status, salaries, and self–perceptions. In many countries, those differences give origin to a variety of terms: "educators", for initial education; "teachers", for primary school; and "professors", for secondary school (Tenti, 2009)[10].

About the perception of the teaching profession, a study conducted by Vaillant and Rossel (2006) of 7 national cases (Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Uruguay) shows that teachers in these countries consider

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[10] It must be noted that in this report the terms "educators", "teachers", and "professors" are used interchangeably.

themselves somewhere between a vocational trainer or "missionary" who makes learning easier, rather than a person who is a cultural reference and who conveys knowledge. Tenti (2009) points out the historical distinction between a vocational and a professional conception of teaching. He adds that the growing complexity of teaching, along with the new scientific and technological knowledge that is needed to exercise it successfully, strengthen the demands for professionalization and weaken the vocational aspect.

Throughout the Region, teachers feel that besides the fact that society places growing demands on schools, educators must assume multiple tasks in care, health, meal distribution, counseling, guidance, and drug and alcohol abuse prevention, which makes it difficult to concentrate on teaching itself, where better results are expected (Falus and Goldberg, 2011). Interpersonal pedagogic relations, collective work, and the capacity to face and solve emerging problems can be highlighted as some of the current aspects of teaching (Tenti, 2010).

The role of the teacher tends to change in present–day society, since schools are no longer the only place where culture is conveyed, given that new information technologies multiply the channels of access to knowledge in daily life. This phenomenon, which sometimes is perceived as a threat to the role of the teacher, is really an opportunity for professionalization, and a challenge to assume the development of cognitive processes that will enable students to comprehend and incorporate new knowledge through the use of technological tools (Falus and Goldberg, 2011).

Regionally, teachers think of themselves as middle–class or lower middle–class, show relatively poor cultural consumption patterns and discontent with their working conditions, but also are quite satisfied with their profession (Tenti, 2007; Ortega, et al., 2011). This last perception is different among Mexican educators, who report –independently of the number of years of service– more satisfaction than at the beginning of their careers, and more appreciation for their wage and contract conditions.

Although it probably represents more than one country, a study that was conducted in Chile states that teachers see themselves as poorly paid, over–worked, and without enough time for planning, preparing materials, evaluations, professional advancement, team–work, and taking care of their students and their families, among other activities that are parallel to classroom teaching (Bellei and Valenzuela, 2010).

▶ 1.3. Characteristics of teachers' organizations in the Region

In Latin America, teachers' guilds or unions emerged in the 1920's, and expanded in the following three decades during the time of consolidation of the national education systems. Those organizations grew in the background of associations and pedagogic societies that had existed in many countries of the Region, starting from the last decades of the 19th Century.

Another wave of emergence of teachers' unions took place in the 1960's and 1970's; this period was associated with labor resistance and confrontation against state repression. Often, unions that were created during that time also became politically radical-

ized. One clear example of unions that are strongly identified with their radical origins is the Union of Education Workers of Peru (SUTEP, by its Spanish acronym), which was established in 1972 (Degregori, 1990). In Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, existing teachers' unions rebuilt part of their identity in the struggle against military dictatorships in the 1970's and 1980's.

In the 1980's the teacher union experience was expressed in large demonstrations in several countries. These mobilizations were marked by wage conflicts in the context of fiscal crises and economic recession (Gindin, 2009). Between the late 1980's and early 1990's, new municipal and sub–national union confederations were established, which were not included in existing national organizations. That is the case of the Confederation of Argentinean Educators (CEA, by its Spanish–language acronym), and the National Confederation of Education Workers in Brazil (CNTE, by its Portuguese–language acronym), both founded in 1990.

As opposed to the main trend in Latin America, teachers' organizations in the Caribbean were structured as professional associations (Palamidessi and Legarralde, 2006). That was the case in Jamaica with the establishment of the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) in 1964, the Dominican Teachers' Association (ADP, by its Spanish acronym) in 1970, and the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (TTUTA) in 1979. In Central America, teachers' organizations were founded as labor unions (Honduras and Guatemala). In the case of Costa Rica, both professional associations, the National Educators' Association (ANDE, by its Spanish acronym) and the Secondary Education Teachers' Association (APSE, by its Spanish acronym), established in 1943 and 1955 respectively, followed the labor union model.

Closely linked to the breadth and intricacy of each country and its public sector, in Latin America and the Caribbean there are organizations that range from small groups with little capacity to put pressure or mobilize people, to large unions that are determining social and political actors. Among the national organizations that have been considered is the National Union of Education Workers of Mexico (SNTE, by its Spanish acronym), the largest in Latin America with 1.5 million members. The smallest union in the region is Trinidad and Tobago's TTUTA with 10,700 members.

In the case of unions, the number of members must be looked at in comparison with the total number of educators. As is pointed out in Table 4, membership rates vary widely among the different countries, with Mexico having a very high number.

Membership levels fluctuate over time. That is the case of SUTEP in Peru, which shows declining levels of unionized teachers in the last three decades (Zegarra and Ravina, 2003).

Labor unions and professional colleges and associations

In Latin America and the Caribbean, it is possible to find teachers' organizations that adopt the labor union or the professional association model.

Teachers' unions are non–profit groups that have the objective of organizing and representing educators (members and non–members), in the defense of their individual and

collective interests, particularly with regard to salaries and working conditions, but also in relation to the education policies that are implemented (Vieira Ferreira, 2010).

Professional associations are focused on representing the interests of their members. In that sense, professional associations tend to consider their members as specialized, and as people who are in control of their labor situation and share ethical norms about their tasks.

Professional colleges are groups recognized by the government, and have the goal of structuring a certain profession at the same time that they defend the interests of their collegiate members. Chile's College of Teachers is a unique case. It was created in 1974 with a decree issued by the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, to replace the Union of Education Workers (SUTE, by its Spanish acronym), which had been disbanded after the military coup in 1973 (Pérez and Sandoval, 2008). Over the years, the organization has been able to function with more autonomy –with the characteristics of a labor union– and without giving up its professional association status (Weinstein, 2006)[11].

Among the characteristics of teachers' unions in the Region, it is worth mentioning an expansion in connections at the Latin American and international levels. In this sense, Regional history has its origins in 1928, with the First Teachers' Congress of the Americas, held in Buenos Aires. Presently, a large number of teachers' unions from the Region belongs to two important international associations. Sixteen national unions or guilds are part of the Education International (EI). Thirteen organizations, many of which overlap with the former, belong to the Confederation of American Educators (CEA, by its Spanish–language acronym).

TABLE 4: Types of educators' organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, number of members, and unionization percentages

COUNTRY	NATIONAL UNIONS (a)	POFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	PROFESSIONAL COLLEGES	NUMBER OF MEMBERS (APPROX.)	UNIONIZATION PERCENTAGE (b)
ARGENTINA	ARGENTINEAN UNION OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS EDUCATORS (SADOP)			N/A	
		TECHNICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (AMET)		N/A	N/A
	ARGENTINEAN TEACHERS' UNION (UDA)			N/A	
	CONFEDERATION OF ARGENTINEAN EDUCATORS (CEA)			N/A	N/A

[11] Democratically–oriented educators who were against the dictatorship first formed their own organizations, like AGECH, and later on took advantage of statutory gaps to win open elections in the College of Teachers and occupy leadership roles.

COUNTRY	NATIONAL UNIONS (a)	POFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	PROFESSIONAL COLLEGES	NUMBER OF MEMBERS (APPROX.)	UNIONIZATION PERCENTAGE (b)
ARGENTINA	CONFEDERATION OF EDUCATION WORKERS OF THE REPIBLIC OF ARGENTINA (CTERA)			286,365 (C)	48.6
BRAZIL	NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF EDUCATION WORKERS (CNTE)			949,629 (C)	44.2
BOLIVIA	NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF RURAL TEACHERS OF BOLIVIA (CONMERB)			N/A	
	CONFEDERATION OF URBAN EDUCATION WORKERS OF BOLIVIA (CTEUB)			N/A	
CHILE			CHILEAN COLLEGE OF THEACHERS	71,982 (D)	53.3
COLOMBIA	COLOMBIAN FEDERATION OF EDUCATORS (FECODE)			270,000 (E)	73.8
COSTA RICA	EDUCATION WORKERS UNION OF COSTA RICA (SEC)			21,000 (F)	
		SECONDARY EDUCATION TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (APSE)		21,000 (F)	
		NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS (ANDE)		45,000 (F)	
			COLLEGE OF GRADUATES AND EDUCATORS IN LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE AND THE ARTS (COLYPRO)	25,000 (F)	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC		DOMINICAN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (ADP)		N/A	
ECUADOR	NATIONAL EDUCATORS' UNION (UNE)			N/A	
EL SALVADOR	UNION OF TEACHERS WITH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (SIMEDUCO)	NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SALVADORAN EDUCATORS (ANDES)		N/A	

COUNTRY	NATIONAL UNIONS (a)	POFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	PROFESSIONAL COLLEGES	NUMBER OF MEMBERS (APPROX.)	UNIONIZATION PERCENTAGE (b)
GUATEMALA	EDUCATION WORKERS' UNION OF GUATEMALA (STEG)			N/A	
	NATIONAL TEACHERS' COORDINATING COMMITTEE (ANM)			N/A	
	GUATEMALA TEACHERS UNION (SMG)			N/A	
HONDURAS	FEDERATION OF EDUCATORS' ORGANIZATIONS OF HONDURAS (FOMH)		COLLEGE OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS OF HONDURAS (COPEMH)	N/A	
			HONDURAN PROFESSIONAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATIONAL TRAINING (COLPROSUMAH)	N/A	
JAMAICA		JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (JTA)		N/A	
MEXICO	NATIONAL UNION OF EDUCATION WORKERS OF MEXICO (SNTE)			1,600,000	129.2
PANAMA		TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA (APRP)		N/A	
PARAGUAY	FEDERATION OF EDUCATORS OF PARAGUAY (FEP)			N/A	
	EDUCATION WORKERS' ORGANIZATION OF PARAGUAY (OTEP)			N/A	
	NATIONAL EDUCATORS' UNION –NATIONAL UNION (UNE-SN)			N/A	
PERU	UNION OF EDUCATION WORKERS OF PERU (SUTEP)			145,000 (G)	41.9
				N/A	N/A
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO		TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO UNIFIED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (TTUTA)		10,700 (H)	73.3

COUNTRY	NATIONAL UNIONS (a)	POFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	PROFESSIONAL COLLEGES	NUMBER OF MEMBERS (APPROX.)	UNIONIZATION PERCENTAGE (b)
URUGUAY	URUGUAYAN FEDERATION OF EDUCATORS (FUM)			N/A	
	NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION TEACHERS (FENAPES)			N/A	
VENEZUELA	VENEZUELAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (FVM)			N/A	

(a) In some countries, there are unions that are officially recognized at the municipal or provincial level, but that do not act nationwide.

(b) Data of the number of teachers used to estimate percentages in this column were taken from Tables 3 and 6 of the Global Education Digest 2010, published by UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, Montreal. However, the unionization rate might be somewhat distorted, due to membership of workers who are not educators and/or educators who are retired in some unions. That might explain percentages that are higher than 100%, as is presented for Mexico.

(c) Gindin (2009).

(d) Teachers who are members of the College, and who are active nationally, (2009–2010 campaign).

(e) "Quiénes somos", (www.fecode.edu.co). Latest consultation: 23 May 2011.

(f) Vargas Salazar (2008)

(g) Zegarra and Ravina (2003)

(h) TTUTA website (www.ttuta.org). Latest consultation: 23 May 2011.

SOURCE: Developed by the authors based on Palamidessi and Legarralde, 2011.

The organization and actions of labor unions fall within the context of regulations and practices aimed at representing the interests of educators as workers. Associations, rather, emphasize the professional nature of teachers and professors (Fernández, 2001). In principle, the expected set of actions linked to dialogue or confrontation, as well as the work that these organizations may carry out, would be different.

The distinction between labor unions and professional associations or colleges leads to different mechanisms of representation and integration, generating divergent ways of constituting an educators' identity (Vieira Ferreira, 2007). The values, knowledge, and senses that are mobilized when educators are considered as "workers" promote integration around the recognition of unity and homogeneity. Being considered as "professionals" emphasizes autonomy, and accountability for individual performance and results, based on the possession of specialized skills. In a certain way, education policies throughout the world and in Latin America converge with the position of educators' organizations, in the sense of seeking the professionalization of teaching, even if there are different interpretations of this concept, from the most technical to the most critical and reflecting approach.

When these organizations were founded, the distinction between teachers' labor unions and professional associations influenced the kinds of resources they mobilized as stakeholders in education policies. In the case of teachers' unions, it was common to use mobilization capabilities in confrontation practices such as strikes. Professional associations usually favored the use of knowledge resources and negotiation practices, consistent with their identity as specialized groups (Palamidessi and Legarralde, 2006). However, in the last few decades, it is possible to observe a growing convergence between teachers' unions and professional associations regarding the resources that they use as actors in processes of education policies. Some labor unions have established research institutes, in order to have more information at their disposal during collective bargaining processes, as is the case of the "Marina Vilte" Pedagogical Research Institute and CTERA in Argentina, and the Institute for Teacher Training and Development (INFODEM), linked to SUTEP in Peru. Other unions have teams of researchers, like the SNTE in Mexico. In some countries, professional associations have joined labor union confederations, like the Chilean College of Teachers, which has become a member of the Unified Workers' Central (CUT, by its Spanish acronym) and has called for strikes and mobilizations.

In that sense, given the convergence trend between labor unions and professional associations and colleges, it may be stated that the actions of teachers' organizations in the Region include and combine –with variations– three elements: a) negotiations and struggle for better salaries, labor rights, and working conditions; b) Political and pedagogical–educational discussions in the search for more social recognition and legitimacy; c) Pushing for more participation in decision–making processes, within the framework of education systems and in the political structures of society.

There are different levels of teachers' organizations in each national case. This is usually related to the structure of the state, and national and sub–national levels of educational governance. Labor relations of teachers at different moments of history determined that unions of different sizes and scope were formed. In unitary countries with nationwide labor relations such as Mexico, national unions were formed, and took on the role of negotiating for better wages and working conditions.

From a different perspective, two organization and coordination models may be identified among teachers' groups in the Region: a) Teachers' unions that are members of confederations (CTERA and CEA in Argentina, and CNTE in Brazil); b) National organizations that have chapters in different jurisdictions, such as some groups in Argentina and Chile.

On the one hand, it is possible to differentiate between nationwide and broadly representative organizations like in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago, and on the other, there are scattered organizations which operate independently, loosely coordinated, or with temporary alliances, like in Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Paraguay.

TABLE 5: Organization and coordination models for educators in some countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

NATIONWIDE AND BROADLY REPRESENTATIVE LABOR UNIONS OR PROFESSIONAL COLLEGES	SCATTERED ORGANIZATIONS WHICH OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY, LOOSELY COORDINATED, OR WITH TEMPORARY ALLIANCES
ARGENTINA (CTERA)	GUATEMALA (STEG) (AMG) (SMG)
BRAZIL (CNTE)	NICARAGUA (ANDEN) (CTE) (FTEM)
CHILE COLLEGE OF TEACHERS	EL SALVADOR (ANDES) (SIMEDUCO)
COLOMBIA (FECODE)	PARAGUAY (FEP) (OTEP) (UNE - SN)
MEXICO (SNTE)	
PERU (SUTEP)	
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (TTUTA)	

SOURCE: Developed by the authors based on Palamidessi and Legarralde, 2011.

The level of internal democracy in Latin American teachers' unions also varies. One key indicator is the rotation or lack thereof in leadership positions. In some cases, leaders remain in their positions for a long time, and this facilitates a concentration of power. This type of situation is more frequent where unions maintain a corporate–type relationship with the state[12]. In other cases, the original mandate as an opposition force –or a mandate that is associated to resisting coercive and repressive state policies– has tended to create more horizontal and agreed upon decision–making structures. In Brazil and in Argentina, unions periodically change their leaders, as a valued distinctive characteristic (Gindin, 2008). In these cases, internal dissent is often channeled through local representation levels, and does not have much influence on the national leadership.

The emergence of more complex, differentiated, and pluralistic societies has given rise to an incipient diversity of interests that, in many cases, do not go further than the level of representation in traditional labor unions. Besides the traditional labor unions and professional associations, social and cultural pluralism has led to the formation of teachers' associations, networks, and groups that gather different sectors of the teaching community: a) Organizations of teachers according to the subject areas that they teach, such

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[12] In Mexico, SNTE has a National Executive Committee that is responsible for establishing the dates of union locals' meetings, when local leaderships are renewed. This allows the National Executive Committee to control any opening for new local leaders, and therefore govern its own legitimacy. Given this situation, internal opposition factions, such as the National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers, are forced to act as separate organizations (Gindin, 2008).

as the National Association of Math Teachers of Mexico (ANPM, by its Spanish–language acronym), or the National Association of Geography Teachers of Uruguay (ANPM, by its Spanish–language acronym); b) Organizations dedicated to research and analysis about teaching, like the Network of Applied Participatory Research for Curricular Renovation (REDIPARC, by its Spanish–language acronym) in Argentina, and Pedagogic Expedition in Colombia.

In this direction, it is important to mention that some teachers' organizations like FECODE in Colombia and the College of Teachers in Chile have developed significant initiatives of pedagogic movements, with the goal of contributing to reflection and to teachers' professional development, and to propose pedagogic and curricular changes.

In summary, the predominant form of organization is both labor unions and professional associations. At the same time, these organizations adopt internal structures that go from assemblies and periodic renovation to leaderships with a great concentration of power and little room for internal dissent. The size, the scope within the labor force, and the level of consolidation of these teachers' organizations can also vary widely. The agenda of demands of teachers' labor unions may be grouped around three themes: economic issues, such as pay hikes, working conditions, statutes, and other norms that regulate teaching; political issues, such as participation in decision–making processes of education and school policy; and ideological issues, such as questioning the general ideological leanings of education policy or the general leaning of a government (Palamidessi and Legarralde, 2006).

❷ Initial teacher training

▶ 2.1. Characteristics of initial training systems in the Region

In Latin America, the institutional base for teacher training has its origins in the teachers' schools that were established throughout the 19th Century in all the mentioned countries. Some of those institutions still remain. Parallel to this institutional foundation, and with the aim of addressing the growth of a secondary level population, university–linked institutions were created, and these later became Education Departments within universities. This university–level training is not as rooted in all countries included in this study, but it represents a significant factor in teacher education, particularly for secondary school, where it is predominant.

Initially, in Latin America and in the English–speaking Caribbean, primary school teachers were trained in high school. This began to change progressively since the late 1960's, but more intensely since the late 1980's, in a process that has been called the "tertiarization" of primary school teachers. This process is ongoing, since Guatemala, along with Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Suriname still have in place a high school–based training process. Nevertheless, in the latter countries there is a trend towards implementing tertiary level training, besides the introduction of qualifying programs for "empirical" educators, that is, those without a higher pedagogical training.

Training institutions

Presently, four types of institutions may be identified:

❶ Universities, which through their Education Departments and other academic units, train teachers for the whole school system (in some countries), and exclusively for secondary school (in other countries). These institutions also implement education research and outreach.

❷ Pedagogic universities: Along the path of establishing tertiary level training institutions for teachers, some countries created pedagogic universities. This constituted a strategy to improve initial and continuing education for teachers, and to strengthen academic research as a means to solve educational problems, and to serve as a cultural reference in societies where they function. Among the most important of these institutions are Mexico's National Pedagogic University (1978), Colombia's National Pedagogic University (1955), Honduras' "Francisco Morazán" National Pedagogic University (1989), Venezuela's "Libertador" Experimental Pedagogic University (1983), and Chile's Metropolitan Education Sciences University (1986).

❸ Higher Pedagogic Institutes: Tertiary, non–university level institutions. Some have their origins in secondary–level training institutions, and usually depend administratively and academically on the Ministries of provincial governments. In some coun-

tries, these institutions train teachers for the whole school system. In other countries, they train teachers only for early childhood and primary education. In some cases, these institutions implement university–level academic activities.

❹ Secondary–Level Teacher Training Schools: Secondary schools that are dedicated to the training of primary school teachers and, in some cases, early childhood education teachers. Usually, these schools are administratively and academically dependent on the Ministries of Education.

In the English–speaking Caribbean, teacher training began in the third decade of the 19th Century with the establishment of the first teachers' college in Jamaica, which was the equivalent of secondary–level teachers' schools in Latin America. A more institution-alized teacher training only began in the English–speaking Caribbean in the post–war era (Richardson, 2005). Presently, there are "colleges" specialized mainly in tertiary training for pre–school and primary (ISCED1) and lower–level secondary (ISCED2). Also, universities and "university colleges" cover all levels of the education system, including concur-rent programs where students graduate with a Bachelor in Education degree, and con-secutive programs for university students specializing in higher–level secondary, who get a Diploma in Education.

Table 6 shows the institutional nature of teacher training in countries included in this study, and points out whether that training takes place at the secondary, non–university tertiary, or university levels.

TABLE 6: Initial teacher training in Latin America and the Caribbean: institutional level

LEVEL OF INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING				
SCHOOL LEVEL	SECONDARY	MAINLY TERTIARY, NON - UNIVERSITY	HIGHER INSTITUES AND UNIVERSITIES	MAINLY UNIVERSITY
INITIAL	GUATEMALA	ARGENTINA, MEXICO, PERU	COLOMBIA, ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN	BRAZIL, CHILE
ISCED1 (PRIMARY)	GUATEMALA	ARGENTINA, MEXICO, PERU	COLOMBIA, ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN	BRAZIL, CHILE
ISCED (LOWER SECONDARY)		MEXICO	ARGENTINA, PERU, ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN	BRAZIL, CHILE, GUATEMALA, COLOMBIA
ISCED1 (HIGHER SECONDARY)			ARGENTINA, PERU	BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, CHILE, GUATEMALA, MEXICO*, ENGLISH SPEACKING CARIBBEAN

* Teachers for higher secondary school (ISCED3) have not been trained as educators, and usually have different types of college degrees.

SOURCE: Developed by the authors based on Palamidessi and Legarralde, 2011.

It is noteworthy that distance learning for teacher training has grown in Brazil, Colombia, and the English–speaking Caribbean, among others. It is not clear how effective these programs are. Regarding the Brazilian experience, Gatti and Sá Barreto (2009) express some concern about the way in which this training is offered at Brazil's Open University. The same concern has been expressed in Chile, with the explosive growth of distance teacher training courses offered since 2000. This led authorities to enforce measures aimed at neutralizing distance learning, and to cancel distance–learning programs.

Finally, based on the Teach for America model that emerged in the United States, in many countries of the region (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru) there are initiatives to recruit qualified university graduates as teachers for schools in low–income sectors. This model consists of providing interested university graduates with minimum training for classroom teaching (usually in summer courses) and classroom mentoring. This initiative has been resisted by teacher training institutions and their instructors in the United States and England, because they consider that it de–professionalizes teaching (Zeichner, 2010). In the Region, there is no apparent resistance to the program due to the fact that it has little coverage, but it is possible that it will be a source of conflict in coming years.

Duration of studies

There are significant variations in the duration of studies, going from four to five years for all levels, as is the case in Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Peru, and three years or more, as is the case in Brazil. Training for the initial level and ISCED1 at Colombian teachers' schools is for two years, while university–level training lasts five years. In Guatemala, training for the initial level and ISCED1 fluctuates between three and four years (because not all institutions have changed their systems according to new existing policies), while there are two programs for secondary school teacher training with different durations. A person can become a teacher in three years, but if someone is pursuing a Bachelor's degree, then it takes five years to graduate. As Table 7 shows, the general trend is for a longer duration of studies for those who want to become secondary school educators.

In the English–speaking Caribbean, the situation varies according to the type of certification that is pursued. A Certificate in Teaching or a Certificate in Education demands a shorter time, usually two years (but this is in a process of modification). Diplomas in Teaching take three years and Associate Degrees take two years, but can constitute the first part of a four–year program that leads to a Bachelor in Education (offered by universities). Finally, there is a Diploma in Education that is offered by consecutive programs to train university graduates.

TABLE 7: Duration of studies for initial teacher training in seven countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

COUNTRY	INITIAL	ISCED1	ISCED2	ISCED3
ARGENTINA	4 - 5	4 - 5	4 - 5	4 - 5
BRAZIL	3 OR +	3 OR +	3 OR +	3 OR +
CHILE	4 - 5	4 - 5	4 - 5	4 - 5
COLOMBIA	2 - 5	2 - 5	5	5
GUATEMALA	3 - 4	3 - 4	3 - 5	3 - 5
MEXICO	4 - 5	4 - 5	4 - 5	--
PERU (A)	5 - 6	5 - 6	5 - 6	5 - 6
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (B)	1 - 2	1 - 2	1 - 2	1 - 2

(a) Teachers for higher secondary school (ISCED3) have not been trained as educators, and usually have different types of college degrees.
(b) Some students at Higher Pedagogic Institutes attend complementary studies for one or two years at universities in order to obtain a teaching degree.
SOURCE: Developed by the authors according to official information from each country.

Quantitative demands on the system

In a context of quantitative demands on education systems and the need to have enough teachers to comply with Millennium Goals[13], it is interesting to note that in many countries, the supply of educators is considered to be much higher than needed, which translates into unemployment for teachers who graduate from training institutions, particularly for primary and lower–secondary school teachers. The situation has been called "extreme" in the case of Peru, at least until very recently, with the exception of intercultural bilingual education, Math, and Science. It has been dubbed as possibly problematic in Mexico, except in rural and indigenous areas. While in some countries of the Region, teacher training programs have expanded in recent years, research about the supply and demand of teachers is not conclusive when considering the processes of enrollment growth that can influence the demand for teaching hours (student/teacher ratio; classroom hours in teachers' contracts; the extension of the school day, and others). Moreover, there might be situations like in Brazil where many teacher training graduates are not working as teachers, which generates problems to satisfy demand (Gatti et al., 2011).

Guatemala is different in terms of the need for training, because the number of teach-

[13] The Millenium Goals that presidents and heads of State of 189 countries subscribed in 2000 include the commitment to achieve universal coverage in primary education by 2015.

ers who have graduated or are adequately certified is less than 50% of those who teach the 3rd and 6th grades, the two levels that were analyzed in the SERCE (2008). This situation could worsen due to the challenge presented by broader coverage in early childhood and secondary education.

On the other hand, in most countries the supply of teachers is insufficient for Science in secondary school. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, there is an excess of supply in academic areas, but there is a shortage in Scenic and Visual Arts, Physical Education, and Professional/Vocational Education.

Curricular guidelines

With regard to guidelines and curricular content of training programs, while at the moment there is no comparative study, there is research about some countries that shows parallel trends in their shortcomings. For example, in Brazil, the different training programs show a great curricular diversity, despite the fact that there are national curricular guidelines that are not always followed. This, in a context where 68% of enrollment for teaching degrees belongs to private institutions. Also, the contents of primary school teacher training are considered as fragmented and dispersed, with little emphasis being made on the requirements for classroom teaching, particularly regarding subject area content. There is a special difficulty in articulating practice and theory, and there is not enough concentration on the methodological aspects of teaching (Gatti and Sá Barreto, 2009; Gatti et al., 2011).

A study conducted in Colombia some years ago (Calvo et al., 2004), highlighted the existence of a large number of courses in teacher training. This interferes with the learning of the basic aspects that are necessary to teach curricular contents while using the appropriate didactic strategies.

Studies about teacher training in Peru point out the lack of an intercultural approach and of critical thinking, besides the limitations of didactic capacities in general. There are training institutions that work with three different training curricula, which shows the non–continuity of policies, and also the tremendous emphasis that is placed on curricula as the cornerstone of change to improve the quality of training (Oliart, 1996; Montero et al., 2005; and Ames and Uccelli, 2008).

The IEA TEDS–M international study about the knowledge level of aspiring Chilean teachers showed that it was considerably lower than the knowledge of Math and Math teaching methods of participants from 15 other countries (Ávalos and Matus, 2010). Moreover, in the nationwide "Inicia" test conducted in Chile in 2010 with students who graduate as basic education teachers, the average of correct answers about the subjects that are taught in primary school was only 51% (ISCED1).

In any case, it is necessary to distinguish between training for primary school and secondary school teachers. In the first case, what predominates is pedagogic training and basic subject area instruction without any specialization, although there are some recent experiences in which subject area specializations are incorporated. In the case of secondary school teacher training, there is subject area specialization, usually in concurrent pro-

grams, and exceptionally in a consecutive manner. However, weaknesses are observed in pedagogic training.

Additionally, there are some shortcomings in teacher training that have been shared at meetings of regional experts: development of skills and attitudes that are relevant for professional practice; training in areas like citizenship values, and foreign languages; training to function in a globalized world; the ownership and pedagogical use of ICTs; and, in general, little articulation with curricular reforms[14]. Regarding this last point, in Chile there has been a definition of standards for the use of these technologies in initial training (MINEDUC, UNESCO, ENLACES, 2008), but the impact of this initiative in the training processes offered by institutions is not clear (Claro et al., 2011).

Regulation of training programs

While in many countries of the Region what has predominated is state–sponsored teacher training, the growth of the private sector has generated a broad and heterogeneous range of teacher training programs with little regulation. Even at public institutions there is a gap between initial training, curricular reforms, and school contexts. For that reason, and in line with international trends, many countries are beginning to develop content and performance standards for initial teacher training, by associating them to graduation exams.

In that same direction, in most of the countries that were analyzed there are accreditation systems for institutions, with different modalities and effects. In the case of Peru, the National Council of Evaluation, Accreditation, and Certification of Non–University Higher Education (CONEACES, by its Spanish–language acronym), has established assessment standards and criteria for higher institutes of teacher training, although the implementation of these regulations has been delayed (Cuenca, 2011). Chile has a system of mandatory accreditation for pedagogic careers, but the law does not stop the offering of these careers in cases in which accreditation is not obtained. It just prevents institutions offering these careers from getting public funds, which does not represent a harsh form of punishment for private entities. In Brazil, accreditation is supervised by the National System of Evaluation of Higher Education (SINAES, by its Portuguese–language acronym), which has three main missions: assessing institutions, courses, and student performance. SINAES evaluates all aspects of these three areas: teaching, research, outreach, social responsibility, student performance, school management, teaching staff, teaching facilities, and others[15]. Colombia has "prior accreditation" as a requirement for a training institution to function. This is done through a quality assurance system for higher education. In the case of secondary–level schools for teacher training, there is a process of quality control that allows the national Ministry of Education to issue the accreditation. In the English–speaking Caribbean, there are accreditation agencies that validate teacher training programs, like the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago.

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[14] Working group conclusions after meeting of the Regional Strategic Project, held in Lima in July 2011.

[15] http://portal.inep.gov.br/superior-sinaes

Regulatory mechanisms include at least five areas:

a. Entrance requirements for teacher training. In Mexico there is a basic knowledge test, and in Peru there is one single nationwide entrance exam, but it is only valid for non–university training institutions[16];

b. Prior authorization or accreditation for initial training programs to function, as happens in Colombia, and in Trinidad and Tobago through its Accreditation Council, in the case of private institutions;

c. Development of a national curriculum in the case of Mexico and the formulation of basic curricular guidelines of curricular frameworks for all training of primary school teachers and, in some cases, of secondary school teachers (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, and Peru);

d. Development of pedagogic and subject area standards; since 2012, Chile's Ministry of Education follows a series of national standards for teacher training contents in Language, Math, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences[17], and also for early childhood education; as a result of a mandate given by CARICOM, the English–speaking Caribbean now has a Council for Teaching and Teacher Education, which has established a set of standards for initial training that is in a process of consultation among member countries;

e. Regulations for the graduation or certification of teachers who come out of training institutions. Several countries have this in place, and are also in the process of establishing entrance conditions for the teaching career, that cover different forms of accreditation for the level of teaching knowledge and skills that applicants possess. Colombia has regulated entrance to the teaching career with an assessment of skills, competencies, experience, and suitability, and a one–year probationary period in the education system. Mexico has an entrance exam for initial training, which is designed and implemented at the national level by an external specialized entity, the National Center for the Assessment of Higher Education (CENEVAL, by its Spanish–language acronym). Chile is giving an exam that measures subject area and pedagogic knowledge (Inicia), and which is based on standards. Presently, this exam is voluntary, but a legislative bill that is being discussed intends to make it mandatory. Only teachers who pass this exam will be able to work at institutions that are state–subsidized. Brazil has the National Student Performance Test (ENADE, by its Portuguese acronym), which is given to all secondary school

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[16] The report that the Peru consultation group presented points out that this measure has been strongly questioned and that it is currently under evaluation, because it has hindered the offer of the Pedagogic Higher Institutes instead of improving the quality of teacher training.

[17] The Center for Advanced Research in Education (CIAE, by its Spanish acronym) of the Universidad de Chile and the Center for Educational Policies and Practices (CEPPE, by its Spanish acronym) of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile developed these standards at the request of the Ministry of Education.

students. In the case of education students, it evaluates the general knowledge, skills, and competencies of future teachers before they can graduate. However, institutions may choose whether they want to require the exam or not. In Central America, El Salvador may be mentioned; applicants must pass the Academic and Pedagogical Competencies Evaluation (ECAP, by its Spanish acronym), as a pre–requisite for graduation.

From the documentation about teacher training in these countries, it is not so clear if there is monitoring of training processes, such as an analysis of training results or mid–term exams at training institutions. The English–speaking Caribbean is the exception, since the *Joint Boards of Education* are responsible for these tasks. *Joint Boards of Education* are responsible for recommending or approving teacher training curricula, testing and evaluating student progress, making recommendations, and operating as an information clearinghouse to promote change and excellence in training institutions (Richardson, 2005). Recently, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) established a new regulatory institution, the *Caribbean Council for Teaching and Teacher Education*.

TABLE 8: Regulatory measures in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

COUNTRY	OPENING AND CLOSURE OF INSTITU- TIONS AND PROGRAMS	APROVAL OF CURRICULUM	SPECIAL ENTRANCE EXAM	GRATUATION CERTIFICATION	DESIGNATION OF TRAINERS	ACCREDITA- TION AND MONITORING
ARGENTINA		X		X [a]	X	
BRAZIL	X	X		X [b]		X
CHILE				X [c]		X [d]
COLOMBIA	X	X	X	X	X	X
GUATEMALA	X	X		X	X	X
MEXICO		X	X	X		
PERU [e]	X	X	X	X	X	X
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	X	X		X		X

(a) Nationwide teacher certification is given by the Higher Institutes for Teacher Training (ISFD, by its Spanish–language acronym).
(b) The national ENADE exam is voluntary for institutions and is not of an enabling nature.
(c) In Chile, there are ongoing discussions about the certifying role of the present voluntary graduation exam.
(d) Voluntary for institutions and mandatory for pedagogic careers, but the only consequence of not obtaining the accreditation is not having access to public funds.
(e) Most of the regulations are applied to the Pedagogic Higher Institutes (ISP), and not to universities.
SOURCE: Developed by the authors, according to official information from each country.

As Table 8 shows, the relatively broad regulatory mandate of government agencies with respect to initial training, must be analyzed from the premise that most of these functions are exercised at public institutions, and not at private entities that are very numerous in many countries. The case of Peru is different, since regulatory policies only affect public and private Pedagogic Higher Institutes, but are not applied to universities, which fall under the University Autonomy Law.

With respect to trainer education, although there is not much research at the Regional level, data from the IEA TEDS–M study about the instructors who teach Math and Math didactic methods to future educators at 34 Chilean institutions, shows that most had graduated as teachers or with an undergraduate degree, but did not hold a master's degree or a doctorate. Ortega and Castañeda point out that in Mexico "secondary level teacher training institutions have not modified key areas such as admission rules, promotions, and tenure of academic staff, or the explicit definition of characteristics that teachers' trainers should have." This situation contrasts with that of universities, where there is greater concern with the professional development and evaluation of scholars (Ortega and Castañeda, 2009).

In CARICOM countries, the minimum requirement to be a teachers' instructor at non–university institutions (colleges) is having an undergraduate degree (Bachelor's), and most of these institutions also demand classroom experience. Universities demand at least a master's degree.

"Universal" or special training

The education systems of many countries of the Region face the requirement of appropriately satisfying the needs of indigenous peoples, when most boys, girls, and adolescents do not speak the official language during the first part of primary school. For some decades, several countries have been implementing intercultural bilingual education, which gives a new meaning to schooling within national education policies. One distinct characteristic of intercultural bilingual education is that it promotes the establishment of educational facilities and modalities that promote sharing between indigenous and non–indigenous students, and working in different curricular, pedagogic, assessment, and participatory expressions from an intercultural and bilingual approach (SITEAL, 2010).

The intercultural approach is particularly significant in Peru, Guatemala, and Mexico, where there are explicit policies that are geared towards intercultural education, and institutions that specialize in preparing people to work in that type of context. Mexico offers a bachelor's degree in intercultural bilingual education for pre–school and primary school teachers. Guatemala has 21 official intercultural bilingual teacher training schools. Additionally, there is a basic national curriculum for intercultural bilingual teacher training in indigenous languages and in Spanish that is used at teacher training schools of the Ministry of Education since 2006. Brazil has a training program for indigenous and rural teachers that is coordinated by the Ministry of Education.

The evidence suggests that training programs differ in quality. In some cases, like in

Peru, the programs could be eliminated as a result of policies that are reasonable from the perspective of raising standards to enter the teaching career, but that also limit the participation of indigenous peoples in this training (Chiroque, 2010). In fact, the 14 pedagogic higher institutes that offered the specialization in intercultural bilingual education will cease doing so, as a result of new regulations for entering those institutes (Trapnell and Zavala, 2009: 99). Nevertheless, the new government has set as a goal that, by 2016, 50% of indigenous boys and girls receive an education in their native tongue. This will give new strength to initial teacher training in intercultural bilingual education, along with the development, distribution, and use of materials in native languages.

In other countries, although there is an indigenous population, the intercultural approach is scarcely developed.

Conditions to enter teacher training

At the old secondary–level teacher training schools, students were frequently selected from the best primary school graduates in disadvantaged areas. At the university level, there is a tendency to open access without much consideration for academic or vocational requirements, as a form of countering the lack of social appreciation for the teaching profession. Entering students do not have sufficiently developed Language, Math, and general culture skills that are necessary to face the demands of higher education. For example, the diagnoses that are made about initial training issues in Argentina, indicate that students at the Higher Institutes for Teacher Training show problems handling some basic skills like reading comprehension of academic texts (Mezzadra, F. y Composto, C., 2008).

The lower status assigned to the teaching profession as compared to other careers, generates family and social pressure on young people who are interested in teaching, to seek alternatives that are more promising from the economic and social prestige perspectives. As the need of counting with better candidates for training is acknowledged, some systems are setting more demanding entrance requirements. That is the case of Peru, which has raised the minimum score that is needed to be admitted to the Pedagogic Higher Institutes (see footnote 14). Mexico requires an exam at the beginning of teacher training that CENEVAL designs and implements at the national level. Also, more resources will be offered to secondary–level teacher training schools that raise admissions requirements. Chile has been implementing a program of scholarships for candidates who obtain high scores on the university selection exam. At the same time, it has reserved the scholarship for those institutions that raise admissions requirements for teacher training.

In some countries, there have been interesting basic skills leveling experiences for students that showed weaknesses in their previous schooling and cultural capital conditions. Among these experiences are those of some Chilean universities, including training in the last years of school, and a leveling program that has been implemented in Peru for intercultural bilingual education careers.

There has been significant progress in quantitative achievements, as well as in institutional changes, that are beginning to facilitate a qualitative improvement in train-

ing. One example is Brazil's capacity to provide initial and complete teacher training for a high percentage of working educators in an extremely short period of time. In fact, since the Law of National Education Guidelines and Statutes was passed in 1996, secondary schools for teacher training have been closed, and the number of educators without formal training, which was quite high, has diminished significantly (Gatti and Sá Barreto, 2009). In 2007, the Ministry of Education created a national higher education program for primary school teachers. This was implemented through a network of institutions and in–person and distance–learning courses, with the aim of graduating 330,000 teachers in five years. However, according to the 2009 school census, 32% of teachers had not completed their higher education. This affected mainly those who worked in pre–school or in the first years of primary education, with differences according to the country's regions (Gatti et al., 2011).

At the same time, in order to satisfy the demand for certified teachers, options have been opened to be certified according to work experience. This is a policy that is implemented to respond to the rapid increase in educational services demand. In Mexico, for example, beginning in 2002 pre–school has been included as part of mandatory schooling. This option opens questions about ensuring quality standards in teacher performance.

Emerging comprehensive policies

We shall take a look at some examples of recent institutional and policy initiatives that have the potential for medium and long–term improvements in initial teacher training.

Some countries have developed or are in the process of developing medium and long–term policies that will offer guidelines for the improvement of initial teacher training processes. One example is Argentina's decision –within the context of the 2006 National Education Law– to create an institution that would provide direct support for initial teacher training offered at the Higher Institutes of Teacher Training, and that would also back university Education Departments indirectly. The new institution, known as the National Institute of Teacher Training was established in 2007 to promote national teacher training policies and provide basic guidelines for initial and continuing education. With this mandate, the Institute has developed the First Teacher Training National Plan (2007–2010), which includes immediate, medium–term, and long–term goals, and which has been continued in the 2011 Plan.

The Institute's curricular development activities include the formulation of basic policies and guidelines for initial and continuing education that constitute a regulatory framework. Those guidelines present –as a result of a consensus– a set of skills that must be built and that training institutions must commit to guarantee, with curricular designs that are consolidated in training plans.

Another important example is Brazil, which through the 2009 National Teacher Training Policy intends to guide the coordination between training institutions and their programs and municipal, state and Federal District governments. It provides support for training programs, coordination between higher education institutions and

the education system school network, and participation for future educators in teaching–learning activities in schools. It also addresses the need to revise the academic and curricular structure of university–level courses and to carry out research that will have an impact on teacher training processes.

In acknowledgment of the limitations of its teacher training system for primary school, Guatemala has recently formulated a teacher development policy known as Academic Program for Teacher Professional Development (PADEP/D, by its Spanish acronym), which will allow working educators access to higher, university–level training. They will also be able to specialize in initial and intercultural bilingual education (the two forms of education recognized by the system). Moreover, in a recent statement, the Minister of Education announced a policy that is aimed at institutionalizing a national system of teacher training that will give priority to intercultural bilingual education and Maya cosmogony. According to the announcement, secondary school–based teacher training will be replaced by higher education training, with a new teacher career that will have wage incentives. Admissions will be implemented through skills and vocational exams, professionalization will be pursued more aggressively, and a program will be established for the licensing and accreditation of teacher training institutions.

In the last few years, Chile has implemented the "Inicia" program, which contains three key elements: a) a graduation exam for all students of pedagogy–related careers, which so far has been given to pre–school and primary school teachers only; b) curricular standards and guidelines for initial training; c) and a support line with special resources for innovation in university–level teacher training.

Through its Public Plan for the Strengthening of Teacher Education (PEFEN, by its Spanish–language acronym), Mexico provides federal resources to teacher training schools, with the aim of helping them to improve academic processes and learning outcomes.

A frequent criticism of initial training offered at universities maintains that theory and general knowledge are predominant, and that classroom teaching skills for specific subject matters that correspond to the curricula is ignored. One way of bridging this gap in professional training has been the introduction of early and life–long practices throughout the academic experience. The case of Chile may be mentioned, where the Program for the Strengthening of Initial Teacher Training was promoted in 2005, and the recommendation was to strengthen teaching practices by generating "articulation between training centers and schools, where educators are directly involved"[18]. In Brazil, present regulations reserve some space in pedagogy training undergraduate programs for the subject of teaching practices; however, training institutions usually do not take up those spaces (Gatti et al., 2011). Peru has established national guidelines for the development of a pre–professional practicum in teacher training.

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[18] Report by the Commission on Initial Teacher Training, Ministry of Education of Chile, p. 73. This Commission was chaired by the rector (chancellor) of the Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación, and made up of representatives of different universities, the Ministry of Education, and the College of Teachers.

In summary, in the countries that have been included in this report, we can observe some efforts geared towards improving the quality and relevance of initial training, regarding the challenges that are faced in order to offer quality education opportunities. Nonetheless, serious problems can be appreciated in initial teacher training. Those problems are analyzed in the following section.

▶ 2.2. Critical issues that emerge from the present situation of initial teacher training

An analysis of teacher training in the Region reveals critical knots that get us closer to an explanation of why the training is not successful enough in overcoming low learning outcomes. It also unveils the great shortcomings in opportunities and results for populations who live in poor and rural areas, including indigenous inhabitants in countries where they are a minority (LLECE, 1997; SERCE, 2008; PISA, 2009).

a. Low level of training when entering pedagogical studies

One serious problem that teacher training faces is the entrance –both at secondary schools and universities– of students who do not seem to have the skills that should have been acquired in high school (in Language, Math, and general knowledge), and that are key to respond to the demands of higher education.

In part, this is due to the expansion of secondary school coverage and its quality problems, which generates pressure from social groups who want to have access to higher education. The situation has become worse with the growth of private institutions, where numbers are more important than the capacities of entering students.

Discussions about the training level (basic skills) of aspiring teachers must take into consideration the low quality of school systems, which severely hinders teacher training policies, and also the status of the teaching profession in each country. While working educators interviewed for a nationwide study in Chile (Ávalos et al., 2010) point out that they did not become teachers in order to gain status, the concern is that people who have the necessary skills to be good teachers choose other university careers, precisely because in their countries the status that is given to the teaching profession is low. This issue has generated different measures in several countries. Among them are publicity campaigns, incentives to attract talented students with good school performance to pedagogical studies, and raising the level of academic requirements for admission.

Those measures have not been free of controversy. Some argue that students should not be selected, that the state should guarantee the right to education and, if it were necessary, the state should compensate for the unsatisfactory school results that many young people may have obtained during their secondary education. Moreover, it is argued that during the selection process it is difficult to evaluate vocational and attitude aspects that are relevant to the teaching profession. The criticism is that incentives like scholarships for the best applicants can distort the selection, attracting students who have the academic skills,

but who lack a commitment to teaching, and at the same time excluding students with potential, but who have problems with their academic performance due to their socio–economic background and the quality of the education that they received. On the other hand, diminished social appreciation for the teaching profession and a negative public view of teacher training, make it difficult for communicational campaigns to be successful and for incentives to attract the best qualified applicants.

The efforts that some teacher training institutions make to compensate for the weaknesses of entering students –before or at the beginning of training– seem not to be sufficiently far–reaching or effective.

b. Low quality of training programs and processes

There are widespread doubts about the quality of opportunities to learn how to teach that training institutions offer. It is possible that the concern for expanding the offer and for covering teachers' needs in education systems may have relegated the issue of quality in training (Gatti et al., 2011). The skepticism about quality grows mainly from the results of standardized learning evaluations conducted with students throughout the system, and from results coming out of international exams.

However, despite the purported impact of initial teacher training on these results, there is not much solid evidence about how the quality of training processes influences the teaching practice, and therefore student learning.

The quality of training processes may be analyzed, as a key factor, by the curricular design and practices expressed in guiding concepts and principles, by teaching contents, and by teaching methodologies and practices.

A review of the mentioned literature shows that, in the training of primary school teachers, a critical issue is its non–specialized nature, with insufficient content about the comprehension of school curriculum subject matters and how to teach them, and a predominance of general pedagogical content. The dispersion of courses and the emphasis on general contents lead to losing the focus on subject matter content and on essential teaching strategies geared towards learning achievements in school.

With respect to the training of secondary school teachers, although subject matter specialization is included, in most cases this is addressed separately from specific teaching methods, that is, there is no concept of Shulman's (1987) "pedagogic knowledge of the content". The gap that is generated between this kind of training and the challenges that the teacher faces in her/his pedagogic interaction with adolescents can be observed daily in classrooms.

A recurrent problem with the training provided at many universities and institutes of the Region is that their high level of autonomy leads them to develop programs that have no connection or preferential reference to the school system and education policies. Often, teachers are trained "in opposition" to those systems and policies. In any case, the level of autonomy varies according to their condition as a university or as a higher institute, since the latter have less room for self–rule.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, multiple institutions offer teacher training with a broad diversity of visions regarding the graduate profile that is sought. In line with present trends, the usual purpose is to train a professional who will be highly skilled in pedagogy and subject matters, and who will be autonomous, responsible, thoughtful, critical, innovative, effective, and socially committed. Nevertheless, institutions do not emphasize these principles in the same way, and this can lead to critical extremes; graduates may end up without the necessary tools to get their future students to achieve basic learning, and may lack the capacity to reflect and to adopt the appropriate pedagogic decisions.

Also, considering the present significance of information and communications technologies, the evidence shows that not enough learning opportunities are offered in teacher training programs to educate future teachers in the use of these technologies as a classroom learning resource (Sunkel et al., 2011). The tendency to believe that new student generations will be able to handle theses technologies, minimizes the importance of learning strategies for a pertinent pedagogic use, and for the capacity to reflect and make the appropriate decision about their utilization. Future teachers are not trained properly, to make sure that their students take full advantage of the opportunities that new technologies offer in the development of research, critical thinking, and communication skills.

Another relevant element that affects the quality of teacher training is not enough supervised practice or experience along the training process, that would allow future educators to study and research about the resolution of real problems they will have to face in a school environment. Many countries have made progress in incorporating a period of practicum throughout the training process and not just on the final stages. However, the lack of a close articulation between training centers and schools where the practicum takes place is a critical issue. Another critical issue is the weakness of supervision, both coming from the academic institution and the school. Often, schools consider the practicum of future teachers as a burden or as a favor for the training institution, instead of as a contribution to the professional learning of future teachers. This is due to the lack of policies that would allow addressing the lack of time and recognition that tutoring teachers face in school. In summary, the integration of theoretical training and practice has been noticed as another critical aspect that must be solved.

c) Training of teacher educators

The level of training of teacher educators is key for the quality of training processes. This issue requires more research at the Regional level, but it is known that in pre–school and primary school teacher training programs, some teacher educators have low levels of academic qualifications (bachelor's or graduate degrees). These limitations may be compensated by their previous experience as teachers in the education system, which could be relevant if that experience is current or recent. On the other hand, in training programs for secondary school teachers, there might be teacher educators with better

academic training, but who are often not familiarized with the requirements of school curricula and who have significant weaknesses regarding didactic skills.

Other critical aspects that are related to school teacher educators are selection mechanisms, which not always are objective, transparent, and with clearly defined duties. Academic development opportunities vary widely for teacher educators, depending on the country and the institutions of each country.

The capacities of teacher educators, both regarding relevant research and the utilization of accumulated research to enrich teacher training, are also a key element.

In the case of universities, the weak training of many teacher educators is closely linked to the diminished position of their Education Schools or Departments, which is the result of society's lack of appreciation for the teaching profession.

d) "Universal" training or special training for disadvantaged social groups

In a region where poverty rates continue to be high, a critical issue for teacher training is the acquisition of skills and attitudes that will allow educators to understand the reality of poverty, and to achieve learning results for students who live in that situation. Learning results in Latin America show that the poorest sectors, who live in rural areas and who are indigenous, have a performance that is lower than that of the rest of the population. However, teacher training does not acknowledge this reality, or the growing incorporation of historically marginalized groups into the school system. Training institutions seem to work as if primary school, and even more so secondary school, were exclusively for middle–class sectors, which have the basic economic, socio–cultural, and family conditions to obtain good academic outcomes. The lack of specific training to work in low–income sectors generates discouragement among teachers, and low expectations for student learning, which at the same time anticipates poor results.

The distribution of trained teachers –with some exceptions– is also unequal among these groups. Therefore, the challenge is guaranteeing that more educators work in the poorest sectors. In part, this has to do with the need for policies of incentives for teachers to work in marginal, poor, rural, and indigenous areas.

This issue is even more critical regarding rural education, where the highest rates of poverty are, and where multi–grade, single–teacher schools predominate. It is estimated that teachers must be able to work both in urban and rural settings. However, taking into account the distinct cultural characteristics of rural populations, and the complexity of multi–grade teaching, not many specialized and differentiated training options are offered.

As has been pointed out, despite the efforts made in many countries, there is still a need for greater development of training in intercultural bilingual education, and for the incorporation of this approach through general education work.

Another critical aspect has to do with admissions policies for training institutions, especially to be able to count on intercultural education teachers who are thoroughly familiar with native tongues and with indigenous cultures.

e) Tension between the secondary level approach and the academic approach in teacher training

Several analysts who study the situation of teacher training in their respective countries point to the persistence of secondary–level methods, even though teacher education is now under different institutions. In Argentina, Mezzadra and Composto (2008) highlight the existence of a "secondary–level logic" which makes training institutions and classrooms look more like primary and secondary schools than academic environments (Alliaud and Davini in Aguerrondo, 2006). This translates into reproducing the organization and dynamics of the school levels for which the training is taking place (Mezzadra and Composto, 2008). Something similar is what Calvo et al. (2004) show in their study about training programs, regarding the organizational structure of secondary–level teacher training schools in Colombia, in the sense that it replicates the logic of secondary schools themselves. Ríos uses almost the same words about the way in which the Higher Pedagogical Institutes of Peru relate to their students: "They are treated like primary school children, not only because of the environment, rules, and uniforms, but also in terms of behavior and cognitive demand". Oliart (1996), and Ames and Uccelli (2008), assert that what predominates in Peruvian teacher training institutions is the reading of abbreviated supplements, instead of original texts written by the authors. Also, excessive significance is attributed to the format in which presentations are made (order, neatness, decoration), to the detriment of content and idea comprehension.

With this institutional culture, it can be concluded that the situation would be very different in university–level training classrooms. In fact, from a curriculum perspective, that is the case. University Education Departments, since they offer a bachelor's degree, tend to emphasize more academic and abstract content, give more importance to educational research methods, and to a greater or lesser extent diminish the significance of the "school" reference in their training, as Gatti and Sá Barreto (2009) point out about Brazil. University Departments of Education also must work with other departments regarding specialization for secondary education. This is usually a source of conflict and of defensive attitudes, because there is a perception that Education majors are not as appreciated as other undergraduate students. It is just the opposite of what happens at non–university training institutions.

f) Insufficient regulation of training programs

Despite the existence of some forms of regulation, the fact that several systems are being reviewed suggests that regulating policies and tools are not working properly. Clearly, there is a need for regulating private institutions, and in those countries where the number of graduating educators exceeds demand there is a need for establishing admissions quotas (like in England and Singapore) or mixed quotas (like in Canada).

Of particular concern is the weakness of regulations in the quality of teacher training, despite the existence of accreditation systems, which seem to be insufficient. The heteroge-

neous nature of the training that is provided by different institutions does not allow many countries to ensure a uniform quality.

As has been pointed out, graduating exams and licensing tests have begun to be implemented, but these do not automatically correct the quality problems that have been detected in training processes.

There seems to be some pressure to develop specific standards for what a training graduate should know and be able to do. While almost all systems establish graduating profiles and expected skills for future educators, practically no system provides guidance in training processes or criteria and regulations to develop graduating exams that have an effect according to results.

Although it is too early to know how the development of standards can influence the quality of training, standards are by themselves a useful tool for the renovation of curricula and for the monitoring of student achievements during the training process. With this in mind, and as has been mentioned (see section 2.1), most countries included in this study are advancing towards the development of standards that will provide guidelines for initial training and graduating exams, and therefore guarantee that entering teachers will have complied with basic requirements. This regional trend is in line with evidence coming from English–speaking Europe and Nordic countries. On this issue, as with others that have been brought up, there are opposition and warnings that making training curricula uniform is risky, because it would limit the autonomy of academic institutions to develop their own projects.

Despite the fact that accreditation systems for programs and institutions are expanding to almost all countries included in this study, there are critical voices that claim these should be stricter, particularly with respect to consequences for unsatisfactory evaluations. In the framework of an agreement between the OECD and Government of Mexico, there is an initiative to revise the evaluation system and establish a system based on specific standards for secondary level training schools. Also, accreditation would be linked to the percentage of graduates who are accepted in competitive calls to fill vacancies (OECD, 2010).

Summary of critical issues in initial teacher training

a. Low level of training when entering pedagogical studies

b. Low quality of training programs and processes

c. Training of teacher educators

d. "Universal" training or special training for disadvantaged social groups

e. Tension between the secondary level approach and the academic approach in teacher training

f. Insufficient regulation of training programs

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❸ Continuing education

◗ 3.1 Characteristics of continuing education systems in the Region

In most of the world's education systems, there have been initiatives to address the professional development of teachers through the implementation of specific policies. This interest emerged from the evidence that links student learning achievements to the quality of training received by teachers, also reflected in teaching practices.

Available evidence shows that teachers are the key for the performance of students, schools, and systems (PISA, 2009; OECD, 2009; Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber, 2010), and suggests that professional development programs implemented throughout their careers are the way for educators to acquire the competencies needed for good practices that are updated and adjusted to particular contexts. This implies changes in continuing education that should be aimed at a real transformation of teaching practices.

Research has demonstrated that teacher training should be continuous, from the initial stage to the end of the labor experience. This relatively new approach in the teaching profession implies a change of paradigm in its definition.

In this sense, emphasis is made on learning to be a teacher through reflection about practice itself, a process that demands approaches and models that facilitate shared learning in daily situations, in the specific contexts where teaching diverse groups of students takes place.

The conclusion is that in the area of professional development, the regional experience has shown considerable limitations, in view of factors like the discontinuation of programs and actions; the scale of operations; models, designs, and processes that are often far from designated interests, environments, and needs; access problems; trainers' lack of skills; and insufficient resources and definitions about the time that individuals and collectives can dedicate to these processes in their daily jobs without deviating their attention from students (Miller and Lieberman, 2001; Villegas–Reimers, 2003; Aguerrondo, 2004; Flores, 2005; Sandoval, 2005; Ávalos, 2007; Tenti, 2007; Vaillant, 2009; Terigi, 2010).

In some countries, it is still believed that teacher training by itself improves learning. What is overlooked is that schools, educational management, and political decisions have a great influence on student learning results (Guerrero, 2009).

Despite the intense activity of the past three decades in Latin America and the Caribbean around teacher training, studies reveal a low impact in the classroom. They also show a negative opinion on the part of school directors, and sometimes even of educators themselves about courses, workshops, compensatory programs, and the vast set of efforts, which –despite good intentions– have not satisfied expectations of improvement in educational practices, which is needed for a sustained growth in the achievement of all students (Murdochowicz, 2002; Villegas–Reimers, 2003; Vaillant, 2004; Ávalos, 2007; Terigi, 2009).

Since the 1970's, Latin American teachers' unions have included the right to professionalization in their demands (SNTE, 1994). The answer has been the numerous courses, activities, and workshops that governments have offered. It has been mainly an effort to update specific skills, which has had different effects on the quality of education, and a low impact on student learning achievements.

It has been demonstrated that the format of courses shows considerable weaknesses like a limited duration, the gap between their content and school requirements, and a lack of monitoring in daily practice (Flores, 2005; Ávalos, 2007; Terigi, 2010).

On the other hand, continuing education that is linked to salaries and promotions in corresponding scales has generated "perverse effects" like "credentialism" and the exclusion of less skilled educators who usually teach school populations with a smaller social capital (Sandoval, 2000; Terigi, 2010).

The reforms of the 1990's and their impact on continuing education

In the 1990's, learning–focused reform policies emphasized just conveying the changes in curriculum, materials, teaching methods, and other modifications to the institution that was involved. Thus, the content of courses, workshops, meetings, and other forms of training served a utilitarian purpose instead of improving the practice of teaching (Ávalos, 2007, Vaillant, 2009; Terigi, 2010).

One of the significant impacts of education reforms in the 1990's was the updating of processes of institutionalization for the right of teachers to become professionals. Consequently, government agencies were determined in their coordination and regulation of continuing teacher training.

In most countries of the Region, there was a formalization of nationwide legal instruments, laws, and regulations that establish the right of professionals to continuing education, and the obligation of the state to coordinate programs to that effect (Aguerrondo, 2004; Terigi, 2009). Despite a partial renovation of the policy and institutional framework, the tendency for initiatives that are "spasmodic and prone to discontinuation, and threatened with the lack of resources" has continued (Terigi, 2010: 41).

Designated institutions

Presently, several countries of the region are in a process of revision of their policy and regulatory frameworks, with the goal of promoting policies of initial training, induction, and continuing education that are more consistent, better coordinated, and more effective. Some of the efforts start from the premise that the purpose of continuing education is improving the quality of education in the classroom, which discards the remedial approach in favor of a vision that supports "… those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school…" (Christopher Day, quoted by Bolam and McMahon, 2004: 34). Some examples of this revision process are in Peru, which is presently designing the construction of a De–centralized System for Working Teachers Training, and in Trinidad and Tobago, which is developing the 2011–2015 Strategic Plan, to revise the regulatory framework of all elements of the education system.

Regarding the determination of government agencies (see Table 9), Argentina promotes teacher professional development through its National Institute for Teacher Training (INFD, by its Spanish–language acronym), which is responsible for public policies in this area throughout the country. Its tasks include the design, configuration, and backing of tools that are available for teachers from their first years in the profession and all along

their careers. These instruments seek the improvement of pedagogical practices, innovation, and research. The INFD is responsible for initial training, continuing education, pedagogic support for schools, and educational research. The Argentinean training system also considers –besides initial training and continuing education– the generation of knowledge about teaching, training, and teaching work, with a focus on the specific traits of the profession.

In Brazil, since 2007, the Ministry of Education's Coordinating Commission for Higher Education Personnel Training (CAPES, by its Portuguese acronym) has taken up the responsibility of designing and coordinating a national training system for primary school teachers –in cooperation with higher education public institutions and with state and municipal education authorities¬– and offers a public, de–centralized, and free option of continuing education, specialization, master's degrees, and doctorates. In 2009, the CAPES determined a national policy for teacher training, which contains long–term guidelines for working teachers' education. For its implementation, it counts on the States' Fora of Support for Teacher Training and on the National Network for the Continuing Education of Primary School Teachers. The CAPES is responsible for the National Training Plan for Basic Education Teachers (PARFOR, by its Portuguese acronym), which has as its main purpose guaranteeing that working teachers in public education obtain the training that is required by the National Law on Guidelines and Regulations for Education. This is achieved through the implementation of special and exclusive courses for working teachers[19]. (Gatti et al., 2011)

The Center for Pedagogical Advancement, Experimentation, and Research (CPEIP, by its Spanish acronym) is the Chilean ministerial body in charge of proposing, designing, and implementing strategies aimed at strengthening initial training, continuing education, and professional practice. During the first decade of the 21st Century, new courses and workshops for teachers of all levels of the school system began to be offered; peer learning was promoted; accredited universities participated in the development of specializations for primary school teachers; the use of information and communication technology was fostered; and new opportunities for internships and graduate degrees were presented, at the national and the international levels. Also, the teacher assessment system has led to the design of specific programs for teachers who do not reach a competent level of performance. In the last two years, many of these programs have decreased their coverage or have been eliminated. Beginning 2011, a program for the training of school directors of excellence is destined for those persons who already work as directors or who aspire to be directors.

Colombia has included the professional development of teachers and educational leaders in the strategic projects of its 10–year education plan (2006–2016). Through its National System of Educators' Training, and according to the territorial plans for training of the Secretariats of Education and the Teacher Training Committees, policies and training guidelines are formulated for subject area and pedagogic updating of teachers. Emphasis in the set of programs for professional development is on acquiring teaching skills that will

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[19] http://www.capes.gov.br/educacao-basica/parfor The Secretariats of Education of the states, the Federal District, and the municipal governments, besides higher education institutions, cooperate to implement PARFOR.

encourage student achievement in communications, Math, Science, citizenship, and labor studies that are included in the curriculum.

Guatemala has defined an Academic Program for Educators' Professional Development. It is a university–based training program for the working teacher population which emphasizes "the training of teachers for village–based curriculum implementation (…) so that the education of boys and girls will lead them to know, experience, and practice their culture, and to use their mother tongue besides a second language" (Luis Enrique López and Ingrid Jung quoted in López, 2010: 27). Specifically, the program intends to strengthen educators' professionalization and socio–cultural development; ensure university–level training; and establish programs for induction and continuing education. The Department of Human Resources Training, which is under the Agency of Education Quality Management, has a mandate for establishing policies and strategies of initial training, induction, continuing education, and professionalization of working teachers, technical staff, school directors, and supervisors.

In the context of the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education (RIEB, by its Spanish acronym), the National Board of Continuing Education has gradually changed in Mexico the National Program for Teacher Continuing Education. It offers two options. First, it intends to convey curricular modifications to all educators, and second, it includes in the National Catalogue for Continuing Education a broad range of options in the specialized branches of education, student development, appreciation for diversity, and other areas of interest that are proposed by public and private higher education institutions as a response to the official call. Programs are submitted to peer evaluation, and this determines whether they are accepted. The Catalogue includes from diplomas to doctorates, which in principle are selected by educators through organizational and logistical approaches that are designed and coordinated in each Mexican state.

In Peru, the National Board of Pedagogical Higher Education is responsible for designing, leading, and evaluating the National Program of Continuing Education (PRONAFCAP, by its Spanish–language acronym) for teachers and school directors in the context of the National Continuing Education System. Through a network of selected universities, teachers have access to continuing education programs that cover the development of Communication, Math and Logic skills, the capacity to have a command of school curricula, and academic specialization according to educational level (http://ciberdocencia.gob.pe). PRONAFCAP includes a basic program, a specialization program, and a refresher program. The target group is all teachers of all regions of the country, who work at public basic education institutions, who are Spanish–speaking or bilingual, and who participated in the assessment census of 2007.

Trinidad and Tobago has established a policy that is focused on the quality of teachers and of the teaching practice. Based on the construction of teacher performance standards, it intends to set up a system that guarantees quality. In this approach, professional development is conceived as a life–long learning process that concentrates on having a pedagogical command of curricular content. Programs will be intensive and sustainable, will focus on facilitating student learning, will be aligned with the school's mission and improvement plan, and will strengthen cooperation among educators (CARICOM, 2011).

TABLE 9: Public offer for professional development in eight countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

COUNTRY	DESIGNATED AGENCY	TYPE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERED
ARGENTINA [a]	· NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR TEACHER TRAINING	COURSES, WORKSHOPS, SYMPOSIUMS, SEMINARS, MENTORING
BRAZIL [b]	· MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: BASIC EDUCATION SECRETARIAT · COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL TRAINING (CAPES)	CLASSROOM COURSES, BLENDED LEARNING, DISTANCE LEARNING (PAULO FREIRE PLATFORM) BACHELOR'S DEGREES GRADUATE DEGREES
CHILE [c]	· MINISTRY OF EDUCATION · CENTER FOR PEDAGOGICAL ADVANCEMENT, EXPERIMENTATION, AND RESEARCH	CLASSROOM COURSES, BLENDED LEARNING, DISTANCE LEARNING, WORKSHOPS, INTERNSHIPS, GRADUATE DEGREES [d]
COLOMBIA [e]	· NATIONAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION · EDUCATION SECRETARIATS	CLASSROOM, DISTANCE, OR BLENDED LEARNING PROGRAMS
GUATEMALA [f]	· DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HUMAN RESOURCES TRAINING	BLENDED LEARNING, SEMINARS
MEXICO [g]	· NATIONAL SYSTEM OF WORKING TEACHERS' CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT · MINISTRY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION (SEP) · DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION (SEB) · NATIONAL DIVISION OF WORKING TEACHERS' CONTINUING EDUCATION (DGFCMS)	NATIONAL CATALOGUE: COURSES, DIPLOMAS, SPECIALIZATIONS, GRADUATE DEGREES DIPLOMAS, SYMPOSIUMS, SPECIALIZATIONS, DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIALS AND MANUALS
PERU [h]	· MINISTRY OF EDUCATION · NATIONAL BOARD OF PEDAGOGICAL HIGHER EDUCATION · NATIONAL PROGRAM OF CONTINUING EDUCATION (PRONAFCAP) · MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE · STRATEGIC PROGRAM ON LEARNING · ACHIEVEMENTS AFTER THE 3RD YEAR OF REGULAR PRIMARY EDUCATION (PELA)	TRAVELING PEDAGOGICAL COUNSELING CLASSROOM AND DISTANCE COURSES SELF–TEACHING MODULES
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO [i]	· MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS BACHELOR'S DEGREES MASTER'S DEGREES DOCTORATES

(a) Ministry of Education of Argentina (http://portal.educacion.gov.ar).
(b) Ministry of Education of Brazil (http://www.mec.gov.br, http://freire.mec.gov.br/index/principal) (http://www.capes.gov.br).

(c) Adapted from Terigi (2010) and the Ministry of Education of Chile (http://www.mineduc.cl).

(d) The graduate degrees program for teacher is managed by the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT).

(e) Adapted from Terigi (2010) and the Ministry of Education of Colombia (http://www.mineducacion.gov.co).

(f) Adapted from the Ministry of Education of Guatemala (http://www.mineduc.gob.gt).

(g) Adapted from "Continuing teacher training as a RIEB strategy in Mexico" presented at the seminar entitled "Effectiveness in teacher performance", Guatemala, 22 October 2010, available at: http://www.preal.org/BibliotecaN.asp?Id_Carpeta=393&Camino=319|Programas/81|Seminarios%20y%20Talleres/393|Seminario%20Internacional%20Efectividad%20del%20Desempe%F1o%20Docente).

(h) Adapted from the Ministry of Education of Peru (http://www.minedu.gob.pe); http://www.ciberdocencia.gob.pe/index.php?cat=267

(i) Adapted from the Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago (www.moe.gov.tt), University of the West Indies (UWI) (www.uwi.edu), and University of Trinidad and Tobago (www.utt.edu.tt)

SOURCE: Developed by the authors, based on a paper by expert S. Ortega, 2011.

In many countries, the responsible agencies have a broad mandate over the supply and modality of opportunities in their planning, coordination for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The goal is to address the problem of dispersion and lack of consistency. This problem does not seem to have been completely solved, since in several countries there is a strong presence of private entities that offer alternatives for continuing education, which are frequently linked to specific programs or interventions at certain schools. The difficulty in regulating and articulating the actions of multiple agents backs Terigi's conclusion (2010), in the sense that the unsatisfied need for institutional consolidation of professional development still stands.

Public agencies implement programs with the collaboration of higher education institutions. These alliances with universities are not exempt from problems, due to the obstacles that many academic institutions face at the time of contextualizing their work with school and teacher culture. At the same time, higher education institutions obtain many benefits, because they achieve relevant learning results that provide feedback for their work in initial teacher training.

Types of programs

In most continuing education programs that countries of the Region offer, the priority is achieving a pedagogic command regarding the curriculum, and different modalities are proposed, both from an academic and peer–learning approach (see Table 10).

There is a tendency to use technology for learning, in models that are strictly on–line or hybrid. Compared to other strategies, this allows greater coverage without losing quality (Ortega, 2009).

TABLE 10: Examples of programs that have been offered in the last few years

COUNTRY	PROGRAMS

ARGENTINA	· PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL DIRECTORS AND MANAGEMENT POSITIONS
	· PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS IN INITIAL LITERACY
	· FIELD STUDY VISITS FOR TRAINERS' INSTRUCTORS
	· INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTS) IN TEACHER TRAINING
	· JURISDICTIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
	· GRADUATE SPECIALIZATIONS:
	  A. SPECIALIZATION IN EDUCATION FOR CONVICTS
	  B. SPECIALIZATION IN RURAL PRIMARY EDUCATION
	· FIRST SEMINAR ON TRAINING FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS (APRIL 2011)

BRAZIL	· PRO–LITERACY: CHAPTERS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR WORKING PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHERS IN INITIAL READING, WRITING, AND MATH. · PRO-KINDER: TWO–YEAR DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM FOR KINDER–GARDEN TEACHERS WHO DO NOT POSSESS THE REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS. · PRO-DEGREE: GRADUATE DISTANCE–LEARNING TRAINING FOR TEACHERS WHO DO NOT POSSESS THE REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS. ITS DURATION IS THE SAME OR LESS THAN THAT OF CLASSROOM COURSES. · SCHOOL LEARNING MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (GESTAR II): FOCUSED ON EDUCATORS WHO TEACH THE LAST YEARS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL. · CONTINUING EDUCATION: CLASSROOM, BLENDED LEARNING, AND DISTANCE LEARN-ING PROGRAMS. · SPECIALIZATIONS: CLASSROOM AND DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS.
CHILE	· NETWORK OF TEACHERS' TRAINERS · COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS · TEACHER TRAINING THROUGH B-LEARNING AT ACCREDITED UNIVERSITIES · GRADUATE SPECIALIZATION IN FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING (THROUGH ACCREDITED UNIVERSITIES) · COURSES ON CURRICULAR OWNERSHIP THROUGH ACCREDITED UNIVERSITIES · TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM FOR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL · INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS IN MATH AND SCIENCE
COLOMBIA	· CONTINUING TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM (PFPD, BY ITS SPANISH ACRONYM) · SET OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS · TERRITORIAL TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS
GUATEMALA	· ACADEMIC PROGRAM FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PADEP/D, BY ITS SPANISH ACRONYM) – EDUCATION, EQUITY, CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN SOCIAL DEVEL-OPMENT

COUNTRY	PROGRAMS

MEXICO	• NATIONAL CATALOGUE:
	  A. TRAINING PROGRAMS 2009–2010
	  B. PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL PROGRAM OF QUALITY GRADUATE DEGREES (PNPC, BY ITS SPANISH ACRONYM)
	• CLASSROOM SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (DIDACTIC APPROACH AND PLANNING) BASIC COURSE (2009)
	• DIPLOMA IN COMPREHENSIVE REFORM OF BASIC EDUCATION (RIEB, BY ITS SPANISH ACRONYM): 1ST AND 6TH GRADES IN FIRST LEVEL; 2ND AND 5TH GRADES IN SECOND LEVEL
	• DIPLOMA ENTITLED "READING SKILLS. A LIFE AND CLASSROOM APPROACH"
	• TRAINING COURSES FOR PEDAGOGICAL TECHNICAL ADVISORS (ATP)
	• MANUALS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS
	• HIGH LEVEL SPECIALIZATION FOR THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF MATH IN SECONDARY SCHOOL
	• MAESTR@STV26
	• TRAINING PROGRAMS: PRE–SCHOOL, PRIMARY, AND SECONDARY
	• TEACHER MATERIALS
	• SERIAL MODULAR COURSES: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
	• TEACHER PROFESSIONALIZATION FOR THE PEDAGOGICAL USE OF ICTS

PERU	• SPECIALIZATION IN COMMUNICATION AND MATH – EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION • SPECIALIZATION IN BILINGUAL INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION (QUECHUA AND AYMARA) – EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION • SPECIALIZATION IN SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT – PRIMARY EDUCATION • SUBJECT AREA SPECIALIZATIONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT, CITIZENSHIP, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, ECONOMY, AND ENGLISH) • SPECIALIZATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR COMPREHENSION – PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN EDUCATION (FOUR SPECIALIZATIONS) AT UNIVERSITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO:
	  A. EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE)
	  B. PRIMARY EDUCATION
	  C. SECONDARY EDUCATION: (LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, MATH, GENERAL SCIENCE, AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES, SOCIAL SCIENCES)
	  D. SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS
	
	UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES:
	• UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS (BACHELOR'S): CLASSROOM AND DISTANCE–LEARNING
	• GRADUATE VOCATIONAL PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS: CLASSROOM AND DISTANCE–LEARNING

The broad spectrum of continuing education activities that are offered in the Region, may be organized as follows:

a. Refresher courses, workshops, and seminars, with the main purpose of updating teachers on new scientific findings related to the different subject areas of the curriculum and of pedagogy, according to curricular changes. Academic institutions play a very important role. Since these activities represent a need, they carry the risk of overlooking the school context in which the educational process takes place.

b. Peer–learning processes, at the educational unit or territorial group (micro–center) level, based on reflecting about pedagogic practice and geared towards the generation of pedagogic knowledge. This strategy –which is highly valued in current specialized literature– has undeniable benefits, due to the connection to reality and the challenges that teachers find in its practice. At the same time, these strategies are highly complex, because they deal with going beyond a simple exchange of experiences, which can be plain or anecdotal, and cannot generate deep learning.

c. Specializations, usually through graduate degrees, that will allow general teachers to perform well regarding a particular subject area, and to receive training for specific duties in a certain educational cycle or socio–cultural environment. This line of activities is highly necessary, but presents two key challenges: ensuring a quality offer, and matching teachers' individual demand with the real needs of the system at the local level and at each educational center.

d. Undergraduate or graduate degrees that will allow teachers to reach higher levels of knowledge that are appropriate with respect to research progress. As in the previous case, it is difficult to match a quality offer with a growing demand that may move away from the needs of the system.

From a different perspective, it is important to mention the classroom, distance–learning, and blended–learning modalities. Recently, the latter have grown considerably, due to the opportunities of using technological tools to communicate and to have rapid access to information, and at the same time to expand spaces of direct personal interaction, which are appreciated by teachers.

Program contents

Some studies have highlighted the positive attitude of educators towards continuing education (Aguerrondo and Vezub, 2003; Mancebo, 2006; OECD, 2009a). Although the training basics that educators consider as relevant are quite disperse, in the case of Mexico, it is possible to identify a pattern of preferences for contents dealing with teaching strategies and organizing work in the classroom, learning assessment, cur-

ricular knowledge and, to a greater extent, information and communications technologies, discipline and behavioral problems, and teaching in multicultural environments[20]. In the case of Chile, results have been consistent in revealing the difficulties that educators have with learning assessments and with using the information that they provide. Consequently, in the last few years there has been a strong demand for specialization in this area. On the other hand, it is interesting to compare the trends in the mentioned demands with those that come out of the Teaching and Learning International Survey, TALIS (2009), which is conducted among educators from different OECD countries. This survey shows a growing interest for concentrating on special needs, the pedagogical use of ICTs, and student behavior in the classroom.

One important finding is that the priority that is assigned to training issues varies significantly according to the number of years in service. While teachers with less than ten years of practice express their preference for issues that are directly linked to classroom teaching and its assessment, educators with more seniority tend to pick issues like discipline and behavioral problems; uses of ICTs; and addressing the needs of children with special educational needs.

These perceptions have an influence on educators' willingness to consider their own development, and in better chances that learning opportunities offered by authorities will not be an imposition, but rather the government's compliance with its obligation to promote professional growth, aimed at strengthening educational achievement from an equity approach.

Educators' positive attitudes towards continuing education make it more likely that they will register for courses and workshops. This is so, even if they continue to be unsatisfied with the relevance of what they learn, either because of the gap regarding their practical needs or because of the content's inapplicability in rigid school contexts, not only due to prescriptive curricula, but also to working conditions and bureaucratic control routines that stifle adaptation.

An analysis of curricular and pedagogical models leads to the conclusion that, despite their number and apparent diversity, continuing education curricula show a low level of specialization, and emphasize theory and general concepts (Ibarrola et al., 2010).

Finally, the challenge of addressing the needs of all teachers according to their individual and institutional situation, preferences, and stage in their careers is more viable in countries which have made progress towards the development of a teacher evaluation system that is based on performance standards that guarantee quality. That evaluation system has a training approach, which allows a precise guidance for offering professional development that will address the needs of teachers groups according to their specific situation.

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[20] This listing that was taken from the survey of Mexican educators is different from the one presented by Mancebo about Uruguayan educators.

Innovative practices

In the last five years, educational research has generated a broad range of practice reviews[21] in the area of professional development in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Studies have revealed the scope of some experiences with very good potential. For example, the Pedagogical Expedition and Micro–centers in Colombia; Teachers Centers in Mexico; support for school teachers in the English–speaking Caribbean (Ávalos, 2007); community workshops and national internships in Chile; "jurisdictional" professional development projects in Argentina, which promote a school–centered modality; or the Networks of Teachers who are interested in Reading, Math, Science, and the use of technology in the classroom and school environments (Fierro, 2010), that are still in place in many countries despite the discontinuation of institutional support.

In all mentioned cases, there is support for school–centered training processes, where educators' collectives have a leading role and the reference is practice itself as a source of reflection, analysis, and learning.

The characteristics of professional development programs that offer educators the opportunity to learn have been identified in the literature (Villegas–Reimers, 2003; Aguerrondo, 2004; Flores, 2005; Ávalos, 2007; Barber and Mourshed, 2007; Vaillant and Marcelo, 2009; Vélaz de Medrano and Vaillant, 2009; Imbernón, 2009; Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber, 2010). There is strong consensus on the need for programs and actions to be consistent, coordinated with other aspects of teachers' policies, sustainable, and subjected to continuous evaluation.

Some countries are starting to deal with the need to provide support for beginning teachers. For example, Argentina's National Institute for Teacher Training, along with provincial higher education departments, and the institutional ISFD teams, are implementing a tutoring, accompaniment, and support program for beginning teachers. In Chile, the Network of Teachers' Trainers and Universities have trained mentors to support beginning teachers, who have completed their practicum in some regions and municipalities. Also, the Brazilian states of Ceará and Espírito Santo offer training and evaluation experiences for beginning teachers as part of the competitive calls to fill teaching vacancies (Gatti et al., 2011).

Graduate degrees

Notably, there is an emphasis on forging partnerships with accredited universities and on the pursuit of graduate degrees, with the goal of improving research and innovation skills in a population that is not used to these endeavors. Surely, some adjustments will be needed in a university environment that has not been close to school systems (Ibarrola et al., 2006). For example, Trinidad and Tobago is undergoing this process.

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[21] See: www.preal.org

It is interesting that, according to the information coming from Mexico, a significant number of teachers are inclined to continue their studies after graduation. At the moment that information was gathered for this report, over a third of all working educators had a graduate degree. In Peru, there is a similar trend to offer, demand, and enroll in graduate studies, and there is no direct relationship between the area in which the teacher works, and the specialization that she/he chooses in her/his graduate studies.

Current policies encourage pursuing graduate studies, which is apparently already part of the aspirations of educators (Aguerrondo and Vezub, 2003; Mancebo, 2006).

Possibly, the "credentialism" phenomenon is behind this preference for pursuing formal studies as a way of reaching professional development. But this situation also shows the opportunity of developing teaching processes that are longer and that have more impact. Also, it reveals that school–centered professional development programs will be of better quality, if the participation of educators with higher academic levels and experience is actively promoted in their design and operation. This resource is of great significance in the development of community–based, high–quality collaborative learning programs that these professional may lead.

Experts on higher education have shown that currently there is an excessive marketing of graduate degrees that are offered according to demands coming mainly from the private sector (Didriksson, 2008). For example, in the case of degrees offered to basic education teachers, it is argued that in Mexico the pressure on educators to get graduate degrees has generated a significant increase in the number of "fast–track" master's titles and doctorates. The National Council of Science and Technology has not accredited some of those degrees, but teachers still accept them. Between 2002 and 2006, the market for these degrees grew three–fold, while private institutions that lack the appropriate accreditation offer more than half of all specializations and close to three fourths of all master's degrees and doctorates (Rama, 2009).

Since graduate degree programs are usually considered by themselves, there is a tendency to separate them completely from teacher continuing education programs that the same universities offer. This affects the virtual relationship that may be generated between the different lines of teacher continuing studies, and also affects the possibilities of establishing training paths that could go from classes and diplomas, to graduate courses and graduate degrees.

Finally, there is a trend towards the design of continuing education programs and policies that are better informed and more consistent. Technical definitions are sound; however, the contexts, the permanent processes of negotiations with stakeholders –including labor unions–, the funding, the consistency of entities that offer professional development options, and the will of teachers, will have a decisive role in the implementation, and therefore in the results.

3.2 Critical issues that emerge from the present situation of continuing education

The previous description of continuing education and professional development shows that there are key aspects that must be carefully reviewed.

a. Poor relevance and coordination of continuing education

One of the main criticisms of education policies undertaken in Latin America in the 1990's is that they gave a relatively minor importance to the most relevant component for success, that is, teacher professional development (Torres, 2003; Barber and Mourshed, 2007; Mourshed, Chijioke, and Barber, 2010; Terigi, 2010).

The high number of teachers and the associated costs, added to the difficulty of not having enough time for teacher participation, tends to shift the emphasis to other policies like initial training, performance evaluations, and incentives, ignoring the fact that none of those policies will have a massive or immediate impact.

On the other hand, the supply and demand game in teacher continuing education puts the search for quality and relevance at risk. Offering institutions tend to favor activities that do not require major costs or demands, which matches the wishes of many educators who want to get certifications without having to make too much of an effort or spend much of the time that is scarce in teaching.

Another problematic point is the limited insertion of professional development programs in long–term policies directed at educators. In the absence of a consistent and well–coordinated program, professional development activities co–exist with multiple initiatives that are promoted from different management levels, and consequently lead to dissipation and lack of relevance for the related goals of professionalization[22].

Many initiatives that are consistent, thought out, and led by teachers, experts, and scholars, have not enjoyed enough support, particularly ongoing support. An additional problem is that a major part of promising experiences was substituted by other programs, or abandoned prematurely by the authorities or by those who promoted them at the beginning, without having had enough time to show results from evaluations that could prove their effectiveness. Many of them have been evaluated externally, but the results have not been used to make adjustments to contents and processes. Hence, while these evaluations are well documented, they cannot lead to improvements (Ávalos, 2007; Vaillant, 2009; Terigi, 2010).

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[22] For example, in Mexico, besides the mandatory courses for those who voluntarily take national exams for admissions or promotions within the incentives program called Teaching Career, schools and educators are obligated to participate in a broad spectrum of special and temporary projects (up to 40, according to each level and each Mexican state). These activities require time and training and are added to the already heavy administrative workload, and the mandatory presentation of expenses reports (SEB, 2011).

In summary, critical balances of continuing education programs in countries of the Region, conclude that a radical change of concepts, models, and processes –in order to modify teaching practices– is unavoidable.

b. Low impact of actions that have been taken

Despite the many activities that have been undertaken in the last two decades in Latin America and the Caribbean in teacher training, studies show a low impact in the classroom (Murdochowicz, 2002; Villegas–Reimers, 2003; Vaillant, 2004; Ávalos, 2007; Martínez, 2009; Sotomayor y Walker, 2009; Terigi, 2009); Voelmer, 2010).

The quality of the training offer is not homogenous and, in many cases, is quite precarious. Fundamentally, it consists of institutions that present weaknesses in the initial training that they provide (Guerrero, 2009). Although innovative practices of academic institutions have been mentioned, traditional programs that are disconnected from the priority needs of teachers and schools are predominant. In part, this problem is related to the scarce relevance that training institutions give to their offer for working teachers, since they consider it a complementary task that is not as valuable.

Another significant factor is that the traditional teaching methodologies that are frequently used, do not contribute to reflection or to the critical ownership of knowledge on the part of teachers. These methodologies also generate models that contradict the present trends of collaborative learning.

The design of training activities that are not linked to school communities contributes to this low impact. When many teachers and school directors perceive that continuing education activities are not effective, they point to the lack of a connection with classroom practice, and to working conditions for teaching. As teacher training drifts from classroom practice, the activities become less effective and discourage educators who participate in them. The tension between practice and theory is at the core of this gap between training and classroom practice.

On the other hand, incentives given to teachers have to do more with attending courses and workshops than with learning achievements. They are even less linked to transferring acquired knowledge to classroom practice and to their effects on student learning.

If the coverage of continuing education programs is compared to the breadth of national teaching bodies, the conclusion is that coverage percentages are low; even more so, when it is reasonable to suppose that an educator must participate in training programs every few years.

Education systems frequently face difficulties in making the participation of teachers in continuing education programs a reality. In part, this is explained by the voluntary nature of participation, and by the fact that these activities are scheduled during teachers' vacations or on weekends.

c. Not acknowledging the heterogeneous nature of teachers' populations

Only recently have continuing education policies taken into account the different development cycles of education professionals. Still, there are programs that do not acknowledge the diversity of teachers according to their age, experience, stage in which they are in their careers, type of initial training, and context in which they work, among other factors.

The lines of research about this issue have not had a comparative view that would allow a better understanding of the motivations, expectations, and level of commitment that different groups of teachers express, according to the stage they are in their professional careers, working conditions, working level, personal willingness to improve practice, and perception about the profession.

The emerging characterization of development cycles for education professionals contributes to formulating policies and designing interventions that are more pertinent and of better quality. Particular attention should be paid to the support required by beginning educators for their insertion in the teaching profession and in their specific school contexts. At the international level, there is an attempt to address the induction of beginning teachers through different strategies, as a need to strengthen training and to avoid early abandonment of the profession (Marcelo, 2008; Feimann–Nesser, 1999; MacBeath, 2012). On the other hand, in the Region, initiatives of support for insertion are scarce and incipient. Beginning educators participate in the same continuing training activities, and have similar classroom duties as other teachers.

The diversity of contexts in which teachers work, constitute a key factor that must be considered. It is obvious that some teachers work in school environments that are more complex, and that present the need to develop special pedagogic skills that are related to school climate and treatment of diversity.

d. Unregulated offer

Regarding the offer, it must be recognized that one of the undesired consequences of having opened the provision of continuing education services to a range of agents has led to the emergence of a market that is not easily regulated, particularly in countries where a significant part of the offer is in the hands of private institutions, both non–profit and for–profit.

In most countries of the Region there are various continuing education initiatives, which offer independent solutions, programs that are linked to the educational proposals and economic interests of certain entities, or on demand by private educational institutions. These offerings may be more relevant, because they are closer to the specific demands of schools and educators. However, their weaknesses are: not being consistent in the quality of learning and not being easily regulated.

Teachers who are in this heterogeneous environment are as diverse and different. This characteristic has to do with the decision of offering institutions to send them off to the labor market as soon as possible and with the lowest cost. They apply this logic to all teachers who are registered, independently of their academic profile or diversity.

This problem is worsened by public institutions' weak regulation and evaluation of academic entities and private agencies that offer continuing education. Thus, quality and relevance are not guaranteed. Additionally, there is little or no consideration for professional performance standards that could also serve as a reference for continuing education. Institutional capacity for effective regulation is crucial, since regulatory frameworks may also lack pertinence, and thus limit innovative initiatives. This would lead to bureaucratization and a loss of flexibility and timely responses. The progress made in several countries regarding the development of standards and criteria for teacher evaluation, opens the way for a road map in continuing education[23].

e. Lack of attention to specific school context and collaborative learning

While we have described significant experiences of collaborative peer learning, which is one of the modalities that teachers value most due to its impact on their daily work, the academic and continuing education offer has been predominantly centered on the traditional modality of courses that are disconnected from school contexts. In part, this phenomenon could be explained by the existing distance between the academic/technical world –mostly responsible for teacher training and education– and concrete school realities. Another possible explanation is that the offer tends to be generalized for different groups of educators, regardless of school unit, sometimes even due to economic efficiency reasons. It is easier to reach greater numbers of teachers through a "waves" strategy, while not paying attention to its limitations.

To learn by observing the practices of others, exchanging experiences, and group reflection are included in public programs, but they are not strongly rooted. This may happen because of the innovative nature of these habits or due to the lack of specific tools and methodologies that are necessary for their implementation. The isolation of educators in the classroom prevents them from understanding the school in its totality, and hinders the necessary interaction and collaboration with others (Torres, 2003).

For professional development policies, the greatest challenge is the design of activities that are consistent with the specific situation of school communities. Teacher professional development cannot be conceived in isolation from the specific needs of

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[23] In Chile, the Good Teaching Framework (MBE, by its Spanish acronym), which works as a standard for teacher performance, is an example of the use of guiding criteria for teacher evaluation and continuing education.

each school. The concept of "situated learning" summarizes this. It means that professional development –in the physical space of the school or outside– must always be focused on the problems the educator faces in her or his daily work, as she or he attempts to get all students to reach their expected learning results.

f. Difficulties in the regulation and relevance of graduate degrees that are offered

A large number of studies about higher education that have been conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean (Didriksson, 2008) have addressed the disorderly expansion of graduate degree offerings (diplomas, specializations, master's degrees, and doctorates), and have demonstrated that this explosion –particularly visible in higher education systems with a strong participation of private institutions that are not closely monitored– is of a reactive nature, and does not follow rules of quality and relevance.

Even in the case of programs that are assessed in the framework of quality assurance mechanisms, the result is issued according to the particular criteria and indicators of the investigation, which limits the development of options with different approaches, like professionalization programs.

Researchers in international networks that are specialized in master's degrees and doctorates for teacher education have an ongoing debate about the impact of practices that are linked to the different models, curricula design, and methodologies. One part of this discussion has been centered on the need to determine the traits that are desirable in programs focused on attracting interested and thoughtful candidates. The prospective participants are educators who wish to broaden the scope of teaching strategies, in order to facilitate the learning of highly demanding curricular contents by a diverse group of students[24].

In principle, national accreditation and certification systems support the quality of graduate programs that higher education institutions offer, according to internationally accepted standards. It must be recognized that what predominates is preparing for basic research, which is positive in terms of the institutional soundness of the offering entity. However, if the purpose is to promote relevant graduate models that emphasize the components of practical training, which are essential for the modification of teaching practices, it is imperative to develop complementary criteria and indicators that will narrow down the selection, and focus it on relevance and impact potential. (Darling–Hammond, 2006; Crowe, 2010).

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24 Examples of this debate in the Region are the presentations made at the December 2010 meeting of the KIPUS Network, made up of educators, experts, and researchers. Several training institutions presented graduate degree models that seek a better coordination between theory / methodology and problems that emerge in classroom practice.

Regulating graduate programs on the basis of quality and relevance standards – that have yet to be fully developed and shared with the community– is an urgent task in the region.

Summary of critical issues in continuing education

a. Poor relevance and coordination of continuing education
b. Low impact of actions that have been taken
c. Not acknowledging the heterogeneous nature of teachers' populations
d. Unregulated offer
e. Lack of attention to specific school context and collaborative learning
f. Difficulties in the regulation and relevance of graduate degrees that are offered

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❹ The teaching career

▶ 4.1 Characteristics of the teaching career in Latin America and the Caribbean

From a broader perspective, a teaching career can be understood as the legal regime that establishes the profession's practice within a particular area, regulating, among other things, the system of admissions, practice, mobility, development, promotion, and retirement of people who work in the profession (Terigi, 2009). Ministries of Education are the most significant employers for teachers in Latin America and the Caribbean, which explains the weight of decisions that are made in the area of teaching careers.

The statutes and teaching careers that have been studied consider the different duties that a teacher may discharge within the school system: classroom teaching; management work; technical–pedagogic work; and supervision. We acknowledge the crucial significance of the training, selection, and professional development of school directors for education quality. However, since teaching is mainly exercised in the classroom, and given the urgency of determining strategies to strengthen that area, this State of the Art concentrates on the careers of classroom educators.

According to UNESCO–UIS (2009), by 2015 it will be necessary to recruit 750,000 new teachers in Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to maintain the present work force, fill emerging vacancies, and achieve the goal of universal primary education. Beyond this important teacher recruitment challenge, it is essential to attract highly qualified candidates who are capable of teaching at schools with critical needs and in specialized areas like Math or Science (UNESCO, 2008).

In this sense, it is crucial to offer an attractive teaching career that will generate high expectations of personal and professional satisfaction, along with fair salaries.

In most countries, the teaching career is regulated by professional statutes, which are a tool that gives legitimacy to teaching activities and establishes rights and obligations (Vaillant and Rossel, 2006). In the Region, teachers work mainly at public schools, are public employees, and therefore enjoy the job security that is characteristic of this sector.

On the other hand, in the last few years, modifications made to the statutes or regulating frameworks have led to situations of conflict and negotiations in different countries of the Region. In nations that are relatively more developed, statutes were established when education systems were being expanded between the 1940's and 1960's. These statutes followed the model of state regulation for labor relations, and set up bureaucratic steps for promotions, scales, and salaries. Usually, they also tended to structure a teaching career that favored seniority and the accumulation of labor experience through a promotion scale that led to better pay and positions of more responsibility, or to seniority–related appointments and pay hikes.

In the processes of reform and modernization of education systems that took place in the 1990's, many analysts and reformers saw these regulating frameworks as one of the main structural obstacles for reformulating school organizing and for improving education. On the other hand, unions tended to back regulations as a line of defense against

a deterioration of labor relations. In almost every country, negotiations and confrontations between unions and governments led to a postponement of statutory change, and to the prioritization of other items on the education agenda (Navarro, 2006).

Beginning in 2000, statutes were modified in several countries –with or without consensus– and traits that were different from those typical of the 20th Century were introduced. In some cases, emphasis was made on the professional nature of the career. Along with rewards for the different levels of specialization, governments now guaranteed access to those options (particularly to continuing education, evaluation, and pedagogical counseling). In other cases, government measures conceived statute modifications as policies associated to the improvement of education quality, with the introduction of evaluation systems that have a direct impact on wages and scales, putting pressure on educators for better results.

Types of teaching careers

In general, in teaching careers, there are vertical and horizontal promotion modalities (UNESCO, 2006). The former has to do with the possibility of leaving teaching to take on other responsibilities, and the latter refers to the opportunities for professional development, without having to quit as a classroom educator.

In the Region, vertical promotions predominate, with the main characteristics of the teaching career being the structuring by scales, the significant weight of seniority, and the tendency to abandon the classroom as the main path to promotion (Morduchowicz 2002; Vaillant and Rossel, 2006). Educators only obtain a substantial improvement in income if they become school directors, and from there supervisors.

Present regulations tend to undervalue classroom duty as a source of professional growth. Therefore, finding mechanisms that allow teachers to be recognized and promoted in their profession without having to abandon classroom teaching represents a challenge. Otherwise, good teachers are lost where they are most needed.

In many countries, the career is organized in a pyramid structure with levels. Entrance corresponds to the position that is lowest in the hierarchical scale, and usually the person needs to graduate as an educator in order to work as a teacher or professor. In general, with the exception of temporary positions, teacher selection is implemented through open calls that the corresponding administrations issue, at the national, state, or local level. Calls are based on merit (background) or on the contrasting of scores.

The contrasting of scores refers to the selection process that lists educators according to the score they get on a test or exam in which candidates demonstrate their knowledge and skills in teaching, and in the subject matter that they are applying for. One example of this modality is the case of Guatemala (UNESCO, 2006).

In other countries the system of entry by contrasting scores is complemented or substituted by a merit competition. While there is great diversity in criteria, merits usually considered are scores obtained during initial training, continuing education courses, and previous teaching experience. The combination of merit and test results –when it

exists– determines the selection and accreditation of educators. Brazil, Chile, and Colombia, among other countries, have chosen this system (UNESCO, 2006).

The teaching career begins in Argentina at the lowest position in the hierarchical scale, through a list that is ordered by merit. In most jurisdictions, entrance into teaching is implemented through a public call that is centered on the candidate's background (initial training, seniority, and education). Access to non–university levels is by background evaluation and/or the contrasting of scores where juries or assessment committees are in charge.

In Trinidad and Tobago, there is only a system based on merit. Entering teachers must have a bachelor's degree in Education. They must register as teachers by presenting the required academic qualifications (which vary according to the level), and are interviewed by the Teaching Service Commission (Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago, 2008).

In Mexico, each state government (or the SEP, in the case of the Federal District) is responsible for hiring through a National Call to Fill Teacher Vacancies, a modality that was recently established and that is a result of the Alliance for Quality in Education, signed by the SNTE and the Federal Government in 2008. The declared goal is "to improve the quality of education in Mexico, by strengthening educators through the hiring of professionals who are the best qualified for the practice of teaching." In this sense, the intention is "to eradicate discretional practices in hiring within the public education system."

A significant dilemma that centralized teaching careers face is coordinating with school management, a situation that becomes more complex in the de–centralized administration systems that are common in the Region. The system of competitive examinations to access teaching positions requires objectivity and transparency, along with teaching vacancies that match the specific characteristics of schools.

In most Central American countries, graduates must register for a teachers' ranking scale, and then apply for a teaching position in a centralized process.

Lastly, there are countries that lack a higher level of regulation to establish common criteria for teacher selection. In these cases, the local educational center or authorities publicize the openings and approve candidates according to their own set of rules.

According to some authors, (De Shano, 2010 and Terigi, 2010) in most cases new teachers enter the career as temporary or probationary employees. Later on, by re–applying or by passing tests and evaluations, they acquire rights as part of the teaching staff and have job security, among other benefits.

Entering the career usually happens at schools that are located in the most unfavorable context (Terigi, 2010). Also, teachers move away from unpopulated areas to be near schools that are closer to their homes. This rotation phenomenon plays against the construction of stable teachers' collectives at the different schools (Vaillant and Rossel, 2006), and harms schools that are attended by students from vulnerable sectors, because it deprives them of experienced teachers.

In the last few years, there has been progress in many countries of the Region in transforming the teaching career. In some cases, that progress has generated significant social mobilizations. The new career models are strongly identified with what is called horizontal promotion, as opposed to the traditional vertical promotion process that

historically has existed in the Region. Horizontal promotion means that educators may have access to new positions within the school setting, without having to leave their classroom duties. The experiences of Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, among others, are part of this new career model.

In Mexico, the teaching career was reformed in May 2011. Its main traits were changed to face the challenges related to improving the quality of education. There is a horizontal promotion system in place, in which teachers participate voluntarily and individually. They have the opportunity of entering the career and of being promoted if they comply with the requirements. The main guidelines for the teaching career were established in 1993, and the present reform is the result of joint efforts made by the Ministry of Public Education and the National Union of Education Workers (Morduchowicz, 2002; Agreement for the reform of basic guidelines in the National Teaching Career Program, 2011).

Another case that is mentioned in the literature is that of Colombia, where there are provisions that establish a salary scale system for teachers and school directors and managers who work in the public sector, according to training, experience, responsibilities, performance, and competencies[25] (Morduchowicz, 2010). Entrance into the teaching career is only through a competitive process, and is allowed for persons who have a secondary school level training in Education, a bachelor's degree in Education, or a university level degree in a different area. The secondary school–level training is only accepted for pre–school and primary education teachers, and the university–level degree is required to teach middle school and high school. This way, professionals who do not have a degree in Education can still enter the career (CEPP, 2010).

Another interesting case is that of Peru, where a five–level public teaching career was established in 2007, through the enactment of the new Law of Public School Teaching. Access to each level corresponds to results obtained in voluntary evaluations and exams, and there is a minimum amount of time that a teacher must remain at each level. The educator must stay a minimum of three years at the first level, five years at the second level, six years at the third level, six years at the fourth level, and up until retirement at the fifth level. Teachers' careers had been regulated under the Educators' Law. Now, they can enter a public teaching career where at the fifth level their salaries will be twice as high as that of the first level (Morduchowicz, 2010). Both laws co–exist, because entrance to public school teaching is voluntary. Despite the economic incentives that are offered, it is estimated that 80% of teachers remain under the coverage of the previous Educators' Law (Cuenca, 2011). One explanation could be that, although a participatory discussion was promoted among social stakeholders, the new law was enacted during a teachers' strike, as an attempt to break that labor action[26].

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[25] The Colombian Congress has recognized previously hired educators, under Decree 2277 issued in 1979 to establish norms for the teaching profession, and new educators, under Decree 1278 issued in 2002, which established the statute of teacher specialization.

[26] Report issued by Peru's consultation group.

In Argentina, Teachers' Statutes regulate the promotion process through an established scale by which higher positions can be reached. In the case of primary education, the hierarchical pyramid is usually made up of the grade school teacher, the vice–director, the director, and the supervising director. Access to each of these positions is determined by each teacher's background and a test of contrasting scores.

Brazil stands out for the heterogeneous nature of its teaching careers. Teaching professionals are divided into six branches: teachers, managers, planners, supervisors, inspectors, and counselors. Teaching career plans are developed at the municipal, state, and federal levels. This way, there is respect for the relative autonomy of administrative spheres, and one single teaching career has not been established nationwide. Nevertheless, there are common criteria established by law. Among those criteria are: the fact that entering the career depends on a competitive exam and on having obtained a degree; continuing education –even with periods of paid leave–; base salaries; promotions based on obtaining degrees or authorizations and performance evaluations; the need for a time designated for studying; planning and evaluating student performance and the school itself; and the teaching experience (OEI, 2008a).

In 2005, Costa Rica established a new professional teaching career focused on incentives for good performance, with the goal of attracting and maintaining the best qualified educators.

Guatemala offers a teaching career approach that was developed by the Training School for Secondary Education Teachers of Universidad de San Carlos (USAC) and the Teachers' Assembly with the support of USAID[27]. Consensus has been reached with educators, and a version of this proposal will soon be discussed and debated. This proposal considers entrance, permanence, periods before promotions, incentives, and retirement. One element to be discussed is performance assessment, and there is agreement with educators that promotions must be linked to teachers' performance. This career approach is being proposed in parallel to the existing career scale structure.

When comparing the cases of three countries that already have national teaching careers –Colombia, Mexico, and Peru–, we can observe the following common characteristics: new requirements are not mandatory for working teachers (except in the case of Colombia, where there is a universal career and a voluntary career, with the aim of offering incentives); teacher evaluation mechanisms; consideration of factors such as seniority, training, and knowledge; and the existence of different levels (except in Colombia). Student learning results are only taken into account in Mexico's teaching career.

An analysis of the different approaches to teaching careers leads to a review of an intricate set of factors such as working conditions, salaries and incentives, and performance assessment systems.

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[27] United States Agency for International Development.

Working conditions

A review of the literature about supply and demand in teaching that was carried out by the OECD in 2002, highlighted some aspects of working conditions that are closely linked to teaching career schemes, namely the teacher–student ratio, school discipline problems, the amount of time dedicated to classroom teaching, holding multiple jobs, and the phenomenon of teacher rotation that has been mentioned.

On the one hand, teachers' working conditions represent a dimension of labor rights that unions legitimately defend. On the other hand, working conditions directly affect the quality of professional performance, and therefore student learning.

Although research about the impact of class sizes on student performance is not conclusive (Vegas and Petrow, 2008), in the Region, teachers do not have to deal with particularly large numbers of classroom students. As was seen in Chapter 1, in 2008 the teacher–student ratio in the Region was 23 for primary education. This figure is similar or slightly higher than the one for most European countries and lower than that of several Asian countries like Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea (UNESCO–IBE, 2010). Nevertheless, this average certainly hides situations that some teachers face in the urban areas of several countries, with high numbers of classroom students.

In many countries, the conditions of school infrastructure are still poor, and this represents a significant obstacle for teaching. Often, teachers make personal economic contributions, or mobilize parents to compensate for those needs. This lack of support on the part of authorities generates negative feelings. The existence of appropriate and well–equipped spaces for out of the classroom activities –both individual and team activities– constitutes another significant factor that carries a diversity of situations.

Some reports, like the one conducted by the OECD in 2002, suggest that school co-existence and classroom discipline problems may also influence working conditions, the number of people who choose the teaching career (in particular), and teacher retention. Recent studies (Marcelo and Vaillant, 2009) show that one of the main reasons for teachers to quit is classroom discipline. It seems like the more teachers feel in control of school discipline policy, the more likely they are to continue teaching.

Another important factor is the organization of teaching work, which includes task assignments. The existence of clear norms and procedures for the assignment of tasks, and the generation of opportunities for collective work, can make a significant difference in the way that professional work is addressed. In the same manner, the bureaucratic and authoritarian internal relations that characterize many institutions in the Region hinder the professionalization of teaching. This is important, because it might represent an underlying factor in passive or negative attitudes that make competent teachers abandon their profession. Despite the significance of this dimension, there is no research available to express its reality, and analyzing it is complex, because internal relations develop in different ways in each community.

There is great ethnic and socio–economic diversity in the Region's schools and student populations. This diversity also contributes to creating working environments that

are totally different, and it is likely that this has an impact on personal decisions about entering the teaching career and where to work (De Shano, 2010).

Most countries of the Region have a high degree of job security. However, one important factor to consider when analyzing teachers' working conditions is the time they dedicate to classroom teaching. The real work–load is always difficult to determine, but it is known that in Latin American countries most of the time is dedicated to classroom work (Vaillant and Rossel, 2006). Usually, this does not include planning, coordination, and evaluation, which most of the time is done during the teacher's free time. This situation represents a significant obstacle for the professional development of educators. There are not many countries in the Region where this situation has been solved, contrary to what has been done in OECD countries, where time that is assigned to professional development is one of the main benefits that working teachers can count on (OECD, 2009a).

Another relevant factor related to the working conditions of educators in Latin America and the Caribbean is having multiple jobs. Double shifts are a reality for a high percentage of teachers. The second shift takes place at a different educational facility, so it adds to the stress and physical exhaustion. This is why there is an indicator that examines whether teachers stay at a certain school for five years or longer (UNESCO–UIS, 2008). For example, if 18 of 20 teachers have stayed at the same school for five years or longer, stability is considered to be of 90%. Many OECD countries reach these appropriate figures of teacher job stability. But it is different in Latin America and the Caribbean, where this number is below 70% (UNESCO–UIS, 2008).

In Central America, teaching is impacted negatively by stress associated to unfavorable working conditions –including school environments that are adverse and unsafe–, commuting to schools in rural areas, an overload of administrative work, and overpopulated classrooms.

Several studies have been conducted on teachers' occupational health, since many educators request prolonged medical leaves of absence, which seriously affect the normal functioning of –particularly– public schools (UNESCO, 2005). One interesting experience is the effort carried out in Trinidad and Tobago that is aimed at achieving better working conditions through the Occupational Safety and Health Act[28]. This initiative is part of a set of goals that the Ministry of Education has set regarding educators: participation in decision–making; time for planning; clear opportunities for promotions; acknowledgement of excellence; fair wages; retirement benefits; and safe and healthy working environments[29].

The problems that educators face regarding their working conditions not only have an impact on the risk of desertion by qualified teachers, but also in situations of discontent that are highly detrimental for an effective professional performance.

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[28] Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago, reply to UNESCO consultation, August 2011.

[29] Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago, Strategic Plan 2010.

Salaries and incentives

Salaries and incentives are pivotal in the teaching career, in the sense that promotions are associated to pay hikes.

The issue of teacher salaries has been extensively discussed and studied, and has been at the center of prolonged conflicts between governments and labor unions in most countries of the Region. In Latin America, salaries for teachers are relatively low if they are compared to wages in other professions. This is a critical point, because if there is an interest to encourage students to enter pedagogic careers, they must know that they will join a profession that is appropriately remunerated.

The bibliography (Morduchowicz, 2009) shows that teachers' earnings are made up of a base salary and other specifications for pay increases that depend on different factors, of which seniority is usually the most important. In many cases, the base salary may grow substantially if incentives are taken into account, although the latter are often very selective.

One of the most common characteristics of salary scales for teachers in the Region is that these are determined in a centralized manner (Morduchowicz, 2009). In some countries that have a federal system of government, the trend of the last few years has been to establish a minimum wage for all educators. Thus, in Argentina, the law that guarantees teachers' salaries –passed and enacted between 2003 and 2004– establishes and standardizes the school year in all jurisdictions and ensures payment for all teachers.

The case of Brazil is symbolic. In 1996, authorities created the Support and Development Fund for Primary Education and Teaching Appreciation (FUNDEF, by its Portuguese acronym), and in 2006 replaced it with the Fund for the Development of Basic Education and the Appreciation of Education Professionals (FUNDEB, by its Portuguese acronym). The main objective of this fund is the redistribution of resources that are channeled to education, by compensating states and municipalities where investment per student is lower than the one that has been pre–determined each year. Since at least 60% of the fund is assigned to teaching professionals' salaries and continuing education, results have been encouraging: teachers' salaries have improved significantly, and pay hikes have been higher where wages had been lower (Souza, 2001 and Gatti et al., 2011).

The Department of Education of the Brazilian State of Sao Paulo has been implementing policies to improve education quality by assigning resources according to assessment results. In this sense, it launched two complementary programs: on the one hand, there is an award that is given to schools that reach the agreed objectives; on the other hand, the Merit Promotion program allows teachers who show good performance to increase their salaries by up to 240% throughout their careers, with respect to their initial salaries (CEPP, 2010).

In Mexico, recent reforms made to the General Education Law of 2011 give a mandate for education authorities to establish evaluation–based mechanisms of incentives for the teaching career. The recent Agreement for the Reform of Basic Guidelines of

the Education Career National Program[30] was aimed at giving priority to student performance in the consideration of teacher incentives. In the previous system, student performance in national exams accounted for 20% of the teacher's score, while in the new framework this number is raised to 50%. The other factors considered are: continuing education (20%), professional training (5%), seniority (5%), and extra–curricular activities (20%)[31]. The high percentage given to student performance is a response to concerns expressed by different sectors of Mexican society[32].

The different countries of the Region have made significant efforts to improve educators' salaries, but there are still large gaps between teachers' earnings and those of other professionals. This situation represents a setback for attracting and maintaining good teachers in the classroom, because they can find better paying jobs.

Morduchowicz (2010) argues that in the teaching profession there are shortcomings basically at the training and recruitment levels. The author asserts that salary incentives are "an attempt to promote and recognize capable teachers, who are attracted to the field independently of alternative sources of income and the different opportunities for professional personal development in other areas" (2010: 3). There have been debates and divergent positions regarding incentives, with the participation of analysts, policy–makers, and union delegates.

The bibliography identifies different types of incentives based on: knowledge and skills; student test results; teacher training; teaching in difficult environments; and teaching certain subject matters (Vegas, 2006). The first two categories have been given priority in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Louzano (2001) goes in depth into the Chilean experience, as an example of incentives that are based on the knowledge and skills of teachers and incentives that are derived from student results. With respect to the first type of incentives, since 2002 Chile has what is called the Pedagogical Excellence Acknowledgement (AEP, by its Spanish acronym). This is a voluntary process, which seeks to recognize professional merit among primary and secondary school teachers. AEP educators must prove their knowledge and skills through a written exam and a portfolio that shows planning, practice (including a video of a class), and evaluation of classes. When educators get their AEP, the monetary compensation is equal to an extra month of wages during the year for ten years[33] (Morduchowicz, 2009). Up to this date, the extra month of wages has benefited around 2% of all classroom teachers at publicly funded schools.

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[30] See reference document SEP-SNTE.

[31] These activities are additional to the teachers' working day, and promote the inclusion and participation of all actors in each school, in order to generate an environment that facilitates student development.

[32] Some experts maintain that the present available tool –the ENLACE test– has weaknesses that could make it an unfair instrument to determine the value that each educator adds to student performance.

[33] A recently approved regulation establishes three levels of accreditation with differentiated amounts, and reduces the incentive period to four years.

Regarding incentives that are related to educational outcomes, Chile has a collective incentive through its National System of Performance Evaluation (SNED, by its Spanish acronym), which every two years assesses the performance of schools through the results that students obtain on the Education Quality Measurement System (SIMCE, by its Spanish acronym) test. Schools that show more progress in this measurement system and in other management indicators receive additional resources for two years in the form of a bonus for all management and teaching staff, based on the principle that a good teacher gets students to learn what they should learn (Peirano, Falck, and Domínguez, 2007).

In Colombia, the national incentives program rewards well–performing school centers with resources for the implementation of educational projects, and teachers at those schools for their excellence. In the last six years, the Colombian government has implemented measures and programs in education, which are focused on improving the quality of public service (Peirano, Falck, and Domínguez, 2007).

According to Andrews (2006), there is enough evidence to show that although wages and incentives are important factors at the time of choosing and remaining in a teaching career, teachers and professors also consider other aspects as very important, among them recognition and incentives for good performance. In Latin America and the Caribbean, it is possible to find promising initiatives of symbolic incentives coming from civil society, which seek to acknowledge good teachers and improve social recognition for them (Vaillant and Rossel 2010). Some of them that deserve a special mention: the Grade–10 Educator Award in Brazil, the Share the Teacher Award in Colombia, the One Hundred Points–Grade Teacher Award in Guatemala, the ABC Award in Mexico, and the Teacher with a Legacy Award in Peru.

Some of the awards include monetary prizes for teachers or schools, teaching materials, computers, international internships, national scholarships, and other material goods. It is worth mentioning that the award ceremonies have a high media impact in each country, which may contribute to improving public views about teachers.

Assessment of teacher performance

Teacher evaluation has not been a priority in many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, which does not mean that there are no practices or regulations on this issue. Supervising directors, school principals, students, and family members often evaluate teacher performance through informal mechanisms (Vaillant and Rossel, 2004; Román, 2010). There are traditional assessment mechanisms that still exist, although their regulatory impact and their linkage to the ensuring of quality are not necessarily effective.

Teacher evaluation is an issue that is debated among education authorities and educators' labor unions, and its implementation is the result of negotiations that not always include technical aspects of good performance. Present initiatives have been launched by governments, and are not necessarily accepted by teachers. Discussions cover issues

like who the object of evaluation is, the selection of evaluators, instruments and procedures, and the relation between results and incentives. Certainly, assessing the quality of teacher performance is a highly complex challenge, which explains the diversity of strategies that are used at the international level.

A study about the evaluation of teacher performance and professional careers that was conducted in 50 countries of the Americas and Europe (UNESCO, 2006), asserts that one of the present concerns in both of these continents is structuring systems of teaching careers and performance assessment that will contribute to the professional development of teachers and professors, and consequently to a better quality of education. However, it recognizes that teacher performance evaluation is a highly conflictive issue, since it confronts the interests and opinions of politicians and managers, teachers and their unions, and experts about the subject.

The study highlights the case of Finland, a country that has recently become a symbol of quality education. It has external evaluations of educators and schools, and the issue is not even under debate. The Finnish education system is based on trusting teachers and their professionalism and the good performance of educational centers (UNESCO, 2006).

Very few examples of teacher performance evaluation can be found in Latin America. Just like with the issue of incentives, Chile and Colombia are mentioned very often in the literature, joined recently by Peru (Vaillant, 2010a) (see Table 11). This makes sense, since incentives are usually a key component of performance evaluation systems.

Since 2003, Chile also has in place the Professional Teacher Performance Evaluation System at the municipal level. The goal is to evaluate educators every four years based on the criteria contained in the Good Teaching Framework (MBE, by its Spanish acronym). This assessment is implemented through four instruments: self–evaluation, a report by the school director and the pedagogical technical director, an evaluation made by a peer from a different school, and a portfolio of written and video files with proof of experience (Manzi, González, and Sun, 2011).

Teachers who get the best results –average and above average– have access to an economic incentive (Variable Acknowledgement of Individual Performance, AVDI, by its Spanish acronym) for four years, after passing a general knowledge exam.

Teachers who get the lowest results in evaluations –basic or unsatisfactory– get support through professional advancement plans, which take into account the weaknesses that the assessment has identified. Also, educators who get unsatisfactory results must go through another evaluation the following year. If they do not pass that test, they must abandon the system[34].

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[34] The recently passed Law for Quality and Equity (2011) changed the measures that are taken regarding teachers who are evaluated as "unsatisfactory" or as "basic" level. In the original system that was agreed upon with the teachers' union, only those who were evaluated as "unsatisfactory" in three consecutive annual exams had to abandon the career. According to the new Law, teachers who are evaluated in three consecutive tests as "basic" and/or "unsatisfactory" must also abandon the system. The present law allows school directors to implement complementary evaluations, and propose the laying off of up to 5% of teachers who are assessed as "basic" or "unsatisfactory" in the national evaluation.

The case of Colombia is also mentioned in the literature. Since 2002, the Teacher Professionalization Statutes establish three types of evaluations. Each assessment takes place at different times in the career and has different goals (Vaillant, 2010a):

a. A competitive call where skills, competencies, experience, and pertinence are evaluated. Once the applicant passes the test, she or he is hired for one year;

b. A yearly performance evaluation. Those who are graded as "unsatisfactory" for two years in a row are separated from the system;

c. A voluntary aptitude test for those who have remained for at least three years in their positions. This allows promotions and salary increases for teachers who are evaluated as above average.

Educators who want to be evaluated by a different scale must take a test of competencies (Peirano, C., Falck, D. and Domínguez M., 2007) that are related to: actions and achievement; help and service; influence; leadership and guidance; cognitive skills; and personal effectiveness[35].

In Peru, the 2007 Law of Public Teaching Careers determines that an educator must pass a demanding competitive process consisting of a test, an examination of her or his professional experience, and a personal interview (Morduchowicz, 2010). Two types of evaluation are stipulated in the new law:

a. Mandatory evaluations to enter the career and to work as an educator. This last one is conducted every three years. In case of failure, another evaluation is implemented after one year, and after training and monitoring. Not more than three quarters of the year must go by after the failed test.

b. Voluntary evaluation for promotion and to verify the teacher's capacities and performance, when she or he applies for a position in pedagogic administration, institutional management, or research. In order to take this exam, tests for previous levels must have been passed. Taking the number of vacancies into consideration and according to merit, the teacher can get the new position only if the total average adds up to 70% or higher.

In Peru, the Ministry of Education, in coordination with the operating branch of the SINEACE (National System of Evaluation, Accreditation, and Certification of Education Quality, established in 2003), is in charge of evaluating educators.

The 2007 Law of Public Teaching Careers established a new horizontal scale of promotions and salary incentives that is based on a system of teacher evaluation. This Law also includes the participation of students' family members in the appointment of teachers

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[35] http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/proyectos/1737/article-210839.html

and directors of school centers. The SUTEP resisted the passing of this Law, and this gave rise to a series of prolonged national strikes (2007). However, the union has been losing strength in its mobilization capacity for this type of actions (Chiroque, 2010).

The implementation of performance assessments that began in 2006, in the context of several education measures that the APRA Party government launched in Peru, led to a an era of conflict and confrontation. Performance evaluation is included in the Law of Public Teaching Careers, and the results obtained in those evaluations are part of the set of factors to be considered for teachers' advancement in the horizontal scale, and for promotions. Education policy–makers seem to have decided that they need to keep moving forward with performance assessments and career reform despite the union's resistance, which they hope to erode in the long–run (Chiroque, 2010).

In Trinidad and Tobago, the system of teacher evaluation allows for the promotion to other positions within the teaching career. The system includes a mandatory annual evaluation.

TABLE 11: Teacher performance evaluation in Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago

COUNTRY	MODALITY	STRATEGY	CONSEQUENCES
CHILE 2002 - 2003	EVALUATION SYSTEM OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE	MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS TEACHER EVALUATION EVERY FOUR YEARS	ABOVE AVERAGE AND COMPETENT TEACHERS MAY OBTAIN ECONOMIC BENEFITS, AFTER PASSING A KNOWLEDGE TEST. TEACHERS WHOSE LEVEL IS EVALUATED AS "UNSATISFACTORY", PARTICIPATE IN A PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM, AND MUST BE RE–EVALUATED IN ONE OR TWO YEARS. IF THEY REMAIN IN THE UNSATISFACTORY LEVEL FOR 2 YEARS, OR IN THE BASIC OR UNSATISFACTORY LEVEL FOR 3 YEARS, THEY MUST ABANDON THE SYSTEM.
COLOMBIA 2002	CAREER ENTRANCE EXAM	EVALUATION AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR	IF THE APPLICANT PASSES THE TEST, SHE OR HE CAN ENTER THE CAREER IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR
	PERFORMANCE EVALUATION	ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION	IF THE TEACHER IS GRADED AS "UNSATISFACTORY" FOR TWO YEARS, SHE OR HE MUST ABANDON THE TEACHING CAREER
	PROFICIENCY EVALUATION	OPTIONAL EVALUATION AFTER A MINIMUM OF THREE YEARS OF SERVICE	IF THE TEACHER IS GRADED AS ABOVE AVERAGE, HE OR SHE IS PROMOTED IN THE SCALE OR GETS A SALARY INCREASE

COUNTRY	MODALITY	STRATEGY	CONSEQUENCES
PERU 2007	ENTRANCE INTO CAREER AND WORKING PERFORMANCE	TEACHERS ARE EVALUATED EVERY THREE YEARS	IF THE TEACHER DOES NOT PASS, SHE OR HE MUST BE EVALUATED AGAIN IN ONE YEAR, AFTER HAVING GONE FOR TRAINING AND MONITORING
	PROMOTION AND ACCESS TO OTHER POSITIONS	ANNUAL EVALUATION OF VOLUNTARY TEACHERS	IF THE TEACHER PASSES ALL TESTS, SHE OR HE IS PROMOTED OR HAS ACCESS TO A NEW POSITION
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	PROMOTION AND ACCESS TO OTHER POSITIONS	MANDATORY ANNUAL TEACHER EVALUATION	PERFORMANCE EVALUATION IS CONSIDERED AT PROMOTION INTERVIEW

SOURCE: Developed by the authors.

Cuba is another country in Latin America and the Caribbean that has a teacher evaluation system managed by a commission made up of the school director, educators with a broad experience, and members of the teachers' union. The teacher must respond to the evaluation, and if she or he does not agree with the results, there is the possibility of appealing to a higher body. Teachers who are evaluated with the best grades have access to courses, undergraduate degrees, master's degrees, and doctorates, nationally and internationally. The Cuban system of evaluation offers bonuses and salary increases as incentives (UNESCO, 2006). Educators who do not get the expected results in the final exam have the option of preparing themselves again intensely at pedagogical universities, without abandoning their duties as public employees.

In Mexico, the assessment system that was agreed in May 2011 by the SEP and the SNTE, has the goal of evaluating all classroom educators, directors and management staff, and teachers working as support pedagogic staff in primary education. This assessment will give way to a comprehensive diagnosis of professional skills, focusing on continuing education to address weaknesses that are detected. This way, appropriate professional support will be offered to improve the quality of education nationwide. Thus, the evaluation will take into account the following aspects: 1) Efficiency (results of national academic tests implemented in schools, standardized instruments, and/or corresponding instruments); 2) Professional skills, which include: a) professional training, with standardized exams given every three years; b) professional performance, based on standards issued by the Ministry of Public Education; and c) continuing education (SEP–SNTE 2011).

◗ 4.2 Critical issues that emerge from the present situation of teaching careers

Most countries of the Region do not have a professional career that embodies social recognition, and that is seen by young people who enter the career and working educators as a set of professional development opportunities, including promotions that reward merit, effort, and professional responsibility.

a. Difficulties in attracting and retaining good educators

The need to attract and retain good educators is a recurrent key issue in most Latin American and Caribbean countries. But there are difficulties in attaining both of these goals, because teaching opens doors for other academic careers and occupations. That is why it is so difficult; there is a need for a professional environment that enhances the capacities of the education system, and that provides incentives for teaching to represent one of the first options for graduating high school students with good grades (Vaillant, 2006).

Also, the lack of a promotion system in teaching in which good practices are acknowledged and encouraged keeps good working educators away.

A review of the international and Latin American literature shows that education authorities today face the constant challenge of having enough competent teachers, who remain motivated and enjoy good working conditions throughout their careers (Vaillant, 2006; OECD, 2005; Vegas and Petrow, 2008).

Undoubtedly, achieving that goal is closely linked to salaries and working conditions, and to the prestige that society assigns to the teaching profession. The little recognition given by society to the profession is a big obstacle, since at the same time there are high expectations about teacher performance. On the other hand, educators regret the lack of status, particularly but not exclusively regarding wages, which perpetuates a certain feeling of resentment (Ortega et al., 2011).

Besides income, there are other incentives that can make the teaching career more interesting. Among them are the quality of the relationship with students and colleagues, team work, support from school management leaders, working conditions (both material and in terms of time for professional activities outside of the classroom, and professional development opportunities (OECD, 2005).

b. Stages of the teaching career are not taken into account

The professional life of an educator lasts between 30 and 40 years, and is strongly marked by the first five years. That first stage is key because it is when teachers build their work culture. In Latin America, options for the teaching career do not address induction as a specific issue. Few countries have policies in place that are focused on beginning teachers (Marcelo, 2010 and Vaillant, 2009).

When thinking about a professional teaching career, the different stages must be taken into account. Research shows that there are significant changes according to each professional stage. The first three years are marked by a strong commitment, and sup-

port from school directors and supervisors is essential. In this period, educators already know what an effective performance means. Between the 4th and 7th year, educators enter the stage when they develop their professional identity and some classroom effectiveness. Then, between the 8th and 15th year, there is a stage of growing tensions and transitions, in which some teachers hold positions of authority and must make several decisions about the future of their careers. When teachers are between the 16th and 23rd year of professional life, problems emerge regarding motivation and commitment. Later on, between the 24th and 30th year, challenges to maintain commitment even intensify. Finally, with 31 years of experience or more, motivation drops considerably due to the proximity of retirement (Day et al., 2007).

Stages in the professional life of an educator should be considered in the design of career proposals, since there are strong indications that stages have a differentiated impact on teachers.

Taking stages into consideration represents a challenge for the Region, since teaching careers only include these distinctions for salary purposes, while continuing education programs do not take them into account. Recent experiences of support or induction of beginning teachers are an exception.

c. Dissociation between the career and professional development

The literature points out that there should be better coordination between the teaching career and educators' professional development (Terigi, 2010). Regarding the latter, it is interesting to review the empirical evidence about the factors that please teachers the most (Vaillant and Rossel, 2006). Among those aspects are student achievements, personal commitment to the teaching profession, continuing education, the satisfaction of being able to convey their knowledge, and their fondness for students.

Taking and passing a challenging course; developing a project for the school, its implementation and evaluation; the satisfaction of being selected after a competitive call and its related prestige; identifying problems in school and building ways to find a solution; applying for scholarships; and advising a colleague who is just beginning, are examples of important achievements for educators. If these activities are included, they can make the professional career more attractive and stimulating (Terigi, 2010). There is not much evidence that these factors are appropriately taken into account in present day teaching careers.

In the Region, teaching careers are usually just limited to including certain training requirements, experience, merit, and performance, but do not generate real opportunities for professional learning. This way, they run the risk of providing certifications that will not allow educators to take qualitative leaps in the improvement of their skills.

d. Tension between centralized and diversified salary scales

An issue that has caused ongoing controversy is the degree of centralization of the salary structures in any given country. There are arguments in favor of establishing base

salaries: objectivity, since they are not being subjected to the decision of any authority; predictability, since educators will know how much they will be paid since the beginning of their careers; easy management and comprehension, since they reduce, if not eliminate, competition among educators (Morduchowicz, 2009). Base salaries also have a justice component, since educators with similar backgrounds (experience, degree, performance) will be paid the same.

However, disadvantages are also reported about those pay scales (Morduchowicz, 2009). Some of the most relevant are: educators with a lower performance receive the same salary as those with better qualifications, training, and commitment; teachers who have Education degrees are paid the same as those who do not go on to higher studies; the potential of educators with more experience is not fully used or paid in challenging jobs; the pay scale is not linked to school activities; and different levels of effort and skills receive the same monetary reward.

Even if job security and salary increases for years of service have become effective incentives to promote the retention of teachers in the Region, they do not contribute to improving quality and equity in education by themselves. It seems that it is possible to put together all the reasons that could originate incentives in categories like performance, teaching in rural and poor environments, and continuing education.

However, for incentives to work, firstly, there should be a good definition of objectives, and clearly established rules. The literature insists that criteria for teachers' incentives must be well designed, with availability for good indicators and a balance in the amounts to be given (OECD, 2009; Louzano, 2011; Vegas and Petrow, 2008). Often, some incentives are not very attractive or effective, because of the amounts or the coverage.

The broad range of options shows that there is not one single institutional approach that will allow for a monetary compensation of effort, dedication, and permanent improvement on the part of teachers. On the other hand, teachers' policies usually assign more significance to factors that are easily measured, like the certifications given at continuing education courses, instead of professional performance.

The introduction of incentives in the salary system of educators faces the obstacle that unions traditionally focus their demands on the defense and the improvement of pre–existing salary scales.

About this issue, teachers' organizations fluctuate between accepting management proposals, resisting to defend the rights they have gained, and searching for agreements that will consider the participation of unions in the different phases of policy implementation.

In these complex processes, unions face the uncertainty of policy effects, in the context of a historical mistrust between organized labor and governments. Additionally, more complex and differentiated mechanisms of incentives and rewards run the risk of increasing tensions among sectors of the teaching profession, due to stronger competition to obtain certain incentives.

In countries where education de–centralization policies have been implemented in the last two decades, salary negotiations have been affected by a new type of contract

relationship, which modifies labor relations between teachers and regulatory regimes. In those cases, unions' demands have been re–centralized around a basic salary.

e. Difficulties in generating consensus for an educational performance evaluation

Reports that have been reviewed (OECD, 2009; UNESCO, 2006) show that performance evaluation systems that work are usually the result of an agreement between representative stakeholders, and have the backing of a majority of those who are being evaluated. It seems that successful initiatives in teacher evaluation have combined the interest for a qualitative improvement in education with the demands for a better management, and the legitimate rights of educators.

Alternatives that have taken root indicate that not only the design is important. The process that was necessary to go through in order to achieve successful results is also significant (Vaillant, 2010b). These results come from considerable technical efforts, which include reviewing the literature, participating in international seminars, getting the advice of national and international experts, and implementing pilot programs.

While countries like Chile and Mexico have reached agreements for the implementation of educators' evaluation systems, other countries like Colombia and Peru have imposed new legal norms that have led to more heated conflicts with teachers' unions.

The possibility of having teacher performance evaluation as a contribution to the quality of teaching and learning, is linked to the capacity of integrating the information coming from that evaluation into the training processes that are part of the professional career. There is no evidence that this challenge has been addressed in the countries of the Region.

Summary of critical issues in the teaching career

a. Difficulties in attracting and retaining good educators
b. Stages of the teaching career are not taken into account
c. Dissociation between the career and professional development
d. Tension between centralized and diversified salary scales
e. Difficulties in generating consensus for an educational performance evaluation

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❺ Institutions and processes of teachers' policies in Latin America and the Caribbean: trends and open questions

An analysis of teachers' policies in the region must include a basic paradox: while there is consensus about their significance and their central role, and the public discourse about teachers' policies always mentions their importance, effective actions regarding teachers do not have strategic status within policy decision–making. This is due to several reasons, which a review of the new agenda must discuss and try to resolve.

Teachers' policies are not really at the top of the priorities list because –to put it simply– they carry a high cost when the aim is to change the whole teaching profession; are not visible to the public in their implementation; are politically complex; and are medium–term and long–term with respect to desired effects. In summary, according to well–informed characterizations (Corrales, 1999; Navarro, 2006), they are at the extreme of "difficult policies". There are several dimensions of education policies that are easier and faster to evaluate in a real assessment of the teaching profession. An increase in school coverage, improvements in infrastructure and equipment, and the acquisition of educational materials, among others, are measures with results that can be massively observed and appreciated in the short–run, despite the need for a significant investment and for possessing the political will. To the contrary, improving initial and continuing education, and the salaries and working conditions of tens of thousands and even millions of educators –according to each country– are goals considered as very costly and hardly addressable by four–year or six–year governments. Moreover, teachers' policies that are favored are the more visible ones, which contribute to avoid conflicts with educators, like salary increases and incentives. Selective incentives are also preferred because they carry lower costs than universal pay hikes. Consequently, the deep changes that are needed in teachers' policies are usually postponed or addressed through partial measures with a reduced impact vis–a–vis the magnitude of the challenges.

Then, the puzzle is that if we take to heart the assertion that the education system and the learning that it achieves and distributes at the social level will have a quality equivalent to the quality of teachers (Barber and Mourshed, 2007), educators and their training and working conditions should be at the center of today's public efforts in education. Even if it is the hardest nut to crack in the whole education reform, and involves the difficulties that have been mentioned.

Against this background, this final chapter of the diagnosis seeks to put forward analytical categories and identify trends about institutions and processes in teachers' policies, where the underlying concern is their quality. Just as it is clear that society has more complex and demanding expectations about education, aspirations about education policies are also "higher". How have policies' determining factors evolved? With what criteria can determining factors be assessed as better or worse? Is it possible to promote an improvement in the processes of policy formulation and implementation? If not, which factors and processes should be a priority to introduce and develop improvement schemes? Below are proposed analysis categories to address these questions.

The aim is to identify trends in institutions and processes of teachers' policies formulation, negotiation, and implementation, and interpret those trends by assessing their impact on the quality of policies themselves.

This is not the usual approach in characterizing and analyzing education policies. Commonly, the policies' content is what is assessed, not institutions and processes, emergence, implementation, and evaluation. The empirical references are scarce and not systematic, which makes it more difficult to compare and generalize. But the conclusion is that this should not prevent an evaluation of a dimension with such a decisive influence on change processes.

▶ 5.1. Analysis categories in processes of formulation and implementation of education policies

The introduction and maintenance of educational reforms is in the midst of a contradiction between how important they are –this is clearly understood by a great majority of actors and observers of the state of education in the Region–, and the existence of a strong opposition and few immediate incentives to put them into practice. In this situation, many times decisions are made as a response to the pressures of the moment, which does not ensure that the reforms will be maintained and implemented in the long–run. Sometimes decisions respond to certain interests or are the result of negotiations about the concerns of stakeholders within the education system, without a public interest approach or concern for the whole national system. In some cases, we can observe that conflicts between governments and teachers' unions lead to rigidity, and a stalemate in the ability of policies to address the needs of the education system in adapting to new and demanding external requirements.

All these traits are typical of a process of policy formulation and implementation that falls under the responsibility of the state, and must be analyzed and assessed at the time of planning teachers' policies. As has been expressed, the approach should go beyond the content of those policies, and examine their emergence and development. In most of the Region, the state fulfills a double role as employer and also as formulator responsible of education policies.

According to Robert R. Kaufman and Joan M. Nelson (2004), to a large extent the research on education (and health) policies has focused mainly on the impact of reform, instead of the political processes through which those reforms are created, diluted or blocked. In that same direction, a key comparative research of the "process of formulation of public policies" in Latin American countries requested by the Inter–American Development Bank (IADB) and coordinated by Ernesto Stein and Mariano Tomassi (Policymaking in Latin America: how politics shapes policies, 2008) developed an interpretative framework. According to this study, it is essential to analyze and assess the following dimensions: who the actors are; their power and roles; their preferences, incentives and aspirations; their temporary horizons; the environment in which they interact; and finally, the types of exchanges and transactions that they establish (Stein and Tomassi, op.cit., pp.14–15).

Merilee Grindle (2004) addressed these issues when she compared the 1990's education reform processes of Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and the Brazilian State of Minas Gerais using an analysis model that considers the following: Firstly, the "arenas" in which the process takes place, which begins with a definition of the agenda, its design, its adoption, its implementation, and its consolidation as a policy that is sustainable (first row in the graphic below). Secondly, "the interests and institutions", which go from the "interests structure" to the different actors that seek to implement the policies, such as the executive branch of government, the political parties system, the bureaucracy, government–teachers' unions relations, inter–governmental structures, and characteristics of the implementing parties (second row in the graphic below). Lastly, it considers "the actions and options" of the different stakeholders in the stages of formulation and implementation of a reform policy, along with strategies, motivations, and resources to be mobilized (third row in the graphic below).

GRAPHIC: Analysis model of the process of education policy reform (Grindle, 2004)
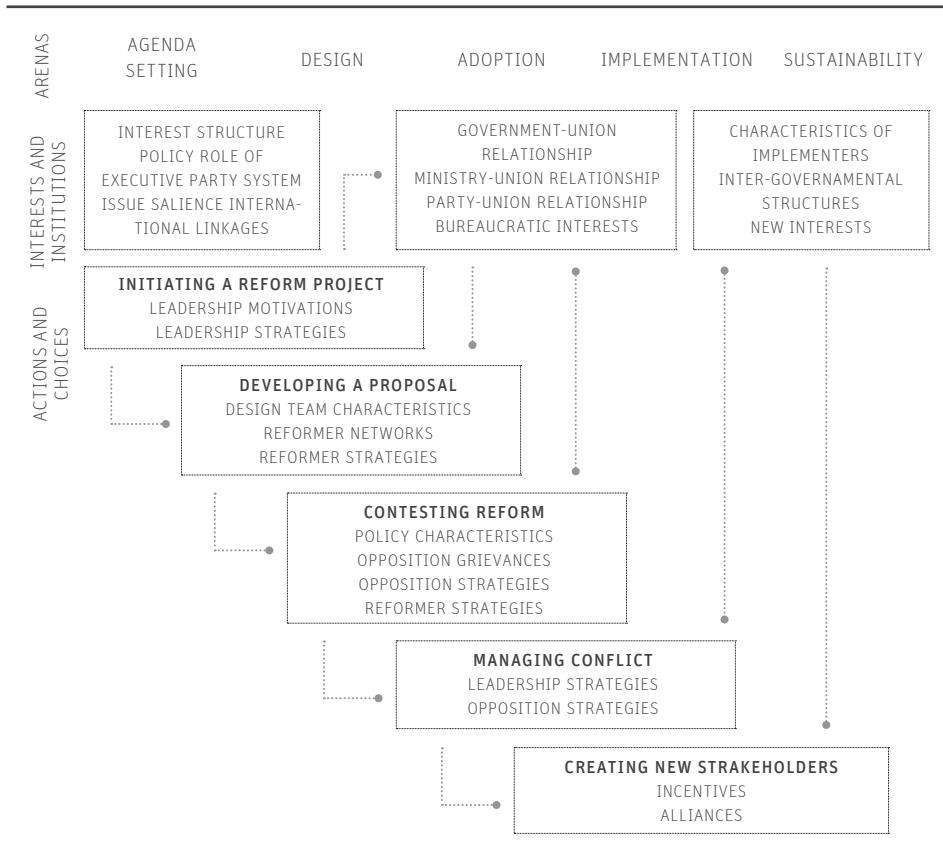
SOURCE: Grindle, M. (2004), Despite the Odds. The contentious politics of education reform. Princeton and Oxford University Press, Graphic 1.1

Grindle's topic of research is the question of how it is possible to move forward on reforms, despite the scarcity of short–term incentives and the opposition of special interests. As she points out, both the outcome of winners and losers in specific reform processes and the conservative nature of institutions would lead to the conclusion that significant reforms are impossible. However, Grindle's study identified close to 40 meaningful education reforms in 17 countries since 1977. Not all have been implemented, and many have been interrupted, but an outlook of movement and change is quite clear. Those reforms were possible because stakeholders are not always the same; the interests at play are not always contradictory, they can change during negotiations; and it is frequently possible for reformers to obtain the support of a broad spectrum of society, as long as they can show that they are addressing society's general interests. In most cases, reforms happen through small legal and administrative measures and changes in practice, which go unnoticed when compared to the big issues of national politics. In a few cases, reform happens due to the introduction of broader policies, which on the one hand are more profound and have more potential, but on the other hand are more prone to be challenged politically or interrupted with a change of government.

If one chooses to "open" the dimension of "institutions", or stakeholders and agencies (second row in the graphic above) that take part in education policies in any country of the Region, there are several actors, beyond those who are directly linked to the education system (education authorities, educators, students, parents), who must be included:

• Agencies of the executive branch of government, including ministries and vice–ministries of Education at different levels. Also, in other areas like Economy, Treasury, and Labor.

• Agencies of the legislative branch of government, including the existence and the mandate of congressional or parliamentary committees on Education and the role of different political forces within them.

• Public institutions responsible for the production and dissemination of education statistics.

• Public and private institutions that develop pedagogical materials, including books, course programs, and technical counseling and school pedagogical support systems.

• Organizations and representatives of the business sector who play a role in vocational and technical education, and who also want to have an influence in general education policies.

• Religious institutions that promote policies in support of freedom of education and the teaching of their respective creeds.

• Non–governmental organizations that are philanthropic or focused on specific causes like human rights and multicultural education.

• International and multilateral cooperation agencies (World Bank, IADB, UNESCO, OAS, OECD, OEI, ECLAC, and others), which must be further studied in their role and impact.

International organizations play a significant role in the formulation and stabilization of education policies in the Region, either through the research conducted on the educational system's situation in the different countries, or through the technical assistance and the funding of specific programs that they can provide. The real impact of the World Bank, the Inter–American Development Bank, and UNESCO on education reform in the Region has not been studied. The scope and nature of their influence is an open question, given the dissemination of their ideas and action criteria, as well as the resources that are directly invested in different projects. The role of UNESCO through Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals is undoubtedly significant, since it establishes international comparisons and defines objectives for each country. The influence of international evaluation systems like the OECD's PISA, UNESCO's SERCE, and the IEA's TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) are quite clear, not only because of the results that they provide, but also due to their likely influence on curricula and the development of national systems of evaluation. Finally, the OECD has played an important role in disseminating good practices in education policy, by conducting evaluations of national education systems at the request of interested countries[36].

Evaluation categories for policy formulation–implementation processes

Stein and Tomassi (2008) proposed five categories to evaluate the "process of policy formulation" in Latin America, and they are applicable to teachers' policies in the different countries.

• Stability: The ability to maintain a certain course of action in time. In countries with stable policies, changes tend to be incremental, or based on achievements of the previous administration.

• Adaptability: Adaptive change in shifting economic or political situations. This must be separated from the "volatility" of policies, which change from one direction to another, along with new governments.

• Coordination and consistency: The predominance of cooperation and communication logics among agencies and stakeholders.

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[36] The OECD has issued evaluation reports on Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico during the first decade of the 21st Century.

• Quality of implementation: A good design is not enough if it is not approved and embodied in laws or programs of action, and an effective implementation is not possible. The poor ability to implement measures in many policy arenas is the Region's "trademark".

• Public approach: Policies that promote everyone's well–being and clearly produce public goods, instead of channeling private goods to corporate groups and interests. (Stein and Tomassi, 2008, pp. 11–12)

These criteria are important for the design and implementation of teachers' policies in the Region, which in many cases have not followed them; the lack of continuity and the lack of coordination among agencies and actors are particularly noteworthy.

Another three relevant categories may be mentioned: contribution to equity; pertinence with respect to problems that must be addressed; and national and local contexts, and the participation of social stakeholders in the processes of design and implementation.

▶ 5.2. Institutions and institutionalization in processes of teachers' policies

All countries of the Region have formal teachers' policies, in the sense that governments must make decisions that one way or the other affect teachers' professional activities, from training systems to hiring rules, salary regimes, and career plans. These policies are usually designed by legal instruments –actions of the executive branch of government, legislation passed by Congress, or administrative regulations and norms–. These legal instruments are often the result of negotiations among government agencies in charge of education, educational institutions, economic authorities responsible for budgetary issues, teachers' organizations, and political parties. In countries with de–centralized systems, regional, state, or municipal governments may enact legislation. Once the rules are established, implementation is the responsibility of administrators, whose actions may often be questioned by the judicial branch, if there are pending issues. In all countries there are teachers' organizations that defend their members' interests, and participate in different ways in the formulation of policies, using their power to pressure and veto according to the situation.

The institutional perspective

Legal instruments establish these policies and decisions, and it is relatively easy to have access to their contents and characteristics by reading the text in each case. It is not so easy to determine the extent to which these policies are institutionalized, that is, to what point they constitute practices that persist and allow a progressive accumulation of knowledge, skills, and methods that are legitimized by actions. The concept of "institution" is widely used in the social sciences to refer to cognitive, normative, and regulating structures that jointly give stability and meaning to social life. The use of the concept

also varies extensively. It is applied to an element of society, a relationship, or a specific organization, a school network, a piece of legislation, or a country's constitution. Nevertheless, the concept of institution does not refer to formal aspects of an organization, a law, or a public regulation, but to the specific cultural and subjective aspects to which organizations and legal statutes are associated (Scott, 2008). The cognitive aspects refer to the explicit and tacit knowledge that is shared by members of the institution, and that are considered as valid. Normative aspects refer to values, behaviors, and attitudes that are considered as appropriate or inappropriate in daily life and in personal relationships. Regulating aspects refer to practices that members usually adopt. Being a "member" or participating in an institution does not necessarily mean having formal membership. Rather, it means sharing and being subjected to the same knowledge, values, and practices of other persons in the same condition.

Modern societies depend on well–established institutions to function in their complexity. Educators need to have a thorough knowledge of the subjects that they will teach, be fully committed to the values of students' intellectual and moral education, and be familiar with the practices through which these values and knowledge are conveyed.

When the institutional perspective is applied to teachers' policies, questions arise about the internal processes of institutionalization in the teaching community, professional associations and labor unions, and school structuring. Also, about the institutionalization of agencies responsible for teacher training, like research institutes and universities, and also government agencies charged with developing and managing teachers' public policies. Some of these areas are explained below.

Government agencies in charge of teachers' policies

The institutions that several countries have established for the design and implementation of teachers' policies and programs, not always are sufficiently robust in terms of their attributions, resources, and continuity in management. There is a particular problem when the diverse dimensions of a teachers' policy are under the responsibility of different bodies. For example, in many countries, initial education policies are regulated by the same bodies that oversee higher education, and continuing education policies are supervised by teacher professional development units. Salaries, incentives, and teaching work regulations are addressed by bodies dedicated to the management and funding of the education system.

Table 12 shows the main institutions that have some degree of participation in different countries. It must be mentioned that the level of intervention is limited by the extent of the autonomy of higher education institutions that are responsible for initial training and that participate in continuing education, as well as by laws and norms that regulate the teaching career. Also, in many countries decisions are made in a de–centralized manner in different regions and territories.

TABLE 12: Public institutions in charge of teachers' policies in countries of the Region

COUNTRY	INSTITUTION	INITIAL TRAINING	CONTINUING EDUCATION	TEACHING CAREER
ARGENTINA	NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR TEACHER TRAINING	PROVIDES CURRICULAR GUIDANCE FOR TRAINING INSTITUTIONS.	PLANS, DEVELOPS, AND PROMOTES POLICIES WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS IN A DE–CENTRALIZED MANNER.	THE INSTITUTE DOES NOT INTERVENE. TEACHING CAREERS ARE REGULATED BY STATUTES AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL, WHICH ARE MODIFIED ACCORDING TO NEGOTIATIONS.
BRAZIL	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION	CURRICULAR GUIDELINES DETERMINED BY THE NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL.		NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL DETERMINES GUIDELINES.
	COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL TRAINING (CAPES)	PROMOTION OF QUALITY	CAPES DETERMINES THE NATIONAL POLICY THAT CONTAINS LONG–TERM GUIDELINES FOR THE EDUCATION OF WORKING TEACHERS.	
CHILE	CENTER FOR PEDAGOGICAL ADVANCEMENT, EXPERIMENTATION, AND RESEARCH	IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONWIDE EXAMS, DESIGN OF STANDARDS.	PROMOTES EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL DIRECTORS AND CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN SOME SUBJECT AREAS.	TEACHER COORDINATION AND ACCREDITATION OF PEDAGOGIC EXCELLENCE.
	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT	COMPETITIVE FUNDS FOR THE SUPPORT OF PEDAGOGIC CAREERS' IMPROVEMENT.		
COLOMBIA	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	KNOWLEDGE TESTS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ABOUT TO GRADUATE.	TEACHERS' CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM	COORDINATION OF THE SYSTEM
GUATEMALA	DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING HUMAN RESOURCES TRAINING	N/A	COURSES, SEMINARS	N/A

COUNTRY	INSTITUTION	INITIAL TRAINING	CONTINUING EDUCATION	TEACHING CAREER
MEXICO	NATIONAL DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR TEACHING PROFESSIONALS	COORDINATION OF SECONDARY TEACHER TRAINING SCHOOLS; PROMOTION OF POLICIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS		
	NATIONAL SYSTEM OF WORKING TEACHERS' CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. NATIONAL DIVISION OF WORKING TEACHERS' CONTINUING EDUCATION (DGFCMS)		NATIONAL CATALOGUE: COURSES, SEMINARS, GRADUATE DEGREES	
	NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMISSION OF TEACHING CAREERS – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION – NATIONAL COMMISSION (SEP–SNTE)			MONITORING AND COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF THE TEACHING CAREER.
PERU	NATIONAL BOARD OF PEDAGOGICAL HIGHER EDUCATION			
	HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	DESIGN OF ADMISSIONS SYSTEMS, CURRICULA, STRENGTHENING OF TEACHERS' INSTRUCTORS, AND EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONS.	PEDAGOGICAL COUNSELING, COURSES	REGULATES TEACHING CAREER ADMISSIONS PROCESS.
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	N/A	WORKSHOPS, UNDERGRADUATE, AND GRADUATE DEGREES	N/A

SOURCE: Developed by the authors.

Lack of comprehensive, articulated, and sustained teachers' policies

Sometimes policies tend to be focused on isolated aspects, and do not follow the systemic approach that they necessarily must have. That is how perhaps it is thought that initial teacher training must be enhanced, without taking into account that an unattractive teaching career or schools that do not renew their teaching methods constitute factors that weaken the attempt to improve initial training. In other occasions, the emphasis is on better salaries and teacher incentives, and this also turns out to be ineffective if there is no effort to improve the quality of initial training and opportunities for professional development.

Also, in several countries of the Region, different public agencies –sometimes even within the same ministry– develop parallel initiatives that contribute to similar objectives. This situation makes it more difficult to adopt a comprehensive vision of teachers' policies, and makes the use of public resources less efficient.

The lack of policy coordination and harmony is directly associated to the mentioned institutional dispersion. Sometimes there are attempts to solve this situation through coordinating committees, but these are too dependent on the personal availability of their members.

Finally, another difficulty is the lack of a long–term approach in teachers' policies. This way, programs that are announced as great solutions are soon abandoned or replaced, without having conducted detailed assessments, diagnoses, or studies.

Investment levels

The low priority that is assigned to teachers' policies is evident from the fact that, beyond higher public spending to cover educators' salaries, investment in programs to improve initial training and continuing professional development is usually shallow in most countries. Also, it varies according to the economic situation and the priorities of different governments[37]. As opposed to what happens with respect to wages, in part, this problem is due to the fact that spending for teacher education and professional development is not regulated by specific and permanent laws. It is regulated by budgets that have to be approved every year.

▶ **5.3. Governments and educators' labor unions: a politically fundamental relationship**

Just like reviewing the regional outlook leads to the identification of many varying features in teachers' organizations, it is also possible to recognize different types of

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[37] For example, an analysis of the 2011 budget of Chile's Ministry of Education shows that the projected spending for continuing teacher education reaches 0.2% of the total budget for the sector. The allocated figure represents 157 USD per teacher per year, which would only allow minimum coverage for training. Presently, the authors do not have similar figures for other countries.

links between these organizations and educational initiatives. The relations can be of opposition or support on the part of educators' labor unions towards government policies, and therefore contribute to the advancement, modification, or failure of those policies. At the same time, in many countries, teachers' organizations have an influence in the general scheme of political support on which governments lean, particularly when administrations are sustained by political parties that historically have sought working class backing. In some circumstances, this influence may turn teachers' labor unions into actors with a significant veto and/or proposing power over official policies.

In the end, the interaction between educators' unions and governments is characterized by different dynamics, and one of the different positions tends to predominate after a given period. That is how it is possible to find patterns in which dialogue prevails, but where confrontation is not excluded, and patterns in which confrontation is preponderant, but dialogue is not absent.

The existence of a space for sustained dialogue generates conditions for the participation of teachers' labor unions in education policies[38]. Unions engage in dialogue by putting forward the demands and preferences of their members in any process of negotiation. The usual practices of mobilization and political blocking are set aside in favor of the exchange of support and concessions between unions and governments, with the aim of advancing –albeit partially– the interests of both parties[39].

What must be considered is that when dialogue takes the forefront, negotiations between representatives of the government and the unions take place in a context of shifting transparency and uncertainty. When negotiations are undertaken, there are resources and incentives at play (privileges, promises, pay hikes, positions, government contributions to unions, and political favors) that are not part of the public agenda, but that can facilitate or obstruct agreements.

In the last few years, different countries have promoted the establishment of consultative councils and other types of dialogue and political–educational agreements, with a broadening of the number and recognition of stakeholders, not only with respect to teachers' unions. Governments usually promote this expansion of the number of actors who participate in teachers' policies, but this measure often is the result of conflict situations, where other sectors push for a new agenda of demands.

Faced with these alternatives, in many countries the main –or simply the only– dia-

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[38] At the international level, Ben Levin of the University of Toronto identifies a direct relationship between strong teachers' organizations and successful education systems, and mentions the cases of Finland, Republic of Korea, Japan, Canada, and Australia (MacBeath, 2012).

[39] In Guatemala, the dialogue between labor unions and governments began in the context of the 1997 Peace Agreement, which allowed the creation of a national reconciliation scenario, with the participation of different social sectors. Thus, these sectors presented a national agenda for the construction of peace, reconciliation, and social equity. Educational reform was one of the main commitments of the Agreement. In October 1997, 17 private and public institutions, the National Teachers' Coordinating Committee (ANM, by its Spanish acronym), and Mayan indigenous organizations participated in the inauguration of the Consultative Commission for Educational Reform (Palamidessi, 2003).

logue and negotiations are the more traditional ones, focused on economic issues, and regulated by legal frameworks inherited from the second half of the 20th Century. These negotiations limit the dialogue on education to the parameters of collective bargaining that are also followed in other sectors of economic activity, and which are focused on salary issues and working conditions.

In summary, throughout the Region it is possible to find patterns of negotiations and exchange where dialogue prevails, within different institutional frameworks, including agendas that are diverse in complexity and scope. In some countries, these relationships have become very institutional and ongoing, with broad negotiations and dialogue agendas. At the same time, the relationships are stressed by a tendency to include more complex and diverse interests and preferences of different social actors in education policies. These are dynamic situations, which –among many other factors– are subject to changes in more general political alliances, the direction of education policies, the general financial situation, and the education budget.

Relationship patterns that revolve around confrontation are those in which teachers' organizations prefer to apply their ability to mobilize and obstruct as a strategic resource in processes of resistance and negotiations.

On the other hand, governments not always avoid confrontation. To the contrary, in some cases they opt for hardening their positions by implementing measures that affect union strength.

If governments choose a path of confrontation with teachers' organizations, they might weaken an opposing actor in the short–run, but that decision also entails consequences. Governments that make that choice expose the education system to situations of potential low governability, affecting the state's management capacity, and the commitment or the initiative of teachers to be successful in improving education quality. Demoralized or alienated teachers cannot usually be considered as "active" agents of reform in the education system.

Independently of these relationship patterns with a prevalence of either dialogue or confrontation, it is possible to find countries where a distinct relationship can be established between teachers' unions and management[40]. In this kind of situation, representatives of educators' unions move into positions within government agencies. They are recruited or accede to positions of decision–making power due to a political kinship or alliance between the union and the government. For unions, this situation carries the risk of losing independence vis–a–vis the government to represent society's general interests, and of being subordinated to state interests.

From a union perspective, it is important to note that in situations of continuous participation of labor representatives in the governance of the education system, unions have an additional resource to participate in negotiations. Such unions are strategi-

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[40] In the case of the SNTE in Mexico, during the last decade there has been a combination of negotiations processes based on the participation of union political and technical leaders in the structure of the Ministry of Public Education (Loyo, 2008).

cally placed in decision–making positions, have access to key information for negotiations, can anticipate projects and proposals of education management, and can increase their power to paralyze the system in case of confrontation. On the other hand, this has internal consequences for unions, since in these situations labor organizations are also made responsible for policies in which they have a decisive voice.

▶ 5.4. Institutionalization: external and internal forces in the teaching profession

Every education system runs the risk of not being effective in its role as a public good, and of serving particular instead of systemic interests. Navarro (2006) explains: Education systems are always in danger of becoming captives of their providers with respect to teaching and administrative vacancies, decision–making control and key processes of educational agencies, hiring, disciplinary measures, distribution of incentives, training, administration, and personnel management systems. Compensatory weights allow education systems to avoid or reduce their propensity to become trapped. Two of these forces are key. The first is a state apparatus that is solid, and that has an effective public administration ruled by appropriate accountability mechanisms. The second is a deeply rooted professional culture, that will make educators and other significant stakeholders commit themselves to high standards of teaching professionalism and to a public interest approach (Navarro, 2006).

Both of these factors will be assessed in their current trends: the first acts from the outside on teachers, who feel it as the pressure of "accountability"; the second acts internally, from within the teaching profession. Below are the main traits of both in their present form.

Accountability, "external controls" and their ambivalence

Unsatisfactory and in many cases declining results regarding the quality of public education, made more dramatic by the scores obtained on international comparative evaluations, led many countries to create external systems that seek to influence and conduct teaching activities from the outside. Methods go from evaluating and monitoring teachers' activities and pedagogical results through external assessment systems, to the consolidation of contents that students must learn, changes in the teaching career, restrictions for teachers in the classroom, and new systems of positive and negative incentives according to the achievement of goals that are determined from the outside.

The success of these outside interventions depends largely on different types of entities: public administrations that can manage appropriate systems of incentives for teaching careers; experts on the evaluation of educational results; providers of specialization and continuing education courses for teachers; pedagogical support systems for teachers in the use of new information and communications technologies; experts on

pedagogical support for schools in program development and the supply of specific didactic materials for the teaching of, for example, Science[41].

The establishment of these institutions in the public sector depends on two main factors: management's ability to create and maintain agencies with technical personnel and resources (in Education and other areas) that can accumulate knowledge and develop long–term policies, and that these agencies are not captured by special interests groups upon which, in principle, they should act.

On the other hand, as larger sectors of society become interested in the quality of education, there is growing participation on the part of families, social movements, private organizations, and corporations in school life, which often represents significant contributions, but at the same time creates for schools and for teachers the need to work with actors that are very different from traditional ones.

Many teachers' organizations and experts have strongly questioned these external interventions, because they see them as eroding the teaching profession, and subordinating the education community to technical or bureaucratic agents –sometimes externalizing to private agents– whose initiatives may be very disconnected from the needs of schools, or even determined by private economic interests.

Internal forces and dynamics of the teaching profession

The issue of developing a professional culture, which is key for the soundness of education systems, implies considering the efforts that have been made in this direction through public policies and by teachers themselves. In previous sections, we have described initial training, continuing education, and professional development initiatives that teachers have promoted and that deserve to be taken into account. Nonetheless, we have also pointed out the limitations of those initiatives with respect to their breadth and depth. Teachers' professional identity is conditioned by their training, which in many cases is deficient; by a lack of social appreciation; and by results–seeking pressures that often lead them to look for simplistic solutions or external blame, instead of truly assuming their professional responsibility.

Research like the one conducted with the PISA confirms that the quality of teachers –expressed in three key components of institutionalization; namely knowledge, values, and practice– is still one of the main factors in good educational results (Korthagen, 2004). The relevance that is presently given to teaching as one of the decisive factors for quality and equity in education, represents an enormous challenge for the profession and for those who advocate for its strengthening. The option of an inclusive education that guarantees the right to learn of all students, also increases substantially the requirements that society places on teachers.

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[41] Many of these activities may be performed by persons who have been trained as educators, but are often performed by professionals from other areas, such as economists, statisticians, psychologists, sociologists, information technology experts, managers, and scientists from specific areas who develop materials and programs for schools in their respective fields of knowledge.

Curricular reforms have and should continue trying to incorporate scientific and technological improvements. Above all, these reforms should include the development of life–long thinking and learning skills. These goals represent new challenges for the teaching profession, which are particularly complex for teachers who –for the most part, in the Latin American context– must take care of students coming from households with poor cultural capital. Of course, this demands a rigorous pedagogic knowledge of contents to be taught (Shulman, 1987), and a command of pedagogy for socio–cultural diversity.

As mentioned, the efforts that some countries have made to develop standards are of the utmost significance, not only because they constitute a key reference for professional development and performance assessment, but also because they define a professional identity that is focused on what a teacher should know and know how to do, in general and in her/his area of specialization. These standards will become valid if they are agreed upon and developed by educators themselves, and legitimized by the guiding agencies of the education system. When the teaching profession is defined as such –a key element for any profession– it becomes a tool for dialogue and for the necessary inter–disciplinary work with other professions. Ingvarson (2009) asserts that professional standards play an important role in the public definition of the teaching profession's identity: "a good standard for teachers is one that helps to change the perception of the general public regarding the teaching profession, by providing convincing evidence of the complexity of what a good teacher knows and is able to do at different levels of teaching and in different areas of the curriculum" (Ingvarson, 2009).

The road between the concept of teaching with a purely vocational or technical vision and a professional dimension is necessarily long and complex. Besides the qualitative progress that is required in initial and continuing education, it entails attaining a balance –using public policies as a base– between trust in the work of teachers and their responsibility for their own performance; between growing degrees of autonomy and monitoring/support to make sure that autonomy is used in a way that is most convenient for student learning, which is the decisive factor (MacBeath, 2012).

Several authors (Perrenoud, 2004; Darling–Hammond, 2005; Lessard, 2010; Danielson, 2011; MacBeath, 2012) agree on the need to strengthen teachers' professionalism, which must be constructed and assumed by teachers themselves, and must consider the necessary competencies and conditions in key aspects such as: the capacity to design, execute, and evaluate good teaching practices, by having a command of the contents and of the way of teaching those contents; professional autonomy and responsibility; the capacity for methodological innovation, pertinent initiatives, and good pedagogic decisions; the competencies to create, select, and adapt appropriate educational materials; team work; acceptance of the results of internal and external evaluations as crucial information for improving teaching and learning; efforts that are consistent with professional development; the capacity to reflect and to self–evaluate about their practices, and of accepting evaluations of their performance in order to improve; the capacity to generate fruitful dialogues with other actors: colleagues, directors, supervisors, other professionals and workers, parents, students, and the community in general.

Looking to the future, teachers' professional identity needs to assume the new ways of learning of children and youth, beyond school itself. These new scenarios do not diminish the responsibility of teachers; as a broader learning guide, it makes it more challenging (MacBeath, 2012).

Finally, one key element on the path of strengthening the profession is the capacity of teachers' organizations to determine ethical and professional performance rules that provide guidance and regulate the sector. We have not found much evidence of this in the Region, but it should be the guiding principle of any future endeavors. The most relevant development in this respect, is the decisive participation of teachers' organizations in some OECD countries in the definition of standards that regulate the profession (Ingvarson, 2009).

II

Second Part

Criteria and Guidelines for Teachers' Policies Development

Criteria and Guidelines for Teachers' Policies Development

The criteria and guidelines that are presented below are based on the State of the Art of teachers' policies that constitutes the first part of this report, some proposals that were developed by experts[42] who are working on the OREALC/UNESCO Strategic Regional Project on Teachers for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the results of discussions conducted by national groups in countries that make up the project's Regional network.

The structure of the document considers the same four areas that were analyzed in State of the Art: initial training, continuing education, the teaching career, and institutions and processes of teachers' policies. For each of the mentioned aspects, the document presents a set of general statements, which are then explained in more specific guidelines.

We must stress that none of the proposals will have effective results if it is approached in isolation. For example, in the area of initial training, the proposal is for strengthening the quality of academic programs and attracting good applicants. However, this will not be possible if students or applicants for the teaching career do not perceive that there will be recognition for their work and real professional development.

Also, if the aim is for continuing education to contribute in the transformation and improvement of teaching practices vis–a–vis student learning, that goal must be closely linked to the soundness of initial training and working conditions in the school environment that facilitate the teacher's professional task.

On the other hand, enhancing the structure of the teaching career to make it more attractive entails quality initial training, and considering significant opportunities for continuing education. It also means generating political agreements with teachers' unions and other social actors, in order to attain effectiveness and stability.

Moreover, this set of teachers' political actions requires a design and an implementation that are appropriately led by sound and competent institutions.

The challenge of proposing particular guidelines on teachers' policies is undertaken knowing that some of them will be more relevant for some countries. Also, if some countries wish to adopt these guidelines as their own, they will do so within different timelines, and with the modifications required by each national context. This means that in each country deliberations and design must consider the particular political, social, and economic system, as well as cultural identity.

This is of the utmost importance, since the unification of proposals for different contexts will surely lead to mistakes and frustrations in public policies.

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[42] Beatrice Ávalos, Silvia Ortega, Mariano Palamidessi, Simón Schwartzman, and Denise Vaillant.

❶ Guidelines on initial training

Writing State of the Art has allowed us to identify that –in the last few decades– initial training in the region has evolved towards higher or tertiary education, with few exceptions. Pedagogical studies last between three and five years. In some countries, the supply of teachers is larger than the need, but in other countries there is a shortage of teachers, particularly in rural areas and regions populated by indigenous peoples, and in subjects related to Science. Significant weaknesses are pointed out regarding basic skills when students enter pedagogical careers and, more importantly, with respect to teacher training. Among other aspects, this is expressed in the lack of specialization for the training of primary school teachers, and of practical training in the skills that are necessary for an effective exercise of the teaching profession, in the midst of the demanding conditions of achieving learning for all, which covers all education levels. Although regulations for pedagogical education are weak, in the last few years new accreditation systems have emerged, besides exams that must be passed for graduation and for being hired as a teacher. Also, there are new standards and guidelines that help in the above mentioned processes, and may also give direction to curricula and assessments at training institutions.

In State of the Art, the following critical knots were identified in teacher training: a) those who enter pedagogical studies have had a low–quality education; b) pedagogical training programs are low–quality, including teachers' educators, and the existence of a non–university level approach to training; c) there is universal training instead of differentiated training for disadvantaged groups; d) there is not enough regulation of the quality of training programs, which is linked to insufficient graduation standards and exams.

The following are criteria and guidelines to address these critical knots in Regional policies of initial teacher training:

❶ Promoting the entrance of better candidates for the teaching profession, by establishing stricter admission requirements in pedagogical studies[43]

One central issue is that the efforts made in education policy and at training institutions must be geared towards candidates who fulfill the minimum requirements in order to become good educators. It is important to keep in mind that those minimum requirements must be considered at the national level, which means that the state has to be involved at the time of defining and implementing them. Undoubtedly, being successful in the search for better candidates is linked to the need of having a teaching career that is attractive, with salaries that are comparable to those of other professions.

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[43] Argentina's consultation group has questioned this general guideline. The group maintains that "the state cannot overlook the educational results that youth with the required credentials achieve. The state is obligated to find solutions that guarantee the right to education, if those results do not match the expectations

These issues are addressed in Section III of this second part. With the aim of advancing in this direction, the following guidelines are proposed:

a. Raising standards in the selection process for those who enter initial teacher training. Basic skills in reading and writing, mathematical thought, problem solving, inter–personal communication, and motivation to learn and to teach must be considered.

b. Secondary education performance and scores obtained in national higher education admission exams (in countries where such tests are in place) and vocational aspects must be taken into account. For the teaching career, there must be admission procedures that are directed towards selecting candidates who have the necessary characteristics to be good teachers. These procedures may include admission exams and the appropriate instruments to assess personal skills, such as interviews.

c. While trying to raise standards for those who enter teacher training, it is important to continue searching for formulas that ensure the participation of candidates who are of indigenous origin, because indigenous cultures are part of each country's heritage.

d. It is also important to avoid biases that could translate into some sort of elitism and discrimination against students who come from low–income homes. In that sense, it is advisable to explore experiences at universities that select students who have had a good performance in secondary education, regardless of that particular school's average performance (which might be low). There is evidence that students who have had a good performance in their own group, tend to have good academic results during the initial training process.

e. In order to ensure the permanence of indigenous and low–income students, it is advisable for higher education institutions to have effective special support programs through placement/leveling basic skills courses or workshops and tutoring systems.

In Latin America, some systems are establishing stricter admission requirements in initial training. Peru has raised the minimum score that is needed on the admission exam for the Higher Pedagogical Institutes. Mexico will offer extra resources for teacher training schools that regulate and raise admission standards. Chile has implemented a scholarship program for candidates who get good scores on the university admission test. Also, it has reserved the scholarship for those institutions that raise admission standards in teacher training.

At the same time, interesting experiences are emerging in some countries in raising the level of skills for students who come from weak educational and cultural capital backgrounds. One notable example is Peru's remedial education program in intercultural bilingual teaching careers.

2 **Strengthening the quality of teacher education programs, particularly in curricular content, training strategies, and the skills of teacher educators**

Advancing towards quality in teacher training implies a joint commitment by two key actors: the institutions that are responsible for education policies, and training institutions, public or private, considering the different degrees of regulations according to the national context. The quality of training processes is a significant source of future teacher performance. In this sense, we propose the following guidelines:

a. Generating standards about what a teacher should know and know how to do, that are agreed upon by the main actors (Ministries of Education, training institutions, and teachers' organizations), and that guide the development of curricular content for training (knowledge, skills, and provisions), besides the assessment of learning levels that all future teachers must reach before being certified. Those standards must consider the articulation of knowledge of the subject matters included in school curricula, teaching procedures and interactive teaching, and the integration of education's social purpose[44]. Also, the different types of specialization must be considered according to school system levels. Since these are guiding standards, it is possible that training institutions develop different academic paths for future teachers to follow.

b. Promoting policies that focus on enhancing the skills of teacher trainers, taking into account selection criteria and academic development actions that are geared towards ensuring that there will be highly knowledgeable staff, with recent and relevant school teaching experience. To this effect, it is advisable to encourage scholars to obtain quality graduate degrees, in their own countries or abroad.

c. Keeping active and ongoing ties among training institutions and schools –which are considered as key training areas– and incorporating well–designed, clearly focused, progression–centered, intense, and quality practical courses throughout the career. There must be tutoring or mentoring by teachers at the training institution and at the school, so that future teachers are able to integrate practical and theoretical skills, obtained in their academic education. The skills acquired during practical courses will represent an input for training, which at the same time will serve as guidance during new situations of practical work. This link between theory and practice is the basis for a good initial teacher training. An issue that necessarily must be solved is the time that should be dedicated and the work that should be acknowledged for teachers who accompany practical courses as tutors.

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[44] In this context, "standards" means a categorical definition of what a teacher must know and know how to do to obtain learning achievement for all her/his students. It is a categorical definition of how evidence will be measured and captured about the achievement of knowing and knowing how to do. Thirdly, it is a categorical definition of what the minimum level of performance will be for someone to be considered as fit to teach. (CEPPE, 2009).

d. Initial training programs must be geared towards the construction of pedagogical knowledge, by educating in the description, self–assessment, and reflection about one's own practical work (including the pedagogic use of ICTs), by linking theory and practice, and by providing the capacity to share with and learn from colleagues. This is the basis for personal and professional team growth, according to the concept of learning communities.

e. Developing competencies in future teachers for: constructing a classroom and school climate that favors solidarity and student learning; and incorporating elements of ethics, gender–perspectives, citizenship, and social kindness.

f. Assuming the cultural changes that condition the task of teaching children and youth in the 21st Century: globalization processes, digital social networks, new required skills for the labor market, among others.

g. Training teachers for embedding themselves in diverse social contexts, and for addressing and contributing to overcome inequality in the classroom. This should be achieved by developing skills to manage student diversity, and by offering significant learning opportunities for all students, according to their own learning, social condition, and physical development characteristics. Particularly important is providing the tools that are necessary to work with children and youth who have special learning needs, and to interact with specialized support staff in the classroom, taking into account current progress towards inclusive education. Also, future teachers must be trained in competencies to work with families and other actors in cross cutting issues that are related to the education of children and youth.

h. Integrating ¬–at initial teacher training institutions– lines of research that are intended to produce knowledge about key aspects of teacher training, teaching processes, and the teaching profession, with the participation of future teachers through their practicum. Also, promoting joint study programs among training institutions.

i. Developing programs that are intended to strengthen basic skills in verbal and written communication, mathematical reasoning, and foreign languages, particularly for students that need it most, as a way of addressing weaknesses experienced in regular schooling.

j. Articulating initial training and continuing education at institutions that offer both levels. This way, initial training will benefit from the practical experience of working teachers, and continuing education will be enhanced by the institution's academic capacity. This effort must be made by acknowledging that it is difficult to break with the institutional inertia that separates both levels, which causes training potential to be lost.

Some countries of the Region have developed or are in the process of developing policies that are considered as guidelines to improve initial teacher training.

In Argentina, the National Institute for Teacher Training, in collaboration with the Secretariat for University Policies and specialized professors from universities and training institutes –in the framework of the "Project to improve initial teacher training"– has developed guidelines for initial training that are aimed at the main subject areas of secondary education. The guidelines are structured to follow up on the progress made by students in the middle of their careers, when they graduate, and during their first years of practice. Training institutions must make a commitment to include in their curricula the skills that are agreed upon in those guidelines.

Since 2012, Chile's Ministry of Education has pedagogical and subject area standards for primary education teacher training in Language, Math, Natural Science, and Social Science, as well as standards for pre–school teacher training.

In the English–speaking Caribbean, the Caribbean Council for Teaching and Teacher Education has generated a set of generic standards for initial training that are now in a process of consultation among member countries.

In Brazil, the 2009 National Policy for Teacher Training entails support for the development of training programs, the articulation of higher education institutions and the network of education system schools, and the participation of future teachers in teaching/learning activities in schools.

❸ Offering relevant quality training for educational work with disadvantaged social groups

Initial teacher training tends to be aimed at a homogenous middle–class population, instead of taking into account social and cultural diversity and the presence in school of sectors that have been historically left out of education. The following guidelines correspond to this reality:

a. Training all future teachers to work in diverse and complex environments, with students who have different backgrounds and cultural capital. For this, it is necessary to develop professional values and attitudes that are open to challenges, and the skills that are necessary to achieve learning in contexts of poverty and vulnerability.

b. Training teachers to work in rural and indigenous areas, and to acknowledge and appreciate the socio–cultural characteristics of specific student populations, as well as learning achievements according to the levels that are established in each country's curriculum. It is useful to follow experiences that have been validated in the Region regarding inter–cultural bilingual education. This, for the development of relevant curricula and teaching activities that satisfy the learning needs of those communities. According to the context of each geographical area, it is advisable to train future teachers to work at multi–grade rural schools.

c. Organizing a system of scholarships and incentives that is objective and transparent, to provide access to specific training programs in areas that are lacking, such as inter–cultural bilingual education, rural education, and others, according to different national and regional realities.

d. Guaranteeing a high degree of knowledge of indigenous languages, through the admission and training of indigenous teachers.

> In Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru there are policies that are explicitly dedicated to inter–cultural education, and institutions that specialize in training to work in these contexts. Specifically, in Peru, inter–cultural bilingual education is offered at 20 Pedagogical Higher Institutes. However, many of these institutes are in a precarious situation, due to recent regulations that have resulted in budget cuts.
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> Guatemala has 21 official inter–cultural bilingual teacher training schools. Also, there is a basic national curriculum for inter–cultural bilingual teacher training (Spanish–Indigenous Languages), that is applied since 2006 at inter–cultural bilingual teacher training schools of the Ministry of Education.

④ Ensuring appropriate systems to regulate quality in training programs and in the skills of students who graduate from them

Without proper regulations in initial training, it is not possible to guarantee that the education system and all its schools will have teachers who are appropriately trained. The following guidelines may contribute to strengthen the role of the state to face this challenge:

a. Establishing a system of accreditation for public and private training institutions, that will evaluate the institutions themselves and their programs vis–a–vis the agreed upon public standards. They should assess the quality of the curriculum and its consistency with the curricular needs of schools; the academic level and strengths of teaching staff; practices of implementation and their integration into the training process; and the precision of assessment mechanisms for students at the beginning and during their training, as well as after graduation; the research capacity of training institutions in teaching and learning; and the quality of the infrastructure, library, information and communications technology resources, and other factors.

b. Making it possible that each private or public initial training institution is periodically evaluated through a transparent accreditation system. The institution will have to make certain commitments in order to overcome –within a timeframe– the weaknesses that are found.

c. Providing support for institutions that do not comply with the minimum required standards in the accreditation process. If they do not improve with that support, they will have to be closed or merged with other institutions that have been accredited. Otherwise, the situation would represent a betrayal of public confidence, since society believes that the institution will train the professionals that it serves and will educate many generations of students.

d. In the offer of new pedagogical careers, possessing mechanisms that are available to regulate academic quality and to fulfill school system needs (required number of teachers per school level, specializations, among others).

e. Establishing comprehensive evaluation systems for future teachers, both during their training processes and at the end, by applying procedures that produce evidence of the knowledge that has been gained and of practical experience, like portfolios. Countries should consider the convenience of establishing graduation exams that focus on the knowledge and skills that are determined by agreed upon standards, at the national or regional (state, provincial) level, according to the situation. Moreover, these evaluations may constitute a significant contribution for training institutions to revise their curricula and practices vis–a–vis the results that their own graduates obtain. They may also be useful for institutions to assume their responsibility for students who have not attained the required learning outcomes.

f. Offering institutions and their staff conditions that will allow them to acquire the necessary capacities to design and implement training opportunities at the new level that is demanded. It is essential to reach a balance between the pressure of "accountability" –represented by exams– accreditation systems, and new standards, and on the other hand the support represented by policies of institutional strengthening, capacity building and development, investment to create institutional conditions that lead to change, and appropriate periods for transitions. Also, it is important to support the role that each training institution has in the context of each area or region.

g. In countries where there is a shortage of certified teachers in certain geographical areas, and/or specialized teachers (for scientific, artistic, technical, foreign language skills, and others), and where persons without the appropriate pedagogical training are allowed to teach, it is necessary to regulate teacher evaluation programs, to ensure that such persons offer quality education. Accredited institutions must conduct pedagogical training. Persons who teach must certify their educational background and their teaching experience, and ensure that teachers and professors reach a satisfactory level of command on skills that are set by initial training standards.

Mexico has exams at the beginning and at the end of initial training, which are designed and implemented at the national level by an external specialized entity (CENEVAL). There is a requirement for authorization and accreditation of teacher training programs in Colombia. The existence of curricular guidelines and frameworks for all primary school teachers –and in some cases for secondary education– is a reality in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru.

Regarding regulations for graduation or certification of future teachers who come out of training institutions, several countries have them in place, and are also in the process of defining conditions for entering the teaching career. These include different forms of certifying the level of knowledge and skills that applicants have for teaching. Colombia has regulated admission into the teaching career through an evaluation of skills, competencies, experience, and suitability for teaching, and a one–year probation period in the education system. Mexico has an entrance exam for would–be teachers. Chile offers a subject area and pedagogy knowledge exam (Prueba Inicia), that training institutions may adopt voluntarily. In Central America, it is worth mentioning El Salvador, where applicants must pass the Academic and Pedagogical Competencies Evaluation (ECAP, by its Spanish acronym).

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES ON INITIAL TRAINING

1. Promoting the entrance of better candidates for the teaching profession, by establishing stricter admission requirements in pedagogical studies
2. Strengthening the quality of teacher education programs, particularly in curricular content, training strategies, and the skills of teacher educators
3. Offering relevant quality training for educational work with disadvantaged social groups
4. Ensuring appropriate systems to regulate quality in training programs and in the skills of students who graduate from them

❷ Guidelines on continuing education

The revision conducted in State of the Art about policies that have been implemented in continuing education, indicates that state–sponsored programs are broad and diverse regarding contents, modalities, and methodologies. However, these programs lack a systemic approach, do not fully satisfy the needs of all teachers or teachers who need more support, and do not comply with adequate quality standards. Moreover, an analysis of curricular and pedagogical models leads to the conclusion that, despite their quantity and apparent diversity, continuing education curricula are not specialized enough, and are focused on theory and a general approach. Presently, in several countries of the region there are initiatives to develop school–centered training policies, in which teachers' collectives assume a leading role, and where hands–on practice is a reference point as a source of reflection, analysis, and learning.

State of the Art points out the following critical knots: a) lack of relevance and articulation for continuing education; b) low impact of actions that are implemented; c) lack of knowledge about the heterogeneous nature of teachers; d) unregulated increase of supply; e) not enough consideration of schools' particular situations and of peer learning; f) difficulties in regulating and establishing relevance for graduate degrees.

These are some guidelines or criteria that can be applied to address the above mentioned critical knots in teachers' policies in countries of the Region.

❶ Ensuring the right to relevant and pertinent continuing education for teachers, focusing on student learning and schools' needs

Education systems require that all teachers have access to professional learning opportunities, in order to guarantee their continuing education and capacity to respond to the rising challenges of learning–centered teaching for all students. Teacher continuing education should not be left to eventual offerings or individual decisions. The state must provide conditions to favor professional development, which is a decisive factor to improve teaching. The following guidelines are aimed at facing those challenges:

a. Making progress in the construction, agreed upon definition, and validation of frameworks for good teaching, and standards for teachers' professional performance (geared towards student education and learning), that can serve as a reference for their professional development and the assessment of their performance. The existence of standards would contribute decisively to a better definition of the continuing education offer, based not only on the suppliers' vision and capacity, but also on the integration of better practices' definitions that are agreed and adopted in standards, considering the real situation of schools' and teachers' needs in their specific contexts.

b. Taking the results of teacher performance evaluations into account, whether they are nationwide and standardized, or conducted at each school. The objective is to consider the priority needs of educators in their specific school contexts.

c. Focusing teacher professional development on the needs that come out of projects inside schools, promoting as a permanent practice the analysis of teacher training needs, through the application of a critical thinking exercise. This demands knowing what the needs are and having a diversified training offer, incorporating the development of generic professional skills –autonomy, self–education, self–regulation, commitment, willingness to work with peers, professional responsibility– as well as a command of specific didactic competencies. Towards this end, joint efforts by the school director, supervisors, and pedagogic technical staff are essential[45].

d. Providing specialized support for intercultural bilingual education teachers, both for knowledge of the indigenous culture and language, and for a proper pedagogic and socio–linguistic training that is applied from an intercultural perspective.

e. Offering teachers tools and strategies to better address the issue of discipline in the classroom, by coordinating between school authorities and families, in order to strengthen peaceful co–existence and a good classroom climate at each school.

f. Establishing incentives and conditions that promote teacher participation in training activities. It is essential that those incentives –which might be in the form of scholarships for graduate studies, internships, or resources for school activities– be destined and used in relevant and pertinent programs. According to the international experience and the perception of directors and teachers, among the most defining conditions is reserving a part of the working day for teachers to reflect on their practices (while avoiding any impact on student learning), to work in teams, to research, to review professional literature, and to participate in activities that are relevant for continuing education. This division of time, if it is well–managed, is a decisive factor, particularly in the articulation of training and school contexts.

Some studies have revealed the scope of high–potential experiences in continuing education. For example, the Pedagogical Expedition and Micro–centers in Colombia; Teachers' Centers in Mexico; support for school teachers in the English–speaking Caribbean; the National Teacher Training Plan (PLANCAD, by its Spanish acronym) in Peru; community workshops and national internships in Chile; "jurisdictional" professional development projects in Argentina, which promote a school–centered modality; the "Letra é Vida" (Reading is Life) program in the state of Sao Paulo, and the Educators' Professional Development Program in the state of Minas Gerais, both in Brazil. The Networks of Teachers who are interested in Reading, Math, Science, and the use of technology in the classroom and school environments, are still in place in many countries despite the discontinuation of institutional support.

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[45] For primary school, we notice special needs in areas like Math, Natural Science, and Foreign Languages.

2 **Ensuring a significant impact of continuing education on teaching practices and student learning**

There is a widespread perception among teachers and experts, that the continuing education actions that have been traditionally implemented through courses and workshops –disconnected from schools' needs– and where teachers and professors are passive learners, do not have sufficient impact on teaching practices, and therefore do not contribute to the improvement of student learning. This requires an effort that is explained in the following guidelines:

a. Focusing on the connection between training activities and classroom practice. The challenge of getting all students to learn while paying attention to their diversity is becoming more complex, and teachers are strongly requesting support to be able to fulfill this task successfully. Every continuing education offer should guarantee –as essential components of a work methodology– a connection with classroom practice and the application of experience and knowledge that are derived from practice.

b. The tendency to consider attendance as the only condition for certification must be left behind. The assessment of effective learning achievement and the ability to translate that learning into the enhancement of teaching practices must be incorporated. Certifications must reflect sound professional learning, and not just participation in training activities. Accompaniment and classroom work observation are important tools to recognize the effectiveness of training activities.

c. Promoting the development of learning communities through the modality of implementing workshops for one school or for many schools, by establishing networks where teachers of similar subject areas or school grades can reflect together about their pedagogical experiences in the search for new strategies, and where they take a leading role while analyzing their practice. It is important to advance towards a model of "analytical discussion" that promotes professional growth through teamwork that includes pedagogical observation, assessment, reflection, and action. Collective learning for teachers' teams contributes to produce the pedagogical knowledge –which incorporates practical knowledge generated by teachers– that must flow within teaching communities for their practices to be enriched[46].

d. Supporting teachers' teams through the development of capacities for multi–disciplinary and multi–sector work, that will allow addressing complex personal and social problems that students might have, and that go beyond the strictly pedagogic aspect. At

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[46] There are interesting examples like the "lesson study" methodology and demonstration classrooms in Japan, and the experience of time for joint planning in Boston, which have already been described in Barber, M. and Mourshed, M. (2007).

the same time, this requires generating support mechanisms for schools, in order to address these situations in a multi–sector manner.

e. Prioritizing coverage for continuing education programs, in order to address significant segments of teaching staff at different times. If the goal is to really enhance the capacity of teachers, it is imperative to invest enough resources in this area. The state must determine which continuing education program is a priority for the development of education policies, and guarantee free access. Political authorities must determine the priorities, based on the main points of national curricula and its modifications, and/or the results of learning assessments or teacher performance. The combination of these factors is what should allow us to clearly identify those teachers who have more weaknesses, as well as the subject areas that need more support. Furthermore, it is necessary to identify and prioritize sectors or geographical areas in which teachers need more training and present more shortcomings.

f. Substantially improving the conditions that are required for an appropriate participation of teachers in continuing education activities, both out of school and in school. Also, providing the time that is necessary for participation during the working day, or sabbaticals, in the case of graduate studies.

g. Associating continuing education to progress incentives in the teaching career, based on the quality of professional work, and taking performance assessments into account.

h. Considering the results of student learning assessments in order to identify needs and define focus areas in continuing education, while at the same time avoiding a reduction of training goals.

i. Valuing the utilization of new technologies in professional development activities, which facilitates the participation of a greater number of teachers, coverage for isolated areas, the establishment of professional networks, the strengthening of ICT use in the classroom, and the lowering of costs.

j. Promoting experimental, monitoring, and systematization activities in the countries of the Region, in order to construct knowledge about what effectively contributes to the strengthening of the teaching profession and the improvement of learning.

> The MERCOSUR Teacher Training Working Group has proposed recognizing, as part of its set of guiding principles on teacher training policies, that "teachers produce knowledge and are the main actors in their own process of training and professional development", a concept that is at the core of strategies for teacher–focused situated and peer learning.

❸ Building professional development road maps, while acknowledging stages in the teaching career

The needs of teachers who are just starting their careers are different from the needs of those who are in a process of professional consolidation. And the latter have different needs than teachers and professors with a high degree of experience. The following guidelines address this assertion:

Building professional development road maps, while acknowledging the different stages of the career, from beginning teachers and professors to educators with more experience and a history of outstanding performances. For this, it is necessary to deepen the analysis of the patterns that are followed to form a teaching staff or collective, in order to have a more sensitive planning of professional development road maps. Continuing education should not be understood merely in a compensatory manner. It should be taken as an essential part of the professional career, including its different moments and spaces of development.

a. Supporting new teachers in their induction. During the initial stage, teachers and professors need strong backing that will facilitate their professional integration in specific school contexts (acknowledgement of school dynamics, school projects and programs, among others), where they must assume responsibilities for which they often feel unprepared, and where they often face a school culture that rejects innovating practices. In this area, it is desirable to promote intensive tutoring or mentoring. Among other actions, there should be class observation, and individual and collective analysis of teaching practices. Induction experiences in developed countries and in some emerging countries of the Region deserve to be studied and emulated, where conditions make it possible. Acknowledging that beginning teachers and professors need special support is essential, because they are the ones who are most likely to abandon the profession. This is something new for the Region, which demands strong institutional capacities, as well as the capacity of working teaching personnel, but it is necessary to begin traveling that road in order to have induction schemes operating in the not so distant future. When possible, this includes giving feedback to training institutions.

b. In situations where it is not possible to offer tutoring to beginning teachers, the alternative might be offering guidance and early professional development programs, under the responsibility of the managerial and technical team of the educational establishment; eventually, specialized academic institutions might offer their support.

c. Teachers with more years of professional experience need accompaniment that is linked to updating and innovating, using technology and support to compensate for any eventual professional weakening.

d. Assigning tutoring or advisory roles to teachers with a high level of professional development, so that they can support their peers, particularly teachers who are in

their induction. In order to better fulfill that task, it would be desirable to have the support of academic institutions that specialize in the development of tutoring and peer learning skills.

e. Considering, in continuing education, the needs of teachers in their different roles, including school directors, coordinators, and pedagogic supervisors.

In Argentina, the National Institute for Teacher Training implements a tutoring program for new teachers; while in Chile, the Network of Teacher Educators and university networks have trained mentors who support beginning teachers. In the Brazilian state of Paraná, the Educational Development Program trains –for a period of two years– expert teachers who provide guidance to educators' networks.

④ Implementing regulatory mechanisms for the continuing education offer in order to ensure quality and relevance

Public institutions should counter shortcomings in quality and relevance for continuing education with efficient regulatory mechanisms. The following guidelines aim at addressing this need:

a. Advancing in the consolidation of training and professional development public institutions, that should be able to coordinate the different bodies of the education system that are involved in continuing education. Authorities at the different jurisdictional levels of the education system need to count on solid institutions. These institutions should allow the offering of programs that are considered as essential for the implementation of education policies, and also regulate the diverse supply of training programs provided by the academic sector and private agencies.

b. Constructing professional development plans for teachers at the national, regional, and state/provincial level, which include the priorities of education policy and precise diagnoses about the needs of teachers, based on student learning necessities.

c. Having effective quality control mechanisms, through accreditation or certification systems that ensure the capacity of making a real contribution to professional development. In this sense, assessment criteria and indicators should be created for the different interventions, while closely following up within reasonable timelines.

d. Developing the capacities of agencies that implement continuing education. It is essential that those offering continuing education are familiar with the school system and the reality and working conditions of teachers, and show respect for the profession.

If institutions charged with offering continuing education programs do not comply with the appropriate conditions, and reproduce traditional teaching methodologies that do not contribute to reflection and a critical ownership of knowledge, it will not be possible to fulfill the requirements of the school system and of the teaching community.

> Argentina promotes teacher professional development through its National Institute for Teacher Training, a decentralized agency that is responsible for public policies in this area throughout the country. Its tasks include the design, configuration, and backing of tools that are available for teachers from their first years in the profession and all along their careers. These instruments seek the improvement of pedagogical practices, innovation, and research. Its regulatory framework considers the need for all the different actors to participate.
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> In Brazil, the Ministry of Education's Coordinating Commission for Higher Education Personnel Training (CAPES, by its Portuguese acronym), in cooperation with higher education public institutions and with state and municipal education authorities, offer a public, decentralized, and free option of continuing education, specialization, master's degrees, and doctorates.

❺ Promoting collaborative learning in the school context

Not taking into account the school context in which the teacher works, limits the effectiveness of training activities, and leads to discouragement and passivity, which are negative for professional learning. The following guidelines address this situation:

a. Promoting the school as a learning community, by ensuring the commitment of all actors involved. If the aim is to have a positive effect on learning, it is necessary to focus on unity and on the whole teaching staff. The biggest challenge is to turn schools into learning communities, where not only students learn, but also all its members, particularly teachers. When needs are identified, these communities generate training activities that are relevant and pertinent, and that allow the resolution of situations that block student learning.

b. Promoting an active role for school directors and school technical teams. They should foster and lead professional development, and an appropriate organization of teachers' work, following institutional objectives and goals. Moreover, it is important that technical supervisors in the regions where schools are located provide support for leadership that is focused on teacher professional development.

c. Generating conditions in schools that will allow turning the isolated work of teachers in the classroom into collaborative work. Teacher professional development cannot be conceived in isolation from the specific needs of each school. Individual teacher education is not enough, if continuing learning opportunities are not offered in schools.

"Situated learning" summarizes this. According to this concept, professional development –whether it is implemented inside or outside the physical space of the school– must always be aimed at solving the problems that teachers face in their daily effort to achieve the expected learning in all students.

d. Integrating school–based professional development into a continuing education system, with a strong emphasis on classroom monitoring and pedagogic accompaniment, by articulating it with the offer of accredited academic institutions, in order to respond to the needs of schools, teachers, and the educational system.

❻ Regulating the relevance of graduate degrees' offer

In several countries of the region, the recent evolution of teacher demand towards the desire to obtain graduate degrees, presents new challenges as far as policies are concerned. These guidelines might make a contribution:

a. Complementing the criteria used in quality assurance systems for graduate degrees in Education, particularly master's degrees, by applying new criteria related to the relevance and impact potential of teaching practices.

b. Awarding scholarships to educators, so they can study in specific fields that the state considers as lacking. The process of awarding these incentives must be transparent, and must consider teachers' merit as well as the needs of educational centers, particularly when they serve a disadvantaged school population.

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES ON CONTINUING EDUCATION

1. Ensuring the right to relevant and pertinent continuing education for teachers, focusing on student learning and schools' needs
2. Ensuring a significant impact of continuing education in teaching practices and student learning
3. Building professional development road maps, while acknowledging stages in the teaching career
4. Implementing regulatory mechanisms for the continuing education offer in order to ensure quality and relevance
5. Promoting collaborative learning in the school context
6. Regulating the relevance of graduate degrees' offer

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❸ GUIDELINES ON THE TEACHING CAREER

Regarding the teaching career, State of the Art confirms the existence of vertical and horizontal promotion modalities. The former refers to the need of abandoning classroom teaching to assume other responsibilities (managerial, technical, supervisory), as a requirement for promotion. The latter has to do with the existence of opportunities for promotion and professional development, without having to abandon classroom teaching. This is less frequent. In the Region, the criteria that historically have ruled decision–making about career advancement are seniority and attendance of continuing education or graduate level courses, while professional performance has been much less significant. Along with analyzing the need to have an attractive professional career, the diagnosis addresses issues like working conditions, salaries and incentives, and assessment of teacher performance.

In the teaching career, State of the Art points out the following critical knots: a) difficulty in attracting and retaining good educators; b) lack of acknowledgement of different stages of teaching; c) dissociation between the career and professional development; d) strain between centralized salary structures and diversified pay scales; e) difficulty in generating consensus on educational performance evaluations.

The following are some guidelines or criteria to address these critical knots in teachers' policies and working conditions in countries of the Region.

❶ Designing and implementing careers that are focused on strengthening the teaching profession and on advocating for the recruitment of good candidates

Teaching careers should be conceived as part of policies that are focused on an effective appreciation of teaching –with appropriate remunerations– and that will allow educators to have better living and working conditions. Careers should foster the profession and encourage the entrance of youth who have the necessary competencies, and the permanence of good teachers and professors. While seeking appreciation for the teaching career, it is important to keep all teachers in mind, both in the public and the private sector, even though according to the legal framework of each country there might be aspects of the career that should be applied exclusively to the public sector.

Those who choose not to abandon the classroom should receive the gratification, acknowledgment, and incentives that are needed to encourage them to remain in it. Surely, moving on to managerial or technical positions must be open, considering the strategic significance of these responsibilities in educational quality, besides the legitimate aspirations of some teachers. However, it is not advisable to place this kind of movement as the only way to advance in the profession. In this sense, we propose the following guidelines:

a. Improving career opportunities for teachers (salaries, working conditions, professional status), and building an image of the profession that corresponds to its strategic role in present–day society, in order to modify collective thinking about this issue. In this

sense, the role of social media is crucial. It is important that policies convey the confidence of society and of the political system in teachers. This will contribute to attracting better teacher candidates, and will allow professional expectations and responsibility for learning results to be raised.

b. Designing promotion modalities in the teaching career that will encourage remaining in classroom teaching. The teaching career should be turned into an attractive option for young people with good educational scores, and whose vocation is oriented towards teaching in the classroom.

c. Generating an appropriate structure for salaries and incentives. The aspiration should be to count on highly qualified professionals. Therefore, average salaries should progressively reach levels that match that goal. The teaching professional career should be aimed at leveling educators' salaries with those received by other professionals who have similar training. If the objective is to attract secondary school students with good scores, it is essential that their initial salaries be decent, and that they have real opportunities for better conditions after five or ten years.

d. Favoring and acknowledging important professional accomplishments for teachers, like achieving student learning; managing innovative projects for their schools; becoming tutors or mentors for beginning teachers; leading or participating in activities of peer professional development; directing extra–curricular programs with students or projects with parents; and obtaining scholarships for graduate courses or programs; among others. The quality of interpersonal relations and acknowledgements, support, and incentives, as well as guidance provided by school directors for professional development are also fundamental factors. The lack of such opportunities is a determining cause for early abandonment of the profession on the part of many young talented teachers.

e. Improving the labor environment of teachers and professors with decent, safe, and enabling working conditions that will facilitate good performance: an appropriate student–teacher ratio; pedagogical technical support; opportunities to participate in peer–reviewed decision–making and in institutional projects; the provision of appropriate educational materials, textbooks and ICTs, infrastructure, and equipment.

f. Ensuring that during the working day there is a proper number of hours for non–classroom professional activities that are destined to planning, evaluating, communicating with students and parents, studying, pedagogic reflection, and collaborative work. It is also important to advance towards concentrating teachers' work days in only one school.

g. Promoting dialogue and joint work between ministries and teachers' organizations in the design of teaching careers.

The experiences of Colombia, Mexico, and Peru are part of this new career model, marked by the introduction of horizontal promotion mechanisms, as opposed to the traditional vertical promotion. In Mexico, the teaching career was reformed in May 2011. There is a horizontal promotion system in place, in which teachers participate voluntarily and individually. They have the opportunity of entering the career and of being promoted if they comply with the requirements. The present reform is the result of joint efforts made by the Ministry of Public Education and the National Union of Education Workers (Agreement for the reform of basic guidelines in the National Teaching Career Program, 2011).

One interesting experience is the effort carried out in Trinidad and Tobago that is aimed at achieving safer working conditions through the "Occupational Safety and Health Act." This initiative is part of a set of goals that the Ministry of Education has established regarding educators: participation in decision–making; time for planning; clear opportunities for promotions; acknowledgement of excellence; fair salaries; retirement benefits; and safe and healthy working environments.

❷ **Acknowledging different stages in the development of the teaching career and of competencies**

In Latin America, there are few career structures to make the distinction between beginning, proficient, and experienced teachers. This is undoubtedly a serious shortcoming, and one of the main reasons why many "flee the classroom" as they advance in their careers. The main innovation that must be introduced regarding this reality is the acknowledgment of categories for classroom teachers, according to competencies, and rooted in the level of experience and training. The following guidelines are proposed as a contribution:

a. Establishing –as part of the career– a period of accompaniment or induction for beginning teachers, as it is mentioned in the Continuing Education section (II 3a and 3b).

b. Considering a reduction of classroom hours for teachers during their first year (while keeping their full salaries), as a way of allowing them to participate in training activities with the support of tutoring or mentoring, and developing a process of reflection about their practice as a continuation of initial training. These activities define the period of induction.

c. While the induction process is essentially for learning, it is important to consider the idea that the initial period could be one of probation, where performance is assessed before a permanent position is offered. This would be more advisable in education systems that have better regulations for initial training. In this case, beginning teachers must demonstrate their teaching skills, according to specific and verifiable sets of standards. For those who do not comply with the standards at the end of the probation period,

but have the potential to fulfill them in a longer period, the probation stage and the induction must be extended. If they are not capable of reaching the required standards at the end of that period, teachers should cease doing classroom work. Only when beginning teachers fully comply with the standards should they be certified to have access to a permanent position.

d. Creating conditions for experienced teachers and professors with high levels of performance, so they can contribute in the fulfillment of technical tasks and in supporting less experienced educators, but without abandoning classroom teaching. These professionals who reach the level of experts in the career, must have enough time to work with beginning teachers, and they also must have access to professional development programs that are related to this responsibility, besides receiving an appropriate salary.

e. During the middle stages of the professional career, it is advisable that teachers growingly assume more responsibilities, like course leadership and project coordination, for which they must also get the appropriate acknowledgement and salary.

❸ Structuring the teaching career around the enhancement of professional performance

Teaching careers that are limited to the recognition of experience and continuing education courses are deviating from the fundamental purpose of the profession. This situation may be addressed by following these guidelines:

a. Exploring professional career designs that are centered on teaching performance quality. Experience, and relevant quality continuing education must be appreciated, as long as they turn into professional learning. Consequently, it is important to evaluate and then reward effective teaching performance, both in the classroom and at the educational institution, and consider it as the cornerstone of promotions. Organizing the teaching career around professional assessment mechanisms is certainly complex, but it is also essential.

b. Articulating continuing education with teachers' salary policies. For this, it is necessary to count on human resources policies, and on management and professional performance tools that will allow the appreciation of continuing education efforts that individuals and teachers' teams make with the clear purpose of enhancing teaching.

c. Encouraging the creation of more spaces for training and debate within teachers' collectives, and promoting empirical research and the flow of knowledge in collaboration with universities and research centers, with the goal of enriching that process.

d. Acknowledging the individual careers that some teachers build, in terms of their training and/or specialization for specific subject areas (Science, Art, or Language teach-

ing, for example), or specific lines of work, such as teaching in disadvantaged or rural areas, the pedagogic use of ICTs, citizenship for a better school co–existence, or support for student initiatives, among others, while the teacher's performance is assessed.

④ Designing and implementing a policy of salaries and incentives that is clear and articulated, in order to encourage professional teaching

An attractive professional career should mean that the teacher will be appropriately remunerated at the time of entering the profession, and that as the teacher progresses, according to her/his duly evaluated performance, she/he should get higher salaries and have access to new professional development opportunities. Towards this end, we propose the following guidelines:

a. It is of the utmost importance that governments intensify their financial efforts, in order to guarantee decent salaries for all teachers and a sustainable program to improve working conditions.

b. Visualizing and weighing different gradients and scales to differentiate salary hikes. For example, a teacher who has seven to ten years of experience tends to have bigger personal and family commitments, so the system should offer her/him significant pay hikes during that stage of her/his career, subject to the general principle of demonstrating good performance.

c. Integrating economic incentives, which are growingly present in the Region, into the professional career as a whole. This way, they will be perceived as attainable –without the existence of quotas– by all teachers who comply with high professional performance standards, and will encourage continuing professional growth. If economic incentives are dealt with in an isolated manner, they lose their effectiveness. In fact, there is not enough available evidence to demonstrate that incentives programs by themselves have an impact on student learning, or help improve teaching. Incentives must be articulated with other measures.

d. Generating motivation that would allow schools located in areas that are poor or far away from urban centers to count on highly qualified educators, who also have real expectations for student learning. It is important that these teachers not only feel attracted to work in schools that are immersed in complex environments, but also feel encouraged to remain on a job that is undoubtedly difficult, and that therefore requires the appropriate support and rewards.

e. Promoting symbolic incentives that would improve public appreciation of the profession through a higher social acknowledgement of those who are working teachers. This would also favor better candidates entering teaching careers as students.

f. Developing initiatives to support continuing education for working teachers, that would allow recognition of the efforts they may be making in that direction, while avoiding the promotion of "credentialism" and the increase of supply and demand for activities that are not relevant or rigorous.

g. Bringing teaching staff to a satisfactory level of understanding and validation of the salary structure, which should include opportunities for gradual raises within reasonable timeframes.

h. Working for decent retirement pay for educators. This way, not only is there recognition for their work; the renovation of the teaching community is also encouraged.

> In 1996, the Brazilian authorities created the Support and Development Fund for Primary Education and Teaching Appreciation (FUNDEF, by its Portuguese acronym), and in 2006 replaced it with the Fund for the Development of Basic Education and the Appreciation of Education Professionals (FUNDEB, by its Portuguese acronym). The main objective of this fund is the redistribution of resources that are channeled to education, by compensating states and municipalities where investment per student is lower than the one that has been pre–determined each year. Since at least 60% of the fund is assigned to education professionals' salaries, results have been encouraging: teachers' salaries have improved significantly, and pay raises have been higher where wages had been lower.
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> In Mexico, recent reforms made to the General Education Law of 2011 give a mandate for education authorities to establish evaluation–based mechanisms of incentives for the teaching career.
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> Chile offers an individually–focused incentive that is based on teachers' knowledge and skills: the Pedagogical Excellence Acknowledgement (AEP, by its Spanish acronym), and a collective incentive that benefits teachers who work at schools that the National System of Assessment of Educational Establishments Performance (SNED, by its Spanish–language acronym) classifies as well–performing.
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> In Colombia, the National Incentives Program rewards well–performing school centers with resources for the implementation of educational projects, and teachers at those schools for their excellence.

❺ Developing valid and agreed upon systems for the assessment of teacher professional performance

Beyond the debates that teacher evaluation generates and the diversity of international opinions about this issue, education systems need to have in place mechanisms to assess performance and to promote its improvement. It must be assumed that this represents a complex challenge. Assessments must be focused on obtaining social appreciation and recognition for the profession. The following guidelines may be used to address this challenge:

a. Developing and implementing an objective and transparent assessment system, based on standards that are validated and considered as legitimate by the teaching community, in order to identify comparable levels of quality in the performance of each teacher, and also taking into account the context in which she/he works. It is important that these systems include different instruments that allow observing and analyzing real practices with respect to their effects on student learning, and also allow compiling the perceptions of all relevant actors.

b. Considering the participation of professionals themselves in organizing the assessment process. There must be a general agreement about the standards that define the criteria and guide evaluations, so that assessments have a real impact on teachers' skills and knowledge. That is why designing participation mechanisms is essential, so that the main stakeholders –particularly teachers– can contribute to the initial definition and the periodic revisions of standards. Teachers should also have the opportunity to be educated on the whole set of standards, in order to know how the standards translate into classroom teaching practices.

c. Directing teacher evaluation towards training purposes, which means giving important feedback about the needs for improvement that teachers, professors, and school directors have. This should be complemented with the identification of the training mechanisms that are needed to support educators in their professional advancement, taking as a basis the strengths and weaknesses that arose during the assessment process. Special attention must be paid to teachers who have not obtained the minimum satisfactory results in performance assessments.

d. Teacher evaluation may also be cumulative, that is, it can have consequences for the teacher's career. Thus, it is essential that teachers' teams, as well as individual educators who show improvements in their practices get their recognition, through both monetary and non–monetary performance incentives. Furthermore, it is important that the education system has sound instruments to identify teachers who –despite the support and the training that they have gotten during the educational evaluation– do not have the willingness or the capability to improve their practices. The necessary measures must be adopted to separate those educators from the profession, as a way of preventing any effects on student learning.

e. Utilizing evaluation methods and instruments that consider the different facets of teaching in the school community, particularly classroom teaching practices, as well as responsibilities in the school community that are related to team work, and to interaction with families and students.

Chile also has in place the Professional Teacher Performance Evaluation System at the municipal level. The goal is to evaluate educators every four years based on the criteria contained in the Good Teaching Framework (MBE, by its Spanish acronym). This assessment is implemented through four instruments: self–evaluation, a report by the school director and the pedagogical technical director, an evaluation made by a peer from a different school, and a portfolio of written and video files with proof of experience. Teachers who get the best results –average and above average– have access to an economic incentive (Variable Acknowledgement of Individual Performance, AVDI, by its Spanish acronym), after passing a general knowledge exam. Educators who get the lowest scores –"basic" or "unsatisfactory"– must go for training through professional advancement plans, and address the weaknesses that the evaluation revealed. A teacher whose performance is "unsatisfactory" must leave the classroom and be evaluated the following year, after having gone for training. If the educator gets the same score, he or she must abandon the education system.

In Colombia, the Teacher Professionalization Statutes (2002) establish three types of evaluations:

• A competitive exam where skills, competencies, experience, and adequacy are evaluated. Once the applicant passes the exam, he or she is hired for one year.

• A yearly performance evaluation. Those who are graded as "unsatisfactory" for two years in a row are separated from the system.

• A voluntary competencies test for those who have remained for at least three years. This allows promotions and salary increments for teachers who are evaluated as above average.

❻ Counting on transparent mechanisms to fill teaching positions and to assign duties

In the norms that regulate access to teaching in general, as well as to specific duties, is where a great part of educational opportunities for the population lies. This is particularly true for the population who needs quality education the most, due to their socio–economic situation. We propose these guidelines:

a. Having clear policies for entering the profession. This means that –besides the degrees and certificates given by academic institutions– the state must establish basic requirements nationwide, based on compliance with the minimum standards that must be attained by those who enter school teaching. The instruments may consist of knowledge and skills tests, and/or evaluated practices. Alternatively, accreditation standards for institutions may be raised, by guaranteeing strict admission systems and graduation requirements in initial training programs. The goal should be that degrees match the level of knowledge and skills required by the education system. This option may not be effective in countries with weak regulations for the public and private academic offer.

b. Organizing competitive calls that are objective and transparent, and with clear rules and selection criteria, in the process of filling teaching positions. Teacher performance standards must also be taken into account in competitive calls.

c. Creating incentives that promote certain stability in the teaching staff, particularly in schools that have difficulties attracting highly qualified personnel, due to the complexity of their teaching duties, which is related to the kind of student population that they work with.

d. Favoring the participation of the director and of joint leaderships in the establishment of the teaching staff at each school unit, ensuring the appropriate personnel according to the school curriculum and the institutional project. These are important conditions in the processes of generation and development of effective schools.

e. Making sure that each educator is assigned the school tasks where she/he can make the greatest contribution, and develop her/his full potential. This should be done by applying objective mechanisms that will help avoid arbitrary decisions in the assignment of duties. A measure that is advisable applying is that teachers who have the best competencies and performances, should assume responsibilities in the initial levels of primary education, or with groups of students who have the most difficulties.

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES ON THE TEACHING CAREER

1. Designing and implementing careers that are focused on strengthening the teaching profession and on advocating for the recruitment of good candidates
2. Acknowledging different stages in the development of the teaching career and of competencies
3. Structuring the teaching career around the enhancement of professional performance
4. Designing and implementing a policy of salaries and incentives that is clear and articulated, in order to encourage professional teaching
5. Developing valid and agreed upon systems for the assessment of teacher professional performance
6. Counting on transparent mechanisms to fill teaching positions and to assign duties

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❹ Guidelines on institutions and processes of teachers' policies

State of the Art seeks to establish analytical categories and to identify trends regarding the institutions and processes of teachers' policies. The underlying question has to do with the factors and processes that affect policy formulation and implementation. While it is clear that society has more complex demands with respect to education, it also has "stricter" demands vis–a–vis educational policies, and particularly teachers' policies. "Policies" depend mainly on the quality of "politics", that is, the capacity of stakeholders and institutions that shape those policies (the rule of law) to process conflicts. Stakeholders and institutions should also be able to cooperate towards achieving educational objectives that are admittedly more demanding than, for example, expanding coverage, and that take longer than one government's term in office. This requires new levels of cooperation on the part of stakeholders and new levels of soundness on the part of institutions.

The following are guidelines and criteria to address teachers' policies, while taking into account the prioritization and effectiveness of policies, the level of participation of stakeholders in generating them, and the institutions that are necessary for their development.

❶ Prioritizing teachers' policies in a systemic approach

Acknowledging the strong influence of teachers as a factor in the quality of education, forces us to give policies geared towards the advancement of this professional community the central role that historically they have not had. The guidelines that we propose are focused on facing this challenge:

a. Assigning teachers' policies a strategic and central role in the design of educational policies, despite the difficulties that must be faced due to the fact that they are very costly, there is a potential for conflict, and it is not easy to foresee results and benefits in the short run. In particular, this means increasing and giving continuity to investment in programs dedicated to improving initial training and continuing education, besides addressing the challenges of the teaching career.

b. Devising teachers' policies in a comprehensive and systemic manner, avoiding a focus on isolated aspects; for example, the enhancement of initial training without taking into account that a non–attractive career or schools that do not renew their teaching methods constitute factors that weaken the effort. Another example would be improving salaries and/or incentives without enhancing the quality of initial training and opportunities for professional development. It is necessary to promote systemic interventions in which teachers' education is considered as a component of a set of actions that aim to support their pedagogical work in school.

c. Seeking a proper articulation between regulations that are established for the teacher training system and for exercising the profession, in order to have enough effective quality control mechanisms, and to avoid excessive regulations that might discourage going into teaching.

d. Directing educational and teachers' policies towards the public interest, in a way that they can contribute to overcome unequal learning opportunities, and are not subject to individual economic, corporate, or political interests.

2 **Achieving more effectiveness in teachers' policies, by reconciling continuity and change criteria**

The lack of continuity in teachers' policies and the multiplicity of programs that are abandoned, make it more difficult to reach expected results, and generate confusion and discouragement among teachers. Reconciling stability, flexibility, and political changes represents a complex challenge. We propose the following guidelines towards this end:

a. Defining very clearly the purpose of teachers' policies in the framework of educational policies, by establishing long–term and mid–term goals, and avoiding short–term projects and programs that have high visibility but low real impact.

b. Articulating activities of teachers' policies with a given set of objectives, thus avoiding dispersion and the overlapping or duplication of programs that could run in parallel within governmental structures.

c. Ensuring reasonable levels of stability for public policies, by avoiding changes that respond more to the turnover of high or mid–level political authorities, than to assessments of programs' effectiveness. In this sense, for many of the Region's education systems, the creation of capacities is a vital objective of the present agenda. This requires an appropriate timeline, and therefore agreements that allow policy continuity.

d. In order to guarantee mid– and long–term approaches to policies, it is important that once the necessary consensus is reached, multi–year budgets and laws that support them be approved. This, despite the fact that national political changes will tend to cause legitimate changes in education policy. For a political system that is capable in education, it is natural to reach an appropriate balance between continuity and change in the regulatory frameworks of teachers' policies.

e. While ensuring continuity in teachers' policies, it is necessary to avoid being rigid, by establishing parameters of flexibility and spaces for innovation that would help improve aspects of design. It is also necessary to adapt policies to political, social, and cultural changes that the school system faces, and to consider the progress made in scientific and technological knowledge.

f. Reaching an appropriate coordination and consistency of teachers' policies with the whole set of educational policies, in order to ensure their convergence in the direction of improving quality and equity in education. Enhancing the teaching profession is closely linked to the conditions in which it is exercised, and among the determining factors are curricular contents, learning assessment systems, educational resources, and school organizing.

3 **Promoting the participation of stakeholders in policy generation**

Experiences of educational and teachers' policies reform that have been imposed without the participation of stakeholders –particularly teachers– have repeatedly been shown to be a failure. Taking this assertion into account, we propose the following guidelines:

a. Generating dialogue and participation that help to reach nationwide political and educational agreements. These pacts should include representatives from different sectors, like education, politics, social groups, and culture, in order to address the need of education systems to adapt to new and rigorous external demands.

b. Creating and maintaining dialogue platforms and collaborative relations between governments and teachers' organizations (unions, guilds, or professional associations) that will help to generate conditions for grassroots participation in educational policies. This implies recognizing those organizations as valid actors in the formulation of proposals, not only about salary issues, but also about teachers' and educational policies in general. Without the participation of teachers, no educational reform will be successful.

c. Opening informed, pluralistic, and participatory debates about the meaning, direction, and breadth of the notions of quality and professionalization. It is not possible to promote policies or build solid agreements, without a shared and socialized process to define the meaning of these key concepts or notions.

In the case of Mexico, it is worth mentioning the Alliance for Quality in Education, signed by the SNTE and the Federal Government in 2008, and the 2011 Agreement for the reform of basic guidelines in the National Teaching Career Program.

In 2003, Chile's Ministry of Education, the College of Teachers, and the Association of Municipal Governments signed an agreement to launch an evaluation system for teacher professional performance.

In Guatemala, the dialogue between labor unions and governments began in the context of the 1997 Peace Agreement, which allowed the creation of a national reconciliation scenario, with the participation of different social sectors. Thus, these sectors presented a national agenda for the construction of peace, reconciliation, and social equity. Educational reform was one of the main commitments of the Agreement. In 1997, 17 private and public institutions, the National Teachers' Coordinating Committee (ANM, by its Spanish acronym), and Mayan indigenous organizations participated in the inauguration of the Consultative Commission for Educational Reform.

Brazil has the States' Fora for Teachers' Policies, which constitute deliberation platforms for social stakeholders in the different Brazilian states.

④ Strengthening public institutions for the development of teachers' policies

Regardless of how good the design of teachers' policies is, those policies will not change the profession substantially if there is a lack of robust institutions that are capable of promoting and monitoring their implementation. By considering the following guidelines, we can advance towards the achievement of this goal:

a. Developing public institutions that are robust in terms of their attributions, resources, and managerial continuity to deal with teachers' policies. Promoting those institutions to be influential in the different dimensions of teachers' policies: initial and continuing education, working conditions, and the professional career. It is important to put the emphasis on institutions and processes that help to generate, implement, monitor, and evaluate policies, and not only on their content. Agencies that are specialized in the education sector and teachers' policies, and national planning and public finance institutions must participate in that assessment.

b. Evaluating the quality of the formulation and implementation of public policies for teachers through criteria like: policy stability; adaptability; coordination and consistency; implementation quality; and focus on public goods[47]. Based on those assessments, deciding on the continuity or replacement of programs within a mid– and long–term approach. The discontinuation of policies causes a loss of efforts, effectiveness, and credibility.

c. Developing an appropriate articulation between national and local authorities in charge of educational management. This is a particularly significant and complex challenge in decentralized or federal countries.

d. Developing a sustained capacity–creating policy that will help education systems to count on highly qualified and specialized professionals, who will in turn design, monitor, and evaluate teachers' policies in the context of present and future school challenges. To this effect, it is important to activate existing international cooperation networks, and to promote new ones, both inside and outside the Region.

e. Promoting advanced interdisciplinary research on educational issues, particularly about initial training and continuing education and the different dimensions of the teaching profession, in order to adopt well–founded decisions about its development.

f. Making good use of the contributions of international organizations and, particularly, of the learning assessment systems that many of those agencies promote to generate sustainable policies.

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47 For more details about these criteria, see: Scartascini, C.; Spiller, P.T.; Stein, E.; and Tomassi, M. (2010).

g. Creating and developing data bases and keeping statistical information updated on the teaching profession and on the educational policies that countries implement.

> Argentina promotes teacher professional development through its National Institute for Teacher Training (INFD, by its Spanish–language acronym), the agency that is responsible for public policies in this area throughout the country. The INFD oversees initial training, continuing education, pedagogic support for schools, and educational research.
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> As federal countries, Argentina and Brazil generate increasingly articulated systems for education policies related to teachers, which allow the association of efforts made by the national or federal government with provincial or state authorities, as well as with municipalities, which in the case of Brazil play a key role in primary education.

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES ON INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES OF TEACHERS' POLICIES

1. Prioritizing teachers' policies in a systemic approach

2. Achieving more effectiveness in teachers' policies, by reconciling continuity and change criteria

3. Promoting the participation of stakeholders in policy generation

4. Strengthening public institutions for the development of teachers' policies

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