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Strategy for Equitable Access with Emphasis on Health Emergencies

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Content

Equitable access policies: an international perspective

The concept of universal access to higher education, which has evolved significantly over the last two decades, has been adopted by various national, regional and international organizations. In this regard, in the case of UNESCO, the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 represent one of the most prominent examples of the global commitment to this goal (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020).

Considering its positive effects for countries and individuals - in the social, economic and political spheres - beyond the humanistic perspective, it should be taken into account that universal access to higher education is configured as one of the cornerstones of ensuring the right to education (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020). Although the perception of the importance of education is increasing, "the inequitable distribution of educational opportunities has currently led to international attention, as it represents a drawback for achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and the other SDGs" (p. 14-15).

In Latin America, higher education has undergone a radical transformation in recent decades, and most governments in the region have promoted comprehensive policies for access to higher education. In fact, it can be said that we have moved from an elitist model serving a small segment of the population in large cities to a mass model (Trow, 2006), in which opportunities to continue studies are open, basically, to all students who have completed secondary education. While the transition from one model to another goes beyond increases in enrollment, the most visible aspect of the change is the accelerated growth in the absolute number of students and their relative weight within the corresponding age group.

Along with a wider range of functions, massification entails substantial changes in curriculum content, typical forms of instruction, the number and heterogeneity of higher education institutions, as well as in national and institutional policies. Student access and selection, while based on a renewed notion of academic merit, evolve into a massified model through compensatory programs and institutional and systemic policies aimed at addressing the greater diversity of students, with different levels of educational attainment and prior expectations, as well as improving equality of opportunity to successfully continue their studies. Paradoxically, massification shifts the policy concern for equity from its previous focus on the academic or vocational nature of secondary studies to equity in access to higher education

However, it should be noted that, while universal access to higher education is also desirable from the perspective of the right to education and social mobility [1], also entails

[1] Education is often seen as a critical lever for promoting social mobility, but the reality is that education systems also promote inequality. In fact, one could go so far as to say that this is what higher education

some problems in terms of employability. It is also important to pay attention to aspects related to the installed capacity of countries to absorb a type of highly qualified workers and to the oversupply of certain careers in comparison with the needs of the labor market. In this sense, it is worth considering not only university higher education, but also other forms of higher education (e.g., technical-professional training), as complementary modalities to attenuate this tension and, consequently, to move towards equitable access to higher education that guarantees greater social and individual development, which also allows for the transition between training alternatives.

First of all, defining what is meant by access to higher education is essential in order to address this phenomenon. While one could start from a restrictive definition of 'access', linked to the "right of qualified candidates to apply for admission to higher education and to be considered for that purpose" (Council of Europe & UNESCO, 1997), it is considered appropriate to broaden the conception and contemplate an 'access policy' as one "aimed both at extending participation in higher education to all sections of society and at ensuring that such participation is effective (i.e., under conditions that ensure that personal effort will lead to the completion of studies)" (Council of Europe, 1998). In a similar vein, in 2006, UNESCO defined universal access as the equal opportunity for people to participate in an education system regardless of their characteristics, with such education being inclusive and accessible to all - with special attention to aspects such as gender, sexuality, ethnic origin or functional diversity - and with a special focus on gender, sexuality, ethnic origin or functional diversity— (UNESCO, 2006).

Secondly, following the previous line, it is also necessary to specify how the aspect of 'equity' is conceived. Defining whether equity is being addressed in terms of socioeconomic, gender, ethnic minorities, other elements, or all of them at the same time, will be essential in order to guide policies optimally towards the desired objective. In this sense, the approach of this document is based on an intersectional perspective, even though the two main focus is on socioeconomic aspects. In practice in the international context, the two main focuses of equitable access to higher education today have to do with family income and ethnic or racial identity, whereas in the past regional (or rural/urban) location and gender predominated, since until recently female representation in higher education was very low in most countries.

Third, while there is broad consensus among families, employers and governments on the need to expand access, the ultimate goal of achieving greater equity is not as clear and does not generate as much consensus. If we look at specific policies for equitable access, it should be noted that, in the international context, few countries have had or

does: it tries to promote social mobility by expanding access, but with provision formulas that end up favoring those who start out with the greatest advantages.

currently have a comprehensive strategy in this direction. Although some have set specific objectives to increase access for specific groups (e.g., France, Belgium, Australia, Malaysia, Chile), in most countries, either general objectives have been set for the overall increase in access or there are no targets in this regard. In fact, not all countries monitor the characteristics - in this case, the socioeconomic characteristics - of students entering higher education, which makes it difficult to establish concrete measures.

With these aspects in mind, this report presents a synthesis of some of the equitable access policies that have been developed internationally, including countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Southeast Asia and Anglo-Saxon countries. The policies issued are heterogeneous and range from specific laws, funding schemes and the creation of specialized universities designed for disadvantaged students (e.g., in Mexico) (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020). Specifically, we offer a classification of policies in two complementary dimensions: on the one hand, those that are articulated on the supply side and, on the other, those that are articulated on the demand side. Both dimensions approach the phenomenon of equity in access to higher education in a more complex way than by focusing only on the demand side. First, some of the factors that limit and facilitate the achievement of equitable access to higher education will be analyzed.

Factors facilitating and limiting access to HE

Access to higher education is conditioned by different elements that can either facilitate or limit it. Analyzing these elements, which constitute barriers or levers, will make it possible to orient policies towards achieving the goal of expanding equitable access to higher education.

Therefore, this section presents some of them. First, the focus is on the barriers that condition equitable access, including poverty, crisis and emergency situations, and problems related to the deficient supply of higher education. Secondly, we look at some of the facilitators of access, including the economic development of countries, the rising aspirations of the middle classes and the increase in distance Higher Education Institutions (hereinafter, HEIs).

Barriers to equitable access to HE

The elements that negatively condition equitable access to higher education are diverse and of a different nature: they have to do with (a) the characteristics of the student body, (b) the characteristics of the educational system in basic education and (c) the characteristics of the educational system in higher education. It is important to bear in mind, however, that these three levels are, in practice, interrelated. Some of the most relevant barriers to equitable access are explored below, from those more closely linked to micro-social elements to those more related to macro-social aspects.

Parental income and family educational level

On the one hand, the empirical literature points to the poverty situation of part of the population as one of the main factors (Solon, 1999, in Kromydas, 2017, p. 6). Indeed, poverty is a key element in understanding barriers to enrollment, completion and inequality of outcomes at the primary and secondary levels of education (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020). In this regard, several studies (Machin & van Reenen, 1998; Gorard, 2008; quoted in Kromydas, 2017) point to the positive relationship between parental income and educational performance already in the secondary stage, which leads, in students with low socioeconomic status, to higher early school dropout and to low learning achievements that hinder access to HE.

Therefore, in order to broaden access to higher education, measures must address the above disadvantage: the risk of dropping out of the education system even before fulfilling the necessary requirements to enter vocational training or university is much higher in some groups than in others. Moreover, such effects are also related to the family's educational level (Gaentzsch & Zapata-Roman, 2020): the family's economic and cultural capital have an impact both on study entry and on the development of the educational trajectory -and educational success- and labor market insertion.

Gender

Furthermore, from an intersectional perspective, there is evidence that in Peru, especially in low-income families, men's education is often prioritized over women's, since many of the household responsibilities fall on women and some families see education as an obstacle to the development of these domestic responsibilities (Guerrero & Rojas, 2020). Even so, looking at the general population, the percentage of women between 17 and 21 years old who accessed higher education in 2019 (79.3%) is higher than that of men (74.1%), according to data from ESCALE.[2]

Rurality

Along the same lines, another barrier to consider has to do with the geographic location of households and the distance to higher education institutions in the territory (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020). Thus, taking university higher education as an example, although more HEIs do not necessarily imply greater access assurance, not having universities close to home is both a physical and economic obstacle for families living in

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2 http://escale.minedu.gob.pe/ueetendencias2016;jsessionid=5f3dc32d1dae82c45499c3a7a683?p_auth=yceLb6LI&p_p_id=TendenciasActualPortlet2016_WAR_tendencias2016portlet_INSTANCE_t6xG&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_pos=1&p_p_col_count=3&_TendenciasActualPortlet2016_WAR_tendencias2016portlet_INSTANCE_t6xG_idCuadro=265

rural areas. The same is true for technical-vocational education. As Reategui, Grompone, & Renteria (2020) comment, in the case of rural students:

> During the transition [to higher education], academies are required to help young people catch up, but they are already located in the city, some distance from their place of residence. Therefore, they must consider the expenses involved in renting a room in the city, in case they do not have a relative who can offer them a place, in addition to the cost associated with the academy. Otherwise, they must incur daily transportation expenses that are considerable for their family economy. (p. 49)

In this regard, it should be noted that Sánchez & Singh (2016) point to the concentration of population with low socioeconomic profile in such areas, which still aggravates the situation: in Peru, in fact, only 36.3% of students in rural areas between 17 and 21 years old attended HE in 2019, compared to 86.7% in urban areas (according to data from ESCALE). Thus, the State should guarantee access to university and technical-productive higher education through its different training alternatives in accordance with the social, cultural and productive context of each area, in order to reduce the urban-rural gap.

Institutional barriers and discrimination

On the other hand, it is necessary to analyze which elements constitute institutional barriers to access to higher education (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020): aspects such as fees and admission exams are clear determinants of universal access, which are related to socio-economic inequalities. Although the direct cost of enrollment in higher education varies from country to country - with cases such as Ecuador, where enrollment is free; the Chilean or the Colombian, where it is paid - it is important to take into account the indirect costs and opportunity costs - that is, the costs of the decision to enter higher education as opposed to other options, such as access to the labor market – which implies access to higher education.

Thus, considering that access to HE implies a high cost for families, it seems evident that those with high incomes have more opportunities and means to promote the skills and career prospects of their children than families with low incomes (Kromydas, 2017). For example, in India, the richest tercile has 21 percentage points more chances to enroll in higher education than the lowest tercile; in Peru, on the other hand, the figure stands at 18 percentage points (Sánchez & Singh, 2016). According to ESCALE data, only 27.2% of people living in poverty between 17 and 21 years of age attended HEIs in 2019 in Peru; a figure that decreased to 16.4% for people in extreme poverty. In contrast, the percentage of HEI attendance by people out of poverty was far from the previous figures, at 87.2%.

It is also necessary to consider discrimination in the educational system as another clear barrier to equitable access to higher education (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020). This discrimination can manifest itself, among others, in the form of lower educational quality for some groups compared to others -as an example, and in line with the above, the differences in educational quality between urban and rural areas- or as part of the educational process itself, when not all social groups can obtain the same benefits from the education received (p. 42). It should be taken into account that in countries such as Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, the majority of people who self-identify as indigenous live in rural communities -mainly in the highlands and jungle areas, in the Peruvian context- and their access to higher education is lower than that of other ethnic groups.

Thus, special attention should be paid to barriers derived from axes such as gender -e.g., child marriage, pregnancy or sexual violence-, disability or functional diversity -e.g., accessibility barriers such as lack of ramps or inappropriate transportation-, or migratory status -e.g., administrative barriers or lack of infrastructure and teaching staff incapable of dealing with cultural differences—. In addition to these, other additional barriers to equitable access must be highlighted, including insufficient and/or inadequate training of teaching staff, insufficient supply or provision of higher education, poor infrastructure, poor access to resources such as electricity and internet, socio-political contexts of crisis or emergency, and low educational investment.

Economic and social inequality

For the reasons stated above, one of the greatest obstacles to equitable access in Latin America has been the region's high level of economic and social inequality, as evidenced by the unequal distribution of household income and cultural assets[3], in particular formal education, compared to other wealthier regions and even to East Asian countries with similar per capita incomes (De Ferranti *et al.*, 2003). Recent studies clearly show the relative delay in the universalization of compulsory schooling, in retention and graduation rates and, in particular, in the pedagogical, material and infrastructure conditions - among others- that ensure minimum quality standards for all in learning at different levels. They clearly show the negative effects of greater economic inequality and the low quality of public education: the vast majority of students from rural areas and poor urban sectors tend to enroll without having made much progress in expected learning, with high repetition and dropout rates, while students from privileged families benefit from better quality public and/or private education and favorable characteristics of the family environment. Something similar occurs with the extension of compulsory schooling to the first years of secondary education.

[3] Although the concept of cultural goods can include several elements -books, musical instruments, etc.-, in this point special reference is made to the academic training received.

Low public investment in education

All of the above is clearly linked to the historically low public investment in education in the Latin American region, aggravated by the bias in favor of higher education spending in relation to basic education, as has been documented on multiple occasions by international organizations (Birdsall, 1999; Birdsall *et al.,* 1995) and also demonstrated in the historical analysis of public spending on education during the last century (Frankema, 2009; Lindert, 2010). In fact,

> As Saraví (2016) argues, in educational systems as segmented as the Peruvian one, educational institutions themselves are a factor of inequality. The characteristics of schools, infrastructure, pedagogical supports and educational quality, as well as the homogeneity of the composition of the student body, are aspects that determine, to a large extent, the educational success and the class trajectories of their graduates. (Reátegui, Grompone, & Renteria, 2020, p. 44)

Facilitators for equitable access to HE

Although it is essential to consider all those barriers that hinder equitable access to higher education, it is also worth mentioning those elements that are facilitators. Following the structure of the previous section, some of the most relevant levers to access are presented below, from those close to the micro-social elements to those related to the macro-social.

Individual and family aspirations and expectations

First, in terms of family or individual facilitators, the importance of aspirations and expectations about higher education should be highlighted. Related to the previous point, family ambitions about maintaining a social position or upward social mobility seem to have an important effect on access to higher education (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020).

A study conducted in Peru, Vietnam and India shows that student aspirations at age 12 are a significant predictor of access to higher education (Sánchez & Singh, 2016). However, in another study by Guerrero, Sugimaru, Cussianovich, De Fraine, & Cueto (2016) on the Peruvian case, it is noted that, in 2009, around 90% of the 15-year-old student body had expectations of attending higher education -80.82% to university and 9, 44% to technical institutes-, although statistically significant differences were found among girls, students from urban areas, students with better socioeconomic status and students with mothers with higher education, in which expectations were higher (see Figure 1).

Even so, the rate of actual access to higher education in 2016 for these students fell far short of expectations four years earlier (see Figure 2). It is important to highlight that, in

most cases, the conception about the purpose of higher education is linked to pragmatism and instrumentalization, directed towards the attainment of better paid and high-quality jobs (Chang et al., 2013, quoted in Kromydas, 2017; Guerrero, Sugimaru, Cussianovich, De Fraine, & Cueto, 2016). It is for this reason that expectations of access to higher education are high in the Peruvian context, despite the fact that inequalities operate in practice and condition effective access to HEIs.

Level of education aspired	Secondary education	Higher education		
		Higher technical education	University higher education	Total
Average (n=631)	9.75	9.44	80.82	90.25
Gender				
Man	9.88	11.88	78.25	90.12
Woman	9.61	6.90	83.49	90.39
Difference	**0.27**	**4.97**	**-5.24**	**-0.27**
Area of residence (2002)				
Urban	6.55	11.61	81.84	93.45
Rural	13.65	6.77	79.58	86.35
Difference	**-7.10**	**4.84**	**2.26**	**7.10**
Family wealth level (2006)				
Highest quintile	0.00	11.17	88.83	100.00
Lowest quintile	18.67	5.98	75.35	81.33
Difference	−18.67	**5.19**	**13.48**	18.67
Mother's education				
Higher education	0.00	3.13	96.87	100.00
Primary school complete or secondary school complete/incomplete	7.66	13.51	78.83	92.34
Incomplete primary or less	13.58	7.35	79.08	86.42
Difference	−13.58	**-4.22**	**17.79**	13.58
Mother's first language				
Spanish	11.50	11.09	77.41	88.50
Indigenous	7.68	7.49	84.83	92.32
Difference	**3.81**	**3.61**	**-7.42**	**-3.81**

Figure 1 Aspirations of young people at age 15 about higher education (2009) (%). Source: Guerrero, Sugimaru, Cussianovich, De Fraine, & Cueto (2016, p. 10), from Young Lives household survey, rounds 2 and 3. Note: bold cells indicate that differences are statistically significant at 5%

	Higher Technical Education	University Higher Education
Average (n=631)	22.2	17.2
Gender		
Man	21.5	20.9
Woman	23.0	13.2
Difference	-1.5	**7.6**
Area of residence (2002)		
Urban	26.9	21.7
Rural	16.3	11.6
Difference	10.7	**10.2**
Family wealth level (2006)		
Highest quintile	19.6	35.0

Lowest quintile	20.7	3.0
Difference	-1.1	**32.0**
Mother's education		
Higher education	33.9	41.4
Primary school complete or secondary school complete/incomplete	25.6	19.6
Incomplete primary or less	17.3	10.9
Difference	16.7	**30.5**
Mother's first language		
Spanish	26.3	19.3
Indigenous	16.9	14.7
Difference	9.5	**4.6**

Figure 2 Youth access at age 19 (2013) (%). Source: Guerrero, Sugimaru, Cussianovich, De Fraine, & Cueto (2016, p. 11), from Young Lives household survey, rounds 2 and 3. Note: bold cells indicate differences are statistically significant at 5%.

Increase in the supply of higher education

As for the macro-social facilitators, the increase in the supply of distance and/or private higher education appears to have a positive effect on widening access on an international scale (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020).

If the previous section identified distance to higher education institutions and insufficient higher education provision as barriers to access, the positive implications of expanding supply through universities that develop distance programs are evident - see the case of Turkey, with an increase of more than 55 percentage points from 2004 to 2014, partially due to enrollment in the distance mode (p. 38) - and/or privately held. It is therefore necessary - and even more so in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic - to move towards an increase in the virtual offer in Peru with quality assurance and equity, taking into account the gap in connectivity and access to computer equipment.

Private HEIs host a high percentage of enrollments -around 30% globally, although in Latin America it rises to 49% and in countries such as Brazil it exceeds 60% of the total student body (UNESCO, 2017, quoted in UNESCO-IESALC, 2020, p. 38)—. In Peru, specifically, the percentage reached 72.5% in 2015 (SUNEDU, 2018). In fact, the increase in the number of entrants to universities "has been possible due to the greater participation of private universities, mainly of corporate universities, whose figure in 2000 was 4 thousand entrants, while in 2015 it reached 193 thousand" (p. 45)

However, some aspects related to quality and equity are problematic: the middle and upper classes often benefit from the high educational quality of some traditional public HEIs, while the lower classes are often relegated to HEIs of lower educational quality, including some newly created private ones—. Horizontal differentiation is thus considered desirable to cater to the diversity of students' interests and goals, and also to meet the needs of societies for different professional skills. However, most systems are characterized by vertical differentiation, also known as stratification: in this case, institutions are distinguished on the basis of higher or lower quality and recognition, and

disadvantaged students disproportionately fill the classrooms of less prestigious institutions - public or private—.

Economic growth

Also, another factor that has a positive impact is the economic growth of countries, due to increased family income, greater wealth, growing middle classes, increased family demand for higher education enrollment, and structural economic change that demands more specific skills (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020, p. 36). Especially for emerging economies with GDP per capita below US$10,000, a slight increase in GDP implies a significant increase in higher education enrollment (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020). In this regard, it seems relevant to assess the effects of the significant decline in GDP and the increase in poverty on a global scale due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition to the above-mentioned facilitators, other factors that can have a positive effect on equitable access to higher education should also be considered. These include, among others, government policies aimed at promoting equitable access to higher education[4] and the growing sense of responsibility about social equity (Oketch, 2016, quoted in UNESCO-IESALC, 2020, p. 36). Thus, in the Peruvian context, actions such as those undertaken within the framework of PRONABEC or support programs could also be considered as facilitators of equitable access.

Policies related to access to higher education

Taking into account the limiting and facilitating factors for equitable access described above, the following are some of the policies that have been implemented by governments internationally to regulate access to higher education, all of them with considerable impacts in terms of equity. However, it is important to consider how the economic, political and historical context of countries has shaped an inequitable system of higher education, with broad impacts on the policies developed; on the one hand, rich countries have adopted cost-sharing and loan policies that allow widespread access by deferring payments or, in a few cases (such as in continental European countries), have maintained a substantial state entitlement. On the other, low- and middle-income countries have for the most part restricted public support to a small number of specific scholarships, and have allowed expanded access only to those wealthy enough to finance themselves. However, there are exceptions, as Latin American countries such as Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela, Cuba and Mexico continue to operate large-scale public systems. These conditions have meant that the expansion has not translated in most cases into an equitable distribution of opportunities for access to higher education. Even for those who have been fortunate enough to find a place in the system, there has not

[4] In this sense, it is important to establish the distinction between university HE and technical and technological HE. It is possible that certain policies aimed at promoting one of the modalities may discourage the other, when it may lead to better employability and greater social mobility.

necessarily been an equalization of opportunity. The human capital theory's belief that the knowledge and skills acquired through education will naturally translate into an increase in pay through recognition of productivity in the labor market has proven to be, at least in part, unfounded, as few sectors implement such an open reward system, free of privileges and discriminations (Jacobs, 1996). Moreover, in many cases, there has been no substantial improvement in the knowledge and skills of university graduates, given the serious quality problems faced by many universities in the context of rapid expansion without corresponding infrastructure, or of the unregulated proliferation of for-profit institutions (McCowan, 2004; Morley and Lugg, 2009; Wangenge-Ouma, 2007).

Following the above logic, in which first the micro-social elements are presented and then the macro-social elements are discussed, the section is divided into two subsections: the first one analyzes some policies articulated on the demand side -related to the student body-, while the second one, on the other hand, analyzes policies articulated via supply -related to HEIs and the organization of the system-. It is worth mentioning that, in order to move towards a more equitable access to higher education, a combination and complementarity of different policies, adapted to the contextual specificities of each country, will be necessary.

Demand-side policies

In the international context, several strategies are being implemented on the demand side to mitigate the effects of inequity in access to HE. In this sense, this section includes the elimination of tuition fees in HEIs, the transfer of funds in the form of scholarships or credits, tax benefits for families and the articulation of strategies to facilitate the transition from secondary education to HE.

a. Elimination of tuition fees

The costs of higher education faced by students and their families relative to family income are much higher in Latin America than in rich countries. As a result, socioeconomic differences in access are more pronounced in Latin America than in rich countries.

In some countries, access to public HEIs does not imply the payment of fees by families (e.g., Ecuador) (Burneo & Yunga, 2020; Zapata & Ramírez, 2015); however, in most countries, part of the financing of HEIs corresponds to the fees charged to students. Internationally, fees have heterogeneous amounts, and in some cases price increases are established in different modalities. For example, in the European context:

> “In Denmark, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia, full-time students normally do not pay fees on their first degree [throughout their degree], while part-time students must do so. Similarly, in Turkey there are no tuition fees since 2012, except for those participating in programs taught in evening mode. In Croatia, some categories of full-time students pay fees and others do not. All part-time students pay fees and these are higher than for full-time students.” (European Commission/ EACEA/Eurydice, 2014, p. 51).

b. Financial Aid (need-based or merit-based)

In most countries, financial aid is provided to students, generally in the form of monetary transfers that can be in the form of scholarships (e.g., Spain, Peru) or credit (e.g., Malaysia, Thailand, Australia, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia). The purpose of these transfers is, on the one hand, to cover tuition costs, if any, and, on the other hand, to compensate part of the opportunity cost of the transfer.

While need-based benefits are the most common in the international context (even becoming universal benefits under compliance with minimum criteria in European countries such as Denmark, Finland and Sweden), in other countries (e.g., in the European context, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Lithuania, Hungary and Portugal) need-based and merit-based benefits are combined. The amount and scope of these benefits (which are generally higher in countries with university fees) is uneven among the countries analyzed (European Commission /EACEA/Eurydice, 2014).

Regarding the aid modality, in the Latin American region there is a long history of educational credits - although they remain a contentious issue that has become more visible in the higher education policy landscape in recent years (Espinoza, 2013; Gómez Campo & Celis Giraldo, 2009) - and were implemented in countries in the region, such as Argentina - between 1996 and 2000 - and Brazil (Chiroleu, 2014). Colombia was the first country in the region with federal credit programs, developed in the 1950s. Notable credit models include income-contingent or income-contingent repayment loans, which consist of lines of credit that are repaid through a percentage of students' future income. In 2014, "Ser Pilo Paga" was implemented, a program that seeks the best students in the country with fewer economic resources to access high quality accredited Higher Education Institutions. This program finances 100% of the tuition fees during the period of studies and subsidizes the support of the students. If the student complies with the established regulations, the loan is forgivable when the student successfully completes the academic program. In case of deserting or

not complying with the conditions of forgiveness, the student must pay the value of the capital plus the interest generated according to the established regulations.

Continuing with the Colombian context, the Universidad de Los Andes has been one of the HEIs that has applied this tool to provide its own credit financing to its students. Specifically, the IES has managed two loan programs with repayment contingent on the student's future income, through the "Quiero Estudiar" and "Quiero Enseñar" (I Want to Study and I Want to Teach) programs. In fact, the yields on these resources function as intergenerational support for the loans, as they are reinvested in the same credit modalities of this institution in the future.

However, criticism abounds based on very contradictory readings of the largest and best-known experiences in the region, such as those of Chile and Colombia. The above is the situation in Mexico following the announcement of a $200 million loan program to students at fee-charging private institutions, which critics say carry high interest rates and reduce the number of favored private universities, including some for-profit universities operated by international corporations, posing a major risk to students as well as a threat to low-fee public institutions (Lloyd, 2012).

On the other hand, as regards scholarships, in Peru, the “Beca 18” program offers young people in poverty or extreme poverty and/or in situations of special hardship (among others, military service conscripts, victims of political violence, young people from coca-growing areas, members of Amazonian indigenous communities) free training in higher education for priority careers, i.e., science and technology - except those related to medicine and health— (Gérard, 2020, p. 36).

In addition, beyond the national scholarship systems, in some countries, several HEIs have developed specific scholarship programs with private funding to help students. In the case of the Universidad de la Republica in Uruguay, the Solidarity Fund was created, which provides intergenerational financing to the scholarship system through voluntary contributions from former students. These contributions contribute to the financing of scholarships for 8% of the current student population of the IES.

There is a significant gap in the literature on the extent to which governments, financial institutions and universities in the region have succeeded in generating student financial support mechanisms that promote equity in an efficient and coordinated manner (Johnstone, 2015); a question that harkens back, moreover, to the more general one of how higher education should be funded

(Goksu & Goksu, 2015), particularly in the context of the impact of the pandemic-driven crisis on higher education (IESALC, 2020). Even so, there seems to be agreement that, without financial support mechanisms, public or private, it is impossible for many young people to assume the costs involved in studying at university. What is the combination of scholarships and credits that can best meet the needs of students, and what should be the characteristics and modalities of the resulting models, are questions that remain open in the region (Holzapfel, Hidalgo, & Valladares, 2016; Orr, 2015) and whose answers require an analytical and comparative approach.

c. Tax Benefits

Another policy related to equitable access articulated on the demand side are tax benefits for families with children enrolled in IES. Countries such as France and Belgium (Flemish community) are implementing them (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014). Generally, although in a very heterogeneous way, they are conditional on income and have age limitations to favor early entry and rapid graduation of students in higher education.

d. Guidance/counseling and transition from secondary to HE

Finally, among the supply-side and demand-side policies, mention should be made of policies that address the transition of students from secondary to higher education. The relevance of these policies, which are generally linked to student guidance and counseling, lies in the fact that they deal with aspects related to student expectations and imaginaries, beyond the economic component addressed by other policies. A clear example of this policy has been developed in France, where a network of more than 300 institutions (known as *Cordées de la réussite* [Climbing together to success]), including secondary schools and IES, has been created. It aims to "reduce socio-economic inequalities between students at different higher education institutions by providing tutoring, advice on academic programs, guidance on career opportunities and, in some cases, accommodation" (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014, p. 26).

In a similar vein, a number of strategies have been developed in Australia to bring HEIs closer to secondary school students, including school- and community-based programs to promote higher education in disadvantaged areas: informative materials for high schools, visits to educational centers, sessions with families and students and dissemination in the local press, among other actions, have been carried out.

In Chile, initiatives have been developed to provide support during the school stage to vulnerable students with good academic performance who wish to pursue higher education (Zapata & Tejeda, 2015). On the one hand, different universities have implemented propaedeutic programs for outstanding students, which consist of programs that offer support during high school, special admission quotas, remedial courses or workshops in the first year of higher education, and other support strategies through tutors, study groups, and some social and financial support programs. On the other hand, the Program of Accompaniment and Effective Access (PACE) -oriented to students in general- offers high school preparation to vulnerable students (without requiring previous academic performance), special places in some institutions that voluntarily participate in the program, and remedial courses (Zapata & Tejeda, 2015).

Finally, in Canada, some provinces have promoted programs to encourage the transition to higher education. One of them, called 'Pathways to Education', aims to help ease the transition of high school students to higher education and their academic success.

Supply-side policies

Policies articulated on the supply side, on the other hand, are understood as those that are carried out through higher education institutions or that have to do with the overall functioning of the system. At international level, several policies have also been implemented in this regard: regulation of the mechanisms of access to higher education, possible access routes, alternatives that make it possible to reconcile work and studies, distance education offerings and affirmative action policies. However, it would also be interesting to analyze the impact of other complementary policies -not developed in this report-, such as the regulation of access through laws or the creation of specific HEIs for certain social groups with considerable barriers to access to higher education (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020).

Some of the policies carried out on the supply side are presented below. Following the above logic, we will first present those policies more related to students and HEIs (sections A and B) and then those more related to the organization of the higher education system (sections C, D, E and F).

a. Affirmative action measure: quotas and incentives for HEIs

One of the policies being implemented internationally has to do with affirmative action measures. Affirmative action is traditionally understood as a set of anti-discrimination measures aimed at facilitating access to privileged positions for groups that would otherwise be seriously underrepresented. These are, in short,

mechanisms for combating social exclusion and desegregating the ruling elites (Darity et al., 2011), either through a system of preferential treatment or the application of quotas for identifiable segments of the population of origin. The formulation of these policies always responds to national conditions and meanings that have different historical roots in each case. In Latin America the use of the term is recent and applies almost exclusively to higher education (although it is also worth mentioning the use of quotas for gender representation in some parliaments).

These measures can be articulated both on the supply side - e.g., targeted increases in university admission grades or targeted scholarships for the indigenous population in Colombia (León & Holguín, 2004) - and on the demand side. As for the latter, two actions stand out in the global context: incentives to HEIs for the enrollment of certain social groups and quotas or quotas reserved for these groups.

First, although few education systems have financial incentives for HEIs to expand student access, examples can be found in countries such as South Africa, where a specific reserve fund for national HEIs enrolling historically disadvantaged students of African descent was established under the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education, which provided for increased participation, success and graduation rates for these students (Wangenge-Ouma, 2010). However, the author argues that the percentage set aside for this purpose was too small (about 6% of total funds) for historically advantaged universities to enroll students of African descent and that, if they did so, it was more a matter of seeking legitimacy with policy expectations than the incentive of such funds.

In addition to South Africa, there are also other experiences in Ireland and the United Kingdom, in England, for example, more than 140 million pounds were allocated in 2012-2013 under this concept (European Commission/ EACEA/Eurydice, 2014). However, this policy is conceived more as a reimbursement for removing barriers than as a reward for broadening participation, because it is based on the premise that "attracting and supporting students from underrepresented groups entails additional costs" (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014, p. 25). Beyond access, other contexts address student retention in the system through incentives to HEIs: for example, in Belgium (Flemish community) HEIs receive funding based on the number of students who complete their studies, while in Austria, government agencies enter into performance contracts with HEIs linked to dropout rates.

Secondly, with regard to quotas, the most notable recent experience is that of Brazil, which, in a period of only two decades, went from a system of "universal

rights" - which practically ignored differences of gender, ethnicity, race or social class in access to higher education - to one that contemplated these aspects in national policies. This was ratified by the Supreme Court in 2012 when it affirmed the constitutionality of the national social quota law mandating federal universities to reserve 50% of their future vacancies for students graduating from public high schools (Lima, 2011). In addition, in countries such as Australia, the Aboriginal Education Strategy was launched in 1990 in relation to Aboriginal communities, which makes it possible to establish quotas for people from these communities and to complement the funding of educational institutions. The last of these strategies, for the years 2017-2020, is having good results: the annual growth in university higher education enrollments of indigenous students tripled the growth rate of non-indigenous students in recent years. However, completion of studies is still a challenge to achieve, since completion rates after 9 years for indigenous students is 47%, far from the 74% of non-indigenous students (Universities Australia, 2020).

b. Existence of e-learning/blended learning institutions/programs

The virtual university offer can facilitate access to higher education to people and communities located in places far from IES without the need for them to travel to the cities where these centers are located, with the inequalities in socioeconomic terms that this implies.

In some countries there are HEIs specialized in virtual or blended learning; some of them represent small private institutions (as in the case of Italy, Malta, Slovenia or Ireland), while others constitute important institutions in the network of HEIs of the countries (e.g., Germany, Spain, Cyprus, Portugal, United Kingdom, Greece). In other cases, virtual education is offered by traditional HEIs (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014).

In addition, it should be noted here that, in the international context, there are examples of agreements with HEIs in other countries to offer distance education (e.g., the Flemish universities with the Open University of the Netherlands, or the University of Linz in Austria with the German FernUniversität) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014).

However, it is important to pay attention to the undesired effects of the expansion and development of virtual education, especially in those territories with a high impact of the digital gap. In areas where connectivity is not assured, especially in rural areas with socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, access to distance higher education can be very unequal.

c. Access regulation: open or selective

Open access systems are those in which passing the final secondary school exams implies the right to a place in a higher education institution (HEI), generally in the institution and field desired by the student. On the contrary, selective access systems contemplate the selection of students as part of the autonomy of the HEI, and articulate the selection through the performance in the final exams of the secondary school or through criteria or exams specific to each HEI (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014). However, beyond these two poles, most systems are somewhere in between, providing both places for all qualified students in most studies, and restrictions in some highly selective HEIs or in specialized fields - e.g., law and medicine - through *numerus clausus*, i.e., limiting the number of places available (e.g., France, Cyprus, Chile) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014; Zapata & Ramírez, 2015).

The way in which the higher education system is designed in terms of access can have important repercussions in terms of equity, so it is very important to highlight some points to take into account. First, those systems close to selective access that are based on a meritocratic logic of access may be detrimental to students from the lowest income quintiles and, consequently, to the most vulnerable population: this is due, as highlighted above, to the fact that academic results, prior to higher education, are clearly conditioned by family socioeconomic status (Kromydas, 2017).

In the Peruvian context, the national standardized tests -ECE- allow us to observe this phenomenon clearly (see Figure 3): in 2019, of the second-grade secondary school students who took the science and technology exam and obtained a satisfactory result, 37.1% came from a low or very low socioeconomic level, while the remaining 63% came from a high or medium level. In contrast, of the students who obtained a poor result (prior to the start), the majority had a low or very low socioeconomic level (81.2%), while the high and medium levels only represented 18.9% (Ministry of Education, 2020a).

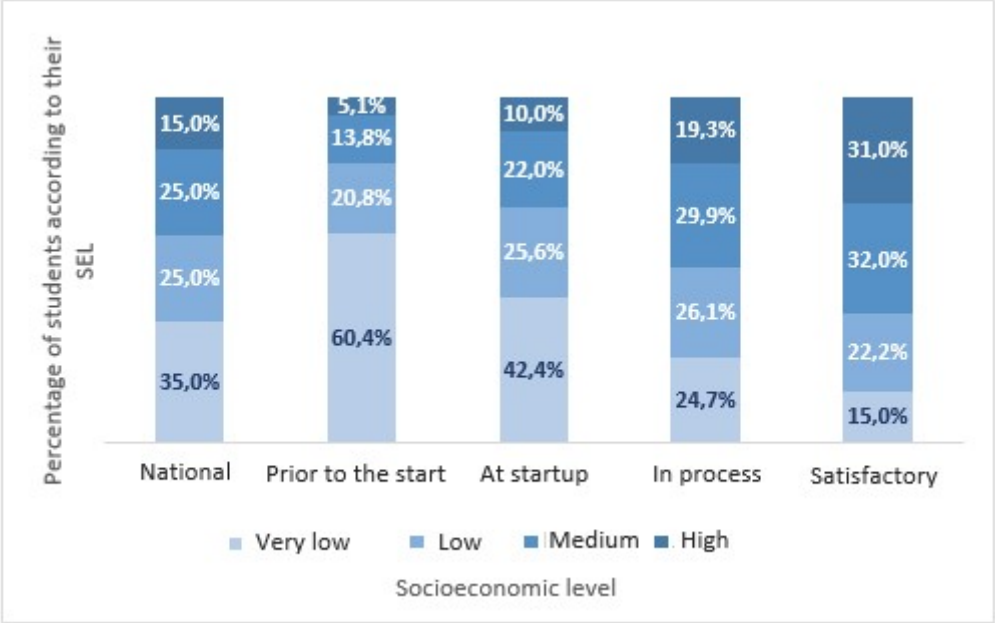

Figure 3 National test scores of high school sophomores in science and technology in 2019, by socioeconomic status. Source: Ministry of Education, 2020a, p. 20.

This implies that, given a standardized entrance exam, students from the most advantaged quintiles will generally have higher scores than the most disadvantaged students - since they have more resources to prepare for the exam and for private tutoring (Caner & Okten, 2013, in UNESCO-IESALC, 2020), in addition to underlying inequalities in prior educational quality and other factors—. In addition, in the case of Peru, it is important to take into account the direct and indirect costs of attending academies and pre-university courses, which, although they facilitate access, are a clear barrier to equitable access.

Secondly, unlike standardized access, the autonomy of HEIs in the selection of students can have both positive and negative effects in terms of equity. On the one hand, it is important to monitor situations of exclusion and discrimination against certain social groups or individuals -for reasons such as gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, belonging to an ethnic minority, disability or religious beliefs, among others- which, as we have seen, create barriers to access to higher education and generate significant inequity effects. However, when admission policies are decided at the institutional level, it is also possible to take into account individual circumstances and thus promote more equitable access (UNESCO-IESALC, 2020).

Finally, in systems of open access to higher education, the barriers to entry discussed in the two previous cases do not seem to have such a clear effect, since no specific requirement - in the form of a grade or acceptance by an HEI - is required to access this level of education. Even so, it should also be considered

that, in those systems closer to open access, inequalities operate in the conditions and in the development of the teaching-learning process, and that the rate of non-completion of higher education is usually higher (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014) —since predictors of success are also associated with motivation and access achievement; that is, the harder it is to enter, the higher the value of studies and, therefore, the lower the dropout rate. Thus, in terms not only of access, but also of retention and completion, open access systems are not free of inequalities and also have considerable drawbacks.

d. Differentiation of higher education

Programmatic and institutional differentiation policies refer to the diversification of higher education offerings -generally in two main modalities: university and non-university. Such policies have become a priority in the Latin American region since the 1980s, often inspired by reform experiences in the United States and Canada (such as the one formalized in California in 1960) and in Western Europe, where binary systems became popular under different names. Many countries developed legal frameworks to distinguish between the university sector and another sector, sometimes referred to as tertiary or non-university, in higher education. The distinction preserves the status of the more prestigious universities, resulting in a greater degree of autonomy to establish their forms of governance and the design of their academic programs, in contrast to institutions that do not enjoy the same privileges. Universities offer longer-term academic programs in a wide range of disciplines, with an emphasis on theoretical training and research work, supporting specialized institutes and centers, while developing outreach programs. In contrast, the non-university sector usually offers vocational or professional programs that, although they involve internships, do not necessarily train in research or have the capacity to do so. Another significant difference is postgraduate training, especially at the higher doctoral or postdoctoral level, which is typical of universities. Many countries restrict the participation of the private sector, particularly the for-profit sector, in universities, while private for-profit institutions tend to predominate in the tertiary sector (Brunner & Ferrada Hurtado, 2011).

However, differentiation policies have encountered various difficulties in applying these distinctions and using them as a useful tool for regulating access and equity: on the one hand, the strong preference of student demand for the traditional courses offered by the university and the limited enrollment in tertiary programs, particularly in the public sector with low fees; on the other hand, institutions tended to fulfill their explicit mission, particularly universities offering an increasing number of short and professional degrees, taking

advantage of the greater laxity available to them to expand their offerings. In fact, much of the non-university institutional expansion took place within the private sector, sometimes exclusively, as in Chile. Only in the last decade some countries have had an explicit policy of public sector expansion in the technological field.

Some recent studies clearly show some of the benefits of the differentiation process for access and equity. Analysis of the results of recent household sample surveys in different Latin American countries that vary in per capita income levels and higher education enrollment rates shows differences in student recruitment and graduation. A recent comparative study (García de Fanelli & Jacinto, 2010) on five countries showed that in all countries enrollment in the university sector predominates over the non-university sector. All five countries, as well as the region as a whole (Espinoza 2013), currently have gender parity in enrollment, with slightly higher rates on average among women. This difference in favor of women is marked in the tertiary sector, but not in the university sector. The large socioeconomic disparities in the student body clearly favor the middle- and high-income sectors, but are much smaller in tertiary programs than in university programs. It is observed that most students enrolled in tertiary programs are the first in their families to have the opportunity to pursue higher education, undoubtedly favored by a more flexible admissions policy.

Another important difference is participation in the labor market: in all cases there is a high proportion of students working, but this is higher in tertiary programs than in university programs. Despite this, the graduation rate is higher in these programs, especially among low-income students, while in university programs the graduation rate is low (and the time to graduation takes longer) for students from different social backgrounds alike. Unemployment rates are equally low among graduates of the two types of programs, while salary differences, although favorable to university graduates, are not dramatic and may be related both to the value of their degrees and to other advantages associated with greater market selectivity for the university sector.

In summary, non-university programs attract more students from lower socioeconomic strata, since they make it possible for students to work while they study, which reduces the time to graduation and facilitates successful entry into the labor market (Gaentzsch & Zapata-Roman, 2020). Undoubtedly, the real costs of university studies are much higher than those of non-university studies, although their calculation is difficult since universities do not keep accurate accounting of tuition costs. Paradoxically, the costs of education are more often borne by students and their families in the non-university sector than in the university sector, while in many countries free public provision predominates.

Implicitly or explicitly, the policy of differentiation has been linked to stimuli for the expansion of the private sector supported by the payment of students and their families, so that greater accessibility has not necessarily generated a more equitable system. Higher income families continue to benefit, at least in many countries, from public university offerings that operate with higher social costs borne by the public funds.

e. Alternative routes of access and mobility between modalities

From the point of view of equitable access, the access route to higher education is another element to be considered, i.e., how and through which paths it is possible to access this educational stage in all its modalities.

For example, focusing specifically on university higher education, in some countries (e.g., Italy, Croatia, Greece, Poland) there is only one pathway to university. This pathway generally corresponds to an educational pathway linked to the completion of academic secondary education. In other words, in order to access university, the only possible way is to have completed secondary studies that lead directly to university higher education - thus making it impossible to access through other secondary education paths more linked to technical-professional studies or other educational and life trajectories—.

However, in other countries (e.g., Spain) there are several access routes to university. One - faster - usually corresponds to the academic pathway (baccalaureate), and another - slower - is more linked to the technical-professional mode (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014). In other words, the system allows a person who has completed higher technical-professional studies to access university higher education if he/she wishes to do so. Therefore, this policy allows mobility between higher education modalities: from technical-professional higher education to university higher education.

Although in most of these countries, the alternative pathway to university, i.e., the professional pathway, is not predominant - in fact, in Europe, few countries have more than 10% of university enrolments - it does make it possible to broaden the possibilities of access to university higher education through this mobility.

This is particularly important in diversified systems, where the choice of educational path (generally academic or vocational) is made at an early stage of studies: a choice of the vocational option at the age of 12, for example, could make future access to university higher education impossible if there is no pathway that allows it.

f. Part-time modality

The existence of part-time studies - generally defined as those that represent between 50 and 75% of the course load or credits foreseen for an academic year - can make it possible for students to combine their studies with work obligations, also in the university sector. As mentioned above, this modality, which is more frequent in the non-university field, allows access to the lower socioeconomic strata. Although there are exceptions (e.g., Germany, Austria), in most European countries this possibility exists, with different variations (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014).

Policy recommendations for Peru

Having analyzed some of the policies implemented internationally, both on the supply and demand side, the focus will now turn to the specific Peruvian context.

It should be noted that the percentage of young people between 16 and 20 years old who had accessed university in Peru in 2018 was around 32.8% (Gérard, 2020), despite the "sustained increase in coverage in basic education", where "average figures of 95% have been reached in the last three years" (Ministry of Education, 2020b, p. 8). However, access to higher education presents considerable problems in terms of equity: on the one hand, approximately 65% of the students enrolled in university were from the two wealthiest quintiles of the population; on the other hand, only 16% of the students from the two lowest quintiles attended higher education (Gérard, 2020).

According to the 2017 Census, only 14% of young men and 13.2% of young women in rural areas of Peru were pursuing or had completed higher education - university or non-university - compared to 41.3% of young men and 45.4% of young women residing in urban areas (Urrutia & Trivelli, 2019).

	Urban				Rural			
	Man		Woman		Man		Woman	
	Number	Proportion %	Number	Proportion %	Number	Proportion %	Number	Proportion %
No level	14,657	0.5	15,112	0.5	14,520	1.9	23,605	3.3
Initial	4057	0.1	4547	0.1	1065	0.1	1475	0.2
Primary	146,740	4.6	179,703	5.6	134,362	17.8	182,319	25.1
Secondary	1,682,652	53.2	1,548,252	48.0	497,047	66.0	421,618	58.1
Basic special	12,016	0.4	14,658	0.5	685	0.1	636	0.1
Incomplete non-university higher education	272,096	8.6	298,405	9.3	33,473	4.4	31,204	4.3
Complete non-university	255,113	8.1	277,471	8.6	29,046	3.9	23,280	3.2

higher education								
Incomplete university degree	483,945	15.3	526,044	16.3	25,884	3.4	25,614	3.5
University degree complete	283,876	9.0	347,717	10.8	17,230	2.3	15,799	2.2
Master's degree or doctorate	10,054	0.3	13,177	0.4	314	0.0	354	0.0
Total	3,165,206	100	3,225,086	100	753,626	100	725,903	100

Figure 4 Proportion of the youth population according to educational level. Source: Urrutia and Trivelli, 2019, p. 30.

From a geographic point of view, inequalities are also observed, since "Lima concentrates 41% of university higher education enrollment, 51% of technological higher education enrollment and 38.2% of technical-productive education enrollment" (Ministry of Education, 2020b, p. 8).

In terms of the different modalities, a large part of higher education enrollment is concentrated in university education (65.8%), despite the fact that the labor market demand for university graduates is only 20.4% (Ministry of Education, 2020b). For this reason, there is a need to promote more diversity in higher education paths, since technical-productive education has a demand in the labor market close to 80%, but enrollment in this modality only reaches 10% of Peru's population (Ministry of Education, 2020b).

Considering these aspects, it is suggested, at a general level, the creation of a Vice-Ministry of Higher Education and a Vice-Ministry of Basic Education that articulate with each other to guarantee that all students in the country receive quality education with equity at all educational levels, with the corresponding compensatory measures. It is important to bear in mind that a large part of the inequalities in access to higher education are not produced at the moment of access itself, but in previous educational stages (Machin & van Reenen, 1998; Gorard, 2008; cited in Kromydas, 2017).

The following highlights recommendations for possible policies or areas for consideration in the short, medium and long term. The criteria used are the priority of the recommendations, their political feasibility and their economic viability. A high priority implies that the measure is aligned with the Ministry of Education's National Policy on Higher and Technical-Productive Education (PNESTP) and/or that it is considered paramount in the short and medium term to foster equitable access. High political feasibility, on the other hand, means that potential political resistance to the implementation of the measure at stake is low and there are facilitators for its development. Finally, high economic feasibility implies that the adoption of the policy does not require high resources for its implementation.

Demand-side policy recommendations

Priority	Political feasibility	Economic feasibility	Policy
High	High	High	Conduct a new impact evaluation focused on high schools to determine what modifications are necessary for optimal outcomes of the Beca 18, after the results of the 2015 Cohort (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2020) concluded that the effect on high schools cannot be determined. This is particularly relevant considering that the gap in the market is mainly in technical education.
High	High	Low	Expand the coverage of existing scholarships, especially the Beca 18, within the framework of PRONABEC, since currently only around 4% of the student body is covered (UNESCO, 2020). In this regard, also strengthen technical scholarships and establish a scholarship program for pre-university students -following the experience of the CEPREPUC of the Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru, among others—.
High	Medium	Low	Strengthen the system of financial aid to students through credits that partially cover the opportunity cost and some costs related to access to higher education, in order to move towards a more effective free access to higher education -see the case of Colombia, among others-. It is recommended that such loans be designed with repayment contingent on the student's future income and without interest.
Low	Medium-low	Medium-low	In the longer term, consider the possibility of establishing a system of tax benefits for the families of students enrolled in HEIs, with conditions linked to income, in order to promote access to higher education - see the cases of France and the Flemish community of Belgium, among others. In the short or medium term, this measure would be difficult to implement in Peru due to the high percentage of the informal economy in the country -72.3% (Ministry of Education, 2020b).
High	Media	High	In order to address expectations and aspirations, promote and strengthen the relationship between HEIs

Priority	Political feasibility	Economic feasibility	Policy
			and secondary education centers, through specific programs of information, guidance and counseling to students, at the national level. These actions may include specific visits to secondary schools, sending information on study alternatives in HE or long-term collaboration agreements between HEIs and secondary schools, among others, see the cases of Chile, Australia and France, among others—.

Supply-side policy recommendations

Priority	Political feasibility	Economic feasibility	Policy
High	High	Media	Strengthen the country's technical-professional education, following experiences in the region, to provide it with greater quality and supply -see the case of Chile, among others —.
High	High	High	Within the framework of the PNESTP, promote access to productive technical education and the transition through a national qualifications' framework or other validation mechanisms, with the objective of aligning higher education enrollment with labor market demands.
High	Medium	High	Promote affirmative action measures for certain disadvantaged social profiles -for socioeconomic reasons, gender or belonging to minority groups- to guarantee effective access to higher education. Although Art. 98 of the University Act already provides for this, it is recommended that the system of quotas in HEIs be extended to particularly disadvantaged groups -see the cases of Brazil and Australia, among others-—.
Low	Medium	Low	Within the framework of their autonomy, assess the possibility of granting economic incentives to HEIs that actively contribute to increasing access to and retention of students with certain profiles, in order to make enrollment of such students attractive (see the

			cases of South Africa, Ireland and the United Kingdom, among others).
High	Medium	High	In the case of universities, assessing the effect of socioeconomic status on the results obtained in entrance exams -partially related to differences in the quality of basic and secondary education- in order to be able to evaluate what measures to take at these levels. This will make it possible to correct inequalities and guarantee greater access for students from the lower quintiles. Specifically, it is recommended that targeted compensatory increases in university admission grades be established -see the case of Colombia—.
High	High	Medium	Implement compensatory actions in public HEIs that are aimed at reducing the gap between academic results, learning conditions and students' school experiences, in order to address both access and permanence and success in HE. One of the recommended actions are the remedial courses, carried out prior to the beginning of HE, by HEIs within the framework of their autonomy and financed by the State. The results of the 2019 Student Census Evaluation (ECE) (Ministry of Education, 2020a), which highlight that only 17.7% of students in the second year of secondary school reached satisfactory achievement in mathematics and 14.5% in reading comprehension, emphasize the need to provide such remedial courses.
Medium	Medium-low	High	Monitor the impact of academies in terms of socioeconomic inequality. In public HEIs, progressively limit the maximum number of students accessing HE through this route and, if necessary, regulate the price. This is important since the recent study by Flor-Toro et al. (2020, p.16) points out that "the cost of pre-university preparation in Peru can be quite high in terms of both time and money, and could represent an important barrier to access to higher education".
Low	Medium	Medium	Extend part-time studies in all HEIs, without penalizing students in any way, in order to guarantee the possibility of combining study with work obligations -see the case of most European countries, such as Spain—.

High	High	Medium	Although Legislative Decree No. 1496 modifies the University Act and includes distance and blended learning as modalities for the provision of university higher education services, the offer of these modalities should be strengthened and expanded to facilitate access, especially for people whose place of residence is far from the IES. Following local and international experiences, the modalities to be followed could include (a) increasing the virtual and blended offerings of traditional HEIs, and/or (b) establishing agreements with HEIs in other countries of the region to expand their offerings in Peruvian territory - see the cases of Flanders-Netherlands and Austria-Germany—.
High	High	Low	Reduce the digital gap in economically disadvantaged and rural communities through community hubs or other modalities that allow the expansion of access to the Internet and technological devices -see the case of Mexico, among others—.

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