



GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT

2020

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Inclusion and education:

ALL MEANS ALL



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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



SUMMA
Laboratory of Education Research
and Innovation for Latin America
and the Caribbean



**Global
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The Global Education Monitoring Report team

Director: Manos Antoninis

Daniel April, Bilal Barakat, Madeleine Barry, Nicole Bella, Anna Cristina D’Addio, Dimitra Dafalia, Matej Damborsky, Matthias Eck, Francesca Endrizzi, Constanza Ginestra, Glen Hertelendy, Ulrich Janse Van Vuuren, Priyadarshani Joshi, Milagros Lechleiter, Kate Linkins, Camila Lima De Moraes, Kassiani Lythrangomitis, Anissa Mechtar, Claudine Mukizwa, Yuki Murakami, Judith Randrianatoavina, Kate Redman, Maria Rojnov, Anna Ewa Ruskiewicz, Laura Stipanovic, Morgan Strecker, Rosa Vidarte, Juliana Zapata and Lema Zekrya.



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SUMMA is the first Laboratory of Education Research and Innovation for Latin America and the Caribbean. It was established in 2016 by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), with support from the education ministries of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. Since 2018, the ministries of Guatemala, Honduras and Panama have also joined. Its mission is to contribute to and increase the quality, equity and inclusion of the region's education systems by improving the decision-making process for education policies and practices. To accomplish its mission, SUMMA organizes its actions in three strategic pillars that allow the promotion, development and dissemination of (1) cutting-edge research aimed at diagnosing the main challenges in the region and promoting shared work agendas, (2) innovation in education policies and practices aimed at providing solutions for the main education problems in the region, and (3) collaborative spaces that allow exchange between policymakers, researchers, innovators and the school community, based on a shared regional agenda.

The SUMMA team

Director: Javier González

Leonardo Baez,[†] Canela Bodenhofer, Mar Botero, Rafael Carrasco, Raúl Chacón-Zuloaga, Mauricio Farías, Ismael Tabilo and Christian Silva.

ABOUT OREALC

OREALC/UNESCO Santiago is the Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. It was established in 1963 with the purpose of supporting Member States in improving their education systems, in the firm conviction that education is a lifelong human right. Its mission is to lead, monitor and provide technical support to the countries of the region through each of its lines of action to advance the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Education 2030, with the involvement of other UNESCO offices and institutes and the participation of strategic partners.

The OREALC team

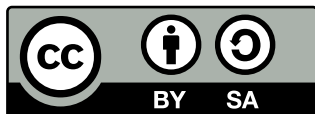
Director: Claudia Uribe

Ramiro Catalán, Carlos Cayumán, Mary Guinn Delaney, Cecilia Jaramillo, Carolina Jerez Henríquez, Ramón Iriarte, Romina Kasman, Paula Klenner Forttes, Catalina Opazo Bunster, Ximena Rubio Vargas, Jerónima Sandino, Yayoi Segi-Vitcheck, Valeria Seguel and Carlos Vargas.

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For more information, please contact:

Global Education Monitoring Report team
 UNESCO, 7, place de Fontenoy
 75352 Paris 07 SP, France
 Email: gemreport@unesco.org
 Tel.: +33 1 45 68 07 41
www.unesco.org/gemreport
<https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com>

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Cover photo: UNICEF/UNI235471/Willocq

Caption: You can almost hear the laughter of these children from the indigenous community of Chicoy near Todos Santos Cuchumatán in Huehuetenango province, Guatemala, as they enjoy their last day of school. ‘We love school but we also love holiday because we can play all day long!’ said one of the children.

Infographics by Optima Design
 Cartoons by Anne Derenne

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Foreword

The arrival of COVID-19 has driven wedges of inequality to breaking point in all corners of the earth. Already, before the arrival of the pandemic, Latin America and the Caribbean was the most unequal region in the world. And if there have been recent gains in poverty and inequality reduction, the ramifications of today's global health crisis risk sending them into reverse. More than ever before, the world needs inclusive education systems, to respond to the pressure COVID-19 has put on learning for all, as much as to build resilience for future major challenges we may face.

Online platforms have been an obligatory education response to school closures, but less than half of households in the region have access to internet or a computer. On a bedrock of already existing inequalities, the pandemic has brought additional risks of enhanced learner marginalization and disengagement, already a challenge for many of the poorest communities, those with disabilities, many migrant communities, and boys, particularly in the Caribbean.

There are many examples of strong pockets of inclusion in education found in the region, which are strong examples for other regions to draw from, and clearly demonstrate a belief in the value of diversity. But these must be built upon, with festering discrimination and segregation actively opposed.

This report drives home where change is most needed. If diversity and identity are inbuilt areas of study in most countries' curricula, the report shows that not all groups are represented and the challenge of teaching children in their home language has yet to be effectively addressed. Practically all countries in the region collect data on ethnicity to guide policy decisions, but many still do not carry out household surveys to get granular data on disadvantage. The region has the highest share of teachers already trained on inclusion, but many are still trying to address inequality and cope with migratory impact without the pedagogies required. A particular case is made for tackling school segregation based on socio-economic and ethnic divides.

All leaders are now considering their best moves to emerge from the pandemic with the least damage. This report is a stark reminder that if we fail to invest in education today, we are setting the world on the course of more exclusion, inequality and polarization. Recovery packages without education do not hold ground. We cannot procrastinate. We must save our future. In the words of our global education goal, SDG 4, we must urgently ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Stefania Giannini
Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO



Foreword

Education is a human right, a central pillar of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and a key to promoting social and labour inclusion and contributing to the reconciliation of economic growth, equality and participation in society. Higher levels of education are associated with reduced poverty and inequality, improved health indicators, the possibility of access to decent work, upward social mobility and expanded possibilities for exercising citizenship. Education is also fundamental to achieving structural change based on capacity building from the bottom up.

However, Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most unequal regions in the world, which constitutes an enormous obstacle against achieving sustainable development and realizing the right to education for all, leaving no one behind. The region is characterized by a mesh of social inequalities, whose main axes include socio-economic level, gender, ethnicity, race, territory and life cycle. These axes are interlinked and intertwined, reinforce one another, and are manifested in all areas of development and rights, including education.

Although school attendance and completion have increased steadily over the past 20 years, especially at the primary education level, disadvantaged social groups continue to be excluded from education. Barriers against access to education of good quality are still too high for people with disabilities, migrants and refugees, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, and particularly affect girls belonging to these groups.

In addition, the progress achieved, which varies by country, generates demands, expectations and challenges that are more difficult to meet. The issue is not only achieving more years of education for the new generation. The nature of the skills being developed and the gaps in learning outcomes are also of great concern. Inequality in access to quality education is a major obstacle to diffusion of the skills that are key for development and is associated with differences in education provision in terms of infrastructure, school size, teacher training and student learning outcomes. Challenges remain in regards to mainstreaming and implementing an intercultural and gender approach in education.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the structural problems of inequality in the region, as it has a discriminatory impact on various population groups and their capacity to respond. The pandemic also has an enormous impact on education in the form of school closures, making it clear that education systems have significant debts on inclusion that need to be addressed urgently. The discontinuation of studies or the impossibility of ensuring continuity through virtual means, added to the economic crisis that is affecting household incomes, increases the risk of dropping out of school, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels. It also increases learning gaps, particularly for the youngest students, who face greater difficulty in continuing their education remotely.

Today, more than ever, the importance of access to connectivity and digital devices to ensure learning continuity, as well as continuity of working and social life, has become evident. In addition, many opportunities for participation and inclusion have been interrupted by lockdown measures. The heterogeneous character of our societies implies that experiences differ depending on contexts of internet access, digital skills, education opportunities and inequality in each country. It is estimated that more than 32 million children live in households that are not connected to the internet. This point reaffirms the need for internet access to be a universal right that must be ensured so the entire population can take advantage of the opportunities and benefits of being connected.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses not only significant challenges to education systems, but also lessons about what really matters for lifelong learning and training. It is important to learn from this crisis and from the experiences of innovation that have emerged, so that education systems are prepared to react quickly, provide support for those most in need and ensure learning continuity, prioritizing the populations that are more vulnerable and at the biggest risk of being excluded, to help reduce socio-educational gaps.

Economic contraction in 2020 brings a concrete risk of reduced education budgets in Latin America and the Caribbean, at least in absolute terms. According to UNESCO estimates, the amount of resources available for education could decrease by more than 9% in 2020 alone. Therefore, ECLAC and UNESCO have highlighted the importance of safeguarding education financing to protect national systems from widening inequality in access to education and the learning crisis.

The 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report – Latin America and the Caribbean – Inclusion and education: All means all* provides relevant results and lessons learned from the regional experience and is a strong call to action. Inclusive education is a process that contributes to the achievement of social and labour inclusion. It requires political will and collaboration among policymakers, educators and communities.

Alicia Bárcena
Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic
Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)



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KEY MESSAGES

School systems mirror the highly unequal societies in which they are situated. Latin America and the Caribbean remains the most unequal region in the world. In 21 countries, the richest 20% are, on average, five times as likely as the poorest 20% to complete upper secondary school. Half the students in Chile and Mexico would have to be reassigned schools to achieve a uniform socio-economic mixture.

Identity, background and ability dictate education opportunities. In Panama, 21% of indigenous males aged 20 to 24 had completed secondary school, compared with 61% of their non-indigenous peers, in 2016. In Paraguay and Honduras, 32% of indigenous people are illiterate. Afro-descendants were 14% less likely in Peru and 24% less likely in Uruguay than non-Afro-descendants to complete secondary education in 2015. On average, 12- to 17-year-olds with disabilities were 10 percentage points less likely to attend school than those without disabilities.

Discrimination, stereotyping and stigmatization mechanisms are similar for all learners at risk of exclusion and affect their learning. One in two 15-year-old students in Latin America did not achieve minimum proficiency in reading. In grade 3, students who spoke their country's majority language at home were three times more likely to read with comprehension than their peers who did not. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students in seven countries reported facing a hostile school environment; those facing higher levels of victimization were at least twice as likely to miss school.

While some countries are transitioning towards inclusion, misperceptions and segregation are still common. About 60% of countries in the region have a definition of inclusive education, but only 64% of those definitions cover multiple marginalized groups, which suggests that most countries have yet to embrace a broad concept of inclusion. More education ministries in the region than in the rest of the world have issued laws on individual groups, for instance on disability (95%), gender (66%), and ethnic groups and indigenous people (64%). But in the case of students with disabilities, laws make provisions for education in separate settings in 42% of countries and for inclusive education in only 16%; the rest opt for combinations of segregation and mainstreaming.

The region is a leader in financing initiatives that target those most in need. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean not only prioritized education spending more than the rest of the world but also pioneered the use of social spending for education purposes. Conditional cash transfers in Latin America since the 1990s have helped increase education attainment by up to 1.5 years. Moreover, new programmes combine education with other social services, notably in early childhood, as seen in programmes in Chile, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

Latin America and the Caribbean is committed to data use but there is room for improvement. Surveys are key for disaggregating education indicators by individual characteristics but 57% of countries in the region, mostly in the Caribbean, representing 13% of the region's population, do not make survey data available. Countries have adopted measurement improvement for ethnicity and disability. But nine countries' education management information systems do not collect education data on children with disabilities.

Teachers need more support to embrace diversity. Continuous professional development opportunities are often unavailable. Although 70% of countries in the region provide for teacher training on inclusion in laws or policies, in general or for at least one group, and 59% provide teacher training for special education needs in laws, policies or programmes, over 50% of teachers in Brazil, Colombia and Mexico reported a high need for professional development on teaching students with special needs.



Two students at school in Huará,
Tarapacá Region, Chile.

CREDIT: UNESCO/Eugenia Paz

CHAPTER

1

Introduction



KEY MESSAGES

Latin America and the Caribbean is the most unequal region in the world.

- The richest 10% have 30% of total income, while the poorest 20% have 6%.

Education opportunities are unequally distributed.

- About 63% of young people complete secondary school but in 20 countries the richest 20% are five times as likely as the poorest 20% to do so. In Guatemala, 5% of the poorest complete secondary school, compared with 74% of the richest.
- For every 100 females, 93 males completed lower secondary and 89 upper secondary education.
- School attendance rates are lower for young people with disabilities, indigenous language speakers and Afro-descendants.
 - Attendance was lower by 10 percentage points on average among 12- to 17-year-olds with disabilities in the region, especially in Ecuador, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago, than among those without disabilities.
 - Attendance was lower by 3 to 20 percentage points among 15- to 17-year-old indigenous language speakers in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru than among all those identifying as indigenous.
 - Attendance was lower in 7 of 11 countries with data among 12- to 17-year-old Afro-descendants than for their non-Afro-descendant peers.

Education outcomes are unequally distributed.

- One in two Latin American 15-year-olds does not achieve minimum proficiency in reading.
- In the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Panama, fewer than 20 of the poorest 15-year-old students for every 100 of their richest peers achieve minimum proficiency in mathematics.
- Gaps in reading scores exist between immigrants and native speakers of the main language. In the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the gap was 36 percentage points in 2015.

Greater efforts are needed to gather more useful data on those left behind.

- The Caribbean has low coverage in household surveys (only 4 of 21 countries have had a publicly available survey since 2015) and in cross-national learning assessments (only the Dominican Republic participated in the 2018 PISA).
- Only six Spanish-speaking countries in the region incorporated an ethnicity question in their census in 1980; today, all except the Dominican Republic have such a question.

International declarations have committed to non-discrimination since 1960 and to inclusion since 1990. Inclusion permeates the 2030 Agenda, with its call to leave no one behind.

- The 2006 United Nations CRPD guaranteed the right to inclusive education but stopped short of precisely defining inclusion in education.
- In 2016, General Comment No. 4 to CRPD Article 24 described inclusive education as a 'process ... to provide all students ... with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences.'

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Transforming our World, the foundation document of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, brought together aspirations of poverty reduction and environmental sustainability, underpinned by a drive for social justice that builds on the human rights instruments of the past 70 years. It refers extensively to equity, inclusion, diversity, equal opportunity and non-discrimination. It calls for empowering vulnerable people and meeting their needs. Several of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) refer to inclusion and equality. SDG 4, the international community's commitment to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all', has both at its heart and is one of the clearest examples of the overall pledge to leave no one behind.

As unequal distribution of resources and opportunities persists, equity and inclusion have become the central promises of the 2030 Agenda. Characteristics commonly associated with inequality of distribution include gender, remoteness, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, incarceration, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and religion and other beliefs and attitudes.

Some mechanisms contributing to inequality are universal while others are specific to social and economic contexts. Advantage and disadvantage are transmitted over generations as parents impart resources, including income, skills and networks, to their children. Organizations and institutions may favour some groups over others and propagate social norms and stereotypes that exclude more vulnerable groups from opportunities. Individuals form groups that extend advantage to

members and deny it to others. Public institutions may be designed to correct imbalances or may be beholden to vested and powerful interests (UNDP, 2019).

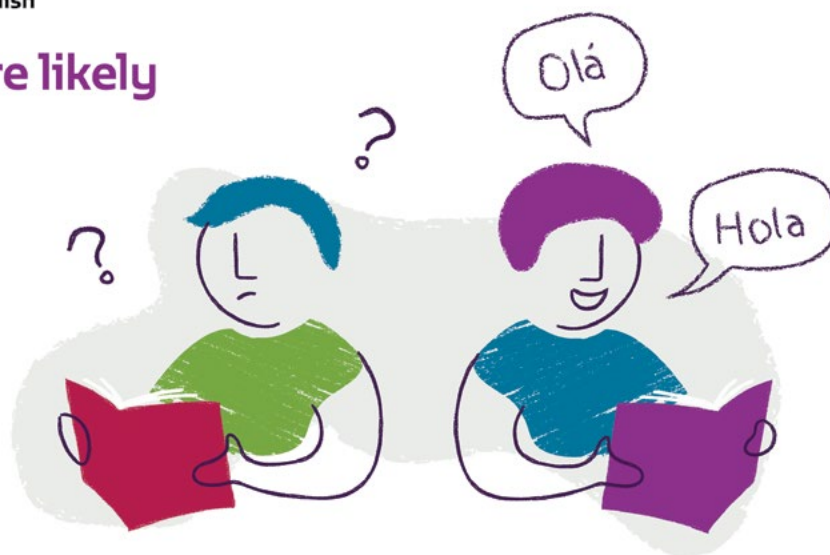
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IS A HIGHLY UNEQUAL REGION

Education systems do not exist in a void. They are influenced and shaped by the social, cultural, economic and political structures in which they are embedded and to which they contribute. Thus, they reflect and risk reproducing historical and current patterns of inequality and discrimination. Education systems both depend on and create the societies in which they exist: While unequal and intolerant societies may create unfair, segregated and discriminatory education systems, more equitable and inclusive education systems can help bring about fairer and more inclusive societies.

The current structural inequality in the region has its roots in the colonization five centuries ago, when unfair and extractive formal and informal institutions were put in place and began to foster high levels of inequality and social exclusion (Bértola and Williamson, 2017; Sokoloff and Robinson, 2004). Education in the early colonial period was aimed at inculcating religious beliefs. Missions were associated with evangelization, the legitimizing imperative of the conquest (Farber, 2017). During the emergence of nation states and independent republics in the late 19th and early 20th century, education systems were motivated by a desire to build narratives and national identities based on cultural homogenization. This meant indigenous culture was largely excluded from education systems and curricula. The education

Grade 3 students who spoke Spanish and Portuguese at home are **three times more likely**

to read with **comprehension** than their peers who did not.



of indigenous and Afro-descendant populations was instead focused on reinforcing the colonizers' dominance and maintaining discipline in service of the ruling elites (Tedesco, 2012).

Education expansion in the late 19th century was linked to growth in foreign trade and state bureaucracies; few resources were dedicated to rural education, and illiteracy rates were high (Ossenbach Sauter, 1993). Through social movements advocating universal education, notably the Mexican Revolution and the election of popular governments in Argentina and Uruguay, the need to achieve social justice began to be acknowledged in constitutions. Although important efforts were made at the beginning of the 20th century, it was only after World War II that social rights, including education, started to be recognized (Farber, 2017). Attempts to industrialize also required development of education (Tedesco, 2012). Yet, in spite of significant expansion, inequality remained high. As early as the 1960s, significant segmentation and stratification by socio-economic status between public and private schools could be observed (de Moura Castro, 1984; Filgueira, 1980) The late 20th century saw a growing shift of education into the private sphere as an individual investment, driven by market demand (Tedesco, 2012).

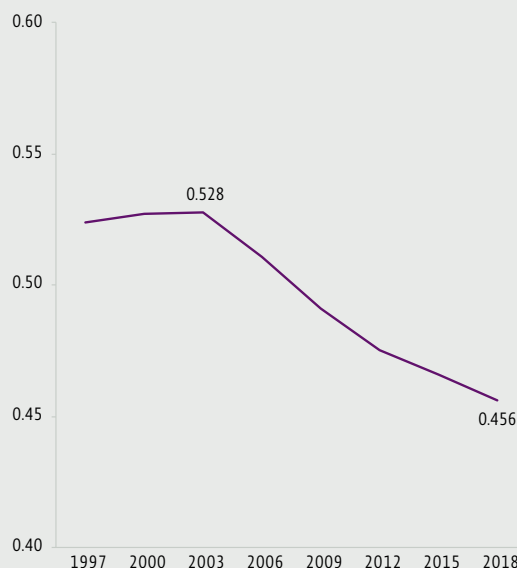
Extreme poverty in the region – that is, the percentage of people living on less than US\$1.90 per day – fell from 11.7% in 2000 to 3.8% in 2018, although it has increased by 0.4% since 2015 (World Bank, 2020). In general, poverty is concentrated among those living in rural areas, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and people with disabilities (ECLAC, 2019a). Rural residents account for 18% of the region's population but 41% of the extremely poor (ECLAC, 2018). Indigenous people account for 17% of the extremely

poor in Latin America but 8% of the population in 2010. Contrary to popular belief, almost half live in urban areas (World Bank, 2015).

Income inequality measures provide further evidence that, despite progress, distribution challenges remain. The

FIGURE 1.1: Latin America and the Caribbean remains a highly unequal region

Gini coefficient of income inequality, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1997–2018



Note: The series was calculated as a simple average of countries with at least four data points in the selected period.
Source: Estimate based on World Bank data.

Gini index for the region has followed a downward trend for two decades, showing that inequality is decreasing. It peaked in 2003 at 0.527 and fell to 0.475 in 2012, although progress then began to slow (**Figure 1.1**). Latin America and the Caribbean remains the world's most unequal region (ECLAC, 2019b).

The richest 10% of the regional population has 30% of total income, while the poorest 20% has just 6%. According to 2014–17 data for 18 countries, Brazil is the region's most unequal country, with the richest 10% of households having 38% of total income. Argentina, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are the least unequal, with the richest 10% having between 21% and 23% of total income. However, research based on tax records in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay shows that inequality levels may be higher than those estimated solely on the basis of household surveys. Tax record data showed that the income share of the richest 1% was 29% in Brazil in 2011 (ECLAC, 2019b).

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a particularly devastating effect on health systems in the region, is projected to reduce regional output by 9.3% (IMF, 2020), which could reverse recent gains in poverty and inequality reduction.

EDUCATION FOR ALL IS THE FOUNDATION OF INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

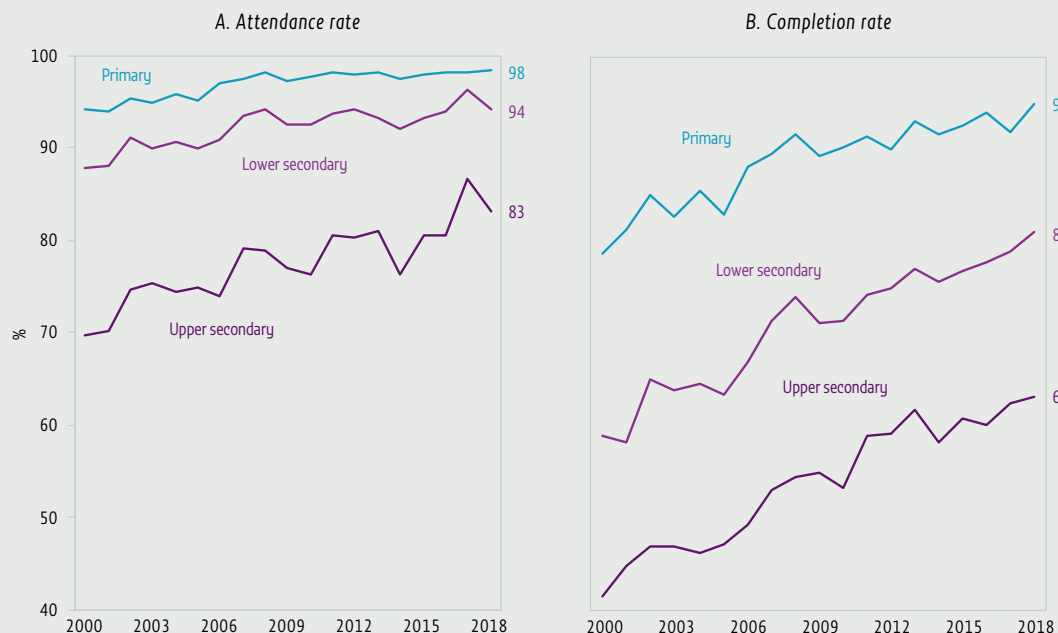
The state of education in Latin America and the Caribbean reflects both historical legacies and recent progress. School attendance and completion have increased steadily for the last 20 years. The number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth decreased slightly from 15 million in 2000 to 12 million in 2018. The region has edged closer towards universal attendance among primary and lower secondary school-aged children and adolescents, while attendance among youth of upper secondary school age increased from 70% in 2000 to 83% in 2018. Completion rates rose from 79% to 95% in primary, from 59% to 81% in lower secondary and from 42% to 63% in upper secondary education, above the global averages of 85%, 73% and 49%, respectively (**Figure 1.2**). However, disparity, linked to a range of individual characteristics, exists.

While the region enjoys **gender** parity in enrolment up to lower secondary education, boys are at a disadvantage in upper secondary and tertiary education enrolment. Females are more likely than males to complete each education level. For every 100 females, 96 males completed primary, 93 completed lower secondary and 89 completed upper secondary education. For all 22 countries with available data except Guatemala and Haiti, women have higher upper secondary completion rates than men. The largest absolute difference is in the Dominican Republic, where the completion rate is 54% for men and 72% for women. Wide disparity is also recorded in Nicaragua, Suriname and Uruguay. Entrenched gender

In 21 countries, children from 20% of the richest households are **five times as likely** as the poorest 20% to **complete** upper secondary school.



FIGURE 1.2:
In the last 20 years, Latin America and the Caribbean has made steady progress in attendance and completion
Selected education indicators, by education level, Latin America and the Caribbean, 2000–18

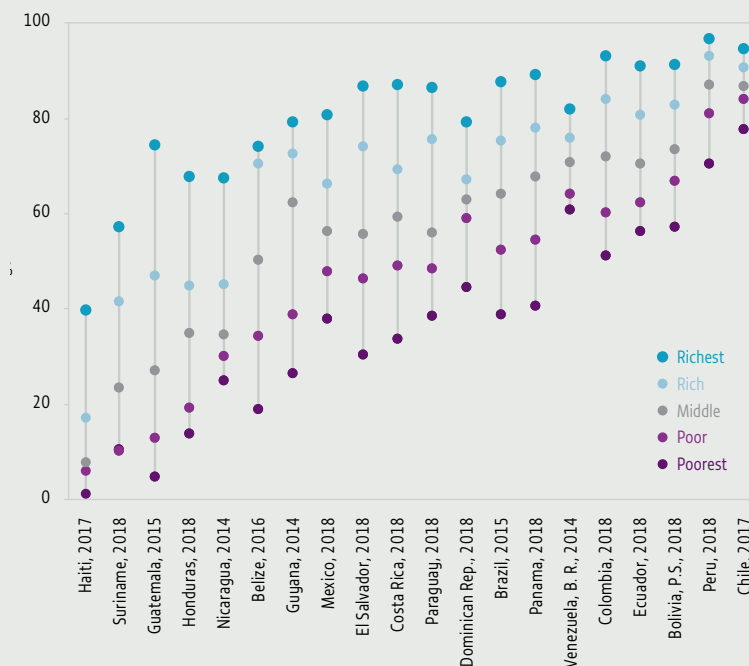


Note: The unweighted averages for the region are shown.
 Source: UIS data.

norms are detrimental to the education of both girls and boys. Poor boys face high expectations to leave school early to work in unskilled jobs that do not require secondary completion. These norms also influence boys' interactions with teachers, parents, peers and the wider community, pushing them to disengage from school (UNESCO, 2018).

Larger gaps exist by **wealth**. In 21 countries in the region, the richest 20% are five times as likely as the poorest 20% to complete upper secondary school, on average. In Guatemala, 5% of the richest complete upper secondary school, compared with 74% of the poorest (Figure 1.3). When poverty overlaps with other types of vulnerability, education disadvantages are amplified. For instance, in seven countries, either the poorest boys or the poorest girls living in rural areas have lower secondary completion rates below 50%.

FIGURE 1.3:
There are large gaps in upper secondary completion by wealth
Upper secondary completion rate, by wealth, selected countries, 2014–18



Source: UIS and WIDE data.

Segregation in education is still common.

Laws in 42% of countries

make provisions for educating children with disabilities in separate settings.



Social segregation in Latin American schools is high. This damages social cohesion, since different social groups have insufficient opportunities to develop a common social experience in which differences are recognized, valued and built upon. The dissimilarity index is a measure of school segregation by socio-economic status, which assigns values between zero (no segregation) and one (maximum segregation). Using data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the dissimilarity index shows higher segregation for both the lowest (0.47) and the highest socio-economic group (0.49) in Latin America than in either non-OECD countries (0.39 and 0.41, respectively) and OECD countries (0.37 and 0.39, respectively) (Krüger, 2019).

Latin America and, to a lesser extent, the Caribbean (**Box 1.1**) has education data disaggregated by sex, location and socio-economic status. However, for various reasons, there is a shortage of comparable data of sufficient quality for those at risk of exclusion due to disability, ethnicity and language, migration and displacement, incarceration, or sexual orientation and gender identity.

Obtaining comparable data on **disability** has been a challenge, although some progress has been made recently. The United Nations (UN) Statistical Commission set up the Washington Group on Disability Statistics in 2001. The Washington Group's Short Set of Questions, aligned with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health and suitable for inclusion in censuses or surveys, was agreed in 2006.

The six questions cover critical functional domains and activities: seeing, hearing, mobility, cognition, self-care and communication (Groce and Mont, 2017). Broad-based adoption of the Washington Group questions will resolve comparability issues that have plagued global disability statistics (Altman, 2016).

Although most estimates on disability prevalence and its effects on education still rely on sources and questions that are not fully comparable, the Washington Group questions are being more frequently used (Groce and Mont, 2017). For instance, they have been adopted for the Model Disability Surveys, a collaboration of the World Health Organization and the World Bank. In Chile, Model Disability Survey data showed that 12% of adults had a mild to moderate disability and 8% had a severe disability. Those without disabilities had completed 11.6 years of education, those with moderate disabilities 9.6 years and those with severe disabilities 7.1 years (Chile Ministry of Social Development and Family, 2016). In Costa Rica, 55% of those with disabilities had completed primary education at most, compared with 38% of those without disabilities. Education centres were not accessible for about 55% of respondents with disabilities as they lacked ramps, visual and audio alerts, grab bars and other adaptations. Less than 5% of respondents reported receiving any type of education support or accommodation (Costa Rica National Institute of Statistics and Census, 2019).

One limitation of the Washington Group questions is that they were developed for adults and do not adequately capture developmental disabilities in children. A Module

10 of 19 countries

in the world that embrace inclusion for all in their general or specific education laws are in Latin America and the Caribbean.



on Child Functioning was developed in collaboration with UNICEF (Loeb et al., 2018; Massey, 2018). Its first large-scale application is in the sixth wave of UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS). Analysis for the 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report* of 14 low- and middle-income countries that administered the MICS Module on Child Functioning in 2017–19 showed prevalence estimates of functional difficulty among 5- to 17-year-olds varying by domain. In the sensory domain, the average prevalence was 0.4% for hearing difficulties and 0.6% for seeing difficulties. Walking difficulties affected 1.3% of children and adolescents, while about 1.4% had problems learning. Psycho-emotional difficulties were more common: 2.3% were depressed and 4.4% suffered from anxiety. The average share of those with a functional difficulty in at least one domain was 12%. In Suriname, the only country in the sample from the region, it was 13.6%

The same analysis showed that children, adolescents and youth with disabilities accounted for 12% of the in-school population but 15% of the out-of-school population. In general, the lower the out-of-school rate, the more likely it is that children with disabilities will be among those out of school. Relative to their peers without disabilities, those with a sensory, physical or intellectual disability

were more likely to be out of school by 4 percentage points at primary school age, 7 points at lower secondary age and 11 at upper secondary age. This estimate is close to a review of Latin American countries based on non-comparable data, which showed that 12- to 17-year-olds with disabilities were 10 percentage points less likely to attend than those without disabilities, on average (Hincapie et al., 2019). The countries with the largest gaps in secondary completion in the latter study were Ecuador, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Latin America and the Caribbean is characterized by wide and persistent disparity by **ethnicity** (Bustillo et al., 2018; ECLAC, 2016; Telles, 2007). By most measures of well-being, including education, non-majority ethnic groups tend to fare worse than the rest of the population. Only six Spanish-speaking countries in the region incorporated an ethnicity question in their census in 1980; today, all countries except the Dominican Republic have such a question. Despite recent progress in collecting information on ethnicity, comparable data of sufficient quality are not easily available. There is a lack of consensus on how to measure ethnicity, due partly to the many dimensions of indigenous identity and of historical nation-building processes that embraced *mestizaje*, or mixing of ethnic and cultural groups, which

made indigenous peoples invisible (Telles et al., 2015). Self-identification is the prevalent approach, consistent with the International Labour Organization's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention. However, countries have also used criteria such as common origin, territoriality and cultural-linguistic factors (del Popolo, 2008). Indigenous population estimates vary considerably, depending on the criterion used (INEE, 2017; Telles and Torche, 2019).

Six countries in the region have data on both self-identification and linguistic criteria. Peru has the highest proportion of self-identified indigenous people and Paraguay the highest proportion of those who speak an indigenous language, though only 2% overall self-identified as indigenous (Table 1.1). Used alone, self-identification can provide inconsistent estimates of education inequality. Education outcomes of speakers of indigenous languages are often worse than those of self-identified indigenous people who speak only Spanish (INEE, 2017; Planas et al., 2016). In 4 countries with data for 2018, school attendance among 15- to 17-year-olds was 3 to 20 percentage points lower among speakers of an indigenous language than among those identifying as indigenous (Valencia Lopez, 2020).

Latin America and the Caribbean has the world's largest concentration of Afro-descendant populations, with estimates ranging from 120 million to 170 million (Rodríguez and Mallo, 2014). Brazil is home to the majority (112 million), equivalent to 55% of its population (IBGE, 2017). Across Latin America, legislation protecting their rights has contributed to increases in the numbers of people identifying as Afro-descendant (World Bank, 2018). Among 12 countries with a population census in the 2010 round, 11 incorporated a question for people of African descent (ECLAC, 2017a).

These populations, whose ancestors were enslaved, continue to experience structural inequality. In Brazil, the poverty headcount ratio is 26% for Afro-descendants and 12% for others; in Colombia, the respective rates are 41% and 27%. In Ecuador, 16% of the urban population and 30% of the Afro-descendant population live in slums; in Nicaragua, the respective rates are 59% and 93% (World Bank, 2018). Despite progress in many countries, inequality persists in education attendance, attainment and achievement. In 7 of the 11 countries with data, attendance rates for Afro-descendants aged 12 to 17 were lower than for their non-Afro-descendant peers (ECLAC, 2017b). The probability of Afro-descendants completing secondary education was 14% lower than that of non-Afro-descendants in Peru and 24% lower in Uruguay in 2015 (World Bank, 2018).

TABLE 1.1:
Identifying indigenous groups in surveys and censuses is a challenge in Latin America

Percentage of indigenous people in the population and school attendance rate, by criterion, selected Latin American countries, 2018 or latest available year

	Year	Indigenous population		School attendance (age 15 to 17)	
		Self-identification	Linguistic	Self-identification	Linguistic
Bolivia, P. S.	2018	25%	31%	80%	72%
Ecuador	2010	7%	5%	67%	66%
Guatemala	2018	37%	27%	47%	42%
Mexico	2018	31%	6%	70%	50%
Paraguay	2002	2%	77%	24%	65%
Peru	2018	64%	21%	62%	59%

Source: Valencia Lopez (2020).

Latin America and the Caribbean has a long record of **migration and displacement**. Throughout the 2010s, Colombia had the world's largest or second-largest internally displaced population. More recently, the mass exit of Venezuelans from their home country has captured the headlines. As of August 2020, there were 5.2 million Venezuelan migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, of whom 80% lived in the region, mainly in Colombia and Peru (R4V, 2020). In April 2020, about 334,000 Venezuelan children were enrolled in school, representing 3.4% of the country's total student population (Colombia Ministry of National Education, 2020).

Data of sufficient comparability and coverage are too scarce to allow full assessment of the education situation of those in **incarceration**. A study of 8 cities (Bogotá, Mexico City, Panama City, Lima, Montevideo, San Salvador, Santiago and Santo Domingo) covering 39 detention centres found that 90% of a sample of about 4,000 13- to 18-year-olds were male and that 70% attended formal education within the institution. At the moment of entering detention, 18% had incomplete primary education and 2% had no education (UNICEF and Universidad Diego Portales, 2017).

Most countries in the region conduct youth surveys but do not include questions on **sexual orientation or gender identity and expression** (Barrientos and Lovera, 2020). National surveys of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) youth capturing their school experiences in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay show that they face a hostile school environment. Those who experienced higher

levels of victimization based on sexual orientation were at least twice as likely to miss school and had higher levels of depression than those experiencing lower levels of victimization. Across the seven countries, LGBTI youth felt unsafe at school, mostly due to sexual orientation (between 47% and 81% of those surveyed), followed by gender expression (32% to 63%) (Kosciw and Zongrone, 2019).

Inequality is further compounded in learning outcomes

Unlike Caribbean countries, many Latin American countries have participated in large-scale cross-national learning assessments. The regional assessment organized by UNESCO's Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education carried out its third round (TERCE) in 2013 and its fourth (ERCE) in 2019. TERCE, which included 15 countries plus the Mexican state of Nuevo León, evaluated mathematics and language (reading and writing) in grades 3 and 6 and natural sciences in grade 6. About 30% of grade 6 students reached the two highest performance levels in reading, compared with 17% in mathematics and 21% in science (UNESCO, 2016b). ERCE 2019 covered 19 countries and its results are expected to be released in 2021.

In 2018, the OECD conducted the seventh round of PISA since its inception in 2000. PISA evaluates reading and

mathematics among 15-year-olds in 80 mostly high- and upper-middle-income education systems. Nine Latin American countries (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay) and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, took part in the 2018 PISA. In addition, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Paraguay took part in PISA for Development (PISA-D) in 2017, which adapted PISA to lower-middle-income country needs through instruments that enabled a detailed definition of student performance at the lower end of the PISA scale (Ward, 2018). The share of 15-year-olds with minimum proficiency (level 2 or more) in reading ranged from 20% in the Dominican Republic to 70% in Chile (**Figure 1.4**).

PISA (OECD, 2019) and TERCE (UNESCO, 2016a) data show large differences in learning achievement by gender and socio-economic status. In PISA 2018 and PISA-D 2017, girls did better than boys in reading and worse in mathematics. Socio-economically disadvantaged students had very low rates of minimum proficiency. In countries including the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Panama, barely 10 disadvantaged 15-year-old students achieved minimum proficiency in mathematics for every 100 of their better-off peers (**Figure 1.5**). In reality, the disparity is even larger, since these estimates do not take into account the lower likelihood of disadvantaged students still being in school at 15.

Bullying excludes:

LGBTI youth in seven countries facing higher levels of victimization were

at least two times as likely

to miss school.



BOX 1.1

Efforts to make disaggregated data available must continue in the Caribbean

Nationally representative surveys that cover all age groups and ask education-related and individual background questions in comparable ways over time are crucial for monitoring equity in education. Globally, 41% of countries, representing 13% of the population, have not carried out household surveys or made household survey data publicly available since 2015.

The Caribbean is one of the subregions with the lowest survey coverage rates. Only 4 of 22 countries had a publicly available survey in this period: Belize (2015–16 MICS), the Dominican Republic (2018 National Continuous Labour Force Survey), Haiti (2017 Demographic and Health Survey) and Suriname (2018 MICS). Cuba and the Dominican Republic conducted surveys in 2019 and their data are being processed, while plans for surveys in Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago have been put on hold due to COVID-19.

Almost all Caribbean countries are small island states; their size increases the fixed cost and difficulty of carrying out surveys. Most Caribbean countries conduct labour force surveys, but they tend to focus on the

working-age population, aged 15 and up. Furthermore, since the focus is on labour market outcomes, they do not always include education-related questions.

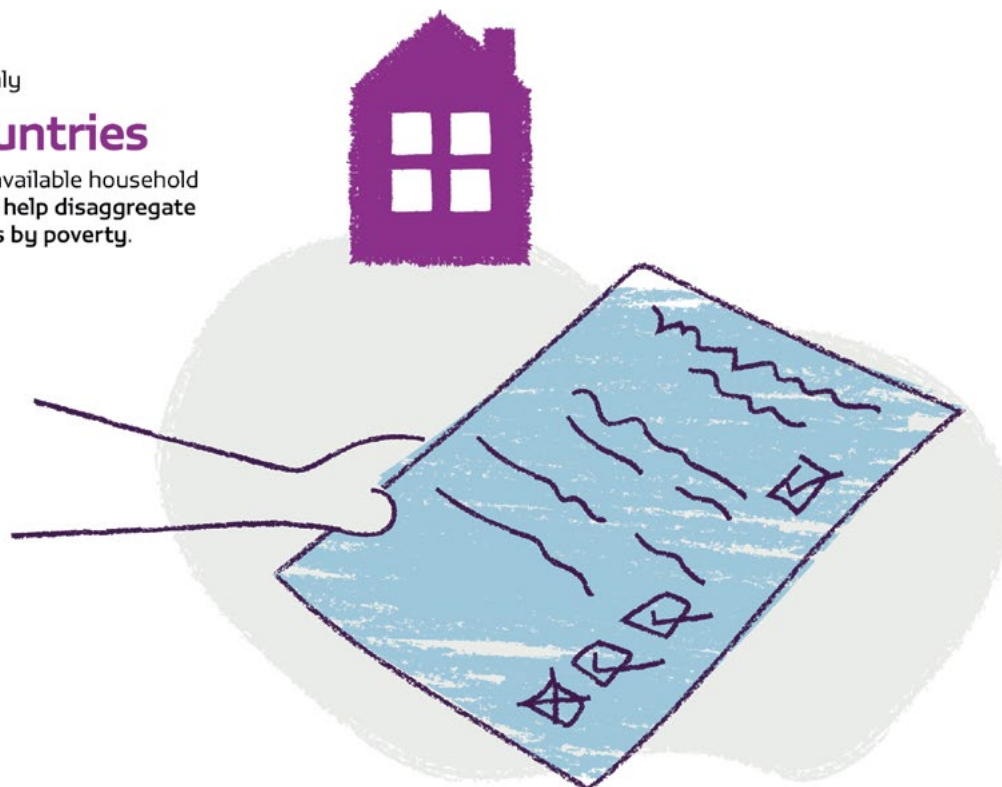
The Caribbean has not participated widely in large-scale cross-national learning assessments. Only the Dominican Republic took part in the 2018 PISA. Trinidad and Tobago participated in PISA in 2009 and 2015. Aruba, Cuba and the Dominican Republic were included in the Fourth Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study, best known as ERCE 2019 after its Spanish acronym.

The Caribbean countries, under the coordination of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), have worked towards improving data collection, harmonization and dissemination so as to better monitor the SDGs (CARICOM Secretariat, 2020). Since 2010, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States has also been developing a statistical digest on education and education policy (OECS, 2020). But more needs to be done to disaggregate many indicators in order to map progress towards leaving no one behind.

In the Caribbean, only

4 of 21 countries

have had a publicly available household survey since 2015 to help disaggregate education indicators by poverty.



Gaps in reading scores also exist between immigrants and native speakers of the dominant language. In the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the gap was 36 percentage points on average in the 2015 PISA (OECD, 2018). TERCE shows that indigenous students also have consistently lower achievement. Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Peru are the countries with the strongest relationship between learning achievement and membership of an indigenous group, as measured by maternal lineage and use of indigenous language at home (UNESCO, 2016b).

INCLUSION IN EDUCATION IS NOT JUST A RESULT, IT IS A PROCESS

Low rates of entry, progression and learning are just the final, most visible outcomes of socio-economic processes that marginalize, disappoint and alienate children, youth and adults. A 'toxic mix of poverty and discrimination' results in them being 'excluded because of who they are' (Save the Children, 2017, p. 1). Powerful social, political and economic mechanisms related to the distribution and use of opportunities, especially early in life, have major, lasting effects on inclusion in education. Education system mechanisms that play out daily in classrooms, schoolyards, parent-teacher meetings, community gatherings, local government coordination structures and ministerial councils also have an impact.

An 'inclusive and equitable' education is at the core of the SDG 4 ambition. Defining equitable education requires distinguishing between equality and equity, two terms that are occasionally misunderstood. In a cartoon that has appeared in various versions, a panel labelled 'equality' shows children of varying heights standing on identical boxes trying to write on a blackboard, the shortest ones struggling. In the 'equity' panel, they stand on boxes of different sizes and all are able to write comfortably. However, this representation is misleading (**Figure 1.6**). In fact, equality is present in both panels: equality of inputs in the first, equality of outcomes in the second. Equality is a state of affairs (what): a result that can be observed in inputs, outputs or outcomes, for example achieving gender equality. Equity is a process (how): actions aimed at ensuring equality.

Inclusion is more difficult to define. As used in this report, it mirrors equity. It is a process: actions and practices that embrace diversity and build a sense of belonging, rooted in the belief that every person has value and potential and should be respected. Yet inclusion is also a state of affairs, a result, with a multifaceted nature that makes it difficult to pin down.

While SDG 4 envisions inclusive education as encompassing all children, youth and adults, such education has historically been associated with, and often conceptualized as, education for children with disabilities. The struggle of people with disabilities has therefore shaped the understanding of inclusion.

Many are being left behind:

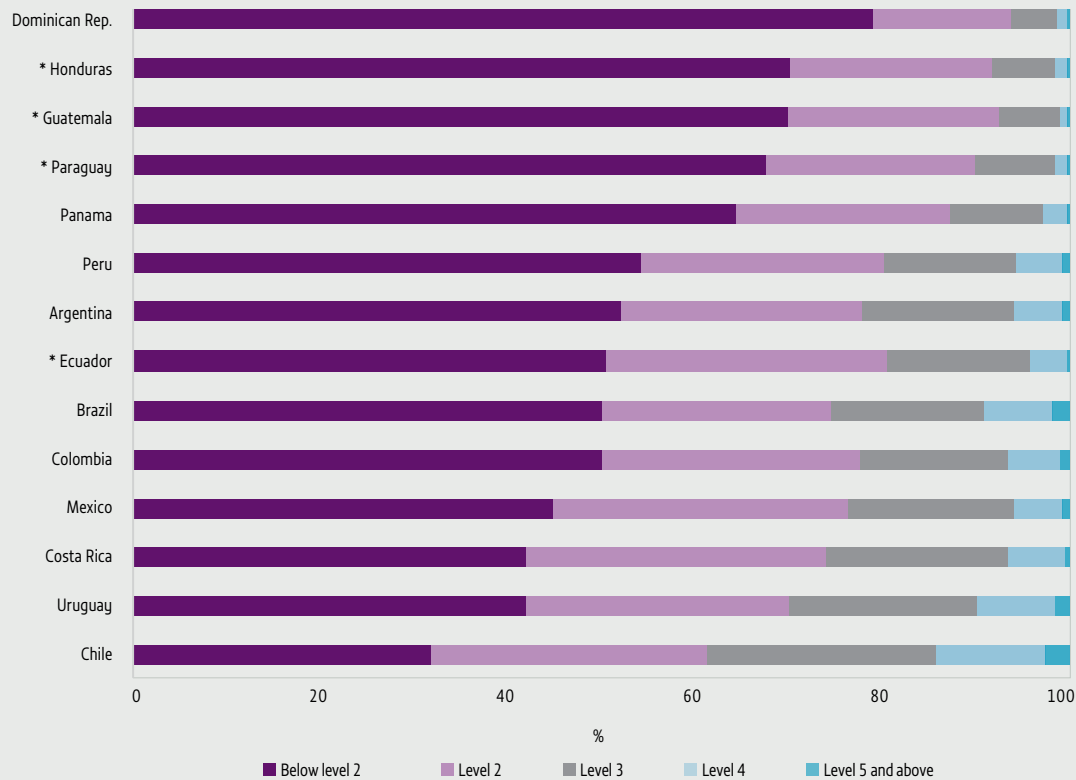
One in two 15-year-old students

does not achieve **minimum** proficiency in reading.



FIGURE 1.4:**One in two Latin American 15-year-olds does not achieve minimum proficiency in reading**

Distribution of 15-year-olds by reading proficiency level, Latin American countries participating in the 2018 PISA and the 2017 PISA for Development



Note: Asterisks denote countries that participated in the 2017 PISA-D.
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on 2018 PISA and 2017 PISA-D data.

The struggle of people with disabilities shapes perspectives on inclusion in education

Education was recognized as a human right in 1948. In 1994, the Declaration of the World Conference on Special Needs in Salamanca, Spain, made a strong and clear case for inclusive education.

The 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) guaranteed the right to inclusive education. Article 24, aiming to realize the right to education of people with disabilities 'without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity', committed countries to 'ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning'.

The CRPD stopped short of a precise definition of inclusion in education. The term therefore remains contentious, lacking a tight conceptual focus, which may have contributed to ambivalence and confused practices (Slee, 2020). While the CRPD endorsed actions that could lead to enrolment in mainstream schools, it did

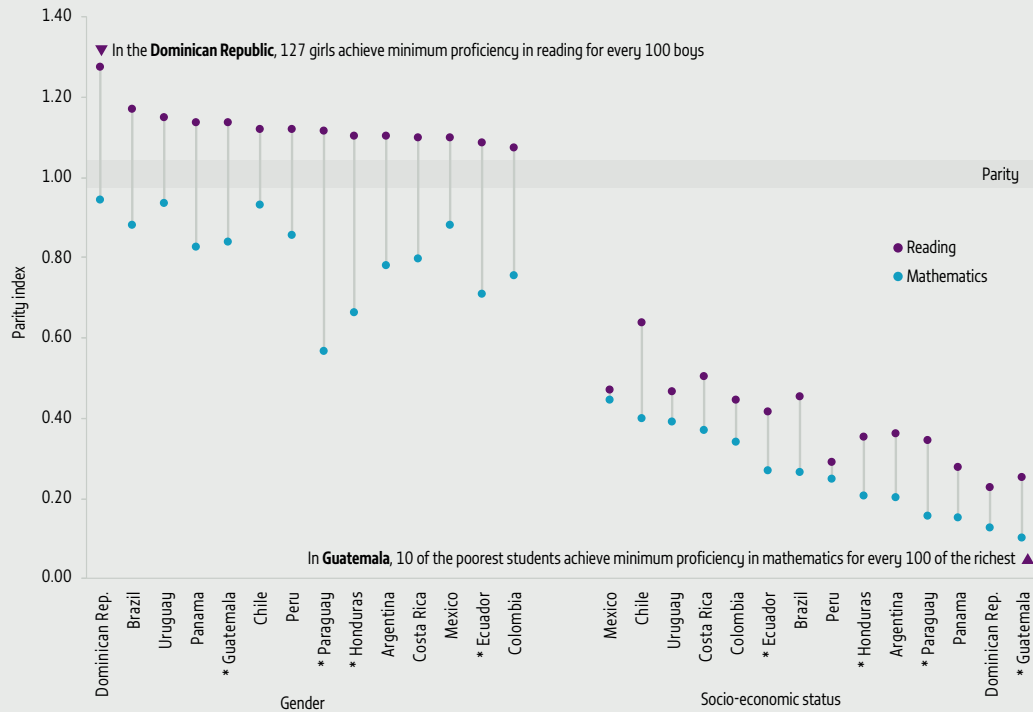
not suggest that special schools violated the convention (De Becco, 2018). Some argue that, in favouring an anti-discrimination perspective over a needs-based one, Article 24 privileged 'mainstream educational environments as its presumed substantive standard rather than the provision of quality instruction in an appropriate setting (including specialized settings) tailored to the particular educational needs of each individual student' (Anastasiou et al., 2018, pp. 9-10). Reports to countries by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities confirm that inclusion is the 'governing paradigm' for special and segregated education (Cisternas Reyes, 2019, p. 413).

Ultimately, the CRPD gave governments a free hand in shaping inclusive education, which may be seen as implicit recognition of the dilemmas and tensions involved in overcoming obstacles to full inclusion (Forlin et al., 2013). While exclusionary practices by many governments in contravention of their CRPD commitments should be exposed, the difficulties in making mainstream schools and education systems flexible should be acknowledged.

FIGURE 1.5:

There are large gaps in learning achievement by gender and socio-economic status

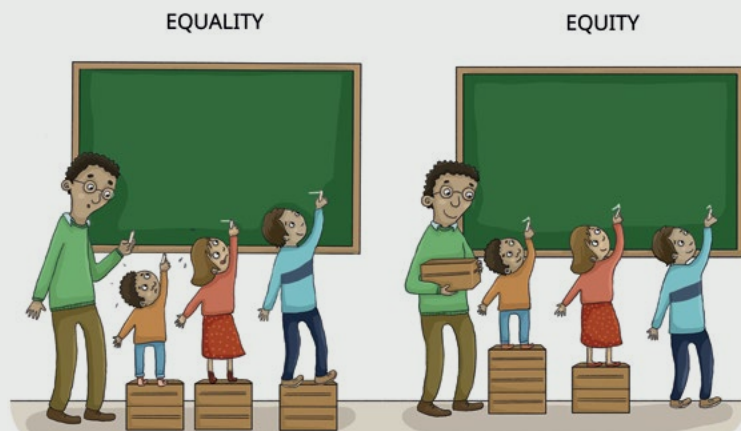
Gender and socio-economic status parity index in minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics, Latin American countries participating in the 2018 PISA and the 2017 PISA for Development



Notes: The parity index, a measure of inequality, is the ratio of the percentage of students achieving minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics. An index value between 0.97 and 1.03 indicates parity. A value below 0.97 indicates disparity in favour of males and high socio-economic status. A value above 1.03 indicates disparity in favour of females and low socio-economic status. Asterisks denote countries that participated in PISA-D. Source: OECD (2019).

FIGURE 1.6:

A popular representation of equality and equity is misleading



In addressing inclusion in education as a question of where students with disabilities should be taught, there is potential tension between the two desirable goals of maximizing interaction with others (all children under the same roof) and fulfilling learning potential (wherever students learn best) (Norwich, 2014). Other considerations include the speed with which systems can move towards the ideal and what happens during transition (Stubbs, 2008), and the trade-off between early needs identification and the risk of labelling and stigmatization (Haug, 2017).

Rapid change may be unsustainable, potentially harming those it is supposed to serve. Including children with disabilities in mainstream schools that are not prepared, supported or accountable for achieving inclusion can

intensify experiences of exclusion and provoke backlash against making schools and systems more inclusive. Advocates for exceptions have also appropriated the language of inclusion, generating confusion (Slee, 2020).

These ambiguities led the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to issue General Comment No. 4 on Article 24 in 2016, following a two-year process involving submissions from countries, non-government organizations (NGOs), organizations for people with disabilities, academics and disability advocates. It defined inclusion as:

a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences. Placing students with disabilities within mainstream classes without accompanying structural changes to, for example, organisation, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion. Furthermore, integration does not automatically guarantee the transition from segregation to inclusion. (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016, p. 4)

The committee described the right to inclusive education as encompassing:

a transformation in culture, policy and practice in all formal and informal educational environments to accommodate the differing requirements and identities of individual students, together with a commitment to remove the barriers that impede that possibility. It involves strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners. It focuses on the full and effective participation, accessibility, attendance and achievement of all students, especially those who, for different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized. Inclusion involves access to and progress in high-quality formal and informal education without discrimination. It seeks to enable communities, systems and structures to combat discrimination, including harmful stereotypes, recognize diversity, promote participation and overcome barriers to learning and participation for all by focusing on well-being and success of students with disabilities. It requires an in-depth transformation of education systems in legislation, policy, and the mechanisms for financing, administration, design, delivery and monitoring of education. (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016, p. 3)

Inclusion in education concerns all learners

Two key takeaways from General Comment No. 4 are central to this report. First, as the description of the requirements makes clear, inclusive education involves a process that contributes to the goal of social inclusion. The attainability of this goal should not affect the resolve of those responsible for implementing this process or those holding them accountable for fulfilling their commitment. Inclusive education should embody the principles of dialogue, participation and openness, bringing all stakeholders together to resolve emerging tensions and dilemmas. Decisions should be based on human dignity, without compromising, discounting or diverting from the long-term ideal of inclusion.

The efforts of policymakers and educators should not override the needs and preferences of those affected. Beyond upholding the fundamental human rights and principles that provide moral and political direction for education decisions, fulfilling the inclusive ideal is not trivial. Delivering sufficient differentiated and individualized support requires perseverance, resilience and a long-term perspective.

Moving away from education systems whose design suits some children and obliges others to adapt cannot happen by decree. Prevailing attitudes and mindsets must be challenged; otherwise, 'inclusive education may prove intractable even with the best will in the world and the highest possible level of commitment' (De Beco, 2018, p. 410). 'The correct approach is not to seek justification for the limits to the goal of inclusive education, but rather to establish the legitimacy of making efforts towards that goal despite such limits. We must investigate whether it is possible to incorporate the element of actual achievability into the ideal of inclusive education' (De Beco, 2018, p. 408).

The second takeaway of General Comment No. 4 is that inclusive education is much broader in scope. It entails a 'process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults' (UNESCO, 2009), to eliminate barriers to the right to education and change the culture, policy and practice of mainstream schools to accommodate and effectively include all learners.

It is not only learners with disabilities who are excluded through discriminatory mechanisms. For instance, the disproportional referral of minorities to special education indicates how cultural biases are embedded in identification of special needs. All over the world, layers of discrimination deny students the right to be educated with their peers or to receive education of the same quality (**Figure 1.7**).

Belief in the principle of inclusion should not obscure the difficult questions and potential drawbacks raised by

including groups of learners at risk of exclusion. In some contexts, inclusion may inadvertently intensify pressure to conform. Group identities, practices, languages and beliefs may be devalued, jeopardized or eradicated, undercutting a sense of belonging. The right of a group to preserve its culture and the right to self-determination and self-representation are increasingly recognized. Inclusion may be resisted out of prejudice but also out of recognition that identity may be maintained and empowerment achieved only if a minority is a majority in a given area. Rather than achieve positive social engagement, exposure to the majority may reinforce dominant prejudices, intensifying minority disadvantage. Targeting assistance can also lead to stigmatization, labelling or unwelcome forms of inclusion (Silver, 2015).

GUIDE TO THE REPORT

This regional report recognizes the variety of contexts and challenges that countries in Latin America and the Caribbean must address in their efforts towards inclusive education. It considers the groups at risk of being excluded from education and the barriers facing individual learners, especially when multiple characteristics intersect. It also takes into account the fact that exclusion may be physical, social (in interpersonal and group relations), psychological or systemic (since systems may exclude, for instance, poorer children through school fees or migrants and refugees through documentation requirements).

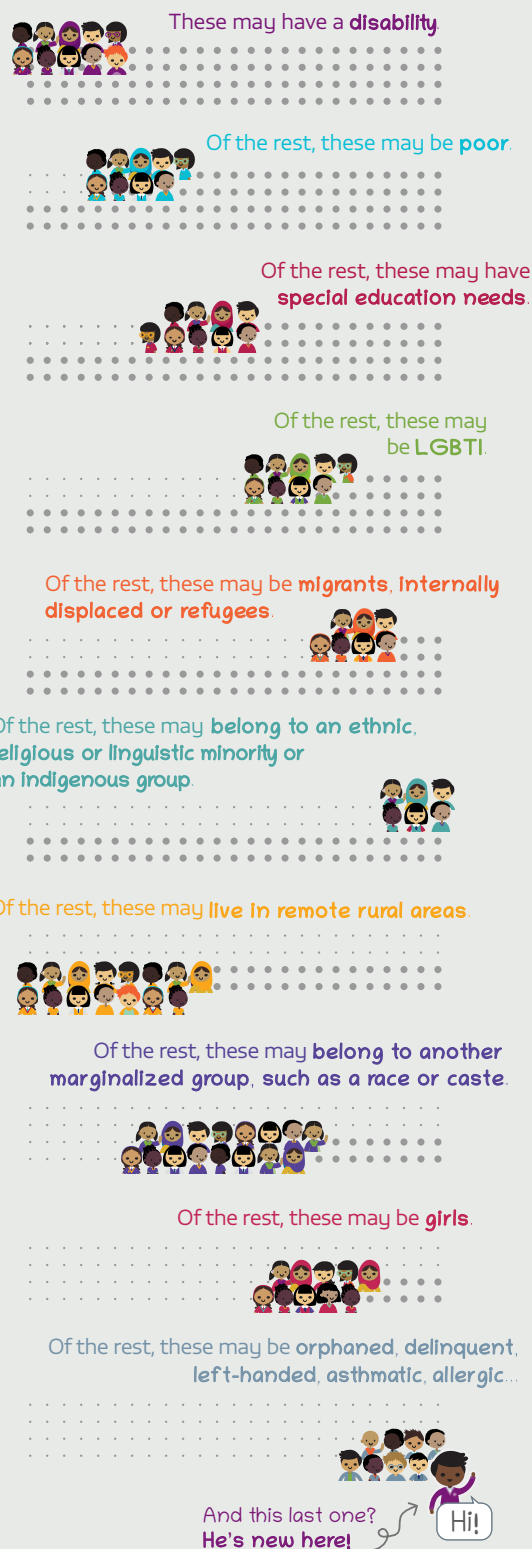
Six elements are key in addressing or exacerbating the challenges and in fostering inclusion of learners at the local and system levels: laws and policies; governance and finance; curricula and textbooks; teachers; schools; and communities, parents and students. Accordingly, this report has six main chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 analyses the role of legal tools in supporting the development of inclusive education. Laws often express the national interpretation of international conventions, which have formulated the commitment to inclusion, but also the adaptation of these concepts to reflect the complexities and barriers specific to their contexts. The chapter also addresses vague or contradictory laws and policies that can hinder inclusion and universal access to the different levels of education.

Chapter 3 addresses governance and finance. Education ministries must be at the heart of inclusion efforts, but to fully achieve their aims, they need to work with ministries and agencies in other sectors, as well as subnational education authorities and NGOs. Success in inclusive education rests on good governance of all these complex partnerships. Financing is crucial in ensuring education for all and targeting the schools and students

FIGURE 1.7:

All means all

Out of **100** children...



most in need. In addition to general equity-oriented funding mechanisms, a twin-track approach is needed for financing the education of at-risk groups, such as learners with disabilities.

Chapter 4 discusses the politically complicated issue of how curricula and learning materials are adapted to the principles of inclusive education. It looks at the stakeholders involved in curriculum and textbook development and how groups at risk of exclusion are neglected, under-represented or misrepresented through imagery, content or delivery.

Chapter 5 looks at ways teachers can support the case for inclusion, considers their needs, and examines how well governments help them prepare to meet the inclusion challenge. It also considers education support personnel, examining the extent to which they are available and how they relate to teachers in ensuring inclusive practice. Finally, it covers the extent to which staff make-up reflects student diversity.

Chapter 6 examines school-level factors. School segregation by income, ethnicity or migrant status can lead to marginalized groups' exclusion. Head teachers must be prepared to promote a whole-school approach based on an inclusive ethos as a prerequisite for inclusion. Physical accessibility and universal design principles that increase functionality and are adaptable to everyone's needs, including through assistive technologies, can help reach the most marginalized learners and support equitable access to learning.

Chapter 7 examines communities' crucial role in achieving inclusive education. Students can hold or be subject to discriminatory attitudes, which affect school climate as well as students' safety, well-being and learning. Parents of vulnerable children, like other parents, may support more inclusive education but also be apprehensive about its implementation. Grassroots and civil society organizations have promoted inclusion through education service provision, advocacy and scrutiny of government actions.

After these chapters addressing the main inclusion challenges, Chapter 8 looks at them all through the lens of COVID-19. The pandemic has forced education ministries to respond under extremely challenging circumstances, which has led to considerable reliance on distance learning solutions. This chapter considers whether such solutions have respected the principle of 'doing no harm' to marginalized populations that may have been left out. Governments need to ensure not only the continuation of education, helping those disadvantaged catch up, but also to support students' health, nutrition and well-being.

Finally, Chapter 9 offers a set of recommendations in response to the report's main questions:

- What are the key policy solutions for each element of inclusive education to ensure achievement of SDG 4?
- How can common obstacles to implementation of these policies be anticipated and overcome?
- What arrangements are needed to coordinate among government sectors and levels and with other stakeholders to overcome overlapping dimensions of exclusion?
- How do education systems monitor exclusion, in terms of both individual education success and systemic factors, and how can current practices be improved?
- What financing channels are used around the world? How are they monitored, and how do they affect local practice?

To the extent possible, the report examines these questions in view of changes over time. However, inclusion is a complex area that is only beginning to be documented on a global scale. One contribution of this report, as part of the overall development of the 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report*, is that it has collected information on all countries, from Anguilla to Venezuela, and developed profiles describing how they are addressing the challenge of inclusion in education. The report features analysis of these profiles, notably in Chapter 2 on laws and policies. All the profiles are available on a new *Global Education Monitoring Report* website, Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER), and can be used by countries to share experiences and learn from one another, especially at the regional level where contexts are similar. They can serve as a baseline to review qualitative progress up to 2030.

CONCLUSION

Inclusion in education matters. Careful planning and provision of inclusive education can deliver improvement in academic achievement, social and emotional development, self-esteem and peer acceptance (Hehir et al., 2016). Including diverse students in mainstream classrooms and schools can prevent stigma, stereotyping, discrimination and alienation (Forlin, 2012).

Ensuring that classrooms and schools are well resourced and well supported implies costs: to adapt curricula, train teachers, develop adequate and relevant teaching and learning materials and make education accessible. There are potential efficiency savings from eliminating

parallel structures and using resources more effectively in a single, inclusive mainstream system; evidence of governments pooling human and financial resources to that effect is growing. As few systems come close to the ideal, reliable estimates of the full cost are scarce. An economic cost–benefit analysis is therefore difficult, not least because the benefits are hard to quantify and extend over generations.

However, economic justification for inclusive education, while valuable for planning, is insufficient. Inclusive education promotes inclusive societies, in which people can live together and diversity is celebrated and built upon. It is a prerequisite for education in and for democracies based on fairness, justice and equity (Slee, 2020). It counteracts education system tendencies that allow exceptions and exclusions. And it provides a systematic framework for identifying and dismantling barriers for vulnerable populations, according to the principle that ‘every learner matters and matters equally’ (UNESCO, 2017).



A girl takes refuge in a temporary shelter open to communities most at risk in the north of Haiti to protect them from the impact of Hurricane Irma in 2017.

CREDIT: UNICEF/UN0119995/Bradley

CHAPTER

2

Laws and policies

KEY MESSAGES

The right to non-discrimination in education is enshrined in eight international conventions.

- Only eight countries in Latin America and four in the Caribbean have ratified all these conventions.

Many countries in the region have adopted a broad perspective on inclusion in national laws, although most tend to focus laws on specific groups.

- Of the 19 countries in the world that embrace inclusion for all in general or specific education laws, 10 are in the region.
- In 95% of countries, education ministries have issued laws focused on people with disabilities. Jamaica, the first signatory of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, approved its Disability Act in 2014: It states that no education institution shall deny enrolment to a person with disabilities.
- National legislation provides for inclusion based on gender in 66% of countries, on ethnic minority and indigenous status in 64% and on home language in 59%, above the global averages.

The region is relatively advanced in the scope of its inclusive education policies.

- Of the 32 countries in the world that have an inclusive education policy, 7 are in the region.
- National policies issued by education ministries target people with disabilities in 31% of countries, gender in 43%, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in 56% and home language in 59%, the final two well above the global averages.

Education sector plans and strategies also support inclusive education.

- About 55% of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have education sector plans or strategies referring to inclusive education as a priority.

Several countries in the region have not effectively fulfilled their commitments.

- Governments sometimes equivocate on the extent to which inclusion laws commit them to include students with disabilities in mainstream schools. In 2018, in spite of its inclusive education law, Chile still had more than 2,000 special schools, catering for 5.1% of all students. In Nicaragua, inclusive education is one of the 2017–21 education plan's strategic priorities, but one-third of about 10,000 students with disabilities were in special schools in 2019.
- The 2015 indigenous peoples policy in El Salvador promoted affirmative action and proposed intercultural education programmes and the establishment of intercultural schools. However, to date, an intercultural education programme has not been established.
- In Colombia, migrant students can take the secondary graduation and tertiary education entry examinations without valid identification documents, but must have those documents to receive their results.
- Laws promoting inclusion may coexist with vague or contradictory regulations. Circular 18-2011 in the Dominican Republic mandates inclusion but does not specify that undocumented students and immigrants must be included in secondary schools.

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Laws and policies determine the framework for achieving inclusion in education. Globally, the international community's aspirations are expressed in binding legal instruments and non-binding declarations, primarily led by the United Nations (UN), but also by regional organizations. These agreements strongly influence legislative and policy actions at the national level, on which progress towards inclusion hinges. Together, such aspirations underpin the vision of the 2015 Incheon Declaration 'to ensure that no one is left behind' (UNESCO, 2016). This approach recognizes that mechanisms of exclusion are common, contributing to a general understanding of the term 'inclusive' in the formulation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4).

In spite of continuing efforts and international human rights law obligations, building inclusive education systems continues to be a challenge in Latin America and the Caribbean. About 60% of countries in the region have a definition of inclusive education, but only 64% of those definitions cover multiple marginalized groups, which suggests that most countries have yet to embrace a broad concept of inclusion. While initial steps have been

taken, too few governments take the follow-up actions necessary to ensure implementation. This chapter discusses regional commitments and cross-country differences in national legislation and policy frameworks..

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS AND DECLARATIONS PROMOTE INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights established the right to education. Numerous instruments since have specified that fulfilling this right means precluding discrimination. The 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education defines discrimination as 'any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth', results in individuals being treated unequally in education. In 2001, General Comment 1 on Article 29 on education of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child specified that discriminatory curricula, pedagogies, educational practices and environments would violate the article's purpose.

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In spite of continuing efforts and international human rights law obligations, building inclusive education systems continues to be a challenge in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Various conventions enshrine specific groups' right to education. The 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees sets out refugees' right to education in a comprehensive normative framework (UNESCO, 2018). Article 27 of the 1989 International Labour Organization Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ILO Convention 169) stipulates that education programmes 'shall be developed and implemented in co-operation with [the peoples concerned] to address their special needs, and shall incorporate their histories, their knowledge and technologies, their value systems and their further social, economic and cultural aspirations.' In addition, 'governments shall recognise the right of these peoples to establish their own educational institutions and facilities, provided that such institutions meet minimum standards established by the competent authority in consultation with these peoples.' Further articles say that textbooks should be relevant, that people should be taught in their home language and that 'history textbooks and other educational materials [should] provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and cultures of these peoples.' Similar rights are set out in Article 14 of the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Of the 41 countries in the region, all have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child; 40 the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women; 37 the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination; 36 the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); 33 the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; 32 the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; 29 the Convention against Discrimination in Education; and 18 the Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. Only eight countries in Latin America (Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Peru) and four in the Caribbean (Aruba, Curaçao, Dominica and Saint Martin) have ratified all eight of these conventions (**Table 2.1**).

INCLUSION LEGISLATION IN THE REGION VARIES IN ITS AMBITION

Analysis carried out for the 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report* suggests that international commitments' focus on inclusion is one reason national legislators pay more attention to inclusion. Considerable progress has been made since 2008, when a thorough review of laws and policies on inclusion in education was conducted as part of the International Conference on Education (Amadio, 2009). Many countries in the region are also adopting a broader perspective on inclusion, rather than targeting particular groups considered at risk

of marginalization. Of the 19 countries in the world that embrace inclusion for all in general or specific education laws, 10 are in Latin America and the Caribbean.

For example, in Chile, a 2015 law promotes diversity, integration and inclusion in education, stating that 'it is the duty of the State to try to ensure a quality inclusive education for all'. In Ecuador, the 2011 Organic Law on Intercultural Education established universality, gender equality, equity and inclusion, multilingualism and interculturality as principles to guide education as part of the Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir. Among the objectives of reforms introduced in 2019 were greater inclusion of people with disabilities and bilingual intercultural education.

In Paraguay, a 2013 law defined inclusive education as 'the systemic process of education improvement and innovation to promote the presence, performance and participation of students in all institutions of the national education system where they are schooled, with particular attention to those students most vulnerable to exclusion, school failure or marginalization, and to detecting and eliminating the barriers that limit this process'. Peru's 2018 general education law incorporated Article 19A on inclusive education. It states that education should be inclusive in all stages, forms, modalities, levels and cycles. It encourages education institutions to adopt measures to ensure accessibility, availability, acceptability and adaptability in provision of education services and to develop personalized education plans for students with special education needs (PEER, 2020).

In many countries, laws focus on specific groups

More commonly, countries' inclusive education laws target people with disabilities or special education needs, rather than applying to all learners. Colombia's Decree 1421, issued in 2017, acknowledges inclusive education as 'the permanent process that recognizes, values and responds in a pertinent way to the diversity of characteristics, interests, abilities and expectations of girls, boys, adolescents, youth and adults ... without any discrimination or exclusion', yet it explicitly regulates only the education of people with disabilities. In Panama, a 2000 executive decree regulates inclusion of people with special education needs.

In general, laws are geared towards specific groups at risk of marginalization, whether the main responsibilities lie with ministries of education or other ministries. In 36 of 38 countries (or 95%), laws issued by education ministries primarily target people with disabilities. Jamaica, for instance, which was the first signatory of the CRPD and ratified it in March 2007, approved the national Disability Act in 2014. It states that no education or training

TABLE 2.1:
Status of ratification of human rights conventions in Latin America and the Caribbean

	Convention on the Rights of the Child	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees	Convention against Discrimination in Education	1989 ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples
Anguilla	X	X	X				X	
Antigua/Barbuda	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Argentina	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Aruba	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bahamas	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Barbados	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Belize	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Bolivia, P. S.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Brazil	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Br. Virgin Is	X	X					X	
Cayman Is	X	X					X	
Chile	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colombia	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Costa Rica	X	X	X	X		X		X
Cuba	X	X	X	X	X			
Curaçao	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dominica	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dominican Rep.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ecuador	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
El Salvador	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Grenada	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Guatemala	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Guyana	X	X	X	X	X			
Haiti	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Honduras	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jamaica	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Mexico	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Montserrat	X				X	X	X	
Nicaragua	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Panama	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Paraguay	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Peru	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
St Kitts/Nevis	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Saint Lucia	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Saint Martin	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
St Vincent/Grenad.	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Suriname	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Trinidad/Tobago	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Turks/Caicos Is	X	X					X	
Uruguay	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Venezuela, B. R.	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Total	41	40	37	36	33	32	29	18

institution shall deny enrolment or attendance to a person with disabilities. National legislation provides for inclusion based on gender in 66% of countries, on ethnic minority and indigenous status in 64% and on home language in 59%. In that respect, the region has done better than the rest of the world (Figure 2.1).

Laws regulating inclusion of people with disabilities and gender in education are often not issued by ministries of education. In Latin America and the Caribbean, however, responsibility for laws on education of people with disabilities lies outside education ministries less frequently than in the rest of the world. Countries in the region also have increasingly committed to respect diversity in ethnicity and gender (Box 2.1).

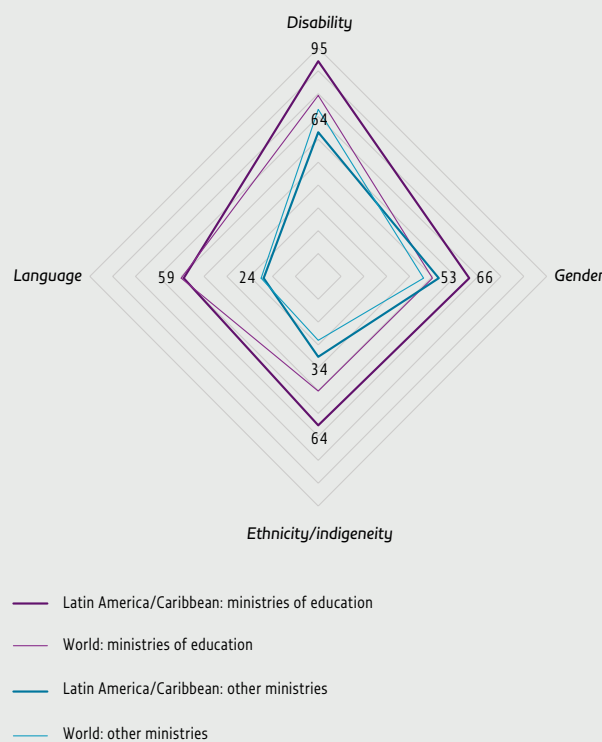
Indigenous peoples are frequently the focus of legislation in the region; their degree of historic exclusion is evident in the fact that 32% of indigenous employed adults age 25 and above have no education, compared with 13% of non-indigenous people (ILO, 2019). The Plurinational State of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru have modified their constitutions to acknowledge their multicultural, pluri-ethnic status, a move which has provided a solid foundation for changes in education. In Ecuador, the 2008 Constitution’s pledge to instate plurinational and intercultural education led to a law to develop, strengthen and enhance the bilingual intercultural education system from early childhood to higher education. Since 2014, the Bilingual Intercultural Education System Model has been used in Bilingual Intercultural Community Education Centres and Units. In Peru, the 2002 Law for Intercultural Bilingual Education recognizes cultural diversity as a value. It was followed by a 2016 Supreme Decree that made intercultural education and bilingual intercultural education mandatory for all entities and introduced a monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

Other countries have only reformed education laws. In Argentina, the 1995 higher education law established that the state should promote inclusion policies in education that recognize different multicultural and intercultural processes. Article 52 of the 2006 general education law established bilingual intercultural education from pre-primary to secondary education in fulfilment of the constitutional right of indigenous peoples to receive an

“ Of the 19 countries in the world that embrace inclusion for all in general or specific education laws, 10 are in Latin America and the Caribbean ”

FIGURE 2.1:
Laws are more likely to focus on people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and gender in Latin America and the Caribbean than the rest of the world

Percentage of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and the world with laws on the education of specific groups, by ministerial responsibility, 2019 or most available year



Source: Analysis based on GEM Report Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER).

education that preserves and strengthens their culture, language, worldview and ethnic identity and enables them to actively participate in a multicultural world to improve their quality of life. In Chile, the Ministry of Education protects the education of indigenous peoples based on the general education law (20.370), indigenous law (19.253) and ILO Convention 169. The 1996 Bilingual Intercultural Education Programme made indigenous languages part of the national curriculum so that all students, regardless of their ethnic group, could acquire knowledge about indigenous languages and cultures.

In Colombia, Decree 0804 in 1995 regulated education for ethnic groups, establishing criteria for appointing teachers in, and from, Afro-descendant communities. Decree 1953 in 2014 established principles for the administration of indigenous territories and consolidated the Indigenous Peoples’ Own Education System.

BOX 2.1

Education systems in the region are committing to respect the right to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression

The right to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression is denied in much of the world, which leads to discrimination, including in education. As of May 2017, 72 countries worldwide criminalized some form of same-sex sexual activity or relationship, including 10 in the Caribbean, such as Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. At its January 2013 UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review, Barbados received recommendations urging decriminalization of same-sex sexual acts but they were not accepted (Carroll and Mendos, 2017). Latin American countries have taken more steps towards fulfilment of the right to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, but differ in the extent of their commitments. Colombia and Uruguay have recorded great progress, while others lag behind (Table 2.2). In Chile, the Gender Identity Law took effect in December 2019, recognizing transgender people and enabling those aged at least 14 to change their names and gender identity on legal documents (Human Rights Campaign, 2020).

Progress on general non-discrimination legislation affects progress on steps to prevent discrimination in education on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. In Argentina, discrimination on such grounds in education is addressed in laws on education (2006), comprehensive sexuality education (2006) and coexistence

and social conflict in education institutions (2013). In 2017, Chile's Ministry of Education issued a circular on the rights of girls, boys and transgender youth in education and guidelines on inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in the education system. The documents aim to promote these groups' rights and inclusion and to stop discrimination, violence or other impediments to fulfilling their right to education (Chile Education Superintendency, 2017; Chile Ministry of Education, 2017). In Colombia, the 2013 Policy Guidelines for Inclusive Higher Education stressed the need to account for diversity and to work with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students (Colombia Ministry of National Education, 2013). Uruguay's 2009 General Law on Education established that a guiding principle of public education was to promote the transformation of discriminatory stereotypes based, among other things, on sexual orientation.

In spite of these efforts, people with diverse gender identities remain at high risk of exclusion. In Brazil, the Ministry of Education has been instructed to draft a bill to protect pupils in primary schools from 'gender ideology'. The Supreme Court, which voted in May 2019 to make homophobia and transphobia a crime, struck down two laws by municipalities in Goias and Paraná states to ban 'gender ideology' in public schools (Associated Press, 2019; González Cabrera, 2020).

TABLE 2.2:

Anti-discrimination, civil recognition and gender identity legislation, selected Latin American countries, 2019

Country	Anti-discrimination legislation	Civil recognition legislation				Gender identity legislation
		Civil union	Same-sex marriage	Joint adoption by same-sex couples	Adoption of spouse's child	
Brazil		X	X	X	X	
Chile	X	X				X
Colombia	X	X	X	X	X	
Ecuador	X	X	X			
Guatemala						
Honduras	X					
Mexico	X		X			
Panama	X					
Peru	X					
Uruguay	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: Barrientos and Lovera (2020).

In Costa Rica, Decree 37801 in 2013 established the specifics of indigenous education in terms of objectives, languages, approaches, administrative organization and human resources. It defined consultation procedures and mechanisms for participation of indigenous peoples in decision making about their education.

Various laws cover other population groups. In Argentina, Article 80 of the 2006 general education law refers to students in adverse socio-economic situations. A draft bill has proposed establishing the National Day of Roma People and Culture aiming to incorporate content in the curriculum at some levels to promote Roma culture (Argentina Parliament, 2019). In Chile, Decree 968 of 2012 focuses on education quality in multigrade rural schools. In Costa Rica, the 2013 Compendium of Standards on the Education Rights of Migrants and Refugees, prepared by the Ministry of Public Education together with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, proposes several lines of action, including curricular and extracurricular approaches to migration, migration management in education centres and school projects on migration. In Colombia, Article 16 of Law 731 issued in 2002 promotes rural education. Peru established Florecer, the National Network for Girls' Education, in 1998 and enacted a law on promotion of rural girls' and adolescents' education in 2001. In 2018, these provisions were enhanced by a policy on rural populations (Montero and Uccelli, 2020).

About 16% of prisoners in the world are in Latin America and the Caribbean (Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research, 2020). The Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, El Salvador, Grenada and Panama have incarceration rates above 400 per 100,000 people, while the global average is 144. Education for prisoners is a legally established right in many Latin American countries and, despite challenges, progress has been made (Rangel, 2018). Argentina, Mexico and Peru have set up a legal basis for prison education. Colombia has an education law for the social rehabilitation of people deprived of liberty and an education model for the penitentiary and prison system (Rangel, 2009).

“ In general, laws are geared towards specific groups at risk of marginalization, whether the main responsibilities lie with ministries of education or other ministries ”

EDUCATION POLICIES VARY IN THEIR EMPHASIS ON INCLUSION

Latin America and the Caribbean is relatively advanced in its inclusive education policies. In the region, inclusion is typically seen through the lens of diversity, as already suggested in the review carried out as part of the International Conference on Education in 2008 (Amadio, 2009). Of the 32 countries in the world that have an inclusive education policy, 7 are in the region.

For instance, Chile created the School Integration Programme to improve education quality for students with special education needs. Admission is based on an assessment by education and health professionals. Interventions depend on the type and degree of disability. In El Salvador, the National Directorate of Education, with Italian government support, introduced a full-time inclusive school model in 2005 focusing on children with special needs or others excluded from public schools. The model was then expanded at cluster level to help neighbouring schools share resources and improve their organization, curriculum, school day duration and community participation, creating integrated systems of full-time inclusive schools (Campuzano et al., 2016; El Salvador Ministry of Education, 2016). Trinidad and Tobago launched the Inclusive School Project in January 2020, aiming to deliver safe, inclusive and effective learning environments for all students regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional or other needs. Led by the Ministry of Education's Student Support Services Division, the programme is to be implemented in 21 schools across 7 education districts, in partnership with non-government organizations (NGOs), advocacy groups and special schools.

Education policies tend to emphasize disability, gender and ethnicity

Education ministries implement policies that target students with disabilities in about one-third of the countries in the region, a smaller share than at the global level (**Figure 2.2**). In Jamaica, a special education policy in fulfilment of the 2014 Disability Act was drafted in 2015 (Gayle-Geddes, 2020) and submitted for Cabinet approval in October 2018 (Jamaica Information Services, 2018) and again in June 2019 (Jamaica Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, 2019), but it has yet to pass. Policies targeting students with disabilities are not necessarily inclusive. In Grenada, the Special Education Desk programme focuses on 'pulling slow children out of the regular schools, giving them one-on-one attention, and then reincorporating them into the regular classroom' (Now Grenada, 2014). Sometimes, education is covered as part of an overall disability policy coordinated by other ministries. In Costa Rica, the 2011–21 National Policy on

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Progress on general non-discrimination legislation affects progress on steps to prevent discrimination in education on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression

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Disability includes guidelines for universal, accessible and quality education, contextualized education, education for human sexuality and the strengthening of inclusive education.

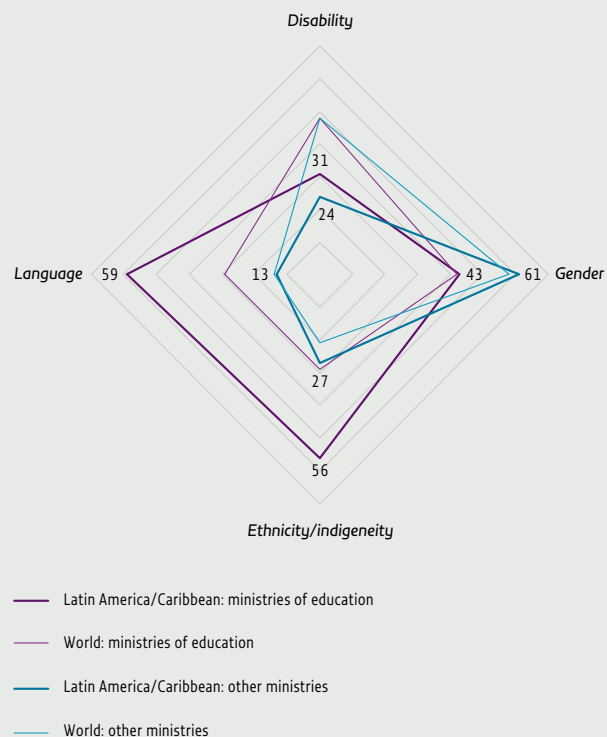
Education ministries in the region issue policies on gender (43%) as frequently as such ministries globally (42%). In Costa Rica, the third action plan (2015–18) of the National Policy on Gender Equality and Equity aims to increase the share of those receiving education for gender equality and equity with a participatory, intercultural, gender and human rights approach. Steps have been taken to develop a policy for transgender education, with a working group recently created to develop a final proposal. In El Salvador, the 2016–20 Implementation Plan for Gender Equity and Equality Policy focuses on eliminating sexism and gender-based violence in education.

In more than half the countries in Latin America, education policies target indigenous, Afro-descendant and linguistic minorities under the labels intercultural bilingual education, self-education or ethno-education (Corbetta, 2020). In Argentina, Intercultural Bilingual Education programmes began in 2004, mainly in northern provinces and at the pre-primary and primary education levels in state schools. Colombia’s 2013 Policy Guidelines for Inclusive Higher Education focus on reducing gaps through participation, diversity, interculturality, equity and quality. They focus on historically excluded groups, such as blacks, Afro-Colombians, Raizales, Palenqueros, indigenous peoples and Roma. The 2015 indigenous peoples policy in El Salvador promoted affirmative action and proposed intercultural education programmes and the establishment of intercultural schools. However, to this date, an intercultural education programme has not been established (El Salvador Ministry of Education, 2020).

In Peru, the 2016 policy on intercultural and bilingual intercultural education, guided by a national plan to 2021, aims to improve access, retention and completion at all education levels, implement pre- and in-service bilingual intercultural teacher education programmes, and promote decentralized management. Universities have developed affirmative action plans based on quota systems to improve access to higher education, but these

FIGURE 2.2:
Education ministries in Latin America and the Caribbean are far more likely to develop policies on indigenous peoples and ethnic or linguistic minorities than their peers in other countries

Percentage of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and the world with policies on the education of specific groups, by ministerial responsibility, 2019 or latest available year



Source: Analysis based on GEM Report Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER).

do not reflect a national policy. The National Intercultural University of the Amazon was the first intercultural university in Peru. Three others have been in the process of being set up.

Policies also address the education rights of other marginalized groups

The number of policies on the education rights of migrants and refugees in the region has increased, especially since the crisis in Venezuela that began in 2016. In Colombia, the Ministry of National Education and the agency in charge of immigration control, Migración Colombia, have relaxed enrolment requirements for migrant children. Circular 016 of 2018 outlines regulatory and procedural adjustments. It calls on schools to register all enrolled children in the Information System to Report Foreigners, noting that Migración Colombia will not initiate administrative action against schools that enrolled children without residence permits or visas. The circular explains the procedure for registering children with irregular migration status in the enrolment system and clarifies the registration obligation for children with regular migrant status. It leaves transport and school feeding decisions up to local governments. A 2018 decree allows any school to carry out academic evaluations to validate studies completed in Venezuela although no procedures have been established. While these measures have removed barriers for children in access to primary and secondary education, legal barriers to access in higher education persist (UNDP Colombia, 2020).

The Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago has no law or policy on the right to education of migrants and refugees. However, it has partnerships with school boards to allocate public school spaces to migrants and refugees. It has also trained teachers and shared the primary curriculum with NGOs promoting access to education for Venezuelan children. These reforms aim to let Venezuelans gain access to accredited education in the country (PEER, 2020).

Costa Rica recognizes immigrants' right to education. Around 4% of students in the country are foreigners, mainly from Nicaragua. In 2018, the government approved guidelines on measures to integrate migrants and refugees. It has called on schools and the community to fight xenophobia in classrooms. Many schools in the north have begun to relax requirements, allowing children without official documentation to register. Some schools offer additional classes aimed at promoting integration of these children (IOM, 2018).

Around 27,000 young people in the region are in detention centres, deprived of liberty. Many centres are overcrowded and institutional, with peer violence

common (Sanhueza, 2020). Some countries have policies on prisoner education (**Box 2.2**).

Education sector plans and strategies mention inclusive education

Analysis carried out for the 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report* suggests that about 75% of all countries and 55% of those in Latin America and the Caribbean have education sector plans or strategies referring to inclusive education as a priority and outlining detailed measures to promote it. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the 2016–20 education sector plan promotes inclusive, participatory, intracultural, intercultural and multilingual education. It focuses on the needs and expectations of people at risk of marginalization and historically excluded due to disability or social disadvantage. The Patriotic Agenda 2025 aims to promote universal access to primary and secondary education and increase access to tertiary, technical, alternative and special education. Other objectives include providing appropriate attention to students with disabilities, learning difficulties or exceptional abilities and creating language and culture institutes to guarantee inclusion of indigenous peoples.

Colombia's Ten-Year Plan for Education 2016–26 discusses ethnicity and the need to recognize cultural diversity and promote inclusion. The Special Rural Education Plan aims to strengthen teaching and learning in rural contexts. Costa Rica, in the 2014 Pact for an Accessible and Inclusive Country, agreed to establish an inclusive education policy promoting equity and a good-quality education for people with disabilities at all levels of formal and technical education, as well as education programmes for adults with multiple intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

In Jamaica, an objective of the 2011–20 education strategic plan is to ensure all children have access to education opportunities appropriate for their developmental age and stage. It aims to establish conditions allowing special needs and gifted students to learn at their own pace and expand their areas of interest beyond the established curriculum. In Suriname, the 2017–21 Development Plan's strategic goal is 'an education system that reflects the multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual Surinamese society' where 'customized programs, make teaching more accessible' (Suriname Planning Bureau Foundation, 2017, p. 140).

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Policies targeting students with disabilities are not necessarily inclusive

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BOX 2.2

Education for prisoners requires more attention in the regional policy agenda

The UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, known as the Havana Rules, were adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 45/113 in 1990. They affirm the importance of education and training for prisoners. Rule 38 expressly acknowledges that ‘[e]very juvenile of compulsory school age has the right to education suited to his or her needs and abilities and designed to prepare him or her for return to society’ and promotes education continuity after release. The rules also propose standards or conditions, particularly regarding special learning needs (cultural, ethnic or cognitive), learning environments (classroom space, library provision), certification of education and training activities, and training for future employment.

A UN Human Rights Council report recommended that education for people in detention should be ‘guaranteed and entrenched in constitutional and/or other legislative instruments’, ‘adequately resourced from public funds’ and in ‘compliance with the standards set forth in international law’ (Muñoz, 2009). A meta-analysis in the United States found that prison education reduced probability of recidivism by 13 percentage points. Increased chance of employment is a key factor, with vocational education having twice the effect of other education types (Davis et al., 2013).

Prisoners tend to have lower literacy levels than their unimprisoned peers. In Honduras, as of 2014, barely 6% of the prison population had a secondary education (El Heraldo, 2014). In Uruguay, 59% of the 501 adolescents admitted in 2018 (of whom 226 were in non-custodial situations and 275 deprived of liberty) had not completed lower secondary education (Baleato, 2020).

Attention to the education of people deprived of liberty has grown. In Argentina, the national programme of prison education was established in 2004. Article 133 of the 2011 law on deprivation of liberty specified that ‘inmates must have full access to education in all its levels and modalities’. Inmates can acquire certification in minimum literacy through the youth and adult literacy programme Encuentro so they can resume their education. The Autonomous City of Buenos Aires has established literacy centres in all its prisons, where 80% of participants continued their primary studies. Resolution 127 of the Federal Education Council established that education should also be provided at higher education levels for youth and adults. The city and province of Buenos Aires and Cordoba and Mendoza provinces have made the most progress in expanding education provision at the university level (IIEP, 2018).

In El Salvador, the Constitution guarantees minors the right to receive education without discrimination, including those in confinement. The Plan El Salvador Educado, drawn up after wide consultation with the public and private sectors, religious bodies and international organizations, contains measures for reintegration and education continuity for imprisoned people (Delgado de Mejía, 2020). The programme Yo Cambio (I Change), established in 2011 and generalized in 2015, operates like a vocational college. Inmates enrol in the course of their choice, giving them a second chance (Lozano, 2019). In Honduras, about 4,000 inmates receive education through three programmes: the Educatodos programme (in 16 prisons), Alfasic (in 8 prisons) and the public school at the Támara National Penitentiary Centre. However, civil society organizations have raised questions over the fact that inmates teach each other and textbooks are not provided (Honduras National Penitentiary Institute, 2019; OFRANEH et al., 2019).

WEAK IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS AND POLICIES HINDERS INCLUSION

To achieve inclusion in education, it is not enough to ensure that norms are in place, translate them into policies and adapt them to take learner needs into account. Appropriate strategies and actions must also be promoted, depending on national contexts as shaped by

“ The number of policies on the education rights of migrants and refugees in the region has increased, especially since the crisis in Venezuela that began in 2016 ”

historical, political, cultural and socio-economic factors. However, policies are often weakly planned, resulting in inconsistency across the system and failures in execution.

Several countries in the region have not effectively met their commitments (Payà Rico, 2010). A 2019 study commissioned by the Inter-American Development Bank identified challenges to realizing inclusive education for people with disabilities; among them were inadequate resources, late or insufficient identification of needs, inadequate teacher training, inaccessible infrastructure and lack of assistive technology (Hincapié et al., 2019). This matches the results of a global review of 85 country reports on CRPD implementation for the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which found the disconnect between laws, policies and practice to be a common theme (Leonard Cheshire Disability, 2017).

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The Autonomous City of Buenos Aires has established literacy centres in all its prisons, where 80% of participants continued their primary studies

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Governments sometimes equivocate on the extent to which inclusion laws commit them to include students with disabilities in mainstream schools. They may continue to encourage education to be provided in special schools, residential institutions and at home. Even when learners attend mainstream classes, they may do so part time, spending the rest in special classes and schools. Laws promoting inclusion in education may coexist with contradictory laws promoting special education in separate settings, which prevents the emergence of a shared understanding of inclusive education and places obstacles in the way of implementation.

In 2018, despite Chile's school inclusion law, it still had 2,027 special schools. Of the more than 180,000 students with special education needs (5.1% of total enrolment), 91% attended private subsidized establishments (Holz, 2018). In Ecuador, inclusive mainstream schools coexist with *instituciones de educación especializadas*, segregated institutions exclusively for students with disabilities (Ecuador Ministry of Education, 2018). The government is keen to move towards full inclusion by transforming these institutions into resource centres but the commitment is yet to be reflected in a ministerial plan. In Nicaragua, inclusive education is one of the 2017–21 education plan's strategic priorities but one-third of about 10,000 students with disabilities were in special schools in 2019 (Fonseca and Pförtner, 2020).

In some countries, special education is embedded in the national education system. In Argentina, Article 42 of the 2006 general education law calls for integration of students with disabilities at all levels and modalities of education, 'according to the capabilities of each person' (Argentina Government, 2006). Brazil's 1996 general education law established that mainstream schools were the preferred place for delivering education for students with disabilities or development disorders, as well as gifted students. But in some states, special education is delivered separately in schools run by charities, NGOs or medical institutions. In Cuba, children with severe physical-motor limitations are taught in their homes by mobile teachers and in special classrooms in hospital centres (EcuRed, 2020).

Where multiple norms exist, confusion and misinformation can result, especially when coordination is poor. Analysis of the GEM Report Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER) on inclusion suggests that 32 countries regulate education for people with disabilities with an education law, 6 with a special education law and 11 with a dedicated disability law. In five countries, different sources coexist.

Similar problems affect the inclusion of other groups. The Colombian Institute for Educational Evaluation has eased assessment requirements to allow migrant students without valid identification documents to sit the Saber 11 secondary education graduation and tertiary education entry examination. However, delivery of results is conditional on having a document valid in Colombia. Venezuelan students without regular immigration status and identification documents cannot therefore receive their Saber 11 results, which means they can neither receive their secondary school certificate nor enrol in tertiary education (UNDP Colombia, 2020).

In Peru, the regulatory framework for rural education inclusion is fairly recent and still lacks an approved action plan, which could cause it to lose momentum (Montero and Uccelli, 2020). Lack of clarity due to contradictory legislation and policies can be a potent exclusion factor, as in the Dominican Republic for undocumented students of Haitian descent (**Box 2.3**). Lack of attention to the intersection of poverty, race, gender and disability jeopardizes the realization of inclusive education.

CONCLUSION

Several countries in the region are moving towards establishing inclusive education systems through laws and policies, in some ways more effectively than in other parts of the world. However, country experiences reveal that the realization of inclusive education requires more than sound legislative and policy frameworks. Effective implementation depends on strong governance structures and adequate financial resources, learning environments and materials; trained teachers; and school leaders who work with communities and their organizations, students and their parents. The following chapters discuss these factors in turn. It is only when all the pieces are in place that inclusive education can be realized, which requires political willingness and commitment to include those furthest behind.

BOX 2.3**In the Dominican Republic, limited knowledge about legislation and policies increases the risk of exclusion**

In the Dominican Republic, according to the 2015 National Labour Force Survey, about 12% of 12- to 17-year-olds not attending school indicated lack of documentation as the main reason (Kit and España, 2017). Those in the poorest 40% of the population are most at risk. According to UNICEF data, about 27% of those in the poorest quintile and 12% of those in the second poorest have not had their births registered. Students who lack identity documents cannot be registered in the school management information system, sit examinations or graduate (Waddick, 2020).

No formal government policies explicitly address inclusion of undocumented students and migrants (Waddick, 2020). In 2005, the case of the Girls Yean and Bosico vs the Dominican Republic was brought to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights after the government refused to deliver birth certificate copies to Dilcia Yean

and Violeta Bosico, thus preventing them from attending school; both were of Haitian descent but born in the Dominican Republic. The court ruled against the government, obliging it to establish laws respecting the right to nationality, but it has not yet done so (Amuedo-Dorantes et al., 2017; Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2015; Petrozziello, 2018).

The Ministry of Education issued Circular 18-2011 mandating inclusion, but it did not specify that undocumented students and immigrants must be included in secondary schools. Many teachers, head teachers and families believe undocumented students and immigrants are not allowed to study at secondary level. Contradictory messages from the ministry and confusion regarding documentation requirements contribute to exclusion of immigrant, stateless and undocumented students with irregular status (Reyes and Drake, 2016).

“ Laws promoting inclusion in education may coexist with contradictory laws promoting special education in separate settings, which prevents the emergence of a shared understanding of inclusive education and places obstacles in the way of implementation ”



Visit to a school near Manaus, in the Brazilian state of Amazonas.

CREDIT: UNESCO/Andrés Pascoe

CHAPTER

3

Governance and finance

KEY MESSAGES

Horizontal collaboration is needed to share information, set standards and sequence support services.

- Multidisciplinary social programmes target vulnerable children through diverse information sources. In Colombia, the Más Familias en Acción conditional cash transfer programme serves 2.7 million poor families, which are targeted through three registries that certify vulnerability on the basis of extreme poverty, internal displacement and indigenous ethnic identity.
- Bureaucracy, unclear roles and overlapping responsibilities can become barriers to effective service provision. In Peru, rural schools are the responsibility of two separate entities. This fragmentation may limit the effectiveness of service provision.

Horizontal collaboration with non-government actors should serve clear policy objectives.

- Paraguay's education ministry and National Commission for Persons with Disabilities worked with the Saraki Foundation and international agencies to define inclusive education guidelines for privately subsidized and privately run education institutions.
- Governments need to strengthen regulation of private schools if they undermine equity. Chile's voucher system has greatly increased socio-economic school segregation.

Inclusive education requires vertical collaboration among government levels.

- Decentralizing education services can enable them to adjust to local needs and collaborate with communities, as seen with zonal bilingual intercultural education coordinators in Ecuador and regional special needs coordinators in Jamaica.
- Nevertheless, decentralization may present implementation complexities. In Colombia, unclear communication about a programme to enrol Venezuelan children caused regions to interpret regulations, procedures and requirements in different ways.

Disadvantaged students need coherent support to transition between education levels.

- The transition between education levels is a difficult moment that can trigger dropout. Uruguay works with at-risk students during the second semester of the last primary grade.
- Argentina provides a scholarship system to facilitate access and progression for poor students in undergraduate education at national universities and university institutes.

Latin America and the Caribbean has prioritised spending on education.

- Education expenditure as a percentage of GDP in Latin America and the Caribbean increased from 3.9% in 2000 to 5.6% in 2017, the highest for all regions.

Equity and inclusion require targeting resources to disadvantaged schools and students in need.

- In Brazil, FUNDEB, the basic education equalization fund, which redistributes federal, state and municipal resources, reduced inequality between municipalities by 12% in five years.
- Several countries offer financial support to facilitate mainstreaming of students with disabilities. In Cuba, a transition plan is designed for each student going from a special to a mainstream school, with tasks for schools, families and communities.
- Social protection financing policies and programmes also target students and families. Since the 1990s, conditional cash transfer programmes in Latin America have increased education attainment by 0.5 to 1.5 years.

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Education governance encompasses a dense network of institutions, rules and norms that determine policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. A review of governance arrangements in education should capture formal administrative and management systems, such as the degree of decentralization; key players' participation in education policymaking; funding arrangements; and accountability mechanisms (Vaillant, 2012). It should also capture the informal processes that distribute power in these systems and determine decision making at all levels. Education governance regimes may be more or less inclusive, depending on which actors and views are involved, represented and heard in decision making. Once decisions are made, the financing of education puts regulations, policies and programmes into action. Inclusiveness in education can be promoted or hindered by the mechanisms used to allocate resources, the approaches to targeting those in need and the effectiveness with which the funded policies and programmes are implemented.

This chapter, accordingly, addresses two issues. First, it looks at collaboration, cooperation and coordination in light of the need to break down silos in policy formulation and implementation, the hallmark of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with an emphasis on how education ministries establish partnerships between education levels, between government levels, with other

sectors and with non-government stakeholders. Second, it looks at the financing of education services for equity and inclusion, including mechanisms to allocate education sector resources to regions, schools and students in need, and social protection resources that can have an impact on education by targeting vulnerable groups.

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION HELP BUILD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEMS

To effectively implement the regulations and strategies needed to achieve and secure inclusion in education, collaboration, cooperation and coordination among stakeholders are essential, whether within the education system (from early childhood to adult education), across sectors (for example, between education, health and social protection entities), across government levels (from central to local) or between government and non-state institutions (such as civil society and the private sector) (Figure 3.1).

Horizontal collaboration is a precondition for inclusive education

Governance structures that bring together government agencies to coordinate provision of education and social services encourage collaboration and more comprehensive identification of problems and solutions

involving disadvantaged populations. In the case of education, such structures allow for greater consideration of a child’s full set of needs, not only education but also nutrition and physical and mental health, among other things. By improving needs identification and promoting accessibility, integrated services can also positively affect outcomes for those with complex needs.

Colombia’s Directorate of Populations and Intersectoral Projects of the Ministry of National Education is responsible for ethno-education and compliance with regulations governing the education of vulnerable populations. Education policies aimed at Afro-descendants are agreed on in the National Pedagogical Commission of Black Communities (Corbetta et al., 2020). The ministry provides guidelines for learners with disabilities and works with entities attached to it, such as the national institutes for the blind and for the deaf. It also works with the Colombian Institute for Educational Evaluation to design tests in accessible formats and with reasonable accommodation for learners with disabilities (ICFES, 2018).

Cuba has 203 Diagnostic and Guidance Centres, where multidisciplinary teams identify and assess the needs of children with disabilities, using a psycho-pedagogical approach, and advise families. The centres can also provide home education services (PEER, 2020).

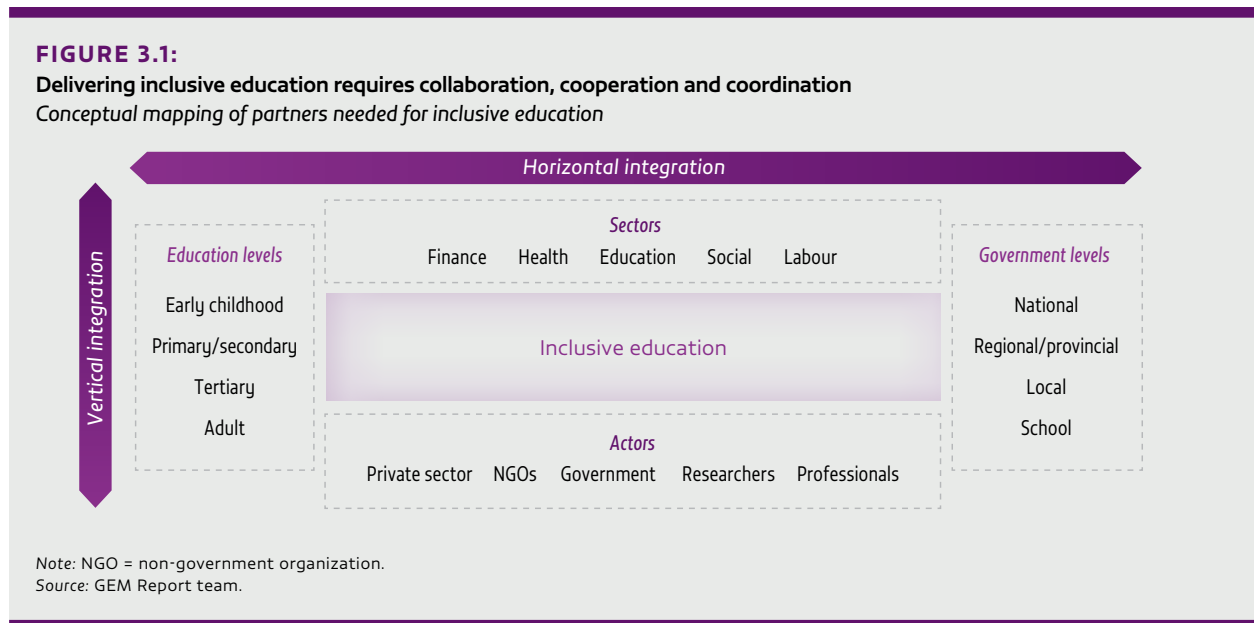
Special units and institutes have been established within education ministries to work horizontally on policies to address gender inequality. Chile developed a 2015–18 plan proposing education policies with a gender perspective. Measures included setting up a Gender Equity Unit in

the Ministry of Education and training professional and technical teams working in the ministry and across the sector. Costa Rica’s National Women’s Institute implements education policies for gender equality (PEER, 2020).

Special units and joint work within and between ministries may not always be efficient. Deep bureaucracy, unclear roles and overlapping responsibilities can become barriers to effective service provision. In Peru, two divisions of the Vice Ministry for Education Management are responsible for education services in rural areas: the General Directorate for Regular Basic Education and the General Directorate for Alternative, Intercultural Bilingual Education and Rural Education Services. Although the latter should be in charge of rural schools, the institutional arrangement leaves out of its responsibility all monolingual Spanish pre-primary schools, 7% of rural primary schools and 98% of on-site rural secondary schools (Montero and Uccelli, 2020).

Some multidisciplinary social programmes that disburse cash benefits conditional on children’s use of a range of education and health services determine access to benefits on the basis of household income

“ Education governance regimes may be more or less inclusive, depending on which actors and views are involved, represented and heard in decision making ”



and means tests. In Colombia, Más Familias en Acción (More Families in Action) is a cash transfer programme conditional on school attendance and health service use. It serves 2.7 million poor families targeted through two complementary mechanisms. First, three registries are used to certify vulnerability: beneficiaries of the extreme poverty programme Red Unidos (United Network), victims of displacement and those enumerated in the Indigenous Census. Second, the National Planning Department's multidimensional Beneficiary Identification System for Social Programmes index uses proxy characteristics to estimate living standards. The programme's management information system uses information technology to improve operational efficiency and reduce families' participation costs (Medellín and Sánchez Prada, 2015).

Horizontal collaboration between government and non-government actors is needed

In many Latin American and Caribbean countries, governments work with non-government institutions to improve service coverage and meet specific needs of marginalized groups. Non-government organizations (NGOs) can identify and highlight gaps and needs not properly met by the state. Effective change advocacy capacity may help mobilize society towards a more inclusive education system. NGOs also innovate, experimenting with approaches that may be more difficult to test in public institutions due to scale and norms. In addition, they may be more agile in natural disaster response and temporarily bridge gaps during crisis periods and the aftermath. This type of public-private partnership can be useful and necessary in the short and medium term.

In Nicaragua, the Maricela Toledo Organization for the Blind works with the Ministry of Education to strengthen the capacity of teachers in mainstream schools on Braille, orientation and mobility, as well as providing adapted materials such as rulers and Braille paper for use in classrooms and arranging for students to be accompanied to school. The Nicaraguan Association for Community Integration has carried out capacity development activities for people with disabilities, families, organizations, communities, education authorities, teachers and academics on rights, leadership, organization and inclusive education (Fonseca and Pfortner, 2020). In Paraguay, the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities worked with the Saraki Foundation, which focuses on intellectual disabilities, and with international agencies to define the 2018 Guidelines for an Inclusive Education System for privately subsidized and privately run educational institutions (Velázquez, 2020).

“ Special units and institutes have been established within education ministries to work horizontally on policies to address gender inequality ”

In certain cases, public-private partnerships have been developed to reach groups historically excluded from the education system or to meet demand not satisfied by the state. In Honduras, NGOs have been serving students who are usually marginalized from the educational system. Funding and provision of technical assistance by these NGOs depend largely on international cooperation, which is achieved through bilateral agreements with development cooperation agencies (Moncada and Bonilla-Larios, 2020). However, in the long term such outsourcing of education delivery can obscure weaknesses in the public system and put vulnerable populations' social rights at risk, since ultimately the government must be the guarantor of the right to an inclusive and equitable education of good quality (González, 2017). The operation of private schools represents one such case (**Box 3.1**).

Promotion of inclusion in education for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) students often rests with civil society (Barrientos and Lovera, 2020). In Chile, while the Children's Ombudsman (Defensoría de la Niñez), a public institution, specializes in cross-cutting defence of child and adolescent rights, it is civil society organizations and foundations linked to the LGTBI movement that have provided political momentum, offering training to school communities to prevent and resolve situations of school violence against LGBTI students (Rojas et al., 2020).

VERTICAL COLLABORATION IS CRITICAL FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Decentralizing education services can increase their relevance because it allows for adjustment to local needs and enables collaboration with communities. In Ecuador, a 2019 resolution established the institutional structure of the intercultural education law, which includes a central level comprising the education minister and the secretary and technical sub-secretary of the Bilingual Intercultural Education System, and a local level, based at the Zonal Direction of each region (Ecuador Presidency, 2019). In Jamaica, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information deployed one Regional Special Needs Coordinator to each of the seven regions to help public and private schools cater for students with disabilities (PEER, 2020).

Nevertheless, decentralization may present implementation complexities, especially when actors at different levels do not share the same objectives and communication is inadequate (Guerra and Lastra-Anadón, 2019; Welsh and McGinn, 1999). One of the main obstacles Venezuelans face in getting access to education is availability of places for new students. In Colombia, the Ministry of National Education established the Educational Route for the Care of Venezuelan Migrant Children and Adolescents and there has been an exponential increase in primary and lower secondary school enrolment. The ministry has provided information about the programme to departmental and municipal education secretariats, which should have passed on the guidance to local education bodies. But the communication strategy and preparation process for the programme have been inadequate, which means regulations are interpreted in a variety of ways, and procedures and requirements have differed geographically (UNDP Colombia, 2020).

Community participation in school governance can help ensure content relevance in remote areas. Nicaragua's

“Chile's voucher system and education quasi-market has not improved quality but has increased segregation”

Regional Autonomous Education Subsystem organizes, directs and manages education in municipalities and communities of the autonomous regions of the Caribbean coast. It operates on a participatory model whose management is decentralized and autonomous and which responds to the education realities, needs, desires and priorities of its multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural population (PEER, 2020).

A major challenge of community participation in school governance is securing adequate resources. Honduras, through the 2011 Law for Strengthening Public Education and Community Participation, aimed to develop community capacity to meet education challenges and optimize use of assigned resources.

BOX 3.1

Privatization can undermine efforts towards inclusive education

The share of private school enrolment in Latin America and the Caribbean is above average in primary education (20.2%, compared with 17.5% globally) but below average in secondary education (19.1% and 26.5%, respectively). In some countries, privatization has been the result of pro-market education reforms. Voucher programmes have been implemented nationwide in Chile. In Bogotá, Colombia, concession schools, a public-private partnership since 1999, follow the US charter school model: publicly funded but privately managed schools operating with relative regulatory flexibility (Edwards and Termes, 2019).

In some countries, participation by the private sector has resulted from a long historical relationship between the state and the Catholic Church. In their attempts to establish national education systems with broad coverage, Argentina and the Dominican Republic opted for stable alliances with religious organizations that had a strong education presence. Public-private partnerships entail provision of public subsidies to private religious schools, under conditions similar to those for public schools (Verger et al., 2017). In other cases, such as in Haiti and Peru, limited public capacity to provide adequate education for all has resulted in the establishment of low-fee private schools. In Haiti, 88% of schools are run for profit (Balarín, 2015; UNICEF, 2016).

Those in favour of private schools and voucher programmes argue that they increase access, quality and equity, develop innovative pedagogical practices and improve public spending effectiveness (Patrinos et al., 2009). However, research shows mixed results, which depend on country, programme design and research strategy (Waslander et al., 2010; Urquiola, 2016; Epple et al., 2017). Those against privatization argue that it challenges the concept of education as a human right and social good, stratifies education systems and undermines equity. Chile's voucher system and education quasi-market has not improved quality but has increased segregation (Gonzalez, 2020; OECD, 2016). Bogotá's concession schools have negatively affected teacher working conditions (Edwards and Termes, 2019).

Competition in education systems tends to exclude disadvantaged students, who are under-represented in private and semi-private schools. Moreover, the market approach in education frequently concentrates students with disabilities in special schools, contradicting the notion of inclusive education as education in diversity. Finally, education strategies in privatization contexts tend towards standardization, which reduces the flexibility necessary for inclusive education. Within such a framework, private schools may resist adaptations for students with disabilities, outsourcing the support they may need and transferring the costs to families (CLADE, 2020).

“

In Colombia, the Ministry of National Education established the Educational Route for the Care of Venezuelan Migrant Children and there has been an exponential increase in primary and lower secondary school enrolment

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School development councils and community and district education development councils were formed and given education support functions and powers to plan, monitor and evaluate education processes (Moncada and Bonilla-Larios, 2020).

Transition between education levels requires coherence and coordination

The transition between education levels is a moment that can determine engagement with school and trigger dropout, particularly among poorer students (Román, 2013). While programmes to assist in transition are fundamental for inclusion, current programmes have had limited impact.

Colombia's Comprehensive Community Homes programme, focusing on children from poor and indigenous families, offers comprehensive care to children under 5. Community education agents, supported by interdisciplinary teams, visit children in their homes to prepare them for entry into primary education (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, 2020; UNESCO, 2013). De Cero a Siempre (From Zero to Forever), initiated in 2011 and confirmed in legislation in 2016, is based on an integrated package of services each child should receive from birth to age 6. It integrates services horizontally among government departments and vertically between the national and subnational government levels (Santos Calderón, 2018).

The transition from primary to secondary school is critical, as it often involves not only changing schools but also experiencing new cultures, environments, classmates and teachers, and potentially increased distance from home. More than a natural process, this transition may produce a radical change in students' education paths (Román, 2013). To address this issue, with a special focus on children of lower socio-economic status, in 2011 Uruguay's Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Health created the Education Transit Programme, which works with students at risk during the second semester of the last grade of primary school and includes support activities throughout the first semester of secondary education (da Silveira, 2014).

In the case of the transition between secondary and tertiary education, initiatives exist to prepare and enable students to gain access to post-secondary opportunities and benefit from them. In Argentina, the National Programme of University Scholarships, established by ministerial resolution in 1996, promotes equal opportunity through a scholarship system that facilitates access and progression of poor students in undergraduate education at national universities or university institutes. A subprogramme focuses on learners with disabilities (Leivas, 2020).

THERE ARE SEVERAL ROUTES TO FINANCING EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

If equity and inclusion are to be achieved, adequate funding must reach schools and students according to need. Countries pursue policies of varying nature and intensity to mitigate the impact on education of vulnerabilities such as poverty, ethnicity, disability and remoteness. In general, three funding levers are important in analysing financing for equity and inclusion in education.

First, governments pursue an overall policy of financing local authorities or schools. Such policies range from those aimed at ensuring that every authority or school receives the same level of resources per student (equality) to those intended to take into account characteristics of areas or schools or their student populations (equity). Policies may vary by type of school or type of financial, human resource or material input; approaches for distribution of maintenance grants, for instance, may differ from those for teacher appointments or equipment purchases. Less frequently, allocations may be determined by outcomes or have a performance element. General policies focusing on equality may be complemented by specific programmes compensating for disadvantage.

Second, education financing policies and programmes may target students and their families rather than authorities and schools. Assistance may be in the form of

cash (e.g. scholarships) or exemptions from payment (e.g. of fees), or in kind (e.g. school meals).

Third, some financing policies and programmes targeting students and families are not education-specific but nevertheless affect equity and inclusion in education. These tend to be social protection programmes, such as conditional cash transfers or child grants with an education component that aim to address poverty, sometimes with a gender dimension. Targeting mechanisms tend to be well articulated and regularly evaluated.

For each funding lever, the key aspects to consider, when examining the potential impact on equity, are whether specific policies or programmes to reallocate resources to disadvantaged areas or populations exist (and, if so, using what targeting criteria); the absolute volume or relative depth of spending (e.g. average transfer size); and coverage in terms of percentage of schools, students or families reached. Several countries in the region have established financial mechanisms to address social exclusion. However, gaps persist, since efforts can be insufficient and not well institutionalized (Ibarra Rosales, 2017).

Latin America and the Caribbean has prioritized education in spending

Domestic resource mobilization is a key priority to achieve SDG 4. The Education 2030 Framework for Action set two benchmarks: at least 4% of gross domestic product (GDP) and at least 15% of total public expenditure should be dedicated to education. Although they are not binding, meeting neither benchmark would signal that education is not being sufficiently prioritized.

Globally, 44 of the 141 countries with data for 2014–18 did not meet either benchmark. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this was the case for seven of the countries with data, mostly in the Caribbean: Dominica, El Salvador, Grenada, Haiti, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Turks and Caicos Islands. Only 12 countries met both benchmarks. For each of the 2 education spending indicators, 3 countries from the region featured among the top 10 countries worldwide: Montserrat (8.3%), Belize (7.4%) and Costa Rica (7.0%) by percentage of GDP; and

Costa Rica (26.1%), Guatemala (23.8%) and Honduras (23.0%) by percentage of total public expenditure.

The global trend in education expenditure over 2000–17 was strikingly flat for the two main indicators. Expenditure in education as a share of GDP fluctuated around 4.5% (4.7% when weighted by size of GDP). Expenditure as a share of total public expenditure fluctuated around 14.6%. By contrast, expenditure levels in Latin America and the Caribbean increased rapidly from 3.9% in 2000 to 5.6% in 2017, the highest of all regions (**Figure 3.2a**). This resulted both from rising public expenditure, up from 22.6% of GDP in 2000 to 27.2% in 2015 (ECLAC, 2018), and increasing priority on education in total public expenditure, which rose from 13.1% in 2002 to 16.5% in 2017 (**Figure 3.2b**).

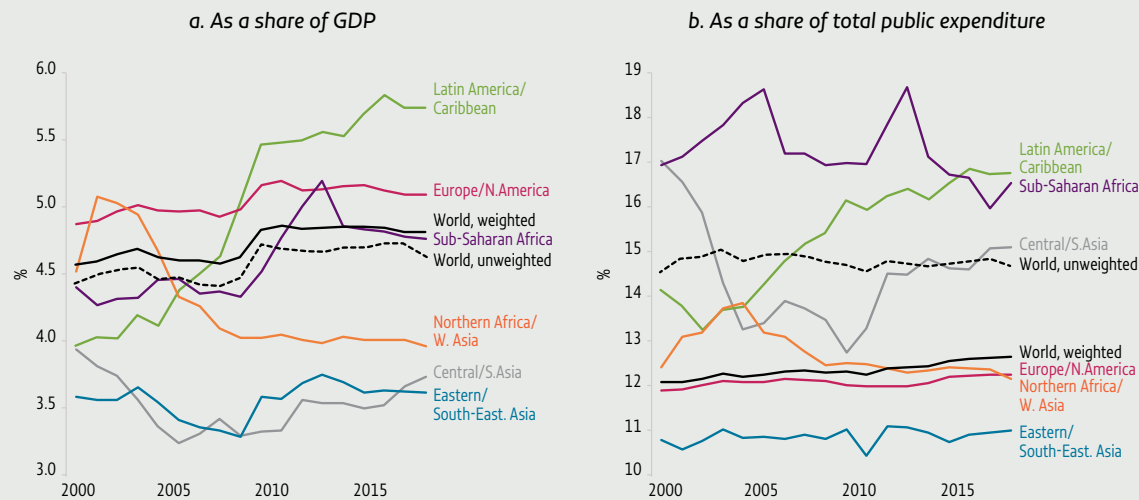
The first step to equity is targeting funding to subnational governments and schools

Countries in the region differ in their administrative structures and the extent to which governments ensure equity in financing education. It is easier to allocate funds more evenly in centralized countries, but such systems may struggle to respond to differentiated needs. In Nicaragua, where budget execution is centralized, less than 2% of the education budget is administered at the departmental and municipal levels (PEER, 2020). In decentralized and federal countries, redistributive tools are used to balance resource allocation in varying degrees. Almost all public funding of primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education comes from the central government in Chile (97%), Colombia (90%) and Mexico (79%). In Argentina, most public funding comes from the provinces (88%), while in Brazil, 44% of funding comes from state governments and 42% from municipal governments (**Figure 3.3**).

As subnational government capacity to raise revenue differs, central governments introduce mechanisms to redistribute education funding to reduce gaps. But these do not always succeed as intended. Education financing in Argentina, a federal country, is in three parts. First, automatic transfers are made from the federal government to provincial governments. Rules for some of these transfers are set in the 2006 education financing law, which takes rural and out-of-school populations into account (Argentina Government, 2006). However, transfers do not sufficiently account for provincial differences (Rivas and Dborkin, 2018). Second, the education and public administration ministries make non-automatic transfers to provinces and municipalities in implementing their nationwide programmes. The effect on inequality is hard to estimate. Third, provinces co-finance education from their revenue, which provides the bulk of total education spending (Bertoni et al., 2018).

“ General policies focusing on equality may be complemented by specific programmes compensating for disadvantage ”

FIGURE 3.2:
Latin America and the Caribbean have spent more than any other region on education
Education expenditure, global and regional averages, 2000–17



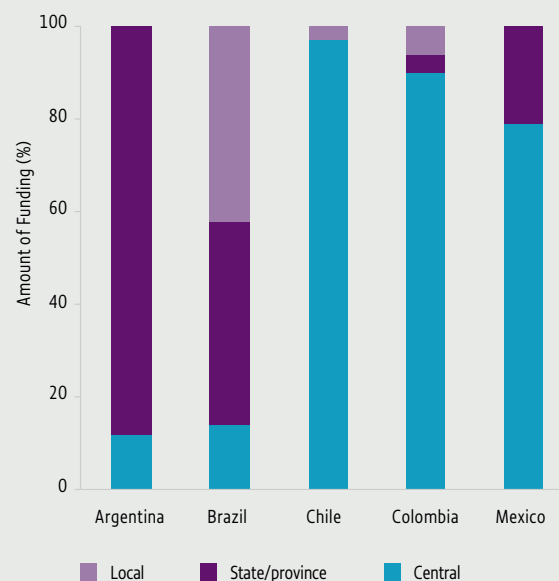
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on UIS and World Bank databases.

This revenue varies a lot, which makes it a major source of inequality. Calls have been made for a more centralized model to address interprovincial inequality and for a review of non-automatic transfers to increase their effect on inequality (Claus and Sanchez, 2019). Compared with Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico, Argentina had the highest capacity to redistribute resources but also the highest level of inter-regional inequality, which has remained stagnant (González, 2019).

In Brazil, the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and Valorization of Education Professionals (Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação, FUNDEB) was established in 2007 to redistribute federal, state and municipal resources to reduce inequality between rich and poor municipalities. It has been estimated that such inequality decreased by 12% in five years as a result of the fund, but the mechanism did not totally eliminate the gaps (Bertoni et al, 2018).

Funding formulas for schools are structured, non-discretionary mechanisms for allocating resources, which ensure equal treatment for all and promote transparency, recognizing the higher costs involved in serving disadvantaged populations. They abolish the inertia of allocation rules based on historical patterns and can be used to foster horizontal and vertical equality, efficiency and inclusion. As these formulas involve fixed rules,

FIGURE 3.3:
The degree of decentralization of education financing differs among the largest Latin American countries
Primary, secondary education and post-secondary non-tertiary education funding sources, by level of government, selected Latin American countries, 2017 or latest available year



Note: The data for Argentina were adjusted proportionally, since the data reported to OECD for local government funds were missing.
 Source: SUMMA team estimate based on OECD data.

decision makers at the national, local and school levels can anticipate future income. However, the mechanisms require well-developed information systems and reliable, detailed data, which are not common in the region. The systems can become complex, bureaucratic and rigid. They need to be able to adjust to ad hoc requirements and situations, such as those caused by migration or natural disasters. In the Dominican Republic, for example, schools receive general funding for teacher salaries and basic expenditure; additional resource allocation is based on the number of officially recognized students, thus penalizing schools with a high proportion of undocumented students (Waddick, 2020).

At the very minimum, funding formulas consider the geographical location (urban or rural) and education level (from pre-primary to secondary vocational) (Bertoni et al, 2018). In Brazil, the National Education Development Fund (Fundo Nacional do Desenvolvimento da Educação, FNDE) recognizes that costs differ by school. For instance, the annual per-student allocation in rural schools is 15% higher than in urban schools. FNDE also funds purchases of textbooks and learning materials as well as transport for rural primary schools (Rolon and Vieira, 2020). In Nicaragua, schools receive income according to enrolment, education level and geographical location based on an equity index, which determines operating cost per student (PEER, 2020).

An example of a more innovative and effective reform is Chile's Preferential Education Subsidy (Subvención Escolar Preferencial), which provides substantial additional resources for the schools serving the poorest students. It includes a fixed amount per primary school student, about US\$1,500 per year in purchasing power parity terms, and a poverty concentration factor, which increases the funding amount depending on the proportion of poor students in the school, allocating around 50% more per poor student. This policy combines higher accountability levels with a greater financial contribution from the state, enabling schools to develop multi-year education improvement strategies and to receive external technical and pedagogical support. The policy has had a positive impact on inclusion of poorer children and on learning outcomes (Carrasco et al., 2020).

Allocation methods that are not formula-based, such as negotiation, administrative discretion, historical allocation

and project-based allocation, continue to be used in some countries, including Argentina and Peru (Bertoni et al., 2018). Whatever the rules used to allocate resources, it is essential for governments to monitor resource use to ensure that it serves education system objectives, such as inclusion (**Box 3.2**).

BOX 3.2

Accountability and monitoring foster effective resource use

Education resources are limited, so leakage and diversions, as well as ineffective and inefficient use, hinder inclusion. Latin American and Caribbean countries have introduced various ways to ensure education resources are used to fulfil the purpose for which they were provided and avoid corruption and mismanagement.

Top-down accountability strategies include Argentina's Education Resource Transfer System, which registers every transfer from the national to the provincial and school levels. Chile formed an independent agency to control and audit whether schools fulfil their financial and administrative obligations, with online and onsite inspections focusing particularly on resources targeted towards students with disabilities and poor students. The Controller General of the Peruvian Republic can audit any public institution (Bertoni et al., 2018).

External groups can also ensure accountability. In Brazil, Monitoring and Social Control Councils (Conselhos de Acompanhamento e Controle Social), composed of diverse social actors, are responsible for monitoring the use of FUNDEB funds. In Chile, schools are obliged to inform school councils about the use of public funds (Bertoni et al, 2018).

A rigorous policy to monitor effectiveness and efficiency is required to ensure that the education system promotes inclusion (Izquierdo et al., 2018). Colombia's Higher Education Inclusion Index allows institutions to assess the degree to which they meet diversity and inclusion targets in tertiary education. In Honduras, the Subdirector General of Education for Persons with Different Abilities or Exceptional Talents has a planning, monitoring and evaluation division, which monitors the quality of education services provided to students with disabilities, special needs and exceptional talents at different levels and modalities (PEER, 2020).

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In Brazil, the basic education equalization fund, FUNDEB, was established in 2007 to redistribute federal, state and municipal resources to reduce inequality between rich and poor municipalities

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Education and social programmes targeting disadvantaged students are needed to level the field

Education financing policies may target not only regions and schools but also disadvantaged learners and their families in order to ease financial and other constraints. In Colombia, for example, the government has allocated resources to ensure Venezuelan learners' access to education. For instance, the Ministry of National Education increased the number of beneficiaries of free meals from 18,000 in 2018 to 117,500 in 2019. The ministry estimated that it needed US\$160 million per year for school feeding for Venezuelan students (UNDP Colombia, 2020). A variety of arrangements exist in the region for learners with disabilities (**Box 3.3**).

In many cases, however, at-risk students do not receive the resources they need. In El Salvador, students deprived of liberty receive a small fraction of the per-student annual expenditure that is invested in students in mainstream schools (Delgado de Mejia, 2020). In Suriname, public schools charge annual fees of US\$4 per

student. Religious schools previously charged the same rate, but they introduced a US\$35 fee per student in 2018. Indigenous and Afro-descendant parents from the interior, where schools are few in number, could face a disproportionate burden depending on the kind of school available in their community (Kambel, 2020).

Beyond targeting regions and schools in need, the scope of education budgets to allocate resources to individual disadvantaged learners is relatively limited. Social protection programmes, however, present a key

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 Whatever the rules used to allocate resources, it is essential for governments to monitor resource use to ensure that it serves education system objectives, such as inclusion
 ”

BOX 3.3

Financing disability-inclusive education presents policymakers with a challenge

General financing that promotes equity and mainstreams disadvantaged students may fail learners with disabilities, as fulfilling their need for specific support is costlier (CLADE, 2020; UNICEF, 2012). A twin-track approach to financing may be needed, involving addressing exclusion from general programmes and introducing targeted programmes (IDDC and Light for the World, 2016).

Three main issues confront policymakers. First, they need to interpret national legislation by defining standards for services to be delivered and costs to be covered. Second, they need to be able to meet increased costs when special needs identification rates rise and design ways to prioritize, finance and deliver targeted services for a wide range of needs. Third, they need to define results in a way that maintains pressure on local authorities and schools to avoid further earmarking services for children with diagnosed special needs and further segregating settings at the expense of other groups or general financing needs (Center for Inclusive Policy, 2019).

Several countries offer financial support that facilitates mainstreaming of students with disabilities. In Belize, the National Resource Center for Inclusive Education, part of the Ministry of Education, identifies children with special needs in and out of school and provides teacher training to ensure that schools have an accessible and welcoming environment adapted to children's needs (PEER, 2020). Regarding students with disabilities, Chile has special

factors for general and pro-retention subsidies and Colombia for staff salaries. In addition, the Colombian Institute for Education Loans and Overseas Technical Studies administers a financial support fund for students with disabilities (Colombia Ministry of National Education, 2017). In Cuba, a transition plan is designed for each student going from a special to a mainstream school, with tasks for schools, families and communities. Follow-up work identifies issues that continue to hinder their learning (Pérez and Hernández, 2020).

In Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministry of Education Student Support Service coordinates a programme that assigns specialized aides to primary schools within each education district and offers financial support for students with disabilities enrolled in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary schools. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has launched a General Assistance Grant covering transport-related costs for children with special needs not already covered by government funding (PEER, 2020).

By contrast, many countries do not have explicit programmes to support inclusion. Panama offers financial support to poor students with disabilities but it applies to study in special schools (PEER, 2020). The country case studies on Jamaica, Nicaragua and Paraguay that focused on disability did not identify any financing mechanisms to support students with disabilities in mainstream schools.

example of how cross-sector collaboration can contribute to inclusion in education. In particular, cash transfers conditional on school attendance and use of health services, which were rolled out in the late 1990s in Mexico and Brazil (Fiszbein et al., 2009), have been extensively evaluated and found to have consistently positive effects on enrolment, dropout and completion (Snilstveit et al., 2015). Evidence on their long-term effects shows they have increased education attainment by between 0.5 and 1.5 grades (Molina Millán et al., 2019).

Virtually every country in Latin America now has a conditional cash transfer programme. Public expenditure on them varies by country, from 0.01% of GDP in Belize to 0.61% in Argentina. Population coverage ranges from 1.2% in El Salvador to 51% in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. While all the programmes target by poverty, some also target by location or disability (Table 3.1). A review of 35 studies found that making transfers conditional on school attendance had a greater effect on attendance than targeting unconditional transfers to poor people, but the difference was not statistically significant. Positive

effects were greater when conditionality was monitored (Baird et al., 2014).

In the Dominican Republic, in addition to Progresando con Solidaridad, which is a general purpose cash transfer programme, there are conditional cash transfer

“ In Belize, the National Resource Center for Inclusive Education, part of the Ministry of Education, identifies children with special needs in and out of school and provides teacher training to ensure that schools have an accessible and welcoming environment adapted to children’s needs ”

TABLE 3.1:
Conditional cash transfer programme coverage in Latin American and Caribbean countries

Country: Programme	Targeting criteria	Percentage of GDP (year)	Average transfer, US\$ per month	Beneficiaries: Share of population Number
El Salvador: Programa Comunidades Solidarias	Location, poverty	0.18% (2016)	15–20	1.2% 0.38m households
Costa Rica: Avanceemos	Location, poverty, academic performance	0.18% (2017)	53–70	3.7% 0.18m students
Chile: Subsistema de Seguridades y Oportunidades	Poverty	0.03% (N/A)	9	4.4%
Guatemala: Mi Bono Seguro	Location, poverty, pregnant/breastfeeding	0.05% (2017)	65–168	5.9% 0.98m people/0.15m households
Ecuador: Bono de Desarrollo Humano	Location, poverty	0.24% (2017)	50–150	6.3% 1.9m people/0.41m households
Panama: Red de Oportunidades	Location, poverty	0.06% (2017)	25	8.2% 0.33m people/0.05m households
Argentina: Asignación Universal por Hijo	Poverty, disability	0.61% (2016)	75–98	9.0% 3.9m people/2.2m households
Uruguay: Asignaciones Familiares – Plan de Equidad	Poverty, disability	0.34% (2015)	44–305	11.0% 0.38m people/0.14m households
Paraguay: Tekoporã	Poverty, disability	0.16% (2016)	4–104	11.6% 0.78m people/0.14m households
Belize: Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation	Poverty	0.01% (2012)	22–247	16.9% 0.48m people/0.88m households
Honduras: Bono Vida Mejor	Location, poverty	0.25% (2017)	12–14	17.5% 1.6m people/0.27m households
Dominican Republic: Progresando con Solidaridad	Poverty	0.37% (2017)	8–92	33.3% 3.5m people/0.97m households
Bolivia, P. S.: Bono Juancito Pinto	Poverty, disability, public schools	0.18% (2017)	29	51% 2.2m students/1.16m households

Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

mechanisms for education, organized by level: the School Attendance Incentive, which is equal to a monthly payment of US\$5 to US\$15 per poor student in grades 1-8 with attendance rates of at least 80%; the School Bond Studying Progress, which is equal to a monthly payment of US\$8.5 to US\$17 per poor student in grades 9-12 with attendance rates of at least 80%; and the Incentive for Higher Education, which includes a monthly transfer of US\$8.5 for university tuition, books and study materials (Velásquez, 2020).

In Ecuador, the Bono de Desarrollo Humano targeted households that had children under age 16 and were classified as vulnerable according to the socio-economic index of the government's Social Registry database. Ultimately, the programme's conditionality on school attendance was not enforced; however, an evaluation of effects over 10 years found a significant increase, up to 2 percentage points, in secondary school completion (Araujo et al., 2017).

Guatemala implemented the Mi Bono Seguro and Bolsa Social programmes, which provide the poorest families with financial support on the condition that school-age children are enrolled and attend school regularly. Jamaica's Programme of Advancement through Health and Education, which applies a slightly higher subsidy for boys to combat a high rate of boys' dropout, has a component of one school meal three days per week (Clarke, 2020). In Panama, the Bonos Familiares para la Compra de Alimentos, focusing on rural towns and families with high rates of extreme poverty and chronic malnutrition, requires children over the age of 6 to attend school (ECLAC, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Strengthening education governance frameworks is essential to promote inclusion in education. Rules that regulate participating actors' incentives and interactions determine the degree of inclusiveness, in particular by prescribing which actors' views will be represented and heard in policymaking. Structures that facilitate horizontal (between sectors) and vertical (between levels) coordination and collaboration are needed. NGOs can play an important role in education by identifying and responding to needs not met by governments. While public-private partnership may be useful, governments need to prevent a high level of dependency from

“ Guatemala implemented the Mi Bono Seguro and Bolsa Social programmes, which provide the poorest families with financial support on the condition that school-age children are enrolled and attend school regularly

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developing in the long run, as it could undermine the right to inclusive education. The special case of privatization seems to strongly contribute to segregation and inequality in school systems. Intervening to support transitions between education levels is important for disadvantaged students, as dropout levels are high at these critical junctures. While some policies and programmes exist to address this problem, they are still somewhat undeveloped.

With regard to financing, decentralization of education service delivery through deconcentration and delegation may help contextualize education policies and boost local participation. But inequality can be increased if local capacity to cater for marginalized students is limited, central government redistribution programmes are insufficient and communication channels are underdeveloped. Countries' methods for financing regions, schools and students should have a much stronger emphasis on equity, with better use of data and a larger share of resources reallocated to compensate for disadvantage. While the focus of financing efforts should always be on mainstreaming marginalized students, a twin-track approach targeting them is needed, since the cost of serving their support needs is much higher, especially for students with disabilities. Education planners need to recognize synergies with social cash transfer programmes, which often have a strong impact on education attendance and attainment. These programmes need to be complemented with robust accountability and rigorous monitoring systems oriented towards achievement of inclusion.

A boy sits at a desk, in a school in the north-eastern department of San Martín in the Amazon in Peru. Several other children are behind him. The school is among 30 participating in a UNICEF-assisted community education project.

CREDIT: UNICEF/UNI40750/Balaguer



CHAPTER

4

Curricula and
textbooks

KEY MESSAGES

Recognizing cultural diversity means recognizing that knowledge is formed in many ways.

- European linguistic, religious and historical perspectives have been emphasized in the region's education systems, militating against inclusion of non-European traditions and populations, an issue that persists to this day.
- An analysis of Colombian social science textbooks found that 90% of texts described European systems of thought in depth but only 55% presented black cultural history, usually in a non-critical and ahistorical way, beginning and ending with slavery, thus assigning a restricted identity to the black population.

A common knowledge core is essential to build societal cohesion and create more equitable and inclusive societies, politics and economies.

- Curricular design can help celebrate the diversity of society and the commonalities shared by all its members. An analysis of 19 countries shows that concepts of dialogue, diversity and identity are present in 95% of grade 3 and 6 curricula, rights and solidarity in 90% and inclusion, non-discrimination and tolerance in 70%.
- Political participation is central to constructing an inclusive society. But curricula in Colombia, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico and Paraguay do not sufficiently encourage student participation in political activities.

People of any identity should be able to recognize themselves as endowed with value in curricula and textbooks.

- Lack of contextualization or adaptation of curricula is a barrier to inclusion of incarcerated youth. In Uruguay, curricular plans for juvenile detention centres are aimed mainly at over-age populations outside regular youth and adult training programmes.
 - In some countries, adaptation to children's first language has been insufficient. In Anguilla, initiatives for the growing Spanish-speaking community support English as a second language in primary but not secondary school. Suriname offers 'multilingual lessons' of half an hour per week but these are not intended as mother tongue-based multilingual education.
 - Other countries have made important progress incorporating bilingualism, especially for indigenous peoples. In Guatemala, textbooks in Mayan languages have been produced.
 - Intercultural education policies face design and implementation challenges. In Ecuador, only eight lines are dedicated to Afro-Ecuadorians in the grade 8 social studies textbook, and none in the grade 10 textbook.
 - Several countries have made curriculum accessibility a priority. Jamaica's Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education offers a two-year transition programme supporting students, often boys, with additional tailored instruction.
 - Gender issues are misrepresented and under-represented in textbooks. In Peru, textbooks still reproduce traditional gender roles.
 - The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex population is ignored in curriculum design. In Guatemala, it is not mentioned in the national curriculum.
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A curriculum is a social and political construction, and so reflects the context in which it is created

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Inclusion is based on the principle of recognizing, valuing and building upon human diversity. An inclusive education system should recognize the equal dignity of all human beings regardless of their origin or circumstances. By providing differentiated support according to each child's needs and abilities, such a system should offer all children equal opportunities to fulfil their potential by having access to education, progressing through and completing it and achieving valuable learning outcomes. Education systems should not simply recognize differences but instead truly value diversity, incorporating it as an enriching dimension of the education experience for all.

Curricula and textbooks are key components in building inclusive education. In fact, the curriculum may be described as ‘the means through which the principle of inclusion is put into action within an education system’ (IBE, 2008, p. 22). Curricula and textbooks define what is important to learn, how to organize teaching and which learning outcomes are to be achieved. They also transmit and promote a society's explicitly and tacitly valued perspectives, principles, social aspirations and identities. The choices made in designing curricula and textbooks are essential in representing and celebrating both the diversity of society and the commonalities shared by all its members.

However, a curriculum is a social and political construction, and so reflects the context in which it is created. In democratic societies, it is the result of deliberation and negotiation processes that establish and prioritize the key knowledge, skills and values that should be transmitted to the next generation. The process of selecting knowledge to be learned and discourses to be shared is also a process of distribution of power (Cox, 2018). During this process of prioritization, some non-dominant groups can be made invisible, misrepresented or even demeaned. These groups are caught between their desire to access the curriculum and their rejection of the subtle loss of identity that education under this curriculum may entail (García-Huidobro, 2018). The manner in which the curriculum is constructed affects its legitimacy and inclusiveness. A curriculum may be imposed from above or may be the result of dialogue and reflection that incorporates the diversity of perspectives and stakeholders in society.

Another tension lies between a society's current values and the values of the future society that a curriculum helps create. This tension is inherent in the nature of education as an instrument of social continuity and change. Addressing it effectively requires selecting those values that provide a society with identity and continuity and should be maintained, while also developing the

critical skills that may lead to some of these values being questioned (Cox, 2006). One manifestation of this tension is the dispute concerning inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression issues in curricula.

An inclusive curriculum ‘takes into consideration and caters for the diverse needs, previous experiences, interests and personal characteristics of all learners’ and ‘attempts to ensure that all students are part of the shared learning experiences of the classroom and that equal opportunities are provided regardless of learner differences’ (IBE, 2019). This chapter explores three imperatives for an inclusive curriculum: It should recognize and include all forms of knowledge, provide a common but varied base of knowledge to promote a cohesive society, and be adapted and contextualized, considering the differences and needs of students and their communities.

CURRICULA SHOULD RECOGNIZE AND INCLUDE DIVERSE FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE

Recognizing cultural diversity means recognizing that knowledge is formed in many ways through various perspectives about society, life and transcendence (De Sousa Santos, 2010). In the 19th and 20th centuries, Latin American countries developed curricula aimed at consolidating an identity for their new nations, which was based on the dominant, colonial Western heritage (Tedesco, 2012). With little concern for local traditions, four basic areas were prioritized to consolidate this societal project: Spanish language, Catholic religion and European history and geography (Torres and Hurtado, 2020).

This emphasis on European linguistic, religious and historical perspectives was strongly biased against inclusion of non-European traditions and populations, and that focus persists to this day. As long as cultural homogenization was relied on in the construction of national narratives and identities, indigenous culture remained absent from education systems and curricula (Tedesco, 2012). Curricular content has given greater validity and importance to knowledge from western Europe and attributed lesser validity and relevance to knowledge from other cultures, such as those of the region’s Afro-descendant and indigenous peoples (Castillo and Salgado, 2018; De Sousa Santos, 2010; Walsh and García, 2002).

A study that analysed social science school textbooks in Colombia found that 90% of texts devoted considerable space to describing the European systems of thought that emerged during the Renaissance and Early Modern ages, articulating them with the process of conquest and colonization of the American continent. By contrast,

55% presented black cultural history non-critically and ahistorically, beginning and ending with slavery, assigning a restricted identity to the black population (Ibagón, 2018).

Nevertheless, initiatives have been taken even within this context to embed indigenous knowledge in mainstream schools. Several governments have made efforts in recent years to include communities in curriculum development and implementation in order to recognize and value local knowledge. The Colombian Proyecto Educativo Comunitario introduces indigenous community perspectives within the framework of the national education system guidelines (Corbetta et al., 2020). The Mokane indigenous group, for example, has integrated in the curriculum content that refers to indigenous legislation, myths and oral history, and agricultural and community production practices. Schooling respects the Mokane calendar (Peralta Miranda et al., 2019).

CURRICULA SHOULD PROVIDE A COMMON BUT VARIED KNOWLEDGE BASE TO PROMOTE INCLUSION

A common knowledge core is essential to build societal cohesion and create more equitable and inclusive societies, politics and economies. If historically excluded members of society lack access to the knowledge they need to continue their education, enter the labour market and participate in political processes, inequality and exclusion will persist. An inclusive curriculum must consider and include a common and balanced core of competences that can allow all students to thrive in society, regardless of their background, ability or identity.

Since the 1990s, many countries in Latin America have initiated curricular reforms aimed at enabling education systems to respond to the new requirements in both citizenship and economic spheres (Braslavsky, 2001; Dussel, 2005). An analysis of 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries shows that primary education curriculum content in language, mathematics and science in grades 3 and 6 is relatively homogenous across countries, with greater emphasis on competency-based approaches. For instance, communication skills in language and problem-solving in mathematics have been extensively incorporated into curricula (UNESCO, 2020). Fostering fundamental cognitive skills in all students provides the groundwork they need to participate in society effectively and a foundation for inclusive education.

Non-cognitive skills are also essential for effective participation in social and economic life (Bassi et al., 2012). Yet they are not always included in national

curricula. Analysis of grade 3 and 6 curricula in the same 19 countries shows that the concepts of dialogue, diversity, identity and participation are present in 95% of curricula. The concept of dialogue was most present in the Honduran curriculum, while diversity and identity were most frequently cited in Ecuador. The concepts of rights, critical thinking and solidarity were identified in 90% of curricula. Solidarity was most present in Guatemala, while justice had the greatest presence in the Dominican Republic. Finally, the concepts of inclusion, non-discrimination and tolerance appeared in 70% of curricula. Inclusion was most present in Peru, and non-discrimination most strongly present in Colombia. More work remains to be done to foster concepts such as gender equity and empathy in the curriculum (UNESCO, 2020).

Important deficiencies are also observed in relation to preparing students for participation in democratic political processes. Political participation is central to constructing an inclusive society, since the political sphere is where members of society bring together their diverse needs and interests to define institutionally the agreements that will rule their coexistence. However, a review of Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Paraguay suggested that their curricula devoted less space to encouraging student participation in political activities (Cox et al., 2014). This shortcoming makes it less likely that the curriculum will provide the knowledge and attitudes for future generations to build arrangements that favour a more inclusive society on a democratic basis. If political participation is not promoted, it is difficult to counterbalance historical exclusion of socially and politically disadvantaged groups.

CURRICULA SHOULD BE ADAPTED TO TAKE ALL IDENTITIES AND NEEDS INTO ACCOUNT

Adapting the curriculum to different contexts and identities entails 'making reflexive, articulated, and well-founded decisions on the part of management teams and teachers' (Castillo and Salgado, 2018, p. 231). It requires reviewing how well the curriculum accounts for diversity, facilitates students' critical and reflective approach to difference, and responds to diverse contexts (**Box 4.1**). People of any identity should be able to recognize themselves as endowed with value in the images the curriculum projects.

Indigenous peoples and migrants deserve more attention

The language of instruction can define the degree of inclusiveness in an education system, especially in countries where more than one language is spoken.

“ An analysis of 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries shows that primary education curriculum content in language, mathematics and science in grades 3 and 6 is relatively homogenous across countries ”

Addressing language diversity in the curriculum is particularly relevant in Latin America. In six countries, some indigenous languages are official, alongside Spanish; in three, they are recognized as regional languages; and in a further seven countries and territories, some are used as languages of instruction (World Bank, 2015).

Mother tongue-based multilingual education is understood as 'education that begins in the language that the learner speaks most fluently, and then gradually introduces other languages' (UNESCO 2017, p. 1). Several studies show that first language-based bilingual education results in higher attainment, lower grade repetition and superior learning outcomes, including in the

BOX 4.1

Incarcerated youth do not benefit from sufficient curriculum adaptation

The curriculum should not only recognize, incorporate and value the identity and needs of all learners but should also respond and be adapted to the unique context in which it exists. Lack of contextualization or adaptation of curricula to particular conditions is a barrier to effective inclusion, especially for youth deprived of liberty. A review of Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama and Peru found that the curriculum used in juvenile detention centres was the same as that used in mainstream education for youth and adults (Scarfo and Aued 2020).

In Uruguay, curricula are insufficiently adapted for the youth prison population. The prevailing curricular plans for adolescents deprived of liberty are the 1996 Plan for Elementary and the 1994 Plan for the Secondary or Baccalaureate, both of which are aimed mainly at over-age populations outside regular youth and adult training programmes (Baleato, 2020). Moreover, the National Human Rights Institution, through its National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture of Uruguay, has stated that adolescents deprived of liberty have four or five hours of teaching time per week in many detention centres, while a minimum of 20 hours is envisaged (INDHH, 2018).

second language (Benson et al., 2012; Global Campaign for Education 2013). Incorporating bilingual education in education systems should not be understood as excluding indigenous peoples from learning the official language. Doing so would exclude them from later opportunities in the labour market and compromise their employment trajectories and social mobility.

In some countries in the region, adaptation to children's first language has been insufficient, constituting a barrier to education. In Anguilla, children from the growing Spanish-speaking community account for up to 25% of enrolment in some primary schools. Initiatives to support learning English as a second language exist in primary schools but are not available in secondary school (PEER, 2020). In the Dominican Republic, inadequate support has been provided to children from Haitian backgrounds who arrive at school speaking only Haitian Creole. Because they have difficulty understanding Spanish-language content, they often have to repeat grades (Kaye, 2012).

In Suriname, most children do not speak Dutch at home; in Sipaliwini, the country's biggest district, only 4% do so (Suriname Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing 2019). Yet Dutch is the only language of instruction. The latest curriculum reintroduces multilingualism, incorporating 10 languages, of which 2 belong to Afro-descendant communities and 4 to indigenous peoples. Translations of key words, simple sentences, songs and poems are provided in a teacher guide that also includes audio recordings to support the right pronunciation. Dutch continues to be the language of instruction, while special 'multilingual lessons' of half an hour per week are devoted to learning short sentences and songs in the languages represented in the classroom. However, this approach is not intended to be a form of mother tongue-based multilingual education. The goal is to make all children feel welcome and at home in the classroom and to foster respect for each child's language and culture (Kambel, 2020).

Other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have made important progress incorporating bilingualism into the education system, especially for indigenous peoples. The Bolivian Plurinational Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures (IPELC) and its 28 Language and Culture Institutes design policies and strategic actions for the development of indigenous languages and cultures (Corbetta et al., 2020). The research, linguistic revitalization and dissemination work of IPELC and the institutes has been enriched by involvement of universities, teacher training colleges and other academic institutions, as well as by the Indigenous Peoples' Education Councils. The Language and Culture Institutes have recovered and published 23 alphabets of indigenous

“ First language-based bilingual education results in higher attainment, lower grade repetition and superior learning outcomes, including in the second language ”

peoples and nations (Bolivia Ministry of Education, 2017). In Guatemala, the government has been active in the production of textbooks in Mayan languages, a challenging task given that most of the languages were not written (Bonfil, 2020).

As well as incorporating indigenous language instruction, inclusive curricula should recognize, value and adapt to indigenous peoples' culture. Efforts have been made in several countries in the region to recognize indigenous peoples positively in the curriculum, often with the participation of the groups involved. When all stakeholders participate in curriculum definition processes, these processes gain greater legitimacy and better capacity to effectively include and represent all actors in society. Bolivia's Plurinational Base Curriculum, for example, is based on four pillars: decolonisation, intra- and inter-culturalism, productive education and communitarian education. Created to address indigenous, rural and Afro-descendant people's demands (Cortina, 2014), it has national (60%), regional (30%) and local (10% to 20%) components. Indigenous Peoples' Education Councils elaborate regional education curricula that correspond to indigenous cultures (Altinyelken, 2015).

In Colombia, teaching materials addressing Afro-Colombian identity have historically been in short supply. Even when such materials have been incorporated in the classroom, Afro-descendants have usually been misrepresented and portrayed in terms of stereotypes (Corbetta et al., 2020). After several years of collective work with Afro-Colombian communities as well as with indigenous peoples, the country set a vision to be a 'social and democratic, multicultural, multi-ethnic and biodiverse' state by 2016, recognizing indigenous peoples as an integral part of the nation (Peralta Miranda et al., 2019, p. 92). One direct result of this change was the 2016–26 education plan, which aims to reform curricula and processes to train teachers and managers in ethno-education (Corbetta et al., 2020).

Intercultural education policies, however, are not immune to deficiency in design and difficulty in implementation. Provision of intercultural education often is not compulsory but left to the goodwill and discretion of

local authorities and schools. In Argentina and Chile, for instance, significant efforts have been made to integrate intercultural education into the curriculum and teaching materials. Yet uptake of the materials has been voluntary and limited in both countries. In Argentina, only two universities offer training opportunities in bilingual intercultural education, the National University of Santiago del Estero in Quichua (since 2012) and the National University of Chaco Austral (since 2016) (Mato, 2020). Chile introduced Indigenous Language Sectors in 2009 in schools where at least 20% of the students belong to indigenous groups. Following a consultation with indigenous groups in 2019, a new subject of 'Language and culture of the original ancestral peoples', intended for grades 1 to 6, will be introduced in 2021 in schools with Indigenous Language Sectors, although there was a debate whether to offer the subject to all schools (Chile Ministry of Education, 2019).

In Colombia, the ethno-education approach is also left to schools' discretion; for many, the approach is seen not as a serious project to transform school life but rather as a novelty used in isolated events celebrating certain dates (Corbetta et al., 2020). In some cases, the insufficient value placed on local knowledge comes from indigenous peoples themselves. In Ecuador, a study found that several Kichwa-speaking teachers, officials and parents considered it unimportant to learn their language, believing it was no longer needed (Gonzalez Terreros, 2011).

The treatment of ethnic diversity in textbooks is also important in promoting an inclusive educational system. Textbooks are key pedagogical instruments that connect curricular definitions with teaching practices in classrooms. They convert the curricular discourse into words, symbols, examples, exercises and images that are shared with students to guide their work (Torres and Hurtado, 2020). However, the degree to which they reliably interpret and translate the guidelines established in the curriculum may vary. Textbooks emerge from complex power dynamics and thus can perpetuate social biases, stereotypes and omissions (Apple and Christian-Smith, 1991). Inappropriate images and descriptions can reinforce non-inclusive paradigms and make students from non-dominant backgrounds feel misrepresented, invisible or alienated.

A study on social representation in Chilean textbooks concluded that the books had a weak intercultural focus, tending to present indigenous peoples, if at all, in stereotyped images and situations. Representations of indigenous peoples tended to be static, rural and historical, without recognizing or valuing their participation and contributions as ambassadors,

politicians, writers, researchers or in other prestigious positions. Indigenous populations in urban areas were omitted entirely (Duarte et al., 2011). In Ecuador, only eight lines are dedicated to Afro-Ecuadorians in the grade 8 social studies textbook. The grade 9 social studies textbook dedicates one complete page to the black population in the independence period, but says very little about its participation in and contribution to the country's independence. The grade 10 social studies textbook does not consider the subject of Afro-Ecuadorians at all (Antón, 2020).

Developing adapted curricula, textbooks and learning material is of no value if these materials are not distributed and used in the classroom. In Brazil, the education census, which collects information about the use of learning materials for indigenous and Afro-descendant (*quilombola*) populations, shows that 53% of rural indigenous schools and 50% of rural *quilombola* schools use these materials (Rolon and Vieira, 2020).

Many indigenous people receive their education in rural schools, which face one more important challenge from a curricular perspective. For example, in Peru, 93% of rural primary schools have multigrade classrooms. This situation leaves rural students at a disadvantage because the curriculum is designed for single-grade classrooms (Montero and Uccelli, 2020).

Curricula and learning materials should be flexible to accommodate students with disabilities

Curricula should ensure a common education experience for all students, taking into account their personal characteristics and needs (Amadio et al., 2015; Gysling, 2016; Ruiz, 2016). For this to happen, teachers need guidelines and support in developing coherent and effective strategies to adapt and diversify the curriculum as appropriate to meet their students' learning needs. This is particularly the case regarding students with disabilities, who, in addition to textbook and material adaptation, need other languages and communication modes incorporated in instruction: sign language, Braille and other communication formats, including assistive technology.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, several countries have made curriculum accessibility a priority in their efforts to achieve inclusion. In Cuba, support is available for provision of teaching resources, communication systems, special furniture and technical support, among other resources. A single curriculum is available for each education level and curriculum adaptations can be made for students who need it. Schools for students with intellectual disabilities have the option of offering an

additional cycle, oriented to labour market preparation for those who complete grade 9 (Pérez and Hernández, 2020).

Students with disabilities in Jamaica have access to education through mainstream and special schools. They use the same national curriculum and assessment programme as students without disabilities, but special education institutions can adapt the curriculum based on students' profiles. However, national guidelines do not exist to ensure a consistent approach for the adaptations (Gayle-Geddes, 2020). In 2017, the country launched a special needs curriculum, with the support of UNICEF, focused on students with moderate to profound intellectual learning disabilities. It includes an assessment component and developmental guidelines to help teachers provide education services tailored to every student's needs (PEER, 2020).

Nicaragua's Resource Centres for Attention to Diversity provide training materials and resources to help improve and strengthen inclusive education practices. The Ministry of Education, through the Education Resource Centre for the Blind, also produces materials in Braille, relief and sound (Fonseca and Pfortner, 2020).

Personalized curricula can also help ensure inclusion across all education cycles. Argentina has established that, for students with disabilities who require a special school environment, the curriculum should be diversified to ensure access to school content with the necessary personal support. In a 2020 Ministerial Resolution on alternative and special education, the Plurinational State of Bolivia proposed development of curricula, programmes and services for students with disabilities, learning difficulties and extraordinary talents to enable them to have a more relevant education (PEER, 2020).

While such initiatives have been useful, they are not without their critics. Such plans often originate in a medical interpretation of impairments and tend to focus on what needs to be fixed. In that sense, there is a risk of individualized education plans slowing down support for inclusive education. They have been criticized as leading to exclusion from classroom peer interactions and feedback opportunities (Carrington and MacArthur, 2012; Florian, 2013).

Curricular content must recognize gender inequality and diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity

The process of constructing identity is a dynamic one. Individuals come to recognize themselves in indirect ways, through cultural signs and interactions with other members of society. Both dominant and subordinate identities are socially and culturally constructed, with

privileges and status benefiting dominant identities. Gender inequality is often reinforced by curricula and teaching materials that adopt a patriarchal perspective, reinforcing domination of men over women. Gender stereotypes are linked to social mental images. Males are linked with production, power, rationality and the public sphere, women with reproduction, weakness, emotions and the private sphere (Espinar, 2007; Zambrini, 2014).

These norms not only disadvantage girls and women, but can also lead to education outcomes that are detrimental to boys. In the Caribbean, boys' dropout is a major concern. A study conducted in eastern Caribbean countries revealed that boys dropped out of school at a rate (32%) twice that of girls (15%) between grades 7 and 11 (Knight et al., 2017). In 2016, Jamaica combined the extension of secondary education from five to seven years with a new approach called Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education. Based on their results at the end of primary school in grade 6, students are assigned into three pathways. The second pathway is a two-year transition programme supporting students, often boys, with additional tailored instruction, offering them an opportunity to move to the first pathway at the end of grade 8. However, top-ranked schools do not receive students who are in the second or third pathways (Clarke, 2020).

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) population is ignored in curriculum design in several Latin American countries. For example, a study of three Catholic and private schools in Colombia found that curricula did not include literature referring to homosexuality (Pulecio, 2015). In Guatemala, the LGBTI population is not even mentioned in the national curriculum (Barrientos and Lovera 2020). Panama recently drafted Law 61 on sex education, which focuses on sexual and reproductive health, but only from a gender binary perspective (Barrientos and Lovera, 2020).

Movements referring to gender and sexual diversity as 'gender ideology' have arisen to try to thwart the advance of LGTBI rights, including through education. Gender diversity has even been challenged by high-level authorities and heads of state, for example in Brazil and Ecuador (Correa, 2018; Barrientos and Lovera, 2020). In spite of opposition, some countries are trying to move towards more inclusive systems that address gender inequality and recognize sexual and gender diversity. In Barbados, the National Strategic Plan 2006–2025 includes concrete measures to promote gender equality in national development policies and programmes. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, enactment of the Comprehensive Act to Guarantee Women a Life Free from Violence in 2013 allowed incorporation of gender equality

concepts into the curriculum at all levels and in teacher training programmes (PEER, 2020). Argentina, Colombia and Uruguay offer teacher support materials for inclusion of sexual and gender diversity (UNESCO, 2015). Cuba's Sexuality Education Programme with a Gender and Sexual Rights Approach promotes a gender and sexual rights approach in the curriculum at all education levels, from preschool to professional education (PEER, 2020).

However, gender issues are still misrepresented and under-represented in textbooks and other learning materials. In Chile, a study of history textbooks showed that, for each female character, there were five male characters, and representations of women and girls were largely linked to domestic chores. Grade 6 science textbooks mentioned 2 female and 29 male characters (Covacevich and Quintela-Dávila, 2014). Such gender biases reinforce concerns regarding the lower participation of women in sciences (UNESCO, 2007). In Colombia, an analysis of the grade 3 mathematics textbook showed that only men were represented as authors of theoretical and empirical developments in science, with no reference to the role of women in these areas (Mosquera and González, 2015). In Peru, despite isolated initiatives identified as signs of progress in the 2000s, such as the use of inclusive language in communication guidelines and improved balance in numbers of men and women represented in textbooks, the reproduction of traditional gender roles persists (Muñoz, 2020; Ruiz Bravo et al., 2006; Ruiz Bravo, 2019).

Textbooks are also biased with regard to the LGBTI population. In Chile, biological sex is still equated with gender in most textbooks. Sexuality is approached from a reproduction and moralistic perspective. This is rooted in the Chilean curriculum's exclusion of terms such as heterosexuality and homosexuality (Rojas et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

Curriculum development is a political process, and the region has been slowly moving towards a more participative approach. In some cases, this approach has enabled a greater degree of inclusiveness. But gaps still need to be closed and important challenges lie ahead.

As a collective endeavour, an inclusive curriculum should incorporate and value a range of sources and forms of knowledge, from all members and communities of society. This is important in order to address the historical bias of curriculum and textbook design in Latin America and the Caribbean, resulting from Western-centred perspectives and the difficulty of including knowledge and world visions from indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant communities.

Another important dimension in supporting social inclusion relates to citizenship and democratic values. Curricular reforms have helped modernize the notion of civic values and ensured that these concepts are generally included in curricula, yet curricula still do not fully address the promotion of democratic participation. This deficiency weakens the development of social cohesion and the functioning of a democratic political system that promotes a more inclusive society.

Inclusive curricula should be adapted and contextualized to recognize diverse identities and needs. In several countries, efforts have increased to recognize indigenous peoples in the curriculum and incorporate bilingualism in textbooks and learning materials. These advances should represent progress in recognizing identities, promoting social integration of students and supporting learning processes, especially in the early grades. Nevertheless, in many cases, efforts have been inadequate or their implementation has been left to the goodwill of local authorities and schools.

Several initiatives have addressed gender inequality, including the use of inclusive language and improvement in the balance between numbers of men and women in textbooks. However, the reproduction of traditional roles assigned to men and women remains an issue. Several countries are developing curricular guidelines for inclusion of sexual and gender diversity, although their implementation tends not to be mandatory and has come up against strong resistance in many countries.

An inclusive curriculum should also be adapted to students' contexts and needs to ensure they receive relevant and equal opportunities. Students in multigrade classrooms, pupils with disabilities and youth deprived of liberty are examples of vulnerable populations that need to be accommodated by an inclusive curriculum and its guidelines. Despite some progress, those efforts should be substantially increased and improved to allow all learners to develop to their full potential and actively participate in an inclusive society.

“ An inclusive curriculum should incorporate and value a range of sources and forms of knowledge, from all members and communities of society ”



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Norma Lizeth

A teacher in the Mexican state of Jalisco.

CREDIT: UNICEF/UNI177022/
Richter

CHAPTER

5

Teachers



KEY MESSAGES

Inclusive education involves ensuring that all teachers are prepared to teach all students.

- In Honduras, Panama and Paraguay, and in Nuevo León, Mexico, teaching practices of good quality were associated with better results in all disciplines.

Teachers tend to have positive attitudes towards inclusion but also doubts about its feasibility.

- In Grenada and in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, some teachers look down on low-performing students in secondary education because access used to be restricted to academically inclined students.
- Teacher bias is detrimental to student learning. In São Paulo, Brazil, grade 8 mathematics teachers were more likely to give white students a passing grade than their equally proficient and well-behaved black classmates.
- Indifference to teaching students with disabilities can come from teachers feeling ill-equipped to meet their needs. Teachers in Trinidad and Tobago have ambivalent attitudes towards teaching children with disabilities, possibly as a result of a lack of resources in schools.

Teachers need to be prepared to teach students of varied backgrounds, abilities and identities.

- Many teachers lack adequate initial education. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 21% of primary school teachers do not have a teaching degree.
- Many teachers are not well prepared for inclusive teaching. Among lower secondary school teachers, 38% in Chile, 53% in Mexico, 55% in Colombia and 58% in Brazil reported a high need to develop skills to teach students with special needs.
- Indigenous teacher training programmes and institutions are scarce and rarely involved in mainstream teacher education. Colombia does not require teachers to learn the language of the community where they teach.
- Training is needed to address gender and diversity. In Grenada and in Saint Kitts and Nevis, teachers are ill equipped to intervene to stop bullying related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, especially since laws criminalize same-sex sexual relations.
- In Latin America, countries are shifting teacher preparation to support inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools. Nicaragua's Education Centres for Attention to Diversity provide training opportunities for teachers to support this transition.
- In the Caribbean, teacher training tends not to be in the framework of inclusive education. In the Bahamas, the disability law requires special education to become compulsory in the teacher training curriculum.

Teaching-force composition often does not reflect the diversity of classroom composition.

- Representation of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in teaching is a major challenge. In Costa Rica, a 2013 decree promoted training for teachers from indigenous communities, including through scholarships and other support for studies and professional development.

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“ Inclusive approaches should be a core element of general teacher preparation rather than a specialist topic ”

Inclusive education involves ensuring that all teachers are prepared to teach all students. Inclusion cannot be realized unless teachers are agents of change, with values, knowledge and attitudes that permit every student to succeed. Around the world, variations in how teachers are trained reflect standards and qualifications that differ by national context. But a common theme is that education systems are moving away from identifying problems with learners and towards identifying barriers in education systems that prevent access, participation and achievement in education.

This shift challenges teachers to be active agents for inclusion and to reflect on how approaches to teaching can be inclusive of all learners. Inclusive teaching requires teachers to recognize every student’s experiences and abilities and to be open to diversity. They need to be aware that all students learn by connecting classroom experiences with life experiences, and so embed new ideas and skills in problem-solving activities. Inclusive approaches should be a core element of general teacher preparation rather than a specialist topic (Rouse and Florian, 2012). While many teacher education and professional learning opportunities are designed to

achieve this, entrenched views of some students as deficient, unable to learn or incapable mean teachers sometimes struggle to see that each student’s learning capacity is open-ended.

Consequently, teachers’ attitudes often mix commitment to the principle of inclusion with doubts about their preparedness and about the readiness of the education system to support them. Ensuring that teachers rise to the challenge requires training. Teachers must also have support, appropriate working conditions and autonomy in the classroom to focus on every learner’s success. And the teaching workforce must be made more representative of social diversity.

POSITIVE TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION ARE COMBINED WITH SCEPTICISM

Teachers’ attitudes and behaviours influence their interactions and engagement with students. The care teachers provide has been associated with students’ self-esteem, well-being and school engagement (Lavy and Naama-Ghanayim, 2020). Positive communication with students builds classroom climates that are more likely to enhance learning processes and meet students’ various needs (Cornelius-White, 2007; Den Brok et al., 2004; Pianta, 2011). The quality of teacher-student relationships also influences teachers’ well-being and sense of meaning at work (Lavy and Naama-Ghanayim, 2020; Spilt et al., 2011).

In Costa Rica, the 2018 Teaching Career Regulation establishes that teaching staff have a duty not to engage

in or promote discriminatory practices contrary to human dignity against any staff member, student or person outside the institution (Costa Rica Ministry of Public Education, 2018). However, teachers may not be immune to social biases and stereotypes, expressed through negative attitudes and discrimination based on student socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, race, ethnicity, language, ability and other social markers.

Preconceived views about the potential of some students pose a barrier to inclusive interactions and hamper students' achievement (Gentrup et al., 2020). For instance, in eastern Caribbean countries, such as Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, some teachers look down on low-performing students transitioning to secondary education because access used to be restricted to academically inclined students. They believe universal access has affected traditional teaching and performance standards and increased disciplinary problems (Knight, 2014; Knight et al., 2017; Marks, 2009).

In seven Latin American countries, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) students could identify at least one supportive teacher or school staff member, but most students had a negative experience of teacher attitudes to sexual orientation and gender expression. In most of the countries, only two-thirds of students reported an average level of school staff intervention when homophobic or transphobic language was used in school, which indicates that such behaviour was often condoned (Kosciw and Zongrone, 2019).

In São Paulo, Brazil, grade 8 mathematics teachers were more likely to give white students a passing grade than their equally proficient and well-behaved black classmates. This bias corresponded to a 4% difference in the probability of retention and a 5% reduction in the probability of black students being at the top of their class (Botelho et al., 2015). In Ecuador, recognition of the history of certain groups and the introduction of critical narratives in education were important in helping dismantle prejudiced practices and racist discourses. Since educational materials were lacking, teachers were fundamental in engaging Afro-descendant students in school by developing pedagogical tools for ethno-education (Antón, 2020).

In Belize, while English is the official language of instruction, multilingualism and code-switching are common practices within classrooms for both teachers and students. Although some teachers hold negative views of northern Belizean Spanish, most multilingual teachers of Spanish tend to show positive attitudes towards language mixing and many consider code-

switching a potential instructional resource in Spanish class (Balam and de Prada Pérez, 2017). Teachers thus embrace their own multilingualism and that of their students.

Empathy in student-teacher relationships is associated with positive attitudes towards students with disabilities (Barr, 2013). Although some teachers are likely to show indifference and rejection, many exhibit positive attitudes towards students with disabilities in mainstream schools. In some cases, indifference is tied to teachers feeling ill-equipped to meet all students' needs in the classroom or not feeling responsible for their instruction (Cook et al., 2007). For instance, teacher attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities were found to be ambivalent in Trinidad and Tobago, which could be explained by a lack of resources in schools (Parey, 2019).

TEACHERS NEED COMPREHENSIVE AND CONTINUING TRAINING ON INCLUSION

Pertinent and timely teacher training of good quality is fundamental in closing learning gaps between students with differing backgrounds and abilities. Teacher preparation and certification have a positive impact on student achievement in contexts of poverty and linguistic diversity (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Exposure to highly qualified teachers can have a long-lasting impact on student outcomes (Chetty et al., 2014). In Honduras, Mexico (Nuevo León), Panama and Paraguay, teaching practices of good quality were associated with better results in all disciplines examined in the 2013 Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (TERCE) (UNESCO, 2016b).

Yet many teachers lack adequate initial education. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 21% of primary school teachers do not have a teaching degree. Among those who do, about 40% have graduated from blended learning or distance education programmes (UNESCO, 2016b). Moreover, few initial education programmes prepare teachers for inclusion. An analysis of programmes in seven Latin American countries examined whether curricula focused on two dimensions: teacher competence to develop individual action plans for all learners and to adapt and vary their teaching strategies according to classroom diversity, especially in disadvantaged contexts; and professional responsibility, including the knowledge and skills to carry out collaborative work, participate in the education community and develop reflective spaces for teachers to address inclusion. While all programmes embraced inclusive education, less present in the curricula were development of individual plans, pedagogical knowledge for effective teaching in disadvantaged contexts, development of reflective spaces among

teachers and participation in the education community (UNESCO, 2018).

Continuous professional development opportunities are limited. Analysis by the GEM Report team shows that 70% of countries in the region have laws or policies that provide for teacher training on inclusion, in general or for at least one group, 59% have laws, policies or programmes providing teacher training for special education needs and 54% envisage teacher training on inclusion in their education sector plan, in general or for at least one group. An analysis of 12 countries identified 7 countries with a specific law on professional development (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Uruguay) and 5 without such a law (Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala and Paraguay) (Vezub, 2019).

However, evidence on coverage and needs suggests the existence of a law is not sufficient. Only 27% of teachers participating in TERCE indicated having taken an improvement course of at least 60 hours associated with the subjects they taught during the two years prior to the assessment (UNESCO, 2016b). Among lower secondary school teachers in middle- and high-income countries who took part in the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), 24% overall reported a high need to develop skills to teach students with special needs, but the percentages were markedly higher in Latin American

countries: 38% in Chile, 53% in Mexico, 55% in Colombia and 58% in Brazil (OECD, 2019).

To fill the gaps in formal professional development, teacher networks are often established to enable collaborative learning, break the traditional isolation of teachers' work and help in developing skills, belief systems, values and habits to change professional practices. Initiatives include the Teachers of Teachers Network in Chile (Chile Ministry of Education, 2020c), the National Pedagogical Expedition in Colombia (Unda et al., 2018) and the Pedagogical Inter-learning Encounters in Nicaragua (Nicaragua Ministry of Education, 2020). In Ecuador, the Situated Pedagogical Accompaniment Program is aimed at improving teaching practices through mentoring (Rolla et al., 2019). Non-government organizations (NGOs) also often step in to fill gaps (**Box 5.1**).

Needs for professional development in inclusive teaching vary by context, from educating incarcerated children and youth (**Box 5.2**) to pedagogical training for multigrade and multilevel schools in rural areas. In Ecuador, 52% of schools have one or two teachers, although only 5% of students attend these schools (*El Comercio*, 2018). In Honduras, 34% of schools in the poorest rural municipalities have one teacher and 10% have two teachers (Moncada and Bonilla-Larios, 2020). The

BOX 5.1

NGOs often lead professional development for inclusion

In many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, civil society, including faith-based organizations, fills gaps in government provision of in-service teacher education for intercultural and indigenous education, gender equality and contexts affected by poverty and violence. In Sonsonate, El Salvador, indigenous communities and organizations mobilized to promote teaching of the Nawat language. Aided by Don Bosco University, a faith-based higher education institution, teachers were trained in linguistic methodology at the university with elderly Nawat speakers as tutors. The programme has been extended to early childhood education and has received government support (Corbetta et al., 2020).

In Peru, Fe y Alegría, a Catholic grassroots organization, has designed a training programme on gender equality aimed at developing teacher capacity to recognize gender stereotypes and roles, analyse unequal power relations between the sexes and respond to evidence of gender-based violence. A programme developed by the Manuela Ramos Movement, a feminist organization, in alliance with the NGO *Medicus Mundi Gipuzkoa*, sponsored by the government of Spain's autonomous Basque Country, aimed at reducing violations of

women's sexual and reproductive rights by integrating comprehensive sexuality education into the curricula of 16 primary and secondary schools in Ayacucho, Lima and Ucayali (Muñoz, 2020).

Fe y Alegría and Alboan, a Basque Jesuit organization, also run Organized Youth Leadership, also known as *ParticipAcción*, a programme aimed at aiding educators to promote non-violence and citizenship education among youth in underprivileged communities in Argentina, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama (Alboan, 2018; CPAL, 2015; Fe y Alegría Argentina, 2020).

In Suriname, faith-based organizations carry out in-service training during holidays for teachers working in the interior, taking advantage of teachers' return to coastal cities so as to avoid high transport and accommodation costs (Kambel, 2020). In Trinidad and Tobago, amid an influx of Venezuelan migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children, the international NGO Catholic Relief Services works with UNICEF to train teachers to deal with youth who have experienced trauma (Maharaj-Landaeta, 2019).

BOX 5.2**Teacher training is scarce for those working in detention centres**

Training oriented to teachers and support personnel working in prisons needs to address not only the harsh context and environment but also the fact that learners have often been marginalized in education. It has to prepare teachers to support incarcerated students in acquiring the skills and knowledge they need while addressing their often low learning outcomes (Scarfo and Aued, 2020). In Chile, 20% of children and adolescents in confinement are behind in school, 7% cannot read or write and a similar percentage are disengaged from school (OHCHR, 2018).

Countries have a range of in-service training options for teachers working with learners in confinement. In Argentina, the Postgraduate Specialization in Prison Education, aimed at both experienced and novice teachers, is required to teach in confinement facilities (Argentina Federal Council of Education, 2008). In Brazil, a 2009 resolution establishing national guidelines for education

provision in penitentiaries requires educators and prison staff to have access to integrated and continuous training programmes. Inmates who have an adequate profile and training can act as educators, receiving remuneration and further training (Brazil National Penitentiary Department, 2009).

Chile has no policy encouraging such training, nor has the teaching career law considered this option thus far (Sanhueza, 2020). In El Salvador, inmates act as voluntary facilitators to promote civic and moral values. They receive training, coordinated by a university and the Ministry of Education, on how to use materials, administer tests and obtain methodological assistance (Rangel, 2009). In Uruguay, most teachers receive in-service training through courses offered by the Management Unit of Education in Confinement Contexts (Baleato, 2020). Educator networks in Argentina (GESEC, 2020) and Chile (Red PECE, 2020) help fill the gaps in knowledge exchange.

distribution of qualified teachers tends to be inequitable with regard to marginalized groups (Ávalos, 2011; Vaillant, 2013). Teachers in rural schools tend to have less experience and fewer learning resources, and are more likely to have been trained by distance or through blended learning programmes (Bruns and Luque, 2014; Kambel, 2020; Montero and Uccelli, 2020; UNESCO, 2016a).

Support networks are an effective way to share training resources in rural schools. In Chile, Rural Microcentres encourage teachers at neighbouring rural schools to meet once a month to provide a space for pedagogical reflection (Chile Ministry of Education, 2018). In 2017, Peru approved guidelines for rural education networks to support personnel management and administration, reduce teacher isolation and fill gaps in the ranks of specialized teachers (Peru Ministry of Education, 2017). Existing networks function irregularly and depend to a great extent on teacher organization, rather than on state institutional support (Montero and Uccelli, 2020). Distance learning presents an alternative solution for students and teachers in remote locations. For example, the National Centre for Educational Resource Development in Guyana manages an in-service teacher training programme (Guyana Ministry of Education, 2020).

Teacher capacity development in intercultural teaching should be mainstreamed

Many countries in the region have intercultural, bilingual or multilingual education approaches and programmes and are developing special directorates or agencies and producing diversified curricula and learning materials in

indigenous languages (Corbetta et al., 2020). Intercultural approaches in education can focus on culturally relevant issues arising in contexts of migration and displacement (**Box 5.3**), sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (**Box 5.4**), or rurality and remoteness, but are mostly developed in reference to Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples. Indigenous teacher training programmes and institutions are nevertheless scarce and, like those referring to Afro-descendants, tend to be sidelined from mainstream teacher education.

Various systems for indigenous education exist in the region, and teachers' experiences depend on national context. The Plurinational State of Bolivia's institutionalized and centralized teacher policies for the Intracultural, Intercultural and Multilingual Education include teacher education, careers and promotion, as well as linking teacher working conditions to performance with respect to inclusion in education. Teacher education includes a bachelor's degree and continuous professional development supplied throughout the country by specialized postgraduate training programmes (Pérez, 2020).

In Brazil, teachers in the Amazon region, where the indigenous populations are concentrated, often come from the community in which they teach. Some have undertaken university studies, but others have left the region only for short periods to attend training in Pedagogy of Alternation, a method in which students alternate between learning in the classroom and applying that learning in activities in their communities. Since

BOX 5.3

Teachers need support to manage multicultural classes with migrants and refugees

Growing migration rates mean teachers in the region work in increasingly diverse classrooms. In the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, 34% of teachers work in schools where at least 10% of students have a migration background; in Chile, 8% of teachers do so (OECD, 2019). Students affected by migration and displacement often do not receive the support they need because of an absence of clear policy frameworks, inadequate enabling and supportive environments and teacher preparation, and insufficient coordination or information. Appropriate training of good quality is crucial to cope with overcrowded, mixed-age, multilingual classrooms and the psychological burden often associated with displacement.

Colombia does not yet have a national policy on teacher training related to the challenges posed by the influx of Venezuelans. District education departments, in collaboration with international actors, provide most teacher training in the country. For instance, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has introduced a child protection pedagogy. However, teacher management and professional development coordination need to be addressed. In Norte de Santander, one of the areas with most Venezuelan students due to its proximity to the border, the Norwegian Refugee Council and Francisco José de Caldas District University have developed a specialization in education to train teachers for inclusive education and to strengthen pedagogical practices to enable inclusive actions at school level (UNDP Colombia, 2020).

In the Dominican Republic, misinformation is a barrier to student registration and school access. A case study of four schools in Independencia province found that no Haitian families had registered in school without help either from a Haitian-Dominican go-between or a teacher. In 2019, a study found that undocumented students of Haitian descent reported teachers were key for them to remain in school. Still, teachers frequently lack adequate or accurate policy information, which hinders their ability to support undocumented students' right to education (Waddick, 2020).

“ In Brazil, teachers in the Amazon region, where the indigenous populations are concentrated, often come from the community in which they teach ”

BOX 5.4

Teachers need support to promote gender equality, respect sexual diversity and value inclusion

Teachers have a strategic role in ensuring the inclusion of all students, including in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. But to address gender and diversity constructively in the classroom, teachers and school staff need awareness, information and classroom management skills to address violence and resolve exclusion problems. These skills are necessary to enable teachers and managers to work more on school climate and classroom dynamics, inclusive pedagogies and materials development (UNESCO et al., 2018).

In Chile, after education authorities issued an administrative directive instructing schools on ways to accommodate transgender students' needs, the Ministry of Education developed practical guidance for inclusion of LGBTI issues in classroom and school activities, including recommendations for teachers (Chile Education Superintendency, 2017; Chile Ministry of Education, 2017).

Peru's Good Teaching Performance Framework mentions gender and the need to cater to students' diverse expressions of gender identity. However, while pre-service and in-service teacher education are being aligned with the gender equality approach of the national curriculum, the binary understanding of gender persists among teachers and the cultural patterns that stigmatize sexual diversity are not explicitly addressed (Muñoz, 2020).

Many teachers and trainee teachers reportedly have expressed homophobic attitudes (Penna and Mateos, 2014). In some Caribbean countries, such as Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis, teachers are still ill-equipped to intervene to stop LGBTI bullying at school. It can be difficult to address this issue in pre-service or in-service teacher education since laws criminalizing consensual adult same-sex sexual relations exist in seven English-speaking Caribbean countries (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

2000, teachers from local communities have attended courses organized by the Amazonas State Education Office and universities through intercultural programmes, allowing them to acquire third-level certification (Rolon and Vieira, 2020). By contrast, progress in the continuous professional development of teachers to implement the 2012 national curricular guidelines for education in the *quilombola* communities of Afro-descendants has been slow (da Costa et al., 2016).

In Colombia, the Ministry of National Education does not require teachers to learn the language of the community in which they teach. This poses difficulties for the youngest

students, as many do not speak Spanish and bilingual teachers may not know enough of the language spoken by the learners (Corbetta et al., 2020; García and Jutinico, 2013). The government, in collaboration with indigenous and Afro-descendent communities, published pedagogical guidelines and a manual aimed at early childhood education (Colombia Ministry of National Education and OEI, 2018a, 2018b).

The 2014 Constitutional Reform in El Salvador recognized the rights of indigenous peoples. The 2015 Public Policy for Indigenous Peoples and the 2018 National Action Plan on Indigenous Peoples were designed to ensure bilingual intercultural education in rural contexts. Since 2010, the Project for Strengthening Cultural Identity and Revitalizing the Nawat Language, supported by the National Directorate of Basic Education, addresses the transition from preschool to school. Participating teachers are interested in responding not only to students' pedagogical needs, but also to their search for identity. The National Institute of Teacher Education has developed a diploma in intercultural education (Corbetta et al., 2020).

In Guatemala and Mexico, indigenous organizations have criticized the shortage of bilingual teachers with intercultural training, especially because Spanish speakers dominate in the teaching force (Bonfil, 2020; Mendoza, 2017). Guatemala began requiring professional degrees for indigenous teacher education in 2008, in line with the Integrated Strategy for Teacher Professionalization, oriented towards training unqualified pre-primary and primary school teachers in indigenous contexts; the number of graduate and postgraduate teachers had doubled by 2015 (Mendoza, 2017). In Mexico, 69% of preschool and 66% of primary school teachers in indigenous education practised without a degree (Schmelkes et al., 2015).

The Bilingual Intercultural Education Programme for the Amazon (EIBAMAZ) was begun in 2005 by the governments, indigenous organizations and universities of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, in cooperation with UNICEF and the Finnish government, to strengthen teacher training. In Ecuador, EIBAMAZ aided the Higher Pedagogical Institutes of Intercultural Bilingual Education in primary and secondary education teacher training and in a new early childhood and community education training programme (UNICEF, 2012).

External accountability mechanisms are a potential obstacle to the realization of intercultural education. Teachers in intercultural settings experience the tension of having to balance indigenous systems and national policies. In Colombia, schools in the Indigenous Peoples' Own Education System are evaluated with the same assessments as schools that are not aligned with teaching in the indigenous system, so indigenous students'

education cannot be properly assessed (Corbetta et al., 2020).

Demands for preparing teachers to support students with disabilities often remain unfulfilled

Teacher education needs to address the challenges of teaching in diversity and diversifying teaching, breaking the predominant view of students and their learning processes as homogeneous. Teachers need to respond to students with diverse abilities, rhythms, learning styles, interests and motivations. About 70% of lower secondary school teachers in Latin American countries who took part in the 2018 TALIS reported that teaching in mixed-ability settings was part of their formal education. Teachers from the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, reported the lowest percentage (57%) (OECD, 2019).

In Latin America, countries are trying to shift towards teacher preparation to support inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools. In Colombia, a 2017 decree regulates in-service teacher training for disability-inclusive education so that learners with disabilities can study in mainstream schools alongside their peers (Colombia Ministry of National Education, 2017).

Since 2015, the bachelor of arts programme in special education at the National University of Education in Ecuador has offered pre-service teacher training for mainstream and special school teachers in inclusive education (Herrera et al., 2018; UNAE, 2020). El Salvador has only 600 teachers to meet the needs of more than 8,000 students with disabilities attending 5,100 public schools. Plans call for the supply of trained teaching assistants to be expanded as part of the Plan El Salvador Educado (El Salvador National Council of Education, 2016). Paraguay's General Directorate of Inclusive Education offers an in-service degree in inclusive education aimed at teachers and other staff in mainstream schools (Paraguay Ministry of Education and Sciences, 2019). It is also working on forming a teacher network to support efforts towards inclusive education (Velázquez, 2020). In 2015, the Peruvian Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ibero-American Intergovernmental Network for Special Needs Education, certified some 1,940 teachers who participated in virtual training courses focused on teaching visually impaired and deaf-blind students, along with students with autism spectrum disorders, within the framework of inclusive education (Peru Ministry of Education, 2020).

In Nicaragua, the pedagogical model for initial teacher education does not include training in inclusive education. However, inclusive education teachers help guide the education community as part of the education inclusion programme (PEER, 2020). Psycho-pedagogical support

“ About 70% of lower secondary school teachers in Latin American countries who took part in the 2018 TALIS reported that teaching in mixed-ability settings was part of their formal education ”

teams, consisting of municipal special education pedagogical advisers, teachers from Education Centres for Attention to Diversity (CREADs), education counsellors and others, are established to identify and recommend support for students with special education needs in early childhood, basic, secondary and special education centres, regardless of disability status (Nicaragua Ministry of Education, 2012). CREADs also provide education materials and training opportunities for teachers to support the education of people with disabilities (Pfortner and Fonseca, 2020). This is an example of a regional trend towards transforming special schools into resource centres to support inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools (Samaniego, 2018). The Resource Centre for Blind and Low Vision Students in Uruguay also offers teacher training and pedagogical tools for classroom activities in mainstream schools (Resource Centre for Blind and Low Vision Students, 2020).

By contrast, in the Caribbean, teacher training for learners with special needs does not tend to be in the framework of inclusive education. In the Bahamas, the 2014 Persons with Disabilities Equal Opportunities Act reaffirmed the need to develop training programmes for teachers working in special and integrated schools for children with disabilities and required special education to become a compulsory component of the teacher training curriculum (Bahamas Parliament, 2014).

In Cuba, students with disabilities mostly attend special schools with specialized trained teachers and multidisciplinary support personnel. Itinerant teachers attend to students with limited mobility at home and special classrooms have been set up in hospitals. Teachers working in hospitals may have primary or special education training (PEER, 2020). Since 2017, efforts have been made to develop teaching guides as tools for teachers to improve the quality of education provided to students with disabilities who attend mainstream schools (Castillo, 2018). In 2019, more than 400 graduates of pedagogical institutions joined special school classrooms to support students in the transition to mainstream education, offering highly specialized education services (Fole, 2019). Support personnel have also been trained (Pérez and Hernández, 2020).

In Guyana, the Persons with Disabilities Act established training for teachers specializing in disability (Guyana Parliament, 2010). Jamaica's Ministry of Education, Youth and Information has trained teachers from 29 primary schools as part of its special education policy (PEER, 2020).

TEACHERS NEED DECENT WORKING CONDITIONS TO ENSURE INCLUSIVE TEACHING

Teacher education and professional development are important in ensuring teaching of good quality, but living conditions and institutional circumstances also play a key role in shaping teacher practices. Adequate pay, appropriate pupil/teacher ratios, availability of pedagogical resources, safe working conditions and sufficient school infrastructure and pedagogical materials all matter, as do a supportive and collaborative work climate, professional autonomy over pedagogical decisions, and pedagogical advice from peers and school directors.

According to the 2019 TALIS, teaching was the first career choice for most teachers surveyed in the region, ranging from 53% in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, to 67% in Colombia (OECD, 2019). Nevertheless, poor working conditions act as disincentives, especially considering that teaching for inclusion is highly demanding. In Jamaica, school leaders and students report that teachers make particular efforts to support boys at risk of disengaging from school, giving up time to work with them and to support after-school programmes (Clarke, 2020). In Mexico, teachers of indigenous students report working longer hours, maintaining stronger interpersonal relationships, travelling greater distances and carrying out more activities than their peers (INEE, 2015, Bonfil, 2020). Education of prisoners generates tensions every day as teachers are caught in the practices and regulatory frameworks of judicial and education systems (Delgado de Mejía, 2020). In El Salvador and Uruguay, teachers tell of violence in confinement and describe receiving threats from inmates (Baleato, 2020; Delgado de Mejía, 2020).

Despite these challenges, average salaries are lower for teachers than for other professionals at the same education level (Bruns and Luque, 2014). Precarious hiring conditions often entail teachers working at more than one school (Murillo and Román, 2013). In Argentina, 28% of primary school teachers work at two schools. In secondary education, teachers are recruited by the hour. Among grade 5 and 6 teachers, 30% work at two schools, nearly one-third at three or four schools and 12% at five or more (Argentina Ministry of Education, 2017).

Teacher salaries tend to be flat, with little variation by performance or context. A careful balance between common and differentiated salary scales is needed to ensure equitable distribution of good teachers. In Colombia, there is a 15% bonus on the basic salary for teachers and principals working at remote rural schools (Colombia Presidency, 2010). A similar incentive is provided in Peru but has not reduced high turnover at the rural primary schools where 23% of teachers work (Montero and Uccelli, 2020; Peru Ministry of Education, 2019). In Brazil, if there is a shortage of teachers, school boards hire temporary teachers who do not have the same rights and security as civil servants: 44% of rural school teachers have temporary contracts (Rolon and Vieira, 2020).

Isolation and challenging living conditions also affect rural teacher turnover. In Brazil, half of rural teachers live in urban areas and commute to work (Rolon and Vieira, 2020). In Suriname, despite a recent 50% salary increase (Kambel, 2020), few teachers are willing to work in remote interior areas, although novice teachers are expected to take up such positions for at least three to five years before they can work in the capital.

MANY EDUCATION SYSTEMS STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE DIVERSITY IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Diversity of teaching staff can signal the value of inclusion to students and society in general. Yet, in many countries, staff composition does not reflect social diversity. Stigma and prejudice against marginalized groups, coupled with lack of institutional support and normative protection, deter inclusion of the marginalized in the teaching force. Teacher education programmes need to promote participation of under-represented groups.

Lack of diversity among teachers and other education personnel jeopardizes inclusive policies. Even where homosexuality is not criminalized, for example, LGBTI teachers and support staff have been reported as suffering from discrimination in Brazil (Prado and Lopes, 2020), Chile (Rojas et al., 2020) and Paraguay (Stromquist, 2018), among others. Networks, social movements, collectives and unions have been formed to provide support (Prado and Lopes, 2020).

Representation of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in teaching is a major challenge. In Argentina, their participation in higher education institutions is remarkably low, apart from non-teaching staff in lower positions. A weak scholarship programme and long history of accumulated disadvantages account for the under-representation (Human Rights Council, 2012, p. 15; Mato, 2020). A 2012 law in Brazil reserves 50% of placements at federal universities for students who attend public secondary schools and, of those placements, 50% are reserved for students from low-income families. The quota system also takes into account the proportion of black, mixed-race and indigenous people in the area where the education institution is located (Brazil Presidency, 2012). In Chile, the Programme of Accompaniment and Effective Access to Higher Education promotes access to higher education institutions for outstanding students from vulnerable groups through financial support and quotas additional to those offered by universities (Chile Ministry of Education, 2020b).

In Costa Rica, a 2013 decree promoted training of teachers from indigenous communities, including through scholarships and other support for studies and professional development (Costa Rica Ministry of Public Education, 2013). Ecuador's Organic Law on Higher Education establishes mandatory quotas to favour access for groups discriminated against because of socio-economic status, rural location, disability or ethnicity (Ecuador Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2020). Peru faces a shortage of bilingual trained teachers even though the 2002 Intercultural Bilingual Education Act promotes incorporation of indigenous teachers in school staffs (PEER, 2020). The country has quotas for indigenous students to enter university, but the quota system was developed by universities and does not correspond to a government policy (Espinosa, 2017).

Teachers from marginalized groups tend to teach students from their communities and have fewer opportunities to teach in other contexts. In Chile, traditional educators teach indigenous languages and culture in schools with 20% or more indigenous students, mainly in rural areas and close to indigenous communities (Chile Ministry of Education, 2020a). Colombia's Indigenous Peoples' Own Education System has contributed to increased autonomy in the selection, recruitment and training of teachers by indigenous communities. However, the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca department terminates indigenous teachers' contracts when school enrolment drops (Corbetta et al., 2020).

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In Costa Rica, a 2013 decree promoted training of teachers from indigenous communities, including through scholarships and other support for studies and professional development

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CONCLUSION

Teaching quality and teachers' professional commitment are crucial in addressing discrimination and redressing structural inequality in education. Well-qualified teachers can make a significant difference, especially among learners belonging to disadvantaged groups. There are interconnected challenges in providing such teachers in places where students at risk of exclusion are concentrated. Initial and in-service training need to be strengthened to improve alternatives for professional development. Better working conditions are needed to improve teacher performance and motivation.

As classrooms and schools in Latin America and the Caribbean grow increasingly diverse, a comprehensive approach to teacher education is needed, aimed at all teachers, not just specialists. Such training should take into account teachers' beliefs and attitudes so as to break with the stigmatization of groups that have been subjected to discrimination and invisibility due to race, ability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, migration background and ethnicity, among other things. Training should foster development of pedagogical skills for the management of diverse classrooms, diversification of teaching and contextualization of the curriculum. Moreover, tools should be developed for collaborative work with the community and for reflective practices.

Teachers need sophisticated skills to reverse the gaps in learning outcomes between the poorest and richest students, allowing students from underprivileged and deprived areas to achieve the expected learning for their age. In rural and remote areas, teachers require training to teach in multigrade and multilevel schools. In indigenous communities, they must integrate the objectives of national curricula with community knowledge and strengthen education in home languages. Teachers need specific tools to deal with processes of education and social exclusion in contexts of displacement, confinement and disability.

However, training is not enough unless adequate conditions are provided for teachers to carry out their work. More often than not, diversifying pedagogies rests on teachers' initiative, effort or personal sacrifice. Their employment, pay, welfare and personal safety must correspond to their workload needs. Teachers in remote or socio-economically disadvantaged areas require greater support. Finally, the teaching workforce should reflect social diversity. Universities and teacher training institutions thus must offer incentives for groups that are under-represented in teaching.



A girl plays a game with stones in a school in les Cayes, Department du Sud, Haiti, which was being used as a living space or shelter for several hundred people who lost their homes to Hurricane Matthew in 2014.

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CHAPTER

6

Schools



KEY MESSAGES

Inclusion in education cannot be achieved without inclusive schools that celebrate diversity and respond to individual needs to support their learning.

- In an inclusive school, every student is welcomed and engaged in school life; all students feel they belong and can realize their potential. Students learn better when they view their learning environment as positive and supportive.

School segregation is a challenge to inclusion and has major effects on learning.

- The level of socio-economic segregation in Chile and Mexico is much higher than in other OECD countries and barely changed between 2000 and 2015.
- Immigrants tend to be concentrated in neighbourhoods or areas where schools may already be disadvantaged. In Colombia, enrolment in border areas increased by 40% as a result of the influx of Venezuelan migrants.
- Despite laws on inclusion, children with disabilities are often still segregated in special schools, as in Barbados and Panama.

Promotion of an inclusive school ethos relies on visionary school leaders.

- Countries in the region have made efforts to scale up training for principals and school leaders. Chile introduced the Good School Leadership Framework in 2011, followed by the Programme for the Training of Excellent Principals, which trained more than one-third of principals in leadership skills through graduate degrees in its first two years.

School culture often falls short of inclusive ideals.

- Students viewed as different from the majority are more likely to be bullied. Haitians in Chile have been subject to racist remarks in public and on social media.
- Physical violence and bullying is sometimes perpetrated by teachers. Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Dominica, Guyana, Saint Lucia and Suriname still practice corporal punishment.
- School-related violence is a concern, not least in the context of high rates of violent death in general in countries such as El Salvador and Honduras.

Safe and accessible schools are crucial for inclusion.

- The journey to school can be so dangerous that some students cannot attend. In Guatemala, many roads are not safe for girls to go to school, and transport, when available, is expensive.
- Buildings and sanitation facilities remain inadequate in many places. In Jamaica, a survey of 10% of schools found that 24% had ramps and only 11% had accessible bathrooms.

Distance learning platforms and assistive technology can enable students with disabilities to participate but require sufficient resources and appropriate pedagogy.

- Not all who need it have access to assistive technology. In Haiti and Peru, less than 10% of people with hearing impairments have access to assistive technology.

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Inclusion in education cannot be achieved without inclusive schools, defined by the Salamanca Declaration as ‘institutions which include everybody, celebrate differences, support learning and respond to individual needs’ (UNESCO, 1994, p. iii). Schools committed to inclusion adopt the principles that each student can and will learn and succeed and that diversity is of value to all students. In an inclusive school, every student is welcomed and engaged in school life; all students feel they belong and can realize their potential. Evidence shows that students learn better when they view their learning environment as positive and supportive (Dorman et al., 2006).

If schools are to play this role, they must be offered the opportunity. In practice, many countries permit the existence of special schools that segregate some learners from others. For people with disabilities, discrimination through laws and policies can be compounded by a lack of accessible infrastructure or reasonable accommodation. For immigrants, legal barriers in host countries can limit access to mainstream education. Insufficient measures to overcome transport or linguistic barriers, potentially fuelled by ambivalent attitudes, can isolate students. For indigenous students, education may not be culturally and linguistically inappropriate. It is true that some attempts at inclusion can have downsides, as flawed practices can undermine certain groups’ identities and needs. But the alternative, segregation, threatens students’ academic achievement, social and emotional development, and self-esteem.

Schools themselves must take the initiative to achieve the inclusion ideal by preventing and addressing many forms of exclusion and marginalization. An inclusive school culture can boost students’ sense of belonging and their motivation so that they take greater responsibility for their behaviour and learning. School ethos, a term sometimes used interchangeably with school culture or climate, refers to the explicit and implicit values and beliefs, as well as interpersonal relationships, defining a school’s atmosphere and guiding behaviour (Donnelly, 2000). School values and norms, which are linked to students’ social and emotional development and feelings of well-being, are considered an important factor in schools’ academic performance (Bennett, 2017). Throughout a school, ‘inclusive values should be evident in all policies and development plans and demonstrated through the mutually supportive working relationships and practice of all school leaders, staff and learners’ (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2011, p.16).

Meaningful participation and inclusive practices in the classroom are also essential. Research has identified five key components for an inclusive classroom: differentiation, classroom environment, teacher disposition, delivery methods and lesson components (Lawless et al., 2020). The implication is that schools need to move away from forms of education that suit some children and oblige others to adapt. This chapter looks at what schools can do to build inclusive cultures and management processes. Effective and supportive

school leadership is instrumental (though not the only factor) in building such environments. Finally, schools can be made more accessible through appropriate physical infrastructure and the use of technology.

THE WAY SCHOOLS ARE ORGANIZED CAN BE A BARRIER TO INCLUSION

School segregation and exclusion are still widespread in Latin America and the Caribbean. Some families consciously self-segregate, while others are segregated because of inability to move. Some governments neglect the needs of the more marginalized; others explicitly decide to separate learners.

School segregation by income, ethnicity or migrant status is common

Segregation means students with given social, demographic and cultural characteristics are educated in schools and classrooms in which they are the majority. It is a system-wide phenomenon that has major effects on schools and learners. School segregation has been shown to lead to higher inequality in education outcomes (Dupriez et al., 2008). In Argentina, student population segregation explains inequality by socio-economic status in skills acquisition (Krüger, 2018).

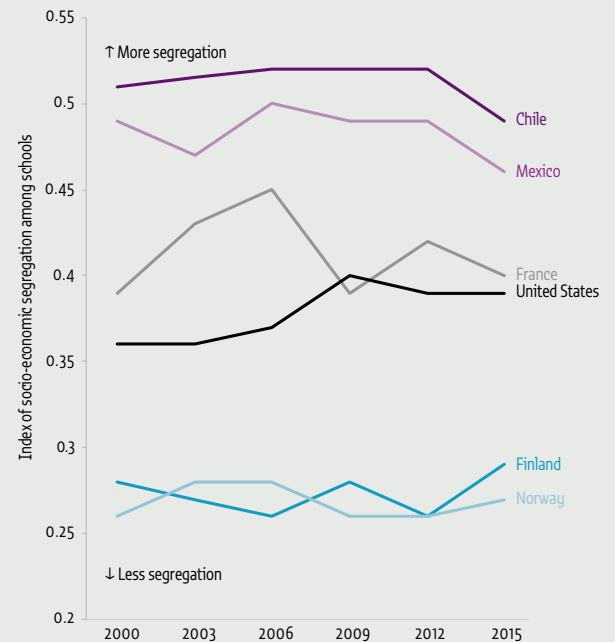
In Latin America and the Caribbean, school segregation is driven by several factors: social and economic inequality that leads to residential segregation; internal and international migration; and social and education policies (Bellei and Bonal, 2018).

Residential and spatial segregation, where different socio-economic groups live apart from each other, is a key feature of societies in the region (ECLAC, 2016). Income inequality has fallen in recent years but from a very high level, so it remains high (ECLAC, 2019). School systems mirror their highly unequal societies. This can be seen in the results of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Half the students in Chile and Mexico, compared with a little over one-quarter in Scandinavian countries, would have to be reassigned schools to achieve a uniform socio-economic mixture. Such segregation barely changed between 2000 and 2015 (Figure 6.1).

School choice and various forms of privatization of school provision can play an influential role in school segregation (Krüger, 2018; Musset, 2012; OECD, 2019). Parental choice in the region is restricted in many ways. Most systems assign students to the local public school, although there is some flexibility in secondary education (Elacqua et al., 2018). However, privatization can exacerbate school

FIGURE 6.1:
Socio-economic segregation among schools is a persistent challenge

Dissimilarity index of distribution of socio-economic top and bottom 50% of students across schools, selected countries, 2000–15



Notes: The dissimilarity index reflects the differing distribution of two groups (e.g. students of high and low socio-economic status) among specific units (e.g. schools). It is equal to half the sum of absolute differences in proportions between the two groups across schools. It ranges from zero (where the proportion of both groups in every school is equal to the proportions found in the population, i.e. there is no segregation) to one (where there is complete segregation of students, i.e. all schools have only one group represented). Source: Based on Gutiérrez et al. (2017).

segregation. In Chile, where school segregation by income is among the world's highest, the worsening segregation trend results not only from high income inequality and residential segregation but also from a school choice mechanism that includes exclusionary selection practices and from price discrimination (Valenzuela et al., 2014).

Although there is significant overlap between segregation by ethnic origin and segregation by socio-economic status, the former is even more widespread in the region than the latter. An analysis based on the results of the 2013 Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (TERCE), a learning achievement survey, showed that eight of the nine countries with indigenous populations had a segregation index of more than 0.9. Colombia and

BOX 6.1:**Expanding multiculturalism, interculturalism and bilingual education in Latin America**

Indigenous people represent 8.3% of the population of Latin America (Corbetta et al., 2020). They speak over 700 languages, some of which, such as Quechua and Aymara, have millions of speakers (López and Sichra, 2008). Brazil has the greatest linguistic diversity, with about 180 languages, but speakers of them make up barely 1% of the population (Povos Indígenas no Brasil, 2018). Indigenous people in Latin America are among the most disadvantaged and experience high levels of poverty and marginalization. They have lower education attainment and literacy rates than the general population. (Cortina, 2017; ECLAC, 2014). In Mexico, the primary completion rate is 72.6% among indigenous 12- to 14-year-olds but 67.5% among those who are also speakers of an indigenous language (UNICEF and INEE, 2018). In Panama in 2016, 21% of indigenous women aged 20 to 24 had completed secondary school, compared with 73% of non-indigenous women (Figure 6.2). In Honduras and Paraguay, 32% of indigenous people are illiterate (UNESCO, 2017).

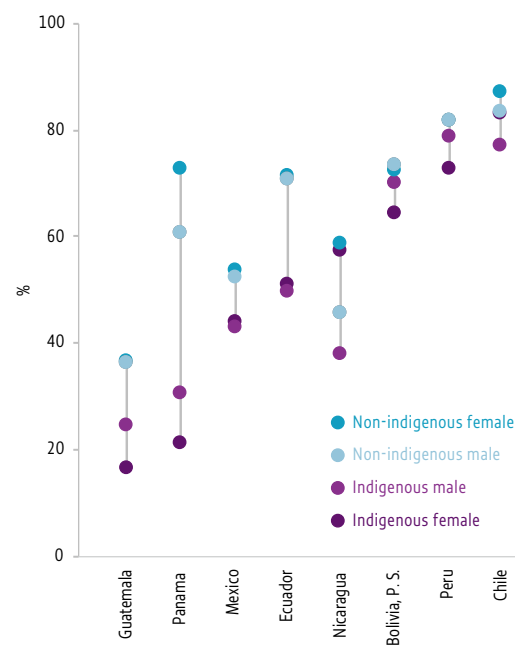
Inter- and multiculturalism are increasingly included in education policies throughout the region. In 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples called for countries to expand education opportunities to the indigenous, while at the same time recognizing their right to establish and control their education systems (United Nations, 2007). Education systems have to strike a careful balance between, on the one hand, the need to maintain ancestral traditions and affirm indigenous identity, and, on the other, the need for indigenous people to acquire skills that have been denied them (UNESCO, 2017). Education can be seen both as causing loss of indigenous knowledge and as a potential way to redress the loss (UNESCO, 2009). Indigenous organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean have urged development and implementation of bilingual and intercultural education systems that take into consideration indigenous knowledge, cosmovisions and languages. Intercultural bilingual education and ethno-education aim to provide culturally and linguistically pertinent education to marginalized indigenous and Afro-descendant communities.

In Colombia, the Indigenous Peoples' Own Education System (Sistema Educativo Indígena Propio, SEIP) enables indigenous peoples to develop capacity for administration, coordination and orientation of their education processes. The system aims to help build norms, institutions and procedures to guarantee indigenous peoples' constitutional right to autonomy and self-determination. In 2014, Decree 1953 created a special regime allowing SEIP schools to operate in indigenous territories. SEIP cycles are equivalent to general system education levels (Corbetta et al., 2020). In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the 2010 Avelino Siñani – Elizardo Pérez Education Law

promotes intracultural, intercultural and multilingual education and the knowledge and languages of indigenous peoples, offering them an opportunity to participate in curriculum adaptation (UNESCO, 2017; Pérez, 2020).

There is evidence that bilingual education has a positive impact on students' learning. In Peru, indigenous children who attended Quechua-language schools achieved higher mathematics scores than indigenous children who attended Spanish-language schools (Hynsjö and Damon, 2015). However, concerns remain that education systems and institutions have largely prevented meaningful inclusion of indigenous populations, and their knowledge and practices, in formal schooling (Persaud, 2016). Moreover, the value of intercultural and bilingual education is often seen as limited to indigenous students, which hampers its spread throughout the education system and thus denies its inclusive potential to other learners.

FIGURE 6.2:
Indigenous people lag behind their non-indigenous peers in education attainment
Indigenous men and women aged 20 to 24 who completed secondary education, 2016



Source: ECLAC (2018).

BOX 6.2**Venezuelans in Trinidad and Tobago face challenges in getting access to education**

As of August 2020, governments in Latin America and the Caribbean reported 5.2 million Venezuelan migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. About 80,000 are in the non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries of Aruba, Curaçao, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago (R4V, 2019). This may be a fraction of what other countries in the region have received, but the number is huge in relative terms; for instance, the 17,000 migrants and refugees in Aruba represent 15% of the population. The true figures are likely higher, as many government sources account only for Venezuelans with regular status. The Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform reports that 24,000 Venezuelans are in Trinidad and Tobago, but other estimates suggest there are over 40,000 (Refugees International, 2019).

A National Policy to Address Refugee and Asylum Matters in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was approved in 2014, but no

implementing legislation has been put forward (Refugees International, 2019). Children of registered asylum seekers cannot attend school. The government spent two weeks registering Venezuelans in June 2019, granting six-month renewable work permits at five registration centres, but with no guarantee of education (Trinidad and Tobago Office of the Prime Minister, 2019).

Non-government organizations work to ensure that Venezuelan children have access to education. For instance, Living Water Community (LWC) accommodated 600 Venezuelan children in 6 child-friendly spaces as of December 2019, with a plan to set up 4 more spaces for 400 additional children. The Ministry of Education granted access to the primary education curriculum and appointed a teacher to work with LWC to secure certification.

Mexico were the most segregated (Murillo and Martínez-Garrido, 2017). Indigenous people and Afro-descendants are vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization. In Colombia, the municipality with the highest percentage of Afro-Colombians had the lowest per capita level of investment in health, education and infrastructure (Hernández, 2013). But there are several challenges facing intercultural education in the region (**Box 6.1**).

First- or second-generation immigrants tend to be concentrated in suburban neighbourhoods or rural areas, where schools may already be disadvantaged. In Colombia, enrolment of Venezuelan children in the border area has increased by 40%, leading to overcrowded classrooms (UNDP, 2020). The country has taken measures to increase education access, including offering citizenship to 24,000 children of Venezuelan migrants and expanding school capacity in the cities hosting the greatest numbers, including Bogotá and Cúcuta (UNDP, 2020). In Trinidad and Tobago, even children of registered asylum seekers cannot attend school. A national policy on inclusive education for asylum seekers was launched in 2014, but as no legislation was introduced to implement it, Venezuelan children receive education in separate settings (**Box 6.2**).

“ Resource centres pool resources, such as assistive technology and specialized teachers, with the ultimate goal of mainstreaming children ”

Marginalized groups continue to be excluded from mainstream schools

The 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) obliges countries with segregation practices to transition towards integrated or inclusive systems. However, less than 25% of countries in the region have provisions for inclusive education in their laws or policies. While some countries have been transitioning towards inclusive education systems, 42% have opted for full exclusion in their laws and 15% in their policies (**Figure 6.3**).

Countries that promote inclusion in their legislative or policy frameworks often retain parallel systems for education of people with disabilities. In Panama, the 2006 National Plan on Inclusive Education established that students with special needs had to be educated in the most ‘standardized education context’ and receive the support they needed to succeed in education. Law 15 of 2016 decreed that the education system should include people with disabilities in regular education with a flexible curriculum and tailored support. Yet inclusive and special schools continue to coexist in Panama (PEER, 2020). The Panamanian Institute for Special Training promotes the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities through community awareness and specialized training programmes, transforming special classrooms and special schools into resource centres (IPHE, 2020).

In Barbados, Article 53 of the Education Act states that the minister may either ‘provide special schools appropriate’ or ‘facilities for special education at any school’ for children ‘requiring special educational treatment’. Despite this pledge, the public education system lacks capacity to meet the needs of all primary

school-aged children with special needs (Barbados Today, 2019). In Nicaragua, the Ministry of Education promotes inclusive education and offers a set of strategies, specialized resources and support services to ensure that students with disabilities access the curriculum (Nicaragua Ministry of Education, 2020) but 25 special schools still operate, providing education for about 3,500 children with disabilities (Fonseca and Pfortner, 2020).

One way the transition to inclusion is taking place is gradual conversion of special schools into resource centres. Such centres often cater for children with a particular impairment and provide tailored education support. They also conduct early screenings and interventions to determine the most appropriate setting for children. Resource centres pool resources, such as assistive technology and specialized teachers, with the ultimate goal of mainstreaming children. Their organization and role vary by country.

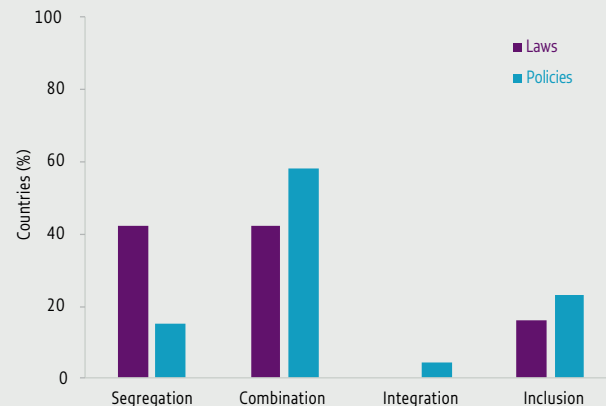
In Belize, teachers advise head teachers to place students they consider as having 'exceptional learning needs' on a referral list for itinerant resource officer assessment (PEER, 2020). As officers visit each school infrequently, many children wait months to be assessed. Officers help teachers develop individualized education plans adapted to learning needs and support school placement of children not in school (UNICEF, 2013). In El Salvador, the Ministry of Education has funded 'support rooms' to facilitate inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms (Duryea et al., 2019). In some countries, children with severe or extreme disabilities are often educated at home or in hospitals. In Argentina, the Federal Council of Education regulates education in home and hospitals. This modality provides an opportunity for ill children to complete compulsory education with tailored support, adapted to their specific needs (Argentina Federal Council of Education, 2013).

Countries have taken various steps to include other children at risk of exclusion from mainstream education. In the case of incarcerated youth, for example, some countries have adopted measures to guarantee that the right to education in the context of prisons is ensured inclusively (Scarfó and Aued, 2020). Education for incarcerated adolescents in El Salvador is provided in four education centres located at Social Insertion Centres, which are part of the national education system. Education is often provided in separate settings at different times for inmates who are gang members so as to prevent outbursts of violence. Inmates who do not belong to either of the two main gangs receive classes at still another time and for fewer hours (Delgado de Mejía, 2020).

FIGURE 6.3:

Policies are more inclusive than laws in including students with disabilities

School organization for people with disabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean, by national legal and policy frameworks, 2020



Source: GEM Report team analysis based on GEM Report Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER).

Alternative approaches ensure that the most marginalized have education access

Alternative approaches to schooling are intended to expand access to education of good quality for some of the most marginalized populations, including those in rural areas, those from indigenous backgrounds and those from low-income families.

Rural schools represent at least 30% of all education establishments in the region (UNESCO, 2016). Multigrade schools aim to make effective use of limited resources in rural areas but face many challenges due to insufficient pre-service teacher training in multigrade methodologies. Alternative approaches to education can help ensure the right to education in rural areas (**Box 6.3**).

Several countries have developed satellite schools. In this model, schools are organized into clusters, usually consisting of a main, well-resourced school and smaller satellites, in some cases one-room schools with multigrade teaching. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, school clusters known as *núcleos* promote bilingual intercultural education. The system has helped expand access to education among indigenous children in highland areas (UNESCO, 2010).

Second-chance education programmes provide opportunities for adolescents and youth who dropped out or never attended school to obtain secondary

“ In Mexico, the Basic Education Programme for Boys and Girls of Migrant Agricultural Workers has been implemented in areas with day-labourer camps, such as Yurécuaro and Tanhuato, to expand education opportunities to more than 50,000 children working in fields, as well as to their families

”

BOX 6.3

Flexible education modalities are critical to fulfil the right to education in rural areas

Support from the community has played a crucial role in education in rural and remote locations, not least because educating populations in scattered communities with low population density is costly. In rural Andean regions, communities are active in demanding provision of secondary education services, preparing school meals and repairing schools, for instance through the *minga* collective labour system in Ecuador.

In rural and remote Brazil, Pedagogy of Alternation is used to help integrate communities, parents and students. Students spend some of their education time in regular classes at school and the rest in their communities working on projects in which they apply what they have learned and support family agricultural activities. The time spent on these projects counts towards the National Education Council's minimum of 200 school days. The programme Pro Jovem Saberes da Terra provides public funding to community schools that offer secondary education aimed at the development of family agriculture using Pedagogy of Alternation. Other programmes to provide educational services in rural communities in Brazil include Escolas Família Agrícola, Centros Familiares de Formação para Alternância and Caminho da Escola, which supports school transport for rural students (Rolon and Vieira, 2020).

Escuela Nueva, a non-state education model introduced in Colombia in the 1970s, addressed access, quality and equity issues in rural education. Teachers act as facilitators focusing on mutual learning through dialogue and collaboration. The government has since adopted this non-traditional, student-centred learning model as a national education policy and scaled it up across the country. Studies have shown the model has had a positive impact on peaceful social interaction and on learning achievement (Forero-Pineda et al., 2006). A second model, Escuela Nueva Activa, has been designed for marginalized urban areas (Escuela Nueva, 2020).

education equivalency qualifications and enter job training (World Bank, 2018). Argentina introduced the Plan for Primary and Secondary Education Completion in 2008 to offer people aged 18 and over an opportunity to complete primary or secondary school (Argentina Ministry of Education, 2019). Governments and civil society collaborate on implementation. Delivery takes place outside schools in places individuals are likely to frequent in daily life, such as clubs and churches. The programme appears to be attractive only to those who were already involved in mainstream adult education. The quality of education delivered has been questioned, not least because teachers are under pressure to ensure that students obtain certification (Beech, 2019).

Re-entry programmes have also been targeted at internal migrants. In Mexico, the Basic Education Programme for Boys and Girls of Families of Migrant Agricultural Workers has been implemented in areas with day-labourer camps, such as Yurécuaro and Tanhuato, to expand education opportunities to more than 50,000 children working in fields, as well as to their families (CONEVAL, 2013). Other second-chance programmes seek target early school-leavers. Chile established more than 150 Integrated Centres for Youth and Adults, also known as Second Opportunity Centres, where 13- to 18-year-olds can complete two secondary school grades in one academic year through differentiated instruction (Espinoza et al., 2019).

School leaders are the linchpin for implementation of inclusive policies

By acting as agents of change, school leaders can perform a deciding role in ensuring equitable access to learning. They can safeguard the translation of inclusive laws and regulations into concrete actions. Where anti-discrimination or inclusion frameworks are not in place or are ambiguous, school leaders can go beyond them by sharing a vision of inclusion, challenging inequitable practices and promoting inclusive pedagogies (OEI, 2018). They can provide pedagogical and teacher support that promotes inclusion, engage parents and community members in decision making and manage resources to support inclusion (Van Horn, 2020). Effective school leadership requires an ability to understand the system's complexity, shape the school and its context, and ensure that teachers support students (Pashiardis and Johansson, 2016).

Countries in the region have made efforts to scale up training for principals and other school leaders. Chile introduced the Good School Leadership Framework in 2011, followed by the Programme for the Training of Excellent Principals, which trained more than one-third of head teachers in the country in leadership skills

through graduate degrees in its first two years (Bruns and Luque, 2014; Vaillant, 2015). In Brazil, the *Jovem de Futuro* programme developed by Instituto Unibanco supported principals and school managers in improving efficiency through results-based school management. The project began in 2007 in 3 schools in São Paulo and 50 institutions in Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul states, and was later expanded to other states. Impact evaluations showed positive results in terms of student outcomes (Adelman et al., 2019; Barros et al., 2012; Caetano et al., 2016; Rosa, 2015). Jamaica's National College for Educational Leadership was established in 2011 to train potential principals and improve the quality of public school leadership (Jamaica National College of Educational Leadership, 2020).

SAFETY IN SCHOOL IS ESSENTIAL FOR INCLUSION

One of the main tasks for school leaders is to ensure a safe and non-violent environment. Globally, an estimated 246 million children and adolescents experience school violence and bullying in some form every year (UNESCO, 2017). Learners viewed as different from the majority are more likely to be targeted. Physical appearance is the most common reason for being bullied, followed by race, nationality and skin colour (UNESCO, 2019).

School-related gender-based violence rooted in discriminatory norms and stereotypes affects millions of children in the region (Plan International and UNICEF, 2011). It involves acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence. Children and young people have different experiences of such violence depending on their sex, gender identity, country and context. For example, girls are more likely to experience psychological bullying, cyberbullying, sexual violence and harassment, while boys often face higher rates of corporal punishment (UNESCO and UN Women, 2016).

Bullying of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) students is widespread. A study on school climate in seven countries in the region found that four out of five Chilean LGBTI students felt insecure at school (Kosciw and Zongrone, 2019). In Colombia, 15% of students had been victims of school violence because of their sexual orientation (Barrientos y Lovera, 2020). In Mexico, 75% of LGBTI youth experienced verbal harassment and insults at school. In Peru, almost 17% of LGBTI students reported physical attacks in the previous year (Kosciw and Zongrone, 2019). The country launched a national monitoring initiative, the Specialized System against School Violence, allowing victims and witnesses in participating schools to report violence. The system

“ Schools should be safe meeting spaces for children, teachers, parents and communities, where children feel welcomed and cases of abuse can be reported ”

specifies follow-up actions to be taken by a designated staff member (UNESCO, 2019).

In Brazil, 60% of students felt insecure about their sexual orientation and 43% indicated that this insecurity was due to gender expression (ABLGT, 2016). In 2009, inclusive policies for LGBTI students were introduced alongside scholarship and vocational education programmes for transgender students as well as a training programme for education professionals to promote discussion of gender, sexuality and violence in schools (Prado and Lopes, 2020). However, in 2018 the government vowed to remove LGBTI content from textbooks (*The Economist*, 2018).

In Mexico, 66% of transgender students said they had suffered from bullying. One way to reduce the risk of harassment and aggression is an arrangement that allows them to use toilets corresponding to their self-assigned gender. To date there is no public policy or regulation promoting the safety of transgender students in the school environment. Training processes have been initiated for teachers and students in some private schools to accept the use of toilets by transgender students as they identify themselves. In others, a third space has been created (Corona and Mazín, 2020).

Migrants and refugees can be particularly at risk. In Chile, the number of Haitian immigrants increased from less than 5,000 in 2010 to 105,000 in 2017, as laws allowed immigrants from the region to get visas at the border and then apply for work permits (Charles, 2018). Haitians have been subject to racist remarks in public and through social media, according to Chile's National Human Rights Institute (INDH, 2018). In Colombia, the Ministry of Education and UNHCR are fighting xenophobia against Venezuelan migrants. Schools should be safe meeting spaces for children, teachers, parents and communities, where children feel welcomed and cases of abuse can be reported (UNDP Colombia, 2020). In the Dominican Republic, schools are often spaces to escape from violence, deportation and harassment for students of Haitian descent (Waddick, 2020).

Several countries have adopted measures to fight discrimination in education against Afro-descendants. Ecuador developed a national plan in 2009 to eliminate

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Public policies to subsidize
transport can foster inclusion

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racial discrimination and ethnic and cultural exclusion (Anton, 2020). At the regional level, a campaign called Basta de Bullying: No te quedés callado is a high-profile bullying prevention initiative sponsored since 2012 by Cartoon Network Latin America in cooperation with Plan International and World Vision. It has reached 60 million households (UNESCO, 2017).

Teachers may perpetrate physical violence and bullying. Corporal punishment is a common form of physical violence affecting millions of children worldwide. The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children has noted that 10 Latin American countries have prohibited it in all settings (Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) and 6 have committed to prohibiting it (Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico and Panama). However, some countries, particularly in the Caribbean, still practice corporal punishment in schools, including Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Dominica, Guyana, Saint Lucia and Suriname (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2020).

Gang violence poses a significant problem and can lead to disengagement from education. Young people on the way to school run a risk of being targeted by armed gangs or caught in crossfire between police and armed groups. In 2016, the rate of violent deaths in El Salvador and Honduras was the highest after Syria and exceeded those in Afghanistan and Iraq (Theirworld, 2018). Gang violence in and around schools is widespread in some Caribbean countries. Gang-related violence in a secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago resulted in teachers refusing to work, saying they felt unsafe because of threats against them and students (*Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, 2020).

Lack of safe and accessible routes to school hinders participation and presents obstacles to inclusion, particularly in rural and suburban areas. In Guatemala, many roads are not safe for girls to go to school; transport, when available, is expensive (Bonfil, 2020). Ensuring safe roads to schools requires collaboration between ministries of transport and infrastructure, the police and the community. Public policies to subsidize transport can foster inclusion. In Brazil, more than 35,000 school buses and more than 170,000 bicycles were procured under two nationwide programmes between 2008 and 2013 to support transport for rural students (Brazil Government, 2014).

UNIVERSAL DESIGN IS A FOUNDATION OF INCLUSION

SDG target 4.a recognizes the importance of facilities suitable for students with disabilities in ensuring inclusion. Universal design offers a roadmap for creating such facilities. The CRPD, endorsing the concept, described universal design as ‘the design of products, environments, programmes, and services to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design’ (United Nations, 2006, p. 4). Universal design aims to increase functionality and be applicable to everyone’s needs, regardless of age, size or ability. It is estimated that incorporating full-access facilities from the outset increases the total cost by 1%, while adaptation after completion can increase it by 5% or more, depending on the modifications (United Nations, 2019).

The seven principles of universal design were developed in 1997 by a group of architects, product and environmental designers, and engineers: equitable use for people with diverse abilities; flexibility in use to accommodate a range of individual preferences and abilities; simple and intuitive use, regardless of user experience, knowledge, language skills or level of concentration; perceptible information that is effectively communicated, regardless of surrounding conditions or sensory abilities; tolerance for error to minimize the consequences of accidents caused by unintended actions; low physical effort; and appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulation and use, regardless of user’s body size, posture or mobility (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 2019). Whether for school buildings, public walkways or physical appliances, these principles can be used to evaluate existing designs, guide the design process and educate designers and users about the characteristics of more usable products and environments.

Countries in the region have taken steps to remove physical barriers in education. Colombia has developed technical norms for physical accessibility in higher education (Colombia Ministry of National Education, 2018). El Salvador has a policy for education infrastructure that promotes the removal of physical barriers for persons with disabilities in schools (UNESCO and RIINEE, 2017). Following the 2010 earthquake, Haiti established standards for making all reconstruction accessible to persons with disabilities (World Bank, 2019). The Nicaraguan Compulsory Technical Accessibility Norm and 2011 Law on the Rights of People with Disabilities include provisions for guaranteeing physical accessibility in schools (Fonseca and Pförtner, 2020). In Paraguay, the Ministry of Education and the Saraki Foundation

“Community radio and education television have helped reach learners in remote and rural areas, although they have struggled to reach the most marginalized groups”

developed a Guide for Physical Accessibility in Schools that lays out rules to ensure accessibility for people with physical disabilities or other mobility difficulties (Velásquez, 2020).

However, facilities remain inadequate in many places. In Jamaica, for example, a survey of 41 primary and 43 secondary schools, representing 10% of schools in the country, concluded that 24% had ramps and only 11% had accessible bathrooms (Gayle-Geddes, 2020). In Honduras, accessibility barriers are considered one of the main causes of early school-leaving among students with disabilities (UNESCO and RIINEE, 2017). Although not specific to issues related to students with disability, analysis based on the results of the 2013 TERCE concluded that a high percentage of students attended schools with insufficient infrastructure. Considerable inequality existed in access to various parts of school infrastructure, in relation to both student socio-economic status and school geographical location. Chile and Uruguay had the lowest level of inequality in school infrastructure (UNESCO and IADB, 2017).

TECHNOLOGY CAN FOSTER INCLUSION OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS

Countries across the region have increased the availability of information and communication technology (ICT) and low-cost assistive devices to help learners from marginalized groups gain access to education. However, access to ICT and the capacity to use it are unequally distributed. For example, while 70% of households in Uruguay have a computer and 64% have internet, internet access levels are below 30% in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cuba and El Salvador (ITU, 2018; UNESCO, 2017). In 11 countries in the region, people with disabilities are less likely to use the internet than their peers without disabilities and the same education level (United Nations, 2018). In Antigua and Barbuda the gap in internet use by disability status is over 40 percentage points (Ullmann et al., 2018).

Community radio and education television have helped reach learners in remote and rural areas, although they have struggled to reach the most marginalized groups. Radio IRFEYAL in Quito and Pichincha province, Ecuador,

has broadcast the education programme El Maestro en Casa (Teacher at Home) since 1995, as well as education, cultural, information and entertainment programmes for the most marginalized (Radio IRFEYAL, 2020). In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Instituto Radiofónico de Fe y Alegría provides education programmes for confined adolescents, youth and adults (Edujesuit, 2020).

Brazil has integrated public universities into a single online system to tackle unequal distribution of higher educational institutions across the country. The initiative, which started in 2015, incorporates online education and physical learning centres where students can complement their online learning with face-to-face discussions and collaborative activities. About 90% of the centres are located in municipalities with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants, who previously had little or no access to universities (Myers et al., 2017). In Uruguay, Plan Ceibal was begun in 2007 to promote inclusion and equity in education through supporting technology. Each child entering the public education system has access to a computer for personal use, with free internet connection. Plan Ceibal also provides programmes, education resources and teacher training (Plan Ceibal, 2020).

ICT in education frequently involves computer-aided learning via tablets that students with disabilities can use. Assistive technology of this kind can make the difference between participation and marginalization for students with disabilities. According to the World Health Organization, assistive devices and technology aim to ‘maintain or improve an individual’s functioning and independence to facilitate participation and to enhance overall well-being. They can also help prevent impairments and secondary health conditions.’ Assistive devices may refer to input technology (e.g. adapted keyboards and computer input controls, speech input and dictation software) and output technology, especially for learners with visual impairments (e.g. screen readers and magnifiers, 3D printers and Braille note takers). Alternative and augmentative communication systems replace speech. Assistive listening systems improve sound clarity and reduce background noise. Such technology has been found to increase rates of graduation, post-secondary education, paid employment and earnings above minimum wage (Bouck et al., 2011). However, it is often not available due to lack of resources or not used effectively due to insufficient teacher education.

Globally, the World Health Organization has estimated, in low- and middle-income countries only 5% to 15% of those who need assistive technology have access to it (Hunt, 2020). The share of those with hearing impairments who have access to assistive technology is less than 10% in Haiti and Peru (Duryea et al., 2019). Successful

“ Globally, the World Health Organization has estimated that, in low- and middle-income countries only 5% to 15% of those who need assistive technology have access to it ”

introduction and use of ICT and assistive technology in inclusive education requires their integration with appropriate pedagogical approaches used by well-trained teachers. In Argentina, the Ministry of Health manages the unified national disability registry, through which access to assistive technologies is facilitated (WHO, 2019). Conectar Igualdad, a programme launched in 2010, offers assistive technology to all special education centres and to students with disabilities enrolled in mainstream schools and teacher training colleges. It provides training in the use of the technology to students and teachers and creates specialized content to promote inclusive digital education (Argentina Ministry of Education, 2020). A manual lists technologies that can be adapted to learners with different types of visual impairments and guides teachers how to use these technologies in the classroom (Zappalá et al., 2011).

CONCLUSION

Schools in Latin America and the Caribbean have made progress but still need to tackle major obstacles if they are to become truly inclusive. Segregation, especially based on income, remains high and the decline in inequality has been too limited to make a dent in residential segregation. Large-scale migration and displacement have increased the challenge. Efforts to introduce intercultural and bilingual education throughout the region, laudable and effective as they have been, do not go far enough, since they have been targeted at indigenous communities and not mainstreamed for the schools of majority populations.

Inclusive learning environments and school ethos are essential to ensure that all learners thrive in education. There are clear examples of moves towards inclusion by adapting processes, fostering collaboration between school leaders and teachers, and developing pedagogies that take the needs of all learners into account. But students often lack the support they need to succeed in education. Many schools are not safe or accessible, while much school building infrastructure does not meet standards. More proactive strategies are needed to fight bullying and school violence, which lead to exclusion. Distance learning platforms and low-cost assistive devices have the potential to reach the most marginalized learners but are often unavailable due to lack of resources or not used effectively due to lack of teacher education.

A teacher helps children assemble a puzzle at an integrated early childhood development centre in Coyhuaruma, a rural indigenous Quechua community about 20 kilometres from the town of Pocoata, Bolivia. The centre provides educational activities and nutrition and health services for children aged 2-5. Parents also receive health, hygiene, nutrition and child-rights training at the centre to better care for their children.

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CHAPTER

7

Students, parents
and communities



KEY MESSAGES

Students, parents and communities can drive, but also resist, inclusive education.

- Practices seen as inclusive in some communities can be seen by others as increasing exclusion. In Peru, some rural communities advocate prioritization of Spanish and reject bilingualism.
- In English-speaking Caribbean countries, where boys lag behind, some strategies involve enhancing segregation by setting up single-sex classrooms; others involve developing gender-based literacy manuals for primary school.

Community participation can reinforce a sense of identity, belonging and solidarity.

- Parental knowledge tapped through groups such as Argentina's, the Plurinational State of Bolivia's and Cuba's school councils, Guatemala's education committees, Jamaica's parent-teacher associations and Mexico's school councils for social participation can support teacher practices and improve learning environments.
- Through advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, non-government and civil society organizations can promote accountability to encourage schools and authorities to meet standards. Examples include campaigns against homophobia and transphobia in Brazil and against xenophobia in Costa Rica.

Collective responses are needed to fight bias and discrimination.

- Incarcerated youth have accumulated disadvantages from past schooling experiences, negative self-concept and low teacher expectations. A community integration programme in Uruguay works with incarcerated youth six months before and three months after their release to identify resources and facilitate education continuity.
- Gender intersects with poverty, ethnicity and location to exacerbate disadvantage and its impact on education. Grassroots organizations in Nicaragua work on the intersection of gender and disability, providing comprehensive sexuality education and training on responses to gender violence.
- Civil society organizations can find themselves at opposite ends of inclusion debates. In Brazil, organizations successfully campaigned to remove references to gender and sexual orientation from the National Education Plan.
- In Mexico, some communities are reluctant to learn about indigenous culture and language, fearing that identifying more closely with indigenous culture could cause them to face discrimination. Community organizations strengthen initiatives that foster linguistic and cultural revitalization in the face of this reluctance.
- Community support helps include people on the move. In Guyana, non-government partners, in collaboration with local education authorities, mobilized volunteers to run a community-based initiative teaching English as a second language to Venezuelan children.

Communities fight to overcome barriers to inclusion of learners with disabilities.

- In Argentina, more than 150 disabled people's organizations belong to the umbrella coalition Grupo Artículo 24 por la Educación Inclusiva, which has published inclusive education manuals for three provinces.
- In Nicaragua, the Association of Comprehensive Community Education Programmes, in alliance with local governments, has been key in promoting participation of people with disabilities in existing community structures.

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Inclusive societies require social and political transformation to create a context in which everyone respects others' rights and believes in fulfilling everyone's potential

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Breakthroughs towards inclusion have, in some cases, been the result of efforts by inspirational and committed pedagogical and education leaders working to break down discrimination barriers and empower vulnerable groups. In other cases, they have resulted from groups aiming to hold to account those responsible for systematic neglect of their needs, or campaigning to challenge injustices suffered by others.

A move towards inclusion, however, cannot be sustained solely through interventions by experts or mobilization by advocates. Societies need to embrace inclusion as a goal. Everyone needs to contribute – in the schoolyard, at school management committee meetings, during local and national elections. Inclusive societies require social and political transformation to create a context in which everyone respects others' rights and believes in fulfilling everyone's potential. Such transformation requires active participation, not passive reception of instructions and guidelines.

Efforts to build inclusive education systems can easily be undermined by certain behaviour towards vulnerable groups, which may be the product of unconscious bias and carried out without reflection. Children can ostracize disadvantaged peers through jokes or intentional aggression. Parents can block efforts to form inclusive classrooms, whether because they belong to a privileged group and do not want their children's progress negatively affected or because they believe their children's or community's special needs are better served through separate provision. Grassroots organizations established to protect vulnerable children's rights can become an obstacle to making overall systems inclusive, regardless of whether attempts to preserve the status quo come from conviction or self-interest. This chapter discusses how students', parents' and communities' attitudes and behaviours can shift the balance towards or against inclusion in education.

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It is the responsibility of governments to balance positions, opportunities and resources to encourage participation in education by all groups

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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION IS AN ESSENTIAL STEP TOWARDS INCLUSION

Structural inequality in distribution of opportunities for access to public goods and services has been a perennial feature of Latin American and Caribbean societies, including distribution of opportunities to learn and participate in education. Factors leading to exclusion are of long standing and deeply rooted in cultural norms and practices. Representative participation in education benefits all learners and communities (Jeynes, 2003; Mager and Nowak, 2012), but marginalized groups are often sidelined.

Enhancing community participation in education is key to tackling structural discrimination and preventing reproduction of inequality and exclusion. Communities comprise a wide array of actors with the potential and the right to participate in education deliberation and decision-making processes. They are highly heterogeneous; the term ‘community’ may once have been primarily linked to kinship and locality, but it has evolved to encompass ethnic, linguistic, historical and symbolic elements that bind people together. Communities vary greatly in size and may be subsumed into, overlap with or be superimposed on other communities.

Communities may also have divergent positions on education. Practices considered inclusive for some communities may contribute to exacerbating exclusion and segregation among others. Fault lines are formed in terms of disability, ethnicity or sex. In Peru, some rural communities advocate prioritizing Spanish and reject bilingualism, while others demand education more aligned with their local reality, with local teachers who master students’ native language and value local knowledge and traditions (Montero and Uccelli, 2020). In English-speaking Caribbean countries, boys lag in learning achievement and are more likely to leave school early, which has prompted adoption of school strategies that enhance segregation by setting up single-sex classrooms (Jamaica Teaching Council, 2015). But other approaches are aimed at addressing structural barriers that reinforce sex segregation in curricula, such as developing gender-based manuals to improve the literacy performance of boys and

girls in primary school (USAID and Jamaica Ministry of Education, 2014).

Given the political nature of community participation in education, stronger mechanisms are needed to ensure multiple voices are heard, to reach consensus and to take collective action. In the end, the issue of community participation in education is a ‘question of whose knowledge and whose values are permitted dominance in education sectors’ (Bray, 2003, p. 32). It is the responsibility of governments to balance positions, opportunities and resources to encourage participation in education by all groups, especially those that have been historically marginalized or construed as objects of charity rather than holders of rights (López and Vargas, 2019; Vargas, 2014).

Broad participation in education promotes inclusion

Participation of parents and students in education improves learning achievement, attendance and school ethos (Mager and Nowak, 2012; Sheldon, 2007; Van Voorhis et al., 2013). Student participation in school management and decision making has been associated with positive impacts on student health and well-being (Arguedas, 2010; Furlong et al., 2003; OECD, 2003), as well as development of social, citizenship and leadership skills that go beyond school grounds and are critical in students’ later lives. Student participation may also improve curriculum design, increase engagement in teaching and learning processes, create opportunities to strengthen schools’ role and advance community development (Levitan and Johnson, 2020; Yamashita et al., 2010). Community participation reinforces a sense of identity, belonging and solidarity among students, parents, teachers and education staff. Community participation can help empower them, increase accountability and provide complementary education services (Williams et al., 2020).

Communities can be empowered through democratization of education, community mobilization and inclusion of voices that are often sidelined in decision making. Some countries have formalized participation of groups at risk of exclusion in educational decision making, installing mechanisms for representation. In Argentina, representatives of indigenous peoples participate in the bodies responsible for Bilingual Intercultural Education strategy development, as mandated by Article 53 of the general education law (Mato, 2020). In Nicaragua, the 2011 law on the rights of people with disabilities allows for people with disabilities to be represented in policies to promote equality and social inclusion in education settings (Fonseca and Pfortner, 2020).

“ In Honduras, the Programme for Community Education integrates parents into education associations, which can also hire teachers and control the funds the government provides for their salaries ”

Countries can capitalize on parental knowledge to support teacher practices and improve learning environments. Examples include Argentina's, the Plurinational State of Bolivia's and Cuba's school councils, Guatemala's education councils, Jamaica's parent-teacher associations and Mexico's school councils for social participation. In Honduras, the Programme for Community Education integrates parents into education associations, which can also hire teachers and control the funds the government provides for their salaries (Souto et al., 2015). But although parental participation can help promote marginalized children's interests in education, arranging it is often challenging, as parents may themselves be marginalized or at a disadvantage in terms of time, distance and language.

In Guatemala, the school feeding programme is mandated by law to promote greater participation of parents in school management (Guatemala Ministry of Education, 2019). Since its implementation, 100,000 parents and other education community members have actively participated through organizations that receive funds from the Ministry of Education to provide meals, 50% of which must be produced in the community (Guatemala Congress, 2017; Mazariegos, 2020). In addition, the programme creates opportunities to make education and schools act as drivers for community empowerment and inclusive development.

Student involvement is also institutionalized in the region. In Argentina, a 2013 law enables the establishment and operation of student centres in secondary and higher education (Argentina Senate and Chamber of Deputies, 2013). In Costa Rica, student governments provide a platform for students to learn and exercise responsible and transformative citizenship based on democratic values and human rights (Costa Rica Ministry of Public Education, 2020). Uruguay's National Congresses of Children for an Inclusive Education, organized by the Mandela Network of Inclusive Schools and Kindergartens, enables students to make their needs and potential visible through discussions and proposals (Radio Uruguay, 2018; Uruguay National Public Education Administration, 2019). The MERCOSUR Youth Parliament

is aimed at creating opportunities for secondary school students to express their opinions on education topics such as inclusive education, gender, youth and the world of work, citizenship, participation, human rights education and Latin American integration (MERCOSUR Parliament, 2020).

Through advocacy, awareness-raising campaigns, workshops and training, non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) and intergovernmental associations promote accountability to encourage schools and authorities to meet standards and fulfil community needs and expectations. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education found that education of learners in confinement would have been much more precarious without active participation by individuals, academic institutions, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations (Human Rights Council, 2009). In Chile, the NGO Leasur advocates for the rights of people deprived of liberty and offers mentoring to providers of non-formal education to inmates (Leasur, 2018).

Sensitization campaigns against homophobia and transphobia have been carried out by the United Nations, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and national CSOs, for instance in Argentina (Campaña Visibilizar), Brazil (Deixe seu preconceito de lado – respeite as diferenças), Colombia (Por el respeto de la libertad sexual y de género) and Mexico (Campaña contra la homofobia y por la inclusión) (IACHR, 2018). Campaigns to generate empathy and counteract xenophobic discourses have taken place in Brazil (Histórias em Movimento) (UNFPA Brazil, 2019), Colombia (Somos Panas Colombia) (UNHCR, 2017), Costa Rica (Países Hermanos) (R4V, 2019b), Ecuador (Abrazos que Unen) (UNHCR, 2019a), Panama (Somos lo Mismo) (UNHCR, 2019b) and Peru (Tu Causa es mi Causa) (UNHCR, 2018). International NGOs such as the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education and the International Council for Adult Education advocate for inclusive education (CLADE, 2020; ICAE, 2020). The International Association of Families for Sexual Diversity has representatives in 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (FDS, 2020).

People of African descent started participating in the development of ethno-education in Ecuador in the 1980s, led by intellectuals and Afro-Ecuadorian activists interested in documenting and understanding the knowledge of the elderly (Antón, 2020). The Afro-Ecuadorian social movement later demanded that the state provide education in line with the community's sociocultural and geographical realities, protected by collective rights. In 2016, the Ministry of Education recognized Afro-Ecuadorian education and implemented a

programme coordinated and monitored by the Secretariat of the Intercultural Bilingual Education System (Ecuador Ministry of Education, 2016, 2017).

Some CSOs provide education services in rural or isolated communities that governments do not reach, such as Fe y Alegría in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Fe y Alegría, 2020). Community education radio stations broadcast content and classes to remote areas throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Programmes for retention in secondary education and school-to-work transition promote equity. The CSO Cimientos, for example, works to improve the quality of education and school-to-work transition for vulnerable youth in Argentina, Colombia and Uruguay (Cimientos, 2020).

In underserved areas, civil society sometimes steps in to help fill gaps in public provision, as in the case of Community Pre-School Education Centres in Honduras (OAS, 2018). Such efforts may help supplement government support, but they are not without risks: For example, civil society providers may withdraw from certain localities, leaving communities without service, or providers may have their own missions that require harmonization with the goal of meeting the needs of the communities they serve.

STUDENTS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES NEED TO RESIST STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICE

Discrimination and exclusionary practices in school systems mirror wider social exclusion patterns. Stereotypes and prejudice have deep roots in socially constructed notions of what is desirable or normal and are embedded in school regulations, practices and the mindsets of school community members. They have a significant impact on access, recognition, participation and learning opportunities for disadvantaged groups marginalized by poverty, migration, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and incarceration, among other things (**Box 7.1**).

“Discrimination and exclusionary practices in school systems have a significant impact on access, recognition, participation and learning opportunities for disadvantaged groups”

BOX 7.1

Youth deprived of liberty need to be connected to the community to continue their education trajectory

Efforts to ensure the integrity and continuity of the education trajectories of youth deprived of liberty need to consider the context of confinement and resulting stigma for each individual, as well as the accumulated disadvantages of shortcomings from past schooling experiences, negative self-concept and teachers' low expectations (Sanhueza, 2020). Parental participation can be compromised if detention centres are too remote to visit or centre management discourages it for security reasons (Delgado de Mejía, 2020; Scarfó and Aued, 2020).

Incarceration hampers the possibility of bonding with the community, which is a key factor in ensuring education continuity once students leave detention. Building a bridge between students and the community requires inter-institutional links between various agencies and actors. The Community Integration Programme in Uruguay was designed to address this issue by working with incarcerated youth for six months before their release and three months afterwards. Educators help to identify and enable resources and services, acting as a link with family and community environments, and making reinsertion and education continuity viable. Nevertheless, some authorities and stakeholders say the programme does not have enough staff to deliver the expected outcomes (Baleato, 2020).

Changing exclusionary social representation and promoting inclusion necessitate collective responses that involve altering linguistic, social and pedagogical practices and developing appropriate institutional regulations. Awareness needs to be raised of 'the consequences of the combination of two or more systems of discrimination which favour the construction of different layers of inequality and the increasing deterioration of the living conditions of people exposed to such risks' (OHCHR, 2017, p. 3). For example, in Guatemala, intersection of disadvantages increases exclusion of rural indigenous girls and women with disabilities (OHCHR Guatemala, 2018; Reyes, 2019).

School disengagement is a multidimensional and gradual experience that negatively affects students' education trajectories and may result in early school-leaving. Such outcomes emerge from multiple interconnected factors, including those related to individual conditions such as poverty, as well as those related to education system characteristics, such as irrelevant curricula and a mismatch between communities' economic and cultural conditions. Whatever the factors, the attitudes of peers, parents (**Box 7.2**), community members and teachers are crucial to inclusion; they can be instrumental in perpetuating discrimination, or in fighting against it.

BOX 7.2

Parental school choice fosters school segregation and challenges social cohesion

Interaction of learners in socially diverse schools is central not only to students' development of social networks and intercultural skills but also to eradicating prejudice and discriminatory practices in education and in society at large. Conversely, school segregation reproduces inequality and reduces social cohesion.

High levels of socio-economic school segregation in the region, notably in Chile, Mexico and Peru, mean students mainly interact with peers of similar status. Socially diverse schools, apart from a desirable objective in itself, are also associated with better learning outcomes (Krüger, 2019). Analysis based on the 2013 TERCE, a learning achievement survey, shows that the association between an index of socio-economic level and academic achievement was higher at the school level than at the student level. In particular, a one-unit increase in the school index of socio-economic level was associated with an increase of up to 60 points in student academic performance (depending on grade, subject and country), while a one-unit increase in the student index of socio-economic level was associated with an increase of up to 41 points in student academic performance (UNESCO, 2016).

School choice policies contribute to school segregation. They result in increasingly uneven school quality and in inequality of access to better schools. In Chile, decades of market-oriented policies have strengthened socio-economic stratification (Elacqua, 2012), with schools becoming even more segregated than students' neighbourhoods (Valenzuela et al., 2013). The richest families restrict themselves to socioculturally homogeneous elite schools; the middle class avoids public and non-selective schools, associating them with risky behaviours; and some of the poorest families do not see school choice as key to avoiding social risks and thus enrol their children in local schools (Bellei et al., 2018a). The country's policy agenda has shifted recently towards redressing inequity and segregation by enacting laws such as the Preferential School Subsidy Law, the Law for School Inclusion, the Teacher Professional Development System Law (Valenzuela and Montecinos, 2017) and the new Public Education Law (Bellei et al., 2018b).

Prevailing beliefs on gender equality and sexual orientation often hinder inclusive education

Gender parity in education participation and completion has long been achieved in most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in primary and lower secondary education, but the region has considerable disparity at the expense of males in upper secondary and tertiary education. In learning achievement at primary level, boys outperform girls in mathematics, girls outperform boys in reading and writing, and parity is observed in science (UNESCO, 2016).

Gender roles and social expectations can influence school disengagement depending on sociocultural contexts. A culture of toxic masculinity in English-speaking Caribbean countries leads male students to refuse to conform to school norms. Working hard at school is considered feminine, so boys who do so are stigmatized and penalized (Clarke, 2020; Plummer, 2010). As has been found in Jamaica, boys are often pushed out of formal education and away from successful re-engagement by notions of masculinity and social expectations that boys must work, earn money and support their families; low expectations for their academic achievement; and the presence of gangs and lucrative gang activities (Clarke, 2020).

Girls' dropout tends to be related to expected participation in unpaid or paid domestic and care work or to early pregnancy and marriage, which are most common in rural areas and among indigenous peoples (Bonfil, 2020). In Guatemala, the employment rate of indigenous children at 27% is nearly triple that of their non-indigenous peers at 10% (Prado, 2015). In Mexico and Guatemala, gender intersects with ethnicity and poverty to exacerbate marginalization and cause indigenous girls to lag behind in education (Bonfil, 2020).

School-related gender-based violence affects attendance, performance and school completion. In rural Peru, harassment and violence affect girls' and young women's educational trajectories (Montero and Uccelli, 2020). In Guatemala, exclusion of indigenous girls from school can be caused by intra-family, social and community violence, and most criminal offences are against girls. Both for boys and girls, the age group most affected by criminal offences is 16 to 17 years old. In Guatemala, rape and sexual assault are among the most frequently recurring types of child violence, with children between 13 and 15 years old being the most vulnerable (Verde y Azul et al., 2017). Grassroots organizations in Nicaragua work on the intersection of gender and disability, providing comprehensive sexuality education and training on responses to gender violence related to disability (Romero, 2020).

“ A culture of toxic masculinity in English-speaking Caribbean countries leads male students to refuse to conform to school norms ”

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Organizations in Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador have also campaigned against initiatives that aim to mainstream the gender approach and include comprehensive sexuality education in national curricula

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Prejudices related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are common. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) learners are more exposed to violence. Consequences include low academic performance as well as dropping out to escape stigma, bullying and discrimination (UNESCO, 2015). Gender identity laws in several countries ensure the right of people to be treated according to their self-perceived identity and to have proper identity registration. Nevertheless, the school context is perceived as one of the most hostile, and verbal harassment, psychological violence and physical violence are most likely to occur there (Kosciw and Zongrone, 2019). For many learners, the threatening reality of school is compounded by family rejection, which negatively affects self-esteem, health status and social adjustment (Ryan et al., 2009; Ryan et al., 2010).

Sexism and homophobia permeate schools and societies in the region. Governments and society have a duty to dismantle structures of discrimination so as to achieve social justice and inclusive education systems. CSOs have played an active role in supporting or opposing efforts to address gender identity and expression issues in education. Perhaps the best-known case was in Peru, where a move towards a gender-based national curriculum led to demonstrations and legal disputes in 2016. Under the slogan ‘Don’t mess with my children’, groups such as National Pro-Family Coordination and Parents in Action demanded the elimination of the gender equality approach in public education, labelling it ‘gender ideology’ and alleging that it disrupted family values and promoted ‘homosexual recruitment’. Some lawmakers endorsed these assertions but interventions from international agencies, CSOs, feminist groups and the government influenced a ruling of the Supreme Court in 2019 declaring the claims to be unfounded (Muñoz, 2020).

Organizations in Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador have also campaigned against initiatives that aim to mainstream the gender approach and include comprehensive sexuality education in national curricula. In Brazil, such groups managed to remove references to gender and sexual orientation from the initial proposal of the National

Education Plan in 2014. They mobilized on the streets and through virtual platforms (such as CitizensGo) and social networks against ‘gender ideology’ in national education laws and policies (Moreira and César, 2019; Pina, 2017). A movement called School without a Party provided draft bills advocating a ban on sexuality education and critical perspectives in history and social sciences, labelling them ‘gender ideology’ and ‘ideological indoctrination’ (Moreira and César, 2019).

In Colombia, parents and a member of the parliament founded Family Standard-Bearers, a movement opposing inclusion of ‘gender ideology’ in curricula and dissemination of sex education booklets by the Ministry of Education (Martínez, 2017). In Ecuador, similar protests led to the deletion of draft articles containing definitions dealing with sexual and gender self-determination, gender identity and sexual orientation from the 2018 Organic Law for the Eradication of Gender Violence against Women (El Universo, 2017).

However, civil society has also defended the rights of LGBTI students. In Mexico, the Association for Transgender Children has focused on their social recognition, for instance through the choice of name, safety and respect in school, spaces for socialization and documents that reflect their identity. Teachers’ and head teachers’ lack of knowledge on children with a variant gender identity results in the inflexible use of mandatory rules for differentiating activities and clothing for boys and girls, an attitude that condemns gender non-conforming attitudes of students, and an absence of protocols for integrating transgender students in the school community. In 2019, the association proposed such a protocol with measures aimed at schools, students and parents. The protocol has been adopted by some private schools with transgender students in Mexico City (Corona and Mazín, 2020).

The Ibero-American LGBTI Education Network, a platform of organizations promoting respect for human rights, has developed actions to improve the school climate for teachers and students, proposing and promoting laws and policies that institutionalize human rights in education from a sexual and gender diversity perspective (Ibero-American LGBTI Education Network, 2020). The General Assembly of the Organization of American States has approved resolutions supporting LGBTI students, and a rapporteur post and core group on LGBTI issues have been established (IACHR, 2020; OAS LGBTI Core Group, 2016). In MERCOSUR, a dedicated working space was established as a permanent commission within the framework of the Meeting of High Authorities on Human Rights and Foreign Affairs Ministries of MERCOSUR and Associated States (MERCOSUR RAADH, 2020).

Communities have supported indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples' right to education

Racism and discrimination towards indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants are persistent and pervasive throughout the region. A common legacy of colonialism and symbolic violence can be traced in open and hidden curricula, which reproduce stigmas and devalue indigenous and Afro-descendant knowledge and culture. As a result, education experiences such as those that can be derived through the *minga*, a community service system, or *cabildos*, a type of community meeting, are undervalued and not seen as valid knowledge (González, 2011).

In response to pressure from indigenous and Afro-descendant organizations and movements to value diversity as a prerequisite for inclusive education, education systems have enacted legislation to promote intercultural, indigenous and ethno-education. However, implementation is pending, with differentiated processes throughout the region. Racism undermines attempts to mainstream interculturality. Skin colour, phenotypic traits, linguistic abilities and foreign origin are causes for discrimination (Antón, 2020; IACHR, 2015; Mato, 2020).

Social and community participation among indigenous peoples has taken a variety of forms in countries of the region. A comprehensive approach can be found in the education transformation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which aimed at achieving a decolonizing, plurinational and decentralized education system, starting with the 1994 Educational Reform Law subsequently replaced by the 2010 Avelino Siñani – Elizardo Pérez Education Law, which highlights the role of community participation in intracultural, intercultural and multilingual education. Indigenous Peoples' Education Councils are social participation bodies, essentially school councils, formed by parents and local authorities, that play a key role in construction of regionalized curricula and selection of indigenous language teachers. However, there is concern that some councils may have not been fulfilling their role (Pérez, 2020). In Brazil, the National Programme

of Ethno-educational Territories has established a national policy for indigenous education, implemented within each territory by a managing commission formed by representatives of the indigenous groups involved, as well as representatives of the National Indian Foundation, municipal and state education offices, NGOs and the Ministry of Education (Rolon and Vieira, 2020).

In Panama, an estimated 4.5% of students self-identify as indigenous (UNESCO, 2016). About 47% of the indigenous population lives in the *comarcas*, which are indigenous autonomous territories making up 22% of the country, self-governed through an Indigenous Congress or Council. Indigenous people also actively participate in education development in these areas (Loizillion, 2020). Still, in 2014, secondary school attendance rates in *comarcas* ranged between 46% and 57%, well below the national average (80%) (Panama Comptroller General, 2014).

In some cases, indigenous students and their organizations participate in education forums. In Peru, *Tinkuy*, which means 'to meet' in Quechua, is a large gathering of grade 6 students from different indigenous groups and Afro-Peruvian communities. Since 2012, students have come together once a year in Lima to exchange experiences, worldviews and values of cultural diversity. The meeting also provides students with an opportunity to express their aspirations and demands for the education they want (Peru Ministry of Education, 2019; UNESCO, 2019b). The Mapuche Student Federation in Chile is committed to revitalizing the indigenous language and supporting participation of Mapuche people in universities and student organizations (Ortiz-Velosa and Arias-Ortega, 2019).

Although in most communities monolingualism is the norm, initiatives oriented towards revitalization of language and culture do exist throughout the region. In Guatemala, the Association of Mayan Educational Centres has been promoting indigenous languages through production of Mayan texts since 1993 (Association of Mayan Educational Centres, 2015), an effort that received a boost following the Agreement on Generalization of Bilingual Education (Guatemala Ministry of Education, 2004). In Mexico, the General Law on the Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the right to preserve and enrich native languages and guarantees access to bilingual and intercultural education. Often, reluctance to learn about indigenous culture and language, for instance among indigenous girls in Guatemala and Mexico (Bonfil, 2020) and in indigenous communities of Caldas, Colombia (Trejos et al., 2017), is associated with efforts to avoid discrimination. Community organizations play an important role in strengthening initiatives that address demand for linguistic and cultural revitalization, such

“ In Peru, grade 6 students from different indigenous groups and Afro-Peruvian communities come together once a year to exchange experiences, and express their aspirations and demands for the education they want ”

as 'double immersion' projects in multigrade schools in isolated indigenous regions and the Milpas Educativas in Mexico (Bonfil, 2020) and the Language Nest in Rapa Nui, Chile.

Migration and displacement require community cooperation to support inclusion

Latin America and the Caribbean has a long history of human mobility, but the recent intensification poses challenges both for people on the move and for host communities. For the former, education is essential to their chances of inclusion in society and access to the sectors and services that protect them against common violations of rights, such as child labour and exploitation (UNESCO, 2019a). To accommodate these learners, education systems must be flexible and responsive in terms of content, pedagogy and organization. As for host communities, even when their welcome for migrants is warm, they expect the quality of education not to deteriorate due to overcrowding or disruption.

Exclusion and unequal access to education services for people on the move reinforce discriminatory practices, racism and xenophobia. Host societies, stressed by huge influxes of people, have shown signs of emerging xenophobic feelings, according to the Displacement Tracking Matrix (UNESCO, 2019a). In Lima, Peru, more than 35% of Venezuelans reported being victims of discrimination because of their nationality (R4V, 2018). Flows of people from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to Mexico have exacerbated the same phenomenon there.

Although some countries in the region have moved towards recognition of cultural diversity and formulated policies for intercultural and bilingual education, the policies focus mostly on provision for indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants. Interculturality, however, should go beyond any particular culture (Walsh, 1998); it helps guarantee quality and culturally relevant education for all. Interculturality should be mainstreamed to promote rights-based approaches and to encourage social participation towards development of more inclusive educational systems.

Fostering intercultural dialogue among migrant populations and host societies is needed to curb racism and xenophobia and ensure quality education to migrant students. In Costa Rica, the Compendium of Standards on the Education Rights of Migrants and Refugees promotes the use of an Intercultural Education Manual among teachers in order to include migrant students, mostly of Nicaraguan descent, in the classroom (Costa Rica Ministry of Public Education et al., 2013; Jiménez, 2012). Support Spaces, an initiative supported by the Regional

Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for refugees and migrants from Venezuela, promotes a network of places where migrants and refugees can receive information, orientation and basic services in different areas, including education. They offer legal support, information and guidance, as well as aid with schooling and tutoring (R4V, 2020). In Uruguay, the Ministry of Education and Culture has mandated all primary education authorities to allow students immediate access to the system, even while their identity cards are in process (Uruguay Presidency, 2018).

While it is the state's responsibility to ensure access to education for migrant learners from the moment they arrive in the receiving country, groups in host societies showing concern for cultural diversity and peoples' rights play a vital role in building inclusive societies and education systems. In Costa Rica, 10 times as many people demonstrated in support of migrants and refugees in 2018 as those who had marched against them (Sandoval et al., 2020). In Trinidad and Tobago, NGOs organized sensitization workshops on tolerance and empathy for primary school students before Venezuelan children arrived in their schools (R4V, 2019a).

BOX 7.3:

NGOs offer alternative education opportunities for Venezuelan learners in the Caribbean

Venezuelan children face obstacles in inclusion in schools in English-speaking Caribbean countries, so NGOs are spearheading efforts to offer diverse learning and community-supported initiatives. In Guyana, Venezuelans have the right to go to school regardless of their residency status, but, in practice, access is often impeded by lack of local school capacity and language barriers. Joint initiatives supporting community-based language classes have been set up to overcome the latter. Non-government partners, in collaboration with local education authorities and community leaders, mobilized volunteers to run a community-based initiative teaching English as a second language to children attending school as well as out-of-school children. Such initiatives aim to foster social cohesion between Venezuelans, returning Guyanese and indigenous Warao children by facilitating their integration into the host community (R4V, 2019a).

In Trinidad and Tobago, where access to school for refugee and migrant children is not guaranteed, national and international partners have joined forces to develop the Equal Place/Espacio de Equidad programme, which provides access to accredited education through a blended approach using online and in-person support. The programme delivers tailor-made learning on two globally recognized platforms, offered in English and Spanish to students and families at no cost (Equal Place, 2020).

Several NGOs (e.g. DREAM Project, CEDES, Yspaniola, MUDHA and RECONOCI.DO) have helped the government of the Dominican Republic operate education programmes and mentoring services for schools, while advocating to keep students of Haitian descent in schools regardless of their documentation or migration status. Social participation in education for migrants and refugees depends on parents' and students' ability to use the host community language. For instance, Creole-speaking parents of Haitian descent face obstacles to school participation in the Dominican Republic, where public school officials do not speak Creole and lack Creole language materials (Waddick, 2020). Initiatives in Guyana and in Trinidad and Tobago target Spanish-speaking or indigenous language-speaking Venezuelan children who do not speak English (**Box 7.3**).

Community organizations push for the education rights of students with disabilities

Inclusion of people with disabilities has improved in the region, but discrimination still exists, holding back learning opportunities and efforts to improve autonomy. Including people with disabilities in mainstream schools helps teach all students to interact with one another and has a positive impact on peers, teachers and authorities, as they experience diversity and develop values of tolerance and respect (Fonseca and Pfortner, 2020).

However, obstacles often emerge from school arrangements or attitudinal barriers. In Nicaragua, blind students believe special schools provide them with key skills to improve mobility and autonomy, contributing to their inclusion in mainstream schools. But for inclusion to follow, mainstream schools need to take more steps to address the different ways students learn, since students with disabilities still experience challenges such as exclusion from school-related group activities due to accessibility problems (Fonseca and Pfortner, 2020).

The relationship between schools and communities can help change attitudes towards students with disabilities. In Cuba, La Colmenita, a children's theatre company, brings together children and adolescents with diverse abilities through theatre and music, showing the decisive role of art and community in the inclusion of students with disabilities (Pérez and Hernández, 2020).

Parents' expectations and beliefs can promote or hinder inclusive education. In Jamaica, some parents of children with disabilities support their education even if it involves personal and economic sacrifices, but others may obstruct their children's progress, hiding them from the public eye because of doubts about whether they can function in society (Gayle-Geddes, 2020). Parents and families of students with disabilities in Nicaragua

generally believe they should study in mainstream schools in order to strengthen crucial skills such as independence, socialization, self-esteem and academic knowledge (Fonseca and Pfortner, 2020).

Disabled people's organizations (DPOs) have played a central role in overcoming barriers to inclusion. With active participation from civil society, these organizations carry out advocacy and watchdog functions aimed at guaranteeing the right to education for all and reversing systemic segregation and exclusion of people with disabilities. In Argentina, more than 150 DPOs belong to the umbrella coalition Grupo Artículo 24 por la Educación Inclusiva, which has published inclusive education manuals for three provinces (Grupo Artículo 24, 2019).

In Nicaragua, the role of families in education is highlighted in the 2011 law on the rights of people with disabilities, the Regulations for the Attention of Students with Education Needs in the Framework of Nicaraguan Diversity, and the 2017–21 Education Plan. The Association of Comprehensive Community Education Programmes, in alliance with local governments, has been key in promoting participation of people with disabilities in existing community structures (Fonseca and Pfortner, 2020).

In Paraguay, DPO participation was institutionalized within the National Commission for the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2013. The commission has a policymaking role and exerts influence over education policies, making its establishment a turning point in participation for DPOs in education. Challenges for participation of people with disabilities in the commission remain, however, in relation to its composition, organization and competences in policy advocacy (Velázquez, 2020).

“ The role of communities and grassroots organizations is fundamental in combating prejudice and suggesting alternative education pathways ”

CONCLUSION

Community participation in education can counter exclusion. Schools that work with their communities tend to be more creative and responsive to the needs of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and to build more favourable environments for inclusive education. They can also expand students' horizons when parents have low aspirations and can accommodate different learners' needs and expectations. These needs require communities to organize action and formulate demands collectively. A variety of organizations make demands for policy change and attract attention to the needs of groups that have been marginalized or are at risk of social exclusion.

Among several exclusion-driving factors, racism, sexism and nationalism are part of everyday life in Latin America and the Caribbean, affecting millions of learners and their communities. Students need to be protected against violence and discrimination in education, but this responsibility goes beyond education systems and policies. The role of communities and grassroots organizations is fundamental in combating prejudice and suggesting alternative education pathways. In

addition to reaching out to underserved populations and providing learning opportunities, NGOs and CSOs can put pressure on governments to fulfil their obligation to guarantee the right to inclusive education. However, they may also contribute to exacerbating vulnerabilities while privileging certain worldviews or imposing them on marginalized groups.

Parents and learners can play a central role in shaping education, for example by identifying exclusionary practices and obstacles to inclusion of certain groups in schools. They can also help overcome systemic hurdles by means of parental associations and organizations. For inclusive policies and approaches to address exclusion, student participation is essential. However, parents and learners from traditionally marginalized groups tend to lack the agency and the spaces needed to participate actively in education matters. Parents from better-off groups, for their part, need to consider the negative consequences of segregated forms of schooling on social cohesion. It is urgent to ensure, foster and support equal participation in education as a matter of practice, but also as a matter of justice.



Justin and Melani are doing homework at their house in Palencia, Guatemala, after receiving their school's guidelines from the Ministry of Education with UNICEF's support.

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CHAPTER

8

COVID-19 and inclusion in education



KEY MESSAGES

Latin American and Caribbean countries have responded to the COVID-19 education crisis.

- The region has the highest overall potential student population reach in distance learning (91%), well above the global average (69%). Potential reach was highest through television (86%) and radio (50%).
- Out of 26 countries, 7 had learning platforms, 22 provided digital content, 13 used physical content and social networks, and 20 offered education through radio or television.
- The Caribbean Examinations Council's CXC e-Learning Hub provides resources adapted to different student learning styles along with technology to create virtual classrooms.

The potential reach of these measures does not necessarily translate into actual reach.

- Only 52% of households in the region had internet and 45% had a computer in 2017.
- At least 20% of 15-year-old students in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico lacked a quiet place to study at home. A phone survey of 14- to 18-year-olds in Ecuador showed that those in the poorest quartile were more likely than their richer peers to spend more time on work or household chores than on education.

Governments have made efforts to target interventions to disadvantaged learners.

- Some countries have prioritized affordable access to the internet. In Uruguay, the government partnered with a telecommunications company to provide all students with access to learning content with no charge for data use.
- Some countries have tried to ensure universal access to devices. In the Cayman Islands, a partnership between the government and a non-profit organization has supported provision of laptops to all public school students.
- In Chile, a broader range of goods and services have been made eligible for reimbursement under a public social protection programme to help students with disabilities continue their distance education.

Teachers also need to learn how to use technology.

- About 63% of Chilean, 69% of Mexican and 71% of Colombian lower secondary school teachers reported letting students frequently use information and communication technology for projects or classwork before the pandemic.
- Still, 88% of teachers in Brazil reported they had never taught remotely before the pandemic.
- In Haiti, as part of a US\$7 million Global Partnership for Education grant, training for 15,000 teachers is being provided to support remote learning.

Students and parents also need additional support during the pandemic.

- Students need to receive feedback. In Argentina, 81% of students reported having homework assigned, 77% reported contact with teachers and 69% reported receiving teacher feedback.
- Many parents need to balance home support with other responsibilities. In Paraguay, parents said the pandemic's biggest impact on them was in education.

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In the course of a few weeks in early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic overwhelmed many national health systems. In their efforts to arrest the spread of the disease, governments around the world imposed lockdowns and curtailed economic activity, threatening billions of livelihoods. One key measure to limit the risk of infection was school and university closures. At the peak of the closure period in April 2020, 91% of the global student population was affected in 194 countries. Several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Paraguay, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, decided to keep schools closed until the end of 2020. Nicaragua was the only country in the region, and one of the few in the world, to keep schools open throughout the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020c). COVID-19 thus precipitated an education crisis, fuelled by the deep and multiple inequalities discussed in this report. While these inequalities have existed for a long time, lockdowns and school closures suddenly brought them into sharp relief on a global scale.

Throughout the pandemic, millions of people have had to make tough decisions: Individuals have had to decide whether to respect or flout quarantine restrictions, medical staff have had to choose between patients' competing needs, and authorities have had to decide how to allocate economic support. The management of education has also posed moral dilemmas. In considering how best to deal with the disruption of learning, policymakers have had options that did not exist previously, as technology has made distance learning more viable. Yet they also had to grapple with the 'do no harm' principle: the requirement that no plan or programme should be put in place if there is a risk of it actively harming anyone at all. And even as education policymakers continue to try to find opportunity in the

crisis, it has become apparent that many of the solutions they have tried pose a risk of leaving many children and young people further behind. Along with the rest of the world, Latin American and Caribbean countries have actively searched for solutions to equity and inclusion challenges during this difficult period.

COVID-19'S ENORMOUS IMPACT ON EDUCATION WILL BE LASTING

The health and financial crisis will have three types of immediate and long-term consequences for inclusion in education: consequences from loss of learning, from current and future recession and from interruption of support services.

Education systems responded to the pandemic by using distance learning solutions, which are more or less imperfect substitutes for classroom instruction. In Chile, only 9% of teachers believe their students can study autonomously. The principal pedagogic strategy used by Chilean teachers during the pandemic, however, consisted of sending homework that students had to complete on their own. Only 49% of teachers felt they had succeeded in getting their students to learn in this way (Mirada docente, 2020).

Research in the United States examining the 'summer slide', the loss of learning during the long school break between grades, found that students lost almost 20% of the school year's gains in reading and 27% in mathematics skills between grades 2 and 3, while the corresponding losses between grades 7 and 8 were 36% and 50% (Kuhfeld, 2018; Kuhfeld and Tarasawa, 2020). A simulation based on data from the PISA for Development survey, which included Ecuador, Guatemala,

Honduras, Panama and Paraguay, suggested that unless remediation were offered, a three-month school closure at grade 3 would result in loss of learning corresponding to an entire year by grade 10 because of the consequences for students of having fallen behind so early in their schooling (Kaffenberger, 2020). Such gaps may be greater for disadvantaged students who have fewer resources at home (Cooper et al., 1996), which would increase socio-economic divides.

The International Monetary Fund has forecast that gross domestic product (GDP) in Latin America and the Caribbean will contract by 9.3% in 2020 (IMF, 2020). In this severe recession, governments are likely to respond to the loss of revenue by reallocating their budgetary funds away from education to meet urgent demand in other sectors. Households, especially those near or below the poverty line, will also need to make hard decisions about resource allocation, which may lead them to withdraw children from school. The World Bank has estimated that 6.8 million children and adolescents of primary and secondary school age are at risk of dropout globally (Azevedo et al., 2020). Disengagement from school and the pull of the labour market may prove strongest at the upper secondary level: UNESCO has estimated that 2.3% of upper secondary students in Latin America and the Caribbean may not return to school (UNESCO, 2020f).

The economic situation will have many repercussions. For one, the small gains made in ensuring access to education for refugee children may be reversed (UNCHR, 2020). Two-thirds of the 3 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru will have seen their food insecurity worsen in 2020 due to loss of income and work opportunities (WFP, 2020b). Even though education ministries in the region have tried to make access to distance education easier for disadvantaged learners via radio and television as well as the internet, Venezuelan learners face major barriers in continuing their learning because of their living conditions and lack of access to technology and learning materials (UNESCO, 2020d).

Early childhood education and related sector programmes have also been severely affected. Globally, the closure of childcare and early education facilities has resulted in at least 40 million children missing out on early childhood education (Gromada et al., 2020). In the Dominican Republic, implementation of the comprehensive early childhood development programme, *Quisqueya Empieza Contigo* (Motherland Starts With You), was disrupted, and 28% of all formal sector workers were suspended from their employment contracts despite the introduction of multiple support measures (Pumarol, 2020).

Third, school closures have interrupted the support mechanisms from which many disadvantaged learners benefit. Schools perform many functions besides education. They provide a safe haven and social arena, as well as a distribution point for vital goods and services. Key school functions that help make up an education community, including social relationships, friendships, socialization and a sense of belonging, are lost during distance education. Social distancing associated with the COVID-19 crisis has negative psychological effects on children (Brooks et al., 2020). Violence against women is reported to have increased under lockdown, which will have a negative impact on children and adolescents in households affected, potentially causing depression, anxiety and long-term developmental consequences (UN Women, 2020).

MAJOR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO MAINTAIN LEARNING CONTINUITY

Latin American and Caribbean countries have been proactive in their attempts to achieve learning continuity and to target efforts to the learners most likely to be adversely affected by the pandemic. Although the region has extensive experience in broadcasting lessons over radio and television, it had never had to address such a massive interruption of learning (Cobo et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it achieved the world's highest overall potential student population reach in distance learning (91%), well above the global average (69%), based on an assessment of policies supporting digital and broadcast distance learning in a UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank survey and on the availability of household assets allowing digital or broadcast instruction to be received. Of all regions, Latin America and the Caribbean had the highest potential reach through television (86%) and radio (50%) (UNICEF, 2020a). According to the Inter-American Development Bank, as of May 2020, out of 26 countries in the region, 7 had learning platforms, 22 provided digital content, 13 made use of physical content and social networks, and 20 offered education through radio or television programmes. The Dominican Republic and Jamaica provided lessons at all levels through all four mechanisms (Álvarez Marinelli et al., 2020).

Chile's *Aprendo en Línea* (I Learn Online) platform provides content at all education levels and supplies digital resources, including software that enables access for students with visual and hearing impairments (Chile Ministry of Education, 2020b). Colombia has two platforms for distance learning: *Colombia Aprende* (Colombia Learns), developed before the pandemic, and *Aprender Digital, Contenidos para Todos* (Learning Digital, Content for Everyone), which the Ministry of National Education

established to support distance education during the pandemic. They make available easy-to-use activities, lesson plans and multimedia resources in audio, video and text formats covering the entire curriculum (Colombia Ministry of National Education, 2020a). The Caribbean Examinations Council has facilitated learning continuity through the platform CXC e-Learning Hub, which provides resources adapted to a range of student learning styles and provides teachers with technology to create virtual classrooms so they can interact with students in real time (Cobo et al., 2020).

Countries have also used widely available communication tools, including chat platforms such as WhatsApp, text messaging services and social media sites, as alternative mechanisms to deliver education. El Salvador and Honduras have curated education content on YouTube through the channels *Aprendamos en Casa* (Let's Learn at Home) and *Portal Educativo*, respectively. In El Salvador, a national contact centre, which parents and students could reach through email and WhatsApp, was established to facilitate learning for parents and students (World Bank, 2020). Guyana has provided continued learning through social media platforms (Guyana Ministry of Education, 2020).

Broadcast services have been used to reach rural areas and households without internet. Colombia's *Profe en Tu Casa* (Teacher in Your House) programme broadcasts education content on two public television stations as well as across the national radio network. In May 2020, an additional programme, *Mi Señal* (My Signal), was aired in three blocks: early morning for children under age 9, midday for 8- to 12-year-olds, and afternoon for 13- to 17-year-olds (Colombia Ministry of National Education, 2020a). Mexico has a long history of providing education services on national television. Before the pandemic, the *Telesecundaria* distance education system was already providing year-round learning content to secondary schools in rural areas through satellite television. In 2017/18, it reached 1.4 million students or 21% of the total secondary school population. To respond to school closures during the pandemic, Mexico's government set up the platform *La Escuela en Casa* (School at Home) to provide distance learning based on national curricula through national television, radio and digital channels (Ripani and Zucchetti, 2020; UNICEF, 2020b). The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela created the television programme *Cada Familia una Escuela* (Every Family a School), broadcasting education content on two public stations (VTV, 2020).

The use of radio in the region has helped expand education access to the most marginalized. In Belize, several radio stations have broadcast content to enable

children to continue their education (Belize Ministry of Education, 2020). Guyana has three types of radio programmes, one of which focuses on interactive instruction in mathematics for grades 1–3 (Guyana Ministry of Education, 2020a), although in recent years research and a commission of inquiry have raised questions about its effectiveness (Elliott and Lashley, 2017; Khatoon, 2017). In Peru, more than 335 radio stations broadcast the *Aprendo en Casa* (I Learn at Home) programme to provide learning opportunities for students in rural and remote areas or from disadvantaged households (UNESCO, 2020b). The *Radio Fe y Alegría* network is very active in the region and played a key role in ensuring learning continuity by broadcasting education content in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (*Radio Fe y Alegría*, 2020).

Some countries have tried delivering education materials directly to students' homes. In Brazil, the São Paulo state Department of Education developed kits containing textbooks, supplementary reading materials and guidelines for parents and caregivers on health and education. Local police helped take the kits to students' homes (Dellagnelo and Reimers, 2020). Peru's Ministry of Education instructed local authorities to coordinate delivery of textbooks to schools, homes or other distribution points (Peru Ministry of Education, 2020).

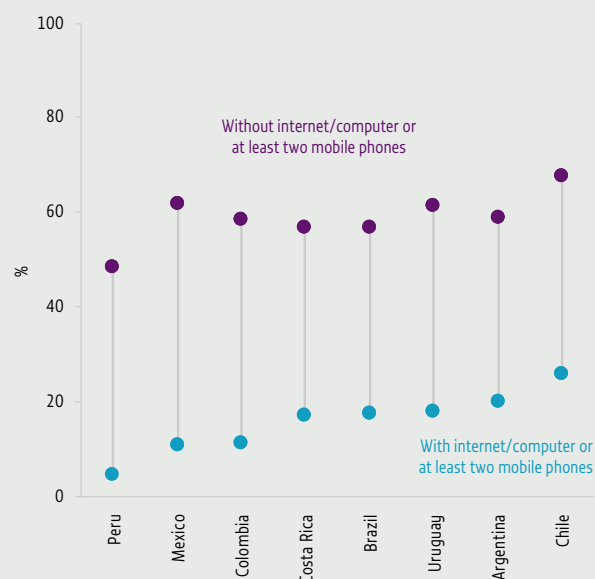
Governments have provided guidelines to support these efforts. Costa Rica issued guidelines on distance education for four types of students, depending on whether they had internet-capable devices and adequate internet connectivity at home (Costa Rica Ministry of Public Education, 2020a, 2020b). Ecuador developed guidelines for educators to ensure uninterrupted learning and help build teacher capacity for remote delivery (Ecuador Ministry of Education, 2020). El Salvador published guidelines for teachers, students and parents to help ensure learning continuity and set up a contact centre to provide support (El Salvador Ministry of Education, 2020a).

EFFORTS TO PROMOTE LEARNING CONTINUITY MAY LEAVE DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS BEHIND

The broad potential reach of these ambitious policies, however, does not necessarily translate into actual reach. To start with, among the poorest 25% of rural households, one in two lacked access to electricity in Nicaragua and one in three in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Honduras (Jimenez, 2016). In Guatemala, only 13% of the poorest 20% of households owned a television in 2014–15 (DHS Program, 2020). In 2017, only 52% of households in the region had access to the internet

FIGURE 8.1:
The poorest 15-year-olds are much less likely to have access to the means to follow online classes

Percentage of 15-year-old students who belong to the poorest 25% of households, by access to tools for online learning, 2018



Source: Buchbinder (2020), based on 2018 PISA data.

and 45% to a computer (ECLAC, 2020). Among 15-year-old students from the poorest 25% of households, less than one in five were from households that had access to the internet and a computer or at least two mobile phones (Figure 8.1).

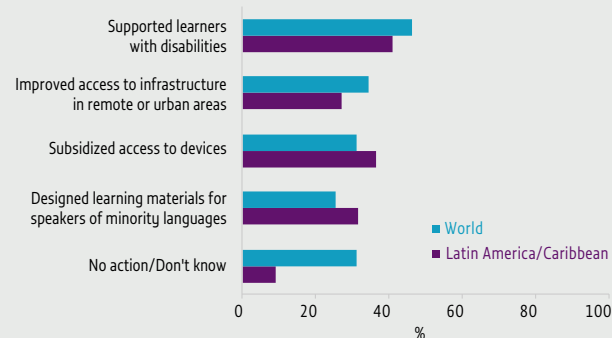
Connectivity problems in rural areas mean indigenous people and intercultural education have been disproportionately affected (UNESCO, 2020a). In Mexico, one in five indigenous children aged 3 to 17 lacked either electricity, television or internet access at home in 2018 (Valencia López, 2020). Even where internet connections are available, they are often not strong enough for data downloads or video calls. Early childhood education has been particularly disrupted. In Brazil, 18% of teachers reported not working with children at all and 51% said few children participated in activities (Nova Escola, 2020).

Other factors that may affect disadvantaged students' opportunity to learn include inability to rely on the support of parents and guardians, who may have little or no education. Disadvantaged students are also less likely to have a home environment that can support learning. At least one in five 15-year-old students in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico lacked a quiet place to study at home (Reimers and Schleicher, 2020). A phone survey of 14- to 18-year-olds in Ecuador showed that those in the poorest quartile were more likely than their richer peers to spend more time on work or household chores than on education. While boys and girls were equally likely to continue their education in the morning, girls were more likely to have childcare and chore responsibilities in the afternoon, while boys were engaged in leisure activities (Asanov et al., 2020).

Learners with disabilities bear a disproportionate share of consequences from the COVID-19 pandemic. Many learning platforms and a lot of digital content are not accessible to blind or deaf students, even those with access to assistive technology; for example, blind students struggle with information shared in images their software cannot read, as well as with frequent changes of online platforms (IDA, 2020). Children with mild learning difficulties, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, may have trouble working independently on a computer. Losing the daily routine that schools provide adds a significant layer of difficulty for learners who are sensitive to change, such as those with autism spectrum disorders. Support often provided in schools has been scaled back or even suspended to reduce infection risk.

FIGURE 8.2:
Latin American and Caribbean countries have taken some measures to support learners at risk of exclusion during the pandemic

Percentage of countries that have made efforts to include at-risk groups in distance learning, Latin American and Caribbean vs all countries, 2020



Source: GEM Report team analysis based on UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank questionnaire.

COUNTRIES HAVE MADE EFFORTS TO SUPPORT LEARNERS AT RISK

Only 9% of Latin American and Caribbean countries, well below the global average of 31%, reported that they had made no efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic to target interventions

to disadvantaged learners, such as students with disabilities, students in remote areas, poor students and those from indigenous communities (**Figure 8.2**).

Some governments have prioritized affordable internet access, often through partnerships with telecommunication regulators and providers. In Argentina, through the telecommunication regulator, ENACOM, telephone companies suspended charges for browsing the Ministry of Education platform Educ.ar, which provides curated digital resources for teachers, administrators, students and families; they also guaranteed that using the site would not affect mobile data allowances (Cobo et al., 2020). In Colombia, to ensure access for the poorest households, connecting to the mobile version of the education portal Colombia Aprende is free for users who have paid up to US\$20 in mobile services (Colombia Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies, 2020). In Paraguay, an agreement between Microsoft and the Ministry of Education and Science resulted in an education package supporting 60,000 teachers and 1.2 million students, at zero cost to users (Cobo et al., 2020). In Uruguay, a partnership between Plan Ceibal, a public programme promoting the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in schools, and the telecommunication company ANTEL provided all students with access to government learning content with no charge for data use (Plan Ceibal, 2020).

Some governments have tried to ensure universal access to devices. In the Cayman Islands, a partnership between the education ministry and Literacy Is for Everyone, a non-profit organization, has supported provision of laptops to all public school students (Cayman Islands Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands, 2020). The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, with support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), is distributing devices to at least 12,000 vulnerable primary school students in Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as part of its Education Sector Response and Recovery Strategy to COVID-19 (GPE, 2020b). In Panama, Samsung supplied the Ministry of Education with technology to develop an online platform allowing students from multigrade schools to continue learning from home. The project also provided mobile phones and tablets, as well as education content, to teachers, students and parents (Quirós, 2020).

Chile Atiende (Chile Serves), a government multisector programme, added several goods and services to the list of eligible expenditure to help students with disabilities continue accessing distance tertiary education, including tablets, voice recognition software, electric wheelchairs, reading lecterns, talking calculators, pocket scanners,

personal assistants, transcription of information, and sign language interpreters (Chile Atiende, 2020). Ecuador issued recommendations for teachers to support the education of children with disabilities who were isolated at home (OHCHR, 2020).

In a few cases, support measures have been targeted at indigenous people. In southern Suriname, UNICEF and the Amazon Conservation Team supported indigenous communities using tailored communication tools and ensuring access to essential items, to water, sanitation and hygiene services, and to psychosocial and education support (UNICEF Guyana and Suriname, 2020a).

To try to prevent the disruption from increasing the learning gap between the poorest and richest students, some countries have adjusted the curriculum, providing guidance to schools on which learning content to prioritize. Chile, Panama and Peru have identified the aspects of the curriculum that are most necessary to achieving essential learning objectives during an academic year in which there will be fewer classes. Guatemala's Ministry of Education, seeking to ensure that assessment is consistent with the current teaching and learning situation, implemented the *Aprendo en Casa* (I Learn at Home) programme, aimed at developing a portfolio of materials through which learning during lockdown can be assessed (UNESCO, 2020e).

Some 14 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean may experience severe food insecurity due to COVID-19 (WFP, 2020a). About 85 million children in the region receive breakfast, a snack or lunch at school (FAO and WFP, 2019). Governments have been trying to mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable families and ensure school meal programme continuity. In Brazil's São Paulo state, the Department of Education launched a social support program called *Merenda em Casa* (Home Lunch), which offered a cash transfer to the poorest families to ensure students had enough food. As of May 2020, 732,000 students whose families were registered in the national welfare database had been provided with the cash transfer (Dellagnelo and Reimers, 2020). In several countries, governments have adapted their school feeding programmes through direct cash transfers or by setting up food deliveries to families whose children depend on the programmes (FAO and ECLAC, 2020).

Pregnant teenagers also need support to continue their education through alternative avenues. The Women Centre Foundation of Jamaica, a public agency that has supported pregnant girls and young mothers in continuing their education, adjusted its efforts to distance learning but also offered psychological support, food and toiletries (Kennedy, 2020).

Other government responses have focused on the physical, social and emotional well-being of students, parents and teachers. Argentina, Peru and Suriname have hotlines for children to report violation of children's rights and gender-based violence at home; hotline agents can also help address the consequences by providing psychosocial support (Argentina Government, 2020; Convoca, 2020; UNICEF Guyana and Suriname, 2020b). Cuba published a booklet with games for psycho-emotional support to young children during lockdown (Cuba Ministry of Education et al., 2020). Panama published an educational tool for prevention of sexual violence during childhood (Panama National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and the Family, 2020). Paraguay's Ministry of Education and Science is developing virtual seminars to support the socio-emotional well-being of those teaching during the pandemic (Paraguay Ministry of Education and Science, 2020).

TEACHERS NEED MORE SUPPORT TO MAINTAIN LEARNING CONTINUITY

Most teachers and school administrators had to switch overnight to using new tools to deliver lessons, distribute content, correct homework and communicate with students, parents and caregivers. Adjusting to home-based distance education has significantly increased teacher workloads.

Argentina's Ministry of Education signed an agreement with unions to regulate teacher work during the pandemic so as to preserve teachers' privacy and well-being (Argentina Ministry of Education, 2020). In Brazil, 88% of teachers reported they had never taught remotely before the pandemic, and 65% said pedagogical work had changed and increased, with a new emphasis on activities involving digital interfaces and remote interaction (Instituto Península, 2020; Fundação Carlos Chagas et al., 2020). The sudden change in teaching routine and modality increased teachers' anxiety, tiredness, boredom and overload, even as their concerns about their health and that of their families increased due to the pandemic. However, 75% of teachers indicated that schools had not prioritized socio-emotional support, even though they would have liked to receive it (Instituto Península, 2020). Working from home is nearly impossible for those who care for children or other family members, especially given the gender division of household tasks and the gender segregation of the teaching profession, which intensifies female teachers' workload.

To effectively provide distance learning, teachers need access to the appropriate technology, but only a few countries have provided teachers with digital devices, either directly or by giving them access to credits to

acquire them (El Salvador Ministry of Education, 2020; Molina, 2020). Teachers also need to learn how to use technology. The 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) found that about 70% of teachers in participating countries in Latin America had received formal training on the use of ICT for teaching (OECD, 2019). Accordingly, 63% of Chilean, 69% of Mexican and 71% of Colombian lower secondary school teachers reported letting students frequently use ICT for projects or classwork, above the OECD average (53%) (OECD, 2020). Still, 27% of Brazilian and 34% of Colombian teachers needed training (OECD, 2019). In Haiti, as part of a US\$7 million GPE grant, training for 15,000 teachers is being provided to support remote learning (GPE, 2020a).

The relationship between teachers, parents and students is key in providing contextualized and relevant education of good quality. According to the 2018 TALIS, schools and parents had relatively little interaction, although teachers from participating Latin American countries tended to spend more time communicating and cooperating with parents (1.8 hours in Chile, 2.7 hours in Colombia, 1.9 hours in Mexico) than the OECD average (1.4 hours per week). Nevertheless, teachers in the region reported a greater need for professional development in teacher-parent cooperation (between 17% and 22%) than the OECD average (9%) (OECD, 2020).

Private schools have an advantage over public schools in the amount of time allocated to distance education and in teacher-student communication (ECLAC and UNESCO, 2020). Private school teachers tend to have access to higher-quality devices to conduct distance learning, maintain interaction and support students (Mancera et al, 2020). Teachers in public schools tend to communicate less with students and offer fewer opportunities for interaction and synchronous feedback than private school teachers (Nova Escola, 2020).

However, private schools have other problems: They depend on fees, which many families cannot pay in the current situation. Some private schools have suspended payments to teachers and others have gone bankrupt, forcing students to enrol in public schools (Elacqua and Schady, 2020). In Ecuador, enrolment in public institutions increased by 120,000 students (6.5%) at the beginning of the school year (Olsen and Prado, 2020).

STUDENTS AND PARENTS NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Students need more than just instruction: They also need to be able to connect with friends and receive feedback on their academic progress. In Argentina, 81% of students reported having homework assigned,

77% reported contact with teachers and 69% reported receiving feedback from teachers (UNICEF Argentina, 2020). In Brazil, while 74% of public school students received some type of homework, 24% did not receive any type of at-home activity. Parents and guardians reported that lack of communication from schools was one of the main reasons their children did not take part in education activities during the pandemic (Itaú Social, 2020). Brazilian youth reported that the main challenge in studying at home was not lack of time or access to devices but rather involved emotional balance, the difficulty of organizing distance study and the lack of a quiet environment at home. About 60% said schools and universities should prioritize activities addressing stress and anxiety and 50% asked for strategies for time management and organization (National Youth Council et al, 2020). In Chile, 63% of students reported not having contact with a teacher to help them resolve doubts about their progress (Educación 2020, 2020).

Students need consistent access to education resources and well-designed communication channels with teachers, parents and caregivers. They need to be protected from risks associated with increased use of online sources and platforms. In Argentina, a civil society organization, Chicos.net, is addressing issues related to grooming, cyberbullying, sexual abuse and digital risk for children and youth during the pandemic (Urbas and Pokorski, 2020).

Parental involvement has a positive influence on student academic achievement (Castro et al., 2015) and household education practices can boost academic achievement (UNESCO, 2016). Yet for many parents, caregivers and families, the change to distance learning forced them to adopt different roles simultaneously and assume tasks for which they were not prepared and which they often had to balance with many other responsibilities, especially the need to retain or secure work and income in the middle of a recession. In this context, disadvantaged students are most affected, as they have fewer resources at home and their parents often have less education and less time to help with their homework. Uneven patterns have been reported in parental participation in public (36%) and private (58%) schools in Brazil (Nova Escola, 2020).

In Paraguay, parents said the pandemic's biggest impact on them was in education, closely followed by the economy. About 70% of respondents said their children had been assigned homework or activities every day. The responsibility of helping children with schoolwork fell mainly on mothers (44%) or on both parents together (33%). Most parents valued distance education because it kept their children active (45%) and ensured their right to education (34%). Some wanted it to involve less work for those who had to supervise homework (11%). Others

believed that, educationally speaking, this would be a lost year (32%) (UNICEF Paraguay and USAID, 2020).

Civil society organizations are crucial in giving a voice to communities left behind in the education response. They have continued to carry out this important work in spite of the impact of quarantine and lockdown (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Calls have been issued to ensure that COVID-19 education responses are rights-based, equitable and inclusive (GCE, 2020) and that they emphasize solidarity and sufficient funding for fulfilment of the right to education (CLADE, 2020). In Brazil, a national campaign launched two guides on education and protection of children and adolescents in the pandemic, targeted at the school community, families, local stakeholders and other decision makers (National Campaign for the Right to Education, 2020). Feminist and women's movements in the region have called attention to the rise of gender-based violence (Munhoz, 2020). The movement We Are All in Action has collaborated with the Inter-American Institute on Disability and Inclusive Development and the United Nations Population Fund to create #ThisIsCaringToo, a campaign that has produced texts, posters and videos comprehensively addressing care issues during the pandemic, with an emphasis on youth with disabilities (Ossana and Lanzillotto, 2020).

Some organizations have provided urgent help for those who need it most. For instance, Plan International has supplied hygiene kits and food to members of marginalized groups, including female-headed households and girls, in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Honduras and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Plan International, 2020; Plan International, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic represents a major setback to efforts to achieve SDG 4, although the magnitude of the impact is not yet clear. The crisis has shown that ensuring learning for all during a pandemic is not simply a technical matter of tackling the digital divide. Although distance learning has captured many media headlines, a minority of countries have the basic infrastructure to focus on the pedagogical challenges of online approaches to teaching and learning for all students. Most children and youth are suffering a short-term direct, but hopefully temporary, loss of learning. But concerns remain about the more lasting indirect effects of the recession, which will throw millions of people back into poverty. Governments need to take a close look at the inclusion challenges highlighted in this report to reconstruct a better education system accessible to all learners.



(Left-right) Mateo, 4, and Sebastián, 9, who is using a walker, walk side by side outdoors during a break between classes, at CENI, an inclusive school in Montevideo, the capital.

CREDIT: UNICEF/UNI144425/Pirozzi

CHAPTER

9

Conclusion and recommendations

All countries committed in 2015 to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 and ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education’ by 2030. However, inclusive education arguably meant different things to different people at the time.

The right to inclusive education had been established in the landmark Article 24 of the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which shaped perceptions of inclusive education as associated with a single group. But it was the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities itself, in its General Comment No. 4 on Article 24 in 2016, that offered a new interpretation, arguing that inclusion should not be associated with only one group. Rather, the mindset and mechanisms that generate discrimination and rejection in education participation and experience are the same for all those who are excluded, whether due to disability or to gender, age, location, poverty, ethnicity, language, religion, migration, displacement, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, incarceration, beliefs or attitudes. Every society needs to own up to the mechanisms within it that exclude people – which is also the premise on which this report is based.

Inclusion in education is a process consisting of actions that embrace diversity, build a sense of belonging and are rooted in the belief that every person has value and potential and should be respected, regardless of their background, ability or identity. Education systems need to be responsive to all learners’ needs and to consider learner diversity not as a problem but as an asset. Inclusive education is the foundation of an education system of good quality that enables every child, youth and adult to learn and fulfil their potential. Inclusion cannot be achieved if it is seen as an inconvenience or if people harbour the belief that learners’ levels of ability are fixed. Inclusion in education ensures that differences of opinion are freely expressed and different voices are heard so as to help achieve cohesion and build inclusive societies.

Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean have come a long way towards healing past injustices related to colonialism, exploitation, oppression and discrimination, but they remain riven with fault lines. Their legislative and policy frameworks have quickly embraced the broad-based concept of inclusion in education and they have led the world in innovative social policies. But in the region with the world’s most unequal income distribution, there is a lot of ground left to cover. Stigma and stereotypes alienate millions inside classrooms and make them less likely to progress through education. And, unfortunately, the gap between proclamations and actions is often too wide.

As Latin America and the Caribbean enters the final decade of action to achieve SDG 4 and fulfil the commitment to achieve ‘inclusive and equitable quality education’ and ‘lifelong learning opportunities for all’, the following 10 recommendations take into account the deep roots of barriers and the wide scope of issues related to inclusion, which threaten the region’s chances of achieving the 2030 targets. The task has only been made harder by COVID-19 and the resulting recession. School closures have led to distance education solutions, which, as forward-looking as they may be, nevertheless risk leaving the most disadvantaged learners further behind.

1. Widen the understanding of inclusive education: It should include all learners, regardless of identity, background or ability.

Inclusive education should encompass all learners. Although 60% of countries in the region have a definition of inclusive education, only 64% of those definitions cover multiple marginalized groups. Residential separation of populations of different socio-economic status into different neighbourhoods also puts some of the region’s education systems among the world’s most stratified. Migrant and displaced populations are not always welcome in school.

When education systems celebrate diversity and are underpinned by a belief that every person adds value and should be treated with dignity, everyone is enabled to learn not only the basics but also the broader range of skills needed to build sustainable societies. Inclusive education is not about setting up a department of inclusive education. Rather, it is about not discriminating against anyone, not rejecting anyone, making all reasonable accommodations to cater for diverse needs. It is about pursuing social justice, recognizing difference and representing all groups in education policies and programmes. Interventions should be coherent from early childhood to adulthood to facilitate lifelong learning.

2. Target financing to those left behind: There is no inclusion while millions lack access to education.

Before the pandemic, there were already over 12 million children and youth out of school in the region. One in five does not finish lower secondary and more than one in three does not finish upper secondary school. In 20 countries in the region, the richest 20% are 5 times as likely as the poorest 20% to complete upper secondary school, on average. While laws on universal free and compulsory basic education have helped reduce child labour, in some countries, including Paraguay and Peru, it is still permitted at age 14, which is before the end of compulsory education.

Legal instruments aside, governments need to further refine their general education funding allocations to compensate for the disadvantage some regions and schools are facing. Some countries, including Brazil, have introduced elaborate financing mechanisms to reduce inequality but their impact has been relatively limited. Key resources are also inequitably distributed. For instance, insufficiently trained teachers tend to be allocated to rural schools, and teachers involved in intercultural bilingual education may not have followed the standard teacher preparation path. In Colombia, the municipality with the highest percentage of Afro-descendants had the lowest per capita level of investment in education.

The region is a global leader in social protection policies that target disadvantaged populations and help improve education attainment. Since the 1990s, conditional cash transfers have increased attainment by up to 1.5 years. However, some programmes' design could be more responsive to certain groups left behind, such as boys in the Caribbean. School meals are another example of programmes that are responsive to disadvantaged groups.

3. Share expertise and resources: This is the only way to sustain a transition to inclusion.

Laws in 42% of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean provide for educating students with disabilities in separate settings, and in 16% of countries for educating them in inclusive settings. The remainder opt for combinations of segregation and mainstreaming. In many ways, achieving inclusion is a management challenge. Specialist human and material resources to address diversity are concentrated in a few special schools, a legacy of segregated provision, and are unequally distributed.

Several countries are trying to make scarce resources more widely available. El Salvador's support rooms and Nicaragua's resource centres aim to facilitate inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The Plurinational Republic of Bolivia's school clusters promote intercultural education, which has expanded access to education among indigenous children in highland areas. Chile's micro-centres and Peru's education networks encourage teachers in rural areas to interact and fill gaps in some specializations. Such efforts need to be institutionalized.

4. Engage in meaningful consultation with communities, parents and students: Inclusion cannot be enforced from above.

A key barrier to inclusion in education is lack of belief that it is possible and desirable. Parents and communities may hold discriminatory beliefs about gender, disability,

ethnicity, race or religion. In Brazil, campaigning organizations managed to get references to gender and sexual orientation removed from the National Education Plan in 2014. Allowing wealthy families to choose a school tends to exacerbate segregation, as in Chile. In Jamaica, as elsewhere, some parents of children with disabilities support their education, while others may hide their children because they doubt their ability to function in society. In Peru, some rural communities advocate prioritizing Spanish and reject bilingualism. Communities can help democratize education and cause sidelined voices to be heard in decision making. Ecuador involves Afro-descendants in developing intercultural education policies. In Nicaragua, the law requires people with disabilities to be represented in the development of policies to promote inclusion in education.

Students may feel unrepresented or stereotyped in teaching materials. Only 55% of Colombian social science textbooks presented black cultural history, and those that did usually framed it in an uncritical and ahistorical way linked almost exclusively to slavery. Haitian students in Chile and Nicaraguan students in Costa Rica may be subject to xenophobia. Gang violence in Central America and the Caribbean makes schools unsafe. In seven Latin American countries, most lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students had a negative experience of teacher attitudes to sexual orientation and gender expression. Schools should increase dialogue on the design and implementation of school practices through parent associations or student organizations.

5. Ensure cooperation across government departments, sectors and tiers: Inclusion in education is but a subset of social inclusion.

Partnership should be the keyword in government efforts to achieve inclusion. First, education ministries must work with other ministries to share information on the needs of disadvantaged children and their families as early as possible. Early childhood development programmes in Chile and the Dominican Republic integrate education with health and other social services to promote early interventions and mitigate the impact of adverse initial conditions on school progression and learning. In Colombia, three registries are combined to identify extremely poor, internally displaced and indigenous populations and target intended beneficiaries of social programmes. But although integration improves service quality and effectiveness, bureaucratic working cultures often keep service delivery in silos. In Peru, rural schools are managed through two parallel systems.

Second, education ministries need to ensure that when local governments have a mandate to provide services for inclusion, they are fully funded and local officials'

capacity is developed. Often, national governments decentralize responsibility to local governments, but communicate with them poorly or pay insufficient attention to their ability to deliver, with the result that inequality is exacerbated. For instance, in the Dominican Republic, teachers may lack adequate or accurate policy information, which hinders their ability to support undocumented students of Haitian descent in fulfilling their right to education. In Colombia, information on enrolling Venezuelan children in school was communicated to departmental and municipal education officials but was not passed in the same way to local education authorities, resulting in geographical differences in how regulations were interpreted and procedures implemented.

6. Make space for non-government actors to challenge and fill gaps: Ensure they work towards the same inclusion goal.

Governments need to consider the important dual role of non-state actors in inclusive education. First, governments should create conditions enabling non-government and civil society organizations to monitor fulfilment of government commitments and stand up for those excluded from education. Campaigns to sensitize against homophobia and transphobia have been carried out, for instance, in Brazil and Mexico. In Argentina, more than 150 disabled people's organizations cooperate in advocacy and watchdog functions aimed at guaranteeing the right to inclusive education, while in Paraguay disabled people's organizations participate in the National Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In Costa Rica and Panama, campaigns have focused on the right of migrants to education.

Second, non-government organizations have provided education services, either on contract with the government or on their own initiative, targeting disadvantaged groups that the government has neglected. This has been particularly the case for children with disabilities throughout the region, for instance in Nicaragua, as well as for rural communities in Colombia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, migrant and refugee children in Trinidad and Tobago and street children in Central America. Governments must maintain dialogue with these organizations to ensure that standards are met and actions align with national policy – and to enable valuable non-state practices to be adopted in national policy, where relevant. Replicating services or exacerbating vulnerability, while privileging certain worldviews or imposing them on marginalized groups, should be avoided.

7. Apply universal design: Ensure that inclusive systems fulfil every learner's potential.

The simple but powerful concept of universal design is associated in education with the design of school buildings to make them accessible for learners with disabilities. In Jamaica, a survey of 10% of schools concluded that 24% had ramps and only 11% had accessible bathrooms. The concept has been extended to describe approaches that minimize barriers to learning for students with disabilities through flexible learning environments. The huge potential of assistive technology for learners with disabilities has not yet been fully tapped; for example, less than 10% of those with hearing impairments have access to such technology in Haiti and Peru. COVID-19 has brought the challenges of distance learning into sharp relief: Although Latin America and the Caribbean has been the most proactive region, 18% of teachers in Brazil have reported no longer working with children at all and 51% said that few children participated in activities.

This underlying idea of flexibility to overcome barriers in the interaction of learners with the education system is applicable on a wider scale. All students should learn from the same flexible, relevant and accessible curricula, which recognize diversity and respond to various learners' needs. Cuba offers a single curriculum for each education level with adaptations possible for students who need them. In Guatemala, the government has produced textbooks in Mayan languages. But challenges arise in several contexts, from the treatment of gender issues in Peru to curriculum relevance for incarcerated youth in Uruguay. Implementation of ambitious reforms is often partial. In Suriname, multilingualism is enshrined in the national development plan but limited in practice to half-hour classes falling short of offering mother tongue-based multilingual education. In Chile, courses on indigenous language and culture are only ensured in to schools where at least 20% of the students belong to indigenous groups.

8. Prepare, empower and motivate the education workforce: All teachers should be prepared to teach all students.

Teachers need training on inclusion, but not as a specialist topic. Rather, inclusion should be a core element of their initial and ongoing education. Countries in the region are generally committed to preparing teachers to support all students. However, it remains a challenge to equip teachers with the skills to discern and develop the potential of every learner without prejudice and to value diversity. In São Paulo, Brazil, grade 8 mathematics teachers were more likely to give white students a passing

grade than their equally proficient and well-behaved black classmates. In Grenada and in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, some teachers look down on low-performing students in secondary education because access used to be restricted to academically inclined students. Corporal punishment is still practised by teachers in much of the English-speaking Caribbean. Programmes need to focus on tackling entrenched views of some students as deficient and unable to learn. More programmes are needed to prepare head teachers, who are ultimately responsible for instilling an inclusive school ethos.

Many teachers, including 53% of lower secondary school teachers in Mexico, say they need to develop skills to teach students with special education needs. Multigrade classrooms are common in rural areas, but many teachers lack the pedagogical training to run them effectively. Classrooms are marked by increasing diversity; in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 34% of teachers work in schools where at least 10% of students have a migration background. A diverse education workforce would support inclusion. Costa Rica provides training and associated scholarships for teachers from indigenous communities. Teachers also need help to manage the shift to distance learning brought on by COVID-19. In Brazil, 88% of teachers reported they had never taught remotely before the pandemic, and 65% said pedagogical work had changed.

9. Collect data on and for inclusion with attention and respect: Avoid labelling that stigmatizes.

Which data are collected and how they are used determine whether inclusion is served. There is potential tension between, on the one hand, identifying groups to make the disadvantaged visible and help prompt action and, on the other, reducing children to labels, which can be self-fulfilling. Not all children facing inclusion barriers belong to an identifiable or recognized group. Many belong to several groups.

Censuses and surveys help monitor outcomes at population level. The situation regarding adequate collection has improved, although gaps remain. Since 2015, 57% of countries in the region, representing 13% of the population, have not had a publicly available household survey to provide disaggregated data on key education indicators. But censuses and surveys also pose challenges in formulating questions identifying nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, which can touch on sensitive personal information, be intrusive and trigger persecution fears. All Spanish-speaking countries in the region have census questions about ethnicity except the Dominican Republic. On disability, the use of the Washington Group Short Set of Questions and the Child Functioning Module, which are based on a social

rather than a medical model, should be prioritized. So far, relatively few countries have incorporated them.

Nine countries in the region do not collect data on children with disabilities in their education management information systems. In any case, administrative systems should collect data not only on categories of students for inclusive education planning, budgeting and service provision, but also on the experience of inclusion. However, the desire for detailed or robust data should not take priority over ensuring that no learner is harmed.

10. Learn from peers: A shift to inclusion is not easy.

Inclusion in education represents a move away from discrimination and prejudice, and towards a future that can be adapted to various contexts and realities. Neither the pace nor the specific direction of this transition can be dictated; each society may take a different route. But much can be learned from sharing experiences through teacher networks, parent-teacher associations, student councils and national forums.

For instance, educator networks, such as GESEC in Argentina and Red PECE in Chile, help share experiences on the education of incarcerated youth. Non-government cross-national networks promote knowledge-sharing on aspects of inclusive education. Examples include the Ibero-American LGBTI Education Network, which focuses on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and the Federación Iberoamericana de Síndrome de Down and the Red Regional por la Educación Inclusiva, which focus on disability. The Red Intergubernamental Iberoamericana de Cooperación para la Educación de Personas con Necesidades Educativas Especiales (Iberoamerican Intergovernmental Cooperation Network for the Education of People with Special Education Needs) serves as a peer learning mechanism on disability-inclusive education. An umbrella group, the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform, which brings together multiple organizations active in the response to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, is also the connecting point for education groups in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

To contribute to this peer learning process, the *Global Education Monitoring Report* provides country descriptions of approaches to inclusion in education as part of its new Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER) website. Countries in the region must work together, using such resources as a basis and taking advantage of multiple opportunities for policy dialogue, to steer their societies to appreciate diversity as something to celebrate, not a problem to rectify.

References

The list of references is in two parts: (a) a list of background papers mentioned in several chapters, and (b) a list by chapter.

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CHAPTER 6

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LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Inclusion and education: ALL MEANS ALL

Latin America and the Caribbean has the largest and most challenging socio-economic inequalities in the world, which have shaped its education systems over the decades. This report looks at everyone both in and excluded from education in the region, pinpointing barriers facing learners, especially when multiple disadvantages intersect. The report also explores challenges in education posed by COVID-19 and the need for urgent action to prevent an exacerbation of inequalities.

Produced by the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report team, in partnership with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC) and the Laboratory of Education Research and Innovation for Latin America and the Caribbean (SUMMA), the report assesses key solutions for greater inclusion through several case studies from the region. It provides in-depth analysis on challenges to inclusion in education arising from migration and displacement in Colombia and Costa Rica; remoteness in Brazil and Suriname; disability in Cuba and Nicaragua; gender in Peru and Jamaica; sexual orientation, gender identity and expression in Chile and Mexico; poverty in the Dominican Republic and Honduras; ethnicity in Bolivia and Ecuador; and incarceration in El Salvador and Uruguay.

Building on the 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report*, this regional edition concludes that strong laws and policies in Latin America and the Caribbean demonstrate a commitment to inclusion, but that the daily realities faced by learners suggest implementation is lagging. Recommendations are aimed at promoting more inclusive education systems to benefit all children and youth, no matter their background, identity or ability. The recommendations provide a systematic framework for identifying and dismantling barriers for vulnerable populations, according to the principle that 'every learner matters and matters equally'.

