



2003

Time to Act

A REPORT CARD
ON EDUCATION IN
CENTRAL AMERICA AND
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Partnership for Educational
Revitalization in the Americas

**Task Force on
Education Reform
in Central America**



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Task Force on Education Reform in Central America

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MISSION

The Task Force on Education Reform in Central America was created in 1999 by the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas (PREAL). Its members are distinguished business, education, and political leaders united by their common interest in improving education in Central America and the Dominican Republic.

In early 2000, the Task Force published a report entitled *Tomorrow Is Too Late*, which highlighted the region's serious educational deficiencies and made four recommendations for overcoming them. The report prompted an extensive debate about education.

To follow up on the implementation of the report's recommendations, the Task Force decided to publish a periodic report card on education in the region. The report is similar to *Lagging Behind*, published in 2001 by PREAL's International Task Force on Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness in the Americas, and draws on national report cards on education sponsored by PREAL in several countries.

Education report cards have been used in other countries as useful tools for increasing accountability and drawing attention to results. Modeled on student report cards, they seek to show how changes in the education system affect educational outcomes. Such assessments offer the public an overview of the state of education in the region. In other contexts, they have been used to disclose the performance of a school, a municipality or a country, and to compare them to their counterparts by assigning scores to various educational indicators.

The national education report cards for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama have provided valuable information for the preparation of this report on education in Central America and the Dominican Republic. It examines the results of educational management based on the belief that transparency and accountability are crucial to understanding and improving children's education. Social justice and international competitiveness demand that every country have a clear understanding of its pupils' performance, so it can assess and implement actions that will bring about sustainable educational reform.

As with *Tomorrow Is Too Late*, this report reflects the consensus of the members of PREAL's Task Force on Education Reform in Central America. We hope that this new publication will give fresh impetus to the education reforms that the people of the region so urgently need. The future viability of the region's nations depends on these reforms.

Humberto Belli

Co-Chair of the Central American Task Force

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This report draws on the contributions, experience and knowledge of public officials, experts, entrepreneurs and educational leaders from throughout the region, as well as on quantitative and qualitative data from research and recent publications. A preliminary version of the report was prepared by consultants Darlyn Meza and Tania Fiedler de Gordón, whose work included visits to the countries, interviews, bibliographical reviews and an examination of statistical data during 2001. Updated information was added based on the national education report cards published in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Panama in 2002, and on international sources. The report has been discussed and modified by the members of the Central American Task Force, with input from PREAL's technical staff.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: A REPORT CARD ON EDUCATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

In *Tomorrow Is Too Late* (2000) we identified four key problems affecting education in the region: (1) management by centralist, bureaucratic and often politicized state institutions that are inefficient and tend to slow the pace of change; (2) inadequate and inequitable investment in education; (3) a decline in the teaching profession due in part to the failure to link salaries to performance; and (4) a lack of unified educational standards and testing systems which makes it difficult to evaluate the performance of people involved in education and the impact of educational policies.

The countries of the region have undertaken many significant initiatives to solve these problems. Nonetheless, a review of the results suggests that not enough has been done so far. Delays in implementing education policy reforms such as those we suggested in 2000 mean

opportunities will be lost and present a real disadvantage given the demands of the global environment. We continue to stress that up-to-date educational systems that can respond to social needs and expectations are a priority on the world stage. Because of the importance of technology to education, this report also includes preliminary examples of the use of technology as a learning tool in the countries of the region.

The assessment of educational progress presented below is useful for raising awareness of the situation and inspiring a search for more effective solutions. We have used a scale that ranges from A (Excellent) to F (Very Poor), along with arrows symbolizing the presence or absence of progress, however modest or disappointing the end results might be. Our grades, though necessarily subjective, are based on the best available evidence.

Report Card on Education in Central America and the Dominican Republic, 2003

Subject	Grade	Progress	Comments
Test scores	D	↔	Scores on national achievement tests are highly unsatisfactory. Most countries do not take part in international tests and therefore lack the tools needed to measure learning in a global context.
Educational levels	B	↑	While primary school coverage has increased, access to preschool and secondary education remains very limited.
Equity	F	↔	Poor, rural, and indigenous children have serious disadvantages in access to and quality of education.
Decentralization	B	↑	Partial efforts have been made to transfer responsibilities to schools, but most schools, as well as the education system as a whole, are still run by inefficient and centralized administrations.
Investment in primary and secondary education	C	↑	Spending on education increased in the 1990s but investment per pupil remains very low, inequitable, and poorly administered.
Teaching profession	D	↔	Despite important efforts to train teachers, their performance has not improved. This stems largely from a lack of incentives and the absence of proper accountability mechanisms. Efforts to change wage policies have faced strong resistance.
Standards	C	↑	There are incipient efforts to develop educational standards, but these have not been widely disseminated, and have yet to be aligned with study programs, teacher training, educational materials or assessment systems.
Assessment	C	↑	In some countries assessment systems are becoming more robust, but efforts in this field are not systematic. The available information from tests is not always of a high quality and is not always used to make improvements.

Grading Scale

A	Excellent	↑ ↔ ↓	Improving No change Declining
B	Good		
C	Average		
D	Poor		
F	Very poor		

I. THREE YEARS AFTER TOMORROW IS TOO LATE: STILL BEHIND

In *Tomorrow Is Too Late* (2000), we recommended the following steps to tackle the region's serious educational deficiencies:

- Transfer to parents, teachers and communities a greater share of responsibility for managing educational systems and administering schools;
- Increase public investment in education to a minimum of 5% of GDP and allocate the new funds to primary and secondary education;
- Revitalize the teaching profession by linking salaries to job performance, improving pre-service training, and promoting more and better in-service training; and
- Establish a common system of educational standards and performance assessment, and disseminate findings widely.

Regrettably, the efforts made in recent years seem to have been insufficient to meet current demands or the needs of the peoples of the subregion. School enrollment has expanded significantly but it has not equitably met the needs of different groups, and it has not been matched by a corresponding improvement in quality. Several countries have taken significant steps toward decentralization of school management, but too many of the key decisions are still made in ministries and are carried out with unacceptable inefficiency. Investment has increased slightly, but such increases generally correspond to the increase in enrollment. The new funds have had little impact on the quality of basic education, and the inequities evident in the financing of primary schooling relative to university education have not been addressed. No changes have been made to the obsolete and poorly designed systems for paying teachers, nor have the education standards proposed over the last five years been fully consolidated or implemented.

At a time when human resource training is the most important element of a country's competitiveness, the slow pace of educational improvement means, quite simply, that the region is falling behind. Without thorough and sustained reforms to our education systems, neither the region nor its children will be able to move forward.

Children's disappointing performance in tests reflects the magnitude of the problem.

TEST SCORES:

Students show low levels of learning = D

In general, students' scores on national and international tests have been discouraging. They confirm the opinion of educators and experts that children and youths are not learning what they should learn in school. Moreover, the general public, and even many significant education actors, remain unaware of this poor performance since it is not publicized.

National tests results are disappointing

Some examples:

El Salvador. Since 1997, all secondary school graduates have been tested annually on the basis of their study programs in language, mathematics, natural sciences and social studies. In the last two tests, the national averages in these subjects have never exceeded 6 (on a scale of 0 to 10).

Panama. In a 2000 sample test of sixth graders, the average percentage score was about 60% correct answers, falling to under 50% in mathematics and social studies.

Honduras. In 1997, a representative sample of third grade pupils from throughout the country scored an average of 39.8% on the language test and 35.8% on the mathematics test, far below the 66% that the testing unit considers an acceptable command of these subjects.

Expert analysis also indicates that the performance of children in Guatemala, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic is discouraging. Eagerly awaited results from recent national tests of third and sixth graders in Nicaragua are not yet available. In general, the national assessments reveal significant disparities among different social and ethnic groups.

No participation in global tests

In general, the countries in the region do not participate in worldwide tests such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) or the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which measures abilities in reading, mathematics and science. The only exception is Belize, which took part the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

(PIRLS) in 2001. In regional tests, only the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Costa Rica took part in the UNESCO/OREALC test of language and mathematics in 1998. Until more countries participate in such tests, it will be very difficult to assess the quality of education in the region relative to the rest of the world.

Currently, the World Bank and UNESCO/OREALC are planning to carry out new regional Latin American tests of language and mathematics developed by UNESCO/OREALC; Guatemala and El Salvador will take part. Of the 12 countries that took part in the tests in 1998 and published the results, Honduras ranked tenth and the Dominican Republic ranked twelfth in fourth grade language tests. Costa Rica did not release its results (Figure 1).

Among Latin American countries, Chile, Argentina, Belize, Mexico, and Colombia have taken part in recent years in international tests such as TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA. Their average scores have been among the lowest among participating countries. But these same countries that participated in the global tests were among those that obtained better results in language

and mathematics in the UNESCO/ORLEAC tests, while Honduras and the Dominican Republic were near the bottom of the rankings. Since there is no substantial evidence to suggest that Central American countries have higher quality education than Argentina, Chile or Colombia, one can assume that if Central American countries had taken part in global tests their scores would have been at least as low as those of the countries mentioned.

EDUCATION LEVELS:
Education levels have improved but remain unsatisfactory = B

Despite the expansion of school coverage, illiteracy is still high and enrollment is low, especially at the preschool and secondary levels.

High levels of illiteracy persist

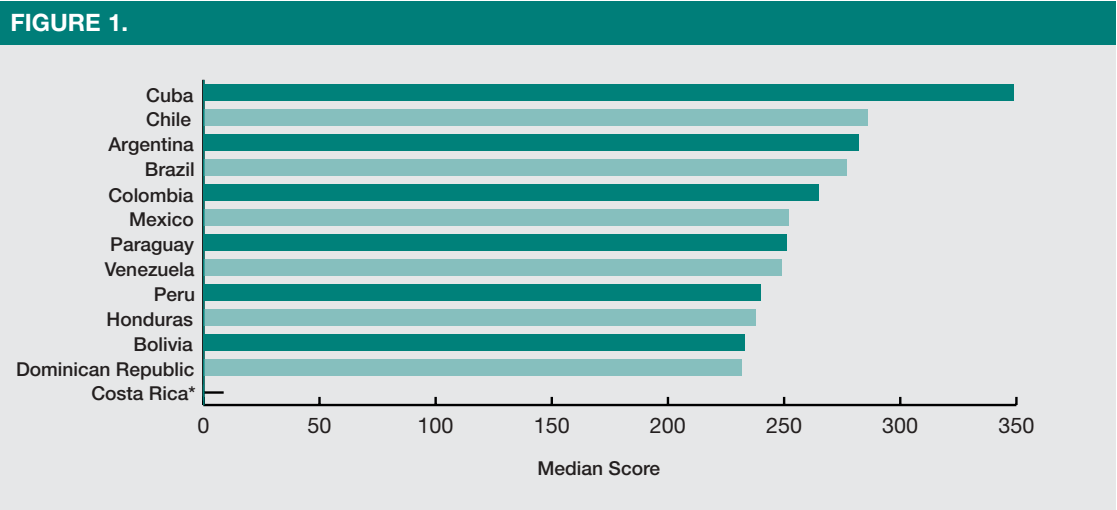
Without doubt the percentage of those who can neither read nor write has fallen in recent decades. In most countries, however, the illiteracy rate was still over 15%

Fourth Grade Language Scores, 1998

*Costa Rica took part but did not release its results

Note: Data represent median country score, standardized to regional mean of 250.

Sources: Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación, 1998, 2000. Data for Peru from Boletín 9 of Peru's Education Ministry and the Laboratorio's technical report.



in 2000, a figure that surpasses the average for Latin America and for countries such as Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia – which face economic challenges similar to those of the region (Figure A.1 in the Appendix).

Many children and youths lack the opportunity to go to the school

Despite the significant efforts made to expand school enrollment, more than half of children of preschool and secondary school age do not attend school.

In most Central American countries fewer than five of every ten children of preschool age are enrolled, less than the average for Latin America and for countries such as Thailand and Malaysia (Figure A.2 in the Appendix). This figure is disturbing because of the importance of preschool education as a basis for success throughout students' school careers. At the primary level, where enrollment is high, Guatemala,

El Salvador and Nicaragua still lag significantly behind. In these countries one of every five children of primary school age does not enroll in school (Figure A.3 in the Appendix).

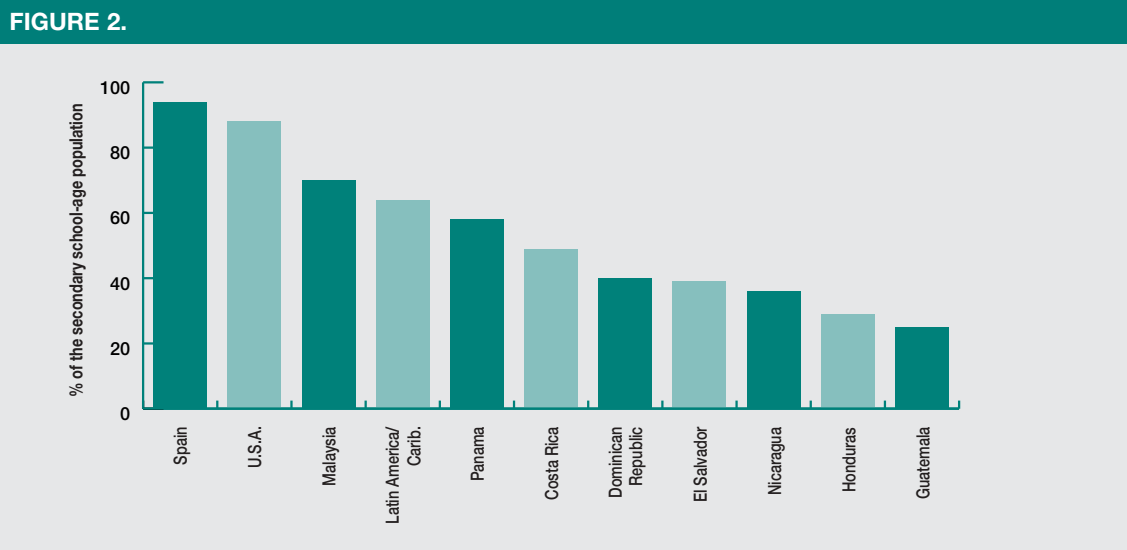
Except for Panama, less than half of the children of secondary school age are enrolled in secondary school (Figure 2). By contrast, in the more developed countries and in competitor countries like Malaysia, most youths reach this level. The lack of trained and educated young people makes it difficult for countries to attract foreign investors, because they cannot hire skilled workers. This in turn limits a country's competitiveness.

Those who enter the education system often do not remain. The primary school completion rate in most countries of the region is not above 80%. In Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala almost one of every three children failed to complete primary school in 2001 (Figure A.4 in the Appendix).

Net Secondary Enrollment Rates, 2000

Note: Honduras data from 1999.

Sources: UNESCO online database, April 2003. *Informe de Progreso Educativo for Honduras, Guatemala and Panama, 2002*. Regional: World Bank, World Development Indicators 2003.



The labor force has little schooling

On average, Latin Americans over 25 years of age have less than six years of education. This is below the world average of 6.7 and the East Asian average of 6.5, and far below the average of almost ten years in developed countries (Figure 3). A population that does not have even a primary level of education faces serious disadvantages in a global labor market that demands at least a complete secondary education.

EQUITY: Serious inequalities persist = F

Despite the efforts made in recent years to overcome inequality, indigenous and poor pupils remain at a disadvantage, and there are still groups that need special attention.

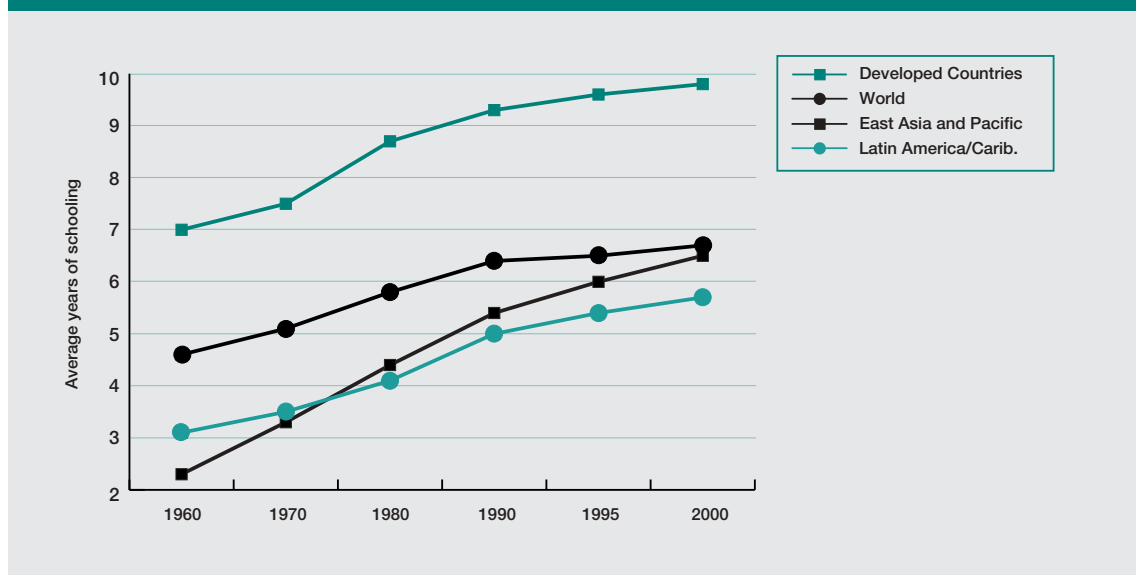
In all the Central American countries, youths from rural areas have a lower level of schooling than urban youths (Table A.9 in the Appendix). Children from families with higher incomes are more likely to complete their education, tend not to be held back and, consequently, have four to seven years more schooling than their peers from poorer families (Figure 4). Paradoxically, one of the widest gaps is in Panama, which has higher levels of schooling than other countries. Children from poor rural families are at a double disadvantage and have on average seven to ten fewer years of education than urban children from higher-income families (Table A.10 in the Appendix).

Average Years of Schooling of the Labor Force, by Region, 1960-2000

Note: Labor force is defined as those aged 25 and over.

Source: Barro, Robert and Jong-Wha Lee. *International Data on Education Attainment Updates and Implications*. NBER Working Paper Series; Working Paper 7911. September, 2000

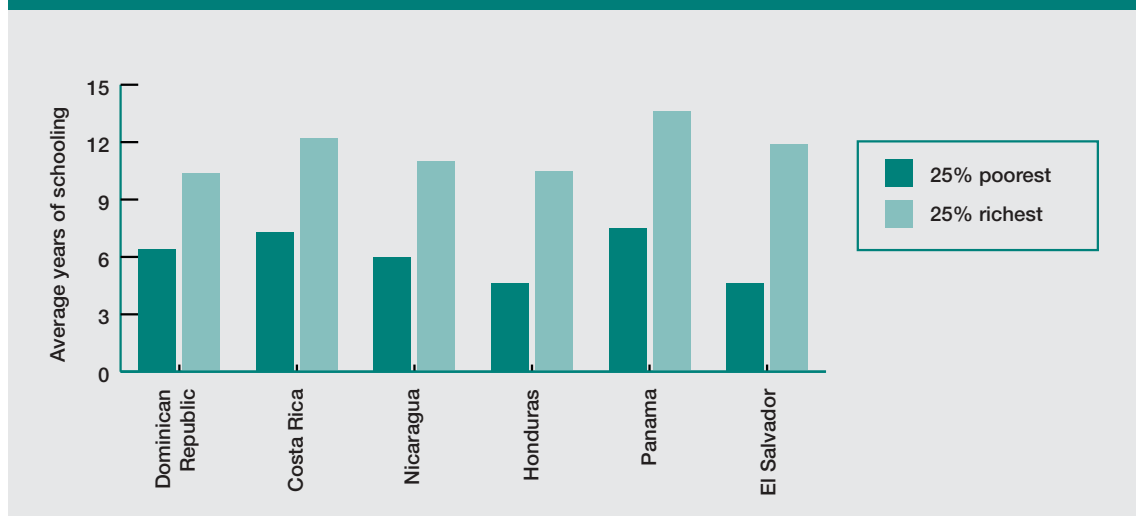
FIGURE 3.



Average Years of Education Among Adults (ages 25 to 59) in Urban Areas, by Income Level, 1997

Source: ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America 1998*, p. 294. Taken from Fernando Reimers, "Políticas compensatorias de discriminación positiva y justicia social del siglo XX en América Latina," *Revista La Educación* # 132-133, OAS, Washington, D.C., 1999.

FIGURE 4.



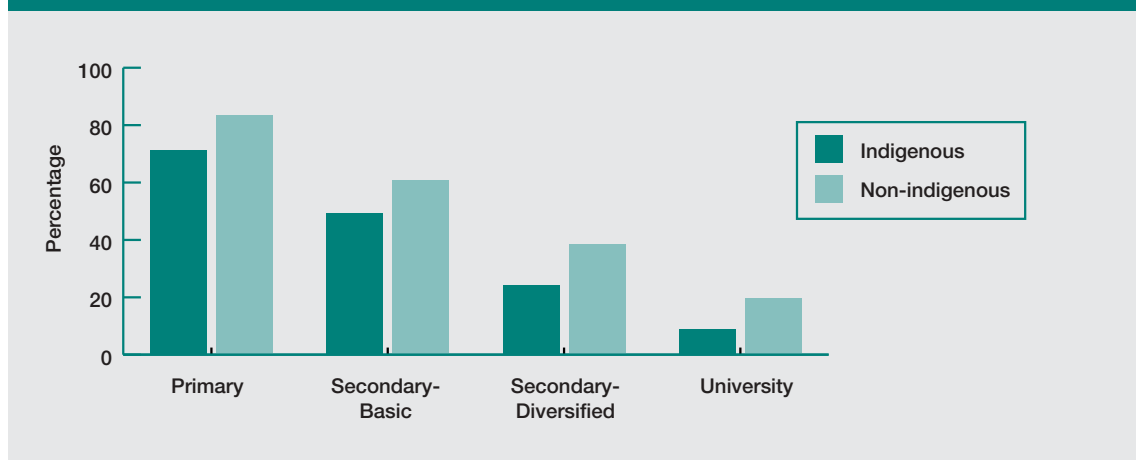
In countries with significant ethnic diversity, indigenous people always have fewer educational opportunities than the rest of the population. In Guatemala, where indigenous people accounted for 39% of the population in 2000, they comprised just 35% of total enrollment. The gaps are more marked in the upper levels, where only 24% of secondary school pupils and 13% of those in higher education are of indigenous origin. The gap in school attendance between

indigenous and non-indigenous pupils has been narrowing at the primary and secondary level (Table A.12 in the Appendix), although disadvantages persist and non-attendance increases with age (Figure 5). In Panama, poor indigenous children have fewer opportunities to enroll at any level, and their participation at university level is almost nil. They tend to repeat years and to drop out more often than others.

Guatemala: School Attendance by Age Group and Ethnic Origin, 2000

Source: CIEN/PREAL, *Informe de Progreso Educativo. Guatemala 2002*.

FIGURE 5.



Poor, rural and indigenous people not only have fewer years of schooling but also learn less at school, partly because the education they receive is of poor quality. In the UNESCO/OREALC test of third and fourth grade pupils, for example, those from rural areas in the Dominican Republic and Honduras scored lower in mathematics and language than their peers from the

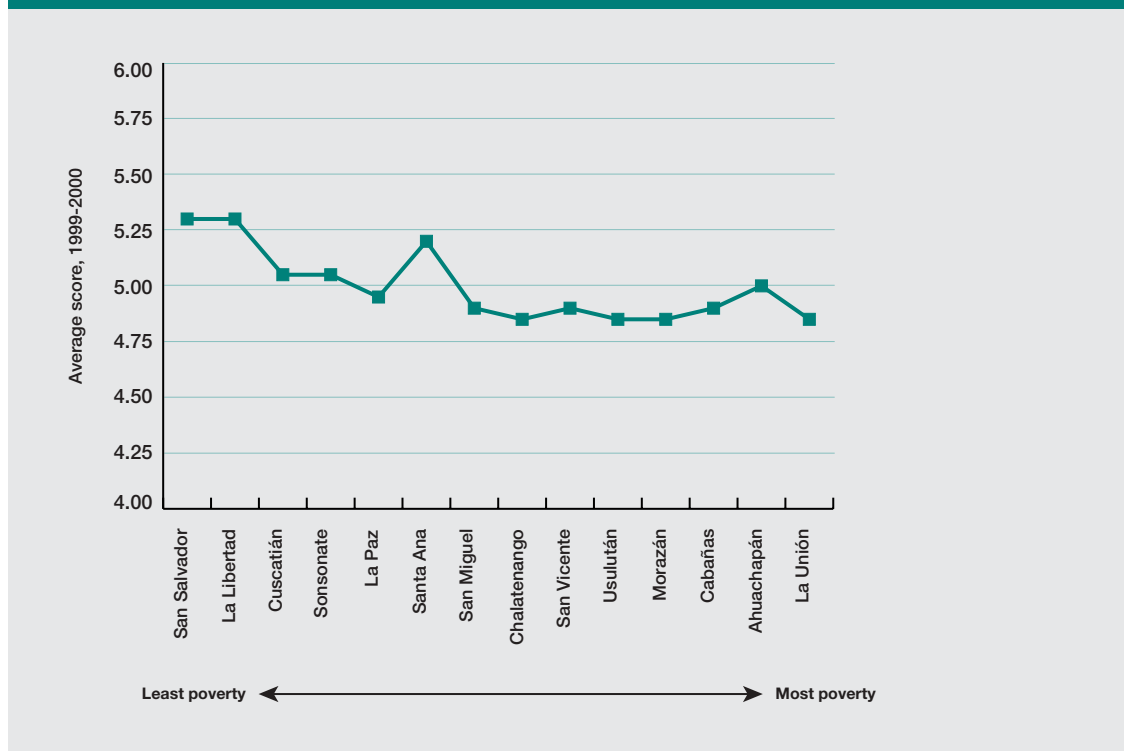
large cities (Table A.6 in the Appendix). In Panama, children from the more remote and indigenous provinces performed worst in the national sixth grade diagnostic test in 2000. In El Salvador, the departments with higher levels of poverty tend to score worst in the national test of students leaving secondary school (Figure 6).

El Salvador: Comparison of the Results of National Tests (PAES) and the Human Poverty Index, by Department, 1999

Note: PAES scores range from 0 (worst) to 10 (best).

Source: Centro Alfa/PREAL.
Informe de Progreso Educativo.
El Salvador 2002.

FIGURE 6.



One positive development is that, in general, the gap between men and women has narrowed and in some cases favors women. Guatemalan and Salvadorean women, however, still have lower levels of education than men (Tables A.13 to A.17 in the Appendix).

II. PROGRESS IS VERY SLOW

The reforms proposed in *Tomorrow Is Too Late* in 2000 were recommended precisely to respond to the region's educational problems described in this report. Three years later, there has been promising, but slow progress in implementing these recommendations.

1. Transfer to parents, teachers and communities a greater share of responsibility for managing educational systems and administering schools.

Significant steps have been taken to involve the community = B

One of the key obstacles in managing education has been the centralization of decision-making in education ministries, or their regional offices, which weakens local actors' ability to participate. To remedy this, several pioneering initiatives arose during the 1990s to transfer responsibilities to the local level and strengthen school management.

Although some of these efforts have prospered in the last three years, it is difficult to break out of the model of centralized policies that historically has dominated public education in the region. The weight of legal and institutional tradition is compounded by government authorities' reluctance to give up the potential advantages of centralized power, such as widespread cronyism and politicized decision-making. In addition, teachers' unions oppose policies perceived as jeopardizing a misguided view of job security. In general, governments in Central America and the Dominican Republic have experienced serious setbacks and constraints when they try to make reforms in this field. Consequently, few schools have real and significant control over their resources and decision-making, and there are not enough initiatives to transfer responsibilities from education ministries to civil society.

• Some positive experiences

In several cases the centralized management model has been broken, and the participation of various local actors in providing educational services has been accepted and facilitated:

EDUCO (El Salvador, 1991)- Involvement of parents' associations in running the schools has increased access to preschool and basic education, especially in rural areas where educational services were not available before.

PRONADE (Guatemala, 1993)- In an effort to facilitate the organization and operation of self-managed schools in rural areas of Guatemala that lack educational services, Education Committees (COEDUCAS) made up of local community members are responsible for running the schools, including hiring teachers.

PROHECO (Honduras, 1999)- Community School Associations (AECO), take responsibility for managing physical and human resources (including hiring and firing teachers).

The School Autonomy Program (Nicaragua, 1992) made changes in the existing public schools. Those changes allowed parents to participate directly in school matters, permitted local election of the principal, and gave the principal greater autonomy.

The program now covers almost all secondary schools and a large proportion of elementary schools. Despite some setbacks, the enactment in 2002 of the School Participation Law (*Ley de Participación Escolar*), which reaffirms the original autonomy project, institutionalized the prerogatives of autonomous schools.

The Dominican Republic There is a pilot plan to establish School Boards for every school in the country. With the broad participation of the community, the boards will have the power to manage the financial resources used to buy educational materials. The plan also envisages training board members to plan and assess education projects, with financing from the Education Secretariat.

Costa Rica and Panama have made less progress in transferring responsibility to the local level. In Panama, a 1997 law sought to decentralize education by creating School Education Boards made up of people from various sectors with full operational autonomy. School activities remain strongly centralized, however, and there is very little community participation. On the positive side, two laws were enacted recently to foster educational decentralization as a way to ensure the financial and operational autonomy of regional offices. In Costa Rica, the Education Ministry has not sought to transfer greater responsibility to parents or teachers in its current policies and programs; centralized decisions are still being made in areas that have already been transferred to the local level in other countries.

• **There is still much ground to cover**

Some countries have made significant progress on this issue, but the real transfer of authority to schools is limited (see **Table 1**), and it has proven difficult to implement many of the programs. Staffing decisions, which are crucial for improving education quality and results, are rarely delegated to the schools. Even in countries where a substantial number of schools, school councils and parents' associations have the power to hire and fire teachers, schools are unable to use pay to attract and retain the best candidates because base salary levels are set centrally. In Nicaragua, school councils can choose to pay

teachers more, but they must finance the difference themselves, which can be a problem in poor communities. Most decisions made in schools and communities are limited to small education improvement projects or the setup and maintenance of classrooms.

Moreover, there is no sign of any initiative to transfer functions and decision-making from public administration to civil society; centralism continues to dominate state management of education. In many countries, for example, hiring teachers still requires the approval and signature of the education minister.

TABLE 1. Level of Decision-Making in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 2000

Country	Hiring/firing of teachers	Hiring/firing of principals	Teacher promotions	Salaries	Budget and use of resources	Maintenance	Books	Timetables & classroom organization	Curriculum
Costa Rica	National	National	No data	National	National	National	Parents	No data	No data
El Salvador	School (EDUCO); departmental	National (1)	National	National	School (2)	School (EDUCO); vouchers for the others	National	School	National (3)
Guatemala	National; municipal (4); parents (PRONADE)	National	National	National; municipal (4)	National	National; municipal; parents (school boards)	National	National; parents	National (5)
Honduras	National; departmental	National	National	National	National; departmental (6)	Departmental; school	National	Departmental; school	National
Nicaragua	Autonomous school	Autonomous school	National and autonomous school	National and autonomous school	National and (limited extent) autonomous school	Autonomous school	National	Autonomous school	National, with authority to adjust in autonomous schools
Panama	National	National	National	National	National	National and school	National	School (principal)	National
Dominican Republic	National	National	National	National	Presidency	School	National	No data	No data

Sources: PREAL, *Informes de Progreso Educativo* for Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Panama 2002. IDB, *Economic and Social Progress in Latin America*, 1996. Nicaragua based on information from national sources.

1. The selection and promotion of public school principals and teachers (excluding EDUCO) is the responsibility of the *Tribunal Calificador de la Carrera Docente*.
2. Since 1997, schools have received quality vouchers to make minimal infrastructural improvements, to acquire educational materials, and to train teachers. The parameters for the use of the funds, however, are set nationally (Education Ministry).
3. Current regulations, however, stipulate that the curriculum be applied flexibly.
4. Municipal and cooperative schools hire and fire teachers according to municipal legal norms. The municipality also finances teachers in municipal schools.
5. As yet there is no official and updated curriculum used universally by all sectors of the education system.
6. The departmental administration proposes but the Education Secretariat makes the final decision.

If current programs are to be implemented effectively, we need to address and overcome the following obstacles:

Lack of political will. National debates on the transfer of authority are usually highly politicized and polemical. Neither the region's governments nor its political class have displayed any marked or consistent interest in reducing the role of the state in education and enhancing the role of civil society. Without the necessary consensus it is extremely difficult to put such reforms into effect.

Deficiencies in control, oversight, training and technical assistance to schools. Greater authority and control over resources do not guarantee better results, especially if those who manage and work in the schools are untrained and if the schools lack adequate institutional support. In Panama, fear that the skill level of education boards and parents might be inadequate has hampered decentralization. In El Salvador, the EDUCO program still lacks a legal and administrative framework to back the appointment of a principal, despite the demand for such a framework arising from the growing size of these schools.

Lack of resources. Transferring responsibility without adequate resources can undermine efforts to give schools more control. In Nicaragua, for example, because teachers' wages are low, the financial resources managed by the schools have been used to create economic incentives for teachers, which can amount to up to 80% of what teachers take home. Using parents' contributions is not always feasible because of the problems afflicting poorer communities.

Lack of clear goals and program assessment methods. Decentralization programs have rarely made clear what results are expected in return for giving schools greater control over their own management. As is evident in the case of Honduras, "there has been no substantial assessment of the program to verify if it is meeting its stated goals" (FEREMA/PREAL, 2002, p.19). It is hard to demand better performance if the acceptable level of performance is unknown, and if progress toward proposed goals is not monitored.

Lack of clear definition of the roles of the various actors. In Panama, for example, the roles and duties of administrators, teachers and parents in running the schools have not been made clear to them, which complicates the establishment of community school boards. Improving education requires the full participation of all actors in taking responsibility for the quality of schools.

• Giving greater control and responsibility to schools is worthwhile

There is little information about how the transfer of authority to local actors affects the quality of education. This is partly because some programs are relatively new and partly because of the lack of systematic assessment.

The available information, however, suggests that the effects can be positive:

- In Nicaragua, according to preliminary studies, math scores have improved in many autonomous schools.
- In El Salvador, recent studies show improved community participation has a positive impact on schools.
- In Guatemala, according to a recent study by the Universidad Rafael Landívar, children who attend self-managed community schools generally perform better than those from centralized public schools.
- In Comayagua, Honduras, there is evidence to suggest that when parents participate in schools, their children are more likely to pass in language and mathematics. In other words, pupils' academic performance improves.

We also know that giving more authority and responsibility to schools promotes greater efficiency and cohesion within them. Direct community participation has a positive impact on teachers' and pupils' attendance, on the quantity and quality of parents' contribution to education, on taking responsibility for results and, in general, on the strengthening of democratic practices.

Obviously, transferring control to schools and communities does not guarantee success. Central governments retain an important function in ensuring that education is of good quality and accessible to all students, especially in areas with limited resources. We still don't know under which conditions school autonomy results in better educational performance. Preliminary evidence, however, suggests that these initiatives provide significant support to the improvement of schools (see **Box 1**).

2. Increase public investment in education to a minimum of 5% of GDP and allocate the new funds to primary and secondary education.

More and better investment is needed = C

In 2000, the Central American Task Force emphasized that the basic problem of investment in education in the region is that very little is spent, and the little that is spent is spent badly. An examination of recent performance does not suggest any significant change to this situation.

BOX 1. The Benefits of Decentralization

- Higher school attendance
- Better academic performance
- Greater parental support for education
- Strengthening of democratic practices
- Greater efficiency and cohesion

- Public spending has increased but investment per pupil remains low

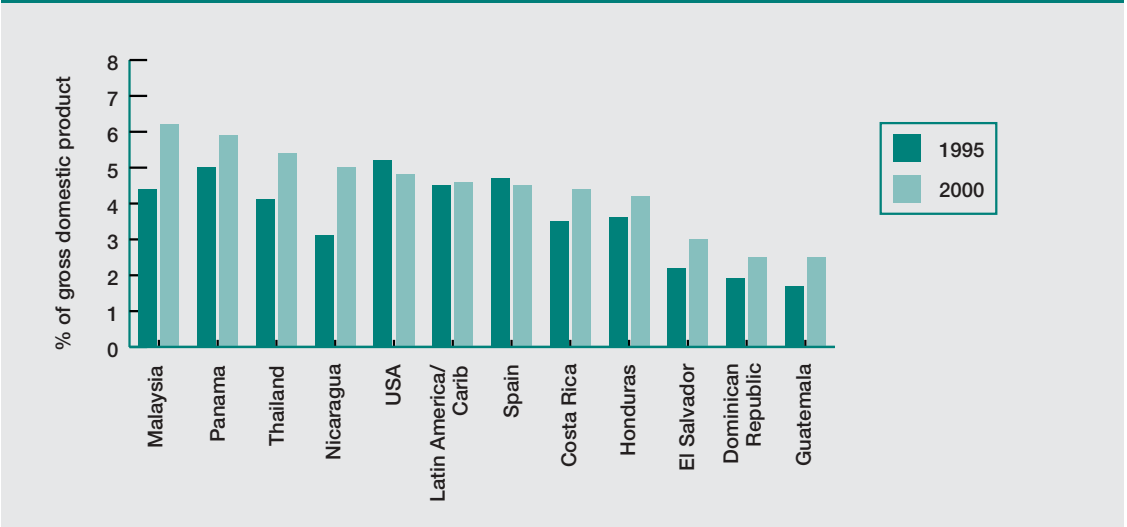
Investment in education in Central America has increased. Nicaragua and Panama invest more in education as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) than the average for Latin America and more than countries like the United States and Spain. El Salvador has increased public spending on education from 1.8% of GDP when the armed conflict ended in 1992 to 3% in 2000, and the other countries have increased their investment as a share of income (**Figure 7**).

Public Spending on Education as a Percentage of GDP, 1995 and 2000

Note: All data are for the year closest to that listed, with no more than a two-year difference. Regional data for 1995 and 1997 expressed as a % of GNP. Guatemala 1995, Education Ministry only. Nicaragua 1995 excludes spending on higher education.

Sources: World Bank online database, May 2003, *Informes de Progreso Educativo for El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, 2002*. Regional: UNESCO *World Education Report, 2000*.

FIGURE 7.



Aside from Panama and Nicaragua, however, the countries of the region are below the 5% target recommended in *Tomorrow Is Too Late*. In Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador, public investment in education as a percentage of GDP is among the lowest in the region.

These figures do not take into account the size of the school-age population. Since in many (but not all) countries of the region the school-age population is proportionally high relative to the total population, these countries need to invest a greater share of their income to attain adequate financing per pupil. In fact, controlling for differences in cost of living in the six countries for which data are available, only Costa Rica spends over \$1,000 per pupil at the primary and secondary level (**Figure 8**). This figure is comparable to spending per pupil in primary and secondary education in countries such as Thailand and Indonesia, but far below the \$3,300 per pupil that Spain spends. By contrast, most Central American countries spend

less than \$600 per primary pupil. Greater resources, of course, do not necessarily guarantee a better education, but more investment per pupil would provide a wider range of options to expand coverage and improve the quality of education.

It is important to note that the figures on public investment in education do not take into account private investment, which is significant in all the countries of the region (see **Box 2** for some examples of private support). In Honduras, for example, private expenditure was equivalent to 2% of GDP in 1996. Added to government spending of 3.6% of GDP in that year, the total surpasses the level of investment recommended in *Tomorrow Is Too Late*. Significant dependence on family resources, however, raises important questions about fairness, especially where many families are poor. Moreover, in many countries a significant proportion of education project funding comes from external sources, which can threaten the programs' sustainability.

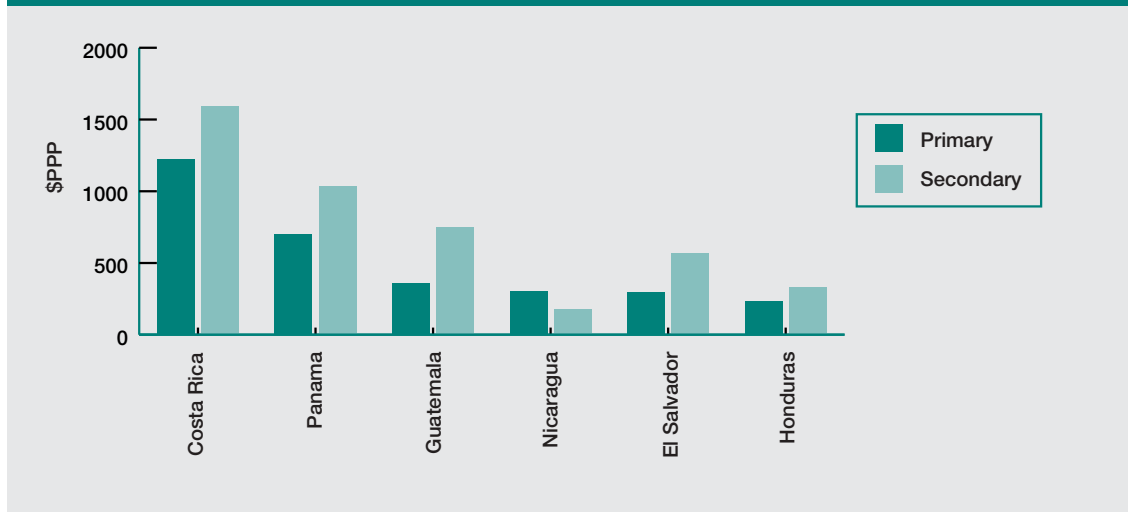
Public Spending Per Pupil by Educational Level (\$PPP),* 2000

*Purchasing power parity

Notes: Figure for Honduras from 1996, current public spending only. Figures for Nicaragua from 2003. Figure for primary in El Salvador is for primary and lower secondary (basic) education. Figure for Panama is current public spending only and does not include spending on infrastructure; pre-primary spending is included with primary.

Sources: *Informe de Progreso Educativo for Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama, 2002*. Costa Rica: PREAL calculations based on data from UNESCO online database May 2003, World Bank World Development Indicators 2003 and UNDP Human Development Report 2002. Nicaragua: PREAL calculations based on information on estimated budget and enrollment for 2003 from the Education Ministry, April 2003.

FIGURE 8.



BOX 2. The Private Sector: Participants in Educational Change

Falconbridge Foundation Program. Dominican Republic.

Since 1990, the Falconbridge Foundation, a private sector institution in the Dominican Republic has been operating a public school sponsorship program.

The program focuses on lowering dropout rates, reducing the number of over-age pupils and increasing students' academic performance by promoting the energetic involvement of school authorities, teachers, pupils and parents. It includes interventions to improve schools' infrastructure, enhance teacher performance, and strengthen community participation. The program has transformed teaching practices by promoting a more integrated approach to education and, overall, has led to a change of culture in the participating schools. UNESCO and, more recently, USAID, have given the program positive evaluations.

American Chamber of Commerce school sponsorship program. Nicaragua.

Under the coordination of the American Chamber of Commerce, private sector firms are sponsoring 43 public schools in Nicaragua. The schools receive resources for infrastructure and teaching materials.

Sister schools program. Panama.

Since 1998, through an agreement with the Education Ministry, the National Coalition of Private Educational Centers has undertaken a program to promote teamwork between private and public schools through intense interaction among all members of the education community. The program includes teacher training, methodological exchanges, support for school cafeterias, health programs, joint academic and recreational activities, and an interesting scholarship program.

Source: Interviews.

• The distribution of spending favors those with more resources

Most countries of the region spend much more per student on higher education than on pupils in primary and secondary schools. Honduras, for instance, spends seven times more on each student in higher education than on each primary pupil, and almost five times more than on secondary students. According to the figures for 1997 in *Lagging Behind*, Panama and Costa Rica spent about three times more per student in higher education than at the primary and secondary levels combined. In the Dominican Republic, by contrast, the ratio is 2:1. According to information from ministry of education officials, Nicaragua is the most extreme case: Spending per student in higher education is 15 times greater than that spent on primary school pupils. In El Salvador, the few resources available are spent more equitably. The ratio of spending per student in higher education to spending per primary and secondary school pupil combined is almost 1:1.

There is no ideal distribution or magic number, but current policy tends to benefit the more affluent, since few poor students enter institutions of higher education. Similarly, most financial resources tend to be spent in urban areas rather than in departments with greater needs. In Panama, for example, which

has one of Latin America's most inequitable income distributions, the share of subsidies for urban areas is higher than the proportion of the school-age population in those areas at all levels, except primary (Figure 9). Such inequalities in financing result in future inequalities in the ability of individuals and societies to generate income.

• Inefficiency wastes much of the limited funding devoted to education

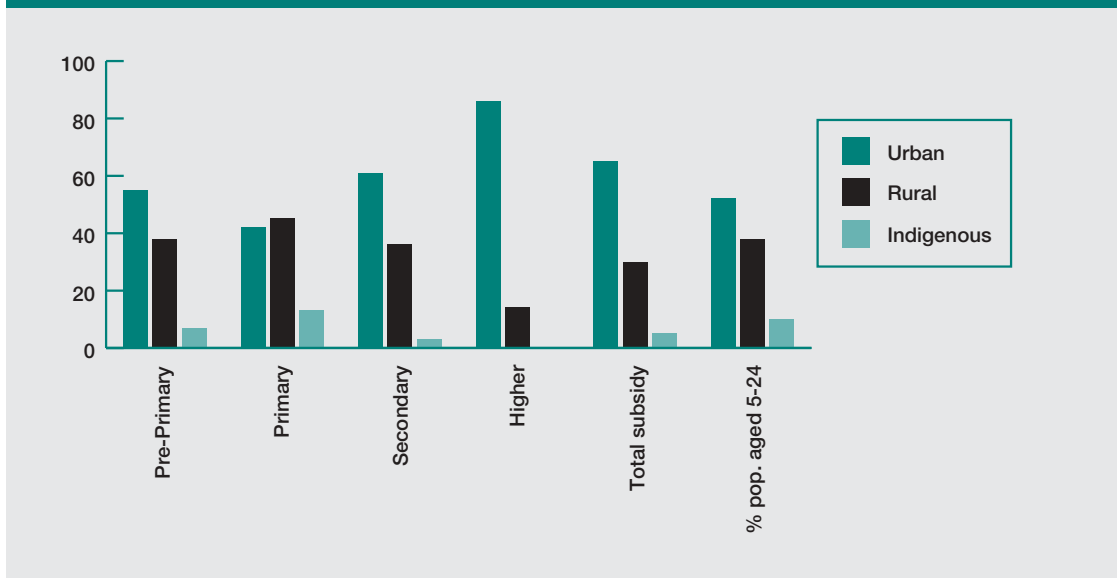
High repetition and dropout rates in most countries consume resources that could be used to expand coverage and enhance quality. In Honduras, for instance, 16% of the already meager budget was "lost" in 1996 on teaching children who were held back or dropped out. It takes a child in Nicaragua an average of ten years to graduate from primary school, and the situation is similar in other countries.

In addition, the lack of accountability systems and mechanisms to monitor the results of programs, makes it difficult to ensure that resources are allocated to the most important needs and that they are spent efficiently. The large state education bureaucracies have far too many employees and often are hobbled by low wages, politicization, a lack of accountability and insufficient training, with all the frustrating results of such circumstances.

Panama: Percentage of Subsidies by Geographic Area and Education Level, 1997

Source: CoSPA/E/PREAL. *El Reto Es Avanzar: Informe de Progreso Educativo*. Panama 2002.

FIGURE 9.



3. Revitalize the teaching profession by linking salaries to job performance, improving pre-service training, and promoting more and better in-service training programs.

Incentives and teacher training are inadequate = D

The quality of education depends to a large extent on the quality of teachers. Unfortunately, teachers in the region do not have adequate training or incentives, so classroom performance is deficient. To date, efforts have centered almost exclusively on pre-service and in-service teacher training. Salaries are not tied to performance, partly because of resistance from unions and other factors.

• Teachers lack incentives to improve their performance

The issue of teachers' salaries is complex and controversial. On the one hand, available studies show no direct link between wage increases and improved teacher performance. There are also indications that, taking teachers' real working time into account (excluding unworked hours and vacations), their salaries are equal to or higher than those of other workers with similar qualifications.

On the other hand, it is evident that current salary and incentives systems do not foster good practices. Public school teachers receive their monthly payments irrespective of their punctuality, their attendance, or whether pupils are learning. Their salaries increase according to seniority or as a result of union pressure. As yet there are no procedures to measure teachers' real performance. It is difficult to ask for accountability if the quality of teachers' work is unknown, and quality education cannot be guaranteed unless good teaching is promoted.

There have been some initiatives in the region to improve this situation by introducing teaching assessment systems and incentives for good performance (Box 3). Nonetheless, experience shows that designing and implementing effective incentives to secure better results remains problematic. Teachers' unions and many teachers oppose assessments, and there are no broadly accepted criteria to use in measuring good teaching (teaching standards). Experiments with offering monetary and non-monetary incentives for improved teacher performance have had mixed results. Additionally, there are virtually no examples of non-monetary incentives such as professional recognition ('teacher of the year', for example), scholarships, discounts on textbooks, or other ways to motivate better teaching and create a sense of professional worth.

Challenges include the following:

Teacher assessments can provoke strong opposition. In Costa Rica, for example, teacher resistance was behind a decision not to establish a pay-related performance-assessment system. In Honduras, the regulations on teachers' performance have not been applied because of opposition from teachers' unions, which went on strike for a long period during the school year. Dealing with such opposition requires strong political support and substantial financial resources, as well as teachers' participation in the process. Perhaps external institutions could also participate, offering a greater guarantee of objectivity and transparency in the assessments.

Unless they are well designed and implemented, financial incentives can become a general pay increase that does not account for differences in performance. Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic are good examples. Despite significant efforts to increase teachers' salaries in recent years, the assessment and incentives systems in these two countries are based on many factors that are not relevant to a teacher's work in the classroom (distance from the school, for example). The incentives do not work objectively and thus they benefit all teachers in a similar way. The system is so poorly designed that the incentive can be more than the basic wage.

Wage increases can be costly, especially if they are given to many teachers. In Guatemala, the process of teacher accreditation will create strong financial pressure to ensure that incentives are assigned in line with improved skills. The resources needed to finance the wage increases will amount to about \$140 million, which is twice the cost of training/accrediting all teachers.

There is no efficient process for removing teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory.

Although teachers have the right to an evaluation and should be given a chance to improve before being dismissed, parents and students have a right to expect that inefficient teachers will be replaced by others who can provide pupils with a quality education. Unfortunately, this rarely happens. The existing legal structures and the lack of objective assessment criteria make it extremely difficult to remove unsatisfactory teachers. As a first step, while consensus-based, transparent and objective assessment criteria are devised, the law should at least facilitate the dismissal of those teachers who have unacceptable and unjustified records of absenteeism or tardiness.

Strengthening the teaching profession by linking salaries to performance will require a change of attitude and practice on the part of teachers and the education community in general. Similarly, it will require that society reassess the value of teaching in ways that offer appreciation and rewards for a job well done. Rewarding performance and attracting good teachers will demand significant monetary and non-monetary incentives. Without them it will be impossible to change the present system, much less secure the necessary cooperation from teachers.

• **Teacher training is inadequate**

Efforts have been made in the region to increase the academic demands on beginning teachers and on working teachers who have not received a higher education degree.

Some examples of such efforts follow:

BOX 3. Incentives to Improve Teaching Performance in El Salvador

The Education Ministry engaged the services of the University of El Salvador to undertake an annual assessment of public education institutions based on a list of indicators defined by the ministry. Teachers in those schools that are evaluated positively receive a bonus worth a little over \$200, which is about half the average monthly salary. About 40% of schools received the *Estímulo a la Labor Educativa Institucional* in 2000 and 2001. The program has faced no significant teacher resistance and has provided momentum to the idea that it is appropriate to offer performance-related incentives.

Source: Centro Alfa/PREAL. *Informe de Progreso Educativo*, El Salvador, 2002.

Costa Rica. The Education Ministry, along with the University of Costa Rica, has developed pre-service teacher training programs intensively in recent years.

The Dominican Republic. There has been a concerted effort to train the country's uncertified teachers, who account for 30% of the total.

El Salvador. Since 1996 the law has required that all teachers be duly certified, irrespective of the educational level and sector in which they work (public or private). Certification requires proof of graduation from a higher education institution.

Panama. The teacher training college was restructured to convert it into a non-university higher learning institution, although the training does not go beyond the twelve years of schooling that generally constitute a complete secondary education.

Honduras. A process is under way to train primary teachers at the university level.

Notwithstanding the above, the substance and quality of pre-service and in-service teacher training is still beset by serious problems, including:

- The programs' curricula and methodologies place a great deal of emphasis on theory, foregoing practice in the classroom and training in specific subjects.
- Teacher trainers are not sufficiently skilled, and the programs generally lack uniform quality standards and are not monitored.
- In many countries, training is merely one more certificate used to get a raise and is unrelated to the needs of a specific school or teacher. Most teacher training colleges in Guatemala, for example, train primary school teachers for urban areas while the training of bilingual, intercultural teachers is deficient in a country with a substantial rural, indigenous population.

- Teacher training candidates are not of the highest quality, and neither are their skills upon graduation. Concerns about the quality of students and the graduates of education colleges have spurred Salvadorean authorities to set criteria for measuring the quality of those who enter and graduate from such institutions.

- Often, teachers do not apply what they learn to their work in the classroom. In Costa Rica, for instance, despite systematic efforts in the last eight years, student test results still reflect deficiencies among teachers, especially in dealing with the content and methodology of mathematics. In the Dominican Republic, the professionalization program that began in 1993 has benefited an estimated 10,000 teachers in the last ten years, but there is no evidence of the effect this effort has had on improving classroom practice. A 1997 study in El Salvador concluded that although teachers generated ideas and innovative curricular instruments during training, classroom practice was almost unchanged.

Aware of this deficit, practically all countries of the region have set up training programs (see **Box 4** for examples). These training models require detailed review if they are to be transformed into tools for increasing student learning. The review must consider how plans are designed, the quality of the trainees, monitoring, and the importance of applying what has been learned.

BOX 4. Improving Teacher Training

El Salvador

Since 2001 the ministry has implemented a new model of professional development, which assigns groups of schools to a team of more than 300 educational advisors. These advisors, selected in a rigorous assessment process, visit teachers in class and offer direct technical assistance (or facilitate the provision of such assistance) on subjects the teacher needs help with.

Guatemala

The professionalization of teachers in Guatemala is a basic objective of current government policy. The country has designed a plan to train teachers in two years, using a partial attendance system with 20 days of class per semester in addition to distance learning. In July 2002 about 63,000 teachers (75% of the total) were registered in the program throughout the country. As yet it is unclear how the program or its impact on teaching skills will be assessed. Moreover, there is the drawback of having teachers out of their classrooms for 40 school days a year.

Panama

The National System of Staff Development is a program of decentralized in-service training devised in 1999 by Panama's Education Ministry in conjunction with the Inter-American Development Bank. The program continued in 2000 but lacks mechanisms to monitor and assess its effects. In 2001/2002 a component to identify training needs was added. The results of this nationwide program are expected in 2002.

The Gabriel Lewis Galindo Foundation is also making strenuous efforts to train primary school teachers and to provide several schools with information technology/Internet centers through the private sector. This program now covers thousands of teachers.

Sources: Interviews and *Informes de Progreso Educativo* in El Salvador, Guatemala and Panama 2002.

4. Establish a common system of educational standards and performance assessment, and disseminate findings widely.

Standards have yet to become useful tools = C

To guide the actions of the education system and measure its impact, especially in schools, it is crucial to have a clear definition of what pupils are expected to learn (content standards), the different levels of achievement they are expected to attain (performance standards), and the technical, human and financial resources required to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to meet goals (school delivery standards). At a minimum, and in line with current practice in other countries, educational standards should be set in four academic areas: mathematics, language, science and social studies. The standards should be clear, demanding, coherent statements that are understood by everyone – not just experts in education.

At the end of the 1990s, the Central American Education and Cultural Committee (CECC) spearheaded an effort to establish regional and national standards for primary education in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and

Panama. That proposal was to be reviewed, debated and implemented by the participating countries. While some countries made progress in this process, others did not, or did so at the same time as curricular reforms and other teaching guidelines (not all of them mutually compatible) that were geared to other ends. Standards are still set by isolated technical teams, are not publicized enough and, consequently, are largely unknown to the education community and the public at large. Additionally, there is no clear and defined link between standards and achievement tests.

Steps taken in Nicaragua and El Salvador provide examples of the kind of progress that has been made:

In Nicaragua, on the basis of the work undertaken by CECC, the Education Ministry took the initiative to continue the effort and established standards in the four core subject areas. It also drew up an implementation strategy, which was introduced in all public schools at the beginning of 2001, and carried out a mass training program to inform teachers and the wider community about the standards.

In El Salvador there have been efforts to define standards since 2001. So far, with international technical assistance, standards have been established for elementary and high school education in four basic subjects. The standards were recently linked to some experimental school improvement programs and to the testing system, which is an urgent priority if there are to be medium- and long-term results.

Without standards or clear expectations that are publicly shared and accepted, it is very difficult to interpret the results of national assessments and to measure progress made on achievement. As a result the users and beneficiaries of the education system (parents and employers) cannot guarantee that children receive a relevant and high quality education, and schools cannot be held accountable for students' learning.

Assessment systems are being implemented = C

The good news is that every country in Central America and the Dominican Republic has administered at least one national test to measure student

achievement. The use of such tests is more institutionalized in countries such as Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. In other cases (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) these systems are being consolidated. Nicaragua and Panama are taking their first steps in this area (see **Box 5** for examples of progress in assessment).

In general, the region's assessment systems are adversely affected by their lack of technical and administrative sustainability, the lack of connections with other parts of the education system, the resource gap, and especially the scant use of the results. To date, test results do not seem to have had any great impact on decisions to improve the quality of education. Moreover, apart from the experience with UNESCO/ORLEAC's *Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación*, the results of which were discussed earlier, the region has taken part in virtually no international tests, leaving Central America without key information on student performance relative to other countries.

BOX 5. Progress in Assessment Systems

Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, universal achievement tests have been held regularly since the 1980s, creating a culture wherein assessment is accepted by teachers, students and parents. The tests are given annually in grades six, nine and eleven to determine which students will advance to the next grade, and the results by school, region and at the national level are published in the newspapers. The annual cost of designing, giving, processing and analyzing the tests is \$900,000, which is relatively low. However, authorities are concerned that while the tests provide feedback and educational quality control, they are not linked to curricular standards but to *ad hoc* test-prep study guides.

Honduras

The External Unit for Measuring Educational Quality (UMCE) was established by an agreement between the Education Secretariat and the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. Since 1997 it has systematically given achievement tests to sample groups of third and sixth grade primary school pupils. Revisions to the system are expected. It will be held every two years for sample groups at the end of each school cycle (grades three, six and nine). The results will be disseminated nationally, including to teachers and parents.

Guatemala

Achievement tests are administered by the National Program of School Performance Assessment (PRONERE), which has been in operation since 1997, and they are based on criteria developed in current programs of study. Recently they have begun to use the Central American standards created by the CECC project. Results have been released making it possible to make comparisons by socio-economic status and ethnic origin. The results have not been publicized extensively or systematically. Hence the general public does not have access to the information, and it is not used to plan for improvement in the teaching-learning process. Because of cuts in financing in 2001, sample size and coverage has had to be drastically reduced.

Sources: *Informes de Progreso Educativo* for Honduras and Guatemala, 2002. Costa Rica based on interviews.

For example, in the Dominican Republic most of those active in the education sector remain unaware of the information generated by the system of national tests as a whole (which are held to promote pupils into the next grade at various points in their school career), since they are interested only in their own pupils' results. Many specialists and teachers believe that the tests are divorced from efforts to revise the current curriculum. Since the tests are a significant component (30%) of students' final grades, and since they determine students' chances of continuing their studies in higher education, teachers feel obliged to continue using "old" programs of study. In Guatemala, the Education Ministry's financial support for tests is declining, which narrows the coverage and leaves the program dependent on funds from the World Bank. In Panama, the sample test of sixth-level elementary pupils in 2000 was plagued by technical deficiencies, including the selection of the sample, duration of the test and inadequate preparation of teachers administering it. In addition, the results of previous assessments have not been publicized and there are no tests at the secondary level. In Nicaragua, tests of a representative sample of third and sixth graders in math and language conducted in November 2002 are a promising first step, and need to be followed by widespread and well-targeted dissemination and use if the system is to play an important role in educational improvement.

Until these deficiencies are addressed, national assessment systems will not be able to respond to the key questions from teachers, legislators, parents and employers about how much and what children learn.

SPECIAL SECTION:

Technology in schools: promising steps

A matter of growing interest in the region that was not included in our 2000 report concerns the use of information and communication technologies in education systems and the impact they may have on the quality of teaching and learning. The UNDP's 2001 *Human Development Report* is forthright in its assertion that technology, creatively and responsibly used, can hasten change and help narrow gaps in countries with high poverty levels. With the exception of Costa Rica, the region's countries have little experience in this field. El Salvador has begun two significant projects for elementary and high school education with loans from the World Bank and the IDB. There are also new experiments in the Dominican Republic and substantial interest in the other countries.

Box 6 presents a review of progress in this field.

BOX 6. Using Information and Communication Technologies in Central American Education

Costa Rica

Founded 14 years ago, the Omar Dengo Foundation has a distinguished record of developing information technology learning programs for preschools and primary schools in poor, rural and remote areas. The program covers 287,182 public school students and 23,279 from private or subsidized schools (about 58% of total national enrollment) and has trained 15,000 teachers in information technology. It is based on the creative use of technology and the Logo environment to help children acquire the skills and knowledge to become programmers. The Foundation has received technical assistance from the Epistemology and Learning Group of the Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and particularly from Seymour Papert.

Dominican Republic

An information technology program in high schools now covers 300 throughout the country. Some 800 teachers have been trained in the use of computers and software. A pilot program of the teaching and curricular model for using technology is being developed in 20 high schools with the coordination and technical assistance of Israeli specialists.

A project financed by the private company AVE takes trucks equipped with virtual classrooms, Internet-connected computers, fax and copying machines, and generators to remote locations for the use of primary school pupils in the countryside. There are currently 90 such centers.

Honduras

The "Broadening Horizons" program, financed directly by the government through the Education Secretariat, seeks to install 15 computers in every school and to involve teachers directly in their use to support implementation of the curriculum. Some 260 centers have been established and parents are responsible for their security and maintenance.

El Salvador

The Education Ministry has designed a model of Learning Resource Centers (CRA). The aim is to set up such centers in public schools to ensure that computers and other forms of information technology help improve the quality of education. Initial coverage will be all high schools and, in a subsequent stage, 400 (of a total of 5,000) elementary schools. Estimated investment will be \$75 million to meet the targets set for the period 1999-2004. Activities are currently under way in 71 high schools, and plans have been drawn up to start work at the elementary level.

Panama

Several initiatives are being undertaken by the private sector and private schools. In 2001, the Education Ministry set up 27 information technology laboratories and there are 50 more in high schools.

The INFOPLAZAS program of the national secretariat for science and technology has had great success in promoting the use of communal technology in remote and poor urban communities.

Nicaragua

An information technology for education program, which receives advice from Costa Rica's Omar Dengo Foundation, has benefited 60 schools so far.

Guatemala

The goal of *Televisión Educativa (Telesecundaria)* is to support students living outside the capital who want to continue in elementary education. The program began in 1998 as a result of an agreement on distance learning between Mexico and Central America. The accord authorizes the Education Ministry to capture the signal sent by *Televisión Educativa* that transmits classes for each grade; to record, reproduce and distribute videocassettes that serve as starting points in each subject area; and to adapt, reproduce and distribute the respective texts. *Telesecundaria's* facilitators are trained and monitored monthly in "quality circles". Additionally, the schools receive books on basic concepts and learning guides, television sets, video recorders, videocassettes and teaching materials. In 2002 there were 403 such centers with 23,500 pupils.

Source: Interviews.

III. WE CAN WAIT NO LONGER

In the last decade a strong consensus has been forged in Central America and the Dominican Republic on the crucial importance of education for development. That heightened awareness has brought a greater sense of urgency about the need to improve the education system. The region must continue to take swift steps and creatively narrow the sharp disparities between countries, social classes and ethnic groups. The rest of the world is moving ahead, and the region can neither wait nor settle for moving slowly. We must prepare to leap forward, and we must expect and demand bold, broad and rapid reforms. Specifically, we must strengthen and speed up activities that support the four recommendations in *Tomorrow Is Too Late*:

Continue to promote decentralization, and demand extensive community involvement in running schools and in the education system.

Decentralization at the school level must become the norm throughout the education system and should not be confined to pilot projects or specific geographic areas. It is important that society and governments be aware that parent and community participation in the schools will help improve the delivery of education and is also an inalienable right that enhances democracy. Education ministries, backed by private or nongovernmental institutions, should offer technical support to ensure effective involvement. The use of education indicators will be a key consideration, as will be the transfer of financial resources to schools, with the corresponding tools of control and accountability.

Increase and reallocate government spending on education per pupil and address the serious inequities.

Resources should be allocated to meeting the access and quality needs of the poorest sectors. This requires reversing financing policies that favor higher education indiscriminately, and promoting the efficiency and accountability of all those involved in providing educational services.

Improve incentives for good teaching, and link new pay increases to the implementation of policies that recognize performance.

This entails hiring teachers in an open manner, assessing their performance, giving them incentives and opportunities to overcome their weaknesses and, finally, using mechanisms to dismiss those teachers whose performance – despite all the foregoing efforts – is clearly inadequate. Quality performance should determine job security. Priority should be given to strengthening teacher training colleges and training programs so as to attract the best teachers and ensure that they are paid well. At the same time, the impact of teacher training on practices in the classroom should be monitored. In multilingual and multicultural countries it is essential to train and hire bilingual and intercultural teachers.

Ensure that standards are linked to other elements of the education system and that they are of real use.

This requires wide dissemination of standards and agreement about them among teachers, pupils, parents and the others involved in education. It also requires monitoring progress toward the learning achievements included in those standards through tests and program assessments. The unification of regional criteria, such as those proposed by CECC, can add value in defining the educational targets that all countries should adopt.

Increase the use of national tests and take part in global tests.

The countries of the region need systematically applied national assessment systems that are linked to regional standards. It would be helpful to develop a Central American test, as well as to encourage countries to participate in worldwide tests and publicize the results.

It is time to act and act quickly. We must not squander the opportunities bestowed by the winds of reform that have swept through the region in recent years, nor allow the gap separating us from our neighbors to widen. It is both possible and necessary, using criteria of quality and equity, to continue to raise the education levels of the people of Central America and the Dominican Republic. We must use all available human and institutional resources, and all our creativity, boldness and solidarity, to confront the educational challenges that affect us all. Meeting those challenges demands the responsible participation of everyone (See **Box 7**).

BOX 7. Improving Education: A Shared Responsibility

Sector	Crucial support
Education Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase community participation in running schools and delegate the provision of services to specialized nongovernmental bodies. • Devise and apply regulatory frameworks that are simple, clear and widely accepted by all involved. • Develop educational standards and assessment systems. • Devote greater financial resources to education, especially at the preschool, elementary and high school levels, with emphasis on the poorest sectors. • Support initiatives that improve teachers' performance (pre-service and in-service training, hiring, incentives, performance assessment, canceling contracts).
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen participatory and democratic processes. • Develop school plans linked to results-oriented assessment systems. • Do what is needed to secure monetary or non-monetary resources from public and private sources at the local and national levels.
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claim the right to take part in running schools and make the most of existing opportunities for participation. • To the extent possible, help out with monetary and/or non-monetary resources. • Support children's school attendance and academic progress. • Monitor the performance of schools, teachers and principals. • Take part in developing the school's institutional plans.
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus responsibly on learning. • Participate in school organizations. • Voice opinions on the services received.
Universities, teacher training colleges and other specialized education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the development of high-quality teacher training programs. • Develop educational research. • Provide feedback to the education system about the quality of the pupils who leave that system.
Political parties and legislatures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the central goals of educational reform by supporting the necessary legislation. • Support increased investment in education with an emphasis on the preschool, elementary and high school levels and the poorest sectors.
Teachers' organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote quality teaching as a condition of job security. • Take part in developing systems that foster good teacher performance.
The media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicize information to heighten public interest and participation in issues related to improvement of education. • Develop ways to guide and support parents, teachers and students in educational processes. • Publicize the results of national tests.
Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand ways to participate in the formulation of education policies. • Lobby politicians and legislatures for educational reform and impress on them the need to invest more in basic education. • Take part in monitoring the progress of reform processes. • Finance innovative educational projects. • Promote the publication and exchange of ideas on successful projects that foster links between business and education.
International organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support national and regional reform efforts. • Support the development of regional projects. • Financially support reform processes and innovative experiences. • Promote the exchange of experience among countries. • Foster research and the publication of information on the progress of reform processes.

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Table A.1. - Basic Social and Economic Indicators, 2000

	Population (millions) 2001	Average annual growth rate of the population (%) 1980-2001	Population below the poverty line (%) (1) 1999	Population aged <15 (% of the total) 2001	Life expectancy at birth (years) 2001	Illiteracy (% of the population aged 15 and above) 2000	Average years of schooling (population aged >15) 2000	Per capita GNP (\$PPP) (2) 2001
Costa Rica	3.9	2.5	20.3	31.2	78	4	6.0	9,260
El Salvador	6.4	1.6	44.7	35.3	70	18	5.2	5,160
Guatemala	11.7	2.6	60.5	43.2	65	32	3.5	4,380
Honduras	6.6	2.9	79.7	41.4	66	20	4.8	2,760
Nicaragua	5.2	2.8	64.0	42.6	69	34	4.6	n.a.
Panama	2.9	1.9	30.2	30.9	75	8	8.6	5,440
Dominican Republic	8.5	1.9	37.2	33.0	67	16	4.9	6,650

(1) Percentage of people whose income is less than twice the cost of the basic basket of foodstuffs.

(2) Purchasing power parity (PPP).

Notes: Data on "population below the poverty line" in Guatemala and Nicaragua from 1998; in El Salvador from 2000. "Illiteracy" for Honduras is from 2001. "Per capita GNP" for Panama is estimated.

Sources: World Bank. *World Development Indicators* 2003. Tables 1.1, 2.1, 2.13 and 2.20. "Illiteracy" from UNDP, Human Development Report 2002, "Population below the poverty line" from ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America 2001-2002*, Table 14 in the annex. Indicators on the "population below the poverty line" and "illiteracy" in El Salvador from *Informe de Progreso Educativo*, El Salvador 2002. "Illiteracy" in Honduras from the National Census of Honduras, 2001.

Box A.1. - Report Card on Education in Latin America, 2001

Subject	Grade	Progress	Remarks
Test scores	D	↔	Scores on national and international exams are alarmingly low.
Enrollments	B	↑	Average levels of education remain below world patterns, despite high primary enrollments and a dramatic increase in pre-primary coverage.
Staying in School	C	↔	In many countries, between a quarter and a half of all students never make it to fifth grade. Even fewer graduate from high school.
Equity	F	↔	Quality education seldom reaches poor, rural, or indigenous children.
Standards	D	↔	Comprehensive national standards have not been established and implemented.
Assessment	C	↑	National testing systems are in place but are weak and underutilized.
Authority and Accountability at the School Level	C	↑	Decentralization is under way, but seldom extends all the way to schools.
Teaching Profession	D	↔	Teachers are poorly trained, poorly managed, and poorly paid. Superior teaching is seldom recognized, supported, or rewarded.
Investment in Primary and Secondary Education	C	↑	Spending (as % GNP) has increased, but public investment per pupil is low and is concentrated in higher education.
Grading Scale:	A B C D F	Excellent Good Average Poor Very Poor	↑ Improving ↔ No Change ↓ Declining

Source: Task Force on Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness in the Americas/PREAL. *Lagging Behind: A Report Card on Education in Latin America*, 2001.

Box A.2. - Report Card on Education in El Salvador, 2002

Subject	Grade	Progress	Remarks				
Test Scores	D	↔	National tests show that children and youths learn much less than expected in school. El Salvador still does not take part in international tests.				
Enrollment	C	↑	Enrollment has increased markedly but many children and youths are still not in school.				
Staying in School	D	↔	In addition to those who repeat years and are overage for their year, one of every four children fails to reach fifth grade.				
Equity	F	↑	There has been slight improvement among younger generations, but children from low-income families still receive less and a poorer quality education than their counterparts from more affluent families.				
Standards System	D	↔	The first steps have been taken to define standards but they are still dissociated from achievement tests and have not been used to design curricula. Moreover, they have not been disseminated in schools.				
Assessment System	B	↑	The administration of achievement tests and data collection have improved recently. A culture of assessment is developing in the education system.				
Responsibility and Accountability at the School Level	B	↑	El Salvador has taken steps to require more responsibility on the part of communities and schools in managing schools, especially in rural areas. Nonetheless, legal, institutional and attitudinal changes are still needed to foster school autonomy.				
Teaching Profession	D	↔	Despite the efforts made, there is still no indication of change among current teachers or higher quality among those graduating from training colleges.				
Investment in Elementary and Secondary Education	D	↑	Investment in education has increased but the resources are insufficient to enroll all children and the level of investment per pupil precludes quality education.				
Grading Scale	A	Excellent	(9-10)	↑	↔	↓	Improving
	B	Good	(7-8)				No Change
	C	Average	(5-6)				No Change
	D	Poor	(3-4)				No Change
	F	Very Poor	(1-2)				Declining

Source: Centro Alfa/PREAL. *Informe de Progreso Educativo*, El Salvador 2002.

CONTEXT

Box A.3. - Report Card on Education in Guatemala, 2002

Subject	Grade	Progress	Remarks
Coverage	C	↑	Despite an increase in primary coverage, few children attend preschools and only a quarter of the population has access to secondary school. Seven- to 12-year-olds have less than three years of schooling on average, under the minimum set by the peace agreements. The country is far from the nine years of mandatory schooling stipulated in the constitution.
Efficiency	D	↓	Dropout rates have increased at all levels, especially at the secondary level (basic and diversified). Primary school repetition rates have remained high. Fewer than three of every 10 children who start school complete sixth grade.
Quality	D	↔	The results of achievement tests for third and sixth graders in mathematics and reading are mediocre.
Equity	D	↑	The literacy target for 2002 established in the peace agreements has been met, but a third of Guatemalans can neither read nor write. This problem affects the most vulnerable sectors in particular; scarcely three of every 10 poor indigenous women in the rural areas are literate.
Standards and Assessment	D	↑	In 1999, the Education Ministry drew up educational standards for the primary level but these have not been implemented. There are no standards for the secondary level. Since 1997, third and sixth grade primary students have been tested through PRONERE. However, not all students take these tests, they are not supported financially by the ministry, and the results are not widely or systematically disseminated. The country does not take part in international tests.
Management and Accountability	F	↑	Decentralization to departmental offices, the creation of management units and the new model of educational self-management have improved the operational capacity of the Education Ministry. However, only 14% of resources are managed locally and have a system of accountability.
Improving Teaching	F	↑	Pre-service and in-service teacher training is deficient and wage increases are not related to professional performance. The academic programs of teacher training institutions have not been reformed.
Financing	C	↑	The education budget has increased and has met the target of 2.5% of GDP. However, investment is far below the Latin American average and only half is devoted to primary education. Almost a fifth goes to higher education.
Grading Scale:	A	Excellent (90-100)	↑ Improving ↔ No Change ↓ Declining
	B	Good (75-89)	
	C	Average (60-74)	
	D	Poor (30-59)	
	F	Very Poor (0-29)	

Source: CIEN/PREAL. *Informe de Progreso Educativo*, Guatemala 2002.

Box A.4. - Report Card on Education in Honduras, 2002

Subject	Grade	Progress	Remarks
Access and Coverage	B	↑	The increase in preschool enrollment and the relatively high primary enrollment rate are commendable, but a high percentage of the school-age population still lacks access to education.
Quality	D	↓	In national tests and those international tests in which the country has taken part, pupils scored only a little over half the level expected and are among the continent's lowest-scoring students.
Efficiency	C	↔	Repetition and dropout rates remain high and have fallen very little in the past decade. Less than half of pupils reach fifth grade without repeating a year and very few complete secondary and higher education.
Equity	D	↔	The gap between the sexes has almost disappeared, but the poor, those living in rural areas, and members of indigenous groups rarely receive a good quality education. The gaps, moreover, are not narrowing.
Standards and Assessment	C	↑	The country currently has basic performance levels that can be used as a basis for setting more developed standards for elementary schools. It also has an external unit to assess the quality of primary education, but it needs standards to evaluate teaching performance.
Autonomy and Accountability	C	↑	The school system remains highly centralized. There are no accountability mechanisms and community participation is limited to experimental cases.
Teaching Profession	D	↔	Salary incentives are still determined by teachers' bargaining capacity rather than by their performance. Changes to pre-service teacher training are needed and a structured system of in-service training should be put in place.
Public Spending	C	↑	Public spending on education (as a percentage of GDP) is comparable to that of developed countries, but spending per pupil is among the lowest in the continent. Moreover, spending has not been efficient and does not respond to equity issues between educational levels.
Grading Scale:	A B C D	Excellent Good Average Poor	↑ Improving ↔ No Change ↓ Declining

Source: FEREMA/PREAL. *Informe de Progreso Educativo*, Honduras 2002.

CONTEXT

Box A.5. - Report Card on Education in Panama, 2002

Subject	Grade	Progress	Remarks
Test Scores	D	↔	Most pupils in official schools cannot answer correctly more than 50% of the questions on national math and social studies exams, and the country does not take part in international tests.
Equity	F	↔	In general, poor and indigenous children receive between seven and nine years less schooling than their more affluent peers, and the education that they receive is of poor quality.
Access and Coverage	B	↑	Most Panamanian children have access to and complete primary school but almost half do not attend secondary school and few finish high school. Three-quarters of the poorest children lack access to pre-primary education. University coverage remains low for the poor and almost nonexistent for those from indigenous backgrounds.
Standards and Assessment	D	↔	Broadly agreed upon national standards of what children should know and be able to do have not been established or implemented. An assessment system to measure what children know has not been institutionalized. There are no standards on the resources needed to ensure quality education, and the country does not participate in international tests.
Autonomy and Accountability	D	↑	Decentralization processes have restarted but as yet there is no accountability to society.
Investment in Education	C	↑	Spending (as a percentage of GDP) has increased in the past decade but its distribution by educational levels remains inefficient and is not conducive to equity.
Teaching Profession	D	↔	The law on the teaching profession has not been developed. The assessment of teacher performance is bureaucratic, dissociated from promotion, and is not connected to pay increases.
Grading Scale:	A B C D F	Excellent Good Average Poor Very Poor	↑ Improving ↔ No Change ↓ Declining

Source: CoSPA/PREAL. *Informe de Progreso Educativo*, Panama 2002.

ILLITERACY

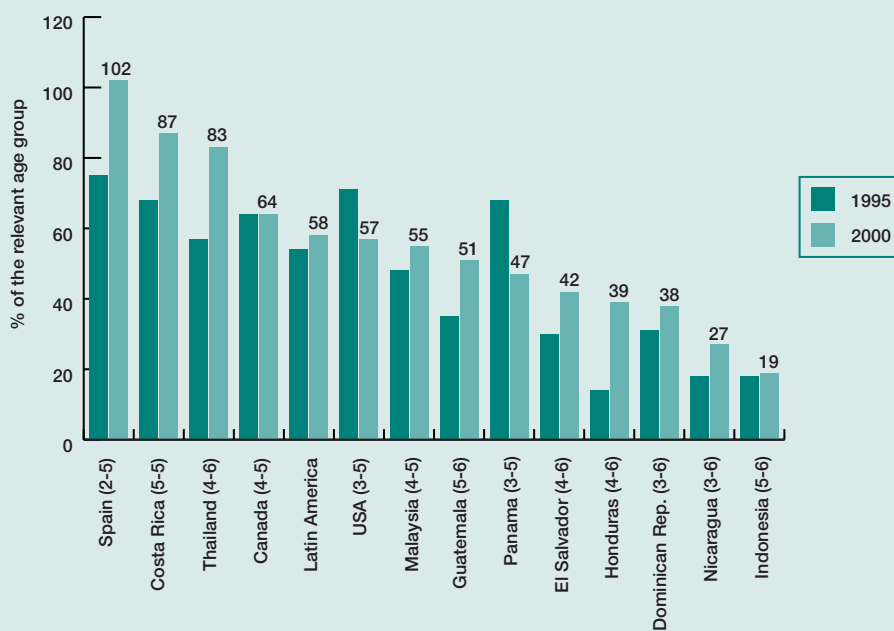
Figure A.1. - Illiteracy Rate (Population Aged 15 and Older), 1997 and 2000



Sources: UNDP, *Human Development Report* 1999, 2002. Figure for Honduras is from 2001 and taken from the National Census of Honduras, 2001.

ENROLLMENT

Figure A.2. - Pre-primary Gross Enrollment Rate, 1995 and 2000

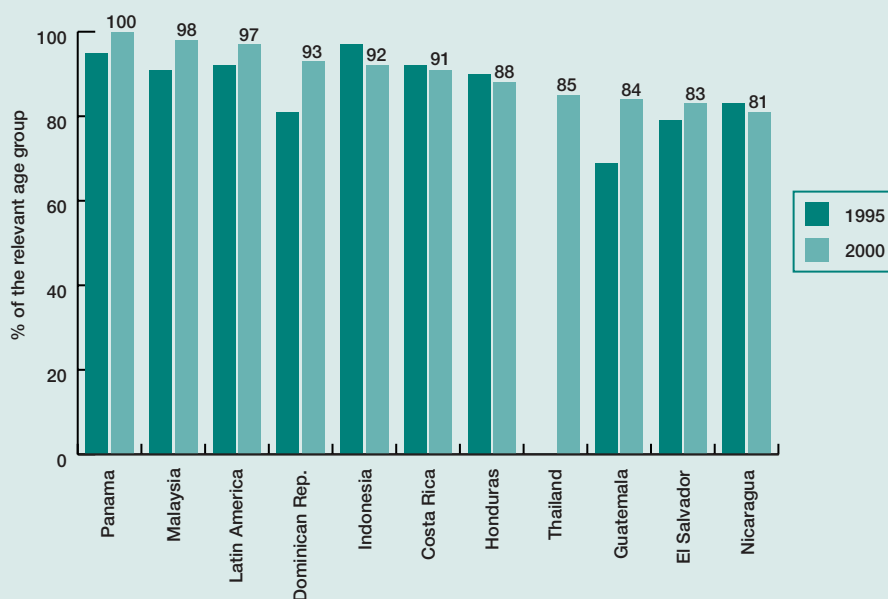


Notes: Pre-primary ages in brackets. For Panama, the age range in 1995 is 5-5 but for 1998-2000 it is 3-5, which might partly explain the dramatic decline. Data for Honduras, Canada and USA from 1999, Malaysia from 1998. Rates above 100% reflect the enrollment of children above or below the official preschool age.

Sources: World Bank, *World Development Indicators* 1999-2003, UNESCO online database, April 2003. El Salvador data from Centro Alfa/PREAL, *Informe de Progreso Educativo*, El Salvador 2002. Figure for Honduras in 1999 based on data from the Statistics Department of the Education Ministry of Honduras. 1995 regional figure from UNESCO *World Education Report* 2000.

ENROLLMENT

Figure A.3. - Primary Net Enrollment Rate, 1995 and 2000



Note: All data are for the year closest to that listed, with no more than a two-year difference.

Sources: UNESCO online database, April 2003, Regional: World Bank, *World Development Indicators* 2003 and World Bank online database. 2000 El Salvador data from Centro Alfa/PREAL, *Informe de Progreso Educativo*, El Salvador 2002. Country data for 1995 from Task Force on Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness in the Americas/PREAL, *Lagging Behind*, 2001.

Table A.2. - Tertiary Gross Enrollment Rate, 1995 and 2000

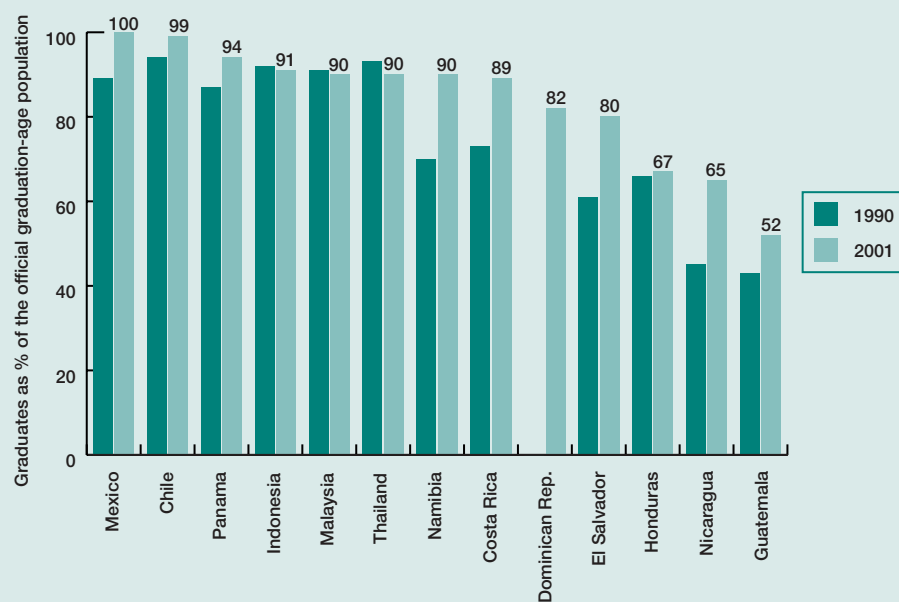
	1995	2000
USA	81	73
Canada	88	60
Spain	48	59
Panama	30	31
Thailand	20	35
Malaysia	12	28
Dominican Republic	22	23
Latin America and the Caribbean	18	22
El Salvador	19	17
Costa Rica	31	16
Honduras	11	15
Indonesia	11	15
Nicaragua	11	12
Guatemala	8	8

Note: Figures for 2000 are for the most recent year from 1997 to 2000.

Sources: World Bank, online database of the *World Development Indicators*, May 2003. 2000 figures for El Salvador and Panama from the *Informes de Progreso Educativo* for El Salvador and Panama, 2002.

COMPLETION

Figure A.4. - Primary Completion Rate, 1990 and 2001



Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators* 2003.

Table A.3. - Percentage of the Cohort Reaching Fifth Grade, 1999

	Men	Women
Costa Rica	77	84
El Salvador	69	72
Guatemala	52	47
Honduras	n.a.	n.a.
Indonesia	92	102
Nicaragua	45	53
Panama	92	92
Dominican Republic	71	79
Thailand	96	99

Notes: Percentage of pupils enrolled in first grade of primary school who reach fifth grade. Guatemala data from 1997.

Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, 2003, 2002. Table 2.13.

Table A.4. - Population Aged 25-59 with 13 or More Years of Schooling, 1995 and 2000

	1995		2000	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Costa Rica	21.5	5.3	22.6	7.0
El Salvador	14.3	0.9	17.8	1.5
Guatemala	n.a.	n.a.	10.2	0.5
Honduras	8.5	0.5	11.0	0.9
Nicaragua	8.7	1.1	14.4	3.4
Panama	22.3	6.9	25.4	8.3
Dominican Republic	15.6	2.7	21.1	4.3

Note: All data are for the year closest to that cited, with no more than a two-year difference.

Source: ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America* 2001-2002. Statistical annex.

ACHIEVEMENT

Table A.5. - Student Achievement on National Reading and Math Tests, 1997-2000

Country	Year	Level	Size	Subject	Scale	National Average
Guatemala	2000	6th primary	Sample	Reading	0-100	61
				Mathematics	0-100	49
Honduras	1997	3rd primary	Sample	Spanish	0-100	40
				Mathematics	0-100	36
El Salvador*	1998	6th primary	Sample	Language	0-10	2.7
				Mathematics	0-10	1.6
	2000	2nd secondary	Universal	Language	0-10	5.2
				Mathematics	0-10	5.0
Panama	2000	6th primary	Sample	Spanish	0-100	57
				Mathematics	0-100	48

Notes: Results for Guatemala are average scores. Honduran data are percentage of correct answers. Salvadorean data are the average number of objectives met. Panamanian data are average "percentage mastery".

Sources: *Informes de Progreso Educativo* for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, 2002. Panama from *Resultados Generales de la Prueba Diagnostica Nacional de Octubre de 2000*. PRODE. Proyecto de desarrollo educativo, ME-IDB, 2001.

Table A.6. - Median Scores on the First International Comparative Study (UNESCO/OREALC), by Location, 1998

Third Grade Language					Fourth Grade Language				
	Country Median	Megacity	Urban	Rural		Country Median	Megacity	Urban	Rural
Cuba	343	346	347	333	Cuba	349	358	347	335
Argentina	263	278	263	244	Chile	286	283	292	264
Chile	259	257	265	233	Argentina	282	296	283	259
Brazil	256	264	256	237	Brazil	277	286	277	265
Venezuela	242	250	241	241	Colombia	265	276	261	258
Colombia	238	258	228	234	Mexico	252	272	260	243
Bolivia	232	246	242	217	Paraguay	251	n/a	265	243
Paraguay	229	n/a	240	222	Venezuela	249	261	248	247
Mexico	224	242	230	216	Peru	240	257	252	222
Peru	222	250	224	207	Honduras	238	257	249	227
Dominican Republic	220	246	212	217	Bolivia	233	246	237	223
Honduras	216	232	224	209	Dominican Republic	232	257	228	227
Costa Rica	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	Costa Rica	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r

Third Grade Math					Fourth Grade Math				
	Country Median	Megacity	Urban	Rural		Country Median	Megacity	Urban	Rural
Cuba	351	351	354	345	Cuba	353	358	353	341
Argentina	251	271	251	235	Argentina	269	292	269	253
Brazil	247	253	247	228	Brazil	269	273	269	257
Chile	242	240	245	227	Chile	265	263	268	246
Bolivia	240	245	245	233	Colombia	258	262	252	263
Colombia	240	242	235	245	Mexico	256	269	261	249
Mexico	236	251	238	231	Paraguay	248	n/a	256	243
Paraguay	232	n/a	237	229	Bolivia	245	249	248	239
Dominican Republic	225	234	222	222	Dominican Republic	234	246	231	232
Venezuela	220	227	219	215	Honduras	231	242	239	225
Honduras	218	229	230	212	Peru	229	240	235	220
Peru	215	221	220	205	Venezuela	226	226	226	224
Costa Rica	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	Costa Rica	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r

Data represent country medians, standardized to a regional mean of 250, by country and location in megacity, urban, or rural area. Megacity=population of 1 million or more Urban=population less than 1 million but greater than 250,000 Rural=population less than 250,000 n/r= data not reported

Source: Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación, 1998, 2000.

EQUITY – URBAN-RURAL DIFFERENCES
Table A.7. - Percentage of the Population Aged 15 to 24, by Years of Schooling and Area of Residence, 1990 and 2000

	URBAN AREAS				RURAL AREAS			
	0 to 5	6 to 9	10 to 12	13 & above	0 to 5	6 to 9	10 to 11	13 & above
Costa Rica								
1990	9.1	50.1	29.8	10.9	20.0	64.5	13.6	2.0
2000	8.2	53.5	28.6	9.8	18.2	63.6	14.4	3.7
El Salvador								
1995	20.6	41.4	28.8	9.2	60.4	31.2	7.3	1.1
2000	14.6	39.7	31.7	14.1	46.4	40.5	11.3	1.9
Guatemala								
1989	33.9	42.6	19.2	4.3	75.9	21.8	2.1	0.2
1998	25.3	43.5	24.3	6.9	67.3	29.1	3.4	0.2
Honduras								
1990	24.1	55.7	15.3	5.0	57.6	39.8	2.3	0.3
1999	16.3	57.7	19.9	6.2	45.5	49.1	5.2	0.3
Nicaragua								
1993	24.6	53.8	19.5	2.1	68.9	26.5	4.3	0.3
1998	21.7	50.5	22.2	5.5	61.2	32.6	5.3	0.9
Panama								
1991	6.3	42.7	39.5	11.5	15.6	57.3	23.6	3.5
1999	3.9	40.8	39.1	16.2	12.9	55.4	26.3	5.4
Dominican Republic								
1997	20.2	39.7	29.7	10.4	41.2	39.6	17.1	2.1
2000	13.1	35.5	37.1	14.3	37.4	38.7	20.4	3.5

Source: ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America 2001-2002*. Statistical annex.

Table A.8. - Percentage of the Population Aged 25 to 59, by Years of Schooling and Area of Residence, 1990 and 2000

	URBAN AREAS				RURAL AREAS			
	0 to 5	6 to 9	10 to 12	13 & above	0 to 5	6 to 9	10 to 11	13 & above
Costa Rica								
1990	16.7	40.5	22.1	20.7	40.0	44.8	10.6	4.5
2000	13.6	43.2	20.6	22.6	29.2	53.2	10.6	7.0
El Salvador								
1995	35.8	30.2	19.7	14.3	80.2	16.3	2.6	0.9
2000	29.5	30.9	21.8	17.8	74.2	20.2	4.1	1.5
Guatemala								
1989	51.5	26.6	13.8	8.1	90.7	7.3	1.5	0.5
1998	42.4	29.9	17.5	10.2	87.1	10.2	2.3	0.5
Honduras								
1990	42.7	31.0	18.2	8.1	81.4	15.9	2.5	0.2
1999	31.4	36.6	21.0	11.0	69.3	24.8	5.0	0.9
Nicaragua								
1993	41.4	34.1	15.9	8.7	81.7	15.0	2.1	1.1
1998	36.5	35.2	14.0	14.4	75.9	16.6	4.1	3.4
Panama								
1991	13.8	39.6	25.1	21.6	37.6	43.9	12.3	6.1
1999	8.0	38.7	27.8	25.4	27.2	48.4	16.1	8.3
Dominican Republic								
1997	32.0	26.9	25.5	15.6	62.1	25.2	9.9	2.7
2000	26.4	29.0	23.5	21.1	58.6	26.6	10.4	4.3

Source: ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America 2001-2002*. Statistical annex.

EQUITY – URBAN-RURAL DIFFERENCES

Table A.9. - Average Years of Schooling, by Age Group and Area of Residence, 1990 and 2000

	URBAN AREAS		RURAL AREAS	
	15-24	25-59	15-24	25-59
Costa Rica				
1990	9.1	9.6	6.9	6.3
2000	8.6	9.1	7.0	6.4
El Salvador				
1997	8.8	7.9	5.2	2.9
2000	9.1	8.3	5.7	3.3
Guatemala				
1989	6.7	5.6	2.9	1.5
1998	7.5	6.5	3.6	1.9
Honduras				
1990	7.0	6.4	4.1	2.5
1999	7.6	7.3	4.9	3.5
Nicaragua				
1993	7.0	6.4	3.6	2.4
1998	7.5	7.0	4.2	3.2
Panama				
1991	9.6	9.6	7.6	6.1
1999	10.0	10.4	8.0	7.1
Dominican Republic				
1997	8.4	8.2	6.3	4.7
2000	9.4	8.9	6.7	5.1

Source: ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America 2001-2002*. Statistical annex.

EQUITY – DIFFERENCES BY INCOME LEVEL

Table A.10. - Years of Schooling of the Population Aged 25 to 59, by Income Level, 1996-1997

	Year	URBAN AREAS				RURAL AREAS			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Brazil	1996	3.9	5.4	7.1	10.3	1.7	2.5	3.2	5.4
Colombia	1997	6.1	7.3	9.0	11.9	3.3	4.0	4.3	6.5
Costa Rica	1997	7.3	7.9	9.6	12.2	5.1	5.7	6.3	8.1
Chile	1996	8.2	9.5	10.8	13.1	5.5	6.1	6.2	7.7
El Salvador	1997	4.6	6.5	8.4	11.9	2.0	2.4	3.0	4.3
Honduras	1997	4.6	6.1	7.5	10.5	2.4	2.7	3.4	5.3
Nicaragua	1997	6.0	6.9	8.0	11.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Panama	1997	7.5	8.8	11.0	13.6	5.0	5.8	7.0	9.6
Paraguay	1996	6.2	7.6	9.4	12.1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Dominican Republic	1997	6.4	7.4	8.5	10.4	3.3	4.4	5.0	6.1
Uruguay	1997	6.9	8.2	9.5	11.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Venezuela	1997	6.3	7.5	8.5	10.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Note: Q1= 25% of the population with the lowest income; Q4=25% of the population with the highest income.

Source: ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America 1998*, p. 294. Taken from Fernando Reimers, "Políticas compensatorias de discriminación positiva y justicia social del siglo XX en América Latina," *Revista La Educación* # 132-133, OAS, Washington, D.C., 1999.

EQUITY – DIFFERENCES BY INCOME LEVEL

Table A.11. - School Attendance in Urban Areas, by Income Level and Age Group, 1999
(% of the population of the same age that attends school)

	1st QUINTILE			5th QUINTILE		
	7-12	13-19	20-24	7-12	13-19	20-24
Costa Rica	98.6	65.2	20.7	100.0	91.9	57.4
El Salvador	87.8	64.1	12.2	99.2	86.2	50.4
Guatemala	83.2	43.6	5.4	98.2	86.6	48.2
Honduras	86.5	47.8	9.1	97.5	86.3	42.7
Nicaragua	84.9	57.9	12.5	95.8	81.9	36.8
Panama	96.8	67.8	14.8	100.0	92.1	58.1
Dominican Republic	74.2	61.6	22.1	93.2	79.3	52.3

Note: Household income is ordered by quintiles according to each household's per capita income. The poorest households are in the first quintile and the wealthiest are in the fifth quintile.

Source: ECLAC, *Anuario estadístico* 2002, Table 40.

EQUITY – DIFFERENCES BY ETHNIC ORIGIN

Table A.12. - Guatemala: School Attendance, by Ethnic Origin and Age Group, 1989 and 2000
(% of the relevant age group)

Age group	1989		2000	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
7 – 12 (primary)	59.6	80.0	71.3	83.6
13 – 15 years (elementary)	28.7	51.4	49.3	60.7
16 – 18 years (diversified)	6.8	26.3	24.1	38.4
19 – 24 years (university)	1.5	5.6	8.8	19.6

Source: CIEN/PREAL. *Informe de progreso educativo*, Guatemala 2002.

EQUITY – GENDER DIFFERENCES

Table A.13. - Percentage of Illiterate Individuals Aged 15 to 24, by Gender, 1990 and 2001

	1990		2001	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Costa Rica	3	2	2	1
El Salvador	15	17	11	12
Guatemala	20	34	14	27
Honduras	22	19	16	13
Nicaragua	32	31	29	27
Panama	4	5	3	4
Dominican Republic	13	12	9	8
Latin America and the Caribbean	7	7	5	5

Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators* 2003, Table 2.14.

Table A.14. - Percentage of Illiterate Individuals Aged 15 and Over, by Gender, 1990 and 2001

	1990		2001	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Costa Rica	6	6	4	4
El Salvador	24	31	18	23
Guatemala	31	47	23	38
Honduras	31	33	25	24
Nicaragua	37	37	33	33
Panama	10	12	7	9
Dominican Republic	20	21	16	16
Latin America and the Caribbean	13	17	10	12

Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators* 2003, Table 2.14.

EQUITY – GENDER DIFFERENCES

Table A.15. - Primary Net Enrollment Rate, by Gender, 2000

Country	Men	Women
Costa Rica	91	91
El Salvador	75	87
Guatemala	86	82
Honduras	87	88
Nicaragua	80	81
Panama	100	100
Dominican Republic	92	93

Note: Data are for the year closest to that cited, with no more than a two-year difference.

Source: UNESCO, online database, May 2003.

Table A.16. - Secondary Net Enrollment Rate, by Gender, 2000

Country	Men	Women
Costa Rica	47	52
El Salvador	40	40
Guatemala	27	25
Honduras	n.a.	n.a.
Nicaragua	33	38
Panama	59	65
Dominican Republic	35	45

Note: Data are for the year closest to that cited, with no more than a two-year difference.

Source: UNESCO, online database, May 2003.

Table A.17. - Average Years of Schooling of Those Aged 25 to 59, by Gender and Area of Residence, 1990 and 2000

	Year	Urban		Rural	
		M	F	M	F
Costa Rica	1990	10.0	9.3	6.6	6.0
	2000	9.1	9.0	6.4	6.3
El Salvador	1997	8.7	7.4	3.3	2.6
	2000	8.9	7.8	3.7	2.9
Guatemala	1989	6.4	4.9	1.9	1.1
	1998	7.2	5.8	2.4	1.4
Honduras	1990	6.8	6.1	2.6	2.4
	1998	7.6	7.1	3.5	3.6
Nicaragua	1993	6.8	6.0	2.4	2.3
	1998	7.4	6.6	3.2	3.2
Panama	1991	9.6	9.7	6.1	6.2
	1999	10.4	10.5	6.9	7.2
Dominican Republic	1997	8.2	8.2	4.8	4.6
	2000	8.9	8.9	5.2	5.0

Source: ECLAC, Social Panorama of Latin America, 2001-2002.

FINANCE

Table A.18. - Spending on Education as a Percentage of Total Public Spending, 1990 and 2000

	1990	2000
Malaysia	18.3	26.7
El Salvador	16.6	19.3
Panama	20.9	16.3
Dominican Republic	8.9	15.7
Nicaragua	n.a.	13.8
Latin America and the Caribbean	n.a.	12.4
Guatemala	11.8	11.4
Spain	9.4	11.3
Costa Rica	20.8	n.a.
Honduras	n.a.	n.a.

Note: All data are for the year closest to that cited, with no more than a two-year difference.

Sources: World Bank, *World Development Indicators* 2003; Centro Alfa/PREAL, *Informe de Progreso Educativo*, El Salvador 2002; UNESCO *Educational Panorama of the Americas*, 2002. 1990 data from UNESCO *World Education Report* 2000.

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