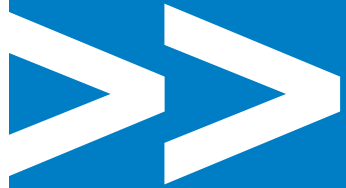


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Number 3, August 2006

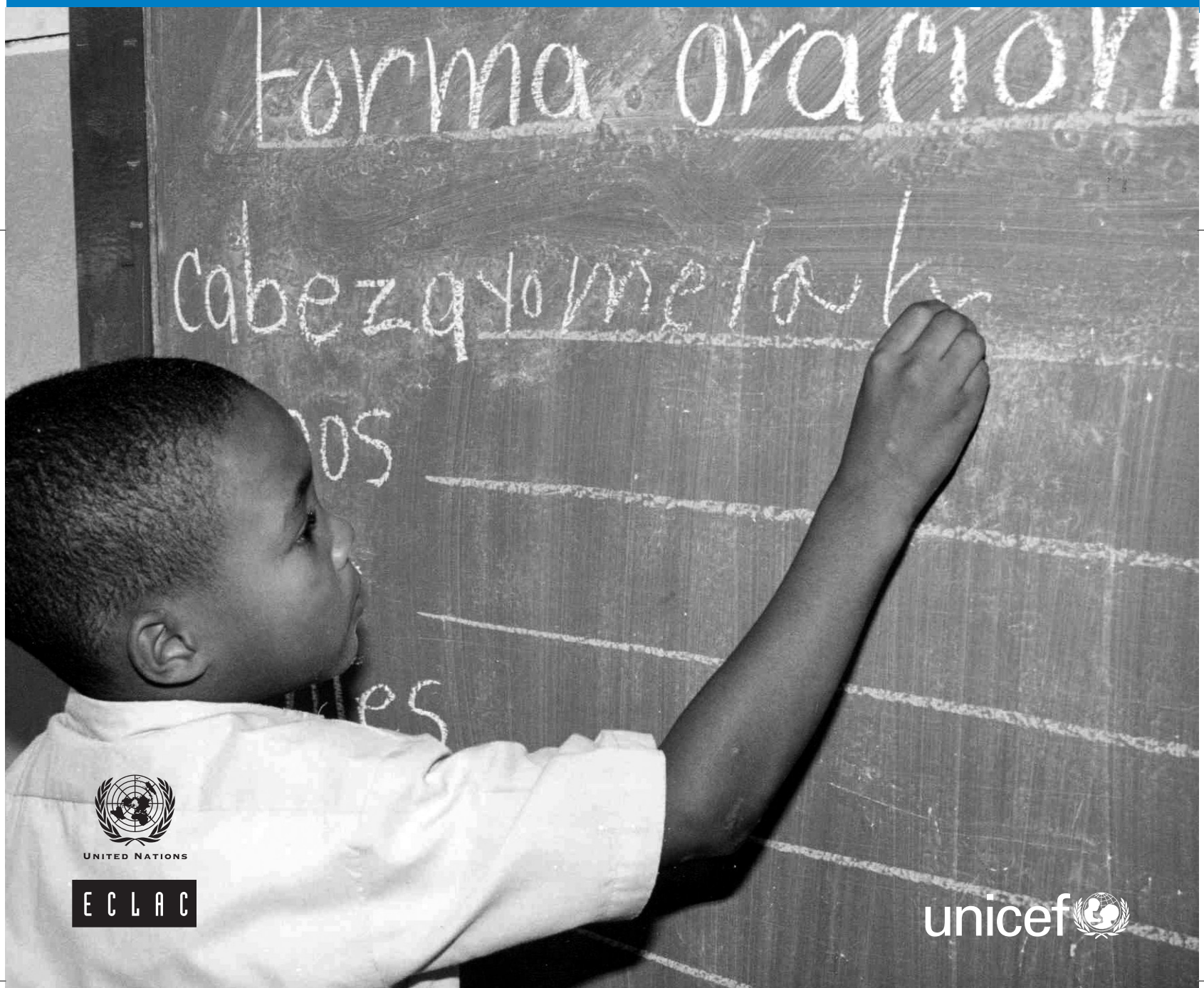
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Newsletter on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals from a child rights perspective



The right to education

An unfinished task for
Latin America and the Caribbean



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The right to education

Our newsletter once again takes on the challenges set forth by the Millennium Declaration and the human rights approach embedded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this issue, we will examine the right of children and adolescents to education.

Education is crucial for overcoming poverty, equalizing work opportunities, and promoting greater gender equality and the well-being of new generations. It also provides the foundation for creating future human resources. Indeed, from a rights-based approach, education plays a key role in nurturing fair treatment and respect towards others, thus reinforcing democratic principles.

But these positive outcomes do not come about automatically. As the lead article argues, factors such as socio-economic status, rural-urban location, and ethnicity create considerable gaps in terms of access and educational attainment. These gaps are later reproduced in the quality of employment, well-being and the development of skills for modern life. At the same time, the education of girls does not necessarily lead to better jobs, equal salaries or greater autonomy.

There are also serious difficulties in terms of the quality of education, fuelled by the poor environmental and learning conditions of schools and the situation of teachers, who are often ill-paid and ill-prepared. While there has been some progress in terms of respect for children's rights in the classroom, gender equality and intercultural education, the testimonies of teachers show that there is still a long way to go in order to overcome all forms of discrimination and authoritarian practices.

This situation reinforces the need to renew efforts towards educational reform. In the "Learning from Experience" section, we highlight a range of programmes that seek to improve the quality and equity of education by ensuring that low-income students remain in the educational system, promoting cultural diversity, and democratizing access to new technologies.

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Recent events

>> Second Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Committee of the Regional Educational Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC).

Planned by UNESCO for 11-13 May, this meeting will facilitate debate about the orientation and quality of education, especially educational curriculum design, with an eye towards the next PRELAC meeting of ministers of education in 2007.

<http://www.unesco.cl/ing/sprensa/noticias/196.act?menu=/esp/>

>> Expert Meeting: "Towards a broader framework of analysis of education in the context of the Millennium Development Goals."

Organized by CEPAL, 3-4 August, with the participation of UNESCO / OREALC, this meeting focused on expanding the goal of achieving universal primary education.

<http://www.eclac.cl/id.asp?id=26284>

>> Working meeting on the identification of tools and mechanisms of cooperation for the inclusion of disaster risk management in the educational sector of Latin America

14-16 June, Panama. Organized by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and UNICEF, with the aim of making progress in including disaster prevention issues in the educational sector with an emphasis on the primary level.

<http://www.eird.org/index-eng.htm>

>> Meeting of the World Follow-up Team to the Educational Agreements on Education for All (EFA).

In May, the team in Paris confirmed that Report EFA 2007 will focus on treatment and education at the primary level, Goal No. 1 of the six goals set at the World Forum on Education (Dakar, 2000).

http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/gmr2006_download/ECCE_outline_es.pdf

http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global_co/working_group/index.shtml

Key Documents



>> UNESCO, Institute for Statistics / UNICEF, 2005.

"Children Out of School: Measuring Exclusion from Primary Education"

http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev_en.php?ID=6427_201&D2=DO_TOPIC



>> Chile, Presidential Advisory Council for the Reform of Policies for Children, 2006

Final Report.

<http://www.consejoinfancia.cl>



>> UNICEF, ADEA and UNESCO, 2005.

Planning Policies for Early Childhood Development: Guidelines for Action (Emily Vargas-Barón)

http://www.redprimerainfancia.org/aa/img_upload/0b212a7b71568a8d8c75d183a7feab2e/Planning_policies.pdf

Commitment to education

>> Student protests in Chile

Between April and June 2006, high school students in Chile staged tumultuous protests, demanding the withdrawal of the Education Law on the grounds that it allows profiteering in the education sector and leads to increased inequality. Protesters also demanded the elimination of fees for university admission tests and school transport services.

María Jesús Sanhueza, spokesperson for the Students' Coordination Assembly, stated: "... we want the Education Law to be properly regulated by the constitution... so as to better ensure the quality of education. Access to education should be guaranteed to all citizens and this must be regarded as a duty of the state. The Chilean educational system is plagued by abysmal inequalities. Students of municipal high schools display educational outcomes that are vastly inferior to those of private school students."

The protest achieved, among other things, the creation of a Commission on Education that includes the participation of student leaders and proposes reforms to the educational system.



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>> Children and Adolescent Consultations on the Education System in Belize

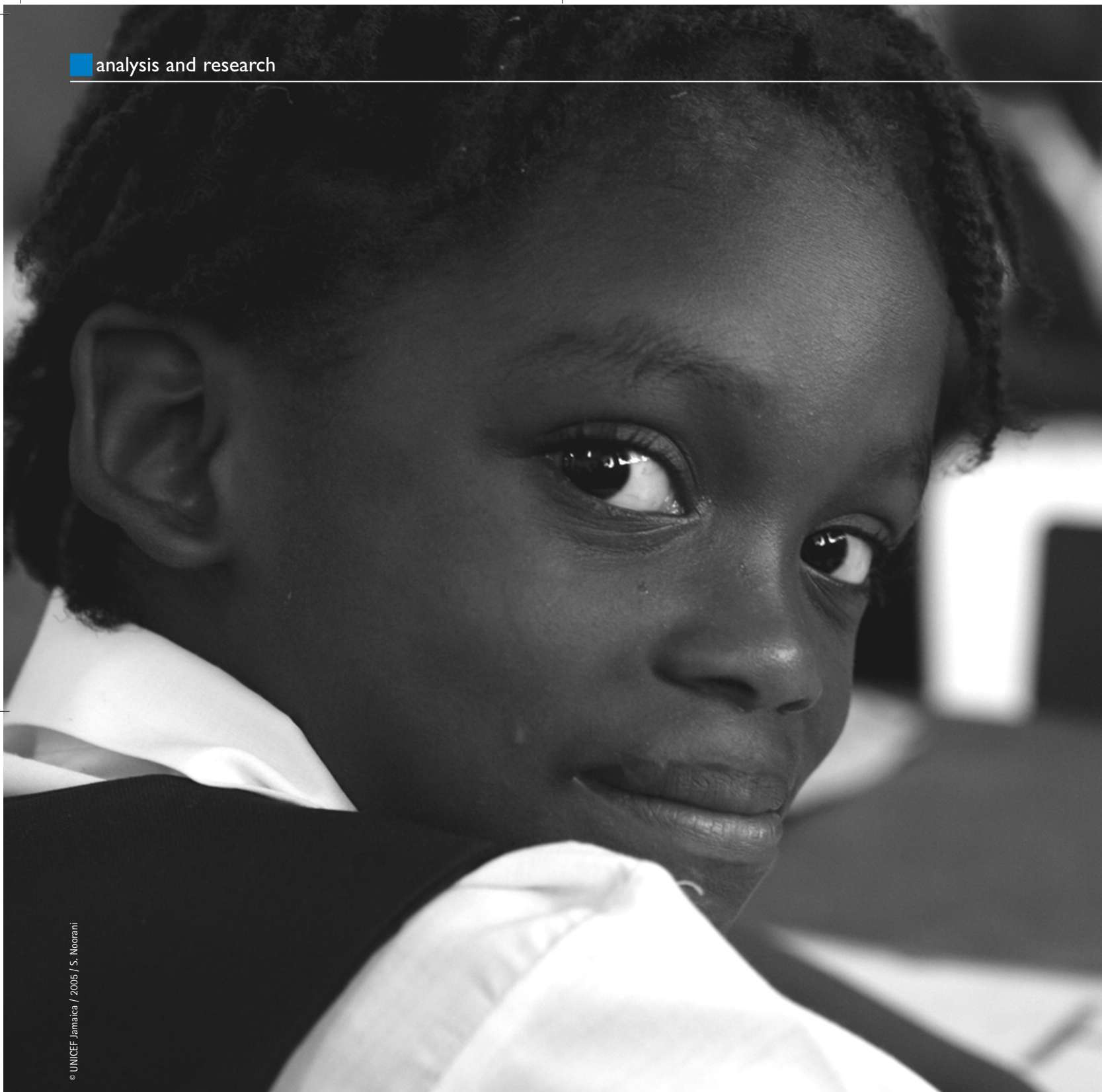
In April of 2005, a national consultation was conducted in Belize with the support of the National Committee for Families and Children and UNICEF. Through this activity, 175 children and adolescents exercised their right to participate and voice their opinions on three key aspects of the educational system: access, investment and quality/relevance of education. Among other objectives, they proposed the following:

- Increase the number of schools that have special education programmes and itinerant teachers
- Promote fundraising in the private and public sectors to support the maintenance of schools, creation of libraries and provision of scholarships; and
- Ensure that principals are qualified in school management and that teachers receive training in innovative teaching methods .

These recommendations form part of the 10 year Plan of Action for improving the quality of education.



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The right to education

An unfinished task for Latin America and the Caribbean

Pablo Villatoro, Consultant and Martín Hopenhayn, Social Affairs Officer,
Social Development Division of ECLAC

The right to relevant, quality and education is an essential condition for overcoming poverty and advancing towards greater equality of opportunities

I. Introduction

The right to education is enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as in the principles and goals of the main international rights conventions and summits. It establishes that all children and adolescents are entitled to free, quality education, with the State bearing full responsibility for guaranteeing it throughout the life cycle. There are three main components to the right to education: access to education, the right to receiving quality education and the right to fair treatment in schools. Using these three aspects as a base, the present article provides an overview of the effective fulfilment of the right to education for all children in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The right to relevant, quality education is an essential condition for overcoming poverty and advancing towards greater equality of opportunities. Increasing educational attainment, among the poorest sectors and reducing existing gender gaps would facilitate social mobility, increase incomes, improve the overall quality of human resources and promote full citizenship in a democratic context.

II. Access to education

States are responsible for guaranteeing access to school for all children, as well as ensuring the progressive completion of each educational level throughout the life cycle.

The right to schooling across the life cycle begins with access to quality preschool education that is compatible with family arrangements. Early childhood is crucial for cognitive and emotional development as well as overall physical and mental health. In the first three years, neuronal connections are formed and the brain reaches 90% of its adult size. Children develop language and motor skills and learn to form social bonds and regulate their emotions. In this sense, the positive effects of comprehensive care during early childhood have a crucial impact on the following phase, from 3-5 years of age. During this phase, access to quality preschool education yields better results and progress during primary education.

Despite its obvious importance, the region displays low levels of access to preschool education. In 2002, 69.5% of Caribbean children had access to preschool education, while the figure for Latin America was only 42.5% (ECLAC, 2005). As with other levels of education, disparities permeate access to preschool education. For example, children in the richest 20% are 1.39 times more likely to attend preschool than children in the poorest 20%. Similarly, children living in urban areas are 1.21 times more likely to attend preschool than their rural counterparts.¹ The greatest income-based asymmetries can be observed in Costa Rica, Panama and Peru, while the greatest variation due to urban/rural residence can be seen in Panama and Bolivia.

The universal completion of primary education would represent a great step towards the effective fulfilment of the right to education. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the rate of primary education completion for the population aged 15-19 was 88.1% in 2002 (ECLAC, 2005).² Nevertheless, there are persistent problems of progression at this level, which result in high rates of grade repetition (Brazil, 21%; Guatemala, 13%; Nicaragua, 11%; and Peru, 10%) far in excess of the figures for Western Europe and North America, where the highest rates of repetition do not surpass 5% (UIS, 2006a).

There are considerable socio-economic disparities in the completion of primary education. While among the poorest 20%, 1 in 4 people aged 15-19 did not complete primary education, among the wealthiest 20%, only 1 in 25 have not done so (ECLAC, 2005, data from 2002). There are also sharp inequalities in primary school completion relating to urban/rural residence and ethnic origin.

Universal completion of primary education does not guarantee poverty reduction. In the year 2000, ECLAC estimated that as a regional average, at least 10-13 years of formal education were required in order to stay out of poverty. For that reason, there is an urgent need to increase access to and completion of secondary education, which not only enhances opportunities for better jobs but also plays a protective role, enabling adolescents to make informed decisions and avoid different types of risks.

In 2001, the net secondary enrolment rate was 70%, although with significant differences between countries (ECLAC, 2005). In 2002, 4 out of 18 Latin American countries displayed levels of access to secondary schooling under 50%, while only three had net enrolment rates over 80% (UNESCO, 2005). In addition to low levels of access, high drop-out rates constitute a significant challenge. This is especially true among poor families, since the need for additional income often means adolescents have to leave school. Drop out rates at the secondary level exceed 15% in 8 countries of the region (ECLAC, 2005).³

In Latin America, the countries with the highest levels of secondary school completion are Chile (73%), Argentina (65%) and Peru (62%), while the lowest rates are found in Guatemala (16%), Honduras (18%) and Colombia (25%). In all the countries of the region, secondary school completion rates among the poorest 20% of the population are lower than the national completion rates. Inequalities by area of residence are also important, although less pronounced (See Graph 1). The regional secondary school completion rate for the total population is 1.41 times higher than it is for indigenous groups and Afro-descendants (4.17 and 3.94 higher greater in Brazil and Bolivia respectively).⁴ In most Latin American countries, more women than men complete their secondary schooling.

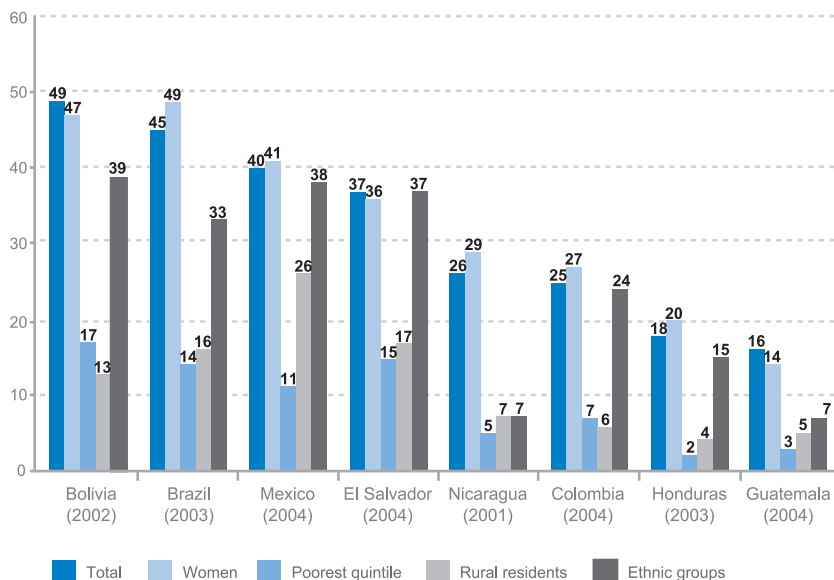
¹ These figures were calculated by the authors from a database of 16 Latin American countries for the years 2001-2004. The summary value presented corresponds to the simple average of responses from each country.

² The reference population consists of 15-19 year-olds. The reason for this is because in a younger age group, it is still hoped that individuals will increase their overall primary school achievement while in this age category, the estimate can be considered to be more conclusive.

³ This underscores the importance of conditional transfer programmes for poor families that receive income in exchange for a commitment to keep their children in school.

⁴ An estimate that corresponds to the simple average of the completion rates for the total population and the indigenous/Afro-descendent population.

GRAPH 1
SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATE: TOTAL, WOMEN, POOREST QUINTILE, RURAL RESIDENTS AND ETHNIC GROUPS 2001-2004



SOURCE: Calculated by the authors using special tabulations by the Social Development Division of ECLAC of household surveys conducted in eight countries of the region.

Access to preschool education must be increased in order to improve the future learning conditions of children

III. The right to a quality education

Access to free quality education is an inalienable right of all children and adolescents. Quality education, beyond providing skills and knowledge, should also prepare children and adolescents for entry into the labour market at a suitable level, a fulfilling family life, and the full exercise of their human rights. Furthermore, quality education should provide a solid base for higher studies and allow students to adapt to the demands of a rapidly changing environment.

The significance and dimensions of quality education are manifold. The Dakar Framework for Action (2000), for example, addresses the attitude and motivations of students, content (the relevance of the curriculum to local realities), processes (teacher's capacities and pedagogical strategies), and systems (management and allocation of resources). Recently, UNESCO (2005) developed a broader quality framework that considers the characteristics of students, the context, inputs and results.

Effective learning outcomes are a crucial indicator of the quality of education. There are several international studies on this issue that include Latin American children of primary and secondary school age. In one such study, carried out by the Latin American Laboratory for the Evaluation of the Quality of Education (LLECE), results revealed signs of insufficient learning outcomes, especially in mathematics: 40% of urban children in the region can only carry out basic mathematical operations. Research by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted with children aged 15 revealed that 80% of children in Peru, 56% in Brazil, 48% in Chile, and 44% in Argentina and Mexico cannot perform elementary tasks, such as making simple deductions or

identifying and understanding the main ideas of a short text. The average figure for students in OECD countries is 18% (OECD / UIS, 2003).

Throughout the region, children who attend public schools and reside in rural areas display lower levels of knowledge and skills than children attending private schools and living in urban areas. This situation partly explains the quantitative and qualitative disparities in education. For example, children in private schools have a higher number of classroom hours per year than children in public schools. There are also considerable differences in the quality of the infrastructure and the materials used in public and private schools throughout the region.

The working conditions and low salaries of teachers (most of whom are women) pose another obstacle to quality education in the region. In Latin American primary schools, the average student/teacher ratio is 25:1, compared with 14:1 in Western Europe and North America. Although there is perhaps no direct relationship between the number of students per teacher and learning outcomes, a very high student-to-teacher ratio makes it considerably more difficult for quality interaction between teachers and students to take place.

In order to make progress towards quality education for all, the countries of the region must commit themselves to increasing levels of social investment in education. Latin American countries spend, on average, 3.88% of GDP on education, while Western Europe and North America spend 5.89% of GDP. The asymmetries are even greater with regard to spending per student in primary education. More developed countries spend an average of US\$5,030 per student, while Latin American countries spend only US\$807.10 (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES VERSUS WESTERN EUROPE/NORTH AMERICA: COMMITMENT TO THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION,
BY SPENDING LEVEL AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF TEACHERS

COUNTRY	Public spending in education as a percentage of GDP (2004)	Expenditure per student in primary education (in US\$ PPP ^a) (2001)	Base salary of teachers after 15 years ^b (in /US\$ PPP ^a) (2002-2003)	Students per primary school teacher (2004)
Argentina	4	1,418	9,508	17
Bolivia	6.4	276	5,318	24
Brazil	-	731	11,860	24
Chile	4.1	1,145	-	34
Colombia	4.9	-	-	28
Costa Rica	4.9	1,319	-	22
Cuba			-	10
			-	21
			2,669	23
			11,304	-
			-	31
			-	34
			16,720	27
			-	35
			-	24
			7,825	27
			5,661	25
			5,787	21
			-	-
			8,516.8 ^c	25 ^c
			36,770 ^c	14.1 ^c

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2006a, 2006b) and UNESCO (2005).
^a US dollars with purchasing power parity. / ^b Teacher salaries correspond to the minimum skill category. / ^c Simple average.

IV. The right to fair treatment and respect in school

The human rights approach implies rethinking the relationships between different actors within schools with the aim of ensuring complete respect towards students. Placing students at the centre of the educational process means that they are not passive recipients of skills and knowledge, but rather rights-holders with a voice for deliberating and expressing opinions. This entails greater autonomy and respect for their personal identity in the educational process, free from discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity or social status.

The right to fair treatment and respect in school should include a gender approach and an intercultural perspective as well. Many textbooks continue to reproduce sexist stereotypes that reinforce traditional gender roles in society. Sexist behaviours can be discerned in the relationships between teachers and students, as well as between boys and girls in school. Sexism also permeates the so called “hidden curriculum,” including the segregation of activities by gender. In fact, labour segmentation can be viewed as a direct result of an educational system that continues to point girls towards child-rearing and household tasks and boys towards competitive professions.

Progress has certainly been made in the revision of school texts, the equal depiction of men and women, sex education and the promotion of a culture of gender equality in schools. However, while these issues are being debated in most of the countries of the region, concrete proposals are not yet sufficiently reflected in the daily life of the schools.

Intercultural education involves recognition and respect for students of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds along with methodologies and content that allow for the free exchange of ideas under conditions of equality and reciprocity. Furthermore, this approach seeks to ensure that the schooling process does not reproduce historical patterns of discrimination based on ethnicity and cultural differences. In other words, an intercultural perspective in education should harmonize greater equality of opportunities with greater recognition for diversity, with the aim of overcoming disparities in learning brought about by centuries of discrimination and exclusion, while taking advantage of the cultural richness that converges in the classroom.

As the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states, the right to equal treatment and respect in the school system includes –in addition to gender equality and intercultural education– at least the following three essential aspects:

There are huge gaps in the completion of secondary schooling, particularly affecting the rural population, low income groups and indigenous and Afro-descendent people

(i) *The progressive right to participation* in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. To that end, it is essential to promote and respect the right of adolescents to organize themselves and fully participate in school life, and to be recognized as valid actors by teachers and administrators. In this regard, the countries of the region show uneven progress at the secondary level. While some countries boast formal structures for student organization, including the participation of student leaders in school councils, others do not enjoy such levels of participation and authoritarian and paternalistic relations between adults and adolescents are still pervasive.

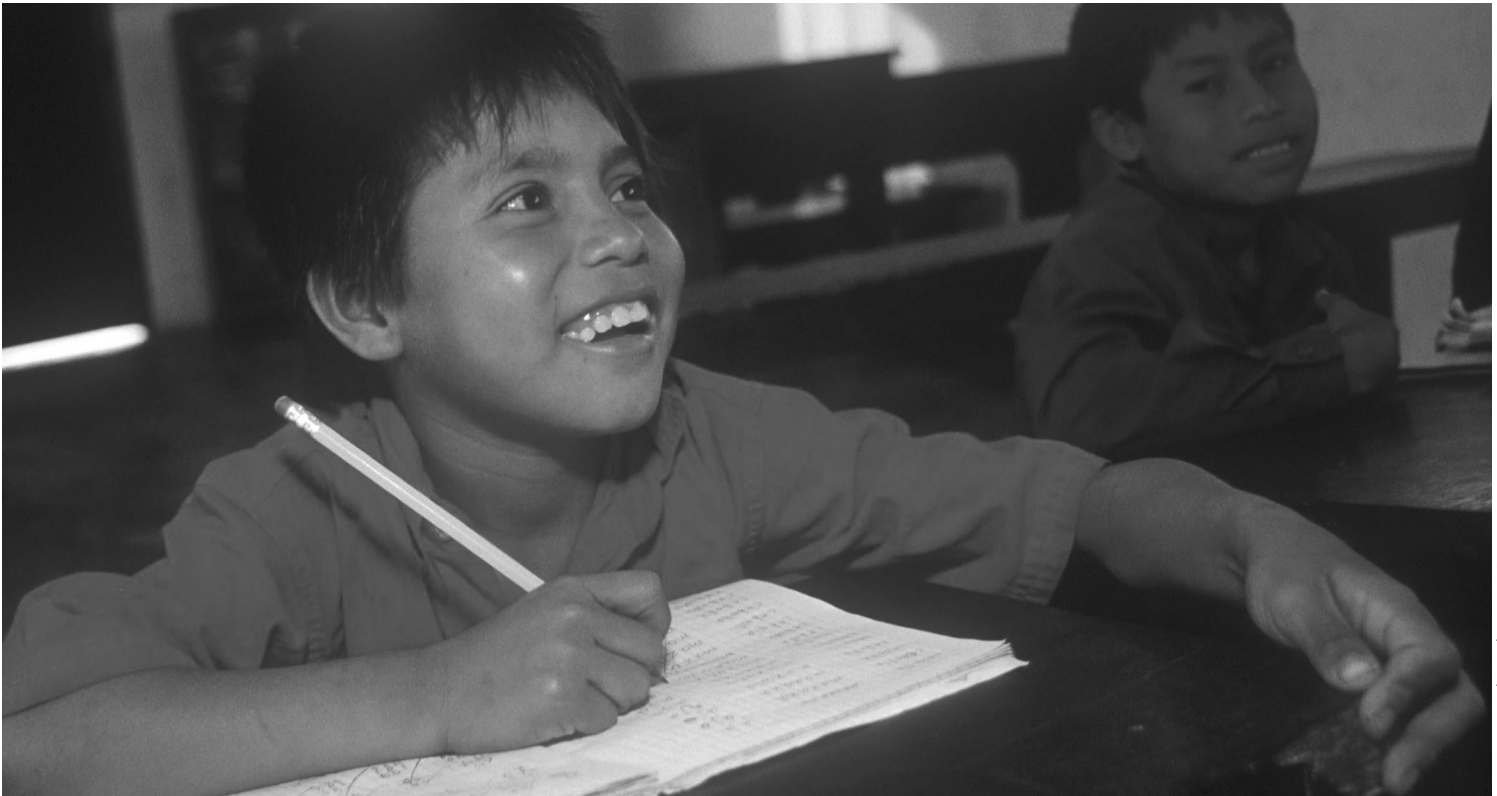
(ii) *The right to a healthy school environment*, which implies ensuring that disciplinary rules and practices are entirely compatible with the dignity of the child. The emphasis should be on a formative, rather than punitive approach. In many schools, authoritarian practices and attitudes from teachers towards students are still common, including the use of physical punishment. It is therefore urgent to review the norms that govern relations both between teachers and students and among students themselves, so as to create a nurturing environment and fully respect the rights of children and adolescents. High levels of violence within schools highlight the lack of conflict resolution tools, and this tends to reinforce authoritarianism. Teachers, administrators, and student leaders should be trained in alternative conflict resolution techniques that can serve as mechanisms for personal and social growth.

(iii) *The inclusive school* is still a pending issue in the region. Children with special educational needs are commonly segregated into specialized educational institutions, when not excluded altogether from the right to education. The practice of segregation does not depend so much on the school as it does upon the school system. Without the resources and necessary support, educators face enormous difficulties in generating processes of constructive integration. This is as true for children with special educational needs as it is for their classmates. In many schools and school systems, a selective vision of education persists. Children who experience academic or behavioural difficulties are often expelled, which dramatically increases the risk that they will not complete their schooling and inhibits their development and future prospects for social integration.

V. Challenge

Ensuring the right to education in Latin America and the Caribbean requires decisive progress towards universal, access to free quality education, with continuity throughout the primary and secondary levels. This implies transforming schools into a space for the full development of students as rights-holders.

In order to achieve this, political commitment and increased investment are required from all stakeholders (state, private sector, donors), as well as more efficient institutional management, an improved curricula, and a rights-based understanding of





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Education plays a crucial role in overcoming all forms of discrimination and in promoting a culture of fair treatment and mutual respect

school governance. In addition, it is critical to improve the efficiency of available resources, particularly by reducing repetition and dropout rates.

It is also crucial to ensure a more equitable distribution of educational opportunities at all levels of the school system so as to avoid discrimination based on social class, gender, capacities, ethnicity or area of residence.

Access to quality preschool education must be ensured for children between the ages of 3 and 6. In addition to playing a key role in children's development, preschool education also prepares students and improves results at the primary level.

Of equal importance is the need to carry out an in-depth review of the critical factors that limit the quality of education. The aim should be to design strategies –with the participation of teachers and communities– that can improve curricular relevance and ensure that students are equipped with the skills required in a world of intense social and cultural transformations.

It is fundamental to promote an ethical commitment to justice and equality of opportunities among students, developing attitudes of solidarity, respect and responsibility towards others.

Lastly, students must be instilled with an appreciation of the active role they need to play in the learning process, and with confidence in their ability to learn and develop the skills that will allow them to act as full rights-holders in the societies in which they live.

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As a teacher, what are the main challenges I face in ensuring that my students learn effectively?

Three teachers express their opinion



© UNICEF Peru / 2006 / Gregorio Gutiérrez

Juan Alberto Castillo

Teacher at the Guayllabamba School, District of CayCay, Paucartambo Province Cusco Region, Peru

I would like to see my school well-equipped with instructional materials, including a computer, proper furniture, adequate bathrooms for boys and girls, and reference materials for us teachers. I would also like to get trained as a bilingual teacher. We are convinced that an authentic education in our context must have an intercultural perspective. What we teach must allow our children to thrive not only in their communities, but also in the broader societies in which they live.

Many parents are not very interested in their children's education. They continue to think that the teachers are the only ones responsible for teaching them. If they were to help us out a bit, leave aside their drinking and refrain from violence in their homes, I am certain that we would have better learning results. I would also like the children to arrive at school well-fed. At times, we prepare ourselves very well for a class, but then we see that the pupils tire very quickly, they get sleepy and begin to yawn. So it takes me a while because what I have to cover in a day sometimes takes three to four days for them to understand.

I know that we are always going to earn little. I don't think that the Ministry of Education has enough money at its disposal to offer the kind of pay raises that are needed by so many teachers. But that doesn't mean that our schools have to be neglected, without bathrooms and materials.



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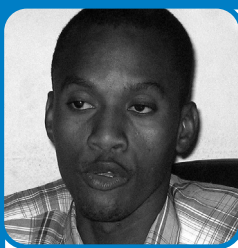
Isolda Cela

Municipal Secretary of Education, Sobral Ceará, Brazil

The relationship between teaching and learning is very complex and depends on a number of factors, many of which are subjective. I would point to two elements that are essential for children to learn, especially under adverse conditions, and which are a challenge for every teacher.

The first has to do with the teacher's capacity to teach in a structured manner. School programmes must be properly organized. It is absolutely essential to define and monitor learning outcomes while at the same time giving each child the individual attention that he or she requires. In the vast majority of cases where children fail to learn, serious deficiencies in teaching methods are the main problem.

The other factor is the teacher's ability to establish a relationship that stimulates the desire to learn among his or her pupils. This means having faith in the children who are learning and feeling and demonstrating a genuine interest in them. At the end of the day, love and the desire to learn are the fundamental factors.



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Jean Renel

Director of l'École Mixte Christ-Roi Cité Soleil, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

We face several educational problems in Cité Soleil and in the country in general. One problem is that the parents of families lack the economic resources required to meet the regular costs of schooling their children. This impacts negatively on the finances of schools and seriously complicates their operations. The economic constraints faced by families mean that it is difficult to continue paying teachers, much less address the problem of their very low salaries. Other problems affecting education are violence and political instability, which create enormous obstacles for the normal operations of the schools in this district. Students often risk their lives to come to class. They do not enjoy protection from the Haitian public forces,

which are practically non-existent in Cité Soleil. A third type of problem I should highlight is the lack of didactic and pedagogical materials as well as furniture and equipment. It is not uncommon to find children sitting on the floor during classes... Our school facilities throughout the country need a lot of repair and renovation work.

Moreover, it must be said that the Ministry of Education has practically no presence in Cité Soleil and that the assistance received from other institutions is inadequate. Regrettably, we will need a lot of help to get our schools in normal operation with an acceptable level of quality.

Educational support programmes

Educational reforms throughout the region have set in motion a wide range of programmes designed to improve the quality and equity of education, ensure greater continuity for low income students across primary and secondary school, promote cultural diversity, and democratize access to information technology.

The lessons learned from these programmes facilitate the development and replication of good practices and new initiatives. There is a great deal of experience in diverse fields: teacher training, curriculum revision, extension of the school day, development of learning materials, community involvement, family support in vulnerable sectors, and promotion of agreements for educational improvement.

The following is a selection of programmes that illustrate the wide range of experiences implemented throughout the region:



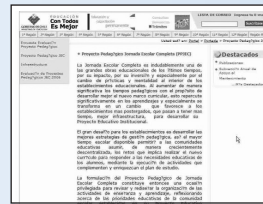
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**Escuela Nueva (New School).
"Fundación Escuela Nueva – Volvamos a la Gente"**
Colombia
<http://www.volvamos.org/>



Escuela Nueva is an innovative approach to basic education which integrates curricular community and training strategies, as well as administration and monitoring. It emerged in Colombia and evolved into a national policy towards the end of the 1980s. Presently, it is a model for similar programmes that have been implemented in ten other countries in the region.

Jornada Escolar Completa (Complete School Day). Ministry of Education.
Chile
http://www.mineduc.cl/index.php?id_portal=21&id_seccion=473&id_contenido=326



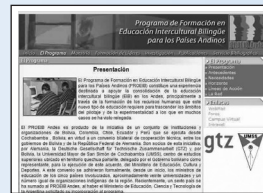
This programme seeks to improve learning outcomes through an increase in overall teaching time and the implementation of an improved curricular framework.

Social Contract for Education
Ecuador
<http://www.contratosocialecuador.org.ec/home/index.php>



This social movement defines education as a national priority aimed at collectively influencing public policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. This should lead to a new and improved vision of education.

Training Programme in Bilingual Intercultural Education for the Andean Countries (PROEIB Andes)
<http://www.proeibandes.org/programa/>



This is a joint initiative launched by Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru for the purpose of developing human resources for bilingual education. The programme is implemented from Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Educational Technology Programme.
Ministry of Public Education. Omar Dengo Foundation.
Costa Rica

<http://www.fod.ac.cr/programas/index.htm>
http://www.risalc.org:9090/disalc/ficha.php?id=238&es_programa=1



This programme is designed to improve the quality of basic public education through the use of computers and the development of teacher training programmes that integrate new technologies into teaching.

■ did you know...?

...that in Latin America, more than 1.1 million young people between the ages of 15-19 have never attended school and another 5 million never finished their primary education?

...that for a total of 17 countries in Latin America, almost 1.7 million children do not attend preschool in the year prior to their entry into primary education, and that half of these children belong to the poorest 20%?

...that across the region, 1 out of every 3 young people between the ages of 20-24 did not finish their primary education and 1 out of every 2 did not complete their secondary schooling?

...that 43.4% of young people aged 15-19 currently in school in Latin America have fallen behind in their studies (around 11 million); and that 60% of these students are behind by three or more years?

...that for every adolescent in the wealthiest 20% that does not attend secondary school in Latin America, there are 7 children among the poorest 20% that are out of school?

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in 18 Latin American countries around 2004.

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