



**PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL
REVITALIZATION IN THE AMERICAS**

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**



Inter-American Dialogue

The Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas

The Inter-American Dialogue is establishing a hemispheric partnership of public and private sector organizations working for educational reform in Latin America and the Caribbean. The partnership will include governments and non-governmental actors. The business community, international organizations, universities and researchers will all have a role. Initial funding is being provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Goals

- Improve the quality and equity of education throughout the Americas.
- Promote better education policy.
- Identify and disseminate best education policies and practices.
- Develop a broad constituency for fundamental education reform.

Activities

- Working groups on educational policy issues.
- Workshops and conferences examining policy alternatives for reform.
- National policy dialogues on educational reform.
- Professional exchanges for key policy specialists.
- Research on important but relatively neglected issues.
- Mechanisms to monitor progress toward improving education policy and practice.
- Publications.
- An electronic communications network for publishing documents, debating issues, and exchanging information.

Organization

- A broad and diverse membership, consisting of institutions, networks, and individuals throughout Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States, and Canada.
- An advisory council to provide advice regarding key issues, monitor activities, and facilitate access to resources.
- National specialists to generate and monitor program activities.
- An executive committee of distinguished leaders from Latin America and the Caribbean.
- A small, professionally staffed secretariat.

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INTER-AMERICAN DIALOGUE

POLICY BRIEF

August 1994

AN AGENDA FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

by Jeffrey M. Puryear and José Joaquín Brunner

The authors point out the disparity between the new economic and political models being applied in Latin America and the Caribbean and prevailing systems of education, which have remained fundamentally unchanged since the 1960s. They outline the principal failings of the education sector in most countries of the region, stress the need for fundamental, systemic reform, and present a series of policy options.

FOREWORD

EDUCATION REFORM IS A WAXING ISSUE on the hemispheric agenda. With the dramatic shift in most of the region toward open economies and democratic governance, countries are increasingly concluding that success in world trade and political stability depends more on human resources than on natural resources. Less widely understood, however, are the failings of existing school systems, and the policy options that countries face as they attempt to devise a new approach to educational development. In an effort to address the need for change, the Inter-American Dialogue is establishing, in collaboration with the Corporation for Development Research (CINDE) in Santiago, Chile, a special Task Force on Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness in the Americas, charged with developing a broader and more active constituency for education reform regionwide.

This policy brief provides an overview of the growing debate on educational reform in Latin America and the Caribbean. It seeks to identify some of the principle problems and most promising avenues for reform emerging from the efforts of researchers, policymakers and practitioners. Two volumes exploring some of these issues in greater detail and presenting eight country-specific case studies have just been published by the Organization of American States. Over the next two years, the Dialogue's Task Force hopes to work with teams of opinion leaders in at least six countries to develop a broad, national debate on educational reform and make policy recommendations.



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EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN NATIONS

OVER the past three decades, the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean have had a remarkable record of achievement in human development. In the midst of profound economic recessions, political crises, global transformations, and uncertain futures, the nations of this region have achieved substantial and continuous improvements in the quality of life of their people.

Today, more children have greater opportunities for survival, education, and access to basic services than ever before. Infant mortality rates decreased from 105 per 1,000 births in 1960, to 47 per 1,000 births in 1992. Life expectancy for the people Latin American and Caribbean countries increased from 56.0 years to 67.7 during the same period. Costa Rica, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina have life expectancy indicators of over 70 years. Most children of the region, male and female, attend primary school; and adult literacy rates increased in 20 years (1970-1990) from 76 percent to 86 percent.

In 1970 only 4 of 10 school-age children had access to secondary school in Chile; today, 8 of 10, have that opportunity. Several countries, such as Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, and Nicaragua, doubled their secondary school enrollment rates in two decades. The Dominican Republic tripled its secondary school enrollment rate. Even during the economic recession of the 1980s, the percentage of eligible children and youth enrolled in the formal education system increased from 59 to 62.

The United Nations, using a combined index of life expectancy, educational attainment, and access to basic resources, classified several coun-

tries of the world as "high human development." Among these countries are ten Latin American and Caribbean countries—Argentina, Bahamas, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela. These countries are not "high income" societies, which indicates that they are achieving human development goals beyond economic predictions. In addition to direct benefits provided to children, this extraordinary expansion of the educational systems of the region has provided Latin America and the Caribbean with a rich set of institutions, expertise, and some highly successful educational innovations and alternatives.

However, the above achievements hide other realities. Three immense gaps motivate Latin American and Caribbean nations to renew their efforts and establish new goals for the welfare of their people:

- The disparity in human resources between the countries of the region and more advanced societies is growing. An analysis of indicators such as school completion rates, outcomes of the system, higher education, numbers of scientists and engineers, and information and communication networks reveals this disparity.
- Persistent economic and social inequalities within the nations of the region hamper the stability of the region, limit economic growth, and violate human rights.

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PROGRAM TO PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL REFORM
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Occasional Paper Series

No. 1

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA:
"STATE OF THE PRACTICE"

Robert G. Myers



Inter-American
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DIÁLOGO INTERAMERICANO

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO DE POLÍTICA

Diciembre 1996

UNA AGENDA PARA LA REFORMA EDUCATIVA EN AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE

por Jeffrey M. Puryear y José Joaquín Brunner

Los autores revelan la disparidad entre los nuevos modelos económicos y políticos que se aplican en América Latina y el Caribe y los sistemas educativos que predominan en la región, los cuales han permanecido fundamentalmente inmutables desde los años 60. Los autores delinean los principales fracasos del sector educativo en la mayoría de los países de la región, subrayan la necesidad de intentar una reforma fundamental y orgánica, y presentan una serie de normas innovadoras hacia un nuevo modelo educativo.

PREFACIO

La reforma de la educación es un tema de creciente importancia en la agenda hemisférica. Debido a la marcha actual hacia economías abiertas y gobiernos democráticos, los países de la región están concluyendo, cada vez más frecuentemente, que tanto el éxito en el comercio internacional como la estabilidad política dependen más de los recursos humanos que de las riquezas naturales. Se comprende menos el fracaso de los sistemas educativos vigentes o las alternativas con las que las naciones deben encararse al intentar trazar un nuevo camino hacia el desarrollo de la educación.

En colaboración con la Corporación de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo (CINDE) en Santiago de Chile, el Diálogo Interamericano se enfrenta actualmente con estos problemas por medio de su recién establecido Programa de Promoción de Reforma Educativa en América Latina y el Caribe (PREAL). Bajo la dirección de PREAL, equipos nacionales lideran el fomento de la reforma educativa en ocho países: Brasil, Colombia, la República Dominicana, Ecuador, Guatemala, Perú, Nicaragua, y Venezuela. El Diálogo y CINDE han creado también un Grupo Extraordinario que trabaja sobre los temas de la educación, la igualdad, y la competitividad económica. Han lanzado así mismo una serie de publicaciones sobre normas reformativas y han organizado talleres de trabajo sobre la descentralización en Nicaragua, y sobre la evaluación de la educación en Brasil.

Este informe sobre políticas educativas, originalmente publicado en 1994, reporta sobre el debate que con creciente vigor ocurre en América Latina y el Caribe; identifica los mayores temas; y



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December 4-6, 1995

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ADVOCACY SERIES

Advocacy Series #1-Educational Crisis in Latin America. Also in Spanish, *La Crisis de la Educación en América Latina.* Jorge Sanguinety. 1992.

This document critically reviews the educational situation in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama. A crisis in these educational systems has affected the human resource wealth or endowment of the societies. The analysis and conclusions of the paper are relevant to other Latin American countries as well.

Advocacy Series #2-Can Schools Teach Democratic Values? Also in Spanish, *El Papel de la Escuela en la Enseñanza de Valores Democráticos.* Eleonora Villegas-Reimers. 1993.

This document reviews contemporary literature on moral and values education in school settings and explores the roles schools can play in teaching democratic values. Options with a focus on teaching democratic values are presented to assist USAID to develop initiatives in moral and values education.

Advocacy Series #3-Policy Dialogue and Reform in the Education Sector. Also in Spanish, *Proyecto sobre Reformas Políticas Educativas*, and French, *Concertations sur les politiques de la réforme du secteur éducatif.* Luis Crouch, Emiliana Vegas, and Ronald Johnson. 1993.

This document traces some of the reasons for the lack of satisfactory results from donor projects in education. Alternatives to project assistance, such as program and nonproject assistance are evaluated. The English version is written for the donor audience; the Spanish version, for an audience of host-country policymakers. Therefore, the Spanish is not a direct translation of the English.

Advocacy Series #4-Education and the Consolidation of Democracy in Latin America. Also in Spanish *Innovaciones Educativas y Desarrollo Democrático en América Latina.* Fernando Reimers. 1993.

This document examines three educational programs in Latin America that have succeeded in bringing education of high quality to children of the poor and traditionally disenfranchised. Several critical factors for program success are identified in the report.

Advocacy Series #5-Creating a High-Quality Work Force. Gary Russell. 1993.

This document gives an overview of existing training systems and related policies in the LAC region-public, private, and employer-based-and analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of each provider based on its appropriate role in vocational-technical education and training.

Advocacy Series #6-Education for Democracy: The Role of Schools. Also in Spanish, *Educación para la Democracia: El Papel de las Escuelas*, and in French, *L'enseignement pour la démocratie: Le rôle des écoles*. Eleonora Villegas-Reimers. 1994.

This document presents recommendations for designing and implementing education for democracy programs and activities—programs that promote knowledge, skills, and values necessary to live in a democratic society. The paper informs policymakers, national and community leaders, educators, parents and other interested persons about the critical nature of education for democracy in preschool, elementary school, and high school settings.

WORKING PAPER SERIES

Working Papers Series #1-Towards a Policy for Early Childhood Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Fernando Reimers. 1992.

This document examines what is known about the need for early childhood education in the LAC region, the benefits from existing early childhood programs both in the United States and in the developing world, and the policies governments should consider in light of the current needs and the potential benefits.

Working Papers Series #2-Effective Multigrade Schools: A Review of Literature. Katherine Hayes. 1993.

This document reviews and synthesizes current research and practical case studies about multigrade schools in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and addresses the effective use of multigrade schools.

Working Papers Series #3-Civic Education in the School Systems of Latin America and the Caribbean. Also in Spanish, *La Educación Cívica en el Currículo en América Latina y el Caribe*. Eleonora Villegas-Reimers. 1994.

This paper compiles the results of a survey conducted in fifteen countries in the LAC region concerning the state of civic education in each country's national curriculum. The report includes a review of literature, country reports, and a listing of key organizations.

Working Papers Series #4-Environmental Education in the School Systems of Latin America and the Caribbean. Also in Spanish, *La Educación Ambiental en el Currículo en América Latina y el Caribe*. Adalgisa Arias-La Forgia. 1994.

This paper compiles the results of a survey conducted in fifteen countries in the LAC region concerning the state of environmental education in each country's national curriculum. The report includes a review of literature, country reports, and a listing of key organizations.

Working Papers Series #5-Education Goals in the Latin American and the Caribbean Region. Lorecia Roland. 1995.

This paper provides an overview of goals in education established by various organizations for the LAC region. The report includes summaries of conferences, studies, reports, and policy briefs, as well as a matrix of organizations and their goals.

Working Papers Series #6–Self Replicating People’s Private Schools: A Concept Paper for a Pilot Project. Also in Spanish, *Escuelas Populares Privadas Auto Reproducibles: Ponencia Conceptual para un Proyecto Piloto.* Luis A. Crouch and Stephen M. Dunn. 1995.

This paper describes a system of franchisable private schools specifically structured to expand access to quality education for low-income students. By providing targeted subsidies to qualifying schools based on aggregate measures of students’ economic background, such a program would encourage schools to expand their enrollment of low-income students.

Working Papers Series #7–Encouraging the Growth of Educational Opportunity: The Concept, Mechanics, and Benefits of an Education Finance Investment Fund. Also in Spanish, *Estimulación del crecimiento de la oportunidad educacional: El concepto, funcionamiento y beneficios de un Fondo de Inversión para el Financiamiento de la Educación.* Stephen M. Dunn and Luis A. Crouch. 1995.

This paper investigates a means by which communities in developing countries could access the pool of charity-capital in developed countries to finance education investment. Vast amounts of money flow through traditional charities to the developing world with little attention given to the ultimate success or failure of the resulting projects and with no financial return to the individual donors. An emerging set of charity-like vehicles represent a promising untapped resource for financing education in the developing world.

Working Papers Series #8–Promoting Educational Excellence via Education Achievement Bonds: An Introductory Concept Paper. Also in Spanish, *Bonos de Logro Educacional: Una Propuesta Conceptual Introductoria.* Stephen M. Dunn and Luis A. Crouch. 1995.

This paper describes a type of financial instrument designed to act as a catalyst for improvements in educational quality, focusing most directly on a means of encouraging family investment in education. By providing a certain near-term monetary reward to carefully measured achievement, such an instrument would serve as an incentive for families to simultaneously exercise voice for educational quality and devote their own resources to achieving a quality education for their children.

Working Papers Series #9–Lessons Learned in Policy Dialogue. Holly Landauer. 1995.

This paper describes the experiences of the Education and Human Resources Technical Services Project in implementing the policy dialogue approach and describes some lessons that can be useful in education policy reform. It is organized by country experience, concluding with a section on general lessons learned.

Working Papers Series #10–Program Overview–Education and Human Resources Development. 1995.

This document provides an annotated listing of all current USAID investments in education and human resources development in the LAC region.

Working Papers Series #11–Educational Revitalization Conference Report. Also in Spanish, *Informe de la Conferencia sobre la Revitalización de la Educación.* Benjamin Alvarez. 1996.

This report summarizes the proceedings of the Conference on Building Partnerships for Educational Revitalization in the Americas, held in Washington, D.C., on December 4-6, 1995. In addition to the summary and sample presentations, it includes the keynote address, conference agenda, and list of participants.

REVIEWS OF EXPERIENCE

Review of Experience-Basic Education. Ray Chesterfield. 1992.

Review of Experience-Training for Development. John Gillies. 1992.

Review of Experience-Vocational Education and Training. Dennis Herschbach. 1992.

Review of Experience-Management Education and Training. John Gillies. 1993.

These documents review USAID's experience in four subsectors of human resources development and focus on investments in the LAC region over the past fifteen years. The studies present lessons learned regarding project design, implementation, and evaluation.

Practical Applications-A User's Guide to Lessons Learned in Project Design, Implementation, and Evaluation

This document summarizes the most important lessons learned from the Reviews of Experience series. This volume is meant to be used by practitioners as they go through the process of designing, implementing, or evaluating a project.

POLICY DIALOGUE

LASER: Strategies for Educational Reform in Latin America. Also in Spanish, *LASER: Estrategías para Reforma Educativa en Latinoamérica.* Luis Crouch.

This paper addresses the question "Why invest in education?" Using the Nicaraguan case, the reply is found through economic, political, and social rationale. Graphics used in the LASER presentation are included.

USAID Donor Collaboration: Assistance to Education in Bolivia. Luis Crouch, Frances Hays. 1994.

This short paper traces the Bolivian government's efforts to reform the educational sector through multidonor collaboration. A donor-consortium provided technical assistance through the World Bank to a semiautonomous unit charged with designing the reform. USAID assisted with efforts to communicate and market the reform.

To obtain copies of any of these documents, contact

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