

UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL

PROPIEDAD DE C. 1  
LA BIBLIOTECA



LIMITED

ST/ECLA/Conf.20/L.4  
November 1965

ORIGINAL: SPANISH

LATIN AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN  
AND YOUTH IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jointly sponsored by the Economic Commission for Latin America, the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning, and the United Nations Children's Fund, in co-operation with the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and World Health Organization

Santiago, Chile 28 November to 11 December 1965

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN A MODERN SOCIETY AND THE RIGHT TO  
EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Document prepared by the UNESCO  
secretariat for the UNICEF Regional Conference  
(Santiago, Chile, December 1965)



# PROPIEDAD DE C. I. LA BIBLIOTECA

ST/ECLA/Conf.20/L.4  
Page iii

## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
- Introduction .....	1
I - Declarations of principles on the right to education .....	1
II - The real effectiveness of the declarations on the right to education .....	4
III - The financing of education .....	21
IV - Problems arising from the foregoing situation for a policy aimed at giving practical effect to the right to education .....	27

## Tables and Figures

Table 1 - Latin America: Enrolment in primary schools 1950 and 1956-62 .....	6
Table 2 - Latin America: Pupils enrolled in public and private primary schools, 1955-62 .....	7
Table 3 - Latin America: Percentage distribution of primary school enrolment by grades, 1956-62 .....	8
Table 4 - Latin America: Primary school gross retention rates .....	9
Table 5 - Latin America: Enrolment by grades related to population aged 7-15, 1962 .....	11
Table 6 - Latin America: School enrolment in relation to population, by age groups and by school participation rates, 1962 .....	15
Table 7 - Central Government expenditure on education as a percentage on national income, 1956-64.	23
Table 8 - Latin America: Central Government expenditure on education as a proportion of total budget expenditure, 1956-64 .....	24
Table 9 - Index of Central Government expenditure on education at constant prices .....	25
Table 10 - Contributions to education from sources outside the public treasury, 1962 .....	26
Figure I - Latin America: Enrolment by grades related to population aged 7-15, 1962 .....	12
Figure II - Latin America: Enrolment by grades related to population aged 7-15, 1962 .....	13

/Figure III

	<u>Page</u>
Figure III - Latin America: School participation rate for population aged 5-15 .....	16
Figure IV - Latin America: Primary school attendance rate for population aged 5-15 in selected countries .....	17

## Introduction

The present document is in four sections. The first quotes certain declarations of principle on the rights of the child in the field of education, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, and in the Constitutions and legislation of the Latin American countries, with a view to determining, by means of a critical analysis, if the content of these documents is responsive to the needs of present-day society, and to the needs that can be foreseen for the future.

The second section describes the educational situation in the region; some conclusions are drawn as to the actual implementation of the rights of the child in education and the main gaps in the performance of the existing educational systems are pointed out. The third part of the report is confined to the problems of financing education, and the fourth contains certain suggestions for a possible policy aimed at making the universal right to education effective, and ensuring that this education equips those who receive it to take an active part in the life and work of the community.

Obviously a document of this nature, covering the whole of Latin America, must necessarily contain a number of generalizations that often do not apply to the situation in every individual country. Nevertheless, despite this handicap, and in view of the practical impossibility of making a country-by-country analysis, a document of this kind can have some value as a guide pointing the way to the formulation of certain general principles that individual countries can then adapt to their own needs and circumstances.

## I

### Declarations of principle on the right to education

1. In certain international declarations that have had a special impact, there have been references to the rights of the child in the field of education. Those specially deserving of note are the Charter of the International Union for the Protection of Children, published in 1923, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, drawn up by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The first Charter contains seven articles, and the seventh refers to education, in only the broadest terms, stating that "The child's education should imbue him with the idea that his best qualities should be devoted to the service of his neighbour." The Declaration of the Rights of the Child contains ten general principles. The seventh states: "The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility and to become a useful member of society." The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, in article 26: "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher

/education shall

education shall be equally accesible to all on the basis of merit." At the regional level, there is the Declaration of Opportunities for the Child, adopted by the Eighth Pan American Congress on the Child, held in Washington in 1942. Paragraph II says of education that every child should have the opportunity to determine what are his special abilities, and should receive education, mental, physical and spiritual, for as many years as are necessary for his full development. With this aim in mind, the Declaration continues, means must be provided for the proper education of children, in accordance with their age and mental capacity; in particular this should cover (a) vocational guidance for the child, and (b) the proper organization of intellectual, physical, spiritual and cultural education for as many years as are necessary to attain maturity and the full exercise of his natural qualities and abilities.

2. The right to education has been enshrined as a fundamental principle in the Constitutions and the education legislation of the Latin American countries. Argentina, in article 14 of the 1860 Constitution, laid down the right of all citizens to teach and to learn; Brazil, in article 166 of the 1946 Constitution, established the principle that education is the right of every person; Bolivia, in article 1 of the Bolivian Code of Education, states that education is the right of the people and an instrument of national liberation; and all the following countries established compulsory education: Cuba, in Act. N°7 of February 1959, Ecuador, in article 141 of the 1946 Political Constitution, Haiti, in article 29 of the 1957 Constitution, Honduras, in the 1957 Constitution, Mexico, in article 3 of its Constitution, Panama, in article 78 of its 1946 Constitution, Paraguay, in its 1940 Constitution, Peru, in article 142 of the Basic Public Education Act, 1941, and Uruguay, in article 70 of the 1952 Constitution.

3. The content of the international declarations given above shows that they are inherently of a general nature, as is usually the case with supranational Charters, where it is necessary to arrive at compromise formulas on certain common principles, in this case the right to basic primary education. The national principles referred to above show that the basic right aimed at is the provision of primary education for every child of school age, that is, a primary education that usually extends over six years in urban areas, and a shorter period in rural areas.

4. Without entering into consideration of the real effect in practice of the above-described declarations or legal principles, which will be studied in the second section of this document, it is appropriate to examine how far the content of these texts meets the needs of the child both as a child and as a future adult. For this purpose account must be taken in the main of certain features of present-day society, and those that can already be envisaged for the society of the future.

5. The interpretation or practical application of the right to education may vary, and in fact has done so at different periods in the past. That is, although the need to receive an education in order to realize one's personality is a permanent need common to all men at all periods, the

particular form adopted varies according to the nature and characteristics of the society in which the individual is living. In the present specific case, the question is whether it is possible to define certain trends in the Latin American society that permit deduction of educational needs. Clearly this can be done with confidence of success for certain trends of special importance to education: population growth, the relatively rapid social changes that are taking place, the evolution towards an industrial society, the general desire, or rather movement, for Latin American integration, and the closer links between the educational systems and economic development.

6. In a society of the kind formed by the above-mentioned trends, the needs of the rising generations that must be met by the educational system are much broader than hitherto. Firstly, the numbers involved are much larger, not only because of population growth, but also to ensure that vast sectors of the community are not excluded from the benefits of education, as in the past. Secondly, education has to have different aims and a different direction. Primary education, as normally consisting of about six years of education, does not meet the hopes pinned to education as a preparation for life. An occupation is an essential element in a man's life, and hence an educational system that offers no opportunity for acquiring the training needed to exercise some profession or occupation suited to the abilities of the individual concerned will always be incomplete. However, educational activities cannot be exclusively concerned with the occupational aspect. Apart from its ethical aims, education has a heavy responsibility for the formation of political and social attitudes. This is a particularly important task, because the educational system can encourage hopes and create attitudes favourable to social change, but it can also sometimes have the opposite effect, by inculcating a conformist and passive attitude. A strict intellectual training, which accustoms the student to analyse facts and ideas and form his own judgement, and thus resist the flood of propaganda that he may have to face, and to prepare himself for a period of change, are important needs for the child and the young person, and responsibilities from which the educational system cannot abdicate. In brief, what is needed is a preparation for a productive life, for a political and social life, and for a private life. Each of these aspects has received special attention at a given moment, but today they must all be given attention simultaneously, as of equal importance.

7. In pointing out the above-described needs, it is essential to indicate the difference between the proclamation of the right to education, and real opportunity to obtain education and benefit from it. This difference, which to some extent is inevitable, is particularly marked in the Latin American countries. Those who design educational policy and adopt the decisions concerned, and those who carry out educational planning and administration, have a heavy responsibility in this respect, since if all have an equal right to education, the opportunity of receiving an education should be the same for all, with due regard for individual differences, and differences of occupation.

II

The real effectiveness of the declarations on  
the right to education

8. All the Latin American countries have long established, as shown in the preceding section, the principle of compulsory education, and hence the corollary of the right to education. In fact the idea of universal education, which first took root in Europe, arose at just the time when the Latin American countries were becoming independent, and this idea at once fired the minds of the leaders of the independent movement, and swiftly crystallized into the basic principles of the political constitutions of the new republics. The aim of universal education in Latin America was based on a warm and idealistic impulse that was in general not followed by the necessary measures to give full practical effect to the principles concerned.

9. A study of the real effectiveness of the right to education reveals a generally disappointing picture. At the UNESCO conference on free and compulsory education held in 1956, over a hundred years after the date when some Latin American countries proclaimed the right to education, the educational situation then existing was described in the following terms: Of a total population of school age of about 40 million, only 19 million were receiving a primary education, and there was a high level of absenteeism and dropping out. As a result the average number of years of schooling for the population as a whole was only one, while the average for that section of the population that had attended school was only four. The vast population increase had so aggravated the problem that the number of additional teachers needed to meet the minimum requirements was estimated as half a million. Other serious difficulties were the large number of unqualified teachers, the low salaries paid, the technical shortcomings, inadequate premises, lack of furniture and materials, and other handicaps affecting the quality of the teaching, including the lack of continuity in educational policy, and the immediate effect this had on continuity of staff, not only among teachers but also among administrators and directors of education; the result was to limit the funds that can be obtained for educational development, and sharply reduce educational performance.

10. The situation has improved since 1956. As a result of the Lima Conference, UNESCO and the Latin American Governments set up the Major Project on the Extension and Improvement of Primary Education in Latin America, with the basic aims of establishing education planning, expanding primary education, training educational leaders and experts, improving teacher-training methods, and revising primary school curricula. As regards the aspect of the Major Project that most closely concerns the present document, namely, the extension of basic compulsory education, the results obtained through the efforts of the Latin American countries have been encouraging. The number of pupils enrolled in primary schools in the twenty Latin American countries in 1962 amounted to about 28 million, an increase of nearly 7.5 million since 1956, and an annual increase of about

1.25 million a year. This rise in enrolment represents an annual average growth rate of 5 per cent (as against 4 per cent during 1950-1956), double the rate of natural population growth. Of the twenty countries, nine, with a total population amounting to 28 per cent of the total population of the region, had average annual enrolment growth rates below the average for the region, while eleven, representing 72 per cent of the regional population, had rates higher than the regional rate (see tables 1 and 2). Although these data show that considerable progress has been made in extending primary education, a detailed study of some of the features of the primary education pyramid leads to a moderation of the optimistic picture conveyed by a first impression of the rise in enrolment.

11. The over-all rise in enrolment is partly due to the larger number of children in the schools, but also partly to the reduction in the dropout rate. It is estimated that of the 28 million children enrolled in primary schools in 1962, 40 per cent were in the first grade, as against 45 per cent in 1956; thus the proportion of enrolment in the first three grades of the primary course declined from over 80 per cent of the total in 1956 to about 77 per cent in 1962.

12. The distribution of primary enrolments by grade in the various countries, and the evolution since 1956, are shown in table 3. This table shows that the concentration of children in the first grade fluctuated between 24 and 50 per cent, according to the country concerned. The graph gives a better picture of the degree of asymetry in the different countries. Hand in hand with the reduction of the porportion of the total represented by children in the first grade, there is a general rise in the proportion of children in the last grade. This increase is significant, since when the school system is passing through a stage of rapid development, the addition every year of an increasing number of children in the first grade may have an adverse effect on the ratio between the first grade and the subsequent grades, by continually broadening the base of the pyramid, unless there is a corresponding decline in the dropout rate.

13. Table 4 gives the gross school retention rate in the last grade for an initial group of 100 pupils. The data available do not permit calculations of net coefficients (on the basis of pupils beginning the course for the first time), but the comparison of the two groups over a period of time gives an idea of the rates of retention. By way of illustration, it should be noted that the retention coefficient rose in Brazil from 19 to 25 per cent in the group between 1954-1957 and 1958-1961, in Chile from 25 to 33 per cent between 1951-1956 and 1957-1962, and in Paraguay from 12 to 14 per cent between 1954-1959 and 1957-1962.

14. The comparison of the retention coefficients (see tables 3 and 4), and the number of enrolments in the last grade as a percentage of those in the first for a given school year, or enrolment pyramid (see last column of table 3), gives a picture of the character and magnitude of the changes that have occurred in the structure and movement of enrolments. In a static system the retention coefficient (pyramid for a group) and the

Table 1

LATIN AMERICA: ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 1950 AND 1956-62

Year	Number (thousands)
1950	15 000
1956	20 360
1957	21 249
1958	22 495
1959	24 279
1960	25 664
1961	27 363
1962	27 804

Average annual rate of increase

1950 - 1956 : 4 per cent.

1956 - 1962 : 5.4 per cent.

Table 2

## LATIN AMERICA: PUPILS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 1955-62

(Thousands)

Country	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
Argentina	2 734.7	2 723.5	2 782.5	2 859.8	2 907.5	2 947.7	3 009.2	3 055.7 <sup>a/</sup>
Bolivia	...	307.0	317.0	332.0	375.0	424.0	466.6	497.4
Brazil	...	6 094.0	6 465.6	6 775.8	7 141.3	7 458.0	7 798.7	7 846.0
Colombia	1 236.1	1 311.5	1 381.3	1 493.1	1 568.6	1 690.4	1 791.8	1 904.0
Costa Rica	153.9	154.9	157.8	174.0	184.1	198.0	207.6	225.6
Cuba	701.3	746.9	756.0	783.0	1 100.0	1 368.0	1 573.0	1 777.0 <sup>a/</sup>
Chile	952.4	980.2	1 035.1	1 095.4	1 143.9	1 186.3	1 219.4	1 297.3
Ecuador <sup>b/</sup>	461.8	490.3	501.6	529.2	565.8	596.0	608.8	641.5 <sup>a/</sup>
El Salvador <sup>b/</sup>	214.9	221.3	232.4	266.7	286.9	297.5	312.6	353.6
Guatemala	216.1	229.3	249.8	259.9	282.0	296.9	312.6	338.9
Haiti	212.1	214.0 <sup>a/</sup>	200.9	204.8	211.0 <sup>a/</sup>	238.5	245.0 <sup>a/</sup>	230.9 <sup>a/</sup>
Honduras	128.0	135.9	146.6	171.9	192.5	205.1	222.4	237.8
Mexico	3 458.0	3 588.2	3 845.3	4 051.2	4 436.6	4 885.0	5 247.3	5 620.3
Nicaragua	118.7	128.0	131.7	147.0	135.1	144.7	168.5	194.2
Panama	137.7	141.3	142.6	145.6	155.5	161.8	171.2	179.8
Paraguay	265.9	273.4	287.0	290.5	296.5	305.5	311.8	327.1
Peru	1 074.6	1 202.7 <sup>b/</sup>	1 233.9 <sup>b/</sup>	1 308.2 <sup>b/</sup>	1 392.0 <sup>b/</sup>	1 440.0 <sup>b/</sup>	1 495.0 <sup>b/</sup>	1 554.4 <sup>a/</sup>
Dominican Republic	385.5	444.9	461.0	479.5	493.5	498.6	499.6	507.2
Uruguay	274.7	295.0 <sup>b/</sup>	301.6 <sup>b/</sup>	310.2 <sup>b/</sup>	313.9 <sup>b/</sup>	319.9 <sup>b/</sup>	331.7 <sup>b/</sup>	343.0 <sup>a/</sup>
Venezuela	629.4	677.2	735.1	900.2	1 074.4	1 223.0	1 277.0	1 324.8
Total	18 000.0 <sup>a/</sup>	20 359.5	21 374.8	22 578.1	24 257.1	25 884.9	27 269.8	27 856.5 <sup>a/</sup>

<sup>a/</sup> Provisional.<sup>b/</sup> Includes pupils enrolled in evening primary schools.<sup>s/</sup> Estimated.

Table 3

LATIN AMERICA: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT BY GRADES, 1956-1962

Country	Year	Total enrolled	Grade							Number in last grade as percentage of number in first grade	
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Argentina	1956	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1961	100.0	23.5	17.3	15.4	13.8	11.7	10.0	8.4	...	36
Difference			...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bolivia	1956	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1962	100.0	36.8	19.9	15.5	11.8	8.8	6.6	-	-	18
Difference			...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brazil	1956	100.0	55.8	22.0	14.6	7.6	-	-	-	-	14
	1961	100.0	53.0	21.8	15.2	9.7	0.3	-	-	-	18
Difference			-(2.8)	-(0.2)	0.6	2.1	0.3	-	-	-	4
Colombia	1956	100.0	48.6	27.1	12.0	7.5	4.8	-	-	-	10
	1961	100.0	45.2	26.2	13.4	8.9	6.3	-	-	-	14
Difference			-(3.4)	-(0.9)	1.4	1.4	1.5	-	-	-	4
Costa Rica	1957	100.0	32.2	23.4	17.3	12.2	8.5	6.4	-	-	20
	1962	100.0	30.6	21.8	17.9	13.4	9.4	6.9	-	-	23
Difference			-(1.6)	-(1.6)	0.6	1.2	0.9	0.5	-	-	3
Cuba	1955	100.0	32.2	19.9	17.1	13.9	9.8	7.1	-	-	22
	1962	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
Difference			...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
Chile	1956	100.0	32.9	20.4	16.9	13.4	9.4	7.0	-	-	21
	1962	100.0	28.7	19.1	16.5	14.1	10.9	10.7	-	-	37
Difference			-(4.2)	-(1.3)	-(0.4)	0.7	1.5	3.7	-	-	16
Ecuador	1956	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
	1961	100.0	37.5	19.6	16.8	11.8	8.0	6.3	-	-	17
Difference			...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
El Salvador	1956	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
	1962	100.0	39.6	21.0	14.8	10.8	7.7	6.1	-	-	15
Difference			...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
Haiti	1954	100.0	65.1	14.4	9.0	5.7	3.5	2.3	-	-	4
	1962	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
Difference			...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
Honduras	1956	100.0	49.0	22.6	12.1	7.0	5.4	3.9	-	-	8
	1962	100.0	43.4	22.6	14.6	9.1	6.1	4.2	-	-	10
Difference			-(5.6)	-	2.5	2.1	0.7	0.3	-	-	2
Mexico	1956	100.0	42.2	21.7	14.7	9.4	6.7	5.3	-	-	13
	1960	100.0	38.5	21.9	15.1	10.4	7.7	6.4	-	-	16
Difference			-(3.7)	0.2	0.4	1.0	1.0	1.1	-	-	3
Nicaragua	1956	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
	1961	100.0	56.6	17.9	10.3	6.8	4.8	3.6	-	-	6
Difference			...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
Panama	1956	100.0	22.0	23.5	16.0	17.0	10.7	10.7	-	-	49
	1962	100.0	27.5	20.4	17.8	13.7	11.6	9.0	-	-	33
Difference			5.5	-(3.1)	1.8	-(3.3)	0.9	-(1.7)	-	-	-(16)
Paraguay	1956	100.0	42.9	22.9	15.0	9.4	5.9	3.9	-	-	9
	1962	100.0	36.8	23.7	16.6	10.8	7.3	4.8	-	-	13
Difference			-(6.1)	0.8	1.6	1.4	1.4	0.9	-	-	4
Peru	1956	100.0	36.2	21.0	16.2	12.3	8.4	5.9	-	-	16
	1962	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
Difference			...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
Uruguay	1956	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
	1962	100.0	25.4	19.5	17.8	15.8	12.1	9.4	-	-	37
Difference			...	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	...
Venezuela	1955	100.0	36.5	20.0	16.3	11.9	8.9	6.4	-	-	18
	1962	100.0	31.0	19.7	18.3	13.9	10.0	6.9	-	-	22
Difference			-(5.5)	-(0.3)	2.0	2.0	1.1	0.5	-	-	4

Table 4

## LATIN AMERICA: PRIMARY SCHOOL GROSS RETENTION RATES

Country	Enrolled in first grade		Number of primary grades	Enrolled in last grade	
	Year	Percentage		Year	Percentage
Argentina	1955	100	7	1961	39
	1956	100		1962	40
Bolivia <sup>a/</sup>	1960	100	6	1962	(17)
Brazil	1954	100	4	1957	19
	1958	100		1961	25
Chile	1951	100	6	1956	25
	1957	100		1962	33
Colombia	1954	100	5	1958	14
	1957	100		1961	17
	1958	100		1962	18
Costa Rica	1954	100	6	1956	25
	1957	100		1962	29
Cuba	1957	100	6	1962	46
Dominican Republic	1957	100	6	1962	7
Ecuador	1956	100	6	1961	21
El Salvador	1957	100	6	1962	21
Guatemala	1957	100	6	1962	15
Haiti	1957	100	6	1962	14
Honduras	1957	100	6	1962	14
Mexico	1957	100	6	1962	23
Nicaragua	1956	100	6	1961	8
Panama	1953	100	6	1958	45
	1957	100	6	1962	48
Paraguay	1954	100	6	1959	12
	1957	100	6	1962	14
Peru	1953	100	6	1958	23
	1957	100	6	1962	26
Uruguay	1957	100	6	1962	39
Venezuela	1953	100	6	1958	23
	1957	100	6	1962	35

<sup>a/</sup> The data available permit the calculation only for the years given in the table.

/percentage of

percentage of enrolments in the last grade in relation to those in the first grade (the annual pyramid by grade) coincide. The steady rise in enrolment in the first grade tends to reduce the ratio between the last and first grades in an annual pyramid, and increase the difference between this ratio and the retention coefficient. On the other hand a rise in enrolment in the higher grades, due to an expansion of the school, the return to school of children who have been absent, the reduction of dropping out or an increase in repetition rates, has the opposite effect. This point is illustrated by a comparison between some of the figures in tables 3 and 4. In Chile there was a considerable improvement in the ratio last/first grade between 1956 and 1962, and in the retention coefficient between 1951-1956 and 1957-1962, but the ratio between the figure of 37 for the annual pyramid and 33 for the coefficient indicates a more rapid expansion in the higher grades than in the first grade. In Panama, on the other hand, there is a decline in the ratio last/first grade and an improvement in the retention coefficient; this reflects a rise in the rate of enrolment in the first grade. A more detailed analysis would make it possible to establish how far these structural changes are due to favourable factors (extension of the educational system, or reduction of dropping out) or unfavourable factors (increase in the repetition rate).

15. Despite the slight improvement in retention rates, the distribution of enrolments by grade is very much out of proportion to the population group concerned, as can be seen from table 5 and figures I and II. The number of pupils enrolled in the first grade in Latin America is nearly double the number of children aged seven, the population group of the age to enter school, which in a fully developed educational system normally coincides more or less with the number in the first grade. The coefficients for various countries in the region, in terms of the number in the first grade expressed as a percentage of the total population of seven-year-olds, are:

Argentina	165
Brazil	202
Chile	173
Mexico	188
Panama	149
Venezuela	173

16. As previously noted, in a school system that is developing at the proper pace, it is normal for the first grade to expand more rapidly, since as school facilities are extended, children of various ages who have never attended school before enter the first grade, and this sharply affects the ratio between the number in the first grade and the number of children aged 7 (or whatever age is laid down as the school entry age, depending on the country). However, the situation is more serious if repetitions constitute a significant factor in the rise of this coefficient. It is estimated that in Latin America repeaters constitute about 20-25 per cent of all enrolments, and 30-40 per cent of enrolments in the first grade. The number of repeaters declines to a relatively low level in the highest

Table 5

## LATIN AMERICA: ENROLMENT BY GRADES RELATED TO POPULATION AGED 7-15, 1962

(Estimates)

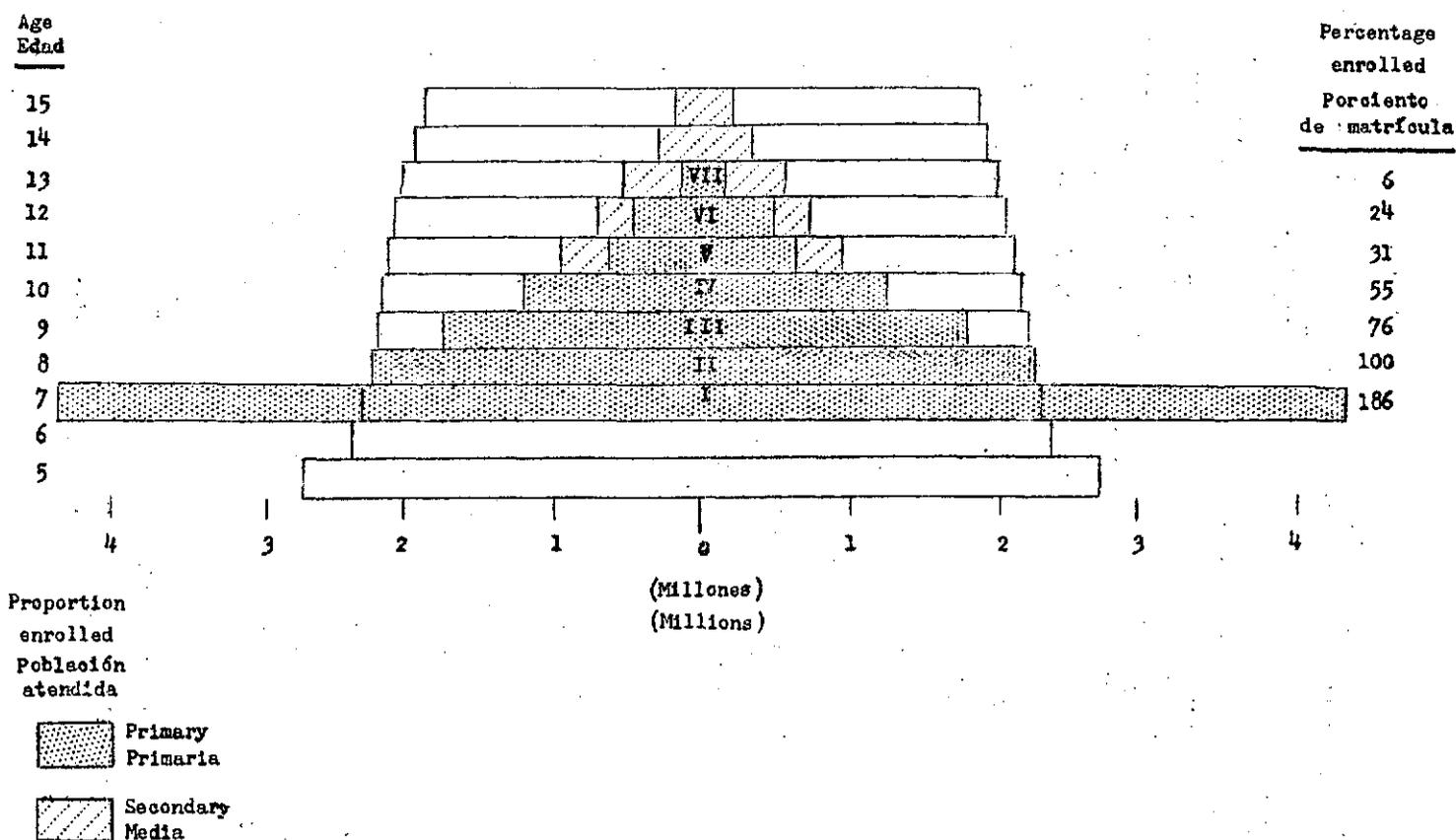
Age	Estimated population (thousands)	Age	Enrolment		Percentage enrolled		
			Primary (thousands)	Secondary (thousands)	Primary	Secondary	Total
<u>Fifteen Latin American countries <sup>a/</sup></u>							
7-12	27 736	I-IV	22 580	976	82	4	86
13-15	11 718	VII; 1-3	253	1 759	2	15	17
7	5 022	I	9 336	-	186	-	186
8	4 836	II	4 845	-	100	-	100
9	4 650	III	3 529	-	76	-	76
10	4 550	IV	2 495	-	55	-	55
11	4 400	V	1 363	562	31	13	44
12	4 278	VI	1 010	414	24	10	34
13	4 092	1 VII	253	790	6	19	25
14	3 906	2	-	589	-	15	15
15	3 720	3	-	380	-	10	10
<u>Fourteen Latin American countries <sup>b/</sup></u>							
7-12	16 488	1-VI	14 782	-	90	-	90
13-15	7 015	VII; 1-3	253	1 444	4	21	25
7	2 990	I	5 215	-	174	-	174
8	2 879	II	3 153	-	110	-	110
9	2 768	III	2 329	-	84	-	84
10	2 710	IV	1 746	-	64	-	64
11	2 594	V	1 329	-	51	-	51
12	2 547	VI	1 010	-	40	-	40
13	2 438	1; VII	253	475	10	19	29
14	2 325	2	-	589	-	25	25
15	2 252	3	-	380	-	17	17

<sup>a/</sup> 85 per cent of the population of the region.<sup>b/</sup> 51 per cent of the population of the region.

Gráfico 1/ Figure 1

AMERICA LATINA: RELACION ENTRE MATRICULA POR GRADO Y POBLACION DE 7 A 15 AÑOS, 1962  
(15 países con 85 por ciento de la población de la región)

LATIN AMERICA: ENROLMENT BY GRADES RELATED TO POPULATION AGED 7-15, 1962  
(Fifteen countries accounting for 51 per cent of the population of the region)

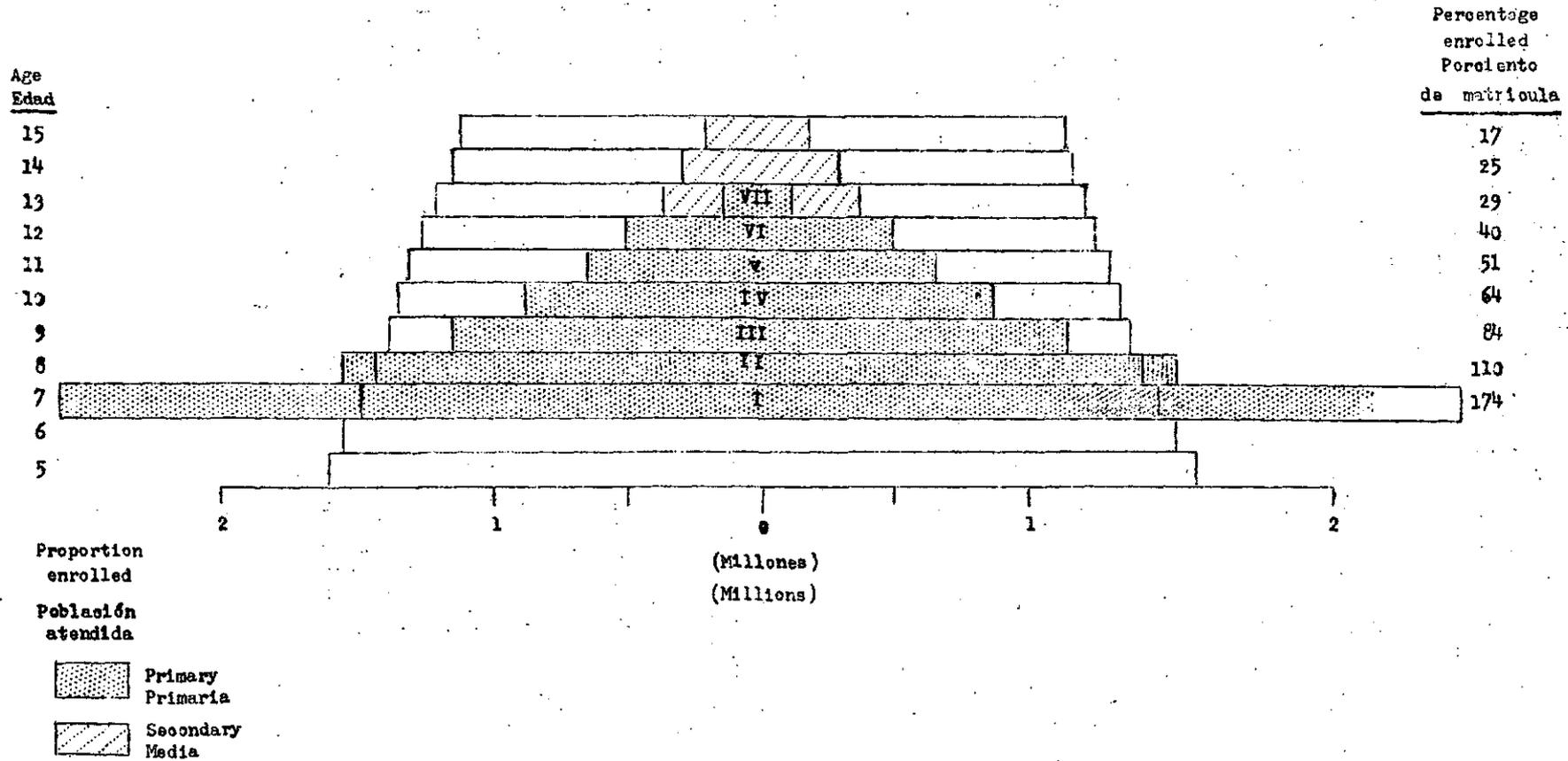


//Figure II

Gráfico 2 / Figure 2

AMERICA LATINA: RELACION ENTRE MATRICULA POR GRADO Y POBLACION DE 7 A 15 AÑOS, 1962  
 (14 países con 51 por ciento de la población de la región)

LATIN AMERICA: ENROLMENT BY GRADES RELATED TO POPULATION AGED 7-15, 1962  
 (Fourteen countries accounting for 51 per cent of the population of the region)



/primary grade.

primary grade. Repeating is rather less for urban than rural children, which may indicate either a higher level of school performance, or a lower number of children who return to school after having dropped out during the school year or having failed an examination, or both. Some children have to repeat a grade more than once.

17. If the percentage of repetitions is applied to the data in table 5, it can be seen that in the fourteen countries that account for half the total population of the region, the total number of repeaters may amount to about 3 million, and to a million and a half for repeaters in the first grade. For the Latin American countries as a whole the number of repeaters may amount to 6 million, of which about 3 million repeat the first grade.

18. The high concentration of children in the first grade, together with the high rate of repetition, reflects a considerable retardation for the children concerned. In fact, in every grade the average age of the pupils is usually one or two years higher than the normal age, and in the worst cases the percentage of pupils whose age is above the normal age is as high as 70 per cent. Consequently there are some pupils in the first grade who would normally, on age grounds, be in the higher grades at the secondary level. This retardation affects the school retention rates, reduces the efficiency of the school system, increases costs per pupil completing the course, and has an effect first on the post-primary levels and subsequently on the active population, by limiting the supply of young people with a basic training adequate to meet the requirements of the modern world.

19. A study of the percentage of children that enrolled in the schools at each year of age shows that some children enter the primary school at the age of five or six, while others remain there until the age of fifteen or over. As shown in table 6 and figures III and IV, the number of children who enter school at the age of five or six is insignificant. The maximum rate of enrolment is always at the age of ten, which shows that children enter school for the first time at any age between six and ten. After ten years of age the enrolment rate declines, which indicates a gradually dropping out. Although enrolment in primary schools has increased, in both relative and absolute terms, the number of children not enrolled in school is still high. For the nine countries that account for 77 per cent of the population of Latin America (see table 6), the coefficient for children between the ages of 7 and 12 who are enrolled is an average of 64 per cent. In absolute figures, of the 24 million children between these ages in the fourteen countries considered, about 9 million are outside the educational system. Of the 8 million children aged between seven and eight, nearly 3 million are not in school. For the region as a whole these figures must be in the region of 10-11 million and 4 million, respectively. The table given below gives the absolute figures for estimated non-attendance at school, by age groups, for selected Latin American countries.

Table 6

LATIN AMERICA: SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN RELATION TO POPULATION, BY AGE GROUPS  
AND BY SCHOOL PARTICIPATION RATES, 1962

(Estimates)

Age	Estimated population (thousands)	Age	Enrolment		Percentage of population enrolled		
			Primary (thousands)	Secondary (thousands)	Primary	Secondary	Total
<u>Nine Latin American countries <sup>a/</sup></u>							
5-6	8 980	- 7	933	-	10	-	10
7-12	23 697	7-12	15 299	-	64	-	64
13-15	10 052	13-15 & +	2 510	...	25	...	...
5	4 562	- 7	933	-	10	-	10
6	4 418						
7	4 273	7	5 346	-	64	-	64
8	4 117						
9	3 967	9	5 600	-	71	-	71
10	3 887						
11	3 801	11	4 353	-	58	-	58
12	3 652						
13	3 502	13	2 018	...	29	...	...
14	3 345						
15	3 205	15 & +	492	...	15	...	...
<u>Eight Latin American countries (not including Brazil) <sup>b/</sup></u>							
5-6	4 932	- 7	859	-	17	-	17
7-12	13 082	7-12	9 769	...	75	...	75
13-15	6 582	13-15 & +	1 709	782 <sup>c/</sup>	26	16 <sup>c/</sup>	42 <sup>c/</sup>
5	2 504	- 7	859	-	17	-	17
6	2 428						
7	2 353	7	3 541	-	77	-	77
8	2 267						
9	2 192	9	3 414	-	79	-	79
10	2 147						
11	2 101	11	2 815	}	68	}	70
12	2 022						
13	1 942	13	1 361	}	36	}	...
14	1 855						
15	1 785	15 & +	348	512	10	14	

<sup>a/</sup> 77 per cent of the population of the region.

<sup>b/</sup> 43 per cent of the population of the region.

<sup>c/</sup> Includes children of 12 at the secondary level.

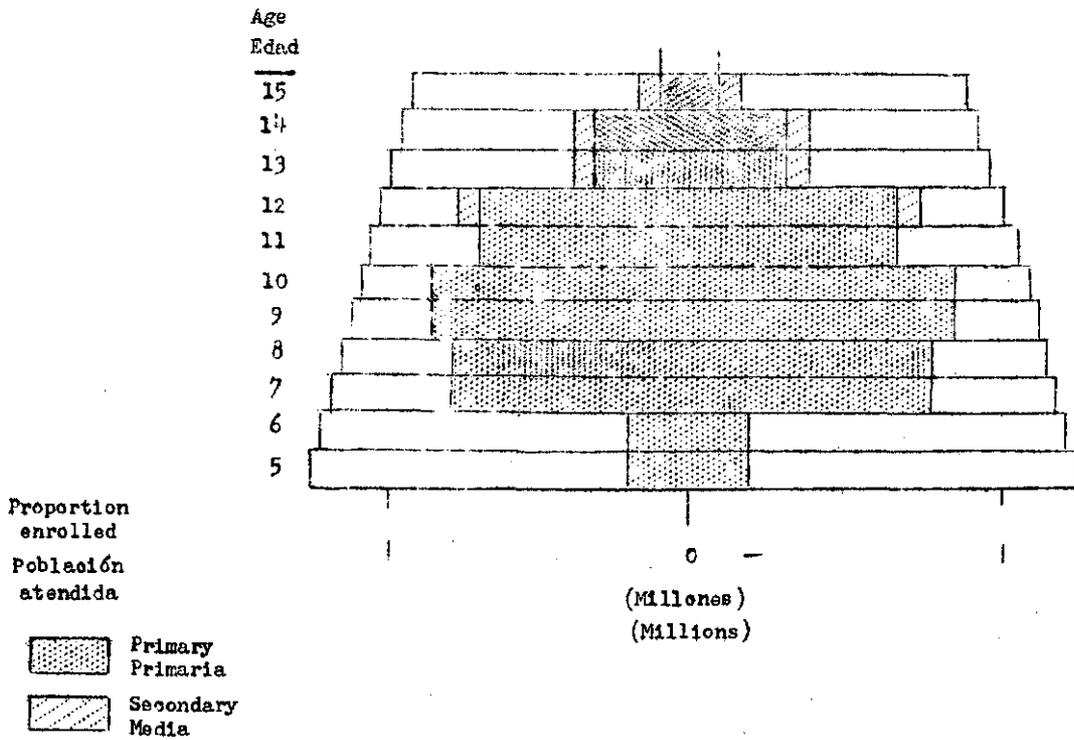
/Figure III

Gráfico 3/ Figure 3

AMERICA LATINA: POBLACION DE 5 A 15 AÑOS. ATENDIDA POR LAS ESCUELAS PRIMARIAS  
(8 países con 42 por ciento de la población de la región)

LATIN AMERICA: SCHOOL PARTICIPATION RATE FOR POPULATION AGED 5-15

(Eight countries accounting for 42 per cent of the population of the region)

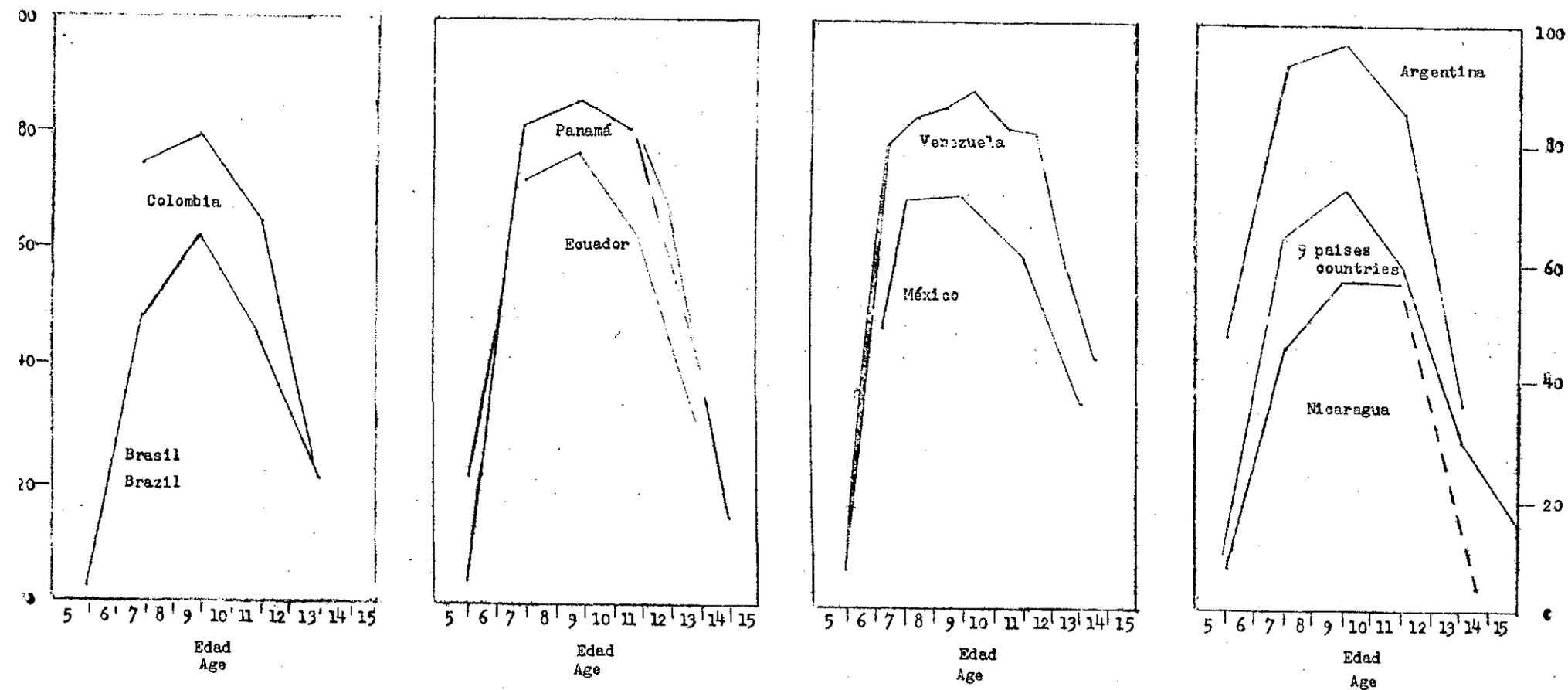


/Figure IV

Gráfico 4/Figura 4

AMERICA LATINA: PORCIENTO DE LA POBLACION DE 5 A 15 AÑOS, ATENDIDA POR LA ENSEÑANZA PRIMARIA EN VARIOS PAISES

LATIN AMERICA: PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE RATE FOR POPULATION AGED 5-15 IN SELECTED COUNTRIES



ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN AGED 5-15 NOT COVERED BY THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

(Thousands)

Country	Ages				
	5 and 6	7 and 8	9 and 10	11 and 12	13 to 15
Argentina	470	64	36	119	470
Bolivia	180	60	42	57	120
Brazil	3 900	1 975	1 329	1 792	-
Colombia	320	198	148	244	540
Ecuador	200	64	51	78	170
Mexico	1 800	560	660	700	1 400
Nicaragua	80	36	33	22	-
Panama	70	12	9	11	30
Venezuela	370	89	56	71	200

20. Non-attendance at school may be due to various factors, such as the lack of suitable conditions or facilities for education as the result either of social and economic factors (such as extreme poverty in the family) or geographical factors (isolation of families living in places difficult of access, lack of roads, etc.), that result either in complete non-attendance, or late entry; the lack of teaching services to enable the pupils to complete the full course of primary education, with a consequent cutting short of the school career; inadequate enforcement of the obligation to attend school, leading to late entry and irregular attendance; a discrepancy between the statutory ages covered by compulsory education, and the duration of the primary course, with a consequent variation in the age at which schooling begins, and retardation.

21. In brief, the constant gross rise in enrolment, both in absolute and relative terms, in the school systems in Latin America is accompanied by the following defects:

- a) An excessive concentration of pupils in the first grade;
- b) A high rate of repetition, particularly marked in the first grade and in the rural areas;
- c) Retardation of the enrolled pupils in terms of the normal age for the grade concerned;

/d) Irregular

- d) Irregular attendance of those enrolled;
- e) Dropping out of school before completion of the primary course;
- f) Failure to observe the rules on the enrolment in the school of children who have reached school age, and consequently relatively high non-attendance coefficients for specific ages.

22. The situation described above is largely the result of a combination of highly adverse factors that are responsible for the poor school results, in terms of both quantity and quality. They include the large numbers of teachers who are not properly qualified for their work; the unsatisfactory grading and distribution of the pupils in school classes, which often leads to fifty, seventy or even a hundred children in the first grade being left in the hands of a single teacher, while the number drop to ten or less in the tenth grade; careless preparation of study plans and curricula that have not been tested in practice and fail to strike a balance between the level of knowledge and normal learning capacity of the different ages; the methods of grade promotion followed by the majority of countries; and the want of a system whereby specific persons would be made directly responsible for school performance. All these factors make it difficult to devise effective methods of teaching that would also be attractive to the children and their parents and would help to spread education.

23. One anomaly that strikes at the child's right to education is the continued existence of rural schools that do not provide the whole course of primary studies. A large proportion of the school age population living in the countryside is consequently unable to receive a complete primary education and is also cut off from secondary schools, which only take pupils who have completed the full primary course of studies of the kind normally provided in urban areas. This sort of rural school is thus a source of exacerbating and unjust discrimination, as it automatically prevents a vast sector of the population from having access to educational opportunities and deprives society of the potentially important contribution to be made by such children whose minds remain undeveloped because of the virtual impossibility of continuing their studies at the secondary and higher levels.

24. Enrolment for intermediate studies has risen considerably in recent years, although the drop-out rate is still very high, as in the primary schools. The additional influx of secondary school pupils is so great that it can be barely be absorbed, and presents school administrators with thorny problems at the beginning of every school year. This movement towards the secondary schools is ill-directed in the sense that it follows the traditional pattern whereby secondary education is regarded as a stepping-stone to the university instead of as an end in itself. The upshot is an increasing number of young people who have passed their bachillerato but, for financial reasons, or because of the limited capacity of the limited capacity of the

/universities, cannot

universities, cannot go on to the higher levels of study, and, on reaching working age, find themselves in the disagreeable position of not having received any kind of specialized training that would have helped them to become useful and contented job-holders.

25. It is clear from the foregoing that one of the most serious problems confronting the educational system in Latin America is how, after a sufficient period of basic education, to diversify secondary education so that young people can have an opportunity of taking specialized courses of study suited both to their own abilities and to the economic needs of the country.

26. Another problem closely associated with this is the dearth of services for advising young people and helping them to develop their potentialities. To begin with, the country's requirements in terms of professional and other workers must be worked out, so that students can find out which branches of activity are most useful for the society in which they live. Secondly, there are hardly any vocational and other guidance facilities to undertake the vital task of helping children and adolescents to unravel personality problems or to deal with the difficulties they may come up against at school. The need for such complementary facilities as professional guidance services is also becoming daily more acute. These would ensure that the varied talents and aptitudes of the students are turned to good account, and thereby help them not only to work well at but to identify themselves with whatever trade or profession they may take up, which is a condition of cardinal importance if they are to be happy themselves and to adapt well to society.

27. Another vital area which has been generally neglected by educational systems in Latin America is the care of specially gifted children, on the one hand, and of children with physical, sensory, mental or psychological disabilities on the other. It is obviously desirable for unusually intelligent children to be given the means to continue their studies so that the greatest possible benefits can be obtained from their abilities and mental powers. As regards children who are handicapped in one or other of the ways indicated above, it is often said that the education of normal children presents too many problems for care to be lavished on the abnormal. This heartless and mistaken point of view can only be held by a person who has no first-hand or close experience of the terrible problems that beset a family with a handicapped child and no specialized institution to which they can entrust its education.

28. One of the main obstacles to implementation of the right to education is the lack of social welfare services for them. Many families have to take their children away from school for want of money, and although the ideal and most equitable solution would be a fairer distribution of income among the different social sectors, any help that can be extended to a child in the shape of food, clothing and school equipment would give a much-needed fillip to compliance with the law on compulsory school attendance. Experience has shown that when this kind of aid has been given, the enrolment figures have jumped up and class attendance has become more regular.

## III

The financing of education

29. Funds for educational purposes are known to come from a variety of sources: the public sector (central, provincial and municipal government budget appropriations), the private sector (private schools, voluntary or compulsory contributions, credits for educational establishments), the family sector (school and other fees and donations to educational establishments), and external (technical assistance programmes, credits, donations).

The possibilities of the public sector are bounded, on the one hand, by the gross national product, and, on the other, by the demand generated by economic and social development in other sectors of activity. The principal source of funds for education has been the national budget, and it will doubtless continue to play the same part in plans for amplifying educational facilities. But the growth of demand may well tax the resources of the public sector to the utmost, and, if this is so, additional funds must be sought elsewhere.

30. Private education is financed mainly by private funds. As about 12 per cent of the primary school age population is educated in private schools, together with an even larger proportion at the secondary level, enrollment fees or other payments undoubtedly bring in a sizable amount of revenue for educational purposes. Furthermore, in most of the Latin American countries agricultural or industrial enterprises which lead their workers to remote areas far from communities with a teaching centre are compelled by law to provide schools for them.

Although the exact amount of such contributions is not known, it may safely be said that more could and should be done. In this connexion, it is interesting to see the enormous scale on which such contributions are made in the United States, and the way, in which the enterprises go about their task.

31. Family and social contributions are another and potentially important source of funds. In some countries, State-owned educational establishments, other than primary schools, are charging enrollment and other fees which, while so low as to be virtually nominal, do bring in a certain amount of revenue for developing educational services. This type of contribution can and should be increased for building and equipping school premises, paying for their upkeep and providing social welfare services for the pupils. It is clear that family contributions are dependent, in general, on the volume of income available and its distribution.

32. As regards external aid, it is essential to enlarge its field of coverage and use it in such a way as to obtain the maximum returns. Limited borrowing capacity and a dearth of specific projects for which aid could be requested make it difficult for credits, donations and multilateral or bilateral aid programmes to be used to good purpose.

33. Tables 7, 8 and 9 trace the evolution of educational financing by central governments as a percentage of national income and of total budget expenditure. They also present this in the form of an index at constant prices in order to eliminate inflationary effects. The three indicators show a general upward trend (see tables 7, 8 and 9).
34. The data given in table 10 give an idea of the proportion funds deriving from sources other than the public treasury in selected Latin American countries (see table 10).
35. Too little information is available to work out a satisfactory table on the distribution of resources in the region and even in the public sector. There are, however, some aspects which have been observed at first hand in a number of Latin American countries and may therefore be mentioned here. The relative share of personal services (wages) in total expenditure is very high, despite the generally low wage level. This means that funds to cover the other operational expenses of the educational system are in short supply. Too little money is spent on upkeep, with the result that the fixtures deteriorate rapidly and have to be replaced at a far higher cost than that of the original repairs, to the detriment of the enlargements needed. Another side of the question is that investment programmes seldom make provision for operating expenses, the result being that there are schools and equipment that cannot be used and, in some cases, buildings that remain unfinished for long periods. Overheads seem to have no relation to the efficiency and technical qualifications of the personnel concerned. In a number of Latin American countries, there is a marked disparity between the allotments for the different levels, with far more normally going to the universities. Lack of efficiency (repetition and dropping out) tends to keep the unit cost of each pupil who completes the primary cycle at a high level. Lastly, pensions are a relatively large item in educational costs. In many countries, the active life of a teacher is fairly short. Large sums therefore have to be earmarked in the education or over-all budget for payment of pensions, and staff numbers are thus inevitably kept down.
36. In short, rapid economic and social development increases the demand for resources in every sector, which means that the public sector may not be able to do much more for education particularly on the basis of the central government budget. The low wage level, lack of attention to other operating expenses, especially in the primary grades, the introduction of modern techniques into administration (supervisory and vocational guidance services), coupled with population pressure, the need for extending and diversifying professional and technical training at the secondary level, the increased emphasis laid on the teaching of science at every level and the general improvement in teaching quality, all combine to aggravate the situation. It is essential to make the system more effective, although the sole result would be to improve its performance. New sources of funds must therefore be tapped, either at home (the private sector or family contribution) or abroad (technical assistance, donations or credits) in order to keep up the rate of development and prevent stagnation from setting in.

Table 7

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A PERCENTAGE ON NATIONAL INCOME, 1956-64

Country	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964
Argentina	1.7	...	2.5	2.8	1.8	2.2	2.3	...	...
Chile	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.1	2.8	(E)3.1
Colombia	0.7	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.6	1.4	1.9	(RE)1.5	...
Costa Rica	2.5	2.7	3.4	3.8	4.1	4.1	4.1	...	...
Ecuador	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.1	(E)2.3	...
El Salvador	...	...	2.5	2.6	2.8	3.3	2.6	(E)2.6	...
Honduras	1.4	1.5	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.3	...
Mexico	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.8	2.0	(E)2.3	...	...
Panama	4.0	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.4	...	...
Peru	1.8	1.8	2.3	2.3	3.2	...	...	(E)5.0	...
Venezuela	1.4	1.5	1.5	2.6	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.3	(E)3.4

Source: The percentages are based on figures for total central government expenditure on education taken from the United Nations Statistical Yearbook, 1959, 1963, 1964, table on "Budget accounts and public debt" and national income estimates from the same source. Because of differences in the budget systems and accounting practices of the various governments, as well as in their internal structure and the scope of their economic activities (in centralized states the central government is almost entirely responsible for education, while in federal states regional authorities share the burden), the data simply reflect the trends within each country and cannot be used for inter-country comparisons.

E: Voted estimates.

RE: Revised estimates.

Table 8

LATIN AMERICA: CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A PROPORTION  
OF TOTAL BUDGET EXPENDITURE, 1956-64

(Percentages)

Country	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Argentina	9.7	...	10.1	10.8	8.6	9.7	10.7	...	...	...
Bolivia	...	17.1	...	...	...	21.9	24.4	(E)24.4	...	...
Chile	17.1	15.5	16.6	17.3	13.2	13.0	13.4	13.2	(E)14.4	...
Colombia	6.3	6.1	9.5	8.7	10.7	13.6	13.0	(RE)13.4	(E)13.0	...
Costa Rica	17.8	17.9	22.6	26.2	26.5	26.0	24.7	25.4	(E)27.3	(DE)28.1
Dominican Republic	...	...	13.7	12.8	10.2	10.5	13.1	17.2	(E)26.1	...
Ecuador	11.4	10.7	12.3	11.5	11.1	11.8	15.3	(RE)15.8	(E)14.5	...
El Salvador	13.4	14.8	14.6	16.6	18.2	21.3	22.3	(E)22.1	...	...
Haiti	...	...	...	(E)9.9	...	(E)10.6	(E)10.1	(E)11.1	(E)10.5	(E)11.2
Honduras	11.4	11.2	...	17.9	18.2	18.3	18.0	20.1	...	...
Mexico	13.1	...	11.1	13.2	12.8	15.7	(E)21.8	(E)22.4	(E)24.3	...
Panama	18.3	21.8	21.0	20.4	20.7	19.5	22.1	19.8	(E)19.0	...
Peru	7.4	7.4	9.8	10.5	16.0	...	...	(E)19.0	(DE)18.0	...
Venezuela	3.2	3.7	4.3	8.2	10.3	10.0	12.1	12.0	(E)12.3	(E)12.2

Source: United Nations, Statistical Yearbook, 1959, 1963, 1964, table "Budget accounts and public debt".

Note: The percentages represent the relation of central government expenditure on education to total government expenditure. Because of differences in the budget systems and accounting practices of the various governments, as well as in their internal structure and the scope of their economic activities (in centralized states the central government is almost entirely responsible for education, while in federal states regional authorities share the burden), the data simply reflect the trends within each country and cannot be used for inter-country comparisons.

E: Voted estimates.

DE: Draft estimates submitted to Parliament.

RE: Revised estimates.

Table 9

INDEX OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AT CONSTANT PRICES

(1956 = 100)

Country	1956	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964
Argentina	100	97	127	128	...	...
Bolivia	100	...	112	133	(E)181	...
Chile	100	124	129	145	137	(E)148
Colombia	100	182	267	403	(RE)294	(E)264
Costa Rica	100	200	206	219	221	(E)230
Ecuador	100	127	149	168	(E)188	(E)211
El Salvador	100	130	165	169	(E)170	...
Honduras	100	188	175	188	200	...
Mexico	100	177	204	(E)253	...	...
Panama	100	136	155	173	191	(E)200
Peru	100	217	...	...	(E)451	(DE)455
Venezuela	100	298	291	314	332	(E)364

Source: The indexes are based on the figures for total central government expenditure on education taken from the United Nations Statistical Yearbook, 1959, 1963, 1964, table "Budget accounts and public debt", adjusted to constant prices through the corresponding cost-of-living indexes.

E: Voted estimates.

DE: Draft estimates submitted to Parliament.

RE: Revised estimates.

Table 10

CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION FROM SOURCES OUTSIDE THE PUBLIC TREASURY, 1962

(Percentage of total)

	Argentina		Colombia	Ecuador	Mexico	Venezuela
	Public sector	Private sector				
Own resources	3.3	15.8	-	-	-	-
General contributions	1.4	5.3	8.5	-	13.0	-
Entrepreneurial contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-
External contributions	-	-	1.6	12.5	-	1.5
Credits	1.8	-	-	2.3	3.3	-
<u>Total</u>	<u>6.5</u>	<u>21.1</u>	<u>10.1</u>	<u>14.8</u>	<u>16.3</u>	<u>1.5</u>

Source: Cost of education in Argentina in 1962. Replies to a questionnaire sent out for the report to the Consultative Committee of the Major Project for the Extension and Improvement of Primary Education in Latin America.

/PROBLEMS ARISING

IV

Problems arising from the foregoing situation for a policy aimed  
at giving practical effect to the right to education

37. Every educational policy has the supreme responsibility of ensuring that sufficient opportunities are made available so that practical effect can be given to the right to education. How far it is able to do so will depend on certain beliefs and views held by school administrators and educators and by the pains taken to plan and implement the measures to be applied. People in such positions must, in the first place, be firmly convinced that the exercise of the right to education is vital for the individual and for society as a whole.

They must also be prepared to take the necessary steps to make that right fully effective. The principles and tenor of educational policy should be based on three main aims: the removal of existing educational obstacles that prevent the right to education from becoming a reality; the adoption of educational measures specifically contributing to the achievement of that goal; and an endeavour to deal with unofficial bodies by neutralizing their influence or making them part of the official framework.

38. Of the obstacles that must be tackled in order to follow this line of action, the following merit special attention: (a) the inflexibility of the present school network. This could be overcome by adding flexible educational services to complement the official system and equip it to deal with every sort of situation. Examples of such services are one-teacher multi-grade schools, school nuclei, visiting teachers, school transport, a diversified time-table, teaching by correspondence courses, radio and television; (b) the fact that it is customary for a pupil's performance to be judged almost entirely by his academic capacity, even during the period of compulsory education when, precisely because it is compulsory, differences in individual ability to study should be taken into account. The rigid system of promotion should be disregarded and an effort made instead to develop the mental capacities of the children as much as possible, including, of course the less gifted pupils; (c) the fact that a fairly large group of people are unable to derive any benefit from the official school system. This problem might be met through night schools, extra-mural examinations, recognition of equivalent qualifications and other similar measures.

39. As regards the institutional modifications needed if the right to education is to become effective, the most important concern compulsory attendance, and the structure and content of the school system. The compulsory period of schooling is, on the one hand, the maximum amount of education received by the majority of the population, and, on the other, the minimum regarded as acceptable by the individual and society as a whole.

In view of the demands and nature of present-day society, this period of compulsory schooling can no longer consist of some elementary instruction imparted for a few years. It must last long enough to meet the different educational requirements involved in equipping a pupil to become a useful member of society.

40. Three main points must be borne in mind regarding the move to reform the school structure, which is gradually spreading throughout the region. These are the relations that must be maintained between that structure and the structure of employment; the reconciliation of the range of abilities displayed by the pupils with the institutional limitations of the system; and facilities for changes and transfers within the system as a means of reorienting pupils.

41. With regard to the best type of educational content, in terms of the whole body of school activities, the following points are important: the need to supplement the systematic intellectual development of the child, which continues to be the specific function of the school, with other kinds of mental training (to develop the child's practical intelligence), thereby enabling the school to cater for a much wider variety of children; the development of a sense of responsibility; professional training; civic education, and the need for school activities to be framed increasingly in terms of what is appropriate for the child at each stage of his development, and to take into account such environmental conditions as health and food.

42. To exercise the right to education, it is not enough for institutional barriers to be removed and institutional facilities overhauled and remodelled. The barriers that exist outside the school system should also be overcome by carrying educational policy beyond the bounds of its traditional province of formal school education. The new policy approach would involve dealing with the following problems: the need to remedy the difficulties caused by lack of funds; the integration in or co-operation of various kinds of institutions with educational work (families, communication media, religious groups, associations of different sorts, enterprises, the armed forces, etc.); the establishment of public agencies for the specific purpose of tackling the problems of young people (guidance centres, youth projects); and the formation of permanent educational bodies.

43. The fact that there are now millions of young people in Latin America who are already over the age for compulsory schooling means that special attention must be paid to the question of permanent education and that urgent measures have to be taken to offer such people educational opportunities.

44. Lastly, it is plain that for sound planning and implementation of the far-reaching and complex measures required by a policy aimed at enforcing the right to enjoy the kind of education demanded by modern society, the key to the whole problem is the type of training to be given to teachers and to the different kinds of educational experts required by a modern school system.