

Diversification of the structure of secondary education and educational segmentation in Latin America



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Felicitas Acosta



Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores
de Noruega

This document was prepared by Felicitas Acosta, consultant with the Social Development Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), assisted by Tomás Esper, consultant with the same division. It is the product of a two-phase study on the link between secondary education structures and educational segmentation in Latin America. The first phase was funded with resources from the regular budget of the Office for Latin America of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP UNESCO) in Buenos Aires. Phase two research was carried out within the framework of the cooperation project between ECLAC and the Government of Norway “Enhancing human capacities throughout the life cycle for equality and productivity” and the partnership agreement to strengthen the social policy agenda for children in Latin America and the Caribbean signed by ECLAC and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF LACRO).

The study was coordinated by Felicitas Acosta, ECLAC consultant, and supervised by Néstor López, former Coordinator of Research and Development of IIEP UNESCO and Daniela Trucco, Social Affairs Officer of the Social Development Division of ECLAC. Contributors to the research process included María Luisa Marinho, of ECLAC; Fernanda Luna and Bianca Gentinetta-Delfino, of IIEP UNESCO; and Claudio Santibáñez Servat, Mariana Coolican, Margarete Sachs-Israel and Vincenzo Placco, of UNICEF LACRO. Tomás Esper, of Teachers College of Columbia University and ECLAC consultant, processed empirical information and reviewed the text. The comments from Daniela Huneus of ECLAC are gratefully acknowledged.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

BGU	Unified general baccalaureate (Ecuador)
CEMSaD	Distance Upper Secondary Education Establishment (Mexico)
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
COBACH	<i>Colegio de Bachilleres</i> public secondary school (Mexico)
CONALEP	National College of Technical Professional Education (Mexico)
EGB	General basic education
IIEP UNESCO	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
IHER	Honduran Institute for Radio Education
SITEAL	Information System on Educational Trends in Latin America
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNAM	National Autonomous University of Mexico
UNICEF LACRO	United Nations Children's Fund, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
UTU	University of Labour of Uruguay

Executive summary

This document presents the results of a two-phase study on the diversification of secondary education provision and educational segmentation in Latin America. Phase one, conducted by the Office for Latin America of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP UNESCO) in Buenos Aires, between 2019 and 2020, with the collaboration of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), investigated the dynamics of educational segmentation in scenarios of extended compulsory schooling. It integrated an analysis of quantitative indicators in 13 countries in the region with a study of secondary education structures and institutional models in six countries: Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico and Uruguay. Phase two combined the thematic focus of three institutions —IIEP UNESCO, ECLAC and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF LACRO)— to explore the educational experience of adolescents and young people in diversified structures. In the same six countries studied in the previous phase, interviews and focus groups were conducted with a purposive sample on access, the educational trajectory and possible temporary or permanent drop-out, including an analysis of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main results indicate a particular form of compulsory secondary education expansion in the region under an extension-diversification pairing. This form of expansion creates at least three tensions. First, tension between the laws and regulations intended to guarantee this extension and the actual outcomes for the educational trajectories of adolescents and young people. Second, tension between government efforts in recent decades to sustain this extension and the persistence and/or creation of new educational segmentation mechanisms. Third, tension between the perception of the value of secondary education certification in social life and the relevance of the educational experience in its contemporary form, a perception that varies widely among adolescents and young people from the different educational tracks.

Beyond the abovementioned tensions, an analysis of the students’ perspective makes it possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses of provision in sustaining the extension of compulsory schooling. The strengths include the creation of institutional provision more tailored to students’ lives, together with some relatively scalable specific programmes to support educational trajectories. There is also appreciation for the value of some teachers and institutional actors as focal points for building bonds

with schooling. Among the weaknesses, some are governed by the design of education policies: the transition between educational levels and stages of secondary education or the material conditions of schooling. Others, such as the barriers stemming from marked socioeconomic differences, continue to play a key role.

Based on an analysis of the empirical evidence, it is possible to make a series of recommendations for policies to extend compulsory secondary education. These include the need to build a common schooling platform for adolescents and young people, underpinned by comprehensive policies to cater to this group, adequate material conditions in terms of both schools and the support of educational trajectories, more integrated provision structures with a less homogeneous institutional design and more diversified education roles and figures.

Introduction

The extension of secondary education poses a challenge for countries in Latin America. Although the region's engagement in this process has continued to grow, this is happening at a slower pace than the countries that modernized their education systems early. According to data from SITEAL (2019), in the twenty-first century, all countries in the region have compulsory lower secondary education, with the exception of Nicaragua, and 13 out of 19 countries have also made upper secondary education compulsory.

The fact that it is a protracted, incomplete process poses at least three challenges, which will be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. School closures at all levels affected over 170 million students throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and over two in three lower secondary education students could fall below minimum proficiency levels (World Bank, 2021).

First, the expansion needs to be completed. In the mid-2010s, the enrolment rate of adolescents aged between 12 years and 14 years exceeded 91% in 15 of the 18 Latin American countries considered. However, in the 15-17 age group, the enrolment rate ranged from 78% to 88%. The difference in enrolment rates between Chile (99.5%) and Honduras (76.9%) (SITEAL, 2019) reflects the unequal expansion of education systems in the region.

Second, successful universal educational trajectories need to be guaranteed. During the 2005-2015 period, there was an increase in the proportion of people aged between 25 and 35 in the region who completed secondary education, although results were mixed. In the mid-2010s, the proportion of people aged 25-35 who completed secondary education ranged from 84.4% in Chile to 19.9% in Guatemala (SITEAL, 2019). In Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, it ranged from 71% to 60%. In El Salvador and Uruguay, it was 38% and 41% respectively and, in Honduras and Nicaragua, less than 25% of the population aged 25-35 completed secondary education.

Sustaining the extension of secondary education while ensuring the graduation of all rests on a third, structural, challenge: to provide an equitable offering that guarantees social and educational inclusion, namely quality provision. This challenge is particularly complex because it is integral not only to the historical dynamics involved in the configuration of modern education systems but also to the dynamics of each country in the region.

In the case of the extension of secondary education, these historical dynamics relate to the diversification of institutional provision as a way of sustaining the expansion. The concept of segmentation reflects this dynamic: parallel educational pathways separated by institutional and/or curriculum barriers, as well as by differences in students' social status of origin. The cut-off point for segmentation is students within the same age group who are out of school (Ringer, 1979 and 1987). It is a dynamic of strong social sorting.¹ The extension of secondary education has entailed various forms of segmentation: vertical segmentation, through the creation of educational levels (early twentieth century) or stages (as from the post-war period); horizontal segmentation, through institutional differentiation (types of school, specialization streams); intra-institutional segmentation (streaming); and the creation of "tailor-made" provision, as flexible or alternative modalities (Acosta, 2019a).

During the post-war period, when many Western countries made lower secondary education compulsory, it involved two overlapping changes: integration into unified structures and the adoption of comprehensive institutional models.² Four of the emerging forms stand out: the combination of a unified structure with elements of the comprehensive institutional model (the Scandinavian comprehensive school); the development of the comprehensive institutional model in parallel with traditional provision (Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand); the creation of common stages or sections of secondary education with some elements of the comprehensive institutional model (France and Italy); and the maintenance of institutional models that include specific streams with flexibility in access to higher education according to the pathway (Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Swiss cantons) (Green, 2006). Although diversification was used to sustain the expansion, the first three models did so through a combination of more integrated structures and comprehensiveness.

According to Benavot, Resnik and Corrales (2006), the shift towards mass secondary education included not only a structural change but also a social one. Beyond the differences between emerging forms, the reforms for expanding secondary education converged simultaneously in: (i) the incorporation of compulsory secondary education; (ii) attempts to dilute hierarchies between academic and non-academic studies through greater diversification of school subjects; (iii) a trend towards the development of comprehensive secondary schools; (iv) an increase in science teaching across all educational levels and curricula; (v) an attempt to sustain and improve technical education through the introduction of more general subjects; and (vi) fewer restrictions on access to higher education.

The pace and characteristics of secondary education extension in Latin America have differed from country to country. These differing features also influence the forms taken by segmentation. First, as highlighted earlier, it is a protracted process, with enrolment growing steadily since the 1960s but without achieving universalization in the intervening half a century.

Second, since the 1960s, reforms have been introduced to achieve more unified structures: in the 1960s and 1970s, through the extension of general education cycles, and, in the 1990s, through the expansion of basic education, together with curriculum renewal policies. These failed to alter the strong classification of the curriculum, organized traditionally into disciplines, or to move towards alternative ways of organizing education provision (Acosta, 2019a).

Third, there is a tendency to sustain horizontal segmentation through traditional specialization streams (common secondary and technical) or streams targeted at specific groups (ranging from rural and intercultural bilingual education to the latest alternative modalities). There has been no large-scale introduction of the comprehensive institutional model, which has probably served to sustain the region's characteristic pattern of selective social differentiation.

¹ The concept of segmentation refers to the characteristics of the way provision is organized in an education system. More recently, the concept of educational segregation was developed, linked with the distribution of students and their institutional concentration according to the subjects' characteristics: ethnicity, socioeconomic status, abilities and place of residence (Murillo and Duk, 2016). Clearly, educational segregation is having an increasing influence on educational segmentation. However, as the focus of this study is the diversification of provision, it was decided to retain the concept of segmentation to organize the analysis.

² This institutional model, based on the North American high school of the early decades of the twentieth century, combined an academic education oriented towards higher education with a broad curriculum tailored to the interests and occupational aspirations of an increasingly diverse school population (Weiler, 1998; Wiborg, 2009; Campbell and Sherrington, 2006).

Finally, unlike the countries that engaged in early modernization, Latin American countries introduced various forms of segmentation when developing secondary education provision, without achieving a steady improvement in indicators of social inequality. As a result, the public/private divide is deeply entrenched in the forms taken by segmentation.

Thus, the general trend points to this being a region which, historically, has sought to extend compulsory education in a bid to achieve slightly more integrated systems (common cycles, basic education), without the large-scale incorporation of the comprehensive institutional model. It also points to this being a region that is structurally permeated by social inequality. Therefore the hypothesis is that, in Latin American countries, secondary education has developed in tension between the extension-diversification pairing, with effects on segmentation. In other words: diversification as a way of sustaining the expansion of secondary education appears to sustain and/or deepen educational segmentation.

Accordingly, the focus of this study is the tension between the universalization of secondary education and educational segmentation, between the pursuit of extension and the constraints of the historical educational and social dynamics specific to the region. The study focuses on those countries that have established compulsory lower and upper secondary education and considers potential conflict between the new regulatory frameworks, which make secondary education universal and compulsory, and persisting traditional structures with diversified routes and modalities in the region's existing secondary education systems.

The new regulatory frameworks redefine the meaning of secondary education. By incorporating it into the cycle of compulsory education, they extend their recognition of the right to education with a function of social and educational inclusion. So, are traditional secondary education structures consistent with the objective of universalizing education and offering learning opportunities to everyone? If not, do these structures promote segmentation?

The report is the product of a two-phase study. In the first phase, the countries having made both lower and upper secondary education compulsory were selected (13 in total). This phase was coordinated by Felicitas Acosta, under the general supervision of Néstor López from the Office for Latin America of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP UNESCO) in Buenos Aires. In this phase, Luisa Iñigo and Rosario Austral conducted a quantitative study on these systems to analyse the relationship between the structure of secondary education provision and the main education indicators. The data and part of the analysis presented in the first section are taken from that study. In addition, there was a qualitative study on six cases, each conducted by a local consultant: Argentina (Daniela Cura), Costa Rica (Mauricio González and Ana María Gonzalez), Ecuador (Isabel Patiño), Honduras (Germán Moncada and Daniela Moncada), Mexico (Mariana Castro) and Uruguay (Javier Alliaume Molfino). The principal researcher on this study was Aldana Morrone and the research assistant was Victoria Rio, under the respective coordination and supervision mentioned above.

The case study focused on systematizing and analysing current regulations, the governance and structure of secondary education with a focus on entrance mechanisms and exit examinations, streams, curriculum diversification, non-standard or alternative provision and schooling support programmes. The study sought to examine segmentation mechanisms in relation to regulations and education provision and their effects on students' educational trajectories based on the "official" narrative of provision. To this end, interviews were conducted with civil servants and researchers in the six cases under study (see annex 1).

The second phase of the study centred on investigating the educational experience of adolescents and young people according to the different routes and modalities currently available in secondary education, with a focus on forms of access and the educational pathway. The study considered the same six countries as in phase one to investigate in greater depth the mechanisms of educational segmentation, both those that have emerged from the new ways of organizing provision and more traditional mechanisms, particularly in areas where it is recognized that secondary education is failing to achieve the objectives of continuity and completion of the educational trajectory. The researchers in charge of the study were the same ones

who conducted the phase one qualitative study, except in the case of Argentina (Pedro Núñez, Victoria Seca and Valentina Arce) and Uruguay (Laura Rivero and Daiana Viera); Humberto González Reyes and Dafne Vergara Lozada joined the Mexico study. The coordinator of this second phase was Felicitas Acosta and the principal research assistant was Tomás Esper; Daniela Trucco and María Luisa Marinho from ECLAC participated in the general supervision, together with members of the research division of the IIEP UNESCO Office for Latin America in Buenos Aires and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF LACRO).

Interviews and focus groups with a purposive sample of 450 adolescents and young people were used to explore the effects of diversified structures on educational experiences in terms of the constraints, as well as the opportunities they create for successfully extending schooling. Incorporated into this phase were experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic in exacerbating processes of exclusion or segmentation. The investigation of provision diversification and segmentation mechanisms focused on the students' perspective: an experiential narrative of education provision (see annex 2 containing a description of the study and the purposive sample surveyed).

This document goes on to discuss the path from regulations to experiences, with an emphasis on how the diversification of provision is manifested in perceptions about educational trajectories. Incorporating the students' experience allows it to determine the explicit forms of this diversification, while highlighting its implicit forms. It then seeks to explain the implementation of education policies, which involves both the drafting of laws and official plans and the concrete forms they take in everyday experience (Ball, Maguire and Braun, 2012).

To this end, the document is divided into three chapters. Chapter one presents the scope and limits of the extension of compulsory education through quantitative indicators on secondary education in the region and qualitative information on the characteristics of provision. Chapter two analyses how the diversification of provision is manifested from the perspective of adolescents and young people, distinguishing between barriers and points of support for sustaining the educational trajectory, in general, and during the pandemic, in particular. Chapter three concludes by identifying elements with policy-making potential for extending compulsory education and universalizing secondary education.

I. Extension of compulsory education, diversification of provision and educational segmentation mechanisms in Latin America

As part of the analysis of the tension between universalization and educational segmentation, this chapter aims to highlight substantive progress in the extension of secondary education, as well as persistent inequalities in different social groups' access and educational trajectory, and the various segmentation mechanisms.

A point of note is that the structure of secondary education differs among countries in the region, in response to the historical and social dynamics described in the introduction. Based on data from SITEAL (2019), four types of structure can be distinguished, ranging from the most integrated to the least integrated types of provision.³ First, there are systems where secondary education is structured, at least based on the legal and organizational title, as a complete cycle: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Peru and Plurinational State of Bolivia. Second, there are systems that include lower secondary education as part of basic education: Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras and Paraguay. Third, there are systems where secondary education is considered as a common structure differentiated by internal cycles or streams: Argentina and Chile. Finally, there are systems where secondary education is organized into two separate structures, usually lower (or basic) secondary education and upper secondary (or intermediate) education or upper cycle: Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay.

As mentioned in the introduction, for the first phase of the study, the countries having made both lower and upper secondary education compulsory were selected: Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay (13 in total). A quantitative study was carried out on these systems to analyse the relationship between the structure of secondary education provision and the main education indicators.

This was followed by a qualitative study of six cases to show different provision structures according to the previous characterization, that is to say, ranging from the most integrated to the least integrated structures:

³ In accordance with the UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), which is divided into ISCED 2 (lower secondary education, corresponding to the final cycle of primary school or the first cycle of secondary school) and ISCED 3 (upper secondary education, preceding higher education).

- Lower secondary education as part of basic education: Ecuador.
- Lower secondary education as part of basic education in the form of a third cycle of basic education: Costa Rica and Honduras.
- Secondary education organized into a common structure differentiated by internal cycles or streams: Argentina.

Lower and upper secondary education organized into two separate structures, lower (or basic) secondary education and upper secondary (or intermediate) education or upper cycle: Mexico and Uruguay.

Annex 3 contains a comparative table detailing current regulations for secondary education, the structure and the main modalities of provision in each of the countries mentioned above. Annex 4 presents information on the coverage and indicators of internal efficiency, also in a comparative table. Some of these data are analysed in depth in the following section to relate the progress in extending compulsory education to the challenges.

Indeed, the survey of regulations in the six cases showed that significant efforts had been made to extend and transform provision to achieve a more inclusive form of secondary education, as evidenced by the: enactment of laws, establishment of new regulations, development of specific programmes, adaptation of curriculum design and creation of more flexible provision. However, an analysis of the distribution of provision, as well as interviews with civil servants and stakeholders, revealed the persistence of mechanisms of educational segmentation and institutional differentiation: there are difficulties not only in access but also, most importantly, in the educational trajectory and completion in accordance with socioeconomic level, area (rural or urban), sector (public or private) and, to a lesser extent, gender.

A. Advances in access, the educational trajectory and completion, and educational segmentation

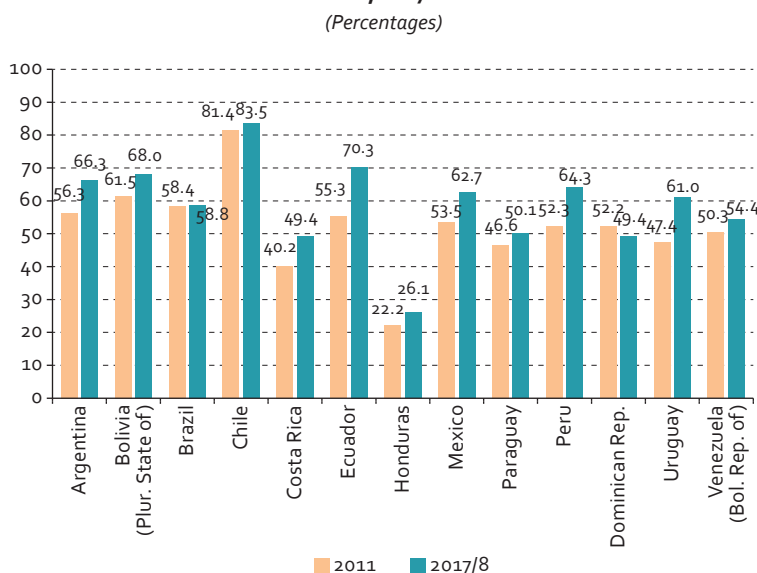
This section presents data on access to lower and upper secondary education in terms of the structure of secondary education and social indicators in the 13 countries having made both lower and upper secondary education compulsory.⁴ It provides information on the trend in access using the net enrolment ratio and the transition from primary to secondary school, and on completion rates between 2011 and 2017-2018. An analysis of the gaps in attendance in each of the stages of secondary education by income quintile shows sustained enrolment in scenarios of extended compulsory education, together with potential inequalities. It is interspersed with personal accounts from civil servants interviewed for the qualitative study in the six selected countries.

According to the information available in the consultation system of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the net enrolment ratio in the group of 13 countries having made both lower and upper secondary education compulsory averages 77.7%. This means that, overall, around 8 in every 10 adolescents within the corresponding theoretical age range attend secondary school. In nearly all the countries considered, net enrolment ratios in lower secondary education are greater than in higher secondary education. However, diachronically, nearly all countries have increased their upper secondary ratios over the past decade, which is the challenge of this new cycle of expansion (see figure 1).

The data on the transition from primary to secondary education are also positive. In the 13 countries, an average of 9 out of 10 students graduate from primary to secondary. Figure 2 shows that between 2010 and 2016, the transition rates remained high in most countries, with the exception of Honduras, which had coverage problems in primary education, and Costa Rica, which slipped back slightly.

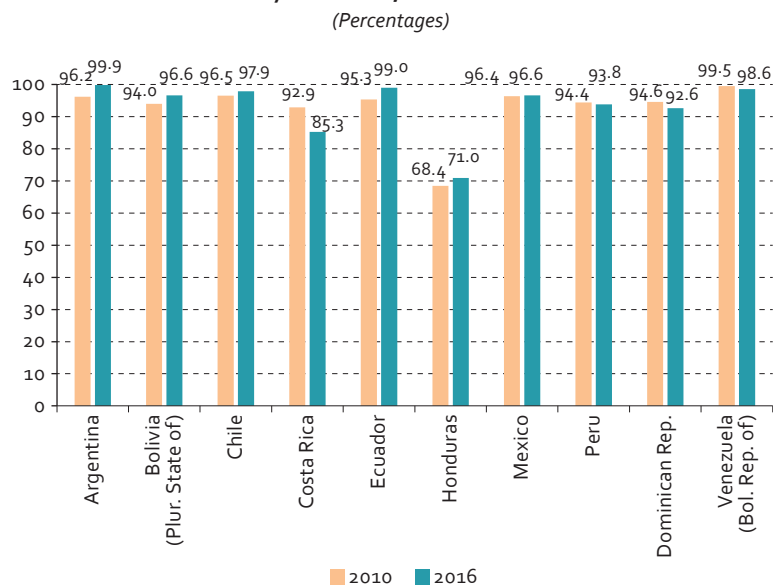
⁴ The data were selected from the exhaustive quantitative report by Luisa Iñigo and Rosario Austral (Iñigo and Austral, 2020), mentioned in the introduction. Some of the figures in the report were incorporated into the body of the text, while others feature in the annexes. Most of the figures in the body of the text were reworked and the data were updated for this document.

Figure 1
Latin America (13 countries): trend in net enrolment ratios in upper secondary education, around 2011, 2017 and 2018



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Figure 2
Latin America (10 countries): trend in effective transition rates from primary to secondary education, around 2010 and 2016



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

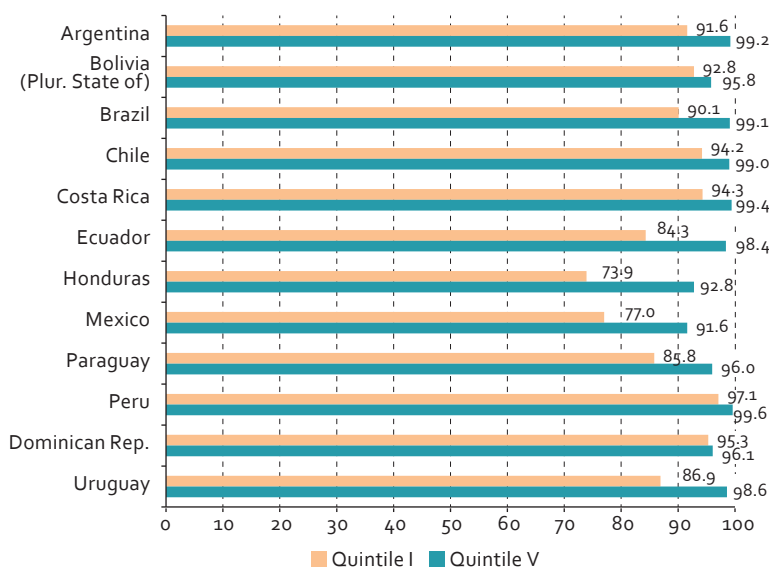
Note: Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay are not included because data are not available for both years.

The increase in access to secondary education, in general, and upper secondary, in particular, may be related to the extension of compulsory education and the efforts by Governments through the creation of institutional provision. One way of looking at the continuity of educational trajectories and possible differences according to population group is by analysing attendance in lower and upper secondary education in the light of variables such as gender, area and socioeconomic level.

The data indicate differences in progress for different population groups. Attendance gaps between lower and upper secondary education are wider for men than for women in six countries. In countries like the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and Ecuador, the gaps are similar, while in Paraguay and Chile the situation appears to be somewhat more unfavourable for women. In all countries, the gaps are wider between the rural population and the urban population. In Brazil and Honduras, there are very marked inequalities: in rural areas, attendance drops to roughly half in upper secondary education (see the summary in annex 5).

The socioeconomic variable seems to be the one with the biggest impact on the differences found. In all countries, the gaps are wider in the poorest quintile than in the richest quintile. The lower secondary school attendance in countries such as Honduras and Mexico appears to stem mainly from economic inequalities, although they are also combined with other gender inequalities and, in the case of Honduras and Mexico, inequalities are based on area of residence, with a greater lag in rural areas. In other countries, there are also inequalities in secondary school attendance among populations in the extreme income quintiles (see figure 3).

Figure 3
Latin America (13 countries): net attendance ratio in secondary education by income quintile, around 2019
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of data from the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Note: The data for Chile relate to 2017, while those for the Plurinational State of Bolivia relate to 2018.

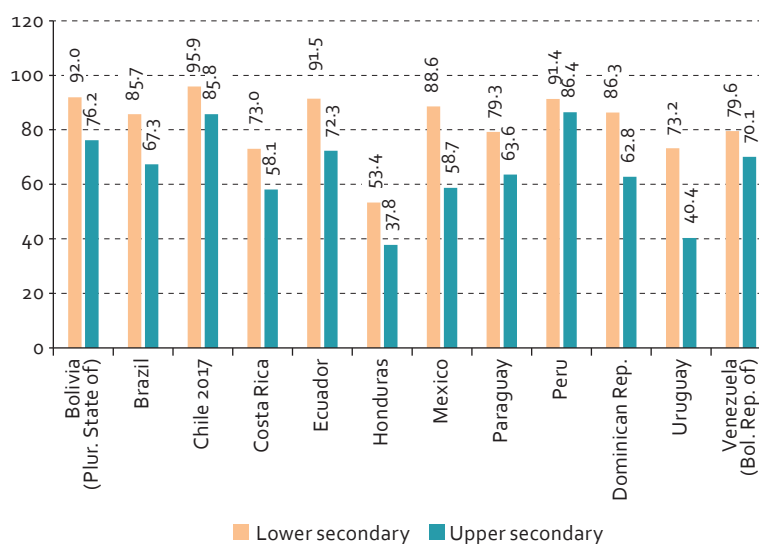
Over the past 15 years, there have certainly been improvements in terms of closing of gaps, and even countries with the most disadvantaged groups narrowed the gaps in all groups affected by the aforementioned inequalities. In Brazil, for example, there have been improvements in all population groups, despite inequalities between urban and rural areas and socioeconomic inequalities. This is also the case in Honduras, a country affected by inequalities of gender, area of residence and socioeconomic status, which has nevertheless improved outcomes over time. Costa Rica, with marked economic inequalities in access to upper secondary education, also shows improvements, although these do not seem to extend to the lowest quintile, as indicated above.

Although the goal of universalization has not yet been achieved, the data indicate greater access and continuity, as expressed by attendance in lower and upper secondary education. They also reflect a reduction in the gaps, with a few marked exceptions. The dispersion of data among countries does

not allow a relationship to be assumed between the structure of provision, according to differentiated cycles or with a greater tendency towards integration, and the improvement or persistence of gaps in the indicators over time. The gap between quintiles seems to have an even more decisive impact.

With regard to completion rates, again the situation differs between stages of secondary education and between countries. The average completion rate for lower secondary education (82.5%) indicates that 8 out of 10 students complete it without excessive delays in nearly all the countries considered;⁵ five countries are below the average. Average completion in upper secondary education is 65%, that is to say, 6 out of 10 students, although two countries are in the most unfavourable position: Honduras (37.8%) and Uruguay (40.4%), with much lower rates. Costa Rica (58.1%) and Mexico (58.7%) also have difficulties in terms of this indicator.

Figure 4
Latin America (12 countries): completion rates in lower and upper secondary education, around 2018
(Percentages)



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

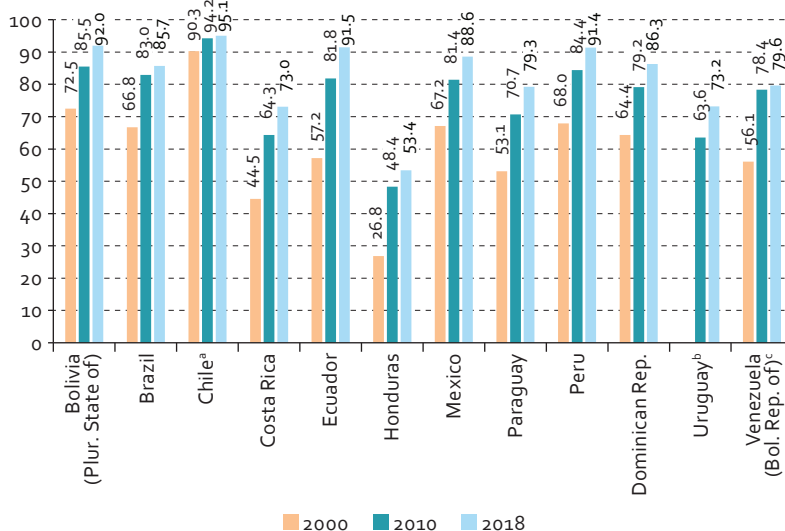
Note: Argentina is not included because there are no published data for 2018.

The trend in completion rates shows improvement over time, particularly in lower and upper secondary education in the first decade of the twentieth-first century. Between 2010 and 2018, the rate of increase slowed, which is more to be expected in lower secondary education. Although the region is closer to universalization, the disparity between countries is still wide, especially considering that all these countries extended compulsory secondary education to both the lower and upper stages: while Chile had rates above 90% in all three years considered for the analysis, the rate in a country like Honduras was 53.4% (see figure 5).

While there has been a similar pattern of increase in upper secondary education, greater differences emerge between the countries, with completion rates ranging more widely. Again, Chile is the country with the highest rates throughout the period considered, contrasting with Honduras and Uruguay, which have the lowest rates for 2010 and 2018 (see figure 6).

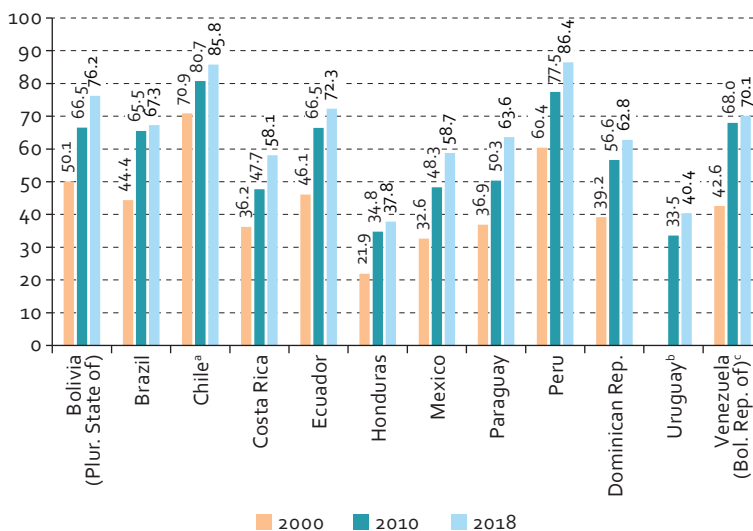
⁵ According to the data digest of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics consultation system, the completion rate indicates how many persons in a given age group have completed the relevant level of education, having entered school on time and progressed through the education system without excessive delays. A completion rate of around 100% indicates that virtually all adolescents have completed a level of education by the time they are three to five years older than the official age of entry into the last grade of the given level of education (See UIS, 2019 [online] <http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=3697>).

Figure 5
Latin America (12 countries): trend in lower secondary completion rates, around 2000, 2010 and 2018
 (Percentages)



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
 Note: Argentina is not included because there are no published data.
^a Most recent rate is for 2017, not 2018.
^b No data available for 2000.
^c Most recent rate is for 2014, not 2018.

Figure 6
Latin America (12 countries): trend in upper secondary completion rates, around 2000, 2010 and 2018
 (Percentages)



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
 Note: Argentina is not included because there are no published data.
^a Most recent rate is for 2017, not 2018.
^b No data available for 2000.
^c Most recent rate is for 2014, not 2018.

This continuous but incomplete expansion, highlighted at the start of this study, gives rise to challenges and complexities that are passed on from one stage of the education system to another as the extension of compulsory education progresses. In this regard, it accords with the analysis of Frankema

(2009) on the extension of primary education in Latin American: it is a model characterized by enrolment over completion. The fact that countries that were first to achieve full access rates did not attain universal promotion and completion until four decades later attests to this. Secondary education appears to be following a similar path.

"...Advantages, well, we have expanded entry opportunities for children, especially those in rural schools who did not enter seventh grade because there was just one type of provision. So, extending the third cycle in rural schools has been a great advantage. The children are going to the centre for education, they are exercising their right" (female civil servant Honduras).

"What stands out most about rural areas, which have been cooling down now that we are decentralized and as everything at departmental level is committed, is the fact that, since the Fundamental Law required us to have a degree, many teachers in rural areas are either studying or have been studying. So, let's say, inland, they come on Friday, they start on Friday and they come virtually on Thursday because some people have to travel on horseback, others have to walk, they have to cross goodness knows how many rivers, meaning that they are here at the weekend studying and they return on Tuesday, Monday, sorry, they arrive in the community on Tuesday. So, how many days of classes do they give the children in practice?" (former female civil servant, Honduras).

"That's one of the main problems. Although we are a single Undersecretariat (all levels), we have not generated integrated planning spaces to be able to say 'here is our point of convergence and we will work on it together to ensure that children have a good transition between tenth grade (general basic education [EGB]) and first grade (unified general baccalaureate [BGU])'. We still do not have that level of integration, of joint planning, and the result is that we do not have joint processes of vocational and career guidance; we meet a demand in tenth grade but we do not know what happens when the other level —baccalaureate— takes over. 'It has gone outside my scope, my competence, so now it is someone else's problem' is the thinking" (female civil servant Ecuador).

As mentioned in the introduction, the pandemic will affect this positive trend. According to recent estimates, the likelihood of completing secondary education in Latin America will fall from 56% to 42% (Neidhöfer, Lustig and Tommasi, 2021, p. 13) and the pandemic will have a particular impact on adolescents from low-educated families whose likelihood of completion could fall by almost 20 percentage points (Neidhöfer, Lustig and Tommasi, 2020, p. 18).

With regard to the completion gaps between lower and upper secondary education for different population groups, in practically all countries except Honduras and Mexico, the completion gap between lower and upper secondary education is found to be slightly more pronounced among men than among women: the average ratio is 1.57 for men and 1.47 for women (the higher the number above 1, the greater the inequality). Furthermore, there are bigger gaps in rural areas, mainly in Brazil: according to the data, an adolescent from a rural area is almost eight times more likely to complete lower secondary education than upper secondary education (see annex 6).

Again, when it comes to differences by household income quintile, the completion gaps between lower and upper secondary education are always more pronounced among adolescents from households in the lowest income quintile, compared with those in the highest quintile. The inequalities are greatest in Brazil and Uruguay, followed by Paraguay and Mexico.

As highlighted above, the differences between the data on access and completion appear to be related more to the gap between quintiles than to the structure of provision. However, the situation of Uruguay, the country with the best Gini coefficient trend in the region in around 2016 (Lavalleya and Rosselot, 2018), demonstrates the influence exerted by variables linked more to education provision characteristics on the chances of completing secondary education: the gap is one of the highest in the two stages and in both quintiles. This reveals historical structural dynamics that hinder the democratization of schooling, notwithstanding laws and programmes that further the extension of compulsory education.

"I mean, in answer to your question, in the first cycle of secondary school, more than 90% of adolescents go where they want, they choose. In the second cycle, upper secondary school, it is different. That's because, in the second cycle, a lot depends on which stream you want and where you live, in both secondary school and the University of Labour of Uruguay (UTU). It's a matter of supply... The supply does not exist in all areas of the country, or else it varies in quantity. Which has a major impact. This is a problem, that of upper secondary education because, when you have done a certain basic cycle and you want a certain stream, an upper secondary option, but you are not able to, it makes you a candidate for not carrying on, for dropping out... and this jeopardizes all the effort made by the student and by the system" (male civil servant, Uruguay).

B. Forms of diversification of provision and segmentation

The previous section provided data on access and the educational trajectory in relation to lower and upper secondary education. This section provides qualitative and quantitative information on the forms of provision diversification in light of the extension of compulsory education and segmentation mechanisms. It is well known that educational pathways differ according to a student's socioeconomic status. This section sets out to demonstrate the persistence of these differences, which, in the provision structure, are expressed through diversification.

This section presents the results of the qualitative study in six countries (Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico and Uruguay) on the forms of provision diversification that could account for old and new segmentation mechanisms. It also provides data on the distribution of enrolment according to the management sector (public or private) and the stream of upper secondary education or the upper cycle. These quantitative data by sector and stream shed light on the historical dynamics of segmentation highlighted in the introduction to this document.

As regards the extension of compulsory education, the six-country case study revealed different strategies, with common trends and specific features. All the countries have laws and regulations aimed at reducing segmentation through progressive inclusion in terms of access to secondary education and sustaining educational trajectories, which could be seen as a direct effect of the extension of compulsory secondary education. The cases reflect diverse strategies to tackle the extension of compulsory education, in tension between integration and diversification: generalization of the type of provision (Argentina, Uruguay and, to a lesser extent, Honduras); generalization of the curriculum (in almost all cases in lower secondary education); creation of specific provision generalized for rural areas at lower and upper secondary level (Honduras, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico); and creation of remedial provision according to educational trajectories and/or specific population groups (all cases). While the former two tend towards integration, the latter two tend towards diversification.

However, as the quantitative information in the previous section shows, inclusion in secondary education does not seem to relate strongly with the position of secondary education in the provision structure (more or less integrated). Combinations can be observed between the forms of provision diversification and traditional and new segmentation mechanisms. Nor does the survey reveal the development of comprehensive unified or integrated institutional models: rather, there is a trend towards increased diversification.

The study reveals differences arising from differing mechanisms, some of which are traditional mechanisms associated with geographical area, secondary education modality, affiliation of the school or examinations for entrance or completion of cycles. It also found new segmentation mechanisms which, paradoxically, are a consequence of the very effort to include the most excluded population. The resulting combination is presented in the table below. It is followed by a summary of the main mechanisms by country according to the qualitative survey, together with the interviewees' perspective on the issue.

Table 1
Combination of segmentation mechanisms by country according to a qualitative survey

Segmentation mechanism	Classic					Recent		
	Country	Sector (public/private)	Modality (baccalaureate/technical)	Area (rural/urban)	Selection (access/completion)	Alternative modalities	Curriculum adaptation according to institutional model	Transnational models
Argentina		X	x		x	x		
Costa Rica			X	X	x	X		
Ecuador		X	X	x				X
Honduras		X	X	X		X		x
Mexico		x	X	X	X		x	
Uruguay			X			x	X	

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of case studies. X or x are used to denote the relative importance of the respective provision mechanism.

1. Argentina

Four mechanisms stand out when it comes to segmentation: public/private provision; provision for baccalaureate and differentiated streams for technical education; ad hoc forms of student selection for secondary schools (entrance examinations for pre-university schools, various mechanisms in the Argentine provinces); and alternative tracks (secondary school re-entry and/or completion plans). Youth and adult education could be considered as a residual track in view of the difficulties that the academic system has in ensuring that education is completed within the allotted timeframe.

“Differentiation between State and private schools is well-established. In other words, the system is fragmented, there are also certain values or a culture that reproduce it. I mean, there are the regulations but also the actors themselves, by their behaviour, they have this differentiation in their mindset and that, I think, is coupled with the way in which secondary education has been evolving in recent years. That is to say, as it was conceived as a selective institution, it can take a long time to break with that, I mean, in reality it is not that secondary school was conceived for everyone and suddenly became selective, or that it has differentiated tracks, but that it was conceived as a selective institution. I also believe that, ultimately, this structure and organization have engendered certain cultural practices among teachers, among management teams, supervisors themselves, among technical teams, which are sometimes difficult to break with, no matter how much people tell you that secondary education is for everyone. I mean, there are certain deeply ingrained practices, even unconscious ones I would say, that keep this alive” (female civil servant, Argentina).

2. Costa Rica

Segmentation seems to be linked to the population’s access to the different types of provision: despite the diversification of secondary education provision through streams, there is a concentration in traditional, academically-oriented schools; rural secondary schools, created with the aim of providing secondary education to the rural population, are highly differentiated from traditional provision; technical provision is weak; tracks of diminished quality can be seen in the modalities and, above all, in night schools. Moreover, the exit examinations (in force until 2017) and the switch to national FARO exams, which account for 40% of a student’s final marks, could point to quality pathways between educational institutions, reinforcing processes of institutional differentiation.

“Because we have these structural problems that I was telling you about [she looks for information, shows the map again]. For instance, these are the households with a poor educational climate in secondary school, in the country, according to what the census indicated. When you look at the education system, you see that our network is very large. Of course, it is concentrated here in the central region but we have a great opportunity to make an impact. When you look at the private network, you see that it is highly concentrated in the Central Valley region. I always show this map to all those wishing to distribute brochures to families to encourage them to send their children to private schools. In other words, it is not the Chilean model that we need here because the private network is not enough. You have to focus on public education. What I was going to show you... here there is structural inequality because you have a promise of universal access but no universal curriculum, the full curriculum is not provided everywhere. You are not giving everyone equal conditions” (female researcher, Costa Rica).

3. Ecuador

Despite an attempt at unification through a more integrated structure (lower secondary education as part of the basic education cycle and upper secondary education through a unified general baccalaureate), the structure of secondary education is segmented: there are parallel offerings by indigenous population, by rural area and by specialization; the mechanism for allocating school places according to domicile can promote both segmentation and segregation, fostering processes of institutional differentiation by social sector; the International Baccalaureate can create quality pathways within the public sector; there is a one-way path between the baccalaureate in science and the technical baccalaureate (from the technical baccalaureate to the baccalaureate in science); a completion examination is required for graduation, which, in 2019, was merged with the university entrance exam, a situation that could reinforce or promote quality pathways through institutional differentiation.

“At the private level, most offer all their provision in science, all of it (not in the technical baccalaureate). And what does that tell us? That science is what counts, it’s the best, it’s the elite, which is why it is created at the private level. It is one of the hidden messages of the provision. Also, this is how the message continues to be that (the baccalaureate in) science is a safe route to university. We don’t have private educational units with technical provision; there are only the Salesians, which are subsidized State-funded faith schools, and we know they cater to the vulnerable population, and the organization “Fe y Alegría” (Faith and Joy). Hence the vulnerable population is in the public system and there you do have technical education. So, there is a very strong message here (that technical education is only for the vulnerable population and is not a worthwhile choice for those who can afford private education)” (female civil servant, Ecuador).

“There is no special strategy, there is no approach to this issue to say ‘I offer the baccalaureate to rural areas but with the following approach’, in order to have an offering tailored to their reality. And the same goes for the other differences. On the issue of peoples and nationalities, an effort is being made, now much more visible with the advent of the National Directorate of Bilingual Intercultural Education, but we have no provision that considers rural versus urban or peri-urban in a holistic manner. The provision is identical, no matter where it is offered. It is a unified curriculum” (female civil servant, Ecuador).

4. Honduras

The education system is embedded in a social reality with profound economic difficulties and social inequalities, compounded by gang violence. These difficulties and structural inequalities explain some of the distribution characteristics of lower and upper secondary education provision (third cycle and baccalaureate) and the forms of segmentation, which are linked more directly with the socioeconomic

level, the area (rural) and ethnic factors. As regards segmentation: the characteristics of the programmes or provision for the rural and/or vulnerable population (components of distance education and educational radio and television) make them a devalued alternative; added to this is an offering with two classic streams in the final stage of secondary education: the humanistic baccalaureate and the technical-vocational baccalaureate; the baccalaureate in science and humanities has fewer streams and is more unified, probably because of its connection with access to university, potentially creating differentiated tracks.

“In other words, the alternative modalities are really aimed more at the vulnerable population, with less income capacity, and regular schools, regular educational centres, are for the majority, for the masses with a bit more economic access. So, yes there are differences, there is a difference not, as I was saying, in the form of delivery, nor in knowledge, it is also about the location, where the alternative delivery modalities are found: they are in the more rural areas, essentially in more vulnerable contexts than the regular educational centres. Yes, there is a difference” (female civil servant, Honduras).

5. Mexico

The extension of the system and, in particular, the heterogeneous nature of the provision, in terms of both streams and modalities and the affiliation of schools, is at the very root of educational segmentation. The governance structure of lower and upper secondary education could contribute to the dispersion of provision and, hence, to segmentation. The lower secondary curriculum is highly centralized, unlike governance, and, while there is an attempt to unify criteria in upper secondary education, there is still a wide variety and dispersion of provision.

With respect to segmentation: the provision for rural areas establishes a clearly differentiated track; the entrance examinations for lower and upper secondary levels that determine which school a student can enter constitute a traditional segmentation mechanism; the lack of linkages between lower and upper secondary levels could promote horizontal segmentation (how far certain groups can go within the education system), as well as educational tracks and segmentation mechanisms arising from institutional differentiation among those who manage to move from one level to another; an elite educational track between pre-university schools and universities.

“If you look at the differing performance of students in each segment, you realize that it does not favour equity, on the contrary. We know that perfectly well. There have been studies on the educational trajectory of kids and you can see how, when it comes to getting to the market, the university market (because everyone wants to get there, and I’m talking about metropolitan areas, right?), they are at a disadvantage. The percentage of upper secondary graduates entering university is lower than those from the upper secondary schools of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) —and not because of the regulated pass but because they are at a disadvantage. It’s the same for graduates from the National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP). So, that is the main argument: segmentation helps to reproduce inequity because they get in with these scores” (female civil servant, Mexico).

6. Uruguay

The overall diversified governance structure of the education system and the differentiation between secondary education provision and that of the Vocational Technical Education Council (University of Labour of Uruguay, UTU, technical education) could be at the root of mechanisms for differentiated provision, with possible effects on segmentation. Efforts have been made to bridge the deep divide between technical education and regular education: transition between streams in the early years; computerized allocation of school places, which, in the case of technical education, is designed specifically to assign the first option to those students with the greatest difficulties; broad diversification of technical education

appears to have facilitated the steady growth in enrolment in recent years, avoiding concentration in the baccalaureate. There seems to be a dynamic of creating plans based on the situation of the educational trajectory (including modular, bridging and completion plans). On the one hand, this could help improve the development of trajectories; on the other hand, it could have an effect on segmentation mechanisms.

"In many cases, it is so difficult to get a child to secondary school that it becomes necessary to support them, which calls for many changes to be made in the system, to make it a friendly place that promotes links and learning. Now, these are issues not only for education but also for the country as a whole, from a holistic perspective. On this, I would stress that the system that has been created provides information on many aspects of students' lives beyond education" (male civil servant, Uruguay).

"In lower secondary school, the compartmentalization of knowledge into subjects should be reconsidered. The curriculum is so fragmented. In fact, there are many educational projects or programmes that offer other things and, at the same time, there are teachers' groups that are altering that offering, over and above the requirements. There is a proliferation of offerings from both the top and the bottom that seek to rethink this excessive number of subjects. Because there is a trend, not only here, but every subject is curricularized, which means fragmentation. Sex education, well, let's make it a subject; computer science education... They have not been able to configure a new design of a more general offering. At the lower secondary education level, I mean. At the upper secondary education level, it would be necessary to offer those preparatory baccalaureate courses for adolescents who already have a clear idea of what they are going to do: engineer, doctor or whatever. While at the same time offering the chance of mobility, more comprehensive baccalaureates that allow entry to different faculties. This is something on which progress is being made in this dialogue with the University of the Republic (UdelaR)" (female researcher, Uruguay).

The quantitative data reveal the relevance of two of the traditional mechanisms: the public/private sector and the orientation of upper secondary education. With regard to the former, it is worth noting that the importance of the private sector is related to the capacity to integrate a system into a common provision, irrespective of the impact of each State's regulations on the provision of that sector. This is how some of the interviewees perceive it:

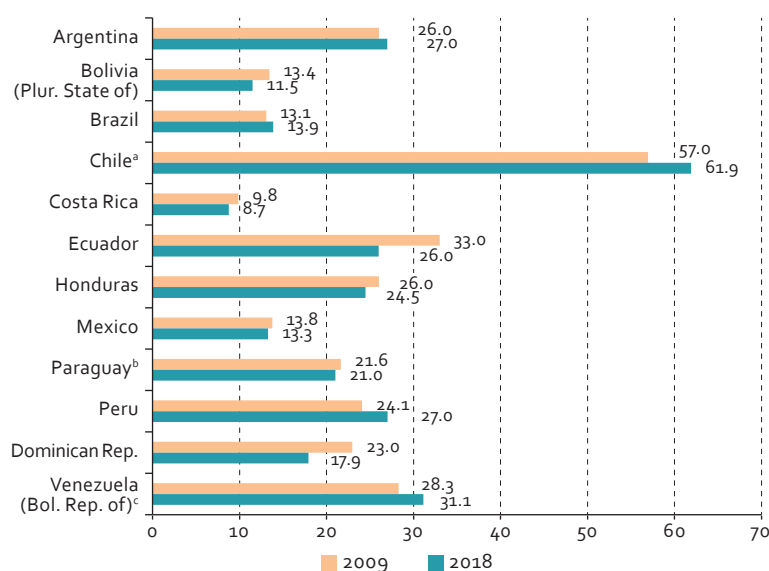
"So, people with more financial resources have a trajectory linked almost exclusively to private education. Of course, they have a choice. Poor people don't have that possibility. Are there places where people still choose a reputable public school even in a family with more financial means? I did see this in Quito, where municipal schools are more valued by the middle class. I haven't seen it in any other city. In Quito, the middle class does ask for places at Colegio Municipal Sebastián de Benalcazar (a highly prestigious municipal school); this is not the case with the middle class of Guayaquil" (male civil servant, Ecuador).

"...private education... they have their organizations through which they regulate themselves and they implement certain processes, which are expensive, which are different. It is a private education that is only in Spanish or bilingual. This bilingual approach is very interesting in the country because they are also regulated by curricula that they adopt from the United States or wherever the curriculum comes from, from England, from France, so they have, like, this double track... in private provision where I have seen that there are very marked differences, but in these elite schools that use other types of process, that is where I have seen a very different type of work that, obviously, when you see the entrance examinations for the Autonomous University, it is these schools that score better and have better scores in the university entrance examination. So, especially in these elite bilingual schools, I have seen that they establish a type of practice that is, well, different from the practices of the sector, of the public sector, for example" (male researcher, Honduras).

In both cases, the private sector seems to form a specific educational track added to which are elements arising from the transnationalization of institutional models that function as aspirational. These can impact on public provision if it is diversified in the image of the elements offered by this model. The case of the incorporation of the International Baccalaureate into the public sector in Ecuador and Costa Rica could be a step in this direction, as table 1 shows.

However, private sector participation in secondary school enrolment has not been homogeneous or stable over time in the 13 countries in the quantitative study. By 2018, the percentage ranged from 61.9% in Chile to 9.8% in Costa Rica. A comparison between 2009 and 2018 shows countries where private sector participation increased (including the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Chile and Peru) and others where it decreased (Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and the Plurinational State of Bolivia) (see figure 7).

Figure 7
Latin America (12 countries): students enrolled in the private sector, 2009 and 2018
(Percentages)



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

^a In the case of Chile, most of the private sector is publicly funded.

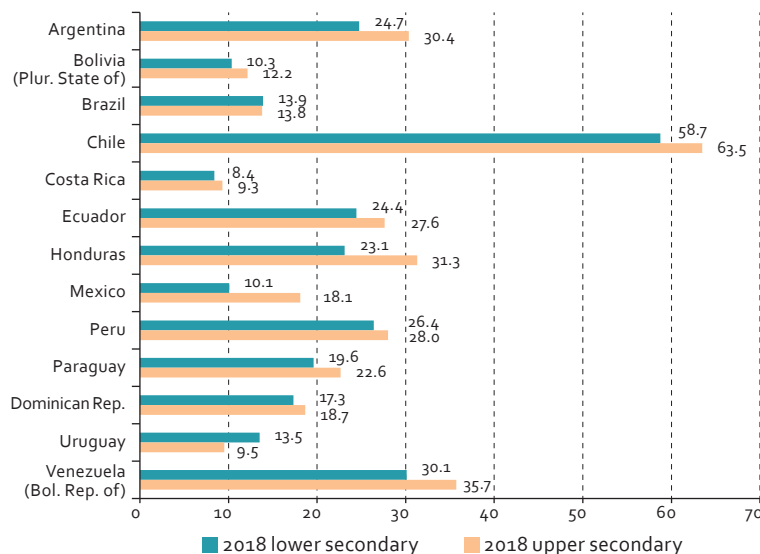
^b The data for Paraguay around 2018 relate to 2016.

^c The data for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela around 2018 relate to 2017.

In nearly all countries, except Uruguay, the private sector has a bigger share in upper secondary than in lower secondary education (see figure 8). The greatest differences in the impact of the private sector between one stage and the next are found in Mexico and Honduras. In these countries, it would appear that access to upper secondary education is, to a greater extent, mediated specifically by attendance in the private sector.

However, a longitudinal comparison shows that private sector participation in education provision increased in lower secondary education in more countries than in those where it decreased, with the reverse situation occurring in upper secondary education (see annex 7). Thus, at the lower secondary level, private sector participation increased in Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile and Peru, while it fell in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. In the other countries, it remained at similar levels throughout the almost two decades. However, at upper secondary level, the private sector's share grew only in Chile and Peru, whereas it decreased in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, remaining relatively unchanged in the other countries.

Figure 8
Latin America (11 countries): students enrolled in the private sector by stage of secondary education, 2018
 (Percentages)



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
 Note: The data for Paraguay relate to 2016.

The extension of compulsory education may be behind the divergent movements of private sector participation between stages of education. In other words, having fulfilled its role in the expansion of lower secondary education, public provision in lower secondary education tends to decrease or, at least, remain stable, as is the case in 7 of the 13 countries considered. On the other hand, where the expansion of upper secondary education is still ongoing, the relative share of public provision tends to increase, as is the case in the five countries mentioned at the end of the previous paragraph, decreasing in only two countries.

In fact, private sector participation in lower secondary education is growing in four of the seven countries where there is mass lower secondary attendance and which are in transition towards mass upper secondary education (Argentina, Peru, Brazil and Chile) and in only one country where mass lower secondary education has not yet been achieved (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela). Mexico is the only country with mass lower secondary education where the impact of the public sector is growing. In the other two countries in transition to mass upper secondary education (Uruguay and Ecuador), the distribution of lower secondary enrolment by sector remains stable.

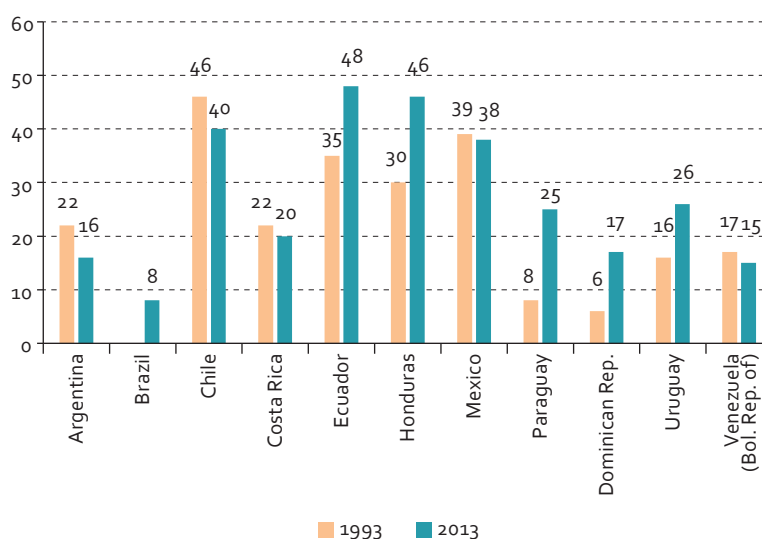
Public sector participation in lower secondary education is growing (except in Mexico, as mentioned earlier) in two countries where mass lower secondary education has not yet been achieved (the Dominican Republic and the Plurinational State of Bolivia) and in Costa Rica, where there is mass lower secondary education, which is terminal for the vast majority of secondary school-age children. As for upper secondary education, four of the five countries where public provision has grown are characterized by a transition towards mass enrolment in the upper secondary level (Plurinational State of Bolivia, Costa Rica, Paraguay and Dominican Republic).

“Out of ten children who enrol in ninth grade, three or four finish. We are seeing this because they do not have the financial resources to continue, to buy their school supplies and for transport. So, there is a big difference between public and private schools in terms of social class” (female civil servant, Costa Rica).

The second contribution of the quantitative study on segmentation mechanisms relates to curriculum streams. As mentioned in the introduction, diversification between classic education and vocational or technical education was one of the first forms of vertical segmentation. The data in this study indicate that, by 2013, almost half of all enrolment in Ecuador and Honduras was in the technical stream, having grown significantly over the 1993–2013 period, with a major share in Chile and Mexico. In nearly all the remaining countries, technical-vocational education accounted for between 15% and 26% of upper secondary enrolment. There was also significant growth in the Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Uruguay (see figure 9). This could be seen as a way of expanding secondary education, as other countries have done since the late nineteenth century.

Despite this, Sevilla (2017, cited in Iñigo and Austral, 2020) reports that only Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia have established a unified or integrated school model in law, avoiding the traditional differentiation between academic and technical-vocational tracks. In Brazil, there have been experiences of unified or integrated schools in just a few states with a smaller share of total enrolment. In the remaining countries, technical-vocational education is offered as a parallel pathway to academic education, especially in upper secondary education, although Argentina and the Bolivian Republic of Venezuela have established it as a differentiated track from the beginning of secondary level.

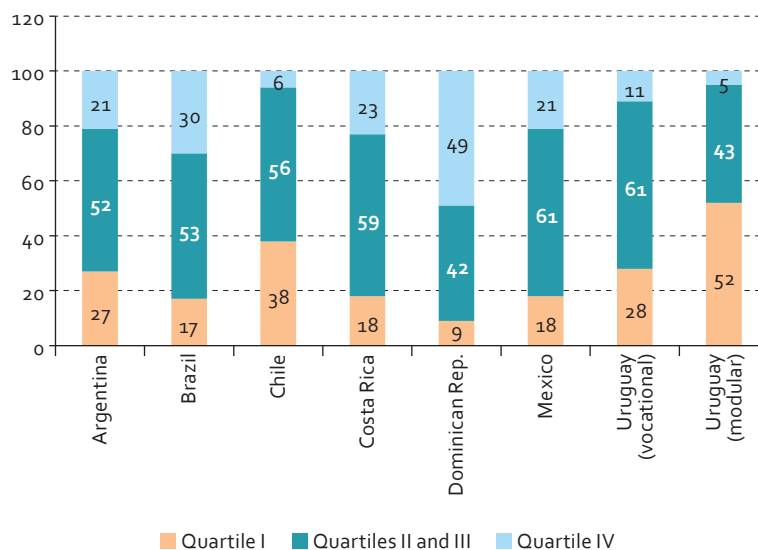
Figure 9
Latin America (11 countries): students enrolled in technical-vocational education at upper secondary level, 1993 and 2013 (Percentages)



Source: Sevilla, 2017, cited in L. Iñigo and R. Austral, *Estudio sobre el estado de la educación secundaria en América Latina: Contribuye la estructura diversificada a la segmentación social y la exclusión educativa? Informe cuantitativo*, Buenos Aires, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), 2020.

Technical-vocational provision is predominantly in the hands of the State in the vast majority of the countries for which there is sufficient information. The exceptions are Chile and Brazil, where technical-vocational provision is divided fairly evenly between the private and public sectors, although, as already highlighted, private provision in Chile is mostly subsidized. According to data from the 2015 survey of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, the vocational stream seems to be a differentiated track that recruits a relatively higher proportion of students from disadvantaged social backgrounds. In Uruguay, this is even more so for modular programmes (see figure 10). In principle, this information, combined with the relatively high participation of the State sector in technical-vocational education in Chile, could suggest the formation of a differentiated vocational track involving social segmentation of education provision.

Figure 10
Latin America (7 countries): composition of enrolment in vocational streams
by socioeconomic quartile of household of origin, students aged 15
(Percentages)

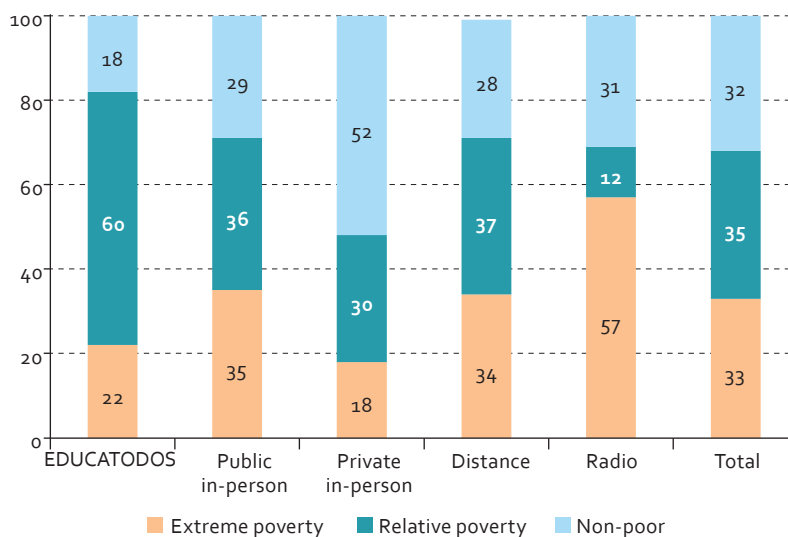


Source: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2015, cited in L. Iñigo and R. Austral, *Estudio sobre el estado de la educación secundaria en América Latina: Contribuye la estructura diversificada a la segmentación social y la exclusión educativa? Informe cuantitativo*, Buenos Aires, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), 2020.

The supplementary data from household surveys used to prepare the quantitative study allow some nuances to be introduced in terms of educational segmentation in certain countries: (i) in Chile, there is a higher share of students from poor households in the technical-vocational stream; (ii) in Uruguay, poverty is slightly higher among students in the technology baccalaureate than among those in the common baccalaureate (a one percentage-point difference); (iii) in Paraguay, the relationship between socioeconomic level and stream seems to be reversed, with students from poor households or the lowest income quintiles accounting for a smaller share of enrolment in the technical stream than in the scientific stream; (iv) in Honduras, there is a smaller share of students from the lowest quintiles in the diversified cycle, while radio education involves a particularly high relative share of students from households living in extreme poverty, and the largest share of non-poor students can be found in the in-person modality in private establishments (see figure 11).

To sum up, educational segmentation is related mainly to classic dimensions of educational inequality, such as socioeconomic level, area (rural/urban) and, to a lesser extent, gender. There are also traditional and new mechanisms of segmentation. Traditional mechanisms include the sector (public/private), the streams (the importance of the social sector according to the type of baccalaureate, even within the science or technology modalities or technical education), the area (provision for rural education in Mexico, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Honduras) and selective access (entrance exams in Mexico, completion exams in Ecuador and Costa Rica and ad hoc selection mechanisms in Argentina). New segmentation mechanisms include the creation of alternative modalities targeted at specific population groups with the aim of expanding coverage and including the most disadvantaged sectors historically excluded from secondary education (to a greater or lesser extent present in all cases), curriculum adaptation by introducing curricula based on the population left out of regular provision (lower secondary education plans in Uruguay) and the transfer of institutional models (as in the case of the International Baccalaureate in Ecuador until it was discontinued in 2020).

Figure 11
Honduras: students according to relative poverty status, by education system and population up to the age of 22 years attending upper secondary education (International Standard Classification of Education 3) (ISCED 3), 2017
(Percentages)



Source: Permanent Multipurpose Household Survey, 2017; and L. Iñigo and R. Austral, *Estudio sobre el estado de la educación secundaria en América Latina: Contribuye la estructura diversificada a la segmentación social y la exclusión educativa? Informe cuantitativo*, Buenos Aires, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), 2020.

The sustained extension of compulsory education and, hence, the expansion of secondary education in the Latin American region seems to be based more on the diversification of provision than on how integrated the structure is and/or the adoption of comprehensive institutional models, which is noticeably absent from the options. The extension-diversification pairing emerges in this context. It is likely that this pairing serves to exacerbate segmentation, as some of the mechanisms reported could consolidate differentiated educational tracks, such as those that align specific institutions within a single pathway leading to higher education.

There are other mechanisms which, unlike the previous ones, do not stem from the diversification of provision but may promote segmentation because they act as an obstacle or barrier to access or continuity of the educational trajectory on the basis of the social group of origin: compulsory or implicit costs (uniforms or textbooks), the prestige of institutions associated with social value and rigidities in institutional design (graded structure and number of subjects). These are mainly the mechanisms that emerge from the perceptions of the students interviewed, which are presented in the following chapter.

II. Diversification and segmentation of secondary education provision: the experience of young people

This chapter looks at the educational experience of adolescent and young interviewees in Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico and Uruguay. The aim was to make a more indepth analysis of educational segmentation mechanisms, both those that have emerged from the new ways of organizing provision and more traditional mechanisms, particularly in areas where it is recognized that secondary education is failing to achieve the objectives of continuity and completion of the educational trajectory. A further aim was to highlight mechanisms emerging from extension policies which, in spite of diversification, serve as support.

Just as the previous chapter discussed the tension between the current regulatory frameworks for achieving full inclusion through the extension of compulsory education and the interplay between traditional and new educational segmentation mechanisms, this chapter focuses on how the diversification of provision is manifested in students' perceptions of their educational trajectories. A point of note is that the study on educational provision and indicators shows that inclusion in secondary education does not seem to relate strongly with how integrated secondary education is but rather to a trend towards diversification as a way of ensuring compulsory education, expressed as tension between the extension-diversification pairing.

A major challenge in processing the information in this chapter is the differences between countries and between the institutional models to which the student interviewees belong. For this reason, there is no attempt to offer a systematic comparison between countries or students but rather to present certain common trends based on the students' accounts, as well as to identify specific features of relevance to the objective of the study. The discussion is presented in the form of *dialogue* between the selected accounts and the categories of analysis. Both the common trends and the specific features are linked to the design of education provision and the form it takes in the educational experience from the perspective of the extension-diversification pairing and the resulting segmentation mechanisms.

In short, an attempt is made to use the interviewees' perceptions of their educational experience to ascertain the ways in which the diversification of provision is expressed. As discussed below, it is manifested in two types of element linked with segmentation: elements arising more directly from the design of

provision (differences between sectors and areas of provision, assessments of educational modalities or streams, selection mechanisms, distribution of provision and costs or economic barriers), and elements arising from the particular forms of policy reality that translate into emerging forms of provision in terms of segmentation (the factors at play in the choice of institution, the implicit costs, assessments of students' profiles and forms of school violence). Between the two there are hinge mechanisms: they segment but also support. A special section is devoted to analysing these elements in a pandemic situation.

A. Design of provision and student perceptions

It is possible to distinguish at least two levels of deployment of provision-design elements: the provision structure and the institutional and educational arrangements.

1. The provision structure

Based on the students' accounts, three elements can be identified linked to the organization of secondary education provision and segmentation mechanisms: perceptions of the private provision differential, availability and accessibility depending on the area (urban or rural) and the differing assessments of the classic streams of secondary education, as well as the alternative modalities arising from the extension-diversification pairing of provision.

a) Private provision differential

One of the classic mechanisms of segmentation stems from the differences between public and private sector provision. As discussed in chapter one of this document, private provision plays a role of varying importance in the Latin American countries, even between lower and upper secondary provision. Beyond that, its importance seems to be somewhat related to the extension of compulsory education: once a stage is covered by the public sector, provision is more diversified between the two sectors.

Of interest here is the students' perception of some aspects where there appears to be a differential between private provision and public provision. One of these is attention or care.

"I went to the private secondary school first. I see a very wide gulf between the two. In the private school they even call you because you forgot to wear your sports trousers. And in the public one, you can be outside at the door, drinking beer and smoking a joint and nobody does a thing. There is no control at all" (male student, upper secondary completion plan at public secondary school, Uruguay).

For some, this attention extends to ensuring a deeper understanding of course content, together with respect for students.

"The teaching at the (private) secondary school seems very good to me because I have compared it with other people, especially those at public schools, and I ask them 'did they teach this?' and they say 'no'. And, in that regard, I feel that it is a privilege to go to a private secondary school. I mean, the teachers, the way they teach, for some reason, even if they are the same teachers, the treatment is different. The teachers in the private school treat you well, very respectfully" (female student, private lower secondary school, Uruguay).

"In the private secondary school there is more student care and other conveniences. The attention that the teachers pay you and there is also more follow-up of enrolled students, they know you better" (male former student at a private secondary school, currently studying the University of Labour of Uruguay baccalaureate - upper secondary education, Uruguay).

Another aspect is associated with differential knowledge, such as the English language, and greater opportunities.

“Well, the truth is that I did my first two years of education at a public school. Afterwards, my parents told me that they had thought about the better opportunities I would have by being able to learn English at the school where I am now and, well, it was my father who talked to my mother and they decided to enrol me here” (twelfth-grade student, private, Honduras).

Added to this is a perception of differential teaching quality.

“I think the fees were too high and they moved me because of the proximity and everything, but I would like to switch to that school because they taught better. When I arrived at this public school, I was ahead of my classmates in English and maths. Yes, I would like to switch” (upper secondary student, science, public, Ecuador).

This perception is accentuated when lower and upper secondary education are provided in separate institutions, without guaranteeing coverage.

“I moved from the [x] municipal school and they transferred me to the [y] private school because they thought that the education would be better... a higher level of education, because at the [x] municipal school the lower secondary education was not so good and they did not have the baccalaureate” (lower secondary student, private, Ecuador).

A third aspect relates to infrastructure and equipment characteristics and the differential they represent in terms of learning opportunities.

“We have access to Wi-Fi. Everyone brings their own devices. It has a laboratory for computer classes and paid programmes. There are projectors in every classroom, which usually work. There are books but they are difficult to get because they are very expensive books or they are not from here, so they give us a PDF file and now they have found a virtual system to assign books for the International Baccalaureate” (female student, Province of Buenos Aires, elite programmes or upper secondary programmes affiliated to national universities, Argentina).

“The classrooms are well-equipped and all have projectors. There is something called Apple TV that allows you to stream things from another Apple device. The court here is a professional football pitch. There are drawing rooms, laboratories and a smart board” (male student in a private upper secondary school in Mexico City, Mexico).

“I get a lot out of it because at school the desks, the screen in each classroom, the computer rooms, show that they do invest in this, and in several subjects we always use books” (male student, diversified education, traditional academic track, private, Costa Rica).

Care, equipment and other areas of knowledge are all aspects that can, in principle, be addressed in the provision design. In fact, this study looked at the development of policies to extend schooling through official provision, such as Ecuador’s Millennium Educational Units and replica schools, which are similar in nature to the two previous testimonies. In this case, a paradoxical situation arises: impoverished sectors have access to this new, resource-rich provision for the first time but it is not distributed throughout the territory. In addition, while these institutions are valued because of their infrastructure and superior quality resources, only a minority group of students has access to them. Although non-discrimination is ensured by the absence of entrance examinations, and affordability is similar to that in other public institutions, physical accessibility and availability of places pose an additional challenge to such provision.

b) Availability and accessibility depending on the area: rural provision and educational tracks

Despite the significant progress in rural secondary schooling mentioned earlier in this document, certain obstacles persist. According to the students’ perceptions, the proximity of provision and availability of transportation determine the continuity of schooling.

"I enrolled in the secondary school I am currently attending because it was closer to where I live and that was the reason I came here [...]. The other secondary schools are further away and to get there we have to pay for transport and my family does not have much money" (female student in the distance secondary education programme in rural Puebla, Mexico).

"We travel by the public transport provided for primary schools, which makes room for us. The school is 8 kilometres away" (female student, Tucumán, rural, Argentina).

"I chose the school because it is within the town, it is the only one and it is the closest one we have" (male student in the distance secondary education programme in rural Oaxaca, Mexico).

"I am a ninth year student and came to this school because it was the only one there at the start of the year but I would have liked to attend Monse [Liceo Monseñor Ruben Odio Herrera]. I am from Turrialba [rural area] but there were some problems so I had to come here [San José] and it was not planned to look for a school at the beginning of the year" (female student, general basic education, traditional academic track, public sub-track, Costa Rica).

"Frankly, there [were no other options]. I didn't want to study here because I didn't feel comfortable, I wanted to study somewhere else [...]. I'm only here because it's close by" (female student at a distance upper secondary education establishment (CEMSaD) in rural Chiapas, Mexico).

"My school is 8 kilometres from where I live. In my little village there are 100 inhabitants. My father takes me as far as a bend in the road and there I hope to take the Traffic [van] to get to school. It's a rural area" (female student, Saladillo, Province of Buenos Aires, rural, Argentina).

To continue with the example of Ecuador, while there are communities that travel to the new Millennium Educational Units on foot or by means of transport guaranteed by the State, there are also cases where this does not happen, made worse by the fact that, in some rural areas, very small institutions located close to communities were shut down in order to concentrate provision in the new, larger units.

The limited prospects for the educational trajectory do not apply only to the present but also to the future.

"I would continue into higher education if I manage to get to agricultural school. I would like to get out of here; I would like to study veterinary medicine, for example, but it is difficult" (student at a rural integrated centre, Uruguay).

"I do have very high aspirations. I want a good degree, to prepare myself well to face the world and plan for the future. [...] However, I can't be sure if I will be able to go to university because the one closest to me is in the city and, of course, it's a big expense: transport, tuition fees, supplies and other expenses. I'm thinking that I would have to work" (female student at a distance-learning community school in rural Oaxaca, Mexico).

Wherever there is a possibility of continuing in nearby or ad hoc institutions, obstacles emerge in terms of both educational offerings and cultural characteristics.

"The upper secondary school in town is not for me, I wouldn't be able to adapt. Here it is different, I feel comfortable here, with my classmates, my people. I am not at ease in the city" (student at a rural integrated centre, Uruguay).

"At secondary school, I had a hard time with maths because I don't understand the subject very well [...] because of the Spanish and the formulas [...]. At the COBACH public secondary school we always speak Spanish. [Speaking an indigenous language] has caused me problems, as things are taught in Spanish, they are difficult for me. So, my classmates mock me and say that I refuse to speak Spanish just for the heck of it" (female student at a distance upper secondary education establishment (CEMSaD) in rural Chiapas, Mexico).

"My way of speaking comes across as very rough and not very refined for the teachers. I'm like that, my inner sassiness just comes out and the teachers don't like it... I explain things like that, in my own words, or I have sayings from here that they don't like" (student at a rural integrated centre, Uruguay).

It is well known that the challenge of guaranteeing compulsory secondary education for the population as a whole is more complex in rural areas than in the urban form of schooling, owing to distances, isolation and sociocultural differences. The expectation, both in the spirit of the regulations and in policy design, coincides with that of students: for them to continue studying. However, implementation poses problems, such as those highlighted above, or has new impacts.

"When I was studying under the distance secondary education programme, the people from the distance-learning school would visit us to invite us to enrol, even though the school did not yet have a campus [...]. What's more, several of my classmates [from the distance secondary education programme] were going to enrol here" (female student at a distance-learning school in rural Oaxaca, Mexico).

"When I finished my distance secondary education, several people began to come and enrol here at the distance-learning upper secondary school. The worst thing here is that the school is not a campus that has chairs, for example, but instead we are in a house. About a year went by before they started setting up the school" (female student at a distance-learning community school in rural Oaxaca, Mexico).

Based on these personal accounts, the design of rural provision in Mexico can be seen as an example of the new forms adopted by the extension-diversification pairing and its relationship with segmentation mechanisms: extension through the transition from distance lower secondary education to the distance upper secondary education, while confining provision to a type of track with differential characteristics.

c) Assessments of streams and modalities

In all the cases under study, the design of provision entails the organization of baccalaureate and technical-vocational education into streams, as well as the development of alternative modalities. As highlighted in the introduction, these are historical and recent forms of segmenting provision. Chapter one also provided evidence of a possible relationship, in some countries, between the stream and a student's socioeconomic status. When asked about their educational experience, student's perceptions vary, with a tendency to make a positive assessment of the choice and/or experience in the technical stream.

On the one hand, the classic assessment of a connection between the technical stream and the labour market is in evidence.

"Actually, I did not choose the school, my parents chose it as they had heard good things about it because some cousins studied here and now they have a good job. My parents believed that by studying here I could also get a good job" (female student at a technical secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"I switched from a private school to a technical college, all alone, and it scared me. I have always liked the technical college, which provides you with a qualification with job prospects" (male student, Santa Fe, upper secondary technical college, Argentina).

"I am in twelfth year and am taking [the specialty] Accounting and Costs. The reason why I chose this technical school, apart from its proximity, is because obviously a technical college is one more advantage in ensuring you can stand out, progress and learn" (male student, twelfth year, technical education track, Costa Rica).

On the other hand, there is the students' assessment regarding areas of knowledge not covered in the classic baccalaureate stream, which is most striking in the case of the technical baccalaureate in Ecuador and science and technology education in Uruguay (University of Labour of Uruguay).

"I chose the technical college because it had a workshop, and I like those things, and the other school did not have one" (female student, Las Heras, Province of Buenos Aires, lower secondary technical college, Argentina).

"I chose it, I loved it because it has specialties. They enrolled me here... It was very difficult [to get a place]" (upper secondary student, public technical college, Ecuador).

"I was assigned another one ...but, as the [college x] has specialties [technical baccalaureate], I wanted to come here... I went to great lengths to get accepted... Begging the principal to get accepted" (upper secondary student, public technical college, Ecuador).

"To choose the school, first my parents explained the options that were available. I did the pre-enrolment at a technical school and at an academic one because, for the technical school, I had to take an exam and didn't know if I would pass, so, as a second option, I had the academic one. But, first and foremost I wanted to study at the technical school because my parents had told me that here I had the chance to start a course of study and get a technical school diploma, and that's why I am here" (female student, fourth year, technical education track, Costa Rica).

"It was a huge amount of paperwork; I was studying at [x] parish. There, it only went up to tenth year. I had to go to school and the technical [school y] attracted me because it had specialties, whereas in [school z] there was only science, that was the reason I decided to [switch]. It was a lot of red tape. After a month I was able to go. I didn't give up. [I made] a special request to the ministry and, also, as I had an uncle who was a teacher [at this technical school], he helped me a lot" (upper secondary student, public technical school, Ecuador).

There is also a perception, especially in the case of Uruguay, that technical stream studies might be less well regarded, revealing the persistence of social prejudice against these studies. In terms of the way in which segmentation mechanisms are manifested, the lengthy pathway of the technical stream and its historical link with the extension-diversification pairing is probably behind this type of perception.

"Many leave because they enrolled believing that it is easy and undemanding and then they find it's something very different" (student of University of Labour of Uruguay [technical education], upper secondary education, inland Uruguay).

"The National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP) was my first choice. In fact, I had problems with my father because he didn't want me to study computer science. As the campus is not very big, I feel that people had a hard time believing in this school; my father was one of them [...]. He used to tell me that it was not a school or a course that suited me; he said that I would end up working in a shop" (female student at the National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP) in semi-urban Veracruz, Mexico).

"Once I was told that the University of Labour of Uruguay (UTU) was attended by kids from the poor neighbourhoods... and it's not like that, the ones who take drugs, but it's not like that. My parents didn't want me to go to the UTU either; they told me that people wanting to do a short course went there" (student at the University of Labour of Uruguay, lower secondary education, inland Uruguay).

"There's a lot of prejudice about the UTU, especially about it being easy. That's what people who have never been here say. They say that it's for people who want to an easy life and to do very little, those who want to take a shortcut... Just let them come here and see if that's the case" (student at the University of Labour of Uruguay, upper secondary education, Montevideo, Uruguay).

The survey presents a similar picture in the case of alternative modalities, especially among students who have fallen behind their age group or have experiences of dropping out. This point is discussed later. A point of note here is testimony of the diversification experience arising from the extension of the International Baccalaureate institutional model in Ecuador's public sector provision.⁶

In Ecuador, the International Baccalaureate was developed as a policy to extend education provision between 2012 and 2020. Even though the 197 schools offering the International Baccalaureate are scattered across the country—150 in urban areas and 47 in rural areas—and enrolment allows for school mobility, most students do not have a nearby school with this provision. So, its physical accessibility is limited. The programme involves selective entrance and transition tests.

"It was easy for me because I had already been at the school and we were taught to the test they would be setting us. Yes, we had to study, but we already knew everything they were going to set us. So it was easy for me to pass the test and I also got one of the top scores" (upper secondary student, science, public, International Baccalaureate, Ecuador).

"It was a bit difficult for me because... [the previous school] was not as far ahead. I was forced to revise topics on YouTube and to analyse them myself. My father knows a bit about maths and physics, so he had to explain things to me that I hadn't seen. History, too, to get ahead of my classmates... In the end I did well in the test and I also got one of the top scores" (upper secondary student, science, public, International Baccalaureate, Ecuador).

Those who are selected enter the Pre-International Baccalaureate programme, a year that seems to work as a second filter for admission.⁷

"It's like a period during which they eliminate those who are not competent, those they believe could not perform better. The best get admitted" (upper secondary student, science, private, Ecuador).

"The pre-International Baccalaureate is preparation for the first grade of the diploma and for eliminating those who are not committed and who see it as difficult... They bombard you with schoolwork to see if you are psychologically prepared for what is to come and, if not, you pull out" (upper secondary student, science, private, Ecuador).

Despite being part of public provision, the programme entails significant costs for students.

"... if we want to have books on the different subjects, our parents have to fork out. For example, a biology book cost them \$94... If they are thinner, the language book costs you around \$50" (upper secondary student, science, private, Ecuador).

"Our law assignments are on a computer. Last year, I didn't have a computer, so I had to write my essays by hand and then go on the Internet to transcribe them. So, during that time it was more difficult to quote in APA format. To be in the International Baccalaureate you really must have..., a computer is like a material requirement for classes" (upper secondary student, science, public, International Baccalaureate, Ecuador).

"When we have essays, they are nearly, like, 12 pages, they check closely that it is well cited... plagiarism programmes, fees... the State has stopped paying for these programmes... Even our own teachers help us with our assignments so we can get higher scores and to ensure less similarity with other websites" (upper secondary student, science, public, International Baccalaureate, Ecuador).

⁶ The study on Argentina shows intra-institutional segmentation in public schools offering the International Baccalaureate. This case is not included because of its limited relevance, as very few institutions in the official sector offer this programme.

⁷ Corresponding to the first year of upper secondary school, prior to the official years of study for the International Baccalaureate Diploma, which would be the second and third years of upper secondary education or baccalaureate.

Just as the distance baccalaureate in Mexico was highlighted as an example, the case of the International Baccalaureate also synthesizes the tension in the extension-diversification pairing. In this instance, it was based on a desire to extend provision with international legitimacy. However, owing to the selection procedures and associated costs, the form it takes creates segmentation mechanisms which, even in the public sector, potentially result in obstacles to schooling.

2. Institutional and educational arrangements

The second level of deployment of provision-design elements is institutional and educational arrangements. They include the characteristics of schools in terms of material conditions, as well as aspects relating to forms of access to secondary education institutions. Perceptions about the misalignment between the different secondary education levels and stages and their relationship with the organization of classes are also highlighted.

a) Material conditions of schools

The institutional organization of education is based on certain material conditions, especially when schooling is concentrated in the school building unit. In this regard, differences in material conditions can translate into differences with respect to delivery media. Accounts of different conditions in private provision have already been identified. The area (rural or urban) does not seem to be the only differentiation variable.

“It is a small school, we have only three classrooms [...]. We have a vegetable garden. At school we don't have computers, we don't have many resources” (male student at a distance-learning community school in rural Oaxaca, Mexico).

“It is small compared with other upper secondary schools, but the space here is used quite well. It has a gym for the different disciplines, such as taekwondo, basketball and volleyball. There are two synthetic grass courts and four basketball and football courts with bleachers. It has a library, cafeteria, theatre and a student band [...]. There are quite a few laboratories [...], language rooms and a central courtyard for breaks” (male student, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) upper secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

“The school is quite large, judging by what I have seen. In recent years, the grounds have been expanded and that is great. There are something like 3,000 students. I would say that, in certain cases, the typical problem that arises is that many students are admitted or many stay down [they do not graduate the year] and, when you get to the classroom, there are no desks or things like that, because the group is very large” (male student, general basic education (EGB), traditional academic track, public, Costa Rica).

“[Internet] only for classes, the password is only for computers, unless you find out the password, but we can't use them because the network might become overloaded and then it freezes” (female student, diversified education, technical education track, Costa Rica).

“It's not a very big school, like medium-sized. It's in a good location, it has its open spaces, all ready for an emergency, and now the gym is used a lot for both educational and recreational activities” (male student, general basic education (EGB), Institute of General Basic Education (IEGB) track, public, Costa Rica).

“[The school has] only the courts and the bleachers. The administration and also a small bar. When it comes to physical education, the courts are not big enough. [The classrooms take] 50, but are more cramped than in other schools. We have seats but we have to arrange them in a U-shape so that we can all get in. If we arrange them end-to-end, we don't all fit. We get the Internet from the mayor's office, or else the data... [To improve the school I would include] a computer room, library, synthetic courts. Basketball court...” (lower secondary student, public, urban, Ecuador).

"It has two courts, one for basketball, one for football, a stage. A playground for the little ones. Toilets for men, women and children. Inspectorate, administration, Student Counselling Department (DECE). There is a library that is not much used, but there is one. Shelters for breaktime with seats out of the sun. The school also has a computer lab. Yes, there is Internet. There is also a culinary (cooking) lab and a chemistry lab. The classrooms are well-equipped. There should be a laboratory for each specialty. At school there are only computer and chemistry labs but none for the other specialties..." (upper secondary student, technical education, urban, public, Ecuador).

In some alternative modalities the situation is particularly precarious.

"Actually, the facilities are on loan. In fact, they are just building our campus [...], there are only four classrooms. There is a small court [...] and we have a computer room where there are enough PCs in principle, although later on there's a shortage. We have no set cafeteria, a lady comes to sell and everyone eats in different areas. There is no dining room set up" (female student, National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP) in urban Veracruz, Mexico).

"The school is very small. Some of the classrooms are very old. There are four buildings, including the administration, and a court. They have just done a refurbishment and put seats in the cafeteria" (female student, COBACH public secondary school, upper secondary education, in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"Well, the Honduran Institute for Radio Education (IHER) [providing lower and alternative upper secondary education] has had no fixed place to operate. For one thing, last year and this year, it operated in the Policarpo Bonilla School. We are not many students and, for that matter, the classrooms are more for children. We go on Saturdays and Sundays, we don't use the school's computer rooms, we can use only five classrooms, four for basic and career education and another classroom that functions as the IHER administration. There is a cafeteria, only that. Our classes are held in the classrooms with the books we use and, when we have a computer lab, they lend us a computer laboratory at the "La Fraternidad" Institute in the Distance Upper Secondary Education System (twelfth grade student, Olancho, alternative education, Honduras).

Again, differences emerge according to whether they are institutions targeted by specific extension policies, such as Ecuador's Millennium Educational Units or International Baccalaureate schools.

"At another school I attended, there was no theatre, library, laboratories, there were only classrooms. In contrast, when I came here, I fell in love with the library. There are loads of green spaces. The labs are moderately well equipped... Because existing supplies sometimes expire or are damaged... There are also quite a few supplies for biology but microscopes and electronic things are not maintained... There is a computer room but they use it more for English... Instead, we are taught more with projectors, which are in the International Baccalaureate block. Also in the theatre and in the auditorium on the ground floor of the International Baccalaureate block. We are taught using slides, videos, they project the study material onto a screen, so the lessons are more interactive and more interesting" (upper secondary student, science, public, Ecuador).

"My school is large, it has three courts, it has a laboratory, a computer area and there are many large classrooms. We all fit in, there are usually 25 to 30 of us. The school has had improvements. They made more classrooms, they made a laboratory... a better one with more equipment. A computer lab and natural science lab. It's a government Millennium School. Yes, they have improved it because, at first... in times gone by, this school had only two classrooms and just a few teachers" (lower secondary student, public Bilingual Intercultural Education System (SEIB), Ecuador).

The significant differences in material conditions described in the personal accounts cut across sectors and areas; they are even reinforced by specific education policies aimed at extending and renewing provision. In education systems centred on the school building unit as the foundation of the delivery context, these differentiated conditions have effects on segmentation at the institutional provision level.

b) Forms of access and distribution

Clearly, the existence of generalized entrance examinations, as in the case of Mexico, fulfils a selection function. In the case of institutional arrangements, it is heightened when it is organized around the distribution of students into shifts.

"I took the entrance exam, it was 60 questions [...]. The assumption was that if you scored 30 points or more you would be placed in the morning shift but if you scored below 30 points you were placed in the afternoon shift. And I was placed in the morning shift" (female student, technical secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"This time we were supposed to take the exam in person but, because of the pandemic, we didn't take it; certain shifts were decided on the basis of averages. It seems that everyone who'd applied for each campus was admitted, but they asked you for your average and that determined whether you were placed in the morning or afternoon shift, which was not very advantageous for some people, as their secondary school average meant that they were placed in the afternoon shift" (female student, COBACH public secondary school in urban Chiapas, Mexico).

"In the afternoon, you feel that time is shorter. I've had the opportunity to go on both [shifts]. Apart from the fact that you leave at night and have to stay up late doing homework [...] I think that the afternoon shift is a bit worse" (student of general secondary education in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

Where examinations are part of specific institutional arrangements, as in the case of Ecuador's International Baccalaureate schools or some of Argentina's pre-university schools, perceptions range from the importance of the economic factor, a higher course load than in primary school and the ability to keep up with the pace, to personal experiences of marked frustration at the start of secondary education.

"There is an economic factor, if you don't have the money to pay for a private teacher" (male student, Rosario, Santa Fe province, differentiated programmes in regular education—elite programmes, national universities—upper secondary education, Argentina).

"I had a friend who did a lot of preparation to get in. On the day she went to sit the exam, we met up and she came out crying because they had told her that she did not have the knowledge required and to try another year" (female student, San Miguel de Tucumán, Tucumán province, differentiated programmes in regular education—elite programmes, national universities—upper secondary education, Argentina).

"I took private lessons during the last year of primary school and struggled to keep up. I went every day. Some would drop out because they saw that they were not up to the right level or for personal reasons" (male student, San Juan, differentiated programmes in regular education—elite programmes, national universities—lower secondary education, Argentina).

"There are huge queues to sit the exam and many kids go to pieces (...) It's a whole year of study reduced to one day and, if you were to vomit and feel sick, you've thrown away a whole year, no matter how much ability you have" (female student, Córdoba, differentiated programmes in regular education—elite programmes, national universities—upper secondary education, Argentina).

While material conditions create differing opportunities, the forms of access described above guide enrolment: by institutions or by shifts. From the standpoint of the educational experience, both raise questions about policies for extending compulsory education: what is entry to secondary school associated with when it takes place in precarious conditions? What value does it add when it is mediated by selection exams? What are the meanings depending on the place and the form of access? Extending compulsory education on such foundations is likely to lead to different meanings.

c) **Obstacles to linkages between levels and stages**

The form of organization of secondary education studies plays a major role in the continuity of the educational trajectory. It becomes a key moment, a nexus, especially owing to the perceived differences between primary and lower secondary education and between lower and upper secondary education, depending on the case. This is true even in systems where secondary education is part of basic education. At play here are legacies of an institutional model focused on the value of general education through exposure to different disciplines or areas of knowledge (Acosta, 2019b).

From the student perspective, there are various points of worry or stress. One is the “shock” at a change in the number of subjects.

“Like, 12 or 13 subjects give you terrible brain clutter... so, it would be good if the subjects were linked to each other” (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in lower secondary education, Uruguay).

“I felt nervous because it was a new stage, because I didn’t know what I was getting into. It was a change because there were new ways of working and orientation. In primary school there weren’t so many subjects, in primary school you were taught by a single teacher, so you could spend a lot of time on one subject. In secondary school, time is shorter and you can’t exceed the scheduled class time” (male student, general secondary education in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

“In lower secondary school, I had only a few subjects, but here at the distance-learning school there are many subjects and more books. Well, the way of working is also very different. I found it a bit hard to adapt” (female student, distance-learning community school in rural Oaxaca, Mexico).

“I found it quite difficult to adapt to the subjects and the type of organization, and to divide my time. That was the hardest thing. And the teachers, they’re not like the ones in primary school. They are more serious and stricter” (male student, Paraná, Entre Ríos province, public lower secondary school, Argentina).

“What surprised me the most were the subjects. A lot of subjects, and I was lucky to be supported by the teachers” (male student, Salta, public lower secondary school, Argentina).

Another point of worry or stress is a change in “atmosphere”, which calls for more seriousness or commitment.

“In lower secondary school they were very strict on discipline and it is something that makes you very fed up [...]. The teachers in the upper secondary school are, like, ‘you decide whether you pay attention or not’ ” (female student, private upper secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

“The energy is different, everything is more serious, it’s better for me. The teachers are more serious” (male student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, public lower secondary school, Argentina).

“The way of teaching and the fact that you have to be more responsible at secondary school because parents don’t keep such a close eye on you as they do at primary school” (female student, general basic education, traditional academic track, public, Costa Rica).

“Well, there is quite a noticeable change, it is a higher level, there is greater maturity, so the teachers’ assessments and attitudes change, because when you are in primary school the teachers keep a closer eye on your schoolwork. At secondary school that changes because you have to be more independent and responsible” (twelfth grade student, Ocotepeque, traditional baccalaureate track, Honduras).

“In primary school they listened to us more and now they are more indifferent” (male student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, differentiated programmes in regular education —elite programmes, national universities— lower secondary education, Argentina).

“Because, in basic education, the teachers are perhaps kinder, you feel they are more caring, as we need more help when learning things, whereas as we go up the educational levels, we have to become more responsible, doing things independently” (twelfth grade student, Francisco Morazán, private, Honduras).

The perceived change in atmosphere is coupled with a perceived change in “pace”, not only because of an increased number of subjects but also because of the way in which subjects are distributed and the assessment regime. This is particularly so in traditional baccalaureate tracks.

“Yes, I have noticed many differences, as it is totally different being in tenth grade than it was in basic education, there are more subjects, a lot more, because in the first semester there are some classes and in the second semester, others, but in basic education the subjects are not by semester” (tenth grade student, Francisco Morazán, private, Honduras).

“I have noticed a lot of difference in what is required, it is much more demanding and, most of all, the number of subjects” (female student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, differentiated programmes in regular education —elite programmes, national universities— lower secondary education, Argentina).

“Perhaps it’s the workload, because sometimes they don’t realize that we have more than six classes and the six teachers of the eight classes set a lot of homework and it may all be by the same deadline, so then you don’t know where to start, how to organize yourself, what to do, because it’s too much work” (twelfth grade student, Francisco Morazán, traditional secondary school, Honduras).

“When I entered technical education, I had to hand in a lot of homework, take exams, so there were more subjects and there were, like, more things, more of everything, and I found the first term quite hard, but then I got really used to it. Socially it wasn’t difficult for me, it was more the academic side” (female student, diversified education, technical education track, Costa Rica).

“Even though we’re now in the second semester, I’m still not used to the assessment system, the exams are quite hard. When I was in ninth grade, for the cumulative exams I didn’t attach so much importance to losing points on an assignment but now I do. There are a total of 50 points for assignments, but you have to do a lot to achieve that score and every little point counts” (tenth grade student, Francisco Morazán, private, Honduras).

“I have found it hard to keep up my grades because, more so now, let’s say with the current situation, it’s quite difficult. As Dani said, before, there used to be two homework assignments per subject but now there are about 10 per month, so, it’s a bit more difficult and I have four siblings and all four are studying and I am always the tutor, so it means yet more effort and I find it a bit hard” (female student, diversified education, technical education track, Costa Rica).

The increased pace of coursework, coupled with a certain disaffection, can lead to school drop-out, the most extreme instance of segmentation.

"I did not return to the COBACH public secondary school because they were not going to revalidate the subjects that I had already taken. It meant starting all over again, another three years [...]. It was going to take me longer to finish school, because a year after [leaving school] means you are beginning from scratch" (woman who dropped out of upper secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"I feel that it was part of the support because there were things that I didn't understand fully and the teachers were definitely not there to teach, they wanted you to learn on your own. At that time, my parents were not well off enough to pay for extra tuition" (woman, youth and adult education track, Costa Rica).

"At the beginning of last year, we all began to take career classes and it was quite hard to adjust to the difficulty of the classes and there were classmates who didn't manage to pass some classes and some didn't even go to remedial classes but instead they dropped out and never came back" (twelfth grade student, Francisco Morazán, traditional secondary school, Honduras).

In the case of Uruguay, there are particular accounts relating both to the provision structure and to institutional and educational arrangements. On the one hand, students are concerned when it comes to choosing a stream, something for which they feel unprepared.

"I am a bit worried about next year when I have to choose my stream. I don't know, I think I'm a bit young to be weighing up everything involved, choosing what job I'm going to be doing for the rest of my life, which also means thinking about finances. I think we don't have enough information and we're not old enough to make such decisions" (student at a private lower secondary school, Montevideo, Uruguay).

"From the moment they tell you to choose a stream, there is the pressure that 'this I going to be for the rest of your life'... I mean, for me, that was extremely hard in fifth and sixth grades" (focus group on lagging trajectories in upper secondary education, Montevideo, Uruguay).

"I don't think it's easy, because the stream you take will be decisive... and if you want to switch later, you will have wasted a lot of time. It's like a decision you have to make at a very young age. It's a decision that affects the rest of your life" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in upper secondary education, Montevideo, Uruguay).

On the other hand, there is frustration over secondary school provision.

"I go to upper secondary school out of obligation... I mean, I don't want to do anything related to secondary school. I don't like any course, I'm only interested in programming but I'm too lazy" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in lower secondary education, Uruguay).

"I am finishing upper secondary school just for the sake of it, because I don't like it, nothing about what I am studying appeals to me" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in upper secondary education, Uruguay).

"I couldn't stand upper secondary school, getting up really early to go and study something that you don't understand and that is pointless because it doesn't apply to anything in the real world" (focus group on lagging educational trajectories, upper secondary school, University of Labour of Uruguay, Uruguay).

"Upper secondary school is not appealing. It's a lot of years during which you achieve very little. For many years you feel that you are not useful for anything. At the time you see no use for that knowledge. When you are older, you can understand it but, at the time you are experiencing it, at the age of 15, you don't understand why you should have to solve quadratic equations. It's very hard for teenagers to make sense of all that in the way it is taught right now. That happened to me and I ended up dropping out" (student who completed upper secondary education at the age of 23 through the Completion Plan, Uruguay).

This is, of course, a limited survey, which may or may not reflect the views of all students in that country. However, chapter one of this document mentioned Uruguay's low secondary school completion rate, despite the country's indicators of better socioeconomic distribution. As numerous local studies have pointed out, something like the lack of relevance and pertinence of provision and its institutional and educational arrangements is likely to be at play here.

"The education system is behind the times, it's outdated. You have to arrive at a specific time, to file in soldier-style, like in a factory system, skipping from one subject that means nothing to you, and that you feel isn't useful, to the next. That's why I think there's no enthusiasm" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in lower secondary education, Uruguay).

d) **Classes and teachers**

Following on from this, the last aspect to emerge in the accounts is the organization of classes.

"The secondary education system is a very archaic system where teachers tell you what you have to do and how, you have to do the exams as they tell you, repeat what they have taught you in their class, etcetera. They don't teach you to think, to develop critical thinking, to discuss, to debate" (upper secondary Completion Plan student, Uruguay).

"What I dislike the most is that many teachers have no desire to teach, they tell you which pages you have to copy and you literally have to copy those and they don't even bother to explain. So it makes the lesson more difficult" (female student, Resistencia, Chaco province, public lower secondary school, Argentina).

"I believe that a subject has a lot to do with the teacher, with the dynamics they create, what they convey about their profession. Most of the teachers at that time simply spewed out course content without the slightest interest in the students learning" (over-age student at night secondary school, inland Uruguay).

"Personally, I believe that the education system has a structure in which memory is heavily reinforced but not logic, mathematical logic, so, for exams they train us to memorize a text, to be able to restate it accurately and concisely. The problem is that when you begin to study for the University of Costa Rica (UCR) exam, you are asked for self-criticism, personal analysis. Within its structure, the education system does not have the ability to reason, to explain Spanish and maths in everyday life" (male student, public diversified education, traditional academic track, Costa Rica).

"What I do find is that you just memorize and repeat, in other words, you don't learn. Some teachers give it a different vibe so that you really learn" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in upper secondary education, Uruguay).

Historical issues emerge, such as the criticism of rote learning or the lack of relevance of course content to the contemporary world. Of note are the accounts regarding lack of development of critical and analytical thinking and the obstacle this may pose for continuing studies in institutions with other cognitive demands, such as university. Also the fact that these issues are associated with the teaching style of each individual teacher. The problem, from a policy design standpoint, is not new: how to regulate teaching styles so as to ensure a common offering. In this case, the combination of shocks or gaps between levels and stages and different styles, which do not always lead to educational arrangements that promote meaningful learning, can have a negative impact on access and continuity of the educational trajectory. Students' disengagement and frustration are testimony to this.

This section focused on those elements linked to segmentation mechanisms that stem from the design of provision with respect to the structure and to institutional and educational arrangements. The students' accounts reveal their perception of conditions that can turn into inequalities: on the one hand,

differentials in private provision, availability and accessibility in rural areas and intensified segmentation of provision according to institutional models; on the other hand, different material conditions, divergent study regimes between stages, selection mechanisms and, in some cases, the lack of relevance of educational and organizational approaches.

It was argued that the above elements can turn into obstacles or barriers to ensuring compulsory secondary education that is common, or as common as possible, in scenarios of extended compulsory education. However, if these elements do indeed stem from the design of provision, it should be possible to reorient, reverse or mitigate them at that very point.

“...I mean, I would give students the opportunity to choose classes, some subjects, in other words, I would give students the ability to have more influence on this” (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in lower secondary education, Uruguay).

B. The policy reality

In conjunction with elements stemming from provision design, it is possible to identify elements arising from the particular forms of policy reality, which translate into emerging forms of provision that could lead to segmented provision. This section highlights three: forms of school selection, the implicit costs of compulsory schooling and continuing experiences of school violence associated with expressions of inequality, such as gender.

1. School selection and its relationship with segmentation

In terms of choice, when secondary education becomes compulsory, adolescents and young people must be able to rely on available and accessible provision. Even if the provision guarantees these conditions, a wide range of factors can affect actual access, as the selected accounts show.

The most influential factor appears to be recommendation *based on educational background*. Personal experiences, such as those of parents and siblings, serve as a reference.

“I went to that school because of my siblings and because the fact that my siblings were there gave me an automatic place” (male student, Paraná, public lower secondary school, Argentina).

“My sister [influenced my choice of school]. She was just out of third grade, she was among the first generation [...] she supports me [...]. The school is about 50 metres away, it’s very close. The other one is further away [...]. The school has a good reputation in the community and among recent graduates” (male student, distance-learning school in rural Oaxaca, Mexico).

“In my case, I’ve been here since seventh grade and I decided to attend this school because it was my choice and also because my mother wanted me to, as my brother graduated from here” (male student, public diversified education, traditional academic track, Costa Rica).

“I went to the primary school that is just around the corner, which is also a secondary school, so I’ve been here for quite a while (...) My two brothers went to secondary school and they graduated from here, which is why I go to this one” (female student, lower secondary school, Mar del Plata, Province of Buenos Aires, public lower secondary school, Argentina).

“It is the only secondary school in Encarnación. I also had the option of going to María Auxiliadora secondary school in Santa Rosa de Copán but I thought it was better to be in the only one where I live and a recognized secondary school, and my parents also recommended it to me” (seventh-grade student, Ocotepeque, traditional secondary school, Honduras).

The students’ accounts also mention uncles and aunts or other contacts.

"My sister had a boyfriend who went to the University of Labour of Uruguay (UTU). So I thought it might be a good choice" (student at the University of Labour of Uruguay second cycle, upper secondary education, Uruguay).

"One of my uncles had studied here and I had the opportunity, when I was much younger, of going to this school. I've always liked it, it's a very big school ... My father had also studied here and I wanted to come here as a family tradition, right?" (male student, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) upper secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"...I've always had a lot of admiration for my aunt, my father's youngest sister, and she had studied here and I wanted to go to the same school as her, more because of that than because of the specialty. Because it was actually a completely different specialty [to the one I'm studying now, electromechanics]. If I'm not mistaken, she studied the call centre specialty" (female student, diversified education, technical education track, Costa Rica).

"My uncles had studied chemistry at the University of Labour of Uruguay and they encouraged me to go" (focus group on lagging educational trajectories in the baccalaureate, upper secondary, Uruguay).

"We had good recommendations and my uncle had attended this school, so my parents decided to send me here" (male student, Mar del Plata, Province of Buenos Aires, upper secondary technical college, Argentina).

Proximity is an important factor, especially among lower secondary students.

"I enrolled in the secondary school I am currently attending because it was closer to where I live and that was the reason I came here [...]. The other secondary schools are further away and to get there we have to pay for transport and my family does not have much money" (female student, distance secondary education in rural Puebla, Mexico).

"It was my decision. I wanted to come here because it is close to home, it is in my town" (female student, Santa Fe, public lower secondary school, Argentina).

"The current school is close to where I live and here it is public, so you don't have to pay" (upper secondary student, science, public, Ecuador).

"I chose this school mostly for convenience because it is very close to my home and it is easier to get there and back. As I sometimes walk there, it's more of a convenience than anything else" (female student, Córdoba, public lower secondary school, Argentina).

"I moved here (to the neighbourhood) and I chose this school because it was closer to home" (lower secondary student, public, Ecuador).

"I chose it because my friends were enrolled here and because of its proximity" (female student, Paraná, Entre Ríos province, public upper secondary school, Argentina).

In some cases, educational background is combined with proximity.

"I have studied at the Unidad Educativa since kindergarten and I still study here because it is close to home. My uncles studied here, it's three blocks from my house" (lower secondary student, public Bilingual Intercultural Education System (SEIB), Ecuador).

"I've been here since kindergarten because it was closer for my mother and because they have upper secondary here" (upper secondary student, science, public provision, Ecuador).

A third important factor is *continuity in the same educational track*. This may be related to the fact that it is the only provision available, as highlighted in the case of Mexico's distance-learning upper secondary school or to the guarantee of a place for the following stage.

"I have been at this school all my life, since the first grade of kindergarten [pre-school]. I decided to stay here to go on to upper secondary school because I didn't need to fulfil any additional requirements to enter the upper secondary school" (female student in a private upper secondary school in urban Mexico City).

"I went to Arboledas, which is like a predecessor to this upper secondary school [...] I decided to stay on here because of the academic standard it offered to graduates and also because my friends were going to stay on here [...], I got in by direct entry" (male student in a private upper secondary school in urban Mexico City).

"I've been here since kindergarten and it was because my sister's godmother's daughter worked here, so she recommended the school and I've been here all my life" (male student, diversified education, traditional academic track, private, Costa Rica).

"I've been at this school since kindergarten. There is an entrance examination but most students continue from primary school, so they don't have to sit the exam" (male student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, elite programmes or upper secondary programmes affiliated to national universities, Argentina).

There is also the reverse of continuity: changing schools because of *lack of provision*, a situation seen in Ecuador.

"This year, they moved me because there was no ninth grade at the school I was at. They transferred me straight here" (lower secondary student, public Bilingual Intercultural Education System (SEIB), Ecuador).

"They moved us from there to here. All of us... they transferred us here... Only the first, second and third grades stayed there. It was only the move from third to fourth grades. It was the same system (that made the transfer)" (upper secondary student, science, intensive public provision, Ecuador).

"I was studying at a primary school, well, at a secondary school that later closed down and remained as just a primary school. Then the district reassigned us and they sent me to this secondary school. That's why I'm at this school" (upper secondary student, science, public provision, Ecuador).

Continuity in an educational track can also be linked to school selection based on *institutional prestige*. This is evident among students at elite schools or schools affiliated to universities, as in Argentina and Mexico.

"It is free and very open and I think it is because of the student centre. And I chose it because of that and also because it is affiliated to the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and it gives you a very good education for the future" (female student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, elite programmes or programmes affiliated to national universities, lower secondary education, Argentina).

"In fifth grade, I met the sister of a classmate who was preparing for this school. It is very prestigious. It's different from the others. I told my mother so. In seventh grade, I started with a private teacher" (female student, Santa Fe, elite programmes or programmes affiliated to national universities, lower secondary education, Argentina).

"I chose this school because the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) is very popular and most people want to go there. I ended up at the School of Sciences and Humanities (CCH) but my first choice was Preparatoria 7 upper secondary school [both belonging to the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)]. That was my first choice because, in terms of ranking, the UNAM upper secondary schools are better" (female student, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) upper secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"I went into secondary at this school and, when I was admitted, my parents were very excited because it's a pretty good school. Out of 2,000 who sit the exam, only 200 are admitted. It was interesting to see if you could take the entrance exam and get in. To be among the 200" (male student, Rosario, Santa Fe province, elite programmes or programmes affiliated to national universities, upper secondary education, Argentina).

Selection as a mechanism of differentiation and ranking is at work here, as mentioned above. The students' accounts also reveal aspects linked to *economic status*. This factor is also found among students in Honduras.

"I chose it because of finances, because of the money, because sometimes we had money and sometimes we didn't, if things were difficult. For my parents, it was better because they didn't have to spend money on transport. Only for things they asked for here at school, they said it was a bit better for them" (twelfth grade student, Yoro, traditional secondary school, Honduras).

"I chose this Institute in the Distance Upper Secondary Education System (ISEMED) for the same reasons as the others have mentioned, that is to say, because it is flexible so that you can work, and that's what I needed to do, to work and get ahead" (twelfth grade student, Olancho, alternative education, Honduras).

A final important factor is students' concern for *safe schools* or safe access.

"I used to go to the University of Labour of Uruguay (UTU) in Malvín Nordea and it was just an ordinary school. But this year I started at the secondary school because I found the UTU to be very rough. I had chosen the UTU as my first option because it was a block away from home. There was no security, they were always beating each other up outside. That's why I moved, because they would come with guns, because they would point them at all of us inside the UTU, and the students had guns and, at the exit, they would point them at all of us" (focus group on lagging educational trajectories in lower secondary education, Uruguay).

"The teachers don't seem to be aware of this, that we should leave a few minutes earlier. They keep us very late and there are times when you have to walk home at night. For my route home, I had two options: either to walk down narrow streets where it was very dark, or to walk for miles to get home, but along streets with lighting. So I had to decide which route to take: the short way or the long way. But I was in danger on the short one. I was getting home quite late" (male student, National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP) in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"First, I went to Liceo 31 secondary school but it had a very hostile environment, outsiders would come in and smoke joints on the roof, they stole my mobile phone and that school... So I switched to Liceo 27, then I went to Liceo 4 and I moved from there too" (focus group on lagging educational trajectories, upper secondary education, Uruguay).

"Because of the timetable, which was very early in the morning, it was very dark and it was dangerous to go out to get the bus. My father had to accompany me because we had heard that other classmates had been assaulted there" (female student, COBACH public secondary school in urban Chiapas, Mexico).

"I don't think so because I also wanted to be here because it was nearby and I was afraid to go out of the other schools and of what might happen to me on the way" (twelfth grade student, Francisco Morazán, traditional secondary school, Honduras).

The above survey shows that there is a combination of factors behind school *selection* associated with place of residence, availability of provision and, above all, educational background. These factors may operate as implicit segmentation mechanisms, as they steer the choice towards what is familiar or accessible, with a potential reproductive effect.

2. Implicit financial costs of compulsory schooling

A second element arising from the particular forms of policy reality, which translate into emerging forms of provision in terms of segmentation, is the implicit costs of compulsory schooling. In all cases, public provision is defined as free of charge. However, passage through secondary education implies costs that students must bear. Uniforms, a traditional mark of distinction, feature in several accounts.

"At one point there were heavy expenses. For example, my parents had to find money somehow for the uniforms and also for the tuition fee. They had to take money from one thing to pay for another. It was a bit hard on my parents' finances" (female student, National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP) in semi-urban Veracruz, Mexico).

"Uniform bought from a company that specializes in that. For those who couldn't pay, white, blue or grey T-shirts were included. And if not, they were given the school logo so that they could sew it on a pullover. In sixth grade, we wore the promotional sweater" (male student, Santa Fe, upper secondary technical college, Argentina).

"You do have to buy the formal uniform, which is worn on Mondays. It is a skirt and blouse and black, low-heeled shoes (...) I wear a white T-shirt and a blue skirt and they also make you buy the physical education uniform, with a tracksuit" (lower secondary student, public Bilingual Intercultural Education System (SEIB), Ecuador).

"A uniform for Mondays, one for the rest of the week and one for physical education. My mother sends me to have a uniform made every year. Women wear skirts" (upper secondary student, public technical education, Ecuador).

"There is always a course fee for the year's expenses. Also, there are the sports T-shirts for sports month" (upper secondary student, science, public, Ecuador).

So, uniforms, which are often perceived as a mark of distinction, become a cost of compulsory schooling. Books are also mentioned.

"This year we have had several expenses; we pay the tuition fee at the beginning of the year, we pay for books for each semester, also for the Business Administration course we are studying. We set up a microenterprise which, although we spent less because of the pandemic, still went ahead" (twelfth grade student, Olancho, alternative education, Honduras).

"The government textbooks and the occasional book that we buy for extra reading" (lower secondary student, public, Ecuador).

"Honestly, there's not enough money, there are certain supplies that they ask us to buy, the books, a uniform, it's not enough for all that... it is enough to buy a few things, like a bag or shoes" (male student, diversified education, indigenous territory track, Costa Rica).

"As for basic education, the additional books that they asked us to buy were on art education and integral human development. The other books were provided by the Government" (upper secondary student, technical education, public, Ecuador).

Accounts regarding State provision of this resource are noteworthy, particularly in Ecuador.

"Mostly we use the workbooks and textbooks provided by the Government. We don't have additional books. (...) They don't ask us to buy any other textbooks or workbooks" (upper secondary student, science, public, Ecuador).

"We use the government textbooks and sometimes they ask us to print out worksheets that they produce themselves" (upper secondary student, science, public, Ecuador).

"There are books that they give us and textbooks that we have to buy, and there are other textbooks that the Government gives us. They buy the ones given by the language teachers (such as stories) or books on writing..." (lower secondary student, public Bilingual Intercultural Education System (SEIB), Ecuador).

Finally, there are what are seen as traditional costs to ensure the safe day-to-day running of schools: course fees, which are usually administered by parents' associations, a situation that is mentioned in the Argentina report and features in the personal accounts from Ecuador.

"The parents organize school cleaning themselves here, and they pay for it" (upper secondary student, public technical college, Ecuador).

"...They say that each parent has to contribute 5 dollars to fix it with cement because it is a big piece that has fallen down. It had fallen down a long time ago. They made us do a student *minga* (traditional communal work) and we fixed that piece with just reeds and bits of wood but now they want to fix it with cement because people are starting to go in there, dumping rubbish..." (upper secondary student, public technical college, Ecuador).

3. School violence, gender inequality and student diversity at the root of segmentation experiences

Chapter one of this document highlighted the positive trend in women's access and completion between stages of secondary education. In most of the countries analysed, gender gaps are the same or improving. Despite this, some of the personal accounts attest to the persistence of this expression of inequality.

"The Student Counselling Department (DECE) acts as a support for people who have difficulties. You know that when a young woman gets involved in this project to get ahead, then the husband doesn't want to get bogged down in the project. The DECE intervenes with this couple (in conversation), that if the woman resumes the study project, he should support her. When there is enrolment, the DECE should be present and, if she already has a partner, as is the case with most students who take the accelerated course, they should go as a couple. At any rate, there is male chauvinism in Ecuador... When you find a person who supports you in your projects, you are going to study with enthusiasm, with confidence and without the fear that you are going to arrive home and they will make a fuss about all the things you haven't done. That's when the DECE should be there, when you go to enrol for the first time" (upper secondary student, science, intensive private education, focus group, Ecuador).

"I want to get ahead, although in my community it is frowned upon for women to study: they tell them to stay at home or start making handicrafts [embroidery]" (female student at a distance upper secondary education establishment (CEMSaD) in rural Chiapas, Mexico).

Sometimes schools themselves becomes spaces of insecurity for women. Situations of harassment by teachers, which seem to be normalized, are reported in different types of provision and sectors by students in both lower and upper secondary education.

"The teachers are sometimes very tough on women but, among colleagues, almost not at all. I mean, I remember when I was at the Don Bosco Salesian School, I had a female classmate who was a neighbour of the specialty teacher and it was like this girl would go out to the toilet and he would follow her to see if she really went to the toilet, and it was only with her. And I've seen several teachers behaving in weird and unusual ways with female

students. I really don't know why this happens, if it's because there's something between them or what, but I've noticed it in both public and private schools" (student, youth and adult education track, Costa Rica).

"My case was at school. A male teacher wanted to grope the girls, he told them to stay behind. He wanted to grope a friend of mine and her mother went to complain. But they did nothing. The teacher is still there" (upper secondary student, science, public, focus group, Ecuador).

Gender violence is perpetrated not only against women but also against those who are vulnerable because of their gender identity and sexual orientation. It is linked with segmentation in that it often leads to school drop-out.

"He says they are sick people, that's what he says... [about bisexual students]. Nobody talks to the teachers. I couldn't tell them that I like women. No, because you know that they are going to judge you and say you are sick, that it's just a phase and that you will get over it" (lower secondary student, private, focus group, Ecuador).

"I had to repeat, and I wanted to leave the previous school because I didn't like it, it was very strict about clothes. Besides, I am a trans boy and there were teachers who did not treat me as who I am" (trans student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, remedial programmes, Argentina).

"People with a different sexual orientation, especially men, are discriminated against because they say they are less of a man" (upper secondary student, science, private, focus group, Ecuador).

School violence also occurs among students, sometimes linked with gender differences. In either case, it seems that schools do not always provide an answer.

"I feel that in upper secondary school the men treated women badly. For instance, if someone didn't wear make-up or didn't have any, or wasn't skinny, they would make comments like 'that girl is fat'. They would denigrate women. What also disgusted me was that they would form groups among themselves to talk about women's bodies, so it made me very angry and the worst thing was that they would say it so brazenly and cynically in front of a woman. They would say 'a girl was with that guy and then the next week with another one and that she was a slut' and it made me feel helpless not saying anything because later they would tell me that I was making too much fuss and, when they found out that I worked in a feminist movement, they would make fun of me saying that I was a radical feminist, that I complained about everything, that I overreacted, that I was going up the wall, and things like that... They don't say so many things to me anymore, now they respect me a bit more the way I am" (lower secondary student, private, focus group, Ecuador).

"The teachers don't do a thing. Once it happened to us in secondary school, there was a guy who wouldn't even let me walk around freely. And neither the teachers nor the headmaster ever did a thing about it" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in upper secondary education, Uruguay).

"Men get bullied a lot by other men. It happened to me a lot when I entered seventh grade. I remember that the big guys, the fifth graders, would grab you and then, when I was in the ninth grade, I was the one who was pestering all those dudes, it made me angry that they'd been doing it to me. And the women don't, well, I don't know how a woman sees it from her point of view but, in reality, more than anything you see many fights between men. I remember that, in the Escazú secondary school, I saw at most two or three fights among women in the three years I was there but the men were fighting like there was no tomorrow. Yes, there are arguments among women but women don't get physical, they get in each other's faces or push each other over in the corridors or classrooms but, with a guy, it's ugly, and when the guy gets up, they hit him" (youth outside the system, Costa Rica).

"I was bullied for being fat. I don't want to talk about it but the teachers didn't do a thing. It's like they treat everything as a typical prank or joke of our age group. They are not trained to deal with such issues" (female student, Completion Plan, Uruguay).

"At my secondary school, another problem was that, in the playground, although it's a bit over the top, there were repeaters who were older than the others... and there is like a hidden part, and there were students who smoked marijuana. When I arrived, there were a lot of repeaters and I felt very small, and they kind of looked at you funny, I mean, they mocked you" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory, lower secondary education, Uruguay).

The characteristics of the survey and, in particular the pandemic situation, prevent progress being made on recording violence associated with other types of inequality, such as ethnic inequality. In the case of Ecuador, focus groups conducted with students from rural Amazonian communities with a majority indigenous population and one in a historic urban community currently populated by indigenous communities show, for example, that Spanish has been imposed as the language of communication despite the educational model of the Bilingual Intercultural Education System (SEIB). According to accounts from some students in this system, there are instances where no changes (or no noticeable changes) in the educational experience have been made as compared with the non-bilingual system: for instance, the indigenous language is not used and there are no changes to the timetable and assessment model.

"I don't know much about the bilingual side. In seventh grade they taught me Quichua and English. In eighth and ninth grades they taught me only English but not Quichua. [The student is not fluent in Quichua] because I was taught Quichua only in the last term. [The student was enrolled in that school] because this was one of the first schools to be established in (name of the city)" (lower secondary student, public Bilingual Intercultural Education System (SEIB), focus group, Ecuador).

"But we had Quichua lessons only until third grade because the other mayor took office and they took away our Quichua lessons but now they are starting them again" (lower secondary student, private, focus group, Ecuador).

"At secondary school I had a hard time with maths because I don't understand the subject very well [...] because of the Spanish and the formulas [...]. At the COBACH public secondary school we always speak Spanish. [Speaking an indigenous language] has caused me problems, as things are taught in Spanish, they are difficult for me. So, my classmates mock me and say that I refuse to speak Spanish just for the heck of it" (female student at a distance upper secondary education establishment (CEMSaD) in rural Chiapas, Mexico).

The policy reality, as seen from the students' perspective, shows continuing experiences of school violence. These are still rooted in classic dimensions of inequality, such as gender and, it would seem, ethnicity, but also in more recent dimensions, such as sexual identity. They reflect tension between the historical homogenization function of schools and the extension of compulsory education, which implies openness to diversity. Although the design of secondary education extension policies incorporates mechanisms to accommodate such diversity, the abovementioned violence speaks of their inadequacy.

This section highlighted elements arising from the particular forms of policy reality that translate into emerging forms of provision in terms of segmentation. From the students' accounts, a selection was made of those elements relating to the *choice* of secondary school, the implicit costs of compulsory schooling and the different forms of school violence. The first element showed a multiplicity of factors that could be at the root of reproduction because they operate at the boundary between what is accessible and what is familiar. The second element showed the persistence of barriers over time, even in scenarios of extended rights: the cost of uniforms being the most notable one. The third element showed the persistence of exclusion experiences associated with classic inequalities, such as gender, or with other

forms of violence, such as bullying, which often go unheeded and unheard within schools. These three elements act as obstacles to schooling in two ways: they violently disrupt and shape the educational trajectory and/or lead to drop-out.

In summary, at the beginning of chapter II, a distinction was made between two elements that reflect differences in students' perceptions of schooling: elements associated with design and elements associated with the policy reality. Although this distinction is analytical, it is useful for understanding the complexity of education policies. While altering the effects of design elements requires one level of intervention, altering policy-reality elements requires two levels: that of design and that of the factors underlying the obstacles or barriers described. The latter poses perhaps the greatest challenge because its effectiveness is based on historical and cultural practices that shape the ways in which policies are implemented. However, as the following section shows, the creation of provision, at the design level, even under an extension-diversification pairing, can present an opportunity.

"Before, I didn't have the chance [to study the baccalaureate] because, as I was a woman, my parents didn't want me to study" (female student at a distance-learning community school in rural Chiapas, Mexico).

C. Between design and reality: a student perspective on support focal points and focal points of opportunities

According to the information presented in previous sections, there have been major advances in policies for extending compulsory education, along with certain shortcomings that were analysed through the prism of segmentation mechanisms. Nevertheless, these policies are being developed within a framework of expanding rights and, as such, they offer and create opportunities. The survey among students reveals at least two: focal points that support regular provision and focal points of new opportunities.

1. Support focal points

The idea of support focal points relates to mechanisms that are instrumental in sustaining educational trajectories from the students' perspective. There are a number of such mechanisms, which vary in nature. Some are part of broader inclusion policies, such as student grants, which are provided in both urban and rural areas.

"The grant helps me to continue studying, I receive it every two months. [It helps me] with whatever my family lacks in the way of food. Whatever we need, that's where we get support" (female student in general secondary education in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"I don't spend my grant, my mother does because she supports me. She uses it to feed my sisters to allow us to get by because, in my village, we have almost no money and we work all afternoon. She has almost always managed my grant" (female student at a distance upper secondary education establishment (CEMSaD) in rural Chiapas, Mexico).

"Personally speaking, they give me a financial grant, which is what motivates my parents to continue providing me with an education and not to short-change the people who have made the effort for me to continue studying" (male student, general basic education, general basic education institutes track, Costa Rica).

"Actually, I used to keep the whole of my grant because my parents would buy my books and school supplies. Then I would buy things I wanted, like a video game or a book for myself" (male student, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) upper secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

Other focal points are part of institutional and educational arrangements. There is one for the development of extracurricular activities, such as sports olympiads, or physics and mathematics olympiads in pre-university schools in Argentina. These are valued as spaces that promote alternative ways of connecting with teachers, classmates and even with young people from other cities and provinces taking part in the events and hosting those travelling to stay in their homes. They represent a break in the school routine while remaining within the school setting.

Mention is also made of the inclusion of different types of recreational activities and other subject areas.

"I liked the activities they held at school, when there was a public event or activities, because some of the girls were pregnant and they would make them tea, or the sports day or some other activity like that; they were a lot of fun" (female student, diversified education, technical education track, Costa Rica).

"There has been a robotics group here since I entered seventh grade, it's very cool. Throughout all the years I have been here, I've always been very involved with the music teachers. In all those years, I have always been in the band; we've been to certain festivals related to the school, such as the Student Festival of Arts" (male student, general basic education, traditional academic track, public, Costa Rica).

Support classes and tutoring are a classic resource in expanding secondary education under the comprehensive reform model. During the twenty-first century, it was incorporated into policies for groups that had not been able to complete secondary education, as part of a range of inclusion strategies (see Acosta and Terigi, 2015). In the case of Latin America, this resource is being introduced on a larger scale, given the aforementioned dynamics of enrolment with completion difficulties. The demand is expressed clearly in the accounts of Uruguayan students.

"I remember when I attended secondary school, I had some difficulties in history and went to support classes. The teacher would stay for about an hour after class and she explained it to me very well. I thought it was great because it was a different way of explaining; you didn't leave until you'd understood!" (student currently outside the system, Uruguay).

"I managed to finish secondary school thanks to the tutoring programme. I had one subject left to finish: fifth year maths. I thought I would never get through it. But I was surprised! They put me in contact with a teacher. I would go to the teacher's house. She was like a kind of private teacher that the school assigned me. I would go to her house and we would study the exam subjects. She was very patient. And what I found surprising was that it was a subject that I thought I would never understand and she helped me understand it very quickly, very quickly indeed. I think it was because of the individual attention; with this teacher it took me very few classes. I went about five or six times for two or three hours and that was enough" (Completion Plan student, Uruguay).

It is worth highlighting a key point from the second account above regarding the organization of secondary school teaching, especially in view of the obstacles and barriers encountered in the transition between levels and stages. The student says: "she was very patient [...] it was because of the individual attention; with this teacher it took me very few classes". It reveals the need for a second explanation, one that was not provided or was not understood during class time. The growth of private support classes, or even the trend towards shadow education (Byung, Chung and Baker, 2018), demonstrate the need to provide students with other kinds of exposure time apart from lessons.

The students consulted also point to the figure of tutor, another classic but essential resource. The availability of this figure varies from sector to sector, as reflected in the accounts from Mexico.

"The tutor is not present all the time, unless a problem arises, but they hold a class called tutoring [...]. The tutor acts as an authority, they try to solve any problems that may arise but, if not, they send us to counselling [...]. We are told only who our tutor will be, we aren't given the opportunity to choose them" (male student in general secondary education in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"Normally, every semester we were assigned a tutor, a teacher, who was in charge of us. At least in my group, they gave us an hour of tutoring to see who was doing poorly and what we could do to improve our grades and avoid failing the semester. There was also the psychology department, which could give you emotional support to improve that part as well" (male student, National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP) in urban Oaxaca, Mexico).

"There are academic advisors for each student. You talk to the advisor every month and they set you goals for each period, they set you personal goals and tell you which things you need to improve on. This year we were given the opportunity to choose the advisor, but yes, they are like a guide. If you are doing poorly in a subject, there are extracurricular lessons for those who are doing badly and to support them" (male student, private upper secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

Aside from these differences, the function is divided between support for keeping up with the pace of teaching and the community living and socialization dimension:

"The school's guidance counsellors are the ones who keep an eye on the students and make sure they are up to speed and, when you have problems, they try to help. So, if someone has a financial problem, they even ask us to contribute and, if we can, we help" (twelfth grade student, Francisco Morazán, traditional, Honduras).

"The educational psychology office, being able to talk to someone who listens to me and understands. I was taking a lot of subjects and they helped me" (male student, San Juan, elite lower secondary programmes, national universities, Argentina).

"Let's suppose there is a subject in which we are not doing well, along comes a teacher and asks us if we want to have tutoring and then goes and teaches us for half an hour and explains a few things [...]" (female student, Santa Fe, lower secondary technical college, Argentina).

"The tutors, because each of us can express what we are feeling, say if we feel upset, if something is going on. The round table discussions on community living, where we can discuss any topic that comes up and we talk to each other. The tutor organizes them and gives us a choice of topics to discuss; it might be violence, bullying, addictions, and we talk about them. We express our feelings. It is one tutor for each class [...]" (female student, Santa Fe, lower secondary technical college, Argentina).

"No, there are no programmes like that but there are teachers who act as guidance counsellors and advisors for everything; they call students and motivate them. If someone doesn't understand a subject, they explain it, but it's not like there is a programme. For instance, they've called several of the students right now. I think that the school itself did its best, through the guidance counsellor, advisors and the teachers themselves, to make sure that nobody dropped out, but the truth is that some do because of financial resources, others because they don't have enough interest" (twelfth grade student, Olancho, alternative education, Honduras).

In some cases, youth groups within schools are identified as a focal point of support, advocacy and identity-building. Examples are students' unions or student representative councils in Argentina's public schools.

"Where there is conflict, it is channelled; the students' union is quite good and whenever we take militant action (sit-ins), we have a lot of freedom. And there is also a comprehensive sexuality education office" (female student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, public upper secondary school, Argentina).

"The students' union works a lot on the idea of community-building. It was approved last year and, from an academic standpoint, it creates a kind of exchange between faculties. [It is involved in] physics and maths olympiads, it fosters a sense of belonging" (male student, Rosario, Santa Fe province, elite programmes, upper secondary programmes affiliated to national universities, Argentina).

"If it weren't for my school's students' union, we would be ignored. It is the only school in Paraná to have comprehensive sexuality education because we protested when they wanted to remove this workshop" (male student, Paraná, Entre Ríos province, public upper secondary school, Argentina).

The latter account links the advocacy role of the students' union with one of the abovementioned support focal points: subject areas of interest (in this case, comprehensive sexuality education). All the groups interviewed in Argentina mentioned it, irrespective of gender, type of institutional provision or location in the country. Respondents showed a great deal of interest in the sexual rights issue, as well as the value of implementation, or, in most of cases, the absence of sustained provision in this area. Criticism of the lack of sex education could be viewed as a basis for developing regulations, where none exist, and for the effective implementation of sex education programmes. Not only because the subject is important for the education of adolescents and young people but also because of the role these programmes might play in ensuring provision that supports compulsory education. Of course, this is a highly sensitive issue, given that it cuts across the private domestic sphere.

"In activities like the public square—which is used to elect the president or for the sports festival—we aren't given sex education or emotional literacy education, only what is taught in biology" (male student, diversified education, traditional academic track, private, Costa Rica).

"Interviewer: Does this school offer a sex education and emotional literacy programme?
Student: Not to me personally. At the beginning of the year, they ask for a letter from parents who don't want the student to be taught this subject, the same as for religion, but yes, it is offered here" (female student, general basic education, technical education track, Costa Rica).

Other figures seem to play no less important a role in supporting schooling: relationships of support. There are multiple actors with whom relationships are established in school life, especially during secondary education. Mention has already been made of the importance of tutors and guidance counsellors, as well as teachers who fulfil these functions. The central role is played by the teacher, a key figure as much of secondary education is structured around what the teacher offers: the lesson. This can elicit positive and enthusiastic feedback.

"I feel as though teachers don't always teach in a way that suits each student. They should have a more differentiated way of teaching, and that disheartened me, and I didn't bother to do anything. Until this year, when a new teacher arrived who motivated me a lot because she was committed to teaching us. This year I sat a physical science exam and, thanks to this teacher, I passed it because it wasn't just about copying everything from the blackboard... in other words, teachers are important" (focus group on lagging educational trajectories, lower secondary education, Uruguay).

"While we were at school, the teacher played a key role in our lives because, every time we showed up she would motivate us with messages every morning before the start of class. She would tell us to give it our best shot, that if we didn't understand her explanations, she was there for us [...] She has always supported us" (female student, distance secondary education in rural Tabasco, Mexico).

"I consider [the student's relationship with the teachers] to be very good because, when I have any doubts or need something, the teachers here are willing to give us an answer anytime we need it. They give us information and look after us well" (student at a distance upper secondary education establishment (CEMSaD) in rural Chiapas, Mexico).

"In my specialty we had a teacher who was a supply teacher because the one who was teaching the subject had had a traffic accident. The one who had had the accident used to barely explain the subject and rambled a lot. The new one arrived and cleared up our doubts, taught us new content and was a really kind person; when someone had a problem and couldn't buy a piece of equipment, he would lend or gift it to us. He was very supportive when it came to studying and made things easier to understand. He would explain things in a humorous way and would look for something funny and he was a teacher who was very practical; he is one of the teachers from whom I have learned the most. He had a lot of patience and a very good way of teaching" (female student, diversified education, technical education track, Costa Rica).

There are also extremely negative accounts that may be associated with disengagement, unease and frustration with secondary education, as mentioned above.

"[Regarding drop-out] I think it's because of lack of financial support, their parents don't have enough funds and also because they may be under a lot of stress, a lot of pressure because of the subjects and they feel demotivated, there is not enough motivation" (tenth grade student, Francisco Morazán, private, Honduras).

"It has happened to me where I didn't understand a thing, I would ask questions and they would get angry. In other words, they didn't help me to understand" (focus group on lagging educational trajectories, lower secondary education, Uruguay).

"And every time I asked a question, the maths teacher would reply: 'if you don't remember, I don't have a memory pill for you'" (focus group on lagging educational trajectories, upper secondary education, Uruguay).

On this point, the survey concurs with the literature regarding the qualities of a good teacher, which revolve around such attributes as knowledge, know-how, respect, ability to explain, kindness, commitment and interest in students learning.

"Communication with my teachers is very good. We have one male teacher and two female teachers and we get along with them very well. Well, more than anything we know that at school there are rules to follow, but the teachers support us, they give us advice; they take the time to chat and ask what is going on and I like the relationship we have with the three of them. They have given me a lot of support; there was a time when I didn't want to carry on and they told me 'you have to keep going, now that you are in, you shouldn't quit', because sometimes it was hard for me because of my daughters, I had no one to leave them with, and I also had to work and study at same time" (female student, distance-learning community school in rural Chiapas, Mexico).

While teachers are key support figures, students also mention how important families are.

"I have always had the support of my mother, my siblings and one teacher in particular—Patricia [the teacher in charge of the library]— who has supported me a lot, since the first semester, and she still helps me with things that I find very difficult" (female student, COBACH public secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"I am from Barrio Cuba, the Pochote neighbourhood, which they call a slum [informal settlement]. I've come across neighbours who stopped studying at the age of 14, they have boyfriends, they didn't even attend courses, nothing. And I wonder whether it might be because of the

neighbourhood. But I don't think so because I'm from the same neighbourhood. Perhaps it's because there is no room in the schools? No way, because the schools themselves want to get people in and, when there are no places, they try to open up new spaces. So, that's not the reason. It was probably lack of motivation. I saw that last year with a classmate at this school and I wondered whether this school demotivated students. So, you can see that there is not only lack of motivation at school but also at home, the situation that each student is going through. Last year, when I was in a bad situation, my family always supported me in my studies despite everything but, for his family, the priority may have been money" (personal communication, technical education track, Costa Rica).

The importance accorded to teachers and other support figures underlines the need to provide these actors with further training in the skills needed to tackle the diverse learning situations in which students find themselves. Moreover, beyond the importance that students attribute to their relatives or contacts, the extension of compulsory education should not be based on a factor over which there is no way to intervene. In this respect, it is possible to guarantee conditions for schooling, such as the above-mentioned grants, as well as institutional support mechanisms, also mentioned earlier. As far as families are concerned, inviting them to become involved in school life rather than assuming their support would seem to be more fitting.

Of course, a key relationship of support for students is friendships and peer groups. It is not deemed necessary to elaborate on this point here. What is striking, however, is the role of peers described in one of the accounts.

"At the upper secondary school we have highly trained teachers, some of whom even have PhDs. This raises the academic standard. [...] My biggest motivation has always been that routine, seeing your friends, competing with them in class motivates you, being with your classmates and *competing* with them. That interaction with friends and also with teachers is, I think, very healthy" (male student, private upper secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico; emphasis added).

This raises the question about the role that peers could play as supporters under certain institutional models.

Apart from support focal points, there are accounts concerning the value of alternative and remedial modalities for schooling. As noted above, these embody the *tension* between the extension-diversification pairing, while also serving as focal points of opportunities.

2. Alternative modalities and remedial plans

One issue that emerges from a number of students' accounts is a certain level of disengagement from regular provision, as opposed to their openness to alternative provision.

"The secondary school should do something when you want to quit, call you, chase you up a bit. They should find out why you want to leave and look for solutions to each case: a grant, or a different plan... but nobody does a thing" (student currently outside the system, Uruguay).

There is a long history of developing alternative modalities and/or remedial plans in the region, always associated with catering to population groups that are left out of regular provision. At present, an increasing number of countries, although not all, are engaged in extending secondary education. Previous studies have argued that this type of provision runs the risk of exacerbating segmentation. The students' perspective is not included here for the purpose of revisiting this argument. Rather, the aim is to highlight accounts of their experience in terms of opportunities.

One of the key elements is the flexibility offered by alternative and remedial provision in terms of institutional and educational arrangements. This facilitates coordination with employment, which is essential for those population groups that need to supplement their income with a wage during their schooling, either fully or partially.

"A recommendation I was given when I was looking for a way to continue at a higher academic level. So I asked several people which one would give me the best chance, given that I was working. That's when I found the Honduran Institute for Radio Education (IHER). So, when I enrolled, I could see that there were various facilities for continuing and that it made everything easy for me at work. So that's how I was able to continue. Up to now, I've been happy with it" (tenth grade student, Francisco Morazán, alternative education, Honduras).

"I've always done well at the secondary school, where they've known me forever, but the final year was difficult for me because I started working. So the school told me to finish with the 1994 Plan, in a flexible modality... but it was meant for students over the age of 21 and I'm only 19! But the school accepted me anyway!" (student under Completion Plan 1994, Uruguay).

"I dropped out of school for a year because I had to attend at night and couldn't because of work. And then I got involved in an accelerated learning project that some schools offer to students who have repeated two or more times to speed up their courses. So long as they offer accelerated teaching, it should be in all schools" (male student, San Martín—Province of Buenos Aires, upper secondary technical college, Argentina).

Another highly valued factor is flexibility in the way the study regime is organized, especially with regard to attendance, coursework and assessments.

"It's good to study one subject at a time because you keep moving up the grades but, at my previous school, if you failed three subjects you had to repeat" (female student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, remedial programmes, Argentina).

"It's a very flexible plan, in terms of timetables and teachers too. They don't nag you if you're 20 minutes late, and if you have to leave early they let you leave. We are just a few students; we were older, so there were no distractions due to age. Maturity helps. The organization of the curriculum—it was organized by semesters... in the first semester from March to July, you take half the subjects and then, in the second semester, you take the other half. You have a month in between for mid-term exams and holidays. For mid-term exams you can also exempt half the subjects. That form of organization and assessment was good. The teachers were always there for you, too. And they are always willing to help you; they are enthusiastic teachers. It's very different from the traditional modality of daytime secondary school (student under Completion Plan 1994, Uruguay).

Another aspect of flexibility relates to "formal" aspects of schooling that can turn into obstacles.

"I used to go to a technical school but I had family problems and dropped out. I also faced a lot of discrimination from my classmates. I dropped out for two years. The other school was much more restrictive, stricter. In the Secondary Education Inclusion and Completion Programme (PIT) they are more liberal and try to understand us better" (female student, Córdoba, remedial programmes, Argentina).

"I had to repeat and I wanted to leave the previous school because I didn't like it, it was very strict about clothes. Besides, I am a trans boy and there were teachers who did not treat me as who I am" (trans student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, remedial programmes, Argentina).

Apart from the various forms of flexibility, a nurturing environment is emphasized, which translates into motivation to continue. This point has already been made above with respect to support focal points.

"In the other school you were absent and that was it, you got marked absent. In this school, the teachers are more caring. I was absent one day and they called me to see how I was, if I was sick, if I needed anything, and I was really touched. In our school you study subject by subject and you move up from one level to the next" (female student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, remedial programmes, Argentina).

"I felt very demotivated, I dropped out of secondary school twice. Each time I quit in the middle of the year; I just stopped going, I didn't tell anyone and I dropped out. I was depressed, things were going badly, I had problems at home. After a while you start to think you'll never graduate, that you won't be able to... but luckily I found this night-time plan and now I'm motivated to finish school" (student behind in grade, upper secondary education under Plan 1994, inland, Uruguay).

"The support we receive from the teachers, the coordinator, the tutors and the psychologist. Girls with children are given more attention at school. The Secondary Education Inclusion and Completion Programme for 14- to 17-year-olds (PIT) is unlike all the other schools because the teachers help us a lot, they look for ways to help us, to get things done. In PIT they give us all the help we need" (female student, Córdoba, remedial programmes, Argentina).

The more diversified the provision, the more likely it is to increase segmentation. From this perspective, studies consider remedial programmes as "tailor-made" provision. Indeed, students seem to find them "tailor-made" to their needs. However, problems can arise, especially in the deployment or quality of provision.

"The positive aspect of the plan was that it was easy, the aim was for you to complete school, although I'm not sure how much you actually learned. They gave you all the course material, they made it easy to graduate" (student, Secondary School Completion Programme (ProCES), Uruguay).

"I enrolled at the Honduran Institute for Radio Education (IHER) for the same reason, it is the system best suited to the amount of time I was able to spend studying, but I had taken the advice of neighbours who told me that the IHER was good and that it was easy" (twelfth grade student, Olancho, alternative education, Honduras).

"There are lots of plans and information, a lot. Too much. It's hard to figure out which is the best plan for you. I spent some time on that, all the information is on the Internet, but on different sites... also when you phone, they don't answer, or, if they do, they don't know much or they're in a bad mood. Or you go to your secondary school to ask and they are mean to you... I think you get to join one of these plans if they want you to get in... Finally I realized that the plan I needed was the 2012 plan. By that time, the enrolment period had already ended" (young person outside secondary education, Uruguay).

Based on the personal accounts of the students surveyed, this section seeks to identify points of support for schooling, including from the perspective of the extension-diversification pairing. A selection of accounts and their subsequent analysis revealed at least two focal points: one of support and the other of opportunities.

Support focal points include extracurricular support, such as grants, and support for institutional and educational arrangements, such as the development of curricular and extracurricular activities, the availability of staff support for academic reinforcement or community living (tutoring and guidance), spaces for youth and the relationships of support that flow from school relationships, particularly with teachers. The second focal point is the development of alternative modalities and remedial programmes, encapsulating the idea of new opportunities.

Aside from the support function of these two focal points, it is possible to identify two common threads running through them. First is availability. This is expressed in such terms as "patience" or "they will explain it again" and in a kind and understanding attitude. Second, someone being there for you, or being there for someone: "I was absent one day and they called me to see how I was, if I was sick, if I needed anything, and I was really touched". A greater emphasis on these common threads could bring compulsory secondary education closer to the *rights* dimension, not just to the *compulsion* dimension.

D. Notes on student perceptions of the educational experience during the pandemic

It took nearly three centuries to achieve the goal of all children and adolescents attending school in person on a regular basis. According to data from UNICEF (2021), as of March 2021, schools for more than 168 million students globally have been completely closed for almost an entire year due to COVID-19 lockdowns, while 214 million children globally, or one in seven, have missed more than three quarters of their in-person learning.

This technology for delivering knowledge on a mass scale, criticized from the very moment it was transnationalized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was suspended. The leap towards “schooling without schools”, mediated by the use of other technologies (such as photocopies, television, radio, video, audio, digital platforms with synchronous and asynchronous classes and social networks), has turned the scenario of the last 150 years into one that may or may not transform schooling as we know it. What are the perceptions of this situation among the students surveyed? How do they relate to the mechanisms of educational segmentation?

Of course, as it is a pandemic, its effects are life-altering for everyone—but for some more than others. The changes in students’ lives undoubtedly impacted on their bond with schooling. In particular, the lack of employment, which affected various sectors of the population, especially in urban areas.

“Dad has lost his job, he gets sad and I get sad and I lose the will to do anything. When I was in class, I would be kind of switched off” (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in lower secondary education, Uruguay).

“It happened to me from being locked up, it was like it hit me badly, like I would try to do something but got frustrated, it was like I was lost, I got really anxious, I fell behind in all the subjects” (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in upper secondary education, Uruguay).

“It has affected me personally and the whole of my family. Before, on Saturdays and Sundays, you could choose to do whatever—or go out wherever—you wanted [...] but not now because we are in a pandemic [...]. It has affected me because my mother no longer works, she lost her job and now we don’t have the same finances we used to have. My father is the only one who works” (female student, general secondary education in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

“Regarding the finances. At the start of the pandemic we only ate two meals to save food. Because it became a bit more difficult for my grandmother to rent out her fishing boat and two engines, as people were afraid to go fishing” (upper secondary student, technical education, public, Ecuador).

“My father and mother lost some of their work and they no longer earn the same as they used to. My father has a taxi and it’s not the same, he used to make between 10 and 15 trips, now it’s just 2 or 3 [...] As we rent [a flat], I can see that he gets very stressed about money” (female student, National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP) in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

Three sets of problems relating to the continuity of schooling emerge from the students’ accounts. First, the material conditions of schools. In 2020, the suspension of face-to-face teaching led to a change in the delivery context: from the classroom and school building, with its ad hoc facilities, to the homes of students and teachers, with differing capabilities in terms of digital connectivity and the devices needed for teaching via a range of technologies (Graizer, 2020).

“I had problems because of the device. I mean, it’s horrible using a mobile and tablet” (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in upper secondary education, Uruguay).

"Yes, we watch 'Aprende en Casa' (a Mexican home-learning television programme) [...]. I think it's good, they have activities that relax you [...]. We don't have a signal, but we pay for cable" (female student at a distance upper secondary education establishment (CEMSaD) in rural Chiapas, Mexico).

"When it comes to doing homework, I have to share with my sisters because everyone connects from the mobile phone. An aunt has lent us a laptop, but we have to share it" (upper secondary student, science, private, Ecuador).

"With my mobile phone, I tried to download an application and it didn't work. Luckily, the Sauce secondary school lent us a PC, and that saved me, but I prefer in-person classes. It felt weird to me, I didn't understand a thing. I mean, when it's face-to-face, you can take notes" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in upper secondary education, Uruguay).

"Well, I connect via a computer that my neighbour lends me because I don't have anything at home, I don't have Internet" (female student, general basic education, traditional academic track, public, Costa Rica).

"I can't watch them because we don't have a TV signal, we would have to pay for it" (female student, distance-learning community school in rural Chiapas, Mexico).

"It's tough not having electricity or money to recharge the phone, or not having a phone, but the activities themselves are not so hard. I feel a bit like I'm being taught but I don't feel like I'm seeing what I need to see, in maths, Spanish... How am I going to get a diploma? I feel like I'm going to fail. But it's not anyone's fault. In our case, if there's something I don't understand, my classmate tells me it's done like this or like that, but not now" (male student, indigenous territory track, Costa Rica).

"I connect to my classes by mobile phone, but it's my mother's. When I have my classes, I ask her for it. As we have no Internet, we top it up because one of my sisters also has to do and send in homework. We top it up twice a month, 100 pesos or sometimes 150 pesos" (female student at a distance upper secondary education establishment (CEMSaD) in a rural community of Chiapas, Mexico).

"I only use my phone and, as a relative has a computer, when I have homework and need a computer, I sometimes ask that person if I can borrow it because I don't have my own computer" (twelfth grade student, Yoro, alternative education, Honduras).

"...I have Internet connection problems, so I have to roam all over the house to get a signal to be able to attend classes. Besides, when I do manage to get connected, the signal is poor because it's an open network, so lots of people use it at the same time. When I want to attend classes, I usually disconnect because I use the audio. ...it goes on and off all the time... or else I have to go to the telecentre, which has other drawbacks, such as not having a front-facing camera, which the teachers ask for, or a microphone, which is also necessary to be able to attend classes" (upper secondary student, science, public, International Baccalaureate, Ecuador).

The difference compared with the urban elite sectors of public and private schools is key, revealing a highly unequal opportunity for access and continuity of schooling, with scenarios ranging from near-total continuity to total interruption of schooling.

"We have online classes and a meeting every week. We submit homework via Google Classroom and the teachers grade us two days later" (male student, general secondary education in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"There are no classes, only practical work" (female student, Mar del Plata, Province of Buenos Aires, upper secondary school, Argentina).

"It's the explanation of the lesson and they hardly make us participate at all and they send homework. They created a school platform, so we have to upload homework" (student lower secondary education, private, Ecuador).

Even in scenarios of continuity, conditions differ, as mentioned above.

"In my case, we have worked via various platforms, such as Classroom or Zoom. Sometimes we have to turn on the camera to present our work with a poster board behind us" (female student, COBACH public secondary school in urban Chiapas, Mexico).

"Every week, the Ministry of Education would send us a PDF file that we had to complete. And we had to meet via Zoom with our tutor advisor to review all the activities we had done but it was tricky because several of us didn't have the means to join Zoom or were unable to listen to the lessons properly. Communication was choppy (Internet)" (upper secondary student, science, public, International Baccalaureate, Ecuador).

"In April, I started lessons on Zoom with maths and then moved on to biology at the beginning of May, we started there. After that, Spanish language, but only one class was held via Zoom and then no more. There were about five subjects that I didn't get taught. We had homework but that was it, I mean, they sent homework via CREA [an official ad hoc platform]" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in lower secondary education, Uruguay).

"We have synchronous, live classes. I take three subjects where the synchronous classes are every day, the others every two days. They last between 50 minutes and nearly two hours. We use Google Meet, Classroom and Moodle and submit the homework via Classroom or email" (male student, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) upper secondary school in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"We have been working mainly via the virtual classroom of an American company. And everyone has access to devices. In general, the system is working well but it is not centralized and each teacher has his or her own technique" (male student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, elite programmes, upper secondary programmes affiliated to national universities, Argentina).

"Also via WhatsApp at the beginning, which lasted about three months. Later, via a platform. We have classes from 8 am to 12 noon, every day. I have five to six lessons every day; we use Zoom and upload the homework to Classroom. Practically all morning, I'm always in class. And, if a teacher has a problem with the Internet, we shift the timetable to the afternoon" (tenth grade student, Francisco Morazán, private, Honduras).

A second set of problems stems from the support required by this broadening of the delivery context. On the one hand, it involves a reorganization of the teacher's role, to which not everyone responds in the same way.

"There were teachers who just vanished during the pandemic; only two or three were around" (focus group on lagging educational trajectories, upper secondary education, Uruguay).

"The activities they set us are not explained properly. There are some resources but they don't answer all the doubts that may arise [...]. They give the 'Aprende en Casa' home-learning videos but, frankly, I think they are very sketchy, they don't cover what I would like to learn, even more so now that I am in third grade [...]. You can write to the teachers but then they take up to two days to reply, or they don't answer you at all" (male student, general secondary education in urban Mexico City, Mexico).

"There were very few Zoom classes; only one teacher did the ID. For Spanish, we did a lot of Zoom but not for the other classes. The others mostly sent homework and sometimes they sent a video" (focus group on lagging educational trajectories, lower secondary education, Uruguay).

"We began with Facebook and now we use WhatsApp. It's hard, sometimes you don't understand a thing and, in my case, I had to go on YouTube because I didn't understand. And not many teachers take the time to call you and explain; some send you a message" (female student, Córdoba, upper secondary technical college, Argentina).

"I don't learn, I don't understand them very well, the teachers don't give us lessons. So we don't do the homework. I just don't learn" (female student, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, public upper secondary school, Argentina).

On the other hand, it assumes a capacity for self-organization and/or family support to complete homework.

"I live alone with my mother and she didn't finish secondary school and I don't have anyone to tell me 'look, this is how it should be'. I have no one. So I have to try to understand everything myself or look things up on YouTube or Google. It's really hard" (female student, Mendoza, public upper secondary school, Argentina).

"Yes, actually, with Professor Julio's videos. He's not a teacher at school, he's a person who posts videos on You Tube. [I learned] a lot of things that I hadn't even seen. It's just that my brother was really behind with the workbooks, so I had to help him" (female student, diversified education, technical education track, Costa Rica).

Teachers who respond to the best of their ability, students who organize themselves according to their capabilities and those of their family environment. The outcome is undoubtedly quantity-related: the greater the availability of resources and capabilities, the better the response. Mention is always made of the need to rely on teachers: the support.

"Before, we were using Classroom but it was only for uploading homework, it didn't have video calls [...] At first it was bad because we focused just on handing in homework, you didn't learn a thing. I was very frustrated because it restricted me [...] because what I really like is to talk and be in there with the teachers [...] Now that we are using Microsoft Teams I like it more because I can talk to the teacher and, besides, we are now attending classes every day. [...] (male student, National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP) in urban Veracruz, Mexico).

"First, no teacher is trained for the virtual world, second, it took us by surprise, third, the biggest mistake was to try to replace in-person classes with virtual ones [...] This year it was more about submitting work than learning [...]" (personal communication, traditional academic track, public, Costa Rica).

"I also prefer in-person classes every time, the teachers aren't so unavailable. On Zoom, 50% of my teachers were unavailable. I didn't have geography, I didn't have drawing, I didn't have history, in other words, only half the subjects" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in lower secondary education, Uruguay).

A third set of problems relates to the effects of forms of delivery: disengagement and lack of motivation emerge as the main effects, irrespective of the material conditions.

"I had Zoom and a tablet, but I didn't feel like doing it... I didn't want to, so I said... I don't like that method. In the first class I logged onto, there were about 50 of us, but they didn't let you talk. So, from April to June, I probably only did two homework assignments" (focus group on the expected educational trajectory in lower secondary education, Uruguay).

"I find it hard to stay focused all the time, no matter how interesting the class is. I feel drained of energy. I get very tired staring at the screen for so long" (female student, San Fernando, Province of Buenos Aires, elite programmes, upper secondary programmes affiliated to national universities, Argentina).

"I got discouraged because I didn't have any way to log on, or a device. I don't have a computer and, for various reasons, the Wi-Fi was taken away because it didn't belong to us at home. It was quite hard for me but I handed in some assignments through CREA [ad hoc platform] but I got pretty discouraged" (focus group on lagging educational trajectories, upper secondary education, Uruguay).

"In terms of leisure [it has affected me]. I live far away, it's more of an upland area, while my classmates live more in the city. I don't see my friends anymore, we don't play anymore, we basically communicate via technology but without seeing each other or playing; it's not the same thing being here [on the mobile] as seeing each other" (male student, general basic education, general basic education institutes track, Costa Rica).

"When the pandemic began, all the teachers sent a lot of homework. Many students, like me, started to have panic attacks, as I wasn't used to so much pressure or, worse still, to being locked up in the house all day... Not leaving the house was very hard" (upper secondary student, science, private, Ecuador).

"Being at home puts a lot of stress on you and can lead to depression. I say this from personal experience because, not long ago, I fell ill. I had very bad flu and I thought it was the virus and my mental health suffered really badly; I became depressed" (male student, general basic education, technical education track, Costa Rica).

The perception seems to be one of loss, although some student accounts mention continuity.

"It is a year, not lost but, yes, one in which we were not able to learn and I think it is very important to receive an explanation from the teacher and to be told whether what we are doing is right or wrong and to have an answer from them" (female student, Mar del Plata, Province of Buenos Aires, public upper secondary school, Argentina).

"At the beginning it affected me a lot, I ached all over, I felt like I was going to die but now I think I'm at the stage where I've accepted it, I've accepted the reality, I've got used to it and I think I've come out of it a bit more, so I don't feel as though I'm in prison like before, but sometimes it does make me sad to have lost so many things this year. But they are not things that I can do anything about, it's not within my power, so what I have to do is accept it" (female student, diversified education, traditional academic track, private, Costa Rica).

"I think there are more drawbacks to online classes than advantages, I think that you almost never learn that way, I mean you can't understand some subjects, and taking tests with no understanding is pointless. The way they teach classes here is that they send you homework as a PDF file via WhatsApp and there they tell you what the homework is, that's what I've been told" (twelfth grade student, Francisco Morazán, traditional, Honduras).

"I haven't learnt a thing, I mean because you don't pay attention to the classes, you just turn on the computer and listen to the teacher and do the homework they send you, that's all, but you don't learn much" (personal communication, traditional academic track, private, Costa Rica).

In relation to the main focus of this document, the way in which segmentation mechanisms are manifested in contexts of extended compulsory education, the pandemic highlights the limitations of schooling. Particularly where material conditions are more precarious. However, it also demonstrates the importance of the support figures mentioned in the previous section and their need to readjust to changing scenarios.

This second chapter of the report has focused on the educational experience of the adolescents and young people interviewed in Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico and Uruguay. An analysis was made of the accounts from the perspective of the extension-diversification pairing and the resulting segmentation mechanisms and consisted of identifying elements stemming more directly from the design of education provision and those stemming from the particular forms of policy reality.

A multiplicity of elements have been identified that, essentially, have led to differential conditions both in terms of provision and in terms of specific institutional and educational arrangements. This differential aspect and the importance acquired by some of these elements turn them into obstacles to access and the educational trajectory. Many supporting elements are also identified which, in some cases, are a result of policy design but, in others, are based on historical and cultural teaching styles and practices that are difficult for specific programmes and policies to address.

These differential conditions and their potential role as a barrier or obstacle are likely to be linked to the form taken by compulsory schooling policies in the region: extension with diversification. Nonetheless, their deployment is evidence of mechanisms that segment but sustain, in particular because they create opportunities. These opportunities are discussed in the final chapter.

III. Contribution of the study to secondary education extension policies

This chapter synthesizes the above path towards a set of policy recommendations for secondary education.

A. Overview

As proposed at the start of this document, since the 1990s, particularly during the first decade of the twenty-first century, Latin American countries have made progress in expanding the legal frameworks underpinning the extension of schooling, in general, and lower and upper secondary education, in particular. All countries in the region have made lower secondary education compulsory, except for Nicaragua, and 13 out of 19 have also made upper secondary education compulsory. In addition, they have introduced laws and regulations to establish a process of universalization in terms of access and sustaining educational trajectories, which could be seen as a direct effect of the extension of compulsory secondary education.

As also highlighted, extending the legal framework is a necessary but not sufficient prerequisite for ensuring universalization. The data provided in chapter one demonstrate significant progress in countries with extended compulsory education: on average, 78% of the theoretical group accesses secondary education, 80% completes lower secondary education and 59% completes upper secondary education. This is a steady but incomplete expansion in terms of access and, in particular, completion. It is worth noting that, in the case of primary education, it took nearly 40 years for the countries that were first to achieve full access rates to go on to achieve universal promotion. Secondary education seems to be following a similar path, one that is unsustainable given the pace of economic, productive, technological and social changes in the contemporary world. These changes are having a much faster impact in terms of devaluing educational credentials than was the case in the last century, accentuating the mismatch between educational provision and the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in today's society.

One of the strategies that several countries have used to extend secondary education since the post-war period has been to institute integrated education provision through common cycles, coupled with the development of comprehensive institutional models. In Latin America, enrolment in secondary education does not seem to be strongly linked to the position of this type of education in the provision

structure: more or less integrated. The cases presented in chapter one reflect diverse strategies used by Governments to tackle compulsory education: extension of common cycles (Costa Rica, Ecuador and Honduras); generalization of the type of provision (Argentina); generalization of the curriculum (almost all cases in lower secondary education); creation of specific provision generalized for rural areas in lower and upper secondary education (Honduras, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico); and creation of remedial or alternative provision according to educational trajectories and/or specific population groups (all cases).

The data presented in this document point not only to the outstanding challenges in terms of access and completion but also to the impact of socioeconomic status, in some cases associated with area of residence, on the distribution of provision and the educational experience. Despite progress over the past decade, the gap between the lowest and highest quintiles in terms of secondary school completion reflects the unequal opportunities available to adolescents and young people in nearly all countries in the region. The general trend shows that, historically, countries in the region have sought to extend compulsory education in a bid to achieve slightly more integrated systems (common cycles and basic education), without the large-scale incorporation of the comprehensive institutional model and always marked by social inequality. In short, the sustained extension of compulsory education and, hence, the expansion of secondary education in the region, seems to be based on two constants. One is an extension of provision based on a persistent matrix of social inequality and the other is an extension that seems to be based more on the diversification of provision than on how integrated the structure is and/or the adoption of comprehensive institutional models.

Sustaining extension over diversification, or in tension with diversification, impacts on educational segmentation. In chapter one of this document, the case studies of six countries reveal how combinations are produced that can sustain and/or deepen educational segmentation. The persistence of traditional and new mechanisms of segmentation was identified, traversed by classic dimensions, such as socioeconomic level or area (rural/urban). Traditional segmentation mechanisms include the sector (public/private), the streams (the importance of the social sector according to the type of baccalaureate, even within the science or technology modalities or technical education), the area (provision for rural education in Mexico, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Honduras) and selective access (entrance exams in Mexico, completion exams in Ecuador and Costa Rica and ad hoc selection mechanisms in Argentina). New segmentation mechanisms include the creation of alternative modalities targeted at specific population groups (present to a greater or lesser extent in all cases), curriculum adaptation by introducing curricula for population groups left out of regular provision (lower secondary education plans in Uruguay) and the transfer of institutional models (as in the case of the International Baccalaureate in Ecuador until it was discontinued in 2020). Civil servants and experts reported on these mechanisms.

The views of adolescents and young people about their educational experience in the six cases covered by the study were used to explore how provision is experienced. Based on the tension between the extension-diversification pairing and resulting segmentation mechanisms, elements of differentiation were identified that stem from policies and from the particular forms of policy reality. The students' accounts reveal their perception of conditions that can turn into inequalities: on the one hand, differentials in private provision, availability and accessibility in rural areas and intensified segmentation of provision according to institutional models; on the other hand, different material conditions, divergent study regimes between stages, selection mechanisms and, in some cases, the lack of relevance of educational and organizational approaches. Also highlighted were elements arising from the forms of policy reality that translate into emerging forms of provision in terms of segmentation. Based on the students' accounts, a selection was made of elements relating to the choice of secondary school, mediated by multiple variables, the implicit costs of compulsory schooling and the forms of school violence.

These differential conditions and their potential role as a barrier or obstacle are likely to be linked to the form taken by compulsory schooling policies in the region: extension with diversification. Nonetheless, their deployment is evidence of mechanisms that segment but sustain, especially as they create opportunities. Based on the regulations and the students' personal accounts, points of support

for schooling were also identified. A selection of accounts and their subsequent analysis revealed at least two focal points: one of support and the other of opportunities. Support focal points include extracurricular support, such as grant programmes, and support for institutional and educational arrangements, such as the development of curricular and extracurricular activities, the availability of staff for academic reinforcement or community living (tutoring and guidance), spaces for youth and the relationships of support that flow from school relationships, particularly with teachers. The second focal point relates to the development of alternative modalities and remedial programmes, encapsulating the idea of new opportunities.

B. Policy recommendations

As stated in the introduction to this document, sustaining the extension of secondary education while ensuring the graduation of all rests on a structural challenge: to provide an equitable offering that guarantees social and educational inclusion, namely quality provision. This challenge is particularly complex because it is integral not only to the historical dynamics involved in the configuration of modern education systems but also to the dynamics of each country in the region.

It is important to note that the complete and successful extension of secondary education relies on: (i) resolving the structural inequalities that affect the lives of young people and adolescents; and (ii) forms of provision organization that guarantee common schooling platforms. The question is: how much progress is possible without resolving basic inequalities and underpinned by education provision that is in tension between extension and diversification? Indeed, the empirical evidence presented here shows the limitations of this situation.

The survey makes it possible to put forward several recommendations that can be used to consider the current form taken by secondary education policies. While these recommendations are not new, as they are based on previous work, they build on the contributions of the studies presented in this document.

1. Reviewing the meaning of secondary education: more integrated and less specialized structures

The extension of compulsory education alters the historical meaning of secondary education and, hence, its functions. While regulatory frameworks address this issue, it does not always translate into policy orientation. Compulsory education means that secondary school becomes the final level of basic education (UNDP/UNESCO, 2009) and, hence, of common education. This makes the historical propaedeutic and selective function of preparing students and steering them towards higher education and/or entry into the labour market irrelevant as the motivating force behind the meaning of secondary education. If compulsory education extends the right to schooling, then secondary education should have a meaning in itself: the shared knowledge provided to adolescents and young people to enable them to navigate this stage in their lives and to develop during the subsequent stages of life. It is about providing a common platform.

This means revisiting old and new tensions: between homogeneous provision and diversity, between extension and diversification. In the late twentieth century, the problem was sometimes conceptualized in terms of targeting, through educational provision for “disadvantaged” groups with compensatory programmes and diversified teaching (Caillods and Hutchinson, 2001). The development of the alternative modalities or remedial plans reported in this study would appear to lead back to this point: segmented circuits could create segmented educational trajectories.

The recommendation is to design common educational experiences that can accommodate specific individual characteristics, rather than the characteristics of a sector, area or membership group. In terms of provision organization and in accordance with international experience (Green, 2006), this means aiming for more integrated structures, restricting instances of student selection (non-selective schools) and shifting specialization by discipline or stream to near the end of the compulsory stage. In

terms of institutional organization, lessons could be learned from the experience of alternative modalities. As this research indicates, these forms of provision were found to encapsulate new opportunities that are expressed in organizational dimensions, such as course flexibility and other dimensions related to treatment and availability: "I was absent one day and they called me to see how I was, if I was sick, if I needed anything, and I was really touched" (remedial programme student). It might be argued that these should be basic conditions for secondary education as a whole, not just in its alternative modalities. As discussed below, this requires a review of the forms of schooling and actors involved.

2. Integrating policies for adolescents and young people: school and other State agencies

The extension of compulsory schooling based on enduring structural inequalities is showing its limitations, one example of which is the persistence of segmentation. In many countries in the region, schooling seems to be the only policy for adolescents and young people—or one of the few policies—that has been long-lasting. While this kind of educationalization of social problems (Tröhler, 2019) is not exclusive to Latin America, it is particularly acute in the region. The intensity and scope of the debate on in-person learning in a pandemic context illustrates this. Comprehensive policies are needed to cater to the lives of adolescents and young people, of which schooling is one of many: policies that contribute to the enjoyment of rights and promote a fuller exercise of citizenship (schooling, health, sports, culture, communication, sexual development, work and identity-building).

This prompts two potential complementary orientations in terms of recommendations. The first is to coordinate the different State agencies with policies for the welfare of adolescents and young people. The second is to consider the possibility of adding other units to deliver programmes and/or resources according to content: clubs, sports centres, museums, cultural centres and technology centres. The pandemic has also shown that the digital medium can serve as a delivery unit in conjunction with (or where there is no possibility of) physical provision. There are other spaces and other forms of expression that could promote these alternative perspectives that arise from the issues affecting adolescents and young people at this stage in their lives. The interest expressed by the student interviewees in extracurricular activities, in subjects outside the official curriculum, such as robotics, and in sexuality, participating in productive community environments and developing political sociability, in direct association with school, could provide a basis for incorporating other delivery units.

3. Providing the right conditions for schooling: ensuring equal opportunities

There is agreement on the need to sustain compulsory schooling under a set of conditions that make this feasible: it is not just educational policies that are required (Terigi, 2009). In this study, the students' accounts are clear concerning policies that are linked to schooling and are part of the interaction between social and educational policies, or, as mentioned above, are part of a comprehensive approach to policies for adolescents and young people.

With respect to the extension of secondary education, at least three recommendations can be made. The first concerns student grants, a key support according to some of the students' accounts. Two options should be considered, especially in the countries lagging furthest behind: to maintain the family support grant for lower secondary students and to move to a universal basic income-type model for upper secondary students. This would make it possible to extend the scope of rights to students nearing the age of majority and could involve grants similar to existing grants for continuing to higher education, or else grants could be extended to vocational qualification systems. In short, it is a question of transferring cash to support access to different types of knowledge, by taking a longer-term approach.

The second recommendation relates to student mobility for accessing schools, which could be linked to specific transport policies. Some of the students' accounts highlight its usefulness in rural areas. It would be important to consider it in urban areas as well, especially for female students who report feeling

unsafe on their way to school. This is nothing new: in some countries, school buses have been part of the process of extending schooling since the mid-twentieth century. The students' accounts reflect both the difficulties in using urban public transport at certain times and the limited choice of schools close enough to home, with the result being to restrict students to familiar spaces. Broadening the mobility horizon through a student-only transport system might be beneficial in this regard.

The third recommendation is to extend specific endowments for items that students consider as falling to families when it comes to sustaining schooling: textbooks, computers and, in some contexts, school uniforms. It is striking how much importance these items still seem to have, most likely in tension between standardizing across a school and acting as a mark of distinction to the outside world. From a policy perspective, moving towards the universal provision of digital devices would be a costly but reasonable approach, especially in a pandemic. Textbook distribution in secondary schools could be incorporated into the digital pathway, as evidenced by experiences of digitizing some aspects of school provision, including in the region.

4. Ensuring adequate material conditions for schooling: broadening the delivery context

Extending compulsory schooling calls for investment in material resources. Some countries in the region have made more progress than others. Studies also show that providing schools with material resources is a necessary but not sufficient prerequisite for ensuring quality provision (Terigi, 2009). Nonetheless, one important recommendation stemming from the results of this study is that school provision should be planned with an emphasis on the material conditions of schooling. The study has highlighted two elements: one is the difference between the material conditions of private and public provision; the other is the availability and accessibility of provision.

With respect to the first element, experiences such as those of Ecuador's replica schools or Millennium Educational Units demonstrate the impact that improved infrastructure has on students and on enhancing public provision. Experience also shows that, unless infrastructure is maintained over time and increased in size, it affects institutional differentiation. Some personal accounts speak of an intermediate situation in terms of public school infrastructure, which is more sustainable from a budgetary standpoint: without going to the extreme of having extensive and highly professional premises for physical activity or theatre stages for artistic development, the premises are adequate for teaching the school curriculum. The recommendation is to devise an optimal formula in terms of material conditions that is sustainable over the long term. Students express satisfaction when they find agreeable material conditions, with basic conditions of hygiene, movement, classroom space and availability of desks and chairs. The disparity between accounts of classrooms with blackboards connected to virtual platforms, more typical of private provision, and overcrowded, unventilated classrooms raises the question of how the decision is made to sustain the extension of compulsory education.

If the infrastructure situation is not yet resolved at this stage in the expansion of secondary education, and experiences of material conditions are so different, other combinations should be considered. For example, investment and material resources could be concentrated in schools serving younger students, and combined modalities could be implemented in upper secondary education, using digital resources. For this same group, consideration could be given to the use of other spaces available in the local area, which could be incorporated into knowledge delivery units targeted at adolescents and young people, using transport systems such as the one mentioned above. Clearly, the personal accounts and evidence on schooling during the pandemic demonstrate the importance of a space for meetings and of exposure to in-person learning. The recommendation is not to replace in-person learning but to complement it, especially for older students in transition to a new stage in their lives and to new forms of relationship with the out-of-school and post-school world.

The previous item relates to the second element: the availability and accessibility of provision. In addition to the issues already mentioned regarding transport, material conditions and the use of virtual media, this is a principle of distributive justice. As indicated earlier, States have made education compulsory and seek to sustain it through regulations, policies and programmes. This requires available and accessible provision for all adolescents and young people. Some of the cases studied show positive progress through the establishment of quotas and admission requirements and the allocation of school places according to domicile. It is recommended that all countries should consider such mechanisms. However, the evidence shows the impact of geographic segregation and its effects on educational segregation when students go to nearby schools. It also shows the constraints of ghettoization, through the development of districts or housing estates, as in Ecuador and Costa Rica, or the creation of specific provision—technical schools—in the suburbs of Montevideo, Uruguay.

As the students' accounts indicate, the reasons for their choice of school are many and varied. Proximity is associated with availability, while the personal background of family members or contacts plays a very important role. It is recommended to ensure a relatively nearby offering with satisfactory material conditions, especially for lower secondary students. The addition of other resources, perhaps through virtual provision, to bring it closer to comprehensive institutional models, including the two stages of secondary school and broadening the range of provision, may be beneficial, particularly where mobility opportunities are limited. This calls for the allocation of material and digital resources in an extended delivery context: schools, households and students.

5. Reorganizing the institutional conditions of schooling: in pursuit of diversity

The document detailed several elements that appear to function as barriers or obstacles and can lead to segmented educational trajectories: selection mechanisms, such as entrance or completion exams, the divergence between primary and secondary education and between stages of secondary education, and the lack of relevance of educational and organizational offerings. Support factors were also highlighted, such as guidance figures (tutors, counsellors), and bonding figures: more flexible institutional models and teachers who listen and explain.

Three recommendations can be made in this regard. The first is to reduce the organizational gap in the transition between levels, as well as the early choices of streams. Regarding transition, the students' perception is that there continues to be a significant divergence between primary and secondary education in terms of the number of demands and the pace of subjects, assessments and teaching styles. To address this, it is suggested to: (i) promote a closer linkage between the final year of each cycle and the first year of the following cycle, through a progressive transition to the forms of the next cycle; (ii) develop support figures dedicated specifically to this linkage; (iii) steer the training of lower secondary teachers towards an intermediate model between the primary teacher and the lower secondary teacher, between guided and autonomous learning. With regard to the early choice of streams, the abovementioned study by Green (2006) is conclusive: less branching, less inequality. The accounts of lower secondary students reveal how difficult it is to decide on a stream, which sometimes involves a change of school and entails a further adaptation, in addition to the transition from primary to secondary school. Those with fewer family resources to support this change find it more difficult to sustain their educational trajectory.

The second recommendation relates to the "de-schooling" of education provision as students move towards upper secondary education, especially in the final year of compulsory education. It is suggested that consideration be given to: (i) increasing the flexibility of academic arrangements, such as course timetables with the alternative of in-person or virtual modalities; (ii) a wider choice of subjects to be offered to suit students' individual interests (although this requires more resources, the virtual modality allows for such an expansion); (iii) diversification of the ways in which subjects are organized and taught, including more varied forms of assessment (while there is no need to elaborate on this point, the accounts of the student interviewees underline the importance of schools providing spaces for production

and exchange); (iv) a review of the relevance of curriculum content, which is reflected both in the value placed on the connection with the world of work, such as in the technical or technology modality, and in the demand for less information content and better links with the contemporary world (Terigi, 2012).

The third recommendation is a prerequisite for the previous two: to diversify the training of teachers and other actors involved in secondary education. Clearly, the extension of compulsory education calls for more human resources—the most important of which are teachers. This resource must be guaranteed in countries, such as Mexico and Honduras, which still do not have adequate teaching staff. It is also necessary to progress in two directions. First, there should be a review of training that involves: (i) identity-building as a secondary school teacher rather than as a teacher of a specific subject; (ii) incorporating content into teacher training to develop skills in what this document defines as making oneself available (patience, willingness to repeat explanations and a kind and understanding attitude); (iii) exposure to content on the rights of adolescents and young people and on identity-building during this stage in their lives. This last point is no small matter, judging by the accounts of different forms of school violence presented in this study: sexual harassment of female students, abuse of authority and ill-treatment on the grounds of residence, social class or ethnicity.

Although it has long been suggested that teachers should work collectively, given the fragmented, subject-specific provision, this has not yet been put into practice. One of the opportunities offered by the suspension of in-person teaching during the pandemic has been to move to other forms of work: planning among teachers from different areas, subjects or courses, with a division of labour based on profiles or preferences for lecturing, developing materials or monitoring students. Facilitating alternative ways of distributing the organization of teaching would allow for better use of existing resources. This could even be considered as part of the teaching career, in which teaching is practised in different ways at different stages or times, not always in front of a class.

Finally, as was the case when secondary education was extended during the post-war period, it is recommended not only to diversify but also to professionalize the roles that provide support or back-up for teaching and are fundamental in sustaining educational trajectories. Figures such as tutors, advisers or guidance counsellors, as well as teachers, who play an important role in forming bonds and providing support, should be formalized as a key element by developing posts and providing specific training. It is recommended that at least three figures should be considered according to functions or key moments in schooling: support during the transition between educational levels; guidance in the selection of streams; and support for educational trajectories. Monitoring systems and, above all, modern communication technologies, make it possible to ensure these alternative ways of “being there for others”, as proposed in the document, of caring for them and preventing them from becoming invisible to the system. They would ensure that calling a student out of concern because she had missed a day of school, as reported by one gratified remedial plan student, becomes an everyday occurrence.

In short, comprehensive policies targeted at adolescents and young people, together with more uniform and less exclusionary material conditions, could contribute to a more equitable platform that is less differentiated on the basis of a student’s background. A more integrated systemic offer, coupled with a less homogeneous institutional approach that leverages available resources through a considered use of new technologies, would lead to a more consistent educational pathway, a denser and wider circulation of knowledge and more awareness of student diversity. A re-evaluation and re-discussion of the role of the teacher and other education forms and figures at the different stages of secondary education could ensure that it is not the actors themselves who end up as the mainstay but rather the education provision itself. Ultimately, all this could lead to what is currently an exception becoming more of a shared, everyday experience.

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Annexes

Annex 1

Description of the study on the status of secondary education in Latin America: does a diversified structure contribute to social segmentation and educational exclusion?

Based on the assumption that each selected country has endeavoured to make secondary education compulsory and therefore universal, the focus of this study is to investigate the extent to which each country's existing secondary education structures ensure that this objective is met, or else pose an obstacle and serve to sustain educational and social segmentation. The sources are:

- Information produced by each country's Ministry of Education (regulations, documents and educational statistics).
- Four in-depth interviews with two government authorities in each country with competence for secondary education and two experts on secondary education.

Outputs

Report on secondary education in each country

1. *Organization and regulation of secondary education*

- Current regulations governing secondary education: identify current regulations and outline the main aspects that determine the functioning of secondary education, admission criteria, allocation of school places, length of the school day and the qualifications awarded.
- Structure of secondary education: describe the structure of the education system, with an emphasis on the specific situation regarding levels 2 and 3 of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2 and ISCED 3).
- Secondary education modalities and/or streams: identify all modalities and streams, stating whether they have any specific characteristics and whether transition between modalities/streams is possible.
- Technical education: describe technical education at secondary level, referring to the regulations defining it and specifying whether it contains any sectoral area that focuses on the curricular definitions of this modality.
- Rural secondary education and youth and adult education: compile a specific section on these modalities at the secondary level, including the regulations defining them and qualifications.
- Teaching qualifications: state whether there is a specific teaching qualification or whether there are cases of teachers being appointed without this qualification. Specify whether there is any distinction by modality.
- Main issues relating to secondary school admission, promotion, assessment and accreditation of the level.
- Existence or otherwise of national examinations for secondary school completion or examinations on a subject-by-subject basis.
- Existence of examinations determining admission to upper secondary education.
- Remedial programmes aimed at student re-entry or alternative ways of studying: list these programmes and provide a summary of the most significant aspects (title, implementation period, main objectives, tools designed to facilitate re-entry or make academic organization more flexible for students' studies).
- Brief description of significant curriculum changes associated with the extension of compulsory secondary education.

- Indicate the most significant curricular differences by modality.
- Existence or otherwise of Internet connectivity in secondary schools, scope by sector (public/private), region and area (rural/urban).
- Other aspects that the consultant considers relevant based on knowledge of the real situation pertaining to this level of education in the country.

2. *Quantitative data on secondary education*

- Number of schools or educational units.
- Enrolment by year of study and access rates.
- Internal efficiency: repetition, drop-out, promotion and graduation.

If possible, disaggregated by sector, rural/urban area, modality and stream, as well as enrolment data for youth and adult education. This may be data included in an official document or publication.

If possible, provide or trace the following data:

- Quantitative data on qualified teachers or unqualified practising teachers; teachers' average years of experience.
- Average number of students per section.
- Data on school connectivity and extent of connectivity.
- Data on school infrastructure by secondary school cycle and by modality or stream.

3. *In-depth interviews*

The purpose of the interviews is to ascertain the main aspects of secondary education from the interviewees' perspective. For this reason, aspects already covered in the report on secondary education are revisited.

Table A1
Interview schedule for civil servants and experts

Dimension	Question
Education governance	How would you describe the different levels of education policy decision-making and management in your country? What are the levels of education policy management? Do you consider the education system to be largely centralized or decentralized, and why? What main aspects are defined at each level of Government, ranging from the national Government down to school level? - Please provide an example of education policy implementation at each decision-making level.
Structure of secondary education	What is your opinion of the way in which secondary education is structured in this country? What do you consider to be the determining factor in maintaining this structure? What role does the distinction between private and public/State education play in the country? Which aspects of rural secondary education would you highlight?
Compulsory secondary education and inclusion	What is your opinion regarding the introduction of compulsory secondary education? How did the process of making secondary education compulsory work in this country? What relationship do you think there is between compulsory secondary education and the educational inclusion of marginalized social sectors? What do you think is the main purpose of educational inclusion? What is your opinion of this process in this country? What relationship do you think there is between educational inclusion and social segmentation?

Table A1 (concluded)

Dimension	Question
Educational trajectories at secondary level	<p>What do the educational trajectories of the most vulnerable young people tend to be like?</p> <p>Are there differences between these trajectories and those of young people with more financial resources?</p> <p>Which aspects of the secondary education structure do you think have an impact on students' educational trajectories?</p> <p>How is secondary education organized for young people and adults?</p> <p>Do you believe that students' trajectories are determined by aspects of the specific forms of accreditation and promotion?</p> <p>Do you think there are differentiated educational tracks in this country? How are these tracks structured?</p> <p>Are these tracks structured in relation to public and private provision? What other elements structure them (e.g. pre-university schools, schools recognized for their tradition)?</p> <p>Are the educational trajectories of women and men different? If so, why is this the case?</p> <p>Do trajectories in urban and rural areas differ?</p> <p>What happens with adolescents and young people from indigenous populations?</p>
Modalities/ streams	<p>How do you rate the modalities or streams in secondary education?</p> <p>Do you consider the quality of educational offerings to be similar or not, and why?</p> <p>Do all secondary level offerings permit entry to higher education formally and in real terms?</p> <p>What is rural secondary education like in your country?</p> <p>What is secondary technical education like in this country?</p> <p>Are students able to move between modalities or streams? If they are, what do you believe is the rationale for moving?</p> <p>What do you think are the advantages or disadvantages of the different secondary level offerings?</p> <p>What is the scope for a family to choose a specific school?</p> <p>Are some offerings/streams more attractive than others for different audiences?</p> <p>Which of the possible ways of transitioning through secondary education do you feel help to reduce segmentation and which ways help to reproduce it?</p>
Meaning of compulsory schooling	<p>What motivation do you think children and young people have for studying at secondary school?</p> <p>What do you think are the future prospects of young people entering secondary school?</p> <p>What is the current relationship between secondary education and the labour market?</p> <p>What is the current relationship between secondary education and access to higher education?</p> <p>To what extent do you think that schools are able to redress inequalities in the cultural capital with which young people enter school?</p>

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Annex 2

Description of the study on the diversification of the structure of secondary education and educational segmentation in Latin America: the experience of adolescents and young people

The second phase of the study centres on investigating the educational experience of adolescents and young people according to the different routes and modalities currently available in secondary education, with a focus on forms of access and the educational pathway.

The general question guiding the research is: what is the connection between education provision and students and their decisions about continuing their educational trajectory? Or, more specifically: how does education provision become a differentiation track? If the provision is segmented, what draws students to this provision (factors)? What kind of educational experience do they have? Which institutional mechanisms lead to continuity of schooling or to drop-out? Which opportunities does differentiated provision offer for continuing the educational trajectory? If provision is common, which differentiation mechanisms accompany schooling? When and where does differentiation take place? Which institutional mechanisms lead to continuity of schooling or to drop-out?

The following factors merit particular investigation:

- Factors relating to the transition between levels (including lower and upper secondary education) and completion of the final stage of secondary education. Distinguish between:
 - Socio-economic factors that influence decision-making.
 - Socio-educational environment factors: expectations, educational experience of the immediate circle, family educational trajectories.
 - Factors of gender, ethnicity, situation of displaced persons.
 - Education provision factors: availability, accessibility, entrance and completion examinations.
 - Educational experience factors: indicators of the prior educational trajectory, prior labelling, persistence of representations about types of secondary school, experience of the school climate (learning environment, school violence, bullying).
 - Institutional provision factors: use of assessments, types of grouping, management of infrastructure and equipment resources, extracurricular activities, student support programmes, learning achievement.
- Mechanisms that facilitate/hinder secondary education continuity and completion. Identify actual segmentation mechanisms, how they work and when and where they occur from the student's perspective:
 - Regular institutional mechanisms: curriculum organization, academic regime arrangements, use of assessments, ways of accrediting learning.
 - Ad hoc institutional mechanisms: specific student support programmes, role of counsellors, role of tutors, grouping according to institutional criteria (including performance and trajectory).
 - Individual mechanisms: role of influential teachers.
- Pandemic-related factors and mechanisms:
 - Socio-economic factors.
 - Education provision factors: availability, accessibility in a pandemic situation.
 - Factors of the educational experience during the pandemic: educational continuity, forms of continuity.

In order to investigate the mechanisms, emphasis will be placed on the main characteristics of segmentation in each case, in accordance with the results of phase I of the study, including: the distinction between public/private provision; the relative importance of remedial or alternative modalities as part of education provision; the existence of entrance and completion examinations; and the ranking of the academic pathway as compared with other pathways.

Target population

The target population for the research should fulfil the following characteristics:

- Students in the first year of lower secondary school, the first year of upper secondary school, the final year of upper secondary school (impact of factors and mechanisms on access, transition, continuity and completion).
- Students who have dropped out of school (impact of factors and mechanisms).
- Different social strata.
- Different areas (urban/rural).
- Control by gender and ethnicity.
- Locations by type of provision:
 - Rural provision (in cases where specific provision is important).
 - Remedial or alternative provision.
 - Provision according to the baccalaureate modality (traditional, academic) and technical modality.
 - Provision according to private or public affiliation.
 - Provision according to differentiated tracks in regular education (pre-university schools, elite programmes).

For selecting the population, emphasis will be placed on one or more specific features of the case, in accordance with the results of phase I of the study, which are also highlighted above.

Survey and instruments

The study will be carried out through interviews and focus groups with the target population in the six countries previously analysed. Depending on the options available in the territory, as determined by the pandemic, they will be conducted in person, virtually or by telephone. The survey is expected to include between 50 and 100 people.

Table A2
Purposive sample surveyed

		Argentina	Costa Rica	Ecuador	Honduras	Mexico	Uruguay	Total
ISCED 2	State sector ^a	21	3	12	12	3	7	58
	Technical education	8	6	<i>Unspecified</i>	8	1	7	30
	Private sector	<i>Unspecified</i>	0	7	7	0	2	16
ISCED 3	State sector ^a	35	8	20	14	14	9	100
	Technical education	12	13	17	8	15	11	76
	Private sector	<i>Unspecified</i>		8 <i>Unspecified</i>	10	11	1	30
	Rural education	15	6	11	7	10	<i>Unspecified</i>	49
	Alternative tracks ^b	10	4	6	8	24	16	68
	Outside the system ^c	4	2	0	4	10	5	25
Total		105	50	73	78	88	58	452

Source: Prepared by the authors.

^a Includes elite tracks.

^b Youth and adult education, distance secondary education, distance-learning college, re-entry and educational continuity programmes.

^c Includes ISCED 2 and ISCED 3.

Annex 3

Table A3
Selected countries: secondary education structure and regulations

Country	Compulsory education	Regulatory framework	Structure of secondary education	
			ISCED 2	ISCED 3
Argentina	Duration: 14 years (ages 4-17)	National Education Law No. 26206 (2006)	Basic cycle Duration: 3 years Modalities: as part of common education, Argentina offers eight modalities with differing curriculum organization: 1. Technical-vocational 2. Artistic 3. Special 4. Youth and adult continuing education 5. Rural 6. Intercultural bilingual 7. Education in detention 8. Home and hospital education	Orientation cycle ^a Duration: 2 or 3 years ^b
Costa Rica	Duration: 12 years (ages 5-16)	Article 78 of the Political Constitution as amended by Law No.8954 (2011)	General basic education (3rd cycle) Duration: 3 years Modalities: 1. Traditional 2. Special 3. 'Aula Edad' (over-age students) 4. Youth and adult	Diversified educationa Duration: 2 years Modalities: 1. Academic 2. Artistic 3. Technical
Ecuador	Duration: 13 years (ages 5-17)	Organic Law No. 417 on Intercultural Education (2011)	Higher general basic education (3rd cycle) Duration: 3 years Modalities: 1. Classroom-based 2. Blended 3. Distance	Unified general baccalaureate Duration: 3 years Modalities: 1. Baccalaureate in science 2. Technical baccalaureate
Honduras	Duration: 12 years (ages 6-17)	Fundamental Education Law No. 2160 (2011)	Basic education (3rd cycle) Duration: 3 years Modalities: 1. Regular 2. Alternative (indigenous & Afro-Honduran; youth and adult; other) 3. Special	Intermediate education Duration: 3 years Modalities: 1. Baccalaureate in science and humanities 2. Technical-vocational baccalaureate
Mexico	Duration: 15 years (ages 3-17)	General Education Law (2019)	Lower secondary education Duration: 3 years Modalities: 1. General 2. Technical 3. Distance secondary education 4. Community 5. Youth and adult education 6. For workers	Upper secondary education Duration: 3 years Modalities: 1. General upper secondary 2. Technology upper secondary 3. Vocational and technical upper secondary education 4. Vocational and technical education
Uruguay	Duration: 14 years (ages 4-17)	General Education Law No. 18437 (2008)	Basic secondary education Duration: 3 years Modalities: 1. General (and rural) education 2. Technical education	Upper secondary education Duration: 3 years Modalities: 1. General: Baccalaureate in Arts and Crafts 1. Technology Secondary Education

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2021 [online] <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>.

^a In the technical education stream, the duration is extended by a further year.

^b In Argentina, the structure of the education system includes two options: seven years of primary education and five years of secondary education, or six years of primary education and six years of secondary education. In the former case, upper secondary education lasts only two years.

Annex 4

Coverage and indicators of internal efficiency in secondary education by country

Table A4
Selected countries: enrolment rate in secondary education

	Argentina	Costa Rica	Ecuador	Honduras	Mexico	Uruguay
Net enrolment ratio (lower secondary)	100%	91.4%	96.2%	61.1%	94.1%	99.7%
Net enrolment ratio (upper secondary)	89.6%	84.7%	81.0%	47.4%	73.8%	88.2%
School-age population (lower secondary)	2 133 803	214 319	928 712	627 153	6 774 507	146 362
School-age population (upper secondary)	2 108 366	148 292	933 763	628 316	6 670 479	150 543

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2021 [online] <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>.
Note: The data relate to 2017.

Table A5
Selected countries: indicators of internal efficiency in secondary education
(Percentages)

	Argentina	Costa Rica	Ecuador	Honduras	Mexico	Uruguay
Population attending at theoretical age 13	93.7	81.4	93.3	96.7	96.7	90.7
Population attending at theoretical age 15	75.2	67.5	89.6	--	95.3	80.8
Non-attending population of secondary school age	6.8	6.9	8.0	--	15.5	10.2
Secondary school completion rate ^a	64.2	52.0	68.8 ^b	28.7	55.1	36.4
Adult population having completed secondary education (upper secondary)	57.0	38.4	45.8	--	36.2	30.9

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Information System on Educational Trends In Latin America (SITEAL), 2021 [online] <https://siteal.iiep.unesco.org/indicadores?countries=1%2C5%2C9%2C14%2C19&years=2016&filters=>.

The data relate to 2016.

^a Data for 2016.

^b In the case of Ecuador, the figure relates to 2010.

Annex 5

Table A6

Trend in the ratio of net lower and upper secondary school attendance rates by gender, area and household income quintile, around 2000, 2010 and 2016

	Total	Women	Men	Urban	Rural	Quintile 1	Quintile 5	Initial upper/ lower attendance ratio	Final upper/ lower attendance ratio	Description
Argentina						>1	>1	Slight reduction in gaps. Stable among men
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)								<1	<1	Lower attendance in lower secondary than in upper secondary education. Improvement in women, men, quintile 1
Brazil								>2	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups
Chile								<1	<1	Lower attendance in lower secondary education. Increase in gaps in all groups
Cost Rica								=2	<1	Reduction in gaps in all groups except quintile 1
Dominican Republic								<1	<1	Lower attendance in lower secondary than in upper secondary education. Improvement in all groups except in rural areas
Ecuador								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups
Honduras								>2	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups
Mexico								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups except quintile 5 and urban areas
Paraguay								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups (2010-2016)
Peru								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups
Uruguay								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups except quintile 5 (2010-2016)
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)						=2	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups except quintile 5

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Annex 6

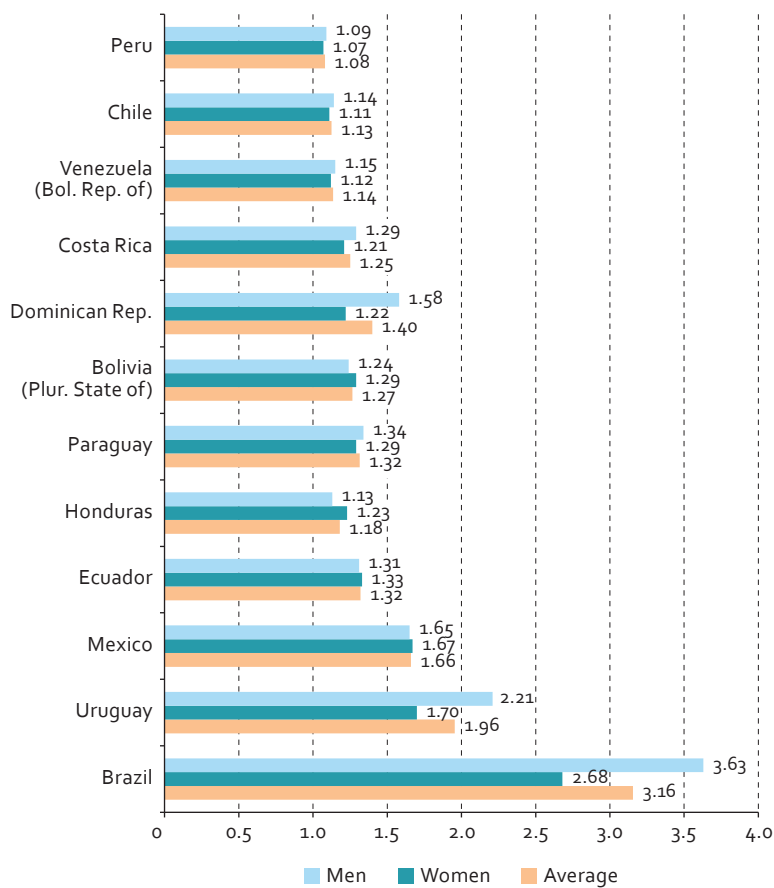
Table A7

Trend in the ratio of lower and upper secondary school completion rates by gender, area and household income quintile, around 2000, 2010 and 2016

	Total	Women	Men	Urban	Rural	Quintile 1	Quintile 5	Initial upper/ lower attendance ratio	Final upper/ lower attendance ratio	Description
Argentina	
Bolivia ((Plurinational State of)								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups. Stable among quintile 5
Brazil								>4	>3	Reduction in gaps in all groups
Chile								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups
Cost Rica								>1	>1	Stable gaps in all groups. Increase among men, rural areas and quintile 5
Dominican Republic								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups
Ecuador								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups, except quintile 1
Honduras								>1	>1	Stable gaps. Increase among women. Reduction among men, urban areas and quintile 1
Mexico								>2	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups
Paraguay								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups
Peru								>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups. Slight increase among men and urban areas around 2016
Uruguay								...	>1	Increase in gaps among men and quintile 1 (2010-2016)
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)						>1	>1	Reduction in gaps in all groups

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics [online] <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>.

Figure A1
Ratio of lower secondary and upper secondary completion rates by gender, around 2016



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics [online] <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>.

Annex 7

Table A8
Students enrolled in private-sector lower secondary education, 2000-2017
(Percentages)

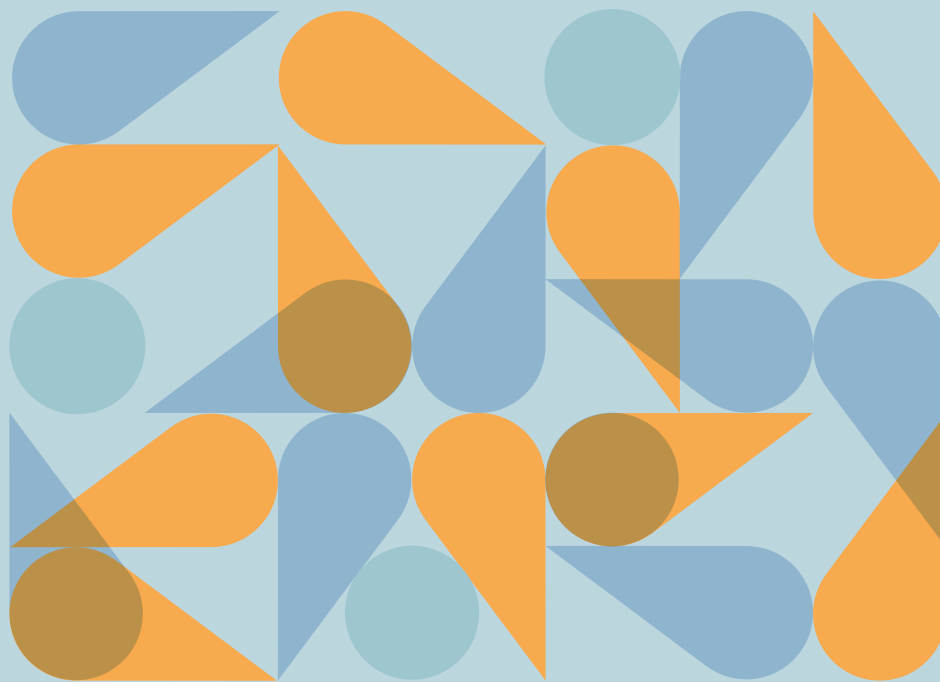
Country	Around 2000	Around 2005	Around 2010	Around 2015	Around 2017	Direction of change
Argentina	22	23	23	24	25	Increased
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	13	10	10	10	10	Decreased
Brazil	10	10	12	13	14	Increased
Chile	42	47	53	58	59	Increased
Costa Rica	12	9	9	9	8	Decreased
Ecuador	23	33	31	24	24	Remained stable
Honduras	..	18	22	24	23	Remained stable
Mexico	13	12	11	10	10	Decreased
Paraguay	24	20	20	20	..	Remained stable
Peru	16	27	25	29	29	Increased
Dominican Republic	20	22	20	18	17	Decreased
Uruguay	13	12	15	15	13	Remained stable
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	25	23	28	32	30	Increased

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Table A9
Students enrolled in private-sector upper secondary education, 2000-2017
(Percentages)

Country	Around 2000	Around 2005	Around 2010	Around 2015	Around 2017	Direction of change
Argentina	30	31	30	30	30	Remained stable
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	20	16	15	14	12	Decreased
Brazil	14	16	16	14	14	Remained stable
Chile	48	55	60	63	63	Increased
Costa Rica	18	13	11	10	9	Decreased
Ecuador	26	34	37	30	28	Remained stable
Honduras	30	32	31	Remained stable
Mexico	21	21	18	19	18	Decreased
Paraguay	33	23	24	23	..	Decreased
Peru	19	20	26	31	30	Increased
Dominican Republic	26	26	23	19	19	Decreased
Uruguay	10	11	..	11	10	Remained stable
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	33	28	30	36	33	Remained stable

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.



One of the main objectives of this series of studies on the diversification of secondary education and educational segmentation in Latin America is to contribute to the development of more inclusive public policies. This document presents the results of a quantitative and qualitative study on the dynamics of educational segmentation in six countries in the region, together with an analysis of the experience of adolescents and young people in scenarios of extended compulsory schooling. The study reflects the significant progress made in extending schooling, as well as the challenges that remain in ensuring common, egalitarian, high-quality educational experiences with a focus on diversity.