Organization of American States

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STATISTICS AND EDUCATION POLICIES RELATED TO EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITIONS

Studies from Colombia, Chile, Peru, Venezuela and Brazil

Organization of American States (OAS)
Office of Education and Culture
Bernard van Leer Foundation

"Trends in transition policies in indigenous, rural and border communities" project

Organization of American States (OAS) Executive Secretariat for Comprehensive Development (SEDI), Department of Human Development, Education and Culture, Office of Education and Culture (OAS/OEC). Bernard van Leer Foundation.

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Background of the Study, within the
"TRENDS IN TRANSITION POLICIES IN INDIGENOUS, RURAL AND BORDER COMMUNITIES" Project

This study was conducted in response to the general objective of the project proposed to support Member States in their efforts to develop and strengthen policies and strategies that contribute to expanding and improving the quality and coverage of care and education for children between the ages of zero and eight, to facilitate their transition from the home to school programs.

The purpose of this study was focused on: a) Collecting and consolidating existing information on trends in care and education in the early years with a special emphasis on rural, indigenous and border settings; b) Identifying and organizing a process of cross-sectoral analysis and evaluation of regional policy and trends in education and transitions during the first years of the child's life; c) Building institutional capacity for policy makers and national and local supervisors of early childhood/preschool and primary education in rural, indigenous and border communities; d) Furthering transition issues and developing specific measures of social communication, advocacy and outreach; e) Providing other countries with the study's methodology and specific publications on reality-based findings identified in indigenous, rural and border communities; f) Acquiring new theoretical and practical elements; g) Assessing the status of early childhood, preschool and basic education; h) Collecting lessons and challenges for the design, implementation, execution and evaluation of policies (early childhood education through the first two grades of primary school) in the hemisphere.

Stages and phases of the study:

1st. Analysis of statistics on specific topics in childcare focused on rural, indigenous and border communities. **(Findings are published in Book I)**

2nd. Policy meta-analysis, which evaluated the international and national policies on children under the age of eight, from various sectors (health, education, family, work, social security) related to the theme of transitions and focused on rural, indigenous and border communities. **(Findings published in Book I)**

3rd. Empirical analysis: case studies: (**results published in Book II)**
The national coordinators selected a community in each country to fully learn about the transition processes of children between the ages of zero and eight in rural, indigenous and border areas, and the educational experiences offered at the locations where they live.

Phases: Linking Countries to the Study

The process had two phases. In the first, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela were associated, and their research teams advanced the aforementioned Stages 1, 2 and 3.

From this initial phase, there are two publications: **the first (this one**) collects reports from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela on Statistics and Policies. The second collects the reports of these countries' case studies, with the exception of Brazil.

While the countries involved in the first phase advanced on the Case Studies, new countries joined and began stages 1 and 2: Mexico, Bolivia, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. To date, Mexico is completing its Case Study. This publication corresponds to the First Phase of the statistical analysis and policy meta-analysis to review the existence of policies, strategies and actions for early childhood transitions in indigenous, rural and border communities.

Foreword

Since 2007, the Office of Education and Culture (OEC) of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF) have been supporting a research project on "*Trends in transition policies in indigenous, rural and border communities*," as part of an Americas-wide program on "*Policies and strategies for a successful transition of children towards socialization and school*."

The policy trends project was designed to shed new light on transition issues and to develop specific approaches for social communication, advocacy and dissemination, and to make available to other countries the study methodology and the specific publications on findings with respect to indigenous, rural and border communities in Peru, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Chile.

In the context of its policies and programs, the Organization of American States, through the Office of Education and Culture (OEC), consulted government and civil society specialists in December 2005, and again in March 2006. Responses were received from 25 of the 34 Member States, expressing the need for more information and sharing successful experiments in two specific areas: the provision of comprehensive services to children from birth through the age of three, and transitions between the different levels of education.

When the Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE) offered the opportunity to submit projects and compete for funding through the Education Sub-fund, the OEC explored this with the Governments of Venezuela and Barbados. In July 2006, after completing the required evaluations, the CIE recommended the approval of the "*Policies and Strategies for a Successful Transition of Children towards Socialization and School*" project for a two-year period, and simultaneously recommended including initiatives from other agencies and international institutions.

The project's general objective is to "complement the efforts of Member States to develop, strengthen, and evaluate policies and strategies that help extend and improve the quality, equity, and coverage of education and child care for children from birth through the age of six, so as to facilitate their successful transition from the home to preschool programs, and from preschool to primary education."

The project was designed to ascertain progress in the countries and sub-regions; to offer training in theory and practice; to evaluate the status of early childhood, preschool, and primary education; and to identify lessons and challenges in the design, implementation, execution, and evaluation of policies (in early childhood education through the first two grades of primary school) in the Hemisphere. The project has included several activities that are expected to help strengthen the institutional capacity of the participating entities (national and civil society), improve the quality of service, and expand coverage equitably.

It was agreed to construct a working methodology that could be used by other countries to promote and implement transition policies. Over the last two years there have been a number

of meetings, some of them to define the parameters of the study itself, and others to share progress to date.[1]

The investigation's general objective was defined as follows: To identify and describe the critical points in the process of transition between the family and school for children growing up in rural, indigenous and border communities. Based on that description, the project seeks to identify policies and instruments to change behavior among the key players in the process: the child, the family and the teacher.

The study was divided into three parts: the first addressed statistics in the various countries on specific issues relating to child care, with a special focus on rural, indigenous and border communities; the second involved a review of national policies on transition in rural, indigenous and border communities; while the third consisted of a series of case studies in each country to gain a clearer understanding of transitions in this vulnerable population group.

This document presents the results of the five participating countries' research in the first two topics: statistics and policies. Those countries are Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela.

[1] Washington DC, May 14-18, 2007; Santiago, Chile, June 20-23, 2007; Washington DC, December 10-12, 2007; Lima, July 31 to August 2, 2008; Washington DC, February 10 and 11, 2009; Santiago, Chile, May 25-29, 2009.

Executive Summary

Chapter I. CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

In order to establish a common ground for the interpretation of the information provided, the authors agreed on a series of basic conceptual definitions. The paper examines what is meant by transitions, explains the nine categories identified to group the transition studies and summarizes the most important aspects to be considered when addressing this issue.

Transitions **are defined** as "critical moments of change that children live when moving from one environment to another opening opportunities for human development and learning for life and school."

The following provides a brief overview of the key conclusions reached by and for each country participating in the study.

Chapter II.: COLOMBIA REPORT

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics focused on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

The paper addresses the transitions from the perspective of education, analyzing the situation of children in Colombia, poverty rates and their impact on vulnerable communities. Similarly, they assess nutrition and health as factors linked to success in school and child development.

According to a census conducted in 2005, nearly half of the population in Colombia are children and young people, one quarter are children under six years, three quarters are distributed in rural areas (including indigenous and border communities where they have greater poverty) and just over half the population consists of women. In rural areas, the most critical factor affecting the population, and thus children, is the armed conflict that causes population displacement, jobs abandonment or forced linkage to the conflict. In indigenous areas, which also include the Afro-Colombian population, this situation is the same, causing displacement and lost opportunities in terms of education (average schooling years, registration, etc.). More than half of indigenous children under the age of six live in rural areas, while Afro-Colombians are more concentrated in urban areas. The poor territorial definition of border communities, composed mostly of indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations, hamper the possibility of an accurate census.

For these authors, the main factors to be taken into account in the analysis of educational transition processes include poverty, maternal, neonatal and infant mortality, and child nutrition. It also explores birth registration, child labor, violence and abuse, family structure and household size.

Although there is a statistic reduction at a national level of factors such as grade retention and school dropout, this does not hold true for vulnerable rural, indigenous and border communities. The rates in these areas are higher than in the rest of the country. The same

phenomenon is observed when analyzing the quality of education and learning achievement: always vulnerable populations always have lower profits and lower performance when compared to children in urban areas.

Conclusions

In Colombia, there are still inequities regarding economic resources and state support provided to rural, indigenous and border areas. This makes successful educational transitions difficult to achieve. There is still a sub-record in terms of the indexes of health and education of children under the age of eight in rural, indigenous and border areas.

Despite the decline in mortality rates at the general population level, there are still high morbidity and mortality rates for mothers and children under the age of five. The provision of preschool education remains very poor in rural, indigenous and border communities, which are the most needed in the field of health, nutrition and cognitive development.

Adult literacy is low. It is important that significant adults in early childhood have the training and necessary information to provide quality care to children under the age of five in rural, indigenous and border communities.

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

The study examines Colombia's early childhood policies and the vision of transitions through these policies. It makes a comparative analysis of the different views of quality, equity and coverage and the role of legislative bodies in the implementation of these policies and intersectoral coordination.

Intersectoral cooperation has been achieved through being involved in the formulation of Public Policy on Early Childhood in Colombia, including the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of National Education, the National Planning Department, the Social Welfare Administrative Department of Bogotá, national and international NGOs, academics and international agencies.

The document analyzes the processes of monitoring and evaluation in the implementation and monitoring of policies, training of specialized agents with a supra-sectoral approach, family involvement as the cornerstone of child development and the design and implementation of the curricular plan based on the characteristics and potential of the child.

Finally, it explores the promotion and implementation of services and programs for early childhood. The ICBF, the Administrative Department of the Capital District Social Welfare (DABS), the Family Compensation, CINDE, among others, provide a set of programs for children in vulnerable situations.

Conclusions

Thanks to the discussions held on the legislation for early childhood and the active participation of civil society and academia, Colombia has a National Policy for Early Childhood, which has contributed to the work of the Ministry of Education to implement the Policy for Early Childhood Education.

The process of articulating preschool to basic primary school is included as a policy component within the current legislation. The transition from the home to early childhood education is not addressed in a comprehensive manner and the mechanisms or resources that accompany school transitions are not identified.

Although there are guidelines in the legislation for the attention of rural, indigenous and border communities, early childhood is not directly addressed, educational transitions are not mentioned, and the necessary resources to ensure coverage and quality in early education in these populations are not allocated.

Chapter III. CHILE REPORT

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

The project was the responsibility of the National Board Early Childhood Education (JUNJI) and the document was developed by staff from the Ministry of Education, the Integra Foundation and the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation. The Department of Health Statistics and Information, the Ministry of Health and the National Indigenous Development Corporation provided information.

Just over half of Chile's population are women and 36% of national households have children under the age of nine. In Chile, there is a marked decrease in the birth rate: from 27.4 in 1972 to 14.9 in 2005, and in the infant mortality rate: from 72.7 to 7.9. Since 1970 there has been an increase in the proportion of adults 60 years and older, and in the segment of 15-59 year-olds, but the younger population (from birth to age 14) has decreased instead. The rural population accounts for 13% (with more men than women) of the total population and has been declining since 1970 (24%). The indigenous population represents 4.6% of the total population, and 14.6% of them are children under the age of nine. Around 62.8% of the indigenous population lives in urban areas, and 15.6% of the rural indigenous population is under the age of nine.

The national total population younger than nine living in poverty is 21%, and 5% live in extreme poverty. This paper addresses factors related to poverty, paid work, household characteristics (national, indigenous and rural), household head (increasing female-headed homes), education, and use and management of the native language. Education is evaluated in terms of a description of the service provided (with a predominance of single-teacher schools in rural areas), the rates in education (age of entry, increased coverage, enrollment and attendance, education and literacy, learning achievement).

Finally, it explores the history of educational agents reviewing the proportion of educational agents per children. There are regulations that establish the ratio of the appropriate number of children per adult.

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

The paper reviews public policies in education for children under the age of nine from the perspective of various stakeholders involved: family, community and educators. A legal

characterization of indigenous peoples is performed, indigenous and rural are defined, and an assessment of the public agenda in indigenous affairs and the legal, policy and curriculum framework for early childhood education is made.

The document revises public structures involved, listing public policy decisions since 1990: "Goals and lines of action for children. Commitments to Chilean children for the decade," in 1992, then the "National Policy for Children and Adolescents 2001-2010," and "Chile Grows with You" in 2006.

The two major public policies for the care of families and children for the most vulnerable sectors of Chile are "Chile Solidario" and "Chile Grows with You." The first corresponds to a Social Protection System, and the second to an Early Childhood Comprehensive Protection System, which supports children from conception through the age of four.

An analysis of the institutional structure and early childhood education programs in the public sector, service coverage and budgetary framework is provided. The paper also reflects on aspects of quality education with emphasis on indigenous education, targeting criteria and benefits offered. A summary of the programs and modalities of early childhood care and education for indigenous and rural populations developed by the Ministry of Education, JUNJI and INTEGRA Foundation is provided. The document reviews the implementation of the intercultural curriculum in early childhood education, examines family involvement and inter-sectoral coordination, and vocational education teachers who work with children under the age of nine that live in rural and indigenous communities.

Elements of reflection and pending tasks

The Central Government intends to support processes of educational transition (family, education system), including the positioning, respect and visibility of the indigenous communities and their culture. There is an improved coverage, but the urban environment is still better than the rural one. The aim is to continue improving the quality of educational provision for rural and indigenous communities.

Even though there is a joint program between initial and basic education, other programs need to articulate the knowledge and indigenous cultural content from nursery education to basic education in order to strengthen this link from the same educational system. The issue of language is more complex, and more systematic efforts are needed to make it a continuum from preschool to primary school, which also requires a larger budget and implementation by the State.

It is important to empower families to support the transition process, particularly in the indigenous areas, and find joint strategies between the supply of national public policy and the comprehensive work for children, their families and communities.

To ensure the quality and effectiveness of non-conventional programs, it is necessary to establish basic training requirements: monitoring, supervision, evaluation, and homogenizing the quality of learning and achieving objectives. It is also important to broaden the perspective of intercultural bilingual education to all early education programs and encourage from the Ministry of Education tasks that would allow to: stimulate bilingual teacher training, development of teaching materials adapted linguistically, distribution of textbooks contextualized and conduct a study on best practices for IBE Original Schools.

The main challenge for early childhood education is to open new Intercultural Centers and develop an Intercultural Curriculum for Preschool Education.

Chapter IV. PERU REPORT

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

The document defines *rural population* as "those areas with no more than 100 homes contiguously-located, nor are district capitals, or that having more than 100 homes, they are scattered or dispersed without forming blocks or cores." The *indigenous population* is defined as "those who descended from populations that inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest, while it was a colony, or during the establishment of present state boundaries, and who regardless of their legal status retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions or part of them."

There is no adequate statistical record to register separately the indigenous population; therefore, in the paper they are reported as part of the rural population. According to the 2005 census, the rural population accounted for 26% of the total population of Peru. There are no adequate statistics disaggregated for the children between the ages of zero and eight.

The study presents an overview of the various scenarios that might influence children's educational transitions and girls from rural, indigenous and border areas: availability of resources and capabilities to accompany educational transitions (parents' education level) and to ensure survival, welfare and child development.

It analyzes educational services in rural areas: in 2006 the enrollment of children in the zero-to-five age range was nearly 39% and coverage was nearly 97%. Educational coverage for children under the age of three is minimal: 4% nationally, and 1.6% in rural areas. In the case of children between the ages of three and five, the overall coverage is 44.8%, with a gap of 20 percentage points in urban areas. According to the 1993 census, only 10.46% of children between five and eight years attended an educational service.

It is necessary to review the characteristics of programs for rural children, the capacities of teachers to accompany learning processes, availability of adequate resources (bilingual teachers who do not work in bilingual schools), and their impact on educational transitions regarding children's entry, permanence and progress. Finally, the achievements of rural children in relation to early childhood education are examined.

Conclusions

It is necessary to refine the mechanisms and instruments for registration of rural, indigenous, three-and-under populations. The effectiveness of early education decreases as poverty deepens.

The family is a key space for the development of children living in poverty since it may help reduce mortality, increase child survival and improve attitudes and behaviors. Still, no improvements were found in the nutrition of pregnant mothers, creating risks on them and their babies in uterus. The low level of education and families' income has a negative effect on their

ability to accompany the educational process of their children. Domestic violence also acts as a hindering factor for socio-emotional development and child safety.

Some indications point to the low quality of education in rural and indigenous areas:

- Schools in rural areas have fewer services, materials and good teachers.
- Five-year-old children are enrolled very early in first primary grades, contributing to higher repetition and dropout rates, since they are not ready to meet the planned learning for this study cycle. There are great differences unfavorable to schools in rural areas (9%), appearing more frequently in public schools (7.7), multigrade schools (10.8) and single-teacher schools (13.2).
- The results of the 2004 evaluation revealed that only 15% achieved the expected skills of reading comprehension and 9.6% in mathematics, nationwide. This is aggravated in rural areas, where only 2.5% achieve skills in reading comprehension and 2.4% in mathematics.

To reverse the current situation requires political will to expand health care coverage at the initial level to allow for continuity in the system with emphasis on equity and quality of education services and enhanced teacher preparation. The problem of children at risk is a national one that concerns us all, not only their families.

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

The study analyzes the quality and equity of education in Peru, and how these elements are handled in public policy education. It reviews government's goals and commitments, the coordination between the different educational levels and policy guidelines; and educational policies in the transition process, participation as a coordination mechanism, bilingual intercultural education and inter-sectorality. Finally, the document analyzes public policies conducive to the development of children and reviews the programs for children: from zero to two years, three to five, and six to eight.

Conclusions

Quality and equity in education are two important pillars for the coordination between the policy priorities established by the Education sector in the Pesem 2007 – 2011, and the 2021 National Educational Project.

In terms of educational coverage, Pesem establishes a 16% increase to the initial level, aiming at achieving 73.7% coverage. This indicator does not specify targets in detail by age group (children under the age of three are the least attended) or geographic area (children in rural and indigenous areas are least likely to have educational services). The Ministry of Education has projected that by the year 2011, a 48% increase in the budget per pupil of the initial level (US$ 224 to US$ 437.5 per child) will be achieved. For the population in the three-to-five year age range living in rural areas, the Ministry of Education establishes an increase of 7.23% (0.11% to 7.34%) of children served in programs IBE.

Coordination as external mechanism that contributes to the processes of transition between educational levels, is widely recognized within the system. Having an integrated and diversified national curricular design does not guarantee the occurrence of efficient processes of

coordination between levels. To fulfill the mandates of education policy requires efficient management of the education system, enabling participation, and efficient use of available resources, intersectoral action and training of a committed team. Although all policy documents mention the need for early childhood education intersectoral action, there are gaps that hinder cross-cutting initiatives.

At present, and in the country's current situation, the action of organized civil society plays an important role in the incorporation of childhood issues (in rural areas) on the public agenda of local governments. However, there is still a need to improve mechanisms of coordination and communication among the initiatives of civil society and government bodies to ensure complementarity of actions and optimize use of available resources. Peru has favorable policies for early childhood, especially for those living in rural and indigenous contexts, and to promote successful transition process, but must improve the functioning of the mechanisms and ways to implement them,.

Chapter V. VENEZUELA REPORT

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

The study is organized around variables of education related to child development in school, and characteristics of the educational agents and the family setting. The described educational variables include the age at school entry, repetition, and desertion, among other things.

According to the 2001 national census, 2.2% of the population in Venezuela (a quarter of a million) is recognized as indigenous. Around 96.2% are in nine of the 23 federal entities, away from the centers where communications and services are concentrated and therefore the most needed. About 34% of the indigenous people live in rural areas. Repetition in basic education has declined over the past three years, although it is still highest in the 1st and 7th grades.

Early childhood education focuses on the ages between four and six (85% of care), while only 21% of the zero-to-three population receives specialized care. About 94% of basic school children between the ages of seven and eight are cared for, 91.9% between five and six are attended, but care for children from zero to three remains stagnated.

About 99% of enrollment at the preschool level is publicly owned. Indigenous communities of difficult access are dominated by religious missions as service providers to children. Around 40% of indigenous peoples have lost their native language—60% speak theirs—a situation related to the proximity of indigenous peoples to urban areas.

The State is making efforts to strengthen and revitalize languages and cultures, but the Castilian influence and domination prevails. The study reviews the level of teacher training in early education, teacher’s working conditions and years of work experience. It presents a characterization of the rural and indigenous families, in their organization, educational level and socioeconomic status.

Finally, there is a brief reflection on the evolution of the Human Development Index (HDI) in Venezuela, showing that Venezuela went from medium-high to high human development.

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

The study reviews transition policies, mechanisms and/or programs, and analyzes early childhood policies and how transitions are conceptualized in these policies, including addressing aspects such as quality, equity and coverage. Legislative bodies nationally and internationally involved in the transition policies are assessed, separately analyzing the political forces involved.

The paper also reviews the mechanisms and legal elements that secure the rights of minorities (indigenous and child population). It analyzes the advances and limitations in public policy and transition programs for children from zero to eight years, the policy emphasis on equity, ethnicity and location, promotion and implementation of programs, and services and the monitoring of these public policies. It also explores the processes and targeting criteria, work and family involvement, adult education, material support, follow-up, and monitoring and financing of services (Mercal Mission, Mothers of the Barrio Mission, Mother Project, Barrio Adentro Mission, Vuelvan Caras Mission, Guaicaipuro Mission).

A review of the school curriculum, the implementation plan, teacher training, follow-up and monitoring and financing of services is presented. The review looks at the intersectoral coordination, the impact of research in transitions policy and evaluates the development of policies related to transitions.

Final Thoughts

Much remains to be done on the processes of educational transition. Venezuela has made progress in legislation, legitimacy of leadership and empowerment of the indigenous population, but the challenge of coverage in early schooling and the creation of appropriate conditions to tune the patterns of parenting and home schooling (Westernized) remain. There is no improvement in school continuation rates, probably due to the precarious conditions in which public schools operate in Venezuela.

There is a positive legislation and also governance mechanisms that strengthen the presence of indigenous traits in the country, but there is a lack of accompaniment of specific programs to help the communities become less dependent in the political decisions of each government. The Decree and Project “Renewing Basic, Rural and Border School” presents a set of proposals to solve many of the weaknesses of the rural and border environment. It is important to create an indigenous-friendly model school, suitable to the ethnic, rural and border populations’ conditions that define a long-range policy for inclusive schooling.

Chapter VI. BRAZIL REPORT

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Indigenous and Rural Children. Statistical Analysis of Public Policies in Education in Rural and Indigenous Communities in Brazil

The document presents an overview of the socio-demographic profile of indigenous and rural populations. In the 1991 census, through a process of "self-identification," the indigenous

population of Brazil was at 0.2%; in year 2000, 0.4% of the total population was self-declared indigenous. This increase is not necessarily related to population growth, but rather to the decision of the citizens to declare (or not declare) themselves as indigenous.

The average age of the indigenous population is 23.2 years, in urban areas it is 30.1, and in rural areas it is 16.8 years. Rural children between zero and three years of age are nearly double those between the ages of four and five.

Education indicators are also reviewed: existing statistics on indigenous schooling, taking into account socio-cultural diversity, the characteristics of indigenous schools, and feedback from the school census in terms of number of indigenous schools, number of teachers, level of training, and school enrollment. According to Presidential Decree 26/91, in coordination with the secretariats of state and municipal education, the Ministry of Education has implemented a national policy on indigenous schooling. Indigenous teacher education is one of the priorities and the major challenge of this administration, as there is no one national indigenous school model.

Indigenous populations are distributed in 12.5% of the country, but 60% is concentrated in the Legal Amazon region. Over 50% of indigenous peoples are made up of less than 500 people.

In 1999, the National Board of Education instituted the creation of the category of Indigenous school education systems in the country. However, existing schools in the villages have different situations regarding the legal recognition, and it is not known which schools are recognized as indigenous and which are not. To improve this situation, a census was conducted in 2005, which provided an initial overview on the situation of indigenous school education in Brazil. Through this census it was found that 14.6% of teachers working in indigenous schools are in centers and pre-schools, 9.9% did not finish basic education, 64.8% completed secondary education, and 13.2% have university education.

The paper presents an educational and infrastructure characterization of indigenous schools, considering the use of the local language, teaching materials, the school's physical structure (buildings), existing divisions in indigenous schools, and literacy rates.

Analysis and Conclusions

The increase in the number of indigenous schools, which rose from 1,392 in 1999 to 2,323 in 2005, and reached a total of 2,422 in 2006, is explained not only by the creation of new schools—which certainly occurred in this period—but also for the regularization of a large number of schools and classrooms that were not previously recognized as indigenous. In many States, the indigenous school category was created as autonomous units within the education system and thereby regularized the status of many schools located in indigenous lands, once considered only as an extension classrooms in other schools.

The Department of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity (SECAD/MEC), along with the secretariats of state and municipal education, the Union of Municipal Education Leaders (UNDIME) and the National Council of State Secretaries of Education, have sought to expand the supply and quality of school education in indigenous communities (indigenous teacher training, construction, reform and expansion of Indigenous schools, etc.). The General Coordination of Education has spent the past four years in coordination with the General Coordination of Indigenous School Education for teacher training, and has ensured the functioning of countless indigenous teaching courses.

The population growth rate of most indigenous peoples of Brazil is closer to 40% (while the national average is 1.4%). Although there is a tendency to make State schools, in percentage terms, indigenous schools linked to the municipalities account for over half the total, 52.4%. The recognition of schools as indigenous also explains the significant increase in the number of indigenous students that, in five years, increased almost 50%. Between 1999 and 2005, there was an increase in enrollment in kindergarten and in care centers: in 1999 there were 7,584 registrations whereas in 2005, there were 18,114.

Data from the INEP MEC School Census 2006 indicate that the supply of indigenous school education increased by 48.7% in the last four years. These numbers indicate that from 2002, the annual increase in indigenous school tuition is approaching the rate of 10% per year.

Despite the progress made in recent years by indigenous peoples regarding the right to an intercultural education, it still requires much attention in terms of practice in the classroom, training of indigenous teachers, and production of materials, such that schools that are on indigenous lands may offer differentiated quality instruction that values the language and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples. Censuses indicate that indigenous peoples saw great progress in education indicators over the 1990s, but still are below average regarding general population.

The 2000 census indicates that the indigenous infant mortality (51.4 per thousand live births) was much higher than that of the general Brazilian population (30.1 per thousand). Indigenous infant mortality also presents a geographical distribution different from that observed for the population as a whole, and is higher in those living in urban areas (52.2 per thousand) than in rural areas (47.0 per thousand), quite the contrary of the general population.

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Rural and Indigenous Communities.
Public Policies in Education for Rural, Indigenous and Border Communities in Brazil: Successes and Challenges

In this section the study reviews the existing legislation, early childhood education and indigenous school education. For at least 30 years there have been initiatives, decrees and political mobilization aimed at the recognition of rights for indigenous peoples. The Magna Carta assured indigenous peoples the right to use their native languages and their own processes of learning, respect and protection of their values and cultural events. There have been major advances in the field of management of indigenous school education programs in recent years.

The paper analyzes public policies for children's education, inter-sectoral coordination, ethno-educational territories and the Curriculum Implementation Plan. Early Childhood Education Policy is based on different legal documents recognizing children as subjects of law (right holders) and emphasize the role of the state as a duty, through the family. Enrolment in kindergarten is not compulsory, it is the family's decision, but the state is nonetheless obligated to provide the service. There are various bodies (organizations and social movements) that monitor government actions in the area of early childhood.

Lastly, it provides a list of articles and legal guidelines regarding early childhood education, and discusses the role that the Ministry of Education proposes to define a national policy for child education in the field.

Chapter VII. CONCLUSIONS

All of the countries participating in the study showed interest in addressing the issues related to vulnerable populations, specifically in relation to indigenous children in rural and border communities. Although there are clear laws, there is no specific approach on transitions, and therefore a large amount of information, resources and monitoring mechanisms on the transition process cannot be easily specified. "In all countries the coverage of early education services is low and is concentrated in urban areas and high income groups." "Border communities" is not territorially defined and there is no accurate census on this.

Generally speaking, from the analysis of statistics and policies we may conclude that the countries included in this study have made significant progress in providing care for children under the age of six, in reducing dropout and repetition rates in the early years of basic education, and in enhancing the visibility of indigenous groups, among others. Yet progress to date still appears inadequate and early childhood education and care is still failing to reach large numbers of children among the most vulnerable population.

With some differing shades of emphasis, the national governments of all these countries have shown a determination to support education transition processes, and to assist in the experience of transition from family into the education system; in particular with respect to valuing people's original culture, with concern for the positioning and visibility of indigenous communities and their culture in the education field.

The reports highlight the fact that despite having a good legislation, transitions are not detailed; rather they are included as a component referred to the coordination of the passage from pre-school to elementary school from an institutional point of view, without comprehensively addressing the issue of transitions from the home to the educational system. There are no established mechanisms or resources to carry out processes accompanying transitions.

This situation can be reversed, but it will take political will to expand the coverage of early childhood education in ways that will allow continuity in the system while stressing equity and quality in the services offered. Better preparation for teachers, in terms of contents and methodological strategies, would allow them to sequence learning and articulate classes, cycles and educational levels more effectively. Furthermore, we are beginning to understand that the problems of at-risk children are not confined to the private sphere (the family), but are becoming a national problem that engage us all.

In all countries coverage of early education services is low, and is concentrated in urban areas and high income groups. All are far from achieving educational indexes than can break the poverty cycle. It is necessary to encourage government investment in this phase of training.

Children's possibilities of receiving support from their families in rural and indigenous areas are not sufficient to protect them against the effects of poverty. Thus, these children start their schooling in a disadvantaged situation, compared to non-poor children from urban areas, which widens the gap. Schools are not responding to the particular needs of these groups, nor are they comfortable enough to contribute with families in the development of their children.

There is also a need to strengthen strategies within early childhood programs in order to empower families in the support they can provide to the transition process experienced by the preschooler upon entering the basic education system, especially in the indigenous world.

Although all the policy documents on early childhood care and education mention the need for intersectoral action, there are gaps that impede intersectoral initiatives, such as: the lack of standardized basic criteria for the functioning, continuity and complementarity of programs, the lack of mechanisms for integrating information and the impossibility of reconciling the data collected from each sector, which prevents the establishment of priorities and goals. As a result, budgets are frequently "cloned" from year to year, strategies are repeated without any demonstration of their impact, there is no comprehensive overview of operations, and there is inadequate targeting with the attendant leakages (where funds go to those who should not receive them). Additionally, there are attitudinal problems on the part of the programs' final operators. These aspects are part and parcel of the problems of equity and of access to early childhood programs.

To guarantee the quality and effectiveness of non-conventional programs, there are certain basic requirements in terms of training—monitoring, supervision, evaluation etc.—that will serve to standardize the quality of the learning and the objectives to be achieved. Reality shows us that having an integrated and diversified national curricular design is in itself no guarantee of efficient articulation between the levels.

Among the tasks that must be addressed with indigenous groups is that of providing indigenous language instruction in their respective institutions; designing and preparing programs of study and teaching materials suited to the idiosyncrasies of the communities; distributing textbooks adapted to the cultures; initial and continuous training for indigenous teachers at the intermediate level; training for indigenous teachers at the higher education level; political and pedagogical support for teaching systems to expand the availability of schooling in indigenous lands; better diagnostic assessments of education in indigenous communities; and dissemination of indigenous cultures among the rest of the population.

To achieve the mandates of education policy and the targets that the sector has set for itself (in terms of early childhood education and care) will require efficient management of the education system. This implies active participation by the various stakeholder entities, adequate funding for implementing policies, efficiency and transparency in the use of resources, intersectoral action to ensure a comprehensive approach, and a human resources team that is committed and performs its functions at a high level. In general terms, with respect to the coordination process, it would be well to adopt strategies to articulate the different spheres of national public policy for integral attention and work with children, their families and community.

Organized civil society has an important role to play in incorporating early childhood problems (in rural areas) into the agenda of local governments. However, the mechanisms of articulation and communication between initiatives of civil society (NGOs, universities etc.) and government agencies (national, regional and local) need to be improved in order to achieve complementarity and optimize the use of available resources.

With respect to specific aspects we may conclude:

- There is great inequity in these countries, and it affects above all people living in rural, indigenous and border communities.

- The indigenous populations in these countries represent a small proportion of the total (3.43% in Colombia, 4.6% in Chile, 2.2% in Venezuela, and 0.2% in Brazil, while in Peru they are submerged in the statistics for the rural population, which is 26%), yet they bear the heaviest burdens.
- Family poverty means that children are undernourished, their parents devote little time or attention to them, are unaware of adequate stimuli (quality of care), and attach low priority to preschool education, nutritional conditions for pregnant and nursing mothers are inadequate. Furthermore, domestic violence is widespread, and women who are heads of household are overwhelmed by their responsibilities. In other words, families do not have the resources and the capacity to monitor educational transitions.
- Chile has the best record, not only because it has made a significant dent in poverty indices but also because it has achieved broad coverage in early childhood education and care for the most vulnerable groups, having reduced the illiteracy rate to 3.9% and increased the average length of schooling to ten years. Nonetheless, Chile still has a very inequitable pattern of wealth distribution (and this is true *a fortiori* in the other countries).
- All countries have established policies, programs and activities for early childhood education and care. Yet actions fall far short of policy guidelines and program targets.
- Generally speaking, national statistics on specific aspects (morbidity and mortality, vaccination systems, HIV/AIDS infection, disabilities, malnutrition, civil registry, child labor, mistreatment etc.) do not contain disaggregated data for rural, indigenous and border populations. However, recognizing that marginalization is greatest among these population groups, we may expect that their maternal and child mortality indices are significant.
- Early childhood care and education is better than before, but still insufficient.
- Rural schools are at a disadvantage in comparison with urban schools.
- The highest repetition rates are in basic education, especially in the first three grades.
- The education problem must be given greater visibility, particularly for rural and border populations, and this means refining the mechanisms and instruments for recording information to make sure they cover this population, including children under the age of three.
- Thanks to policies and programs aimed at keeping children in school, dropout rates are declining, but they are still high among the most vulnerable population groups.
- While the provision of preschool services for children three years and older has improved, they are still rare in rural, indigenous and border communities. The poorest and most disadvantaged children in rural and indigenous areas have no access to early childhood education and care programs, and yet these are the groups with the greatest needs in terms of health, nutrition and cognitive development.
- The available indicators show that a high percentage of indigenous groups have lost their native tongue or use it only within the family, and occasionally in closed communities.

- Five-year-olds are being enrolled too early in the first grades of primary school, a factor that contributes to high repetition and dropout rates because their stage of development is not sufficient to master the learning required for this cycle of study.
- Instruction is of low quality and teachers do little monitoring of their students (student performance is poorest in the public schools, and worse yet in rural public schools).
- Education programs need to be made more attractive and more child-friendly.
- Teachers need greater skill in monitoring children's learning and transitions.

Introduction

The impoverishment of societies is intimately linked with the care they provide to children in their first years of life. Yet economic analyses of poverty frequently fail to take into account this close connection with childhood. Historically, social policies have focused on poverty and how to overcome it, giving the issue political, cultural and social legitimacy in terms of preparing rules and regulations, but they have done little to address the situation of marginalized or impoverished children.

On par with the international declarations of recent years, the situation of early childhood has become more visible in Latin America with regards to the definition of policies, and the implementation of plans and programs for protection, care and education aimed at children under the age of eight. Yet many children in numerous sectors are still denied the minimum conditions of protection, care and education essential for the development of their potential and capabilities.[2] This marginalization is more acute in the case of rural, indigenous and border population groups, where living conditions are often difficult and childhood ranks low on the list of priority issues for the State and families.

According to UNESCO, early childhood education provides the opportunity to compensate as early as possible for a child's disadvantaged situation, thereby ensuring better results in his or her subsequent academic career. "*The fact of participating or not in an education program marks the difference in subsequent academic performance, in employment opportunities, and in greater productivity, which can help to compensate for situations of disadvantage and to reduce socioeconomic inequalities*."[3]

The progressive globalization of preschool education reflects the recognition of the importance of providing comprehensive attention to young children toward the development of their abilities and their subsequent social integration.[4] There is evidence to indicate that the first years of life are essential for development, and that participation in preschool education programs yields substantial benefits throughout life, both in terms of progress and academic performance, as well as in long-term social integration (Aguado et al. 2006).

With respect to the importance of education as a factor that influences childhood development, many studies have recognized it as the driving force and the fundamental factor for children's development and for overcoming poverty. [5]

To track the changes that children experience as they move from one educational experience to another is a very complex task, as these changes involve various players and scenarios. When children move from the home to their first school experience, the transition

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[2] According to Aguado et al (2006), the Human Development and Capacity approach proposed by Sen (1998a, 1998b and 1999) recognizes the importance of providing children with certain basic assets (such as nutrition, schooling and education for mothers) that will give them access to economic opportunities and can expand their future options.
[3] ORALEC/UNESCO, Síntesis regional de indicadores de la Primera Infancia, Santiago, Chile, 2004.
[4] ECLAC, 2006
[5] The World Bank, in its study "The Dividends of Learning" (1990), offers a triple economic justification for the design and implementation of pro-education policies:: (i) investment in education is complementary to other investments; (ii) the marginal economic returns from investment in education, as measured by productivity and income, are generally higher than those for investments in physical capital (infrastructure for example); (iii) education gives people the opportunity to become more productive, escape poverty, and improve the quality of their lives.

becomes a daily and permanent relationship because the home and school experiences take place simultaneously. This is in contrast to the move from preschool to primary school, in which the environments and people involved are generally different, constituting a transition in the strict sense.

In the initial documents prepared for this study, *Transitions* were defined as "critical moments of change that children experience when moving from one environment to another, opening opportunities for their human development and their learning for life and school." These critical changes may lead to unsuccessful transitions for boys and girls, and as a result this is a particularly high risk in the case of vulnerable groups such as rural, indigenous and border communities.

As studies in the participating countries have advanced, the phenomenon can now be presented in a more complex manner; not only through the data available for each country but also through the concepts gathered, both from direct sources and the publications of researchers who have conducted broad researches of international sources.

Indigenous communities, the inhabitants of border zones, and rural communities have a particular historical background and context, which require an ethnically oriented education that reflects the worldviews of those communities.

People who live in border areas constitute a diverse population segment, with one particular feature that has a direct impact on their notions of identity: that is their constant movement across borders with neighboring countries. Border zones have a fluid economic, social and cultural relationship with bordering countries, which gives them a sense of regional identity independent of the dividing line between countries.

Rural communities are another vulnerable population group, needing opportunities to cope with economic changes and to improve their quality of life as a means of reducing their exodus to the cities. Rural communities need relevant educational alternatives that take into account their geographic, social and cultural characteristics, in order to bring the school and the community closer together and reduce the division between city and countryside.

The topic of transitions as applied to these groups is of great educational and social importance, because school repetition and drop out rates are alarmingly high, especially at points of passage from one environment to another: from the home to school, or from one grade to another. The following chapter delves deeper into the concept of transitions and the aspects associated with it.

Chapter I. CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

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Conceptual Definitions of Transitions

As noted above, the initial documents that gave rise to this book defined *transitions* as critical moments of change that children experience as they move from one environment to another, opening opportunities for their human development and their learning for life and school. As studies in the participating countries have advanced, the phenomenon can now be presented in a more complex manner, not only through the data available for each country but also through the concepts gathered, both from direct sources and from the publications of researchers who have conducted broad searches of international sources.

Sacristan (1997) and Bennett (2006), for example, consider that the "changes" that take place in this move from one environment to another can be seen as conflicts that open opportunities for enrichment, and as occasions for children to absorb stimuli and "cultural capital" that will offer opportunities for "growth," provided the conditions are such as to ensure that these transitions occur satisfactorily.

With respect to these "favorable conditions" for educational transition, UNESCO publications refer to the concept of "educability," noting the existence of "*conditions of educability,*" and highlighting the inter-relations that must exist between families and schools with respect to the provision of resources and opportunities that will help to keep children in the education system.[6] The notion of educability bears a certain relationship to the thinking of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, which identifies two angles in the establishment of transitions that could condition their success: on one hand, there are structural and systemic factors (conditions of educability linked to the education system) that exclude children from schools, and on the other, the strengths and weaknesses that children bring with them (conditions of educability originating in the family).

"The idea of educability refers not to the capacity to learn but to the capacity to participate in the formal education process and in this way to obtain a basic education that defines the horizon of equity in education systems."[7]

At a working meeting in Santiago, Chile, Peralta presented the event's central topic: "Transitions in the Care of Children: A Framework for Addressing the Issue of Quality".[8] There, she presented some important contributions to the issue, which are repeated here in detail, for they constitute one of the basic points of reference for the countries participating in the study.

In analyzing the transitions that children go through, it is important to refer to some of the basic propositions on this issue, such as: to define and identify the processes associated with transitions and the manner in which they must be viewed (as a problem or an opportunity), ways of facilitating those that can be "successful" or positive for children, and the relationship between socio-cultural realities and the different types of transitions.

We may distinguish two types of transitions: the first occur within the family-social space. As such, they expand from smaller to broader circles, and depend on the family for their childhood behavioral patterns, rules etc. The second are transitions from the family environment

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[6] López, N. (2005). *"Equidad educativa y desigualdad social. Desafíos a la educación en el nuevo escenario latinoamericano"* Iipe – UNESCO, Argentina

[7] Néstor, L. (2005). "*Equidad educativa y desigualdad social*".

[8] Peralta, M. V. (2007). "Transiciones en la atención a los niños y niñas: un marco para abordar el tema de la calidad", project working document presented in Santiago, Chile, June 20 – 23.

to some external institution, and can vary greatly. The moment of change depends on factors such as the family and/or the mother's occupational status, the family's economic situation, child-rearing practices, beliefs about the age at which children should be placed in an external institution, legislation on postnatal care, day care center rights, knowledge and appreciation of the contribution of early childhood education (ECE), its physical and economic accessibility, quality of available ECE, and the social demands for "preparedness" for entry into primary or basic education.

There exist yet another type of transitions that are intra-institutional: these may occur within the same type of formal or non-formal program when the child switches from one level or caregiver to another (e.g. from nursery school to kindergarten or preschool), or between different programs, be they formal, non-formal, or from one to the other.

The transition that has been most closely studied is that from the final level of preschool to primary education. There can be many variables to this type of transition, generally depending on the quality of education offered at the two levels, the existing cultural-educational transitions, and the clarity with which these transition situations are identified.

In considering the social and cultural context, there are a number of external and internal factors that affect transitions. Among the first are those linked to emotional development: basic trust, security, self-esteem, resilience, repertoire of adaptive strategies, and attitudes toward change. In relation to cognitive development, the following stands out: knowledge of the new surroundings, and abilities to interpret other codes (emotional, cognitive, and linguistic). With respect to external factors, which we may also call articulating factors, we have the following: emotional support, the capacity to promote children's strengths, the nuclear family's attitude toward change, activities to prepare for new situations, support in dealing with new situations, the definition of situations of continuity, progression and differentiation, identification of achievable new states, and control over conditions of accessibility.

Transitions from the family circle to an immediate social circle depend on the family's child-rearing subsystem, which is an important part of the process of instilling culture and values. Both aspects determine the environments or thresholds where children must participate, and how they will do so. There are traditional approaches, as well as others that are more open to facilitating the transition.

Transitions within ECE programs are facilitated by a shared educational vision, expressed in certain common codes and ways of acting by people who interact with children; through careful planning of learning and its articulations, avoiding repetitions or "leaps," and adopting shared strategies. Transitions from the initial to the primary level are seen as problematic in all continents, systems, programs and traditions. One explanation for this may lie in the very distinct practices at the two levels and/or opposing types of teacher training.

For Peralta (2007), transition implies a *process* in which we may distinguish three sub-processes: continuity, progression and differentiation, giving the impression of interrelationship and, at certain points, of sequence. She notes that "each of them plays a role in the move to the new state. One gives stability while the second complicates the achievement, and the third offers the change to be achieved."[9] The author also indicates that we must add to these internal sub-

[9] Peralta, M. V. (2007). "Transiciones en Educación Infantil: Un marco para abordar el tema de la calidad". Working document. Washington, DC

processes (which the person constructs internally) the concept of coordination, as an external mechanism that serves to link each new stage reached.

With respect to the internal character of transitions, an important contribution from the Bernard van Leer foundation refers to the need to consider how children evolve in these processes of change, and the personal singularities that will establish qualitative differences in the way each child addresses and experiences his or her "critical moments of change."

Peralta also establishes a relationship with the *quality* of the educational service offered, insisting that this is a fundamental factor that can make for a successful (or satisfactory) transition through the application of such criteria as: acceptance and respect for the child; the child's role in his or her own learning; the involvement of families in curriculum development; cultural relevance, emotional and cognitive interactions of quality, and flexibility.[10]

In this sense, the authors allude to the "conditions of educability" as the provision of resources and opportunities for children to enter and remain in the educational system. For this they will hopefully have an optimal physical and mental structure (generally provided by the family) and a favorable education setting that allows them gradually to reach more complex levels of thinking, and to achieve the learning successes expected for their age and maturity level (generally provided by the educational system).

The definition of transitions in the context of this project seeks to specify the qualification of "successful" on the basis of indicators relating to children's entry and retention in the educational system, which should have a favorable impact on learning in their cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions that will equip them with tools for integrating and adapting themselves readily to changing spaces throughout their lives.[11]

To speak of satisfactory educational transitions not only implies the existence of education services that provide for continuity between levels, but also poses the basic question of whether that continuity contributes to reversing school failure.

In today's educational continuum there is a very important question as to how much early childhood education contributes to developing the skills needed to perform "successfully" in the future, and how the conditions of adversity that surround a child may limit the full development of his or her potential. This may also be associated with environmental issues such as sanitation conditions, or the child's state of health or nutrition, among other things.

The conceptual framework adopted here starts from a broad vision of human development. Taking up the argument of Alvarado, 2008, this study will treat transitions as an aspect that cannot be divorced from a comprehensive concept of children's human development, understanding this as the process of constituting a child's subjectivity and identity through socialization.[12]

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[10] Idem.

[11] The report from the Washington meeting (December 2007), addressing the question "what is transition?", notes that the variables to be taken into account in defining transition relate to keeping the child in the education system, avoiding school failure, evaluating learning achievements, and promoting a process that is satisfactory for the child.

[12] Alvarado, S. V. (2008). *Socialización política de los niños y las niñas en edad preescolar, formación de valores y procesos de participación infantil*. Paper presented at a world forum on early childhood education in Monterrey, 2008. Manizales: Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Niñez y Juventud de la alianza CINDE-Universidad de Manizales.

Human development is in this sense "an active process by which the child constitutes him or herself in his or her individual and social dimensions, which he or she does through daily interactions with his or her surroundings. To become a subject implies for the child achieving an awareness of him or herself and of his or her daily surroundings, and taking a position on the ways of ordering and organizing day-to-day life in common" (Alvarado, S. V. & Ospina, H., 2005, 2006).

In a document that is also part of the general project on "*Trends in transition policies in indigenous, rural and border communities*," there is a synthesis of the research propositions of Sara Victoria Alvarado with respect to this perspective of human development, a portion of which is incorporated into this study.[13] Human development understood in this way recognizes people as situated in their contexts, and includes the different dimensions of their constitution—physical, emotional, cognitive, communicative, ethical and moral, social and political—which define a dynamic process that involves continuous rebalancing.

This perspective stresses the importance of "strengthening the emotional, communicative, creative, ethical, moral, and political potential of children and young people, which allows them to constitute and position themselves in the world, construct shared meanings, organize themselves as a "we" capable of transforming subjective and objective reality through their participation in common projects, in conflictive contexts and practices in which each can recognize others as legitimate adversaries, with their own face and voice. In this respect, plurality, like equality and distinction, in Fraser's terms (2003), is played out in a permanent dialectic between what people have in common and what differentiates them, between those things on which consensus can be reached and those on which dissent and argument will persist."[14]

As is clear from this perspective, "transition processes cannot be divorced from the multiple dimensions of the child's development. For this reason, educational environments, agents and their practices must respond to the potential for constructing the subjectivity that is present in children so they can build an identity as distinct from others (the sense of 'otherness') that will be different and empowering. In this sense, transitions constitute challenges for children, which they must face in the midst of the conflict sparked by the many changes they are called to make as an inherent condition of the transits and transformations of human beings in the course of their lives."[15]

Researcher Rocio Abello (2008) offered a careful documentary tracking the issue of transitions to which we shall make extensive reference here, in order to enrich the perspective of this study. According to her, transitions are problematic primarily because of the different contexts through which children pass—the home to preschool, and preschool to primary school—where the discontinuities between the two environments are accentuated. This means that children, schools and families alike must be prepared for the process, anticipating the required articulations. It also means that each must recognize the expectations of others, so that both vertical and horizontal articulations will be possible.[16]

From a human development perspective, it is important to examine the construction of the normative constraint in the child and ask oneself: how do children put into operation their

[13] Alvarado, S. V., Suárez, M. & Pedraza, D. *Tendencias de las políticas de transición en comunidades indígenas, rurales y de frontera,* Estudio Cualitativo Caso Colombia, Segundo Informe de Avance
[14] Idem, p. 8
[15] Idem, p. 9.
[16] Abello, pp. 5-11.

capacity for learning to learn within the broad framework of principles of human development? Do horizontal and vertical articulations have an impact on children? (Abello, 2008).

Abello (2008), quoting Fabian and Dunlop (2006) in works from 2002 and 2005, defines transition as "the process of change that children make from one setting or phase of education to another over time." Changes of relationship, teaching style, environment, space, time, learning contexts, and learning it, combine at moments of transition to make intense and accelerated demands. Change can bring the opportunity to learn new things, but it can also bring an element of apprehension of the unknown "that can cause confusion and anxiety, leaving an impression that may still affect behavior many years later."

Consequently, addressing transitions conscientiously requires a coordinated effort by the family, school, community and other local institutions. Citing Kagan, Carroll, Comer and Scott-Little (2006), Abello states that "transitions require emphasis on alignment of standards, curriculum and assessment practices across the early grades. This alignment, or lack thereof, will have a significant impact on children's experience. It is a condition for children to experience continuity between one grade and the next" (p. 135).

For Abello, transitions are complex phenomena in which there are cross-tensions "between continuity and discontinuity, between the convergent and the divergent, and between the dominant culture and the emerging one, the possibility of being human and of constructing subjectivity."[17]

Abello uses nine categories for grouping the studies on transitions. These are:[18]

(i) The effect of transitions on the child's development and learning.
(ii) How children and parents experience transitions.
(iii) Expectations of the various players about transitions.
(iv) Transitions from various perspectives.
(v) The impacts of parents' involvement in academic achievements.
(vi) Demonstration strategies for handling transitions.
(vii) Strategies to guarantee continuity between preschool and school.
(viii) The impacts of ECE.
(ix) The effects of comprehensive services provided through intersectoral coordinated actions.

We shall present some of the most important conclusions offered by Abello in each of these categories, and refer to some of the authors consulted.

(i) The Effect of Transitions on the Child's Development and Learning

Abello, citing Fabian and Dunlop (2006) who in turn cite Curtis (1986), Cleave and Brown (1991), Dowling (1998), Kienig (1999), Featherstone (2004), Fisher (1996), Kening (2002), and citing Blacher and McIntyre (2006) as well, who refer to the studies of Robert Pianta and his colleagues at the University of Virginia, concludes that "adaptability to the change that transitions imply engages the child in his or her integral and multidimensional being, and this in turn affects the possibilities of learning in school. The results of these studies show that the capacity for emotional self-governance in addressing uncertainty, the existence of socially

[17] Abello, p. 1
[18] Idem, p 25

supportive peer networks, and the relations with the teacher through which social skills unfold and the capacity to address the challenges of school in cognitive terms are key dimensions for rethinking the way children face transitions."[19]

(ii) How Children and Parents Experience Transitions

Abello consults Fabian and Dunlop (2006), who cite Pramling-Samuelsson and Lindahl (1991, 1994, Sweden), Thyssen (2009, Denmark), Griebel and Nieisel (2000, Germany), Dunlop (2001, 2002, Scotland), and Dockett and Perry (2001, Australia), and concludes that "these studies make it increasingly clear that transitions engage not only the child but his or her family as well in the process of beginning school. Adaptability to change, which means that the child is assuming the new role of student, also mobilizes the parents. This is a challenge for the teachers and for the schools, for managing transitions requires more comprehensive study to understand the child in the socio cultural context of his or her support networks."[20]

(iii) Expectations of the Various Players about Transitions

Aiello refers to Mendez (no date) who quotes Docket and Perry (2001) and the Sierra N. study (no date) on the early childhood care and development program of the Christian Children's Fund (CCF) that has been underway in Honduras since 1982, to discuss the differences between what children, parents, and teachers expect from nursery school, preschool and primary education. "Children are preoccupied by the rules about what they can do or cannot do, about relational interactions—who will be their playmates, whom will they get to know, what will the future be like—all referring to the question, how are things going to be? Parents have concerns about their children's adaptability to change, about the safety of the environment, and whether the teacher will be disposed to help them. The teachers are concerned about children's adaptability to change, and about the skills they bring with them for addressing new challenges. Comparing these expectations, we may say that while children are concerned about relations, teachers are concerned about abilities. This reveals the convergences and the dissonances or conflicts that arise between the different scenarios of children's socialization and challenge the schools to understand the conflicts and to seek synergies that will facilitate the process."[21]

(iv) Transitions from Various Perspectives

Fabian and Dunlop (2006), citing several different authors, show (according to Abello) that "the topic of transitions can be explored from various perspectives, and the process of change that transitions imply at the beginning of school is one of the many transitions that people face in their lifetime."[22] We have then:

- Research approximations concerned with transitions from the viewpoint of children, stressing empowerment (Fabian and Dunlop, 2006, quoting Davey and Wang, 1998).
- Other studies that explore lack of progress and the variations in teaching approaches between primary and secondary school (Galton, Morrison and Pell, 2000).

[19] Idem, p. 26.
[20] Idem, p. 27.
[21] Idem, p. 28
[22] Idem, p. 29.

- From the viewpoint of parents, studying the transition to parenthood (Cowan and Cowan, 1995).
- Studies on the development of children and adults' strategies for coping with transitions when parents are divorced (Fortune-Wood, 2002).

(v) The Impacts of Parents' Involvement in Academic Achievement

After reviewing various studies, Fabian and Dunlop (2006) who cite Ethinakis (1998), Griebel and Niesel (2002) and Johansson (2002), Perry, Dockett and Tracey (1999), and other authors such as Rimm-Kaufman and Zhang (2005), Ferrara and Ferrara (2005) who quote Hiatt-Michael (2001), and Blacher and McIntyre (2006), Abello concludes: "we may say on this basis that a topic of capital importance for investigative work and exploration on transitions is the family. Its demographic characteristics and its active participation in the process of schooling children have a positive impact on academic achievement, and that impact is directly related with adaptability to change."[23] It is worth noting the conclusions from some of these studies:

- Transitions can be seen as opportunities for families and the school system to work together to support the children's' process.
- Parents' socioeconomic status, their beliefs and values and their educational level, will affect the way children cope with transitions.
- "The perspectives of teachers, parents and children can be grouped into four broad categories: adjustment, knowledge, disposition and rules. While parents and teachers see adjustment as most important, children will focus on the rules."[24]
- The frequency and characteristics of communication between parents and school are predictors of academic success.
- "Parents' commitment to their children's learning has a positive impact on school attendance; it increases graduation rates, reduces repetition, raises the level of student and parent satisfaction with the educational institution, reduces disciplinary problems, and produces better results in reading and mathematics."[25]
- It is essential for parents and teachers to coordinate and concert their efforts to facilitate transitions.

(vi) Demonstration Strategies for Handling Transitions

Abello cites "Head Start Children's Entry into Public School: a Report on the National Head Start Public Early Childhood Transition Demonstration Study" (2000), which was undertaken to explore the impact of the program on children, families, schools and communities. Its conclusions include:[26]

- Those who partook in the study rated the program highly.
- Many of the achievements were visible even after funding ended.

[23] Idem p. 30
[24] Idem p. 29
[25] Idem p. 30
[26] Idem p. 31

- Just two or three years after the program, the vast majority of Head Start children who were in public schools were achieving on par with the national averages.
- Community associations were strengthened.

Among the activities that various participants rated positively were: "creating Parents' Resource Rooms in the schools, conducting home visits, sending special newsletters to parents about school and community activities, family workshops on home-based learning aids to help children succeed, promoting the inclusion of children with disabilities into regular classrooms; addressing cultural and linguistic diversity and appreciation; and developing individualized transition plans for each child. In short, the most highly rated transition demonstration programs contained aspects relating to parents' involvement, continuity in children's education experience, family social support services, and health and nutrition."[27]

(vii) Strategies to Guarantee Continuity between Preschool and School

Citing Kagan, Carroll, Comer and Scott-Little (2006), Abello states that to ensure continuity from one grade to another requires a degree of alignment between curriculum, standards and assessment practices between levels, given that their existence or absence has a significant impact on children's experience. From the studies consulted it is clear that these changes must not be left to chance: actions must be intentionally planned and implemented, both vertically and horizontally. The authors also recommend taking into account the level of children's development, including the various areas they have mastered.[28]

(viii) The Impacts of ECE

Following wide-ranging international consultation, Abello concludes: "Research evidence reveals that initial education experiences have a positive impact on children's life paths. They have obvious impacts on academic achievement throughout the education system, in promoting relations of greater stability, and in labor stability and economic productivity. This means that initial education experiences, if successful in terms of unleashing the potential for integral development, can strengthen adaptability to change and facilitate transitions."[29]

(ix) The Effects of Comprehensive Services Provided through Intersectoral Coordinated Actions

Abello cites the work of Pelletier and Corter (2005), who set out to create a comprehensive model covering different aspects and involving different players and social strata, with respect to ethnically and culturally diverse families in the city of Toronto. Although there are no conclusive results from the study, the authors recommend that this type of approach requires non-conventional research. However, according to Abello, "the mobilization of families, communities, institutions and sectors in favor of initial education and early childhood is an alternative for inclusion and equity for multicultural societies that are home to immigrant communities. The example mentioned highlights the importance of the territory where populations, institutions and sectors converge and which, if mobilized in support of local development, can in a participatory way seek paths for improving the quality of life, which will reinforce processes of individual and collective identity."[30]

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[27] Idem, p. 31
[28] Idem, p. 32.
[29] Idem, p. 35.
[30] Idem, p. 37.

By way of summary:

- Transitions are critical moments of change in children's lives.
- The "changes" involved in this passage from one environment to another may be seen as conflicts that open opportunities of enrichment, if conditions are favorable to a satisfactory transition.
- Favorable conditions can be understood under the concept of educability, which refers to the capacity to participate in the formal education process, and thereby to access a basic education that will define the horizon of equity of education systems.
- There are different kinds of transitions, linked to different socio-cultural realities.
- The moment of change depends on factors such as: family and/or the mother's working situation, economic status of the family, child-rearing practices, beliefs about the age at which children should enter an external institution, existing legislation on postnatal care, day care centers, etc., knowledge and appreciation of the contribution of early childhood education, physical and economic availability of ECE, the quality of available ECE, social demands for "preparedness" for entry into primary or basic education.
- Internal and external factors impact transitions. Internal: those relating to emotional and cognitive development. External (or coordinating) factors: emotional support, children's capacity to build on their strengths, the nuclear family's attitude to change, activities in preparation for new situations, support in the face of new situations, definition of situations of continuity, progression and differentiation, identification of new states reached, control over conditions of accessibility.
- Transitions within ECE programs are facilitated by a shared educational vision, expressed in certain common codes and ways of acting on the part of people who interact with children.
- Transition implies a process, in which we can identify three sub-processes: continuity, progression and differentiation, giving the impression of an interrelationship and occasionally of sequence.
- Transitions linked to a comprehensive concept of children's human development, understanding this as the process of constituting children's subjectivity and identity through socialization.
- The importance of strengthening the emotional, communicative, creative, ethical and moral, and political potentials of children and youth.
- Transitions seen as challenges that children must meet in the midst of the conflict posed by the many changes they face, as a condition inherent to the transits and transformations of human beings during their lives.
- Importance of ECE: young children are becoming a population group attracting the interest of governments, communities, parents, educational institutions and investments and integral care for children and their families.

- The capacity for emotional self-governance to deal with uncertainty, peer networks of social support and relations with the teacher, through which social skills unfold and the capacity to address the challenges of school in cognitive terms are key dimensions for rethinking the way children face transitions.
- Transitions engage not only the child, but his or her family as well, in the process of beginning school.
- The people involved in these transitions have different expectations: convergences and the dissonances or conflicts that arise between the different scenarios of children's socialization and challenge the schools to understand the conflicts and to seek synergies that will facilitate the process.
- The family's demographic characteristics and their active participation in their children's schooling process will have a positive impact on academic achievement; an impact that is directly related to adaptability to change.
- The frequency and characteristics of communication between parents and school are predictors of academic success.
- Evidence as to the importance of the transitions between the home and preschool, and between preschool and primary school, as well as coordination between the family and the educational institution.
- Preschool experience that is successful in terms of realizing the potential for integral development can strengthen adaptability to change and facilitate transitions.
- These changes must not be left to chance: actions must be intentionally planned and implemented, both vertically and horizontally.
- There is an urgent need for research on these transitions in order to reorient policies and the allocation of resources, programs and projects.
- It is important to examine the expectations of the different stakeholders in the face of transitions.
- Addressing transitions from a strategy of horizontal coordination (school-family-territory) and vertical coordination (between teachers) to reinforce continuities.
- Successful interventions where populations, institutions and sectors converge and which, if mobilized in support of local development, can in a participatory way seek paths for improving the quality of life, which will reinforce processes of individual and collective identity.

Chapter II. COLOMBIA REPORT

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

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Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

Introduction. 1. Scenarios that influence educational transitions for children living in rural areas. 1.1. The situation of early childhood in Colombia. 1.1.1. Rural, indigenous and border communities. Rural communities. Indigenous communities. Border communities. 1.1.2. Families' capacity to support the educational transition process. Poverty. Maternal mortality. Neonatal and infant mortality. Child nutrition. Other statistics that shed light on the status of children. 1.2. Education. 1.2.1. Educational services in rural areas. 1.2.1.1. Initial education. 1.2.1.2. Preschool or "pre-primary" education. 1.2.2. Program staff. 1.2.2.1. Teaching and guidance staff. Staff training. 1.2.2.2. Mother's education level. 2. The impacts of these scenarios on the educational transitions of rural and indigenous children. 2.1. Efficiency: repetition and dropout rates. 2.2. Quality (learning achievements). Conclusions. Bibliography.

Introduction

This document addresses the issue of education, and in particular the transitions that children experience in moving from the home to school, and from preschool to primary school, as well as their close relationship to poverty and other associated factors in light of statistics and analysis available on rural, indigenous and border communities in Colombia over the last ten years. While the focus of this analysis is on education and transitions experienced by young children, aspects relating to health, nutrition and poverty are also explored, which act as enabling or limiting factors for children's access, retention and success in school, and for their ability to develop their potential and construct a decent life.

1. Scenarios that Influence Educational Transitions for Children Living in Rural Areas

1.1. The Situation of Early Childhood in Colombia

In this section we present the general situation of young children in Colombia, looking at conditions of poverty, health, nutrition, care and early education. The statistical data have been taken from various sources, particularly population data from the National Planning Department and DANE between 1990 and 2005. The section on education relays data on the education and occupational status of the mother, as well as general demographic data.

Of the 41,468,384 inhabitants reported in Colombia's 2005 Census, around 50% are children and youth. Children under the age of six account for 12.7% of the population. There are 4,787,710 children below the age of five (10.39%) and 16,888,819 under the age of 18 (36.67%), 51% of whom are female.[31]

Population growth in 2003 was 1.7%, with 950,938 live births, a figure that rose by 2.3% to 968,000 in 2005. The global fertility rate was 2.6 births per woman, the gross birth rate was 22.4, and the infant mortality rate was 25.6. In 2005, life expectancy at birth was 73 years.[32]

[31] Information derived from various sources, all based on DNP data.
[32] Data from various sources: DANE, UNICEF, DNP.

In Colombia, children and adolescents account for nearly half the total population, and yet their situation is fairly precarious as a result of poverty, serious social inequities, difficult access to public services, health, education, and the general existence of unmet basic needs.

To this situation one must add the children and youth who are victims of armed conflict: not only are they being assaulted, but they have become active subjects in the hostilities. These factors are compounded by labor exploitation, child prostitution, and the use of minors as accessories in petty crime.[33]

1.1.1. Rural, Indigenous and Border communities

Around a third of children under the age of six are living in rural areas, which include indigenous and border zones where poverty is most acute.

In analyzing the relationship between care[34] and early childhood education, rural, indigenous and border communities were selected as key aspects in the educational transition from the home to preschool, and from preschool to primary school, for reducing the risk of repetition and school dropout, and for enhancing their work performance as adults. It is there that the problems of poverty and child neglection are most acute, and where the intergenerational transmission of poverty is most likely.[35]

Rural communities

Of Colombia's total population (41,468,384 inhabitants), 75.8% (31,507,441) live in municipalities or district towns, and 24.2% (9,960,743) in rural areas.[36] The gender distribution of the population is 51.4% female and 48.6% male.

These ratios have been shifting at increasing speed: in the middle of the last century, the rural population accounted for nearly half of the whole.; it then rose by one million inhabitants between 1985 and 2003, versus 11 million in urban areas. This process of urbanization can be explained in part by adjustments in the agriculture sector in the context of globalization, increase in rural poverty, and intensification of the armed conflict in those regions.[37]

The 2003 Human Development Report for Colombia focused its analysis on armed conflict and showed that there are inequities between rural and urban areas that express themselves in life expectancy and income distribution. "Inhabitants of rural areas live, on average, around two years less than those in urban areas. With respect to income per capita, the urban level is more than twice as high" (UNDP, 2003). The undependable nature of social assistance programs in rural areas makes this problem all the worse, and it is children who suffer most severely from conditions of marginalization.[38]

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[33] http://www.unicef.org/colombia/04-unicol.htm
[34] Care is understood here as a set of integrated actions embracing nutrition, protection, affection and stimulation, among other aspects.
[35] Aguado et al. (2006) cite a number of studies from various parts of the world showing that adequate stimulation and nutrition at an early age (from birth to five years) have important consequences both for the intellectual and occupational development of children once they reach adulthood and for mitigating the intergenerational transfer of poverty (ECLAC, 1999; ECLAC and UNICEF, 2006; World Bank, 2005).
[36] DANE's virtual projection device shows the current population at 44,069,734.
[37] FAO Rural Education Report
[38] UNDP (2003) The Conflict, A Way Out. National Human Development Report for Colombia.

CRECE[39] reports that the intensification of armed conflict has led to mass displacement of rural people, causing them to abandon productive activities and, in the worst cases, dragged them into the conflict. This has had a great impact on education leading to the partial or complete suspension of school activities because of security problems, increasing school dropout rates, destroying school infrastructure, and intimidating people—students, teachers and directors alike—in the country's rural schools.

This marginalization of Colombia's rural people has sparked further situations of conflict, affecting women and children most severely by limiting their opportunities to develop their full human potential, and exacerbating the country's spiral of poverty.

Indigenous communities

In the history of Colombia the indigenous populations have been frequently counted but formal censuses have been rare. There are many figures, from reports and descriptions by chroniclers and travelers, of 16th century to modern censuses. The same cannot be said for the country's Afro populations, which were brought to reinforce indigenous manpower: less is known about their actual numbers.

With the promulgation of the new Constitution in 1991, which stressed the importance of ethnic differences and recognition of "Afro-Colombian" groups, the 1993 census not only designed a specific form for these groups but, for the first time, included the question as to whether the person belonged to any ethnic group. If so, the respondent was asked to indicate the name of the indigenous or Afro community. By this means, 81 indigenous groups were identified (including one originating in Ecuador, the Otavalo), as were three Afro communities.[40]

The 1993 census introduced the concept of self-recognition, changing the lives of indigenous populations, who in previous periods were considered such by default. By introducing the concept of ethnicity, that census asked for identification not only of indigenous peoples but also of “black” or Afro-Colombian minorities. It is only now that we have, for the first time, census figures on black populations, a fact that demonstrates the historic lack of recognition of this group.[41]

Population Censuses

Census	Total Population	Indigenous Population	Indigenous Population %
1938	8,701,816	100,422ª	1.15
1951	11,548,172	157,791ª	1.37

[39] Report prepared by Crece for the FAO on rural education in Colombia.
[40] Vejarano, F. (2000). Etnicidad.. *Bogotá: Centro de Investigaciones sobre Dinámica Social, Cids, Universidad Externado de Colombia*
[41] Source: DANE. Until 1979 there are no census data; after 1985 there are population censuses. Variations with regard to total population provide an indication of the quality of that information. The very low proportion for 1985 reflects the fact that only indigenous people living on reserves were counted. In 1973, some indigenous populations in the Cauca reserves were double-counted.

1964	17,484,508	119,180[a]	.68
1973	20,666,920	383,629	1.86
1985	30,062,200	237,759	.79
1993	33,109,840	574,482	1.74
005	41,468,384	1,392,623	3.43

Source: DANE

According to the latest census, the indigenous population is distributed among 87 clearly identified peoples. The percentage of males is 50.4, and females 49.6%.[42]

The majority of indigenous communities in Colombia are located in rural areas, corresponding to their ancestral homelands. There are 710 official reserves[43] located in 27 departments and 228 municipalities, occupying a total area of approximately 34 million hectares, or 29.8% of the national territory. A minority of indigenous people live in regional centers and in the major cities of the country, but their numbers have been growing as a result of rural-to-urban migration sparked by cultural changes, the exhaustion of lands on the reserves (especially in the Andes), and the forced displacement of communities as a result of the invasion of reserve lands by outlaw armed groups, particularly in the regions of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and Urabá and in the departments of Cauca, Córdoba, Guaviare, Nariño and Putumayo.

The national Constitution sets Spanish as Colombia's official language, but indigenous languages also have official status within indigenous territories. Throughout the country there are 64 Amerindian languages spoken, and a great diversity of dialects that can be classified into 13 linguistic families.

Beginning in the 1970s, indigenous organizations, supported by various strata of society and by the State itself, launched a process of cultural reaffirmation and awareness of native identity that culminated in recognition of Colombia in the 1991 Constitution as a pluri-ethnic and multilingual country: there are around 30 articles in that Constitution referring to ethnic groups and their diverse and particular cultures.

Indigenous and Afro-Colombian people are the most affected by the displacement sparked by violence. Life threats are the reason cited by 10.2% of indigenous people who have changed residence, 5.6% of Afro-Colombians, 3.8% of the general population, and 1.8% of the Roma. On the other hand, lack of educational opportunity was cited as a reason for moving in the last five years by 6.7% of the indigenous population, 4.2% of Afro-Colombians, 3.8% of the general population, and 2.7% of the Roma. Finally, 3.2% of indigenous people, 2.8% of Afro-Colombians, and around 2% of all population groups changed their place of residence for health reasons.

The average schooling of indigenous people ages 24 or more is 5.3 years, compared to a national average of 7.3 years. The school enrollment rate for indigenous children of the age of five is 11.3%.

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[42] DANE-National Administrative Department of Statistics, Directorate of Census and Demography. *Colombia Una Nación Multicultural Su Diversidad Étnica*. May 2007.
[43] Ibid.

Reveco (2003) reports that indigenous and Afro-Colombian children in Colombia are estimated at 593,904: of these, 118,099 are indigenous and 475,805 are Afro-Colombians. More than half of the indigenous population under the age of six lives in rural areas, and only 28.7% in urban areas. Afro-Colombian children are more highly concentrated (56.1%) in urban areas.

Border communities

Border communities in Colombia are not territorially defined, and there are no precise census figures due to heavy movement across borders. These population groups are for the most part indigenous or Afro-Colombian, and have been disrupted by the establishment of borders; indigenous groups in particular have lost their autonomy, culture, land and their ancestral unity as a people. Historically, of course, there were no national borders, which is why these people see them as an administrative imposition by the State that has disrupted family ties on both sides of the line. Their blood ties, and the concept of "ancestral territory," create strong bonds of ethnicity feeling more identified with their own people than with their "nation."[44]

In Colombia, there are 12 departments, 54 municipalities and 11 *correjimientos* (districts) that are classed as border areas. Colombia shares common frontiers with five countries: Venezuela (2219 km), Brazil (1645 km), Peru (1626 km), Ecuador (586 km) and Panama (266 km), for a total of 6335 km. These border areas involve the departments of Norte de Santander, Cesar, Arauca, La Guajira and Vichada, on the border with Venezuela; the Department of Chocó on the border with Panama; the Department of Putumayo on the borders with Ecuador and Peru; the Department of Nariño on the border with Ecuador; the departments of Amazonas bordering Peru and Brazil; and the departments of Vaupés and Guainía bordering Brazil.[45]

Along the frontier with Venezuela there are Wayü communities where the need for bilingualism has not been fully met. Because of family characteristics in these regions, the MEN has established a policy of special attention offering flexible education approaches such as the "New School" and accelerated learning for children who have shunned the education system and who can, in this way, catch up and resume their studies.[46]

1.1.2. Families' Capacity to Support the Educational Transition Process

Poverty

Poverty is one of the main factors affecting young children in Colombia. A percentage of 56.7 of the total population live below the poverty line, and 65% of these people are under the age of 18. Of these, 15.82% are five or younger. The indigent (extremely poor) population is estimated at 20.28%: 25% are children, 17.22% of them young children.[47]

The distribution by income deciles of the population under the age of six reveals that 14% of children in cities (around 400,000), and 11% in the countryside (slightly more than 153,000) live in extreme poverty. In 2006, while 45.1% of the total national population had

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[44] DANE-National Administrative Department of Statistics, Directorate of Census and Demography. *Colombia Una Nación Multicultural Su Diversidad Étnica*. May 2007.
[45] "We indigenous peoples know no borders." www.onic.org.co/docs/fronteras_inipu.doc
[46] Assertion based on conversations with Gisella Oliveira, the official responsible for border issues in the National Ministry of Education (MEN), 2007.
[47] http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/cvn/1665/article-101154.html

incomes below the poverty line, the proportion of children under six living in poverty was 59.3%.[48]

According to the DNP,[49] physical disabilities, illness, learning problems and all the disadvantages that may appear in early childhood weigh most heavily on children belonging to the poorest socioeconomic groups.

Maternal mortality

Maternal mortality figures for 2005 showed a decline from those of 2000, dropping from 104.9 to 73 per 100,000 live births.[50] Despite this improvement, which was due in part to initiatives to reduce the causative factors, the fact that the figure is still so high remains a cause for concern, given the impacts associated with maternal mortality.

We may correlate these maternal mortality rates with the high rates of teenage pregnancies, which showed an upward trend between 1990 and 2005. While in the earlier year the fertility rate among women under 20 was estimated at 70 births per thousand women, in 2005 the rate was calculated at 90 per thousand.[51]

Neonatal and infant mortality

In 2005, 92% of childbirths took place in a health establishment. Among the poorest segments of the population, the figure was only 73.7%, compared to 99.2% for mothers belonging to the wealthiest population strata.

The infant mortality rate (deaths during the first year of life) stood at 17 per thousand live births in 2006.[52] In comparison with previous years this represents a decline, reflecting various factors including a higher level of education for mothers and better access to health services.[53] Yet the figure is still high, with marked regional differences and risk factors associated with poverty and inequity.

The child mortality rate (deaths under the age of five) declined from 35 per thousand live births in 1990 to 21 per 1000 in 2006. The child mortality rate is still unacceptably high, recognizing that deaths in early childhood are mainly due to causes that can be prevented through proper nutrition, care and attention.

The principal causes of death among children under the age of six in Colombia are preventable communicable diseases such as acute respiratory infections (ARI), acute diarrheic diseases and other infectious and parasitic diseases, followed by accidents. There are marked regional differences: while the 2005 rate was 23 per thousand in Bogotá and 16 per thousand in the departments that comprise the coffee belt, it was as high as 65 per thousand on the Pacific coast (Litoral Pacífico).[54]

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[48] FAO study on world education.
[49] CONPES Document 109.
[50] Ibid. The rate is relatively high in comparison with other countries. Costa Rica has a rate of 11.2 per 100,000 live births, Venezuela 67.2, and Canada 2.5 (the lowest rate).
[51] Source: DNP Census 2005.
[52] UNICEF. http://www.unicef.org/colombia/04-unicol.htm
[53] Consejo Nacional de Política Económica Social – DNP. Documento Conpes Social 109 Política Pública Nacional de Primera Infancia "Colombia por la primera Infancia", Bogotá, December 2007
[54] Conpes, 2007.

According to the 2005 National Demographics and Health Survey (ENDS),[55] only 58% of children between 12 and 23 months of age were fully vaccinated. There is also a direct relationship between levels of safety and vaccination coverage.

Another major health problem in Colombia is HIV/AIDS. The HIV prevalence rate among adults of reproductive age (15 to 49 years) is estimated at 0.6, and the number of women over the age of 15 living with HIV is estimated at 45,000 (UNICEF, 2008). According to the DNP, HIV infection now extends to young children. Between 1983 and June 2003, 40,072 cases of HIV/AIDS infections were notified, 3.2% of which involved children infected by maternal-fetal transmission.

In 2005 around 2% of children under the age of five showed some type of disability. This situation reflects congenital problems as well as the maltreatment, abuse and neglect from which children in Colombia suffer.

There are no disaggregated data for rural, indigenous and border communities. However, as these groups are the most severely marginalized, it may be assumed that maternal and child mortality rates among them are significant.

Child nutrition

It is an alarming fact that 10% of children in Colombia have low birth weight: this is one of the most frequent avoidable causes of death during the prenatal period. Children under the age of three, and pregnant or nursing mothers are at greatest risk of malnutrition.

According to UNICEF figures (2006–2008), 47% of children younger than six months are exclusively breast-fed, 65% of children between six and nine months received a mix of breast-feeding and solid food, and 32% of children between 20 and 23 months are still breast-feeding.

While the practice of exclusive breast-feeding has been growing (from 11% in 1995-2000, to 26% in 2000-2005), it is important to note that 53% of children younger than six months are not breast-fed. The average duration of breast-feeding with complementary food increased from 13 months to 14.9 in 2005.[56]

Severely underweight children face a very high risk of early mortality: 83% of infant deaths are associated with light or moderate malnutrition.[57]

The percentage of children under the age of five who are moderately or severely underweight[58] is 7%, and 1% are severely underweight. The percentage of children suffering from moderate or severe wasting[59] is 1%, and that of children suffering from moderate or severe stunting is 12%.[60]

The total mortality rate from malnutrition in Colombia is 20.75, and is higher for males (22.38) than for females (19.15). By age group, the highest rates are found among children under

[55] Encuesta Nacional de Demografía y Salud (ENDS) (2000 y 2005). Bogotá: PROFAMILIA
[56] UNICEF. http://www.unicef.org/colombia/04-unicol.htm
[57] Centro de Investigaciones sobre Dinámica Social (CIDS) 1998 – 2000
[58] for their age.
[59] an acute condition that causes extreme weakness and underweight.
[60] source: UNICEF, data from 1999 to 2005, webpage 2006 report

the age of five, with no differentiation by sex, and among people over 45 years of age, where the rate is higher among men. However, malnutrition accounts for more deaths among women (5%) than men (4%). The proportion of deaths due to malnutrition is highest in the one-to-five-year age bracket, where it is 21.5% for females and 19.1% for males.[61]

For infants under the age of one, this proportion is much lower (9.3%) partly because of the protection they receive from breast-feeding, and also because of health and nutrition policies that are focused on this age group. For all age groups, the proportion of female deaths exceeds that of male deaths, and the difference is greatest in the 15–44-years age bracket, probably as a result of pregnancy and nursing.

An FAO study cited by Aguado et al. (2006) found that the nutritional status of Colombian children under the age of five had improved tangibly between 1966 and 2000, apparently as a result of the socioeconomic, health and nutrition strategies of recent years. That study reports that the prevalence of malnutrition, as measured by underweight, had dropped from 21% in 1966, to 7% in 2000.

The study also points to differences among regions in terms of child nutrition: the highest prevalence of stunting occurs in rural areas and in the Cauca and Nariño sub-region. The two coastal regions (Atlantic and Pacific) and rural areas are more affected by underweight, while the Cauca Valley has the lowest rate of child malnutrition (3%). In sum, FAO's study highlights the large disparities in child development between regions and provinces in Colombia.

In 2005, 12.1% of all children under the age of five in Colombia showed chronic malnutrition or retarded growth, a fact which reflects the situation of exclusion and poverty. Thus, while the total malnutrition rate among children from the poorest families is 19.8%, the proportion for the richest families is less than 1% (UNICEF, 2002).

According to data from the 2000 demographic survey, chronic malnutrition rates in urban and rural areas were 10.8% and 19.4%, respectively.[62] There is a marked difference between urban and rural areas, the latter showing higher rates of malnutrition in all anthropometric indicators: height for age, weight for height, and weight for age. This situation is directly related to the level of poverty, which in urban areas stood at 59% in 2001, and 80% in rural areas.[63]

Other statistics that shed light on the status of children:

- Civil registry. According to government statistics, some 150,000 births go unregistered every year in Colombia. Between 1999 and 2005, 90% of all births were registered, with a rate of 97% in urban areas and 77% in the countryside. The lack of birth registration in rural areas exacerbates the marginalization of children and denies them opportunities for development. The lowest registration rates for children under the age of five are to be found in the two coastal regions, where between 10% and 14% of children in this age bracket are still unregistered.
- Child labor. 5% of children (6% for boys and 5% for girls) between the ages of five and 14 are working.

[61] Op. cit.
[62] Encuesta Nacional de Demografía y Salud, Profamilia – UNFPA 2000
[63] Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Hacia un Estado Comunitario 2002

- Violence and abuse. In 2002 there were 736 violent deaths among children under the age of four, the majority of which are presumed to be accidental deaths, followed by homicides and traffic accidents. Boys accounted for 60.46% of those deaths.[64] According to Medicina Legal, there were 1525 victims of sexual abuse under the age of five in 2002. Young children are also affected by displacement: according to figures from the Social Solidarity Network in the Single Registry of the Population Displaced by Violence, in February 2004 a total of 138,787 children under the age of four were listed as displaced (71,302 boys and 67,484 girls).
- Family organization. There are two ways of characterizing Colombian families: by kinship and by lifecycle. By kinship, two-parent households predominate (48%) and 34% are extensive families. The proportion of households headed by women continues to rise: it was 24% in 1995, and 28% in 2000.
- Household size. This has been declining significantly, from 6.1 individuals in 1972 to 4.1 in 1998, and 2.6 in 2002. However, among poor families the average number of children is around 4.7.

1.2. Education

1.2.1. Education Services in Rural Areas

Early childhood education is a work in progress in Colombia. While there has been some advance in recent years in recognizing the importance of early childhood education and in efforts to promote and regulate it, especially through the comprehensive care programs sponsored by the ICBF, the Ministry of Education and the communities, there are still problems of quality and coverage in this area.

1.2.1.1. Initial Education

In Colombia there are two institutional arrangements for initial education: first, there are the protection and care programs offered by the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF), and by official and private institutions at the local or regional level. Second is the preschool program itself, which is regulated by the Education Ministry and is offered through official and private establishments.

Initial education coverage is low,[65] and is concentrated in urban areas and among higher income groups: in 2003, only 35% of children under the age of five were attending some type of education institution.[66] There are differences according to income levels: for the first income quintile the attendance rate is 40%, versus 75% for the richest decile. By zone, the attendance rate is 39% for urban zones and 25% for rural zones.

[64] http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/cvn/1665/article-101154.html
[65] Initial education seeks to protect the rights of all children from birth to five years, and to promote their cognitive, emotional, social and physical development. It takes place in two settings: within the family, and in official and private institutions that operate under the Colombian legal framework. Information from Educación Compromiso de Todos, 2006.
[66] Calculations based on DANE, ECV 2003

The ICBF is the agency with the principal responsibility for protection and care programs for families and children under the age of seven in the country.[67] In 2006, the ICBF served 2,690,021 children under the age of seven. The principal programs are: *Materno Infantil* (13.1%), *Hogar Comunitario* FAMI (14.4%), *Hogares Comunitarios de Bienestar* (29.3%), *Hogares Infantiles* (4.6%), *Lactantes y Preescolares* (0.5 %), *Jardines Comunitarios* (0.1 %) and *Desayunos Infantiles* (38.1%).[68]

1.2.1.2. Preschool or "Pre-Primary Education"[69]

In Colombia, education is compulsory between the ages of five and 14 (including one year of preschool). Children enter the education system at the age of five, having completed "level 0" or transition.

There are three levels of preschool in the Colombian education system: pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and transition or level 0. The five-year-old age group, comprising 901,845 children (ECV 2003), is distributed as follows: 34.4% are in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten; 28.4% are in level 0 or transition; 20.5% are in the first grade of primary school, or higher grades; and the remainder, 16.7%, are outside the system.[70]

The gross enrollment rate in preschool and primary between 2003 and 2004 was 37.6%, and the net enrollment rate was 33.9%. There are no data available on the number of children entering primary school with preprimary experience.

Level	Under 3 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	7 years
Preschool	0.0	13.8	28.3	58.3	8.8	1.4
Primary	-	-	-	13.4	77	90.6
Total	0.0	13.8	28.3	71	85.8	92

Source: National Ministry of Education

The coverage of the transition grade has increased. Between 2000 and 2005, enrollment in preschool (this level has three grades, the last of which is transition) increased by 45,000 children to more than 1.5 million. While 61 of every 100 children attended the transition grade in 2000, the ratio was 69 in 2004. All departments, with the exception of San Andrés, saw increases in coverage for this grade. However, there are differences: while in some departments eight out of every ten children are attending, in others the figure is four or less. In addition, two out of every tem children enrolled in primary school are over-age (i.e. older than the regulation age for this level).[71]

[67] ICBF was created in 1968 to improve family welfare, particularly with respect to caring for children and for pregnant and nursing mothers. Its activities are financed from a special payroll tax of 3% levied on all private enterprises and State entities.
[68] Source: ICBF report, 2006
[69] Term used in the International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED
[70] Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2007) http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/article-125372.html
[71] Informe de Progreso Educativo Colombia, 2006

In 2005, the gross coverage rate in preschool was 48.9%, representing an improvement of about two percentage points over the situation five years earlier (this figure refers to level 0 in the State schools). In net terms, the enrollment rate in 2005 was 46.5%, or about three percentage points above the rate in 2000.[72]

Rural preschool education. The Rural Education Program (PER) of the MEN is responsible for rural preschool in 22 departments, with a population of 74,008 children, of whom 11,939 have attended preschool, and has 910 experiments underway.

Indigenous populations. For the zero-to-five-years age group, the distribution by ethnic group of enrollment in care programs, day care centers or school centers is as follows: 1.6% indigenous, 10% Afro-Colombian, and 88.4% other. According to calculations using the 2003 ECV, the percentage of indigenous children under the age of six enrolled in any preschool or school program is only 29.1%, versus 43.2% for the rest of the population (Reveco, 2003).

These percentages for the country's child population are very low, suggesting that we are far from achieving education indicators that can overcome the factors of impoverishment in Colombia, and that further government investment is needed in this phase of education.

1.2.2. Program Staff

1.2.2.1. Teaching and Guidance Staff

In the official education sector, staff consists primarily of teachers and guidance staff. There are no accurate figures on the characteristics of personnel in private education. Informal programs are offered by "community mothers" and other educational and social agents. Their level of education is the ninth grade (secondary school), on average.[73]

Of the 50,715 teachers assigned to transition, 95% are women. At this time the MEN has no detailed information on the additional characteristics of teaching staff.[74]

The number of teachers fell by nearly 26,000 (11,000 of them State-employed) between 2000 and 2003. In the latter, the country had around 411,000 teachers, the majority of whom (69%) were employed in State education institutions. In 2005 there were slightly more than 24,000 vacant teaching positions in the official sector. The shortage of teachers at this level is felt most acutely in Antioquia, Bolívar, La Guajira, Cundinamarca, Huila, Risaralda, Tolima and Valle del Cauca.

Staff training

In order to be a teacher in the State education service, a person must hold a university or postgraduate degree in education, or a diploma from a normal school, and must be registered in

[72] In the early childhood program, the MEN's objectives are to provide comprehensive care for children under six years in terms of nutrition, protection and education. This program will operate in partnership with the ICBF and the Ministry of Protection. It is expected to serve 50,000 children in 2007 and 400,000 in 2010.

[73] UNESCO, from the National Registry of Community Mothers compiled by the ICBF in October 2004. That registry shows the number of community mothers throughout the country, and allows us to characterize them, to establish the conditions under which they operate, to update the sampling frameworks for subsequent studies, and to identify areas for improvement.

[74] The Ministry issued Resolution 166 in 2005, establishing reporting conditions for implementing the Education Sector Information System.

the National Teaching Roster. A normal school diploma is valid only for teachers at the preschool level and in basic primary education. This is a middle-level diploma: by agreement with the universities that have education faculties, candidates enter normal school after four years of basic secondary education and two years of intermediate education.

According to the National System of Information on Higher Education (SNIES), there are 33 preschool education degree programs now operating in the country. The Ministry is preparing standards for early childhood education that will guide the work of teachers at this level.

In the case of non-formal programs, community mothers and other educational and social workers receive various kinds of training in pedagogy, comprehensive care, health, nutrition, cooperatives and other aspects.

1.2.2.2. Mothers' Education Level

The level of education of mothers is an indicator of their ability to acquire relevant information that will have an impact on their approach to caring for their own and their children's health, and the importance they will place on having their children attend school (Save the Children 2006; Nagar & Sharma, 2006).

At the national level, over the period between 2000-2005, there was an increase in the educational level of mothers, as reflected in the percentage of mothers who had completed secondary school or had some higher education. In 2005 it is estimated that five out of every ten mothers had completed at least one year of secondary education.

At the sub regional level, ENDS data show that in 2005 the highest proportions of women with no schooling or only primary school were to be found in Antioquia (excluding Medellin), on the Pacific coast, and in the sub-region of Tolima, Huila and Caquetá, where half of mothers had not gone past primary school.

By contrast, the cities of Bogotá, Cali and Medellin have higher levels of maternal education: eight out of every ten mothers have secondary schooling or higher. These are followed, in descending order, by the departments of Atlántico, Bolívar, Sucre and Córdoba. However, considering only the level of higher education (technical or vocational), the highest percentages of mothers with this level of education are in Medellin (22.6%), and in the sub-regions of Atlántico and Norte de Bolívar (21.3%).

When mothers are engaged in remunerated activities, the percentage of children attending preschool is greater. In Colombia, from 2000-2005, 38% of children whose mothers were engaged in paid work were attending preschool, compared to 25% for children whose mothers performed no paid work.

2. The Impacts of these Scenarios on the Educational Transitions of Rural and Indigenous Children

2.1. Efficiency: Repetition and Dropout Rates

The repetition rate declined between 2000 and 2003. In basic primary school it dropped from nine in every 100 children, to five. Repetition is especially high in the first three grades of basic primary school and in sixth grade (it is 9% in the first grade, and 5% in the sixth). There

are also differences between departments: more than 10% of students repeat a year in basic primary school in Amazonas, Guaviare, Guainía and Vaupés, while the figure for Bogotá is only 2%.

The school dropout rate declined between 2000 and 2003, but it remained high in grades one and six. In basic primary school it dropped from 8% to 6%, and in secondary school from 6% to 5%. These results may be connected to the programs sponsored by the national government and some local administrations, such as "Families in Action,"[75] designed to encourage children to attend and remain in school. A study conducted by UNESCO and the World Bank found that only eight in ten children entering the first grade made it through to the fifth grade.[76]

Here again, there are marked differences between departments: in Cauca, Córdoba and Chocó the dropout rate is 2% or less, while in Guainía, Guaviare and Vaupés[77] roughly 20% of students abandon school.

These data reveal the education system's shortcomings in terms of achieving universal coverage and retaining students at the different levels of schooling. In fact, initial education is the most important indicator for optimal development and overall poverty reduction in the country.

2.2. Quality (Learning Achievements)[78]

Education quality has been evaluated in Colombia since 1970, and tests have been conducted since 1990 to measure the quality of basic primary and basic secondary schooling. The *Saber* ("Knowledge") tests are administered every three years to students in grades five and nine to assess their skills (the capacity to employ their knowledge in day-to-day life) in the areas of language, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, and civics.

Very few students reach the highest level of skills. In mathematics, 13 out of 100 did so in grade nine. In the social sciences, one out of every 100 in grade five, and eight out of every 100 in grade nine.

There are sharp differences between departments: generally speaking, Bogotá, Boyacá, Caldas, Cundinamarca and Santander show high average levels in all areas and grades, while the levels in Amazonas, Chocó and San Andrés are low. There are no geographically disaggregated data to appreciate the results of these tests in rural, indigenous and border zones.

Official education institutions that have introduced flexible teaching models (such as "New School") tend on average to produce better results in the *Saber* tests than those that use the conventional methodologies.

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[75] This program provides subsidies to families in the poorest municipios to cover costs of meals, school supplies and transportation, on the condition that children be in regular attendance at school.

[76] UNICEF (2006) Situación de la educación preescolar, básica, media y superior en Colombia. Bogotá: Segunda Edición Casa Editorial El Tiempo, Corporación Región, Fundación Corona, Fundación Antonio Restrepo Barco, Plan Internacional

[77] Areas with indigenous populations.

[78] The concept of quality has to do with the need to ensure that all students, regardless of their personal and socioeconomic characteristics, can develop the skills and the values necessary to participate in social and productive life on an equal footing.

However, poorer children have less opportunity to study and on average they spend fewer years in school. Repetition and dropout rates are highest in official institutions and in rural areas. There is virtually no information on indigenous communities.

Conclusions

We may say that Colombia still exhibits inequities in terms of the economic resources and government attention devoted to rural, indigenous and border areas. As a result, children lack the possibility to make successful educational transits toward consolidating subjectivity with the power to transform and create conditions for overcoming the social, cultural, economic and political marginalization in which these communities remain immersed.

General population statistics on Colombia have improved, but there is still under-recording of data on population, health and education with respect to children under the age of eight, and for rural, indigenous and border populations in particular.

Although infant mortality rates have declined, the measures adopted by governments to improve the conditions of care and education for young children under the age of three have been insufficient, as reflected in the high rates of morbidity and mortality among mothers and children under the age of five.

The availability of preschool services for children three years and older has improved, but they are still very scarce in rural areas and among indigenous and border communities. The poorest and most disadvantaged children in rural and indigenous areas have no access to early childhood care and education programs, and they are the neediest groups in terms of health, nutrition and cognitive development.

Despite the general improvement in Colombia's literacy indicators, they are still inadequate to ensure that adults responsible for children under the age of five in rural, indigenous and border zones will have the training and information needed to provide them quality care.

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Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies
Relating to Transitions

If survival depended on the triumph of the strong,
then the species would perish. So the real reason
for survival, the principal factor in the "struggle for
existence," is the love of adults for their young.

Maria Montessori

Introduction. 1. Early childhood policies in Colombia. 2. The meaning of educational transitions in policy documents. 3. Concepts of quality, equity and coverage relating to educational transitions. 4. Legislative bodies involved in policies and intersectoral coordination. 5. Implementation support. 6. Monitoring public policies for transition. 7. Training of specialized agents. 8. Family work and involvement. 9. Curriculum: implementation plan. 10. Promotion and implementation of early childhood services and programs. Conclusions. Bibliography.

Introduction

This paper offers a description and an assessment of Colombia's early childhood policies as they relate to the educational transitions that children make between the home and preschool, and between preschool and basic primary school, with a particular focus on policies for traditionally vulnerable and marginalized rural, indigenous and border communities.

In the analysis certain concepts and proposals are adopted from national and international researchers and from education policy documents such as the Early Childhood Policy of Colombia (2006), the Early Childhood Education Policy of the Ministry of National Education (2007), the MEN Guidelines on Policies for Vulnerable Population Groups, and various international documents and agreements. These include the Dakar Framework of Action, Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments, adopted at the World Education Forum (2000), the EFA (Education for All) Global Monitoring Report (2007), the Millennium Development Goals Report (2007) and the EFA Global Monitoring Report: Education for All by 2015: Will We Make It? (2008).

1. Early Childhood Policies in Colombia

Government policies relating to school transitions in Colombia are the Public Policy on Early Childhood, and the Early Childhood Education Policy of the Ministry of National Education,[79] which set out guidelines and targets for improving the quality of life and the conditions of care, protection and education for children under the age of six, and which make occasional references to the issue of transitions as such.

[79] In both the public policy document and the education policy document, early childhood refers to children six years and under

Other policies that contain education provisions for early childhood are the political Constitution of 1991, which makes at least one year of preschool education compulsory, and Decree Law 088 of 1976 (Article 4) and Law 115 of 1994, which establish and ratify the preschool level as the first level of formal education or "grade 0".

With the issuance of the Early Childhood and Adolescence Code (Law 1098 of 2006), Colombia has harmonized this legislation with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 29 of said code specifies the care that children must receive during early childhood: "from their early childhood children are entitled to the rights recognized in international treaties, in the political Constitution, and in this code. The essential rights of early childhood include health and nutritional care, the complete vaccination regime, protection against physical hazards, and initial education…"[80]

***The national public policy for early childhood,* "Colombia por la primera infancia"**

Colombia has a National Public Policy for Early Childhood, known as "*Colombia por la Primera Infancia*," endorsed by the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of National Education, and the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, the National Department of Planning and numerous organizations and institutions of civil society. It is part of the National Development Plan and is reinforced by commitments required under the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.[81]

The policy documents define early childhood as embracing the period from birth to the age of six. In its preamble, the early childhood policy establishes arguments relating to human development from the rights perspective, scientific, social and cultural, legal and political arguments, arguments relating to the institutional and programmatic context, and ethical arguments for establishing a national policy in favor of children from birth to age six. It makes no specific reference to rural, indigenous or border populations, but is formulated in general for all Colombian children.

The document includes a process of institutional and social mobilization and cooperation and provides a historical account of the different political and programmatic moments through which Colombia has passed in its development, and the assumption of national and international commitments relating to early childhood. It presents significant statistics on children and pregnant mothers, relating to health, nutrition, poverty, displacement, family violence and abandonment, education and identification.

When it comes to education, it stresses the importance of initial education is one of the basic conceptual and operational elements for ensuring integral care in early childhood. Noting that the concept of education for small children related traditionally to preschool education, in preparation for school life and entry into basic education, it establishes a new vision in which initial education seeks to provide children with experience that will be meaningful in their present development, and not only for their immediate future.

The principles guiding the early childhood policy include: the family as focal point, the perspective of rights and comprehensive care which considers children as full subjects of rights;

[80] Consejo Nacional de Política Económica Social - Departamento Nacional de Planeación (2007). Documento Conpes 109. Política Pública Nacional de Primera Infancia "Colombia por la Primera Infancia". Approved version.
[81] In December 2007 this policy was submitted to the National Economic and Social Policy Council of the National Department of Planning, and was adopted as Conpes Social Document 109.

equity and social, ethnic, cultural and gender inclusion; joint and integral responsibility between family, State and society; and targeting and promotion based on conditions of social and economic vulnerability.[82]

2. The Meaning of Educational Transitions in Policy Documents

To track the changes that children experience as they move from one educational experience to another is a very complex task, for they involve various players and scenarios. When children move from the home to their first school experience, the transition becomes a daily and permanent relationship, for the experience of home and of school takes place simultaneously. This is in contrast to the move from preschool to primary school, in which the environments and people involved are generally different, constituting a transition in the strict sense. In this document we shall use "transitions" to refer to both cases.

The policy document "*Colombia por la primera infancia*" establishes that the core of initial education is "care and accompaniment" of children in their growth and development, through creation of safe and healthy settings for socialization. It treats initial education as a continuous and permanent process of healthy, timely and pertinent interactions and social relations that enable children to boost their capabilities and acquire skills. It stipulates that initial education activities are just as important as those involved in child nutrition, health, care and protection, because the skills acquired are the basis for future learning.

The paper does not directly conceptualize school transitions or the mechanisms and strategies for home-preschool-primary coordination. It also makes no reference to the issue of transitions in rural, indigenous and border communities. However, in the matrix of policy indicators, goals and resources in the annex to the document, we that in goal 14: "the territorial entities shall implement the teaching framework defined by the Ministry of Education for the educational care of children from birth to six years of age," proposing "putting into operation channels of intersectoral and inter-institutional coordination at the local, municipal and departmental levels that will guarantee adequate transition for children into school and their continuity in the educational system"[83] as a strategy.

In the document on education policy for early childhood, the MEN does not directly conceptualize educational transitions, but it does refer directly to them in establishing that early childhood education must guarantee "the transit of children through diverse and enriching educational experiences," through coordination of the family environment with the different approaches to early childhood care, and between those approaches and basic education.

It also establishes that this coordination take place through pertinent educational projects that meet criteria of flexibility, so that they can be adapted to the changing realities in which the child develops and to Colombia's multicultural nature. It also notes that this coordination is achieved through use of strategies that facilitate the transit from one educational cycle to the next. It does not, however, identify what those strategies will be.

[82] Political Constitution and Law 1098 of 2006, in the Social Protection System as the State instrument for guaranteeing rights.

[83] DNP (2007). Matriz de Metas, estrategias, indicadores y recursos de la Política Pública Nacional de primera Infancia "Colombia por la Primera Infancia", Bogotá.

The document declares that one of the purposes of early childhood education is "to establish coordination with the basic education cycle," explaining that this coordination does not imply that initial education must be subordinate to primary education, but rather that there is a need to ensure linking mechanisms, so that the transition will have elements of continuity. Such elements include the development of skills, and other elements of change and differentiation such as the study plans used in basic education.

It is significant that the policy document speaks of attention to transition processes, but it does not offer any clear concept of transition; nor does it specify what those linking mechanisms will be and how they will produce articulations to facilitate the transition process.

Thus, the concept of educational transitions in the education policy document focuses on pedagogical processes, but makes no reference to the social, cultural and emotional implications of the transit that children experience from the home to their first institutionalized educational experience. It refers to the transition grade as a level corresponding to nationally institutionalized preschool.

3. Concepts of Quality, Equity and Coverage Relating to Educational Transitions

Quality

Quality and coverage remain important challenges for the country. The results of international tests have highlighted the enormous distance that separates Colombia from developed countries, and even from some countries within the region.

With "The Educational Revolution" (2002-2006), the MEN set out to design and implement a permanent system for improving educational quality. To this end strategies are being developed for the design and dissemination of standards in basic skills; the evaluation of students, teachers and educational directors and dissemination of evaluation results; and quality improvement.[84]

Some actions have been taken with respect to formulating improvement plans for educational institutions, quality certification for educational institutions using internationally recognized models, pedagogical use of the media and learning resources through endowment with infrastructure, connectivity, training and content development; and training for teachers in basic skills and improvement plans.[85]

On the topic of initial education as it relates to school transitions, the intention was to coordinate preschool with primary school. In the first half of 2005, guidelines were established for an early childhood education policy, and a start was made at formulating standards for preschool skills so as to improve the conditions of entry for children in primary basic education. A document was prepared on "basic standards for early childhood education," and is being vetted

[84] www.mineducación.gov.co/cvn/1665/article-137265.html.

[85] During 2003 and 2004, there were 19,758 teachers trained in improvement plans, and occupational skills, and basic language skills, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences and English, in civics issues and environmental education. In the second half of 2005, 4,955 teachers were trained in improvement plans, flexible models, the relevance to rural life of the Superior Normal Schools curriculum, bilingualism, scientific skills and the incorporation of standards in classroom pedagogical projects, for a total of 24,713 teachers trained. There are no figures for the number of teachers trained in initial education.

with educators, universities, normal schools, early childhood teachers associations, cooperation agencies and NGOs.

Quality policy has sought to improve the provision of education services in vulnerable communities. To this end, strategies have been developed to reduce dropout rates with learning and motivation schemes for children to access knowledge through flexible education models, pedagogical and didactic tools, educational baskets, training of officials, school directors and teachers, among others. These will allow the school to recognize diversity and heterogeneity in the context of decentralization, guiding and proposing actions to provide sound and appropriate educational care in order to achieve inclusion, equity and solidarity with these population groups.[86]

The MEN's document on early childhood education policy defines seven aspects as necessary for *offering quality early childhood education*:[87]

1. Have all children achieve a satisfactory level in their development;
2. Treat initial education as a key strategy for equity;
3. Generate a pertinent offer of initial education;
4. Construct pedagogical guidelines that take account of meaningful educational activities through play, art and language development;
5. Ensure a successful transition for children to basic education, making the required institutional articulations between the initial and basic education levels;
6. Develop a cross-sectoral program for training education agents; and
7. Strengthen territorial entities' role in implementation of the Early Childhood Education Policy.

While the MEN refers to a concept of quality "to achieve a successful transit for children to basic education," making the required institutional articulations between the initial and basic education levels, this is treated as an institutional problem of formal education, and no specific mechanisms are directed at the family and other stakeholders for achieving this aspect of quality.

It also seeks to improve quality in the provision of educational services by using quality standards, divided into five components: (i) infrastructure, environment and equipment; (ii) human resources; (iii) the pedagogical process; (iv) shared responsibility with third parties; and (v) administrative and financial management.

Other aspects of quality dealt with in the education policy document relate to the pedagogical component, the development of a project to improve the ICBF children's homes, and training of agents specialized in early childhood issues. The document makes no mention of school transitions as an aspect of quality improvement.

Equity

[86] Between 2003 and 2004, there were 12,660 teachers trained in flexible models and in dealing with vulnerable populations, and 5,636 experiments were implemented with flexible educational models.

[87] Ministerio de Educación Nacional. Viceministerio de la educación Preescolar, Básica y media. (2007) Informe sobre el estado de la situación nacional de la atención del niño menor de 0 a 4 años. Política Educativa Para la Primera Infancia. Bogotá. Ministerio de Educación Nacional

The Colombian education policies that refer to equity as a component of inclusion are the General Education Law, Law 115, the Early Childhood Education Policy, and the Policy Guidelines for Educational Care for Vulnerable Populations.

International documents and agreements mention equity as a principle and a fundamental concept for the quality of care for children from birth to the age of eight, broadening the concept of social and economic equity to include gender, ethnic and cultural aspects. They also consider the situation of geographically dispersed groups, people displaced or in conflict, and children with disabilities. They express concern for the active inclusion of children from rural, indigenous and border communities, who are generally denied access to quality education.

The MEN's early childhood education policy defines equity as equality of opportunities for children to enter and remain in the education system, and notes the need to reduce existing differences of opportunities between rural and urban settings, and among the different socioeconomic strata.

Although based on principles of quality that start from treating children as individuals with rights, this policy limits equity to socioeconomic and geographic factors between rural and urban populations, and reflects little thinking about such important aspects of equity as gender. Nor does it refer to seeking equity for indigenous, black and border communities, or children suffering from displacement or disabilities, making no mention of strategies to improve the transition process for these groups. It is targeted at children from birth to the age of six, which implies that the monitoring of children in their transition to basic primary school is not covered.

Indigenous, border and rural communities

The Directorate of Populations and Inter-Sectoral Projects of the MEN has been working on policy guidelines for educational services to vulnerable groups, as part of the policy known as the "Education Revolution," as one of the national government's principal tools for achieving social equity. The vulnerable groups identified as priorities for attention are:

a) Ethnic communities (indigenous, Afro-Colombian, *raizal* and Roma peoples).

b) Illiterate youth and adults.

c) Youth with special education needs (because of disabilities or limitations, or exceptional talents or capacities).

d) Those affected by violence (displaced population groups, youth who were formally members of unlawful armed groups and school-age children of demobilized adults).

e) Youth at social risk (child workers, youth in conflict with the law, and children and adolescents under protection).

f) Border residents.

g) The isolated rural population.

The document states that educational services for these population groups will be provided in territorial entities "from the preschool level" through intermediate and higher education, informal and community education institutions with the required pedagogical supports.

This policy sets parameters for equity covering various population groups, but does not mention the educational transitions of children from the home to their first institutional education experience, and from there to primary school. We have summarized the aspects dealt with in the document with respect to indigenous communities, border inhabitants, and the isolated rural population.

To guarantee the right to education for indigenous communities, the MEN has followed a policy of inclusion that takes into account the particular historical features and the context of these communities, seeking to develop ethnically appropriate education that reflects the worldview of these communities. It promotes efforts to create appropriate conditions and to guide the various government entities at the national, territorial and local level, such as the departmental and municipal governments, education secretariats, education institutions and centers, organizations and individuals, to ensure that the *majority* (our emphasis) of children belonging to these ethnic groups will have access to education (MEN 2005).[88] However, the coverage of high quality and culturally relevant education for indigenous communities is far from assured.

When it comes to border communities, the establishment of regional communities and the adoption of legislation for frontier zones are both relatively recent, leaving border-zone inhabitants in a condition of vulnerability. Traditionally, these communities have complained of "abandonment" by the State.

The document on education policy guidelines for vulnerable populations states, "in this diverse and complex economic, social and cultural scenario, the education sector must respond with relevance and quality to the characteristics of the border population and to their notions of identity. There must also be great efforts at coverage, even when the geographic, environmental and security characteristics are in many places adverse and complex. The condition of cross-border mobility and regional identity must be recognized in the regional education context so that crossing the border does not become an obstacle to continued pursuit of academic development."[89] Despite this provision, there are few specific programs offered in these communities, especially at the early education level, and people are continuously crossing the border in search of better services offered by one State or the other.

With respect to the rural population, it is estimated that 30% of the Colombian school-age population are children living in rural areas of difficult access. The figures on the current status of rural education in the country reveal high illiteracy rate, low enrollment rates, and high dropout rates. Moreover, a number of studies show that the school-age population enters school late and leaves early to join the workforce.

The document on education policy for vulnerable populations declares that rural education must offer opportunities to cope with economic changes, to improve the quality of life, and thereby to reduce the rate of migration to the cities. It notes that rural people need pertinent education alternatives that take account of their geographic, social and cultural characteristics, in order to bring the school closer to the community and to reduce the existing urban-rural divide.

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[88] Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2005). Dirección de poblaciones y proyectos intersectoriales. Lineamientos de política para la atención educativa a poblaciones vulnerables Bogotá, Colombia. www.mineducacion.gov.co

[89] Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2005). Dirección de poblaciones y proyectos intersectoriales. Lineamientos de política para la atención educativa a poblaciones vulnerables. Bogotá, Colombia. www.mineducacion.gov.co

It stresses the need for territorial entities to focus their efforts on expanding the coverage of preschool, basic secondary and intermediate education, *where the principal problems of school access and retention lie*. The programs offered must also ensure that their curriculum contents, educational materials and teacher training are consistent with specific local characteristics.

This document makes no reference to the education transitions of children in indigenous, border or rural communities, nor does it draw links to the early childhood policy or the education policy for early childhood. However, it does declare that, for isolated rural communities, the formal and non-formal education strategies for early childhood should facilitate entry for school-age children and should be adapted to the scattered nature of the population. In addition, it argues that with the implementation of these strategies, the community will become aware of the importance of initial education, and that parents have a key role in supporting the teacher in the non-formal education option.

Coverage

Under the early childhood policy, the approach to education for early childhood has focused primarily on preschool education, the purpose of which is to prepare children for entry into the formal education system. Preschool education is governed by the General Education Law No. 115 of 1994, which considers it as the first level of the education system and makes the last year of preschool compulsory, defining it as "the education offered to children for their development in the biological, cognitive, psychomotor, socio-affective and spiritual aspects, through experiences of pedagogical and recreational socialization."

The creation of "grade 0" (Decree Law 088 of 1976, Article 4, and Law 115 of 1994) has had a positive impact on coverage for five- and six-year-old children. According to the *Informe Plan País* (2003), the net coverage rate in 2002 for preschool was 34.7%. According to the Sectoral Plan, in 2006 the country achieved coverage ratios of 94% in transition and 115% in basic primary school. For 2006, enrollment at the "transition" level was 824,514, representing a 20% increase from 2002, when it was 686,890.[90] There are no reliable statistics on education for children under the age of five.

The document on education policy for early childhood establishes two different strategies for expanding coverage. For children under five, this is to be done through outsourcing to suitably experienced private service providers in each of the following three modalities:

- Attention in the family setting: this is directed at children in remote rural areas who are unable to attend a child center on a daily basis. Over the period 2006-2010, the plan calls for serving 50,000 rural children under the age of five at Sisben (a proxy means text) levels I and II.
- Attention in the community setting: services provided in community-run nurseries with a view to provide an educational component as a supplement to the care and nutrition that children currently receive. It is targeted at 300,000 urban children under the age of five at Sisben levels I and II, who are served in the Community Nurseries (*Hogares comunitarios*).

[90] Abello R. (2008). Informe de Tesis Doctoral. Transiciones al inicio de la escolaridad: Una experiencia de construcción de sentido. Doctorado en Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud del Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Niñez y Juventud del CINDE–Universidad de Manizales

- Attention in the institutional setting: this is completely privatized, using the installed capacity and experience of private operators who will offer children the components of care, nutrition and education. It is targeted at 50,000 children under the age of five at Sisben levels I and II, in urban areas.

The policy calls for a strategy that will expand school enrollment and retention for five- and six-year-olds through the program "*Ni uno menos*" ("Not one less"),[91] which will work together with the education departments to develop school retention strategies targeted specifically at the most vulnerable population groups.

The goal of the *Ni uno menos* program is to increase the number of children who have access to school, and to ensure that none of those within the system will drop out. It seeks to develop awareness-raising strategies for education agents to generate mechanisms of access. The education departments, rectors, teachers, parents, students, local authorities and the community in general are all stakeholders to whom this campaign is directed.

Within the strategy for educational organization and continuity there is no direct reference to school transitions, but the intent is to strengthen the enrollment process, to offer complete levels of education, from transition to intermediate, and thereby facilitate students to move regularly through the different grades and levels. Other elements proposed relate to school busing programs for remote areas, and the financing of projects to improve school infrastructure and make more efficient use of it so as to guarantee quality facilities and reduce overcrowding.

Referring directly to educational opportunities for rural populations, the strategy calls for implementation of new education models to "bring the school closer to the children," addressing in this way the problem of educational pertinence: these models are adaptable to the environment and the needs of students in these zones.

In addition, to overcome the lack of interest that many parents show in having their children enter and remain in school (an attitude often linked to illiteracy), a special education program for illiterate youth and adults been developed.

4. Legislative Bodies Involved in Policies and Intersectoral Coordination

The bodies involved in policies relating to education transitions and rural, indigenous and border populations are of the institutional and sectoral type, NGOs and civil society organizations. In this sense, the public policy on early childhood takes a mixed approach to inter-institutional coordination, which implies the establishment of institutional and inter-sectoral agreements.

The organizations that played a direct part in formulating the policy are: the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of National Education, the National Planning Department, the Bogotá Department of Social Welfare, national and international NGOs, universities, and international cooperation agencies.

CONPES document 109, National Public Policy for Early Childhood, makes the integral development of young children a goal of social policy, which includes the Social Protection

[91] www.mineducación.gov.co/cvn/1665/article-137265.html. Consulted May 2008. Campaña del MEN: Ni uno menos: más niños en la escuela, disminución de la deserción

System (SPS) intended to reinforce the human capital and incomes of families, to mitigate and overcome situations of crisis, and to assist families in situations of poverty and social vulnerability. The SPS has a series of subsystems, including the Social Promotion System and the Social Risk System, for targeting SPS action for prevention, promotion and assistance to children and pregnant mothers in conditions of vulnerability and poverty.

With respect to the Education Policy for Early Childhood, the MEN has assigned the task of implementing it to a number of sectors and players at the national, regional and local level, working through intersectoral partnerships to achieve the coverage, quality and efficiency targets proposed.

The following table identifies the institutions currently involved in the early childhood policy and the education policy for early childhood, with advisory, oversight, formulation or execution responsibilities.

Institutions Involved in Policy Formulation[92]	
State institutions	Ministry of National Education Ministry of Social Protection Colombian Institute for Family Welfare – ICBF National Planning Department- DNP Social Welfare Department - DABS
National NGOs	International Center for Education and Human Development - CINDE
Universities and research centers	Universidad de Manizales Universidad Javeriana Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Observatorio de Infancia) Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
International organizations	UNICEF Pan-American Health Organization- PAHO Save the Children (UK) Centro Regional para el Fomento del Libro en América Latina y el Caribe - CERLALC World Vision Plan Internacional Inter-American Development Bank- IDB Korean Fund Fondo para la Acción Ambiental y la Niñez

The document also makes the Ministry of National Education and the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, together with the respective regional secretariats and departments, responsible for the design, adoption and implementation of education policy, in coordination with the social assistance funds, NGOs, universities, normal schools and other organizations. To this end, committees, roundtables and networks will be established at the national and local levels to make the policy sustainable.

The community and the family are also to play an active role, under the principle of shared responsibility, thereby changing the traditional role of beneficiaries by linking them to the

[92] Data from the Web Page, Colombia por la primera infancia-ICBF.

Educational Policy for Early Childhood through formal commitments with education service providers in the family, community and institutional settings.

During the two successive mandates of the current government, early childhood has consistently been treated as an important issue. In the period 2002-2006, the Development Plan *Hacia un Estado Comunitario* ("Towards a Community-Based State") sought to broaden coverage among the poorest population, with special emphasis on children five years of age and younger, through child development programs, and it made the previously established Social Policy Councils responsible for coordination among the different bodies of the National System of Family Welfare at the territorial level. However, coverage and quality are still far from the minimum levels needed for a large segment of the population.

5. Implementation Support

In financial terms, the Early Childhood Policy establishes indicators and goals for executing the policy and adds to CONPES document 109 the matrix of goals, strategies, indicators and resources, indicating the resources that will be available to 2010, for each goal, and identifying institutional responsibilities for each goal.

Goal 14 corresponds to the implementation of the pedagogical framework defined by the MEN. One of its strategies is "to put into operation channels of intersectoral and inter-institutional articulation at the local, municipal and departmental levels so as to guarantee adequate transition for children to school, and their continuity in the education system." No resources have been allocated to this goal, which might indicate that the transitions issue has still not been clearly defined in terms of its components and needs.

With respect to the human resources needed to make the early childhood policy viable, these will come from various government bodies and from the *Red de la Sociedad Civil por la Infancia*, a network of academic institutions, NGOs and grassroots organizations. The MEN has established a team headed by a general coordinator responsible for managing the project and coordinating all activities relating to quality, coverage and efficiency, reporting directly to the Vice Minister of Preschool, Basic and Intermediate Education.

The project falls directly under the Office of the Vice Minister of Education and works directly with the Quality Directorate and its Sub-Directorates for Standards and Evaluation and for Educational Improvement and Coordination. It also works with the Directorate for Coverage and Decentralization, with the aim of coordinating the actions needed for the effective and efficient implementation of the education policy for early childhood.

6. Monitoring Public Policies for Transition

Both the Public Policy for Early Childhood and the Early Childhood Education Policy have established their own mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation activities under those respective policies. There are no specific policy guidelines for the educational transition process, and consequently, only the general monitoring mechanisms for these policies are described.

For the early childhood policy there is an inter-institutional and intersectoral working group known as the Monitoring and Evaluation System, tasked with designing the methodology for managing and monitoring the process of implementing the policy.

The MEN has established that will work to update the technological platform of the Enrollment Information System (*Sistema de Información de Matrículas,* SIMAT) and to identify sources, instruments and mechanisms for data collection beginning in 2007. It will work with the ICBF to adopt a common set of recording variables, which will make it possible to track enrollment by age from birth to age 17 for children served by the two institutions.

Processes and criteria for targeting

The Early Childhood Policy and the Early Childhood Education Policy share some targeting processes and criteria, which are in fact used by State institutions in general and are based on the Sisben, which is the system used to identify potential beneficiaries for social programs. This tool organizes individuals according to their standard of living and (theoretically) allows the beneficiaries of government social program to be selected in an objective, uniform and equitable manner in light of their particular socioeconomic condition.

If a person has been identified as a potential beneficiary of social programs (i.e. if a person is classified between levels 1 and 3), he or she will be eligible for government subsidies through the various programs, in accordance with the applicable regulations.

The social program executing agencies allocate subsidies on the basis of information contained in the consolidated database, certified by the National Planning Department (DNP) and other targeting tools applicable to each program.

In this way, the MEN and the ICBF will ensure that services under the early childhood education policy will be targeted at children in Sisben levels I and II.

7. Training of Specialized Agents

To work as a teacher in preschool education in Colombia requires a special degree (*licenciada en Preescolar, tecnóloga en Preescolar, licenciada en Educación infantil*) or a normal school diploma (a middle-level diploma: by agreement with the universities that have education faculties, candidates enter normal school after four years of basic secondary education and two years of intermediate education).

The early childhood education policy attaches great importance to specialized training for its teachers. To this end it adopts a cross-sectoral approach based on the public policy for early childhood, in order to respond adequately to the characteristics and needs of children. In 2006, the "Human Talent Roundtable" was established as part of the formulation of the Early Childhood Policy, led by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the ICBF, the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional and CINDE.

The Human Talent training component is intended to build a cross-sectoral system for training education agents for early childhood education (SIFAE) using existing systems.[93] However, the country currently betrays great shortcomings in terms of teacher training and expertise in early childhood education.

[93] According to the same document, this proposal was presented to the IDB, which will provide financial support for gathering information for the sectoral training systems oriented to early childhood education.

8. Family Work and Involvement

One of the principles underlying the Early Childhood Policy is "the family as focal point," according to which the family is treated as the natural setting for the integral development of children from birth through the age of six, guided by the parameters of love, kindness and recognition of the dignity and rights of all family members. This is the space in which children first experience democracy and where they develop into human beings who are dignified, free, responsible, equal and autonomous, and aware of the gender perspective and of their rights.

The Early Childhood Education Policy seeks to transform the family role under the principle of shared responsibility, moving from the status of beneficiaries of government programs to a more proactive role. It calls for involving families in the early childhood education policy through formal commitments with education service providers in the family, community and institutional settings.

The policy aims to strengthen the educational contribution of families in day-to-day life and the role of initial education in all the learning environments—family, community and institutional—as a way of developing basic skills. Despite these guidelines, we are not aware of any specific family programs dealing with school transition.

9. Curriculum: Implementation Plan

According to Decree 2247 of September 1997, the curriculum guidelines for preschool education are based on the principles of "comprehensiveness, participation and child's play." That decree declares that the preschool curriculum is to be conceived as an ongoing project of pedagogical construction and investigation that embraces the objectives established by Law 115, article 16 of 1994, and that must allow for continuity and articulation with the pedagogical processes and strategies of basic education.

Early childhood education policy calls for developing a pedagogical component appropriate to early childhood, starting from the characteristics and potentials of the child, making available situations for individual and social learning and promoting opportunities, the quality of learning, and the acquisition of basic skills.

The MEN has prepared a document known as the "Descriptor of Basic Skills in Early Childhood: Transition" which describes the abilities that the child possesses at the time of the proposed activity and before the activity as a way to understand its manner of accessing knowledge and organizing its world. This descriptor is to allow the teacher to program and adjust educational activities in order to generate a classroom environment more conducive to learning and socialization, and one that will encourage all children to achieve skills of progressively greater complexity.[94]

The MEN, along with the Early Childhood Network, has undertaken the task of preparing pedagogical guidelines for parents, caregivers and teachers to aid their understanding of the

[94] In 2006 the MEN tested this descriptor in selected municipios, where it also provided training for teachers in the transition grade.

child's capacities and potentials, and to accompany the processes of care and education in early childhood.[95]

There are no explicit guidelines for the school transition process, although progress has been made in achieving vertical articulation between preschool and basic primary.

10. Promotion and Implementation of Early Childhood Services and Programs

The Colombian Institute for Family Welfare and the National Ministry of Education has signed an inter-agency agreement to provide comprehensive early childhood care through various means. At the same time, they are taking steps to improve the quality of care with programs such as "*Fiesta de la Lectura*" ("Festival of Reading"), which seeks to promote languages, literature and artistic expression in the *hogares infantiles* and community day care centers.

The ICBF offers care programs targeted at early childhood:

1. The ***Materno infantil*** ("mother and child") program offers nutritional and health support to pregnant and nursing mothers and to children under the age of seven living in rural areas, with preference to those in Sisben levels 1 and 2.

2. The ***Lactantes y prescolares*** ("infant and preschool") program offers funding to nonprofit organizations that are part of the National Family Welfare System[96] to provide care for children from three months through the age of five. This funding covers a portion of the cost of childcare, with a focus on nutrition, psychological and pedagogical activities, and parent training.

3. ***Hogares FAMI*** sponsors activities with pregnant and nursing mothers and children under two, preferably in Sisben levels 1 and 2, with a view to enhancing the socializing function and strengthening the participation of fathers, mothers and siblings in the child's development.

4. ***Hogares Communitarions de Bienestar*** (Community Welfare Nurseries) are a set of joint government and community efforts to foster the psychosocial, moral and physical development of children under the age of six from extremely poor families. They offer nutritional support and encourage socialization, and also seek to involve parents more closely in the training and care of their children. These actions are pursued under four modalities, "family," "group," "multiple" and "business-sponsored" centers.

5. ***Hogares infantiles*** ("Children's centers") are a service run directly by the ICBF that offers preventive protection to children between six months and five years who face threats to their growth, development and socialization because they have no one (parents or sitters) to give them emotional and sociocultural care during the day.

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[95] The MEN has now consulted experts on the contents of these pedagogical guidelines and it has established the "early childhood team" responsible for this component.

[96] The *Sistema Nacional de Bienestar familiar* embraces all the legally authorized public, private, social and community entities that work together to improve the lives of children and families, in the municipios, departments and throughout the national territory. It includes the Ministry of Social Protection, the ICBF and all State agencies, NGOs and community organizations delegated by the ICBF.

6. **Support for the socialization of deaf children**. This program is targeted at children under five who were born deaf, or have become deaf in the first two years of life. They must be registered with the General System of Social Security. The purpose is to help them become socialized by learning how to communicate in sign language.

7. ***Desayunos infantiles*** ("Child breakfasts") was developed between 2003 and 2006 to contribute to the food and nutritional security of children between six months and five years from families at Sisben level 1. It offers two kinds of breakfasts, as well as health, education, training and outreach activities.

Other programs

The Capital District Department of Social Welfare (DABS) also has a number of projects to care for children in situations of vulnerability. These include: Initial Education for children under the age of five; *Centros Amar de Integración*, providing care to youngsters up to 14 years of age whose parents work in the streets or at night, or who are exposed to begging, maltreatment, sexual abuse or child labor; *Protejamos la vida*, ("Let's protect life"), with special centers for juveniles under legal protection orders from the Family Defender of the ICBF, and children with moderate to severe mental retardation, in Sisben levels 1 and 2; and *Nutrir para el futuro*, which seeks to improve nutrition for all DABS users (children and youth, pregnant women and adults) through food assistance, educational activities and nutritional monitoring.

The family assistance funds (*cajas de compensación familiar*) also have early childhood programs. Some run their own kindergartens and schools. Others, such as *Compensar* in Bogotá, operate the Social Kindergartens Program under contract with the ICBF and DABS.

CINDE has designed a series of innovative non-formal programs to help children under the age of six through their families and individuals from the community, improving their living standards, education, health and environment. These methods have been applied very successfully in the Department of Chocó and in urban districts of Medellin for more than 25 years. The programs sponsored by CINDE include the following: early stimulation, integrated school-home program; child-to-child program, preschool at home, community family centers, and "play and learn to think."

The CONPES 109 document lists local programs for early childhood development in different regions of the country.

Conclusions

Since the 1990s Colombia has debated and adopted a significant body of legislation dealing with early childhood, and civil society and the academic world have promoted the issue at the national level. As a result, the country now has a National Public Policy for Early Childhood. The involvement of civil society, the academic world and NGOs has been an important factor in promoting legislation to protect the rights of young children; there are institutional arrangements for concerted work among these different levels.

The Ministry of National Education has prepared and is now implementing the Education Policy for Early Childhood, based on the guidelines established in the Public Policy for Early Childhood.

The principles underlying the early childhood policy enshrine the perspective of rights and integral protection established in the Constitution and in Law 1098 of 2006, and in the Social Protection System, as the government instrument for guaranteeing rights.

Despite this wealth of legislation, policy documents contain no specific concept of school transitions. These are included as a policy component, particularly with respect to vertical transitions involving the move from preschool to basic primary, from an institutional viewpoint, but they do not really address the issue of transitions from home to initial education. There are no mechanisms or resources to accompany school transitions.

The MEN has prepared policy guidelines targeted at vulnerable population groups, which include people living in indigenous, border and isolated rural communities, but there are no clear guidelines for early childhood and no reference to educational transitions for these groups.

Despite legislative progress, the resources devoted to implementing the policy are still inadequate to achieve significant improvements in coverage and quality for initial education as it relates to the educational transitions discussed in this document.

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Chapter III. CHILE REPORT

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

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Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

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Introduction

The execution of this project in Chile is the responsibility of the National Board of Early Childhood Education (*Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles*, JUNJI). This document was prepared by a working team comprising officials from the Ministry of Education, the Fundación Integra, and the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation. It also received contributions from the Department of Health Statistics and Information of the Ministry of Health and from the National Corporation for Indigenous Development.

1. Children in Rural and Indigenous Areas: Specific Features of the Educational Transition

1.1. Demographic Background[97]

1.1.1. National Population

The total national population of Chile is 15,116,435 individuals—7,447,695 men and 7,688,740 women (masculinity index of 96.9).[98]

The growth, size and composition of any population are determined by the levels and structure of fertility, mortality and international migration.[99] In the case of Chile, the greatest demographic impacts on the gender and age composition come from the natural or vegetative balance, i.e. the difference between births and deaths.

[97] All data in this section are taken from the 2002 Census of the National Statistics Institute of Chile.
[98] The masculinity index is a demographic indicator expressing the ratio of men to women in a specific territory, expressed as a percent. It is calculated using the formula men/women x 100.
[99] Census records show that until 1990 Chile had a negative net international migration balance, with more emigrants than immigrants. The values of that balance were low and constant (between -30 and -40 thousand persons over a decade). However, between 1990 and 1995, for the first time, the country began to experience a positive net migration balance, with immigrants outnumbering emigrants.

The birth rate declined from 27.4 in 1972 to 14.9 in 2005. The fertility rate during the 1960s in Chile averaged slightly over five children per woman; a rate that has since shown a downward trend, and in 2005 the average was 1.93 children per woman of childbearing age. The overall rural fertility rate is 2.1, the overall indigenous fertility rate is 2.27, and the overall indigenous rural fertility rate is 2.25.[100]

Between 1972 and 2005, the mortality rate dropped from 8.9 to 5.3. The child mortality rate fell from 72.7 to 7.9, while the neonatal mortality rate was down from 29.4 to 5.2, and the stillbirths (mortality) rate declined from 20.8 to 7.6.

The average annual population growth rate between censuses has been declining: it dropped from 2.03 in the period between 1970 and 1982, to 1.64 between 1982 and 1992, and to 1.24 between 1992 and 2002. This means that the pace of population growth in Chile has been slowing steadily.[101]

In terms of age distribution, Chile is in the advanced stages of a demographic transition towards an aging population,[102] and older adults (60 years or more) are gradually becoming a larger portion of the total, while the younger population has seen its weight decline in the national population as a whole. The following table shows weightings by age group:

Age Groups	CENSUS			
	1970	1982	1992	2002
0-14	39	32	29	26
15-59	53	59	61	63
60 and over	8	9	10	11

Source: INE, Chile, Anuarios de Demografía

This development reflects primarily the steady decline in mortality and in fertility, and greater longevity in this segment of the population. Life expectancy at birth increased from 63.6 years between 1970 and 1975, to 77.7 years between 2000 and 2005.

The total national population under the age of nine is 2,423,700 individuals (1,233,836 boys and 1,189,959 girls, for a masculinity index of 103.7). The weight of this age group in the total national population is 16%. The total national rural population under the age of nine is 320,273 individuals (163,551 boys and 156,722 girls, for a masculinity index of 104.4). This group accounts for 15.8% of the total national rural population.

1.1.2. Rural and Indigenous Population

[100] Estadísticas Sociales de los Pueblos Indígenas en Chile. Censo 2002. INE-Programa Orígenes
[101] In 1970 the Chilean population was estimated at 9.5 million (9,570,000); in 1982 at slightly over 11 million (11,330,000); in 1992 at 13.5 million (13,665,000); and in 2002 at nearly 16 million (15,746,000).
[102] Odette Tacla Chamy, *Envejecimiento demográfico de la población, Estadística y Economía*, INE Chile 2003

The total rural population[103] is 2,026,322 individuals (1,081,384 men and 944,938 women, for a masculinity index of 114.4), with a persistently negative national rural growth rate of -0.8%. Since 1970, the proportion of the total national rural population in the total national population has dropped from 24% to the current 13%.

The total national indigenous population[104] represents 4.6% of the total national population, at 692,192 individuals (348,906 men and 343,286 women, for a masculinity index of 101.6). The total national indigenous population under nine years is 101,250 individuals (51,683 boys and 49,567 girls, for a masculinity index of 104.3). This age group accounts for 14.6% of the total national indigenous population.[105]

The percentage of 62.8 of Chile's indigenous population lives in urban areas. The great majority (87.2%) identify themselves as Mapuche, followed by Aymará (7.8%), Atacameño (2.8%), Diaguita (0.8%), Quechua (0.6%), Coya (0.3%), Rapa Nui (0.2%), Kawashkar (0.2%) and Yagán (0.1%). In regional terms, individuals belonging to indigenous peoples are to be found primarily in the Araucanía Region (29.5%), followed by the Metropolitan Region (27.7%), Los Lagos (14.7%), Bío Bío (7.8%) and Tarapacá (7.1%).[106]

The total national rural indigenous population represents 37.2% of the national indigenous population, at 243,810 individuals (129,116 men and 114,694 women, for a masculinity index of 112.6). The total rural indigenous population under nine years is 38,015 individuals (19,341 boys and 18,674 girls, for a masculinity index of 103.4). This age group accounts for 15.6% of the total national rural indigenous population.

2. Rural/Indigenous Families

2.1. Poverty[107]

Between 1990 and 2006 there was a steady decline, from 38.6% to 13.7%, in the number of individuals and households living in poverty. As to those living in extreme poverty (indigence), the figure dropped from 13% to 3.2%. The National Rural Population classified as poor declined from 38.8% to 12.3%, and that defined as indigent from 15.7% to 3.5%. In terms

[103] The term "Rural" applies by definition to a set of dwellings, concentrated or dispersed, with 1000 inhabitants or fewer, or with between 1000 and 2000 inhabitants if less than 50% of economically active population is engaged in secondary or tertiary activities. The INE does not in fact class communes (*comunas*) as "rural", but refers to their rural element, which it classifies according to the following criteria: highly rural: those with a rural population exceeding 60%; mixed: those with a rural population between 40 and 60%; low rural element: those with a rural population under 40%, areas that are also called urban.

[104] Chilean statistics use the criterion of self-identification or self-perception. The National Population and Housing Census of the INE has been asking about ethnic identity only since the census of 1992. The question is formulated thus: "If you are Chilean, do you consider yourself as belonging to any of the following cultures? Mapuche, Aymara, Rapa Nui or none of the foregoing." In the 2002 Census the question was modified to read as follows: "Do you belong to any of the following aboriginal or indigenous groups? Alacalufe (Kawashkar), Atacameño, Aymara, Colla, Mapuche, Quechua, Rapa Nui, Yámana (Yagán), none of the foregoing."

[105] The Indigenous Law of Chile (Law 19,253) of 1993 takes account of criteria of descent, as well as sociocultural criteria and self-identification. Para. 4 provides: "Article 9. For purposes of this law, the indigenous community shall be understood as any grouping of persons belonging to the same indigenous ethnic group, under one or more of the following circumstances: (a) they come from the same family tree; (b) they recognize a traditional chief; (c) they own or once owned indigenous lands in common; (d) they come from the same ancient settlement."

[106] Informe INE 2007.

[107] The data in this section are taken from the Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (*Encuesta de Caracterización Socio Económica*, Casen) of the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (Mideplan).

of total national households, the proportion of poor households fell from 33.3% to 11.3%, and indigent households from 10.6% to 2.7%.

Thirty-six percent of national households have children under the age of nine. For poorer households, the figure is 67% and for indigent households, 58%: 21.0% of the total national population under the age of nine lives in poverty, and 5% in extreme poverty.

The national income distribution by autonomous income quintile is the following:

Zone	I	II	III	IV	V
Urban	3.6	8.1	12.2	20.1	56.0
Rural	10.8	16.4	17.2	16.7	39.0
Total	4.2	8.7	12.6	19.8	54.6

Source: Casen – Mideplan, Chile

As seen in the table above, 20% of the wealthiest households nationwide receive more than half (54.6%) of the total income, and the poorest 20% receives 4.2%. The rural income distribution is different: the fifth quintile receives 39%, and the first quintile (the poorest households) receives 10.8% of rural income.

2.1.1. Indigenous and Rural Population

The proportion of the national indigenous population living in poverty was 35.1% in 1996, and was down to 19% in 2006,[108] while the proportion living in extreme poverty dropped from 11% to 4.7%. Poor indigenous households declined from 30.4% to 14.6%, and indigent indigenous households from 8.9% to 3.9%. The population under the age of nine living in poverty was 27%, and 7% lived in extreme poverty. The National Rural Indigenous Population living in poverty is 20.2%, and in extreme poverty it is 6.2%. The Rural Indigenous Population under the age of nine living in poverty is 27%, and 9% live in extreme poverty. The urban indigenous population receives incomes that are 25.7% lower than those of non-indigenous city-dwellers, and 28.7% of this population is classified as poor, a figure that is 10.6 percentage points higher than the poverty rate among the non-indigenous population.

The proportion of poor rural households fell from 32.9% to 10%, and indigent rural households from 12.5% to 3%.

The proportion of the total national rural population under the age of nine living in poverty is 17%, and 5% live in extreme poverty.

2.1.2. Paid Work among the Indigenous Population

In 2006 the labor participation rate of the national indigenous population was 56.8%, up by 2.2 percentage points from 1996, with a gap of only 0.5 percentage points below the rate for

[108] The Mideplan Casen Survey has asked about ethnic origin since 1996, and the question is worded the same as that in the 2002 Census. In the 2006 Casen survey the Diaguita ethnic group was added to this question, having been recognized by law in 2006.

the non-indigenous population. Also in 2006, the average income of the indigenous population was 27.8% below that of non-indigenous people.[109]

The economic income of the indigenous population grew by 7.2% between 2003 and 2006, or by 2.4 percentage points less than that of the non-indigenous population. As the great majority (87.2%) of the indigenous population identifies itself as Mapuche, the situation of Mapuche working women can be taken to illustrate the reality of indigenous women in general.

Eighty-three percent of Mapuche women surveyed by Casen 2006 were engaged in paid work. Of these, 53% were in the formal economic system, and 30% were engaged in paid domestic employment. Thus, the majority of Mapuche women surveyed are engaged in occupations that oblige them to remain outside the home, for which reason the early childhood education services offered by government and the basic education system for ethnic communities are of great importance.

2.2. Household Characteristics

2.2.1. National Households[110]

The national average for the number of individuals under the age of six per household is 0.3, a figure which prevails at both the rural and urban level. Average national household size is 3.7 individuals (3.7 urban, and 3.6 rural).

Among poor households, the average size is 4.5 people, and 4.4 for indigent households. The average number of household members with paid employment at the national level is 1.5; it is 1 in poor households, and 0.7 in indigent households.

There was an increase in the number of households headed by women between 2000 and 2006: while in 2003, 23.1% of households had a female head, that figure had risen to 30% by 2006.

The majority of non-indigenous rural households fit the pattern of the conventional nuclear family (58.15%), followed by the "extended family" pattern (23.1%).

2.2.2. The Structure of Indigenous and Rural Households[111]

The distribution of households by structural type in rural areas in relation to urban areas and the national total is the following, including indigenous families:

Type of household	Urban	Rural	National
One-person	9	10	9
Simple incomplete nuclear	11	7	10

[109] Source: Casen 2006.
[110] The data in this section are taken from the Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (*Encuesta de Caracterización Socio Económica*, Casen) of the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (Mideplan).
[111] The data presented in this section are taken from the 2002 Census (Social Statistics on the Indigenous Peoples of Chile, INE-Mideplan).

Type of household	Urban	Rural	National
Simple complete nuclear	50	54	51
Simple extended nuclear	11	12	11
Composite nuclear	11	9	11
Composite extended	2	2	2
Multiple extended	6	4	6
Census-based	1	0	1
Total	100	100	100

Type of indigenous household	%
Composite	3.2
Extended	23.6
No family nucleus	5.7
One-person	9.4
Nuclear	58.1

Source: INE-Mideplan, Chile

In urban and rural areas alike, the greatest percentage of households falls into the simple complete nuclear category, at 50% and 54% respectively. The majority of indigenous households are extended households, followed by one-person households.

Information on the average number of persons in the family group, by household structure among the indigenous population, is presented in the following table:

Relational structure	Average no. of persons per household
Incomplete household	3.7
Lone indigenous head or head of household with no family nucleus	1.7
Indigenous head and indigenous spouse/partner	4.3
Indigenous head and non-indigenous spouse/partner	4.2

Relational structure	Average no. of persons per household
Non-indigenous head and indigenous spouse/partner	4.1
National	3.8

Source: Casen-Mideplan, Chile, 2006

2.2.3. Head of Household

The majority of indigenous households have an indigenous head with an indigenous partner or spouse (24.3%), followed by those with an indigenous head and a non-indigenous partner or spouse, at 24%. In rural areas, the distribution by type of indigenous household reveals a majority of households with an indigenous head and indigenous spouse or partner (41.1%), followed by households with a lone indigenous head or a head with no family nucleus (20%).

The following table shows the average distribution of indigenous households by head and the relationship of the couple:

Relational structure	% of indigenous households
Incomplete household	14.2
Lone indigenous head or head of household with no family nucleus	15.1
Indigenous head and indigenous spouse/partner	24.3
Indigenous head and non-indigenous spouse/partner	24
Non-indigenous head and indigenous spouse/partner	22.4
National	100

Source: Casen-Mideplan, Chile, 2006

Regarding the distribution of household heads by sex, the proportion of households headed by females rose by 2.8 percentage points between 2000 and 2003. The figure for indigenous households nationwide rose by 3.3 percentage points over the same period.[112]

Thirty-two percent of indigenous urban households are headed by a woman, as are 23.8% of rural indigenous households.[113] The equivalent figure for non-indigenous rural households nationwide is 20%.[114]

2.2.4. Education Levels of Household Heads

Among household heads at the national level, the average number of years of schooling is 9.5 (8.7 years for female heads, and 9.8 years for male heads).

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[112] Source: Mideplan, from the Casen Survey
[113] Source: Mideplan Report 2006.
[114] Source: National Statistics Institute, webpage
http://www.ine.cl/canales/chile_estadistico/estadisticas_sociales_culturales/etnias/pdf/info_etniascenso2002.pdf

Among rural households, the figure is 6.3 years (5.2 years for female heads and 6.6 years for male heads).

Among indigenous households, the nationwide figure is 7.8 years (seven years for female heads and 8.2 years for male heads).

2.2.5. Use and Mastery of the Indigenous Language

Of the national indigenous population, 23% speak and/or understand their native language; 12.1% speak and understand it, while 10.8% only understand it.[115]

In rural areas, 37.1% of the indigenous population speak and/or understand their native language: 21.4% speak and understand it, while 15.6% only understand it. In urban areas, 16.7% speak and/or understand their native language: 8% speak and understand it, and 8.7% only understand it.

The proportion of the indigenous population that speaks and/or understands their native language declined among all age groups between 2003 and 2005, as the following graph shows. In the 0-17 year's age bracket, the figure was 10.3% in 2006; 19.5% for those between 18-29 years; 28.5% for those between 30-44 years; 34.6% for those between 45-59 years; and 45.6% for those over the age of 60 (the age bracket with the greatest percentage of individuals who speak or understand the native language).[116]

Indigenous population that speak and/or understand their native language, by age bracket. 2003-2006 (percentage) 0-17 years etc.

Source: Casen-Mideplan, Chile, 2006

Among the Mapuche population, 22.8% speak and/or understand their native language; the figure for the Rapa Nui population is 81.3% and 74.4% for the Quechuas. The Diaguitas, Atacameños and Yaganes peoples have lost the use of their native language.

3. Education

3.1. Characterization of Available Education Services

Formal education for Chile's rural population is provided through the schools, which are classified by the education system as "incomplete or "multigrade" and "complete." The

[115] Source: Casen 2006
[116] Source: Casen 2006.

"incomplete" or "multigrade" schools are those that offer basic instruction up to grade six; the complete schools offer eight years of basic education. Both types may offer preschool classes. There are approximately 3,414 schools, with 5,068 teachers and 96,500 pupils, distributed across the country. Studies show that the rural teaching body is stable and turnover is low.

The size and geographic distribution of schools serving the rural population reveals various types of organization and management, from schools with only one teacher for all courses (and responsible for management and administrative functions as well) to schools with a full team of directors, pedagogical technicians, teachers and administrative personnel.

Rural Multigrade Schools, by Size of Teaching Body		
Nº of teachers	Nº of schools	%
1 teacher	1,811	42
2 teachers	626	15
3 teachers	255	6
More than 3 teachers	722	37
	3, 414	100

Source: Ministry of Education of Chile, Basic Education Level, 2004

As seen in the table above, one-teacher schools predominate in the countryside (42%), while 37% have more than three teachers. Most of these schools are small: 39% serve fewer than 20 pupils, and only 18% have more than 120.

In rural areas, municipally-run public establishments account for the majority of elementary and high schools: they number 3,448, representing 58.4% of the total. This is important, for it reflects the government's intention to guarantee school access for the rural population, which is geographically dispersed and far from urban centers.

Region	Geographic area	Administrative arrangement				
		Total	Municipal	Private subsidized	Pvt. paid	"Delegated Administrative Corporation"
Total	Total	11,763	5,909	5,054	730	70
	Urban	7,337	2,461	4,100	714	62
	Rural	4,426	3,448	954	16	8

Source: Ministry of Education of Chile

The rural school population represents 9.5% of total school enrollment in the country.

3.2. Education Indicators

3.2.1. Entry Age by Level of Education

For the age bracket of interest to this study (under the age of nine), the age distribution at entry into the education system is as follows:[117] Up to five years and 11 months for preschool, and between six and eight years for basic education (grades 1, 2 and 3).

Preschool education in Chile is organized into cycles, covering two different age groups: the first cycle is for children up to 2 years and 11 months and the second cycle for children 3 years to 5 years and 11 months. These are divided into three levels: (a) day nurseries (*sala cuna*) for children up to the age of two, with two sublevels: Junior (*sala cuna menor*), for children in the first year of life, and senior (*sala cuna major*), for children between the ages of one and two; (b) intermediate level for children between the ages of two and four, divided into two sublevels: two- to three-year-olds (junior), and three- to four-year-olds (senior); (c) transition level for children between the ages of four and six, divided into first (ages four to five) and second (ages five to six) levels. As noted earlier, children generally enter basic education at the age of six.[118]

3.2.2. Coverage

Preschool education is not compulsory in Chile. However, Law 20,162 of 2007 establishes kindergarten and prekindergarten as the first level of the national education system; one that is free of charge and targeted at children under the age of six, guaranteeing coverage for the entire national population. Preschool is not a prerequisite for entering basic education, but it does count towards the 14 years of compulsory education offered by the State to the entire population. The government has in fact made it a basic principle to achieve equity from nursery school on, implying a government commitment to ensure the quality of education for all children regardless of their socioeconomic origin.

Rural children usually have no access to kindergarten or other formal preschool programs, due primarily to the geographic dispersal of the population, the great distances between towns, and adverse climatic conditions. Consequently, special programs have been created for young rural and indigenous children, through the National Board of Early Childhood Education (*Junta Nacional de Jardines*, JUNJI) as well as the Fundación Integra. The JUNJI serves indigenous communities primarily through the Alternative Kindergarten Program for Indigenous Communities, which is offered in 52 establishments throughout the country; the program manager is a person of indigenous descent who knows the local indigenous language. The Fundación Integra offers three programs: "seasonal kindergartens," "intercultural kindergartens," and "Pehuenche summer classes." The Ministry of Education offers the Intercultural Bilingual Education Program.

The greatest increase in coverage between 1990 and 2006 was for the four-year-old age group, which rose by 34.9% over that period. In contrast, coverage for the eight-year-old age group rose by only 0.7% over those years. In 2006, 59.3% of children under the age of nine nationwide were attending an education establishment; the figure among the rural population was 50.2%.[119]

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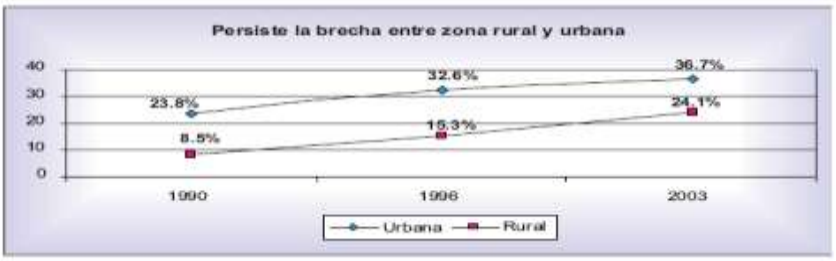
[117] In addition, children with special educational needs may enter special-education schools or programs from around age 2 until age 24, and this limit can be extended in certain cases to age 26.

[118] In a reference to preschool education, President Michelle Bachelet noted that "as of now the Constitution mandates the State and gives it responsibility to ensure that places are accessible and available to all families that need and want them. …It is not compulsory for parents to send their children, but it is compulsory for the State to guarantee and maintain all the conditions for access to education, without making this level a requirement for entry into basic education". In this context, an important aspect is the establishment of "a guarantee of availability for the families of Chile". January 23, 2007.

[119] Source: Casen Report 2006.

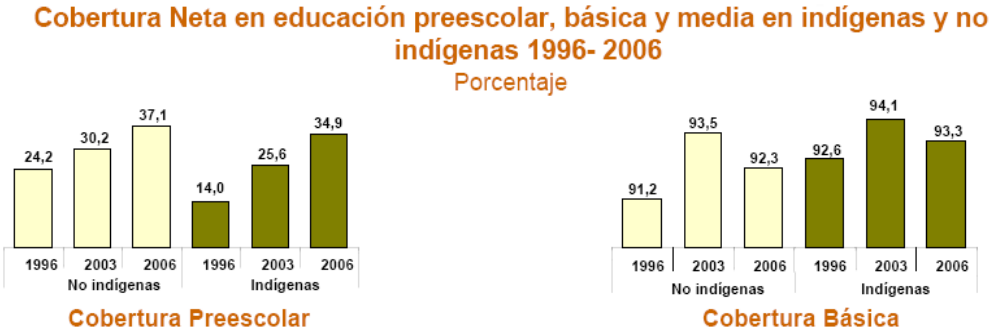
As the following chart shows, although preschool education coverage has increased, there is still a gap between rural and urban areas: while rural coverage has increased faster than urban coverage, in 2003 it still lagged behind by 12 percentage points.



Source: Ministry of Education of Chile

The rural-urban gap persists. The change in preschool and basic education coverage for the indigenous population between 1996 and 2006 can be appreciated in the following chart:

Preschool, basic and intermediate education coverage in indigenous and non-indigenous areas, 1996-2006. Percentages.



Preschool Coverage **Basic Coverage**

Source: Casen 2006

As the above data shows, non-indigenous preschool coverage increased from 24.2% in 1996 to 37.1% in 2006, a rise of 13 percentage points. Indigenous preschool coverage rose from 14% to 34.9% over the same years for an increase of 20.9 percentage points, or seven points more than the non-indigenous coverage. However, in basic education the pattern of indigenous coverage has been discontinuous: it rose by 2% between 1996 and 2003, but then fell by 0.8% in 2006. Interestingly, the basic education pattern was similar for the non-indigenous population over that same period.

In 2006, 18.1% of the non-indigenous population nationwide had no formal education or had not completed primary school, compared to 31.2% of the indigenous population. In 2006, 28.4% of the non-indigenous population had completed basic education but had not completed intermediate school, compared to 31.5% of the indigenous population. This confirms the importance of the bursary programs such as the "Indigenous Bursaries" (in place since 1994), which seek to increase coverage and thereby ensure access to education for these people.

3.2.3. Enrollment and Attendance

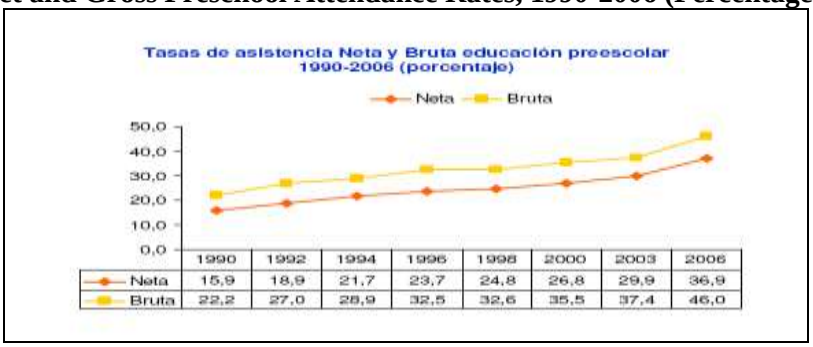
The institutions responsible for early childhood education policy and delivery are the National Board of Early Childhood Education (JUNJI); the Foundation Integra, and the Ministry of Education. The following table shows enrollment nationwide among the under-six population, by educational institution:

INSTITUTION	1999	2006	9
MINEDUC	27 4 587	31 7 064	6 1.8
JUNJI	11 5 327	12 1 648	2 3.7
INTEGRA	59 839	74 252	1 4.5
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	44 9 753	51 2.964	1 00

Source: Casen-Mideplan, Chile, 2006

Total enrollment rose by 5.8% over the period between 1999 and 2006. The gross attendance rate[120] in preschool education increased from 22.2% in 1990 to 46% in 2006, up by 23.8 percentage points as shown below, while the net attendance rate[121] rose from 15.9% to 35.9%, an increase of 21 percentage points over the same period.

Net and Gross Preschool Attendance Rates, 1990-2006 (Percentages)



Source: Casen-Mideplan, Chile, 2006

The net attendance rate in basic education increased from 90.4% in 1990 to 92.4% in 2006. The following table shows the promotion (passing), repetition and dropout rates for the first three years of basic education nationwide:

Level and grade	Promotion rate	Repetition rate	Dropout rate
Complete basic	94.3	4.3	1.4

[120] The Casen 2006 defines the Gross Preschool Attendance Rate as the total number of students attending preschool divided by the population aged zero to five years.
[121] The Casen 2006 defines the Net Preschool Attendance Rate as the total number of students aged zero to five years attending preschool divided by the population aged zero to five.

Level and grade	Promotion rate	Repetition rate	Dropout rate
1°	93.7	4.5	1.8
2°	95.1	3.9	1.0
3°	95.5	3.7	0.8

Source: Ministry of Education, Chile, Education Indicators 2005

The dropout rate is highest in the first level of basic education, as is the repetition rate: this would seem consistent with research data, which show that repetition is one of the determining factors behind school dropouts. The rural dropout rate is lower at all levels than the nationwide rate, although the rural repetition rate is higher for all levels of basic education considered.[122]

An analysis of the promotion rate focusing on the geographic location and gender of students shows that the female passing rate is slightly higher than that for males, both in basic education as a whole (2.66 percentage points) and in the first two years of basic education (2.19 points for the first level and 1.69 points for the second level). The urban passing rate exceeds the rural passing rate by 1.36 points, and it also exceeds the nationwide rate by 0.17%.

3.2.4. Schooling and Literacy Among the National, Indigenous and Rural Populations

Nationwide, the average length of schooling rose from nine years in 1990 to 10.1 years in 2006. Among the population classified as poor it raised from 7.7 to 8.7 years, and among the indigenous population from 7.2 to 8.5 years. Nationwide, the proportion of people who had not completed intermediate school dropped from 64% to 48.1%.[123]

According to the Casen 2006, the average length of schooling for the indigenous population 18 years and older was 8.7 years, or 1.6 years below the average for non-indigenous people: this gap was similar across all income quintiles.

Between 1996 and 2006 the proportion of the indigenous population completing intermediate school rose initially and then declined: it was 33.6% in 1996 and 34% in 2003, but only 31.5% in 2006.

In 1996, 4.4% of the indigenous population had received some higher education, versus 6.3% in 2006; in interpreting this figure, however, it must be recalled that the self-identified indigenous population was greater in 2006 than in previous periods.[124]

The nationwide illiteracy rate declined from 5.2% in 1990 to 3.5% in 2006.[125] Over that same time, the illiteracy rate among the national population classified as poor dropped from 6.8% to 6.2%, and for the indigent population, from 8% to 6.8%.[126]

The illiteracy rate among the indigenous population ages ten and older is 8.2% nationwide, but only 4% among the ten-and-up non-indigenous population. The rural illiteracy

[122] Source: UNICEF. Web file:///G:/oea/estadistica/Unicef%20Chile%20-%20Educaci%C3%B3n.htm
[123] Source: Casen 2006
[124] Source: Casen 2006.
[125] Source: UNICEF. Web file:///G:/oea/estadistica/Unicef%20Chile%20-%20Educaci%C3%B3n.htm
[126] Source: Casen 2006

rate is 10.5% among non-indigenous people, and 13.4% for the indigenous population. This indicator reveals differences between men and women: rural women have a higher illiteracy rate.

3.2.5. Learning Achievements

In 2006 the so-called "Education Quality Measurement System" (SIMCE) was applied to the four years of basic education. The results[127] for mathematics and for language and communication were as follows, by type of institution: (a) in mathematics, municipal institutions obtained a nationwide average score 14 points below the national median, 16 points below the median for private subsidized institutions, and 60 points below private paid institutions; (b) in language and communications, municipal institutions obtained a nationwide average score 13 points below the national average, 13 points below private subsidized institutions, and 50 points below private paid institutions. It is important to note that, according to information from the Ministry of Education, the municipal system covers the majority of schools serving children from the low and middle-low socioeconomic groups (77.9% and 79.3%, respectively); the private subsidized schools serve primarily children from the middle and upper-middle income groups (58.95% and 90.41%, respectively), while 89.5% of schools serving the high social economic group are in the private paid system.

4. Background Information on Educational Personnel

4.1. Staff-to-Pupil Ratio

Education staff in the JUNJI program has the following training profile: (a) in formal programs, preschool teachers have university studies and preschool technical staff has studies in technical-vocational institutes; (b) non-formal programs have teachers with university and technical school training in preschool education, and community agents trained by JUNJI. In the case of Integra, there are preschool education technicians and preschool teachers with university training. In the case of the Ministry of Education, preschool teachers have university training.[128]

In the Fundación Integra as well as in the JUNJI, standards have been developed to establish the staff-to-pupil ratio.

National Board of Early Childhood Education (JUNJI)		
Type of program	**Age of preschoolers**	**Number of teachers and agents**
Classic kindergarten	Under two years	One teacher for every 20 children
	Under two years	One technical agent for every six children
	2 to 5 years	One teacher for every 64 children
	2 to 3 years	One technical agent for every 16 children
	4 to 5 years	One technical agent for every

[127] Source: Ministry of Education, institutional portal.
[128] Information taken from institutional websites

		32 children
Family education program:	Communicational: urban, rural children between two and five years	One teacher for every 250 children
	"Know Your Child": urban, rural	One "mother monitor" for every 20 mothers with children
Alternative program :	"Childhood Improvement Program": urban, 2 to 4 years	One community agent for every 36 children
	Kindergarten: urban, rural. 2 to 4 years	One technical agent for every 32 children
	Day-care center: urban, rural. 2 to 4 years	Two technical agents for every 32 children
	Seasonal kindergarten: urban, rural. 2 to 4 years	Two technical agents for every 36 children
	Indigenous community kindergarten: rural, 2 to 4 years	One technical agent for every 32 children

Fundación INTEGRA	
Education program for first and second cycle	**Number of education workers and age of children**
Junior nursery	0- 11 Months 29 Days): up to 6 education workers
Senior nursery	1- 1 Year 11 Months 29 Days): up to 6 education workers
Nursery	1- 2 Years 11 Months 29 Days): up to 6 education workers
Junior intermediate	2- 2 Years 11 Months 29 Days): up to 15 education workers
Senior intermediate	3- 3 Years 11 Months 29 Days): up to 20 education workers
Intermediate	2- 3 Years 11 Months 29 Days): up to 15 education workers
Gender transition	4- 4 Years 11 Months 29 Days): up to 15 education workers
Senior transition	5- 5 Years 11 Months 29 Days): up to 15 education workers
Transitions	4- 5 Years 11 Months 29 Days): up to 15 education workers
Heterogeneous	2- 5 Years 11 Months 29 Days): up to 15 education workers

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Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

Introduction. 1. Characteristics of indigenous and rural populations. 1.1. Legal characterization of indigenous peoples. 1.2. Definition of indigenous and rural. 1.3. The government's indigenous agenda. 2. The legal, political and curricular framework for preschool education. 2.1. The Chilean legal framework for public education. 2.2. Early childhood education policies. 2.3. Stated objectives for preschool education. 2.4. Political forces and public agencies involved in setting preschool education policies and standards. 2.4.1. Government institutions involved. 2.4.2. Social forces involved in debating preschool education policies. 3. Institutional structure and public sector preschool education programs. 3.1. Institutions offering preschool education services in the public education system. 3.2. Coverage of preschool education. 3.3. Budgetary framework for public education. 4. Education quality, with an emphasis on indigenous education. 4.1. Targeting criteria and benefits in the education of indigenous and rural peoples. 4.2. Preschool programs for indigenous and rural children. 4.2.1. Implementing the intercultural curriculum in preschool education. 4.3. Family involvement, government provisions. 5. Intersectoral coordination. 6. Teacher training for educational work with indigenous and rural children under the age of nine. 7. Areas for further consideration and action. Bibliography.

Introduction

In the context of this project, "Trends in Transition Policies in Rural and Indigenous Communities of Chile," transitions were defined as "critical moments of change that children experience in moving from one environment to another, opening opportunities for their human development and their learning for life and school."

Educational transitions for rural and indigenous children are especially complex, not only because of geographic problems of access to educational establishments but also because the contents of the education system itself are geared primarily to urban ways of life. It should also be noted that formal education has traditionally been used as a means of integrating the indigenous population into the Chilean national culture, and at the same time it has been a tool for denying indigenous culture or at least an obstacle to its transmission and development.

The general objective of this paper is to identify and describe the critical points of public education policies as they relate to transitions for rural and indigenous children. We shall therefore review education policies and programs for children under the age of nine, with a special focus on the attention accorded the different stakeholders in educational transitions (family, community, education agents).[129]

1. Characterization of Indigenous and Rural Populations

[129] The statistical data presented here were taken from the Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (*Encuesta de Caracterización Socio Económica*, Casen) conducted in 2006 by the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (Mideplan), Population and Housing Census of the National Statistics Institute (INE).

1.1. Legal Characterization of Indigenous Peoples

While indigenous peoples are not recognized as such in the Chilean constitution (something that remains an issue of national political debate), a number of key steps have in fact been taken to move forward the process of recognition:

- Promulgation of the Indigenous Act, Law 19,253 of 1993, which establishes standards for protection, encouragement and development of indigenous peoples, recognizing as Chile's principal indigenous ethnic groups the Mapuche, Aymara, Rapa Nui or Pascuenses, the Atacameñas, Quechuas, Diaguitas and Collas communities in the north of the country and the Kawashkar or Alacalufe and Yamana or Yagán communities of the southern channels.
- The 1994 creation of the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI), and a public agency charged with promoting, coordinating and implementing government action for the integral development of indigenous people and communities, especially on the economic, social and cultural fronts, and for promoting their participation in national life.
- Signature approving the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the Government of Chile in 2007. Ratification of ILO Convention 169 in 2008.

1.2. Definition of Indigenous and Rural

Official Chilean statistics use the self-identification or self-perception criterion for defining the indigenous population.

With respect to the definition of the rural population, according to the INE this corresponds to settlements with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants, distributed among 274 towns and 36,695 villages, hamlets and other localities that make up the country's rural population. For census purposes, "rural" means "a human settlement, concentrated or disperse, with 1,000 or fewer inhabitants, or between 1,001 and 2,000 inhabitants"[130] in which less than 50% of the economically active population is engaged in secondary activities.

1.3. The Government's Indigenous Agenda

President Bachelet's indigenous policy is set forth in the document entitled "*Re-conocer: Pacto Social por la Multiculturalidad,*" which establishes a new agenda for political discussion between the State and indigenous peoples, by making profound changes to the political system. It also details measures to reorganize the government apparatus in order to deal efficiently and effectively with the problems of indigenous peoples. Moreover, it reinforces and guarantees observance of agreements reached in the past between the State and indigenous peoples, and details the plans and programs through which the government will seek immediately to promote productive development and innovation with full respect for the particular characteristics of indigenous peoples. The action plan outlines three broad areas and their respective actions: (a) political system, rights and institutions; (b) integral development of peoples; and (c) multiculturalism and diversity.

2. The Legal, Political and Curricular Framework for Preschool Education

[130] In the case of the 2006 Casen Survey Report, supplementary information is taken from the 2002 Census.

2.1. The Chilean Legal Framework for Public Education

A brief chronology. The first milestone in legislation concerning preschool education was Law 5,291 of 1920, on compulsory primary education, which requires children to attend eight years of primary school. Supreme Decree 27,952 of 1965 included preschool education as a component of the education system. Law 17,301 of 1970 created the National Board of Early Childhood Education (JUNJI). The Constitutional Organic Law on Education 18,962 of 1990 constitutes the general framework for the education system, establishing its features and structure from the initial to the tertiary levels. The proposed General Education Act, now under discussion by society and by Congress, would make amendments to the 1990 law; it is expected to be given its final legislative shape in the near future. Finally, the amendment to article 19 of the Constitution (approved by Congress in 1999 and legislated definitively in 2007 through Law 20,162) is perhaps one of the most important milestones, establishing the preschool level as the first level of the national education system, intended to guarantee free education for children under the age of six.

2.2. Early Childhood Education Policies

The current national policy takes a coordinated intersectoral approach to early childhood education. Transition is understood as a chronological development between the moment of transit from initial education to general basic education, but at the same time as a process of displacement shaped by the experience of changing from the family space to a formal educational space.[131]

Although regulations governing preschool education were issued in earlier periods (1974, 1981, 1984 and 2002), the current framework is the one promulgated at the end of 2004. The Ministry of Education prepared a resolution[132] requiring education establishments that offer preschool education "to develop technical pedagogical activities to improve the coordination between the curriculum at this level and that of basic education."[133] Article 3 provides that "the coordination strategy that each school defines and adopts must be constantly revised and adjusted to reflect improvement in the attention to children and in the quality of their learning."[134]

In 2005, the Ministry of Education issued a decree[135] changing the ages of access to preschool education and the first year of basic education. Children who reach their fourth birthday before June 30 may now enter pre-kindergarten, provided they have authorization from the director of the institution in question.

2.3. Stated Objectives for Preschool Education

The fundamental objective of preschool education is "the integral development of the personality of the child and its intelligent adaptation to its social and natural surroundings."[136] In pursuit of this objective linkages are to be established with parents and the community in order to guide and support them in their educational mission.

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[131] La Educación Parvularia en Chile. Ministerio de Educación, 2001, p. 30
[132] Resolución Exenta Nº 011636, of September 3, 2004.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Decreto Ley 171 issued by the Ministry of Education on February 24, 2005.
[136] Bases Curriculares de la Educación Parvularia, Ministerio de Educación, 2001.

The Curricular Foundations of Preschool Education (*Bases Curriculares de la Educación Parvularia*, BCEP) constitute a broad and flexible frame of reference that can be implemented in many ways. Their definitions are based on the learning and development objectives to be pursued; the guidelines are general and must be spelled out and implemented by the institutions, programs and projects that constitute the preschool level, in a manner consistent with their diversity and with that of the contexts in which they work. Accordingly, they allow for a different curricular emphasis to reflect ethnic and linguistic diversity, among other dimensions.

The BCEP hold that the culture to which a child belongs can contribute significantly to forming his or her identity, self-esteem and inner consciousness. Respect for the ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity of the country's various communities requires that such diversity be recognized and incorporated into the curriculum. For this reason pre-scholars must be treated as active agents of their specific culture and as contributing to it from their perspective as children. The BCEP respect the different dimensions of diversity, and make explicit mention of intercultural education.

2.4. Political Forces and Public Agencies Involved in Setting Preschool Education Policies and Standards

2.4.1. Government Institutions Involved

Since the restoration of democracy in 1990, the early childhood policies pursued by successive Chilean governments have shifted away from a sector-specific perspective, where there was not much coordination between policies, towards a more integrated approach that stresses the importance of articulated management among stakeholders and social networks, sectorally and geographically integrated, with common objectives and outcomes, and with guaranteed services that beneficiaries can demand as a way of enhancing the welfare of the country's poorest families and individuals. This approach has been distilled into a series of policy decisions, including the "Targets and Lines of Action in Favor of Childhood. Commitments to the Children of Chile for the Decade," prepared in 1992; the "National Policy for Children and Adolescents 2001-2010"; and the "*Chile Crece Contigo"* ("Chile is growing with you") program launched in 2006.

At the present time in Chile, the two major policies targeted at families and children in the most vulnerable social sectors are *Chile Solidario* and *Chile Crece Contigo*.

Chile Solidario is a social protection system[137] with a perspective that combines assistance for escaping from extreme poverty and special attention to people over the age of 65 living alone. It is managed by the Planning Ministry (Mideplan), and the program has been targeted primarily at families living in extreme poverty, who face the greatest difficulties in accessing the benefits delivered by the municipalities and the State. The program is based on existing institutional networks, with State staffing (the "proactive State") and participation by the municipalities.

The *Chile Crece Contigo* program is a comprehensive early childhood protection system created in 2006 to provide comprehensive support and protection for children and their families through actions and services of a universal nature. Its purpose is to address the needs and support the development of young children at each stage, promoting the necessary basic conditions, with the understanding that childhood development is multidimensional and is therefore influenced

[137] Law 19,949 of 2004.

simultaneously by the biological, physical, mental and social aspects of the child and his or her surroundings. The program offers support for children, their families and their social circle, from the prenatal period to the age of four. Said support is of several kinds: some aspects are universal, while others are differentiated to reflect the socioeconomic conditions of children and their families. The scope of intervention is local, considering the interface between the family and health advisers, schools, nurseries, kindergartens and other instances.[138]

2.4.2. Social Forces Involved in Debating Preschool Education Policies

Social forces have had a constant role in the debate that has permitted the advance and transformation of preschool education policies. Among those invited by the authorities to participate in the debate as civil society counterparts we find, first, political parties, including the *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia* (the governing coalition for Democracy) and the *Alianza por Chile*, currently in the opposition and representing parties of the center. Preschool teachers' associations have also provided input, as well as education experts, representatives of public preschool institutions, NGOs involved in preschool education programs and projects, and universities that offer a degree in preschool education. Indigenous organizations have also participated actively, since the government of Patricio Aylwyn, in discussing the definition and characteristics of intercultural education.

3. Institutional Structure and Public Sector Preschool Education Programs

Preschool education is targeted at children between the ages of 81 days and six years, and is non-compulsory. It includes three differentiated levels reflecting the biological stage of the children, which are coordinated with the two cycles of pedagogical orientation found in the BCEP. The three age-differentiated levels are:[139]

1. *Day nurseries (sala cuna)* for children up to two years old, with two sublevels: Junior (*sala cuna menor*), for children in the first year of life, and senior (*sala cuna major*), for children between the ages of one and two;
2. *Intermediate level* for children between the ages of two and four, divided into two sublevels: ages two to three (junior) and three to four (senior);
3. *Transition level* for children between the ages of four and six, divided into first (ages four to five) and second (ages five to six) levels.

The BCEP define principles for standardizing the contents and learning imparted by preschool education institutions: these are activity, singularity, relationship, unity, play, well-being, empowerment and meaning.

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[138] The *Chile Crece Contigo* program emerged from ideas developed by Mideplan with other institutions in the first half of 2006.

[139] In a reference to preschool education, President Michelle Bachelet noted that "as of now the Constitution mandates the State and gives it responsibility to ensure that places are accessible and available to all families that need and want them. …It is not compulsory for parents to send their children, but it is compulsory for the State to guarantee and maintain all the conditions for access to education, without making this level a requirement for entry into basic education". In this context, an important aspect is the establishment of "a guarantee of availability for the families of Chile". January 23, 2007.

There is also a Quality Accreditation Model that JUNJI uses to certify that preschool education institutions are achieving a degree of quality in their services, in the pedagogical, curricular, financial, physical and human resource management areas.

3.1. Institutions Offering Preschool Education Services in the Public Education System

The principal public institutions for preschool education at the national level are the Ministry of Education, the National Board of Early Childhood Education (JUNJI), and the National Foundation for Integral Child Development (Fundación Integra).

The Ministry of Education is the government department responsible for developing education at all levels, with a view to achieving equality of opportunity and ensuring the quality of learning. Its mission is "to design, regulate, evaluate and supervise the implementation of policies, plans and objectives for educational and cultural development so as to guide the education system in all its levels and modalities and see to their observance."[140] Consistent with the educational decentralization policy pursued in the country since the 1980s, the Ministry of Education has transferred schools and the responsibility for administering education programs to the municipalities of the 15 regions that make up the country, providing them State financing through subsidies. There are also private subsidized schools run by the private sector that receive State financing.

Consequently, we must distinguish between:

- *Municipal education centers*: These offer free preschool and basic education and are financed by a State subsidy for each child served. Preschool attendance is concentrated in the five- to six-year age group (second transition level), and has been expanded since 2001 to the four- to five-year age group (first transition level); these are the only levels that receive the subsidy. Educational activity is based on the official programs of the Ministry and is supervised by education experts in the respective provincial departments of education.
- *Private subsidized education centers*: these operate in the same way as the municipal centers; the only difference is that they are run by private parties recognized as cooperating in the State's educational function. These may be religious institutions, private education firms, individuals, or business corporations of an educational nature.

The JUNJI was created in 1970 by Law 17,301 as an autonomous body under the Administrative Statute and constituted as a public corporation financed from the national budget, linked to the Ministry of Education, with the purpose of overseeing early childhood education in the country. It has the power to create education programs and to promote, supervise and certify kindergartens. The JUNJI is operationally decentralized, organized into regional directorates employing multidisciplinary technical teams who supervise and support the work of the kindergartens. It operates with a dual administration system: (a) direct administration of early childhood education establishments, and (b) indirect administration through public or private nonprofit agencies authorized to provide preschool education. JUNJI guarantees the quality of education provided by the private sector through the official recognition accorded to education establishments for nursery schools and intermediate levels, but has no enforcement powers: it cannot order the closure of private kindergartens that fail to comply with legal requirements.

[140] Quoted directly from the institutional webpage.

The programs and modalities of education offered by JUNJI are:

1. *Programa Jardín Infantil* (Kindergarten program)
2. *Programa Alternativo de Atención* (Alternative Care Program) that includes *Jardín Familiar, Jardín Laboral, Jardín Estacional, Jardín en Comunidades Indígenas, Mejoramiento de Atención a la Infancia* (PMI)[141]
3. Family Education Program, which embraces: Early Development and Learning through the Family Health Center,[142] Communicational, and "Know Your Child" Program

The Family Education Programs occupy an important place in the national policy for integrating early childhood education (children under the age of six) into the family, in support of children's transition from the family to the education system.

Integra is a private nonprofit institution created in 1990 from the National Community Assistance Foundation (FUNACO), which conducts early childhood programs financed through the Fund of the Ministry of the Presidency and is governed by the labor code. It has a National Executive Committee and an Advisory Council, comprising the head of the preschool education section of the Social Sciences Faculty of the University of Chile, the Director of the Psychology School of the Catholic University of Chile, the National Coordinator of the Preschool Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, the Coordinator of the Curriculum and Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of Education, and the Director of the Interdisciplinary Education Program (PIIE).

Integra offers the following education programs: Educational Program for the First and Second Cycle, Extended Hours Program, Seasonal Kindergartens, Digital Kindergarten, Intercultural Kindergartens, Kindergarten on Wheels, Psychosocial Care for Hospitalized Children, Pehuenche Summer Program, and Kindergarten without Frontiers.

The programs of the Ministry of Education, JUNJI and Integra of greatest interest for indigenous and rural preschoolers will be detailed below.

3.2. Coverage of Preschool Education

Over the last decade, non-indigenous preschool coverage increased by 13 percentage points, from 24.2% in 1996, to 37.1% in 2006. Indigenous preschool coverage increased by 20.9 percentage points, from 14% in 1996 to 34.9% in 2006, or seven points more than the non-indigenous coverage. However, in basic education the pattern of indigenous coverage has been discontinuous: it rose by 2% between 1996 and 2003, but then fell by 0.8% in 2006. Interestingly, the basic education pattern was similar for the non-indigenous population over that same period.

The combined preschool education efforts of the Ministry of Education, JUNJI and Integra provide coverage of 32.4% nationwide, with 17.2% in rural areas and 34.8% in urban areas.

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[141] In 2006, the Ministry of Education decided to transfer the PMI Program to the JUNJI. This was done in 2007 with support and financing from Mideplan through *Chile Solidario*.

[142] This program was transferred during the course of this year to the Health Ministry.

In the four- to six-year age bracket, preschool education in Chile is coming to resemble that in most OECD countries: it focuses on five-year-olds (corresponding to the second transition level), with extension of the subsidy to four-year-olds (first transition level) since 2001.

3.3. Budgetary Framework for Public Education

Public spending on education represents 3% of GDP:[143] this is the amount distributed directly between the Ministry of Education and JUNJI, both of which are included in the national budget and are covered by the Public Sector Budget Law.

Integra is financed directly from the President's office, and is not included in the above statistic. It should also be noted that total public spending for municipal schools, which come under the Ministry of Education, is supplemented by the municipalities themselves from annual revenues included in other budget items or from public agencies that deliver funds directly to the municipalities from their own program budgets. These amounts are also excluded from the statistics cited above.

4. Education Quality, with an Emphasis on Indigenous Education

4.1. Targeting Criteria and Benefits in the Education of Indigenous and Rural Peoples

The main targeting criteria relate to conditions of social vulnerability both for rural and urban populations, and to the situation of language loss in the indigenous case.

Chile is pursuing a policy that combines universal and specific targeting, using targeting criteria[144] for assisting low-income families living in situations of poverty and vulnerability. Within this horizon, JUNJI and Integra give priority to the children of working mothers.[145]

The principal benefits offered include:

Indigenous Scholarship

The Indigenous Scholarship Program was created to address the situation of poor indigenous children, who drop out of school despite satisfactory academic performance, and to encourage pupils to value and appreciate indigenous cultures. The program resides today in the JUNAEB, an institution that, together with the National Corporation for Indigenous Development, offers guidance for improving service to beneficiaries.

Mece Rural

The *Mece/Rural* program was launched in the 1990s to provide State support for improving education in the country's rural schools, in response to specific targeting criteria relating to the socioeconomic condition of the rural population.

Chile Solidario

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[143] Dipres (National Budget Division) www.dipres.cl/prsentaciones/ifpoctubre 2007
[144] Pacheco, Elacqua et al., "Educación Preescolar Estrategia Bicentenario". Ministerio de Educación Chile 2006
[145] Ibid.

This is the social protection system introduced in 2005. It currently provides support for 225,000 indigent families in 322 communes, and is targeted at both indigenous and rural families.

Parent benefits

Law 20,047 provides four days of special leave to new parents as an inalienable right.[146]

Compulsory nurseries

Law 19,824 expands the obligation to provide nurseries for the children of workers in shopping centers under common administration and in industrial and service institutions.[147]

Breast-feeding Breaks

Article 206 of the labor code entitles the mother of a nursing infant younger than six months of age to take time out for breast-feeding at work.[148]

4.2. Preschool Programs for Indigenous and Rural Children

Below are the principal programs and modalities of preschool education for indigenous and rural children offered by the Ministry of Education, Integra and JUNJI:

The Ministry of Education's bilingual intercultural education program is based on the Indigenous Act, which calls for establishing a system that will allow indigenous students to develop adequately both in their own culture and in global society. Under this law, the Culture and Education Unit of CONADI (National Corporation for Indigenous Development) was created in 1994 to come up with a strategy for implementing bilingual intercultural education and to promote a cultural development policy consistent with the education programs of the Ministry of Education, while at the same time meeting the needs of different indigenous peoples to express and construct their identity.

Some important pilot projects have been undertaken,[149] and produced a series of inputs for subsequent decisions taken by the Ministry of Education with respect to creating a unit to design a specific education proposal for indigenous peoples: the unit still exists and will be analyzed below. Indigenous and rural education, then, started from a common framework, which in the case of basic education could have important implications for the educational transition in rural, indigenous and border communities. The concept guiding education for indigenous communities calls for building interculturalism as an experience of integration between the indigenous and non-indigenous worlds, based on knowledge and respect for the native culture.

The Bilingual Intercultural Education Program has the following main objectives: (a) to strengthen the identity and self-esteem of indigenous children by incorporating learning materials pertinent to their cultural and linguistic reality; (b) to improve the learning of culturally and

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[146] Taken from the web site www. http://www.mintrab.gob.cl/

[147] Observatorio Laboral "Informe de Situación Laboral Chile" taken from the web site http://www.mintrab.gob.cl/

[148] "Alcances y Propuestas Jurídicas para el desarrollo Integral de la Infancia en Chile" Universidad Alberto Hurtado June 2006. Available at http://www.crececontigo.cl/especialistas/documentos.php

[149] Huenchullán , C. (2007). *La institucionalización de la Educación Intercultural bilingüe en Chile: contexto, situación actual, desafíos*. In Patrimonio Cultural Mapunche. Derechos culturales y patrimonio cultural mapuche, volumen II. Compiladores, Durán, T., Catriquir, D., Hernández, A. Universidad Católica de Temuco. Project financed by the Fondo del Libro

linguistically diverse children by incorporating methodological strategies for teaching and learning the mother tongue and a second language (indigenous language and/or Spanish); (c) to improve the pedagogical practices of teachers in areas with an indigenous population, and incorporate teaching and learning methods developed by indigenous families and communities into the training offered their children; and (d) to encourage indigenous communities to participate in developing the curricular activities of schools attended by their children so that, together with the traditional authorities and the teachers, they can incorporate their knowledge, techniques and worldviews into the school curriculum and its management. President Michelle Bachelet has promised to make progressive improvements to the bilingual and intercultural performance of schools where the student body is more than 50% indigenous.

The Basic Education Program with a Rural Focus ("*Programa de Educación Básica: Atención a la Ruralidad*") seeks to develop experiments that will strengthen the institutional and pedagogical management of a group of multigrade rural schools ("rural microcenters"), which at the same time will provide input to the rural education policy in place since 2008. It seeks to construct and implement a strategy for supporting rural schools, adapted to the particular features of the rural context and the teaching challenges of the multigrade classroom.

Integra offers the following programs:

Seasonal kindergartens
This program, initiated in 2001, focuses on the education needs of the children of seasonal-worker mothers and workers in the tourism industry.

Intercultural kindergarten
This program is offered in the kindergartens and nurseries of Integra located in areas with a high concentration of indigenous inhabitants. It seeks to support native cultures and to strengthen multicultural harmony and respect for the diversity of people's social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds in order to make children more open to the world.

"Kindergarten on wheels"
This program uses a bus to bring free preschool education to children in remote rural areas where conditions of poverty, low population density and geographic isolation make it difficult to establish a permanent facility. It is currently operating in remote areas of the Maule and Bio Bio regions.

Veranadas Pehuenche
Every summer, between January and April, Pehuenche families from Lonquimay in the Araucania Region migrate to the mountains to collect pine nuts, gather firewood and find forage for their livestock. Their children, who normally attend the local Integra kindergartens, accompany their families on these summer migrations. During the season, teams from the Integra kindergartens move to the mountains and work in cooperation with the families to provide an educational experience that is unique in the country. While the adults are busy gathering supplies, the children receive professional attention that provides them not only with care and security but also with education.

"Kindergarten without Borders"
This Chilean-Bolivian preschool cooperation project was launched in recognition of the need to integrate communities along the border between the two countries. It provides quality education and nutrition to the Aymara children of Visviri, in Chile, and Charaña, in Bolivia. The project fields an intercultural mediator to assist at each stage of the

process, working directly with preschool teachers from Integra and with the families through workshops offering nutrition and education programs.

JUNJI has the following programs:

Seasonal kindergarten
Created jointly with the National Women's Service (SERNAM) for children of mothers performing seasonal work, preferably in the productive areas of fruit growing, agro-industry, fishing and tourism, this program runs for three or four months of the summer, beginning in October, and depending on the region. Educational activities are essentially held outdoors and have a recreational focus. The children are fed nutritious meals, geared to the daily schedule, with a diet specially designed to suit local climatic conditions.

Educational planning is the responsibility of the program's technical manager. The manager schedules pedagogical work both with the children and with their families (who take a direct part in daily education activities), runs workshops, and makes visits to the children's homes. The evaluation process places special emphasis on participation. The program manager has a Curriculum Planning Manual that includes indicators for use in the evaluation process.

Kindergarten in indigenous communities
Designed for children ages between the ages of two and five belonging to the Aymara, Atacameño, Colla, Rapanuí, Mapuche, Pehuenche, Huilliche, Kawashkar and Yámana communities, this program offers an intercultural curriculum appropriate to each ethnic group.

The kindergarten is run by a preschool technician or teacher, preferably a woman of indigenous culture. In her education work with the children, she will be joined by a member of the native community, trained by JUNJI, who will work directly with her on a permanent basis. The diet offered to children includes preparations and foodstuffs that pertain to their culture and region.

"Know Your Child" (*Conozca a tu Hijo*) Program
This program trains rural mothers of young children as educators. Specifically, it is targeted at women raising children younger than six in areas that, because of their geographic isolation, have no access to formal preschool programs. The program is delivered in workshops that are held once a week for approximately 12 mothers. Each mother participates in the program for two years. The program uses an "active-participatory" methodology in a community setting where participants can share and socialize traditional wisdom and can incorporate new knowledge relating to their children's growth and development.[150]

Improved Child Care Program (*Programa de Mejoramiento de Atención a la Infancia, PMI*)
This program involves community-based education and childcare projects targeted at the most vulnerable children. The education offered seeks to restore their cultural assets,

[150] For further details on this program and the PMI, see *Informe Completo de Chile sobre Análisis de las Políticas Educativas en Primera Infancia Referidas a Transiciones.*

including their language, customs and traditions, and in this way it is responsive to the needs of rural, indigenous and immigrant population groups. The projects are constructed as they proceed, which means that the education agents are constantly refreshing their skills and looking for ways to improve their education practices.

"Communicational Kindergarten"
Targeted at children under the age of six living in isolated areas with no access to formal preschool programs, this program is delivered by radio broadcasts, supplemented by education manuals for the family and occasional meetings with a preschool educator.

4.2.1. Implementing the Intercultural Curriculum in Preschool Education

Although as of yet there is no specific curriculum for intercultural education, plans and programs have been implemented and intercultural symposiums have been held in eight regions of the country.

As indicated earlier, JUNJI and Integra have experience in working with indigenous preschoolers and they have developed curriculum guides tailored to various indigenous peoples. Because those guides were prepared before the BCEP were issued, they now have to be adjusted to the new framework

In follow-up to the presidential commitment to open new intercultural kindergartens, JUNJI, Integra and the Ministry of Education, with CONADI support, are now preparing general guidelines for an intercultural curriculum that is to be put into practice in 2009. In partnership with CONADI, a first national meeting on intercultural preschool education was held in 2008, and training sessions in interculturalism and the preschool curriculum were held for teachers and education experts from all regions of the country.

4.3. Family Involvement, Government Provisions

The government has established the following provisions for the educational development of children with their family. These are general provisions, and not necessarily tailored specifically to ethnic or rural communities, but they are part of the process of refining the parental role for understanding the transition process as part of a complex framework that embraces an early period in which the child transits from the home environment to the formal school setting, and from initial education to general basic education. In light of the foregoing, these provisions are an essential part of this report.

- Integra kindergartens are to work with families to foster positive interactions and good treatment.
- JUNJI kindergartens are to implement a module on "growing and developing in the path of daily affectivity," developed jointly with Sernam, for working with fathers and mothers.
- JUNJI kindergartens are to implement a module on "sexuality, gender and affectivity in the education of preschoolers," developed in tandem with Sernam, for working with fathers and mothers.
- Nationwide dissemination of the guide on "active paternity" for public health officials, prepared by Sernam, which encourages men to take a greater role in raising their children

by involving them in processes relating to pregnancy, childbirth and monitoring their children's health.

Since its creation in 1971, JUNJI has considered family participation as a key aspect of its educational work. In 2005, JUNJI published its "Policy for Working with the Family," setting out objectives and strategies for incorporating the family into the initial education process. In addition to direct interaction with families, there is an institutional website that carries information to help families work with children under six years at the different stages of their development.

JUNJI is currently developing a work program to foster "good treatment" (*buen trato*) of children under the age of six, by establishing Regional Units for the Protection of Good Treatment. They pursue activities of three kinds:

- Promoting good treatment and the welfare of children.
- Preventing violent conduct.
- Dealing with cases where children's rights have been violated.

Since 2006 the **Fundación Integra**, through its kindergartens and nurseries, has sponsored a program called ***Mirando mi árbol***, focused on working with families and on enhancing parents' capacities and resources to contribute, through education and upbringing, to the integral development of their children.

5. Intersectoral Coordination

Between 1994 and 1997 the Ministry of Education developed a "Program of Articulation between Preschool and Basic Education," which represents the principal experiment in the area of educational transitions in the country.[151] The concern was to resolve the sticking points in the process of transition from family to school,[152] and to improve children's performance in language and in logical and mathematical thinking, and strengthen their social and emotional development, with active family participation.

One of the most important current efforts at coordination of government policy is the *Chile Crece Contigo* program which, as noted above, is a program of comprehensive care that coordinates the work of the ministries of health, education and planning and FOSIS.

The Ministry of National Education, "as the public body responsible for orientation of the education system at all its levels,"[153] is working with CONADI to implement indigenous education policies and programs.[154] CONADI is headed by a National Director and comprises senior government officials, three advisers appointed by the President of the Republic, and eight indigenous representatives appointed on the recommendation of indigenous communities and associations. In the case of the sectoral programs and regulations emerging from the Intersectoral

[151] Programa de Articulación Pre-Básica y primeros años de Educación con incorporación de la familia. Ministerio de Educación-CPEIP-CIDE. 1995.
[152] Francisco Álvarez, F. (1999). Articulación y Educación. Revista de Educación Perspectiva, 13
[153] Quoted from the institutional webpage.
[154] Articles 38 to 53 of the Indigenous Act deal with creation of CONADI, specifying its nature, objectives, organization and institutional design.

Coordination Programs, the corresponding ministries participate in establishing specific guidelines for their development.

6. Teacher Training for Educational Work with Indigenous and Rural Children Under the Age of Nine

The preferred setting for training teachers is the university. The following institutions, in particular, offer teacher training with an indigenous focus:

- Universidad Católica de Temuco: training of bilingual Mapuche teachers. The curriculum is geared to members of indigenous communities, with training in the development of intercultural education. This project is sponsored by the Ministry of Education.
- Universidad Arturo Prat, training of bilingual Aymara teachers, with emphasis on cultivating bilingual intercultural education skills. This project is also sponsored by the Ministry of Education.
- In late 1995 the Universidad de Playa Ancha (UPLA) approved a course of study in basic education with an emphasis on rural education and develop. The program was initiated at the university's San Felipe campus, and in March 1997 it welcomed its first 31 students.

Generally speaking, with the exception of the programs offered by UPLA and the Villarrica campus of the Universidad Católica, initial teacher training takes little account, either conceptually or methodologically, of the rural aspect of education. This shortcoming is now being addressed with the experiments promoted over the last decade by the Ministry of Education, through the Basic Rural Education Program.

7. Areas for Further Consideration and Action

Based on an analysis of the existing offer, as expressed through education programs and benefits and policies for early childhood education, we may say that there is intent on the part of the central government to support educational transition for preschoolers. This emphasis is clear when it comes to the processes experienced in children’s transition from family to school, in particular with respect to valuing their native culture, transmitting knowledge, etc., with a concern for the positioning, respect and visibility of indigenous communities and their culture in the field of education. We may also appreciate the significant progress that has been made in improving coverage, although there is still a gap between urban and rural areas in this respect. On the other hand, there is a concern to make a lasting improvement in the quality of education offered to rural and indigenous populations.

Nevertheless, it seems advisable to go further in designing strategies that will enhance quality by considering the specific features of the rural cultural setting with respect to the transition process, especially the family-school transition. While there is a program for articulating initial and basic education, programs need to be expanded beyond the institutions that provide early childhood education, so as to strengthen this linkage within the education system. There is a need to harmonize educational strategies that articulate indigenous knowledge and cultural contents, from preschool to basic education, recognizing in particular the role of indigenous educators in the school system. The issue of language is a more complex one, for it

requires more systematic efforts to achieve a continuum from preschool to basic education, and this will require adequate funding and initiatives on the part of the State.

There is also a need to strengthen strategies within early childhood programs in order to empower families in the support they can provide to the transition process experienced by the preschooler upon entering the basic education system, especially in the indigenous world. The parental role needs to be strengthened as it relates to the transition that children experience as they move to the formal education system, and between its different levels.

In general terms, with respect to the coordination process, it would be well to adopt strategies to articulate the different spheres of national public policy for integral attention and work with children, their family and their community.

To guarantee the quality and effectiveness of non-conventional programs, there are certain basic requirements in terms of training—monitoring, supervision, evaluation etc.—that will serve to standardize the quality of the learning and the objectives to be achieved.

Broadening the perspective of bilingual intercultural education to cover all early education programs is a very important task, as it will lay the basis for reconstituting social and cultural networks that will lead to the construction of a national self-representation in the context of democratic cohabitation among the members of the different sectors of the national fabric.

The Ministry of Education has posed challenges for delving further into these tasks, including the following:

- Giving indigenous and non-indigenous students the opportunity to learn indigenous languages at school.
- Design and preparation of study programs and teaching materials in Rapa nui, as well as printed and digital teaching materials for the Aymara, Mapuche and Quechua language subgroup.
- Distribution of textbooks appropriate to the Mapuche, Aymara and Lican Antai cultural contexts for NB1, NB2 and NB3 for teaching language and communications and mathematics, for the benefit of some 10,000 indigenous students in our country.
- A study on successful bilingual intercultural education practices in native schools.

Finally, we must note that the great challenge facing preschool education in the area of ethnic relevance is to fulfill the promise of President Michelle Bachelet to open new intercultural kindergartens and to prepare an intercultural curriculum for preschool education.

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Chapter IV. PERU REPORT

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

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Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

Preliminary observations. 1. Scenarios that influence educational transitions for children living in rural, indigenous and border areas. 1.1. Rural families: availability of resources and capacity to support educational transitions. 1.1.1. Availability of resources to guarantee children's survival, well-being and development. 1.1.2. Families' capacities to support educational transition processes. 1.2. Education services in rural areas: how much do they contribute to educational transition? 1.2.1. Safe, attractive and child-friendly education programs: a necessity in rural areas. 1.2.2. Teachers lack the skills to monitor children's learning progress, especially in rural areas. 1.2.3. The bilingual intercultural schools do not have bilingual teachers. 2. The impact of these scenarios on children's educational transitions in rural, indigenous and border areas. 2.1. Children's entry and progress through the education system. 2.2. Rural children's' learning achievements and their relationship to early childhood education. Conclusions. Bibliography.

Preliminary Observations

It is important to note that the figures given here are approximate and are constructed from various data sources, with the intention of offering an overview of the education transitions experienced by children through the age of eight in rural and indigenous settings.[155]

The National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) defines rural areas as "territories with no more than 100 contiguous dwellings that are not district capital cities, or those that have more than 100 dwellings but where those dwellings are dispersed or scattered without forming blocks or nuclei."

Indigenous populations, are defined by law as "those who are descended from populations that inhabited the country or a geographic region to which the country belonged at the time of the conquest or the colony or the establishment of current State frontiers and who, regardless of their legal status, have preserved all their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, or portions thereof."

The definition of indigenous population establishes two groups. From the way the quantifiable and available information is organized, we may infer that the distinction between those groups reflects the area of residence: campesino communities (Andes –Sierra) and native communities (jungle [*Selva*] – jungle fringe).

Article 2 of the Campesino Communities Act (Law 24,656) defines those communities as "organizations of public interest with a legal existence and juridical personality, comprising families that inhabit and control specific territories, linked by ancestral, social, economic and cultural bonds, expressed in the common ownership of land, communal work, mutual assistance,

[155] The concept of "rural population" as used in the country's statistical systems includes indigenous and border communities. Indigenous communities are invisible in birth registries and in census data, where their members are consistently under-recorded. In Peru, the "indigenous peoples" criterion appeared only in the 1993 National Census; unfortunately it has not been used again for more than a decade.

democratic governance, the pursuit of multisectoral activities oriented towards satisfying their members and the country."

With respect to the native communities, Article 8 of Decree Law 22,175 declares that "they have their origin in the tribal groups of the jungle (*Selva*) and jungle fringe and are constituted by groups of families linked by the following principal elements: language or dialect, cultural or social characteristics, common and permanent ownership and usufruct of the same territory with concentrated or scattered settlements."

The last Housing and Population Census, from 2005, counted 6,730,364 inhabitants of rural areas, representing 26% of the country's total population.

An information search in the country's official sources reveals that there are limitations in obtaining specific and disaggregated information for the population ages eight and under, and it is even harder to segregate data on members of this age group belonging to indigenous communities. For this reason, this report will refer to the rural context as including indigenous populations, and will present specific information on those populations whenever this is available.

The available statistics dealing with agriculture and social development show that there are 7,163 recognized indigenous communities, of which 5,818 are *campesino* communities and 1,345 are native.[156] In 1993, the majority of the national population (83.8%) was recorded as Spanish-speaking; 13% spoke Quechua; 2.5% Aymara; and 0.7% native languages of the Selva. In rural areas, more than half the population spoke Spanish, followed by Quechua, Aymara and Amazonian languages (1.5%).[157]

1. Scenarios that Influence Educational Transitions for Children Living in Rural, Indigenous and Border Areas

1.1. Rural Families: Availability of Resources and Capacity to Support Educational Transitions

There is no doubt that the family is the first and principal setting in which young children develop as human beings, and it serves to direct and coordinate important factors that influence children's social development, which must then continue and be supplemented in school.

In Peru, rural families are predominantly poor (73%),[158] and the poorest of these families are indigenous and unilingual.[159] As Trevelli (2000) indicates, poverty has devastating effects on health, education, nutrition, access to resources, life expectancy, income, employment, maternal and child mortality, political participation, and family violence. Yet it is in just such a context that many children live out their first eight years, with their family and community playing a key role in their survival and development.

Studies show that in rural and indigenous areas, the mother carries the main responsibility for the caring and rearing of children. Consequently, in light of the project's objectives, and

[156] Third National Agricultural Census 1994 and MIMDES Repopulation Program
[157] The 1993 Census was the only one to date to consider the mother tongue of the head of household for identifying the indigenous population.
[158] INEI-CPV 2005.
[159] Trivelli (2000) takes the mother tongue of the head of household or spouse as the indicator for identifying indigenous households.

without any intent to bias the analysis, we shall attempt here to analyze and interpret the statistics on rural families on the basis of information available about the situation of women in rural and indigenous areas.

Women currently account for 50% of the national population. Generally speaking, that population is unevenly distributed at the national level, as a result of social, geographic and cultural factors: thus, 78% of women live in urban areas, and the remaining 22% in the countryside.[160]

1.1.1. Availability of Resources to Guarantee Children's Survival, Well-Being and Development

(a) The risks begin with pregnancy

According to INEI projections to 2006,[161] the rural population is young: children nine years of age and under represent 26.5% of the total population.

According to INEI (2000 – 2005), the fertility rate among rural women is higher than for urban women: rural women have an average 4.6 children, while the urban figure is 2.4. Studies reveal a relationship between a woman's years of schooling and the number of children she will bear. The statistics used in this report corroborate that finding: the illiteracy rate among rural women is above 30% and women in indigenous communities have on average 2.7 years of schooling, and they become mothers at an earlier age.

While teenage pregnancy rates have remained steady over the last four years, factors such as the level of schooling and cultural patterns of some regions and groups are still contributing to a situation where girls are becoming pregnant at a very young age. It is estimated that 13% of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are already mothers (10.7%) or in their first pregnancy (2.3%).

The 2008 UNICEF report finds that access to prenatal care has improved significantly in recent years; in rural areas it rose from 47% in 1996, to 83% in 2004-2006. Yet despite this increase, the report finds no observable improvement in the nutrition of expectant mothers: 43% of pregnant women and 47% of nursing infants suffer from anemia.[162] This brings risks for mother and child alike, and tends to perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

While 92% of childbirths were assisted by health professionals in urban areas, the corresponding figure in rural areas is only 45%. These data reflect the fact that a pregnant woman's access to services offering the minimum conditions for giving birth in safety and dignity will depend in large part on her place of residence and her socioeconomic situation.

(b) There are significant income differences between rural and urban women

In the rural areas of Peru, women represent 73.9% of the economically active population, and play an important role in agriculture and in income generation. Yet cultural patterns undervalue women's work, treating it as supplementary.

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[160] INEI-CPV 2005
[161] INEI: Compendio Estadístico 2007
[162] Monin data 2004.

The following table shows that many rural women of childbearing age (15 to 49 years) who have less education and are employed in agriculture receive no pay for their work.

Women working without pay, 2000 (percentages)		
Area	Urban	7.70
	Rural	56.20
Education	No education	55.50
	Primary	41.10
	Secondary	15.50
	Higher	4.80
Occupation	Agriculture	72.70
	Non-agriculture	6.30

Source: Bravo, Rosa. Las metas del Milenio y la igualdad de género: el caso de Perú. Santiago: ECLAC, 2004. ("Mujer y Desarrollo" series, 55)

(c) In rural families eight of every ten children feel the impact of poverty, and begin their school career at a disadvantage

The urban population is greater than the rural (60.17% versus 31.83% of the national total). In rural areas, eight of every ten children are living in poverty,[163] and this situation is most acute in departments such as Huánuco and Huancavelica, where 85% of children live in such conditions.[164]

Population distribution by area of residence and socioeconomic condition

	National	Urban	Rural
Total population (%)	26,152,265 (100%)	19,421,901 (74%)	6,730,364 (26%
Population living in poverty	52.0%	40.3%	73.6%
Children living in poverty	65.1%	51.9%	82.1%

Source Estudio de Oferta de servicios de atención infantil – MINEDU 2007, based on Compendio estadístico 2005 – INEI – Census 2005[165]

At the national level, one in every four children is small for his or her age, and the problem is worse when examined in light of departmental data: for example, in the departments of Apurímac, Cajamarca, Huánuco and Huancavelica the chronic malnutrition rate exceeds 40% (almost one child in two), and the prevalence of severe stunting in these departments is double the national average, or more (25%).

Anemia is another major nutritional problem in Peru, particularly in rural areas, where it affects one in two children under the age of five.

[163] The National Plan of Education for All 2005-2015 reveals that a high proportion of households (ranging from 41% to 62%) are unable to secure the basic food basket.
[164] Study on the availability of child care services, Ministry of Education 2007, based on the INEI Statistical Compendium 2005 and the 2005 Census. The reference age group is birth to five years.
[165] The reference age group is birth to five years.

1.1.2. Families' Capacities to Support Educational Transition Processes

Parents' education level influences their children's development

In 2006, INEI recorded a national illiteracy rate of 11.4%. In rural areas, the female illiteracy rate stands at 34.4%, in contrast to a male illiteracy rate of only 11.9%. The Ministry of Education (2006) reports that 93.9% of rural mothers have not completed any level of basic education (initial, primary or secondary).

In rural areas, women are responsible for the care and raising of their children, and for a good part of their education. Yet high illiteracy rates and low schooling among rural women means that they do not have the tools or the basic knowledge to accompany their children through the education process.

A statistical overview reveals that 41.2%[166] of biological parents strike their children to correct or punish behavior. It appears that the mistreatment children receive at the hands of their parents generally occurs in the context of punishment for disobedience, betraying sociocultural patterns that consider spanking or beating an effective mechanism for training the child.

According to information gathered in the CEM[167] (Women's Emergency Centers) in 2004, 88.5% of complaints of physical mistreatment among children ages five and under pointed to the parents as the aggressor: the mother is the person who strikes the child most frequently (52.9%), but the father is the culprit in many cases (28.2%), followed by other family members (8.8%). In the early years, then, the mother is the principal aggressor, reflecting the fact that the mother has closer contact with the young child, who is more dependent on her than at other stages of his or her life. Thus, the mother is indicated as the aggressor in 52% of cases involving psychological violence, and 60% of those involving physical violence; psychological and 28.5% who indicated physical violence. Although there is no breakdown of the information by area of residence, we may note that qualitative studies of child rearing practices in rural and indigenous settings indicate that such disciplinary practices are present there (Ghersi, 2002, Moromizato, 2007).

When it comes to cases of negligence and abandonment, the report cites 229 cases involving children under five, where parental neglect has had physical repercussions that have affected the child's life and health.

While some indicators suggest that there been improvements in rural families' living conditions (with respect to prenatal care, assisted childbirth, and reduced child mortality), these are not enough to guarantee a favorable setting for building the initial supports the children need for successful educational transitions – the "conditions of educability" that families must provide.

1.2. Education Services in Rural Areas: How Much do they Contribute to Educational Transition?

[166] National Demographic and Family Health Survey, 2000.

[167] The Women's Emergency Centers are sponsored by the Ministry for Women and Social Development through the National Program against Family and Sexual Violence. They offer specialized services free of charge, providing comprehensive and multidisciplinary care to victims of family and sexual violence in the various districts of the country.

In 2006, 38.9% of Peruvian children five years and younger were enrolled in an educational institution, and primary school enrollment (ages six to 11) was nearly universal, at 96.8%. Yet these figures conceal differences by age group and by area of residence.

In the zero- to two-year-old age group, only 4.2% of children are served by the education system: 5.8% in urban areas and 1.6% in rural areas. This age group is served primarily through non-formal approaches (3.1%). For the three- to five-year-old group, the national coverage rate is 66.4%, with a 23.2% gap between urban and rural areas.

In recent years significant progress has been made in bringing children between the ages of six and 11 into the education system. In 1985, the primary school coverage rate was 79.1%, and in 2005 it was 96.8%, reflecting the efforts made by the education system to provide access at this level and to achieve virtually universal coverage.

With respect to area of residence, there are sharp differences in the coverage rate, both for the zero-to-two group (urban 5.6% versus rural 1.6%) and for the three-to-five group (urban 76.7% versus rural 53.5%). In primary school, the urban-rural gap is nearly 4 percentage points.

As a source of statistical data on children living in indigenous communities we have had to rely on the 1993 INEI census because, more than a decade later, this remains the only census that considered the mother tongue as the criterion for identifying these population groups.

The 1993 census recorded a total of 2,248,969 children between the ages of five and eight,[168] the majority of whom (82.35%) spoke Spanish, followed by Quechua (13.57%), Aymara (1.67%) and other native languages (0.97%).

With respect to educational coverage, in 1993 only 10.46% of indigenous children between the ages of five and eight were reported as attending school, while 4.8% declared that they had never attended an education institution. We have no reliable and up-to-date information to assess the trend in coverage for this population group.

Frequency and percentage of children between the ages of five and eight, by attendance and mother tongue

Attending an Education Center	Mother tongue or dialect	Age				Total	
Attending		5	6	7	8	Total (N)	Total (%)
	QUECHUA	24808	48768	55733	64248	193557	8,61
	AYMARA	4383	7236	8044	9029	28692	1,28
	NATIVE	1806	3421	3643	4000	12870	0,57
	SPANISH	283695	383332	394304	424277	1485608	66,06
	FOREIGN	362	406	370	391	1529	0,07
	NO ANSWER	996	1230	737	702	3665	0,16
	Total	316050	444393	462831	502647	1725921	76,74

[168]The 1993 census provides no data on children ages four and younger.

Never attended		5	6	7	8	Total (N)	Total (%)
	QUECHUA	45926	26266	13017	8995	94204	4,19
	AYMARA	4418	1612	488	265	6783	0,30
	NATIVE	3346	1785	1012	910	7053	0,31
	SPANISH	159544	54092	22347	14225	250208	11,13
	FOREIGN	156	32	14	9	211	0,01
	NO ANSWER	17827	3717	2246	1763	25553	1,14
	Total	231217	87504	39124	26167	384012	17,08

Source. Censo de Población 1993 – INEI.

1.2.1. Safe, Attractive and Child-Friendly Education Programs: A Necessity in Rural Areas

The habitability of school facilities is an important factor in children's development and learning. Yet the report on "Infrastructure and Educational Quality" prepared by the Ministry of Education in 2005 shows that the country's public education infrastructure has serious problems with maintenance and equipment. It also indicates that the schools are not offering sufficient levels of safety, in many cases because of faulty or unsuitable construction: indeed, outside Lima, construction skills are low and natural conditions unfavorable, making it difficult to build structures of more than one story.

The report recognizes that poor sanitation is one of the most acute problems in the educational infrastructure, and has an impact on children's health. Even in rural areas there are marked differences between school-based programs (53%) and non-school (18%) programs, which are located for the most part in indigenous communities and which are contributing to expanding coverage for children between the ages of three and five.

In 2004, less than 50% of publicly run initial education centers in rural areas had basic utility services. Only 41% of rural schools had sewage service versus 93% in urban areas; 51% of rural schools had running water versus 97% in the cities; and 41% of rural schools had electric lighting versus 95% of the urban schools.

The 2007 study of care and education services for children six years and under in rural areas revealed a tendency to rely on written materials in early childhood education, at the expense of play and physical activities.

In some rural areas it can take children as long as 45 minutes to an hour on foot to reach school. The lack of proximity of early childhood education facilities in many areas imposes a significant cost and effort on parents and children alike, and is a factor behind high absenteeism and dropout rates.

1.2.2. Teachers Lack the Skills to Monitor Children's Learning Progress, Especially in Rural Areas

Statistics on the teacher-pupil ratio and the index of certified teachers would suggest that there are no problems with these aspects. On average, there is one teacher for every 23 to 25[169]

[169] Ministry of Education, Indicadores de estadística básica 2006.

children, with no significant differences between rural and urban areas, except in the case of single-teacher schools.

The ratio of teachers with formal credentials is 72.9% in initial, and 85.2%[170] in primary education, with little difference by area of residence. However, teacher evaluations reveal serious problems in the training and performance of teachers.

The 2007 evaluation of the teaching body provided four rankings of qualifications, from 0 (lowest) to 3 (highest). When it comes to reading comprehension, rural teachers are concentrated in group 0, with only 16.7% reaching the highest level. For mathematics and logical reasoning, the results are even more discouraging: only 0.7% of rural teachers make it into the highest group.

These results show that having a teacher's certificate is no guarantee of the quality of training received or of the quality of instruction delivered in the classroom. It would seem that the Ministry of Education's training efforts have not had the desired results. This situation recently led the Ministry to close the country's teacher training institutions to new entrants, and to call for certifying their quality.

Teacher pay. Despite a 46% raise[171] in 2005, teachers in Peru still earn less than those in other South American countries (Chile, Brazil, Argentina) and, according to a study by Grade-PREAL (2003), Peruvian teachers have lower monthly incomes than other professionals, and are more likely than other professionals (31% versus 23%) to resort to "moonlighting," a situation that, while it may serve to supplement their incomes, is bound to affect the quality of instruction.

1.2.3. The Bilingual Intercultural Schools do not have Bilingual Teachers

The Intercultural Bilingual Education program (EIB) was created to ensure a culturally relevant education to indigenous peoples, through which they could preserve their history, their values, their customs and their know-how and in which learning would be consistent with the context and circumstances of each group. An important feature of EIB is the mother tongue, which is recognized not only as a set of symbols or words that mean something but also as an element of identity, a bridge for transmitting knowledge and above all for strengthening emotional bonds. Consequently, the program calls for the presence of bilingual teachers who have mastered the culture and the language; yet this goal is not always achieved.

In rural areas, and especially in indigenous communities, there is a shortage of bilingual teachers, particularly at the initial level, and this is not helpful in expanding educational coverage for this age group in a context of respect for cultural diversity. Moreover, given the poor working conditions in rural schools and levels of pay and bonuses that are not commensurate with the effort required, 90%[172] of teachers working there are eager to be reassigned to urban schools. At the same time, rural schools show the poorest results in national measurements of academic performance.

A study in the Selva Central (Moromizato, 2007) identified two reasons for the lack of bilingual intercultural teachers: one was administrative, and had to do with the need to find places

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[170] Idem.
[171] In 2001 the average pay for a teacher was S/. 784.16 (US$290) a month, and this rose to S/. 1,149.74 (US$425) in 2005; teachers in rural schools received an incentive of S/. 119.00 (US$44) a month.
[172] Consejo Nacional de Educación, referring to the public education teaching career.

for teachers who are not bilingual, while the other reflects the fact that there is a shortage of teachers who meet the requirements of knowing the culture and mastering the mother tongue of the community. In their analysis of bilingual schools in Puno, Cueto and Secada (2000) found that the criteria for assigning EIB status to a school were not clear, and that in any case they bore little relation to the mother tongue of students in the area.

Both studies point to confusion and implementation of EIB, although Cueto and Secada go further by indicating that the plan has not really been implemented. The studies show that there are schools in native communities that are denied bilingual teachers because they have not been declared as EIB schools. At the same time, there are schools recognized as EIB where staff has neither command of the language nor any identity with the culture.

Cueto and Secada also show that the majority of teachers in EIB schools in Puno can speak the language of their school, but that fewer than half can read or write it. The authors raise a pertinent question: how can these teachers teach their students to read and write their mother tongue? On the other hand, there are teachers outside the EIB schools who speak, read and write in indigenous language but who have been assigned to unilingual Spanish schools (primarily in urban areas). Perhaps the most surprising finding was that some teachers who speak Quechua are working in Aymara schools (six cases) or vice versa (one case); some of them have a command of both Quechua and Aymara, but others are simply in the wrong place.

2. The Impact of these Scenarios on Children's Educational Transitions in Rural, Indigenous and Border Areas

2.1. Children's Entry and Progress through the Education System

The last 13 years have seen an increase in the coverage of services for five-year-olds. Yet the figures show that 55.2% of children between the ages of three and five are not in regular attendance in early childhood education programs. Casas (2006), in a study for the Ministry of Education, finds that the main reason for non-attendance is that parents still have the idea that the child lacks the maturity (and perhaps the capacity) to learn in an educational setting (76%). Another reason is the lack of education services (6%). Finally, the cost of sending children to school is a hardship for poor families (who generally live in rural areas) and if they have several children they are likely to give priority to primary school (8%).

With respect to the continuity of service between the initial and primary metals, we find that 62.5% of children entering primary school have had some initial education. Here again there is an urban-rural divide: in urban areas, 75% have initial education, but the figure is only 41% in rural areas.

It is estimated that 3.4% of children entering primary school are over-age, [173] a figure which rises to 5.7% in rural areas.

For children between the ages of six and eight, we find that in urban and rural areas alike six-year-olds attend less regularly than seven or eight-year-olds. These figures may be related to dropout rates, which are particularly high in the first grade of primary school.

[173] i.e. two or more years beyond the age established for the grade in question.

The percentage of pupils who dropped out in 2005 was much higher in rural areas (9.0%), where the rate was 7.7% for the public schools, 10.8% for multigrade schools, and 13.2% for single-teacher schools. While dropout rates have declined since 1992, they are still alarmingly high, particularly among the most vulnerable social groups. These data reveal the difficulties of staying in school for pupils living in rural and extremely poor areas, and the importance in this regard of the institution's management and its pedagogical organization.

A report presented by the National Directorate of Initial Education (2005) shows a positive correlation, on a departmental basis, between dropout rates and participation in initial education centers or programs: the higher the coverage rate of initial education, the lower is the dropout rate in the first grade of primary school, as can be appreciated in the following chart.

In the case of indigenous language groups, data for 2004 show a dropout rate of 2.5%, which is lower than the overall dropout rate at this level of education. Among these groups, dropout rates are highest in the first grade (3.5%) and in the last grade (3.9%).

Ramírez shows that a great many children of primary school age are working in agricultural, craft or domestic activities. In the Sierra and the Selva, work of this kind allows parents to transmit cultural practices to their children and inculcate in them a sense of collaboration and belonging. Yet most working children (71%) are poor (ENG, 1997): their work is routine, their productivity low, and their reward paltry. Moreover, such work is reflected in low school attendance and poor academic performance.

2.2. Rural Children's' Learning Achievements and their Relationship to Early Childhood Education

The national evaluation of educational performance conducted in 2001 by the Ministry of Education showed that the majority of children were reaching the sixth grade without acquiring the expected skills in the areas of "integral communication" and "mathematical logic."

A 2004 evaluation of the performance of pupils in the second grade found that only 15.1% had acquired the expected reading comprehension skills, and only 9.6% had the expected mathematics skills; the performance was even worse in the public education system and in rural areas.

To speak of satisfactory educational transitions not only implies the existence of educational services that provide continuity between levels, but also raises a fundamental question as to what that continuity contributes to forestalling school failure.

The National Directorate of Initial Education (2005) attempted to answer this question by comparing two different sample groups and establishing an index of the effectiveness of initial education in terms of the number of first-grade students who have developed reading and writing skills. The first sample consisted of children who had attended some initial education center or program, while those in the second sample had no such experience.[174]

Cross-referencing of the data shows a higher percentage of children who know how to read and write among those who received initial education. Nationwide, the effectiveness index

[174] To avoid distortions due to age differences among children in first grade, the samples were restricted to those at the normal age for that grade (six years). It is also important to note that the only condition for placing a child in one sample or the other was the child's educational situation in the year prior to first grade.

turns out to be 7. In other words, for every first-grader who can read and write but did not attend initial education there are seven with those skills in the group that did attend.

If we compare this index for poor (but not indigent) children and for non-poor children, we find that as poverty worsens the effectiveness index for initial education declines from 7 to 2. This finding probably has to do with quality differences in the services provided. Effectiveness levels calculated by comparing individuals in a sector with the same characteristics may be associated with quality factors.

On the other hand, if we look at the percentages representing the number of children who have attended initial education and have acquired the ability to read and write, we find fairly large differences between different poverty levels and geographic zones. Among the non-poor, 26% of children have developed these skills, but for those living in extreme poverty the figure is only 5%. In urban areas, 20% of children develop this ability, while only 7% do so in rural areas. These results demonstrate that adverse living conditions will to some extent limit the child's potential for development. This may also be associated with environmental issues such as sanitation conditions or the child's State of health and nutrition.

If we analyze the results by the type of management of the primary education provided, we find that the differences of effectiveness and skills development are similar to those described above.

Conclusions

1. To appreciate the education problem, especially in rural and border communities, it is essential to refine the mechanisms and instruments for recording information on these population groups, including children under the age of three.

2. The family constitutes an important—if not the principle—setting for the development of children. Klisberg (no date) and Hardoy (1993) note that the family acts as a buffer between the child and the harsh realities of life, and among the poor it helps not only to reduce child mortality but also to improve attitudes and behavior by offering a life model.

3. However, there are many problems—especially for women, who are generally responsible for children’s upbringing. In rural areas there has been a significant increase in prenatal care and assisted childbirth, yet there are no observable improvements in the nutrition of pregnant women, and this generates risks for mother and fetus alike.

4. Low family income and education levels make it difficult for parents to support and monitor their children's education progress. In addition, family violence can stunt the child's social and emotional development and deny it the security it needs to face new situations.

5. The conditions in educational institutions reveal glaring gaps between urban and rural areas: rural schools are less well endowed with services, facilities and qualified teachers.

6. Education coverage for children under three is minimal: 4% nationwide and 1.6% in rural areas. For children between the ages of three and five, overall coverage is 44.8%, with a 20 point urban-rural discrepancy.

7. Children are being enrolled in the first grades of primary school when they are too young, at the age of five, and this tends to increase repetition and dropout rates. This is because they have not reached the stage of development that would allow them to achieve the learning expected at this level of education.

8. When it comes to dropout rates, information provided by the Ministry of Education shows that rural schools are at a disadvantage: the rural dropout rate is 9%, and ranges from 7.7% of the public schools, to 10.8% in multigrade schools, and 13.2% in single-teacher schools. This reflects the poor quality of teaching and the lack of backup support for teachers in their work.

9. A further indicator of the inequity and poor quality of the education system can be found in the learning achievements of children. The 2004 evaluation showed that, nationwide, only 15% were meeting expectations in reading comprehension, and only 9.6% in mathematics. The situation is worse in rural areas, where the respective figures were only 2.5% and 2.4%.

10. The report presents a dismal picture for children living in the rural areas of our country. The support these children receive from their families is not enough to shield them from the effects of poverty, which means that they begin their school career at a disadvantage in comparison with non-poor urban children, and the gap widens as they progress. Moreover, the schools are not sufficiently safe or nurturing to help families in the upbringing of their children.

11. This situation can be reversed, but it will take political will to expand the coverage of early childhood education in ways that will allow continuity in the system while stressing equity and quality in the services offered. Better preparation for teachers, in terms of contents and methodological strategies, would allow them to sequence learning and articulate classes, cycles and educational levels more effectively. Furthermore, we are beginning to understand that the problems of at-risk children are not confined to the private sphere (the family) but are becoming a national problem that must engage us all.

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Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

Introduction. 1. The experience of a quality education with equity. 1.1. Quality and equity in education policy documents. 1.2. Commitments and targets established by the Peruvian government with respect to quality and equity in early childhood education in rural and indigenous communities. 2. Educational articulation is a bridge between educational levels and spaces. 2.1. Education policy guidelines relating to articulation between educational levels. 2.2. Articulation between scenarios: education policies as a contribution to transition in rural and indigenous communities. 2.2.1. Participation as a mechanism of articulation between educational scenarios. 2.2.2. Bilingual Intercultural Education as a mechanism of social articulation and respect for cultural diversity. 2.2.3. Efficient education management that facilitates coordination between levels and spaces. 3. The intersectoral approach to child well-being and development as a basic condition for successful transition. 3.1. Policies for ensuring the survival, well-being and development of children based on intersectoral action and comprehensive child development programs. 3.2. Early childhood programs of different government sectors. 3.3. Civil society's contributions to improving the quality of care and education for rural children. Conclusions. Bibliography.

Introduction

The objective established for this second report was to identify, analyze and interpret existing policies for early childhood education that might be linked to transition processes, in particular for rural and indigenous communities. To this end, we posed the following questions:

- *Do current education policies consider elements that will promote satisfactory educational transitions for children under the age of eight living in rural and indigenous communities?*
- *Do they have implementation mechanisms to ensure successful transitions?*
- *Are there gaps in education policies and their implementation mechanisms that prevent children, especially in rural and indigenous areas, from staying in school and learning at the level expected for their age?*

In this report we shall measure "success" with indicators relating to entry and retention of children in the education system, which is supposed to equip them with the cognitive, emotional and physical foundations for coping with the changes they will experience throughout their lives.[175]

The basic policy documents for this analysis are essentially the General Education Act (Law 28044) and the National Education Project (RS 001-2007-ED), which has been adopted as government policy to the year 2021. Starting with these documents, we shall incorporate

[175] The report from the Project meeting held in Washington in December 2007 indicates that, in answer to the questions "what is transition?" and "how do we define transition?", the most important variables are those relating to retention in the education system, reversing the path to school failure, evaluating learning achievements, and promoting a satisfactory process for the child.

elements of policy derived from plans, standards, regulations and programs relating to early childhood in rural and indigenous communities.

The Constitution of Peru (articles 2, 9, 12 and 17) recognizes that every person has the right to life, to identity, to moral, mental and physical integrity, to free development and well-being, and equitable access to health and education services. It enshrines the principal and fundamental role of parents in the education of their children, and the right to participate in the education process.

This analysis will take as its basis the education policy documents.

For analyzing and interpreting policies for early childhood education and their relationship to educational transitions, especially for rural and indigenous people (the target population for the project), we shall employ conceptual ideas about transitions[176] and the priorities established in the framework of education policies, from three viewpoints:

- The experience of a quality education with equity.
- Educational articulation as a bridge between educational spaces and levels.
- The intersectoral approach to child well-being and development as a basic condition for successful transition.

One document that will be included in the analysis is ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, which was approved by Legislative Resolution 26,253 (02/12/1993), ratified January 17, 1994, and came into force on January 2, 1995. This convention requires the Peruvian State to take the necessary measures to guarantee these people the enjoyment of the rights. The policy underlies the incorporation of bilingual intercultural education (EIB) into the country's educational structure.

1. The Experience of a Quality Education with Equity

1.1. Quality and Equity in Education Policy Documents

Educational quality remains a topic of concern and ongoing debate among politicians, civil servants and researchers, reflecting the intention to achieve a better understanding and explanation of the reasons for the educational crisis the country is experiencing. Although the topic can be addressed from many perspectives, the one thing that appears certain is the uncertain and ambiguous nature of the term. As Myers indicates (2004), the definition of (educational) quality is relative and never absolute, for it varies depending on when and where it is constructed and on the attitudinal characteristics of the people involved in the process. He also mentions the term's transitory and dynamic nature, which will evolve and change with the shifting context in which it is formulated.

For this reason, in analyzing this aspect we must situate the concept of quality in relation to the concept of education and the vision that the country has of the individual, as demonstrated in its education policies. This will allow us to understand where we are coming from and where we are going.

[176] The conceptual elements were presented in Chapter I.

The General Education Act, Law 28044, is part of the policy documentation, i.e. applicable to all citizens of the country, without distinction as to race, creed, gender, socioeconomic condition or place of residence. This law places the individual at the center of the education process and makes him or her its fundamental agent: article 2 indicates that "education is a process of learning and instruction that is pursued throughout life and that contributes to the integral formation of individuals, to the full development of their potentialities, to the creation of culture and to the development of the family and the national, Latin American and world community. It is developed in education institutions and in different spheres of society." The document also recognizes that education is a fundamental right of the individual and of society, and that the State is responsible for guaranteeing full enjoyment of this right, with a comprehensive focus on quality for all, on the basis of universal and free basic education (articles 3 and 4).

Speaking of the goals of education (article 9), the document highlights two purposes relating to the vision of the individual: (i) the development of capacities for the person's ethical, intellectual, emotional, physical, artistic and spiritual fulfillment, which promotes the formation and consolidation of his identity and self-esteem, and his adequate and critical integration into society in order to exercise his citizenship and to be able to join the labor force and adapt to constant changes in society and in knowledge; and (ii) the individual's ability to help shape a democratic society that can affirm the national identity based on cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, overcome poverty, and promote the country's sustainable development and its integration into the world.

To achieve the purposes set forth in the Education Act, the principles of ethics, equity, inclusiveness, quality, democracy, interculturalism, environmental awareness and creativity are proclaimed (article 8). For achieving universality, quality and equity in education, the document cites the need to adopt an intercultural focus and a decentralized, intersectoral, preventive, compensatory and restorative approach that will contribute to equality of opportunities for successful learning (article 10).

The law defines the quality of education as the optimum level that the person must achieve in order to cope with the challenges of human development, to exercise his or her citizenship, and to continue learning throughout his or her life.

With respect to equity, article 17 declares that the State shall take steps in favor of social segments in a situation of abandonment or risk. In addition, the State recognizes and guarantees the right of indigenous peoples to education under conditions of equality with the rest of the national community. To this end it establishes special programs that will guarantee equality of opportunities and gender equity in rural communities.

1.2. Commitments and Targets Established by the Peruvian Government with Respect to Quality and Equity in Early Childhood Education in Rural and Indigenous Communities

The Strategic Multiyear Education Plan 2007-2011[177] (PESEM) sets out policy guidelines for the national agreements established in the National Education Project, the National Action Plan for Early Childhood, the National Plan for Education for All, and the National Competitiveness Plan.

[177] Ministerial Resolution 0190-2007-ED, approved May 9, 2007.

Through PESEM, the Ministry of Education establishes articulation between the education priorities for the current five-year government mandate and the strategic objectives established by the National Education Project to 2021, which in turn reiterates the targets established in the National Plan of Education for all and the National Action Plan for Early Childhood.

The PESEM contains three benchmarks for education policy: first, ensuring education for life, with equity and quality; second, improving the management and use of public resources allocated to the sector; and third, consolidating the education sector within the national sphere. Each of these benchmarks is accompanied by strategic objectives, priority activities for the sector, and outcome indicators.

The first strategic objective is to increase the levels of quality and equity in education services. The plan contains indicators referring to coverage, which is linked to increasing the supply of education services at the initial and primary levels, with special mention of rural indigenous areas, although there is no specific mention in the policies of children under three (nor are there any explicit indicators for them).

To these indicators, the National Education Project adds indicators relating to achievements in reading comprehension and mathematics for the primary and secondary levels, but it establishes no indicators of successful learning or development for the initial level in any part of the country.

The PESEM also indicates the strategic activities that will contribute to achieving the objectives, and these offer greater precision with respect to the type of intervention and the target population, but there is no clear correlation with the monitoring indicators proposed in the plan.

2. Educational Articulation is a Bridge Between Educational Levels and Spaces

2.1. Education Policy Guidelines Relating to Articulation between Educational Levels

In 1993 the countries launched a process to reform and modernize the State, accompanied by privatization and efforts to insert the country into the global market. This entailed a critical look at the education system, which would have to train citizens for this purpose.

That curriculum reform, influenced by the propositions emanating from Jomtien and Dakar, brings with it the intention to take a new view of education, to incorporate a new paradigm with respect to the learning process, moving from a behavioral focus to a constructivist focus that prizes such aspects as capacity development versus rote learning, the importance of learning on the basis of meaning, and the need for a progression between education levels, starting with their articulation.

During 1994 and 1995 Peru implemented an educational articulation policy, the purpose of which was to expand coverage for five-year-olds and to link that level to the next, i.e. to articulate initial and primary education.

The current General Education Act (approved in 2003) and the Regulations for Basic Regular Education (Supreme Decree 013-2004-ED) retain the intention to articulate the levels of the education system (articles 25 and 26 of the law, and article 14 of the regulations). Both policy documents make the Ministry of Education responsible for articulation at the national level of the

different levels of basic education and their modalities, maintaining unity with the principles and purposes of Peruvian education.

Article 25 of the General Education Act provides that the education system is inclusive and flexible, for it embraces and articulates all its elements and allows users to organize their educational path. It takes account of the needs and demands of the country's diversity. The regulations provide greater precision: article 16 stipulates that initial and primary education are to articulate concepts of childhood, as well as pedagogical and curricular approaches appropriate to children's evolution in each stage of their organic, emotional and cognitive development, their specific education needs, their individual differences and their sociocultural diversity, considering these as a process that continues from birth.

It adds moreover that primary education should consolidate and continue the integral training that began in initial education, bearing in mind article 36 of the Act, which recognizes initial education as the first level of the education system, targeted at children under the age of six, and recognizing the different modalities of providing education. It also calls for family and community involvement, indicating that initial education serves the purpose of promoting child rearing practices that will contribute to the integral development of children, taking into account their social, emotional and cognitive growth, their oral and artistic expression, their psycho-motor development, and respect for their rights.

Perhaps the clearest manifestation of the articulation between education levels is the effort to establish a single curriculum design that will embrace all levels of regular basic education (Ministerial Resolution 0667-2005-ED), which establishes learning goals for each educational cycle. It is expected that, on the basis of the general frameworks, the decentralized institutions of the system will diversify themselves, giving meaning to learning by assuring social and cultural relevance in relation to the context in which it is applied.

On this point, the curricular guidelines for Bilingual Intercultural Education[178] provides:

> 1. The different levels and modalities of Peruvian education are governed by the principle of interculturalism. The curriculum for the different levels and modalities of education must ensure that all students can develop common basic skills on the basis of the social, linguistic, cultural and economic reality of each region, diversifying the curriculum to ensure its relevance.
>
> 2. Curricular diversification goes beyond the usual contextualizing of capacities established in the Basic Curricular Structure, something that any teacher normally does. It presupposes the establishment of basic guidelines for curricular diversification, as well as training for all the country's teachers in specific procedures and techniques that allow them to adapt the curriculum to local reality. This process must also involve grassroots organizations.

However, reality shows us that having an integrated and diversified national curricular design is in itself no guarantee of efficient articulation between the levels. Many studies have shown discontinuities in pedagogical processes between the initial and primary levels and the lack of education services that will facilitate the move between levels; the training of teachers continues to be slanted towards the age group with which they will work.

[178] Policy Guidelines for Bilingual Intercultural Education, Ministry of Education, Dirección Nacional de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural – Dinebi – 2004

2.2. Articulation between Scenarios: Education Policies as a Contribution to Transition in Rural and Indigenous Communities

2.2.1. Participation as a Mechanism of Articulation between Educational Scenarios

Education policy guidelines encourage participation by civil society (families, community leaders and local authorities in particular) in the formulation of local education projects, with a view to ensuring that education institutions incorporate the expectations, needs and sociocultural differences of the population into their projects, so as to offer a pertinent education that will contribute to local development. This participation should facilitate the building of bridges between the education system and the local population, and make them easier to cross.

Article 52 of the General Education Act recognizes students, parents, teachers, principals, administrators, former students and the public at large as members of the education community. It encourages participation in the education process through the establishment of the Institutional Education Council in which representatives of the education community can help to formulate and execute the national education project. In addition, there are participatory bodies at the local level such as the Local Participatory Council on Education (Article 75); the Regional Participatory Council on Education (Article 78) at the regional level; and the National Education Council (Article 81) at the national level (Ministry of Education).

These forums for participation, cooperation and oversight apply to all areas of the country, including rural and indigenous communities, and start from the recognition of the student as the center of the process and the education system (article 53)—and the family as the fundamental nucleus of society—with primary responsibility for the integral education of its children (article 54).

With respect to the Education Institution, this is defined as a learning community and as the first and primary locus of management for the decentralized education system, the purpose of which is to impart learning and comprehensive training to its students (article 66).

The education institution, as a physical and social setting, must also establish links with the various organizations in its environs and make its facilities available for extracurricular and community activities, while preserving its primary education goals and objectives (article 66).

2.2.2. Bilingual Intercultural Education as a Mechanism of Social Articulation and Respect for Cultural Diversity

One of the principal themes of education policy is interculturalism. From this perspective, the education system must promote recognition and respect for social and cultural identities, and must consider cultural diversity as an asset to which all the country's peoples and its cultural and linguistic communities will contribute through democratic dialogue.

A concrete expression of this principle can be found in the teaching policy guidelines for Bilingual Intercultural Education,[179] which call for renewing pedagogical practices to strengthen awareness of the country's multicultural reality and which promote the inclusion of knowledge,

[179] Lineamientos de política de la educación Bilingüe Intercultural. Ministerio de Educación. Dirección Nacional de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural – DINEBI – 2004.

know-how, values and practices from different cultural traditions, recognizing and taking advantage of the ways in which different societies generate and transmit knowledge, evaluate skills, abilities and attitudes, and foster cooperative work. Moreover, those guidelines promote the development of new forms of learning and teaching.

The policy recognizes and supports the right of women and girls to education. It encourages women, particularly indigenous women, to stay in school longer and to become literate. Recognizing that the knowledge of men and women from different cultures constitutes a valuable contribution to education, special attention must be paid to the contribution of Andean and Amazonian women and to opportunities for enriching the educational experience of new generations.

The Regulations for Regular Basic Education and the Policy Guidelines for Bilingual Intercultural Education (EIB) provide that at the initial and primary education levels students should be offered diversified curricula relevant to their reality, both in their mother tongue and in a second language, promoting the construction of new knowledge, practices and values grounded in their immediate social and cultural setting.

The specific guidelines with relation to EIB indicate that:

1. Initial education, in order to give continuity to the process of primary socialization, should favor students' own language and culture. In indigenous communities, the use of Spanish at this level is limited to play and recreational experiences that promote initial contact with that language. Teachers and other initial education workers must be members of the local community and speak the language of the pupils they are working with.

2. The EIB approach in primary education must be universalized in areas where indigenous languages are spoken, whether these areas are Andean or Amazonian, rural or urban. Primary education teachers must speak the language of their students and be aware of EIB methodologies.

3. Because most primary schools serving indigenous peoples are multigrade or have only one teacher, bilingual intercultural education at the initial and primary levels offers pedagogical designs and educational materials that are linguistically and culturally attuned to serve groups at different learning levels simultaneously.

The centers for training teachers in EIB are expected to prepare professionals who will be able to speak and write an indigenous language and Spanish, so that they can conduct lessons in both languages.

2.2.3. Efficient Education Management that Facilitates Coordination between Levels and Spaces

To achieve quality education with equity, in which the schools offer favorable conditions of educability and respect the rights of the most disadvantaged population groups, the education system must be efficiently managed. This presupposes certain conditions, such as active involvement by the participatory councils at all levels, adequate funding for implementing policies, efficiency and transparency in the use of resources, and a teaching body that is committed and performs its functions at a high level.

Article 63 of the General Education Act declares that management of the Peruvian education system is decentralized, simplified, participatory and flexible and that it is to be implemented in a framework of respect for pedagogical autonomy and with a management approach that favors the education effort. There are four levels of management: the Education Institution, the Local Management Unit (UGEL), the Regional Education Directorate (DRE) and the Ministry of Education.

With specific reference to management and organization of EIB schools, the guidelines indicate:

In the context of decentralized management, there must be coordinated and concerted action among the public and private organizations involved in bilingual intercultural education, in order to institutionalize and strengthen it at the local, regional and national levels.

The Ministry of Education encourages effective participation by indigenous peoples of the Amazon and the Andes through their representative organizations, considering such participation to be an indispensable condition for proper management and organization of EIB.

The National Education Council (CNE)[180] produces a scorecard on education management, the results of which are not very favorable:

- In terms of participation, 16 of 26 regions have produced advanced versions of regional education projects. However, regular participation levels are low: fewer than half are working to a coordinated annual activities plan, and there is little oversight exercised.
- The CNE warns that Peru is one of the countries that invest the least in education on a per-student basis: on average, the government devotes US$352 per year for each student in primary education (and only around US$225 for initial education), while the Latin American average is US$800. Moreover, funding is not equitably distributed: Huanuco, one of the poorest regions, receives S/. 544 per student per year, while Moquegua, located in a less poor region with six times fewer students enrolled, spends S/. 1,236 per student per year.
- When it comes to transparency in the use of resources, the CNE indicates that the education sector is the source of more complaints about corruption than any other State sector.
- The CNE reports that "education management is currently bogged down in bureaucratic routine and perfunctory compliance with existing standards, and it is consequently losing sight of its *raison d'être*, the need to increase the educational achievements of students."

3. The Intersectoral Approach to Child Well-Being and Development as a Basic Condition for Successful Transition

The intersectoral approach to early childhood development translates into national plans, strategic actions, and the allocation of resources for comprehensive attention with quality and equity, in order to guarantee the sound and optimal development of children. The Dakar

[180] Full information can be found at www://pen.cne.gob.pe.

Framework for Action, inspired by Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognizes the need for "expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children."

To meet these international commitments, governments need to turn words into action in terms of policies and programs.

In this context, intersectoral coordination is seen as a strategic action intended to "bring together the different social sectors and harmonize their care and education policies as well as their service delivery systems in order to avoid overlapping, but without going so far as to merge structures," as UNESCO explains in its report on "Intersectoral coordination of early childhood policies and programs: experience in Latin America" (2004). Coordinating different sectors is not an easy task, but it is the best way of pooling efforts and ensuring a comprehensive approach to the care and education of children under six.

Peru has a broad legal framework governing intersectoral action for young children, in particular those deemed at risk.[181]

Through intersectoral action, the intention is to achieve the development of children by supporting the poorest families in providing their sons and daughters with the minimum conditions of survival that will favor their development, i.e. to help establish the conditions of educability that families are supposed to provide, recognizing that poor families have difficulties in meeting the basic needs of their members.

3.1. Policies for Ensuring the Survival, Well-Being and Development of Children Based on Intersectoral Action and Comprehensive Child Development Programs

From the review of policy instruments, the most significant elements for implementing early childhood programs have been identified. It will be seen that the need for intersectoral work is recognized at all levels, from the macro framework of international policies to the local scale, with the Municipal Organization Act. Equitable access to services and active community participation are also elements that appear constantly in these documents.

However, the policy guidelines and standards for early childhood care and education have paid less attention to steps for enhancing the efficiency of management, such as establishing oversight and evaluation systems, rating the competence of early childhood program personnel, or ensuring the social and cultural relevance of services and the proper allocation and use of resources.

3.2. Early Childhood Programs of Different Government Sectors

Peru currently has a legal framework that is favorable to children, one in which the various power groups have agreed on the need to give priority to early childhood through

[181] This component appears in policy documents such as: National Accord, approved by Supreme Decree N° 105-2002-PCM; General Education Act N° 28044; National Education Project, approved by RS N° 001-2007-ED; National Action Plan for Children and Adolescents, approved by Law 28487; National Antipoverty Plan, National Plan for Education for All, approved by RM No 0592 –2005 ED; "Balanced-Budget Law" 2008; Prenatal and Early Childhood Stimulation Law - Law N° 28124 – MINSA; Family Strengthening Law 2004-2011 - Law N° 28542; National Plan for Family Support (2004 – 2011) approved by DS 006 – 2004- MIMDES ; Municipal Organization Act Nº 27972.

intersectoral action, with a particular focus on children living in the country's poorest rural areas. The development of early childhood programs in fact constitutes a concrete expression of political will, based on legal frameworks established by agreement among all branches of government.

If there are gaps in the policy, they are to be found not in the documents themselves but in their implementation, which often suffers from a shortage of funds, lack of understanding between government institutions and the public, and lack of capacities on the part of those responsible for executing the programs.

This chapter summarizes the main conclusions of the final report from the study on care and education services for children under six in rural areas, prepared by the Research Center of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú at the request of the Ministry of Education. That study focused primarily on early childhood programs offered by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry for Women and Social Development.

Programs for children from birth to the age of two:

The statistical evidence shows that programs for this age group are virtually nonexistent in rural areas, and that the majority of them are concentrated in the cities, perhaps reflecting the fact that urban women are more likely to take full-time jobs and therefore to need daycare services.

The study, conducted in the regions of Cajamarca, Huánuco, Ucayali and Apurímac, which are home to the largest rural population, shows that in the 22 districts selected for the study the Ministry of Education had no programs targeted at this age group, either through the schools (nursery, kindergarten) or in other settings (SET, PET, Paigruma, PIETBAF, PIET).

In the case of the Wawa Wasi,[182] coverage is minimal and there are in fact only four Wawa Wasi in the 22 districts selected (2 in Cajamarca, 1 in Apurimac and 1 in Huanuco), a significant finding considering that the program is supposed to be targeted at poor and indigent people, who are for the most part rural. While the program is designed for children from six months to three years and 11 months, most of the care it provides is concentrated on the two-and-under population group.

With respect to the food supplement programs (PRONAA, *Vaso de leche*); PACFO is targeted at children between six and 36 months with nutritional problems, while PANFAR serves children up to 36 months and their mothers. These latter two programs are coordinated with the health establishments of the Ministry of Health. However, there are no effective mechanisms to ensure that the children actually consume these nutritional supplements.

With respect to the nutrition and milk distribution programs, there are no systematic or up-to-date records on beneficiaries under the age of two, which makes it difficult to assess the real impact of the programs on the nutritional status of children. As we shall see below, basic sanitation conditions and infrastructure problems pose serious risks to children's health.

[182] The National Wawa Wasi Program, sponsored by the Ministry for Women and Social Development, offers daycare service for children over a period of eight hours, including meals suitable to different age groups. Children pursue early childhood learning activities and receive preventive health interventions, for which a framework agreement has been signed with Minsa providing for weight and height control.

As to the services sponsored by the Ministry of Health, we find that the care afforded children in this age group involves essentially growth and development monitoring ("CRED"), immunizations, and attention to prevalent diseases. There is a law on prenatal and early childhood stimulation, under which parents can receive guidance at the health centers on how to work with their young children, but its provisions are being implemented only slowly and they are scarcely applied in rural areas where health centers are few and far between.

As noted, the ministries responsible for early childhood services have achieved only minimal coverage for those services, despite the provisions in their rules and directives.

Programs for Children between the ages of three and five, and six and eight

Education programs for children between the ages of three and five are offered primarily through the kindergartens and, outside the schools, through PRONOEI, while those for children between the ages of six and eight are provided conducted through the primary schools. These programs are offered in the mornings: for the younger group, they run for four or five hours, and six or seven hours for the older group.

In theory, these programs are supposed to provide comprehensive care through intersectoral actions, but in practice it is mainly the kindergartens that are able to offer food programs, while the PRONOEI are less well served. We believe this reflects the fact that the PRONOEI are located in more sparsely populated rural areas where access is difficult and where there are fewer children.

The school meals program delivers food to the schools, but it has to be prepared and distributed by the mothers, working in shifts. The municipal governments are responsible for supplying inputs for the milk program ("*vaso de leche*").

When it comes to health services, we find that growth and development monitoring declines progressively with children between the ages of three and five, and those between the ages of six and eight are checked only if they are ill. The regulations require less frequent health checks for this age group, on the assumption that these children are less vulnerable, yet that assumption is not valid for poor rural areas, where children in this age group are also at high risk.

While most of the early childhood programs and services are supposed to be nation-wide in scope, the country's poorest areas are still underserved, as they have been for several decades. This confirms the findings from other studies to the effect that efforts and resources are too widely scattered, and that there are gaps in the targeting mechanisms.

Despite the social and economic changes that our country has seen in recent years, the hours during which childcare services are available are everywhere the same, with no allowance for the actual needs of families and their children, even though the rules (both in MINEDU and in MIMDES) call for the scheduling of service to be flexible in light of people's needs (article 71 of the Regulations for Regular Basic Education and Guidelines for the National Wawa Wasi Program, PNWW).

According to the operating guidelines for child care programs, both MINEDU and MIMDES have programs or services where responsibility for delivery lies with community agents, who must have a specified profile and proper training and must receive constant coaching from professional education workers or caregivers. In the case of MINSA, service delivery is the

responsibility of professional staff in the health centers, although in practice most of the activities are provided entirely by community members, and they receive virtually no coaching.

While all sectors claim to have monitoring and evaluation systems, the problems mentioned above are such that, in practice, they are not achieving the goals for which they were created. There is usually only one supervisor (the immediate chief of the service) and supervisors tend to focus their attention on administrative matters and ensuring coverage, with little time left to monitor technical activities.

The study of early childhood services found that the non-operability of monitoring and evaluation systems could be laid to problems of organization and functioning, such as the following:

- Perhaps the emphasis on monitoring indicates that, for the final operators, the coverage of services is more important than the actual process.
- Final operators are not familiar with the systems of monitoring and of generating information for decision-making.
- There is a mismatch between operating personnel numbers and the assigned service goals. A further obstacle to effective monitoring is geographic isolation and lack of transport facilities, which limits on-site presence and the time that can be spent there.
- These staffing shortages, which reflect inadequate funding, mean that program sites are visited on average only every six months, or twice a year.
- Working conditions: high staff turnover affects the continuity of the strategies.
- The PNWW and MINSA monitoring systems involve too many forms, and they collect quantitative data only, rather than the qualitative data that would be more useful for improving the services. The Ministry of Education has no proper system for recording data or for systematizing the little information collected, which means that these data are not used. The other social programs rely essentially on KARDEX for delivery control.

We may add that the absence of basic, standard criteria for running the programs, the lack of mechanisms for integrating information, and the impossibility of reconciling the data collected all make it difficult to establish service priorities and goals. As a result, budgets are frequently "cloned" from year to year, strategies are repeated without any demonstration of their impact, there is no comprehensive overview of operations, and there is inadequate targeting, with the attendant leakages. These aspects and part and parcel of the problems of equity and of access to early childhood programs.

The *Crecer* strategy adopted by the present government through the Council of Ministers seeks to correct these gaps and to strengthen intersectoral action. It has set a 2011program target of reaching one million children in 880 of the country's poorest districts, with priority to children under the age of three. Yet action is still slanted towards child survival, with the emphasis on malnutrition, and tends to overlook the education aspect.

3.3. Civil Society's Contributions to Improving the Quality of Care and Education for Rural Children

Civil society, working through nonprofit associations or NGOs, is pursuing projects to improve living conditions, with particular attention to the country's most disadvantaged areas. The 2006 report from the International Cooperation Agency (APCI) showed that 6.8% of international cooperation was earmarked for the education sector in 2004, amounting to some US$26 million (see attached table). No specific information was provided on the percentage administered by the various executing agencies (governmental and nongovernmental) in the education area, but it appears that for that year 54% of the money was administered by NGOs.

The APCI sets the national policy for international cooperation and has identified 12 priorities that are aligned with the national policy documents such as the National Accord, the National Antipoverty Plan, the National Rural Development Strategy, the National Competitiveness Plan, and the National Food Security Strategy. Two of those priorities relate to the subject of this report:

- Improving public health and nutrition.
- Ensuring universal access to quality education.

In line with the priorities established by the APCI, the intent is to coordinate and rationalize the international cooperation channeled through governmental and nongovernmental entities. To this end, a registry of NGOs has been established, with rules to guarantee transparency in the administration of the funds. However, it is difficult at this time to assess the impact that the various NGO initiatives have had on improving the quality of education over time. There are several reasons for this: actions are taken in isolation, there is no effective monitoring and evaluation system, the intervention focus is unclear, and there are no effective mechanisms for coordination between NGOs and government.

The present policy provides some guidance with respect to government needs and priorities, but there are no clear guidelines for "what happens afterward" or for ensuring project sustainability. Government institutions are under no express obligation to monitor NGO efforts or to incorporate innovations into their technical proposals, even though they work with education institutions that are part of the public sector, and there is a lack of familiarity with the activities and opportunities for improvement that may be found there. On the other hand, some NGO initiatives have proven difficult for the State to replicate, either because of their inherent complexity or because the human and economic resources needed to implement them on a national scale are lacking.

Finally, in the Peruvian context of decentralization, one important contribution of organized civil society is its participation in coordination forums (such as decentralized antipoverty councils and the participatory formulation of local budgets). These constitute an opportunity to place the early childhood issue on the public agenda at the local level where decisions are taken on priorities in the annual regional plans and consequently in the allocation of public funds.

Conclusions

Quality and equity in education

1. Quality and equity in the education system are two important focuses of articulation between the education policy priorities established in the 2007-2011 PESEM, and the National Education Project to 2021.

2. In terms of coverage, the PESEM calls for a 16% increase at the initial education level, with the goal of a 73.7% coverage rate. That indicator does not specify detailed targets by age group (children under three receive the least attention) nor by geographic area (rural and indigenous children have the fewest education services). The Ministry of Education projects a 48% increase in budget allocations per student for 2011 (from US$224 to US$437.50 per child). For the three-to-five age group living in rural areas, the Ministry of Education plans to increase by 7.23% (from 0.11% to 7.34%) the proportion of children served by EIB programs.

3. Articulation is broadly recognized within the system as an external mechanism to assist in transition between education levels. The General Education Act and the Regulations for Regular Basic Education provide further details, (specifying article 16) that initial and primary education together must articulate concepts of early childhood education as well as pedagogical and curricular approaches. These respond to the characteristics of children's evolution at each stage of their organic, emotional and cognitive development, their specific educational needs, their individual differences and their sociocultural diversity, considering these as a continuous process from birth.

4. While the most concrete evidence of articulation between levels is the effort of the education sector to establish a single curriculum design that will embrace all levels of regular basic education (Ministerial Resolution 0667-2005-ED), experience shows that having an integrated and diversified national curricular design is in itself no guarantee that such articulation will be effective. Many studies have shown discontinuities in pedagogical processes between the initial and primary levels and a lack of education services that will facilitate the move between levels; the training of teachers continues to be slanted towards the age group with which they will be working.

5. To fulfill the education policy mandates and the targets set for the sector (with respect to early childhood education in rural communities) will require efficient management of the education system. This presupposes certain conditions, such as active involvement by the participatory councils at all levels, adequate funding for implementing policies, efficiency and transparency in the use of resources, intersectoral action for comprehensive care, and a teaching body that is committed and performs its functions at a high level.

6. Although all the policy documents on early childhood care and education mention the need for intersectoral action, there are gaps that impede intersectoral initiatives, such as: the lack of standardized basic criteria for the functioning, continuity and complementarity of programs, the lack of mechanisms for integrating information and the impossibility of reconciling the data collected from each sector, which prevents the establishment of priorities and goals. As a result, budgets are frequently "cloned" from year to year, strategies are repeated without any demonstration of their impact, there is no comprehensive overview of operations, and there is inadequate targeting, with the attendant leakages (where funds go to those who should not receive them). As well there are attitudinal problems on the part of the programs' final operators. These aspects are part and parcel of the problems of equity and of access to early childhood programs.

7. At the present time, given the country's economic circumstances, organized civil society has an important role to play in incorporating early childhood problems (in rural areas) into the agenda of local governments. But the mechanisms of articulation and communication between initiatives of civil society (NGOs, universities etc.) and government agencies (regional education directorates, local management units) need to be improved in order to achieve complementarity and optimize the use of available resources.

8. Finally, as we have noted, Peru today has legal frameworks that are favorable to young children, especially those living in rural and indigenous communities, and they are favorable as well to successful transition processes. The weakness lies in the mechanisms and the ways adopted for implementing policies, which will require preparing the corresponding bodies (decentralized levels of government), preparing and informing program operators, improving public staffing mechanisms, strengthening program strategies in light of the local context, and providing greater information and opportunities for public participation.

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Chapter V. VENEZUELA REPORT

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

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Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Children in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities

Introduction. 1. Information on the general and target populations. 2. General situation of children in Venezuela. 2.1. School attendance and repetition rates. 2.2. Dropout rates. 2.3. Initial education coverage in the Venezuelan education system. 2.4. Language. 3. Education workers. 3.1. Level of training of teachers in initial education. 3.2. Working conditions for teachers. 3.3. Years of experience. 4. Family. 4.1. Family structure. 4.2. Level of schooling among rural and indigenous mothers. 4.3. Socioeconomic level (poverty quintiles). 4.4. Performance of the Human Development Index in Venezuela. Bibliography. Database.

Introduction

The data presented in this report is organized around three aspects suggested for the research:

a) Education variables relating to the development of children in school (age upon entrance, repetition and dropout rates, etc.).

b) Characteristics of education workers.

c) Characteristics of the family setting.

We have added indicators that permit a broader overview of these elements.

It is interesting to note that the indicators used were compiled for the most part from government sources, as supplemented with other documentary sources that we deemed to be based on rigorous studies.

1. Information on the General and Target Populations

Venezuela has a population of 23,054,210.[183] Of this total, 511,329 inhabitants (2.2% of the total) recognize themselves as indigenous (INE Census of Indigenous Communities, 2001) and have registered among the country's 32 ethnic groups, of whom 25% live in the major cities (Maracaibo, Caracas, Barquisimeto, Puerto La Cruz and Barcelona), 36% in traditional communities, and 39% in areas of intermediate status between rural and urban.

A recent study (Regnault, 2006) based on national records shows that the proportion of the indigenous population grew slightly over the last 20 years (1982:0.96%; 1992:1.50%; 2001:2.2% of the total population), in contrast to the notion that this important population group was on the verge of extinction.

[183] Censo General de Población, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas INE- 2001. The projected population for 2007 is 27,483,208.

Of the 32 indigenous peoples registered in the 2001 census, the most numerous are the Wayúu (60.5%), the Warao (5.6%), the Kjariña (3.4 %), the Jivi (3%) and the Piaroa (3%), while the remaining groups represent less than 2% each.

According to Allais (2004), 96.2% of the indigenous population is located in nine of the 23 federal divisions of the country. It is in those divisions that the ancestral lands of today's indigenous peoples are to be found.

The states with the greatest proportion of indigenous people are geographically remote from the center of the country, and betray a glaring lack of services and communications. Consequently, their indigenous inhabitants are not only geographically segregated but are also excluded from basic social services and are disadvantaged culturally, socially and politically (Colmenares, 2003).

In terms of the rural/urban distribution of the indigenous population, information from the 1992 and 2001 Indigenous Censuses shows that a significant portion of this population has migrated from the countryside to the cities, while at the same time rural areas have been converted into urban ones that include indigenous communities. Thus, in 1992 58% of indigenous people were living in areas considered rural, while for the latter census figure is only 34%.

According to the latest available census data (2001), the population of youth (from birth to age 18) numbered 9,034,790, or 39.1% of the total population. Of these, 83,406 (1.09%) belonged to the indigenous population.

2. General Situation of Children in Venezuela

The indigenous population living in urban areas shows a significant difference from that living in traditional and rural zones. In municipalities close to major urban centers and in regions of high economic productivity, the school attendance rate for children from seven to 14 years old stands between 81.2% and 91.2%. According to Regnault (2006), in the state of Zuliar "there is no municipality with low school attendance" (page 285), which suggests that in terms of school attendance, indigenous communities (primarily Wayuu) have greater opportunities than in other states.

"Early childhood" is understood as embracing the period from conception to about seven or eight years of age. It is at this age that children make the move from initial into primary education. Non-conventional childhood programs in Venezuela, such as the so-called Hogain[184] program of day care centers (*Hogares de Cuidado Diario*), accept children from the first year of life, offering them comprehensive care until they are six years old, the average age of entry into formal education. The Simoncito program offers comprehensive care from birth to age three (nursery), and from three to six years (preschool).

However there are still many obstacles to making initial education universal, and much less progress has been made here than with basic education, today called primary education.

2.1. School Attendance and Repetition Rates

[184] This program is sponsored by the Servicio de Atención Integral a la Infancia y a la Familia (Senifa), under the Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación (MPPE).

National indicators do not provide a breakdown for this age segment, and are based on information from global statistics.

According to Regnault (2006), school attendance (and average years of schooling by age group) will vary depending on the community in question. Thus, school attendance among indigenous people is highly heterogeneous, and cannot be addressed as if all families were equal (page 16).

As estimated by the Social Indicators System of Venezuela, the repetition rate in basic education has declined steadily over the last three years (from 8.1% between 2002 and 2003, to 6.4% between 2005 and 2006). The repetition rates in grades one and seven are still the highest.

It is a common characteristic of indigenous groups that children are over-age for the grade they are attending (Regnault, 2006). This situation is associated with low learning levels and high repetition and dropout rates. The author reports that 37% of girls and 32% of boys in grade six are over-age, and that for girls 13 years and older the rate is as high as 55%.

By contrast, the repetition rate in rural schools has been declining, and the total number of repeaters dropped from 97,379 in the 2005-2006 school years to 76,936.

The highest repetition rates are still in basic education, especially in the first grade, which together with seventh-grade, has the highest repetition rate in the entire system. A recent study (Teran de Ruesta, 2006) found that although these rates have declined over the past five years, they are not yet back to where they were in 1999-2000, at 9.2%.

2.2. Dropout Rates

The percentage of students continuing their studies in 2004-2005 was up nearly five points over 2001-2002, when it was 84.8%. These points to a decline in the dropout rate perhaps associated with introduction of the new education policy based on the "Bolivarian schools" model that offers comprehensive attention to children and adolescents.

2.3. Initial Education Coverage in the Venezuelan Education System

An important variable to be analyzed in this report is the coverage of initial education, which has generally fluctuated around the 50% mark.

In an effort to make initial education universal, education policies have focused primarily on the four-to-six year age group, for which it has created new childcare programs and centers (Simoncitos and Bolivarianos) and these have helped increase enrollment.

An important element here is the presence of the official sector in rural areas. In fact, the public sector accounts for 99% of rural preschool enrollment, reflecting the efforts of the government to provide education services, and we may say therefore that indigenous communities are served essentially by official institutions. Nevertheless, religious missions have a major presence in the more remote indigenous communities, where they focus their efforts and initiatives on early childhood services.

Ministry of Education data for 2005-2006 show[185] that, while 85% of children between the ages of four and six were being served; only 21% of the zero-to-three age group was receiving specialized care. The Ministry also notes that basic education coverage for children between the ages of seven and eight is 94%. The Terán de Ruesta study (2008) estimates the coverage rate for children ages five and six at 91.9%, but calls attention to the fact that for children three years and under, coverage rates have stagnated.

2.4. Language

According to Mosonyi (2004), the predominant language of instruction in nearly all schools is Spanish, which constitutes the "national language." The use of indigenous languages in the communities poses a dual problem: on one hand, employment opportunities require a minimal oral and written knowledge of Spanish, and on the other there persists an element of indigenous shame.

For example Wayuunaiki, the language of the Wayuu (Guajiros) people, is very much alive and is one of the most widely spoken. It belongs to the Arawak linguistic family, which is the most widespread and important in South America. Yet with the process of acculturation, adults have been losing interest in passing their spoken language on to their children, much less encouraging them to learn to read and write in Wayuunaiki (Alvarez, 1994).

A further problem for this language is that there is very little written material that can be used as a basis for effective mass literacy in Wayuunaik, and there are very few people who can read and write it.

Linguistic communities can be classified into contrasting groups: threatened peoples, and linguistically strengthened peoples. Communities closest to urban centers see no use for their native language, and they prefer to have their children instructed in Spanish at school, leaving it to the family to teach the indigenous tongue at home.

Regnault (2006) cites indicators showing that 40% of indigenous people have lost their native language, 60% still speak it, but of these only 10% speak it exclusively (page 20). This means that transmission of the language is declining, and takes place essentially within the family nucleus, where mothers, grandmothers and elders pass on the legacy of the past in oral form.

The Venezuelan government has designed a national education policy oriented towards providing indigenous peoples with "*Educación Propia*" ("their own education") and "*Educación Intercultural Bilingüe*" ("Bilingual Intercultural Education"), and strengthening and reviving their languages and cultures, and it has been enlisting linguists and anthropologists to study and systematize those languages. Yet Spanish remains the dominant influence.

3. Education Workers

The Ministry of Education's Annual Report for 2006 shows that there are 377,830 teachers in initial education; the gender breakdown is 295,560 females and 82,270 males.

3.1. Level of Training of Teachers in Initial Education

[185] Sources: Projection of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, figures supplied by the Dirección General de Educación Inicial, and authors' own calculations. These figures must be treated as estimates.

Estimates for 2006 show that 298,531 teachers were certified (*titulados*); 106,659 had degrees in education; 108,832 were *profesores graduados*; 51,596 were *técnico superior docente*; 31,444 were *bachilleres docents*; and only 79,299 lacked teaching credentials.[186] On this basis, it may be said that a high percentage of the teaching staff has professional education qualifications.

For the non-conventional system, specifically the *Hogain*, the 2006 Ministry report indicates a total of 36,803 "teaching mothers" (*Madres Integrales y Promotoras*), of which 18,633 had completed studies in a given area, while the remaining 18,170 had not.

In states where there is a high concentration of indigenous people, there is a state directorate of indigenous education responsible for training and statistics for this modality. However, this information is not consolidated at the national level, since it is supplied to a large extent at the initiative of local teams.

One of those teams, working directly under the Indigenous Education Directorate of the State of Amazonas, released a diagnostic report (May 2008)[187] on the training needs of teachers in the state. It notes that 58.58% of teachers working in that state are not teaching professionals, and that of that group 41.48% are baccalaureate holders, while 9.49% are working as teachers without this diploma. This percentage varies by education level and by municipality: for example, in preschool it is 56.57%, while it rises to 64.32% in the first and second stages of basic education. This information is consistent with the findings of Regnault (2006), who reports that "most teachers working in schools in indigenous areas have no professional teaching diploma, and they tend to be baccalaureates without any specialized preparation for being teachers" (page 34). The following table shows this breakdown.

As to the ethnic origin of teachers in the state of Amazonas, that diagnosis reports that 67% of them are indigenous. It should be noted that this proportion does not apply for other indigenous peoples. In the schools of Laguna de Sinamaîca (in Zulia – Añù people, who represents 4.5% of the indigenous population), the situation is quite different: at the official local level there is no ethnic criterion for selecting teachers, and consequently the majority is Creoles. On the other hand, nearly all the teachers live outside Laguna and in some cases must travel up to two hours a day to reach their workplace. This proportion reflects the lack of official criteria or education policies for selecting teachers on the basis of ethnic origin, although it must be recognized that this is not a sufficient criterion to ensure quality in intercultural education (Fernandez and Mendoza, 2007).

The diagnostic report on the training needs of teachers serving the indigenous communities of the state of Amazonas[188] proposes a training plan that includes all teachers (Creole and indigenous) in three levels of instruction: (1) continuous training; (2) refresher training; and (3) professional development.

This training plan is consistent with the national policy for teachers serving indigenous communities, which calls for continuous training for teachers in the complementary context of the three, mutually inclusive levels of Indigenous Education, Bilingual Intercultural Education, and Interculturalism.

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[186] These categories correspond to different levels of education – university, technical and secondary – at which teacher training is offered.
[187] Source: Dirección de Educación Indígena, Estado de Amazonas. 2008
[188] The State of Amazonas is home to 19 indigenous peoples.

3.2. Working Conditions for Teachers

Around 85% of teachers are in the public sector. In contrast to working conditions for the rest of the workforce, they have a significantly lower unemployment rate and considerably shorter working hours.[189] Yet their income also tends to be lower than that of other professional and technical workers. A study by researchers of the Institute of Advanced Studies in Administration (IESA) cites the Sample-based Household Survey (EHM for the years 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1995) as showing that:

- The average income of teachers in Venezuela is equal to that of other professionals in the country, but is below that of managers.
- At the margin, teachers work longer hours than do other professionals.
- The gender wage differential is lower for teachers than for other professional groups.
- Teachers earn more for their level of education than do other professional groups

The study also showed that the teaching body in Venezuela has grown since 1980 and that female teachers outnumber males by nearly three to one. It is interesting to note that teachers are generally perceived as belonging to the middle or lower-middle social class.

3.3. Years of Experience

Official sources provide no significant data on this aspect. However, a study on the teaching career and incentives in Venezuela[190] indicates that most teachers began their career in part-time or temporary positions or as employees in the private school system. Teachers in the public system are recruited by competition, and candidates do not necessarily have to give up their position in private institutions. Teachers say that the incentives to join the public system have to do with the social benefits it offers. Thus the typical pattern seems to be for a teacher to start out in the private sector and subsequently shift to the public workplace.

4. Family

4.1. Family Structure

The predominant household pattern in Venezuela is the nuclear family, followed by the extended family, single person households, and finally composite households. This is true in both urban and rural areas.

Nationwide, the percentage of households headed by females rose from 21.8% in 1981, to 29.4% in 2001. That percentage is lower in rural areas (18.1%) than in the cities (30.8%) (FAO, 2006).

Among indigenous peoples, households are generally structured as nuclear families, constituting socioeconomic units. Families are organized around a grandmother or mother, forming small units in which the woman is the central figure. Testimony from inhabitants of

[189] Bruni, C., Josefina et al. (2001*). Los maestros en Venezuela: carrera e incentivos*. Caracas: IDB-IESA
[190] Idem.

indigenous communities always mentions the mother or the grandmother as the person who taught them and told those stories. The typical family socioeconomic unit is patterned as a settlement where the eldest woman (the grandmother, mother or a maternal aunt) lives at the center, surrounded by the dwellings of siblings, sons and daughters. When they marry, the daughters take up residence near that of the mother, while the sons tend to move to the place where the wife's mother lives, forging in this way an alliance between the families. Families typically have many members, averaging between nine and 14 people (Fernandez and Mendoza, 2007).

Following are some characteristic traits of selected indigenous peoples:

- For the Warao (known as Guaraúnos), the extended family is the basis of their social organization, although with the advent of wage-paying jobs and salaried employment in the regional or local public administration family members have broken with the traditional patterns of cooperation and mutual help in subsistence tasks.
- The Wayúu, located in the Venezuelan Quajira, typically live in settlements of dispersed dwellings inhabited by related families, governed by a matrilineal system where the head is generally a maternal uncle or *taulala*.
- The Yanomami lived in collective or communal dwellings (of varying size, with the number of inhabitants ranging from 20 to 200 individuals) called a "*shapono*," where the families may be either monogamous or polygamous. In the latter case, each wife and her children have their own fireplace; when the family expands, a new hearth is added, around which the elder children gather. The families that leave will found another community based on the same model, but further away, or they may ally themselves with another community. They may be guided by one or several leaders.

4.2. Level of schooling among rural and indigenous mothers

Official data on the education levels of mothers in the sectors covered by the study are for 2001.

Indigenous population 15 years and older, by education level

Education level	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Not declared	1.4	1.4	1.4
None	42.6	52.9	47.5
Basic/Primary	46.6	37.7	42.3
Intermediate	8.3	6.5	7.4
Higher	1.2	1.6	1.3
Total	100	100	100

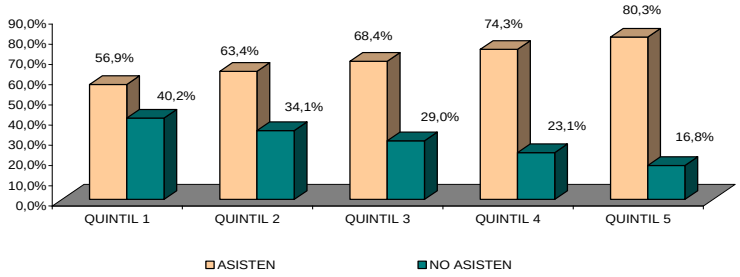
Source: INE. Censo de Comunidades Indígenas. 2001

Regnault (2006) reports that the education level of the mother in indigenous communities has a significant influence on her children's school attendance. Thus, of all children enrolled in school, 23.5% have illiterate mothers, while 35.3% with illiterate mothers do not attend school.

4.3. Socioeconomic Level (Poverty Quintiles)

According to calculations by Terán de Ruesta (2008), children in the two highest income quintiles (4 and 5) are more likely to attend a preschool center than are the children of families in the lower three quintiles.

Educational enrollment of children ages three to six, by income quintile



Enrolled **Not enrolled**

Source: Proyecto Ampliación y Mejoramiento de la Educación Inicial y Básica de |Jornada Completa y Atención Integral, Estudio: Caraballo, Casanova, et al. (2004) Prepared by Caraballo and Herrera with data from INE - EH[191]

There is a strong correlation between poverty and ethnicity in Venezuela. Indigenous peoples constitute a cultural minority clearly identified in national official data, and legally recognized. Yet the municipalities that are home to the greatest concentrations of indigenous people are disadvantaged in two ways: first, although extreme poverty indices have declined sharply in recent years (from 34% to 12%) in 2001 there was still a five-point poverty gap between these municipalities and the national average (12%). Second, these municipalities are located far from urban centers, and are thus beyond the radius of basic services and employment opportunities, which immediately exposes them to poverty and exclusion. For this reason, Colmenares maintains that social exclusion in Venezuela is a rural phenomenon and reflects inequality in people's access to basic social services such as education and health (Colmenares, 2004).

In a similar vein, Regnault (2006) shows that the highest exclusion indices are to be found in 62 municipalities located in Sierra de Perijá, Amazonas, Delta Amacuro, Sucre and the *Llanos* of Cojedes and Apure. These places are home to 8% of the national population, and comprise both indigenous and non-indigenous people engaged in farming activities. By contrast, the lowest degree of exclusion is found in the major cities and their immediate surroundings.

4.4. Performance of the Human Development Index in Venezuela

In 2006, the Human Development Index, which combines such factors as life expectancy, income and education, stood at 0.8144% (source: INE). In other words it represented an increase of 0.1227%, indicating that Venezuela had moved from the "medium" to the "high" human development rankings.

[191] Terán de Ruesta (2008). Op. Cit.

This evolution is indicated in the following table. When it comes to education specifically, the trend has been positive in terms of educational achievement and a declining illiteracy rate, which in line with government policy is measured through so-called "missions."

Human Development Index Performance

Year	Illiteracy rate	Combined enrollment rate	Educational achievement component	HDI
2000	90.9	64.12	0.82	0.75
2001	93.6	67.25	0.82	0.78
2002	93.6	69.06	0.85	0.77
2003	93.6	70.61	0.86	0.76
2004	95	75	0.88	0.80
2005	95	75	0.88	0.81

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE. (2005)

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Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Transitions

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Presentation

This document presents the results of ongoing research. It constitutes a national balance sheet of the broad trends in early childhood education policies in Venezuela, produced from an analysis of the existing legal and regulatory platform relating to the issue of transition and its practical operating framework. The document is targeted essentially at indigenous, rural and border communities, in terms of three manifestations or types of transition: from the home to the early childhood center, from that center to primary education, and from the home to primary education directly.

1. Policies, Mechanisms and Programs Relating to Transition

1.1. Early Childhood Policies in Venezuela: Existing Legislation

Initial education, understood as comprehensive care and education services for young children, is defined as the continuing process of child development and learning that begins in gestation and runs through the age of six, or until the child enters primary school. Its purpose is to foster full development of the child's social, emotional, linguistic, cognitive, physical and motor potentials, taking into consideration all his or her social and educational experiences, interests and needs.

With the new constitutional framework established in 1999, the Ministry of Education (now known formally as the *Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación*, MPPE) is developing competencies for educational work with children from birth to the age of three and then for initial education, which has two levels: (1) nursery ("*maternal*") for children from six months to two years and 11 months, and (2) preschool, for children from three years to five years and 11 months, or until they enter primary school.

Policies relating to the education of children from birth to age eight are based on provisions of the 1999 Constitution (*Carta Magna de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela*), which makes education compulsory at all levels from nursery school to the diversified intermediate level. The Constitution also recognizes education as a human right and a social duty for the development of the individual from a transforming social and humanist perspective, intended to create a form of citizenship that reflects the criteria of diversity and participation. Similarly, comprehensive care for young children (nutrition and food, health, recreation etc.) appears as one of the essential traits, finding its strongest expression in the declarations of the Organic Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LOPNA), which stresses the obligation of the family to be actively involved in the growth and development of its children.

Such policies are also linked to the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2001-2007, which is focused on the strategic objective of "achieving social justice" in order to guarantee to all Venezuelans the universal and equitable enjoyment of their social rights. The Ministry of Education has formulated and implemented policies specifically geared to children from birth to age six, among which we may cite:

- Universal initial education for children ages four to six, and expanded coverage for child care from birth to age three.
- Expanded coverage for initial education, through the construction of new classrooms and education centers and the reinforcement of nonconventional services.
- Training and ongoing professional development for the teaching body and the outfitting of centers that offer comprehensive education and day care services, in order to improve the quality of initial education.
- Information, training and dissemination to empower and strengthen the family and the community as the first educational settings for children.

Although the country does not have a comprehensive early childhood plan that articulates policies for this segment of the population, the national government is taking various steps to deepen and broaden its policies for certain target groups of children.

With respect to the population groups of interest to this report, studies of child-rearing patterns in rural and indigenous settings (Escuela de Educación de la Universidad Metropolitana, 2005), and of the dominant child-rearing practices among indigenous peoples of Venezuela (Amodio, 2005), indicate that these communities have firm criteria as to the lifestyle they seek to inculcate in their children as members of the family or of the extended social group. The problems lie in unmet needs for culturally more appropriate social services (ibid.). This suggests that studying the home-to-school transition, as well as the transition between different levels and modalities of schooling, is not merely an academic conceit but a necessity in order to derive a clear picture of the ways in which education arrangements could be improved so as to help reduce the social exclusion of the most vulnerable groups in our societies.

1.2. The concept of Transition in Policy Documents

The issue of transitions has emerged only recently in Venezuela. However it frequently appears in the literature, where it is always related to changes in children's lives, their adaptive capacity, the dynamics of the educational setting (family or school), interactions between children and adults, and the quality of the environment in which children live. The many meanings

attached to the term and the uses that are made of it explain in themselves the conceptual diversity of transitions as discussed by the authors.

The fact that transitions are a process can be appreciated by understanding them as critical moments of change that children experience as they move from one environment to another, in this way opening opportunities for their human development and their learning for life and school (OAS-CIDI-BvLF, 2007). This is clearly a child-centered definition, for it is the child that makes the transition, with support from his or her family and immediate surroundings.

While no national document on early childhood policies introduces a conceptualization of the term "transitions" in itself, it is useful to examine it from the viewpoint of its related elements: quality, equity and coverage.

1.2.1. Quality

The quality of early childhood education has not received sufficient attention in Venezuela, despite the importance it has acquired in light of the 1999 Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the commitments accepted at the 1993 World Conference on Education for All (EFA).

1.2.2. Equity

Early childhood ("initial") education is now seen as a very appropriate policy for overcoming poverty and achieving equity. The country has a set of regulatory instruments (laws and presidential decrees) for managing policies in this area, the purpose of which is to overcome the burden of social exclusion and injustice. Those instruments define equity in terms of three elements: gender, ethnic and racial origin, and social class.

In the year 2000 Venezuela launched the Strategic Social Plan (PES), which seeks to universalize social rights with equity, especially in indigenous communities, for which it calls for direct action on nutrition, vaccination and integral development projects. Finally, equity as a function of social class allows the fine-tuning of policies to reduce inequalities in living and health conditions based on membership in a certain sector of the population.

1.2.3. Coverage

The Ministry of Education (MPPE) has developed initiatives for the expansion of early childhood education through strategies that involve conventional and nonconventional approaches. The focus is on improving the physical capacity for providing care to children at the nursery and preschool levels (birth to age six), with a special emphasis on regions and states with the lowest coverage and the highest levels of social vulnerability.

According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report prepared by the International Education Office of UNESCO (2007), relating to Early Childhood Care and Education Programs (AEP) in Venezuela, coverage at the nursery level is low.

1.3. Legislative Instruments Relating to Transition Policies

1.3.1. At the International Level

Venezuela has assumed a number of social and educational commitments to the international community, all of them inspired in legal terms by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, two binding instruments that stipulate norms inherent to the dignity and value of each individual without distinction as to race, language, religion or nationality.

Having accepted these obligations, successive national governments have ratified the country's determination to protect and ensure the rights of children as human beings who need special care and protection. The State is recognized as having prime responsibility for this commitment to the world, through its interaction with the many international agencies, private and public, that are active in the country and are helping to build an inclusive education system based on multiple optics and varying levels of depth.

Government agendas have endorsed many initiatives for building interagency agreements in order to give priority to education and to favor the most disadvantaged groups. In 1990, for example, Venezuela adopted the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) signed in Jomtien, Thailand, which would be crystallized ten years later in the Dakar Framework for Action under a series of indivisible rights intended to meet the learning needs of all children and adults as summarized in a set of six objectives, the first of which refers specifically to early childhood care and education:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to good quality, free and compulsory primary education, and that they complete it;
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs;
4. Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

At the United Nations Millennium Summit, also held in 2000, Venezuela accepted the Millennium Development Goals approved at that event for the purpose of reducing poverty and improving people's lives, under which it has made significant efforts—at least in formal terms—, leaving the impression that the country is taking its international commitments seriously.

Each of the MDGs, conceived jointly as a program, has been proposed as a target to be achieved by 2015.

It is however the project for renewing basic rural, indigenous and border schools (*Renovemos la Escuela Básica, Rural, Indígena y de Frontera*, OAS-MECD, 2002) that constitutes the most important sign to date of political will for promoting the material and

spiritual conditions for better transitions from family to school and for ensuring that indigenous children can progress through the successive levels of schooling in rural and border areas. This project, supported by various multilateral agencies including UNICEF, the OAS and the IDB, has been striving for 14 years to develop a schooling option consistent with the needs of rural and border communities. This, in terms similar to what may be the ideal qualities of a cultural environment where the transition of children between the ages of zero and eight is constitutionally reasonable.

This document is a gold mine of information about the social and pedagogical aspects of transition policies, especially as they relate to methods and techniques for promoting community-school integration. From beginning to end, the document discusses not only the "what" but also on the "how" of integrating communities and schools, highlighting the mission of the school as a center for revitalizing rural, indigenous and border areas so as to assert comprehensive leadership in the transformation process (OAS-MECD, 2002, page 11). There is much more to be said of this document and its virtues for situating and managing the school-family-community relationship, but it is enough to mention here its usefulness in our effort to compile first-hand information on the ways of giving practical effect to national and international intentions for achieving better school-community integration as a basis for children's transition from family to school.

1.3.2. At the National Level

Venezuela has adopted a legal platform for social inclusion and equity, and has taken steps to recognize cultural diversity through establishment of institutional mechanisms specifically targeted at this goal. The nation has recently classified itself as multiethnic and pluricultural, thereby acknowledging its historic debt to the indigenous ethnic groups that for centuries suffered segregation and discrimination. Those steps were negotiated in the lead-up to adoption of the 1999 Constitution, of which it has been truly and proudly said that "this is the first time in our republican history that the indigenous movement has been given political recognition as a social movement. This is the first time that a chapter on the historic rights of indigenous peoples has been included" (Asamblea Nacional/Comisión Permanente de Pueblos Indígenas/Parlamento Indígena de América/Consejo Nacional Indio de Venezuela, 2006, pp. 25-26).

Another important legal document for purposes of this study is the so-called "Organic Law on Indigenous Peoples and Communities" (LOPCI), for which the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples is responsible. As noted earlier, the transitional provisions of the 1999 Constitution require the State to produce new laws on education and social organization, yet nearly ten years after its approval, this is virtually the only piece of legislation governing indigenous rights that has been proposed, discussed and approved to the full satisfaction of those representing the interests of the community, primarily those who live in rural and border areas.

An analysis of LOPCI, approved by the National Assembly on December 8, 2005 (from a perspective that powers the need to recognize what does or does not favor the home-community-school transition and the vertical movement of children under the age of eight through the established school system), allows one to conclude that the transition from the home to school is formally home-community, and self-managed by indigenous schools.

Titles IV and V of the LOPCI provide the most explicit references to the formal framework through which children under eight years move between home, school and community

and on through the fabric of institutions that make up the constitutionally sanctioned national education system.

The negotiation and subsequent approval of the 1999 Constitution served to crystallize an important series of legal instruments that have consolidated the rights of cultural minorities, especially indigenous ones:

- Organic Law on the protection of children and adolescents (LOPNA).
- Organic Law on indigenous peoples and communities (LOPCI, 2005).
- Law demarcating and guaranteeing the habitat and lands of indigenous peoples (2001).
- Law on lands and agrarian development (2005).
- Law on biological diversity (2000).
- Law approving the Convention for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination.
- Law Approving ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (2000).
- Law approving the Agreement Constituting the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (2001).
- Law on the Local Public Planning Councils (with indigenous representation) (2002).
- Youth Law (2002), recognizing the right of indigenous youth to a proper education, employment opportunities, and development consistent with their ethnic and cultural reality, interests and aspirations.
- Presidential Decree 1393 of 2001, creating the Presidential Commission for Indigenous Peoples.
- Presidential Decree 1795 of 2002, on the use of indigenous languages in schools located in indigenous communities.
- Presidential Decree 1796 of 2002, creating the National Council for Indigenous Education.

The monitoring reports identifying progress with Venezuela's national and international agreements and commitments suggest, however, that the objective of reducing severe poverty and hunger by half by 2015 may not be met. For example, the percentage of households in indigenous communities identified as extremely poor is higher than the average for Venezuela as a whole (40.5% in 2001), although the gap appears to have narrowed since 1990 (when it was 65%).

With respect to social exclusion, while the indicators show that more children are now enrolled in early childhood education, representing a significant improvement over the last ten years, school attendance in indigenous municipalities is still not up to the national average. Moreno (2008) concludes that this is due to the “funnel” effect of the school system: there are more spaces in the lower grades than in the higher grades, a problem that is particularly dramatic in the indigenous municipalities, revealing inequity of access and making it unlikely that students will go on to further studies. To this, another negative factor must be added: illiteracy rates among indigenous children are high, and although they have declined over the last decade, there is still a 26 point literacy gap between the indigenous population and the national average.

We may conclude that, although enrollment has increased, efforts to date have been inadequate. There will have to be greater investment in education to improve its quality and relevance, and government policies will have to address exclusion head-on. In fact, from our analysis of the data and the official statistics contained in the first report prepared by the Venezuelan team on the OAS/BvLF project, we may say that there is a strong correlation between poverty and ethnicity: although the indices of extreme poverty among indigenous peoples appear to have declined significantly over the last decade, indigenous households are still lagging behind because of their remoteness from urban centers, which restricts their access to basic services and exposes them to conditions of poverty and exclusion. The situation is even worse in border areas and in territories occupied by indigenous people, and it places the integral development of these people at much greater risk.

1.3.3. Political Forces Involved in Transitions

An important piece of legislation relating to child protection policies is the Organic Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LOPNA), which establishes that all children and adolescents have the right to survival, development, special protection and participation, under the principle of equality and nondiscrimination. This means that indigenous children and adolescents must enjoy these rights, and that in particular they are entitled to an education that respects their own cultural identity, the use of their language, access to knowledge generated by the people, and programs of bilingual intercultural education.

Based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the LOPNA and other special regulations, state and municipal councils have been established for the protection of children. The institution of public defenders for indigenous children has not had the expected success, however, because it failed to take into account the cultural differences of indigenous peoples, their languages and ways of life, or the cultural patterns that determine roles, expectations, conduct and taboos relating to gender, life cycles and social and political class.

In the specific case of education, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport created an Indigenous Education Directorate in 2000. Other state agencies that are involved in planning and implementing policies for indigenous peoples or active in predominantly indigenous areas include the National Parks Institute (Inparques), the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the National Lands Institute (INTI), the Ministry of External Relations, the Ministry of the Interior and Justice, the Ministry of Light Industry and Trade, and the Ministry of Defense. The governments of the states with indigenous populations have created regional agencies for indigenous peoples. The municipalities are moving forward with the establishment of local planning councils in which indigenous people are represented.

Finally, it may be noted that the National Assembly, the Indigenous Parliamentary Group and the Permanent Committee on Indigenous Affairs are the most important sources of legislation to be found in Venezuela, and the most important achievements to date are the Organic Law on indigenous peoples and communities (LOPCI) and the creation of the Vice Ministry for Indigenous Affairs.

2. Transition Mechanisms

The most evident progress with respect to educational transitions is to be found in the set of legal instruments emerging from the new constitutional framework of Venezuela, which have

promoted and consolidated the rights of minorities, especially those of children and, in particular, indigenous children.

The main difficulties in implementing and monitoring policies lie in the low levels of intersectoral coordination among government agencies involved in this work. As a result, the country accords special treatment to indigenous peoples, but policy documents pay little attention to rural and border populations and communities, and the distinctions between these terms are therefore frequently blurred.

2.1. Achievements and Limitations in Transition Policies and Programs for Young Children (Birth to Age Eight)

It was in 1998, under the Caldera presidency and in the midst of one of the most severe oil crises in the country's modern history, that the Organic Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LOPNA) was adopted. Its provisions are fundamental for the progress of children and indigenous minorities. For example:

> Article 36. Cultural rights of minorities. All children and adolescents have the right to their own cultural life, to profess and practice their own religion or beliefs, and to use their own language, especially those belonging to ethnic, religious, linguistic or indigenous minorities.
>
> Article 60. Education for indigenous youth. The State must guarantee education systems, plans and programs for all indigenous children and adolescents that will promote respect and conservation of their own cultural life, the use of their own language, and access to knowledge generated by their own group or culture. The State must ensure sufficient funding to comply with this obligation (LOPNA, 1998).

2.1.1. Policy Emphasis on Equity, Ethnicity and Geographic Location

It is true that the 1961 constitution enshrined the substantive educational rights for an educational transition of the kind desired today, but it gave short shrift to the social demands of the rural and indigenous population.

During the process leading to approval of the 1999 Constitution, great attention was paid to the issue of indigenous and border communities. The political polarization that has marked this country since 1999 has resulted in unprecedented vitality in indigenous representation in the National Assembly, which together with the Presidency is the institutional epicenter of the Venezuelan State.

The 1999 Constitution establishes the official use of indigenous languages, which means that the home-school transition can be made in the language the child uses to communicate with his or her family and immediate indigenous community. Article 9 declares "the official language is Spanish. Indigenous languages are also of official use for indigenous peoples and must be respected throughout the Republic, because they constitute the cultural heritage of the nation and of mankind" (Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 1999).

Among the human rights that the Constitution enshrines for children between the ages of zero and eight, including those recognized as indigenous and living in non-urban areas along the country's borders, the most important is contained in two articles that make education compulsory and oblige the State to provide it without excuses, something that colors the entire legal and

political framework of the country with respect to the human right to all the quality education possible, with no discrimination whatsoever.

2.1.2. Promotion and Implementation of Early Childhood Services and Programs

In order to give effect to the principles and provisions of the 1999 Constitution and to implement the policy guidelines in each of the documents indicated above, the present government adopted the National Plan for Economic and Social Development (2001-2007), based on "active participation of the entire Venezuelan people without any discrimination" (MSDS, 2001), and intended to establish five kinds of balance: international, political, economic, territorial and social. Social balance is supposed to overcome the burden of exclusion and injustice in order to allow the full development of the citizen in the exercise of democracy, and it establishes, as the criterion for equity, equality with respect to three elements: gender, ethnicity and race, and social class.

In order to achieve greater equity and social justice, the country has an instrument for articulating public action: the Indigenous Policy Guidelines (MECD, 2000). Their purpose is to convert indigenous policy from a welfare-based tradition to one that is participatory and intercultural, for which a new system of relations between the State, indigenous peoples, communities and organizations is to be established.

However, the efforts to implement the institutional mechanisms for ensuring the inclusion of indigenous peoples in the social and educational services described here have been inadequate, according to a study (Colmenares, 2004) on social exclusion and racial and ethnic diversity in Venezuela, which found that:

> "Public institutions responsible for promoting the participation of indigenous groups in local and national development need to be strengthened in their capacity for planning, implementation of actions and policies, and articulation with local indigenous groups, as well as with their grassroots organizations" (page 6).

2.1.3. Monitoring of Transition Policies

In 2007 the Ministry of Education replaced the former Vice Ministry of Educational Affairs with two new vice ministerial offices: Education Development and Education Programs and Projects. The Initial Education Directorate is responsible for implementing curricular, administrative and technical policies and guidelines at this level, and for ongoing advisory services and evaluation of the program's progress and execution.

In each federal entity, there are two official bodies responsible for implementing policies, plans, programs and projects for early childhood care and education. These are: (1) the Education Zone Directorates, which are deconcentrated dependencies of the Ministry of Education and which, through the initial education coordination offices in the education zones, are responsible for coordination, support and supervision of the national Initial Education Centers; and (2) the Education Secretariats, responsible for direction, management and administration of the Initial Education Centers created by the regional governments. The initial education office (*Jefatura de Educación Inicial*) of each regional government is supposed to enforce the curricular policies and guidelines for initial education, providing comprehensive and high quality care to children ages zero to six, with family and community participation, through:

- Monitoring of policies.

- Formulating and evaluating curricular guidelines for initial education.
- Promoting and developing alternatives for comprehensive care for children ages zero to six.
- Coordinating plans and projects jointly with national and international agencies involved with early childhood.
- Establishing guidelines for continuous training of human resources.

Additionally, the Municipal Organization Law assigns educational responsibilities to local governments, with respect to the creation and maintenance of institutions and services for young children.

2.2. Targeting Processes and Criteria: Equity, Ethnicity and Geographic Location

Many references indicate that the public debate is dominated by the line espoused by the President of the Republic in his frequent media appearances, where he seldom fails to stress the priority he accords to compensating indigenous peoples in some way for the neglect they have suffered historically, and especially in the last 40 years. We may say roughly the same with respect to the cumulative social debt in respect of early childhood education for rural border communities. These are constant topics in presidential communications and in the controversy swirling around the model of the country that is being promoted from the pinnacle of national government. A perfect example of all this is the following excerpt from one of the most important written communications issued by the President's office with respect to the fabric of commitments that the country has accepted for fulfilling the promises of the 1999 Constitution:

> *"The revolutionary government is orienting its social policy toward equality and social inclusion, as well as to promoting respect for the rights of those sectors that were traditionally excluded, such as indigenous peoples, people living in extreme poverty, children and adolescents, seniors and women, especially those who are poor. To achieve this orientation of social policy, the revolutionary government has since mid-2003 been implementing massive social programs such as the "missions", intended to educate, to cure and prepare Venezuelans, especially those who live in poor and remote zones. These missions are making people literate and giving them the opportunity to continue their studies at all levels..." (Chavez Frias, 2004, page 7).*

The Minister of Education presented a report on the events held for improving the quality of rural education:

> Seminar for Rural Education Coordinators; Seminar for Coordinators of the National Project for Rural, Indigenous and Border Schools; Fifth "Day of Pedagogical and Cultural Action for Rural Teachers;" "Seventh National Festival of Teachers' Voices;" Workshop on Agricultural Education, the Land Law and Sustainable Rural Development; "First National Forum on Rural Education and Initial Education;" First Andean Forum of Education Vice Ministers; First Regional Meeting on Rural and Indigenous Education; Second Meeting of Andean Countries and Spain on Rural Education; and Second National Meeting of Student Governors of Rural Schools.

Consistent with the rights of indigenous peoples, enshrined in the Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela, in the context of a multiethnic and pluricultural Venezuela:

> The National Council for Indigenous Education, Culture and Languages was created, by means of Presidential Decree 1796 of May 27, 2002, as an advisory body to guarantee participation by indigenous peoples in the design, planning and limitation of education, culture and language policies.
>
> Through Presidential Decree 1795 of May 27, 2002, the use of indigenous languages was made mandatory at all levels and modalities of private and public education in indigenous habitats, both rural and urban (Istúriz, 2003, p. 6).

What is now known as the Bolivarian Education System, sponsored and led by the national government, is guided by the principle of interculturalism as the basis for the inclusion of all indigenous peoples, with full respect for their specificities, and it describes initial Education

> "…as the first stage of the Bolivarian Education System [....] for the integral care of children from gestation to six years, or when they enter the first grade of primary education, through conventional and nonconventional care, with family and community participation." It comprises two levels: "*maternal*" or nursery (0-3 years) and preschool (3-6 years or upon entry into the first grade of primary education)" (Rausseo, 2006, page 2).

2.3. Family Work and Involvement

The aspect of comprehensive attention, from the viewpoint of protection, refers to the child's care, education, protection, hygiene, recreation and feeding, under the shared responsibility of the family, the State and society. This is according to the 1999 Constitution and the LOPNA, which oblige the State to provide institutions and services that guarantee the right to education and the responsibility of families for educating their children.

In this context the family, as the natural setting for integral development (article 75 of the Constitution) is now viewed quite differently from its traditional concept. The Constitution establishes the shared responsibility of the family, society and the State to guarantee the harmonious and integral development of children and the full exercise of their rights, and it recognizes the family as the first scenario of children's development. It is within this nucleus that the processes of socialization and participation begin; it is the family that builds children's' first bonds and emotional relationships, and the lessons and behavior they learn reflect the child rearing practices of their families and their communities. In this way, when the child and his or her family come together with the teacher and the education institution, and share their life stories, their culture and expectations.

The 2007 UNESCO report, "Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education" notes that the most efficient means to provide support in the family setting is to work directly with the parents, and this includes home visits that allow direct contact with the parents. However, it also points out those home visiting programs are expensive and are best targeted at families at risk.

There is one basic act that gives substance to transition: when children attend school at the decision of the family and under the influence of the rules that organize society as a State. And in living communities, according to the testimony gathered from the interviews mentioned in the introduction, this happens in a very complex and determining way in the school life of

children, above all, with respect to retention and the different transitions that must occur through different levels of the Venezuelan school, in the conditions defined by legislation.

2.3.1. Adult Education

The policy documents on early childhood education contain no reference to the links between adult education and care for young children. However, one of the current government's flagship projects, the Simoncito Initial Education Center, offers a full eight-hour day of nursery and preschool. For this purpose, teachers in each center work to strengthen the family and ensure community organization and participation in running the program, and this necessarily involves adult education strategies.

Additionally, under the nonconventional modality, when there are no official premises available, teachers in initial education will hold classes in the children's homes, thereby strengthening the family role in its children's' learning and helping the family itself to learn.

2.3.2. Support Materials

The Ministry of Education, in pursuit of the goal of universal initial education, is working to boost the quality of teaching at this level by supplying equipment and furnishings as well as teaching and recreational materials suitable for preschoolers, as established in the official curriculum.

2.3.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Ministry of Popular Participation and Social Development is responsible for monitoring and evaluating social policies, including family work and involvement.

2.3.4. Financing of Services

The 2008 Annual Operating Plan designed by the Ministry of Planning gives spending priority to projects linked to the social economy, which are executed through missions, i.e. a set of government social policies (education, health, nutrition etc.) targeted at social inclusion. These have included the following programs, among others:

- **"Mercal" Mission**, comprising a marketing network that offers low-cost basic foodstuffs to poor families.
- **"Barrio Mothers" Mission** (decree 4342 of March 6, 2006), run by the Ministry of Labor and targeted at female heads of extremely poor and socially excluded households. This mission pays 60 to 80% of the minimum wage to needy mothers, on either a temporary or permanent basis depending on her particular needs.
- **"Mother Project,"** intended to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates more quickly.
- **"*Barrio Adentro*" Mission**, which offers medical care to low-income groups.
- **"*Vuelvan Caras*" ["Faces Return"] Mission**, targeted at sponsoring economic revival through cooperatives.
- ***Guaicaipuro* Mission**, designed to restore the original and specific rights of indigenous peoples in Venezuela by promoting their integral development and guaranteeing them the effective enjoyment of their social rights (health, education,

housing, water and sanitation), as well as the cultural and political rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The 2008 national budget allocates 12.5 billion bolivars, or 40% of the total budget, to social investment, which includes funds for communities, missions and social infrastructure.

2.4. Curriculum Implementation Plan

The Initial Education Curriculum finds its basis in the Constitution, which defines education as a human right and a social duty for the development of the individual from a perspective of social and humanistic transformation designed to foster a civic culture within a framework of diversity and involvement.

This curriculum is oriented towards the integral development of the individual from gestation to age six or entry into the first grade of primary school, and promotes interrelationships for children with their peers, family group, teachers and other significant adults in the community. Consequently, it considers the social and cultural diversity of the families and communities in which children grow and develop.

As for Bilingual Intercultural Education (EIB) in Venezuela, Regnault (2006) traces this to a sustained campaign by pressure groups to defend the rights of indigenous peoples. It took shape between 1968 and 1979, during which guidelines were worked out that subsequently led to implementation of the Bilingual Intercultural Education Program.

Between 1979 and 1983 this project enjoyed significant political support, starting with Presidential Decree 283 of 1979. During those years the initial design was prepared and implemented in nine indigenous schools, and various courses for indigenous teachers were organized. All this took place within a favorable setting of political and administrative support and economic prosperity. However, other factors worked against the project: these included technical constraints, a shortage of indigenous teachers, underestimation of the supporting materials required, and excessive haste in implementation, as a result of which decision-makers and project technical staff was working at cross purposes. In 1999, as noted earlier, EIB was established as a right in the new Venezuelan constitution and thus became a valid educational option for indigenous peoples.

With the constitutional recognition of interculturalism as a feature of the specific education rights of indigenous peoples (article 121), and the principle of equality of all cultures (article 100), EIB has been introduced in the curriculum in three ways: as an educational subsystem (specific education right for indigenous peoples), as a guiding principle, and finally as a crosscutting curricular theme of intercultural education for all. This has posed the challenge of defining the "Bolivarian Education System" and putting it into practice. Legal and political steps to date have not been sufficient to achieve this, and a number of obstacles remain; hence the importance of further actions to consolidate the system and to move toward a multiethnic and pluricultural society.

On this point, Mosonyi (2004) argues that "no harmonious insertion of indigenous peoples into the official education framework is feasible or even possible unless we begin with the affirmation that each culture necessarily has its own education system" (page 5), which becomes the point of departure for developing interculturalism in education systems. This system is based on the dialogue of knowledges and worldviews.

In the documents we examined there is no explicit reference to transition but there is much of the context that explains it in reality, particularly with respect to the curriculum implications and the conditions for implementing plans and programs that will foster a healthy relationship between pupils' home community and the school.

2.4.1. Teacher Training Activities

There are three categories of teachers trained in initial education: (a) teachers graduating from pedagogical institutes, (b) university graduates, and (c) high-level technicians from colleges and university institutes. However, different levels of training coexist and there is heterogeneity in the curricular approaches and contents of the country's different teacher training institutes. Under these circumstances, the Ministry of Education has launched consultations with the various universities and institutions for training trainers in initial education, with a view to reaching agreements for endorsing curricular plans for responding to the demands of the new national curriculum.

Most of the teachers working in rural and indigenous communities have no professional teaching credentials, and will typically have a baccalaureate with no specialized preparation for being teachers. Consequently, a training plan consistent with the national policy is being promoted to cover all teachers (Creole and indigenous) at three levels of intervention: (1) permanent training; (2) refresher training; and (3) professional development.

2.4.2. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Ministry of Education is the lead institution in education policy and is responsible for incorporating and implementing the innovations and changes that take place in the field of knowledge and information management as essential aspects of integral human development, through socially relevant training, ensuring the dedicated, proactive and ethical participation of men and women in the country's transformation.

This is the background behind the Bolivarian Institute for Educational Research and Development (IBIDE), which has as fundamental tasks: (a) to investigate the dynamics of the education process being constructed, and to assess, systematize and evaluate processes and their impacts, with respect to the implementation of the education policies of the Venezuelan State; and (b) to develop specific research for producing and promoting materials of different kinds in support of a quality education.

The Institute coordinates ministerial initiatives for strengthening educational research, with a view to:

- Produce knowledge that will be relevant for the formulation of policies and strategies and the taking of decisions.
- Protect, disseminate and utilize the country's pluricultural, intercultural and multiethnic heritage, especially in its linkage to education.
- Generate educational materials of various kinds that will contribute to teaching and learning.

In this regard, IBIDE fulfills monitoring functions using the results of its research, and produces updates and critical assessments on various topics relating both to policies and activities (IBIDE, 2006).

2.4.3. Financing of Services

Funding for initial education services comes directly from the national budget, which is distributed officially through the Ministry of Education (MPPE). Although there are no data available on public expenditure per pupil as a percentage of per capita GNP, it is estimated that 9% of budgetary funds are earmarked for this level.

The National Autonomous Service for Integral Care to Children and Families (SENIFA), which comes under the MPPE, is the entity responsible for allocating funding for the so-called *Hogain Comunitarios*, community facilities which are run by NGOs and are suitably equipped to care for 30 children or so, assigned to three "caregiving mothers" (*madres cuidadoras*) under the supervision of authorized personnel.

2.5. Intersectoral Coordination

The MPPE is the senior policy body for education at the initial, primary, secondary and diversified intermediate levels. Within the Ministry, the Initial Education Directorate is responsible for implementing policies and curricular, administrative and technical guidelines for this level of education.

In each federal entity, there are two official bodies responsible for implementing policies, plans, programs and projects for early childhood care and education: the Education Zone Directorates, which provide coordination, support and supervision of institutions in each dependency or state, and the governments of each federal entity which, through their Education Secretariats, exercise direction, management and administration of policies defined by the MPPE.

2.6. Research and its Impact on Transition Policies

The MPPE, through the Initial Education Directorate, has undertaken studies to meet the education needs of the current government. These studies include the following:

- **Emotional and pedagogical continuity:** designed to avoid a rupture between preschool and the first grade of primary school, in order to guarantee emotional continuity and pedagogical articulation that will allow children to make successful transitions.
- **A methodology for caring for children from birth to age six:** designed to structure educational and childcare activities under the nonconventional modality, whereby members of the nuclear family are involved with their children in their own community, organized in an inter-institutional and intersectoral way.
- **Diagnostic study of comprehensive care for children to age six:** based on identifying strengths and weaknesses in current child care and education services and programs, both conventional and nonconventional, in order to make permanent improvements in the country's initial education in line with the specific requirements of the region, federal entity or locality where the diagnosis is conducted.

The research coordinated by Emanuele Amodio and the Asociación Asha de Venezuela has shed light on the way in which transition occurs between family life and the school setting:

> It demonstrates the persistence of the cultural practices of each indigenous group investigated both in terms of the parental-child relationship and the process of socialization that gives children an important basis for their future identity as adults. Yet in some cases, especially among peoples who have the most contact with national society, the research identified some spheres that have changed over time, with the adoption of lifestyles different from those transmitted by the elders, without much awareness of their consequences for child development – an example is the decline in the practice of breast-feeding. On the other hand, it is clear that some traditional practices may no longer be appropriate under the new living conditions in which the indigenous peoples of Venezuela find themselves. For this reason, it is essential to involve indigenous people and their organizations in the matters that concern them, and this is especially true for women, children and adolescents (Li, June 2006).

The anthropologist Paul Oldham produced significant research for his doctoral thesis at the University of LOPNA on the educational behavior of the Piaroa people in Churuata Don Ramón and other settlements to the south of Puerto Ayacucho, capital of the State of Amazonas. He also had a direct hand in creating the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Amazonas (ORPIA). His studies among the Piaroa found that their educational practices differed from the Western model, and involved a kind of gradual system that started with initiation rites in early childhood and culminated in the personal affirmation of adults in the system for the distribution of power within the group and its geographic setting (Oldham, P.). This phenomenon was bringing the traditional learning systems closer to the working mechanics of the Western education system, facilitating the construction of cultural bridges that made the transition to the Western-style Venezuelan school less painful and more efficient for Piaroa children.

More recently, under the leadership of UNICEF in partnership with ORPIA, a very enriching experiment has been underway to find paths for the early childhood transition to school that will be more efficient and respectful of the ancestral identity of indigenous peoples.

3. Development of Transition Policies

3.1. Status

The Venezuelan government has established general guidelines for the National Plan for Economic and Social Development, which is oriented toward social justice and equity with the fundamental purpose of overcoming today's deep social imbalance.

The Development Plan is governed by the principles of territorial integrity, cooperation, solidarity and co-responsibility enshrined in the Constitution (article 4). In this respect it has identified the following as fundamental policies:

- Integral care for children and adolescents.
- Nutritional and food security.
- Social protection for adults and seniors.
- Basic social infrastructure.

On this basis, the MPPE has made initial education a priority policy, with the goals of:

- Universalizing preschool education.

- Increasing coverage for the zero-to-three age group.
- Improving the quality of education.

Strategies

- Program for construction, rehabilitation and equipping of physical facilities.
- Program of continuous training for teachers, specialists and auxiliary workers.
- Updating and modernization of the curriculum, through collective construction.

The goal in all cases is to guarantee the fundamental rights of children from birth to age six, in accordance with the Constitution (IBIDE).

Final Observations

In summary, we may say that the topic of education for children living in rural and border areas is an important one. There is room here for fruitful dealings between the government, communities, the indigenous leadership represented in the communities themselves and in the National Assembly, and the public and private international organizations interested in the social inclusion of indigenous children and a reasonable balance between the individuals and their cultural setting. Yet we must admit that there is a significant gap between the treatment given transitions in the documentation analyzed, which is more indirect and contextualized, and the repeated mentions of transition and its circumstances made by the individuals interviewed. Much is spoken about the phenomenology of the transition of children from the home to school, but the topic scarcely appears in the documentation, and is visible only indirectly, at least in the documentation analyzed.

Similarly, we may admit that Venezuela has moved a long way in terms of legislation, legitimacy of indigenous leadership, and empowerment of the indigenous population. At the same time, however, much remains to be done in terms of early schooling and creating material and spiritual conditions for a reasonable harmony between childrearing patterns in the home and in the family group, and the decidedly Western and westernizing experience offered in schools. Furthermore, upward mobility through the school system does not seem to be a notable feature of current policies and programs, primarily because of the uncertain and unstable conditions within which the public schools still operate, at least those installed in rural and border zones.

Official statements tell us much about the intention to create favorable conditions for the transition between the home and school in indigenous, rural and border communities, but they offer much less in the way of defining sustainable development programs that will permit this by giving these people management autonomy. Appropriate legislation has been passed and there are government mechanisms in place to strengthen the indigenous presence in the country's political life, but there are still no concrete programs that would make communities less dependent on government largess. A notable exception to this assertion, confirmed in our consultations, is the decree and project for renewing basic, rural and border schools (*Renovemos la Escuela Básica, Rural y de Frontera*) described in this report, which contains a series of proposals that would apparently resolve many of the problems rooted in the social and cultural insecurity that prevails in rural and border areas.

It is with respect to this lag between statements of good intent and concrete actions that international public and private cooperation and the players who define the organized life of the indigenous country could have an impact. What is needed is to create a friendly indigenous

school model appropriate to the circumstances of rural and border communities, with their many ethnic variables, and to define a long-term policy for inclusive schooling. This is our main recommendation for helping define the bridges that will have to be crossed to identify the facts and take the consequent action for improving the transition of young indigenous children into the school—the one we have and the one we could have—if the national and international stakeholders, both public and private, can agree to focus their efforts on such a noble cause, through flexible but assessable projects.

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Chapter VI. BRAZIL REPORT[192]

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Indigenous and Rural Children.
Statistical Analysis of Public Policies in Education in Rural and Indigenous Communities in Brazil

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policies Relating to Rural and Indigenous Communities.
Public Policies in Education for Rural, Indigenous and Border Communities in Brazil: Successes and Challenges

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[192] [footnote re translation from Portuguese into Spanish]

Analysis and Interpretation of National Statistics on Indigenous and Rural Children.
Statistical Analysis of Public Policies in Education in Rural and Indigenous Communities in Brazil

1. Socio-demographic profile. 1.1. Socio-demographic profile of the indigenous population. 1.2. Socio-demographic profile of the rural population. 2. Education indicators. 2.1. Analysis of statistics on indigenous schooling. 2.1.1. Social and cultural diversity. 2.1.2. Indigenous schools in the education systems. 2.2. The 2005 School Census. 2.2.1. Teachers in indigenous schools. 2.2.2. Students in indigenous schools. 2.2.3. Pedagogical and infrastructure characterization of indigenous schools. 2.2.4. Analysis and conclusions. 2.3. Other indicators for the indigenous population. 2.3.1. Fertility rates among indigenous women, 1991 and 2000. 2.3.2. Child mortality rate. 2.3.3. Training of teachers. Bibliography.

1. Socio-Demographic Profile

1.1. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Indigenous Population

Using the results of the 1991 and 2000 demographic censuses, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*) (IBGE), analyzes the self-declared indigenous population, according to the census questionnaires.

The question relating to "color and race" has been used to identify the indigenous population since the 1991 census. The methodology for capturing responses is that of self-identification. The census counted self-identified indigenous individuals living on indigenous lands, in rural areas beyond those lands, and at urban addresses.

During the 1990s, the number of Brazilians declaring themselves as indigenous rose by 150%, at an annual pace nearly six times that of the population in general. This was largely because of a growing number of persons living in urban areas, particularly in the Southeast, who in 2000 declared themselves to be indigenous but had been classified in other categories in 1991.

According to census figures, the percentage of indigenous individuals in relation to the total Brazilian population in 1991 was 0.2%, or 294,000 individuals across the country. In 2000, 734,000 (0.4% of the total population) declared themselves as indigenous, representing absolute growth between these two census periods of 440,000 individuals, or an annual increase of 10.8%, the highest rate among all color or race categories. For the country as a whole, the annual rate of growth over that period was 1.6%. All states showed an increase in the number of individuals declaring themselves indigenous.

The absolute increases were significant in urban areas across all regions, and this was true in rural areas, although to a lesser extent. In 1991, Brazil had 223,000 indigenous individuals in rural areas (76.1% of the total). In 2000, 383,000 lived in urban zones (52.0% of total). This apparent urbanization trend reflects more self-declarations in the Southeast and Northeast, where there are fewer recognized indigenous lands and where, in recent decades, there has been a significant resurgence of indigenous ethnic awareness. On the other hand, in the regions with the

greatest number of indigenous lands, such as the North and Center-West, most indigenous people live in rural areas, as expected.

The sex and age composition of the urban indigenous population is similar to that of the Brazilian population as a whole: relatively low fertility and mortality rates, low dependency ratio, and high median age. In the countryside, the composition reflects the characteristics of a young population, reflecting persistently high fertility rates: thus, the age distribution pyramid is broad at its base and narrows with increasing age, reflecting relatively fewer adults and seniors.

The median age of Brazil's indigenous population, according to the 2000 census, was 23.2 years (22.9 years for men, and 23.5 years for women). In urban areas, the median age was nearly double that in the countryside (30.1 and 16.8 years, respectively). In rural areas the population was younger, with a median age of 15.9 years. The North had the lowest median age (17.2 years) and the South the highest, at 31.8 years.

The economically inactive urban population was slightly more than one-third the potential workforce, while in rural areas the ratio was practically one-to-one.

1.2. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Rural Population

The most recent data on geographic distribution of the Brazilian population, supplied by IBGE, indicated a total of 2,018,178 rural residents between the ages of zero and three, and 1,110,630 ages four and five. Those figures are based on a 2007 headcount conducted in 5,435 municipalities with up to 170,000 inhabitants, representing approximately 60% of the population.

Although total figures for that population are lacking, a comparison with MEC/INEP data (2006 school census)[193] reveals the quantitative and percentage gap in kindergarten and preschool attendance, in relation to the total population and between the two levels, as shown in the following table:

Enrollment in Early Childhood Education, Brazil, by Region and UF, on March 29, 2006

Unit of the Federation	Rural				
	Total	Kinder-garten	%	Preschool	%
Brazil	933.444	101.666	10,9	831.778	89
North	132.409	8.776	6,6	123.633	93
Northeast	642.093	75.530	11,8	566.563	88
Southeast	93.275	10.812	11,6	82.463	88
South	48.516	5.436	11,2	43.080	89
Center-West	17.151	1.112	6,5	16.039	94

Source: MEC/INEP - censo escolar 2006

It will be noted that preschool education coverage is high in all units of the Federation between 80% and 94%), while kindergarten coverage is very low (maximum 11.8% in the Northeast and minimum 6.5% in the Center-West).

[193] INEP - Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira. Estatísticas sobre educação escolar indígena no Brasil – Brasília: Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais, 2007.

2. Education Indicators

2.1. Analysis of Statistics on Indigenous Schooling

Indigenous schools are a modality of education that has been receiving special treatment from the Ministry of Education, based on a new educational paradigm of respect for interculturalism, multilingualism and ethnicity. With its responsibilities (pursuant to Presidential Decree 26/91) for coordinating educational activities across the country, in conjunction with the state and municipal education secretariats, the Education Ministry has been implementing a national indigenous schools policy, in light of legal precepts established in 1988 Constitution, the Law on Guidelines and Foundations of National Education, the National Education Plan, and Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization.

That policy is intended to offer a quality education to indigenous peoples, one that is community-based, specific, differentiated, intercultural and multilingual. It is supposed to provide them access to universal knowledge while recognizing their maternal languages and traditional know-how, thereby contributing to reaffirmation of their identities and their sense of ethnic belonging.

The principal challenge for consolidating this new approach to indigenous schooling is to train indigenous teachers, drawn from the respective ethnic groups, so that they can take over teaching and management in schools located in indigenous lands. The first experiments are now underway for training indigenous teachers at the university degree level (*licenciatura*), as a continuation of the teacher training courses (*magistério indígena*) that provide basic instruction and specific training for indigenous teachers in different regions of the country.

There is not, nor can there be, a single model of indigenous schools that would be applicable throughout the country. The Ministry of Education has been working with the education systems to build on specific experiments with school organization, based on consultation and cooperation with each indigenous community, as called for in ILO Convention 169, which was ratified by Brazil and came into force in July 2003.

2.1.1. Social and Cultural Diversity

Brazil today recognizes the social and cultural diversity of indigenous peoples. This is expressed by the presence of more than 220 distinct indigenous peoples, inhabiting hundreds of villages located in nearly every state of the Union. They live on 628 discontinuous indigenous lands, totaling 12.5% of the national territory. Despite their wide distribution, more than 60% of the indigenous population is concentrated in the Legal Amazonia region.

Although there are no precise data on Brazil's indigenous population, we know that they were certainly more numerous in the past. It is estimated that in 1500, when the first conquistadors arrived, the indigenous population amounted to some six million. Later, the indigenous population dropped to a level far below that of today: in the first half of the past century, it had fallen to perhaps 200,000.

Over the last 30 years, the downward trend has been reversed and the indigenous population has been steadily increasing, reflecting improved sanitary conditions and medical attention in the villages, the protection and demarcation of indigenous territories, and recognition

of indigenous peoples' rights to maintain their identities and their specific cultural, historic and linguistic traits.

Generally speaking, Brazil's indigenous peoples constitute small population groups: more than 50% have fewer than 500 members, and only three have more than 20,000. There are reports of perhaps 40 "isolated peoples" in Brazil who have resisted closer or more permanent contact with other segments of Brazilian society. In recent years, a number of peoples who were considered "extinct" have reemerged through the process of ethnic reaffirmation, demanding recognition of their identities by the Brazilian government. The historical experiences of indigenous peoples' contact with Brazilian society are thus varied and dynamic, resulting in heterogeneity of situations of contact and coexistence.

The social and linguistic status of indigenous peoples is also extremely varied. Today there are known to be 180 indigenous languages, distributed among 41 linguistic families, two linguistic branches, and ten isolated tongues. Some indigenous people speak more than one language, while others are unilingual, either in the indigenous language or in Portuguese, as is the case with several peoples living near the coast, where Portuguese is today the only spoken language. Given the low population density of various peoples and the fact that they constitute minorities within the national State, many indigenous languages are today at risk of disappearing. The school, which in the past was one of the main instruments for denying linguistic diversity and imposing Portuguese as the national language, could now have an important role in recognizing and maintaining indigenous languages.

2.1.2. Indigenous Schools in the Education Systems

It was in 1999, through Opinion 14 and Resolution 03, that the National Education Council, interpreting the provisions of the Law on Guidelines and Foundations of National Education and of the Federal Constitution, called for the creation of the indigenous school category in the country's education systems. These were to follow their own standards and legal rules, with a view to promoting intercultural and bilingual instruction, "seeking full recognition of the cultures of indigenous peoples and affirmation and maintenance of their ethnic diversity" (Resolution 03/CNE, article 1).

To ensure the special features of this category of school and instruction modality, the National Education Council defined the basic elements for the organization, structure and functioning of these schools, which were to be located on lands inhabited by indigenous communities. They were to serve those communities exclusively, through instruction provided in their maternal tongues, and each community was to have its own school organization. That independent school organization was to be based on participation by the indigenous community, taking into account their social structures, cultural and religious practices, economic activities, forms of producing knowledge, processes and methods of instruction and learning, as well as the use of teaching materials produced in a manner consistent with the social and cultural context of each indigenous group (Resolution 03/CNE, articles 2 and 3).

Although this regulation was issued only recently, education systems are now supposed to be making provision for the new indigenous school category, as an essential condition for offering this particular modality of instruction. Yet in villages across the country the schools are in various situations of legal recognition, and there are no accurate figures as to which ones are recognized as indigenous schools. Until very recently, most indigenous schools were treated as rural schools or as extension classrooms for urban schools, following the calendars and curricula

of those institutions. Recognition of village schools as indigenous schools, with a different status, is something new in the education system and is still a work in progress throughout the country.

In order to improve education policies for indigenous communities, assess policies for the sector and collect information as the basis for defining new priorities and lines of action, both by the Ministry of Education and by the state and municipal education systems, the INEP conducted an indigenous school census in 1999. That was the first survey specifically designed to understand the characteristics of schools located in indigenous lands, by collecting general information on schools, teachers and indigenous students throughout the country; it produced an initial overview of the indigenous school situation in Brazil. The data from the 2005 census are reproduced below.

2.2. The 2005 School Census

The form used to collect information for the 2005 school census contained a series of questions designed to produce data on schools serving indigenous communities exclusively. Respondents who checked the box indicating that the school offered indigenous education were then asked to answer three additional questions about the specific modality of instruction: (1) what is the language of instruction?; (2) does the school used teaching materials specific to your ethnic group?; and (3) is the school located on indigenous land?

Total number of indigenous schools

Through these responses, a total of 2,323 indigenous schools were identified in all states of the federation, with the exception of Piaui and Río Grande do Norte, which recorded none. In terms of administrative responsibility, municipally-run schools (52.4%) outnumber state schools (46.66%) and private schools (0.95%). These numbers show that the tendency toward "municipalization" of indigenous education revealed in the 1999 indigenous school census (when municipal schools accounted for 54.8% of the total) has persisted.

Although these figures point to a trend to municipalization of indigenous schools in recent years, there are significant differences to be noted between regions. Thus, in the North and Center-West regions municipal schools predominate (62.1% and 83.9%, respectively), while in the Northeast, Southeast and South regions the state schools predominate (83.9%, 77.6% and 71.3%, respectively).

In previous years there was a trend towards state administration of indigenous schools. The 2005 school census showed a reversal of this trend, probably because of the municipal elections that were held at the end of 2004, and this trend was maintained in the 2006 census. It remains to be confirmed in each case whether the "municipalization" observed occurred primarily at the insistence of indigenous people, or whether it was determined by partisan politics in each municipality. Another explanation for the growing number of municipal schools is the action taken by the new municipal leaders, primarily in the states of Amazonas and Pará, which at the insistence of local communities have created or recognized new indigenous schools.

The impressive number of indigenous pupils in basic education means that indigenous communities whose schools fall within the state and municipal systems are receiving funding for their education in the order of R$217 million from FUNDEB/2007 alone.

A careful assessment of these two trends will now have to be done to verify the impact of one model or the other on the quality of indigenous schools, whether in terms of ensuring

adequate facilities and operating conditions, or in terms of maintaining initial and continuing training programs for indigenous teachers and support programs for the production and publication of specific teaching materials for use in these schools.

Only a qualitative study can provide the information needed for a closer examination of this question.

2.2.1. Teachers in Indigenous Schools

There are now 8,431 teachers (vs. 3,998 in 1999) working in these schools. Without specific research, it was impossible to tell how many of those teachers are indigenous. The Indigenous Education Coordination Office of SECAD estimates that 90% of those teachers are indigenous: 54.6% are hired by the states, 44.5% by the municipalities, and 1% are working in private schools. Most of these teachers (72%) are teaching at the basic level, from grade 1 to grade 8. Another significant portion (around 14.6%) is teaching at the preschool and kindergarten levels.

Level of teacher training

There are great discrepancies in the degree of training of these teachers, a fact that was already identified in the 1999 Indigenous School Census. In the 2005 census, 9.9% of teachers in indigenous schools had not completed basic education, 12.1% had completed basic education, 64.8% had secondary schooling, and 13.2% had higher education. These percentages reveal a steady improvement in the qualification of teachers in the country's indigenous schools. The increase in the percentage of teachers with intermediate education, in comparison with the 1999 census as well as data from recent years, reflects the impact of indigenous teacher training policies introduced recently by school systems and nongovernmental organizations, with technical and financial support from the Ministry of Education.

Courses averaging four to five years and involving both classroom and distance instruction now allow indigenous teachers to complete their basic education, while at the same time receiving specific training as intercultural teachers. They represent an on-the-job training approach that has improved the level of qualifications of indigenous teachers working in the village schools. Even so, a significant proportion of indigenous teachers (perhaps 10% of the total) in these schools not only failed to complete their basic education but never received any training as teachers, illustrating the continuing need for specific investments in this area. The North and the Northeast are the regions with the greatest concentration of under-qualified indigenous teachers: there, the percentage of teachers who have not completed basic education is higher than the national average (18.4% in the North and 12.6% in the Northeast).

There are relatively few teachers with higher education in the indigenous schools: they represent only 13.2% of the total, with great differences between states. However, a more detailed analysis is impossible without specific research that would identify these teachers as indigenous or not. It is believed that non-indigenous teachers working in the country's indigenous schools have already completed this training, in principle.

2.2.2. Students in Indigenous Schools

Enrollment

There are now 163,773 indigenous students enrolled in the country's indigenous schools. Of these, 51.8% are enrolled in the municipal schools, 47.6% in state schools, and 0.6% in private schools. According to data on the number of schools and the size of the indigenous population, the greatest concentration of indigenous students is in the North region, where 52.5% of the student body is indigenous. The state of Amazonas stands out in particular: it has 49,139 indigenous students, representing 30% of the national indigenous student body. The distribution of indigenous students in the other regions is as follows: Northeast 23.2%; Center-West 15.5%; Southeast 2.9%; and South 5.9%.

Enrollment by level of instruction

The bulk of these students (128,984, representing 81.2%) are in basic education for eight- and nine-year-olds, which is already offered in some indigenous schools. In the case of eight-year-olds, the students are concentrated mainly in the first grades, representing 81.7% of students in the first four grades, distributed as follows: 32.8% in grade one; 20.8% in grade two; 15.8% grade three; and 12.5% in grade four. The remaining 18.3% are in grades five through eight. There are 11.06% students in early childhood education, only 2.6% in intermediate school, and 7.5% in youth and adult education.

The concentration of indigenous students in the first three years of basic education has several explanations; we shall cite some, although the subject deserves deeper research. We know that in many indigenous schools instruction is focused on literacy skills and rudimentary arithmetic, and that it is not organized in terms of grades, years or cycles. In some schools, the student body is divided into beginners, intermediate (literate) and advanced. Several schools are multigrade. Thus, a first explanation for the concentration of students in the first grade is the fact that indigenous schools are not structured by grades, years or cycles. Another explanation is the low level of qualifications among the teaching body, which prevents diversification of education levels in the indigenous schools. The informal nature of instruction in the schools and the lack of materials and facilities could also explain this concentration, as many indigenous schools are only now being regularized and brought within the education systems.

In gender terms, male students are in the majority (52.2%) at all levels of education; female students comprise the other 47.8%.

With respect to distribution of students by age group at the different levels of education, there is a clear age/grade distortion, and this is yet another indicator of the precarious nature of the education offered in indigenous schools. If we look solely at enrollment in grades one to four by age group, we find that more than half of students are over-age for their grade. In fact, 50.4% of students in these grades are over the age of 11.

2.2.3. Pedagogical and Infrastructure Characterization of Indigenous Schools

Use of the local indigenous language

In response to the question in the 2005 census, 1,818 schools (of 2,323) reported that instruction was given in the indigenous language. The responses indicated that, in 78.3% of the country's indigenous schools, there was some form of indigenous-language or bilingual instruction offered, while in the other 21.7% the indigenous language was not used. This latter figure includes schools located in indigenous communities that have lost their mother tongue through the historic process of contact with Brazilian society, and where Portuguese is the only spoken language. But it also includes schools in indigenous communities where the mother

tongue is still spoken, but where it is not used in school activities. Only a qualitative research effort can provide indicators on the socio-linguistic situation of teaching in Brazil's indigenous schools.

It is interesting to note that in 199 schools, or 8.6% of the total, Portuguese was not reported as a language of instruction. The assumption is that in those schools instruction is offered only in indigenous languages. Again, only a more ethnographic investigation could confirm this indicator.

Use of teaching materials specific to the ethnic group

When asked about the use of teaching materials specific to the ethnic group, 965 schools (41.5%) responded affirmatively. There are significant differences among regions: in the North, where more than half the indigenous schools are located, only 33% use specific teaching materials. In the other regions, this percentage rises: in the South, it is 63.9%; 60.7% in the Center-West; 49.9% in the Northeast; and 79.6% in the Southeast. In some states, however, the percentage is very low: in Rondônia, Pará, Alagoas and Bahia, for example, fewer than 20% of indigenous schools said they used any kind of teaching material specific to their ethnic group.

As the use of differentiated teaching material may be restricted to a single primer, reader or dictionary, this situation is of great concern, betraying the inadequacy of available materials for offering an intercultural education and for recognizing indigenous knowledge and know-how. Although the Ministry of Education has attempted to encourage the production of such materials, written in indigenous languages for use in village classrooms, and has offered specific financing for such production, the above data indicate that Brazil's indigenous schools do not have their own teaching materials prepared on the basis of differentiated curricula.

The preparation of differentiated teaching materials requires significant investment not only of financial, but of human resources as well. Indigenous teachers must be involved in researching, systematizing and organizing knowledge on the basis of an education approach that seeks to integrate traditional knowledge and know-how into classroom life. Yet this remains a goal to be achieved rather than a normal practice in this modality of instruction. The Ministry of Education and the education systems will need to make efforts to encourage the production, publication and use of differentiated teaching materials, as called for in the legislation.

Location and physical premises of indigenous schools

The 2005 schools census found that, of the 2,323 indigenous schools, only 1,528 (65.8%) had their own building. The remaining 34.2% had to make do with makeshift and occasionally multiple premises: 533 were housed in sheds, 135 in teachers' homes, 36 in temples or churches, 14 in other schools, and 237 in other, unspecified premises. Although the Ministry of Education has invested in the construction, expansion and renovation of school facilities on indigenous lands in recent years, there is still significant unmet demand in terms of improving the schools' physical infrastructure. The percentage of schools operating without their own facilities is very high, and indicates the precarious nature of education in the villages.

This situation becomes even more dramatic when other variables are brought into the equation, such as the connection of these establishments to public electricity, water and sewage services. Only 741, or 31.9%, of indigenous schools have electricity Of the remainder, 313 have their own generator, 103 use solar power, two rely on wind power, and the great majority (1,175) has no form of power supply. When it comes to water, only 137 schools are connected to the

public system, 492 rely on an artesian well, 492 have a water tank, and the remaining 1,281 draw their water from a river or stream. There are still 19 schools that have no formal water supply at all, and only 16 are connected to the public sewage system. While 1,201 schools have a septic tank, 1,107 use some other form of sewage disposal.

Teaching facilities in indigenous schools

The ability of indigenous schools to conduct varied educational activities is compromised by the shortage of teaching facilities. Virtually all indigenous schools are reduced to one or a few classrooms: only 23 have computer labs, three have science labs, 55 have a playground, and 85 have a library.

The use of computers and distance education equipment is also limited. The data show that only 307 schools have a television set, 238 have a video cassette player and 177 have a parabolic antenna. This means that only 7.6% of indigenous schools are in a position to benefit from distance education technologies, such as the programs offered by *TV Escola.* The situation is even worse in terms of computer equipment: only 126 schools have a computer, 96 have a printer, and 22 have Internet access. In percentage terms, 35.4% of indigenous schools have a computer, and less than 1% has the possibility of connecting to the World Wide Web.

Because they are part of the state or municipal education systems, all indigenous schools have access to programs of the National Education Development Fund (FNDE), such as the direct funding program (*Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola* – PDDE), the national lunch program for indigenous schools (with a planned budget exceeding R$13 million for 2007), or the national textbook program (which distributed around 600,000 textbooks to indigenous schools during 2006, at a cost of more than R$3 million).

Of the government programs for improving education, the school lunch program is the most widely available: it is offered in 2,257 or 97.2% of indigenous schools. The "family bursary" (*Beca Familia*, formerly the "school bursary") program is offered to children and families in 1,014 or 43.7% of indigenous schools.

Despite the significant funding earmarked for indigenous education and expanded access to government programs, the figures reveal that incorporating the indigenous schools into the education systems has brought no real, widespread improvement to teaching conditions in those schools, and they illustrate the challenge of extending the benefits of government programs to these establishments. They also show the need to adapt programs to the specific reality of the country's indigenous schools, by revising the rules for classifying these institutions so that they can be covered by those national programs.

The picture resulting from all these indicators is of great concern, for it demonstrates that indigenous schools have benefited little from their inclusion as a separate category in the country's education systems. Guaranteeing decent operating conditions for village schools will have to be a goal at the federal, state and municipal levels alike.

Literacy rate

The literacy rate, which was below 50% in 1991, rose by half to 73.9% in 2000, and over that same period the proportion of the Brazilian population 15 years and older that could read and write increased by 8.1%, from 79.9% to 86.4%. There was a significant reduction in illiteracy

rates among indigenous peoples, especially in the Northeast. The highest literacy levels are in the Southeast and South.

For indigenous people 15 years and older, the illiteracy rate is higher among women, especially in rural areas. Only in the Northeast is the rate roughly equal for men and women (25.5% and 26.0% respectively).

According to the 2000 census, the educational enrollment rate for individuals between five and 24 years of age was 68.3%, and 56.2% in the case of indigenous people. In 1991, by contrast, only 29.6% of self-declared indigenous people between the ages of five and 24 years were in school. The greatest improvement in this rate among indigenous people was in rural areas, with the exception of the Southeast, where the increase was higher in the cities. In 2000 the Northeast had the highest indigenous enrollment rate, at 67.8% (versus 31.6% in 1991).

In 1991, indigenous persons ten years and older had an average of 2.0 years of schooling. This figure rose to 3.9 years in 2000, at which time the average for the population as a whole was 5.9 years. In urban areas, the average rose from 4.0 to 5.3 years among indigenous people, but the greatest proportionate increase occurred in rural areas, from 1.2 to 2.0 years of schooling.

2.2.4. Analysis and Conclusions

The increase in the number of indigenous schools, which rose from 1,392 in 1999, to 2,323 in 2005, and to 2,422 in 2006, is explained not only by the creation of new schools, which certainly occurred over this period, but also by the regularization of a great many schools and classrooms that previously were not recognized as indigenous. In many states of the federation a separate indigenous school category was created, as autonomous units within the education system, and this served to regularize the situation of many schools located on indigenous lands that were previously treated as extension classrooms of other schools.

Some other factors that explain this expansion are:

Indigenous people view school education not only as a basic right, but as a strategic factor in building their own future societies. Recent years have seen increased demands for the establishment of schools on indigenous lands. Of all segments of Brazilian society, it is the indigenous groups that have been most active in campaigning for high-quality public schools.

The Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity (SECAD), together with the municipal and state education secretariats, the Union of Municipal Education Directors (UNDIME) and the National Council of State Education Secretaries (CONSED) have all been working steadily to enhance the number and quality of schools in indigenous communities.

SECAD funding for training indigenous teachers at the intermediate level and in intercultural teaches courses at the university level[194] and the funding provided by the FNDE for building, upgrading and expanding indigenous schools[195] have contributed to this growth.

In recent years, around 9,100 indigenous teachers graduated from, or were enrolled in, special indigenous teachers' courses in virtually every state in Brazil.

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[194] Brazil has seven public universities offering such degrees, and new courses will be introduced as of 2007.
[195] In 2006, funding for the state and municipal education secretariats amounted to R$18 million

FNDE programs, such as the school lunch program, give particular attention to indigenous pupils, for whom the per capita allowance is higher than in non-indigenous schools, and this has encouraged pupils to remain in school.

The education systems in a majority of Brazilian states have given priority to the indigenous education agenda set forth in the "Charter of Amazonas" (*Carta do Amazonas*).[196] Most of the 24 state education secretariats, which have indigenous schools as part of their state education systems, have invested heavily in training teachers and in building, upgrading and expanding indigenous schools, in addition to improving their management.

The General Coordination Office for Education (CGE) of FUNAL has invested consistently and continuously over the last four years together with the General Coordination Office for Indigenous Education (CGEEI) of the MEC in training teachers, running innumerable indigenous teacher courses, and providing key support to the degree programs of various state universities (UFRR, UNEMAT, UEA, UFG/UFT, UFGD and UFMG).

The annual population growth among the majority of indigenous peoples in Brazil is around 4%, compared to the national average of 1.4%.

While the number of indigenous schools has been growing in many states, the fact is that the actual number of indigenous schools is understated in the official records, because of the process of grouping schools in "clusters," where several schools have the same address and may therefore be seen as a single establishment. This is the case in Minas Gerais, for example, which in 1999 recorded five establishments embracing a total of 28 schools. This may also explain the decline in the number of schools in some states.

Comparing the distribution of indigenous schools by administrative jurisdiction, we find that in the period between the two censuses there was an increase in the percentage of state-run indigenous schools, indicating a slight tendency towards greater state responsibility for schools on indigenous lands. Despite this trend, however, municipal-run institutions still account for more than half (52.4%) of indigenous schools. In absolute terms, municipal-run schools are in the majority in only eight states: in Amazonas there are 752 municipal schools and 12 state schools; in Bahia, 46 municipal and five state schools; in Mato Grosso, 150 municipal and 26 state schools; in Mato Grosso do Sul, 38 municipal and seven state schools; in Pará, 83 municipal and eight state schools; in Paraíba, 22 municipal and five state schools; in Paraná, 25 municipal and three state schools; and in Espírito Santo, all seven schools are municipal. In other states, state schools predominate.

If we take only the municipal schools of Amazonas and Mato Grosso, we find that 38.83% of the total are indigenous schools, a finding that, in absolute terms, reinforces the nationwide trend to state-run schools.

The recognition of schools as indigenous also explains the significant increase in the number of indigenous students, which in five years increased by nearly 50%. In 1999, there were 93,037 indigenous students, while in 2005 they numbered 163,693. During that time, there was a sharp rise in enrollment in early childhood education and kindergartens: from 7,584 in 1999, to 18,114 in 2005.

[196] Document approved by CONSED and MEC.

Data from the 2006 school census show that the supply of indigenous school education rose by 48.7% over the last four years. In 2002 there were 117,171 pupils attending indigenous schools in 24 units of the federation. Today that number is 174,255, covering the years from early childhood to intermediate education.

These numbers tell us that indigenous school enrollment has been rising since 2002 at around 10% a year. No other segment of the Brazilian school population has seen such impressive growth over the period 2003-2006.

Data from the school census show a significant increase in intermediate education offered on indigenous lands.

In 1999 there were 943 schools, in 2005 there were 4,270, and in 2006 there were 7,900. Despite this obvious growth, the number of students enrolled in indigenous intermediate schools is still very small, reflecting the relative scarcity of instruction at this level on indigenous lands. Where it is not offered, indigenous students wishing to pursue their studies have to leave their lands and continue in non indigenous schools, or in rural or urban areas. The same process occurs on various indigenous lands, with the final years of basic education. It should be noted that intermediate education is offered in indigenous schools in only 13 states: Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Tocantins, Maranhão, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Sergipe, Minas Gerais, Bahia, Santa Catarina, Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul. In the other states, there are no special arrangements to provide intermediate education for indigenous students.

A significant finding is that the distribution of students among the different grades of basic education has improved, showing that indigenous schools are better structured and organized. While the 1999 indigenous school census showed that 43.5% of students were in the first year of basic education, the 2005 school census saw this figure drop to 31.2%, with an increase in the proportions in the later years (up to grade eight). This improvement in the distribution of indigenous peoples among the grades of basic education, particularly grades five to eight, is one result of the indigenous teacher training programs, which has allowed more villages to offer these levels of schooling.

Another outcome highlighted in the 2005 school census is an increase in the number of schools with specific teaching materials. The bulk of these materials is produced in the context of indigenous teacher training: they are published in Portuguese, in indigenous languages, and in bilingual versions, reflecting the funding and the priorities that the Ministry of Education has allocated to the policy of encouraging the production of differentiated materials for use in indigenous schools and its support for state and municipal education secretariats, universities and indigenous organizations. Yet despite these investments, fewer than half of the country's indigenous schools (41.54%) have any type of differentiated material. There has been progress in comparison to 1999, when the figure was 30.5%, but the current percentage is still recognized as unsatisfactory for schools that are supposed to assert the value of indigenous languages and traditional knowledge.

These numbers show that, despite the progress that indigenous peoples have made in recent years in asserting their right to intercultural education, much remains to be done in terms of classroom practice, training for indigenous teachers, and the production of material so that schools on indigenous lands can offer a differentiated, high-quality education and recognition of these peoples' language and traditional knowledge.

The Ministry of Education has released these data with a view to assessing national policy for indigenous education, providing indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of federal, state and municipal education programs and plans of action. It is hoped that these data will help indigenous communities to exert effective oversight over the education policies targeted at them.

The censuses reveal, then, that indigenous peoples made great progress in their education indicators during the 1990s, but that they still fall below the average for the population in general.[197]

2.3. Other Indicators for the Indigenous Population

2.3.1. Fertility Rates among Indigenous Women, 1991 and 2000

As has happened in the country as a whole, the fertility rate of indigenous women has declined sharply. It dropped by nearly 30% between 1991 and 2000, when it stood at slightly under four children. Urban women account for most of this decline: in rural areas, the rate was still close to six children per mother in 2000. Among rural women, fertility rates exceeded seven children per woman in the South and South Central regions, comparable to the birth rates that prevailed for the country as a whole at the beginning of the 20th century, but consistent with what research tells us about the behavior of certain indigenous peoples.

2.3.2. Child Mortality Rate

The 2000 census placed the indigenous child mortality rate at 51.4 per 1000 live births, much higher than that for the Brazilian population in general (30.1 per thousand). The World Health Organization classifies child mortality rates as high (50 or more per thousand), moderate (20-49/000) and low (under 20/000). According to the 2000 census, this indicator produced values that fell into three groups, depending on the "color and race" criterion. The first included Oriental (18.0/000) and white (22.9/000), the second brown (33.0/000) and black (34.9/000), and the third indigenous (51.4/000. Using the WHO benchmarks for categories of color or race, the level of child mortality was moderate in general, except in the case of indigenous people, where the rate would be classified as high.

Indigenous child mortality rates also show a geographic distribution that differs in part from that for the population as a whole. Based on results from the 2000 census, the population classified as indigenous in the Northeast region had the highest rate (71.7 per thousand live births) and the North the lowest (39.1/000). Intermediate values were found in the Southeast (42.3/000), South (48.3/000) and Center-West (52.9/000).

Another notable aspect is that, for the country as a whole, the indigenous child mortality rate in urban areas (at 52.2/000) is higher than in rural areas (47.0/000), which is the reverse of the pattern for the general population. Regionally, this pattern can be observed in the North, Southeast and Center-West. On the other hand, in the Northeast and the South, child mortality is higher in rural areas. Again, within the Southeast and South regions, indigenous child mortality rates are higher in rural than in urban areas.

These differences between regions may result from several factors. It must be recalled that indigenous lands are much more extensive in the North and Northwest of the country. This could to some extent mean that rural indigenous groups in those regions enjoy better living and

[197] IBGE data

social conditions (relying for their livelihood on agro-extractive activities, for example) compared to residents of cities, where adaptation depends on overcoming social and environmental adversities, cultural shocks and social exclusion.

2.3.3. Training of Teachers

Pursuant to article 62 of LDB 9394/96, regulated by Decree 3,276/99, teachers in early childhood education are to have advanced training, with the middle level of normal school as a minimum. The Supplementary guidelines (Resolution CNE/CEB 2 of April 28, 2008, article 7.2) refer to teacher training appropriate to rural education.

According to the 2006 school census (MEC/INEP), there are 3,125 teachers who lack the minimum credentials for kindergarten (498) and preschool (2,627). In the Northeast region, in particular, we find that 5.92% and 3.2% of kindergarten and preschool teachers, respectively, have a basic education only.

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Introduction. 1. Brazil's indigenous peoples and education systems. 1.1. Current legislation. 1.2. The current status of indigenous schooling. 1.3. Early childhood education and indigenous schools. 1.3.1. Early childhood education policies. 1.3.2. Indigenous early childhood education. 1.4. Intersectoral coordination. 1.4.1. Ethno-educational territories. 1.4.2. Curriculum implementation plan. 2. The current status of rural early childhood education. 2.1. Legal basis. 2.2. Rural early childhood education. Bibliography.

Introduction

This document brings together analyses of early childhood education policies at the national level and those specifically targeted at Brazil's indigenous peoples, as part of the first phase of the project on *Trends in Transition Policies in Indigenous, Rural and Border Communities* sponsored by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

This project opens an important forum for discussion on the topic of indigenous education policies. The Ministry of Education (MEC) is paying special attention to education for indigenous peoples, as part of the new education paradigm of interculturalism, bilingualism and ethnicity at the different levels and stages of national education.

Consistent with its role in leading and coordinating national policies under the Education Development Plan (PDE), the Ministry has been developing educational programs and activities for indigenous peoples. Those programs and activities are discussed, prepared and implemented with the participation of representatives of these peoples, and they include the definition of curriculum guidelines, technical and financial assistance for indigenous teacher training programs, publication of specialized teaching materials, and formulation of specific programs to meet the needs of indigenous schools, with a view to improving teaching conditions in the villages.

1. Brazil's Indigenous Peoples and Education Systems

1.1. Current Legislation

The aboriginal peoples of America have been acquiring a set of rights in national States for the last 30 years or more, as is evident in policies relating to human rights and the affirmation of cultural differences. In Brazil, the 1988 Federal Constitution enshrined the principle of recognition, appreciation and protection of the social and cultural diversity of indigenous peoples, reversing policies of assimilation and establishing the paradigm of sociocultural pluralism in government policies. There are countless policies and government agencies responsible for implementation of these policies, in conjunction with indigenous peoples.

The political movement that emerged in the mid-1970s among some indigenous peoples, determined to protect their lands and recover their autonomy vis-à-vis government, also sparked thinking about the role of the institution known as "the school." In this process of re-signifying the school and asserting ownership over it, the school was seen as having the role of supporting efforts to ensure the continuity of indigenous communities' identity and culture.

The Constitution guaranteed indigenous peoples the right to *use their mother tongues and their own learning processes, and respect and protection for their cultural values and manifestations*.

Law 10.172 of January 9, 2001, the National Education Plan, devoted a chapter to indigenous education, and included among its objectives and goals the need "to provide the Brazilian population in general with accurate and broad information on indigenous societies and cultures, as a means of combating ignorance, intolerance and prejudice with respect to those peoples."

The right to intercultural indigenous schooling—characterized by the affirmation of ethnic identities, the retrieval of historic memories, the recognition of the languages and knowledge of indigenous peoples and the association between school, society and identity in shaping social projects defined autonomously by each indigenous people—was the result of determined struggles by indigenous peoples and their allies as well as the ongoing democratization of social relations in the country.

The country's broad sociocultural diversity, which had historically been subjected to efforts at homogenization that generated social inequalities and injustices, has come to be recognized in government policies and in the schools, creating thereby new agendas, commitments and debates. The challenges posed by intercultural indigenous education, which included the complex demands of recognizing the diversity of more than 225 peoples and promoting their self-determination, are being confronted with policies for training indigenous teachers in universities and intercultural normal schools, with the production of specific teaching and support materials, with an expanded offer of basic education in the indigenous schools and the strengthening of institutionalized and informed dialogue between indigenous representatives and the managers and officials of the MEC and the education systems.

Decree 5.05/04 of April 19, 2004, promulgating ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous Peoples and Tribal Communities, stipulates (article 131) that educational measures must be adopted in all sectors of the national community, and especially in those that are in most direct contact with the people concerned, with a view to eliminating any prejudices with respect to those peoples. To this end, efforts must be made to ensure that history textbooks and other teaching materials offer a fair, accurate and instructive description of the societies and cultures of the peoples concerned.

Another initiative for overcoming ethnic and racial discrimination was the approval of Law 11.645 of March 10, 2008, amending Law 9.394 of December 20, 1996, which had established the guidelines and bases for national education. The new law requires the official teaching curriculum to include the topic "Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture."

1.2. The Current Status of Indigenous Schooling

The National Commission for Indigenous Schooling is the body within the MEC through which indigenous representatives provide input to the discussion and formulation of national

policies of interest to indigenous peoples. Through it, many indigenous communities have expressed dissatisfaction with the way their educational rights, based on recognition and appreciation of indigenous social diversity, have been implemented. Demands for schools that have meaning and specific functions in a setting of cultural diversity have been met with teaching systems based on the urban school, where management and administrative patterns tended to exclusion and were not structured for dealing with diversity.

Some significant progress has been made in the management of indigenous school programs in recent years, including the following:

- The creation of SECAD has brought a greater political focus.
- The MEC budget for indigenous schools has been expended.
- The National Indigenous School Meals Program (PNAE-I) was created.
- A specific financing coefficient has been defined for indigenous students, in accordance with FUNDEB values.
- Indigenous schools were identified in the INEP school census.
- Indigenous schooling needs have received specific treatment in the PDE/PAR Indígena.
- A program was created to provide advanced training for indigenous teachers, and to integrate them into the public IES.
- More funding has gone into initial and continuous training of indigenous teachers and restructuring of the physical network of indigenous schools.
- There is increased output of specific teaching materials thanks to the creation of the Commission to Support the Production of Indigenous Teaching Materials (CAPEMA).
- The National Commission on Indigenous Schooling has been strengthened and restructured as an interagency advisory body.
- The First National Conference on Indigenous Schooling, held in 2008-2009.

In the education systems, we may mention the creation of social participation and oversight bodies, the creation of specific programs of initial training for indigenous teachers, the allocation of earmarked capital funds, administrative reorganization and strengthening of the indigenous education offices and coordination units, in a growing process of institutionalizing indigenous schools, as set out by CONSED in the "Charter of Amazonas."[198]

Yet before these measures can have full effect there are a number of challenges to be met in giving effect to educational rights:

- Problems in implementing pedagogical and organizational autonomy for indigenous schools.
- Disappointing results from the traditional school lunch program—in many schools, increased funding for the school lunch program produced no improvements, and management problems remain (type of food purchased, introduction of funding management by the school, the food delivery schedule, etc.).

[198] *Carta do Amazonas.* CONSED, Manaus-AM, 2005

- The problem of getting indigenous communities to define and implement their own pedagogical projects.
- Problems in ensuring that indigenous schools offer the complete basic education program: 60% of indigenous pupils are now in the first grades of basic education, 14.5% are in the later grades, and only 4.5% are in intermediate education.
- Demands to have intermediate education include vocational training in the socio-environmental management of community projects.
- Initial training for indigenous teachers is not universal.
- Debate over the sociocultural specificities of peoples in education policies: early childhood education, basic education (nine years), education for young people and adults.
- Making transparent use of FUNDEB (and other) funds, with social oversight.
- The unequal treatment of education systems can be seen in many cases in the initial training of indigenous teachers, the offer of basic education, the system for hiring education professionals, the regularization of indigenous schools, etc.

The Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity (SECAD) of the MEC was created by the federal government to disseminate and implement management concepts, contents and practices based on recognition of diversity as a heritage of Brazilian society and as a driving force in advancing democracy and building a fair and egalitarian society. The recognition and fostering of diversity is also expressed in the expansion of funding specifically earmarked for the development of indigenous schools, in support of state and municipal education systems which, in 2005, amounted to R$11 million, representing in recent years an unprecedented increase in the budget devoted to this type of instruction. More recently (2007), under the PDE/PAR Indígena, the funds allocated to indigenous schooling amounted to R$116,204,804.43.

The state education departments, which took over responsibility for indigenous schools slightly more than a decade ago, are being restructured, creating new activities, renewing and strengthening school management practices, deepening their dialogue with indigenous leaders and communities, and building new policies to promote innovation for the Brazilian education system.

In harmony with these moves by the state education departments, the Ministry of Education is pursuing more intensively its role as interagency coordinator, fostering dialogue and negotiation as strategies for dealing with the enormous challenges in a school system that is immersed in the sophisticated complexity of social diversity.

The PDE (Education Development Plan of Brazil), for its part, is based on six pillars: a systemic vision of education, territoriality, development, system of collaboration, empowerment and social mobilization. It views the association between education and territory as fundamental, in the sense that "it is in the territory where the cultural and social cleavages caused by geography and history establish and reproduce themselves."[199]

The ethno-educational territories are intended to contribute to the discussion of a Subsystem of Indigenous School Education, as called for by the Indigenous Movement,[200] where

[199] *Plano de Desenvolvimento da Educação. Razões, princípios e programas*. MEC, 2007, page 6.
[200] *Manifesto em Favor de uma Educação Escolar Indígena de Qualidade*. Abril Indígena, 2008.

programs, actions, and management and administrative practices are guided by specificity and interculturalism. The indigenous school, according to the National Education Council, is a specific category of school, with its own legal rules and procedures, geared to intercultural, multilingual/bilingual, specific, differentiated and community-based teaching. On the way to building this subsystem, it will be necessary to define a legal framework that effectively takes account of the educational institutions of each indigenous people, territoriality and its sociocultural dynamics, the formulation of specific laws and rules for that system, as well as the peculiarities of the indigenous school and the definition of specific budgets for indigenous school education.

The ethno-educational territories are supposed to put into operation a specific treatment for developing indigenous schooling around strategic actions, constructing common standards for hiring indigenous teachers and other professionals for the indigenous schools, initial or continuous training of indigenous teachers, production of teaching materials, a physical network suited to the socio environmental realities of communities, institutional responsibilities, financing and social oversight.

1.3. Early Childhood Education and Indigenous Schools

1.3.1. Early Childhood Education Policies

Access to free, high-quality early childhood education is a right of every child up to the age of six: this is an option for the family and a duty for the State.

Article 27 of the federal Constitution provides:

> *"It is the duty of the family, the society and the State to ensure children and adolescents, with absolute priority, the right to life, health, nourishment, education, leisure, vocational training, culture, dignity, respect, freedom and family and community life, as well as to guard them from all forms of negligence, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty and oppression."*

It is incumbent upon the Brazilian State, then, to formulate policies, implement programs, and mobilize resources that will guarantee children integral development and a full life, in a manner complementary to the efforts of the family.

In Brazil, the Early Childhood Education Policy is based on several legal documents that recognize the child as having rights and affirm the duty of the State to make early childhood education available at the family's option.

The 1988 Constitution recognizes care from age five to 11 as a right of the child and his or her parents, and as a duty of the State, and that care must be provided through kindergartens and preschool institutions. The Statute of Children and Adolescents (Law 8069/90) reaffirms this right, which is regulated by the Education Guidelines and Bases Act (LDB 9394/96) of 1996. The LDB defines early childhood education as the first stage of basic education, as part of the structure and functioning of the Brazilian education system. The National Education Plan (PNE, Law 10,172/01) calls for expansion of the service "in such a way that in five years it will serve 30% of the population from birth to three years of age, and 60% of the population ages four to six (or ages four to five) and, by the end of the decade, will achieve the target of 50% of children from birth to three years, and 80% of those ages four and five (target 1)."

Enrollment in early childhood education is not compulsory, as it is an option of the family to share the responsibility for educating its children with the State. If the family chooses to enroll its children in kindergarten or preschool, however, the government has the obligation to offer that service.

Great improvements were recently made in the regulatory frameworks for early childhood education. There is now constitutionally mandated funding through the National Basic Education Development Fund (FUNDEB) and children who have reached six years of age are now included in the nine-year basic education program.

Consistent with its responsibilities for guiding and coordinating Brazil's national education policy, the MEC, as part of the Education Development Plan (PDE), is developing programs and activities that conceive of early childhood education as the education and care of children from birth to five years and 11 months, offered outside the home in collective institutions—public or private—considered as education establishments and subject to multiple mechanisms of social monitoring and control, in the sense of addressing these challenges. Among those programs and activities we may highlight:

- Initial Training Program for Teachers in Early Childhood Education: PROINFANTIL.
- National School Libraries Program, which includes a collection of 60 works on early childhood education, and will be available in 85,179 early childhood education institutions.
- National Program for Restructuring and Acquisition of Equipment for the Public Early Childhood Education Network: PROINFANCIA.
- Update of the Regulatory Framework for Early Childhood Education.
- Allocation of subsidies to the municipalities under the policy for chartering early education schools.
- Preparation of quality indicators for early childhood education.
- Preparation and distribution of publications.
- Debate on policies for early childhood education in rural areas.
- Discussion of the school lunch program and the *Prêmio Professores do Brasil* teachers' awards program.

Various organizations and social movements have been monitoring the Brazilian government's actions with respect to early childhood. These include the *Rede de Monitoramento Amiga da Criança*, operated by a group of national social organizations and international agencies with a focus on children and youth.

As one of the 189 countries that committed themselves to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in 2000, Brazil has clearly defined targets for improving the situation of children. The commitments spelled out at the UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children in 2002 have been transformed into a set of social targets and objectives in various areas (education, health, protection and HIV/AIDS), contained in the document *Um Mundo para as Crianças (MPC)*, ("A World for Children"). The Presidential Plan "Friend of the Child" (PPAC) was presented by the Brazilian government in response to pressures from society: it was based on

the MPC goals for the period 2004-2007 and followed the constitutional principles that child and adolescents are absolute priorities[201] in public policies and that their human rights must be made effective.

1.3.2. Indigenous Early Childhood Education

Indigenous education policies are designed to make available to indigenous peoples a quality education that is community-based, differentiated, intercultural and multilingual. It is also intended to give indigenous peoples access to universal knowledge, without devaluing their maternal languages and traditional knowledge, thereby contributing to reaffirmation of their identities and sense of ethnic belonging.

Yet closer attention needs to be given to early childhood education policies as they relate to indigenous people, so as to facilitate the systemic move from indigenous schooling and early childhood education to higher education.

Dalmolin (2002), speaking of the multicultural perspective in education, quotes the words of Bartolomeu Meliá referring to an "*alteridade moderna*" ("a modern otherness").

In Brazil there are 23,141,413 children aged six and under (IBGE, 2000 census). It is a country marked by social inequalities, with significant differences between regions, inherited from a historical past of slavery and colonization.

The data from the 2005 census show the need to pay attention to some important matters in the field of education, such as the constant and significant increase in the number of children enrolled in early education, which is higher than the average overall increase at other levels of education, and the rising numbers of small children enrolled in indigenous schools in recent years. Every year, more indigenous children are experiencing formal instruction in the indigenous schools, and they are doing so at an earlier age; there are no evaluation indicators, and there has been little qualitative research for placing the quantitative data in context.

Similarly, the Curriculum Guidelines and National Benchmarks for indigenous schooling show the absence of benchmarks for indigenous early childhood education in terms of its regulation, and there are no pedagogical parameters for the education offered at this level, nor is it a component in the curriculum for training indigenous teachers.

Herein lays the great challenge of transposing words into action and coping with the complexity of a school that seeks to be intercultural. According to Dalmolin (2002), the very idea of the school as a curricular and pedagogical structure and organization is in itself a construction of the dominant Western culture.

Another important aspect, when considering education based on intercultural dialogue, relates not only to the exchange of different kinds of knowledge but also to the relationship between different cultures. In other words, between universes with different meanings: *"...considering the uniqueness of each people and national society's ignorance of that uniqueness, how are we to establish [in educational institutions] something that is not purely imposed and absorbed through 'cultural cannibalization'?"* (Dalmolin, 2002).[202]

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[201] Pursuant to article 227 of the 1988 constitution.
[202] SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa. In FELDMAN-BIANCO, Bela and CAPINHA, Graça, 2000. p.36.

In this context, and considering demands and needs on one hand, and on the other the fact that, in the understanding of many indigenous peoples, the dominant Western model of the school and of education does not fit with their cultures, social practices and societal goals, the MEC considers it essential to accept the challenge of strengthening the public debate on early childhood education in the indigenous school system and building an initial overview of Brazil's young indigenous children, on the basis of a broad diagnostic evaluation and dialogue with indigenous peoples.

This will serve to spark discussion on what kind of early childhood education the indigenous communities want, and which ones really want it. It will also bring about respect for these peoples' own way of educating their young children, recognizing that to debate education for young indigenous children is to break with the models and to construct new possibilities, since, for the indigenous school, this must respect the decision of each people, and must also consider the pedagogical action of the community in which it is inserted.

The Directorate of Education for Diversity (DEDI/SECAD/MEC), through its Coordination Office for Indigenous School Education (CGEEI/SECAD), insists on the absolute necessity of pursuing this thinking further, taking as reference the remarkably precise formulation of Dalmolin:[203]

> *"Official recognition of the indigenous schools presupposes something more than negotiating with the official sectors; it implies, first, coming to terms with anti-indigenous stances and then addressing the political and ideological arguments that shape government policies.... this tendency is reflected in the understanding of the school in which... its universalist meanings are maintained. In other words, in order to be understood as such in the official sphere, the school must have a structure that conforms to the system historically constructed by Western society: teachers and pupils, benchmarks, curriculum guidelines or parameters, and finally delimited knowledge, "sciences" as object, "orderly", systematized functioning, compartmentalized with "grades", measurement, graduations, evolutions. The insistence on these parameters or equivalents places the educational project under the scheme of the dominant thinking."*

Although they are very recent, some initiatives have reinforced thinking about the issue of policies for early childhood education and indigenous schools, for the purpose of making early childhood education in the indigenous schools a matter of public debate.

When discussing early childhood education and indigenous peoples, the questions take on other points of departure, other benchmarks, and other complexities. Among these is a lack of knowledge about young indigenous children: there is a huge vacuum in this area of research, in terms of understanding the realities, concepts and treatment of early childhood according to each indigenous culture. There has been very little research into indigenous peoples' own methods of learning (article 210 of the Constitution), such as would provide input for the pedagogical practices pursued in indigenous schools.

Quoted by DALMOLIN, in a paper presented at the First International Conference on Education -- *Multiculturalismo, Diferenças e Convivência*. *Por uma cultura do "Outro"*. SEMED/Ribeirão Preto, 2002.

[203] Dalmolin, G. (2002). *Colonialismo, política educacional e a escola para povos indígenas.* Campo Grande, UCDB

It will use this knowledge as input for implementing specific public policies for addressing the particular needs of indigenous early childhood education and building them into the action plans for indigenous schooling that are to be negotiated and planned in every ethno-educational territory, with the participation of all the social and institutional players involved.

1.4. Intersectoral Coordination

1.4.1. Ethno-Educational Territories

Territoriality, social mobilization, articulation and empowerment

In order to overcome historic inequalities, a new systemic basis is needed for intercultural indigenous education in Brazil, from basic education through to higher education, negotiated and agreed with indigenous representatives and with CONSED, UNDIME, the universities, FUNAI, indigenous organizations, the Federal Attorney General's Office, the vocational and technical school networks (CEFETs and EAFs). To this end, the "ethno-educational territories" (*Territórios Etno-Educacionais*) are being proposed as a new, articulated model that will take into account the territories of indigenous peoples, their own forms of social organization, their cultural production, languages and traditions, the networks of relations with state agencies, indigenous organizations (of teachers, health workers, and community and economic associations), NGOs historically active in the struggle for land and for differentiated, bilingual/multilingual and high-quality education, universities, and international cooperation agencies.

In this way, SECAD intends to take a systemic approach to the planning of indigenous schooling, involving management and training institutions with a territorial focus and assigning responsibilities among the various parties.

The ethno-educational territories are specific territorial areas related to the sociocultural dynamics and the territoriality of indigenous peoples, which constitute a response to their political demands for ethnic reaffirmation and territorial guarantees, and for specific policies in health, education and ethnic development.

They comprise a set of networks and systems of teaching, research and extension, civil society organizations, indigenous NGOs, and public agencies in other sectors, and they presuppose active engagement of those peoples in asserting their political rights in the definition and achievement of their societal objectives, and in dialogue with public agents.

From the management viewpoint, these territories are supposed to facilitate the design and management of policies articulated with different bodies, on the basis of educational diagnoses and demands, the definition of a work plan with clearly established institutional responsibilities, objectives, targets and monitoring mechanisms, as well as the respective evaluation.

The establishment of 16 ethno-educational territories is being proposed as a strategy for reinforcing and qualifying the treatment of indigenous social diversity in education policies and public management, based on the territoriality of indigenous peoples and their interethnic relations, promoting articulation with CONSED, UNDIME, the universities, FUNAI, and other agencies involved in this topic, and indigenous organizations, as the basis for an Indigenous School Subsystem.

In operational terms, the Ministry of Education, through SECAD, CAPES and IES, is discussing the creation of an "Observatory for Indigenous School Education," which would provide financing for graduate and postgraduate students and their advising professors to conduct research and produce case studies in the area of indigenous early childhood education, as a contribution to the proposed diagnostic analysis. The results will provide a better understanding of the experiments underway and will serve as input for implementing the early childhood aspects of the action plans for indigenous education, which are to be planned and agreed with all the social and institutional players in each ethno-educational territory.

1.4.2. Curriculum Implementation Plan

SECAD is now pursuing the following activities in order to guarantee high-quality school education:

- Initial and continuous training for indigenous teachers at the intermediate level (*Magisterio Indígena*, indigenous teacher's certificate).
- Training for indigenous teachers at the higher education level ("intercultural" university degrees).
- Production of special teaching materials in indigenous languages, as well as in bilingual versions and in Portuguese.
- Political and pedagogical support to education systems for expanding the offer of school education in indigenous lands.
- Diagnostic assessment of indigenous schooling.
- Promotion of indigenous social oversight.
- National conference on indigenous schooling.
- Financial support for the construction, renovation and expansion of indigenous schools.
- School education in conformity with indigenous territoriality (territories that cross municipal and state boundaries).
- Support for education systems.
- Dissemination of indigenous cultures.

2. The Current Status of Rural Early Childhood Education

2.1. Legal Basis

The Operational Guidelines for Rural Basic Education (CNE/CEB Resolution 1 of April 3, 2002) were adopted in response to public demands to give effect to the existing legislative provisions referring to the right to differentiated education (LDB, article 28), and to the adaptation of schooling to the specific features of rural life (articles 5, 6, 7 §2).

Article 5. In order to respect differences and the right to equality and to ensure immediate and full compliance with article 23, 26 and 28 of Law 9,394 of 1996, the pedagogical approach in rural schools will consider the diversity of rural life in social, cultural and economic aspects and its gender, generational and ethnic dimensions.

Article 6. The public authorities, in fulfillment of their educational responsibilities and in light of the legal guidelines governing collaboration between the Union, the states, the federal district and municipalities, will provide early childhood education and basic education in rural communities, including for children who did not complete their schooling at the regulation age; the states shall in particular guarantee the conditions for access to intermediate education and to vocational and technical education.

Article 7. It is the responsibility of the respective education systems, through their governing bodies, to regulate the specific strategies for rural education and to provide for flexibility in the school calendar, observing the principles of equality in allocating teaching facilities and classroom times.

§2. Educational activities in the schools may be organized and developed in different spaces or premises, provided the exercise of the right to school education and the development of the students' capacity to learn and to continue learning so require and that the purposes of each stage of basic education and of the proposed mode of teaching are respected.

The Supplementary Guidelines (CNE/CEB Resolution 2 of April 28, 2008) set out the specific features of rural early childhood education, stipulating the following conditions:

Article 3. Early childhood education and the first years of basic education shall always be offered in the rural communities themselves, avoiding the creation of school clusters and the movement of children.

§2. In no case may children in early childhood education be grouped together with pupils in basic education.

Article 7. Rural education must always offer the indispensable pedagogical support to pupils, including adequate infrastructure conditions and learning materials and books, equipment, laboratories, libraries and areas for recreation and leisure, in accordance with local reality and the diversity of rural peoples, with due regard to article 5 of the Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in rural schools.

§2. The admission, initial and continuous training of teachers and support personnel must consider pedagogical training appropriate to rural education and the opportunities for teachers to pursue refresher training and further development with professionals in their specialties.

2.2. Rural Early Childhood Education

The Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity (SECAD) has since its creation in 2004 been pursuing a policy of respect for diversity, based on meeting the specific educational needs of groups that as a result of historical processes are vulnerable. These include various Brazilian population groups, such as small farmers, *extrativistas* (persons who live from the exploitation of plant, animal or mineral products), fishermen, riverbank dwellers, squatters, persons settled under the agrarian reform, indigenous people, and others.

Meeting these specific demands implies not only recognizing the particular cultural and social features of these groups, but also identifying the need to improve education at each of its stages.

The MEC, in pursuit of its role in leading and coordinating educational policies throughout the country, is proposing a national policy for rural early childhood education as input

to the preparation and implementation of municipal and state policies in this area, through a collaborative approach.

Education in rural areas is concentrated in the first years of basic education: enrollment at this stage corresponds to around 60% of total rural enrollment in basic education. As a result, intermediate education and early childhood education receive less attention and in fact kindergarten enrollment is only 1.5% of the total in rural schools.

Approval of the FUNDEB law, which covers all stages and forms of basic education and guarantees differentiation in rural enrollment, should make it possible to expand the offer of early childhood education in the countryside and make needed improvements in the quality of teaching.

In this context, there is a particular need to identify and characterize the early childhood education experiences offered in rural areas throughout the country by the public education systems, and by the nonprofit entities that have been serving the various rural population groups mentioned above.

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Chapter VII. CONCLUSIONS

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Conclusions

Generally speaking, from the analysis of statistics and policies we may conclude that the countries included in this study have made significant progress in providing care for children under the age of six, in reducing dropout and repetition rates in the early years of basic education, and in enhancing the visibility of indigenous groups, among others. Yet progress to date still appears inadequate and early childhood education and care is still failing to reach large numbers of children among the most vulnerable population.

With some differing shades of emphasis, the national governments of all these countries have shown a determination to support education transition processes, and to assist in the experience of transition from family into the education system; in particular with respect to valuing people's original culture, with concern for the positioning and visibility of indigenous communities and their culture in the education field.

In their reports, the countries highlight the fact that, despite a wealth of legislation, the documents provide no details on educational transitions. These are included as a component referring to the vertical transitions involved in the move from preschool to basic primary school, from an institutional viewpoint, without really addressing the issue of transitions from home to initial education. There are no mechanisms or resources for monitoring educational transitions.

This situation can be reversed, but it will take political will to expand the coverage of early childhood education in ways that will allow continuity in the system while stressing equity and quality in the services offered. Better preparation for teachers, in terms of contents and methodological strategies, would allow them to sequence learning and articulate classes, cycles and educational levels more effectively. Furthermore, we are beginning to understand that the problems of at-risk children are not confined to the private sphere (the family), but are becoming a national problem that engage us all.

While the coverage of initial education services has increased in recent years, and has included rural, indigenous and border communities, in general it may be said that in all countries this coverage is low and is concentrated in urban areas and among high-income groups. We are far from achieving educational indices that will allow us to overcome the factors of impoverishment. Governments must be encouraged to invest in this phase of education.

Border communities are not defined in territorial terms, and there are no precise census figures on them, because of the high degree of mobility across borders; these communities have been disrupted by the establishment of borders between countries. Indigenous groups in particular have lost their autonomy, their culture, their land and their ancestral unity as a people, for whom historically there were no national frontiers, and these people see borders as an administrative imposition by the State that has disrupted family ties on both sides of the line. Their blood ties, and the concept of "ancestral territory," create strong bonds of ethnicity, and they identify more with their own people than with their “nation.”

The picture is fairly bleak for children living in rural areas or belonging to indigenous groups in our countries. The support these children receive from their families is not enough to shield them from the effects of poverty, which means that they begin their school career at a disadvantage in comparison with non-poor urban children, and the gap widens as they progress.

Moreover, the schools are not sufficiently safe or nurturing to help families in the upbringing of their children.

There is also a need to strengthen strategies within early childhood programs in order to empower families in the support they can provide to the transition process experienced by the preschooler upon entering the basic education system, especially in the indigenous world. The parental role needs to be strengthened as it relates to the transition that children experience as they move to the formal education system, and between its different levels.

Although all the policy documents on early childhood care and education mention the need for intersectoral action, there are gaps that impede intersectoral initiatives, such as: the lack of standardized basic criteria for the functioning, continuity and complementarity of programs, the lack of mechanisms for integrating information and the impossibility of reconciling the data collected from each sector, which prevents the establishment of priorities and goals. As a result, budgets are frequently "cloned" from year to year, strategies are repeated without any demonstration of their impact, there is no comprehensive overview of operations, and there is inadequate targeting with the attendant leakages (where funds go to those who should not receive them). Additionally, there are attitudinal problems on the part of the programs' final operators. These aspects are part and parcel of the problems of equity and of access to early childhood programs.

To guarantee the quality and effectiveness of non-conventional programs, there are certain basic requirements in terms of training—monitoring, supervision, evaluation etc.—that will serve to standardize the quality of the learning and the objectives to be achieved. Broadening the perspective of bilingual intercultural education to cover all early education programs is a very important task, as it will lay the basis for reconstituting social and cultural networks that will lead to the construction of a national self-representation in the context of democratic cohabitation among the members of the different sectors of the national fabric.

Reality shows us that having an integrated and diversified national curricular design is in itself no guarantee of efficient articulation between the levels. Many studies have shown discontinuities in pedagogical processes between the initial and primary levels and the lack of education services that will facilitate the move between levels; the training of teachers continues to be slanted towards the age group with which they will work.

Among the tasks that must be addressed with indigenous groups is that of providing indigenous language instruction in their respective institutions; designing and preparing programs of study and teaching materials suited to the idiosyncrasies of the communities; distributing textbooks adapted to the cultures; initial and continuous training for indigenous teachers at the intermediate level; training for indigenous teachers at the higher education level; political and pedagogical support for teaching systems to expand the availability of schooling in indigenous lands; better diagnostic assessments of education in indigenous communities; and dissemination of indigenous cultures among the rest of the population.

To achieve the mandates of education policy and the targets that the sector has set for itself (in terms of early childhood education and care) will require efficient management of the education system. This implies active participation by the various stakeholder entities, adequate funding for implementing policies, efficiency and transparency in the use of resources, intersectoral action to ensure a comprehensive approach, and a human resources team that is committed and performs its functions at a high level. In general terms, with respect to the coordination process, it would be well to adopt strategies to articulate the different spheres of

national public policy for integral attention and work with children, their families and community.

Organized civil society has an important role to play in incorporating early childhood problems (in rural areas) into the agenda of local governments. However, the mechanisms of articulation and communication between initiatives of civil society (NGOs, universities etc.) and government agencies (national, regional and local) need to be improved in order to achieve complementarity and optimize the use of available resources.

As we have noted, there are today legal frameworks that are favorable to young children, especially those living in rural and indigenous communities, and they are favorable as well to successful transition processes. The weakness lies in the mechanisms and the ways adopted for implementing policies, which will require preparing the corresponding bodies (decentralized levels of government), preparing and informing program operators, improving public staffing mechanisms, strengthening program strategies in light of the local context, and providing greater information and opportunities for public participation.

With respect to specific aspects we may conclude:

- There is great inequity in these countries, and it affects above all people living in rural, indigenous and border communities.
- The indigenous populations in these countries represent a small proportion of the total (3.43% in Colombia, 4.6% in Chile, 2.2% in Venezuela, and 0.2% in Brazil, while in Peru they are submerged in the statistics for the rural population, which is 26%), yet they bear the heaviest burdens.
- Family poverty means that children are undernourished, their parents devote little time or attention to them, are unaware of adequate stimuli (quality of care), and attach low priority to preschool education, nutritional conditions for pregnant and nursing mothers are inadequate. Furthermore, domestic violence is widespread, and women who are heads of household are overwhelmed by their responsibilities. In other words, families do not have the resources and the capacity to monitor educational transitions.
- Chile has the best record, not only because it has made a significant dent in poverty indices but also because it has achieved broad coverage in early childhood education and care for the most vulnerable groups, having reduced the illiteracy rate to 3.9% and increased the average length of schooling to ten years. Nonetheless, Chile still has a very inequitable pattern of wealth distribution (and this is true *a fortiori* in the other countries).
- All countries have established policies, programs and activities for early childhood education and care. Yet actions fall far short of policy guidelines and program targets.
- Generally speaking, national statistics on specific aspects (morbidity and mortality, vaccination systems, HIV/AIDS infection, disabilities, malnutrition, civil registry, child labor, mistreatment etc.) do not contain disaggregated data for rural, indigenous and border populations. However, recognizing that marginalization is greatest among these population groups, we may expect that their maternal and child mortality indices are significant.
- Early childhood care and education is better than before, but still insufficient.

- Rural schools are at a disadvantage in comparison with urban schools.
- The highest repetition rates are in basic education, especially in the first three grades. Dropout rates are declining.
- The education problem must be given greater visibility, particularly for rural and border populations, and this means refining the mechanisms and instruments for recording information to make sure they cover this population, including children under the age of three.
- Failure rates are particularly high in the first three grades of basic education.
- Thanks to policies and programs aimed at keeping children in school, dropout rates are declining, but they are still high among the most vulnerable population groups.
- While the provision of preschool services for children three years and older has improved, they are still rare in rural, indigenous and border communities. The poorest and most disadvantaged children in rural and indigenous areas have no access to early childhood education and care programs, and yet these are the groups with the greatest needs in terms of health, nutrition and cognitive development.
- The available indicators show that a high percentage of indigenous groups have lost their native tongue or use it only within the family, and occasionally in closed communities.
- Five-year-olds are being enrolled too early in the first grades of primary school, a factor that contributes to high repetition and dropout rates because their stage of development is not sufficient to master the learning required for this cycle of study.
- Instruction is of low quality and teachers do little monitoring of their students (student performance is poorest in the public schools, and worse yet in rural public schools).
- Education programs need to be made more attractive and more child-friendly.
- Teachers need greater skill in monitoring children's learning and transitions.
- Teachers must be trained for the bilingual intercultural schools.