

TRENDS IN EDUCATION

Trading in Education: Political, Economic and Ideological Schemes to Commercialise a Right

- The Economistic Perspective of Education Agendas at Jomtien, Dakar and Incheon
- The Transition of Public Education from a Social Right to a Marketable “Common Good”
- The IDB and the World Bank Financing Reforms to Dismantle Public Services
- The OECD’s Position on Education: Weakening Public Policy to Commercialise Services
- The Private Business Sector as the Ambitious Interloper in Education Policy

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**Publication of the Latin American Observatory of Educational Policies (OLPE)
Initiative of the Regional Committee of Education International for Latin America**

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370.19

I 61 t Education International for Latin America
Trends in education. / Education International
for Latin America. / 1. Ed.--
San Jose, 2018.
1 resource online PDF, 3 MB

ISBN 978-9930-548-04-2

1.Education-trends. – I. Title.

**EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL FOR LATIN AMERICA (EILA)
REGIONAL OFFICE, SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA**

TEL: (506) 22 34 84 04

POSTAL CODE: 1867-2050

ELECTRONIC MAIL: AMERICA.LATINA@EI-IE-AL.ORG

WEB PAGE: WWW.EI-IE-AL.ORG

PORTAL: WWW.EDUCACIONPUBLICA.ORG

OBSERVATORY: WWW.OBSERVATORIOEDUCACION.ORG



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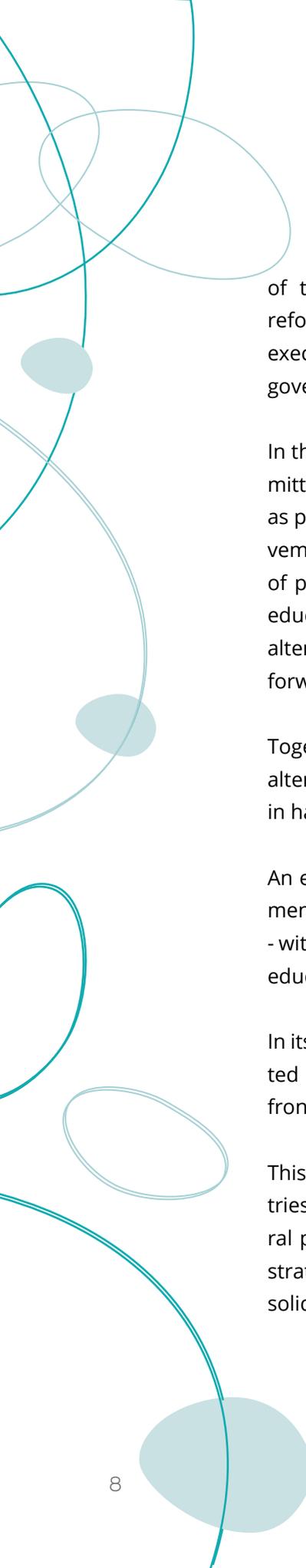
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Presentation

The Education International Latin America (IEAL) Regional Committee began the process of organizing the Latin American Pedagogical Movement (MPL for the initials in Spanish) in December, 2011. The motivation in promoting this movement has been the de-legitimization of public education fomented by neo-liberal sectors, which since the 1990s have encouraged the implementation of regressive educational reforms and the privatisation and commercialisation of education. In this context, the MPL was formed to defend quality, secular, state-funded public education.

The trend beginning all those years ago and extending to the present represents significant progress in the deterioration of public rights at the expense of the promotion of private interests. The use of public funds for private profit through the formula of public-private partnerships has been one of the methods used to secure this process. This situation arises from several decades of the state being subjected to the progressive liberation from its responsibilities. Governments and business sectors have articulated a policy of privatization, developed with the financial support of international organizations such as the World Bank (WB) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which have recently managed to incorporate this policy in the framework of agencies belonging to the United Nations (UN). This process has resulted in the booming commercialisation of education being taken up by national and transnational private sectors in each of the countries of Latin America, with the view to guaranteeing an educational model that provides the formation of human resources for the productive and business development and cultural control.

In this context, education policy is being defined -in particular - by the international bureaucracy associated with neo-liberal national sectors and the international institutional system. Teachers, central actors in the educational process, have not been taken into account in the definition



of the educational policy, nor in the definition of the educational reforms. Teachers are taken into consideration only in terms their role in executing that defined by the international bureaucracy along with local government actors.

In this context, the Education International Latin America Regional Committee has organized the Latin American Pedagogical Movement (MPL) as politico-organizational strategy intended to mobilize society. This movement encourages education unions to confront the neoliberal policies of privatizing and commercializing education. The MPL has invited the education unions affiliated with Education International to formulate alternate public policy education proposals to counter those pushed forward by neoliberals.

Together with their trade union organizations, teachers must elaborate alternative public education policy from their classrooms, working hand in hand with their educational communities and students.

An essential aspect raised by the MPL is the mobilization of the sectors mentioned - who have been excluded from the definition of public policy - with the objective of pushing for the approval of the defence of public education versus the privatized, commercialized model of education.

In its 7th World Congress held in July 2015, Education International adopted a resolution to organize and implement a global campaign to confront the privatised and commercialised model of education.

This global campaign urges trade union affiliates in each of the countries of the world to develop and propose an alternative to the neoliberal public education policy proposal. This campaign promotes four key strategic areas: research for action, taking political action, international solidarity and denunciation, and strategic political communication.

With this in mind, the Education International Latin America Regional Committee developed the Latin American Education Policy Observatory (OLPE for the initials in Spanish), which has systematized the positions and political-educational approaches of governments, international financial institutions, private institutions and social organizations to provide an assessment on the current state of education and, in particular, current trends influencing this sector.

In the above context, this document presents an overview of the trends currently at play in education, particularly in Latin America, with the purpose of providing documents and information to education unions affiliated with the Education International, to assist them in the formulation of alternative public education policy to counter neoliberal proposals, and, additionally, to complement their research and the compilation of data to assist in the struggle against the privatization and commercialisation of education in each country.

The elaboration of this document was made possible thanks to the participation of the Latin American Education Policy Observatory team.

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Trading in Education: Political, Economic and Ideological Schemes to Commercialise a Right

1. Introduction

The Latin American Pedagogical Movement, launched in 2011 by the Education International Latin America Regional Committee, is a political and organisational strategy of education unions to promote the elaboration of public education policy proposals to serve as an alternative to the education policy fomented by neo-liberal sectors. The educational movement promotes social transformation through education, in which public education is understood to be a social right that should be financed and guaranteed by the state.

Since its launch, the Latin American Pedagogical Movement has denounced the neo-liberal logic that has guided education policy in the region, as well as the mechanisms of the privatisation and commercialisation of public education, which refuse to understand public education as a social right, instead viewing it as a market commodity. The proposals elaborated by education unions therefore emphasise the public and free nature of education.

This publication seeks to document the main trends in the progress of the aforementioned privatisation and commercialisation mechanisms for the regional education unions. These mechanisms include the operational framework and the financing of education policy, as well as global agendas promoting educational reform oriented towards commercialisation and the dismantling of public education systems.

One of the main trends observed is that the process of increasing privatisation and commercialisation of public education at all levels is sheltered by a global legal and institutional framework made to apply on regional and national levels. This process includes the calls made to governments to take on debt and to involve the private sector in decision making on public policy that are enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals established in the United Nations 2030 Agenda signed by 193 countries. The international framework for privatisation and commercialisation also involves loans for education promoted by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which continue to impact upon the direction taken by educational reform through the placement of funds for specific educational agendas. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a body that has taken on the functions of a global government in productive and economic matters, is also intervening on decision-making on education, proposing a homogenized educational outlook that assigns specific roles to education systems in middle- and low-income countries.

Since the 1990 **World Conference on Education** for All in Jomtien, Thailand, and the elaboration of the **The Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments** at the 2000 World Education Forum, global goals for education seek to open the door to the sale of educational services. Since the Dakar Conference, the global position has been towards the greater indebtedness of low- and middle-income countries to meet the demands of the educational goals established in the global forums. IDB and the World Bank education loans in Latin America and, more recently, OECD recommendations, contain criteria and guidelines that ultimately establish a “bankable” education policy that guides national educational processes towards reforms defined by these international financial institutions (IFIs). As will later be examined, these reforms have to do with the flexibilisation of work conditions in the education sector, the reduction of educational content, and standardised evaluation. On reviewing various documents put out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the alignment of these organisations with such criteria are apparent.

Latin American governments have aligned themselves with this global trend, redirecting education policies in accordance with these guidelines to favour the business of commercialising education, with many of the activities that are financed by loans drawing on schemes of purchasing services from third parties (including outsourcing the management of educational centres) and public-private partnerships. The fact that the privatisation and commercialisation of education in Latin America has not occurred as an isolated external phenomenon, but rather has been promoted from within Ministries of Education, calls for a review of the ideological and political models permeating these Ministries.

This practice emerges from a model and an outlook on development that normalises the participation of the business sector in the different stages of education policy, so providing the conditions to continue advancing the commercialisation and privatisation of education. Thus, expressions such as low-cost private schools, concession schools and the purchase by the state of various educational services from private groups are merely consistent extensions of a global and regional approach to education with an emphasis on measurable results. This overview of trends reviews the main lines of financing and the reforms these are aimed towards achieving.

The World Bank is the main lender for education in the world, and Latin America is

the most indebted region in the field of education, receiving 43% of all funds credited to education. Some World Bank agencies that are involved in the generation of loans are the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). The former facilitates buffer periods of up to 35 years which are favourable to the countries. Loans from the IBRD do not have the same comfortable, flexible conditions as those of the IDA. While IDA loans tend to be up to 25% cheaper than those from private banks, this is not the case for IBRD loans.

Another growing trend in the region is that of groups of private companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) organising together to form business structures that produce education policy proposals, going from proposed curricula to proposals for education budgets and teacher recruitment systems. It has been observed that in participating in the debate on education, the business sector describes itself as “civil society”, which could be motivated by seeking the appearance of neutrality and the legitimacy of its recommendations. This overview of trends analyses a set of these private sector groups and the way in which they are participating.

In general, the role of civil society has also been reconfigured within a commercialised framework involving the participation of private actors in decisions on educational policy. Education unions are well aware that the private business sector has forums of negotiation with government sectors. However, this sector is now regarded as part of “civil society”, participating in various discussions and negotiations with local and international NGOs and international cooperation bodies. Review of a set of documents shows that different global structures such as the UN and its agencies UNESCO and UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank all insist on positioning groups from civil society—including those of private enterprise—as legitimate actors requiring participation and representation, even supposing these to have ideological and political neutrality. They thus attempt to minimise the political role of the trade union sector as the counterpart in these forums. International bodies are giving way to a tide of NGO and business groups, so hiding the legitimate role of the trade union movement in representing the true experts in education (teachers), who are not taken into account in defining educational reforms.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development repeats this mechanism which seems to establish a new social contract granting non-governmental organisa-

tions, the private business sector (now considered “civil society”), and philanthropic groups the same legitimacy of participation and decision-making as that rightly held by the union movement.

The documents analysed allow identification of the trend of conditioning educational financing upon results. It is worrying that educational processes are not being evaluated according to a systemic outlook and the use of educational criteria, but that rather monitoring and evaluation are based on accountability for funds placed by IFIs into education.

The trend is thus towards the systematisation of data and the monitoring and standardised evaluation of teachers and students. The data collected and the evaluation made are not intended to improve educational systems in a broad sense, but rather are performed to show the efficiency of the resources invested, as well as comparing and selecting the “most profitable” and effective experiences in order to continue financing these and replicating them in different countries. It is insisted that curricula content is aligned with easily measurable and comparable subjects, as occurs with the focus on mathematics and language, which are measured using the PISA test. Additionally, the argument is repeated that education ceases to be a process of sociocultural relevance with transformative value, instead becoming a time of life used to acquire a handful of tools necessary to face up to—as individuals—a changing and uncertain world.

This publication examines a set of documents made available on the webpage of the **Observatorio Latinoamericano** de Política Educativa (Latin American Educational Policy Observatory, OLPE), developed at the request of the Education International Latin America Regional Committee. These have been reviewed and analysed to facilitate an understanding of the global and regional scenario, which, on the one hand, transforms the right to education into a marketable common good, and, on the other, promotes an institutional logic which normalises and celebrates private participation in the definition and implementation of educational policy. It also provides a first approach to dealing with the relationships between the logic of countries indebting themselves, the purchase of private services by Ministries of Education with public funds—some of these arising from loans, and the deepening commercialisation of education, which promotes private profit through public funds.

2. The Economic Perspective of Education Agendas at Jomtien, Dakar and Incheon

The documents reviewed are related to global agreements on education. The world has experienced a spate of proposals and agreements establishing an educational agenda on a global level. These agreements have been signed by the Ministries of Education in Latin America.

Below are reviewed the global agreements established in the 1990 **World Conference on Education for All**, in Jomtien, Thailand; the **Dakar Framework for Action: Meeting our Collective Commitments** elaborated in the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, as part of the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and the 2015 **Incheon Declaration** which sets the Education Goals of the Sustainable Development Goals included in the 2030 Agenda.

There are issues that have been present throughout these 28 years, retaining some coherence to the global agenda. The broad lines of action call for investment in primary education; the reinforcement of literacy and mathematics education; teacher training; teacher and student evaluation; training that provides tools for employment; the mobilisation of financing and international cooperation to ensure that countries comply with the proposed tasks; and the involvement of various actors, including civil society and the business sector, in decision-making, with this participation said to involve conciliation and co-responsibility. For this last task, the state is called on to promote forums for dialogue and the generation of partnerships with the private sector. As of the year 2000, the theme of information and communications technology (ICT) serving as a tool to help achieve the goals was introduced.

Since 1990, the approach of viewing education as a process occurring within a system with the clear intention of transforming social and cultural processes has been weakened in favour of a neo-liberal view of education as a set of tools that should be acquired to tackle a competitive world.

Over the past 28 years, the approaches embodied in Dakar document and, later, the Incheon Declaration progressively lost the ability to place education within complex realities, which must necessarily be taken into account in formulating educational policy. A transition regarding the perception and valuation made of teaching with respect to the fulfilment of the right to education is evident. The

1990 Jomtien Conference recognised the irreplaceable role of teachers, as well as administrative workers, calling for action to improve the working conditions of teachers and highlighting the role of the state as being responsible for ensuring access to, and the funding and operation of education. As of Dakar, teachers are being held accountable for the bad results of education policy, and consequently are being increasingly subjected to evaluation processes, with their labour rights and wages conditioned upon the results of standardised testing of students.

Throughout these 28 years, the harmony and alignment between global education agendas with the World Bank and the IDB education agenda has been consolidated, with the neoliberal view on state policy deepening, particularly with respect to educational policy. These 28 years have resulted in the mobilisation of financial resources to entrench the role played by business in education through the sale of so-called “educational services”. The heights reached by this commercialisation can be seen in the fact that, while the Jomtien Conference had achieved a clear analysis warning of the impact of the reduction of public investment and the danger of debt widening social divides both between and within countries, the Incheon Declaration calls for an increase in indebtedness of countries to meet the new goals for the year 2030.

The debts currently incurred by Latin America have among their main components the generation of information and evaluation mechanisms, the financing of reforms, ICT platforms to promote “inclusion”, teacher training, the redesign of teacher recruitment formats, and the redesign of the way in which resources are distributed. This is no cause for surprise, given that in Dakar it was foreshadowed that accomplishing the goals would mean an increase of \$8 billion dollars on an annual basis, while in 2017, the Education Commission estimated that \$71 billion would be required between 2020 and 2030 to meet the challenges posed by these goals.

Currently, of the total loans for education approved by the World Bank, 43% goes to Latin America ([World Bank, 2017](#)), a percentage not likely to see a reduction in the short term. Although these agendas are presented as novel, urgent and disruptive, this is not the case. The goals set out in Jomtien, Dakar and Incheon represent an almost relentless continuum, as do global data after the investment of trillions of dollars to follow up on these goals: in 1990, 80 million children were recorded to be excluded from primary school; in 2000, there were 113 million; and by 2015, this amount increased to 158 million children not accorded the right to primary education (with 100 million children not finishing primary school, and another 58 million

never entering it). These data show that, despite educational agendas and the debt burden undertaken by countries, something has failed. A first reading to explain the gap between the level of investment and educational coverage could be that the funds have not been used to strengthen public policy for relevant, contextual inclusion, but rather has been directed at short-term services with a welfare mentality. Nevertheless, the educational global elite continues indicating to countries that this is the direction that must be followed so as to “leave no one behind.”

2.1 Jomtien

In Jomtien in 1990, the reduction of investment in education was criticised as one of the reasons for the education gap. Consistent with this criticism, Jomtien called for action to be taken to increase education budgets in the countries most affected by debt. Although the possibility of collaboration with private funds was mentioned, the central role of the private sector was not specified, and international solidarity was described as focused on the construction of “equitable and fair economic relations in order to redress existing economic disparities” (p. 8).

Jomtien also placed value on teaching and administrative work, at the same time as recommending actions to improve work conditions, given the impact of these on the teaching-learning process.

Recommendations were made for actions relating to coverage in primary education and training to deliver tools for employment in secondary education, without limiting secondary education processes to this purpose. For its own part, Latin America designed the **Regional Action Framework** developed to implement actions based on the World Declaration made at Jomtien. Since that time, consistent with World Bank policies and the positions that were further developed at Incheon, “civil society” has been invited to broaden its participation in the development of educational policy.

2.2 Dakar

In 2000, a new chapter in global alignment began with countries agreeing to the **Dakar Framework for Action: Meeting our Collective Commitments**, as part of the Millennium Development Goals adopted at the Dakar World Education Forum. This framework established that countries should develop their own national plans of education for all. These plans should guide the educational reforms to be implemented, as well as the definition of budgets (UNESCO, 2000, p. 10). At that time, UNESCO

itself warned that the international community should be prepared for a major mobilisation of resources given that achieving the objectives set in the Education for All Agenda would involve investment “in the order of \$8 billion a year. It is therefore essential that new, concrete financial commitments by national governments and also by bilateral and multilateral donors” (p. 10). UNESCO therefore called for the coordinated action of national governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, the World Bank, regional development banks, civil society, and foundations.

That is, in Dakar a survey was made of the cost of the educational goals that were proposed, thereby outlining the education market more clearly, and focus was made on undertaking debt with international financial institutions (IFIs).

After Dakar, the World Bank’s Education Sector Strategy 2020, outlined in 2010, expands the concept that the “education system” is not limited to the public system, but rather includes the various offers and forms of education for all ages provided by public, private, and mixed sectors, and non-governmental or religious organisations. Thus, when the World Bank finances processes that “strengthen” or “improve” the education system, it does not refer to the public education system which traditionally implied governments and trade unions, but rather, in its own words:

“education system” includes the full range of learning opportunities available in a country, whether they are provided or financed by the public or private sector (including religious, non-profit, and for-profit organizations). It includes formal and non-formal programs, plus the full range of beneficiaries of and stakeholders in these programmes—teachers, trainers, administrators, employees, students and their families, and employers. It also includes the rules, policies and accountability mechanisms that bind an education system together, as well as the resources and financing mechanisms that sustain it. (p. 5)

Therefore, funds from loans and grants from the World Bank can also be directed towards purchasing educational services offered by the private sector, including services of designing educational policy, curriculum content and teacher training systems.

The Dakar Framework for Action proposed that governments provide for the “mobilisation of new resources, particularly those coming from the private sector” and that they should “actively seek alternative mechanisms for financing education, such as public/private sharing and foreign debt/education swaps” (p. 40). While

maintaining focus on the cost of achieving these goals, Dakar additionally appointed international cooperation agencies the task of cooperating through “support mechanisms to countries in order to contribute to the fulfilment of goals established in this Framework of Action and to assume a shared responsibility for their fulfilment” (p. 42).

Dakar already placed strong emphasis on the processes of evaluation and information systems and suggested supporting assessment processes with “mechanisms that are outside the education system itself” (p. 42). This method of delivering assessment processes to autonomous entities not affiliated with the Ministry of Education was carried out to the letter in Mexico, with the establishment in 2002 of the Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (National Institute of Educational Assessment, **INEE**); in Uruguay in 2008, with the Institución Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (National Institution of Educational Assessment, **INEEd**); and in Ecuador in 2012 with the establishment of the Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (National Institute of Educational Assessment, **INEVAL**).

The different assessments carried out by the United Nations (**UNESCO**; 2015) indicate that a significant percentage of the Goals established by the Ministries of Education at Jontiem and Dakar were not met by the very same governments that signed these agreements.

2.3 Incheon

In 2015, fifteen years after Dakar, the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) burst onto the global scene with the motto, “Leaving no one behind”. This motto makes it clear that in global forums a single form of development is referred to, which is linear and has been constructed through advantages that have left some “behind”. This single, linear concept of development includes education along with another 16 Sustainable Development Goal areas. Similarly, according to this logic, some countries lead, while others must—inevitably—follow. “Leaving no one behind” indicates that there is a single direction in which to progress, and that direction is measurable and quantifiable.

At Incheon, a new partner joined the educational forum on a permanent basis: the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The participation of the OECD at Incheon should not be taken lightly, since, from 2015, the administrative and political approach to education has reinforced the precepts of the

neoliberal model, considering the role of the state on issues of education as “essential to setting and regulating standards and norms”, while promoting the strong involvement of all actors in the provision of educational services (UNESCO, 2015, p. 28). As will be further discussed in this publication, as of the Incheon Declaration, it became more evident that the OECD intends defining the viewpoint on educational reforms. The countries of the region have already received instructions in this area from the organisation as a membership requirement.

The 2030 Agenda Action Plan (2015) launched in the framework of the **Incheon Declaration** at the World Forum—in which Education International was invited to participate—called for the guarantee of more resources including funds from cooperation and “emerging donors” to finance education (p. 10). The Declaration states that the private sector will play a role in formulating the relevant character of educational content (p. 28).

With the establishment of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations agencies reiterated the call for the private sector to be a central actor in achieving compliance with the SDGs, proposing that solutions to global development challenges cannot come exclusively from governments. For its part, the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda** created at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (2015), provides an implementation and financing framework for the 2030 Agenda, calling on governments, the business sector and civil society to seek agreements to finance development (UN, 2015).

The Sustainable Development Goals assume that states are not adequately self-sufficient to meet the 2030 Agenda. They therefore designate the private sector to be a key player in the process of meeting these goals, and, consequently, in the formulation of public policy. Meeting the educational goals posed by the SDGs so implies normalising and even promoting the participation of the private sector.

The SDGs constitute a global roadmap and, unlike the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), they are goals that must also be met by rich countries. Another difference with respect to the MDGs is that SDGs open the door for the private sector and cooperation organisations to participate in the financing of the public agenda. The goals of developing countries must be guided by the SDGs, which normalises and institutionalises the participation of the private sector in decision making for development processes.

Sustainable Development Goal 4, focused on education, establishes clear goals in terms of completion of studies (Target 4.1), care and education in early childhood (Target 4.2), education for employment (Target 4.4), conditions of equal access (Target 4.5), literacy (Target 4.6) and teacher training, among others.

Based on this document, UNESCO and UNICEF have repeatedly urged that the private sector play a role in proposing innovative strategies to achieve access and coverage, particularly through collaboration with online virtual education platforms.

Target 4.1 states, “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.” For the fulfilment of this goal, the Incheon Declaration proposes monitoring learning using standardised measurement mechanisms and the creation of databases, such that decisions on educational policy can be guided by a “cost-effective” approach (p. 31).

Other United Nations initiatives, such as the **Global Alliance for Literacy** launched in September 2016, also indicate that without the private sector it is not possible to progress towards Target 4.6, which is: “By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.”

2.4 Comparison of the Educational Agendas of Jomtien, Dakar and Incheon

Below is a table comparing the main agendas established from 1990 through 2015, with the participation of the global education bureaucracies.

Table 1. Comparison of the Educational Agendas of Jomtien, Dakar and Incheon

| | Jomtien 1990 | Dakar 2000 | Incheon 2015 |
|---|--|---|---|
| Approach | Education must be considered a fundamental aspect of all economic, social and cultural projects. | Education is a fundamental human right and, as such, is a key element of sustainable development and the peace and stability within each country and between nations. It is therefore also an indispensable means required for participation in social and economic systems of the twenty-first century. | "Leaving no one behind" Inclusive, equitable and quality education must be ensured for all, as must the promotion of opportunities for learning throughout all stages of life. |
| On the state of global education | <p>More than 100 million children, of which at least 60 million are girls, have no access to primary education.</p> <p>More than 100 million children and many adults fail to complete the basic education cycle.</p> <p>More than 960 million adults—two-thirds of whom are women—are illiterate.</p> | <p>Less than a third of the more than 800 million children under six years of age receive some form of education.</p> <p>More than 113 million children have no access to primary education.</p> <p>There are 880 million illiterate adults.</p> <p>Young people and adults are denied access to the techniques and skills needed to find gainful employment and to participate fully in society.</p> | <p>100 million children do not finish the basic education cycle.</p> <p>58 million school-age children are not covered by the educational system.</p> <p>There are 781 million illiterate adults.</p> |

| | Jomtien 1990 | Dakar 2000 | Incheon 2015 |
|--|--|--|--|
| On financing, administration and management | <p>The reduction of public expenditure during the 1980s contributed to the deterioration of education.</p> <p>National, regional and local authorities responsible for education have an obligation to prioritise the provision of basic education to all.</p> <p>Coordination of actions among all subsectors and all forms of education.</p> <p>The adoption of measures to increase the national budgets of the poorest countries or to assist these alleviate the heavy debt they are burdened with.</p> <p>Creditors and debtors must try to find new and equitable formulas to reduce that burden.</p> | <p>National Education for All plans will define the reforms related to the six Education for All goals.</p> <p>They will establish a financial framework compatible with resources.</p> <p>Management and participatory government is required.</p> <p>The promotion of the mobilisation of new resources, particularly coming from business and productive sectors.</p> <p>Search more extensively for alternative education financing mechanisms, such as debt relief and external debt swapping.</p> <p>Guide international solidarity to increase external funding of education, particularly for basic education.</p> <p>Intensification and expansion of the adoption of early action to reduce or eliminate debt, so as to fight poverty and to take a firm position in favour of basic education.</p> <p>Mobilisation of resources must take into account that meeting the Education for All goals will cost around \$8 billion dollars annually. This will require additional financial support from the countries, as well as increased development assistance and a reduction of debt by bilateral and multilateral donors.</p> <p>Firm new commitments must be adopted as part of their financial plans by national governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, the World Bank, regional development banks, civil society and foundations.</p> | <p>Education is a public good, the main guarantor of which is the state. Education is a common social cause that entails a participatory process in terms of the formulation and implementation of related public policy.</p> <p>The participation of the state is essential to establishing and regulating standards and norms.</p> <p>Civil society, teachers and educators, the private sector, communities, families, young people and minors perform key roles in delivering on the right to a quality education.</p> <p>Efficiently allocate at least 4% to 6% of the Gross Domestic Product to education, or at least 15% to 20% of the total public expenditure.</p> <p>Appeal to developed countries, traditional and emerging donors, middle-income countries, and international funding mechanisms to increase financing for education and to support the implementation of the agenda in accordance with countries' needs and priorities.</p> <p>Reinforce the efficiency and effectiveness of institutions, school administration and governance by expanding the participation of communities, including young people and parents, in school management.</p> <p>Allocate resources more equitably among the schools favoured and those disadvantaged in socio-economic terms.</p> <p>The private corporate sector should help planners of education and practical training to understand labour market trends and the skills required. This facilitates the transition from school to work, promoting innovative approaches to meet the challenges posed by education.</p> |

| | Jomtien 1990 | Dakar 2000 | Incheon 2015 |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| On education workers | <p>This takes into account the special professional role of teachers, administrative staff and all other educational personnel.</p> <p>Conditions of service and the social status of teachers, who represent a crucial element in achieving education for all, should be urgently improved in all countries, in line with the ILO/UNESCO recommendation on the status of teachers (1966).</p> | <p>Improve the quality of certain aspects such as teacher training, the preparation of teaching materials, and active teaching techniques.</p> | <p>Teachers and educators should be empowered, duly hired, receive good training, and have professional qualifications. They should be motivated and supported within systems possessing sufficient resources, which are efficiently and effectively deployed.</p> <p>Increase the supply of qualified teachers, including by means of international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small, isolated, developing states.</p> |
| General actions recommended | <p>Increase quality educational services and take consistent measures to reduce inequalities.</p> <p>Determine acceptable levels of acquisition of knowledge through learning in education plans and implement improved evaluation systems of the results.</p> <p>Focus on the learning of trades.</p> <p>Mobilise educational processes through libraries, television and radio.</p> | <p>Guarantee access to good quality, free, compulsory primary education, which students come to complete.</p> <p>Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood protection and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.</p> <p>Guarantee access to good quality, free, compulsory primary education and the completion of studies.</p> <p>Ensure the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and to programmes for preparation in active life skills.</p> <p>Increase adult literacy by 50% by the year 2015, especially for women, and facilitate equitable access to basic education and continuing education for all adults.</p> <p>Eliminate disparities between</p> | <p>Ensure the development of the skills, values and attitudes that allow citizens to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, to make informed decisions, and to respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED).</p> <p>Take advantage of the information and communications technology (ICT) to strengthen educational systems, the dissemination of knowledge, access to information, effective quality learning, as well as providing services more effectively.</p> <p>Provide distance learning, training in ICT, access to appropriate technology and infrastructure needed to create a learning environment in the home, in conflict zones and in remote areas, especially for girls, women, and vulnerable boys and youths, and other marginalised groups.</p> |

| | Jomtien 1990 | Dakar 2000 | Incheon 2015 |
|--|--|--|---|
| | | <p>the genders in primary and secondary education by the year 2005 and achieve equality between the genders with respect to education by 2015. Young women in particular must be guaranteed full and equal access to basic education of good quality, as well as good performance.</p> <p>Achieve recognised and measurable outcomes, especially in reading, writing, mathematics, and essential practical skills.</p> <p>Ensure the progressive incorporation of information and communications technology given social demand to include this topic in education and training.</p> | |
| On evaluation and information systems | <p>Determine acceptable levels of acquisition of knowledge through learning in education plans and implement improved evaluation systems of the results.</p> | <p>Make precise definition and evaluation of expected results, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.</p> <p>More effectively monitor and regulate progress made in the fulfilment of the aims and objectives of Education for All.</p> <p>Implement systems of evaluation of the performance of teachers, and to measure the quality and the levels of achievement within the profession, based on basic standards agreed upon with teacher unions and social organisations.</p> <p>Information and evaluation systems are essential for decision-making on education policy.</p> | <p>Develop national systems of integrated monitoring and evaluation to produce solid data for policy formulation and the management of education systems, as well as to ensure accountability.</p> <p>Conveners and participants in the World Education Forum 2015 should support the development of capacities for the collection and analysis of data and the presentation of reports at the national level.</p> <p>Improve and standardise the data on the mobilisation of domestic resources and other sources of education funding, including household contributions.</p> |

Source: Based on the **Jomtien Declaration** (1990), the **Dakar Framework for Action: Meeting our Collective Commitments** (2000), the **Education for All Global Monitoring Report** (2015), and the **Incheon Declaration** (2015).

World Declaration on Education for All Meeting and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs. Jomtien, Thailand, March 5 - 9, 1990. Retrieved from: http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/JOMTIE_E.PDF

The international bureaucracy will continue moving in the direction of the public-private partnerships to achieve of the targets set by SDGs. On educational matters, UN agencies also continue to support private participation in the different facets of educational policy. The participation of the private sector in financing, supporting innovation, generating management strategies, collecting data, proposing content, etc., is the new global mandate established in the 2030 Agenda.

Growth is expected in IDB loans and technical cooperation linked to the fulfilment of SDGs, including SDG 4. International funding will be made available for educational projects that do not clash with this mandate. An example of this is the World Bank's proposal for the creation of an International Finance Facility for Education, as discussed below.

3. The Recommendations of the Education Commission to Deepen Debt Burdens

Global education goals arising from the 2030 Agenda are accompanied by a global agenda for educational financing.

During the so-called "spring meetings" of the World Bank in April 2017, the Education Commission presented a proposal for the establishment of the **International Finance Facility for Education**.

This office would centralise dealings for education loans from the World Bank, the IDB, and even funds donated via UNICEF. The proposal can be understood to seek global financial governance for a global educational process.

The proposal to create a single office that decides on the flow of capital to education was put forward by the **International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity**, which supported the objective of gathering evidence to present an action agenda for global education financing. In November 2016, this Commission presented the report **"The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World"**. In the report, the Commission recommended "mobilising new finance from a wide range of sources, including through the establishment of a new education investment mechanism to help scale financing from Multilateral Development Banks" (p. 9).

During the presentation made in April 2017, the Commission proposed the creation of the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) to the World Bank.

The Commission stated that to meet the Sustainable Development Goal 4 with respect to quality education, countries should allocate at least 6% to 8.5% of their GDPs to education. For most countries in Latin America, this would imply increased debt. The Commission established that this investment in education means mobilising at least \$13 billion annually until 2020. In the case of low- and middle-income countries, for example, financing requirements would go from \$23 billion in 2020 to \$71 billion in 2030.

Who will there be money for? Once again, funds for the development of educational reforms will be conditioned upon criteria established by financiers. The Commission proposes conditioning the delivery of loans to countries willing to “reform their educational systems based on results” (p. 2), as well as the “better distribution of resources” in education.

The Commission says that it will cause “a revolution in education financing” (EC, 2018) and proposes that the International Finance Facility for Education be an entity that enhances the ability of countries to take out loans by setting lower interest rates (buy-downs) as a strategy to attract debt. The International Finance Facility for Education is formed through a partnership between developing countries, regional development banks (in the case of Latin America, the IDB) as well as allied private banks and other donors willing to mobilise new resources for low- and middle-income countries.

In November 2016, the Commission published the report, **“The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World”**. This document highlights the mandate to identify ways to “mobilise and put resources in place” ensure education. The Commission recommends that investment in education is guided by the results of education and reform processes, proposing “the establishment of a new education investment mechanism to help scale financing from Multilateral Development Banks” (p. 15).

Among other findings, the report recommends a series of actions that extend the participation of the private business sector in public educational processes. The following three recommendations are made by the Commission:

- “mobilising new finance from a wide range of sources, including through the establishment of a new education investment mechanism to help scale financing from Multilateral Development Banks” (p. 15).
- “Innovation in education can also benefit if governments improve partnerships with non-state actors (...) Civil society organisations, enterprises and employers in all sectors play important, and, in many countries, expanding roles in education—in leadership, advocacy, and accountability, as well as in being education providers and investors” (p. 18-19).
- The recommendation to governments is that these “strengthen their capacity to

harness the potential of all partners. In particular, this should include improving the regulation of non-state providers of education in order to enhance their contributions and protect rights, and expanding the role of employers in the design and delivery of education” (p. 19).

In February 2018, the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Financing Conference** was held with the presence of world leaders, “philanthropic” foundations and members of the private sector. Countries placing funds for loans indicated that they will double their contributions for the financing of Global Partnership for Education; this would go from \$1.3 billion available in the 2015-2018 period to \$2.3 billion in 2018-2020. This implies that the GPE can run operations for up to \$300 million over the next two years.

The Commission reported that the biggest financing contribution would come directly from developing countries, which have pledged to increase public investment in education by up to \$110 billion during the 2018-2020 period (so surpassing the \$80 billion budgeted for the 2015-2017 period). The International Commission recommended that, from now to 2030, middle- and low-income countries increase their investment in education from 4% to 5.8% of their GDPs. This is evidence of how the 2030 Agenda can lead towards greater indebtedness and the increased involvement of private actors in the education agenda.

Responding to the 2030 education goals with greater debt clearly contradicts the warning made in the **1990 Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All** when discussing like goals for the year 2000, about the critical situation of “the increasing debt burden of many countries” as being one of the causes for the educational gaps.

Fourteen African countries are already implementing the Commission's plan—and accessing resources. These countries form part of the Pioneer Country Initiative which includes Botswana, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Tunisia. The Commission hopes to begin talks with Asia and Latin America to promote their partnership with the International Finance Facility for Education.

The Commission proposes that those resources that are not granted by the International Finance Facility for Education are channelled through the Education Cannot Wait Fund, a mechanism responsible for sustaining conditions to provide educational services in times of emergency and crisis.

As described in the section reviewing World Bank loans, the loans granted by the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) have a maturity period of up to 35 years and can be up to 25% cheaper than private banking loans.

The fact that the Education Commission suggests the centralisation of funds from donations and the United Nations system, in particular from UNICEF, through an International Finance Facility for Education may generate tension between donations from the United Nations system, the agenda of the World Bank itself, and the agendas of the countries.

4. The Transition of Public Education from a Social Right to a Marketable “Common Good”

Along with tensions and interests guiding decisions on global education financing, there coexists tension over the concept of public education as a right, as opposed to the perspective of seeing education as a service.

A current debate in the framework of the Latin American Pedagogical Movement, also informing the elaboration of proposals for alternative educational policy, is the concept of public education as a social right which must be guaranteed and financed as such by the state. As a right, public education must aim for a universal approach committed to equity and social integration. This universal approach also implies the eradication of niches and fragmentation due to socio-economic conditions in the educational process.

However, more recent discussions on educational issues, such as the United Nations 2030 Agenda and OECD recommendations, have displaced the notion of public education as a social right, instead introducing the concept of education as a common good, which is ultimately used to justify the commercialisation of public education.

Administrative law establishes that a public good is one “whose consumption of it by one individual does not diminish its availability to others” (Samuelson 1954). The terminology of administrative law describes a public good as “non-excludable” and “non-rivalrous”. This is to say, once it has been produced, others can enjoy this good without that increasing the cost of its production, and no one should be excluded from the good, even when not paying any fee for consumption. Some documents add that public goods must not be commercialised on the market and must be guaranteed by the state.

The 2016 UNESCO document, “**Revisiting the Principle of Education as a Public Good**”, describes a common good as one which aims to “contribute to the general interest, enabling society as a whole to be reinforced and to function better, as well as individuals to live better” (p. 8), and states that therefore decisions made

about this good include not only the state, but also the market and civil society. In the Latin American countries, where education is sold as a service (from early childhood up to the tertiary level), education is not considered to be a public good but rather a common good. This argument developed in the UNESCO document (2016) justifies the transition of the concept of education as a public good to a common good, or an "impure public good" (p. 4).

UNESCO explains that education has lost the character of "non-rivalry" that forms the basis of a common good, and this is evident in the fact that states do not have the capacity to provide education for all. "Given the technical possibility to exclude someone from school attendance, private actors are likely to provide education only for the children whose parents can pay school fees" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 3). The document adds that the participation of the State must therefore ensure that those children whose families cannot pay for their education are included in the system through the contribution of the state: "There is therefore a need for state intervention to ensure equity" (p. 3).

The publication raises for discussion the idea that more people might be willing to pay for educational services if they were better informed on the benefits that education can provide (Musgrave, 1959 cited by UNESCO, 2016, p. 3), and points out that in OECD countries, "the private share in national expenditure, essentially coming from households, increased from 12.1% in 2000 to 16.8% in 2010" (p. 6).

The UNESCO document describes the diverse participation of private actors ranging from offering services through concession schools and private educational institutions, to their collaborating along with international agencies in the design of educational policy.

The document opposes understanding education to be a market commodity due to its civic, cultural and ethical content. However, it criticises educational policy decision making remaining a "hierarchical" task of the state. It alleges this should instead be designed and implemented through networked decision-making that is inclusive of the private sector and civil society (p. 7), applauding democratic decision-making to achieve equity and inclusiveness as justifying the participation of private suppliers in the education market.

UNESCO proposes understanding education not as a public good, but as a common good, which, as already noted, involves the participation of non-state actors

in decision-making and the provision of this common good as a service. It thereby normalises seeing and managing education as a marketable commodity.

For the Latin American Pedagogical Movement, public education is a social right which must be guaranteed and funded by the state, and not a marketable commodity which can be left in the hands of private actors motivated by profit.

The UNESCO publication **“Revisiting the Principle of Education as a Public Good”** shows that United Nations agencies see education as a marketable common good, and they consider commercialising education as an option to achieve the inclusion of all those requiring access to this good, and, furthermore, that this is the correct option to respond to the state’s inability to ensure inclusion and guarantee the right to education.

This concept of education as a common good is the founding basis of positions that defend the transfer of public funds to support private businesses, such as concession schools and voucher systems.

For example, Martin Krause and Irene Giménez (2016), champions of the business of private schools in Latin America, argue that private schools should be considered public because they serve public interests. From this point of view, they defend the state ceasing to finance educational institutions as such, to instead reorient funds towards the delivery of vouchers to families for these to make payments directly to the educational institution.

4.1 Education Policy as a Focused Policy Rather than a Universal Right

The notion of public education as a service that must be provided in a way targeted to the most vulnerable groups and not as a right for universal coverage is not limited to political and economic processes. It also has an impact on public opinion and is generating a transformation in the social perception of public education.

The consumption of private supply by middle and upper classes generates increasing private supply, and ultimately converts public education into a welfare service focused on the poorer classes, so establishing a deep segregation between the children and youth of different socio-economic classes.

In investigating the progress of the privatisation of education, the social perception of public education must not be ignored. The notion has become ingrained that social policy and public services are expensive and should be narrowly focussed and “made efficient”. This discourse is strongly defended by the OECD, which has insisted that public education must be directed only to those cannot pay for private education.

This vision of education as just another service rather than as a process of social cohesion and integration is also present in the IDB report, **“Time to Act: Latin America and the Caribbean Facing Strong Challenges”** (2016). This document recommends focusing social spending on the most marginalised groups, that is, reducing it and narrowing its focus:

Countries may wish to re-evaluate such expenditures and ensure that they are obtaining the highest levels of efficiency and services. This is particularly desirable for education and health, which tend to account for a large proportion of expenditure. There may be ample space to improve efficiency or, in other words, to provide the same level of services but at lower costs. Above all, there appears to be considerable space to re-evaluate social spending policies to ensure that they exclusively benefit those really in need. (p. 38-39)

Suggesting that public education (as well as health) should be focused on those sectors of the population who cannot afford private services is not an outlook unique to the Inter-American Development Bank. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development also reiterates the call to focus public education policy in terms of welfare policy. That is, it denies the concept of public policy as a tool for social cohesion and integration focused on rights, instead promoting a purely welfare outlook.

A major risk of this is that by not having tools for political analysis on the right to education and discussion on its quality, the purchase of private educational services and support for the rejection of public education is normalised for the general public, so weakening their social rights.

4.2 The Sale of Educational Services within the Framework of a Common Good

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The transition of the concept of public education as a social right to that of education as common good has converted it into a tradable commodity. According to this economy-centred perspective, the private sector selling educational services is seen as a strategic ally with the ability to ensure coverage and educational inclusion. This approach is notable in laws and regulations—and even in the lack of these—that make viable growth and progress in the sale of educational services, either directly to families or to the state through the outsourcing of services.

Another perspective found in a set of documents reviewed, also favouring the commercialisation of education, is that the private sector has greater management capacity and better pedagogical proposals, and therefore has greater capacity to bring “quality” to the educational process. Both perspectives promote the making of legislation in Latin America in favour of subsidising private business with public funds.

Concession Schools in Colombia

An example of the above is the case of concession schools in Colombia, the country with the largest amount of **funds destined to private or religious education management**. Since 1999, Colombia has promoted the participation of private groups in the management, organisation, and operation of new public education centres.

The model includes the participation of Colombian private schools demonstrating the best results on standardised tests and religious NGOs involved in processes of public tender for the management of schools receiving state funds. The Ministry of National Education hands over infrastructure and government departments transfer those private groups given tenders a specific cash amount for each child enrolled.

The concession schools are asked to comply with the Institutional Education Plan and are given freedom of decision in other areas. To obtain financing for concession schools, the private sector can resort to the **Fondo Financiero de Proyectos de Desarrollo** (National Fund for Development Projects, FONADE), which provides resources for tenders involving private business groups. The union movement has denounced the way concession processes involve the deregulation of work in the education sector, the dismissal of public sector teachers, and the recruitment of teachers through flexible employment schemes, additionally, impeding the right to freedom of association and trade union participation.

According to data from the Columbian National Ministry of Education, the granting of concession schools mainly benefits private education groups such as Cafam, Colsubsidio, Calasanz College, the Salesian, the Nuevo Retiro, La Salle, Fe y Alegría, and the Aliancia Educativa (formed by the Universidad de los Andes and the Nueva Granada, San Carlos and Los Nogales schools).

Public Funds Financing Private Schools in Panama

Another example is the recent entering into force of the decree allowing private school students to access the Universal Scholarship in Panama, which, as of January 2018, also covers payments to private schools. Since 2010, the Panamanian government has delivered the Universal Scholarship to students at public schools. Between \$270 (two hundred seventy dollars) and \$450 (four hundred fifty dollars) are given to students for expenses for transport, supplies, food, etc. The scholarship is awarded to families once a year.

In February 2017, the National Assembly approved Draft Bill 389, amending Act 40, a law governing the Universal Scholarship Programme. The amendment to the law gives the green light to private school students to also access the Universal Scholarship granted by the state.

Proponents of Draft Bill 389 argue that the support of public funds is necessary to deal with the high costs of private tuition and that students outside the public education system represent “savings to the state.” The presentation of the draft bill additionally contains a critique of public education and its teachers:

Everyone knows the major problems that exist in public education, with problems in infrastructure, constant strikes, the lack of vocation or interest on behalf of teachers in

the work they perform, the lack of excellent public schools. These problems, among many others, mean that on a daily basis more and more Panamanians make the sacrifice of enrolling their children in private schools, not infrequently with more than one student per family increasing this sacrifice, while saving the state a large amount of resources providing education to these students, thanks to their being outside the public sector.

See more.

Given the availability of public funds for families buying services from private schools, these institutions can proceed to increase the cost of their tuition, that is, a great deal of speculation may thereby be generated. The opening up of funds to families buying educational services from the private sector may lead to “competition” for available funds among the groups of families in the private sector with those of the public sector.

The broadened coverage of the Universal Scholarship may also benefit low-cost private schools operating in Panama. Although low-cost private schools are a more common phenomenon in China, India and some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, they have begun to grow in Panama and Peru. Low-cost private schools were launched by the company EG West Center, dedicated to founding educational institutions that teach English in locations of high poverty. EG West Center saw an opportunity to create schools that charge low fees that cover educational wages while leaving a margin of profit to cover the infrastructure.

In Panama, 20 low-cost private schools were recorded in 2012. There are no current data for 2018. Tuition for low-cost private schools ranges from \$6 (six dollars) to \$30 (thirty dollars). These schools teach the four main subjects: science, mathematics, Spanish and social science, but do not follow a common curriculum: instead, they focus on pedagogical facilitation and contents are based on results. Despite this weak academic offer, the 2012 Panamanian Annual Business Conference stated that low-cost schools were a valid alternative, because they are free of interruptions that may be generated by teacher strikes and marches, poor infrastructure and other factors. That is, the business sector applauds deregulated, flexibilised employment as an alternative to the public sector that guarantees labour regimes and trade union rights.

The operation of low-cost private schools must be scrutinised, as this also implies a deregulation of teaching while calling for a full opening of education markets.

In 2016, publication was made of the study, “Una Nueva visión en educación. Un estudio sobre la educación en Panamá (A New Vision on Education: A Study on Education in Panama)” by Goethals Consulting and the Instituto de Estudios para una Sociedad Abierta (Institute of Study for an Open Society, ISA Panama) led by Martin Krause and Irene Giménez. The document indicates, “The State has the obligation to finance people’s schooling and to give parents the ability to choose the school they want their children to attend” (Krause and Giménez, 2016). They propose completely deregulating kindergartens, preschools and primary schools, and preventing the implementation of a single curriculum. They also make reference to unions, indicating that “public schools are dominated by unions, a common issue in Latin America. Seeking good results in this scenario is a waste of time.”

In Brazil, the Right to Higher Education Also Gives Way to its Becoming a Business

In 2005, Act 11.096/2005 was approved, establishing the University for All Programme in Brazil (**PROUNI**), a programme that has been considered advanced due to its promotion of the admission to university for students from marginalised families, especially students of African, mulatto, and indigenous descent, or from rural areas.

PROUNI scholarships are aimed at people who have completed secondary education in public schools or in private schools as the beneficiary of a scholarship. PROUNI also provides scholarships to teachers actively working in the public education system.

Although PROUNI settles a historical debt in terms of access and coverage, it generates a new niche for private business in tertiary education, because it delivers scholarships or “vouchers” that can be used to fund university studies in private educational centres.

The system of vouchers is a concern, as although it generates a financing mechanism, it represents the purchasing of private services with public funds. In 2016 alone, the Brazilian **Ministry of Education** reported that through PROUNI, it was to hand over vouchers for a total of \$400 million. These funds would be directed in their entirety to paying for educational services in private establishments.

The voucher system has already been employed in the United States and Chile at the primary level and there is currently a strong lobby for its implementation in Mexico.

Three Private Business Scenarios

These scenarios in Colombia, Panama, and Brazil show private education services strengthened with the business of low-cost private schools, concession schools, and with the voucher system. With the exception of tertiary education in Brazil, the two other schemes coincide in the deregulation of employment in the education, in violation of the right to free association.

These three examples show that the educational field as a business niche is proven to be competitive and versatile. Any new private education business seeking to establish itself (for example, the low-cost private schools promoted by James Tooley) can find strong competition and conflicts of interest in the field, unless partnerships and corporate mergers are forged.

5. The IDB and the World Bank Financing Reforms to Dismantle Public Services

The national dynamics described above favouring education businesses have a strong correlation with the mechanisms for the commercialisation and privatisation of education promoted by international financial institutions. For this reason, special attention has been paid to the role of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank in the promotion of the indebtedness of countries to finance certain educational policies that counteract the public and universal sense of education, therefore weakening it.

According to the [World Bank Report](#) of 2016, the level of debt in Latin America is the highest in the world in the field of education (p. 35). It is striking that the policy of increasing debt is deepened in countries with on average 4.5% of the GDP dedicated to education.

To understand this contradiction between the availability of public education funds and the deepening of debt, it is necessary to review the practices of the neoliberal model aimed at hindering and limiting action taken by the state. Latin American states manage their budgets, but do not have the ability to adapt these for actions not established by law or not included in budget planning, which present as “emerging needs” in government management.

Thus, IFIs act as a resource fund—which, unlike public funds, are immediate and flexible—such that states can respond to a set of circumstances that cannot be undertaken using public budgets. The more emerging needs faced in educational sectors, the more likelihood of incurring debt.

Thus, emerging needs in education are being guided by organisations external to educational policy: the World Bank supports reforms in the structuring of the teaching career; the IDB promotes changes in educational content and teaching strategies; the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) pressure for educational content relating to innovation, mathematics, information technology, and science.

Analysis was made of a total of 260 documents published by IEAL's *Observatorio Latinoamericano de Política Educativa* (Latin American Education Policy Observatory, OLPE) corresponding to loans and technical cooperation projects provided by the World Bank and the IDB to 16 countries in the region in the period from 1992 to 2017. On reviewing the contents of forty of the IDB and the World Bank loans for education in Latin America, the OLPE identified five areas mostly served by these loans, as listed below.

Table 2. Main Areas of Education Policy Financed by the World Bank and IDB

| Loan area | Components |
|--|--|
| Institutional management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for Ministries or Secretariats of Education. • The creation of institutional information and monitoring systems. • The promotion of decentralisation systems. • The transfer of ministerial powers to other actors: communities and civil society groups. • Management of Public-Private Partnerships • The collection and analysis of data. • The design of budgeting by results. • Negotiations and dialogue with the trade union movement (especially in the case of loans involving reforms). • Institutional communication strategies (especially in the case of loans that generated far-reaching reforms). |
| Teacher evaluation and student assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher evaluation. • The design of systems for linking working conditions/incentives to results. • Student assessment focused on language, arithmetic and science. • The design of systems for student distribution according to performance. • Financing of the participation of the countries in the PISA tests. • Payment for third party services for teaching evaluation. • The promotion of autonomous education evaluation institutes (external to Ministries or Secretariats of Education). |
| New educational models | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design of new curricular content • The purchase of services from NGOs and private actors for the design of content and educational materials. • The alignment of the secondary curriculum to the labour market. • The promotion of training programmes for employment. • Pilot plans for the implementation of “successful models”. |

| Loan area | Components |
|------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The narrowing of the secondary education curriculum content. • The implementation of extended day models. • The implementation of secondary school distance models. • The implementation of integration models (Mega-Secondary Schools, Schools of the 21st Century, etc.). • Analysis for the closure of educational centres and relocation in integration models. • In-service teacher training. • The promotion of pedagogical models based on connectivity and online education. |
| Infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and works concession. • Connectivity and information systems platforms. • Payments to third parties for the development of digital platforms. |
| Early childhood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promotion of new legislation for early childhood education. • The promotion of public-private partnerships for the management of education and care in early childhood. • The promotion of concessions for the management of education and care in early childhood. • Technical and vocational training in early childhood. • The construction of works. • Management of community networks. |

Source: Based on World Bank and IDB documents.

In the case of loans and technical cooperation for El Salvador, Brazil and Peru, it is clearly shown that funds are allocated to private groups that create teaching material (Pupa in Brazil); develop pedagogical models (Mind Lab in Brazil and Scholas in Paraguay); design a training curriculum for secondary school students (Galpao Aplauso in Brazil, and FEDISAL and FUSADES in El Salvador); or alternatively, establish their own educational centres (Innova in Peru).

The participation of the World Bank has been emphatic, especially when it comes to financing processes of long-term educational reform.

A significant amount of reforms forming part of the Education for All initiative (Dakar, 2000) were launched and financed by the World Bank. This is the case of the 1991 loan delivered to the Government of El Salvador, named the Social Sector Rehabilitation Project, which created a parallel educational management system handled by parent groups in rural areas through the Programa Educación con Par-

participación de la Comunidad (Education Programme with Community Participation, EDUCO). This diverted the responsibility of the Salvadoran state for education in these areas for nearly a decade.

It is also the case of the two most recent World Bank loans in Ecuador, one in 2006 for the Inclusion and Quality Education Project (for \$43 million) and another in 2015 for the Supporting Education Reform in Targeted Circuits Project (for \$178 million). Both loan projects mention enhancing institutional capacities for teacher recruitment and the distribution of funds, as well as the design of the curriculum and school administration.

Similarly, the World Bank has promoted and financed deep-reaching reforms to secondary education to, firstly, align this with the labour market, and secondly, segment it into differentiated systems for young people suffering conditions of poverty and vulnerability, in an approach consistent with recommendations of the OECD and the World Bank itself. This is the case of the most recently approved loan in Brazil, for \$150 million (hundred fifty million dollars) to reform diversified secondary education (the final years of secondary school). The reform focuses on decreasing the curriculum from 13 subjects to 4 (prioritising mathematics, Portuguese, and English, and giving the option to choose a fourth supplementary subject). The loan description warns of the risks of social conflict from possible layoffs of teachers that should be incurred, and provides for specific funds to pay consultancies relating to negotiation and “preventive” discussions with teacher organisations.

The World Bank had already promoted a similar reform in 2010 in Mexico, with the Upper Secondary Education (MUSE) Development Policy Loan for \$700 million to finance the continued implementation of a competency-based diploma focused on increasing the number of graduate students to be inserted in the labour market. The World Bank description indicates that this strategy is in response to OECD recommendations to “simplify” secondary education for students at greater social risk. On that occasion, the Bank described how teacher unions (known as subsystems in the World Bank document) had supported the reform.

With respect to non-reimbursable technical cooperation projects undertaken by the IDB, these have been observed to be intended as “prototype” projects. Technical cooperation projects have thus been reviewed that finance pilot projects developed by NGOs and private groups, with later attempts to emulate these in educa-

tional policies on the national level. For this reason, technical cooperation projects should be scrutinised, as giving clues to the agenda of educational commerce that the World Bank may be intending to promote.

Increases in technical cooperation projects have been observed when changes of government occur and the World Bank believes that a particular country may be ready to generate long-term educational reforms. Such is the case of Peru, where the IDB provided eleven technical cooperation projects between 2008 and 2017, mainly focused on issues of administrative management and curriculum design. This experience is replicated in the case of Chile, where the IDB undertook eight technical cooperation projects between 2008 and 2016. A spate of technical cooperation projects also occurred in Colombia coinciding with the peace talks, where since 2013 the IDB has engaged in six technical cooperation projects focused on creating prototype educational models in rural areas, school administration, and extended school days.

Technical cooperation projects on training for employment are worth noting. Examples are the EDUCAME Project in El Salvador, which in 2008 received \$150,000, and the Monge Foundation's Project Matching New Workforce Skills to Knowledge Economy Demands in Costa Rica", which received \$1.2 million in 2015. Along the same lines, technical cooperation of \$973,000 was delivered to the New Employment Opportunities for Youth Project in Chile (NEO-Chile) in 2016. These technical cooperation projects test out possible models for curricular reforms to align secondary education with the needs of the labour market, as recommended by the OECD, IDB and the World Bank.

A tendency to finance technical cooperation projects to implement virtual platforms and information and communications technology (ICT) has also been observed. Among other projects reviewed were the technical cooperation project, "E-Learning in LAC: 3 Personalised Learning Environments (PLE)" in Chile which received \$325,000 in 2011; the "Maximising the Impact of Information and Communications Technology in Education" Project in Honduras which received \$500,000; and the "Public-Private Partnerships for Educational Innovation" Project which received \$1 million, and which proposes copying the educational model of the Argentinian NGO, Scholas.

Another example is the case of the private **Innova Schools** in Peru. These were founded in 2005 by the company Colegios Peruanos S.A.C. (hereafter CP). In 2010,

CP was bought by NG Education Holdings Corp (Interbank group) and NG Capital Partners (Nexus Group). In 2012, the IDB approved a loan for \$15 million with an option for a further \$10 million to finance the expansion of the Innova Schools network. It is interesting to note that Innova Schools teachers are trained in the “Corporate University” owned by that private group itself. The loan funds also include teacher training, such that NG Education Holdings Corp (Interbank group) and NG Capital Partners can buy their own teacher training services.

Monitoring by IEAL’s Observatorio Latinoamericano de Política Educativa (Latin American Education Policy Observatory, OLPE) has identified how the loans stipulate the hiring of consultants for a wide spectrum of activities. Basing a large number of stages of public policy on debt means creating and running a set of parallel education budgets—loans—which social and even political sectors cannot influence. This dependence on IFI financing has not been interrupted over the years of democratic, popular governments in the region. That is, the model of dependence and the construction of a parallel agenda for education based on debt has similarly continued make progress in the region.

The region of Central America has a high level of debt to the World Bank and the International Development Bank (IDB). OLPE’s monitoring of educational commerce has involved reviewing a set of loans from these institutions for more than \$300 million (three hundred million dollars) to cover the development and implementation of educational policies, from processes of reforming the teaching profession to evaluation processes and the mapping of statistical data. The level of sub-regional debt is worrying, and even more so is the power of international financial institutions (IFIs) in educational decision-making in the region.

5.1 The Fast Funds of Fast Track Initiatives

In 2002, the World Bank launched the **Fast Track Initiative**, released as the result of the Monterey Conference in 2002, in which the World Bank, UN agencies and other actors decided to create a mechanism to expedite the approval and disbursement of financing to countries not eligible for IDA-World Bank loans.

The funds mobilised through the Fast Track Initiative were to be aimed at supporting projects related to Education for All (EFA), as adopted in the Dakar Framework, and the agenda for Millennium Development Goals, aimed at promoting preschool and primary education, educational evaluation and monitoring mechanisms, and the expansion of credit for these purposes (World Bank, 2002).

The Fast Track Initiative funds were available to countries not eligible for loans from the International Development Association (IDA), which, in the case of Latin America at that time, were Honduras, Nicaragua and Bolivia.

These funds were granted under “more flexible” conditions in exchange for the countries presenting investment plans with follow-up indicators and criteria to improve transparency. Another requirement for receiving the funds was that countries would be guided by harmonisation criteria for policies and governance, as set out in the 2003 **Rome Declaration on Harmonisation** which established that Official Development Assistance (ODA) should abide by the technical recommendations of banks and the OECD. It is worth noting that, among other things, the Rome Declaration calls on signatory organisations to generate a system of incentives for their directors and functionaries that more successfully appeal to alignment with management in the various countries that are to receive aid.

As of 2004, these countries were additionally directed to obey the guidelines for “developing results-oriented management” defined in the 2004 Marrakech Roundtable.

An example of what these conditions could involve is found in the document, “Bolivia’s Plan to Achieving Education for All Goals” (2002), prepared by the World Bank. This analyses the opportunities for Bolivia to participate in the Fast Track Initiative. The document explains that although the Bolivian state and municipal governments had a set of plans designed to develop the national educational process, the funds transferred could not be used to finance what was merely a state proposal, given that, following the concept of country ownership, multilateral institutions and coo-

operation agencies would not trust a plan entirely designed by a country. Countries should therefore submit proposals involving the criteria stipulated internationally in the Millennium Development Goals. That is, the funds were also delivered under the condition that the plans presented by the countries were aligned with the priorities of the donor community, in this case, meeting the preschool and primary coverage education goal, going beyond the format of management to achieve this (p. 8).

Despite being eligible for the Fast Track Initiative and despite the World Bank having budgeted around \$300 million for this purpose, the Bolivian government refrained from submitting a proposal for this initiative. One of the explanations for this was, as previously explained, these funds did not strictly respond to policies defined by the central government nor by municipal governments given that the World Bank required financed actions to be aligned with the interests of donors.

Countries that are to receive such funds are pressured to deliver results and reports (in accordance with the Marrakesh guidelines). The volume of Fast Track Initiative disbursements did not lead to more robust management on behalf of the states because they were not planned for that purpose; they rather sought to achieve the rapid, agile deployment of educational services.

In 2008, the World Bank and other organizations created the Regional Fund of Civil Society for Education to finance the participation of private actors and NGOs in the provision of educational services and evaluation of the implementation of the Fast Track Initiative. Outsourcing these services offered governments a way to generate results and reports quickly as demanded by the World Bank.

In Nicaragua, the **disbursements** made by the World Bank via the Fast Track Initiative between 2002 and 2008 amounted to a total of \$400,700,000. That is, through the Fast Track Initiative, the second poorest country in Latin America after Honduras received funding to implement educational projects which, at that time, accounted for 6.7% of its total external debt for 2003 (**Central Bank of Nicaragua**, 2005). In the case of Honduras, \$348 million dollars were received between 2003 and 2015 (World Bank, 2016).

It should be noted that the three countries benefiting from the Fast Track Initiative continue to face significant levels of inequity in educational matters, and in the case of Honduras and the Dominican Republic, the teaching profession continues to be harassed and held accountable for the results in education.

5.2 IDB and the World Bank Prototyping Education Models: The Cases of SABER, SUMMA and CIMA .

As already discussed, the set of the IDB and the World Bank loans contain an educational proposal and guide educational reform in the region. That is, funds are placed for specific educational projects, which are aligned with the approach of these IFIs.

To propagate this approach to education, both the World Bank and the IDB have created online portals discussing educational experiences and “good educational practices”. The World Bank’s portal, **SABER**, and the IDB’s portals **SUMMA** and **CIMA** present educational content, teaching tools, and management models among others that the financial institutions consider to be successful and efficient, and consequently would be willing to finance, replicate and further develop. These portals broadcast part of the educational proposal of these IFIs.

The World Bank Education Strategy 2020 named, **“Learning for All: Investing in People’s Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development”** explains that the bank will support countries in creating monitoring and evaluation systems to provide information on the results of the financing the bank provides. To this end, it designed the “Systems Approach for Better Education Results: **SABER**”, which retrieves data allowing the comparative analysis of both the educational policies and educational institutions of different countries. In Latin America, SABER has collected experiences on responses made by the “educational communities” affected by violence in Honduras, Nicaragua and Colombia, and on teacher training and recruitment policy in Paraguay.

The data are constructed from educational experiences in teaching, management and administration financed by loans and grants from the World Bank, which are considered “good practices” that can be emulated by other countries and prioritised in decision-making on financing.

Through the SABER system, the bank carries out monitoring of employment training through the SABER Work Force Development (SABER-WFD) programme and the Training Assessment Project (TAP). TAP systematises and compares the characteristics of models of workforce development, comparing results and analysing possible actions with respect to training for employment (World Bank, 2017), while also identifying the most successful experiences in aligning learning with the demands of the labour market and new tasks—and pressuring educational systems to implement these approaches.

For its part, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has launched two initiatives notable in coming from a bank. The first is the Centro de Investigación para la Mejora de los Aprendizajes (Centre for the Improvement of Learning, **CIMA**), which collects information and comparable statistics for “decision makers” on matters of educational policy in the region.

IDB’s second initiative, created in conjunction with Fundación Chile, is the Education Research and Innovation Laboratory for Latin America and the Caribbean (**SUMMA**). The Laboratory has the support of the Education Ministries of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. SUMMA performs the function of collecting and promoting good practices, as well as evaluating various educational methods from a cost-benefit perspective.

The IDB is now seeking to create a new niche for itself in the business of education, announcing through IDB-CIMA that it will offer training and skill development workshops and programmes (p. 5). It also establishes the aim of giving support to countries to participate in standardised international tests, to improve the collection and use of data, and improve data-based decision making. The portal offers information and statistics on the state of education in Latin America and the Caribbean and aims to be the reference point for queries from governmental spheres responsible for decision-making, as well as for researchers and other stakeholders interested in monitoring progress in education.

The information is intended to facilitate comparison among countries and is collected through household surveys, administrative data collected by the countries’ educational authorities, and educational performance test results. IDB-CIMA paints a picture of regional education from the perspective of the bank, using **40 indicators** that are presented in an educational data repository called EDULAC, offering information in six areas: learning, coverage, efficiency, infrastructure, financial resources, and context (the student community). Learning outcomes are measured in the form of pass and performance rates in standardised international tests (OECD’s PISA, UNESCO’s SERCE and TERCE, etc.). Coverage is measured based on attendance rates, and efficiency indicators are generated from the countries’ graduation data, and information on education expenditure budgets, disaggregated by spending per student, per level, and by teacher salaries, among others.

Why Dwell on These Comparisons of Educational Models?

Trade unions should carefully examine these “success stories”, because they reveal elements of education policy targeted by IFIs and, therefore, with financing available. That is, the comparison of these experiences provides data to define the educational areas that will receive more attention and investment. From the point of view of the education market, SABER, SUMA and CIMA represent instructions to guide educational policies which can and should receive financing, as well as the type of educational services that should be offered to private groups.

The publication of comparative analyses and evaluations of the impact of major educational reforms also provide a notion of the way in which IFIs expect to homogenise educational processes in the region. Examples include the reduction of the school curricula based on PISA tests, the relating teacher payments to student performance, and the decentralised management of education systems.

The documents reveal that the educational proposals of the IFIs do not clash with the goals of the 2030 Agenda nor OECD recommendations for reforms in education systems. That is, the mandate for “harmonisation” made in the 2003 Rome Declaration is being taken up, and global agendas for education in impoverished countries are being aligned to the approach imposed by financiers.

5.3 The World Bank and Standardised Assessment.

The financial sector is guided by the possibility of achieving success in business. For this purpose, performance data that allow analysis of the efficiency of investments and which serve as a basis for decision-making are required. In this sense, it is no coincidence that the World Bank, as a main financier of education policies, is also the primary advocate of standardised assessment processes, and of monitoring and comparing performance in education results. Educational information allows the World Bank to make decisions about new investments with respect to what loans will be made and for what purposes.

The push for standardised assessment applied to both teachers and students also forms part of global educational agendas and financing agendas both for the IDB and the World Bank. The OECD also promotes the evaluation agenda by “recommending” that countries create educational evaluation institutes which are not governed by Ministries of Education.

Jomtien indicated it is necessary to, “Determine acceptable levels of acquisition of knowledge through learning in education plans and implement improved evaluation systems of the results.” Dakar defined it more specifically by proposing the “definition and precise evaluation of the results expected, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values”. It also called for “more effectively monitoring and regulating the progress made in the fulfilment of the purposes and objectives of Education for All” (UNESCO, 2000) by means of performance evaluation systems. Finally, Incheon insisted on the need for “integrated national systems of monitoring and evaluation in order to produce solid data for policy formulation and the management of education systems, as well as to ensure accountability” (UNESCO, 2015), emphasising that international assistance should collaborate with the establishment of these systems.

Education unions should be alert to the fact that Incheon proposed that information systems include data about the amount that families invest in education. Possessing the numbers on how much families are willing to invest in education allows business assessment of the for-profit education market.

For its part, the World Bank continues financing large-scale evaluation processes as introductions to educational reform. The World Bank report, **“Great Teachers: How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean”** points out that having clear data on educational performance is a key tool to implementing educational reforms, especially those directed at quality criteria focusing on teaching and student performance, and conditioning the teaching career path and wage increases upon such performance (p. 49).

The report recommends that education reforms on quality are planned in such a way that the level of conflict with unions is reduced. It indicates a three-step strategy to this purpose:

- the first is student assessment,
- the second is to condition funding for schools on student performance,
- the third is teacher evaluation, and offering of financial incentives based on teaching performance (p. 49)

In the document, the World Bank recommends recourse to the external experts to increase the legitimacy of the evaluation (p. 44) and linking promotions in professional rank to teachers’ knowledge and skills, while leaving seniority aside (p. 43). Furthermore, it suggests to seeking more evidence on the impact of policies that

reduce job security as a strategy to improve performance and recruiting a new generation of teachers as a strategy to reduce conflict and facilitate the link between employment stability and wage performance (p. 50).

The document indicates the role of teacher unions in education reforms. It recognises the value of negotiation and the defence of wages, but it accuses the teaching profession of being far distanced from the interests of students, families and employers' needs to hire trained personnel (p. 48). The document cites situations occurring in Mexico, Ecuador and Peru as evidence that trade unions are losing the ability to oppose educational reform (p. 48) and explains that governing groups depend less on electoral support from unions and more on popular and social support for undertaking such reform, suggesting this support is accomplished with media campaigns that make visible the faults in the educational system (p. 49).

The bank encourages governments to establish direct social dialogue on the debate on quality in education through the mass media. This direct dialogue makes invisible (and even disqualifies) teaching unions as legitimate partners in the education sector, prioritising the support of civil society in order to push forward evaluation processes aimed at "improving quality".

Investment in large-scale evaluation processes, such as the Apender Programme in Argentina and the evaluation made by the INEE in Mexico, are aligned the World Bank proposal. In Mexico, the progress of education reform is already underway, and the role played by the application of mass evaluations launched in January 2017 by the INEE as part of this reform process is notable. The evaluation programme included a tendering process for technical equipment to evaluate teacher and student performance, curriculum design, and institutional management and administration mechanisms, among others (INEE, 2016). In Argentina, the standardised evaluation process known as **Aprender** began in 2016. This involves the imposed compulsory assessment of students in the last year of primary school and the last two years of high school. The Secretariat of Educational Evaluation in Argentina has reported that Aprender results should be used to guide the design of institutional plans at each education centre.

Currently, the union proposal for non-punitive evaluation focused on the educational process as a system is gaining support. In the framework of the elaboration of proposals for alternative educational policies, the Latin American Pedagogical Movement has also suggested that unions propose evaluation of the educational

system as a whole, in a way not focused on individual results.

Central American education unions have pointed out that the unilateral and non-participatory establishment of standardised evaluation tests and the transformation of teacher employment conditions weaken public education and involves the clear intrusion of the IFIs in decision making on educational policy.

5.4 Financing a Global Curriculum in the 21st Century: Educational Content for Entrepreneurship and the Future of Employment.

A fundamental part of the learning proposal made by IFIs are derived from the purpose and character that pervade the educational models they finance. In the case of educational content, especially for the secondary school level, there is a strong presence of fomenting education for employment and entrepreneurship. This coincides with the curricular format presented by the OECD for countries from the South.

As previously discussed, a set of IDB and World Bank loans are based on the idea that young people “seem to face growing difficulties in the transition from school to work” (IDB 2014, p 1). For this reason, these disbursements support initiatives that reconcile or supplement the secondary educational curriculum with market demands, especially in terms of the so-called “soft skills” and “21st century skills” as a strategy to combat youth unemployment.

These soft skills are concentrated on the capacity for dialogue, teamwork, decision-making, leadership and problem solving, among others. Discourse on 21st century skills also occurs in arguments in favour of standardised assessments (such as PISA Tests), and they take centre stage in the Inter-American Development Bank’s **Education Research and Innovation Laboratory for Latin America and the Caribbean (SUMMA)**.

The expectation that the educational curriculum be linked with market needs is not new, however, what is striking is the reductionism that aims to establish the belief that simply acquiring a set of tools and knowledge will be sufficient to overcome social gaps and to counter the 18.7% youth unemployment affecting the region.

During the period from 2002 to 2008, Latin America showed economic growth of 4%. This growth was due to ease of access to credit, the rise in the prices of commodities exported by the region, and a set of socio-economic policies of a group of Latin American democratic popular governments that proposed a break with some facets of the neoliberal model, extending social policy and strengthening the role of the state, while also managing to lower poverty rates by up to 10 percentage points (IMF, 2011).

This reduction in poverty did not occur as an immediate condition of economic growth, nor was it spontaneous in origin. It was the product of a set of policies, including political work related to the formalisation of employment, increase in the minimum wage, social security coverage, and trade union negotiations.

This trend for growth was reversed as of 2008 with the financial crisis occurring in core economies. In addition to this, the return to power of governments of neoliberal bent in Latin America brought a new era of cuts in public investment and social policy, which, in turn, limited state regulation. In this regional context, there was 14% youth unemployment in Latin America in 2014. A year later it increased to 15%, and in June 2017, this figure reached 18.7%, tripling the unemployment of adults. In addition, six out of ten young people who work do so in precarious conditions in the informal market economy (ILO, 2017).

In the absence of policies for the formal employment of young people, programmes in educational systems that provide training for employment become a simple way to provide “restitution” of the right to employment through the provision of technical expertise that does not manage to achieve higher employment rates (SI-TEAL, 2015). However, the World Bank and the IDB insist that developing countries should move their educational curricula towards entrepreneurship (WB, 2013) and innovation (IDB, 2014) in order to respond to youth unemployment and the social inclusion needs of this population.

There are many analyses made of education systems which blame these for not being in tune with the requirements of the market and its cyclical nature. This trend is observed in the World Economic Forum’s 2016 **Global Competitiveness Report**, the OECD 2016 report **Getting Skills Right: Assessing and Anticipating Changing Skill Needs**, and report, “**The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World**” by the Education Commission established by the World Bank and the United Nations.

The three documents coincide on implementing a kind of “educational formula” as a strategy to increase the competitiveness of Latin American countries and provide young people with competencies and skills for the labour market. These “21st century skills” prioritise knowledge in mathematics, computer science, science, and a second language. They also reference “soft skills”, such as leadership, innovation, the ability to make decisions, and to adapt to constant change. As a contribution towards reconciling the educational curriculum with the needs of the market, the Education Commission proposes also promoting the participation of the private and business sector in decisions on public education, “and to expand the role of employers in the design and delivery of education” (p. 85)

Moreover, the IDB has argued that passing through the educational system provides the students with skills that are not “relevant to a successful career and the skills required by companies and society today” (IDB 2014, p. 2). Ministries of Education and technical training institutions have responded to these demands with reforms in educational content and a set of partnerships to link the educational system with the world of work through projects for the provision of skills for employment in the context of conditional cash transfer programmes.

The 2016 study, **Escasez de talento** by ManPowerGroup Latin America (dedicated to the outsourcing of employment for infrastructure works and services) says that Latin America has high levels of inequality because “it is not innovative” and that young people have difficulty finding employment because they are “not sufficiently” entrepreneurial (ManPowerGroup, 2016). From this perspective, the responsibility for poverty and exclusion rests with the people themselves, not with political management nor the economic structure. That is, the responsibility of the state to guarantee the right to formal employment is transferred such that this role falls to the general populace.

This kind of approach arises from and is strengthened by an economic model in which the state is not seen to be responsible for guaranteeing a set of rights, including that of employment, and people are forced to respond individually to market dynamics, with no state regulation or management. From this perspective, unemployment is seen to be the failure of the individual and not the result of the socio-economic structure.

There is an evident contradiction between programmes of entrepreneurship and the training of young people for employment with the concept of the uncertainty

of the future labour market. On the one hand, insistence is made on the need for training and the acquisition of tools to enter the labour market, but, on the other hand, there is a warning that no clear indication of the future labour market exists, and therefore there is no guarantee that the gaps in inclusion and employment will be closed.

This shows a type of structural cynicism: reducing social inequality and poverty through a curriculum package of mathematics or computer science is proposed, while ignoring the socio-political context and the structure established by the economic model. That same model has already announced that there is no certainty about the possibility of labour being absorbed—even when skilled—yet it requires the education system to continue qualifying people on the basis of a labour market that supposedly does require a certain set of skills. At the same time, the lassitude of employment policies and the promotion of entrepreneurship as an aspirational working format grows, especially for young people in situations of social exclusion.

The freeing of the state from responsibility for employment policy issues also finds an echo in arguments about the changing and uncertain future of the labour market and the existence of an indecipherable package of skills, so surprising and novel that no Latin American state could foresee it. Along with this kind of uncertainty, which is accepted and assimilated by both public and private actors, a social mandate seems to emerge that individuals must be sufficiently entrepreneurial and innovative to find a niche of subsistence, given a state incapable of protecting the right to the employment in the market of the future.

Promoting an educational system for entrepreneurship seems to be operating as a euphemism in the absence of employment policies. This would make it necessary that, along with programmes of training for employment, the availability of micro-credit, and reforms to educational curricula, there be reinforcement of government intermediation services for employment and the promotion of business practices for the recruitment of persons seeking their first jobs. Such tasks would require the state to regulate employment conditions and to set minimum wages and quotas of youth participation in the labour market.

5.5 The World Bank and the Dismantling of Educational Systems in the Countries of the South

The trend of reducing educational content and blaming the educational system for unemployment in countries once again appears in the World Bank report, “**Learning To Realise Education’s Promise**” published in November 2017.

The report raises a change in approach to the treatment of the educational process in developing countries: the interest is not in educational systems as an integrated process, but in management and evaluation mechanisms for the learning of skills and competencies.

The World Bank thus makes **learning**—and not education—the objective of investment and policies. In a significant lapsus, the bank fails to make the call for “Education for All” that it promoted on a global level in the year 2000, and instead proposes “learning for all” (p. 4) as the new “global” agenda.

The word global is placed in commas, because the impoverishment of the educational process into a mere learning process seems to apply exclusively to poor countries.

On reading the report, a focus on the analysis of the poor results of countries in the economic South is evident. Education policies that the financial organisation would like to promote—and finance—in poor countries must be designed based on results and evidence (p. 16). For that purpose, given the priority made of the level of learning, assessment processes acquire a central role, and to that end the report warns about the need to create suitable systems for monitoring and evaluation to allow shaping the necessary reforms.

On the other hand, on the grounds of poor performance in learning, the document undermines public policies as a mechanism for the construction of equality. The bank insists that:

problems with teacher absenteeism, lack of inputs, and weak management are typically severest in communities that serve the poorest students. It’s not just that spending patterns typically disadvantage marginalised communities but also that resources are used less effectively there, exacerbating the problem. Public policy thus has the effect of widening social gaps rather than offering all children an opportunity to learn. (WB, 2017, p. 12)

From this logic, it is expected that the World Bank will continue promoting the financing of projects aimed at the creation of standardised evaluation mechanisms, even at the primary level.

The World Bank insists on basing decision-making on learning outcomes, because this can be oriented towards short-term action, lacking in a system of logic that should characterise education.

What Are the Components of the World Bank's Educational Viewpoint?

The document allows the recognition of at least four areas in which the organisation will be promoting loans in developing countries over the coming years:

1. The **transition of educational systems** towards administration mechanisms for the learning of skills and the acquisition of tools for employment.
2. The promotion of **decentralisation and school autonomy**, through training on management issues and administration methods for personnel.
3. The re-alignment of learning stakeholder groups through the promotion of coalitions of "civil society" with the business sector to participate in educational processes.
4. The establishment of **standardised assessment mechanisms** for student performance, especially in reading and mathematics, as a basis for the design of educational policies.

The lines of action proposed by the World Bank report constitute a road map to dismantling the educational system in the countries of the South. It calls for the prioritisation of educational processes focusing on performance rather than systemic improvements based on the value of public education as a social right that binds together and integrates the educational community.

The report indicates to countries from the economic South that "to compete in the economy of the future workers need strong basic skills and foundations for adaptability, creativity and lifelong learning" (WB 2017, p. xii).

To this end, the World Bank insists on directing resources to selecting methodologies and educational options that are considered "successful" and that help establish methodologies based on the learning of measurable content. It considers that the world that already has enough evidence on the neurological processes by which people learn and that this evidence should be the guide for educational innovation.

In addition, the World Bank indicates that there are technical and political causes that are responsible for low levels of learning. It calls for the mobilisation of “everyone who has a stake in learning” (p. 4) to support teachers who wish to be innovative. Among the technical causes indicated are the lack of autonomy of educational institutions, as well as the poor management capacity of administrative staff (p. 11). The document argues that “school management capacity tends to be lowest in those countries with the lowest income levels, and management capacity is substantially lower in schools than in manufacturing” (p. 11).

Teacher Union Activism: A Technical and Political Barrier to Learning

Again, the World Bank places the weight of educational outcomes on teaching staff and insists that “teachers are the most important factor affecting learning in schools” (p. 10), at the same time as reporting on (unnamed) studies on teacher absenteeism. The report indicates that this is “not intended to blame teachers” (p. 10), rather meaning to call attention to education systems that do not support teaching staff, but the data that are emphasised indicate otherwise. An example is the approach that is made to teacher absenteeism, comparing cases between countries in terms of teachers absent from school or those who are in school but are not in the classroom.

Struggles over labour rights, particularly for a dignified wage and stability in educational work, are dismissed with the argument that in defending these rights, teachers are defending policies that are not necessarily in “learning-aligned interests” (p. 13), and that they are rather represent competing interests, opposed to students’ welfare and even show a lack of “professional ethic” (p. 14).

The same disqualification is made of the defence of labour rights by the administrative and management personnel. According to the organisation, the defence of salaries and job security are competing interests with the proper functioning of schools (p. 14). Reading between the lines, teacher unions may be seen to constitute what the World Bank calls “technical challenges” (p. 12) and “political challenges” (p. 13).

Based on the organisation’s perception that teacher union activism detracts from the quality of the learning, it could be inferred that the World Bank would support—through its loans—educational reform projects aimed at excluding the union movement and the education workers from the different decision-making mechanisms and structures.

This is not an isolated trend: OLPE has already reported on the way the OECD and different business sector organisations have recommended excluding teachers from decision-making forums, especially in the cases of Uruguay and the Dominican Republic, as well as in other countries in Latin America.

Dividing the Educational Community: Families against Teachers

In discussing the effects of reforms to direct the educational process towards learning, the World Bank refers to the students, families and the business sector as the beneficiaries of these reforms (p. 14-15). Without directly mentioning the union movement, the document insinuates that the losers would be education workers.

For example, the document explains that, “By contrast to these potential beneficiaries of reform, the potential losers tend to be more aware of what is at stake for them and, in many cases, better organised to act collectively” (p. 15). The document shows the World Bank’s interest in supporting the organisation of parents to participate in school decision-making, noting such parent organisations as a potential force to counter teacher organisations. An example of this is when the document states:

Parents are usually not organised to participate in debates at the system level (. . .) They also may worry about the potential ramifications for their children or themselves of opposing interests such as teachers, bureaucrats, or politicians. (p. 15)

The report suggests that “the various components of the system” should be aligned around learning and providing greater “coherence” to school processes through reinforcement among actors (p. 13).

The discourse contained in this World Bank document revolves around how the teachers and education administrative personnel prioritise their own “interests” before the learning of students, so condemning these latter to poverty. Moreover, the document calls for the establishment of coalitions and the alignment of actors “to the make whole system work for learning” (p. 16). In this sense, teachers, administrative personnel and education unions, which, according to the Bank, have “competing interests” with learning, should necessarily be excluded from these coalitions.

The Bank describes lower performing educational systems as systems stuck in “low-learning traps” (p. 15). The place of learning is seen to be held in an equi-

brium within a framework of clashing groups of stakeholders and their interests, such as those of teachers, administrative staff, the business sector, politicians, donors etc. (p. 14). The World Bank's interest would be to support actions to shift these systems of low-learning equilibrium towards a "higher-quality equilibrium" (p. 15), that is, a process in which education worker organisations and activism have no weight.

In other words, promotion is made of a form of participation that does not take into account labour demands as educational demands, denying these to be one of the foundations of the educational process. Once again, the approach taken up in the "Learning to Realize Education's Promise" report suggests that the World Bank would support projects and reforms aimed at generating greater involvement of parent organisations and business sectors in decision-making, even possibly promoting the substitution of unions by these groups.

Blaming Schooling for Adult Poverty

The World Bank's concern about what it calls "the learning crisis" translates into blaming education systems for "work skill shortages", which, according to the organisation, is the cause of low rates of employability and the problems of productive sectors in the different regions (p. 9).

The World Bank's report explains that graduates of the educational system discover that they have not learned enough at primary or secondary school when they begin to look for work and are not hired. From this perspective, the problem of unemployment does not lie in the productive policies of countries nor in the lack of strategies to generate first employment opportunities for young people, but rather, rests exclusively on educational policies and curricula frameworks.

The document considers that the monitoring and evaluation of learning can re-orient decision-making and prepare the students of poor countries with reading and mathematics proficiency so as to secure employment.

The World Bank will continue to support the taking on of debt to establish evaluation mechanisms because, among other things, it insists that:

An assessment of capacity to monitor progress toward the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals found that of the 121 countries studied, a third lack the

data required to report on the levels of reading and mathematics proficiency of children at the end of primary school. (p. 17)

The report repeats the trend of blaming the educational process for poverty and unemployment. On observing worse levels of educational performance in children in conditions of poverty, World Bank experts fail to consider systemic causes of poverty. Seeing education systems as responsible for combating unemployment has been part of the argument used by the World Bank and IDB to support projects for educational reforms transforming the secondary education curriculum, reorienting it towards the learning of skills while reducing academic content to literacy and mathematics competency, as has occurred in Brazil.

It can be inferred from the “Learning to Realize Education’s Promise” report that the World Bank will continue to finance projects for curriculum reforms directed at the reduction of educational content.

The lines of action proposed by the World Bank report constitute a road map to dismantling the educational system in the countries of the South.

Why? Because, on the one hand, each educational institution is understood as an isolated space in which decisions are made based on performance (productivity), without the support of or the need to respond to a national educational policy. Standardised evaluation mechanisms focused on measurable results are the only factors that would guide decision making.

In addition, the measures proposed by the World Bank imply the disarticulation of the educational community, with their focus on generating opposition between, on the one side, students’ families and the business sector, and education workers on the other.

Furthermore, it insists on thinking of every student as a receiver of skills and competencies. When students come from marginalised communities, schools are seen to be responsible for providing them with the tools to fight poverty, regardless of the systemic causes of inequality.

The World Bank’s document places so much emphasis on learning outcomes that it disconnects education from the complex sociocultural dynamic in which it operates. In summary, the World Bank continues focusing its financial policy on dismantling public education policy and supplanting it with systems that manufacture competencies and skills.

6. The OECD's Position on Education: Weakening Public Policy to Commercialise Services

Together with the World Bank and the IDB, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a key player in the definition of educational policy from a mercantile global perspective. The OECD promotes the decentralisation of education systems, placing special emphasis on eliminating the state's responsibility with respect to a set of social rights, including the right to public education.

Several Latin American countries are in the process of acceding to the OECD. As part of this process, governments allow the OECD to analyse the status of their policies in different areas, including education policies. The OECD uses these analyses to develop recommendations to align national policies to the productive and competitive logic of OECD member countries, so establishing that set of actions that may facilitate entry into the OECD.

Documents from the OECD analysis of three countries were reviewed: **Reviews of National Policies for Education: Education in Costa Rica** (2017), the document **Reviews of National Policies for Education: Education in Colombia** (2016), and **OECD Reviews of School Resources: Uruguay** (2016).

The recommendations focus on the professionalisation of teacher evaluation; opening up the system to the participation of private actors in the provision of educational services, particularly for early childhood; reforming secondary education to align it with the demands of the labour market and the needs of the most excluded youth (the need to enter the labour market); and the management of information for decision making (including budget design) based on results.

More specifically, it is recommended Costa Rica design a secondary model with a reduced number of years aimed at youth "at risk" of exclusion; Uruguay is urged to exclude teacher organisations from decision-making; and Colombia is called on to increase public-private partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms. This set of guidelines coincides with the areas identified as priorities in a series of loans from the World Bank and the IDB in the region. Review is made below of specific points of the OECD recommendations for these three countries.

6.1. Costa Rica

In the case of Costa Rica, the OECD recommends a “significant change is needed to how (educational) policies are designed, funded and delivered” (OECD, 2017, p. 16) as well as designing and linking measurable results to budget planning (p. 17). It criticises that Costa Rica’s investment in education (8% of GDP) is even greater than that of many OECD countries, but that investment is not reflected in the level of completion of studies, as only 51% of people aged between 24 and 34 hold secondary school diplomas.

Among the main recommendations are prioritising the expansion of the **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) sector** and guaranteeing a change in governance and financing. The OECD suggests seeking more cost-effective delivery mechanisms, as well as reducing administrative complexity and promoting the services of private operators (p. 20). It additionally recommends developing and delivering learning kits to parents, a service that has served as an opportunity for private business groups in countries like Brazil (this monitoring process had already reviewed the case of the PUPA group, which offers training to parents, having received a **loan for \$3,000,000 (three million dollars) from the IDB**).

The document reiterates that the state must first and foremost attend children at greater risk and insists on a welfare focus as opposed to the universalisation and strengthening of public policy.

In addition, it proposes establishing **high standards for teachers** and aligning approaches to teaching processes in all sectors to quality standards (p. 24). The OECD recommends that Costa Rica establish a system of teacher assessment, with annual evaluations, which sets the conditions for external evaluation. In addition, it recommends strengthening the role of school supervision and constituting teams of supervisors (p. 24). The OECD considers there to be an insufficient quantity of personnel dedicated to evaluation tasks in the Costa Rican education system.

The OECD calls on the country to evaluate the creation of an entity—without specifying whether this would be linked to the Ministry of Public Education or not—to support the establishment of quality standards and educational policy. This entity would be different to the *Modelo de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación Costarricense* (Evaluation Model of the Quality of Costa Rican Education, MECEC) which operates within the Ministry of Education.

As has been observed, other countries have already established structures of this type such as the Instituto Nacional de *Evaluación Educativa* (National Institute of Educational Evaluation, INEE) in Mexico and the *Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa* (National Institute of Educational Evaluation, INEVAL) in Ecuador. These act without being linked to the education system, without coordination with teachers for assessment processes, nor later actions, while operating from a perspective of taking punitive action.

To enhance the monitoring capacity of quality supervision processes in rural areas, the OECD recommends closing small schools with few students and centralising this population into fewer, larger schools. A similar process occurred in rural areas in Paraguay with the establishment of “**enhanced schools**” with financing from IDB and “**model schools**” with financing from the World Bank (in the case of Paraguay, the World Bank documents predicted the conflict with teacher organisations because of the dismissal of teachers resulting from the closure of schools).

The OECD criticises the secondary educational curriculum in Costa Rica being strongly academic (p. 28) and suggests it should consider a shorter process (from six months to two years), merging technical high schools with the *Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje* (National Learning Institute, INA) to prepare students for employment (p. 27). Along these lines, the OECD recommends expanding processes of vocational and technical training with the participation of the employers, as well as “workbased learning” (p. 28). It even suggests that the technical training received at the INA be recognised as credits for academic education in the Ministry of Public Education.

These types of recommendations can open the door to greater inequality, because they may lead to the establishment of policies for youth at social risk receiving training in competencies and skills for employment, while youth who are not at risk get to dedicate themselves to academic studies in preparation for more comprehensive citizenship.

6.2 Uruguay

One of the OECD’s main recommendations to Uruguay involves the exclusion of teachers from decision-making forums and establishing a national framework of teaching competencies. In the document, OECD Reviews of **School Resources: Uruguay**

(2016), the organisation indicates there is an urgent need for progress in the **centralisation of educational management**. The OECD recommends the existence of a single entity that focuses on managing education policy and accountability. It proposes solving this administration problem by giving greater autonomy to educational institutions, transferring responsibilities to departments, and “reviewing” teacher participation in decision-making on education policy.

This last point refers to the participation of the teachers in the *Asociación Nacional de Educación Pública* (National Association of Public Education, ANEP), the “institutionalised co-administration” mechanism which includes the participation of teachers (p. 4). The OECD calls for a review of the pertinence of this co-administration, since it considers that teacher participation may make education more teacher-centred than student-centred, even making the criticism that “such practice enables corporate interests to influence the development of educational policy” (p. 9).

The OECD criticises the fact the Uruguayan education is managed by councils responsible for each level or area, with the existence of the *Consejo de Educación Inicial y Primaria* (Early and Primary Education Board, CEIP); the *Consejo de Educación Secundaria* (Secondary Education Board, CES); the *Consejo de Educación Técnico Profesional* (Technical Professional Education Board, CETP); and the *Consejo de Formación en Educación* (Education Training Board, CFE). These are all established by the *Consejo Directivo Central* (Central Management Board, CODICEN), which in turn belongs to the *Administración Nacional de Educación Pública* (National Association of Public Education, ANEP). According to the OECD, “Under such a governance structure, holistic “whole-system” change is difficult to implement (...) Only small, incremental change is feasible” (p. 8). Viewed another way, this form of administration via subsystems is seen to be a way to “obstruct” structural reform.

In administration matters, the OECD criticises educational institutions not having the autonomy to decide on the acquisition of materials and specialised processes. From the point of view of teacher organisations, this absence of autonomy is positive, because it prevents the growth of outsourcing and the purchasing of private services.

The method of financing of education is another factor that the OECD proposes reforming. It suggests reorienting public expenditure on education according to a cost-benefit logic, making decisions by reviewing investment performance based on achievement indicators. It is a concern that the document proposes that Uruguay implement a discretionary funding formula such as funding per pupil. This type of financing has been employed in Chile and in the United States (via vouchers) and has

proven to be a method to weaken public education institutions, because it generates broad gaps in funding among schools. It also suggests “reviewing” the existence of small schools (p. 10).

In terms of teaching proposals, the OECD considers it necessary to **reconceptualise teachers’ work**, by establishing profiles for teachers and principals based on skills, using a new method of recruitment, an evaluation system for teaching that the OECD proposes be “formative” (p. 7), and evaluation of educational institutions. It insists that “there is no shared understanding of what constitutes good quality teaching” (p. 14) and proposes the establishment of a “national framework of teaching competencies” (p. 17) to be used to determine promotions in the career path.

It is a concern that the OECD considers that initial teacher training is “too specialised”, with teachers trained by specific subjects. It recommends countering this by directing teacher training by related areas and not by specific disciplines. In other words, it proposes not training teachers in history, but rather training teachers who can deal with content in geography and history; not training teachers in mathematics, but rather teachers who can teach physics, mathematics, and so on (p. 15).

In fact, the document introduces the discussion emphasizing secondary education should more closely address “the needs” of students, the same argument used in the case of Costa Rica to introduce proposals for reduction in years of study in secondary school and the replacement of academic education for technical training for employment.

As previously indicated, there are coincidences between these OECD recommendations and processes developed with the support of IDB and World Bank loans to reduce educational content to employment competencies.

6.3 Colombia

In the 2016 report, **Reviews of National Policies for Education: Education in Colombia**, the OECD proposes developing a new national curriculum project in which local governments play a central role, and deepening the decentralisation process (p. 43). To this end, the OECD proposes creating incentive mechanisms for local governments that show greater ability to provide educational services.

As examples of decentralisation, the OECD calls for the continuation of the “strategy to subsidise private schooling for public school children in efforts to increa-

se enrolment” (p. 43). Additionally, it proposes that the decentralisation process should be financed through “stronger public private partnerships and greater use of innovative financing models can also help to increase the range and level of funds available” (p. 50).

The OECD considers that the process of educational decentralisation (understood as a reform) requires the leadership and participation of the business sector and “civil society”. It clarifies that “parents, students and civil society play a key role in the creation of the demand that drives reform” and that “employers and higher education institutions, should also be involved” (p. 255).

The report recognises that the *Federación Colombiana de Trabajadores de la Educación* (The Colombian Federation of Education Workers, FECODE) has participated in dialogue processes, but sees value in the government calling on more “stakeholders” to be part of a national multi-sectoral consultation process on education (p. 45-46). The OECD calls for more involvement of civil society in decision-making in education, and even that it assumes “part of the costs” of the educational process (p. 256) in order to ensure its quality.

6.4 Replacing Universal Public Policy with Targeted Welfare Services

The common theme in the OECD documents reviewed is to call on states to focus services on the population most at risk of exclusion and poverty, that is, to convert educational public policy into a focused welfare policy, rather than a broad right with a universal approach. This vision of public education as a welfare tool is consistent with some proposals made at Incheon, the first global meeting on education in which the OECD participated.

Many governments are already taking up this recommendation and are focussing public education on the sectors of the population who cannot afford private services. In this sense, a narrow focus is promoted and the approach of public policy as an instrument of social cohesion and integration is abandoned. This impoverishes the ability of countries to generate social cohesion and integration and to strengthen their institutions and democratic mechanisms.

7. The Business of Virtual Education as the New Promise for Inclusion

The discourse on digital education as the tool par excellence for inclusion, used to achieve goals of educational coverage has been well established in the Ministries of Education. Union organisations have insisted that ICTs are an important complement to the educational process but can never replace face-to-face interactions that allow collaborative learning and strengthen students' collective identity.

Discourse has also strengthened on how school dropout rates are due to the lack of youth interest in educational content (IDB, 2018), and that therefore technological innovation can be an effective tool to renew interest in education. This narrative is accompanied by financing through loans, technical cooperation projects, and public-private partnerships for Ministries of Education to meet needs for computing platforms for administrative management, but also for the provision of technological tools and educational resources for students and educational institutions.

Digital learning companies present themselves as the answer to closing gaps in education access once and for all. From this perspective, a structural problem of the weakening of public education policy that has led to different forms of exclusion is reduced to notions of being solved through the distribution of connectivity programmes and virtual classrooms. Private groups producing educational ICT resources are organised, well-connected, and have wide-reaching ability to sell services to the public system.

This perspective is complemented by the proposal that, through technology, more appropriate and more interactive learning environments are created which are closer to students' reality (INTEL, 2017). Technology companies thus package together arguments on education ranging from coverage and increased appeal to inclusion and closing social and gender gaps.

This had led to a variety of technological and telecommunications projects undertaken by partnerships between multinational companies and Ministries of Education in the region of Latin America. Examples of such projects aimed at developing information technology, entrepreneurship and finance in educational institutions include **Reading Companion**, the IBM programme for schools and colleges; **INTEL**; and **Fundación Telefónica and Caixa's Profuturo project**. The ProFuturo Project reported that it intends to establish partnerships with leading ICT companies in

Latin America to elaborate teacher training processes and the dissemination of educational methodologies designed for and by the project. In Latin America, the project has been launched in Nicaragua, Colombia and Guatemala. Access was obtained to information on the implementation of ProFuturo in **Colombia**, where the project began in 2016 in the departments of Santander and Magdalena in the country's North, where it has focussed on training teachers in project content and methodologies. Access was also obtained to information indicating that in **Guatemala**, the ProFuturo project is being developed in partnership with the Fe y Alegría network of schools.

The presence of NGOs in the administration of funds for educational processes continues to be strong in Nicaragua. The business sector working together with a group of NGOs organises the *Jornada Nacional Permanente por la Educación* (Permanent National Day for Education). In the framework of this National Day, the Forum published the study, "**Inventario de la Inversión que realizan ONGs, fundaciones y empresas en la educación pública en Nicaragua**" (Inventory of the Investment Made by NGOs, Foundations and Companies in Public Education in Nicaragua), which reports on 32 public-private partnerships (PPP) working in the field of education in alignment with government strategy (p. 51). 87% of these PPPs are developed in primary and secondary schools where they focus on processes of teacher training, pedagogical innovation, promoting student participation, and improving infrastructure, among others.

Most of the Education Ministries in Latin America have no ability to implement ICT tools from within their own structures, and therefore this resource provides ample business opportunities which are difficult to supervise and regulate due to their ever-changing nature. For their part, **private groups producing educational ICT resources** are well organised and connected and have the wide-reaching ability to sell services to the public system (Bett Summit in Mexico 2016 and London 2018).

8. The Private Business Sector as the Interloper in Educational Policy

The participation of private actors is not limited to private trading in education, but is also active in the formulation of public education policy. This participation has become normalised in the practices and approaches of Ministries of Education, which give continuity to the public-private partnerships and projects funded by United Nations agencies and the 2030 Agenda and then go on to echo IFI calls on the private sector to act as stakeholders in public policy. Especially in terms of Sustainable Development Goal 4 concerning quality education, the participation of private groups in the different phases of educational policy has become the normalised.

A set of documents made available on the IEAL's OLPE portal contains the proposals of the United Nations agencies responsible for educational agendas such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). These proposals express support for public-private partnerships in education and the involvement of the private sector in the different stages of the educational policy.

In 2006, UNESCO published the document, **“UNESCO-Private Sector Partnerships: Making a Difference”** which recommends that developing countries promote partnerships between governments and the private business sector to achieve advancement in education (p. 5). In 2013, within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, UNICEF and UNESCO jointly elaborated, **“The Smartest Investment: A Framework for Business Engagement in Education”**.

This is a document prepared by UNESCO, UNICEF and the United Nations Global Compact, which is directed at encouraging the private sector to organise to become a key actor in educational policy (p. 11), whether through providing support to coverage, infrastructure, the creation of content, or access to and use of ICTs. The document provides strategies for the companies linked to the educational world (p. 12) and promotes these organising and collaborating within the framework of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

The publication points out that companies have “political weight” (p. 10) that can be directed to participating in educational policies and generating partnerships with

governments to provide technology, innovative content and expertise to improve the management of education (p. 14). It also proposes accompaniment of the sector in the design of educational content such that these are relevant to market demands to so ensure that the educational process provides skills for employment (p. 29). The Education International Latin America Regional Committee has already warned how legal frameworks are being used to create normative validity and so normalise the involvement of the private sector in the different phases of educational policy all over the world.

8. 1 Business Organisations in Latin America

At the regional level, the involvement of private actors in education joining in partnerships with Ministries of Education has become normalised. Monitoring has been made of forums, meetings and other structured spaces organised by the region's private business sectors, in which education policy proposals are established for matters including proposals for the use of funds, the evaluation of teacher and student performance, educational content, institutional management, data management, community participation, etc.

The business sector has embraced the defence of the quality of education, while advancing the notion that quality is a right (rather than public education). It has installed the notion that it is the private business sector that can provide the public sector with the skills for better educational management and results-based decision making. In this sense, the private business sector has joined the negotiation table for the elaboration and proposal of educational policy, championing the discourse on quality, efficiency, transparency in the use of funds, and the improvement of results.

The private business sector declares itself an ally of the state and civil society, and its discursive keynote appoints itself to be the quintessential role model of quality, in contrast with public teachers, which are seen to be responsible for educational outcomes and the lack of financial resources, while disregarding the systemic reality of educational processes.

In addition, the business sector shows itself to be broadly aligned with the perspective of the World Bank and OECD on issues of monitoring and evaluating, as well as the idea of limiting (rather than aligning) the curriculum to market needs, and offering educational solutions targeted to the most marginalised sectors.

Business sectors in Latin America have organised as the *Red Latinoamericana por la Educación* (Latin American Network for Education, REDUCA), to impact on decision-making on educational policy. The structures making up REDUCA are national groups of businesspeople with the occasional participation of civil society organisations. These structures have the administrative capacity to undertake research, the mobilisation of funds, and to engage in lobbying (with the authorities or the sources of funding); additionally, they organise activities and forums to which they tend to invite UNESCO, UNICEF and the Ministries of Education.

Included among the business organisations in the region are *Proyecto Educar 2050* in Argentina; *Todos pela Educação in Brazil*; *Educación 2020* in Chile; *Fundación Empresarios por la Educación* in Colombia; *Grupo FARO* in Ecuador; *Empresarios por la Educación* in Guatemala; *FEREMA* in Honduras; *Mexicanos Primero* in Mexico; *Foro Educativo Nicaragüense Eduquemos* in Nicaragua; *Unidos por la Educación* in Panama; *Juntos por la Educación in Paraguay*; *Empresarios por la Educación* in Peru; *EDUCA* in the Dominican Republic; and the *Fundación Empresarial para el Desarrollo Educativo* in El Salvador.

The documents of business organisations in Panama, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, Mexico and Paraguay contain clear attacks on unions and teacher organisations, and mainly present proposals to exclude unions from decision-making processes. In the case of the Dominican Republic, there is advocacy for the elimination of the collection of trade union dues and the reduction of pensions.

In the case of Mexicanos Primero, the attack on the trade union movement is far-reaching, with the business organisation's proposal including the reform of the public teacher system to eradicate existing union structures, as will be reviewed in more depth in the next section.

For the purposes of this publication, review was made of the documents available on IEAL's OLPE portal, elaborated by the business organisations Mexicanos Primero in Mexico, EDUCA in the Dominican Republic, Educar 2050 in Argentina; Educar 2020 in Chile; and Juntos por la Educación in Paraguay.

The documents published by the business groups match the style of the World Bank, the OECD and the IDB in reiterating the importance of quantitative data and management by results.

8.2 EDUCA in the Dominican Republic.

In the **Dominican Republic**, **EDUCA** draws together the business sector and civil society. This organisation hosts the Aprendo International Congress with a programme that includes panels on the theme of quality, learning outcomes and use of technology in education.

EDUCA has published two documents making analysis of educational policy. The first was published in 2016 and is titled, **“Calidad del Gasto Educativo en República Dominicana. Un análisis exploratorio de la vigencia del 4%”** (Quality of Education Expenditure in the Dominican Republic: An Exploratory Analysis of the Validity of the 4%). In this analysis, EDUCA proposes that a way to “evaluate the efficiency of education expenditure” is by measuring whether an increase in teacher salaries creates an improvement in educational performance (p. 53), suggesting that teacher incentives (salary increases) are linked to student performance (p. 134). It additionally makes the criticism that the retirement system will represent 29% of the education budget in the year 2025 (p. 129).

The paper also analyses that fact that the Ministry of Education (MINERD) is responsible for retaining 1% of salaries to be paid to the *Asociación Dominicana de Profesores* (Dominican Teachers’ Association, ADP) union, as well as savings and credit cooperatives. Faced with this dynamic, EDUCA recommends, “eliminating the provision that MINERD acts as the agent withholding the salaries of Ministry personnel in favour of third parties, which are outside the provisions of law” (p. 133). This can be interpreted as the business sector organising through EDUCA to call on the government to eliminate the collection of trade union dues that it currently transfers to the ADP.

It is not surprising that a document produced by the business sector recommends eliminating the collection of trade union dues, reducing educational pensions, and moreover, sees teachers as being responsible for the lack of resources available for education.

A second document published by EDUCA is **“Formación y carrera docente: profesión que cambia vidas”** (Teacher Training and the Teaching Career: A Profession that Changes Lives), a collection of documents from the XIX Aprendo International Congress on Education held in 2015. This document includes fifteen different studies. One of these analyses the use of time in classrooms after the implementation of the extended day. Results showed that 65% of primary teachers’ time is dedicated to academic tasks, while in the case of secondary teachers, time dedicated

to exclusively academic tasks is 73%. The document is in favour of extended-day schools, and it is important to pay attention to the focus and the approach of the model it promotes in terms of investment (and loan) processes, and public-private partnerships (PPPs).

The proposal to establish PPPs providing educational services for the extended day is a stance in favour of commercialising education and for private profit using public funds. This position is consistent with the defence EDUCA makes of increasing public investment in education to 4% of the GDP. Related to this, the fact that public funds are available facilitates the outsourcing of education services.

8. 3 Argentina's Educar 2050 Project

In Argentina, the **Educar 2050 Project** is a private association with the support of financial groups such as the Peterson Group Foundations, (Banco Santa Fe Foundation, Banco Santa Cruz Foundation, Banco San Juan Foundation, and Nuevo Banco Foundation), the Santander Rio Group, and MasterCard, as well as local corporations. In 2015, Educar 2050 launched the campaign *#Yovotoeducación* ("I vote education") as a strategy to position education on the agenda of electoral discussion. In its report, **"Anuario del 2015"** (2015 Yearbook), Educar 2050 reports having provided training to eleven thousand teachers and having financed two hundred projects for technological equipment in educational institutions.

This role of "financer" of technological equipment is consistent with all the supporting arguments in favour of the use of information and communications technology in education that the association defends in the publication, **"El futuro ya llegó, pero no a la Escuela Argentina"** (The Future is Now, but Not in Argentinian Schools)".

This document, published in 2015, argues that both the work of teaching within the classroom and the pedagogical practice currently implemented are obsolete and that the solution to this is to develop a technological education proposal, based on connectivity and online training processes. The document argues that technology is also the mechanism to overcome inequality and school exclusion (p. 9). This technological teaching would empower the country with "technological thinking" that would allow response to the challenges of a "changing society" and would transform teachers' work into playing the role of "facilitator" (p. 41). The document recommends changes in teacher recruitment, specifically through "appointment by position (...) and replacing the importance of seniority with that of greatest suitability" (p. 46).

The business sector participating in **Educar 2050** Project insists on the standardisation of processes to monitor and evaluate the quality of education (p. 47). It is a position aligned with policies promoted by the World Bank, the IDB, and more recently, the Education Commission, and suggests that the business sector backs an educational process aligned with the productive logic of process efficiency.

Educar 2050's proposals are neatly aligned with the approaches of the World Bank and the IDB, so it is important to monitor potential financing and technical cooperation project opportunities that these IFIs may grant the group in the future.

8. 4 Juntos por la Educación in Paraguay

In Paraguay, the group **Juntos por la Educación** is made up of business and civil society organisations. In its document, **"Propuesta para la Agenda Educativa"** (Proposal for the Education Agenda, 2013), Juntos por la Educación calls for a "new social education contract" targeting accountability in education. Indeed, the proposal puts a strong emphasis on processes of evaluation and data management in educational institutions. Of 30 actions proposed for the short and medium term, 22 refer to processes of evaluation and the management of data at different levels. Among other things, the group proposes developing short-term actions for Paraguay to start taking the PISA Tests and for the general promotion of "the institutionalisation and strengthening of systems of information, assessment and research" (p. 34). It additionally calls on the Paraguayan State to establish a national institute for educational evaluation to monitor the performance of students, teachers, and educational institutions.

A second issue the document focusses on is teacher training and evaluation. In the document, the business sector makes the criticism that the Paraguayan State does not have a strategy to monitor the processes of initial teacher training and that in-service training occurs in isolation. The group proposes the design of a National Plan for Teacher Training (p. 45), pointing to the fact that initial teacher training concentrates on subject content and not on pedagogical practice.

The document states, "teachers have been ignored in the process of reform, so, in many cases, even the most expensive and better designed interventions by central bodies have failed" (p. 37). Even so, it suggests that the way to improve the quality of education is, "to adjust, to repeal as appropriate, legal frameworks related to educational policies: the General Education Act, the Teacher Statute Act, the Higher

Education Act, the School Calendar Act, the Scholarship Act, the ANEAES Act” (p. 46), inasmuch as these laws delay and “disorganise” decision-making in teacher training and recruitment. The business document blames the union for generating constant strikes over pay and the right to promotions in the teaching career path, arguing that the “payment of benefits constitutes a source of conflict between the MEC and the teacher union, even being the reason for numerous extended education strikes. There is no evidence that teacher promotion leads to better teaching practices” (p. 43).

Another proposal put forward by the business sector is the creation of a National Council of Education and Work to regulate and order employment training according to the needs of the labour market as a way to “innovate” the Paraguayan educational system.

In general, Juntos por la Educación Paraguay repeats the anti-pedagogical perspective of other business organisations, blaming public teachers for the state of the whole educational system and urging a violation of the right to free union association.

8. 5 Chile 2020 in Chile

In Chile, the business organisation Chile 2020 presented a proposal named **“Plan Nacional de Educación: 30 prioridades para el 2030”** (National Education Plan: 30 priorities for 2030), in which the business group analyses the funds available for education, predicting as “a rough figure: between \$6.5 and \$7.5 billion annually by the year 2030.” This amount would be earmarked to finance educational services in the areas of coverage of early education, primary, secondary, and higher education. It is important to note that educational reforms in Chile have provided greater state funding of higher education. Faced with this reform, the business sector participating in Chile 2020 presented a **Draft Bill to Reform Higher Education**. The proposal, together with the group’s declaration on the **2018 Budget Act** was placed before the Senate Committee on Education and Culture, demonstrating the business sector’s intention to defend the preferential treatment of technical education institutes by requesting that these be treated under the same criteria as universities so that their students can receive state funding.

In addition to that proposal, Chile 2020 published the document, **“Hacia una educación intercultural: propuestas para la reflexión-acción en contexto migratorio”** (Towards an Intercultural Education: Proposals for Reflection-Action in a Context of Immigration) containing content for teachers working with migrant

students. The publication is addressed to the teachers and consists of content and methodologies with which to work in the classroom, so demonstrating that this business group claims to have developed expertise in matters of pedagogical classroom practice.

8.6 Mexicanos Primero in Mexico: A Business Sector that Proposes Replacing the Union Movement

In Mexico, Mexicanos Primero is an organisation that brings together business and civil society organisations who wish to become actors in educational policy in opposition to the trade union sector.

The organisation was founded by Emilio Azcárraga Jean, owner of the multinational company Televisa. It has been chaired by Alejandro Ramírez Magaña, who represented Mexico in the OECD during the Government of Vicente Fox, and by Claudio González Guajardo, co-founder and former President of Televisa Foundation. González has been the spokesman for major campaigns against the *Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación* (National Coordinator of Education Workers, CNTE) and its Section XXII branch.

The current Chairman of Mexicanos Primero, David Calderón Martín del Campo, served as Adviser to the Institute of Educational Evaluation of Nuevo León and as a member of the **ENLACE Test's** Technical Committee. He further designed the **Índice de Desempeño Educativo Incluyente** (Inclusive Educational Performance Index, IDEI) on which the ENLACE Test is based.

With the financial support of “donors”, Mexicanos Primero seeks to direct the course of educational policy in Mexico through its lobbying and publications. Nonetheless, no teachers participate in Mexicanos Primero, but rather, it is composed of business actors who hire researchers and academics.

What does the agenda of the Mexicanos Primero reveal?

In recent years, Mexicanos Primero has focused on promoting educational reform (in opposition to public teacher organisations), demanding the undertaking of teacher evaluation, increased school autonomy, and the planning of school budgets by performance.

The obsession of Mexicanos Primero with the evaluation of teachers is evident.

Mexicanos Primero is one of the main promoters of the ENLACE Test, which is performed by the Mexican Secretariat of Public Education and is based on the **Índice de Desempeño Educativo Incluyente** (Inclusive Educational Performance Index, IDEI) as designed by the now Chairman of Mexicanos Primero, David Calderón Martín.

The IDEI evaluates education with indicators of business accomplishments such as efficiency, permanence, supervision, the participation of civil society in the schools, and teacher professionalisation. The ENLACE Test awards points to each indicator and generates a “state grade”. Accusations have been levelled on the way the results are used to attack those states where public teachers and the union movement is opposed to the education reform supported by Mexicanos Primero.

In fact, Sylvia Schmelkes, who currently directs the Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (National Institute for the Evaluation of Education, INEE), formed part of the group’s Academic Council, and collaborated with documents such as **Contra la pared: Estado de la educación** (Against the Wall: The State of Education), published in 2009, and **Metas: Estado de la educación** (Goals: The State of Education) published in 2011.

During the opening of the **Education as a Social Project Forum**, Mexicanos Primero reiterated its support of social monitoring and mechanisms for each school to be accountable to other “stakeholders”.

This call for social (and business) participation in decisions on education is proposed by Mexicanos Primero in the document **“Ahora es Cuando 2012-2024”** (Now is When 2012-2024), which calls for the establishment of:

a national policy of social participation. Not only is the functioning of the Consejo Nacional de Participación en Educación (National Council of Participation in Education, Conapase) provided for by law not complied with—through bad design—but, additionally, the current practice of the major authorities privileges consultation forums in such a way that is against the spirit of legislation on democratic development planning. Briefings do not comply with parameters demanded by transparency and accountability, and invitations to social organisations and parent representatives to events, inaugurations and celebrations give a false impression of collaboration, unrelated to the consistent and daily work of informed demand and co-responsibility for the achievement of goals. (p. 30)

Talk of “co-responsibility for achievement goals” implies the direct involvement of

the business sector in the development of the educational process. It is a demand for their inclusion in educational legislation as actors in the fulfilment of the achieving education, that is, as providers of different services to achieve educational goals. This basically represents a demand to design a regulatory model that will allow the business sector to participate through education businesses (processes of evaluation, the design of curricula, teacher training, etc.). This participation is aligned with United Nations calls for the private sector to help achieve measurable results within the framework of the 2030 Agenda. Increase in primary and secondary school coverage is Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda, a goal which does not limit the role of the private sector.

The Mexicanos Primero private business organisation is clearly interested in pushing forward education reform, with education policy to be guided by evaluation and “social” (read business) control. In fact, it has been alleged that **“Ahora es Cuando 2012-2024”** (Now is When 2012-2024) served as the basis for the educational reform that public teachers in Mexico are currently mobilising against. This document stresses the need for reform, indicating to the Mexican government:

By 2013, reform of the National Legal Order should already have begun, with changes to the General Act on Education and related regulations to detail new responsibilities which can be demanded of different actors, federal authorities and state authorities, by communities and families, if necessary, in courts of justice. (p. 30)

This punitive, persecutory approach to teachers’ work is accompanied by the business demand that the political sector commits to publishing a “Single Register of Teachers, which should contain updated and reliable data on identity, academic background, work situation, and the performance of each teacher working in compulsory education (...) to establish the minimum requirements for system governance, such that budgeting can be controlled and serve the efficient planning of adjustment and expansion” (p. 38).

Subsequently, in 2014, Mexicanos Primero **issued 10 proposals** for the management of the 2015 education budget. One of the proposals included the revision of public teacher pensions, with the prospect of establishing a new pension system. It is also proposed that each budget line indicates the expected results, with a view to a “results-based budget”. In the same vein, two years previously, in the document **“Ahora es Cuando 2012-2024”** (Now is When 2012-2024), the organisation had already proposed that civil society—including businesspeople themselves—parti-

participate in financing decisions, given their duty “to participate with contributions in design, and collaboration in implementation and financing, but above all in the consolidation of a culture of making necessary effort” (p. 42).

The Anti-Union Campaign of Mexicanos Primero

The private business group Mexicanos Primero includes among its objectives a recovery of “the democratic stewardship of the state in education”. The business group does not explain this objective, but it can be guessed that it thereby refers to the exclusion of the trade union sector from decision-making in educational policy.

This intuition is reinforced on reading the document **“Ahora es Cuando 2012-2024”** (Now is When 2012-2024), which expresses:

a Decree must define the condition of intermediate authorities as trusted employees, leaving them subject to immediate public scrutiny and progress in a merit-based civil service. Otherwise, these positions will continue to divide friends and supporters, and—as is the case, with a few honourable exceptions—to feed a system of the coercion of teachers by union leaders, with a narrow filter closing communication to the convenience of the union leadership and the guidelines of the major education authorities, so damaging the implementation of any programme departing from the status quo. (p. 29)

That is, trade union participation in decision-making is challenged, and the claim is made that the union impedes the entry of external projects on educational policy. This same document proposes consolidating parallel structures to the union, called “professional teacher associations”, urging that these be recognised in the National Legal Order (p. 44). It proposes that these professional teacher associations be forums for educational debate and even that they replace unions in forums for the discussion and proposal of educational policy:

Technical School Councils will be reformed into forums with true academic representation, so that in 2016, consolidation can be made of Professional Teacher Associations which socialise best practices and act as the natural reference point as interlocutors in adjusting educational policy. The professional career service will include in its design the objective criteria identifying expert practitioners, such that membership of the association focusses on learning and is not subject to union leadership. (p.33)

As part of this effort to challenge the union’s forums of action and protagonism, this same document sets as one of Mexicanos Primero’s programme goals:

an alliance of advertisers and mass media communication, such that throughout 2012-2024 there is a systematic boosting of campaigns, programmes and activities of social evaluation of the profession, to establish teaching as a service providing a public good of first order. (p. 35).

This communication strategy can be seen in **television campaigns** attacking public teachers as organised by the CNTE. Both groups are accused of damaging education and even of breaking the law.

Another mass media campaign against public teachers is the internet campaign called **Primero los Niños** (Children First). This campaign is directly aimed at the teachers organised by the CNTE in Oaxaca, Guerrero and Michoacan, who are accused of failing to comply with their teaching duties, "selling and inheriting" teaching positions, opposing evaluation, harassing other teachers, and diverting resources from educational funds.

The dispute of Mexicanos Primero against the CNTE has led them to take **legal action** seeking the annulment of agreements between the Secretariat of the Interior and CNTE's Section XXII. These **agreements** focus on the protection of teaching and putting a stop to the punitive evaluation process.

Much of the criticism against the CNTE reiterates the fact that the organisation has decision-making capacity in terms of the education budget, which may hinder the participation of private business in education in different states, in particular, in Oaxaca and Michoacan. Mexicanos Primero additionally objects to the fact that the INEE has not had even greater presence and impact on performance evaluation in these states.

The dispute of Mexicanos Primero with the education union sector is clearly between those who want legislation that allows them to profit from education, and those who, protected by the legitimacy of their work in the classroom, have the content necessary to make proposals and guide educational processes.

9. First Conclusions on the Tendencies Observed

The main trends in terms of the privatisation and commercialisation of education in Latin America are presented below, based on documents available on the portal of IEAL's Observatorio Latinoamericano de Política Educativa (Latin American Education Policy Observatory, OLPE).

9.1 The commercialisation of education is driven by a global agenda

The global trend towards the privatisation and commercialisation of public education has grown exponentially as a result of a series of agreements at the global level. These agreements begin in Jomtien in 1990, continue in Dakar in 2000, and are renewed in the Incheon Declaration and the 2030 Agenda in 2015.

Alignment with this trend can be observed on behalf of international financial institutions (IFIs), the OECD, United Nations agencies (in particular, UNESCO and UNICEF), national governments, the business sector and NGOs. This alignment occurs in the context of a policy of the multi-nationalisation and de-nationalisation of all levels of the educational system, from early childhood to higher education and technical training. Following this approach to education, international bureaucracies are promoting the practice of outsourcing education services with public funds (derived from loans or otherwise). Regulations or laws may or may not exist in these countries for private sector participation in the supply of educational services and the sale of services to the public sector. In other words, a global agenda exists that encourages the commercialisation and the privatisation of education.

9.2 IFIs and multilateral agencies find prolific business in educational reform

The channelling of loans for education has become a mechanism used by IFIs to impose their concepts of education policy, as well as to appropriate public funds according to their particular private interests. In this way, gradual progress is made from a conception of public education as a social right to become what UNESCO now considers a "common good". This normalises seeing and managing education as a marketable commodity. It can be observed how the region is led into debt

to pay for educational reforms imposed by the World Bank, the IDB, and, more recently, the OECD and the 2030 Agenda. The region is taking on credit commitments for 20 and even 25 years to pay for goals established by multilateral bodies and cooperation organisations. This process of debt leads to a deepening of the situation in which educational reforms are not negotiated in forums with public teachers, but rather through the approval of loans and technical cooperation projects. From this point of view, the field of education as a business niche is proven to be competitive and versatile.

9.3 Ministries of Education normalise the commercialisation and privatisation of education

The proposal is favour of privatisation made on global management and administration levels correlates with methods of management and administration used by national governments. The process of privatising and commercialising public education is being conducted with the participation and complicity of Ministries of Education and governments in almost all developing countries, in many cases at the request of these. Another way to normalise private participation is not to create legal frameworks that prevent, regulate or limit their participation. This largely represents the incursion of neo-liberal business-style policies in the field of education, with two main purposes: emphasising the training of students on the basis of labour market demands, and facilitating the transfer of public funds (national budgets) earmarked for free public education to the private sector dedicated to educational trade through the purchase and sale of services.

9.4 The private sector is organising to participate in defining educational policy

The private business sector is gaining an increasing number of tools to make evaluations and proposals in education issues. This sector has lobbying and research capacity and promotes educational models that match the business focus on competitiveness and performance. Given this level of expertise, the possibility exists that business sector organisations—for example, REDUCA—submit proposals to compete for public and private funds available for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda. This deepens the niche for educational commerce and private profit with public funds.

Educational proposals submitted by the private sector do not aim to implement of

a form of management or administration or even a set of contents or a method of financing. The purpose of these proposals is to achieve control of culture through the implementation of an educational model that transfers the business outlook and private interests to the educational, social, political and economic dynamics of countries.

9.5 The segmentation of educational services mirror social fragmentation

The consumption of private supply by middle and upper classes generates even more private offer, and ultimately converts public education into a welfare service focused on the poorer classes, thereby establishing a deep segregation between the children and youth of different socio-economic classes.

Educational niches are being formed and stigmas are being established on the different types of schools. In practice, two educational systems in countries can be observed: an impoverished public system offering basic education; in opposition to this, is a (semi-)private educational system which receives more and more public funds, offering “quality education”, that is, education that is capable of producing results commensurate with international assessment instruments, such as the well-known PISA Test. Thus, some will spend their entire student lives in private educational institutions, while others attend private concession schools sustained with public funds, and others still attend public schools located in lower middle-class and the most marginalised communities.

9.6 The implementation of an anti-union strategy persists

In the context of this increasing privatisation and commercialisation of education, in a parallel fashion, the disqualification and invisibilisation of teacher unions is increasingly promoted. Teachers are accused of being responsible for deterioration in the quality of education, of representing a high cost for public finances, and of having marginalised a significant sector of the young population from the education system. Additionally, they are accused of being distanced from the interests of students, families and employers. The international organisations call on citizens in general, the private sector and civil society (NGOs that share this vision of privatising and commercialising education) to enact the education reforms that they consider necessary and take sides in favour of “quality” against

the trade union sector. Specifically, the World Bank calls for a direct dialogue with society, so obscuring the position of public teacher organisations as legitimate actors and stakeholders in the field of education.

9.7. Trade union action against the commercialisation of education should target pedagogical, ideological and cultural processes

The consequences of these new educational policies are obvious: a deepening of processes of the privatisation of education and an increase in educational commerce. In response to this trend, it is clear that teaching unions, particularly those affiliated with the IEAL, are called on to confront these policies and, at the same time, make progress in developing and strengthening education policy proposals that centre on comprehensive education for life with an emphasis on human rights. This means nothing less than continuing to work in favour of a proposed educational, pedagogical alternative to the dominant model. Union strategies against the privatisation and commercialisation of education should additionally be designed taking into account the cultural and ideological dimensions of this conflict. In this task, unions can find great strength and support in the Latin American Pedagogical Movement.

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List of Initialisms and Acronyms

ADP

Asociación Dominicana de Profesores
Dominican Teachers' Association

ANEP

Asociación Nacional de Educación Pública
National Association of Public Education (Uruguay)

CEIP

Consejo de Educación Inicial y Primaria
Early and Primary Education Board (Uruguay)

CES

Consejo de Educación Secundaria
Secondary Education Board (Uruguay)

CETP

Consejo de Educación Técnico Profesional
Technical Professional Education Board (Uruguay)

CFE

Consejo de Formación en Educación
Education Training Board (Uruguay)

CIMA

Centro de Información para la Mejora de los Aprendizajes
Information Center for the Improvement of Learning

CLADE

Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación
Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education

CNTE

Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación
National Coordinator of Education Workers (Mexico)

CONAPSE

Consejo Nacional de Participación en Educación
National Council for Participation in Education (Mexico)

ECCE

Early Childhood Care and Education

EDUCO

Programa Educación con Participación de la Comunidad
Education with Community Participation Programme (El Salvador)

EDULAC

Repositorio de Datos Educativos par América Latina y el Caribe
Educational Data Warehouse for Latin America and the Caribbean

EFA

Education for All

FEDISAL

Fundación para la Educación Integral Salvadoreña
Salvadoran Integral Education Foundation

FECODE

Federación Colombiana de Trabajadores de la Educación
The Colombian Federation of Education Workers

FUSADES

Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social
Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development

IBRD

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

ICT

Information and communications technology

IDA

International Development Association

IDB

Inter-American Development Bank

IDEI

Índice de Desempeño Educativo Incluyente
Inclusive Educational Performance Index (Mexico)

IEAL

Internacional de la Educación para América Latina
Education International Latin America

IFI

International financial institutions

INA

Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje
National Institute of Learning (Costa Rica)

INEE

Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa
National Institute of Educational Evaluation (Mexico)

INEVAL

Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa
National Institute of Educational Evaluation (Ecuador)

MDGs

Millenium Development Goals

NGO

Non-governmental organization

ODA

Official Development Assistance

OECD

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OEI

Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos

Organisation of Ibero-American States

OLPE

Observatorio Latinoamericano de Política Educativa

Latin American Education Policy Observatory

PISA

Programme for International Student Assessment

PPP

Public-Private Partnerships

PROUNI

Programa Universidad para Todos

University for All Program (Brazil)

SABER

System Approach for Better Education Results

SDGs

Sustainable Development Goals

SERCE

Second Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (UNESCO)

SITEAL

Sistema de Información de Tendencias Educativas en América Latina

Information System on Educational Trends in Latin America

SUMMA

Laboratory of Education Research and Innovation for Latin America and the Caribbean

TAP

Training Assessment Project

TERCE

Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (UNESCO)

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

WB

World Bank

WEF

World Economic Forum

OTHER EDITIONS

