This literature review on equity in Latin American and Caribbean tertiary education has been produced as a background note for the overall World Bank “Equity of access and success in tertiary education” study.
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Introduction

The evolution of tertiary education systems in LAC illustrates important lessons to be taken into consideration to design and implement policies aiming to improve the equity of access and of outcomes. Firstly, it is necessary to increase efforts to continue enhancing access, progression and completion rates. Although there has been an impressive expansion of gross enrollment rates (mainly in private institutions) in LAC countries, these are still relatively low and exhibit limited improvements as compared to other regions. Moreover, special attention must be paid to internal efficiency, since there are relatively high levels of dropouts and decreased graduation efficiency in comparison to those in high-income countries.

Secondly, it is crucial to identify and positively impact disadvantaged groups whose socio-economic condition continues to be a determining factor of inequities in the education system. Special attention must be given to economically disadvantaged students, gender imbalances, indigenous and afro-descendent populations, mature students, persons with disabilities as well as to rural/urban disparities.

Furthermore, policies addressing tertiary education inequities should aim to overcome financial as well as non-monetary barriers. Finally, measures should guarantee that expansion, differentiation and diversification of tertiary education systems in LAC contribute to equity, through greater focus on the role of quality assurance mechanisms, among other considerations.

This document is based on a survey of the literature on equity and access to tertiary education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although it is not exhaustive, it attempts to outline the main lessons, through the presentation of the situation in the region as well as recommendations. The document is divided in four chapters; each presents data and analysis developed in relevant literature and is followed by a list of additional references.
CHAPTER I

Need to increase efforts to enhance access, progression and completion rates.

- Continue efforts to expand access to tertiary education in LAC.
- Failure, desertion and completion should receive more attention.

Continue efforts to expand access to tertiary education in LAC

- Government efforts to expand tertiary education that began in 1950 and increased in 1960, diminished during the 80s. This evolution faced diverse obstacles: firstly, limited public investment, which indeed fluctuated with the changing governments and economic situation, secondly, the increasing demand and insufficient supply which affected the quality of education; and finally, the lack of sufficient flexibility to adapt the system to students with diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Silas, C. (February 2009). Un intento de respuesta a los desafíos. In: Asuntos del Sur. Retrieved March 24, 2009, from: http://www.asuntosdelsur.cl/index.html

- During the last 3 decades, enrollment in higher education in Ibero-America has quadrupled, attaining 16 million students. This increase, however, has been lower than other regions. Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo -CINDA. (2006). Informe: Educación Superior en Ibero América - 2006. Universia.

- Even though access to higher education doubled from 1994 to 2003, the gross enrollment ratio for the population aged 20-24 only increased from 18% to 29%, which is still half of that in North American and European countries in 2001. Moreover, the gap in enrollment rates between LAC and these two other regions increased from 29% in 1998 to 32% in 2001. It is worth noting that there are important differences in the participation rates within the region. While Argentina and Panama present enrollment rates above 50%; in Chile, Costa Rica, Venezuela and Uruguay they are between 40% and 50% and in most other countries, including Brazil and México, they are less than 20% (IESALC, 2006). Mendes Braga, M. (2008), Inclusão e equidade: desafios para a educação superior na América Latina e no Caribe na próxima década. In: http://www.cres2008.org/es/info_documentos.php

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES


Failure, desertion and completion should receive more attention

- Expansion of access for lower income students in the tertiary system augments the possibility of failure and desertion. Even so, there is a lack of related data and steps to resolve the issues are still incipient in the region. Higher education systems in LAC demonstrate unequal access and completion rates (less than 20% of adults above the age of 25 have obtained a university education and less than 10% have completed university studies); there is low graduation efficiency (which is around 43% of those who enter). This statistic differs among countries, among careers and mostly affects the lowest quintiles as well as male students. Policies in this regard should aim to better identify groups at risk; strengthen vocational orientation and follow-up of students; incorporate leveling and remedial systems; increase curricular innovations and flexibility; enhance links with the private sector, and improve the teaching staff. González Fiegehen, L. E. (January 2007, 2nd Ed.) Chapter 11: Repeated failure and desertion in Latin American universities (pp. 155-166) In: UNESCO-IESALC Report on Higher Education in LAC 2000-2005: The metamorphosis of higher education. Caracas: IESALC.

- In LAC, completion rates remain much lower than in the OECD countries. During the last 10 years, only Chile and Peru were able to increase the completion rate by more than 1%. Today, Peru displays the performance of the OECD countries in the 80s, Chile of the 70s and Brazil and Argentina of the 60s and 70s. Few countries have a completion rate above 10% of the population aged over 25. Uruguay has a gross enrollment rate of almost 50%, while only 4% of the population above the age of 25 has completed higher education. In Argentina, only a quarter of students enrolled in higher education graduate. Mendes Braga, M. (2008), Inclusão e equidade: desafios para a educação superior na América Latina e no Caribe na próxima década. In: http://www.cres2008.org/es/info_documentos.php

- Completion of higher education is fundamental for economic redistribution, since it considerably increases the probability of being employed and moreover, the private rate of return to higher education is relatively high for most LAC countries. Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo - CINDA. (2006). Informe: Educación Superior en Ibero América - 2006. Universia.
ADDITIONAL REFERENCES


CHAPTER II

Promote equity of access and of outcomes: Need to identify and positively impact disadvantaged groups whose socio-economic condition continues to be a determining factor of inequities.

- Overcome influence of family background and income.
- Further efforts to improve gender equity within a comprehensive perspective.
- Further efforts to overcome the existing link between poverty, ethnic minorities and exclusion in the education system.
- Implementation of existing legal frameworks for the effective inclusion/integration of persons with disabilities.
- Further flexibility to promote educational attainment of mature students.
- Reduce rural/urban educational gaps.
- Design and implement appropriate positive discrimination policies for disadvantaged groups, which firstly require the improvement of data collection and research, among other considerations.

General remarks

- The expansion of access to higher education (mainly in the private sector) has not led to a proportionate decrease in inequality, since access and completion still depend on socio-economic factors. Only in the Dominican Republic and Venezuela, is the expansion of access to education for the people aged 20-24 correlated with a diminution of social inequality. Mendes Braga, M. (2008), *Inclusão e equidade: desafios para a educação superior na América Latina e no Caribe na próxima década.* In: http://www.cres2008.org/es/info_documentos.php


- LAC countries have the lowest average Education Equity index score, showing that socio-economic status has a relatively higher influence on the access to education compared to high-income countries. As a consequence, the region presents lower accessibility to tertiary education system. Murakami, Y. and A. Blom (2008). *Accessibility and Affordability of Tertiary Education in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.* Policy Research Paper Number 4517. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Overcome the influence of students’ family background and income

- There is unequal access depending on the students’ economic background. In most of the countries, 50% of the richest quintile has access to higher education, while for the poorest quintile; this proportion is between 10% and 20%. Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo -CINDA. (2006). *Informe: Educación Superior en Ibero América - 2006*. Universia.

- Expansion has benefited mostly the middle classes while continuing to exclude the poorest section of the population. Differences between and within countries are measured by income quintiles and by the Gini coefficient; results denote that the most elitist countries are Brazil, Chile, México and Costa Rica. Vizcaíno, G. M. (November 2007). *La Educacion superior en America Latina, democracia o plutocracia?* In: Lopez Segre, F. *Escenarios mundiales de la educación superior. Análisis global y estudios de casos*. CLACSO, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales. In: [http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/ar/libros/campus/segre/09Vizcaino.pdf](http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/ar/libros/campus/segre/09Vizcaino.pdf)

- Chile and Brazil have the most elitist education systems. In Brazil, 59% of the students enrolled in public universities and 74% of those in private institutions belong to the richest income quintile and this proportion is 52% in Chile. Argentina is the least unequal, and despite this, 60% of the enrollment corresponds to quintiles 4 and 5. Sverdlick, I., Ferrari, P. and Jaimovich, A. (2005) *Desigualdad e inclusión en la educación superior. Un estudio comparado en cinco países de América Latina*. In: Serie Ensayos & Investigaciones del Laboratorio de Políticas Públicas. No 9. Buenos Aires: Laboratorio de Políticas Públicas (CLACSO).

- Inequities in the education system originate due to the socio-economic disparities in the region (population living under the poverty line is 50% in Bolivia and Ecuador, 44.30% in Peru and 25% in Colombia). The access to education (any educational institution in urban areas) for people aged 20-24 belonging to the poorest quintile is relatively low (13.1% in Colombia, 17.1% in Ecuador, 24.4% in Peru, and 32.9% in Bolivia). In the Andean countries, it is estimated that barely 45% of the population that completes secondary education has access to higher education and the access to HE for the population aged 20-24 in urban areas belonging to the poorest quintile, is less than 3%. Piscoya Hermoza, L. (2007). *Tendencia de Inclusión y Equidad en la educación superior de la Comunidad Andina de Naciones - CAN*.

**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES**


Further efforts to improve gender equity within a comprehensive perspective

- Female participation rate grew from 35% in 1980 to 53% in 2003. However, persisting segregation in academic fields results in lower salaries for women with similar qualifications to those possessed by men. Aponte-Hernández, E. (2008). Chapter 4: Inequality, inclusion, and equity trends in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards an alternative scenario for 2021 (pp.109-148). In: A. Gazzola and A. Didriksson (Eds.). Trends in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Caracas: IESALC.

- In LAC, there is a majority of female students (with the exception of countries that have a significant percentage of indigenous population). However, they are underrepresented in (post)graduate programs. Rama Vitale, Claudio (2007), Los nuevos estudiantes en circuitos diferenciados de educación. In Rodríguez Ortíz (Ed.), Educación superior en América Latina: Sus estudiantes hoy (pp. 13-42). Mexico: Unión de Universidades de América Latina.

- Countries show different proportions of women’s enrolment: Levels below 50%: Peru and Bolivia. Between 47% and 53%: Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador and Mexico. Between 54% and 60%: Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela and above 60%: Uruguay, Dominican Republic and Panama. Furthermore, there are a higher proportion of women graduating from tertiary education, with the exception of Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, El Salvador, Uruguay and Venezuela. However, since women are a majority in traditionally lower remunerated careers, they face greater inequities in the labor market. Women are more affected by unemployment, occupy relatively lower management positions and receive lower salaries. Moreover, access to higher education has a greater impact for women, since “on average, women with 13 years or more of education have a 19% higher participation rate in the work market than the total female population (5.46% for men)”. Papadopulos, J. Radakovich, R. (January 2007, 2nd Ed.) Higher Education and Gender in Latin America (pp. 117-128). In: UNESCO-IESALC Report on Higher Education in LAC 2000-2005: The metamorphosis of higher education. Caracas: IESALC.

- Given the majority of women enrolled, presenting better performance and graduating in greater proportion from tertiary education systems, it is pertinent to develop further research to address male enrollment. Vanderpol, J. and Chipman-Johnson, R. Gender Participation in Higher Education within the Anglophone Caribbean. (October 2003). Collection Higher Education in the Caribbean. Caracas: UNESCO-IESALC.
Further efforts to overcome the existing link between poverty, ethnicity and race and exclusion in the education system

- In LAC, indigenous populations (30 million) are mainly present in Bolivia (62.2% of the total population), Guatemala (41%) and Peru (32%). The ratio of people living below the poverty line (US$1/day) is about eight to one higher among indigenous people in Paraguay (compared to the rest of the population), six to one in Panama and three to one in Mexico (ECLAC, 2006). African-descendants (120 million) are mostly present in Brazil (45% of the population), Cuba (34%) and Colombia (10%). These populations are in a worse socio-economic condition as compared to the white population. In Brazil, approximately 15% of young people and adult Afro-descendants are illiterate, while this rate is 6% for white young people and adults. In Colombia, the illiteracy rate of the white population halves that of African-descendants. In Peru, while 9% of the adults have university degrees, this rate is less than 2% for adult African-descendants; in Ecuador, these rates are 16% and 12% respectively and in Brazil, barely 23% of the university students are Afro-descendant. According to ECLAC’s estimations (2007) for 16 LA countries among the urban population, 56.6% of non-indigenous people complete the secondary cycle, while this ratio is 43.4% for indigenous people.

Among the rural population, these rates are 21.2% and 17.4% respectively. The completion rate of tertiary education for indigenous people living in rural areas is only 0.5%, which is 1/10th of the rate of non-indigenous people. Within this context, participation of Afro-descendants and indigenous

- Although some countries have legal frameworks to promote “minorities” participation and completion rates, their enrollment in tertiary education is low and the dropout rates are still high (80% in Colombia). In Ecuador, in 2000, the gross enrollment ratio in Higher Education for the population aged 20-24 was 3% for the indigenous populations, 6% for African-descendants, 14% for mestizos, and 19% for the white population. Rama Vitale, Claudio (2007), Los nuevos estudiantes en circuitos diferenciados de educación. In Rodríguez Ortíz (Ed.), Educación superior en América Latina: Sus estudiantes hoy (pp. 13-42). Mexico: Unión de Universidades de América Latina.

- With regard to afro-descendants, there have been practices of positive discrimination, such as quotas reserved for this population in Brazilian public universities. Yet, less than 2% of afro-descendants have access to higher education. Mendes Braga, M. (2008), Inclusão e equidade: desafios para a educação superior na América Latina e no Caribe na próxima década. In: http://www.cres2008.org/es/info_documentos.php

- Initiatives are being implemented for the inclusion of “minorities” in different institutions, programs and modalities in tertiary education systems (financial aid, creation of universities for indigenous populations with bilingual and intercultural education, institutional reforms etc.). In the last 2 decades, there have been approximately 50 initiatives in the region to better respond to the demands and needs of these populations. Nevertheless, there is still low participation and dropout rates remain very high. Therefore, further efforts are needed to overcome the following deficiencies:
  - Legal frameworks and initiatives consider mainly indigenous populations and to a lesser extent afro-descendants.
  - Higher education is not adapted to indigenous populations’ needs and demands (programs, schedules, language etc. are inappropriate).
  - Indigenous and afro-descendent populations attend primary and secondary school of deficient quality, limiting their access and completion of tertiary education.

- Indigenous populations and afro-descendants are also faced with inequities in the labor market. Indigenous workers receive lower salaries. For instance, in Mexico, about 51% of the population earns minimum wage, and this rate rises to 81% among Mexican indigenous people. Afro-descendants (especially women) are more affected by unemployment. In Colombia, 42% of Afro-descendants are unemployed. In 2006, unemployment rate of Afro-descendant women in Brazil was 12.5% and was 13.4% in Ecuador, while the unemployment rate for the white population was 9.7% and 10.1% respectively. (ECLAC, 2008). Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE). (2008). Education and Ethnic-Racial Equality in Latin America: A contribution to Durban review process. Public Position Paper. http://www.campanaderechoeducacion.org/publications.list.php?s=campaign
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- In the Anglophone Caribbean countries, while the necessity to enhance the participation of students with disabilities is widely recognized, there is no sufficient data, nor sub-regional guidelines or policies to address this issue. Howe, G. (2003, January). Contending with Change: Reviewing Tertiary Education in the English-Speaking Caribbean. Caracas: IESALC/ UNESCO.
Further flexibility to promote educational attainment of mature students


- There have been reforms to enhance participation of mature students in the Anglophone Caribbean countries. Improvements have been possible due to the growth of the private sector, the emergence of governmental initiatives such as the Management Institute for National Development, as well as the diversification of institutional programs. These changes have led to increased equity through more flexibility in schedules, programs and financing. Howe, G. (2003, January). Contending with Change: Reviewing Tertiary Education in the English-Speaking Caribbean. Caracas: IESALC – UNESCO.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE

Reducing rural/urban educational gaps

- The increasing regional demand for tertiary education has resulted in the creation of new institutions and in the regionalization of existing ones. The percentage of regional enrollment in Venezuela increased from 49% in 1970 to 75.3% in 2000. In Mexico, 32% of the students enrolled at the UNAM come from different parts of the country. Nonetheless, there are still striking disparities in education systems between urban and rural areas. Rama Vitale, Claudio (2007), Los nuevos estudiantes en circuitos diferenciados de educación. In Rodríguez Ortiz (Ed.), Educacion superior en América Latina: Sus estudiantes hoy (pp. 13-42). Mexico: Unión de Universidades de América Latina.

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- Design and implement appropriate positive discrimination policies for disadvantaged groups, which firstly requires the improvement of data collection and research, among other considerations.


- An alternative scenario has been proposed for 2021, which requires the prior identification of underprivileged students in order to transform from the logic of “equality of opportunities” toward “equality of conditions based on different abilities and equality of differences”. Aponte-Hernández, E. (2008). Chapter 4: Inequality, inclusion, and equity trends in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards an alternative scenario for 2021 (pp.109-148). In: A. Gazzola and A. Didriksson (Eds.). Trends in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Caracas: IESALC/UNESCO.

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CHAPTER III

Overcome financial and non-monetary barriers that affect equity and access to tertiary education systems in LAC.

- Increase affordability and equity through innovative financing mechanisms.
- Consider non-monetary barriers.

General remarks

- The educational gap between LAC countries and high-income OECD countries is due to lower affordability and a lack of financing of tertiary education, low and unequal access to secondary education, insufficient information, and reduced educational expectations of youth from low-income families. The difference is also explained by “a relatively larger share of non-governmental education; a relatively lower GDP per capita, and a low level of student assistance”. (p. 21). Murakami, Y. and A. Blom (2008). Accessibility and Affordability of Tertiary Education in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. Policy Research Paper Number 4517. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Increase affordability and equity through innovative financing mechanisms

* Public spending allocation with greater focus on equity

- Public funds need to be more accurately targeted at the level of education that corresponds to the phase a country is going through: The analysis of education systems in 20 LA countries since 1950, display the passage through five phases of development. These phases have been followed diversely by each country at varying periods of time. Phases range from the literacy rates being below 50% and fewer than 1 in 20 adults obtaining university-level education, to a period where primary education is universal with literacy rates approaching 100% and almost half the population attaining post-secondary education.

By working against the historical pattern of education expansion, LA governments’ preferential expenditure on tertiary over secondary education reduced the efficiency and equity in their education systems. Therefore, funds allocation should depend not only on political and economic factors, but should also be in conjunction with the educational development phase each country is going through. Abel, C. And Lewis C. (Eds.). (2002). Exclusion and engagement, social policy in Latin America. London: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London.

* Innovative financing mechanisms to promote equity, including financial assistance to qualified but needy students enrolled in private and public institutions

- Tertiary education systems in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru demonstrate lower affordability than in high-income countries. In these LAC countries, families have to pay 60% of per-capita income for tertiary education per student per year, (19% in high income OECD countries), living costs represent 29% of GDP (19% in high-income OECD countries) and grants and loans are not
significant since they barely contribute to 4% of GDP (11% in high-income OECD countries). Therefore, tertiary education financing must be taken into account within a comprehensive approach (since living costs are significant) and assistance to student must improve (loans, income-contingent loan, grants to low income families). Murakami, Y. and A. Blom (2008). Accessibility and Affordability of Tertiary Education in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. Policy Research Paper Number 4517. Washington DC: The World Bank.

- It is important to promote innovative funding mechanisms including cost-sharing with students, link government funding closely to performance and quality, diversify funding from alumni and external sources, introduce income-generating activities and mobilize greater private funding. “The expansion of private HE in the absence of cost recovery in the public sector and loan or grant programs for the poor can produce double inequity. The most privileged students move from the best (often private) secondary schools into free public universities (e.g. Brazil’s federal universities), while the poor end up paying for lesser quality education offered by private tertiary institutions. Unless cost-sharing is introduced in public universities, diversity and equity objectives cannot be effectively served by the increase of private institutions.” (p.36) The World Bank. (1994). Development in practice: HE: The lessons of experience. Washington D.C.: The World Bank

- Inequities lead to unequal distribution of higher education subventions. The subsidy gini is compared to the income gini, which shows that the effect of the subsidies on income distribution differs among countries, with the Dominican Republic showing a negative effect and Argentina being relatively more equal. Therefore, revised policy should include providing financial support to qualified students from low-income backgrounds and introducing income contingent pricing in public higher education. Winkler, D. Higher Education in Latin America. Issues of Efficiency and Equity. World Bank Discussion Papers 77, August 1994.

- In Chile, the liberalization and privatization in the 80s, as well as the innovative financing mechanisms have helped increase the number of institutions and enrollment rates in tertiary education (48% today compared to 16% in 1985). Chile has considerably improved the equity of access to tertiary education. Yet, the students enrolled in the universities that receive public funding benefit from better public subsidies and scholarships. Eguiguren, P. (February 2009). El modelo chileno de Educación Superior y las reformas pendientes. In: Asuntos del Sur.

* Influence of economic cycle on education financing: lessons for the current crisis.

- During economic recession, public expenditure for the social sectors (health, education etc.) is more directly affected and there is less private willingness to invest in education. This has a negative impact on tertiary education enrollment rates (E.g. Colombia’s economic recession in the late 90s resulted in reduction of access by 15%, 17% and 4% respectively, during a period of 3 years). Moreover, “equity deteriorates as a higher proportion of students from high-income backgrounds attend tertiary education institutions, while prospective students from poor and middle-income families exit the education system and enter the labor market (…) In times of crisis more than ever, cost-sharing cannot be implemented equitably without adequate student support mechanisms for academically qualified but needy students”. World Bank Perspectives on the Impact of the Financial Crisis on Tertiary Education, in: http://www.che-concept.de/cms/?getObject=674&getLang=de

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES
Consider non-monetary factors affecting equity

* Guarantee quality and completion of previous levels of education
The percentage of the population aged 20-24 with lower secondary education in LAC was 71.1% in 2004, the lowest rates are found in Honduras and Guatemala (approximately 30%). Nicaragua, Costa Rica and El Salvador are between 40% and 60%. Moreover, less than 50% complete upper secondary education (around 15% in El Salvador). Contrary to LA, upper secondary education in developed countries is compulsory. Cecchini, S. *Educación y mercado de trabajo en América Latina*. Presented at an international seminar in Bogotá, Colombia, 24 October 2007. Social Development department: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean - ECLAC. In: http://www.eclac.cl/dds/noticias/paginas/6/28106/EducMercTrabajo.pdf

- It is necessary to guarantee that all students complete upper secondary education, and also to increase the proportion of technical education at this level. Cecchini, S. *Educación y mercado de trabajo en América Latina*. Presented at an international seminar in Bogotá, Colombia, 24 October 2007. Social Development department: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean - ECLAC. In: http://www.eclac.cl/dds/noticias/paginas/6/28106/EducMercTrabajo.pdf

- Exclusion originates mainly in secondary education and in the passage to university and is caused to a lesser extent at the university level. Argentina and Chile present relatively lower inequality in the completion rates of middle education, but Chile’s HE system is relatively more exclusive. Therefore, in Chile, inequality in the access to higher education may be explained by other factors such as financing or admission procedures. On the contrary, in Brazil, the exclusion originates at secondary education. (In Chile, the wealthiest 10% of the population has 3.6 times the chance to complete middle education compared to the poorest 10%. In Argentina, this proportion is 7 to 1, in Mexico 17 to 1 and Brazil is the most unequal with 36.5 to 1) Sverdlick, I., Ferrari, P. and Jaimovich, A. (2005) *Desigualdad e inclusión en la educación superior. Un estudio comparado en cinco países de América Latina*. In: *Serie Ensayos & Investigaciones del Laboratorio de Políticas Públicas*. No 9. Buenos Aires: Laboratorio de Políticas Públicas (CLACSO).

* Increase seats available to students and flexibility of institutions’ admission criteria

- Demand for tertiary education in LAC has increased more rapidly than enrollment rates, which could be explained by an insufficiency in supply. For instance, in Brazil, on average there are 3 candidates per seat and this rate rises to 67:1 at the University of Sao Paulo. However, even if the demand is greater than the supply, there are still a considerable percentage of seats that are not filled. In 2002, in Brazil, 31% of the seats remained empty, in Colombia 25.6% in public tertiary institutions and 53.5% in private institutions were not occupied. This is partly due to academic deficiencies in previous levels of education, as well as rigid and exclusive admission mechanisms (mainly in public universities). Admission mechanisms based on quotas and exams limit the entry of an important number of potential students in higher education. However, universities with open access (e.g. Universidad de Buenos Aires) also present exclusion (although to a lesser extent), since there is greater socio-economic differentiation among the students in the first cycle as compared to those in (post)graduate programs. Sverdlick, I., Ferrari, P. and Jaimovich, A. (2005) *Desigualdad e inclusión en la educación superior. Un estudio comparado en cinco países de América Latina*. In: *Serie Ensayos & Investigaciones del Laboratorio de Políticas Públicas*. No 9. Buenos Aires: Laboratorio de Políticas Públicas (CLACSO).


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CHAPTER IV

III. Guarantee that further differentiation, diversification in tertiary education systems contribute to equity.

- Increase equity through differentiation and diversification of tertiary education institutions and programs.
- Surmount the existing private/public dual vision and lack of collaboration.
- Establish/consolidate quality assurance mechanisms to enhance the impact of institutional expansion, diversification and differentiation on equity.

General remarks

- People from higher income quintiles have more opportunities to access quality public/private universities and constitute the majority in postgraduate programs; while students from lower income quintiles, who usually work in addition to attending school, tend to enroll in technical and vocational institutions, and regional or private universities that offer more flexible schedules, have lower admission requirements, and shorter, professional oriented programs. However, these last institutions are not well regarded since their quality is not adequately supervised, and as a consequence their graduates are faced with inequities at the labor market. Within this context, education systems tend to reproduce existing inequities in the region. Rama Vitale, Claudio (2007), Los nuevos estudiantes en circuitos diferenciados de educación. In Rodríguez Ortíz (Ed.), Educación superior en América Latina: Sus estudiantes hoy (pp. 13-42). Mexico: Unión de Universidades de América Latina.

Increase equity through differentiation and diversification of tertiary education institutions and programs

- Due to the increasing demand, during the last 5 decades, the number of institutions increased from 75 to 5,000 (of which 900 are universities). Aponte-Hernández, E. (2008). Chapter 4: Inequality, inclusion, and equity trends in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards an alternative scenario for 2021 (pp.109-148). In: A. Gazzola and A. Didriksson (Eds.). Trends in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Caracas: IESALC/UNESCO.

- There has been institutional diversification and decentralization. Although there are still macro-universities (E.g. Mexico and Argentina), their predominance has been reduced and instead, there has been an expansion of institutions that address the needs of particular groups, through long-distance learning, intercultural universities, institutions based on ethnicity or institutions targeted towards low-income students (E.g. Technological Universities subsystems in Mexico). This change promotes equity of access and of outcomes. Didou Aupetit, S. (February 2009). Educación superior en América Latina: reformas deseables y necesidades de ruptura. In: Asuntos del Sur.
Nonetheless, reforms for the diversification of programs and institutions have in general failed, as the students’ demand is still highly concentrated in long-term and expensive academic programs that are offered by autonomous universities, which indeed are disconnected from other segments of Tertiary Education. Balán, J. (February 2009). Desafíos de la educación superior en América Latina. In: Asuntos del Sur.

There is a need to articulate short and long-term programs in a horizontal and vertical dimension, which would permit the mobility between careers, as well as the diversification of the educational and labor opportunities. Mainero, E. (February 2009). Desafíos, necesidades y tendencias en los procesos de formación en la Educación Superior. In: Asuntos del Sur. Retrieved March 24, 2009, from: http://www.asuntosdelsur.cl/index.html

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES


Surmount the existing private/public dual vision and lack of collaboration

- In comparison to other regions, there is a relatively high participation in private institutions in LAC, which account for at least 1/3 of the total enrollment in Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Venezuela and México. **Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo -CINDA. (2006). Informe: Educación Superior en Ibero América - 2006.** Universia.

- Countries with higher per capita income present greater enrollment rates, but they are also the most unequal, since participation is mainly concentrated in private institutions. **Aponte-Hernández, E. (2008). Chapter 4: Inequality, inclusion, and equity trends in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards an alternative scenario for 2021 (pp.109-148). In: A. Gazzola and A. Didriksson (Eds.). Trends in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.** Caracas: IESALC/UNESCO.

- Contrary to South Asia and to Central & Eastern Europe, LA has not responded effectively to the trend of expansion of Tertiary Education. In some countries such as Brazil and Costa Rica, the private institutions absorbed the increasing demand. There was also a proliferation of private centers in Chile and Peru; while in others such as Mexico, Argentina and Uruguay, the Public Universities were expanded. In most of the countries, there has been an opposing private-public dual system, which is detrimental to an overall systematic and cooperative approach. **Landoni, P. (February 2009). Crisis de la Educación Superior Latinoamericana: un problema político. In: Asuntos del Sur. Retrieved March 24, 2009, from: http://www.asuntosdelsur.cl/index.html**

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- Piscoya Hermoza, L. (2007). **Tendencia de Inclusión y Equidad en la educación superior de la Comunidad Andina de Naciones - CAN.**

Establish/consolidate quality assurance mechanisms to enhance the impact of institutional expansion, diversification and differentiation on equity.

- There is a link between expansion and lower quality and efficiency of education. As a matter of fact, countries with selective admission mechanisms and lower enrollment rates present a completion efficiency of about 50% (60.7% in Brazil, 57.3% in Colombia), compared to 27.5% in Bolivia and 24.4% in Guatemala that have open admission systems. Rama Vitale, Claudio (2007), Los nuevos estudiantes en circuitos diferenciados de educación. In Rodríguez Ortíz (Ed.), Educacion superior en América Latina: Sus estudiantes hoy (pp. 13-42). Mexico: Unión de Universidades de América Latina.


- Governments have tried to establish quality assurance systems to address the increase in demand, which has resulted in lower quality due to the lack of sufficient physical and human resources. Landoni, P. (February 2009). Crisis de la Educación Superior Latinoamericana: un problema político. In: Asuntos del Sur.

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