USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

MINED
Ministerio de Educación

BASIC EDUCATION IN EL SALVADOR:
CONSOLIDATING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR QUALITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Researchers

Ernesto Schiefelbein, Education Policy Analyst
Renán Rápalo Castellanos, Specialist in Primary Education / Decentralization
Richard Kraft, Specialist in Teaching / Learning and Teacher Education
José Luís Guzmán, Specialist in Education (Education Policy / Quality)
Anabella Lardé de Palomo, Specialist in Education (Education Finance / Economics)
Carmen Siri, Team Leader for the Consultation
Fernando Reimers, Adviser to the Team

Coordination

Paula Gubbins, Project Director

AED
Academy for Educational Development
Connecting People > Creating Change

CONTENTS

ANNEX

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACE
[Community Associa

APREMAT   Proyecto de Apoyo al Proceso de Educación Media Técnica
[Technical Secondary Education Suppor

ARENA   Partido Alia
[Nationalist Repul

CDE
[S

CECE
[Catholic Scho

CEEC   Coordinadora Educativa y Cultura
[Central American Educational and Cultural Coordinator

CEPAL   Comisión Económica par
[Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean]

CONACYT
[National Science and Tech

CRA   Centro de Recursos Tecnológicos p
[Center of Technological Resources for

DIGESTYC   Dirección General d
[Department of Statist

ECAP   Prueba de Evaluación de Competencias Académicas y Pedagógicas
[Academic and Pedagogical Competencies Assessment Test]

EDI   Evaluación al Desemp
[Institutional Educational Performance Ev

EDIFAM
EDUCO   Programa Educación con Participación de la Comunidad
[Education with Community Participation Pr

EDURED   MINED's educational portal for teachers
EHPM   Encues
[Multi-purp

FANTEL   Fondo de Privatización de ANTEL (Ex Asociación Nacional

FEPADE   Fundación Empresarial para el Desarro
[Private Sector Foundation for Educational Development

FIDES   Fondo de Iniciativas pa
[Fund for Educational Developmen

FMLN   Partido Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nac

[Farabundo Martí National Liberat

FUNDAEDUCA

[Friends of Ec

FUNDEMAS   Fundación Empresarial p

[Private Sector Foundation for Soc

FUSADES   Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y

[Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development]

GOES
HIID   Harvard Institute for Int
IDB

[Banco Interamericano de Desarro

IFI
INED

[Institute

IPIES   Institutos Pedagógicos en las Instituciones de Educación Superior

[Pedagogical Institutes within Institutions of Higher Education]

ISNA   Instituto Salvadoreño de la Niñe

[Salvadoran Institute for Children and Adolesce

MINED   Ministerio

NGO
OEI
PAEBA   Programa de Alfabetización y Educac

Adult Basic Education and Literacy

PAES   Prueba de Aprendizaje y Aptitudes para Egresados de Educación

[Learning and Aptitude Test for Graduates of Secondary School]

PREBAD   Pro

[Distance Program for E

PROES

SABE   Strengthening of Achievement in Basic Education Project (USAID)
SINEA   Sistema Nacional de Evaluació

[National Learning Ev

SNEC   Sistem

[National Quality

UCA   Universida
UDB
UNDP

[Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo – PNUD]

UNESCO   United Nations Organization for Education, Science and

[Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia

UNICEF   United National Chil

[Programa de las Naciones Unidades para la Infancia y la Niñez]
UNICO   Universidad Católica de Occi
USAID   United States Agency for International Development

[Agencia de los Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo Internacional]
WFP

I. INTRODUCTION

Fernando Reimers

El Salvador has advanced a set of policies and programs that have contributed to significant improvements in access to basic education and have led to changes meant to improve quality. Efforts carried out over the past ten years contrast sharply with the neglect of the educational system during the civil war of the prior decade. Given the level of abandonment, disintegration, and deterioration of the educational system at the end of the war, the importance of educational *efforts* over the past decade cannot be underestimated.

Nevertheless, educational reforms implemented over the last decade are far from sufficient to achieve the goals established ten years ago: to continue responding to the growing challenges of consolidating democracy and promoting competitiveness within an increasingly global and interdependent economy, and to maintain parity with other nations in the hemisphere. In other words, although the educational situation in El Salvador would have been worse without the reforms made over the last decade, much remains to be done. Time is pressing and without profound and sustained efforts, the majority of Salvadorans will not be competitive in a global economy in the 21st century.

Principal Argument

The principal argument of this study is that education is one of the primary methods by which Salvadoran society can reduce persistent structural poverty, further consolidate peace, and improve quality of life, democratic development, and labor force productivity. Education provides society with the tools to run businesses in a market economy that will lead to improvements in the competitiveness of the national economy. Preschool and primary school are at the foundation of El Salvador's efforts to improve its overall human capital. For the nation's future, it is fundamental that all children complete a basic education of high quality.

Consequently, the underlying premise of the study is that a population with more and better education can better face the challenges of national development, including the challenge to become competitive in the global economy. The objective of the study was to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of basic education in El Salvador, to analyze results of past educational policies, and to formulate recommendations to develop policies and interventions for educational improvement. Another purpose of the study was to help USAID/El Salvador define its new plan to support the Salvadoran education sector (2005-2009).

This study of basic education in El Salvador was carried out between September and December of 2003 by a team of researchers.[1]

The publication has two parts:
• First, this introduction addresses the main findings of the study and proposes education policy priorities for the next reform effort
• The second part presents a summary of the original study of basic education.

A Spanish-language CD attached to this publication includes the complete eight chapters on which the summary is based. Chapter One

---

1 Undertaken with the technical and financial participation of the United States Agency for International Development in El Salvador and coordinated by the Academy for Educational Development, the study was one of a set of research studies and assessments coordinated with the Ministry of Education of El Salvador (MINED) in 2003–2004, to provide a comprehensive view of all levels and modalities of El Salvador's education system. The findings presented here formed part of this broader effort and were incorporated into the integrated assessment coordinated by MINED and completed in September 2004.

by Ernesto Schiefelbein examines educational coverage and efficiency and their evolution over the past decade. It also discusses options that can serve as catalysts to improve educational quality. Chapter Two by José Luís Guzmán discusses educational policies implemented over the past decade with respect to the challenges caused by globalization. Chapters Three and Four by Richard Kraft analyze basic education (including preschool education and the three cycles of primary education), and discuss the teaching profession in El Salvador, with special attention to the selection and professional development of, as well as support for, teachers. Chapters Five and Seven by Renán Rápalo Castellanos cover the system used to define quality standards, the system used to assess such standards and other available evidence about students' learning levels, and institutional modernization and decentralization within the education sector. Chapters Six and Eight by Anabella Lardé de Palomo analyze educational spending—its evolution, levels, and distribution—and examine mechanisms for coordination among different agencies (public, private, donors) that support educational development.

This report focuses specifically on preschool and primary education, as well as on subsystems that affect educational quality at these levels: teacher training, educational financing, and educational management, with special attention to educational evaluation and the definition of standards. In addition, the report analyzes educational policies applied over the past decade in response to demands on the country imposed by globalization. Finally, it examines the contributions made by donor agencies to education in El Salvador.

In the 21st century, education will be the principal competitive advantage of nations. Growth will result not only from conventional investment, but also from development of human capital through investments in education, training, and work experience. It is widely accepted that education is the basis for creating, adapting, developing, and disseminating innovation and technological development. Furthermore, education that develops a capacity for innovation creates a cadre of more productive workers who increase the competitiveness of entire societies.[2] Evidence for "education as economic investment" is widespread. It has been well

documented that with each extra year of schooling, an individual's earnings increase. Educational attainment also improves income distribution, thereby improving equity, and it decreases the chances that people will remain in poverty. Importantly, developing countries, due to their relative scarcity of human capital, have higher rates of return at all education levels. Investments in basic education, however, yield the highest rates of return. This is because, except when a country's basic education coverage is already near universal and of good quality, the unit costs of providing basic education are small relative to the extra lifetime income and productivity that comes with literacy. Moreover, the equity impact is highest for basic education. Recent estimates show that El Salvador receives higher returns on its investment for basic education than it receives for either secondary or tertiary education.[3]

2 Alfredo Sarmiento, Capítulo 1, La educación en el contexto social y económico, nacional e internacional. MINED, Integrated assessment of education in El Salvador, draft, 2004.

3 George Psacharopoulos and Harry Anthony Patrinos, Returns to Investment in Education: A Further Update, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2881, September 2002.

Low Levels of Learning for the Majority of the Population

Deficiencies in quality at the foundation of the educational system have direct consequences on the educational profile of the Salvadoran population. Many children in early grades fail to acquire the fundamental competencies that allow them to complete primary school successfully, and there are insufficient opportunities to attend secondary school. The limitations faced in acquiring competencies and the overall low education level of the population restrict opportunities for the country's economic, social, and political development. Among those over 25 years old, 60% have completed only primary school or received even less education. This represents an advance compared to a decade ago (when 75% had only a primary or lower level of education). However, achievement of an educational level considered in most countries in the hemisphere as a minimum for social inclusion a century ago is clearly insufficient for the demands of the 21st century. The number of years of schooling of the Salvadoran population aged 15 or older averages 5.6 years, 3.6 in rural areas. DIGESTYC, 2003.[4] Within Latin America, only Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Brazil have populations with lower levels of schooling than El Salvador.

As a result of these deficiencies in quality at the foundation of the educational system, an insufficient number of Salvadorans have attained a secondary and higher education (only 40% of those over 25 years old). Not surprisingly, Salvadorans with a secondary education enjoy greater economic benefits than those with only a primary education. Given that those who increased their average educational level during the past decade belong to higher income groups, gaps in earnings and income will grow in the absence of deliberate policies to expand access to secondary school. An increasing income gap is likely to weaken social cohesion and contribute to an increase in crime and violence, and could undermine governance. For these reasons, overcoming the barriers to access to secondary education is crucial. But such access cannot be merely a formality, consisting simply of awarding diplomas to graduates without ensuring that they acquire superior cognitive competencies.

In this sense, it is important to learn from the lessons of the last decade about expansion of access to primary education. It is of little good to enroll more students in school if their education does not translate into the ability to acquire competencies that increase their life opportunities. While increasing access to low-quality secondary education would be relatively easy, it would not lead to improvements in the skills and competencies of graduates. These deficiencies are cumulative: failure in early grade levels sets the foundation for subsequent and continuous failure, and, eventually, school dropout or the receipt of a diploma unrelated to students' capabilities.

This persistent underperformance of the education system in El Salvador, which translates into limited educational opportunities for its poor children, is one of the most pressing education problems facing the country. The challenge for the new administration is to demonstrate true commitment to the education of the poor. The priority of providing better education was clearly indicated in the educational assessment carried out 12 years ago.[5] Except in the expansion of access to primary grade levels, it is clear that policies applied over the past decade have not placed a high enough priority on providing quality learning opportunities for poor children.

Educational Efforts in El Salvador within the Context of Efforts in the Americas

Most countries in the Americas implemented educational reforms in the past decade, including attempts to improve quality and to improve the educational opportunities of lower income groups. In Mexico, for example, efforts included development of a new curriculum and textbooks; free

4 DIGEST, 2003. *Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples.*
5 Reimers, F. (Coordinator). 1995. *La Educación en El Salvador de cara al Siglo XXI. Desafío y Oportunidades.* San Salvador. UCA Editores. Pages 48, 51, 62-65.

distribution of textbooks to all children; on-the-job professional development for teachers; incentives for teachers' professional performance; and compensatory programs specifically targeted to marginalized children. In Chile, programs were implemented to strengthen pre-service teacher education; improve the quality of schools attended by lower income students; and improve education generally through reviews of curricula and provision of educational materials, teacher support, and performance incentives.

Compared with these and other educational reform efforts carried out in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and the United States, efforts implemented in El Salvador during the last decade were modest. Without doubt, the conditions in El Salvador are different—its needs are many but its resources dedicated to education are more limited than those of other countries with larger economies and higher per capita investment in education. These differences help to explain the differences in educational levels between El Salvador and other countries of the region.

The challenge for the next generation of reforms in El Salvador is to close the gaps in educational opportunities between different groups, not only internally, but also between El Salvador and other countries in the hemisphere. These gaps include the yet unmet challenges to universalize basic reading, writing, and math skills, as well as to develop competencies for the 21st century such as higher-order and complex thinking skills, ability to work effectively with others, and lifelong learning. Competencies for the 21st century must be aimed at developing *expert thinking* and *complex communication*[5], which are the basis for strengthening economic competitiveness and participation in a democratic society. In the new global economy, people will need not only to master basic reading and writing skills, but also to develop understanding of complex information in the different disciplines. They must be able to interpret information critically, rather than simply memorizing. Furthermore, they must be able to engage in complex communication with others, which is basic to working in teams. With computers now performing many routine tasks once performed by unskilled labor, those who do not acquire more complex skills will not have access to higher earning jobs. These competencies are also fundamental to the consolidation of a democratic society, as discussed later in this introduction.

Looking Back at the Past Ten Years

Over the last decade, advances have been made in access to preschool and primary school. Gains in levels of educational attainment, however, have been more limited among lower income groups. This demonstrates that in a society in which there are clear advantages to being educated, and in which there are significant inequalities in income and education, these inequalities are sharpened as each family attempts to transfer its respective social advantages to its children.

The expansion in access to preschool education between 1993 and 2002, for example, was far greater among families with higher incomes, thus widening the gap in access to preschool (a level of education critical for stimulating early child development and preparing children to benefit from subsequent schooling). In 1993, 9% of those in the poorest quintile attended preschool compared to 11% in the wealthiest. In 2002, more of each group attended preschool, but the gap widened, with preschool enrollment levels of 27% of the poorest and 70% of the wealthiest quintiles.

The fact that upper income groups benefit disproportionately from educational gains underscores the necessity for educational policy to set priorities to reach the most vulnerable groups, in terms of both spending and efforts to support innovation and qualitative improvement.

Low quality in education, as well as low family income, influences retention. As described in Chapter

6 Frank Levy and Richard Murnane, "Education and the Changing Job Market." *Educational Leadership*, October, 2004.

One, 95% of children currently enroll in first grade, although only 89% enroll at the age of seven. Nine of ten children are enrolled in school for six years, and 85% for eight years. These important achievements in initial and timely access to primary school are undermined, however, by the low quality of education received by many children, which translates into high rates of failure and retention beginning in the first grade.

Because teachers have neither the preparation nor the conditions to provide differentiated and effective attention to repeaters, many of these children repeat several times (one of every two children has repeated two or more times). Eventually, many repeaters abandon school before completing the sixth grade. As a result, only one of every four students completes the nine grades of basic education. From the analysis of student repetition and dropout patterns, it follows that an increase in the percentage of students with secondary education will only be possible if the number of Salvadorans who complete primary education increases. However, simply opening new secondary schools will not increase the number of students who enroll if students are not ready to handle the more advanced subject matter. The high rates of repetition in basic education are a result of the low quality of teaching. In surveys of families, three of four assert that their children repeat because they are not learning. Four of five parents say that when their children repeat, it is because they fail the grade level. These low levels of learning are corroborated by students' results on national examinations of academic performance.

Based on poor student performance, it appears that teachers are barely able to develop even the most basic competencies in their respective curricula. For example, there was very little change in reading comprehension levels between tests administered in 1993 and in 2001. Half of third-grade students cannot understand the meaning of a simple four-line text. Studies show that performance at each educational level is in part a function of mastering competencies acquired in prior levels; thus, the consequences of inadequate teaching quality are cumulative. Students in higher levels of basic education show even lower levels of achievement with respect to curricular objectives.

Educational policies of the last decade were oriented toward the following objectives:

1. Expansion of preschool and basic education services in rural zones
2. Promotion of local-level participation through the creation of school management councils with parental participation and the transfer of school resources
3. Curricular reform and the elaboration of educational standards
4. Teacher education, incentives, and standards
5. Provision of educational materials for teachers, students, and parents
6. Development of assessment systems: standardized tests and school evaluations
7. Use of technological resources to support learning
8. Food, health, and basic services for schools in low-income areas
9. Creation of multi-grade and accelerated education services and curricular models to prevent school dropout, reduce grade repetition and decrease the number of over-age students
10. Consolidation of public schools, and support for school-level quality management
11. Rehabilitation of school infrastructure
12. Creation of and support for preschools.

The previous Government's priorities for education policy, while arguably on target, were—in hindsight— insufficient to achieve the desired improvements in teaching children to read and write. The results of these efforts were to improve educational management by decentralizing it to the local level, improve infrastructure, ensure basic inputs (curricula, standards, assessment tests, textbooks), and promote innovation in the education of teachers and the support for educational quality (with experiments such as the *Escuela Diez*).

As discussed below, this study proposes that the Government lower the priority of reform in school-based management (since it appears to have achieved its main objectives) and instead focus on reforms geared to improving quality. In this sense, *it is recommended that specific initiatives be advanced to develop reading / writing skills, motivation, and engagement; to develop*

tolerance and civic education; to improve school effectiveness; and to strengthen support systems for pre-service education and continuous professional development of teachers.

Current Status of Preschool and Primary Education

Half the children between four and six years old are excluded from preschool education, and those from zero to three receive even less coverage. Lack of coverage is greatest in rural areas and among those sectors with lower incomes. In addition to limitations related to access, there are disparities related to the quality of education offered. In some cases, the conditions under which services are provided (with groups of 45 to 50 students per teacher in rural zones of Ahuachapán, La Libertad, and Sonsonate, for example) make it very difficult for preschools to offer sufficient adult attention to ensure adequate care and education, let alone to stimulate child development. At the root of these serious deficiencies is the lack of a strategic framework to guide efforts at this level, as well as insufficient allocation of resources to preschool and early childhood education.

Analysis at the preschool level shows that curricula are strongly oriented toward fostering integrated child development. Except with respect to goals related to language development, little emphasis is placed on the development of pre-reading competencies or of thinking and problem-solving skills. Researchers on the assessment team who visited preschools found significant gaps

between desired objectives and practice, with practice lagging severely behind the intended objectives of the preschool curriculum. In addition, private preschool teachers emphasize pre-reading competencies more than their colleagues in public preschools. In spite of these gaps, the researchers observed more appropriate teaching practices in preschools than in primary schools, specifically in regard to organizing children in groups for learning and other interactive teaching strategies.

Thus, preschool in El Salvador is currently at the root of unequal learning opportunities faced by children of differing social origins, not only because access disproportionately favors children whose parents have higher levels of education, but also because private preschools focus more on promoting children's cognitive development than do public preschools.

Problems in preschool education include low coverage, unequal access, gaps between the quality of public and private education, inadequate teacher education, disparities in the quality of teaching, and a lack of coordination between different initiatives and efforts. These problems point to an enormous gap between the country's legal obligations as declared in the law and actual policy implementation and results.

Starting in 2005, an improved curriculum for early childhood and preschool education will be implemented in all formal and non-formal centers and may help

improve the situation. A new policy for early childhood and preschool is pending approval. The Early Childhood Family Education Activity (EDIFAM) funded by USAID has also achieved important results in the quality of teaching, in coordination efforts among public institutions, and in an awareness campaign promoting the importance of investing in the area.

In primary education, efforts have increased initial access to first grade, but the quality of teaching is deficient, especially in the teaching of reading and writing. In addition, as documented in a qualitative study by MINED, emphasis on constructivist education has been reduced to slogans and jargon, rather than effectively translating policy into classroom practice. According to the MINED report:

> Educational quality continues to be a concern and a challenge. Intentions to modify life in the classroom and school with new approaches—where learning becomes a relevant activity for students because it takes into account their prior experiences and the needs that arise in society—have not been achieved in the classroom.

> The Ministry of Education has implemented several initiatives to improve educational quality. The results obtained to date, however, are not wholly encouraging. Learning achievement tests show…that children in the first and second cycles of basic education are not able to master even the basic objectives evaluated,

demonstrating more difficulties in the subjects of language and mathematics….A tendency toward decreasing academic performance is seen as students approach the final stages of basic education.

This study shows that the main challenges in the immediate future are to provide quality education universally and to guarantee fundamental competencies to all Salvadorans. Focusing on quality implies identifying the purposes of education, for quality is defined with respect to educational ends or goals. One of the most valuable lessons learned during the past decade of reform has been that educational quality is not generated spontaneously as a result of institutional or managerial reforms. On the contrary, quality must be actively promoted through specific initiatives oriented toward improving the competencies of teachers, well-structured teaching and learning materials that allow students gradually to acquire basic abilities such as reading and writing, and a school administration that supports quality instruction.

The analysis of basic education emphasizes students' low achievement levels on performance tests, as well as the enormous gap between teacher discourse, the intended curriculum, and the curriculum being used. Based on the analysis, it is recommended to increase instructional time, especially time focusing on all forms of literacy at early grade levels, allowing students to read silently and for pleasure, to listen to reading, and to write stories and essays

(preferably writing free-form essays and using other forms of creative writing instead of copying from the chalkboard or textbook). It is recommended that the use of student learning guides be encouraged and that models for "alternative" (multi-grade) classrooms and effective schools be supported, along with models supporting reading and writing (such as reading clubs or structured reading instruction programs). Based on the analysis of the final cycle of basic education (middle-school level, or grades 7 to 9), it is recommended that teachers incorporate learning mechanisms that help to integrate the school with its surrounding community.

The chapter on basic education underlines the importance of textbooks. Although textbooks are among the few (or perhaps the only) materials supporting the development of reading competencies among low-income students, visits to schools showed that they are seldom used and that teachers often have students copy information from the chalkboard.

Moreover, the study finds the limited and inadequate use of instruction time to be a serious obstacle undermining students' learning. A massive program to review and re-edit textbooks is not recommended, although a classroom library program that increases the number and variety of reading materials available to children is presented as highly desirable. A review of the value of the textbooks as teaching instruments is also recommended.

The study also questions the excessive emphasis in El Salvador on the development of standards and assessment as the main instruments for improving quality, noting that there is no evidence in any country that such interventions—without serious efforts to support the development of professional competency among teachers—translate into improved learning opportunities for students.

In order to develop a reading culture, it is essential to improve teacher education. Analysis of the education and professional support for teachers shows that pre-service education is excessively theoretical, that MINED fails to retain the best teachers because of poor working conditions and isolation, and that on-the-job training is not sufficiently practical to be useful. Significant inequalities are also found in the opportunities for teachers in urban and rural schools to pursue courses offered through their respective schools or in professional development centers, institutes of higher learning, or universities. This chapter recommends viewing teacher education as a process rather than an event and giving voice to teachers in the definition of their training needs and in decisions about reforms. It also recommends professional development modalities that promote collaboration among professional development centers, universities, schools, other institutions, school and teacher networks, distance education systems, and micro-centers.

The report highlights the efforts that MINED and pre-service

teacher education institutions have carried out: new curricular design for pre-service education; specific standards for pre-service education of teachers (which have brought about improvements in conditions of service in authorized institutions); significant improvements in material and administrative conditions in teacher education institutions; introduction of enrollment and graduation criteria (the *Evaluación de las Competencias Académicas y Pedagógicas*, known as ECAP); monitoring and assessing teacher education, and supporting processes for the professional development of teacher educators. It concludes that, despite the magnitude of these efforts, pre-service training is still not producing adequately trained teachers.

The report points to important advances promoted by MINED with respect to teachers' ongoing professional development, including the decentralization of training through financial transfers to schools and the contracting of external services and pedagogical consulting. The effectiveness of these efforts has still not been evaluated. One deficiency in the professional practice of teaching is that most teacher educators work only part-time in this capacity. Curriculum design in institutions of pre-service teacher education is fragmented and confined to single courses, rather than a comprehensive or integrated program. There are not sufficient courses focused on teaching specific disciplines. Teachers do not graduate from these institutions with adequate academic preparation, so in-service education ends up being remedial, as well as disconnected from pre-service teacher preparation.

Results of the ECAP show that those studying to be teachers are not developing sufficient teaching or academic competencies to perform well in the classroom. While commending the government for forging strong links between theory and practice with its school-based practice-teaching requirements, the report urges that a greater percentage of time be spent during pre-service teacher preparation in liberal arts and academic disciplines. The report proposes a comprehensive policy to support the professional development of teachers. Such an effort will require developing a social and political consensus, with participation by teachers, their institutions, and the public at large.

As stated above, secondary education is a critical area for additional investment because of the low levels of coverage and low quality. No international comparisons of performance have been made at this level, and therefore it is not possible to determine how the competencies of students in El Salvador compare with those of students in other countries. However, the Learning and Aptitude Tests for Graduates of Secondary School (PAES) illustrate inadequate achievement by secondary students. The report strongly emphasizes expanding access to and improving the quality and relevance of secondary education.

To implement the changes recommended in the study, it will be necessary to reallocate financial resources. Although public spending on education has increased significantly over the last ten years (158% in real terms between 1993 and 2003), El Salvador still lags behind most Latin American countries in per capita funding for public schools. El Salvador spends 3.3% of its gross domestic product to finance education, surpassing only the percentages of GDP allocated by Ecuador, Guatemala, and Uruguay and equaling that spent by Peru. Other Latin American countries earmark at least 4% of their respective GDPs for education.

Moreover, a significant portion of the financing of El Salvador's education reform during the last decade came from external cooperation or loans; consequently, the financial sustainability of these reforms is vulnerable without a steady increase in the education budget. Public spending on education disproportionately benefits the middle 60% of the population based on distribution; the quintile of highest income receives only 16% of spending, due to the prevalent use of private schooling, and the quintile of lowest income receives only 18%. The most regressive spending is in secondary education, where 20% of the households with the lowest income receive only 8% of the government's education resources, whereas the three quintiles of highest income receive 23%, 25%, and 27%, respectively. Nevertheless, the education budget is more equitably distributed than overall income distribution, and consequently education spending contributes to

long-term improvements in income distribution.

Education policy for school-based management, advanced over the past decade, promoted community participation in school management through the EDUCO program, and fostered social participation in processes such as hiring and firing teachers and making decisions on spending for schools. The study recommends establishing permanent mechanisms for civil society participation in the definition and evaluation of educational policies, as well as delegating well-defined responsibilities to departmental offices and schools. The study also recommends analyzing the effectiveness of the fund for teachers' professional development as a decentralized means of training, including revising eligibility criteria so that this mechanism promotes professional development systems that are integrated with pre-service education and that benefit all schools equitably.

The report's final chapter underlines the importance of maximizing the impact of donor cooperation through development of a single sectoral policy that serves as a framework to coordinate assistance programs, in order to address priority needs, prevent duplication, and maximize the comparative advantages of each donor and the synergies between different programs of external cooperation. The previous ten years' experience with donor coordination was positive. A new plan is recommended for the next decade, with specific goals, strategy, and budget requirements.

Second Generation of Reforms

The strengthening of educational efforts over the next decade must build upon the education reforms of the last decade. Wiping the slate clean would only waste resources and experience, and carry a great opportunity cost in a country where needs exceed the resources available. The continuation and strengthening of educational improvement efforts must be supported by what was learned through the first generation of reforms, such as targeting efforts to improve student learning in reading and mathematics.

The second generation of educational reforms must improve the quality of education, emphasizing the acquisition of basic cognitive and meta-cognitive competencies that enable people to learn throughout their lives. A significant part of this report addresses ways to promote a reading culture, as well as to develop skills and interest in reading and writing as the basis for communication and lifelong learning.

Specifically, the development of a reading culture in El Salvador—with a series of shared practices and meanings—will require use of a wide variety of means to support children and their families. In the second-generation reform efforts to improve quality in the classroom, the report also recommends setting clear goals for the development of interpersonal and emotional competencies, tolerance of diversity, and ethical frameworks at all levels of Salvadoran society. Achieving these goals would allow more Salvadorans to reason and act ethically, as well as to participate fully in a diverse democratic society and a market economy.

It is proposed that the second generation of reforms in El Salvador focus on:
• developing pedagogical competencies in preschool and primary teachers
• providing high-quality reading and writing, as well as teaching materials
• strengthening efforts to build a solid reading culture in the country
• supporting improved retention and learning conditions in preschool and primary school, especially for the poorest 40% of the population.

A great majority of Salvadorans understand and agree that educational institutions potentially serve to transmit the best of national culture to new generations, providing them with opportunities to build a better nation. A recent report on productivity and competitiveness identifies the low levels of skills of the labor force as one of the structural factors limiting the country's potential. As a result of the Salvadoran economy's limited competitiveness and unequal income distribution, more than one-third of the population continues to live in poverty, and half of those in rural areas are poor. In order to meet the Millennium Development Goals, the country must integrate into society its most severely marginalized sectors.

This suggests the need to advance specific programs for direct poverty reduction. Those who remember the violence of the 1980s understand that quality of life in the future depends to a great extent on the capacity of individuals and institutions to be tolerant of one another, to respect the beliefs and rights of all, and to coexist in peace, considering that we need each other for our mutual development. In large part, the construction of a culture of peace in democracy depends on what educational institutions do—or do not do—with children and youth. Indeed, Chapter Two of this report concludes:

> Essentially, schools must ensure that children and youth learn how to learn and how to live in peace with one another. This implies the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills, as well as the practice of values that enable children and youth to promote their own welfare and that of the local, national, and global community.

Basic education should be a priority of the Government of El Salvador, as this is the only education that most of the population receives. This is essential to consolidating a culture of peace and forming democratic and competent citizens who can participate fully in a market economy. This does not mean that El Salvador should limit its educational goals to universal access to basic education. Precisely because primary education is extensively available, the government also needs to provide greater access to secondary and tertiary education.

The second generation of educational reforms in El Salvador must focus principally on improving educational quality, improving student learning in math and language, and promoting school attendance, especially in schools attended by the poor. It will remain impossible to ensure secondary and tertiary education as long as so many of those who begin their basic education do not finish it successfully, and as long as the children of poor families are mainly those who drop out of school.

Policy Recommendations

The preceding sections of this introduction discussed some of the major findings of the study. What follows are nine main policy recommendations that should guide El Salvador's educational strategy over the next ten years.

These nine recommendations arise from the study analysis combined with results from a consultation process held in December 2003, during which a draft of the study was presented to a group of Salvadoran education professionals (see Annex 2B). In this consultation, participants completed a survey that covered the detailed recommendations contained in the eight chapters of the report. They estimated the expected effects of each recommendation on student learning, along with the probability that each recommendation could be applied successfully.

The combination of estimates about expected effects and probable implementation provided an index of probable effect. Annex 3

summarizes the recommendations rated most positively by participants (those with an expected effect of 80% or higher and a 60% or higher probability of successful implementation), with improved training of preschool teachers and expanded classroom libraries receiving the highest scores. *It should be noted that the recommendations oriented toward directly improving support conditions for the development of reading / writing competencies appear at the top of the list.* In other words, experienced educators in El Salvador perceive these recommendations to be effective options, with high probabilities of being implemented successfully, in response to prioritized issues related to quality.

The nine recommendations are as follows:

1. **Promote access to preschool education, whether formal or informal, focusing on children from the 40% of households with the lowest incomes.**

- Support the enrollment of children from the 40% of households with the lowest incomes in public schools and in mixed-administration entities (childcare centers, community-based child development centers, and preschools).
- Strengthen the teaching skills of day care providers and preschool/kindergarten educators.
- Implement communication campaigns aimed at parents and meant to improve child-rearing environments and the culture of interaction between parents and

children.

- Promote the broadcasting of television programs such as Sesame Street.

2. **Set priorities to improve quality by strengthening teacher education.**

- Promote a comprehensive policy for teacher education and professional development, combining pre-service education and in-service professional development. This will require generating a broad social and political consensus in support of high-quality education for all. Use the fund for teachers' professional development to promote innovation in pre-service and in-service professional development.
- Prepare and use models for teacher education and refresher training that target specific reading / writing competencies, promote effective teaching for low-income students, and ensure effective attention to diversity.
- Encourage the reform of pre-service teacher education programs, adding new modalities such as: professional development schools, distance education, teacher-to-teacher education, and case studies. Ensure that pre-service education centers develop comprehensive programs with clear pedagogical purposes. Encourage teacher education centers to define areas for educational innovation and reflection about educational practices.
- Develop refresher programs based on teacher-to-teacher education, networks, and micro-centers, incorporating micro-

teaching techniques (videotaping of classes and discussion of the taped classes by teachers in the course, guided by an expert facilitator). Evaluate ongoing experiences such as pedagogical advising and decentralization of professional development, and experiment with distance education models using computer-based technologies.
- Establish or reorient systems to monitor teacher education and quality, with actions such as the following: 1) reorient the use of ECAP results to stimulate critical reflection in teacher education institutions; 2) carry out studies on the predictive validity of the ECAP test; and 3) establish systems to monitor teacher education.
- Develop programs for teacher trainers, emphasizing the development of competencies to support reading and writing instruction.
- Increase transparency and efficiency in the selection of • candidates to fill teaching vacancies that arise as a result of actions by MINED and teacher education institutions. Examine the incentives structure to attract candidates for the different teaching specialties.

3. **Continue increasing effective investment in education, in a sustained manner and as rapidly as possible, reaching at least 5% of GNP by 2015, to finance education policies over the next ten years.**

- Build widespread consensus and support for the national

importance of education.
- Ensure sustainability and the availability of national resources for quality improvement.
- Allocate increased education funding at the preschool and basic education levels.
- Increase education spending per student.
- Ensure equal spending in different geographic regions of the country, focusing resources where the need is greatest; evaluate the impact of interventions.
- Develop targeted programs to improve learning and promotion in first grade, focused on schools where repetition rates are the highest.

4. **Set priorities to improve the quality of basic education in schools located within regions and zones inhabited by lower-income children.**

- Increase teachers' effective use of time-on-task and, in particular, to the development of language and reading / writing competencies through changes in standards and supervision, combined with media campaigns aimed at parents.
- Reformulate standards for the Spanish curriculum, especially for the first, second, and third grades.
- Evaluate and adopt student learning manuals similar to those currently found in "alternative" (multi-grade) classrooms, as well as workbooks from the accelerated education program.
- Submit current textbooks to a rigorous process to evaluate their effectiveness, and recommend potential steps leading to their

improvement.

- Provide classroom libraries for the first five grades to schools attended by children from the 40% of households with lowest incomes. Provide these libraries, which can be administered directly by the students, with 60-100 books.
- Evaluate and promote programs for over-aged students and for rural communities with low population densities.

5. **Utilize monitoring, assessment, and evaluation systems more intensively in order to learn from the results of ongoing policies and programs.**

- Identify priority areas for the achievement of competencies and educate the community about educational goals and current levels of achievement in the education system.
- Carry out specific studies that strengthen knowledge about the effects of innovations promoted during the last decade, such as the *Escuela Diez* school supervision and teacher professional development modalities; and that generate further knowledge about promising practices for the teaching of reading and writing and the effects of innovations to improve those practices.

6. **Promote initial access, regular attendance, and retention in school for children from the 20% of households with lowest incomes.**

- Carry out studies to identify obstacles preventing initial access faced by children from the 20% of households with lowest incomes.
- Experiment with targeted programs that promote this group's initial enrollment, regular attendance, and retention in school.

7. **Promote coordination among donors through the preparation of a single sectoral plan.**

- Strengthen the planning unit of the Ministry of Education to prepare and implement the sectoral plan for education.
- Strengthen the coordination of a donor group on education and organize donor support according to the education plan.
- Define a clear strategy and benchmarks for interventions backed by funding to achieve results in the short, medium, and long term.

8. **Promote legal reform.**

- Establish more concrete mechanisms for civil society participation in the definition and evaluation of policies, and increase the competencies of departmental offices, municipalities, and schools in the area of school management.

9. **Continue promoting school autonomy with respect to the hiring and professional development of teachers, infrastructure,** **educational resources, and school monitoring mechanisms.**

- Strengthen the role of departmental directors and make local administrative processes more efficient by consolidating money transfers, and assign resources according to the schools' needs as defined in their plans.
- Improve assistance to schools in their local management responsibilities, ensure equitable support to the smallest schools, and evaluate the effectiveness of these decentralized strategies to ensure their positive impact on school autonomy.

A Vision of Education for the Consolidation of Democracy and Freedom

The Government of El Salvador can initiate second-generation reforms that will effectively target support for all students, so that children achieve curricular goals (beginning by ensuring that they learn how to read and write well) and also develop the competencies to meet current economic and social demands. Efforts over the last decade strengthened management capacities in the education system at both the central level and the school level. These efforts forged minimal educational consensus, encouraged educational innovation, and strengthened institutional capacity to obtain and process educational information in support of decision making. Numerous experiments are still underway, from which it will be possible to learn in order to design new actions to

promote the academic success of all children.

As noted earlier, this second generation of reforms must focus specifically on supporting classroom teaching, developing teaching competencies, supporting teachers with high-quality reading / writing and teaching and learning materials, and strengthening the construction of a reading culture within the country.

In insisting on the need to make the development of sophisticated reading-comprehension and writing competencies the top priority of this second generation of reforms, it is useful to remember that this objective is oriented toward the development of competencies for life in a democracy and for the effective exercise of citizenship. Children must be taught to read and write well, at the same time that they are taught to think for themselves, to value freedom, to exercise democratic citizenship, and to participate effectively in an *increasingly interconnected world.*

The competencies for democratic participation require skills and aptitudes that allow individuals to think for themselves, communicate effectively, gain access to and use available knowledge about different topics, learn continuously, work with others, understand the importance of and mechanisms for participation, and comprehend the differences that distinguish closed and totalitarian societies from open societies. Such competencies can be acquired and enhanced in different settings: in families, in the workplace, and through religious institutions, in addition to schools.

Schools have the potential to equitably develop competencies for effective participation in a democracy. Pedagogy—the way teachers teach, the school culture, and the manner in which school is organized—is central to the development of these competencies and aptitudes. As John Dewey said, "how we teach is what we teach." Therefore, decisive and effective support for teachers' efforts is required to ensure that all citizens have the competencies necessary to think for themselves, to value their freedom and the freedom of others, and to work and communicate adequately with others. To achieve this goal, all must be educated with high levels of quality, in ways that enable the development of competencies for democratic participation. This requires strengthening the pedagogical competencies of teachers, as well as the social and emotional climate of schools.

In sum, building a democratic culture requires construction of an educational culture that enables the development of a democratic citizenry. This objective can only be achieved with serious and dedicated work to ensure that teachers direct their efforts, on a daily basis, toward the development of these competencies in their classrooms.

In supporting the creation of teaching teams in schools, teachers' efforts must focus both on technique (how to improve and strengthen the teaching of fundamental skills such as reading and writing) and on the values that schools must reflect to prepare students to live in a democracy. It

is beneficial for teachers to discuss how school organization and the relations between teachers and students can, in themselves, be powerful moral lessons. It is difficult to teach how to live in a democracy if school and system relations are authoritarian or disrespectful of the rights of others.

The development of competencies that impart respect for others requires attention to three interrelated areas: construction of democratic school environments; inclusion in the curriculum of processes for the development of competencies for coexistence; and attention to the relations between teaching staffs and communities, administrators, and supervisors. It is insufficient to attempt to develop competencies for tolerance, respect and interdependence within a specific classroom if such competencies are contradicted in the broader school culture. It is essential to ensure that skills and aptitudes for life in a democracy are developed simultaneously in the school's most explicit curriculum (in its classrooms) as well as in its deeper curriculum—reflected in the ways in which students relate with each other and with teachers and in the way school staffs relate with parents, the school community, school supervisors, and other local institutions.

As a result of a heavy authoritarian past in the region, most schools are silent about what is missing for life in a democracy. The majority do not teach students the human rights contained in the Universal Declaration adopted more than 50 years ago with the creation of the

United Nations. As a result, schools produce civic illiterates. Educational programs must explicitly incorporate content that develops abilities, attitudes, and values that favor the peaceful resolution of conflicts over other alternatives; recognizes and appreciates diversity in points of view; prefers democratic over authoritarian forms of organization; and allows for the construction of a civic culture from the school culture, where reasoned argument based on evidence is preferred as a way to reach agreements and to persuade, rather than the imposition of dogmas based on faith by one group over another.

On a small scale, experiments have been carried out to help teachers develop effective classes on these topics. Programs have been shown to be effective in developing reading / writing skills that combine effective traditional practices emphasizing the learning of reading components, letters, syllables, and phonemes, with materials and activities that build interest in reading. [7] Other examples include curricula on human rights and programs that promote critical reading of the press in marginalized communities. [8]

Conclusion

In sum, El Salvador faces an extraordinary opportunity to continue developing the competencies of all of its citizens in order to expand their options and their freedom, thereby making the country more productive and more democratic. The reforms implemented over the past decade constitute an excellent base from which to strive toward high goals. El Salvador's first stage of reforms initiated a process that, although still incomplete, makes it possible to define a second generation of reforms.

Success in this second phase of educational reforms will require more defined programs in priority areas, comprehension of the causes of current challenges, and selection of strategies for action. The main challenges are to strengthen the quality of education with respect to fundamental reading / writing and communication skills; develop critical thinking skills, motivation toward lifelong learning, and meta-cognitive abilities for the administration of human capital; and develop emotional and interpersonal competencies for tolerance and productive association with others. El Salvador has begun this journey, and the path already traveled has made it possible to chart the path for the next decade. The challenge for new leaders in the 21st century is to quicken the pace of this march and to consolidate the foundations for quality education.

7 For example, programs carried out by the Asociación de Amigos del Aprendizaje in Costa Rica.
8 A number of Web sites offer materials that support the teaching of skills for life in a democracy, including Civitas International (www.civnet.org) and the International Bureau for Education (www.ibe.unesco.org/regional/diversity).

II. METHODOLOGY

As its first task, the research team reviewed local reports, studies, and documents related to national education, along with international studies pertinent to the topics of analysis and proposed recommendations. The team then reviewed educational statistics available from the Ministry of Education (MINED) and Multi-purpose Household Surveys (EHPMs) produced by the Ministry of Economy. The investigators also reviewed data produced by the National Learning Evaluation System (SINEA), especially regarding learning achievement tests in primary education. In addition, they reviewed international databases of the World Bank, UNESCO, and CEPAL.

The analysis included individual and group interviews with key people from the Ministry of Education, teachers, school directors, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Focus groups were formed of parents, teachers, and students during several visits to schools (see Annex 1).

In December 2003, a preliminary version of this summary, along with the eight chapters on which it is based, were submitted for review to USAID, MINED, and key stakeholders in Salvadoran society. Five roundtables were held December 2–5, in which the study's main findings were presented[9]. More than seventy key individuals from the education sector participated in this process, including top MINED officials; representatives of NGOs, universities, and other organizations; and public school teachers and directors. (A summary of roundtable results and lists of participants are included in Annex 2.)

As part of the consultation process, surveys were carried out with roundtable participants in order to prioritize the study's recommendations. In particular, a survey was applied to all of the groups in order to prioritize recommendations according to (i) their impact toward achieving greater reading comprehension and writing skills among public school children, and the viability of their implementation; and (ii) the probability that the measures could be implemented successfully. (Results of this survey are presented in Annex 3.) This process of discussion with El Salvador's educational community was particularly valuable for enriching the study and its recommendations.

---

9 This effort was coordinated jointly by USAID, the Ministry of Education, The World Bank, and the Academy for Educational Development..

III. SALVADORAN EDUCATION IN A GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

Globalization is an essential characteristic of today's world and a useful reference point for understanding El Salvador's international outlook. It can be defined as "the circulation of goods, services and capital, but also of information, ideas and people" (World Bank, 2000, p. 1). From the perspective of formal education[10], one essential aspect in confronting the demands of globalization is to create the capacity to provide quality educational opportunities to all citizens. In this respect, globalization presents a very simple challenge to society: *The population must increase its schooling and must acquire, through schooling, a quality education.*

Recent studies (FUSADES, 2003; FUSADES, 2002; UNDP, 2001) show that El Salvador, after the signing of the Peace Accords in 1992, has made efforts to alleviate poverty and strengthen democracy. However, existing inequalities are critical, the population still faces high levels of insecurity (economic and social), the country suffers from low levels of productivity, and, consequently, El Salvador is found at a relatively low level of competitiveness within the international context.

Two developments are essential for the analysis of current preschool and primary education policies and programs: the post-conflict situation of Salvadoran society and promotion of the Ten-Year Educational Reform Plan of 1995.

As of the late 1980s, assessments indicated that top priority should be placed on expanding access to preschool and primary education, especially in rural zones (Fundación Kast, 1988)[11]. Public officials recognized the quality deficiencies and low educational coverage, leading to the implementation of two significant initiatives in the early 1990s: the Education with Community Participation Program (*Programa Educación con Participación de la Comunidad* – EDUCO) and the Strengthening of Achievement in Basic Education Project (SABE).

The Peace Accords brought twelve years of civil war to a close and made it possible to initiate a process for the reconstruction and reconciliation of society. This also enabled the creation of a favorable political and social framework under which to implement EDUCO and SABE, to launch other initiatives, and, in general, to assign greater priority to education on the national agenda.

In spite of efforts made, an extensive study of the education sector carried out by the Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID)[12] demonstrated that education in El Salvador was in crisis (Reimers, 1995). For example, one in three adults could not read or write; the illiteracy rate among women was 32% and among men, 24%; forty-two percent of the population had received no

---

10 Clearly, non-formal or alternative education of youth and adults also has a significant impact on the educational opportunities and achievements of the population outside of formal schooling. This topic requires special treatment and is associated with a strategic line of efforts to be made by El Salvador's education sector in the immediate future.

11 The education policies of Alfredo Cristiani's administration (1989–1994) were to focus prioritized attention on the preschool and primary education of the poorest, develop options for informal adult education, improve the quality of the curriculum, decentralize administrative services, update the institutional framework, and promote participation by the nongovernmental sector (MINED, 1994).

12 This sector assessment was carried out in partnership with Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA), and Fundación Empresarial para el Desarrollo Educativo (FEPADE). It received support from the Ministry of Education and financing from USAID. In addition, its methodology promoted dialogue between key actors of Salvadoran society.

education beyond the third grade; only 70% of children between seven and fifteen years old were enrolled in primary education; and only 18% of youth between sixteen and eighteen years old were enrolled in secondary education. The data were even more critical with respect to the poorest sectors. For example, among the poorest 20% of the population, only one of two seven-year-old children was in school. In contrast, among the richest 10%, nine out of ten children attended school at age seven. These indicators were the result of a situation caused by the conflict: low investment in education; high levels of bureaucratization, centralization, and politicization in public administration; and severe insufficiencies in the delivery of services. Faced with this situation, the HIID study recommended the following: "On the agenda for a national dialogue to modernize the educational system, the main topics involve increasing, to a significant extent, quality and equality in the provision of education. For that, it will be necessary to increase significantly the resources allocated to education, to improve the educational system's links with society and the economy, and to improve efficiency in the use of resources" (Reimers, 1995, p. 99). Annex 4 summarizes the recommendations from this study linked most directly to preschool and primary education.

In 1994, the President of the Republic announced that a profound educational reform would take place. Efforts then focused on the preparation of a national plan, including intensive consultations with different groups and sectors of society (Comisión, 1995; Córdova, 1999), leading to the ongoing Ten-Year Educational Reform Plan (1995–2005). This plan emphasized the following: (i) elevate education to the highest priority, and forge it into a national policy rather than that of a single party or government administration; (ii) allocate sufficient resources in the budget; (iii) achieve an educational system with quality, universal access, equality. and efficiency; (iv) broaden the participation of teachers, parents, and communities in educational processes; and (v) provide integral education in human values, ethics, and civics (MINED, 1995). In early 2000, MINED presented a revised ten-year plan, confirming its commitment to reform and to reinforcing quality and equality in education (MINED, 2000). Annex 5 includes a synthesis of the main policies and programs for preschool and primary education over the past decade. (See Castro and others, 1999; Fernández and Carrasco, 2000; MINED, 2000; MINED, 2001; MINED, 2003a.)

IV. MAIN FINDINGS: PROGRESS, BUT NOT ENOUGH

Coverage

The gross and net rates of schooling at the preschool level increased between 1992 and 2000: the gross rate from 22% to 42% and the net rate from 22% to 37%. Although the increase is clear, a significant number of children still do not receive preschool education (MINED, 2002, p. 6 and 7). The situation is more disadvantageous for the poorest children, as detailed below.

Access to primary education increased from 81% among twelve-year-olds in 1993 (UNESCO, 1993, p. 667) to up to 95% among eight-year-olds in 2002 (see Table 2). The country not only offers timely and almost universal access to first grade, but also permanence in the educational system for at least six to eight years. According to 2001–2002 data, however, there is a high level of grade repetition. High repetition indicates learning problems, significant heterogeneity of ages at each grade level, and delays in promotions to higher grades.

According to Ministry of Education data, for all age groups the maximum rate of schooling in 2002 was 95% (among eight-year-olds; see far right column of Table 1). This maximum rate of schooling (children of a single age group who were enrolled simultaneously in primary school) is an indictor of access to first grade[13]. It shows the minimum percentage of children of this age group who enrolled at some time in first grade[14].

---

13 Given the high level of schooling achieved by El Salvador, the "illiteracy rate" (self-assessment reported to survey taker) has little significance, and the "schooling rate per age group" is somewhat inaccurate (ranging from 89% to 95% among the 7- to 12-year age groups, according to Table 1). The "rate of graduation from sixth grade of primary school" has, for now, an upper limit close to 50%, according to data from the household surveys. Because of such discrepancies, this study preferred to analyze coverage in terms of "access to first grade."

14 These data are consistent with data from the EHPMs applied periodically by DIGESTYC (2003, 33) and with data found in the 1998 National Family Health Survey (FESAL, 1999).

Table 2. Initial Enrollment (Public and Private) per Age and Grade, 2002

Age	Pre-school	Primary Grade 1	Primary Grades 2-9	Adult Basic Educ.	Secondary Grade 1	Secondary Grades 2-4	Higher Educ.	Total Enrollment	Population (single age group)	Net Rate of Schooling
3	4,418	93	772	8	2	1		5,294	160,665	3%
4	40,014	265	1,271	4	1	3		41,558	159,191	26%
5	76,073	2,028	620	4	7	1		78,733	157,645	50%
6	88,483	23,733	1,969	7	22	6		114,220	155,948	73%
7	17,411	100,256	19,565	10	15	12		137,269	154,943	89%
8	436	60,981	83,897	11	7	19		145,351	152,713	95%
9	80	25,892	114,448	33	10	20		140,483	150,199	94%
10	52	13,293	125,608	79	7	5		139,044	147,439	94%
11	73	6,688	124,993	121	6	3		131,884	144,560	91%
12	12	4,331	129,006	284	8	18		133,659	141,664	94%
13	3	1,886	116,168	437	79	61		118,634	138,753	86%
14	12	847	113,614	658	731	55		115,917	136,263	85%
15	11	377	85,635	793	8,741	706	11	96,274	134,430	72%
16	8	148	54,068	924	23,192	7,782	58	86,180	133,128	65%
17	5	116	28,234	875	16,745	21,539	536	68,050	131,713	52%
18		63	14,035	766	9,418	21,756	4,658	50,696	130,982	39%
19	1	38	6,835	644	5,157	13,051	11,529	37,255	130,490	29%
20	3	40	4,074	586	2,847	7,209	17,026	31,785	129,837	24%
21	1	35	2,446	392	1,584	3,788	20,805	29,051	129,166	22%
22	2	32	1,733	524	1,119	2,306	21,712	27,428	128,177	21%
23	1	19	1,039	337	697	1,335	18,277	21,705	127,325	17%
24	1	23	777	293	535	897	11,406	13,932	126,430	11%
25	8	23	650	247	359	678	5,909	7,874	125,334	6%
26	2	15	477	226	328	527	2,061	3,636	125,334	3%
27+	954	1,225	7,312	2,263	1,735	2,829	687	17,005		
Total	**228,064**	**242,447**	**1,039,246**	**10,526**	**73,352**	**84,607**	**114,675**	**1,792,917**		
Over-age		**116,072**	**551,505**		**40,524**	**44,294**				
% Over-age		**48%**	**53%**		**55%**	**53%**				

Note: This table shows the distribution of data as reported by the cited sources. Certain enrollment figures are not compatible with the age groups to which they correspond. However, the table does illustrate structural trends within El Salvador's educational system.
Sources: Ministry of Education, Preliminary Tabulation, National Department of Monitoring and Evaluation, San Salvador, November 2003. DIGESTYC-UNFPA-CELADE, 1966, Proyección de la Población de El Salvador. 2025, San Salvador, p. 56.

Students who enter the school system remain enrolled for six or more years. This permanence does not necessarily imply an increase in grade levels passed or attendance throughout the year, but it is an indicator of the time available for learning[15] within the system. Attendance is an aspect that should be investigated in detail in order to explain repetition and quality problems discussed below.

Eighty-five percent of the students who enter first grade remain in school for at least eight years. As illustrated under the column entitled *Net Rate of Schooling* in Table 1, these rates are 89% and over 90% for seven- to twelve-year-olds and 86% and 85% for thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds, respectively. Given the consistency between data from the Ministry of Education

and other sources, it may be claimed that there are no drop-outs among six-, seven- and eight-year-olds, but that desertion begins among nine-year-olds (when 1% desertion occurs).

Given the timely enrollment of most seven-year-old students and the fact that desertion begins among nine- and ten-year-olds, it is possible to

---

15 John Carroll (1963) includes available time as an important element for educational quality. The difference between grade levels passed and the number of years a student has been enrolled indicates system inefficiencies. Such inefficiency may have external causes (if the student does not attend class, for example, or has a learning problem or does not persevere until completing the proposed learning situations) or internal causes within the system related to teaching methods, didactic materials, methods of evaluation or learning goals.

estimate first-grade repetition with great precision[16] Indeed, *almost all first graders who are eight years old or older are repeating the first grade* (for the first time or more), except for some 15,000 students (close to 10% of the eight-year-old population group) who enrolled for the first time in first grade at the age of eight[17] and a small number of others who enrolled at the age of nine (0.33%, or one-third of one percent), but adding some 7,000 students[18]who first enrolled in first grade at the age of six and are thus repeating. Given that there are 116,072 over-age students, first-grade repeaters would total approximately 108,000[19]. Therefore, the *first grade repetition rate is close to 45%* (3% lower than the rate of over-age students). Data regarding over-age students (estimated according to the procedure indicated) are listed in the two bottom rows of Table 2 and show that repetition rates are close to 50%. This is consistent with UNESCO calculations for the early 2000s (UNESCO, 1996, p. 286). (Computer models are available to carry out the complex calculations required to estimate the rates for each of the following grade levels, in the event that precise figures are needed for these grades.)

High repetition would explain the low rate of coverage of the third primary cycle (grades 7–9), as well as the low percentage of youth who complete their primary education. Gross schooling in the third cycle grew from 34% to 39% between 1992 and 2000, whereas net schooling increased from 33% to 46% during the same period (MINED, 2002, p. 6 and 7.) In addition, although the percentage of fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds who have completed their primary education increased from 1995 to 2002, approximately 60% of youth had not completed ninth grade by the end of 2002 (see Table 3).

Table 3. Maximum Grade Reached by 15- to 19-Year-Olds, by Gender (1995, 2002)

Grade	1995			2002		
	Males	**Females**	**Total**	**Males**	**Females**	**Total**
None	10.4	9.0	9.7	5.2	4.3	4.7
Third	80.9	84.4	82.7	90.5	91.6	91.0
Sixth	59.2	62.8	61.1	75.2	75.9	75.5
Ninth	30.7	35.8	33.3	40.0	40.7	40.4

DIGESTYC – Household and Multi-purpose Surveys (EHPMs) for each year.

16 There is a 1-2% margin of error, which is low when compared, for example, to the 5%+ margin for census data..
17 The difference between the 145,351 eight-year-old students enrolled in 2002 and the 130,732 seven-year-old students enrolled in 2001. Some eight-year-olds may enroll directly into second grade, in which case the rate of first grade repetition would be even greater.
18 The approximate difference between the 24,989 six-year-old students in first grade in 2001 and the 17,737 seven-year-old students in second grade in 2002 corresponds to repeaters, since there is no desertion at these ages.
19 116,072 over-age students minus (145,351 – 130,732) new students, plus (24,989 – 17,737) repeaters.

Equality

Because there are different ways to understand equality, the following definition is proposed: The educational system is equitable if all children, regardless of socioeconomic or cultural status, have an equal opportunity to change the circumstances of their lives in connection with the education they receive (see Rosekrans, 2001). In associating equality with educational opportunity, Reimers (2000) identifies five aspects: i) opportunity to enroll in first grade, ii) opportunity to complete first grade successfully enough to pass to the following grade, iii) opportunity to complete each educational cycle, iv) opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge comparable to that of other classmates, and v) opportunity to extend one's social and economic options based on what was learned. This study presents an analysis that emphasizes socioeconomic aspects, since they are more relevant to the case of El Salvador. The conclusion is that *even though the opportunity to enroll in and complete first grade has increased (although not necessarily with the desired quality) for the different socioeconomic sectors of El Salvador's population, the poorest sectors face severe disadvantages in passing from one grade to another and in completing a quality education.*

Early childhood education doubled between 1993 and 2002, but a significant part of this expansion benefited the top economic sectors. Preschool coverage increased from 9% of the zero- to five-year-old population in 1991 (UNESCO, 1996, p. 284) up to 24% in 2002 (Table 1). Fifty percent of five-year-old children and 57% of six-year-olds are currently enrolled in preschool (Table 1). In 1992, the Household Survey showed few differences in access to infant education according to family socioeconomic status— 9% of children for the poorest families and 11% for those with the most economic resources. In 2000, however, the Household Survey demonstrated a considerable difference in access to infant education based on socioeconomic status: 27% of children from the poorest families receive such schooling vs. 70% of children from families with the most economic resources (MINED, 2002, p. 20).

There are signs that access to primary education increased over the last decade, even within the sectors with lower incomes. As stated above, however, this does not mean that children advance from one grade to another in a timely manner. The level of schooling achieved by each child is determined by differences in access to first grade, combined with inequalities in teaching quality, the pertinence of the curriculum, and the need to contribute to family income[20]. The effects of these factors are seen with greater clarity in higher age groups. Table 2 presents data for several age groups; however, the following analysis concentrates on the comparison of 20- to 24-year-olds and 25- to 29-year-olds, thus reflecting many of the possible achievements of these age groups at all levels of the educational system (Table 4).

Schooling levels achieved are higher among the upper quintiles, as demonstrated by the number of times that the percentage of the upper quintile is higher than that of the lowest quintile. Among 20- to 24-year-olds, for example, 73% of the quintile with the highest incomes achieved secondary or higher education: 4.5 times more than those in the quintile with the lowest incomes (16%, including 10% who reached from 10th to 12th grade and 4% who reached 13th grade or higher). On the other hand, 58% of 20- to 24-year-olds in the lower quintile reached only the fifth grade of primary school or below, compared to 9% in the upper quintile. The differences are even greater among 25- to 29-year-olds. Here, 70% of the quintile with the highest incomes reached secondary school or beyond—seven times the corresponding percentage for the lower quintile. In addition, 67% of the lower quintile reached only the fifth grade of primary school or below, compared to 9% in the upper quintile.

From 1995 to 2002, educational levels and access to first grade improved among El Salvador's children and youth, at least up to the 25- to 29-year age group. However, distribution per family income became less equitable. Indeed, the gap between the top

---

20 Susan Bissell and Ernesto Schiefelbein, 2003, Education to Combat Abusive Child Labor: Designing Incentive Strategies to Increase Education Access by Children Involved in Abusive Child Labor, Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS), Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII), United States Agency for International Development, Washington, DC, p. 64.

and bottom quintiles grew. With respect to the lower quintile, a comparison of the educational levels of 15- to 24-year-olds in 1995 to those of 20- to 29-year-olds in 2002 shows an improvement of *0.5 years* in schooling. The same comparison with respect to the upper quintile shows an improvement of *1.7 years.* In other words, the top quintile improved at over three times the rate of the lowest quintile, proving that the gap between both groups continues to grow.

Table 4. Education Achieved by Age Group, per Quintile, 2002

Educational Level Achieved	20- to 24-years-olds		25- to 29-year-olds	
	Lower Quintile	Upper Quintile	Lower Quintile	Upper Quintile
None	20%	1%	27%	2%
1 to 5	38%	8%	40%	7%
6 to 9	26%	17%	23%	20%
10 to 12	12%	38%	7%	32%
13 and above	4%	35%	3%	38%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Based on the 2002 Multi-purpose Household Survey (EHPM).

The population of the lowest quintile is concentrated within the first five grades of primary education, reflecting the high rates of repetition observed at these levels. In turn, high repetition is a result of low levels of learning. *In sum, a case can be made that two sub-systems are at work in education, each of which operates differently and achieves opposite results: one efficient sub-system for the population of the top quintile, in which students advance according to age, and another sub-system in which student advancement is slow because of high repetition and where fewer than half of the children complete the first six grades of primary education.*

The difference in educational level achieved by children in one or the other sub-system is associated with the inadequate primary education offered to children from lower-income sectors, who do not enjoy the conditions necessary to master basic knowledge and complete the primary education cycle. Although they remain in school for six to eight years, very few children of families in the lowest quintile become proficient in the knowledge considered by their teachers to be indispensable for promotion to higher grade levels. All of the children have talent—this is distributed evenly—but the lack of early stimulation by parents or through infant education, insufficient reading, the poor quality of primary education (especially that provided in marginal and rural zones), and lack of relevance in the curriculum act as impediments to learning. In these cases, school loses relevance, and this, combined with the need to contribute to family incomes, eventually leads children to abandon the system.

Quality

According to the documentation reviewed, achievements in educational reform in the 1990s—in terms of curricular reform—have involved the improvement of school conditions and inputs. There have been no significant changes within the classroom in terms of teaching practices or student learning.

A transition may be underway from traditional educational practices that focus on teaching toward a learning-based model. But such a transition has occurred mainly with respect to the formal and obvious

aspects of educational practices, such as the distribution of desks, access to certain curricular instruments, or teachers' opinions about which methodologies are more convenient. Frontal methodologies, rather than active ones, remain predominant. In addition, although certain practices do take place (such as work in teams and verbal question and answer exchanges), these are implemented outside of the pedagogical sense promoted under the reform framework.

Results of testing in primary education in 1998 showed that levels of student mastery over assessed objectives varied from one educational cycle to another: approximately 50% in third grade, 30% in sixth grade, and 20% in ninth grade (Graph 1).

Graph 1. Number of Learning Objectives Achieved by Students, per Subject and Grade, 1998
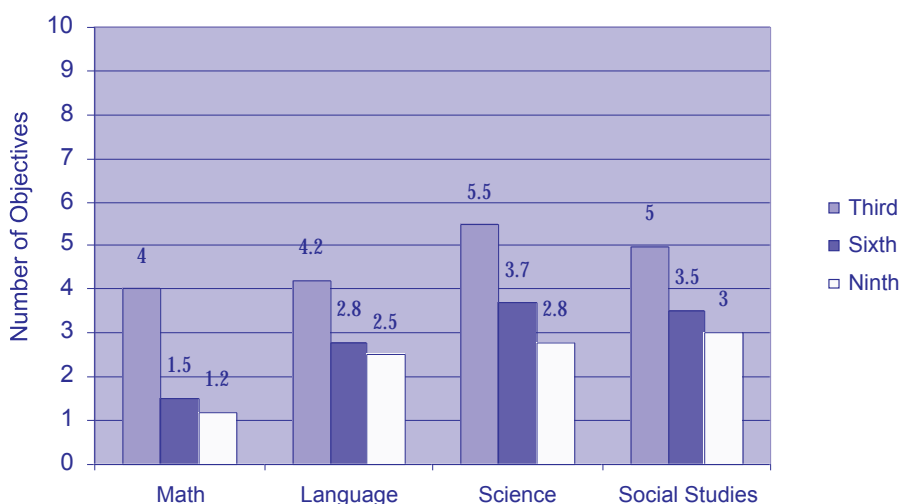
Source: Prepared with data from the National Department of Assessment, MINED

Breaking down the results, inequalities in student achievement are also seen as dependent on different factors. For example, there seems to be a growing opinion among teachers that no differences exist between the capacities, roles, or responsibilities of boys and girls. Even when it appears that certain advances have been made, actions occur in the classroom that contribute to gender inequalities (Barillas et al., 1997).

With respect to the socioeconomic situation, students in rural schools show lower academic achievement than those in urban schools. The same thing occurs with respect to public versus private school students, and students in eastern departments versus those who attend school in the central region (MINED, 2000, p. 18).

Reports on factors associated with secondary education (MINED, 2002b) demonstrate that household conditions (particularly socioeconomic conditions and the years of education of the mother) are the variables that weigh most heavily on student performance. This has been corroborated by other studies. Carrasco (2000), for example, found a significant correlation between achievement in mathematics and Spanish and the socioeconomic situation in students' households: those from the poorest homes obtained scores 40% lower than those of other students. A more recent study by Marín (2001) also found advantages among urban students over rural students in terms of reading comprehension and language skills. Finally, tests applied in 2001 show an important gap between the scores obtained by students in rural and urban areas in all evaluated subjects and grade levels (MINED, 2002c).

For technical reasons, a mathematical comparison between achievement tests applied by MINED in 1998 and 2001 has not been implemented. However, the trend has been consistent: students have low academic achievement in primary education. Results from 2001 show that in the four subjects and three grade levels, students

reach the lower limit of the intermediate achievement level (identify and comprehend) but do not process, recognize, or apply their knowledge. This indicates that students are not developing the higher skills and competencies that are the focus of a curriculum under the constructivist approach.

The fact that students reach an intermediate level, on average, indicates that some are learning and others are not. Graph 2 illustrates at least the following trends: (i) most primary students are learning something but not enough, as demonstrated by the percentages located at the intermediate level and especially at the basic level; (ii) only approximately 13% of students are experiencing optimal learning (those located at the superior level); (iii) in some cases, as students advance in their studies, they learn less, as shown by the decrease in students at intermediate and basic levels in sixth grade with respect to those in third grade, and in ninth grade with respect to sixth grade; (iv) students are learning less in mathematics than in other subjects; and (v) only 2% of students are experiencing optimal learning in mathematics in sixth grade.

Graph 2. Percentage of Students per Achievement Level and Grade, 2001

	Language			Math			Science			Social Studies		
	Third	Sixth	Ninth	Third	Sixth	Ninth	Third	Sixth	Ninth	Third	Sixth	Ninth
Superior	12	11	17	13	2	7	16	15	12	22	14	13
Intermediate	48	52	43	44	51	37	40	56	62	28	50	49
Basic	40	37	40	43	47	56	44	29	26	50	36	38
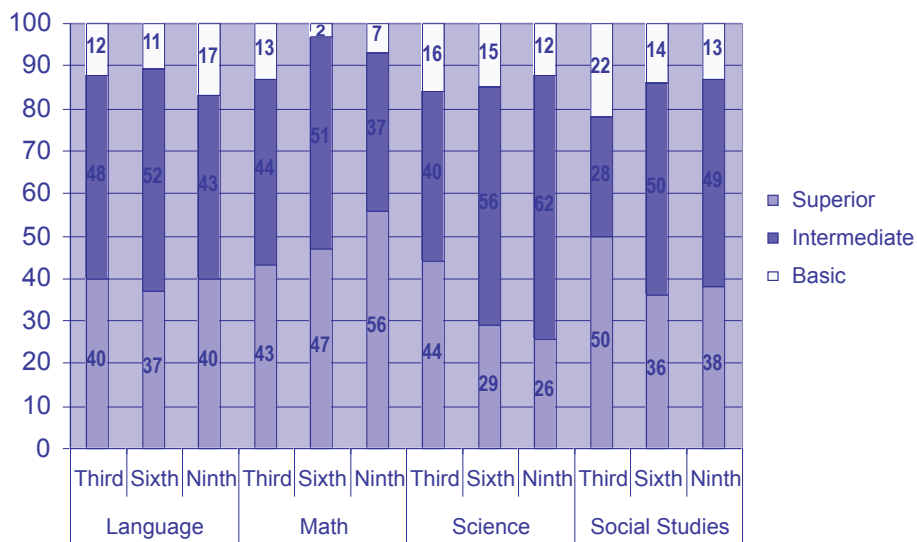
Source: Prepared based on data from MINED (2002a).

As part of this study, the research team reviewed the results achieved on language items by third-grade children in the test applied by SINEA in 2001. *This analysis revealed that half of the students in the third grade of primary school in El Salvador cannot identify the message of a relatively simple written text* (approximately four lines long). This result is consistent with the rates of repetition mentioned above. It confirms the low level of learning and reveals an inefficient use of resources in the school system to the extent that the objectives in reading comprehension are reasonable according to international comparisons[21]. It is particularly relevant to analyze reading comprehension results because they tend to be the best indicators of the quality of education provided in third grade, and non-specialists can also form their own opinions about the relationship between what students understand and the difficulty of the text. *If children cannot understand what they read, then they are unable to comprehend math problems or to learn concepts in the social and natural sciences.* This study also believes

---

21 See comment on page 31 in Lockheed, M and A. Verspoor, (1991), *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries: A Review of Policy Options*, (World Bank), New York: Oxford University Press.

that inferential reading is a better indicator than literal reading (UNESCO-LLECE, 2001, p. 24).

As discussed elsewhere, the poorest students obtain the lowest results. This is cause for great concern, since recent studies have shown that school quality is of vital importance to disadvantaged groups in providing opportunities for success in life. In developing countries, the effects of school quality on student performance can potentially compensate for disadvantages in socioeconomic background (Reimers, 2000; Cassasus, 2003).

The low levels of learning found in the 1990s did not significantly improve in the last assessment carried out in 2001 and are associated with the persistence of traditional teaching methodologies used at the start of the decade. This is particularly valid for the lower half of primary students, *and very probably for the children with greater socioeconomic disadvantages, who took part in achievement testing in 2001.* Indeed, with learning levels low at the end of the period under investigation (in these cases the aggregate value is clearly very low, and the use of complex methods of measurement is unnecessary), it is impossible to expect that there has been a substantial improvement in learning or in teaching.

Greater competitiveness requires more skilled human resources. Most countries that hope to advance in terms of international competitiveness, including El Salvador, are emphasizing the importance of extending secondary education. However, the indicators presented above illustrate the complexity involved in achieving this goal, as it implies improving the structural capacity of preschool and primary education. It also requires special attention toward the development of flexible modalities for youth who are entering the labor force with only six grades of primary education. In summary, *preparing the population for greater competitiveness involves increasing the effectiveness of preschool and primary education, including an effective transition of students from one grade to another (implying mastery of reading and writing as a foundation for the ability to learn how to learn), and ensuring that opportunities are available to all children regardless of their socioeconomic or cultural situations.*

V. CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Preschool Education

During the 1990s, public preschool enrollment increased under the EDUCO initiative. In addition, nonformal education centers were established to provide services to zero- to six-year-old children. These centers promote the involvement of mothers, who receive training in educational strategies for early childhood stimulation and preparation. These initiatives have been supported by NGOs, universities, the central government, and international organizations such as UNICEF, USAID, and the World Bank. There are no records, however, about the number of children covered through these centers. In 1998, the Early Childhood Family Education Program (EDIFAM) began, financed by USAID (US $8.7 million) in coordination with the Salvadoran Institute for Children and Adolescents (ISNA), MINED, and the Ministry of Health. EDIFAM has supported curricular revision and the production of preschool materials for the formal system (four to six years); it is currently designing the curriculum for zero- to three-year-olds. This earliest level has also been targeted by Phase I of the Educational Reform Project funded by the World Bank. In this case, didactic materials have been provided and training held for parents, teachers, and school directors in 525 communities.

Access to preschool has a positive impact on performance, as demonstrated in studies that control for family socioeconomic conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to broaden access or offer alternative, equivalent modalities that prepare children to enter primary school. El Salvador's goal is to provide three years of preschool education to all children between four and six years old— an admirable goal for a developing nation. Given the large percentage of poor children who do not attend preschool, however, a cost / benefit analysis should be implemented comparing the enrollment of children in three years of preschool versus the option of ensuring at least one year of preschool before first grade.

With respect to the quality of preschool education, in the 1990s significant steps were taken to develop a new curriculum with three basic units: the school, the family, and the community. These units were linked to the national curriculum, placing emphasis on children's cognitive, psychomotor, and social/affective development. In addition, teachers received training in how to evaluate the children in their classes. Methodological guidebooks were prepared for teachers, providing assistance for planning, organization of the learning environment, and teaching strategies. Textbooks were prepared for children, along with guidebooks for their parents.

There is broad agreement among preschool educators that traditional training, content practice, and isolated skill building have not been successful in preparing children for entrance to primary school. Nor do these aspects help to develop a good level of critical thinking or the problem-solving skills necessary in the 21st century. Although it is possible to improve traditional testing results by promoting memorization, training, dictation, in-class repetition, and mechanized learning, few educators currently support the continuation of such traditional methodologies. Experts agree that active, life-based, significant, and relevant learning experiences are required. They also believe in the need for interactive teaching, cooperative learning, and the integration of subject matters (NAEYC, 2003). Specialists' opinions, as well as the goals, objectives, and curriculum in El Salvador, apparently support these basic assumptions about teaching

and learning. This can be demonstrated by comparing the goals for preschool in El Salvador with the goals of NAEYC (*Dominios Curriculares Básicos*, 1999, p. 13–14), as illustrated in Annex 9.

Early childhood specialists agree that children—especially those under five years old—should not receive formal instruction in reading and writing. However, they also agree that the classroom must contain many letters, words, numbers, and other abstract concepts. Even more important than the introduction of symbols is the need for teachers to read to students in groups and individually, and for children to acquire knowledge about words. It is here where serious questions may be asked not only about preschools in El Salvador, but also about the country's primary education in general. Although teachers have the intention to use a child-centered approach in class, studies have shown that they take very little time for any type of reading and writing in class. In part, this can be attributed to the lack of books and reading materials. Even in primary schools, where emphasis on formal learning in language is essential, there is little or no reading to children and little free reading by them. Moreover, in general, parents in El Salvador do not read to their children before primary school.

Although *preschool education expanded over the last decade and certain quality improvements were achieved, gross schooling still only covers less than 50% of the overall population. Seventy percent of children from families with the highest incomes receive preschool education, compared to only 25% of children from families with the lowest incomes.* First-grade teachers who receive students with no prior preparation have a more complicated task than those teachers who receive students with one or two years of preschool. This initial difficulty is one of the causes of the deficient results found upon entry into formal schooling. It leads to a vicious cycle of failure and heterogeneity that becomes difficult to resolve.

Teacher Performance and Classroom Practices

Over the last decade, MINED has implemented changes in teacher training. New teachers take classes in educational theory, as well as gain practical experience by observing and helping in classrooms. In general, the purpose of all policies and programs targeting quality is to modify teacher performance and teaching practices in the classroom. In comparison to the United States, teacher training in El Salvador does not require coursework in the content that the teachers will be teaching (language, history, etc.), but provides more time in educational theory and teaching methods.

Following the passage of laws from 1996 to 2000 governing higher education and the teaching career, MINED embarked on achieving a new vision of continuous and systematic professional development for teachers in service. The vision includes improving capacity among teachers for offering constructivist, learner-centered education and a role for teachers in the social and economic development of the country.

Changes promoted in the 1990s included the following: curricular reform, distribution of study programs and teacher's guides, provision of textbooks to students, salary increases associated with a pay-scale revision and the introduction of performance incentives, the reform of early education, implementation of national training initiatives from massive training events to the transfer of financial resources to schools, testing of those graduating with teaching degrees, and the introduction of new evaluation standards. Recently, the *Escuela Diez* program was launched, focusing on improving quality in 103 relatively successful schools. However, no clearly defined policy has been adopted to ensure that teaching is effective and that children's learning is improved.

This study identified ten principal causes of low achievement in learning that are relevant to the situation in El Salvador, many related to teacher performance and teaching practices (see Schiefelbein, 1990)[22] :

(i)   use of frontal teaching and

22 On the other hand, the study rejects other causes often cited as problems. For example, the level of difficulty of the curricula applied in El Salvador is reasonable and does not differ significantly from the levels of difficulty in other countries; that is, El Salvador's curricula should not create excessive demands on the children (see Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991). Class size is reasonable, and a similar conclusion may be drawn with respect to teacher salaries, which are more than two times the national per capita income (the indicator used as a reference).

other inadequate teaching methods in classes in which there is great heterogeneity with respect to student age;

(ii) failure to provide preschool education to children with fewer resources (see previous section);

(iii) lack of learning materials for students;

(iv) inadequate reading / writing teaching methods;

(v) lack of an induction process for new teachers;

(vi) difficulty of changing the teaching styles of those who educate teachers;

(vii) insufficient early stimulation of children;

(viii) public disinformation about the high rate of repetition and the magnitude of learning problems;

(ix) lack of available time for learning; and

(x) inadequate assignment of teachers to the first grade of primary school.

With respect to teaching methods (item (i) in the above list), frontal teaching is inefficient when employed with heterogeneous age groups and students with highly variable learning levels who receive little support at home, frequently miss classes, do not do their homework on time, lack school supplies, have limited vocabularies, and are incapable of using more complex expressions. Frontal teaching does not allow children from families with fewer resources to achieve the minimum expected learning. Therefore, these students repeat the grade level, which further aggravates classroom heterogeneity without improving children's learning (Flechsig and Schiefelbein, 2003; also see McGinn and Borden, 1995, p. 90).

With respect to learning materials (iii) and teaching methods (iv), a review of textbooks used in El Salvador showed that students' prior knowledge is often disregarded. Textbooks do not suggest family activities, indicate how to include the school environment or surroundings in classroom activities, or include sufficient practice exercises or attractive formative evaluation modalities. In general, the texts do not include good exercises for reading comprehension, identification of the main idea, vocabulary building, or logical reasoning. The books use few teaching models (only two or three out of many possible— and effective—models.[23]) It is important to note that research has led to great progress in different approaches to the teaching of reading. A recent publication by the U.S. National Research Council has systematized global research about the prevention of reading difficulties (Snow, et al., 1998). In any case, "validation of the initial versions of guidebooks and instructions…will ensure that teachers can use them, students can understand them, and learning times are appropriate" (World Bank, 1987, p. 5). In addition, neither study programs nor textbooks emphasize the importance of systematic and permanent reading and writing in primary education, especially in the early grades.

With respect to an induction process (v) and styles of teacher-educators (vi), a great majority of those who educate teachers employ frontal teaching methods and carry out little research about the effects of different teaching models. Although teachers know the characteristics of many available models, few have put into practice any model other than frontal teaching, such as case studies, projects, seminars, field exploration, simulations, place learning, programmed teaching, mutual education networks, tutoring, or workshops (Flechsig and Schiefelbein, 2003). In addition to limitations in their pre-service professional development, new teachers joining the work force for the first time discover that they lack the techniques for teaching and must ask their colleagues "how to do it" (Latorre, 2002) or adopt the very same frontal model with which they were educated at different levels in the school system.

With respect to a lack of available time (ix), students who learn the least are those who miss too many class days due to illness or the need to contribute to family activities, as well as those who require more time to understand instructions. Good instructions make it possible for students to recover (at least in part) the learning that occurred

---

23 Teacher professional development and training, as well as didactic materials, should allow for experimentation with different models (Montessori, Waldorf, Freinet, Makarenko, Nueva, Plan Dalton) and projects (Accelerated, Cognitive Curriculum, French, German, Italian, British or American). There is a list of 20 teaching models useful for work in heterogeneous classrooms (Flechsig and Schiefelbein, 2003).

when they missed class. In general, students have little time to learn in traditional schools because of very short school years, few hours in a class day, student and teacher absences, and poor use of time by teachers (Toro, 1988). In a traditional school, the real number of class days in a school year is no more than 160, and classes usually last no more than 3.5 hours per day, as was the case ten years ago (Dewees et al., 1995, p. 243). Subtracting holidays and vacations, it is estimated that the school year (or time available for learning) totals 500 hours per year in El Salvador, compared to 1,100 hours in the United States, some 1,300 hours in Europe, and even more in Japan.[24] Real time for teaching / learning is further reduced because both students and teachers miss class during the year; the lack of textbooks makes it necessary to copy instead of spending time reflecting or practicing; and the need to resolve disciplinary problems, generated, in part, by boring frontal teaching practices. Students abandon school during harvest and/or market seasons, especially in rural areas, and some teachers utilize sick leave. In addition, the little time that remains for learning is sometimes dedicated to less relevant objectives (prioritizing, for example, the memorization of grammar rules with children who cannot write and do not comprehend what they read).

Finally, with respect to inadequate assignment of teachers (x), teaching first grade is probably the most important position in a school, but it is the job often assigned to the least-prepared teacher. First-grade teachers have an especially complicated assignment when their students are entering school for the first time with no preschool experience, have received little early stimulation, and have parents with little or no education. In this case, the task is immense, and most teachers try to avoid it. They attempt to pass the job to new teachers—recent graduates with limited expertise to complete the task successfully. The lack of prior experience among first-grade teachers will lead to low levels of learning among students, and this translates into a burden that will accompany almost all of these students for the rest of their lives in school. The assignment of good teachers to first grade would break this complicated, vicious cycle, helping to improve learning at all grade levels.

Quantity and Quality of Investment in Education

El Salvador has made efforts to increase investment in education. The education budget rose by 158% in real terms from 1993 to 2003, and public investment in education increased from 1.5% of the GDP in the early 1990s to more than 3% of the GDP in 2002.

According to the proposed National Budget presented to the Legislative Assembly, however, after twelve years of uninterrupted increase, the 2004 budget for education will experience a US $21 million nominal decrease. This reduction corresponds to a decrease of approximately US $40 million in external loan disbursements, a drop that is not compensated by a similar increase in the national budget (which will increase by less than US $20 million). There will also be a slight decrease in grants. It must be noted that *many of the inputs related to improvements in teaching quality are financed with external resources and, therefore, their sustainability cannot be guaranteed.*

---

24 Nancy Sato, 2004, Inside Japanese Classrooms. The Heart of Education, Routledge Falmer, New York, p. 325.

Graph 3. Education Budget as a Percentage of GDP and Total Budget, 1992 to 2004
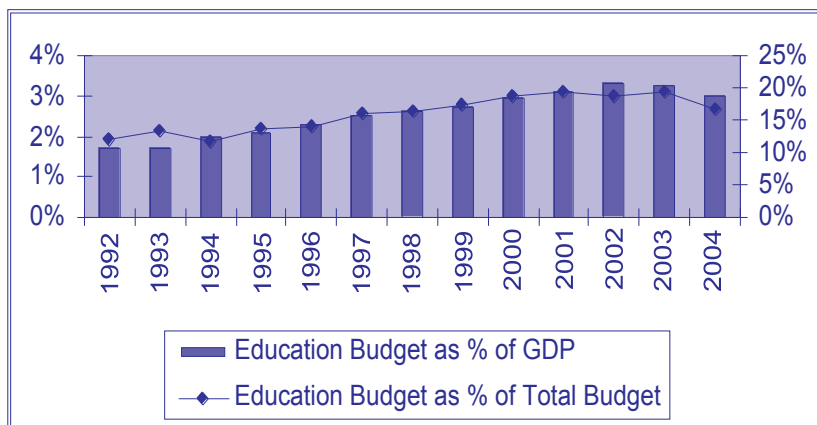
Note: Data about the 2004 budget refers to the budget proposal presented to the Legislative Assembly.
Source: National Budget, several years.

Compared with other countries in Latin America, El Salvador's public spending on the education sector is still limited (Table 5 and Annexes 6d and 6e). As a percentage of GDP, El Salvador's education budget surpasses only those of Ecuador, Guatemala, and Uruguay and is equal to Peru's. The remaining countries in the region earmark at least 4% of their respective GDPs to education (UNDP, 2003).

Priority within the budget is focused on primary education, which absorbed 60% of the total in 2002. However, primary education covers nine grade levels, and the budget is not detailed in a way that makes it possible to determine if some grade levels are under-financed (because of their high repetition rates) and others over-financed. Allocations for preschool and secondary education are low.

It is important to ensure the sustainability of components financed with external resources, so as not to put educational quality at risk. According to a breakdown of spending per student, salaries absorb a significant percentage of the budget. At the preschool and primary levels, salaries account for between 72% and 75% of all spending, and administrative and other similar expenditures between 10.5% and 12.5%. All other expenditures—many of which are necessary to improve educational quality—add up to only 16% of spending per student[25]. Most financing to improve quality comes from external sources. This means that sustainability is not ensured over time. If the permanence of such resources is not ensured over time, the quality of education in El Salvador may deteriorate, especially when compared with other countries in the region (Annexes 7A and 7B).

25 See Chapter 8, included in the attached CD, for a more detailed description of activities financed by World Bank and IDB loans.

Table 5 Breakdown of Spending per Student in US$ and % of Total Spending, per Level, 2002

	US$	% of Level
Preschool	233.39	100.0%
Salaries	166.69	71.4%
Goods and Services	1.13	0.5%
Current Transfers	4.02	1.7%
Other Expenditures, Preschool 1/	32.50	13.9%
Other Expenditures 3/	29.06	12.4%
Primary	279.21	100.0%
Salaries	208.92	74.8%
Goods and Services	1.61	0.6%
Current Transfers	7.13	2.6%
Other Expenditures, Primary 1/	32.50	11.6%
Other Expenditures 3/	29.06	10.4%
Secondary	490.63	100.0%
Salaries	251.66	51.3%
Goods and Services	6.37	1.3%
Current Transfers	3.87	0.8%
Other Expenditures, Secondary 2/	199.68	40.7%
Other Expenditures 3/	29.06	5.9%

1/ Educational Reform, Phase I, World Bank: US$42,938,050 divided by the number of preschool and primary students.
2/ Secondary Education Reform, World Bank: US$16,435,100 and technical support for the secondary education reform process: US$4,860,720, divided by the number of secondary students.
3/ Including: institutional management and administration; strengthening of access to education; educational development; and teacher welfare, divided by the total number of students.
Source: Prepared based on data from the National Budget, 2002 and MINED.

Relatively less public spending for education is directed toward lower-income sectors, especially with respect to resources earmarked for secondary education[26]. It should also be noted that public investment is lower in the case of preschool and secondary students from the lowest income quintile (indicated as "1" in Graph 4) than it is for the other quintiles.

Graph 4
Distribution of Public Resources for Education, per Educational Level
(Children between 4 and 18 years old per income quintile)
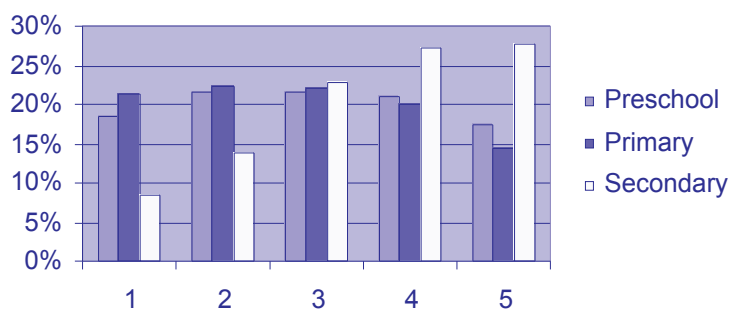
Source: Prepared based on data from the National Budget for 2002 and EHPM 2002.

26 In terms of adequate distribution, the study found evidence demonstrating that San Salvador and La Libertad are under-financedwith respect to their student populations.

High repetition, mainly within the first years of primary school and among *students with fewer resources, leads to the serious waste of resources within* *the system. Estimates of the costs of grade repetition are shown in Table 6.*

Table 6
El Salvador's Costs of Repeating Students in Each Primary Grade Level, 2002

Grade	Total Enrollment	Over-age	Repeaters (45% are over-age)	% of Total Enrollment	Cost of Repeaters (in US$ millions)
1	242,447	116,072	108,000	45%	24.8
2	174,817	89,739	83,498	48%	19.2
3	158,826	83,719	77,897	49%	17.9
4	144,311	76,517	71,196	49%	16.4
5	132,403	69,650	64,806	49%	14.9
6	124,347	65,611	61,048	49%	14.0
7	119,040	67,128	62,459	52%	14.4
8	100,465	53,453	49,736	50%	11.4
9	85,037	45,688	42,511	50%	9.8
Total	**1,281,693**	**667,577**	**621,150**	**48%**	**142.9**

Budget for primary education in 2003:	252.8
Percentage dedicated to repeating students:	56.6%

Note 1: The cost per student is estimated at US$ 230, using the following data.
Note 2: The average salary of a category 3 teacher is $ 6,910 per year (in 2003).
Note 3: In 2001 there were 52,553 teachers and 1,393,349 students (27 students per teacher).
Note 4: It is estimated that the real student / teacher ratio in 2002 will be 30 to 1.
Source: Calculations by Ernesto Schiefelbein, based on data from DIGESTYC 2002 (p. 441, 473, and 501).

In its plan entitled *Educación para Todos* (Education for All), MINED has established goals for net coverage at the different levels of education. By 2015, it proposes to achieve universal coverage at the preschool and primary levels and 75% coverage with respect to the third cycle of primary school and the secondary level. According to prepared calculations, the budget for education must increase from 3.3% of the GDP in 2002 to close to 5% of the GDP in 2015 in order to finance the requirements implied by these goals.

Private spending in education increased total spending for education to 8.4% of the GDP, through support for textbooks,

classroom fees, supplies, and other costs. However, as needed as this funding is, it primarily benefits students of higher income households. Of the $727 million in private funds for education in 2002, 45% went to those in the highest-income quintile, while only 8% benefited the lowest-income students.

Institutional Modernization and Decentralization

In the early 1990s, El Salvador faced a critical need to modernize its educational system. Throughout that decade, decisions were made and initiatives implemented that pointed toward a more decentralized management of

education services.

The legal framework (General Education Law, Teaching Career Law, and Higher Education Law) was updated, integrated, and simplified in the mid-1990s. Changes in MINED have included the following: decentralization from a regional to a departmental structure (1997–1998); contracting of private services with public funds; renewal of the supervisory system (1991) and, subsequently, its elimination in order to create a pedagogical advisory system (2001); modernization in the administration of human and financial resources; and implementation of information and evaluation systems.

Initially, the idea was to transfer responsibilities to Departmental Offices. However, it was later decided that this might cause dysfunctional overlaps with the central level and a loss of school autonomy. Unlike other educational decentralization processes in Latin America, El Salvador opted not to decentralize through its municipalities, which were thought to have technical limitations and to be at risk of politicization, although they could collaborate with the schools according to their individual capacities. Instead, El Salvador decided to decentralize at the school level (Lardé de Palomo, et al., 1998).

Through the EDUCO program, MINED organized, legalized, and trained Community Associations for Education (*Asociaciones Comunales para la Educación* – ACEs) formed by parents in communities within the country's poorest municipalities. With financial resources transferred by the government, ACEs hired teachers and purchased goods and services. When the EDUCO program began in 1991, the program included 263 ACEs and covered 8,416 students.

By 2003, student enrollment had topped 362,000, with the participation of over 2,000 ACEs in schools employing over 7,000 teachers. In 2002, ACEs administered close to US $45 million, representing approximately 11% of the national budget (Reyes, 2002). Currently, enrollment in EDUCO schools is close to 37% of total rural enrollment in public preschool and primary education.

As a result of approval of the Teaching Career Law, School Management Councils (*Consejos Directivos Escolares* – CDEs) were established in all public schools as of 1997. In cases where more than one school existed within a single building, one director was appointed, assigning one school name and establishing a single staff payroll. School directors were selected and named for five-year periods. In some cases, conflicts arose with respect to the integration of services within single school buildings; however, the measure was ultimately successful and facilitated the implementation of funding transfer mechanisms in subsequent years. In addition, as of 2001, El Salvador promoted the implementation of Institutional Educational Projects (*Proyectos Educativos Institucionales* – PEIs).

The establishment of ACEs and CDEs has made it possible for communities and other stakeholders to administer financial resources without seeking prior authorization from MINED or the Ministry of Finance and without having to carry out and wait for the steps required for centralized procurement within the public sector. One example is the administration of school bonds since 1997. (Table 7 lists transfers administered by schools in 2002.) Nevertheless, central MINED is still responsible for overseeing transfers of financial resources, negotiating sector resources with the Ministry of Finance, and legalizing documentation at the national level. It also continues to administer, at an overall level, the payment of salaries and benefits (except in EDUCO schools). Budget allocations are not provided to the departments, although the allocation of periodic payments does occur at the departmental level (Lardé de Palomo, et al., 1998, p. 12).

Table 7.
School Bonds per Bond Type, Objective, and Allocation Criterion, 2002
(Thousands of US$)

	Type of Bond	Objective	Allocation Criterion	Amount (US$ Thousands)
1	Educational Quality Bond (*Bono de Calidad Educativa* – GOES)	To help to satisfy schools' priority needs, oriented toward improving the quality of services.	Per number of sections	9,285
2	Preventive Maintenance	Preventive maintenance of the schools.	Budget of needs	635
3	Development of Learning Resource Centers (*Centros de Recursos para el Aprendizaje* – CRAs)	Introduction of Learning Resource Centers.	School project	1,400
4	Bond for Excellence	To provide *Escuela Diez* with resources to implement activities and projects prioritized in the PEI.	School project	2,025
5	School Food	To provide daily food rations to children in rural and marginal urban areas.	$ 0.12 per child	5,103
6	Fondo Alegría Bond	To encourage better utilization of schools during open hours.	Per school project	857
7	Fondo Juventud Bond	To create spaces for cultural and recreational participation during non-school hours and vacations.	Per school project	200
8	Professional Development Plans	To strengthen local professional development processes for teachers, through self-initiative and -development.	$ 56.69 per teacher (approximately)	1,829
9	Incentive for Institutional Educational Efforts	To provide incentives for quality teacher performance and planning efforts.	$228.57 per teacher in institutions that pass evaluation	5,143
10	Administrative Assistance	To strengthen the administrative capacities of different members of the Modalities for Local School Administration (CDEs and ACEs)	$57.14 per school to schools in departmental capital; $68.57 to schools in other municipalities	3,816
	TOTAL			30,293

Source: Prepared by Anabella Lardé based on MINED data.

Five points can be made about institutional modernization and decentralization in El Salvador:

(i) The creation of Departmental Offices has facilitated organization and administrative support processes for the schools. Because they lack decision-making power, however, personnel in these offices feel that they play only a secondary role as clerks or "paper pushers." In addition, there is no systematic policy to promote participation by the municipalities.

(ii) MINED transfers have provided the schools with non-salary resources to which they had no access before. Bringing the decisions about how to use funds closer to the schools presumably has a positive impact with respect to spending pertinence and efficiency, although this should be proved empirically. Currently, bond options are highly fragmented, forcing ACEs and CDEs to invest much of their time in administrative procedures.

25 Transfers 1, 5, 9, and 10 are incorporated within the Budget Law. The rest are financed through credit from the World Bank or IDB. This means that their sustainability cannot be ensured.

(iii) With the Professional Development Bond, MINED has decentralized in-service teacher training and apparently been able to train all teachers at a lower cost than invested previously. However, questions have been raised about the quality of service providers (especially in rural zones) and about the atomization of allocations to small schools.

(iv) EDUCO has achieved relative success in extending coverage, but significant challenges remain with respect to its functioning (especially regarding its clear impact on the improvement of quality and equality). Working and salary conditions of EDUCO teachers have been improving and are now almost at the level of traditional schools. However, the question of job security as perceived by teachers in the traditional system has yet to be resolved. Given the type of population they cover, the work of EDUCO schools is more difficult, but they can also make a greater difference in the quality of their students' lives.

(v) With respect to CDEs, there is a need to train their directors (as well as other members in general) on aspects of administrative and pedagogical management and parliamentary norms, so that they can improve their efforts and better manage consensual decision-making processes.

The reforms of educational management have promoted parental participation and created mechanisms for the accountability of school directors and teachers. *Such efforts are pointing in the right direction because, in order to have an effect, all educational reforms must reach the classroom, and participation can contribute significantly to this goal.* However, with power and autonomy come responsibilities. If participants' capacities are not strengthened and they are not provided with adequate resources to meet their responsibilities, results will be insufficient. The risk in decentralization processes (especially those involving school autonomy) is that they may exaggerate rather than decrease existing educational inequalities. This problem cannot be alleviated through a policy that expects existing inequalities to be resolved by a trickle-down effect. *The greatest pending challenge is to channel this participation toward the improvement of learning opportunities, especially for the poorest and most marginal sectors of the country.*

Evaluation Systems

Before 1993, El Salvador did not apply standardized tests to measure the academic performance of students in its educational system. In that year, and with support from the SABE Project, initial efforts were made in the area of learning assessment. The first tests were applied by a special unit created in the Curriculum Office in 1994. The data were analyzed by an external agency, and results served as a baseline for the SABE Project (USAID, 1994).

Subsequently, the application of testing at the primary level was systematized. In 1996, the Department of Evaluation and Research was created, and achievement tests covering the four main primary subjects were applied to a representative sample of first- and sixth-grade students in 311 schools, including EDUCO and traditional schools. In 1998, tests were given at the same schools, and ninth-grade students were also included. The results of these tests have served as feedback for the review of study programs, production of teaching materials, and design of training processes. In order to put learning achievements into context, information was also gathered about factors related to the teachers, schools, and families. This has made it possible to establish correlations between learning achievements and different variables related to student achievement. After the evaluation in 1998, results were returned to the schools (Castro et al., 1999, p. 93).

During the period from 1993 to 2000, however, testing at the primary school level tended to be inconsistent, due either to test design or to sample selection, both of which are related to the availability of financial resources. Recognizing these weaknesses in the system, MINED decided to unify and systematize all evaluation processes, including tests of learning at the primary and secondary levels and competency tests applied to graduating teachers (ECAP). In this way, MINED established the National Learning Evaluation System (*Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de los Aprendizajes* – SINEA) in 2001, under the auspices of the National

Department of Monitoring and Evaluation. Academic performance tests were applied at the third-, sixth-, and ninth-grade levels in 2003, but the results are not yet available.

MINED has made significant progress in establishing a learning assessment system. It now has standardized tests for the final grade levels of each of the three cycles in primary education (third, sixth, and ninth grades), for the final year of secondary school, and even for those graduating from universities with teaching degrees. However, certain aspects must still be improved:

(i) A better-defined policy is required for the use of evaluation results. The Achilles heel of this system, as in many other systems in the region and the world, involves the presentation, dissemination, and use of results in improving national policies and school and teacher performance. Very few key actors are aware of testing results, and even fewer use the results to improve their performance. *The challenge of educational quality evaluation systems involves translating the results into concrete policies and interventions that will improve educational quality. Clearly, this requires a good strategy for the dissemination, socialization, and presentation of results. There is no evidence that such a strategy exists in El Salvador.*

(ii) Improved guidance is required for school directors, teachers, and parents about the objectives, focus, structure, and type of results produced by the tests.

(iii) In order to ensure transparency and better comprehension of the system, those in charge of it must produce a complete technical report explaining the focus, preparation, application, measurement, and presentation of results.

(iv) SINEA tests still assess only a limited number of competencies under each subject and only those that can be measured using multiple-choice questions. In order to measure student performance, many different types of assessments are required.

(v) The samples do not allow for relevant breakdowns to obtain data according to geographical criteria, gender, or socioeconomic status. Nor do they provide specific information about which skills (within the competencies) are and are not being mastered.

(vi) The test that is most severely criticized, especially by the universities, is the ECAP, which tests new teachers. The reason, perhaps, is that this is the only test that is a requirement for graduation. Concerns are that the ECAP is not aligned with the curriculum or with what is taught to the students and that, despite being considered a test of competencies, it actually favors the measurement of • memorized knowledge and ignores more important aspects such as professional development, values, and skills directly related to teaching.

(vii) El Salvador does not participate in international testing. However, there are several opportunities to do so, such as TIMSS, PISA, PIRLS, and the LLECE test. A second study of the LLECE test at the Latin American level is scheduled for 2004. El Salvador should consider participating in tests of broader international reach, such as those sponsored by IEA and OCDE.

(viii) Finally, key actors in the system interviewed for this study expressed concern that the emphasis on standardized testing has led to the neglect of self-assessment and internal evaluation processes carried out by stakeholders in the schools themselves. In order to resolve this problem, some countries in the region (such as Mexico) have separated internal and external evaluations. Internal evaluations would be managed by MINED and external evaluations by a specialized autonomous institution. As a consequence, testing results would be more reliable and the Ministry would no longer be judge and jury of its own evaluation process.

Within the framework of evaluation criteria comes consideration of standards. In Latin America, interest has been expressed about the establishment of national and regional standards. Central America—El Salvador in particular—has begun to take steps in this direction: the definition of educational standards began in 1998 through a project led by the Central

American Educational and Cultural Coordinator (*Coordinadora Educativa y Cultural Centroamericana* – CECC), together with the Organization of Latin American States (OEI) and with participation by technical teams from the region's Ministries of Education. The project's initial results included the definition of regional content and performance standards for primary grades one to six in the subjects of mathematics, language, and natural sciences (OEI/CECC, 1999). El Salvador is one of the countries that has advanced most in the definition and implementation of national standards derived from these regional standards.

In 2000, El Salvador began the process of defining its educational standards and grade expectations. By 2003, it prepared content and performance standards covering from the first cycle of primary education up through secondary school in the subjects of language, mathematics, social studies, and natural sciences. (Learning opportunity standards, which are key to aspects of equality, have not been defined. These standards are not part of the CECC Project and apparently are not included in MINED's short-term planning.) The defined standards have been disseminated to different stakeholders, and a pilot project for classroom application has been initiated with a small group of 13 schools belonging to the *Escuela Diez* Program. Teacher reactions to this project have varied, and

other sectors have reacted tepidly, thus demonstrating the need to reinforce dissemination and consensus.

Institutional Coordination

In the Rome Declaration on Donor Harmonization signed in February 2003, governments and international organizations committed to ensuring that development assistance is applied pursuant to the priorities of each partner country (abiding by national poverty reduction strategies and similar approaches) and that efforts are adapted to country contexts. The objective of such coordination is to increase the impact of international assistance by reducing or eliminating the duplication of efforts, filling gaps and exploiting the comparative advantages of each donor.

As a local counterpart, partner countries must ensure that public policy objectives are expressed in government plans for each of the sectors, including education. Such plans must stipulate the sector's principles and objectives, the strategies and measures meant to achieve these objectives in the medium term, and specific short-term intervention programs.

In line with the above, over the past several years the concept of Sector-wide Approach Programs (SWAPs) has been predominant. MINED has established sectoral plans: the Ten-year Educational Reform Plan for

1995-2005 (MINED, 1995) and its adjustments as expressed in the "Challenges for Education in the New Millennium" Program (MINED, 2000). The fact that MINED has these plans has ensured a certain level of coordination with other actors within the sector. This is seen as an advantage compared to other social sectors that, until recently, have lacked sectoral plans.

MINED's Department for the National Coordination of Assistance is responsible for the coordination of all resources obtained through external aid. Assistance from bilateral donors is determined by the agreements regarding cooperation and priorities of the donor country. Cooperation from multilateral donors is more flexible: areas of action stem from summits and ministerial agreements in which El Salvador participates and wields influence. It should be clarified, however, that the coordination of credits or loans (which involve the highest investment volumes) is carried out by a specialized entity: the Project Coordinating Unit (*Unidad Coordinadora de Proyecto* – UCP).

Effective leadership by MINED in coordinating the different actors in the education sector will require strengthening the MINED planning unit. This unit was established recently[28] and, as of January 2004, employed only two technicians. Planning responsibilities exceed the unit's capacity, not only because of the limited personnel but also

---

28 The Planning Office (ODEPOR) was eliminated in 1996 when MINED reorganized its Regional Offices into 14 Departmental Offices.

because the staff must dedicate some of its time to short-term day-to-day activities.

Table 8 presents a summary of the programs that have received the most funding over the past decade (see also, in Annexes 7a and 7b, a list of international organizations and private entities that implemented programs in El Salvador in 2003).

Table 8
Credits and Grants of Highest Financial Significance in the Education Sector (1991-2003)

Project	Source	Period	Total Amount (US$ Millions)	External Financing (US$ Millions)
Credits				
Social Sector Rehabilitation	BIRF	1991-1995		7.0
Modernization of Primary Education	BIRF/IDB	1995-2002		80.2
Reform of Secondary Education	BIRF	1998-2004	77.0	68.0
Educational Reform, Phase I	BIRF	1998-2004	110.0	100.0
Educational Technology	IDB	2000-2004		81.3
Educational Infrastructure	IDB	2001-2003		78.8
TOTAL				415.3
Grants				
SABE	USAID	1991-1998		30.0
Support for Reform	USAID	1995-2000		7.0
APREMAT (Technical Secondary Education)	European Union	1999-2005	25.4*	17.0*
EDIFAM	USAID	1999-2004		6.0
EXCELL	USAID	2003-2005		5.0
TOTAL				60.0

* Euros
Source: Anabella Lardé, based on data from MINED and Centro ALFA (2002).

In order to increase the levels of human capital, greater public resources are required, along with resources from other actors: International Financial Institutions (IFIs), foreign cooperation, the private sector, and NGOs. For a long time, these actors have supported the education sector. However, MINED has not played a very active role in coordinating such support and, on many occasions, has limited its actions to simply receiving the assistance offered.

More funding can be obtained, and its use improved, if MINED, donors, and other actors in the sector agree to unite and commit to a single vision. Such a pact would help to generate a coherent, predictable, and transparent response by donors and other actors to the national plan and would create clear incentives so that the government, donors, and other actors intensify their efforts.

Any effort toward coordination must be founded on educational planning and, within that planning, on the new Ten-Year Educational Reform Plan. The ten-year plan must stipulate the sector's principles and objectives, as well as the strategies and measures to be implemented to achieve these principles and objectives in the medium term and a program of specific short-term interventions. The plan should be prepared under MINED's leadership, with participation by donors and other key actors within the sector. It must be subject to continuous monitoring, and it must be adapted and modified according to new realities, taking into account that if appropriate financial estimates are not included in the national budget, then the sustainability of investments will be at risk when external support ends.

In order to ensure sustainable coordination, MINED must create—under its leadership—a permanent entity in which to define the sector's principles and objectives, as well as the strategies and measures to achieve these policy objectives in the medium term, and a program of specific short-term interventions. This space for participation would also be the coordinating entity in which each of the donors and other actors commits to levels of financing and specific areas of intervention.

VI. NEW EDUCATION POLICY OPTIONS FOR EL SALVADOR

The efforts carried out in the 1990s to strengthen El Salvador's educational system must be recognized. More children attend school, efforts have been made to provide schools with resources, teachers share a vision with respect to the improvement of quality, funding for education has increased, and important legal and institutional transformations have been achieved. However, it cannot be said that children are advancing effectively from one grade level to the next in primary school, or that they are acquiring the fundamental competencies necessary to face the challenges of today's society. At the root of current learning deficiencies is an insufficient mastery over the competencies of reading and writing—competencies that must be consolidated within the first years of schooling and that set the foundation for subsequent learning.

In an international context, the limitations that may exist in El Salvador (see Annexes 6A through 6E) are even more severe for the socioeconomic sectors with the lowest incomes. Dedicated efforts must be made to eliminate existing gaps, thereby ensuring that the system operates effectively to reduce poverty and increase productive capacities and international competitiveness.

The following seven proposed policy options, based on this analysis, may help to improve education in El Salvador. With elections held in El Salvador in 2004, these proposals come at an opportune time for the definition of a long-term strategic plan:

(i) **Opportunities for children to receive preschool education must be increased, particularly for those children whose families receive lower incomes**. In an initial stage, El Salvador should consider expanding access to preschool to all children for at least one year prior to first grade. Preschool education must ensure that children acquire skills associated with reading and writing.

(ii) **Measures increasing the possibility that students pass from one grade to the next must be introduced**, especially within the first cycle of primary education, ensuring that relevant learning is achieved. In this sense, the curricula of these grade levels should be revised, focusing on the development of a reading culture based on reading and writing skills. Special emphasis must be focused on children who are below average in learning achievement tests— and who are also the poorest children. Excellent teachers should be assigned to cover first grade, and teaching practices should be reviewed in order to ensure that teachers practice models other than the frontal method and focus on literacy and self-learning. This will imply an increase in the effective time dedicated to learning and application of a system that promotes students because they learn. There are programs in El Salvador (such as Alternative Classrooms and Accelerated Education) that must be evaluated and improved in order to help eliminate repetition.

(iii) The third primary cycle (grades 7 to 9) will grow as more children complete sixth grade. Meanwhile, **El Salvador must consider the implementation of flexible alternative modalities** (including the evaluation and strengthening of programs such as television-based learning and EDUCATODOS) in order to

ensure that options are available for a greater percentage of the population to continue their studies.

(iv)The assessment system must be strengthened. The elimination of current initiatives due to lack of financing must be prevented. In addition, mechanisms must be created to ensure that evaluation results are useful to and exploited by public authorities, schools, teachers, parents, and society in general to identify problems and determine correct responses to improve children's learning. The country should consider participating in international testing, so that the achievements of Salvadoran children are compared to those of children from other countries.

(v)Efforts to strengthen school autonomy should be reinforced, promoting leadership among school directors, as well as participation by teachers and communities. The schools' main responsibility should be to use available resources to ensure an increase in schooling and an improvement in learning quality.

(vi)The trend toward reductions in public investment in education must be reversed. Rather, such investment should increase and achieve greater effectiveness, which will be accomplished by preventing repetition and focusing resources on the children of families with lower incomes so that education becomes a tool for the reduction of poverty.

(vii)A national initiative must be developed, bringing different local actors and international organizations together to cooperate in efforts to improve education, pursuant to a long-term vision. Finalization of the Ten-Year Educational Reform Plan (1995–2005) and the arrival of newly elected officials will provide an opportunity to unite society on behalf of education. While long-term goals are being established, it is essential to remember that short-term efforts are also necessary to increase the quantity and quality of education, especially among the country's poorest sectors.

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Banco Mundial (2003). *El Salvador. Costo Eficiencia de los Bonos Educativos*. Evaluación de medio término.

Bissell, Susan and Ernesto Schiefelbein (2003). Education to Combat Abusive Child Labor: Designing Incentive Strategies to Increase Education Access by Children Involved in Abusive Child Labor, Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS), Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII). Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.

Carrasco, A. (2000). *Equidad de la Educación en El Salvador*. Revista de la CEPAL # 70, Santiago.

Carroll, John (1963). A Model of School Learning, *Teachers College Record,* N° 64, May 1963.

Cassasus, J. (2003). *La Escuela y la (des)igualdad*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones.

Castro, A., D. Meza, and J.L. Guzmán (1999). *En el Camino de la Transformación Educativa (1989-1999)*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

Centro ALFA (2002). *Informe de Progreso Educativo: El Salvador 2002.*

San Salvador: Centro ALFA y Programa de Promoción de la Reforma Educativa en América Latina (PREAL).

Comisión de Educación, Ciencia y Desarrollo (1995). *Transformar la educación para la paz y el desarrollo de El Salvador*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

Córdova, R. (1999). *El proceso de gestación de la Reforma Educativa.* San Salvador: Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo, FUNDAUNGO.

Dewees, A. et al. (1995). Educación Básica y Parvularia. In F. Reimers (coordinador), *La Educación en El Salvador de cara al siglo XXI. Desafíos y oportunidades*. San Salvador: UCA Editores.

DIGESTYC (2003). Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples 2002, p. 350. San Salvador: Ministerio de Economía, Programa MECOVI-BID.

DIGESTYC-UNFPA-CELADE (1966). *Proyección de la Población de El Salvador. 2025,* p. 427. San Salvador.

Duryea, S., A. Cox, and M. Ureta (2003). *Critical Decisions at a Critical Age: Adolescents and Young Adults in*

Latin America. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank.

Enríquez, A. and J. Chávez (2003). *Descentralización de la Educación Parvularia y Básica en El Salvador: Construyendo una Propuesta*. San Salvador: FUNDE. Preliminary draft for discussion.

Fernández, A. and A. Carrasco (2000). *La educación y su reforma. El Salvador, 1989-1998*. San Salvador: Fundación Empresarial para el Desarrollo Educativo (FEPADE).

FEPADE (1997). *¿Tu Aprendes? ¿Yo Enseño?: Discurso y Realidad en las Escuelas Salvadoreñas*. San Salvador: Fundación Empresarial para el Desarrollo Educativo.

FESAL (1999). *Encuesta Nacional de Salud Familiar (FESAL-98),* San Salvador: Asociacion Demográfica Salvadoreña and Centers for Disease Control, Division of Reproductive Health.

Flechsig, Karl-Heinz and Ernesto Schiefelbein (2003). *20 Modelos Didácticos para América Latina*, in OEA digital library, www.educoea.org, visited on November 2003.

Fundación Kast (1988). *Fundamentación del Desarrollo Social:*

Sector Educación. Mimeograph. San Salvador: Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUSADES).

Flores, I., et al. (2001). *Escuelas Públicas de I y II Ciclo de Educación Básica Exitosas y no Exitosas: Factores que Influyen en tal Situación*. San Salvador: FEPADE.

FUSADES (2002). *Invirtamos en educación para desafiar el crecimiento económico y la pobreza. Informe de desarrollo económico y social*. San Salvador: FUSADES.

FUSADES (2003). *Informe de Desarrollo Económico y Social 2003: Competitividad para el Desarrollo*. San Salvador: FUSADES.

Gajardo, M. (1999). *Reformas Educativas en América Latina: Balance de una Década*. Santiago: PREAL, documento de trabajo No 15.

Guevara, et al. (2000). *Los CDE, una Estrategia de Administración Escolar, Local Participativa*. San Salvador: FEPADE.

Guzmán, J.L. (2003). *La Reforma Educativa de El Salvador (1992-2002)*. Case Study. Washington, DC: The RISE Institute/IDB.

Lardé de Palomo, A., et al. (1998). *Administración Educativa Descentralizada: El Caso de El Salvador*. San Salvador: FUSADES.

Latorre, Marisol (2002). *Saber Pedagógico en uso. Caracterización del saber actuante en las prácticas pedagógicas,* Tesis Doctoral, Programa de Doctorado en Ciencias de la Educación, PUC,

Santiago, Chile y Ecole Doctorale de la faculte des Sciences Humaines et Sociales de l´Universite Rene Descartes, Paris.

Lockheed, Marlaine and Adriaan Verspoor (1989). *El mejoramiento de la educación primaria en los países en desarrollo: examen de las opciones de políticas*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Marin, M. (2001). Aula Reformada: Buenas Prácticas de Actualización y Buenas Practicas Docentes. Estudio inédito, REDUC.

Ministerio de Economía (2003). *Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples, 2002,* Dirección General de Estadística y Censos.

Ministerio de Educación (MINED) (1994). Memoria de Labores 1989-1994. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (1995). *Reforma Educativa en Marcha. Lineamientos del Plan Decenal, 1995-2005*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (1997). *Fundamentos del Currículum Nacional*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (1999). *Dominios curriculares básicos de educación parvularia, básica y media.* San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (2000). *Desafíos de la educación hacia el nuevo milenio. Reforma Educativa en Marcha, 2000-2005.* San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (2001). *Memoria de Labores 2000-2001. La Transformación en la Reconstrucción*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (2002a). *El Salvador 2000. Logros y desafíos de la educación.* San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (2002b). *Factores asociados al rendimiento de los estudiantes que se sometieron a la PAES 2000.* San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (2002c). *Informe de Resultados de Logro Académico Educación Básica*, 2001. El Salvador: SINEA.

MINED (2003a). *Plan de Educación para Todos 2003-2015* (Versión preliminar). San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (2003b). *Caracterización del Primero y Segundo Ciclos de Educación Básica en El Salvador. Un enfoque cualitativo*. San Salvador: Dirección Nacional de Monitoreo y Evaluación, Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (2003c). *Memoria de Labores 2002-2003. Escuelas en transformación hacia una educación de calidad*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED (2003d). *Estándares e Indicadores de los Procesos de Calidad: Programa Escuela 10*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

MINED/UES (2003). *Plan Especial de Estimulo a la Labor Educativa Institucional para el Año 2002*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación, Universidad de El Salvador.

Ministerio de Hacienda (2003).

Proyecto de Ley Presupuesto General del Estado, 2004.

Ministerio de Hacienda (2003). *Presupuesto General del Estado, 2003.*

Ministerio de Hacienda (2002). *Presupuesto General del Estado, 2002.*

Ministerio de Hacienda (2001). *Presupuesto General del Estado, 2001.*

Ministerio de Hacienda (2000). *Presupuesto General del Estado, 2000.*

Ministerio de Hacienda (1996). *Presupuesto General del Estado, 1996.*

OEI/CECC (1999). *Informe Regional del Proyecto Establecimiento de Estándares para la Educación Primaria en Centroamérica.* San José.

NAEYC (2003). *Guidelines for appropriate curriculum, content and assessment in programs serving children ages 3 through 8.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Nóchez Montes, M. E. (2003). *Evaluación de la descentralización de Fondo de Desarrollo Profesional Docentes- Año 2001* San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.

PREAL (2001). *Lagging Behind. A Report Card on Education in Latin America. A Report of the Task Force on Education, Equity, and Economic Competitiveness in the Americas.* Washington, DC: Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas (PREAL).

PREAL (2003). *Es hora de actuar. Informe de Progreso Educativo de*

Centroamérica y República Dominicana. Comisión Centroamericana para la Reforma Educativa. Washington DC: PREAL.

Ravela, P. (2002). *¿Cómo presentan sus Resultados los Sistemas Nacionales de Evaluación Educativa en América Latina?* Washington: PREAL.

Reimers, F. (1995). *La educación en El Salvador de cara al siglo XXI: Desafíos y oportunidades.* San Salvador: UCA Editores.

Reimers, F. and N. McGinn. (1997). *Informed Dialogue. Using Research to Shape Education Policy Around the World.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Reimers, F. (2000). *Unequal Schools, Unequal Chances.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Reyes, J. (2002). *The Case of a Successful Community-Managed Education Program: EDUCO.* Washington DC: World Bank (Draft).

Rosekrans, K. (2002). "Educational opportunity: El Salvador's barriers to achieving equality persist." *The Online Journal of Comparative, International and Intercultural Education.* Fall.

Schiefelbein, Ernesto, Laurence Wolff ,and Paulina Schiefelbein (2000). La opinión de expertos como instrumento para evaluar la inversión en educación primaria. *Revista de la CEPAL,* No 72, Diciembre 2000, ECLAC, Santiago, pp. 147-163.

Schiefelbein, Ernesto, Laurence

Wolff, and Paulina Schiefelbein (1998). "Cost Effectiveness of Education Policies in Latin América: A Survey of Expert Opinion", Technical Study EDU-109, IDB, Washington, D.C., pp. 1-29, December 1998.

Schiefelbein, Ernesto (1990). Basic Elements to Reflect on the Quality of Education in the Latin American Context, *Research Report,* No. 86, International Institute of Educational Planning, UNESCO, Paris, p. 35.

Sawada, Y. (2000). *Community Participation, Teacher Effort, and Educational Outcome: The Case of El Salvador's EDUCO Program.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

SINEA (2002). *Educación Básica. 2001.* San Salvador: Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de los Aprendizajes, Dirección Nacional de Monitoreo y Evaluación, Ministerio de Educación, Dirección de Evaluación Educativa.

Snow, Catherine, S. Burns, and P. Griffin (Eds.) (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children.* Washington, DC: National Research Council, National Academy Press.

Tedesco, J.C. (2002). *Los pilares de la educación del futuro* (Presentación en el Seminario de Educación de la Asociación Cristianda de Dirigenrtes de Empresa). Argentina. (manuscript).

Toro, J.B. (1988). *Primero mi primaria. Para triunfar.* Bogotá: Fundación Social,.

UNESCO (1996). "The State of Education in Latin America and The

Caribbean, 1980-1994", p. 697. *Mayor Project of Education*. Santiago, Chile: OREALC –SIRI.

UNESCO-LLECE (2001). *Primer Estudio Internacional Comparativo. Informe Técnico*, p. 269. Santiago: Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación. Available at www.unesco.cl/llece

UNESCO/OREALC (2002). *Panorama Educativo de las Americas: Informe Regional*. Santiago.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1999). *Informe sobre desarrollo humano*. New York: UNDP.

UNDP (2001). *Informe sobre desarrollo humano: El Salvador 2001*. San Salvador: UNDP.

UNDP (2003). *Human Development Report. Millennium Development Goals: A Compact Among Nations to End Human Poverty*. New York: UNDP.

USAID (1994). *Mid-Term Evaluation of the Strengthening of Achievement in Basic Education Project (SABE)*. San Salvador: USAID.

USAID (2002). *Equidad y género en el aula. Base de datos de diez escuelas en El Salvador*. San Salvador: USAID/MINED.

USAID (2003). *Central America and Mexico (CAM) Regional Strategy*. Washington, DC: USAID.

Winkler, D.R. and A.I. Gershberg (2000). *Education Decentralization in Latin America: The effects on the quality of schooling*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Wolff, L. (1998). *Las Evaluaciones Educacionales en América Latina. Avance Actual y Futuros Desafíos*. Santiago: PREAL.

World Bank (1987). *Education News*, Vol 1 (4), First Quarter, Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank (2000). *Poverty in an Age of Globalization*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank (2002). *Closing the Gap in Education and Technology*. Washington, DC: World Bank Latin American and Caribbean Studies, World Bank.

ANNEX I.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED, CENTERS VISITED, AND FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS
(October-November 2003)

Interviews

Name	Institution/program	Position
Rolando Marín	MINED	Minister
Matilde de Quintana	MINED	Vice Minister
Francisco Quintanilla	MINED	Director of Educational Development
Angel Dubón	MINED	Director of Educational Management
Napoleón Zepeda	MINED	Head of Office of Programming and Project Management
Patricia Mejía	MINED	Director of National Coordination of Cooperation
Rolando Aguirre	MINED	Head of Planning
Ernesto Richter	MINED/*Escuela Diez*	Director
Marco Tulio Fuentes	MINED	Departmental Director of Santa Ana
Nelson Martínez	MINED/*Aulas Alternativas*	Coordinator, Center for Professional Development (East)
Hugo Said Magaña	Public school	Assistant director
Lic. Elizabeth Ortiz	MINED	Administration of Decentralization
Oscar A. López	MINED	Coordinator of Computer Education
Lorena de Varela	MINED	*Escuela Diez*
Agustín Fernández	UCA	Head Deparment of Education
Ana Julia de Polillo	MINED	Director of Curriculum Development
Fredy Alfaro	MINED	Specialist in Curriculum Development
Marco Morroquín	MINED	Educational Standards
Alberto Barillas	FEPADE	Researcher
Roberto Rivera Campos	FUSADES	Director of Economic and Social Studies
Francisco Ramos	MINED	Coordinator, PAES Implementation
Cesar Mejía	FUNDE	Coordinator of Education
Carmen Lorena Reynosa	ACE	President
Mercedes Ruiz	MINED	Manager, Teacher Training
Margarita Franco	UDB	Director, School of Education
Rafael Guido	MINED	Assistant to the Minister
Edmundo Salas	MINED	Director of Evaluation and Research
Miguel Corleto	DIGESTYC	Director
Ángel Azucar	MINED	Educational Materials
Mercedes Castro	MINED	Teacher Professional Development
Mario Nóchez	EXCELL	Director, Training
Adalberto Campos	MINED	Higher Education
Zulema de Fuentes	EXCELL	Teacher Training
Kristin Rosekrans	USAID	Education Team Leader
Dorita Gutiérrez	USAID	EXCELL Project
Tully Cornick	USAID	Assistant Director
Ron Greenberg	USAID	Deputy Director
Marc Silverman	USAID	Mission Director

Educational Centers Visited

Tomás Medina School, Santa Ana	Quitasol
Vuelta de Oro School Center, Santa Ana	Cantón Arracaos School Center
Caserío el Coyolito School Center, Cantón	Caserío el Anomal School Center

Focus Groups (Schools)

	Teachers	Directors	Parents	Students
1	Cecilia Panameño	Ricardo Antonio Castillo	Sara E. Vasquez	Kathelyne A. Castro
2	Ana María Hernández	José Alexi Perez	Elba Carina Ramírez	Saúl Reyes
3	Teresa de Jesús Fuentes	Angel Alfonso Lopez	Carlos Arturo Villatoro	Ingrid Guevara
4	Flora Nidien Castellón	Julio Cesar Zelaya	Brunilda Martínez	Jacqueline Santos
5	Sonia Esther argueta	Rubis Elizabeth Fuentes	Enma del Carmen Turcios	Sandra Maria Duran
6	Paula Cerritos	Jesús H. Romero	Delmy Cesibel Guzman	Irvin Josué villalta
7		Alma Gladis Soto	Carlos Arturo Villatoro	Julio E. Martinez
8		Alma de Saravia	Senia Esther Argueta	Keyla Arely Romero
9				Jhonny Rolando Quintanilla

Focus Groups (Teacher Training Institutions)

Teaching Staff		
Agustín Fernández	UCA	Department Head
Karla Celena Rivera Hdz.	UDB	Teaching Staff
Marina Cuellar	UDB	Teaching Staff
Oscar Cárcamo	UNICO	Course Coordinator
Jaime Osmín Trigueros	UNICO	Dean of Science and Humanities
Edgar Nicolás Azala	UES	Coordinator, Science and Humanities
María Carmen Cruz	UCA	Professor, Education Coordinator
María del Carmen Ruiz	U Evangelica	Consultant
Ana Carreras	UES	Pedagogical advisor
20 Professors	UCA	Conference
Students		
Julia María Martínez Domínguez	UDB	3rd Year
Elena Guadalupe Pérez Erazo	UDB	3rd Year
Claudia Yanira Hernández Martínez	UDB	2nd Year
Jeny Cariuna Mendoza Chavez	UDB	2nd Year
200 students	UCA	Conference and discussion

Additionally, an opinion poll was administered to all Departmental Directors to find out their opinions about the decentralization process (Nov. 2003)

ANNEX 2A.
SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS
(December 1–5, 2003)

1. Research Inputs
   a. Analysis of Preschool and Primary Education (USAID/AED) – Draft of Executive Summary and Eight Chapters.
   b. Analysis of the Coverage, Quality and Costs of Primary and Secondary Education (World Bank.)
2. Methodology used with the roundtables
   a. Presentations by researchers (Emanuela di Gropello; José Luis Guzmán; Richard Kraft; Anabella Lardé de Palomo; Renán Rápalo; Fernando Reimers; Ernesto Schiefelbein.)
   b. Analysis – six tables and three subgroups per table (problem tree, causes, solutions, recommendations for research.)
   c. Surveys to validate study recommendations (see Results in Annex 3.)
3. Main argument of the analysis: The construction of an educational system with greater internal coordination, increased social dialogue, better management, more innovation and improved generation of knowledge and research has set the bases for…the initiation of a second generation of educational reforms that will prioritize the development of competencies

for a democratic and free citizenry.
4. Results of the analysis of the study on preschool and primary education (USAID)
   a. There have been advances in coverage, participation, modernization.
   b. Focus on equality in terms of quality.
   c. Focus on a reading culture as a lever to change the system.
   d. One learns to read by reading…
      i. Enjoying reading
      ii. Choosing what to read
      iii. Reading to others
      iv. Listening to stories read out loud
      v. Getting ready for reading
      vi. Inventing stories
      vii. Having access to books and libraries
      viii. Involving parents and other children
5. The generation of child readers will make it possible to have impact on:
   a. Repetition
   b. Over-agedness
   c. Educational level
   d. Performance in mathematics and other subjects
   e. Capacity to "learn to learn" and for profound learning
   f. Capacity for higher-level thinking
   g. Performance in higher school

cycles
   h. Funds available for preschool, and coverage increased
6. Presentation of preliminary survey results.

Contributions of the Roundtables

7. **Table 1:** Educational Opportunities and Equality
   a. In rural zones, the need for children to help in the household or to work at early ages is associated with absenteeism and desertion.
   b. The importance of bringing educational services geographically closer to smaller children (preschool and primary grades) should be considered. Higher grade levels can be consolidated in larger schools to the extent that this prevents the dispersion of resources. In the case of dispersed schools, the possibility of employing one director for a group of schools should be considered.
   c. The motivation of educators is a key factor. Sometimes teachers do not view themselves as service providers. The idea that the teacher has a contract and must be accountable for the tasks corresponding to this

contract should be reinforced. On occasion, teachers want to teach but do not know how, and they are embarrassed to express this limitation because of the myth that teachers have to know everything.

d. Children attend school irregularly or do not attend at all:

i.Irregular attendance can be expressed in the following manners:

  (i) the child does not attend school;

  (ii) the child repeats a grade;

  (iii) the child does not complete his/her education;

  (iv) the child attends, but ineffectively.

ii. Causes of irregular attendance: costs of education; the school is far away; no monitoring of children; learning is irrelevant to the children.

iii.Solutions: greater commitment or competence of the teacher; bring schools closer to children (especially preschool and primary grades); provide incentives to schools that achieve retention; provide follow-up to children who attend irregularly; adopt flexible school years; carry out campaigns for timely entry.

e. Children do not read or write effectively:

i. Causes:

  (i) poor pedagogy (boring methods, teachers do not differentiate among children, lack of conversation with children, teachers do not read much, reading and writing processes require specific didactic strategies but teachers do not differentiate between them);

  (ii) textbook problems (lack of connection between books and reality, books are unattractive, books not used much);

  (iii) deficiencies in reparation;

  (iv) poverty (as expressed in hunger and overcrowding, illiterate parents, no books at home.)

ii. Solutions: review curriculum for teacher professional development.

8. **Table 2**: Teacher Professional Development

a. Reform of teacher professional development programs

b. Involve different organizations in professional development (universities)

c. Multiple means of evaluation, not only upon initiation of service

d. Certification of institutions and trainers/instructors of teachers

e. Coordinated and strengthened in-service training

f. Quality trainers

g. Appropriate combination of actions:

  i. Incentives (promotion, scholarships)

  ii. Certification (annual training, permanence, academic studies, optimized learning)

  iii. Supervision

  iv. Teachers teaching teachers, classroom observation

h. Investigation and evaluation – how to affect performance in a positive manner (reading culture and first grade levels)

i. Coherence with overall reading goals, equality of quality, support for first grade

9. **Table 3**: Teaching / Learning: Curriculum, Standards and Evaluation

On Curriculum

a. Improve competency levels obtained by students, especially in reading/writing and mathematics.

b. Evaluate whether the curriculum motivates and guides teachers to change their pedagogical practices.

c. Promote discussion about implementation of the curriculum among teachers.

d. Provide schools with better materials and equipment.

e. Compensatory programs to improve equality of learning opportunities for students from poor backgrounds.

f. Focus *Escuela Diez* schools on the accreditation of quality, improvement of results and not only of inputs.

g. Increase the motivation of teachers, participation of parents and leadership of school directors.

On Evaluation

h. Define a policy for the use of results.

i. Provide further orientation to teachers and school directors about objectives, focus, structure and type of results to be produced.

j. Prepare reports on technical aspects of evaluations.

k. Focus evaluation on key competencies, and diversify types of questions.

l. Discuss whether it is convenient that evaluation depends on MINED.

m. Improve dissemination of results, and promote their use.

n. Participate in international studies.

On Standards

o. Seek greater consensus about their pertinence.

p. Continue with the definition of standards for subsequent grade levels, as well as for performance and learning opportunities.

q. Do not underestimate complexity of their implementation.

r. Levels of breakdown, compulsoriness.

s. Regional and international vision.

10. **Table 4**: Decentralization and School Autonomy

On Institutional Modernization and Legal Reform

a. Open permanent, thematic space about decentralization and its objectives.

b. Clarify aspects of decentralization: what is decentralized, towards whom, what competencies remain at the central level.

c. Greater monitoring and follow-up of the process and goals.

d. Strengthen technical capacities at national and local levels.

e. Establish clear goals.

f. Break with the centralist vision.

g. Seek participation by people, not only in implementation but also in the conception. Sometimes, methods are implemented, but people are not asked if they want them. Determine to what a group will commit.

h. Unify the transfer. Criteria of equality are not always completed or needs covered.

i. Review the legal framework so that it responds to the vision of decentralization.

j. Prioritize social accounting and controls. The administrative adviser may have conflicts of interest.

k. Improve the mechanism for selecting and contracting directors. There are no such mechanisms.

l. Make the system more flexible so that it responds to people's needs.

m. Promote harmony at all levels and in all technical units. Not all are on board with respect to the objectives of decentralization.

On Autonomy within the Traditional System

n. Regulatory framework: establish one that better defines the State as regulator and more clearly stipulates the roles of actors, including intermediate entities. Change the human resources mechanism.

o. Participation: there is no systematization of decision making. Increase continuity (CDEs change every two years.) Provide more training to parents, and to a greater number of parents.

p. Autonomy: there are legal gaps in the selection and promotion of school directors and teachers that must be filled. Redefine the role and profile of directors (administrator, pedagogical coordinator, two figures?) Implement the PEIs more effectively, and use them more effectively as a fund transfer mechanism (bonds consolidated as resources and distributed according to PEI goals.)

q. Leadership: redefine training and the role of the director.

On EDUCO

r. Strengthen pedagogical advisers who cover the model, strengthen program identity.

s. Increase the number of pedagogical advisers and administrative assistants (in the latter case to help the ACEs.)

t. Administrative assistants require specialized training.

u. Although EDUCO was to involve social auditing carried out by the communities, in practice this did not occur.

v. If it is not possible to strengthen the community, other measures must be taken: another organization should sign the checks.

w. There is corruption, and this must be confronted.

x. Train personnel.

y. Provide pedagogical and administrative follow-up.

z. Strengthen strategies for quality: alternative, accelerated and television-based learning. Focus more resources on these schools.

aa. Strengthen teacher training.

bb. Promote that schools

implement assessments to identify and respond to limitations.

cc. Human resources must be strengthened: numbers of teachers and directors pursuant to needs.

dd. Strengthen the "Parents' School." Another type of parents' school is needed, with specific aspects.

ee. Alliances among different programs in the Ministry to strengthen EDUCO.

11. **Table 5**: Educational Financing Strategies
  a. Budgetary insufficiency and low-level execution.
  b. Allocations in the national budget are not sufficiently equitable or efficient.
  c. Financing mechanisms do not sufficiently promote efficiency and equality in spending.

Recommendations
  d. Achieve consensus about the need to invest in education.
  e. Increase fiscal revenues (specific taxes.)
  f. Prioritize resource allocation according to goals.
  g. Adjust the legal framework and reinforce monitoring system:
     i. To evaluate spending implementation
     ii. For more efficient use of human resources (transfers.)
  h. Review criteria for budget allocation.
     i. Take population growth and regional development projections into account.
     ii. Establish costs per student, and differentiate per area.
  i. Unify bonds and establish allocation criteria based on PEI

and performance.

j. Improve coordination of external financing resources for MINED.

k. Analyze innovative financing mechanisms:
   i. Modalities for the administration of systems involving monetary transfers to households.
   ii. Feasibility and impact of public financing / private provision mechanisms (exploiting idle capacities.)

12 **Table 6**: Secondary Education in El Salvador

Recommendations to Increase Coverage, with Equality
Increase public spending on education: according to a recent evaluation, spending should total 5% of GDP in order to achieve 60% net coverage in secondary school. Apply a combination of actions n the supply and demand sides, which may include:
  - more public infrastructure when necessary
  - provision modalities that are more flexible
  - increase in the quality of the educational process.

Conditioned scholarships or monetary transfers for poor students.
Establish a differentiated urban / rural strategy:
  - Urban areas: more public infrastructure (particularly in San Salvador and La Libertad); development of public financing / private provision regimes.
  - Rural areas: more infrastructure; extension of alternate modalities such as distance learning; increase

number of teachers.

Recommendations to Improve Quality
Improve school administration in order to create more favorable environment for the teaching / learning process (more leadership from director, more participatory organization, more autonomy in management, etc.)
Improve professional development, self-esteem, and commitment of teachers (create a more participatory environment at school; apply performance incentives.)
Increase availability of didactic materials and equipment at schools (especially for technical high schools.)
Disseminate the curriculum; improve its implementation.

ANNEX 2B.

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

ROUND TABLES (MINED/USAID/WORLD BANK)

San Salvador, Hotel Radisson Plaza - Salón Tecapa. December 2-5, 2003

No.	LAST NAME	FIRST	POSITION	INSTITUTION	1	2	3	4	5	6	Closing session	Subtotal
30	Alexander Galdámez	Julio Samuel	Director	C. E. Cantón El Capulín			1	1				2
32	Arguello	Aida	Consultant	Presidential Commission for Social Area Coordination	1							1
67	Arias	Carlos Mauricio	Director Education Department	MINED		1				1	1	3
41	Arriaza	Frat Adalberto	Manager	CECADE		1	1	1	1	1		5
28	Avalos	Flor de María	Project Technical Coordinator	MINED				1	1	1	1	4
40	Beltrán	William	Education Technician	CECADE	1	1	1	1			1	5
65	Berrios de Folio	Ana Julia	Curriculum Development Coordinator				1					1
38	Bruno	Fabián	Director of Education Projects	Don Bosco University					1			1
31	Calderón Martínez	Lissette	Analyst	FUSADES	1						1	2
6	Canacas Batán	Pedro Ernesto	Pedagogical Assistant	MINED - Professional Teaching Development Center	1	1	1	1		1	1	6
48	Castillo	Carlos Armando	Pedagogical Assistant	MINED - Professional Teaching Development Center	1	1	1	1	1	1		6
60	Cerna	Héctor Eduardo	Coordinator of Management Processing Unit	MINED - School Ten		1	1		1			3
9	Cruz	María Carmen	Distance Education Coordinator	Central American University		1	1				1	3
14	Cruz Ayala	Ernestina del Carmen	Technician	CONCULTURA	1	1	1	1				3
46	Cruz de Villalta	María del Socorro	Profesor, School Ten	C. E. "Lucía de Villacorta"	1	1	1					3
57	de Gutiérrez	Dorita	Manager, EXCELL project	USAID - El Salvador	1	1	1	1	1		1	6
55	de Hernández	Carmen María	Manager, EDIFAM	USAID	1	1	1	1			1	4
53	Díaz	Norma Elizabeth	Pedagogical Assistant	Centro de Desarrollo Profesional Docente	1	1	1	1		1	1	6
13	Dubón Marchelli	Angel Gustavo	National Director - Education Managment	MINED	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
35	Escobar	Jorge Alberto	Coordinator, School of Social Sciences y Humanities	Pedagogy University	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
62	Espinoza López	Miguel Angel	Administrative Manager	MINED	1	1	1	1	1			2
39	Franco	Margarita	Director of the School of Education			1						1

#												
58	Gálvez	Raúl	Director	Training and Development "Agora"						1	1	2
27	Gil Cruz	Bartolomé	Manager of Modernization	MINED			1		1			2
37	Girón	Juan Bautista	Director	National Institute of Usulután			1	1	1	1	1	5
42	Góchez	Roni Alexander	Director	National Institute of Cornelio Azenón Sierra		1	1	1	1	1	1	6
44	Guevara de Varela	Ana Lorena	Executive Director	MINED		1	1		1		1	4
25	Gutiérrez Álvarez	Carlos Alberto	Director	Nacional Institute of Cantón El Pacun				1	1	1		3
24	Hernández	Mabel	Technician I.	MINED - Dirección Nacional de Evaluación	1						1	2
11	Herrera Ramos	Oscar Wuilman	Professor	University of El Salvador		1	1	1	1			4
26	Huezo Centeno	Marta Beatriz	Primary Education Coordinator	ISNA		1		1				2
36	Huiza Santamaría	Jorge Alberto	Pedagogy Assistant	MINED - Center for Professional Teacher Development, Central Region		1	1	1	1	1	1	6
22	Lara Quintanilla	Blanca Zulema	General Coordinator Teacher Practice	Central American University		1	1				1	3
8	Majano de Viche	Magdalena	Project Coordinator	Francisco Gavidia University	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
2	Maravilla	Rina Emperatriz	Pedagogy Assistant	MINED - School Ten Program		1	1	1	1	1	1	6
61	Marín de Nóchez	María Francisca	Documentary Coordinator	Central American University		1	1				1	3
54	Martínez	Rebeca Ardón	Director	C. E. Cantón San José	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
7	Martínez Durán	María Elena	Teacher	C.E.C. "Corazón de María"	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
52	Martínez Eguizábal	Nelson Jesús	Head of Educational Systems Division	MINED		1	1	1	1	1	1	6
68	Melara	Oscar Manuel	Director	National Technical Industrial Institute		1	1	1	1	1	1	6
47	Meléndez de Cerrato	Alba Nelly	Head of Human Resources	El Salvador Municipal Development Institute			1			1	1	3
45	Mena López	Claudia Isabel	Assistant Professor	C. E. José Martí	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
43	Mendoza Hernández	Elmer Eleazar	Opinion and Investigation Institute Coordinator	University of Capitán General Gerardo Barrios	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
1	Ochoa	Carlos Arturo	Head of Teaching Processes Unit	MINED		1	1	1	1		1	5
50	Osorio Romero	José Amilcar	Head of Teacher Training	MINED - Higher Education Management			1	1		1	1	4
51	Paz de Rivas	Bernarda Emérita	Training Specialist	MINED			1	1	1	1	1	5
3	Perdomo de Castillo	Marta Olimpia	Basic Ed. Director	MINED	1		1					2
21	Pereira de Ruíz	Ana Vilma	Director of Departament of Education - Chalatenango					1				1
18	Ramírez Peréz	Eliseo	Curricular Planning and Development Specialist			1			1		1	3
33	Ramos de Caprile	Rebeca	Director of Primary Ed	MINED	1			1		1	1	4

ID	Surname	Given name	Position	Organization								Total
17	Rivas Gaitán	María del Carmen		Evangelical University of El Salvador		1	1				1	3
20	Rivera Alegría de Raful	Ana María	Director of Department of Education-Cabañas	MINED			1					1
63	Rodríguez	María Isabel	Principal	University of El Salvador	1	1	1	1		1		6
10	Rosales Lara	León Aquiles	Education Programming Coordinator	World View El Salvador	1	1	1	1				3
70	Ruíz de Castro	Ana Mercedes	Director of Professional Teaching Development	MINED	1			1	1			2
16	Serrneño	Ruben Regalado	Director of Curricular Planning and Development	Evengelical University of El Salvador	1	1	1				1	3
34	Serrano de López	Janet Lorena	Coordinator	MINED	1	1			1	1	1	4
66	Smith	Benjamín	Representative	OIT-IPEC	1			1			1	3
19	Solís de Ramírez	Lorena Victoria	Director of Department of Education - La Paz	MINED			1					1
4	Ticas	José Roberto	Education Manager	MINED - San Vicente Department			1		1	1		2
49	Trejo Alemán	Mauricio Antonio	Educational Careers Coordinator	Central American University	1		1			1	1	3
5	Turcios de Morán	Liduvina del Rosario	Pedagogical Advisor	MINED - Center of Educational Professional Development, Central Region	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
69	Ursula Ventura	Carlos Orlando	Director	C. E. Caserío El Monarca	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
12	V.	Alberto Barillas	Education Research Coordinator	FEPADE	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
64	Valiente	Juan Antonio	President	Centro ALFA	1	1					1	2
15	Vela de Ruíz	Carmen Elena	General Program Coordinator	JICA	1					1		2
59	Vernier Hasbún	Jorge Ernesto	Business Training Advisor	FUNDAPYME		1	1				1	3
29	Villeda	Irma	Cooperation Specialist	MINED					1		1	2
56	Williams	Tara	International Initiatives Director	Alas Tobar Asociados	1		1		1	1		3
23	Zana Calvío	Alexander Ottoniel		PEBA - Basic Education Program, Catholic Church		1						1
	TOTAL				**39**	**41**	**40**	**42**	**30**	**28**	**40**	**260**

ANNEX 3.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY CONDUCTED AT THE ROUNDTABLES
December 2–5, 2003

RESULTS IN ORDER OF PROBABLE EFFECT (From Greater to Lesser) 94 Cases (Tables 2, 3, and 4; December 2003)	Planned Effect	Implemen- tation	Probable Effect
5. Training preschool teachers to support reading / writing	100	90	81.00
22. Increase provision of books and stories to classroom libraries	100	80	80.50
13. Provide guidance to teachers so that children read and write in class every day	90	80	75.75
21. Promote reading clubs	95	80	75.00
2. Expand preschool to incorporate the poorest children	100	80	72.00
14. Increase the time dedicated to reading to 8-10 hours per week	90	80	70.00
18. Tape classes in teachers colleges	90	80	67.50
4. Modify preschool programs with more emphasis on reading / writing	90	80	64.00
7. Review early primary programs with respect to reading / writing	85	75	64.00
9. Evaluate effectiveness of textbooks, with a view toward modifying them to make them more effective	90	75	64.00
12. Focus pre-service professional development on reading/writing	90	75	64.00
16. Assign best teachers to first grade	100	80	64.00
17. Promote the taping of classes and their discussion	90	75	64.00
23. Expand traveling bookcase program	80	75	64.00
6. Implement television campaign directed toward parents about ways to stimulate child development	90	75	62.00
8. Expand classroom guides – Accelerated Classroom	80	70	60.00
19. Set aside days for fairs	90	75	60.00
3. Expand different preschool modalities (daycare shelters)	80	60	56.25
10. Encourage teachers to write and share class guides	90	65	56.25
24. Reformulate programs in the third cycle, combining the components of Accelerated Education, television-based learning, etc.	80	60	56.25
20. Reduce emphasis on program contents	90	75	56.00
1. Promote television transmission of Sesame Street in English and Spanish	80	70	53.25
25. Offer multiple modalities for completion of the third cycle	80	60	53.00
15-a and b. Increase the number of SINEA test items. – Provide each school with four computers	80	70	52.50
11. Incorporate internships into teacher professional development	80	70	52.00

Source: J. L. Guzmán, with data from the Fernando Reimers survey (Jan 2004.)

ANNEX 4.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORIENTING AN EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND IMPACT ON EQUITY AND QUALITY (Jan. 1994)

	Recommendation	Equity	Quality (internal efficiency)	Quality (relevance)
1	Assign more resources to the sector	Will expand educational opportunity	Will permit financing options proposed	Will permit financing options proposed
2	Focus efforts on first grade	Will give more opportunity to the poorest to learn	Will reduce repetition rates in primary	
3	Expand access to first grade	Will provide access to the 15% that do not enroll		
4	Provide books and materials to disadvantaged children	Will give to the poorest resources to learn	Will reduce the number of repeaters	Will increase the acquisition of basic skills
5	Teacher professional development		Will increase quality of teaching	Will increase the acquisition of basic skills
6	Decentralize education	Will bring decision making closer to local problems	Will increase efficiency in the use of resources	Will relate the functioning of the school to reality
7	Promote parent participation		Will relate the school to the children's reality	Will increase school-community relations
8	Information systems	Will permit monitoring problems of access and delivery of resources to particular groups	Will allow for analyzing the impact of interventions on students' learning	Will permit relating inputs and processes with the world of work
9	Pact with teachers	Will increase the presence of teachers in remote schools	Will increase the time available for learning	
10	Promote new books and materials		Will facilitate the task of the teacher	Will focus learning on general skills.
11	Emphasize general skills in primary and secondary school			Will increase workers' capacity to learn
12	Expand preschool in rural and marginal urban areas	Will increase opportunity for success in primary for the poorest	Will reduce the number of children who repeat the grade	
13	Promote innovations	Some may be responses to children with special needs	Will increase options for teaching effectively	

Note: The study made a total of 19 general recommendations (the rest related specifically to intermediate, technical-vocational and higher education).
Source: Taken from Reimers (1995, p. 102-103).

ANNEX 5.

PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN EL SALVADOR (1992-2003)

Taking into account the limitations implied in any effort toward summarization, presents, from an analytical viewpoint, a synthesis of the most prominent educational policies over the last decade at the preschool and primary levels of the educational system. This summary should not leave the impression that interventions have been developed systematically and incrementally. In some cases, decisions have been made that resulted in significant changes with respect to what had been carried out beforehand. In other cases, interventions were promoted through specific programs, the scopes of which were related to the availability of specific financial resources and the priority assigned by public officials. Usually, the programs targeted particular population groups.

	Policy	Program(s)	Current Scope	Type of impact expected
1	Expand preschool and basic education services in rural areas	EDUCO	362 thousand children in 2003 (approximately 28% of the public school enrollment)	Coverage, equity
2	Promote local participation by creation of models of school administration and transfer of resources to schools	Creation of ACEs and financial transfers (since 1992); Creation of CDEs and CECEs in traditional public schools and financial transfers (since 1998); Administrative Assistance Program and PEI (2001)	100% of public schools	Quality, school management
3	Reform curriculum standards	Curricular Reform (1992-1997) School standards pilot program (since 2001)	National (School standards pilot in 103 schools)	Quality
4	Improve teacher performance (preparation, training, incentives and requirements)	SABE/USAID (1992-1997); Training of trainers/USAID (1996-1999); School Training Centers and Model Schools (1992-1999); Professional Development Systema (2001-2003)	100 % of teachers in diverse training modalities	Quality
5	Provide educational materials to teachers, students and parents	New study programs (1992-1997); Texts (1995-1997; 2000); School and classroom libraries (1998 y 2002); Teachers' guides, standards and learning assessment manual	National	Quality
6	Apply assessment instruments	First stage of primary test sample (1994-1999); PAES (since 1996); Evaluation of School Educational Achievement (2000-); SINEA (2002-)	National (Primary test sample)	Quality, school management
7	Provide technology resources to enhance learning	Interactive radio (since 1994); *Teleaprendizaje* (since 1997); Learning Resource Centers -CRA and EDURED (since 2002)	Interactive Radio (100% of children in grades 1-3) *Teleaprendizaje* (796 sections in 350 schools); CRA (pilot projected in 400 schools)	Quality

8	Offer food, health and basic service to schools in poor areas	Health Schools (since 1996) School Feeding Program (since 1994)	600 thousand children in rural and peri-urban schools	Equity
9	Institute flexible curriculum models, multigrade services and accelerated educaiton	Alternative Classrooms (1998), *Tele-aprendizaje* (1998), Accelerated Education (2000),	397 alternative classrooms = 12,900 children; 796 sections of *Teleaprendizaje* en 350 schools; 450 sections of Accelerated Education = 12,800 children	Coverage, equity, efficiency (lower dropout and over-age)
10	Improve quality management at the school level	Selection and training of unit directors (1998-2000); PEI (desde 2001); *Escuela Diez* (2001)	National (*Escuelas Diez* - Pilot in 103 schools)	Quality, school management
11	Rehabilitate school infrastructure		2,500 constructed or rehabilitated	Coverage, quality
12	Give educational opportunity to 0-6-year-old children	EDUCO, EDIFAM and Education Reform Programa (BIRF)	83,600 preschool children in EDUCO schools (50% of public enrollment); 8,000 children (EDIFAM) 525 communities via parents' schools	Coverage, equity

Source: Compiled based on author's review of documentation.

ANNEX 6A.

PREPRIMARY AND PRIMARY ENROLLMENT RATES IN 12 LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES IN THE 1990S (PERCENTAGE)

untries	Gross rate of preprimary enrollment					Net rate of primary enrollment				
	Period		Initial year	Final year	Annual increase	Period		Initial year	Final year	Annual increase
Bolivia	1990	2000	32	46	1.4	1990	2000	91	97	0.6
Brazil	1990	2000	48	63	1.5	1990	2000	86	97	1.0
Chile	1990	2000	82	77	-0.5	1990	2000	88	89	0.1
Colombia	1990	2000	13	37	2.4	1991	2000	69	89	2.2
Costa Rica	1990	2000	61	87	2.6	1990	2000	86	91	0.5
Dom. Rep.	1992	2000	18	38	2.5	1996	2000	78	93	3.6
El Salvador *	1991	2000	21	44	2.5	1992	1999	75	81	0.9
Guatemala	1991	2000	26	51	2.9	1997	2000	72	84	3.9
Honduras	1991	2000	13	21	1.0	1991	2000	89	88	-0.2
Nicaragua	1990	2000	12	27	1.5	1990	2000	72	81	0.9
Panama	1990	2000	53	47	-0.6	1990	2000	91	100	0.8
Peru	1990	2000	30	64	3.4	1993	2000	87	100	1.9
Average			34.1	50.2	1.7			82.0	90.8	1.4

* According to MINED, the gross rate of preprimary school attendance was 42% in 2000 and the net rate of primary education (grades 1-6) was 85% in the same year (see MINED, 2002, pp. 7 and 8). According to FUSADES, the gross rate of secondary (including Third Cycle and Secondary School) was 66% in 2002 (see FUSADES, 2003, p. 153). Source: World Development Indicators Database (World Bank)

ANNEX 6B.

GROSS SECONDARY ENROLLMENT RATE AND ILLITERACY OF YOUTH (AGED 15-24) IN 12 LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES IN THE 1990s

untries	Gross secondary enrollment rate					Youth illiteracy rate (15-24) - %				
	Period		Initial year	Final year	Annual increase	Period		Initial year	Final year	Annual decrease (%)
Bolivia	1998	2000	72	80	3.7	1990	2001	7.4	3.9	-0.3
Brazil	1999	2000	103	108	5.2	1990	2001	8.2	4.5	-0.3
Chile	1998	2000	85	85	0.1	1990	2001	1.9	1.1	-0.1
Colombia	1998	2000	71	70	-0.4	1990	2001	5.1	3.0	-0.2
Costa Rica	1999	2000	51	60	9.3	1990	2001	2.6	1.7	-0.1
Dom. Rep.	1998	2000	56	59	1.7	1990	2001	12.5	8.6	-0.4
El Salvador *	1998	2000	50	54	2.2	1990	2001	16.2	11.5	-0.4
Guatemala	1998	2000	31	37	3.1	1990	2001	26.6	20.4	-0.6
Honduras			..	..	..	1990	2001	20.3	14.5	-0.5
Nicaragua	1998	2000	48	54	2.8	1990	2001	31.8	28.1	-0.3
Panama	1998	2000	69	69	-0.1	1990	2001	4.7	3.1	-0.1
Peru	1998	2000	81	86	2.4	1990	2001	5.5	3.1	-0.2
Average			65.2	69.3	2.7			11.9	8.6	-0.3

Source: World Development Indicators Database (World Bank)

ANNEX 6C.

CHILDREN'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (AGED 7-12) IN URBAN AREAS ACCORDING TO INCOME (1999) BY QUINTILE OF INCOME

Country	Quintile with lowest income	Quintile with highest income	Gap
Argentina	99.3	99.7	0.4
Bolivia	99.0	97.6	-1.4
Brazil	95.4	99.4	4.0
Chile	98.6	99.8	1.2
Colombia	91.8	98.5	6.7
Costa Rica	98.6	99.4	0.8
Ecuador	94.5	98.9	4.4
El Salvador *	87.8	99.2	11.4
Guatemala	83.2	98.2	15.0
Honduras	86.5	99.0	12.5
Mexico (2000)	95.5	99.1	3.6
Nicaragua	84.9	95.8	10.9
Panama	96.8	100.0	3.2
Paraguay	95.8	99.3	3.5
Peru	98.4	100.0	1.6
Rep Dom.	74.2	93.2	19.0
Uruguay	98.2	100.0	1.8
Venezuela (total)	95.5	99.5	4.0
Average	93.0	98.7	5.7

* Percentage of school attendance of children 7-15 of lowest-income quintile increased from 72% in 1995 and 79% in 2002, according to EHPM.
Source: CEPAL, Statistical Yearbook for Latin American and the Caribbean, April, 2003, p. 48.

ANNEX 6D.

LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES: EDUCATION BUDGET AS PERCENTAGE OF GDP 1999–2000

País	%
Ecuador	1.6
Guatemala	1.7
Uruguay	2.8
El Salvador*	**3.3**
Perú	3.3
Argentina	4.0
Honduras	4.0
Chile	4.2
Costa Rica	4.4
Brasil	4.7
Paraguay	5.0
Nicaragua	5.0
Bolivia	5.5
Panamá	5.9
Belice	6.2

* 2002; Source: Human Development Report, 2003, UNDP, General National Budget, 2002 and BCR

ANNEX 6E.

**VARIOUS LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES
COMBINED GROSS RATE OF ENROLLMENT AND EDUCATION BUDGET
AS % OF GNP**
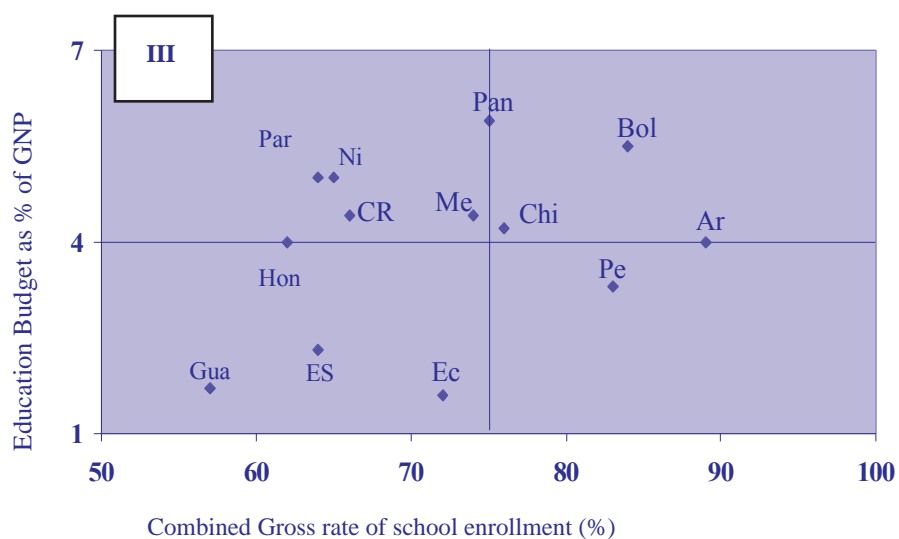
Source: UNDP, Human Development Report, 2003

ANNEX 7A.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION PROJECTS IN PROCESS (BILATERAL & MULTILATERAL), 2003

	Educational materials	Director and teacher training	Standards, curriculum programs, guides	Educational evaluation	Educational technology	Infrastructure and equipment	Institutional strengthening	School feeding	Training of trainers	Technical assistance	Preschool education	Special groups	Community participation	Intermediate technical education	Other
Bilateral cooperation															
Mexico		X	X	X	X							X			
USAID		X	X	X		X	X	X			X		X		
China					X										
Luxembourg		X				X									
AECI		X					X		X	X					
Italia								X		X					
Multilateral cooperation															
CECC	X		X												
UNESCO							X								X
UNICEF											X 1/				X
FNUAP															X
PNUD															X
European Union	X					X			X						
APREMAT														X	
OEA							X								
OEI		X	X	X	X						X				
ATEI					X										
ILCE					X										
CIPIE												X			
World Links					X 2/										
OIT/IPEC												X			
BID/CECC															X

1/With USAID financing 2/ With World Bank financing. **Source: MINED**

ANNEX 7B.

PROJECTS IN EXECUTION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR AND NGO COOPERATION, 2003

	Educational materials	Director and teacher training	Curriculum standards, programs, guides	Educational technologies
TELECOM				X
Bank of El Salvador				X
National Strategy	X	X		
World Vision				X
Legado Publishing, Costa Rica	X			
Plan International			X	
Cartotécnica	X			

Source: MINED

ANNEX 8.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Millennium Development Goals

In 2000, the highest number of Chiefs of State in history reached an agreement, and the United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted. This involves a commitment to eradicate poverty; promote human dignity and equality; and achieve peace, democracy and environmental sustainability. From this declaration arose the Millennium Development Goals and Objectives. In the case of education, the following goals and objectives are emphasized:

Objective 2: Achieve universal primary education.
Goal 3: Ensure that, by 2015, all boys and girls can complete a full course of primary schooling.

Objective 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.
Goal 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015.

The remaining objectives refer to the eradication of poverty; reduction of infant mortality; improvement of maternal health; fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; assurance of environmental sustainability and promotion of a global partnership for development.

Source: UNDP (2003).

Objectives of "Education for All" (Dakar, 2000)

Objective 1. Expand and improve early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
Objective 2. Ensure that all children, and especially those in difficult situations, have access to and complete good quality, free and compulsory primary education by 2015.
Objective 3. Ensure that the learning needs of all literate youth and adults are satisfied through equal access to adequate schooling and programs that prepare them for active lives.
Objective 4. Increase, by 2015, the number of literate adults by 50%, focusing particularly on women, and facilitate access to permanent, basic education to all adults.
Objective 5. Improve all qualitative aspects of education, ensuring the highest parameters in order to achieve more recognized and measurable learning outcomes, especially in reading, writing, mathematics and essential practical skills.

Source: *Marco de Acción de Dakar. Educación para Todos: cumplir nuestros compromisos comunes*. Adopted at the World Education Forum. Dakar, Senegal, April 26-28, 2000. Paris: UNESCO, paragraph 7.

Summit of the Americas Goals for 2010

Goal 1. That 100% of children complete quality primary schooling.
Goal 2. That at least 75% of youth have access to quality secondary education, with increasingly larger percentages of youth who complete their secondary studies.
Goal 3. That educational opportunities exist throughout life for the general population.

Source: *PREAL Informa*. No. 16. September 2003.

ANNEX 9.

COMPARISON OF EARLY CHILDHOOD GOALS

Profile and Basic Competencies of El Salvador (Age 4-6)	NAEYC Sample Goals (Age 3-8)
Expression of security and self-confidence in personal, family, social and school domains.

Identity and autonomy | Develop a positive self-concept toward learning, self-control, and a sense of belonging. |
| Practice of norms and values of cooperation in his home, school and community

Social Development | Develop relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults and peers…understand and respect social and cultural diversity…Know about the community and social roles |
Integration and cooperation in group games and activities, through evidence of interest and respect for teamwork	…understand perspectives of other people, and negotiate and apply rules of group living.
Capacity to communicate correctly, in formal oral, comprehensive, organized and fluent, as well as by means of symbolic and graphic expression	Use language to communicate effectively and to facilitate thinking and learning…Become literate individuals who gain satisfaction from reading and writing.
Artistic creativity, evidenced through music, dance, plastic and theatre arts	Develop curiosity about the world, confidence as a learner, creativity and imagination, and personal initiative…Represent ideas and feelings through pretend play, drama, dance and movement, music, art and construction.
Interest in exploring and discovering his physical and social environment

Social, cultural and natural environment | Construct understanding of relationships among objects, people and events such as classifying, ordering, number, space, and time. Construct knowledge of the physical world, manipulate objects for desired effects and understand cause-and-effect relationships. |
| | Think critically, reason, and solve problems. |
| | Acquire knowledge and appreciation for the fine arts, humanities and sciences. |
| *Physical expression*

Physical development, health and nutrition | Become competent in management of their bodies and acquire basic physical skills, both gross motor and fine motor. Gain knowledge about the care of their bodies and maintain a desirable level of health and fitness. |