

TOWARDS THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUTH

Tools for analysis and policy design



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

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1 Introduction

The integration of youth into development processes is crucial in order to advance towards more egalitarian societies. Over the past few years, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has regarded equality as the horizon for development, structural change as the way to achieve it, and policy as the instrument to reach that horizon (ECLAC, 2007, 2010 and 2014). Equality is viewed as going beyond the distribution of means, such as monetary income, to include equal opportunities and capacities. This implies understanding equality as the full exercise of citizenship, with dignity and the reciprocal recognition of actors. Progress in this direction requires policies that promote the autonomy of subjects and pay attention to their vulnerabilities. ECLAC highlights that in addition to persistent structural gaps, inequalities also exist in capacity building and in the labour world (ECLAC, 2014). If one is to pursue sustainability with equality, there is a need to tackle those inequalities that especially affect youth.

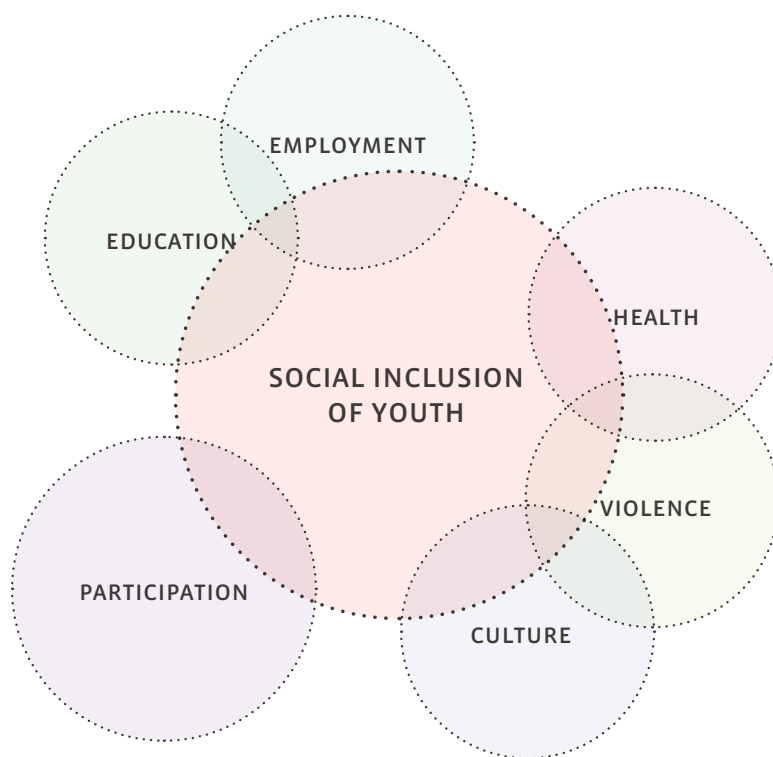
Today, the social inclusion of youth is one of the most important challenges faced by Latin American and Caribbean countries. Not only because of the number that young people represent in comparison with the rest of the population, but because of what this group implies in terms of dependency rates, as well as its specific age-related needs and issues. On average, people aged 15 -29 represent a quarter of the region's total population. In addition, in some specific countries, a large part of the population is excluded and marginalized from the economic, political and social processes underway.

The social inclusion of youth, primarily through education (relevant and quality education) and employment (dignified and decent employment) must be a priority for governments in the region. Moreover, social inclusion must be translated into public policies that transcend changes in governments and become a permanent pillar for development in each country throughout the region. ECLAC's proposal views social inclusion from a rights perspective, going beyond the basic factors of education and employment to encompass other fundamental dimensions enabling youth to make progress not only in terms of the objective parameters of inclusion (such as access to education, health and decent employment, among others), but also in subjective parameters, making them feel part of the joint construction of society. As a consequence, the analysis and design of youth policies considers a comprehensive perspective that includes education, employment, health, violence, culture and political participation (see diagram 1).

DIAGRAM 1 **SPHERES OF SOCIAL** **INCLUSION OF YOUTH**

SOURCE

PREPARED BY AUTHORS.



Despite this comprehensive and multidimensional view of youth life, and as a result of the limitations of research and availability of comparable information, we have restricted the analysis to some aspects of each dimension. Thus, very important aspects related to the social inclusion of youth in the region, such as migration, recreation and sport, the environment and

religion, have not been considered. We reflect on other issues, such as family and communities, in a cross-cutting fashion. Indeed, even if the research unit of analysis is the young person, we place him or her within their context and value the importance of that context in promoting or hindering the youth inclusion processes.

The design and analysis of comprehensive policies that encompass the above-mentioned spheres implies focussing on three fundamental dimensions of the social inclusion concept:

- A first dimension that considers institutional development aimed at the protection and promotion of the social inclusion of youth. This also includes strengthening the capacity of the coordinating institutions to design, coordinate and evaluate, as well as willingness - on the part of institutions that implement youth policies - to incorporate integrated visions.
- A second dimension, focussing on closing social inclusion gaps in the various spheres previously mentioned, with an equality- and rights-assurance perspective resulting from the implementation of coordinated sectoral policies.
- Finally, a third dimension that considers and understands the needs and visions of youth regarding their own social inclusion in order to incorporate these elements in policy design and implementation.

The implementation of successful comprehensive policies can only be achieved considering these three dimensions with a holistic approach. It is important to consider specific aspects in each dimension that can be summarized in the following set of sub-dimensions (table 1).

TABLE 1
SUB DIMENSIONS OF YOUTH
SOCIAL INCLUSION

SOURCE

PREPARED BY AUTHORS BASED ON ECLAC, 2007.

ANALYTICAL DIMENSIONS			
SUB-DIMENSIONS	INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	GAPS	PERCEPTIONS AND VALUATIONS
	REGULATIONS (LEGAL FRAMEWORK)	EMPLOYMENT	TRUST
	PLANNING (SECTORAL/INTER-SECTORAL PLAN)	EDUCATION	EXPECTATIONS
	COORDINATING INSTITUTION	HEALTH	CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY
	PROGRAMMES ON OFFER (IMPLEMENTING INSTITUTIONS)	VIOLENCE	SOCIAL SOLIDARITY
	ACCESS TO RESOURCES (EXPENDITURE/INVESTMENT)	CULTURE PARTICIPATION	

Considering this conceptual framework, ECLAC has prepared this guide for those involved in the design of youth development policies, programmes and strategies, providing tools to facilitate their task of fostering the social inclusion of youth in the region.

This guide includes seven tools:

1. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPHERE OF YOUTH POLICIES

This tool was created following an analysis of the institutional development dimension, based on the youth social inclusion approach set forth in table 1. It includes a review of the scenario of the regulatory, planning and institutional framework sub-dimensions¹ that will enable the user to become aware of existing institutional and regulatory frameworks in the region.

2. DIAGNOSIS OF YOUTH SOCIAL INCLUSION GAPS

This tool reviews the status of the gaps dimension, including an in-depth analysis of the six sub-dimensions in table 1 (employment, education, health, violence, culture and participation).

3. A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT URBAN VIOLENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA: CHARACTERISTICS OF MARAS AND GANGS IN SAN SALVADOR AND MANAGUA

This tool presents the results of two case studies conducted in Nicaragua and El Salvador in 2014. In the search for better proposals for youth social inclusion in the context of violence, and based on the information obtained in those case studies, supplemented with existing research on that phenomenon, this tool attempts to make a contribution by comparing Nicaraguan gangs with Salvadoran *maras*.

4. PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH ABOUT THE PRIORITIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

This tool includes reflections obtained from recent youth fora, and is related to the third dimension of table 1. It seeks to provide knowledge about regional realities so that users may identify the most important issues of youth social inclusion from the point of view of youth themselves.

5. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH POLICIES

In the search for a definition of comprehensive youth policies, this tool suggests elements to institutional users, such as the selection of a base approach perspective, as well as a set of basic considerations that should be incorporated. Most of these recommendations arise from the Baku Commitment on Youth Policies. In both cases, the perspective and considerations, we highlight the importance of considering the third dimension of inclusion, that is, the perceptions and valuations of youth in the design of youth policies.

6. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICIES BY SOCIAL INCLUSION SPHERE

This tool includes specific recommendations for the design of youth development policies, programmes and strategies in the various social inclusion spheres. This tool seeks to provide users with some specific lines of action for decision-making aimed at closing inclusion gaps in the six specific areas. It is worth noting that most areas include recommendations that also consider the institutional development dimension, both at a sectoral level, through implementing institutions, and at the level of the leading institution.

7. YOUTH OBSERVATORY FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (JUVELAC)

This tool is a historical and prospective information repository enabling users to access a large amount of continuously updated information on the dimensions of youth social inclusion. It is comprised of four sections.

1. The programmes sub-dimension is dealt with in the seventh tool of this guide (Youth Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean - JUVELAC). The expenditure sub-dimension is regarded as an issue that goes beyond the scope of this guide, but may be dealt with as from the perspective of social expenditure (see CEPAL-OIJ-IMJUV, 2014).


The first section contains information on policies, programmes and experiences. The aim is for users to access youth social inclusion programmes being implemented throughout the region.

The second section is a statistical information repository enabling users to monitor specific themes in their own country or at a comparative level with other countries in the region.

The remaining sections include a repository of information about institutions. Finally, it also includes lib-guide with references to studies and other documents relevant to youth.

The aim of this instrument is for users to directly access information needed for the design of youth development policies, programmes and strategies.

Hopefully, these tools will help to improve the design of youth development policies, programmes and strategies in Latin America and the Caribbean.



TOOL #1

Institutional development in the sphere of youth policies

COORDINATING INSTITUTIONS

There are many different types of government institutions in charge of youth related issues. As shown in table 2, in the region one finds ministries, vice-ministries, youth secretariats, under-secretariats, institutes, directorates and youth councils, among others. As stated by ECLAC (2009), in general terms the objectives of these institutions include at least four tasks: i) generating systematic knowledge of youth reality; ii) professionalization of their technical staff; iii) innovation in programme design and execution, and iv) development of communicational capacities to promote consensus among decision makers and public opinion.

TABLE 2
**COORDINATING INSTITUTIONS FOR
YOUTH AFFAIRS IN LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

SOURCE

PREPARED BY AUTHORS BASED ON
INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN THE WEB PAGES
OF THE RESPECTIVE ENTITIES.

COUNTRY	INSTITUTION	LINK
ARGENTINA	DIRECCIÓN NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD – NATIONAL YOUTH DIRECTORATE	HTTP://WWW.JUVENTUD.GOV.AR/
BOLIVIA (PLUR. STATE OF)	DIRECCIÓN PLURINACIONAL DE JUVENTUD, MINISTERIO DE JUSTICIA – PLURINATIONAL YOUTH DIRECTORATE, MINISTRY OF JUSTICE	HTTP://WWW.JUSTICIA.GOB.BO/
BRAZIL	SECRETARIA NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD – NATIONAL YOUTH SECRETARIAT	HTTP://JUVENTUDE.GOV.BR/
CHILE	INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD – NATIONAL YOUTH INSTITUTE	HTTP://WWW.INJUV.GOB.CL/ PORTAL/
COLOMBIA	PROGRAMA PRESIDENCIAL COLOMBIA JOVEN – YOUNG COLOMBIA PRESIDENTIAL PROGRAMME	HTTP://WWW.ECURED.CU/ INDEX.PHP/UNI%C3%B3N_ DE_J%C3%B3VENES_ COMUNISTAS
COSTA RICA	VICEMINISTERIO DE JUVENTUD – VICE-MINISTRY FOR YOUTH	HTTP://WWW.MCJ.GO.CR/ MINISTERIO/JUVENTUD/
CUBA	UNIÓN DE JÓVENES COMUNISTAS – YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	MINISTERIO DE LA JUVENTUD – MINISTRY FOR YOUTH	HTTP://JUVENTUD.GOB.DO/
ECUADOR	DIRECCIÓN NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD – NATIONAL YOUTH DIRECTORATE	
EL SALVADOR	INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE LA JUVENTUD – NATIONAL YOUTH INSTITUTE	HTTP://WWW.INJUVE.GOB.SV/EN/
GUATEMALA	CONSEJO NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD – NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL	HTTP://CONJUVE.GOB.GT/
HONDURAS	INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE LA JUVENTUD – NATIONAL YOUTH INSTITUTE	HTTP://DIJUVE.GOB.HN/
MEXICO	INSTITUTO MEXICANO DE LA JUVENTUD – MEXICAN YOUTH INSTITUTE	HTTP://WWW.IMJUVENTUD.GOB. MX/
NICARAGUA	MINISTERIO DE LA JUVENTUD – MINISTRY OF YOUTH	HTTP://WWW.INJUVE.GOB.NI/

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

COUNTRY	INSTITUTION	LINK
PARAGUAY	SECRETARÍA NACIONAL DE LA JUVENTUD – <i>NATIONAL YOUTH SECRETARIAT</i>	HTTP://WWW.SNJ.GOV.PY/
PERU	SECRETARÍA NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD – <i>NATIONAL YOUTH SECRETARIAT</i>	HTTP://JUVENTUD.GOB.PE/
URUGUAY	INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE LA JUVENTUD – <i>NATIONAL YOUTH INSTITUTE</i>	HTTP://WWW.INJU.GUB.UY/
VENEZUELA (BOL. REP. OF)	MINISTERIO DEL PODER POPULAR PARA LA JUVENTUD – <i>MINISTRY FOR YOUTH</i>	HTTP://WWW.INJ.GOB.VE/

Regardless of their type and the tasks they perform in order to promote the development of youth in their respective countries, youth institutions tend to be weak, especially in comparison with the robustness of the sectoral ministries such as education, employment and health. This weakness is the result of their limited political clout and the scarce resources they have to conduct their work. In view of this situation, we need to reflect on the essential functions that government youth institutions should perform.

SECTORIAL YOUTH PLANS AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES

The role of a national youth policy or plan is also critical because it provides the vision for all programmes and activities related to youth in a country. In the region we find many countries that have developed strategies that adopt the youth perspective as a space for citizenship and consider young persons as strategic actors for development (table 3). However, the allocation of resources to youth within public budgets is still insufficient and in some cases evidence a mis-match between the objectives of those plans and the public budget. For example, excluded youth, job placement, construction of citizenship and prevention of violence are prioritized in public youth policy documents. But public budgets continue to prioritize integrated youth and formal education, some resources are invested in health, but relatively little is directed towards job placement and the prevention of violence (Rodríguez, 2010).

TABLE 3
**NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY
DOCUMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

SOURCE

PREPARED BY AUTHORS BASED ON
INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN THE WEB
PAGES OF THE RESPECTIVE ENTITIES.

COUNTRY	DOCUMENT	LINK
BRAZIL	POLÍTICA NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD: DIRECTRICES Y PERSPECTIVAS – <i>NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY: GUIDELINES AND PERSPECTIVES</i>	HTTP://LIBRARY.FES.DE/PDF- FILES/BUEROS/BRASILLEN/05611. PDF
CHILE	CHILE SE COMPROMETE CON LOS JÓVENES: PLAN DE ACCIÓN EN JUVENTUD – <i>CHILE IS COMMITTED TO YOUTH: YOUTH ACTION PLAN</i>	HTTP://EXTRANET.INJUV.GOB.CL/ CEDOC/ESTUDIOS%20DEL%20 INJUV/ESTUDIOS%20PDF/ EVALUACION_DE_LA_REFORMA_ ESCOLAR.PDF

TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)

COUNTRY	DOCUMENT	LINK
COLOMBIA	POLÍTICA NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD: BASES PARA EL PLAN DECENAL DE JUVENTUD 2005 – 2015 – <i>NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY: BASIS FOR THE TEN-YEAR YOUTH PLAN 2005-2015</i>	HTTP://CDIM.ESAP.EDU.CO/BANCOMEDIOS/DOCUMENTOS%20PDF/PROGRAMA%20PRESIDENCIAL%20COLOMBIA%20JOVEN.PDF
COSTA RICA	POLÍTICA PÚBLICA DE LA PERSONA JOVEN – <i>PUBLIC POLICY FOR YOUNG PERSONS</i>	HTTP://WWW.CPJ.GO.CR/IMAGES/POLITICA_PUBLICA_DE_LA_PERSONA_JOVEN_2014_-_2019.PDF
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	POLÍTICA PÚBLICA NACIONAL PARA EL DESARROLLO DE LA JUVENTUD DOMINICANA 2008 – 2015 – <i>NATIONAL PUBLIC POLICY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOMINICAN YOUTH 2008-2015</i>	(NO SE ENCUENTRA DISPONIBLE EN LÍNEA)
ECUADOR	PLAN NACIONAL DE LA JUVENTUD 2004 – 2008 – <i>NATIONAL YOUTH PLAN 2004-2008</i>	
EL SALVADOR	POLÍTICA NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD 2011 – 2024 Y PLAN DE ACCIÓN 2011 – 2014 – <i>NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2011-2024 AND ACTION PLAN 2011-2014</i>	HTTP://PLANIPOLIS.IIEP.UNESCO.ORG/UPLOAD/YOUTH/EL%20SALVADOR/EL_SALVADOR_POLITICA%20NACIONAL%20DE%20JUVENTUD%20DE%20EL%20SALVADOR%202011-2024.PDF
GUATEMALA	POLÍTICA DE JUVENTUD 2012 – 2020: CONSTRUYENDO UNA NACIÓN PLURICULTURAL, INCLUYENTE Y EQUITATIVA – <i>YOUTH POLICY 2012-2020: BUILDING A PLURICULTURAL, INCLUSIVE AND EQUAL NATION</i>	HTTP://CONJUVE.GOB.GT/DESCARGAS/PNJ.PDF
HONDURAS	POLÍTICA NACIONAL DE LA JUVENTUD 2007 – 2021: POR UNA CIUDADANÍA PLENA – <i>NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2007-2021: FOR FULL CITIZENSHIP</i>	HTTP://PLANIPOLIS.IIEP.UNESCO.ORG/UPLOAD/YOUTH/HONDURAS/HONDURAS_2007_NATIONAL_YOUTH_POLICY.PDF
MEXICO	PROGRAMA NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD 2014-2018 – <i>NATIONAL YOUTH PROGRAMME 2014-2018</i>	HTTP://WWW.DOF.GOB.MX/NOTA_DETALLE.PHP?CODIGO=5343095&FECHA=30/04/2014
NICARAGUA	POLÍTICA NACIONAL PARA EL DESARROLLO INTEGRAL DE LA JUVENTUD Y PLAN DE ACCIÓN DE LA POLÍTICA NACIONAL PARA EL DESARROLLO INTEGRAL DE LA JUVENTUD 2005 – 2015 – <i>NATIONAL POLICY FOR COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION PLAN OF THE NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH 2005-2015</i>	HTTP://PLANIPOLIS.IIEP.UNESCO.ORG/UPLOAD/YOUTH/NICARAGUA/NICARAGUA_NATIONAL_YOUTH_POLICY.PDF
PANAMA	POLÍTICA PÚBLICA DE JUVENTUD DE PANAMÁ – <i>PUBLIC YOUTH POLICY OF PANAMA</i>	HTTP://PLANIPOLIS.IIEP.UNESCO.ORG/UPLOAD/YOUTH/PANAMA/PANAMA_2004_NATIONAL_YOUTH_POLICY.PDF
PARAGUAY	PLAN NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD “DON FÉLIX DE GUARANDA” 2011 – 2013. HACIA LA NUEVA GENERACIÓN DE PRÓCERES – <i>“DON FÉLIX DE GUARANDA” NATIONAL YOUTH PLAN 2011-2013, TOWARDS A NEW GENERATION OF RENOWNED CITIZENS</i>	HTTP://WWW.MEC.GOV.PY/CMS_V2/ADJUNTOS/7259

TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)

COUNTRY	DOCUMENT	LINK
PERU	PLAN ESTRATÉGICO NACIONAL DE LA JUVENTUD 2014-2021 – NATIONAL STRATEGIC YOUTH PLAN 2014-2021	HTTP://JUVENTUD.GOB.PE/PDF/PLAN-ESTRATEGICO-NACIONAL-DE-LA-JUVENTUD-2014-2021-RUMBO-AL-BICENTENARIO.PDF
URUGUAY	PLAN DE ACCIÓN DE JUVENTUDES 2015-2025 – YOUTH ACTION PLAN 2015-2025	HTTP://WWW.INJU.GUB.UY/INNOVAPORTAL/V/26838/5/INNOVA.FRONT/PLAN_DE_ACCION_DE_JUVENTUDES_2015-2025

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A key component of the institutional framework is the existence of laws and regulations related to youth (see table 4). These regulations, be they laws or decrees, create institutions, define objectives for interventions, establish rights and goals, allocate resources, separate levels of responsibility and articulate actors. The definition of a legal framework for the sphere of youth reflects a consensus in society about the need and way to deal with and tackle that issue. On the other hand, it mandates the different levels of the Executive to define policies and programmes to meet the goals and channel public budget resources. Thus, the legal framework provides stability, permanent criteria, the institutional framework and resources for public youth policies.

TABLE 4
**NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK
 IN THE AREA OF YOUTH IN LATIN
 AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**


SOURCE

PREPARED BY AUTHORS BASED ON
 INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN THE WEB PAGES
 OF THE RESPECTIVE ENTITIES.

COUNTRY	LAW	YEAR OF CREATION	LINK
BRAZIL	LAW NO. 11.129 THAT CREATES THE NATIONAL YOUTH SECRETARIAT AND THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL	2005	HTTP://WWW.CAMARA.GOV.BR/SILEG/INTEGRAS/535652.PDF
BOLIVIA (PLUR. STATE OF)	LAW NO.342, YOUTH LAW AND REGULATION	2013	HTTP://WWW.JUSTICIA.GOB.BO/INDEX.PHP/COMPONENT/CONTENT/ARTICLE/44-PUBLICACIONES/1618-LEY-342
CHILE	LAW NO. 19.042 THAT CREATES THE NATIONAL YOUTH INSTITUTE	1991	HTTP://WWW.LEYCHILE.CL/NAVEGAR?IDNORMA=30409
COLOMBIA	LAW NO. 1622, STATUTORY LAW OF YOUTH CITIZENSHIP	2013	HTTP://WWW.YOUTHPOLICY.ORG/NATIONAL/COLOMBIA_2013_NATIONAL_YOUTH_LAW.PDF
COSTA RICA	LAW NO. 8.261, GENERAL LAW OF THE YOUNG PERSON	2002	HTTP://CPJ.GO.CR/DOCS/DOCUMENTOS/LEY_GENERAL_DE_LA_PERSONA_JOVEN_8261_Y_SU_REFORMAS_LEY9051_Y_LEY9155.PDF
CUBA	CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH CODE	1978	HTTP://FILES.SLD.CU/PREVENI/FI

TABLE 4 (CONTINUED)

COUNTRY	LAW	YEAR OF CREATION	LINK
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GENERAL YOUTH LAW NO. 49-2000	2000	HTTP://WWW.CONSULTORIA.GOV.DO/REGLAMENTOS/REGL.%20LEY%20GENERAL%20DE%20LA%20JUVENTUD%2049-00.PDF
ECUADOR	NATIONAL YOUTH LAW	2001	HTTP://DOCUMENTACION.ASAMBLEANACIONAL.GOV.EC/ALFRESCO/D/D/WORKSPACE/SPACESSTORE/86C26DBA-98A1-4B6A-B004-9B84A8F254F9/LEY%20ORG%C3%A1NICA%20DE%20LA%20JUVENTUD
EL SALVADOR	GENERAL YOUTH LAW	2011	HTTP://WWW.ASAMBLEA.GOB.SV/EPARLAMENTO/INDICE-LEGISLATIVO/BUSCADOR-DE-DOCUMENTOS-LEGISLATIVOS/LEY-GENERAL-DE-JUVENTUD
HONDURAS	DECREE NO. 260 – 2005, FRAMEWORK LAW FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH	2006	HTTP://WWW.PODERJUDICIAL.GOB.HN/JURIS/LEYES/LEY%20MARCO%20PARA%20EL%20DESARROLLO%20INTEGRAL%20DE%20LA%20JUVENTUD.PDF
MEXICO	LAW ON THE MEXICAN YOUTH INSTITUTE	1999	HTTP://WWW.DIPUTADOS.GOB.MX/LEYESBIBLIO/PDF/87.PDF
NICARAGUA	LAW NO. 392, ON THE PROMOTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH	2002	HTTP://LEGISLACION.ASAMBLEA.GOB.NI/NORMAWEB.NSF/9E314815A08D4A6206257265005D21F9/10FA0619155A2E2A062570A1005811FC?OPENDOCUMENT
PANAMA	LAW NO. 42 THAT CREATES THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH, CHILDHOOD, WOMEN AND FAMILY	1997	HTTP://DOCS.PANAMA.JUSTIA.COM/FEDERALES/LEYES/42-DE-1997-NOV-24-1997.PDF
PARAGUAY	LAW NO. 262 THAT CREATES AND REGULATES THE NATIONAL YOUTH SECRETARIAT	2013	HTTP://WWW.GACETAOFICIAL.GOV.PY/GACETA.PHP?ACTION=SHOW&ID=2366&NUM=128
PERU	LAW ON THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL NO. 27.802	2002	HTTP://WWW.CAJPE.ORG.PE/GEP/IMAGES/STORIES/LEY_CONAJU_27802.PDF
VENEZUELA (BOL. REP. OF)	NATIONAL YOUTH LAW NO. 37404	2002	HTTP://WWW.MIJUICIO.COM/LEYES/ESPECIALES/16.PDF



TOOL #2

Diagnosis of youth social inclusion gaps



PHOTOGRAPHY

UNICEF/EL SALVADOR/2007-436/GONZALO BELL

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

In order to ensure the long term sustainability of development and promote the structural change that is required, we need a young population with a higher educational level, relevant learnings, innovation capacities and capable of dealing with the society of knowledge. In summary, young people better prepared for life-long learning (ECLAC-OIJ-IMJUVE, 2014). However, strengthening this link must necessarily be accompanied by improvements in the sphere of job placement opportunities, both in terms of greater productivity and innovation, and also to strengthen social inclusion processes: the bridge between education and employment during youth represents, in no greater measure, the step of moving from a life of dependency to one of autonomy (Rico and Trucco, 2014).

WHAT DO YOUTH DO? AN INITIAL APPROACH

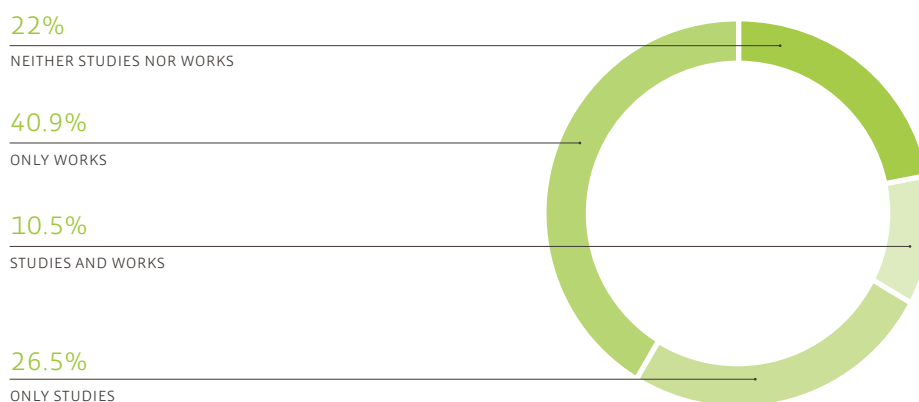
Structural socio-economic and spatial inequality conditions, the characteristics of the formal and non-formal supply of education, the productive structure and immediate development environment exert an influence on the experience and biography of youth in the region, both in terms of the various social insertion opportunities they may gain access to, and more broadly, in their sense of belonging and ways to conceive life and the future within (or outside) Latin American societies.

According to data presented in graph 1, around 2012 approximately 37% of youth aged 15 – 29 attended an educational centre, representing some 49.9 million people. On the other hand, a little over 50% of them were employed when the surveys were conducted in the various countries (75.7 million). Between both groups there is a sub-set of young people that study and work representing a tenth of the total: 15.3 million. Lastly, 22% of youth declared they were not involved in either of these two activities (29.7 million).

GRAPH 1
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
 STATUS OF ACTIVITY OF YOUTH
 AGED 15 - 29, AROUND 2012**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS IN THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.



As shown in table 5, considering the development of educational systems and access to them, the operation of labour markets, maternity patterns, women's labour force participation, as well as other phenomena involving youth, certain differences exist between countries.

TABLE 5
LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
STATUS OF ACTIVITY OF YOUTH
AGED 15 - 29, AROUND 2012
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS IN THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

	STUDIES AND WORKS	ONLY STUDIES	ONLY WORKS	NEITHER STUDIES NOR WORKS
ARGENTINA, 2012	10.3	36.1	34.3	19.3
BOLIVIA (PLUR. STATE OF), 2011	8.7	14.2	48.5	28.6
BRAZIL, 2012	13.1	22.0	44.0	20.8
CHILE, 2011	6.5	38.2	32.4	21.8
COLOMBIA, 2012	10.7	24.1	42.5	22.7
COSTA RICA, 2011	15.0	32.2	34.2	18.6
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, 2012	11.6	33.6	31.1	23.6
ECUADOR, 2012	8.8	35.5	38.1	17.7
EL SALVADOR, 2012	7.8	27.0	40.4	24.8
GUATEMALA, 2006	10.4	13.9	50.0	25.7
HONDURAS, 2010	8.3	20.8	43.6	27.3
MEXICO, 2012	8.7	23.8	47.0	20.5
NICARAGUA, 2009	7.3	20.7	43.6	28.4
PANAMA, 2011	9.2	28.8	39.7	22.3
PARAGUAY, 2011	16.9	25.0	40.3	17.8
PERU, 2012	12.2	20.2	47.7	19.8
URUGUAY, 2011	13.8	27.4	42.4	16.4
VENEZUELA, (BOL. STATE OF), 2012	9.6	33.6	36.3	20.5
LATIN AMERICA (SIMPLE AVERAGE)	10.5	26.5	40.9	22.0

YOUTH WHO STUDY: ACCESS AND PROGRESSION WITHIN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

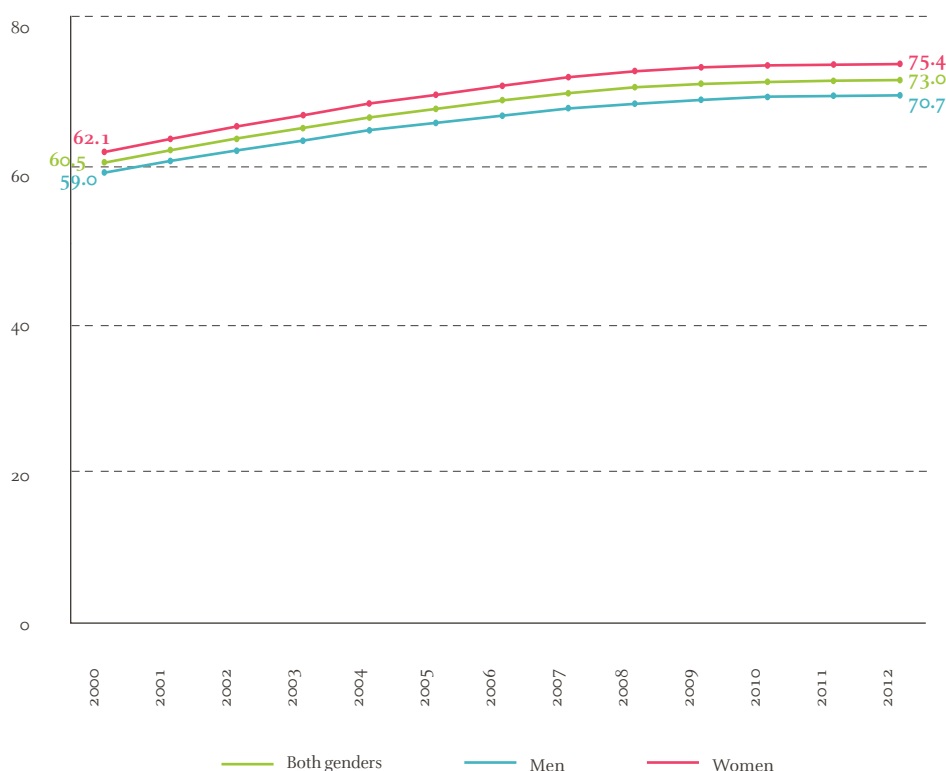
Recent studies by ECLAC (ECLAC, 2014; ECLAC-OIJ-IMJUVE, 2014) emphasize that the development of skills through formal education represents one of the principal focuses of youth social inclusion. These studies show that more years of schooling not only provide young people with greater social insertion opportunities but also enable them a fuller participation in the democratic, complex, and globalized societies they face.

The educational outlook for youth in the region shows that full primary education is practically universal (94%)² and is no longer an obstacle to expand secondary education. This evidences a fluid transition between these two cycles (UNESCO, 2013,). However, the number of students theoretically old enough to attend secondary level education but not yet enrolled in an educational establishment is still significant. According to UNESCO-UIS data, based on comparable information from 41 Latin American and Caribbean countries, the net enrolment rate at the secondary education level increased from 60.5% in 2000 to 73.0% in 2012 (see graph 2). On the other hand, the educational expansion process at secondary level has also brought important benefits for women in terms of their access to education in the region.

GRAPH 2
LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN (41 COUNTRIES): NET
ENROLMENT RATE AT SECONDARY
EDUCATION LEVEL, BY SEX
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

UNESCO-UIS: INSTITUTE FOR STATISTICS OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION – [ON LINE] DATA BASE [HTTP://STATS.UIS.UNESCO.ORG/](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/).



However, despite an increase of more than 10 percentage points over the last 12 years, figures are still low and reflect the long road still to be travelled to achieve universal full secondary education. Part of the problem continues to be the drop out rate.

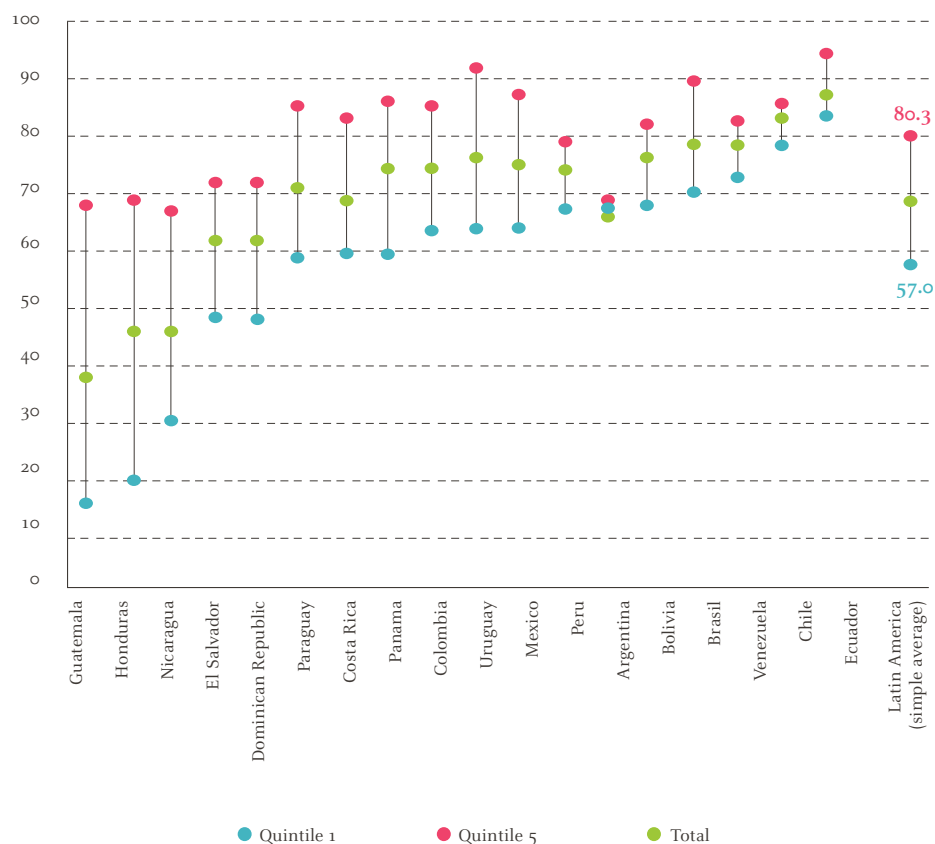
Increased enrolment in secondary education over the last decade is largely due to the incorporation of groups that have historically been excluded from the school system (Itzcovich, 2014). However, significant gaps still remain in the region today dictated by the socio-economic level of the homes in question. For example, while 80.3% of secondary school age teenagers and young people from the highest income quintile were enrolled in secondary education in 2012, this figure was only 57.4% for the lowest quintile. The situation is certainly highly varied when reviewing the countries in the region because compared to Central American countries, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Venezuela are the countries with the smallest differences between opposed quintiles. This not only brings to light the dramatic inequality but also highlights low attendance rates in general (see graph 3).

2. This is ECLAC data, estimated on the basis of special tabulations of household surveys in 18 countries in the region, around 2012.

GRAPH 3
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
 NET SECONDARY EDUCATION
 ATTENDANCE RATE, BY INCOME
 QUINTILES, AROUND 2012**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS FROM THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.



3. This document understands school drop-out as dropping out for a specific year, and does not necessarily imply a definite drop out from the school system.

School dropout rates³ are another factor that jeopardizes timely progression and conclusion of this educational cycle. Such rates are significant in many countries in the region largely because youth already have the opportunity and the need to enter the labour market, thus discouraging their permanence in school. Estimations show that the secondary education dropout rate in Latin America for 2012 was 15.5% (see table 6), with teenagers from the lower income quintile more than doubling the dropout rate of those in the highest income quintile (19.1% in quintile one as opposed to 8.2% in the fifth quintile). Access to the educational system does not guarantee that teenagers will conclude formal education, which is why it is imperative for the region's educational systems to improve their capacity to keep students in school, especially those from underprivileged homes.

TABLE 6
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
 SECONDARY EDUCATION DROPOUT
 RATE, AROUND 2012**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS FROM THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

	TOTAL	QUINTILE 1	QUINTILE 2	QUINTILE 3	QUINTILE 4	QUINTILE 5
ARGENTINA	13.5	18.6	15.0	11.7	9.9	5.5
BOLIVIA (PLUR. STATE OF)	12.0	16.0	10.6	10.6	13.2	9.4
BRAZIL	16.2	19.7	19.7	16.2	13.3	5.5
CHILE	10.0	12.2	11.8	13.5	7.0	2.2

TABLE 6 (CONTINUED)

	TOTAL	QUINTILE 1	QUINTILE 2	QUINTILE 3	QUINTILE 4	QUINTILE 5
COLOMBIA	14.6	17.4	18.7	15.9	11.0	6.7
COSTA RICA	8.5	7.6	9.5	7.5	10.9	6.4
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	19.3	26.8	24.1	18.8	16.5	9.2
ECUADOR	15.5	20.6	18.9	16.4	12.0	4.2
EL SALVADOR	19.3	26.8	24.1	18.8	16.5	9.2
GUATEMALA	13.0	8.6	10.2	19.9	15.9	8.1
HONDURAS	16.5	23.8	22.7	16.9	15.8	10.4
MEXICO	28.9	37.3	32.6	31.1	27.1	14.8
NICARAGUA	19.7	21.5	17.6	18.5	24.3	16.5
PANAMA	15.7	20.4	14.8	16.1	15.4	9.4
PARAGUAY	13.6	15.8	16.7	14.2	14.2	5.4
PERU	8.8	7.0	7.5	10.7	9.9	9.3
URUGUAY	21.7	30.2	23.9	21.5	17.1	7.0
VENEZUELA (BOL. REP. OF)	12.1	14.1	14.1	11.8	10.7	7.8
LATIN AMERICA (SIMPLE AVERAGE)	15.5	19.1	17.4	16.1	14.5	8.2

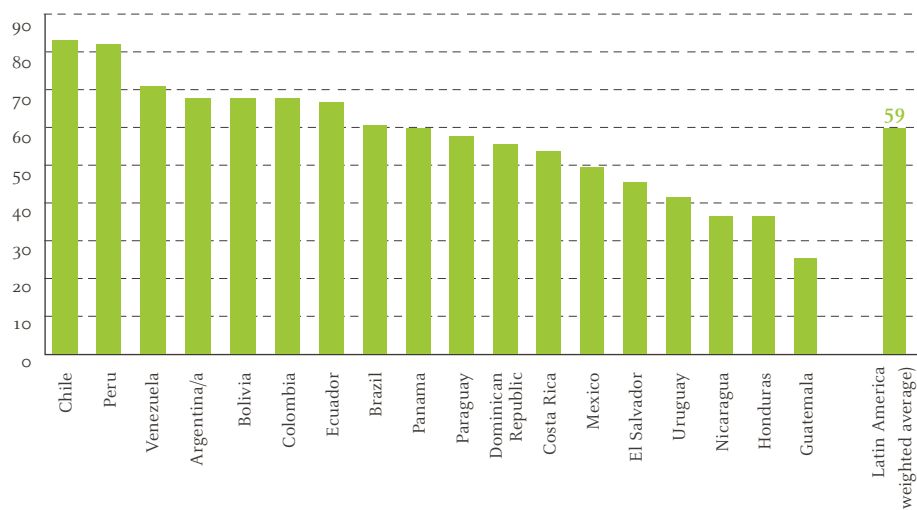
The high dropout rates in a large number of countries result in few years of finalized education, well short of complete secondary education. This level of schooling is crucial to acquire the basic skills required in a globalized world enabling the individual to develop freely and acquire the capacity to learn throughout the rest of his or her life. Moreover, according to ECLAC estimations (2010), full secondary education is the minimum level of education required in most Latin American countries to have a lower probability than the average population of living in poverty. However, in order to earn an income above the average in the majority of countries implies at least 13 to 14 years of study, meaning that some level of post-secondary education is required (ECLAC-OIJ, 2008, and ECLAC-OIJ-IMJUVE, 2014).

The aforementioned situation translates into a negative regional perspective as far as the conclusion of secondary level education is concerned given that 4 out of 10 young people aged 20 - 24 do not conclude this level (see graph 4). By not allowing these individuals to obtain a high-quality job that guarantees an above average income, increased probabilities of continuing and reproducing precarious living conditions (ECLAC-OIJ-IMJUVE, 2014) become a reality. The outlook in these countries varies: Chile and Peru evidence the highest education conclusion rates in the region but there are countries with very low secondary education completion rates, such as Honduras with 36% and Guatemala with 25%.

GRAPH 4
LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
CONCLUSION OF SECONDARY
EDUCATION AMONG YOUNG
PEOPLE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 20
AND 24, AROUND 2012
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS FROM THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.



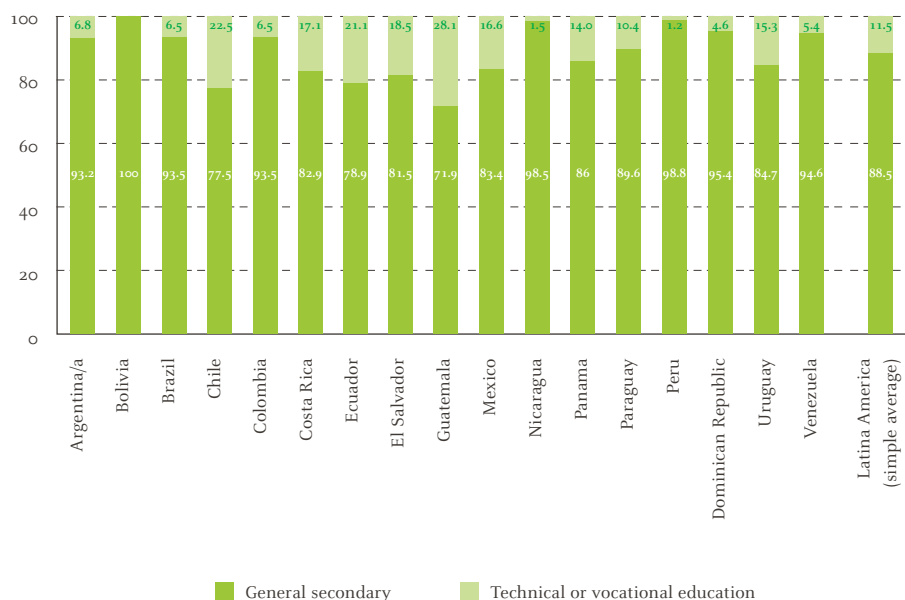
Secondary education options available in the region can be divided into two modes: one general or common program, and technical or vocational education programs. The first of the two modalities channels young people towards a scientific/humanistic education, thus preparing them for advanced education. Vocational education, on the other hand, was conceived as a subsystem within high school education, but offers job placement upon conclusion of secondary studies by means of technical training. Based on information available for 17 countries, the large majority of young people in Latin America are in general education (88.5%), and Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Nicaragua, and Peru are the countries where practically all students enrolled in secondary education are in the general education modality (see graph 5). There is also a group of countries where technical education is more significant, representing more than 15% of total enrolment in secondary education: Guatemala (28.1%), Chile (22.5%), Ecuador (21.1%), Costa Rica (17.1%), and Mexico (16.6%).

GRAPH 5
LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES):
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS
ENROLLED AT SECONDARY LEVEL,
BY TYPE OF PROGRAM, 2012 ^A
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

UNESCO-UIS: INSTITUTE FOR STATISTICS OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION – [ON LINE] DATA BASE [HTTP://STATS.UIS.UNESCO.ORG/](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/).

^A ESTIMATIONS ARE FOR 2012. INFORMATION FOR ARGENTINA, BOLIVIA, GUATEMALA, PARAGUAY, AND PERU ARE ESTIMATIONS FOR 2011; WHILE INFORMATION FOR NICARAGUA AND URUGUAY ARE FOR 2010.



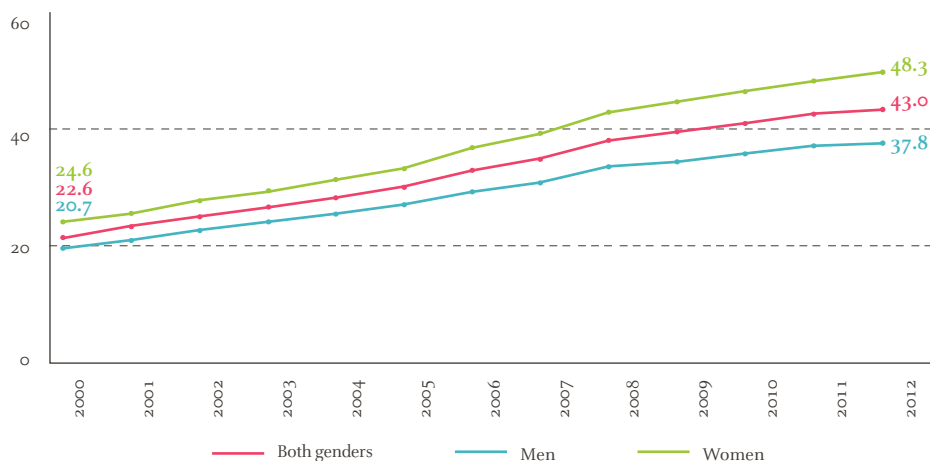
The scarce proportion of young people with technical education limits modernization processes and greater competitiveness while hindering the development of economic and industrial policies, as well as technological development to achieve structural change in the economies of the region. A reworking of technical education is urgently needed. This should not only be understood as education conducive to an immediate short term employment but, rather, as something that provides youth with a platform for permanent learning and a capacity to innovate, including employment and/or admission into education and post-secondary training.

It is worth mentioning that it is not easy to estimate youth access to post-secondary education level because, unlike primary and secondary education, there is no formally defined age range to attend, and people come and go into post-secondary education during their lives (UNESCO, 2013). However, one way of ascertaining this is to review gross enrolment rates⁴. Based on this rate, it becomes evident that involvement in post-secondary education in the region has increased dramatically and has in fact doubled in recent years, from 22.6% in 2000 to 43.0% in 2012 (see graph 6). As in the case of secondary education, it is young women that have benefited most from this greater enrolment, exceeding men by approximately 10 percentage points.

GRAPH 6
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN (42 COUNTRIES): GROSS
POST-SECONDARY ENROLMENT
RATE, BY SEX, 2000-2012**
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

UNESCO-UIS: INSTITUTE FOR STATISTICS OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION – [ON LINE] DATA BASE [HTTP://STATS.UIS.UNESCO.ORG/](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/).



The higher education system is a key driver for development: it strengthens a country's competitiveness in the global economy and generates social and individual benefits. Increasingly, development depends on countries' capacity to generate knowledge and the necessary skills conducive to social and productive innovation, as well as for economic growth and environmental sustainability.

YOUTH WITH PAID WORK

Another pillar of social inclusion is opportunities for youth to enter the labour market. In Latin America, and based on information available for 18 countries, approximately 76 million young people aged 15-29 are in paid jobs.

High turnover, segmentation, and insecurity are commonplace for youth entering the labour market. However, as mentioned by the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI), youth today

4. The population in post-secondary age represents a five year cohort derived per country. This covers five years after theoretical conclusion of secondary education.

see this “new employment reality” as *fait accompli* (OEI, 2012). In some cases, this reality meets the desired autonomy expectations. However, for the majority, this situation does not allow for career development and stable work relations. Also, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), this employment situation poses a political challenge because the desire for paid work and to lead an independent life based on employment is confronted by the reality of a labour market where youth face increasing unemployment and informality (ILO, 2013).

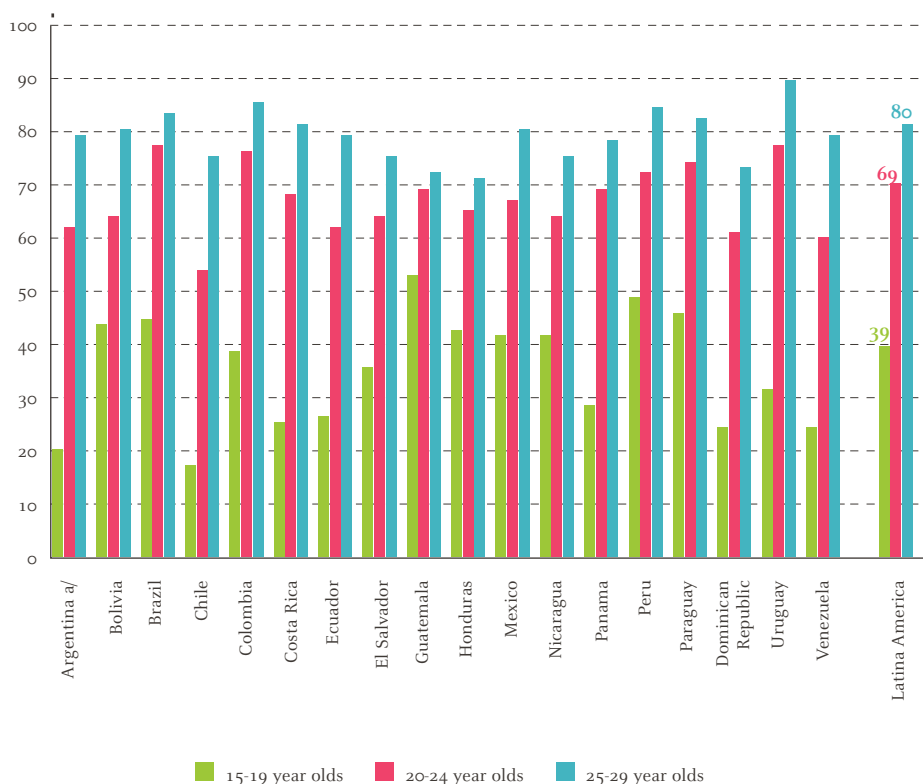
As analyzed in recent documents (ECLAC, 2014 and ECLAC-OIJ-IMJUVE, 2014), the youth employment rate in Latin America increases with age (see graph 7). Around 2012, the youth employment rate between the ages of 15 and 29 was 39%, and 80% for the 25 to 29 age range. However, the lower labour participation among those aged 15 - 19 is not necessarily a disquieting fact given that later job placement allows the individual to remain in the educational system longer and improve credentials for subsequent use upon entering the labour market.

GRAPH 7
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
RATE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE
LABOUR MARKET BY YOUTH AGED
15 - 29, AROUND 2012**
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS FROM THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

^A URBAN ZONES.



The differences faced by youth are not exclusively limited to age issues, but to many other factors, especially the socio-economic conditions in which they were brought up and developed. As observed in table 7, in the different countries, the youth unemployment rate trends per income quintiles tend to decrease as income increases. Thus, insofar as the latter group achieves higher educational levels, the role played by education with regard to entering the labour market is evident. Unemployment and inactivity periods associated with difficulties in entering the labour market (discouraged unemployment) are also correspondingly shorter. At regional level, it is evident that youth in the higher quintiles have an unemployment rate on average three times lower than those in the lower income quintiles. In some countries, there is an eight to one difference in this respect (for example, Costa Rica).

TABLE 7

**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF
YOUTH AGED 15 – 29, BY INCOME
QUINTILES, AROUND 2012
(IN PERCENTAGES)**

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS FROM THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

^A URBAN ZONES.

COUNTRY	QUINTILE 1	QUINTILE 2	QUINTILE 3	QUINTILE 4	QUINTILE 5
ARGENTINA A/	28.8	18.3	14.3	9.3	4.6
BOLIVIA	5.0	5.5	5.5	4.7	3.6
BRAZIL	23.9	16.3	9.8	6.2	5.5
CHILE	39.9	18.2	14.2	8.2	7.3
COLOMBIA	25.4	20.9	19.1	14.3	10.3
COSTA RICA	36.9	21.5	11.5	10.0	4.3
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	32.2	17.5	12.7	9.6	6.6
ECUADOR	14.4	11.5	9.3	9.2	5.3
EL SALVADOR	15.1	13.4	10.1	9.2	5.4
GUATEMALA	1.2	2.6	3.4	3.4	3.8
HONDURAS	3.3	7.6	8.2	8.3	6.9
MEXICO	10.6	7.8	8.1	7.1	4.4
NICARAGUA	14.3	10.2	11.5	8.6	8.1
PANAMA	9.5	17.4	8.5	7.0	4.3
PERU	7.2	9.0	7.9	7.3	6.5
PARAGUAY	17.6	13.0	12.6	8.1	6.1
URUGUAY	24.0	16.1	11.7	8.4	7.3
VENEZUELA	29.9	17.3	13.6	7.7	5.5
LATIN AMERICA	19.3	13.9	10.4	7.6	5.7

Among those employed, 79% are salaried workers and a smaller proportion work independently or are self-employed (19%)⁵ as compared to remunerated workers over 30 years of age whose distribution is less pronounced (56% and 37%, respectively) (see graph 8). This pattern is widespread: as age and job experience increase so does the propensity of labour autonomy, either in the form of independent work or through the creation of new enterprises. This is primarily due to greater knowledge of the line of work and to networks of suppliers and clients in the specific line of work. This has certain implications for the design of training programs: although the promotion of youth entrepreneurship and development of associated skills is important, it is not expected to have significant mass impact. In consequence, it must be viewed as a program that is complimentary to training for salaried work.

In terms of the composition of youth employment by economic branch, most youth are in the tertiary sector, where women with high and intermediate educational levels predominate (ECLAC-OIJ, 2004). As Weller notes, both the agricultural and manufacturing industry sectors have lost weight in the youth employment structure, giving rise to a polarized structure in the tertiary sector (Weller, 2001 and 2003). On the one hand, this is characterized by a significant

5. Only the two most important categories are mentioned.

number of highly productive and typically well remunerated jobs, such as financial services, services to companies, telecommunications, energy, and social services while, on the other hand, there are jobs with low entry barriers and low productivity, such as informal trade and certain personal services.

GRAPH 8

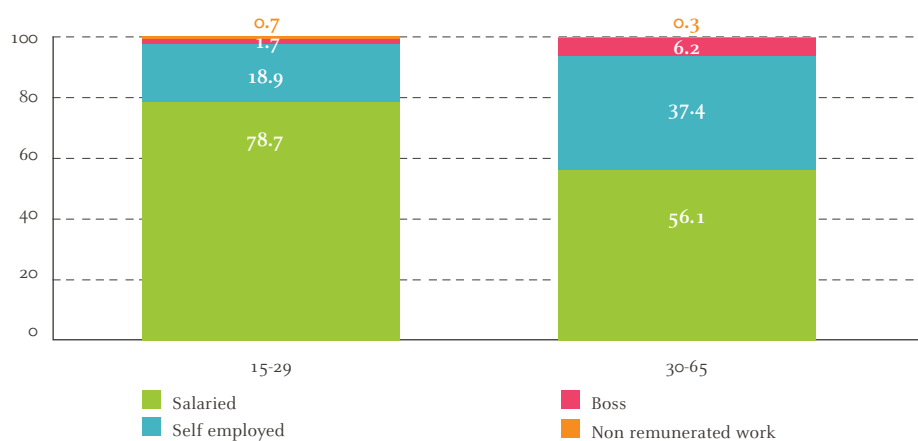
LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AROUND 2012

SOURCE

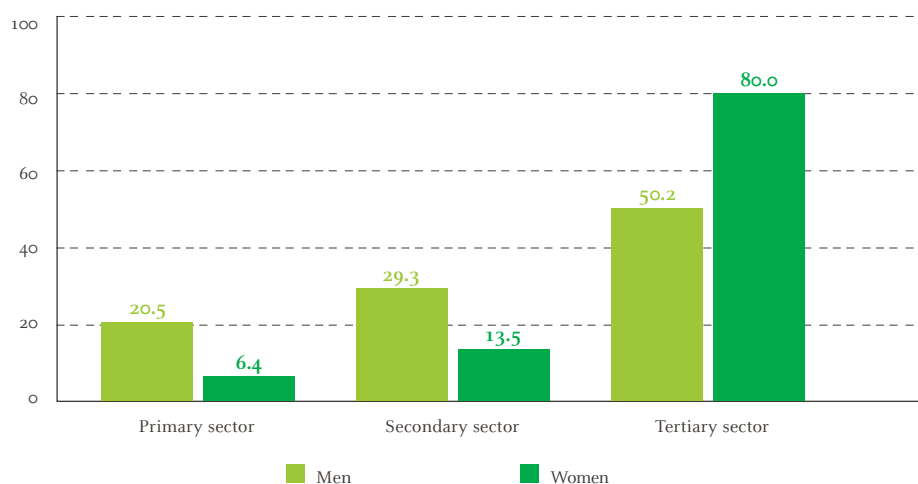
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS FROM THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

^A SIMPLE COUNTRY AVERAGES.

A/ YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SITUATION, PER AGE GROUP, AROUND 2012 (IN PERCENTAGES)



B/ BRANCH OF ACTIVITY OF YOUTH, PER GENDER, AROUND 2012 (IN PERCENTAGES)

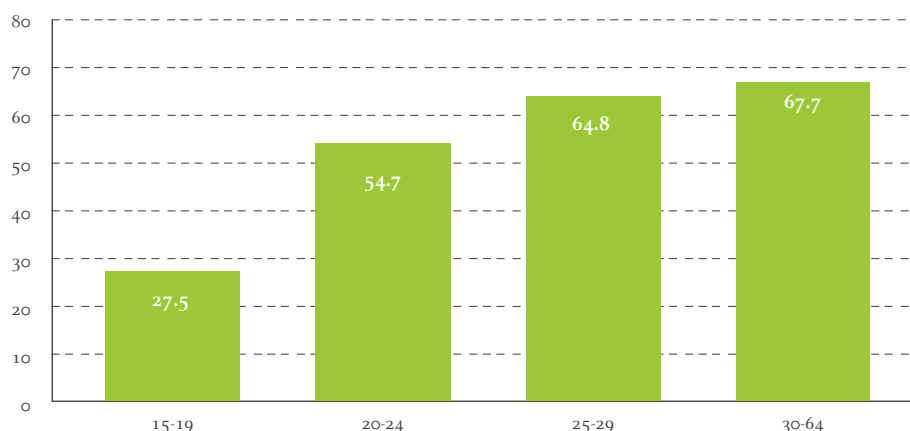


Additionally, most youth have precarious employment. Thus, the quality of employment is different between youth and adults. An expression of this situation is the level of labour protection measured by affiliation to social security by young salaried workers. Youth, especially those under 20, have a level of labour protection substantially lower to that of adults; while 27,5% of salaried youth aged 15 – 19 are affiliated to social security, in adults this percentage is 70% (see graph 9). As age increases, so does affiliation, indicating that for a significant number of youth with paid jobs this is a temporary lack of social security protection. However, it reflects discrimination towards young workers (ECLAC, 2014).

GRAPH 9
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
 SALARIED POPULATION AFFILIATED
 TO SOCIAL SECURITY, PER AGE
 GROUPS, AROUND 2012**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS FROM THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.



The above mentioned situation confirms the ECLAC-OIJ-IMJUVE (2014) report which states that undoubtedly employment is the most critical link in youth social inclusion. In fact, a decade ago, ECLAC and OIJ mentioned that despite important educational achievements and greater adaptability to organizational and communicational changes by youth, progress had not been made in the field of employment (ECLAC-OIJ, 2004).

YOUTH THAT ARE NOT INCORPORATED INTO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND DO NOT HAVE PAID WORK

It is estimated that in Latin America approximately 30 million young persons, equivalent to 22% of the total (see graph 1), are not linked to the main spheres of social inclusion, i.e. the educational system and the labour market. This situation not only implies an important disadvantage, today and in the future, in avoiding poverty or escaping from it, but also entails a negative label that stigmatizes them.

Stigma is built around the idea that youth not incorporated to the educational system or the labour market are risky, associated to problems such as vagrancy, crime, alcohol and drug abuse. In actual fact, this is a very heterogeneous group of young persons. Thus, we need to make visible the diversity and complexity of their situation, as well as the reasons for their exclusion. This would reveal other social inclusion paths followed by this youth group.

As shown in a recent ECLAC study, the group of youth outside the educational system and labour market was – with the exception of Guatemala and Honduras – comprised mostly of women (73.5%), living primarily in urban zones (63.5%) (ECLAC, 2014). Despite the fact that differences between age groups are not very significant, most of those who do not study or work are aged 20 - 24 (37.5%) and this percentage drops in the 25 - 29 age group (30.1%), thus evidencing the dynamic and temporary nature of youth activity. Finally, considerable gaps exist between income quintiles because nearly 50% of those that neither study nor have paid work belong to the first two quintiles⁶.

6. For more details about youth not linked to the educational or labour market, see ECLAC, 2014.

By looking at the specific activities of these young people, we can establish that more than half of those who neither study nor work (55%) are engaged in non-remunerated domestic care and work (see graph 10). This brings to light a sharp gender distinction given that the large majority of youth in this group are women. Indeed, the fact that women are overburdened with care

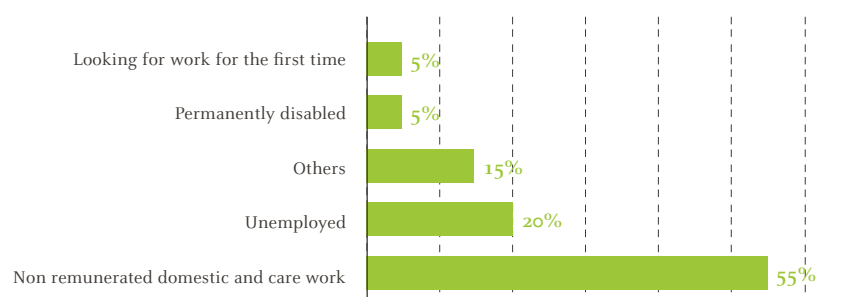
tasks has a high cost in terms of their progress towards future opportunities. This situation makes them financially dependent and hinders their incorporation to the labour market during their whole lives. This cost is not paid to the same extent by young men who abandon the educational system because they are able to compensate for the lack of formal education with work experience, which is relatively highly valued in the marketplace (Rico and Trucco, 2014).

The value attributed to work experience accounts for the fact that 20% of young people who neither study nor work are looking for remunerated work having worked previously (unemployed). Another 5% of young people have stopped studying and are looking for work for the first time. It is possible that young people who find themselves in this situation might do so temporarily and eventually join the labour market.

GRAPH 10
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE
 CARIBBEAN (18 COUNTRIES):
 STATUS OF ACTIVITY OF YOUTH
 AGED 15 - 29 THAT NEITHER STUDY
 NOR WORK, AROUND 2012**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND
 THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL
 TABULATIONS FROM SURVEYS HOUSEHOLD FROM
 THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.



This scenario leaves 15% of youth (Other inactive category) who do not study and have not entered the labour market, considered to be the hard core of exclusion (close to 4.8 million, accounting for 3.3% of total youth aged 15 - 29). Some of the reasons for the non-incorporation of that group are lack of interest and motivation both with regards to studying and looking for paid work.

The design of youth social insertion strategies must take into account national and local realities, along with the life situations and specific trajectories faced by young people to ensure that effective and adequate actions are undertaken to encourage and support them when it comes to continuing their studies and/or looking for work (ECLAC, 2014). Moreover, it is important to work in favour of developing educational institutions and a labour market that accepts and allows the incorporation of youth in a context that is significant for them. This is the only way to generate public policies that make sense to them and enables the reduction of the hard core of youth social exclusion.

HEALTH

It is imperative to understand and respond to youth health needs. Health is a condition that favours the development of skills as it facilitates involvement in academic studies and labour insertion, thus promoting social inclusion. As indicated by ECLAC, social inclusion is conducive to the exercise and enjoyment of rights that are fundamental to achieve a safe, healthy, and prosperous society throughout the world, guaranteeing high levels of food and nutritional security, health, and well-being (ECLAC, 2014).

Although young people tend to get sick less or die less frequently and in less numbers than those in other stages of life, they certainly represent a sector of the population that faces greater health risks associated with exogenous factors. It is also true that many of the habits that are detrimental to health are acquired during youth and do not qualify as disease until years after (Maddaleno, Morello and Infante-Espindola, 2013).

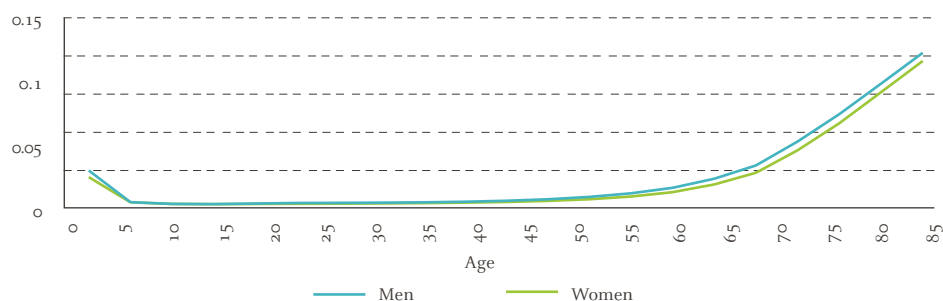
HEALTH OUTLOOK FOR LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN YOUTH

First of all, youth mortality rates are lower compared with persons from other age groups (graph 11). In comparative terms, young people enjoy good health. This accounts in part for the scarce attention paid to the subject of youth health and for the fact that it is not a priority in the public agenda.

GRAPH 11
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:
SPECIFIC MORTALITY RATES BY AGE AND
SEX, 2010

SOURCE

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN DEMOGRAPHIC CENTRE (CELADE) AND ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), DEMOGRAPHIC OBSERVATORY NO. 9, MORTALITY, SANTIAGO, CHILE, UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS, 2010.

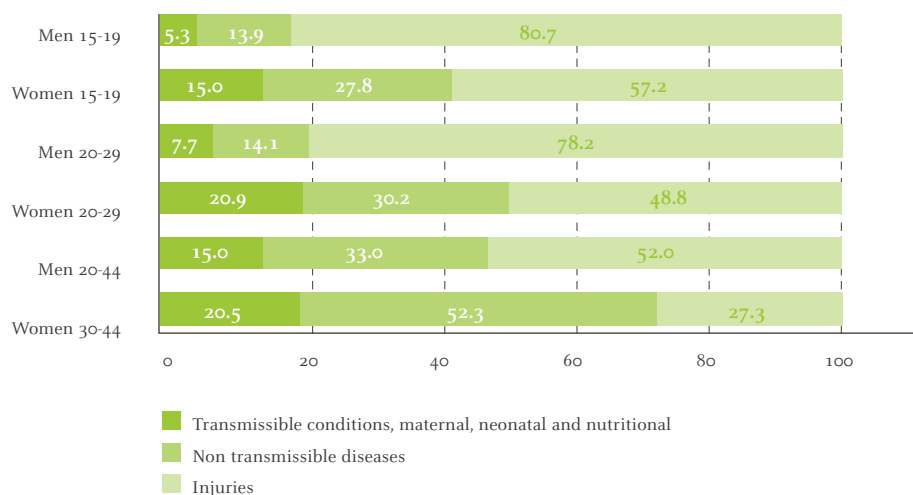


However, the specific youth mortality patterns result from causes which are largely preventable. As shown in graph 12, injuries are the principal cause of death for both young men and young women, meaning that that the majority of these persons die from preventable causes. But the relative weight of deaths from injury decreases as age increases, and non-transmissible diseases acquire greater importance, especially among women.

GRAPH 12
LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN (33 COUNTRIES):
DEATHS FROM SPECIFIC CAUSES,
BY AGE GROUPS AND SEX, 2010
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

HEALTH METRICS, GLOBAL HEALTH BURDEN STUDY, 2010.

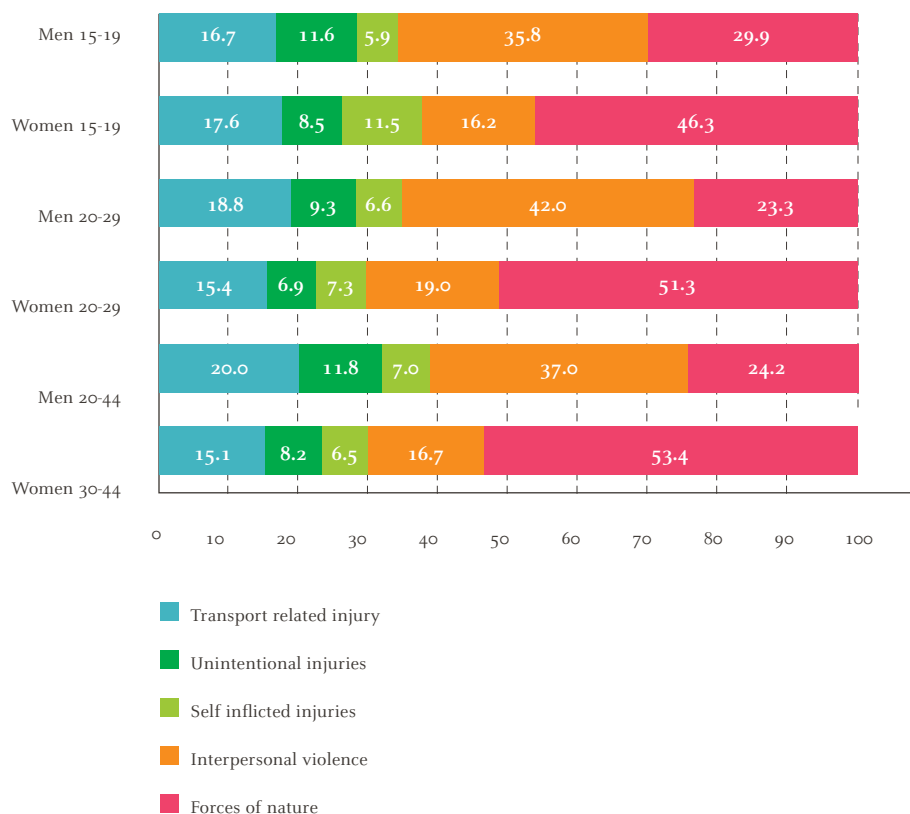


An analysis of the category “deaths caused by injury” (see graph 13) reveals different patterns for men and women and, again, between young people and adults. Although interpersonal violence is the principal cause in the category of injuries among men, deaths due to transport injuries, unintentional injuries, and self-inflicted injuries are also leading causes as compared to young people. In contrast, most deaths by injury among women are caused by exposure to the forces of nature, and tend to increase with age. It is also worth highlighting that self-inflicted injury is more common among women aged 15 - 19 than in any other group, accounting for 11.5% of deaths in this category.

GRAPH 13
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
 (33 COUNTRIES): DEATHS BY
 SPECIFIC INJURY CAUSES, BY AGE
 GROUPS AND SEX, 2010**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

HEALTH METRICS, GLOBAL HEALTH BURDEN
 STUDY, 2010.



Although mortality is a general reflection of the state of health of youth in the region, it is an insufficient measure, since it does not consider illnesses that restrict the life possibilities of persons in this stage of life without necessarily leading to death.

Another way of conceptualizing health is through disability adjusted life years (DALY). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines a DALY as a year of healthy life that is lost. In particular, this value reflects the impact of different risks on mortality and morbidity. The sum of the DALYs in a population, or the burden of disease, represents the gap between the current state of health of the population and the ideal state of health, where everyone lives to an advanced age, free of disease and disability⁷. Despite the fact that this measurement has been criticized (for example, see Anand and Hanson, 1997), especially because of its ethical and valoric underpinnings, it is useful to conceptualize and measure health problems in a synthetic fashion and identify the causes that prevent the population from enjoying good health. Table 8 shows the five principal diseases that contribute to the burden of disease among youth in the region.

7. For more information see [on line]
http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/metrics_daly/en.

TABLE 8
LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN (33 COUNTRIES):
PRINCIPAL DISEASES/HEALTH
PROBLEMS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO
THE BURDEN OF DISEASE AMONG
YOUTH AGED 15 - 29 BY SEX, 2010.

SOURCE

INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH METRICS AND EVALUATION
 IN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND
 THE CARIBBEAN ECLAC, 2015. SEE [ONLINE], [HTTP://](http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare)
[VIZHUB.HEALTHDATA.ORG/GBD-COMPARE](http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare).

MEN	WOMEN
VIOLENCE	UNIPOLAR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER
EXPOSURE TO THE FORCES OF NATURE	EXPOSURE TO THE FORCES OF NATURE
INJURIES DUE TO TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS	MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER
UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES	ANXIETY DISORDERS
UNIPOLAR DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS	BACK PAIN

Although a mortality and morbidity analysis provides us with a general scenario regarding youth health in Latin America, it is important to remember that the distribution of health in the population is not homogenous and that there are important disparities the region. Poverty, lack of education, overcrowding, deficient nutrition, lack of drinking water and sanitation, along with marginalization and discrimination not only condition the exposure of young people to pathogens but also create a context of exclusion that can generate conditions for the development or worsening of mental health problems or drug abuse. On the other hand, social exclusion limits access to medical care, both for the diagnosis and treatment of illnesses. In the face of contexts of exclusion, protection factors such as a stable family life, strong links with school, and positive role models, among others, that promote the healthy development of youth, or mitigate the effects of exclusion, are particularly important.



PHOTOGRAPHY

UNICEF/PANAMÁ/2007-015/GONZALO BELL

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INEQUALITY AMONG YOUTH IN THE REGION

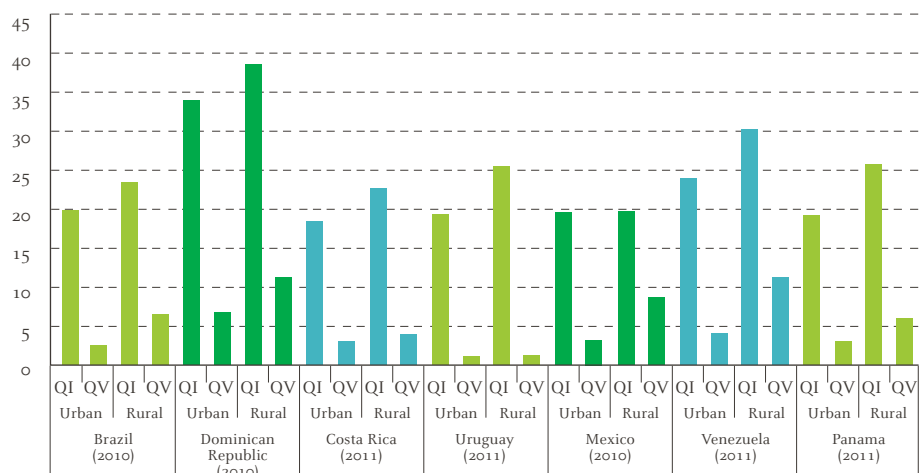
Socioeconomic gaps in health are very clearly expressed in sexual and reproductive health. In view of the consequences for their stage of life, their future and that of their children, reproductive risks faced by youth are an increasing concern. Especially, and as a result of the large and varied negative repercussions on the comprehensive development of women, men, boys and girls, families and societies, adolescent pregnancy is a concern at a regional level. Even more worrying is the fact that, despite efforts to reduce the teenage maternity rates, this indicator has remained high in many countries of the region (Rodríguez, 2014). Though there are various paths that lead to teenage pregnancy, the phenomenon is disproportionately more common among poorer women. Historically, teenage fertility has been associated with poverty (Rodríguez, 2008). Regardless of the socioeconomic class proxy used (zone of residence, educational level, or level of wealth of the home), an inverse relationship is observed between adolescent fertility rates and socioeconomic level.

Based on the most recent census information, graph 14 shows the percentage of adolescent mothers in seven countries in the region. In fact, young women living in rural areas are systematically more prone to be adolescent mothers than those living in urban areas and, within each zone, it is the young women from the poorest income quintile that account for the highest percentages of adolescent maternity.

GRAPH 14
LATIN AMERICA (SEVEN COUNTRIES): ADOLESCENTS WHO ARE MOTHERS AMONG WOMEN AGED 15 - 19, BY SOCIOECONOMIC QUINTILE AND ZONE OF RESIDENCE (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

RODRIGUEZ, JORGE, "REPRODUCTION IN ADOLESCENCE AND ITS INEQUALITIES IN LATIN AMERICA. INTRODUCTION TO THE DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE USE OF CENSUS MICRO DATA FROM THE 2010 ROUND" SANTIAGO, CHILE, UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION, 2014.



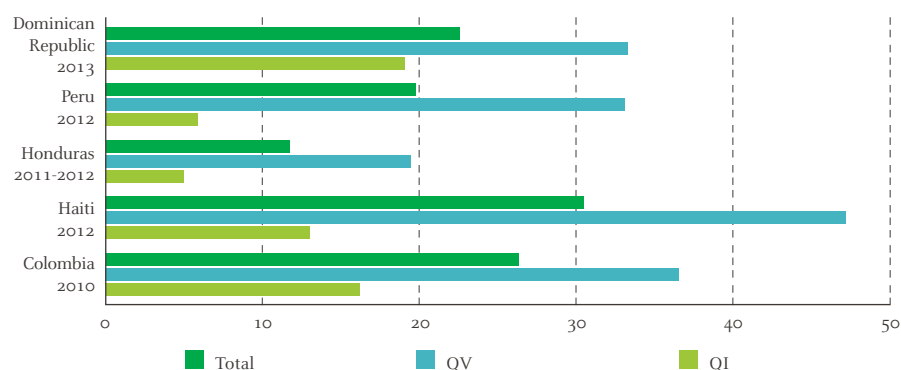
One way of approaching the relation between socioeconomic situation and teenage maternity is by means of behavioural analysis: just as the sexual and reproductive health behaviours are different, so are the results.

One factor which significantly affects the probability of becoming pregnant is the use of contraceptives. The use of a condom at last intercourse varies greatly among youth depending on their socioeconomic level (see graph 15). In all cases, the percentage of youth in the richest quintile who used a condom at last intercourse is at least double that of those in the lower income quintile. This may be related to lack of access to family planning methods, power inequality in personal relations and, of course, differences in life plans. Moreover, starting from the precept that condom use at last intercourse is low, there are great differences between countries: 30.7% in Haiti and 11.8% in Honduras. This not only affects the probability of becoming pregnant but also the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections.

GRAPH 15
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (FIVE COUNTRIES): CONDOM USE AT LAST INTERCOURSE AMONG WOMEN AGED 15 - 29, BY INCOME QUINTILE (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEYS FOR THE COUNTRIES AND YEARS SHOWN.



Differences in the role played by maternity as a role and identity for women from different economic levels also helps to explain the gaps in young maternity. From this perspective, adolescent pregnancy is the result of conditions such as poverty, lack of motivation, or failure at school (frequently due to the poor quality of education), limited expectations that a complete education will help them get a well-paid job, little social mobility possibilities and the absence of other life projects. In this context, being a mother is a way of having activities, roles, and

concerns, and a way of being included and seen within the families and communities (Oviedo and Garcia, 2011; Näslund-Hadley and Binstock, 2010).

Considering the above, and as noted by Rico and Trucco (2014), policy implications are different and must go beyond the prevention of pregnancy as a problem of sexual and reproductive education and the availability and use of contraceptives. Although these are necessary elements to prevent early pregnancy, they are not sufficient. Strategies are required to expand the opportunities of youth and to support them in achieving their goals.

Finally, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, adolescent maternity can also be understood from the perspective of the traditional cultural practices of certain groups, such as indigenous people. As indicated by ECLAC/PAHO (2011), indigenous women form a stable union and begin reproductive activity at a stage in their lives which would be considered adolescence by Western chronological standards. In this sense, the behaviours, experiences, and significance of sexuality and pregnancy in indigenous youth are largely determined by social and cultural norms. This cultural difference adds complexity to the general notion of adolescent maternity as being a “problem”.

Another domain for exclusion in the field of youth health is their limited access to health care. Many young people in the region are not covered by health insurance. This can be associated with various factors. On the one hand, young people are not covered by the health plans of their parents when they reach a certain age. They also underestimate their medical care and health insurance needs considering they run little risk of getting sick. On top of this, the entry of young people into the labour market is unstable, part-time, and in the informal labour market, which offers no access to health insurance. Although this is a general trend for youth, notorious differences are clearly evident between young people of different socioeconomic levels. Considering that the parents’ employment is the main channel for health insurance affiliation among young people, it is reasonable to think that youth from lower echelons lack health insurance because their parents are not affiliated either. As well as differences in health coverage, unequal access to the health system may be the result of a combination of economic, geographic, cultural, and linguistic barriers.

OTHER HEALTH ISSUES AMONG YOUNG POPULATION: DRUG USE AND MENTAL HEALTH

As mentioned in previous paragraphs, youth health is frequently conceived from a limited perspective that hinders a holistic comprehension both of the state of health of young people and of the development of policies and programs to address more complex health realities. The nutritional condition of young people, the problematic use of legal and illegal substances, mental health, chronic diseases such as diabetes, occupational health, among others, are subjects about which relatively little is known. Below, is an analysis of the use of legal and illegal substances in the context of social exclusion and inequality.

Despite the multiplicity of factors potentially leading people to drug addiction, starting with genetic, family, or peer influences, right through to individual characteristics, it is argued that the consumption of such substances may be strongly related with socio-cultural contexts and the significance they acquire for users. The elements that trigger consumption of these substances exist at an individual level and in interpersonal contact with peers. Although drug addiction is considered a psycho-pathology, with a strong organic connection given the level of dependence they exert on the organism and testing the will power of users (see Reith, 2004), before addiction, we come across scenarios of exposure to consumption which are defined by culture and interpersonal relationships. In this domain, the identity construction processes play an important mediation role between young people and the consumption of substances.

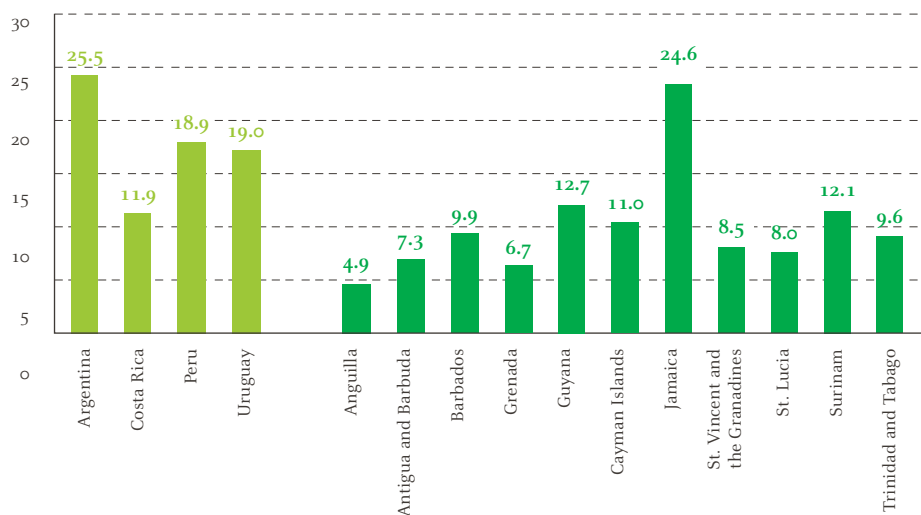
At a social level, precariousness and social exclusion have their own dynamic in relation to the use and distribution of legal and illegal substances. The precarious and unstable conditions within the home, homelessness, or the permanent movement between home, the shelter, treatment or confinement facilities, constitute especially risky scenarios for young people when it comes to abuse and addiction of different substances. As a whole, the problems faced by youth reinforce social exclusion through the stigma of being qualified as marginal, addicted, and violent individuals, encountered not only in every day interactions but also in the health services that should help them.

The abuse of legal and illegal drugs is a serious public health problem given the wide-ranging negative effects both at a personal and social level. Consumption of legal drugs, such as tobacco and alcohol, has noxious consequences for health at an organic level which express themselves silently throughout youth but which come to light in later stages of life such as adult hood or old age. As far as illegal drug abuse is concerned, its consequences on the health of the individual are frequently linked to evolutionary psychology, and fuel arguments surrounding the effects of consumption on the neurological and cognitive development of boys, girls, teenagers, and young people. Over and beyond the biological effects on the individual resulting from abuse of illegal substances, another consequence derived from such abuse is that some young people with addictions get involved in distribution networks. They are thus exposed to interpersonal violence and crime. This leads to an additional dimension to the problem, to be covered in the next section.

The abuse of illegal and legal drugs by young people also has significant direct and indirect costs for society. This may be summarized in years of productive life lost for young people who are addicts, costs associated to the criminal justice system, as well as health and treatment costs. It has been demonstrated that treatment against drug consumption reduces social and health costs at a scale far greater than the cost of treatment as such.

As shown in graph 16, data reveals that the prevalence of tobacco use varies in countries in the region: ranging from 4.9% in Anguilla to 25.5% in Argentina. Basically, this trend seems to be greater in the four Latin American countries as compared to the Caribbean countries –although an important percentage of students in Jamaica reported having smoked cigarettes recently (24.6%). As in the case of tobacco consumption, there is some variance in alcohol consumption among students in the region (graph 17). However, except for a few cases, the prevalence of alcohol consumption is in excess of 30%; that is to say, one out of three students report having consumed at least one alcoholic drink in the last 30 days. This places alcohol as the most consumed substance among youth in this set of countries.

GRAPH 16
LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN (15 COUNTRIES):
STUDENTS WHO SMOKED
CIGARETTES ON ONE OR MORE
DAYS IN THE LAST 30 DAYS
(IN PERCENTAGES)

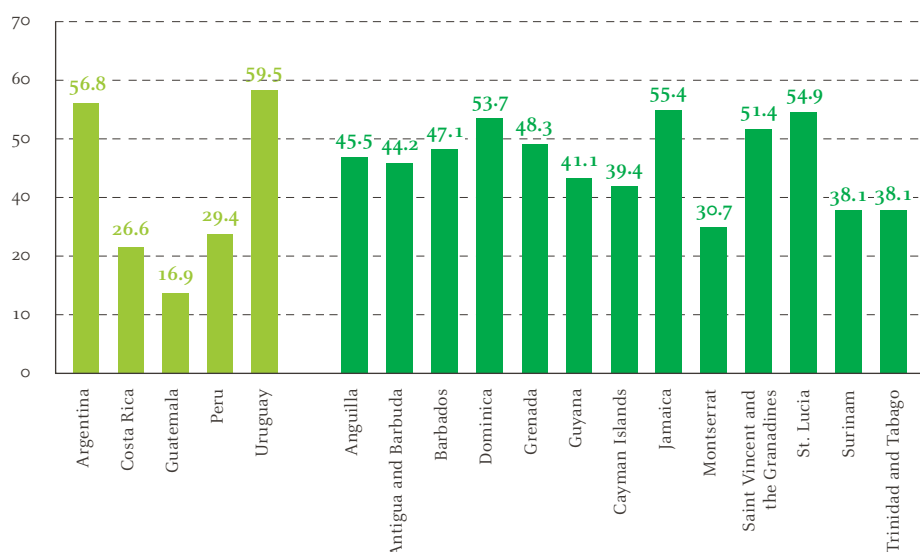


GRAPH 17

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (18 COUNTRIES): STUDENTS WHO CONSUMED LEAST ONE ALCOHOLIC DRINK ON ONE OR MORE DAYS IN THE LAST 30 DAYS (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S GLOBAL SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY. WORLD SCHOOLCHILDREN HEALTH SURVEY, 2010A.



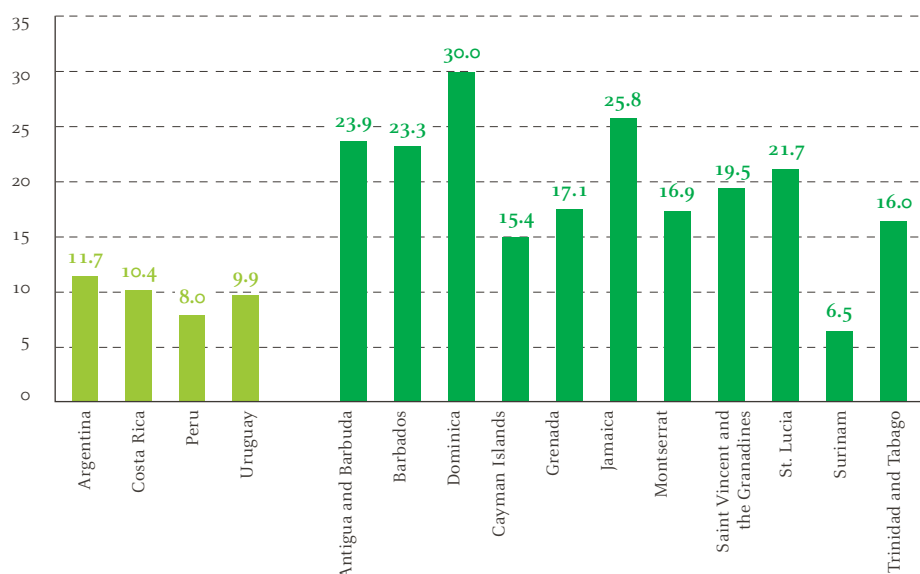
Finally, graph 18 shows the prevalence of illegal drug consumption among secondary school students. This demonstrates that consumption of these substances tends to be greater among students from Caribbean countries as compared to those from Latin America.

GRAPH 18

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (15 COUNTRIES): STUDENTS WHO HAVE CONSUMED DRUGS SUCH AS MARIHUANA, COCAINE OR ECSTASY, ONCE OR MORE IN THEIR LIVES (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S GLOBAL SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY (WHO, 2010A).



In short, both in Latin America and in the English-speaking Caribbean, alcohol consumption is far more prevalent than tobacco and illegal drug consumption. However, in Latin America tobacco consumption exceeds illegal drug use while the opposite can be observed in the English-speaking Caribbean, where a greater percentage of students report the use of drugs.

Although the media and policies concentrate on the problematic use of illegal substances by young people, particularly marijuana and cocaine (and related variations, such as base paste),

the drugs most commonly consumed by young people are those that generate the greatest problems in the present and future stages of their lives –alcohol and tobacco. The fact that these are legal drugs makes them no less noxious and its victims are those whose health is irreversibly affected and those who, under the influence of alcohol, expose both themselves and third parties to dangerous behaviour such as risky sexual conduct and driving under the influence of alcohol (ECLAC-OIJ, 2008). The participation of youth in acts of violence, an issue discussed in the next chapter, is also linked to the abusive consumption of legal and illegal drugs.

However, consumption of drugs by young people can be associated with various processes in different socioeconomic environments; in the case of young people from the poor levels of society it can reflect lack of opportunities, frustrations in face of an educational system that does not respond to their needs, and conflicts in the family environment. On the other hand, young people of low socioeconomic status have with addictions have limited access to treatment. In consequence, their addictions become especially weakening and problematic.

It is clear that abusive use of substances is an effect and one of the causes of social exclusion. The absence of protection factors, poverty, inequality, an employment reality with possibilities mainly in the informal market, scarce housing, school systems often incapable of covering needs, migration, and new family configurations, may create vulnerability contexts for substance abuse.

Moreover, young people addicted to substances are stigmatized and excluded, which again brings negative consequences in terms of their health and in terms of receiving adequate treatment to overcome their addictions. Research on this issue differentiate between interpersonal stigma and structural stigma (Hatzenbuehler and Link, 2014; Link and Phelan, 2014). Structural stigma is defined as “societal conditions, cultural norms, and institutional policies that restrict opportunities, resources, and welfare to individuals or stigmatized groups” (Hatzenbuehler and Link, 2014; page 2). Thus, stigmatization is one of the factors that generates social exclusion and its action is legitimized by structural conditions.

Another group of youth that is stigmatized is those with mental health problems. There is a strong relationship between these and other health and developmental problems; particularly with regards academic performance at school, use and abuse of substances, violence, and sexual and reproductive health. For this reason, mental health has a significant impact on the development of young people and directly affects the possibilities of living fulfilled lives and becoming economically and socially integrated.

Epidemiological studies on youth mental health in Latin America and the Caribbean are scarce and hardly comparable due to methodological differences; that is, because of the measurement instruments used, the age groups considered, and the reference periods. However, as shown through the analysis of burden of disease (table 8), mental health conditions have an important impact, especially among young women.

Despite the fact that women tend to have more people that are closer to them than men (Fuhrer and others, 1999), which is known to be a factor that protects against mental health problems, there is a differentiated pattern by sex, and these disorders appear to affect women more than men.

The specific contributions made by various biological and psychosocial factors to mental health and the development of problems in this context in men and women are still unknown. Although the hormone profile of women has been implicated, research on gender and mental health suggests that gender discrimination, conceptions of masculinity and femininity, stressors and different stress mitigation strategies, social and economic vulnerability of women, and gender violence also have a significant effect (Gavira and Rondon, 2010). An important bias

in diagnosing mental health problems may also be contributing to the prevalence of these conditions among women.

Regardless of gender, mental health problems have a significant impact on youth social inclusion possibilities. As indicated by ECLAC, young people with mental health conditions face significant challenges in completing their studies due to low academic performance, discipline, and attendance problems, and eventually, by dropping out (ECLAC, 2014). This school experience leaves them unprepared to enter the labour market, which results in subsequent weak labour insertion. Experiencing mental health conditions during adolescence and youth can also affect the development of safe and healthy relations with peers, family members, and others. Finally, it has been demonstrated that mental health conditions affect youth self-esteem, as well as their social interaction, increasing possibilities of personal injury or damage to themselves and others (Bradshaw, O'Brennan, and McNeely, 2008).

It has been recognized that youth mental health conditions are multi-factorial. Poverty, working or living on the streets, and circumstances such as bullying, traumatic events, experiences of conflict and post-conflict are important risk factors for youth mental health (UN, 2014). As shown in the WHO report on mental health and development, there is a mutually-reinforcing relationship between vulnerability and mental health which makes the problem more complex. Likewise, poverty and mental health conditions react to each other: persons living in poverty experience high levels of stress and trauma, as well as social exclusion and have little access to medical attention, which aggravates the risk and severity of mental health conditions. It is also true that those with mental conditions may be more exposed to the risk of poverty due to poor academic performance, weak job placement, high costs of medical care, stigma, and social exclusion.

However, as indicated by Patel and others (2007), the majority of young people do not develop mental health conditions even among those who face a great deal of adversity as well as multiple risk factors. This emphasizes the importance of protection factors to mitigate the consequences of these risks, and work must be done to strengthen protection so as to promote mental health in young people. Some of these protection elements include a sense of connection and belonging, as well as low levels of conflict, and social support (Patel and others, 2007). The family context is also highly important in increasing the resilience of young people –it is fundamentally important to support the families.



PHOTOGRAPHY

UNICEF CHILE/1170/EMILIO JOSÉ FUENTES TRAVERSO

VIOLENCE

Important progress made by Latin American countries in recent years in developing positive impacts on young people today paradoxically goes side-by-side with increases in violence in the region. This has forced the population in general but, especially, Latin American and Caribbean youth to face a context of growing violence and insecurity. One of the current characteristics of Latin America and the Caribbean, as compared to other regions in the world, is that countries coexist in peace. However, there is extreme violence in within countries to the point that the region has the highest homicide rate in the world (UNODC, 2013).

Violence (intentional or unintentional) represents the main cause of death in the population aged 15 - 50 in the region. Seven of the 14 most violent countries in the world are in Latin America and the Caribbean: Belize, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Honduras, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Between 2000 and 2010, the homicide rate increased

11% while, in the majority of regions around the world, it descended or stabilized. What is more, considering the countries for which information is available, robbery has tripled in the last 25 years. In a typical day in Latin America, 460 persons, principally women, suffer the consequences of sexual violence (UNDP, 2013).

This problem affects the young population especially. As discussed in an earlier section, violence is the principal cause of death among young people, who frequently find themselves involved in acts of this nature as victims or as perpetrators. This apparent participation in violent acts has transformed this phenomenon into a stigma borne by young people who simply as a result of being young, are seen as violent criminals, distorting the perception of the real problem and its possible solutions.

The concept of violence is multidimensional and manifests itself in different environments and spaces, affecting the actors involved differently and with different types of consequences. In light of its complexity, an analysis of the context of violence among young people requires the definition of a conceptual framework for structuring purposes. It is proposed that such framework be based on the complementary nature of the two violence typologies most covered by research on the subject in recent years; that is, Galtung's proposal (1990) which allows for a distinction between the dynamics in the processes of violence and facilitates the identification of factors, and that derived from the ecological model developed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979 and retaken by the WHO in 2002, which allows for the identification of environments in which violence is exercised (see table 9). The complementary nature of these typologies is established through a combination of types of violence defined in both. This order of the acts of violence allows for the establishment of a basis to undertake a more detailed analysis of the manifestations that have greater relevance for the youth inclusion processes.

TABLE 9
EXPRESSIONS OF YOUTH VIOLENCE
CLASSIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH
THE COMPLEMENTARY NATURE OF
THE GALTUNG TYPOLOGY AND THE
ECOLOGICAL MODEL

SOURCE
PREPARED BY AUTHOR.

TYPOLOGY OF THE ECOLOGICAL MODEL			
	SELF INFLICTED	INTERPERSONAL	COLLECTIVE
GALTUNG TYPOLOGY	DIRECT	SELF-INFLICTED INJURIES AND SUICIDE	PHYSICAL AND/OR PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION AGAINST SCHOOL MATES (BULLYING OR CYBER BULLYING), NEIGHBOURS, AUTHORITIES OR GANGS
	STRUCTURAL	SELF-EXCLUSION	DISCRIMINATION WITHIN THE FAMILY OR CLOSE CIRCLE, BECAUSE OF SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS (FOR EXAMPLE, MEMBERSHIP OF MINORITY GROUPS)
	CULTURAL/SYMBOLIC	LOW SELF-ESTEEM	EXCLUSION ASSOCIATED TO CONCEPTS ROOTED IN CULTURE (FOR EXAMPLE, TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES)

Practically nowhere is free of violence, for even closed and intimate spaces such as the home, the school, or the workplace, or even public places such as institutions, or the media (including Internet), are places where violence may manifest itself. It is important to analyze the specificities of each one of those spaces as locations prone to violence. In the following sections an effort is made to analyze in greater depth some of the environments and expressions of violence considered to have great impact on young people and which have acquired special notoriety through dissemination via the media.

GENDER AND VIOLENCE IN YOUNG POPULATIONS

Because of its importance and the fact that many of the manifestations of violence have specific implications in the youth population, it is relevant to analyze the relationship between gender and violence in young populations, since it is present in all of the spaces and in all of the dimensions and types of violence considered (see table 10). Several studies on violence at the global and regional levels have analyzed the youth-violence and gender-violence associations separately.

There is statistical information allowing for partial conclusions relating to the hypothesis that the gender of the individual may represent a determinant factor in the possibility of suffering a given type of violence. For example, in terms of the most dramatic consequence of violence, which is loss of life, information held by the World Health Observatory reports estimated figures based on administrative records for 2012 showing mortality by intentional injury among young men (aged 15 - 29) for Latin America and the Caribbean to be 8.5 times higher than among women in the same age range (WHO, 2013). This reflects a greater propensity for young men to suffer the consequences of violence of this type, a conclusion predominantly shared by studies into youth violence.

A closer look at the analysis indicates that 17% of deaths among young men through intentional injury were self-inflicted (suicide), while the respective figures for young women were equal to 37.8%. Although this does not indicate that young women commit suicide more than young men do (the suicide rate shows a ratio of three young male suicides to every one young female suicide), it does provide evidence to qualitatively analyze the reason why, once the differentiated death risk by intentional injury has been accounted for, there should be such a difference in the related figures for self-inflicted violence among young women.

In the case of acts of violence associated with violent crimes, information available in the Americas Barometer for 2012 (LAPOP) indicates that, in Latin American countries where the survey was carried out⁸, and having analyzed responses in relation to certain types of illegal acts suffered in the previous 12 months, young women were three times more likely to be the victims of rape or sexual assault than women of other ages and seven times more likely to be victims of this crime than young men⁹. Moreover, data from this information source indicates that women were twice more likely to be victims of kidnapping than young men (see table 10)¹⁰. The low percentage of persons who report to have been victims of sexual violence is worth noting, highlighting the under-reporting of these types of violent acts. The region is still characterized by male chauvinistic cultural patterns that tend to attribute responsibility for the attack to the victim, as if the victim had provoked or sought such an outcome. For this reason, many of these acts are not reported and, less still, considered in data collection studies.

8. Countries with surveys: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

9. Estimates based on calculations on data from the barómetro de las américas 2012 (lapop), available [online] <http://lapop.ccp.ucr.ac.cr/Lapop.html>.

10. The estimates from the Barometer of the Americas show that 17.6% of those interviewed reported being victims of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey.

TABLE 10
**PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN
 VICTIMS OF CRIMINAL ACTS IN THE
 LAST 12 MONTHS, BY TYPE OF ACT,
 SEX, AND AGE, 2012.**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

BARÓMETRO DE LAS AMÉRICAS 2012 (LAPOP), 2012.

	YOUTH (15-29)			OTHER AGES			
	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
UNARMED ROBBERY, WITH NO PHYSICAL AGGRESSION OR THREAT	4.7	4.9	6.1	5.5	4.4	4.3	4.4
UNARMED ROBBERY, WITH PHYSICAL AGGRESSION OR THREAT	2.3	3.4	2.9	3.1	2.0	1.8	1.9
ARMED ROBBERY	4.6	8.0	5.0	6.5	4.6	2.8	3.7
PHYSICAL AGGRESSION WITH NO ROBBERY	0.8	1.3	0.7	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.7
RAPE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1
KIDNAPPING	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
DAMAGE TO PROPERTY	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.7
BURGLARY	1.9	1.4	1.7	1.6	2.0	2.3	2.1
EXTORTION	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.7
OTHERS	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0
TOTAL	16.8	21.4	18.9	20.2	16.6	14.2	15.3

As for acts of violence involving direct victimization of women, information provided by Demographic and Health Surveys of some countries in the region¹¹ have included related questions, and their answers show varying percentages for the countries. These percentages went from 10% to 30% in the case of women who were pushed around or struck by their spouses, but there was no clear evidence that young women were more likely to be victims of these acts than men from other age groups. In the case of sexual aggressions, particularly forced sexual relationships, young women are indeed more vulnerable to this type of violent act, mainly in the case of violence between couples with prevalent percentages ranging from 5% to 11%. It is particularly relevant that, in the case of aggression perpetrated by persons who were not spouses or partners of the women, there was evidence that young women were more likely to suffer such aggressions although these were far less common, highlighting the importance of spouse violence.

It should be emphasized that, in general, the available information sources make it impossible to determine whether the gender of an individual is a determining factor to become a perpetrator of certain kinds of violent acts. It is not common to have information on the gender of the person responsible for such acts, for homicides or other crimes. However, it is more common to ask this information in surveys directed at women who are victims of violence. From such

11. There is information available for Bolivia (2008), Colombia (2010), Haiti (2012), Honduras (2012), Peru (2012) and Dominican Republic (2007).

information, which is generally scarce, and from the vast majority of qualitative studies on gender violence, the general conclusion is that regardless of age groups, violence against women is in most cases perpetrated by men. This reinforces the need to conduct a more comprehensive analysis mainstreaming the gender approach in youth violence.

Out of all the expressions of violence, those exercised against women are the most complex to analyze. They typically involve multiple sociological aspects, especially of a long-standing cultural and family nature. The identification of a clear differential relation between the gender of perpetrators and the gender of victims of gender violence—notoriously leaning to the side of masculine perpetration and feminine victimization—evidences the need for a generational cultural change aimed at encouraging sensitivity towards the issue of nonviolence against women by men, and to eradicating the perception among women and society as a whole that such violence as normal, thus ensuring that the index of violence against women decreases.

In spite of the above, there appears to be no evidence that among younger groups this type of violence decreases. This shows that the intergenerational transmission of the message to respect the right to a life free of violence among youth in the region is not getting across. Information from the Demographic and Health Surveys carried out in certain countries in the region demonstrate that between 15 and 40% of young women have seen their fathers hit their mother during childhood. This reflects a scenario that could come to be considered normal among women when they grow up, or when they are beaten or abused by their spouses. The proportion of women over 29 years of age who have witnessed abuse or ill-treatment of their mothers by the father is significantly greater than the number of younger women, which represents a positive indicator within the process to reduce violence against women.

The information contained in these surveys indicates that beyond any major differences, and regardless of the age of women, the majority who have suffered some kind of ill-treatment from their spouses have not sought assistance. This is again indicative of the double victimization process experienced by women who, despite having been abused, when requesting help—and due to social conventions—are stigmatized simply because of that fact. One relevant aspect reflected in this information is that younger women tend to seek help from their parents more than older women, which again reflects the need for intergenerational awareness and support from the family to overcome this problem.

Finally, it is important to draw attention to information regarding the role of women within youth groups associated with organized violent behaviour, such as gangs. This information is limited and drawn from the results of some case studies that document the matter. It can be inferred from such studies that, except for a few cases, women in general do not play a role on a par with men within gang activities. Women who become involved with gangs do so in accordance with the traditional gender roles and carry out activities that include the provision of food for the gang, covering up and protecting, keeping weapons, tending to wounds, through to a role of sexual submission. Gang members do not normally seek a stable relationship with a woman. If such a relationship is sought, they generally look outside the gang (Lacayo, 2015).

Some studies, trying to delve deeper into the role of women in gangs, have documented that some of the ways in which these gangs establish contact with young people is through the offer of easy money, power, and sex. In the latter case, this is achieved through the affiliation of women, mainly teenagers who, trying to escape from their realities of scarce opportunities and unpromising family environments (in many cases with backgrounds of conjugal or domestic violence themselves) are attracted by a scenario of promiscuity that results far from liberating. These women become the property of the gang, and the gangsters exercise manifest sexual violence through rape or collective abuse (Rubio 2008), thus magnifying gender inequality.

VIOLENCE IN THE COMMUNITY - SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Another very important expression of violence takes place in educational centres. Such violent behaviour goes against what is expected of a school as a secure and protected environment which seeks to train new generations in behaviours and democratic and civic values (Roman and Murillo, 2011).

Violence in schools takes place against a background of social transformations experienced by society as a whole. Changes of the last decades, encouraged by a globalization process that redefines spaces and territory, the universalization of centres of decision and power, as well as the growing prevalence of the market and consumption in the everyday lives of people have been very significant. The advent of new information and communication technologies (ITC) has had a special impact on the lives of teenagers and youth (Lopez, 2011). Additionally, processes to spread education at a massive scale in the region have significantly increased the diversity of the school population. But the school institution, conservative by nature, has not been able to fully cope with some of these changes.

Violent behaviours within the educational space are diverse and must be understood within the framework of interpersonal relationships in which they occur and according to their intensity and/or seriousness. It is thus necessary to distinguish between acts of violence perpetrated by adults (school authorities and parents) and aimed at students, and those exercised by students against adults, as well as against their peers. The latter form of violence has acquired greater relevance in recent years through the focus granted by the media in the conceptualization of bullying or school harassment. This type of violence will be discussed in greater depth in this section.

This concept refers to the different situations of intimidation, harassment, abuse, molestation, and victimization that occur repeatedly between school students. It consists of physical or psychological aggressions that take place repeatedly and over extended periods of time and that bring different though equally disquieting consequences for all those involved. Three types of actors are involved: the victim, the perpetrator, the witnesses (Roman and Murillo, 2011). These types of acts normally occur during adolescence while the identity construction process is at its full, and perpetrators need witnesses for the aggressions to serve his or her own identity reaffirmation process.

According to a school violence report published by Plan International and UNICEF, aggressions between peers are common and even a normal part of development and socialization (Eljach, 2011). But this requires adult support to provide guidelines and limits with a view to developing respectful behaviour towards others. The use of violence in the adolescent stage is different because it constitutes a conscious act. In many cases, as from the confrontation or rejection of another, such an act may be interpreted as an act of recognition or validation of the self –explaining the need for witnesses. However, those who settle for this option to affirm their identity are usually teenagers who have not received necessary recognition within their own environment (family or school), or have lacked adequate guidelines to limit these types of behaviour as part of their educational process.

When it comes to designing effective intervention strategies to tackle this problem, the above-mentioned considerations are important because they often only involve working with the victim, as if he or she were responsible of inadequate social adaptation. We should bear in mind that the actions of the perpetrator are derived from a series of problematic factors within his or her own development. Acts of discrimination by teenagers, which frequently take the form of violent behaviour, tend to occur as an imitation or teachings drawn from the adult world in their immediate environment (Eljach, 2011). Thus, apart from sanctions, the teenager needs support and work with personal resources in order to manage conflict and tolerance

adequately. Another very effective strategy to control these types of behaviours within the school is to educate school children in their roles as protectors of the victim whenever they witness such violence.

Studies on the subject indicate that physical violence in schools has decreased though there has certainly been an increase in psychological or emotional violence. This type of bullying and harassment among peers is frequently very harmful for it remains hidden and leaves no physical trace (Eljach, 2011). As in the case of other types of violence, it is difficult to come up with comparable statistics for the countries in the region. One of the few available data sources for the specific case of peer violence is that gathered in the Global School Health Survey involving the participation of 23 Latin American and Caribbean countries during the 2000 decade. This information shows that on average 27% of schoolchildren involved in the study admitted having been bullied during the last month. That is to say, around one third of students indicate they face this problem relatively frequently in their school lives (see graph 19).

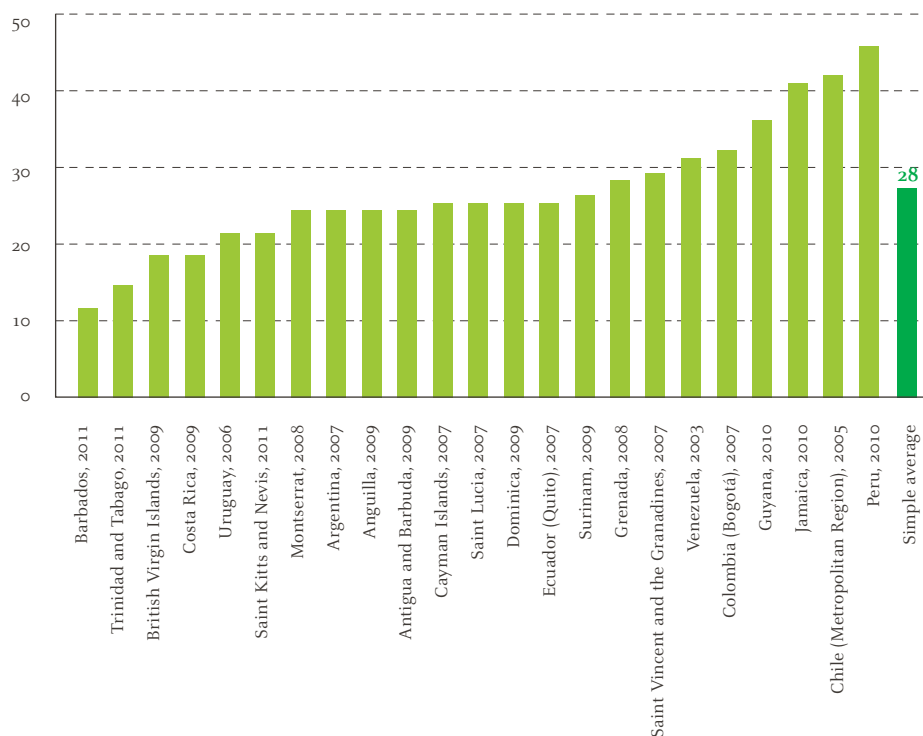
GRAPH 19
LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN (23 COUNTRIES):
POPULATION AGED 11 - 17 THAT
CLAIM TO HAVE SUFFERED
BULLYING IN THE LAST MONTH
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM THE GLOBAL SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

NOTE

ONLY CASES FROM THE METROPOLITAN REGION WERE CONSIDERED FOR CHILE, COLOMBIA, ECUADOR, AND VENEZUELA, (SANTIAGO, BOGOTÁ, QUITO, AND BARINAS, RESPECTIVELY).

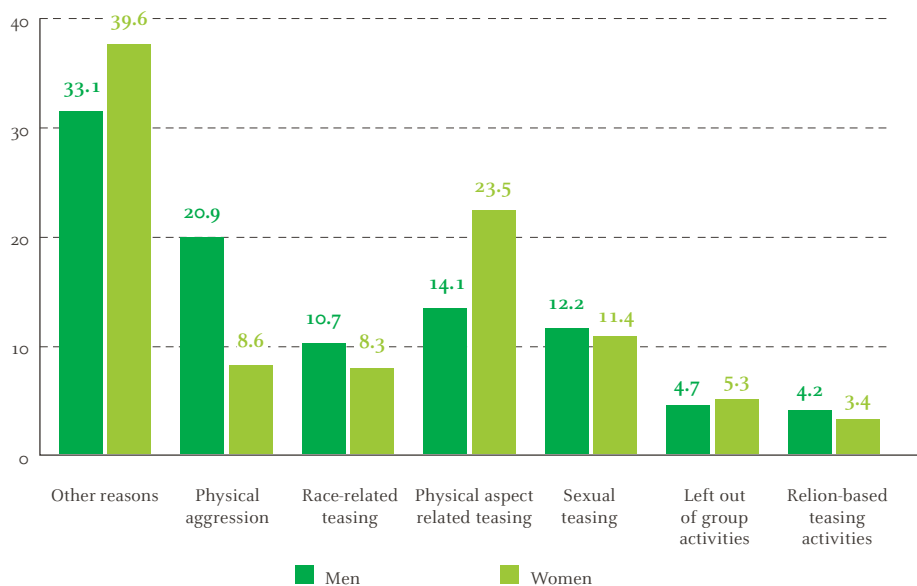


Several of these national studies conclude that violence is not a phenomenon restricted to the poorest schools but, rather, that it occurs in similar proportions both in public and private schools. Findings even show a greater prevalence of certain types of violent behaviours in more expensive schools (Eljach, 2011). The type of violence is diverse and not necessarily the same for men and women (see graph 20). Available information allows a distinction to be made between physical aggression as in the typical form of male violence (on average, mentioned in 20% of cases) while the mocking of physical appearance proliferates (in 23.5% of cases) among women. This indicates the types of violence that reflect behaviours and discrimination associated with roles and gender inequalities that are traditional in our culture.

GRAPH 20
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE
 CARIBBEAN (23 COUNTRIES):
 POPULATION AGED 11 - 17 WHO
 CLAIM TO HAVE SUFFERED
 BULLYING IN THE LAST FEW
 MONTHS**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE
 CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS
 FROM THE GLOBAL SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY OF THE
 WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.



Instead of being isolated events in certain types of schools or countries, the information presented here confirms the findings of various studies (Roman and Murillo, 2011): school violence is a generalized phenomenon that occurs in all countries and social classes. Research conducted in developed countries and also in Latin American nations have confirmed the pernicious effect that school violence between peers in the school environment has on victims. Among the effects mentioned we can find lower academic achievement, deterioration of motivation, self-esteem problems, and lower psychosocial development (Roman and Murillo, 2011).

The digital era and the use of Internet, especially social networks, has become an everyday thing for people of the region, particularly young people, and has brought about additional related complexities. The increase in the amount and availability of information challenges and transforms ways of learning, as well as the skills that need to be developed to learn. They also change the way people relate to each other, enabling –for example– relations with other people under anonymity, accessibility to a large number of people, immediate communication, and the establishment of virtual communities and automatic recording of such interaction, among other things (Pavez, 2014).

These transformations open opportunities and also bring risks to the life experiences of adolescents and youth. Some of the better and more publicized risks are grooming (which is the stalking of minors for sexual purposes) and cyber bullying. The latter is considered a sort of repeated bullying in the form of harassment, persecution, smearing, violation of intimacy, exclusion, identity impersonation through the Internet or other electronic means by a group or individual against a defenceless person (Smith and others, 2008, cited in Pavez, 2014). Although violence and abuse of all types are not new in the school environment, the ways in which these phenomena are adapted thanks to Internet are new. The amplitude of the audience and potential dissemination capabilities form part of an unprecedented phenomenon that compromises education systems not equipped to face this threat, converting online platforms into elements powerful in terms of emotional destruction (UNICEF, 2011, quoted in Pavez, 2014, page 40).

Cyber bullying has characteristics that not only render it permanent in time but that are also more detrimental than personalized bullying. For example, the aggressor can hide his or her identity, thus increasing impunity and making defence more difficult for the victim. Aggressors

can multiply dramatically, and humiliation can be witnessed by a much greater audiences. Dissemination is high speed and—although direct physical aggression can be discarded—makes the offense public, thus increasing the vulnerability of the victim (Cerezo-Ramirez, 2012, cited in Pavez, 2014).

In a context where the right to privacy, dignity and reputation is vulnerable due to the absence of a regulatory framework to act as a safeguard in this digital world, and where practices such as digital harassment are growing, polarized points of view on the subject – protecting against empowerment and restricting the development of skills – are just some of the premises. However, boys, girls, adolescents, and young people are subjects of law entitled to comprehensive economic, social, and cultural protection. The notion of the victimizing effect of Internet use should then be left aside. It is important to consolidate the opportunities and advantages of being part of the digital world by enjoying protection from risks. This is practically unexplored terrain and there would appear to be a consensus in terms of seeing the educational system as the answer not only to promote access to ITCs, but also to develop digital skills (Pavez, 2014). The school is challenged to fulfil a role as a space for guidance where behavioural guidelines, tools, and abilities are provided with a view to decreasing risks and increasing the advantages brought by ITC use for future generations.

COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE IN THE CITY¹²

In view of the important tensions and difficulties for certain countries, the urban dimension of violence associated to crime and drug trafficking is the most visible and worrying in the region. By establishing a scenario more conducive to the involvement of young people, either as perpetrators or victims, in the expressions of violence associated to crime (the three types of violence according to Galtung in the collective dimension, see table 9), this dimension of violence significantly affects youth development and social inclusion alternatives.

Fear, as an immediate expression of insecurity and weakened social cohesion is very present in contemporary society which is progressively less capable of generating cohesion. Throughout history all societies have directed their deepest fears at a given entity. In general, this is a group that becomes the object of stigma and therefore of rejection and exclusion. Young people are today that group, particularly those living in areas marked by poverty, marginalization, inequality, and segregation that characterize Latin American cities. Stigma is created on a symbolic basis which is then easily transferred from the poor youth to the young criminal, closing doors to his or her inclusion. The “marero” (as the Central American gangster is known) tattooed up to the face and characterized by tremendously aggressive gestures, embodies like no one else the archetype of urban panic: the young man emerged from the most excluded neighbourhood, full of defiance and resistance, to disrupt peace on every corner. His appearance, and the use made of that by the worldwide press, evidences the contemporary stigma suffered by that population, which projects its fear of insecurity based on a judgment not necessarily backed by real evidence.

Little is known about the perpetrators of violent acts and their age distribution. Related statistics are limited and difficult to access. Moreover, their registration is deficient partly due to the high levels of impunity that characterize many countries in the region. A more general approach to participation in violent acts can be drawn from the figures that account for extreme acts of violence such as homicide. In the case of Mexico, according to published data, the number of individuals convicted for this in 2008 was relatively similar in youth aged 16 - 19 (10.7 per 100,000 inhabitants) and adults aged 30 - 44 (9.6 per 100,000 inhabitants),

¹² A large part of this section was prepared for *Social Panorama 2014* (ECLAC, 2014). Inputs prepared by consultant Carlos Mario Perea were used.

although the index was significantly lower for the group of adults aged 45 - 59 (5.2 per 100,000 inhabitants¹³). Upon analyzing these figures, the supposed leading role of youth goes without saying: the greater the participation in violent organizations, the greater the risk of becoming a victim.

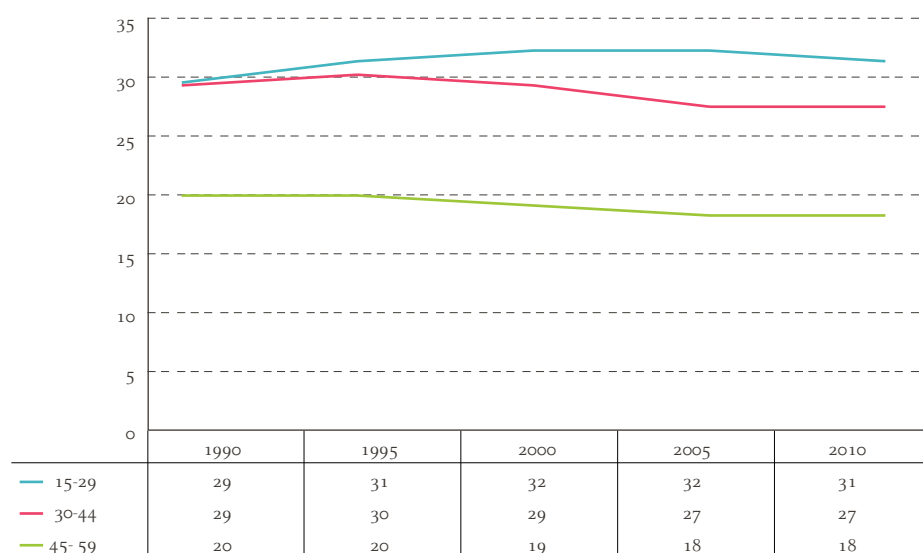
The other way of gauging youth participation in homicides; that is to say, through victimization levels as compared with adults (aged 30 - 44) and those in an older age group (45 - 59) brings to light all types of distinctions that question the supposed solidity of the stigma. For example, in the case of the mortality rate from interpersonal violence, considering attacks perpetrated using firearms, knives, and other weapons, the information for Latin America and the Caribbean between 1990 and 2010 does not reflect significant differences between young people in the 15 - 29 age group with respect to persons in age group of 30 - 44 (see graph 21). The two curves maintain relative parity and, although between 1995 and 2005 participation of adults was lower, differences were not significant.

13. Criminal court statistics available through the website of the National Institute for Statistics and Geography (INEGI)

GRAPH 21
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: MORTALITY RATE RESULTING FROM INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE, DATA PER AGE RANGE, 1990-2010
(IN NUMBER OF DEATHS PER 100,000 INHABITANTS)

SOURCE

INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH METRICS AND EVALUATION
[ON LINE] [HTTP://VIZHUB.HEALTHDATA.ORG/GBD-COMPARE/](http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare/) IN ECLAC (2014).



The statistical approach to levels of participation in violent behaviour based on the number of victims indicates that the stigma of violent youth is not derived from the levels of participation in violent acts, but from the way such acts are carried out. *The Social Panorama of Latin America 2008* indicates that the vast majority of perpetrators of violent acts against young people in urban contexts are normally of the same age and gender as the victims. In the majority of cases, these are males acting in a group (ECLAC, 2009). This type of organized violence comes from local groups that emerge in situations of marginality and disruptive conduct; i.e., gangs. These gangs develop their own subcultures and fight among themselves for territorial control. In some cities, there are numerous youth groups that perpetrate various types of crime in their immediate environment and also carry out actions of intimidation and deterrence against third parties (ECLAC, 2009).

The participation of young people in different forms of organized urban violence in the region is a fact. Territorial behaviour in cities is one of the characteristics that generates a

strong feeling of insecurity in the population at large since this directly affects coexistence. The gang is a direct result of what has been referred to as structural violence derived from exclusion and marginalization of the development process of society. Youth specialists have for decades argued that the gang is an organization that offers a social inclusion alternative to a good number of Latin American youth; when what you have is poverty, few opportunities for labour market insertion, and weak presence from the state and institutions in general, the only thing that can provide a sense of future to the lives of many young people is their group of peers in the neighbourhood. The gang provides them with power, income, a place, and a sense of belonging that no other social institution offers. As indicated by ECLAC, the idea of belonging to a gang operates as an “inclusion in exclusion”. Many gangs act as social integration microsystems that reflect, compensate, and reinforce the disintegration of society (ECLAC, 2009). However, Reguillo indicates that these types of organizations have changed over the last years, from a central reference point that offers a sense of belonging, to one of survival: “youth groups in contexts of exclusion and poverty appear to operate for many of their members as places of minimal (precarious) security and confidence” (Reguillo, quoted in Perea, 2008).

The gang phenomenon cannot be understood without understanding the socio-political and cultural history of the territories in which they emerge. These coordinates affect the organization, power of recruitment of criminal organizations on young people, and the type of territorial dominance they exercise. It is important to analyze what belonging to these groups entails and the levels of violence which some of their acts of domination involve. These form part of a multiplicity of social processes that facilitate this type of alternative social inclusion for part of the youth in the region.

FACTORS THAT FACILITATE VIOLENCE

Violence affecting youth as perpetrators or victims is the result of a complex series of risk factors that emerge at any given moment. Among the risk factors (or facilitators) most commonly mentioned in international literature that are more general and can encourage various expressions of violence in youth, we can find the following:

- Growing inequality and exclusion (or exclusions): increasing economic and social polarization and inequality reveal a much more systematic association with levels of violence than poverty.
- Aftermath of civil conflicts: periods of post-war transition associated with a culture of violence in resolving conflicts and greater availability of weapons.
- Drug trafficking: this phenomenon has become the dominant illegal market in cities characterized by violence. Important profit margins can be drawn from this market which in turn defines another set of illegal activities (Perea, 2014). In many of these cities, there is no possibility of competing in the legal market and the alternatives offered by the State in terms of job opportunities for the marginalized young population are even more negligible.
- Migration processes and deportations: the negative effects of migration, mainly international migration, can be fundamental in the life of young migrants, who can face dangerous and violent situations during their journey.

- Domestic violence: one factor associated with violent behaviour is intergenerational transmission of domestic violence, replicating violent response and interaction models in adult life.
- No sense of belonging by youth: understood as lack of adhesion to shared values or recognized forms of participation, lacking a willingness to recognize others with regards perceptions about discrimination or new communicational practices, as well as lack of confidence in social structures and options for the future. All these are important causes behind certain acts of violence.
- Stigmatization of youth: certain youth groups, such as gangs members or young people from vulnerable urban sectors, tend to be stigmatized negatively, reinforcing exclusion processes.
- Institutional disaffiliation: a hostile educational system, added to a labour market that offers few opportunities to many young people also becomes a relevant frustration factor and a facilitator of violent behaviour.



PHOTOGRAPHY

UN PHOTO/MARTINE PERRET

CULTURE

During the last decades, substantive evidence on the role played by culture in development has been accumulated (UNESCO, 2010). The international community has confirmed that culture contributes effectively to policies, strategies, and programs aimed at inclusive economic and social development, environmental sustainability, harmony, peace, and security.

Culture has thus come to be conceived of as a motor and facilitator of sustainable development. Based on this acknowledgment, it is proposed that culture be linked, among other development aspects, to social inclusion. From the perspective of ECLAC, “social inclusion enables the realization and progressive enjoyment of rights which are fundamental to attain many of the aspirations of a safe, healthy, and prosperous society throughout the planet” (ECLAC, 2014, page 6). Culture, as in the case of education or health, is a domain of rights, and relative to which processes of exclusion may also be generated. Youth access to culture –one of the fundamental cultural rights– is a condition for the generation of opportunities enabling individuals to express themselves in such a way that they can develop fully and participate actively in society.

Inclusion in the field of culture requires the promotion of access for people in conditions of social exclusion, at risk, or vulnerable from a perspective of cultural consumption and also enabling them to express themselves and develop continually as persons, to transform their situation and have an impact on society. The exercise of the right to access to and participation in cultural life, as well as the freedom of artistic expression are fundamental to create inclusive and egalitarian societies (Bizkaia Observatory, 2012).

Graph 22 shows access to various cultural goods by different age groups in Latin America. There are three segments: young people (16 to 29), adults (30 to 50), and older adults (51 and over). The information shows that access to cultural goods decreases with age; i.e. young people show the greatest participation in cultural consumption, followed by adults and older adults.

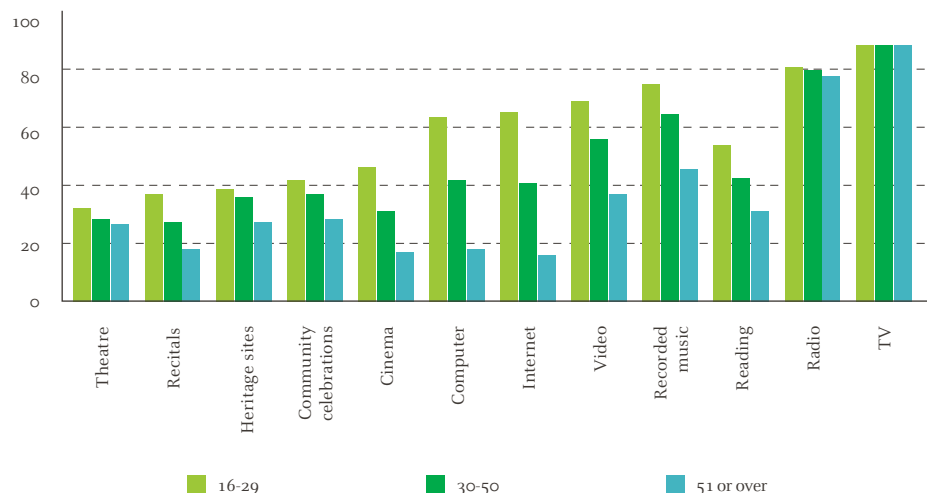
GRAPH 22
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
 PERSONS WHO HAVE USED,
 PARTICIPATED, OR VIEWED A
 CULTURAL ACTIVITY, BY AGE GROUP
 (IN PERCENTAGES)**

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2013.

NOTE

THE FREQUENCY QUESTIONS ARE NOT EXACTLY THE SAME FOR ALL CULTURAL PRODUCTS. FOR EXAMPLE, FOR ATTENDANCE TO CINEMAS, WATCHING VIDEOS, AND LISTENING TO RECORDED MUSIC, RESPONSE CATEGORIES ARE CLASSIFIED AS FOLLOWS: DAILY, AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK, AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH, AT LEAST ONCE PER QUARTER, LESS THAN ONCE EVERY THREE MONTHS. HOWEVER, FOR COMPUTER USE, CLASSIFICATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS: VARIOUS TIMES A DAY, AT LEAST ONCE A DAY, AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK, AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH, AT LEAST ONCE A QUARTER. IN TERMS OF INTERNET USE, CLASSIFICATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS: EVERY DAY, OCCASIONALLY, ALMOST NEVER, NEVER.



As shown in graph 22, youth have more access than adults and older adults to all the cultural activities considered (with the exception of television, where everyone has equal access). On average, Latin American youth is the segment that reads most books, attends more music concerts, goes to the cinema most frequently, watches more videos, and listens to more recorded music. This increased access by today's young generation suggests that new social sectors— particularly middle-class young people and, to a degree, young people from lower socioeconomic groups— are consuming what was traditionally restricted to an elite, such as theatre, museums, music concerts, among others. Young people are also accessing cultural industry products such as books, cinema, recorded music or videos.

Moreover, available information indicates that young people represent the segment that most uses digital technology: 67% use computer with some degree of frequency compared to 19% of older adults (a difference of 48 percentage points¹⁴); and 69% use Internet with some degree of frequency as compared to 17% of older adults (a difference of 52 percentage points).

In short, there is an *intergenerational gap* in cultural consumption. The current generation of Latin American youth has more access to cultural goods and services than older generations. This means that, at present, a greater proportion of young people are exercising their rights of access to and participation in culture, which is fundamental for the attainment of aspirations of more just and equitable societies. The exercise of cultural rights is associated with higher educational levels attained by youth in the last decades, which has meant more skills in persons in conditions of exclusion or vulnerability. These higher educational levels are a key factor in modifying intergenerational reproduction of cultural interest in order to achieve a more equal distribution of the cultural capital.

Furthermore, it is worth emphasizing that although certain progress has been made in terms of cultural access granted to young people, this is still insufficient. In this respect, (graph 22) shows that, unlike cultural activities that take place in private spaces (television, radio, video, computer, and Internet) and that show high levels of participation, cultural activities that take place in public spaces (theater, cinema, legacy spaces and musical recitals) reveal relatively low levels of participation.

14. “With some frequency” includes “several times a day” to “at least once every three months”. That is, not only the most frequent users are considered.

These relatively low levels of participation in cultural practices held in public spaces indicate the existence of access limitations. Barriers are normally of an economic, educational, and/or geographic nature (given that cultural provision tends to be concentrated in the large cities). Undoubtedly, some of these barriers (such as the economic barrier) are also a factor in the case of

activities that take place in private spaces (computers and Internet). This suggests that to ensure that culture comes to represent a key social inclusion domain in countries of the region, it is necessary to have policies aimed at removing the barriers limiting generalized access to culture.

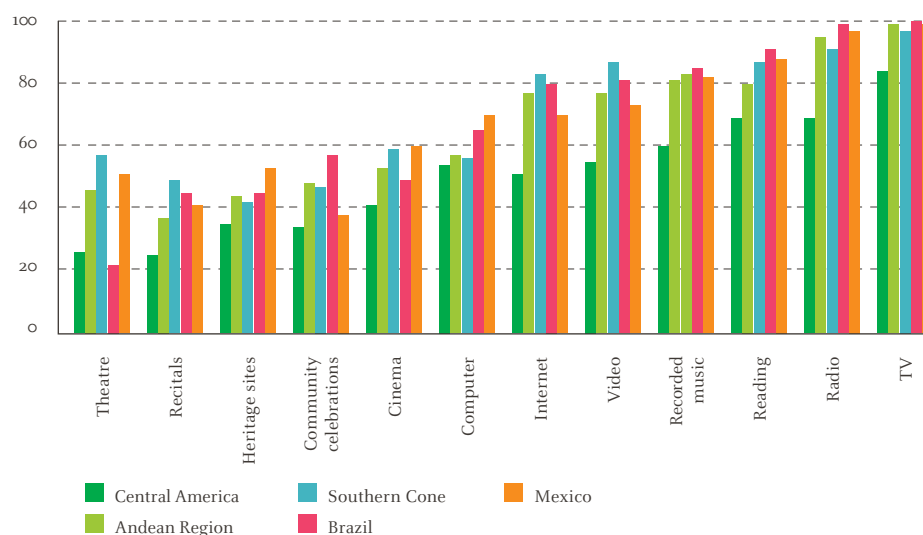
Graph 23 shows youth access to different cultural products by three groups of countries (or sub regions): South America (Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay), Andes region (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru) and Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama). The information for Brazil and Mexico is presented separately. The information indicates that, despite important progress achieved, there are still great inequalities in youth access to the cultural capital of countries in the region.

As compared to the remaining sub regions, youth in Central American countries have less access to all the cultural activities considered. This is the case of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. For example, 22% of youth in Honduras participate in community celebrations, 26% go to the cinema, 15% go to the theater, and 13% go to music concerts, 41 watch videos, 33% use computers, and 36% go on the Internet. In consequence, the exercise of cultural rights of youth in these countries is highly restricted, possibly due to lower educational levels, the magnitude of poverty, social integration problems, and scarce supply of cultural goods.

GRAPH 23
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16 - 19 WHO
HAVE USED, PARTICIPATED IN OR
VIEWED A CULTURAL ACTIVITY, BY
GROUPS OF COUNTRIES
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2013.



In short, there are *intragenerational* gaps in the access of youth to the cultural goods of countries in the region. In this sense, it is worth noting that Central American youth have less access than those from the remaining sub regions in relation to practically all cultural activities. This brings to light a critical situation in terms of exercising cultural rights. Youth from the remaining sub regions have similar levels of access to cultural activities, although some differences do exist. Gaps are also evident in the provinces of the country and are dictated by unequal access by socioeconomic and educational level of youth. So, increasing the presence of youth in the various forms of artistic expression continues to be a challenge from the point of view of cultural access.

The consideration of access to and use of digital technologies in analyzing cultural consumption by youth is necessary for various reasons. Firstly, there is the importance of the social media in the lives of young people, modifying their way of interacting in the world and in their social relations. Second, the use of digital technologies is a necessary condition to benefit from opportunities

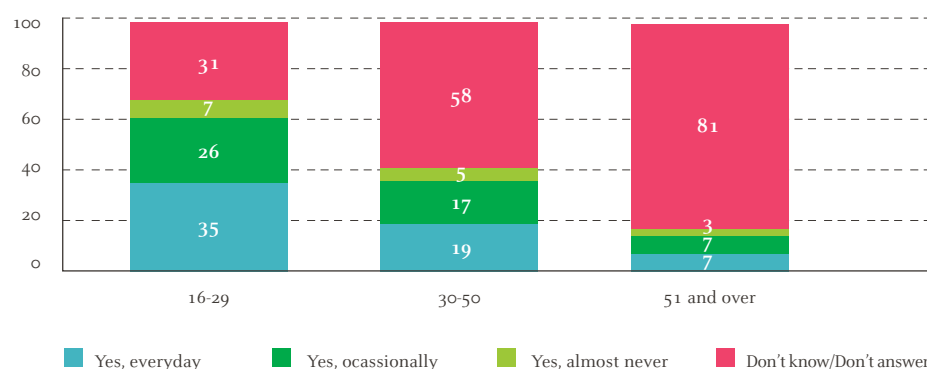
provided by such technologies, including those relating to culture. Thirdly, the use of digital technologies generates new modes of access to culture that reorganizes cultural consumption and restructures the cultural field. Lastly, the use of new technologies also represents a cultural practice.

Graph 24 shows the frequency of Internet use by age groups, and reveals that more than a third of young people (35%) use Internet every day compared to 19% of adults, and only 7% of older adults. The proportion of frequent young Internet users is less than frequent computer users (44%), possibly due to connectivity costs¹⁵. A sector equal to 35% of youth who surf the net daily is fully integrated into digital culture. But the 26% that uses Internet only occasionally also know or are highly familiar with digital culture codes.

GRAPH 24
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
FREQUENCY OF COMPUTER USE
BY AGE**
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2013.



The digital intergenerational divide may be conceptualized in terms of distinguishing between digital natives and immigrants. The term digital natives suggest that the current generation of young people have experienced a radical change as compared to their predecessors, the so-called digital immigrants. Today's youth represent the first generation actually brought up using the new advanced technology. They have grown accustomed to finding themselves surrounded by computers, videos, video games, digital music, mobile telephones, and other forms of entertainment and tools since childhood. These young people think and process information in a way that is significantly different to their predecessors (the digital immigrants) and have greater ability to handle and use the new technology. In particular, digital natives have been born into and have grown up using the peculiar digital language of video games, video, and Internet (Balardini, 2004).

Over and above regional averages, there are significant differences by countries in the frequency of Internet use. For example, almost two thirds (61%) of young lower- socioeconomic status Chilean people and more than half (55%) of their Argentinean peers are Internet users (including those who use Internet every day and occasionally). This implies that an important proportion of young people living a situation of vulnerability in these countries have access to digital technology. That is to say, in these countries a highly advanced digital inclusion process is in place, in stark contrast with the situation in some Central American countries. For example, only 8% of young people in El Salvador and 9% of lower-socioeconomic status young people in Honduras and Nicaragua are Internet users. Broad sectors of youth in these countries are excluded from access to digital technologies.

The intergenerational digital divide is also associated with different technology access possibilities. In this sense, it is worth noting that the home is the place that allows access to technology with greater frequency and intensity as it is possible to be connected permanently. Differences in access from the home by socioeconomic level are significant: young people from the high

15. For more information, see *Avances en el acceso y uso de las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación en América Latina y el Caribe 2008-2010*, Project document N° 316 (LC/W.316), Santiago, Chile Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2010.

sectors have almost 4 times more possibility of having Internet connection from home than those from lower sectors, due to connection costs. The cybercafé is an option for those who don't have access from home; however, this is a limited option in terms of frequency and intensity of use, and also implies a financial cost, while Internet use at work is even more restricted still.

Access and use of digital media is a necessary condition to benefit from the opportunities provided by new technologies, including culture. From this perspective, it is interesting to examine the role played by digital media in the promotion of access to culture and its contribution to the exercise of cultural rights. To address these issues it is first necessary to consider that digitalization—which is the basis of digital culture—has had a strong impact on the production and circulation of various cultural sector environments: from heritage (museums and performing arts among others) through to cultural industries (editorial, music, and cinema), including the media (radio and television). The musical industry pioneered this process and is an example of the deep impact of digitalization. In this respect, it has been pointed out that the real revolution brought by technological development at the end of the 90s to the musical industry can be associated with the potential brought by the outcome and promotion of digital support around the world and, mainly, with the possibilities provided by digital content distribution through the net (Palmeiro, 2004).

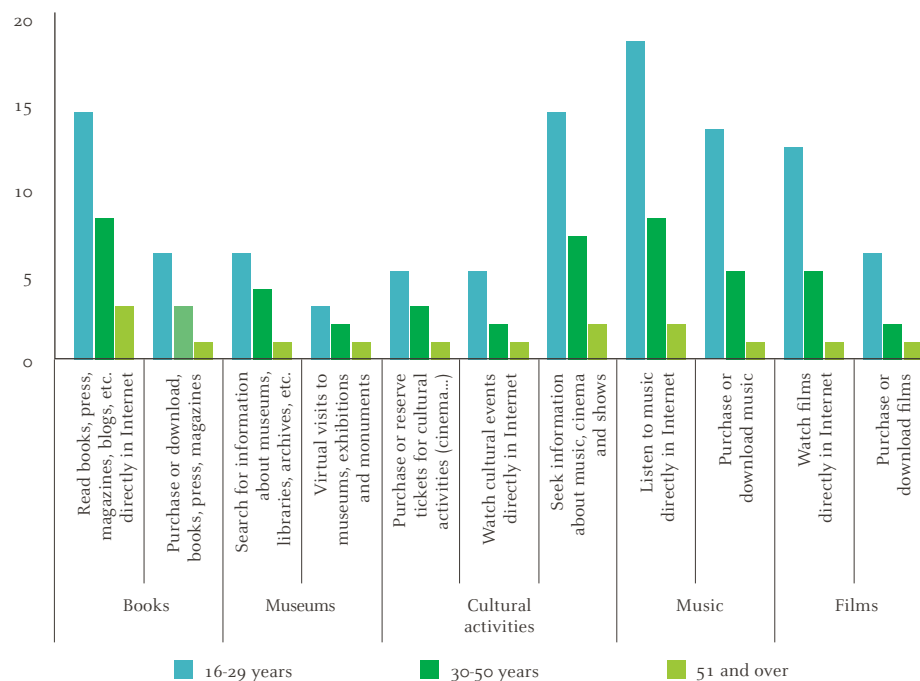
The impact of digitalization on the production and distribution of various cultural products is the subject of much research. Especially, how digital culture is changing the way to design, produce and exhibit culture.

But digital media has also generated new ways of accessing culture: digital access to a broad range of cultural goods and services. Graph 25 shows the use of Internet for cultural purposes in three age groups in the Latin American population: youth, adults, and older adults. There are activities relating to cultural industries (music, cinema, and books), heritage (museums), performing arts, and other activities (searching for information, buying, or reserving tickets). Data shows that these activities via Internet are carried out in a greater proportion by young people, followed by adults, and then older adults.

GRAPH 25
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
 PERSONS WHO HAVE USED
 INTERNET TO CARRY OUT A
 CULTURAL ACTIVITY, BY AGE GROUP
 (IN PERCENTAGES)**

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS FROM THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2013.



On average, young people from Latin America are the age segment that listens most to music (18%), reads books (14%) and watches movies (12%) via Internet. It is also the most important group that purchases and downloads music (13%), books (6%), and movies (6%) via the net. Young people also use Internet significantly to search for information on music, cinema, and shows (40%). Although this is just an emerging trend, young people represent the age segment that most watches shows (5%) and most makes virtual visits to museums or exhibitions (3%). The Latinobarómetro study shows that some cultural activities are carried out via Internet by a much larger proportion of persons than others. The cultural activities that are most frequently carried out by young people are listening to music, searching for information about music, reading books, and watching movies. The remaining activities, buying and downloading books, buying and downloading movies, and searching for information about museums and libraries are less prevalent.

Indeed, the proportion of people who use Internet as a means of access to culture is less than those who use it for traditional purposes; that is to say, without digital mediation. However, the trend is significant and is becoming increasingly relevant as a result of the mass use of Internet and also because new services are being generated that promote access to culture. For example, the rapid growth and expansion of movie services via Internet has generated new forms in which movies reach the audience. The notion of watching a movie as a kind of shared ritual from the beginning of the movie subsequently to be commented outside the cinema was already in crisis before the onset of Internet as a result of video, DVD, and cable TV. Internet has now made a decisive contribution in this sense, and the region is now in a post cinematographic era where the relation with images has changed quickly and films no longer have the same meaning as they did for previous generations.

Internet has also brought changes in ways of reading, particularly among young people. Changes in the reading protocol: the passage “from flat to spherical reading” described by Beatriz Sarlo, highlights the competition offered by hypertext to the book. Hypertext is a mobile text that can be reached from any point and that has different paths to move from one part to another or from words to images and sound. As this author explains “the page, just as the book made us used to the idea of a page, no longer exists in hypertext which is no more than a number of screens not ordered by fixed succession which can be accessed and articulated in different ways, following links by association, hierarchy, sequence, theme, or on a whim” (Sarlo, 1998, page 70). Thus we arrive at the deep mutation of the act of “reading” which has its greatest impact precisely on those who are more familiar or have more empathy with the new communication technologies: youth. According to Martin-Barbero, this empathy “goes from an enormous information absorption capacity via television or computer games— which erodes the schools’ status as the single and legitimate instance to convey knowledge— to the facility to enter and manage a wealth of computer networks” (Martin-Barbero, 1998, page 35). In contrast to the resistance of adults to the hypertext culture, youth not only evidence more skill in surfing but also greater expressive affinity. This is because “they are able to find their rhythm and language in its narrative, images, sounds, fragmentation and speeds” (Martin-Barbero, 1998, page 35).

Young people have greater access to culture through Internet than adult generations, and thus also exercise their rights of access and participation in culture through digital media. If, in the case of traditional modes of cultural consumption, greater access of youth is associated to higher education levels achieved by the young population in the last decades, for this new form of access we can say it goes hand-in-hand with a new form of cultural capital, a “techno-cultural” capital existing in the attitudes and disposition of individuals toward technology and, particularly, in certain skills, know-how, and competencies (O’Keefe, 2011, quoted in Gayo 2011, page 11).

Two types of digital skills are fundamental for this “techno-cultural capital” (Claro, 2008). Firstly, functional skills, generally conceptualized as digital literacy, comprising a set of skills necessary to use certain applications in these technologies. Among these, the word processor,

the spreadsheet, e-mail, and the search engine. Secondly, there are “digital learning skills” that go beyond the functional use of certain applications and refer to the creative use of the latter, enabling the acquisition of new knowledge. This includes, among other things, the ability to surf, search, critically evaluate, and make sense of the information obtained using this digital media.

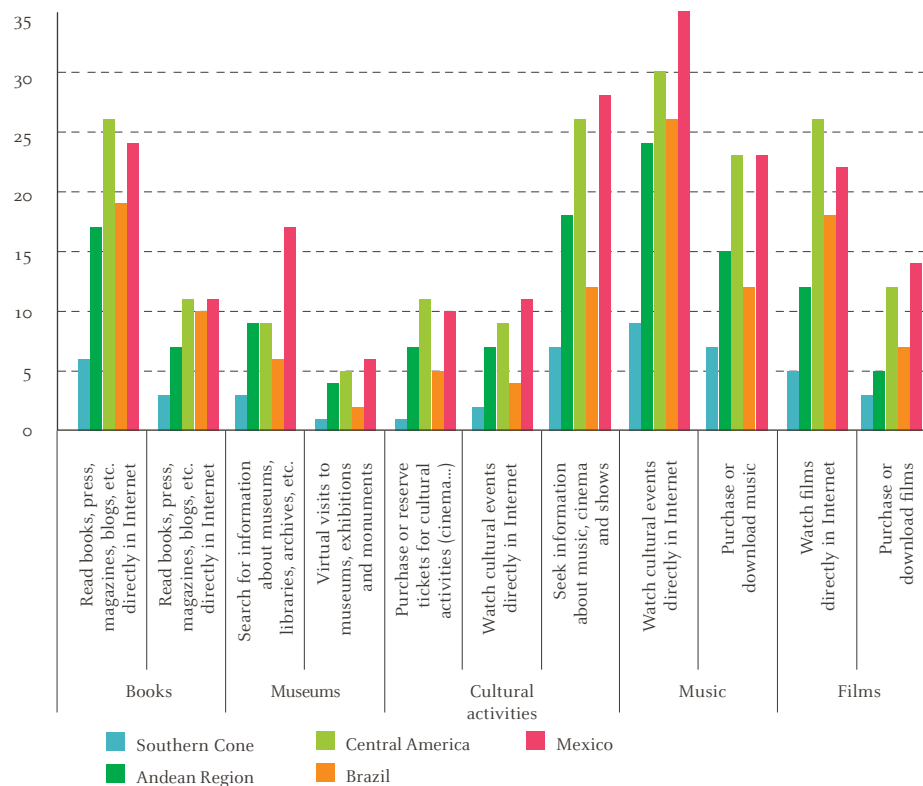
This techno-cultural capital consisting of the two types of digital skills is fundamental in order to gain access and participate in cultural activities via Internet. Today’s youth, whose domestic lives have been invaded by the new technologies, is thus in a position of clear advantage. This also suggests that the tendency to use Internet as a new way to access culture— less developed in some activities and more developed in others— offers participation possibilities to young people who were previously denied for financial reasons, geographic location, or other considerations. Therefore, new technologies contribute to a massive access to culture.

Graph 26 shows the cultural activities carried out by youth in three country groups (or sub regions): South America (Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay), Andes region (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru) and Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama). Information for Brazil and Mexico is separate. The information indicates that there are great intergenerational inequalities in Internet use to access culture in the different countries in the region.

GRAPH 26
LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
YOUTH AGED 16 - 29 WHO
HAVE USED INTERNET FOR ANY
CULTURAL ACTIVITY, BY COUNTRY
GROUPS
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (CEPAL), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2013.



As with the rest of cultural consumption, and compared to youth in the rest of the sub regions, Central American youth are the ones with the lowest use rate of Internet as a means to access culture in all the dimensions that were considered. Data suggest that this is an emerging phenomenon in this sub region, especially in countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala,

Honduras and Nicaragua. This is a novel phenomenon even when it comes to listening to music in Internet, buying or downloading music, books and films. This is consistent with the information presented beforehand, both with regards the consumption of culture, and the digital development of countries. On the other hand, none of the remaining sub-regions or countries evidences an opposite behaviour; i.e. because youth have greater access to all the activities in question. In the remaining sub regions, and despite their differences, Internet use as a way of gaining access to culture is far greater than in Central America.

The possibilities of benefitting from the opportunities provided by Internet in the sphere of culture are necessarily conditioned by access and use of digital media. As evidenced, there is unequal access to the digital media. Consequently, there is a gap between those that have access to opportunities, and those excluded from them. Access inequality becomes even more severe to the extent that many young people lack the digital skills needed to benefit from such opportunities. Therefore, greater access to culture via Internet is a challenge associated with bridging the digital divide and massively spreading techno-cultural capital.



PHOTOGRAPHY

UNICEF/EL SALVADOR/2007-434/GONZALO BELL

PARTICIPATION

As stated by ECLAC more than a decade ago, social participation and the exercise of citizenship are key dimensions for youth inclusion in society, because it is through them that youth express both their possibilities and desires in the construction of a shared future (ECLAC-OIJ, 2004). In addition, participation is an essential way to effectively enjoy human rights, and is therefore a component of the rights-based perspective; i.e. the attempt to ensure the exercise of rights as the guiding theme for public policies. Through active participation in society, youth play a key role in their own development and by acquiring life-long skills, develop knowledge about human rights and citizenship, and promote civic action, make a positive contribution to their communities. However, youth need to be provided with the necessary tools to participate effectively: information, education and knowledge of their civil rights.

Numerous studies have referred to the distance and lack of confidence of Latin American youth in conventional politics, their lower electoral participation as voters and candidates, and in political parties, as well as in traditional social organizations that channel the demands and express the interests of different social groups (IDEA INTERNATIONAL, 2013; ECLAC-OIJ, 2008; ECLAC-UNFPA, 2011). Frequently, and based on the somewhat arbitrary division of attainment of age as a criteria for the full exercise of political citizenship rights, youth, and especially the under aged, tend to be regarded by the established order as objects of public policies, but not as active subjects of policies (Reguillo, 2003). Normally, even when they reach voting age, their priorities are only heard by those with political responsibility when all voters regard them a priority (UNFPA, 2014). Not in vain, on September 15, 2014, International Democracy Day, in his message the General Secretary of the United Nations underscored the imperative need to create closer links between youth and political participation as a way to renew and consolidate democracies in all latitudes¹⁶.

It is stated that youth show indifference and even reject traditional forms of political action, but by expressing new concerns and demands through informal and non conventional mobilisation, implementing novel and creative channels of communication and coordination such as virtual social networks and sometimes by being capable of mobilising wide ranging processes of change in politics and policies, youth are indeed key players in new participation formulas. By acting in networks or participating in collective or “viral” discussions many young people

16. In 2007, in order to encourage governments to strengthen national programs to promote and consolidate democracy, the UN General Assembly declared September 15 of each year as International Democracy Day, via Resolution A/62/7. See more details [on line] in <http://www.un.org/es/events/democracyday/>.

today shape and discover themselves as active political subjects; i.e. as citizens. We now refer to some trends of youth political participation over the past few years and highlight some of the main themes that seem to be of their interest from a political institutional standpoint. Every context needs to open spaces, eliminate formal barriers to the political and electoral participation of youth and incorporate the non conventional means of expression and political mobilisation they propose as a key component of public debate, in addition to traditional representation mechanisms in democracies.

YOUTH AND CONVENTIONAL PARTICIPATION: FROM PERCEPTIONS TO ACTIONS

As a starting point, we examine the adherence of youth to conventional political participation, exploring their perceptions of institutions, democracy, their interest in politics, and lastly, their participation in electoral processes.

An analysis of the level of confidence in different institutions is revealing because it may not only be related to the level of interest of youth in the political world, but also helps to explain their participation or non participation in the electoral processes. As can be seen in graph 27, there is far less confidence among youth in Congress and political parties, compared not only to other traditionally recognized institutions like the Church (that is less trusted than in the past), but also in comparison with the media (television) or institutions such as the armed forces or the police. With the exception of the Church, a comparison with the first decade of the 21st Century reveals a slight improvement in this negative evaluation. With regards to adults, loss of confidence in the church is greater among young persons, while an increase in confidence is slightly greater in the case of television and the armed forces. In any case, the prevailing characteristic during the period is that out of all these institutions, Congress and political parties enjoy comparatively lower levels of confidence¹⁷.

GRAPH 27
**LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES):
16 TO 29 YEAR-OLDS AND ADULTS
AGED 30 OR MORE THAT DECLARE
THEY HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN
THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS,
2000-2013**
(IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

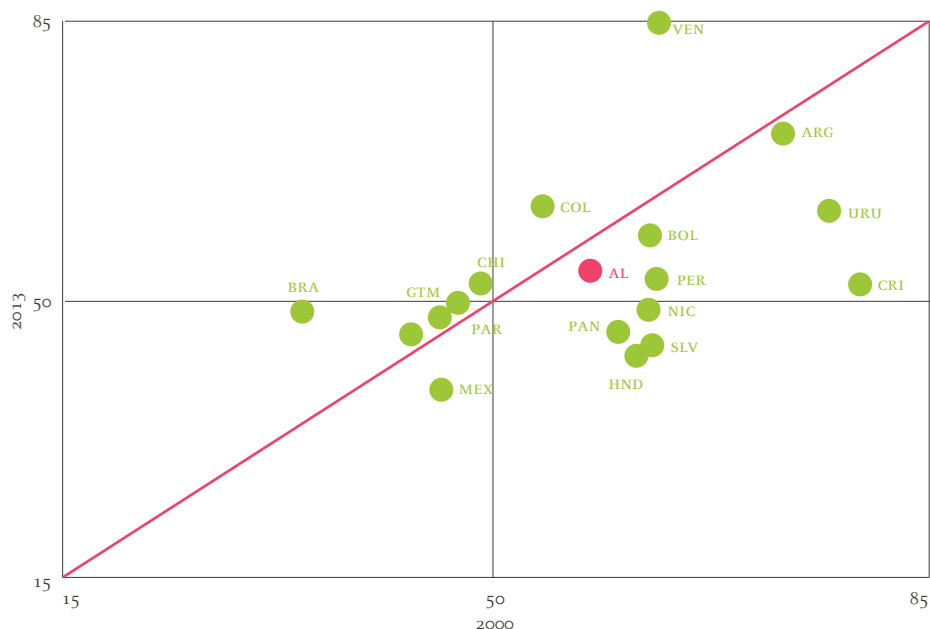
PREPARED BY AUTHOR BASED ON SPECIAL PROCESSING
OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2000 AND 2013.

17. This data represent a simple average for 17 countries in terms of whether a democracy can operate without Congress and political parties, based on special tabulations of the Latinobarómetro survey 2000 and 2013.



In addition to the low level of confidence in institutions that are fundamental for the operation of the democratic political system (Congress and political parties), the level of support for democracy on the part of young people has dropped or remained stable at low levels in most countries during 2000-2013 (graph 28). A way of summarizing this evolution is to consider, on the one hand, those countries above the red diagonal line, where youth preference for democracy as the best form of government increased in the period 2000- 2013. In terms of positive evolutions we can mention that in 2013 the support for democracy increased considerably in Brazil, Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Below that line are countries where support for democracy as the best form of government declined between 2000-2013, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama in Central America, and Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Peru and Uruguay in the Southern Cone. However, that ranking must consider the initial and final level of support: countries located to the left of the vertical axis and below the horizontal axis maintained a level of support for democracy as the best way of government at a level below 50% during the period. Thus, in Brazil, the support for democracy increased from 35% to 48%, but still remained among the countries with relatively low level of support. What is noteworthy are countries that maintained a level of support below 50% in 2013: the most concerning cases are those that showed that characteristic in both moments. For example, support for democracy in Mexico as the best form of government was 45% in 2000 and dropped to 39% in 2013.

GRAPH 28
**LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES):
 EVOLUTION OF THE SUPPORT FOR
 DEMOCRACY AS THE BEST FORM
 OF GOVERNMENT, AMONG YOUTH
 AGED 16 – 29, 2000 AND 2013.**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)



Likewise, countries located to the right of the vertical axis and above the horizontal axis maintained a level of support greater than 50% despite their individual evolutions; in this group we find Costa Rica and Uruguay. With regards adults, except for a few cases (and that of Chile is exemplary), the percentage of young people who believe that democracy is the best form of government is similar to the percentage among adults who express the same opinion (graph 29).

GRAPH 29

**LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES):
SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY AS
THE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT
AMONG YOUTH AGED 16 – 29 AND
ADULTS AGED 30 AND OVER, 2013.
(IN PERCENTAGES)**

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2000 AND 2013.

NOTE

IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE, THE QUESTION IS ASKED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER: “WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PHRASES DO YOU AGREE WITH MOST?”, AND THE ALTERNATIVES ARE: “DEMOCRACY IS PREFERABLE TO ANY OTHER FORM OF GOVERNMENT”; “IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES, AN AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT CAN BE PREFERABLE TO A DEMOCRATIC ONE” AND “FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME, A DEMOCRATIC OR NON DEMOCRATIC REGIME IS THE SAME THING”. DATA FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WAS NOT CONSIDERED IN THIS TABLE BECAUSE THEY ONLY HAVE FIGURES FOR 2013. FOR THE 2013 SURVEY, CATEGORIES “DON’T KNOW” AND “DOES NOT ANSWER” COMPLETE 100% OF CASES.



A relevant indicator about the valuation of the representative capacity of democracies is the perception of who governs (graph 30). In 2013, 70% or more of young people believed that the powerful groups governed for their own benefit, while it was only in Ecuador, Nicaragua and Uruguay that young people believed that governments benefited the people as a whole. As from 2000, these countries share a common characteristic which is the coming to power, and holding on to power of new left-wing coalitions often accompanied by charismatic leaders. In this issue, the less optimistic opinions of youth coincide with that of adults aged 30 or more and what prevails is a view not too convinced that the government of countries did not pursue the majority.

GRAPH 30

**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
YOUTH AGED BETWEEN 16 – 29
AND ADULTS AGED 30 OR MORE
WHO BELIEVE THE COUNTRY IS
GOVERNED BY POWERFUL GROUPS
FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT, 2013
(IN PERCENTAGES)**

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2013.

NOTE

IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE, THE QUESTION IS ASKED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER: “IN GENERAL TERMS, WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE COUNTRY IS GOVERNED BY A FEW POWERFUL GROUPS FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT, OR GOVERNED FOR THE GOOD OF PEOPLE AS A WHOLE?”



GRAPH 31
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
 LACK OF INTEREST IN POLITICS
 AMONG YOUTH AGED 16 – 29 AND
 ADULTS AGED 30 OR MORE, 2013.**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

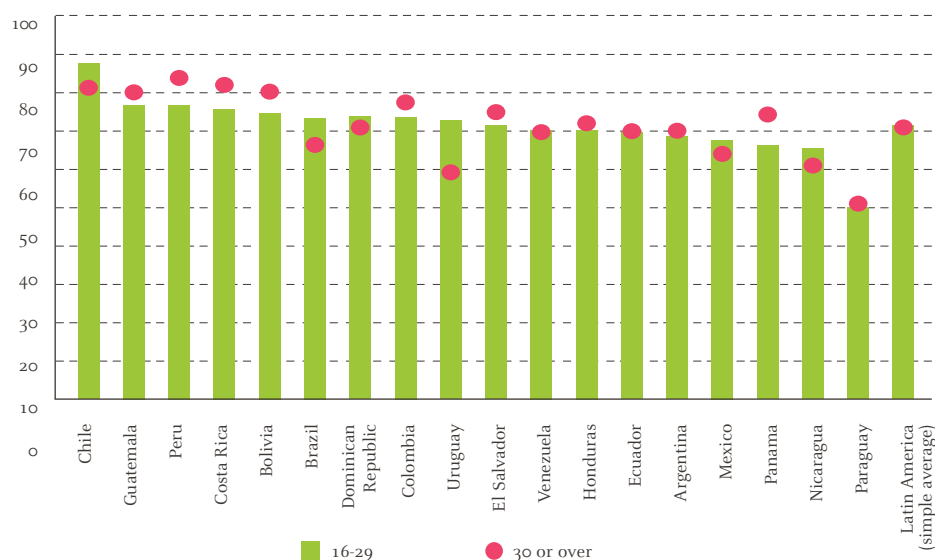
SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2013.

NOTE

IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE, THE QUESTION IS ASKED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN POLITICS?" ORIGINALLY, THE QUESTION HAS SIX ALTERNATIVE ANSWERS: "DON'T KNOW", "DOES NOT ANSWER", "VERY INTERESTED", "SOMEWHAT INTERESTED", "NOT VERY INTERESTED" AND "NOT INTERESTED AT ALL". HOWEVER, FOR DATA PRESENTATION PURPOSES, THESE ANSWERS WERE GROUPED INTO TWO CATEGORIES: "VERY OR SOMEWHAT INTERESTED" AND "NOT VERY INTERESTED OR NOT INTERESTED AT ALL".



Beyond perceptions, an analysis of concrete actions shows that a clear expression of traditional political participation is to have voted in the last presidential elections (graph 32). Although most youth vote, they do so far less frequently than adults. This is due to age-based exclusion, but also to self-exclusion for those that do not vote even though they are eligible to do so. The former refers to age and administrative barriers faced by youth in order to vote. In this sense, if in the vast majority of countries in the region voting age was 18, in countries such as Brazil, Ecuador and Nicaragua this was reduced to 16. The latter is an expression of rejection and/or indifference towards voting as a means to participation. The cases of Chile, Peru and several Central American countries are revealing because close to 50% or less of their young population actually votes. It is also interesting to note that while in 2000 more than 40% of youth and 70% of adults voted, in 2013 there is greater diversity in youth and adult voters.

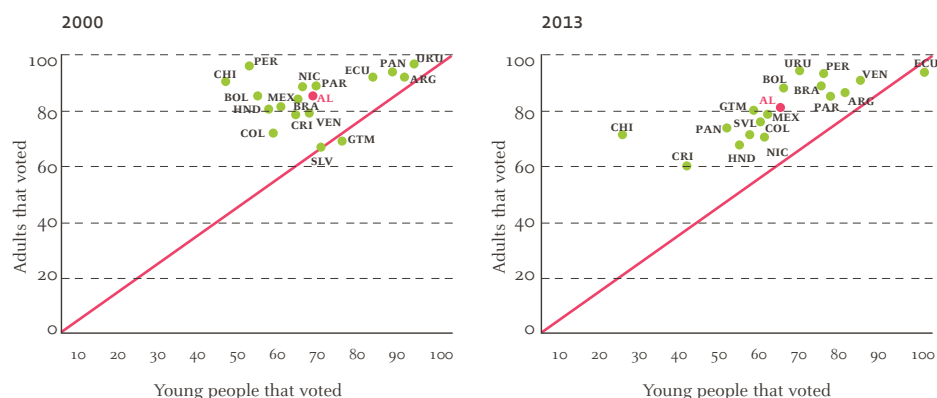
Finally, it is also worth mentioning that in most countries of the region there are gaps between ages to vote and be voted. In 19 of the 25 countries considered in Latin America and the Caribbean, the age required to be elected to the Legislative is greater than the voting age. In 10 countries the age to be elected to the Chamber of Deputies was 25 or more, thus excluding a high percentage of youth from participation (Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Haiti, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay). In addition, in countries with Upper Chambers or Senates, age requirements for eligibility were even higher. In fact, in 8 of the 13 countries with Upper Chambers, the minimum age of 30 to be eligible for election excludes the whole young population; that is the case of Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Saint Lucia and Uruguay. In contrast, only four countries have the same age to vote and be voted into Congress (Guatemala, Grenada, Guyana and Suriname). In consequence, in order to expand legal possibilities for the

election of young representatives, most countries need to at least discuss a reduction in the difference between both requirements.

GRAPH 32
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
 YOUTH AGED 16 - 29 AND ADULTS
 AGED 30 AND MORE DECLARE
 THAT THEY VOTED IN THE LAST
 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, 2000
 AND 2013**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2013.



In summary, in most countries youth express dissatisfaction with the operation of democracy, and in comparison with other institutions, are mistrustful of institutions such as Congress or political parties. In most cases, youth nowadays are less convinced that democracy is always the best form of government. This belief is not exclusive to youth, but rather a wide ranging mistrust and dissatisfaction with representative democracy in many countries in the region. Despite these negative perceptions and valuations, youth continue to vote, although they do so to a lesser extent than other age groups. This reveals the tension and contradictions of youth vis-à-vis the political establishment – ambivalence, mistrust, but without ignoring the important role of Congress or political parties for an adequate operation of democracy, continue to participate in traditional political processes, such as voting, and are not indifferent to a series of themes and interests around which they are willing to mobilise. In fact, the strongest willingness to mobilise in favour of various issues points to the need to open scope for youth participation.

Faced with this outlook, can we talk of general indifference and passivity? As will now be discussed, despite an important contingent outside electoral participation and mobilisation, there is also scope for direct mobilisation via non conventional means that are redefining traditional youth participation patterns.

VOTE AND MOBILISATION: THE RELATIVE WEIGHT OF MARGINALISED YOUTH

In the case of youth, social mobilisation, voting or self exclusion from both actions are indicators of multiple attitudes (adhesion, indifference or aversion to public life and democracy) that are significant as such, but above all very particular with regards other groups. At the same time, in the case of under aged youth, not voting can also express social exclusion situations in persons not necessarily indifferent or averse to voting, but prevented from doing so because of age requirements to enjoy full political citizenship. It is especially interesting to determine the magnitude of youth in the region that is excluded from electoral participation and social mobilisation.

To deal with this aspect, various studies have tried to combine data about electoral participation and social mobilisation in order to identify: i) those that vote and mobilise; ii) those that vote but

do not mobilise; iii) those that do not vote but mobilise and iv) those that do not vote and do not mobilise (FLACSO and IDEA International, 2013). Those that vote and mobilise simultaneously exercise a full strategy of “having a voice” in the public sphere, with conventional political participation as voters, but also through their direct participation as mobilised citizens (Hirschman, 1995). Those that only vote but do not mobilise represent the profile of “having a voice with loyalty”, in the sense that they participate as voters, complying with one of the basic duties of citizens in a democracy, but not to the extent of participating in any collective mobilisation. On the contrary, those that mobilise but do not vote represent a group with a strategy of “having a voice without loyalty” in the sense that they actively and directly participate in public life, but not necessarily adhering to the conventional modes of electoral participation. Finally, those that do not vote and do not mobilise are “marginalised groups”, distant from electoral participation¹⁸ and social mobilisation, either because of indifference, dissatisfaction with existing participation channels, or because they are excluded from them. This is no reason to discard the creation and active use of other channels of expression and search for meaning, neither in this group nor in any of the others.

In order to determine the order of magnitude between different attitudes towards political participation, the Latinobarómetro data enable us to focus on two points in time and contrast the participation patterns of youth and adults aged 30 or more. That exercise also enables us to identify among youth, in comparison with adults, a category of people that neither vote nor express themselves and are thus “marginalised”. As can be seen in graph 33, two major groups prevail in the region: the biggest one are those that only vote (42% in 2013), followed by the “marginalised” group that neither votes nor mobilises (31.3% in 2013). In third place, we find those that vote and have mobilised at least once (17.4% in 2013), followed finally by those that do not vote but have mobilised (9.3%). The biggest change observed during the period is a slight increase in the percentage of those that neither vote nor mobilise from 27.3% to 31.3%, and a drop among those that only vote, from 45.9% to 42%. The biggest contrast with adults aged 30 or more is a far smaller contingent of “marginalised” youth, as well as a less important group of those that only participate through mobilisations.

18. One could also find under aged youth willing to vote, but unable to do so because of age or administrative requirements.

GRAPH 33
**LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES):
YOUTH AGED 16 TO 29 AND
ADULTS AGED 30 OR MORE THAT
DECLARE THEY VOTED IN THE LAST
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
HAVE MOBILISED AT LEAST ONCE
THE PREVIOUS YEAR, 2000-2013
(IN PERCENTAGES)**

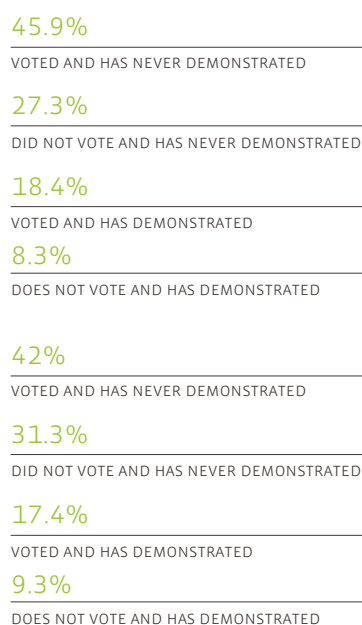
SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2000 AND 2013.

NOTE

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES THAT DID NOT VOTE ALSO INCLUDES THOSE THAT COULD NOT ATTEND, DID NOT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS TO VOTE AND DID NOT WANT TO VOTE, AMONG OTHERS.

YOUTH AGED 16 - 29



ADULTS AGED 30 OR MORE

62.5%

VOTED AND HAS NEVER DEMONSTRATED

12.8%

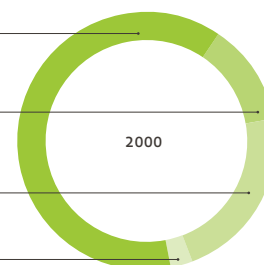
DID NOT VOTE AND HAS NEVER DEMONSTRATED

22.1%

VOTED AND HAS DEMONSTRATED

2.6%

DOES NOT VOTE AND HAS DEMONSTRATED



61.3%

VOTED AND HAS NEVER DEMONSTRATED

15.4%

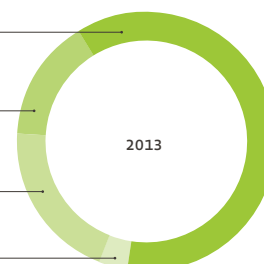
DID NOT VOTE AND HAS NEVER DEMONSTRATED

19.8%

VOTED AND HAS DEMONSTRATED

3.4%

DOES NOT VOTE AND HAS DEMONSTRATED



This shows that from the point of view of conventional political participation, there is a margin to be expanded in the case of youth, looking for ways to mobilise and participate in electoral processes. This is something that we referred to later on as recommendations to raise barriers in each context, beginning by aligning voting age with the age to be elected as a candidate, among other aspects.

NON CONVENTIONAL PARTICIPATION AND THE NEW PLATFORMS OF EXPRESSION, MOBILISATION AND INCIDENCE

The distance between youth and the political system and electoral competition should not overshadow new forms of youth participation that have the potential to influence the public agenda. Over the past few years social movements headed by young persons have been very important in the region. This reveals their interest in being heard and in actively participating in the development of their societies. In this way new forms of youth mobilisation and organization emerge, with the key element of technological tools, primarily, social media. These are among the preferred Internet platforms in Latin America: out of the 12 countries of the world where social media is most highly used, five are from this region and most of their users are adolescents and young persons.

The communication model proposed by social media opposes that of the traditional mass media that sends a single message on to an indefinite group of individuals. Instead, in social media it is the user that has the possibility of creating and disseminating messages, and that interactivity is enhanced by their capacity to create networks and establish contacts. This model implies a substantial change in the way in which people interact, both among themselves as well as with institutions, either individually, in communities, or in movements. (Pavez, 2014). Thus social media plays an increasingly important role in the way in which adolescents and youth exert influence and put forward their concerns and ideas, giving way to new forms of organization that have generated social movements and communities (UNDP, 2013).

An interesting case is that of Chile where as a counterpoint to low indices of conventional political participation among youth, the student movement in 2011 achieved great notoriety. This movement brought to the public debate issues that traditional political actors had sidestepped or only partially discussed, for example the end of profiteering in the whole educational system and especially in university education. In principle, profiteering was forbidden within the formal legislative framework, but in practice this was not complied with, turning educational activity into a business like any other. Mobilisations achieved long standing and growing support despite the opposition or negative solutions proposed by government at that time. Thousands of families and other social sectors joined the movement, generating exceptionally large mobilisations widely covered by the press. On the other hand, most of the opinion polls revealed national support for the main causes upheld by the student movement. This support was also longstanding. However, cabinet changes and some significant government measures, the need for a complete reformulation of the educational system, together with a tax reform to obtain the funds necessary to move forward, remained at the top of the public agenda, to such an extent that many of the issues put forward by the movement were at the very centre of the following presidential campaign and in the government coalition programme that won those elections. Another important fact was that an important part of the leadership that emerged from the student movement (young people under the age of 25) were able to join various political parties or, as independents, run as candidates for Congress in 2013. Many of them were elected as Deputies in the Lower Chamber of Congress. In this sense, the 2011 student movement contributed to the appearance of young leaders that were elected in popular elections and subsequently acquired concrete influence on decision-making.

Another significant case was that of Mexican youth and the appearance of movement #yosoy132, organized by university students in the midst of the 2012 presidential campaign. Promoted from platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Skype, that movement not only expressed the anger of many voters who perceived biased media coverage, but also because of the support and communicational use of the social media. Movement #yosoy132 called upon students to publicly express and keep themselves informed, and demanded that the media be restrained from manipulating information to provide it in an independent and neutral fashion. Several public forums were also held inviting all youth to participate. They were invited to participate in a debate organized by movement “*todos los candidatos presidenciales*”, using a new form of moderation, including questions obtained via Twitter and with links via streaming. As a result of the inclusive potential of technology, the message of movement #yosoy132 reached an audience not only already interested in politics, but a much wider one, as varied as unknown.

These non-traditional movements, mobilisations and social organizations where young people are key leaders, have new forms of communication, response and participation. They are organized via networks and capture the attention of the mass media and governments based on their horizontal organization, lack of political affiliation or defined leaderships. These same features, in turn, conspire against their permanence in time (Pavez, 2014). However, they are a novel and recurrent form of mobilisation with specific objectives that can have great impact. Their importance is related to the fact that they supplement an inadequate or insufficient representation of youth plurality through the conventional channels of representative democracy. In broader terms, these formulas contribute to social conflicts that forces political systems to address their demands and to respond to issues that are ignored or even blocked by formal institutional channels (Calderón Gutiérrez, 2011, 2012).

WHICH ISSUES MOBILISE YOUTH?

This leads us to ask ourselves about the issues that mobilise youth. An approach suggested by the findings of Latinobarómetro considers how willing youth and adults are to mobilise in favour of various issues (graph 34). In general, youth declare they are more willing than adults to mobilise about all the issues that are mentioned. However, the issues that interest them more are education and health, followed by demand for better salaries and employment, protection of democratic rights, land ownership and exploitation of natural resources. On the one hand, priority issues are related to individual opportunities relevant to their present life cycle (health, education, salary and employment), which attracts far more of their enthusiasm compared with more intangible causes such as the protection of democratic rights. But “traditional” social struggle issues such as land ownership or the exploitation of natural resources, both in terms of the appropriation of revenues resulting from that activity and its effects on the environment awaken less enthusiasm.

GRAPH 34
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES):
 PERSONS THAT DECLARE
 WILLINGNESS OR UNWILLINGNESS
 TO MOBILISE IN FAVOUR OF THE
 ISSUES SELECTED, YOUTH AGED
 16-29 AND ADULTS AGED 30 OR
 MORE, 2013**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2013.



MAIN PRIORITIES AND ISSUES OF PUBLIC INTEREST FOR YOUTH

The main public agenda issues and their evolution over the past few years are extremely important to guide the analysis and prioritize policy actions. At a regional level, the main problems identified for youth changed between 2000 and 2013 (graph 35). In 2000, issues identified as priorities were unemployment (21.2%), education (20.7%) and corruption (9.7%). Closely followed by poverty with 8.1% and crime with 7.7%. However, in 2013 their priorities were crime (23.0%), unemployment (15.9%), education and corruption (each one with 6.3%). Thus, only unemployment has remained as an issue of concern, whilst crime gained ground during the period analyzed. Education is still present as a concern, but with less intensity.

GRAPH 35
**LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES):
 AVERAGE PERCEPTION OF THE
 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN THE
 COUNTRY ACCORDING TO YOUTH
 AGED 16-29, 2000 AND 2013**
 (IN PERCENTAGES)

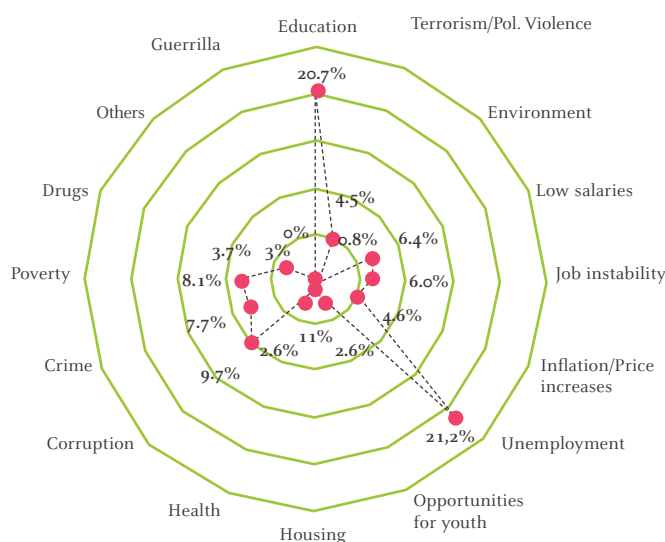
SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2000 AND 2013.

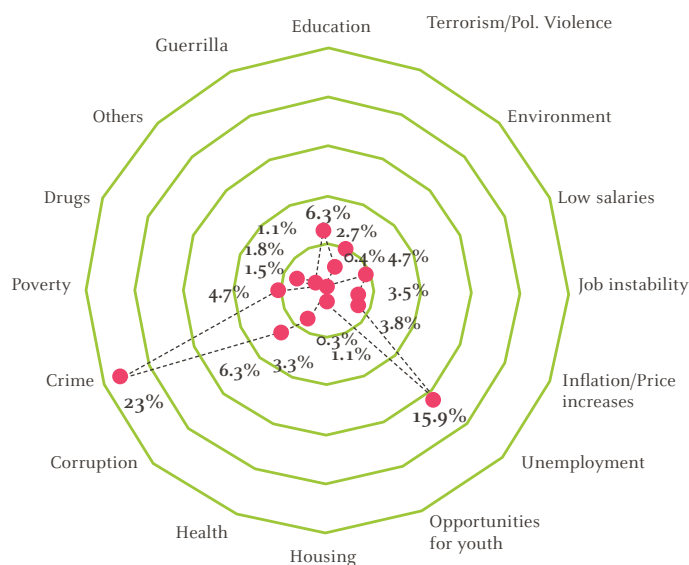
NOTE

IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE, THE QUESTION IS POSED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER: "FROM THE LIST OF PROBLEMS THAT I WILL SHOW YOU, WHICH ONE DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR THE COUNTRY?". IN ORDER TO MAKE CASES COMPARABLE FOR BOTH YEARS, THE ONLY ANSWERS CONSIDERED WERE THE ALTERNATIVES STUDIED IN THE 2000 SURVEY. THIS MEANS THAT OPTIONS "DON'T KNOW", "DOES NOT ANSWER", "NONE", "TRANSPORT", "HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS", "DRUG TRAFFICKING", "FOOD SHORTAGE", "GLOBAL WARMING", "BASIC SERVICES", "ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL PROBLEMS", "POLITICAL SITUATION", "INCOME DISTRIBUTION", "RACIAL DISCRIMINATION", "BORDER PROBLEMS", "PROBLEMS WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES" AND "ENERGY PROBLEMS", COMPLETED 100% OF THE CASES SURVEYED IN 2013.

2000



2013



It is worth noting that each country has its own specificities (table 11). On the one hand, in 2000, in the 16 countries where we have information, education was regarded as one of the two most important problems. Unemployment (11 countries) and corruption (8 countries) were also present in most nations.

In 2013, crime and public safety were among the most important issues in 13 out of the 16 countries. Unemployment was mentioned in ten cases, while other issues such as economic and financial problems, corruption and education were highlighted less frequently. In summary, at the level of countries, there is certain coincidence with what is evidenced at a regional level where unemployment has remained a priority issue for youth surveyed in 2000-2013, while problems linked to crime became part of the main issues mentioned in 2013.

TABLE 11
LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES):
THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT
PROBLEMS MENTIONED BY YOUTH
AGED 16 – 29 IN 2000 AND 2013

SOURCE

PREPARED BY AUTHOR BASED ON SPECIAL TABULATIONS
 OF THE LATINOBARÓMETRO SURVEY 2000 AND 2013.

(*)CATEGORIES NAMED DIFFERENTLY DEPENDING ON
 THE YEAR OF THE SURVEY, BUT IT IS ASSUMED THAT
 THEY REFER TO SIMILAR CONCERNS.

COUNTRY	2000	2013
ARGENTINA	UNEMPLOYMENT	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY
	EDUCATION	INFLATION AND PRICE INCREASES
BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)	EDUCATION	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY
	UNEMPLOYMENT	THE ECONOMY AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS
BRAZIL	UNEMPLOYMENT	HEALTH
	DRUGS	PROBLEMS WITH EDUCATION*
CHILE	UNEMPLOYMENT	PROBLEMS WITH EDUCATION
	JOB SECURITY	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY
COLOMBIA	TERRORISM AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE*	UNEMPLOYMENT
	UNEMPLOYMENT	VIOLENCE AND GANGS
COSTA RICA	EDUCATION	CORRUPTION
	CORRUPTION	UNEMPLOYMENT
ECUADOR	EDUCATION	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY *
	CORRUPTION	UNEMPLOYMENT
EL SALVADOR	POVERTY	DELINCUENCIA Y SEGURIDAD PÚBLICA*
	EDUCATION	LOW SALARIES
GUATEMALA	EDUCATION	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY *
	LOW SALARIES	UNEMPLOYMENT
HONDURAS	EDUCATION	UNEMPLOYMENT
	CRIME*	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY *
MEXICO	INFLATION AND PRICE INCREASES	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY
	EDUCATION	UNEMPLOYMENT
NICARAGUA	EDUCATION	UNEMPLOYMENT
	UNEMPLOYMENT	LOW SALARIES
PANAMA	UNEMPLOYMENT	TRANSPORTATION
	EDUCATION	LOW SALARIES
PARAGUAY	UNEMPLOYMENT	UNEMPLOYMENT
	EDUCATION *	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY
PERU	UNEMPLOYMENT	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY
	EDUCATION	POVERTY
URUGUAY	UNEMPLOYMENT	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY
	LOW SALARIES	UNEMPLOYMENT
VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)	EDUCATION	CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY
	UNEMPLOYMENT	FOOD SHORTAGE AND HOARDING

In most countries of the region, we confirm general features already identified by several studies. For example, the low level of confidence in political institutions, lower levels of conventional and electoral participation, little interest in politics or greater indifference about democracy as the best form of government, among other aspects. The legitimacy of democratic systems is questioned by youth because they do not perceive them as mechanisms for inclusion, equality or individual improvement. There is also great tension between the formal and electoral spheres that upholds equal rights, and the realities of very unequal societies. In most countries, more than two thirds of youth (and adults) believe that the powerful rule for their own benefit. There is also a large number of young persons who simultaneously exclude themselves from both electoral participation and social demonstration. Their characteristics and motivations need to be studied in each context.

At the same time, there is evidence of an attitude among youth that is in principle more enthusiastic than that of adults to demonstrate in favour of issues directly related to their development, such as health and education, as well as better jobs and opportunities. Although the majority shows indifference or reticence to participation, there is also greater willingness than adults to mobilise directly via demonstrations and other means. New forms of direct mobilisation, organization and protest are emerging in the region spearheaded by youth and closely linked to new information and communication technologies. Indeed, these movements are playing a key role pushing political systems to provide the answers that are absent or not considered by formal representation channels.

Thus, which priorities should we address for? The issues of greatest concern for youth have changed over time. In 2000, the most urgent problems were unemployment, education and corruption. In 2013, we find crime and public safety, and also issues such as unemployment, as well as education and corruption to a lesser extent.

This highlights the urgent need to open up new spaces for youth political participation. There are wide ranging alternatives when it comes to standards, policies or programmes that foster youth participation, organization and mobilisation. The guiding principle should be to open spaces and eliminate barriers to their participation. In this sense, the idea is not to mechanically reverse exclusion or self exclusion patterns of conventional participation channels, but to make efforts so that each political and institutional context becomes more open to the incorporation of their mobilisations and contributions. In practically all countries, a starting point would be to hold a discussion about the sometimes large distance that separates the age needed to vote from the age needed to be elected.



TOOL #3

A comparative look
at urban violence
in Central America:
characteristics of
maras and gangs
in San Salvador
and Managua

TOOL 3

INTRODUCTION

Nicaragua and El Salvador are Central American countries that share similar historical processes. Domestic armed conflicts ended in both countries in the early nineties of the 20th century, and they have since experienced similar development processes, trying to reduce the prevailing poverty and inequality and facing major challenges.

Despite their similarities, these countries have a very different level of prevalence of violent acts associated to crime and the presence of organized groups, especially gangs. This difference reveals the fact that social exclusion conditions in one nation are not necessarily factors that trigger an increase in violence.

Understanding, from a social perspective, the differences that characterize the presence of gangs in both countries can be a relevant element in designing strategies aimed at modifying the trend of greater violence in countries located within the northern triangle of Central America. This implies understanding the reasons why such different scenarios in the prevalence of violence can develop in two countries with similar social and historical characteristics. And this may contribute towards the identification of replicable experiences that could reverse a process that damages society and considerably limits the development potential of its members.

Case studies were conducted in San Salvador and Managua in 2014 in order to determine the differences between countries and research social aspects of the gang phenomenon in both cities. In the search for better proposals for youth social inclusion in the context of violence, and based on information obtained in those case studies, supplemented with existing research on this phenomenon, this tool tries to make a contribution comparing Nicaraguan gangs with Salvadoran *maras*.

CHARACTERIZATION OF SALVADORAN MARAS

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Peace Accords were signed in El Salvador in 1992. This meant the end of a 12-year armed conflict that left more than 75.000 people dead and thousands of disappeared persons. Since then, political violence resulting from a civil war has been substituted by a deep rooted presence of expressions of social and criminal violence (Murcia, 2015). These expressions reached alarming levels in 2009 and 2011 when the rate of homicides was greater than 70 per 100.00 inhabitants (FUNDAUNGO, 2014). In 2011, the city of San Salvador joined the list of the 20 most violent cities in the world (CCSPJP, 2012).

This scenario has a special impact on youth. Homicide figures for 2009, one of the most violent years, broken down into age groups, reveal that more than half the victims were young people aged between 15 and 29 (FUNDAUNGO, 2014). But young people were not only the main victims; it is estimated that in that same year more than 60% of perpetrators were also young (Alianza Joven Regional, 2010). This explains the attempt at finding a link between perpetrators and their membership in *maras* and gangs.

Much has been written about the relationship between the high level of violence and the evolution of *maras* in the country. Despite the fact that such a correlation cannot be quantified with the

available information, it is a proven fact that the presence of *maras* is a factor with a strong impact on the high levels of violence, and they have become a very relevant public safety problem.

Understanding, from a social perspective, the origin, evolution and present violent manifestations of Salvadoran *maras* can be a key factor to revert a scenario of violence that impacts society as a whole.

ENABLING FACTORS

Many different factors have enabled Salvadoran *maras* to reach their present proportions and, especially, to have today's social impact. It is a fact that the gang phenomenon in El Salvador dates back to the 70s, but at that time it was a group of young people meeting to spend some time together, drink alcohol and use drugs, party and commit petty crimes (Murcia, 2015).

At the end of the 80s, there was a massive wave of deportations of thousands of Salvadorans from the United States, among them an important number of young ex gang members that had settled in important cities in that country, especially Los Angeles. When they returned to El Salvador, they found no social reintegration or employment opportunities and replicated the more violent gang models, but with some characteristics that enhanced their presence.

There are a series of aspects that enabled gangs to become a space of inclusion for many young people who felt attracted by the culture and illegality associated to the phenomenon of *maras*. Among them, we can highlight that following the armed conflict, the Salvadoran State was under construction and had weak presence in territories, persistent social exclusion linked to a lack of opportunities in education and employment, high levels of poverty and dysfunctional families, due partly to the migration process (Murcia, 2015). Thus, *maras* offered the possibility of an inclusive environment enabling members to no longer be "nobodies" and become "leaders" with power (UNDP, 2013b).

But this was a gradual upsurge and at the beginning it did not have much significance given the little attention paid by governments to this phenomenon during its early stages. However, in a few years it reached such a considerable magnitude that it has become a human and public safety problem that involves aspects such as violent territorial control, social complicity, the substitution of the State, reinforcement of criminal culture and links with drug trafficking (Villalobos, 2011, quoted in UNDP, 2013a).

SCOPE

According to the Transnational Anti Gang Centre, the presence of active gang members in June 2014 was estimated at 32,310¹⁹. In a country of nearly 6 million inhabitants, it is significant that a group which only represents half a percentage point of the total population has such a relevant repercussion on Salvadoran society. This becomes even more evident if we consider that out of all active gang members only 21,619 are free, while 10,691 are incarcerated.

19. Data from the Strategic Analysis Unit of the Transnational Anti Gang Centre, quoted in Von Santos, 2014.

Gangs are dispersed throughout the Salvadoran territory and it is estimated that by September 2014 there were 2024 zones under their influence, present in 80% of the country's municipalities.

Their greatest concentration is in the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador, especially in municipalities of La Libertad and San Salvador (455 zones), that represent practically half the presence of gangs (Ministry of Justice and Public Safety, 2014).

The presence of gangs is in constant expansion towards new zones. In an interview with a gang member, he stated that “nowadays there is not a single square kilometer in El Salvador without the presence of gangs.... just like water that flows finding a way out, (*maras*) look for alternatives and reach virgin colonies”²⁰ Murcia, 2015).

DEPTH

Maras have become criminal structures with an ability to grow (Lindo, 2014) and seek to expand their sphere of action by recruiting a larger number of members, and by venturing into new neighborhoods in order to expand their territory. Thus, they express their capacity for reproduction and dissemination, deepening and strengthening their presence.

But the depth of *maras* goes beyond their mere presence. Based on intimidation, violence and a certain degree of community consent, these groups are able to challenge the territorial domination of the neighborhoods they inhabit, displacing inhabitants from the public spaces they take over (Murcia, 2015).

In fact, *maras* have even challenged the State monopoly of force, illegally substituting the role of those that provide security for the population in their neighborhoods. This has even created the paradoxical situation where inhabitants of zones dominated by *maras* feel safer now than before their presence (Murcia, 2015).

STRUCTURE

In order to achieve such a profound social presence, Salvadoran *maras* have become hierarchical structures replicated in a very similar fashion in the various gangs that exist. The main ones, which create the largest amount of conflict as a result of their permanent confrontation is Mara Salvatrucha (MS) and Barrio 18. It is estimated that out of all gang members that are not in jail, 14,868 belong to MS; 6,585 to Barrio 18 and 166 to other gangs, whilst out of those in jail 5,280 belong to MS; 4,099 to Barrio 18 and 1,312 to other gangs.

Gangs have national leaderships called “*ranflas*” that coordinate a second hierarchical structure known as “*programas*”, in the case of MS, and “*tribus*” in the case of Barrio 18. These entities, in turn, control smaller units known as “*clicas*” (MS) or “*canchas*” (Barrio 18).

This structure has been strengthened as a result of the harsh repressive policies implemented by governments since 2003, that have focused on the massive round-up of gang members. This explains their large numbers in prisons. Instead of disbanding these gangs, such policies have strengthened them, increasing their cohesion and control, and establishing new leaderships inside prisons (Von Santos, 2014).

20. Interview conducted by W. Murcia in San Salvador [10/11/2014] with an anonymous gang member.

It is worth highlighting that together with a more sophisticated hierarchical structure, *maras* have also made their communications and actions (encryption, planning and logistics, among

others) more complex, thus expanding their organizational structure in accordance with the requirements of new leadership and territorial expansion (Von Santos, 2014).

CONTROL AND DOMINATION

Salvadoran *maras* promote a strong sense of identity among their members. This creates great internal cohesion and is a key element to dominate the territories²¹ they occupy, based on intimidation, violence and social consent.

By means of coercion, charging a compulsory tax with the threat of physical harm or death if not paid, these gangs are able to control everything: from the people that enter or leave the neighborhood to shop distributors. In fact, what sustains gangs in economic terms is this type of forced payment which is a way of profiting from the control of the territory (Von Santos, 2014). Between 2008 and 2009 up to eleven cases per day of this type of extortion were registered (Gómez Hecht, 2013).

The main reason that justifies the quest for territorial domination is the symbolic sense of defending the neighborhood, exacerbated by the constant and latent rivalry between the two most important *maras*. MS and Barrio 18 are in permanent struggle for territorial control and all it contains, including people, shops and public spaces. This provides a double meaning to the defense of the neighborhood; on the one hand, defense against aggression from the rival gang, and on the other, safeguarding the benefits obtained from coercion in their territories.

These groups have been able to dominate the presence of State institutions, especially of the police, that find it difficult to enter territories occupied by gangs. In this sense, the ammunition of gangs is significant and they possess a large amount of assault rifles, hand grenades and rocket launchers, even antitank weapons and M-16 rifles used exclusively by the armed forces (Von Santos, 2014).

This domination is also expressed in the more day-to-day activities of inhabitants in these territories. This is exercised by the coercion of boys and girls in schools so that they may become part of *maras*, or by other means of domination that may even take the shape of the organization of festivities or neighborhood activities.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The presence of *maras* is one of the many causes of involuntary migration in the shape of forced displacement. As a consequence of the many latent risks, for example the risk faced by women (gang members “demand them” at a certain age), or the forced recruitment of children and teenagers, inhabitants of neighborhoods with *maras* abandon their own homes (Murcia, 2015).

Among the population unable to “escape” from such reality, additional implication are the difficulty or impossibility of freely moving in public spaces without the risk of aggression²²; apart from the “need” to cooperate with the gang in exchange for protection from persons external to the territory. This collaboration, be it monetary or in terms of actions to favor the gang, violates the most basic right to freedom of inhabitants, generating a context of human and citizen insecurity with the permanent latent risk of being killed. The use by gangs of children aged 12 and 15 for communication tasks and the surveillance of possible “invaders” (gangs violate the right of freedom of movement), reflects the degree of social impact upon communities.

21. Category developed by Carlos Mario Perea in contrast to that of territorial control (Perea, 2015).

22. Based on interviews of inhabitants in zones controlled by gangs. Young people no longer use sport grounds because they are afraid of being killed by stray (or not) bullets fired by *maras*.

On the other hand, the territorial domination by gangs has linked them to drug trafficking as a result of the issue of transport (passing controlled zones) and distribution. Thus, they control the street level drug market and involve children and teenagers in the drug world and its devastating consequences.

CHARACTERIZATION OF NICARAGUAN GANGS

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Nicaragua is a country where two elements that are difficult to find simultaneously in Central America converge after an armed conflict that lasted practically the whole decade of the 80s with hundreds of lives lost that ended after the signing of Peace Accords in 1990. On the one hand, high levels of poverty and social need, and on the other, a high level of public safety, low crime rates, no presence of *maras* and scarce existence of gangs.

Since 2010, Nicaragua has been regarded by the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the Global Peace Index produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace, as the safest country in Central America and the third least violent in Latin America. Statistics that reflect a downward trend in homicides and other violent crimes over the last few years support these conclusions and shows that the rate of homicides in Nicaragua is 10 for each 100.000 inhabitants.

Even in this context of low levels of violence, certain issues can be identified in Nicaragua worthy of attention. That is the case of a certain reappearance of armed activities in the countryside and the direct territorial influence of drug trafficking in some communities of the Atlantic Coast (Arana, 2003). There is also evidence of small scale drug trafficking in certain communities.

Despite the fact that there is no link between the above mentioned phenomena and gangs, there are some elements pointing to the involvement of young people in some specific aspects of violence, albeit at a small scale, present in Nicaragua. In the specific case of youth, available data show that nearly half the victims of homicides are young people aged between 13 and 25. This reveals that even in contexts of small scale violence, young people are relevant actors in urban violence and may be linked to specific types of violence (family violence, gender violence, all common crimes such as thefts and robbery) (UNDP, 2011).

ENABLING FACTORS

The present context of low levels of violence is not fortuitous and relates to the origin and composition of the National Police which is the entity in charge of maintaining the high levels of public security. Following the end of the armed conflict, this police body was created to replace the Somoza National Guard, which was totally dismantled. This prevented the existence of negative elements from the previous police regime. As was the case with the army, the reconstruction of the police was based on guerrilla leaders of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional comprised primarily of young people with high cultural level and solid values (Lacayo, 2015). This is reflected in citizens' respect for the police.

In Nicaragua, the police is respected and valued out of tradition, but also because it is an institutional and professional police model that combines the presence of the State with citizen participation in neighborhoods (through programs, family cabinets and crime prevention committees). In some neighborhoods, there is even a permanent presence of the Preventive Police.

Another factor that enables the low level of violence is the existence of a culture of social rejection of war and the trend towards negotiated agreements of conflicts. This is the result of an inter-generational transmission of the negative consequences of violent solutions to disagreements. This is of great importance because it reveals the ground breaking attitude which, in principle or intuitively, could be expected as a standard in all post conflict countries, especially where survivors value the losses suffered during that conflict. Unfortunately, this is not repeated in other countries of Central America.

This has been combined with a tradition of social vigilance and sense of neighborhood reflected in solid community organizations enabling communities themselves to work cohesively and in close contact with institutions that are, in turn, present in territories (communities and neighborhoods).

Another factor worth highlighting is the presence of migration associated much more to politics, such as escaping from military service or rejection of the revolution, rather than to the social character of the 80s. This is relevant because migrants were middle and upper class people who were welcomed in the United States of America and felt motivated to return to their country after the end of the armed conflict. This is also linked to a strategy of repatriation of migrants that has sought their reintegration to society (and not to exclude them), even when those returning are at odds with the law.

In addition, it is quite probable that the late appearance of drug trafficking in Nicaragua is also an element that favored the low prevalence of violence. Even with all these elements, gangs have existed in Nicaragua for many years and have a weak presence in some neighborhoods of Managua with very different characteristics to Salvadoran *maras*, but also with some similarities that are worth understanding.

SCOPE

In 2005, the police reported 89 gangs at a national level with 2,227 members and 77 high risk groups with 998 members (Rocha, 2006). In 2012, the same National Police in public statements mentioned 48 gangs with a total of 806 young members. In 2013, a report of the Security and Defense Network of Latin America estimated the existence of 42 gangs. Recent National Police data mentions the existence of 19 youth groups, 4 youth gangs and 5 criminal youth groups in 2015 (Rodríguez, 2015).

This data accounts for a limited phenomenon because the youth population involved in gangs represents less than half a percentage point of the total youth population, located in specific, clearly identified neighborhoods. In addition, even at such small scale, the constant reduction of gangs is notorious over the past few years (Lacayo, 2015).

DEPTH

Gangs in Nicaragua are not the result of extreme poverty, but of low- to medium-level poverty. In addition, few women take part in those gangs and they play supporting roles. In general, these groups are not linked to organized crime and are therefore not deeply embedded in their societies. Nor are they linked to other gangs, and their evolution is very limited. If they were to be transformed they would become isolated criminal bands.

These gangs are not strangers to the neighborhood. Their members have always lived in them and most were born there. But even if, on certain occasions they are protected by their families when the police are after them, they do not have the backing of neighborhood inhabitants (Lacayo, 2015).

It is important to mention that the gang phenomenon in Nicaragua presents neither the power, nor the criminal potential that exist in other countries of the region (Liebel, 2004).

STRUCTURE

The main characteristic of gangs that have historically existed in Nicaragua is that they are not permanent, lacking “institutional” or organic continuity (a gang disappears and a new one is created in the same neighborhood). Consequently, they have no clear structure, are simple in terms of hierarchy and membership, lack discipline, are not vertical and are disorderly (Lacayo, 2015).

Gang members leave the gang for various reasons, and although some leave out of fear, most simply change their activity or role in life, get married and create a family, leaving aside their link with gangs. Their members do not remain their whole lives in the gang.

CONTROL AND DOMINATION

In general, gangs are created to fight each other. They do not normally rob or repress the neighborhood and, as a result, there is no violent domination of the territory, but only territorial control. Gangs rarely get involved in acts of violence, and when that happens it is to defend the neighborhood from the invasion of other gangs, for vengeance or to protect their turf (gangs by sectors).

Nor is there conflict between gangs and the police. The National Police arrests them, cuffs them, subdues them, but does not kill them. In fact, whenever conflict arises, it is the population, the structure of religious leaders and neighborhood community networks that act as conflict mediators (Lacayo, 2015).

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In general terms, gangs in Nicaragua are not very relevant from a social point of view. However, they do have local and especially individual implications. For young people involved in gangs, their participation is a way to satisfy - in some cases violently - their social integration, identity, belongingness and territorial roots (Lacayo, 2015).

Interviews with ex gang members of neighborhoods Grenada and Dimitrov, conducted by Nadine Lacayo in 2014 in Managua, revealed that the motivation to join gangs included a combination of psychosocial factors such as poverty, drug and alcohol consumption, family violence, background of families with criminal behavior, social rejection, stigmatization, social resentment and family disintegration.

In general, consequences are greater for individuals than for the community. An ex gang member interviewed mentioned the difficulties he faced: because of his membership of a gang, having killed a person, having been in jail and was now stigmatized, unable to find work, and thus forced to seek alternatives outside the law, such as selling drugs and encouraging other young persons to get involved in the dangerous and harmful world of drugs²³.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE

Nicaraguan gangs differ significantly from Salvadoran *maras*. Understanding their social backgrounds can lead us to better solutions for the problem of violent gangs in countries within the northern triangle of Central America, as well as in other countries with similar conditions. This comparison becomes especially relevant when one considers the convergence between Nicaragua and El Salvador in terms of their similar social inequality gaps in aspects such as poverty, education, health and employment, among others.

This analysis does not seek to determine the possibility of replicating in other countries the elements that have led to limited violence in Nicaragua. But, in order to establish that possibility we need to analyze two fundamental aspects: the phenomenon as such and the answers of both States to that problem.

The gang phenomenon in both countries has been characterized in previous sections. As shown in table 12, it can be concluded that the problem has had a significantly different origin and evolution in both countries. The influence of both external factors and internal factors and decisions is evident.

What comes across clearly in the comparison between El Salvador and Nicaragua is that in the 70s the gangs of both countries shared similar characteristics: created within a neighborhood, much more local in scope, limited duration and unsophisticated organizational structures. These features pointed towards a phenomenon with important social implications, but mostly limited to gang members, having little impact on their societies which were not consenting or very violent. It is worth highlighting that despite the fact that these groups created conflict given their nature associated to identity processes, they were limited to trying to control territory with low levels of violence. Not because of this to be underestimated, but it was manageable with government response.

After the armed conflict in both countries, and as a result of some decisions and other involuntary responses to that conflict, the nature of gangs in both countries began to differ notoriously. In general, Nicaragua maintained its characteristic of limited implications that have been contained with a strategy of sanctions and prevention plans. But the nature of migrations, disbanding the Somoza National Guard and implementation of a culture of non-violence transmitted across generations, has also helped.

23. References to fragments of interview conducted between September and December 2014 by Nadine Lacayo (2015).

On the other hand, the case of El Salvador is very different. Among the elements that have facilitated that situation are the nature of migration in El Salvador, especially the deportation of ex gang members from the United States; the permanence of police forces that existed before the armed conflict; the scarce initial attention paid to the gang phenomenon and subsequent decisions such as the implementation of harsh policies. They have led to a scenario where *maras* evolved expanding their scope to a large part of the territory by means of sophisticated structures, exercising territorial domination through the use of violence, increasing their arsenal of weapons and having an impact beyond the social sphere because the practice of extortion has also become an economic problem.

TABLE 12
MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF *MARAS*
AND GANGS IN SAN SALVADOR AND
MANAGUA

SOURCE

PREPARED BY AUTHOR.

CITY	ORIGIN	SCOPE	TIME	STRUCTURE	POWER
SAN SALVADOR	EXTERNAL TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD	MASSIVE	PERMANENT	HIERARCHICAL	VIOLENT TERRITORIAL DOMINATION (CRIMINALITY)
MANAGUA	INTERNAL TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD	LOCAL	INTERMITTENT	DISORGANIZED	TERRITORIAL CONTROL

It is clear that after more than 20 years of a significantly different evolution in both countries, today's contexts would not lead to the implementation of the same public policies in both nations. However, a more in-depth knowledge of the social elements common to both experiences can help to identify resilience factors in the midterm. For example, this may be the case with the identification of elements such as the need for identity and a sense of belonging, as well as emancipation and the search for transcendence in a world of social needs. All these factors could be used to reverse violent gang processes through strategies enabling young people to satisfy their needs without having to get involved in these groups. Likewise, it is worth highlighting the value of the social fabric and cohesion in these processes at a local level, as well as individual and community trust and expectations.

Even with major differences in the characteristics of gangs in both countries, their similarities in social aspects may enable the identification of public policy elements that can be replicated. Among them, the implementation of community police models already underway in some places in El Salvador, or violence prevention strategies that are only just being introduced with encouraging results in Honduras. These recommendations are discussed in greater length in Tool 6 of this document.

RESPONSE AND PROPOSALS

Bearing in mind the different characteristics of *maras* and gangs in both countries, as well as cultural and contextual differences, it is useful to analyze the response elements that have been implemented in El Salvador and Nicaragua in an attempt to reduce or limit gang related violence.

The ineffectiveness of harsh policies implemented for some years during the first decade of the 20th century in El Salvador has already been discussed. In early 2012, a different

strategy was tested: considering evidence that violence was primarily caused by the permanent confrontation between MS and Barrio 18, and responding to the explicit desire of gangs and the State, a truce between gangs was suggested. The main indicators of violence show that in years following the truce violence did actually diminish. However, it has again increased in 2015. The government has implemented other alternatives associated with less repressive approaches, seeking – for example – a comprehensive response by means of the National Justice, Security and Coexistence Policy that operate in conjunction with other more repressive strategies such as the Law Banning Maras, Gangs, Criminal Groups, Associations and Organizations.

Response has also been sought from the local level through the National Violence Prevention Strategy, supporting municipalities with territorial development approaches and bringing together the efforts of central and municipal governments. This is also strengthened by the initiative “Municipalities Free of Violence” that since 2012 has brought the truce down to the territorial level. However, in a complex context, all of these initiatives are still insufficient today because we are dealing with a scenario of mistrust on the part of stakeholders, thus limiting its achievements.

This can be evidenced by referring to the implementation of community police in some zones of San Salvador using a policy of coming together and shared responsibility. This experience comes from Nicaragua and its National Police model, close to communities, that to a large extent owes its success to the trust of social actors. Indeed, this is one of the best examples of the difficulties in implementing successful experiences in different contexts. Perhaps, before the implementation of community police models it would be worth considering the possibility of establishing the basis for those police forces to recover the lost trust among social actors.

It is worth discussing in greater depth the response by Nicaragua in order to maintain low levels of urban violence. The historical context is undoubtedly favourable considering the existence of a culture of peaceful conflict resolution and a solid institutional framework evidenced in confidence in the police and community commitment. These characteristics have led to the positive results of the comprehensive violence prevention model, described as one of shared responsibility.

Nicaraguan violence prevention rests on three important elements:

- Support of legal and institutional frameworks: in Nicaragua laws are in place to determine police action in terms of security and defense, with special guidelines on urban violence issues and particular emphasis on the mainstreaming of specific groups, such as women and young persons.
- Support of a national public safety policy that coordinates ministries conducting prevention and violence related work within the framework of a shared responsibility model in which they participate.
- Support of citizens by means of a community safety model that coordinates this work with the support of citizens’ committees for crime prevention through family, community and life cabinets comprised of inhabitants of the same community.

Within this model, the police coordinate a preventive, proactive and community model that includes the permanent professionalization of the police force, the organization of Volunteer Police and two additional entities: the Women and Childhood Precinct and the Directorate for Youth Affairs that especially focuses on youth violence.

The actions of the Directorate of Youth Affairs include close interventions of youth exhibiting violent behavior and those involved in gang activities or in conflict with the law. The idea is to help them with a peaceful six step protocol that involves truce, diagnosis, care, armistice, demobilization and social reinsertion. All this is based on the commitment of young people themselves, their families and the community.

CONCLUSIONS

The multi-factorial character of a phenomenon such as the exercise of violence in its diverse manifestations within gangs makes it a complex issue and establishes the need to implement a response that considers that complexity.

Thus, it is clear that the defeat of urban violence implies the design of comprehensive policies that through a more robust presence of the State focus on its multiple causes. Those strategies must be coordinated at different levels incorporating a territorial perspective. But beyond that, they must be regarded as long term strategies to recover general social context aspects such as a culture of peaceful conflict resolution to reduce violence via the desire of violent actors to no longer act violently. Shared responsibility among all social actors must also be recognized, as well as fostering a scenario of institutional trust, especially for institutions such as the police.

The above mentioned elements cannot be attained in the short term; as has occurred with the context of violence that has gradually become more severe, these recovery processes must also be gradual, but at a faster pace than the deterioration process.

It is also important to recognize that the establishment of these elements is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition, to reverse processes of violence. Response is needed that considers analytical elements such as those presented in this text so that from a social perspective it may clarify the role played by gangs for their members. Recognizing that membership in a gang satisfies identity needs, sense of belonging, and above all self-fulfillment, will enable the design of responses capable of satisfying their need for social participation, but obviously without the violent elements that presently shape that participation. In any case, there is a need for responses closer to the individual, both in the sphere of prevention, and in the containment of violence, expanding the social inclusion options for youth in a world that presently excludes and stigmatizes them, and fails to ensure them full personal fulfillment.



TOOL #4

Perceptions of youth regarding development agenda priorities

TOOL 4

With regards to the world debate about the establishment of the 2030 development agenda, over the past few years various youth participation fora have been held identify the main challengers they face at a regional level. Priorities depend on the heterogeneous nature of the groups represented, despite certain agreement around some of the essential and critical issues for the full development of youth in the region.

The Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Youth Forum held in Quito in May 2014, was a space for discussion and consultation involving the participation of young people, youth organisations and networks, national and international government entities and civil society. In order to identify the priority recommendations of youth, on that occasion discussions were held around five key themes for youth development in the region: employment and work, health (including sexual and reproductive health), violence, education and youth participation.

In the recommendations related to education, agreed upon during the forum, in the area of education young people request that States guarantee the right to education at the university, technical and secondary levels, that it is accessible, free of charge and of good quality. They recommend that education be democratic, participative and with a gender perspective, in addition to recognizing and valuing racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences. Young people believe that education plays a central role in their possibilities to join the labour market and overcome the threshold of poverty. Thus, they suggest that education be linked to the world of labour, promoting decent and acceptable employment to generate alternative development models characterised by sustainability, acknowledging the value of non formal education and learning by doing. They also highlighted the importance of continuous teacher training to develop skills, attitudes and abilities for students, including ITCS, as pedagogical tools.

Specifically related to employment, youth call upon States to create and design policies based on inclusion and non discrimination aimed at incorporating young people to non-precarious employment; especially those traditionally marginalised from the labour market (youth with disabilities, those who live with HIV/AIDS, afrodescendants, indigenous peoples, migrants and LGBTs). On the other hand, they highlight the need for States to recognise and guarantee the rights and freedoms of young workers, specifically mentioning trade union freedom, collective bargaining and social security, as well as education in labour rights starting from secondary education. In addition, the young people that participated in the forum emphasized the need to acknowledge the role played by the care economy as the invisible driver of the economy of countries in the region. In order to implement social benefit redistribution policies with a social security perspective, they promote research on the link between youth and domestic work, recognizing it as unsustainable employment which is frequently non remunerated. Finally, in order to support entrepreneurs and innovation they suggest that States provide financial and legal assistance, training and incentives by means of community based possesses.

With regards to the youth development agenda, they also proposed that States provide universal access to differentiated and quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health for young people. In addition, these services must be relevant in cultural and linguistic terms, and sensitive to sexual diversity, provided in a friendly and confidential fashion without stigmatising young persons. On the other hand, they call upon States to respond to the comprehensive needs of young persons with HIV/AIDS, recognising their diversity and providing a multi-sectorial response that guarantees education, treatment and accompaniment, including free access to counseling, HIV tests and medicines. Emphasis is also placed on the need to promote public education policies, care and mitigation of risks and damages related to the consumption of legal and illegal drugs, as well as policies to create awareness about youth mental health issues and increase access to its treatment.

In terms of participation, forum recommendations focused on ensuring the participation of teenagers and youth in the formulation, execution, supervision, and validation of multi-sectorial public policies at all levels of government through the allocation of a permanent budget and binding mechanisms. Young persons especially expressed the need to promote decisive actions that guarantee alternation, renewal and gender parity and intergenerationality of various youth in decision-making and leadership positions, as well as in the State apparatus. Another issue that was mentioned refers to the implementation of policies and programmes that promote the exercise of the right to leisure, participation, recreation and free time; for that purpose, there is a need to promote investment in the recovery of public spaces for this purpose, as a mechanism to promote cultural interchange in order to stimulate mutual knowledge respecting cultural diversity and solidarity.

In the forums the idea has been put forward of promoting public policies aimed at creating youth awareness about the culture of peace and the elimination of all forms of violence against women through prevention and education programmes and processes for men and the women during all stages of their lives. In addition, it is suggested that femicide be recognized as an expression of maximum violence against women and as a crime that must be typified in legislations. The most important demands by young women point to an increase in fiscal expenditure to prevent and fight against gender violence, granting greater access to health and security systems in cases when they have suffered violence, and the creation of reparation programs and legislation about discrimination and racism, among others.

Another important issue for many young people is protection against violence in virtual spaces, such as bullying and harassment via Internet and the social media. In some forums it is also mentioned that the State should advance towards the construction of a security paradigm that protects youth and does not act against them in a repressive fashion. This implies preventing all types of institutional violence and fully guaranteeing their rights.

In the global consensus reached in one of the global forums, youth recognised the importance of their own role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, understanding that this is a fundamental condition for the development of peaceful, inclusive and safer societies. Such self-recognition has been reflected in the creation of youth groups focusing specifically on the prevention of violence (for example, the group Youth Against Violence in Central America).

In summary, without leaving aside a series of elements that form part of the present context of violence, young people in the region suggest betting on strategies to create awareness of a culture of peace and to focus efforts on the prevention of gender and school violence.



TOOL #5

Basic considerations for the development of youth policies

TOOL 5

It is undeniable that the region has made considerable progress in the promotion of youth development, at least at the level of designing strategies. However, there is still a long way to go. National youth entities have to progress towards an effective coordination of efforts aimed at youth social inclusion, especially considering the context of violence that many face. We need to improve the design of youth public policies, especially in terms of their comprehensiveness, preventing them from becoming a list of sectoral policies, and making them feasible with clear goals, realistic budgets and effective allocations.

THE PERSPECTIVE: WHAT IS THE STARTING POINT?

The first thing that has to be taken into consideration is the perspective on youth that policies and programmes adopt as a starting point. As expressed in the IberoAmerican Youth Reports (ECLAC-OIJ, 2004, 2008 and OIJ, IMJUVE, ECLAC, 2014), the complexity of the term youth and the way it is defined determines the variability in the conception of policies dealing with this issue. Beyond age limitations, which in the majority of countries is between 15 and 24 or 15 and 29 years of age, what determines to a large extent the implementation of policies is the substantial definition of this segment and where it is placed; i.e. the place youth hold in society, the roles they are allocated and which others they are barred from (OIJ, IMJUVE, CEPAL, 2014).

According to a study conducted by Dina Krauskopf in 2003, entitled “The construction of youth policies in Central America”, included in the IberoAmerican Youth Reports (ECLAC-OIJ, 2004, 2008 and OIJ, IMJUVE, ECLAC, 2014), it is possible to identify four major prevailing paradigms in governments’ imaginary about the term youth, thus influencing the definition of policies for youth (see table 13).

TABLE 13
PARADIGMS OF THE JUVENILE
PHASE IN POLICY AND
PROGRAMME APPROACHES

SOURCE

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (CEPAL), “YOUTH AND SOCIAL COHESION IN IBEROAMERICA: A MODEL TO BE ASSEMBLED”, SANTIAGO, CHILE, 2008, BASED ON KRAUSKOPF, D. (2003), “THE CONSTRUCTION OF YOUTH POLICIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA”, IN: DÁVILA, O. (COMP.) (2003), “PUBLIC YOUTH POLICIES IN LATIN AMERICA: NATIONAL POLICIES”, VIÑA DEL MAR, CIDPA EDITIONS.

PARADIGM OF THE JUVENILE PHASE	POLICIES	PROGRAMME CHARACTERISTICS	TYPES	OBJECTIVES
TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD PREPARATORY STAGE	GEARED TO THE PREPARATION OF ADULTHOOD	UNIVERSAL NOT DIFFERENCED	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES	INTEGRATED YOUTH
	EXTENSION OF EDUCATIONAL COVERAGE	ISOLATED	PROGRAMMES ON THE USE OF FREE TIME, SPORTS, RECREATIONAL OR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	STRENGTHENING FACTORS THAT PROTECT ADOLESCENCE
	HEALTHY FREE AND RECREATIONAL TIME, WITH LOW COVERAGE			PRE-CRIMINAL STAGE
	MILITARY SERVICE			VIOLENCE PREVENTION

TABLE 13 (CONTINUED)

PARADIGM OF THE JUVENILE PHASE	POLICIES	PROGRAMME CHARACTERISTICS	TYPES	OBJECTIVES
RISK AND TRANSGRESSION	COMPENSATORY	WELFARISM AND CONTROL OF	REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES	SOCIAL CONTROL OF MOBILIZED
STAGE OF PROBLEM FOR SOCIETY	SECTORAL (PREDOMINANTLY JUSTICE AND HEALTH)	SPECIFIC PROBLEMS	SOCIAL REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES	YOUTH SECTORS
	FOCUSSED	RELEVANCE GIVEN TO POOR URBAN YOUTH		VIOLENCE PREVENTION
		DISPERSION OF OFFERS	PROGRAMMES LINKED TO THE PRISON SYSTEM	
JUVENTUD CITIZENSHIP	COORDINATED IN INTER SECTORAL PUBLIC POLICIES	COMPREHENSIVE PARTICIPATIVE	NATIONAL POVERTY REDUCTION POLICIES	COMMUNITY STRATEGY
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STAGE	YOUTH INCLUSION AS EXPLICIT SUBJECTS OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS	EXTENSION OF ALLIANCES	CONDITIONAL OR DIRECT CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMES	VIOLENCE PREVENTION
			VOLUNTEER PROGRAMMES	PARTICIPATIVE STRATEGIES SOCIAL CAPITAL
YOUTH: STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT	COORDINATED IN PUBLIC POLICIES	EQUITY AND HORIZONTAL CROSS-CUTTING	EMERGENCY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES	VIOLENCE PREVENTION
ACTOR TRAINING AND PRODUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION	INTER SECTORAL	INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK	TRAINING PROGRAMMES	INTEGRATION IN THE MARKET
	GEARED TO THE INCORPORATION OF YOUTH AS HUMAN CAPITAL AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL	CONFRONTING EXCLUSION	PRODUCTIVE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES	ECONOMIC CAPITAL
		CONTRIBUTION OF YOUTH TO DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES		

All of these paradigms appear at different moments during the course of the last three decades, but are not mutually exclusive. Today, they coexist in policies and in public discourse, and are frequently combined in various ways. Each one of these approaches implies options in terms of youth policy design and the nature of programmes (ECLAC-OIJ, 2008; ECLAC-OIJ-IMJUVE, 2014). The last two approaches, that of youth citizenship and that of strategic development agent consider youth as social actors and are the perspectives promoted by the United Nations.

It is also important to consider that the conception of youth is a social construct and, therefore, its age definitions, characteristics and roles vary in accordance with historical and cultural factors. Countries must also consider that vital transitions and experiences of youth are heterogeneous and, despite the prevalence of a linear experience model, they develop in a diverse fashion and at different times.

ESSENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR POLICY DESIGN

The Baku Commitment was the outcome of the first Global Forum on Youth Policies held in that city on October 28-30, 2014. This meeting summoned more than 700 participants from 165 countries with the aim of providing a platform so that various parties interested in youth policies could analyse the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth policies, share good experiences and identify gaps and challenges.

According to the Baku Commitment, youth policies should comply with the following characteristics:

Be rights-based: that is, to be designed and implemented within a human rights framework in accordance with countries' global and regional commitments.

Be inclusive: this means they have to ensure equal opportunities so that every young person may reach his or her full potential in life, enabling the participation of all people and eliminating exclusion barriers, especially of vulnerable groups.

Be participative: this refers to the fact that they have to be designed, developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated with the significant participation of youth and all those interested at a local and national level, from urban and rural contexts, and also in post conflict and transition situations.

Be gender-responsive: this means that policies must facilitate specific actions to promote gender equality, ensuring that young women are equal partners of men and recognising gender based disparities that may be present in any context, political, socioeconomic and cultural.

Be comprehensive: this refers to the fact that the development of youth must be tackled with a holistic approach through collaboration of policy and ministerial sectors, as well as other relevant entities. It must provide an integrated strategic framework to guide legislation and measures that have an impact upon this age group.

Be knowledge-based and evidence-informed: this means they must be regularly developed and updated based on the collection, analysis and dissemination of both qualitative and quantitative information regarding the situation, needs, challenges and opportunities of youth in a specific context.

Be fully-resourced: this implies that they must possess adequate and transparent resources, especially allocated for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as maximising available resources through the coordination of stakeholders.

Be accountable: this means that youth policies must be generated and implemented from the local and national level, as well as constantly monitored and evaluated in accordance with specific youth development goals and indicators, and with the active participation of young persons.



TOOL #6

Specific policy
recommendations
according to social
inclusion dimensions

TOOL 6

Based on the analysis of the many key dimensions of youth social inclusion, the following specific recommendations for the design of intervention strategies in each area are suggested.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Entities in charge of youth affairs should coordinate and organize efforts to make processes more dynamic and thus improve youth policies in each sector. Uncoordinated programs are not only less efficient in the use of available resources (which are normally scarce to begin with), but also more expensive. These conclusions justify the need to promote comprehensive programmes coordinated by youth entities, organized among stakeholders and designed with a logic highlighting attention to youth groups in their respective environments. Local entities (primarily municipal) need to be strengthened to undertake youth social inclusion and violence prevention initiatives that include, among other characteristics, greater community participation in their design and implementation.

The following strategies are recommended in addition to suggestions already presented aimed at strengthening the institutional framework of youth affairs in countries of the region:

- Promote youth laws in countries where they still do not exist.
- Promote the strengthening of leading entities in youth affairs; in terms of autonomy, influence and/or resource allocation, in order to ensure their impact in the design and implementation of strategies and programmes fostering comprehensive development of youth.
- Support lobbying to create awareness among national budget authorities so that they provide youth institutions the financial resources needed to conduct their work in a sustained manner.
- Promote, at a sub-regional level, the exchange of knowledge and experiences in the design (or update) of public youth policies, as well as strategic youth social inclusion and violence prevention plans.
- Prepare action plans with precise goals, clearly established institutional responsibilities, resources allocated from the budget and monitoring and assessment components for an effective implementation of public youth policies.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

PROMOTE TRANSITION PROCESSES FROM EDUCATION TO MORE ADEQUATE AND BETTER QUALITY EMPLOYMENT

The link between the educational system and the labour market needs to be strengthened considering important spheres like technical and vocational training, especially at the end of secondary school (ECLAC, 2014). At the same time, strategies aimed at improving employability via education, training and competencies, job placement programmes (internships and apprenticeships), as well as entrepreneurial initiatives and self-employment (ILO, 2013). These efforts must seek to coordinate the varied supply of education (and training) with projected

labour force demands with different skills and qualifications. In this sense, in order to adjust the supply of programmes and improve coordination with other training/educational programmes and the effective market demands, it would be appropriate to promote the evaluation of youth entrepreneurship programmes, as well as their diversification and adequate diagnosis about their impact.

PROMOTE THE EXISTENCE OF A LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO ENSURE DECENT EMPLOYMENT

We need to develop a legal framework is that especially considers young women, indigenous and afro-descendant youth, as well as youth with disabilities. We advocate for the recognition of the special difficulties that young women have face in trying to make employment and maternity compatible. In this sense, we need to recognise non remunerated domestic work and the economy of care, as well as incorporate policies that promote co-responsibility of men and women in this sphere and support a balanced family life for both genders. It is also very important to design programs and incentive mechanisms to hire young people in protected employment that include social security, health and unemployment insurance benefits.

AVAILABILITY OF FLEXIBLE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING

In order to continue to increase educational opportunities for youth in the region, we need to recognise the diversity of backgrounds and provide opportunities for the continuation of studies in a flexible manner. It is therefore important to have formal and informal educational opportunities, including more “heterodox” alternatives adapted to the specific conditions of young people (for example, for those living in distant rural areas or in very poor and marginal areas), able to make work and education compatible. It is also necessary that such educational opportunities include programmes for young people with special situations (such as persons with disabilities), promote non discrimination and lower segregation, in addition to compensation actions (scholarships, school dining rooms for young people or the conditioning of CTP to young people), retention and reincorporation to the school, among others (CEPAL-OIJ-IMJUVE, 2014).

RELEVANCE OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Today’s youth are the result of a society that on the one hand exalts youth from a commercial, media and consumer perspective, and on the other, isolates and stigmatises it. For this reason, young people tend to increasingly socialise among themselves, without the presence or guidance of adults. As the importance of rights develops in youth cultures, within the school context there is greater demand for better treatment and a new type of relationship with adults, especially with teachers; likewise, there is a demand for an education that makes sense, that provides identity and belonging, linking youth culture with the wider society by means of significant and relevant learning (Rico and Trucco, 2014).

HEALTH

IMPROVE INFORMATION ABOUT LATIN-AMERICAN YOUTH IN THE SPHERE OF HEALTH IN ORDER TO DEVELOP EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES

As expressed throughout this guide, data related to the health of youth is scarce, not only from an epidemiological point of view, but also with regards to the use and satisfaction of health care services. Without this information, it is difficult to design policies that respond to the health needs of young people, and even less possible to monitor and evaluate if they have been successful. Although many countries in the region have conducted national youth surveys²⁴, in some cases they have been isolated initiatives that have not been conducted over time and do not allow us to understand the evolution of health in young people.

24. For more information, see [online] <http://www.celaju.net/herramientas-de-trabajo/encuestas-nacionales-de-juventud/>.

STRENGTHEN SERVICES SPECIFICALLY AIMED AT YOUNG PEOPLE, SENSITIVE OF DIFFERENT CULTURES AND WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON CONFIDENTIALITY

Prevention, care and treatment services for young people must adapt to their stages of psycho-emotional development as well as to their social, economic, cultural and family environment. Such services must certainly focus on the health issues that are most relevant for this population group. In the provision of these services, it is fundamental to respect their autonomous decision making and ensure confidentiality.

DEEPEN THE INTER-SECTORAL NATURE OF POLICIES

Although there are strong links between the health and education sectors, young people's health can also be promoted as from other sectors. We recommend greater institutional coordination at a national and local level between entities responsible for youth that develop programmes and projects which, directly or indirectly, relate to the youth sector (education, health, security and employment, among others). In this way, we can prevent "youth policies" from becoming mere lists of sectoral policies and, on the other hand, reinforce each other.

INCREASE RESOURCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

As the population in the region ages, the distribution of public resources will be aimed at addressing their needs at the expense of other age groups, especially in the sphere of health (Rossel, 2013). Precisely because of that, and given the fact that proportionately there will be fewer youth in the future, we need to invest so that they may make a fuller contribution to the economic and social development of their communities and countries. The idea is not only to invest financial resources, but also ensure that health staff is trained to work with the young population.

VIOLENCE

UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE AS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PHENOMENON

In order to reverse the present context of violence, its dimensions - discussed in table 9 of Tool 2 - must be reflected in a variety of intervention approaches (ECLAC, 2007). These approaches must clearly establish the way in which they will deal with the problem in each one of the dimensions. This aspect will prevent redundant interventions and better focus efforts made in this respect.

INTER INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION OF VIOLENCE POLICY AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

In order to achieve a comprehensive approach of the national policy related to violence, it is important to establish a coordination mechanism between the various public entities that work on violence issues and youth, trying to make them complementary. Institutional coordination is fundamental. And in order to avoid redundant efforts, it is important to promote greater and better coordination among all agencies that conduct youth violence prevention programmes; among them, national entities, municipal authorities, civil society organisations and international organizations (be they bilateral or multilateral). In this sense, it is worth mentioning that civil society actions and those of international cooperation organisations have played a role, albeit at a small scale, especially relevant in the prevention of violence.

AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT DECISION MAKING

As occurs with other dimensions of youth social inclusion, there is a need to make progress in terms of national information systems capable of revealing the real scope of the problem and of identifying the most affected populations. This will enable a better focus for interventions and monitoring of their progress.

PROMOTE PROTECTION FACTORS CONSIDERING LOCAL RISKS

Protection factors that will counteract risk factors in order to mitigate their most severe effects and contribute to a reduction of violence must be carefully identified and analysed in order to create ideal conditions to promote contexts of peaceful coexistence at all levels: family, community and social. For the success of any violence prevention program (primary, secondary or tertiary), it is fundamental to know the main risk factors that promote violence and that operate in a specific context (in this case, violence between and towards youth). This is relevant, because risk factors may also be considered as factors that enable or facilitate attitudes leading to violence.

MAIN PRIMARY PREVENTION STRATEGIES

It is important to reduce the risk factors that increase the possibilities for a person, or a group of persons, to be victims or to act in a violent fashion. This can be achieved by means of short-, medium- and long-term strategies. We recommend the following short- and medium-term strategies:

- Implementation of strategies to reduce risks such as alcohol consumption or carrying weapons.
- Implementation of education and awareness campaigns for the general population, with special emphasis on youth, enabling the promotion of a culture of peace as from different scenarios.
- Assessment of violence related legislation in terms of the treatment of violence in youth. The aim is to incorporate or generate guiding or leading elements for the actions of institutions faced with expressions of violence in school and non school environments, using an approach that guarantees rights, with clear regulations and implications for young people that break the law.

MAIN STRATEGIES FOR SECONDARY PREVENTION

Secondary prevention focuses on more vulnerable groups that have already been affected by violence; for example, people involved with gangs, that live on the streets or suffer addictions.

- Improvement in the design and implementation of initiatives that focus on activities such as psychosocial care, care for young people with drug or alcohol addiction problems and demobilisation of young gang members.
- Strengthening strategies to treat student violence in schools with protocols that establish roadmaps for care, considering the rights of children and teenagers, and the best interest of children under the age of 18.

MAIN STRATEGIES FOR TERTIARY PREVENTION

Tertiary prevention has a restoration approach which consists of the rehabilitation and social reinsertion of people at odds with the law and that have already committed violence, or in the restoration of damage to victims.

- Design and implementation of social policy that promotes criminal liability (sanction), but also social reinsertion through inclusion mechanisms for youth in education and production that considers violence as a significant phenomenon for formal inclusion of those that break the law.
- Take cases of violence to court, strengthening justice systems, opening spaces for reporting and adequate monitoring for both victims and perpetrators. This implies improving the ability of the police to manage reports, as well as improving their investigation tools, processing and actions towards those implicated.

- Promotion of initiatives for youth in conflict with the law; i.e. all those already in jail or detention centres that lack opportunities to be reintegrated to the country's social, economic and political life upon completion of their sentence. This recognizes a population with rights that requires tools to develop capacities and skills for a decent and productive life once freed.

CULTURE

ESTABLISH THE PLACE(S) WHICH IMPLEMENT CULTURAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR YOUTH

As has been mentioned, countries in the region lack national cultural policies for youth. Nor do they have policies to grant youth access to culture and enable their participation. There is also no institutional framework to implement those policies. In the public sphere, these initiatives are primarily linked to youth institutes, ministries or councils of culture, ministries of education and municipalities. In this sense, we need to coordinate the institutions that contribute to improve the situation of youth in the sphere of culture. This will enable the incorporation of various existing initiatives - many of which operate on a small scale - to larger policies. We also need to develop public-private partnerships and with the third sector.

GUARANTEE CULTURAL ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION TO LATIN-AMERICAN YOUTH

As explained, today there are more young people exercising the right of access and participation in culture. This is associated with higher levels of education among the younger generations. However, this progress is still insufficient because there are still obstacles limiting the access of many youngsters because of socioeconomic and educational factors. Policies aimed at eliminating these obstacles and at redistributing cultural capital are needed to ensure youth access and participation in culture.

USE CULTURE AS A KEY RESOURCE FOR THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF VULNERABLE YOUTH

Culture provides tools to fight against poverty and expands capacities and opportunities for vulnerable groups. Within the framework of public policies, culture may be used as a valuable social inclusion resource for youth in situations of social risk resulting from their close proximity to violence, crime, drug trafficking or consumption, among others. Culture is a key "place" to conduct interventions of this type because it is attractive for young people, but also generates capacities that promote participation, conflict resolution and resilience.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE REDISTRIBUTION OF TECHNO-CULTURAL CAPITAL

As has been explained, not all young people have access to digital technology. However, in many countries of the region the main problem is the gap in capacities or abilities to use technology effectively. This is known as the second digital divide. In order to benefit from the opportunities provided by new technologies in the sphere of culture, we need to possess techno-cultural capital comprised of certain digital skills. Culture is the key "place" that contributes to the redistribution of that capital, training young people in the use of digital abilities for cultural production and expression, whilst also contributing to reduce the second digital divide.

IMPROVE INFORMATION SYSTEMS ABOUT YOUTH IN THE SPHERE OF CULTURE

Policy making requires information. However, as already explained, culture is a sphere that is characterised by the precarious nature of its statistics. National youth surveys can be ideal to obtain information about the habits and behaviours of young people in the sphere of culture. If key questions were to be included on youth cultural habits and behaviours, this could become a useful source of information. Moreover, youth surveys in different countries would need to include the same set of questions to guarantee comparability.

DEFINE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR SOME CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Throughout this document we have seen that Central America is a sub-region with very unequal development in access to culture, including access to digital technologies. In this sense, it becomes evident that youth in some Central American countries have fallen behind in terms of access and their participation in culture. Their cultural rights are thus severely restricted. Previous suggestions are certainly valid for these countries, but given their differences, some specific guidelines need to be designed.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN CONVENTIONAL POLITICS

The International Parliamentary Organization suggests the following concrete measures to foster the political participation of youth (IPU, 2014):

- Establish quotas for youth in parliaments and political parties.
- Establish quotas at local levels so that new political leaderships may arise and subsequently be consolidated at a national level.
- Lower the minimum age to vote and be voted.
- Make the minimum age required to be voted the same as the minimum age to vote.
- Consider the possibility of establishing political parties for youth, if permitted by the constitutional and legal framework of each country.
- Since frequently people vote for similar candidates, and because the more young representatives in parliament the more young people are likely to vote, include more young candidates for parliament and executive positions.
- Establish Youth Committees in parliaments and provide them with the faculty to analyze any policy proposal or bill, regardless of their direct or explicit effects on youth.
- Monitor the implementation of youth policies, allocate funds for youth education and training policies, and consider youth when preparing national budgets.
- Include youth in international debates and not only in forums on youth.
- Introduce training programmes for young politicians in order to mitigate their lack of political experience.
- Establish post-graduate or university training programmes for young people wanting to actively participate in political life, to compensate for their relative lack of experience.
- Include the active participation of youth in decision-making on political, governance and peace issues within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, as requested by the Youth Forum of the UN Economic and Social Council.

STIMULATE THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN THE DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE ELECTORAL CYCLE

A further field of interventions that could be conducted in each country refers to the promotion of actions and reforms favouring youth participation not only at a regulatory level, but also throughout the electoral cycle, as recently proposed by a global study on this issue (UNDP, 2013). This implies having a systematic impact on the capacity building required so that young candidates may interact with more equal resources and experiences. For that purpose, an important factor is to keep open channels for participation and permanent incidence at a community level, because this is often a fundamental level for the initial development of political and social leadership capacities.

MANAGEMENT OF YOUTH PROGRAMMES BY YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES

A further strategic field for capacity building consists in having young people managing or leading youth interventions or programmes. For example, at a project management level, collaboration with initiatives headed by young people and their systematic inclusion in national or local dialogue or consultation processes. In order to favour actions effectively linked to the interests and priorities present in each context, such initiatives must adapt to the national or local context, and to the diversity of situations of young persons.



TOOL #7

Youth Observatory
for Latin America
and the Caribbean
(JUVELAC)

In order to strengthen the evidence base on youth social inclusion in the region, the JUVELAC Youth Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean of the ECLAC Social Development Division seeks to collect and disseminate statistics, policies, experiences, research results and news related to youth issues in the region.

The observatory allows for access to and circulation of relevant and specialized information on youth through the participation of both international organizations and local institutions linked to youth issues and civil society. In this sense, JUVELAC seeks to become a centre for integration that coordinates participants in this system, both horizontally and vertically. This implies organizing ample and diverse information that contributes, among other things, to provide a present-day and comprehensive outlook to monitor the reality of youth and to develop and improve youth policies in the region.

Thus, JUVELAC defines itself as a technological tool – a resource centre – to conduct friendly-content queries about youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, providing statistical information, descriptions of policies and experiences, publications, information on institutions working on this issue in the region and current news. Information is organized under six themes: education, employment, health, participation, violence and culture.

In technological aspects, the observatory was created using the “LAMP” technological platform, comprised of a Linux server, an Apache operating system, a MySQL base system and PHP programming language.

The most relevant sections of this instrument are described as follows:

POLICIES AND EXPERIENCES

This section provides information on policies, programmes, projects and experiences in the sphere of youth, implemented by various institutions and organizations in recent years. Each one has a brief description of programme objectives and target population, as well as its duration, institution in charge, financing and ways to contact the implementing organization. Searches are conducted based on themes and/or country where the initiative is conducted. In addition, users registered in the observatory are able to feed information about their own experiences or strategies that may be interesting for this information repository to share among the network of Observatory users. An example of a fact sheet obtained for each project or experience is shown below.

Nombre	Programa Nacional de Mediación Escolar
País	Argentina
Tipo	Programa
Vigencia	Ejecutado desde septiembre de 2003 y sigue vigente
Objetivos	Trabajar en nuevas estrategias que permitan atender la conflictividad en la convivencia escolar. Garantiza orientación a las y los alumnos, respeto de su integridad, dignidad, libertad de conciencia y expresión.
Población objetivo	Niños, niñas y adolescentes en edad escolar y que asistan a la Escuela.
Cobertura	Nacional
Institución a cargo	Ministerio de Educación
Naturaleza organismo ejecutor	Pública
Fuente del Financiamiento	Ministerio de Educación
Tipo de Financiamiento	Público
Enlace	http://www.me.gov.ar/construccion/mediacion.html

STATISTICS

This section includes statistical information on a series of indicators on youth social inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean. Data may be calculated and exported to an Excel spreadsheet following these steps:

After logging in, the user obtains the information required by means of the search engine. The search may be filtered by theme or country, as required. For this example, we will use the theme “health” and the search engine shows all the indicators in this section.

It is important to highlight that there are two types of indicators: static () and dynamic (). They differ according to the type of data base they draw from and processing. The former have a data base that enables the display of information collected from various external information sources. Dynamic indicators, however, have a data base that may be processed online and also able to produce results in accordance with specific information needs.

The screenshot displays the 'Juventud e Inclusión Social' website interface. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Inicio', 'Políticas y experiencias', 'Estadísticas', 'Bibliografía', 'Instituciones', and 'Enlaces'. The left sidebar contains filters for 'Temas' (Education, Health, Participation, etc.) and 'Países' (Latin America, Caribbean, etc.). The main content area shows a list of indicators under the 'Estadísticas' tab, including 'Conocimiento de métodos anticonceptivos', 'Edad de la primera relación sexual', 'Edad del primer matrimonio', 'Jóvenes activos sexualmente', 'Jóvenes afiliados a la seguridad social', 'Jóvenes que declaran haber consumido alcohol en los últimos 12 meses', 'Jóvenes que han mantenido relaciones sexuales en los últimos 12 meses', 'Maternidad por años de estudios', 'Número de muertes por lesiones intencionales (1996-2009)', 'Número de muertes por lesiones involuntarias (1996-2009)', and 'Número de muertes por lesiones no intencionales (1996-2009)'. A search button labeled 'Buscar' is located at the bottom of the sidebar.

Having selected an indicator option, the tab labelled “Basic steps” will immediately be loaded. To conduct the processing or calculation of the indicator, the user selects the mandatory and optional variables to link the information. Optional selection variables are filters and specific data that may be obtained from this indicator. Depending on available variables, the web surfer may, for example, access information broken down into geographic area, gender or income quintiles, among others.

In each variable, one or more available categories may be selected by dragging the categories of interest clicking on the left button of the mouse. The same procedure can also be done using the keyboard with the up and down arrows and the Shift button. After the selection has been made, press the process button below the box and a new page will open with the results that may be exported to Excel.

Pasos básicos Gráfico fácil

Opciones ¿Cómo comenzar?

Variables de selección obligatoria

País
☐ Ocultar variable en tabulado (usar como filtro)
 México 2012
 Perú 2013
 Paraguay 2013
 República Dominicana 2013
 Uruguay 2013
 Venezuela (Rep. Bol. de) 2013

Variables de selección opcional

Sexo
☐ Ocultar variable en tabulado (usar como filtro)
 1 Hombre
 2 Mujer

Área Geográfica
☐ **Edad quinquenal**
☐ **Nivel educativo**
☐ **Quintiles de ingreso**

Opciones de despliegue
 Subtotales:
 (El cálculo de subtotales demora el resultado)

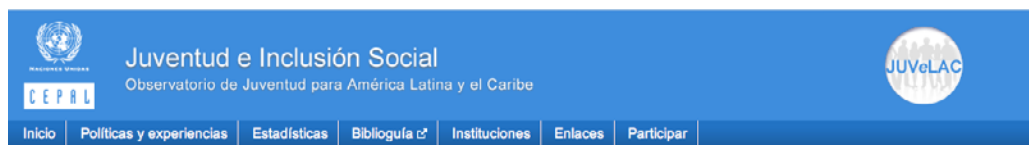
Tipo de indicador

Décimales

Notación decimal

Separadores de miles

☒ Mostrar notas de la tabla (más rápido)
☒ Desplegar nota de alerta para tamaños de muestra pequeños
☒ Informe técnico



Jóvenes afiliados a la seguridad social según país y sexo

- Porcentaje -

Variables		Sexo		Total
		1 Hombre	2 Mujer	
País	Argentina 2012	27.8	18.5	23.1
	Bolivia (Est. Plur. Nac. de) 2011	9.4	6.1	7.8
	Brasil 2013	42.8	33.4	38.1
	Chile 2013	38.0	26.8	32.4
	Colombia 2013	22.0	16.2	19.1
	Costa Rica 2013	43.9	29.1	36.6
	Ecuador 2013	34.5	24.9	29.7
	El Salvador 2013	16.6	10.7	13.6
	Guatemala 2006	19.3	9.2	13.7
	Honduras 2010	11.2	8.7	10.0
	México 2012	19.2	11.6	15.4
	Perú 2013	21.6	15.9	18.8
	Paraguay 2013	15.3	11.1	13.2
	República Dominicana 2013	18.8	13.5	16.3
	Uruguay 2013	48.6	37.5	43.1
	Venezuela (Rep. Bol. de) 2013	18.5	13.6	16.0
Total		29.3	21.3	25.3

Another way of analysing the indicators is to select the “Easy graphs” tab. This automatically draws graphs based on the variables of the indicator and can be exported as image files (png, svg o jpg) or in pdf format. Graphs are only available for dynamic indicators.

LIB-GUIDE

The lib-guide grants access to a variety of electronic resources on youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, including publications, data bases and electronic journals from the ECLAC library.

INSTITUTIONS

This section lists all government organizations and national and regional institutions working with youth issues. Each one has its own web page.

LINKS

This section contains links to various IT resources related to youth development in the region.

PARTICIPATE

Users can register to receive information, participate in seminars via the platform and upload information in the observatory.

