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# OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN INITIATIVE



UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESSES OF  
EDUCATIONAL EXCLUSION WITHIN 15 TO 20 YEAR  
OLD POPULATION IN ORDER TO MODIFY THEM

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

This document aims to study the educational exclusion of adolescents and young people between the ages from 15 to 20 in the Latin America and the Caribbean region; to know and understand these processes in order to back up the design and implementation of important public policies for the attainment of a full inclusion.

In the concerned segment of the population, being out-of-school involves various and heterogeneous situations, since within the group of adolescents who do not attend school, there is also a variety of previous schooling pathways and life experiences. Outlining the profile of their situation of exclusion, approaching the characterization of barriers against full schooling, and identifying the policies that contribute to overcome these barriers, it all raises a complex and specific challenge.

The study of exclusion within this segment of population must begin with a careful documentary analysis including an in-depth exploitation of the different sources of information available within a country, an analytical overview of the accumulated knowledge from available research, and the evaluation of the implemented policies. In addition to this, it is necessary to make a thorough review of the regulations, a study of policies and programs reports (including general documents and evaluation reports) and the compilation of the public opinions about education, among other resources. In the process of building this analysis, some data gaps may appear when attempting to a complete understanding of the educational exclusion affecting specific population groups. This may explain the need of specific studies to broad the knowledge and will sustain the definition of further policies and strategies.

Additionally, all the elements previously mentioned must relate to the diverse types of exclusion represented in this complex age group: the more focused that the analysis can be, the more appropriate the contribution for policy-making will be.

In order to advocate for the development of broad-perspective studies related to exclusion, this document proposes to articulate some elements from the *Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children* and specifically the contributions of the report *Finishing school: a Right for Children's Development: A Joint Effort*<sup>1</sup>, to introduce a study of exclusion within population of 15 to 20 years of age, structured in three areas: **the development of the profiles of exclusion, the analysis of the barriers that produce them, and the systematization of the action lines to overcome those barriers and remove exclusion.**

#### CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A QUANTITATIVE APPROACH TO EXCLUSION WITHIN POPULATION OF 15 TO 20 YEARS OF AGE

The OOSC initiative promotes that the countries of the region expand their perspective by linking the available information (statistical and research) in order to formulate an integrated diagnosis. Not only aiming to characterize effective exclusion, but also to find within the education system hints of the processes that progressively generate such exclusion.

In this sense, the OOSC Initiative raises two challenges into the formulation of the profiles of exclusion:

**Enhancing the statistical characterization of exclusion:** in order to build statistical information that can be useful for identifying and quantifying the different schooling pathways that integrate these situations of exclusion (formulation of profiles of exclusion), and that contributes to the identification of the most excluded population based on territorial breakdowns, characterization of schools and students, among others (acknowledgment of disparities).

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<sup>1</sup> In the year 2010, UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics launched the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children (OOSCI). This initiative presented a new challenge for the common goal of the Latin America and the Caribbean countries: it invites the countries to broaden their perspective, to reconvert and articulate their available resources statistical and research information, aiming to develop an articulated diagnostic. The goal is to deepen the knowledge about how many, who and why they are under an exclusion situation.

**Empowering its use for decision-making oriented towards reducing exclusion:** in order to use information that can guide the process of decision-making in policies to tackle the factors that generate educational exclusion, it is necessary to empower specific technical profiles of those who can articulate the statistical analysis with the different public management of education.

On the other hand, the ways in which the schooling pathways deploy (in terms of access and transit through the levels, with the different development levels of the countries of the region) bring a methodological and conceptual challenge for achieving a statistical quantification, which requires building some basic consensus.

Moreover, this scope involves the concept of risk of exclusion, which has become one of the most innovative contributions of the OOSCI by focusing the analysis on those who are in the educational system but at risk of drop-out. With this contribution it is intended to comprehend exclusion as a process that grows progressively. Its outcome is sometimes visible –in the shape of drop-out- but in other cases it remains invisible, when it is about the accumulation of school failure events, of low quality learning, emotional distress, or other factors that create poor academic experiences.

The objective of this section is to present a group of core issues that require consensus, and to outline a proposal for a categorization approach.

### **The challenges of analyzing exclusion**

One of the challenges raised by the **Global Initiative on OOSC refers to the generation of statistical information for formulating the profiles of exclusion**, that is, recognizing the pathways that express exclusion situations, and quantifying the number of boys and girls represented in each of these pathways. On the other hand, identifying disparities from a key set of variables (sector, area, sex, indigenous condition, etc.) to recognize the different intensities in which the exclusion situations are present in the different population groups. In order to address these tasks, considering the complexity and diversity of situations, the following challenges appear:

### *First challenge: The complexity of analyzing adolescent population*

This approach aims to build the characterization of exclusion of the population of ages 15 to 20. This range of ages corresponds to a complex stage of vital development, given the social formats of adolescence in the region. There exists a broad heterogeneity of situations, some of which involve important implications for the educational system: some examples are their entry into the labor market, parenthood or contribution to the household livelihood.

There is not a single data source that responds to these diverse situations. Using different data sources (educational data, household surveys, census, complementary surveys) -which not always are compatible- remains a challenge. Each source comes with strengths and weaknesses. This document proposes to plan a comprehensive approach in order to enhance the possibilities given by the available information and by the harmonization of the different scopes.

### *Second challenge: The diversity of schooling pathways*

In the Latin America and the Caribbean countries, the transit through the educational system in the compulsory stages can be outlined by two key elements: the universal coverage of primary level and the heterogeneity of the schooling pathways, expressed by high levels of educational lag caused by late entry, repetition and/or temporary drop-out. There is only a small proportion of adolescents who have never entered the educational system, but there is a greater proportion of adolescents who have experienced schooling with serious difficulties and who have dropped in different stages.

As a consequence, the heterogeneity of the population's school and educational experience grows with their age. Adolescent population who do not attend school has performed very different pathways: just a few have never entered and others have dropped out during primary. There are others who have dropped out after finalizing primary, or in the transition to secondary education. In order to provide basic information that will allow identifying the barriers related to exclusion, it is necessary to distinguish each of these situations.

In this framework, another key contribution from the document is the development of an operational definition of exclusion, which distinguishes the different shapes of exclusion from the educational system experienced by the population of ages 15 to 20 years old.

## Recommendations for the formulation of exclusion profiles

The goal of the quantitative analysis proposed in this document is oriented towards building the profile of exclusion of population aged 15 to 20. The use of the age range 15 to 20 allows making a statistical approach of the population that remains excluded from different stages of education.

With this purpose in mind, some recommendations are presented:

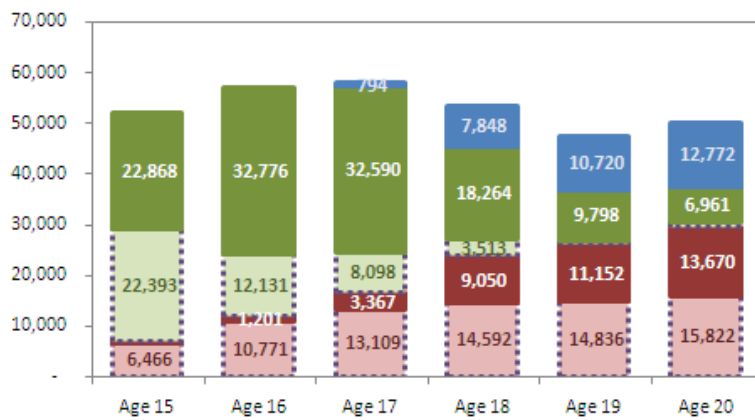
### *First recommendation: how to define the population excluded of ages 15 to 20*

In its general formulation, the condition of exclusion is given by the situation of population who, in a position of accessing and finalizing an educational level, are out of school. Acknowledging that the access to a certain educational level requires complying with two conditions, having attained a certain age and having completed the previous educational levels, it becomes necessary for the complementary analysis to identify the *condition of potential demand*: the schooling situation of an individual, that enables him/her to enroll in the level, according the current regulations, regardless of the fact that he/she does it or not.

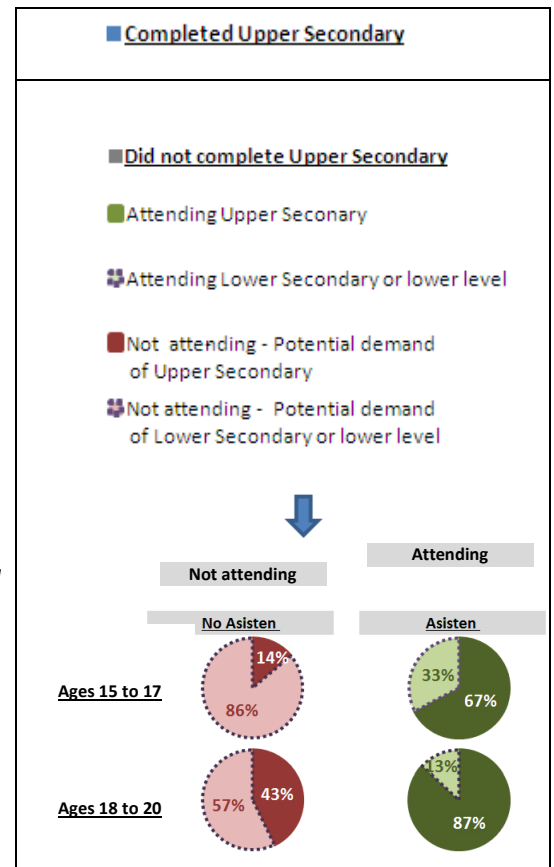
The identification of the potential demand guides policies of educational inclusion, and enables to identify as well the main points of constriction present in the different levels of education.

When profiling the situation of the population not attending school, the combination of both requirements (age and previous educational history) shows a variety of situations that needs to be explored. An example of Uruguay serves as an illustration:

Figure 1. Population aged 15 to 20 by school attendance and completion of secondary level. Uruguay. Year 2013.



Source: data processing with microdata of the INE (Encuesta Continua de Hogares, 2013) of Uruguay.



The case from Uruguay is useful to characterize the relationship between the age and the condition of potential demand: by the official ages of upper secondary in the country (15 to 17 years old), only one out of seven (14%) out-of-school adolescents is in the position of demanding it. This proportion is increased to almost the half in range of 18 to 20 years of age. In order to approach the particularity of exclusion from upper secondary it is needed to broaden the range of ages above the official ages of the level.

For the rest of the population excluded, a back-to-school policy should plan the access to lower secondary or primary. A transversal cut of the population *by the age of attending* secondary school enables to build a scenario of their educational situation. However, if it is intended to generate information to study the factor that restrict the access or the permanence in the level (for example, lack of schools) it is necessary to analyze the *condition of potential demand*.

In the frame of the OOSC initiative, two types of approaches are considered for the formulation of a comprehensive profile of exclusion: a complete diagnosis requires information of the general state of the education level of the population by the age of attending the level, complemented by an analysis of the situation of the potential demand of the level.

For that reason, the first quantitative exercise to be conducted is the identification of the population that no longer attends school and that is in the position of demanding some educational level.

### *Second recommendation: How to define the population of ages 15 to 20 at risk of exclusion*

In the region of Latin America, the approach to risk of exclusion is focused in the identification, through the age-grade gap, of the school population who has had difficulties in its schooling pathway: repetition, late entry and temporary drop-out. This way, it is aimed to account for the students in the situation of educational vulnerability.

At the same time, there is a broad and diverse group of educational offers in the region, specially directed to adolescents in this age group. Some of them are youth and adult education, alternative or non-conventional for completing secondary education, which are generally directed to students who dropped out from the level. Thus, students attending these offerings have already had major difficulties in their schooling pathways. Students who attend these offerings are excluded from upper secondary, even though they are in school.

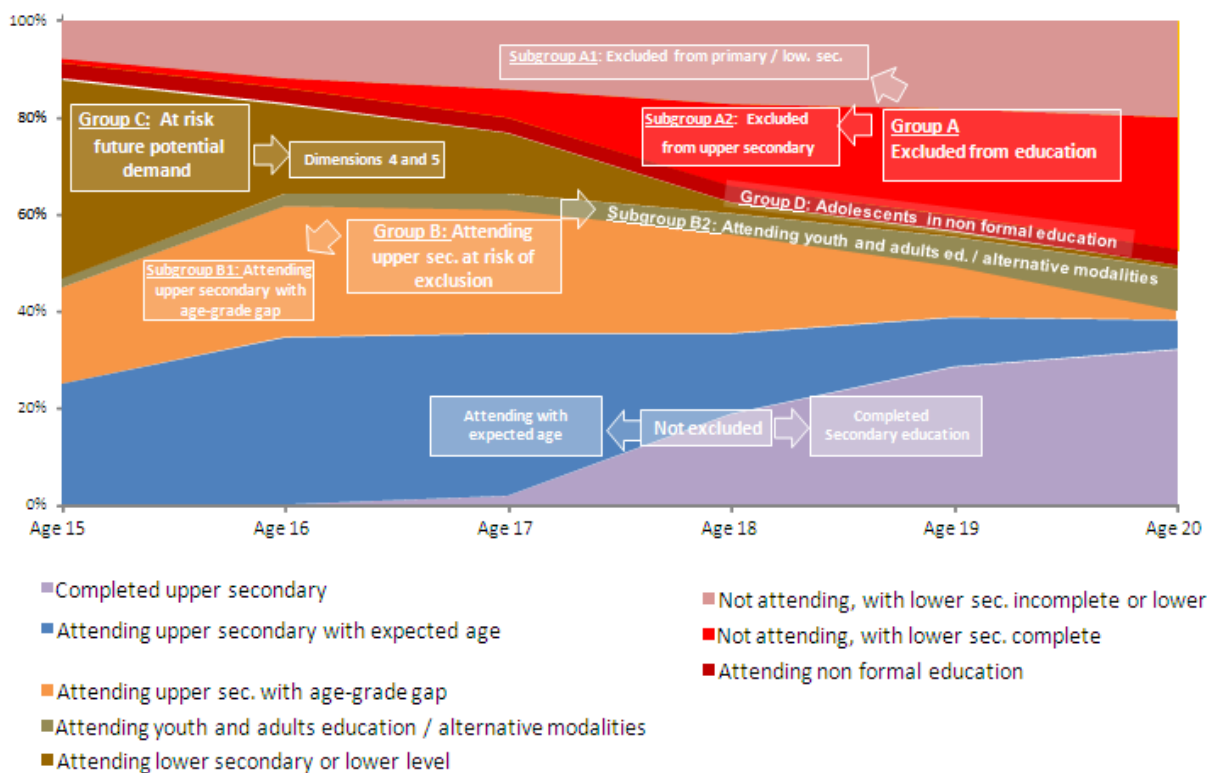
As well, it is possible to identify students who, while being at the age of attending upper secondary, are enrolled in primary or lower secondary with high levels of educational lag. In the frame of the OOSC initiative, they are part of Dimensions of Exclusion 4 and 5, and are considered within the model in order to articulate the relations between different situations of exclusion.

### *Third recommendation: Categories to quantify exclusion*

Taking the previous recommendations as a starting point, the document proposes and presents the development of a profile of population of ages 15 to 20-

### **Figure 2. Population aged 15 to 20 by school attendance and maximum educational level attained**





This full scheme includes all the categories that define a situation of exclusion within this age group.

**Group A:** Those who are excluded from the educational system

**Subgroup A1:** Adolescents and young people of 15 to 20 years of age currently out of school who did not enter or did not complete either primary or lower secondary. This category corresponds to the population that does not attend school and who are in the position of enrolling to primary or lower secondary level.

**Subgroup A2:** Adolescents and young people of 15 to 20 years of age who are in the position of attending upper secondary but who dropped out in the transition from lower to upper secondary during this level, or who passed through this level but their completion is pending because of pending exams. That is, they correspond to the population who do not attend school and who are in the position of enrolling upper secondary.

**Group B:** Those who are enrolled in upper secondary but at risk of exclusion:

**Subgroup B1:** Adolescents and young people of 15 to 20 years of age who are attending school with age-grade gap. *They are at risk because they have accumulated breakdown situations.* The condition

of risk of exclusion is acquired and reinforced due to the accumulation of school failure along the schooling pathway.

**Subgroup B2:** Adolescents and young people of ages 15 to 20 who attend alternative modalities. *They are at risk because they have previously dropped out regular or common education.*

**Group C:** The at-risk future potential demand: Adolescents and young people of ages 15 to 20 who attend primary or lower secondary, lagging behind grades. They are considered within Dimensions of Exclusion 4 (primary enrolment) and 5 (lower secondary enrolment). They still do not represent the effective potential demand of upper secondary level, but are in school with high chances of dropping out.

**Group D: Those who are attending non-formal education:** Adolescents and young people of ages 15 to 20 who are attending educational offerings which promote their integration into the labor market without implying completion (they do not provide a certificate for an educational level).

The figure shows all the situations that are present at the time of studying exclusion of population of ages 15 to 20. In this sense, and in order to deepen into the analysis, some recommendations and technical orientations are included in the document in order to quantify each category.

## THE BARRIERS OF EXCLUSION

Analyzing the factors that influence the processes of educational exclusion involves reviewing the barriers that prevent the achievement of the goals of schooling for each age group. It is considered as a barrier of exclusion the bottlenecks that generate exclusion.

The methodological proposal for the profile analysis has shown that being out-of-school in this range of age cannot be reduced to being totally excluded from upper secondary education. Given that the diversity of previous schooling pathways and the present school and life experiences of the young people require a more disaggregated analysis in order to identify the patterns and the intensity of exclusion.

In this direction, a conceptual classification of barriers is hereby presented, in order to identify in which manner they affect the groups of individuals of age 15 to 20, mentioned in the previous section, who present different exclusion situations. In a second place, some analytical criteria are suggested to address new research on unexplored topics. Last, some tools are presented for the classification of the existing literature on the topic of secondary level exclusion based on certain methodological criteria.

### Barriers that generate or worsen exclusion

In order to organize the revision of barriers that affect this age group generating or worsening exclusion in its different expressions, an analytical structure of 4 domains and 10 determinants is used, as proposed by the MORES<sup>2</sup> methodology.

It is important to highlight that there are barriers with a higher or lower relevance in the configuration of situations of exclusion of each group and sub-group. Besides, there are barriers of a more systematic type. That is, they affect the regular functioning of the educational system, oriented to ensure the best conditions for the education and learning of all adolescents and young people.

The following chart presents each one of the determinants –grouped in domains- and the barriers that emerge from them, affecting either globally or specifically some of group of population according to the categories presented in the previous section.

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<sup>2</sup>The MORES (Monitoring Results for Equity Systems) methodology was developed by UNICEF and it looks forward to proposing a conceptual framework for the use of information in planning, programming, execution, follow-up and management of results of the programs developed by the organization.

**DOMAIN: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT****Determinant 1: SOCIAL NORMS**

They are behavior patterns that are driven by social pressure. They provide a framework of meaning that guide human action and prescribe to specific actors and specific situations which are the expected behaviors and actions. The non-observance of these norms puts an individual in tension with his or her society. Its social character is also given because it has a meaning in a certain context: a social norm of a country or region or social group, is not necessarily the same for a different one.

Barriers	Concerned groups
Social norms that determine any sort of prejudice regarding the capacities and rights of adolescents and young people for continuing their schooling until completing secondary level.	Those who are excluded from school and those who attend non-formal education.
Lack of strategies for effective communication that build the importance of education, settling it as a right, and raise awareness about the costs of failure and exclusion.	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.

**Determinant 2: LEGISLATION AND POLICIES**

Adequacy of the legislation and policies at a national and sub-national level. Taking into account the normative framework emanating from the three branches of government and also the lower ranking legislation set by different actors and levels within the education system, through which the full exercise of the right to education is put in operation.

Barriers	Concerned groups
Non-compulsory secondary	Those who are excluded from school and those who attend

education (partially or totally) within fundamental norms.	<b>non-formal education.</b>
Weak regulations that increase the risk of exclusion (norms related to enrolment/access; school attendance; school qualifications; evaluation and promotion; school coexistence).	
School rules that are unconnected and not introduced to students	
Profuse, saturated and fragmented formal curriculums, focused on conceptual contents and with scarce orientation towards non-cognitive or socio-emotional skills.	
Lack of comprehensive youth policy frameworks.	
<b>All the population included in the categories of exclusion.</b>	

### Determinant 3: BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE

Allocations and disbursement of required resources at a national and sub-national level.

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Concerned groups</b>
Budgetary restriction for catering the system's general conditions.	<b>All the population included in the categories of exclusion.</b>
Inequitable allocation criteria.	
Issues regarding the opportunity and timing of the budgetary execution.	
The over-expenditure of school failure.	

### Determinant 4: MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

Each country assigns the responsibilities for a comprehensive management and coordination of the

education system to bodies at the central, sub-national, local and even to the school level.	
Barriers	Concerned groups
Inadequate diagnosis and monitoring of the exclusion processes.	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.
Unsatisfactory relevance and efficacy of the support to the most challenged schools.	
Lack of effective schemes for inter-sectoral cooperation at a territorial level, in order to respond to specific situations of budgetary exclusion.	
Weak or lacking procedures for control of the execution and accountability.	
Weak or lacking procedures for consultation to communities and young people.	

**DOMAIN: SUPPLY OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

**Determinant 5: ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL SERVICES THAT ARE APPROPRIATE, PROXIMATE, ADEQUATE AND KNOWN BY ALL CITIZENS.**

**Physical access (to services, facilities, information)**

Barriers	Concerned groups
Gaps of school supply in certain levels or locations.	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.
Inadequacy of the secondary education scheme (selective institutional matrix).	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.
Rural education diminished in its	Adolescents and young people of rural locations.

identity.	
Impoverished school supply, confusing for indigenous population, or good practices that are unable to reach the required scale.	Adolescents and young people of indigenous communities.
Difficulties in catering handicapped population in a timely and professional manner.	Adolescents and young people with a handicap.
Low coverage and efficacy of the back-to-school schemes aimed for drop-out students.	Those who are excluded from school.
Lack of supply for young people in the context of imprisonment.	Adolescents and young people under prosecution.
Teacher training policies unrelated to the school's reality, and not working for inclusion.	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.
Lack or deterioration of school buildings.	
Lack of teaching, leadership or support staff.	
Weak or unbound teacher teams.	
Scarce information directed to all citizens about the available supply, the requirements, operation and supports given by the government in order to provide schooling.	
Scarce and wasted instruction time.	
<b>Determinant6: AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL MATERIALS</b>	

<b>Essential inputs/contributions required for offering an education service or following a practice</b>	
<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Concerned groups</b>
Impoverished, lacking or inappropriate didactic material.	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.
Lack or scarcity of adequate books.	
Absence or deficit of informatics or multimedia equipment.	
Inadequacy of materials in the supply of youths and adults education or back-to-school programs.	Those who are excluded from school; Adolescents and young people of 15-20 years of age who attend alternative offerings. At-risk due to previous drop-out of regular/common education.
Lack or low use of ICTs with a pedagogic scope.	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.

## **DOMAIN: DEMAND OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

### **Determinant 7: FINANCIAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION**

#### **Capacity of facing the direct and indirect costs of some practices and services**

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Concerned groups</b>
Extreme household income poverty.	Those who are excluded from school; Adolescents and young people of 15-20 years of age who attend alternative offerings. At-risk due to previous drop-out of regular/common education; those how attend non formal education.
Pressure regarding the opportunity cost of attending school.	Those who are excluded from school.
Difficulty in arriving and staying at school.	Adolescents and youth from low-income sectors, rural areas and ethnical groups.
Difficulty in covering the costs of school fees.	

### **Determinant 8: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PRACTICES AND BELIEFS**

**Beliefs and individual practices which can be shared but not a product of social pressure or**



expectations.	
Barriers	Concerned groups
Negative prejudices against the student's capacities.	Students from low-income sectors, rural areas and ethnical groups.
Retracted attitudes towards demanding or exercising the right to education.	

### Determinant 9: REGULARITY AND CONTINUITY OF ATTENDANCE TO EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Completion / continuity of use of the education services and practices.

Barriers	Concerned groups
The student is not considered as a single subject introduced into a group.	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.
Differences between the popular culture and the school culture, with little dialogue and integration.	Students from low-income sectors, rural areas and ethnical groups.
Inappropriate choice of channels and media or communication tone for the mobilization of adolescents and young people who are out-of-school or at-risk	Those who are excluded from school; those who are attending upper secondary at-risk of exclusion; at-risk future potential demand.

## DOMAIN: QUALITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

### Determinant 10: QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Adherence to quality standards (either national or international).

Barriers	Concerned groups
Erratic evaluation practices and arbitrary promotion procedures.	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.
School organization processes that produce covert segregation.	Students from low-income sectors, rural areas and ethnical groups.
Competitive school environment, aggressive communication.	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.
Extracurricular climate of violence.	All the population included in the categories of exclusion.

<b>Teachers with challenges to organize their teaching in diverse groups.</b>	<b>All the population included in the categories of exclusion.</b>
<b>Teachers with limited mastery of effective teaching methodologies.</b>	<b>All the population included in the categories of exclusion.</b>
<b>Final assessments to certify secondary school completion are restrictive or not in accordance with classroom instruction.</b>	<b>It affects globally all countries with final exam certificate.</b>
<b>Weak pedagogic schemes for working with back-to-school students.</b>	<b>Those who are excluded from school.</b>
<b>Youth and Adults Education scheme is not different from the regular secondary education scheme.</b>	<b>Those who are excluded from school; Adolescents and young people of 15-20 years of age who attend alternative offerings. At-risk due to previous drop-out of regular/common education.</b>

### [Research guidelines for the study of barriers](#)

The diversity of experiences and schooling pathways within the 15 to 20 age group, as it was already been mentioned, reflect the need of building deeper knowledge for action. In this sense, it is vital to conduct new research that brings first-hand information from adolescents and young people regarding the factors that have influenced drop-out in the case of those that are currently out-of-school, and in the case of those that have later re-enrolled in alternative offerings or those who preferred educational options aiming opportunities for social integration but with no certification of educational levels. These situations which appear to be individual, in most cases are the consequences or reactions to the manner in which the educational system has provided opportunities.

As well, this age group is influenced by some life circumstances, such as increasing responsibilities in the household livelihood, early entry into the labor market, parenthood or becoming the household head, which impact on the possibilities of access or permanence in the educational system, and become causes of drop-out or access to limited offerings whenever the government does not place protection policies into force.

At the same time, there are some system issues which require higher precision. In order to approach each one of the mentioned aspects, it is suggested to deepen the studies as follows. In these research guidelines the search of evidences is condensed around associated determinants and barriers affecting adolescents and young people's educational exclusion:

- 1. The acknowledgement of social representations that exist within society about the right to education for all adolescents and young people.** *Social representations are, on one hand, social norms that determine preconceptions regarding the capacities and rights of adolescents and young people to continue their schooling pathway until completing the secondary level. And, on the other hand, the practices and beliefs that generate retracted attitudes demanding or exercising the right to education.*
- 2. The normative standards that restrict or give substance to the right to education.** *Regulations can become a relevant support for the effective implementation of educational inclusion or may be an obstacle, given the substantive aspects of their content as well as their subjective or functional aspects.*
- 3. Policies that are more or less effective in terms of protecting the educational rights of adolescents and young people, and the extent of their integrality.** *Policies, strategies or programs implemented by governments are a specific tool for guiding the settlement or improvement of a scenario, assign resources and mobilize individuals and teams in the task.*
- 4. The key features of the educational system and its schools which constitute a limit to the opportunities of adolescents and young people and those of who support them.** *The core of this study is the teaching situation within schools. Both at a formal and a real level, the teaching situation at school is a social and cultural product. It is influenced not only by the formal curriculum but also by its translation to the school's reality.*
- 5. The place of education and the sense of the school experience in the life trajectories of adolescents and young people and their future expectations.** *It is necessary to reckon with the voice of adolescents and young people regarding their school experience, about the aspects referred to the different life trajectories, aspirations and personal desires looking ahead.*

### Systematization of the study about barriers

The systematization of studies, research and evaluations that have been done within a country creates the “state of the art” regarding the approach to educational exclusion within a specific population. The state of the art enables determining how this matter has been handled, which the information available about it is, as well as the dimension and localization of exclusion situations, the most frequent explanations used, the methodological decisions that have been taken, and the existing awareness about educational exclusion. It also allows identifying knowledge gaps as a guide for future research.

In a first level of this characterization, two key inputs are used: the profile –presenting the different situations of exclusion- and the identification of determinants and barriers. The combination of the identification of profiles and the knowledge about barriers, together with the systematization of the state of the art, is a relevant input for the design of policies or for optimizing their suitability.

### Elements for a literature review on Exclusion

- **Focus the search**, for example, if the intention is to highlight the situation of exclusion of all the 15-20 year old population or if the focus will be on a specific group or sub-group.
- **Distinguish between concomitant and causal factors** of educational exclusion. Concomitant factors are those that only take different effects of poverty and social inequality as the main causal explanatory factor. While there are other factors of the pedagogic, organizational and socio-cultural level tend to become invisible in the studies.
- **The literature review must be oriented by each one of the situations of exclusion** that are intended to know in detail, in order to identify the most relevant barriers for each group and sub-group.
  - Verify that the reviewed literature is **related to real and present situations of exclusion**.
  - In case that there is **no information about any of these groups or sub-groups**, the proviso must be noted.
  - Bear in mind **the transition between lower and upper secondary** as another stage where drop-out occurs.
    - Consider as well the **first year of upper secondary** as a grade with high levels of repetition.
    - Address the issue of **upper secondary certification**: a proportion of the students that complete this stage do not attain the certificate because they have pending subjects or final exams.
    - Address the critical point that lays in the **transference from common education to alternative offerings** which represents in most cases a process of temporary drop-out.

The state of the art is built from the systematization of what is commonly known as “literature about exclusion”. Such literature brings in the study of barriers that affect the entry to / permanence at the educational system of 15-20 year old population. In this document, the main criteria for narrowing down the search are presented: **prioritize the most specific literature** rather than the most general one; **prioritize the studies that work with primary or secondary data regarding real situations**; **complement with a consultation to key informants to retrieve relevant pieces of research**; **begin addressing the latest literature and end up with the oldest studies**; **consider the studies with a greater scope**.

It is recommended to firstly conduct a general and broad collection, and later apply the mentioned selection criteria, in order to identify a corpus of around 10 to 15 research studies that can be the base for the systematization about barriers, describing, explaining and grounding them with data of the social or educational reality.

## SOME POLICIES FROM THE REGION DESIGNED TO OVERCOME EXCLUSION

In order to deepen on the guidelines presented above, the document analyzes some of the principal policies developed in the region with regards to educational exclusion. In this respect, the OOSC study, both in the characterization of profiles as in the identification of barriers, is set to build and implement superior political action.

This section presents three cases of policies developed with the aim of overcoming the issue of exclusion, which become relevant for the region. Their selection was not random; they seek to address the critical points detected across the region based on the countries' profiles.

### Policies for the expansion of adolescents and youth's secondary education in rural areas

Secondary education in rural areas, both in the lower and secondary cycles, represents one of the biggest political, organizational, pedagogic and socio-economic challenges for the region at the present time.

The review of policies and strategies that have been implemented for secondary education in rural areas can be done under different scopes. A distinction can be made between policies with a broader focus in addressing and promoting the demand for education from the community, families and individuals; and the policies that address the creation and improvement of the secondary education supply in rural areas.

For the purpose of this document, the cases of Brazil, Peru, Chile, Colombia and Mexico are highlighted. Since the policies implemented in these countries are clearly referred to the rural context, they work on its specific restrictions. They can be classified in three types of policies:

- **Education for rural population:** general offering supporting access and permanence (Chile).

- **Education in rural areas:** adjustment based on technological and didactic supports (Mexico, Chile, Peru y Colombia) and adjustment based on curriculum definitions (Chile, Columbia).
- **Education of rural population:** adjustment based on the roles of teachers from the communities (Mexico) and adjustment based on the central role of the community (Brazil, Peru).

In short, these policies share common characteristics that make them relevant for the analysis:

- In every case, a firm political decision is taken aiming to create an educational offering for the secondary level located where the students live;
- In every case, flexibility is granted in terms of school schedule and calendar, to enable that the school time is adapted to those of the local production and activities;
- They count with a greater space for participation of the families, compared to those traditionally found in the educational systems –especially in alternation schools-;
- They pursue to overcome the limitations of the teaching staff –especially in the different curricular areas- with schemes that take into account the acquis of the teachers, taking some of the principles of distant learning, and adding various technological supports –virtual, TV, books and specially designed graphic materials)-;
- They aim to coordinate with other areas regarding the resolution of infrastructure restrictions which affect rural communities and limit their schooling conditions –transportation, telecommunications, provision of drinking water, etc.);
- They coordinate with conditional cash transfer programs in order to enhance the support to the demand with the expansion of the educational supply;
- In Brazil and Peru, additionally, the alternation mode is selected as the pedagogic scheme to settle, and there is legislation to provide it with a normative and political framework which outlines a government program of mid and long term;
- In Colombia there is an interesting process of curriculum definition for the bachelor’s orientations focused on well-being in a rural context;
- Chile presents a rising enrolment on the base of a different pedagogic model: the concentration of students in urban schools, with mechanisms of transportation and boarding schools.

## Social protection policies focused on conditional cash transfers

For the last 25 years, different programs were developed in the region based on conditional monetary transfers. These programs seek to combat current poverty and reverse the inter-generational transmission. In Latin America and the Caribbean region, 21.1% of the population is under some of these programs<sup>3</sup>.

The condition in order to receive these transferences varies according each country, but they have general features that are common for all of them: enrolment of the children and adolescents within a beneficiary family group and performing regular health controls.

Even if there are different ways of naming these programs, in the specialized literature they are generically called "Conditional cash transfer programs" (CCTP). Their management and coordination structure varies from country to country, as well as their institutional placement. But a general characteristic is that they involve more than one government sector, particularly the areas of social development, health and education.

Among the most important programs, there are: Bolsa Familia (Brazil), Oportunidades (Mexico), Familias en Acción (Colombia). **Evaluations of several of these programs have shown positive effects in terms of access to education, school progression and reduction of child labor (Villatoro, 2007).**

Besides, even though they originally targeted early childhood and childhood schooling, in recent times cash transfer programs have been added to prevent secondary school drop-out, stimulate re-enrolment, or support the continuation of studies. For example, in Chile (Beca de Apoyo a la Retención Escolar), Mexico (Beca contra el abandono escolar), and Argentina (PROGRESAR). **Programs of this type enable that students who have temporarily dropped out go back to school; but it is crucial that the educational offering is different from the one that they have already abandoned and that there is accompaniment during the re-entry. If not, there is the chance of leading to a new drop-out process, probably permanent this time.**

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<sup>3</sup>"Liceo para todos" Program, Chile; "Educación Básica Rural Programa Enlaces" Program, Chile; "Educación Media Técnica Vocacional" Program, Chile; "Telesecundaria" Program, Mexico; "Educación Secundaria A Distancia" Program, Peru; "Posprimaria" Program, Colombia; "Servicios De Aprendizaje Tutorial" Program, Colombia; "Educación Comunitaria" Program, Mexico; " Educación Por Alternancia" Program, Brazil and Peru.



However, even considering the great progress made in the region in terms in social protection, there are some points to highlight which appear as knowledge gaps in the existing specialized literature, or as topics poorly addressed.

- **Improvement of the interaction between the CCTPs and the educational programs with focus on coverage and equity:** several studies point out that the educational services for the beneficiaries of these programs are not enough and/or they are low quality. There are issues such as remoteness of the educational institutions, structural issues related to educational services, decreasing access to basic resources as the cash transfers increase.

- **Age limit to receive benefits related to schooling:** in most cases, age 18 is usually the limit age for receiving monetary transfers linked to the support of schooling. However, the profile of the region shows that even in the case of the countries with the higher levels of secondary enrolment, only a low proportion of the population attains secondary education by the theoretical age, especially within low income sectors. The percentage of graduates increases between ages 18 and 20 since there is a process of graduation deferred in time. Thus, it would be necessary to adjust that limit.

- **Coverage and opinion of adolescents and youth population about education services:** there are few studies that analyze the extent in which adolescents and young people excluded from school or at risk are reached by these programs, and their level of satisfaction in terms of their personal needs. Data collection tends to privilege an approach to the families and not to the subjects.

- **The socio-cultural dimension of the CCTPs in the school:** the socio-cultural aspects that are associated to the CCTPs are scarcely found in the studies, which mostly focus on impact evaluations with a strong econometric emphasis. It is crucial to work at the school level, so that the fact of being a CCTP beneficiary does not reinforce barriers such as segregation and negative prejudices about the capacities of the students and their families.

- **Communication:** the publishing or guide that inform about the existing programs are generally of a sectorial nature. There are just a few cases where the presentation of the program offer is fully available, independently of the area that provides it.

### [Policies with focus on adolescents and young people's re-enrolment to the educational system](#)

The concern about the re-enrolment to the educational system of adolescents and young people is not a region-specific problem, but it presents here a relevant dimension.

In the frame of **EUROSociAL** –cooperation program of the European Union Programme for Latin America–, the Ibero-American Foundation for Education, Science and Culture (FIECC, in its Spanish acronym) and the Organization of Ibero-American States (IEO) have propitiated the conduction of six studies focused on back-to-school policies and accelerated learning which have been implemented in diverse cities of the region under the Series “Educar en Ciudades”<sup>4</sup>. Later on, Unicef Argentina took over the continuation of the series with up to now four studies of other re-enrolment policies implemented in Argentina.

In the group of policies with focus on re-enrolment into the educational system, there are two intervention lines: those that involve an adaptation of the school format for the students that are re-enrolling in the regular formal school supply and those that involve the creation of an alternative offering (Acosta and Terigi, 2015:51). As well, for those who did not complete / did not transit through primary education, there are usually strategies of “learning acceleration”.

The basic premise of these policies is that adolescents and young people must recover their confidence on their own learning skills. For this reason, building self-esteem and motivation becomes a core aspect of these schemes.

Another common feature of these polices is the possibility of “customizing” the academic year, that is, that the school adapts to the different life situations of the students.

On the other hand, the accompaniment function is present in every case but with specific dynamics, since it is crucial as a space for pedagogic, social and emotional support. For this reason, regarding this type of schemes it is necessary to count with a stable and engaged teaching staff. This requires a special consideration about the legal frameworks that regulate the teaching profession.

In conclusion, regarding the institutional placement, Ecorys report (2013) distinguishes three types of experiences:

- **Those that involve a differentiated offering which enables an alternative course regarding the general supply of education.**
- **Those that assume the coexistence of two offerings within a single school: the general supply of education, and the back-to-school offering.**

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<sup>4</sup> Available at the website <http://www.redligare.org/spip.php?article409>

- Those that entail the conversion of a school adopting distinctive aspects from the back-to-school programs (academic and organizational flexibility, personalized follow-up, reduced average class size, specially trained teachers).

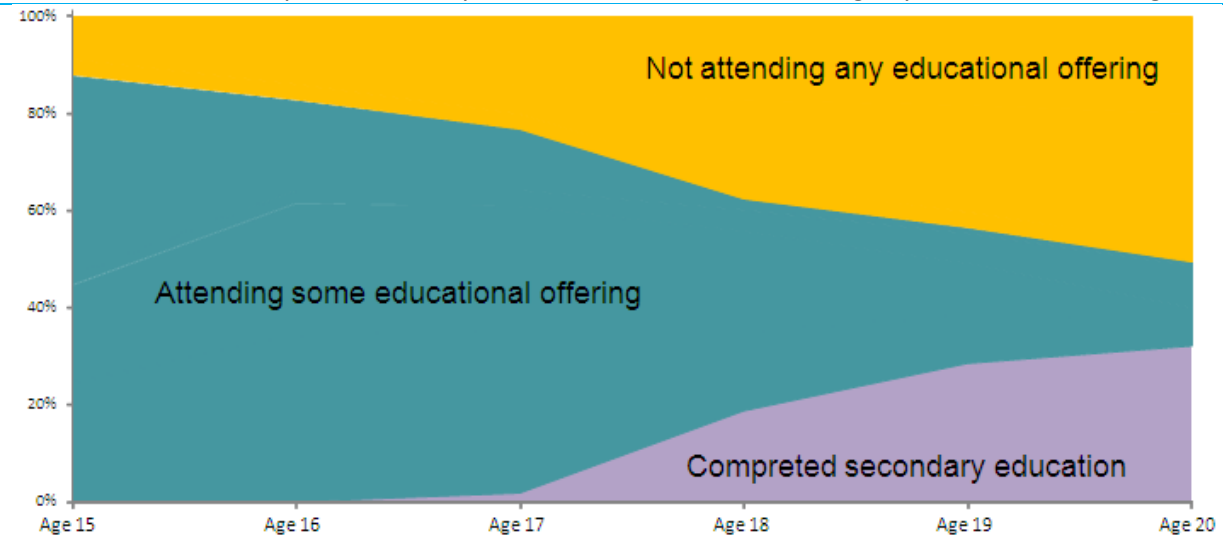
SCHEME FOR A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CATEGORIES OF EXCLUSION

Taking as starting point the population of ages 15 to 20, it is possible to formulate a group of exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories in order to identify the different situations experienced by this group of population with regards to educational exclusion.

The following steps enable to reconstruct the different categories, based on key data:

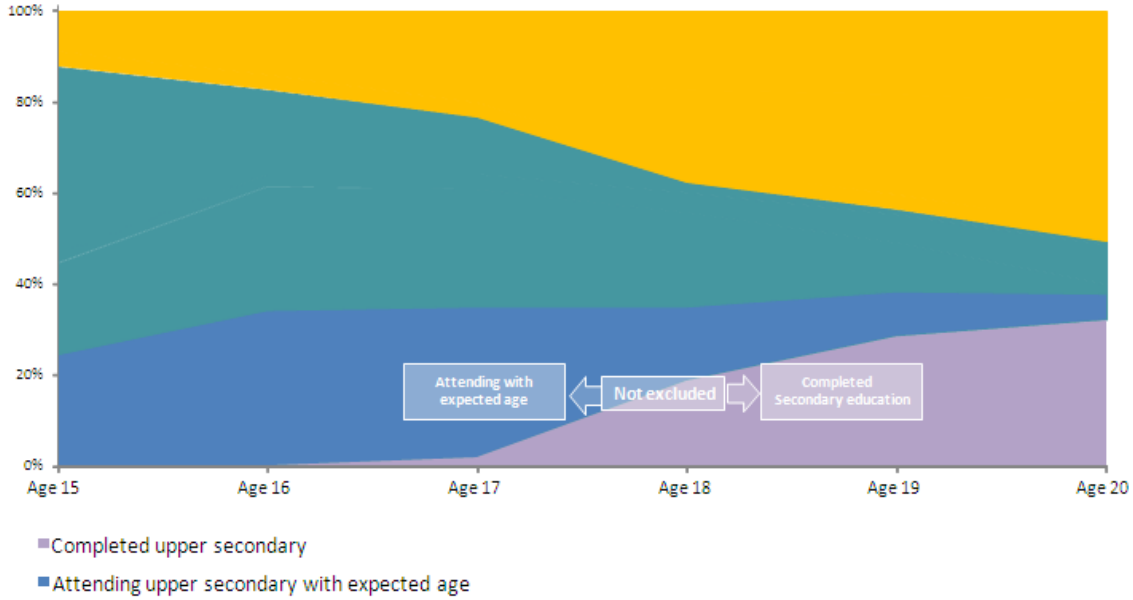
- School attendance
- Grade, level and modality attending or attended as the maximum level of education

**Step 1:** Divide the population into three main groups: those who completed secondary education, those who have not completed it and are currently attending some education offering, and finally those who did not complete secondary education and are not attending any educational offering.



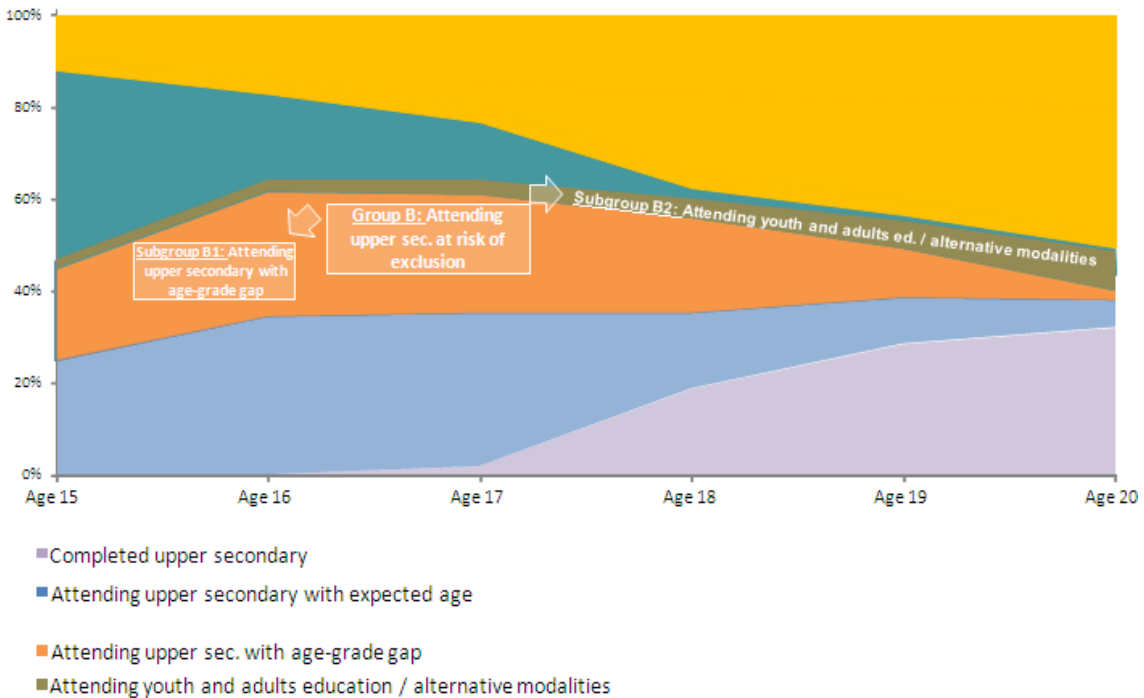
The information regarding **school attendance** together with the identification of **the last grade or level completed** is sufficient for the formulation of this first division.

**Step 2:** Identify the population that is not excluded.



It is composed by the population that has completed secondary education, and that is attending upper secondary with the expected age.

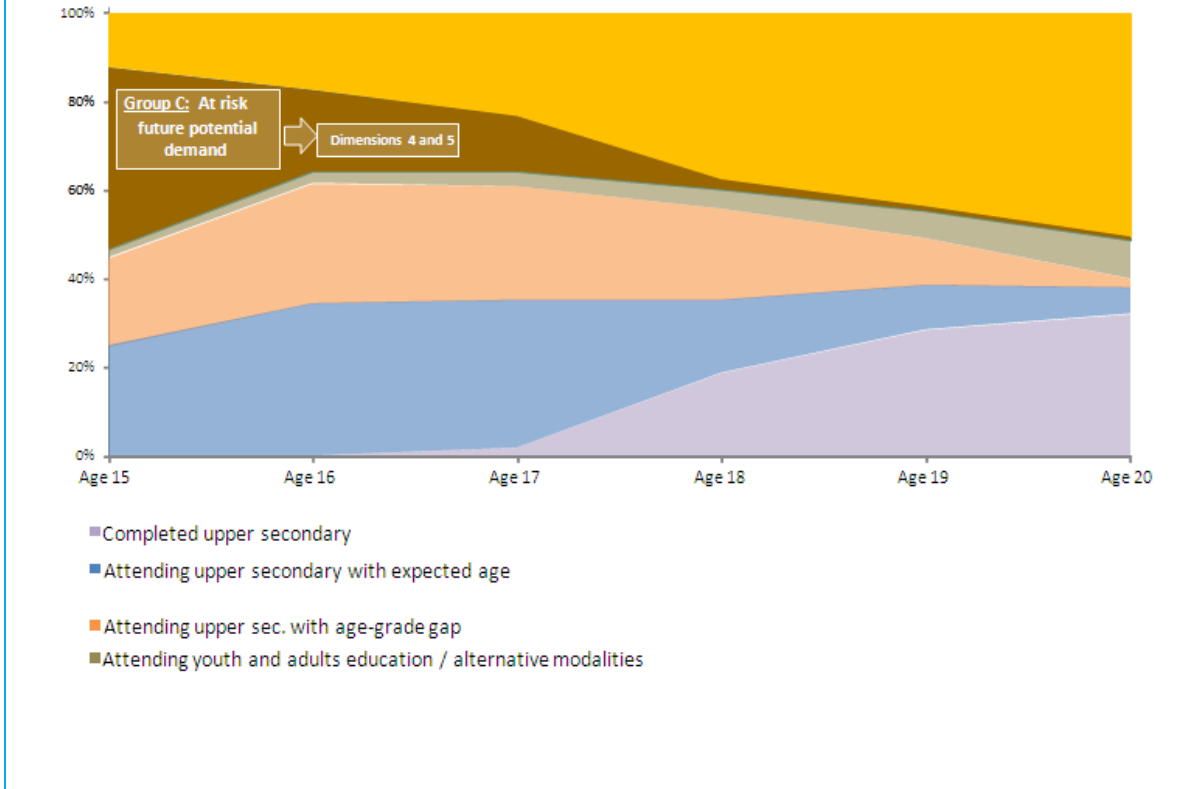
**Step 3:** Identify the population attending upper secondary that is presently at risk of exclusion (Group B).



They are those who attend some offering that certifies upper secondary education. It includes those who attend regular upper secondary with age-grade gap, and those who attend youth and

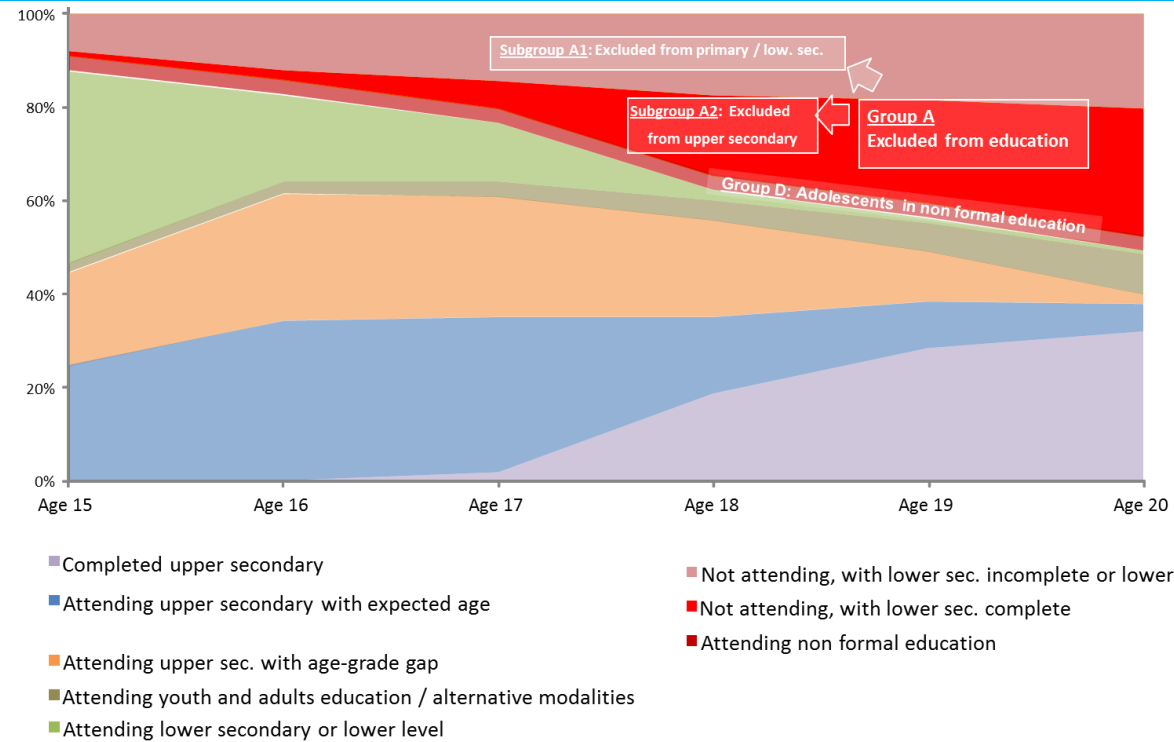
adults education or alternative modalities (graded formats or formats that are complementary to regular education), which involve completion of secondary level. For the population that attends upper secondary with age-grade gap, it is convenient to distinguish those who attend with one year of lag and those with two or more years or lag.

**Step 4:** Identify the population that constitutes at-risk future potential demand (Group C).



These are those with age for upper secondary but who remain enrolled in lower educational levels (primary or lower secondary) lagging behind grades, or who attend youth and adults education or other alternative offerings that certify primary or lower secondary. This group is part of the Dimensions 4 and 5 in the frame of the OOSC initiative. It is considered as the population that will potentially demand upper secondary under the condition of high risk of dropout. With this category, the analysis is articulated with the dimensions of exclusion.

**Step 5:** Identify the population excluded from the education system (Group A)



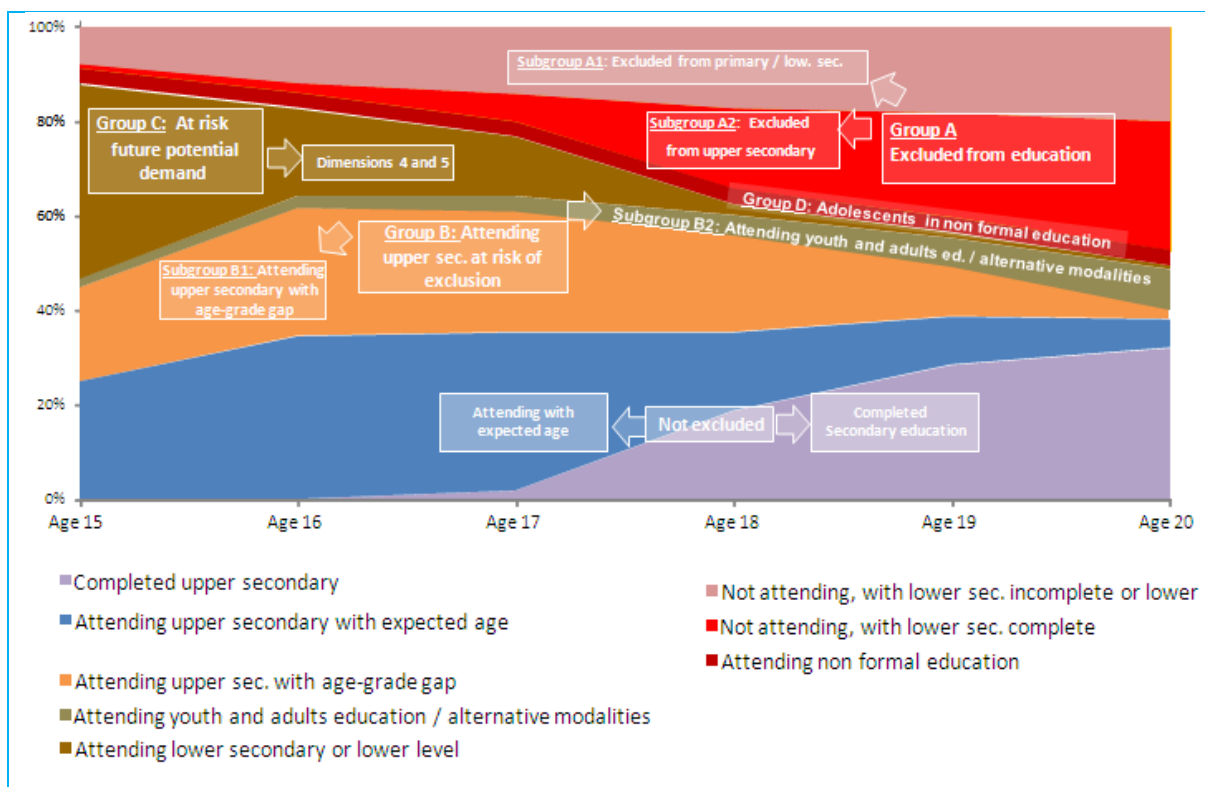
These are those who have not completed secondary education and do not attend an education offering that certifies secondary level. They are classified according to their condition of potential demand:

Excluded with potential demand of primary or lower secondary: they correspond to the population that does not attend school and who are in the position of enrolling in primary or lower secondary level.

Excluded with potential demand of upper secondary: they correspond to the population that does not attend school and who are in the position of enrolling upper secondary. This group conforms the population excluded from upper secondary.

Finally, it also includes those who attend non formal education. This category refers to those of 15 to 20 years of age who are attending education offerings that do not certify secondary level education. They are considered to be excluded from upper secondary but since they are within an educational offering, they are in a better situation than those who are totally out of school.

**Final scheme:** Considering the school attendance condition, the maximum level attained and the offering currently attending, the group of categories is displayed for the identification of the condition of exclusion of the population aged 15 to 20.



This full scheme includes all the categories that define the situation of exclusion of population of this age group.

**Group A: Those who are excluded from the educational system**

**Subgroup A1:** Adolescents and young people of 15 to 20 years of age currently out of school who did not enter or did not complete either primary or lower secondary.

**Subgroup A2:** Adolescents and young people of 15 to 20 years of age who are in the position of attending upper secondary but who dropped out in the transition from lower to upper secondary during this level, or who passed through this level but their completion is pending because of pending exams or other situations.

**Group B: Those who are enrolled in upper secondary but at risk of exclusion:**

**Subgroup B1:** Adolescents and young people of 15 to 20 years of age who are attending school with age-grade gap. *They are at risk because they have accumulated breakdown situation.*

**Subgroup B2:** Adolescents and young people of ages 15 to 20 who attend alternative modalities. They are at risk because they have previously dropped out regular or common education.

**Group C: The at-risk future potential demand**

Adolescents and young people of ages 15 to 20 who attend primary or lower secondary, lagging behind grades. They are considered within Dimensions of Exclusion 4 (primary enrolment) and 5 (lower secondary enrolment).

**Group D: Those who are attending non-formal education**



Adolescents and young people of ages 15 to 20 who are attending educational offerings which promote their integration into the labor market without implying education completion (they do not deliver certification for an educational level).

## INDICATORS FOR THE FORMULATION OF PROFILES OF EXCLUSION AND DETECTION OF POINTS OF CONSTRICTION

### Effective exclusion within the population of ages 15 to 20.

An outlook on the excluded population of ages 15 to 20, finds a direct link to the methodological framework of the OOSC initiative, in particular, with regards to the characterization of dimensions 3 and 5. The former (dimension 3) represents the population by the age of attending lower secondary who are currently out of school. Here lays the first link with the initiative, in the temporal relationship with dimension 3: the adolescents who at a certain moment do not attend school by the ages 12 to 14 –unless they re-enroll in the education system- in the next years will be part of the population of ages 15 to 20 who is excluded from the education system and with the condition of potential demand of lower secondary or a lower level.

Now, something similar happens with dimension 5. This one is defined as the population who attends lower secondary and is currently at risk of dropping out, and for its identification the indicator used is educational lag<sup>5</sup>. In this point, the characterization of the indicators of school failure and dropout from lower secondary are crucial for the identification of the points of constriction that restrict the successful flow through the level. As it has been already explained, many students of lower secondary are 15 to 20 years old. For this reason, when the population that belongs to dimension 5 drops out of school, they become part of the adolescents excluded by the following age: 15 to 20.

Last, the schooling pathways that are linked with the type of exclusion analyzed in this document, and which are not related with the OOSC initiative, are those which relate to dropout after the end of lower secondary, either in the transition between levels or in the passage through upper secondary.

Next, some recommended indicators are presented for the characterization of dropout profiles. The selection presented is considered as the most recommendable set, using the example of Central American countries. This scheme can be replaced or complemented by others, based on the availability of information from each country.

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<sup>5</sup>In Scasso and Scándalo (2016) the use of educational lag as an indicator of risk is thoroughly explained, as well as its advantages compared to other alternatives.

## I. DROPOUT IN THE TRANSITION:

- Indicator: *Rate of effective admission to upper secondary*

This indicator enables to describe dropout<sup>6</sup> by the moment of access to upper secondary education. The analysis is based on the comparison between the potential and the effective demand. It is considered as potential demand the total of students with the regulatory status to enroll or re-enroll, including not only the graduates from lower secondary but also those with a first failure by the moment they started upper secondary. The effective demand is composed by the effective enrollment in a given year.

The indicator analyzes the process of access to upper secondary education between two consecutive years:

- In the base year, a group of “potential entrants” is identified, integrated by all those who meet the regulatory status for enrolling to the first grade of upper secondary (grade 10) the following year;
- The following year, it will be identified the proportion of these entrants who were effectively admitted to grade 10 the following year (by relating the potential entrants with the enrollment in grade 10)
- When the number of potential entrants is above the number of students enrolled to grade 10, the gap is considered as school dropout.

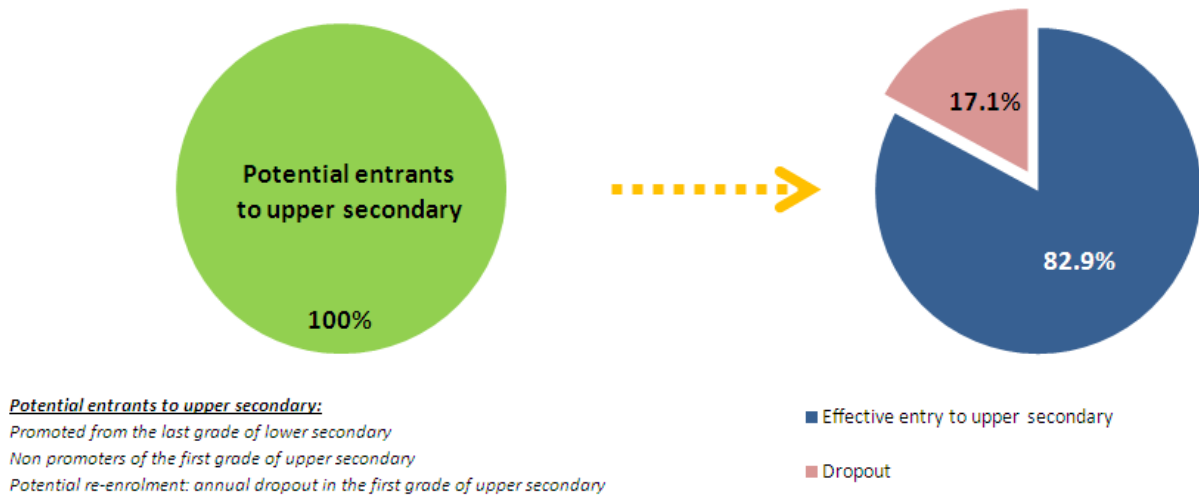
### Who are the “potential entrants”?

- Students promoted at grade 9 in the year T-1
- Students who failed grade 10 in the year T-1 (who should re-enroll as repeaters in grade 10 the following year)
- Students of grade 10 who dropped out during T-1 (and who should re-enroll as re-entrants of grade 10 the following year)

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<sup>6</sup>In Scasso and Jaureguizahar (2015), the explanation of the mentioned indicator is approached, developed and analyzed.

### **Rate of effective admission to upper secondary level. Central American countries. Around 2013**



Source: Regional Series of Educational Indicators. CECC/SICA. Regional Total, Year 2013.

- The left chart represents the total potential entrants corresponding to the base of the indicator (100%). It refers to year T-1.
- The right chart shows:
  - In blue (82.9%), there is the effective admission to upper secondary. It represents the percentage of potential entrants who effectively enroll in grade 10 the following year (Year T).
  - In pink, it appears dropout (18.1%), representing the percentage of potential entrants who did not enroll in grade 10 the following year.

#### **Some clarifications for the interpretation of the indicator<sup>7</sup>:**

- The rate of effective admission can result in values above 100% whenever the effective enrolment of grade 10 is higher than the potential entrants registered in the previous year.
- This situation may be referring to the intake of students from other areas. Such phenomenon is usually seen when comparing indicators of rural and urban areas.

<sup>7</sup>In Scasso and Jaureguizar (2015), the explanation of the mentioned indicator is approached, developed and analyzed.

## II. DROPOUT DURING THE PASSAGE THROUGH THE LEVEL:

School dropout can be approached from the scope of education statistics based on different indicators. Each one highlights a specific aspect of the phenomenon, and the combination of various indicators builds a more comprehensive scenario. In this case, it is proposed to work with three complementary indicators: annual dropout, which identifies those who start a school year and do not finish it; inter-annual dropout, which focuses on dropout when it occurs between two school years; and ceasing students, which seeks to describe in a particular manner the phenomenon of dropout when it happens after the experience of non-promotion.

- Indicator: *Intra-annual dropout*

This indicator relates the total amount of enrolled students by the beginning of a school year and those who are attending by the last day of the school year. This way, it is possible to quantify how many students drop out during the school year. Since it is an intra-annual indicator, it does not report if students who drop out stay out of school during the following school year, or if they re-enroll into the system. It is an indicator with high versatility, since it enables different breakdowns, even by school, leading to deeper technical analysis and specific policy planning.

For the interpretation of this indicator, it is necessary to mention that by the end of each school year there are three possible conditions for students:

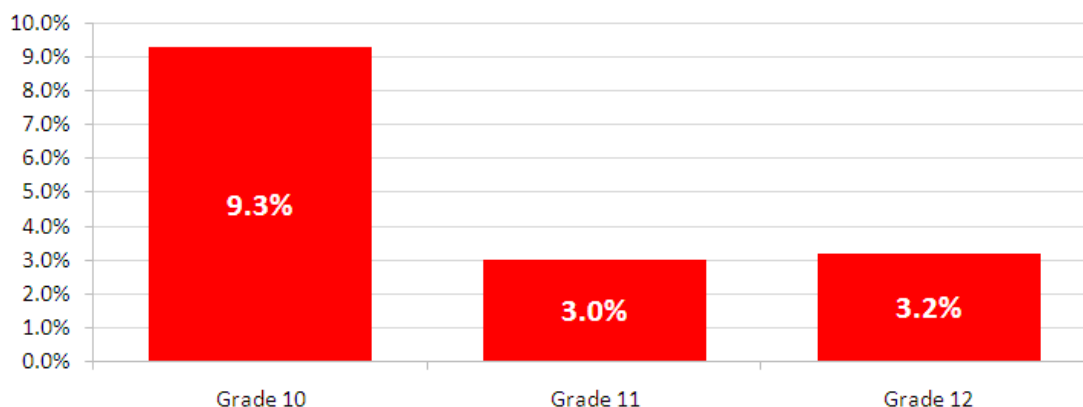
- Intra-annual promotion: referring to those who have accredited the progress in learning corresponding to a grade/year of study, and remain in the position of enrolling in the subsequent grade/year.
- The non-promotion (or grade failure): it refers to those who have not accredited the progress in learning corresponding to a grade/school year, and therefore will not be able to enroll to the subsequent grade/school year.
- Or the intra-annual dropout: referent to those who have dropped out of a grade/school year before their completion.

The percentage of intra-annual dropout is the relation between the total enrolment by grade by the beginning of each school year, and the sum of those who drop out during the year. Even if some of them may re-enroll to school, gaining or aggravating their age-grade gap, most of the

students who drop out during the school year do not go back to school, ceasing their schooling pathway, possibly after experiencing iterated school failure.

This indicator generates a “targeted alert” for guiding actions for the protection of students against permanent failure, especially in the grades where the incidence of the issue is higher, commonly in the initial grades of the level.

**Percentage of intra-annual dropout (grades 10 to 12). Central American countries. Around 2013.**



SOURCE: Regional Series of Educational Indicators. CECC/SICA. Regional Total, Year 2013.

**Keys to interpretation:**

- Each bar represents the percentage of intra-annual dropout by grade.
- The first grades of the cycle show the highest percentages of students who drop out.
- On average, in upper secondary 5.8% of students drop out during the school year.

• Indicator: Inter-annual drop out

This indicator is an approximation of dropout occurred between one school year and the following one, taking as a reference the enrolment by the beginning of each one of them. In other words, students who are identified as dropouts did not enroll in school by the beginning of a school year. It requires a series of assumptions which not always happen, and it may result in distorted or inconsistent values –especially when working with low levels of disaggregation-. For this reason, it is recommended to use it with special attention when analyzing dropout, relating it to other indicators.

The indicator<sup>8</sup> analyzes the process of transition from one year to the following one, and thus it assumes a closed system. Dropout does not emerge from a measurement, it emerges from a difference between estimates. For the interpretation of the indicator it is necessary to mention that it belongs to the group of three indicators of internal efficiency:

- Effective promotion: it estimates the total of students who promoted and enrolled in the following grade, subtracting the repeaters from the total enrolment, related to the total of students of the previous grade during the previous school year. It requires counting with a very strong measurement of the total of enrolled students.
- Repetition rate: it is the relation between the total repeaters of a grade, and the enrolment of the previous grade during the previous school year.
- Inter-annual dropout rate: it is the estimate of those who have dropped out in the transition between one school year to the following one, which is calculated subtracting the effective promotion and the repetition rate to 100%.

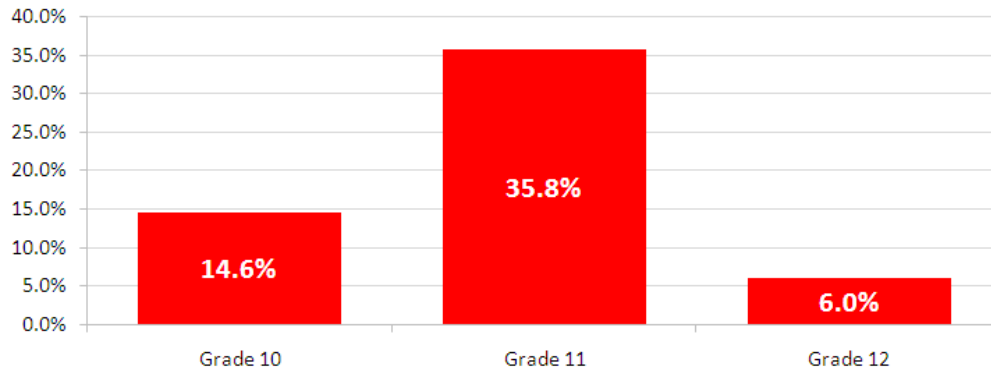
The percentage of inter-annual dropout estimates the “permanent” dropout, in the sense that it identifies students who, at a school year, do not enroll to upper secondary. Given some weakness regarding its calculation, for the last year of secondary education dropout is not recorded, but the percentage of students who do not achieve to complete secondary education by that year.

This indicator creates a “targeted alert” in a complementary manner to intra-annual dropout, for guiding actions for the protection of students against permanent failure, especially in the grades where the incidence of the issue is higher, commonly in the initial grades of the level.

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<sup>8</sup>In Scasso and Jaureguizahar (2015), the explanation of the mentioned indicator is approached, developed and analyzed.

### **Percentage of inter-annual dropout (grades 10 to 12). Central America countries. Around 2013**



SOURCE: Regional Series of Educational Indicators. CECC/SICA. Regional Total, Year 2013.

#### **Keys to interpretation**

- Each bar corresponds to the percentage of inter-annual dropout by grade.
- The intermediate grade of the cycle shows the highest level of dropout. However, it may be explained also by secondary level offerings with one grade less.
- On average, for upper secondary, 19% drops out in the passage from a school year to the following one.

- **Indicator:** *Rate of ceasing students*

This indicator estimates the size of critical situations of school dropout during upper secondary, focusing on its link with school failure in the level. Ceasing students are those who drop out from school after not promoting the grade they were attending<sup>9</sup>. It is considered that the indicator represents those who drop out permanently due to the effect of demotivation caused by failure, or as a consequence of the loss of a vacancy in their school, precisely as a corollary of failure. It is built from the relation between students who do not promote a grade, and those who enroll as repeaters the following year.

This indicator points out to the experience of the students who are not promoted in the school year: taking the data from two consecutive years, it retrieves in which proportion the students that did not promote the grade are not enrolled as repeaters in the same grade the following year. It is

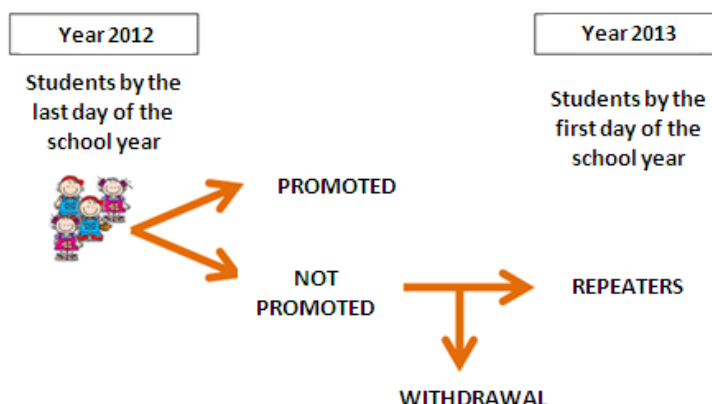
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<sup>9</sup>For a complete definition of the indicator, please see the Regional Series of Educational Indicators of CECC/SICA ([http://www.sica.int/cecc/indicadores\\_educativos.aspx](http://www.sica.int/cecc/indicadores_educativos.aspx))

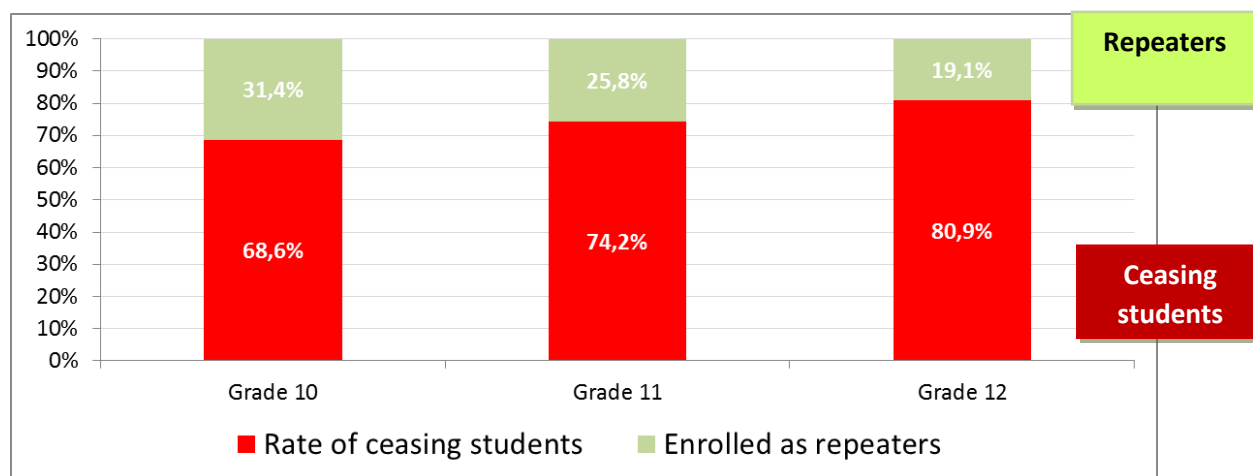


considered that this group of students composes a specific group among those who drop out, since it is integrated by young people who cease from their schooling pathway after the experience of school failure.

The following scheme shows the ceasing students:



**Rate of ceasing students. Central American countries. Around 2013**



Source: Regional Series of Educational Indicators. CECC/SICA. Regional Total, Year 2013.

**Keys to interpretation:**

- The chart displays a bar per grade. The sum of each bar is 100%, which represents the total of students who did not promote the grade in the year 2012.
- Within each bar, two segments can be distinguished:

- A green segment is from Repeaters, points out the proportion of students who did not promote the grade in 2012 and who enrolled as repeaters in the same grade the following year.
- The red segment is from students who cease, points out the percentage of students who did not promote the grade in 2012, and did not enroll in school the following year.
- It can be observed from the figure that, as upper secondary advances, the proportion of students who do not promote the grade and do not re-enroll as repeaters increases (ceasing students grown).

**Particular situations.**

In some cases, the rate of ceasing students may result in negative values. This happens when more repeaters are recorded compared to the number of students who did not promote the grade the previous year. A possible explanation for this is that in some cases students who have dropped out go back to school and they are enrolled as repeaters of the same grade (and not as re-enrolled).

***Precautions about the inter-annual dropout indicators***

*Inter-annual dropout and the rate of ceasing students are measures based on the comparison of information from two different school years. This is what enables to give an account of dropout expressed not as the non-enrolment of a student who used to attend school, and that is why its use is relevant.*

*However, it is important to consider two important methodological limitations which must be taken into account when analyzing its values:*

*1) The comparison between two school cycles assumes the principle of a closed system; the flow of students is dichotomous (in/out), there are no other options. This restriction limits its use in disaggregations: the flow of students between two units of different type (e.g., public/private, or between locations) distorts the values of the indicator, even with possible negative values or values above 100%.*

*2) These indicators take as a base the number of repeaters of a given year. Several studies show that repetition of the grade recorded by the statistic systems of the region is significantly lower than the total annual failure<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, an analysis based on this indicator will tend to describe*

<sup>10</sup> Some of the papers referring to this topic are Schiefelbein (1989) and UNESCO (1996)

*an optimistic scenario of the state of promotion in the region<sup>11</sup>. Thereon, it is recommended to previously analyze the value of repetition in the country, exploring the available research about its quality and coverage, inquiring to the government areas in charge of managing this type of information, and compare the consistence of their values with other indicators, such as overage and promotion.*

#### COMPLETION WITHOUT ACCREDITATION:

(i) Indicator: *Percentage of non-promotion by the last grade of the level*

This indicator identifies the percentage of students by the last grade of secondary level who complete the school year without reaching the regulatory status for accrediting or promoting the grade. In most of the countries, the regulation regarding promotion establishes that these students must not re-enroll or repeat the last grade of the level, but remain with pending exams. It also includes those who have failed in the examination or compensatory stage that is implemented in some levels and countries after the conclusion of the school year.

This indicator is based on the same scheme of the intra-annual dropout, since it takes another of the annual categories: the students who do not promote the school year. That is, those who have not accredited the progress in learning corresponding to the last grade/school year of the level, and therefore cannot attain the completion of the level.

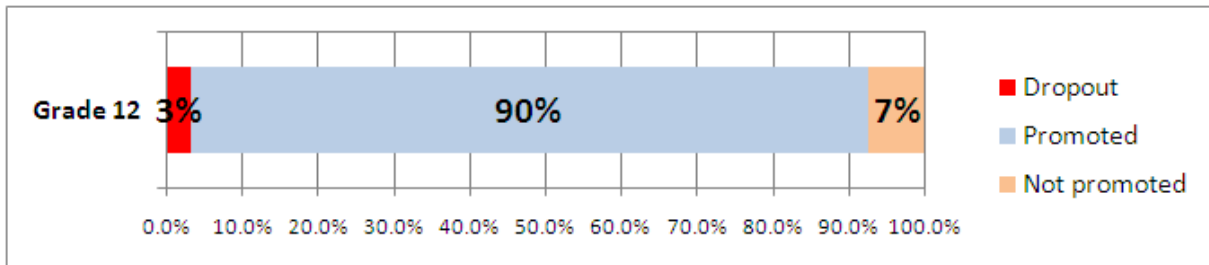
It is important to highlight that some of these students will attempt to repeat their exams the following year; while some others will not go back to school, ceasing to complete the level, possibly after experiencing iterated school failure.

The identification of the students that do not promote the last grade of the level is an important tool for the design of specific policies aiming to foster the students who reach this stage. It is displayed together with the other indicators of final condition.

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<sup>11</sup> In this respect, it is important to mention that the *inter-annual promotion* is an indicator built for the simulation of theoretical cohorts. This indicator is calculated considering the enrolled students not repeating a year, within the enrolment in the previous grade in the previous year. That is, it does not measure directly the promotion, but it *deducts it* based on the information of enrolment and repeaters. It is important, in contrast, to mention the *indicators of final condition* (promotion, non-promotion and annual dropout). These indicators (which are collected by the national education statistic systems but are not systematized by UIS-UNESCO) give an account of the regulatory status of the students by the end of the school year. In this sense, unlike inter-annual indicators, these indicators capture specific school scenarios.

**Percentage of non promotion in the last grade of the secondary level. Central American countries. Around 2013**



SOURCE: Regional Series of Educational Indicators. CECC/SICA. Regional Total, Year 2013.

**Keys to interpretation:**

- Each bar represents a category of final condition:
  - The red bar represents intra-annual dropout, which has been previously analyzed.
  - The blue bar represents the students who achieved to graduate that year, representing 90% of the enrolled students.
  - The orange bar represents 7% of the enrolled students who do not achieve to promote the grade.

***The case of the systems of information which register nominal data***

*In the past few years, many countries have driven their information policies towards the development of student's nominal information systems, with a unique ID for every children or adolescent who attends or attended school.*

*The nominal records of students enable a stronger approach to the schooling pathways related to exclusion: not only leads to a higher precision in the measurement but also it also make possible to conduct stronger measurements and build stronger indicators. For example, it is possible to acknowledge if a student who has dropped out during the school year re-enrolls or remains out of school the following year.*

*Even if there are several countries in the region which have progressed in the modernization of their information systems, in many of them they have still not reached to develop devices to enabling their exploitation for the analysis of exclusion. Many of the practices and examples still present have been developed based on more elementary systems of information<sup>12</sup>.*

*For this reason, the design of indicators based on nominal systems can contribute to an innovative analysis of exclusion, but if there is the intention of starting that path it is important to assess the accessibility and quality of the information disaggregated by student.*

<sup>12</sup>Taccari (2013)

### Risk of exclusion within the population of 15 to 20 years of age

Next, some indicators are presented for the characterization of pathways related to risk of exclusion. As it was proposed for the previous group of indicators, the following –with the exception of the last one- are examples based on a group of Central American countries:

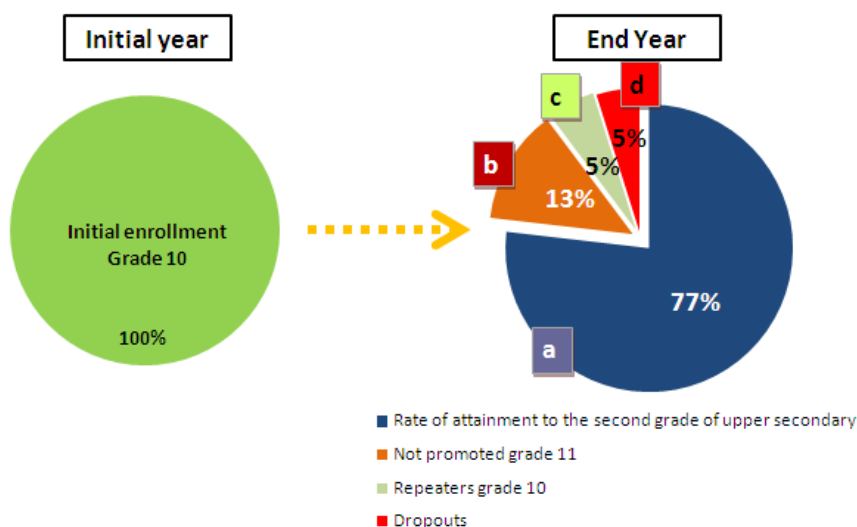
- Indicator: *Attainment by the second grade of upper secondary*

The indicator is intended to describe and quantify the profiles of pathways in the beginning of upper secondary. It compares two consecutive years, taking as a starting point the students enrolled in the first year of the cycle (grade 10), and identifies by the following year the students who achieved to pass the second grade of upper secondary (grade 11) –that is, those who progressed at due time the first two years of the cycle. When analyzing a complementary group of indicators for upper secondary, it is possible to identify the following situations:

- Proportion of students who achieve to promote to grade 10. These are those who passed grade 9 by the end of year T-1, enrolled in grade 10 and then passed by the end of year T. This group represents the rate of attainment by the second grade of upper secondary.
- The proportion of students who promoted grade 10 in year T-1, but who did not successfully promote grade 11 in the year T. They are the non-promoted of grade 11.
- The proportion of students who do not promote grade 10 in year T-1, and re-enroll as repeaters in the year T. They are the repeaters of grade 10.
- Last, the promotion of students enrolled in grade 10 in the year T-1 who dropped out of school before the end of the year T. This situation may have occurred in the year T-1 or in the year T (Dropouts).

The following figure presents the elements:

**Rate of attainment by the second grade of upper secondary. Central American countries. Year 2013**



SOURCE: Regional Series of Educational Indicators. CECC/SICA. Regional Total, Year 2013.

The chart shows that: every 100 students enrolled in grade 10,

- 77 successfully promoted in grade 11 by the end of the following year (77%),
- 13 successfully passed grade 10, but did not promote in grade 11 by the end of the following year (13%),
- 5 failed in grade 10 y and re-enrolled as repeaters of the same grade the following year (5%),
- 5 dropped out of school (5%)

- Indicator: Total annual failure

The generation and aggravation of educational lag in upper secondary is explained by the group of students who do not achieve to promote a grade, due to annual dropout or by failure. Annual dropout describes the situation of those who enroll in the beginning of a school year but do not complete it. This is not necessarily permanent dropout: some students who drop out during the year actually re-enroll to the same grade the following year, or enroll in an alternative modality. Failing the grade refers to the situation of students who complete a school year but do not successfully promote, even after sitting for additional stages of assessment after the last day of the

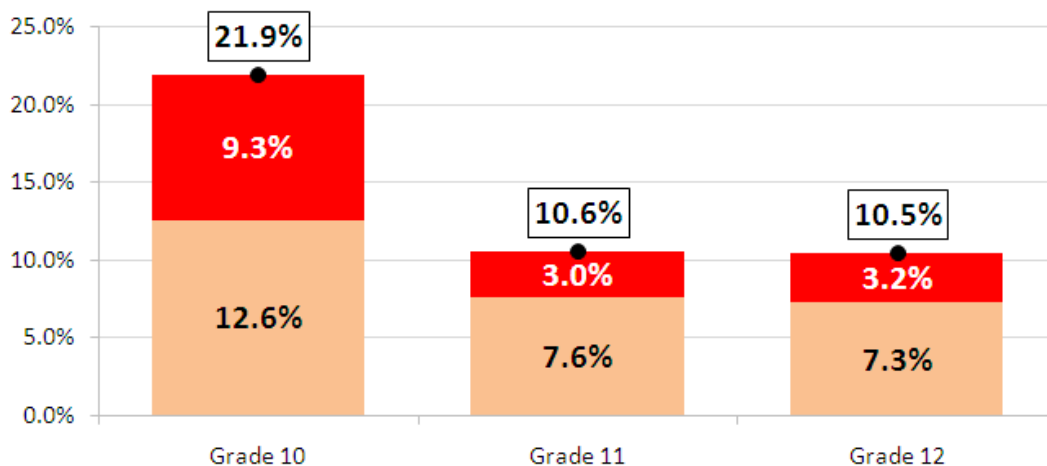
school year. In short, each student who enrolls in the beginning of a school year, by the end of the year can have one of three possible conditions: promoting, failing, or dropping out. Total annual failure is defined as the sum of the group of students who do not successfully promote, or dropout during the course of the year.

The percentage of total annual failure is the relation of the total enrolment of a grade by the beginning of a school year, and the sum of those who drop out during the year or are not promoted to the next grade. It is considered annual failure because students are in a condition of vulnerability after their experience of failure. Some of them will enroll as repeaters the following year, gaining or aggravating their age-grade gap; while others will not go back to school, ceasing their schooling pathway, possibly after experiencing iterated school failure.

This indicator summarizes non-promotion and dropout, as two expressions of breakdowns in the expected schooling pathways of students. It creates a “targeted and preventive alert” for guiding actions for the protection of students against permanent failure, especially in the grades where the incidence of the issue is higher, commonly in the initial grades of the level.

Total annual failure is a powerful tool for the identification of the level of inefficiency of the educational system, since it expresses the proportion of students who do not successfully promote to the next year.

### **Percentage of students at school risk. Central American countries. Around 2013**



SOURCE: Regional Series of Educational Indicators. CECC/SICA. Regional Total, Year 2013.

### Elements of the figure:

1. Each bar represents the total annual failure by grade.
2. The red segment of the bar corresponds to the students who dropped out during the year (intra-annual dropout of that grade).
3. The orange segment of the bar represents the non-promoted students of that grade.
4. The figure does not reflect it, but the rest of the percentage to reach 100% in each grade corresponds to the students who have completed the school year in the position of enrolling to the following grade the following year (that is, the ones who have been promoted).

### Keys to interpretation:

- The first grade of upper secondary shows the highest total annual failure.
- On average, for upper secondary, 1 out of 7 students does not end the year in the regulatory status of enrolling to the following grade (15.4%)

• **Indicator:** *Rate of transfer of students from common education to alternative modalities*

This indicator represents the proportion of students, by age groups, enrolled in some alternative modality of education, who were enrolled in a school of common or regular education by the previous year.

This indicator provides an understanding of the transition between sub-systems, especially the transfer from the regular sub-system to the one of alternative education.

With this indicator, it is possible to contribute with key information for the study of the schooling pathways of the students who drop out from regular education. The higher the percentage, the greater the transfer. This means that within the proportion of students who drop out from regular education, a higher number decides to continue studying in alternative education.

The indicator is highly sensitive for capturing modifications.

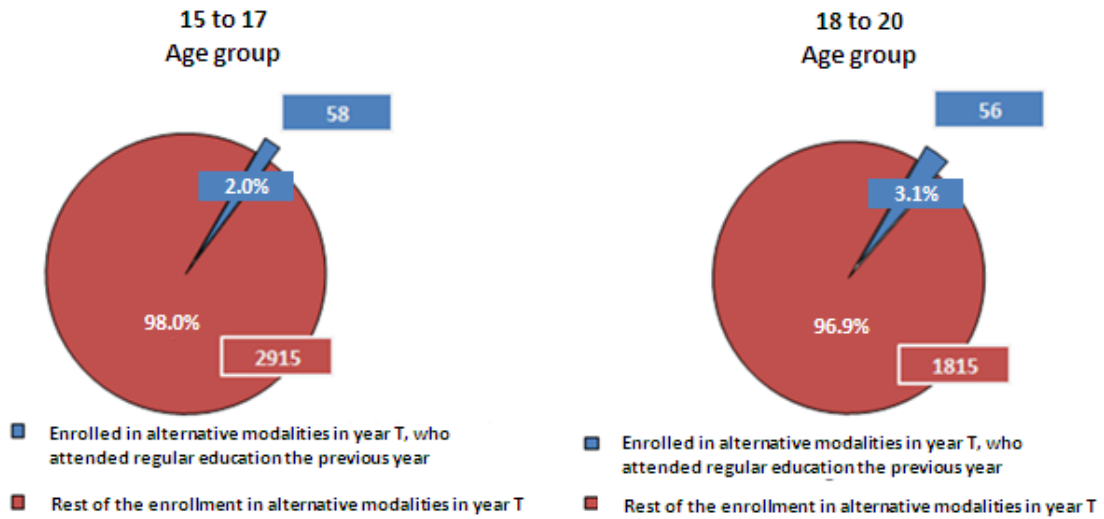
For the calculation of this indicator, the numerator is the enrollment of the alternative education sub-system, by age group, in a given year T, which had been enrolled in regular education the previous year. In order to make this identification, the country must count with the possibility of unequivocally identifying the student in both modalities, based on a nominal system with a unique id.



The denominator is the group of students by age group in the year T who are enrolled in alternative education.

Next, an example of graphic representation for this indicator is presented:

**Transfer of students from regular education to an alternative modalities**



## GLOSSARY OF INDICATORS FOR THE CHARACTERIZATION OF EXCLUSION WITHIN POPULATION OF AGES 15-20

In order to help the reader, the indicators are presented next with their definition, formulae and keys to interpretation.

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED WITH AGE-GRADE GAP

#### Definition:

It is the proportion of students that attends a grade with an age that is higher than the official age, with regards to the total of students enrolled in the grade. It can be identified those who are attending with one year of lag (moderate risk) and those who attend with two or more years of lag (critical risk).

#### Formulae:

$$\frac{\text{Moderate risk}}{I_g^{a+1}} \times 100 \qquad \frac{\text{Critical risk}}{I_g^{a+2+}} \times 100$$

$I_g^{a+1}$  = Enrollment with one year of age-grade gap in a grade of upper secondary

$I_g^{a+2+}$  = Enrollment with two or more years of age-grade gap in a grade of upper secondary

$I_g$  = Enrollment by grade

#### Interpretation:

The educational lag is a unique dynamic and accumulative scope of exclusion, since the age-grade gap is caused by different failure processes: late entry, repetition of the grade or temporary dropout. Educational lag is generated and gets accumulated: there are students with one, two, three and more years of lag. In upper secondary there is a raise of the incidence of dropout by the population with critical lag. The advanced educational lag is a hint or alert of exclusion.

The educational lag is a product of the educational system's features. It is not that the students "repeat" but the system that makes the decision of making them repeat the grade. Educational

lag is built or strengthened after situations of school failure: pedagogical schemes that are ineffective or do not provide alternatives for students with paces or styles other than the average. Students suffer from great stress which triggers automatic and defensive responses, which are dysfunctional for the school life.

#### RATE OF INTER-ANNUAL DROPOUT OF STUDENTS BY AGE

##### Definition:

It is the relation between the group of students by the age of attending upper secondary who drop out in the transition between a school year and the following one, and the total of students of that age.

##### Formulae:

$$\frac{I_{a+1}^{T+1} - I_a^T}{I_a^T} \times 100$$

$I_a^T$  = Enrollment with age a in the year T.

$I_{a+1}^{T+1}$  = Enrollment with age a+1 in the year T+1.

##### Interpretation

It expresses the difference between the number of students enrolled of a given age, with regards to the enrolment with an age one year older in the next calendar year. For this reason, it can give an account of the processes of inter-annual dropout for a given age or age group corresponding to upper secondary, regardless of the level or grade effectively attending.

It is important to highlight that the indicator may reach positive or negative values. Whenever the result is negative, it means the amount of students with a given age who drop out of school in the transition from one year to the following one. In turn, when the indicator is positive, it indicates the opposite: students entering the educational system.

## PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ANNUAL FAILURE

### Definition:

It is the relation of the total enrolment of each grade of upper secondary by the beginning of a school year, and the sum of students who drop out during the school year and the students who are not promoted to the following grade by the end of that school year.

### Formulae:

$$\frac{\sim PR_g + AD_g}{I_g} \times 100$$

$\sim PR_g$  = Non-promoted by grade of upper secondary: these are the students who, by the end of the year, are not in the regulatory status for enrolling to the following grade the following year.

$AD_g$  = Annual dropout by grade of upper secondary

$I_g$  = Enrollment by grade of upper secondary

### Interpretation

This indicator enables the identification of the level of inefficiency of the educational system, expressed by the proportion of students who do not successfully promote to the next year.

This way, the population who has experienced a failure event and is in a critical situation the following year can be located.

This indicator summarizes non-promotion and dropout, as two expressions of breakdowns in the expected schooling pathways of students. It creates a “targeted and preventive alert” for guiding actions for the protection of students against permanent failure, especially in the grades where the incidence of the issue is higher. It is important to highlight that both indicators given an account of the regulatory situation by the end of a school year, and do not describe what happens in the following school year: while the students who drop out in a school year may re-enroll the following year (annual dropout which turns into re-enrollment in a grade), those who do not promote may not re-enroll (non-promotion which turns into inter-annual dropout. For this, see *Rate of ceasing students*)

## RATE OF EFFECTIVE ADMISSION TO UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL

### Definition:

It is the proportion of students enrolled in the first grade of upper secondary in a given school year within the group of students in the position of enrolling or re-enrolling due to their regulatory status of the previous year.

### Formulae:

$$\frac{I_g^t}{PR_{g-1}^{t-1} + \sim PR_g^{t+1} + AD_g^{t-1}} \times 100$$

$I_g^t$  = Enrollment by grade in a given year

$PR_{g-1}^{t-1}$  = Promoted students from a grade in the previous year

$\sim PR_g^{t+1}$  = Non promoted students from a grade in the previous year

$AD_g^{t-1}$  = Annual dropout from a grade in the previous year

where  $g$  = first grade of upper secondary education and  $g-1$  = the last grade of lower secondary

### Interpretation

This indicator enables to deepen in the processes of access to the upper secondary education, through the sizing of the enrolment with regards to the potential demand, including not only those who completed lower secondary but also those who had their first failure in the access to upper secondary cycle.

It is an indicator regarding the behavior of the offer and also of the demand. It enables to analyze aspects of coverage of upper secondary education.

## RATE OF ATTAINMENT BY THE SECOND GRADE OF UPPER SECONDARY

### Definition:

This is the proportion of students who promote, and therefore, successfully complete the second grade of upper secondary education, with regards to those enrolled in the first grade of upper secondary in the previous year.

### Formulae:

$$\frac{PR_g^t}{I_{g-1}^{t-1}} \times 100$$

$PR_g^t$  = Promoted from a grade in a year. It refers to the students who, by the end of the school year, are in the position to enroll in the following grade in the following year.

$I_{g-1}^{t-1}$  = Enrolment from a grade in the previous year.

where  $g$  = second grade of upper secondary and  $g1$  = is the first grade of upper secondary education

### Interpretation

This indicator enables to characterize the extent of the attainment in the passage from the first to the second grade of upper secondary education, indicating the proportion of students who achieve to transit through them without failing. Complementary, it enables to size the bottleneck that constrains the successful progression in the beginning of upper secondary education.

Definition:

It is the relation made from the difference of students not promoted by the year T and the students enrolled in the same grade as repeaters of the same grade in the following year, with regards to the total of students not promoted in that same grade in the year T.

Formula:

$$\frac{\sim PR_g^t - R_g^{t+1}}{\sim PR_g^t} \times 100$$

$\sim PR_g^t$  = Non promoted from a grade in a year

$R_g^{t+1}$  = Repeaters from a grade in the following year

Repeaters: these are the students who do not achieve to promote the school year and re-enroll in the same grade.

Interpretation

This indicator sizes the critical situations experienced in the school progress through upper secondary, taking the “reaction” after facing school failure in the level.

Ceasing students can refer both demotivation caused by failure, or a loss of a vacancy in their school, precisely as a consequence of failure.

This indicator enables to analyze the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the school offer of the level. It is a versatile indicator, since it allows different possible breakdowns (gender, area, sector), and it is sensitive due to its potential to capture the modifications triggered by specific policies on a yearly basis.

In the case of some countries, it may occur that some students are not recorded as not-promoters of a grade who, due to a compensatory stage or similar, finally promote to the following grade. For this reason, it is crucial that the interpretation of the indicator is done along with the other indicators of the series.