

EDUCATION SECTOR: CENTRAL AMERICA

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EDUCATION SECTOR: CENTRAL AMERICA

I. The Problem

A. Formal Education Sub-sectors

1. Overview

Over the past twenty years, Latin American countries have made substantial investments (a per country average of 20% per annum of the national budget) in education. In the period from 1960 to the mid-seventies, this investment helped to increase enrollments from approximately 46% of primary aged children to 60%, and from approximately 18% of secondary aged youth to 40%. The Central American countries have made even more impressive improvement in primary level outreach. Students enrolled in primary school as a percentage of their age group increased from 67% to 89% in Honduras; from 66% to 92% in Nicaragua; and from 45% to 65% in Guatemala between 1960 and 1977.

Despite the high investment and the vast improvement in outreach over the past twenty years in Central America, formal education is still characterized by high drop-out and repetition rates and by high per student costs. Literacy rates and school enrollment levels remain problem areas in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. Almost uniformly, the quality of education is low at all levels of the system and administrative and management systems are weak.

Educational content often has little relevance to the practical and vocational needs of students, and there is a mismatch in all countries between the employable skills required in the country and the supply of individuals trained by the education system in those skills. Poorly trained and motivated teachers, low quality and often irrelevant curriculum materials, and inadequate physical facilities, textbooks, teacher's guides, basic educational materials and supplies are general problems. Budgetary constraints prohibit the expansion and improvement of all levels of education in all of the countries of the region.

The following paragraphs will provide a closer look at the problems of primary, secondary, higher, vocational and nonformal education in the Central American countries, Panama and Belize.

2. Primary Education

Central American primary education systems usually consist of six grades and are directed to students between the ages of seven and twelve. There is a significant proportion of pupils over twelve due to grade repetition. All Central American countries have laws mandating universal compulsory primary education but compliance varies from country to country. Significant variation even occurs within some of the countries. In contrast to U.S. schools, Central American school systems are administered centrally through a Ministry of Education and depend directly on the national budget for support.

All of the countries have instituted educational reforms in the recent past. These reforms have met with varying degrees of success. National curricula have been revised but still lean toward academic preparation and are not relevant to the needs of the majority of children, especially in rural areas. Some textbooks and materials have been developed but quality is generally low. The demand for textbooks far exceeds the supply in all countries. Adequate quality bilingual curricula is not generally available in countries with substantial indigenous populations such as Guatemala.

Educational reforms have contributed to improved teacher training at the primary level but there are serious deficiencies in the primary school teaching staff. These deficiencies contribute to the inequality, drop-out and wastage encountered in the system. Some factors affecting professional performance of teachers are: poor facilities; overcrowding; lack of textbooks and other teaching materials; low pay; and poor teacher preparation and teaching methods.

Drop-out rates are high in most areas, but are most serious in rural areas where only three or four years of education are the norm. Only a portion of students, under 40% in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua (1975 statistics), are retained throughout the primary level. This inefficiency and low educational quality combine to detract considerably from the

relatively successful effort countries have made to increase access to the formal system. (Summary statistical tables for all levels of the formal education system are presented in Chart III.)

3. Secondary Education

In most countries, secondary education consists of two cycles of three years each. The first cycle consists of general education; the second is more diversified, offering technical, vocational and industrial tracks, as well as a teacher training and a general academic track which is by far the most popular.

Private schools account for a higher proportion of student enrollment at the secondary level than at the elementary level. In the past, secondary-level education was reserved for the "elite", but over the last three decades more and more opportunities at the secondary level have been made available for the general population. Despite this, less than 50% of the eligible population is enrolled at the secondary level in most countries in the region. In general, access to secondary schooling is higher in urban than in rural areas.

The same factors affecting primary teacher performance affect performance of the secondary teacher as well. Schools are overcrowded, salaries are low, many teachers have little or no

preparation in education, the lecture method predominates and there are few incentives for secondary level teachers to up-grade or acquire the necessary skills to carry out their responsibilities.

4. Higher Education and Development Training

Higher education in Central America has typically been within the purview of state and religious-affiliated (primarily Catholic) institutions. The higher education institutions tend to be in urban areas and are limited in number. Most function independently. In contrast to the traditional universities, a few post-secondary institutions have emerged which offer specialized courses such as management training, health care and nursing, and teacher training.

The growth rate of higher education in Central America during the last decade also has been high, especially in Costa Rica and Panama. Enrollments range from over 20% of high school graduates in Costa Rica and Panama to about 10% in Guatemala and Honduras in 1980. Rates are lower in El Salvador and Nicaragua. There are serious problems facing higher education; among them: over-extended facilities; over-emphasis on traditional fields; lack of relevance of instruction to market and job requirements; poorly trained professors and instructors; and an extremely high attrition rate. Many of the universities are highly politicized.

Strikes and student demonstrations often paralyze the universities for months at a time.

5. Scholarships and Advanced Training

Lack of skilled personnel is a problem that is a key constraint to development in all of the Central American countries. The training of selected Central American professionals in the public and private sectors is an important activity which impacts on all sectors, not just education, and at all levels. This training, in-country, in third countries and in the United States, is an important part of development assistance programs because it assures that systems and technologies being put into place by foreign assistance will be sustained after the limited project objectives are met and the specific project assistance terminated. Post-secondary and short-term technical training also serve to extend donor out-reach. It provides opportunities to impact in an important way on institutions and programs which are critical to development but are not directly receiving donor project assistance.

B. Vocational and Technical Education

1. Formal Vocational Education

Vocational high school programs are provided by Ministries of Education in the areas of industrial, commercial and agricultural skills. Many students with lower performance records in primary schools enter the vocational high schools because they cannot get

into the traditional, academic high schools. (Upon completion of vocational school however, many enter universities without ever using the technical skills they have acquired).

Employers complain that the courses offered by the vocational high schools are not relevant to their needs and that not enough time is spent doing practical work. At the same time, the low quality level of graduates is also of concern to employers. Ministries of Education have difficulties meeting the relatively higher costs of vocational training and improving systems due to severe fiscal cutbacks now occurring in all of the Central American countries.

2. In-plant and Nonformal Skills Training

Despite a relatively large number of graduates from vocational schools, as well as growing numbers of the unemployed (many of whom have labor force experience), employers continue to complain of skills shortages. Most common in all countries is concern for the low skill level and productivity of currently employed workers, especially now when competing for export markets is of growing interest to Central American business. Next is the concern for training workers for plant expansion and for new industries which are given incentives to enter local economies. Finally, employers in all countries cite critical skill shortages in such occupations as maintenance mechanics, highly skilled

electricians, specialized technicians and mid-level managers, as bottlenecks to economic growth and employment expansion.

Employers in the U.S. and other developed countries would take it upon themselves to solve these training problems. In Central America, however, establishments tend to be small by U.S. standards and developing training programs for a few employees is costly. The ability of employers to provide skills training to workers is also limited by the use of imported technologies and because some plant owners have no industrial experience. Much of the training, production technologies and equipment in these situations must be imported.

Four Central American countries (Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama) have developed skills training institutions that are funded, and to a certain extent, managed by the private sector to meet the collective needs of the labor market. These institutions have been particularly successful in training new labor force entrants but have had less impact on upgrading the skills of the currently employed or in filling critical shortage occupations. This area requires close collaboration between employers and nonformal training institutions.

3. Organizational Improvement of the Labor Market

Improving the operations of skills training institutions and

stimulating in-plant training programs alone will not solve the skills training problems in Central American countries. Incentives to workers to enter the most critical occupations are needed but local labor markets are not organized to offer these incentives. The unemployed are almost all recent labor force entrants (either young people or adult women). Therefore, high unemployment will be relieved only in part by linking the unemployed with unfilled job openings. An equally critical factor will be maximum utilization of experienced workers through offering them skills upgrading. This should cause upward mobility effects resulting in newly created openings for entry level jobs which can then be filled by the unemployed.

C. Nonformal Activities and Other Educational Innovation

1. Programs

Most resources available for education in the region are used for traditional, formal education. There have been a number of innovative activities that have made use of mass media and nonformal education techniques for adult learners, but, with only a few exceptions, the countries have not been able to undertake large-scale implementation of new educational approaches. Innovative services that now exist in different states of development include: an open university (Costa Rica); a multi-sectoral nonformal education resource center (Guatemala);

educational television for in-school instruction (El Salvador); and a rural newspaper for newly-literate adults (Honduras). Several countries have made use of broadcast radio to provide instructional services to different groups. Although it has not been exploited to provide educational services, the widespread access to television (including access to U.S. television via satellite) offers great potential as a popular educational medium.

Four of the six countries (Belize excluded) have the special problem of providing educational services to minority indigenous populations that are culturally and linguistically distinct from the Spanish-speaking majority. Some efforts have recently been made to provide new instructional programs for these groups in their own languages, but, on the whole, the educational needs of the indigenous populations have been badly neglected.

Adult literacy campaigns have been a common phenomenon in the region. The massive literacy campaign that took place in Nicaragua following the 1979 revolution has spawned copies in several other countries. These campaigns have all been unabashedly political, intended to generate popular support for the programs of the government, as well as to teach literacy. While the political impact of the campaigns is difficult to assess, there is little indication that they have been a productive educational investment.

2. Delivery Systems

Although some of the educational innovation discussed above takes place in the formal system, all of the nonformal education and most of the mass media usage takes place outside the traditional school system. The instructional services usually reach adult learners in his or her home or local community. The programs do not usually follow a structured curriculum, can usually be delivered at low cost because they do not require extensive physical infrastructure or professional full-time teachers, and are generally designed to respond to very specific, practical information needs rather than providing generalized instruction.

Only a few--mainly adult literacy campaigns--are actually run by Ministries of Education. Most programs are run by private voluntary organizations although some large health, nutrition, family planning/population, and agriculture programs are run by the appropriate governmental ministry or agency. Local community groups and cooperatives often organize ad hoc nonformal education programs to respond to localized problems and needs.

The major problem with this type of activity in Central America is the lack of professional expertise and adequate physical resources to produce effective educational campaigns and services. Because the activities are so diverse, resources are spread thinly among different private and public organizations, and often there is no

clear mandate for leadership or coordination with one organization. None of the countries has a "critical mass" of experienced writers, planners and producers of materials and programs or the modern production equipment and facilities needed to effectively produce and disseminate materials. As a result, each organization independently tries to generate its own instructional services with inadequate resources and little or no linkages with other groups in the same field, resulting in quantitatively and qualitatively deficient services that often have little impact.

II. The Options

A. Introduction

1. Educational Reform: Overview

What should educational reform mean in the current Central American context? There are varying degrees of educational change that might be recommended, ranging from very fundamental shifts in educational services and delivery mechanisms to simple expansion of existing programs. A broadbrush attempt to remodel the education systems of all Central American countries, to reorient them, as a group, away from their traditional, university-directed educational pyramids toward an enforced spread of technically-oriented training would be one possibility. Another would be to institute wholesale conversion to media-based education or to move to an "open university" concept for higher education throughout the region.

Some may argue that existing educational systems in Central America are so inefficient and ill-adapted to the practical educational needs of the people they serve that basic structural changes are required to make services responsive and cost/effective. Decentralization of educational systems or privatization of the systems are other elements of what is being defined here as structural reform.

Clearly there is a continuum of possible reform options. Three will be considered in this document: first, a comprehensive structural reform of the education sector analagous in scope and implication to El Salvador's agricultural land reform; and second a more moderate reform of the entire education sector. This approach would not overturn existing systems as the structural reform would do, but would seek to effect changes in all aspects of the current system. (This approach was exemplified by the Chile, Columbia and Brazil sector reform programs of some years ago.) The third option would provide a moderate reform of the existing system, but more limited and targeted in scope. This reform would address itself to effecting change in a few key elements of the system rather than in the entire system.

2. Structural Change

Programs involving comprehensive and fundamental reforms, while justified in many cases on strictly technical and economic criteria, inevitably clash with political and institutional realities. Ministries of Education in Central America represent large, change-resistant vested interests. Teachers' unions are politically powerful and active. Parents are committed to educational attainment by their children within the existing, established formal school system. These factors make reform difficult to accomplish in the best circumstances.

Structural change is appealing in part because it allows for innovation and experimentation. However, in the Central American context efforts like those described above, in essence would be experiments. Opting for this course would mean discarding much of the current educational structure and while some innovations have been tried and found to offer possibilities on a limited scale, broadbased comprehensive structural substitution is untested. There would be little chance of reaching consensus among host country institutions, beneficiaries, other donors and interested parties to implement this kind of radical structural reform.

3. Sectoral Reform

Approaches which seek to improve the current system in all aspects and at all levels, are more familiar to the international donor community. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, this type of program was common. Large programs were implemented in Chile, Brazil and Columbia. Many countries participated in some kind of reform during that period.

In general, the sectoral programs tended to focus on the primary and secondary levels (about 80% of total funding) with educational planning, technical services and higher and other education receiving the remainder. The sector reform approach was generally considered to be successful but one negative lesson learned was that different elements of the sector advance at different rhythms and sometimes in different directions. Implementation of overarching sector reform proved difficult both for donor organizations and for the recipient country institutions. A country's ability to absorb, over a relatively short time period, the massive infusion of funding required to carry out these programs was a critical factor in the success they had. The countries of Central America do not have the capacity to implement massive sector reforms at this time.

4. Moderate Reform

The third option is based on the successful elements of the sector

approach, tempered to fit the particular development context of Central America. It would target on key elements of the system that can be addressed by outside donors and that have a high probability of impacting substantially on the sector. Efficiency and quality concerns at the primary and vocational levels of the system would receive high priority under this option. A first step toward detailing reform activity could be intensive updating of respective country education sector assessments. (All countries, with the possible exception of Belize and Costa Rica, have assessments that were done some ten years ago.)

It should be pointed out that implementing a moderate reform does not negate doing innovative projects as was described in the first reform option. It does mean, however, that these innovations must respond to country needs as identified through such actions as updating assessments and through intensive dialogue and discussion with host country officials and with other donors.

III. Recommendations

A. Reform Recommendations Overall

Analysis of the problems and opportunities of the educational sector for Central America, Panama and Belize leads to the conclusion that a targeted and moderate reform effort directed

toward improving the efficiency, quality, relevance and administrative/managerial effectiveness of primary and vocational education is a reasonable, attainable goal.

The reason for assigning high priority to the formal education sector is amply documented in the technical and research literature of other sectors. This literature stresses the crucial relationship and high correlation between basic education/literacy on the one hand and agricultural and rural productivity, economic growth, fertility decline, infant mortality reduction and improvement of nutritional status on the other. (Sources for information on these relationships are contained in the "selected references" annex of this paper.) Primary education is selected as the level of concentration because it impacts on almost all of the future citizens of the countries and because the literature demonstrates that it is at this level where greatest gains in social returns are achieved from educational investments. (At all levels of the education system, empirical data reveals that education investment compares favorably with most alternative investments.)

Vocational and technical education for employment was selected as the second key focus of the proposed reform because of the strong movement on the part of all of the countries towards productive and economic growth orientated activities, especially with high

private sector participation. This element of the reform would focus on expanding access to relevant skills training and vocational education in formal and nonformal settings, including in-plant training. Coordination of the training with private sector needs is an important part of this component. The increasing urbanization and evolving nature of skill needs for urban service, commerce and industry, has underscored the need for this component.

B. Formal Education: Assuring the Educational Base

Formal education, especially at the primary level, receives a very large percentage of Central American budget resources and is the sole exposure which the great majority of the population has to education preparing them to earn a living. The quality and relevance of this education is low and characterized by high repetition and drop-out, poorly-trained and motivated teachers, inadequate materials, faulty administration and under financing. To help counteract this and guarantee literacy and numeracy essential for progress, the donor community should provide large and sustained support to secure basic reforms, at the primary education level. Direction of that reform should not however, be the traditional one of simply increasing access by expanding the system. First priority for educational reform at the primary level is intensive action toward quality improvement. That action

should include greatly improved teacher training, provision of upgraded teaching material, utilization of modern education administration, and possibly, budget support to certain countries. In a few instances there may be reason to support further infrastructure development, especially in and around primary and secondary cities as rural-urban migration and high population growth intensifies demand.

A substantial level of effort is required for quality improvement. Fortunately, given the size of the countries, geographic proximity and relative homogeneity of the problems, some economies of scale can be realized. Special programs should be arranged through U.S. universities for Central American administrators, planners and managers; a regional materials development center should be established; utilization of mass media and other tested innovations in education should be expanded; pertinent research on primary education, including the effects of preprimary education on primary-level system efficiency, should be advanced in incorporating CAP research institutions into larger networks. Intensive updating of education sector assessments in all countries should be an initial step towards defining specific priorities for each country.

Secondary level reform will be covered in the section on vocational education. Educational reform at the post-secondary or

university levels, while potentially beneficial, is not recommended in any general sense. This type of undertaking is extremely costly, extraordinarily complex, fraught with political difficulties, and requires concentration of vast resources on very limited target audiences. Donor support should concentrate instead on upgrading administration and faculty in a few carefully selected institutions, especially in critical disciplines such as public administration, engineering, applied science, finance and education. In place of overall reform efforts at this level, participant training, technical assistance and exchange programs utilizing host country, U.S. and third country facilities and resources should be sizeably increased. (Advanced developing country possibilities should be explored particularly.)

C. Vocational Education: Developing Earning Skills

The secondary level of the formal system is where training for productive employment usually begins. In Central America, however, most secondary schooling still is directed towards preparation for the university. To attempt a full-scale comprehensive reform of education at this level, where the number of students is much smaller, would not be cost-effective. However, definite actions can be taken within the current framework to help develop employable skills and hence greater productivity potential. An initial reform recommendation is the

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early (first-cycle) introduction of pre-vocational education. This not only will improve employability and production potential for students getting only that far, but also will increase effectiveness of those going on to more advanced training.

Given the installed vocational capacities, no quantitative expansion of such facilities is recommended. However, efforts should be made to improve the caliber of instruction, primarily by fostering much greater involvement of the private sector, especially small to medium-sized firms. Increased private sector involvement with these public institutions can also result in public cost savings.

Most emphasis should be given to the expansion of skills-training institutions modeled after the payroll-tax-supported institutions which have proven successful in a number of Latin American countries. This expansion --which should embrace creation of national systems of this type plus development of additional facilities within those systems (and thus stands in distinct contrast to the situation of formal vocational schools) -- must be undertaken in extremely close cooperation with the private sector. Such institutions need to be integrated tightly with private sector demands for upgrading technical skills of employed workers, for supplying new workers with training in specific job skills, and for development of training in fields where there are

shortages of trained personnel. As these institutions develop, regional coordination should be explored. In an effort aimed at securing vital inputs from the private sector, programs should also be developed for private sector participation in setting employment standards, for current assessments of the labor market and for judging the productivity of that market and ways to enhance it.

ANNEX A

Major Donor Activities (Formal Education).

During the 1960s, the U.S. was the main donor to LAC countries, contributing some 60% of all development assistance. Today, U.S. bilateral assistance to Latin America has fallen to some 20% of the total and the Central American countries, Panama, and Belize currently depend on the major multilateral institutions for the bulk of their capital resources from nonprivate sources. The international financing institutions (IFIs) generally do not have field staffs. The large capital activities that the IFIs fund require less monitoring than do quality-related activities; therefore, IFIs have tended to fund infrastructure and equipment projects rather than projects designed to bring about qualitative and efficiency improvement in educational systems. As a result, qualitative improvement is a development need which cries for attention in all countries of the region, regardless of their school enrollment or literacy rates. The IFIs are not fully meeting the need in the infrastructure areas either. Rapid population growth, combined with urban migration, has resulted in

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unfilled demand for classrooms in primary and secondary cities. Deterioration in classrooms built 20 to 30 years ago also requires large renovation efforts and new classroom construction in rural areas.

All of the countries in the region, with the possible exception of Belize and Costa Rica, have education sector assessments that were prepared seven to twelve years ago. A key activity that donor institutions can collaborate on immediately is a rapid up-date of these assessments. The up-dated assessments could provide information on deficiencies in infrastructure, quality, training, materials, and other areas. This information will be needed if careful programming and coordination of future programs for the region is to be effected.

AID has recently published an educational policy statement. The Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean has followed-up on this by drafting an education sector strategy for the region. The major thrusts of the proposed strategy are that A.I.D. will focus on improving the efficiency and quality of basic education in those countries where basic literacy and numeracy are judged to be deficient. In other countries, AID will focus on activities in vocational and technical skills training especially as related to private sector employment issues. A.I.D.s current portfolio for Central America reflects this policy and strategy. Most new

program starts are to be in the employment/skills training area, except in countries like Guatemala, where bilingual basic education initiatives are being developed.

ANNEX B

Training

There are approximately 450-500 CA individuals studying in USAID-sponsored training programs each year. Most of this training is directly related to approved bilateral projects, where such training is an integral aspect of project design.

In addition to these mission training programs, two major new regional activities, totalling \$22.5 million, were initiated in FY 82 and FY 83 to address special development needs of the region. The approximate number of individuals from Central American countries to receive training under the two projects is outlined in Table II.

TABLE II.

Summary of Two CAP Regional Training Activities, FY 82-88

<u>Level</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
U.S. M.A. Level	105
U.S. B.A. Level	80
U.S. Short Term	204
Other Short Term	93
U.S. Long Term Non-degree	9
U.S. Private Enterprise	<u>22</u>
Total	513

The Central America training activities outlined above are an important part of U.S. foreign assistance because of their development, political, and economic impacts.

It is recommended that training activities be increased and expanded to help meet development manpower needs in agriculture, education, health, population, nutrition, energy, environment, public and business administration, engineering, economic development, information systems, science and technology, and

media. Specific types of regional and mission activities suggested are:

(1) Limited U.S. PhD level training in only critical areas.

(2) M.A. level U.S. training.

(3) Some increased U.S. B.A. level training, with short internships.

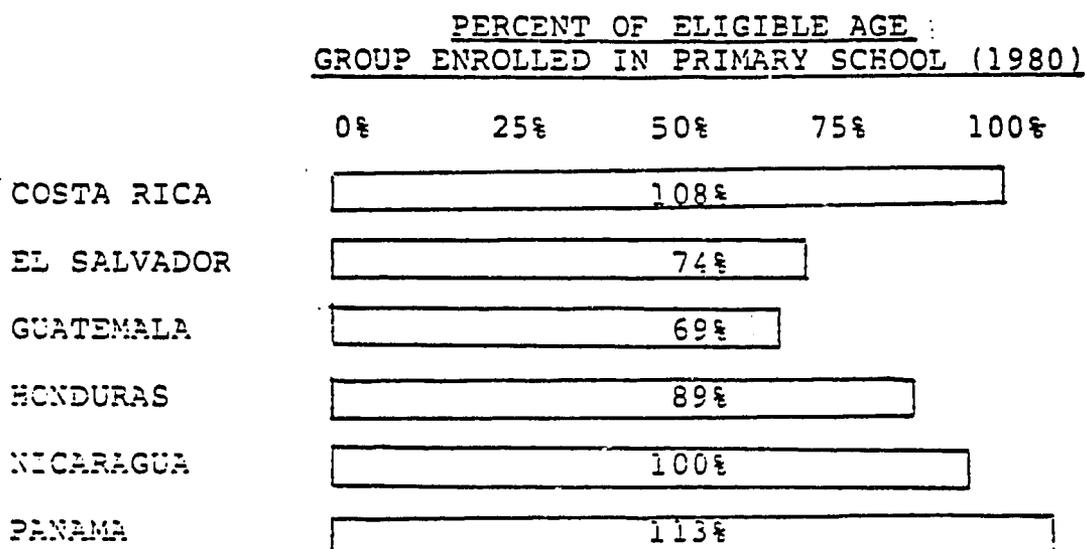
(4) Greatly expanded their-country long- and short-term training.

(5) Greatly expanded in-country, short-term training

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CHART 1PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT RATIOS: 1980

Statistic: The actual number of students in primary school programs, divided by the total population of eligible children. Enrollment ratios of more than 100% indicate that older students who did not attend primary school when they were young are also enrolled.



Source: Statistical Yearbook, UNESCO, 1982)

Comment: Primary school enrollment is considered a critical indicator of development of basic education services. It is highly correlated with literacy levels, agricultural productivity, health and nutrition indicators, and reduced fertility

Substantial progress toward full enrollment at the primary school level has been made throughout Central America. Full enrollment has largely been achieved in urban areas; the remaining deficiencies are in remote rural areas and among non-Spanish speaking indigenous groups. Enrollment ratios in Central America are essentially the same for girls as they are for boys.

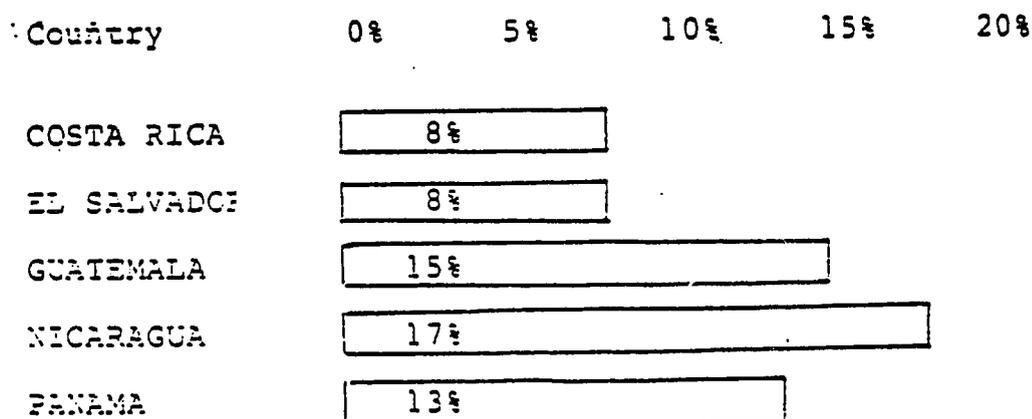
Belize figures not available.

GRADE REPETITION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Statistic: Percentage of enrolled students repeating the school year

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS REPEATING
GRADES IN PRIMARY SCHOOL (1980)

Source: Statistical Yearbook, UNESCO, 1982



Comment: Grade repetition is an indicator of the internal efficiency of the education system. A repetition rate of more than 3% to 5% at the primary school level usually indicates significant deficiencies in teaching, instructional materials, and/or facilities. High repetition increases the cost of education, both to students and to the national education system.

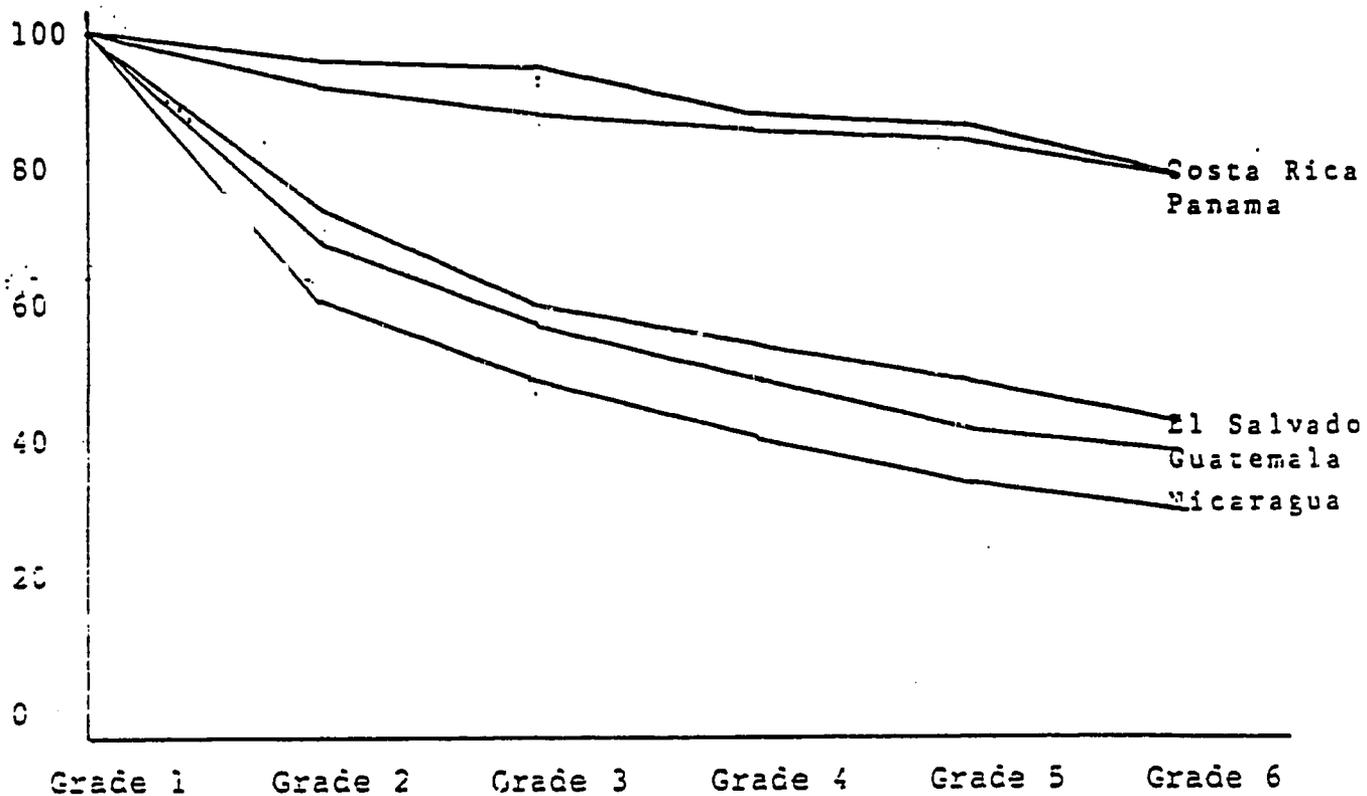
For comparison, Cuba reported a repetition rate of 5% in 1980. Mexico reported 10%.

Honduras and Belize figures not available.

SURVIVAL RATES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

(Percentage of education cohort reaching grade)
Year: mid 1970s

Percentage



Source: INDICATORS OF EDUCATION IN A.I.D. ASSISTED COUNTRIES

Comment: Survival rates are an indicator of the internal efficiency of the education system. High enrollment rates for the first years combined with low survival rates indicates an inefficient system. Developed nations, with 9 - 12 years of schooling rather than 6, have rates in the 90% range.

Honduras and Belize statistics not available.

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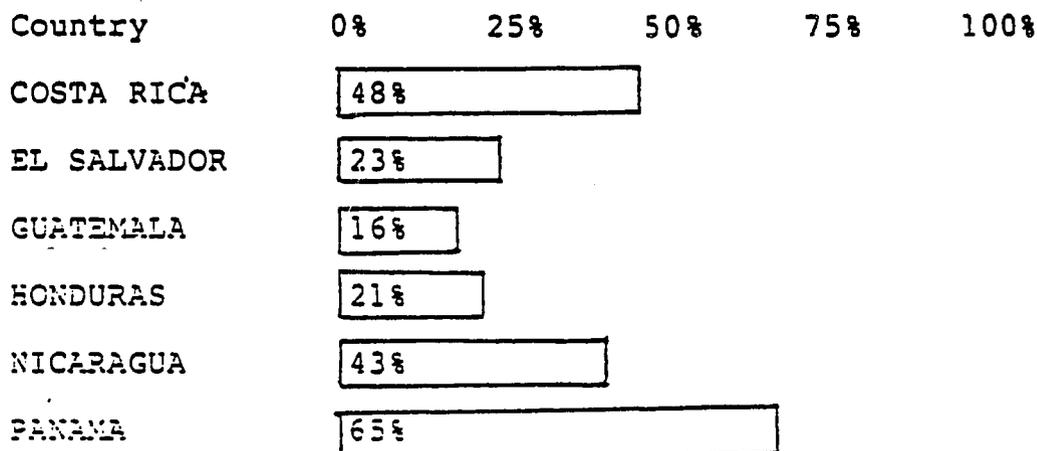
CHART 4

ENROLLMENT IN SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION: 1980

Statistic: This actual number of students in secondary schools and in higher education institutions, divided by the total population in the age groups that correspond to each level.

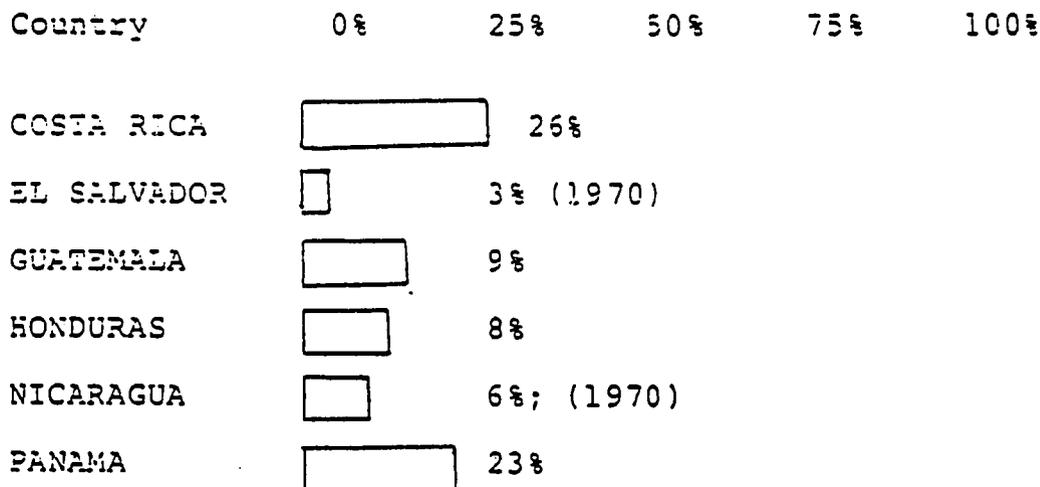
PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE AGE GROUP
ENROLLED IN SECONDARY SCHOOL (1982)

Source: Statistical Yearbook, UNESCO, 1980



PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE AGE GROUP
ENROLLED IN HIGHER EDUCATION (1980)

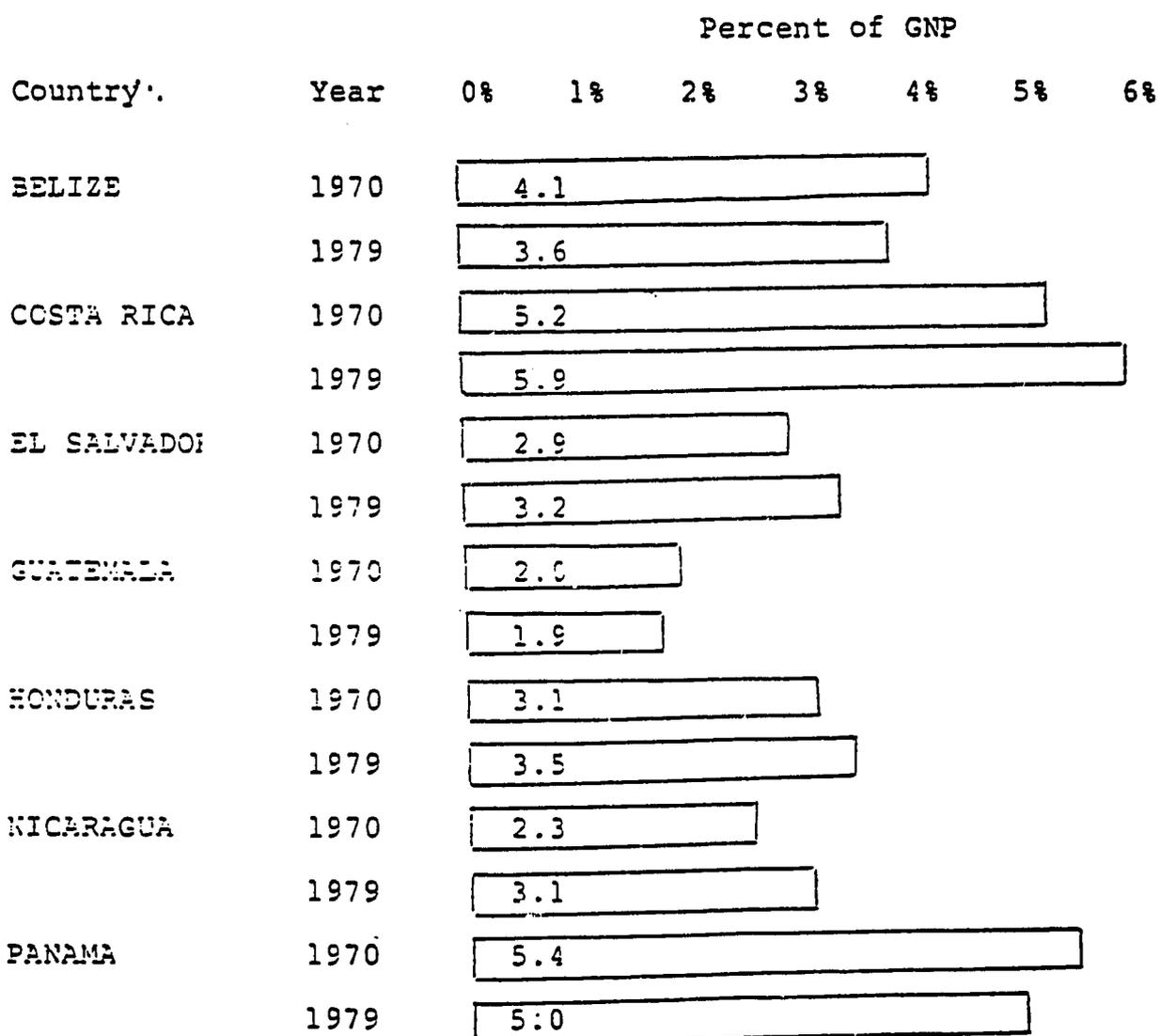
Source: Statistical Yearbook, UNESCO, 1982



Comment: For comparison, 1980 secondary school enrollments are 71% in Cuba, 37% in Mexico; and 90% in Puerto Rico. 1980 higher education enrollments are 20% in Cuba, 15% in Mexico and 35% in Puerto Rico.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION: 1979

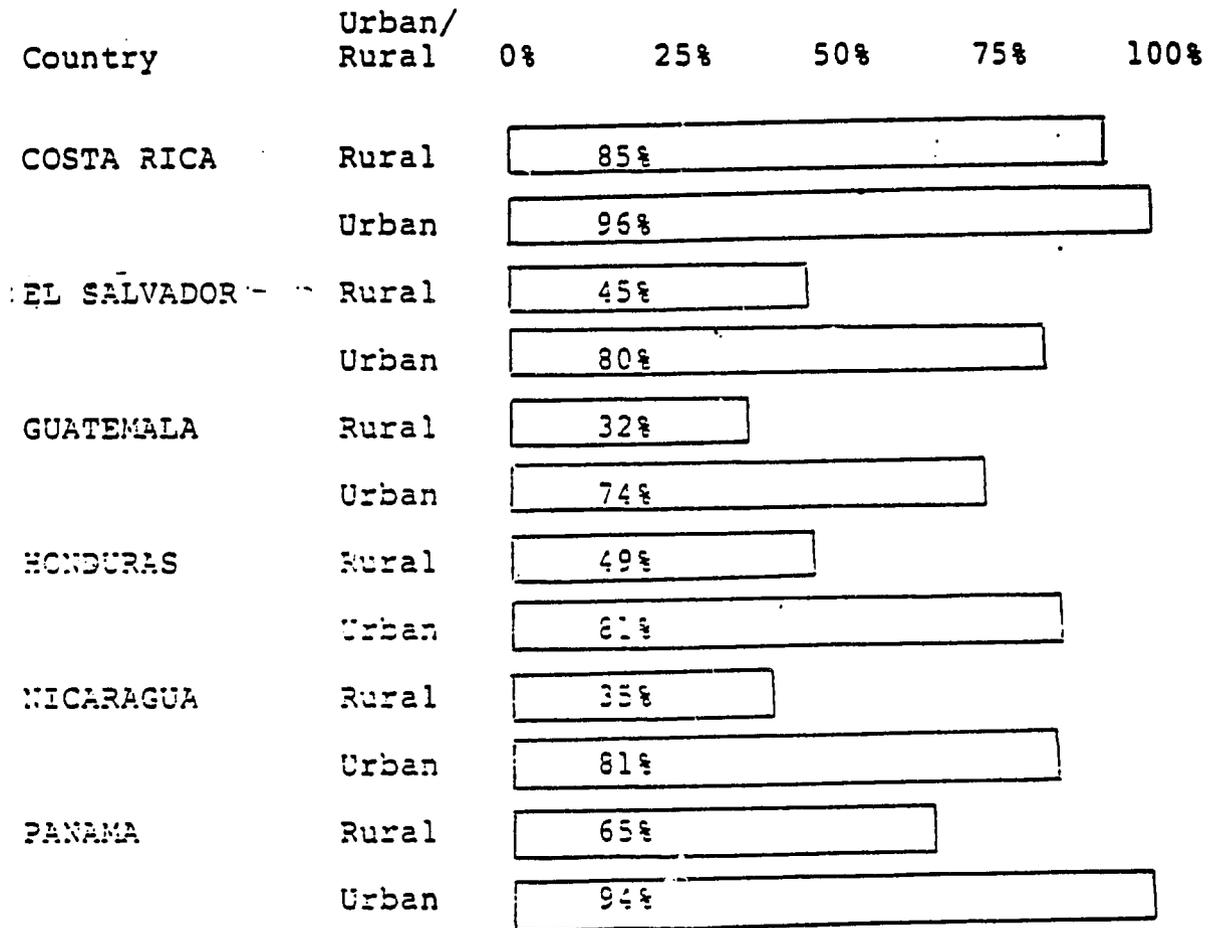
Statistic: Total expenditure on education as a percent of gross national product.



Source: Statistical Yearbook, UNESCO, 1982

RURAL AND URBAN LITERACY RATES

Statistic: percent of adults able to read and write.



Note: Belize figures not available. Overall literacy rate for Belize is over 95%, indicating high literacy in both rural and urban areas.

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