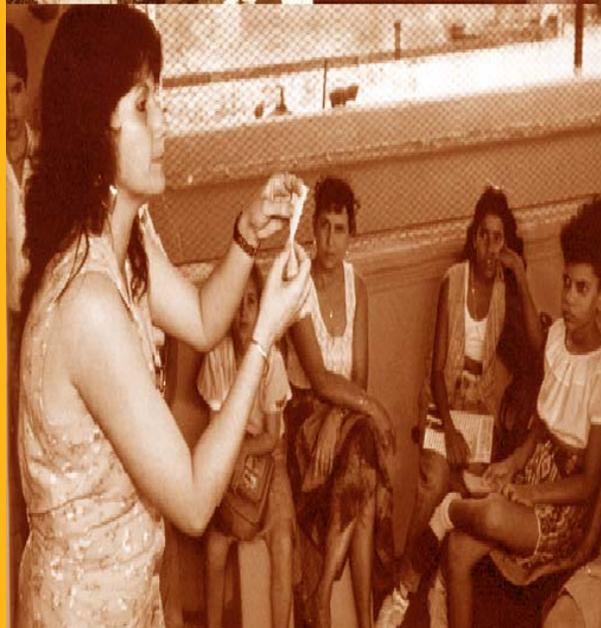


Working Papers  
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**EDUCATION,  
EMPOWERMENT AND  
QUALITY OF EDUCATION:  
THE ROLE OF SEXUALITY  
EDUCATION**

Directed and Supervised by the  
Country Support Team for Latin  
America and the Caribbean

Consultant Bienvenido Argueta



**UNFPA Country Support Team  
for Latin America &  
the Caribbean  
UNFPA CST/LAC -Mexico City**



**UNFPA COUNTRY SUPPORT  
TEAM FOR LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN.**

**EDUCATION, EMPOWERMENT AND QUALITY  
OF EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF SEXUALITY  
EDUCATION.**

**Coordinators:**

**Beatriz Castellanos & Martha Moyano  
UNFPA/CST/LAC**

**Consultant:**

**Bienvenido Argueta Hernández**

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# **Education, Empowerment and Quality of Education: The Role of Sexuality Education.**

## **I. Introduction.**

Globalization and the era of knowledge have motivated deep reformations in the educational systems. More and more, the development of the countries depends, among other factors, of the renovation and transformation capacities in the citizen's formation processes. The traditional functions assigned to education during modernity have been renewed as for the exercise of the citizenship in democratic societies and to the work or labour preparation in a more and more technified and competitive world. At the present time, the countries are facing the challenge of offering bigger education opportunities for all with the purpose of promoting sustainable human development, to reduce the inequalities and to attack poverty. However, the uncertainties are big if it is considered that a tendency exists to the increment of the gaps of progress and knowledge among rich and poor. Special concern constitutes the fact that poverty has bigger incidence in the group of women, therefore, the efforts of social and economic development should prioritize actions that tends to the reduction of gaps among the sexes or genders.

The relevance of education to eradicate poverty has been recognized by the world leaders in different international conferences. In the International Conference on Population and Development taken place in Cairo in 1994 and in the Declaration and the Woman's Fourth World Conference taken place in Beijing in 1995, it is manifested with clarity that education is an indispensable instrument to improve the quality of life and the individual and social development. In this sense, education is constituted in a component of economic, political and social well-being in a scenario where the knowledge, abilities and skills or dexterities change quickly. Likewise, it is recognized that education should contribute to the woman's empowerment, in terms of her insertion to the work or labour market and increase of her contribution to the democratic and economic developments in the countries. Among other, education promotes equity or justness and equality among the sexes or genders, guaranteeing the woman's rights, favouring "her capacity of adoption of decisions at all levels and in all the domains of life, especially in the ground of sexuality and reproduction." Therefore, education builds the conditions so that the different groups of population, particularly woman, can generate knowledge, attitudes and values linked to sustainable human development.

In this same line, the World Conferences of Education of Jomtiem (1990) and Dakar (2000) they intend to eliminate the discrimination conditions in the educational systems, as for their universal access to the primary and secondary education and to obtain an education of quality that allows to satisfy their learning needs. Likewise, the resolved participation of men is sought in the corresponsability of population and development programs especially as for the reproductive sexual behaviour and its social and family function. The education of

the boys and girls are fundamental to the effects of promoting from early age the equality and equity or justness between men and women. Special mention is made to the commitment to suppress the disparities among the genders in primary and secondary school education as of here to the year 2005 and to achieve before the year 2015 equality among the genders in education, in function of guaranteeing to the girls the full and equal access to a basic education of good quality, as well as a good performance.

On the other hand, the countries of the world, including the Latin American countries, they have intended in the framework of the Summit of the Millennium of 2000, to promote efforts guided toward the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Being fundamental objectives the universal provision of primary education, to promote gender equality and woman's autonomy, to reduce infant mortality, to improve maternal health, to combat HIV/AIDS and other illnesses, to guarantee environmental sustainability and to foment a world alliance for development.

In reason of the commitments assumed in the World Conferences and the different actions that they are promoted at country level in the Latin America and The Caribbean Region with relation to the topics of development, gender equity, and education, it is advisable to review in first term, the advances carried out, the obstacles and pending challenges. Also, it is necessary to consider that in order to accomplish the great objectives of the reduction of poverty and to improve the access and quality of education, it is required among other to analyze and to propose strategies that allow empowerment to the women and to strengthen the relevancy and quality of education through the education of sexuality.

For this, in the first part of the document, a succinct analysis is made of the access to education and the situation of parity or disparity with regard to the variable of gender. For such effects the literacy indexes and schooling system are reviewed from the pre-primary level till the tertiary level, establishing in turn the relationship among poverty, education level and gender. This allows to identify the main challenges in Latin America with regard to education. In a second part, the problem of the quality of education in Latin America and how sexual education constitutes a basic strategy to assist the basic educational needs and to improve the learnings that are built in the educational systems, is approached. Continuing with this dynamics thematic and methodological areas are proposed in regard to sexual education and finally, the action lines are sketched for their development at regional, national and local level.

## II. Access to Education and Gender in Latin America.

In general it can be affirmed that the coverage of the primary level in Latin America is high, as it is manifested in the rates of gross and net coverage. This situation is different if the coverage rates for the pre-primary, secondary and third level are considered, where the defers of school coverage shows the need to make a special effort to assist the children, youth and mature population in Latin America, especially if it is considered the correlation that exists among years of education and overcoming the barrier of poverty that it requires at least between 9 years and 12 years of school courses or curriculum (ECLAC, 2000a and 2000b).

Since the second half of the XX century, in Latin America bigger gender equity is observed in the access to education (Schiefelbein and Peruzzi, 1991; Stromquist, 1995; United Nations, 2003). This situation has been affirming itself to such a point that in almost all the countries of the region a same or bigger relation is observed in the educational coverage for women with regard to men, in all levels, from the pre-primary level to the university level. The disparity in favour of men over women is manifested in the literacy for the groups of population between 15 years and more.

### Literacy.

As it is observed in Chart No. 1, the literacy rate in the population of 15 years old and more for Latin America and the Caribbean is only overcome by Europe and Oceania, Australian Continent. However, the same as all the continents and regions a gender disparity in favour of men in 2 percentage points, what constitutes a low rate of disparity of gender, if it is compared with Asia and Africa where inequity levels are found to be sensibly superiors.

**Chart No. 1**  
Illiteracy Rates by Continents and Regions:  
Population of 15 years old and more, Year 2000

Continents and regions	Illiteracy Rates 15 years old and more(%)			Illiteracy Rates 15 – 24 years old (%)		
	Both Sexes	Men	Wome n	Both Sexes	Men	Women
WORLD	20.3	14.8	25.8	13.2	10.1	16.6
AFRICA	40.2	30.9	49.2	23.7	18.4	29.0
ASIA	24.4	17.0	32.1	14.8	10.9	19.0
EUROPE	1.8	1.1	2.4	0.3	0.3	0.4
OCEANIA	6.1	5.2	7.0	5.7	4.9	6.4
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	11.1	10.1	12.1	5.0	5.2	4.7

Source: UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, 2002

If one examines the population's group between 15 and 24 years old, it is possible to observe two important phenomena. In the first place, illiteracy sensibly decreases what shows the policies' impact in the countries of the region in regard to literacy programs and the extension of the primary level coverage. In second place, gender equity is balanced in the alphabetized population what implies a greater access of the female population to educational services.

The analysis of literacy by country, however, puts in manifesto that the problem of illiteracy in populations of 15 year-old and more is alarming in 5 countries of the region: Haiti, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador, whose rates of illiteracy oscillate between 50% and 21%. Also, it is observed that gender inequity for adult women is present in 15 countries of the region. This situation especially affects Haiti, Guatemala, El Salvador, Bolivia, Peru and Mexico.

**Chart No. 2**  
Rates of Illiteracy in Latin America by Country:  
15 year-old population and more, Year 2000

COUNTRY	Illiteracy Rate			COUNTRY	Illiteracy Rate		
	(%)				(%)		
	Both Sexes	Men	Women		Both Sexes	Men	Women
HAITI	50.2	48.0	52.2	ECUADOR	8.4	6.8	10.1
GUATEMALA	31.5	24.0	38.9	PANAMÁ	8.1	7.5	8.8
NICARAGUA	33.5	33.8	33.3	VENEZUELA	7.5	7.0	8.0
HONDURAS	25.0	25.1	25.0	BELIZE	6.8	6.7	6.8
EL SALVADOR	21.3	18.5	23.9	PARAGUAY	6.7	5.6	7.8
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	16.3	16.3	16.3	PUERTO RICO	6.2	6.4	6.0
BOLIVIA	14.6	8.1	20.8	COSTA RICA	4.4	4.5	4.4
BRAZIL	13.1	13.0	13.2	CHILE	4.2	4.1	4.4
JAMAICA	13.1	17.1	9.3	CUBA	3.3	3.2	3.4
PERÚ	10.1	5.3	14.8	ARGENTINA	3.2	3.2	3.2
MÉXICO	8.8	6.7	10.9	URUGUAY	2.4	2.9	2.0
COLOMBIA	8.4	8.4	8.4	GUYANA	1.5	1.1	1.9

**Source:** UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, 2002

If one observes in Chart No. 3, one can deduce that for younger group of population, between 15 and 24 years old, the rate of illiteracy sensibly decreases and in turn, the disparity of gender toward the woman. The situation is alarming in Guatemala, where the difference of illiteracy between men and women is of 13 percentage points in the detriment of women. The countries with more illiteracy are Nicaragua and Haiti with 28% and 36% of illiteracy for this age group.

**Chart No. 3**  
Rates of Illiteracy in Latin America by Country:  
Population of 15 to 24 years old, Year 2000

COUNTRY	Illiteracy Rate			COUNTRY	Illiteracy Rate		
	(%)				(%)		
	Both Sexes	Men	Women		Both Sexes	Men	Women
HAITI	35.6	35.7	35.5	MEXICO	3.0	2.6	3.4
NICARAGUA	28.4	29.0	27.7	PARAGUAY	2.9	2.9	3.0
GUATEMALA	20.9	14.6	27.3	ECUADOR	2.8	2.5	3.1
HONDURAS	14.9	16.5	13.4	PUERTO RICO	2.5	3.1	1.8
EL SALVADOR	11.8	11.0	12.7	VENEZUELA	2.0	2.7	1.4
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	8.9	9.6	8.1	BELIZE	2.0	2.7	1.3
JAMAICA	6.0	9.3	2.5	COSTA RICA	1.7	2.0	1.4
BRAZIL	4.7	6.0	3.3	ARGENTINA	1.4	1.7	1.2
BOLIVIA	4.2	2.0	6.4	CHILE	1.1	1.3	1.0
PERU	3.3	1.8	4.8	URUGUAY	0.9	1.2	0.6
PANAMA	3.3	2.9	3.7	CUBA	0.2	0.2	0.2
COLOMBIA	3.1	3.8	2.5	GUYANA	0.2	0.2	0.2

**Source:** UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, 2002

### Pre-primary Level.

In Chart No. 4 one can observe that for the year 2000/2001 the gross rate of the school courses or school curriculum of the pre-primary level in 9 Latin American countries was inferior to 50%. The countries with less coverage are Honduras and Nicaragua that have not yet been able to overcome 30% of attention in this educational level. While in Belize, Colombia and Dominican Republic the coverage levels are still inferior to 40%, in El Salvador, Bolivia, Panama and Venezuela the coverage comes closer to 50%. On the other hand, there are 6 countries in the region whose rate oscillates between 51% and 70%, such it is the case of Guatemala, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Peru and Ecuador. The countries with greater attention in this level are Chile, Mexico, Jamaica, Costa Rica, Suriname and Cuba whose attention oscillates between 77% and 109%. With regard to the educational attention by gender an equity is observed regarding access. Except for the case of Chile and Suriname, the other countries of the region report an equality or a greater access of women up to 2%.

**Chart No. 4**

Pre-primary level: School Curriculum Gross and Net Rates, Years 2000/2001

Country	Gross Rate			Net Rate		
	Both Sexes	Men	Women	Both Sexes	Men	Women
HONDURAS	(**) 21	(**) 21	(**) 22	21	(**) 21	(**) 22
NICARAGUA	27	26	27	27	26	27
BELIZE	31	30	32	30	29	31
COLOMBIA	37	37	37	33	(**) 33	(**) 34
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	(**) 38	(**) 38	(**) 38	...	...	...
EL SALVADOR	44	43	44	40		
BOLIVIA	46	46	47	36	36	36
PANAMA	47	47	48	46	45	46
VENEZUELA	(**) 48	(**) 48	(**) 49	(**) 44	...	...
GUATEMALA	51	51	51	37	37	37
ARGENTINA	60	60	61	(**) 60	(**) 60	(**) 61
URUGUAY	63	62	63	45	44	46
BRAZIL	63	63	63	49	49	49
PERU	64	64	65	61	61	62
ECUADOR	69	68	70	57	56	58
CHILE	77	78	77	41	41	42
MEXICO	77	76	78	69	68	70
JAMAICA	82	82	83	82	81	83
COSTA RICA	87	87	87	59	59	60
SURINAME	97	97	96	(**) 57	(**) 58	(**) 55
CUBA	109	108	110	97	96	99

**Source:** UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, 2002

(\* \*) National estimate

... Without estimate

With regard to the net rate, one can affirm that only 4 countries maintain the same percentage of attention than that of the gross rate, like it is the case of Nicaragua, Honduras, Argentina and Jamaica. In all the other countries a decrease of the net rates is observed with regard to the gross rates. Therefore, in most of the cases the attention in the pre-primary level observes a high percentage of population in extra age. On the other hand, countries such as Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Brazil, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Chile whose differences in percentages between the net rate and the gross rate go from 10% to 36%. The same as the gross rate, it is observed that the relation between men and women favours the latter, given the fact that from 18 Latin American countries, 14 report a greater net rate for women, although this is minimum. Only in Suriname a difference is reported in favour of men in a 3%.

## Primary Level.

As it can be observed in Chart No. 5, the gross rate of the primary level for the years 2000/2001 overcame 100% in all the Latin American countries. The gross rate oscillated between 102% to 124%. This means that in almost all the cases there is a relatively high level of extra age due among others to the school repetition and incorporation after a temporary desertion. With regard to gender parity between men and women in the gross rate in primary level, one can affirm that in 16 countries there is an equal or superior rate for women and only in 4 countries there is an inferior rate. Especially the cases of Brazil and Guatemala can be mentioned whose rates are of 0.93 and 0.95 in favour of men.

The net rate for the primary level shows that in most of the countries of Latin America it sensibly decreases in regard to the gross rate. Nevertheless, in most of the countries there is an attention greater than 90%. Countries like Guatemala, Chile, Nicaragua, Honduras, Colombia and Venezuela attend between 84% and 89% in both sexes. In the cases of Guatemala, Cuba, Chile, Colombia, Argentina and Brazil, the rate for women is inferior to that of men. In this sense, one can affirm that in general terms the rate of net attention has achieved the equity of gender.

**Chart No. 5**

Primary level: School Curriculum Gross and Net Rates, Parity of Gender.  
Years 2000/2001

Country	Gross Rate			Net Rate			Parity of Gender
	Both Sexes	Men	Women	Both Sexes	Men	Women	
GUATEMALA	102	106	98	84	86	82	0.95
JAMAICA	100	100	99	95	95	95	1.00
CUBA	102	104	100	97	98	97	0.99
CHILE	103	104	101	89	89	88	0.99
NICARAGUA	104	103	104	81	80	81	1.01
COSTA RICA	107	108	105	91	91	91	1.00
EL SALVADOR	109	112	107	...	...	...	...
HONDURAS	106	105	107	88	87	88	1.02
URUGUAY	109	110	109	(**) 90	(**) 90	(**) 91	1.01
PANAMA	112	113	110	100	100	100	1.00
COLOMBIA	112	113	112	(**) 89	(**) 89	(**) 88	1.00
MEXICO	113	114	113	99	99	100	1.01
BOLIVIA	116	117	115	(**) 97	(**) 97	(**) 97	1.00
ECUADOR	115	115	115	99	99	100	1.01
ARGENTINA	120	120	120	(**) 100	(**) 100	(**) 99	0.99
BELIZE	128	130	126	(**) 98	(**) 96	(**) 100	1.04
PERU	127	128	126	100	100	100	1.00
SURINAME	127	127	126	(**) 98	(**) 97	(**) 100	1.03
BRAZIL	155	159	150	97	100	93	0.93
VENEZUELA	(**) 102	(**) 103	(**) 101	(**) 88	(**) 87	(**) 89	1.02
PARAGUAY	(**) 113	(**) 115	(**) 111	92	92	92	1.01
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	(**) 124	(**) 126	(**) 122	(**) 93	(**) 92	(**) 93	1.02

Source: UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, 2002

(\* \*) National estimate

... Without estimate

Another of the indexes that shows the advances had in Latin America in regard to the expansion of primary education, is constituted by permanency. This could be observed in the survival that the boys and the girls have up to the fourth grade of primary level (See Chart No. 6). In countries that report this type of information, it is observed that in most of them the 80% of students is overcome. Countries like Colombia, Guatemala and Nicaragua only present indexes of abandonment between 41% and 30% desertion. In turn in most countries there is a balance between permanency of the system among genders.

**Chart No. 6**  
Rate of survival at fourth grade of primary level.  
Year 1999/2000

Country	Both Sexes	Men	Women
CHILE	100	100	100
JAMAICA	98	98	99
CUBA	97	97	98
ARGENTINA	92	91	92
MEXICO	90	90	91
PERU	90	90	90
URUGUAY	90	92	88
COSTA RICA	85	82	89
BELIZE	85	83	87
BOLIVIA	85	86	84
PARAGUAY	82	81	84
ECUADOR	81	80	82
COLOMBIA	70	68	73
GUATEMALA	62	62	63
NICARAGUA	59	55	63

**Source:** UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, 2002

(\* \*) National estimate

... Without estimate

Nevertheless, the indexes of efficiency and coverage are flattering, there is a concern for the quality of education as it is shown in the First Comparative International Study on Language, Mathematics and Associated Factors in Third and Fourth Grade, carried out by UNESCO in 1997. This study reveals that in the case of the mean scores of Mathematics for fourth grade, the average student of the region only answered correctly 50% of the questions, what is equivalent to a score of 250. With the exception of Cuba whose score was 353, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Venezuela and Honduras had mean scores between 269 and 226 (UNESCO, 1998). Being the results of Language similar to those of Mathematics.

## Secondary Level.

According to Chart No. 7, the school curriculum gross rate of secondary level in Latin America for the years 2000/2001 overcomes 50% in all the cases, with the exception of Guatemala that only reports 37%. Another group of Latin American countries such as El Salvador, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Belize and Mexico present rates that oscillate between 54% and 75%, while in Bolivia, Jamaica, Chile, Cuba, Peru and Suriname there are gross rates between 80% and 87%. In other countries as Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil gross rates between 97% and 108% are observed. If the attention of secondary level is compared with the pre-primary level, one can affirm that in the first one, gross rates are sensibly higher. Another fundamental characteristic of the secondary level is that, except for countries like Guatemala, Peru and Bolivia, in all the other countries there is a disparity of gender in favour of women. The same as the primary level, the secondary level reveals a net rate sensibly inferior to the gross rate. In this sense, in all the countries it is observed that the net rate is much lower than the gross rate, staying the same level of disparity of gender in favour of woman.

**Chart No. 7**

Secondary level: School Curriculum Gross and Net Rates,  
Parity of Gender. Years 2000/2001

Country	Gross Rate			Net Rate			Parity of Gender
	Both Sexes	Men	Women	Both Sexes	Men	Women	
GUATEMALA	37	39	35	(**) 26	(**) 27	(**) 25	0.94
ECUADOR	57	57	58	48	47	49	1.04
NICARAGUA	(**) 54	(**) 50	(**) 58	36	33	38	1.18
PARAGUAY	60	59	61	(**) 47	(**) 45	(**) 48	1.06
COSTA RICA	60	58	63	49	47	52	1.11
VENEZUELA	(**) 59	(**) 54	(**) 65	(**) 50	(**) 46	(**) 55	1.20
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	(**) 59	(**) 53	(**) 67	(**) 40	(**) 35	(**) 45	1.28
PANAMA	69	67	71	(**) 62	(**) 59	(**) 65	1.09
COLOMBIA	70	67	73	(**) 57	(**) 54	(**) 59	1.10
BELIZE	74	71	77	63	61	66	1.07
MEXICO	75	73	77	(**) 60	(**) 57	(**) 62	1.08
BOLIVIA	80	81	78	(**) 68	(**) 69	(**) 67	0.98
PERU	(**) 86	(**) 89	(**) 82	(**) 65	(**) 67	(**) 64	0.96
JAMAICA	83	(**) 82	(**) 85	74	73	76	1.04
CHILE	85	85	86	75	73	76	1.03
CUBA	85	83	87	82	80	84	1.05
SURINAME	87	80	94	(**) 61	(**) 55	(**) 67	1.22
ARGENTINA	97	94	100	(**) 79	(**) 77	(**) 82	1.06
URUGUAY	98	92	105	(**) 70	(**) 66	(**) 74	1.11
BRAZIL	108	103	114	71	69	74	1.08
EL SALVADOR	54	...	...	...	...	...	...
GUYANA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
HAITI	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
HONDURAS	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Source: UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, 2002.

(\*\*) National estimate. ... Without estimate

## Superior Level (University Education).

As it is observed in Chart No. 8, only 13 countries present information for the years 2000/2001. Approximately half of the countries report a coverage rate that oscillates between 15% and 18%. In four cases, the rate of attention at superior level oscillates between 21% and 29% and in three cases it is attended between 36% and 38%. In terms of parity of gender, only in two countries, Mexico and Chile there is a disparity of gender in detriment of the woman. In all the other cases the index of parity of gender favours the woman in a relation that it goes from 1.09 to 1.89.

**Chart No. 8**

Superior Level: School Curriculum Gross Rate and Parity of Gender  
Years 2000/2001

Countries	Both Sexes	Men	Women	Parity of Gender
HONDURAS	15	13	17	1.31
COSTA RICA	16	15	18	1.21
BRAZIL	17	14	19	1.29
EL SALVADOR	18	16	19	1.24
PARAGUAY	(**) 17	(**) 14	(**) 19	1.36
MEXICO	21	21	20	0.96
JAMAICA	16	(**) 11	22	1.89
COLOMBIA	23	22	24	1.09
CUBA	25	23	26	1.14
VENEZUELA	(**) 29	(**) 24	(**) 35	1.46
CHILE	38	39	36	0.92
URUGUAY	36	26	47	1.83
BOLIVIA	36	...	...	

Source: Institute of Statistics of UNESCO, 2002

(\*\* ) National estimate

... Without estimate

## Conclusions concerning the educational coverage in the region .

From the previous analysis you can conclude that the Latin American countries have made significant advances in regard to the educational coverage in the formal systems, particularly in the primary level. However, there are two fundamental problems that should be solved. In the first place, the expansion of school matriculation in the pre-primary and secondary levels strengthening the parity that has been achieved with regard to gender and to the more disfavoured groups, as it is manifested in the commitments of Dakar. In the case of the lack of coverage of the secondary level, it conduces directly to think on non formal education programs, especially those that are addressed to training, work, and reproductive health.

In second place, the challenge stated by education as a strategy in order to promote human development and the effective exercise of human rights, demands in addition to the expansion of the school coverage the increment of quality. In fact, a fundamental part of the coverage increase constitutes to elevate efficiency, to decrease school failure, to make education pertinent and to be able to prepare the Latin American citizens in the new context of international competitiveness. At the present time there are educational reformations being carried out that, in most of the cases it puts particular emphasis in the academic performance of mathematics and logical reasoning, and in reading and writing. The reformations also promote assessment or evaluation systems of school performance in the areas previously indicated. Nevertheless, the need that the children and the youth develop reasoning capacities and to know the languages thoroughly in order to have access to the universal codes that allow them to articulate the social and natural world, they constitute insufficient learnings. An education of quality also demands essential abilities of understanding and respond to daily life problems, as well as to create attitudes, values and behaviours required in the construction of equal, democratic societies, and with possibilities opened to change. Abandoning the thematizing process of the most enormous problems of the children, the youth and of the person during all his or her adult life would be to empty education of the basic contents. In this sense, the educational reformations that extend their actions toward those areas outlined in the initiatives of the Cairo, Beijing, Jomtiem and Dakar offer greater opportunities to effectively improve the quality of education making this more pertinent.

In fourth place, it is advisable to indicate that the quality of education is also related to the development of investment, creativity and updating of the educational systems capacities in order to offer better infrastructure conditions, books and educational materials, complementary attendance, and mainly, good formation and preparation of teachers.

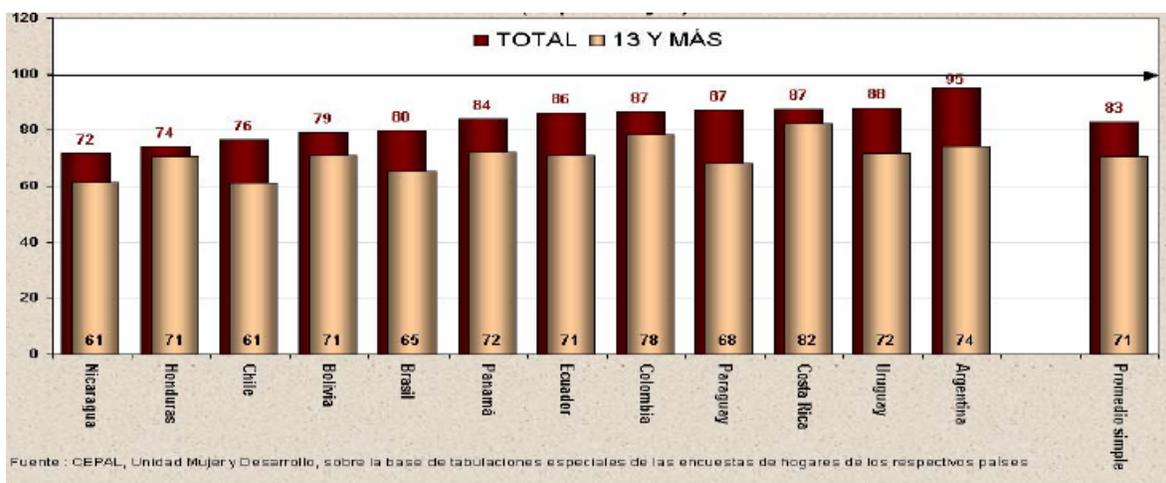
### **Education, Gender and Poverty.**

The evidences of the studies on poverty in Latin America show that during the year 2000 the poor population's percentage was of 42.1%, which grew up to 42.5% in the year 2001. The projections for the year 2003 ascend to 43.9% (ECLAC, 2003). The studies also show that there are more women than men in situation of poverty, also the income or revenues of the women head of the family are inferior to those of men in poor and non poor homes. This means that the concern to eradicate poverty as a priority in public policies should not only consider the promotion of the equality and equity of gender, but in a resolved way to promote the woman's participation.

Although it is certain that education is a necessary and intervening factor for the eradication of poverty, it is also certain, as it has been shown in the first part of this document that women have achieved better opportunities in the access to education. But this simple fact doesn't constitute a fundamental factor for the increment in the income or revenues, to achieve a social mobility and to improve its

quality of life in comparison with the masculine population. As it is shown in Graph No. 1, women with 13 years and more of education, they have their remuneration 30 lower% than that of men. This obeys among other circumstances to the fact that women have been displaced to studies and professions that are not valued in the same way in the work or labour market than those chosen by men.

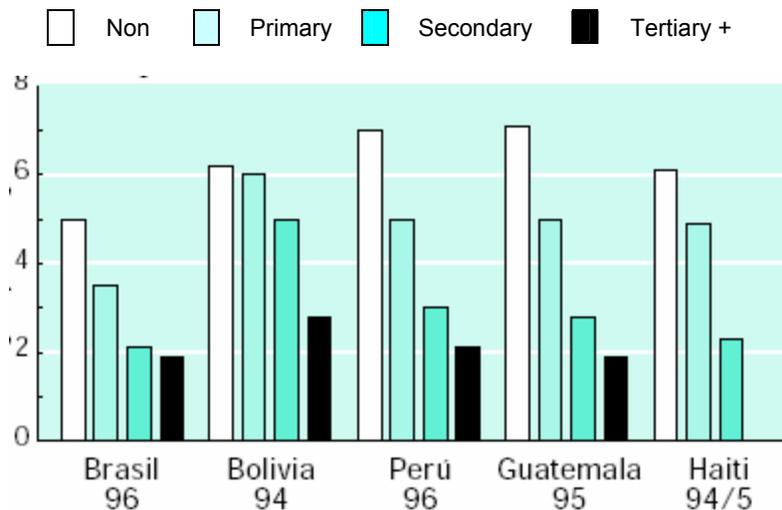
**Graph No. 1**  
 Latin America (12 countries)  
 Relation between Average Income of Work per hour of Women and Men  
 Total and for 13 or more years of Instruction Urban Zones, around 1999 (In percentages)



**Source:** ECLAC, Social Panorama of Latin America 2002-2003, (2003)

One of the positive aspects that a greater number of years of school courses provide for women constitutes the fact that they marry or unite themselves at an older age, they delay their first pregnancy, they have smaller quantity of children, they possess knowledge of health, they plan the family and they satisfy better their needs and that of their family (UNFPA, 2002 and 2003). In this same sense, the Woman's Unit of the Inter-American Development Bank (2001) indicated that there is a negative correlation between the fertility rates and the degree of school courses in Latin America. In the measure in which the women's degree of secondary school courses increases, the number of children decreases.

**Graph No. 2**  
Total fertility rates and level of school courses  
Children per Woman



**Source:** Inter-American Development Bank, Unit of the Woman in the Development, (2001)

Another factor that determines the relation between education, gender and poverty constitutes the effective discrimination that the Latin American societies show to the interior of its educational systems. The dynamics of the educational practices articulates curricula that promote and reproduce sexual stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours differentiated for men and women. The general logic of the educational systems is based in a distinction of the sexual roles, which puts into a hierarchy the relationships among the sexes in an inequitable way. This way, education constitutes a practice of conformation and reproduction of identities on false and acritic ideas, privileging the exercise of power on these bases.

Therefore, one of the fundamental actions that favours the quality of education not only consists on extending the coverage and the school attendance and the promotion indexes, but also the promotion of more democratic and fair ways to improve the people's conditions of life and development. In this sense, education will have as a fundamental factor to build critical, pertinent learnings and guided to the resolution of the basic needs of men and women under equal conditions. With this it will be promoted in fact public policies that allow greater equity of educational opportunities in terms of a greater social, political and economical participation, on the part of the more disfavoured groups and, due to gender reasons.

Associated to the socio-economic factors which affect the patterns of access and permanency to the school and the school curriculum, is the cultural dynamics. Some cultural traditions in Latin America are configured within the patriarchal logic that propitiates discriminatory practices against the girls. Given the social functions assigned in an inequitable way and differentiated to men and women, the family mothers and fathers as well as teachers favour educational experiences that reproduce, strengthen or silenced topics of sexual education. And even the

learnings promoted by education consider that it should be formed in the women, values such as obedience, dependence, submission, passivity, maternity, emotionality, and works related with the domestic chores.

These statements are also sustained in the measure in which there is the woman's greater political participation in the different positions of public power of the state where it is also observed a gender inequity. As it is observed in Chart No. 9 most of the countries have a female participation in the parliaments and national congresses from 5% to 20%. Except for the case of Costa Rica, Argentina and Cuba whose percentages of female participation oscillate between 35% and 28%.

**Chart No. 9**  
Proportion of Women in the Legislative Power

Country	%	Country	%
Costa Rica	35.1	Uruguay	11.5
Argentina	31.3	Colombia	11.0
Cuba	27.6	Bolivia	17.8
Nicaragua	20.7	Chile	10.0
Guyana	20.0	Panamá	9.9
Surinam	17.6	Venezuela	9.7
Perú	17.5	El Salvador	9.5
México	16.0	Haití	9.0
Jamaica	16.0	Guatemala	8.8
Dominican Republic	15.4	Paraguay	8.0
Ecuador	14.6	Brazil	6.7
Belice	13.5	Honduras	5.5

**Source:** UNIFEM, Progress of the World's Women, 2002.

## II. Quality of Education and Sexuality Education.

At the present time there is a growing concern for the quality of education. In fact, since the World Conference of Education for All taken place in 1990, the countries of Latin America are carrying out deep reformations to their educational systems. While in the past, the educational reformations constituted a form of strengthening democratic processes and processes of social change at country level, now we observe that in all the countries of the region resolved actions are promoted in order to reconvert the traditional ways of civic education and to guarantee the development of competence or aptitudes for working in more and more complex and changing productive systems. The educational reformations are not the exclusive concern of the national leaders and of educational authorities but they constitute processes of alliances with the educational community and mainly with the society as a whole. These alliances have been the result of several factors among which stand out the social dissatisfaction on the results that are obtained from the educational systems, the emergence of a growing awareness that education constitutes a basic condition for the individual, local and national development and from the awareness of civic participation in order to change and

to reach a better standard of living. The changes that the educational systems undergo no longer consist on looking for ways, methodologies or means in order to reach the objectives outlined in modernity, but rather they redefine the own ends of education (Gómez, 1998; and Tedesco, 1995). The transformations and developments in the productive and technological systems, the innovations in the communication forms and the requirements of formation of the human resources in the work or labour market within the globalization framework have made that the education of quality becomes a priority. In this sense, the countries of the region do not only make big efforts to universalize the basic education and to achieve a symmetry in the incorporation and retention of girls and women, but rather they assume as central problem the re-articulation of the educational practices.

The changes carried out up to now in the different countries; show us that still exist remainders, difficulties, significant advances, opportunities and challenges in order to reach a harmonic and equal development. In the framework of strengthening democracies, the changes in education are not exempt from controversies and from processes of analysis, discussion and consensus about what should be the priorities and measures in order to improve the quality of education.

As a rule, quality has reduced itself to two aspects that turn out to be necessary but insufficient. In the first place, quality is usually reduced to the results in the academic performance of the students, mainly in the area of mathematics and reading. A demonstration of this is the recent concern in the different countries to incorporate measuring and evaluation systems of the performance with tests in different grades of the educational process on the basis of standards in these two instrumental areas of knowledge. From this perspective, education is seen as the universal "access to the codes of the contemporary world". The emphasis is no longer made on knowledge as a result and acquisition of the same, but rather it is considered as "the learning that happens in the framework of a wide economy" interwoven by the so called societies of knowledge where the knowledge as information does not only flow but rather it should be coded, decoded, transmitted, understood and generated starting from the requirements in the world of the market and of consumption. Therefore, the most important capacities to be developed in the school from early age are those intellectual tools that allow the individuals to be competent in the languages and the logic of production and technology. From that account, the educational systems privilege at the present time the development of basic mathematical operations, reading and writing, reception and interpretation of messages in the media, organized in the disciplines of mathematics, calculation, languages and basic sciences. This means that the changes are no longer strictly in the extension of educational coverage, but also in the curriculum's restructuring. The curricula now tend toward a general formation structured as basic pre-requisites for any specialized formation. The general formation supposes the acquisition of general methods of work, of expression analysis, which would be an effective instrument for the future adaptation to the possible polyvalence of the work or labour market.

In second place, also there is a tendency to understand the quality of education as the internal efficiency of the educational systems. This means, to review indexes of the access, permanency, promotion and increment in the levels of secondary school courses of the citizens. This orientation is reinforced by studies and comparative reports that are made on the basis of indexes and specific goals in an established period of time. Without doubt, to achieve a good efficiency constitutes an action that directly affects education. However, the widespread uneasiness that the school does not fulfil its assigned functions stays present. Even more, there is a complaint that is manifested in the dissatisfaction that education moves away from the basic concerns of the human existence and that in any event, the school reinforces enormous problems of the different groups that conform societies.

The tensions that are presented in regard to the changes in education have also counted as integral solutions in order to improve the quality of formation that our educational systems offer. The countries at world level ratified the commitments of the world conferences on education with regard to "satisfying the basic needs of learning." According to the Delors Report 1996) this concept is understood as "the knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values necessary so that people can survive, to fully develop their capacities, to improve their quality of life, to live and to work with dignity, to fully participate in the development, to make firm decisions and to continue learning" (p. 7). In a more comprehensive way, the UNESCO (1996), through the "Delors Commission" points out that the learnings are built during a lifetime. In order that the education becomes of quality it should be based on four important principles: to learn how to know, to learn how to make, to learn how to live together and to learn how to be. In a summarized way, the Delors Commission defines in this way these principles:

- To learn how to be so that the own personality flourishes better and one is under conditions of acting with growing capacity of autonomy, of judgement and of personal responsibility. With such an end, not to minimize in the education none of the possibilities of each individual: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities, aptitude to communicate.
- To learn how to live together developing the understanding of the other and the perception in the interdependence ways -to carry out common projects and to get ready to deal with conflicts- respecting the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace.
- To learn how to make or how to do in order to acquire not only a professional qualification but, generally, a competence that qualifies the individual to face a great number of situations and to work as a team. But, also, to learn how to make or how to do in the framework of the different social experiences or of work that are offered to the youth and adolescents, very spontaneously because of the social or national context, very formally thanks to the development of the teaching by alternation.

- To learn how to know, combining a sufficiently broad general culture with the possibility of deepening the knowledge in a small number of subject matters. What also supposes: to learn how to learn to be able to take advantage of the possibilities that education offers along the life.

In consequence, to achieve the quality of education depends on the way how the competences or capacities concile themselves in the basic languages of access and generation of knowledge granted by mathematics, language and sciences with the demands and requirements of significant learnings that give answer or respond to the most relevant problems in the individuals and society as a whole, with the purpose of improving quality of life and to promote sustainable human development of the countries.

If it is considered the constituent function that sexuality has in the conformation and development of the human beings, defining each individual as a person and offering the conditions of its autonomous and sovereign, particular and social substrate, part of a society that is perpetuated and that manifests himself or herself in the free and responsible encounter with himself or herself with the others, being an integral part of his or her being and of its action and election in the exercise of his or her human rights and the group of values of his or her community, it will be understood the fundamental value that the education of sexuality presents to offer an education of quality. In fact, societies in an expressed or tacit way, they have educated in the domain or sphere of sexuality. Be it in the family, community, school or learning centres, using the word or silences, regulating or allowing, carrying out public rituals or private practices, interpreting in traditional stories or scientific speeches, legitimating or prohibiting certain type of knowledge and behaviours, communicating through traditional forms or by means of the massive media or Internet, sexuality has been configured as part of the identities' economy. Additionally, at the present time old problems have become evident and have appeared new ones which are directly linked with human sexuality (UNFPA, 2003). Problems such as: gender discrimination, pregnancies in adolescents, not wanted pregnancies, marriages at an early age, maternal mortality and infant mortality, increase of abortions, irresponsible paternity and increase of single mothers, sexual violence, sexual abuses and prostitution of minors or children under age, the destruction of the family networks, the population's quick growth and pressure in the natural and environmental resources, illnesses of sexual transmission and HIV/AIDS, poverty, deficiencies in areas such as health, nutrition and education, as well as the overload in the health attention systems that constitute aspects that should be approached at school as part of the education of sexuality. Mainly if it is considered that in great measure the solution of these problems depends on the informed decisions that people make (Guzman, Hakkert, Contreras and Falconier, 2001) The problem fundamentally affects the group of poor women which is reinforced by the social environment. For instance, as the United Nations Population Fund –UNFPA-, 1997 affirms it: "The dimension and characteristic that the adolescent pregnancy assumes in the decade of the nineties are showing that in adolescents, the traditional patterns of identity of gender that the media and the social institutions transmit, influence in a decisive way on the creation of favourable

conditions to pregnancy and early unions” (p. 25). Therefore, the justification to incorporate the sexuality in the curricula is justified.

Unfortunately, the school curricula show relevancy difficulties and relevance which particularly affect the girls and the woman since they do not respond to their development process and their interests. Although it is certain that the woman's education favours conditions to delay pregnancies at an early age, to share the decision of the number of children and when to make it and to link women to the work or labour market, it is also certain that the educational system many times reproduces patterns of life that limit her human rights, reproductive rights and the co-responsibility that it means the responsible paternity. The implications of this situation do not only affect the girl and the woman in personal terms, but rather it also affects the countries, since the strengthening of the woman's participation in the construction of democratic societies and socio-economic development is restricted.

It is obvious that factors of social, cultural, political, and economic character have a direct incidence on education. However, these problems are also reinforced at school and, consequently, a space of critical reflection and action is not created so that it reverts this situation. On the contrary, the educational system becomes a self-referential system. In this sense, the school and sexual education play a strategic function that contributes to change this situation, particularly in the efforts to improve the quality of education. At least three aspects can be mentioned in which the education of the sexuality contributes to the quality of the education.

In first term, the quality of the education is related to the capacity of the educational systems to assist the needs and demands of the human person's formation in an integral way, offering the conditions to solve the problems and challenges of the contemporary society. From that account, the quality of the education consists on the construction of learnings and behaviors that guarantee in an effective way that the individuals and social groups, be men and women, participate in an equitable way in the construction of fair, equitable and democratic societies. Quality equally refers to the development of competence or capacities to generate knowledge, abilities, skills, values and decisions that allow social practices responsible with one-self, with and toward the others, the environment and the population's economic growth. Sexual education in this sense is intimately related with those learnings which question, restate, build in a critical way the sexual identities as fundamental part of what defines us as human beings. The construction of knowledge that is organized in sciences such as biology, medicine, sociology, political sciences, history, philosophy, art, as well as the social and political projects acquire a different meaning for the community of those that learn and develop new practices.

In second term, the quality of the education consists on offering equality of opportunities, religious and cultural, to contribute and to be part of the quick change that one observes in the systems of production and of specialization of knowledge, as well as the vertiginous advance of computer science and

technology. Especially if the requirements of learnings to act efficiently in the labour world that is more and more competitive and that it demands a domain of high technologies is considered, without meaning loss of their critical sense, solidarity and their fight commitment for a better and more fair world. Sexual education allows to create reflection-action spaces where men and women appropriate themselves of the capacities that are generated in community and they discover that together they can dominate, they can put into practice and they can be part of the change that one lives in the world, extending these opportunities to regions that have been affected by the deep gaps of knowledge and technology that is manifested among developed and developing countries.

In third term, sexual education allows to link different areas of knowledge that interrelate social problems such as poverty and population's problems. Sexual education allows the establishment of relations among phenomena such as malnutrition, lack of education, discrimination, marginating, lack of political participation opportunities and other aspects that attempt against the compliance of human rights, reproductive rights and woman's rights. The sexuality problems are understood in the measure in which the pedagogic proposals are put in context in a framework that allows the reflection and the search of solutions which are associated to actions of individual and social character, as well as to public policies that the States generally promotes and which require an approach in the person's formation process. Sexual education makes sense if at the learnings level is associated to the conditions that allow the support to development processes that the traditional education does not generally approach or makes it in a compartamentalized way, subtracting the deepest meaning in terms of the emancipation to the conditions of equality of opportunities in democratic societies.

Associated to these contributions that sexual education can offer to improve the quality of education there are likewise other two aspects that are described next. On one hand, sexual education contributes to the quality of education as for the starting point and the point of arrival constitutes the development of the research, creativity and innovation processes on the different spheres of knowledge, art, corporal development and the generation of projects. Sexual education forms individuals able to inquire and to expand their sense of curiosity. Sexual education is constituted starting from a critical interpretation that one makes of the individual, social, economic, political and cultural reality. Research is considered essential in the framework of the generation of a critical thought facing reality, with the participation of the students, teachers, family and community.

On the other hand, sexual education allows to establish conditions of flexibility and capacity of change in the students' practices and conceptions and in the social and cultural dynamics. Sexual education contributes to the formation of people and leaders that guide and transform their own behaviours and inspire the coordinated work and team work and that they recreate the public sphere starting from an equal relationship between men and women and between members of different ethnic groups or religious beliefs.

## **Main Thematic Areas in Sexuality Education.**

Although sexual education contributes from a resolved way to improve the quality of education by approaching fundamental problems in the current societies in Latin America, it is necessary to admit that it constitutes a space that it is not free of controversies. Different visions and perspectives are observed in the countries of the region that are being solved starting from dialogue and consensus processes. The human sexuality is so important for the human being that its approach and focus is fundamental part of the public space and of the participation of the society as a whole. The teachers, students, family parents and educational administrators are not the only ones that request participation in the definition of sexual education. However, far from being a weakness, sexual education is constituted in a topic of debate and public agreement.

Therefore, it can be affirm that the education of sexuality constitutes a space of discussion and analysis where the different focuses and approaches are enriched with research, reflection and action processes that it allows to overcome the original postures. Moreover, sexual education allows, in the framework of the current education, to articulate knowledge and attitudinal structures that allow to understand and to reconstruct the acquired learnings, on the basis of previous knowledge or life world, or in other words, that constantly overcome those simplified interpretations or the difficulties that limit the understanding of the problems of sexuality.

Sexual education in this sense consists on a bigger process than the provision of information, being an effective vehicle for the integration of the group of learnings and experiences that in its interrelation will lead to a process of decisions making and actions that guarantee an exercise of healthy sexuality and potentiate the conditions of personal, family and social development. Additional to fact that education favours better conditions of life associated to behaviours that favour the exercise of the reproductive rights and reproductive health, the sexuality education allows us to become aware on this respect. "Recognition of the rights of the individuals and couples to decide in free and informed way on the behaviours that give form to their reproductive trajectory."

The domain of sexual education is not limited to a single study area, but rather it demands for its understanding a group of interrelations that they go from the psychological element and of conformation of the body till the system of symbolic interrelations and of power in the different societies and countries of the region. However, there is a basic structure for sexual education that is based on the sexual and reproductive rights. Rights that have been defined and specified this way: right to the life, right to the freedom and the person's security, right to the information and the sexual education, right to the attention and the protection of health, right to the planning of the family, right to a pleasant and healthy sexuality, right to the private life and life in family, right to the non discrimination by reasons of sex, right to the non discrimination by reasons of age, men and women's right to participate in the upbringing of their children, with the same responsibilities,

Considering the changes that are offered in different spaces of life, the methodology and orientation of the education of sexuality should be addressed on one hand to put the students, according to the educational level and the age group referred to, in the condition of thinking about the questions and to understand the problem that is approached. That the thematic becomes an entire challenge for the educating student. In turn, the starting point should be the person's group of beliefs, values, attitudes and previous knowledge. It does not make sense, to impose contents, if they are not associated to the world of life of the children, the youth and the adult population. The education of sexuality above all should allow the student to see himself or herself and the community to which he or she belongs from a critical look and to recognize that there are other forms and dimensions to those to which he or she is usually accustomed. This will achieve to investigate, analyze and assume a critical posture in front of the thematic that is approached. Also, it should be encouraged the valuation and attitudes guided toward the action. This means that more than transmitting information we are dealing with being able to think about questions, articulating structures that reach levels and processes of understanding of sexuality, their interrelations with other areas of life, the implications that it has for my own person and the society and the way how a healthy sexuality is built. In consequence, it is to potentiate the own people to plan, to make opportune decisions and know the means to reach the situation that they want. The relevance of this process, be its organization through subjects matters, traverse or cross-axes, units, areas or other, it allows to articulate an entire structure that can generate conditions so that a different or new problem can be easily analyzed, assumed critically and with direct effects in the action of people.

On the basis of the World Conferences of Cairo, Cairo+5, Beijing and Beijing+5 it could be established as fundamental structure of the education of sexuality and the empowerment of woman, the human rights of reproductive health, as well as the Goals of the Millennium and the Convention on the Children's Rights. This without losing of view the needs, requirements and specific policies that are stated in each country and they are prioritized, at least in regard to the following topics:

#### Develop of the person and sexuality

- Sexual Identities
- The constitution and significance of the human body
- Development of self-esteem
- The shared responsibility of men and women
- The social construction of the roles and sexual stereotypes
- The process of life: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age or third age.
- Evolution and changes: during the puberty and reproductive capacity
- Freedom and decision making relative to fertility or fecundity
- The personal project of life and sexuality
- The value of sexuality in human development
- The project of life and decision making

### Sustainable social development and the population's dynamics

- The population's dynamics, sexuality and development.
- Fertility or Fecundity, poverty and social mobility
- Decisions of sexuality and environment
- Sexual and reproductive rights and social development

### Equity and Equality of Gender

- Legislation and equity of gender
- Critic to any type of discrimination and social marginalization
- Power and gender
- Woman's Empowerment, civic and political participation
- Social division of work and tasks in the family, community and country
- Shared responsibility in the productive and reproductive life
- Professional and labour development and equality of opportunities for all

### The psico-biological development of sexuality

- Anatomy and physiology
- Sexual Reproduction
- Sexual desire, healthy and pleasant sexuality
- Responsible decisions and family planning

### Puberty and adolescence

- Adolescence and the person's development
- Adolescence in history and cultures
- Changes in adolescence
- Friendship, social integration and peer group pressure
- Risk factors in adolescence
- Self-esteem and responsible decisions
- Development of the person's values
- Self-discipline
- Consequences of the adolescent pregnancy

### Reproductive health

- Infant-Maternal Health
- Illnesses of sexual transmission and Prevention of HIV/AIDS
- Responsible sexual behavior
- Decrease of the number of children
- Abortion

### Violence and Sexuality

- Abuse of the children,
- Violence against the woman
- Pregnancies of adolescents

### Sexuality, population and migration

- Racism, discrimination of gender and xenophobia
- Fertility or fecundity, mortality and migration
- Respect toward the other

### Sexuality and Family

- Social Change and family
- Formation of the couple
- Responsible Paternity

## **Some strategies for implementing Sexuality Education and woman's empowerment.**

### **1. High-priority attention to the youths.**

Considering that during this stage of life decisions are made that affect the person's reproductive life with effects in the community and their quality of life, the education of sexuality should be a priority for this group. In fact, it is in this period in which the ways of social insertion and the projects of life of the people are defined with more precision. Everything is associated to the beginning of sexual activity and exposure to illnesses that it demands of information, knowledge and values in order to favour appropriate behaviours. This type of behaviours has effects in the physical and mental health of the individuals and, in certain measure, in the development of societies. Also at this age it is required knowing about the availability and use of services that reduce the conditions of illnesses or not wanted pregnancies. In this stage of life they finish reinforcing the sexual roles and the ways of relating themselves with the other sex.

### **2. Formation and training requirements of teachers.**

On the other hand, the absence of education programs that respond to the needs and expectations and girls and women is in certain measure originated by the lack of training of the human resources in the Ministries of Education, educational centres and other public and private institutions. The teachers require to approach, to reflect, to discuss and to put into practice learning activities that promote changes in the sexual roles and stereotypes, as well as the formation of girls and boys whose interrelation outlines a new dynamics that is symmetrical and with equity. Although it is certain that the discourse of the schools has already had experiences that recognize the equity of gender in a theoretical way, it is required training programs that are devoted to this topic on a systematic, profound and practical way. Particular emphasis should assign to the changes and reformations that are outlined in the initial and continuous formation of teachers, be these universities, normal schools or teachers' training school, or superior institutes. Reformations therefore, in the educational formation it should focus toward the revision of the curriculum, methodologies, evaluation or assessment processes

and in ways that are in agreement to the dynamics of the innovations that are being carried out in the different countries of the region. If it is considered that according to the research carried out in Latin America on the gender of the educational bodies in the institutions that form the male and female educators are mainly women, this can constitute a key element not only to incorporate the topics of sexuality, but also in the ways of reaching the goals of equity of gender and women's empowerment in the Latin American societies.

### **3. The role of the family and the State in Sexuality Education.**

One of the current debates of education consists on the final responsibility of children's education. Some want to strengthen the idea that the parents have all the responsibility as for the sexual education. This position is generally sustained by groups that base sexual education in religious (Falconier, 1993 and 1997) and moral statements strictly private and, therefore, unaware to the State. On the other hand, we find positions in which sexual education has ended up being constituted into a component of public character, what means that the schools and the public institutions should take the responsibility in the sexual education, basing this in strictly scientific researches. Reinforcing this position are the preoccupations concerning HIV/AIDS and adolescent pregnancy. In this same sense, there are intermediate positions that point out that sexual education should be a concern of all, including the family and the State, especially if we take into account that many of the learnings that are acquired in the educational establishments are weakened by the family practices, friends' groups, religious principles or family values that are put in doubt in the schools, generating this way a contradiction that conducts at the end, to fragmented processes of decision making and without a clear directionality in this respect. The main argument that both positions maintain as separate spaces, constitutes on one hand, relating sexual education with the group of family and social values. On the other hand, the scientific knowledge that to a certain extent have been considered unaware to caloric outlines and likewise to differentiated dynamics and alternatives outlined by the family and the State. An example constitutes the re-statement of the gender relationships where the school should become a challenge space to the state policies and the family practices that favour inequitable conditions between men and women. However, any action of modification of the conditions and regimes of truth should be strengthen in the measure of modifying the conditions that limit these processes of change and this is possible if sexual education permeates the different population groups, including the different social institutions that defend traditional values.

### **4. Sexuality Education and cultural differences in Latin America.**

In Latin America there is a wealth in regard to the ethnic, cultural, and linguistics diversity. Most of the groups coming from pre-Columbian populations in countries such as Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Chile, as well as Afro-American population groups in almost the whole continent and the Caribbean. In most of the cases, these populations are not only under poverty and extreme poverty conditions, but also

hold under subordination conditions with relation to the dominant western culture. For these groups the population's growth rates are high, the access and the permanency in the educational system are minimum with regard to the other population groups and disregarded of social policies. It is advisable to highlight the differentiated forms on sexuality, the identities and the roles assigned to the sexes, different ways to conceive puberty and the age of union, the value of the children etc.

## **5. Attention to different education subsystems.**

In diverse countries of the Latin American region the lack of attention to the access to education of different population groups is observed, particularly in the regions of extreme poverty, rural areas, ethnic groups and women. Therefore, education does not only constitute a formal process that is developed in the schools and educational institutions in the different levels, but also in non formal programs such as literacy, education and training for work, extra school education and others. In this sense, these population's groups generally constitute adolescent and mature population groups that are facing the need of solving problems associated to their sexuality and of avoiding the risks in regard to their reproductive health. In fact, there are specific programs for the women and men that approach the thematic of sexuality and other basic aspects of development as articulators in the formation programs. However, most experiences show that this component of sexual education regularly has been left aside, nevertheless, it constitutes an essential element in the integral formation in the programs of non formal education. Therefore, sexual education should be considered in the different school courses and non school courses subsystems and programs to assist with quality such populations.

## **6. Participation of civil society in the instances of Sexuality Education.**

The educational reformations that are promoted in the different Latin American countries and the policy's dynamics for their implementation demand the involvement and the resolved support of different sectors of the Latin American societies. The problem of education in general and sexual education in specific, it requires of ample consensus processes to guarantee their development, the elimination of possible confusions, contradictions and oppositions on the part of some sectors, for the lack of understanding or differentiated visions in regard to these issues. Also, the participation of civil society will constitute empowerment mechanisms of diverse government and not government organizations that include groups in favour of the woman's rights that become promoters of sexual education and instances of social audit for its accomplishment. This action at the same time allows the construction of alliances that will favour the definition, execution and evaluation or assessment of the policies on eradication of poverty, the offer of equality of opportunities and the incorporation of the issues and problems of sexuality as an essential part in the educational systems. The dynamics of the incorporation of civil society is being constituted as an alternative to legitimate the different actions that the States promote in diverse areas, but mainly in areas that

are controversial, in more and more complex, dynamic scenarios and with more information on the part of the diverse social actors or stakeholders. If it is considered the lack of legitimacy and the political crises present in the Latin American region, the alternative of the participation of civil society offers solutions in order to legitimate and to institutionalize programs and direct actions on diverse matters, but mainly in terms of the actions referred to sexual education and the woman's empowerment. Also, the participation of civil society allows the debate, negotiation, lobby and consensus or consent in order to review the patterns and roles traditionally established in societies that in the framework of the current changes re-shape the sexual roles and stereotypes. Therefore, the development of permanent mechanisms and instances that promote the incorporation of civil society in order to promote sexual education is constituted in a necessary element for the success of the programs.

## **7. Decentralization and Sexuality Education.**

Another component that should be considered in the promotion of sexual education, consists on recognizing that the Latin American educational systems in the last decades have been decentralized. This constitutes a strengthening of the local powers and, therefore the decisions no longer come only from the central levels in the Ministries of Education. This means that part of the strategies for the promotion of sexual education should consider the promotion in the different instances, and territorial and administrative, technical and directive levels in the educational and political systems. In some countries of the region, the decisions are made at the level of the federated states, counties, departments or districts that outline their own curriculum, formation and educational training programs and ways of participation of the educational community and society in general. Therefore, the promotion of sexual education should be adjusted to the very nature of the organization of education in the Latin American states, supporting the decentralization of education, making pertinent the sexual education of the specific problem in the local levels within the framework of national policies.

On the other hand, it is necessary to consider that the educational reformations, in great measure, depend how much conviction do the authorities have at level of the school centers or institutions that promote non formal processes of education in regard to their levels of awareness, conviction, capacities, opportunities and financing. Also, the dynamics characteristic of the communities are fundamental in order to adapt sexual education in regard to their development and depth. In some communities, these topics are already essential part in the educational practices, however, in other communities a special treatment is required. Therefore, in terms of the pedagogic and curricular proposals the decentralization is a factor to keep in mind to facilitate the effective inclusion of sexual education as part of the formation of the children, the youth and the adult population.

## **8. Articulation of alliances with other projects and programs.**

Generally, the pressure that the educational systems have in order to approach different problems and relevant issues in the formation processes are immense. From the environmental education, education for work, the education pertaining to road, streets and highways, the civic education, the education in values, the education for democracy and peace, the technological education, multicultural education, education in human rights, education in natural disasters and the traditional areas of learning, they outline scenarios that if they are not articulated, they become competition spaces. Nevertheless, from sexual education all these issues become an integral part for its approach, it is necessary to articulate alliances and appropriate methodological forms for its incorporation. Additionally, that all these topics are not part of the formation of the people that are decision makers or of the educational bodies in the educational centres. Generating, in most of the cases reluctance or the omission of these proposals in the teaching-learning processes. Above all, if one keeps in mind that at the present time there is a greater number of projects and programs that want to influence in the educational systems and in the formation processes. Therefore, it should be looked for alternative where the education of the sexuality allows to join efforts in terms of the understanding of the different problematic and priorities established in the competence or capacities, themes and contents that are established as the ends that are pursued in the educational centres. In this sense, the alliances among projects, programs and national and international agencies are basic in order to assure that sexual education is an effective part in the pedagogic proposals.

## **9. Information and communication as a part of the strategy in implementing Sexuality Education.**

One of the aspects that it should be considered is the relationship with the social media and in the formation and information to the formers of public opinion. The preparation of courses, seminars, day's work, conferences, workshops with this sector that influences in the policies and in the citizenship it is of vital importance so that the processes that are generated in the educational systems have a referring and a support on the part of the media. This can favour the elimination of the disinformation and opposition of groups contrary to sexual education. The promotion of basic topics that we have pointed out previously can be extended to groups of population that in another way they do not have access to this type of thematic. The programs of sexual education and their execution can have an effective incidence in the Latin American States and societies in the measure in which they occupy an essential space in the discussion of the public problems. This measure should include alternative media that in some occasions are the only ones that they have in the rural areas or populations in extreme poverty, such as the community radios and local newspapers.

## **10. Formation of Sexuality Education networks at Latin American level.**

In the global world and the era of knowledge the exchange of experiences through the conformation of networks constitutes a basic tool for the promotion of solutions to different problems and actions in diverse fields. Therefore, it should be considered the strengthening of already existing networks or the creation of the same that favour alliances between countries and regions. Particularly, on that referring to successful or effective experiences in the field of sexual education. These networks should incorporate different segments of the population and social actors or stakeholders in agreement with their roles and functions. For example, networks of teaching staff, networks of decision makers, networks of social communicators, networks of women's organizations, networks of juvenile organizations, etc. This strategy would allow equally to introduce new approaches in education, in the policies of sexual education and its relation with the eradication of poverty, the woman's empowerment and others. Also, it could be taken advantage of this space to introduce problems, documents, researches or information bulletins that allow to promote concrete actions in favour of sexual education.

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