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**Conclusions: Some particularities
of Education for All in Latin America**

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Although each chapter in this book is consistent by itself, all of them have been distributed into sections according to three thematic axes: the international agenda, the pluriscalar politics of education, and the interaction between education and inequalities. Drawing on these references, in these conclusions we aim at highlighting some Latin American particularities of the Education for All Programme.

In Latin America, the educational policies promoted by UNESCO, some regional bodies like OEI, and the national governments have stimulated an array of innovative proposals that want to enrich the objectives of Education for All associating them to the objectives of inclusive education (EFA Global Monitoring Team, 2010). Inclusion consists of responding to special education needs and to marginalised groups from the perspective of human rights. These measures release many synergies for both educational institutions and their environmental, institutional regime (see Acedo and Opertti's chapter). For some years governments have drawn on inclusive guidelines insofar as they have been concerned with school expansion (e.g. the Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação, FUNDEB, in Brazil), disadvantaged groups (e.g. the Oportunidades Programme, in Mexico), multi-dimensional faces of equality (e.g., the Plan Integral de Igualdad Educativa, in Argentina), and opening high schools to all (e.g., the Programa Liceo para Todos, in Chile). However, this universalistic and comprehensive policy has not altered the minimalistic consensus established in the nineties. Although some substantive reforms and rhetorical variations announce a new orientation, those neoliberal principles are still prevailing with a powerful inertia (see Serna's chapter).

Then, the wording of the EFA Monitoring Reports and the use of education in the World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers are easier to understand. Although the region is able to achieve

the objectives related to schooling comfortably, an exhaustive review of the reports detects some ambivalences with regards to early child education and literacy (see Ferrer's chapter). Similarly, in spite of the World Bank's growing preoccupation to widen its repertoire of recommendations —so far restricted to investment in primary education—, its operational plans have only become weak palliatives to material deprivation (see Tarabini and Jacovkis' chapter).

The civil society related to education is so influential in Latin America that an overview of the continent introduces important qualifications in the worldwide debate. Actually, while the global discussion asks why the broad participation of Non Governmental Organisations has eventually relaxed the commitment of states to EFA (Klees, 2008; Rose, 2009), in the region the groups associated to the Global Campaign for Education and some networks inspired on the principles of corporate social responsibility have put pressure so that governments strengthen their aspiration to achieve very ambitious objectives of educational development. If the interaction between governments and these NGOs is to be documented, some methodological assumptions have to be challenged, mostly the identification of education systems with nation-states clearly distinct from other spheres of social activity, the exclusive focus on endogenous phenomena coming from the very education, and the understanding of territories as fix and concentric realities (see Robertson y Dale). A different perspective unveils the complex political interplay between international bodies, governments and civil society networks.

The disparate actions of the civil society notwithstanding, its participants coincide in claiming for a sufficient funding to guarantee the right to education. Thus, the guidelines of the *Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación* (the regional network of the Global Campaign for Education) have been widely generalised. In contrast with variate national circumstances, this ideological convergence is a likely consequence of an exchange of ideas, experiences and resources (see Verger and Novelli).

Appealing coincidences are noticeable between the parallel debates that UNESCO and the World Bank are holding everywhere, OEI and PREAL in Latin America, and the National Convention for Education (CONAE) and the business-friendly *Todos pela Educação* in Brazil. While UNESCO, OEI and CONAE want to align the policies of educational development and national integration, the WB, PREAL and *Todos pela Educação* would rather stress school effectiveness and public-private partnerships. Both the data and the documents issued by these political actors reveal their

strategic decision-making in order to intervene selectively at the global, Latin American regional, federal Brazilian, and even provincial and municipal scales. They are drawing on their different capabilities in terms of funding, collective action, expertise and public opinion so as to gain advantage in this struggle (see Rambla).

In Argentina, the interaction between global, federal and provincial scales has 'installed' an agenda defined outside the country. A number of very similar initiatives, launched in a short time frame, which overlap in many issues, has eventually blurred the link between Education for All and the right to education. Furthermore, this political process has equipped governments with new tools to hide significant setbacks in a country with favourable official indicators in 1990, where life conditions have nevertheless worsened after the crisis in 2001 (see Feldfeber and Saforcada).

The last specific feature of Education for All in Latin America lies in the obstacles created by social inequalities. Latin American education is a very salient case study to explore the potential of democratic and complex governance to face these inequalities, not least because the new wide agenda precisely aims at responding to this challenge —interestingly, because the making of educational civil societies has put the issue high in the agenda— (EFA Monitoring Report, 2009). The age structure and the main social policies also underscore the importance of this world region as far as the rights of children are concerned. Remarkably, the prior reduction of fecundity with regard to ageing could eventually favour educational development (CEPAL, 2008), but the scarcity of social transfers targeted to children is a very powerful shortcoming (CEPAL, 2010).

These circumstances posit crucial dilemmas to the right to education as well as to the opportunities for the youth to finish their compulsory or fundamental education. Unfortunately, despite a positive trend of many indicators, right now it is hard to conclude that education is affordable (due to low investment), accessible (due to persistent discriminations), acceptable (due to disciplinary practices which are incompatible with the rights of children) and adaptable (due to weak inclusive measures) (see Naya and Dávila). In Brazil, regional disparities in early drop-outs and school progress, and over-age enrolment, unveil many situations where indecent life conditions spoil the very possibility to educate (see Gallego, Mediavilla and Pereira). Actually, over-age enrolment severely constrains the opportunity of many youth to deal with the main crossroads in their social pathways. The problem is reproduced within the very household —to the extent that older siblings' over-age contributes to younger siblings'— and the labour market —to the extent that informal labour of parents increases the risk of over-age enrolment of children— (see Pereira and Rambla). Therefore,

both the human rights and the human capabilities approaches, deeply discussed by these chapters, show how poverty in income, legal protection, family social capital, and education, *inter alia*, trigger accumulative processes that hinder Education for All in Latin America.

But it is not reasonable to conclude that this is the whole story. The realisation of the former commonalities between the work of the contributors to this volume opens new question marks for future investigation. The narrow geographical scope of our studies also reminds of their incomplete conclusions. We expect that these final remarks suggest ideas to the researchers who are still dealing with these problems of Latin American education, since this collective endeavour will contribute to our knowledge on education and will probably find out crucial clues to guarantee the right to education to everybody.

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