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Youth and Higher Education in Venezuela

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ABSTRACT

The Latin American reality reflects a continent full of con-
 trasts where youth is expected to play a key role in the trans-
 formation of society. Demographic studies indicate that the
 percentage of young people in Latin America is greater than
 at any time in the past. These young people have witnessed a
 significant increase in opportunities for higher education in
 Latin America, especially in Venezuela, where student enrol-
 ment has doubled in less than two decades. This paper analyzes
 the growth of university education in Venezuela during the
 last decade, as well as some quality indicators, scientific

productivity of universities, and the main motivations to enrol for college expressed by a total of 3,026 young Venezuelans from three higher education institutions.

Introduction

In recent decades, the youth have been a recurring topic in studies from universities as well as research centres and institutes. Latin America, especially, has increased the budget for youth-care programmes and many countries have created public bodies specially dedicated to protect the healthy development of children, teenagers, and young people.

According to data presented by UNESCO, young people will represent over 50 per cent of the population of developing countries in the next few years (Castro, 2005, p. 10). The world, more than ever, presents today a young face that has forced public and private institutions to give attention to this age group. This paper analyzes the results of three studies of Venezuelan youth, made between 1989 and 2000, emphasizing the educational aspect. It also discusses the evolution of college tuition in Venezuela and the Caribbean region over the past decade, the scientific production of Venezuelan universities, and the results obtained in three private universities about young people's motivation to pursue a college career.

Educating Young People in Venezuela: 1989–2000

In Venezuela, since the mid-1980s, the State through public and private institutions, has done several demographic studies about youth in our society. The demographic changes that the country faced (both Venezuela and the rest of Latin America), generated a growing concern for this age group, but effective public policy requires a valid knowledge about its immediate beneficiaries; that is why Venezuela developed several descriptive studies in order to diagnose the main needs of young students. However, as Bermúdez and Martínez (2010) point out, studies about youth in Venezuela are underdeveloped, both statewide and within universities, and this becomes an important difference from other Latin American countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, and Mexico.

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Albornoz (1989), conducted a quantitative study on high-school youth, considering the aspects of family, school, society, and future in a questionnaire administered to 7,339 students in their last three years of secondary education. The selection of the sample and the analysis of the results were performed following the methodological guidelines of social science research. Regarding the most relevant results, we emphasize the following:

- 88 per cent considered their primary studies as good and excellent and 70% felt the same way when it came to high school.
- 95 per cent felt it was fairly or very important to graduate from a university.
- 4 per cent said they watched political talk shows on TV and a similar percentage said they displayed no interest in politics.
- 75 per cent said they would be studying or working in the near future.

The results presented a slight variation based on the type of institution (government or private), gender, and age, showing coincidences in most of the survey questions. Also, the young people presented a positive appreciation toward education (including the education received and the education they hope to pursue at a higher level), and future success associated with the possibility of continuing studies at the fourth level. Fourth-level studies are college and university studies spanning three or five years), also called undergraduate studies in some countries. The discussion on political issues was not among their preferences, and despite the social crisis faced by the country by the end of the 1980s, young people said they were convinced that the future was going to be better. The researcher concludes that young people tend to reproduce the existing cultural patterns in Venezuelan society: "It is the impression of a conventional youth satisfied and content, which is an elemental consequence of being the product of a stable society" (Albornoz, 1989, p. 144). However, by the late 80s the signs of exhaustion of the system and the stability of the democracy model began to show warning signals.

Between 1992 and 1993 the Ministerio de la Familia applied the National Youth Survey (ENJUVE) in order to know the reality of young

people in Venezuela, to detect and set possibilities and resources to enable their full inclusion in society. The intention was to obtain updated information for the ministry and other government agencies regarding the characteristics, profiles and trends of Venezuela's youth population, with the objective of strengthening the basis from which policies and programmes for the youth segment should be developed.

The study included 5,649 young people aged 15 to 24 years throughout the country. The survey included the following areas of study: living conditions, education, employment, family, politics, conflict and free time. Unlike the study of Albornoz (1989), the ENJUVE was aimed at both young students and those who were not studying when the survey was applied. This study is undoubtedly a mandatory starting point for research on Venezuelan youth. The problems of education and, within it, the phenomenon of poverty, describe a discouraging social landscape in the context of the political instability of that period. According to this research, there were 4,024,406 young people aged 15 to 24 years in the country and only 1,631,396 (40.5 per cent) were regular students (Angulo, 1994, p. 17). These data included young people who were in the final year of elementary education and in high school; for that reason the real number of college students was even lower.

In relation to years of instruction, ENJUVE founded that 55.5 per cent had studied for one to eight years, 31.6 per cent for nine to 11 years, 8.9 per cent had at least one year of higher education, and only 1.3 per cent were professionals or technicians. According to the structure of the Venezuelan education system for the year of the investigation, a 15-year-old student should have completed at least nine years of formal education. Despite the low percentage of young people who had obtained a college degree (1.3 per cent) or had completed at least one year of higher education (8.9 per cent), the majority of answers identified education as a means of construction for a self-improvement project (84.4 per cent).

Angulo (1994) summarizes part of the picture of the Venezuelan youth as follows:

... More than half of young Venezuelans do not attend any educational establishment. About a third of this group has left school by age 15, that is, when they had not even reached the

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s do not attend any of this group has left not even reached the

juvenile period, and more than half of them left school between 15 and 19 years... near a quarter of the youth segment already have had children and, of this total, more than a half had their first child between 15 and 19 years old ... (p. 31)

The phenomenon of educational exclusion reached over 50 per cent of Venezuelan youth population during the 1990s; the less economically favoured sectors and women were the most vulnerable: 67.9 per cent of young people who were out of school were poor. Regardless of social status and educational attainment, young people associated their personal development with the possibility of a college degree in the future.

The second government of Rafael Caldera (1994–1999) conducted the National Survey of Population and Family (ENPOFAM). Within this study, which covered various aspects of the family environment, were included some issues related to youth. The Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in 2000 published a work by the researchers Freitez, Zúñiga and Di Brienza, titled *Sexual and Reproductive Behavior of Teenagers*, which was based on the results of the ENPOFAM. This study focused mainly on the sexual behaviour of young teens, allows us to see the effects of poverty on school continuation. Among the results of this research is that half of young women do not finish elementary school and a third did not attend school. Teenagers from lower strata were likely to drop out long before college, a very influencing factor in the reproduction of poverty.

The ENJUVE and ENPOFAM, both done in the 1990s, are part of the few quantitative pieces of research conducted nationwide. They gave important inputs to the State for public policy formulation that serve to counteract the negative effects of poverty. In Venezuela, education has been seen as a way for personal growth and social development, however, historically, an important segment of the youth population has been excluded from the system.

The review of research about the educational situation of youth in Latin America reveals some similarities to what is happening in Venezuela. According to the International Labour Office (ILO, 2010) youth are classified as follows: 2 per cent are illiterate, 19 per cent reach the level of primary education, 65 per cent study up to secondary level and 15 per cent study to a higher level. It also notes a relationship between

increased access to education levels in those economically better off, which leads to fewer opportunities to access and complete higher levels of education for economically disadvantaged students.

Miranda (2012) reports the percentage of youth between 15 and 19 years who neither work nor study in Latin America, ranking it at 16 per cent, which represents an average of 9 million young people. The highest percentages are found in Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Uruguay, while Venezuela, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Argentina, and the Dominican Republic are at the regional average, and below this average are Panama, Ecuador, Chile, Brazil, and Bolivia. In relation to these data, it is estimated that 6.7 million youth in Latin America are seeking employment that is not available, representing 44 per cent of the total unemployed in Latin America. This situation is worrying in terms of the difficulties and limitations involved for the professional and human development of a significant percentage of young Latin Americans.

The dropout rate among young people is also a recurrent concern in the literature on the general situation of young people in Latin America. According to the Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (2001–2002) [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2001–2002)], 37 per cent of adolescents between 15 and 19 years old leave school before completing secondary level. About half left the school before completing primary education and the differences are exacerbated in the case of rural areas and lower-income households. ECLAC/CEPAL reports these figures:

... In 2000 the overall dropout rate among teenagers before completing secondary education was less than 20% in urban areas of Bolivia (9%), Chile (14%), Peru (16%) and Dominican Republic (19%). In Argentina (23%), Brazil (23%), Colombia (24%) and Panama (25%) ranged between 20% and 25%. In eight countries affected a percentage of between 25% and 35% of adolescents: Costa Rica (30%), Ecuador (28%), El Salvador (30%), Mexico (35%), Nicaragua (34%), Paraguay (32%), Uruguay (32%) and Venezuela (35%), in Honduras and Guatemala the urban dropout rate reached 40% and 47%, respectively... (p. 1)

Of course, high dropout rates lead into a minimum number of opportunities for the chances of developing these young people to

The First Iberoamerican Youth Organization considered education as a right entrenched in Central American confidence is lower in the students of AUSJAL until the Society of Jesus study is, first, to dominate mobility.

In the following pages, we analyze the situation in Venezuela and present the beliefs, and aspirations of the universities.

Comparing Higher Education in Latin American and Caribbean Countries

Since 2003, the Institute for Global Education Digest has invited researchers to make comparisons in higher education. In order to highlight the situation in Venezuela and the Caribbean, we have analyzed the reports of 2003 and 2012 which have been incorporated into the Caribbean Digest of these reports (see table 1).

Higher education trends have been analyzed in this paper. The number of students in tertiary education (48.97 per cent less students in 2003) is the most significant increase (226 per cent) and Trinidad and Tobago expansion in Cuba and Venezuela.

in those economically better off, access and complete higher levels of education. Disadvantaged students.

stage of youth between 15 and 19 years of age in Latin America, ranking it at 16 per cent of the total young people. The highest rates are in Nicaragua, Peru, El Salvador, Uruguay, while Venezuela, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic are at the range of 10-15 per cent. Panama, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, it is estimated that 6.7 million young people are unemployed that is not available, 15 per cent employed in Latin America. This situation and difficulties and limitations involved in the employment of a significant percentage of young people.

Young people is also a recurrent concern in Latin America. In Latin America and the Caribbean, young people between 15 and 19 years of age are at the secondary level. About half left the school and the differences are significant in higher and lower-income households.

Among teenagers before 2000, less than 20% in urban areas. In Peru (16%) and Dominican Republic (16%), Brazil (23%), Colombia (23%), between 20% and 25%. In Argentina (25%), Ecuador (28%), El Salvador (34%), Paraguay (32%), (35%), in Honduras and Nicaragua reached 40% and 47%,

Of course, high dropout rates recorded in most countries translate into a minimum number of years of educational preparation which reduces the chances of developing a productive or professional activity that allows these young people to overcome poverty.

The First Iberoamericana Survey of Youth, conducted by the Latin American Youth Organization (OIJ, 2013) reveals that young people considered education as a key to gain a good job. This perception is entrenched in Central America, in the Andes region and Brazil, while confidence is lower in the Iberian Peninsula and Mexico. Similarly, young students of AUSJAL universities (Association of Universities Entrusted to the Society of Jesus in Latin America, 2011) state their purpose to study is, first, to dominate a field of knowledge and secondly, for social mobility.

In the following pages we analyze the coverage of higher education in Venezuela and present the results of an investigation about the practices, beliefs, and aspirations of young people from three private Venezuelan universities.

Comparing Higher Education in Venezuela and Caribbean Countries according to *Global Education Digest*

Since 2003, the Institute of Statistics of UNESCO (UIS) has published the *Global Education Digest* report annually. This publication allows researchers to make comparative analyses on the worldwide state of education. In order to highlight the developments in college tuition in Venezuela and the Caribbean, we used the reports for 2004, 2009, 2011 and 2012 which have specific data on higher education. In this paper we incorporated the Caribbean countries whose statistics are reflected in these reports (see table 1).

Higher education tuition expanded significantly in eight countries analyzed in this paper. Bermuda is the only country that reduced the number of students in tertiary education between 2001–2002 and 2010 (48.97 per cent less students in 2010 compared with 2001–2002 data). The most significant increases occurred in Cuba (318 per cent), Venezuela (226 per cent) and Trinidad and Tobago (72 per cent)¹. The university expansion in Cuba and Venezuela is framed in a policy of decentralization

of higher education promoted by the State whose main objective is to reduce the rates of educational exclusion at this important level of the educational system.

Table 1

Tertiary Education: Total Enrolment in Selected Caribbean Countries and Venezuela (Students)

	2001–2002	2007	2009	2010
Aruba	1,542	2,200	2,000	2,000
Barbados	–	11,000	14,000	13,000
Bermuda	1,960	890	1,000	1,000
British Virgin Islands	758	1,200	1,000	1,000 ⁻¹
Cuba	191,262	865,000	971,000	801,000
Jamaica	44,878	–	61,000 ⁻¹	71,000
Saint Lucia	–	1,400	3,000	2,000
Trinidad and Tobago	9,866	17,000	–	–
Venezuela	650,000	1,381,000	2,123,000	2,123,000 ⁻¹
Total	900,266	2,279,690	3,176,000	3,014,000

Source: *Global Education Digest* 2004, 2009, 2011 and 2012

⁻¹ refers to previous year

Besides the total number of students who are part of the subsystem of higher education, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics reports also present net enrolment for each country (see table 2). This information allows us to know the percentage of students, aged between 18 and 22, studying for a university degree. In 2010, the countries with the highest rates of enrolment were Cuba (95 per cent) and Venezuela (78 per cent), followed by Barbados (66 per cent) and the British Virgin Islands (64 per cent). It is pertinent to note that Barbados and Jamaica managed to almost double their rates during the period 2001–2010. In 2010, Bermuda and St. Lucia are the only countries with a net enrolment below the 2009 figure.

Aruba
Barbados
Bermuda
British Virgin Islands
Cuba
Jamaica
Saint Lucia
Trinidad and Tobago
Venezuela

Source: *Global Education Digest*

⁻¹ refers to previous year

* = National estimates

The Global Education

data of other Caribbean countries. It is clear that the past decade was a period of development in higher education in each country.

In addition to the University of the West Indies, there are several other interests in the community. The University of the West Indies has five faculties of the University: Engineering, Humanities, Law, and Theology – with the aim to detect similarities in the curriculum. The Universidad Carlos Rafael Ángel, the Universidad Eugenio María de Hostos, the Université Chrétienne de la Caraïbe, and the Universidad de Granada;

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890	1,000	1,000
1,200	1,000	1,000 ⁻¹
865,000	971,000	801,000
–	61,000 ⁻¹	71,000
1,400	3,000	2,000
17,000	–	–
1,381,000	2,123,000	2,123,000 ⁻¹
2,279,690	3,176,000	3,014,000

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Table 2

Tertiary Education: Net Enrolment

	2001–2002	2007	2009	2010
Aruba	29	33	31	31
Barbados	36 *	53	–	66
Bermuda	62 *	–	32	20
British Virgin Islands	51	75-2	64**	64
Cuba	27	109	118	95
Jamaica	17	–	24-1	29
Saint Lucia	–	9	16	11
Trinidad and Tobago	7	11-2 **	–	–
Venezuela	27**	52-1	78	78-1

Source: *Global Education Digest* 2004, 2009, 2011, and 2012

-1 refers to previous year; -2 refers to 2005

* = National estimates; ** = IUS estimates

The *Global Education Digest* reports do not provide full educational data of other Caribbean countries, however, the overall tendency shows that the past decade was positive in regard to the inclusion of young people in higher education, an important matter to promote overall development in each country.

In addition to the UNESCO statistics and in order to find common interests in the communities of the Caribbean universities, we compared five faculties of the Universidad Católica Andres Bello (UCAB), Caracas—Engineering, Humanities and Education, Economics and Social Sciences, Law, and Theology—with the faculties of 23 universities in the Caribbean to detect similarities in the academic offerings. These universities were: Universidad Carlos Rafael Rodríguez; Centro Universitario de las Tunas; Universidad Eugenio María de Hostos; Universidad del Caribe, Haití; Université Chrétienne du Nord d’Haïti; Université Quisqueya; Universidad de Granma; University of Aruba; Universidad del Caribe,

República Dominicana; University of the Southern Caribbean; Universidad de Mayagüez; Universidad de la Habana; The University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, Barbados; The University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica; The University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago; Universidad de Puerto Rico Río de Piedra; University of the Virgin Islands; St. George's University; Universidad del Sagrado Corazón; Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico; Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico; Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo; Universidad de Oriente Santiago de Cuba; University of Technology, Jamaica; Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra; Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña.

Of the 23 universities surveyed, seven of them have an Engineering faculty, 19 have an Economics and Social Sciences faculty or similar, one has a Theology faculty, nine have a Law faculty, and 15 have a Humanities and Education faculty. Moreover, we found a significant relationship between the academic offerings of UCAB and Caribbean universities, especially in administrative, economic, and educational areas. This could serve as an incentive to establish student and teacher exchanges, and help to promote both transmission and creation of knowledge, especially bearing in mind the close geographic areas.

Report on Higher Education in Venezuela according to State Institutions

The Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación Superior (MPPES) stated that by 2003 there were 163 higher education institutions in Venezuela, distributed as follows: 49 universities, one polytechnic institute, 60 higher education institutes of technology, 33 higher education institutes, nine higher education institutes of the Fuerzas Armadas and 16 university colleges. According to the official information source, the public universities enrolment consisted of 453,733 students (75.49%) and private universities enrolment of 147,324 students (24.51%) (OPSU, 2003, pp. 21–25). During the period 1999–2008 there were established five public and five private universities, four public higher education institutes and 14 private university colleges; this number of institutions established represent the lowest number of higher education institutions opened

over a ten-year period since 2008, p.175).

The Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación Superior (MPPES) (2005) presents [the Report] to the National Assembly. The Ministry (2010) indicates that the enrolment in public universities has increased by an amount which represents 10% of the total enrolment by the Oficina de Planificación Nacional (2003). This report does not provide data on enrolment figures, however, the report reveals that student enrolment in universities and colleges was 538,387. The report also provided recent statistics on enrolment in public institutions, however, we believe that the report is representative of the current situation.

How does Venezuelan higher education compare with Latin America? According to the report, the enrolment of the region was 5,500,000 with the highest number of enrolment in Mexico (2,528,664), Argentina (1,500,000) and Brazil (1,400,000) (Garcia, 2010, pp.15–16).

In Venezuela, enrolment in higher education institutions reached 5.5 million students in 2010. The report also indicates that the government has directed at the municipalization of higher education, regional expansion of the enrolment in university locations, especially for the Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela (UBV) and Universidad Nacional Experimental Simón Bolívar founded during the first decade of the 21st century.

How many young people are enrolled in higher education under the municipalization policy? What are the challenges that have pursued higher education institutions to attend undergraduate universities in the last few years. Of course, there are many challenges in short programmes (technical and vocational training)

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Autónoma de Santo Domingo; Uni-
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ica Madre y Maestra; Universidad

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The Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación Superior (MPPES) (2005) presents its Memoria y Cuenta [Memory and Account Report] to the National Assembly annually. The latest report of the Ministry (2010) indicates that the number of higher education students enrolled in public universities, technical institutes and colleges is 1,090,021², an amount which represents a significant increase in the statistics given by the Oficina de Planificación para el Sector Universitario (OPSU) in 2003. This report does not include student enrolment in private institutions, however, the report of the OPSU corresponding to the year 2005 reveals that student enrolment in private universities, technical institutes, and colleges was 538,387. Unfortunately, the Venezuelan State has not provided recent statistics on private and public higher education institutions, however, we believe that these preliminary statistics are representative of the current situation in the field.

How does Venezuelan higher education compare with the rest of Latin America? According to UNESCO's data for 2007, the total student enrolment of the region was 17.5 million. During that year, the countries with the highest number of university students were Brazil (5,272,877), Mexico (2,528,664), Argentina (2,202,032), and Venezuela (1,381,126³) (Garcia, 2010, pp.15-16).

In Venezuela, enrolment rose from 601,057 in 2003 to more than 1.6 million students in 2010. This increase has been the result of a State policy directed at the municipalization⁴ of higher education, which means the regional expansion of the education offer by creating new public university locations, especially for the Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela (UBV) and Universidad Nacional de la Fuerza Armada (UNEF), both founded during the first administration of Hugo Chavez (1999–2006).

How many young people have benefitted from the higher education municipalization policy? What is the percentage of young people who have pursued higher education studies? Most young Venezuelans who attend undergraduate university are located in the age group of 17–24 years. Of course, there are students over 24 years of age who take short programmes (technical college) or long programmes (Bachelor's),

and some students aged under 17 years are already enrolled in long programmes, but this number is not representative of the university population. Now, what percentage of young Venezuelans between the ages of 17 and 24 years are higher education students? This question cannot be answered correctly because of the lack of information provided by the ministry, and also because the results of the Population and Housing Census of Venezuela done in 2011 have not yet been published. However, there are some numbers calculated according to official information available.

In 2001, there were 3,532,839 inhabitants of Venezuela between the ages of 17 and 24 years. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE), the annual population growth of Venezuela between 2001 and 2011 was 1.6 per cent. This data allows us to formulate a projection of 4,140,578 young people from the age group noted above⁵, such that the proportion of young people who are higher education students does not exceed 39 per cent. What is the situation with more than half of the young people who are not higher education students? We can only offer some approximate answers to this question as the official state authorities have not released records on the subject. Some of these young people could have graduated before age 24 or be enrolled in the final year of high school; others may have decided not to continue studying and to seek employment independently. However, we believe that most of these young people left school before the age of 17 and others could not pursue higher studies; these young people are the excluded group from the formal education system. Freitez (2012) states that:

... At the end of the 90s only 44% of secondary school-age young people were actually enrolled while, for the period 2008-2009, that participation had increased to 64%, being 11 percentage points behind of the goal of 75%, established in the 2010 Education Action Plan adopted by the Heads of State at the Summit of the Americas ... (p. 274)

Although school coverage in secondary education (12-17 years) has increased in the last decade, more than 30 per cent of young people are excluded from the system long before the average age of starting higher studies.

Despite the increase in e Latin America, there still exist who have been excluded from "... there is 74% of young pe cation system in the region, low-income youth ..." (p. 88). is above the regional average

Tables 3 and 4 summarize institutions and student enro

Educational Public I

Universities
University institutes
Colleges
Total

Source: Report and Accounts of MPI

Educational Private I

Universities
University institutes
Colleges
Total

Source: Statistical Bulletin No. 23 of Universitario (2005).

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Despite the increase in enrolment experienced in the last decade in Latin America, there still exists a significant percentage of young people who have been excluded from the system. According to García (2010), "... there is 74% of young people aged 20–24 ... outside the higher education system in the region, who happen to be also the most excluded low-income youth ..." (p. 88). In this respect, we can state that Venezuela is above the regional average coverage.

Tables 3 and 4 summarize the available data of higher education institutions and student enrolment in Venezuela.

Table 3

Educational Public Institutions and Student Enrolment

	Number	Student Enrolment
Universities	24	975,336
University institutes	23	102,565
Colleges	2	12,120
Total	49	1,090,021

Source: Report and Accounts of MPPES (2010).

Table 4

Educational Private Institutions and Student Enrolment

	Number	Student Enrolment
Universities	25	212,907
University institutes	59	278,661
Colleges	7	47,269
Total	91	539,172

Source: Statistical Bulletin No. 23 of the Oficina de Planificación para el Sector Universitario (2005).

What is the Fate of the Excluded?

The *Misión Sucre* as an Educational Alternative

The Venezuelan higher education system offers a choice of parallel study to formal education through a programme called *Misión Sucre*. The *Misión Sucre* was an educational initiative created by the Venezuelan government in 2003 "as a strategic alternative to overcome exclusion levels in society, especially in the lower income classes" (Informe de la Memoria y Cuenta de la Fundación Misión Sucre, 2010, p. 3). This programme has been a free educational option for citizens over 18 who have been unable to pursue higher education studies for different reasons. However, the quality of the study programmes (called *programas educativos*) has been questioned, as the processes of approval, accreditation, and evaluation of its programmes were not done following the established parameters for higher education institutions. Beyond the strong criticism regarding the quality of education of *Misión Sucre* and the denunciations about strong indoctrination processes designed to promote the political project of Hugo Chavez (Socialism of the 21st Century), 462,199⁶ students were enrolled in their programmes for the year 2010 (Informe de la Memoria y Cuenta de la Fundación Misión Sucre, 2012, p. 39).

As shown in figure 1, college enrolment is composed of 67 per cent in public institutions and 33 per cent in private institutions, however, when integrating data for *Misión Sucre*, enrolment in private institutions decreased by 8 per cent (see figure 2).

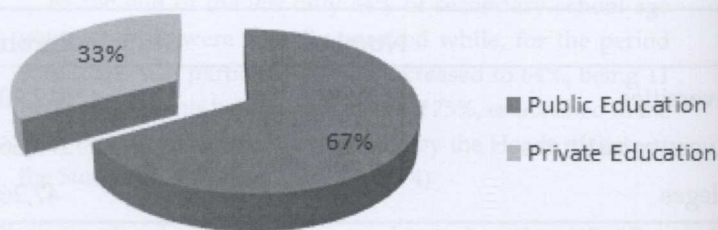


Figure 1. Distribution of Student Enrolment—Venezuela (2010)

Source: Report and Accounts of Higher Education (2010), Statistical Bulletin No. 23 of the Oficina de Planificación del Sector Universitario (2005).

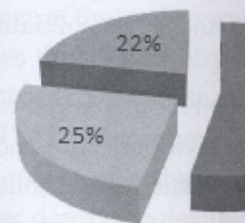


Figure 2. Distribution of Student Enrolment and at the *Misión Sucre*

Source: Report and Accounts of Higher Education (2010), Statistical Bulletin No. 23 of the Oficina de Planificación del Sector Universitario (2005).

Student Enrolment and the Quality of Venezuelan Universities

Despite the considerable progress in higher education in the last decade, there are still many challenges that have not progressed at the same pace. Of all the academic research, only 10 per cent were published by the Ministry of Education by Argentina, 7.5 per cent by Venezuela (García, 2010, p. 25). Venezuelan universities perform poorly when compared to other universities among the top 500 universities in the world regarding scientific production. The Universidad Central de Venezuela is not even in the top 50 in Latin America (Scharifker, 2012, p. 10).

The emergence of world-class universities in this century has produced a new paradigm that have criticized the methodology used to make comparisons with other countries; however, the need for higher education in a globalized world is necessary. In addition, the

ded? ational Alternative

system offers a choice of parallel study programme called *Misión Sucre*. The *Misión Sucre* was created by the Venezuelan government to overcome exclusion levels of "home classes" (Informe de la Memoria Sucre, 2010, p. 3). This programme has benefited citizens over 18 who have been unable to study for different reasons. However, the programme (called *programas educativos*) has been subject to approval, accreditation, and evaluation following the established parameters beyond the strong criticism regarding *Misión Sucre* and the denunciations about its design to promote the political project of the 21st Century), 462,199⁶ students were enrolled in the year 2010 (Informe de la Memoria Sucre, 2012, p. 39).

Enrolment is composed of 67 per cent in private institutions, however, in *Misión Sucre*, enrolment in private institutions

■ Public Education
■ Private Education

nt—Venezuela (2010)

(2010), Statistical Bulletin No. 23 of the University Sector (2005).

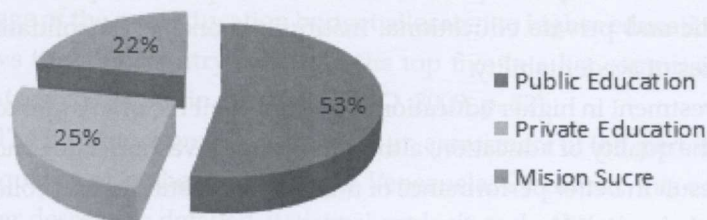


Figure 2. Distribution of Venezuelan Student Enrolment at Higher Education and at the Misión Sucre (2010)

Source: Report and Accounts of Higher Education (2010), Statistical Bulletin No. 23 of the Planning Office for the University Sector (2005) and Report and Accounts of the Misión Sucre Foundation (2010)

Student Enrolment and Scientific Production of Venezuelan Universities

Despite the considerable increase in higher education enrolment in the last decade, there are still aspects inherent to the academic world that have not progressed at the same rate. One of those aspects is academic research. Of all the academic publications in Latin America in 2009, 53.4 per cent were published by Brazil, 16.7 per cent by Mexico, 14.4 per cent by Argentina, 7.5 per cent by Chile, and 4.4 per cent by Venezuela (García, 2010, p. 25). Venezuelan universities do not have an outstanding performance when compared globally. None of Venezuela's universities are among the top 500 universities ranked by Shanghai University, and regarding scientific production, only two universities in Venezuela (Universidad Central de Venezuela and Universidad Simón Bolívar) appear in the top 50 in Latin America, in positions number 33 and 50, respectively (Scharifker, 2012, pp. 183–184).

The emergence of world rankings of universities at the beginning of this century has produced mixed reactions in the academic world. Some have criticized the methodology and others believe that it is not possible to make comparisons worldwide due to historical inequalities between countries; however, the possibility of comparative analysis at the level of higher education in an increasingly globalized world seems to be necessary. In addition, these indicators may become indispensable for

the formulation of public policies intended to improve the performance of public and private educational institutions and to consolidate the processes of accountability.

Investment in higher education is an important factor in order to improve the quality of education, although greater investment does not always result in better performance of universities, institutes and colleges. This is the case of Venezuela, where the percentage of public spending on higher education represents between two per cent and three per cent of the GDP⁷, which along with Cuba, are the two highest public-spending countries in Latin America in regard to higher education (García, 2010, p. 82). To illustrate this point, table 5 indicates the percentage of GDP allocated to higher education by the top five Latin American countries with the highest university student enrolment, publications percentage in relation to the total the region, and number of the universities in Latin American countries in the top 50 in terms of scientific production, according to the Latin American Ranking, Schimago Institutions Rankings [SIR], 2011.

Table 5
GDP, Publications Percentage and
University Ranking in Latin America

Country	Percentage GDP for Higher Education	Percentage of Publications	Latin American Ranking (SIR 2011) (first 50 universities)
Brazil	0.5–1%	53.2%	12
Mexico	1.2%	16.7%	5
Argentina	0.5%–1%	14.4%	2
Colombia	1.5%–2%	2.2%	2
Venezuela	2.52%	4.4%	2

Source: Percentage of GDP (2008) in Venezuela and Mexico (Bruni, 2012); Percentage of GDP (2007) Brazil, Colombia and Argentina (*Global Education Digest*, 2009); Percentage of publications (2009) (García, 2010); and universities located in the top 50 in Latin America (Scharifker, 2012).

Another factor regarding the percentage of the total educational budget shows that the country is among the top five countries compared in 2008.

The indicators presented in this section and quality of higher education matter deserves a detailed analysis to make an appropriate suggestion to reach definitive conclusions on the policy of municipal and Venezuelan government over other criteria relating to higher educational institutions.

Promotion Program

The National Plan for Science and Technology [Plan Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología] promotes science and technology for the sustainable development policies that must be in line with the needs of a population with high scientific knowledge. It says in part: "Technology and science and technology are part of the development of the nation and the appropriate scientific and cultural models is essential for the development. Therefore, it is essential to invest in science and technology as to assist them with the development based on the fact that the development of scientific resources.

Based on the idea of the incorporation of young people in educational policies especially for young people.

From the perspective of the investment to education, it

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Percentage and Latin America

Percentage of Publications	Latin American Ranking (SIR 2011) (first 50 universities)
2%	12
7%	5
4%	2
%	2
%	2

Mexico (Bruni, 2012); Percentage of
Global Education Digest, 2009);
) and universities located in the

Another factor regarding higher education in Venezuela is the percentage of the total education budget allocated to higher education. This shows that the country is among the top five in a list comprising 102 countries compared in 2007 (UNESCO, 2009, p. 52).

The indicators presented above is an assessment of the performance and quality of higher education in Venezuela. Of course, this complex matter deserves a detailed statistical analysis and validation in order to make an appropriate supervision to budget allocation. We do not intend to reach definitive conclusions in this paper, but there is no doubt that the policy of municipalization of higher education promoted by the Venezuelan government has favoured the increase of student enrolment over other criteria relating to quality requirements for higher education institutions.

Promotion Programme for Research and Innovation

The National Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation 2005–2030 [Plan Nacional de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación 2005-2030] (Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología, 2005) states the importance of science and technology for the sustainable development of society, and the public policies that must be implemented in order to meet the demands and needs of a population that requires scientific and technological knowledge. It says in part: "Therefore, people increasingly realize that science and technology are part of their lives ... To learn, to create and disseminate the appropriate science and technology for the lifestyles, aspirations and cultural models is one of the contemporary challenges" (p. 9). Therefore, it is essential to invest in the training of future researchers, as well as to assist them with programmes that support their consolidation based on the fact that research is an ongoing process that requires financial resources.

Based on the idea of inclusion, this plan has among its principles the incorporation of young people in the research tasks. Thus, this promotes educational policies capable of building bridges for community inclusion especially for young people. The National Plan elaborates further:

From the perspective of science and technology with regard to education, it is necessary, on one hand, to deepen scientific

studies in various scientific, engineering, and technical disciplines, and on the other hand, to make an effort to diversify technical studies and to promote the teaching and learning of science, especially at the primary and secondary levels, while in our setting the tradition is not precisely oriented or associated with this body of knowledge, and it is fundamental that we attract talents that increasingly will venture into and build up a national science culture. (p. 61)

Consequently, investment in science and technology cannot be postponed for two reasons: first, scientific communities have been consolidated in Venezuela since the mid 20th century and according to information provided in The National Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation 2005–2030, the deficit for researchers was a total of 20,000 by 2004. This explains the results that Cruces and Vessuri (2005) presented at the First Survey of Public Perception of Science 2004 which was applied nationally. Venezuelans openly stated that there are no scientific activities in the country, or at least, not known by them. However, a curious fact is that 80 per cent of respondents believe that research is useful in general. Only nine per cent of respondents identified a Venezuelan scientist. The survey results are disappointing and, therefore, it is imperative to design policies to promote the increase of the scientific and technological community, taking into account the national requirements. The survey also stated the active involvement of young people in the Promotion Programme for Research and Innovation (PEII). It can be seen in one of the objectives proposed by the *gobierno bolivariano* in The National Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation 2005–2030 that it is important to seed knowledge expansion in strategic areas:

- 1.3. Creation of assessment, certification and promotion systems to bring new actors to the National System of Science, Technology and Innovation as technologists (TSU) and technicians.
- 1.4. Encouragement of national creativity and use of scientific thinking through the promotion of grassroots innovators, shamans and sages from indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, "garage" researchers, children and youth. (p. 87)

The objectives indicated above gave support and justification for the restructuring conducted between 2008 and 2010 by the National Obser-

vatory of Science, Technology and Higher Education Promotion Programmes and to enhance research capabilities in the following preliminary objectives of the National Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation 2005–2030:

- 1.2. Support for young researchers pursuing the highest level of research as member of the research community and enterprises.
- 1.3. Support for national development through research for the promotion of scientific research in museums, infocentros,

Within this context, we have seen that from 2011, for the first time, the age is below 25 is included. This includes credited researchers and innovators, which doubles the number for 2004. The promotion programme for research and innovation is perceived as important to expand research to include research at the early stages of research.

Although the numbers are low, they increase the numbers by promoting research of the promotion programme for research and innovation at secondary level schools, the promotion of innovation into the minds of young people, professional expertise, in order to build national expertise.

So far, it has been stated that the promotion of universities. Also, there have been efforts to increase and scientific output of universities through a programme of research and innovation. This programme addresses the vision that youth should be specifically regarding the research and higher education programme.

engineering, and technical disciplines, to make an effort to diversify the teaching and learning of primary and secondary levels, while not precisely oriented or associated with science and technology, and it is fundamental that young people will venture into and build on this knowledge (p. 61)

science and technology cannot be separated from scientific communities have been developing since the mid 20th century and according to the National Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation, the number of researchers was a total of 20,000 by 2010. Cruces and Vessuri (2005) presented the National Perception of Science 2004 which was a survey that openly stated that there are no scientific communities, not known by them. However, a current survey of respondents believe that research is useful and that respondents identified a Venezuelan perception of science as disappointing and, therefore, it is imperative to promote the increase of the scientific and technological level to account the national requirements. The involvement of young people in the National Plan for Science and Innovation (PEII). It can be seen by the *gobierno bolivariano* in The National Plan for Science and Innovation 2005–2030 that it is a vision in strategic areas:

certification and promotion system of the National System of Science, Technology and Innovation (TSU) and technology, of national creativity and use of science and technology for the promotion of grassroots innovation from indigenous peoples, afro-venezuelans, children and youth. (p. 87)

gave support and justification for the National Plan for Science and Innovation 2008 and 2010 by the National Obser-

vatory of Science, Technology and Innovation (ONCTI) regarding the Promotion Programmes engaged to attract and consolidate talents with research capabilities in the country. The ONCTI was inspired by the following preliminary objectives of The National Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation 2005–2030, to establish policies for youth involvement:

- 1.2. Support for young people pursuing careers in science, pursuing the highest level postgraduates and genuine integration as member of the research staff of research centers, universities and enterprises.
- 1.3. Training young talent in strategic areas for national development.
- 1.4. Building social infrastructure for the promotion of science and technology (science houses, museums, *infocentros*, *infopuntos*, etc.) (p. 87)

Within this context, we have the picture (table 6) where it can be seen that from 2011, for the first time, a larger number of young people whose age is below 25 is included. Meanwhile, in the segment comprising accredited researchers and innovators between 25 and 34 years, it almost doubles the number for 2009–2010. It is important to point out that the promotion programme for research began in 1990 and it is only now perceived as important to expand research tasks to programmes that include research at the early stages of youth education.

Although the numbers are exceedingly modest, the intention is to increase the numbers by presenting, at the national regions, the benefits of the promotion programme. The intention is also to introduce, at the secondary level schools, the need to inculcate the process of research and innovation into the minds of young Venezuelans, along with the professional expertise, in order to bring benefits to the communities.

So far, it has been stated how many young people are enrolled in our universities. Also, there have been some indicators of public investment and scientific output of universities, and the aims of the promotion programme of research and innovation (PEII). However, it is pertinent to address the vision that young people have about higher education, specifically regarding the reasons or motivations they have to start a higher education programme.

Table 6
Structure of Researchers Accredited by Age

Year	Age Ranges						No info.	Total
	<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 or more		
1990	1	124	329	228	48	11	0	741
1991	0	144	404	288	70	17	0	923
1992	0	150	403	279	76	20	0	928
1993	0	135	361	298	84	19	1	898
1994	0	168	371	347	108	23	1	1018
1995	0	207	424	387	140	29	1	1188
1996	0	264	425	413	146	27	0	1275
1997	0	250	466	481	167	34	0	1398
1998	0	269	507	514	202	44	1	1537
1999	0	312	525	566	231	52	2	1688
2000	0	346	546	612	243	53	2	1802
2001	0	404	641	689	274	67	2	2077
2002 a/	0	404	641	689	274	67	2	2077
2003	1	474	970	932	357	88	5	2827
2004	4	438	1084	1064	454	100	4	3148
2005	1	483	1259	1253	581	129	4	3710
2006	3	598	1536	1568	751	168	2	4626
2007	3	657	1715	1738	900	198	11	5222
2008	2	777	1984	1980	1052	229	14	6038
2009	9	839	2190	2249	1240	292	12	6831
2010 a/	9	839	2190	2249	1240	292	12	6831
2011 b/	125	1456	2459	2321	1180	259	1	7801

Source: Statistical tables ONCTI, 2011.

Motivations for Young Higher Education Ins

Higher-education institutions provide educational service with high standards, meet the needs and also to give societal service (García & Acosta, 2011). In this regard, the government (CINDA) in a 2012 Resolution aimed at improving the quality of university services, actions to encourage, facilitate and attitudinal changes of a

One of the aspects that are most important are the motivations of students or future students of higher education, the motivation and purpose of study, influence study habits and study environment (Caballero, Abello, & Palace, 2011).

These motivations fall within the scope addressed by the Governing Board of the National System for Higher Education in Latin America (UNESCO) during the August 2008 meeting analyzed by Didriksson (2008). The resolutions are intended to carry out a series of actions in an edge-based society, especially in their models of training, to offer the widest range of services, experiences that enable a qualitative improvement of the region's higher education, to promote debates about new services, and technological innovations, to generate new knowledge that generates innovation based on training knowledge, to promote commitment and responsibility to sustainable development.

Credited by Age

	65 or more	No info.	Total
55-64			
48	11	0	741
70	17	0	923
76	20	0	928
84	19	1	898
108	23	1	1018
140	29	1	1188
146	27	0	1275
167	34	0	1398
202	44	1	1537
231	52	2	1688
243	53	2	1802
274	67	2	2077
274	67	2	2077
357	88	5	2827
454	100	4	3148
581	129	4	3710
751	168	2	4626
900	198	11	5222
952	229	14	6038
940	292	12	6831
940	292	12	6831
930	259	1	7801

Motivations for Young People to Study in Higher Education Institutions

Higher-education institutions are responsible for providing an educational service with high standards of quality according to population needs and also to give society higher skilled professionals (Ruiz, Molina, & Acosta, 2011). In this regard, the Inter-University Centre for Development (CINDA) in a 2012 Report on Higher Education focused on quality assurance in Latin America, stated that any strategy for innovation and improving the quality of university education should include a set of actions to encourage, facilitate and properly consider the institutional and attitudinal changes of all stakeholders to achieve such improvement.

One of the aspects that have been evaluated and highlighted as important are the motivational variables and involvement levels of students or future students of higher education. It has been found that the motivation and purpose that lead people to study and stay in college, influence study habits and satisfaction with the studies (Barca, 2002; Caballero, Abello, & Palace, 2007; Willcox, 2011).

These motivations fall under the purposes of higher education addressed by the Governing Board of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC-UNESCO) during the August 29–30, 2006 in Caracas, Venezuela, and analyzed by Didriksson (2008). They are: (a) higher education institutions are intended to carry out a fundamental role in the context of a knowledge-based society, especially if they can carry out fundamental changes in their models of training, learning and innovation; (b) education must offer the widest range of scientific, technological, and humanistic experiences that enable a qualitative leap in social responsibility and commitment of the region's higher education institutions; (c) universities should promote debates about new lines of research linked with production and service, and technological improvement, and especially to educate persons to generate new knowledge. This involves the idea of a university that generates innovation with social relevance — a social institution based on training knowledgeable workers with a high level of commitment and responsibility to social change, democracy, peace, and sustainable development.

While universities try to adapt to the needs of today's world, young people must make crucial decisions that will impact their personal future. The decision of young people to start a higher education career is usually taken through many questions, doubts and demands of different kinds. Often, they express that their family (especially parents) force them to study for a specific career. Others choose to seek a job prematurely to support their families in order to cover basic subsistence needs, although they do not give up the possibility of studying at college. According to Angulo (1994):

84.4% (1,383,270) of young students state that the main motivation for further studies is to achieve, through education, self-improvement. Thus, the educational training process still records positive levels and strategic importance in the subjectivity of students, in contrast to the increasingly inadequate behavior of the educational system that does not provide the means for social integration. The rest of the young students take school attendance as a way to get the desired job (9% / 148,541), to please the family (3.4% / 56,452) and, to a lesser degree, take school while waiting for some work or other activity (1.1% / 18 980). (p. 29)

The answers of the youth reflect a search for personal achievement, either because they conceive self-improvement as synonymous with better living conditions or as a possibility to improve their cultural level. But in the late 20th century, the aspirations of young people to excel through education were offset by insufficient academic offers. Now that we have presented numbers that show a significant expansion of higher education in Venezuela, let's see what young people expressed about the possibility of studying at the university level.

The main motivation of young people to start a college career were addressed by the project, Youth Culture Monitor of the Association of Universities Entrusted to the Society of Jesus in Latin America (AUSJAL), and conducted in 13 private universities.

This project emerged as an initiative to understand precisely the most important cultural characteristics of the young people studying in their respective institutions. The intention to investigate the activities commonly undertaken by young people (practices), the ideas and

concepts that they have about (beliefs) and their future goals. This is an exploratory-descriptive project to obtain reliable information to guide in the same direction of the Society of Jesus.

The comparison between the results obtained in this study and the results obtained in previous studies has determined the degree of congruence between what young people do, think, and aspire to. This research. These dimensions include: family support (family), study habits (education), health-related habits (health), sexual relations (sexuality), motivation (transcendence), political participation (politics), and the Internet.

The regional profile of the study shows a high degree of similarities and differences between the universities founded by the Society of Jesus in Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. However, due to space limitations, we will focus on the results obtained in Venezuela, based on sampling by quota (career and university) of the general population of the study period (8,327 students).

The study was conducted in 13 private universities, generalized to the rest of the country. This is a solid starting point to understand the culture of the university. In this regard, the study was conducted for these purposes: the possibility of obtaining a service), higher social status, and the possibility of becoming a specialist in an area of knowledge related to their desired profession. The results presented here are given by students from three universities presented here.

A total of 3,026 students from three universities surveyed — 48 per cent of students

pt to the needs of today's world, young
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le to start a higher education career is
tions, doubts and demands of different
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er. Others choose to seek a job prema-
order to cover basic subsistence needs,
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initiative to understand precisely the
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ng people (practices), the ideas and

concepts that they have about some aspects of society and the world
(beliefs) and their future goals (aspirations) was not conceived as a mere
exploratory-descriptive process. The study was formulated as a way to
obtain reliable information to strengthen the education of young students
in the same direction of the *Proyecto Educativo Común* of the Society of
Jesus.

The comparison between the three levels assessed in the study illu-
minated the degree of congruence or difference between what young
people do, think, and aspire to in each of the dimensions covered in the
research. These dimensions were: arts-related activities (artistic), family
support (family), study habits (education), purpose of the studies (edu-
cation), health-related habits (health), motivation underlying sexual re-
lations (sexuality), motivation to work (work), forms of transcendence
(transcendence), political participation (politics) and social use of the In-
ternet.

The regional profile of the research has allowed for the assessment
of similarities and differences between existing youth cultures in the uni-
versities founded by the Society of Jesus in Bolivia, Chile, Colombia,
Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.
However, due to space limitations, this paper will only make reference
to the results obtained in Venezuela. The research used a non-probability
sampling by quota (career and year), choosing approximately 13 per cent
of the general population of the 13 universities in the 2008-2009 academic
period (8,327 students).

The study was conducted in 2010 and although the results cannot be
generalized to the rest of the Venezuelan student population, it provides
a solid starting point to understand the reasons why young people go to
university. In this regard, three indicators were developed to measure
these purposes: the possibility of providing a social service (vocational
service), higher social status (social promotion) and to develop as a
specialist in an area of knowledge. Also, it explored the beliefs and goals
related to their desired professional practice. The results of the answers
given by students from three Venezuelan private universities⁸ are pre-
sented here.

A total of 3,026 students from catholic universities in Venezuela were
surveyed — 48 per cent of students from the main campus of Universidad

Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB) – UCAB-Coro: 2 per cent, from UCAB-Puerto Ordaz: 8 per cent; 30 per cent from Universidad Católica del Táchira; 5 per cent from Instituto Universitario Jesús Obrero (IUJO) – campus of Barquisimeto; IUJO-Caracas: 5 per cent, and IUJO-Maracaibo: 4 per cent. Of all the students, 41 per cent were male and 59 per cent female. Regarding marital status, 96 per cent of students were single and 60 per cent were between 20 and 24 years old, from a range of 16 to 30 years of age. The students belonged mostly to middle socioeconomic level (61 per cent) and most of them had completed their secondary education in private institutions (76 per cent). Regarding religion, 86 per cent were Catholic and 87 per cent were financially dependent on their families. The respondents stated that most of their parents had achieved higher education studies (36 per cent of mothers and 32 per cent of fathers).

Concerning the students' motivations to study in college, a slight majority expressed the desire to serve society (40 per cent). A little over half were studying to upgrade their social status (57 per cent), and to master an area of knowledge (58 per cent).

Responses regarding the students' beliefs about the purposes of studying at university were inconsistent when compared to their practices. Half of the students believed that their study programme allowed them to provide a social service; a further 48 per cent said that studying in college was the best way of acquiring knowledge and only 37 per cent believed that college provided a higher social status.

Furthermore, in terms of their aspirations, students wished to expand their knowledge to become a specialist in some area (71 per cent), while their less desired goals were to upgrade their social status by acquiring knowledge in college, and to serve society through this knowledge (both ranked 49 per cent).

In addition, while measuring whether the practices, beliefs, and aspirations regarding the purposes of study were differentiated by sex and socioeconomic status, it was obtained through the *t Student test* in a range of 1 to 4, that women had more practices, more favourable beliefs, and higher aspirations, in terms of studying at college to serve society than men. Also, women had higher aspirations to expand their knowledge through college.

Regarding socioeconomic status, students from the low and middle levels were more to serve society than students from the high socioeconomic levels. Students from the middle level had more social upgrading than the rest of the students. In their beliefs, students from a middle level were more than those from the low level as they saw college as an opportunity to provide social service and a career. Students from the high level believed that college is the best way to gain knowledge and to upgrade their low levels. Socioeconomic status was not a factor in achieving the purposes of education.

In summary, we observed that students had different purposes of attaining higher education and knowledge acquisition. There is no consistency between practices and beliefs. It could be argued, however, that college is a means and not as a means is a practice. For students, while the least important purpose is the result of a college education. It is important to note that according to sex and socioeconomic status.

The results reported here are consistent with those of Noz (1989) and Angulo (1994) who found that college is for social upgrading and a higher social status. It is important to highlight that the results from Venezuelan universities are related to the search for personal development (social upgrading) over social status.

Challenges of Venezuelan Higher Education

We have discussed in general terms the challenges of higher education, highlighting the changes in the last decade. The statistics show that higher education to date — an important development for people between 17 and 24 years of age.

UCAB-Coro: 2 per cent, from UCAB-
cent from Universidad Católica del
Universitario Jesús Obrero (IUJO) –
Maracas: 5 per cent, and IUJO-Maracaibo:
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Regarding socioeconomic differentiation, it was determined that the students from the low and medium-low socioeconomic levels study more to serve society than students from middle-high and high socioeconomic levels. Students from a high socioeconomic level study less for social upgrading than the rest of the students. Also, in terms of their beliefs, students from a middle-high socioeconomic level differ from those from the low level as they have more favourable beliefs about the opportunity to provide social services offered by their professional career. Students from the high socioeconomic level believe that college is the best way to gain knowledge, compared to youth in the middle and low levels. Socioeconomic status does not change the aspirations regarding the purposes of education.

In summary, we observed that students tend to perceive the three purposes of attaining higher education (serving society, social upgrading and knowledge acquirement) as complementary and not exclusive. There is no consistency between the practices, beliefs and aspirations. It could be argued, however, that the acquisition of knowledge as an end and not as a means is a practical and important aspiration of college students, while the least important is the ability to do social services as a result of a college education. It is also noted that motivations are different according to sex and socioeconomic level.

The results reported here are consistent with the findings of Albornoz (1989) and Angulo (1994), who highlighted young people's search for social upgrading and a higher cultural level through tertiary education. It is important to highlight also that the main reasons why students from Venezuelan universities of AUSJAL study and stay in education are related to the search for personal benefit (knowledge acquirement and social upgrading) over social service.

Challenges of Venezuelan Higher Education

We have discussed in general terms the situation of Venezuelan higher education, highlighting the expansion experienced by the sector in the last decade. The statistics show a growth of over 100 per cent from 1999 to date — an important development for society, especially for young people between 17 and 24 years.

The growth of the student population has been seen primarily in public institutions as a result of the strong public investment which has been possible due to high international oil prices, the main economic source of the Venezuelan State, and to the municipalization policy of higher education promoted by the government. This policy has sought to include young people who could not afford to start a career in the past. Similarly, the proliferation of new university locations throughout the national territory has allowed the incorporation of young people who could not travel to major urban centres.

The student enrolment growth, although extraordinary, leaves some doubts about the quality and appropriateness of the education offered by experimental higher education institutions, which unlike autonomous public universities, are directed and controlled by the national government through MPPEs. In this sense, some sectors of the academic world have complained that the municipalization policy is framed in a strongly populist ideological power (especially in the specific cases of Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela and Universidad Nacional Experimental de la Fuerza Armada), which seeks at all costs to increase the student enrolment and number of graduates, but does not guarantee a quality education. Time will allow an objective evaluation the quality of professional graduates in the country and the opportunity to make the appropriate corrective actions to ensure compliance with the requirement of the Venezuelan legal system: a quality education for all without exception.

Comparative analysis with the countries of the region shows that Venezuela is far from acceptable as regards levels of scientific production, despite strong public investment made by the State at the higher academic level. Currently, there are new initiatives such as the Promotion Programme of Research and Innovation (PEII), created by MPPEs (2011), which aims to increase the scientific activity in the country by stimulating young professionals.

Venezuelan youth still perceive education as an appropriate means for improvement. The results obtained from 3,026 students from three private universities in the country, confirm that young people see uni-

versity study as an opportunity, a specialist in a particular area. The country demands talented professionals to meet the most urgent needs in favour of social service to ensure a future for Venezuela.

NOTES

1. Comparison of Trinidad and
2. This number has been calculated from statistics of 41 institutions from which, for unknown reasons, eight had no statistics for student enrolment.
3. Our calculations based on the OPSU'S Report (2005) among
4. In Venezuela, the municipalization of higher education. The term "municipalization" was used by Carmen García Guadilla (2005) to refer to the expansion of college tuition to rural communities across the country.
5. The annual growth of 1.6% was published by the INE as a preliminary estimate; it is likely that the age group is slightly higher, but in the absence of concrete data recorded by the population census (inec.gov.ve/documentos/Documento_Censo2011.pdf).
6. This number corresponds to the programmes. According to the data, there are enrolled in what has been called the education introductory programme for school students to higher education (de Memoria y Cuenta de la Universidad Nacional Experimental de la Fuerza Armada, mismisionsucre.gov.ve/, pp.4-5).
7. Bruni (2012) estimates that
8. Universidad Católica Andrés Bello and Universidad Católica

population has been seen primarily in the strong public investment which has fallen due to international oil prices, the main economic support, and to the municipalization policy of the government. This policy has sought to allow young people who could not afford to start a career in the past to access new university locations throughout the country and the incorporation of young people who were previously in the centres.

Although extraordinary, leaves some doubts about the appropriateness of the education offered in institutions, which unlike autonomous universities are controlled by the national government. In some sectors of the academic world, the municipalization policy is framed in a strongly paternalistic way, especially in the specific cases of Universidad Nacional Experimental and Universidad Nacional Experimental. It seeks at all costs to increase the student enrolment, but does not guarantee a quality education, nor a subjective evaluation of the quality of professional training and the opportunity to make the appropriate choice in compliance with the requirement of quality education for all without exception.

The countries of the region shows that as regards levels of scientific production, the commitment made by the State at the higher education level are new initiatives such as the Promoción de la Innovación (PEII), created by MPPES to stimulate scientific activity in the country by

viewing education as an appropriate means to be obtained from 3,026 students from three universities, confirm that young people see uni-

versity study as an opportunity to acquire knowledge in order to become a specialist in a particular area, and also, as a means for social upgrading. The country demands talented young people willing to develop as professionals to meet the most urgent need of society: an excellent education in favour of social service to create a more productive, just and equitable future for Venezuela.

NOTES

1. Comparison of Trinidad and Tobago is made with 2011–2002 and 2007 data.
2. This number has been calculated by summarizing the student enrolment statistics of 41 institutions from a total of 49 presented in the report. Due to unknown reasons, eight higher education institutions did not present statistics for student enrollment during that year.
3. Our calculations based on the Memoria y Cuenta of MPPES (2010) and OPSU'S Report (2005) amounted to 1,629,193 students.
4. In Venezuela, the municipality is the political entity closest to the citizens. The term "municipalization" of higher education has been employed by Carmen García Guadilla (García, 2010) to describe the decentralization and expansion of college tuition through the setting up of new campuses in communities across the country.
5. The annual growth of 1.6 per cent between 2001 and 2011 has been published by the INE as a preliminary result of the census in 2011. However, it is likely that the age group of 17–24 years has registered higher growth, but in the absence of concrete data we chose to use the average growth recorded by the population. For more information see: http://www.inec.gov.ve/documentos/Demografia/CensodePoblacionyVivienda/ppt/Resultados_Censo2011.pdf
6. This number corresponds to the students enrolled in education programmes. According to the official source, a total of 255,955 new students are enrolled in what has been called *trayecto inicial*, which is a higher education introductory programme intended to favour the path of high school students to higher education. For more information see: 'Informe de Memoria y Cuenta de la Fundación Misión Sucre', at: <http://www.misionsucre.gov.ve/>, pp.4–40.
7. Bruni (2012) estimates that this percentage was 2.52% for the year 2008.
8. Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Instituto Universitario Jesús Obrero and Universidad Católica del Táchira.

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Success and Failure of Educational Reforms: Contrasting Belize and Jamaica

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Introduction: The Complex Process of Educational Change

For Cuban (1992), fundamental change is not mere renovations. Many changes do not materialize. Fullan (1993) describes a lapping series of dynamically changing, uncontrollable in many respects, forces, forced or mandated, he argues, with uncertainty and excitement, but it is from which we need to learn from; and he sees himself as a change agent. The process is numerous and unpredictable. Even if key leaders may leave in the midst of the international aid agencies may change in the midst of the reform process, the success of educational reform may be hampered by problems are encountered.

Factors affecting implementation

Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) discuss the implementation of a change in terms