
**Country Analysis
Education**

Colombia



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1. General educational situation

1.1 Educational history

Spanish colonization

The era of Spanish colonization began in 1510 with the founding of San Sebastian near Panama.

Most Spanish colonists avoided the tropical grasslands of the interior. Jesuit priests went into those regions and established missions that gathered together the communities of semi-settled Native American groups who lived there. Depending on Native American labor, these missionaries created cattle ranches and plantations that passed into the hands of other religious orders in 1767 when the Jesuits were expelled from the Spanish empire. Through these mission communities, Catholic priests served as mediators between the settled Native Americans and the Spanish state, and they provided education for the Native Americans that otherwise was unavailable. However, critics complain that the education Native Americans received in the missions actually was nothing more than an indoctrination into the Christian faith and instruction in Spanish. In spite of existing historical documents that show that the clergy was urged to teach the Native Americans, little education actually took place.

Missionary schools

The earliest missionary schools date to the mid-sixteenth century. In 1533, Fray Juan Luis de los Barrios founded a school, while Archbishop Luis de Zapata de Cárdenas established the Seminary San Luis. Although the seminary closed in 1586 due to student dissatisfaction, it later reopened. In 1580, the first university, Universidad de Estudios Generales, was opened in Bogotá by Orden de los Predicadores. This university later merged with the Santo Tomás School and taught religion under the new name Colegio-Universidad Santo Tomás. In 1622, the Jesuits opened Javeriana University, offering grammatical studies, and in 1635, Archbishop Fray Cristóbal de Torres created the Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario. All of these schools were in Bogotá, and each had a curriculum that was theoretical and focused on subjects such as law, logic, grammar, theology, and oratory.

Scientific thinking

In 1783, José Celestino Mutis, Barón de Humbolt, and Francisco José de Caldas came to New Granada, the area now known as Colombia, to start the Expedición Botánica. Their goal was to record all of the botanical species found in South America. Although this task was too great for the expedition to fulfill, group members spread scientific thinking through the colony and Mutis won honorary membership in the Swedish Academy of Science.

Catholic clerics

Nonetheless, the educational efforts in New Grenada were extensive. By the end of the colonial period in 1819, the number of Catholic clerics—whose calling essentially required spiritual and educational endeavors—rose to nearly 1,850. With a population of 1.4 million during the early 1800s, the ratio of priests to citizens reached 750 to 1. This ration exceeds the ratio found in any Latin American country in the 1990s.

In 1819, when the famous leader Simón Bolívar addressed the Congress of Angostura, he called for the establishment of universal popular education, claiming that the Catholic religious orders had not created anything that resembled a proper system. The clerics could not provide education for children from rural areas or from lower classes, despite the large number of priests in colonial New Grenada. To some

extent, Bolívar's request went unheeded. The members of the congress had not come together to improve education. Having broken with Spain, they sought to define the country's political organization. Thus, they unified the regions of the former New Granada, Venezuela, and Ecuador into what they named *Gran Colombia*. The members of the congress appointed Bolívar president and Francisco de Paula Santander vice president.

Constitution

In 1821, the Congress of Cúcuta devised a constitution for this new country. However, before the regular Congress of Gran Colombia could form, the Congress of Cúcuta abolished all monasteries with fewer than eight members, confiscated their assets, and placed the money in an endowment for the development of secondary schools. Although these actions were driven more by anticlerical feelings than by educational concerns, Santander did open several new secondary schools. Despite opposition from the Catholic Church, Santander urged that works by unorthodox authors, such as Jeremy Bentham, be included in the school's curriculums. In the meantime, Bolívar continued as the head of the Colombian armies that were battling Spain for control of the country.

Illiteracy

According to the congressional delegates in 1821, Spanish indifference had caused widespread illiteracy, a condition they pledged to correct. Thus, in the constitution of 1821, the delegates chose 1840 as the date by which all voters would have to pass a literacy test. Unfortunately, for the next 10 years, educational reform moved slowly. In 1832, delegates met in a national convention to draft a new constitution. However, acknowledging that literacy had not spread throughout the new republic, the delegates postponed the date for voter literacy tests until 1850.

Civil war

A civil war called the War of the Supremes (1839-42) interrupted educational reform. After the war, because of the tendency of local leaders to inflate their positions, Colombian president Pedro Alcántara Herrán and his secretary of the interior, Mariano Ospina Rodríguez, introduced new methods and pedagogical principles. For example, they removed the controversial authors from the secondary curriculum, reduced the extent of theoretical studies, and increased studies that had more practical applications, such as natural science. In addition, Herrán invited the Jesuits back to become teachers and to continue their work in frontier missions.

Liberal party

In 1849, after a close and controversial election, José Hilario López, a Liberal Party candidate, became president. In 1850, fulfilling the Liberals' desire to reverse many of the Conservative policies, the Congress enacted various policies that were intended to increase the freedom of education. The Congress disbanded all universities, placing those programs of higher education into *colegios* (secondary schools), and ended all academic requirements for people to practice any profession, with the exception of pharmacy. The citizens had the freedom to decide what training they needed, or if they needed any education at all, before entering a profession. In the same year, López reversed Herrán's invitation to the Jesuits. He argued that the sanction of 1697, which originally expelled the Jesuits from the Spanish empire, was still valid in New Granada. According to the anticlerical views held by some of López's associates, the Jesuits had to be expelled because their schools converted citizens to conservative Catholicism.

New constitution

To consolidate their victories, the liberals adopted a new constitution in 1853. They offered universal male suffrage, removed the electoral college system, and increased the number of officials who were elected rather than appointed. The provincial legislature of Vélez extended suffrage to women. In addition, the new constitution

guaranteed freedom of worship for all citizens and introduced civil marriage and divorce. In 1863, the liberals framed another constitution that changed the name of the state to *Estados Unidos de Colombia* (United States of Colombia) and advanced the regionalism of the country. The new constitution gave extensive authority to the then nine states, allowing them to determine their own suffrage laws and maintain their own services, such as postal delivery. To further limit the authority of the federal government, the constitution of 1863 reduced the president's term to two years and prohibited anyone from serving consecutive terms.

Undoing educational reforms of 1850

By 1867 the liberal government had started to undo the educational reforms of 1850. It established the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá. Emphasizing the traditional disciplines of law, medicine, and philosophy, the university offered technical studies to help Colombia enter the mechanical age. Three years later, the Congress made primary education in Colombia free and compulsory and established several teacher training institutions—called normal schools—to meet the sudden need for teachers. To assist in the process, German experts were brought in to serve as instructors at the normal schools. Fearing this represented the beginning of a godless education, church leaders called on parents to ignore the public schools. Some Catholics complained that the German educators imported to staff in the schools belonged to the Protestant faith. To alleviate the controversy, the government allowed church representatives to offer religious instruction in the public primary schools during specific hours to pupils whose parents requested it. Some states required religious teaching in the primary schools. These controversies continued to grow and became part of the civil war that erupted in 1876.

1.2 Formal education

In general, the academic structure of the educational system in Colombia remains relatively constant. Preschool or kindergarten is usually in private hands. A child may enter at age four and continue through age six. Primary schooling in Colombia begins with five years of elementary education followed by four years of secondary education. After this basic cycle, students proceed to a second level of secondary education, lasting two years. Generally, these six years of secondary education appear together. Upon finishing that level, the students may pass on to some kind of technical training or commercial studies, or they can attend university and eventually pursue graduate studies.

School calendar

The National Ministry of Education offers two options for the school calendar. One option begins in February, offers a four-week vacation in June and July, and finishes in November. The second option begins in September, offers a four-week vacation in December, and finishes in June. Both systems offer 198 days of school attendance.

Language of Instruction

Some schools offer bilingual opportunities and employ languages like French, German, or English for instruction. However, these are expensive, private academies serving the students of prosperous families. In general, Spanish is used in most schools, especially those in those rural areas where Spanish is the dominant language. In areas of the country where an indigenous language dominates, the law requires that schools offer bilingual programs using the native languages.

Grading System

In most high schools, grades are awarded on a scale extending from 1 to 10. This system was adopted in 1973, replacing a system that used a scale of one to five. However, universities retained the shorter system. In university courses, students

take final exams that count for twenty percent of the grade. These tests are two hours long and the students take one per day for five days.

Public/private schools

The distribution of enrollment between public schools and private schools, most of which are Catholic, illustrates that, while private elementary schools have become more popular, public high schools have also increased in popularity. In 1935, about 93 percent of the elementary age students attended public schools. However, at the high school level, about 46 percent attended public schools. In 1980, the proportion of students attending public elementary schools dropped to 85 percent, while the proportion of high school students attending public schools increased to about 56 percent.

School materials

In general, schools do not buy textbooks. Instead, the parents must purchase school supplies after schoolteachers or administrators indicate which books they should buy from local sources. These books may come from publishers in Colombia or from foreign firms. Usually, when a school adopts a textbook, it uses the book for three years. For many years, the Instituto Colombiano de Pedagogía (ICOLPE) of the Ministry of Education developed primers, called *cartillas*, and used five of the primers per subject to enhance elementary school teachers' pedagogical skills and to provide materials and suggestions to facilitate their daily work. Distributed without charge, the *cartillas* were well received. A less successful effort was the Ministry's attempt to develop and publish textbooks that followed appropriate educational objectives for each subject.

1.3 Government education policy

Adopted in 1886, a constitution, which remained in effect until 1991, offered free elementary education to any child who wanted it. However, the constitution reversed the 1870 law that made such elementary education compulsory. The following year, the government entered the Concordat of 1887, requiring that all public education be done in accordance with the Roman Catholic religion. As result, clergy could approve school texts, determine the curriculum, and appoint teachers.

National system of education

In 1903, the central government took responsibility for establishing a national system of education with the passage of the Organic Law of Public Education, which made education free but not compulsory. Together with its regulating decree of 1904, the Organic Law set up a system of national inspection, divided schools into elementary and secondary levels, and established professional, industrial, and artistic branches. Although the law of 1903 placed education under the control of the states, it gave the power to set policy for all public, private, state, and national schools to the Ministry of Education. Other levels of government took different responsibilities. For example, states had to pay teacher salaries while municipalities had to construct and furnish the schools. Unfortunately, the law perpetuated discrepancies between urban and rural education by ordering cities to provide six years of schooling and requiring rural areas to provide only three.

Compulsory education

In 1927, the Conservative government of Colombia made education compulsory, but did not provide funds to make this possible. Consequently, public education remained unavailable for most Colombians even though it was supposed to be free and compulsory.

Religion in education

The Liberal candidate, Alfonso López Pumarejo, became president in 1934, and he increased spending on schools. To increase the status of teachers, López Pumarejo's Liberal government established registries, required high school teachers to have university degrees, and set up national salary scales for teachers. In 1936, the Liberal government adopted a law stating that neither race nor religion was an adequate reason to deny students admission to schools.

In his most controversial act, López Pumarejo changed the constitution to remove the Catholic Church as the final authority on permissible practices in schools. Enacted in 1936, these amendments enabled the Colombian Ministry of Education to encourage coed education, even though Pope Pius XI urged Catholics to avoid this practice. At the same time, the Ministry of Education invited liberal humanist scholars from Europe to come to Colombia. In addition, while the Conservative government had mandated religious training in the public schools, the Liberal Party turned schools toward patriotic education. As a result, instructional materials and programs emphasized the patriotic duties of citizens, the accomplishments of traditional heroes, and the value of national goals instead of spiritual development. In reaction, Conservatives complained that the Liberal administration assaulted moral and religious values.

Violencia

The controversy over religion and education grew into the struggles known as the *Violencia* (The Violence). According to some estimates, the fighting claimed the lives of 300,000 people.

In 1957, a military junta took control of the federal government. To bring peace, they adopted a set of mathematical guidelines to the Constitution that required the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party to share all elective and appointive offices. According to this agreement, the two parties alternated control of the presidency. Although criticized for being undemocratic, these rules created a coalition known as the National Front that ended the *Violencia*.

Secretary of education

During the 1980s, the governor of each of the country's departments (equivalent to a U.S. state) served as the chief administrative officer of his or her department and controlled all the educational matters in that department. Each governor appointed a secretary of education, who directed the schools in his or her department and reported to the governor. In 1986, there were about 32,000 such schools in the different departments, which at the time numbered 22. On the national level, the president appointed a minister of education to oversee national schools, of which there were about 500, and private schools, of which there were about 8,000. At the same time, the president appointed the governors.

New constitution

In 1991, Colombia approved a new constitution. Among other provisions, the constitution of 1991 made education compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 15 years and recommended one year of pre-kindergarten training. It recommended other changes, such as bilingual education for communities where the population spoke an indigenous language, and it repeated the requirement that all teachers had to be professionally trained.

For more information about the new constitution visit:

http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/colombia_const2.pdf

1.4 Education providers

The largest part of the educational system in Colombia is made up of public schools.

In 2006 the enrolment percentage in private pre-primary education was 39% and 19% in primary education. In the same year 24% of secondary school students were enrolled in private secondary schools.

The private sector of education was made up of schools operated by the Roman Catholic Church, schools operated by other religious denominations, private schools, and cooperative schools operated by communities. Catholic schools predominated. The Constitution guarantees freedom for private ownership and operation of schools in the private sector. However, they had to be licensed, meet public-school standards, and generally use the public curriculum, and they were subject to supervision by the public inspection system. Private institutions administered by foreign organizations could use the language of the home country for instruction, but they had to employ Colombian teachers to conduct classes in the Spanish language on the country's history and geography. Catholic schools used texts prepared by Catholic publishers adapted under government order to conform to the prescribed official program of study. The Colombian government relied heavily on the private school system, and it financially supported institutions that provided scholarships to children from poorer families.

1.5 The quality of education

Although quality primary education was a difficult and subjective concept, many indicators suggested that there was substantial room for improvement. Rates of attrition had decreased, and rates of graduation had improved since the 1960s. The repetition rate had also gone down slightly. Nevertheless, only 62 percent of those students who entered primary schools in urban areas finished sixth grade, and in rural areas the rate was just 18 percent. In the departments, the variations were quite large, ranging from 34 percent to 81 percent in urban areas and from 9 percent to 41 percent in rural areas. The grade repetition rates were uniform by region but still quite high, ranging from 20 percent in the first grade to 7 percent in the fifth. Students in urban areas completed an average of 3.7 primary-school grades, whereas those in rural zones completed an average of only 1.7 grades.

The low quality of education was one of the reasons for the high rates of student attrition and the major reason for the high rate of grade repetition. To improve the quality of education, in 1985 the Plan of Curriculum Revision was approved after years of testing. But up until 1988, it had been implemented only partially because of administrative and financial problems.

Secondary education

Inefficiency and low quality were also major problems in Colombia's secondary schools, although to a lesser degree than at the primary level. At the secondary-school level, 55 percent of all teachers had completed university studies, students used modern learning aids in class, and teaching materials of high quality were generally available.

Higher education

There were few reliable data on the quality of higher education except in those universities that maintained high entrance requirements. Most of these were concentrated in Bogotá and a few other principal cities. Nonetheless, observers agreed that the rapid expansion of higher education had in general occurred at the expense of quality.

1.6 Religion within education

Reinforcing the growing secular influences in Colombia, the new constitution eliminated any reference to Catholicism as the national religion. It specifically placed all religious denominations on equal legal footing, and it made divorce subject to civil law, thereby making civil divorce legal. Unfortunately, it is unclear what effect this change in religious policy will have on educational matters. For example, in 1936, the government amended the constitution by removing the authority of the Catholic Church in educational matters. However, as late as 1971, critics had complained that, although the Ministry of Education was most responsible for education in the country's departments, the ministry could not regulate such things as private school tuition because these schools were Catholic. In the church dioceses bishops ensured that the Catholic faith was taught in public schools and that lessons did not contradict the Church's magisterium. The bishops approved religion textbooks adopted by elementary and high schools, and the archbishop of Bogotá decided what religion texts the universities used. If a religion teacher ignored a bishop's requirements the bishop could remove the teacher from his or her position.

Religious control

The practice of religious control of the schools continues despite constitutional changes because the Catholic Church has more influence in Colombia than in any other country in the Western Hemisphere. In Colombia, clerics wield their power informally through interpersonal relations. Consequently, though the constitution of 1991 sought to establish distance between the government and the church, church officials continued to appear in public forums offering their blessings to official acts. Thus, while private schools may have had to adjust to government regulations and conform to courses of study prescribed by the Ministry of Education, Catholic bishops unofficially retained authority over such matters in the public school.

1.7 Teacher education

In 1979, The Congress of Colombia passed the Teacher's Law (*Estatuo Docente*), which specified the rights and benefits of teachers throughout the nation. This statute established a salary scale for teachers with 14 levels and benefits. At the same time, the teachers were expected to enter a registry. The lowest level at which a person could enter this registry required completion of a teacher training program offered at a high school. The highest level demanded a post-graduate degree in education, or a university degree in education and the publication of a work in the field. To draw teachers to rural areas, the statute offered incentives, such as rapid advancement. Despite the incentives, many teachers transferred to urban areas, which led to a surplus of qualified teachers in urban areas and a lack of adequate personnel in rural areas.

Levels of teacher training

In Colombia, teacher training takes place at two levels. Some secondary schools offer a teaching diploma (*Bachillerato Pedagógico*), or an identical program called normal school training (*Formación Normalista*). These programs offer a basic cycle of academic courses and a second cycle of specialization. After receiving their diplomas, students may teach in primary schools or apply for admission into an institution of higher learning. To qualify to teach at a secondary school, the candidates have to graduate from a postsecondary institution or a university school of education. Critics complain that the normal schools are inflexible and offer poor quality specialized training. In 1980, to address these criticisms, the national Ministry of Education adopted Decree 80, which promised to promote the scientific and pedagogical training of teachers in universities.

Teacher preparation

Despite the criticisms, the level of teacher preparation rose significantly. In the 1960s, 11 percent of primary school teachers had only a primary school education or less. At the same time, only 2 percent of primary school teachers had any postsecondary training. In the 1980s, the percentage of primary school teachers with primary school training or less dropped to about 1 percent. However, only 13 percent of the primary school teachers had postsecondary training. Among secondary school teachers, the level of preparation is higher. During the 1980s, about 55 percent of secondary school teachers had completed university studies.

1.8 Administration and finance

In the 1980s, the national government continued to bear the primary responsibility for public and private education. The authority was extended downward from the president to the minister of education and by delegation to the secretaries of education in the departments, the national territories, and the large municipalities that maintained their own school systems. It extended also to several decentralized institutions concerned with education matters.

There were various kinds of schools. At all levels of schooling, the central government operated a small system of national schools ranging from preschool units in major urban centers to the massive UNC in Bogotá. Only in Caquetá Department, however, were national schools in a majority. Most of the schools were maintained by the departments and the national territories, and many were maintained by municipalities with populations of more than 100,000. Because schools in the national system were large and well known and their teaching staffs were in a favored position, analysts often overemphasized their numerical importance.

Private sector

The private sector of education was made up of schools operated by the Roman Catholic Church, schools operated by other religious denominations, private schools, and cooperative schools operated by communities. Catholic schools predominated. The Constitution guarantees freedom for private ownership and operation of schools in the private sector. However, they had to be licensed, meet public-school standards, and generally use the public curriculum, and they were subject to supervision by the public inspection system. Private institutions administered by foreign organizations could use the language of the home country for instruction, but they had to employ Colombian teachers to conduct classes in the Spanish language on the country's history and geography. Catholic schools used texts prepared by Catholic publishers adapted under government order to conform to the prescribed official program of study. The Colombian government relied heavily on the private school system, and it financially supported institutions that provided scholarships to children from poorer families.

Administration

In the 1980s, the administration of the education system involved an interplay between forces of central control and forces of regional decentralization in which political considerations had an important part. This interplay had existed for many years, and the complexity of the issues involved was perhaps best exemplified by the issuance in 1968 of a decree establishing the system of Regional Educational Funds (Fondos Educativos Regionales--FER) as a many-faceted attack on the country's educational problems. Theoretically, the public education system had been a unit in which the Ministry of Education set down patterns and rules and coordinated and supervised the day-to-day administration provided at the regional levels. In practice, a kind of anarchy had developed, in which the departmental and municipal systems

had operated with a degree of de facto autonomy that prevented the central authority from effectively using the material and human resources theoretically at its command.

FER program

The FER program sought to remedy this situation by establishing a relationship between the Ministry of Education and the regional school systems in which the amount of money assigned to each regional system and the manner in which it was to be spent were determined by contract. To administer the FER program and to provide a direct line of communication between the national and departmental levels, delegates were named by the minister of education to oversee the FER programs and to cooperate with the regional secretaries of education in administering the local education systems. Because the delegates were to reside in the departmental capitals and devote their attention exclusively to the departmental and municipal school systems in a particular area, the Ministry of Education maintained that the change was one of decentralization. In fact, it was the exact opposite.

Before the end of 1969, contracts had been signed by each of the departmental governors. The most significant portion of each contract was a section requiring that the department establish a special bank account to receive the monthly national contributions. If the terms of the contract were violated or if during any month the corresponding regional contributions to the education fund were not deposited, the contract would be suspended, and any unexpended funds would be returnable to the national government. Although this was the only sanction set forth in the contract, it was a highly potent one.

The FER system achieved mixed results. The varying degrees of noncompliance resulted from and illustrated the problems that had plagued the country's education system in the past and continued to disturb it into the 1980s. The root causes were intense regionalism and the politicization of the local systems.

The presence of the delegate as the representative of the control authority was frequently resented. What the central authority wanted did not always meet regional needs. The regional delegate could work only through the regional secretary of education, who was not an educator and who was not concerned primarily with education. In addition, the regional delegate was responsible not to the minister of education but to the governor of the department, who was in turn responsible to one of the two major political parties.

Education sector

Although the education sector grew continually after the 1930s, the most rapid changes occurred after the 1960s. Colombia began to move toward a long-standing educational goal, equal access to primary education for all sectors of society. In 1987 about 90 percent of the children between seven (the age established for obligatory primary school attendance) and eleven years of age attended primary school in urban areas. In many rural areas, however, the number was often below 70 percent, and in some areas it even dipped below 50 percent in 1988.

The educational levels of the population improved in tandem with the country's economic growth. Around 30 percent of the twelve-year-old population went to secondary school in 1985, in contrast to only roughly 8 percent in 1951.

Nevertheless, percentages were much lower in the rural areas because there were few secondary schools. Moreover, 80 percent of all university students attended classes in just five cities.

In quantitative terms, the performance of Colombia's education sector has been impressive. Although increases in the number of young people entering the school system have remained constant-- roughly 3 percent annually throughout the 1970s and 1980s--the system not only has kept pace with population growth but also has increased its rate of absorption of students. In absolute figures, one of the most difficult tasks for the public primary schools was the absorption of 2 million new

students in less than twenty years. This growth was particularly remarkable, given that the system had less than 1.5 million students in 1960. But this accelerated growth was achieved at the cost of a decline in the quality of public education because it focused largely on the increased availability of classrooms and teachers without taking into account the need for supplying other critical resources.

1.9 Conclusions

The Colombian school system has been through a lot of strains during its history especially with regards to the influence of religion in education. To this day the Catholic church still has some influence on the public education in Colombia.

The structure of the educational system in Colombia has remained relatively constant with a structure of, pre-primary education, followed by primary education, secondary education and higher education.

The government has clear legislation on its education together with a good administrative structure to support education.

The part of education that can do with improvement lies within the teacher qualifications and teacher education, there are not enough well qualified teachers in public education.

2. Primary education

2.1 School attendance

Early efforts to establish primary education did not enjoy great success. In the 1830s, under the direction of President Francisco de Paula Santander, public primary school enrollment rose from 17,000 children to 20,000. Combined with private school attendance, this still meant that less than 15 percent of the primary school population was attending school. In 1870, when the Congress made primary education in Colombia free and compulsory, the national government offered 4 percent of its budget (200,000 pesos) to education, with 20 percent of that sum going to universities. Nonetheless, primary schools spread. In 1870, 60,155 students were enrolled, and by 1874, the number had grown to more than 84,000.

Statistics on primary and pre-primary education

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006
Data				
Percentage of female students. Pre-primary	49	49	49	49
Percentage of female students. Primary	49	49	48	49
Pupils of the official school age. Pre-primary. Female	...	473,126	489,648	455,288
Pupils of the official school age. Pre-primary. Male	...	487,838	509,655	473,445
Pupils of the official school age. Pre-primary. Total	960,796	960,964	999,303	928,733
Pupils of the official school age. Primary. Female	...	1,936,404	2,010,676	1,978,304
Pupils of the official school age. Primary. Male	...	1,996,115	2,097,701	2,063,962
Pupils of the official school age. Primary. Total	...	3,932,519	4,108,377	4,042,266
Enrolment in pre-primary. Public. All programs. Total	665,558	666,732	684,111	664,513
Enrolment in pre-primary. Public and private. All programs. Female	524,061	522,912	539,036	526,990
Enrolment in pre-primary. Public and private. All programs. Total	1,065,699	1,065,885	1,108,409	1,083,737
Enrolment in primary. Public. All programs. Total	4,317,178	4,368,492	4,307,867	4,276,624
Enrolment in primary. Public and private. All programs. Female	2,538,173	2,559,509	2,568,957	2,574,705
Enrolment in primary. Public and private. All programs. Total	5,207,149	5,259,033	5,298,257	5,296,190
Enrolment in primary. Grade 1. Total	1,402,139	1,271,837	1,243,785	1,210,920
Enrolment in primary. Grade 2. Total	1,069,872	1,081,509	1,080,429	1,070,840
Enrolment in primary. Grade 3. Total	985,414	1,032,683	1,044,045	1,032,840
Enrolment in primary. Grade 4. Total	907,657	966,146	992,065	992,855
Enrolment in primary. Grade 5. Total	842,067	906,822	937,932	988,735
Gross enrolment ratio. Pre-primary. Female	39	39	41	40
Gross enrolment ratio. Pre-primary. Male	39	39	41	41
Gross enrolment ratio. Pre-primary. Total	39	39	41	40
Gross enrolment ratio. Primary. Female	113	114	115	115
Gross enrolment ratio. Primary. Male	114	115	117	117
Gross enrolment ratio. Primary. Total	113	115	116	116
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Pre-primary	1.01	1.00	0.99	0.99
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio.	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.99

Primary				
School life expectancy (years). Pre-primary. Female	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
School life expectancy (years). Pre-primary. Male	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
School life expectancy (years). Pre-primary. Total	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
School life expectancy (years). Primary to secondary. Female	10.2	10.6	10.8	11.0
School life expectancy (years). Primary to secondary. Male	9.8	10.2	10.4	10.6
School life expectancy (years). Primary to secondary. Total	10.0	10.4	10.6	10.8
Rate of primary school age children out of school. Female	...	12	7	8
Rate of primary school age children out of school. Male	...	13	7	8
Rate of primary school age children out of school. Total	...	12	7	8
Percentage of private enrolment. Pre-primary	38	37	38	39
Percentage of private enrolment. Primary	17	17	19	19
Teaching staff in pre-primary. Total	50,525	50,462	49,926	49,822
Teaching staff in primary. Total	194,153	188,147	186,898	187,920
Pupil-teacher ratio. Pre-primary	21	21	22	22
Pupil-teacher ratio. Primary	27	28	28	28

For the latest statistics visit:

http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0

2.2 School accessibility

In Colombia, the constitution guarantees free education but provides that this right is “without prejudice to charges for the cost of academic rights for those who can afford them.” As a result of this provision, Colombian authorities have generally taken the position that some fees are permissible.

In July and August 2004, Human Rights Watch interviewed children in Colombia who reported paying up to 100,000 pesos (US\$40) in matriculation fees. Related costs for uniforms, books, and backpacks and other supplies often total US\$30 or more. Some schools also charge up to U.S.\$10 in administrative fees for “paperwork” or “school records”. This is a substantial sum for poor families, particularly those with several school-age children. The minimum wage in Colombia is approximately 350,000 pesos (US\$140) per month, and many wage earners make less than \$40 per month.

For more information on school accessibility visit:

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/colombia1005/7.htm>

2.3 Forms of primary education

Pre-primary education

In Colombia, the available pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs vary from day care programs that simply watch over the children to sophisticated programs employing specialized teachers and advanced technology. Almost 92 percent of the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten centers are Catholic, privately owned and

operated, and are located in urban centers. In 1970, to increase educational opportunities, the Congress allowed universities to offer pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs. Thus, public universities currently offer programs to train early childhood teachers. While most of these require four or five years of study, the Universidad Pedagógica de Bogotá offers a three-year early childhood teaching program. However, this did not increase the number of public kindergartens because the graduates of these training programs chose to work in private kindergarten centers that offered better salaries and more opportunities for teachers than did the public schools.

Public/private preschools

According to 1999 statistics (from the National Administrative Department of Statistics), about 56 percent of preschool students enroll in public institutions. Although the public preschools enjoy a higher percentage of the total preschool enrollment, there are fewer public preschools because, public preschool centers are usually larger than the private ones.

Primary schools

Most primary schools are free public institutions operated by the department government with the assistance of the National Ministry of Education. Although children may enter these public primary schools at six years of age, most children enter at age seven. Usually, the classrooms are self-contained and the instructional day lasts for six hours, divided into two sessions. Each day contains three 45-minute class periods and a 45-minute break. Instruction includes the following subjects, in order of their importance: Spanish, arithmetic, social studies, aesthetic and manual training, natural science, physical education, and religious and moral training.

Rural schools

In rural areas, schools tended to stress practical subjects. In the 1970s, educators repeatedly said that the rural schools should teach students about the problems that existed in the country. Unfortunately, this meant that current technology was little-used in classrooms. Worse, the department secretaries expected teachers to present problems at the central office. Consequently, the teachers closed their classrooms and rode buses to the reach the city where the office was located. In 1977, to solve this problem, the secretaries tried to divide each state into planning, administrative, and instructional systems. Since most rural primary schools offered programs that were shorter than five years, the plan tried to include one five-year school in each district, which were about 10 kilometers in length. Secondary schools almost never appeared in rural areas.

New schools movement

In the 1980s, Colombian educators introduced an innovation called the New School Movement that spread throughout Latin America. It was an effort to encourage self-instruction. Specially written guides took the place of textbooks. These guides covered such subjects as math, social science, and language. They offered detailed instructions allowing students to proceed on their own. In addition, the guides suggested activities and exercises the students could pursue in school or at home. Such flexible programming allowed students to leave school to help the family during harvest time, for example, and to resume studies at the same point when they returned to school.

Teachers asked parents and community members to form school councils, tend school gardens, and help teachers during lessons. Some critics complained that the New School Movement reduced teacher involvement, and other critics complained that many teachers misused the guides by making the students work through them as they marched through textbooks. Although the new schools emphasized self-instruction, they cost about 10 percent more than traditional ones. Nonetheless, about 12,500 new schools spread throughout Colombia, and, in 1989, the World

Bank recommended that other developing nations adopt the New School Movement. As a result, Guatemala, Chile, Argentina, Nicaragua, and the Philippines adopted the movement.

2.4 Special needs education

According to the World Health Organization, 7–12% of the world population has some type of disability. The index for Latin America and the Caribbean tends to be higher than 7%. It is 12% for Colombia.

Although the Colombian Division of Special Education was created within the Ministry of Education in 1976, only in 1994 did Law 115—the general law of education—specify special classes in the public school that integrally included people with disabilities. However, Law 115 indicated more a symbolic attitude than a policy: regulations and practices did not show up automatically. As a matter of fact, in the implementation of Law 115 in August 1994, special education was not mentioned. During the emergence of special education, a wider interest in individuals with disabilities has arisen. There is now a focus on the human being within the contexts of culture, history, and societal values. Education is now understood as giving the individual autonomy, an understanding that provides a basis for educating children more effectively. There has also been a focus on the etiology of disabilities and on the implementation of courses of action.

Factors affecting the development of special education

Currently, there are four factors that affect the development of special education in Colombia: the cultural, the socioeconomic, the pedagogical, and the critical. It is important to understand these when considering the future of special education in that country.

Culturally, Colombia is linguistically multiethnic and *casteliansed*, that is, heavily influenced by the Spanish of Castilla. Colombian education is a centralized Hispanic-colonialist legacy inscribed into a Latin American context. More recently, influences on Colombian education have come from the United States, England, and France.

From a socioeconomic perspective, Colombia has slightly better conditions than the average of other developing countries and centers, based on specific indicators: life expectancy, access to safe water, GNP per capita, and gross primary school enrolment.

With respect to the pedagogical factor, Colombia is giving increased attention to curriculum, teaching, methodology, and the school as an institution. This contrasts with the focus in preceding years, which was on the pupil as the one to be changed or "cured" rather than on the instructional medium.

Finally, the critical factor involves the choice between an approach that is segregationist and one that is integrationist. Unfortunately, Colombian educational reform is currently more a reactive system addressing immediate political, social, and economic problems than a long-term program for the strategic development of a culture. The importance of the family and the social environment as the primary influences on children's lives has been neglected. Indeed, the opinions and perceptions of parents have not been a matter of discussion in connection with either regular or special education.

Parental beliefs about their child's disability constitute a variable that potentially affects many aspects of the development and education of children with disabilities. Given the reasons for, and conditions of special education in Colombia, an important step would be to consider placement for children with disabilities by clearly attending

to the essentially local needs and culturally sensitive conditions of the families of these children.

Example: deaf education

Colombia's deaf education services span the complete educational choice spectrum, from sign language to oral to mainstreamed, although the majority seem to be oral. There are even schools for the deaf that reverse mainstream hearing children. One deaf school that emphasizes sign language, is the Filadelfia School for the Deaf (Filadelfia para Sordos) in Bogota. Deaf education in Colombia is overseen by the Instituto Nacional para Sordos (INSOR).

2.5 Conclusions

The enrolment statistics for primary education are very good, however primary education can still be unavailable to some because of the different kinds of fees that schools charge, together with costs for school supplies and school uniforms.

Pre-primary education however, has much lower enrolment rates and a much higher private enrolment rate.

Colombia also has a division for special education which focuses on providing education to children with special needs. This division still has a lot of room for development.

3. Secondary education

3.1 School attendance

In Colombia, secondary education is concentrated in urban areas. As a result, a disproportionate number of high school students come from wealthy families. This bias toward the wealthy children remains true even though about 60 percent of the students enroll in public schools.

Secondary education grew rapidly in Colombia. In 1970, 20 percent of children in the appropriate age group enrolled in some form of secondary education. However, by 1980, this number had doubled to 40 percent. In 1990, secondary school enrollments reached 1,849,243, which was about 46 percent of the school-age population.

Statistics on secondary education

Years	2003	2004	2005	2006
Data				
Percentage of female students. Total secondary. General programs	51	51	51	51
Percentage of female students. Total secondary. Technical/vocational programs	55	55	54	54
Percentage of female students. Total secondary. All programs	52	52	52	52
Pupils of the official school age. Secondary. Female	...	1,541,952	1,703,411	1,831,678
Pupils of the official school age. Secondary. Male	...	1,442,064	1,597,370	1,708,199
Pupils of the official school age. Secondary. Total	...	2,984,016	3,300,781	3,539,877
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 1. Total	898,298	898,630	949,236	977,199
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 2. Total	721,897	782,183	828,220	868,923
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 3. Total	638,362	723,097	751,282	762,842
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 4. Total	574,181	613,013	669,371	701,384
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 5. Total	355,845	406,520	463,454	...
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 6. Total	311,333	309,434	352,771	...
Enrolment in lower secondary. Public. All programs. Total	2,207,718	2,383,499	2,473,319	2,561,597
Enrolment in lower secondary. Public and private. All programs. Total	2,837,425	3,016,923	2,191,795	3,310,348
Enrolment in total secondary. Public. General programs. Total	2,652,751	2,889,657	3,034,030	3,197,638
Enrolment in total secondary. Public. Technical/vocational programs. Total	224,655	255,511	242,054	225,771
Enrolment in total secondary. Public. All programs. Total	2,877,409	3,145,168	3,276,084	3,423,409
Enrolment in total secondary. Public and private. General programs. Total	3,499,915	3,732,877	4,014,334	4,230,653
Enrolment in total secondary. Public and private. Technical/vocational programs. Total	289,076	317,648	282,894	253,843
Enrolment in total secondary. Public and private. All programs. Total	3,788,991	4,050,525	4,297,228	4,484,496
Gross enrolment ratio. Lower secondary. All programs. Female	82	87	91	94
Gross enrolment ratio. Lower secondary. All	76	80	84	87

programs. Male				
Gross enrolment ratio. Lower secondary. All programs. Total	79	83	87	90
Gross enrolment ratio. Upper secondary. All programs. Female	59	64	68	72
Gross enrolment ratio. Upper secondary. All programs. Male	51	54	57	60
Gross enrolment ratio. Upper secondary. All programs. Total	55	59	63	66
Gross enrolment ratio. Secondary. All programs. Female	75	79	83	87
Gross enrolment ratio. Secondary. All programs. Male	68	71	75	78
Gross enrolment ratio. Secondary. All programs. Total	71	75	79	82
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Lower secondary. All programs	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Upper secondary. All programs	1.17	1.18	1.18	1.19
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Secondary. All programs	1.10	1.11	1.11	1.11
Percentage of private enrolment. Lower secondary. General programs	22	21	23	23
Percentage of private enrolment. Upper secondary. General programs	33	29	32	31
Percentage of private enrolment. Upper secondary. Technical/vocational programs	22	20	14	11
Percentage of private enrolment. Secondary	24	22	24	24
Teaching staff in lower secondary. Total	...	121,849	...	...
Teaching staff in upper secondary. Total	...	42,491	...	...
Teaching staff in secondary. Total	181,077	164,340	164,194	164,783
Pupil-teacher ratio. Lower secondary	...	25	...	...
Pupil-teacher ratio. Upper secondary	...	24	...	...
Pupil-teacher ratio. Secondary	21	25	26	27

For the latest statistics visit:

http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0

3.2 School accessibility

Students are generally admitted to secondary school after finishing primary education.

For more information on school accessibility see '2.2 School accessibility' or visit: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/colombia1005/7.htm>

3.3 Forms of secondary education

In Colombia, secondary education is divided into two parts, middle school training (*educación media*), and secondary school training (*educación secundaria*.) Both terms refer to level 6 through 11 and are often offered together. The sole requirement to enter a public secondary school is to satisfactorily complete a primary school course. Generally, private schools require the students to pass an entrance examination. As a result, public secondary schools tend to serve the lower income

groups and offer more diversified educational programs leading to employment as well as higher education. Most private secondary schools offer a *Bachillerato Académico o Clásico*. However, since 1974, the secondary schools have had to offer at least one other curriculum besides those leading to an academic diploma.

Curriculum

In 1974, the Ministry of Education mandated that the curriculums operate on two cycles. The *Ciclo Básico* (Basic Cycle) occupies the first four years of instruction and all students receive the same fundamental academic instruction. In addition, they spend five hours per week in what might be called vocational exploration. The advanced secondary cycle takes up two years. It may be called *Ciclo Vocacional* (vocational cycle) or the *Enseñanza Media Diversificada* (diversified courses). In these programs, students may complete programs leading to different degrees, such as *Bachillerato Académico o Clásico*, *Bachillerato Pedagógico*, or *Bachillerato Agropecuario*.

Types of secondary schools

In general, there are three types of secondary schools. The bulk of the institutions include public and private schools that prepare the students for university training and teach humanities and science courses. In 1981, the enrollment in these schools included about 72 percent of overall secondary enrollment. The second type of secondary school includes vocational or teacher training institutes. Although students in these schools take the basic academic subjects, the schools emphasize vocational subjects through all six years. In 1981, about 25 percent of the students were enrolled in this type of school. Finally, a small percentage of students enroll in *Institutos Nacionales de Enseñanza Media Diversificada*, or comprehensive high schools.

Vocational education

In 1969, the Ministry of Education began the *Institutos Nacionales de Enseñanza Media Diversificada* to encourage vocational education. Offering academic courses and various vocational programs, these schools operate on the same four-year Basic Cycle and two-year Vocational Cycle pattern found in other schools. However, instead of different schools offering different specialties, many options are grouped together in the same building. These schools spread rapidly, in part because international organizations such as the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development and the United States Agency for International Development contributed to their establishment and support.

Another highly regarded vocational program in Colombia operates from the Ministry of Labor. Called *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* (SENA), this program provides on-the-job training to people who have completed a primary school education. It began in 1957 and is supported by a payroll tax. Shortly after the ministry introduced SENA programs, all the departments began offering them, enrolling more than 23,000 trainees annually. By 1987, more than 15 percent of the urban workforce had attended SENA training sessions.

3.4 Conclusions

The enrolment rates for secondary education are significantly lower than those for primary education. There is also a clear difference between lower and upper secondary enrolment rates, upper secondary education has much lower enrolment rates.

A good development is that the enrolment rates have clearly been rising significantly over the last few years, indicating that the accessibility to secondary education is improving.

However as with primary education, secondary education is by no means free. Students have to pay for school uniforms, school supplies and different kinds of school fees. When combining all these costs education can be to costly for the very poor.

4. Higher education and university

4.1 School attendance

Statistics on tertiary education

Years	2003	2004	2005	2006
Data				
Percentage of female students. Tertiary ISCED 5A	53	52	57	53
Percentage of female students. Tertiary ISCED 5B	46	46	35	47
Percentage of female students. Tertiary ISCED 6	33	35	41	34
Percentage of female students. Total tertiary	51	51	51	51
Enrolment in 5A tertiary. Total	796,808	910,228	919,463	953,044
Enrolment in 5B tertiary. Total	189,552	201,581	303,170	360,797
Enrolment in 6 tertiary. Total	320	765	961	1,131
Enrolment in total tertiary.	986,680	1,112,574	1,223,594	1,314,972
Gross enrolment ratio. ISCED 5 and 6. Female	25	28	30	32
Gross enrolment ratio. ISCED 5 and 6. Male	23	26	28	30
Gross enrolment ratio. ISCED 5 and 6. Total	24	27	29	31
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Tertiary	1.09	1.08	1.08	1.09
School life expectancy (years). Tertiary. Female	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.6
School life expectancy (years). Tertiary. Male	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.5
School life expectancy (years). Tertiary. Total	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
Graduates in education.	...	...	17,945	7,120
Graduates in humanities and arts.	...	...	4,058	6,036
Graduates in social sciences, business and law.	...	...	63,062	60,092
Graduates in science.	...	...	2,758	2,227
Graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction.	...	...	30,824	29,231
Graduates in agriculture.	...	...	1,589	1,244
Graduates in health and welfare.	...	...	11,608	9,538
Total graduates in all programs. Tertiary. Female	...	42,737	68,390	57,282
Total graduates in all programs. Tertiary. Total	...	82,213	131,844	115,488
Teaching staff in total tertiary. Total	83,084	87,544	93,673	87,397

4.2 School accessibility

Students that apply to a non university higher education institution must take an entrance examination.

The admission for university level studies also require an entrance examination. Some universities set their own compulsory examinations.

Public/private enrolment

A unique characteristic of Colombia's educational system is the composition of public and private enrolments at the different levels of education. Whereas most primary (81 percent) and secondary (72 percent) students attend public institutions, 70 percent of students attend private higher education institutions. This contrast has to do with higher education institutions' role as relatively good businesses and public institutions having their growth restricted due to fiscal constraints.

This trend has serious consequences concerning higher education access for graduates of public secondary schools. Public universities (both national and regional) admit only about 15 percent of the new students. In national universities, there are always more candidates than places. Instead of moving to towns with extra places available at public universities, most students apply to private institutions with a range of academic standards, prices, and traditions.

The differences in public and private enrolments between basic and higher education in Colombia are related to the constraints of the public offer. The limited access to subsidized (public) higher education means that the students who fail to gain admission and cannot afford to pay tuition opt out of the educational system.

4.3 Forms of higher education

Admission

After completing secondary education, students wishing to attend a university must pass the official entrance examination, *El Examen de Estado* (The State Examination). For many years, students applying for higher education had to possess a Bachiller (secondary school) diploma and pass an exam. In 1980, the Ministry of National Education issued a decree that made this common practice a legal requirement. Although the state examination is administered through the *Servicio Nacional de Pruebas*, each institution weighs the results in accordance with its own academic requirements. Thus, universities and colleges determine what level of performance they can demand of students in order to fill their own enrollment quotas. Although admission is based on academic performance, the students in institutions of higher learning come disproportionately from high-income families.

University programs

In 1940, there were fewer than 3,000 students enrolled in universities studying to enter medicine, law, and engineering. The main objective of this system was to transmit information that students had to memorize. However, university programs changed as a result of the growth of national industries. Called "*modernización*" (modernization), these economic changes required more specialized technicians, workers, engineers, accountants, managers, and economists. Consequently, universities have diversified their programs and opened them to many social groups (Parra).

Institutions

In 1980, the Ministry of National Education officially established four levels of higher education: intermediate professional studies, technological studies, university studies, and graduate studies. Within these categories, the number of institutions grew rapidly. In 1970, the Colombian Association of Universities recognized 25 public and private universities. However, the National University Fund identified 65 more institutions of higher learning. By the late 1980s, there were more than 235 institutions of higher learning, and in 1999, university enrollment exceeded 807,000 students.

Schools' capacity and staff

The number of applications to public universities exceeded the schools' capacity to accept students. Facing such demand, public universities raised their admission requirements. One reason for the large number of applications was that tuition in a public university was based on the parents' declared income. This made education affordable. Furthermore, since 1950, completion of higher education has been the avenue for social mobility. To meet the increased demand for higher education, more private universities and technical institutes were opened.

When universities grew to meet the demand for higher education, the institutions could not find faculty to teach the classes. In 1970, for example, the University of Antioquia ranked as one of the best schools, with a well-planned new campus and above average financial support. Although it had eight basic departments, the staff in those departments was underqualified. In the department of mathematics, one professor had a master's degree. The other instructors included six civil engineers, one chemical engineer, an economist, eight teachers with bachelor's degrees in education, and two people without degrees in higher education (Waggoner).

At any rate, in the 1990s, higher education in Colombia expanded more than the other, lower levels of education. Private institutions grew faster than public ones. Unfortunately, most observers agreed that the institutions grew at the expense of quality. They offered courses in areas that did not meet the developmental needs of the country. Since the faculty members were often untrained, they did not engage in scientific or technical research.

4.4 Accreditation system

As part of a reform of the higher education system in Colombia proposed in 1992 (law 30) the system of accreditation of Colombian higher education institutions was created under the auspices of the National Council of Accreditation (CNA), which had been specifically set up by this law. CNA functions under the National Council of Higher Education (CESU), which is the main body for policy making in Colombian higher education. CNA consists of a group of highly respected Colombian academics and of the secretariat that is in charge of co-ordinating on-going accreditation processes.

CNA

CNA performs two functions in the area of quality assurance: submission of reports on the orientation and coordination of voluntary accreditation of quality control of both undergraduate programs and higher education institutions, as well as reports on the evaluation of both "previous accreditations" of teaching training programs, and of engineering and health programs, known as the "verification of minimum quality standards".

Accreditation of excellence

"Accreditation of excellence" is both a voluntary and temporary process and its methodology stresses quality enhancement rather than quality control. As a consequence, "accreditation of excellence" adopted a system whereby ideal characteristics of quality are compared in the light of reality, thus creating strong incentives for quality improvement.

More recently, it was also decided to develop a methodology for the accreditation of institutions which focuses on processes of the entire higher education institution and is less geared towards specific study programs. Both processes are perceived to be complementary and based one on the other.

The methodology for the *accreditation of excellence* of academic programs and institutions is founded on a four-stage-process. Once an institution has requested

accreditation of its programs, the first phase concerned with checking the eligibility of criteria may begin. Following this stage, the academic undergraduate program of the institution undergoing accreditation conducts a self-evaluation based on a pre-established methodology and set of criteria and quality characteristics. An external peer visit of the institution then follows, which leads to the preparation of a reports on which the institutional management may comment. The concluding report of the peers is submitted to CNA which then proceeds to the final evaluation or syntheses and issues a recommendation to the ministry of education to accredit the programs for a given duration range from three to ten years.

The model

CNA has prepared a model for the *accreditation of excellence*, which is based on the following seven factors:

- Institutional project;
- Students and teachers;
- Academic processes;
- Institutional well-being;
- Organization, administration and management;
- Graduate students and impact of the environment;
- Physical and financial resources.

The factor are described and organized into a total number of 66 characteristics. Each characteristic includes indicators that allow measuring the degree of complians with an ideal value. According to the object for accreditation, certain characteristics are more important than others and some are considered as crucial. This leaves institutions and peers with a checklist of items to be interpreted with regard to a particular department of specific institutional circumstances. Institutional accreditation assessment is based on similar factors and characteristics but the focus is more on the institutional and organizational processes.

Accredited programs

As of august 2002, 138 programs had been proposed by CNA for accreditation, 63 of which where not accredited. At the same time, a great number of other programs where engaged at different stages in the accreditation process, which brought the total number up to approximately 400.

A certain number of incentives have been created by the state for accredited programs, such as an institution “award for the concern with quality” in public sector management, or tax exemption for donors of funds to institutions with accredited programs.

Accreditation in Colombia is perceived as a success story. It has helped instil a culture of evaluation, which enhances concerns with quality and management processes in general. It is also, however, still struggling with many organizational problems such as aiming a higher scale, implementing the necessary infrastructure to do so, or co-ordinating with other mechanisms of quality assurance.

For more information on the accreditation program visit:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001310/131066e.pdf>

4.5 Conclusions

The enrolment rate for tertiary education in Colombia is around 50% and has not changed over the last four years.

Access to higher education in Colombia can be attained after finishing secondary education and successfully completing an official entrance examination.

In Colombia there is an accreditation program in place to assure the quality of higher education. However accreditation is voluntary for higher education programs, although the number of accredited programs in Colombia is rising.

5. Informal education and literacy

5.1 Non-formal education

During the early twentieth century, small towns and cities had local newspapers that produced issues of less than 10 pages to a small circle of readers. Not until the 1930s did a major newspaper achieve national circulation. In 1929, Elías Pellet Buitrago made the first radio broadcast in Colombia. However, there were only about 250 receivers in the country. By 1935, radio's popularity grew. Although news programs of that time consisted of nothing more than commentators reading stories from journals, politicians recognized radio's potential as a campaign tool and sought to use it to mobilize crowds of voters. As a result, in 1941 there were 70 stations in Colombia, most of which played a various forms of music. Occasionally, literature and theater found their ways on to the airways. In the 1950s, transistor radios became popular and appeared everywhere.

ACPO

To some extent, radio offered a means to help rural education. In 1947, Father José Joaquín Solcedo initiated a church-sponsored program named *Acción Cultural Popular* (ACPO), or Popular Culture Action. The idea was to use a radio relay system to transmit classes in reading and writing to all parts of the country. The classes concentrated on basic literacy but included such items as agricultural extension programs and sanitation suggestions. ACPO offered paperback texts at a nominal cost that the parish priest could distribute. Usually, an assistant helped the students follow the instructions. Financed entirely by the church, ACPO claimed to have 16,000 radio schools in the rural areas of Colombia in 1970. Despite these claims, some researchers found that many priests did not invest the necessary time in the program and that the broadcasts rarely reached the more remote areas of the country.

Television

In 1954, television came to Colombia, where it was initially controlled by the state bureau of information and news (*Oficina de Información y Prensa del Estado*). In 1955, the authority passed to the national office of television (*Televisora Nacional*). Not long after that, the state monopoly passed to the *Instituto Nacional de Radion y Televisión* (National Institute of Radio and Television), also known as Inravisión. As a result of such governmental control, politicians used the television to campaign, and they cancelled programs that were critical of their policies. Nonetheless, television spread rapidly, covering 80 percent of the territory by 1960 and reaching almost two million viewers. Although most of the programming consisted of soap operas and sporting events, in 1961, television channels began carrying educational programs for children and agricultural information for farmers in rural areas. By 1970, there were two national television channels dedicated to educational programming.

Media

In 1972, more than 12,000,000 radios were in use in Colombia. In the 1970s, the number of member radio stations held by the major networks increased. However, the three principal networks—CARACOL, RCN, and TODELAR—established ties with television and print media. Similarly, newspapers consolidated. In the late 1970s, there were 42 papers in 16 Colombian cities. Each had circulations of approximately 200,000 readers. Finally, in 1985, the national television network, Inravisión, broke into three branches, and channels appeared in the different regions of Colombia.

5.2 Literacy

The adult literacy rate in Colombia is one of the highest in Latin America. According to the United Nations Human Development Report 2003, in terms of literacy Colombia ranks second after Panama, in the group of medium human development. Since 2003, Colombia has implemented a national program for literacy and basic education for young people and adults which have benefited 275,000 people. Several specialized adult education methods are being used under the CAFAM Program, which has won a UNESCO literacy prize. Almost 90 % of the national territory is being covered by the program, including countryside, urban, displaced women, indigenous population and population affected by the violence.

Statistics on literacy

Years	2004	2005
Data		
Adult illiterate population. Female	1,152,643	1,144,859
Adult illiterate population. Male	1,063,884	1,105,973
Adult illiterate population. Total	2,216,528	2,250,832
Youth illiterate population. Female	64,810	66,861
Youth illiterate population. Male	102,596	105,155
Youth illiterate population. Total	167,407	172,016
Adult illiterate population. % female	52	51
Youth illiterate population. % female	39	39
Adult literacy rate (%). Female	92.7	92.9
Adult literacy rate (%). Male	92.9	92.8
Adult literacy rate (%). Total	92.8	92.8
Youth literacy rate (%). Female	98.4	98.4
Youth literacy rate (%). Male	97.6	97.5
Youth literacy rate (%). Total	98.0	98.0
Gender parity index for adult literacy rate	1.00	1.00
Gender parity index for youth literacy rate	1.01	1.01

5.3 Conclusions

As in any country there are different types of non-formal education to be found in Colombia, in the history of Colombia different kinds of media were used to educate the citizens.

Literacy rates in Colombia are very high. Colombia has implemented a national program for literacy and basic education which covers almost 90% of the national territory to further improve the literacy rates.

6. Sources

Text	URL / ISBN
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1.2 Formal education	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/283/Colombia-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW.html
1.3 Government education policy	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/282/Colombia-CONSTITUTIONAL-LEGAL-FOUNDATIONS.html
1.4 Education providers	http://www.country-studies.com/colombia/education---administration-and-finance.html
1.5 The quality of education	http://countrystudies.us/colombia/57.htm http://countrystudies.us/colombia/58.htm
1.6 Religion within education	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/282/Colombia-CONSTITUTIONAL-LEGAL-FOUNDATIONS.html
1.7 Teacher education	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/289/Colombia-TEACHING-PROFESSION.html
1.8 Educational legislation	http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/colombia_const2.pdf
2.1 School attendance	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/284/Colombia-PREPRIMARY-PRIMARY-EDUCATION.html http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0
2.2 School accessibility	http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/education0905/4.htm
2.3 Forms of primary education	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/284/Colombia-PREPRIMARY-PRIMARY-EDUCATION.html
2.4 Special needs education	http://escholarship.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1137&context=education/tecplus
3.1 School attendance	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/285/Colombia-SECONDARY-EDUCATION.html http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0
3.3 Forms of secondary education	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/285/Colombia-SECONDARY-EDUCATION.html
4.1 School attendance	http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0
4.2 School accessibility	http://www.unesco.org/iau/onlinedatabases/systems_data/co.rtf http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/newsletter/Number42/

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4.3 Forms of higher education	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/286/Colombia-HIGHER-EDUCATION.html
4.4 Accreditation system	http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001310/131066e.pdf
5.1 Nonformal education	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/288/Colombia-NONFORMAL-EDUCATION.html
5.2 Literacy	http://www.sice.oas.org/Investment/NatLeg/COL/Comp_Advantage.pdf http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=41817&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0