# The important role of Government in assuring quality & equity of basic education in Latin America & the Caribbean
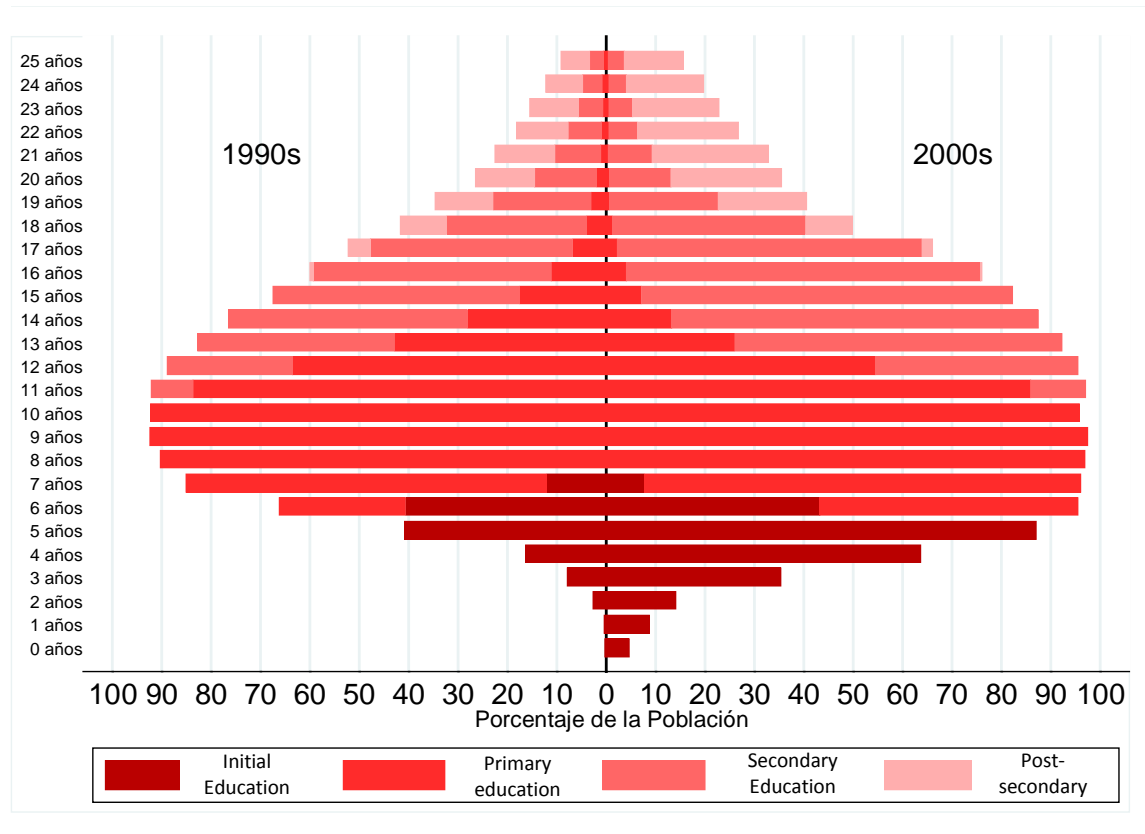
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Education Division Chief
Inter-American Development Bank

Lima, March 18, 2016

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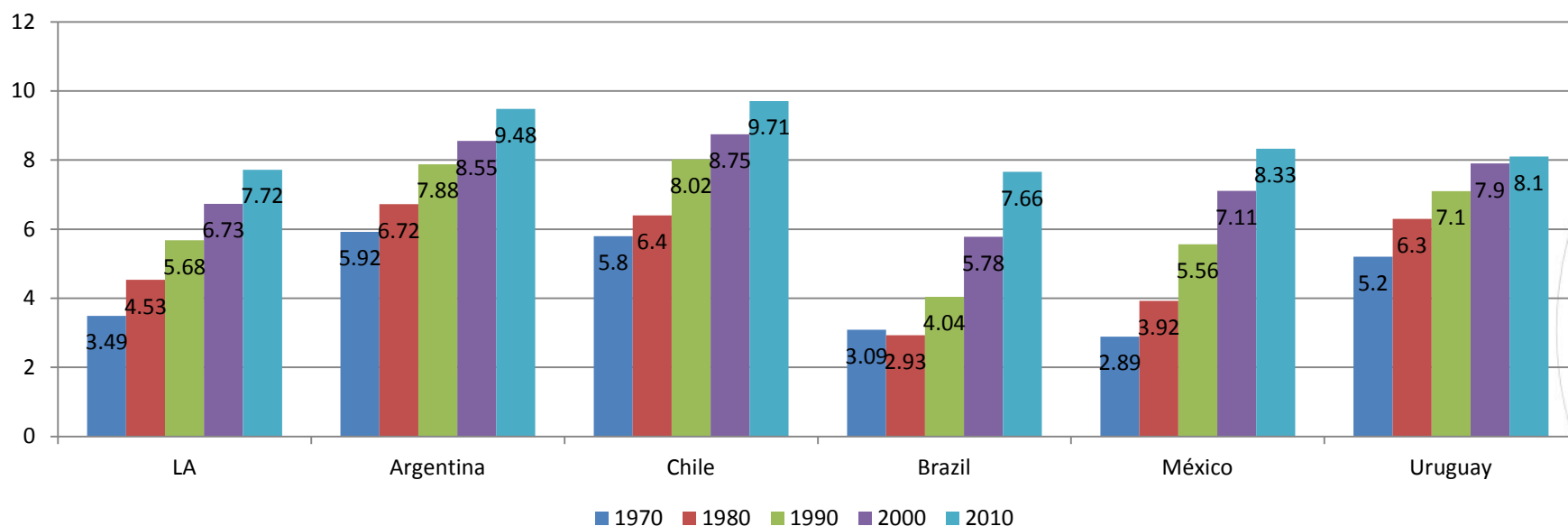# LAC increased access to education at all levels significantly

Enrollment rates by age and education level



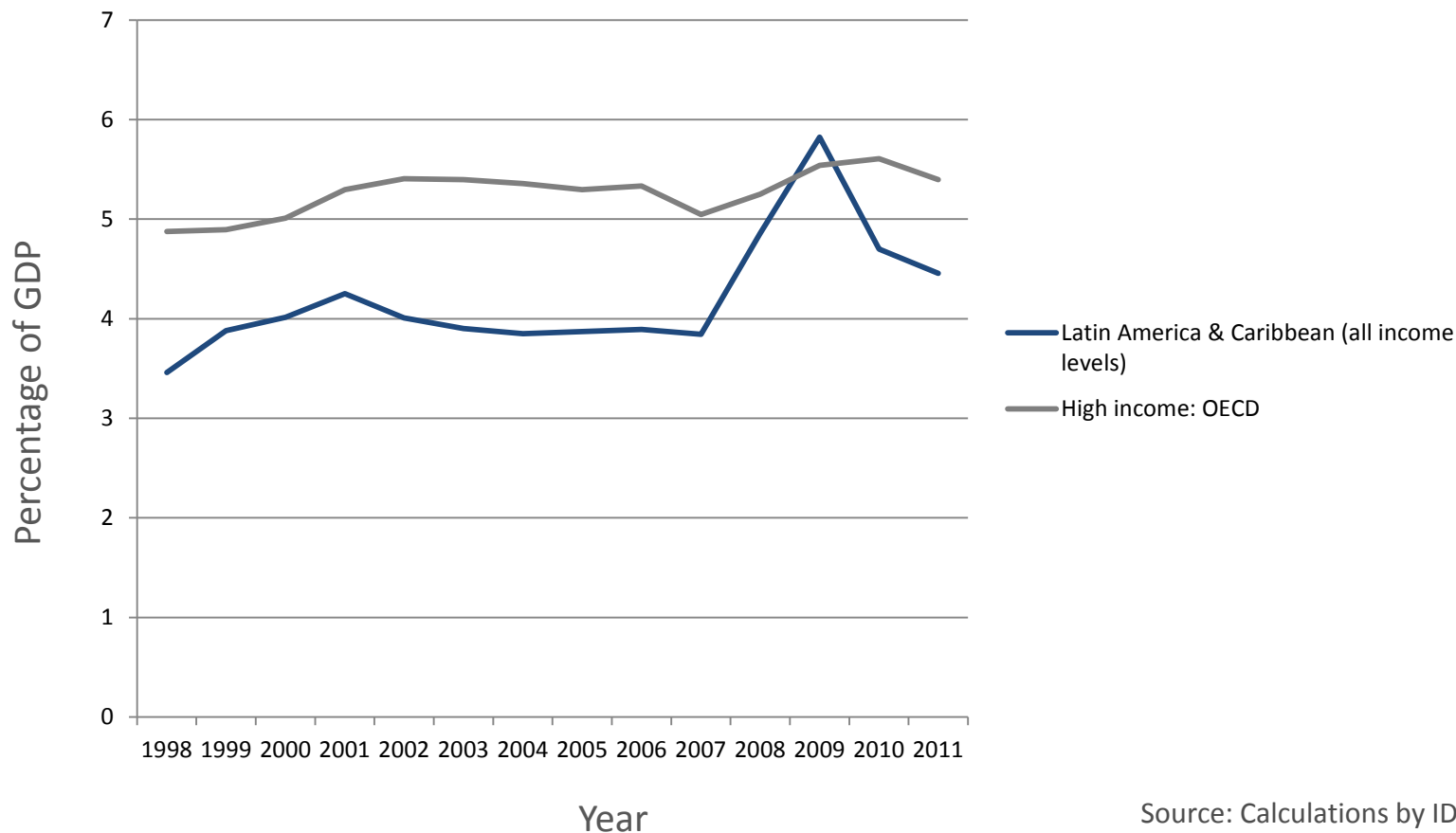Source: IDB/EDU calculations based on Household surveys

# And the region has improved markedly in average years of schooling…

**Average years of schooling of adults, 1970-2010**



Source: Barro-Lee data.
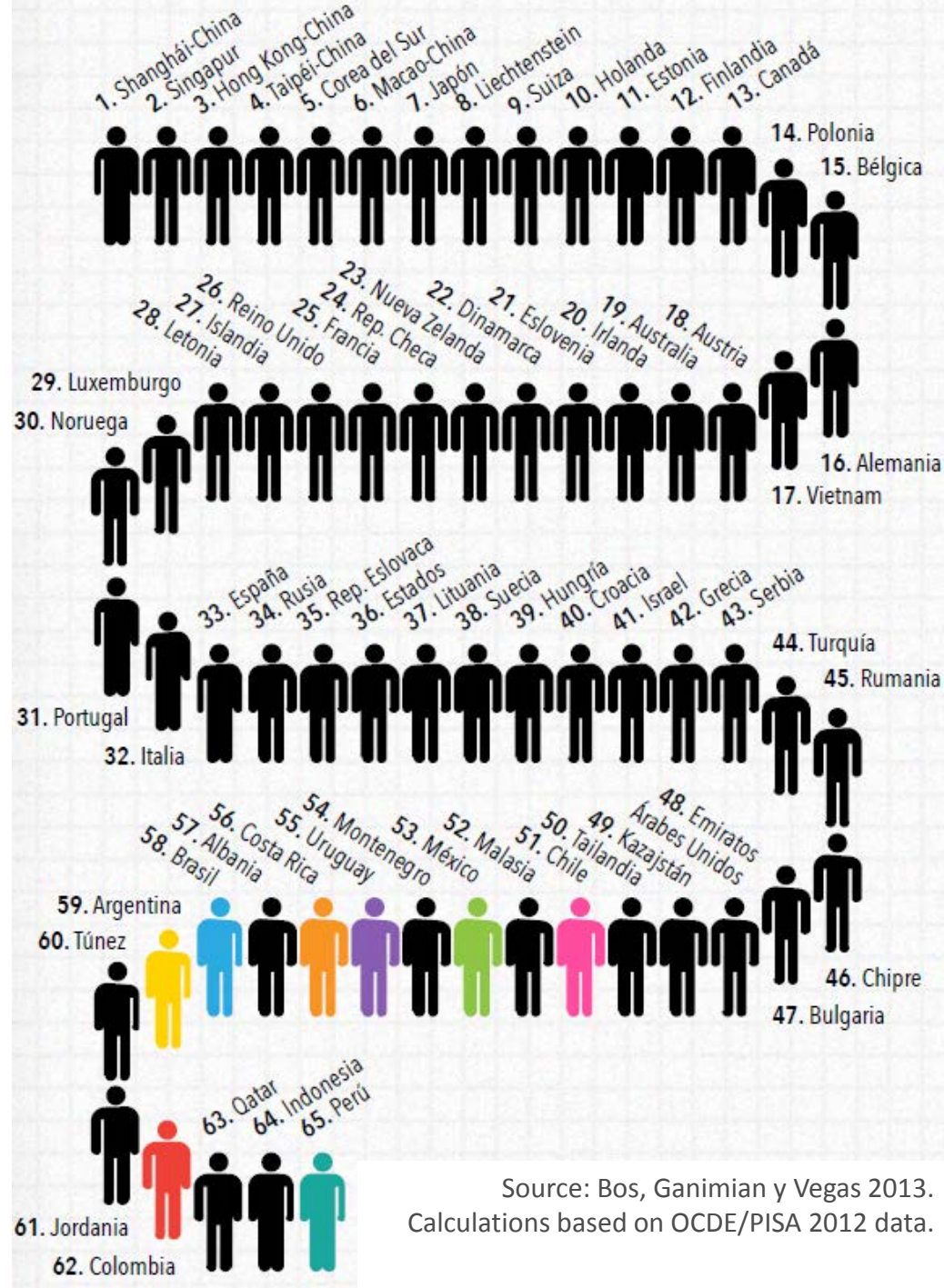
# Public spending in education also increased



Source: Calculations by IDB/EDU based on EdStats, World Bank
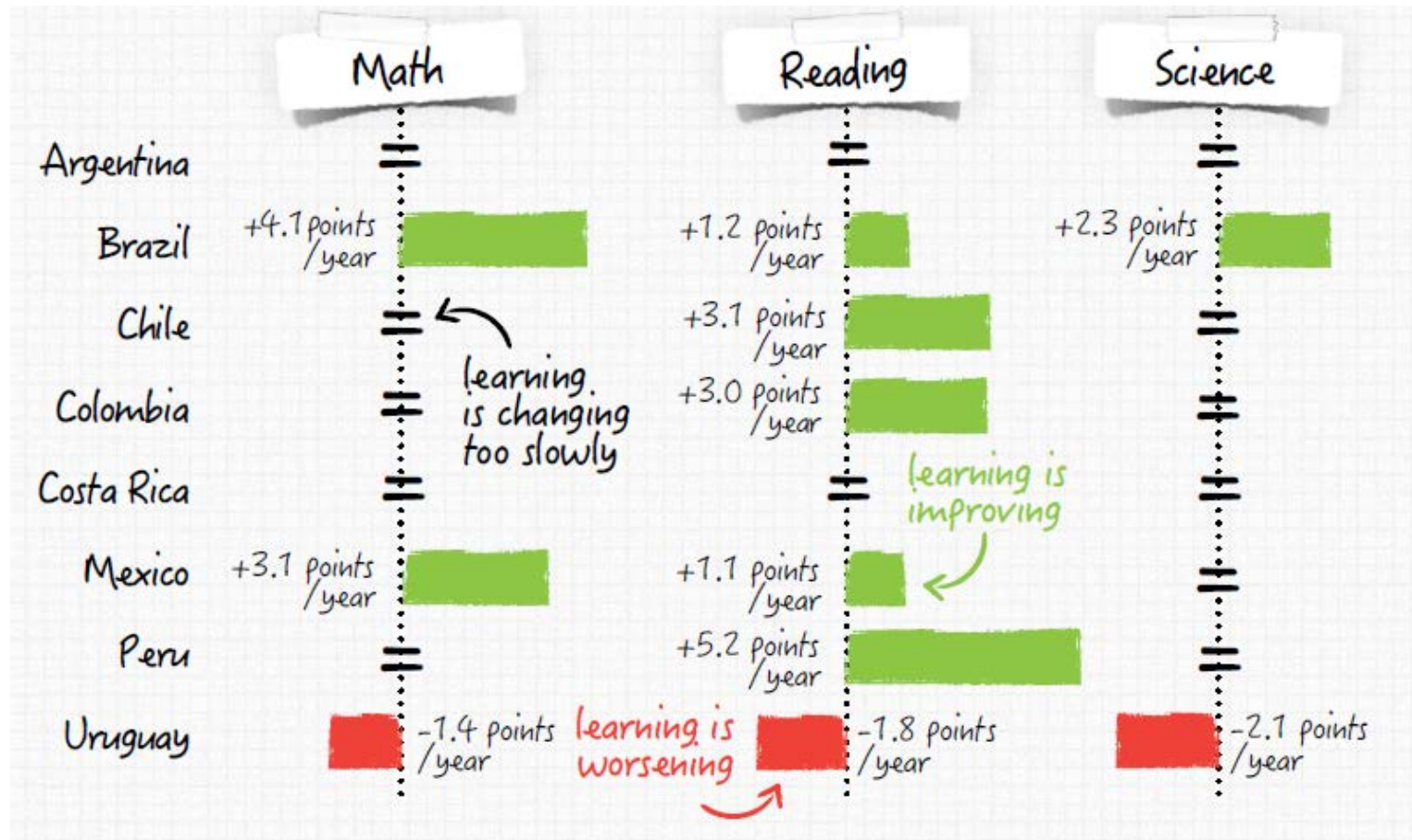
# But...

Latin American countries continue to underperform in PISA compared to other countries

Average math scores in PISA 2012

# And although progress has been made, many still lag behind
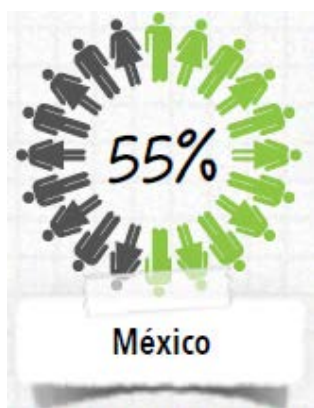


Change between PISA 2000 and 2012

| | Math | Reading | Science |
|---|---|---|---|
| Argentina | | | |
| Brazil | +4.1 points/year | +1.2 points/year | +2.3 points/year |
| Chile | | +3.1 points/year | |
| Colombia | | +3.0 points/year | |
| Costa Rica | | | |
| Mexico | +3.1 points/year | +1.1 points/year | |
| Peru | | +5.2 points/year | |
| Uruguay | -1.4 points/year | -1.8 points/year | -2.1 points/year |

learning is changing too slowly

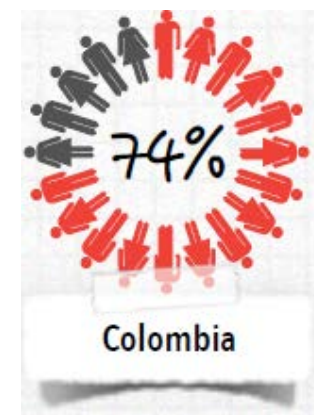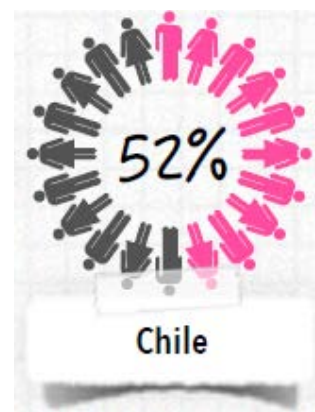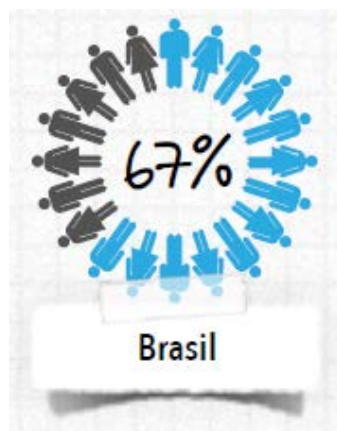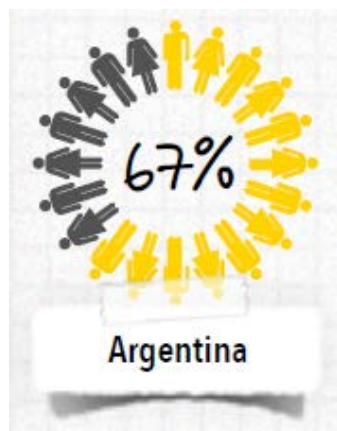learning is improving

learning is worsening

Source: Bos, Ganimian and Vegas 2013. Calculations based on data from OECD/PISA 2012.

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# Student learning is low

Percentage of students that perform below level 2 in Math



Argentina 67%

Brasil 67%

Chile 52%

Colombia 74%

México 55%

Perú 75%

Uruguay 56%

Source: Bos, Ganimian and Vegas 2013. Calculations based on OCDE/PISA 2012 data.

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# Student learning is low

Percentage of students who reach levels 5-6 in Math, PISA 2012



Below level 1

Level 1

Level 2

Level 3

Level 4

Level 5 and 6

0.3% Argentina

0.8% Brasil

1.6% Chile

0.3% Colombia

0.6% Costa Rica

0.6% México

0.6% Perú

1.3% Uruguay

Source: Bos, Ganimian and Vegas 2013. Calculations based on OECD/PISA 2012 data.
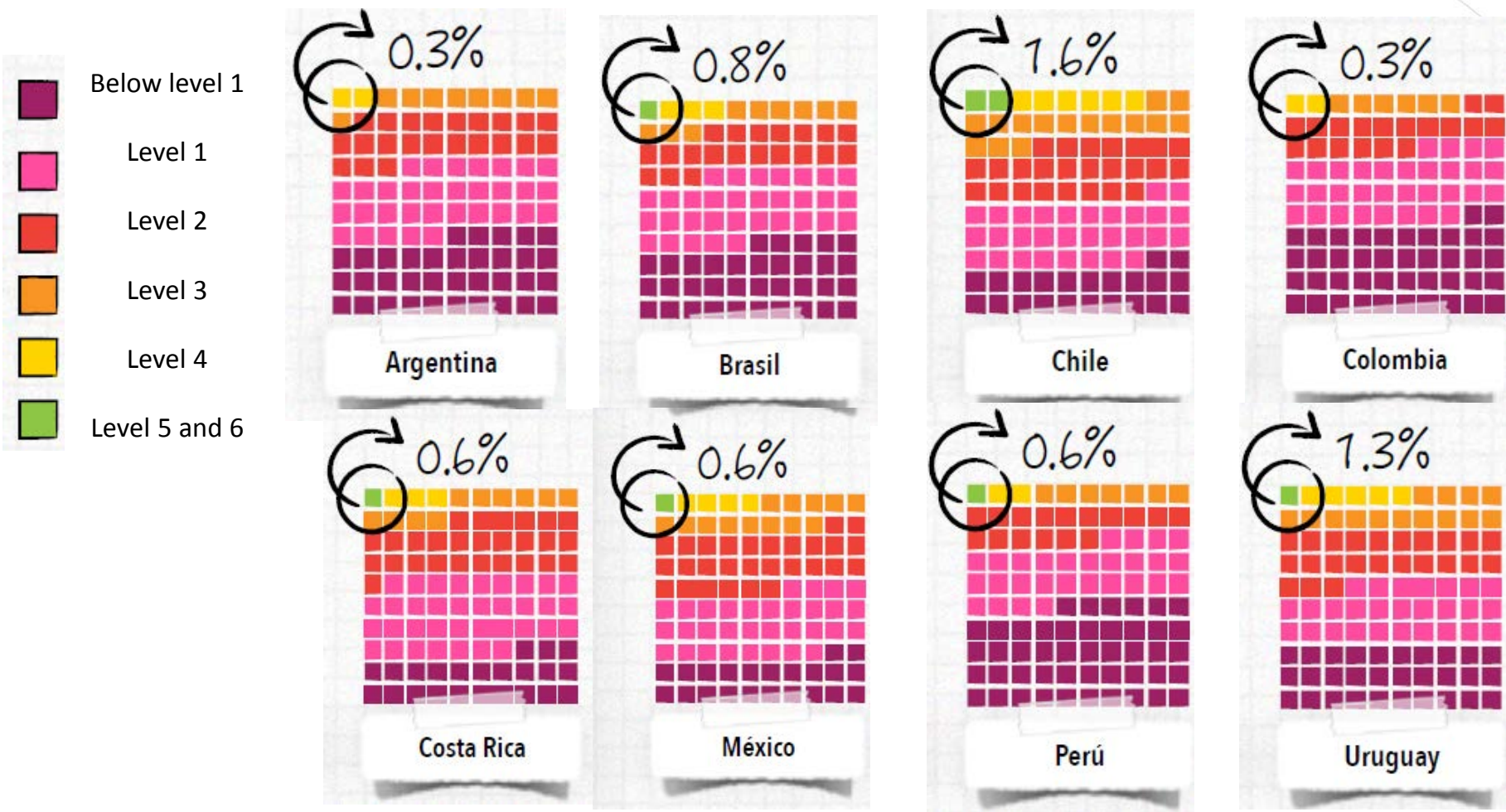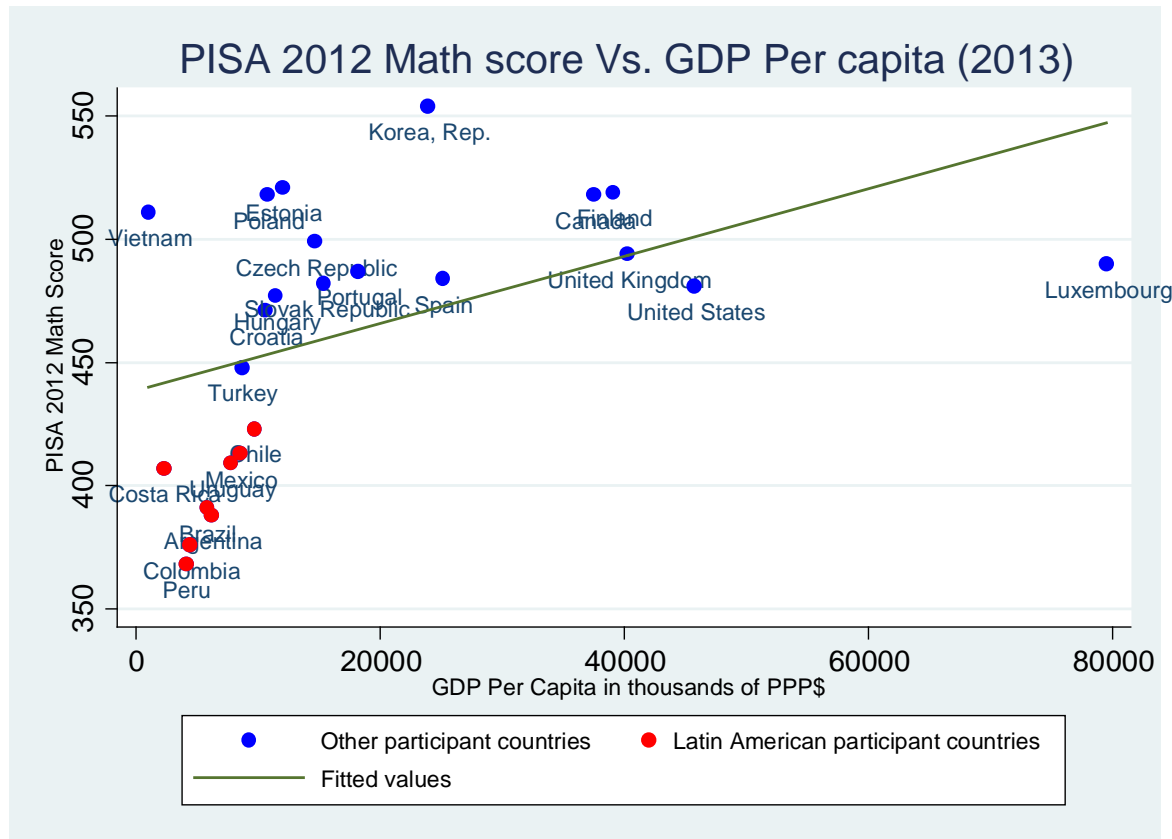
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# LAC's student learning is low compared to what its GPD per capita predicts

Latin American students score low in international assessments such as PISA



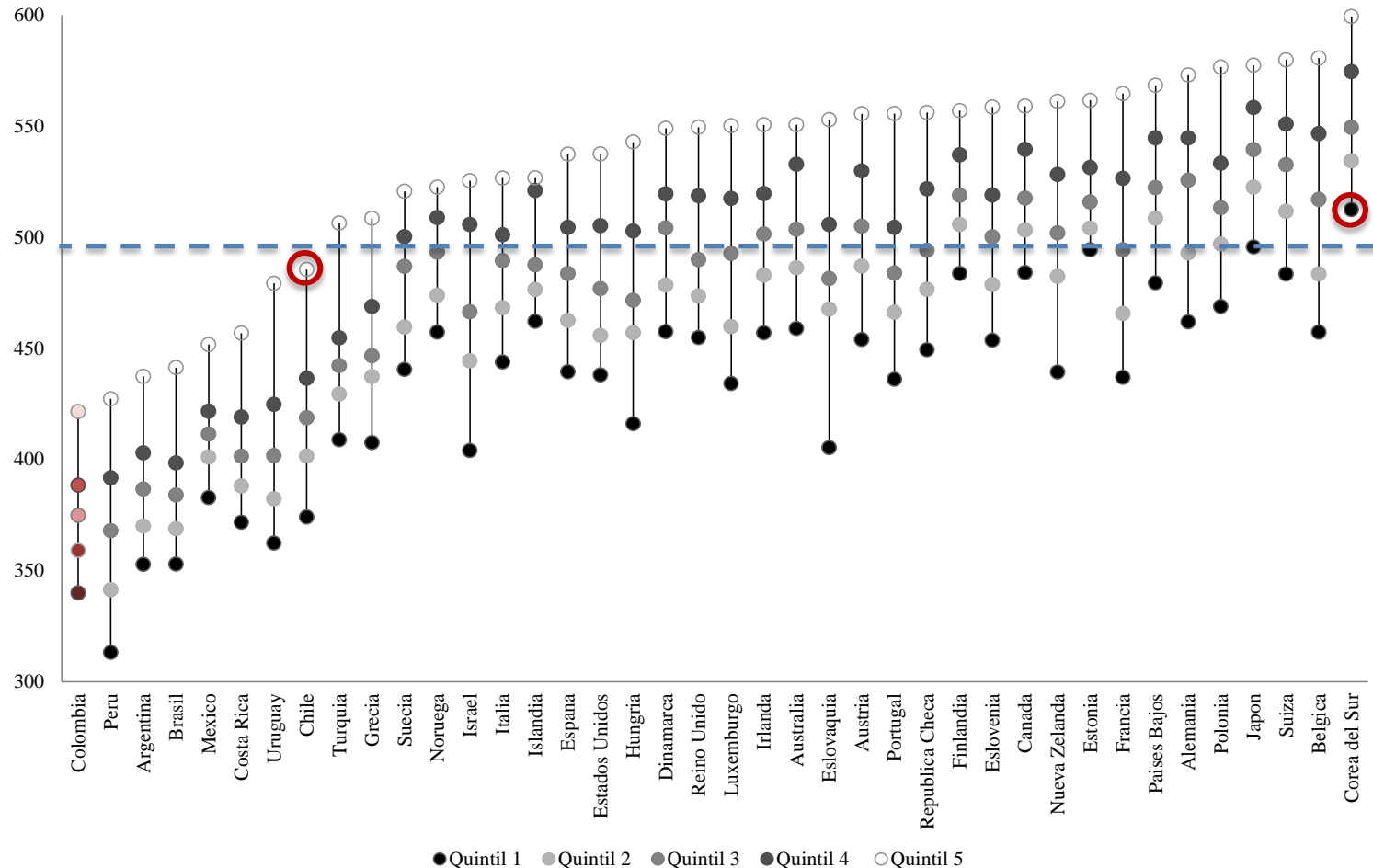PISA 2012 Math score Vs. GDP Per capita (2013)

Note: Adjusted GDP per capita by PPP, constant dollars of 2005
Source: PISA-OECD 2009 and World Bank EdStats
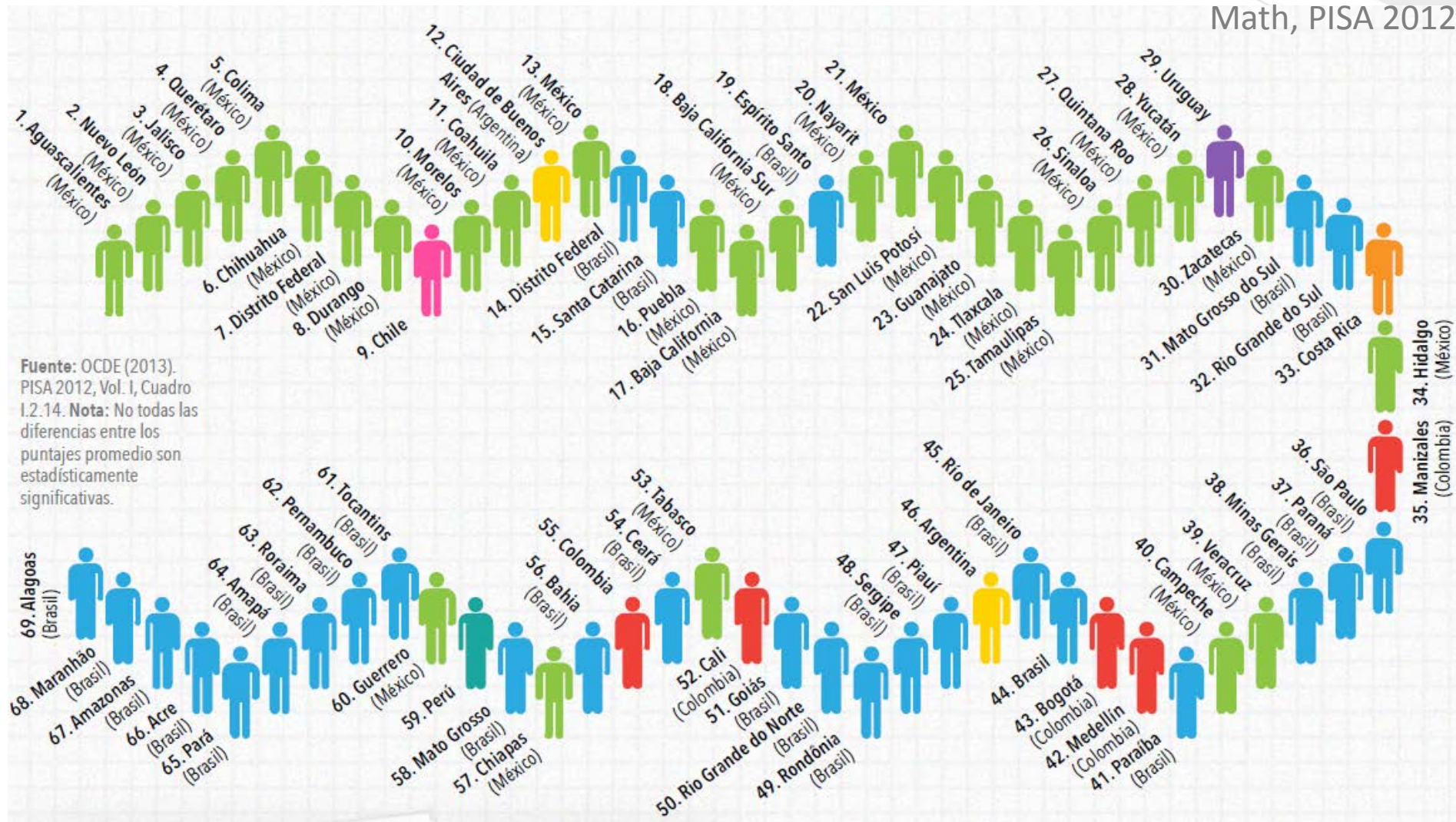
# Latin American students have a low and unequal performance compared to other countries

## PISA 2012 math scores, by country and income quintile



Quintil 1    Quintil 2    Quintil 3    Quintil 4    Quintil 5

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# Learning gaps exist within countries

Ranking of education systems by their average performance in Math, PISA 2012



Fuente: OCDE (2013). PISA 2012, Vol. I, Cuadro I.2.14. Nota: No todas las diferencias entre los puntajes promedio son estadísticamente significativas.

Source: Bos, Ganimian and Vegas 2013. Calculations based on OCDE/PISA 2012 data.

# Student learning is inadequate

**Employers' reports of difficulty in obtaining different types of skill**

(%)

Legend: Sector-specific | Knowledge | Socioemotional | None

Categories (x-axis):
- Country: Argentina, Brazil, Chile
- Sector: Automotive, Retail, Hotel, Finance, Food
- Number of employees: 0 a 9, 10 a 49, 50 a 499, 500 or more
- Wage level: Low, Medium, High
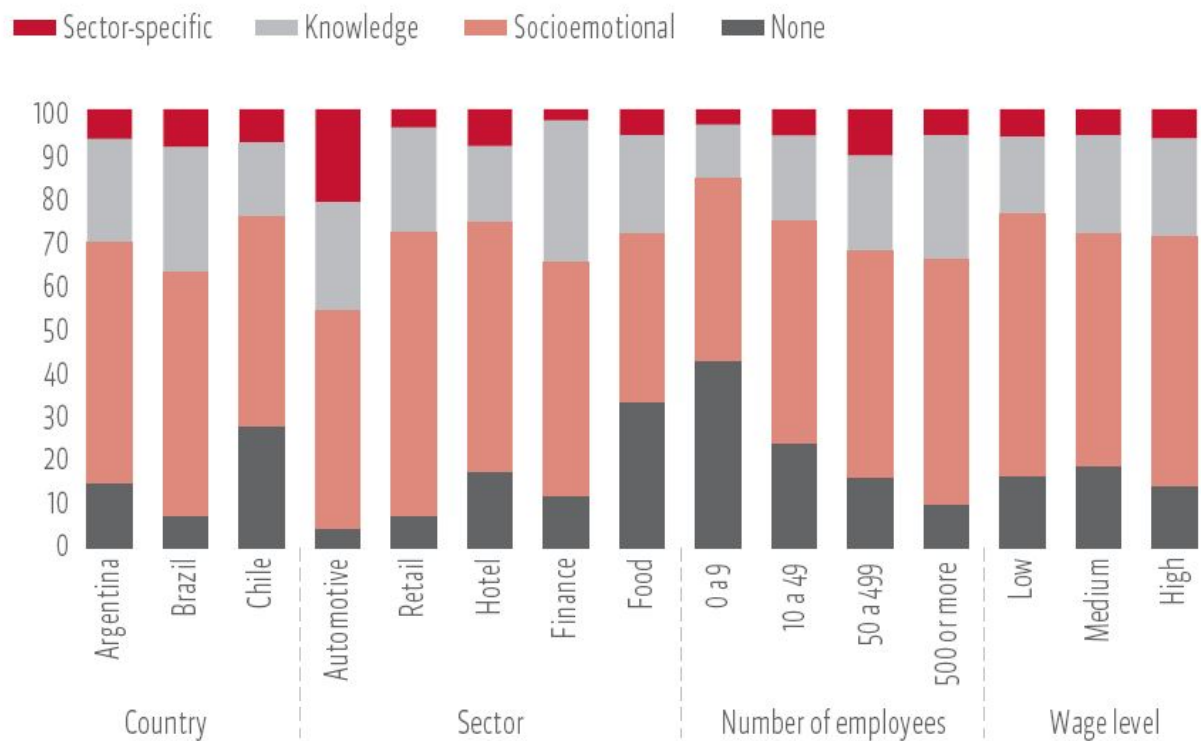
Source: Bassi, Busso, Urzúa, & Vargas, 2012.

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# Private schools are a significant provider in many countries
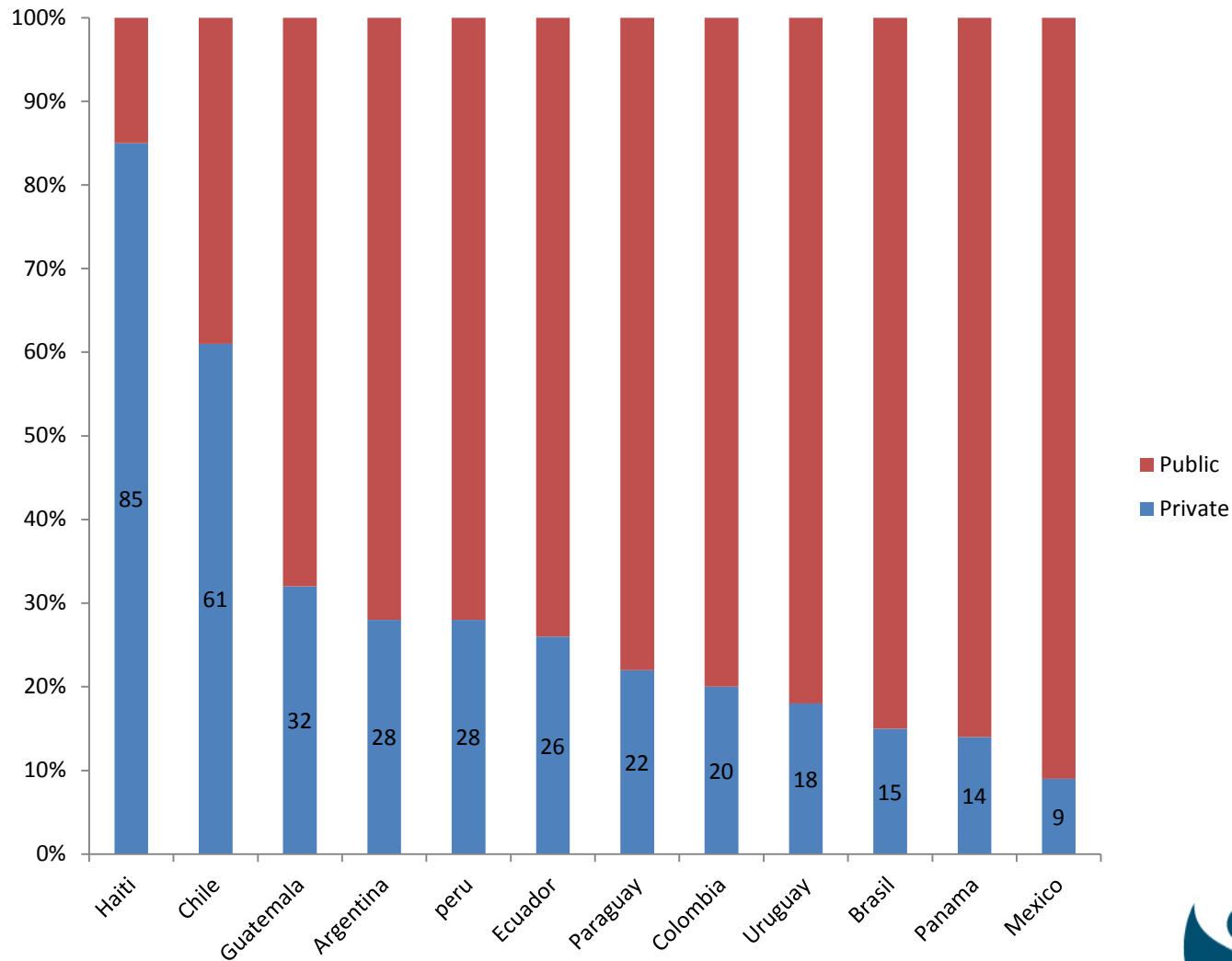


Source: IDB (2015).

# *What* can Governments in the region do to ensure quality & equity?

5 Dimensions of successful education systems:

1. High expectations for student learning guide the provision and monitoring of education services

2. Students entering the system are ready to learn

3. All students have access to effective teachers

4. All schools have adequate resources and are able to use them for learning

5. All graduates have the necessary skills to succeed in the labor market and contribute to society

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# 1. High expectations for student learning guide the provision and monitoring of education services

Key areas of action:

» Establish clear and useful standards for student learning to share among all schools and teachers.

» Align curricula with student learning standards to guide the expectations for teachers' work.

» Align evaluations with student learning standards, educational materials and teacher training, and use them to inform teaching.



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# 2. Students entering the system are ready to learn

Key areas of action:

» Invest in expanding access to preschool education and ECD programs.

» Promote quality assurance systems for preschool education and ECD.

» Measure ECD outcomes to inform policy & programs.

# 3. All students have access to effective teachers

Key areas of action:

» Transform the teaching profession to attract, develop, motivate, and retain the best professionals.

» Strengthen the role of school directors and their leaders in how to improve teaching effectiveness.

» Develop instructional support structures for networks of schools, principals and teachers.



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# 4. All schools have adequate resources and are able to use them for learning

Key areas of action:

» Establish financing amounts and mechanisms geared to promote effective teaching to achieve strong learning results among all students.

» Ensure that all students have access to schools with adequate infrastructure.

» Use technology as an instrument to facilitate student learning – implications for clear goals, training, support.

» Align textbooks, reading books and teaching materials to learning goals and curriculum.
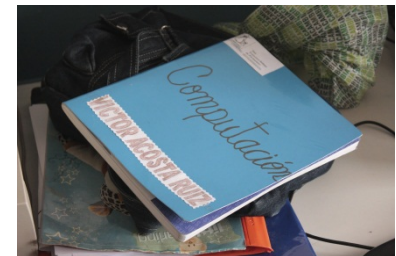


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# 5. All graduates have the necessary skills to succeed in the labor market and contribute to society
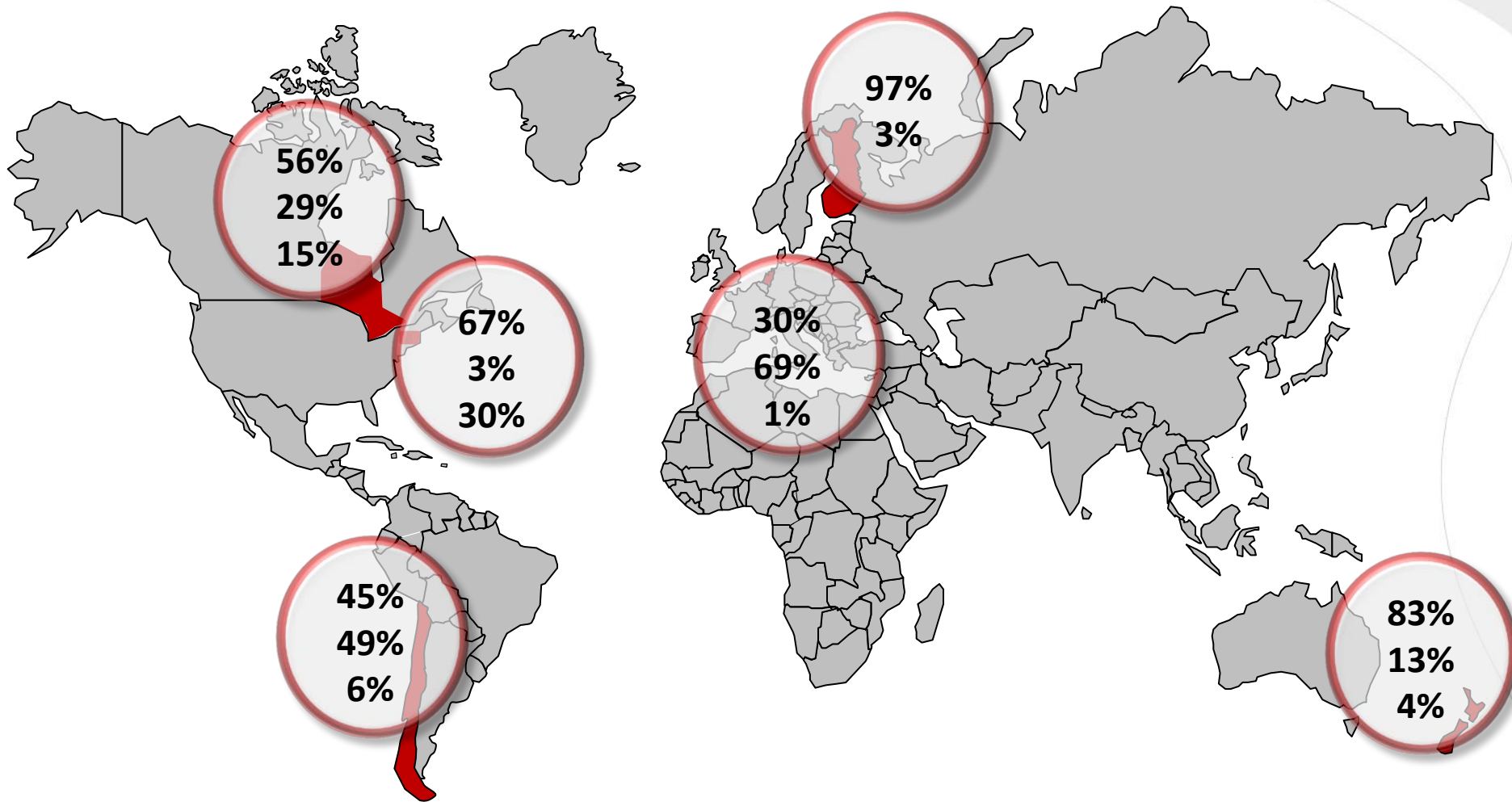
Key areas of action:

» Develop cognitive, socio-emotional, and interpersonal skills.

» Facilitate graduates' access to productive jobs and opportunities for development throughout life.

» Partner with the private sector to ensure that schooling is relevant to society and the labor market.





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# *How* can governments be set up institutionally to achieve these 5 dimensions of success in education?

- Regardless of the degree of centralization-decentralization, successful education systems all have institutionalized structures to monitor and support the work of schools

- 5 case studies of high performing/rapidly improving education systems:
  - Boston, Massachusetts (USA)
  - Ontario, Canada
  - Finland
  - Netherlands
  - New Zealand

# Mixed systems (public/private subsidized/private)

**56%**
**29%**
**15%**

**67%**
**3%**
**30%**

**97%**
**3%**

**30%**
**69%**
**1%**

**45%**
**49%**
**6%**

**83%**
**13%**
**4%**

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# Diverse institutional arrangements

School boards

Districts

Municipalities

Municipalities

School boards

School boards per school

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# Comparison criteria

» **Structure: who are they?**
  » Management unit scale
  » Administrative level
  » Governance
  » Community participation
  » Human resources
  » Etc…

» **Functions: what do they do and how?**
  » Territorial planning
  » Financing mechanisms
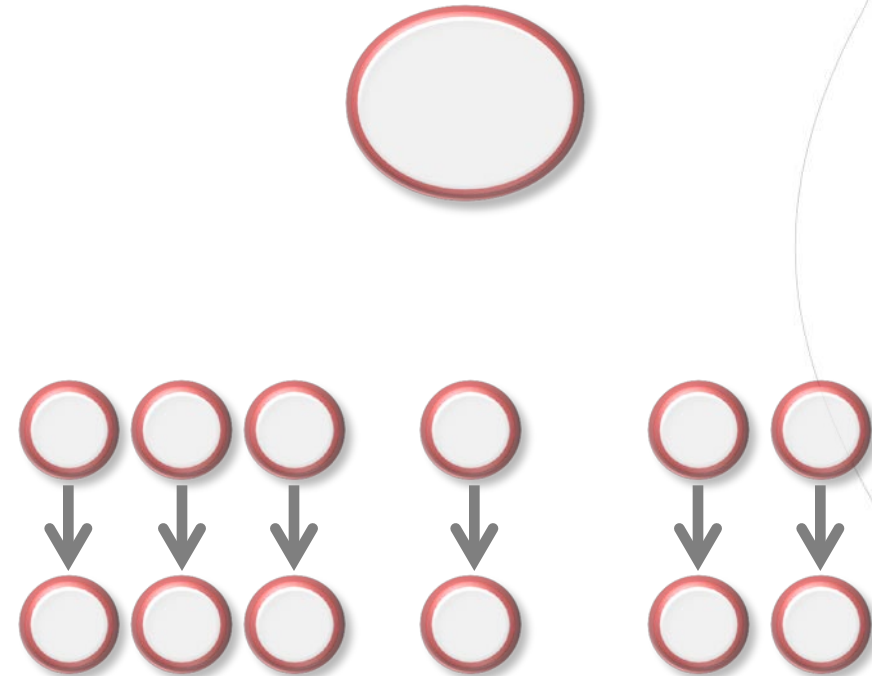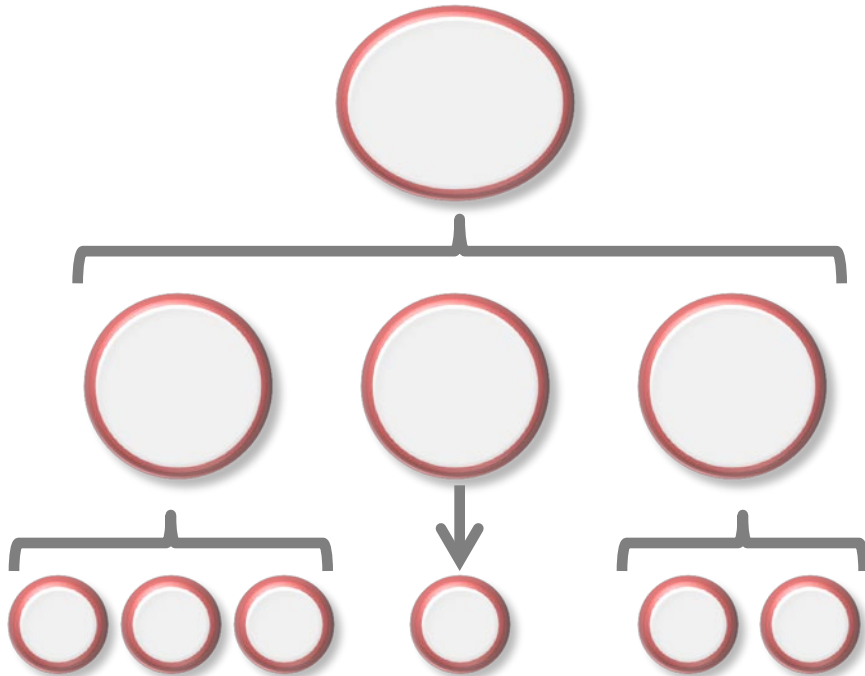  » Human resource management
  » Monitoring, support, and accountability

# Structure: Basic management unit



"Middle structures"

Central office + "1 : 1"

# Structure of Basic Management Units

| | 🇫🇮 | 🇨🇦 | 🇺🇸 | 🇳🇱 | 🇳🇿 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrative level | Municipality | School board (groups of schools) | District | School board (school/ groups of schools) | School board (school) |
| Location criteria | Geographic | Historical/ Idiosyncratic | Geographic | Historical/ Idiosyncratic | Historical/ Idiosyncratic |
| Governance | Separate Political Technical | Separate Political Technical | Separate Political Technical | Unitary Technical/ Community | Unitary Community/ Technical |
| Max. Scale (Administrative role) | 157 schools | 553 schools | 119 schools | 66 schools | 1 school |
| Max. Scale (Academic role) | ~ 20 schools | ~ 25 to 30 schools | ~ 15 to 25 schools | 66 schools | 1 school// ~ 20 a 35 schools |

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# Functions: how do they compare?

## Monitoring & support: internalized v. contracted out
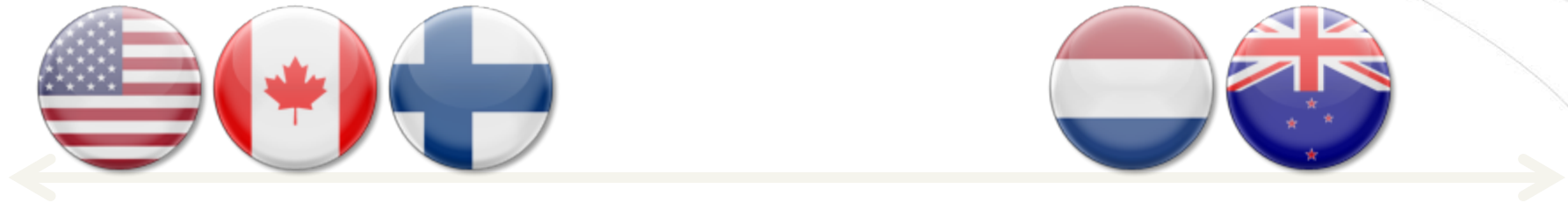
### Providers

- Specialization of functions (administrative vs. academic)

- Direct provision of support to schools

- Nested support structures: needs assessment and support provision from various levels

- Shared responsibility for school improvement across levels

### Facilitators

- No specialized functions

- Technical assistance contracted out

- Central level: strong role in needs assessment

- Responsibility for school improvement mainly in the basic management unit

# Some lessons from our analysis of institutional arrangements for quality education

» Different scales depending on function:
  - Monitoring and support:    around   25 – 30 schools.
  - Administration:  larger scale

» Pedagogic responsibility at the Basic Management Unit level – implies adequate personnel for this role.

» Alignment between monitoring and support:
  - Data-rich environments.
  - Needs assessments.
  - Targeted support.

» Nested structures at the system level:
  - the basic management unit provides support to schools.
  - At other system levels, there exist mechanisms to develop capacity in the basic management unit.

# Concluding remarks

- Governments have an important role in ensuring quality & equity of education – in *both* public and private schools

- Successful systems have institutional arrangements focused on school improvement, with clear functions and division of responsibility

- Successful systems share responsibility for school quality across different government levels, and across sectors (public and private)

- In Latin American countries that are showing improvements in quality, education reforms have been demanded by civil society – but this is still a fairly recent phenomenon.

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