



AGENDA REGIONAL PARA EL DESARROLLO  
INTEGRAL DE LA PRIMERA INFANCIA

A photograph of a young child, likely a toddler, sitting on a bed and playing with a toy. The child is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt. The background shows a bed with a patterned blanket and a teddy bear. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD  
POLICIES IN LATIN  
AMERICA:  
PROGRESS REPORT ON THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
REGIONAL AGENDA**

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First Edition

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# INTRODUCTION

After three years of collaborative work among members of governments in the region, academia, civil society, and multilateral organizations, led by the Inter-American Dialogue, in November 2017, the *Regional Agenda on Early Childhood Development* was signed. The four agreements of the agenda were multi-sector planning and financing, improving the quality of services, measuring early childhood development, and collaborating and alliances building. Eleven governments of the region<sup>1</sup>, representatives of multilateral organizations, representatives from civil society organizations (from Mexico in the north, all the way to Argentina in the south) signed this agreement.

After signing this agreement, an instrument was developed collaboratively to measure the compliance of the countries that signed the agenda by assessing the state of early childhood policies using the Declaration of Bogotá as a benchmark. The idea is that these reports serve as a baseline for each country. In 2018 and 2020, research centers in ten countries<sup>2</sup> surveyed compliance through a participatory process validated with each government, either through a workshop or the formal approval of the document.

Each country developed a national report that monitored the progress of compliance with the agreements of the agenda over time. It is worth mentioning that the different countries developed their reports on different dates (starting with Chile in 2018 and ending with Uruguay in 2020) and that this report only considers the information in such reports and not the progress they have made subsequently since these will be reported in the following monitoring reports.

This document summarizes the main results of these ten reports regarding the four agreements, recognizing the opportunities for improvement and, above all, highlighting the strengths that the different countries have in each of the areas. This report hopes to inform regional governments and citizens about the state of early childhood policies and compliance with each agreement of the Declaration of Bogotá, as well as highlight good initiatives that could serve as an example for other countries.

**THE REGIONAL AGENDA ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IS AN AGREEMENT THAT SEEKS TO GUIDE THE EFFORTS OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC POLICIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD.**

# AGREEMENT 1

## Multi-Sectoral Planning and Financing

Consolidate national early childhood development policies or plans – binding for the various entities and initiatives involved – backed by sustainable investments in the medium- and long-term. High-level agencies with political and technical authority should be in place, in charge of leading the coordination and articulation among the sectors and with ascendancy thereon.

**Almost all countries in the region have developed in the last 15 years a comprehensive early childhood policy, strategies, or a national childhood plan. This shows the recognition that governments of the region have of this age group for its relevance to human development. The main pending challenges include the need for a greater and better multi-sector articulation to deliver a comprehensive supply of services. In many countries, the institutionalization of the plan, strategy, or policy with clear leadership and political power is pending. Finally, it is important to consolidate a greater understanding of investments needed for this age group.**

Almost all countries in the region have developed in the last 15 years a comprehensive early childhood policy, strategies, or a national childhood plan. This shows the recognition that governments of the region have of this age group for its relevance for human development. In some countries, plans or strategies are specific to early childhood, and in others, they include all childhood and adolescence (see Table 1). It is important to mention that the establishment of a comprehensive policy is considered an improvement since it accounts for the political will to look at early childhood from a comprehensive perspective and because it permanently sets a country's commitment to this age group.

The first comprehensive policy that emerged among these countries is Chile Crece Contigo (Chile Grows with You), which was implemented in 2007. In 2009, it was legally recognized in Law 20,379 and is acknowledged as a "Comprehensive Protection Subsystem for Children", framed in the Intersectoral System of Social Protection. Legal recognition ensures budgetary and institutional

sustainability. This policy includes benefits from pregnancy to 9 years of age in the areas of health, social protection, and education, in some cases it finances them and in others it sets standards.

Another example of a comprehensive policy is the case of Colombia, where in December of 2007 the National Council for Social Economic Policy (CONPES) 109 approved the Early Childhood Public Policy "Colombia por la Primera Infancia" (Colombia for Early Childhood). Then, in 2011, the Comprehensive Early Childhood Care Strategy was launched, which was elevated to State Policy for the Comprehensive Development of Early Childhood "De Cero a Siempre" (from Zero to Forever) with the sanction of Law 1804 of 2016. The Law provides in its article 2 the need "for an articulated and intersectoral work from the perspective of rights and with a results-based management approach." Consistent with the foregoing, the National Development Plan 2018-2022 "Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity" ratifies the country's commitment to early childhood by expanding

coverage and improving the quality and relevance of care to this population and identified as a priority the possibility to advance in comprehensive care for children and adolescents. In the plans and policies, a strength found was the attempt to coordinate different sectors and provide comprehensive care for children. In turn, seven of the ten countries have legal frameworks for childhood, early childhood, or have policies or plans that support this target population. This allows for actions to be sustainable in the medium- to long-term.

One of the weaknesses observed in some of the countries studied is that not all policies and plans have been fully implemented, sometimes they end up as starting points that are not formalized into concrete actions that benefit children. In other words, although there has been the political will to develop the policy, strategy, or plan, this has not always been reflected in a change in the supply of services for children or in a change in their perspective. For example, in Guatemala, the Public Policy for Early Childhood, “Guatemala Invests in the Comprehensive Development of Early Childhood”, has been in place since 2010. This is recognized as a framework. However, it does not have a legal framework and has not been implemented.

Policies and plans do not necessarily have associated benefits, and some that establish objectives and goals do not have defined or associated services or benefits. In Honduras, for example, there is a Policy for the Comprehensive Development of Early Childhood (PAIPI, 2012) with a Strategic Plan that includes health, education, food and nutritional security, protection, recreation, and value establishment. It has binding goals but has no associated services or benefits. The existence of a legal framework is not made explicit, but it accounts for different current regulations and commitments that the country has signed both nationally and internationally.

In policies or plans with associated benefits or services, these are generally associated with a child’s developmental path and include at least health and education services – the broader ones also include social security benefits and special protection. For example, in the case of the Dominican Republic, the Quisqueya Empieza Contigo (Quisqueya Starts with You) plan offers services for children aged 0-5 in health, nutrition, early education, detection and attention to special educational needs, protection against child abuse, family participation, and citizenship building. One difficulty of the revised policies and plans is being able to integrate all the services provided in early childhood through coordinated intersectoral work.

Since the signing of the Declaration of Bogotá, progress has been made at the regional level in the formulation of a *basic package of benefits for early childhood*, framed in three stages: a) prenatal stage (which includes before conception), b) from birth to three years of age, and c) from three to six years of age. Said package was built on consensus utilizing the basic benefits that a group of countries in the region – Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay – already seek to guarantee for this target population<sup>3</sup>.

The definition of a basic universal benefits package such as the one that arose from the agreements reached, includes standards that guide and promote the advancement of a regional agenda, where all the countries are above that threshold and define their goals within the framework of their national initiatives. The definition of goals and financing alternatives in this context will also make it possible to enable the progress of the countries for the effective implementation of the benefits involved.

**Although only seven of the ten countries have legal frameworks for childhood, the policies and plans of all the countries attempt to coordinate different sectors with the aim of providing comprehensive care to children, which is observed as a strength.**

Regarding the institutionalization, governance, and leadership of early childhood policies or plans, something common across the different countries is the lack of clarity on the organization that will lead and, in the cases where there is a defined institution, there is a low level of autonomy, political power, and resources (see Table 1). Another challenge is to improve the definition of the roles, responsibilities, and functions of the different institutions that are part of the policy or plan. There is a striking need for greater intersectoral integration and coordination.

For resources allocated to early childhood, hardly any country that participated in this process at the end of their

report had an integrated budget for early childhood; that is, as a country they do not know how much the state spends for this age group. Peru is the exception. In recent years they have worked with a Results-Oriented Budget Program for Early Childhood Development (PpRDIT). This program defines an integrated package of services prioritized by the Peruvian state for early childhood. And it is this combination of interventions, aligned with the Childhood First Guidelines, which is comprehensively budgeted.

Most countries observed can have, with some certainty, specific sector-level expenses, such as health, or of some particular benefit or service, for example, preschool education. But there is no integrated budget for the age group. It is also observed that several countries (Argentina, Peru, and Chile, among others) have worked with UNICEF to estimate the costs for this age group as a whole. Such exercises can have been used as inputs by governments.

UNICEF (in collaboration with the OEI and IIEP-UNESCO) published a study in 2015<sup>4</sup>, estimating spending on early childhood in the region. According to this study, the expenditure of the 9 countries included ranged between 0.3 and 2.2 of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and between \$299 and \$2,295 dollars per year per child. Regarding the differences in GDP spending, this speaks about the

weight that the state gives to this age group from the budgetary point of view. At the same time, spending in dollars describes the real investment made by each country. This analysis shows that budgets do not always represent sufficient investment levels. The protection of budgets for early childhood, in general, is not guaranteed. However, a case worth noting is Colombia, where the legislation indicates that the previous year's budget will not be lowered, acting based on the medium-term fiscal framework, and there is a commitment to allocate additional resources if GDP growth exceeds 4%.

This is undoubtedly the agreement where there is more progress in the region, which accounts for the political will to place early childhood as a central component of the national agenda. The main pending challenges include strengthening intersectoral articulation to deliver an integrated benefits package. In many countries, the institutionalization of the plan, strategy, or policy with clear leadership and political power is pending. Finally, there is a need for greater clarity on investment levels in this age group.

**MOST COUNTRIES DID NOT REPORT BUDGET OR SPENDING DATA FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIFICALLY, MEANING THEY DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH THE STATE SPENDS ON THIS AGE GROUP.**

TABLE 1: EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICIES, PLANS, AND ESTRATEGIES

COUNTRY	POLICIES, STRATEGIES OR PLANS	GROUP	LEGAL FRAMEWORK	LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION
ARGENTINA	National Early Childhood Strategy	Early Childhood	Yes	The National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family is the leading entity for this strategy, but it does not have the financial and political resources for effective leadership.
BRAZIL	Legal Framework for Early Childhood without comprehensive policy or plan	Early Childhood	Yes	There is an intersectoral committee, but it does not have effective powers. It was set in the Ministry of Social Development, currently Ministry of Citizenship.
CHILE	Intersectoral Policy "Chile Crece Contigo" recognized as "Subsystem of Comprehensive Protection for Childhood"	Early Childhood	Yes	Policy implemented, executed and coordinated by the Ministry of Social Development and Family. Insufficient political authority to guarantee effective and binding intersectoral articulation.
COLOMBIA	Policy for the Comprehensive Development of Early Childhood De Cero a Siempre, incorporated into the National Policy for Children and Adolescents	Early Childhood	Yes	The policy is under the leadership of the Ministry of Education (MEN), in relation to the technical line of initial education and training. And, with the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) as responsible for coordinating the operation of the modalities. The Intersectoral Commission for Children and Adolescents retains a coordination report.
GUATEMALA	Public Policy of Comprehensive Development of Early Childhood	Early Childhood	No	There is no specific authority for this Policy. The Social Welfare Secretariat should be the institution in charge of executing the Policy.
HONDURAS	Public Policy for the Comprehensive Development of Early Childhood	Early Childhood	No	There is no clarity about who coordinates the Policy. Since its beginning, it has been in charge of the Secretariat for Development and Social Inclusion. There is a lack of articulation and coordination among the different secretariats.
MEXICO	National Strategy for Early Childhood Care (ENAPI)	Early Childhood	Yes	There is no consistent authority in public entities. There is a National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents (SIPINNA), in operation since 2015.
PERU	National Action Plan for Children and Adolescents (PNAIA) and Guidelines "Childhood First"	Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence	Yes	There is no clear leadership in the national early childhood policy - disputes over leadership are evident. It is observed that there are thematic leaderships. For example, the MINEDU is in charge of educational services, the MINSA of health and nutrition, the MIMP of social protection.
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	National Plan for Protection and Comprehensive Care for Early Childhood, called "Quisqueya Starts With You"	Early Childhood	Yes	The Plan is in charge of the General Directorate of Special Programs of the Presidency (DIGEPEP).
URUGUAY	National 2016-2020 Plan for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence associated with the National 2010-2030 Strategy for Childhood and Adolescence (ENIA)	Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence	Partial	The National Institute for Children and Adolescents of Uruguay (INAU) is the governing body for children, linked to the executive branch through the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES).

# AGREEMENT 2

## Quality of Early Childhood Development Services

Establish quality assurance systems for governmental and non-governmental childhood development services. These systems must be based on the expected development of children and define the capabilities of the human resources responsible for their care and the technical, material, and infrastructure conditions that public and private providers must meet to achieve child development goals.

**While no country in this report has a quality assurance system to ensure the quality of early childhood services, many of them are moving in that direction. Likewise, there is a need to guarantee a minimum standard for the quality of educational services by all actors, at a structural level, as well as to ensure the quality of processes. With this immediate challenge, the Regional Forum on Quality in Early Education met virtually between May and July 2020 and developed eight recommendations aimed at deepening the quality agenda in the region.**

While no country in this report has a quality assurance system to ensure the quality of early childhood services, many of them are moving in that direction. Six countries have standards in at least one sector (education or health). Some of the other countries are in the developmental process or have goals associated with the objectives they want to achieve. There is a need to guarantee a minimum standard of the quality of services by all actors, at a structural level, as well as to ensure the quality of processes. This is reflected in the presence of operating regulations for both education and health services, and in the absence of permanent monitoring processes. Another challenge in this area is the integration and regulation of private providers, which in most countries are free from complying with requirements, as they do not receive financing from the State.

Some countries have created or are in the process of creating institutions responsible for ensuring the quality of services. These institutions must fulfill evaluation, monitoring, and accompanying functions so that processes for service-improvement. The country reports highlighted a low monitoring capacity at the central level and difficulty in establishing accountability processes. This

would account for the lack of implementation of national assurance systems in the countries where they exist. These systems usually begin with the definition of standards, the development of evaluation systems, and, at a later stage, support for improvement and accountability mechanisms when these are necessary or desirable. Below are some examples of exciting developments being made in the region.

In Brazil, the health component of the Program for Improving Access and Quality in Primary Care offers quality standards for services. It has three types of evaluation instruments: self-assessment by the team, evaluation through health indicators, and external evaluation conducted by external institutions. In education, Brazil also has mandatory National Curriculum Guidelines and a National Common Curriculum Base that defines rights and learning objectives.

In Uruguay, they created the Indicators for the Evaluation of the Quality of Services for children between 0 and 3 years of age, prepared by the regulatory entities, and whose axes are the quality of the structure, the quality of the interactive

processes, the quality of comprehensive care, and quality of management. However, its implementation has been partial, and only in institutions regulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Likewise, it was identified that there is a need to involve users and beneficiaries to evaluate quality based on their perceptions and expectations.

Colombia has progressed in the definition and use of standards as well as in the construction of supervision and control systems in education. Structural and process quality guidelines and standards have been defined. Among the key milestones, a baseline study of the standards in 2012; in 2014 the delivery of technical references for initial education and in 2015 the development of the Instrument for Measuring the Quality of Early Education in Colombia, IMCEIC, based on the MELQO (Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes) instrument.

Chile has a law that created an education quality assurance system in 2011 and also an institutional framework in charge of this system that includes a national education council, an education administration within the education superintendence, and the agency for the quality of education. It has been implemented in recent years in preschool education. All public and private programs have a deadline to comply with structural standards and in 2020 the indicative performance standards were launched, which will be the basis for the implementation of a monitoring and support system for the programs.

Peru has a National System of Evaluation, Accreditation, and Certification of Educational Quality (SINEACE) that accredits educational institutions that participate in a self-assessment process voluntarily, and without consequences. It also has guidelines for the Cuna Más child-care program. These guidelines, in addition to setting the standards for the programs, include instructions for support, supervision, and evaluation of the service operation. The program evaluation guidelines include both a checklist and a matrix of improvement actions.

In the case of Mexico, there are some structural standards of preschool quality at the infrastructure level or the performance of the people who work with children, for example. Likewise, there is an Official Standard for Health Services for children under the age of ten years old, and a version already focused on early childhood is under review, which includes the promotion of health and neurodevelopment; monitoring of growth and nutrition; and prevention, identification and reporting of violence against children and child abuse.

Finally, Argentina has a strategy for measuring quality in early childhood. The MIR.AR national scale was created with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank. This scale arises after a study where instruments like the ITERS (Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale) and CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) were applied in classrooms with children under 3 years of age. This scale was applied through software in the centers that adhered to the National Plan for Early Childhood. What these examples show is that progress has been made in defining standards and that the greatest challenge for the region in this area is to consolidate these efforts into institutionalized and organized systems that allow guaranteeing the quality of services in early childhood.

With this immediate challenge, the recent Regional Forum on Quality in Early Education met virtually between May and July 2020 with the participation of representatives of the ministries and agencies responsible for early education, experts and representatives of civil society organizations and cooperation, and issued eight recommendations aimed at deepening the quality agenda in the region. Guided by a call to agree on a vision of quality in all countries that understands the relationship between learning and integral development, and whose emphasis is placed on both structural and process quality factors, the Forum made specific proposals to develop quality assurance systems, institutionalize the measurement of the quality of initial education services, and create competency frameworks for those who work with children in early childhood. In addition, they included the promotion of training systems—both initial and continuous—and continuous and flexible competency certification for care professionals.

Finally, the Forum called on international organizations, the governments of the region, academia, and civil society to create a space for coordination and regional dialogue to facilitate knowledge-sharing and creation of frameworks that inform public policies at the country-level to ensure the quality of services and reduce inequities in early childhood.

# AGREEMENT 3

## Measuring Early Childhood Development

Define childhood development goals for the country and establish evaluation mechanisms that make it possible to learn about the changes and developmental characteristics of children. Ideally, such national efforts should allow for international comparisons, especially within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Most countries have made efforts to measure the status of development during early childhood at one or more critical moments. Likewise, some have incorporated evaluations in health or education systems. But most of the countries studied lack clear early childhood developmental goals for their population or a plan for periodic evaluations that allow public policies to be monitored.**

Most countries have made efforts to measure the status of development during early childhood at one or more critical moments. Likewise, some have incorporated evaluations in health or education systems (see table 2). However, many of the countries studied are still far from achieving the results this agreement calls for. Uruguay, Colombia, Chile, and Mexico are four interesting examples to illustrate the progress currently underway in the region.

Since 2013, Uruguay has had the Early Childhood Nutrition, Child Development and Health Survey (ENDIS in Spanish). It is governed by an Inter-Institutional Governing Commission, which brings together representatives of different institutions with competencies in early childhood as well as the National Institute of Statistics in charge of its implementation. It is a panel-type survey with three implementation phases underway: 2013, 2015, and 2019. In 2018, a second sample cohort started. ENDIS arises within the framework of the Uruguay Crece Contigo Program, its financing comes from the national budget, and it has an important role in informing public policies. The data is public and freely accessible. There is even a competitive fund for the use of survey data through the National Agency for Innovation and Research.

In Chile, there is the Longitudinal Survey of Early Childhood (ELPI in Spanish). It has had three implementation phases: 2010, 2012, and 2017. Each has been implemented under the guidance of a ministry (education, labor, and social development). The Ministry of Social Development and Family is expected to remain the entity in charge in the future. There is little dissemination of the survey and its results, low institutionalization, and legitimacy. The survey uses instruments that allow some international comparability and has the potential to inform public policies. In Chile, early childhood development assessment instruments are also applied during health check-ups. However, these results are not utilized to monitor the target population or to inform public policy universally.

In the case of Mexico, although no survey solely targets early childhood, two instruments have been applied that evaluate early childhood development indicators: National Survey of Children and Women (ENIM in Spanish) 2015 and the National Survey of Health and Nutrition (ENSANUT in Spanish). Since 2010, Mexico has been monitoring the development of children through the application of the Early Childhood Development Assessment (EDI) to children between the ages of 1 to 59 months old in the health sector. This information is being used to monitor population development and is expected to inform public policy.

Finally, Colombia is an interesting case since the government, through the Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE in Spanish), assumed the Colombian Longitudinal Survey, ELCA (now called Longitudinal Survey of Colombia or ELCO in Spanish) designed and applied between 2010 and 2016 by the Universidad de los Andes. It is interesting how this private initiative became a valued effort for the government and how this public-private partnership was established to ensure continuity.

Most of the countries studied lack clear early childhood development goals for their population or a plan for periodic evaluations that allow public policies to be monitored. There are examples of sample assessments of development, health, or nutrition. However, little sustainability and continuity over time are observed, either due to the discontinuity of resources or low institutionalization. Also, monitoring development initiatives are observed in health and/or education controls; however, this information is not always used to inform public policies. The possibility for instruments used to have greater international comparability is highlighted as a challenge.

During this period, there were also advances at the regional level to support the implementation of this agreement. In

order to promote a common approach to measuring early childhood development in the region that involves the periodic and regular implementation of national childhood development surveys, the Regional Network to Measure Early Childhood Development (REMDI in Spanish) was established in 2019. The network is made up of members of governments, academia, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations. Currently, the governments of Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay are part of the advisory council, and the technical secretariat is exercised by the government of Uruguay.

REMDI's goals include (i) facilitating access to information on various types of surveys (such as population, longitudinal, for the evaluation of child development programs and services, among others) and instruments to measure child development; (ii) promoting the exchange of lessons learned from ongoing efforts in different countries of the region; (iii) promoting the development and dissemination of common materials and frameworks for both measuring child development and for the analysis and use of the information; and (iv) developing technical assistance opportunities for countries that require it.

**TABLE 2: CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT SURVEYS**

COUNTRY	SURVEY
ARGENTINA	Survey on Living Conditions of Children and Adolescents (ECOVNA) and National Nutrition and Health Survey (ENNyS) measured some dimensions.
BRAZIL	There is no national survey.
CHILE	Longitudinal Survey of Early Childhood - ELPI (three rounds: 2010-2012-2017). Evaluation of development in health controls (EEDP- TEPSI).
COLOMBIA	Colombian Longitudinal Survey, ELCA, two rounds (2010-2016).
GUATEMALA	There is no regular survey on childhood and early childhood development. There is the Maternal-child survey and there is information on nutrition, height and weight of children who are enrolled in pre-primary school (2014-2015).
HONDURAS	National Demographic and Health Survey -ENDESA (2005-2006 and 2011-2012).
MEXICO	National Survey of Children and Women -ENIM 2015 and the National Survey of Health and Nutrition - ENSANUT 2018. EDI has been applied since 2010 on a large scale in the health sector to children from 1 to 59 months.
PERU	Demographic and Family Health Survey - ENDES Early Childhood Development module - Measurement of the Quality and Results of Early Learning - MELQO measured early skills at the beginning of schooling.
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	There is no national survey on early childhood or to measure children's development.
URUGUAY	There is the Nutrition, Child Development and Health Survey (ENDIS), three rounds 2013, 2015 and 2019.

# AGREEMENT 4

## Collaboration and Alliances

Consolidate collaboration among different actors interested in Early Childhood Development, establishing national instances where sector authorities meet formally and periodically with allies from civil society, academia, private sector, the media, and communities. A key aspect of such instances is monitoring national childhood development policies, plans, or strategies and proposing ways to strengthen them.

**Regarding collaboration and alliances, there are different levels of civil society participation in early childhood issues in the countries of the region. However, none of the early childhood policies include a binding collaboration instance and mechanisms for permanent participation. What do exist are instances of consultation or collaboration, more or less formalized by the state.**

There are different levels of civil society participation in early childhood issues in the region. However, it is important to mention that none of the early childhood policies include a binding collaboration instance and mechanisms for permanent participation. What do exist are instances of consultation or collaboration, more or less formalized by the state. Many times, these instances have a specific objective, such as making a diagnosis of a particular issue.

In each country, one way or another, civil society, academia, and policymakers discuss early childhood issues, covering issues that go beyond comprehensive policies or childhood plans. It is possible to observe, in some countries, how civil society is the one that has organized around early childhood issues to influence decision-making, as is the case of the Pact for Early Childhood in Mexico, which represents a very wide and influential coalition of more than 400 civil organizations throughout the country.

In other cases, instances are led jointly by the states and civil society, as is the case of Brazil and its National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CONANDA in Portuguese), with the participation of civil society. This is a joint council that centers on early childhood as one of its mandates.

Finally, we find instances led by the State, such as the National Honorary Consultative Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents of Uruguay, which promotes the coordination and integration of sectoral policies for child and adolescent care. This is also the case of the Early Childhood Advisory Board of the Dominican Republic. This group was established by the Ministry of Education in 2016 after two years of working together. The group brings together government institutions, civil society, and international organizations. This is an instance that has influenced public policies through the development of

recommendations for curricular changes, observations to the evaluation system of the MINERD as well as recommendations for the Draft Law on Early Childhood.

It is possible to see how collaboration with civil society and public-private partnerships can play a critical role in the development of comprehensive early childhood policies, as is the case in Honduras. Honduras has a history of collaborative work that began at least six years before the early childhood policy was approved. The policy is recognized as an outcome of this collaboration and alliance. During the time that preceded the policy, international organizations and civil society financed a study that revealed the need for a policy to promote collaborative work with the government in this area. However, there is consensus that collaborative work faded once the policy is enacted.

Most of the countries realize that this is a lagging agreement, revealing a great challenge in terms of collaborative and integrated work among the different relevant actors in early childhood issues as well as the difficulty to create instances where civil society has a permanent and hopefully binding participation in childhood policies.

## NOTES

1. In alphabetical order: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay.
2. See Annex.
3. Other countries, which for circumstantial reasons did not participate in this exercise, also have similar packages. Such is the case of Mexico through the Comprehensive Care Route (RIA) that covers children up to five years of age and is the guiding axis of the National Strategy for Early Childhood Care.
4. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/2541/file/Reporte%20completo%20La%20inversi%C3%B3n%20en%20la%20primera%20infancia%20en%20Am%C3%A9rica%20Latina.pdf>.

## ANNEX

### *Country-Level Progress Reports of Early Childhood Development in Chronological Order*

*Chile: Country Progress Report on Early Childhood Development Policies* – August, 2018 – Centro de Estudios de Primera Infancia (CEPI)

*Honduras: Country Progress Report on Early Childhood Development Policies* – August, 2019 – Fundación para la Educación Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Andreu (FEREMA)

*Argentina: Country Progress Report on Early Childhood Development Policies* – August, 2019 – Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (CIPPEC)

*México: Country Progress Report on Early Childhood Development Policies* – September, 2019 – Mexicanos Primero

*Guatemala: Country Progress Report on Early Childhood Development Policies* – October, 2019 – Empresarios por la Educación

*Peru: Country Progress Report on Early Childhood Development Policies* – December, 2019 – Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE)

*Brazil: Country Progress Report on Early Childhood Development Policies* – January, 2020 – Maria Cecilia Souto Vidigal Foundation

*Colombia: Country Progress Report on Early Childhood Development Policies* – March, 2020 – Fundación Centro Internacional de Educación y Desarrollo Humano (CINDE)

*Dominican Republic: Country Progress Report on Early Childhood Development Policies* – March, 2020 – EDUCA

*Uruguay: Country Progress Report on Early Childhood Development Policies* – May, 2020 – Red IBX Consultores





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