

## Chapter 1

# School education in Uruguay

*The Uruguayan education system is highly centralised, both in terms of distribution of responsibilities across levels of governance and in terms of space and geography. Almost all of the decisions about administrative and pedagogical aspects are taken at the central level. In contrast to OECD countries, the main responsibility for formulating and implementing policies in school education does not lie with the Ministry of Education and Culture but rather with the autonomous National Public Education Administration (ANEP). In addition, pre-tertiary education is co-administered with teachers as they elect representatives to the governing bodies of ANEP. The large majority of children attend public education. Curricula are defined at the central level. The level of educational attainment in Uruguay remains modest and has increased slowly over the past decades. Universal access has been reached in primary education while access to pre-primary has expanded considerably. However, completion rates in lower and upper secondary education remain unsatisfactory while repetition rates are very high in international comparison. Levels of student achievement have decreased in recent years but remain above the regional average. Finally, students' and schools' socio-economic status have a strong impact on student performance.*

This chapter provides political, demographic and economic background information for the subsequent analysis. It also includes a detailed description of the Uruguayan school system, including its governance. In addition, it provides an account of recent developments and main trends within the education system of Uruguay.

## Context

Situated on the Atlantic coast of South America, Uruguay spans a territory of 176 215 km<sup>2</sup> and, in 2014, had a population of more than 3.4 million (United Nations, 2015). Uruguay shares a border with Argentina to the west and Brazil to the north. The country's capital and largest city is Montevideo (1.3 million inhabitants) and the second largest city is Salto, with little over 100 thousand inhabitants (United Nations, 2014).

Uruguay is a high income economy (World Bank, 2015) and is ranked “high” on the Human Development Index – fourth among all Latin American and Caribbean states, behind Chile, Cuba and Argentina (UNDP, 2014, Table 1). It has the lowest poverty rate (per day capita income below USD 4) and largest middle class (USD 10-50) in Latin America, comprising 56% of the population (OECD/ECLAC, 2014, Figure 1.18).

### **Governance and administration**

Uruguay is a presidential, representative democracy whose 1967 Constitution establishes the separation of powers among three branches: the legislative (the General Assembly, a bicameral parliament comprised of a House of Representatives and a Senate Chamber), the executive (the President, who is both head of government and head of state as well as a Cabinet of Ministers), and the judiciary (the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeals, Trial Councils and Magistrate's Courts). The Administrative Court, the Electoral Court and the Court of Auditors function as additional supervisory bodies (INEEd, 2015). Elections for the Presidency and for parliament are held simultaneously every five years. Members of the House of Representatives (99 members) are elected by department while members of the Senate (31 members) are elected nationwide.

Uruguay's administrative structure is divided into a national, a departmental and a municipal level. The 19 departments (see Table 1.1) are governed by mayors (*intendentes*), elected every five years, who execute national laws and by elected departmental boards, which take on legislative functions. The departments are responsible for the maintenance of local infrastructure such as transportation, waste management and public lighting. Departments have the power to levy some property and vehicle taxes but largely rely on financial transfers from the central government. A 2009 reform introduced one-third level of government, sub-dividing the departments into 112 municipalities (as of 2015). Municipalities are governed by councils which are comprised of five directly elected members and are chaired by a municipal mayor (*alcalde*). The municipalities do not have their own budget or officials and their responsibility is largely confined to the execution of tasks delegated by departmental governments (INEEd, 2015).

## Demographic characteristics

### Population

The majority of Uruguay's departments are very sparsely populated with as few as five inhabitants per square kilometre, resulting in a low overall population density of 19 inhabitants per square kilometre. The adjacent southern departments Montevideo and Canelones are the exceptions with 2 489 and 115 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> respectively (see Table 1.1). In 2014, 50% of Uruguay's population lived in the Montevideo agglomeration, which constitutes a very high degree of population concentration (United Nations, 2015) and reflects the country's historically high degree of urbanisation. With 95.2% of its population living in urban areas in 2014, Uruguay remains one of the world's ten most urbanised countries<sup>1</sup> (United Nations, 2015).

Table 1.1. Departments of Uruguay

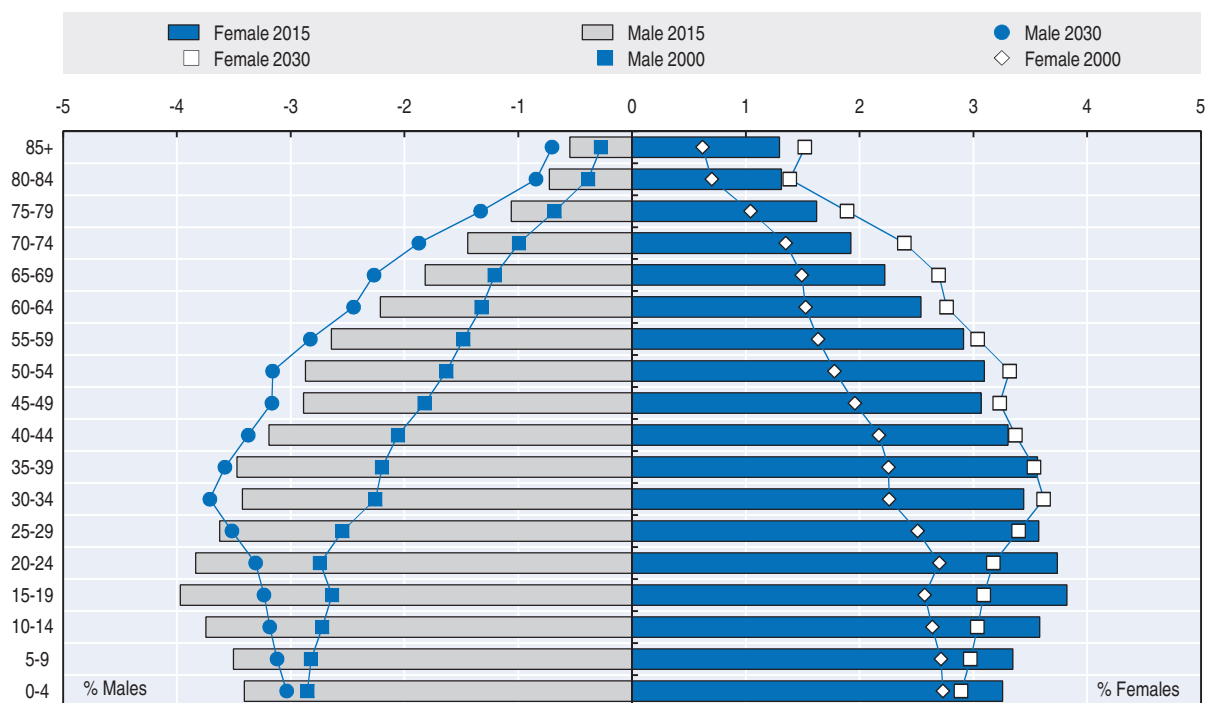
Department	Capital	Land area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Population (2011)	Population density (inhabitants per km <sup>2</sup> , 2011)
Montevideo	Montevideo	530	1 319 108	2 489
Artigas	Artigas	11 928	73 378	6
Canelones	Canelones	4 536	520 187	115
Cerro Largo	Melo	13 648	84 698	6
Colonia	Colonia del Sacramento	6 106	123 203	20
Durazno	Durazno	11 643	57 088	5
Flores	Trinidad	5 144	25 050	5
Florida	Florida	10 417	67 048	6
Lavalleja	Minas	10 016	58 815	6
Maldonado	Maldonado	4 793	164 300	34
Paysandú	Paysandú	13 922	113 124	8
Río Negro	Fray Bentos	9 282	54 765	6
Rivera	Rivera	9 370	103 493	11
Rocha	Rocha	10 551	68 088	6
Salto	Salto	14 163	124 878	9
San José	San José de Mayo	4 992	108 309	22
Soriano	Mercedes	9 008	82 595	9
Tacuarembó	Tacuarembó	15 438	90 053	6
Treinta y Tres	Treinta y Tres	9 529	48 134	5
<b>Uruguay</b>	<b>Montevideo</b>	<b>175 016</b>	<b>3 286 314</b>	<b>19</b>

Source: INE (2011a), Censos 2011: Superficie, Población, Densidad, Tasa de Masculinidad y Variación Porcentual en el Periodo Intercensal, Según Departamento [2011 Census: Area, Population, Density, Rate of Masculinity and Percentage Variation for the Inter-Census Period, by Department], [www.ine.gub.uy/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=a79effde-e5e1-4bb5-9a5a-64825e3bb93c&groupId=10181](http://www.ine.gub.uy/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=a79effde-e5e1-4bb5-9a5a-64825e3bb93c&groupId=10181).

Uruguay's population is expected to continue growing at a very low rate, reaching 3.5 million by 2025 before stagnating around 3.6 million after 2035 (United Nations, 2015). Uruguay is also confronted with a rapidly ageing population – a trend which will continue in the coming years, as can be seen in Figure 1.1. Fertility rates have dropped over the past two decades and the proportion of over 65-year-olds has increased from 7.6% in 1963 to 14.1% in 2011 (OECD/ECLAC, 2014).

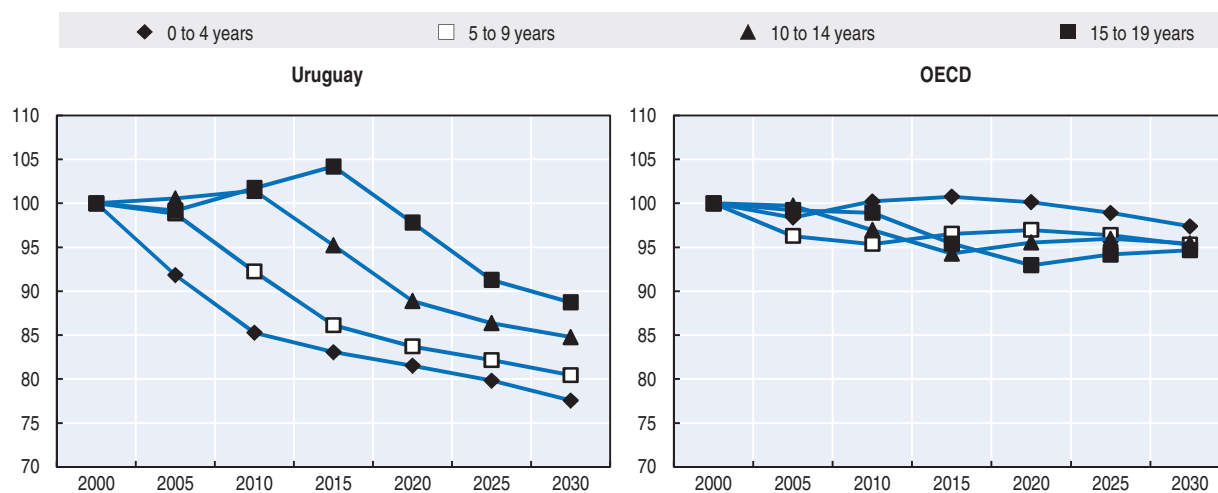
The school age population has been in decline since 2005 and will continue to drop over the next few years, causing the school age dependency ratio (school age population to the working-age population [15-64 year-olds]) to drop before settling at 30% in 2035 (INEED, 2015). The evolution of the school age population in Uruguay is slightly different from that of the average OECD country. As can be seen in Figure 1.2, in Uruguay cohorts across all

Figure 1.1. Uruguayan population pyramids in 2000, 2015 and 2030



Source: INE (2011b), Censos 2011 [Census 2011], [www.ine.gub.uy/web/guest/censos-2011](http://www.ine.gub.uy/web/guest/censos-2011).

Figure 1.2. Variation in Uruguay's school age population compared to the OECD



Source: OECD.Stat (n.d.), *Historical population data and projections (1950-2050), Demography and Population (database)*, OECD.Stat, <http://dotstat.oecd.org/Index.aspx>; Uruguay data from INE (2013a), *Estimaciones y Proyecciones de Población (Revisión 2013)* [Population Estimations and Projections (2013 Revision)], [www.ine.gub.uy/estimaciones-y-proyecciones](http://www.ine.gub.uy/estimaciones-y-proyecciones).

levels of education are expected to decrease continuously until 2030, following an increase over the past decade in the number of children at upper secondary school age. Unlike the OECD which will see a small increase in the number of lower secondary students between 2015 and 2030, Uruguay's population of 10-14 year-olds will shrink by 11.0% and that of 15-19 year-olds by 14.8% over the same period. Similarly, Uruguay's population of 5-9 year-olds will shrink by 6.6% between 2015 and 2030.

### Cultural and linguistic diversity

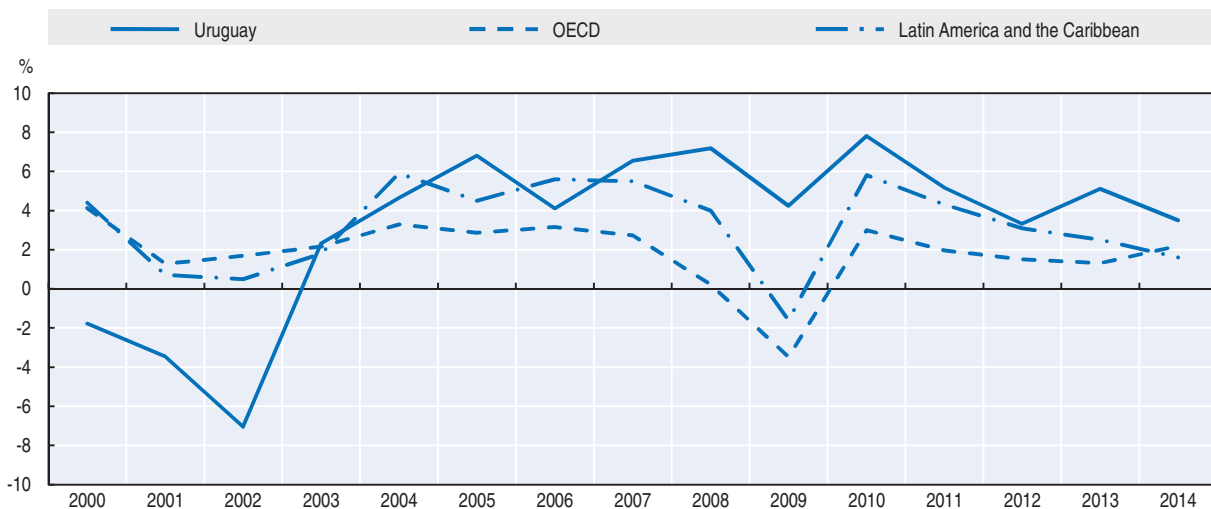
Uruguay's official language of administration and instruction is Spanish. According to the 2011 census, the large majority of the population reports to be of primarily European ancestry while 4.8% stated to be of mainly African and 2.4% of indigenous descent (INE, 2013b).

### Economy

#### Economic growth

Uruguay's economy has made remarkable progress since the financial crisis of 2002 (OECD/ECLAC, 2014). Following low growth throughout the second half of the 20th century and a period of recession in the early 2000s, Uruguay's economy has quickly expanded (see Figure 1.3), reaching a cumulative annual growth rate of 5.7% between 2004 and 2013 (INEED, 2015). The GDP (gross domestic product) per capita based on purchasing power parity reached USD 20 500 by 2014, which is the third highest value among South American countries after Argentina and Chile (IMF, 2014).

Figure 1.3. **Evolution of GDP growth in Uruguay, the OECD, and Latin America and the Caribbean, 2000-14**



Source: OECD (2014a), *OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2014 Issue 1*, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eco\\_outlook-v2014-1-en](http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eco_outlook-v2014-1-en); ECLAC (2014), *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean 2014: Challenges to Sustainable Growth in a New External Context*, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, Chile; and projections by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and CAF – Development Bank of Latin America; IMF (2014), *World Economic Outlook Database*, [www.imf.org/external/ns/cs.aspx?id=29](http://www.imf.org/external/ns/cs.aspx?id=29).

### Unemployment

Between 2007 and 2010, Uruguay succeeded in increasing the employment rate while reducing the prevalence of non-standard work at the same time (UNDP, 2014, Figure 3.7). Since the crisis in 2002, unemployment has dropped from a peak of 17% to 6.7% in 2013 (INEED, 2015) and the labour force participation rate is close to the OECD average (OECD/ECLAC, 2014). However, unemployment among the young population (14-24 year-olds) remains high at 19.4%, compared to 15.1% across the OECD and 9.5% in Mexico<sup>2</sup> as well as 4.6% among 25-54 year-olds in Uruguay in 2014 (ILO, 2015; OECD, 2015). The proportion of young people (aged 15-24) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) has been rather stable from 10.7% in 1992 to 11.8% in 2012 (64.6% of whom female) (MEC, 2013), compared to 17.8% and 13.7% for women and men aged 15-24 respectively, in OECD countries (OECD/ECLAC, 2014).

### **Inequality**

Income inequality in Uruguay, as measured by the Gini coefficient, remains among the lowest in the region but is higher than that of any non-Latin American OECD country (OECD/ECLAC, 2014, Figure 1.18; INEEed, 2015). There remains a significant regional disparity between the Montevideo metropolitan area and the rest of the country. Salaries in Montevideo are significantly higher than those in the rest of the country, partly due to a concentration of the industry and service sector in the capital (OECD/ECLAC, 2014). At the same time, between 2006 and 2012, Montevideo has persistently exhibited higher levels of income inequality than the rest of the country (CEDLAS and World Bank, 2014).

Gender inequality in Uruguay is low compared to other Latin American countries, according to the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.<sup>3</sup> Despite a persistent salary gap, the female-male labour market participation ratio is the fourth highest in the region and only slightly below the OECD average. The remaining gender gap in the exclusion from the labour market has been attributed to deficiencies in childcare arrangements, although the government has recently launched targeted programmes to guarantee access to mono-parental childcare services (OECD/ECLAC, 2014).

## **The governance of the school system**

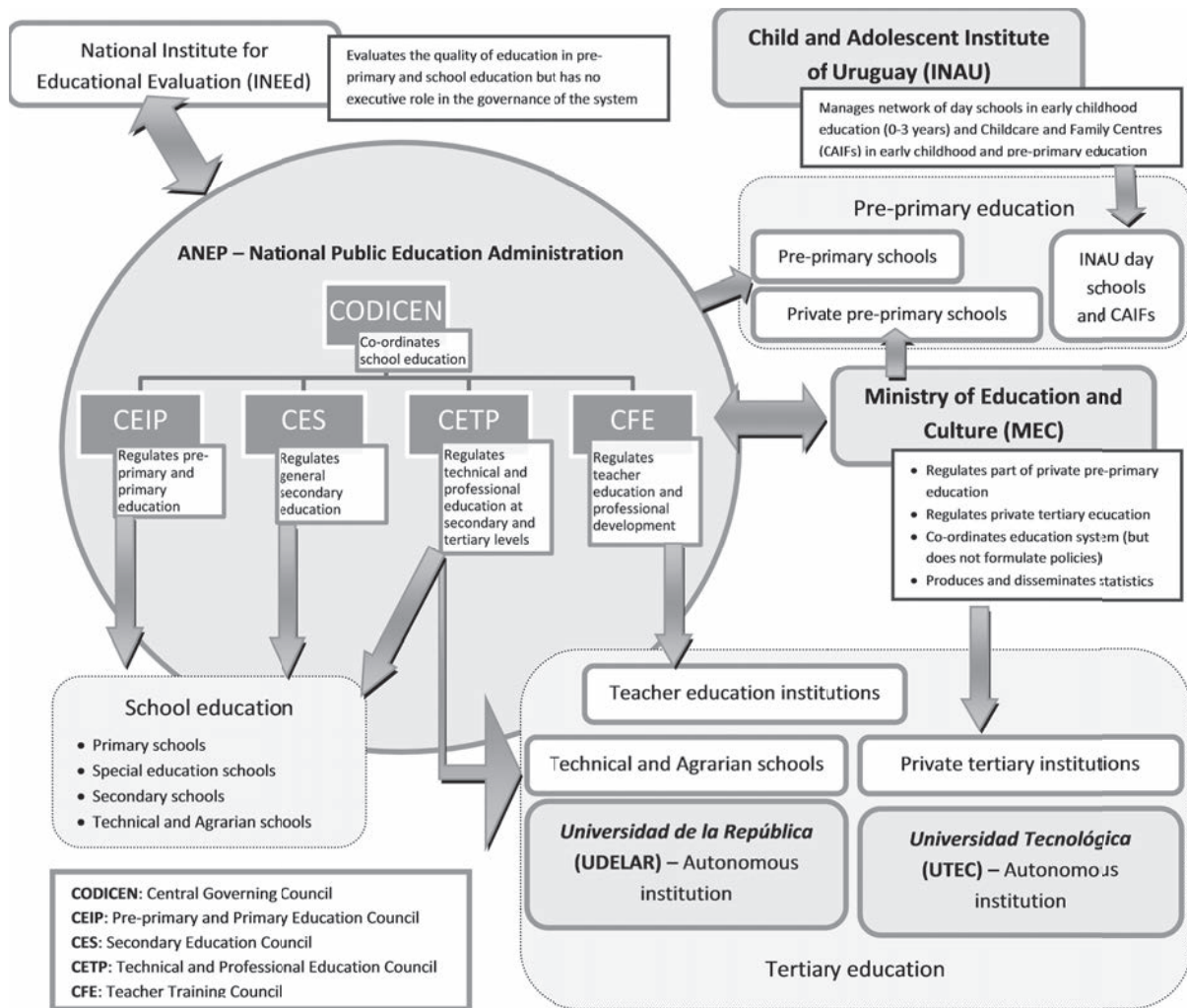
***The governance of the school system is highly centralised and unique in a number of ways***

### **Overview**

The governance of the education system in Uruguay is characterised by a high degree of functional and geographical centralisation (INEEd, 2015). In contrast to OECD countries, the main responsibility for formulating and implementing policies in school education does not lie with the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Ministerio de Educación y Cultura*, MEC), but rather with the autonomous National Public Education Administration (*Administración Nacional de Educación Pública*, ANEP) (INEEd, 2015).

Figure 1.4 displays the structure for the governance of the Uruguayan education system. Five agencies with different levels of responsibility govern the education system:

- ANEP: regulates and administers part of early childhood and pre-primary education; all of school education; teacher education at the tertiary level; and technical and professional education at the secondary and tertiary levels.
- MEC: regulates and oversees part of private early childhood and pre-primary education; and private tertiary education (universities, university institutes and tertiary non-university institutes).
- The Child and Adolescent Institute of Uruguay (*Instituto del Niño y Adolescente del Uruguay*, INAU): regulates and administers both the network of day schools in early childhood education and the Childcare and Family Centres (*Centro de Atención a la Infancia y la Familia*, CAIF).
- *Universidad de la República* (UDELAR), which is an autonomous institution of tertiary education at the university level.
- *Universidad Tecnológica* (UTEc), which is an autonomous institution of tertiary education at the university level specialising in technological degrees.

Figure 1.4. **The governance of education in Uruguay**

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### **The leading role of the National Public Education Administration**

The ANEP has full responsibility for developing and implementing school-level policy in Uruguay. It is based in Montevideo and headed by a central governing council (*Consejo Directivo Central*, CODICEN) which is comprised of three members nominated by the President (with the consent of the Senate) and two members elected by teachers. This participation of teacher representatives in institutions of educational governance was introduced by the 2008 Education Law and reflects the rather idiosyncratic situation in Uruguay of institutionalised co-administration of the school system with teachers. The CODICEN co-ordinates the work of four education councils, each of which takes the majority of administrative and curricular decisions and plays a decisive role in the development and implementation of educational policies:

- The Pre-Primary and Primary Education Council (*Consejo de Educación Inicial y Primaria*, CEIP), which regulates and administers early childhood, pre-primary and primary education.

- The Secondary Education Council (*Consejo de Educación Secundaria*, CES), which regulates and administers general programmes within secondary education.
- The Technical and Professional Education Council (*Consejo de Educación Técnico-Profesional*, CETP), which regulates and administers technical and professional education at both the secondary and tertiary levels, also commonly known in the country as *Universidad del Trabajo de Uruguay* (UTU, University of Labour of Uruguay).
- The Teacher Training Council (*Consejo de Formación en Educación*, CFE), which regulates and administers teacher education and professional development for teachers.

Each of the four councils is composed of two members designated by the CODICEN and one member elected by the respective teaching bodies (INEEd, 2015). Within their areas of responsibility, the councils concentrate significant authority. They develop curricula, manage teaching and non-teaching staff, establish monitoring processes for both public and private institutions, manage financial resources and submit budget forecasts to the CODICEN (INEEd, 2015). The 2008 Education Law reorganises the set of councils under the CODICEN but the future structure has not yet been implemented. The latter includes the CEIP and the following new councils: Lower Secondary Education Council (*Consejo de Educación Media Básica*), Upper Secondary Education Council (*Consejo de Educación Media Superior*) and the Technical and Professional Education Council (with different responsibilities than the current equivalent council). In addition, the 2008 Education Law provides for the conversion of the CFE into the University of Education. However, the latter has not yet been approved by the parliament.

The CODICEN defines general guidelines for all levels and types of education, including the supervision of private schools. It is also responsible for drafting the educational budget and approving both the curricula and the statutes of teachers and non-teaching staff developed by the councils. In addition, the CODICEN decides on the establishment of new schools (as well as their location) and has authority over the school calendar. The CODICEN co-ordinates the work of the four councils and is hierarchically above them but, at the same time, the councils are considered autonomous in their areas of responsibility. While the CODICEN may have the final say in the decision-making process, the councils tend to exert their autonomy implying that decisions within the ANEP tend to be collegial between the CODICEN and the councils. This leads the councils to operate somewhat independently from each other which, in practice, results in little co-ordination of education policies across councils' areas of responsibility and a possible lack of consistency of education policies across education levels and school types.

### **Other main players**

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) plays a minor role in the governance, supervision and administration of education and does not formulate education policy. Its main executive functions consist of regulating part of private early childhood and pre-primary education and all private tertiary education. In addition, it contributes to the co-ordination of national education policies, establishes general guidelines and collects and disseminates statistical information (INEEd, 2015). The MEC, as part of its co-ordination role, manages the Co-ordinating Committee of the National System of Public Education (*Comisión Coordinadora del Sistema Nacional de la Educación Pública*), which brings together the MEC, ANEP, UDELAR and UTEC represented at their highest level. The Committee, which meets once a month, seeks to promote educational planning and formulate recommendations for co-ordinated policy development.



The Child and Adolescent Institute of Uruguay (INAU) plays a role in the regulation and administration of early childhood education and pre-primary education overseeing two major networks: the public Day Schools (*Centros Diurnos*) and the private Childcare and Family Centres (*Centros de Atención a la Infancia y la Familia*, CAIF) (INEEd, 2015).

Public university education is self-regulated by the two only public universities in the country. The *Universidad de la República* (UDELAR) was the single public university in the country until the *Universidad Tecnológica* (UTEC) started operating in 2014. The latter is oriented towards technological university careers (with a strong presence in the countryside) while the former is an institution with a comprehensive range of offerings.

The 2008 Education Law established the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (*Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa*, INEEd), which started operating in 2012. INEEd is an autonomous institution with the responsibility of evaluating the quality of education at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. INEEd's objectives include the provision of information about student learning in Uruguay, the development and dissemination of knowledge on evaluation and assessment procedures, and the formulation of recommendations for the improvement of education. While INEEd produces relevant information for policy-making and supports the implementation of evaluation and assessment procedures in the school system, it is not formally part of the governance of school education.

### **The inspections**

The inspections, which are part of the structure of ANEP (one inspection per each CEIP, CES and CERP), perform a key liaison function between the central level (where most decisions are taken) and individual schools. Their role is twofold: i) to observe and evaluate educational processes in individual schools and report this information back to the central level with advice for decisions to be taken by CEIP, CES and CERP; and ii) to supervise educational processes in individual schools in view of both providing support and holding schools (and its teachers and school leaders) accountable. The role of informing central decision-making involves, for instance, advice on which schools to target for improvements in educational infrastructure and the identification of which schools should be part of specific educational programmes (e.g. extra resources for equity). Guidance and support to individual schools involve, for example, the organisation of the educational offer, the creation or removal of student groups or the implementation of specific education programmes (e.g. ICT use). Inspections also assist individual schools in the implementation of new education policies dictated at the central level and take some decisions regarding the school's operation (e.g. the maximum number of students allowed). Furthermore, inspections have an accountability function. They do not evaluate individual schools as a whole but, instead, evaluate individual teachers, school principals and deputy-principals.

Three inspection structures exist (see also Chapter 4 for further details). In pre-primary and primary education, the Technical Inspection is a division within the CEIP and is organised according to the following types of inspectors:

- District inspectors (*inspector de zona*): responsible for the supervision of a number of schools in a given district. They appraise individual teachers, school principals and deputy-principals and both oversee and guide the schools for which they are responsible.
- Departmental inspectors (*inspector departamental*): responsible for a territorial department or for specific types of schools (e.g. Full-time schools) or educational programmes (e.g. ICT).

- Specialised inspectors (*inspector de área/inspector nacional*): responsible for specific areas such as pre-primary education, special needs education, physical or arts education.
- General inspectors (*inspector general*): responsible for a part of the country.
- Technical inspector (*inspector técnico*): responsible for the inspection service as a whole.

In general secondary education, the General Inspection is a directorate within the CES and is organised according to the following types of inspections:

- Subject inspection (*inspección de asignaturas*): responsible for the appraisal of individual teachers in a given subject.
- School inspection (*inspección de institutos y liceos*): responsible for the supervision of given schools and the appraisal of individual school principals and deputy-principals.
- Technical inspection (*inspección técnica*): responsible for advice on technical issues such as curriculum implementation and student assessment.

In technical-professional secondary education, the inspection is divided across different programme directors as part of CETP:

- Some programme directors are responsible for the technical inspection and teacher appraisal in specific technical-professional specialisations (e.g. agriculture, industrial processes, services).
- Other programme directors are responsible for specific education processes such as school management which involves the appraisal of school principals.

### **Initiatives to decentralise the governance of school education**

In school education, policy development and the use of resources are highly centralised. ANEP's councils have the final say in most administrative and pedagogical matters. Few initiatives have been developed to delegate more autonomy at the regional level. The most significant initiatives to decentralise the governance of school education to the regional level are the following:

- The creation of Departmental Co-ordinating Commissions for Education (*Comisión Coordinadora Departamental de la Educación*, CDE) within the country's departments to foster some co-ordination of education offerings within departments. The CDE brings together the main education players within the department to discuss education priorities but it does not have the mandate to develop and implement education policies at the regional level.
- Five regional campuses of the CETP (each covering three to four departments) have been created to manage the use of school resources, co-ordinate school offerings and supervise schools within regions. Each campus has a director and a board composed of regional inspectors and school principals in the region.
- Within pre-primary and primary education (CEIP), the departmental inspections can make some decisions on teacher recruitment and decide on the participation of individual schools in specific education programmes.
- Within general secondary education (CES), there are plans to establish regional offices of the inspectorate.
- Each department has a Departmental Infrastructure Committee which establishes priorities for interventions to improve education infrastructure in the department even if the final decision rests with the CODIGEN.

### **Key features of the governance of the Uruguayan education system in an international context**

In summary, the main features of the governance of the education system that distinguish Uruguay in an international context are the following:

- The governance of the education system is shared among a number of agencies (ANEP, MEC, INAU, UDELAR, UTEC), each of which has exclusive powers over a specific part of the system.
- The main governance agencies (ANEP, UDELAR, UTEC) have technical and administrative autonomy from the government.
- The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) has a relatively secondary role in the design, development and implementation of educational policy, namely within school education.
- The pre-tertiary education system is co-administered with teachers as they elect representatives to the governing bodies of ANEP.

### **Private provision**

Public education is dominant in Uruguay. In 2013, considering all pre-tertiary levels, 86% of students attended public schools while the remaining 14% attended private schools. Private schools are generally not publicly funded in Uruguay even if they are exempt from paying taxes (value-added tax, employer's contribution to social security). The only exceptions, all at the early childhood and pre-primary levels, are the Childcare and Family Centres (CAIF), the "Our Children" programme and the voucher scheme organised in the context of the CISEPI project (Care and Socio-educational Inclusion for Early Childhood) (as of 2016, replaced by a new programme, Scholarships for Socio-educational Inclusion [*Becas de Inclusión Socioeducativa*, BIS], (see below). Private institutions are concentrated in Montevideo and its neighbouring departments such as Canelones and Maldonado. The majority of private institutions follow the national curriculum and use their autonomy in the provision of extracurricular activities.

### **A range of policy consultation processes**

The development of educational policies by the ANEP councils provides for some stakeholder involvement through consultation mechanisms. In 2008, the National Education Commission (*Comisión Nacional de Educación*, COMINE) was created as an advisory and consultative body. It brings together representatives from ANEP, MEC, INAU, UDELAR, UTEC, private institutions, labour unions, teacher unions, students, businesses and civil society. The COMINE meets four times in a year and deliberates on educational policies and promotes their coherence with other areas of public policy (INEEd, 2015). Also, each council has advisory commissions (*Comisiones Consultivas*). The Advisory Commissions are made up of non-teaching public officials, students, parents and guardians. In the case of the Technical and Professional Education Council (CETP), at least one or more Advisory Commissions advise on issues within specific sectors of the economy and include public and private, business and industry and trade union representatives. The Co-ordinating Committee of the National System of Public Education, managed by MEC, is also in charge of organising the National Congress of Education (*Congreso Nacional de Educación*), an arena for citizens to express their interests and debate educational issues. The National Congress of Education must be convened at least within the first year in office of a new government to express views on education policy (INEEd, 2015).

ANEP organises consultations with teachers through four institutionalised Teachers Technical Assemblies (*Asambleas Técnico Docentes*, ATD). These represent pre-primary and primary education, general secondary education, technical and professional education, and teacher training and have, as their main objective, the expression of the views of teachers on education policy initiatives proposed by CODICEN or its education councils. They can do so on their own initiative or at the request of CODICEN or its councils (INEED, 2015). ATDs exist at the school and national levels. Each national-level ATD has a Standing Committee which is the direct interlocutor of CODICEN or the respective council.

Teacher unions have considerable influence in the policy debate and organise themselves according to education levels and sectors: teachers of public pre-primary and primary education come together in the Uruguayan Federation of Primary School Teachers (FUM); public general secondary school teachers in the National Federation of Secondary School Teachers (FENAPES); public professional and technical school teachers in the Staff Association of the Uruguayan University of Labour (AFUTU); and private primary and secondary education teachers in the Union of Workers in Private Education (SINTEP).

Private schools, whose influence in the policy making process is limited, are represented through the Uruguayan Association of Catholic Education (*Asociación Uruguaya de Educación Católica*, AUDEC) and the Association of Institutes in Private Education (*Asociación de Institutos de la Educación Privada*, AIDEP).

## The organisation of the school system

### Overview

As displayed in Table 1.2, the school system in Uruguay is organised in four consecutive stages: early childhood education (*Primera Infancia*, ISCED<sup>4</sup> 01, below three years of age) and pre-primary education (*Educación Inicial*, ISCED 02, ages 3 to 5); primary education (*Educación Primaria*, ISCED 1, Year 1 to Year 6, typical ages 6 to 11); lower secondary education (*Educación Media Básica*, ISCED 2, Year 7 to Year 9, typical ages 12 to 14); and upper secondary education (*Educación Media Superior*, ISCED 3, Year 10 to Year 12, typical ages 15 to 17). School attendance is compulsory from the age of four to the end of upper secondary education.

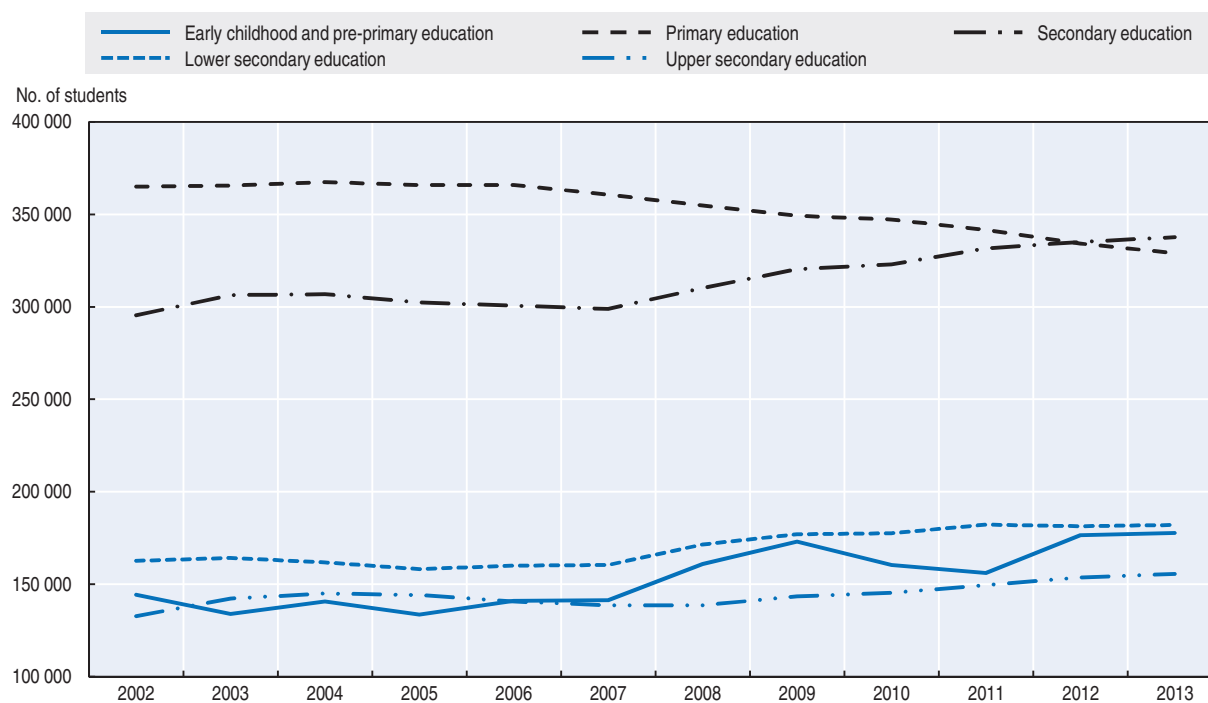
The first selective transition occurs in lower secondary education at age 11 (compared to the OECD average of 14), which is one of the earliest selection ages among the 47 countries participating in PISA and by far the earliest in participating countries from Latin America (OECD, 2013a, Table IV.2.5). Lower secondary education is of three types: general programmes (*Ciclo básico de secundaria*); technical programmes (*Ciclo básico tecnológico*); and basic professional training programmes (for students aged at least 15) (*Formación profesional básica*). Similarly, upper secondary education has three different tracks: general programmes (*Educación media general*); technical programmes (*Educación media tecnológica*); and professional training programmes (*Educación media profesional*).

As shown in Figure 1.5, enrolment in primary education has been declining in recent years (9.9% between 2002 and 2013) while enrolment in secondary education has been increasing (14.3% between 2002 and 2013). The latter increase is more pronounced in upper secondary education (17.2% in the same period) than in lower secondary education (11.9%). Yet, the highest enrolment increase has been in early childhood and pre-primary education (23.2% between 2002 and 2013).

Table 1.2. The Uruguayan education system

Level	Public	Private
<b>Early childhood</b> Age: 0 to 36 months	<b>Pre-primary school (ANEP-CEIP)</b> INAU day school (INAU: Child and Adolescent Institute of Uruguay)	<b>Private without public funding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private pre-primary school (regulated by ANEP)</li> <li>Private school with pre-primary classes (regulated by ANEP)</li> <li>Private early childhood school (regulated by MEC)</li> </ul> <b>Private with public funding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Childcare and Family Centre (CAIF) (regulated by INAU)</li> <li>“Our Children” programme (regulated by MEC)</li> <li>Private early childhood education with vouchers CISEPI (project: Care and Socio-educational Inclusion for Early Childhood), replaced in 2016 by Scholarships for Socio-educational Inclusion (<i>Becas de Inclusión Socioeducativa</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Pre-primary</b> Age: 3 to 5 years (compulsory from 4 years)	<b>Pre-primary school (ANEP-CEIP)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common</li> <li>Full-time</li> <li>JICI (<i>Jardín de Infantes de Ciclo Inicial</i>) (Pre-primary school with initial cycle: combines pre-primary with Years 1 and 2 of primary)</li> <li>CEPI (<i>Centro Educativo de Primera Infancia</i>, Early Childhood Educational Centre, former nurseries)</li> </ul> <b>Urban primary school with pre-primary school (ANEP-CEIP)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common</li> <li>Full-time</li> <li>Extended-time</li> <li>Practice</li> <li>“Aprender” (“Learning”)</li> </ul> <b>Rural primary school with pre-primary school teacher (ANEP-CEIP)</b>	<b>Private without public funding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private pre-primary school (regulated by ANEP)</li> <li>Private school with pre-primary classes (regulated by ANEP)</li> <li>Private pre-primary school (regulated by MEC)</li> </ul> <b>Private with public funding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Childcare and Family Centre (CAIF) (regulated by INAU)</li> <li>Private pre-primary schools w/ vouchers CISEPI (project: Care and Socio-educational Inclusion for Early Childhood), replaced in 2016 by Scholarships for Socio-educational Inclusion (<i>Becas de Inclusión Socioeducativa</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Primary</b> (Mainstream education) (Year 1 to Year 6) Age: 6 to 11 years (compulsory)	<b>Urban primary school (ANEP-CEIP)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common</li> <li>Full-time</li> <li>Extended-time</li> <li>Practice</li> <li>“Aprender” (“Learning”)</li> </ul> <b>Rural primary school</b>	<b>Private without public funding</b> Private schools (regulated by ANEP-CEIP)
<b>Primary</b> (Special education) (Year 1 to Year 6) Age: 6 to 11 years (compulsory)	<b>Special education school (ANEP CEIP)</b>	<b>Private special education school (regulated by ANEP CEIP)</b>
<b>Lower secondary</b> (General programmes) (Year 7 to Year 9) Age: 12 to 14 years (compulsory)	<b>Secondary school (ANEP-CES)</b> <b>Rural primary school with Years 7, 8 and 9 (ANEP CEIP)</b>	<b>Private without public funding</b> Private schools (regulated by ANEP-CES)
<b>Lower secondary</b> (Technical programmes; Basic Professional Training programmes) (Year 7 to Year 9) Age: 12 to 14 years (compulsory)	<b>Technical and Agrarian schools (ANEP CETP)</b>	<b>Private without public funding</b> Private schools (regulated by ANEP-CES)
<b>Upper secondary</b> (General programmes) (Year 10 to Year 12) Age: 15 to 17 (compulsory)	<b>Secondary school (ANEP-CES)</b>	<b>Private without public funding</b> Private schools (regulated by ANEP-CES)
<b>Upper secondary</b> (Technical programmes; Professional Training programmes) (Year 10 to Year 12) Age: 15 to 17 (compulsory)	<b>Technical and Agrarian schools (ANEP-CETP)</b>	<b>Private without public funding</b> Private schools (regulated by ANEP CES)
<b>Tertiary</b> Age: from 18 years	<b>Universidad de la República (UDELAR, autonomous)</b> <b>Universidad Tecnológica (UTEC, autonomous)</b> <b>Technical and Agrarian schools (ANEP-CETP)</b> <b>Teacher education (ANEP-CFE)</b>	<b>Private universities (regulated by MEC) (a total of 4)</b> <b>Private university institutes (regulated by MEC) (12)</b> <b>Private tertiary non-university institutes (regulated by MEC) (3)</b>

Source: INEEd (2015), OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay, [www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm).

Figure 1.5. **Enrolment by level of education, 2003-13**

Source: MEC (2013), *Anuario Estadístico de Educación 2013* (Education Statistical Yearbook 2013), [www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/11078/5/mecweb/publicaciones\\_?3colid=927](http://www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/11078/5/mecweb/publicaciones_?3colid=927).

### Pre-primary education

#### Early childhood education

Children from birth to the age of three can be enrolled, on a voluntary basis, in early childhood education. Table 1.3 shows the distribution of children across different types of early childhood and pre-primary education. Private provision is dominant in early childhood education (below age three). The Childcare and Family Centres (CAIF), which are privately-run,

Table 1.3. **Early childhood and pre-primary education enrolment by age and type of offer, 2013**

Type of offer	Early childhood education				Pre-primary education				
	0-1 year	2 years	Total (0-2 years)	Share (0-2 years) (%)	3 years	4 years	5 years	Total (3-5 years)	Share (3-5 years) (%)
<b>Public sector</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>1 170</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>8 353</b>	<b>35 266</b>	<b>37 272</b>	<b>80 891</b>	<b>62.5</b>
Pre-primary schools (under ANEP)	0	102	102	0.2	7 729	13 738	12 386	33 853	26.2
Primary schools with pre-primary classes (ANEP)	0	0	0	0	106	21 359	24 886	46 351	35.8
INAU day schools	527	541	1 068	2.2	518	169	0	687	0.5
<b>Private with public funding (CAIF)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>17 928</b>	<b>12 106</b>	<b>30 034</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>11 837</b>	<b>3 279</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15 116</b>	<b>11.7</b>
<b>Private without public funding</b>	<b>6 512</b>	<b>10 790</b>	<b>17 302</b>	<b>35.7</b>	<b>12 339</b>	<b>10 899</b>	<b>10 088</b>	<b>33 326</b>	<b>25.8</b>
Private pre-primary school (ANEP)	807	1 262	2 069	4.3	1 267	1 074	745	3 086	2.4
Private school with pre-primary classes (ANEP)	1 372	3 412	4 784	9.9	4 944	6 986	7 725	19 655	15.2
Private early childhood and pre-primary schools (MEC) <sup>2</sup>	4 333	6 116	10 449	21.5	6 128	2 839	1 618	10 585	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 967</b>	<b>23 539</b>	<b>48 506</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32 529</b>	<b>49 444</b>	<b>47 360</b>	<b>129 333</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. Children below the age of two enrolled in CAIFs (Childcare and Family Centres) attend them once a week accompanied by their parents.

2. Includes the publicly-funded "Our Children" Programme of the departmental government of Montevideo.

Source: INEEd (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay*, [www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm).

publicly-funded and regulated by INAU, constitute the main provider with about 62% of the enrolments in 2013. Children attend CAIF centres on a daily or weekly basis and families are not charged fees. The “Our Children” programme, which is jointly organised by NGOs and the departmental government of Montevideo and supervised by MEC, constitutes another case of private provision with public funding. The rest of the private sector, which is not publicly-funded, attracts about 36% of the enrolments. These include private pre-primary classes under the supervision of the ANEP (about 14% of enrolments) and private early childhood and pre-primary schools under the supervision of the MEC (about 22% of enrolments). Public provision, most of which is provided by INAU’s day schools, represents only 2.4% of enrolments at this level. CAIF centres, the “Our Children” programme and INAU day schools mainly cater to children from vulnerable families.

As part of its recent “Care and Socio-Educational Inclusion for Early Childhood” project (CISEPI), in areas where public provision is not available, the government offers, through a voucher system, financial assistance to single parents with children between ages 0 and 3 for attendance of private pre-primary schools under the supervision of MEC (MIDES, 2014). As of 2016, the CISEPI project was replaced by a new programme, Scholarships for Socio-educational Inclusion (*Becas de Inclusión Socioeducativa*, BIS). The BIS programme offers scholarships for children between the ages of 45 days and 2 years from vulnerable families which participate in priority programmes organised by the Ministry of Social Development to attend private early childhood schools in geographical areas with insufficient public supply of early childhood programmes.

### **Pre-primary education**

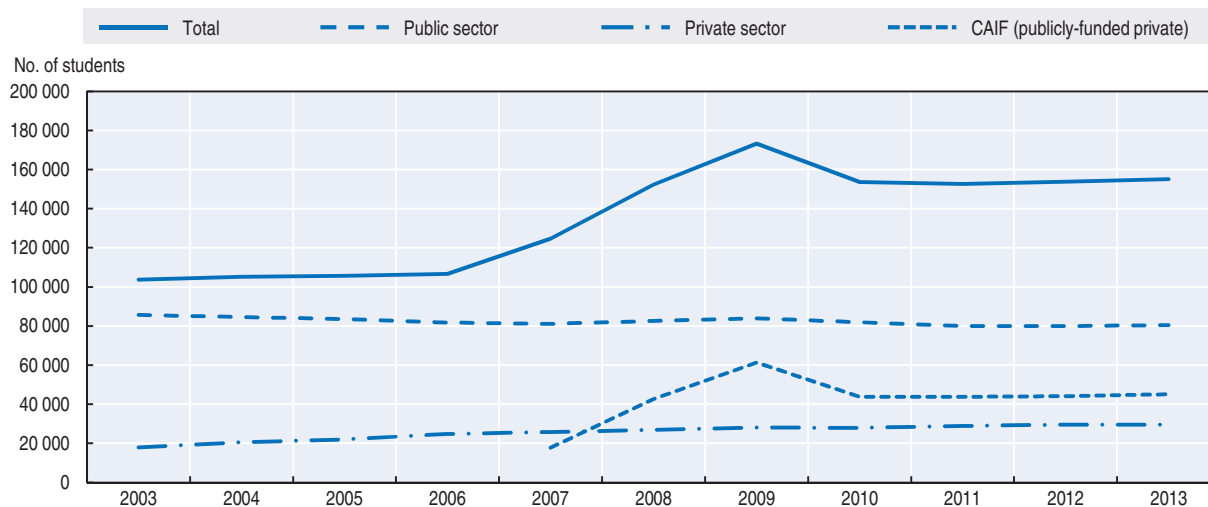
Pre-primary education is aimed at children aged 3 to 5 and is compulsory from the age of 4. At this level, public provision is dominant with about 63% of enrolments (see Table 1.3). Public free provision includes pre-primary schools (about 26% of enrolments), pre-primary classes in primary schools (about 36% of enrolments), both under the supervision of the ANEP, as well as INAU day schools (0.5% of enrolments). ANEP provides pre-primary education in various formats even if these share a common curriculum. ANEP’s pre-primary education services are provided in pre-primary schools (in the following modalities: common; full-time; JICI [*Jardín de Infantes de Ciclo Inicial*, pre-primary school with initial cycle combining pre-primary with Years 1 and 2 of primary]; and CEPI [*Centro Educativo de Primera Infancia*, Early Childhood Educational Centre, former nurseries]) and in primary schools with pre-primary classes (in the following modalities: common; full-time; extended-time; practice; and *Aprender* (Learning), see further description under “Primary education”).

The CAIF centres, with about 12% of enrolments, while privately-run are publicly-funded and do not charge fees. The fee-paying private sector is sizable and includes private pre-primary schools and primary schools with pre-primary classes, both under the supervision of the ANEP (with about 18% of enrolments), as well as private pre-primary schools under the supervision of the MEC (about 8% of enrolments). In 2013, there were 2 192 institutions offering pre-primary education, of which just under half were public (45.9%); 38.4% were private without public funding; and 15.7% were private with public funding (CAIF). This distribution differs considerably across departments within the country. In Montevideo, in 2013, most pre-primary institutions were private (58.7%) while in the rest of the country this proportion stood at 27%.

The coverage rate for children aged between 3 and 5 reached 84.4% in 2013 (from 76.8% in 2008) while that for children aged between 4 and 5 reached 94.4% in the same year (from

88.9% in 2008) (MEC, 2013). This is reflected in the overall increase of enrolment in early childhood and pre-primary education, as displayed in Figure 1.6 (which does not include data for institutions regulated by MEC and for public INAU day schools). The overall increase of 49.7% between 2003 and 2013 was pushed by growth in the private sector (enrolment in the public sector actually shrank 6.1% for the same period). While the fee-paying private sector grew 64.5% between 2003 and 2013, the CAIFs (privately-managed and publicly-funded) grew 154% between 2007 and 2013.

Figure 1.6. **Enrolment in early childhood and pre-primary education by sector, 2003-13**



Note: CAIF refers to the publicly-funded private Childcare and Family Centres (*Centro de Atención a la Infancia y la Familia*) supervised by the Child and Adolescent Institute of Uruguay (*Instituto del Niño y Adolescente del Uruguay*, INAU).

Data do not include enrolment in private early childhood and pre-primary schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and the public INAU day schools.

Source: INEEd (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay*, [www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm).

### Primary education

Primary education in Uruguay lasts six years (Year 1 to Year 6) and is delivered both in mainstream and special education schools (see below further information on special education). In 2013, about 83% of primary education students attended public schools (see Table 1.4), although there are large regional variations in the proportion of private primary schools, accounting for less than 10% in most departments compared to 44% in Montevideo (INEEd, 2015; INEEd, 2014). Over half of the private schools are located in Montevideo. All public primary schools are administered by the ANEP's CEIP which also supervises all private schools at the primary level (INEEd, 2015).

Mainstream primary schools can be of different types. In the public sector, and within the urban context, primary schools can have the following modalities (see Table 1.4):

- Common (*Común*): regular offer operating half a day (four hours either in the morning or in the afternoon) (in 2013, it catered for 27.8% of primary students).
- Full-time (*Tiempo completo*): operates the whole day (7.5 hours) (10.1% of enrolment in 2013).
- Extended-time (*Tiempo extendido*): similar to common school (four hours of regular classes) but with time extended for the organisation of extra activities (which typically involves staying at school about seven hours) (1.1% of enrolment).



- Practice (*Práctica*): similar to common school (four hours of regular classes) with the distinct feature of receiving teacher education students for their practice (12.7% of enrolment).
- *Aprender* – “Learning”: similar to common school (four hours of regular classes) but located in a disadvantaged socio-economic context with extra support programmes (23.8% of enrolment).

Another modality consists of rural schools which are located in rural areas and teach for five hours a day. In 2013, rural schools, which are typically very small, made up 52% of all public primary schools in Uruguay but merely account for 4.7% of the primary school enrolment due to ongoing decline and increasing sparseness of the country’s rural population (INEEd, 2015) (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4. **Schools and students in primary education, 2013**

Type of offer	Schools	Students	Share of students (%)
<b>Primary Schools</b>	<b>2 556</b>	<b>324 783</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Public</b>	<b>2 143</b>	<b>268 001</b>	<b>82.5</b>
Urban	952	245 840	75.7
Common	329	90 187	27.8
Full-time	188	32 957	10.1
Extended-time	29	3 559	1.1
Practice	129	41 157	12.7
<i>Aprender</i> (“Learning”)	265	77 268	23.8
Pre-primary school with primary classes (JICI)	12	712	0.2
Rural	1 111	15 348	4.7
Common	1 105	15 215	4.7
Rural internship	6	133	0.0
Special education	80	6 813	2.1
<b>Private</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>56 782</b>	<b>17.5</b>
Common	345	53 572	16.5
Special education	68	3 210	1.0

Note: JICI (*Jardín de Infantes de Ciclo Inicial*) refer to pre-primary schools with initial cycle (combines pre-primary with Years 1 and 2 of primary).

Source: INEEEd (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay*, [www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm).

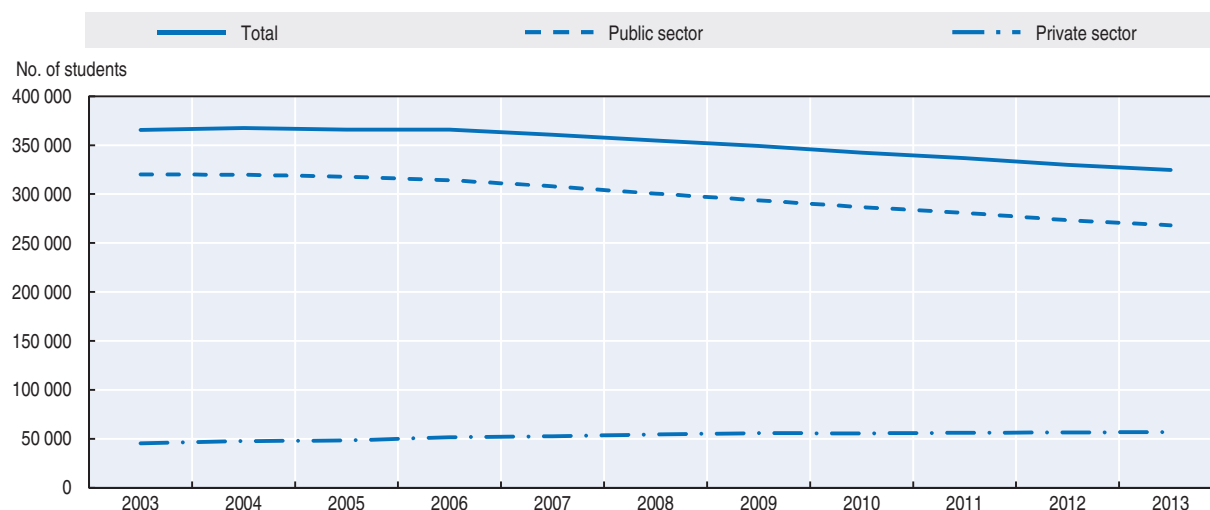
As displayed in Figure 1.7, between 2003 and 2013, total enrolment in primary education declined about 11%. The decline was pronounced in the public sector (about 16%) while enrolment in the private sector grew about 25% during this period.

### Lower secondary education

Lower secondary education spans Years 7-9 and has been compulsory since 1973. It offers programmes of three types:

- General programmes (*Ciclo básico de secundaria*), with about 85% of enrolment in 2013.
- Technical programmes (*Ciclo básico tecnológico*), catering for about 10% of students in 2013.
- Basic professional training programmes (*Formación profesional básica*), targeted at students who are 15 or older, with a 5.5% share of enrolment in 2013 (see Table 1.5).

The public school offer at the lower secondary level is entirely administered by the ANEP’s CES (general programmes), CETP (technical and professional training programmes) and CEIP (rural primary schools with Years 7, 8 and 9). Private secondary schools, which offer general programmes only (with a few exceptions), are regulated by the CES. Most of them

Figure 1.7. **Enrolment in primary education by sector, 2003-13**

Source: INEEd (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay*, [www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm).

Table 1.5. **Schools and students in lower secondary education, 2013**

Type of offer	Schools	Students	Share of students (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>184 533</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Public</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>150 081</b>	<b>85.7</b>
Secondary school (general programmes)	255	124 749	67.6
Technical and agrarian school (technical and professional training programmes)			
Technical programmes	138	18 876	10.2
Basic professional training programmes		10 198	5.5
Rural primary school with Years 7, 8 and 9 (general programmes)	61	1 812	1.0
Community classrooms ( <i>Aulas Comunitarias</i> )	25	1 429	0.8
Pedagogical areas ( <i>Áreas Pedagógicas</i> )	7	1 017	0.6
<b>Private (offer general programmes only)</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>26 452</b>	<b>14.3</b>

Note: Lower and upper secondary courses from different levels can co-exist in the same school.

Source: INEEd (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay*, [www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm); and MEC (2013), *Anuario Estadístico de Educación 2013* (Education Statistical Yearbook 2013), [www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/11078/5/mecweb/publicaciones\\_?3colid=927](http://www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/11078/5/mecweb/publicaciones_?3colid=927).

charge tuition fees, although there are examples of private schools not charging fees to children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (these are supported by corporate donations under tax exemption schemes). The proportion of private providers in lower secondary education varies considerably between regions, ranging from 50% of schools in Montevideo to only 5% in the northern department of Artigas (INEEd, 2014). In 2013, private schools catered for about 14% of total enrolment in lower secondary education (see Table 1.5).

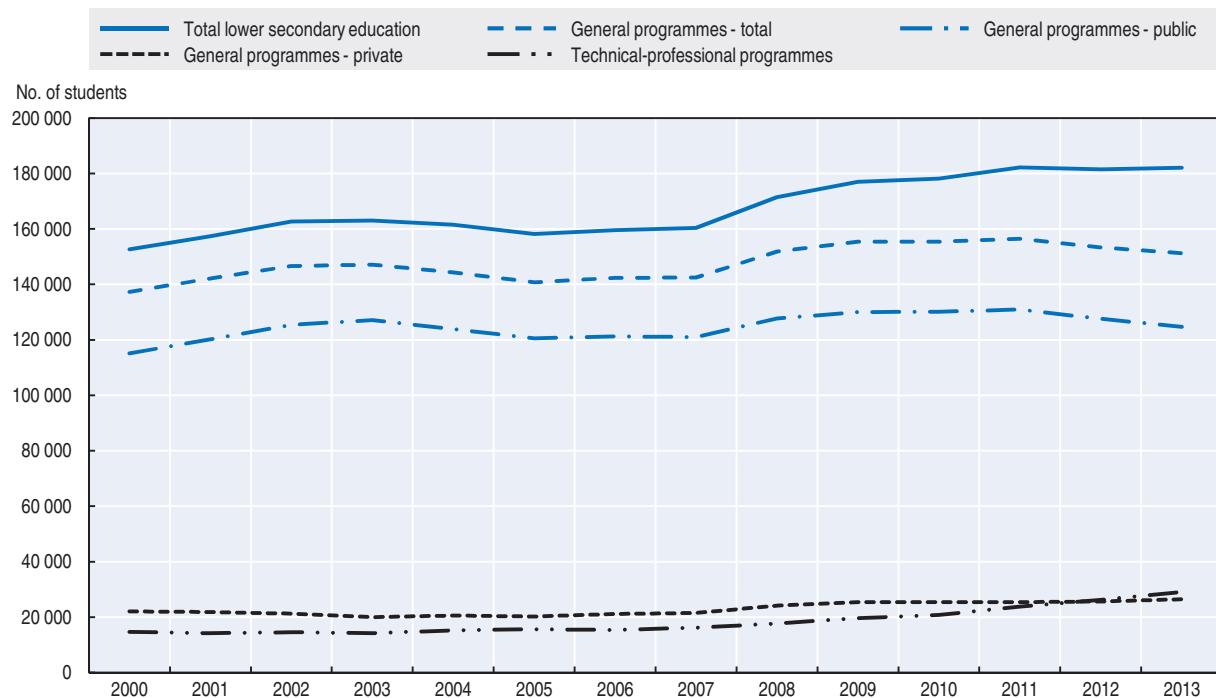
Basic professional training programmes are available for young people above 15 years of age who have not completed lower secondary education. Completion of this programme enables students to move on to general or technical-professional upper secondary education and grants students a professional certificate in a chosen field. Basic professional training is based on the principle of integrated knowledge. Subjects are integrated and allow teachers to develop learning strategies for individuals and groups. Basic professional training

programmes also recognise prior learning which allows students to complete programmes following different individual pathways.

There are also a number of special programmes at the lower secondary level targeted at specific populations which the ANEP carries out in co-operation with other public institutions (INEEd, 2015). These include the “Community Classrooms” programme (*Aulas Comunitarias*) (targeted at students below 17 years of age who have not completed Year 7); and the “Pedagogical Areas” programme (*Áreas Pedagógicas*) (targeted at young people under INAU guardianship and young people with behavioural problems).

As displayed in Figure 1.8, enrolment in lower secondary education has grown about 21% between 2000 and 2013. In this period, the proportion of private provision has remained stable at around 14%. By contrast, the proportion of students in technical and professional training programmes has grown from about 10% in 2000 to about 16% in 2013.

Figure 1.8. **Enrolment in lower secondary education by sector and type of programme, 2000-13**



Note: Total includes general programmes, technical and professional training programmes and primary schools with Years 7, 8 and 9. Specific figures for the latter are not shown in the figure. Technical and professional learning programmes are only offered in public schools. Source: INEEd (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay*, [www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm).

### Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education covers Years 10-12 and has been compulsory since 2008. It offers three different tracks:

- General programmes (*educación media general*), mainly geared to the continuation of studies at tertiary education level. These lead to the diversified baccalaureate (*Bachillerato diversificado*) as an upper secondary qualification.
- Technical programmes (*educación media tecnológica*), geared to working life or the continuation of studies at tertiary education level. These offer practical and theoretical education in a

specialised subject area. They lead to the technical baccalaureate (*Bachillerato tecnológico*) as an upper secondary qualification.

- Professional training programmes (*educación media profesional*), geared towards an initial qualification for students, giving priority to their entering the job market. These offer two years of technical training and one year of general education. They lead to the professional baccalaureate (*Bachillerato profesional*) as an upper secondary qualification.

While general education programmes are administered by CES, the technical and professional tracks are administered by CETP. In 2013, about 75% of the students attended general programmes, while technical programmes and professional training programmes catered for 15% and 10% of the students respectively. A small proportion of the students were enrolled in private schools (11%), which offer general programmes only (with the exception of a few private schools with technical programmes) and are overseen by CES (see Table 1.6). Over half of the private schools are located in Montevideo (INEEd, 2015).

Table 1.6. **Schools and students in upper secondary education, 2013**

Type of offer	Schools	Students	Share of students (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>155 522</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Public</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>138 480</b>	<b>89.0</b>
Secondary school (general)	195	99 485	64.0
Technical and agrarian school (technical and professional training programmes)			
Technical programmes		23 492	15.1
Other, including professional training programmes	138	15 503	10.0
<b>Private</b>			
(offer general programmes only – except for a few with technical programmes)	<b>167</b>	<b>17 042</b>	<b>11.0</b>

Note: Lower and upper secondary courses from different levels can co-exist in the same school.

Source: INEEd (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay*, [www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm); and MEC (2013), *Anuario Estadístico de Educación 2013 (Education Statistical Yearbook 2013)*, [www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/11078/5/mecweb/publicaciones\\_?3colid=927](http://www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/11078/5/mecweb/publicaciones_?3colid=927).

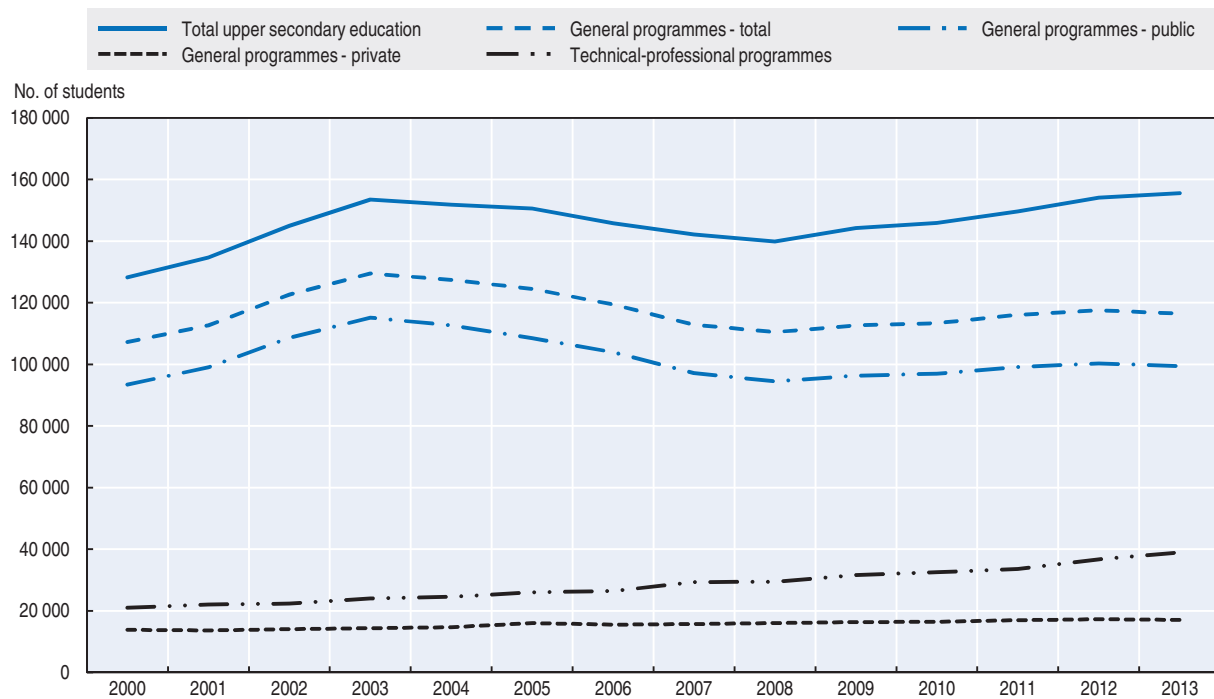
As displayed in Figure 1.9, enrolment in upper secondary education has grown about 21% between 2000 and 2013. In this period, the proportion of private provision has remained stable at around 11%. By contrast, the proportion of students in technical and professional training programmes has grown from about 16% in 2000 to about 25% in 2013.

## Educational goals

### General goals

The 2008 Education Law states that the purpose of the education system “as a public and social good” is to pursue “everyone’s full physical, psychological, ethical, intellectual and social development without discrimination.” It also states that education should aim at a life that integrates various aspects such as work, culture, health care, entertainment and exercising citizenship responsibly (INEEd, 2015). Furthermore, the law defines the general goal of each level of education as follows:

- **Pre-primary education:** Stimulating children’s emotional, social, motor and intellectual development while fostering their social inclusion, self-awareness and an understanding of their family, community and natural environment.
- **Primary education:** Providing basic knowledge and imparting the communication and reasoning skills necessary to responsibly coexist in the community.

Figure 1.9. **Enrolment in upper secondary education by sector and type of programme, 2000-13**

Note: Total includes general programmes, and technical and professional training programmes. Technical and professional training programmes are only offered in public schools.

Source: INEEEd (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay*, [www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm).

- **Lower secondary education:** Deepening acquired knowledge and skills while promoting the theoretical and practical command of disciplines such as the arts, humanities, biology, science and technology.
- **Upper secondary education:** Offering a higher degree of orientation, specialisation, and, depending on the chosen educational track, preparing students for tertiary education or the entry into the labour market.
- **Technical-professional education:** Teaching students from the age of 15 the skills required to pursue professional careers in basic and advanced technical and technological occupations.

### Student learning objectives

Curricula are defined for the entire country at the central level. National curricula for each level and type of school education are developed independently by the respective councils (CEIP, CES and CETP) following guidelines established by the CODICEN which is responsible for ensuring the implementation of student learning objectives (INEEd, 2015). While the education councils develop national curricula, the CODICEN needs to formally approve them.

At pre-primary and primary levels, student learning objectives at the national level (the national curriculum) are elaborated in the common “Programme for Pre-primary and Primary Education” (*Programa de Educación Inicial y Primaria*) issued in 2008 by the CEIP. This Programme describes overarching learning objectives as well as learning content in six areas of knowledge (languages, mathematics, arts, natural sciences, social sciences and physical

education) for three years in pre-primary education (age 3 to 5) and Year 1 to Year 6 in primary education. The curriculum is built around a concept of transversal education, i.e. teachers introduce concepts in the first compulsory year of pre-primary education and work with these concepts until the end of primary education in Year 6. The required content is provided as a list of topics to be covered (e.g. “the estimation of areas” in Year 5’s mathematics) with limited detail (e.g. the content suggested for mathematics from Year 1 to Year 6 is listed in 18 pages of the document) (ANEP-CEP, 2013). The Programme leaves substantial room for interpretation when it comes to concrete content, which gives schools and teachers considerable autonomy to decide upon more specific goals, content and methods. Also, aspects such as the expected learning outcomes at given education stages (defining what students should know – content standards – and be able to do – performance standards); didactic and pedagogical methodologies; and assessment criteria (with performance descriptors) are not specified. This makes it more difficult to measure student performance and ensure the consistency of student assessment across teachers and schools. However, a significant recent development was the establishment, in 2015, of expected learning outcomes at the end of Year 3 and Year 6 (also called “graduation profiles” for students completing Years 3 and 6). These specify what students should know and be able to do at the end of Years 3 and 6 in four knowledge areas (languages, mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences) – e.g. “be able to identify the fraction that expresses the probability of a success” in mathematics at the end of Year 6 (ANEP-CEIP, 2015).

In lower secondary education, three different national curricula exist for: general programmes (developed by CES); technical programmes (developed by CETP); and basic professional training programmes (developed by CETP). For general and technical programmes the curriculum is defined for different subjects and school years while that for basic professional training programmes is structured in courses and modules. In general and technical programmes, the requirements of the curriculum are not provided in detail (e.g. in general mathematics in Year 7, five pages provide the domains to be covered and a content list) while the type of specifications in the curriculum differ across subjects and year levels (some might provide a greater level of content detail or even broad expected learning outcomes). While some regulations exist on criteria for year progression and the use of some assessment instruments, the assessment of students against the curriculum objectives is the responsibility of the teachers. A large number of subjects in these two tracks complicates students’ transition across year levels. By contrast, the curricula for basic professional training programmes are considerably more detailed to serve as a basis for student assessment. They include explicit student learning objectives.

Upper secondary education is based on distinct curricula for the general, technical and professional training strands. Similarly to lower secondary education, both general and technical programmes lack a set of precise learning goals and focus on a description of broad content. CETP-administered professional training programmes have more detailed descriptions of required content and student learning objectives and reflect closer ties to the productive sector. As in lower secondary education, the curricula for upper secondary programmes provide regulations for students’ progression across year levels, but student assessment is the responsibility of schools and teachers. At both levels of secondary education, CES-developed curricula were issued in 2006 while CETP-developed curricula were issued in 2004 for professional programmes and in 2007 for technical programmes.

National curricula are typically developed in consultation with teachers, education experts and inspections. In pre-primary and primary education, the national curriculum was

developed by a central committee supported by sub-committees for each of the six areas of knowledge covered. These were formed by practicing teachers, secondary teachers appointed by the CES, inspectors, delegates from the Teachers Technical Assemblies (ATD) and representatives from the relevant teacher union (FUM). Similarly, in general secondary education, commissions were formed with experts, members of the inspections and representatives of the ATD. In technical and professional secondary education, consultations to define the curricula are broader and include, for example, representatives of employers, trade unions and the Ministry of Social Development. They are organised on the basis of working groups created at the regional and national levels. The inspections also play a key role not only on the definition of the curricula but also on putting them into practice at the school level (i.e. defining the concrete content taught by teachers).

In sum, student learning objectives for the different educational levels and strands have the following characteristics:

- They are defined at the national level.
- Emphasis is placed on content.
- In most instances, expected learning outcomes are not specified.
- Assessment is not considered a curricular technical component.
- Little co-ordination exists between CEIP, CES and CETP in the development of the curricula.
- Teachers and schools have some autonomy to interpret an often not-so-detailed curriculum and define assessment criteria.

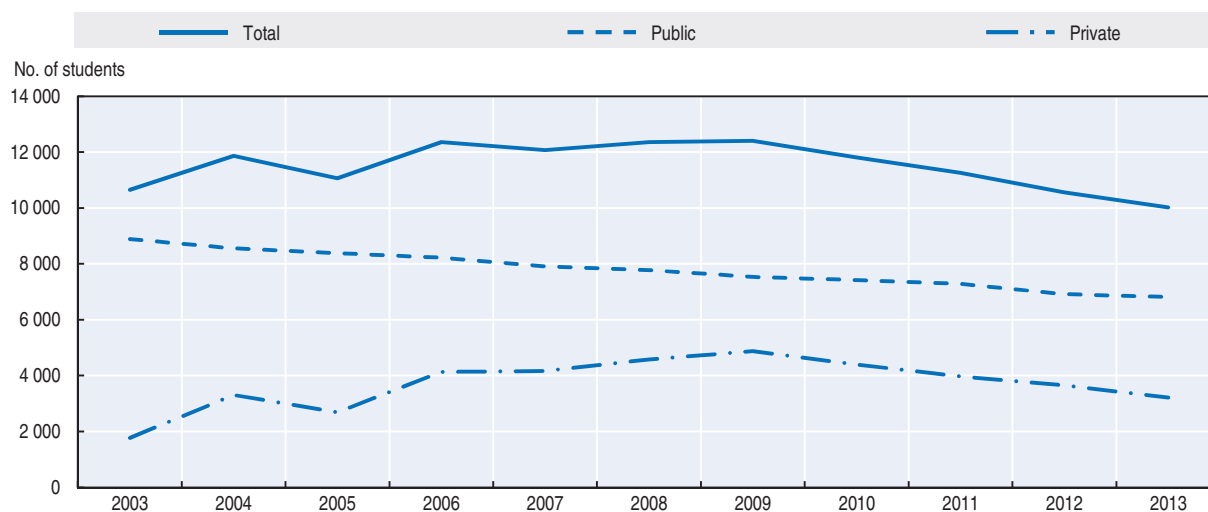
### **Students with special educational needs**

Specific accommodations for special needs are only available in primary education. Mentally and physically disabled children, children with visual and hearing impairments, and children with behavioural difficulties at this level of education can choose to go to a special school. Alternatively, children can attend both a special and a mainstream school, either splitting their time between the two schools (*escolaridad compartida*) or attending both schools (*doble escolaridad*), or only spend some time period in a special school. Provision for special needs education also includes classrooms in mainstream schools with groups for inclusion, support teachers (*maestros de apoyo*) and medical teachers (*maestros hospitalarios*) in mainstream schools, and home assistance, if needed (INEEd, 2015). Special schools are organised according to the type of special need (e.g. students with hearing disabilities). Enrolment in special schools represented 3.1% of overall primary school enrolment in 2013 (see Table 1.4). About 32% of these students attended private special schools in 2013, compared to 17% in 2003. Also, as shown in Figure 1.10, the number of students in special schools decreased about 6% between 2003 and 2013, with a pronounced decrease in the public sector (23%).

Teacher preparation for special needs is organised as a postgraduate specialisation at initial teacher education institutions. By 2012, about 65% of special education teaching staff had acquired this specific qualification (INEEd, 2015).

Beyond primary education, there are no specific provisions for students with special needs. No special schools exist and although some programmes for special needs students are provided within the mainstream school system, the majority of secondary schools have neither specific provisions nor resources for the integration or separate teaching of special needs students (INEEd, 2015). Secondary schools also generally do not receive funds for inclusion (e.g. professional development to work with children with autism). Due to the

Figure 1.10. Enrolment in special schools by sector, 2003-13



Note: Data refer to attendance of special schools, which only exist at the primary education level. Data for public providers also include children in special courses in mainstream schools.

Source: INEED (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay*, [www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm).

challenges this poses to educational continuity for special needs students, more than one thousand students beyond the age of 15 continued to attend special needs schools administered by CEIP in 2011 (UNESCO, 2015).

### School governance

The composition of the school leadership team depends on the school's type and size. Schools are typically led by a school principal, one or two deputy principals, and one or more secretaries. The school leadership team is also supported by teacher leaders (*maestros* and *profesores adscriptos a la dirección*) who fulfil mainly administrative (e.g. data management, keeping discipline) but also some pedagogical tasks. With a few selected exceptions for positions of trust (e.g. some teacher leaders), school principals do not select their school leadership team. Deputy principals and teacher leaders are recruited centrally through exams and competitions, and secretaries are chosen according to their ranking in the teacher hierarchy. School principals are responsible for leadership in three areas: pedagogical, organisational-administrative and communal. However, as will be analysed later in the report, the autonomy of individual schools in Uruguay is rather limited. Schools have no autonomy to manage human resources and manage very limited financial resources.

The 2008 Education Law foresees the implementation of participation councils (*Consejos de Participación*) in all schools. These councils bring together students, parents and guardians, teachers and educators and community representatives, and must meet at least three times a year. According to the regulations, participation councils have the right to make suggestions to the school leadership on the education project and the running of the school, a school's collaboration with external institutions, social and cultural activities in schools, a school's infrastructure, donations, and the use of resources. They are also supposed to participate in school self-evaluations and provide their views on the development of the school. However, the development of participation councils in the country is still incipient and the large majority of schools have yet to form one.



Active parental participation in schools' activities occurs through specific parental associations. In primary and technical-agrarian schools, parents contribute to the school's activities through the Support Commission (*Comisión de Fomento*) while in general secondary schools, parental involvement is organised through an Association of Parents and Friends of the School (*Asociación de Padres y Amigos del Liceo*). Traditionally, these parental associations have focused on raising additional resources for the operation of their school.

### **School choice**

In Uruguay, school choice exists among public schools only. In general, private schools receive no public subsidies and involve the payment of an attendance fee. As described earlier, exceptions exist in early childhood and pre-primary education through the public funding of privately-run CAIFs, the "Our Children" programme and the voucher system embedded in the project "Care and Socio-educational Inclusion for Early Childhood" (CISEPI, replaced, as of 2016, by a new programme, Scholarships for Socio-educational Inclusion, BIS). Also, in secondary education, some private schools do not charge fees to children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Within the public education system, families can choose the school for their children, but if demand exceeds school capacity priority is typically given to those families who live in or whose workplace is in the neighbourhood of the school or who have other children already enrolled at the concerned school. In primary education, excess demand often occurs for a particular modality such as full-time schools. In this case, additional selection criteria are the family income and the employment status of the mother (if the mother works).

In general secondary education, the allocation of students to secondary schools is organised by a central office on the basis of students' preferences. Students can register at any school but, if there is excess demand, the residence of the family is used as a criterion. School admission on the basis of academic criteria is less frequent in Uruguay than in the OECD area. However, there are significant differences between public and private schools with the latter giving considerably more importance to academic performance in their admissions policies (see also Chapter 4).

### **Evaluation and assessment**

In addition to school leadership appraisal and teacher evaluation, which are described in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively, the evaluation and assessment framework in Uruguay comprises the following main components.

#### **Student assessment**

Student performance is assessed by a variety of instruments, ranging from national external assessments to ongoing daily formative assessment in the classroom. At the national level, sample-based national tests are conducted every three (or four) years in Year 6, the results from which are used for national monitoring. These have been organised in 1996 (full cohort), 1999, 2002, 2005, 2009 and 2013 in language, mathematics and science. No other regular national external standardised assessment exists (INEEd, 2015). One-off national full cohort assessments were organised in Year 9 in 1999 and in Year 12 in 2002. Summative assessment is based on teacher-based classroom assessments as there are no external national examinations. While student assessment criteria are defined mostly at the school level, there are national regulations on criteria for year transition in secondary

education. Teachers also benefit from a system of online formative assessments proposed by ANEP. The platform – System for the Assessment of Learning (*Sistema de Evaluación de Aprendizaje*, [www.anep.edu.uy/sea](http://www.anep.edu.uy/sea)) – proposes assessments and allows teachers to create their own assessments in reading, mathematics, science and English for students in Year 3 to Year 6. As of 2013, assessments are also available for lower secondary education.

### **School evaluation**

In Uruguay, there is no evaluation of schools and their processes as a whole. As explained earlier, the work of inspections concentrates on the appraisal of individual teachers, school principals and deputy-principals. Results from evaluations undertaken by inspections are not made publicly available. There is also no requirement for schools to perform self-evaluations (see also further analysis in Chapter 4).

Also, it remains uncommon in Uruguay for data on academic achievement at the school level to be published, although the 2008 Transparency Act requires it to be released from central authorities upon request (INEEd, 2015). Recently, the CODICEN's Research, Evaluation and Statistics Division (DIEE) and CES have started publishing selected indicators such as repetition and year-transition rates as well as student-teacher ratios for public primary schools and general secondary schools. These are often published in the media in raw format. No such data are provided for private or technical-agrarian schools (INEEd, 2015). In 2012, according to school principals' perceptions, only 9.8% of 15-year-old students attended schools in Uruguay that publicly posted student achievement data, against an OECD average of 45% (OECD, 2013a, Table IV.4.31). Also, according to the same PISA data, only 16.5% of 15-year-old students attended schools which used student results to compare themselves to the national or regional performance and 12.2% attended schools which used student results to compare themselves to others. Both are the lowest figures among all participating countries and well below the OECD averages of 61.7% and 52.5% respectively. However, compared to 2003, more schools are now using student results to track their progress over time (87.5%, up by 11.0 percentage points and above the OECD average of 79.6%) and to identify aspects of instruction or the curriculum that could be improved (86.3%, up by 17.5 percentage points and above the OECD average of 80.1%) (OECD, 2013a, Table IV.4.36).

### **Education system evaluation**

The National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEEd) is in charge of providing an independent evaluation of the state of school education in the country. This evaluation is published in a biennial report (called "Report about the state of education in Uruguay"), the first of which was released in December 2014. As explained above, standardised student assessment for national monitoring is only organised in Year 6. As of 2015, INEEd is developing a national system to monitor student achievement in Year 3 to Year 9 (INEEd, 2015; see INEEd, 2014) focusing on three main assessment areas: cognitive skills (especially problem resolution and reading comprehension); socio-emotional skills; and citizenship knowledge. Education system evaluation also includes a range of statistics on education based on data collected from schools by ANEP, MEC and INAU. These are the basis for annual publications with system-level indicators on education such as the Education Statistical Yearbook published by MEC. Also, international benchmarks of student performance provided by international student surveys have been influential in driving policy development at the system level. In 2006 and 2013, Uruguay took part in the Second

and Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Studies (SERCE and TERCE) carried out by UNESCO and which cover the Latin America region.<sup>5</sup> Uruguay also participates since 2003 in the triennial OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which measures 15-year-old students' skills in mathematics, reading and science.

## Main trends and concerns

### ***A good provision of basic education but high repetition and low completion rates in secondary education***

The level of educational attainment in Uruguay remains modest with an average of 8.1 years of education among the population aged 25 or older in 2010, higher than that of Brazil (7.7 years) but lower than that of Mexico (8.3 years), Argentina (9.5 years) and Chile (9.7 years). Compared to the region, attainment has increased very slowly over the past decades. In 2010, 20-24 year-olds had completed an average of 10.2 years of schooling, compared to 9.1 among 30-34 year-olds, 8.8 among 40-44 year-olds and 8.5 among 50-54 year-olds (Barro and Lee, 2010).

Universal access has been reached in primary education. Also, access to pre-primary education is good for children aged 4 and 5, with coverage rates considerably above the average for the Latin America region (Mateo and Rodriguez-Chamussy, 2015). The net attendance rate for children aged 5 reached 98% in 2012 while it stood at 89% for children aged 4 (INEEd, 2015). For age 3, the net attendance rate is significantly lower, reaching 64% in 2012. At this age there are important inequities of access: while 93% of children from families in the highest income quintile attend pre-primary education, only 49% of children from families in the lowest income quintile do so (INEEd, 2015).

However, the completion rates of lower and upper secondary education remain unsatisfactory and lower than those of other countries in the region (INEEd, 2015). The proportion of 15-24 year-olds who have completed secondary school is one of the lowest in the region and has shown little improvement over the past decades compared to other countries of the region. In 2010, it reached 29.7% (up from 22.4% in 1990), compared to the OECD average of 75% (OECD/ECLAC, 2014, Figure 1.8). In 2013, the net attendance rate in lower secondary education was 75% while it only reached 43% in upper secondary education (INEEd, 2015).

Uruguay also has very high repetition rates in regional and international comparison. According to PISA data, 37.9% of 15-year-olds reported to have repeated a year at least once, which is more than in any OECD country and the second highest in Latin America after Colombia (40.6%). 21.6% had repeated at least one school year in primary school, and 27.1% one school year in lower secondary school (OECD, 2013a, Table IV.2.2). As a result, there is a high number of overage students. In 2013, 43% of lower secondary and 59% of upper secondary students fell outside their school years' expected age range (INEEd, 2015). Nevertheless, the repetition rate in public primary schools has steadily decreased since 2002 and had almost halved by 2013 (INEEd, 2015).

### ***Levels of achievement have decreased but remain above the regional average***

#### ***Uruguayan students perform above the regional average at the primary level in reading, mathematics and science***

Students in Years 3 and 6 achieved some of the best mathematics and reading scores among Latin American countries in both the 2006 SERCE (Second Regional Comparative and

Explanatory Study, *Segundo Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo*) and the 2013 TERCE (Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study, *Tercer Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo*) studies. Students in Year 6 also achieved one of the highest results in natural sciences. Across all subjects and year groups, Uruguay had a higher proportion of students reaching the top achievement level and a lower share of students in the bottom achievement group than the Latin American average. However, in contrast to the majority of the participating countries, Uruguay did not improve its results in any of the subjects since 2006 and its performance in natural sciences was worse in 2013 than it had been six years earlier (UNESCO/LLECE, 2015). Furthermore, SERCE revealed that Uruguay exhibited one of the widest achievement gaps between the 10th and 90th percentile and one of the most pronounced urban-rural divides of the region in mathematics (UNESCO/LLECE, 2008).

### ***Uruguayan students perform below the international average at the secondary level in reading, mathematics and science***

Uruguay's 15-year-old students achieved one of the best results among Latin American countries in the OECD PISA study but lagged behind those of all non-Latin American OECD countries. In 2012, Uruguay's mean score in mathematics was 409, compared to the OECD average of 494, a gap equivalent to around 2 years of schooling. Uruguay's results were statistically significantly below those for Chile, similar to those for Mexico and Costa Rica and above those for Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Peru. The mean reading score was 411, compared to the OECD average of 496 and in science, Uruguay reached a mean score of 416, compared to the OECD average of 501 (OECD, 2014c, Figure I.2.b). In reading Uruguay's results were statistically significantly below those for Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico while in science they were below those for Chile and Costa Rica (OECD, 2014c). Uruguay's performance in PISA has deteriorated over the years both in absolute terms and relative to other countries. Uruguay's mean score in mathematics in 2003 was 422 while the mean score in science in 2006 was 428. In analysing PISA results for Uruguay, it is however important to consider that both Uruguay's high school drop-out rates and the fact that PISA is limited to students enrolled in schools mean that PISA results for Uruguay are likely to overestimate the skills of the wider population of 15-year-olds.

### ***A significant proportion of students underperform in secondary education***

A significant challenge in Uruguay is the high proportion of low-performing students. In PISA 2012, 55.8% of students demonstrated low levels of mathematics proficiency compared to 23.0% on average in the OECD. The equivalent proportions in reading and science were 47.0% and 46.9% respectively (against OECD averages of 18.0% and 17.8% respectively) (see Table 1.7). In fact, a significant increase in the proportion of low-performing students in mathematics has driven the deterioration in mathematics performance since 2003 (7.7 percentage points increase of students performing below mathematics proficiency Level 2, as defined by PISA) (OECD, 2014c, Figure I.2.23). It is the same case for science performance (OECD, 2014c, Figure I.5.11). Also, the share of Uruguayan students reaching the highest performance levels (at or above proficiency Level 5, as defined by PISA) in mathematics decreased from 2.8% in 2003 to 1.4% in 2012 (see Table 1.7).

### ***Students' and schools' socio-economic status have a strong impact on performance***

In Uruguay, there are marked educational inequities based on students' socio-economic status (INEEd, 2015; OECD, 2016). In PISA 2012, in Uruguay, 22.8% of the variance in

Table 1.7. **Selected indicators of quality and equity in education in Uruguay based on PISA 2012**

	OECD average (2012)	Uruguay (2012)	Uruguay (2003; for science: 2006)
<b>Percentage of top performers</b>			
Mathematics	12.6	1.4	2.8
Reading	8.4	0.9	5.3
Science	8.4	1.0	1.4
<b>Percentage of low achievers</b>			
Mathematics	23.0	55.8	48.1
Reading	18.0	47.0	39.8
Science	17.8	46.9	42.1
<b>Difference in performance between the 90th and 10th percentiles (in score points)</b>			
Mathematics	239	229	259
Reading	242	249	315
Science	239	245	244
<b>Percentage of variance in performance explained by socio-economic status</b>			
Mathematics	14.8	22.8	..
Reading	13.1	17.5	..
Science	14.0	19.8	..
<b>Percentage of resilient students (mathematics)</b>			
	6.4	2.1	..
<b>Between-school variance in mathematics performance (as percentage of total variation in mathematics performance across OECD countries)</b>			
	36.9	38.9	..
<b>Within-school variance in mathematics performance (as percentage of total variation in mathematics performance across OECD countries)</b>			
	63.3	53.6	..

..: Not available.

Note: Top performers are those students proficient at Level 5 or 6 of the assessment; Low achievers are those students proficient at or below Level 1 of the assessment. ESCS is the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status. Resilient students are those in the bottom quarter of the PISA ESCS index in the country of assessment who perform in the top quarter of students among all countries, after accounting for socio-economic status.

Source: OECD (2013b), *PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity: Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed* (Volume II), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201132-en> (Table II.2.1, p. 174; Table II.A, p. 15; Table II.2.7b, p. 195; Table II.2.8a, p. 196); OECD (2014c), *PISA 2012 Results: What Students Know and Can Do: Student Performance in Mathematics, Reading and Science* (Volume I, Revised edition, February 2014), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264208780-en> (Table I.A, p. 19; Table I.2.1b, p. 299; Table I.4.1b, p. 376; Table I.4.3d, p. 386; Table I.2.3d, p. 308; Table I.5.1b, p. 393; Table I.5.3d, p. 401).

mathematics test scores was explained by students' economic, social and cultural status (ESCS). Although the degree of socio-economic inequality is high across Latin America, Uruguay had the fifth strongest association between socio-economic status and student performance among all PISA participating countries, behind Hungary, Chile, Peru, and the Slovak Republic (and well above the OECD average of 14.8%, see Table 1.7) (OECD, 2013b, Table II.A). Also, Uruguay had a percentage of resilient students – students in the bottom quarter of ESCS who perform among the top 25% of students after accounting for ESCS – below the OECD average (2.1% against 6.4%) (OECD, 2013b, Table II.A).

In PISA 2012, in Uruguay, between-school variance explained 41.9% of the total variation in mathematics performance, compared to the OECD average of 36.9%. In contrast, only 57.8% of performance differences were observed within schools, compared to 63.3% across the OECD (see Table 1.7). Uruguay's index of academic inclusion<sup>6</sup> stood at 58, significantly below the OECD average of 64. This places Uruguay's inclusiveness below Mexico's and Colombia's (both 65), but above Peru (54), Argentina (56), Chile and Brazil (both 57) (OECD, 2013b, Figure II.5.1b).

There are large differences in students' achievement, depending on school type and school resources. Students in private schools performed on average 100 score points better in mathematics than those attending public schools, which is the equivalent of more than two years of schooling and the second highest difference among 47 participating countries (OECD, 2013a, Figure IV.1.19). However, nearly half of this performance difference is accounted for by differences in the socio-economic status of students attending public and private schools (which are the second highest among all PISA countries) (OECD, 2013a, Table IV.4.7). In fact, once schools' index of economic, social and cultural status is also taken into account, students in public schools outperform students in private schools in about 28 points (Figure IV.1.19).

Also, educational differences between rural areas and cities are significant. According to the PISA 2012 mathematics assessment, Uruguayan students in rural areas were significantly outperformed by their peers in towns and cities, although some of this was explained by socio-economic differences (OECD, 2013b, Table II.3.3a). Even when taking into account these socio-economic differences, the performance disadvantage for students in rural areas is significantly more pronounced than on average in the OECD.

In Uruguay, 15-year-old students who have attended more than one year of pre-primary education perform on average 50 score points better in mathematics than those who have not, which is close to the OECD average (OECD, 2013a, Figure IV.1.13). Students who attend pre-primary education also have a considerably higher socio-economic status than those who do not, which gives rise to equity concerns. Although this divide is more pronounced in Uruguay than the average OECD country, it has narrowed by 25% between 2003 and 2012 (OECD, 2013a, Figure IV.1.14).

These inequities are also reflected in students' educational attainment. In 2010, only 25% of 15-17 year-olds from the lowest income quintile had completed lower secondary education and 7% of 18-20 year-olds had completed upper secondary education, compared to 85% and 57% from the top income quintile respectively (MIDES/OPP, 2011).

## Notes

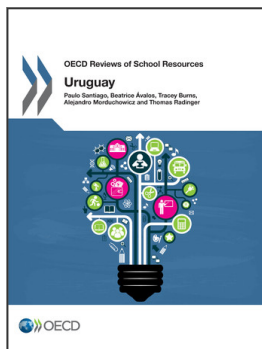
1. For countries with 90 000 inhabitants or more in 2014.
2. Figures for Mexico and the OECD refer to the population of 15-24 year-olds.
3. For details, see <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>.
4. ISCED, the International Standard Classification of Education, is the reference classification developed by UNESCO for organising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields which is used as an instrument for compiling internationally comparable education statistics (UNESCO, 2012).
5. SERCE and TERCE are international student assessments carried out by UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO) in 2006 and 2013 respectively. SERCE assessed Year 3 and Year 6 students in 16 countries (plus one Mexican state) in reading, writing, mathematics and natural sciences (Year 6 only). TERCE repeated the same assessments for 15 countries (plus one Mexican state).
6. Calculated as  $100 \cdot (1 - \rho)$ , where  $\rho$  stands for the intra-class correlation of performance, i.e. the variation in student performance between schools, divided by the sum of the variation in student performance between schools and the variation in student performance within schools (OECD, 2013b).

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