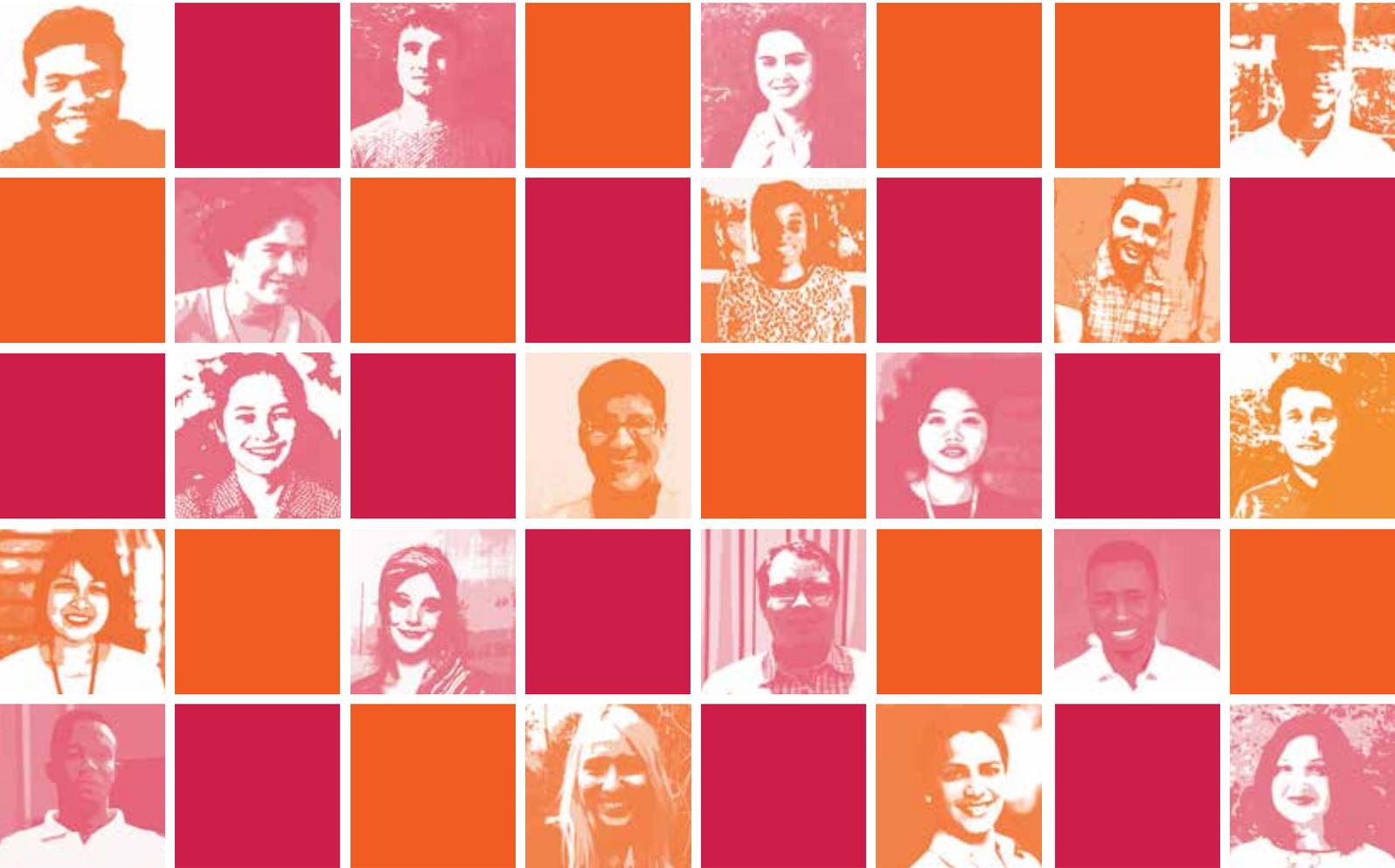




Youth Well-being Policy Review of Peru

ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

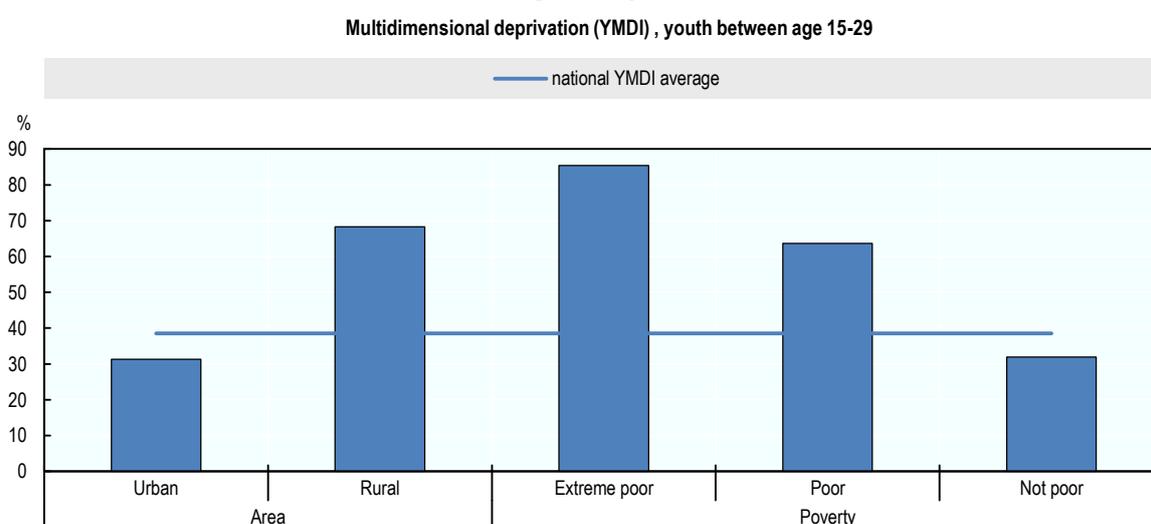


Assessment and recommendations

Youth well-being in Peru and its main challenges

Almost two in five young Peruvians face difficulties in multiple aspects of well-being. The Youth Multidimensional Deprivation Indicator (Y-MDI) comprehensively measures whether the youth achieve the minimum levels of education, employment, health, civic participation and social inclusion to allow them to be protagonists of their own lives. The Y-MDI clearly shows that there are systematic gaps. The indicator revealed that indigenous-speaking, rural and (extremely) poor youth are more than twice as likely as their peers to suffer multidimensional deprivation. These high levels of deprivation are partially explained by the low quality of education and limited access to information (Figure 1). If the government could eradicate the shortcomings in these areas, the proportion of the youth with multidimensional deprivation would fall to 7.6%.

Figure 1. Multidimensional deprivation (YMDI), youth between age 15-29
(in percentage)



Source: National Household Survey (ENAHO, 2015) of the National Bureau of Statistics (INEI).

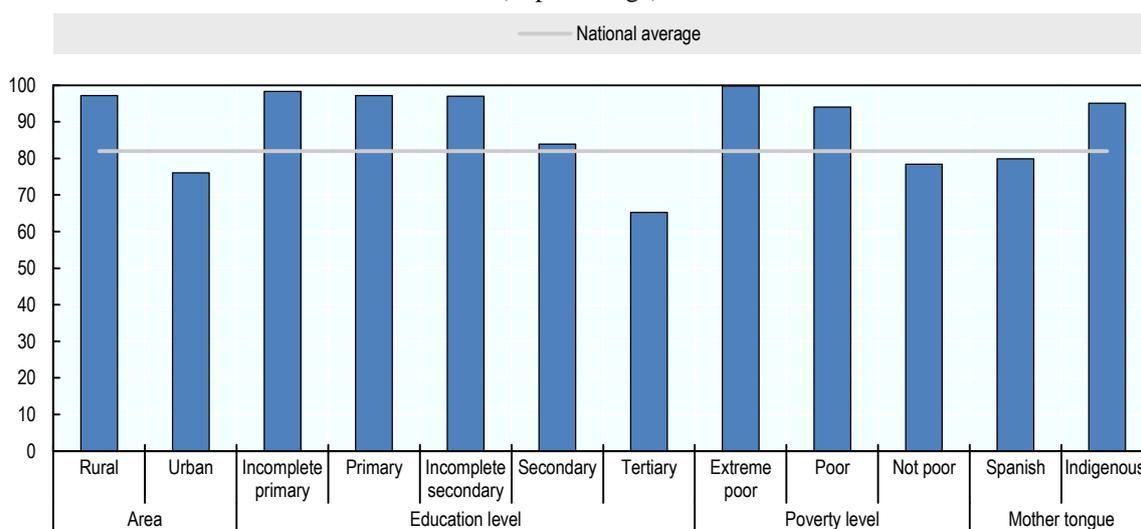
By broadening the reach of secondary education, Peru improved the school access and retention rates considerably among its indigenous-speaking, rural and poor youth. Indicators of access to education show vast improvements in this area of well-being: in ten years, net enrolment in secondary schools (12- to 16-year-olds) increased by almost 12 percentage points, reaching 82.9% in 2014. Over the same period, the rate of adolescents with incomplete secondary education fell by 10 percentage points to 15.9%. All young people benefited, especially those who have traditionally been disadvantaged. Although the gaps between the indigenous-speaking, rural and poor youth and their respective counterparts have narrowed, they still exist and remain a challenge for

education policy makers, especially the gaps between youth living in (extreme) poverty and youth not living in poverty. The main factors holding back secondary-school retention rates and access to education in general are the costs of enrolment, opportunity costs, and, in the case of young women, the unequal distribution of unpaid care work.

Access to education is no longer the main challenge in education policy. Today, the main challenges are the low quality of education and gaps between different geographical areas and poverty. Peruvian students achieve poor results in international (PISA, TERCE) and national (*Evaluación Censal de Estudiantes*, ECE) standardised tests for measuring learning and performance levels, with some of the lowest skills in the region for reading comprehension, mathematics and science, well below the OECD average. The ECE confirms these results, with only 12% of students showing satisfactory skills. The skills gaps and learning gaps between different groups of young people are of great concern. Students from higher-income families achieve skills levels that are similar to the OECD averages, but those from lower-income families barely achieve a basic skill level. Poor-quality education affects youth employment prospects, while gaps impede social mobility and jeopardise the sustainability of national progress.

Peru's youth typically hold informal jobs with low salaries for which they are overqualified. Young Peruvians today enjoy greater opportunities than their parents did, so there are fewer unpaid family workers and domestic workers than in the past. Progress has only gone so far, however, and the rate of youth who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has remained at 15% over the past 10 years, indicating a structural problem. In addition, many young people have precarious jobs. Peru has one of the highest informal employment rates in Latin America, with four in five working informally. Among the indigenous-speaking, poor, rural and poorly educated youth the informal employment rate is close to 100% (Figure 2). Meanwhile, the skills mismatch rate is rising. Greater access to education in rural areas for indigenous-speaking and poor youth is raising the proportion of overqualified young people in those groups. This means that the creation of good-quality, skilled jobs is not keeping pace with improvements in access to education in Peru.

Figure 2. Informality rate, 2014
(in percentage)



Source: National Household Survey (ENAHO, 2014) of the National Bureau of Statistics (INEI).

The youth are generally healthy, but if they do suffer any health problems it can affect their financial situation. Few young Peruvians say they have health problems, but if they do it can have disastrous consequences, especially for those with low economic resources. Another factor affecting people's finances is teenage pregnancy, especially for young mothers who cannot finish their studies or integrate fully into the jobs market because they take care of their children. Despite this, many low-income youth are completely at ease with the idea of forming a family at a young age, which can be seen in the increase in the teen birth rate from 44 to 54 births per 1 000 women.

Although Peru's youth recognise the problems they face as they transition to adulthood, their level of subjective well-being is high. Other challenges, in addition to those described above, include gender-based violence (30.1% of young Peruvian women have at some point been victims of physical or sexual violence by their partner), crime and drugs. These risk factors particularly affect young people in vulnerable situations. Despite these issues, few adolescents in Peru are unsatisfied with their life (16.4%), few regularly have negative feelings (12.3%), and few have little sense of purpose in life (10.7%).

The Peruvian youth's lack of trust in public institutions is a challenge to the work and impact of the state. More than 75% of young Peruvians distrust the executive, legislative and judicial branches. The youth also show little trust in the media (63% distrust the media). Added to this is the widespread belief among the marginalised urban youth that the government shows no interest in supporting them in their transition, instead – according to the perception of these marginalised urban youth – it supports only the elite. These negative views are a stumbling block for the state, since trust in institutions is essential for social stability, effective public policy and democracy.

Policies and the institutional framework for the youth

In recent years, the authorities have begun to recognise that the country's youth are key to national development. Much remains to be done, however, to place the youth firmly on the political agenda. Changes to the legal and political frameworks and the focus on other priority areas have made it difficult for the state to offer coherent, integral support to the country's youth. This is reflected in the scant role that the state and government services play in the lives of many young people. The government could reverse this perception of young people by communicating more with the youth and by seeking to meet with them in their everyday settings.

In the last 15 years, the legal framework for youth has changed considerably, leaving policies without a clear and integral vision. The level of priority given to youth policies has changed with each change of government. As a result, there is no strategic plan for young people other than the 2006-11 National Youth Strategy, which was never rolled out because it was seen as a political tool of the previous administration. The replacement plan took several years to put together, but there has been no political will to place it on the debate agenda. The *Políticas Nacionales de Obligatorio Cumplimiento* (PNOC) – national priority objectives set by central government that all government entities must follow – have to some extent filled the void created by the absence of a strategic plan, as they have made the youth a priority group. The PNOC are not the same as a strategy, however, since the different sectors of government do not integrate or co-ordinate efforts on youth policy, and until 2016, the National Youth Secretariat (SENAJU) did not have the powers to formally monitor the process and the progress made in the sectors. Consequently, it is not clear what should be done with the results

obtained from this monitoring, and the conclusions drawn are not binding (they are seen as information that does not have an impact on improving youth policies). In addition, sectoral performance assessments under the youth PNOC are conducted at the sector level, rather than at the programme level, thus reducing the possibility of direct communication taking place between the SENAJU and the departments responsible for implementing the PNOC, and reducing the possibility of the SENAJU putting forward specific recommendations.

Although there are education, employment, health and citizenship programmes for the youth, they do not necessarily complement each other or have a cross-sectoral focus. Most of the current public programmes and services to support the youth were not designed exclusively for them. Young people do sign up to the programmes, but the original target audience was much broader. Nearly all the programmes benefit mainly the urban youth, with many vulnerable segments of the youth population left out. This urban bias is a problem for young people, as is the poor publicity given to the programmes, with much of the information either failing to reach the target audience or making them feel overwhelmed. For many programmes, a financial commitment is needed to extend them to vulnerable groups.

Education policies focus on expanding secondary and higher education, and few programmes offer second chances. Beca 18 is the flagship educational expansion programme. It is an excellent example of an initiative that targets the most vulnerable young people, and it was meticulously designed and implemented in consultation with various institutions. Additionally, it is important to seek to improve the inclusion and attendance of secondary-school students from low socio-economic groups. In Chile, the *Ley de Subvención Escolar Preferencial* (SEP), or Law on Preferential School Subsidies, gives schools additional funding for each disadvantaged student; in return, the school must commit to developing a plan to improve the skills levels of those disadvantaged students. Peru's second-chance programmes to give young school dropouts (15.9% of the country's youth) the chance to complete their studies are still in their early stages.

Employment policies were at the centre of the government's attention. Here, the flagship policy *Jóvenes Productivos* (Productive Youth) stands out, which is co-ordinated in conjunction with private enterprises to ensure that it is relevant for the jobs market. Early childhood development programmes like Cuna Más remain uncommon, and if they are to achieve their secondary goal of helping (young) mothers get jobs, the programmes will need to win the approval of the general public. One area that deserves greater attention is careers guidance. Very few people receive support from the vocational and training department (*Dirección de Formación Profesional y Capacitación Laboral*) run by the Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion (MTPE), and those that do are mainly in urban areas. The online *Ponte en Carrera* platform is a valuable addition to the careers guidance available, providing information on academic and vocational qualifications and on career prospects, but it needs to be better publicised, especially in rural areas. Young Peruvians are firmly demanding that the state should play a guiding role. An example of careers guidance and youth participation in public policy is the BW Jobs 4 Graduates programme organised by Botswana's Ministry of Labour and run by young people. The programme supports young people by connecting them with businesses, helping them find and apply for jobs and sending instant mobile-phone notifications regarding new job vacancies.

Some issues of importance to the health of young people require greater attention, especially sexual and reproductive health and teenage pregnancy. The National

Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy (*Estrategia Nacional de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva*) does not have a specific action area for young women aged 18 to 29. There is a need for policies and programmes designed for teenage and young mothers establishing a clear connection between child support needs and the needs of young women as they transition to adulthood. Peru's universal healthcare system, called *Seguro Integral de Salud*, addresses these issues only when there is a critical case, or one that receives widespread media attention. Teenage pregnancy ought to be addressed not only through the Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Plan (*Plan de Prevención del Embarazo Adolescente*), but also through interventions to support young mothers, especially those in vulnerable situations who do not receive the support they need. One example of such interventions is the "First-Time Parents" project in India, which views the time before and after the birth of the first child as a unique opportunity to improve the situation of young mothers and to involve the father in taking care of the children. Focusing on rural areas, the Indian project provides sexual and reproductive information and education, preparation for childbirth, and postnatal services, and it also puts young mothers in contact with each other. In Peru, marginalised young urban mothers have called for the same kinds of spaces to talk to each other and offer mutual support.

The many independent bodies involved in youth policies need to improve their co-ordination. To implement successful youth policies, it is essential to work closely with various levels of government, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international co-operation organisations. The effectiveness of inter-institutional work is compromised because there is not a strong commitment to it and because a youth perspective is still not systematically integrated in policy making considerations. Empowered by its knowledge management and close work with youth organisations, the SENAJU invests considerable time in supporting and promoting a cross-cutting approach to youth issues. The demographic dividend, international trends and the strengthening of youth organisations need to be used to place the youth on the political agenda.

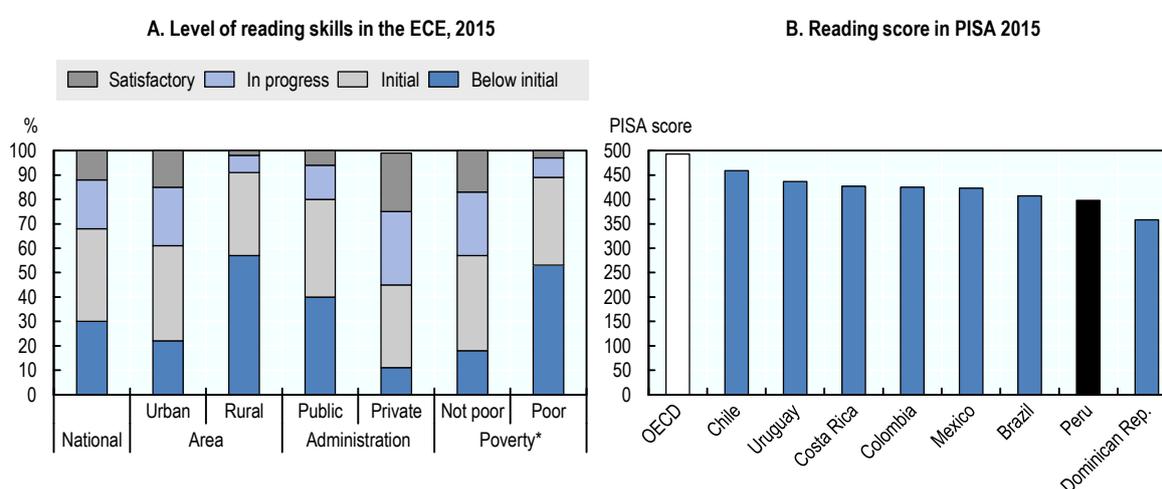
As the governing body for youth issues, the SENAJU has little autonomy and scarce resources. The SENAJU was created in 2007 to formulate and propose youth policies and plans, co-ordinate and assess the various youth programmes and policies, strengthen participation spaces for the youth, and generate evidence for decision-making. As an advisory body to the Ministry of Education (MINEDU), however, the SENAJU does not have sufficient interministerial co-ordination powers to ensure there is a cross-cutting approach to youth issues. Consequently, the SENAJU plays a limited role in making decisions on youth policies. The SENAJU's restricted legal framework, tiny budget and high staff turnover further reduce its scope for action. Looking beyond institutional co-ordination at the national level, the youth would also benefit from a much-needed boost to co-ordination and support among regional and local authorities and between them and central government.

Secondary education in Peru and challenges in terms of quality

Education is a driver of economic growth, and therefore of social inclusion. To promote social inclusion, education needs to help create equality for all. In this respect, secondary education has improved, with high coverage and gaps having narrowed considerably between students from different geographical areas, students with different mother tongues and students from families with different income levels. Curricular guidelines have also improved, and specific programmes provide specialised support.

Nevertheless, in Peru's secondary schools there are still problems with the quality of learning, and inequalities remain strong. The ECE shows that only 12% of students achieve satisfactory reading skills and only 8% satisfactory mathematics skills (Figure 3.A). Furthermore, there are marked differences between the results achieved by public vs. private institutions, urban vs. rural areas, and predominantly poor vs. non-poor districts. Satisfactory reading comprehension levels are achieved by only 2% of students in rural areas (vs. 15% in urban areas), 6% of those attending public schools (vs. 24% in private schools), and 3% of those living in poor districts (vs. 17% in non-poor districts). In mathematics, even fewer students achieve satisfactory results. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) confirms the wide skills gaps between students according to their geographical location, type of school and socio-economic level. The PISA results rank Peruvian students among the lowest in the region, well below the OECD average (Figure 3.B).

Figure 3. Secondary school students' reading skills



Note: * The Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion considers a district as poor if more than half of the households are below the national poverty line.

Source: A. Own calculations based on ECE (MINEDU, 2015). B. PISA OECD 2015.

The poor quality of secondary education makes it difficult for young people to get a decent job. The PISA test found that less than half of Peruvian students have the fundamental reading comprehension, mathematics and science skills needed to take part in debates as critical, informed citizens and to continue on with higher education or succeed in the labour market. Youth employment also depends on the quality of secondary education, which is strongly correlated with the chances of getting a formal job and income earned.

The little amount invested in secondary education does not succeed in reducing inequalities between different regions. Although education spending has increased, it is still far lower than in other Latin American countries, and there are vast disparities between different regions in Peru. There is a positive correlation between each region's GDP per capita, ECE results and secondary-education spending per student, but there is no clear link between total education spending and ECE results, with regions that are investing the same amount achieving very different results in the tests. In other words, investing in the right areas is more important than the total amount invested. The proper

planning, distribution, use and management of educational resources are fundamental pillars to guarantee a good-quality education. The prevailing ambiguous relationship between spending and quality in education and the large regional disparities in ECE results are affecting the attention afforded to education.

The educational service has insufficient and poorly distributed material resources. Schools' basic services vary widely depending on the area, type of school and poverty level. The state of the infrastructure is a serious problem, with less than 20% of the country's public schools in good condition. There is very little information available on the infrastructure of private schools, indicating that although there is a mechanism to certify the quality of infrastructure, it has not been effective enough to monitor that private schools have good infrastructure.

Progress has been made in the development of policy frameworks for the professional development of teachers. The government-sanctioned teaching degree and good performance frameworks for school teachers and principals are fundamental inputs for implementing policies to improve performance. Nevertheless, although teachers have had pay rises, they still earn less than their counterparts in other economic sectors, and less than the Latin American average. Despite their low salaries, teachers are, on the whole, satisfied with their profession.

The secondary-education curriculum has been unstable, and past changes have failed to follow best practices. Frequent changes have been made to the curriculum without consulting experts or looking at evidence, which has made teaching difficult. MINEDU has acknowledged these shortcomings and, following a long consultation and analysis process, carried out the recent curricular reform. Regional and local entities, however, do not seem to be complying with the demands of experts and youth representatives for a more diverse curriculum geared towards the specific characteristics and requirements of students and the local setting.

The expansion of secondary education has changed the make-up of the country's students. Certain groups have gained access to secondary education for the first time, and intergenerational social mobility has increased, with young people usually obtaining better qualifications than their parents. Thanks to the expansion, students are more diverse in terms of their location, their mother tongue, and especially their socio-economic status: students from poor families make up 39.3% of the young people who are the first in their family to attend secondary school, whereas only 14.4% of the students with family members who have already attended secondary school or a higher education institution are poor. The different needs and resources of these two groups must be addressed, because performance and achievement are affected.

Public policies and youth participation

Peruvian legislation restricts the effective participation of the youth in formulating public policies at the national level. The youth's limited participation is due to the legislative barrier, which does not allow for national participation spaces to be created or financed. This barrier exists because previous youth representation institutions, including a national youth council, were not reinstated in 2007. Despite its limited mandate, the SENAJU has become a benchmark for relations between youth organisations and the Peruvian government, providing technical advice for creating participatory spaces in the regions.

At the national level, there is a shortage of institutionalised spaces that the youth can use for civil participation. The only initiatives of note are the Youth Parliament (*Parlamento Joven*) and the National Youth Congress (*Congreso Nacional de Juventudes*). The Youth Parliament can help to restore trust in the legislative branch, but it has too few members to have a major impact and create confidence. The National Youth Congress, meanwhile, is an important initiative that empowers youth nationwide, but because it cannot function as a true participatory space, in reality it merely functions as a meeting point for young people from across the country.

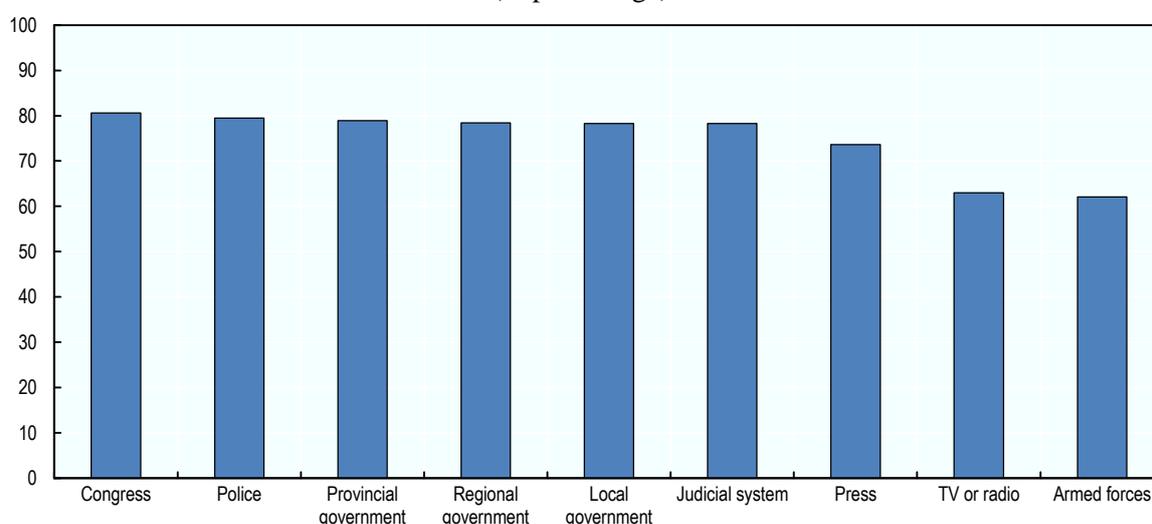
Youth participation in public policies currently takes place at the regional level. The only participatory mechanism that currently functions at the regional level is participatory budgeting, but it is not exclusively for young people, and very few young people participate. A successful initiative is the Youth Quota (*Cuota Joven*), thanks to which the number of young people in regional and local government (regional councillors, local councillors, and district mayors) has increased considerably.

The Regional Youth Councils (COREJUs) are Peru's main mechanism for youth participation in public policy making, but generally speaking, they have a limited impact. The councils are not uniform across the regions, with some regional governments willing to give them greater powers and functions than others. Few COREJUs have budgetary autonomy and stability. Many of them are financed by regional governments, which allocate budgets to them according to how important they consider them. These two factors hold back the consolidation of the COREJUs, which are forced to depend on regional governments and to constantly call on them for assistance.

In general, institutions other than the SENAJU understand participation to mean providing information to the youth, without giving them the opportunity to shape new policies. Most of the youth-oriented programmes treat young people as the targets of public policies. They inform the youth of the programme's possible benefits, but do not involve the youth in the policy making cycle. In a few, rare instances, the youth are consulted during public policy making, but they never participate or make decisions during that process.

The youth's negative opinion of politics is reaching alarming levels. Democracy feeds on public support and on the premise that the general public is represented and can influence government. Many young people, however, take a critical stance towards government, and do not view it as beneficial to them, which could, in the long term, weaken the connection between the two and harm social cohesion. With distrust in parties running so high (Figure 4), young people prefer participatory spaces that are not connected to party politics, but are instead based around the ideal of grassroots democracy.

Figure 4. Lack of trust in institutions
(in percentage)



Source: National Household Survey (ENAHO, 2014) of the National Bureau of Statistics (INEI).

For civically active young people, volunteer work was their first contact with the public sphere. Voluntary community work fits in with the ideals and preferences of young people who want to contribute to public life. In addition to forming their own leadership structure, this work equips young people with non-cognitive skills, which will help them in the jobs market. However, despite their good intentions, many young people find it difficult to participate because they do not have the time, resources, or spaces in which to meet.

Secondary-school students are sceptical about the civic qualities of their compatriots. Most marginalised urban students believe their compatriots are dishonest, violent and irresponsible, and many of those young people show rather undemocratic tendencies in certain respects, supporting ideas such as taking the law into their own hands and adopting tough stances to deal with problems, such as crime. At the same time, however, they adopt a peaceful approach to making themselves heard and defending their rights.

The civics syllabus for Peruvian schools does not teach skills and values that are relevant to civic participation, such as diversity and tolerance. Although there is formal adhesion to general ideas like democracy and tolerance, in practice, the syllabus has contradictions and shortcomings that prevent those ideas from being taught. The emphasis is on promoting unchallenged civic values, rather than on creating a democratic political community, and there is insufficient debate on collective identities. Civics does not seem to be a priority in efforts to improve Peruvian education. Often the school environment (authoritarianism, male dominance and psychological and physical violence) is contrary to the official ideals in the civics syllabus. The school municipalities (*municipios escolares*), which promote participation in schools, have a limited effect, depending largely on how much backing they receive from the education authorities and how much support they get from NGOs. In practice, school municipalities have little influence in schools.

Recommendations

Create specific programmes for the indigenous-speaking, rural and poor youth living in poverty to improve their well-being in terms of education, employment and health. Despite major progress in the well-being of vulnerable groups, the gaps have not yet been closed. The Youth Multidimensional Deprivation Indicator shows that vulnerable groups are deprived in several aspects simultaneously. This is the case for indigenous-speaking, rural and poor youth, who are systematically disadvantaged in all aspects of well-being. Many youth support programmes have an urban bias, even though the data show that the rural youth are more vulnerable. To ensure that young people have equitable opportunities and can fully develop their potential, the government needs to continue focusing on them, working to ensure that access to services and opportunities no longer depends on socio-economic conditions. Achieving this will require greater investment in the programmes, or, at the very least, specific budget lines so that the programmes do not have to compete with other budget priorities. The Doble Oportunidad, Beca 18 and Cuna Más grants and other programmes that help to develop young people's potential should be expanded.

Improve communication with young people and access to information on programmes for the youth. Some young people believe that youth-oriented public policies are few, patchy and badly publicised. Most national programmes do not coordinate with local governments, and they usually work on a first-come, first-served basis, so those who do not have access to the right information are often excluded from the programmes. It is therefore essential to make information on youth programmes accessible to young people. The Peruvian government has already made moves to achieve this, increasing its presence on social media to communicate with young people and inform them about the various programmes and services available. The problem, however, is that only 26% of homes (and only 1.2% of rural homes) have Internet access. The government's relationship with the youth should therefore not be limited to providing them with information electronically. It must also use traditional media like television, fairs in schools and visual campaigns.

Provide early guidance to young people for their educational transition or transition to the workplace. The transition from secondary education either to higher education or to the workplace can be a complex period in young people's lives. It is therefore important for guidance services to begin at a young age and to be available in the places where young people are located, such as in schools and community centres. In the OECD countries, good practices in this area begin during the first cycle of secondary education. Employers are actively involved, and students attend brief work placements to try out different professions. In this regard, it is important to invest in the professional development of careers advisers in schools and to train them to use labour market data. Another way of providing guidance is through careers fairs, which should take place not just in the regional capitals, but also in smaller communities. Likewise, the government ought to expand and better publicise the Ponte en Carrera platform, providing information on post-secondary courses and professional career options.

Support the institutional, managerial and budgetary strengthening of the body responsible for the youth, and create a cross-sector co-ordination mechanism. It is essential for the SENAJU to have a precise mission and vision and clearly defined relations with other government bodies. Currently, there is no institutional mechanism for co-ordination among the various sectoral ministries that run youth programmes. A good co-ordination mechanism should involve all relevant sectoral ministries, the

representatives of youth and educational institutions, and employers. Also, the governing body for the youth needs to have a specific budget and incorporate into its organisational structure civil servants that have been trained and hired according to the Civil Service Law (several sectors of the public administration fail to do this), according to its powers. It is also important to determine whether it would be helpful for the governing body to be attached to a ministry.

Include regular monitoring and assessment in youth programmes. Few programmes include performance appraisal, and the monitoring that does take place is deficient. Each programme ought to have a permanent body responsible for monitoring its deployment and for co-ordinating information to facilitate subsequent improvements. More generally, measures need to be taken to strengthen the authority of the governing body for the youth, which is responsible for defining indicators, goals and guidelines and for supervising the priority objectives of the youth-related PNO. Government sectors will then be able to choose whether to adopt these standardised goals and indicators or to create their own based on technical guidelines provided by the governing body. This could be complemented by a system that makes the conclusions of the PNO assessments binding. In the specific case of education policies, it is essential to promote transparency, the monitoring and assessment of investments, curricular policy and student performance. In this regard, the inclusion of secondary education in the ECE was an important step towards improving the education system. Specific support programmes for secondary education need to be supervised as a set, rather than individually, since they may overlap or even increase performance gaps. Assessments ought to be co-ordinated and planned in advance, and should provide qualitative and quantitative information on processes, results and impact.

Measures to promote youth participation in public policy making

Strengthen the relationship between government and youth to restore trust in institutions. After several years without any changes to the institutional framework, it is important to review the limitations to participation at the national level to identify whether they are still relevant and whether they respond to the youth's growing distrust of the state. Official, institutionalised consultations are essential to ensure that the youth truly participate in public policy making. Until a national youth council is set up, these consultations could be made through the network of SENAJU-registered youth organisations. In the same vein, it is necessary to empower the National Youth Congress by asking the ministries to respond to its resolutions.

Enhance the SENAJU register of youth organisations and use it to improve communication between government and the youth. The SENAJU register of youth organisations ought to become a consultative, evidence-producing body for public youth policies and a means for promoting youth programmes and services. Improving how the register is used might encourage other young people to register their organisations. This can be achieved by incorporating new indicators and by publishing data that do not affect the privacy of legal representatives, while ensuring that it remains a user-friendly tool for interested youth organisations. The register should contain indicators of each organisation's purpose, type of activities, geographic scope, target audience, and articles and memoranda of association. It should also contain up-to-date, anonymous profiles of the participants in each organisation (age, gender and level of education), but since many organisations are short-lived, keeping the profiles up to date could prove difficult, and will only be possible if the young people who are registered are sent regular notifications

(preferably electronically) asking them to confirm that they are still members, with those who do not do so automatically removed from the register.

Make it easier to take part in extracurricular activities without affecting school attendance, and promote volunteering that teaches participation skills. The Peruvian education system is not strong at training citizens interested in participation. One way it can address this weakness is by allowing young people to take part in other, independent initiatives that operate alongside schools (like Chile's *Casas de la Juventud*, or youth centres) and are linked to civics and the school municipalities scheme. Another way to boost participation skills is to promote volunteer work and offer incentives for the registration of such schemes. Such incentives might include giving greater official recognition to volunteer work, creating a single certification system that could eventually be eligible for extra points in university applications, and recognising volunteer work as work experience. For example, the entry procedures of some academic institutions and the recruitment procedures for some civil service posts currently award additional points to applicants who are registered as disabled. The Law on Volunteer Work approved in 2015 by the Ministry for Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) is a step in this direction, but it places the awarding of additional points in the hands of other institutions, like the National Programme of Scholarships and Education Loans (PRONABEC) and the Ministry of Housing, which has not put the scheme in place yet. If the rule were applied also to short-term volunteer work (the most common type of volunteer work), more young people could benefit from this system.

Create premises free of charge for recreational activities and for youth organisations to meet. Because of the limited resources, many youth organisations do not have premises where they can meet and hold their activities. This problem is not unique to young people who belong to organisations, however; the marginalised urban youth also struggle to find places where they can hold recreational activities and mutual support sessions (such as for young mothers). Many countries have opened youth centres to cater for this demand. If it is not possible to invest the kind of money needed to create such premises, one alternative could be for municipal councils, either on their own or in partnership with the private sector, to make premises available to the youth at least once a week.

Strengthen the budget, organisational memory and relevance of the COREJUs. The COREJUs can be successful only if they receive regular funding. Another important factor for COREJUs to perform well is organisational memory, which is lost if all members leave simultaneously. One example showing how to prevent the loss of organisational memory comes from El Salvador's national youth council (*Consejo Nacional de la Persona Joven*). Its members serve a three-year term, with half being replaced every 18 months to ensure the continuity of their work so that incoming councillors do not have to start from scratch. It is also advisable for the SENAJU to continue to communicate with regional governments to explain the benefits of including the youth and inform them of the opportunities that can arise if they do so. In this area, the SENAJU and COREJUs can conduct collaborative research that is mutually beneficial to both, including the regular compilation and organisation of information on the experience, situation and work of the COREJUs. Reports could include an index-based ranking of the COREJUs' capabilities (creating local participatory spaces, proposing youth ordinances, etc.). These reports – together with meetings among the COREJUs – can strengthen peer learning and be used to oversee the COREJUs and influence regional governments for improvements.

Measures to improve the quality of education

Step up investment in secondary education and improve the management of investment at the regional level. Peru needs to increase spending on secondary education (currently 0.93% of GDP) to the Latin American average (1.6% of GDP) and keep up with the pace of regional development. In particular, the Peruvian regions that perform poorly in standardised assessments and have many schools in rural areas and poor districts need stronger investment. It is also necessary to analyse the types of investment and how investment is managed, including how it is distributed and how it is used for different student groups. Likewise, there needs to be more discussion among the regions, with the best practices of regions that achieve good results, despite lower investment, being adopted by the other regions. This may encourage mutual learning.

Improve learning conditions by upgrading infrastructure and distributing teachers in a way that will help struggling schools. Although the average number of students per classroom is satisfactory, the learning environment might improve if teachers were distributed differently to help struggling schools, and if they dedicated more time to students. Teachers are central to creating favourable learning conditions, so it is essential – as envisaged in the 2012 reforms to legislation on teaching (*Ley de Reforma Magisterial*) – to make the profession more attractive by optimising working conditions (including salaries), supporting continuous training and continuing to professionalise teaching. Furthermore, creating spaces for teacher training within and among secondary schools may improve learning conditions. Finally, renovations should be made in public schools, many of which are in poor condition, while private schools should have their conditions monitored, which is currently not done properly.

Support the cognitive and socio-emotional development of struggling students by bringing social workers into schools. With secondary education expanding, the education system needs to start taking into account its students' wide range of backgrounds, otherwise the socio-economic divide between public and private schools could widen. In schools in which many students have a low socio-economic status and many are the first members of their family to attend secondary school, social workers are needed to support the cognitive and social-emotional performance of those students. If social workers are not brought in, their role will need to be fulfilled by the teachers, so they need to receive information and training to meet the needs of a more plural mix of students.

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Youth Well-being Policy Review of Peru

ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Peru experienced extraordinary growth rates and socio-economic improvements. In order to sustain this growth and take advantage of Peru's opportunity to achieve demographic dividend, it will be crucial to include youth considerations in national development. Youth inclusion and well-being are not only a matter of rights, but it is also beneficial to the State and society. Investing in education and creating employment opportunities for young people contribute to increased income and productivity. The report, which is part of the Youth Inclusion Project co-financed by the European Union and implemented by the OECD Development Centre, assesses the situation of social inclusion and well-being of young Peruvians using a multidimensional approach. It analyses diverse aspects of employment, education, health and civic participation affecting youth, based on the latest data available. Thematic chapters focus on key challenges faced by Peruvian youth, namely the quality of secondary education and youth participation in the policy making process. Based on the findings, the report gives recommendations for the formulation of public policies in favour of youth.

Consult the full report on line at:

www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/youth-country-studies.htm



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