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Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC)

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**Statistical Information and Monitoring
Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC)**

International Programme on the Eradication of Child Labour (IPEC)

International Labour Office (ILO)

In-depth analysis of child labour and education in Costa Rica

Prepared by*:

Ana Lucía Calderón Saravia

*In the analysis of Chapter 2, Carlos Castro Valverde also acted as a consultant.

July 2004

FOREWORD

The International Labour Organization, working through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), has turned the progressive prevention and abolition of children's work into a universal cause.

At the global level, children's work is a broad, complex and multi-faceted issue. In the absence of reliable information and qualitative and quantitative studies, however, it is difficult to find effective ways to address the problem. For many years, a lack of data regarding the causes, magnitude, nature and consequences of children's work has significantly impeded efforts to effectively face, halt and eliminate the problem, which affects millions of boys and girls around the world.

Since 1998, the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour has administered the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). The purpose of the Programme is to assist participating countries collect data on children's work for comparison among themselves. The overall objective of SIMPOC is to use household surveys to generate quantitative data on school activities, as well as other economic and non-economic activities in which children are engaged outside of school. The programme also aims to collect qualitative information and create databases on children's work. The information gathered by SIMPOC has served as the basis for a number of studies in participating countries.

The collection and analysis of reliable data supports the development of effective actions against children's work. It is hoped that the information gathered in different countries, and the studies based on that information, will facilitate the development, implementation and follow-up of policies and programmes to combat children's work. It should also promote social attitudes that favour the sustainable prevention and progressive elimination of children's work.

I am certain that the information presented in this report on children's work in Costa Rica will contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon, increase sensitivity to the plight of working boys and girls, and make it possible to develop better strategies to fight the problem.

The ability of each participating country to form an increasingly accurate picture of children's work undoubtedly points toward the development of a more effective process and a shorter path toward a world without child labour.

Guillermo Dema
Subregional Coordinator
ILO/IPEC for Central America,
Panama, The Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico

PREFACE

Child and adolescent work has existed in Costa Rica for many years. Our forefathers included boys, girls and adolescents in farm labour and housework.

Over the last few years, however, what was once considered a tradition has become a social problem. Our country's girls and boys have joined the work force in large numbers, and have consequently become victims of exploitative conditions that limit both their access to education and the enjoyment of their rights.

To address this situation, the country must develop a national policy to effectively abolish child labour, and take the immediate steps necessary to put an end to the abuses suffered by girls and boys whose work puts their health, safety and moral integrity at risk. Girls and boys must also be guaranteed the highest possible level of physical and mental development.

A number of efforts to gradually eliminate child labour have therefore been undertaken. As a result of these endeavours, child labour has come to be viewed as a problem rather than a solution, and as such has been given a place on the country's political agenda.

As part of these initiatives, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses, acting with the technical support of ILO IPEC, have implemented the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). This programme provides updated statistics on the magnitude of child labour in Costa Rica, as well as information on the geographic areas and occupations that hold the highest percentages of working girls and boys. Such information facilitates the development of strategies to effectively address the problem.

The documents produced by SIMPOC also serve to supplement the second National Plan to Eliminate Child Labour and Protect Adolescent Workers.

It is our hope that the information obtained through this programme will be of use to those who, in a variety of ways, have become our partners and colleagues in the struggle to eliminate child labour.

Lic. Ovidio Pacheco Salazar Camacho
Minister
Ministry of Labour and Social Security

Lic. José Antonio Calvo
Director
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Multiple Purpose Household Survey (EHPM, for its name in Spanish), carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) in 2002, included a module on the activities carried out by the population between 5 and 17 years of age, which yielded updated information about the living conditions of working children and on the effect of work on their academic achievement.

According to the data revealed by the EHPM for 2002, people between the ages of 5 and 17 who are economically active were found in 99,846 households. The number of working children in the country for that year amounts to 113,523. Labour insertion at an early age takes place more frequently in rural areas, at a proportion of 68.4% of the total group of working children, in comparison to 31.6% in the urban areas. Boys enter the labour market in a higher number: 72.7% of the economically active population is comprised of men.

Families with members between 5 and 17 years who work live in disadvantageous economic conditions, a situation that is in agreement with the premise that relates child labour to poverty and, consequently, to a negative impact on the insertion in school and academic performance. The data show that most of the labour activities performed by children between 5 and 17 can be classified as unskilled activities, in the sense that they do not require much experience or training. Forty-four percent work in activities related to the agriculture, forestry, and hunting sectors; 21.7% work in commerce and car and appliances repair, and 9.0% work in activities related to the manufacturing industry. This seems to influence working children not to consider education as a mechanism to improve their labour and living conditions.

Regarding the effects of child labour on education and their relationship, the figures indicate that the younger the child and the fewer the hours worked, there are more possibilities of remaining in school. In the 5 to 9 age group, school attendance is 91.7%, whereas in the 15 to 17 age group, 62.9% do not attend school. School exclusion affects men proportionately more: 47.7% of boys do not go to school in comparison to 37.4% of girls.

Exclusion and lagging significantly affect working adolescents who are between 15 and 17 years old. Sixty-two point five percent of this age group is not attending school and 70.5% of those who are, are behind in their schooling. Seventy-nine point five percent of the working population who does not go to school is between 15 and 17 years old. Regarding the reasons for not attending school, the most common is lack of interest in formal education. The figures also indicate that most of the working population who does not attend school --73.0%-- lives in rural areas.

There are 9,666 children who are seeking work and who are not in school, 91.1% of them in the 15 to 17 age group. There is also a population under 18 who neither works nor studies, some 67,259 people.

In comparing the conditions of economically active children with the educational possibilities offered by the Ministry of Public Education (MEP), it becomes clear that the formal system does not adapt to the conditions, interests, and requirements of this population. In this sense, the development of several informal educational alternatives are a significant contribution to the improvement of educational coverage, especially the alternative education programmes such as *Aula Abierta* (Open School), *Nuevas Oportunidades* (New Opportunities), and *Centros e Institutos de Educación de Adultos* (CINDEA) [Adult Education Centres and Institutes].

The deficiencies regarding infrastructure, teaching materials, teachers' training, and accessibility in public education affect school permanence and the quality of the schooling received, since there is no consistency between the particular conditions, expectations, and educational needs of working children and the educational supply. In fact, the deficiencies in the educational system turn into obstacles that, very often, do not allow accessing an education in accord with society's current needs.

To guarantee the right to education on the part of children involved in economic activities, the government of Costa Rica has to consider the different realities in the country and take into account geographic, economic, cultural, and gender issues. In addition, the evaluation or grading system needs improvement. Since it is standardised in nature, it does not take into consideration the diverse conditions of the student population and does not assess the real acquisition of knowledge and success of the teaching-learning process.

The educational system should face the challenge of democratising education, in the sense of looking for mechanisms that would allow an effective participation of children, their parents, and the citizens, in general, in the design of study plans and programmes, grading mechanisms, and responsibility sharing so that the child population have access to the schooling system in any of the modes available.

The allocation of more resources that would lead to a qualitative improvement in the national educational system and an expansion of its coverage to reach a larger population, would make schooling actually respond to children's expectations and particular needs as well as the country's development.

1. COSTA RICA'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT, A SCENARIO FOR CHILDREN'S WORK

The Multiple Purpose Household Survey (EHPM) carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) between July and August of 2002 included a child activity module for those 5-17 years old, through which updated information on the living conditions of working children was gathered.

Child labour in Costa Rica is a phenomenon that has not been studied in depth until recently, despite the fact that children have traditionally supported the family economy, both remunerated and without pay, in rural and urban contexts. It was due to international declarations and of the creation of national laws to safeguard the rights and integrity of the people under 18 years old that the problem of child labour became visible in Costa Rica and was identified as a practice that in many cases attempts against the integral development of the children that prevents them from enjoying their basic rights, such as their right to education.

Economic, cultural, and social factors explain the occurrence of child labour and, at the same time, the possibilities of having access to free and compulsory education for the whole population. However, poverty is identified as the main cause of child labour, since families with unmet basic needs, due to their own situation, cannot envisage alternatives to improve their economic income. Thus, the solution they see to their immediate problem is the incorporation of most of the members of their household in productive activities. Therefore, it is important to review some information on the social and economic context of Costa Rica, which is the scenario within which child labour occurs.

1.1 The population

According to estimates of population growth in the last 10 years, Costa Rica's population grew from 3 million inhabitants in the year 1992 to about four million in 2002. The National Population Census carried out in 2000 by INEC revealed that the country had a population of 3,925,331 inhabitants and for 2002 the estimates indicate that the population grew to 3,997,883 inhabitants, of which 50.4% are women and 49.6% are men.

The urban areas have the largest population, about 59.0% of the total, while the remaining 41.0% lives in rural areas. Table 1 shows the distribution of the population by region. With a surface of 51,100 square kilometres, the population density in Costa Rica for 2002 is 78.3 inhabitants per square kilometre.

Table 1
Total country population, by region

Region	Total Population (absolute numbers)	Total Population (relative numbers)
Central	2,564,984	64.1%
Chorotega	312,198	7.8%
Pacífico Central	210,097	5.3%
Brunca	310,422	7.8%
Huetar Atlántica	385,987	9.6%
Huetar Norte	214,215	5.4%
Total	3,997,883	100.0%

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002

The group between 0 and 17 years represents 36.7 % of the total population, as shown in Table 2. That is, children comprise the most numerous population group. As will be explained later, people under 18 years old have characteristics and needs that are different from those of the rest of the population. This is due to the fact that they are in a stage of growth, development, and learning and do not yet have the physical or emotional maturity to face the challenges of adulthood. For this reason, according to the Code of Children and Adolescents (Law No. 7739), children are, first of all, the responsibility of their parents or custodians, and second, of the Costa Rican State. The State is in the obligation of making sure that boys and girls enjoy the conditions that allow them to have access to their rights.

Table 2
Total population, by sex, by area and age group

Area and age group	Number			Percentage		
	Total	Sex		Total	Sex	
		Male	Female		Male	Female
Country total	3,997,883	1,983,715	2,014,168	100.0	100.0	100.0
0 – 5	432,779	220,510	212,269	10.8	11.1	10.5
6 – 10	419,220	218,047	201,173	10.5	11.0	10.0
11 – 17	614,607	316,514	298,093	15.4	16.0	14.8
18 – 25	596,900	307,090	289,810	14.9	15.5	14.4
26 – 35	568,995	274,439	294,556	14.2	13.8	14.6
36 – 45	570,261	266,231	304,030	14.3	13.4	15.1
46 – 55	360,096	177,152	182,944	9.0	8.9	9.1
56 – 65	208,400	97,473	110,927	5.2	4.9	5.5
66 and older	218,116	101,496	116,620	5.5	5.1	5.8
Unknown	8,509	4,763	3,746	0.2	0.2	0.2
Urban	2,359,158	1,147,227	1,211,931	100.0	100.0	100.0
0 – 5	231,221	117,963	113,258	9.8	10.3	9.3
6 – 10	226,321	120,218	106,103	9.6	10.5	8.8
11 – 17	340,757	172,569	168,188	14.4	15.0	13.9
18 – 25	369,377	189,628	179,749	15.7	16.5	14.8
26 – 35	330,731	156,773	173,958	14.0	13.7	14.4
36 – 45	351,438	159,588	191,850	14.9	13.9	15.8
46 – 55	231,200	108,461	122,739	9.8	9.5	10.1

56 – 65	131,972	58,612	73,360	5.6	5.1	6.1
66 and older	140,098	60,385	79,713	5.9	5.3	6.6
Unknown	6,043	3,030	3,013	0.3	0.3	0.2
Rural	1,638,725	836,488	802,237	100.0	100.0	100.0
0 – 5	201,558	102,547	99,011	12.3	12.3	12.3
6 – 10	192,899	97,829	95,070	11.8	11.7	11.9
11 – 17	273,850	143,945	129,905	16.7	17.2	16.2
18 – 25	227,523	117,462	110,061	13.9	14.0	13.7
26 – 35	238,264	117,666	120,598	14.5	14.1	15.0
36 – 45	218,823	106,643	112,180	13.4	12.7	14.0
46 – 55	128,896	68,691	60,205	7.9	8.2	7.5
56 – 65	76,428	38,861	37,567	4.7	4.6	4.7
66 and older	78,018	41,111	36,907	4.8	4.9	4.6
Unknown	2,466	1,733	733	0.2	0.2	0.1

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002

Other demographic indicators show that the total population growth¹ decreased in the last decade, passing from 21.8 per 1000 in 1992 to 18.8 per 1000 in 2002.

The birth rate, that is, the number of annual births for every thousand inhabitants, was 17.4 in 2002, 2.5 points below its level in 2000. The downward trend in the birth rate has been present since the nineties, which evidences a reduction in the number of pregnancies and the size of the family. Access to more information about reproductive health and easy access to various birth control methods, in addition to the entry of women in the labour market, are elements that may explain the reduction in the population growth.

Child mortality in 2002 was 11.1 deaths of children under one year old for every thousand live births.

1.2 Population's socio-economic situation

1.2.1 Employed population, poverty levels, and income²

According to the Human Development Report 2003, Costa Rica was among the 53 countries of the world with high human development, occupying position number 42. And out of 94 countries ranked, it occupies position 4 regarding the human

¹ The total population growth rate refers to the growth of the population between two time periods, based on the exponential growth of the population and using the formula $r = \{[\ln (N_t/N_o)] / t\} * 1000$, where r = result, $\ln$ = natural logarithm, N_t = final population, N_o = initial population, and t = time period selected.

² According to the definitions used by INEC, *non-poor households* are those that have a per capita income that allows them to cover their basic food and non-food needs, that is, their per capita income is equal to or higher than the poverty line. On the other hand, *households that do not meet their basic needs* are those that have a per capita income under the poverty line, but equal to or higher than the per capita cost of the basic shopping basket (CBA). The per capita cost of the poverty line for 2002 was ¢28,895 (US\$80.80) for the urban areas and ¢22,714 (US\$63.52) for the country's rural areas.

poverty index. In Latin America, only Barbados, Argentina, and Uruguay rank higher than Costa Rica in human development. Close to it, but in a lower position, Chile takes up place 43, Cuba position 52, Mexico 55, and Panama 59³.

Despite its high ranking according to the world human development index, 20.6% of Costa Rica's population lives in poverty, and 5.7% of its inhabitants live in extreme poverty.

The open unemployment rate⁴ reached 6.4% in 2002. In the 12 to -24 year age group, open unemployment was 13.8% nationwide and 17.2% among women.⁵ These conditions, in addition to production in different sectors, as will be explained later, evidence a limited economic growth that only benefits those who have more resources, a minority that still owns the country's wealth⁶. In this setting, most of the population is excluded from alternatives that would allow it to improve its living conditions by having access to better labour opportunities and better income.

The evolution of the minimum wage shows an actual rate⁷ of negative variation in the years 2000 and 2002, with figures of -1.0% and -1.1%, respectively. The average income shows a similar trend, and in 2002 the minimum salary was equivalent to US\$216 a month. In the medium-term, the actual minimum wage does not show a decreasing trend if comparing the data for 2002 and 1991. However, as of 1998, its evolution in real terms practically stalled⁸.

1.2.2 Economic growth in the last years and the structure of the economy

In 2002, the per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Costa Rica reached 4,130 US dollars. It has been practically stalled since 2000 as a result of lower economic growth⁹. On the other hand, public finances show a deficient performance which limits investment in social policies and programmes. In 2002, the overall public

³ UNDP. Human Development Report 2003.

http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/espanol/pdf/presskit/HDR03_PKS_HDI.pdf

⁴ Annex 1 includes the definitions used by INEC for each of the indicators regarding the labour force and poverty.

⁵ INEC. Household Survey 2002, main results, charts 6 and 8

⁶ 8th Report on the State of the Nation

⁷ The real salary indicates the quantity of goods and services that can be purchased with the money received, so that if the workers' wages increase, but at the same time, the prices of the products s/he purchases increase, the real salary does not change, and if the increase in the price of goods is higher than the rise in salaries, the actual rate of variation is negative. Daily La Nación, page 26, Section A, July 11, 2003.

⁸ Based on the figures of the 8th Report on the State of the Nation, Statistics Volume, Minimum Wage Decree July 2002; MIDEPLAN – SDES. Average wages correspond to that registered by the Household Survey for the totality of the employed people with a known income.

⁹ PROCESOS. ¿Hacia dónde vamos? Economía y Desigualdad en Costa Rica 1997-2002. [Where are we going? Economy and Inequality in Costa Rica 1997-2002]. San José, Costa Rica: Asociación Programa Centroamericano para la Sostenibilidad Democrática (PROCESOS), s.f., pp. 28, 61

sector deficit reached 4.8% of the GDP, while for the central government it increased from 2.2% in 1999 to 4.1% in 2002. *“The evolution of the deficit of the Central Government along the period was characterised by unsustainability of the long-term indebtedness. As of 1998, the accumulated percentage of domestic and external debt increased as a percentage of GDP from 19.5% to 36.2% in 2002”*¹⁰.

In the long- and medium-term, significant changes have taken place in the employment structure (Table 3) and in the composition of the main employment sectors. For instance, in 1960, agriculture represented 25% of GDP, percentage that has been decreasing to 18% in 1980¹¹ and 7.3% in 2002¹². The manufacturing sector is the most important within the secondary sector; however, the participation in this sector has been decreasing since 1990 when it represented 18.0%, to the point that in 2002, it only represents 14.3%.

Since the nineties, the main trend was not only the continuity in the reduction of agriculture's relative weight as a source of employment in national production, but also the reduction in the participation in community, social, and personal services from 26.7% to 22.6% between 2000 and 2002¹³.

Table 3
Distribution of the employed population, by sector and industry
2000 - 2002 (in %)

Sector and type of activity	2000	2001	2002
Primary sector	17.3	15.6	15.9
Agriculture	17.3	15.6	15.9
Secondary sector	21.7	22.2	21.1
Mining and quarrying	0.2	0.1	0.1
Manufacturing industry	14.8	15.4	14.3
Construction	6.7	6.7	6.7
Tertiary sector	60.4	61.8	63.0
Electricity, water, and gas supply	0.8	1.3	1.4
Trade, repair, restaurants, hotels	21.3	21.3	24.3
Transport, storage, and communications	6.2	5.7	5.7
Financial establishments, insurance, enterprises	5.4	6.0	8.5
Social and personal services; public administration	26.7	27.5	22.6
Unspecified activities	0.7	0.3	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, Basic Figures on the Labour Force, July 2001 and 2002.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.27

¹¹ VII Report on the State of the Nation, 2001, p. 148

¹² INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, Basic Figures on the Labour Force, Numbers 5, 6, and 7.

¹³ Ibid.

The structure of employment shows a marked participation process in the tertiary sector, as well as a reduction of employment in agricultural activities and a lower participation of employment in industry. Agriculture decreased its participation among the employed population from 17.3% in 2000 to 15.9% in 2002, while the tertiary sector increased from 60.4% to 63.0% in the same period, and industry decreased from 14.8% to 14.3%.

1.3 Literacy

The population's literacy rates evidence significant progress in the last 50 years. Illiteracy was reduced from 21.2% among the population over 10 years old in 1953 to 4.8% in 2000, being 5.0% for men and 4.5% for women.

This, however, does not exclude important deficiencies in a significant part of the population. When the number of people over 25 years old without schooling (6.7%) are added to the 19.0% who did not complete primary education, it is clear that a fourth of the population has a low educational level (Table 4). An important achievement in Costa Rica's social development that is worth noting is gender equity, as schooling levels are very similar between men and women.

Table 4
Schooling level of the population 25 years old and over by sex (in %)

Schooling	Men	Women	Total
Without any schooling	6.8	6.5	6.7
Incomplete primary	18.0	20.0	19.0
Subtotal without instruction and incomplete primary	24.8	26.5	25.7
Primary complete	30.3	29.4	29.8
Secondary Incomplete	15.4	15.0	15.2
Secondary Complete	10.9	11.7	11.3
Community College	1.0	1.3	1.2
University	15.9	15.0	15.4
Unknown	1.6	1.1	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Based on INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2001.

1.4 Population's access to basic services

Regarding access to basic services, according to estimates for 2001¹⁴, health care reached to 3,933,975 inhabitants, that is, practically 100% of the population. Vaccination coverage among children reached 88.5% of the child population. The population with access to piped water was estimated at close to 100% and coverage of electric services reached 97% of the population.

Regarding the health conditions of the Costa Rican population, the data show positive results in the medium and long-term. Child mortality is 10.8 per every thousand births in 2001, which represents almost 7 times less than the 67.0 per

¹⁴ 8th Report on the State of the Nation. Statistics Volume. pages 325, 354

thousand in 1970. Life expectancy at birth is 77.7 years, while the percentage of births receiving medical attention is 95.6%. Vaccination coverage is high, with figures close to or higher than 90%. Health insurance coverage is 87.5%. This figure, however, is lower if rather than using the administrative records of the CCSS (Social Security Authority), data from the Population Census is used. According to the latter, 81.8% of the country's population is covered by the social security.

As a result of the changes in the epidemiological patterns among the population, overall mortality at present is concentrated on chronic illnesses and tumours.

2. THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN COSTA RICA

2.1 Legislation that regulates public education

Several legal instruments refer to education in Costa Rica. The Political Constitution of Costa Rica of 1949 and its amendments set forth the overall regulatory framework for the country's public education.¹⁵ Its main provisions regarding education are the following:

- Article 78- "Pre-school education and the general basic education [grades 1-9] are compulsory. These and the "diversified" or high-school education [grades 10-11] in the public system are free and paid for by the Nation.

In state-run education, including higher education, public expenses will not fall below six percent (6%) of gross domestic product per year, according to the law, without detriment of the provisions in articles 84 and 85 of this Constitution"¹⁶ (*Constitutional Amendment 7676 approved on July 23, 1997*). A previous constitutional amendment of the year 1973 defined as compulsory the general basic education, that is, six years of primary education and three years of middle school. In the past, only elementary education was compulsory (MEP, 1997; chap. 8, page 1). The innovation introduced in 1997 consisted in including pre-school education and setting public expenditure to be no less than 6% of GDP for education. Other articles of the Political Constitution that make reference to education go from 77 to 82:

- Article 77- "Public education will be organised as an integral process correlated in its diverse cycles, from pre-school to the university."
- Article 79- "Freedom of teaching is guaranteed. However, every educational centre shall be under the State's inspection."
- Article 80- "Private initiatives in educational matters will be promoted by the State as provided for by the law."
- Article 81- "The general direction of public education corresponds to a superior council integrated as provided for by the law and chaired by the Ministry of the area."
- Article 82- "The State shall provide food and uniforms to indigent school children, according to the law."

¹⁵ Political Constitution of November 7, 1949, and its amendments (up to June 2002), Title VII Education and Culture, online version, Dr. Rodolfo Saborío Valverde at <http://www.nexos.co.cr/cesdepu/nbdp/copol2.htm>

¹⁶ This article also states that "the State shall facilitate the pursuit of higher studies to those who lack the financial resources. The assignment of scholarships and stipends will be in charge of the Ministry of the area through the organization provided for by the law."

- Article 86- The State will train teachers by means of special institutes, the University of Costa Rica, and the other higher education institutes (Constitutional Amendment 5697 of June 9, 1975).

The Fundamental Law of Education of 1957¹⁷ set forth more specific regulations. In its Article 1, it states that “every inhabitant of the Republic has the right to education and the State has the obligation to offer it in the broadest and most adequate form.”

The Central American Convention on the Basic Unification of Education of 1962, in addition to defining several requirements and conditions to unify education in the region's countries, in its Chapter I, Article 25, item 7, states that “...*the signatory States decide to set a minimum of two hundred days a year of actual classes, with a daily schedule of no less than five hours. Moreover, they will use all the resources at hand and, as allowed by the circumstances, gradually eliminate the courses structured in a single shift, a double period, or require attending classes on alternate sessions.*”¹⁸ The objective of this provision was to extend classroom time for more and better learning, as well as expand the educational supply in terms of a higher number of educational centres that would allow regular attendance in the same schedule. However, it is important to point out that the two hundred school days agreement was not implemented until the Rodríguez Echeverría Administration (1998-2002), almost forty years after the Convention was signed and published. Furthermore, there is a lack of infrastructure, staff, and budget that make it impossible to eliminate the alternate session shifts (e.g. classes are taken one day in the morning and another day in the afternoon).

Finally, the Code of Children and Adolescents¹⁹, in effect since February 1998, is the legal instrument that at present regulates, protects, and sets forth the rights and duties of the population under eighteen years old, as well as the responsibilities of the various governmental institutions, parents, and custodians to oversee children's well-being. In its Title II, Chapter V, Right to Education, it states:

Article 56 Right to develop their full potential

Underage persons will have the right to receive education aimed at the development of their full potential. The training offered to them shall be addressed at the full exercise of their citizenship, teaching them respect for human rights, own cultural values, and care for the natural environment within a framework of peace and solidarity.

This legal instrument appoints the State to design national policies regarding education, guarantee quality learning and equal opportunities that promote scientific, technological, artistic, and cultural learning as well as ethical and moral values, and the dissemination of the rights of underage people to prevent risk

¹⁷ <http://www.mep.go.cr/LeyFundamental.html>

¹⁸ Central American Convention on the Basic Unification of Education, 1962

¹⁹ Code of Childhood and Adolescence, Law No. 7739, February 1998

factors for the integral development of this population. In its Article 59, Right to free and compulsory education, the Code states:

“Pre-school education, general basic education, and high school will be free, compulsory, and paid for by the State.

Access to compulsory and free education will be a fundamental right. The lack of governmental actions to facilitate it and guarantee it will be considered a violation of the Right and shall be liable before the competent authority”.

Articles 60 to 72 state that the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) is the institution responsible for taking the necessary measures for underage people to enjoy their right to education, regardless of their socio-economic condition, nationality, ethnic group, or beliefs. Moreover, the right to technical education, special education, parents' and learners' participation in the educational process, MEP's duties, disciplinary procedures, corrective actions, prohibition of discriminatory practices, and students' rights, are also outlined.

Chapter VII Special Protection Regime for Working Adolescents establishes 15 as the minimum age to exercise the right to work, together with a series of regulations that guarantee that working adolescents do not risk their physical, mental, or emotional health or endanger their integral development. These regulations include a maximum daily work schedule of 6 hours and 36 hours weekly. It prohibits children from working in mines and quarries, unhealthy and dangerous places, bars and other places that sell alcoholic beverages, as well as their participation in activities that endanger their life and that of other people, their being responsible for other people and performing jobs with heavy machinery, polluting substances, or excessive noise. Article 87 Work and Education reaffirms the right and obligation of working children to education and states that their job must not interfere with their attendance to educational institutions.

MEP is assigned the responsibility of designing modes and schedule to facilitate working adolescents' access to education and states that educational authorities are responsible for making sure that adolescents' jobs will not interfere with their attendance or performance in school, as well as their obligation to report to the National Directorate of General Labour Inspection of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security any labour-related situation that affects the students.

Article 88 of the Code forces employers to provide working adolescents with the facilities to attend school, and Article 89 states the right of working adolescents to training.

It is important to point out that the Code of Children and Adolescents establishes for the first time the relationship between education and work as part of the rights of the people under eighteen, as well as the regulations to guarantee their implementation and enforcement. The relevance of this legal instrument lies precisely in the fact that it takes into consideration children's needs and that it

states that children and adolescents are subjects of rights, with duties and obligations. It also states that parents or custodians and the State and society in general are responsible for the people between 0 and 17 years old and should make sure that their rights are protected and their well-being safeguarded.

2.2 Country's investment in education

Public expenditure on education showed a relative upward trend in the nineties, as it increased from 3.9% of the GDP in 1990 to 5.2% in 2001, whereas overall social expenditure increased from 16.1% of the GDP to 19.0% in the same period. It should be noted that the figure corresponding to education remains under the 6% set forth in amendment 78 of the Political Constitution of 1987.

The internal composition of social expenditure shows a slight increase in the percentage aimed at education, which increased from 24.0% in 1990 to 27.6% in 2001. The main part of social expenditure corresponds to social security and welfare which includes the special pension regimes. Spending on health is the second highest with 28.8% of total social expenditure.

The internal distribution of spending on education shows the following characteristics:

- General education, which includes pre-school, primary, and secondary education as well as special education and open education, represents 69.1% of the total expenses in education. Community college and university education takes 21.3%, vocational training uses 5.9%, and study incentives (school dinners and other programmes) take up 3.6%²⁰.
- In general education, 96.1% of the expenses corresponds to current expenses and 88.8% to salaries, while investment is only 3.9%, and teaching materials take up 1.0% of the total²¹.

According to the estimates of the Budget Planning Department²² of MEP, in 2002 the government invested a total of US\$551.47 for every elementary-school student and US\$783.46 for each high-school student during the year²³.

²⁰ Trejos, Juan Diego. "La equidad de la inversión social en el 2000" [Equity in social investment in 2000]. Paper for the 8th Report on the State of the Nation. San José, Costa Rica: June 2002, p.p. 4, 5.

²¹ Loc. Cit.

²² Information provided by Mr. Carlos Badilla Chaves, Budget Planning Department, MEP.

²³ These figures are computed on the basis of the investment made in infrastructure, staff salaries, administrative expenses, school dinners, teaching materials, and scholarships that MEP made in the year. Then, the total amount is divided by the number of students enrolled.

Regarding investment in teaching materials, infrastructure, and teachers' salaries, for 2003, it is estimated that the total expenses will amount to US\$2,637,202.26.²⁴

In the case of the scholarship system, for 2002, the National Scholarship Fund (FONABE) granted 37,334 scholarships to children, representing 82.0% of the total. For 2003 the figure increased to 39,517 scholarships for children representing 89.9% of the total of scholarships granted. It only assigned 126 scholarships to elementary-school students and 115 to high-school students in the Open Basic General Education Programme, which will be discussed later, 7 scholarships for the Open Classroom Programme, and 42 scholarships for students in the New Opportunities Programme. These figures illustrate the little support available to students in the educational programmes which are more accessible to working children²⁵.

2.3 Coverage of the regular and alternative education systems

Coverage rates in primary and secondary education show some progress in the last years. In elementary school, where the gross rate is above 100% due to the educational lag, there is an increase in the Second Cycle (from third to sixth grade), from 90.6% in 1990 to 99.6% in 2002. In this same cycle, the net rate is lower by 10 percentage points due to overage children, although there was an increase in the net rate from 81.3% to 88.8% in the same period.

At this level, attendance figures according to the Population Census and the Household Survey show that Costa Rica is very close to universal coverage in elementary education and that the gaps between the urban and rural areas and between the Central Region and the peripheral regions of the country are small. In the urban area, school attendance from 7 to 12 years of age is 97.4%, whereas in the rural area it is 93.6%, according to the Population Census of 2000. In the Central Region, attendance for the same age group is 97.6%, whereas in the peripheral regions it reaches 96.5%, according to the Household Survey of 2002. There are no significant differences regarding school attendance for men and women.

Middle-school coverage also showed a favourable trend in the last 10 years. The gross enrolment rate increased from 57.5% in 1992 to 65.6% in 2002, and the net rate passed from 50.3% in 1992 to 58.7% in 2002. In the period of "diversified education", which corresponds to the end of secondary education, coverage is lower, although it has also increased. In 2002, the gross rate in this cycle was 48.4% and the net rate was 36.0%.

Starting in the secondary level, geographic and social differences in attendance rates are clearly marked. In 2002, attendance in urban areas for children between 13 and 17 years old was 77.4%, in sharp comparison to the rural area where

²⁴ Information provided by Mr. Carlos Badilla Chaves, Budget Planning Department, MEP.

²⁵ Information provided by Mr. Carlos Badilla Díaz, Head of the Unit of Processes and Information Management of the National Scholarship Fund of the Ministry of Public Education.

attendance drops to 55.7%. In the Central Region, attendance in the same age group was 77.3%, decreasing to 62.6% in the other regions. The data also show contrasts among adolescents according to the schooling of the head of the household, since 97.6% of adolescents from homes in which the head has college education attend school, in contrast to 57.2% of the youngsters from homes in which the head has no instruction or incomplete elementary education.

Regarding sex, there are no significant differences between male and female rates. Some differences seem to favour women, for example after 12 years old the net coverage in secondary education is higher for women. This could mean a lower educational lag (Table 5). From 6 to 11 years old, the net coverage rate by sex is very similar for men and women.

Table 5
Net schooling rates in the formal educational system by age, by sex

Sex and level of schooling	Age														
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Men															
Primary	0.2	59.1	92.5	99.4	99.0	102.6	100.4	59.3	26.2	12.0	3.7	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.2
Secondary	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.8	32.0	57.9	61.9	58.3	51.6	35.2	16.5	7.1
Women															
Primary	0.2	60.7	92.6	99.9	99.4	101.0	100.7	54.7	19.8	7.7	2.2	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.1
Secondary	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.9	36.0	63.0	67.8	64.1	56.8	37.1	16.2	6.3

Source: Statistics Department, MEP. Expansion of the educational system 2001 (Table 94).²⁶

The development of several informal education alternatives is a significant contribution to the improvement of educational coverage. The gross enrolment rate in secondary education increased by 9.8 percentage points from 65.6% to 75.4% in 2002, while the net rate increased by 4.8 points from 58.7% to 63.5%. In secondary education, the main alternative education programmes are Open Classroom, New Opportunities, and Adult Education Centres and Institutions (CINDEA), which will be discussed later.

2.4 Students' academic performance

Academic performance is measured according to the percentage of students who pass the grade each year with regards to the final registration for the year in question. In the primary school level, around 90% of students definitely pass the grade, while in secondary school the proportion is close to 80%. The lower performance in high school corresponds to seventh grade, the first level in this cycle, with 75.5% of students passing in 2001, which indicates that one of every four

²⁶ Population figures used as reference come from CELADE. As of 2002, MEP estimates the coverage data, based on the population estimates of CCP and INCE, which in turn are based on the Population Census 2000. The coverage data by sex were not included by MEP in its 2002 statistics.

students that starts secondary school fails, which has subsequent impact on the dropout rate of 1 out of every 5 students in secondary education.

2.5 Dropout rate

School dropout or exclusion refers to those students who leave the educational system before the school year ends. According to available data, dropout in elementary education reached 5% in 2001, and in high-school it reached 12% that same year. However, in seventh grade the dropout rate reached 20.9%. This figure does not seem to decrease from one year to the next, which points at a structural problem in the educational system. This problem is a lack of assimilation and adaptation to make the transition between primary and secondary education easier. This has a direct impact on many youngsters who do not conclude the third cycle (ninth grade) to have access either to high-school education or to enter the technical education programme which are part of the formal education system, or to that provided by the National Learning Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje, INA*), the Professional Institutes for Community Education (*Institutos Profesionales de Educación Comunitaria, IPEC*), or the Education Centres and Institutes for Adults (*Centros e Institutos de Educación de Adultos, CINDEA*), where the minimum admission age is 15.

The adolescents who prematurely drop out of school do not have the legal age to work and run the risk of entering labour activities that attempt against their integral development and enjoyment of basic rights, such as education and recreation. In addition to the high dropout rate in the first year of secondary education there is also a failure rate of 25% for students in that same level. This increases the levels of overage students and the probabilities of dropping out in the following years.

There are important differences at the elementary level between public and private education, which has an impact on school dropout rates. In public education the dropout rate is 4.8% and in private education it is 1.2% (Table 6). Between urban and rural areas there are no significant differences. But men's dropout rate is slightly higher than women's.

Table 6
Intra-annual dropout rates in elementary education (Cycles I and II)
by area and sex, by type of institution

Type of institution	Total			Urban			Rural		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total	4.5	4.8	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.0	4.7	5.1	4.3
Public	4.8	5.1	4.4	4.7	4.9	4.5	4.8	5.1	4.3
Private	1.2	1.2	1.3	0.8	0.6	1.0	2.5	2.9	2.2
Subsidised private	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.7	1.4	3.0	-0.5

Source: MEP, Statistics Department, 2001

In secondary education, there are differences between public and private education. The differences by sex favour women, situation that could be explained by the fact that less girls enter the labour market than boys. In public

high school, total the dropout rate is 13.9%, whereas in private schools it is 1.9%. By geographic area, there is a higher abandonment of the educational system in rural areas than in urban areas, with figures of 13.0% and 12.1%, respectively. By sex, the dropout rate is lower for women (10.8% in high school) than for men (14.1%). In seventh grade of middle school, these differences remain, being higher for men in rural areas (25.3%) as compared to 24.6% in urban areas (Table 7).

Table 7
Intra-annual dropout rates in secondary education (III cycle and diversified education)*, by sex, by area and type of institution (total figures and seventh grade, in %)

Area and type of institution	Total			7 ^o grade		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total	12.4	14.1	10.8	20.9	23.1	18.6
Public	13.9	15.6	12.2	22.8	24.9	20.4
Private	1.9	2.8	1.0	3.8	4.9	2.7
Private subsidised	2.9	3.7	2.1	1.3	1.2	1.3
Urban area						
Total	12.1	13.7	10.5	20.5	22.5	18.4
Public	13.9	15.5	12.3	22.9	24.6	20.9
Private	1.4	2.3	0.6	2.3	3.0	1.6
Private subsidised	3.0	4.1	2.1	1.3	1.3	1.2
Rural area						
Total	13.0	14.7	11.2	21.6	24.1	18.8
Public	13.9	15.9	12.0	22.6	25.3	19.7
Private	3.6	4.5	2.8	9.2	11.6	6.8
Private subsidised	2.6	3.0	1.9	1.2	1.0	1.5

* It includes daytime and night-time schools.

Source: MEP, Statistics Department, 2001

2.6 Public education infrastructure²⁷

Schools for all regular education cycles grow in number each year, as shown in Table 8. However, the conditions of these educational centres are not always ideal since they lack the necessary resources to guarantee an adequate environment for the teaching-learning process and do not have access to the necessary and minimal teaching materials and services.

²⁷ Based on data from the Department of Statistics of the MEP and information provided by Mr. Carlos Badilla Chaves from the Department of Budget Programming of the MEP.

Table 8
Total regular education institutes and services by type of institution, 1998-2002

Year	Total	Pre-school	Cycles I and II	Night-time schools	Third Cycle and High School			Special education
					Total	Daytime	Night-time	
1998	6247	1646	3711	12	425	386	39	453
1999	6539	1821	3768	12	454	415	39	484
2000	6884	2035	3801	12	518	480	38	518
2001	7156	2174	3860	10	547	510	37	565
2002	7597	2289	3904	10	580	534	46	814

Source: MEP, Statistics Department, Expansion of the Costa Rican Educational System 2002

The deficient infrastructure in public schools affects students' permanence in the educational system and the quality of education. These schools often imply co-existence in a crowded environment that does not have the minimal services nor the resources necessary to guarantee an appropriate setting for teaching and learning.

In 2002, 79.7% of public primary schools did not have a library, deficiency present in 20.5% of private schools. Similarly, the lack of computer laboratories affects 81.1% of public establishments versus 9.3% of private institutions. The differences between public and private institutions regarding libraries and computer laboratories may be explained by the fact that the latter have the resources to purchase the equipment and have access to newer information technologies. Dinners, on the other hand, are a public service deemed important for the nourishment and achievement of the student population, especially that with fewer resources. As such, it is absent only in 7.4% of public schools, whereas in private schools the figure reaches 44.2%. It should be pointed out that 13.0% of public schools do not have electricity.

In secondary education, there are similar differences and deficiencies when public and private institutions are compared. Yet, the absence of services such as computer laboratories and libraries is lower than in public elementary schools. There is no library in 32.9% of public high schools (contrasted with 18.5% in private ones) and no computer laboratories in 37.4% of them (7.4% in private institutions). The absence of internet services is higher as it reaches 63.8% in public high schools and 29.9% in private high schools. It is important to point out the limitation this represents to the students who do not have access to a service that would allow them to get updated information on the most diverse issues in an easy and inexpensive way. Moreover, this would be an important resource for those schools that do not have teaching materials or libraries.

In elementary schools, 26.4% of the classrooms are in a fair condition while 5.8% are in poor conditions, according to assessments by schools principals themselves. In public secondary education, the situation is not much different: 26.9% of the classrooms are in fair condition and 3.7% are in poor condition.

Beyond the physical conditions of the classrooms, their deficit in public education is high. According to estimates by the principals, in elementary education, there is a lack of 1,971 rooms, that is, 14.4% of the totality of classrooms currently available. Regarding secondary education, this ratio is higher, as out of a total of 5,917 classrooms, there is an additional need for 1,091 or 18.4%. This could be evidence that the expansion of high-school coverage in the last years has not been accompanied by the corresponding investment in infrastructure.

2.7 Teaching staff qualifications

At present, there are a total of 46,225 teachers, of which 5,254 work in pre-school, 22,818 in primary, and 14,735 in secondary school²⁸.

The qualifications of the teaching staff have improved in the last 15 years, since the percentage of teachers with degrees rose from 78.2% in 1992 to 88.2% in 2002. In primary schools, 91.2% of the teachers have degrees. This percentage drops to 86.3% among high-school teachers. Having teachers with the minimal requirements has an impact on the quality of education since unqualified teachers do not have the knowledge or the didactic tools to adequately perform their job. Moreover, attention must be paid to those areas and educational centres where the teachers with the lowest academic profile are found, and analyse the achievement of the students under their charge while looking for medium-term alternatives to improve teachers' training.

A condition that attempts against an adequate teaching development is the high number of interim positions: 13,889 in 2003 according to figures provided by MEP to the press²⁹, a third of the total. In some schools, the percentage of teachers with an interim position ranges between 50% and 60%³⁰. Yet, the interim condition does not affect the salary or the level of labour stability, since interim teachers enjoy the same advantages and wage incentives as teachers on tenure. Promotion possibilities and job stability greatly depend on each teacher's academic qualification, since the person with a higher degree has a higher possibility of getting a stable job in an area of his/her choice. Nevertheless, MEP has an incentive programme for those teachers who decide to teach in socially disadvantaged communities. According to the teachers' academic preparation, the incentive is higher, thus the best-qualified and more experienced teachers are encouraged to work in less developed communities (Appendix 2).

²⁸ MEP, Statistics Department, figures on the teaching staff in education, charts 3 and 6.

²⁹ http://www.nacion.com/ln_ee/2003/febrero/07/pais1.html. The newspaper mentions as its source the Personnel Directorate of MEP.

³⁰ Doctorate in Education, Universidad de Costa Rica (DE-UCR 2001). La educación costarricense: una propuesta de agenda para un debate nacional [Costa Rican education: An proposal for the national debate agenda] San José, Costa Rica: Programa Latinoamericano de Doctorado en Educación, Universidad de Costa Rica, November 26, 2001, p. 27.

2.8 Education quality and relevance

To talk about education quality and relevance in Costa Rica, it is necessary to state the fact that the concept of quality in the educational environment comes from administration theories that equate quality to production. However, other positions consider that the quality in education may be measured by the characteristics of the product, in this case, the students. These theories also indicate that efficiency, as equivalent to school achievement, can also show the quality of education³¹. Villalobos believes that these conceptions are limited and restricted and proposes five aspects to take into account to estimate the relevance and quality of education³²:

- First, it is necessary to visualise the political and ideological levels of education, which respond to the educational demands from the different sectors of society, and which are translated into the ends and goals of education. In this sense, quality education should: *“...provide the best education possible to the largest number of people, regardless of their economic origin and focusing on its pedagogical approach, thus creating mechanisms and procedures for decision making that set forth in advance the educational efficiency criteria.”*
- A second aspect that measures the quality of education is its commitment to respond to the educational demands and needs of the different sectors of society, which means an agreement between *“...the contents developed in the classroom in relation to their relevance within the socio-cultural context and the development of contents, attitudes, and values...”*, as well as the participation of the different social and teaching sectors, students, administrative staff, parents, and community leaders.
- Third, the teaching-learning process should be considered based on the people being targeted, *“...the learning conditions, the educational scenarios, and the definition of the didactic model implemented in the educational process.”*
- A fourth aspect has to do with the teaching personnel, their qualifications both regarding their academic preparation and their conditions to undertake their teaching activities.
- Finally, a fifth element that has an impact on the quality of education is the academic structure and administrative management of the educational system, that should define a logical sequence between the curriculum, courses, contents, and academic activities, as well as the educational cycles and levels that have to facilitate students’

³¹ According to Ángel Barriga, quoted by Villalobos, Luis R., in the article *“La calidad de la educación: Directrices para su evaluación”* [Quality in education: Guidelines for its evaluation] en *Revista Electrónica Intercambio*. Universidad Interamericana de Costa Rica. http://www.revistaintercambio.com/agosto_2003/portada/por_005_calidad.htm

³² Villalobos, Luis R., ob. cit., pp 2, 4.

comprehensive formation, with time efficiency and optimal administrative management of the schools and the resources they have.

Based on the information above and the characteristics of education in Costa Rica, some researchers point out that the educational system is completely outdated in relation to society's requirements. In this sense, Costa Rican education has little relevance for children and adolescents, who spend several hours a day in the schools, despite the fact that it has a useful social role in the transmission of reading and writing skills, basic arithmetic, interaction with other people, and discipline and responsibility practices³³.

School exclusion and lag make about 50% of the population not to enter high school or not finish it. The fact that education is more deficient and has fewer resources in the poorest communities leads to a third of the population not having other alternatives to overcome poverty or nor having access to vocational training, especially in rural areas³⁴. This indicates that the Costa Rican educational system has still to overcome a series of limitations. A system that is not capable of retaining the students, both because of economic limitations and because it fails to attract a segment of the population that is also affected by school failure, is far from being efficient.

One of the main deficiencies of Costa Rican education is that its teaching and evaluation systems are selective. The educational process is organized within theoretical, organizational, and statistical parameters that do not take into account the particular development of the students as a whole or individually. Thus, those that cannot adjust themselves to the pace of the majority are excluded from the system. Standardised national tests are an example of this model, as they do not take into account the various socio-cultural contexts and multiple realities that are apparent in the country. As Meléndez³⁵ points out:

"It is clear that a curriculum that does not respond to the contextual and personal peculiarities, that is not willing to promote the participation of its actors in the construction of the curriculum itself, that does not show interest or respect for the styles or special learning paces, because of the particularities imposed by the ethnic groups, among many others (...), is not in agreement with a democratic system or a citizens' formation for critical and creative participation, for inclusive, collaborative, and non-discriminatory actions."

In analysing the characteristics of the Costa Rican educational system, its conceptual and technical model, its material resources, teaching staff, and the

³³ http://claudiogutierrez.com/educacion_digital.html

³⁴ Meléndez, Lady, article "*El modelo educativo costarricense de cara a la exclusión escolar*" [The Costa Rican educational model faced with school exclusion] in Revista Electrónica Intercambio. Universidad Interamericana de Costa Rica.
http://www.revistaintercambio.com/agosto_2003/portada/por_009_calidad.htm

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2

number of students that pass, repeat grades, lag behind and are excluded, it is possible to affirm that schooling in the country still needs to overcome several obstacles in order to comply with its commitment to improve its quality and relevance, and to provide necessary options. Complying with this commitment would ensure that all the people get the kind of formation that responds both to their wishes and aspirations, and also contributes to the country's widespread development and the improvement of the population's quality of life.

The quality of education should also respond to the investment that families make to send their children to school, because although the legislation indicates that general basic education and high school are free and compulsory, the truth is that education has a cost that very often is not compensated by an educational process that is not contributing to children's learning and integral development and that exceeds many families' economic possibilities.

As an example, the Ministry of Public Education makes an annual estimate of the basic cost of education for families, based on the studies of the Ministry of Economy, Industry, and Commerce on the market value of uniforms and school supplies³⁶. Although there no data about these costs for several years, it is estimated that for each student in public education, the initial expenses for the 2003 school year was the following:

- Primary, first cycle (first to third grade): girl's uniform 9,072 colones (about US\$ 22.68), boy's uniform 10,282 colones (US\$ 25.70); school supplies 8,582 colones (US\$ 21.38).
- Primary, second cycle (fourth to sixth grade): same cost for school uniform, supplies 9,862 colones (US\$ 24.65).
- Middle school, third cycle (seventh to ninth grade): women's uniform 9,865 colones (US\$ 24.66), men's uniform 11,475 colones (US\$ 28.68); supplies 11,552 colones (US\$ 28.88).³⁷

These costs do not include textbooks, food, transportation, or materials that students need throughout the year. This investment makes many families decide not to send their children to school in an educational system that in spite of demanding important expenses and resources, does not meet the expectations of students and their parents.

³⁶ School supplies include notebooks for different subjects, sheets of paper, pencils to write and color pencils, pencil sharpener, pens, erasers, glue, scissors, and a geometry set.

³⁷ Information supplied by Patricia Mora, officer of the Plan and Programmes Department of MEP.

3. WORKING CHILDREN

3.1 Socio-economic characteristics

The Multiple Purpose Household Survey (EHPM) 2002 gathered updated data about working children, their living conditions and their reasons for entering the job market. Based on the data gathered, it is estimated that there are 113,523 children between 5 and 17 years old who are currently working in the country. Labour insertion at an early age is more characteristic of rural areas. A total of 68.4% of working children are rural residents, and 31.6% reside in the urban areas. Male children and adolescents are the ones that join the labour force in larger numbers, as illustrated in Table 9: 72.7% of the working child population is composed by men.

Table 9

Working population between 5 and 17 years old, by sex and area

Area and sex	Number	Percentage
Total	113,523	100.0
Area		
Urban	35,831	31.6
Rural	77,692	68.4
Sex		
Men	82,512	72.7
Women	31,011	27.3

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002

A total of 99,846 households report children between 5 and 17 years who are either working or seeking work. About 127,077 children in this age group either work or are searching for work. Moreover, a total of 54,259 boys and girls are employed on a regular basis, which means that their main status in the year of reference was employed³⁸. Participation in the child labour force is defined by partly by schooling, as it varies according to the school schedule and vacation periods and also according to the agricultural production cycles. Analysing this specific group makes it possible to visualise how the participation of children under 18 in labour activities changes according to the season.

Among those households of children who work or look for work, it is estimated that 99,846 households have on average 1.1 children who are active. Of these households, 31.9% live in poverty, 21.3% do not meet their basic needs, and 10.6% are under the extreme poverty line, a percentage that is much higher when

³⁸ The information supplied by the surveyed people includes activities held during one week at the time the EHPM was held. Therefore, these data are circumstantial. However, as a strategy to learn about the evolution of child labour during a year, the concept "habitual activity," used by ILO, was included. This allowed identifying the "habitually active" population for the period between July 2001 and June 2002 (ILT-IPEC-SIMPOC, INEC, Informe Nacional de la Encuesta de Trabajo Infantil y Adolescente en Costa Rica [National Report on the Child Labour Survey in Costa Rica]. San José, Costa Rica, 2003, p. 55.

compared with households with underage children who neither work nor look for work, of whom only 23% live in poverty, as shown in Table 10.

The average household income in the case of working children is smaller than that of households of children who are not active. The data also indicate that schooling is lower among heads of household and other adults in the former, with an average of 6.0 years of schooling, whereas in the latter heads of household's schooling average in formal education is 8.1. Lower schooling of adults may mean lower possibilities to have a skilled job, resulting in lower wages. This creates economic limitations that force children to enter the labour market at an early age and to leave school or have low academic achievement.

Table 10
Main demographic, occupational, and income characteristics of
households with known income, by children's activity status

Household characteristics	Children's activity status	
	Working or looking for work	Inactive ³⁹
Total persons in households	548,030	2,279,485
Total households ⁴⁰	99,846	483,487
Members per household	5.5	4.7
0 - 4 years old	0.4	0.4
5 - 17 years old	2.5	1.8
18 years old and older	2.6	2.5
Labour force per household	3.0	1.7
Employed by household	2.8	1.6
5 - 17 years old	1.1	-
18 years old and older	1.7	1.6
Poverty Incidence (%)*	31.9	23.0
Unmet basic needs	21.3	16.6
Extreme poverty	10.6	6.4
Total household income (¢)	183,690	249,564
Per capita household income (¢)	33,466	52,935
Employed adults' income (¢)	161,674	235,975
Employed children's income (¢)	45,424	-
Average schooling of head (years)	6.0	8.1
Average schooling of adults (years)	6.6	8.7
Households with a female head (%)	24.8	23.3

* Percentage of households under the poverty line.

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002.

Although the difference in the percentage of households with female heads is not very significant for homes with and without active children, the figure is slightly

³⁹ The inactive population includes children who do not participate in economic activities and that are not trying to enter the labour market.

⁴⁰ With members between 5 and 17 years old who are part of the Economically Active Population

higher in homes with children who work or seek work, with a total of 24.8%, in comparison to 23.3% where children are inactive.

In general, one finds more unfavourable economic conditions in households of members between 5 and 17 who work or seek work, situation that coincides with the premise that relates child labour to poverty. However, it should be pointed out that many households that have sufficient resources to meet their basic needs involve children in labour activities at an early age, not in response to an economic need to improve the household's living conditions, but because they believe that work helps enhance children's development, as they get a sense of responsibility and learn to appreciate the cost of material things and the importance of working. In addition, having children participate in the family's business or economic activity is considered both by adults and children as a way to identify with the adults and the household and to continue the family tradition. Several studies discuss these perceptions⁴¹; however, it is important to distinguish labour activities for this purpose, from activities that attempt against the comprehensive development of children, especially their participation in the educational system.

In households where underage persons work to guarantee their food, clothing, education, and even shelter, or where they assume the economic responsibility of supporting the adults, children's rights are being violated, because it is the adults who are responsible for ensuring that youngsters' material needs are met. Unavoidably, those who participate in labour activities at an early age have their right to education affected, as will be explained in the following sections.

3.2 Activities performed by children and their working conditions

The data show that most of children's labour activities may be categorised as low-skilled activities, in the sense that they do not require much experience or training. In other words, 43.4% of children work in the agriculture and forestry sector, 21.7% in trade and repair of vehicles and appliances, and 9.0% work in the manufacturing industry, as shown in Table 11.

⁴¹ To expand this information, the following publications may be looked up: United Nations Interagency Programme. Upala: Condiciones de vida y derechos humanos [Upala: Living conditions and human rights]. San José, Costa Rica, 1997 / UNICEF-Costa Rica. El trabajo infantil juvenil en áreas urbanas: el caso del distrito de Pavas [Child-labour in urban areas: The case of the Pavas district]. UNICEF-Costa Rica, 1999/IPEC-ILO. Trabajo Infantil y Adolescente en la Región Brunca: Diagnóstico [Child-labour in the Brunca Region: Diagnostic] IPEC-ILO, Fundación Iustitia, MTSS. San José, Costa Rica, 2001/ IPEC-ILO, Cartago: Dimensión, naturaleza y entorno socioeconómico del trabajo infantil y adolescente [Cartago: Dimension, nature, and socio-economic environment of child labour]. IPEC-ILO, San José, 2002/IPEC-ILO. Sistematización de la Intervención del Programa de Acción: Eliminación Progresiva del Trabajo Infantil en la Extracción de Moluscos y Actividades Pesqueras del Golfo de Nicoya [Systematisation of the Action Programme Intervention: Progressive Eradication of Child Labour in the Extraction of Mollusks and Fishing Activities in the Gulf of Nicoya]. San José, Costa Rica, 2002.

Table 11
Working children 5-17 years old by age group, by industry

Industry	Age group					
	5 - 14		15 - 17		Total	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total	48,715	100.0	64,294	100.0	113,009	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, hunting	27,563	56.6	21,533	33.5	49,096	43.4
Fishing	202	0.4	693	1.1	895	0.8
Mining and quarrying	0	0.0	114	0.2	114	0.1
Manufacturing Industry	3,533	7.3	6,677	10.4	10,210	9.0
Construction	2,347	4.8	5,553	8.6	7,900	7.0
Trade and vehicle/appliances repair	9,506	19.5	15,054	23.4	24,560	21.7
Hotels and restaurants	2,400	4.9	3,047	4.7	5,447	4.8
Transport, storage, and communication	420	0.9	1,487	2.3	1,907	1.7
Real estate, business, and leasing activities	346	0.7	1,726	2.7	2,072	1.8
Education	0	0.0	299	0.5	299	0.3
Health and social care	0	0.0	161	0.3	161	0.1
Social, community, and personal services	1,021	2.1	2,644	4.1	3,665	3.2
Private households with employed persons	1,377	2.8	5,306	8.3	6,683	5.9

Note: 514 cases in which the industry is not known are excluded. The following industries are also excluded: "electricity, gas, and water," "financial intermediation," "public administration, defence and compulsory social security," and "extra-territorial organizations" as there are no children involved in these industries.

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002.

It is important to notice that 43.1% of the employed population is between 5 and 14 years old, an age range in which it is forbidden to work. The law also prohibits boys and girls to work in activities such as mining and fishing, that pose risks and threaten children's health and life, but still some children engage in them.

Although a small percentage, a few children report to participate in teaching activities. This means, that these children under 18 have teaching jobs, but at this age it is impossible for a person to have the academic requirements or experience to work as a teacher. This represents a failure in the selection of the teaching staff, with the risks it implies for the educational system and the quality of education.

The male population between 5 and 17 years old comprises 72.6% of working children, and 27.4% are females. The data by sex also suggest that some industries are exclusively male. These include fishing, mines and quarries, and construction. In the areas of health and social care, on the other hand, only women participate. In domestic work, the percentage of male participation is low, 0.8% of total working boys, while it is higher among women, 19.6%. In agriculture and forestry, male relative participation surpasses female participation by 12.5 percentage points, as shown in Table 12.

The highest participation of men in labour activities may be evidence of the traditional roles assigned to men, where the role of provider and the entry into the public world of work may be reasons for families to force boys to enter the labour market at an early age.

Table 12
Working children 5 – 17 years old by sex, by industry

Type of Activity	Sex					
	Men		Women		Total	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total	82,067	100.0	30,942	100.0	113,009	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, hunting	38,459	46.9	10,637	34.4	49,096	43.4
Fishing	895	1.1	0	0.0	895	0.8
Mining and quarrying	114	0.1	0	0.0	114	0.1
Manufacturing Industry	7,934	9.7	2,276	7.4	10,210	9.0
Construction	7,900	9.6	0	0.0	7,900	7.0
Trade and vehicle/appliance repair	17,566	21.4	6,994	22.6	24,560	21.7
Hotels and restaurants	2,135	2.6	3,312	10.7	5,447	4.8
Transport, storage, and communications	1,907	2.39	0	0.0	1,907	1.7
Real estate, business and leasing activities	1,626	2.0	446	1.4	2,072	1.8
Education	299	0.4	0	0.0	299	0.3
Health and social care	0	0.0	161	0.5	161	0.1
Social, community, and personal services	2,614	3.2	1,051	3.4	3,665	3.2
Private households with employed persons	618	0.8	6,065	19.6	6,683	5.9

Note: 514 cases in which the industry is not known are excluded. The following industries are also excluded: "electricity, gas, and water," "financial intermediation," "public administration, defence and compulsory social security," and "extra-territorial organizations" as there are no children involved in these industries.

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002.

Regarding the distribution by area, 68.5% of the employed population between 5 and 17 years comes from rural areas and only 31.5% from urban areas. Obviously, there is a higher number of children participating in agriculture and forestry in the rural area, 57.5%, in contrast with urban areas where the percentage barely reaches 12.8%. The most common activities in the urban areas are trade and vehicle and appliance repairs, with 31.8%, construction with 13.9%, and the manufacturing industry with 13.2%.

In the urban areas there are more labour opportunities in the service sector, while in the rural areas the primary sector (agricultural production) is still the one that absorbs most working children, as illustrated in Table 13.

Table 13
Working children 5 to 17 years old by area, by industry

Industry	Area					
	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total	35,593	100.0	77,416	100.0	113,009	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, hunting	4,562	12.8	44,534	57.5	49,096	43.4
Fishing	459	1.3	436	0.6	895	0.8
Mining and quarrying	0	0.0	114	0.1	114	0.1
Manufacturing Industry	4,684	13.2	5,526	7.1	10,210	9.0
Construction	4,943	13.9	2,957	3.8	7,900	7.0
Trade and vehicle/appliance repair	11,335	31.8	13,225	17.1	24,560	21.7
Hotels and restaurants	2,379	6.7	3,068	4.0	5,447	4.8
Transport, storage, and communications	1,221	3.4	686	0.9	1,907	1.7
Real estate, business and leasing activities	1,149	3.2	923	1.2	2,072	1.8
Education	160	0.4	139	0.2	299	0.3
Health and social care	161	0.5	0	0.0	161	0.1
Social, community, and personal services	2,379	6.7	1,286	1.7	3,665	3.2
Private households with employed persons	2,161	6.1	4,522	5.8	6,683	5.9

Note: 514 cases in which the industry is not known are excluded. The following industries are also excluded: "electricity, gas, and water," "financial intermediation," "public administration, defence and compulsory social security," and "extra-territorial organizations" as there are no children involved in these industries. Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002.

Out of the economically active⁴² children (5 to 17 years old) who do not go to school, 41.0% work in agriculture, livestock, hunting, and forestry, 17.2% work in commerce, and 11.0% in the manufacturing industry (Table 14).

Table 14
Working children 5 to 17 years by school attendance, by industry

Industry	Total	%	Goes to school	Does not go to school
			n:64,908	n:56,675
Total	121,583	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture, livestock, hunting, and forestry	50,706	41.7	42.3	41.0
Fishing	895	0.7	0.1	1.5
Mining and quarrying	114	0.1	0.0	0.2
Manufacturing industry	11,531	9.5	8.2	11.0
Construction	8,831	7.3	6.1	8.6
Trade	26,247	21.6	25.4	17.2
Hotels and restaurants	6,295	5.2	6.0	4.2
Transport, storage, and communications	2,049	1.7	1.5	1.9
Financial intermediation	157	0.1	0.0	0.3
Real estate, business, and leasing activities	2,316	1.9	1.3	2.5
Education	299	0.2	0.2	0.2
Social and health services	161	0.1	0.0	0.3
Other community service activities	3,981	3.3	2.6	4.1
Private households with employed persons	7,487	6.2	5.5	6.9
Unknown	514	0.4	0.8	0.0

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002.

⁴² See definition in Appendix 1.

Regarding children's work schedule, 91.0% work a daytime shift, 7.3% have a mixed shift⁴³, and 1.7% work at night. This result must be emphasised since 2.5% of the population between 5 and 14 years old and 1.1% of those between 15 and 17 works at night (Table 15). This situation is completely against the legal provisions regarding adolescent work.

Table 15
Working children 5 to 17 years old by age group, by shift

Shift	Age group				Total	%
	5 - 14		15 - 17			
	Total	%	Total	%		
Total	48,856	100.0	63,535	100.0	112,391	100.0
Daytime shift	45,746	93.6	56,514	88.9	102,260	91.0
Mixed shift	1,903	3.9	6,338	10.0	8,241	7.3
Night-time shift	1,207	2.5	683	1.1	1,890	1.7

Note: Those cases in which the shift is unknown are excluded (1,132).

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002

Regarding the number of hours worked per week by children, in the 5 to 9 age group the average is 5 (Table 16). In the 10 to 14 age group, the average number of weekly hours worked is 14. In the 15 to 17 age group, the average number of hours worked per week is 32. Moreover, 42.3% of them work shifts that extend beyond the number of hours specified by the law, that is, 36 hours a week for adolescents. Part-time occupations and full time occupations prevent children who work that many hours to do well in school and even prevent them from going to school.

Table 16
Average number of hours worked by working children 5 to 17 years old by age group

Age groups											
5 to 9 years			10 to 14 years			15 to 17 years			Total		
Number	%	Average	Number	%	Average	Number	%	Average	Number	%	Average
13,110	100.0	5	35,821	100.0	14	63,478	100.0	32	112,409	100.0	23

Note: Those cases in which the number of hours worked is unknown (1,114) are excluded.

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002

Regarding the remuneration received by working children for the labour they perform, it is important to point out that it depends on the number of hours worked. Children between 15 and 17 years old work more hours and have a higher income.

⁴³ The mixed shift includes takes place partly in the afternoon and partly at night. According to the Children and Adolescents Code, a person below the age of 18 should not work after 10:00 p.m.

Table 17
Average monthly income of working children 5 to 17 years old
that have an income by age group

Average monthly income	Age group		
	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 17
Working with income	2,590	13,493	46,297
Average income	¢5,243	¢20,886	¢46,667
	US\$15	US\$58	US\$130

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002

With regards to this aspect, a research done in Costa Rica in the year 2000 with children domestic work revealed that those that work full time (up to 12 hours a day) or part time (between 4 and 6 hours a day) received an average monthly salary of US\$71.00 and US\$42.72, respectively. This information can illustrate the fact that the population of children and adolescents receives wages that are much lower than the minimum legal wages set forth by the law⁴⁴.

It is also important to point out that in their own homes, a total of 176,214 children, that is 15.8% of the population between 5 and 17 years old, perform domestic chores for an average of 10 hours a day or more per week without pay. These activities could also affect their academic attendance and achievement⁴⁵.

Regarding the reasons why children work, 48.9% reported that the main reason is to help with household expenses or the family business. This explanation reaches 51.3% in rural areas and 44.0% in urban areas (Table 18). The second most important reason for children's work is to cover personal expenses and pay for studies, with 26.2% of total responses. In the rural areas, this explanation is given by 35.8% of interviewees. Both the need to contribute to the household and to cover personal expenses indicate that children's work is closely related to economic wants in the households, and that this forces children to enter the labour market. The percentage that indicates that children work due to problems in school only reaches 3.3%, being this percentage higher, 4.6%, in the 15-17 age group. These data reveal that the most significant reasons for children to work are not related to problems at school. Yet, work does interfere with students' optimal educational achievement, as may be noticed in the following section.

⁴⁴ ILO – IPEC. El trabajo infantil y adolescente doméstica en Costa Rica [Domestic child labour in Costa Rica]. ILO – IPEC. San José, Costa Rica, 2002, p. 102.

⁴⁵ ILO – IPEC- INEC. Informe Nacional de los Resultados de la Encuesta sobre Trabajo Infantil y Adolescente en Costa Rica [National Report of the Results of the Child Labour Survey in Costa Rica]. ILO – IPEC- INEC. San José, Costa Rica, 2002, p. 64.

Table 18
Working children 5 to 17 years old by age group, sex, and area, by declared reason to work*

Reason to work	Total 5 - 17		Age group (%)		Sex (%)		Area (%)	
	Number	%	5 - 14	15 - 17	Men	Women	Urban	Rural
			(n: 45,505)	(n:58,964)	(n:76,251)	(n:28,218)	(n:34,172)	(n:70,297)
Total	104,469	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
To help with household expenses or the family business	51,095	48.9	46.3	50.9	48.0	51.4	44.0	51.3
To pay for personal expenses and studies	27,340	26.2	17.4	32.9	26.6	25.0	35.8	21.5
Problems in school	3,431	3.3	1.6	4.6	3.5	2.6	3.4	3.2
To learn a trade	9,029	8.6	14.4	4.2	10.0	4.9	6.1	9.9
Other	13,574	13.0	20.3	7.4	11.8	16.1	10.7	14.1

* Those cases in which the reason to work is unknown (9,054) are excluded.

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002

3.3 School attendance by working children

Table 19 summarises the overall conditions of working children indicating whether they go to school or not. The figures indicate that the younger the child and the fewer the number of hours worked, the higher the possibilities to remain in school. In fact, in the 5-9 age group, the percentage of working children who go to school is 91.7, whereas in the 15-17 age group, 62.9% do not go to school. Exclusion from school affects boys more than girls, as 47.7% of working males do not go to school in contrast to 37.4% of working girls.

Exclusion from school reaches an even higher percentage in rural areas: 48.0%, in contrast to 38.2% in urban areas. On the other hand, a higher percentage of working children living in poverty (56.7) and extreme poverty (66.5) remain in school. This could be explained by three circumstances. One of them could be that children living in poverty are younger and, as already mentioned, the younger the child, the higher the possibilities of remaining in school. Another aspect that may be influencing this situation is the economic support given to poor students, which may be giving good results by allowing a percentage of the socially and economically disadvantaged population to remain in school despite its material limitations. Parents also value education as a mechanism to overcome poverty, so this may be another element that has an impact on having poor children remain in school.

Table 19
School attendance of working children 5 to 17 years old, by area, sex, age group, shift, and socio-economic condition

	School attendance				Total	
	Yes		No			
Area	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	22,149	61.8	13,682	38.2	35,831	31.6
Rural	40,429	52.0	37,263	48.0	77,692	68.4
Sex						
Men	43,166	52.3	39,346	47.7	82,512	72.7
Women	19,412	62.6	11,599	37.4	31,011	27.3
Age group						
5 - 9	12,026	91.7	1,084	8.3	13,110	11.5
10 - 14	26,723	74.0	9,396	26.0	36,119	31.8
15 - 17	23,829	37.1	40,465	62.9	64,294	56.6
Shift						
Daytime	56,136	54.9	46,124	45.1	102,260	91.0
Mixed	4,455	54.1	3,786	45.9	8,241	7.3
Night-time	1,423	75.3	467	24.7	1,890	1.7
Poverty incidence						
Extreme	7,836	66.5	3,947	33.5	11,783	12.6
Do not meet their basic needs	11,388	56.7	8,706	43.3	20,094	21.5
Non poor	32,748	53.1	28,958	46.9	61,706	65.9
Main monthly income (average)	¢28,626.66		¢47,874.82		¢39,935.72	
Average hours worked per week	13.4		34.87		23.03	

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002

Exclusion and lag affect working adolescents between the ages of 15 and 17 more severely. Of them, 62.5% no longer attend school and 70.5% of those who do are behind in their studies. In the 10 to 14 age group, 26.0% do not attend out and 45.4% are lagging, in contrast to only 3.3% who are not attending school among those between 5 and 9 and 10.7% that are lagging (Table 20).

Table 20
Population between 5 and 17 year old by school situation, by activity status, age group, sex, and area

Age group, sex, and area	Persons	Dropout rate (%) [*]	Enrolled		
			Total	Without lag (%) ^{**}	With lag (%) ^{**}
Working children	112,036	44.1	62,578	48.3	51.7
By age group					
5 - 9	12,429	8.3	12,026	89.3	10.7
10 - 14	36,119	26.0	26,723	54.6	45.4
15 - 17	63,488	62.5	23,829	29.5	70.5
By sex					
Men	35,390	37.4	22,149	42.7	57.3
Women	76,646	47.3	40,429	51.4	48.6
Inactive children	941,866	6.9	877,199	73.4	26.6
By age group					
5 - 9	356,676	2.7	347,102	94.7	5.3
10 - 14	390,557	5.1	370,825	72.2	27.8
15 - 17	194,633	18.2	159,272	52.4	47.6
By sex					
Men	461,547	4.9	438,886	74.4	28.6
Women	480,319	8.7	438,313	75.2	24.8
By area					
Urban	546,271	4.6	521,258	75.5	24.5
Rural	395,595	10.0	355,941	70.2	29.8

* Percentage with respect to total number of persons.

** Percentage with respect to total persons enrolled.

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002.

When the figures of the working population between 5 and 17 years old are compared with those of the inactive population in the same age group, it may be noticed that among the former the dropout rate is 44.1%, while for the latter it is only 6.9%. Similarly, regarding school lag, 51.7% of working children are behind the grade that corresponds to their age, whereas 26.6% of non-working children are in such situation.

Having to devote time and effort to labour activities diminishes students' time and energy for their school chores. This is evidenced by the academic achievement shown by those who are working and those who are not. As already pointed out, inevitably combining child labour with education decreases the academic preparation and permanence in school of those working children. Moreover, in some cases, the short-term vision of the children and their parents can lead them to devote more time to their jobs because of the money they get and the goods they can buy with it, leaving education aside.

Regarding the reasons not to attend school, as illustrated in Table 21, the most common is the lack of interest in formal learning, mentioned by 34.0% of the working total. By age group, 29.9% of those between 10 and 14 years and 35.7% of those between 15 and 17 stated not attending because of lack of interest in

formal education. Moreover, this is the reason working boys mention most frequently for not attending school, with 37.4% of responses. In urban areas (38.2%) and rural areas (32.6%), this is also the most frequently mentioned reason.

Regardless of the subjectivity that could underlie this response, the figures do evidence that there is a high percentage of working children who have dropped out of school and that are not being covered by the alternate educational options (to be discussed later). This situation renders visible, weaknesses in the promotion mechanisms and those used to attract students to the new educational alternatives not related to the traditional system. It could also show failures in the conventional educational system to retain students, since they cannot adapt themselves to the system or do not find an alternative compatible with their interests and aspirations in formal education.

Table 21
Working children 5-17 years old not attending the educational system by age group, sex, and area, by declared reason not to go to attend school

Reason not to attend school	Total 5 - 17		Age group (%)			Sex (%)		Area (%)	
	Number	%	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 17	Men	Women	Urban	Rural
			(n: 1,084)	(n:40,465)	(n:40,465)	(n:39,346)	(n:11,599)	(n:13,682)	(n:37,263)
			2.1*	18.4*	79.5*	77.6*	22.4*	27.0*	73.0*
Total	50,945	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Has to work	11,003	21.6	0.0	16.4	23.4	24.5	11.9	27.9	19.2
Has to help with the house chores	285	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.7
Cannot pay for his/her studies	7,309	14.3	8.1	18.2	13.7	11.7	23.3	9.0	16.3
Access problems to the school system	3,098	6.1	14.4	4.9	6.1	4.7	10.6	3.5	7.1
Pregnancy or marriage	640	1.3	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	5.5	1.9	1.0
Disease or disability	578	1.2	0.0	1.9	0.9	1.3	0.7	0.9	1.2
Finds studies hard	5,780	11.4	0.0	13.8	11.1	10.8	13.1	11.6	11.3
Not interested in formal learning	17,345	34.0	8.1	29.9	35.7	37.4	22.5	38.2	32.6
Does not have the required age	750	1.4	62.9	0.0	0.1	0.9	3.4	0.4	1.9
Other	3,420	6.7	6.5	14.9	4.9	7.1	5.5	3.8	7.8
Unknown	737	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.9	1.6	1.1	2.8	0.9

*Percentages with respect to the total (50,945)

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002.

Women mention as the main reason not to go to school the fact of not being able to pay for their studies (23.3%) and, in second place, they mention lack of interest in formal education (22.5%). It is possible for women to have more limited resources to study due to traditional conceptions of sex roles, placing women at home and not in the labour market. This leads some families not to consider the need for women to get an education, and decide to invest their resources in sending boys to school. This is evidenced by the fact that 11.7% of boys stated not having the necessary resources to study as the main reason not to attend school. Another aspect to notice is that 10.6% of working girls mention school accessibility problems as a common obstacle, a situation that again can be related to gender issues and

the idea that outside the home, women are exposed to many dangers and, therefore, should not go out and expose themselves to those dangers. This means that the accessibility difficulties may not only be physical but also cultural, since this reason is only mentioned by 4.7% of boys.

Of working girls, 5.5% mentioned pregnancy or marriage as a reason not to go to school. However, this should not be a reason to drop out, since the educational centres and the staff are obliged to provide adequate conditions to pregnant adolescents and mothers to continue their studies. The fact that pregnant adolescents drop out is an issue that shows a weakness in the educational system, that still has to find alternatives to retain young mothers to be and to look for the family support to make it possible.

Gender issues could also explain why most of the working population between 5 and 17 is composed of men--77.6%. Men are traditionally expected to be the breadwinners and be independent, both from the decision-making perspective and from the economic perspective. Thus, boys may be pressured to enter the labour market. This pressure is not necessarily based on economic constraints but on more subjective reasons, such as "becoming men" by earning money, working outside the home and collaborating with the family expenses. Almost a fourth of men (24.5%) mention not going to school because they have to work, whereas women only mention this alternative in 11.9% of the cases.

The figures also indicate that most of the working population that has dropped out of school lives in the rural areas, 73.0%, as shown in Table 20. In addition, this may mean that in rural areas children have more labour options in agriculture as well as more economic needs that force them to enter the labour market at an early age. An important aspect to take into consideration is that in rural communities, where the main source of income and also food is agriculture, the knowledge required to be successful in its production may come more from experience than from formal instruction. Having a standardised curriculum for the whole country does not take into account the educational needs for the different economic, social, and cultural contexts. This may be a reason for working children not to consider education as a mechanism that teaches them about relevant issues in accordance to their everyday reality.

There is a population⁴⁶ of 9,666 children who do not work but are actively seeking work and do not attend school (Table 22), 91.1% of whom are in the 15 to 17 year old age group. For these children, the most common reason not to go to school is not having money to pay for their studies. This reason was mentioned by 35.3% of these children. In second place is the lack of interest in formal education, with 34.1%. In this case, the percentage is the same for rural and urban areas and similar for men (35.0%) and women (32.3%).

Among the children seeking work, economic problems as well as the lack of interest in formal education prevent them from going to school. But lack of work

⁴⁶ See definition in Appendix 1.

and educational exclusion make this population vulnerable to abuse, involvement in illegal activities, and in the medium term, inability to access skilled labour alternatives and salaries that would allow them to meet their basic needs.

Table 22
Work-seeking children between 5 and 17 years old by age group, sex, and area, by declared reason not to attend school

Reason not to attend school	Total 5 - 17		Age group (%)			Sex (%)		Area (%)	
	Number	%	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 17	Men	Women	Urban	Rural
			(n: 0)	(n:853)	(n:8,813)	(n:6,386)	(n:3,280)	(n:4,194)	(n:5,472)
			0*	8.9*	91.1*	66.1*	33.9*	43.4*	56.6*
Total	9,666	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Has to work	482	5.0	0.0	6.7	4.8	6.5	2.1	0.0	8.8
Has to help with the house chores	303	3.1	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	9.2	3.8	2.6
Cannot pay for his/her studies	3,415	35.3	0.0	24.8	36.3	36.1	33.8	27.3	41.5
Access problems to school	142	1.5	0.0	0.0	1.6	2.2	0.0	0.0	2.6
Pregnancy or marriage	71	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	2.2	0.0	1.3
Sickness or disability	54	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.0
Finds studies hard	519	5.4	0.0	4.1	5.4	6.3	3.6	6.9	4.2
Not interested in formal learning	3,293	34.1	0.0	49.4	32.6	35.0	32.3	48.1	23.3
Other	1,014	10.5	0.0	8.3	10.8	10.1	11.2	10.2	10.7
Unknown	373	3.9	0.0	6.7	3.5	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.9

*Percentage with regards to the total (9,666)

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002.

There is also an inactive population (Table 23) (appendix 1) that does not work nor seek work and does not study, and that is at a higher risk since access to the educational system, knowledge about children's rights, and protection of the educational authorities may prevent situations of abuse and neglect. Not having access to education already exposes this population to exclusion from learning, lack of interaction with people of their same age, and not building a life project based on the opportunities offered by the educational system.

With the exception of 37.9% of this group that stated not having the age to study, there are 67,259 people who do not go to school and do not work nor seek work. Of them, 13.7% affirm that their exclusion is due to lack of interest in formal education, and 12.7% state not having the resources to pay for education. This reason is mentioned primarily by those between 10 and 14 (26.7%). The percentage of women that mention economic limitations not to study is 14.7, compared to 10.0% men. In rural areas, this aspect was mentioned by 16.2%, while in the urban areas it was mentioned by 8.1% of the group.

Outside of the educational system, in some cases faced with economic hardship and with no interest to work, the population that does not work, search for work

nor study is the one at a higher social risk. According to Claramunt⁴⁷, poverty, family disintegration, domestic violence, abuse, and school exclusion are risk factors, especially for girls, for commercial sexual exploitation. Related to school exclusion, there is also drug addiction and delinquency. And one of the main social roles of the educational system is precisely encouraging children to build a project of life aimed at personal development that would allow them to enjoy a good quality of life, professional development, and work.

Table 23
Inactive population 5-17 years old by age group, sex, and area, by declared reason not to attend school

Reasons not to attend school	Total 5 - 17		Age group (%)			Sex (%)		Area (%)	
	Number	%	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 17	Men	Women	Urban	Rural
			(n: 51,001)	(n:20,522)	(n:36,771)	(n:45,173)	(n: 63,121)	(n:46,218)	(n:62,076)
			47.1*	18.9*	34.0*	41.7*	58.3*	42.7*	57.3*
Total	108,294	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Has to work	917	0.8	0.0	1.5	1.6	0.7	1.0	0.7	1.0
Has to help with the house chores	3,641	3.4	0.0	0.6	9.5	0.2	5.7	2.3	4.1
Cannot pay for his/her studies	13,786	12.7	3.1	26.7	18.1	10.0	14.7	8.1	16.2
Access problems to school	8,195	7.6	6.6	15.9	4.2	6.5	8.4	5.8	8.9
Pregnancy or marriage	3,332	3.1	0.0	1.1	8.5	0.3	5.1	4.2	2.3
Sickness or disability	5,597	5.2	1.7	11.5	6.7	5.8	4.7	5.4	5.0
Finds studies hard	6,461	6.0	0.7	11.1	10.4	5.8	6.1	6.5	5.6
Not interested in formal education	14,875	13.7	0.1	18.7	29.9	14.4	13.3	14.9	12.9
Does not have the age	41,035	37.9	79.9	0.8	0.4	46.6	31.7	42.3	34.6
Other	8,096	7.5	6.6	10.2	7.2	6.7	8.0	6.8	7.9
Unknown	2,359	2.2	1.3	1.9	3.5	3.1	1.5	3.1	1.5

*Percentages with regard to the total (108,294)

Source: INEC, Multiple Purpose Household Survey, July 2002.

Based on this perspective, it is possible to point out that there is still plenty to do, especially in the educational sector, since attracting children who are not attending school to educational centres will depend on an wide-ranging strategy that includes the identification of specific educational needs for this population, material support, work with families, and design of educational programmes that are in accord with the expectations of this population that has indicated not being interested in the traditional educational system.

⁴⁷ Ma. Cecilia Claramunt. Explotación sexual en Costa Rica: Análisis de la ruta crítica de niños, niñas y adolescentes hacia la prostitución [Sexual exploitation in Costa Rica: Analysis of children's critical route for children] UNICEF – Costa Rica, 1998 / Explotación Sexual Comercial de Personas Menores de Edad en Costa Rica [Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Costa Rica]. ILO – IPEC. San José, Costa Rica, 2002.

4. OPTIONS OFFERED TO WORKING CHILDREN BY THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

To cover the adolescent population outside the conventional educational system, the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) carries out several programmes that operate under the “open education” concept. In this mode, students may choose the educational options that meet their needs better, decide what subjects to take and when they want to be evaluated. Schedules are flexible, students do not need to wear a uniform, the textbooks used are designed to promote distance learning and include alternatives for academic, technical, productive, and socio-cultural education. Below is some general information of each on these programmes.

4.1 Programmes of open basic general education for cycles I, II, and III⁴⁸

These educational programmes target the population 14 years old and over and are part of MEP’s general adult education scheme. Upon concluding Cycles I and II of the Programme, the student gets the elementary school diploma, and upon concluding Cycle III, they finish ninth grade and receive the General Basic Education diploma.

The methodology of these programmes consists of studying from textbooks with specific contents for each cycle and for each of the five basic subjects in Cycles I and II: Spanish, arts, mathematics, sciences, social studies, and human education. In Cycle III, human education changes to civic education and English as a foreign language is added among the compulsory subjects.

Exams are given twice a year for each of the subjects in the three cycles. If students pass these tests, they are promoted to the following cycle. Each of the subjects is evaluated separately.

To prepare for the tests, students may study individually at home or attend the tutorial sessions offered by MEP called “public workshops” in educational centres throughout the country. These tutorials comprise three weekly sessions taught after 6:00 p.m. for a period that usually begins in February and ends at the time the students take the tests. Thus, their duration can vary from six to nine months. Those in charge of the tutorials are teachers who take this chore in addition to their regular jobs⁴⁹. Before each test, the regional directorates⁵⁰ set up public workshops

⁴⁸ Information included in the informative documents about the I, II, and III Cycle Programmes of MEP’s Open General Basic Education.

⁴⁹ Although acting as a teacher in the public workshops is considered an additional work load because it surpasses teachers’ work schedule, they receive a wage incentive close to 30% of their base salary.

⁵⁰ In Costa Rica there are twenty Regional Education Directorates that coordinate, supervise, and support the operation and administration of the 7,597 schools throughout the country. The Regional Directorate of San José, for instance, attends 784 schools. Other Regional Directorates are Desamparados (342 schools), Puriscal (229), Pérez Zeledón (631), Alajuela (502), San Ramón (274), San Carlos (564), Upala (239), Cartago (510), Turrialba (277), Heredia (499), Liberia (175), Nicoya (262), Santa Cruz (183), Cañas (191), Puntarenas

in schools located in communities where the demand is concentrated⁵¹. Those who take the tests under this mode may also pay for tutorial sessions at private institutes.

Cycles I and II have a student population of 18,715 persons in 2002 and Cycle III had 12,189 students in the same year.

Under this mode, the student has the advantage of choosing the moment to take the tests and with only one exam he/she can pass the whole subject for a cycle. However, the method requires a great deal of discipline and dedication on the part of students in order for them to pass the tests, since they do not go to classes and they are responsible for their own learning process. In addition, the mode implies studying to pass the test and this does not guarantee that the knowledge they get is permanent.

4.2 The open classroom programme⁵²

The Open Classroom Programme was created in 2001 to be implemented in communities with a lower social development, as part of the government's strategy to eradicate poverty. The main objective of this programme is to provide an open and flexible educational option to adolescents between 13 and 15⁵³, who want to finish elementary school. The target population of the programme includes:

- People in the educational system who are at least three years older than the rest of their classmates and who do not show signs of adapting to the formal education system
- Adolescents who have dropped out of Cycles I and II of Basic General Education
- Adolescents completely excluded from educational services, who never entered school for whatever reason
- Adolescents who participate in labour activities, whether formal or informal, and regardless of their receiving pay or not
- Teenage mothers
- Foreign migrants

(338), Coto (578), Aguirre (159), Limón (517), and Guápiles (343). Each Directorate covers a large geographic area and identifies the needs of each school in its jurisdiction as well as potential solutions.

⁵¹ Public workshops are defined annually for the whole country and try to have a national coverage. For instance, in 2003, the Literacy Programme had 570 public workshops, 472 for elementary school, 151 for the third cycle and 72 for high school. Information provided by Mr. Emilio Umaña Hernández, Advisor of the Teenage and Adult Education Department.

⁵² Information supplied by Blanca Rosa Loaiza Esquivel, Coordinator of the Open Classroom Programme and advisors Irma Navarro Mora and Alberto Chévez León.

⁵³ Regarding the age limit, several exceptions have been made if the student is over 15 years old, provided that he/she is not older than 17.

Each student is evaluated at the beginning of his/her incorporation into the Programme. The main characteristics of this system are the following:

- ✓ Schedule flexibility that allows students to attend school in the afternoon or evening and define the days that are more convenient to them
- ✓ Each student advances at his/her own learning pace
- ✓ Use of textbooks called self-informative guides, with which students study independently, evaluate their own progress, and do practical exercises
- ✓ Tutors' support to expand the information in the textbooks and to respond to students' questions
- ✓ The possibility of completing one school year in only one semester
- ✓ Use of everyday clothes rather than school uniforms, but following the same standards used in the formal system, such as not allowing any piercing, tattoos, short and tight garments.

The teachers that work in the Programme must have academic training with a minimum degree of "*diplomado*" (similar to an associate degree), and preferably with teaching experience in Cycles I and II of general basic education and sensitivity toward the student population that has school-failure, lagging, dropout, and learning problems, and lack of adaptation to the formal educational system. Teachers should also have the skills to handle boundaries and discipline in the classroom, handle and apply several learning theories, evaluation mechanisms, individualised teaching strategies, personal development, and social co-existence, thinking and creativity development in the educational process, physical, social, and affective development in adolescence. Moreover, teachers should be capable of planning and organizing their work so that they can advance at different paces with students, but also in order to apply various techniques that contribute to strengthening the students' self-esteem and motivation. They should also look for ways to incorporate parents into the educational process.

The curriculum includes five basic subjects: Spanish, sciences, social studies, civic education, and mathematics, whose assimilation is evaluated by means of several mechanisms designed by the tutors. They determine when a student can move on to the next level. Upon concluding level III of the Open Classroom, students should take the country's standardised tests specially designed for this Programme in order to get their elementary education diploma.

Regarding the way in which students' learning problems are cared for, the programme only provides adaptations to facilitate access to the semester tests. These consist of offering students more time to complete the test as well as taking the test alone, without his/her classmates' company.

The Open Classroom Programme intends to add workshops on other subjects (such as, English, music, religion, physical education, fine arts, and computer use) to provide a more comprehensive education. These subjects would be evaluated qualitatively and their results would not have any bearing on the grades for the basic subjects. But, this initiative has not yet been implemented.

The Open Classroom Programme was assigned priority by the current administration of Dr. Abel Pacheco de la Espriella (2002-2006), as it is considered a very useful tool to provide educational alternative to a population with scarce possibilities to participate in the formal system. It is expected that the programme will have reached 10,000 students by the end of the four-year administration period. Thanks to this situation, the Programme has been provided with didactic materials, teaching positions, and grants from several organizations such as the International Labour Organization and Bank of Costa Rica. These resources make it possible to have monthly training sessions for the country's teachers.

The country has defined communities to implement the Programme on a priority basis (Appendix 3) and, although coverage has increased, the dissemination and attraction mechanisms among the target population are still very limited. The population covered in 2002 was 4,493 students and 5,041 in the first semester of 2003.

One of the main obstacles that the Open Classroom Programme still has to overcome is the selection of the staff, because the success of the Programme lies on the commitment, creativity, and persistence of the teachers. When the teachers are not dedicated and cannot identify themselves with the target population, the Programme's objectives are not accomplished.

Another obstacle to overcome is some school principals' refusal to accept using their school's facilities to implement the programme. They feel that students in this Programme are troublesome and can influence the rest of the student population negatively since they are older, have been excluded from the system and, in some cases, are resentful against the formal system. In these cases, the principals do not acknowledge the communities' need to have this educational option.

A final limitation on the effective implementation of the Programme is that only three people are in charge of guiding and supervising its implementation throughout the country and it is impossible for such a small team to cover all the country's centres, travel on a regular basis to the different school centres throughout the country, and evaluate the progress and teachers' performance, as well as the programme's obstacles and needs.

4.3 New opportunities programme⁵⁴

This programme was created in 2000 in order to provide an alternative for adolescents between 15 and 17 years old to start or finish middle and high school. The characteristics of these students are similar to those in the Open Classroom Programme:

- People who never entered high school

⁵⁴ Information provided by the advisors of New Opportunities: Mercedes Rodríguez Pagani, Mirian Rojas Rojas, and Ronald Vargas Chavarría, August 2003.

- People in the educational system that are at least two years older than their classmates and that do not show signs of adaptation to the formal education system
- People who dropped out of school one year ago or more
- Adolescents who have dropped from Cycle III of Basic General Education or High School
- Adolescents who have a job, either formally or informally, whether paid or not
- Teenage mothers
- Foreign migrants

Under exceptional circumstances, the age limit to be accepted in this programme is 21 years old. One of the exceptions is made for young mothers. New Opportunities operates in 20 regions across the country and each has a coordinator for the programme.

Like Open School, in one semester students have to cover the contents of a conventional school year and in one year they can cover two high-school years. The six compulsory subjects for Cycle III of Open General Education are the same for this programme and the same textbooks are used. Tutors participate in the programme to respond to students' questions and assign homework. Groups are composed of 15 to 30 students.

The student population in the New Opportunities Programme has been increasing year after year. In 2000 it had 10,414 students; in 2001 there were 10,457; in 2002, 14,377, and in the first semester of 2003, 15,853 students were enrolled in the programme. In most schools where the programme is implemented, classes take place in the night-time or late afternoon. The schedule is defined according to the students' needs.

Regarding curricular adaptations for students with learning problems, as in the case of the Open Classroom, these deal with giving students more time to take the semester tests and the possibility of taking them alone without distractions.

The programme's teachers are high-school teachers who should have the same academic requirements of those who work in formal education, and they take their job in the New Opportunities Programmes in addition to their regular job. These teachers understand the problems that adolescents face, are flexible regarding schedules and the use of didactic resources to offer the tutorial sessions.

The students in the programme should comply with the same discipline requirements and relationship with teachers and classmates as those in the formal education system. In this sense, the transmission of values and co-existence rules, respect, and discipline are deemed important and are promoted through the subject citizens' education.

When a student drops out of the programme, there are no follow-up mechanisms to try to attract him/her back into the programme. In this sense, the lack of

personnel is one of the main limitations to expanding the programme coverage and achieving more effectiveness by means of more tutorial hours for the students, since vast contents need to be covered in a few weeks.

Another aspect that needs to be improved is the training of the teachers who work in the programme, given that the population with which they work faces specific situations that require the application of psychological principles and those of other disciplines in addition to different and innovative teaching techniques to facilitate the assimilation of contents.

The lack of resources in the programme prevents the national advisors to visit the different regions where the programme is implemented to supervise tutors' work and to get feedback from teachers.

Regarding the costs of the textbooks and payment for the tests, each student must cover these expenses since the programme's regulations do not contemplate providing any economic support or scholarships.

4.4 Diversified (High-school) Distance Education Programme (EDAD)

This programme is geared to adolescents older than 15 years old and adults who did not go to high school (10 and 11 grades) or adult education programme by means of a distance learning programme in which each student prepares himself/herself to take tests in five subjects: Spanish, social studies, mathematics, English, and science (either biology, physics, or chemistry).

The students have to have completed Cycle III of General Basic Education and have the corresponding diploma to apply for this programme.

The programme allows students to transfer the subjects passed from other programmes, either the formal education system or the adult education programme (available for those students over 18 years old).

The methodology of this programme is similar to that used in the Open Basic General Education Programme, with the difference that there are no tutors to advise students. Thus, the success of the programme depends on his/her capacity to study individually and assimilate the knowledge.

Regarding evaluation, there are two tests to take per subject, each of which is worth 50%. They must pass each test with a minimum grade of 70 points to pass the subject. For each subject passed, the student may take the corresponding standardised test to get the high-school diploma.

4.5 Education for work programmes⁵⁵

The programmes included in this mode offer academic, technical, productive, artistic and cultural training and are geared toward people over 15 years old (exceptions are made for students over 13 years old) at different levels from literacy to high-school completion plus training in some technical or artistic discipline.

The methodology of these programmes consists of taking learning modules. Evaluation is more like a follow-up process that is participatory and democratic, and less like the assignment of a number grade. It should reflect students' degree of progress, assimilation of knowledge, and skill development.

These programmes are taught in two types of official institutions: the Centres and Institutes of Adult Education (*Centros e Institutos de Educación de Adultos*, CINDEA) and the Professional Institutes of Community Education (*Institutos Profesionales de Educación Comunitaria*, IPEC). Both are part of the Costa Rican education system and are characterised for offering alternatives for “permanent education” that respond to the educational demands and interests of the adolescent and adult population. They also provide opportunities to involve the target population in various educational programmes designed and offered in the different Regional Directorates of Costa Rica. There are a total of 14 CINDEA and 13 IPEC throughout the country. Their creation and implementation depends on the demand and express request of the communities that have to show the need in the population to create a Centre or Institute and the number of students who will attend.

A characteristic of the CINDEA and IPEC is that they do not give standardised tests to their students. Instead, students' progress is measured according to their assimilation and application of their knowledge. On the one hand, this is an advantage for those students who cannot adapt to the formal education system, but the fact that the curriculum has a comprehensive approach (academic, socio productive, and personal development), not just focused on academic contents, makes the educational authorities underestimate the usefulness of this permanent and open educational model. IPEC and CINDEA students are not considered part of the formal educational system, and since they are not subject to the conventional evaluation and learning standards, they are not granted the diplomas that the rest of the population in the formal system receives.

Finally, the National Learning Institute, (*Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje*, INA), as part of the educational system, offers learning programmes in several technical specialisations. Its entrance requirement is being at least 15 years old and having approved ninth grade. The courses last between one and two years. It also offers complementary courses and specific specialised courses adapted to the

⁵⁵ Information included in the Plan de Estudios para la Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos [Study Plan for Youngsters and Adults]. MEP, Departamento de Educación para Jóvenes y Adultos. San José, Costa Rica, 2001.

communities' demands; these courses are shorter. The age requirement is the same (15 years old minimum) but they only require sixth grade. In 2002, 150,585 people were trained in the different courses offered by INA throughout the country⁵⁶.

4.5.1 Literacy programme

This programme is geared toward adolescents and adults who lack the basic reading and writing skills. Students must complete a literacy programme that consists of 405 hours and 27 credits⁵⁷. Upon completion, students receive the Citizens' Literacy Certificate.

4.5.2 First level programme

People who passed the Literacy Programme and have the reading and writing skills and wish to continue studying can enter the First Level Programme. Here they need to pass 129 credits (102 compulsory and 27 optional) equivalent to 1,935 hours of instruction.

The contents in this programme are geared toward the students' personal development and social co-existence. Their purpose is to build skills to analyse reality, express themselves orally and in writing and also using the body, and look for appropriate solutions to the everyday problems of the students' personal, family, and social lives through the application of basic knowledge.

In 2002, this level had 1,087 students, but it was not possible to know how many of them were below 18 years of age.

4.5.3 Second level programme

This programme requires 1,770 hours of instruction equivalent to 118 credits (108 compulsory and 10 optional).

This level includes aspects related to personal development and critical awareness regarding history, political thinking, communication processes, organization and operation of the Costa Rican State institutions. The programme also promotes the development of logical thinking skills and other basic learning in mathematics. This knowledge intends to provide students with attitudes, skills, and knowledge to

⁵⁶ It was not possible to determine the number of people under 18 years old who participated in technical education provided at INA. This information was provided by the Statistics Department of MEP and Mr. Emilio Umaña, of the Youngsters and Adult Education Department of MEP.

⁵⁷ The credits are scores assigned according to the number of hours of the courses. Each level has a minimum score to pass. In these programmes, each credit is equivalent to 15 hours, 10 hours are to be completed in the classroom and 5 hours are to be devoted by the student doing assignments out of class.

improve their social and working conditions by means of an adequate handling of science and technology.

Having concluded this level, the student may opt for any of the three different options offered in the Third Level.

4.5.4 Third level (high school)

At this level, the student may choose between academic, technical, and artistic education according to his/her particular interests and abilities.

Those who choose academic education get a high school diploma. Those who choose technical or artistic education, get a professional diploma or mid-level technician diploma in the specialisation they chose after completing the requirements.

The Conclusion of High School diploma they receive in the academic option allows students to enter the labour market and continue studying in institutions that do not require the high school diploma. This option requires 1,635 hours of instruction equivalent to 109 credits (89 compulsory and 20 optional). This option promotes the selection of learning modules according to the students' interests and needs in order to strengthen their academic formation so they can have access to higher education.

The technical and artistic options aim at forming students so they can participate in productive processes based on new technologies. The contents of these modules are complementary and independent from the modules of the Basic and Diversified General Education. The various possibilities that these options offer allow students to enter the labour market by learning the theoretical and practical principles of a craft or a technical or artistic discipline. These options require 2,700 hours of training equivalent to 180 credits and all modules are compulsory. Upon completing all requirements, the student receives the Conclusion of Technical or Artistic Education Certificate in the specialisation chosen. Then each student has to take the National Test for Mid-Level Technician and if he/she passes the standardised bachelor's test, he/she also gets the professional diploma in the area of training.

The student population in Cycles II and III in 2002 was 11,000, but it was not possible to determine how many were less than 18 years old.

4.5.5 Emerging education

This mode offers several short-term educational and training alternatives by means of socio-cultural workshops, socio-productive workshops, modular courses, study circles, and free courses at the IPEC and CINDEA. This educational supply is characterised by being dynamic, flexible, and functional and by giving preference to the socio-productive area, although academic formation and

personal development are also considered important in the curriculum of this mode.

The modules offered in Emerging Education may be complementary to the other educational programmes and students may get an attendance certificate, a participation certificate, an achievement certificate, or a diploma for those programmes and short-courses that lead to learning a craft.

Emerging Education had 6,697 students in 2002, and 995 people were trained in the socio-labour area.

The professional education programmes and social education programmes had 23,249 students in 2002. However, it was not possible to determine the percentage of students younger than 18 who participate in these programmes, so it was not possible to determine how effective they are in attracting adolescents.

4.6 An overall assessment of the alternative education options

In general, although the alternative education options offer different choices apart from the formal education system, it may be affirmed that their coverage is limited, both because they do not have enough resources to reach a higher number of people and because their promotion among adolescents is limited. In the case of the Open Classroom and New Opportunities programmes, neither of them has a promotion strategy to identify and attract the target population.

However, the methodology used in these two programmes may become a good alternative for the adolescent population that cannot adapt to the conventional educational system and that has less time to study. Nevertheless, only Open Classroom has a follow-up strategy, a mechanism that may contribute to prevent desertion from this programme.

An obstacle in these programmes that has to be overcome is the fact that they do not have specific funding to grant scholarships to the poorest students and those in disadvantageous socio-economic conditions. Paying for books, written tests, transportation, and materials requires resources that many families and students do not have.

Cycle I, II, and III Programmes of the Open Basic General Education and the Diversified (High school) Distance Education Programme, with the self-study mode to take tests, does not seem adequate for adolescents who have dropped out of the formal education system because although they may pass the subject matter of one cycle taking only one exam, assimilating such large quantity of knowledge through self-study requires consistency, discipline, and concentration, conditions that are difficult to get when adolescents start working at an early age and when they live in an environment of material deprivation and economic pressures.

Regarding the Education for Work programmes, the number of hours that each level requires is incompatible with the educational requirements of the working

adolescent population that has less time to study. The free courses in socio-productive areas seem a viable technical education alternative for adolescents who need training in some specific area that would allow them to enter a certain labour sector, according to their community context and the opportunities it offers.

Regarding the IPEC and CINDEA, the contradiction appears because they offer an alternative education model that is flexible and that responds to youngsters' and adults' expectations, but that does not recognise the differences and the importance of implementing an evaluation system adapted to this model. This issue has to be resolved for the benefit of the student population that chooses this educational alternative.

Figures show that the formal education system is not suitable for the particular conditions of the working adolescent population. Moreover, it is incapable of preventing school desertion, lag, and the lack of interest on the part of children and adolescents. Furthermore, the educational system cannot coordinate actions to prevent school-age children and adolescents from looking for labour alternatives to pay for their own education and contribute to their household expenses.

5. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the data obtained from the Multiple Purpose Household Survey of July 2002 allows drawing some general conclusions regarding the particular conditions of the working child population, especially about those aspects that are related to their schooling situation. The main conclusions are the following:

- Labour insertion at an early age takes place mainly among boys - 72.6% of working children between 5 and 17 years old are boys. This phenomenon is related not only to families' socio-economic conditions, but also to gender issues that encourage boys to work and earn money.
- Girls seem to have less economic support to study, as 23.3% of those who work and do not go to school said that the reason for not attending school is not having the resources to pay for their studies, compared to 11.7% boys. This situation may evidence cultural aspects that discourage women from studying as it is believed that their role is to be wives and mothers, remain at home and not enter the labour market.
- The poor enforcement of the national legislation that prohibits children under 15 to work is evidenced in the fact that 43.1% of working children are between 5 and 14 years old.
- The types of activities where most children work may be classified as low-skilled. This factor may influence children and their parents to underestimate the need to remain in school because the work they do does not demand more training or academic preparation.
- Since 68.5% of working children live in rural areas, the risks to repeat grades, lag in school, and be excluded are higher in the country's rural communities.
- The formal educational system is not compatible with the living conditions, interests, and expectations of working children. This is evidenced by the fact that 48% of the working rural population and 38.2% of the working urban population do not go to school. Dropout rates in the 15-17 working population reaches 62.5% and school lag reaches 70.5% in that same age group.
- Children who drop out or are excluded from the educational system and enter the labour market run the risk of living in poverty, since the lack of formal instruction and training will prevent them from getting skilled jobs and better salaries that would allow them to have a life without economic and material deprivations.
- A total of 67,259 people between 5 and 17 years old who do not work and do not go to school either are at a great social risk since exclusion from the school system, associated to poverty, family disintegration, domestic violence, and abuse is considered a factor that may lead to the commercial sexual exploitation of girls, drug addiction, and participation in illegal activities.

- Although there are numerous open education alternatives, the coverage of these programmes is still limited, because of the few resources they have and the limited promotion of the services they offer, and because of the evaluation methodologies and mechanisms used that are still framed within those used in formal education.

Some general recommendations are the following:

- First, for the national education system to respond to the needs and demands of the different social sectors of Costa Rica, the Ministry of Public Education has to design an educational plan adequate to the different economic, cultural, and geographic contexts and has to respond to the different educational needs of the population. The design of regional educational plans that take into account the social, cultural, gender, age, and economic differences of the communities may become a tool capable of attracting children and adolescents to school who, due to labour, economic, or incompatibility reasons, are not attending school or run the risk of being excluded from the educational system.
- Undertake a national diagnostic with the participation of children and adolescents, parents, community organization representatives, staff from non-governmental institutions, representatives from the different productive sectors, and citizens in general that may contribute to identifying both the needs and expectations from education and the labour and economic possibilities of the communities and regions. This knowledge will be an input in the preparation of educational plans and programmes in accord with the learning interests and training of children and adolescents and with the labour options of the different socio-economic and cultural contexts of the country and with employers' requirements.
- An action that the Ministry of Public Education, in coordination with other governmental institutions and the civil society, should take is the identification of children and adolescents who are out of the educational system, whether for economic or labour reasons, difficulties at school or any other reason, and look for educational options adequate to the particular conditions of this population. It should also implement programmes that respond to the needs and expectations of this group excluded from the formal education system.
- Economic wants force children to work at an early age and puts their access to education at risk. A far-reaching assistance strategy for families that have children under 18 years old who are working, then, should include economic support through scholarships and temporary monetary and food assignments for the families as well as the possibilities of training, labour and productive opportunities for their adult members so that they can assume the economic responsibility for the family, rather than depend on child labour. The implementation of a plan of this sort may contribute to improve the quality of life of the families and their members, and expand children's opportunities to

remain in school. The implementation of this kind of strategy requires a coordinated action on the part of governmental institutions and a greater state investment in education and social welfare.

- Investment in education should also be expanded to improve school conditions, so that they have adequate infrastructure and the necessary services to guarantee a healthy environment that facilitates the teaching-learning process. As important is the design and provision of teaching materials adequate for the different social, cultural, and economic contexts of the country. If the educational system intends to reach the largest possible number of people with a quality supply, it needs resources to be able to achieve its objectives and to be adapted to the population's needs.
- The educational system also requires a policy of professional development and training of the teaching staff, since 15% of the teachers still do not have a university degree and this has an impact on the quality of the service offered. In addition to professional training, a permanent training policy must be designed in order to allow teachers to get the knowledge they need to respond with sensitivity and creativity to the problems, needs, and interests of the student population and the communities where they work. The design of permanent training programmes in several issues, such as detection and attention of learning problems, curricular adaptations, gender perspective, children's and adolescents' rights, new teaching techniques, assertive communication, and alternative conflict resolution, among many others may contribute to having teachers do their work more effectively and facilitate students' assimilation of knowledge and permanence in the educational system.
- Children who are forced to take a job are more limited to respond to the demands of the formal education system. In this sense, teachers should also have the flexibility of adapting the teaching-learning process to the particular population and prevent children from dropping out, repeating grades, and lagging in their studies. It is also indispensable to strengthen the open education programmes so that they can increase their coverage and reach a larger number of people. This is important because despite the variety of options available, they cannot yet attract children who are not attending school and who do not have the economic resources or family support to do so.
- One of the actions that the Ministry of Public Education has to include as a priority is making teachers aware of their responsibility in preventing exclusion and school desertion, because although permanence in the educational system in the end depends on the parents, teachers have a key role in detecting those cases in which children stop coming to school without a valid reason. Following up each student is vital to prevent desertion. Likewise, teachers should support students who have low achievement and learning problems by means of different study techniques and any other resource that would allow them to overcome these problems, regardless of their learning

pace. Budgetary limitations and the lack of staff should not be excuses for educational authorities to remain indifferent when faced with the possibility of having a student excluded from schooling. The law is clear in this sense and assigns MEP the responsibility of guaranteeing children's and adolescents' right to education.

- MEP should also re-think the use of standardised evaluation throughout the country in order to ensure an educational system that is democratic and respectful of the cultural, economic, and geographic differences within the population. In addition, it should consider whether over-evaluation is useful for students' formation, since those attending the formal education system should take tests each month, each quarter, and also to go from primary to secondary school and from ninth grade to high school. Once they finish high school, they have to take and pass the national standardised tests in order to graduate from a level that they already passed. Not passing the national tests is an obstacle for any student who wants to continue in the educational system. There lies the importance of improving the evaluation mechanisms so they do not harm the students, especially those with more difficulties and limitations to remain in school, such as working children.
- Finally, the joint effort of several governmental entities—the Ministry of Public Education, the National Child Welfare Institute, the National Learning Institute, the Mixed Social Welfare Institute, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, and the Ministry of Finance—is indispensable to guarantee the provision of the necessary resources to substantially improve the educational system, guarantee respect to the laws dealing with child labour and access to quality education, both academic and technical or artistic, free and compulsory, for children. This collaboration is also essential to create the condition for Costa Rican children to benefit from a national strategy that facilitates access to educational opportunities suitable to their particular conditions and needs, and to the country's development.

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APPENDIX 1

Definitions used for the economically-active population by INEC

EMPLOYED: those people in the labour force who worked for at least one hour in the week of reference or that, not having worked, have a job from which they were absent due to circumstantial reasons such as sickness, license, vacations, strike, scholarship, etc.

UNEMPLOYED: people in the labour force who were not working in the week of reference, that were available to start working immediately, and who did not find a job although they took concrete steps in the last five weeks to get a paid or an independent job. Unemployed people are classified into two categories: laid off and first-job seekers.

ECONOMICALLY-ACTIVE POPULATION: it is the group of people—5 or older—who worked or were unemployed in the week of reference and comprise the labour force.

ECONOMICALLY-INACTIVE POPULATION: it is the group of people—5 or older—who did not work in the week of reference and did not look for a job in the last five weeks. This group includes: retirees, rentiers, students, homemakers, people with disabilities that do not allow them to work, and others. In other words, people who are not part of the labour force.

(Source: INEC Multiple Purpose Household Surveys 2001 and 2002, Main results (2002-a and 2002-b) chapter I “Methodological aspects”.
<http://www.inec.go.cr/Hogares02.pdf> and
<http://www.inec.go.cr/PubEH001.pdf>)

Definitions of poverty used by INEC

To determine poverty, INEC has adopted the Poverty Line Method or Income Method. It consists on calculating the Poverty Line which represents the minimum per capita amount needed for a household to meet its members' basic needs (food and non-food), and compare it with the per capita income of each household. The application of the method requires the following information: a. the cost of the per capita basic shopping basket (CBA); b. an estimate of the cost of non-food basic needs that is computed as the inverse of the food expenses, according to the information in the last Income and Expense Survey; c. the per capita income in the household calculated by the Household Survey on the basis of the households that declared their income, which this time represented 83,0% of the total households in the country.

The value of the Poverty Line corresponds to the value of the CBA multiplied by the inverse of the food expenses. The procedure is applied in the same way for the urban and rural areas.

According to this, the application of the Poverty Line Method allows classifying households as non-poor households, households that do not meet their basic needs, and households in extreme poverty.

Non-poor Households are those that have a per capita income that allows them to cover their basic food and non-food needs. That is, their per capita income is equal to or higher than the Poverty Line.

Households that do not meet their basic needs have a per capita income lower than the Poverty Line, but equal to or higher than the CBA per capita cost. The per capita level of the Poverty Line for 2002 was ¢28,895 for urban areas and ¢22,714 for rural areas in the country.

Households in extreme poverty are those whose per capita income is lower than the per capita cost of the CBA. The per capita cost of the CBA in 2002 was ¢13,255 for urban areas and ¢11,530 for rural areas in the country.

(Source: INEC Multiple Purpose Household Survey 2002. Main results (2002-b), chapter I “Methodological aspects”, pages 16-17 <http://www.inec.go.cr/Hogares02.pdf>)

APPENDIX 2

**PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC
GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF CIVIL SERVICE
(*DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DEL SERVICIO CIVIL*)**

RESOLUTION DG-268-2003

GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF CIVIL SERVICE (*DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DEL SERVICIO CIVIL*) --San José, at the thirteen hours of the fourteenth of May two thousand three.

WHEREAS:

1. Article 13, item a), of the Civil Service Statute grants powers to this General Directorate to classify and assess job posts.
2. By means of agreements subscribed on October 29 and 30 of 1996 and December 12 of 1997 between the Ministry of Public Education and the teachers' representatives, it was agreed to set an additional payment for teaching and administrative-teaching positions for working in educational centres located in the areas with the lowest socio-economic development; and that to this end a bipartite commission was created with representatives from the Ministry of Public Education, the Civil Service General Directorate, and the National Teachers' Association.
3. By means of the agreement subscribed on June 25, 2001, the Minister of Public Education committed to extending this incentive to School Counsellors, Assistant Counsellors, and Librarians.
4. The aforementioned agreement also includes the payment of this incentive as of 2002 to other teachers who have a degree specifically in education, including those that hold the following professional categories: MT-3, VT-4, PT-3, PT-4, KT-1, ET-2, and ET-1.
5. As a result of these agreements and the recommendations issued by the bipartite commission, Resolutions DG-152-97, DG-086-2000, and DG-178-2001 were issued which recognise this payment for areas with the lowest socio-economic development.
6. According to the provisions in the resolutions mentioned above, the incentive in the Low Level and Very Low Level districts was acknowledged, as per classification based on the District Social Development Index (IDSD), by relative development areas, determined at present according to Executive Decree N°29923-PLAN-COMEX of September 17, 2001.
7. By means of official letter DVM-A-3879-2003 dated April 25, 2003, subscribed by the Administrative Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Public Education, Lic. Carlos Enrique Campos Roblero, the document entitled "Commission Report on the Least Developed Areas" is endorsed and sent to this Office, action that recommends the inclusion of some Middle Level districts as beneficiaries of this incentive as per Executive Decree N°29923-PLAN-COMEX.

8. In addition to the aforementioned resolutions, attending to the demands of the administrative dynamics inherent to the payment referred to above, as well as the requirements of the Ministry, Resolutions DG-118-2002 and DG-124-2002 were also issued; this makes it necessary to integrate in a single regulatory body what correspond to the payment mentioned above.

Therefore;

THE GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

In his capacity as conferred by Article 13 of the Civil Service Statute and the Public Administration Salary Act, and in agreement with the petition that to this end was presented by the authorities of the Ministry of Public Education.

RESOLVES:

Article 1º.- An additional payment, divided into twelfths, as detailed in article three of this Resolution, shall be granted to teachers in Cycle III and Diversified (High School) Education, Cycles I and II of the Basic General Education, Pre-school Education, and Special Education according to their academic status, the position they have, and their geographic location, provided that they comply with what is specified below:

- a) They hold a
 - a.i.) Teaching only position, or
 - a.ii.) Teaching-administrative position, or
 - a.iii.) Position in the Technical Teaching Strata as Librarian in an Education Centre 1 or 2; Counsellor 1, 2, or 3; or Assistant Counsellor.
- b) They have the minimum academic degree of college baccalaureate in the specialty of said position or a teaching degree that corresponds to one of the following professional groups: MT-3, VT-4, PT-3, PT-4, KT-1, ET-2, or ET-1.
- c) They work in educational centres of Cycle III or Diversified (High school), Cycles I and II of the Basic General Education, Pre-school Education, or Special Education, located in the areas (districts) of lowest relative development, Low and Very Low levels, according to the provisions in Decree 29923-PLAN-COMEX of September 17, 2001, published in the official paper *La Gaceta* N° 210 of November 1, 2001.

Article 2º.- Based on the recommendations of the commission created for this purpose, and on the particular conditions of some districts, the additional payment will be acknowledged for teachers working in the Middle Level districts included in the decree under the same conditions as those in the Low Level. These districts are detailed below:

SAN JOSE

- Frailes
- San Cristobal Norte
- General
- Tabarcia
- San Pablo de Turrubares
- Santa Maria de Dota
- San Pablo de Leon Cortes

ALAJUELA

- Desmonte
- Venecia
- Toro Amarillo

CARTAGO

- Santa Cruz
- Quebradilla
- Corralillo
- Tucurrique

GUANACASTE

- Tempate
- La Mansion
- Quebrada Honda
- Hojancha
- Diria de Santa Cruz
- Filadelfia
- Carmona de Nandayure
- Sardinal de Carrillo

PUNTARENAS

- Jaco
- San Rafael
- Barranca
- Chacarita
- Quepos de Aguirre
- Golfito

LIMON

- Limon
- Guacimo
- Pocora

This is applicable provided that there is compliance with the provisions in items a) and) of Article 1º of this Resolution.

Article 3º.- The payment will be made under the following conditions:

- a) The employees benefited must have one of the following professional groups: MT-6, MT-5, MT-4, ET-4, ET-3, KT-3, KT-2, PT-6, PT-5, VT-6, or VT-5.
- b) For workers who have the professional groups mentioned above, the payment will be comprised of two parts, as detailed below:

First: For working in an area of low development, Low Level or Very Low Level, as follows:

- If they work in a district classified as a Very Low Level area, fifty percent (50%) a year of the total salary.

- If they work in a district classified as Low Level, forty percent (40%) a year of the total salary.

Second: According to the professional group of the employee, namely MT-6, MT-5, MT-4, ET-4, ET-3, KT-3, KT-2, PT-6, PT-5, VT-6, or VT-5, as follows:

- MT-6, fifty percent (50%) a year of the total salary.
- MT-5, ET-4, KT-3, PT-6 o VT-6, forty percent (40%) a year of the total salary.
- MT-4, ET-3. KT-2, PT-5 o VT-5, thirty percent (30%) a year of the total salary.

Thus, the following table will be applied:

Table to determine the additional payment for working in an area of low development and according to the professional group, in percentage of the total salary						
IDSD Level	MT-6		MT-5, ET-4, KT-3, PT-6, VT-6		MT-4, ET-3, KT-2 PT-5, VT-5	
	Per year	Per month	Per year	Per month	Per year	Per month
Low	90%	7.50%	80%	6.666%	70%	5.833%
Very Low	100%	8.33%	90%	7.50%	80%	6.666%

- c) For workers with a teaching degree, which corresponds to professional groups MT-3, VT-4, PT-4. KT-1, or ET-2, the payment will be computed as follows:

- If they work in a district classified as a Very Low Level area, fifty percent (50%) a year of the total salary.
- If they work in a district classified as Low Level, forty percent (40%) a year of the total.

The following table will be applied:

IDSD Level⁵⁸	PT-4, VT-4, MT-3, ET-2, KT-1	
	Per year	Per month
Low	40%	3.333%
Very Low	50%	4.166%

- d) For workers with a specific teaching degree corresponding to professional groups PT-3 or ET-1, payment will be made as follows:

- If they work in a district classified as a Very Low Level area, forty percent (40%) a year of the total salary.
- If they work in a district classified as Low Level, thirty percent (30%) a year of the total.

The following table will be used:

⁵⁸ IDS D: District Social Development Index

IDSD	PT-3, ET-1	
	Per year	Per month
Low	30%	2,5%
Very Low	40%	3,333%

Article 4º.- The definition of the areas according to Executive Decree 29923-PLAN-COMEX may vary if another decree that modifies it is issued, or if, as a result of the creation of a commission according to the agreements subscribed, it is deemed convenient to add other districts based on other additional criteria to those included in Executive Decree 29923-PLAN-COMEX of September 17, 2001. This would be done to better comply with the purpose of this incentive.

Article 5º.- This additional payment is temporary and will be applied while the worker is entitled to it, remains in the same area or district. His/her temporary or permanent transfer to another area or district will mean a change in the payment as required or the total elimination of the payment if his/her new position is not among those included in item c) of article one or article second of this Resolution.

Article 6º.- For all legal purposes, the additional payment regulated by these regulations will not be considered salary, so it will not be subject to the social contribution nor will it be considered to compute overpayments.

Article 7º.- Without detriment to the powers of this General Directorate, compliance with the general provisions of this Resolution will be the responsibility of the authorities of the Ministry of Public Education.

Article 8º.- The following Resolutions are hereby repealed: DG-152-97 December 8, 1997, DG-086-2000 of August 28, 2000, DG-178-2001 of November 29, 2001, DG-118-2002 of June 18, 2002, and DG-124-2002 of June 25, 2002.

Article 9º.- The provisions in this Resolution are in effect as of the month of February of 2003 and are subject to budget availability.

Let it be published.

Guillermo Lee Ching
GENERAL DIRECTOR

SRH/GLCh

APPENDIX 3

Priority communities to implement the Open Education, Open Classroom, and New Opportunities programmes by canton and district.

CANTON	DISTRICT	COMMUNITY
Talamanca	Bratsi	Distrito Completo
Matina	Matina	Matina Centro
Squirres	Squirres	Asentamiento Imperio Asentamiento Maryland
Guácimo	Río Jiménez	La Lucha Los Ángeles
Pococí	Colorado	Barra del Colorado Tortuguero
Upala	Dos Ríos Yolilla	Basílica San Luis San Gabriel Los Tijos
Los Chiles	Caño Negro Los Chiles (centro)	Veracruz Las Marías Coquiales Cuatro Esquinas
San Carlos	Pocosol Cutris	El Plomo Tres y Tres San Pedro Boca de San Carlos (Boca de Arenal)
Guatuso	Buena Vista San Rafael	Mónica Costa Ana Palenques Indígenas (Tongibe, Margarita y El Sol)
Cañas	Palmira Porosal	Nueva Guatemala Palmira Centro Centro Santa Lucía
Bagaces	Central Río Naranjo	Llanos de Cortés Playitas de San Ramón Río Chiquito Naranjito
Nicoya	Nosara Sámara	Centro La Esperanza Chinampas El Torito
Abangares	Colorado San Juan Grande	Higuerilla San Joaquín Raizal San Juan, Todo el distrito
La Cruz	Santa Cecilia La Garita	Caoba La Virgen La Garita Centro Los Andes
Nandayure	Bejuco	Moravia

CANTON	DISTRICT	COMMUNITY
	Porvenir	Quebrada Nando Los Ángeles Quebrada Grande
Hojancha	Puerto Carrillo Monterromó	Betania San Miguel San Isidro Cuesta Roja
Buenos Aires	Pilas Changuena	Concepción Pablo Nuevo Changuena Centro Paraíso
Osa	Serpe Bahía Ballena	Serpe Centro Bahía Drake Valla Centro Playa Hermosa
Golfito	Puerto Jiménez Pavón	Puerto Jiménez Centro La Palma Conte Zancudo
Coto Brus Coto Brus	Limoncito Pittier	Sabanilla Las Vegas Aguas Calientes Santamaría
Corredores	Canoas Laurel	San Jorge El Triunfo Naranjo La Nuvia
Aguirre	Saavegre Naranjito	Centro Portalón Centro Villa Nueva
Parrita	Parrita	Stradique Pirris (IDA settlement)
Puntarenas	Barranca Chomes	Juanito Mora El Progreso Orocú (IDA settlement) Colimas de Sarmiento
San José	Hospital Uruca	El Pochote Cristo Rey León XII La Carpio
Alajuelita	San Antonio	The whole district (dispersed)
Acosta	Cangrejal Sabanilla	Disperse populations Disperse populations
León Cortés	Llano Bonito Santa Cruz	Disperse populations Disperse populations
Turubares	San Juan de Mata San Luis	San Gabriel Quebrada Azul San Luis
Goicoechea	Rancho Redondo	Todo el Distrito

CANTON	DISTRICT	COMMUNITY
	Purral	Los Cuadros
Desamparados	Frailes Rosario	Particular areas with disperse population Particular areas with disperse population
Cartago Cartago	Llano Grande Quebradilla	Llano Grande centro Barrio los Ángeles Asentamiento La Flor (IDA) Coris
Turrialba	La Suiza Tayutic	Cruzada de Afirro Las Colonias Quetzal Grano de Oro
Sarapiquí	La Cureña Llanuras de Gaspar	Los Ángeles Golfito La Aldea San Antonio
Alajuela	Sabanilla San Rafael	El Cerro San Luis El Futuro Sacramento
San Ramón	Piedades Sur Zapote	Guaria-Sardinal San Miguel San Antonio de Zapotal Carrera Buena