Chapter 2

Governance of school resource use in Uruguay

This chapter is about the governance of schooling, including the distribution of responsibilities, the supply of school services and the organisation of the school network. It places particular emphasis on areas of priority for Uruguay such as the structure of education governance, strategic planning and equity within the school system. It also reviews areas in which demand for education services is likely not to be met and identifies a number of sources of inefficiency in school resource use. The chapter further highlights the importance of implementation aspects of education policy and the need to increase trust in education through effective change in educational policy.

This chapter is about the governance of schooling, including the supply of school services and the organisation of the school network. It analyses how the effectiveness of resource use is influenced by key features of the school system such as the distribution of responsibilities, the structure of schooling, diversity of school offerings, and learning opportunities across student groups. The chapter places particular emphasis on areas of priority for Uruguay such as the structure of education governance and equity within the school system.

Context and features

Distribution of responsibilities: a high degree of centralisation and limited school autonomy

As described in Chapter 1, the Uruguayan education system is highly centralised, both in terms of distribution of responsibilities across levels of governance and in terms of space and geography. Almost all of the decisions about administrative and pedagogical aspects that provide the framework for the operation and organisation of schools are taken at the central level by ANEP's Central Governing Council (CODICEN) in Montevideo and the councils for the different subsystems of the education system (the Pre-primary and Primary Education Council [CEIP], the Secondary Education Council [CES] and the Technical and Professional Education Council [CETP]). As described in Chapter 1, the CODICEN co-ordinates the work of the different councils and holds ultimate decision-making power in some administrative and pedagogical areas (e.g. approving the statutes of teachers and non-teaching staff, approving curricula, setting instruction time and the school calendar), even if in practice it works jointly with the councils in these areas. The councils design and implement policies and decide upon and manage a large proportion of administrative and pedagogical aspects for their respective subsystem (e.g. definition of curricula, organisation of the teaching workforce and recruitment of staff in schools, maintenance of infrastructure, allocation of materials, supervision of schools and personnel appraisal through school inspection). A fourth education council, the Teacher Training Council (CFE) regulates and administers teacher education and professional development of teachers.

As seen in Chapter 1, there are two major features of the governance of schooling that distinguish Uruguay. First, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) has a relatively secondary role in the development and implementation of school education policy. MEC regulates and oversees part of private early childhood and pre-primary education. Second, the pre-tertiary education system is co-administered with teachers as they elect representatives to the administration of ANEP (CODICEN and all the education councils). Another player in the governance of pre-tertiary education is the Child and Adolescent Institute of Uruguay (INAU), which regulates and administers the network of day schools in early childhood education and the Childcare and Family Centres (CAIF). Finally, a significant recent development in the governance of schooling in Uruguay was the establishment of the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEEd), an autonomous institution with the responsibility of evaluating the quality of education at the pre-primary, primary and secondary education levels.

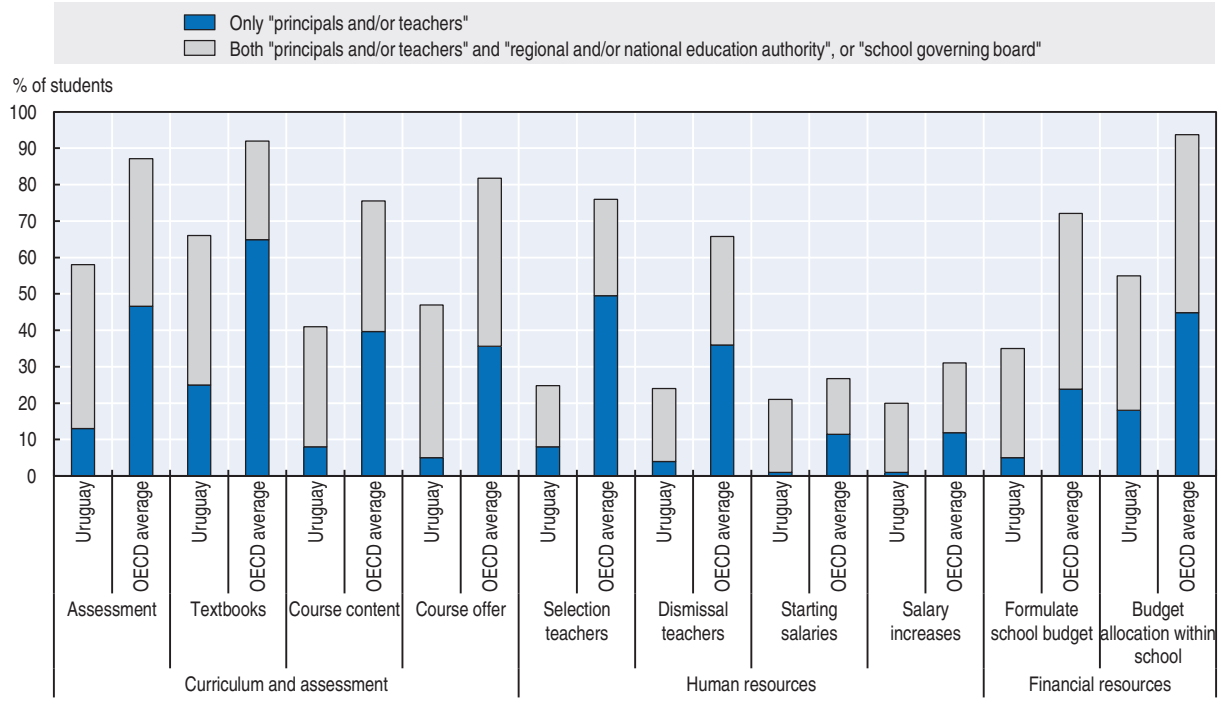
Depending on the subsystem, councils' representations at the departmental level provide some input into decisions taken by their respective council and hold some decision-making powers themselves. In pre-primary and primary education, departmental inspections have some say about the distribution of teaching positions in schools, which is ultimately determined by the technical inspection at the central level (see Chapters 1 and 4). Departmental inspections also decide about the allocation of specific targeted programmes to schools. In general secondary education, decision-making is the most centralised among the different subsystems, but the Secondary Education Council has begun a process of decentralisation through the creation of regional inspections that are based in departments outside of Montevideo, even if the regional level does not yet hold any responsibility for the education system. In technical-professional secondary education, the council has recently created five regional campuses that hold some powers for the organisation and operation of technical and agrarian schools (e.g. planning of initiatives at regional level, supervision of schools in the region, co-ordination of the curricular offer at schools in the region). In addition, Departmental Co-ordinating Commissions for Education (*Comisiones Coordinadoras Departamentales de la Educación*) within the country's departments are responsible for convening participation councils (*Consejos de Participación*, see Chapter 1) to reflect about education as a whole in the department, but hold no decision-making powers.

Public schools have almost no autonomy to decide about aspects that govern their organisation and operation and to plan and manage their own financial, human and physical resources. They have very limited financial resources for the maintenance of the facilities at their disposal (see Chapter 3), have no discretion to develop and implement specific programmes for their school (see Chapter 4) and have no authority to select and hire their teachers (see Chapter 5) (INEEd, 2015).

Schools have very little autonomy in the management of school resources in Uruguay compared to other OECD countries (see Figure 2.1). According to PISA 2012, a small proportion of 15-year-olds attend schools whose school principal reports that only principals and/or teachers establish student assessment policies (13%), choose which textbooks are used (25%), determine course content (8%), decide which courses are offered (5%), select teachers for hire (8%), fire teachers (4%), establish teachers' starting salaries (1%) and increases (1%), formulate the school budget (5%), or decide on budget allocations within the school (18%) (OECD, 2013a). All these figures are considerably below the OECD average (see Figure 2.1). School principals are also unable to design their own organisational structure, both in terms of selecting their management team and designing functions for school staff.

Levels of autonomy are considerably greater in the private school sector. Private schools are free to select the textbooks they use, choose the courses they offer, have considerable leeway in determining course content (while they use the national curriculum, they can complement it through other activities and/or increased workload), and have significant autonomy in establishing student assessment policies. In addition, the private sector has full autonomy in teacher recruitment and dismissal, salary setting and the allocation of resources within the school (INEEd, 2015). According to the perceptions of principals of schools attended by 15-year-olds, secondary schools offering technical-professional programmes seem to have greater autonomy in deciding their course offer and in selecting the textbooks used than secondary schools offering general programmes (INEEd, 2015).

Figure 2.1. **School autonomy in Uruguay and OECD, 2012**



Note: This figure shows the percentage of students in schools whose principal reported in PISA 2012 that the following groups have a considerable responsibility for the areas of autonomy displayed above: i) only "principals and/or teachers" (indicated in dark blue); and ii) both "principals and/or teachers" and "regional and/or national education authority", or "school governing board" (indicated in light grey).
Source: OECD (2013a), *PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful: Resources, Policies and Practices (Volume IV)*, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201156-en*.

Organisation of the school network

There are no regulations regarding the size of schools (number of students) or their geographical distribution within the country. The only formal decision concerns the establishment of new schools, particularly on the availability of resources for construction. There are also some guidelines for infrastructure organisation.

In 2014, the average size of primary schools was 129 students (124 for public schools and 157 for private schools). This hides considerable differences between urban and rural schools. In the public sector, while the size of an urban primary school was 256 students, it stood at 13.4 students for rural schools. Some rural primary schools have just one student. In 2014, there were more rural public primary schools (1 111) than urban public primary schools (938) (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2). The size of primary schools is greater in Montevideo (315 in the public sector and 193 in the private sector) than in the rest of the country (98 in the public sector and 121 in the private sector) (see Table 2.2). Urban schools which do not operate full-time or extended time typically use the school infrastructure in two shifts. Full-time primary schools are also, on average, smaller than common primary schools; most full-time schools were planned to accommodate an average of 200 students (INEEd, 2015).

As can be seen in Table 2.1, while the number of primary education students dropped about 13% between 2003 and 2014 (about 18.1% in public schools), the number of schools remained about the same (dropped about 1.4% in the public system). It is interesting to note that while the number of students in rural public primary schools dropped about 12% during this period, the number of rural primary schools increased by 2.3% (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. **Number of students, schools and teachers by level of education, sector of provision and location, 2003 and 2014**

	2003	2014	Percentage change
Students			
Primary education	**354 843**	**308 644**	**-13.0**
Public schools	311 141	254 686	-18.1
Montevideo	96 337	78 355	-18.7
Rest of the country	214 804	176 331	-17.9
Urban schools	294 182	239 746	-18.5
Rural schools	16 959	14 940	-11.9
Private schools	43 702	53 958	23.5
Montevideo	28 325	32 984	16.4
Rest of the country	15 377	20 974	36.4
Secondary education, general programmes	**276 600**	**265 241**	**-4.1**
Public schools	242 319	221 137	-8.7
Montevideo	91 303	70 956	-22.3
Rest of the country	151 016	150 181	-0.6
Private schools	34 281	44 104	28.7
Montevideo	26 804	29 493	10.0
Rest of the country	7 477	14 611	95.4
Schools			
Primary education	**2 396**	**2 393**	**-0.1**
Public schools	2 078	2 049	-1.4
Montevideo	257	249	-3.1
Rest of the country	1 821	1 800	-1.2
Urban schools	992	938	-5.4
Rural schools	1 086	1 111	2.3
Private schools	318	344	8.2
Montevideo	162	171	5.6
Rest of the country	156	173	10.9
Secondary education, general programmes	**483**	**626**	**29.6**
Public schools	321	436	35.8
Montevideo	84	104	23.8
Rest of the country	237	332	40.1
Private schools	162	190	17.3
Montevideo	100	107	7.0
Rest of the country	62	83	33.9
Teachers			
Primary education	**..**	**23 626**	
Public schools	13 439	15 237	13.4
Montevideo	3 962	4 178	5.5
Rest of the country	9 477	11 059	16.7
Private schools	..	8 389	..
Montevideo	..	4 984	..
Rest of the country	..	3 405	..
Secondary education, general programmes	**..**	**..**	
Public schools	25 168	23 187	-7.9
Private schools	..	..	..

..: Not available.

Note: Data on teachers for primary education refer to head counts while data on teachers for secondary education are based on the number of subjects, i.e. teachers who teach more than one subject are counted as different teachers.

Source: MEC (2003, 2014), *Anuario Estadístico de Educación* (Education Statistical Yearbook), 2003 and 2014 editions, *www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/11078/5/mecweb/publicaciones_?3colid=927*.

This led to a substantial decrease of the size of public schools from about 150 students to about 124 students during 2003-14 (see Table 2.2). Similarly, the student-teacher ratio in public primary education dropped from 23.2 in 2003 to 16.7 in 2014 (see Table 2.2). By contrast, both the number of students and the size of schools have increased in the private primary sector (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2).

Table 2.2. **School size and student-teacher ratio by level of education, sector of provision and location, 2003 and 2014**

	2003	2014	Percentage change
School size			
Primary education	**148.1**	**129.0**	**-12.9**
Public schools	149.7	124.3	-17.0
Montevideo	374.9	314.7	-16.1
Rest of the country	118.0	98.0	-17.0
Urban schools	296.6	255.6	-13.8
Rural schools	15.6	13.4	-13.9
Private schools	137.4	156.9	14.1
Montevideo	174.8	192.9	10.3
Rest of the country	98.6	121.2	23.0
Secondary education, general programmes	**572.7**	**423.7**	**-26.0**
Public schools	754.9	507.2	-32.8
Montevideo	1 086.9	682.3	-37.2
Rest of the country	637.2	452.4	-29.0
Private schools	211.6	232.1	9.7
Montevideo	268.0	275.6	2.8
Rest of the country	120.6	176.0	46.0
Student-teacher ratio			
Primary education	..	**13.1**	
Public schools	23.2	16.7	-27.8
Montevideo	24.3	18.8	-22.9
Rest of the country	22.7	15.9	-29.7
Private schools	..	6.4	..
Montevideo	..	6.6	..
Rest of the country	..	6.2	..
Secondary education, general programmes			
Public schools	9.6	9.5	-0.9
Private schools	..	..	..

..: Not available.
Note: Data on teachers for primary education refer to head counts while data on teachers for secondary education are based on the number of subjects, i.e. teachers who teach more than one subject are counted as different teachers.
Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, MEC (2003, 2014), *Anuario Estadístico de Educación* (Education Statistical Yearbook), 2003 and 2014 editions, *www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/11078/5/mecweb/publicaciones_?3colid=927*.

In secondary general programmes, while the number of students decreased by 4.1% between 2003 and 2014 (8.7% decrease in the public sector and a 28.7% increase in the private sector), the number of schools increased by 29.6% (35.8% increase in the public sector and a 17.3% increase in the private sector) (see Table 2.1). This has led to a substantial decrease of the size of general secondary schools in the public sector from 755 students in 2003 to 507 students in 2014. This drop was particularly strong in Montevideo, from 1 087 to 682 students in the same period. By contrast, the average size of private general secondary schools increased from 212 students in 2003 to 232 students in 2014. In secondary education, schools typically operate in two shifts.

In spite of the decrease in student numbers, particularly in primary education, there has been no policy initiative to assess the need for adjustments to the school network, including school closures. Rural primary schools remain open even if they have a single student. In secondary education, given the expected expansion of the sector, there are no policy plans to re-organise the network of schools.

Organisation of learning

Student admission, transfers, and tracking

The education system in Uruguay leaves the choice of public school for their children to families themselves (see also Chapter 1). Generally, students typically attend their neighbourhood school, which can lead to inequities as socio-spatial segregation in cities has been increasing (Peters, 2015).

Uruguay does not promote competition between schools and, as PISA 2012 indicates for secondary education, schools tend to compete with few schools for students in the same area. 43.7% of students were in a school whose principal reported that they were not competing with any other school for students in the same area (OECD average: 23.8%), and 40.6% of students were in a school whose principal reported that they were competing with two or more schools (OECD average: 60.7%). Competition for students among schools as reported by principals is also low when compared with other Latin American countries. In Argentina, for instance, 14% of students were in schools whose principal reported to compete with no other school, and 77.9% of students went to a school whose principal reported to be competing with two or more schools for their student intake. In Brazil, the proportion of students was 26.4% and 51.7% respectively; in Chile, 15.8% and 65.8% (OECD, 2013a, Table IV.4.4).

In case a school is oversubscribed, some selection criteria apply. In primary education, demand for full-time schools and extended-time schools currently exceeds supply. In these cases, students with a sibling in the same school have priority for admission, followed by students resident in the neighbourhood of the school or with parents working there at the time of enrolment. Full-time schools also take into account the child's household income and the labour market situation of the child's mother. In general secondary education, the council also considers residence as a factor for prioritising students if more students want to attend a school than places are available.

According to PISA 2012, 26.7% of 15-year-olds were in a school whose principal reported that residence in a particular area is always considered for admission (OECD average: 40.7%, 37% in public general secondary schools; 9% in technical schools; and 1% in private schools) (INEEd, 2015, Annex I). In general secondary schools this is more common than in technical secondary schools (37.4% and 9.4% respectively), and in lower secondary schools more common than in upper secondary schools (33.2% and 22.3% respectively). Student performance plays a minor role for school admission. 50.4% of students went to a school whose principal reported that a student's academic record or recommendations of a feeder school are never considered for admission (OECD average: 32%, Argentina: 47.1%, Brazil: 55.2%, Chile: 19.1%). However, there are significant differences between public and private schools: about 57% of the students in the private sector were in schools whose principals reported that they "always" considered at least one of these two criteria in school admission decisions (INEEd, 2015, Annex I). As in various other countries taking part in PISA 2012, including Argentina and Chile, upper secondary schools in Uruguay are more

selective in terms of academic performance than lower secondary schools (difference of 15.7 percentage points) (INEEd, 2015; OECD, 2013a, Tables IV.2.7 and IV.2.8).

Secondary schools typically do not transfer students to another school because of low academic achievement, behavioural problems or special learning needs. Only 3.7% of 15-year-olds were in a school whose principal reported that one of these factors would lead to the transfer of a student to another school (OECD average: 12.8%, Argentina: 11.5%, Brazil: 14.7%, Chile: 22.9%) (OECD, 2013a, Table IV.2.9).

As described in Chapter 1, students in Uruguay have to select an education track for the first time at the age of 11-12, earlier than in OECD countries (average: 14 years) and in other countries in the region (Argentina and Brazil: 15 years, Chile: 16 years) (OECD, 2013a). However, it is possible for students to change tracks between general and technical-professional programmes later on in their schooling, even if this may be difficult considering differences in curricula (especially from professional training programmes to general and technical programmes). At age 11, students can choose between general and technical programmes (see Chapter 1). At age 14 or 15, students choose between general programmes, technical programmes and professional training programmes (see Chapter 1). In the second year of the upper secondary general track, students select a humanistic, scientific, biological or artistic orientation. In the second year of the technical track, students also specialise, for instance in management, computer science, or chemistry. The choice of programmes at both age 11-12 and age 14-15 is up to students and schools do not have selection criteria for the different tracks (INEEd, 2015).

Curricula and assessments

As described in Chapter 1, in Uruguay national curricula for each level and type of school education are prescribed centrally and little autonomy exists at the school level to introduce learning content more specific to respond to local needs. Schools are required to implement educational programmes as specified by the respective council in terms of number of hours assigned to each learning area and subject. Beyond the scope given to schools through the lack of specificity in the definition of content for most programmes and areas of knowledge, schools have few ways to adjust curricula to their needs and these make up only a very small proportion of the overall curriculum. In general lower secondary education, some flexibility is possible through an open curricular space, in some general upper secondary programmes through optional classes. In technical-professional secondary education, schools have some limited autonomy through elective instruction hours or specialisation in some baccalaureate programmes. For example, an agricultural baccalaureate in a dairy school will specialise in this field in terms of instruction hours as defined in the central curriculum, but the school has no autonomy to alter these central requirements. In technical-professional education, the regional campuses co-ordinate and plan the curricular offer in their region to strengthen the links between education and the local economy and labour market (INEEd, 2015).

By international comparison, secondary schools in Uruguay have relatively little autonomy in setting curricular and assessment practices. School autonomy as measured by the PISA 2012 index of school responsibility for curriculum and assessment is smaller than on average across OECD countries and smaller than in all other Latin American countries participating in the survey, except Mexico. Even for decisions about student assessment, one of the remits in which schools in Uruguay have a larger degree of autonomy, principals and teachers have less freedom than in many other countries. Only

13% of 15-year-olds were in a school whose principal reported that only principals and/or teachers have considerable responsibility for establishing student assessment policies (OECD average: 47%, Argentina: 59%, Brazil: 20%, Chile: 46%) (OECD, 2013a, Figure IV.4.3).

Learning time

In theory, the CODICEN holds responsibility for setting the school calendar, for deciding when classes begin and when they end, as well as the number of instruction days for the different levels of education and programmes. In practice, the CODICEN works together with the different councils to define these aspects of the education system (INEEd, 2015).

In pre-primary and primary education, regulations stipulate a minimum of 180 instruction days per year, but in practice students attend up to 187 days a year. According to data provided by the CEIP, the average instruction time for a student in this subsystem has been increasing over the last years. While the average student in pre-primary and primary education received 834 hours of annual instruction in 2007, this amount had increased to 862 hours in 2013, the equivalent of one week of classes. All public common schools follow the same schedule, but there are some differences across school types. Common urban schools, Practice schools and *Aprender* schools teach four hours per day, either in the morning or in the afternoon depending on the shift (*turno*) they offer. This includes 30 minutes of break time. Extended-time schools offer a longer school day of seven hours. The additional time is used to organise workshops and activities, such as extra instruction in English, music, and plastic and visual arts. Full-time schools offer 7.5 hours of instruction per day. Rural schools provide five hours of instruction per day.

In general lower secondary education, annual instruction time amounts to 1 140 hours. The curriculum specifies an instruction load of 30 hours per week distributed across 39 lessons of 45 minutes. In general upper secondary education, annual instruction time decreases to 884 hours. The curriculum specifies about 26.5 hours of instruction per week distributed across 34 lessons of 45 minutes and about 5 hours of instruction per day (INEEd, 2015).

School holidays for pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education run from mid-December to the beginning of March with two additional weeks off in July. School holidays in upper secondary education begin earlier, generally around the end of October or beginning of November, but the months of November and December are an examination period (INEEd, 2015).

Time-on-task, that is the amount of time that teachers spend on instruction as opposed to administrative duties and classroom management, is an important aspect of effective classroom teaching. Poor disciplinary climate in classrooms may result in significant reductions in learning opportunities for all students. Interruptions to classes in mathematics as reported by students for PISA 2012 are more of an issue in Uruguay than in many countries in the OECD, but less so than in other countries in the region. The PISA index of disciplinary climate for Uruguay shows more problems with disciplinary climate than is the case on average across OECD countries, but fewer problems than the index suggests for Argentina, Brazil and Chile (OECD, 2013a).

Students missing out on learning opportunities by skipping school or classes or by arriving late can also be an issue that affects learning time. Student truancy not only hurts the individual student, but when it is pervasive, it contributes to a disruptive learning environment and hurts the entire class. As principals reported for PISA 2012, student

truancy is a problem for schools in Uruguay, and especially so for technical schools. 46% of students were in a school whose principal reported that student truancy hinders learning to some extent or a lot (OECD average: 32%, Argentina: 53%, Brazil: 52%, Chile: 17%). In technical schools this proportion amounted to 62.3%, in general secondary schools to 37.9% (OECD, 2013a, Figure IV.5.5; INEEd, 2015). The share of students arriving late for school is of particular concern. 59.3% of students reported having arrived late for school at least once in the two weeks prior to the PISA assessment, compared to an OECD average of 35.3% (Argentina: 47%, Brazil: 33.7%, Chile: 53%). 79.1% of students were in a school where more than half of students had arrived late at least once in the two weeks before the PISA assessment. 23.6% of students reported having skipped a day of school at least once in the two weeks before the PISA assessment, and about the same share of students reported having skipped some classes at least once in the same period (OECD average: 14.5% and 17.8%) (OECD, 2013a, Tables IV.5.1, 5.2 and 5.3).

It is also important to consider learning time outside of formal classroom settings, such as out-of-school instruction, homework, and private tutoring. For PISA 2012, 15-year-olds in Uruguay reported to spend an average of 4.7 hours per week on homework or other study set by teachers for all subjects, around the OECD average of 4.9 hours, but more than in Argentina (3.7 hours), Brazil (3.3 hours) and Chile (3.5 hours). Students also reported to spend 66 minutes per week working with a personal tutor (OECD average: 42 minutes, Argentina: 84 minutes, Brazil: 60 minutes, Chile: 36 minutes), and the same amount of time to attend after-school classes paid for by their parents (OECD average: 36 minutes, Argentina: 66 minutes, Brazil: 90 minutes, Chile: 24 minutes) (OECD, 2013a, Table IV.3.27).

Schools can organise extracurricular activities for their students. According to the PISA 2012 principal survey, 69.9% of 15-year-olds were in a school that offers students the opportunity to participate in a band, orchestra or choir and 52.1% of students were in a school that organises a school play or musical (OECD average: 62.9%, 58.5% respectively). Schools provide fewer opportunities for students to publish a school yearbook or magazine (11.9%, OECD average: 55.8%), to participate in volunteering (35.5%, OECD average: 72.6%), or to join an arts club (27.4%, OECD average: 61.7%). As in other countries, many schools offer sporting activities (92.7%, OECD average: 90.2%) (OECD, 2013a, Table IV.3.30). General secondary schools are more likely to organise creative extracurricular activities than technical secondary schools (INEEd, 2015).

Compensatory programmes to improve equity in education

In Uruguay, there is a large variety of compensatory programmes to improve equity in education and support students with learning difficulties. They involve the funding of specific groups of students or schools on a targeted basis. The participation of specific schools in these programmes is decided by the administrators of the programmes (e.g. education councils, MEC), often following advice from locally-based units such as the inspection, particularly in pre-primary and primary education. Table 2.3 summarises the main features of some of the major educational programmes.

In pre-primary and primary education, the CEIP has implemented two major programmes to support students with learning difficulties and disadvantaged students. The Community Teachers Programme (*Programa Maestros Comunitarios*) allocates one to two community teachers to disadvantaged schools depending on the size of the school. This programme aims to prevent students from falling behind and having to repeat a year by supporting children who show low performance. The Teacher + Teacher (*Maestro más*

Table 2.3. **Major educational compensatory programmes in Uruguay**

Name	Supervision	Target group	Main features
Community Teachers Programme (*Programa Maestros Comunitarios*) (Since 2005)	Organised by CEIP Monitored by MIDES	Students falling behind in disadvantaged schools in primary education	Allocates one to two community teachers to disadvantaged schools depending on the size of the school (schools are identified by the inspection, typically from quintiles 1 and 2 of socio-cultural context). It involves a maximum of 20 students per school per semester. Four major components: • Educational integration (e.g. working in small groups; through games); • Interaction with families (visits if students do not attend school; raising self-esteem of families; workshops for parents); • Remedial education (e.g. if at risk of repetition); and • Literacy at home (working with families).
Teacher + Teacher Programme (*Maestro más Maestro*) (Since 2012)	Organised by CEIP	Students in primary education (Year 1 and 2) with poor performance	Seeks to reduce year repetition in the first and second year of primary education by improving students' oral and written expression. The programme offers two formats: in some schools, a teacher works with students after the end of the school day to offer additional learning opportunities in a longer school day; in other schools, two teachers work together in one classroom at the same time to provide more individualised attention to children with the greatest learning difficulties.
Tutorials Project (*Liceos con tutorías y profesor coordinador pedagógico*) (Since 2008)	Organised by CES	Students with learning difficulties in disadvantaged schools in public general lower secondary education	Provides additional and targeted support for schools with the greatest socio-economic challenges in view of improving the learning outcomes of students in these schools. Participation in this programme is compulsory for schools with more than 400 students and a year repetition rate higher than 25% for the entire general lower secondary cycle. The programme consists of: • Tutorials for students at the greatest risk of repetition or drop-out who are selected by schools; and • Additional resources for school meals, uniforms and supplies for all students in the school (schools receive a fixed amount of money depending on their enrolment numbers which they distribute across all types of materials).
Educational Commitment Programme (*Compromiso Educativo*) (Since 2011)	Managed by the CODICEN, CES, CETP, CFE, MEC, UDELAR, MIDES, INAU, and INJU	General and technical-professional upper secondary students Involves selection based on an index of critical needs of the MIDES.	Students sign an educational commitment agreement on performance and behaviour together with their family and the pedagogical facilitator teacher (*profesor articulador pedagogico*) of the school. Some students receive a small stipend of UYU 8 000 per year. Other students receive special support in school instead of the stipend. The Educational Commitment Programme also provides mentoring by tertiary education students who volunteer to work with students on a weekly basis on different projects and topics.

Table 2.3. **Major educational compensatory programmes in Uruguay** *(cont.)*

Name	Supervision	Target group	Main features
Uruguay Studies (*Uruguay Estudia*) (Since 2009)	Managed by the MEC, CES, CETP, Bank of the Republic, CND, MEF, OPP and MLSS	Students above 14 years of age at all levels of the education system	Offers scholarships for students from the end of primary to upper secondary education and tutorials to help students complete lower secondary and upper secondary education.
Scholarships to continue studies (*Becas de acceso a la continuidad educativa*) (Since 1986)	Organised by MEC	Students in lower and upper secondary education	Scholarships for students in lower and upper secondary education. The Departmental Co-ordinating Commissions for Education are responsible for selecting students based on their performance and household income. Schools have one member of staff (*referente*) who follows students' progress, provides support, and keeps track of school and class attendance.
Community Classrooms Programme (*Programa Aulas Comunitarias*) (Since 2007)	Organised by CES and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	Youth between 12 and 17 who have never begun or dropped out of secondary education before completing the first year of lower secondary education.	Seeks to reintegrate students in the first year of general lower secondary education, to introduce students to life at a general secondary school, and to accompany young people's transition from community classrooms to general secondary schools. While an NGO typically provides the physical space and a team of co-ordinators, social workers, educators and workshop leaders, the CES is responsible for the provision of subject teaching. The community classroom can, however, also be based in a school.

Note: CFE: Teacher Training Council; CEIP: Pre-primary and Primary Education Council; CES: Secondary Education Council; CETP: Technical and Professional Education Council; CND: National Development Corporation; CODICEN: Central Governing Council; INAU: the Child and Adolescent Institute; INJU: the National Youth Institute; MEC: Ministry of Education and Culture; MEF: Ministry of Economy and Finance; MIDES: Ministry of Social Development; MLSS: Ministry of Labour and Social Security; OPP: Office of Planning and Budget; and UDELAR: University of the Republic.

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

Maestro) Programme seeks to reduce year repetition in the first and second year of primary education by improving students' oral and written expression and by introducing new and innovative ways of teaching in schools. This programme offers two formats: in some schools, a teacher works with students after the end of the school day to offer additional learning opportunities in a longer school day; in other schools, two teachers work together in one classroom at the same time to provide more individualised attention to children with the greatest learning difficulties.

In general lower secondary education, the CES has created the Tutorials Project (*Liceos con tutorías y profesor coordinador pedagógico*) to provide additional and targeted support for schools with the greatest socio-educational challenges and to improve the learning outcomes of students in these schools. The programme consists of tutorials for students at the greatest risk of repetition or drop-out who are selected by schools and additional resources for school meals, uniforms and utensils for all students in the school. In general and technical-professional upper secondary education students can benefit from additional support through the Educational Commitment Programme (*Compromiso Educativo*). Students can sign up on line and are selected according to an index of critical needs of the MIDES. Some of the students sign an educational commitment agreement on performance and behaviour together with their family and the pedagogical facilitator teacher (*profesor articulador pedagogico*) of the school and receive a small stipend of UYU 8 000 per year. Other students sign an educational commitment agreement, but receive special support in school instead of the stipend.

The programme Uruguay Studies (*Uruguay Estudia*) aims to support students above 14 years of age at all levels of the education system to complete their studies. This programme offers scholarships for students from the end of primary to upper secondary education and tutorials to help students complete lower secondary and upper secondary education. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) provides small scholarships for students in lower secondary and upper secondary education to continue their studies (*becas de acceso a la continuidad educativa*). Also, the CES together with NGOs organises the Community Classrooms Programme targeted at children aged between 12 and 17 who have never begun or dropped out of secondary education before completing the 1st year of lower secondary education. These are special classes which are organised in settings which facilitate the integration of these students. In 2016, educational authorities announced the intention to gradually discontinue this programme.

These educational programmes complement other major equity-targeted initiatives such as full-time schools, extended-time schools and *Aprender* schools, which benefit from additional resources and are located in disadvantaged localities. Other major programmes are the Meals at School Programme (*Programa de Alimentación Escolar*), which provides free meals (breakfast, lunch and/or snack) in public primary schools, with some differentiation depending on the socio-economic quintile of the school; and the Summer School Programme (*Programa Educativo de Verano*), which extends the school year for 28 days in the summer, following projects proposed by some schools (typical activities include both extracurricular activities and support to improve language and mathematics).

Strengths

There are considerable efforts to extend the coverage of the school system

The last decade in Uruguay has been characterised by considerable efforts to extend the coverage of the school system, which has been supported by increasing levels of public

funding (see Chapter 3). Uruguay operates an extensive school network able to ensure good access to education. Especially, there is a strong emphasis on providing access to early education in rural areas. There are considerable efforts to ensure that primary education (and, to a lesser extent, pre-primary education) can be provided locally. In 2014, there were more rural primary schools (1 111) than urban primary schools (938). Some rural schools have only one student. This approach has granted universal access to primary education.

There has also been considerable progress in providing access to pre-primary education. The net attendance rate for children aged 5 reached 98% in 2012 while it stood at 89% for children aged 4 (INEEd, 2015). This resulted from a variety of initiatives including the expansion of pre-primary education services provided by ANEP, publicly funding private provision (e.g. CAIFs) and encouraging the expansion of the regulated independent private sector (see Chapter 1). Berlinski et al. (2008) studied the effect of pre-primary education on children's subsequent school outcomes in Uruguay. They found small gains from pre-primary education attendance at early ages that get magnified as children grow up. By age 15, children who attended pre-primary education have accumulated 0.8 extra years of education and are 27 percentage points more likely to be in school compared to their siblings who did not attend pre-primary education. The authors conclude that pre-primary education in Uruguay appears as a successful and cost-effective policy to prevent early failure. However, some progress is still needed regarding attendance at age 3 and below. For age 3, the net attendance rate reached only 64% in 2012 with important income-related inequities of access (see Chapter 1).

The extension of student learning time in primary education has also been a recent priority through the full-time schools programme and the extended-time schools programme (see Chapter 1). Both these programmes extend learning time relative to the typical four hours delivered by common schools and are offered in schools serving more disadvantaged student populations. However, full-time primary schooling in Uruguay remains underdeveloped as it covered only about 11% of primary education students in 2013. Cerdan-Infantes and Vermeersch (2007) assessed the impact of the full-time school programme in Uruguay on standardised test scores of Year 6 students. They show that students in very disadvantaged schools improved their performance in both mathematics and language as a result of their attendance of full-time schools. They conclude that, while the programme is expensive, it may, if well targeted, help address inequalities in education in Uruguay, at an increase in cost per student not larger than the then deficit in spending between Uruguay and the rest of the country.

Expansion has been considerably slower in secondary education. In 2013, the net attendance rate in lower secondary education was 75% while it only reached 43% in upper secondary education (INEEd, 2015). While this is not satisfactory, there have been some efforts to provide conditions for expansion at this level. In general programmes, in spite of the slight decrease in student numbers, the number of secondary schools (both public and private) has increased considerably between 2003 and 2014 (see Table 2.1), and at a higher rate outside Montevideo. This means that geographical access has improved in this period of time. In technical-professional secondary education, course offerings have expanded considerably which has led a growing share of students to select these programmes. The greater diversity of programmes allows the education system to provide better options to a greater variety of students, particularly those at a greater risk of dropping out. Technical-professional programmes are more and more a valid option for students to remain in the system at the secondary level. However, there might be some current constraints in

expanding the number of schools providing technical and professional programmes across the country. While making school attendance mandatory to the end of upper secondary education sends an important signal to families about the importance of education, its enforcement is clearly work in progress. Greater efforts in diversifying the supply of offerings at the secondary level, in supporting learning difficulties before and during secondary education and in granting better transitions between primary and secondary education are needed to attain universal attendance of secondary education.

Education policy gives good prominence to equity in education

Education policy in Uruguay is giving increasing prominence to equity in education. This is in recognition of the impact the socio-economic background of students has on their academic achievement. As explained in Chapter 1, according to the PISA 2012 survey, the Uruguayan education system is among those where the impact of the socio-economic status of parents on student performance is among the highest and the proportion of resilient students[1] is among the lowest. While the OECD average of the percentage of variance explained by socio-economic status in mathematics performance was 14.8%, in the case of Uruguay it was 22.8%, which was the fifth highest among PISA participating countries. And while the proportion of resilient students was 6.4% for the whole OECD area this percentage was only 2.1% in Uruguay (OECD, 2013b).

The recognition of equity challenges in education has led Uruguay to invest considerably in targeted programmes aimed at improving equity in education. The main approach is to provide greater resources to those students and schools with the greatest needs as a result of a given disadvantage. This is the case, in primary education, of the Community Teachers Programme and the Teacher + Teacher Programme and, in secondary education, of the Tutorials Project and Educational Commitment Programme (see Table 2.3). The focus is both on students from a disadvantaged background and with learning difficulties. This systematic support for disadvantage provides schools with greater opportunities to offer the necessary support for students with greater needs. There are also programmes targeted at individuals who have dropped out of school or are at risk of doing so, such as the Community Classrooms Programme and the "Uruguay Studies" programme (see Table 2.3).

This focus of policy on targeted programmes to improve equity in education is commendable. However, there are three aspects which require further reflection. First, most resources for equity are channelled through targeted educational programmes, especially in secondary education, while the regular funding of individual schools distributes few resources on the basis of the specific needs of schools (see Chapter 3). As explained in Chapter 3, the excessive reliance on education programmes might reduce the transparency of funding to schools while increasing the complexity of resource distribution. Second, other policy areas have not received enough attention in terms of the inequities they introduce in the system. Two examples are the high levels of student repetition in the system (highly correlated with disadvantage) and the way teachers are deployed to individual schools (which leads to an inequitable distribution of teachers across schools, see Chapter 5). Third, there is limited knowledge about educational disadvantage in the Uruguayan education system – little differential analysis is undertaken on student performance across specific groups such as students from disadvantaged families or those who live in a rural location. Also, no measures of equity in the education system have been developed so that progress towards reducing inequities can be monitored.

A number of initiatives are opening the way for a less centralised education governance system

As analysed below, the highly centralised approach to education governance in Uruguay raises concerns. In such a context, the few initiatives providing some leeway at the local level merit support. In a significant effort to decentralise educational governance, the CETP has created Regional Campuses (covering three or four departments each), which are involved in the region-level preparation of five-year budgets, the supervision of schools and the co-ordination of their offer (INEEd, 2015). The full scope of decisions which will eventually be delegated to the Regional Campuses is yet to be defined (INEEd, 2015). Also, in the CEIP school network, decentralisation has been promoted by departmental inspections which determine the allocation of specific educational programmes to schools and influence the assignment of special teaching personnel. In general secondary education, there are also plans to establish regional offices of the inspectorate (INEEd, 2015). Finally, Departmental Co-ordinating Commissions for Education (*Comisión Coordinadora Departmental de la Educación*, CDE) bring together the main education players to discuss education priorities and co-ordinate education offerings within each department. However, they do not have decision-making powers. While incipient, these initiatives are opening the way to little by little give some autonomy to local players.

The creation of the National Institute for Educational Evaluation fills an important gap in the governance of the education system

A highly relevant development in education governance in Uruguay was the recent establishment of the National Institute for Education Evaluation (INEEd). This responded to the increasing social demand for an autonomous body to carry out reliable evaluations of the education system. INEEd performs a variety of functions: i) compiles key information for national monitoring (statistics and indicators); ii) evaluates the Uruguayan education system, producing the biennial "Report on the State of Education in Uruguay"; iii) co-ordinates and undertakes research studies in education; iv) evaluates the implementation of programmes and innovations; v) develops evaluation and assessment capacities in the system (improvement of practices and training for evaluation and assessment); and vi) contributes to the development of evaluation and assessment procedures and instruments. INEEd is also expected to provide suggestions for educational improvement.

INEEd brings an authoritative and autonomous voice to the analysis of the Uruguayan education system, highly credible for its expertise and technical capacity. It fills an important gap in the governance of the education system through its technical leadership (e.g. in developing methodologies, instruments, guidelines), its ability to develop evaluation capacity across the system (through training, disseminating best practices, and preparing evaluation materials) and its focus on building evidence to assess the impact of education policies and programmes. As such, INEEd has become a fundamental institution to improve checks and balances in an education system in which accountability at the system level remains limited (see below).

However, there are concerns of two types in the operation of INEEd. First, even if INEEd has the mandate to evaluate the Uruguayan education system, in practice the division of labour between the ANEP (through its Research, Evaluation and Statistics Division, ANEP-DIEE) and INEEd within the evaluation and assessment framework remains unclear. For instance, ANEP-DIEE develops statistics, indicators and student assessment instruments, all areas in which INEEd is also involved. While there is collaboration between ANEP-DIEE

and INEEd, it is often ambiguous how far INEEd can take its autonomy in leading educational evaluation activities in the country. Second, while INEEd has technical autonomy over its work, it remains dependent on the country educational authorities. Indeed, INEEd is supervised by a governing board with six members: two nominated by ANEP-CODICEN, two nominated by MEC, one nominated by the *Universidad de la República* and one nominated by a representative of school private providers. The reality is that any of the institutions making these nominations has a vested interest in the evaluation of the Uruguayan education system. This has the potential to greatly limit the independence of INEEd's work, including its judgments on the state of education in Uruguay.

The bases for the evaluation of the education system are being strengthened

A number of initiatives are strengthening the bases for the evaluation of the education system. First, references for the monitoring of the education system are being improved with the development of expected learning outcomes (also called "graduation profiles") at given education stages. These are now available for Year 3 and Year 6, specifying what students should know and be able to do at the end of Years 3 and 6 in four knowledge areas (languages, mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences) (see Chapter 1). Similarly, a working group formed by ANEP is developing expected learning outcomes for lower secondary education (INEEd, 2015). These more detailed reference standards for student learning are an important development in improving the ability of the education system to measure student performance.

Second, improved instruments for the national monitoring of student learning are being developed. In particular, as of 2015, INEEd is developing a national system to monitor student achievement in Year 3 to Year 9 focusing on the assessment of cognitive skills (problem solving, reading comprehension), socio-emotional skills and citizenship knowledge. These assessments are being developed in alignment with the expected learning outcomes. In addition, INEEd is contributing its technical expertise to the refinement of the education indicators framework.

Third, there is also some progress in developing data information systems. Increased attention has been placed to creating, collecting and making data available. The most significant example is the development by ANEP-CEIP of the Unified Management of Registry and Information (*Gestión Unificada de Registros e Información*, GURI), a computerised system to collect data from pre-primary and primary schools on students (e.g. enrolment, attendance, study progress), teachers (e.g. attendance, ratings by inspection) and non-teaching staff (attendance). This system simplifies the collection of data from schools, permits an easy updating, and facilitates the preparation of indicators at the school level. However, it is currently available only for pre-primary and primary schools. This is supported by the disclosure of some information about schools for the general public. A public Internet portal named "SIGANEP" (*www.sig.anep.edu.uy/siganep*), which was established by ANEP, publishes data on every pre-primary and primary school while providing schools' geographical location. Some basic information at the school level is also available from the Primary Education Monitor (*Monitor Educativo de Primaria*), established by ANEP-CEIP (*www.anep.edu.uy/monitor/servlet/inicio*).

Uruguay has benefitted from high levels of trust in education

Trust is essential for our wellbeing and the functioning of our societies, and education plays a key role in the development and maintenance of trust in our communities and

institutions (Borgonovi and Burns, 2015). As governments continue to struggle to recover from the financial crisis, the OECD has made it a priority to work on reinforcing the public's trust in government as well as understanding the key drivers of economic and social wellbeing. Trust in our education systems is an important component of this.

Historically Uruguay has benefitted from high levels of trust in education. The education system, and in particular primary education, was considered an essential pillar of the community and an important cornerstone to personal and societal development. Schools, teachers, and the system in general were highly trusted. A 2007 survey commissioned by the Inter-American Development Bank showed that not only did Uruguay have one of the highest levels of trust in education in the region, its citizens (along with those of Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela) reported levels of satisfaction similar to those of developed nations. Importantly, this was the case despite much lower achievement scores as measured by PISA (IDB, 2008). The explanation given for this at the time was twofold: i) that individuals with lower levels of education tended to rate the quality of education in their country more highly than those with more years of schooling; and ii) that parents appeared to focus on other elements than achievement when rating quality, such as whether the school is kept clean and well-disciplined (IDB, 2008).

The IDB report warned that without more pressure from the public to improve learning outcomes the government was unlikely to feel pressured to make essential reforms to improve education quality. Unquestioning or misplaced trust in education can thus play a negative role in pushing for improvements and creating the conditions for change, which in turn could lead to a sense of complacency. The decline in PISA scores in the 2012 test cannot, of course, be directly attributed to high levels of trust or the lack of public pressure for change, but they are suggestive.

The study of trust and satisfaction in the education system is thus an important indicator in and of itself, as well as a key element in understanding the governance and reform process (see Cerna (2014) for a fuller discussion). High trust and satisfaction in education is important on a number of dimensions, including the satisfaction and retention of teachers, relationships with the community, and support for the importance of education as a societal institution. It is on these levels that Uruguay traditionally benefitted from its historical high levels of trust.

Challenges

Education is faced with a fragmented governance structure with an ambiguous distribution of responsibilities

A major challenge in education in Uruguay concerns its institutional governance structure and the distribution of responsibilities to develop and implement school education policy. First, there is no clarity regarding who is responsible for defining education policy and who is ultimately held accountable for policy implementation and learning outcomes within the education system. This results from the ambiguity of roles between CODICEN and ANEP's education councils (CEIP, CES, CETP, CFE). While CODICEN co-ordinates the work of the four councils and is hierarchically above them, the councils are considered autonomous in their decisions (Mazzini et al., 2014). In practice, each education council operates quite autonomously *vis-à-vis* the CODICEN and the other councils; and the CODICEN maintains a collegial approach to the co-ordination with the councils. Yet the CODICEN negotiates the education budget with the government and is

held responsible for its use before the parliament. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture has a very limited role in the governance of school education as it does not have major policy instruments to be influential (except for its regulatory powers over part of private pre-primary education). Hence, the institutional governance structure is problematic because it does not clearly define the entity with the ultimate responsibility for the state of education in Uruguay. This has a number of challenges associated with it: unclear lines of responsibility, a lack of leadership for educational policy as a whole, and at times competition between the bodies for resources.

Second, the governance structure is highly fragmented as, in practice, each education council operates its subsystem (pre-primary and primary education; general secondary education; technical-professional secondary programmes; teacher training) in a rather independent manner. As a result, school education is not governed as a system, but as a number of rather isolated subsystems. Each area of policy (e.g. human resources, curriculum, budget, infrastructure, planning) is independently addressed within each education council – each council has independent units covering these policy areas while the CODICEN replicates the same units but with no oversight upon the corresponding units of the councils. This institutional design does not ensure enough co-ordination across educational levels and types (D'Avenia, 2014). The risk is the development of policies which are not coherent across the education system, duplication of efforts and resources not allocated efficiently. The fragmentation of education governance makes it difficult for subsystems to share resources and also hinders the smooth shift of resources from one subsystem to the other when needed in function of demographic changes, emerging new needs, existing inefficiencies and changing policy priorities (see also Chapter 3). Also, curricula and study plans vary across levels of education and types of programmes and there is little co-ordination between the different councils to define a curricular framework with common criteria and objectives for the education system as a whole. This lack of co-ordination can complicate students' transition through the education system and from one level to another.

Under such a governance structure, holistic "whole-system" change is difficult to implement. Although during the visit of the OECD review team the vast majority of actors were aware of the main challenges – and indeed in agreement with each other on what those main challenges were – change in education is tremendously difficult to achieve in Uruguay under the current governance structure. Ambiguity in education leadership together with accountability for education results not well targeted prevents any major reform in Uruguay's education system. Only small and incremental change is feasible under the current governance arrangements. This explains the multitude of educational programmes in operation (e.g. targeted at equity, ICT) to bypass the complex regular policy development process and the formation of a large array of committees bringing together the main actors (namely the education councils) to discuss specific policy challenges. In addition, and this is a direct result of fragmented governance and unclear lines of responsibility, there is a distinct lack of a mid-term or long-term vision for the system. In order to effect change and systemic improvement, the institutional governance structure must be addressed.

Education governance is overly centralised

As described above, schools and departments have little autonomy in Uruguay compared to OECD countries (see Figure 2.1). Both the CODICEN and the education councils strongly centralise the management of resources. Not only do central authorities manage school budgets, the recruitment of teachers and the allocation of infrastructure and

equipment but they also retain decision-making power over less fundamental aspects of school operation such as the acquisition of instructional materials, ad hoc repairs at schools and the approval of schools' special activities (e.g. educational or social meeting). According to Mancebo (2012), the Uruguayan education system has historically operated with high centralisation, both functionally and geographically and it has been characterised as "bureaucratic-hierarchical" with "excessive centralisation".

Little local and school autonomy hinders effectiveness in the use of resources as local authorities and schools are unable to match resources to their specific needs, and in consideration of their conditions and context. Also, responses from central educational authorities to an emerging school need can prove very slow, as when an emergency infrastructure situation arises at a school. In addition, limited autonomy disempowers school and local actors. For instance, school leaders are limited in their ability to address challenges and, as they lack tools and own resources, they might then not take full responsibility for school improvement. Also, to the extent that the responsibility for resource management is not decentralised, regional structures such as the Departmental Co-ordinating Commissions for Education (CDE) do not have effective tools to operate effectively. Limited autonomy also makes it more difficult to hold local players accountable, in particular school leaders, as they do not have the responsibility to take most of the decisions (e.g. selecting teachers; use of teacher resources) that have an impact on student learning outcomes. Besides, as local actors (namely school principals) have limited leeway on the operation of schools, they have few opportunities to build their capacity to guide and lead school development. Currently, they tend to be more representatives of central education authorities who execute given national norms. Finally, limited autonomy at the local level constrains the potential for pedagogical innovation at individual schools.

In this context, there has been a growing political consensus in Uruguay of the need to give schools greater autonomy. The public discussion is on-going and focuses on the scope of decentralisation, areas of autonomy for schools, strategies to build capacity to exercise autonomy and the need to introduce a number of accountability requirements at the school level (INEEd, 2015).

The institutionalised co-administration of the school system with teachers raises concerns

A rather unique feature of school education governance in Uruguay is the institutionalised co-administration of the school system with teachers. Indeed, teachers elect representatives to CODICEN (two out of the five members) and to each individual education council (one out of the three members for each council). Therefore, in practice, teachers are directly involved in the development of school education policy, including in those decisions that directly concern the interests of individual teachers. The direct involvement of teachers in the administration of the school system is debatable as, inevitably, they do have a vested interest in the system. Clearly, such practice enables corporate interests to influence the development of education policy. The risk is that some education policies might be biased to favour the interests of the teaching workforce. As a result, the education system risks being more teacher-centred than student-centred. For example, as analysed in Chapter 5, one of the consequences of the current approach to the recruitment and deployment of teachers (based on the individual preferences of teachers and their seniority) is the inequitable distribution of teachers across schools (in terms of their qualifications).

Not surprisingly, the co-administration with teachers is a source of debate in Uruguay. A number of groups propose removing the elected representatives of teachers from education governance while others propose the redefinition of their responsibilities in the education councils (e.g. participation on an advisory role and with no vote) (INEEd, 2015).

There is a lack of strategic planning based on evidence and analysis and little accountability at the system level

In Uruguay, strategic planning and policy development in education is not sufficiently informed by research evidence and analysis. Not including the results of international assessments such as PISA, the OECD review team did not see much evidence of a systematic strategy to incorporate the results of education research, either Uruguayan or international, into the policy process. This is not unique to Uruguay. In many OECD countries the gap between educational researchers and policy makers is wide, and the role of research in shaping policy is inconsistent or weak (OECD, 2007). Also, there is no tradition in Uruguay of evaluating the impact of specific policies or programmes. While some isolated examples exist (e.g. assessing the impact of the CEIBAL Plan, see Chapter 3), impact analysis of policy interventions is not systematic. An evaluation strategy is also not typically conceived at the time of the design of an educational programme. However, some programmes such as the Community Teachers Programme, the Educational Commitment Programme and the Community Classrooms programme have monitoring mechanisms which were part of their original design. The development of pilots before full implementation is also not usual practice in Uruguay.

However, considerable progress is being made by INEEd, which is leading a research agenda which seeks to capitalise on the education research community to inform education policy making. INEEd undertakes analysis of available data on education in Uruguay, commissions specific work from education researchers and promotes the discussion of education research.

In addition, data information systems to inform educational planning remain limited. There are encouraging initiatives such as the Unified Management of Registry and Information (GURI), but it is limited to pre-primary and primary education and collects a narrow range of data on students and teachers. There are no data information systems linking resources to programmes or education results or providing information on the resources allocated to each school, even if work on this has started within the ANEP. The existing databases are not sufficiently integrated to facilitate system level analysis. Similar databases (e.g. on teachers and their working conditions) co-exist across education councils (INEEd, 2015). The integration of the distinct databases was under development at the time of the writing of this report. The objective is to integrate accounting, budget, salary information together with information on students and school staff across the education councils. As Uruguay continues to build its data collection and dissemination system, it must also take into account the capacities necessary in order to effectively use those data.

Another major challenge is the little accountability at the system level for educational results. At the time of the OECD review visit, educational authorities did not establish education targets with a given time horizon (e.g. coverage rate in upper secondary to be reached by 2020) and few instruments existed to monitor student learning outcomes overtime and assess the educational progress of cohorts of students. This has now changed as the ANEP established annual targets for the period 2016-20 in its 2015-19 Budget Plan (ANEP, 2015). This document establishes targets for 61 indicators in a range of areas

(e.g. percentage of students attending full-time schools; number of graduates from initial teacher education) (see Chapter 7 in ANEP, 2015). Sample-based national tests conducted every three years in Year 6 in language, mathematics and science are the main instrument to assess learning outcomes while INEEd is currently developing a national system to monitor student achievement in Year 3 to Year 9 assessing a greater variety of skills. Also, as elaborated in Chapter 3, the execution of public spending in education is not evaluated against educational results. This significantly reduces the accountability of elected officials in charge of education. However, INEEd's work in analysing the state of education in Uruguay, reflected in a biennial publication, is a major progress in introducing system-level accountability.

There are a range of areas in which demand is likely not to be met

Enrolment in pre-primary education is low

As illustrated earlier, enrolment in early childhood education (age three and below) is low and associated with ability to pay. For age three, the net attendance rate reached only 64% in 2012 with important income-related inequities of access. This might be related to insufficient supply, especially for the more disadvantaged families. As shown in Table 1.3, provision for children aged three and below is mostly private, 40% of which without public funding.

The provision of special needs education is inadequate

Provision of services for special needs students is underdeveloped in Uruguay. These are mostly provided in special schools, which exist only at the primary education level. In 2014, only about 3% of primary education students were identified as having special educational needs. Of these, within the public sector, only about 2% were in special classes offered at mainstream schools. The remaining 98% were placed in special schools, the great majority of which target disabilities (see Table 2.4). About two-thirds of students with special needs are in public special schools and the remaining students in private special schools. Within the last decade, provision for special education students has expanded in the private sector and contracted in the public sector (see Table 2.4). There are possibly large numbers of disabled and special needs children who are not in any school, special or mainstream, and receiving little or no useful education in their own homes. This is particularly the case at the post-primary level even if many (primary) special schools attend for older students with special needs.

Table 2.4. **Number of special schools and students with special needs, 2003 and 2014**

	2003	2014	Percentage change
Number of special schools	**144**	**148**	**2.8**
Public	80	79	-1.2
Private	64	69	7.8
Number of students with special needs	**10 652**	**9 999**	**-6.1**
Public	8 884	6 638	-25.3
Special schools	8 629	6 507	-24.6
Special classes in mainstream schools	255	131	-48.6
Private	1 768	3 361	90.1

Source: MEC (2003, 2014), *Anuario Estadístico de Educación* (Education Statistical Yearbook), 2003 and 2014 editions, *www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/11078/5/mecweb/publicaciones_?3colid=927*.

Clearly, services for special education students have received very little attention in Uruguay and strategies to integrate students with special needs in mainstream schools are practically non-existent. Mainstream schools in Uruguay do not appear to be making enough progress in accommodating children with special needs. In separate special schools, students might have fewer opportunities to access the full curriculum, interact with other children and develop the abilities and potential that they share with other children. The dominant trend in developed countries is to move towards more integrated education and this is accompanied by the functional transformation of special needs schools from primary service providers to special education students to providers of professional support for mainstream schools inclusively educating students with special educational needs. A meta-analysis found that including special needs students within regular classrooms had neutral to positive effects on the achievement of their classmates (Ruijs and Peetsma, 2009).

There is a low level capacity of the system to provide inclusive or integrated education. The limited capacities of schools and teachers to provide integrated education, based on innovative pedagogies supporting teaching in heterogeneous classes, and providing individualised attention create constraints that push the system to rely on special schools to respond to the needs of special education students. Mainstream schools lack skilled personnel and assistant teachers necessary to make the integration of special needs students a success. In Uruguay, teachers in mainstream schools do not seem prepared to cope with the presence of special education children in their classrooms. This is in spite of the fact that children with special needs often attend mainstream schools with no dedicated and specialised support.

Demand for full-time schooling is not met

As of 2013, only about 11% of primary education students attended a full-time or extended-time school – the great majority of students attended a school offering only four hours of classes a day. There is a clear perception that there is a higher demand for full- or extended-time schools than can currently be accommodated. At the same time, the government intends to expand full-time education services in primary education.

A range of constraints make it difficult to meet demand for secondary education

The expansion of secondary education faces a range of constraints, particularly in technical-professional programmes. These include lack or inadequate infrastructure, limited equipment (particularly in technical-professional programmes) and lack of qualified teachers. New infrastructure has included prefabricated buildings or loan of buildings which are owned by departmental governments.

An additional major constraint is the inadequacy of the diversity of offers in secondary education to accommodate the interests and characteristics of students. This is rendered more difficult by the lack of qualified teachers. For example, both the technological and the professional baccalaureate programmes provide neither education in the arts, physical education nor citizenship. Like lower secondary education, these programmes also do not offer workplace learning, although schools may organise projects with business and industry for final year students as the review team learned. Workplace learning can have many benefits, including better school to work transitions for young people (OECD, 2010).

Student career guidance services appear insufficient

Career guidance or career counselling that help students choose between different tracks and programmes is not systematically available in schools in Uruguay, but schools may organise their own guidance initiatives as the OECD review team learned during its visit. One primary school, for instance, worked together with a general secondary school to organise visits and orientation days. The National Youth Institute (*Instituto Nacional de la Juventud*, INJU) organises career guidance workshops (*talleres de orientación vocacional*) for young people aged 14-22 with a special focus on facilitating young people's choice between different programmes in secondary education. This includes the organisation of a career exhibition (*Expo Educa*) in the interior and in Montevideo and of 30 workshops in Montevideo.[2] Overall, however, student career guidance services appear insufficient to systematically assist students in making their study choices and in convincing them of the benefits of education.

There is a variety of sources of inefficiency

Year repetition is an ineffective pedagogical practice

A major source of inefficiency in the Uruguayan school system concerns the very high rates of year repetition. According to PISA 2012, the percentage of students reporting that they have repeated a year in primary, lower secondary or upper secondary education was 37.9% in Uruguay against an OECD average of 12.4% (Argentina: 36.2%; Brazil: 36.1%; Chile: 25.2%; Colombia: 40.6%; Costa Rica: 33.5%; Mexico: 15.5%; Peru: 27.5%) (OECD, 2013a). National data also reveal high levels of year repetition (Table 2.5). In primary education, year repetition rates have been decreasing in the last decade, from 10.3% in 2002 to 5.4% in 2013. Interestingly, they tend to be considerably higher in Year 1 (13.4% in 2013) and decrease for higher years to a low of 1.4% in Year 6 (in 2013, see Table 2.5). In lower secondary education, year repetition rates are very high: between 25% and 30% in Years 7 to 9 in 2013 (see Table 2.5). In the last decade, they have increased considerably, for instance in Year 7 from 22.2% in 2002 to 30.0% in 2013, which is possibly explained by the expansion of coverage. Year repetition rates are negatively associated with the socio-economic

Table 2.5. **Year repetition rates in public primary and lower secondary education, 2002, 2008 and 2013**

	2002 (%)	2008 (%)	2013 (%)
Primary education	**10.3**	**6.2**	**5.4**
Year 1	20.1	13.8	13.4
Year 2	12.8	7.9	7.2
Year 3	9.3	5.6	4.6
Year 4	7.5	4.4	3.4
Year 5	5.9	3.6	2.5
Year 6	2.7	1.7	1.4
Lower secondary education	..	..	..
Year 7	22.2	28.1	30.0
Year 8	20.8	22.4	25.0
Year 9	21.2	25.0	28.2

..: Not available.

Note: Data for lower secondary education do not include rural schools with Years 7, 8 and 9 and exclude evening schools.

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

context of schools. For example, in public primary schools, in 2013 the repetition rate in Year 1 for schools in the lowest quintile of the socio-economic index was three times higher than the equivalent rate for schools in the highest quintile of the socio-economic index (21.1% against 7.2%). Also, the equivalent repetition rate in private primary schools was 2.6% in the same year (INEEd, 2015).

In public upper secondary education, the available data refer to "non-promotion rates" – i.e. the proportion of students who do not progress to the following year level within the same type of programme (general or technical-professional). It should be noted that, if a student is not promoted, it might move to another type of programme or drop-out of the school system. In 2013, no-promotion rates were very high: 43.2% in general programmes (34.0% in Year 10, 40.3% in Year 11 and 55.4% in Year 12); and 36.6% in technical-professional programmes (INEEd, 2015).

High rates of year repetition raise important concerns. First, they are not compatible with a student centred educational system as it extensively involves branding students a failure at different stages of schooling, including in the very early stages of learning. Second, it runs counter to the need for teachers to have the highest possible expectations of what children can achieve if they always have the possibility of retention in the back of their minds for children who do not respond well to their teaching. Third, the direct costs for school systems are very high, as these include providing an additional year of education and delaying entry to the labour market by a year. According to PISA data, in Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain the direct costs of year repetition account for more than 8% of the annual expenditure on primary and secondary education (OECD, 2013a, Table IV.1.6).

The extensive use of year repetition in Uruguay is not supported by the vast body of literature that reports that the academic benefits of year retention are slight and short-lived while the financial costs of year repetition are large for both individuals and society (OECD, 2012). Reviews of the research literature by Brophy (2006) and Xia and Kirby (2009) concluded the following about school-imposed year repetition:

- It improves academic achievement temporarily, but over time, year repeaters fall further and further behind other low achievers who were promoted.
- It is stressful to students and associated with reduced self-esteem, impairs peer relationships, increases alienation from school, and sharply increases likelihood of eventual dropout.
- It makes classes larger and harder to manage for teachers and creates budgetary and equity problems for schools and school systems.

Research in both France and the United States suggests that social background, independent of school attainment, is an important determinant of repeating. This may be due to behavioural difficulties associated with social background, or because educated parents are in a stronger position to oppose a repetition proposed by the school. Therefore year repetition may also pose risks for equity in terms of bias based on social background (Field et al., 2007), as seems to be the case in Uruguayan schools. Also, the costs of repetition for the education budget are substantial given the extra expenditure incurred in the repeated year and the opportunity costs of one year of the student's time. This is exacerbated by the fact that schools have very few incentives to take these large costs into account. In summary, year repetition is ineffective and costly; this has both efficiency and equity implications (Field et al., 2007; OECD, 2012). Nonetheless, many countries have been

trying to eliminate repetition, but in many cases the perverse effect has been that students move forward in their schooling without acquiring the expected learning (Torres, 1995; Schiefelbein and Wolff, 1992).

School completion rates are low and increasing slowly

Drop-out rates in secondary education remain high. In 2013, the net attendance rates in lower and upper secondary education were only 75% and 43% respectively (INEEd, 2015). A study conducted in Montevideo shows that, by 2014, of the students who took the PISA assessment in 2009, only 42.9% had completed upper secondary education; 42.6% had dropped out without completing lower secondary education; 12.2% were attending upper secondary education; and 2.3% were attending lower secondary education (IDB, 2015).

The rate of completion of lower secondary education stood at 53.3% and 68.1% in 2013 for individuals aged 15-17 and 18-20 respectively (see Table 2.6). More worrisome, they reflect little progress from the completion rates observed in 2006 (52.0% and 67.4% respectively). Completion rates are considerably lower in upper secondary education. In 2013, they stood at 27.8%, 39.0% and 39.3% for individuals aged 18-20, 21-23 and 24-29 respectively. They also reflect little progress *vis-à-vis* completion rates in 2006 (see Table 2.6).

Table 2.6. **Rates of completion of secondary education by age range, 2002, 2008 and 2013**

Age range	2006 (%)	2010 (%)	2013 (%)
Lower secondary education			
15-17 years	52.0	50.2	53.3
18-20 years	67.4	66.8	68.1
Upper secondary education			
18-20 years	23.9	25.3	27.8
21-23 years	35.4	35.8	39.0
24-29 years	33.8	34.9	39.3

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

According to data from the 2012 and 2013 household survey, the main revealed reason for early school leaving is lack of interest, for all age segments surveyed (15-17, 18-20, 21-23, 24-26 and 27-29), although with age increase this reason decreases in importance and other reasons gain in importance. For people aged 24-29 the lack of interest had almost as much influence as the intention to work or situations of pregnancy (own or partner) when deciding to drop out of secondary education. Overall, this might indicate that the supply of education services at the secondary level is not adequate to match the interests and characteristics of young people (INEEd, 2015).

Little attention has been given to the organisation of the school network

Also, the monitoring and planning of the school network is limited. There are quite a number of very small schools with small classes which do not offer a rich learning experience to students. As shown in Tables 2.1 and 2.2, in public primary education, while the student population decreased about 18% between 2003 and 2014, the number of schools decreased only 1.4% while the number of teachers actually increased 13.4%. As a result the average size of the 1 111 public rural schools in operation in 2014 became

13.4 students (from 15.6 students in 2003). In 2013, there were about 500 schools with fewer than ten students in primary education (INEEd, 2015). A rural primary school remains open as long as it has at least one student. A good aspect to the reduction of class size in primary education is the opportunity to extend student learning time. Also, in public general secondary education, while the number of students decreased 8.7% between 2003 and 2014, the number of schools increased about 36%. While data are not available, it is likely that some secondary schools, particularly outside Montevideo, have small classes and possible a lower diversity of subjects on offer.

This situation arises because there has not been a review of the school network to assess the need for some re-organisation of local educational supply and no major school transportation strategies have been developed. A school network populated with a large number of small schools might not be the most cost-effective option to deliver education services in rural and remote areas. The preponderance of small schools is driven by the objective of granting every village the operation of a school, despite the presence of many small schools within a short distance of each other, without sufficient regard to the quality, equity and efficiency of the education services provided. Students in small schools tend to suffer from poorer learning environments. Some evidence suggests that the teaching quality in small schools might be lower and thus calls into question the benefits that could accrue from lower student-to-teacher ratios. As analysed in Chapter 5, better qualified teachers are less likely to work in disadvantaged schools. Also, initial teacher education programmes might not prepare teachers for the specific challenges that they will face in small schools, such as multi-year teaching (see Chapter 5), whilst international research shows that effective multi-year teaching requires capable teachers with a specific preparation to teach in these environments and additional resources, such as different types of instructional materials (Mariano and Kirby, 2009; Veenman, 1995; Burns and Mason, 2002). The availability and quality of instructional materials and equipment in small schools might also be more limited. Overall, there is a lack of clear strategic vision to improve education service delivery in rural and remote areas which might hinder the overall performance of the education system.

Transitions between education levels are ineffective

To a great extent as a result of the segmented nature of education governance (with different education councils administrating independently the different levels and types of school education), there is little co-ordination of education provision across education levels and types. Curricula are not articulated across educational levels and types, which does not facilitate student transitions between primary and lower secondary education; lower and upper secondary education; and general and technical-professional programmes. This is undesirable, especially in a country with high drop-out rates. However, the government which took office in 2015 intends to promote the development of a common curriculum framework for all levels of education between pre-primary and lower secondary education. At the upper secondary level, in order to improve completion rates, pressing issues include offering a greater diversity of courses, giving the curriculum more flexibility, and promoting greater mobility between general and technical-professional programmes.

A range of other sources of inefficiency exist

Other areas in which efficiencies can be produced are the management of human resources (with the need for more autonomy at the local level, the concerns that the allocation of teachers resources to schools raise, and teacher absenteeism) (see Chapter 5),

the completion rates in initial teacher education (see Chapter 5), the lack of co-ordination across education levels and types (see above) and the little use of evaluation results to generate improvement of practices at the school level (see Chapter 4).

Local capacity for reform implementation is limited

As education systems must increasingly respond to new societal, economic and individual needs, it is arguably the local level that is most challenged by these developments. It is at this level that education policies must be implemented, and it is here that they either succeed or fail. A key element of successful policy reform implementation is ensuring that local stakeholders such as policy makers, school leaders, teachers and parents have sufficient capacity to carry out their tasks. In particular, they need adequate knowledge of educational policy goals and of the consequences that implementing these policy goals will have for their respective environments, and they need the tools to implement them as planned. Without these, the best policy reform risks being derailed at the level where it counts most: in the classroom.

Although Uruguay has started to take some steps to provide more local autonomy in some areas, for example through departmental inspections for CEIP, regional campuses for CETP and the creation of Departmental Co-ordinating Commissions for Education (see Chapter 1), these steps are still very limited. There is a need to give more autonomy to local actors, both departments and schools (see above). As this progress continues, Uruguay would benefit from an explicit focus on capacity building on all levels of the system, and for all major actors, including policy makers themselves. One key point: while capacity building measures are frequently used to intervene where implementation has been unsuccessful, their impact is greatest when they are integrated into the policy planning phase from the start (Hopfenbeck et al., 2013).

An interesting example of proactive system-wide capacity building comes from the certification programme in Colombia (see Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. **Explicit capacity building in Colombia: the certification of municipalities**

In Colombia a certification system was established in 1991 as an *ex ante* approach to assessing public sector capacity to deliver services. A government-wide initiative, each sector (education, health, and water and sanitation) had its own requirements, with municipal certification determined jointly by the departmental planning offices and the relevant sector ministries.

Due to the success of the programme Law 715 was passed in 2001 to further refine the process. Certification is extended by the department except for municipalities with over 100 000 population, which are now certified automatically (World Bank, 2005). Certified municipalities can:

- manage their own education funding, received directly from the national level
- appoint teachers (as long as the cost is covered by the funding received) and
- enter into contracts with accredited private providers as long as the cost per student is not greater than that of public providers (if the cost is higher the municipality can still contract the private providers but cannot use the funds from the central government transfer) (World Bank, 2005).

Box 2.1. **Explicit capacity building in Colombia: the certification of municipalities** *(cont.)*

Although initially meant to be a proactive way of certifying capacity at the local level, over time the process has resulted in most municipalities being certified. The main role of the process now is to allow for the decertification of municipalities with obvious capacity problems (Bird, 2012, p. 20).

This is an interesting example for Uruguay as it demonstrates how explicitly capacity building might be introduced into the system to allow for greater flexibility and local autonomy, without radically changing the governance structure. Education in Colombia is still monitored and steered on the national level by the Ministry of National Education, through funding provided by the Ministry of Finance. Further analysis is available in a review of the Colombian education system (OECD, 2016).

Source: OECD (2016), *Education in Colombia*, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264250604-en*.

So what does building local capacity mean, concretely? What skills are required? Local policy makers often need to serve as mediators between other local level actors as well as those at regional and central levels. One of their main tasks is to provide upper levels of government with knowledge of what is actually happening on the local level, and what the needs and challenges are of day-to-day education. In Uruguay, inspectors constitute an example of a group at the local level feeding back the national education authorities with information about local practices and circumstances. In order to do this, they use different sources of knowledge, including the experiences of local actors in defining and solving problems in schools and classrooms. It is important to facilitate and strengthen the ways in which local educational policy makers gather and transmit this feedback and knowledge to other levels of government. The source of the knowledge (e.g. practitioner expertise, programme evaluation, parent committee reports, etc.) is also key. Without strong knowledge gathering and transmission on the part of local policy makers, emerging policies and their implementation will be lacking an essential element of feedback.

Being able to do this is a nuanced skill and process which requires local policy makers to have the requisite connections to relevant stakeholders, the forums and capacities to gather this information, and the ability to formalise and make explicit what is often tacit or procedural knowledge. While this is often overlooked, some countries have put considerable resources into facilitating such forums of exchange and capacity building for local policy makers. Germany, for example, launched a federal programme called "*Lernen vor Ort*" (Learning on the Local Level) in 2009. This programme brings together 46 operating foundations in education which help 40 model communes to manage their education programmes and build networks for knowledge transfers across regions (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015). Although a relatively recent initiative, this is one of a set of promising programmes across OECD countries that explicitly try and build capacity in this area (see Box 2.2).

There is not enough attention to implementation aspects of education policy

A further challenge is that there is a strong legalistic administrative tradition in Uruguay. This tradition is characterised by an overemphasis on the role of legal instruments in policy-making and a relative neglect of implementation aspects. This was illustrated during the interviews of the OECD review team. When talking about specific education problems and possible solutions to these problems the interlocutors of the OECD

Box 2.2. **Reforming education governance through local capacity building in Germany**

Against a background of promoting national policy priorities at the local level, the German federal government enacted the "*Lernen vor Ort*" [LvO – "Learning Locally"] programme. The programme supported local governments in building capacities for education monitoring and management as well as creating sustainable networks between local administrations and civil society actors. The LvO programme ran from September 2009 until August 2014 and provided a total sum of EUR 100 million to support local districts and municipalities in setting up network structures and developing capacities. Districts and municipalities had to compete for funding and their participation was entirely voluntary.

One innovative element is that LvO required participating localities to co-operate intensely with philanthropic foundations by involving them in local governance structures of the programme. Furthermore, LvO aimed at mobilising the political support of the heads of local government by allowing only local governments to submit proposals (and not other local institutions) with the aim of ensuring the sustainability of programme elements beyond the end of the official funding period.

The LvO programme is a good example of a specific policy tool that central governments can use to build capacity at the local level. In particular, when formal decision-making power is limited as it is in the case of the German federal government in education policy, the central government can set up competitive funding schemes on a model or experimental basis, which can be taken up by local governments voluntarily. The study provides insights into the effectiveness of this voluntary approach to supporting local governments in improving steering capacities.

Source: Busemeyer, M. and J. Vossiek (2015), "Reforming Education Governance through Local Capacity-building: A Case Study of the "Learning Locally" Programme in Germany", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 113, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5js6bhl2mxjg-en*.

review team typically referred to education laws and very rarely mentioned "soft" policy instruments. References to instruments such as incentives, development interventions, and the use of feedback mechanisms or capacity building were seldom made.

A legalistic approach might be inadequate when the nature of the policy problem requires solutions applied gradually in function of the development of capacities or other contextual features. For example inclusive education of children with special needs in mainstream schools can be successful only when a critical mass of teachers possesses the adequate competences which can be acquired only through professional learning. These are complex professional competences, learning them requires time, they spread across schools and among teachers only gradually and they cannot be mandated. An implication of this is that the spreading of inclusive education can be made only gradually, and this happens only if there is a sustained strong policy support for this process. A legalistic approach, which often forces teachers and schools to provide inclusive education from one day to another following the adoption of relevant legal rules and which does not provide strong and sustained professional support in the implementation phase cannot be successful in this and similar policy areas.

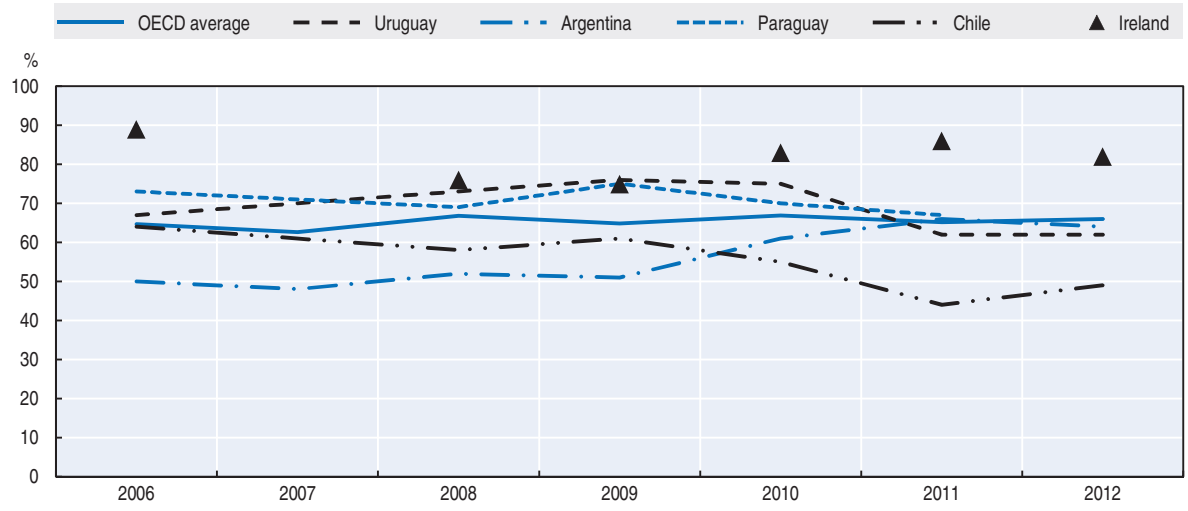
Levels of trust in education are decreasing

In world surveys, trust levels vary widely across countries and across time. Ireland, for example, consistently has had high levels of confidence in education, with over 82% of

respondents reporting themselves satisfied in 2012. Finland and Iceland also have consistently high levels of trust in education. In contrast, Brazil, Chile, Greece and the Russian Federation have some of the lowest levels.

Figure 2.2 graphs the level of trust in education in Uruguay along with selected regional comparisons such as Argentina, Chile and Paraguay. Of special interest is the change across time, with Uruguay consistently at or above the OECD average from 2006 to 2010. In 2011 the proportion responding satisfied dropped from 75% to 62%, a reduction that continued the following year. This is a rather dramatic change, all the more so as it took place at the same time as levels of trust were remaining steady across the OECD and indeed were increasing in neighbouring countries such as Argentina.

Figure 2.2. **Trust in education, Uruguay and selected comparison countries, 2006-12**



Source: Gallup (n.d), Gallup World Survey Data, Confidence in Education 2006-12, *www.gallup.com*.

What does this mean? In the OECD review team's interviews, a lack of trust in education was identified by a number of stakeholders as one of the central challenges facing the system. Although trust in education was still considered relatively high for primary schools, the secondary level was most often identified as the one suffering from the lowest levels of trust. This was argued to have an impact on the public's willingness to support changes and reforms to the system, as well as the functioning of the system itself. Indeed, there is a large body of research that supports this argument (see Cerna, 2014, p. 28 for full discussion and original citations):

- High levels of trust among education stakeholders (i.e. between teachers themselves, teachers and students, teachers and parents and all of these and the school principals) have a positive effect on school reform, collaboration, leadership and achievement including student performance and schooling;
- In schools with high levels of trust parents are more likely to be included in school-level decision-making and teachers are more likely to collaborate with one another on classroom-level decisions, peer and collaborative learning, and professional development (for one example, see Box 2.3).

Because of this, improving public trust in education and trust within the education system itself is a high priority in many OECD countries. A number of interesting initiatives

Box 2.3. **Trust, communication and professional learning communities in Alberta (Canada)**

The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) was implemented from 1999 to 2013 to produce system-wide educational change through innovation and improvement at the local level. Alberta allocated 2% of its education budget to AISI. Through this initiative, teachers in 95% of the province's schools were engaged in designing and then evaluating their own innovations in teaching and learning. The provincial government and the teacher union (Alberta Teachers' Association) supported and initiated this project. As a condition of involvement, teachers were required to share what they had learned with other local and national schools.

Many schools used the AISI budget to purchase teachers' time to spend with other teachers inquiring into practice together. In the later years of AISI, many of the projects focused specifically on building professional learning communities. The time and expectation for teachers to collaborate on improving professional practice was resourced on a continuous basis so that it became a major part of the work of teaching and of the definition of what it meant to be a professional. The initiative invested high trust in the professional judgments of teachers and principals.

The school improvement initiative became a success, due to a degree of mutual trust within schools between principals and teachers, in communities between schools and parents, and in the province between districts and the provincial government. The AISI partnership resulted in the building of trust, collaboration, and teamwork among the education partners.

Source: Cerna, L. (2014), "Trust: What it is and Why it Matters for Governance and Education", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 108, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxswcg0t6wl-en*; Hargreaves, A. et al. (2009), *The Learning Mosaic: A Multiple Perspectives Review of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI)*, Alberta Education, Edmonton.

have been developed to build and maintain trust in education over time, and to restore it if it is lost. Work on country examples of rebuilding trust is ongoing as part of the OECD Governing Complex Education Systems project.[3] A synthesis and mapping of country experiences currently includes examples from Belgium (Flemish Community), Finland, Japan, Korea, Israel, Mexico, the Netherlands, Portugal and the Slovak Republic.

Policy recommendations

Clarify responsibilities for education and integrate policy across education levels

There is a need to clarify responsibilities in the school education sector and define who is ultimately held accountable for policy implementation and learning outcomes. Two major difficulties need to be overcome: i) the ambiguity of roles between the CODICEN and the education councils; and ii) the fragmentation of school education governance by education levels and types (as defined by each education council). The objective is to clarify responsibilities, strengthen system leadership and ensure a holistic approach to education policy development (whole-system approach). A first step is to concentrate ultimate responsibility and accountability in a single body which would lead the development of school education policy. The most natural such body in Uruguay is the CODICEN, which should have its responsibilities reinforced *vis-à-vis* the individual education councils. This would involve making each education council subordinate to the CODICEN. Each education council could become a department below the CODICEN or, rather, the education councils

could be discontinued and its units integrated in the equivalent CODICEN units (e.g. budget and planning; human resources management; infrastructure). This approach would define the entity to be held accountable for the state of education in Uruguay; reduce unnecessary duplication; provide the potential for better co-ordination across education levels and types; establish closer linkages between funding, resource allocation and accountability; facilitate the alignment between education strategic objectives and school-level management; reduce ambiguities in defining who is responsible for what; and assist with medium- and long-term planning in education.

Another priority to improve school education governance in Uruguay is to review the pertinence of the institutionalised co-administration with teachers. It is conceptually debatable that an education governance system has, among its administrators, representatives of a group which clearly has a vested interest in the system. Given the high risks this approach poses for the neutrality of education policy development, the OECD review team recommends its discontinuation. Teachers have respected organisations which represent them – teacher unions and professional associations – and these should be part of consultation processes as education policies are developed and implemented. The key fundamental aspect which needs to be respected is that the views and perspectives of teachers are taken into account in education reform processes, a principle that is valid for other groups such as students, parents, employers or school leaders. However, there is no valid rationale to involve teachers as decision-makers when decisions have a direct impact on their interests. An education system should be student-centred and the risk of the co-administration with teachers is that, instead, it becomes teacher-centred.

Another pending task in shaping school education governance in Uruguay is defining the complementarity of the role of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC). While it is not clear why the MEC should retain its regulatory role in private early childhood and pre-primary education (functions that could be integrated within ANEP to reinforce a more holistic public policy at these levels), it could have its co-ordination/consultation role reinforced. A possibility would be for MEC to become the main body organising consultations among the main education agencies and relevant stakeholders to discuss and agree long-term strategies for education in Uruguay. The MEC could use the analyses of INEEd, secondary analysis of education indicators, results from education research and position papers by relevant education stakeholders to foster the internal debate among education players about major challenges in Uruguayan education, areas for further education investment, adjustments to education policy and long-term ambitions for education in Uruguay. The objective would be to build a range of consensuses among education players and offer these as recommendations for ANEP to include in education policy development. MEC could become the main forum for policy consultation on the basis of the evidence generated by the system and offer the generated consensuses as feedback for policy development by ANEP.

One of the best examples of the successful implementation of whole system reform can be found in Hong Kong. Jensen et al. (2012) studied the intensive process, which first involved the identification of the main challenges for the system through an intensive consultation process. A system-wide plan was then developed, goals were laid out clearly and exhaustively before implementation and detailed timelines given to all stakeholders. 42 measures were created to support teachers, schools and administrators with each measure being explicitly described and clearly explained as part of a single comprehensive

overhaul. All stakeholders were made aware of what would take place and when, and, most importantly, they were told why a given approach was being taken.

The reforms were not always popular, but strong leaders from multiple sectors – politics, business, and academia – joined to put forward a coherent vision of where Hong Kong was and where it needed to go (Snyder, 2013). Implementation of the programme began in 2000 and is scheduled to conclude in 2016. Despite this long timeline, the Hong Kong authorities have adhered faithfully to the plans developed during the initial consultation and development phases. This long-term view, often absent from reform approaches, is a key element for successful system development. It takes into account the complexity of the system by allowing time for rich feedback to accrue and for the system to evolve in response (Snyder, 2013). It can also reduce "reform fatigue" amongst actors and lead to greater stability within a system (Hopfenbeck et al., 2013).

While this radical a change may not be very feasible in the Uruguayan system as it is currently constructed, it is useful to isolate some of the key elements necessary for effective strategic planning, such as (adapted from OECD, 2009):

- clear responsibilities and governance structures
- strong leadership
- agreement on the necessity for change and developing a sense of urgency for that change
- engagement with a broad variety of actors, including parents and community members
- strong mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and monitoring of reform efforts, including feedback mechanisms that guide and refine implementation
- a clear timeline for change with clearly established goals and mechanisms for communicating both the goals and the progress towards those goals on an on-going basis.

Reforms taken without these conditions being met will run the risk of poor implementation, or worse, active resistance on the part of teachers and schools, or parents and the community. Effective modern governance incorporates these strategic planning techniques into normal operations. However it is important to get the strategy right, as both inaction and the wrong action can lead to costly mistakes. In this sense there is a rich opportunity to learn from a dramatic reform process in Sweden, which did not yield the intended results over the long-term (see Box 2.4).

Box 2.4. **Strategic vision and 20 years of education devolution in Sweden**

Starting in the 1990s, the Swedish Education Ministry rolled out a reform in which the responsibility of running public schools and educational attainment was decentralised to the municipalities. At the same time, school choice was introduced, which together with the decentralisation reform aimed at increasing local autonomy and enabling the education system to adapt to heterogonous local contexts. National goals were to be set at the national level, with the responsibility to accomplish these goals entirely left to municipalities.

The reform was introduced suddenly, superseding a then highly centralised system. Municipalities had to adapt quickly to their new responsibilities. Rather than supporting the local level in the implementation of the reform, the central level deliberately adopted a policy of non-intervention guided by the philosophy that the "local authorities knew best".

Blanchenay et al. (2014) found that the lack of a systemic vision prevented municipalities from developing sustainable strategies for managing their new responsibilities. The central

Box 2.4. **Strategic vision and 20 years of education devolution in Sweden** *(cont.)*

government, steering education at arm's length, had few tools to incentivise compliance with national goals. At the municipal level, financial resources were often allocated based on tradition and local politics rather than actual needs. This is in part due to misuse of available data and of expert knowledge by local level decision-makers.

Currently Sweden is addressing these issues by working on strengthening accountability, building local capacity, and developing a systemic strategic vision. This last element includes reintroducing earmarked grants as part of the general allocation budget for municipalities to protect the education budgets and developing an education-specific forum for municipalities to discuss and share best practices, including a platform for innovative initiatives, such as experimentation or cost pooling (e.g. IT systems).

Source: Blanchenay, P., T. Burns and F. Köster (2014), "Shifting Responsibilities – 20 Years of Education Devolution in Sweden: A Governing Complex Education Systems Case Study", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 104, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jz2jg1rqrd7-en*.

Part of the success of policy implementation involves the establishment of a comprehensive and strategic plan for the mid- and long-term development of the Uruguayan education system, involving a rich and extensive consultation process. It is important to develop a strategic vision for the development of the education system with clearly defined objectives and education targets to be achieved at given points in time (e.g. in 10 or 20 years' time). Ideally, education policy would need to be based upon informed policy diagnosis, drawn on best practice, backed up by adequate research evidence, and consistent – both intrinsically and with other education policies. Of equal importance is consensus-building among the various stakeholders involved – or with an interest – in education policy. This should go alongside the involvement of practitioners such as school leaders and teachers in the design, management and analysis of education policies.

In order to build consensus, it is important that all stakeholders see proposed education policies within the broader policy framework and strategy. Indeed, individuals and groups are more likely to accept changes that are not necessarily in their own best interests if they understand the rationale for these changes and can see the role they should play within the broad education strategy. There is therefore much scope for government authorities to foster the chances of successful policy implementation, by improving communication on the long-term vision of what is to be accomplished for education as the rationale for proposed reform packages. In this context a priority should be the involvement of a broad set of stakeholders in consultation processes, a main mechanisms for modern accountability and participation in the system (see Box 2.5).

Box 2.5. **Three lessons for increasing stakeholder participation from existing models in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom**

1. Identify the key stakeholders among communities, parents, students and other actors. This is more difficult than it sounds, and schools/local authorities must make efforts to involve less powerful or inactive voices.
2. Build capacity for new roles. Some stakeholders might not have the knowledge and language needed and may inadvertently be excluded from accountability processes. Providing

Box 2.5. **Three lessons for increasing stakeholder participation from existing models in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom** *(cont.)*

them with the tools to interpret and analyse benchmarking data and other evaluation processes (e.g. value-added measures) is an important part of giving them the expertise they need to take part.

3. Schools need to be ready and open to assess their quality and processes. School leaders play a key role in empowering staff to be involved and open to parents and members of the local community.

Source: Hooge, E., T. Burns and H. Wilkoszewski (2012), "Looking beyond the Numbers: Stakeholders and Multiple School Accountability", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 85, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k91dl7ct6q6-en*.

Strengthen evidence-based strategic planning and reinforce accountability at the system level

Uruguay needs to develop a culture of using evidence from research, programme evaluation and performance audits as the basis for future reform initiatives, both in the design – to identify what policies would be more cost-effective – and in the implementation – to make change happen in schools. This involves a strategic approach to research, analysis and evaluation, and information management activities in view of supporting the development of evidence-based policies. Disseminating the evidence basis underlying the policy diagnosis, research findings on alternative policy options and their likely impact, as well as information on the costs and benefits of reforms is also instrumental in gaining the support of key stakeholder groups. Linking research to policy-making requires the development of fora that bring together researchers and local policy makers to share relevant research and discuss applicability to policy needs, training policy makers to interpret research, and providing structures (e.g. agencies tasked with linking research and policy) that help to strengthen the connections to policy, assess the legitimacy and rigour of the research, and build co-operation and trust (OECD, 2007). The creation of INEEd is a potential opportunity to systematise this process, but would require extending the mission beyond evaluation to be fully successful. INEEd could act as a knowledge broker in the Uruguayan education system and the MEC could bring together the relevant stakeholders to discuss the implications of the existing evidence for the development of an education strategy in Uruguay.

The improvement of data collection systems and practices is also needed. To build a robust external independent monitoring system, data collection systems and practices should be strengthened to allow for in-depth analysis of student-level and school-level data. In particular, there is a need to integrate the range of existing databases, expand the information collected, better link resource allocation to programmes and education results, and provide explicit capacity building tools and training for a better analysis of the data.

Also, there is ample room to improve the external and independent monitoring systems of Uruguay's education system in order for accountability at the system level to be reinforced. Designing well-functioning monitoring systems can be overwhelming difficult for any country. However, once systems are established, widespread benefits emerge from proper monitoring mechanisms: benchmarking and monitoring indicators of education system performance allow any country to rapidly assess its education system, setting the stage for improving policy planning and implementation. Key elements for establishing a

strong education system monitoring framework include, clearly defining student learning objectives and education targets, developing a national education indicators framework, designing a national strategy to monitor student learning objectives, ensuring the collection of qualitative information on the education system, assuring the monitoring of changes over time and progress of particular student cohorts, ensuring collection of adequate contextual information to effectively monitor equity, strengthening analysis of education system evaluation results for planning and policy development and communicating key results of education system evaluation to stakeholders (see OECD, 2013c, for an in-depth analysis). A step in the right direction has been the recent setting of educational targets by ANEP for the period 2016-20 (ANEP, 2015).

Also, a needed key adjustment to strengthen national education monitoring in Uruguay is the considerable expansion of the autonomy of INEEd so it can take the leadership in evaluation and assessment activities in the country and provide an independent judgment on the state of education in Uruguay. This would be in a context where the ANEP retains the leadership in setting educational strategy and developing educational policy and maintains a role in the implementation of all the components of the evaluation and assessment framework (e.g. student assessment, school evaluation, teacher appraisal). The further independence of INEEd would imply being politically and financially independent from the ANEP and the government, reinforcing the presence of evaluation experts, researchers and specialists in its decision-making bodies and being led by a governing board not nominated by existing educational authorities. INEEd's governing board could be formed by personalities with high credibility in the country for their career achievements (not necessarily in education), possibly suggested by parties represented in the parliament and with confirmation by the parliament. Preferably, the duration of the mandate of the governing board should not coincide with the political cycle. The main role of the governing board should be at the strategic level, including the selection of the executive board which would lead INEEd in its daily activities. The objective would be to establish INEEd as the authoritative voice in evaluation and assessment in Uruguay, highly credible for its expertise and technical capacity, issuing directions for the implementation of evaluation and assessment procedures in the country, and providing analysis on the education system feeding into the process of education policy development. In terms of functions, INEEd should emphasise its technical leadership (e.g. in developing evaluation instruments, guidelines), the monitoring of the education system, the introduction of innovations on the basis of research results, the development of capacity for evaluation and assessment across the system, and its technical support for educational authorities to implement evaluation and assessment procedures around the country.

Gradually increase local and school autonomy as capacity to support local implementation is strengthened

School autonomy has been the subject of heated debates in the international education and research community in the last 50 years. The relationship between autonomy, performance and equity is a complex one. Since the 1980s, school reforms in several OECD countries have increasingly given schools greater autonomy, in an effort to increase performance. Wößmann (2003) finds that school autonomy in setting standards and the size of the school budget are negatively related to student performance, while school autonomy in personnel management and process decisions are positively related to performance. This may suggest that school systems should ensure external control of

resource levels and performance standards, but give schools autonomy in process areas where school-level knowledge is more relevant, such as managing their personnel. In PISA 2012, students tend to perform better in countries where schools have greater autonomy over what is taught and how students are assessed (OECD, 2013a). However, school autonomy has been negatively associated with student achievement in developing and low-performing countries (Hanushek et al., 2013).

The consequences for Uruguay from this accumulated research need to be carefully analysed, using local experts and a better understanding of how schools operate in the country, but three lessons seem clear. First, the levels of local and school autonomy are so low in Uruguay that there is surely some room to expand autonomy at both local and school levels. Second, when thinking about local autonomy Uruguay reformers need to carefully analyse which spheres of autonomy should be entrusted to schools and to their principals, which spheres should be entrusted to departments, and which spheres should remain with central level authorities. Third, granting of autonomy must always be associated with relevant and focused monitoring, especially monitoring of outcomes.

Uruguay could explore ways to gradually provide more autonomy to schools and lower levels of government (departments) in order to enable them to foster improvements in education. Certain decisions are best left to local authorities and school principals, who best know their schools' needs, to ensure a more optimal allocation of resources. Schools, for example, as suggested in Chapter 3, could be allowed to manage a budget for operational expenses for materials, equipment, teacher professional development and school development projects. Also, as suggested in Chapter 5, teacher recruitment and selection could include input from school principals (e.g. being part of the commissions making the final selection of the candidates). Similarly, departmental governments could be directly involved in infrastructure development and maintenance, including with a dedicated budget, and the provision of logistical support (e.g. transportation services, dormitories, school meals). As school leaders and departments' officials learn to exercise their new responsibilities and as monitoring systems gather more experience, central educational authorities can proceed with stronger deregulation and increased autonomy. In other words, increasing autonomy must be associated with the process of mutual learning of school principals and departments' officials and of monitoring experts. A possibility would be to develop a certification process, possibly led by the inspectorates, to grant some schools the possibility to exercise autonomy in a range of areas.

More school and local autonomy might exacerbate the existing differences between schools and between departmental governments in different parts of the country, including the urban-rural divide. Therefore some mechanisms to disseminate best practices, to identify risks and support those local managers whose performance is not improving should be introduced. In this regard, it will be necessary to strengthen the improvement function of school evaluation (see Chapter 4) and inspectorates could take the role of identifying and disseminating best practices by schools in the exercise of their autonomy.

Gradually providing further autonomy to the local and school level requires policies to strengthen capacity at the local level. Indeed, the lack of capacity at the local level may lead to greater inequalities and ineffectiveness. Capacity building is a complex enterprise and takes time. Local governance actors and school leaders require training and support to facilitate change at the local level. They need knowledge about the content of the change process, what works and what is expected to be achieved. These processes develop over

years, and devolution of responsibilities therefore needs to be planned strategically. As the education system moves to provide further autonomy to local actors, Uruguay would benefit from an explicit focus on capacity building on all levels of the system. This includes:

- Building capacity on a large scale.
- In order to facilitate system-wide change the capacity building element of reforms must be thought out and elaborated in order to ensure their appropriate implementation. The certification programme of Colombia is one interesting example of this (see Box 2.1).
- Developing a sustainable strategy.
- Too often capacity-building exercises are of short duration and do not take into account the time required to change behaviours and learn new skills. Capacity building must be planned as a sustainable systemic feature, one that is available as needed and not just in the initial phases of a policy programme.
- Taking context into account, especially important given differences in rural and urban areas in Uruguay.
- More remote and smaller municipalities often report being overextended by policy changes and struggling to prioritise activities (Hopfenbeck et al., 2013). Some examples of how this could be done in a practical fashion include providing a framework to facilitate inter-localities projects, for example through networks between successful schools and localities and those that struggle with change, in order to overcome implementation issues.

The gradual increase of autonomy at the school and local levels would build on the current initiatives to decentralise decision-making in education in Uruguay (e.g. regional campuses of CETP) and the OECD review team formed the impression that it is widely supported by school principals and local actors. However, there is the perception that, in addition to reinforcing the management skills of local actors and school principals, there is a need to review the organisation of school leadership in Uruguayan schools (distributing school leadership across a larger school leadership team, see Chapter 4), ensure a greater stability of teaching bodies within schools, rethink school leader appraisal and improve school leaders' working conditions (see Chapter 4).

Improve the supply of a range of education services

Expand the provision of early childhood education

A growing body of research recognises that early childhood education brings a wide range of benefits, including social and economic benefits; better child wellbeing and learning outcomes; more equitable outcomes and reduction of poverty; increased intergenerational social mobility; higher female labour market participation and gender equality; increased fertility rates; and better social and economic development for society at large (OECD, 2011). Hence, priority should be given to meeting demand for early childhood education services for younger children (aged three and younger) as there are indications of shortfalls in provision for this age range. A possibility is to enlarge the scope for the public funding of private provision, including with voucher schemes. Also, efforts should continue to strengthen the quality of services at all pre-primary schools.

Develop a comprehensive education strategy for students with special educational needs

Students with special educational needs have been a neglected group within the Uruguayan education system. As a result, there is an urgent need to establish a comprehensive education strategy for students with special needs, which can raise their aspirations at all

levels of the education system. A range of aspects need to be considered. First, there needs to be a reflection about the type of special needs that should be considered in an overall strategy. Types of special needs typically include students with disabilities, gifted children and students with more severe learning difficulties. Second, approaches and structures to identify and diagnose special needs need to be developed. This is not an easy task and requires the contribution of a range of specialists (e.g. teachers, doctors, psychologists) and good communication with parents. Third, there needs to be a reflection about the roles of special schools and the extent to which mainstream schools can contribute to the education of special needs students. Fourth, resourcing strategies need to be developed with the adequate assessment of the extra resources needed to educate a student with special needs. One priority is the establishment of special schools at the secondary education level. There is no reason to assume that students with special needs cannot aspire to reach secondary education.

The major trend regarding special education in developed countries is the progressive integration of special needs students in mainstream schools (and, preferably, in regular classes of mainstream schools). This practice is almost non-existent in Uruguay, or at least with the necessary extra resources to attend to the particular circumstances faced by students with special needs. Effective inclusive education typically requires a well elaborated strategy with two key interrelated components. One is encouraging special education schools to develop a new function of supporting both students with special needs being educated inclusively in mainstream schools and teachers providing inclusive education in these schools. Turning special schools into methodological centres providing support to mainstream schools is a highly complex process of institutional change, which requires serious adaptive capacities from special schools (and their professionals) and it can be implemented only slowly and gradually through pilot development projects based on voluntary participation and through the spreading of successful practices.

The second key component of a strategy for inclusive education is enabling mainstream schools to provide effective inclusive education. This is also a slow and gradual process which, however, can be significantly accelerated by massive and effective capacity building. The practice of inclusive education requires major changes both in the professional competences and the attitudes of mainstream teachers. Only teachers capable to use a rich repertoire of innovative teaching methods and capable to create learning environments that support personalised teaching and learning can achieve successful inclusive education. This requires a supportive institutional context characterised by an organisational culture which supports diversity and pedagogical innovations. Institutions responsible for initial and continuous teacher education, including those providing specialised forms of training linked with specific development interventions should be strongly involved in this process.

Continue efforts to expand full-day schooling

There is a need to increase instructional hours, particularly for students in primary education. Having a relatively short school day, in terms of hours of instruction, may place children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who may be struggling, at risk of failure. Lengthening the school day has been found to benefit learners. For example, in the United States, a large longitudinal study compared reading and mathematics learning outcomes for children who attended "full-day" pre-primary schools (31.5 hours per week) with those who attended "half-day" pre-primary schools (15.8 hours per week). The researchers found that children who had attended the "full-day"

programme learned more than those who had attended the "half-day" programme, and that the learning advantage persisted through Year 3 for students whose home language was not English (Lee et al., 2005; Walston et al., 2005). In addition, increasing instructional time by lengthening the school day, adding Saturday classes, and shortening breaks between classes was one element of a package of interventions that significantly boosted math performance of low performing schools (Fryer, 2014). Hence, expanding programmes such as full-time schools and extended-time schools should remain a priority in Uruguay.

Further diversify and make more relevant the provision of secondary education

In order to improve the attractiveness of secondary education and retain students at this level, there is a need to further diversify and make more relevant the provision of secondary education. The objective is to improve the matching of educational offerings in secondary education to both the interests of the students and the needs of the labour market and society. Part of the solution is to make technical-professional programmes a more attractive option for students. This involves ensuring the labour market relevance of technical-professional programmes, which requires a close collaboration of labour market actors; greater responsiveness of schools to the identified needs in the labour market; creating more opportunities for work-based learning and apprenticeships, which requires maintaining partnerships between schools and employers; greater partnerships between general and technical-professional programmes; and student career guidance which is informed by labour market outcomes of graduates from technical-professional programmes.

In addition, it is important to keep the curriculum of general programmes relevant for the continuation of studies at a higher level while increasing the flexibility of its delivery to take into account the increasing diversity of student achievement as students make progress within the education system. However, it is important to ensure that curricula in both general and technical-professional programmes do not become too fragmented as too many different course options could lead to the operation of many small classes in secondary education, which would risk increasing the cost of provision considerably. Finally, the expansion of relevant provision in secondary education will also require efforts in building new infrastructure and in devising strategies to attract new qualified teachers.

Strengthen student career guidance and counselling

Uruguay needs to consider expanding mentoring and career guidance services in order to build student confidence and encourage students to aim higher. Lack of mentoring and career guidance means that students might be confined with their own personal experiences and life expectations. Developing a strategy for student career guidance and counselling is particularly important in a country with such high drop-out rates. As resources are limited, priority should be given to disadvantaged and at-risk students as research shows that it can have the greatest impact on them (OECD, 2012). One option that the government could consider is to involve higher education institutions in activities to raise the expectations of disadvantaged students.

Address inefficiencies in the education system

Reinforce early intervention and co-ordinate strategies for equity

Among measures that improve the effectiveness of resource use in the Uruguayan school system are the decrease of drop-out rates in secondary education and the reduction of repetition rates at all educational levels. Studies, such as by Heckman (2008), have

concluded that early intervention is more productive than late intervention. To compress socio-cultural differences in achievement requires structured programmes in early childhood care and education, extending upwards into primary school. Ensuring that schools provide their students with adequate and timely support is essential to enable struggling students not only to stay at school but to get the most of their schooling years. Schools should be encouraged to use early warning systems to identify students at risk and support them as early as possible. Timeliness matters because later interventions are less cost-effective. Recent rigorous research from the United States demonstrates the efficacy of introducing five "best practices" of public charter schools into low-performing public primary and lower secondary schools (Fryer, 2014). The five practices were: increased instructional time through lengthening the school day and school year; better teachers and administrators; high-dose tutoring in very small groups; frequent use of data from monthly classroom assessments to inform instruction; and a culture of high expectations. After three years of programme implementation, students' scores on standardised tests of mathematics increased by 21% of a standard deviation and the gap between low performers and high performers diminished significantly. Moreover, the most costly aspect of the programme - tutoring for students – was estimated to have a rate of return of approximately 14%, significantly above the 10% typically used in education, and – for secondary students – the impact was a stunning gain of 60% of a standard deviation in mathematics. This suggests reinforcing educational programmes targeted at early intervention such as the Community Teachers Programme, the Teacher + Teacher Programme (*Maestro más Maestro*) and *Aprender* schools.

At the same time, targeted interventions at the secondary level to prevent dropouts and to raise the awareness about the benefits of education should receive further resources. Students from socially-disadvantaged backgrounds should be supported by a maintenance grant to cover some of the expenses of attending school, such as meals, equipment and foregone earnings. This would be contingent on regular school attendance and satisfactory progress.

Progressively reduce the use of year repetition

An important priority for Uruguay is to reduce the high rates of year repetition. There are alternative ways of supporting those with learning difficulties in the classroom. One way is to provide extra teaching time for students who fall behind and adapt teaching to their needs. There can also be short-term, intensive interventions of one-on-one lessons for underperforming students. This can be organised with extra staff such as recovery teachers. The objective of recovery lessons or remediation is to promote accelerated learning so that students catch up to their peers, close the achievement gap as quickly as possible, and continue to learn independently. This can build on the remedial classes that already exist in Uruguay secondary schools. Another example of intervention is the presence of teaching assistants in the classroom to support the students who fell behind. Approaches also include school prevention with the early identification of learning difficulties and programmes designed in partnership with parents (see Field et al., 2007). In Uruguay, programmes such as Community Teachers, Teacher + Teacher, Tutorials are already operating with these objectives.

The review team does not recommend an abrupt abolition of year repetition in the system but rather its gradual elimination as alternative measures to support students with learning difficulties are strengthened. The rationale for reducing the application of year

repetition as a pedagogical measure to address learning difficulties will need to be clearly communicated to school actors, in particular teachers and parents, as year repetition is deeply entrenched in the traditions of the Uruguayan education system. The sharp reduction of year repetition has the potential to be a far-reaching reform but one which inevitably needs time to gain support among school actors and work effectively. Its effectiveness will depend on the alternative ways to support those students who fall behind, the preparation of teachers and the ability of the system to cultivate and promote novel pedagogical approaches. The strategy also requires continuing supporting teaching professionals so that they develop their in-classroom techniques to help those who are falling behind.

Review the organisation of the school network in view of ensuring quality education in rural areas

Another area of inefficiency concerns the existence of many small schools. A strategic vision is required at the national level on how best to deliver education in rural and remote areas. Smaller schools often have higher operating costs, but also may serve more isolated or remote communities and their existence and quality need to be seen in the context of wider regional development policies. It is important to keep in mind that the organisation of the school network must be about ensuring quality education for all children. Students' access to high quality education should not be affected adversely by their place of residence. In some cases, closing the school may not be the best solution – the distance to travel may simply not be practicable. However, in others consolidating educational provision on fewer sites will present wider opportunities for both students and teachers (e.g. closing small schools, sharing of resources between nearby schools, clustering of schools under the same school leadership) (Ares Abalde, 2014). Investment in effective transportation solutions, after-school facilities, the use of ICT, and the creation of rural school networks can also be part of an overall strategy to provide education in rural and remote areas (Ares Abalde, 2014). The strategy to deliver education in rural areas should have four main pillars: i) reorganisation of the school network; ii) flexibility for more efficient resource management; iii) ensuring equity and fairness of resource provision; and iv) proper monitoring of education quality in rural schools.

Co-ordinate provision across education levels to facilitate transitions while offering relevant options for secondary students

Improving completion rates in the Uruguayan education system also requires improving the supply of educational services at the secondary level to make them more relevant for the interests and characteristics of students and also to better align them with the needs of society and the labour market. This calls for strategies to improve student transitions across education levels, namely the development of a common curriculum framework for all levels of school education. This could go alongside bringing together lower and upper secondary education under the same roof as these are typically provided in distinct schools. At the upper secondary level, a more diverse supply of courses, more extensive and relevant vocational options, as well as a greater mobility between general and technical-professional programmes might prove effective.

Place more emphasis on the implementation aspects of education policy

There is a clear need in Uruguay to widen the repertoire of policy instruments and to go beyond legal regulations and mandatory solutions whenever possible. There are many policy goals that require the use of more sophisticated, often "soft" policy instruments. For example

a curricular reform will not automatically make schools capable of implementing it nor will it automatically make teachers ready to teach according to the revised curricula. This not only requires strong support mechanisms and capacity building but also the acceptance that some schools will become capable of implementing the new curricula quicker than other schools. This requires greater flexibility in regulations allowing some schools to develop faster than others while targeting support to those that are still lacking the appropriate capacities. In general there is a need to shift the focus of education policy making from the adoption of legal texts to the implementation processes and to strengthen the "implementation intelligence" of the education policy system. Strengthening the role of *ex ante* and *ex post* impact assessment is one possible way to do this.

The implementation of education policy requires the recognition of a range of important aspects. First, reaching agreements on the design of education reforms requires time for discussions and consultations with all stakeholders. Second, developing expertise in the system, including training school leaders is expensive and requires time. Third, implementing education initiatives induces additional workload for school agents and requires more educational resources. A range of strategies to consolidate the implementation of education policies are available. The policy development process is more likely to yield consensus and compromise among parties if policies are developed through co-operation of different stakeholders towards a common goal. Other strategies include engaging stakeholders and practitioners in the design and implementation of policies, communicating the rationale for reform, using pilots before full implementation, periodically reviewing implementation and ensuring adequate capacity and resources.

Increase trust in education through effective change in educational policy

Uruguay could benefit by improving trust in education, particularly in secondary education. This is a difficult and complex topic and most if not all countries in the OECD struggle with this issue. A recent analysis of PIAAC[4] data on trust and its relationship to education suggested the following concrete steps that countries could use in order to improve trust in their system and also reinforce the system's ability to educate and strengthen trust among individuals. They are (adapted from Borgonovi and Burns, 2015):

- Continue to work to improve the quality of education including lifelong learning. This provides the cognitive abilities necessary for the development of trust, supplies greater knowledge of how communities operate, and exposes students to socially agreed norms and cultural identity.
- Improve pathways and access to tertiary education as each extra qualification is associated with higher reported levels of trust. Tertiary graduates reported the highest levels of interpersonal trust, even when literacy and numeracy was controlled for.
- Work to strengthen social and emotional skills underlying collaboration, teamwork, and co-operation. Individuals who work in environments that require more interaction with colleagues report on average higher levels of interpersonal trust.
- Actively seek options to break the systemic elements that contribute to inequality. While education is a major pathway for increasing upward mobility across generations, the intergenerational transmission of advantage is still very much alive. Education can and should play a greater role in reducing inequalities and access to opportunity.

In addition, within the education system itself it is important to have a strategic vision to adequately balance accountability mechanisms, important for ensuring quality and

efficiency in the system, and trust, necessary for teachers to do their work. School leaders must involve the teachers in the process of developing school cultures for effective teaching and learning. And governments must continue to manage the process of reform so that priorities are clear and aligned. This is deceptively difficult: in many countries teachers have not developed a common understanding of how to transform the theory underlying a specific education reform into high quality teaching practices (Hopfenbeck et al., 2013). Successful education reform works through trust, clear communication, and the possibility to prioritise competing claims on times and resources.

It is important to clarify that high levels of trust in the system must be justified, that is, the system must earn them. The drop in levels of trust in the Uruguayan education system is perhaps merited by poorer performance. It may also play an important role in driving public perception and also government initiatives on the need for change. Improving levels of trust, therefore, should go hand in hand with improving system performance and effectiveness.

Notes

1. Resilient students are those who are achieving significantly higher than expected given their socio-economic background.
2. For further details, *www.inju.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/7417/5/innova.front/talleres_de_orientacion_vocacional_ocupacional*.
3. For further details, see *www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/gces*.
4. The OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), which took place from August 2011 to March 2012, assesses the proficiency of adults aged 16-65 in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments. Around 166 000 adults were surveyed in 24 countries and sub-national regions, including 22 OECD member countries. Further information is available at *www.oecd.org/site/piaac*.

References

ANEP (2015), *Proyecto de Presupuesto – Período 2015-19: Tomo I – Exposición de Motivos* (Budget Plan – 2015-19 Period: Volume I – Presentation of Reasons), Administración Nacional de Educación Pública, Montevideo, *www.anep.edu.uy/anep/phocadownload/Presupuestosyrendiciones/ProyectodePresupuesto_Periodo_2015-2019/Tomo%201%20-%20Exposici%C3%B3n%20de%20Motivos%20ANEP.pdf*.

Ares Abalde, M. (2014), "School Size Policies: A Literature Review", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 106, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxt472ddkjl-en*.

Berlinski, S., S. Galiani and M. Manacorda (2008), "Giving children a better start: Preschool attendance and school-age profiles", *Journal of Public Economics*, 92, pp. 1416-1440.

Bird, R. (2012), *Fiscal Decentralization in Colombia: A Work (Still) in Progress,* International Center for Public Policy, Georgia State University, USA, *http://icepp.gsu.edu/files/2015/03/ispwp1223.pdf*.

Blanchenay, P., T. Burns and F. Köster (2014), "Shifting Responsibilities – 20 Years of Education Devolution in Sweden: A Governing Complex Education Systems Case Study", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 104, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jz2jg1rqrd7-en*.

Borgonovi, F. and T. Burns (2015), "The Educational Roots of Trust", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 119, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5js1kv85dfvd-en*.

Brophy, J. (2006), *Grade Repetition*, 6, Education Policy Series, The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and The International Academy of Education (IAE), *http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001520/152038e.pdf*.

Burns, R.B. and D.A. Mason (2002), "Class composition and student achievement in elementary schools", *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Sage Journals, USA, pp. 207-233.

Busemeyer, M. and J. Vossiek (2015), "Reforming Education Governance through Local Capacity-building: A Case Study of the "Learning Locally" Programme in Germany", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 113, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5js6bhl2mxjg-en*.

Cerdan-Infantes, P. and C. Vermeersch (2007), "More time is better: An evaluation of the full-time school program in Uruguay", *Impact Evaluation Series No. 13*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4167, World Bank, Washington, DC.

Cerna, L. (2014), "Trust: What it is and Why it Matters for Governance and Education", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 108, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxswcg0t6wl-en*.

D'Avenia, L. (2014), "Evolución de la estructura institucional y de la gestión de la educación pública: Agenda actual y desafíos a futuro" ["Evolution of the institutional structure and the management of public education: current agenda and challenges for the future"], in L. Harari, M. Mazzeo and C. Alemany (coords.), *Uruguay +25, Research documents,* Fundación Astur, Montevideo, *www.trilce.com.uy/pdf/U+25docs.pdf*.

Field, S., M. Kuczera and B. Pont (2007), *No More Failures: Ten Steps to Equity in Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264032606-en*.

Fryer, R. (2014), *Injecting Charter School Best Practices into Traditional Public Schools: Evidence from Field Experiments*, Department of Economics, Harvard University, *http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/2014_injecting_charter_school_best_practices_into_traditional_public_schools.pdf*.

Gallup (n.d), Gallup World Survey Data, Confidence in Education 2006-12, *www.gallup.com*.

Hanushek, E., S. Link and L. Wöβmann (2013), "Does school autonomy make sense everywhere? Panel estimates from PISA", *Journal of Development*, No. 104, pp. 212-232.

Hargreaves, A. et al. (2009), *The Learning Mosaic: A Multiple Perspectives Review of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI)*, Alberta Education, Edmonton.

Heckman, J. (2008), *The Case for Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children*, *www.heckmanequation.org/content/resource/case-investing-disadvantaged-young-children*.

Hooge, E., T. Burns and H. Wilkoszewski (2012), "Looking beyond the Numbers: Stakeholders and Multiple School Accountability", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 85, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k91dl7ct6q6-en*.

Hopfenbeck, T. et al. (2013), "Balancing Trust and Accountability? The Assessment for Learning Programme in Norway: A Governing Complex Education Systems Case Study", *OECD Education Working Papers,* No. 97, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k3txnpqlsnn-en*.

IDB (2015), *Nota Sectorial de Educación 2015-2018 Uruguay (con énfasis en la educación media)* [Education Sectorial Note 2015-2018 Uruguay (with emphasis on secondary education)], Inter-American Development Bank.

IDB (2008), "Beyond facts: Understanding the quality of life", *Development in the Americas*, Inter-American Development Bank, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, *http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1775002*.

INEEd (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for Uruguay*, National Institute for Educational Evaluation (Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa), Montevideo, *www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm*.

Jensen, B., A. Hunter, J. Sonnemann and T. Burns (2012), "Catching Up: Learning from the Best School Systems in East Asia", *Grattan Institute Report* No. 2012-3, *http://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/130_report_learning_from_the_best_detail.pdf*.

Lee, V.E. et al. (2005), *Full-Day vs. Half-Day Kindergarten: In Which Program Do Children Learn More?*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Anaheim, CA.

Mancebo, E. (2012), "Descentralización, financiamiento y gobernanza educativa en Chile y Uruguay" ["Decentralisation, funding and governance of education in Chile and Uruguay"], *Revista Uruguaya de Ciencia Política*, Vol. 21, No. 1.

Mariano, L.T. and S.N. Kirby (2009), "Achievement of students in multigrade classrooms: Evidence from the Los Angeles Unified School District", *RAND Education Working Paper* WR-685-IES, Rand Corporation, Santa Monica.

Mazzini, P. et al. (2014), "Estructuras y procedimientos de gestión de la educación secundaria en Uruguay" ["Structures and procedures for the management of secondary education in Uruguay"],

Paper commissioned by the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa, INEEd), Montevideo.

MEC (2003, 2014), *Anuario Estadístico de Educación* (*Education Statistical Yearbook*), 2003 and 2014 editions, Ministry of Education and Culture, Montevideo, *www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/11078/5/mecweb/publicaciones_?3colid=927*.

OECD (2016), *Education in Colombia*, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264250604-en*.

OECD (2013a), *PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful (Volume IV): Resources, Policies and Practices,* OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201156-en*.

OECD (2013b), *PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity (Volume II): Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed*, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201132-en*.

OECD (2013c), *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment,* OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en*.

OECD (2012), *Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools*, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264130852-en*.

OECD (2011), *Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264123564-en*.

OECD (2010), *Learning for Jobs*, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264087460-en*.

OECD (2009), *Working Out Change: Systemic Innovation in Vocational Education and Training*, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264075924-en*.

OECD (2007), *Evidence in Education: Linking Research and Policy*, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264033672-en*.

Peters, S. (2015), *"Das Bildungssystem Uruguays unter besonderer Berücksichtigung sozialer Ungleichheiten"* ["The educational system of Uruguay with special consideration of social inequalities"], in V. Oelsnder and C. Richer (eds.), *Bildung in Lateinamerika: Strukturen, Entwicklungen, Herausforderungen* [Education in Latin America: Structures, developments, challenges], Waxmann Verlag, Münster, pp. 273-296.

Ruijs, N.M. and T.D. Peetsma (2009), "Effects of inclusion on students with and without special educational needs reviewed", *Educational Research Review* Vol. 4, No. 2, Elsevier, Amsterdam, pp. 67-79.

Schiefelbein, E. and L. Wolff (1992), *Repetition and Inadequate Achievement in Latin America's Primary Schools: A Review of Magnitudes, Causes, Relationships and Strategies*, UNESCO/OREALC, Santiago de Chile.

Snyder, S. (2013), "The Simple, the Complicated, and the Complex: Educational Reform Through the Lens of Complexity Theory", *OECD Education Working Papers,* No. 96, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k3txnpt1lnr-en*.

Torres, R. (1995), "Repetition: A major obstacle to education for all", in *Education News*, No. 15, UNICEF, New York.

Veenman, S. (1995), "Cognitive and noncognitive effects of multigrade and multi-age classes: A best-evidence synthesis", *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 65, No. 4, Sage Journals, USA, pp. 319-381.

Walston, J., J. West and A. Rathbun (2005), *Do the Greater Academic Gains Made by Full-day Kindergarten Children Persist through Third Grade?*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

World Bank (2005), *Expanding Opportunities and Building Competencies for Young People: A New Agenda for Secondary Education*, World Bank, Washington, DC, *http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079967208/Expanding_Opportunities_Secondary.pdf*.

Wößmann, L. (2003), "Schooling resources, educational institutions, and student performance: The international evidence", *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics,* Vol. 65, No. 2, pp. 117-170.

Xia, N. and S.N. Kirby (2009), *Retaining Students in Grade: A Literature Review of the Effects of Retention on Students' Academic and Nonacademic Outcomes*, prepared for the New York City Department of Education, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica.