



Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 13-Jul-2021 | Report No: PIDC31749

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country Uruguay	Project ID P176105	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Strengthening Pedagogy and Governance in Uruguayan Public Schools Project (P176105)
Region LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Estimated Appraisal Date Sep 28, 2021	Estimated Board Date Dec 02, 2021	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministerio de Economia y Finanzas	Implementing Agency Administracion Nacional de Educacion Publica	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Project's Development Objective is to strengthen pedagogy and governance in the Borrower's Expanded Learning Time schools.

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**SUMMARY**

Total Project Cost	40.00
Total Financing	40.00
of which IBRD/IDA	40.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS**World Bank Group Financing**

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	40.00
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Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Concept Review Decision



Moderate

Track I-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **Following a decade of economic growth, Uruguay's economy has lagged during the last five years.** Between 2004 and 2014, Uruguay experienced the highest and longest economic expansion in recent history, and in 2013 the World Bank classified Uruguay as a high-income country. From 2015 to 2019, however, growth contracted and economic activity expanded at an average annual rate of only 1.3 percentage points (pp), less than the growth forecast in the national budget approved for that period. Private investment as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell from 16.6 percent of GDP in 2015 to 12.9 percent in 2019. Unemployment also fell from 10.8 percent in 2006 to its lowest level of 6.3 percent in 2011, however, in the context of the lagged growth, it increased to 8.9 percent in 2019. Moreover, unemployment is expected to further increase since the Uruguayan economy registered a contraction of 6 percent in the first half of 2020¹ due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, to a lesser extent, the effects of the severe droughts the country experienced in 2019 and 2020.

2. **Uruguay has made great strides in reducing overall poverty, but younger age groups continue to be disproportionately affected by poverty.** The country achieved an impressive reduction in poverty since the end of the economic crisis (1999-2002) and, between 2006 and 2019, the percentage of the population living in poverty declined steadily from 32.5 percent to 8.8 percent and extreme poverty was practically eradicated.² The reduction in poverty was accompanied by a marked decrease in inequality, with Uruguay's Gini Index gradually falling from 0.45 to 0.39 between 2006 and 2019.³ However, significant differences among different regions and age groups remain. The proportion of the population below the poverty line is higher in the northern regions of the country and among specific age groups, including those younger than 6 (17 percent), children aged 6 to 12 (16.5 percent), and youth aged 13 to 17 (15 percent). Conversely, only 7.4 percent of 18-64-year-olds and 1.8 percent of those over 65 are poor. The Afro-Uruguayan population is also disproportionately affected by poverty; 18.7 percent of Afro-descendants were poor compared to 11 percent of those who identify as White.⁴

3. **The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic unleashed an unprecedented economic shock on the country, leading to a sharp decline in economic activity in 2020 that highlighted the need to adjust the inclusive growth model.** Uruguay's fundamental characteristics, a small, open economy with a strong social contract, still constitute the underlying strengths for a sustained and inclusive growth path. The projections released by the Economic Expectations Survey of the Central Bank of Uruguay in October 2020 estimated a median decrease in GDP of 4.28 percent in 2020 and an expansion of only 3.35 percent in 2021. Commercial and services activity continued in a recession during 2020, although in a lesser magnitude compared to what was observed in the first two quarters of the year. The slowdown in growth and reversals in the reduction of poverty and inequality due to the COVID-19 pandemic raise fundamental questions on the ability of

¹ Compared to the same period in 2019

² Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) - *Encuesta Continua de Hogares* (ECH), 2019

³ <https://datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/SI.POV.GINI?locations=UY>

⁴ 2019 Continuous Household Survey

<https://www.ine.gub.uy/documents/10181/30913/Estimaci%C3%B3n+de+la+pobreza+por+el+m%C3%A9todo+de+ingreso+2019/c0c832b4-7e5c-4c2a-92e9-7ea69a75e92a>



the economy to adequately generate income and quality jobs, especially for the poor and vulnerable segments of society. The epidemiological situation in the country has also worsened since November 2020, reaching one of the highest death rates from the pandemic in March 2021. Furthermore, while the vaccination process has been one of the most efficient in the region, its positive impacts have not yet been widespread enough to counter the effects of the pandemic.

4. **Investments in education and human capital accumulation have become especially critical.** Education is especially important to strengthen the skills and increase the productivity of the current generation to sustain and extend attained social gains in the midst of slower medium-term growth. In Uruguay, the increase in the proportion of the elderly population as the working-age population shrinks has placed added pressure on building the human capital of current youth, given that a decline in the active-age population may reduce the capacity for growth unless other factors to offset it are increased.⁵ Uruguay needs to focus not only on coverage and quality of education, but also on its relevance, moving away from the traditional rigid and encyclopedic curriculum and towards a model that prepares all students for a rapidly evolving labor market. Taking advantage of this opportunity means accumulating enough human and physical capital to increase productivity in a sustainable way in the medium and long term.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

5. **Learning difficulties start early in Uruguayan children's educational trajectories, undermining human capital accumulation for future growth.** Learning is a cumulative process, and low-quality early education leads to many children arriving at school unprepared to benefit fully from it. The deficits in the formation of skills start early: according to the World Bank's Learning Poverty indicator,⁶ 42 percent of children aged 10 in Uruguay do not reach the expected level of proficiency needed to read and fully understand a simple text. Even though that is 8.9 pp below the average for the region, it is 28.8 pp above the average for high income countries. Likewise, in the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Uruguay was the country with the fourth highest proportion of students with grade repetition in primary and lower secondary education (31.5 percent), which is 6.8 percent higher than countries in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region and 21.2 percent above the mean for all countries. As a consequence of poor learning in primary and secondary education, children born today cannot achieve their full potential later in life. A child who starts school at age 4 today in Uruguay can expect to complete 11.8 years of schooling by age 18 (while compulsory education is 14 years of school). When those years of schooling are adjusted for what a child actually learns, they are equivalent to only 8.4 years of schooling. Moreover, the World Bank's Human Capital Index suggests that a child born in Uruguay today can expect to attain only 60 percent of their full potential by the age of 18.⁷

6. **Many of the challenges that Uruguay's education sector faces in tackling its learning crisis are rooted in long-lasting inequities stemming from children's socioeconomic status.** In PISA 2018, socioeconomic status explained 16 percent of the variance in reading performance for Uruguay, higher than the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 12 percent.⁸ Students in the top quintile scored an average of 490 points (a score that exceeds the OECD average), while those in the bottom quintile scored 339 (below the average for LAC) in reading, representing a difference of about 3 years of schooling. Other indicators such as graduation, repetition, and over-age rates also show large gaps: at 22 years of age, only 15 percent of the population in quintile 1 has completed all cycles, compared to 71 percent of those in quintile 5. In primary school, repetition rates stratified by sociocultural levels continue to be a feature and in 2020, the first two quintiles (40 percent of the most vulnerable urban schools) represented 52

⁵ Economic growth depends on the endowment of productive factors, work and capital (both physical and human), as well as total factor productivity.

⁶ World Bank, 2019

⁷ The Human Capital Index. World Bank, 2019. The Human Capital Index (HCI), which measures the potential productivity of the next generation of workers, indicates that Uruguay has made progress in survival rates, healthy growth, and learning.

⁸ <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=URY&treshold=10&topic=PI>



percent of total repeaters. Consequently, 36.4 percent of students reached sixth grade with at least one year of overage in the most vulnerable schools in quintile 1, compared to 14 percent in schools from the upper quintile.⁹ In secondary education, enrollment increased by approximately 33 percent in the last 10 years, but only 47 percent of students from the lowest income quintile complete this level, while 96 percent of those in quintile 5 complete it.¹⁰ Moreover, the graduation rate for this level in the upper quintile is 95.6 percent, while only 58.8 percent of those in the lowest quintile graduate.¹¹

7. **Uruguay's education sector is also at risk from a range of macro-level shocks as epidemiological and climate crises become more prominent.** The impact of these shocks depends on the sector's ability to implement preparedness and recovery strategies in the short term while adapting and creating enhanced resilient systems in the long run. First, and most recently, Uruguay's response to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, including strong containment measures and relief efforts, have greatly affected public sector service delivery. Preliminary estimations show that learning poverty¹² is expected to increase by 2 percent. Additionally, children in the lowest socioeconomic quintile, who are more likely to lack adequate access to remote learning opportunities and childcare arrangements, would face a reduction of learning of 26 pp, which is 14 pp more than children in the highest quintile.¹³ Furthermore, a dramatic increase in dropouts could occur in upper secondary, together with an increase in dropouts in lower secondary, given that learning difficulties are an important predictor of dropout.¹⁴ Pre-existing investments promoted by Plan Ceibal¹⁵ made Uruguay one of the best prepared countries in LAC to move to remote learning as schools closed,¹⁶ but digital learning tools are only available for up to lower secondary, and their implementation is not as well coordinated in secondary as it is in primary. Nonetheless, while 96 percent of students from the top quintile connected at least once during school closures in June 2020 to CREA, Uruguay's education platform, only 79 percent of students in the bottom quintile did.

8. **A series of service delivery challenges inhibits the education sector from providing adequate learning opportunities for all in schools.** These challenges are largely related to pedagogy, governance, and infrastructure. First, despite efforts in recent years to develop a more integrated educational curriculum in primary schools, there is a need to intensify the focus on competencies across subjects and education levels with well-defined graduation profiles to ensure continuity in curriculum content. There is little room for pedagogical innovation at large scale, areas of knowledge are fragmented, and the focus on socioemotional and 21st century skills remains weak. Innovation initiatives such as *the Red de Aprendizaje Profundo* and the *Centros María Espínola*,¹⁷ which take advantage of innovations and allow for customization of the learning process, are promising but are still isolated and limited in scale. Rigid curricular contents and institutional rules have also restricted the adoption of these innovations, hindering new learning opportunities for most public schools in Uruguay. Second, highly centralized personnel management, as well as administrative and

⁹ ANEP, 2020. https://www.anep.edu.uy/monitorRepo/Documentos%202020/ESTADO%20DE%20SITUACION%202020%2027_4%20final.pdf

¹⁰ OPP-MIDES, 2017.

¹¹ ANEP, 2019. <https://observatorio.anep.edu.uy/sites/default/files/arch/La%20Situaci%C3%B3n%20Educativa%20en%20Uruguay%202019.pdf>

¹² Defined as the share of children that by age 10 cannot read and understand a simple text.

¹³ Skills Development in Post-COVID Uruguay (forthcoming)

¹⁴ Cardozo (2016)

¹⁵ Plan Ceibal is the national education and technology Program that distributes digital devices, manages school connectivity and implements innovative pedagogical interventions supported by technology in public primary and secondary schools.

¹⁶ Most countries in the region have had to make extensive efforts to set up remote learning for their children and youth, aiming to mitigate the potentially dramatic consequences of school closures. While Uruguay was leading the implementation of digital learning, school closure is likely to negatively impact all secondary level learning outcomes. Schools closed in Uruguay on March 14 in 2020, and reopening started on April 22, starting by rural schools, following a multi-step calendar of reopening that ended on June 29, 2020, when all schools reopened (with few exceptions, following local outbreaks). In 2021, schools closed when Covid-19 cases peaked, on the third week of March. Gradual reopening started on May 3rd, starting by rural schools, pre-primary level and first years of primary level.

¹⁷ See <https://redglobal.edu.uy/> and

<https://www.anep.edu.uy/sites/default/files/images/2021/noticias/marzo/210305/Centros%20Mari%CC%81a%20Espinola%202020%20v5.pdf>



budgetary matters, translate into little autonomy for schools to select their own teaching staff and allocate resources to respond to specific school needs.¹⁸ A related challenge is the limited training of directors and school inspectors on school management, and the lack of incentives for qualified teachers to take on the responsibility of school directors. Additionally, personnel policies to manage the teaching workforce – such as recruitment, training, job conditions, compensation, retention – have not been designed to prepare, manage, and support teachers throughout their careers while simultaneously focusing on improving student learning. As a result, teacher turnover and teacher and student absenteeism are high. Third, institutional fragmentation affects infrastructure management at the ANEP level, hindering long-term planning. Information on infrastructure is scarce and is not systematic, and the lack of guidelines and standards for school design and maintenance, particularly in the secondary level, makes it more difficult for school directors to have a role in the efficient and effective use of maintenance resources. Secondary schools also lack the appropriate spaces for extended time activities such as sports or arts, or spaces to promote the participation of families and communities, particularly in vulnerable urban areas. Finally, rigid policies in pedagogy, governance, and infrastructure hinder the development of innovative learning initiatives, and do not allow for the needed adaptations in the COVID-19 context, further delaying school reopening.

9. **The sector’s leadership, tasked with responding to these challenges, is composed of multiple, high-level actors that centralize decision-making responsibilities but promote limited institutional coordination and collaboration, constraining an effective response.** The ANEP is composed of the Central Steering Council (*Consejo Directivo Central*, CODICEN), the Training in Education Council (*Consejo de Formación en Educación*), and 3 General Directorates (Initial and Primary Education, Secondary Education, and Technical-Professional Education). A recent reform simplified ANEP’s structure,¹⁹ transforming the collective Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education Councils into General Directorates, but the mechanisms of coordination between education levels are unclear and decisions are made independently in each level. Other relevant actors, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Ministerio de Educación y Cultura*, MEC) and Plan Ceibal, have limited jurisdiction in the areas overseen by ANEP. Furthermore, ANEP’s coordination with these actors is primarily based on individual programs and activities rather than on a general sector strategy. This lack of clear coordination rules and accountability adds to a tradition of atomization of initiatives, regulations, and programs.

Relationship to CPF

10. The proposed Project contributes to the Bank’s twin goals and its overall strategy for Uruguay. The Project contributes to the Bank’s twin goals of eradicating poverty and promoting shared prosperity. As noted, despite Uruguay’s commendable record in poverty reduction and inclusive growth, children and youth are substantively overrepresented among the poor; poor children also fare worse in educational attainment and dropout rates. The Project would focus on increasing this population’s human capital by providing targeted infrastructure investment (75 percent of which is focused towards schools in quintiles 1 and 2), improving internal efficiency, and supporting identification mechanisms and teaching practices that focus on at-risk students (most of them from vulnerable backgrounds).

11. While the development of a new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) has been delayed due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposed Project remains aligned with Uruguay’s CPF for the Period FY16-FY20 (Report No. 97063-UY), as well as with the findings of the 2018 Performance and Learning Review (PLR) of the CPF (Report No. 124164-

¹⁸ The decision-making structure in Uruguay deviates from the ones observed in many other high-income countries, where schools enjoy higher degrees of autonomy and decision-making tools to achieve better learning outcomes.

¹⁹ Until 2020, the three education levels were managed by collective councils, with overlapping spheres, duplication of functions and lack of a systemic approach. With the objective of resolving decision making bottlenecks, the *Ley de Urgente Consideración (LUC)*, the Fast Track Omnibus Law approved by the Parliament in 2020, simplified ANEP’s governance; however, education levels are still highly independent from each other, and coordination rules are not implemented.



UY). Both documents highlight the need to address the poverty disproportionately affecting children and youth and the afro-descendant population, the challenges in human capital formation for the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution, the completion and quality of education for the poor, and the complex governance structure in education. The Project would respond to Pillar 2 of the CPF: Rebalancing the Social Compact, which emphasizes the need to strengthen the quality of and access to education to prepare the bottom 40 to acquire marketable labor skills (Objective 4). It is also aligned with one of the key lessons detailed in the PLR: the need to focus on education, with special attention to early childhood development and skilled youth, as a long-term strategy for poverty reduction and inclusion in a small, open economy with a strong social contract like Uruguay. The proposed Project would not only foster increased access to quality education, but it would also increase the resilience of children and vulnerable populations to climate change by ensuring that this access is not interrupted by any external shocks, including those related to climate, that could disrupt face-to-face schooling.

C. Proposed Development Objective

12. The Project's Development Objective is to strengthen pedagogy and governance in the Borrower's Expanded Learning Time schools.

Key Results

13. The key results (potential PDO indicators) are:

- PDO Indicator 1: Percentage of primary and secondary schools that implement a realigned competency-based curriculum.
 - PDO Sub-Indicator 1.1: Percentage of primary and secondary schools that implement a realigned competency-based curriculum in vulnerable areas.²⁰
- PDO Indicator 2: Percentage of primary and secondary schools with an improved "school governance index."²¹
- PDO Indicator 3: Percentage of primary and secondary students benefitting from Expanded Learning Time schools (disaggregated by gender).
- PDO Indicator 4: Share of teachers participating in early screening training and in-service training modules to update pedagogical skills (disaggregated by gender).

D. Concept Description

14. **The proposed Project would seek to strengthen learning quality and equity by supporting the adaptation of schools in the country to a new expanded learning time school model.** Expanded Learning Time (ELT) schools can foster the development of academic, digital, citizenship, and socioemotional skills in an equitable manner and should be better equipped to reengage students to successfully transition back to in-person learning, or continue to engage in virtual or hybrid learning during crises. By adapting, coordinating, and providing services for learning continuity, these schools will be prepared to face epidemiological crises, climate-related shocks, or more endemic crises stemming from socioeconomic disparities in the population.

²⁰ The classification of schools into vulnerable areas will be agreed with ANEP during the preparation of the project.

²¹ The index would be constructed from a combination of key variables. These could include: (a) whether or not the school implements management tools (e.g. a triannual management plan, an institutional self-assessment, a results report, and an improvement plan), (b) number of learning support staff at the schools (e.g. teaching, activities and participation coordinators), (c) whether or not the school has a teacher collaborative space, (d) teacher effort and motivation (from teacher surveys, such as ARISTAS), (e) teacher and student attendance, (f) teacher turnover rates, (g) teacher shortages, (h) differences between hours/roles proposed in the management plan vs. actual hours/roles in the results report. The construction of this index will be completed during preparation.



15. **The Project would focus on a number of vulnerable primary and secondary schools,²² classified under socioeconomic quintiles 1 and 2 (the percentage of the total number of schools in these quintiles will be determined during preparation).** As a reference, there are currently 2,252 primary and 474 secondary schools in Uruguay, of which only 284 primary schools are full-time or extended time schools.²³ A new ELT model would include both (i) the traditional extended-day model where schools expand the length and quality of the school day and activities are provided directly by the schools; and (ii) an innovative model where schools partner with other local schools and/or organizations to lengthen the school day and provide activities that go beyond the regular school day. The model to be followed by each school will be determined by several factors, including their current infrastructure needs and the availability of other schools or strong local organizations that could be partnered with.

16. The Project would support a new model of ELT schools through three key components: (i) strengthening pedagogy by realigning the curriculum and developing adequate pedagogical programs; (ii) strengthening governance by realigning the role of teachers, school directors, and other academic staff to support the new model and improve training programs and the hiring and school assignment processes; and (iii) improving school infrastructure and other complementary services to adequately support students and learning activities during extended school days. In combination, these activities would ensure that the additional instructional time that comes with the extension of the school day is used effectively and supports vulnerable students to strengthen their academic trajectories across primary and secondary education. To foster the strengthening and coordination of national institutions, the Project would include PBCs in Components 1, 2, and 3. The Project would also include a technical assistance component (Component 4) to support critical actions required for the achievement of the PBCs, as well as to support overall project management. Importantly, through strengthened pedagogy and governance in all grades, the Project would improve coordination between primary and secondary schools and tackle repetition in primary schools, repetition, and dropouts in the early years of secondary, and overall cumulative learning deficits.

17. **Component 1: Strengthening Pedagogy.** This Component would consist of four Subcomponents that would develop a new curriculum and adapt and improve the quality of the pedagogical content of programs for ELT schools. It would also improve the effectiveness of their delivery strategies for in-person, hybrid, and remote education to increase the resilience of the education system. This Component would be targeted to schools at the primary and secondary level. Lastly, the new curriculum could be designed with a gender lens to help narrow gender gaps in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and out-of-school populations that was observed in the latest country gender assessment.²⁴

18. **Component 2: Strengthening Governance.** This component would consist of two Subcomponents that would strengthen the professional development of teachers, school directors, and other learning support staff while aligning their roles, responsibilities, and skills to support the new ELT schools. As a consequence of the demographic characteristics of teachers, most of the beneficiaries of this component are women.

19. **Component 3: Improving School Infrastructure and Complementary Services.** This component would support the maintenance, construction, expansion, and/or rehabilitation of infrastructure needed for ELT schools, as well as some complementary services. The infrastructure would focus on being inclusive, flexible, climate-resilient, healthy, digitally connected, and student-centered.

²² The number of schools to adopt the Expanded Learning Time model in each educational level are yet to be defined. Targeted schools would not include current full-time or extended time schools in primary (13% of all primary schools)

²³ Source: ANEP/DIEE. Secondary education in Uruguay includes schools offering regular education as well as technical education.

²⁴ Country Gender Assessment for Uruguay, 2021: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/305771601535010024/jugar-un-partido-desigual-diagn%C3%B3stico-de-g%C3%A9nero-en-uruguay>



20. **Component 4: Technical Assistance and Project Management.** This component would support the engagement of consultant services to strengthen key results areas of the Project. It would also support project management, including staff for Project coordination and administration, monitoring and evaluation of the Project’s results framework, and fiduciary and environmental and social management, as well as finance the carrying out of independent audits and verification of PBCs. Additionally, this component would cover other recurrent costs such as office space rental, insurance, and operational costs.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No
Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	

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APPROVAL

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