WORLD BANK GROUP
Education

Latin America & Caribbean Region

URUGUAY

PISA 2015[1]

TAKEAWAYS

- Uruguay has mostly recovered from the decline in scores experienced in 2012 and is now performing slightly better than in 2009 in reading and science, although not in math—see Figure 1.
- Uruguayan 15-years old are the second highest performers on average in the region, trailing only the Chileans. However, on average, they amass the equivalent of about two years of schooling less than students in the OECD (Figure 2).
- Only roughly one in three Uruguayan students performs below basic proficiency in science or reading (Figure 3), which is considerably better than the regional average of one in two. Yet, in the OECD it is only one in five who performs below basic proficiency.
- Similar to others in the region, poverty is a large predictor of achievement, as students in the bottom quintile by socioeconomic status (ESCS) score about two years of schooling below those in the top quintile (Figure 4). On the other hand, differences between urban and rural students are small.
- Students in public schools score three and a half years of schooling below those public schools. This large disparity is twice as large as the regional average and highlights the significant differences in education quality by school ownership.
- With regards to education expenditures, Uruguay is close to reaching the point at which further improvement in learning is more likely to result from efficiency gains than from increased spending per student.
- For Uruguay to increase its performance, it is likely that it will have to focus on increasing teacher quality. Among the steps it could take are: doing away with outdated teaching practices, strengthening teacher training, enhancing career development opportunities, introducing incentives, and making the teaching profession more attractive to those at the high end of the ability distribution.

Figure 1

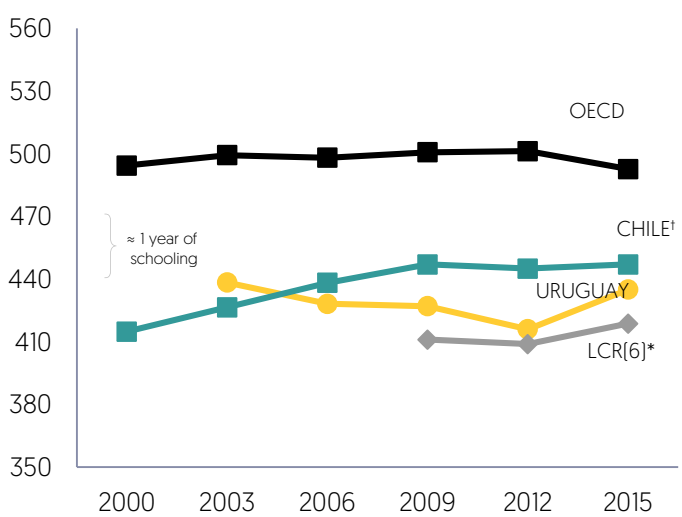
SCORES OVER TIME

	MATHEMATICS	READING	SCIENCE
2003	422	434	438
2006	427	413	428
2009	427	426	427
2012	409	411	416
2015	418	437	435
Δ 2012-2015	9	26†	19†

† Equals statistically significant change

Figure 2

SCIENCE TRENDS



† Chile is included for comparison as the LCR country with the highest score in 2015
* LCR(6) includes the six countries in the region with results from 2009 to 2015

PISA: Program for International Student Assessment

PISA is the OECD's benchmarking tool to assess achievement and application of key knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds. Launched in 2000 and administered every three years, PISA tests proficiency in mathematics, reading, science, and problem-solving. In 2015, representative samples from 72 countries and economies (9 LCR client countries) included 540,000 students.

[1] In 2015, the OECD introduced several improvements to the design, administration, and scaling of PISA. For further details of these changes and their implications for comparability between the 2015 results and previous PISA assessments, please consult the PISA 2015 international report: OECD 2016. PISA 2015 Results (Volume 1): Excellence and Equity in Education. Paris: OECD.

Figure 3

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

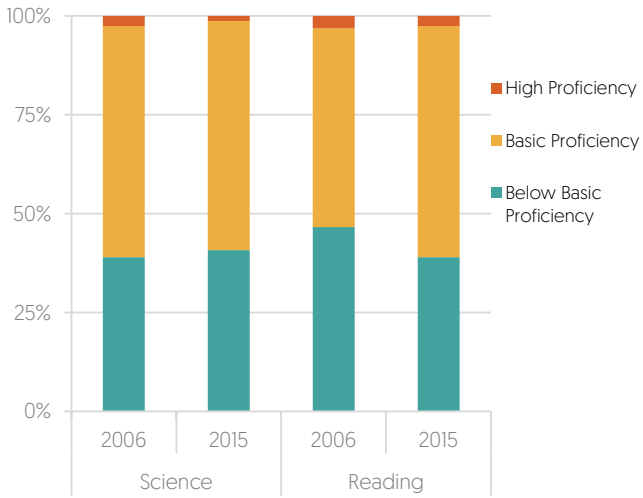


Figure 4

EQUITY PROFILE

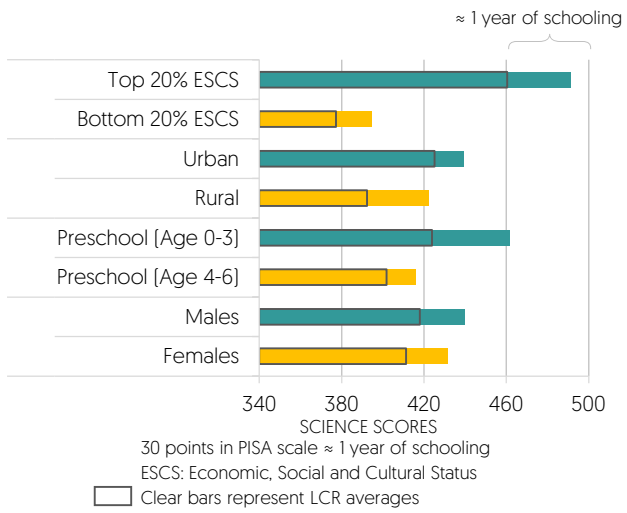
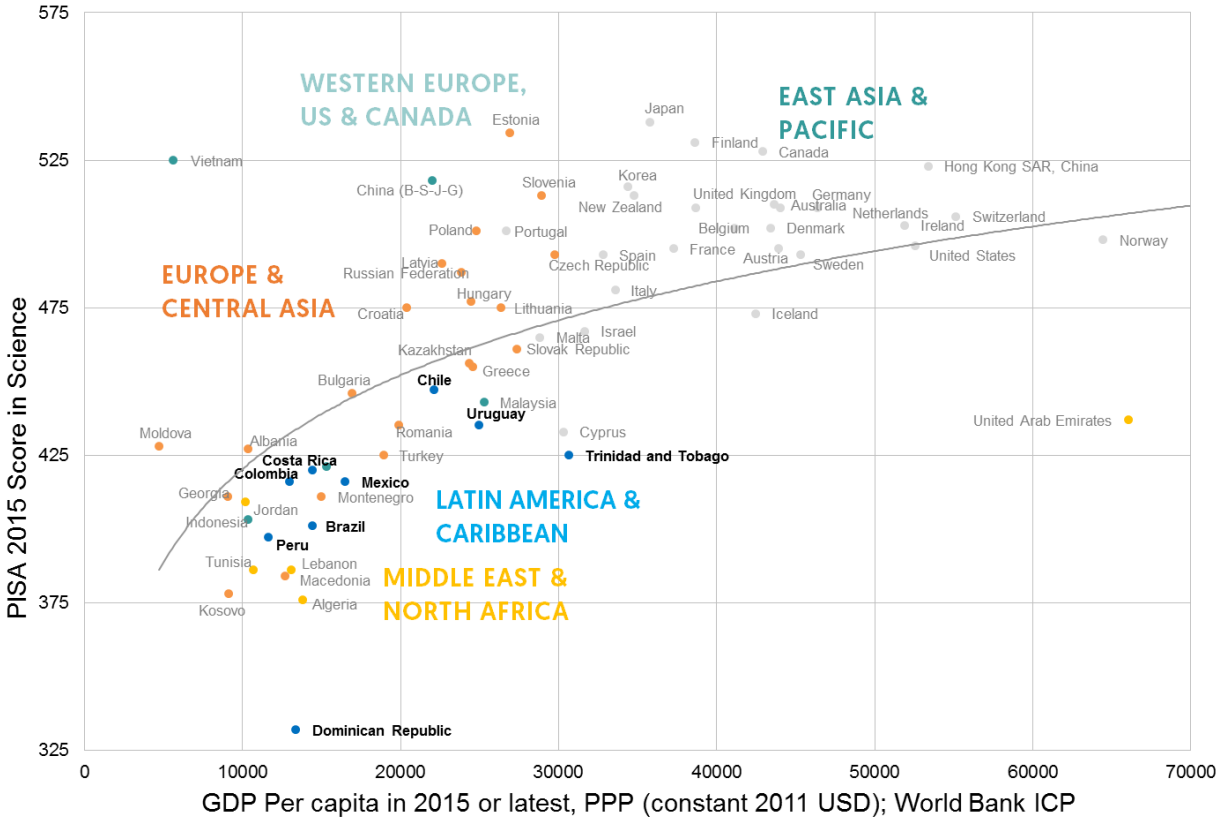


Figure 5

GDP PER CAPITA AND PISA PERFORMANCE



WB EDUCATION ENGAGEMENT

FINANCING:

- Ongoing: Support to Uruguayan Public Schools Project (P126408)
- Pipeline: Improving the Quality of Initial and Primary Education in Uruguay