



## CHAPTER 2:

# Contexts for civic and citizenship education

### Chapter highlights

- A comparison of the structural characteristics of the five ICCS 2016 Latin American countries showed important differences in population size, economic strength, and human development. ([Table 2.1](#))
- Important differences were also apparent in relation to political context, with considerable variation in voter turnout, female representation in parliament, and support for democracy. ([Table 2.2](#))
- Although adult literacy rates are relatively high in all five countries, differences in the provision of education remain. ([Table 2.3](#))
- In general, ICCS 2016 revealed marked differences between the five countries in relation to their Grade 8 students' civic knowledge and Grade 6 students' reading abilities. ([Table 2.4](#))
- Although all five countries were placing considerable emphasis on civic and citizenship education, the extent to which this learning area was represented in their national curricula differed. ([Table 2.5](#))
- Civic and citizenship education in the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries is strongly influenced by their respective historical and political backgrounds.

This chapter summarizes key features of the national contexts for civic and citizenship education in each of the five participating countries and covers basic demographic, socioeconomic, and political contexts. It also provides information about the implementation of civic and citizenship education in the curricula and schools of these countries.

Our focus in this chapter is on the first general research question for ICCS 2016: *How is civic and citizenship education implemented in participating countries?* This question references two specific research questions in the ICCS 2016 assessment framework (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, & Agrusti, 2016) that together provide a structure for the descriptions and analyses of the countries' national contexts:

- *What are the aims and principles of civic and citizenship education in each participating country?*
- *Which curricular approaches do participating countries choose to provide civic and citizenship education?*

Both questions relate to the main historical and political features of each country and how these affect that country's curricula and its approaches to providing civic and citizenship education. The information presented in this chapter draws on data not only from the ICCS 2016 national contexts survey but also from published sources about the countries' historical and political backgrounds and the intentions underpinning their civic and citizenship curricula.

The assessment frameworks of both ICCS 2009 (Schulz, Fraillon, Ainley, Losito, & Kerr, 2008) and ICCS 2016 (Schulz et al., 2016) explicitly recognize the importance of the wider community in developing young people's understandings of their roles as citizens in contemporary societies. "Wider community" comprises the context within which schools and home environments work, and includes factors at local, regional, national, and even supra-national levels. The assessment frameworks also distinguish between *antecedent* and *process-related* variables in the contextual framework within which civic and citizenship education takes place. Among the first set of variables are the democratic history of a country and the structure of its education system; among the second are the intended curriculum and contemporary political developments (Schulz et al., 2016, p. 41). The national contexts survey provided the main source of information for identifying these contextual factors in each national case. The survey data were complemented by information from published secondary sources, particularly with respect to supra-national common factors.

Contemporary research regarding civic and citizenship education in Latin America began with a landmark secondary research study that was conducted by Torney-Purta and Amadeo (2004) and based on data from IEA's Civic Education Study (CIVED) of 1999 (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). During their 2004 study, Torney-Purta and Amadeo reviewed results from two countries of the region that participated in this study (Chile and Colombia) and compared these findings with results from the United States and Portugal. The research focused on similarities and differences in the civic-related views of students and teachers, and on similarities and differences in students' civic knowledge.

More than a decade and a half later, and decisively based on evidence produced by ICCS 2009 (see Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010), research on civic and citizenship education has moved on. Today, researchers in this area are increasingly conducting more sophisticated multilevel and/or multivariate analyses. They are also investigating patterns of civic knowledge and attitudes in quite diverse national contexts (both regional and global) and exploring associations between these patterns and socioeconomic and home background variables as well as key features of countries' educational contexts, such as school resources, curricula, and pedagogical approaches.

The participation of six countries from the Latin America region in ICCS 2009 (Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, and Paraguay) resulted in a wealth of evidence on the impact of differences in socioeconomic status (SES) on students' civic knowledge, attitudes, and expectations of participating in civic-related activities. Results from analyses of data from all six

ICCS 2009 countries (Castillo, Miranda, Bonhomme, Cox, & Bascopé, 2015), and those conducted on data from Chile, Colombia, and Mexico only (Diazgranados & Sandoval-Hernández, 2017; Treviño, Béjares, Villalobos, & Naranjo, 2017), indicated that the variation found in students' civic knowledge and attitudes and their dispositions toward civic participation could be explained by student SES, with students with higher SES gaining the higher scores on the scales corresponding to these learning and attitudinal outcomes.

For Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, Diazgranados and Sandoval-Hernández (2017) found that differences in civic knowledge between high and low SES students were significantly larger ("between 2 and 6 times") than those for civic attitudes and dispositions. The authors attributed this difference to the fact that a test was used to measure knowledge, while students' self-reports were used to measure attitudes. They concluded that the resulting data may have been affected by "social desirability bias" (p. 186).<sup>1</sup>

An important finding regarding students' intended future participation (in legal protests and political activities), again based on data from the three ICCS 2009 countries of Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, is that almost all the variance (over 90%) in students' scores on the corresponding scale was within schools. This finding supports the idea that, at least in these countries, families or contextual variables (such as media and social networks) are the most important factors influencing students' disposition to engage in civic-related activities in the future. In contrast, schools appear to be relatively ineffective in developing beliefs about the importance of participation. Furthermore, with regard to the socializing influence of home background on students' intentions to engage, civic-related variables such as parental interest in discussing politics appear to be more important factors than socioeconomic background (Treviño et al., 2017).

The complex nature of these associations is also evident from the study by Castillo et al. (2015) that drew on Chilean ICCS 2009 data. The authors examined the influence of both civic knowledge and classroom climate on students' expected participation. Both variables showed a positive and similar influence, a finding which, according to the authors, "suggests a possible path whereby openness of classroom climate would favor the acquisition of civic knowledge, which in turn influences future participation" (p. 16). However, classroom climate (in terms of promotion of or lack of receptiveness to open and free exchange of ideas on politics and social issues) is less affected by students' background than civic knowledge. This finding seems particularly important for schools aiming to mitigate the link between home background and future participation, or endeavoring to enhance the limited but significant power of the school in nurturing engagement among young people.

A comparative analysis of curricula for civic and citizenship education of all the ICCS 2016 countries except Peru, published by the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO in 2014, found some important commonalities. Official curricula in all four countries emphasized democracy, human rights, and diversity as leading values, but, in contrast, did not emphasize values such as common good, solidarity, and social cohesion. With regard to citizens' participation, the only curriculum that referred explicitly to voting as a citizen's right and duty was Mexico's. The references in the curricula of all four countries to institutions of representative democracy omitted topics related to the penal system and to the role of the armed forces. In addition, national curricula did not cover the analytical category of "risks to democracy." Overall, many more goals and content areas touched on the civil rather than the civic dimension of citizenship (Cox, Bascopé, Castillo, Miranda, & Bonhomme, 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> Social desirability in this context is seen as a construct which reflects the contextual cultural influences that affect the shaping of views and attitudes across social groups and are generally independent of the explicit curriculum.

Finally, it is particularly instructive when exploring the influences of national contexts on the ICCS 2016 Latin American students' views and attitudes relating to democratic politics and trust in civic institutions and processes to consider evidence from relevant surveys of adult populations in the region. The 2016/17 round of the AmericasBarometer survey (which includes the Latin American Public Opinion Project) of the political views of the Latin America and Caribbean region's adult population found that 58 percent of the respondents in these countries supported democracy (Zeichmeister, Lupu, & Cohen, 2017).

The 2016/17 results also revealed a notable decline (of almost nine percentage points) in support for democracy since the time of the 2014 survey. This value is the lowest observed in an AmericasBarometer study since 2004.<sup>2</sup> The survey also asked respondents to indicate their support for military coups as a means of fighting high levels of crime and corruption. On average across the four ICCS 2016 countries involved, 41 percent of the respondents expressed acceptance of a potential military government, with Colombia having the lowest value (33%) and Peru the highest at 53 percent (Cohen, Lupu, & Zeichmeister, 2017). This finding has particular relevance for the interpretation of ICCS 2016 results on students' justifications for dictatorship and their endorsement of authoritarian government practices presented in Chapter 3 of this report.

## Education systems and national contexts

Any valid interpretation of the results for the Latin American countries in this study requires consideration of the differences across the national contexts. These differences relate, at the most general level, to demographic, socioeconomic, and political factors. The latter are of relevance within the context of this study, and they refer also to features of the countries' education systems and learning outcomes.

**Table 2.1**, which presents selected demographic and economic characteristics of the five Latin American countries surveyed in ICCS 2016, shows considerable differences in population size, with the range extending from about 10.5 million inhabitants in the Dominican Republic to over 120 million in Mexico. The data reflecting gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in \$US PPP (purchasing power parity) of the five countries show three with GDPs between \$US11,000 and \$US13,000 (Colombia, Dominican Republic, Peru), and two with comparatively higher levels of economic wealth: Mexico with \$US16,502, and Chile with \$US22,145. The table also shows scores, international ranks, and classifications drawn from the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI scores range from 0.722 in the Dominican Republic to 0.847 in Chile. One country (Chile) can be classified as having "very high" human development whereas the other four countries fall into the category labelled "high" human development.

The extent to which members of the public see government practices as honest and transparent is an essential element of support for democracy and its legitimacy (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). **Table 2.1** therefore also includes data on the most recent results of the international Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which scores countries on a scale ranging from 100 (very non-corrupt) to 0 (highly corrupt). The data column of the table (Column 4) shows both the scores and the international rankings. The scores for the five countries range from 30 in Mexico (ranked 123rd out of 176 countries in the 2016 report) to 66 in Chile (ranked 24th).<sup>3</sup> The relatively low scores on this index for all countries except Chile indicate comparatively high levels of perceived corrupt practices.

<sup>2</sup> The noted drop in formal political participation, particularly among the young generation, and its accompanying expansion of the repertoires of other forms of participation linked to community and social movements, has led to the need to re-conceptualize youth participation (see Amnå & Ekman, 2013; Miranda, Castillo, & Sandoval-Hernández, 2017; Sloam, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> The global average for the 2016 Corruption Perception Index is 43 (Transparency International, 2017).

An important aspect of Latin America is the presence of high levels of violence in civil society, to the point of the region having the highest rate of homicides in the world (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2014).<sup>4</sup> The right-hand column of [Table 2.1](#) shows, for each participating country, the number of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, as collected by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC). These data are the latest statistics available for each country, and the years of reference can be seen in brackets. These figures show strong differences across the five countries: Colombia has the highest homicide rate, followed by also very high rates in the Dominican Republic and Mexico. Peru and Chile have much lower homicide rates, with Chile exhibiting a significantly lower average (3.6 homicides per 100,000) than the world average of 5.3 in 2015.

The selected political characteristics for the five countries shown in [Table 2.2](#) include voter turnout at the last presidential and legislative elections before the ICCS 2016 survey, whether voting is compulsory or not, the number of political parties in parliament, the percentages of seats in parliament held by women, and the percentages of the adult population expressing support for democracy as “the best system.”

Voter turnout for the election closest to the start of ICCS 2016 varied quite markedly across the five countries. Chile and Colombia do not have compulsory voting, and their percentages of voter turnout were similar at just below the 50 percent mark. While voting is compulsory in the other three countries, they differ in their degree of enforcement. Peru exhibited the highest turnout (over 81%, in both presidential and legislative elections, which take place on the same day and require voters to mark different sections of a common ballot paper). Mexico recorded the lowest turnout for its legislative election (48%). The number of parties in parliament at the time of the elections varied between six in Peru and 14 in Colombia. The percentage of women in parliament was highest in Mexico with 42 percent and lowest in Chile with 16 percent. Support for democracy in the Dominican Republic and Chile was higher (above 60%) than in the other three countries, where around 50 percent of respondents supported this type of government.

The selected characteristics of each country’s education system (shown in [Table 2.3](#)) include adult literacy rate, public expenditure on education in percentages of GDP, years of compulsory education, and proportions of children enrolled in primary and secondary education.

Adult literacy rates are high in all five countries, with the Dominican Republic having the lowest rate (92%) and Chile the highest (97%). Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP ranges from between 3.7 percent in Peru to 5.2 percent in Mexico. In four countries, education is compulsory for more than 12 years: 15 in Mexico, 14 in Peru, and 13 in Chile and the Dominican Republic. In all five countries, these figures include years in pre-primary education.

In three of the five countries, over 90 percent of the corresponding age groups are enrolled in primary education; in Colombia and the Dominican Republic this percentage is below 90 percent. Variation is greater with respect to the number of adolescents enrolled in secondary education. Here, the range extends from 66 percent in the Dominican Republic to 88 percent in Chile. Compulsory schooling in Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico encompasses 12 years of ISCED 1+2 programs combined; in Colombia and Peru the corresponding number is 11.

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<sup>4</sup> On average, 30 percent of the homicides in the region relate to organized crime and gangs, which contrasts with the one percent of similarly caused homicides in Asia, Europe, and Oceania (ECLAC, 2014, p. 142).

Table 2.1: Selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries

Country	Population size	Human Development Index		Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (in USD \$)	Corruptions Perceptions Index (index value and international rank)	Homicide statistics (number per 100,000 inhabitants by year)
		Value	Rank			
Chile	17,948,14	0.847	38	22,145	66 (24)	3.6 (2014)
Colombia	48,228,70	0.727	95	12,988	37 (90)	26.5 (2015)
Dominican Republic	10,528,39	0.722	99	13,375	31 (120)	17.4 (2014)
Mexico	127,017,22	0.762	77	16,502	30 (123)	16.4 (2015)
Peru	31,376,67	0.740	87	11,672	35 (101)	7.2 (2015)

**Notes:**

Data on Human Development Index and GDP per capita obtained from the *Human development report* (United Nations Development Programme, 2016).

Data on population size sourced from *World Bank Indicators* (World Bank, 2017).

Data on Corruptions Perception Index taken from *Corruption Perceptions Index 2016* (Transparency International, 2017).

Data for homicide rates taken from the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *Global Study on Homicide* (UNODC, 2014).

Table 2.2: Selected political characteristics of the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries

Country	Legal age of voting	Compulsory voting (Y / N)	Percentages of voter turnout at last presidential election prior to study (year of election)		Percentages of voter turnout at last legislative election prior to study (year of election)	Number of political parties in parliament	Percentages of seats held by women	Percentages of adults supporting democracy**
			Rank	Category				
Chile	18	N	49.1	(2013)	49.3	8*	16*	61 (0.8)
Colombia	18	N	47.9	(2014)	43.6	14*	19*	53 (0.8)
Dominican Republic	18	Y	69.6	(2016)	70.3	10*	27*	62 (0.9)
Mexico	18	Y	63.1	(2012)	47.7	9	42	49 (0.9)
Peru	18	Y	81.8	(2016)	82.0	6	28	53 (0.7)

**Notes:**

Data for this table collected from the IPU Parliline database (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017) unless otherwise stated.

\* Bicameral structured parliament. Data refer to lower house.

\*\* Support for democracy reflects agreement with the AmericasBarometer question: Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? (Zeichmeister et al., 2017).

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Table 2.3: Selected educational characteristics of the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries

Country	Adult literacy rate (%)	Public expenditure on education (% of GDP)	Internet access (% of population)	Years of compulsory education	Net enrollment rate in primary education (length in years in brackets)	Net enrollment rate in secondary education (length in years in brackets)
Chile	97	4.6	66	13	93.0 (6)	88.3 (6)
Colombia	95	4.7	58	10	89.8 (5)	78.6 (6)
Dominican Republic	92	3.8 <sup>a</sup>	61	13	83.6 (6)	65.5 (6)
Mexico	94	5.2	60	15	95.1 (6)	67.3 (6) <sup>b</sup>
Peru	95	3.7	45	14	92.8 (6)	78.4 (5)

**Notes:**

Adult literacy rate data obtained from *Human development report* (United Nations Development Programme, 2016) unless otherwise stated and refer to the percentage of the population aged 15 and over who can read and write. Data relate to collection period between 2005 and 2015.

Public expenditure on education data obtained from *Human development report* (United Nations Development Programme, 2016) unless otherwise stated.

Internet access data obtained from International Telecommunication Union (ITU, 2016).

Data for net enrollment were taken from *ECLAC statistical yearbook 2016* (ECLAC, 2017) and, for secondary education in Mexico, from *ECLAC statistical yearbook 2015* (ECLAC, 2016).

<sup>a</sup> Data relate to data collection period from 2005 to 2014 and were taken from *Human development report* (United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

<sup>b</sup> Data refer to the year 2010 (ECLAC, 2016).

Table 2.4 summarizes the results for the five countries regarding both the civic knowledge dimension of ICCS 2016 (which surveyed Grade 8 students) and reading ability as measured by the Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (TERCE). This study, carried out by UNESCO in Latin America, targeted Grade 6 students (see Flotts, Manzi, Jiménez, Abarzúa, Cayuman, & García, 2016).<sup>5</sup>

Table 2.4: Civic knowledge and reading results for the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries

Country	ICCS 2016 civic knowledge score (Grade 8)	TERCE 2015 reading score (Grade 6) <sup>a</sup>
Chile	482 (3.1)	776 (3.2)
Colombia	482 (3.4)	726 (5.5)
Dominican Republic	381 (3.0)	633 (3.3)
Mexico	467 (2.5)	735 (3.3)
Peru	438 (3.5)	703 (3.4)

**Notes:**

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup> TERCE 2015 reading data taken from Flotts et al. (2016).

The average score on the civic knowledge scale across the five Latin American participants was 450, while the average ICCS 2016 score for all participating countries was 517.<sup>6</sup> Substantial variation was evident in the national results for the five countries. Chile and Colombia both recorded an average scale score of 482 points (at the higher end of the scale), while the Dominican Republic recorded a score of 381 points (at the lower end of the scale). The dispersion of results from the TERCE 2015 reading test<sup>7</sup> was even broader, with students in Chile having the highest average score and students in the Dominican Republic, the lowest. Despite Chile and Colombia having the same ICCS 2016 civic knowledge score, a rank ordering of the countries according to the ICCS and TERCE sets of results showed a very similar pattern across the two sets.

## Historical and political background of civic and citizenship education in each country

The ICCS national contexts survey provided information about the historical and political backgrounds that have influenced civic and citizenship education in the five participating countries. A summary of that information follows.

### Chile

In Chile, a dictatorship between 1973 and 1990 and the transition to democracy during the 1990s strongly influenced educational policies in general and civic and citizenship education in particular. The authoritarian rule resulted in civic education that focused on family and national identity and aimed to promote knowledge and respect for the political institutions defined in the country's 1980 constitution, which followed authoritarian principles of a "protected democracy." In contrast, during the 1990s, Chile implemented a new curriculum focused on democracy and human rights. It celebrated the principles of diversity, pluralism, and intercultural dialogue. Since the start of the 2000s, an ongoing concern of the country's political elites has been young people's low level of engagement and participation in formal politics.

5 Results from the reading assessment were included because of their fundamental importance as a key competence provided by education. The results also offer an interesting source of comparison alongside the ICCS 2016 civic knowledge findings.

6 For further details regarding the measurement of civic knowledge in ICCS and the establishment of a described scale, see Schulz, Fraillon, and Ainley (2013), and Schulz et al. (2016).

7 For further details on this study, see UNESCO-OREALC (2016).

These later years have nonetheless also seen new developments in young people's civic participation, most notably in terms of political mobilization. This mobilization has been particularly evident in the widespread social movements of students that took place in 2006 (secondary students) and 2011 (university students). During these times, students demanded not only greater opportunity to access quality education but also a change in the "education model" (from market to state regulation of the education sector). Over the last three or so years, a series of high-profile cases centered on political financing by big business has led to a general alienation from politics among members of the public and a marked drop in their levels of trust in political institutions. These developments have put great pressure on civic and citizenship education. In 2016, for example, a new law required civic and citizenship education to be reinstated as a dedicated subject at the end of secondary education. This change came after two decades of preference for a "transversal" approach to this learning area, which meant its contents were distributed among four subjects—two in primary and two in secondary education. In addition, from 2016, every school has been required to develop a comprehensive plan for strengthening this learning area.

### ***Colombia***

Colombia's contemporary history has been defined by five decades of political armed conflict, originating in class inequalities and social struggles in the 1960s when many guerrilla groups were formed and were then confronted by the army and para-military groups. The conflict, fueled in the last three decades by the drug trade, has left a culture of violence legitimization and distrust in political institutions. The major recent development has been the demobilization of the most powerful guerrilla group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and consequent peace negotiations with the government that culminated in a national referendum (October 2, 2016) on the terms of a transitional justice process aimed at reconciliation. Although the "yes" vote lost, this outcome has not stopped the negotiated end of the armed conflict or diminished widespread expectations of a post-conflict future.

Against this background, education has consistently been seen as a crucial means of achieving peace in Colombia and of enhancing the country's democratic culture. The General Law of Education that came into effect in 1994 established ethical education as a mandatory subject in basic education, while standards for civic and citizenship education and a nationwide system of evaluating the outcomes of this educational provision were established in 2006. Since 2011, three government initiatives have underlined the evolving centrality that civic and citizenship education has for Colombia's efforts to achieve peace and a strongly based democratic culture. They are the Program of Citizenship Competencies (2011), which updated the 2006 definitions, the National System of School Coexistence (2013), and the Peace Class (2014).

### ***Dominican Republic***

During the last decade and a half, the Dominican Republic has experienced the evolution of democratic electoral politics, with these changes gathering legitimacy through reforms of the public institutions that oversee the democratic process (such as electoral courts). At the same time, governments, backed by varying political alliances, have been able to enact educational policies designed to reform education. This trend has culminated in a recently agreed national pact for educational reform (Pacto Nacional para la Reforma Educativa en la República Dominicana, 2014–2030). Since 2012, the government has also substantially increased financing of the education sector. These positive features of the political context need to be seen against the country's wider societal context of immense challenges to education in general and civic and citizenship education in particular. These challenges include high levels of violence, social inequality, poverty, and gender inequality, all of which are evident across the different sectors of Dominican society.

### **Mexico**

Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, and after 70 years of single-party rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the political context in Mexico has been defined by the initiation and subsequent consolidation of real democratic change in political power. The ensuing democratic transition and electoral political reforms have meant close relationships between these and educational policies, explaining, for example, the Federal Electoral Institute's 2003-designed program titled *To Educate for Democracy*. In addition, the Ministry of Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública) set up an inter-institutional committee that included a representative of the Ministry of the Interior (Secretaría de Gobernación). The aim of this initiative was to develop a comprehensive program of civic and ethical education by 2008. In 2011, this program became a formal school subject called civic education and ethics.

High levels of violence and criminality within a context of corruption and the limited effectiveness of state institutions have emphasized the need for government agencies to address security issues and policies. Since 2006, these concerns have brought about programs that complement the national curriculum. Among them are the Culture of Legality Program and the Safe School Program.

Mexican society and its political system continue to give utmost priority to education. In 2012, the three major political forces of the country agreed on a *Pacto por México* (Pact for Mexico). Less than a semester later, the country had experienced a change in the constitution and the enactment of a General Law of Education as well as two complementary laws, one designed to regulate the teaching profession and the other designed to strengthen Mexico's National Institute for Educational Evaluation. These legal reforms were also put in place in order to end the teacher union's control of the schooling system, to improve the quality of educational provision, and to make access to education more equitable.

### **Peru**

In Peru, the year 2000 and the end of the authoritarian Fujimori government represented a turning point for educational development in the country. The government created a National Education Council and worked to ensure that citizenship issues and containing corruption became part of educational and public arena debates. In 2002, the government signed a national accord that was followed by a set of state policies which sought to define a course for the country's sustainable development and democratic governance. In 2006, the National Educational Project defined citizenship education as one of the fundamental pillars of the country's education system and emphasized democratic consolidation as a goal for 2021 (the bicentennial year of Peruvian independence). Citizenship has become a major focus in the basic education curriculum, with sample-based national assessments of student learning in this area taking place in 2004 and 2013.

## **Profiles of civic and citizenship curricula**

The ICCS national contexts survey also collected information on national profiles of civic and citizenship education curricula in each of the participating countries. These are summarized here.

### **Chile**

Civic and citizenship education in Chile's national curriculum is oriented toward developing the knowledge and attitudes that citizens need in order to participate in an active and responsible way in a democratic society. These characteristics include self-recognition as a citizen and a positive disposition in relation to social participation and involvement. National curriculum guidelines specify a core set of democratic values, open attitudes toward diversity and a pluralistic society, and respect for human rights. The curriculum stipulates that aims in civic and citizenship education are accomplished through daily actions that take place at school and in the home. These aims include

developing self-expression, facilitating the skills of dialogue and persuasion, and fostering teamwork abilities. The following are the specified main aims of civic and citizenship education in Chile:

- Ensuring students recognize human rights and the rule of law as foundations for living together in a society;
- Developing among students the skills, knowledge, and attitudes demanded by democratic life and participation;
- Recognizing diversity as an inherent feature of society and a manifestation of human freedom and dignity;
- Promoting students' civic participation and involvement in addressing problems in their communities;
- Developing students' abilities to apply historical and spatial thinking, work with different sources of information, and apply critical thinking and communication skills.

### **Colombia**

Civic and citizenship education is at the core of Colombia's curriculum because it is seen as a direct means of ameliorating the country's history of social conflict and violence, especially by building competencies that enable people to live peacefully together. The standards underpinning this area of education focus on the immediate within-school and within-community relationships rather than on topics related to broader society. They also directly appeal to the individual person by presenting statements such as the following to Grades 6 and 7 students: "I contribute to peaceful relationships," "I reject situations in which human rights are violated," and "I identify and reject different forms of discrimination in my school and community and critically analyze the reasons why they occur."

Three aims structure civic and citizenship education in Colombia:

- To support the construction of *peaceful coexistence* by establishing capacities in the new generation directed toward building good social relationships based on justice, empathy, tolerance, solidarity, and respect for others;
- To promote *democratic participation and civic responsibility* through the mechanisms of citizen participation established in the constitution and thereby enabling a full exercise of citizenship;
- To encourage, value, and promote *plurality, identity, and appreciation of difference*, in recognition of the equal dignity of all human beings, with particular reference to the characteristics of gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, and class.

### **Dominican Republic**

Within the context of a major political effort to develop national agreement on education policies (Pacto Nacional para la Reforma Educativa en la República Dominicana, 2014–2030), the Dominican Republic has recently subjected its school curriculum to a comprehensive review and reform process that involved a strong emphasis on consultation and participation. Consideration of the civic dimension in the curriculum led to authoritarianism, gender inequality, and violence being identified as features of culture and society that comprehensively undermine the effectiveness of both primary and secondary education. The new curriculum (2014) defines as a "fundamental" (that is, a transversal) aim "ethical and citizenship competence," the components of which embrace the following actions:

- Recognizing oneself as a person belonging to a culture, a nation, and a global human culture;
- Assessing social and institutional practices from a historical perspective and within present times;
- Contributing to the creation of the fair, just, and democratic relationships that characterize harmonious living together;
- Acting with autonomy, responsibility, and assertiveness in relation to one's own rights and duties.

### **Mexico**

In keeping with the competency-based approach that has underpinned Mexico's curriculum since 2006, the country's aims for civics and ethics education encompass eight competencies grouped into three main themes: *person* (referring to self-care); *ethics* (referring to self-regulation and responsible freedom); and *citizenship* (referring to active participation in resolving issues facing the community and the country and in defending the exercise of rights).

The main aims of the current curriculum (implemented in 2011) are for students to:

- Recognize themselves as worthy subjects, able to fully develop as individuals through enjoyment and care of their person, to make responsible and independent decisions to guide their aims in life, to act as civic subjects with rights and duties, and to participate in improving society;
- Recognize the importance of exercising the freedom they have to make responsible decisions and to self-regulate their conduct in accordance with ethical principles, respect for human rights, and democratic values;
- Understand that the different groups they and others belong to in society are equal in dignity even though different in their ways of being, acting, thinking, feeling, believing, living, and living together;
- Understand and appreciate democracy as a way of life and government by analyzing and practicing the values and attitudes manifested in day-to-day living and by understanding how the Mexican state is structured and functions in order to regulate democratic participation, all within a framework of laws and institutions characterized by respect for and exercise of human rights and a deep sense of justice.

### **Peru**

Peru's aims for civic and citizenship education are informed by the country's educational policy concerning the development of citizenship skills and attributes in students. These aims include the following:

- The development of personal, social, and cultural identity in the context of a democratic, multicultural, and ethical society;
- The development and strengthening of self-esteem and esteem for one another, thus preparing students for life in a multicultural society;
- Contributing to social cohesion and enhancement of democracy through which ethical conduct, embedded in democratic values, is expressed as respect for the principles of law and the principles of individual and social responsibility.

### **Approaches to civic and citizenship education**

When asked about current debates on civic and citizenship education, the ICCS 2016 national centers in the Latin American countries, with the exception of Mexico, reported that education policy for this learning area has been a major focus of recent debates and that these have resulted in agreements aimed at reinforcing the importance of civic and citizenship education in the school system. In all countries except Colombia, the curriculum for civic and citizenship education has undergone revisions since 2009.

Civic and citizenship education is included in the formal curricula experienced by the ICCS target-grade (Grade 8) students in four out of five Latin American countries (Table 2.5). This area of education is defined as a specific subject in three of the countries: the Dominican Republic (until 2015), Mexico, and Peru. In Chile and Colombia, it forms a learning area integrated into several subjects. In addition, all countries except Peru intend the goals and content of civic and citizenship education to imbue all subjects taught at the ICCS target grade.

Table 2.5: Approaches to civic and citizenship education in the curricula for lower-secondary education in the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries

Country	Civics and citizenship included in formal curriculum	Specific civic and citizenship education subject (compulsory)	Name of curriculum subject	Taught by teachers of subjects related to human/social sciences	Integrated into all subjects taught at school	Extracurricular activities	Considered result of school experiences as a whole
Chile	•			•	•		•
Colombia				•	•		
Dominican Republic*	•			•	•		
Mexico	•	•	Civics and ethical formation	•	•		
Peru	•	•	Civic and citizenship education	•			

**Notes:**

Source: ICCS 2016 national contexts survey; reference year is 2016.

\* Dominican Republic changed to the transversal approach in 2016.

In terms of the civic and citizenship topics included in the countries' curricula, the following content features in all five: human rights, equal opportunities for men and women, citizens' rights and responsibilities, critical and independent thinking, and conflict resolution. However, the topic of elections and voting—an important topic with respect to educating young people about formal political participation—is not included in the curricula for Grade 8 students in Chile and the Dominican Republic.

In all five countries, learning objectives characterized as “knowing basic civic and citizenship facts” or “understanding key civic and citizenship concepts” are specified in the curriculum for the ICCS target-grade students. Other objectives, such as “understanding key civic and citizenship values and attitudes,” “communicating through discussion and debate,” “participating in community-based activities,” “developing positive attitudes toward participation and engagement in civic and civil society,” and “understanding how to resolve conflicts in society” are specified in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Peru, but not in Chile and Colombia.

Mexico and Peru specify the amount of instructional time to be spent on civic and citizenship education at the ICCS target grade. Peru mandates two hours per week of “civic and citizenship education” whereas Mexico stipulates four hours per week of “civics and ethical formation.” In Chile, schools are legally required to devote 152 hours per year at the ICCS target grade to the subject area “history, geography, and social sciences.” Here, civic and citizenship education is taught mainly as one strand of content. Colombian learning standards do not specify instruction time for civic-related goals and contents, so it is up to the schools to determine how much time to allocate to them. In the Dominican Republic, the curriculum specifies the time allocated for social sciences as five hours per week; in this country, civic and citizenship education became a dimension within this broader civic-related subject area only recently (in 2016).

Mexico is the only Latin American ICCS 2016 country where content related to civic and citizenship education at the target grade is taught by specialist teachers. In the other countries included in the study, this content is taught by teachers of subjects related to civic and citizenship education (e.g., history, geography, social studies). Colombia is the only one of the five countries where teachers of subjects not related to civic and citizenship education (e.g., mathematics, science) are required to teach civics and citizenship topics.

In Mexico and Peru, civic and citizenship education is a mandatory part of preservice/initial teacher education for specialist teachers of civic and citizenship education and for teachers of other civic-related subjects. Mexico also includes civic and citizenship education in its initial teacher education for teachers of subjects not related to this learning area. In Colombia and the Dominican Republic, civic and citizenship education is not part of initial teacher education. Chile has no systematic provision of this content during initial teacher education, even for teachers of civic-related subjects. Instead, teacher education institutions decide whether and how much civic and citizenship education they will include in their programs.

According to representatives of the ICCS 2016 Latin America national centers, all five countries recognize aspects such as school governance, student participation, school ethos, school culture and values, and parental/community involvement in school as aspects of education that contribute to civic and citizenship education.

All five countries also expect students in the ICCS target grade to be formally assessed with regard to the learning outcomes of civic and citizenship education. Assessment is classroom based in Peru, involves written tests in Chile, encompasses standardized examinations in Colombia, and covers projects, oral presentations, and research reports in the Dominican Republic. In Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, students receive, at either the end of terms or the end of the school year, formal reports detailing their civic and citizenship knowledge and skills.

Of the five countries, only Colombia has nationwide, census-based assessments of civic and citizenship education. Since 2012, these assessments have been part of Colombia's national assessment program Pruebas Saber Pensamiento Ciudadano. Over the period encompassing 2014 to 2017, Chile, Mexico, and Peru have used assessments conducted with representative samples of schools and students to measure the outcomes of civic and citizenship education.

### **Discussion of differences and similarities**

A comparison of structural characteristics for the five ICCS 2016 Latin American countries shows important differences regarding population size, economic strength, and human development. Considerable differences also exist with respect to perceived corruption and homicide rates. Chile is in a notably better situation in relation to all these measures than are the other four countries, which, on average, show relatively low levels of economic strength and development as well as relatively high homicide rates and levels of perceived corruption.

All five countries have presidential forms of government, but there are marked differences regarding voter turnout, fragmentation of parties, and the number of seats in parliament held by females. Only Chile and Colombia do not have compulsory voting, and their turnout figures at elections are significantly lower than those of Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. Support for democracy in the adult population is around the 50 percent mark for three countries, and just over 60 percent in the other two (Chile, Dominican Republic). These percentages represent the lowest level of commitment to democracy in the decade and a half since the introduction of a survey collecting comparable data.

The characteristics of the countries' education systems differ considerably, although adult literacy rates are quite high in all five. Net enrollments in primary education are on or over 90 percent in four countries, with only the Dominican Republic having higher proportions of young people (mostly in rural and poor urban areas) out of school. Attendance in secondary education among the corresponding age group is close to 90 percent for Chile, over 75 percent for Colombia and Peru, and below 70 percent in Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

While the results from the ICCS 2016 national contexts survey point to recent debates on or reforms in civic and citizenship education across the region, the countries' approaches to this learning area vary. Three of the five countries have a specific subject for this learning area (Dominican Republic until 2015), whereas the other two integrate civic-related content into other subjects. Variation also exists with respect to the provision of teacher training in civic and citizenship education and in the methods used to assess the target-grade students' civic-related learning outcomes.

Historical and political events in recent decades in Latin America have facilitated efforts to strengthen civic culture and democratic values in all five of the region's ICCS 2016 countries. Across the five countries, these events include the challenges to democratic development that represent the political sequels to Fujimori's populist regime and deterioration of the rule of law in Peru; the peace agreement between the national government and the FARC in Colombia; student movements and the legitimacy crisis relating to political institutions in Chile; the significant efforts to redefine the regulatory framework of education in Mexico; and the cultural challenges presented by the legacies of dictatorships and *machismo* culture in the Dominican Republic.

In social terms, of the five countries, only Peru and Chile are comparatively free of high levels of violence and insecurity linked to drug trafficking and its corrosive effects on society. Issues related to crime and violence continue to challenge Colombia, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, where civic and citizenship education is being explicitly framed as counter-strategies to these phenomena.

Despite the very different challenges that each national context confronts with regard to fomenting democratic beliefs and accompanying competencies among young people, there is consistent evidence across the period of time encompassing ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 that the five ICCS 2016 Latin American countries are paying increasing attention to the value of civic and citizenship education. Enhancing curricula in this learning area and defining outcome goals in terms of competencies are common to all five countries and a sign that civic-related issues are becoming an important part of these countries' educational policies.

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