Chapter 3
The Fragility of the School-in-Pandemic in Chile

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Abstract This chapter examines how Chilean education was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Like all school systems worldwide, Chilean education was strongly impacted, with schools closing for nearly the entire academic year, which necessitated an improvised "distance education." This new system faced enormous difficulties, especially in rural sectors and for families that lacked sufficient resources in their homes, which in the case of Chile represent a significant portion of the population. Based on secondary sources and a study conducted by the authors, this chapter begins by describing the fundamental characteristics of Chilean education before continuing with an overview of the principal actions undertaken by public authorities to confront the pandemic in the educational sphere; we then present the (scant) information available on how the suspension of in-person classes affected different school actors and summarize the basic findings of our own study on this topic, whose focus is educational experiences at home. The chapter concludes with some reflections of a more general nature that seek to situate the educational debate triggered by the pandemic in a broader context, concerning the future evolution of the education system.

3.1 Education in Chile: Basic Context

The Chilean school system is known worldwide as an extreme case of the educational market, in which education is strongly decentralized, highly privatized[1], markedly segregated, and in which a subsidiary state assumes a regulatory and evaluative role (Bellei 2015; Parcerisa & Falabella 2017; Valenzuela et al. 2014). In administrative terms, in Chile there are two school types: public, which depend on municipalities

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[1] Chile is among the countries with greatest private participation in school education (OECD 2014).

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and Local Education Services[2]—intermediary bodies autonomous from the Ministry of Education—and private, which are entirely autonomous. Within the latter sector, there are private schools without state funding (which charge families high tuition fees) and subsidized private schools which, like public schools, are funded via a per-student subsidy (given that families have the freedom to choose a school, schools compete for family preferences to obtain more resources). In addition to receiving state resources, a minor part of subsidized private schools charge a copayment to parents[3], and until 2015 they could profit from their earnings.

Within this arrangement, school enrollment is concentrated mainly in subsidized schools (92%), mostly private (56%), while public schools account for only 36% of students. One of the most salient consequences of the Chilean educational market model is the soaring socioeconomic segmentation and segregation between schools, along with the marked stigmatization and marginalization of public education (Bellei et al. 2018), which is attended primarily by students from the poorest homes. On the other extreme, unsubsidized private schools educate the highest-income students and have historically represented a smaller percentage of the enrollment—currently 8%.

In Chile there are 12 years of compulsory schooling (as of 2003), beginning with the first level of primary education, which lasts 8 years. Secondary education is divided into a common cycle (9th and 10th grades) and a differentiated cycle (11th and 12th grades), with tracks for scientific, humanistic, technical/vocational, and artistic education. Coverage is nearly universal in the case of primary education (99.7%) and very high in secondary education (87.7%) (MINEDUC 2018). In 2020, school enrollment climbed to 3,608,158 students. Although preschool education is not compulsory, coverage for kindergarten is very high (currently 94% according to Ministry of Education data from 2019).

Among the functions of the Ministry of Education are the formulation of the national curriculum, which is mandatory for all schools, and the determination of learning standards for each level. All schools, both public and private, have freedom of teaching; that is, they can offer their own curriculum if it covers the learning objectives established by the ministry. However, in practice schools do not differ significantly in terms of curricula and tend to follow ministerial plans and programs. In addition, the Ministry evaluates both schools and teachers through strong accountability mechanisms. For this, it relies on an institutional framework (Agency of Quality, and the Superintendence of Education) in charge of school supervision, evaluation, and orientation, and it intensively utilizes standardized tests of academic achievement (SIMCE) to apply sanctions and support. Initially created to inform parents in the process of school choice and foster competition between schools, SIMCE results are widely publicized in the school system and the press.

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[2] Entities in charge of the administration of public schools, in the framework of the law from 2017 that creates a new system of public education and stipulates the gradual transfer of establishments to municipal control.

[3] The educational reform of 2015, the "Inclusion Law," has begun to gradually eliminate the copay.

As will be seen, the heightened decentralization and decoupling of the Chilean system, its marked socioeconomic stratification, and its strong focus on curricular coverage and external learning evaluation affected its capacity to adequately respond to the complex scenario generated by the pandemic.

3.2 Policies Adopted to Confront the Pandemic in Education

The first case of COVID-19 detected in Chile, in early March 2020, coincided with the beginning of the school year. After two weeks, the closing of all schools and preschool establishments, both public and private, was ordered, and the majority would not return to in-person activities at all during the year.

Following the suspension of classes, government education policy was redirected primarily toward facilitating conditions for schools, teachers, and students to be able to continue the school year through distance learning. This has meant multiple challenges that are not limited to deficits in technological equipment and connectivity, though to be sure this aspect has been a major limitation for a substantial proportion of students and schools, and part of the government's efforts have been directed toward filling such gaps. Although, as we will see later, the lack of access to devices and a stable internet connection is a problem that continues to affect a significant proportion of students, despite the different initiatives promoted by the government and other private and public organizations (such as universities). This line of policies and actions[4] can be grouped as follows:

(a) Online pedagogical support for teachers, students, and families: Various types of support for distance learning have been created and made available to all school communities. These include the webpage "I Learn Online," (Curriculum Nacional, 2020) which brings together pedagogical material, textbooks, videos, and exercises for all grades, and is adapted for use by students, teachers, and parents; through an alliance with the Mobile Telephone Association of Chile, downloads of school textbooks and guides are free of charge. In addition, software and applications to promote reading and ludic educational activities have been distributed; the Digital School Library has been enhanced, and reading clubs have been created as part of the literacy plan; free university preparation classes have been made available (so students finishing secondary school can prepare for the national higher education admissions test); a television channel has been created—*TV Educa*—in partnership with other public and private bodies, transmitting exclusively entertaining educational and cultural content from the first through fourth grade curriculum (MINEDUC 2020a); and lastly—although nearly at the end of the school year—an educational radio station was created for students in remote areas.

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[4] An official synthesis in "Balance MINEDUC 2020a": https://www.mineduc.cl/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2021/01/BalanceMineduc2020.pdf.

(b) Support for schools and teachers: The availability of free software such as
     Gsuite and Office 365 A1 enabled for 5,700 schools; courses, training, and
     conferences on the use of educational platforms, the use of ICT tools, curric-
     ular prioritization, and socioemotional learning; and infrastructure plans for
     improvement, replacement, fitting out, and adaptation of school spaces for the
     return to classes. The topic of school coexistence and socioemotional assis-
     tance has also represented an area of reflection and guidance for schools. The
     Ministry generated guides for families and their socioemotional wellbeing and
     material for teachers to face the overload of work (MINEDUC 2020b, c, d).
     In April 2020, the authorities also relaxed the Preferential School Subsidy
     Law[5], allowing schools to use subsidies for technological resources, sanita-
     tion, cleaning and disinfection of infrastructure, resources for infrastructure
     modification, and other activities to confront COVID-19 (Superintendencia
     de la Educación 2020). Furthermore, from May to November, the Agency of
     Educational Quality changed its strategy of support and evaluation to an online
     modality in which 846 schools from around the nation participated in "men-
     torships," "remote visits," (with an instrument simpler than the face-to-face),
     and "Agency Connects" (a virtual space where schools with noteworthy prac-
     tices can share their good experiences), among which the mentorships were
     the best attended. The same agency, in August 2020, also created a "Citizen
     Consultation" to respond to the question, what is educational quality in the
     context of the pandemic? (With a view to rethink online support), in which
     more than 37,226 people participated (71% of them parents or guardians).
     The main results were that students' socioemotional contexts were crucial to
     learning; that it was important to continue with online learning and strengthen it
     through more tools and resources; and that participation and interaction among
     students was essential.
(c) Support focused on students: Mainly directed at low-resource students,
     subsidized schools, technical/vocational schools, and rural/isolated areas.
     Computers and tablets have been provided along with broadband mobile
     phones and physical educational materials; the school feeding program has
     been maintained (through the delivery of food boxes to families); and discounts
     for public transportation have been arranged. Meanwhile, for students with
     difficulty accessing the internet, the "I Learn at Home" plan was launched,
     delivering educational materials similar to the "I Learn Online" program in
     printed form, along with reinforcement booklets (UNESCO 2020).

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[5] The Preferential Subsidy created in 2008 provides additional resources to schools with students
from low socioeconomic backgrounds; these resources can only be spent on items stipulated in an
annual school improvement plan that each school designs.

Additionally, considering that the possibilities of addressing the compulsory national curriculum appeared to be seriously restricted by the reduction of class time, in May the government proposed a Curricular Prioritization that defined essential learning objectives for each grade and subject, which entailed making plans of study and mechanisms of evaluation more flexible for each school. The proposed curricular prioritization is based on the achievement of learning objectives at distinct levels, prioritizing the first level and incentivizing comprehensive approaches that integrate distinct objectives and even subjects. In terms of content, the proposal establishes that the plan of studies should be focused on the subjects of Language and Communication and Mathematics, although the subjects of Counseling and Technology are also important and represent a space that must be maintained. In terms of educational levels, certain critical courses are being focused on, including first and second grade (literacy); eighth and ninth grade (related to the transition to secondary education); and twelfth grade (focused on the completion of secondary school). Lastly, it has been emphasized that each school should decide what is fundamental in their study plans and how this can be adapted to the curricular prioritization (MINEDUC 2020f). The curricular prioritization is optional, as each school can adjust it according to their context and conditions, and it will be valid for all of 2020 and 2021, with the expectation of resuming the official national curriculum in March 2022.

Despite all of these supports and flexibilization measures, the government's strategy to face the pandemic at the school level was problematic, which points to poor political management and limited capacity for dialogue and empathy with the school communities and families living through a crisis scenario.

The first issue was the failure to concretize a return to face-to-face activities during 2020. The first estimated return date was set at the end of April, after declaring an early "winter break," when the pandemic was still in its initial stages and the scenario was highly uncertain. The decision was widely criticized by various sectors, including health and education experts, and especially the teachers' union. Later, with the second half of the school year well advanced, the Ministry convened a work group, together with UNESCO, that created a proposal that included evidence on the negative effects of a prolonged interruption of classes, knowledge of international experiences of reopening, and a participatory dialogue on reopening classes and the nature of monitoring and accompaniment in schools that reopen (MINEDUC 2020e). Thus, it was only as recently as October, after the creation of this committee of experts, that a protocol was designed for the "secure return" and some schools began to partially restart in-person activities. However, the scant credibility of or confidence in the authorities, the limited previous investment to refurbish schools (during most of the year the government rejected providing additional resources for this purpose), and the pressing fears of families who had primarily opposed the return impinged upon the reopening process, which ultimately was only carried out by a small fraction of schools, and mainly in high-income sectors. Furthermore, the disagreements between the Ministry and the teachers' union, along with actors from civil society and local authorities, did not cease and characterized the start of the 2021 school year.

The second issue was the government's insistence on maintaining standardized assessments of school actors in the middle of a social and health crisis. This was clearly expressed by the government's determination on maintaining the SIMCE test (System for Measuring the Quality of Education), although it was later transformed into an optional measure to be used for informational purposes based on a sample of schools, the Ministry initially upheld its normal application, a situation that was widely questioned by the teachers' union, experts in the area, and various educational institutions[6]. Another case was the National Teacher Evaluation, which was also maintained, although as a voluntary activity[7]. The main criticisms against these measures point to the validity of the results in a context of exceptional crisis, and thus to their limited utility for decision-making; to the stress that such measures entail for educational communities, given that the SIMCE, along with the National Teacher Evaluation, are tools utilized for classification of schools and teachers and the allocation of economic resources and incentives; and to the unjustified use of these resources that could be redirected to other priority areas in education. A final example was the maintenance of the practice of grade repetition based on student performance, which, being a questionable pedagogical measure with known negative effects even in normal times, was hardly justifiable amidst a crisis in which most students have barely been able to maintain their engagement with the educational process from home.

Finally, there is little information available on how local public education administrators have confronted the pandemic, although some innovative practices have been documented. For example, in terms of semi-rural areas, the Lampa Municipality published a manual specifically aimed at supporting families in terms of recreation, promoting physical activity to improve the time at home (Corporación Municipal Lampa 2020); and the María Pinto Municipality managed to continue the functioning of their youth orchestras online, prioritizing extracurricular and artistic contents (Corporación Municipal de María Pinto 2020). In urban areas, the Renca Municipality encouraged the development of a project-based learning methodology for its schools and published a catalogue of good practices among its schools (Equipos Educativos de la Corporación Municipal de Renca 2020); and in the Las Condes Municipality, a website called "Learn While Traveling" was created, which was focused on pre-school education and displayed different "worlds" (aspects of knowledge) with material prepared by local educators, including about the human body, animals, the universe, and culture, among others. These examples demonstrate innovation and concern for enriching students' experiences during the pandemic that exceed curricular prioritization.

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[6] https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/05/16/simce-despues-del-confinamiento-servira-para-algo/.

[7] https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/07/02/evaluacion-docente-en-contextos-de-covid-la-trampa-del-progreso-profesional/.

3.3 Effects of the Pandemic on the Educational Process and the Responses of Actors[8]

The relocation of school to the home has forced the reinvention of various educational actors amidst an unprecedented situation in which the most basic aspects of teaching processes have become a challenge: creating educational strategies that overcome inequalities, allowing all students to have an educational experience with even minimum safeguarding of learning, and socioemotional conditions and well-being at home. In this section we present the main challenges and opportunities that were faced during 2020 by schools, teachers, principals, families, and students in this distance-learning scenario through a review of Chilean empirical literature that tackled these subjects.

The school is a space of socialization that allows community and support networks to be formed between distinct educational actors, so its functioning based on communication is key to coordinating a system that structurally organizes a significant portion of families' and students' lives. During the pandemic, the closing of the school and its relocation to the home has transformed daily lives and private and shared spaces, leading to the question of how to improve and deepen the emerging relationships among actors. Likewise, the educational experiences of children confined to their homes have uncovered deep inequality and social, material, and territorial exclusion, revealing the fragility of the diverse actors who sustain the "educational chain." Specifically, we refer to the following: a school with an essential social role that must maintain minimum teaching conditions; the teachers working to stay in contact with students and providing learning tools and socioeconomic resources, which are especially important during a crisis of this proportion; the families and students who must balance their private spheres with experiences of working and studying at home; and finally, the role of the state in implementing public policy in a realistic manner that can effectively answer the needs of a profoundly altered education system.

A study on educators at the national level demonstrated that teachers have developed a new ethos in their work during this period, since the focus of their pedagogical labor has not been placed solely on learning achievements-as it was prior to the pandemic-but also on concern for the social and emotional situation of families (CIAE, Eduinclusiva, Eduglobal 2020). Some have had to support families in terms of food and household wellbeing, becoming involved in the precarious situations of students in rural areas who do not have access to connectivity or material learning resources. In low-income urban sectors, the reality is not much different, as explained by the director of a school in a working-class area of Santiago: "they live in houses that are 425, 475 square feet (40–45 mt2), with five or six people, without the real possibility of having a place to study. These are families with the parents out of work, who today are more worried about figuring out meals, where the focus is put

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[8] This section is configured with the analysis of different studies. To review the methodology of each one, see table in Appendix 1.

on surviving, and their kids' education takes second place" (Equipos Educativos de la Corporación Municipal de Renca 2020, p.17).

School and home are mutually necessary because the proper functioning of one is a condition for the stability and progress of the other. However, many teachers perceive a relative absence of parents. One study on teacher wellbeing, also national in scope, revealed that only 25% affirm that their students have an adult available to help them with school during the health crisis (Fundación Chile 2020). Likewise, teachers perceive a lack of interest among families and students when receiving new content, while 40% of teachers feel less supported than before the pandemic by parents and guardians (Elige Educar 2020). The comparative mental health research by (Lagarribel, Halpern, Montt & Rojas-Andrade 2021) also showed more than 50% of teachers present high stress symptoms and significant mood disturbances. What has caused the most stress were the psychological demands of a year of the pandemic: many had to urgently learn digital skills that they did not have. They had to quickly transform their way of doing face-to-face classes to online platforms, which was worsened by a context in which, before the pandemic, 78% of teachers were only at an initial level of digital skills. (Claro, Salinas, Cabello-Hutt, San Martín, Preiss, Valenzuela & Jara 2018).

Connectivity problems while maintaining an online distance school have reinforced existing inequity[9]. The participation of students in daily school activities has varied considerably based on school type: public school teachers estimate that only 14% of their students participate in virtual classes versus 81% in unsubsidized private schools (CIAE, Eduinclusiva, Eduglobal 2020); in addition, 71% of teachers claim that their students have had connection problems when receiving pedagogical information and resources (Elige Educar 2020); lastly, only one out of four Chilean teachers believes that their students possess the resources and tools necessary to participate in distance education (Fundación Chile 2020). According to a longitudinal study with a sample of 16,000 homes throughout the country, 1.2% of students did not receive any online class or educational materials during the pandemic[10], while students with weaker internet connections could only receive brief daily educational capsules via social networks like WhatsApp or by email, and a very small proportion could connect with their teacher directly for a class. In fact, 38% of public-school teachers confirmed that they communicate with their students through telephone calls when the connection is deficient, a means that is virtually unused in private schools (CIAE, Eduinclusiva, Eduglobal 2020). By contrast, 85% of students from unsubsidized private schools have received online classes with the possibility of interacting with the teacher and their classmates (which points to frequent use of platforms like

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[9] At the national level, reports indicate that 12.6% of Chilean homes did not have an internet connection in 2017. In homes with school-age children or youth (defined as 5 to 24 years old), this statistic drops to 6%, though it is 10% in the lowest-income quintile of the population and 3% in the highest-income quintile (Subsecretaría de Telecomunicaciones 2017).

[10]   https://www.latercera.com/que-pasa/noticia/clases-a-distancia-mientras-el-61-de-alumnos-de-mas-altos-recursos-accedio-a-traves-de-computador-propio-solo-el-29-de-los-de-mas-bajos-rec ursos-pudo/2XE5R4UZJVC5JBB6RW3QI6RWIU/.

Google Classroom, Zoom, or Aula Virtual), compared to 33% of their peers in public schools (Elige Educar 2020).

One of the great gaps in this period of learning at home has been the lack of interaction among students. According to a citizen survey carried about by the Agency of Educational Quality, 55% of parents and guardians state that their children have not interacted with classmates during 2020 (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación 2020), although there are significant differences based on school type, with public school students being the most isolated. In the case of rural areas, the students' experience has been even more solitary. A teacher from Chépica (a rural zone in central Chile) explained that she has "prepared individual guides and been working with the rural modules that the Ministry of Education sends us. All that material has been sent on printed paper to the students"[11] (Enseña Chile 2020). In some cases, this includes distribution to students' homes by the teachers themselves, while in others, families must go to the school. Meanwhile, in terms of the lack of connectivity and interactive classes, 70% of teachers claim that a main teaching–learning activity is the weekly delivery of work materials ("guides") to their students (CIAE, Eduinclusiva, Eduglobal 2020).

In general, to communicate with students, teachers have stated that they use email (63%), WhatsApp (55%), Google Classroom or Zoom (34%), school textbooks (33%), telephone calls (30%), YouTube (26%), printed work guides (23%), other textbooks (15%), Facebook or Instagram (14%), and SMS (7%) (Elige Educar 2020), which illustrates the diverse efforts that have been made. Beyond pedagogical encounters with students, 42% of teachers have contacted their students to find out how they are doing during the pandemic through social networks, which have enabled a new form of interaction (CIAE, Eduinclusiva, Eduglobal 2020).

These new forms of communication have opened the possibility of new methodologies, generating activities that can maintain students' attention. For example, some teachers report that they have motivated uninterested students through activities on WhatsApp including audio stories, guessing games, rhymes, and tongue twisters, or with relaxation and mindfulness exercises or others that help identify emotions through games and storytelling (CIAE, Eduinclusiva, Eduglobal 2020).

School principals have also been focused on learning development (66.7%) and student wellbeing (54.5%) during the pandemic, and they believe that the health crisis will make families value the work that teachers do with their children far more (Montecinos et al. 2020). Principals believe that appreciating the importance of students' socioemotional wellbeing will help prepare them for other potential crises, and they consider this period to have fostered students' learning autonomy, in addition to a revaluation of in-person classes for the personal and social interaction they provide with classmates and teachers (Montecinos et al. 2020). In terms of students' educational situation, most principals anticipate a significant deterioration in learning achievements and an increase in structural inequality, and in terms of

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[11] Account obtained from https://www.ensenachile.cl/blog/enfrentar-la-educacion-a-distancia-desde-el-contexto-rural/.

policy, they suggest focusing on flexibility and decreasing results-related pressure on schools (Montecinos et al. 2020).

Finally, during this period the role of the family has been paramount, taking on special prominence in children's learning processes and balancing time and work in the mission to keep the home on track emotionally, socially, and in terms of education. But families themselves are fragile in the face of the pandemic. A study that interviewed parents and guardians of children six years old or younger revealed a stark image of home reality: 69% of parents state that their family incomes have decreased since the pandemic began, 47% worry about a lack of food and/or clothing for their family, 15% have been affected by the death of a loved one, 21% have had a relative who was hospitalized, and 25% take medication to regulate sleep or mood (CEDEP 2020). Meanwhile, in terms of educational priorities for their children during this period, according to a study from the Agency of Educational Quality (2020), the most essential for parents and guardians is reinforcing academic learning, followed by an emerging necessity for emotional development. Topics such as learning to live in a community and coexisting with others have returned to center stage for families during this time because the socioemotional effects for the entire family unit have been deep and unprecedented. It is important to note that the weakness of the Chilean school in the psychological and social dimension predates the pandemic, as the work of diverse educational actors has been overly focused on academic dimensions and a traditional conception of the discipline (Salas et al. 2020), rather than on a comprehensive view of the school as a space for socialization and development of skills for the 21st century (Bellei & Morawietz 2016).

In the case of early childhood, parents report that their children are more worried and irritable, that it is harder for them to get up in the morning, and that they are more fearful than before. While nearly two-thirds of children are demanding more support and company, more than half feel irritable and angry or cry and have temper tantrums, and 40% have lost the motivation to learn and explore (CEDEP 2020). According to the same study, parents are worried about excessive screen time, the lack of nature and fresh air, low social interaction with peers, high emotional reactivity, decreased movement, and health risks related to missing check-ups and vaccines. According to a study that evaluated the mental health of students before and after the pandemic, 21% of parents indicated that their children evolved from not presenting any symptoms related to their mental health before the pandemic to having at least one during quarantine. The most significant increases were "lack of desire, even to do activities that they like," by 30%; "Changes in appetite" and "trouble sleeping," "both by 26% percent;" and "being sad" at 25% (Lagarribel, Halpern, Montt & Rojas-Andrade 2021). But it has not all been negative, as parents have also valued this period because they have been able to play, converse, and spend quality time with their children, in addition to becoming involved in their learning process (CEDEP 2020).

3.4 The Fragility of the Experience of Schooling at Home

After a full year of "live-in" school, what do we know about how children's educational experiences have been at home? In this section, we present findings from the study "Children's educational experiences at home during the COVID-19 pandemic[12]," carried out by the authors and centered on the receiving end of the educational act: the student. Considering the unprecedented scenario, this study operated with a broad definition of "educational experience," in which in addition to exploring distinct instances of learning (formal, informal structured, and every day), an approach to constraints on educability was also included—that is, a recognition of the material, social, and personal surroundings that contribute to or detract from learning.

Data was obtained through a self-administered online survey directed at parents and guardians of school-age children (4–17-year-olds) and in-depth interviews carried out with children between 8 and 13 years of age in different regions of the country. The data collection was carried out between September 1 and October 14, 2020. The online questionnaire was partially based on the survey developed by the Autonomous University of Barcelona "Confinement and Learning Conditions" (Bonal & González 2020), adapted to Chilean reality.

A non-probabilistic sampling by quotas with basic coverage in all regions was used together with post-stratification weights based on enrolment numbers by Municipality and School property (public, private, or subsidized). A sample of 4,912 households with children of school age were reached, with cases in all 16 regions of the country, and in 241 municipalities, out of a total of 345 with school enrolment. The sample collected represents geographical areas where 87% of the national enrolment is located.

Regarding qualitative sampling, it was composed by a grand total of 47 children, 19 of them living in Metropolitan Region, 14 of them in Ñuble Region and 14 in Los Rios Region, both in urban and rural areas. Out of this total, 22 were girls and 25 boys. 13 of them attended private schools (10 of which located in the Metropolitan Region), 19 of them attended subsidized private school (12 of them free of cost), 14 attended municipal schools, and 1 girl attended home schooling. Regarding payment methods, 26 children attended free schools, while 21 attended paid schools (even though not all students who attended subsidized private schools with co-pay effectively paid for tuition).

A *"change of venue:"* With the school in pandemic, inequality migrated to the internet

The impact of adapting the school to a virtual modality varied in intensity according to pre-existing conditions. The school in pandemic is incapable of attenuating inequalities of origin, given the difficulty of standardization from a distance. This occurs despite the virtual school presenting a fairly common base modality, among whose attributes are the scheduling of online classes on virtual platforms and the implementation of learning resources, with guides and videos prepared by teachers being the most usual.

This modality, however, presents significant differences based on school type according to our study, while 8 of 10 students from unsubsidized private schools receive online classes every day, in public schools and free subsidized private schools, the amount varies enormously: on one extreme, only 3 of 10 students claim to have class every day; on the other, 2 of every 10 students state that they "never have classes online." These differences are in turn augmented by unequal criteria that operate when online classes are carried out. We observed through our qualitative data that unsubsidized private schools have divided their courses to ensure more personalized learning, while subsidized private schools have opted for joining courses, which can reach more than 50 students online in unison. Likewise, public schools and free subsidized private schools have depended on more traditional support, such as guides and physical materials sent home and communication via telephone or email, all less efficient means.

In terms of content, it is evident that the school in pandemic is greatly hindered in terms of fostering comprehensive learning. Through interviews with students, we noticed that curricular prioritization has been one measure adopted by a significant proportion of schools, configuring a standard foundation of mathematics and language, and another that is a bit more sophisticated, which includes social and natural sciences. According to the children interviewed, the arts and physical education have generally been the most neglected subjects, being retained primarily for students from unsubsidized private schools.

It is also important to highlight the transformation of evaluative parameters in the face of a limited school environment. Though schools have incorporated criteria of curricular hierarchization, a "survival strategy" is applied on the part of the students. Thus, students with less motivation toward school only complete the guides that will be evaluated or are up to date solely in the subjects that "count to pass the grade." This measure has resulted in the formation of an insurmountable gap in the framework of the school in pandemic. As we observed in the survey, 25% of students devoted less than 1 hour per day to school activities and 33% dedicated 4 hours or more, which leads to a monthly difference of at least 60 hours between the two, differences that are strongly associated with their family socioeconomic status. It is important to note differences in dedication to schooling between the different educational levels. While almost half of those students in primary school (48%) and a third of those among secondary school students (34%) dedicated two hours or less to curricular activities, most students attending pre-primary school only dedicated one hour or less. On the

other end of the spectrum, those who dedicated the most time to curricular activities were secondary students, with 38% of them dedicating 5 hours or more of time to curricular activities.

Thus, it is necessary to be emphatic: the school in pandemic has exacerbated the structural inequalities of the Chilean education system. In this modality, the shortage of resources is intensified, as the existing differences have been translated to a single virtual space which, in disadvantaged sectors, multiplies the flaws of the school with the shortcomings of the home.

What is left "unseen" by distance learning

This year, a large majority of virtual classes were carried out with "camera off" students. Whether due to the weakness of their connection, the deficiency of their equipment, or individual discomforts, children were in class only as listeners, without necessarily giving any sign of attention or presence. This metaphor leads to a discussion of the "blind spots" of the school in pandemic, which play a significant role in the evaluation of the past year.

To this effect, we can observe how unequal material opportunities for study interact. Thus, in homes of more than 1,075 square feet (100 mt2), more than 80% of children always have a space of their own to study and do homework, far exceeding the possibilities of those who live in houses of 320 square feet (30 mt2), of whom only 36% have a space to study that is always available and 34% have no such space. Convergently, this gap is repeated for other constraints of educability, including possessing didactic resources, a good internet signal, or a desk.

In the same vein, a spatial overlap of the school and the home occurs. Thus, those who live in more spacious homes or who have exterior spaces in which to "disconnect" from the school environment are in a better emotional state in terms of educability, compared to those who cannot physically separate from their at-home school workspace.

Another resource for educability, highlighted by results of the questionnaire, was access to a computer used exclusively for schoolwork and internet connections. While 2 of 3 students from unsubsidized private schools have their own computer, only 1 of 3 of their peers from free subsidized private schools possess this resource, while 1 in 8 do not even have a computer. Meanwhile, in the homes of students from subsidized private schools, only 1 of 5 can rely upon mobile internet connections and this figure is doubled in the case of students from free subsidized private schools. When evaluating connection quality, while nearly a third (29%) of students who attend free subsidized private schools or public schools have connections that they consider deficient, this indicator is halved (14%) among those who attend unsubsidized private schools.

While material provisions are fundamental to face the situation of the school in pandemic, it would be impossible to do so without a family to carry the demands of the "live-in" school. In this context, another critical gap that appeared on the survey and during the interviews was the clear dependency on the mother for the achievement of the educational process, with the mediation of the school in the home environment resting on her shoulders. This situation leads to repercussions in family coexistence, in which half of people claim to completely agree or agree

with the statement that girls and women have been more exposed to some form of violence (physical, psychological, or sexual) in the home, while 71% affirm that mainly women have been in charge of domestic work and care. Thus, for 92% of preschool students and 81% of primary school students, it is the mother who oversees "activating" the school at home, helping with schoolwork, and providing some measure of supervision to ensure their children's continuity in this situation. In this way, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the multiple factors that affect learning. To secure optimal educational processes (both formal and informal), it is not enough to guarantee a larger material equity. On top of this, pressure inside the household, domestic violence, and an overload of work for mothers are also factors which affect the education of children.

The reinvention of the child's world: Between emotional inequality and alternative ways of learning

The school in pandemic has been fundamentally challenging for children. Added to the situation already described, many girls and boys have had to grapple with loneliness during lockdown. In interviews, a substantial proportion affirmed that friends, recreation, and the ordinary life they share are some of the experiences they miss the most, being above all moments in which they do not have to fill the role of student or son or daughter. Undoubtedly, social distancing, lockdowns, the suspension of classes, and the general economic crisis have impacted the wellbeing and emotional world of these generations. The results of our survey show that socioemotional problems affect a significant proportion of students, with the most prevalent being getting bored easily (52%), difficulty concentrating (46%), not wanting to do schoolwork (43%), and getting frustrated often (40%). Additionally, between one-quarter and one-third of children have been more conflictive and more irritable, as well as experienced alterations in sleep and appetite. It is worth mentioning that socio-emotional measurements showed variations according to educational level, being secondary age students (between 14 and 18 years old) those most affected by lockdown. Meanwhile, primary school students had trouble complying with homework and curricular activities. Preschool students (4 to 5 years old) struggled mostly with everyday stress related situations. These effects vary by case: in the context of better social and economic conditions, there tends to be greater capacity to regulate the demands (physical, psychological, and material) of this situation. To confront the stress and loneliness of this period, many children have taken refuge in technological devices amidst the entropy of daily life. According to the survey, 86% of children are in front of a screen every day (television, tablet, or cellphone). Other daily activities outside of school include helping with household work (40%), chatting with friends, communicating via social networks (33%), and reading and playing video games (32%).

It becomes clear, then, why the management of free time has been one of the most complex spheres to resolve during the lockdown. Going from 8 hours per day at school to educational activities that often do not exceed a few 45 minutes blocks per week is certainly complicated. In some cases, this situation has led children to

take a more proactive stance toward their emotional state, generally associated with an exploration of their interior worlds.

Interestingly, 56% of families surveyed state that their child has developed new interests and talents during this period of learning at home, in addition to autonomy and self-confidence (61%). Indeed, 20% even consider their children to be learning more at home than at school. If this last assertion is evaluated by educational levels, 67% of families with children in pre-school age agree with developing new interests and talents during lockdown, while 54% of families of students in primary school and 51% of secondary school students agree with this proposal. The massive use of "do it yourself" tutorials, which not only reinforce a positive self-perception, but also stimulate learning by doing as an approach of trial and error. Thus, when seeing others of a similar age painting their rooms, transforming their clothing, cooking, or organizing their things, children feel inspired, delve into their interests, and work toward a finished product.

It should be noted that in this area, we identified certain gender differences. In terms of the use of free time, we observed different manners of addressing the lack of compulsory activities. Among girls, 77% engage in activities like drawing, painting, or crafts every day or some days, compared to 58% of boys. Boys, meanwhile, play videogames daily (72%), compared to 45% of girls. Likewise, a gap of 7 percentage points was noted in terms of household contribution, with girls helping at home more than boys, along with participating more on social media.

In this sense, while the experience of learning from home has been critical in all cases and has confronted children with difficulties previously unknown to them, the reinvention of the child's world through play and the possibilities of informal learning at home has become a way to accommodate the complexity of the process. In the face of the destabilization of the school that provided continuity to their daily experience, the evaporation of peers who were models of identity, and the absence of compulsory time within the school institution, children have been able to practice autonomy, creativity, and self-discipline, though in contexts of great material, emotional, and family difficulties.

3.5 Final Reflections: Looking to the Post-pandemic School

Since at least the beginnings of the 20th century, the social sciences have repeatedly returned to the discussion of the validity of the institution of the school, including voices that suggest not only its decline but also the convenience of its replacement. More recently, some have joined the debate who believe that information and communication technologies have become sufficiently sophisticated to dispense with teachers to a large extent, joining a long tradition of faith in educational technology that merges self-study guides, computers, and the internet. If we have re-learned something from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is rather the opposite: the centrality of the school in our society and the critical role teachers play as mediators of learning.

Of course, this does not imply that traditional schooling and teaching do not require changes, a matter which we reflect on in this final section.

As the evidence discussed in this chapter has shown, as the school has become secluded in the house, each has mimicked the other, and the educational process that each child has experienced has depended decisively on conditions at home. In its most basic sense, institutional education is a collective commitment to provide each generation with a formative experience that is independent of the privileges or disadvantages of the family; it is a common formative experience that children have the right to as citizens, beyond their families. What the pandemic has done is to remind us of the urgency of this commitment. In a society such as Chile, plagued by inequalities and with significant proportions of children living in very basic conditions, the closer to home the school comes, the less just it will be. Closing schools has a very high, yet differential cost. This has a direct implication for the process of reopening and returning to in-person class. Heterogeneity in terms of what learning has been achieved in different circumstances will be the norm. Schools will need to organize flexible pedagogical processes that are sensitive to this heterogeneity, recovering for example the didactic strategies typical of multigrade classrooms, such as peer tutoring.

As challenging as the work of "leveling learning" is, it is nevertheless a well-known matter for Chilean schools, since—although at another scale—they dedicate themselves to it continuously. The truly complex task, by contrast, will be understanding the centrality of the socioemotional experience of students, identifying traces of what they have lived through, and producing a favorable attitude toward schoolwork beginning with their overall wellbeing. This refers to a longer-term undertaking, a more structural change that is required in education and that the pandemic itself has helped us recognize as urgent. In Chile, curricular priorities are strongly biased toward academic learning and pedagogy, very focused on instruction in fundamental cognitive abilities such as language and mathematics. Both the intrapersonal and social dimensions of learning have traditionally been neglected (Bellei & Morawietz 2016). Yet they are the two dimensions that have shown to be most significant during the confinement and decoupling of daily life to which children have been subjected during this period. Higher order cognitive skills have also been less emphasized, a competence that is needed to make sense of the complex pandemic situation and undertake multidisciplinary learning.

The almost complete destabilization of children's daily world has meant an enormous emotional load, with consequences for mental health and quality of life in general that we are only just beginning to grasp, as we have shown throughout this chapter. Schools and teachers have tried to provide support in this area, and—after the initial shock—emphasis has increasingly been moving in this direction. Aspects such as character building, finding meaning in things, finding purpose, and aligning it with the will, self-maintenance or monitoring one's own feelings, and more generally, staying healthy and dealing with insecurity and fears, are some examples of "21st century skills" that the Chilean school has disregarded and that the school in pandemic has had to dust off during a time of crisis. Furthermore, disciplines such as the arts and sports (vital for staying healthy during this period), which constitute

excellent means of accessing these competencies, are frequently marginalized in the Chilean school to privilege efforts toward standardized tests, which the authorities use to create rankings and distribute awards and sanctions to schools and teachers (Bellei et al. 2014, 2020). The post-pandemic school must recalibrate these priorities.

Social skills represent another domain that is even more undervalued by Chilean education. There is little teaching of teamwork, collaborating in diverse contexts, valuing differences, or arguing and being persuaded. The school in pandemic has been even more solitary; in addition to the suspension of face-to-face classes, there is the fact that teachers have made very little use of resources of dialogue and group assignments with classmates. To give another example, during 2021, Chile will carry out a process of creating a new political constitution because of the enormous social mobilization of 2019; schools, especially secondary schools, will have an invaluable opportunity to privilege citizen education and use the constitutional debates as catalysts for dialogue, inquiry, and participation with social and life processes of both local and national contexts. Evidence shows that Chilean students are highly interested and motivated regarding public problems (indeed, they have also led massive student movements for over a decade), but the school fails to take advantage of this motivation, teaching them little or nothing about citizenship (Schulz et al. 2016).

Lastly, the school in pandemic has not only called curriculum and pedagogy into question, but also the rules of its organization, the grammar of schooling (Tyack & Tobin 1994), which includes detailed planning, rigid schedules, the courses, the separation of subjects, and the rules of evaluation and repetition, just to name a few. More fundamentally, the dissolution of the distinction between the space/time of the home and the school and the roles of mother/teacher are the extreme manifestation of this abrupt and forceful deinstitutionalization. Indeed, many teachers and families attempted to respond to the new scenario with known tools, those of habitual modes of operation, including the extreme example of some schools which required that their students wear a uniform at home to connect to Zoom classes, and others that demanded that two cameras be turned on during evaluations to monitor the behavior and surroundings of the student and avoid cheating. The educational authorities, meanwhile, did the same, insisting on applying official standardized tests of academic achievement. Upon returning to in-person classes, the temptation to go back to "business as usual" will be great, and it will be necessary to resist it. Perhaps it would be sometimes convenient to place students in smaller groups, and maybe the criterion should not always be age, but rather their interests and motivations; perhaps schedules should be flexible and variable to accommodate the state of mind of the group in a given moment. And what would be the point of having students repeat a grade in a context of a massive curricular delay, which in any case is probably not the most important issue? The grammar of schooling must be revised using a simple criterion: the rules that do not help rebuild individual and group health, that do not help facilitate a process of healing and re-engagement with education, should be put on hold. Increasing the instrumental productivity of the system will not be the priority, and the selective and competitive logic that feeds into such objectives will have been called into question not a moment too soon.

Before concluding, we offer a final comment looking beyond the field of education. As we have argued, the centrality of the school to the functioning of society, family dynamics, and children's socialization has been reconfirmed by the dramatic "natural experiment" that the pandemic has represented. Further, complementary functions of the school, such as channeling social policy (e.g., nutrition), physical health (e.g., contagion prevention), and psychology (e.g., supporting students affected by the stress and anguish of lockdown) can even be seen to have been reinforced during this period. The centrality of classmates as a reference group and students' daily social coexistence has also been highlighted. The school is the main institution created to embrace and promote the development of the society's children and youth. However, in Chile we have confirmed, at the same time, the fragility of the school, and more generally of the education system as a whole. The absence of intermediate levels of management that support the work of the schools at a local level, the virtual non-existence of forms of horizontal cooperation and networking, and the lack of support from local governments and other institutions to complement the work of schools has also been highlighted, as well as the lack of political priority of children's wellbeing at the top of the agenda. We ask much of the school, and we support it little. In the future, it will be necessary to rethink the monopolizing model of the school for childhood, advancing toward the notion of "educating cities." For example, this could include creating new institutions in different communities that offer alternatives in terms of education, exploration of interests, and sociability, and integrating the school with the rest of the local and community organizations that exist. The school cannot satisfy all the requirements of childhood, nor is it desirable that it would try.

Appendix 1

	Type of study	Target population	Statistic sample	Application period	Sample according to gender	Sample according to type of establishment	Responsible organization
COVID-19 new contexts, new demands and teaching experience in Chile	Self-administered online survey	Teachers of all school levels of the education system	N = 2.205	May 25 to June 29, 2020	Female gender: 76,3%, Male gender: 23,7%	Private with state subsidy: 42,3%, Public: 35,2%, Private without subsidy: 18,4%	CIAE, Eduinclusiva, Eduglobal
Engagement and exhaust in Chilean teachers: a look from the reality of covid-19	Survey administered online survey	Teachers working in primary and secondary education institutions	N = 2.657	April 22 to July 5, 2020	Female gender: 75,35%, Male gender: 24,24%, Other: 0,41%	Public: 46,67%, Private with state subsidy: 40,12%, Private: 13,21%	Educarchile, Circular HR
Situation of teachers and educators in the context of pandemic	Survey administered online survey	Educators, teachers, and managers of all levels of the educational system.	N = 7.187	April 21 to May 5, 2020	Female gender: 78,9%, Male gender: 20,3%, No answer: 0,8%	Private with state subsidy: 42%, Public: 40%, Private without subsidy: 16%	Eligeeducar

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	Type of study	Target population	Statistic sample	Application period	Sample according to gender	Sample according to type of establishment	Responsible organization
Public consultation. Quality of education in the context of a pandemic	Digital survey with closed questions (of alternatives) and open questions	Mothers, fathers, and guardians. Workers in educational establishments; students and citizens	N = 37. 226. 26.447 mothers, fathers, or guardians. 7.870 workers of educational establishments. 2.106 students. 803 citizens	August 24 to September 30, 2020	Female gender:85,17%, Male gender: 14,61%, Other: 0,23%	Public: 61%, Private with state subsidy: 35%, Private: 4%	Agency for the Quality of Education, Government of Chile
National consultation on the situation of early childhood due to the covid-19 crisis	Online perception survey	Mothers, fathers, and guardians of children from 0 to 6 years old	N = 10.013	July 9 to July 31, 2020	Female gender: 93%, Male gender: 5%	Public: 48,2%, Private: 28,7%, Private with state subsidy: 9,2%	Center for Development Studies and Psychosocial Stimulation (CEDEP)
Impact on the mental health of Chilean preschoolers and schoolchildren associated with quarantine by covid-19	Online questionnaire of socio-emotional conditions	Mothers, fathers, and guardians of children in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade, whose ages ranged from four to 11 years	N = 4.772	August 18 to October 26, 2020	**No Data**	46 public education establishments in the communes of Cerro Navia, Lo Prado and Pudahuel in Santiago	North Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Chile

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	Type of study	Target population	Statistic sample	Application period	Sample according to gender	Sample according to type of establishment	Responsible organization
The voice of the directors in the covid-19 crisis	Online self-questionnaire reported	Directors of schools imparting regular day education at the levels kindergarten, elementary and/or middle school	N = 424	During the month of August	Distribution of participants who completed the survey is quite similar to the distribution national directors gender of schools	Distribution of participants who completed the survey is quite similar to the distribution national directors by dependence and socioeconomic status of schools	Leadership Program Educational of the Diego Portales University, PUCV Educational Leaders Center of the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso, Center of Advanced Research in Education of the University of Chile

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