

CHAPTER V
SOCIAL SECURITY FOR YOUTHS

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V.1 Introduction

Throughout history, few individuals have passed through adolescence without engaging in a productive activity and finding themselves subject to the behavioral expectations of an adult. With the increase in longevity and the extension of education to all social groups, today it is unacceptable that children younger than 14 work at all or that those younger than 18 work full-time after quitting school—although many do in low income societies—and it is not viewed as a favorable situation that teenagers marry—although many do even in the wealthiest countries. Even if they can usually vote by age 18, youths are subject to social controls until later ages, and societal traditions now include an expectation of study until later in life and the belief in supporting young individuals to help them integrate into the complex labor market waiting for them. This chapter describes basic elements of the state of young people in the region, and the way youth programs and social security interact. Social security has played a vital role in financing children and adolescents in families where the breadwinner is disabled or has died, and has a growing role in programs that benefit all youths in achieving a successfully transitioning toward and into adulthood.

The age at which adolescence begins cannot be pinned down easily. It is well known that the physical and psychological characteristics associated with adolescence vary significantly between individuals. The

passage from adolescence to adulthood is marred by deeper issues, because it is less linked to purely biological factors, and has more to do with society at large. Yet, social insurance has a special role to play as long as the commonwealth assumes the responsibility of protecting children from being subject to risks that for adults are within the realm of individual responsibility.

V.2 The State of Youth in the Americas

Young people in the Americas live in a world that has changed a lot and quickly; one full of promise and challenge. A brief comparison tells us about the extent of the change. Compared with only two or three previous generations, we see that children in the Americas live in smaller nuclear families and extended families, as well as in non-traditional families that often have the mother as single or main breadwinner; they live in cities whereas until the seventies the share of rural population was still relatively high; they are much more educated although there is a perception that the quality of education they receive may not always be as high as desired; they do not expect to marry as children, many will marry at the "old" late-twenties, and a fair share will never form a family with children (although they will have significant long-term personal relationships); few expect a labor career free of the hassle of job changes, and they are expected to experience a life learning new abilities continuously, if they are to survive as successful workers.

The Americas are a young region. Even the countries with more advanced aging processes have kept fertility and immigration rates at high enough levels to sustain long-term growth in the labor force, and year after year the entry of youths to the labor market is important. In Figure V.1, we see that for most countries, young people are still a large part of the labor force. The countries that have had fertility rates around replacement levels have values around 20% in this figure (this is the case for Canada and the United States). Countries like Paraguay, which have kept fertility rates over three children until recently, have more than 30% of the labor force in young age groups.

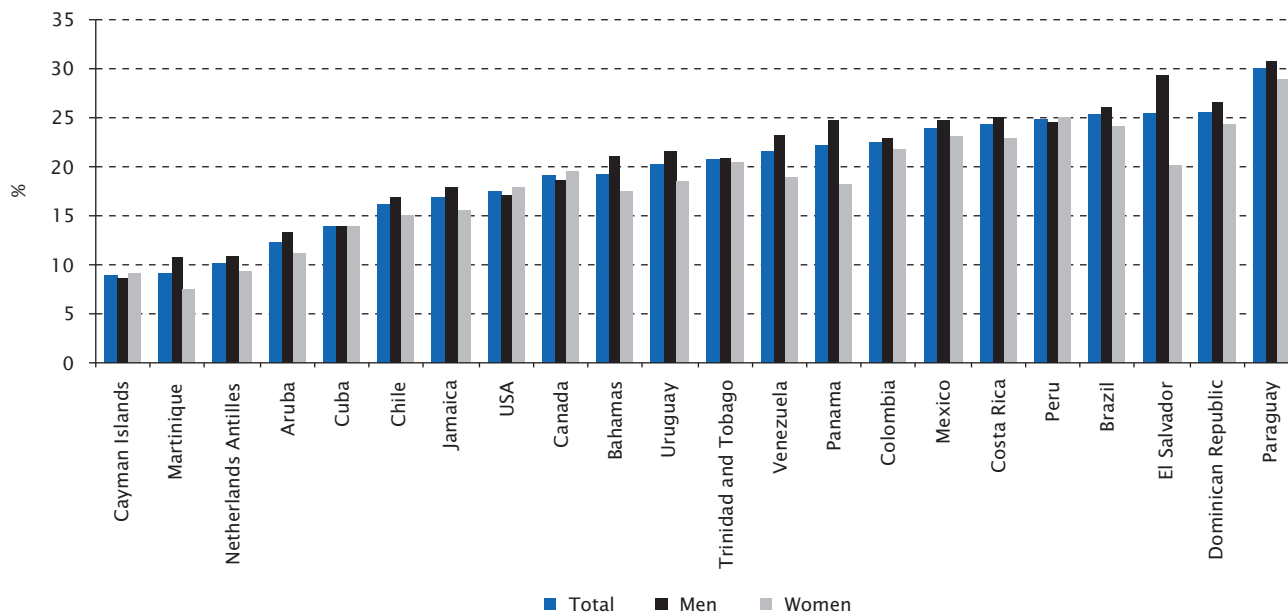
V.2.1 Family

The social environment can begin to be described by using information on marriage and fertility, as well as on the relations of the adolescent to his or her family and school. Adolescents tend to be healthier, having passed the more risky years of infancy, but females

begin to face reproductive health risks soon enough. Adolescents of both genders can begin making decisions on marital union and fertility, although in practice this turns out to be a more critical issue for females. Also during these years some may decide to abandon their households, or conversely, their families may decide to dedicate lower resources to them and even to abandon them completely in a social and economic sense.

Growth in the total numbers of young people is going to continue for at least several decades. In Figure V.2, we see that most countries have fertility rates at or above replacement, and in Paraguay, Honduras, Bolivia, Haiti, and Guatemala rates are actually still in ranges associated with very fast population growth. In Figure V.3, we see the share of youths in the population of most countries in the continent. There are vast differences within the region. While youths (15-19 years) represent more than 11% in Paraguay, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Grenada, for the United States and Canada the figure is around 7%.

Figure V.1
EAP Aged 15-24^{1/} as a Proportion of EAP Aged 15-54^{2/}: Selected Countries, 2008



Notes: EAP: economically active population. 1/Colombia, 12-24; USA, 16-24. 2/Colombia, 12-55; USA, 16-54.
Source: ILO LABORSTA (consulted on April 7, 2010).

In Chapter II of this report, we saw that poverty among children has become a major challenge for the region, and our findings show that the problem extends through the teenage years. In Figure V.4, we see that the share of poor among young men and women in the American countries is generally higher than among OECD countries. The problem is more acute for females.²

Teenage marriage and pregnancy have fallen substantially since the seventies, and age at first marriage has increased. By 2008 the average for females lies between 20 and 25 years and two countries exceed the 30-year barrier (Figure V.5). Yet, in some countries such as Honduras, teenage marriage is still near 20%. Certainly, teenage marriage is associated with poverty because less educated women are more often in that situation, making it very difficult for them to follow the constructive development of skills related in Chapter III of this report. In Figure V.6, we see that for several countries, one in ten women has been a mother or is pregnant by age 16 (Nicaragua, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Colombia), and in several the share is over one-third by age 19 with Nicaragua being the highest at 45%.³ When we review the data by level of education, we see that women with elementary school (1st to 6th grade) or less education are predominantly the ones facing this condition (Figure V.7).

In contemporary societies, when a young woman heads the household, the family can be well-off because the mother is actually very productive in the market, or the household is actually composed by a single

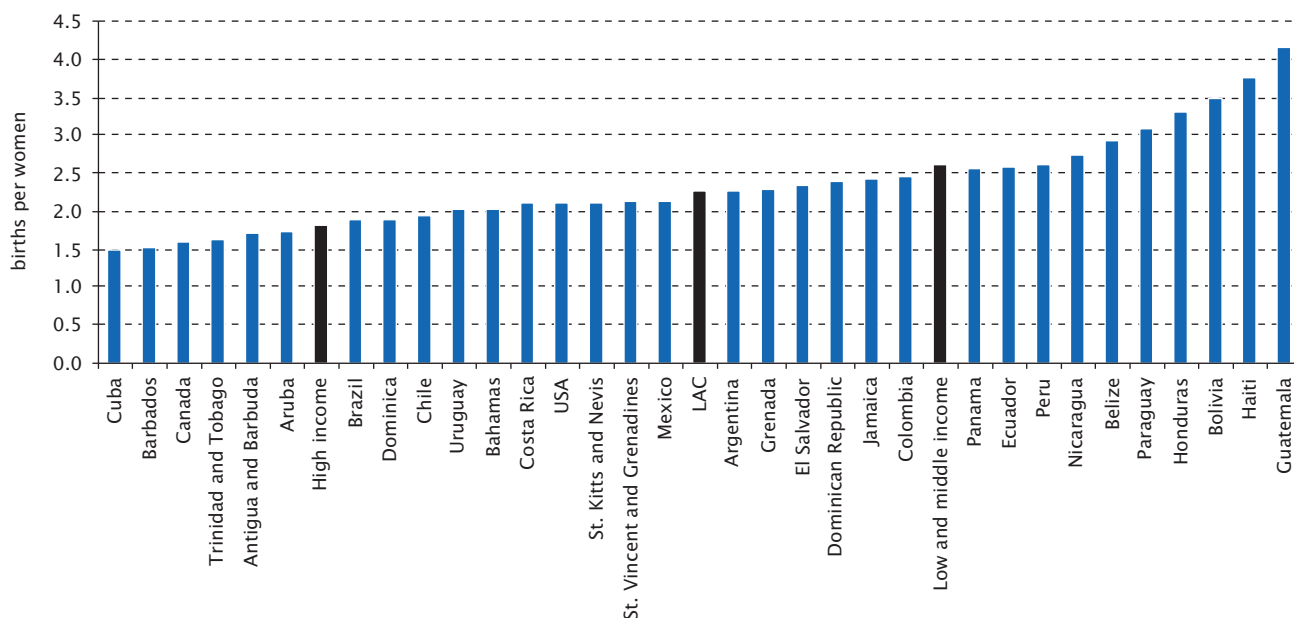
woman working or studying. However, it is more often the case that the male has left the home or that the woman has had children without having formed a family before. In the group of middle- to low-income countries in Figure V.8, we see that more than one-third of the households are headed by women in the countries of Island Hispaniola, and in the shown cases the rate is above one-fifth. In this figure, Haiti and the United States, the poorest and the wealthiest nations in the region have the largest shares of households headed by women. However, as will be seen, there is a difference among these two countries.

In Figure V.9, we see that the share of households headed by young women ranges between 1 and 16%; in several wealthy OECD countries, youths aged 16 to 19 are household heads in a proportion of more than 10%. However, Figure V.10 shows that in rich countries, most of these households correspond to single working women with no children, and to students, while in poor countries, these households more often have a low-educated, low-income mother in charge. In Canada, nearly 65% of the young female household heads do not have children or are not in a couple, while in Argentina the share is only 40% and in Mexico it is less than 10%. We may notice that figures on the share of young household heads declaring children and couple status may be suspect: perhaps these are women that declare having a couple at home while in fact they are single mothers (and the border between categories is not, in general, clear-cut). For men, these figures tell an altogether different story: young males who are household heads rarely have children at home.

² The reference periods in Figures V.4, V.9 to V.10, and V.14 are the following: Hungary, Sweden, 2005; Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, Poland, United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, Italy, USA, 2004; Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, 2000; Netherlands, 1999; Argentina, 2001; Uruguay, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Panama, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Dominican Rep., Colombia, 2008; Guatemala, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Honduras, 2007; Chile, 2006; Mexico (Figure V.4), 2008, 2004 otherwise; Paraguay, (Figure V.4), 2008, 2004 otherwise; El Salvador, (Figure V.4), 2004, 2007 otherwise. The sources are the following: OECD countries: Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) Key Figures, <http://www.lisproject.org/keyfigures.htm> (consulted on March 5, 2010); Argentina: INDEC (consulted on March 10, 2010); American countries except Canada and United States: (Figure V.4), CEPALSTAT (consulted on June 2, 2010); Paraguay: Presidencia de la República/Secretaría Técnica de Planificación (STP) and DGEEC 2005; El Salvador: IUDOP/UCA 2008.

³ The reference periods in Figures V.6 to V.8, V.11, and V.15 to V.17 are the following: Bolivia, 2008; Dominican Republic, 2007; Haiti, Honduras, 2005-06; Colombia, 2005; Peru, 2004-2005; Nicaragua, 2001; El Salvador, 2007; Chile, 2006; Costa Rica, 2007; Argentina, 2001; USA, 2008; Uruguay, 2008. The sources are the following: Bolivia, MSD/PRS and INE 2009; Peru, INEI, USAID and Measure DHS+/ORC Macro 2006; Colombia, Profamilia 2005; Dominican Republic, CESDEM and Macro International Inc. 2008; Honduras, SS, INE and Macro International Inc. 2006; Nicaragua, INEC and MINSa 2002; Haiti, Cayemittes et al 2007; El Salvador, IUDOP/UCA 2007; Chile, INJUV 2007; Costa Rica, Consejo Nacional de la Política Pública de la Persona Joven 2008; Argentina, INDEC (consulted on March 10, 2010); USA, Ruggles et al 2010; Uruguay, Programa Infamilia-Mides 2009.

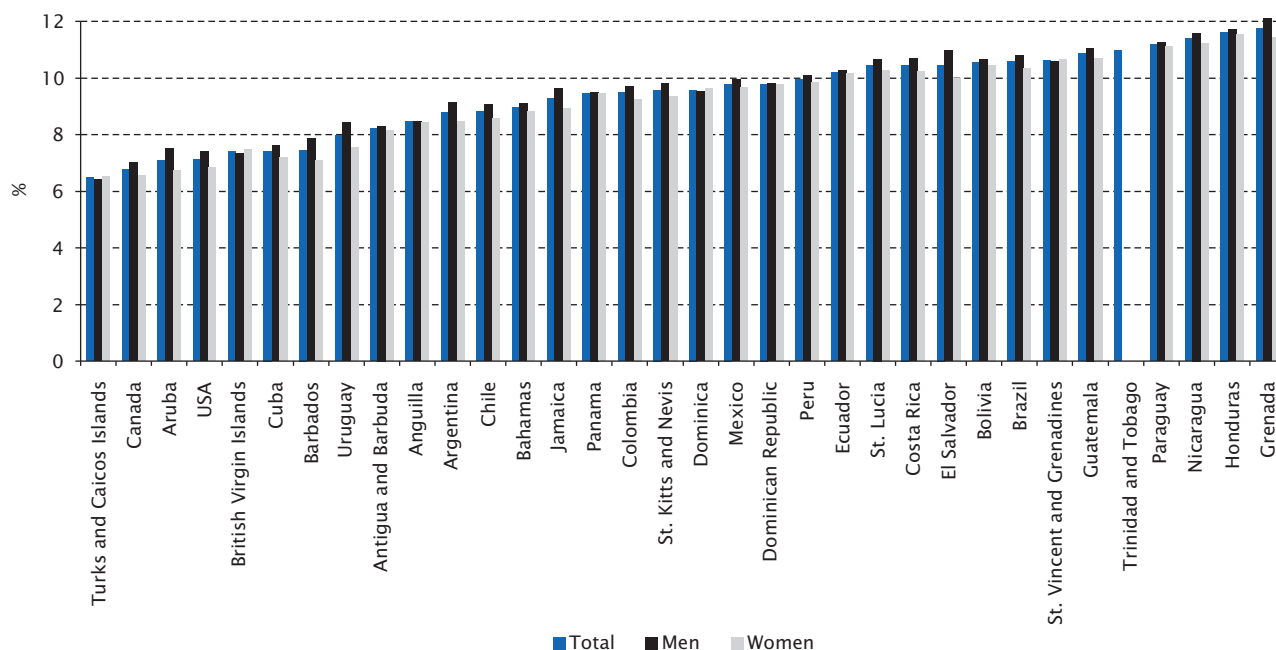
Figure V.2
Global Fertility Rate in Selected Countries, 2007^{1/}



Notes: 1/ Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2002; Dominica, 2003; Haiti, extrapolated data.

Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators 2009 (consulted through UNdata at <http://data.un.org/Explorer.aspx?d=CDB> on April 19, 2010).

Figure V.3
Youths Aged 15-19 as a Proportion of Total Population: Selected Countries, 2008^{1/}



Notes: 1/ Barbados, Brazil, Grenada, Panama, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2000; Anguilla, Argentina, Bolivia, British Virgin Islands, Ecuador, Honduras, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos Islands, 2001; Dominican Republic, Paraguay, 2002; Antigua and Barbuda, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, 2005; Dominica, 2006; Costa Rica, El Salvador, Jamaica, Peru, St. Lucia, USA, 2007.

Source: United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD a), UNSD Demographic Statistics (consulted through UNdata at <http://data.un.org/Explorer.aspx?d=CDB> on April 19, 2010).

Figure V.4
Youths (16-19) Living in Poverty: Selected Countries, 2008

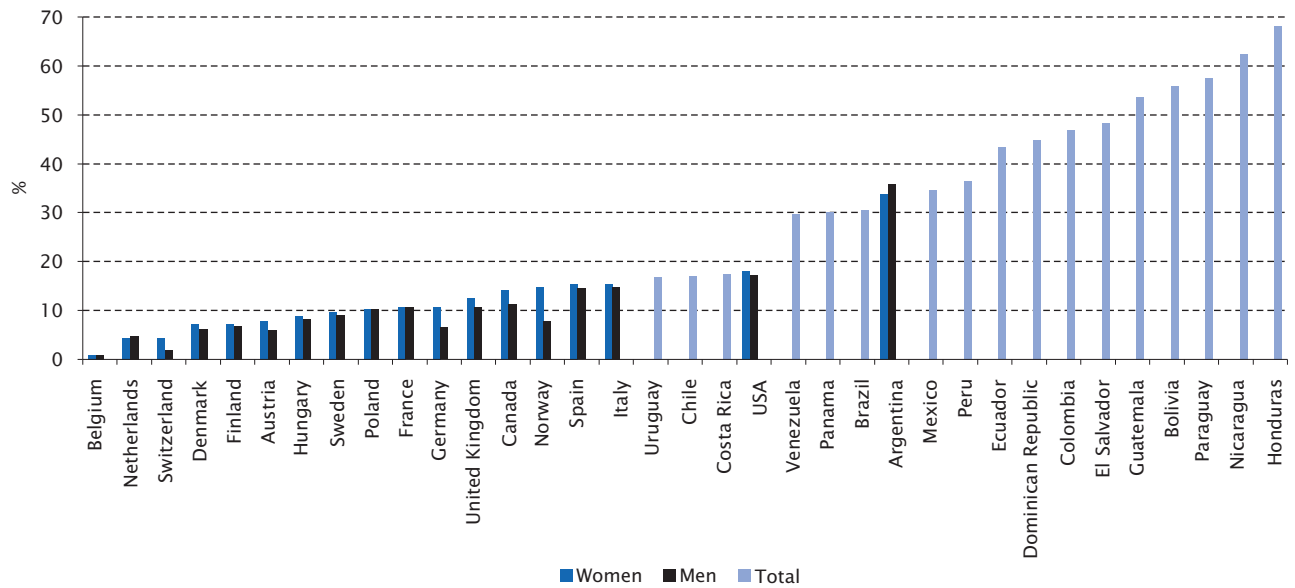
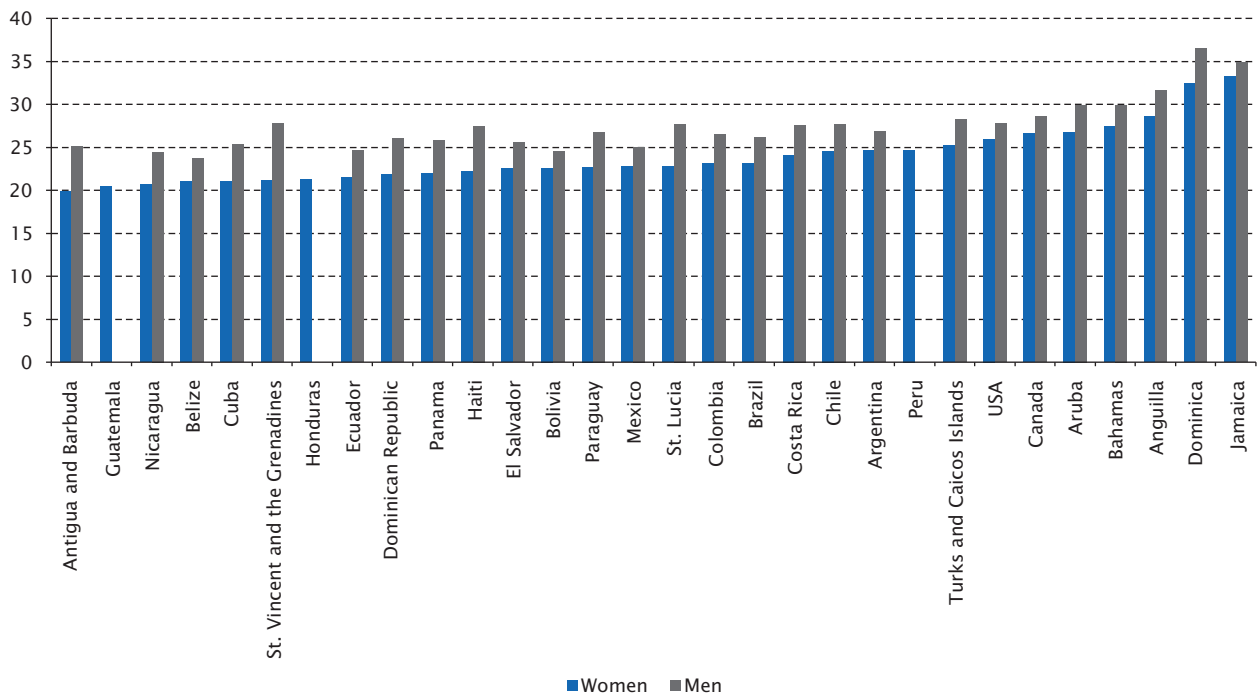


Figure V.5
Mean Age at First Marriage^{1/}



Note: 1/ Costa Rica, El Salvador, 2007; Canada, Haiti, 2006; Colombia, Honduras, Nicaragua, 2005; Peru, 2004; Bolivia, 2003; Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2002; Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Dominica, Ecuador, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Turks and Caicos Islands, 2001; Aruba, Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Mexico, Panama, USA, 2000; Guatemala, 1999.

Source: United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD c), Statistics and indicators on women and men (consulted on March 24, 2010).

Figure V.6
Youths Who Are Mothers or Pregnant at Ages 15-19: Selected Countries, 2008

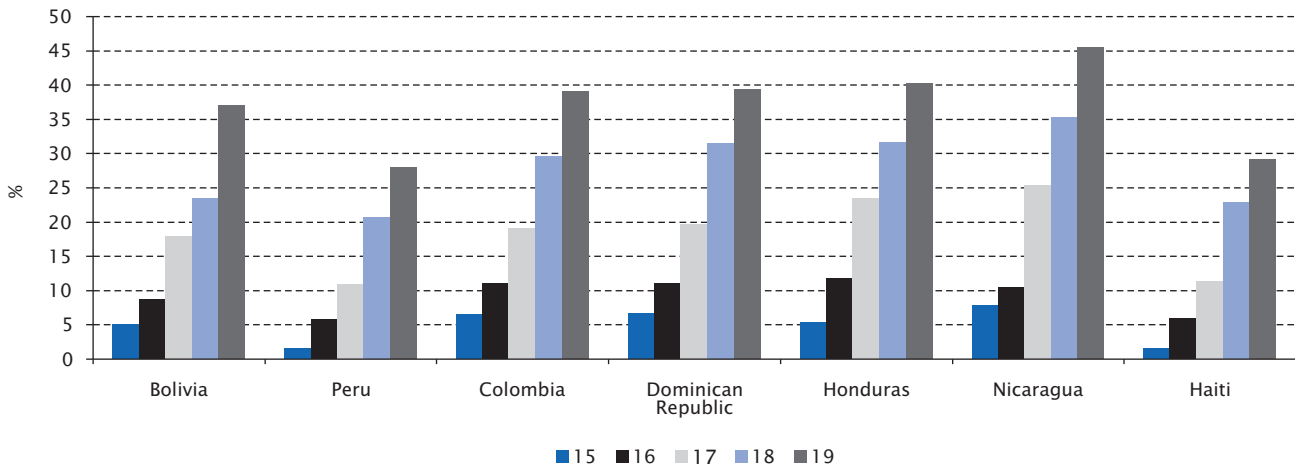
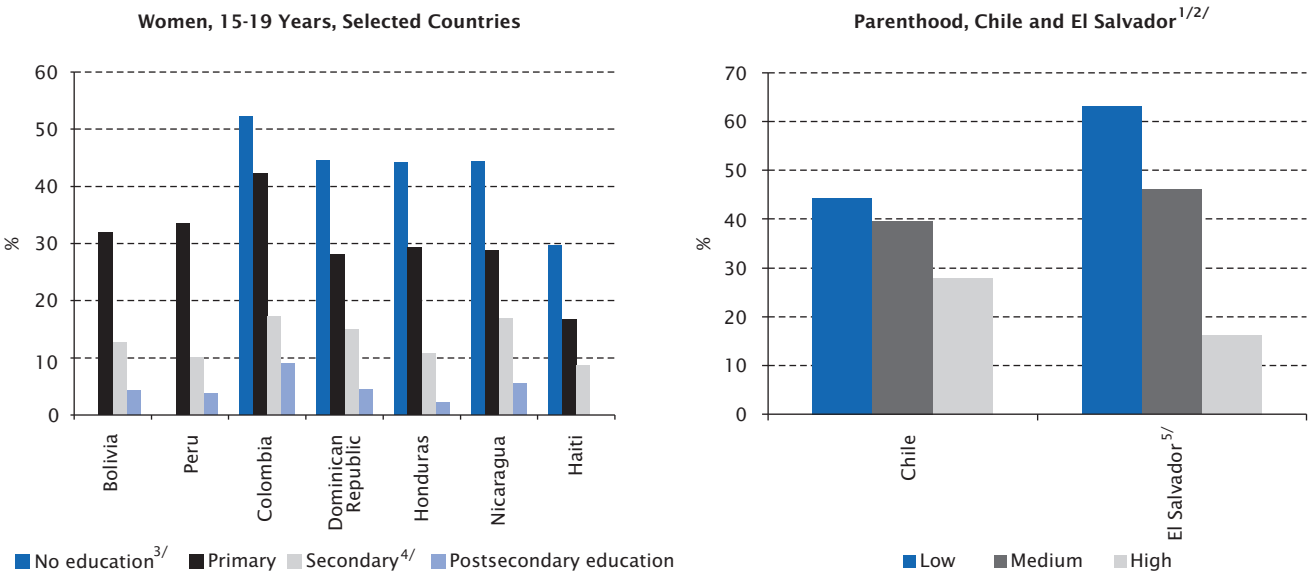


Figure V.7
Youth Pregnancy, Maternity, and Parenthood by Level of Education: Selected Countries, 2008



Notes: 1/Chile, 15-29 years; El Salvador, 15-24 years. 2/In Chile it refers to socio-economic level. 3/No education include the categories "No education" and "Incomplete elementary school (1st to 6th grade)". 4/In Haiti, the value corresponds to the average of the categories "Secondary (7th to 9th grade)" and "Postsecondary education (10th grade and over)". 5/In El Salvador, "Low education" represents those with no education and elementary school (1st to 6th grade), "Medium education" goes for secondary education (7th to 9th grade), and "High education" corresponds to persons aged 15-24 with postsecondary education (10th grade and over).

Figure V.8
Women as Household Heads in Selected Countries, 2008
 (total population)

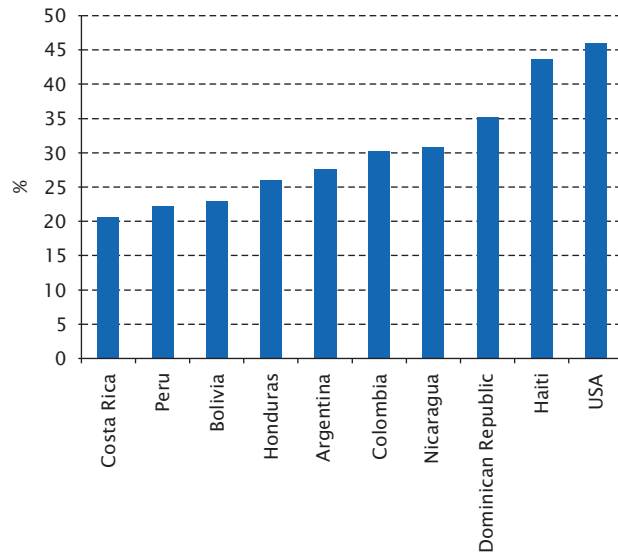
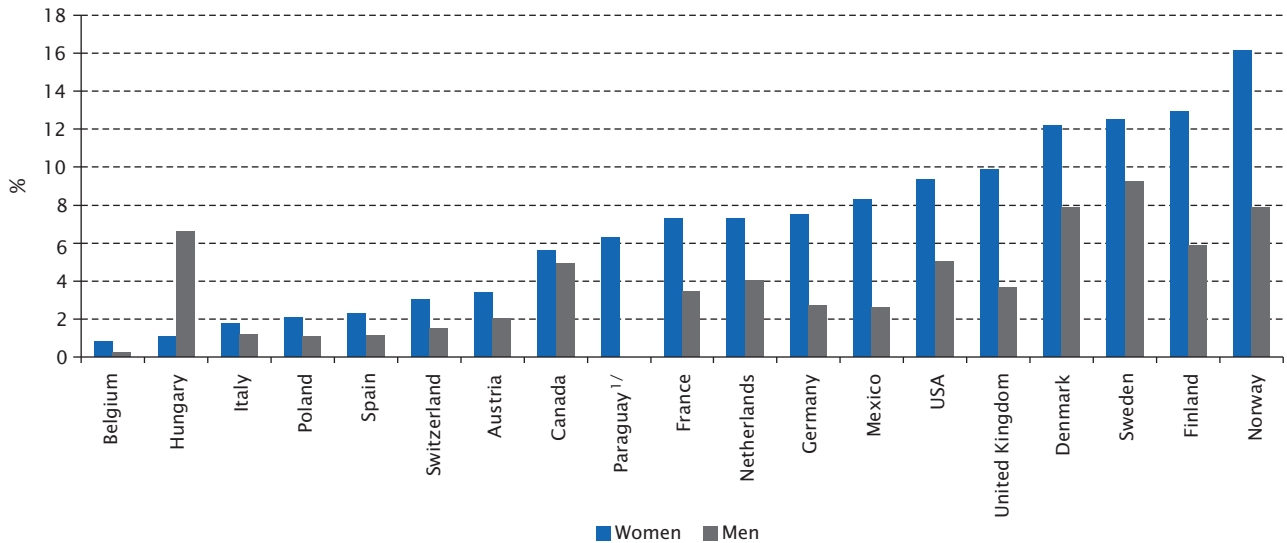
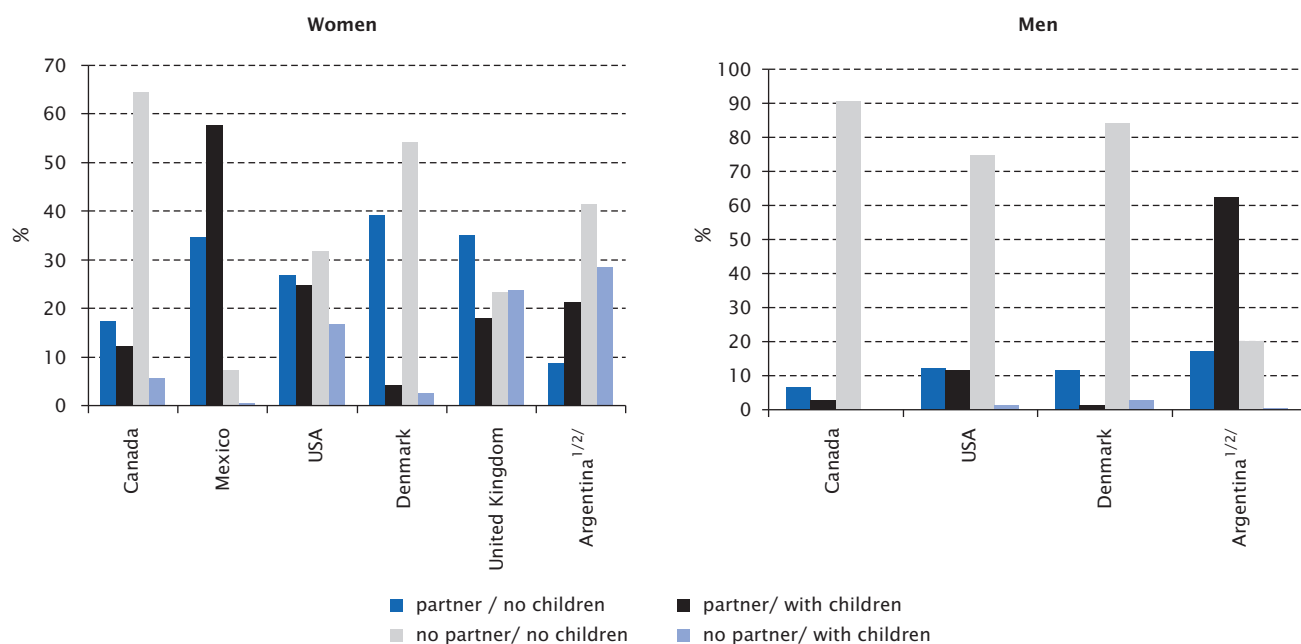


Figure V.9
Percentage of Youth (16-19 Years) Who Are Household Heads in Selected Countries, 2004



Note: 1/ 15-29 years.

Figure V.10
Family Structure of Youth Household Heads (16-19) by Sex in Selected Countries, 2004



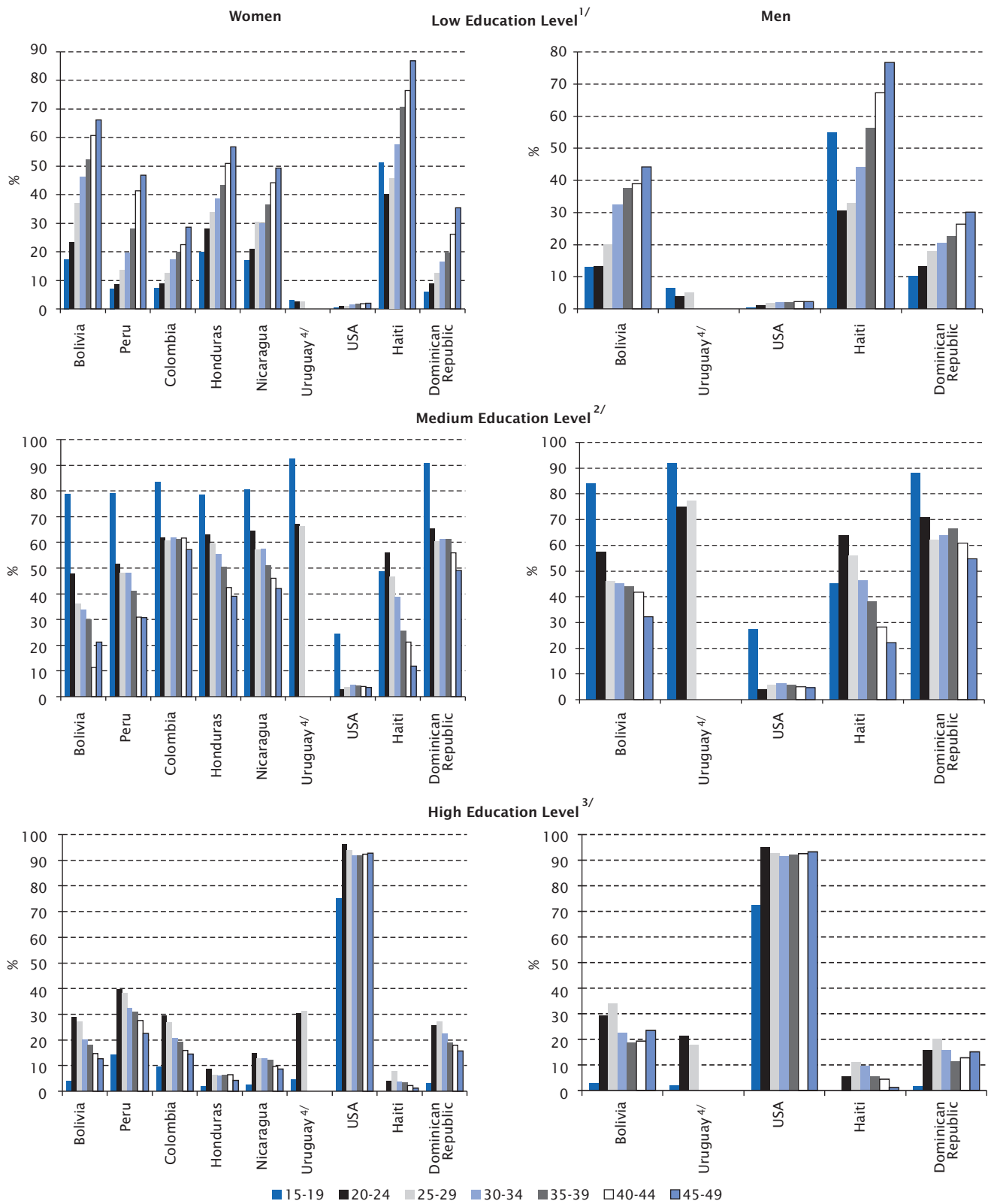
Note: 1/14-24 years. 2/2001.

V.2.2 Education

While the previous section underlined problematic situations, the horizon is far from bleak. Recent decades have brought about major improvement in the levels of human capital acquired by young persons in the Americas. In the first panel of Figure V.11, we see that for Bolivia, fully two-thirds of the women born around the early sixties had low educational levels, while for those aged 15-19 in 2008 (born in the early nineties) the figure is 18%-still high, but definitely better. While Peru, Colombia and the Dominican Republic have broken the 10% milestone for the youngest generations, Haiti is likely to remain above 40% for at least another decade. The best results are observed for Uruguay and the United States.

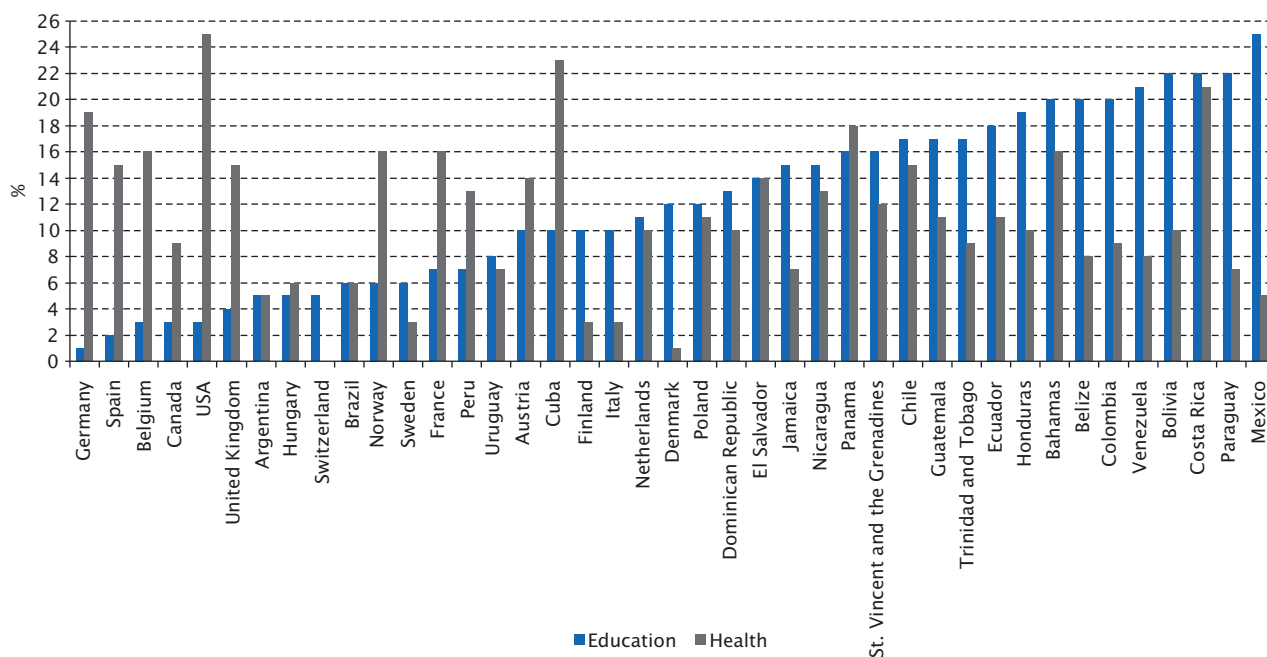
The favorable results extend to adolescents, and, in the third panel of Figure V.11, we see that of the 15-19 age group in most nations, 80% of women are reaching a middle educational level. When we reach the higher education echelon, the variation between countries becomes larger and only in Peru the 15-19 group topped the 10% mark by 2008, and the 20-24 group scratched 40%-this means that women still arrived "late" to the university, at age 20 or after, which certainly affects the quality of the education received and the commitment to improve the human capital. For men the story seems to be similar than the one described for women. Figure V.12 shows the central government expenditure allocated to education and health in selected countries. We can see that in countries with higher human capital, central governments spend more resources on health than on education-an issue that deserves further research.

Figure V.11
Level of Education of Persons Aged 15-49 Years by Age Group and Sex
in Selected Countries, 2008



Notes: 1/Low education level is the sum of the categories "No education" and "Incomplete elementary school (1st to 6th grade)". 2/Medium education level includes the categories "Complete elementary school", "incomplete middle school (7th to 9th grade)" and "Complete middle school". In Dominican Republic it refers to the categories "5th-8th grade" and "secondary education". In Nicaragua it comprises the categories "4th to 6th" grade and "secondary education". 3/High education level correspond to the category "Postsecondary or more (10th grade and over)". 4/In Uruguay the education level for the groups 30-34 or more is not available.

Figure V.12
Central Government Expenditure Allocated to Education and Health in Selected Countries, 1997-2006^{1/}
 (% of total expenditure)



Note: 1/In France, Cuba, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Ecuador, Honduras, Belize, Costa Rica and Paraguay, data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the title, differ from the standard definition or refer to only part of a country.
 Source: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), The State of the World's Children (consulted through Undata at <http://data.un.org/Explorer.aspx?d=CDB> on April 19, 2010).

V.2.3 Employment and Social Protection

How do the young work? Are they receiving social protection? Figure V.13 shows the activity rate for selected countries in the Americas. We notice that the activity rate for persons aged 15-19 in the first panel strongly differs among countries: for men, from less than 10% in Martinique to more than 60% in Paraguay and some parts of Central America, while the activity rate for men aged 20-24 follows a smoother path: from around 75% to less than 90%, with some exceptions.

To understand the way in which social protection can support young people, it is useful to understand the nature of employment. In the first two panels of Figure V.14, we see that in European countries the shares of students and employed is very large, usually above 80%. For some, it is mostly students (e.g. France, Spain, Poland, Hungary, Belgium), while for others the

employment bar is high (e.g. Germany, Denmark, Netherlands). For the second group, this does not mean that teenagers have left school for work. Rather, it means that the educational system and the labor market institutions are seamlessly merged (or at least with not too many stitches), and boys and girls begin to do some market apprenticeships and work by age 16 or 17. The five American nations in this figure (El Salvador, Paraguay, Mexico, United States, and Canada) have distributions similar to Germany or Switzerland, but this statistic hides that the Americas lack that strong connection between education and work.

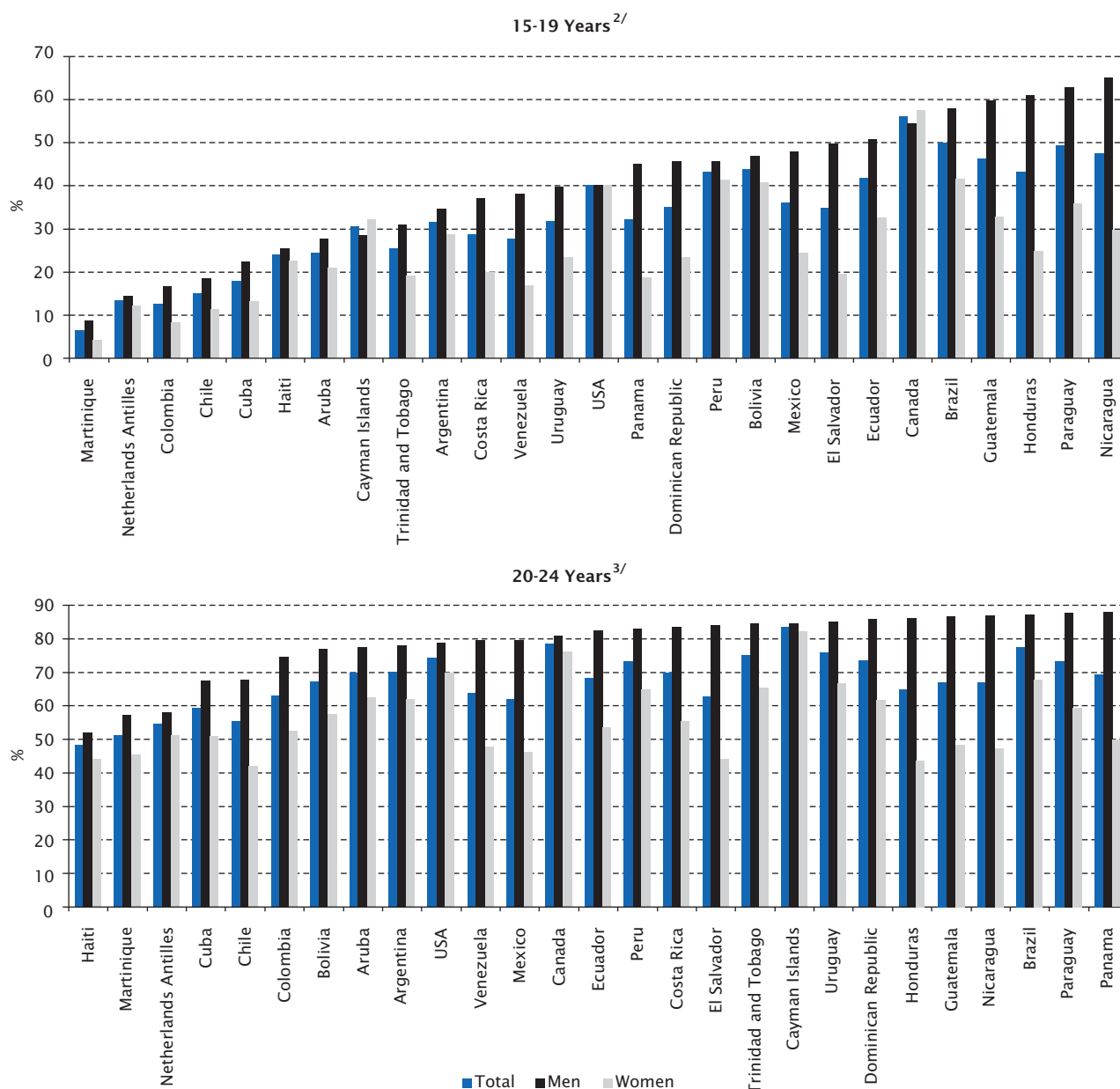
Work by female teenagers is high in the Andean countries in Figure V.15, but low in the Central American and Caribbean nations. Data in previous sections allows the affirmation that the working youth are not going back to school.

Given the low level of human capital, young women in middle- to low-income countries work predominantly as self-employed and in the informal economy. With the exception of the United States, Figure V.16 shows that "sales and services" is the largest category of employment for women. Agriculture is still important in the Andean region. For the United States, management and professional occupations are the most important categories in

every analyzed age cohort, nevertheless, sales and services follows in importance. For this country, farming represents less than 2% for both sexes in every age group.

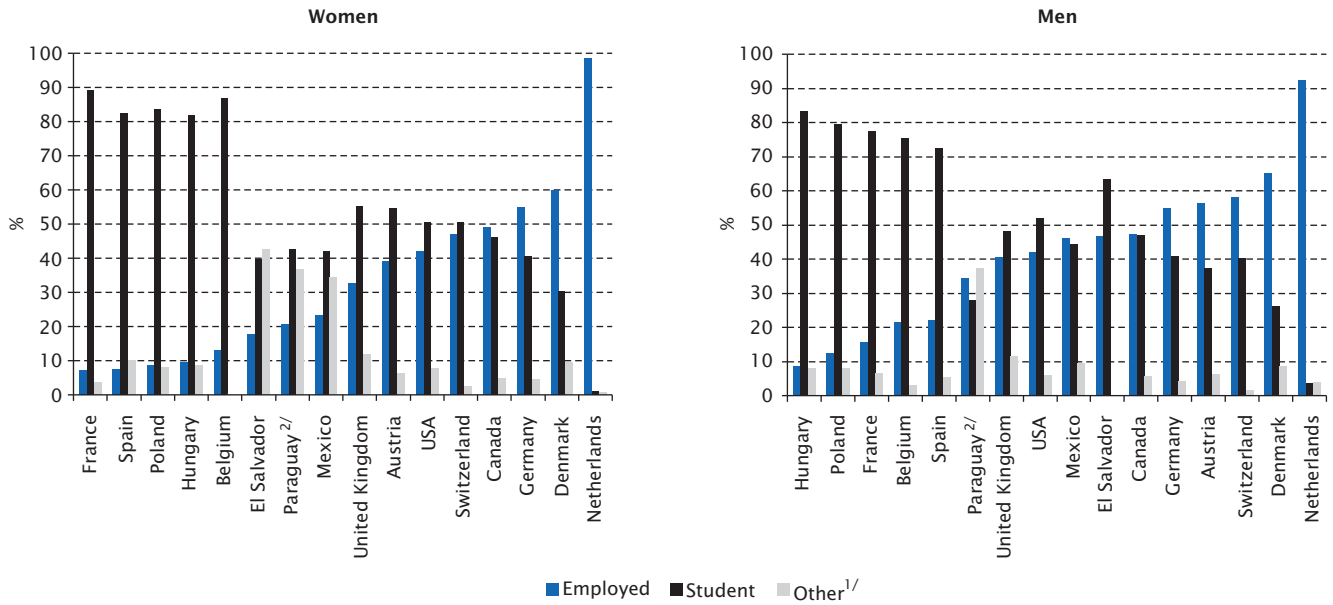
One of the motivations for this report is to deal with the gaps in coverage of children imposed by the rules of social security. We see in Figure V.17 that in fact, there is a lower rate of coverage of social insurance for children, but also for youths.

Figure V.13
Activity Rates for Youths in Selected Countries, 2008^{1/}



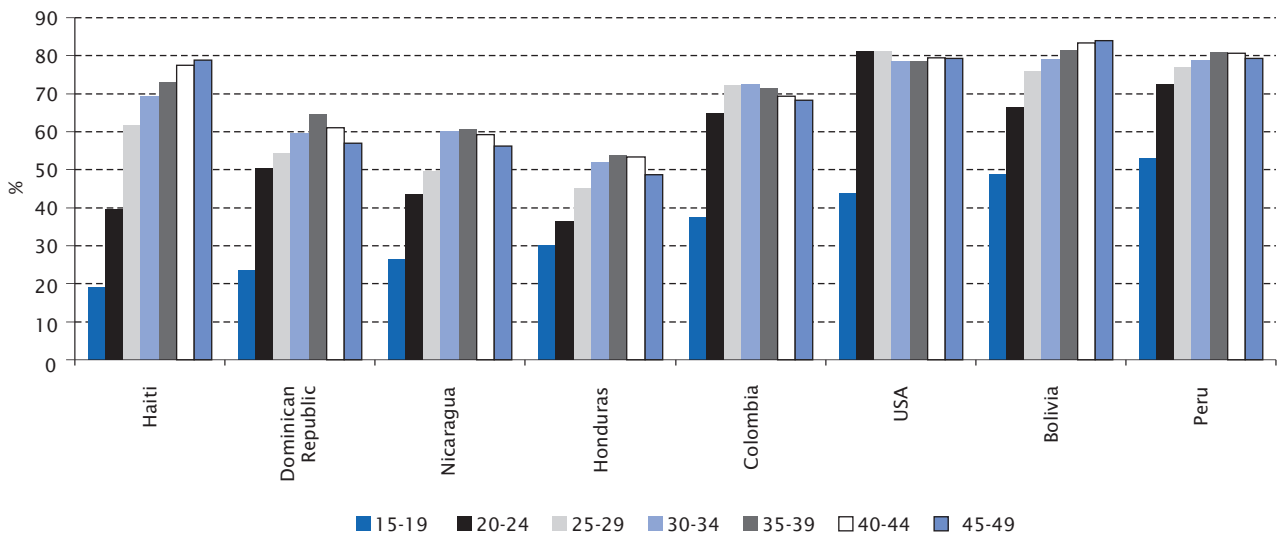
Note: 1/Aruba, Brazil, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Uruguay, Venezuela, 2007; Haiti, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, 2010 projections. 2/Colombia 12-17, Cuba 17-19, El Salvador 16-19, USA 16-19, Uruguay 14-19. 3/Colombia 18-24. Source: ILO LABORSTA (consulted on April 7, 2010) and CEPAL CELADE (consulted on April 8, 2010).

Figure V.14
Youth (16-19) Employment Status in Selected Countries, 2004



Notes: 1/For women, in El Salvador the category "Housekeeping" represents more than 80% inside the category "Other". 2/In Paraguay the category "Employed" include those that are searching for a job. In that country, the category "Other" is composed by the categories "Not student nor employed" and "Student and employed", where the second represents 46% for women and 89% for men.

Figure V.15
Women of 15-49 Years Employed in the Last 12 Months^{1/}
by Age Group in Selected Countries, 2008



Notes: 1/Corresponds to the women employed at any moment during the 12 months prior the survey.

Figure V.16
Youth (15-24 Years) Occupation by Sex in Selected Countries, 2008

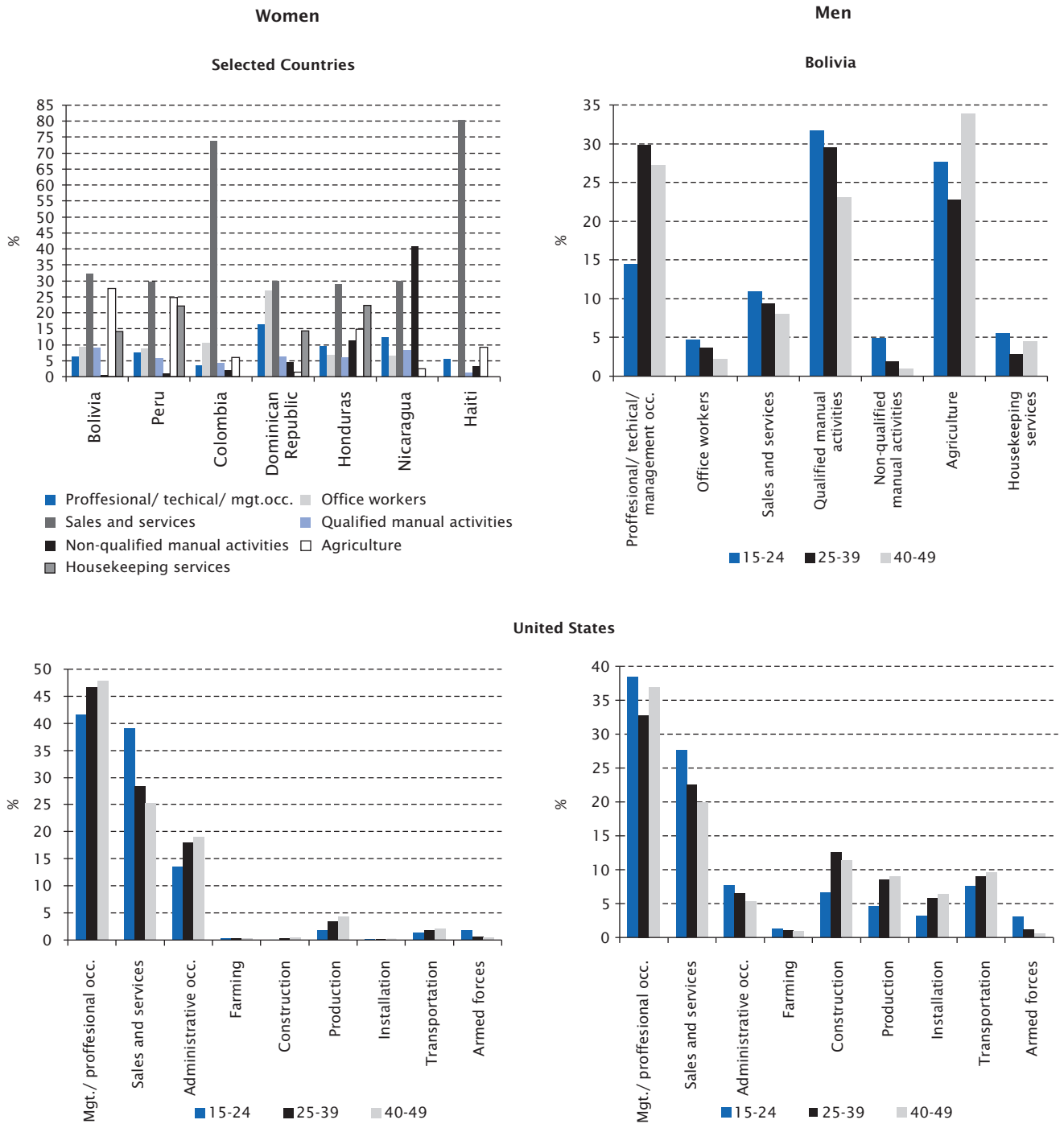
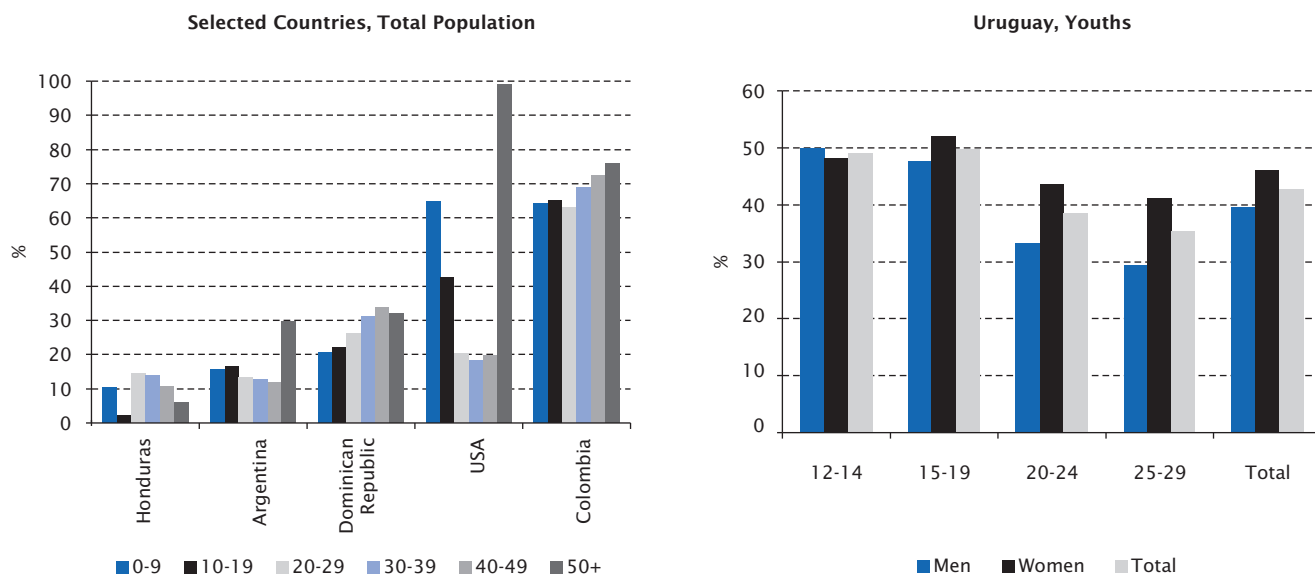


Figure V.17
Health Insurance Coverage by Age Groups in Selected Countries, 2007^{1/}



Notes: 1/In the case of Colombia, covered population corresponds to those affiliated to the National Health Social Security System (SGSSS), which include: Social Security Institute (ISS), Health Promoting Entities (EPS), Managers of the Subsidized Regime (ARS), Solidarity enterprise, Military forces/National Police, Ecopetrol, Ministry and Foncol-puertos. In the case of Dominican Republic it corresponds to the population covered by Managers of Health Risk (ARS). Coverage in the case of Honduras comprises persons covered by the National Social Security Institute (IHSS) or the military insurance. In Argentina it corresponds to the persons covered by obra social and/or private or mutual health plans. In the USA it corresponds to the sum of persons that have public health coverage, Medicare and Medicaid.

V.3 Regulation and Training Programs for Young Workers

V.3.1 Regulation on Youth Work and Employment Programs

To achieve a high labor utilization rate, a country must be able to avoid high unemployment of youths, increase its female labor participation rates, and avoid excessive early retirement. For the topic of this report, the main issue is that many youths who are not in school do not find a job promptly. The narrative defining the structure of the labor and educational systems says that an overwhelming majority of youths will reach at least pre-college education (i.e. upper school), many will go on to college and the rest will begin working full-time after reaching the legal adult age. National achievement is defined through

increasing rates of upper-school graduation and rates of admittance to higher education. Yet, reality is producing very large contingents of young persons who are not studying or working, with extremely low expectations of returning to the formal educational system.

Some reforms to labor and social insurance regulations have recognized that for young individuals the gains from keeping them in a healthy track of learning supersedes the goal of linking the labor contract to the full array of social protection rules adopted for adult workers. For example, perhaps generating entitlement for a pension is not important for a worker at age 17, and a rule mandating severance payments in case of separation from employment may become an obstacle for firms willing to offer training

to youths. On the other hand, there is no room for debate around the prevalence of some fundamental labor and social security regulations in any event. Such are the cases of health and safety rules and protection through health insurance.

How to combine the needs of youth? These are being immersed in a learning environment while also allowing youths to be able to draw means of sustenance when the family is no longer able or willing to do so. Several analysts have pointed to the main strategies for the creation of a more dynamic labor market, and the next are elements of coincidence: remove impediments to labor force participation as well as to job search, eliminate labor and product market obstacles to labor demand, and facilitate the development of labor force skills and competencies (OECD jobs strategy; see OECD 2006). Similarly, the main problems identified to achieve this goal are: taxes, social security contributions and wage regulations (such as excessively high minimum wages) that make it difficult to create jobs for low-skilled workers, in particular if they are young; and barriers to labor participation and access to formal sector jobs that affect more women, youth, and low-skilled workers.

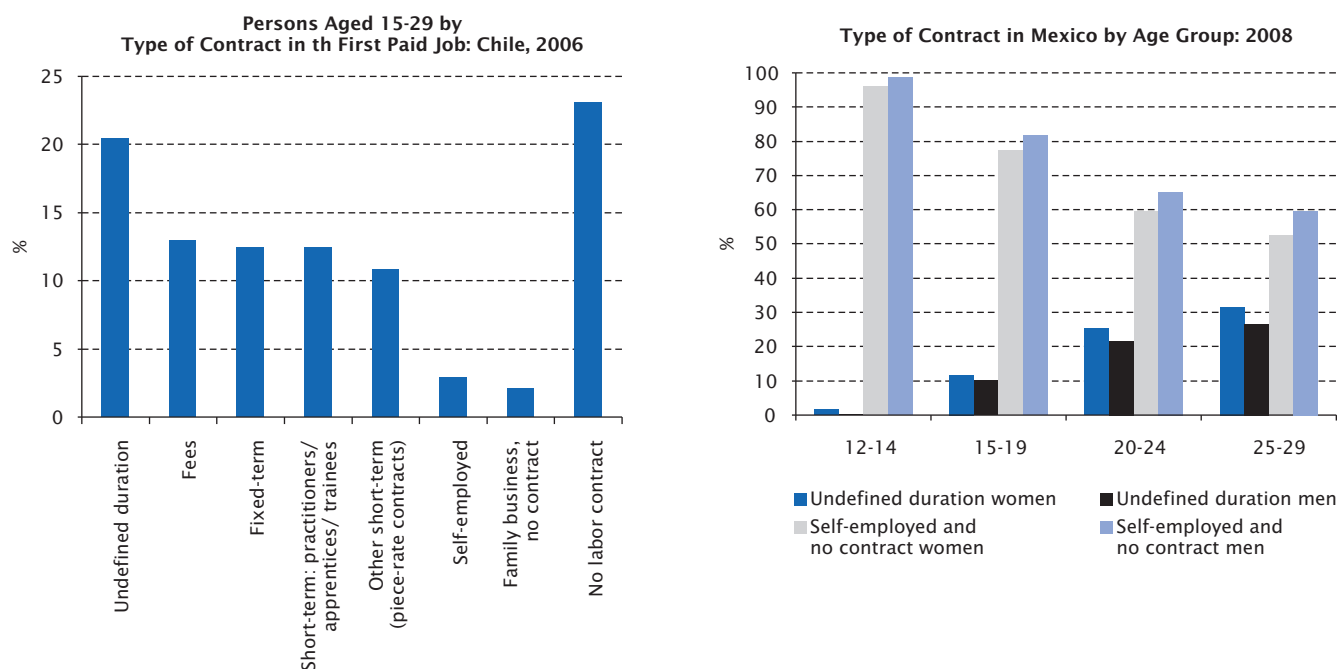
Programs for youth are affected by the generally low administrative capacity of national governments to manage employment and training services. Similarly, the weak enforcement of labor laws, coupled with a stringent regulatory environment to labor contracts affects the hiring of young workers in a higher proportion due to their high expected turnover.

Much of the growth in labor demand for young workers is taking the form of subcontracting. While this should not affect the efficiency of the labor relation, it is sometimes accompanied by evasion of social security contributions. Some countries have adopted regulations to preclude subcontracting of jobs that are "part of the own productive process".

While the adoption of these type of regulations might be harmless at a first glance, in practice it has led to significant levels of litigation given the inherent difficulty to strictly define the frontiers of a company.

The LA region—but not the English speaking Caribbean or North America—operates a system of high severance payments. The application of this regulation is plagued by compliance problems: employers often do not pay severance or negotiate payment with dismissed workers, and the effectiveness of courts in dealing with complaints is very limited. An idea that has floated for more than ten years now is that these countries can phase-out the severance payment rules to increase the role of unemployment insurance benefits. Austria has done this since 2003. Certainly, this is supported by the development of individual accounts systems for retirement, but also requires the addition of a meaningful and operative unemployment insurance program. A consequence of labor regulations is that most young workers do not have contracts. The first panel of Figure V.18 shows that only 20% of youths aged 15-29 in Chile have undefined duration contracts. On the other hand, the second panel shows that before reaching 20 years, young Mexicans work with a labor contract only by exception, and even for the 25 to 29 group, more than half do not have a labor contract.

Figure V.18
Population by Type of Labor Contract in Selected Countries



Source: INJUV 2007 and INEGI 2009.

There is evidence of a negative impact of high minimum wages on employment. Some countries have increased minimum wages in important amounts during the last decade, but many others have kept low minimum wage policies. The support to low income workers takes two forms: wage subsidies and earned income credits. For example the program *Jóvenes Chile Solidario* reimburses half of the minimum wage to employers in contracts with apprentices and other participants who are younger than 25. Also, the minimum wage is lower for those younger than 18, older than 65 or domestic workers. It is not clear that these subsidies have supported a significant increase in labor utilization rates of youths.

It is also believed that LAC countries should adopt some elements of the activation strategies used in OECD countries, in particular, job counseling and referral to training. These services can be easily outsourced to private providers, a practice that has already been used in the region. Relatedly, institutions for lifelong learning should be adopted. Historically, the efforts have been centered on employees of enterprises. This requires the coordination of the labor, economy and education authorities to cover general as well as vocational training. Yet, the effort to create a national system of skill certification is incomplete, and the largest question is how to improve the quality of education for youths, including improved links between technical and vocational education and employers.

V.3.2 Programs for Youth

Nearly every country in the Americas has worked to address the youth employment challenge. Many of these efforts have been translated in programs for promoting youth employment, but many of them have been limited in time or reach. Most of these initiatives aim to ensure that youths leave the educational system with the skills required in the labor market, combining measures ranging from education and training, to support for gaining experience and entrepreneurship development. Yet, the sheer size of the problem and the complex situation of many youths make it hard to find a "best practice" to be generalized internationally. However, there are useful partial experiences.

Most government interventions for promoting employment for young people in the region have been targeting youth who have become disconnected from the educational system, and are not working or planning to return to training: the "disconnected youth" or "at-risk youth". According to Cunningham et al (2008), youth-at-risk constitute more than half of the total population aged 12-24 in LAC, a condition confirmed by the previous analysis in this chapter.

With respect to programs to support young workers, Olga Susana Puerto (2007) reports on the World Bank Youth Employment Inventory (YEI), which aims to measure the coverage of interventions, the quality of the interventions, as well as the quality of the evaluations of the programs. The YEI documented 68 interventions in 18 countries in LAC, plus 122 interventions in OECD countries. Worldwide, 289 interventions are identified. The main conclusions are that training programs have positive effects on placement and quality of employment, and that there are positive net effects from comprehensive programs in employment and earnings.

The YEI focuses on the issue of the transition from school to work, and stresses the problem of the disadvantaged youth. This effort is limited to post-formal-schooling interventions. The goals of these programs can be summarized as increasing the demand for labor and the ability of young people to integrate. In turn, intervention is defined in terms of resolving market access problems (to credit, training, jobs), improving regulations and skills of disadvantaged youth. The two categories that concentrate the effort are "skills training for young people" and "comprehensive approach". Programs usually favor low-income-disadvantaged youths, and they are concentrated in urban areas, however, these programs do not have a general inclination to deal with gender issues. The YEI includes programs in Argentina, Belize, Chile, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, and Nicaragua.

**Table V.1
Categories Used to Classify Programs in the YEI**

1. Making the labor market work better for young people: improve information and increase demand
1a. counseling, job search skills
1b. wage subsidies
1c. public works programs
1d. anti-discrimination legislation
1e. other
2. Improving chances for young entrepreneurs: provide assistance to start a business
3. Skills training for young people
3a. vocational training including apprenticeship systems
3b. literacy & numeracy – young adult literacy programs
3c. 2nd chance & equivalency programs
3d. other
4. Making training systems work better for young people
4a. information
4b. credit (to individuals or enterprises)
4c. financial incentives (subsidies, vouchers)
4d. other
5. Programs to counteract residential segregation of disadvantaged young people
5a. transportation
5b. others
6. Improving labor market regulations to the benefit of young people
7. Programs for overseas employment of young people
8. Comprehensive approach
9. Other (e.g. voluntary national service programs)

Source: Puerto 2007.

According to the YEI, the LAC region does not have significant programs in the categories of wage subsidies, public works programs, anti-discrimination legislation, young adult literacy programs, making training systems work better for young people, counteraction of isolation of young people, improving labor market regulations to the benefit of young people, and programs to promote overseas employment of young people.

In the following subsections we explain the main types of programs that have been applied in support of youth employment, continuing education, training and social protection.

Second Chance Programs

Second Chance Programs aim to help those who have dropped out return and complete formal primary and secondary education. Some of the countries that have this type of program include Brazil, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, and the United States. These programs are flexible and involve lower cost teaching methods.

In Brazil, the National Youth Inclusion Program (*ProJovem*) focuses on young people between the ages of 18 and 24 years who have completed fourth grade but did not complete primary education, and who have no job with a formal training contract. The Dominican Republic has two flexible second chance education programs offered in the evenings and on weekends: the Basic Education for Youth and Adults (*Educación Básica de Jóvenes y Adultos*) that allows youth and adults (ages 15 and above) to complete their basic education (8th grade equivalent); and *PREPARA*, which enables youth and adults (ages 19 and above) to complete their basic or middle education, either in four years or in an accelerated 2-year program for qualified entrants. The United States provides, through the Youth Opportunity Grants, a high concentration of employment and education-oriented services for youth in high-poverty areas. Guatemala recently launched the Solidarity Scholarships program (*Becas Solidarias*) targeting young Guatemalans from 18 to 30 years of age. The purpose of this program is to provide youth with financial support and opportunities to access education, training and job placement. The government of Honduras along with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has implemented a program called Education-For-All (*EDUCATODOS*), a basic education program for children and adults not reached by the formal education system. The program allows out-of-school youth and adults to access alternative forums for primary education (1st through 9th grades).

Job Training Programs

The transition from education to work is problematic for many young people. Failure to find a job is often linked to a mismatch between educational outcomes and labor market requirements. Combining education, training, and work has proven to be an effective approach to help youth to enter in the labor market.

Most of the interventions found in the Americas that deal with this transition have focused on skills training and comprehensive programs. Starting in 1991, many American countries have implemented a policy commonly referred to as "Youth Programs" (*Programas Joven*). The model was applied in Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Peru, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay. The United States implemented similar programs in 1964 called "Job Corps". These models have been seen as demand-side programs that mainly provides vocational training coupled with support services. "Demand-side" means that subsidies tend to be directed toward individuals and not providers of educational services.

Table V.2 shows the main characteristics found in youth training programs in the Americas. All provide in-classroom training and on-the-job training. Training courses provide vocational skills in a diverse number of occupations. On-the-job training is provided by legally registered (formal sector) companies, providing unpaid internships to the participants. Some programs additionally provide life skills, job search assistance, counseling, and daily stipends. The programs are generally targeted to young people between the ages of 18 and 25 (in some countries the maximum age is 30) who are in lower socio-economic strata of the population.

Yet, according to Puerto (2007), these programs have become smaller or even closed over time. Evaluations of youth programs are in general favorable in terms of improving earnings or employability: for women, Argentina and Chile report improvements of 10 to 21% in the probability of employment; with regard to earnings, there are report of improvements that range between 10 and 26% for both genders in Argentina, Dominican Republic, and Chile.

Youth programs fall into the category of "skill training for young people". Moving to the category of "comprehensive programs for youth", these can be seen as including skill training classes, plus policies to provide extended services such as social insurance, special support to young mothers, and in-kind support such as books, clothing and transportation. Evaluations of these Youth Training Programs have found evidence that participants have a greater chance of finding employment and higher earnings than those in control groups. Elias, Victor et al (2004) show evidence of this in Argentina, and Attanasio et al (2008) in Colombia.

As to the main question of why the youth program approach has not grown, the answer may be cost. Estimates of cost per participant range usually in the high hundreds of dollars or even above a thousand. The youth programs avoid the problems of bureaucracies and undue investments-in-bricks, however, the cost per user is not small, and programs have been more successful when kept at a smaller size, but have not been able to expand to the size required to provide for the large masses of young persons in need of education and jobs. Nevertheless, the favorable experiences have to be weighed: perhaps the cost is high in comparison to the initial expectations of governments, but still the benefit-cost ratio can be favorable; and the issue of the size of the program can be used as an advantage if administration is decentralized to avoid costly bureaucracies.

Table V.2
Youth Training Programs in the Americas

Country/ name and duration of the program	Goal	Eligibility requirements	Benefits
<p>Argentina Program: Youth Program for More and Better Work (<i>Jóvenes por Más y Mejor Trabajo</i>) Duration: From 2008 to date</p>	<p>To generate opportunities for employment and social inclusion for young people through a range of integrated activities.</p>	<p>Applicant must be between the ages of 18 and 24, have permanent residency in the country, have not completed the primary or secondary level, be unemployed and in a socially at-risk condition.</p>	<p>Compulsory orientation and induction into the labor market; training for primary and secondary school completion; vocational training; occupational skills certification; support to young entrepreneurs; mentoring; labor intermediation services; life-skills training; and paid internships in enterprises.</p>
<p>Brazil Program: First Employment (<i>Primeiro Emprego</i>) Duration: From 2003 to date</p>	<p>To provide a first job to young people. It aims to combat poverty and social exclusion, and to combine employment and income policies with a public and private investment policy.</p>	<p>Youth must be between the ages of 16 and 24 years, have family monthly per capita income of less than half the minimum wage, and be pursuing an education (studying or has completed at least the second degree).</p>	<p>Financial subsidies to companies for each new job they create. The company receives a financial incentive equivalent to at least state minimum wage and a maximum of two minimum wages for six months. This varies in the case of temporary employment.</p>
<p>Bolivia Program: My First Worthy Employment (<i>Mi Primer Empleo Digno</i>) Duration: From 2008 to date</p>	<p>To increase the development of skills of young people in urban and semi-urban low income areas to enable them to find and maintain a formal job through training and internship programs.</p>	<p>The program is targeted to young people between 18 and 24 years of age who have completed second grade in secondary education, who are unemployed, have no work experience, and consumption of water and electricity are low.</p>	<p>Insurance coverage for accidents for the life of the project (training and internship), daily financial support during the training stage for transportation and lunch, and an economic support on the internship stage.</p>
<p>Canada Program: <i>Skills Link</i> Duration: From 1997 to date</p>	<p>To help youth facing barriers to employment develop the broad range of skills, knowledge and work experience they need to participate in the job market.</p>	<p>Youth must be between 15 and 30 years of age; out of school; a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or person on whom refugee status has been conferred; legally entitled to work; not in receipt of Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, and in need of assistance to overcome employment barriers.</p>	<p>Income support to individuals (allowances or wages) based on the minimum wage rate; additional support for individuals to participate (dependent care, travel or transportation); additional support for persons with disabilities; completion bonuses; costs associated with the Workers' Compensation actual costs or assessment paid directly to the provincial/territorial Workers' Compensation.</p>

Table V.2 (continued)

Country/ name and duration of the program	Goal	Eligibility requirements	Benefits
<p>Colombia Program: Youth in Action (<i>Jóvenes en Acción</i>) Duration: From 2002 to date</p>	<p>To enhance employment opportunities, labor insertion, and social integration of unemployed youth through training for semi-skilled workers.</p>	<p>Young people between the ages of 18 and 30 in the two lowest socio-economic strata of the population (<i>SISBEN 1</i> and <i>2</i>).</p>	<p>It provides 3 months of in-classroom training and 3 months of on-the-job training. The program was implemented in seven metropolitan areas: Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Manizales and Cartagena.</p>
<p>Chile Program: Young Chile (<i>Chile Joven</i>) Duration: From 1991 to 2008</p>	<p>Program aimed at youth without jobs.</p>	<p>Low income youth between 16 and 24 years of age, who have little or no work experience, who are unemployed, underemployed, or inactive.</p>	<p>Short courses (an average of 6 months) comprised of training classes and placements in firms and enterprises. Cost-free training, scholarship for transportation and other minor expenses that individuals face when attending. Women encouraged to participate by an extra financial amount for child care.</p>
<p>Dominican Republic Program: Youth and Employment (<i>Juventud y Empleo</i>) Duration: From 2001 to date</p>	<p>To provide disadvantaged youth with training and internships as an avenue toward gaining a first work experience.</p>	<p>Young people aged 16-29 from poor families that otherwise have very limited access to training programs and work opportunities. Youth must be out of school and jobless, having never completed secondary school.</p>	<p>During the first phase of the program, participants receive between 8 and 12 weeks of technical training, offered by independent training institutes (called <i>ICAPs</i>). They subsequently become interns (and in some cases vacancies). Participants also receive a daily stipend to help cover the costs of food and transportation.</p>
<p>Jamaica Program: <i>Youth Development</i> Duration: In development</p>	<p>To promote the integration of those outside the education system and labor market.</p>		<p>Training, on-the-job experience, information dissemination, and labor intermediation services.</p>

Table V.2 (continued)

Country/ name and duration of the program	Goal	Eligibility requirements	Benefits
<p>Peru</p> <p>Program: Pro-Youth (<i>Projoven</i>)</p> <p>Duration: From 1997 to date</p>	<p>To increase youth labor rate participation, improve the quality of jobs, and increase the labor income levels of young beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Youth between 16 and 24 years of age in ten major cities.</p>	<p>Technical training and work experience articulated with services, empowerment and employment agency, which meet the requirements of business and labor market. After three months of training, beneficiaries who passed competency tests graduated to a three-month internship with a local firm.</p>
<p>Trinidad and Tobago</p> <p>Program: <i>Youth Training and Employment Partnership Program</i></p> <p>Duration: From 1988 to date</p>	<p>To transform young persons into marketable employees and entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>Citizens and non-nationals young persons between the ages of 15 and 25.</p>	<p>80 vocational courses in 12 occupational areas. Training is conducted in 6-month cycles. Open program to eligible persons who are interested in entrepreneurship or technical vocational training. Income support to individuals.</p>
<p>United States</p> <p>Program: <i>Job Corps</i></p> <p>Duration: From 1964 to date</p>	<p>Job Corps is a free education and training program that helps young people learn a career, earn a high school diploma or GED, and find and keep a good job.</p>	<p>At-risk young women and men, ages 16 to 24.</p>	<p>Provides teaching of academic, vocational, employability skills, and social competencies through a combination of classroom and practical learning experiences to prepare youth for stable, long-term, high-paying jobs. The Job Corps design is based on the principles of quality services and individualized instruction to meet the needs of each student.</p>
<p>Uruguay</p> <p>Program: Pro-Youth (<i>Projoven</i>)</p> <p>Duration: From 1994 to date</p>	<p>To support young people from lower income sectors to improve their educational and job placement opportunities through job training processes effectively articulated to the demand of human resources identified in the labor market.</p>	<p>Between 17 and 24 years. Must not have completed the second cycle of secondary education, have no formal employment, or an unemployment insurance beneficiary, and come from a low-income household.</p>	<p>Provides technical training, upgrading of basic skills (reading and writing), personal relationship skills, and internships. Private training institutions provide the training classes and supervised the placements in the second stage. The program also provides with travel expenses for transportation and insurance of occupational accidents.</p>

Source: Own elaboration using information of the respective countries' documents and web pages.

Vocational Education and Training Programs

Before the wave of "youth-type" programs described in the previous section, the dominant model was based on state-managed training program. It was supply-driven, based on school construction, and provision by public educational institutions. Most countries in the Americas have Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems as a part of their strategy for promoting youth employment. VET includes education and training programs designed for, and typically leading to, a particular job or type of job. Most of the vocational training institutions in the region target young people between 14 and 18 years of age who have finished primary or secondary education, and are not incorporated in the general

educational system. Table V.3 shows examples of the vocational training offered in LAC countries according to the classification of the ILO (2002).

The supply-driven-seventies model sometimes created costly bureaucracies, focused too much on building physical structures, and not enough on the needs of people, and was not always capable of creating a constructive and rich link with the productive system. On the other hand, over time much of this supply has merged or at least improved its coordination with the general educational system. While it does not provide a general solution to the youth employment and training problem, it is a valuable addition to the supply of educational services.

Table V.3
Vocational Training Arrangements in LAC Countries

Arrangement	Country/Agency
A single agency, usually national and sectoral, assumes the responsibility both for defining policies and strategies and implementing direct training actions.	Bolivia- <i>INFOCAL</i> , Ecuador- <i>SECAP</i> , El Salvador- <i>INSAFORP</i> , Guatemala- <i>INTECAP</i> , Honduras- <i>NFOP</i> , Nicaragua- <i>INATEC</i> , Panama- <i>INAFORP</i> , Paraguay- <i>SNPP</i> , Peru- <i>SENATI</i> and <i>SENCICO</i> , Venezuela- <i>INCE</i> .
Definition of strategies and policies concentrated in a single agency, also playing a predominant role in execution of training actions, complemented by shared management and collaborating centers.	Jamaica- <i>HEART</i> , Dominican Republic- <i>INFOTEP</i> , Colombia- <i>SENA</i> , Costa Rica- <i>INA</i> .
Coexistence and interrelation of two predominant arrangements with different rationale: one associated with Labor Ministries (specialized bodies define policies and strategies without ever implementing training actions), and training is carried out by a multiplicity of agents; the other one, associated with national or sectoral training agencies that may fall into the arrangements described in the first two lines of this table.	Brazil- <i>SEFOR</i> (designs policies and strategies without implementing any actions that are carried out by private agents, non-governmental organizations, trade unions: <i>SENAI</i> , <i>SENAC</i> , <i>SENAR</i> , <i>SENAT</i>); Mexico-Ministries of Labor and Education on one hand and <i>CONALEP</i> , <i>CECATI</i> , <i>CETI</i> , <i>CBTI</i> on the other; Uruguay- <i>DINAE</i> on the one hand, and <i>CETP-UTU</i> , <i>COCAP</i> and <i>CECAP</i> , on the other.
Definition of training policies and strategies is wholly in the hands of Labor Ministries through specialized bodies, which do not carry out any training action. Implementation is assumed by a large number of agencies and players.	Argentina-Ministry of Labor and Social Security, through the Secretariat for Employment and Occupational Training, and the National Office of Employment Policies; Chile-Ministry of Labor and Social Security, through <i>SENCE</i> .

Source: Own elaboration with information from ILO 2002.

Support Programs to Young Entrepreneurs and Self-Employment

Government programs for the promotion of youth entrepreneurship are relatively small and not abundant. Sometimes, youth can access general entrepreneurship programs (e.g. *Fondo de Capital Semilla in Chile*), but there are cases of specialized programs.

In 2005, Brazil launched the Young Entrepreneur Programs part of the National Program to Incentive the First Employment (*PNPE*) run by the Ministry of Labor. When selected, the recipient goes through a training course in entrepreneurship for developing a business plan. After this first stage, the participant develops a business plan and proposes the project to the Credit Committee, which analyzes the feasibility and finances the project.

In Peru, the Entrepreneur Grant (*Bono Emprendedor*) promotes entrepreneurship among people between 18 and 30 years of age who have at least finished secondary school. Young people compete for resources and training for developing a business plan through a business proposal. The winning proposals receive grants for the implementation and consolidation. The five best-rated plans in each region covered by the program receive a contribution in the form of seed capital for starting a business.

Fiscal Incentives

The role of government interventions in the region has also included wage subsidies or other incentives (e.g. tax exemptions or reductions in social insurance contributions for a limited period) for firms that hire young people.

In Chile, the Wage Subsidy to Youth Employment program (*Subsidio Empleo Joven*) benefits those aged 18 to 29 from the *Chile Solidario* Program. The program reimburses half of the minimum wage to employers for a period of one to four months, renewable for an additional four months. It also funds optional job

training and, additionally, youth employees receive vouchers for food and transportation for the days actually worked.

In Colombia, Act 789 of the Labor Reform Act of 2002 established tax exemptions from contributions to the family subsidy scheme, to the National Training Service (*SENA*), and to the *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF)* for firms recruiting youth aged 16 to 25 years and earning up to three minimum wages. Also, the Act established tax exemptions from contributions to the *ICBF*, *SENA* and Family Compensation Funds for young students aged 16 to 25 who study no less than 4 hours and work 4 hours a day, or have a flexible work schedule of up to 24 hours per week without exceeding the 6-hour workday. In the same way, the Youth in Action Program in Colombia provides the employers participating in the program benefits in the form of: tax exemption for 6 months and an economic subsidy to any companies increasing their staff for up to 6 months through the Direct Support Program for Employment (*PADE*).

Canada established the Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit in 2006, which is a non-refundable tax credit equal to 10% of the eligible salaries and wages payable to eligible apprentices. The Summer Work Experience program provides wage subsidies to employers to create summer employment for secondary and post-secondary students, and supports the operation of summer employment offices.

In Mexico, the First Employment (*Primer Empleo*) program subsidizes 12 months of social security contributions when recruiting a new employee who never has been employed regardless of the employee's age. The program began in 2007, but is being phased out.

Youth Service Programs and Public Sector Internships

Canada, Jamaica, and the United States have implemented Youth Service Programs as a policy to increase youth employability. The Youth Service Programs provide youth an active role in community and national development while learning practical and marketable skills and knowledge, which makes them more employable and facilitates their transition into the labor market, further training, or higher education.

Canada introduced the Youth Employment Strategy in 1997 to help young Canadians (aged 15 to 30) find those first jobs that enable them to get the experience they need. This national strategy helps them obtain career information, develop skills, find good jobs, and stay employed. In some cases, the Government of Canada funds employers and community organizations to hire youth and help them gain practical work experience and develop employment skills. In other cases, federal departments and agencies offer internships that give youth work experience in specialized fields, such as international development or science and technology.

Jamaica's National Youth Service Program (NYS) begins with one month of residence-based training in job and life skills for unemployed secondary school graduates. This is followed by a 6-month internship in the areas of early childhood education, administration, customer service, or micro entrepreneurship. Participants receive a stipend to cover their transportation costs and food. More than 1,400 young people participate each year, with 60% transitioning to either permanent employment or continuing their studies, compared with 34% of similar young people in a control group.

The AmeriCorps program in the United States provides a year of full-time service (1,700 hours per year) in areas such as education, public safety, human resources, and the environment in exchange for an AmeriCorp Education Award of up to US\$4,700 dollars that can be used for either higher education, vocational training, or to repay student loans. Jastrzab

et al (2007) developed a 15-year longitudinal study of the program and found that at-risk participants were less likely to have been arrested, had acquired more basic work skills, were more involved in civic life, more connected to their communities, and more likely to choose a career in public service than their peers in a control group.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship is considered another effective way to prepare young people for work. Chile, Canada, Colombia, and Trinidad and Tobago each have programs that promote apprenticeship.

In Colombia, Decree 933 of 2003 established the apprenticeship contract as a special form of relationship for the labor market. The apprenticeship contract exempts the employer from some features of the general labor relation, and its term should not exceed two years. Under this contract, an individual older than 14 years of age who has completed primary school receives theoretical training in a training institution approved under the auspices of a sponsoring company that provides the means to acquire methodical and comprehensive training required for the job. With regards to the affiliation of students and apprentices, the payment of contributions is fully met by the sponsor. Decree 2585 mandates that private employers engaged in any economic activity other than construction, and employing 15 workers or more, must accept apprentices.

Canada encourages young Canadians to enter the trades through Apprenticeship Incentive Grants and Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credits.

Chile's Apprentice Program aims to promote the recruitment and training of youth under 25 years of age with a competency-based approach. The program reimburses half the minimum wage to employers for a period of 12 months. It also funds job training so employers must appoint a lead teacher to support the development of labor skills of the apprentice within the company.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the National Apprenticeship Program (NAP) provides persons between the ages of 16 and 30 structured apprenticeships in the private and public sectors. As apprentices, youths receive a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction to help learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a skilled occupation.

The United States' programs focus on specific sectors to further employment for young people. "YouthBuild" is an academic and vocational training program focusing on the construction sector. All students are poor and many have had experiences with foster care, juvenile justice, welfare, and homelessness. Participants spend 6 to 24 months in the full-time program, dividing their time between the construction site and the YouthBuild alternative school. Community- and faith-based nonprofit organizations sponsor most programs, although some are sponsored by public agencies. Each YouthBuild program raises private and public funds to support itself. Primary support comes from the U.S. Department of Labor through a dedicated federal line item.

Box V.1 refers to the German apprenticeship system, which is often listed as a successful approach to integrate education, training and work.

Box V.1

Why is Germany a Low-Youth Unemployment Country?

There is little debate that youth unemployment has been high since the eighties in many countries, and has been specially affected by the recession that has afflicted the world since 2007. This issue has been documented by the ILO (2008) report on youth employment and Bell and Blanchflower (2010). Within this global stress, Germany has arisen as a relatively low-youth unemployment country and the "dual apprenticeship training" (GAT) system is often credited as an asset that defines that positive result.

The "dual" term means that for nearly 350 trades, students have to finish an apprenticeship while also attending a school. The extent of these programs is not small, and more than half of young Germans have participated in this program in recent years. Small companies usually do not participate, but virtually all medium and large firms offer jobs for apprentices. The system as it exists today is regulated by a 1969 law. Key elements include the participation of business associations, which certify employers, and the educational system, that provides programs that complement the training offered by firms. Thus, a significant institutional effort is required to make this work.

At the bottom, the GAT is driven by economic incentives: employers like to have young people around because they provide an unmatched opportunity to learn the abilities and potential of individuals, reducing cost of recruitment and training after permanent hiring. This leads to the main question on the transferability of the GAT: perhaps firms have incentives to provide firm-specific training, but not general training. On the other hand, young participants are willing to work at a low cost for the employer because even if not all the training they receive is transferable to other jobs, they receive a very important skill: the ability to keep learning. This debate points toward the importance of the public sector and business communities in developing an institutional infrastructure that reduces the cost of transaction to employers and young workers, and facilitates coordination with the educational system.

"Apprenticeship" is an old tradition in any country; it is just a natural way to incorporate young people into productive activities. However, in today's economy, to gain full advantage of the concept, the educational, fiscal, and labor regulations have to be coordinated to reach the full potential.

V.4 Conclusions

Key variables such as fertility, poverty, pregnancy, schooling outcomes, employment, and social security protection influence the situation in which young persons are living. One of the main problems faced by most countries in the Americas is that systems lack strong connection between education and work. A significant share of boys and girls begin to abandon formal schooling by ages 14-17, and do not have jobs to provide adequate learning opportunities and on-the-job training. In this context, social security agencies have a window of opportunity to reform the existing programs for young people or create new ones to make them more effective. Some recommendations are the following:

- a. *Programs should incorporate gender issues, recognizing the different social risks faced by males and females. Teenage pregnancy is still too high in several countries of the region and is associated with poverty of mothers and children.*
- b. *A main effort by affected countries and the international community must be directed to almost eliminate the incidence of low education levels, and continue affecting a significant increase in the incidence of medium education levels. For higher grades, countries must reform education and labor regulations to facilitate on-the-job training and mixed school-work programs.*
- c. *National governments should support young persons to increase upper-school graduation and rates of admittance to higher education.*
- d. *Social security rules regarding affiliation, contribution and benefits can be adjusted to facilitate the use of school-work and on-the-job training for teenagers. One goal needs to be to create a channel of entry to facilitate long-term permanence in the system. Wage subsidies and other fiscal incentives support hiring young workers in a general way. Programs must recognize that those most in need often work in small firms and in the informal economy.*
- e. *A more dynamic labor market can be achieved through the removal of impediments to labor force participation as well as to job searching, eliminating labor and product market obstacles to labor demand, and facilitating the development of labor force skills and competencies, particularly job counseling and training.*
- f. *A balanced portfolio of policies and institutions will support the young best by recognizing the variety of needs of individuals, the possibilities of the educational sector and of combining with employers and communities. Among the types of programs that have shown success under adequate conditions are second-chance programs, vocational programs, youth programs for training, young entrepreneurs and self-employment programs, youth service programs, public sector internships, and apprenticeship programs. None is a silver bullet to solve all problems, but all can be used as part of the solution for that segment of the population that requires help.*

There is a window of opportunity and many things can be done to improve youth well-being. Moreover, while some actions lie directly within the social protection field, other policies may be implemented by other government bodies, such as labor and education ministries. In any case, each country's objective should be to implement a comprehensive and integrated approach to improve youth well-being.