



Cisterna
Reciclar
20
30
4
50
6

bella que tien

→ At the Jácome School, in rural Gramalote, Elva Marina Santander teaches her students the history of the town that disappeared. She also encourages them to save water and other natural resources so as to, she says, "avoid another tragedy."

tiene belleza, hermosa.

IENTAL ESCOLAR "PRAE"
RURAL JACOME
CATIVO RURAL SAN ISIDRO
GRAMALOTE





→ Carlos Rodríguez returned to live with his mother and his sister, Angie, in Simijaca. The death of their father forced their mother to work and be away from them.

CHAPTER 5

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN COLOMBIA: THEIR EVOLUTION THROUGH THE 2010-2013 PERIOD

CATHERINE RODRÍGUEZ ORGALES¹



→ It takes twelve-year-old Daniela Cruz a 30 to 40 minute cycle along a dirt track to get to school in Simijaca, Cundinamarca.

→ 5.1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most outstanding characteristics of ELCA is that it allows a detailed follow-up of the physical and cognitive development and general well-being of a representative sample of children in Colombia that in 2010 were aged between zero and nine. These children are perhaps the individuals that will be most carefully followed over the next waves of ELCA, as we will have a concrete understanding of the problems they may face as they grow up, helping us understand their life stories once they enter adulthood. More importantly, the information provided by this longitudinal study will allow us to design and assess policies and programs to improve the current situation and the future of this and the following generations of Colombians.

As well as researching issues commonly treated in other surveys carried out in Colombia on children and youths' education and work, ELCA gathers detailed information, which does not exist in any other representative survey at a national level. Moreover, the questions and issues dealt with in the survey regarding these individuals will increase and become enriched as they grow, adapting to the stages

1. The author would like to thank the excellent research assistance of Román David Zárate and the comments made by the members of the National Committee of ELCA, in particular those of the director, Ximena Cadena. This document is financed and promoted by the Center for Studies on Economic Development, (CEDE).

of their lives. In line with this idea, the second wave of ELCA has a specific module dedicated to studying the attitudes, social capital, smoking and alcohol-consumption habits, use of time, dreams and life plans, etc., of youths between the ages of ten and thirteen.

This chapter presents a brief introduction to the richness of data pertaining to this longitudinal survey and, as such, reveals some of the most significant changes that these children and youths experienced over the three years. Specifically, this chapter presents the most salient characteristics of three issues: the youths' education, their participation in household work and in the labor force, and some of the risks they are subject to as well as their dreams for the future. The choice of these three issues is not random; it is in line with their importance in the future lives of the children and youths in the study.

Education is probably the most important factor leading to social mobility and decreasing levels of poverty and inequality. The level and quality of education that individuals receive will determine their employment options and with these, their levels of income, economic stability and personal and family development in the future.² Similarly, the decisions regarding children and youths' participation in the labor market are crucial, complex and important to understand. On the one hand, child labor may

benefit both the youths and their families in the short-term, thanks to the resources immediately available to the household. However, in the long-term, this activity can imply significant sacrifices in terms of lower levels of schooling or child abuse, depending on the conditions of their participation.³ Finally, with a sound understanding of the risks that youths are subject to and their future life plans, it will be possible to design policies to mitigate the former and foster the latter.

5.2. WHO ARE THEY?

This chapter uses information from two groups of Colombian children and youths depending on the issue dealt with and the availability of data in the two waves of ELCA. For education and labor force related issues, the sample corresponds to those children in the study that in 2010 were the children of the household heads or their spouses and who were aged between five and nine. The sample is restricted to those surveyed both in the baseline and the follow-up surveys in order to create a balanced panel that sheds light on their evolution over the three years.⁴ For the section related to risks faced by the youths and their future dreams in 2013, it is necessary to clarify two points. First of all, given that this is a new section of questions, it is not possible to compare the responses with 2010.

We therefore only present the statistics for 2013. However, even though only follow-up children and youths were questioned in this section, the sample widened given that even those who had not been interviewed in 2010 were surveyed in 2013. The analysis of the last section of this chapter takes advantage of all the existing information and is based on this extended sample.⁵

Table 5.1 shows some basic characteristics about these children and youths for the urban area (upper panel) and for the rural micro-regions (lower panel). The first two columns present the information for children and youths surveyed in both the 2010 and the 2013 waves and thus included in our panel. The third column presents information relating to youths over ten years of age surveyed in 2013. For both samples, statistics are presented in terms of age, gender and wealth level of the children on whom this chapter is based.

5.3. EDUCATION: ATTENDANCE, EDUCATIONAL LAG, AND DESERTION

In accordance with Colombian legislation, mandatory education begins at the age of five and goes from grade zero (transition) to nine in basic education. This implies that all children between the ages of five and fifteen must attend an educational

2. See, for example, Duflo (2001) among many others.

3. See, for example, Beegle, Dehajia and Gatti (2009).

4. Furthermore, to maintain the representativeness of the rural and urban sample, the analysis is restricted to those individuals who did not migrate between rural and urban areas.

5. Even though the second wave of the ELCA gathers information about education and labor force for this expanded sample, the analysis is restricted to the panel sample for these two topics so as to study their evolution over the three years.

TABLE 5.1.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PANEL OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS TEN YEARS AND OLDER IN 2013.

	Panel sample		Youths
	2010	2013	2013
Urban			
Average age (years)	7,07	10,04	11,50
Male (%)	48,52	49,66	49,96
Wealth (%)			
Low (%)	24,82	22,21	19,95
Medium (%)	35,89	33,50	37,70
High (%)	39,30	44,30	42,35
Observations	1.729		1.369
Rural micro-regions			
Average age (years)	7,09	10,11	11,53
Male (%)	50,07	50,26	50,85
Wealth (%)			
Low (%)	31,74	31,71	23,99
Medium (%)	31,54	31,53	33,45
High (%)	36,72	36,76	42,56
Observations	1.994		1.657

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions.

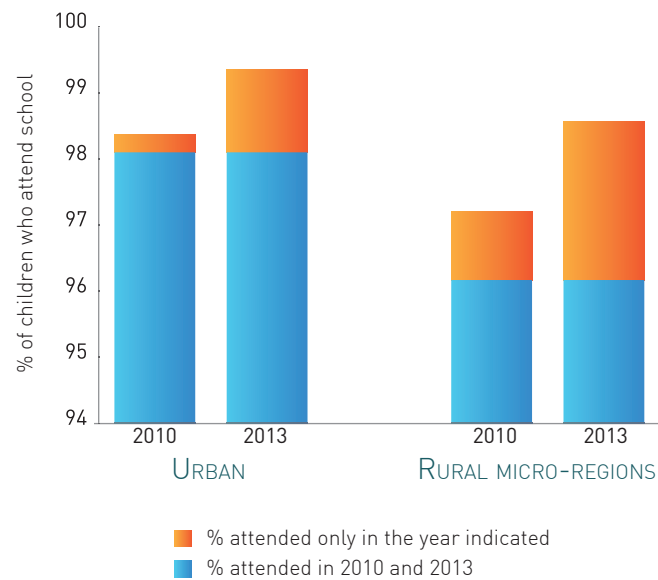
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6. In this chapter, we define a child as being lagged if she/he is in a grade that does not correspond to her/his age. Specifically, an individual is considered to be lagged if she/he is two or more years older than the generally recognized age for each educational grade in accordance with the law. For example, we consider a child to be lagged if she/he is seven and in grade zero or not attending school altogether; a student of eight years of age who is in first grade or less; a nine-year-old student in second grade or less and so on until fourteen-year-old student in seventh grade or less. Those who do not attend school are also considered as being behind, given that children are required to attend school by law.
7. The definition of educational lag as used in this chapter is stricter than that used by the National Ministry of Education (MEN) when referring to over-age students. In accordance with MEN, students are considered over-age when they are two or three years older than the average expected age for a certain grade.
8. See for example Rodríguez and Sánchez [2012] and Romero [2012].
9. This is consistent with the rates of net coverage reported by the National Ministry of Education for the year 2012 and shows an encouraging panorama in this aspect.

center and be enrolled in a specific grade in accordance with their age. This last point determines that children that are behind the appropriate grade level for their age are, according to the law, considered to be in educational lag.^{6,7} In addition to knowing whether the child or youth is attending school, it is also important to understand and quantify the education lag. A number of studies have shown that educational lag is highly correlated with school desertion and with involvement in undesirable activities such as taking drugs, juvenile delinquency, and teenage pregnancy.⁸

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 analyze how the school attendance and educational lag rates for the children and youths in the study have changed over the three years in the urban area and in the four rural micro-regions. After detailed analysis, three clear messages stood out. First, over the three years, school attendance increased almost universally for the groups of children and youths who in 2010 were aged between five and nine. In 2013, only 0.5% and 1.4% of the children included in the urban and rural study respectively did not attend school, implying that, at least in these early stages, school desertion rates are not a huge problem requiring immediate action.⁹ Second, in contrast to the attendance

FIGURE 5.1.
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF THE PANEL OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY AREA
(PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).



Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions.

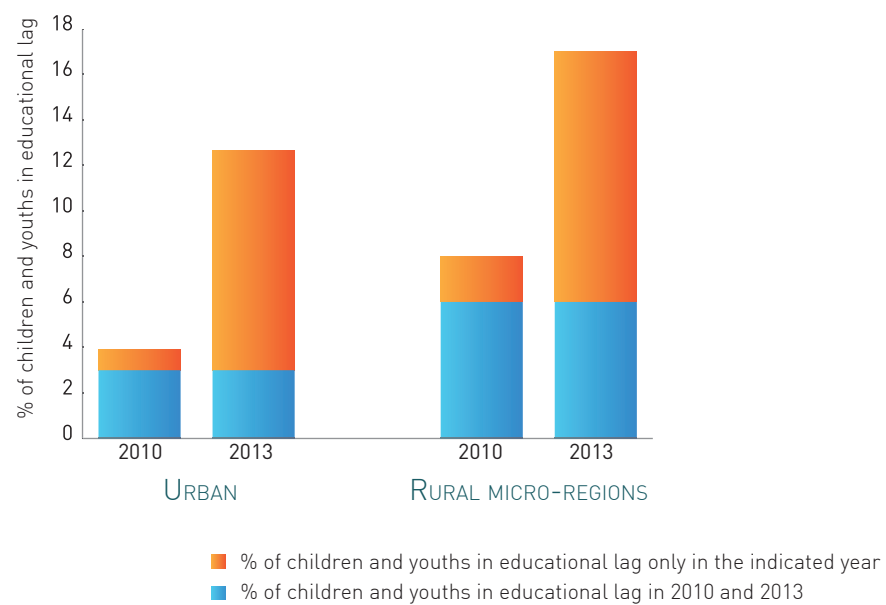


→ Luis Fernando Moreno dreamed of his son Cristian becoming a professional soccer player. He remembers that his son played for Envigado FC for 14 years. He only had the final step to go.

rates, educational lag is a problem that exists at these ages and, during the three years, it increased significantly in both areas. Between 2010 and 2013, educational lag increased by almost eight percentage points in both urban and rural areas for the panel of children who in 2010 were between the ages of five and nine. Although considered natural that the percentage of those in educational lag would rise as they grow, the increases recorded with the information taken from ELCA are far greater than what was expected. Third, the inequalities between these two areas are evident even at these early ages. The non-attendance rate in the rural area is almost three times greater than in the urban area and educational lag is 30% greater in rural areas than in urban ones.

FIGURE 5.2.

EDUCATIONAL LAG OF THE PANEL OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY AREA
(PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).



Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

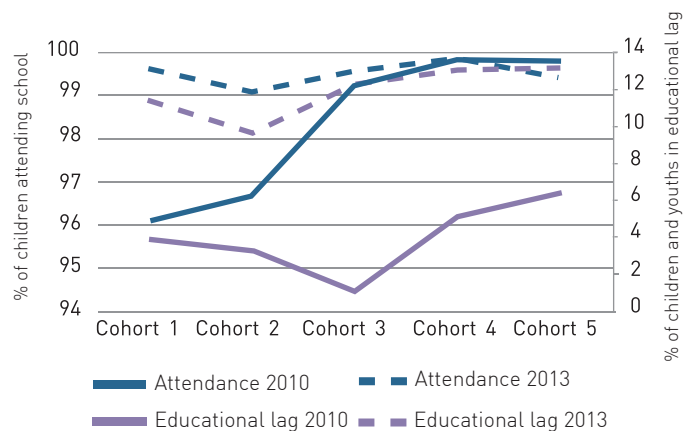
This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions.



→ Antonia Pelaez dreams of being a musician. She is learning to play violoncello in Villa Hermosa, Medellín. She has all the support of her mother and grandmother.

As expected, these rates vary considerably depending on the socio-economic characteristics of the children and their families. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show the attendance and educational lag of the ELCA children who were residents in the urban and rural areas in 2010 and 2013, in accordance with their respective ages. The left axes show the percentages of attendance or school coverage, while the ones on the right show the percentages of children and youths that are lagged. The information is divided into five cohorts. Cohort one is made up of all the children in the study who in 2010 were five years old, cohort two is made up of those who in 2010 were six, cohort three includes those who were seven years of age, cohort four is for those who were eight years old, and finally cohort five is for those children in the study who were nine years old in 2010. For the second wave, the average ages of each cohort increased by three years,

FIGURE 5.3.
ATTENDANCE AND EDUCATIONAL LAG OF THE PANEL OF URBAN CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY COHORT AND YEAR (PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).



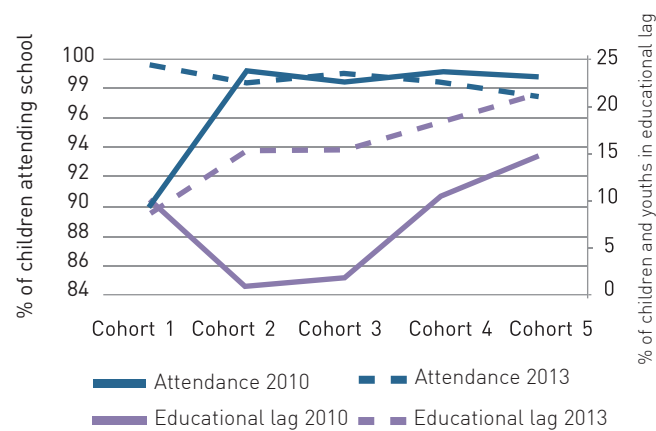
Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013.

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013.

beginning each cohort from approximately eight years of age to thirteen years of age, respectively.

Two important points stand out. First, upon comparing the rates of school attendance between 2010 and 2013, we can see that these increased for the first two cohorts, which can be explained by the late entry of younger children into the school system. For the other groups, attendance remains almost identical implying that nearly 100% of the children in these cohorts attended school in 2010 and continued doing so in 2013. Second, educational lag increased for all the cohorts in the three years in both areas, meaning that the phenomenon occurs from an early age and that educational policies are essential in overcoming this problem.

FIGURE 5.4.
ATTENDANCE AND EDUCATIONAL LAG OF THE PANEL OF RURAL MICRO-REGION CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY COHORT AND YEAR (PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).



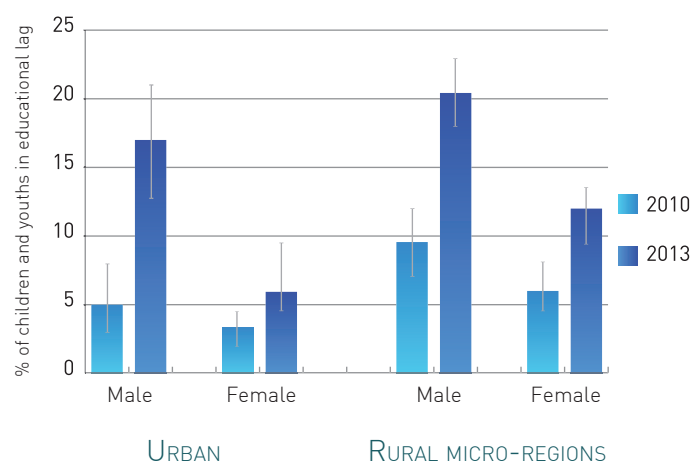
Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013.

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions.

Figures 5.5 and 5.6 also show interesting patterns of educational lag, which is much greater for men than for women, a gender-based difference that increased significantly over the three years. Furthermore, the correlation between educational lag and levels of wealth is negative, increased over time and, as expected, the children and youths who belonged to the poorest households

presented the highest rates of educational lag. Figure 5.7 shows that, in accordance with the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) applied to these children and youths in 2010, educational lag was greater in 2013, and for children with lower scores. It also increased more significantly over the three years. As seen in the previous case, the differences are statistically significant.

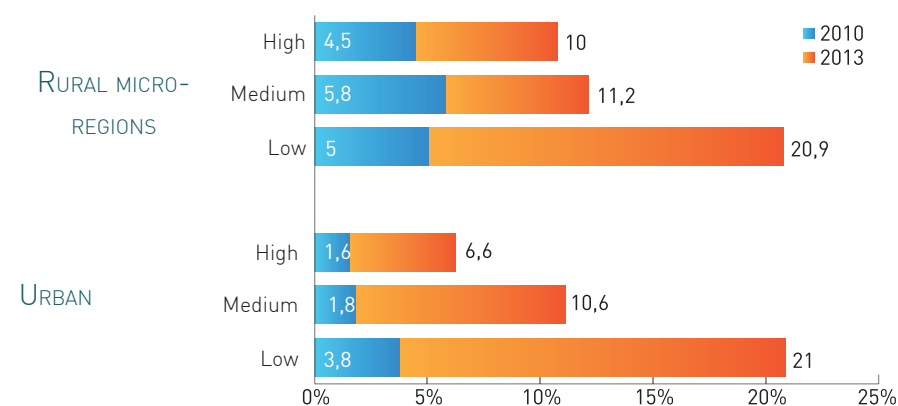
FIGURE 5.5.
EDUCATIONAL LAG OF THE PANEL OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY GENDER, YEAR AND AREA (PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).



Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions. A 95% confidence interval is reported.

FIGURE 5.6.
EDUCATIONAL LAG OF THE PANEL OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY WEALTH LEVEL, YEAR AND AREA (PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).

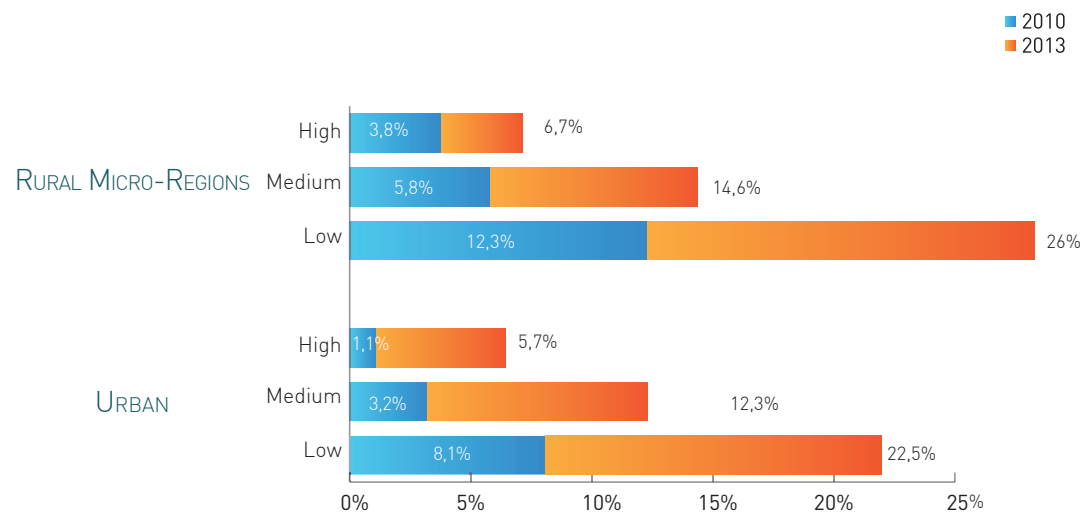


Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The wealth level corresponds to the terciles of a continuous wealth index, based on durable goods and households' access to services. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions. A 95% confidence interval is reported.

FIGURE 5.7.

EDUCATIONAL LAG OF THE PANEL OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY PPVT SCORE, YEAR AND AREA (PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).



Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions. A 95% confidence interval is reported.



→ Natasha Moncayo attends Escuela Nueva in Córdoba (Quindío) where she shares her classroom and teacher with other children at different levels of learning.

Table 5.2 reveals that there are also important differences in the evolution of the education variables of ELCA children and youths in accordance with their place of residence. For example, the increase in educational coverage between the 2010 and 2013 was greater for the children in urban areas in the Pacific region where it increased by 3.6 percentage points, without yet reaching universal coverage. In the rural areas, the biggest increase was in the Center-East micro-region. As previously mentioned, these increases are probably due to the children who entered the school system late. Table 5.2 also shows the regional differences in terms of educational lag rates.

There are many factors that can explain the educational lag of these children and youths in Colombia. In addition to late entry into the school system, educational lag can also be explained by repetition or short periods of desertion. For example, in accordance with ELCA data, an average rate of 3.5% of the children in the urban study and 4.5% of the rural children dropped out of school at some point for a period greater than two months between 2010 and 2013, which can increase the educational lag. Table 5.2 shows that the children and youths living in Bogotá were those who most dropped out for periods

greater than two months in the urban areas. In the rural areas, children living in the Coffee Region were those who most reported having dropped out at some point during the three years. However, it is worth clarifying that the majority of these youths eventually returned to the school system, thus, affecting educational lag but not the general coverage rates as was mentioned earlier and as can be seen in the first figures of this chapter.

Similarly, household shocks can also negatively affect educational achievements. ELCA data suggests that, at least for the children and youths aged between eight and thirteen in 2013, when faced with unexpected events, their families did not react in a way that affected their accumulation of human capital. This is excellent news, given that doing so would be perhaps the most costly response and would carry many more negative repercussions in the long-term. The only case in which a shock increased the probability of desertion or educational lag, both in the urban area and the four micro-regions, was when the shocks were due to a natural disaster. This is probably highly correlated with damage to the physical school infrastructure or road infrastructure and, therefore, can and should be managed by efficient State policies.



→ Early in the morning, Luisa Rodríguez has her breakfast in the kitchen so she can head out to school. She lives with her aunt and uncle, cousins and grandparents in a house in rural Puente Nacional.

TABLE 5.2.

EDUCATIONAL VARIABLES OF THE PANEL OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY REGION
(PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).

Region	Attendance (2010)	Educational lag (2010)	Attendance (2013)	Educational lag (2013)	Temporary deser- tion in the three years
Urban					
Atlantic (%)	99,3	4,8	99,4	9,9	4,0
Eastern (%)	99,7	0,7	99,7	7,7	1,5
Central (%)	98,1	3,2	99,5	14,5	3,3
Pacific (%)	95,0	8,6	98,6	9,0	4,1
Bogotá (%)	99,2	2,7	100,0	8,1	4,7
Rural Micro-Regions					
Mid-Atlantic (%)	99,0	7,4	99,1	19,5	2,5
Cundiboyacá (%)	97,5	4,9	99,0	8,9	3,6
Coffee Region (%)	97,0	9,8	97,6	17,5	7,3
Center-East (%)	94,3	9,8	97,7	16,1	4,6

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions.

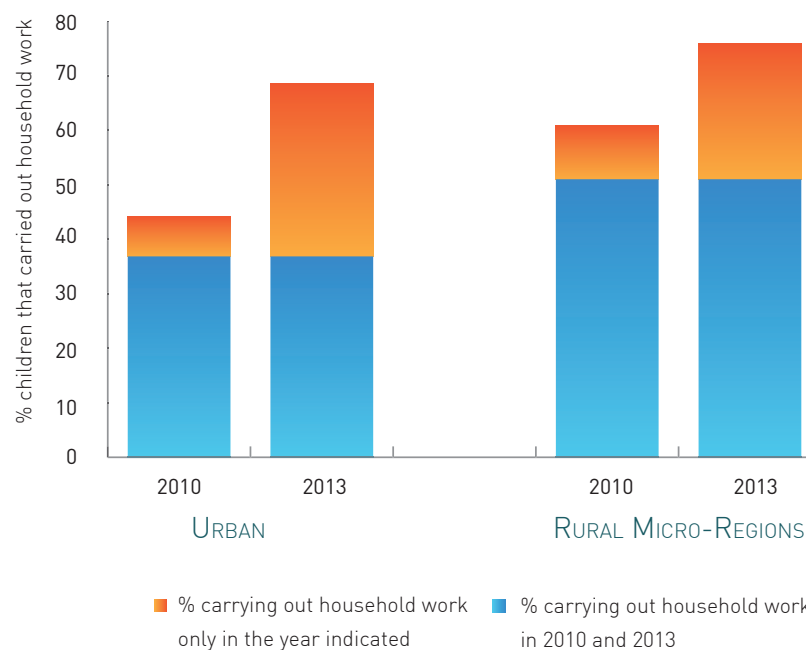
5.4. HOUSEHOLD WORK AND THE LABOR FORCE

The ELCA also investigates the children and youths' participation in work activities with specific questions according to the different age ranges. For all the children over five, the survey enquires into whether they helped with household work. Children between the ages of five and nine were asked whether they worked, collaborated with or helped anyone in their work during the previous week, whereas those over ten were asked questions similar to those applied to the adults, regarding their participation in the labor market. With this information, two variables were constructed to identify collaboration with household work and participation in other work in the labor market for all of the children and youths in the panel sample. These questions were applied both in 2010 and 2013, which means that we were able to analyze this topic along with the panel of children to see the changes they experienced in this aspect.¹⁰

Figures 5.8 and 5.9 show how participation in these activities evolved over the three years as the children in the study grew. As was to be expected, we can see that the participation in household work and the labor force of the panel of children and youths increased as they grew. For example, while 44.8% of children between the ages of five and nine carried out household work in the urban area in 2010, this percentage increased to 68% in

FIGURE 5.8.

PARTICIPATION IN HOUSEHOLD WORK OF THE PANEL OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY YEAR AND AREA (PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).



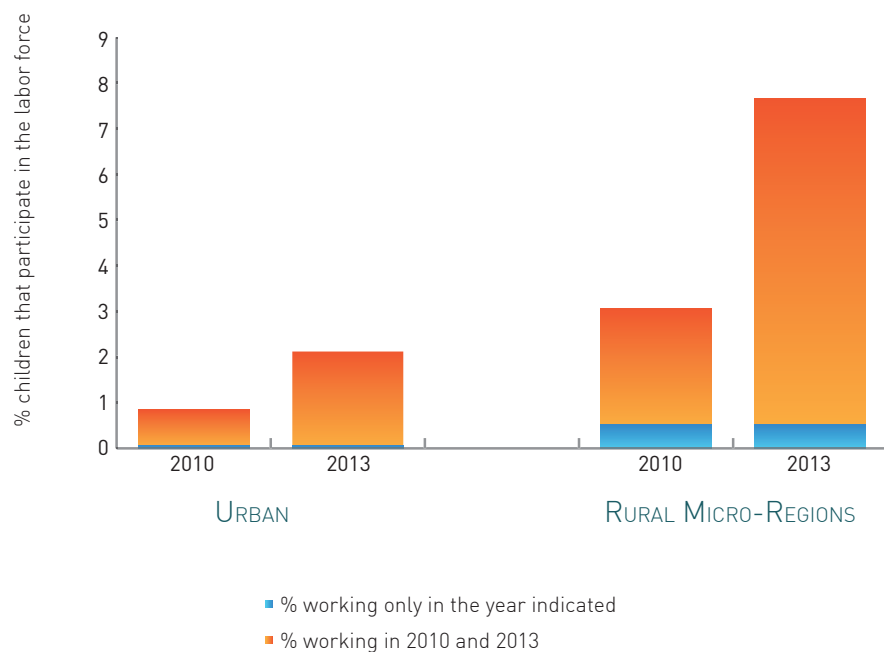
Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions.

¹⁰ For the construction of the labor participation variable, information is included for all ages; that is, we take into account whether the child helped someone in their work or whether they participated directly in the labor market.

FIGURE 5.9.

PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR FORCE OF THE PANEL OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY YEAR AND AREA (PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).



Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions.

2013 when these same children were aged between eight and thirteen. This increase is marked by 31.8% of the total number of children that did not carry out household work in 2010, but did so in 2013. Likewise, for the rural area, 60.8% and 75.9% of the children in the study undertook household work in 2010 and 2013, respectively. Furthermore, we can see that the ELCA children's participation in child labor in the urban area increased from 0.8% in 2010 to 2.1% in 2013. At the same time, for the rural area, the children's participation in child labor increased from 3.1% in 2010 to 7.7% in 2013, of which 7.12% of the total number of children did not undertake any labor activity in 2010, but did so in 2013.

Table 5.3 shows the percentage of children and youths in the first and second waves of ELCA that reported undertaking household work and working in the labor markets in urban and rural areas, respectively, in accordance with some of their socio-economic characteristics. In analyzing the responses, common trends can be identified both in the urban area and in the rural micro-regions. First, on average for both years and for all of the children and youths, undertaking household work was significantly greater than participation in the labor market. Second, while the participation of women in household work was greater than that of men, the opposite occurs in terms of participating

in the labor market. Over the three years, the rise in collaboration with household work was greater for women than for men, whereas in the case of the labor force, the increases were greater for men than for women. Third, the rate of collaboration in household work in the urban area and in the micro-regions is quite similar and, in general, the majority helped with washing, cleaning, cooking, taking care of children and running errands.

Table 5.3 also shows the important differences between these two variables. The first notable difference can be seen when comparing participation in the urban and rural labor force. While, on average, only 2.05% of the children and youths in the urban area reported carrying out this activity in 2013, in the same wave for the rural area, the percentage was 11.5% and especially high for men (15.93%). The second difference can be observed when comparing the percentages of participation in accordance with the households' wealth level. In the urban area, children and youths belonging to wealthier households reported doing household work and participating in the labor force to a lesser extent than their peers belonging to less wealthy households. In the rural area, in contrast, there are no important differences in the rates of participation in these two activities in accordance with the level of wealth.

TABLE 5.3.

PARTICIPATION IN HOUSEHOLD WORK AND THE LABOR FORCE OF THE PANEL OF CHILDREN AND YOUTHS BY GENDER AND WEALTH LEVEL (PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).

	Household work			Labor participation		
	2010	2013	Change	2010	2013	Change
Urban Area						
Gender						
Male	42,84%	62,84%	20,0	1,22%	2,86%	1,6
Female	51,18%	77,06%	25,9	0,55%	1,27%	0,7
Wealth level						
Low	48,88%	72,86%	24,0	1,84%	3,56%	1,7
Medium	53,77%	71,78%	18,0	0,73%	2,59%	1,9
High	39,20%	65,67%	26,5	0,12%	0,88%	0,8
Rural micro-regions						
Gender						
Male	63,26%	72,28%	9,0	5,22%	15,93%	10,7
Female	62,12%	83,74%	21,6	1,82%	6,73%	4,9
Wealth level						
Low	64,45%	79,01%	14,6	3,92%	10,49%	6,6
Medium	65,01%	76,47%	11,5	3,81%	12,52%	8,7
High	58,02%	78,25%	20,2	2,70%	11,77%	9,1

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The wealth level corresponds to the terciles of a continuous wealth index, based on durable goods and the households' access to services. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions.

There are also a number of differences in terms of the participation rates in the labor force across the four rural micro-regions.¹¹ The greatest increase in the number of young workers was observed in the Center-East region, whereas the lowest increase occurred in the Coffee Region, and the youths in the mid-Atlantic region were those less likely to be working in 2013. The data also indicates that the time that youths dedicate to these two activities increases as they grow. While in 2010, children in the urban and rural areas dedicated an average of 2.2 and 2.9 hours to household work, in 2013, they dedicated 2.8 and 3.7 hours to such activities, respectively. These same values for labor activities were 3.3 and 3.7 in 2010, and 4.5 and 6.3 in 2013, respectively. Furthermore, as was to be expected, for both years, the higher the child or youth's level of wealth, the less time they dedicated to work.

As with the educational variables, it is interesting to know how participation in these activities changes when households are subject to high-impact shocks. Figure 5.10 presents the impact of those shocks that significantly affected each one of these activities in the urban region and the four micro-regions respectively for 2013. What stands out is that, in the urban area, the shocks only affected the probability of undertaking household work, whereas in the four micro-regions, these only affected the probability of working in the labor force.

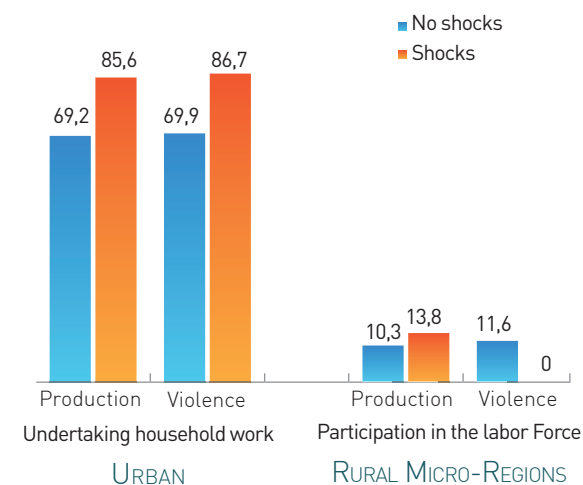
Specifically, if the urban households experienced a production shock (associated with the bankruptcy

of their business or store) or a violence shock between 2010 and 2013, the probability of the children or youths undertaking household labor increased by between sixteen and eighteen percentage points respectively. This may be due to the fact that these shocks increase the work participation of the adults, forcing minors to replace them in taking responsibility for household work. In the four micro-regions, the children and youths increased their participation in the labor force by three percentage points, and they reduced it by eleven percentage points if their households experienced a high impact production or violence shock, respectively. In the first of these cases, the increase could be due to the fact that families resort to child labor as a means of cushioning the negative effects of the shock. The second case is consistent with the idea that, in the most violent places, parents perhaps protect minors more and minimize the time they spend outside the home and, as such, the risks they may be subject to. Alternatively, the decrease could also be due to the fact that there are fewer adequate work activities for them in such areas.

5.5. THE YOUTH OF 2013: THEIR DREAMS AND THE RISKS THEY FACE

As previously mentioned, the second wave of ELCA contains a special section dedicated to youths aged between ten and thirteen. This section of the survey was created to account for the fact that the

FIGURE 5.10.
PARTICIPATION IN HOUSEHOLD WORK AND IN THE LABOR FORCE BY HOUSEHOLD SHOCKS (PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN).



Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The occurrence of shocks refers to the households, which over the three years experienced some destabilizing event that had a medium to high impact on their economic stability. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions.

11. In the urban area, there are no significant differences to report.

main subjects of the study are growing up and, in their preadolescence, facing situations that will affect their future lives. Such factors are, therefore, important to recognize and understand. Among the aspects that this study investigates are the youths' attitudes with regard to their peers, their social capital, their involvement with gangs, their smoking and alcohol consumption habits, their plans and dreams for the future and their use of free time during the week and on weekends. This chapter presents a number of the results regarding some of the risks they face and their dreams for the future in 2013.

Among the risks, the ELCA results provide information about the youths' smoking and alcohol consumption habits. The data shows that cigarette consumption is very low among those between ten and thirteen years of age. In fact, only about 2% of the youths in the rural and urban areas reported to have tried a cigarette in their lives. However, the situation is very different when it comes to alcohol consumption. In the urban area, 36% of the youths between the ages of ten and thirteen reported having tried an alcoholic drink; of these, 34% reported consuming alcohol more than twice a year. In the rural area, these same percentages are 43% and 44%, respectively. Furthermore, the ages at which they drink alcohol for the first time are relatively low. In the urban and rural area, 60% and 73%, respectively, tried alcohol between the ages of eight

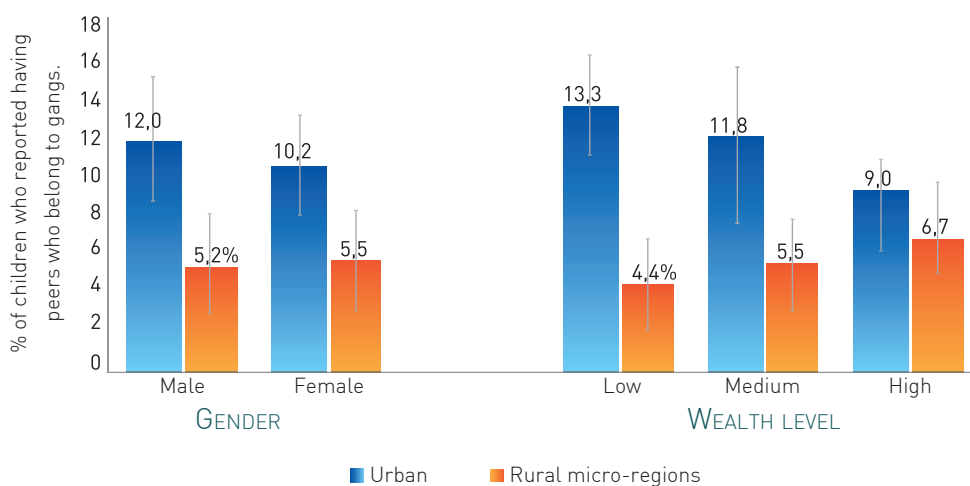
and ten. Significant regional differences were observed in terms of alcohol consumption. In particular, the youths living in the Eastern urban region and in the rural Cundiboyacá micro-region reported having tried and consumed alcohol more frequently than their peers in other regions. Additionally, the youths with higher scores on the 2010 PPVT and who belonged to households where members habitually consume alcohol reported higher rates of alcohol consumption.

Youths nowadays are also exposed to the risk of being recruited for future criminal activities by neighborhood gangs. ELCA confirms that this is an urban problem more than it is a rural one and, as such, urban areas are where prevention policies are most urgently needed. While 36% of the young residents in the urban areas reported that they had gangs in their neighborhoods, in the rural area, only 7% report their existence. In the urban area, the proportion of men from lower-income households that reported the existence of gangs in their neighborhoods was significantly greater, indicating that the problem is particularly acute for this area of the population. ELCA also includes a question about whether or not an individual is part of a gang. The percentages here are very low as less than 1% in the urban area and 0.1% in the rural area reported belonging to a gang. However, these youths, especially in the urban area, are at risk of joining or being in direct contact with such organizations



→ Sebastián Bolaños has to walk thirty minutes to get to school from his home in Córdoba (Quindío). The school was closed for five years because of the winter spell.

FIGURE 5.11.
YOUTHS THAT REPORTED HAVING A PEER BELONGING TO A GANG IN 2013
BY GENDER AND WEALTH LEVEL (PERCENTAGE OF YOUTHS).



Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The wealth level corresponds to the terciles of a continuous wealth index, based on durable goods and households' access to services. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions. A 95% confidence interval is reported.

in the future given that 11% of them answered affirmatively to the question of whether or not any of their classmates belonged to a gang. Figure 5.11 shows that the greatest risk, once again, is for men in urban low-income households.

The last questions the youths were asked in the ELCA study had to do with their plans and dreams and what they thought their lives would be like in the future. What is immediately striking about the re-

sults are the responses on life expectancy. Youths in Colombia want to live longer than they expect to live. In the urban area, the youths reported wanting to live to be 98, believing that they will only live to be 81. In the rural area, as was to be expected, life expectancy is lower. Youths in the micro-regions reported wanting to live to 94 years of age but only really expecting to live to be 77. There are no gender differences in these expectations in the urban area. In the rural area, however, women re-

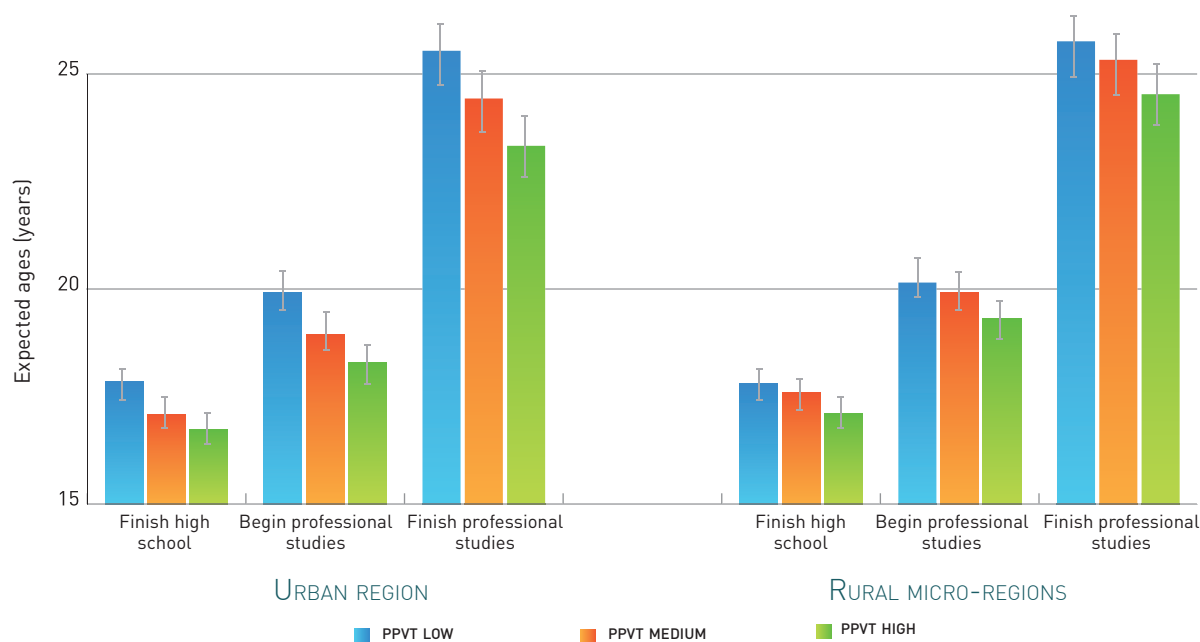
ported wanting and expecting to live four and three years respectively less than men. The differences are statistically significant and stand out because in these regions it would be expected for men to be those most affected by the armed conflict that impacts these populations significantly and influences their expectations.

Insofar as family, it was found that the vast majority—approximately 80%—of the young residents in the urban area hoped to get married and have children. In the rural area, 73% of the youths hoped to get married and 76% hoped to have children. When comparing these dreams by gender, we can see that on both rural and urban areas, the probability of a woman wanting to have children is ten percentage points less than men, which makes these differences significant. On average, the youths that live in the urban Atlantic region and rural mid-Atlantic region are more likely to want to get married and have children than any other youth in any other region. The average age at which they hope that both events occur in the urban and rural area is at 27 and 29 years of age, respectively, and less than 1% of youths hope to have children before they turn nineteen. This clearly shows that the high rates of teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers are a result of unwanted pregnancies, at least in cases whereby the mothers are between ten and thirteen years of age.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the youths' expectations in terms of their future educational achievements. In the urban area, 99% hope to finish their

FIGURE 5.12.

EXPECTED AGES FOR EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS REPORTED BY YOUTHS IN 2013 BY 2010 PPVT RESULTS AND AREA (PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN).



Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

high school studies, 96% hope to start professional studies, and 95% hope to finish their professional studies. These same percentages for youths in the four rural micro-regions are 96%, 91%, and 90%, respectively. These expectations are quite different from what really happens, whereby only 25% finish high school and a professional career. As expected, there are also significant differences by gender in

terms of youths' expectations of entering higher education. Compared to their male peers, women presented a greater expectation of beginning and finishing professional studies, in both urban and rural areas. The high and positive expectations regarding their future educational achievements explains why there were no significant differences according to the youths' scores obtained in the 2010 PPVT. How-

It is worth mentioning the youths' expectations in terms of their future educational achievements. In the urban area, 99% hope to finish their high school studies, 96% hope to start professional studies, and 95% hope to finish their professional studies.

This information refers to children surveyed in both waves of ELCA who were aged between five and nine in 2010, and between eight and thirteen in 2013. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and the Center-East micro-regions. A 95% confidence interval is reported.

ever, when analyzing the ages by which the youths expected to achieve these three educational goals, the differences in accordance with the PPVT scores are significant and important especially in the urban area. Youths who in 2010 obtained a high score on the PPVT hoped to graduate from high school and complete professional studies 1.1, 1.6 and 2.2 years before youths that obtained a low score.

5.6. CONCLUSIONS

The data analyzed in this chapter shed light on the positive and negative aspects of the lives of the youths included in the ELCA study over the three years. Some of the positive aspects are that the majority of them attended school, few were part of the labor force, and the majority had great dreams and expectations for their futures. It is worth fostering and ensuring that they all fulfill their dreams of finishing high school and higher education. However, it is important for policy makers to account for the significant risks, which can have costly repercussions on society as a whole in the future; for example, the educational lag found at these early stages of life is high and has increased rapidly for these individuals in both the urban and rural areas.

With this in mind, educational policy should ensure that late entry into the educational system stops occurring, given that it is probably highly correlated with educational lag. Furthermore, specialized educational policy, particularly for children and youths with learning difficulties, should be applied and available in all official educational institutions. Undoubtedly, the implementation of such programs could help reduce educational lag rates in the country. There is also a need for public policy aimed at controlling gangs and early forced recruitment of youths as, according to the data, this seems to present a current risk, especially for young men in the urban area.

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