

# RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN PARAGUAY

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*Information on the UPR Prior  
to the sessions*

Callescuela : is a **non-profit civil society organization** established in 1983, with legal status. Its mission is to enhance the **well-being of children and adolescents**, within a framework that promotes **meaningful child participation, social equity**, and the **full and unconditional respect for children's rights**.

**National Level:**

Member of national human rights advocacy networks.

**International Level:**

Member of the **BICE Network (International Catholic Child Bureau)**,

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# Situation in Paraguay: Early Childhood Development

- **118.116 Accelerate the implementation of an effective social policy, focusing on early childhood and aimed at ending intergenerational poverty (Iceland)**
- In 2020-23, EDI "***Espacios de Desarrollo Infantil***" were promoted, *with regulations in place since 2017.*
  - A program coordinated between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Children, enabling 14 centers
  - Children aged 0 to 5
  - Health - Nutrition, early stimulation, and family support
- In 2025, the launch of the ***Semillas del Futuro*** program *is expected to:*
  - Support for 180,000 children aged 0 to 5
  - Establishment of 100 childcare centers, called "Comprehensive Early Childhood Care Centers" (CAIPI) – **20 CAIPI centers are currently under construction**

## *Challenges and needs – Early Childhood Programs:*

### **Semillas del Futuro & Espacios de Desarrollo Infantil**

- **Implementation requires:**
  - ▣ **An integrated plan** of interventions with decentralized actors.
  - ▣ **Budget** planning: mobilize national and local resources in line with international standards.
  - ▣ **Secured investment**, included in the General National Expenditure Budget.

# Recommendations – *Seeds of the Future*

1. **Strengthen capabilities professionals** In accordance with the educator/child ratio established in the international reference standards of UNICEF, UNESCO, and WHO.
2. **Guarantee the construction of the 100 centers** 100 specialized centers as promised, giving priority to areas with high social vulnerability in urban, peri-urban, and rural settings.
3. **Guarantee the Municipal Councils for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CODENI) adequate resources to support the Program**
4. **Strengthen coordinated and networked work of policies and programs for Early Childhood Care, including training and capacity for families.**

# Best practices in the management of early childhood education centers from civil society

## Early Childhood Education Centers (CEPI)

- Best practice developed by Callescuela. CEPIs are structured around 6 fundamental approaches:
  - **A Rights-Based and Child Well-Being-Centered Approach**
  - **A Community-Based Approach**
  - **A Participatory Approach**
  - **An Interactive Approach**
  - **A Dynamic Approach**
  - **A Positive Approach**

# Situation in Paraguay –

## Right to education 5 pillars

- 118.145 Consider measures for ensuring access to education (India)
- 118.148 Strengthen efforts to ensure access to quality education for all children (...) (Maldives);
- 118.153 Persist with its efforts to address remaining challenges in the education sector (Trinidad and Tobago)
- 118.167 Invest additional efforts to improve the position of (...) children in rural areas of the country, especially (...) in the field of education (...) (Serbia)

# New developments - Right to education

- For 2026, Paraguay plans an unprecedented education budget, surpassing **USD 1.3 billion**.
- However, education expenditure remains below international benchmarks, at an estimated **4.3%** of GDP.
- Programa “Ley Hambre Cero en las Escuelas” – 2025 School Meals in Public Schools

# Challenges, demands, needs, right to education

## □ **School Dropout**

- The dropout rate increases as students progress through the educational levels.
- Six out of ten children entering first grade do not complete the first three years of secondary education
- 2025, An estimated dropout rate of 13% in basic and secondary education for ages 5 to 17.

## □ **Violence in School Settings**

- **February-September 2024:** 1,800 cases of school violence (MEC) in public, private, and subsidized schools.

# Challenges, demands, needs, right to education

- **Education is not truly free due to indirect and hidden costs.**
  - **Indirect costs:**

35% of total spending on primary education and 37% of total spending on secondary education is borne by families. These expenses are true **obstacles** for some parents without resources, especially in rural and disadvantaged areas
  - **Indirect Costs:**

Households bear **35% of total basic education expenditure at the primary level** and **37% at the secondary level**. These costs constitute an **insurmountable barrier for resource-poor families** and represent **one of the main drivers of school dropout**.
  - **Infrastructure:**

By **2026**, approximately **45% of schools lack adequate infrastructure**, with many buildings **at risk of collapse**, forcing the **redistribution of students into overcrowded and reduced learning spaces**.

# Recommendations - Right to Education

- **Increase** the national budget allocated to education to 7% of GDP.
- **Ensure** effective compliance with the provision of free and compulsory education enshrined in the Constitution.
- **Expand and maintain** programmes that facilitate the return to school and continued attendance of children and adolescents
- **Provide** safe, adequate and accessible infrastructure for all schools.
- **Combat** school dropout rates and establish a mechanism for reintegrating students who have dropped out of school through apprenticeships and vocational training.
- **Promote** the inclusion of mental health professionals in

## Recommendations – Right to education

- **Ensure** a comprehensive, scientific, and rights-based sex education policy.
- **Ensure** that teenage mothers and pregnant girls receive the necessary support and assistance to continue their education in mainstream schools and establish programs on human rights and gender equality education.
- **Take** measures to deter all forms of discrimination and violence in the school environment and provide schools with rules and standards for the protection of children.
- **Promote** positive, non-violent, and participatory educational and disciplinary methods.
- **Reform** curricula, train qualified teachers, and ensure initial and continuous professional development to improve the quality of education.



**Thank you very  
much.**