

Unsettled and Discontinuous: The Politics of Education Reform in Peru

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About this country brief

The RISE Programme is a seven-year research effort that seeks to understand what features make education systems coherent and effective in their context and how the complex dynamics within a system allow policies to be successful. RISE had research teams in seven countries: Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania, and Vietnam. It also commissioned research by education specialists in Chile, Egypt, Kenya, Peru, and South Africa.

Those researchers tested ideas about how the determinants of learning lie more in the realm of politics and particularly in the interests of elites. They focused on how the political conditions have (or have not) put learning at the center of education systems while understanding the challenges of doing so.

Each country team produced a detailed study pursuing answers to two central research questions:

- Did the country prioritise learning over access, and if so, during what periods?
- What role did politics play in the key decisions and how?

The full studies detail their analytical frameworks, their data, and sources (generally interviews, government internal documents and reports, and other local and international publications), and the power of their assessments, given their caveats and limitations. Country briefs extract from the full studies how leadership, governance, teaching, and societal engagement are pertinent to student outcomes.

Introduction

Current reform agendas in Peru are markedly similar to what they were at the beginning of the 1990s, suggesting that many reform goals have not been reached. Small incremental gains may have been achieved by one administration only to be dismantled by another and to then be re-established, often partially, at a later stage.

In this protracted process, the education sector has managed to take steps for improving the teaching profession, reforming the national curriculum, and developing a strong and valued learning assessment system. The long and discontinuous path in the development of these reforms has often meant that their implementation has only been partial, and that many key elements have been lost on the way. At the same time, many reforms—such as decentralization, the improvement of secondary schooling, and teaching quality—remain partial. And second-order reforms to bring about more fundamental changes in teaching and learning are yet to be developed. The discontinuities and other factors hindering the definition and consolidation of quality and learning reforms in Peru can be clearly linked to the political economy of education policymaking. However, the weakness of Peru's state and institutions mean that political economy cannot just be understood as the interplay of actors, negotiations, interests, compromises and settlements. In Peru, as in most of Latin America, “the vast differences in the enforcement and stability of rules (...) suggests that institutional strength should be treated as a variable, rather than a taken-for-granted assumption.”¹

The characteristics of the policy process make it difficult to identify specific policies or reforms behind the improvements in the quality indicators in the past three decades—especially given that the trajectory of improvements began before some of the most important reforms of the period. At the same time, it is important to consider other contextual factors that may partly account for such improvements, as Peruvian society has experienced fundamental changes in its economic and social structure, and their impacts on educational improvement cannot be underestimated.

Policies and reforms focused on learning

In 1993, a comprehensive General Diagnosis of the state of the education system was conducted by the MoE (Ministry of Education MoE), UNESCO, UNDP, the German technical cooperation agency (GTZ), and the World Bank, with the participation of a broad set of key civil society actors and organizations. It painted a bleak picture of the state of the education system after more than a decade of economic decline and the near complete collapse of the state in the latter part of the 1980s, under the combined effects of hyperinflation and the internal armed conflict that devastated vast areas of the country.²

The diagnosis revealed that while Peru had greatly expanded access to education, especially at the primary level, this had happened without any concomitant increase in the public budget for education. On the contrary, per pupil public investment had been steadily diminishing since the 1950s, reaching an all-time low at the beginning of the 1990s, when yearly per pupil investment was only around USD\$162, and teachers' salaries were less than USD\$155 per month—around 17 percent of what they earned in 1945.³

The diagnosis also highlighted problems in various key areas. It showed that there was an almost total lack of educational resources in public schools and that educational infrastructure was inadequate and insufficient. It pointed to the existence of a rigid and self-serving bureaucracy, as well as cumbersome legislative frameworks, that hindered functional governance and educational change. It also showed the prevalence of inadequate instructional methods in schools that focused on rote learning of highly disconnected subject matter. And it exposed very serious problems in teaching careers, from low salaries to a very poor initial training system and almost no in-service training.⁴

These problems had serious consequences for the quality of education. While the country had no educational evaluations until the late 1990s, qualitative studies revealed serious limitations in school practices, and the General Diagnosis revealed serious problems in progression indicators, including high rates of repetition, school drop-outs, and overage children.

The main proposal that emerged from the diagnosis was to improve teacher training and develop school materials. The document said next to nothing about the curriculum or learning assessment—both of which would become central aspects of reforms in the following years. Of the proposed reforms, the aim was to train teachers to use the new materials “to produce some improvement in something that was only then beginning to be [defined] and measured as learning” (interview data). This initially vague concept of learning would become the central objective of educational reforms.

1995 inaugurated an era of learning-focused policies and reforms. It marked the beginning of the Educational Quality Improvement Program (MECEP, for its name in Spanish). Initially funded by the World Bank and later by the InterAmerican Development Bank, the program followed a reform template similar to other quality improvement programs in the region that were promoted and funded by those same institutions.⁵ It focused on four key components: teaching, infrastructure, administrative modernization, and, later, quality assessments. The Ministry of Education’s pedagogical teams during the MECEP years also worked on developing a curricular reform that proposed an active and learner-centered pedagogy, which, while not an integral part of the program, helped defined the aims and content of teacher training programs.

During the MECEP years, the MoE created a Learning Quality Assessment Unit, tasked with conducting national evaluations of learner achievement, and with leading the country’s participation in international assessment programs such as PISA. Data emerging from evaluations by the Learning Quality Assessment Unit, together with other key indicators, provided a picture of Peru’s learning improvement trajectory during the years that followed.

Between 1995 and 2020, Peru, like most of the Latin American region, showed a significant and positive evolution in many key educational indicators.⁶ The positive evolution in student performance can now be seen through the country’s results both in international assessments (mainly PISA), and in the National Census Evaluation (ECE). In the case of PISA, Peru, which has continually participated in the assessment since 2009, shows a very significant improvement in all of the assessed areas (language, math, science).

Results from the National Census Evaluation (ECE), which has taken place yearly since 2007 and assesses grade 2 students' language and math skills, show a similar improvement scenario. Between 2007 and 2015, the score for reading increased from 500 to 592 points, and for mathematics, from 500 to 575. It is also important to highlight the jump in results between 2013 and 2014 and the sustained improvement thereafter.

Progression indicators also experienced very marked improvements. Between 2000 and 2016, the percentage of children who repeated one or more years of school in both primary and lower secondary showed a consistent downward trend. During this period, the percentage of repeaters in primary education went from 10.7 percent to 4.0 percent, and in lower secondary from 6.3 percent to 2.9 percent.

There is no easy explanation for the positive changes. Recent studies point to a very discontinuous policy process, where ministerial teams, as well as those working at the regional and local levels, have changed constantly. This made the definition and implementation of reforms sketchy, and led to what can be defined as a form of “protracted incrementalism,” to describe the very slow and often discontinuous pace at which reforms are advanced, one where many key aspects of those reforms may get lost.⁷

Beyond the story told by educational, social, and economic indicators, the years between 1995 and 2021 were a period of several education reform attempts, some more comprehensive than others, that sought to remedy many of the problems identified in the 1993 General Diagnosis and, in later similar efforts, to improve the quality of education. With some exceptions, it was also a period of great change in the leadership of the sector, with 20 ministers in 25 years, and often-redefined policy goals. Many basic features—especially those related to the instructional core⁸ and therefore to the actual learning that happens in classrooms and schools—have remained untouched.⁹ This is partly related to the political dynamics evident in the period.

The broader political and institutional regime

The education sector is a relatively autonomous field, with its own political economy, but it needs to be understood in the context of the country's broader political and institutional regime. Over the past three decades, the country has been ruled by a broad political settlement which is often referred to as the “Lima Consensus,” a national, more radical, and pervasive version of the “Washington Consensus”—the set of free-market economic policies promoted by the IMF and the World Bank during the 1990s,¹⁰ which have often been synonymous with the establishment of neoliberal regimes in the region.¹¹ The Lima Consensus can be said to be a more radical version because it promoted liberalization with only a minimal, and often ineffective, degree of state regulation.¹² And it is a more pervasive version of the model, because unlike what happened in most of Latin America during the early 2000s in the so-called ‘pink wave’ that led to the rise of various left-wing governments, it had, until the time of this study, no effective political challenges since its establishment in the early 1990s.

The continuity of the Peruvian neoliberal way over the past 30 years is reflected not just in the general institutional arrangements inaugurated by the 1993 Constitution, but also in the “practices and common sense that have prospered under that institutional continuity.”¹³ The

hegemonic and ideological nature of this broad political settlement is crucial to understanding the configuration of political power in the country, and the overall orientation of education policies and the political processes that have shaped them.

The narrative here is particularly relevant when it comes to understanding the precariousness and lack of sustainability of policy discourse and reform in the country—something that is clear in the analysis of education reforms. Not only is the instability of governments and ministerial administrations high, but the institutional weakness in the country has led to what may be described as a “colloidal Republic,” in which the state “is like an emulsion that never reaches solidity,” a country with a “moderate anarchy,” “a state of disorder which is only controlled at times.”¹⁴

The education sector certainly fits this image, as quality reforms—with some notable exceptions—have been pursued over very long periods, acquiring and losing their shape in the process, as ministerial teams have come and gone, sometimes at a very fast pace. In this process, there have been a number of achievements, but many important aspects of reforms have also been lost. The sustainability of reforms has been affected not only by political dynamics, but also by the weak nature of the institutions that hold policies and reforms together.

Key areas of contestation

As the previous discussion shows, one of the most salient features of the period under study is the length of time that it has taken for key reforms to coalesce. Reforming teaching practices and the curriculum has been at the center of policy debates since the very beginning of the period, but reforms have only improved in recent years and in some cases remain partial and still susceptible to being discontinued.

In the case of teaching practices, reforms have been particularly slow, but they are still partial, as advances in key areas such as the teachers’ career, have still not been accompanied by a necessary reform of pre-service teacher training, or by a consistent approach to teachers’ professional development, consisting not only of remedial and scattered actions, but of a permanent in-service training system that is adaptive to the diverse needs of teachers in different locations and stages of their career, and responsive to changing curricular guidelines.

In the case of the curriculum, it took about 20 years for a consistent and well-articulated version of the national curriculum to emerge—one with a clear and well-operationalized definition of competencies capable of guiding teaching practices. And there is still some way to go in the implementation of the new curriculum and its translation into learning materials.

Learning assessment, of the standardized variety, has been one of the most consistent areas of policymaking. But learning has been conceptualized merely as results in rather narrow standardized tests that assess knowledge and skills in just two curricular areas. And the way assessment results have been used to guide policy decisions, especially after 2006, may have been counter to the goal of actually improving teaching practices and learning. On one hand, there is evidence that teachers are teaching to the test and often narrowing down the curriculum. On the other, policymakers—especially those in the strategic planning and budget allocation

offices of the MoE, and their counterparts in the MoF—search for recipes to improve results in the short term, but often sideline programs that might contribute to more long-lasting transformations of teaching and learning practices.

Throughout the period, an array of key actors has influenced formulating reforms.

International agencies, especially the World Bank and the InterAmerican Development Bank, have played a key role in setting and developing reform agendas. This influence, more than a form of imposition, seems to have resulted from the poor capacity at the national level to establish and support the development of reform agendas. Along the way, the professional capacity of local actors has also developed, and the policy agendas—for instance, through the work of the National Council for Education, but also through the stronger capacity of the MoE teams—have become stronger and less reflective of international agencies' priorities. One line of thought, however, which has become profoundly entrenched in education policymakers' views, and which is traceable to the agendas of international agencies, is making standardized assessments the main guiding element for reforms, and of assuming that results in such tests are the sole and sufficient measure of quality.

Civil society organizations—NGOs, universities, think tanks, and research centers—have also played a key role in defining policy agendas, from the early General Diagnosis of 1993, to the national consultation for education and the drafting of the 2004 General Law of Education, up to their role—either direct or indirect—in drafting the National Education Projects led by the National Council for Education. These actors have also played a key role in the development of education policies and reforms. Though not always able to rein in technocrats and other policymakers, they have certainly contributed to the continuity of agendas and to the advancement of reforms, however piecemeal.

Throughout the period, but especially in recent years, private and corrupt interests, many of which have links and even representation in Congress, have also exerted a major influence over the course of reforms. While not explicitly targeted at the quality reforms, private interests acting against the development of the higher education reform have frequently jeopardized the advance toward key goals through their impact on ministerial crises that have led to sweeping changes of key policy teams. Corruption has also affected the course and continuity of education reforms, especially in recent years, as politicians' involvement in large-scale corruption scandals has affected political instability, governmental crises, and ministerial changes, all with a major effect on the course of reforms.

The political settlement's influence on education reform

At the broadest level, the unusually slow and discontinuous pace of education reforms can be traced back to the influence of the country's dominant macro-political settlement, which has contributed to the prevalence of state and institutional weaknesses. Such weaknesses set the ground on which policies are pursued, both discursively and in terms of the state's capacity to carry them forward. The origins of state and institutional weaknesses in Peru are certainly historical. But their prevalence during the last few decades of economic growth and broad democratic stability can also be attributed to an approach to development in which deregulation

and market development have clearly taken precedence over state strengthening—though market development could have also benefited from stronger institutions.

The crisis of this model of development is now more evident than ever, as the pandemic has fully revealed the various cracks in Peru's state architecture and its capacity to address the most basic of human needs. The prevalence of this model has affected education reforms through its negative influence on the reform of key institutions, such as the political party system, the civil service, and the judiciary. While the urgency of reforming these institutions has been clear for decades, they have only been the target of unsuccessful or partial reform attempts.¹⁵

The weakness of the political party system in Peru has played a key role in defining and developing reform agendas, while the weakness of the civil service means that there is a very high turnaround of ministerial officials, even at the middle or bottom echelons of ministerial bureaucracy, every time there is a change of minister and especially when there is a change of government.¹⁶ But even the judiciary may be seen to play a role in education reforms through its influence on corruption, which has often broken the continuity of ministerial and governmental teams and reform agendas.

The dominant model of development may also be said to have affected education reforms through its influence on public investment and on the priority given to public education and other key public services. The deregulation of the private education market has also influenced the establishment of new undesirable trends, such as socioeconomic school segregation, which no doubt have an impact on quality—especially when the latter is understood in a broad sense, encompassing equity.¹⁷

Political instability's impact on the education sector

The high political instability, especially during some presidential administrations, and the way some governments have ended (amid crises and corruption scandals) has been one of the main factors affecting the development of key quality-improvement reforms. Political instability has had a very negative impact on the continuity of policies and on the establishment of broad political settlements and of policy discourse and orientations. Such instability has been evident not only during periods of deep political crisis—such as at the fall of Fujimori's government and during the turbulent presidential period beginning in 2016—but also within fairly stable, though often weak, presidential periods, notably that of Toledo (2001–06). The impact of political instability on education policies is deepened by the country's general institutional weakness, which makes it easier for new ministerial administrations to change the course of policies without public debate, justification or accountability.

There have been several attempts to strengthen institutions and processes that may lead to greater sectoral policy coherence. In the early 2000s, for instance, in the context of the transition to democracy, a national forum called the *Acuerdo Nacional* (National Agreement) was created to establish agreed routes for policy development. In education, the National Council for Education and the National Plan for Education are meant to provide such settlements for desired objectives and routes to achieve them. These mechanisms, however, have not been very

successful in a country where informal relations are the rule and agreements such as the National Plan for Education are often ignored by ministerial administrations and political parties.

In recent years, one mechanism that has generated some broad level of continuity has been the establishment of long-term budgetary programs by the Ministry of Finance. In the education sector, the Learning Achievement Education Programme (PELA), which grants investment funding for long periods that may span several ministerial administrations. However, as one interviewee suggests, this continuity is mostly “formal,” and PELA is “like a skeleton that supports things, but the contents (of policies) vary a lot from one minister to the next.”

When ministerial changes are constant, the course of policies can be erratic. Adding to this, the MoE’s organizational culture, characterized by divisions among offices that should work toward common goals, may also act against the development of clear policy discourse and guidelines. Ministerial discontinuity, as well as the MoE’s internal organization and work culture—which is certainly influenced by the high turnover in authorities—hinder the consolidation of reforms and the advancement of key goals.

Highly technocratic policymaking and the clash of efficient management and pedagogical change

One of the main elements in the political economy of quality and learning reforms has been the gradual transformation of the Ministry of Education and of the education policy arena in general. It has gone from a model of policymaking in which individual figures ruled more or less freely, imposing their views and decisions regardless of the need for some level of policy coherence and continuity—to a much more technocratic model of policymaking, in which decisions fall in the hands of technocrats, many of them economists, whose main goals are to control spending and to ensure improvements in learning results as measured by standardized tests, but who may have a limited understanding of both the purpose and nature of desirable changes in school and classroom practices. This change has been gradual, with a degree of alternation between these two models of policymaking until recently. And it can be described as part of a broader, though slow, transformation and modernization of the public sector.

The emergence of a technocracy in the education sector, especially in the Strategic Planning Office of the MoE, with links to the MoF technocracy, has enabled greater degrees of continuity in certain policy actions, for instance, through the establishment of large-scale investment programs or interventions under a model of results-oriented budgeting. It has been positive in many regards, especially in containing the more whimsical, idiosyncratic, non-evidence-based, and non-results-oriented policy styles of previous decades. But this new technocratic mode of policymaking—based on a narrow conception of educational quality as standardized test results—has ended up hindering the establishment of quality improvement policies more conducive to real changes in teaching and learning practices in schools.

The politics behind this narrowly technocratic model of approaching education reforms seems to run counter with the views of educational experts (those specializing in curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher training) who may have a deeper understanding of the complex and often time-

consuming processes required to develop teachers' professional capacities and generate fundamental changes in teaching and learning.

The emergence of a technocracy in the MoE has its roots in the early 1990s, with the establishment of PLANMED, the Strategic Planning and Educational Quality Measurement Office of the Ministry of Education, which would later become the Strategic Planning Secretariat. Largely funded with resources from the World Bank and later the InterAmerican Development Bank as part of the MECEP program, PLANMED was the first attempt at establishing a technocracy within the MoE, an institution that, like much of the Peruvian public sector at that time, was run by often self-serving officials, many of whom had acquired their posts through personal favors.¹⁸ It became the main "power house" for proposals such as the New Pedagogical Model, the new Baccalaureate, and the rural education project. It also gave rise to a more data-driven style of policymaking, through the establishment of the Learning Quality Assessment Unit and the modernization of the Educational Statistics Unit at the MoE. While PLANMED is often criticized for its weak capacity to translate broad ideas into concrete, implementable, and monitorable policies, it sought to combine an emphasis on pedagogical change, with a more modern style of policymaking.

The broader political context in which PLANMED came to life as well as the MoE's general disregard for dialogue in favor of a more autonomous or autocratic style of policymaking were key factors in the wholesale dismissal of the Fujimori period's policies.¹⁹ Fujimori's increasingly autocratic government, his attempt at perpetuating himself in power through an unconstitutional reelection, and the evidence of pervasive corruption gave rise to a backlash, after the government's downfall, against most policies from that period.

The years that followed were marked by political instability and by an initial period of constant change in the MoEs leadership. During this time, however, a transformation began to take place in the Ministry of Finance that would mark a lasting change in the model of education policymaking. This transformation began with the establishment of the National Public Investment System, which had to clear all public investment projects. The system established common and transparent rules to assign and monitor public investment resources, in a move to curb ministerial discretion. In parallel, the Ministry of Finance embarked on a public spending reform that led to results-based budgeting as the central tool to guide and monitor budgetary decisions.

While the aim of this tool was to promote deliberation and discussion, it became a means for the Ministry of Finance to exert central control. Through this it also acquired a role in defining policies, thus becoming a key player, and often sidelining proposals from the MoE's pedagogical teams. One complicating factor is that the MoFs understanding of educational goals and processes is a rather restricted notion of what works, which it sees as a sum of spending efficiency and improvement in standardized test results.

Over time, and especially since 2006, the Strategic Planning Secretariat became a kind of mini-MoF inside the MoE, with a regular movement of public officials from the former to the latter. This takeover is seen by some as part of a strategy by the MoF to leave the National Planning

Center (CEPLAN) behind and to become the main engine for public policy planning. This technocratic model of policymaking, which has become institutionalized through results-based budgeting and through the MoF's control of the MoE's Strategic Planning Secretariat, has had both positive and negative effects. Positive because it has granted much needed degrees of continuity to certain policies. And negative because, through its accompanying understanding of the nature and goals of education policy, which has become the dominant settlement in education, it has led to a narrowing down of education change agendas.

Hence, the struggle between the goals of efficient management and those of pedagogical change. While the two are not (or should not be) contradictory, in practice they have become so, and this separation has become entrenched within the MoE. The reality is that pedagogical and strategic planning teams appear to speak different languages, and communication between the two is difficult.

Corruption and private interests

While political instability has various causes, corruption and private interests have played a key role in the development of education policies and are at the root of much sectoral instability. This has been especially the case in two moments—the fall of Alberto Fujimori's regime, and the last presidential period—but it was also evident during Alan García's government.

During the first of these periods, evidence of corruption contributed to the wholesale rejection of most of the policies developed during the MECEP period, policies linked to Fujimori's increasingly autocratic government. This led to an important discontinuity in quality reforms, as the processes initiated during the MECEP era—the new pedagogical model and the curriculum—were abandoned and replaced by policies that focused on the system's management (decentralization and participatory decisionmaking).

During the 2016–20 period, corruption and private interests have had a clear impact on education policies. The government's first ministerial crisis centered on the figure of then education minister Jaime Saavedra. He had been the main promoter and defender of the higher education reform that was putting at risk the interests of various key education businesses, many of which had direct representation in Congress—the owners of various such institutions were either in congress or were key funders for several political parties.

Saavedra was censured for allegations of corruption, which later did not hold, but he had to leave his post.²⁰ The following minister, Marilú Martens, was consistently attacked by ultra-conservative groups, with representation in Congress, for her administration's inclusion of a gender perspective in the curriculum.²¹

Later, in 2018, the alleged involvement of president Pedro Pablo Kuczynski in the regional mega-corruption scandal known as Lava Jato, led to his resignation. This entailed a new ministerial change in just a short number of years, and what came after was a period with five more ministers and two more presidents.

So...

Political and sectoral instability caused by the general weakness of the country's political and institutional system and by corruption have had a profound influence on the nature and especially on the pace of reforms during this period. That the education sector has been led by 20 ministers in 25 years illustrates the radical discontinuity in policymaking.

The development of learning and quality reforms in Peru have been marked by very high discontinuity, which has led to a kind of protracted incrementalism in which reforms have taken unusually long times to coalesce and have been marked by various back and forth movements that have often resulted in reforms being partial.

Peru has made notable improvements key variables related to educational quality—such as test results and schooling trajectories—but it not easy to link such improvements to learning reforms. Other contextual variables, such as the country's economic growth and the consequent improvement in people's livelihoods, may have played an equally important role in quality improvement.

The prevalence of a weak state and weak institutions is clearly a historical phenomenon, but in the recent decades of economic restructuring and growth their persistence can be related to the dominance of a political settlement that prioritized market development, leaving institutional reform behind. This settlement, consecrated in the 1993 Constitution, establishes the primacy of the market and the subsidiary role of the state, and has marked the slow (or poor) institutional development of Peru, despite the country's good economic performance. The influence of this settlement can be seen in the low levels of social investment in the country—clearly the case for education.

Politics thus affects reforms not simply because substantive matters become politically contested, but because of the precarious nature of institutions and political processes, which hinder the formation of political projects and discourses, and the establishment of binding agreements and settlements for key goals and how to achieve them.

Beyond ministerial changes, or perhaps because of them, there is considerable continuity in the policy agenda, suggesting that the problems identified three decades ago have not been properly addressed. While important progress has been made in achieving better results in national and international tests, there is still a pending agenda for the pedagogical core of educational practice. Three lessons:

- First, in contexts with weak states and institutions, and where party politics is also unstable, there need to be other mechanisms to establish policy discourses able to guide learning policy agendas. Such processes should include the promotion of broad-based public debate in order to established shared ideas as to the nature and overall direction of education policies. Open, transparent, and sustained debate around key policy issues might be the only way to promote sustainable settlements to guide learning improvement policies.

- Second, the international and donor community, together with civil society organizations, can play a key role in promoting open debate around key policy issues, helping to settle policy agendas and maintain them over time and in spite of general political instability. In Peru, such organizations have been fundamental in the establishment and progress made in key education reforms. But there have been cases in which they appear to have promoted their own views too harshly, unduly influencing the course of policy agendas.
- Third, the focus on political settlements and policy discourse is useful for understanding the overall nature and direction of policies. While specific policies may reflect particular ways of framing problems, they can also be read as the product of the broader orientation in both sectoral and national politics. However, in developing countries, the idea of political settlements themselves needs to come under examination, as the conditions to enable such settlements may be entirely absent. When applying this approach to developing countries it is important to consider that in many cases these are highly unsettled contexts, in which broad political as well as specific policy discourses may not have achieved a basic level of consolidation to enable a settlement around a specific set of ideas. This is not a necessary limitation, but the settlements approach does seem to leave behind discussions about ideology and hegemony. Political settlements and policy discourses should be read in relation to ideas—for instance, about the role of the state or the balance between states, markets, and individuals in the production of well-being.

Annex 1 Indicators of learning for RISE countries

A country's learning adjusted years of school combines the quantity and quality of schooling into a single indicator by multiplying the estimated years of schooling by the ratio of the country's score on the most recent test scores harmonized to 625 (World Bank data for latest year of assessment).

Learning poverty, a combined measure of schooling and learning, is the proportion of children unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10 (World Bank data for 2019).

The Human Capital Index is the amount of human capital that children born today can expect to acquire by the age of 18 given the prevailing risks of poor health and poor education. It combines the likelihood of surviving to school age, the amount of school they will complete and the learning they'll acquire, and whether they leave school ready for further learning and work. For example, a score of 0.5 means that they will be only 50 percent as productive as they might be with complete education and full health—and that their future earning potentials will be 50 percent below what they might have been.²²

	Learning adjusted years of school	Learning poverty (%)	Human Capital Index (0–1)
Chile	9.4	27.2	0.7
Egypt	6.5	69.6	0.5
Ethiopia	4.3	90.4	0.4
India	7.1	56.1	0.5
Indonesia	7.5	52.8	0.5
Kenya	8.5	—	0.5
Nigeria	5	—	0.4
Pakistan	5.1	77	0.4
Peru	8.6	44.4	0.6
South Africa	5.6	78.9	0.4
Tanzania	4.5	—	0.4
Vietnam	10.7	18.1	0.7

Note: — = not available.

¹ Levitsky and Murillo 2014.

² Ministry of Education 1993.

³ Bing Wu 2001; Saavedra and Suárez 2002.

⁴ Hunt 2001; Hunt 2004.

⁵ Ferrer 2004.

⁶ Rivas and Scasso 2020.

⁷ Balarin and Rodriguez 2020.

⁸ Elmore 2008.

⁹ Balarin and Rodriguez 2019.

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- ¹⁰ Orihuela 2020.
¹¹ Jessop 2013.
¹² Ruiz-Torres 2005.
¹³ Vergara 2012, 3.
¹⁴ McEvoy 2021
¹⁵ Dargent 2021.
¹⁶ Balarin 2006.
¹⁷ Balarin and Escudero 2018.
¹⁸ Hunt 2001, Hunt 2004, Ministry of Education 1993.
¹⁹ Balarin 2006.
²⁰ BBC Mundo 2016.
²¹ El País 2017.
²² World Bank Human Capital Index for September 2020.

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