



#49

Preventing school exclusion with a gender perspective **for** **a sustainable reactivation**

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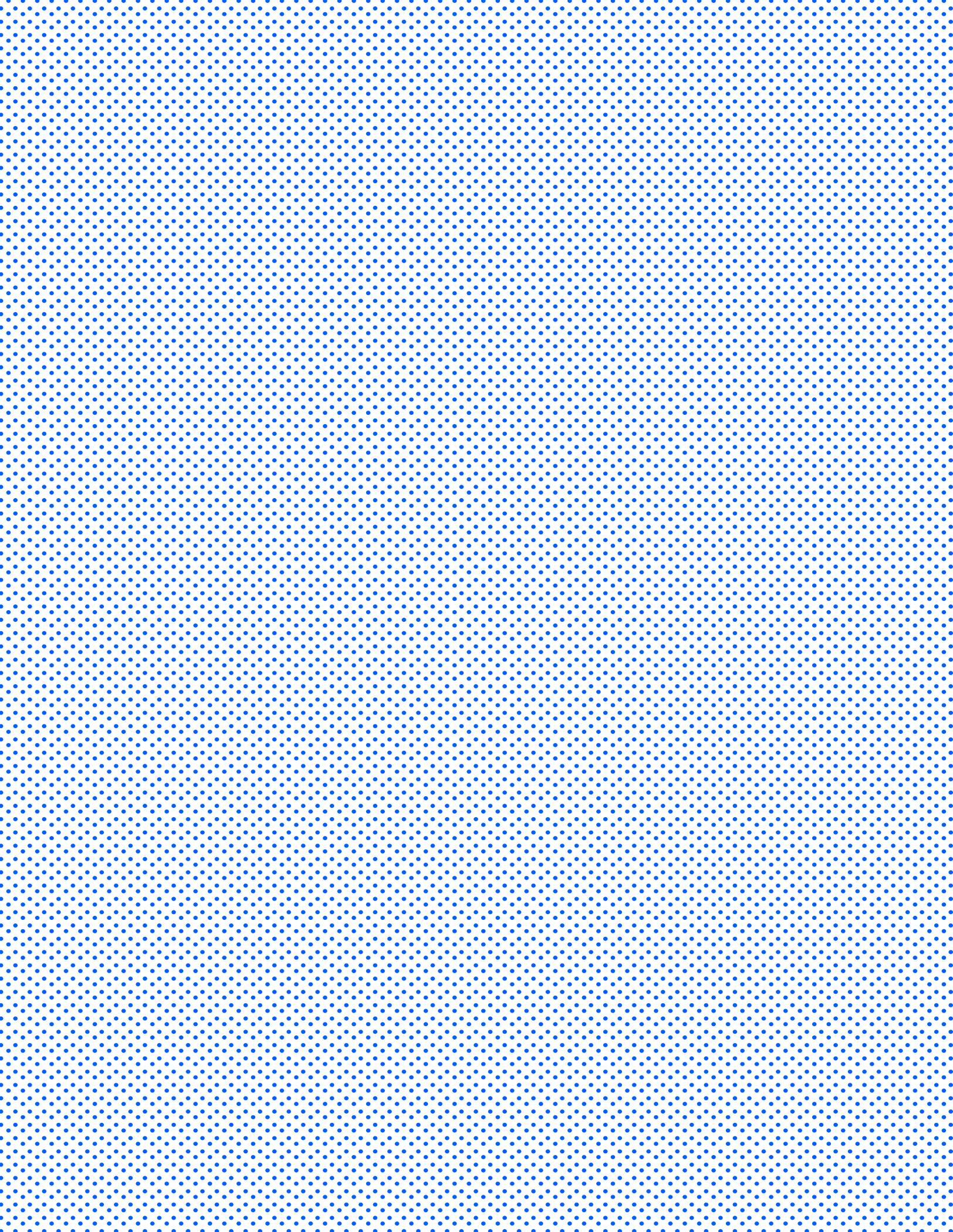
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**Preventing
school exclusion
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Summary

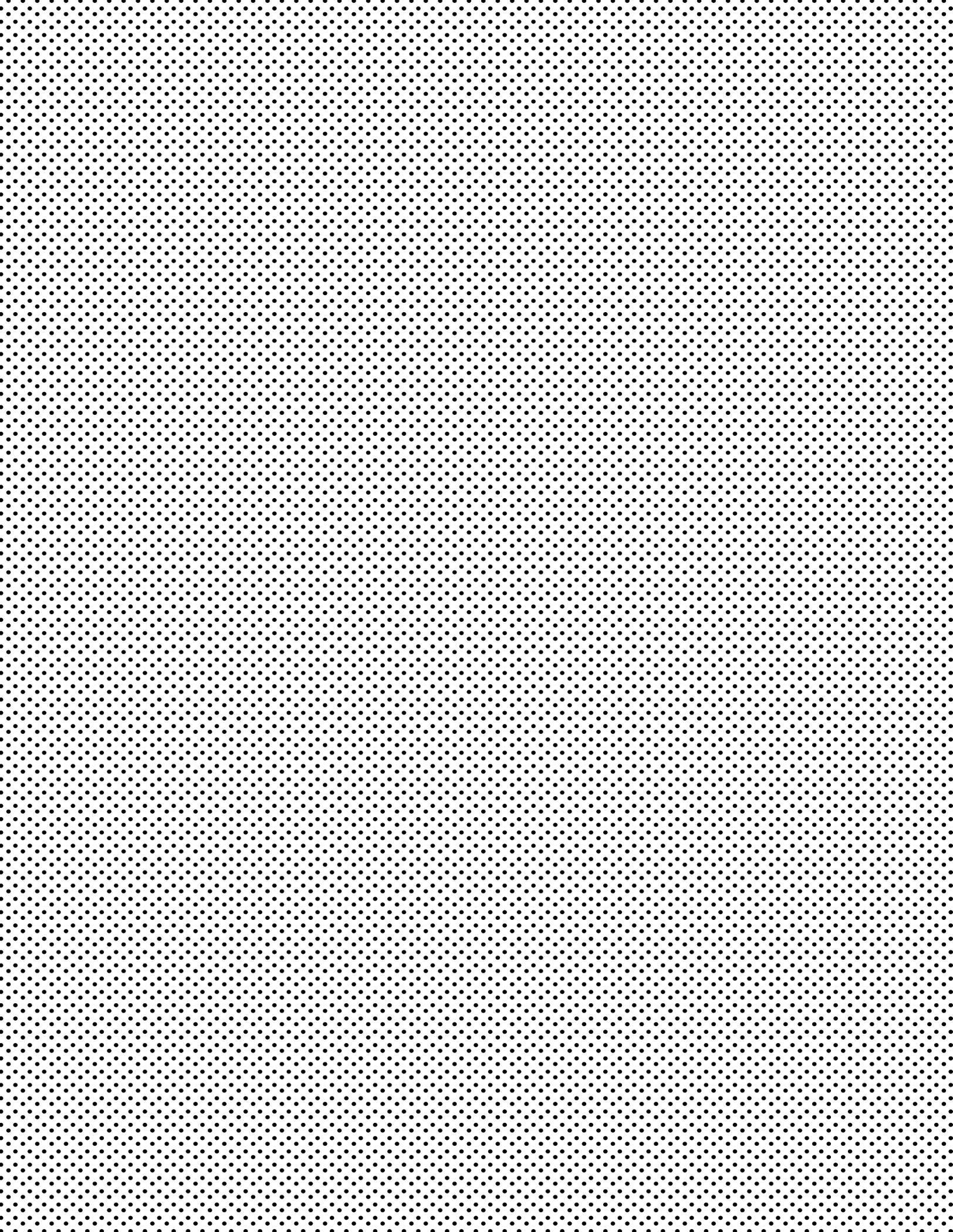
The health crisis due to COVID-19, together with its catastrophic social and economic consequences, is affecting the right to education of thousands of children and adolescents in Chile and globally, interfering, also, in the exercise of other fundamental human rights.

The widespread interruption of in-person educational services and other activities that are essential for the wellbeing of the population, even when conceived as public health protection measures, have altered the living conditions of students and their families. Thus, the risk of school exclusion has increased, mainly among young people exposed to situations of vulnerability.

The disengagement of children and adolescents from the educational system must be understood as a complex problem that involves multiple players and factors, and that has a differential origin and impact on females and males, compromising the present and

future development opportunities, not only of those who experience it, but of the whole society.

This report addresses, firstly, child and adolescent labor, and then, adolescent pregnancy, as two of the main factors contributing to a rise in the risk of school exclusion. These risks have been amplified during the current health and economic crisis, due to which a set of measures is being offered to address them and decrease school exclusion to the highest possible degree. It is thus expected to contribute to the creation of short, middle and long-term strategies to guarantee the full right to education of children and adolescents, and to expand the possibilities of achieving social and economic reactivation that is sustainable over time.



Background

Children and adolescents have not suffered, to any large extent, the effects on physical health caused by the COVID-19 pandemic¹. However, they are one of the most vulnerable groups in the population. In fact, this health emergency has resulted in a serious social and economic crisis that is deeply affecting the wellbeing of young people, even due to mitigation measures that have, inadvertently, caused great damage, as in the case of the suspension of in-person classes (UN, 2020).

The closing down of educational institutions, together with the difficulties to provide other essential services like healthcare, nutrition, and protection for children, plus the great economic challenges faced by families, have had catastrophic consequences for young people, that if not attended to in the short term, compromise the future of new generations (UNICEF, 2020).

In Chile, the suspension of in-person classes took place in all educational facilities on March 16, 2020. Since then, over 3.6 million school students have had their traditional educational process interrupted, with various effects according to their socioeconomic and family reality.

From August 7, 2020, the Ministry of Health has allowed the operation of Pre-School, Elementary and High School facilities, with prior authorization from the

Ministry of Education, in regions and districts on phase 4 of the deconfinement plan (Initial Opening, next-to-last phase). Therefore, during 2020, as the ministerial authority has informed, some educational centers were able to reopen and operate. However, due to the high uncertainty that characterizes this health situation, it is difficult to foresee the advance or setback of the measures established regarding school year 2021.

This crisis has aggravated multiple preexisting problems in society, jeopardizing advancements achieved in most Sustainable Development Goals (end of poverty, zero hunger, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, inequality reduction, etc.) and, particularly, those aiming at “ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (ODS 4).

In this context, protection of children and adolescents in emergency situations, one of the core objectives of the UNICEF Education Strategy 2019-2030 (UNICEF, 2019), acquires greater relevance. In order to achieve it, it is fundamental to work on prevention—building resilient educational systems that take the multiple associated risks into account— and also on crises response strategies.

¹ Although, according to UNICEF (2020), based on an analysis performed in 87 countries, by November 2020, children and adolescents represented 11% of the total number of people infected with COVID-19, which is a greater impact than what was initially expected.



School exclusion

Exclusion from the educational system is not a new problem in Chile, however, it has gained a greater focus in recent years, especially, during this pandemic, which has resulted in a school year, from March to December, without in-person classes almost for the entire student body.

To understand its true complexity, it is important to think of the definite disengagement from the educational system not as the students' option, but as the culmination of a long process that is built and validated throughout school history and daily life, in which both the school and all society are responsible (Román, 2013). Therefore, it does not seem appropriate to talk about "school drop out", although it has historically been contextualized this way, and various national and international organizations continue to do so. As expressed by the Chilean foundation Hogar de Cristo (2019), "the concept of drop out does not successfully capture the true depth of what it implies for somebody to leave school, since it tends to pathologize as an individual behavior something that responds to exclusionary social dynamics".

School exclusion is not a harmless event in people's lives, least of all in the case of females. On the contrary, low education levels increase the chances of facing greater difficulties in the labor market, living in situation of poverty and social exclusion (Eurostat, 2020). It also affects the construction of a life project and contributes to a person's self-worth appraisal (Román, 2013).

Empirical evidence shows various factors that increase school exclusion risk articulating around individual, family, school, and social spheres. In this sense, having many repetitions throughout school history; suffering many family crises in vulnerability contexts; performing child labor; and experiencing pregnancy at an early age, stand out as some of the most common (UNICEF, 2008).

In the current health context, the UNICEF and Chile's Ministry of Education have warned that if the suspension of in-person educational activities were to be extended,

it will increase the risk of school exclusion, especially for minors that belong to the country's most vulnerable sectors.

In effect, the closing of schools reduces access to quality education and exacerbates vulnerabilities that were previous to the health crisis, affecting, especially, girls: even in places where schools are open, there is risk of increase in school exclusion rates among them since domestic and care-taking responsibilities increase as a result of the pandemic. Similarly, since families must face economic tensions, negative coping mechanisms, such as child labor, may cause more school drop outs. Later, when schools open again, some young people, such as pregnant adolescents, will find it hard to reinstate themselves (Plan Internacional, 2020a).

In that sense, school as an inclusive space, together with the family, community, and timely socio-educational policies with a gender perspective, are fundamental to ensure that thousands of children and adolescents will continue their learning process and that, in doing so, may opt for better development opportunities in the future and contribute to society.

Overview in figures of school exclusion in Chile

- » In 2003, Law N° 19.876 was enacted, establishing 12 years of free and compulsory education, including Elementary and High School Education, and in 2013, under Law N° 20.710, the second level of transition was incorporated.
- » However, according to administrative data of the Ministry of Education (2020a), by 2018, there were 75,059 children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 that, having participated in the school system, had been excluded from the system without having finished minimum compulsory schooling. This figure represents 2.4% of

the population of said age group that record any year in the school system², but it could rise as associated risk factors increase with the crisis³.

» According to survey “Educational experiences in the homes of children during the COVID-19 pandemic” (*“Experiencias educativas en casa de niñas y niños durante la pandemia COVID-19”*)⁴, developed by Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación (CIAE) of Universidad de Chile, 5.2% of the respondents manifested an interruption in the student’s schooling. Particularly, 2.5% declared that the child had abandoned its studies, but continued to be enrolled. Nonetheless, it is estimated that 1 in every 20 students has undergone some kind of interruption or change in their formal educational experience this year.

» Additionally, among reasons reported to trigger changes in the child’s educational situation, 30% mentioned that the school wasn’t able to arrange remote education suitably; 18% mentioned that they didn’t have enough money to pay for the monthly fee; 17% prefers the child to repeat the school year when things are back to normal; 11% explains that the child has had problems that prevented him/her from continuing studying at the moment; 6% has had problems at home; another 6% mentions that the child is preparing open exams or changed to an online school; and 4% changed schools. The

remaining 7% mentions other reasons (Universidad de Chile, Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación, 2020).

» According to the results of the 2nd Survey #EstamosConectados, of Educación 2020⁵, 44% of the students perceive that they have learned nothing or only a little during the pandemic. As for the environmental conditions that allow continuing formation processes from home, about 24% say they do not have a suitable place to study and/or doing work. Among the latter, 77% say they have learned nothing or just a little.

» According to survey “The voice of principals in the COVID-19 crisis” (*“La voz de los directores y directoras en la crisis COVID-19”*)⁶, the respondents mentioned that they have not connected with 7.1% of their students during the last month —which is equivalent to over 240 thousand students on a national level if the sample were representative—; they have connected regularly with 77.6% of the students; and sporadically with 15.4%.

» One of the main indicators used by the Ministry of Education to analyze the evolution of this problem is the drop out incidence rate, which measures the percentage of students that, having been enrolled in regular education for a certain period, are not enrolled for the following period, without having graduated from

² It specifically corresponds to the percentage of students that appears in the system with at least one year of schooling in the 2004-2017 period, and that, without having graduated from twelfth grade, was not enrolled in 2018. In MINEDUC’s terms, it represents the drop out prevalence rate based on administrative records.

³ It is worth clarifying that the Ministry of Education considers “school exclusion” both what it calls “school drop out” (students that have entered the educational system, but that, due to various factors, have left it without obtaining minimum credentials) and “un-schooling” (children and young people who have never entered formal education in spite of being old enough and having the right to belong to a school environment). In this report, what the Ministry calls drop out has been resignified as school exclusion.

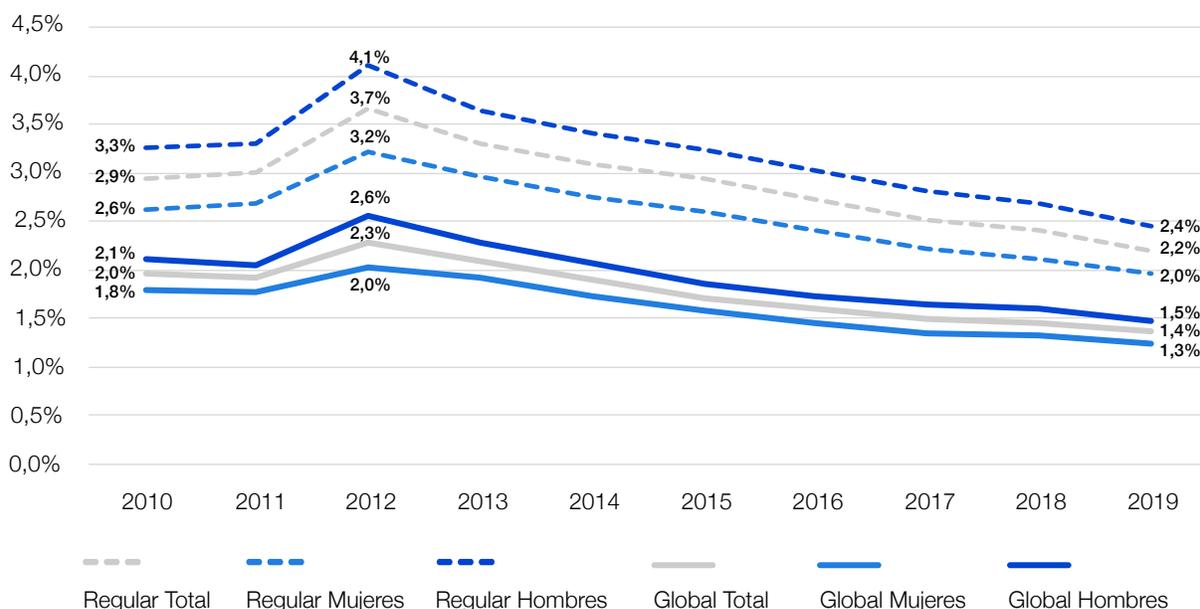
⁴ Addressed to parents and guardians of students aged 4 to 18, conducted during September 1 and October 14. The sample comprised 4,912 homes in 241 districts in all of the country’s regions.

⁵ Online survey conducted between July 23 and August 18, 2020, with specific questions for students from 4th grade to 12th grade. The sample consisted of 3,488 actors from educational establishments: 584 students; 1,730 parents / as; 816 teachers; and 358 members of management teams.

⁶ Implemented by the Educational Leadership Program of the Faculty of Education of U. Diego Portales; CIAE/IE Universidad de Chile; and Center for Educational Leaders of Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. The survey was answered during August 2020 by 424 school principals from all the country, whose distribution was quite similar to national distribution in terms of gender and in relation to education center dependence and socioeconomic level.

Figure 1/

School drop out incidence rate by gender, 2010-2019.



Source: Developed by ComunidadMujer based on 2019 Education Indicators, Study Center, Ministry of Education.

the school system during that time frame. If no type of enrollment is featured, it is measured by the global incidence rate, while if it features enrollment in young and adult people education (EPJA), it is measured by the regular incidence rate. Thus, being more extensive, the regular incidence rate will always be higher or equal to the global incidence rate.

» As can be seen in Figure 1, school drop out incidence rate, both global and regular, respectively, increased in the 2010-2012 period and then decreased sustainably until 2019. According to the Ministry of Education (2020), this proves that, in periods during which in-person classes have been suspended for a prolonged period of time, there is an increase in the drop out rates. In fact, an increase in the incidence rate between 2009 and 2010 may be due to the earthquake in February 2010, while the increase experienced

between 2011 and 2012 may be related to the massive strikes and student mobilizations at the time⁷.

» Thereby, great improvement was recorded between 2012 and 2019, with a drop in the global incidence rate, from 2.3% to 1.4%. In turn, the number of children and adolescents that definitively disengaged from the educational system dropped from 68,161 to 40,398, respectively. On the other hand, the incidence rate in the regular system dropped from 3.7% to 2.2% during the same period, with a reduction from 110,573 to 65,827 children and adolescents.

» At the closing date of this report, the Ministry of Education has not published incidence rates corresponding to 2020. However, the report by the technical table convened by this authority to work on the prevention of this problem during the health emergency (Ministry

⁷ Along the lines, a study by Grau, Hojman and Mizala (2018), found causal evidence linking the closing of educational establishments in Chile with a rise of 1.8 to 2.5 percentage points in the likelihood of a student leaving school, which represents a rise from 49% to 68%.

13,8%

of adolescents between the ages of 15 and 17 who do not attend any educational establishment indicated that this is mainly due to “pregnancy, maternity or paternity”: 24.8% of women and 1.5% of mens. (CASEN 2017)

69,5%

of those who perform child labor between the ages of 5 and 17 belong to the 40% of the most vulnerable households. (ILO, MINTRAB and MDS, 2013)



It is estimated that

47.686

girls, boys and adolescents who were enrolled in 2019 were no longer enrolled in 2020, without having completed Secondary Education. (MINEDUC, 2020)

1 in 20

students has experienced some kind of interruption or change in their formal educational experience this pandemic year. (CIAE, 2020)

of Education, 2020) suggests that, for that year, a 0.2 percentage point increase in the global incidence rate will be recorded in relation to the previous year, reaching 1.6%. In this manner, 47,686 children and adolescents who were enrolled in 2019 will no longer be enrolled in 2020, without having completed Secondary Education. It is explained that part of the increase may be due to two phenomena: the social crisis that began in October 2019 —which reduced attendance to school considerably during the last quarter of the year— and due to the suspension of classes on March 16, 2020 —when the school year had just begun—, which probably discouraged those who had not enrolled up to that moment.

- » Additionally, the Study Center of the Ministry of Education (2020b), estimates that, during 2020, 44,756 to 81,099 children and adolescents —depending on the projected scenario— between 6th and 12th grade may have disengaged from the educational system as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic⁸. With this, incidence rates in the order of 2.8% to 5.0% respectively would be reached, which, in any case, exceed the global incidence rate observed in 2019 for students in these educational levels (1.8%).
- » Whatever rate is used, school drop out is lower among females. Thus, the global incidence rate among them decreased from 2.0% to 1.3% between 2012 and 2019, respectively, while among males it decreased from 2.6% to 1.5%. As for the incidence rate in the regular system, it dropped from 3.2% to 2.0% for females and from 4.1% to 2.4% for males during the same period.
- » Following the incidence rate by educational level in 2019, it shows that greater drop out occurs in High School Education, especially at regular system level, during 9th and 11th grade. This means there is a high proportion of adolescents that disengage from High School Education to enroll in Young and Adult People Education (EPJA). In fact, in 11th grade, which features the highest levels, the regular incidence rate exceeds 6%: 6.5% in scientific-humanistic orientation education (5.6% among females and 7.5% among males) and 6.3% in professional technical education (5.8% among females and 6.7% among males).
- » Also, statistics show that disengagement from school is not neutral to students' socioeconomic level. If we consider the drop out prevalence rate between ages 5 and 24 based on the CASEN 2017 Survey⁹, it is possible to see that it is higher in lower income quintiles, with 6.4% for the first quintile and 1.3% for the fifth quintile (Ministry of Education, Study Center, 2020a).
- » According to a study by the Center of Studies of the Ministry of Education (2017), based on information provided by the Adult Population Competency Study (PIAAC), for adult population aged 18 to 65, completing High School Education or not, has important consequences in terms of the development of skills and competencies; the use of skills and competencies in daily life; working conditions; continuing education opportunities; and subjective wellbeing.

⁸ Starting from a baseline scenario, without a negative shock on school attendance, with an average 90.8% attendance and an estimated number of 42,068 children and adolescents from 6th to 12th grade that may disengage from the educational system (high risk), which implies an incidence rate of 2.6% in said levels. A second great scenario, with a negative shock on the school attendance rate as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, considers 4 reduction levels: the most optimistic scenario considers a 5-percentage-point reduction in the school attendance rate, while the worst-case scenario considers a 50-percentage-point reduction.

⁹ Drop out prevalence rate measures the proportion of individuals in a certain age range that, without having graduated from 12th grade, do not attend any educational facility at a given moment, excluding those who have never attended formal education. Therefore, as opposed to the school drop out incidence rate, which measures events between one year and the next, the prevalence rate quantifies the status of the problem according to the accrued number of students who have disengaged from the educational system before completing High School Education.

School exclusion risk factors

It is a fact that the harmful effects of the health, social, and economic crisis are not equitably distributed among the population. Thus, the situation will be more complex for children and adolescents who already are in disadvantageous situations (UN, 2020).

In this sense, a recent report by the Center of Studies of the Ministry of Education (2020c), has revealed various factors that increase the risk of school dropout, especially, during the health emergency. The document identifies, based on various sources, three types of factors: individual factors, family factors, and those relating to the school system.

Among individual factors, the following are mentioned: relevance of academic failure; attendance and academic performance; intrinsic motivation, the student's commitment to and expectations of the educational process; relationship with the school; and the use of free time. Among family factors the following stand out: parent or guardian involvement and proximity in the student's learning process; sociodemographic characteristics, such as the home's socioeconomic level (which, among other issues, generally determines the neighborhoods they live in, with great inequalities among them, regarding access to green areas, transportation, commercial services, health, education, etc., and the level of exposure to violence and drug trafficking), parents' or guardians' educational level, the presence of an unemployed head of household, and the exercise of support roles performed by young people. Lastly, among factors associated to the school system, reference is made to the kind of facility and the resources it has; the student-teacher relationship; the curriculum offer; and the community environment.

Although attention is given to addressing school exclusion, the discussion has not included the necessary gender perspective, disregarding the fact that sources

that trigger it may be very different for males and females. It is indispensable to consider that, to a great extent, important risk factors respond to traditional gender roles, and their subsequent inequalities, and that it is vital for social institutions not to continue reproducing them. For example, adolescent pregnancy has not been revealed in the continuity of females' educational process, an aspect that has been emphasized by international entities and that, despite the significant reduction experienced by Chile during the last decade, as will be discussed later, may revert its trend due to the difficulty to access contraceptive methods or to an increase in sexual abuse situations during the health emergency, among other reasons.

Therefore, as recommended by UNESCO (2013), it is fundamental for educational policies to consider the specificity of factors that increase the risk of school exclusion, particularly, in High School Education: paid work and behavioral problems in the case of males¹⁰, and motherhood and unpaid domestic and caregiving work in the case of females.

This becomes more relevant at present, since, as stated by ILO and ECLAC (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic will exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, increasing the risk of child labor and adolescent pregnancy.

Although school exclusion levels before the health emergency were lower among females in relation to males, it is not clear whether these dynamics have continued in the subsequent period. Regardless, the life projects of those who permanently dropped out of the school system will be even more affected, due to the various structural inequalities they were already experiencing —such as the prevalence of not studying nor performing paid work (not in education, employment or training, NEET)—, which will make the achievement of greater economic, physical and decision-making autonomy even more complex¹¹.

¹⁰ A recent publication indicates that students sanctioned with expulsion or cancellation of enrollment have double the likelihood (5.5%) of dropping out than students that have not been sanctioned after controlling due to their individual characteristics. For more details, see Bennett, F., Contreras, D., Morales, M., (2020). Medidas disciplinarias y su vínculo con la deserción escolar en Chile (Disciplinary measures and their connection to school drop out in Chile). Serie Documentos de Trabajo COES, Work document N°45, pp. 1-9.

¹¹ In Chile, a large proportion of young people do not develop a professional nor educational life project, especially females. According to the CASEN 2017 Survey, 12.7% of the people aged 15 to 29 do not study nor perform paid work (NINI). Among females, this proportion reaches 17.5%, while, among males, it reaches 7.9%.

It is essential to note that, to a large extent, important risk factors respond to traditional gender roles, and their consequent inequalities, and that it is crucial that social institutions do not continue to reproduce them.

Prevention of female and male exclusion from the education system considering two of the most important social risk factors —child and adolescent labor, and adolescent pregnancy— is discussed below. This, understanding that, if child labor is not eradicated, if adolescent labor is not protected —that is, if the human rights of working adolescents are not safeguarded, particularly the right to education— and if adolescent pregnancy is not prevented, it is not possible to ensure continuity of the educational process of children and adolescents.

1. Child and adolescent labor

According to the “National strategy for the eradication of child labor and protection of the adolescent worker 2015-2025” (ILO and the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare of Chile, 2015), child labor is considered as activities that jeopardize the health, and the physical and moral integrity of children and adolescents, as established by Convention 138 of the ILO on minimum age.

In this sense, the strategy points out that not all activities developed by children or adolescents represent child labor, since collaborating in certain tasks —house chores, family business or vacation work—, as long as they do not interfere with their academic performance, health and personal development, contributes to their wellbeing and their families’, providing them a valuable experience for the future.

Child and adolescent labor manifests differently among females and males, because traditional labor gender division is replicated throughout the entire life cycle.

As a consequence of the health emergency, which has resulted in a serious socioeconomic crisis, children

and adolescents that belong to the most vulnerable families may be compelled to enter the labor market. In the case of girls, an increase in the workload of unpaid domestic and caregiving work, must also be taken into account (ECLAC, 2020).

» In Chile, Law N° 19,684 of 2000, abolished work for children under 15¹². Recently, Law N° 21,271, enacted in October 2020, has adapted the Labor Code in matters of protection for children and adolescents in the working world¹³.

» According to this new Law, “protected adolescent work is that which is performed by adolescents that are old enough to work, that is not considered dangerous work and that, due to its nature, is not detrimental to their regular attendance to classes and/or their participation in professional guidance or education programs, as applicable”. Thus, in spite of being legal from ages 15 to 18, it is necessary to meet certain requirements and conditions provided in the Labor Code (articles 14 to 18).

» According to “Crecer Felices”, the national strategy for the eradication of child labor and the protection of the adolescent worker 2015-2025 (ILO and the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare of Chile, 2015), it is understood that child labor operates both as cause and consequence of school exclusion, since it may affect children and adolescents in multiple ways during their school history, leading up, lastly, to school desertion.

» According to the Child Labor Vulnerability Index¹⁴, developed by ILO and ECLAC, of the 345 districts

¹² In line with the suggestions of Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labor (WFCL), Chile performed a typification that established two large groups: intolerable labor and dangerous labor. Included within intolerable labor is any activity that infringes upon the human rights of children and adolescents. Meanwhile, dangerous labor refers to situations that represent physical, moral or mental damage to children and adolescents, Decree N° 1,447 of 2000, enacted Convention N° 182 of the International Labor Organization, on the prohibition of the worst forms of child labor and immediate action for their elimination.

¹³ According to Article 16 of the Labor Code, in duly qualified cases, in compliance with the requirements of Article 14 and with the authorization of the competent Family Court, children and adolescents that are not old enough to work shall be allowed to enter into contracts to participate in theater, cinema, radio, television or circus shows, or other similar activities, under certain conditions.

¹⁴ The Child Labor Vulnerability Index is a statistics tool composed of twelve variables, obtained from administrative records, grouped in five dimensions, from which three vulnerability levels are defined: high, medium and low. For more information, see ILO – ECLAC – SUBTRAB (2020).

in the country¹⁵, 81 (23.5%) present a high index, 63 (18.3%) a medium index, and 201 (58.3%) a low index. The highest concentrations of districts with a high index are in northern-end and south-central regions.

- » In Chile, there are no recent nor periodical statistics about child labor. Up to now, the only official available source to gather this information is the National Survey on the Activities of Children and Adolescents of 2012 (EANNA 2012), whose second version was scheduled for 2020 but that, due to the health emergency, was suspended.
- » According to the EANNA 2012, about 219 thousand children and adolescents aged 5 to 17, were in child labor situation (6.6% of the total population in that age group)¹⁶. Out of them, 69.2% were males and 30.8% females, which implies that, from the total number of males and females aged 5 to 17, 9.5% and 3.9% were performing child labor at the moment of the survey, respectively.
- » More so for males than for females, adolescent labor represents a relevant reason to interrupt their educational process. According to the CASEN 2017 Survey, of the total number of adolescents aged 15 to 17 (at appropriate age both to work and to attend High School Education), without considering those who declare having finished their studies, 3.3% does not attend any kind of educational institution at any level: 3.5% of the females and 3.0% of the males. Of this total, 6.8% mentioned it was because “they

work or are looking for a job”: 3.3% of females and 10.7% of males¹⁷.

- » Child labor is intimately related to poverty, since in this situation children and adolescents are considered necessary for the family's economy. Thus, 69.5% of those who perform child labor between ages 5 and 17 belong to 40% of the most vulnerable homes (45.9% and 23.6% belong in the first and second income quintiles, respectively). Also, 36.6% are in situation of poverty. However, it is important to contrast and say that among those minors who do not perform child labor, 56.2% belong to 40% of the most vulnerable homes and 24.5% are in a situation of poverty (ILO, MINTRAB and MDS, 2013).
- » Among the most relevant reasons to explain child labor, according to those who perform it, are the facts of having their own money (41.7%), helping their families (23.4%) and for fun (20.4%) (ILO; MINTRAB and MDS, 2013).
- » Most children and adolescents in situation of child labor work in retail (40.9%). A significant percentage work in agricultural production (19.2%), the building sector (9.2%) and in domestic services (6%) (EANNA 2012).
- » Although not considered child labor in all their forms¹⁸, domestic chores are performed by most of the child and adolescent population between ages 5 and 17 (87%). Among males, participation is 84.4%, while among females it is 91% (EANNA 2012).

15 345 and not 346 districts, because the districts of Cabo de Hornos and Antarctica are grouped together.

16 In operational terms, children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 are considered to be performing child labor when they: (1) work under the minimum age, from 5 to 14 (94 thousand), and (2) dangerous labor, from 15 to 17, including dangerous domestic labor (125 thousand).

17 These rates consider all the people in the age group that are not attending an educational establishment, including those who never have. In the case of males (excluding those who completed their studies), a lack of interest is the most important reason not to attend an educational establishment (18.5%). This reason is followed by economic difficulties (11.3%), performance issues (11.0%), working or looking for a job (10.7%), and illness (8.9%). The most important reasons for females are addressed in the following section, on adolescent pregnancy.

18 According to the ILO (2011), strictly, domestic child labor refers to economic activities performed by persons under 18 outside their nuclear family, and due to which they may or may not receive remuneration. They are mostly girls who lead an adult life prematurely, working for many hours a day in conditions that are detrimental to their health and development, for a low salary or in exchange of housing and education. When these activities are performed in their own homes and have dangerous characteristics, they are also considered child labor.



» In Chile, according to the ILO and the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare (2015), domestic chores performed by children and adolescents in their own homes are considered child labor when they involve dangerous tasks (handling of dangerous equipment, toxic materials, heavy loads, or dangerous places)¹⁹ or exceed 21 hours a week (more than half a day), because they are considered to interfere with the educational process. In this sense, the EANNA 2012 reveals that 10.4% of children aged 9 to 14 that perform domestic labor do so for 21 or more hours a week: 9.7% of males and 11% of females. Among adolescents aged 15 to 17 this proportion increases to 28%: 21.8% of males and 33.2% of females.

» “Crecer Felices” suggests that, due to the sociocultural characteristics of Chile, domestic child labor in children’s own homes or unpaid domestic child labor is especially concerning, because of the deep consequences it has in the development of children and adolescents. It is difficult to address because, as the strategy points out, these tasks are overlooked due to being traditionally linked to the private sphere — historically attributed to women—, not having any assigned economic value and, many times, the parents or relatives themselves are who introduce children and adolescents to this kind of practices, mainly because of economic reasons.

2. Adolescent pregnancy

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as the development period that takes place between ages 10 and 19, which is characterized by being a phase that separates an individual’s childhood from adulthood. Experiencing a pregnancy in this stage of life, as such, leads to certain adverse effects such as:

(i) generating greater health complications during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period; (ii) reducing academic performance and increasing the risk of exclusion; (iii) hindering employability; (iv) collaborating in the intergenerational replication of poverty and inequality; (v) contributing to the intergenerational replication of gender inequalities; (vi) representing a barrier against ascending social mobility; and (vii) demanding time and additional resources from parents and families (ECLAC, 2017).

According to UNFPA (2020a), the health emergency is affecting work related to the satisfaction of family planning needs, mainly, due to factors associated to the availability of healthcare, fear of attending health facilities, interruptions in the supply chain of contraceptive methods or, even their substitution for other less efficient ones.

There is concrete evidence to expect, during the present health emergency, due to the control measures implemented to contain it, such as the closing of schools and caregiving services, an increase in girls’ and adolescents’ pregnancies, fostered by a rise in gender violence²⁰. In this sense, the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2019) has alerted about a greater risk of abuse, domestic and sexual violence against children and adolescents occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although a decrease in adolescent pregnancy has been recorded in Chile in recent years, it still is a concerning problem, particularly among the most vulnerable socioeconomic levels.

» According to the Vital Statistics of the INE (National Institute of Statistics) of 2017, of 219,186 people born, 7.9% is born to a mother under 20 years of age, which corresponds to half of what was recorded a decade before (2007): 16.5%. At the same time, the yearly rate of adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age that become mothers has been reduced

¹⁹ For more information on the list of dangerous activities for children under the age of 18, see Supreme Decree N° 50 of the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare.

²⁰ According to the International Plan (2020b), the closing of schools played a fundamental role in the rise of adolescent pregnancies in Sierra Leona during the Ebola crisis in 2014 (65%). It points out that schools and teachers were considered an important source of education on contraception and sexual health, including the provision of contraceptive pills. Although it mentions that the study conducted did not supply conclusive evidence on the correlation between abuse or sexual exploitation and adolescent pregnancies, subsequent research has shown that in Sierra Leona the number of cases of sexually abused girls and domestic violence recorded during 2014 were higher than in previous years.

by half, dropping from 5.3% to 2.7% between 2007 and 2017, respectively.

- » Even so, World Population Prospects 2019 of the United Nations' Population Division show that, in the 2015-2020 period, Chile recorded an adolescent fertility rate of 41.1 births in every 1,000 women aged 15 to 19. This positions the country very near the world average (42.5) and below the Latin American average (63), but far from high-income countries (15).
- » Looking beyond annual figures, according to CASEN 2017 Survey data, one third of the females that are 12 years old and older belonging to the first quintile of independent income per capita of the home has been an adolescent mother (31.4%), while in the fifth quintile, this group reaches 10.6%. In average, almost one fourth (23.7%) of women aged 12 and over have been adolescent mothers.
- » Likewise, the CASEN 2017 Survey shows that, the lower the educational level, the greater the percentage of women who have been adolescent mothers. In effect, 36.4% of females aged 13 and older without formal education have been adolescent mothers, and this proportion is very similar for those who have incomplete (35.5%) or complete Elementary Education (34.7%). Whereas, it decreases moderately for those who have incomplete (28.3%) or complete (24.3%) High School Education, and substantially among those who have incomplete (11.7%) or complete (9%) Higher Education.
- » According to the Casen 2017 Survey, among female and male adolescents aged 15 to 17 (old enough to attend High School Education) that are not attending any educational institution, excluding those who declared having finished their studies, 13.8% mentioned that this is mainly due to "pregnancy, motherhood or

fatherhood": 24.8% of the females and 1.5% of the males. Therefore, for females, adolescent pregnancy or motherhood represents the most important cause to interrupt their studies, while for males, fatherhood is one of the least relevant²¹.

- » Chile has three regulations that safeguard the rights of pregnant students and students that are parents: the General Law of Education (article 11), Decree 79 of the Ministry of Education enacted in 2004 and, most recently, Exempt Resolution N°0193 of 2018, which approves the regulatory Circular on pregnant students and those who are parents.
- » Additionally, there are public programs that directly promote the retention of students in condition of pregnancy or parenthood. One of them is the School Retention Support Scholarship (BARE, Beca de Apoyo a la Retención Escolar)²² granted by the National Board of School Aid and Scholarships (JUNAEB, Junta Nacional de Auxilio Escolar) since 2002, addressed to High School Education students with higher levels of socio-educational vulnerability. As revealed by the technical table convened by the Ministry of Education (2020), this program was evaluated by the DIPRES in 2018 as having poor performance, mainly due to theoretical difficulties in the definition of the potential population; because there is no clarity in regard to the estimation of the amount of the benefit; and because the focusing method should be updated, considering other risk factors.
- » In the same line, is the School Retention Support Program "Enriching the Educational Experience" (PARE-PeeE), implemented by JUNAEB since 2009, whose aim is to promote psychosocial tools that generate protective factors in students with socio educational risk and/or in condition of pregnancy and parenthood. According to the Ministry of Education (2020),

²¹ These rates consider all the people in the age group that are not attending an educational facility, including those who have never done so. In the case of females, after pregnancy/motherhood, the most relevant reasons are performance issues (14.0%), lack of interest (13.8%), family issues (6.9%), and illness (5.1%). Following very close by, is helping in house chores (5.0%).

²² The School Retention Support Scholarship (BARE, Beca de Apoyo a la Retención Escolar) consists in a free-disposal monetary contribution paid out in up to 4 installments. It is intended for High School Education students that are parents, pregnant or participate in the Chile Solidario program, who are currently enrolled in municipal or subsidized-private establishments recognized by the Ministry of Education. Currently, the benefit consists in the provision of a \$196,000 yearly allocation.

There is concrete evidence to expect that, during the current health emergency, due to the control measures that have been implemented to contain it, such as the closure of schools and care services, an increase in pregnancies in girls and adolescents will be generated.

this program was evaluated by the DIPRES in 2018 as having medium performance and does not include impact evaluations. However, it points out that in 2017 it had been considerably adapted, but that these changes were not included in the following year's evaluation.

- » The Second Survey on Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health in COVID-19 Times, performed by Corporación MILES in the middle of June 2020, indicated that 45% of the respondents, of which 94% were women, presented difficulties having access to sexual and reproductive health services. Particularly, 74% presented problems accessing contraceptive methods because, most of them, experienced an interruption in their delivery or because they could not find stock.
- » According to data from the Department of Health Statistics and Information (DEIS, Departamento de Estadísticas e Información de Salud), from January to September 2020, among girls aged 11 to 14, 18 pregnancies terminated due to the cause of rape were recorded (in that age group it is the only cause argued and they correspond to 16.54% of the terminations due to this cause). This is equivalent to 58.1% of comparable terminations during all 2019. Among adolescents aged 15 to 19, terminations due to the cause of rape during the first 9 months of 2020 reached 13 (11.9% of the total number for said cause), figure that represents 50% of the equivalent terminations performed during all 2019.

Preventing school exclusion in Chile during the Health Emergency due to COVID-19

Although projects and programs that address school exclusion have been implemented, Chile lacks an integral policy that allows for attending to the different social factors that lead to the truncation of effective academic histories.

During the health emergency, the Ministry of Education formed a technical table to analyze school drop out and in July it presented a document containing 15 proposals to prevent this problem (Ministry of Education, 2020). As indicated therein, measures focus on ensuring the right to education of children and adolescents that present the highest risk of disengaging from their learning process and that may not be able to rejoin in-person classes once these have been resumed in their respective communities. The proposals are summarized in Table 1.

Although the global strategy is assessed as positive, it does have certain limitations:

1. It has a fundamentally school approach, lacking a social approach addressing risk factors from a gender perspective. The absence of explicitness regarding adolescent pregnancy as a central problem is particularly of concern.
2. It has a short and medium-term scope, but not a long-term one promoting cultural and regulatory transformation and installing resilient capacities to deal with future emergencies.
3. It recognizes the right to education but does not establish a comprehensive protection basis for children's rights.

It is considered that a comprehensive approach of school exclusion requires, additionally, to attend to social risk factors from a gender perspective. In this sense, it is proposed to adopt an emergency management approach, which will allow not only for creating immediate response strategies, but also achieving sustainable recovery in the long term. The proposals are detailed below:

Table 1 /

15 proposals by the technical table convened by the Ministry of Education to prevent school drop out in Chile

THEMATIC FOCUS	PROPOSAL
I. Generating a common narrative of positive academic histories and the role of responsible adults	Proposal 1: Campaign for the appreciation of the role and work of current directors, teachers, assistants, and families
	Proposal 2: Communicational campaign to promote positive academic histories and prevent drop out
	Proposal 3: Promoting enrollment of unenrolled students in 2020
II. Generating conditions for the different players in the school system to be able to perform independent and active work for the promotion of positive academic histories	Proposal 4: Provide general guidelines to allow administrators and directors to support their teachers in performing their work at a distance in exceptional conditions
	Proposal 5: Facilitate the existence of the minimum conditions for the access of all students
III. Strengthening timely detection systems of students at risk of school exclusion and supporting the educational community on their use	Proposal 6: Extension of the Early Alert System for the entire educational system
	Proposal 7: Tool to manage the connection between school institutions and students during remote education
	Proposal 8: Indicator of school commitment and strategies to work on its promotion
	Proposal 9: Tool to identify, manage and revert chronic absenteeism, training management teams on its use and providing action strategies
	Proposal 10: Revision of Other Quality Indicators of the Education Quality Agency associated to absenteeism
IV. Strengthening network work to deal with the school exclusion multicausality, both in times of in-person and remote classes	Proposal 11: “Good practices in pandemic times” platform
	Proposal 12: Massive accompaniment plan for administrators and management teams
	Proposal 13: Coordination of interministerial offer at the service of school communities
V. Strengthening existing school reintegration, re-admission and retention programs	Proposal 14: Strengthening and analyzing space for improvement in programs that address school retention
	Proposal 15: Strengthening and finding space for improvement in programs that address re-admission

Source: Ministry of Education (2020), with inclusive language adjustments by ComunidadMujer



Preventing school exclusion in Chile with a gender perspective for a sustainable reactivation: 16 proposals by ComunidadMujer

I. Specific proposals by risk factor:

1. Reduction of child labor and protection of adolescent labor

Proposal 1: Implementing **ongoing targeted awareness campaigns** about the rights of children and adolescents, eradication of child labor and the protection of adolescent labor, addressed to educational communities, employer organizations and families. In the latter case, it is fundamental to emphasize the overload of unpaid domestic and caregiving work that falls, especially on girls and adolescents.

Proposal 2: Granting **specific economic aid** to vulnerable homes of minors aged 15 to 17, enough as to substitute the income generated by the work of adolescents, safeguarding their educational process.²³

Proposal 3: Referring adolescents aged 15 to 17 that wish to work —and who meet the requirements established by law—, to **public work induction programs**

that safeguard the continuity of their compulsory educational activities (school attendance) and ensure positive insertion²⁴. An experience to pay attention to may be the Uruguayan one, with its program “I Study and Work” (“Yo Estudio y Trabajo”), which began in 2012²⁵.

Proposal 4: Improving the recently enacted **Law N° 21,271, which adapts the Labor Code in matters of protection of children and adolescents in the working world**. Particularly, reconsidering changes mandated for working hours²⁶, safeguarding compatibility between working and educational activities²⁷ and, also, Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the right to rest and leisure, to play and to recreational activities.

Proposal 5: **Gathering information periodically about activities and the use of time of children and adolescents**, understanding that it represents a basic input to monitor and design public policies, especially to fight domestic child labor that, because of its nature, is more difficult to audit.

²³ In Chile, economic incentives to school attendance are marginal and turn out to be little effective to encourage continuity of the educational process for students at risk of child or adolescent labor. An example of this is the Bonus for School Attendance Duty (Bono por Deber de Asistencia Escolar), a benefit of \$6,000 a month per child, intended for families that use the Subsystem of Assurances and Opportunities (Subsistema de Seguridades y Oportunidades), whose children aged 6 to 18 are studying at an educational institution recognized by the State, whether in elementary or high school education, and that comply with a monthly school attendance equal to or higher than 85%.

²⁴ In Chile, youth employment programs, such as Yo Trabajo Jóvenes of FOSIS, exclude this segment of the population, since they are programs for young people aged 18 to 24, and exceptionally aged 17 to 29.

²⁵ See more at: <https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-trabajo-seguridad-social/politicas-y-gestion/programas/programa-yo-estudio-trabajo>.

²⁶ That maintain a maximum of 30 hours a week, reduce working hours during the school period from 8 to 6, and maintain the 8-hour maximum only for vacation period.

²⁷ The current legislation establishes that, during the school year, the total amount of time devoted to educational activities and working hours must not exceed 12 hours. However, considering a full school day of 8 hours and a full working day of 6 hours, they make up a total of 14 hours a day, without considering commuting times and domestic chores. As the ILO points out (2013), in Finland, for example the legislation establishes that the total duration of school hours and working hours must not exceed 8 hours, or the total number of weekly working hours must not exceed 12 hours.

Proposal 6: Reinforcing the capacities of competent authorities and schools to detect and follow up on cases of child and adolescent labor, particularly, in emergency contexts and in areas that present higher vulnerability²⁸.

2. Prevention of adolescent pregnancy

Proposal 7: Implementing **ongoing awareness campaigns**, within and outside the educational sphere, at least on two key issues. One, on **rights to sexual and reproductive health**, which addresses the importance of the use of safe contraceptive methods with the purpose of extending their use among adolescents. And the other, **against sexual abuse of children and adolescents**, focused on its visibility and prevention together with the protection of children and adolescents exposed to sexual violence.

Proposal 8: Developing a **National Comprehensive Sex Education Program**, in the context of the comprehensive sex education bill (Bulletin N° 12,955-04)²⁹, that aims at implementing it from preschool education, addressing it from a rights point of view and an educational perspective³⁰.

Proposal 9: Developing a **National Plan for the Prevention and Protection of Adolescent Pregnancies**, addressing this issue comprehensively and positioning it as a priority in the public agenda, establishing specific reduction goals and an effective articulation

among all services involved, allowing for the strengthening of existing school retention programs and the development of others that ensure continuity of the educational process of girls and adolescents in emergency situations.

Proposal 10: Developing a **National Protocol on Prevention, Detection, Approach and Sanction of Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents**, which strengthens institutional capacities and intersectoral relations to deal comprehensively with sexual violence during childhood and adolescence, considering emergency situations.

Proposal 11: Creating **school consulting services on comprehensive health for adolescents**³¹, to serve as everyday spaces for consultation, guidance and/or referral, focusing on the needs and problems relating to health in general, and, particularly, to sexual and reproductive health. During the health emergency, it is substantial to ensure in-person instances with minimum periodicity, that allow for children and adolescents to have contact with a person outside their core family that is able to identify situations of abuse and activate the necessary protocols.

Proposal 12: Activating **free and confidential remote service channels that are compatible with the emergency context** at public and private sexual and reproductive health services³².

²⁸ In line with the recommendations by ILO – ECLAC – SUBTRAB (2020) and by ILO *et al.* (2018).

²⁹ Currently archived. The idea to legislate was rejected and there was no insistence.

³⁰ In line with the recommendation by UNESCO (2020), which suggests “strengthening comprehensive sex education programs both in virtual and traditional formats, as a way of reducing vulnerability of girls and young women to early and unwanted pregnancies, HIV and gender violence, and therefore contributing to school reenrollment and permanence”. Likewise, it points out that said programs must continue once in-person classes are resumed, including references to sexual and reproductive health services and access to modern contraception methods for young people.

³¹ In Argentina, this initiative has been driven by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and UNICEF.

³² Following the suggestions of the Medical Association of Chile (Colegio Médico de Chile) (2020), in relation to generating clear national guidelines on call center services and provision of contraceptives, together with effectively informing the public about their availability.

Proposal 13: Eliminating regulatory obstacles that may hinder the free and timely provision of contraceptive methods³³ —establishing clear supply protocols for emergency situations³⁴— and services for the voluntary termination of pregnancy in the three causes established for Chile.

II. Cross-cutting proposals:

Proposal 14: Urgently advancing on the development of a **Law for the Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (Ley de Protección Integral de los Derechos de las Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes)**, considering that Chile is the only country in the region that does not have one.

Proposal 15: Strengthening public education by improving its quality, for which it is necessary to increase **resources allocated by the State to public education³⁵**, and to promote equitable, efficient and effective allocation. Education is a basic human right —universal, inalienable and indivisible— and that contributes to the achievement of many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)³⁶.

Proposal 16: Strengthening the **National Subsystem of Support and Care (Subsistema Nacional de Apoyos y Cuidados)**, by incorporating an early childhood component and extending its coverage³⁷. This, with the purpose of relieving thousands of women, including mothers who are adolescents and girls, from the caregiving load that quite often translates into domestic child labor.

³³ In line with the WHO Recommendations on health and sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents (WHO, 2019), which emphatically point out that “States, in view of human rights regulations, have the obligation to offer adolescents contraception information and services. States have the obligation to adopt legal and political measures to ensure access to affordable, safe, and effective contraceptives for everybody, particularly female adolescents. Female adolescents must have easy access to contraceptive methods in the short term, long term and permanently; they shall not be presented with obstacles due to their marital status or to the conscientious objection of healthcare providers. Contraceptive information and services, including emergency contraception, as part of sexual and reproductive health services, must be free, confidential, adapted to adolescents and non-discriminatory; obstacles to these services, such as the requirement of authorization by third parties, must be eliminated”.

³⁴ In line with the provisions of the National Regulations on Fertility Regulation in Chile (Normas Nacionales de Regulación de la Fertilidad de Chile), in the chapter on contraception in emergency situations and disasters, and with the UNFPA recommendations (2020b), on the provision of contraceptive methods, including emergency contraception, during the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean.

³⁵ According to the report *Education at a Glance 2020* (OECD), in Chile public expenditure on elementary and high school education as GDP percentage is equivalent to 3%, very similar to the OECD average (3.2%). However, in relation to the total expenditure on educational institutions per student, it shows that Chile spends \$US 5,259 on elementary education and \$US 5,167 on high school education, practically half of the corresponding OECD average (\$USD 9,090 y \$USD 10,547, respectively).

³⁶ In line with the UNICEF Education Strategy 2019-2030 (UNICEF, 2019).

³⁷ For further details on this proposal, see ComunidadMujer (2020).

Table 2/

16 proposals by ComunidadMujer to prevent school exclusion in Chile with a gender perspective, according to health emergency phase and risk factor

Phase of Emergency	EMERGENCY	POST-EMERGENCY	
	Response	Prevention Mitigation Preparation	Recovery
Risk factor	Actions carried out once the crisis has been declared, aiming at reducing its immediate impact	Short term-actions focused on preventing or reducing the impact of a new threat, developing knowledge and/or improving preparation capacities	Acciones de mediano y largo plazo encaminadas a restaurar o mejorar las condiciones previas a la crisis
Child and adolescent labor	Targeted socioeconomic aid	<p>Ongoing awareness campaigns</p> <p>Gathering of information on the use of time of children and adolescents</p> <p>Reinforcement of detection and monitoring systems of the competent authority and schools</p>	<p>Updating of legislation on adolescent labor</p> <p>Public work induction programs</p>
Adolescent pregnancy	Provision of contraceptive methods and services for the voluntary termination of pregnancy in emergency situations	<p>Ongoing awareness campaigns on the rights to sexual and reproductive health and against sexual abuse of children and adolescents</p> <p>Comprehensive health school consulting services</p> <p>Sexual and reproductive health remote service channels</p>	<p>National Comprehensive Sex Education Program</p> <p>National Plan for Prevention and Protection of Adolescent Pregnancy</p> <p>National Protocol for the Prevention, Detection and Addressing of Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents</p>

Law for the Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents

More State resources for public education

Strengthening of the National Subsystem of Support and Care

Source: Developed by ComunidadMujer.

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We are an organization with gender expertise that promotes women's rights and contributes to the debate, discussion and generation of public and corporate policies for greater equality and equity in our country.

We promote a transversal dialogue and permanent action with various national and international social actors, in the fields of education, work and politics. Through public-private partnerships, research, advocacy, leadership training and gender consultancies, among other initiatives, we work with an innovative perspective to facilitate cultural transformation that allows us to achieve sustainable development.

Our purpose is that women are born and grow up in a country with equal rights and opportunities.

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