

Intra and extra school factors associated with educational backwardness in vulnerable communities

Factores intra y extra escolares asociados al rezago educativo en comunidades vulnerables

Research

Elizabeth Mendoza Cárdenas

Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León-México
bettymendozac@yahoo.es

María Zúñiga Coronado

Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León-México
maria.zunigacn@uanl.edu.mx

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Abstract

Six Objectives of development of the Millennium focused on childhood were established on 2000 with the aid of the 189 countries that form the United Nations, due to the situation presented by children from all around the world. One of the objectives strives to assure that by 2015 all children will complete their primary education. A series of individual and structural factors keep children from staying in school. According to several studies, external factors, such as poverty and gender end up being the key reasons that keep children away from school. This paper has the objective of showing the result of an exploratory study realized from a mixed focus over the perception that directives, professors, and citizens from Polígono San Bernabé (Monterrey), regarding the factors that promote educational lay back within basic education. The main strategies used by institutions to avoid this issue will also be presented.

Keywords: Drop-out, social inequality, basic education, poverty, educational backwardness, social vulnerability.

Resumen

Ante la situación que presentan los niños y niñas del mundo, sobre todo los de los países en desarrollo, se establecen, con la participación de 189 países miembros de las Naciones Unidas, en el 2000, seis Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio dirigidos a la infancia. Uno de ellos pretende asegurar para el 2015 que todos los niños y niñas terminen la enseñanza primaria. Una serie de factores individuales y estructurales impiden el acceso o permanencia de los niños y niñas en la escuela, sin embargo, de acuerdo a una serie de estudios realizados, los factores externos, como la pobreza, y el género resultan ser los factores clave que mantiene a los niños alejados de la escuela. El presente trabajo tiene por objetivo mostrar los resultados de un estudio exploratorio realizado desde el enfoque mixto sobre la percepción que tienen directivos, profesores y habitantes de nueve agebs del Polígono San

Bernabé, del municipio de Monterrey, sobre los factores que promueven el rezago educativo de los estudiantes que cursan la enseñanza básica. Se dará a conocer, además, las principales estrategias utilizadas en las instituciones educativas para incidir en los factores de riesgo.

Educational backwardness in Mexico

We understand backwardness as the educational level of an individual or a group, inferior to the academic standard established as the minimum or sufficient. According to Suárez Zozaya (2001), it is an inequality condition and lack of justice in terms of services and educational opportunities distribution.

Educational backwardness is one of the main problems that affect Mexico. On a national level, in 2010, the percentage of the population 15 years or older who are illiterate or have not finished primary or secondary education was 40.7%. The percentage of the population who didn't finish primary education was 12.9%, which is equivalent to 10 082 386 people. In Nuevo León a 28.8% of educational backwardness is registered, which is equivalent to 958 035 individuals who are illiterate or haven't finished primary or secondary education. The people who have finished primary amount to 282 141 (8.5%) (INEG, 2010).

The factors associated with educational backwardness are multiple, for which they are studied following two approaches. One approach is centered on the intra-school variables and the other on extra-school variables (Espinoza, Castillo, González y Loyola, 2012). Within the internal factors in schools are the allocation and administration of resources, the training and working conditions of the teachers, the salaries, study plans, the teaching model, and the perceptions and believes of teachers regarding their students. The extra-school approach points out that the main reasons for educational backwardness are closely related to the socioeconomic situation,

Descriptores: Abandono escolar; desigualdad social; educación básica; pobreza; rezago educativo; vulnerabilidad social.

the culture and the family context of the students. Poverty, unemployment, low schooling of the parents, marginalization, pregnancy at an early age, drug use, family disintegration, as well as the low expectative the families have on education, are identified as the factor within the family context which can trigger educational backwardness (Muñoz Izquierdo, 2009).

Methodological outline

It is a mixed research performed with the participation of the inhabitants, teachers and managerial members of the main primary and secondary schools located on the San Bernabé area of the Metropolitan area of Monterrey, characterized as poor. For this study, the strategy of sequential procedures of the mixed investigation method was used. Which means the project is primarily qualitative and the quantitative analysis was fused to provide introspection in different levels or analysis units to achieve a profound comprehension of the problem.

Qualitative Methodology

A dialogue was established with teachers and representatives of educational institutions through the in-depth interview, as well as adults residing in the communities of the area. The dialogue was aimed at understanding the perspectives of each party regarding the factors affecting the school performance of basic-level students, as well as the proposals to address it.

The first contact with the area was made through an exploratory visit, which allowed to identify the social organizations and institutions located in the colonies, among them the educatio-



nal ones. Also, the approach with some inhabitants facilitated the identification and the contact with other settlers; the *snowball* was the strategy used for this purpose.

Profile of the interviewed subjects

Dialogue was established with eleven persons from different colonies located in eight *agebs* of the San Bernabé Area of the municipality of Monterrey. Six of the respondents hold positions at primary level educational institutions, four of which hold management positions, one as a teacher and one as an assistant. In addition, we talked with one parish priest and the remaining four, are settlers. As for sex, three are men and nine women. All people are adults.

Quantitative methodology

We used the transectional or transversal descriptive research design and to select the households of San Bernabé, the probabilistic method, denominated “simple random”, was used. Once the households were selected, we went to their respective homes and a questionnaire was directed to someone who met the requisite on being of legal age. The sample of the *agebs*, object of the present study, consists of 559 addresses and information collected from 2 290 residents of the selected houses. The sample allows making estimations with a 95% reliability.

Results

The context

The San Bernabé Area is located in the North-West part of the City of Monterrey. It bor-

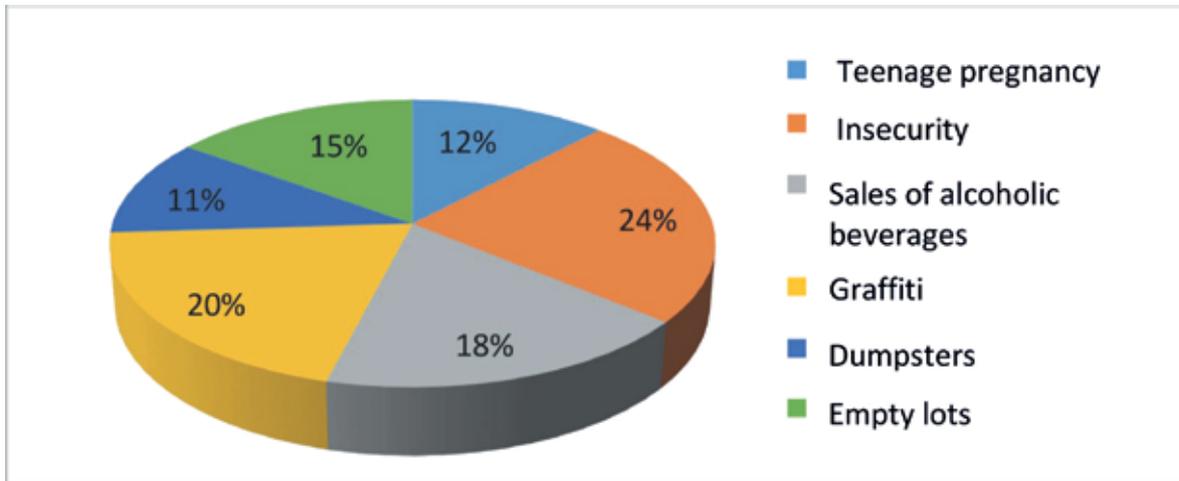
ders with the municipality of Escobedo and with the Hill of the Topo Chico. According to its morphology it comprises two zones. The zone of San Bernabé that is characterized by being flat ground and with urban equipment and the Croc, zone located in hills, with deficiency or deterioration of urban infrastructure.

San Bernabé / la Croc, emerged as an illegal urban settlement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The houses were precarious, all kinds of urban equipment were lacking, such as basic services to the interior of the house and public services in the colony; darkness and remoteness of the properties promoted that from the beginning, that people were victims of assaults and robberies in their homes. Currently, the Area consists of 28 *agebs*, comprising 32 colonies. There are significant advances in urban development in most of the area. Almost all the colonies have basic services, with basic schools, a *CONALEP*, a Health Center, public plazas, sports courts and a macro-centre. The quality of housing has also undergone major changes, as most are built of solid materials, such as concrete, in addition, many are held with the title of ownership. However, the settlements located in the upper area of the Croc are the most marginalized because they are located in federal territory. The houses are characterized by being built in wooden walls or blocks stacked or other waste material and with galvanized roofs, do not have the installation of basic services, only through irregular connections they have access to electricity and Water, in addition, there are practically no access roads.

The lack or malfunction of basic services, insecurity, unemployment, low incomes, family disintegration, and educational backwardness are the problems currently facing the inhabitants of the communities of San Bernabé / La Croc and the main manifestations of these are: (See Figure 1).



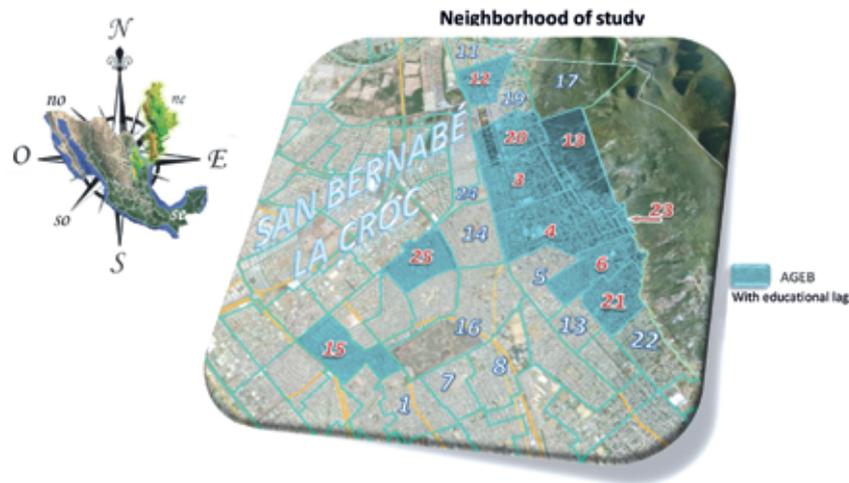
Figure 1. Problem situations in the communities of San Bernabé / La Croc



Source: Own elaboration, the calculations presented were obtained using the information from the Baseline Questionnaire made to households, UANL-SEDESOL 2014.

The educational backwardness of primary school students is identified in nine agebs of San Bernabé, 3 (La Croc), 4 and 23 (Extension of the Slopes of the Topo Chico), 6 (Gloria Mendiola and El Porvenir), 12 (Conquistadores/La Croc), 15 (San Bernabé XIV), 20 (La Croc), 21 (Municipal Amplification and La Reforma) and 25 (San Bernabé XII). (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Map of the Polygon San Bernabé / La Croc



Source: Own elaboration based on information from DENUE

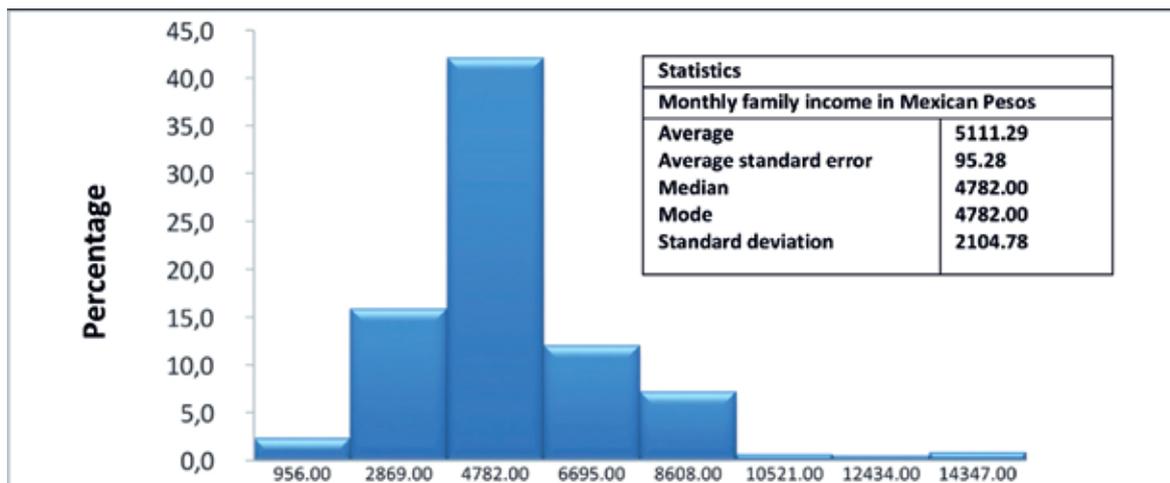
The area of the Croc, is where we identify greater backwardness, in comparison with the zone of San Bernabé. The majorities of the inhabitants of these agebs have a low educational level, and develop informal jobs. The bulk of the male workforce performs as masons, carpenters, welders or mechanics. Informal trade is the second sector where they earn income for survival (See



Figure 3). In the case of women, in general, they also work in the informal market, primarily as domestic workers in the Cumbres area.

Due to the characteristics of employment, the inhabitants receive low wages and lack access to health services and social benefits (See Figure 4).

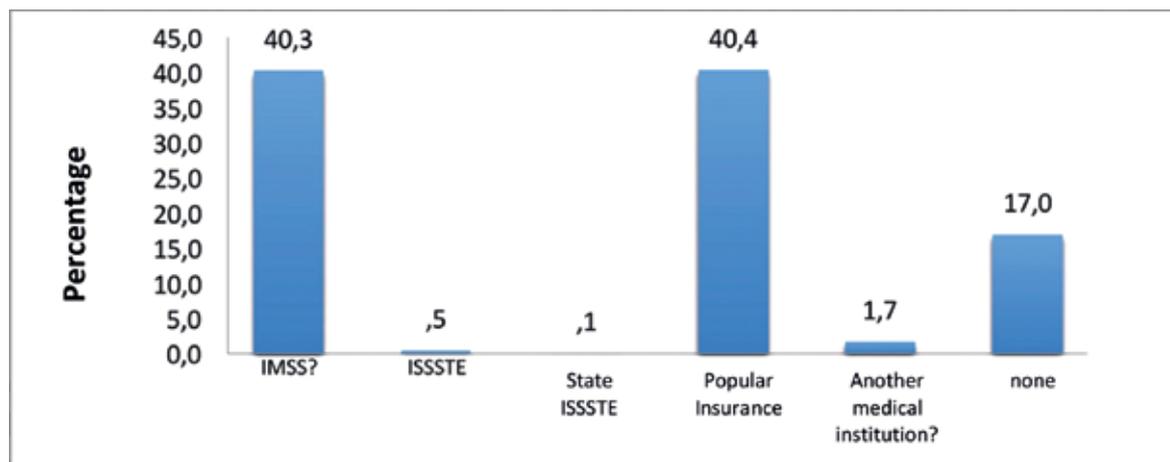
Figure 3. Monthly family income in the communities of San Bernabé / La Croc



Source: Own elaboration, the calculations presented were obtained using the information from the Baseline Questionnaire made to households, UANL-SEDESOL 2014.

Households are inhabited by five people on average ($\bar{X} = 5.13$, $DE = \$2.205$) and the estimated family income in the population, at the end of 2014, was $\$5,111.3 \pm \186.75 ($\bar{X} = \$5111.3$, $DE = \$2,104.8$).

Figure 4. Affiliation to health institutions of the inhabitants in the communities of San Bernabé / La Croc



Source: Own elaboration, the calculations presented were obtained using the information from the Baseline Questionnaire made to households, UANL-SEDESOL 2014.



The common denominator of these colonies is the presence of insecurity, family violence, family disintegration, gangs, drug addiction and unemployment.

Factors associated with the educational backwardness of students residing in vulnerable communities in the municipality of Monterrey

Multiple factors intra-school as well as extra-school are associated by the respondents to the low school performance or the educational backwardness of primary students living in the San Bernabé / La CROC Area in the municipality of Monterrey. However, extra-school factors, especially those related to the family context, are predominant in the discourse of the interviewees. In the first instance the extra-classroom factors and later the internal factors are described, which from the perception of the participants in the study affect the school performance.

Extra-school ambit

Family context. In the family sphere, the lack of interest of the parents, the paid work of the father and the mother, the family disintegration, domestic violence, poverty, the addictions, and the parents' schooling are the main situations identified as the cause of the School backwardness of primary students.

Disinterest of parents. Parents are the main actors identified by schools staff interviewed from different schools, such as those responsible for students' poor performance.

...the teacher is doing his part as he should... the student is being motivated in the school by the teacher to participate but the parents who are the third party do not fulfill what corresponds to them and for that reason the school does not go well academically (Staff/F/ 4).

The lack of interest and / or apathy of the parents in the educational process is reflected in the lack of attendance of the children to the school and in the non-fulfillment of the homework.

...the father and the parents who are free some of the do help but most of them don't. When we call them, we have asked the parents to come here... from students who are lagging, they leave their kids alone, they don't come they don't show up. There is people that pretend that the school is a day care or boarding school, they leave their kid here in August and don't come until July for the grades, but we never meet them. They have absenteeism problems, of internal desertion, they come and go. They go to San Luis or other estates y then return... It is disinterest and apathy that they have. They say that if they come we always scold them because their kids don't do homework, and only sometimes we receive it. But we have no fault in telling the parents, always negative. We never summon the good students... (Staff/F/12).

...the problem we have is the absenteeism, with the absenteeism we have much battle, there is a lot of irresponsibility of the parents, and we are always insisting that they send them daily, but there are always missing children. It is the biggest problem and that causes the school backwardness, which the children are falling behind, this, which has been in their learning... (Staff/M/20).

And in the absenteeism is the irresponsibility of the parents, ..., all arriving late, all scraping, all saying, "I over slept" countless excuses, so completely, irresponsibility of parents , that is, in non-attendance (Staff/F/25).

The family is identified by the heads of schools as an important agent of socialization in the transmission of norms and values for life, school and work, however, parents do not act as agents transmitting the values that are fundamental in education.



The values that the teachers encourage, I say the values and they bring them from home, the teachers we encourage them, we do not do give them, some already bring them, because the student's attendance when coming to a school ... 35 years of service and all our lives we have struggled with punctuality, but I say it is a Mexican culture being late, that's why (Staff/M/12)

The lack of parental involvement in the educational process is discouraging according to the perception of the interviewees, because of the parents' belief that teachers are responsible for educating and development of students. The low educational level of the parents (See Chart 1) is

another contributing factor to the school failure of the children.

..., because they want the teacher to make and have the magic wand to educate them, besides teaching them, to educate their children, error (Staff/ F / 25).

... but as people, many from here, from this colony, unfortunately not, studied only until high school or, or not even that because the mother of these children does not know to even read, she has to sign with her fingerprint when I send her something, to sign a document she has to put the fingerprint because she does not know how to even read (Dependent / F / 3).

Chart 1. Instructional level of persons aged 15 years or over who do not study

Level	Sex	
	Man	Woman
None	41	50
Primary	201	272
Secondary	339	296
High School	98	88
Normal	1	2
Technical or Commercial Career	21	37
Professional	23	20
Total	724	765

Source: Own elaboration, the calculations presented were obtained using the information from the Baseline Questionnaire made to households, UANL-SEDESOL 2014.

Paid work of father and mother. The work of both parents, particularly the incorporation of the mother into the labor market, is perceived as a major obstacle to students' school failure. The long working days, coupled with the time spent traveling in and out of work, prevent having the time to support and follow up on the children's school career.

... the mother is alone, she is going to work, the father is, he can be in prison, because we have had such cases, I had many situations like that, then we see that the child is unprotected ... (Staff / M / 12).

It is due to the lack of support on the part of the father of the family, they are little responsible parents regarding the support for their children, they are dedicated to work or to do other things, and do not pay attention to the child, they give importance to other things, less to the child, ... (Staff/ F / 25).

The mothers work, but, work in companies that pay them a little bit and they have to work 8 hours and more, with, with, with, the, transportation of the truck and all that, ladies are away from home 12 hours, yes, between going



and coming, so that's why the children also get bad grades because the mothers do not, do not help them do homework and, and do not realize, what is happening in ... sometimes they come and do not know the name of the child's teacher (Dependent / F / 3).

... is that many people as parents, because of work, do not pay attention to their children do not know with whom they come together or anything ... (Inhabitant / F / 18).

Domestic violence. Family violence is identified as a situation that often occurs in families.

Well here there is a lot of quarrels in marriages, the blows, almost usually there is no family that the woman deceived him, that the man hits the children, is one of the problems I think more have seen here in the colony (Inhabitant / F / 25).

Physical and / or psychological abuse by a family member, such as the father or stepfather, has important consequences on the psychophysical health of the students.

... a problem arose with a teacher who had the child that could not get up, and he does not want to get up and is crying and crying, and that he cannot support his feet, well what is going in, ... I tell the concierge to bring him here and I saw the legs and they were all bruised and the stepfather had attacked him with a broomstick and the little sister who was in the second I also brought it and I started to ask and said is that my dad Not us ... is it your dad that hits them? (Teacher / F / 12).

... there is a great deal of respect between the parent and the child because it seems, say the case, that a parent draws attention to the child with very strong words, sometimes with maltreatment (Staff/ M / 20).

Yes, yes there is abuse, if there is mistreatment because, uh, they want children to do everything, without them putting something on their part, and when children are disobedient,

then there is abuse, that, if I am the father, yes I am the mother, that you obey, and I agree, but as long as they do not have values in their house and do not base them, well, the result is there, they lack respect, they do not like it and it is where abuse is ... / F / 25).

Family disintegration. The change of address or the psychological trauma that students suffer when parents separate or divorce hinders academic progress.

... the famous, the famous case that my father left, right?, then, we are going to go with my grandmother who lives in another state or that the other husband comes to the lady and already has her husband and then that comes the real father and takes the children, no, problems, grave problems between boys, we see with impotence, here is very difficult regarding psychological problems, it is very difficult, if we have a child or several children with problems we are obviously not going to advance, it will be there blocking us (Staff/ M / 12).

... the family disintegration of the parents and there is another problem here that there are families, but there are families where drugs are used, then it is another thing that children bring, they see it and they talk about it, but in a minority, So it is mainly family disintegration (Director / M / 20).

In other cases, the breaking of the marital bond causes the abandonment of the children by the mother, situation that affects the emotional stability of the child and academic performance. Grandmothers are the ones who take responsibility for the upbringing and education of the grandchildren.

Many, many cases. No, I do not have, but there are, there are single mothers, divorces, grandmothers in charge of the grandchildren, because the mother left them, the mother did not take care of them, she got together with another couple and they did not take them anymore (Staff/F/25).



Poverty. Educational backwardness or school dropout is also triggered for economic reasons. Children are used by parents as an instrument to earn income to supplement family spending, so instead of attending school, they wander the streets or on public transport trucks asking for money or selling some item in order to obtain income to complete family spending.

... someone who rescues these children because when those children do not come to school is because they are begging for hand-outs on a truck, I know, they have seen them, they sell pallets they sell candy and help their dad to, to sell I do not know what to do what, so that they have, the parents, have food, when the parents are the ones who should not work them and that's it, ... (Dependent / F / 3).

Petrita (a fictitious name) who left the high school has not been taken care of and the lady is not taking her to high school, she walks in the streets begging for money, selling things in the trucks, and the other time I saw her here in the neighbourhood with a person of the same height as she is, another little child, but it was not her father, he was a young man, the girl is already 13 years old, right, they are neglecting her but they do not say anything on television, they do not say that parents are failing as parents (Dependent / F / 3).

Of the analyzed sample we found 377 young people in the range of nine to nineteen years of age, of them, currently 103 do not study. Based on this data, we can estimate that $27.3\% \pm 4.5\%$ of the population in this age group present educational backwardness and express as main reasons for leaving school: lack of money, do not like to study and need to work (see Figure 5).

Hunger is also an impediment in the learning process of students. Hunger and poor nutrition disrupt school progress because it drastically reduces attention and concentration.

... here with the children, in bad behavior, in aggression from one child to another and in not progress in the lagging behind because the

child cannot concentrate because he is hungry, because he is thinking that his dad beat his mom, he is thinking his mom came high or drunk or is thinking that his dad fell asleep ... (Dependent / F / 3).

Addictions. Alcohol and other drug addictions from parents lead to a lack of support in a variety of settings, including education.

The problems of the students are very visible, uh, there is the drinking, drug addiction and that the parents are not at home with them, this is problematic, very serious here in the community (Staff / F / 25).

The lack of legal identity excludes children from school, since without the birth certificate they can't be enrolled.

... mmm, always it is very rare the faces that are that the couples fight like this, there are many children who are not in the school or registered still; And good reason for it is that they need to check so close family by family and if they will find many that if you ask for the birth certificate they do not have it... (Inhabitant / F / 15).

Intra-school ambit

In the formal field, there is a lack of support from school principals and the Ministry of Education so that teachers can intervene in certain factors associated with backwardness, such as child abuse and lack of material support (textbooks).

The response of school administrators to cases of abuse is indifference or complicity, refusing to intervene or trying to prevent teachers from intervening, because they have to comply with the instruction of the Ministry of Education to not be involved in these cases.

... and of course I got into a big problem with the principal because she didn't want me to, I said but I had to do that, because no, because, the media will come and what do you want me to do here. They are going to come with us



because he was not attacked here, but if I had not done it, they would have said that teacher as irresponsible as she saw that he was beaten and did not act, so that he could have you done teacher? (Teacher / F / 12).

And this is not from... this is from the very Ministry, that they are a unconscious, incongruous dependency, because the first thing that they tells us, you do not get yourself involved (Staff/ M / 12).

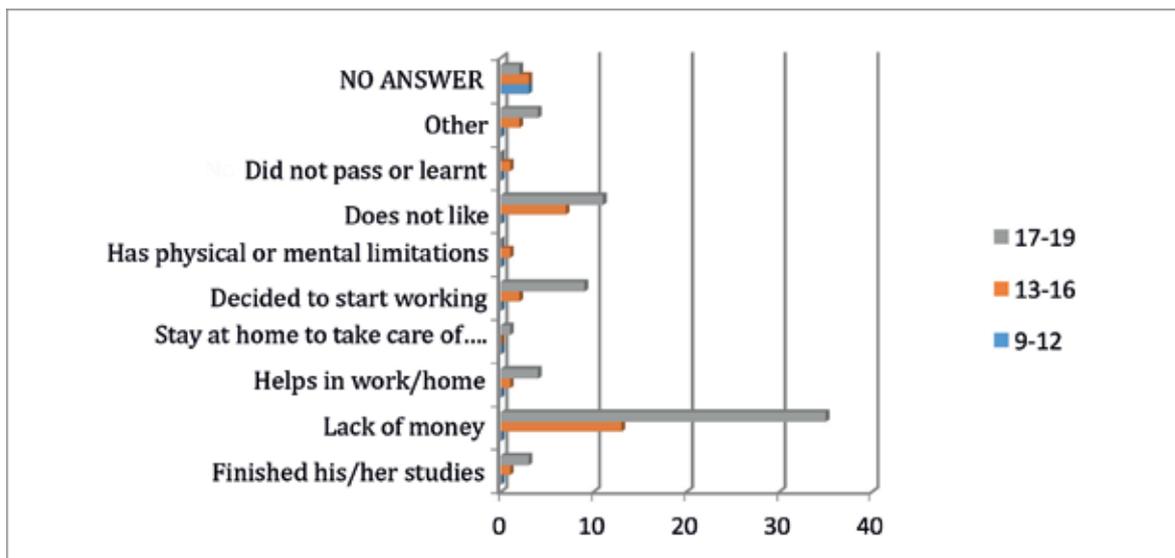
The non-distribution of textbooks by the Ministry of Education favors the educational backwardness of the children in the area.

... and I have removed many vices that the teachers had, for example they did not carry a planning; for example they did not record the works of children in the notebooks and I asked for the notebook when I ... - the notebook where you have the assistance where they have the grades- And the teachers -: what notebook? - the notebook that you must carry, the registration - we had a month in school and the teachers only had one or two grades and I said - everything that you grade must be registered

- and I started to ask them and to ask them and now they got used to that they have to send me the planning, the notebook of attendance the report cards and that they have to average with the daily assignments, the examinations. We have been advancing and this ... there is still a lot to do yet, but, but the teachers are no longer lacking, they are early, they work as a team, we have projects and we carry them out and we have evidence (Principal / F / 4).

[...] Neglected children, many are not cared for in schools, many teachers who come to classes here, do not want to come here, then come reluctantly, because they require a post, then it also affects the treatment of children. Then we begin by wanting to have a relationship with the teachers, with the schools, telling them to see, in the catechism we perceive that these children do not learn, we want them to tell us how they are there in school, at best tye children bring a family problem, and we need to detect what the problem is, to provide a thorough solution, together, they did not want to, they did not want to, because a lot of problems are generated in the school (parish priest/ M / 21).

Figure 5. Main reasons for dropping out of school by age range



Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Baseline



Strategies for overcoming

Among the main strategies that are carried out in schools to influence family factors is the implementation of school workshops and the value workshops for parents and students, as well as academic support projects.

The purpose of the school workshops is to encourage parents' participation in the academic field, promote communication between parents and children and between parents, teachers and school personnel.

Now we are seeing it frequently, for example we have marked dates, last week 4 groups participated, this week began one and the activities are marked for each month, in the meetings of the technical board, we marked all the activities and we marked all the groups and we are scheduling for all parents, if they have, for example, that if they have children in third and fifth, well that on this day come with the third and the day that comes the fifth, come with the fifth. In order for them to spend time and carry out activities with their children and comply with both, we schedule all these activities and with parents and send the invitation (Principal/ F / 25).

From last year to here, you can see a lack of values, I gave myself to the task, as I say, to be open to parents in the community, communication, and that they understand, that responsibility in the home fostering the values (Principal/ F / 25).

Reading, writing and mathematics projects are aimed at providing training and advice in the areas where the greatest backwardness occurs.

... we propose projects to get children out of educational backwardness, such as reading and writing projects in mathematics, writing and values ... (Staff / F / 4).

The improvement route is also implemented so that students do not lag behind. [...] low performance, low performance, that is why we

are now implementing many strategies, which is the route of improvement, looking for suitable strategies, so that we do not have children lagging behind or in danger of failure, we are also very focused on fighting the Violence between themselves is ... (Assistant school / F / 6).

Conclusions

The genealogy of the educational backwardness of students living in the San Bernabé / La Croc is due to both extra-school and school factors. Factors that do not depend on the students' efforts, but which interfere with school achievement, are mainly poverty and lack of family support.

The economic factor has been taken care of by the government through the cash subsidies that families receive through the "Oportunidades" program, which has resulted in the permanence of some children in school. However, the inadequate use that some parents make of the government resource, as well as the characteristics of employment and the perception of precarious income continue to influence in the educational backwardness in these areas.

The family variable also plays a significant role in educational backwardness. The disintegration of the family, domestic violence and the incursion into the labor market, from both father and mother, directly affect the emotional state and therefore the mental health of children, affecting their academic performance.

Internal factors of the schools also play a significant role in educational backwardness, mainly the indifference on the part of the school authorities as well as the Ministry of Education regarding the effects that the family situation is having on academic performance of the children. The lack of presence of other professionals, social workers, psychologists, etc., to attend to aspects related to the mental health of the students, as well as those related to the family context (violence, disintegration, etc.) is a sample of the neglect or indifference of this problem.



To combat the factors that prevent students from completing the school cycle, it is necessary to implement various programs based on a qualitative and quantitative diagnosis of each colony and family. Programs will be more effective and efficient based on the characteristics, interests and needs of the actors involved, as well as those of their environment. The dialogue between the different actors involved must prevail over the vertical forms of approach to working together. The actions should aim at the re-signification that parents and students have of the importance of education in the quality of life, rather than in the reeducation of parents, as well as to establish alternatives so that children who do not receive support at home for homework can receive assistance from other community actors, such as high school students and universities, through the formation of task clubs.

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