

“Students We Share” Research Summaries

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Children and youth return migration to Mexico--characteristics and challenges to educational

This paper has two basic objectives—to describe the nature and scale of the presence of students from the U.S. attending Mexican schools and to consider the basic barriers to entry in the schools of Mexico, discuss recent policy changes, and suggest ways to implement the new policies in schools and states that have not put them into effect.

The study relies heavily on the 2014 Census of Basic Education (CEMABE) and reports that the great majority of the more than 400,000 U.S. born students counted are either in primary school or preschools. These numbers do not include students who have failed to enroll or who seek to continue their education at the college level, and likely undercounts the actual number of these students substantially. The report analyzes the problem that many families have had in enrolling their children because they lack records that are officially stamped at very few offices in the U.S. with special international seals and because their children lack the official Mexican identity cards possessed by the vast majority of children born in Mexico, which are difficult for families to obtain because of a variety of requirements. The study reports that this has been a serious problem for students to enroll in middle school and can be an absolute barrier to high school enrollment. The study describes a major reform to ease these problems issued in 2015, which is not well understood and has not yet been implemented in many schools and regions.

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Education and the Perpetuation of Inequality in a Cross-Border Megalopolis

This paper is about the context of unequal educational and economic opportunity within the vast urbanized area from Los Angeles through Tijuana. The students we share suffer some problems that are unique to them but many that affect lower income and minority families on both sides of the border. By examining demographic

trends, patterns of school success and school achievement gaps, and the relationship between educational attainment and economic success the paper uses official data from the census, schools, and labor markets in both countries and reports that the large majority of both the students in Tijuana and the Latino majority in Southern California, more than nine-tenths of them born as U.S. citizens, fail to achieve the level of education that is essential for economic success and mobility. Although new polling data from both sides of the border show tremendous student optimism about their future attainment and job success, the existing patterns, including discrimination in California and the limited time and resources described by other conference authors, notable educational progress has been below the level of attainment that is related to true mobility: higher education. The paper concludes that educational inequality is deeply embedded across this vast region and that it is necessary to explicitly attack the key barriers if we are to expect outcomes that differ from those in place for many years.

Dr. Luis Calva, Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF) lecalva@colef.mx

Migration flows of education and skills from Mexico to the US

This presentation is about the Survey on Migration in the Northern Border of Mexico (Emif North) at COLEF that provides reliable data on the volume and dynamics of migration of Mexicans moving to the northern border of Mexico and the United States. By 2015, according to the intercensal survey, it is estimated that the volume of the population living in Mexico and studying in the US is 41,805. Among border entities with high numbers of migrants, Baja California (16,387) and Chihuahua (9,319) have the highest number. This phenomenon is closely related to another seen in the border area: that is, mothers who have their children in the US. Data show that 78.4% of those studying in the US were born in that country.

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The Mexican universities and institutional restrictions placed on “los retornados” from the U.S.--Studies of State

Social inequality is replicated in universities in Mexico, because while in cities such as Mexico City and in states like Sonora, Sinaloa and even Jalisco there are good academic offerings and significant financial resources, there are states with smaller budgets and greater underachievement (Guerrero, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo). Autonomous universities (most of them are public) are very important because in them lies most student demand, and autonomy allows each institution in the country to establish its own admission criteria and enrollment periods. Consequently, the country has as many

different admission criteria and different enrollment periods as the number of State Public Universities (UPEs) and Federal Public Universities (UPFs). This makes it very difficult for returnees navigate admission to universities even if they are academically prepared.

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Ideas and assumptions about Mexico among young Mexicans returning to the country

This presentation is based on five key observations that describe the situation of returnees to Mexico:

1. Their perception of Mexico as imagined from afar: The pendulum swings from love to hate
2. The experience of forced return: Confronting their own ideas, platitudes and prejudices about the country and society that are unknown, or superficially known)
3. The attitudes of teachers against the new Mexicans: Not recognizing that just because they are Mexicans they don't necessarily know or understand many things in their context—the source of enormous frustration
4. The need to create programs that will locate the history, political system and political culture in a broad schema in which we live daily with a certain lack of clarity
5. The tools to combat mutual stereotypes: Bringing young returnees tools that allow them to understand contemporary Mexico even with its rawness but also its potential. For example, the place of women, organized civil society, the role of youth, differences with political practices as with the election issue, the weight of electoral processes, etc.

Although one cannot change these ideas before living in the country, it is up to schools, teachers and students themselves to seek the way to address these perceptions and needs.

Dr. Rodrigo Aguilar Zepeda, COLEF rzepeda@colef.mx

Arriving at Mexican "Schools." Experiences of young immigrants and returnees in the process of integration and school integration in Mexico.

US migration to Mexico of children who accompany their parents is not an isolated event. Almost 190,000 children arrived in Mexico in 2010 and 110,000 in 2015. This study includes interviews with 20 children of relatively young age. The age at which they arrive invariably affects the way in which they experience school in a country that is often strange to them. Hence the importance of knowing how is it that school integration takes place for immigrant children to Mexico in two contexts: the city of Tijuana (9 interviews) and the city of Cuernavaca (11 interviews)? Tijuana as a border city and Cuernavaca located in the center of the country are different spaces that host these children. Among the most important findings of this study is that the age at which

children come to Mexico is a factor that directly influences the way they are integrated at school. One plus is that the repetition of grades, as a result of migration, does not seem to be an underlying problem, probably due to the fact that the children were very young when they first entered school in Mexico; the language itself seems to cause more difficulties in the process of school integration. Finally, most immigrant children are Americans (of Mexican parents) and their future plans often include returning to the United States, the question is in what academic condition will they return?

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Children Circulating between the U.S. and Mexico: fractured Schooling and linguistic ruptures

This is a study of the issue of language in the institutional context of schools in Mexico and the United States. Findings are presented about transitions and linguistic ruptures of migrant students who participate year after year in the seasonal type of circular migration between Mexico and the United States. The study offers descriptions of practices and perceptions of children about their own difficulties to read or write in Spanish, having spent part of the year in educational institutions in the US where English instruction is the norm. Students experience linguistic ruptures leading to a mismatch of basic skills essential for academic success. Without the skills, abilities and knowledge needed to complete in basic education in either school system, migrant children are in a situation of extreme vulnerability.

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Those who stay in Mexico and those who go to the U.S.-- A longitudinal comparison of the educational trajectories of youth in transition to adulthood

The Longitudinal Study of Educational Achievement (ELLE) in Mexico and the United States analyzes multiple variables that impact educational achievement and employment in the transition from youth to adulthood. It also compares the situation of young people and their parents of the same geographic origin (municipality of Ameca, Jalisco) in two countries: Mexico and the United States. And in the case of families who migrated to California it became a comparison between the situation of documented and undocumented immigrants with those who were already US citizens. This study was conducted initially in 2008 and 2009 with follow-up at both locations (Mexico and US) in 2014. In 14 cities located in northern and southern California, 67 young people were surveyed who were enrolled between grades 7 to 12 and 40 parents in migrant families were surveyed; and in the municipality of Ameca, Jalisco, 114 young people from two secondary and two high schools were interviewed with 90 parents. All young people in the sample were asked about current educational and occupational status, that is, at what grade level were studying, what level of studies they had reached or, if applicable,

what activity they were engaged in at the time. These questions allowed us to examine the educational paths of youth, and also provided important data to determine the degree of connection or social disconnection young people had with social institutions, as there were young people who were neither studying nor working, a situation that marginalized them and resulted in a total disconnection with these institutions, educational and / or economic, which should support them as they move towards adulthood.

In Mexico the school system does not provide sufficient opportunities and the tools necessary to succeed professionally, to "get ahead" in their adult life. By contrast, many of the Dreamers (children of undocumented immigrants) have found some success in the United States.

Mtra. Melissa Floca, US-Mexico Center, University of California, San Diego mfloca@ucsd.edu

The educational performance of Mexican students in the Californias

A survey we conducted of a representative sample of 9th and 10th grade students in the border area of San Diego and Tijuana shows the extent to which young people are rooted in a truly binational community and imagine futures for themselves that are binational as well. Only 10% of students in the cross-border region do not have ties to the opposite side of the border and that over half of students are very connected to both countries. The *students we share* have big aspirations for their futures, and trust schools and teachers to help prepare them for adulthood. However, they face important barriers to success and most in their mid to late twenties have not achieved the set of aspirations that these high school students have laid out for themselves. As we move into our second year of research, we will identify the determinants inside and outside of schools that lead to the significant gap between aspirations and outcomes in terms of educational attainment, social mobility and integration, and labor market placement.

Bryant Jensen, BYU, Dra. Silvia Giorguli, El Colegio de México (COLMEX), Eduardo Hernández Padilla, Universidad Autónoma de Morelos sgiorguli@colmex.mx

Academic achievement of Mexican youth considering migration to US

Prior research has shown how family and personal migration histories are associated with educational opportunity in terms of the quantity of schooling—i.e., current enrollments, high school completion rates, years of schooling, etc. We move beyond that approach to study the associations between migration variables and the quality of students' schooling—i.e., performance on a standardized measure of Spanish literacy—as they transition from middle to high school. By merging 2010 Mexican Census data with a 2008 nationally representative sample of 9th graders in Mexico we identified how

migration variables interact with school retention to affect students' migration plans, effort in school, and performance on a standardized measure of literacy. The results depict a new migration scenario existing in Mexico, where *migration* in rural communities is no longer seen as *the* 'escape valve' and where these Mexican youth now also consider alternative options to migration or postpone their plans to migrate. Findings show that immediate plans for students who consider emigrating are associated with lower academic performance, and that this relationship varies by family socio-economic status and, less so, by urbanicity. Results also show that students today in rural communities are now enrolled longer than any adult family member or immediate social network. However, although the *quantity* of schooling may have increased, the *quality* of schooling for children of migrant families has not. This study reemphasizes the need to target school improvement efforts in underprivileged and under-resourced communities where migration continues to be perceived as an alternative to school success.

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Children of International Migration: consequences for school trajectories.

Over 12 years members of a bi-national and multidisciplinary research group have been surveying, interviewing and observing the children who come to schools in Mexico from the United States. To date, we have data on nearly 1,500 children in five Mexican states. We have concluded that Mexican schools there are no welcoming policies, in fact, these students are often invisible to their teachers. Their skills and knowledge are not recognized. They suffer in the transition from English to Spanish literacy without support. They repeat grades without understanding why. They lose school years because they are not allowed in schools at the date on which they reach Mexico. Their grades fall: many who were excellent students in the United States are considered in Mexico to simply be "regular" students. Sometimes they are humiliated because of the way they speak Spanish or because they cannot read texts in Spanish.

Policies and strategies to welcome these students in Mexican schools, starting with the training of teachers and principals, are the key to the *students we share* becoming successful and their valuable skills recognized and used by both countries. More than half of these returnees, according to our surveys, are born in the United States and therefore have both nationalities and all predictions indicate that their adult lives will unfold in both countries. Children with school experience in the United States have higher aspirations than children who have not migrated. Their bicultural skills, bilingualism (oral and written), and transnational learning constitute valuable human capital for Mexico and the United States.

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Socio-economic determinants of the educational skills of the students we share

This paper analyzes the socioeconomic conditions of group of high school students in the bi-national border region of Tijuana-San Diego determined to be "students we share," which is defined as students who have completed part of their formal education on both sides of the border, or who in one or more aspects of their life are linked to this phenomenon.

In this sense, this work characterizes the socioeconomic conditions of the student population, taking into account such factors as employment status of parents and access to resources and tools relevant to education; the conditions of physical and emotional health, such as access to medical services, quality of food and current emotional status. These elements are relevant for understanding the problems related to the educational performance of young bi-national students on the one hand and their transition from youth to adulthood on the other, since according to the literature there are family institutional, and social context factors that help to explain the differences in how their development unfolds. Additionally, the database itself provides unique survey data in the bi-national region, and the analysis provides the incorporation of the degree of trans-nationality as a key element for analysis.

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Fragmented Schooling: Examining the Educational Experiences of Indigenous, Undocumented, and Deported Mexican Youth

Using secondary analyses of datasets from four studies of undocumented, deported, and indigenous Mexican students in the U.S. and Mexico, our findings suggest parallel forms of marginalization and exclusion on both sides of the U.S. Mexico border that negatively impact academic engagement. In the U.S. undocumented students lack access to college preparatory courses and information about higher education access. Zapotec, Mixtec, and Purepecha indigenous students in the U.S. suffer from various forms of school-based discrimination due to their indigenous language use and "indigenous" physical characteristics. Similarly, Purepecha students in Michoacan who have internalized negative stereotypes about their academic abilities are less likely to be engaged in school there. Deported youth back in Mexico suffer from various forms of discrimination due to their lack of Spanish language proficiency and American cultural identities that limit their ability to access higher education. Despite these challenges, our research on transnational Mexican students in the U.S. and Mexico suggests that when indigenous, undocumented, and deported youth receive social and language

support from teachers and peers they are more likely to be engaged in school and to report lower psychological distress.

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American citizenship, schooling and bi-national school access for children of recent immigration from the U.S.A.

In this study I analyze the association between being outside the Mexican school system (not attending school in Mexico or attending in the US) of children living in the northern Mexican border region with recent arrivals from the US, and US citizenship. Also analyzed is the relationship between underachievement and these last two variables according to the country where they study. Based on the Intercensal Survey 2015 I have found that children from the US have a higher risk of dropping out when they are born in the US or attended school in the US, compared to their non-immigrant counterparts. Furthermore, the possibilities of educational underachievement are higher for students from the US when they are US-born, both in Mexican schools and in the US, even after taking into account the economic, social and human capital at their disposal in their homes as well as having a Mexican birth certificate. While migrant children born in the US have access to bi-national schooling at the border, they lag in achievement, which can be attributed to a number of barriers to social and school integration.

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Mexican Teacher Responses and Possible Responses to Transnational Students in Mexican Schools

Based on a review of 68 educators (teachers and administrators) collected over a decade at schools across Mexico, this paper considers how Mexican educators make sense of and respond to binational/transnational enrollees (i.e., students with prior experience in the US). We propose a 5-part taxonomy that characterizes the range of responses (including the non-response of not knowing that there were such students in the enrollment). Many teachers described migrant students as particularly vulnerable and with difficult family circumstances, but others noted that such students often had academic skills, particularly in English, that could be helpful additions to Mexican classrooms. Few teachers felt ready to meet the needs of migrant students and our recommendations include ideas for teacher training and in-service professional development.

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Competencies of Teachers of Transnational Students: Do They Have the Language and Cultural Skills Our Students Need?

This paper presents data from three border states with similar populations of transnational students: Arizona, California, and Texas. The academic achievement as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th grade reading test for transitional students in Arizona is lower than California by one standard deviation, which in turn is lower than that of Texas, also by a standard deviation. To assess the origins of these differences, the paper presents a summary of the skills that teachers of transnational students should have regarding language and culture, according to research. The research findings indicate that transnational students have higher academic achievement when teachers are required to have a specialization in bilingual education and when teacher certification requirements include three main areas: (1) the benefits of promoting the mother tongue for literacy development; (2) knowledge of how a second language develops; and (3) knowledge of the assessment of student learning. The research findings also indicate that teachers need to have a deep understanding of the student, including their socio-historical context. Although it is obvious that at the state level the requirements vary substantially, the data support the need for teachers of transnational students to meet the requirements of bilingual education, but to strengthen this goal, the policies of states and both countries must reflect that bilingualism is the goal for our students.

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Classroom Learning Opportunities for the Students We Share in Mexico

In this paper we analyze Mexican Census data to provide a demographic portrait of three groups of children (ages 6-17 years old) with U.S. association in Mexico vis-à-vis migration experiences: Mexican-born returnees, U.S.-born returnees, and those with a household family member who recently migrated to the U.S. (i.e., “remaining behind”). We conceptualize classroom-learning needs for these students, and share descriptive findings from a recent K-1 video study of classroom quality in Aguascalientes. We find that nearly 1.2 million primary- and high-school-aged children fall into one of these three groups, 4.5% of the child population throughout Mexico. U.S.-born returnees increased significantly from 2010 to 2015, whereas the other two decreased in size. According to our estimates, there were 320,581 U.S.-born returnees ages 6 to 17 years old in 2010, and 412,246 in 2015. Expanding the age range from birth to college—i.e., ages 0 to 24 years old—there were 628,573 U.S.-born returnees in 2015 (well over 700,000 when including Mexican-born returnees). Though dispersed nationally, there were higher concentrations of U.S.-born children in northern and central states, and extensive within-state variation. In nearly a quarter of municipalities, more than 3% of the child population was U.S.-born in 2015, and in 45 municipalities more than 10% of children were U.S.-born returnees. We find in the video study that K-1 classrooms demonstrated decent emotional support and organization, though they were largely disconnected and the quality of instructional support was somewhat weak. We recommend using Census data to target school and communities that are highly

impacted by return migration. Instruments of classroom quality should be developed and refined to measure generic quality, local quality, and instructional time. These measures should be used to design and test teaching practices, education policies, and professional development initiatives that enrich learning opportunities for returnees and others.

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Basic Profile of Teachers in the U.S. and Mexico: Prospects for Translational Students

This paper presents a profile of the demographic characteristics of public school teachers in Mexico and the U.S. The limited data that is available to compare and contrast teachers in both countries paints a complicated picture for transnational students: In the United States, children of immigrant Mexican families enroll in mostly monolingual schools, causing a decline in proficiency and use of Spanish. In Mexico, teachers and schools are woefully unprepared to incorporate children of returning migrants. Mexican public schools are of comparatively lower quality than schools in the United States. Mexican public schools are largely staffed by less qualified teachers, have poor levels of resources including technology and basic learning materials, and have large class sizes (on the order of 30-40 students in high schools), though it is important to note that Mexican immigrant students tend to go to the poorest, most segregated and poorly staffed schools in the United States. The school day is short: 6 hours in middle school and high schools, 4.5 hours in elementary school. Extracurricular offerings are limited. This results in lower performance levels overall for Mexican students when compared to U.S. students overall. Nonetheless, Mexican students in the U.S. do not fare well compared to their non-Mexican peers. Although the U.S. has developed English as a Second Language programs for immigrant students (sometimes of dubious quality), Mexico does not have programs to transition returning students with limited Spanish proficiency into the mainstream curriculum and an estimated fewer than 5% of Mexican teachers are bilingual and capable of assisting returning students in English.

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School in the lives of young indigenous migrants: Case studies in the Santa Maria Valley, California--Students' perceptions on discrimination and unfairness in rural schools in California

This project is studying the effects of deportations on one hand and on the other the effects of DACA in families of mixed legal status in rural California. These phenomena are studied from the perspective of young people who have experienced schools in California and the study presents some of the problems that young people cited as most

important, including discrimination and lack of information on how to navigate the educational system in the U.S.

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School Itineraries of Children Moving from the United States to Mexico

Children and adolescents who cross the border between countries are also international migrants, however, they have not been considered as such in migration studies between the US and Mexico. This research has as its main interest to give children an important place as a social actor in migrant families. We believe that through the discourse of transnational children we can learn more about the dynamics in schools, homes and neighborhoods than if we only focus on the discourse of adults (parents, teachers and civil servants). In other words, adults cannot know what is best for transnational children if we do not listen to them. How do you feel when arriving in a new country, new school or new neighborhood? How have they been adapting to changes in their different environments? How do their teachers, classmates and Mexican family treat them? Therefore, in this presentation we focus primarily on projecting the views of children about schools in Mexico and the obstacles they have had to face, with their parents at various school stages. We use the methodology of life stories in a longitudinal investigation of 3½ years that is multi-sited.

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Voices of Trans-border Students: Identity, Linguaging and Schooling (Back) in Mexico

Children and young people are involved in the migration of their families, but their views are rarely taken into account when making decisions to leave or return to a country. This study shows their views and experiences with a focus on their struggle for identity as a Mexican, American or some combination between the two countries. It also shows the difference in the education of these students between countries, which is more difficult when it is the first time learning Spanish or an indigenous language. Cross-border high school students in Oaxaca formed a group called the "New Dreamers" in which they meet with other students who understand their experiences and worked to inform their teachers about their circumstances and needs. The above is recorded in the documentary *One Life, Two Countries: Children and You're (Back) in Mexico* (Children and Youth (Back) in Mexico). The documentary is available with the corresponding curriculum and guide for teachers: unavidathefilm.com.

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