

MEMORANDUM

Date: 09 February 2001

Re: Short memo comparing Puerto Rican education expenditure to various nations

As a percentage of GNP, Puerto Rico spends more on education than either of the five comparison countries and all but three Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The table over page provides raw figures and rankings of education expenditure as a percentage of GNP for 30 countries in addition to Puerto Rico including:

- Ireland, Korea, Mexico, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and the US as specific comparison countries
- Remaining Latin American and Caribbean countries for broad comparisons

This analysis was intended to provide a quick overview of the situation. The primary finding is that presented above.

Figures availability and measurement problems.

- Puerto Rico's education figures do not represent all education expenditure rather only that for schools and universities. This represents under rather than over measurement however – if the figures were complete, Puerto Rico's ranking would rise higher.
- I am concerned about the year \$ comparisons as the UNESCO data (which comprises all but the Puerto Rico data, does not provide details of \$ years. The standard is to expect that it is in current dollars however that has not been confirmed.
- As discussed, Puerto Rico's GNP is not a particularly representative measure. If 1994 GNP is adjusted downwards by one third (from \$26,640.9M to \$18337.3M), Puerto Rico's education expenditure rises to 10.3% of GNP, whereby the Commonwealth would lead all of the countries presented here.

Sources used were:

- US Department of Education, Common Core of Data, as published in Table 161 of The Condition of Education Report 1999, Washington DC.
- Office of Analysis and Economic Studies, Government Development Bank of Puerto Rico, 1999 Puerto Rico in figures, San Juan.
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Paris, at <http://unescostat.unesco.org/en/stats/stats0.htm>.

Conclusion

As I am not confident of the comprehensiveness nor the comparability of these figures, I believe more information, would provide a more telling picture.

Expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP

Country	Year	As percentage of GNP	Rank
St. Lucia	1994	9.8	1
Cuba	1994	7.5	2
Barbados	1994	7.2	3
Puerto Rico	1994-94	7.1	4
Ireland	1994	6.3	5
Belize	1994	5.9	6
Jamaica	1994	5.7	7
USA	1994	5.4	8
Venezuela	1994	5.2	9
Panama	1994	5	10
Aruba	1994	4.9	11
Bolivia	1994	4.9	12
Mexico	1994	4.7	13
Costa Rica	1994	4.6	14
Grenada	1994	4.6	15
Guyana	1994	4.5	16
Trinidad & Tobago	1994	4.4	17
Nicaragua	1994	3.9	18
Peru	1994	3.9	19
Argentina	1994	3.8	20
Korea	1994	3.7	21
Colombia	1994	3.6	22
Honduras	1994	3.5	23
Ecuador	1994	3.4	24
Chile	1994	3.1	25
Paraguay	1994	2.9	26
Uruguay	1994	2.5	27
Dominican Rep.	1994	2	28
El Salvador	1994	2	29
Brazil	1994	1.7	30
Guatemala	1994	1.5	31

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