

## EDUCATION: THE BASIS FOR COMPETITIVENESS

- *In Brazil, the unsatisfactory quality of basic education and the limited supply of technical and vocational training courses constitute barriers to productivity growth and to the competitiveness of companies.*
- *The design and implementation of educational policies adapted to both new market demands and new technologies are essential for Brazil's economic and social development.*
- *The approval of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) for Early Childhood and Elementary Education and the new Secondary Education Law point to favorable perspectives for change, bringing opportunities and challenges to be overcome for making progress in designing a new educational matrix for the country.*

**Education is still vulnerable in Brazil.** The low level of education of the Brazilian population and the poor quality of education interfere with the workers' ability to interact with new production technologies and methods, with negative effects on productivity, competitiveness, and growth potential.

**Despite advancements in universal access to Basic Education, problems still persist in Secondary Education.** Brazil has virtually succeeded in ensuring universal access to Elementary Education. In 2015, 97.7% of the population aged from 6 to 14 were enrolled in this educational level. Higher enrollment rates, student performance, and school flow in the elementary stage sustained the increase in the net enrollment rate of Secondary Education, which rose to 62.7% in 2015. However, approximately 1.5 million of 15-17-year-olds who should be enrolled in secondary education are out of school.

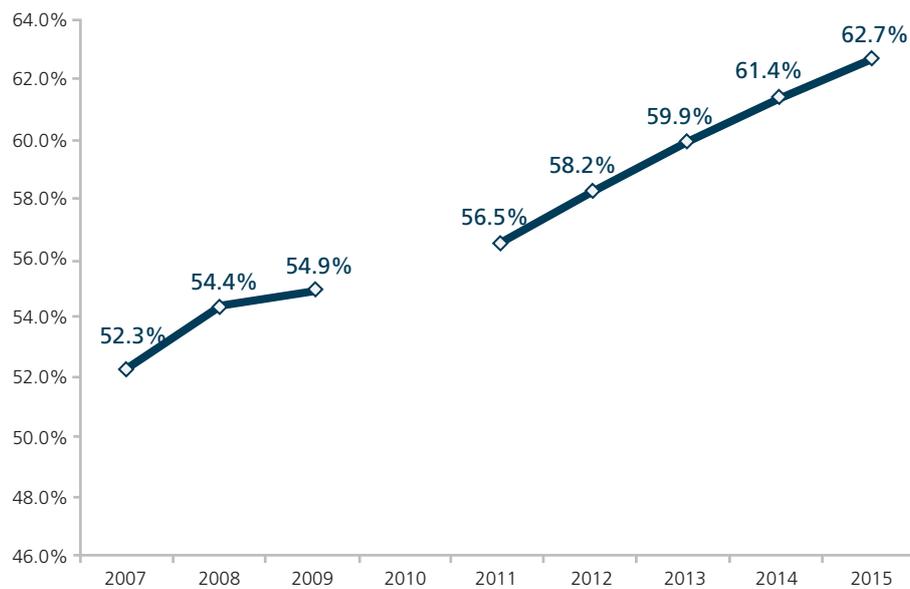
**Brazil has challenges to be addressed. Data from the 2017 PNAD show that the country has 6.9 million young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who neither work nor study.** They account for 30.1% of the population in this age bracket. The social and economic cost of this marginalization is high, since one in every three youths is not advancing in his or her education and

qualification, which hinders his or her inclusion and retention in the labor market.

**Another major challenge concerns the low Basic Education completion rate: only 58.5% of young people complete this stage of education by the age of 19.** Consequently, the share of the adult population that has not completed secondary education is high in Brazil. More than 70 million people enroll in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) to complete the schooling process. Also, enrollments in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) have dropped by almost 40% in the past 10 years to only 3.6 million in 2017: some 2.2 million in Elementary Education, 1.4 million in Secondary Education and only 54,000 in Vocational Education.

**Only 11.1% of Secondary Education students attend Vocational Training courses.** In more developed countries, more than half of secondary education students are enrolled in some type of Professional Education, called Vocational Education. In Austria and Finland, the percentage of young people attending vocational programs was about 70% in 2015, and in countries such as Germany, Denmark, France and Portugal this percentage exceeded 40%. Although this issue has been addressed by Law 13,415/2017, which reformed

PERCENTAGE OF 15-17-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL  
NET ENROLMENT RATE, 2007-2015



Source: PNE Observatory, 2017.

Note: Because it was a year in which the Demographic Census was carried out, the IBGE did not conduct the PNAD in 2010.

Secondary Education, Brazil still faces challenges associated not only with the need to adapt curricula and learning strategies, but also with the lack of structure and resources to transform the school system.

**In Brazil, only 15% of the population between 25 and 64 years of age have completed Higher Education, while in OECD countries this percentage reaches 37%.** In addition to limited access to higher learning, Brazil faces another important bottleneck related to Higher Education: it is estimated that approximately 64% of university degrees are in the areas of human and social sciences and only 16% are in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) areas. In OECD countries, about one in every four degrees is in STEM areas, thus reflecting a permanent effort to promote these courses.

## Main recommendations

**1 The curriculum structure and teaching methodologies should be reviewed.**

**2 The National Teacher Training Policy should be reviewed** and greater recognition of teacher training courses and the teaching career should be promoted.

**3 The supply of school places should be planned with a focus on Vocational Education and the supply of Vocational and Higher Education should meet the medium and long term demands of the productive sector.**

**4 Financing and school management policies should be reviewed** and a Vocational Education evaluation system should be implemented.

**5 Conditions for implementing the new Secondary Education Law should be established** and regulatory frameworks should be reviewed to improve, for example, vocational education.

**6 Education for socio-productive inclusion** should be given priority through the improvement of and new focus on Youth and Adult Education.

The full version of the document can be accessed through the QR code on the side or at: <http://www.cni.com.br/eleicoes2018/downloads/> This summary is part of the series Proposals of Industry for the 2018 Elections comprising 43 documents. The series, which is based on the *2018-2022 Strategy Map for Industry* is a CNI contribution to the new federal administration and presents analyses and proposals of priorities to increase Brazil's competitiveness. Any part of this publication may be copied, provided that the source is acknowledged. Brasília-DF, July 2018.

