

# **Mercosur Policies For Teacher Training: The Experience Of Educational Internships And Regional Mobility**

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## **Abstract**

In recent decades, multiple multilateral commitments have agreed to prioritize teacher training, under the conviction that it is the central factor in securing the quality and equity of education systems. With this objective, Ibero America and Mercosur have developed various public policies aimed at their teachers. All this, in a context characterized by the return of the State, the review of educational reforms implemented in the 1990s -with limited results-, and the expansion of access to education. In this framework, the article seeks to carry out a descriptive and exploratory analysis of the regional policies developed by the Mercosur Teacher Training Area Commission since 2011, with a focus on the experience of internships and mobility. As there is little research that addresses the topic in regional terms, a qualitative methodology is used to review both References and primary documents. After the analysis, it is concluded that the policies on the subject have been hierarchized and deepened in Mercosur. It is also recognized that the differences between the teacher training systems of the States add complexity to the processes of educational integration.

*Keywords:* Mercosur; teacher training policies; regional mobility.

## **1. Introduction**

In recent decades, major educational policy and research debates have paid special attention to teacher training. Conceived as a key factor for achieving quality and justice in educational systems, the case of Mercosur teachers presents unique challenges and characteristics. This is due, among other reasons, “to the constant expansion of coverage, the need to shore up the quality of Latin American educational systems, the imperatives of democratization and the achievement of higher levels of educational equity” (Alliaud et al. , 2014, p. 13). The aforementioned challenges must be understood within the framework of increasing educational globalization and internationalization of higher education.

Although teacher training institutions have less tradition in international cooperation experiences, policies for teachers currently include agreements, efforts and activities at multilateral, regional, national, subnational and institutional levels. Among them, UNESCO's International Task Force on Teachers (TTF) stands out, a global network of national governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, whose latest Strategic Plan aims to contribute to global debates on standards and standards related to teachers as an essential dimension of educational quality (UNESCO, 2022). At the hemispheric level, the Inter-American Commission on Education of the Organization of American States (OAS) has created a working group dedicated to strengthening the teaching profession. As a result, a complex governance scheme for teacher training emerges, which includes the Mercosur Educational Sector.

Although education was not contemplated in the creation of the regional integration process in 1991, a year later the Mercosur Educational Sector (SEM) was inaugurated 1. The inclusion of teacher training finds its most direct antecedent in a Working Group dedicated to the topic, which in 2011 was replaced

by the Teacher Training Area Commission (CA-FD). Its first stage of work was driven by the Mercosur Educational Sector Support Program (PASEM), a program financed by the European Union to contribute to the improvement of educational quality by strengthening professional teacher training in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The topic has increased its centrality and institutionality over the years within the Educational Sector.

Although the trajectory of this space is extremely relevant, research on regional educational public policies has barely addressed it. Along with this, the dominant literature on teacher training and Mercosur uses a comparative policy perspective, focusing on national realities (Aliaud and Feeney, 2014; Alliaud and Vezub, 2014; García and Pico, 2014; Lorenzatti and Ligorria, 2016). As a result, studies are recognized as necessary that promote an articulating perspective on a regional basis. In this scenario, this work proposes to carry out a descriptive and exploratory analysis of Mercosur policies for teacher training since 2011, with a focus on the experience of internships and regional mobility. Within the framework of a qualitative methodology, the selected methodological strategy is the case study, that is, the in-depth approach to the agenda of regional policies and initiatives in teacher training. Accordingly, the main empirical collection instrument has been documentary research, which is why bibliographic review and analysis of primary sources are used. Of them, 22 minutes of the plenary meeting stand out, with their annexes, which systematize the work of Mercosur in teacher training for the period 2007-2019. Other official documents, such as regional work plans and declarations of multilateral spaces, are also incorporated into the analysis.

With the described purpose, the first section places the topic within the priority objective of improving the quality and equity of educational systems. It also

replenishes the political priorities of recent decades for teacher training, crucial to understanding the different approaches developed. Next, the initial and continuous training system of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, Mercosur Party States, is characterized. On the one hand, this approach presents its singularities and areas of convergence. On the other hand, it introduces the government institutions that participate in the SEM Teacher Training Area Commission, the unit of analysis of the present study.

For its part, the third section provides a historical overview of the Mercosur Educational Sector to explain how the place of teacher training has changed in that regional governance space. With this information, the experience of internships and mobilities carried out between 2013 and 2019 is described. A first stage of the policy was developed by PASEM, and included 25 internships in four countries, with the participation of almost 350 people, representing more than 200 training institutions. In a second stage, led by the Teacher Training Area Commission, 25 internships were developed, involving more than 100 participants from 40 institutions.

Finally, it is concluded that, after 30 years of educational integration in Mercosur, teacher training has been hierarchical and contributes to the regulation of public policies for teachers. At the same time, it is understood that the differences between the teacher training systems of the States Parties influence the configuration of the regional agenda in question, adding complexity to the processes of educational integration, development of regional public policies and social construction of the region.

Although the conceptualization of teacher training will not be delved into, for the purposes of this article, initial teacher training is understood as higher education

studies that aim to train future teachers, for any of the levels and modalities of educational systems. It is, then, prior to professional teaching. On the other hand, continuous teacher training is based on a conception of professional development that extends throughout life, is permanent, and whose target universe is the teaching staff. Finally, the training of trainers refers to training strategies for teaching teams that develop professionally in teacher training institutions, that is, whose students are future teachers. This is a key area for strengthening teacher training, and is, at the same time, very powerful for regional exchange.

## **2. The contribution of policies focused on teachers to improve the educational systems of Mercosur**

The field of public policy and research share a central concern for ensuring educational quality and equity. With this objective, in recent decades more and more evidence has been generated that “the big secret” is in teacher training. Furthermore, a consensus has been reached that the quality of an educational system cannot be better than the quality of its teachers. With this reasoning, more and more countries implement, in various contexts and territories around the world, policies and strategies dedicated to initial and teacher training. International organizations accompany this diagnosis, warning of the need for school change to be accompanied by processes of renewal and development of its teaching staff, since they can function as catalysts or inhibitors of broader school transformation processes (Alliaud et al., 2014). ).

The shared view of the Ibero-American countries on the issue has been expressed on several occasions. Recognizing the role of education for the progress of countries and their citizenship, the construction of democratic, participatory and equitable societies, and sustainable development, the high authorities in the field

have stated that teacher training is crucial for the development of the region. Thus, the XIII Ibero-American Conference on Education considered “that teachers are central actors for the construction of new educational strategies that respond to the challenges of the globalized world” (OEI, 2003). The last conference, held fifteen years later, maintained this priority, by agreeing to strengthen the continuous training of teachers at all levels, and within the framework of lifelong learning (OEI, 2018).

The efforts described are linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; in particular, to the achievement of the fourth goal, which establishes “guaranteeing inclusive, equitable and quality education and promoting learning opportunities for all” (United Nations, 2018). Within this ambitious objective is specific goal 4.6, which outlines as a horizon the substantive increase in teachers with specific training for the exercise of the profession, including through international cooperation. In line with what has already been mentioned, other objectives linked to the permanence and graduation of students, learning outcomes, education for global citizenship, human rights, gender equality and promotion of culture for peace mention the strategic importance of teachers. In short, international organizations that participate in the global governance of education identify the quality of teachers as the main critical factor in the quality of the results of the educational system as a whole. The Mercosur Educational Sector also supports this idea.

Now, the basic shared consensus must be put into dialogue with the heterogeneous conceptions and policies for teacher training in Latin America. In recent decades, governments have significantly transformed educational systems with the aim of ensuring the quality of school learning. The central countries began this path in

1980. However, during that time the Latin American region focused on the processes of democratization of social institutions, after long dictatorial periods (Alliaud and Feeney, 2014). For this reason, it was only at the beginning of the 1990s that teacher training entered the policy and research agenda of the Southern Cone. The decade was characterized by the implementation of major educational reforms, within the framework of a neoliberal scenario, and encouraged by a deficient conception of initial training and negative teacher performance. Some results of these processes were the dispersion and fragmentation of the teacher training offer, the proliferation of lists with required professional competencies or skills, and the constant pressure to achieve the expected results.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the limited effect of the improvement policies developed, together with the return of the centrality of the State, promoted important political and institutional changes. As will be seen in the next section, in several countries in the region new national education laws were passed, teacher training was prioritized and new public bodies with responsibility in the matter were created. Accordingly, “a new discourse emerges that aims to revalue teachers and produce their repositioning as legitimate agents of cultural transmission and producers of pedagogical knowledge” (Aliaud et al., 2014, p. 14). The processes of curricular construction and ongoing training also incorporate new, more horizontal and participatory forms.

For Birgin et al. (2014), the tensions that go through the debates on improving the quality of teacher training in Mercosur countries must be understood within the framework of the different moments described. Thus, it is important to consider the different traditions, the neoliberal imprint of 1990, and the democratizing transformations of the new century, associated with the expansion of educational

rights, the universality of the middle or secondary level, and the profound sociocultural changes that challenge both the school and the as well as the training of those who teach in it.

In this scenario, Ibero-America and the Mercosur countries have been implementing policies to strengthen their teaching staff. The strategic importance of initial and continuing training is undeniable, since it is crucial to achieving equitable and quality education. It must also be understood within the framework of an increasingly globalized world, which assumes that the isolated efforts of governments can hardly resolve the great challenges of the contemporary pedagogical scene. Along these lines, it is necessary to incorporate into the analysis the policies developed by the Teacher Training Area Commission of the Mercosur Educational Sector. To do this, it is important to consider, previously, the unique characteristics of the teacher training systems of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

### **3. The teacher training systems of the Mercosur countries**

To understand the regional teacher training policies of Mercosur, it is necessary to address the singularities and shared aspects of the training systems of the States Parties: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. With this objective, a set of formal characteristics linked to initial teacher training will be developed: types of offering institutions (institutes, centers or universities), levels for which they are trained, duration of studies, general regulatory framework and national government areas. with responsibility in the matter. These data will be complemented with references to continuous teacher training, a framework for the analysis of the experiences that are the subject of this work.

#### **3.1 Initial teacher training**



Each training system has different traditions and constituent aspects. At the same time, it is crossed by reforms, debates and tensions. Despite this, some convergences can be identified. The first of them is that in the Mercosur countries, teacher training is developed at the higher level. In Brazil it is basically located in universities; However, there are still teachers trained at the secondary level who can work in early childhood education and the initial years of basic education. On the other hand, in Uruguay teacher training is carried out almost exclusively in higher institutes<sup>2</sup>. The demand to relocate it to the university was expressed for the first time in the General Education Law of 2008, with the main objective of promoting teachers' access to postgraduate training; Since then the topic has been on the agenda. For their part, both in Argentina and Paraguay, higher institutes have preeminence in the training of future teachers, despite the fact that there is a relevant university offer that especially trains secondary school teachers. The persistence of different institutional inscriptions of teacher training is recognized as a major problematic knot by Birgin et al. (2014), who warns that there are still instances of middle-level qualifications that coexist with those of higher-level institutes and universities.

The second element of convergence is the extension and duration of teacher training careers. As a result of the transformations of the educational system in recent decades, the mandatory secondary level, and the return of State control, the minimum duration of initial training has been extended to between three and four years, with 3,000 hours completed on average. . In the Argentine case - unlike Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay - it stipulates for all teachers a minimum workload of 2,600 clock hours, lasting four years. On the other hand, in Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay, the minimum workload is increased for teachers at the initial, primary,

or first years of basic level, compared to those at the secondary or intermediate level, reaching 3,255 clock hours in Uruguay. These criteria are more flexible for universities that generally follow differentiated logics.

Thirdly, all Mercosur Party States have a general national standard that regulates the initial training of teachers at all levels and educational modalities. In Argentina it is governed by the National Education Law No. 26,206 of 2006, in Uruguay by the aforementioned General Education Law No. 18,437, of 2008, while the latest national education regulations in Brazil correspond to law No. 9,394. , of 1996, and that of Paraguay to No. 1,264, of 1998. The State's control over the matter includes a more extensive regulatory framework, although each case has different stages and scope. In Uruguay and Paraguay the government is centralized, so in these countries the national administration regulates the entire training offer, including the development of curricular designs. The only difference is that Paraguayan universities retain their autonomy, being able to propose alternative designs. Argentina and Brazil are federal countries, so their national regulations are limited to guiding the curricular construction processes, either of the jurisdictions (in Argentina), or of the universities (in Brazil). The requirements in the first case are greater, since the national standard provides for the regulation of the basic aspects of the entire training system and proposes that universities adapt to the same guidelines. On the other hand, in Brazil the curricular definition is the responsibility of the training institution, which, on the other hand, must undergo periodic evaluation processes of the Ministry of Education, responsible for authorizing, recognizing and renewing the recognition of the courses.

Closely linked to this is the leading role of the institutions and government areas with responsibility in the matter. In this regard, Birgin et al. (2014) differentiates

the 1990 stage, characterized by the diversified, unequal and fragmented growth of training institutions, from the process of re-institutionalization and recovery of legitimacy at the national level in the direction of policies at the beginning of the 2000s. In Argentina, The National Education Law provided for the creation in 2007 of the National Teacher Training Institute (INFD), within the orbit of the Ministry of Education of the Nation. The expansion of powers of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Level Personnel (CAPES, for its acronym in Portuguese) can also be read in this code. This autonomous body, linked to the Brazilian Ministry of Education, was dedicated 60 years ago to expanding and consolidating postgraduate studies in the country. However, in 2007 it also began to deal with the training of basic education teachers. Along the same lines, the General Education Law of Uruguay, of 2008, provided for the creation of a decentralized body called the Education Training Council (CFE), within the scope of the National Administration of Public Education (ANEP). The scheme of government institutions in charge of the issue is completed by the General Directorate of Professional Training of Educators of Paraguay, dependent on the Vice Ministry of Higher Education and Sciences. Indeed, it is these government institutions that currently make up the Mercosur Teacher Training Area Commission.

In short, both challenges and common responses are observed in Mercosur's initial teacher training. For Alliaud et al. (2014), the first include the prioritization and improvement of the quality of teacher training, the updating of study plans, cultural training, the strengthening of training institutions and the training of teachers for performance in real situations and contexts. , among others. Faced with this, the countries considered State regulation, a longer duration of training, the

enhancement of general training and professional practice, the development of support programs for new teachers, the updating of contents as responses. , the change in institutional conditions, the increase in the participation of the actors involved and a greater role for universities (Aliaud et al., 2014). To systematize the indicated characteristics, the following table is presented:

Table 1. Characteristics of the initial training systems of the Mercosur countries

	Argentina	Paraguay	Uruguay	Brazil
Training institutions	Colleges and Universities		Higher institutes and centers (except UCU)	Universities and secondary level (only for early childhood and primary education)
Minimum duration	4 years	3 years	4 years	3 years
Minimum hourly load	2,600 clock hours	Between 2,700 and 2,906, depending on level	Between 2,600 and 3,255, depending on level	Between 2,800 and 3,200, depending on level
national law	National Education Law No.	General Education Law No.	General Education Law No.	Federal Education Law No. 9,394, of

	26,206, 2006	of 1,264, 1998	of 18,437, 2008	of 1996
Government body in charge	National Institute Teacher Training, ME	General of Directorate Professional Training Educators	Education of Training Council, of ANEP	Coordination of Improvement of higher level personnel, MEC
Curricular designs	Jurisdictional	National		Institutional (university)

Note: own elaboration, based on Alliaud et al. (2014)

### 3.2 Continuous teacher training

Due to the purpose of this article, reference should also be made to continuing teacher training, which includes a wide variety of formats, modalities and types of training devices for already qualified teachers. The approach is complex, since there are great differences between the Mercosur Party States, both in the wide diversity of meanings granted and in the different degrees of public regulation. For Birgin et al. (2014), while teacher professional development for Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay has been established not only as an obligation of teachers, but also as a right, in Paraguay it seems to be considered a way to apply educational reforms. This idea is consistent with his argument that “a quick look shows Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay with more shared general orientations regarding the democratization of education and training policies for teaching” (Birgin et al., 2014, p. 37).

Beyond these divergences, the offer of continuing teacher training can be generally grouped into: a) training, updating or continuing education courses; b) postgraduate studies or careers, such as postgraduate degrees; and c) more informal, brief or autonomous activities, such as conferences, conferences, and, indeed, internships. Although the subject areas are very broad and heterogeneous, continuous teacher training for Alliaud et al. (2014) seems to be a favorable space to work on new contexts and problems of the contemporary pedagogical scene, such as school violence, Human Rights and the environment. It is also dedicated to providing teaching tools and strategies in relation to specific school contexts, as well as updating content of curricular disciplines and their teaching strategies.

In a transversal way, it promotes more horizontal, participatory and exchange dynamics, which value the pedagogical knowledge that the teacher develops in his daily experience. Along with this, it places the center of training on teaching and learning practices, the real teaching task, and the various contexts and situations of professional practice. Although the still incipient character of proposals that make possible the strengthening of teacher training based on the exchange of knowledge of other cultural and pedagogical forms linked to the region is recognized (PASEM, 2014), the characterization of teacher training in Argentina , Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay frame the experiences developed by the Mercosur Educational Sector, analyzed in this article. The next section will discuss the topic.

#### **4. The place of teacher training in the Mercosur Educational Sector**

The inclusion of the educational agenda in the Mercosur integration process occurred almost simultaneously with its own creation (Costa, 1991; Cambours de Donini, 2001; Perrotta, 2011). This decision was prompted by a recommendation

of the Ministers of Education of the States Parties, who met in Brasilia, on December 12 and 13, 1991. After considering this request, the Common Market Council (CMC) created, on the 17th December of that same year, the Meeting of Ministers of Education of Mercosur (RME), with the fundamental purpose of coordinating the educational policies of the States Part<sup>3</sup>.

To justify the importance of the inclusion of the topic, the text recognized that “raising education levels is an essential factor to strengthen the integration process and achieve prosperity, progress and well-being with social justice of the inhabitants of the subregion.” ” (Mercosur, 1991). As is known, over time it has included the Associated States and has created a large number of instances to support its work. Indeed, the approval of its organizational structure in 2001 reflects this transformation, including a Regional Coordination Committee, Regional Coordinating Commissions of Areas (Basic, Technological and Higher) and the Management Committee of the Information and Communication System (Mercosur, 2001). Subsequently, new areas and work instances were incorporated.

Within this framework, in 2007 a Teacher Training Working Group was created within the orbit of the Regional Coordinating Commission for Basic Education. Although the decision to subsume the regional treatment of the teaching issue to the mandatory levels is not based on official documents, Molinari (2020) expresses that it is linked to the issues on the educational agenda at that particular time. More specifically, he points out among the shared concerns the increase in repetition and school dropouts, student learning difficulties, language policies and initial literacy, and the teaching role. However, these issues were not limited only to basic education. Along with this, difficulties were recognized in guaranteeing

the participation of technical team and specialists, thus postponing the reaching of agreements on the matter.

As a consequence, in 2011 the Working Group was transformed into an Area Commission. According to the Mercosur Educational Sector Plan for the period 2011-2015 “the transversal nature and diversity of the characteristics of teacher training for Mercosur countries, such as terminology, curricula and the duration of technical training and higher, indicate the need to create a specific area commission” (Mercosur, 2011b, p.18). The document also recognized that the topic was essential to ensure the quality of educational processes, and formalized the following internal working groups: diversity education, training of teachers of Portuguese and Spanish as a foreign language, and distance education. It should be noted that these spaces already existed in the previous stage (along with another dedicated to mapping continuous teacher training, which was dissolved). In that sense, it can be said that the decision recovers the work started in 2007, but, at the same time, it prioritizes it.

In turn, the document highlighted the recent approval of the Project to Support the Educational Sector of Mercosur (PASEM). Its launch was expected to organize the first stage of the Commission, providing the necessary financing. Along these lines, it is important to mention that, although the plan incorporated some actions that were not directly linked to PASEM, its goals and expected results reflected those agreed for the project (Mercosur, 2011a; Molinari, 2020). With this, they guaranteed compliance with a large number of agreed actions. The Program, signed with the European Union, aimed to contribute to the design of regional teaching policies with the aim of consolidating the regional integration process through the strengthening of teacher training. To do this, it planned a wide variety



of actions, organized into four axes: a) the collaborative construction of regional teaching policies; b) the generation of spaces for dialogue to share knowledge, also promoting the learning of Spanish and Portuguese; c) the promotion of the culture of recording and documentation of pedagogical experiences; and d) the consolidation of inter-institutional links. Its execution ended in 2015, so, through the review of minutes and other official documents, its results can be synthesized.

Linked to the first question, five studies were carried out on quality and improvement criteria, analysis of study plans for initial and continuing teacher training, regulations for the training and exercise of the teaching profession, incorporation of ICT with a pedagogical sense in the training level, and situation of teaching Portuguese and Spanish as foreign languages. Six regional seminars were also organized, with the participation of 690 people. Finally, policy documents were prepared, which included what had been worked on in both instances. Regarding the second axis, two editions of the Mercosur Innovative Experiences in Teacher Training Contest were launched, with 257 institutions applying. In addition, documentary videos, television clips and a series of multimedia material were released. Based on the documentation and registration of innovative pedagogical experiences, promoted by the Contest, a bank of experiences was created, which collaborated with the fulfillment of the third axis. Finally, the consolidation of inter-institutional links was achieved through exchange visits, subsidies to networks of training institutions, and the implementation of an internship system. The following section will discuss this topic.

In conclusion, the sector's integration agenda has a process of political accumulation, management capacities and social legitimacy of thirty years of

specific regional activities, projects and programs (Perrotta, 2011, 2013). Although the political scenario has been transformed from its founding moment to the present, its priorities have been maintained over time. It is worth noting that a good part of regional public policies have focused on university higher education - in the axes of accreditation, mobility and inter-institutional cooperation- (Perrotta, 2019). In this scenario, starting in 2011 and the implementation of PASEM together with the dynamism of the CAFD, the teacher training agenda has been hierarchical and expanded.

#### **5. The experience of internships and regional teacher training mobilities in Mercosur**

As introduced, the implementation of PASEM contributed in many ways to the construction of the regional agenda on the subject. One of his most ambitious initiatives was the development of Mercosur's first teacher training internship system. Its main objective was to contribute to the process of strengthening regional integration based on exchange and learning experiences of key actors in the design and management of teacher training policies and practices, both initial and continuous. Along these lines, internships are understood in this context as “a training process, which brings together actors from different professional spaces and cultures and who are involved in the development of joint practices” (Echeverriarza and Rivarosa, 2006, p. 473). It is, then, a shared learning space, of short duration, that includes training and practical activities, promoting contact with new forms of inquiry, problem solving, pedagogical tools and action strategies. For this reason, it differs from academic exchanges and exclusively theoretical activities.

The target group of the policy was very broad, since it included teachers and directors of teacher training institutions (professors and universities), as well as technical teams and authorities of public organizations related to teacher training. The internships were developed in organizations and institutions whose training proposals – due to their innovation or other quality features – constituted sources of learning. It was thus expected that, through immersion in the daily practices of colleagues from another country, each intern would be able to learn about initial training experiences different from those developed in their areas of work performance, acquire new tools and perspectives to apply in their own context of work. insertion, and thereby strengthen their professional work.

Between October 2013 and November 2015, 25 internships were implemented in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, as detailed in the following table:

Table 2 . First stage of teaching mobilities (2013-2015)

Host country	Period	Receiving institution	Amount of participants	Issue
Uruguay	7/10/2013 a 10/13/2013	CERP of the Coast	12	Institutional Projects. Inclusion of ICT and support for beginners
Argentina	10/20/2013 a	ISFD N° 804 El Maitén	12	Initial literacy

Host country	Period	Receiving institution	Amount of participants	Issue
	10/25/2013			
Brazil	11/3/2013 a 11/9/2013	Rio Grande do Sul Federal Institute	12	Science Training Network and Program Teacher initiation
Brazil	09/20/2014 a 09/28/2014	Campus Pelotas - Visconde da Graca - IFSUL	12	Teacher initiation, continuing in-service training and science teaching
Brazil	11/09/2014 a 11/18/2014	Secretary of Education of the State of Bahia/ Anísio Teixeira Institute	14	Teaching initiation, initial and continued training in service and use of technologies

Host country	Period	Receiving institution	Amount of participants	Issue
				in teacher training
Uruguay	11/17/20 14 a 11/23/20 14	Education Training Council - Maldonado	10	Practices, science and technology
Argentina	12/08/20 14 a 13/12/20 14	INFD	12	The management of teacher training policies in Mercosur
Brazil	05/11/20 15 a 05/19/20 15	Secretary of State of Education of Mato Grosso	12	Initiation to teaching, teacher training in service and use of technologies.
Brazil	05/18/20 15 a 05/26/20 15	Federal University of Rio Large - FURG	eleven	Initiation in teaching, teacher training in service,

Host country	Period	Receiving institution	Amount of participants	Issue
				Continuing training in service
Uruguay	05/25/2015 a 05/31/2015	Normal Institutes (IINN)/Montevideo	10	New technologies to support teacher training of primary education trainers in various disciplines
Argentina	05/31/2015 a 06/06/2015	INFD, Rio Negro, San Carlos de Bariloche	eleven	professional insertion into Teaching, within the framework of Teacher Professional Development

Host country	Period	Receiving institution	Amount of participants	Issue
Brazil	06/13/2015 to 06/21/2015	Municipal Secretary of Education of Macaé	eleven	Teacher training in service
Brazil	06/15/2015 a 06/23/2015	Federal University of Alagoas (Maceió)	12	Initiation in teaching/Science training
Uruguay	06/22/2015 a 06/28/2015	CERP of the South/Atlántida/Canelones	10	Teaching practice – New teachers – Didactics from interdisciplinarity
Brazil	06/29/2015 a 07/05/2015	Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais	12	Initiation in teaching/Continued training in service/Continued training in

Host country	Period	Receiving institution	Amount of participants	Issue service
Argentina	08/02/2015 a 08/08/2015	Tucuman	24	New teachers
Uruguay	08/03/2015 to 08/09/2015	IFD Carmelo/Cologne	10	Sciences - Extension projects - Teaching practice and new teachers
Argentina	08/09/2015 a 08/15/2015	UNGS, Province of Buenos Aires	24	Mathematics and ICT in teacher training
Argentina	08/31/2015 a 09/05/2015	Directorate of Higher Education of Jujuy	24	Initial literacy



Host country	Period	Receiving institution	Amount of participants	Issue
Paraguay	09/07/2015 a 09/11/2015	University of La Paz (Ciudad del Este)	24	Initial Teacher Training in Initial Education and Basic School Education Teacher Training
Uruguay	09/14/2015 a 09/18/2015	CERP of the Litoral/Salto	12	New Communication Technologies – Teaching Practice
Paraguay	09/13/2015 a 09/19/2015	Evangelical University of Paraguay, Chaco	24	Initial Teacher Training in Basic School Education Teachers
Brazil	09/21/2015 a	Distance Education Center of the State of	12	Continuing training in

Host country	Period	Receiving institution	Amount of participants	Issue
	09/30/2015	Ceará		service. Use of technologies in teacher training.
Uruguay	03/10/2015 a 10/10/2015	IFD Rocha	10	Science and technology – Research (within the framework of the 50 years of officialization of teacher training)
Paraguay	11/9/2015 a 11/14/2015	“IBEROAMERICANA” University, Asunción	12	Initial Teacher Training and Training Continuous Teaching in the Faculty of Initial Education, Basic School Education (Reading-

Host country	Period	Receiving institution	Amount of participants	Issue (writing)

Note: own elaboration, based on Mercosur, 2016

As can be seen, almost 350 people participated in the experience, representing more than 200 institutions linked to teacher training in the four States Parties. On the one hand, the variety of receiving institutions reflects the already mentioned complexity of the teacher training system, because it included higher institutes, centers, universities, and government institutions, both national and subnational. These were chosen by the country focal points before PASEM, that is, the countries. On the other hand, the selected work topics are ascribed to the conception of permanent teacher training as a favorable terrain for working in new contexts and problems, specific school contexts, updated contents of curricular disciplines and teaching strategies. In this framework, experiences linked to teaching mathematics or science, initial literacy and reading writing, and use of ICT, among others, can be read. Finally, it is interesting to clarify that Paraguay did not participate until mid-2015, because it was suspended from the regional integration bloc.

The implementation of the first regional internships for teacher training in Mercosur sought to generate a dense network of exchanges and shared work between different education actors. Understood as a policy for initial and continuous training, it promoted horizontal and participatory work dynamics, led

by the teaching and management teams of the training institutions. With this, it promoted the circulation of pedagogical and cultural knowledge present in the countries of the region. Regional mobility not only allowed us to exchange perspectives and learn about the training system of each country, but also to generate professional and personal ties whose vocation is to persist over time, and at the same time form new collective projects. This is a particularly relevant issue since the possibility of sustaining regional public policies in Mercosur (as well as in any other regional or multilateral space) is sedimented in processes of socialization of actors, which include social learning and the construction of norms and identities. .

PASEM ended at the end of 2015, but the Mercosur Teacher Training Area Commission decided to make that experience its own and give it continuity. According to what was expressed in the minutes, the power of the results of the internships and the network of institutions involved, with the desire to continue working together, demanded that effort. For this reason, an open call was prepared for the formation of new inter-institutional projects, which would have the participation of at least two training institutions from at least two countries. With this objective, the Regional Teacher Mobility Program of the Educational Sector was created, under the leadership of Uruguay and with financing from the Mercosur Educational Fund (FEM), that is, from the States Parties. Its details are shown in the following table:

Table 3. Second stage of teaching mobilities (2018-2019)

Coordinating country	Period and receiving city	Amount of participants	Issue
Argentina	03/30/19-04/13/19. Recife-Brazil 09/21/19-09/28/19. Rosario-Argentina	fifteen	Strengthening inclusion in Higher Education.
Argentina	10/29/18-11/03/18. Encarnación-Paraguay 08/25/19-09/01/19 Jujuy-Argentina	13	Intercultural education: advances and challenges in teacher training in Mercosur. Exchange of experiences between Paraguayan and Argentine trainers.
Brazil	06/17/19-06/22/19. Mato Grosso-Brazil	10	Mercosur Teaching Profession Observatory - OPD

Coordinating country	Period and receiving city	Amount of participants	Issue
			Mercosur. First subproject: Comparative study of training and policies of teaching profession in Mercosur: links between training in service, research and innovative experiences.
Brazil	03/24/19-03/29/19. Minas Gerais-Brazil 08/25/19-08/29/19. Jump-Uruguay 10/09/19-10/11/19. Minas Gerais-Brazil	7	Comparative study of institutional policies and practices of teacher initiation and insertion.

Coordinating country	Period and receiving city	Amount of participants	Issue
Brazil	05/06/19-05/10/19. Mato Grosso-Brazil 08/31/19-09/06/19. Mar del Plata-Argentina 10/28/19-10/30/19. Mato Grosso-Brazil	4	Teaching of History and Training of Professors in Brazil and Argentina.
Paraguay	10/31/18-11/01/18. San José de los Arroyos-Paraguay 11/07/18-11/09/18. Buenos Aires, Argentina	eleven	Teacher training for the construction of regional citizenship in Mercosur (FORSUR).
Uruguay	08/05/19-08/09/19. Misiones-Argentina 09/23/19-09/27/19. Peach-Uruguay	10	A training experience, between action and reflection: pedagogical expedition to rural primary

Coordinating country	Period and receiving city	Amount of participants	Issue
			schools in Uruguay and Argentina.
Uruguay	04/08/19-04/12/19. Chubut-Argentina 05/06/19-05/11/19. Montevideo/Maldonado-Uruguay 09/16/19-09/20/19. Chubut-Argentina 09/23/19-09/27/19. Montevideo, Uruguay	10	Pedagogical practices mediated by technology developed by teachers who work in Teacher Training.
Uruguay	04/01/19-04/05/19. Asuncion, Paraguay 05/06/19-05/10/19. Montevideo/Canelones-Uruguay 11/25/19-11/29/19. Montevideo/Canelo	10	Teaching-learning of Dance in artistic and teaching training institutions in Uruguay and Paraguay.



Coordinating country	Period and receiving city	Amount of participants	Issue
	nes-Uruguay		
Uruguay	10/11/18-16/11/18. Balls/Rio Grande-Brazil 11/19/18-11/23/18. Jump-Uruguay 10/03/19-10/05/19. Jump-Uruguay	14	Literacy, mother tongue teaching practices and encouragement of reading at the early childhood level and in primary education, in Brazil and Uruguay.

Note: own elaboration, based on Mercosur, 2019.

As a result, between 2018 and 2019, 25 internships were carried out, involving more than 100 participants from 40 higher teacher training institutions in the four States Parties. Although the main recipients were trainers of trainers, students, managers and other actors in the system were also included. In turn, the themes included the teaching of history, the use of technologies, bilingual intercultural education, educational inclusion and the construction of regional citizenship, among others. Although when developing the policy the Commission asked

whether it was necessary to establish some priority work areas, the focus of each project was defined by its protagonists. Furthermore, the results exceeded the initial planning: instead of 10 visits, 25 were carried out, which implied reciprocal visits in all internships. Likewise, 40 institutions participated instead of 20.

The interest expressed in both calls, the commitment to collective work and the willingness to continue the inter-institutional links created within the framework of the programs express that the teachers in the region value this type of experiences. In that sense, the mobilities have been formative in themselves and, therefore, contributed to strengthening the teaching profession in our region. To summarize their contributions, it may be interesting to know that, thanks to both stages of the policy, research, publications, agreements, scientific events such as seminars and conferences, joint virtual and in-person training courses, teaching materials and videos on the topics worked on were carried out. All in all, it is possible to affirm that this process stimulated research projects on teachers from a “regional” perspective, contributing to the expansion of a prolific field of studies, but which had remained biased for a long time towards comparisons of national cases. . This, in turn, has an impact on thinking that this education sector has to have specific internationalization instruments.

## **6. Conclusion \_**

Teacher training is a strategic area to ensure the quality and equity of educational systems. In an increasingly complex and globalized world, it is essential to have governance mechanisms that respond to new challenges in the pedagogical scene. In that sense, countries are not alone. Multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations and the Organization of Ibero-American States, have promoted educational policies and regulatory frameworks to strengthen the teaching

profession. Regional integration processes, such as the European Union and Mercosur, also consider teacher training to be a critical factor.

The thirtieth anniversary of the Mercosur Educational Sector offers the academic field new opportunities to review the development of the agenda and the implementation of regional educational public policies. In a complementary way, it is considered that the construction of the regional implies a pedagogical task that gives centrality to the teaching role. In this context, this article set out to analyze the work linked to teacher training in Mercosur. The trajectory from the constitution of a Working Group to an Area Commission, transversal to all educational levels, emphasized the political will to prioritize the issue. However, it did not manage to resolve the tensions linked to the heterogeneity of teacher training institutions, given that, although in most of the States Parties initial training is located at the higher level, some instances of mid-level qualifications still persist. As anticipated, this reality complicates the coordination of policies for teacher training at the regional level. Despite these challenges, a large number of convergences were also recognized, associated with the relative duration of the careers, the existence of general or national educational laws, the presence of regulatory government bodies, or a large offer of permanent training proposals. .

In this context, one of the great challenges of the future is to build a common regional horizon, without failing to consider the singularities of the teacher training systems of the Mercosur countries. Based on shared political, pedagogical and institutional problems, it is considered necessary to articulate and sustain networks of various institutions dedicated to teacher training. The experience of internships and mobilities presented collaborates in this objective. A second challenge is associated with the construction of the region, which is a permanent task. To this

end, the literature (Alliaud et al., 2014; Birgin et al., 2014) has recommended the socialization of innovative experiences and good practices, the accreditation of training paths, the recognition of teaching degrees and the inclusion of Latin American content in the curricular designs. With this, the Educational Sector of Mercosur can be conceived more than as a space restricted to the work of government areas, as a meeting place that contributes to the construction of a regional identity.

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