

Mexico to Cut Educational Spending in 2017



Mexico City, September 22 (RHC)-- The administration of Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto plans to deepen contested education reforms, by cutting spending for facilities improvements, equipment access, and teacher training, the Mexican newspaper *La Jornada* reports. The Mexican government proposes federal-level cutbacks in 19 out of 23 programs for children and adolescents next year.

According to data from Mexico's Center for Economic and Budget Research, also known as CIEP, spending earmarked for education in the 2017 budget is set to fall by 4.2 percent. Total educational spending represents 14 percent of the federal budget and 3.3 percent of GDP, which represents a reduction in educational investment historically. According to World Bank statistics, Mexico dedicated 5.1 percent of GDP to education in 2011, which was, at that time, more than the worldwide average of 4.53 percent of GDP.

According to numbers reported by *La Jornada*, some areas will be hit harder than others. Funding for the Education Reform Program is set to plunge by nearly 72 percent, while the Program for Professional Development for Teachers will take a hit of over 37 percent.

Other programs on the chopping block include initiatives aimed at bridging the digital divide, improving early childhood education, and developing infrastructure in the education system, among others. *La Jornada* reports that the projected cuts to education spending come amid an ongoing conflict between

dissident teachers and the Mexican government over education reforms, rolled out by government beginning in 2013. Striking teachers slam the reforms as “neo-liberal” and argue that they do not account for unique needs of students and teachers in rural and Indigenous areas.

In recent weeks, some sections of the National Coordinator of Education Workers, or CNTE union, have opted to go back to classes after striking for about four months, while other sections have continued to protest the government’s refusal to overturn the disputed reforms.

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