

can be reduced with the appropriate use of new technologies. For both lower and upper secondary education, it is necessary to strengthen existing offers through Open Secondary Education (Escuelas Abiertas).

**Indigenous education:** Despite the adoption of the National Plan for Indigenous Peoples and the enactment of the Indigenous Education Act, indigenous peoples remain the most vulnerable group and need specific attention. 90% of the indigenous population lives in rural areas and only 7.3 per cent in urban areas with 66 % living in poverty and 34 % in extreme poverty. In 2007, the General Directorate for Indigenous School Education (DGEEL) initiated the design of curricula relevant to the 19 Peoples to encourage teaching in all indigenous educational institutions to begin in the mother tongue, to continue in the higher grades and courses, and to choose one of the two official languages as a second language. To achieve this, it is necessary to strengthen teacher training and support teachers in the implementation of coherent pedagogical innovations. In Concepción in 2022, there were 366 indigenous students (including 157 from the Pai Tavytera People and 135 from the Mbya People). In the region of Amambay in 2022, there were 2,008 indigenous students (including 1914 from the Pai Tavytera People). In the region of San Pedro in 2023, there were 1,299 indigenous students (including 713 from the Ava Guaraní People and 390 from the Mbya People).

Preparing disadvantaged young people from Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay to be the workers and active citizens of tomorrow is critical to inclusive growth in Paraguay. Integration into the labour market is a key indicator for the relevance of learned skills hence the focus on improved technical and vocational education, which can reinforce skills and competences to provide better futures for students completing compulsory schooling. The curriculum for technical diplomas has to be tailored to the changing needs of the private sector and other stakeholders. In practice, the production sector should be more directly involved in curriculum planning and in the work carried out to formulate the national qualifications framework.

Promoting and strengthening the Paraguayan national qualifications system (NQS) is critical to developing a structured and more relevant vocational training system. Such a national system will mean the identification of skills and competences relating to different qualification levels and families of professions. The EU will continue to promote the NQS, and the certification of skills acquired outside formal environments to ensure greater opportunities. Technical education must be tailored to the changing needs of the private sector and other stakeholders and more directly involved in the planning and content of curriculum together with the definition of the NQS.

## **Stakeholder analysis**

### *Duty bearers (institutional stakeholders)*

- The Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) is responsible for management of the sector, including planning, financial and economic management. MEC human resources are mostly centred in Asuncion, although it has de-centralised supervising bodies in each of the 17 Regions. The capacities of the sector are mostly concentrated at the central level. Decentralisation efforts need to be accelerated. The Organic Law of 2017 sets the basis for a reorganisation and restructuring of MEC. Strengthening of MEC capacities and de-concentration of control at the decentralised level will be critical for education reform. At the central level, MEC capacities are weak, also due in part to very frequent changes in authorities.
- Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MTESS) guides labour policy and articulates public and private efforts to expand access to formal employment, job training, to promote adequate working conditions and labour rights. (MTESS) is the institutional reference for the promotion of employability and self-employment and manages both the National System of Professional Promotion (SNPP) and the National System of Labour Training (SINAFOCAL). Together with the technical and vocational schools of the MEC that are part of the formal education system and serve the secondary level, MTESS are key actors in the National System of Qualifications (SNC) and will work in a close-knit manner with MEC in relation to formal, informal, and non-formal TVET.
- Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) was established in 2023 and is responsible for the overall management of public finances, the planning of economic policies, the administration of tax and revenues and spending. It has the mandate to promote further PFM reforms and to ensure the sound monitoring of the implementation of substantive education programmes in the national budget. In