# CIMA

## Latin America and the Caribbean

# HAVE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GAPS CLOSED?

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**The expansion of access to education in the region has been accompanied by greater inclusion: more poor students and those in rural areas are attending school at all levels. In pre-primary and secondary, the educational gap between rich and poor students remains large.**

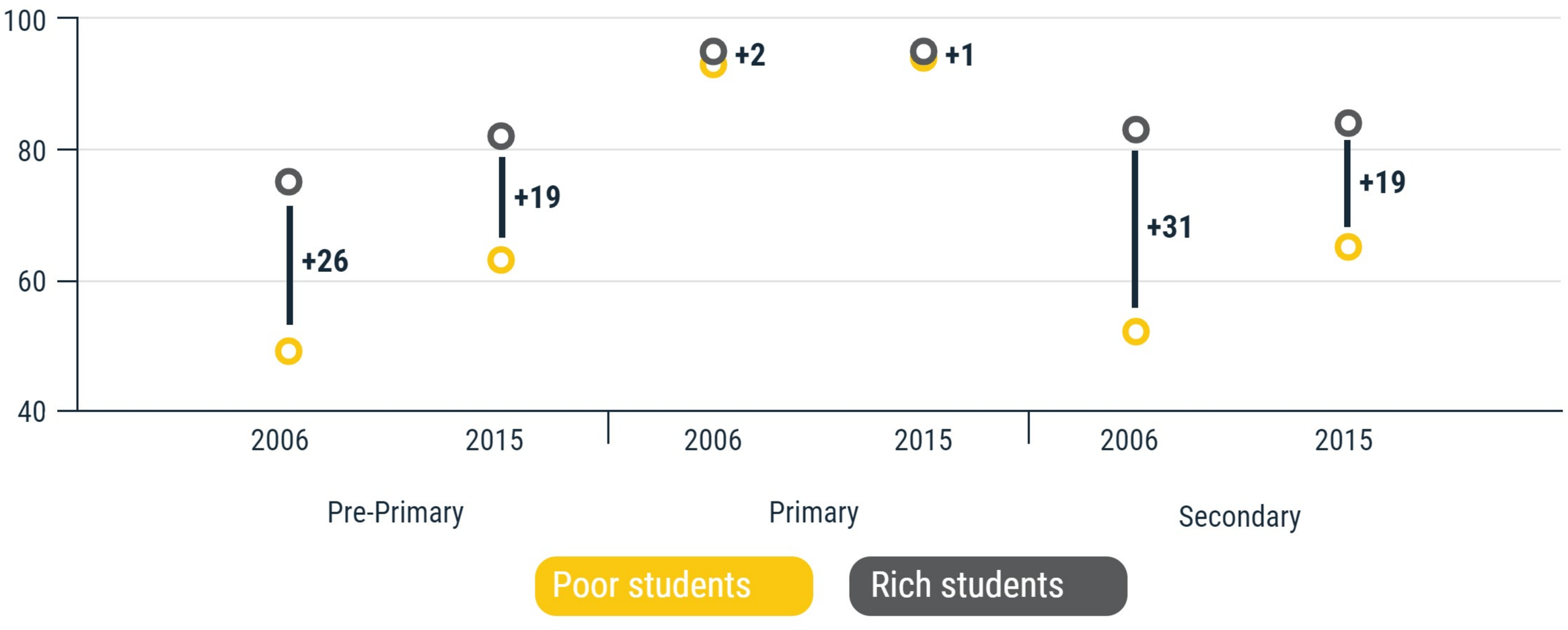
## In 2015, almost all poor children attended primary school

- In 2015, around 95% of children (both rich and poor) in LAC attended primary school. Nevertheless, at the pre-primary and secondary levels, attendance rates varied widely between rich and poor students.
- On average, in 2015, pre-primary school attendance rates totaled 75% for poor students and 82% for rich students.
- Uruguay, Mexico, and Colombia had the highest pre-primary school attendance rates for poor children (88%, 78%, and 74%, respectively).
- Secondary school attendance rates among poor students totaled 72% in 2015, while attendance rates for rich students totaled 85%.

## Gaps have closed over the course of the last 10 years

- The increase in attendance in the region is driven by the increase in attendance among poor children.
- On average, the gap in attendance rates at the pre-primary and primary school levels between rich and poor students decreased by 14 and 3 percentage points between 2006 and 2015, respectively.
- Similarly, at the secondary school level, the gap between rich and poor students decreased by 12 percentage points, despite remaining high. In 2015, 65% of poor children attended secondary school, which was an increase of 13 percentage points from 2006.
- During the same time period, Brazil and Ecuador have seen the largest increases in attendance since 2006 among poor children (from 12 to 17 years of age) of 30 and 26 percentage points, respectively.

## ATTENDANCE BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, 2006 Y 2015

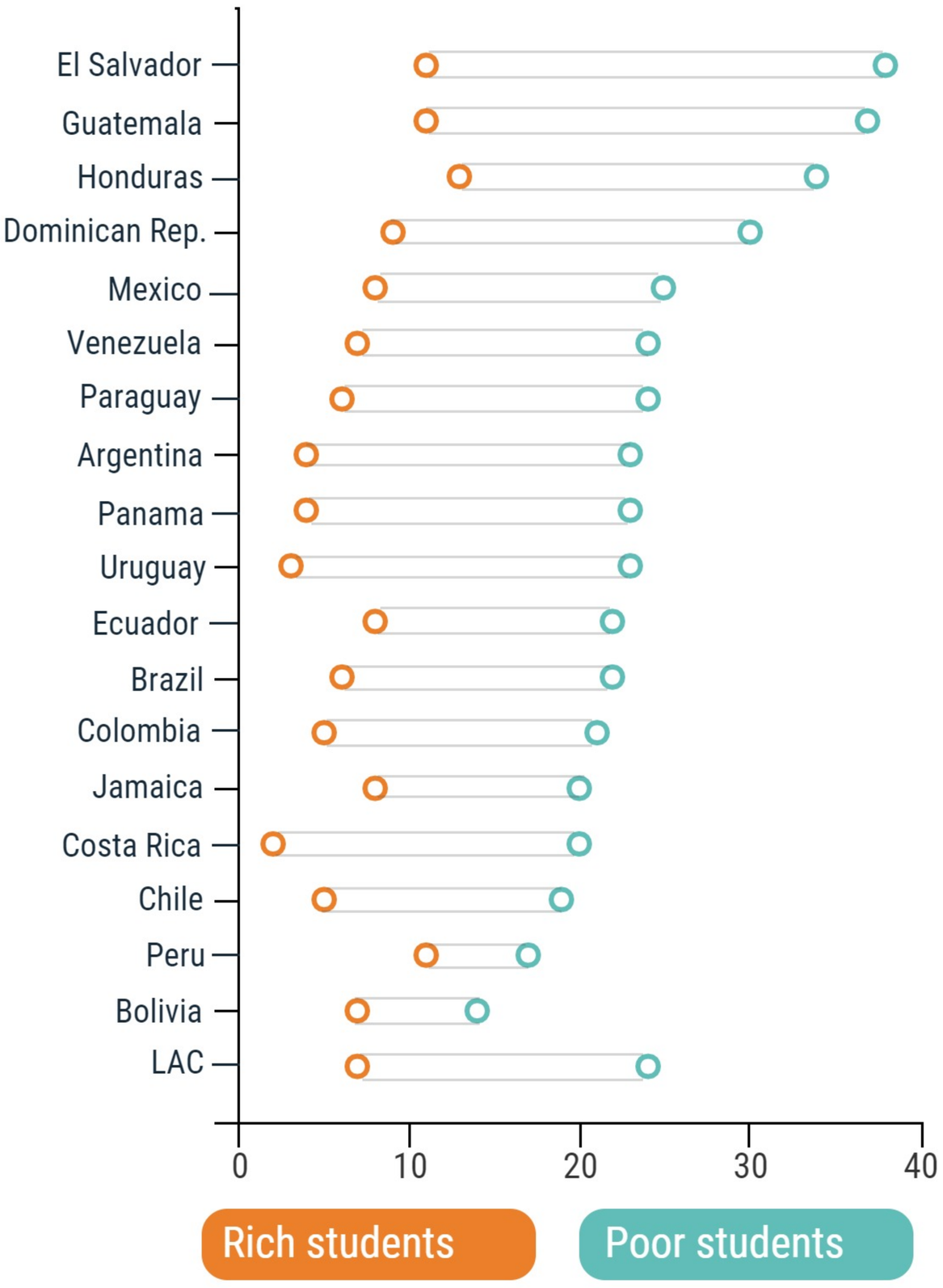



**Source:** CIMA (Information Center for Improvement in Learning), Education Division, Inter-American Development Bank, 2018.
**Note:** The LAC values are simple averages that include all countries with available data.

## More poor students are completing primary and secondary school

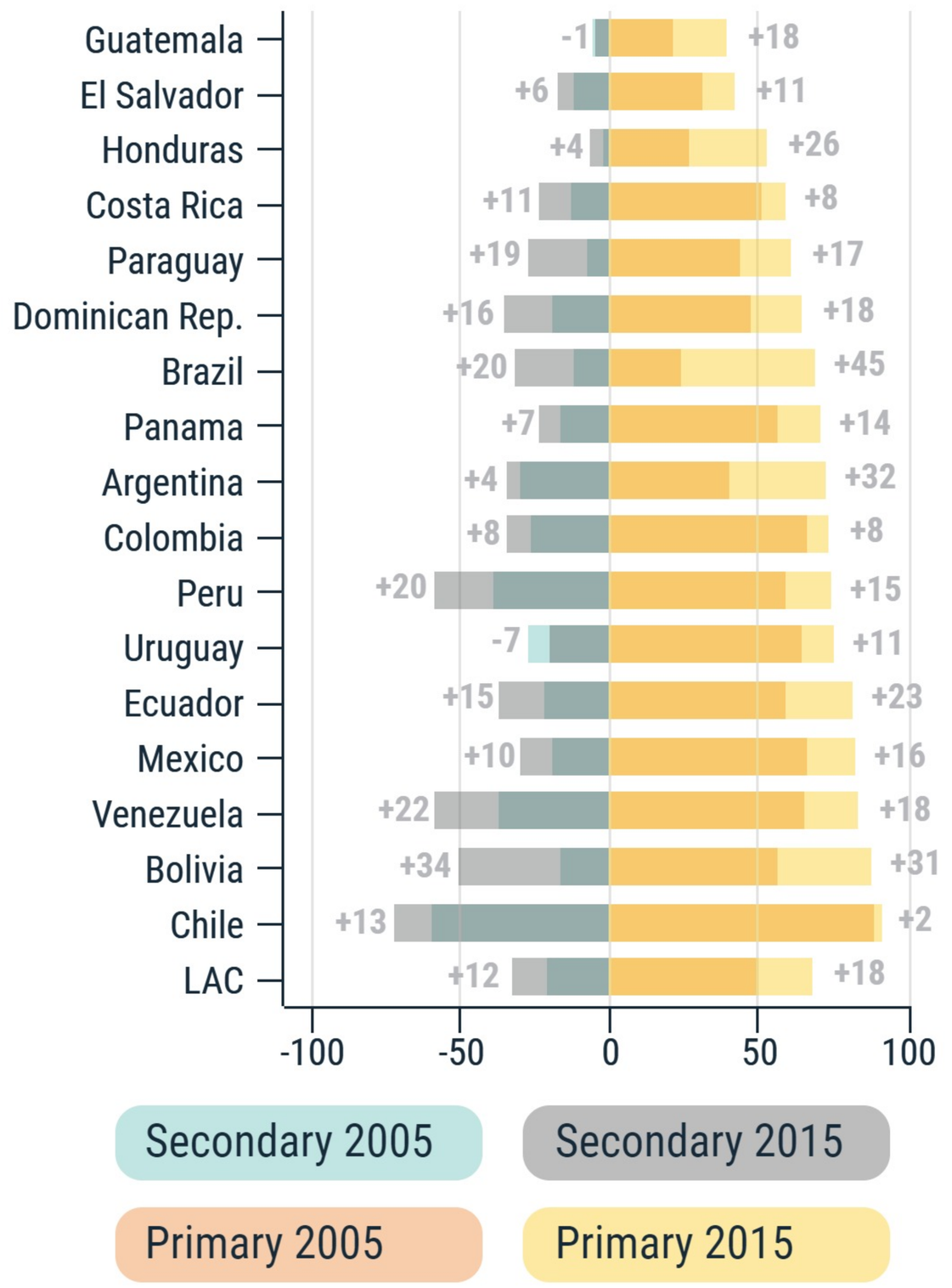
- The primary and secondary school completion rates for poor children and youth both increased by 18 p.p. between 2005 and 2015.
- Brazil, Ecuador, and Bolivia are the countries that saw the greatest increases in primary school completion rates among poor children and youth. In 2015, those percentages were 70%, 82%, and 88%, respectively.
- The secondary school completion rate among poor students moved from 20% to 33% between 2005 and 2015, an increase of 13 p.p.
- Bolivia, Peru, and Venezuela substantially increased their secondary school completion rates among poor children by 34 p.p., 22 p.p., and 20 p.p., respectively.
- Uruguay moved in the opposite direction: it saw a decline in the aforementioned completion rate by 7 p.p., decreasing from 26% in 2005 to 19% in 2015.

## NEETS BY SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, 2015




**Source:** CIMA, IDB, 2018.
**Note:** NEETs are young people ages 15 to 24 who do not study and are economically inactive.

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY COMPLETION RATES FOR POOR STUDENTS, 2005 AND 2015

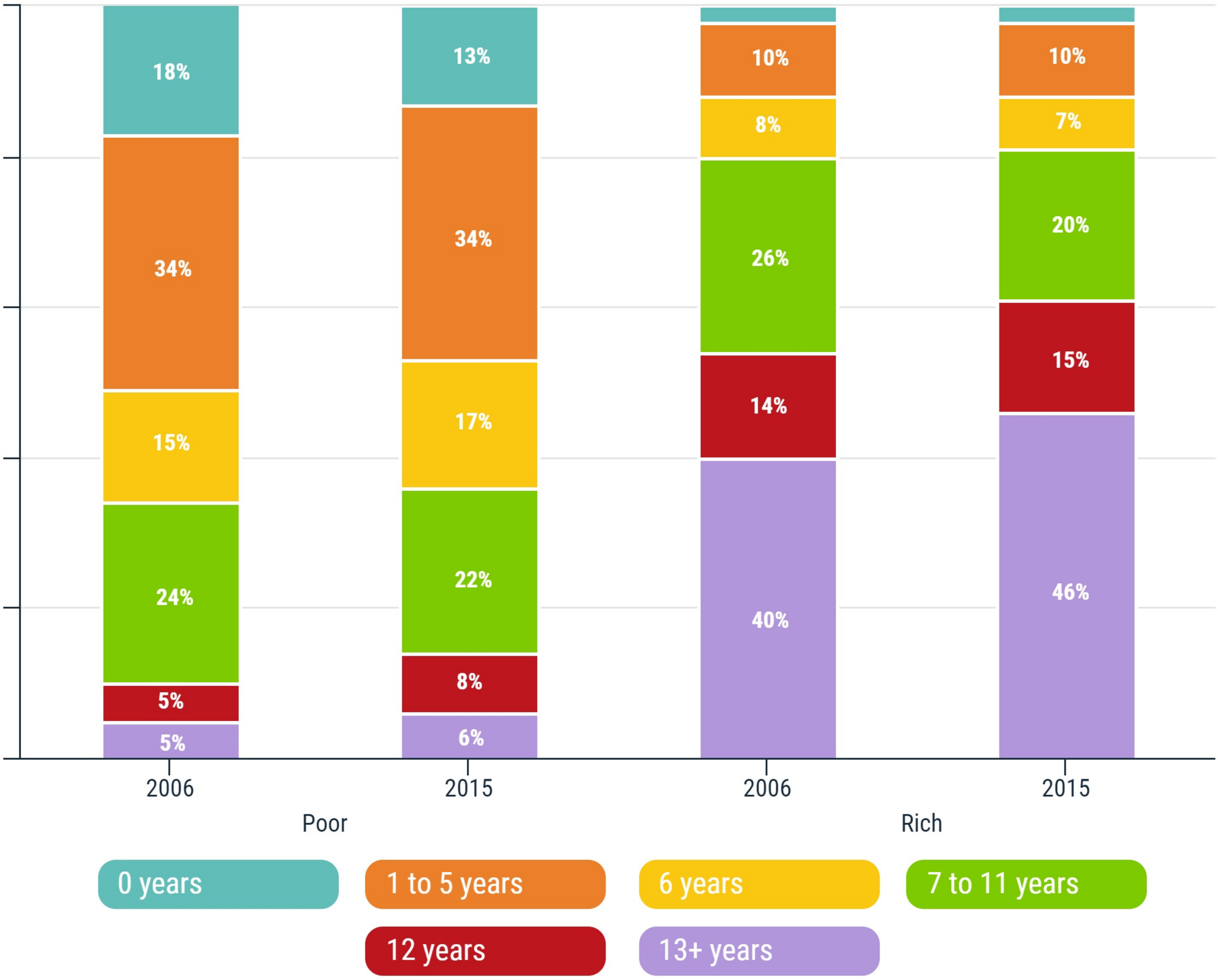



**Source:** CIMA, IDB, 2018.

## Fewer youth don't study or work, including poor children

- The percentage of youth who don't study or work is higher among youth from the most vulnerable households in every country in the region.
- In 2015, Bolivia (14%) and Peru (17%) had the smallest percentages of poor youth who didn't study or work.
- Though the proportion of people who don't study or work slightly declined in the region, some countries experienced more significant changes.
- Colombia, Chile, and Peru saw the greatest declines in their proportions of NEETs (to 21%, 19%, and 17% in 2015, respectively).
- Nevertheless, between 2005 and 2015, Bolivia and Ecuador saw increases in their proportions of NEETs by 2 and 3 percentage points, respectively.

# YEARS OF EDUCATION COMPLETED BY SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, 2006 AND 2015




**Source:** CIMA, IDB, 2018.

**Note:** 1. The LAC values are simple means that include all countries with available data. 2. The percentage corresponding to the turquoise section for rich students equals 2% in both 2006 and 2015.

## Rich and poor people are becoming better-educated

- The percentage of people older than 25 with more than 13 years of education increased by 5 percentage points in the region, from 18% in 2006 to 23% in 2015.
- The improvements have been substantially larger among high-income people.
- The percentage of high-income people older than 25 with more than 13 years of schooling moved from 40% to 46% between 2006 and 2015; among low-income people, this percentage only increased by one percentage point (5% to 6%) during the same time period.

## Socioeconomic gaps in educational attainment persist

- In 2015, the majority of low-income people had obtained very little education, with 34% of low-income adults having received between one and five years of schooling.
- In contrast, that same year, only 10% of high-income people had between one and five years of schooling.
- On average, the proportion of people without any type of formal education declined by three percentage points. Among low-income people, this proportion declined from 18% to 12% (a decrease of 6 p.p.).

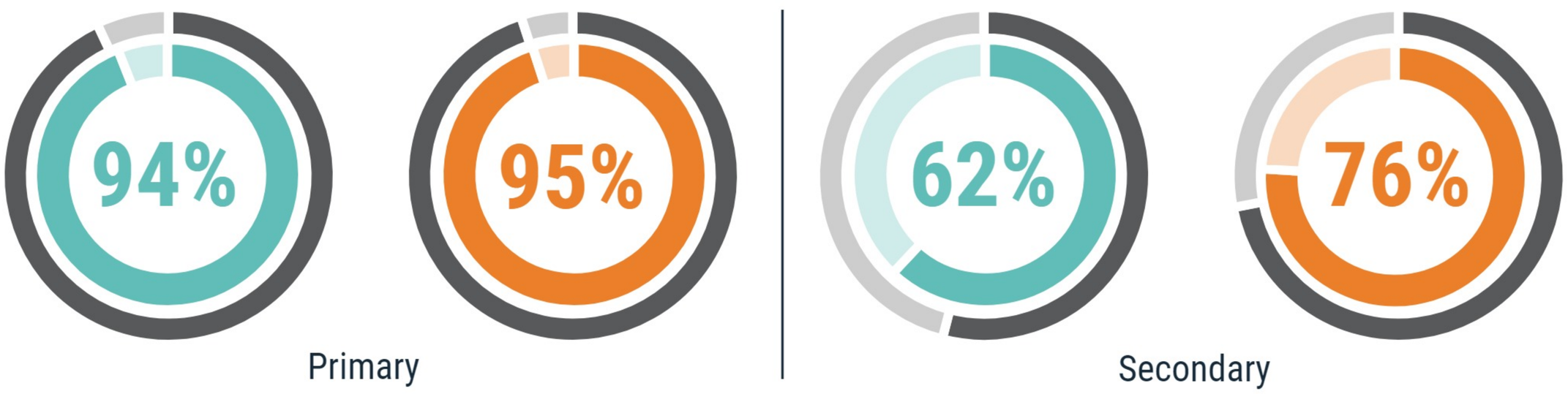
## More students in rural areas attend school

- The primary school attendance rate is high, even in rural areas. In 2015, the primary school attendance rates for students in rural and urban areas was 94% and 96%, respectively.
- The urban-rural gap in attendance has declined by 2 p.p. since 2006. Honduras and El Salvador each had urban-rural gaps of 6 p.p. in net attendance in 2006 that declined to 2 p.p. in 2015.
- Secondary school attendance rates increased in the region, above all in rural areas, where the net attendance rate increased from 54% to 63%. In urban areas, the rate increased by only 3 p.p.
- Nevertheless, the urban-rural gap in secondary school attendance rate remains large. The attendance rate totals 76% in urban areas and 62% in rural areas.
- Countries like Ecuador, Brazil, and Peru have reduced their urban-rural secondary school attendance gaps by 15, 14, and 13 percentage points, respectively.

## Access to education continues to favor students in urban areas

- The population with the most years of schooling can be found in urban areas. On average, 26% of people older than 25 who have 13 years of schooling live in urban areas. In rural areas, this percentage is only 9%.
- Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia are the countries with the greatest urban-rural education gaps. The difference between urban and rural areas in terms of the proportion of the population older than 25 with more than 13 years of schooling is approximately 25 percentage points.
- Additionally, this urban-rural gap continues to increase. For example, Brazil experienced a shift in this gap from 2 percentage points in 2006 to 6 percentage points in 2015.
- The percentage of people older than 25 with more than 13 years of education declined by 2 percentage points (from 22% to 20%) during the same time period.

## ATTENDANCE BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND GEOGRAPHIC AREA, 2006 AND 2015




**Source:** CIMA, IDB, 2018.
**Note:** The LAC values are simple means that include all countries with available data.

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**References:** CIMA (2018).

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