

## **Characteristics of the Education during the Spanish colonization (1821-1885):**

- Isolated situation
- Cultural life was reduced
- Lack of stimulation for the intellectual tasks
- Elementary schools were reduced and they had short periods and limited to count with teachers and pupils.
- Unstable situation

### **From 1821 to 1885:**

- Model Municipal- Ecclesiastic
- The independence in 1821 brought the foundation of the first elementary schools
- Administration and finances in charge of the local governments
- Ley Básica y Garantías (1858). The law requires the obligatory education
- Parents did not sent their kids to the schools
- Creation of Santo Tomás University, influenced by the illustrated liberalism
- School for Girls (1849)
- Evolution from the civic education to the popular education
- Foundations of San Luis Gonzaga High School in Cartago
- José María Castro's reforms and those of following presidents, allowed Costa Rica to become the first country in the world where education became free and obligator since 1869, as expressed by Article 78 of the Constitution. This and other articles of the constitution work towards preserving the quality of Costa Rica educational system.
- First Teacher: Priest Diego Aguilar. Director for more than 40 years of the Elementary School.
- Guatemala required teaching only the Spaniard sons and daughters to read and to write the Christian Doctrine.
- Division of social class was evident (private schools and private teachers)
- The education was dogmatic and memoirist
- Corporal punishment
- The teaching was limited to the reading, writing, Spanish grammar elements and arithmetic
- Priority to the Christian doctrine

### **1885:**

- Modernization of the Costa Rican State
- Influence of the liberalism from France and England (laissez-faire, laissez-passar)
- Liberalism versus clericalism
- Olympus Generation (young people)

### **Educational Reform:**

- Education is centralized by the State. (Ley Fundamental de Instrucción Pública)
- Definition of the elementary schools and its territorial division
- Foundation of the Normal School
- 1887: José María Castro's reforms and those of following presidents, allowed Costa Rica to become the first country in the world where education became free and obligator since 1869, as expressed by Article 78 of the Constitution. This and other articles of the constitution work towards preserving the quality of Costa Rica educational system.
- 1887 Foundation of Instituto de Alajuela (Alajuela), Liceo de Costa Rica (San José), Escuela Normal para varones.

- 1888. Creation of secondary schools: Colegio Superior de Señoritas and Escuela Normal for woman.
- Closed of Santo Tomas University but the Law School was kept open.
  - The reform was fundamental for:
    - The right of the education
    - Teaching children from 7 to 10 years old in mix schools.
    - Distribution of the school length with periods of breaks and exercising (recreos)
    - Forbidden the corporal punishment
    - Foundation of Special Schools (kindergarten) in the city of the provinces.
    - Division of the territory in school districts (every 2 km per 1000 inhabitants)

### **Normal School:**

- Introduced the progressivism movement
- Introduced new pedagogical currents and new way the educational thoughts
- Promoted the education in rural and urban areas
- In 1926 boosted the pre-school education (Maternal Montessori School – María Isabel Carvajal)
- In 1935 the MIP published the New Spelling Book (Silabario Castellano) (Emma Gamboa)

### **HIGHER EDUCATION:**

In 1941 was created the University of Costa Rica. The government established three basic functions:

- Higher teaching
- Research
- Extension to the national community
- Integration of the Pedagogy, Fine Arts, Agriculture, Law School and Pharmacy
- The mission is to encourage to the studies and research of the national problems

1950 – 1970. Pilot projects:

- Fundamental education
- Secondary Education
- Vocational Education (UNESCO)
- Normal Education
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1940 – 1970. International context and changes in Costa Rica:

- Second World War
- Costa Rica Civil Revolution (1948)
  - Social reform: social guaranties (Labor Code & Social Security)
  - Nationalization of the public services (national banks)
  - Decentralization of the Executive Branch (creation of the autonomous institutions)

### **University:**

- Science and Philosophy Schools (to train professor for secondary schools)
- Licentiate Degree was established in Science, History, Geography, Philosophy and Arts (Spanish and Literature)

**STRUCTURE OF THE FORMAL EDUCATIVE SYSTEM:**

- Pre-scholar School
- Elementary School (8-9 grades) it is named Educación General Básica
- Secondary School
  - Diversify education
    - academic (two years)
    - technical (three years)
- Higher Education
- Professional Learning (INA)
- Other types of schools:
  - Languages
  - Music and Arts
  - Education for Adults

**Public Universities:**

- 1940 Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR)  
UCR is the largest and oldest university. Enrolls around 35,000 students, mostly on scholarships, even though full tuition rarely surpasses \$200 a semester.
- 1973 Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica (UNA)  
Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica, located in Heredia. Offers a variety of liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies to more than 13,000 students. UNA also has regional at Northern and Southern Costa Rica.
- 1971 Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica (ITCR)  
Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica. Located in Cartago and with center in San José. This technological institute specializes in science and technology, and trains people for agriculture, industry and mining.
- 1977 Universidad Estatal a Distancia  
Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED) that means The State Correspondence University was founded in 1978. It is modeled after the United Kingdom's Open University with 32 regional centers offering 15 degree courses in health, education, business administration, and the liberal arts. It has had great success especially for people who live in rural areas.
- Higher education (public community colleges):
  - Colegio Universitario de Alajuela (CUNA)
  - Colegio Universitario de Cartago (CUC)
  - Colegio Universitario de Puntarenas (CUP)
  - Centro de Investigación y perfeccionamiento de la Educación Técnica (CIPET)
  - Escuela Centroamericana de Ganadería
  - Centro de Formación y Formadores de Personal Técnico para el Desarrollo Industrial de Centroamérica (CEFOF).

**Private universities:**

- Since 1977 year when was founded the Universidad Autónoma de Centro América (UACA). They are controlled by the Consejo Nacional de Educación Superior (CONESUP) and one representative from Consejo Nacional de Rectores (CONARE). The private universities have been increasing in number due to the difficulty of being admitted to state-funded, more prestigious universities. From 1992 to 1998, the number of private universities increased from 11 to 41.

Other institutions: There are other institutions dedicated to graduate education and research in different areas such as business administration, international relations and diplomacy, etc. for example INCAE. This is a private, non-profit, multinational, higher education institution that has graduate programs in business administration and applies economics. INCAE was founded in 1965 as an initiative of the Central American Governments and the business community. Since then, it relies on the advisory of the Harvard Business School. INCAE has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to award master's degree since 1964.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

- The earlier leaders and the first president, José María Castro Madriz, were former teachers who were concerned about the education in Costa Rica.
- The Costa Rica government invests 30% of the National Budget; around 8% from the Gross Domestic Produce (GDP) that represents a quarter of the National budget.
- The country boast of 96% literacy or older.
- Primary school has 6 year levels.
- High Schools have 5 years.
- Both primary and High School are divided in two year cycles and upon completion of each cycle, students are required to pass test on all subjects during those years.
- The main tests are the Bachillerato Tests, which are required to get the High Schools diploma needed for admission to Universities.
- Primary education lasts for six years divided in two cycles of three years each.
- Secondary education covers five or six years divided into cycle 3, the last three years of basic education, and cycle 4 of two or three years' duration.
- On entering cycle 3, pupils choose an academic course or a technical/vocational program. At the end of this cycle, a Certificate is awarded.
- In cycle 4, pupils choose a two-year academic course or a three-year technical course. Both courses follow a core curriculum including Spanish, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science and Foreign Languages in addition to the specialized subjects. Satisfactory completion of this cycle leads to the Bachillerato, which gives access to higher education; however, most universities impose an entrance examination.
- This system applies to all public schools, but there are also private schools and high schools, which utilize an American or European system, where more well-to-do families usually send their children.
- There are several North American schools in addition to a German school, a French school, and a Japanese School. The explosion of private Costa Rican and foreign schools has lessened over-crowding in the public schools and has provided an alternate educational system for those who can afford it.
- The Ministry of Education is responsible for regulating education in all of Costa Rica. To help keep Costa Rica current and on top of education, Jose Maria Figueres who was president from 1994 to 1998 declared the teaching of English and Computer Science as mandatory in all of the nation's public schools. This meant the training of 500 teachers and a huge expense from the part of the government. The commitment to education and progress by Costa Rica was shown to still be present. This was able to occur since most of the inhabitants of Costa Rica live in a concentrated area and communication is widespread. New technology and programs are able to be spread quickly throughout the country.