

2.2 Satisfaction with public services

Public services such as hospitals, schools and courts affect the lives of many and serve as points where people interact with public institutions and government. Satisfaction is a widely used indicator to gauge public sector performance from the citizen's or user's perspective. The term may encompass a range of different aspects of the services – such as access, responsiveness and quality (Baredes, 2022). Satisfaction with public services also influences trust in government and in the civil service (OECD 2022). Moreover, well-functioning public services improve productivity by providing essential education and healthcare, as well as a sound judicial system, all of which drive economic growth.

On average, 66% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are satisfied with the education system in 2022, similar to the average for OECD countries (67%) in the same year. In Nicaragua, more than 80% of the population are satisfied with the education system, making it the country with the highest satisfaction rate in the region. It is notable that between 2022 and 2011, most LAC countries have only experienced minor changes in satisfaction with the education system, or none at all. However, there are a few exceptions, such as Brazil, where satisfaction with education has improved by 9 percentage points (p.p.) since 2011, with 64% satisfied in 2022 (Figure 2.3).

In 2022, more than half of the population in LAC countries were satisfied with the healthcare system (53%). The regional average has fallen slightly since 2011 (-2.6 p.p.). This is due to large falls in satisfaction in a handful of countries, even though there were small or no improvements in the level in 10 out of the 18 countries surveyed. This is a striking result following the COVID-19 pandemic. The three countries with the highest satisfaction levels are Costa Rica (70%), Nicaragua (67%) and El Salvador (63%), followed by Uruguay (63%), which had the highest satisfaction rates in 2011 (75%) (Figure 2.4).

Only 38% of people in the LAC region reported confidence in the judicial system in 2022 – although that is an improvement since 2011 when the average was 32%. People's confidence in the judiciary improved in 11 out of 18 LAC countries during this period. Costa Rica (18 p.p. increase), Guatemala (10 p.p.) and Nicaragua (13 p.p.) showed significant increases in confidence between 2011 and 2022 (Figure 2.5). It is worth noting that justice services are used by a smaller share of the population

than health and education. Accordingly, confidence in the judicial system and the courts is less likely to be based on experience than with healthcare and education.

Methodology and definitions

Data are from the Gallup World Poll (GWP), which is a cross-national and longitudinal survey based on a nationally representative and probability sample of about 1 000 individuals per country. In some countries, data refer exclusively to the capital or largest cities. The GWP includes questions on confidence in the judicial system and satisfaction with education and health systems. The questions on confidence in the above institutions allow for a binary response (yes or no). For more information on the survey methodology please consult:

www.gallup.com/178667/gallupworld-poll-work.aspx.

Further reading

Baredes, B. (2022), "Serving citizens: Measuring the performance of services for a better user experience", *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, No. 52, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/65223af7-en>.

OECD (2022), *Building Trust to Reinforce Democracy: Main Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions*, Building Trust in Public Institutions, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b407f99c-en>.

Figure notes

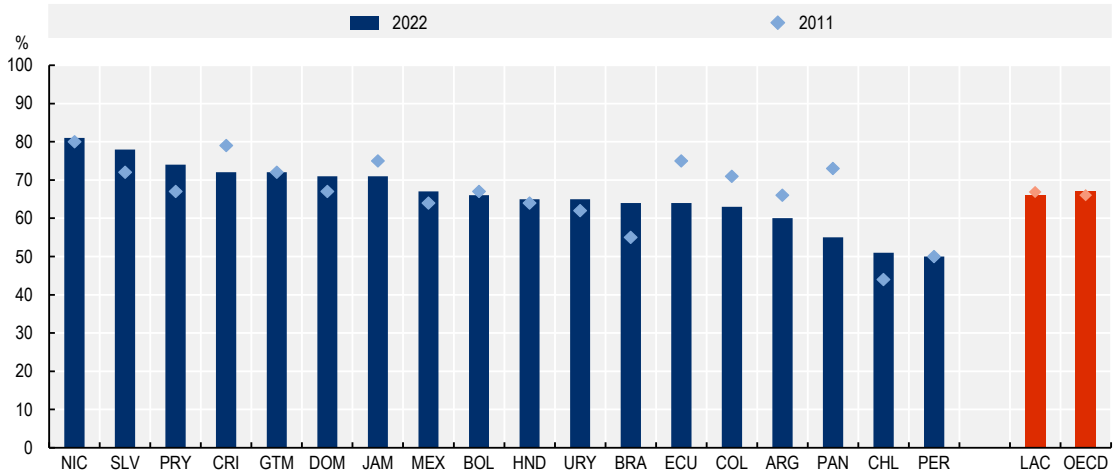
Figure 2.3, Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.5. Due to missing data, the OECD averages for 2011 are calculated using 2012 data for Norway and Iceland.

Figure 2.3. The data refer to the question "In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the educational system and the schools?"

Figure 2.4. The data refer to the question "In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the availability of quality health care?"

Figure 2.5. The data refer to the question "In this country, do you have confidence in each of the following, or not? How about judicial system and courts?"

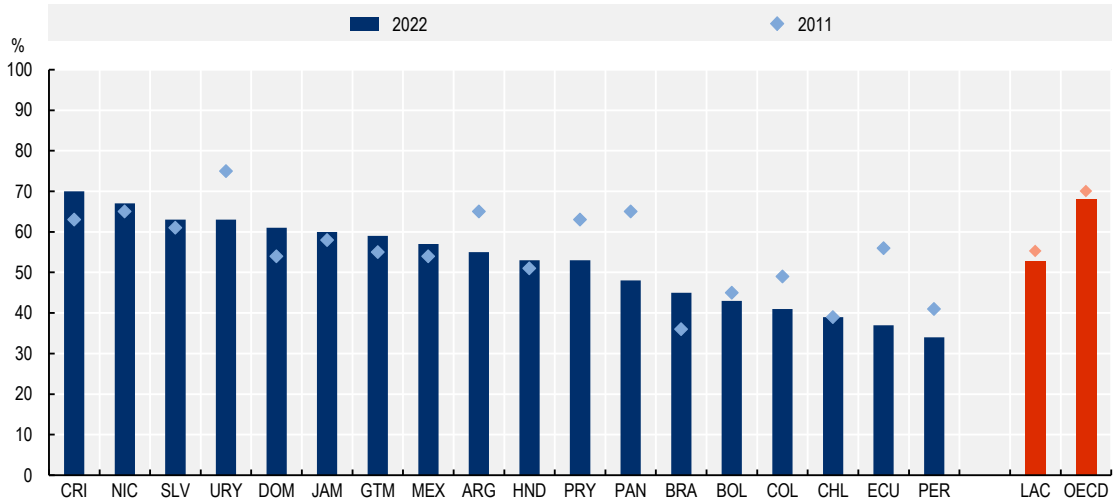
Figure 2.3. Citizen satisfaction with the education system, 2011 and 2022



Source: Gallup World Poll 2023 (database).

StatLink <https://stat.link/8qlo9v>

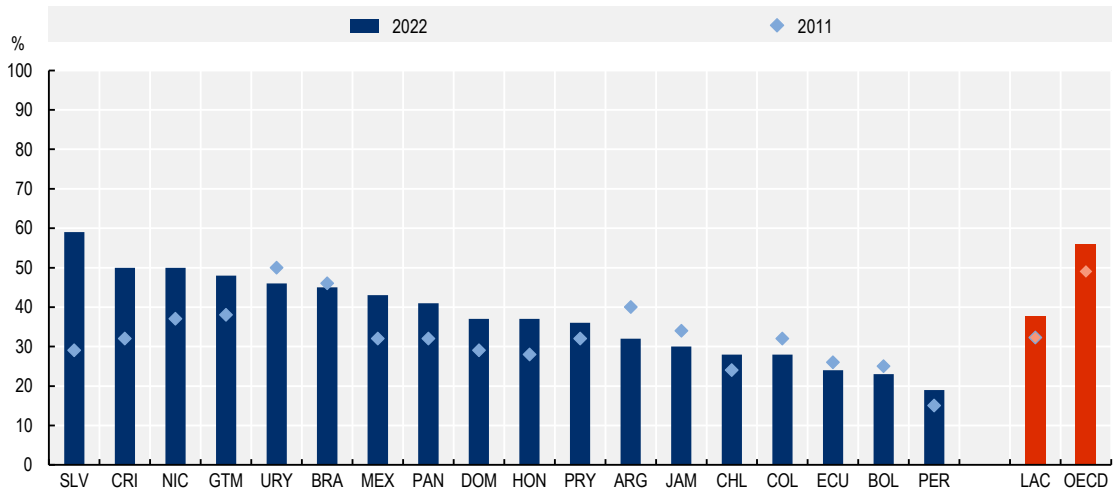
Figure 2.4. Citizen satisfaction with the healthcare system, 2011 and 2022



Source: Gallup World Poll 2023 (database).

StatLink <https://stat.link/elvt2c>

Figure 2.5. Citizen confidence in the judicial system, 2011 and 2022



Source: Gallup World Poll 2023 (database).

StatLink <https://stat.link/nelo7t>



From:
Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2024

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/4abdba16-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2024), "Satisfaction with public services", in *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2024*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/3df671dd-en>

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.