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THE MENDOZA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS PLAN (ARGENTINA, 1962-1972: STANDARD PROJECTS AND TERRITORY

EL PLAN DE ESCUELAS INTEGRALES DE MENDOZA (ARGENTINA, 1962-1972): PROYECTOS TIPO Y TERRITORIO

O PLANO DE ESCOLAS INTEGRAIS DE MENDOZA (ARGENTINA, 1962-1972): PROJETOS-PADRÃO E TERRITÓRIO



Figure 0. Standard rural project developed by Corti and Alfaro. Sources: Images from Summa (López de Genovart, 1976); plans of the archive of the Directorate of Architecture of Mendoza.

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AS / Vol 44 / Nº 69 / 2026
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ABSTRACT

Throughout the 20th century, school construction became a core component of state consolidation processes in Argentina, closely linked to the expansion of schooling, territorial organization, and socioeconomic development. In a context marked by overlapping responsibilities between the national state and provincial governments, and by the progressive advance of educational decentralization since the mid-1950s, school architecture acquired a strategic role in the formulation of public policies. During the 1960s, developmentalist orientations and the country's growing international engagement fostered the professionalization of educational architecture, in dialogue with organizations such as UNESCO. Within this framework, this article analyzes the school construction plan implemented by the province of Mendoza between 1962 and 1972. Based on the revision and analysis of documentary and technical sources, the architectural and territorial characteristics of standardized designs, the connections among different levels of the state, and continuity and reformulation processes were examined, in comparison with previous experiences. The study demonstrates that Mendoza's school building policy constituted a sustained strategy of educational planning and territorial development, consolidating the provincial government's leading role and assigning standardized projects a central role as instruments of state modernization in the Argentine context of the 1960s.

Keywords: educational architecture, primary schools, public works, planning, territory

RESUMEN

A lo largo del siglo XX, la construcción de escuelas constituyó un componente central de los procesos de consolidación estatal en Argentina, estrechamente vinculada a la expansión de la escolaridad, la organización del territorio y el desarrollo socioeconómico. En un contexto marcado por la superposición de competencias entre el Estado nacional y los gobiernos provinciales, y por el avance progresivo de la descentralización educativa desde mediados de la década de 1950, la arquitectura escolar adquirió un papel estratégico en la definición de políticas públicas. Durante la década de 1960, las orientaciones desarrollistas y la creciente inserción internacional del país impulsaron la profesionalización del campo de la arquitectura educativa, en diálogo con organismos como la UNESCO. En este marco, el artículo analiza el plan de construcción de escuelas impulsado por la provincia de Mendoza entre 1962 y 1972. A partir del relevamiento y análisis de fuentes documentales y técnicas, se examinan las características arquitectónicas y territoriales de los prototipos, la articulación entre los distintos niveles del Estado y los procesos de continuidad y reformulación respecto de experiencias previas. El estudio demuestra que la política mendocina de edificación escolar constituyó una estrategia sostenida de planificación educativa y desarrollo territorial, que consolidó el protagonismo del gobierno provincial y otorgó a los proyectos tipo un rol central como instrumentos de modernización estatal en el contexto argentino de la década de 1960.

Palabras Clave: arquitectura educacional, escuela primaria, obras públicas, planificación, territorio

RESUMO

Ao longo do século XX, a construção de escolas constituiu um componente central dos processos de consolidação do Estado na Argentina, estreitamente vinculada à expansão da escolarização, à organização do território e ao desenvolvimento socioeconômico. Em um contexto marcado pela sobreposição de competências entre o Estado nacional e os governos provinciais, bem como pelo avanço progressivo da descentralização educacional a partir de meados da década de 1950, a arquitetura escolar assumiu um papel estratégico na definição de políticas públicas. Durante a década de 1960, as orientações desenvolvimentistas e a crescente inserção internacional do país impulsionaram a profissionalização do campo da arquitetura educacional, em diálogo com organismos como a UNESCO. Nesse cenário, o artigo analisa o plano de construção de escolas promovido pela província de Mendoza entre 1962 e 1972. Com base no levantamento e na análise de fontes documentais e técnicas, examinam-se as características arquitetônicas e territoriais dos protótipos, a articulação entre os diferentes níveis do Estado e os processos de continuidade e reformulação em relação às experiências anteriores. O estudo demonstra que a política de edificação escolar de Mendoza constituiu uma estratégia contínua de planejamento educacional e desenvolvimento territorial, que consolidou o protagonismo do governo provincial e conferiu aos projetos-padrão um papel central como instrumentos de modernização do Estado no contexto argentino da década de 1960.

Palavras-Chave: arquitetura escolar, escola primária, obras públicas, planejamento, território

AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 20th century, school construction became one of the main instruments in the processes shaping modern states. In Argentina, the country's size and migratory flows shaped heterogeneous scenarios, in which elementary schools occupied a central place amid high illiteracy rates. The expansion of school infrastructure accompanied the growth of educational systems and promoted architectural transformations in response to new pedagogical demands, technological advances, and local conditions (Cattaneo & Durá Gúrpide, 2024). The school building was thus combined with state institutionalization, regional organization, and economic and social development processes.

Between 1905 and 1978, educational management in Argentina was characterized by the alignment of competencies between the national state and the provinces. Although the National Constitution (General Constituent Congress of the Argentine Confederation, 1853) and Law 1420 on Common Education (1884) assigned to the latter the responsibility for primary education, the ratification of the Láinez Law (Law 4874, 1905) enabled the National Council of Education to create and manage schools in provincial areas, a situation that remained in place until these were fully transferred in 1978. This overlap of competencies led to a dynamic of multilevel articulation that alternated between cooperation and conflict and that, since 1955, has been inscribed in a progressive educational decentralization (Southwell & De Luca, 2008; Petitti, 2024; Durá Gúrpide, 2025a).

In the 1960s, development policies and the country's growing international integration transformed the production of state infrastructure. The implementation of major public works, such as dams, roads, hospitals and schools, was combined with the objectives of industrial modernization and urban expansion (Müller & Schmidt, 2020). In the field of school architecture, Argentina joined an international process of professionalization, fostered in particular by UNESCO and the Regional Center for School Buildings for Latin America (CONESCAL) (Durá Gúrpide, 2026). Within this framework, the National School Construction Plan was implemented in 1965, which led to standardized prototypes (Estrella, 1984; Barrán, 2022; Cattaneo & Durá Gúrpide, 2025). These projects were applied to the construction of approximately 200 schools; however, their implementation was inconsistent over the provinces, and in some cases, such as Mendoza, none were implemented.

In contrast to the limited national intervention, the government of the Province of Mendoza implemented an intensive school construction policy from 1962 to 1972. Francisco Gabrielli's involvement over the three periods (1961-1962, 1963-1966, and 1970-1972), together with the management of José Blanco (1966-1970), helped consolidate a provincial strategy oriented toward expanding educational infrastructure. Following UNESCO's recommendations, this project elevated the school to a role as an instrument for regional and social development.

AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

The Mendoza initiative was based on a previous route taken in the field of school construction. Since the late 1920s, the province had supported sustained school construction plans, which allowed it to develop technical and institutional capacities and consolidate a relevant position compared to the State (Cattaneo, 2015; Durá Gúrpide, 2018; Durá Gúrpide, 2025a; Durá Gúrpide, 2025b; Raffa, 2020). In this framework, the use of standardized projects was consolidated as an effective strategy to respond to the regional expansion of the educational system, in tune with international experiences disseminated since the postwar period, such as the British CLASP system and, in Latin America, the prototypes of the State programs of Mexico, Chile, and Venezuela (Estrella, 1984; Shmidt, 2014; Barrán, 2022).

This article analyzes the Integrated School Plan implemented in the province of Mendoza between 1962 and 1972 to understand how the provincial policy combined educational planning, architectural production, and regional development in a context of educational decentralization. Based on a study of the standard projects and their regional concretization, the paper examines the relationships between provincial policies, international guidelines, and technical professionalization.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Recent historiography on school architecture has progressively shifted interest from the isolated building to the analysis of public policies, planning processes, and institutional networks that made its production possible. From this perspective, standard projects are understood as instruments through which the State has materialized pedagogical, economic, and regional objectives. At the same time, they constitute a privileged object to study the professionalization of school architecture during the 1960s and 1970s. This problem has been addressed in Argentina (Fiorito, 2013; Shmidt, 2014; Blanc, Cattaneo & Durá, 2025) and in other Latin American countries (Pereira, 2019; Peláez Iglesias, 2021; Exss, 2022; Torres et al., 2024).

To a lesser extent, the relationship between standard projects, regional planning, and implementation in rural areas has been explored. In this sense, the contributions on the experimental nature of the rural school in educational architecture, linked to their specific conditions, are summarized (Cattaneo & Durá Gúrpide, 2024). Under this approach, the work interprets the standard projects as the result of a local appropriation of international guidelines and as instruments for regional planning and the strengthening of state presence.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the analysis of primary sources such as official publications, institutional reports, educational regulations, press releases, and technical documentation of architectural projects, preserved in the Archive of the Architecture Directorate of Mendoza, the Historical Archive of Mendoza, the San Martín General Public Library, and the Library of the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature of the National University of

AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

Cuyo. The analysis was developed in three complementary dimensions: first, the provincial school construction policy and the educational planning processes associated with the Integrated School Plan were reconstructed based on official speeches, government reports, and institutional documentation. Then, the standard projects were analyzed from an architectural perspective, considering their spatial organization, construction solutions, implementation criteria, and reformulation processes. Finally, the buildings that were actually built were identified and geo-referenced to assess their completion and regional scope. The Mendoza case was also examined in the context of previous provincial and national experiences to identify continuities, reformulations, and specific contributions.

DEVELOPMENT

THE INTEGRATED SCHOOL AND THE CONCENTRATED MODEL

The policies promoted by the government of Francisco Gabrielli placed education at their heart, with particular attention to rural schools, in line with recommendations from regional specialists. The National Population Census of 1960 highlighted persisting problems with literacy and school attendance, especially in rural areas, underscoring the need for intervention in this sector. Within this framework, the rural school was conceived by the provincial government not only as a space for basic preparation but also as a strategic instrument of economic and social development, aimed at promoting productive specialization, strengthening local roots, and mitigating migration to urban centers.

The initial diagnoses of the provincial educational situation identified insufficient classroom capacity and the sustained growth of the school population as the main problems, resulting from both the organic growth and migratory flows. Faced with the saturation of existing establishments, it was proposed to expand the teaching staff and build new school buildings, taking into account the cultural characteristics of each area and contemporary trends in educational architecture. In this sense, a balanced regional organization of the school system was proposed, prioritizing small-scale schools close to neighborhoods and rural populations, at the expense of large centralized establishments (Government of Mendoza, 1961, p. 16).

According to the governor himself, the educational initiatives were guided by rational, modern, and practical criteria (Government of Mendoza, 1961, p. 16). The "Integrated school" was formulated in this context, as a "school of life, which radiates all the knowledge that children, adolescents and men need to be useful in their lives and in society" (El Tiempo de Cuyo, 1962, p. 8). This definition expressed a pragmatic conception of education, focused on technical preparation at the earliest levels. In rural areas, practical courses (on engines, pumps, fruit and vegetable curing, among other topics) were proposed, aimed at both

AS / Vol 44 / Nº 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

students and adults in the community, along with the incorporation of small intensive crop farms for pedagogical purposes (Government of Mendoza, 1961, p. 16).

As part of this policy, the provincial state focused on developing school buildings, which were conceived as tangible indicators of educational progress. School infrastructure occupied a priority position within provincial public works, both in the number implemented and in the proportion of the allocated budget. In 1962, the Integrated Schools Plan was launched, proposing a new type of establishment linked to provincial development, demographic growth, and the expansion of industrial capacity. The plan was based on UNESCO's recommendations in the fields of educational planning and infrastructure and set an objective: the construction of 100 school buildings (El Tiempo de Cuyo, 1962).

The program envisaged for these establishments reflected the breadth of their goals, which exceeded formal education. The official documentation provided classrooms according to the area of influence, with a possibility for expansion; a principal's office; a library; an assembly hall; housing for the principal and a teacher; and basic gas, electricity, and running water services. In addition, agricultural and forestry education workshops, units for agricultural activities, a first-aid room, a small post office, and spaces for community use were added (El Tiempo de Cuyo, 1962, p. 8).

To implement the plan, a standard project was developed by the architect Juan Manuel Benegas, who had been trained at the National University of Córdoba and was brought into the provincial Architecture Directorate in 1957. Among his first works are the Mariano Necochea School in Las Heras in 1958 and, later, the Philosophy and Literature Faculty building at the National University of Cuyo. His career reveals a specialization in educational architecture (Raffa et al., 2017, pp. 71-74).

The standard project conceived by Benegas proposed a broad program, albeit more limited than the one initially stated (Figure 1). The complex was organized around a central covered courtyard intended for multiple uses, around which the classrooms, the toilet block, and an area next to the entrance, which was home to the principal's office, the teachers' lounge, and a storage room, were arranged. The layout also included two houses, one for the principal and one for the doorman. This concentrated organization reinforced the conception of the school as a community meeting space.

From a constructive point of view, traditional and easily accessible materials were chosen: an anti-seismic reinforced-concrete structure, a flat-slab roof, and exposed-brick enclosures. The central space was higher, allowing for large windows to bring in daylight and natural ventilation. The classrooms had large glazed surfaces comprising several panes, allowing them to be opened outward.

AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

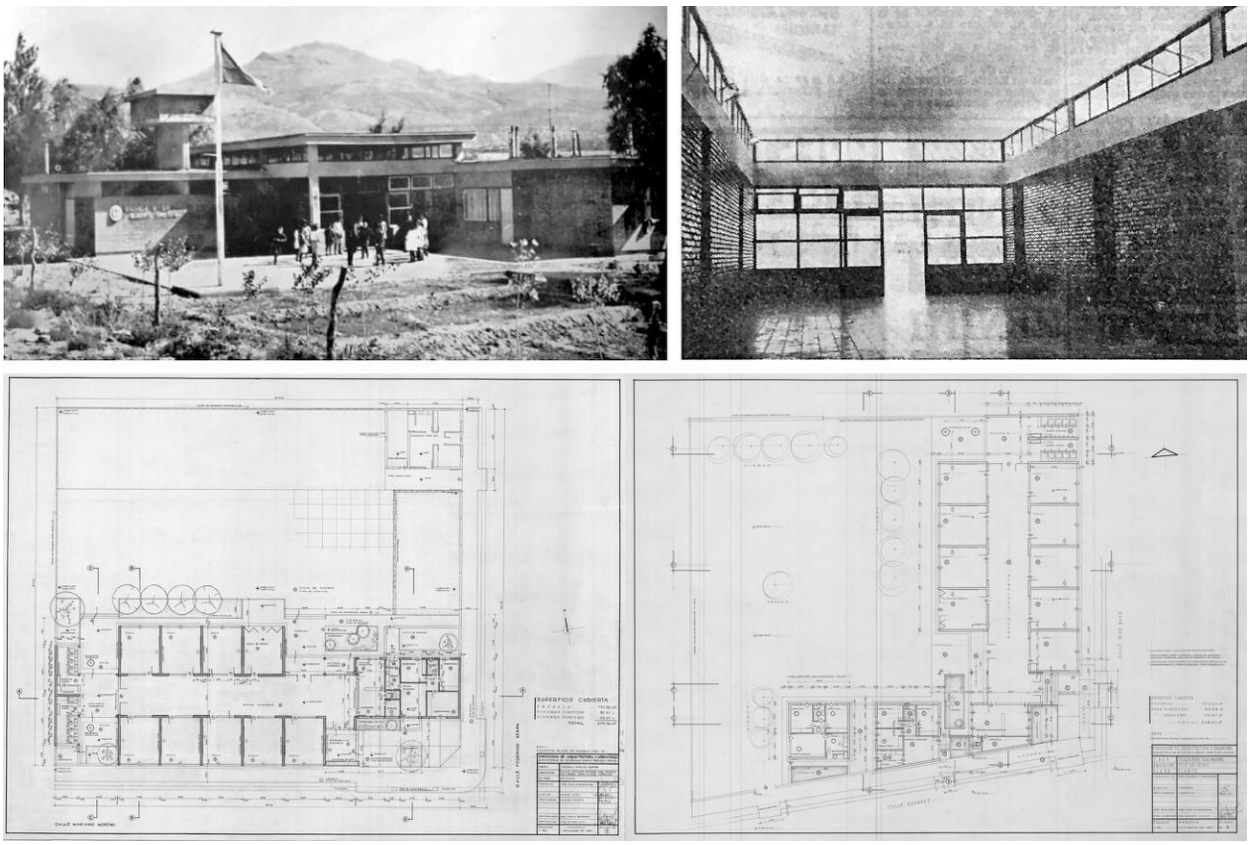


Figure 1. School prototype developed by Benegas. Sources: Images from the Government of Mendoza (1964b). Mendoza moving forward, 1963-1964. Official Printing Press; plans of the archive of the Directorate of Architecture of Mendoza.

The project contemplated variants of five- and nine-classroom configurations, the latter with a music room, and incorporated location-specific adaptations, especially in the entrance area and teachers' lounges, as well as in the design of the outdoor spaces, which included galleries, terraces, gardens, and drinking fountains. It is worth highlighting the design of the reinforced-concrete drinking fountain with five spouts on a central container, comparable to that of Arne Jacobsen's Munkegårds School (Denmark, 1951-1958).

The concentrated model was novel compared to the standard projects previously used in the province, characterized mainly by linear classroom layouts linked by corridors, open to the landscape in rural areas and to courtyards in the city. While urban establishments usually incorporated multipurpose rooms, rural programs were generally minimal, except for the Peronist period, which featured a broad program and linear layout. Schools with a concentrated organization began to spread internationally from the 1960s, driven by approaches in pedagogy and sociology, and the Mendocino case aligned with this model (Durá Gúrpide, 2024).

Planning, continuity, and optimization of standard projects

Upon assuming his second term in 1963, Francisco Gabrielli reaffirmed the priority given to education by constructing school buildings (Government of Mendoza, 1963, p. 10). The guidelines of his actions in

AS / Vol 44 / Nº 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

building matters were summarized in the motto "Neither monuments, nor ruins", which expressed the rejection of both sumptuous and oversized buildings and precarious and insufficient constructions (Government of Mendoza, 1964b; Government of Mendoza, 1965a). On repeated occasions, the Governor highlighted the volume of resources allocated to education and culture, equivalent to 33% of the Central Administration's budget, which exceeded the constitutional minimum of 20%, as a way to legitimize the State's effort in this area (Government of Mendoza, 1964a; Government of Mendoza, 1964b; Government of Mendoza, 1965a).

In addition, the provincial Government actively promoted community participation through Cooperative Commissions, Mothers' Clubs, and Graduate Centers. The contributions of these organizations, which included land donations, building improvements, the provision of teaching materials, social assistance, cultural outreach, and actions related to child health, were significant and helped strengthen the regional integration of the educational system (Government of Mendoza, 1964a).

During this period, provincial educational planning was consolidated, in line with the boom in state planning between 1960 and 1975. A Provincial School Census was carried out in 1964, aimed at comparing progress with the 1960 National Census and to produce detailed information for planning. At the same time, the educational programs were revised, and the School Guide was updated to systematize the location and distribution of institutions by zones and regions (Government of Mendoza, 1964b). In November of the same year, the Commission for the Integral Planning of Education was created (Law 3109, 1964), one of the first offices of this type in the country, preceded only by the one in Córdoba (1962) and created simultaneously with the one in Buenos Aires (1964) (Aguerrondo, Mejer & Araujo, 2009). Comprising officials and specialized personnel, the commission prepared an exhaustive 1966 study of the main problems of the provincial educational system and the solutions required. In 1965, these initiatives were complemented by the creation of the Center for Educational Documentation and Information, which produced, among other works, a report presented at the International Conference on Public Instruction held in Geneva in 1966.

The consolidation of technical planning and continuity policies was reflected in a second school construction plan initiated in 1964, conceived as an extension of the previous one and aimed at achieving the initial objective of building one hundred new establishments (Government of Mendoza, 1964b; Government of Mendoza, 1965a; Government of Mendoza, 1965b; Government of Mendoza, 1966a). In this framework, a new standard project was developed, defined as "more economical and fundamentally more in line with the characteristics of our climate and the needs of our school population" (Government of Mendoza, 1965b). Firstly, a model was designed for rural areas, and in 1965 another specific one for urban areas, in light of the lower availability of land and the higher population density. The rural project was signed by the architects Hipólito

AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

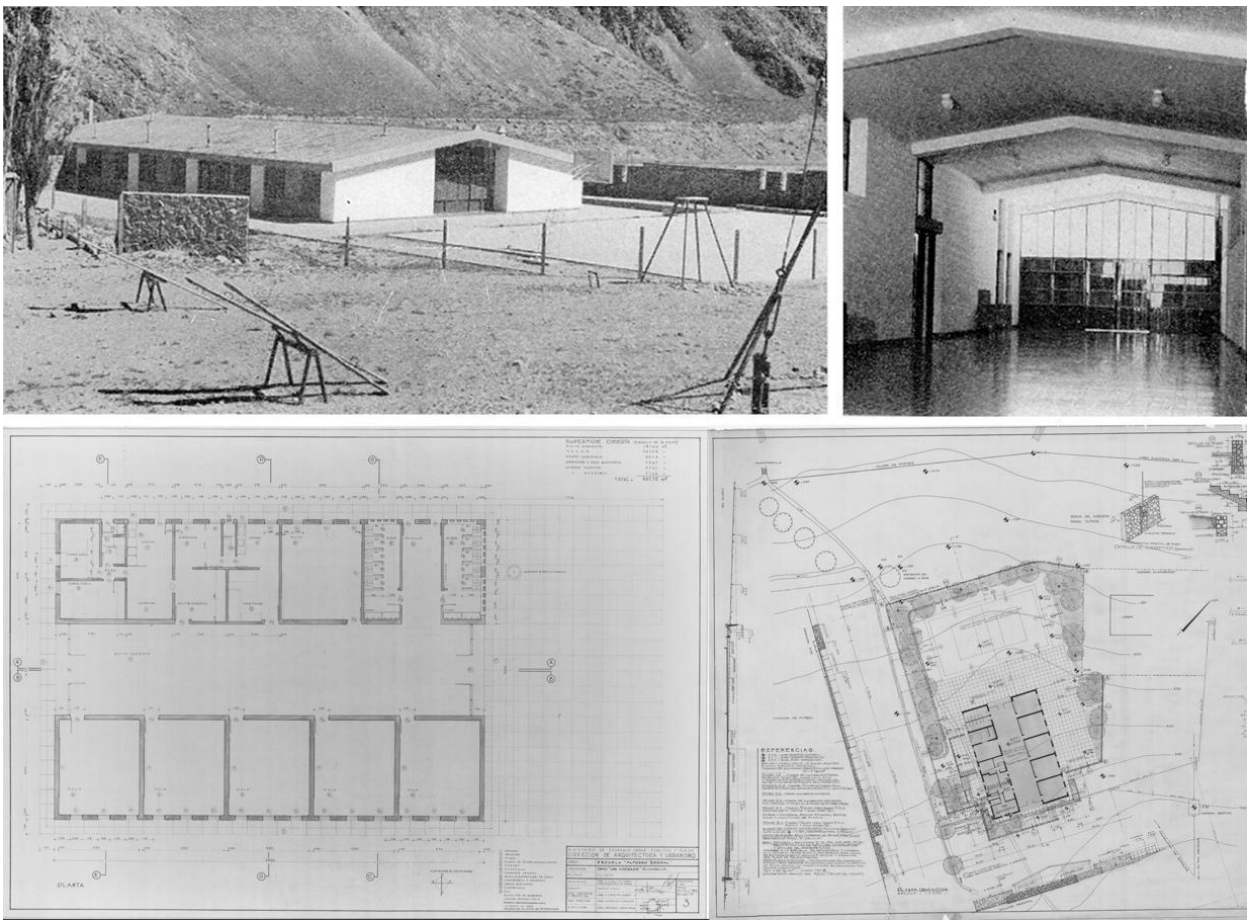


Figure 2. Standard rural project developed by Corti and Alfaro. Sources: Images from *Summa* (López de Genovart, 1976); plans of the archive of the Directorate of Architecture of Mendoza.

Corti and Edgardo Alfaro, while the urban one was led exclusively by Alfaro.

The rural model was an optimized version of the project developed by Benegas in 1961 (Figure 2). The main modification consisted of grouping all the spaces into a single volume with a gabled roof, a solution that simplified construction and maintenance. The building was organized around a central multipurpose space, open to the outside through large glazed panes at both ends. The classrooms were arranged on one side, preferably facing north; on the other, the teaching facilities were concentrated: the principal's office, teachers' lounge and dormitory, office, toilet, and principal's house, along with the toilet block and, depending on the variant, some classrooms. The most widespread version had six classrooms, although there were also variants of five and ten classrooms, the latter with a library and side entrance. In all cases, the standard drinking fountain designed by Benegas was maintained.

The urban prototype, on the other hand, was resolved as a compact two-story building with eleven classrooms -one for music- linked by an open gallery (Figure 3). The ground floor included administrative units, four classrooms, the toilet block, and a staircase, while the upper level housed seven classrooms. The classrooms had wide openings to the north,

1 Edgardo Alfaro trained as an architect at the National University of Córdoba. He worked at the Department of Architecture of the Province of Mendoza together with Hipólito Corti, with whom he also carried out private construction projects. He also served as director of the Provincial Housing Institute and as a professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of Mendoza and the Higher School of Arts of the National University of Cuyo. He died in 1967 in a car accident (Raffa, 2017, p. 37-38).(Raffa, 2017, p. 37-38).

AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

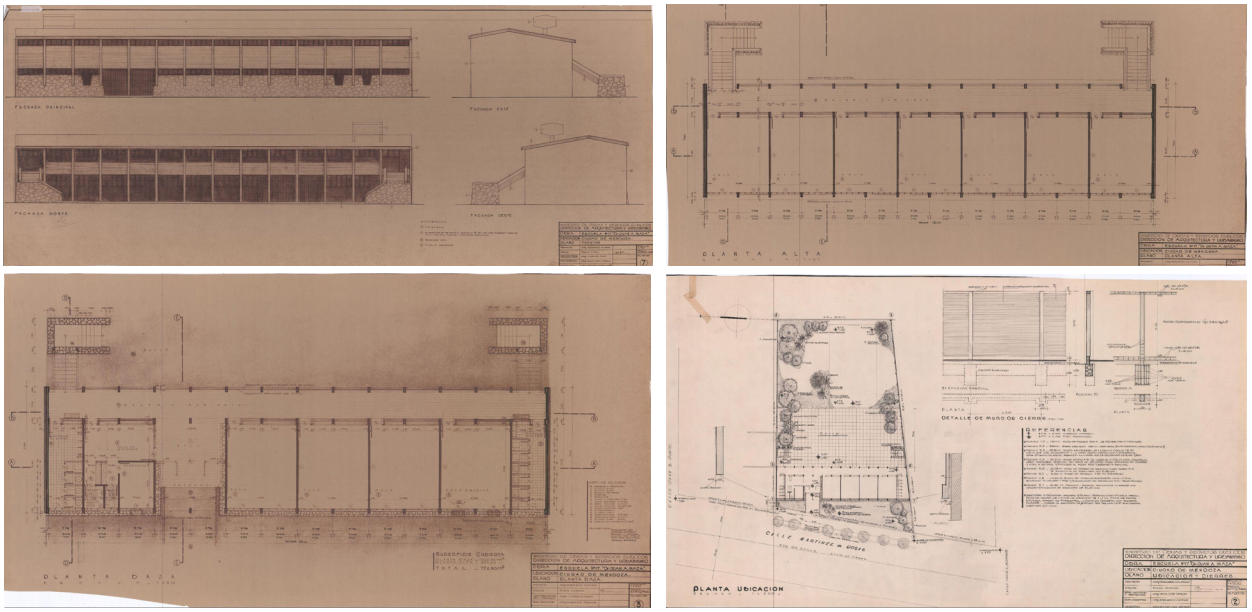


Figure 3. Standard urban project developed by Alfaro. Sources: Image of *Los Andes*, July 6th, 1970; plans from the archive of the Directorate of Architecture of Mendoza.

protected by galleries, while to the south they had high, narrow windows. These establishments lacked a multipurpose room, and the project was replicated without any variations. The linear organization on two levels allowed optimizing land use and freed up exterior surfaces for recreation. It is worth noting the differentiation of the two levels through the use of different cladding materials: stone on the ground floor and ceramics on the upper level. This strategy allowed adapting its scale.

In both models, the orderly, modular distribution of spaces facilitated the optimization of the construction processes. The buildings shared a reinforced concrete structure, brick partitions, and industrialized roofs of galvanized corrugated sheet on steel reticulated beams. They incorporated thermal insulation solutions and finishes that combined traditional and industrialized materials. These decisions sought to reduce costs, take advantage of local resources, and facilitate assembly using unskilled labor.

During the governorship of José Blanco (1966-1970) and the third term of Gabrielli (1970-1972), both educational planning and the school construction policy continued (Government of Mendoza, 1966b; Government of Mendoza, 1970; Government of Mendoza, 1971; Federal Intervention of the Province of Mendoza, 1973). Coordination at a national level was strengthened through the National Meetings of Ministers of Education and Educational Planning Offices, in which Mendoza actively participated, hosting these in 1970.

During this period, the use of prototypes developed under Gabrielli's second plan continued, along with unique projects in specific contexts, such as the Helen Keller school for blind and amblyopic children, designed by Jaime Perelló in 1967. In high-mountain areas, extreme climatic conditions motivated the development of specific solutions: initially, singular projects

AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

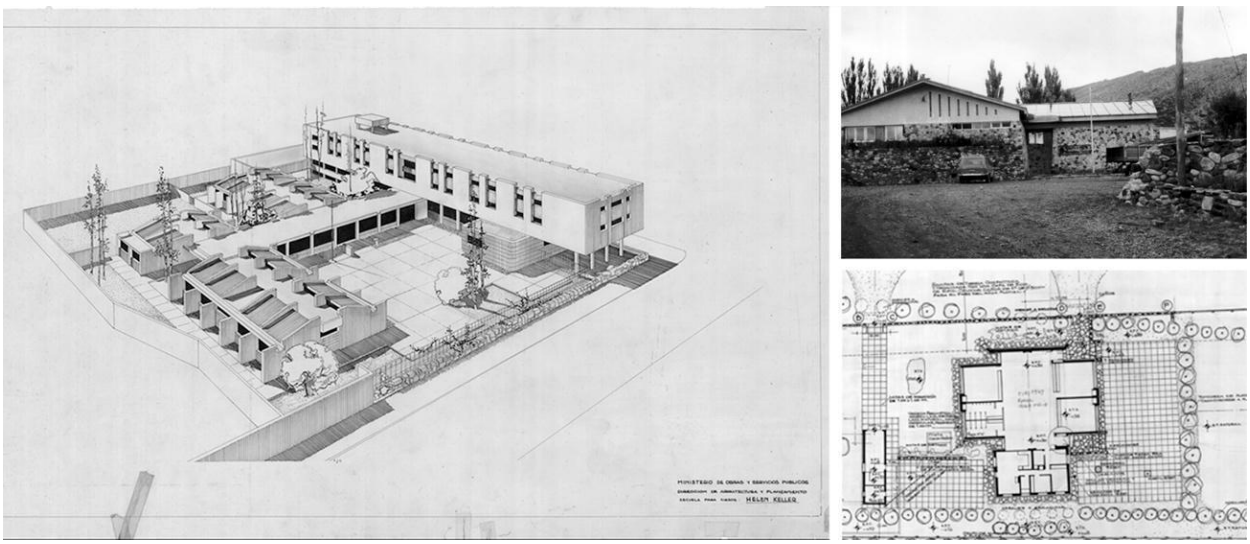


Figure 4. The Helen Keller School and standard high-mountain project. Sources: Drawings from the archive of the Directorate of Architecture of Mendoza (1979); image by INCIHUSA Digital, Fondo Civit-Manchón, Atlas of the western Argentine Border Project, 1979.

such as the Puente del Inca school, designed by Alfaro in 1965, and then a cross-shaped project with a central multipurpose space and greater thermal insulation (Figure 4).

Completion and impact

The contrast between the planned works, the documentary sources, and the actual buildings allows making an approximation of the degree of completion achieved by the school building programs. **2** Regarding the first stage of the plan (1962-1963), 27 implemented works were identified, 24 of which follow the standard project developed by Benegas, while the remaining three had been planned and/or started previously. During this period, the provincial government also assumed responsibility for constructing three State-financed national schools, revealing inter-jurisdictional articulation.

In the second stage (1964-1972), the standard projects designed by Corti and Alfaro were systematically applied in the construction of 25 provincial urban and 67 rural schools. The rural prototype was also used in the construction of three national schools. To these achievements are added four establishments that follow the high-mountain prototype and five unique projects designed to address specific pedagogical or environmental conditions.

Overall, a significant expansion of buildings can be observed between 1962 and 1972, with at least 134 establishments built by the provincial government, six of which were destined for national schools. The regional distribution of these works was broad, spanning 17 of the province's 18 departments, except for La Paz. Although most of the schools were located around the province's main oases, where most of its population is concentrated due to the local semi-arid climate, they also reached rural areas with dispersed populations and, in particular, isolated areas, such as high-mountain areas (Figure 5).

2 Some of the schools listed in the plan could not be located. Consequently, the identified works constitute a proven minimum, very close to the total actually built.

AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

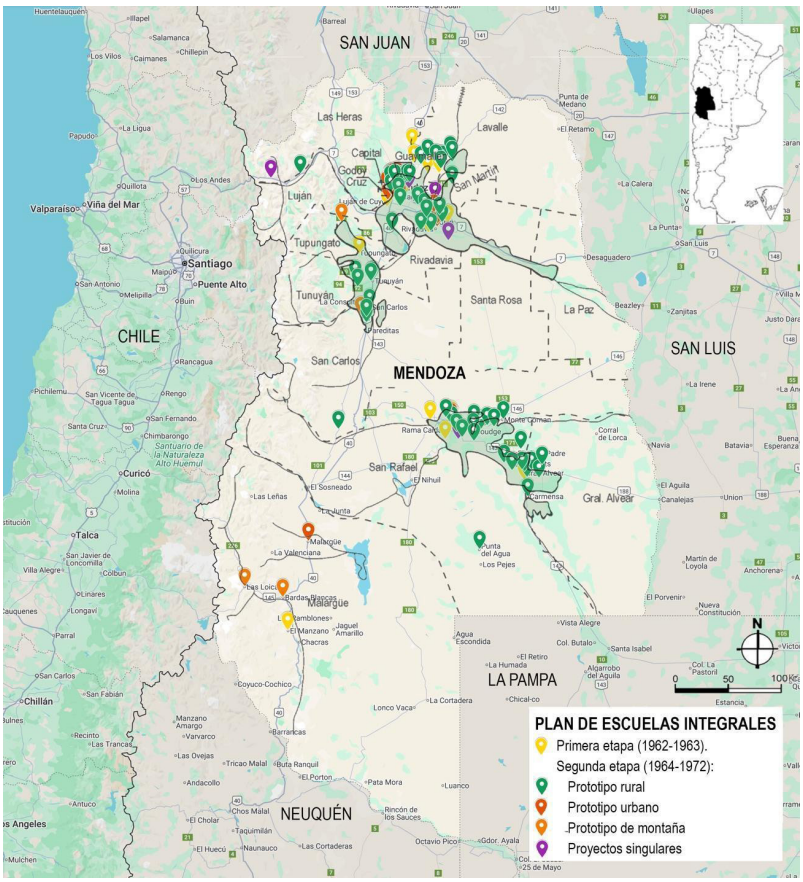


Figure 5. Distribution of the schools built in Mendoza, mostly located in the oases (marked with delimited green plots), where most of the provincial population and production is concentrated. Source: Prepared by the Author using a Google Earth map.

These figures can be compared with the experience of the first Peronism period (1945-1955), a stand-out precedent in school construction. In Mendoza, 112 schools were built during that period, 60 of which were implemented by the provincial government and 52 by the National Government (Durá Gúrpide, 2018). Although the global scales are relatively close, the difference lies in the distribution of responsibilities: while in the Peronist stage both state levels participated in a complementary manner, in the analyzed developmentalist period (1962-1972) the construction of the new buildings fell almost entirely on the provincial Government, which reinforces the interpretation of the process as a concrete expression of educational decentralization.

The standard rural project designed by Corti and Alfaro was the most used during the study period, on about 70 occasions, and continued to be used subsequently. Adopted for at least a decade by the School Architecture Division, directed by Marta López de Genovart between 1967 and 1982, it incorporated constructive adaptations that allowed its implementation in mountainous areas. In 1976, Summa magazine, a national benchmark, highlighted the Mendocino model's flexibility and ability to adapt to various climatic conditions (López de Genovart, 1976). This experience also gained international prominence through López de Genovart's participation in the CONESCAL meetings held in Mexico during the 1970s, representing the Government of Mendoza. **3**

3 Interview with Alberto Treves, conducted on March 5th, 2025. A specialist in educational infrastructure, he participated in the CONESCAL meetings during the 1970s and formally joined the institution in 1976, where he became deputy director.

AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the school construction plan promoted by the province of Mendoza between 1962 and 1972 reveals a unique process within the Argentine panorama of the second half of the 20th century, characterized by the provincial government's central role in planning and implementing school infrastructure. In a national context marked by overlapping competencies between the Nation and the provinces and by the progressive decentralization of education, Mendoza developed its own strategy, sustained over time and rooted in a tradition of state intervention in school building.

School construction, linked to both educational expansion and economic and territorial development, became a priority from the first government of Francisco Gabrielli. The Comprehensive School Plan of 1962 reflected this conception: the rural school was conceived not only as a space for literacy, but also as an instrument for population rooting, social cohesion, and technical training, capable of contributing to productive modernization. In this context, the standard project developed by Benegas represented a significant departure from previous models by proposing an organization centered on a multipurpose space, reinforcing the institution's community character and expanding its functional potential.

Although the Benegas' project was distinguished by the ambition of its plan and the spatial richness of its concentrated layout, which favored flexibility of use and the integration of school and extracurricular activities, it also presented limitations related to construction and upkeep, particularly in the solution for its roof. These tensions of typological innovation, technical feasibility, and long-term sustainability were addressed in the next stage through a systematic model optimization process.

The second phase of the school construction plan, initiated in 1964, reflected the maturation of provincial policy and the systematic incorporation of technical planning tools. The realization of the Provincial School Census, the updating of the School Guide, and the creation of the Commission for the Comprehensive Planning of Education and the Educational Documentation and Information Center consolidated a rational approach to educational planning, aligned both with the recommendations of international organizations and with the rise of planning in the Argentine public administration during the sixties. In this sense, Mendoza was positioned early as a pioneer province in the professionalization of educational planning.

The projects developed by Corti and Alfaro constituted the architectural correlate of this stage. The rural model, conceived as an optimized version of the previous concentrated layout, and the urban prototype demonstrate specialized knowledge of contemporary school architecture and, in turn, of the province's particular environmental conditions. The adoption of streamlined construction systems, the combination of traditional and industrialized materials, and the modulation

AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

of the spaces reduced costs, facilitated implementation and maintenance by local labor, and ensured the replicability of the buildings, without renouncing comfort and functionality criteria.

The continuity of these policies during the federal intervention of José Blanco and the third term of Gabrielli confirmed the structural character of the provincial strategy. The persistence in using prototypes, together with the development of unique projects for specific contexts, demonstrates the provincial State's capacity to balance standardization and adaptation, responding to diverse regional, climatic, and pedagogical situations.

In quantitative and regional terms, the scale of the process is striking: between 1962 and 1972, at least 134 school establishments were built, across 17 of the province's 18 departments, including widespread rural and high-mountain areas. This building expansion consolidated a province-wide school network and positioned the Mendoza government as a central actor in building educational infrastructure, even for national schools built through inter-jurisdictional agreements.

The study also highlights a sustained multi-level connection among the provincial State, the national State, and international organizations, complemented by the participation of community and private actors. The cooperation commissions, neighborhood associations, and contributions from companies and philanthropists reinforced schools' regional integration and showed that the school-building policy was also a socially shared process.

In short, the construction of schools in Mendoza during the developmentalist period went beyond a sectoral building program to become an integrated public policy in which educational decentralization, technical planning, regional development, and the professional consolidation of state architecture converged. The resulting schools not only expanded the capacity of the educational system, but also served as material manifestations of the provincial modernization project, connecting technical knowledge, pedagogical aspirations, and intervention strategies in the region.

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS CRediT

Conceptualization, I.D.G.; Data Curation, I.D.G.; Formal analysis, I.D.G.; Acquisition of financing; Research, I.D.G.; Methodology, I.D.G.; Project management; Resources; Software; Supervision; Validation; Visualization; Writing - original draft, I.D.G.; Writing - revision and editing, I.D.G.

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AS / Vol 44 / N° 69 / 2026
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

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