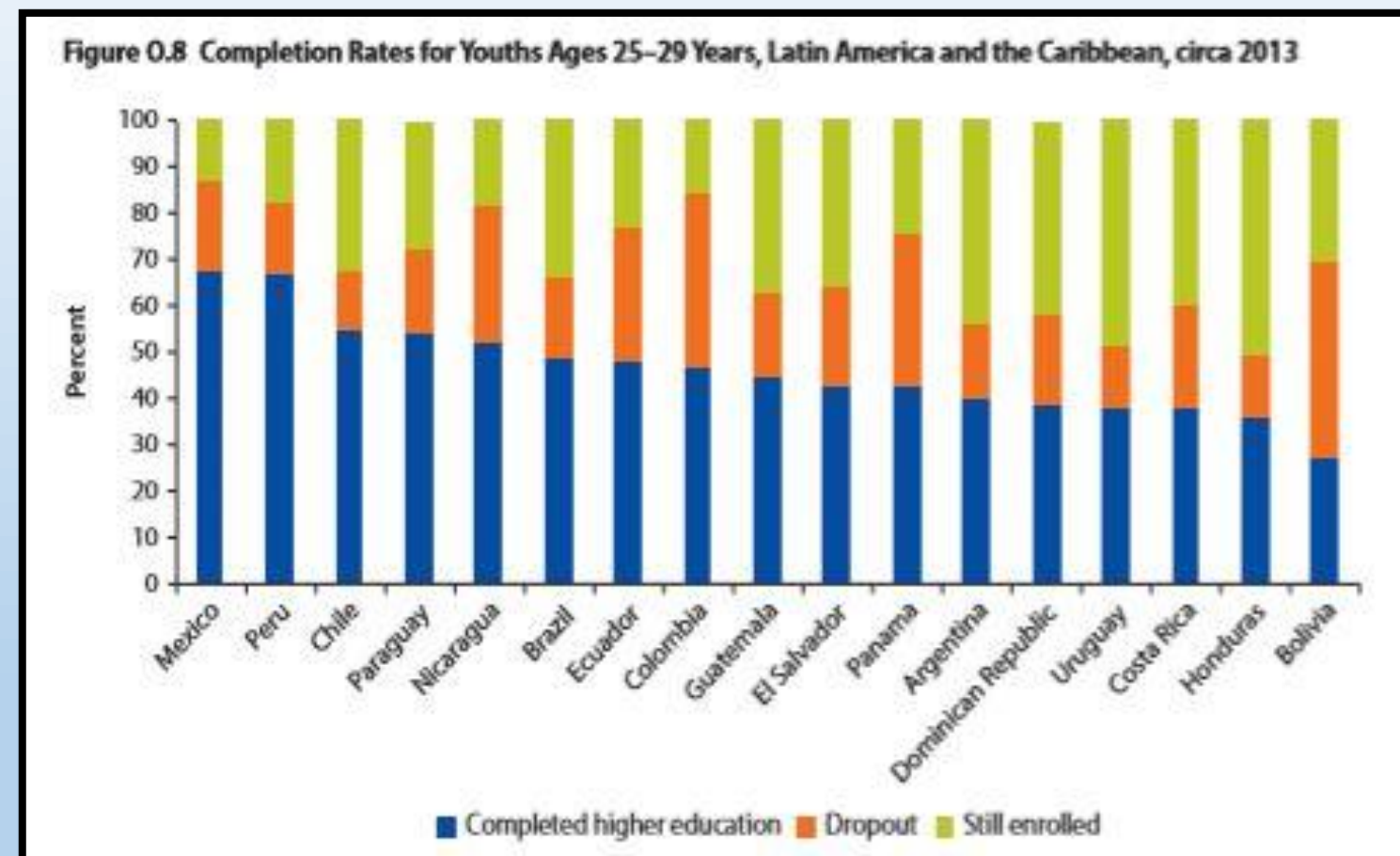


## Definition of the Problem:

Panama is a country with potential for economic growth. Its higher education system is internationally considered the second most problematic source for doing business with the country (World Economic Forum, 2014-2015) due to these main factors:

Gustavo Jose Santamaria Gonzalez-Syracuse University

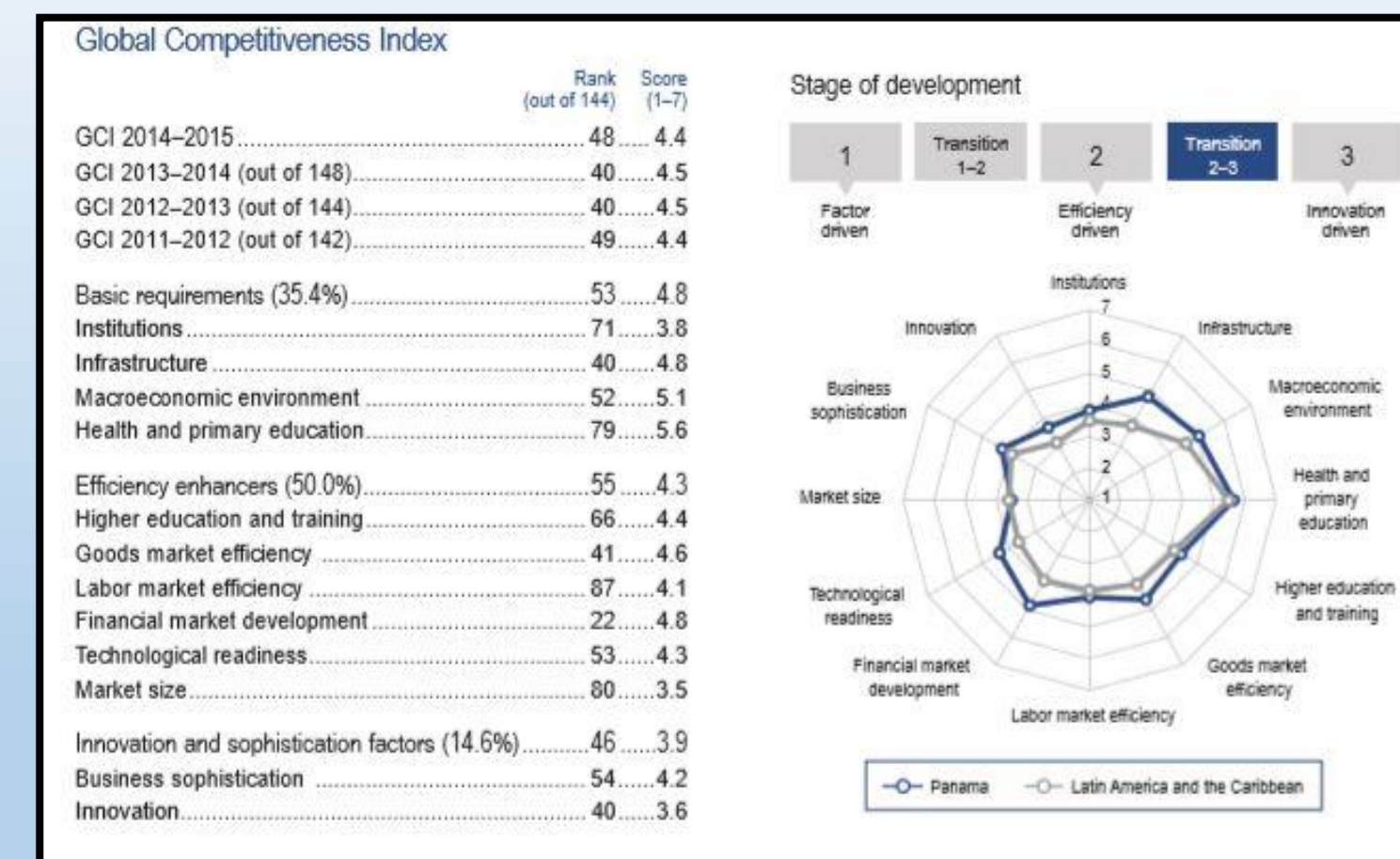
### Alarming Numbers



Source: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/26489>

- A recent article from "Panama America" newspaper states that only 42% of enrolled students graduate from Universities; the rest drop out (Diaz, 2019)

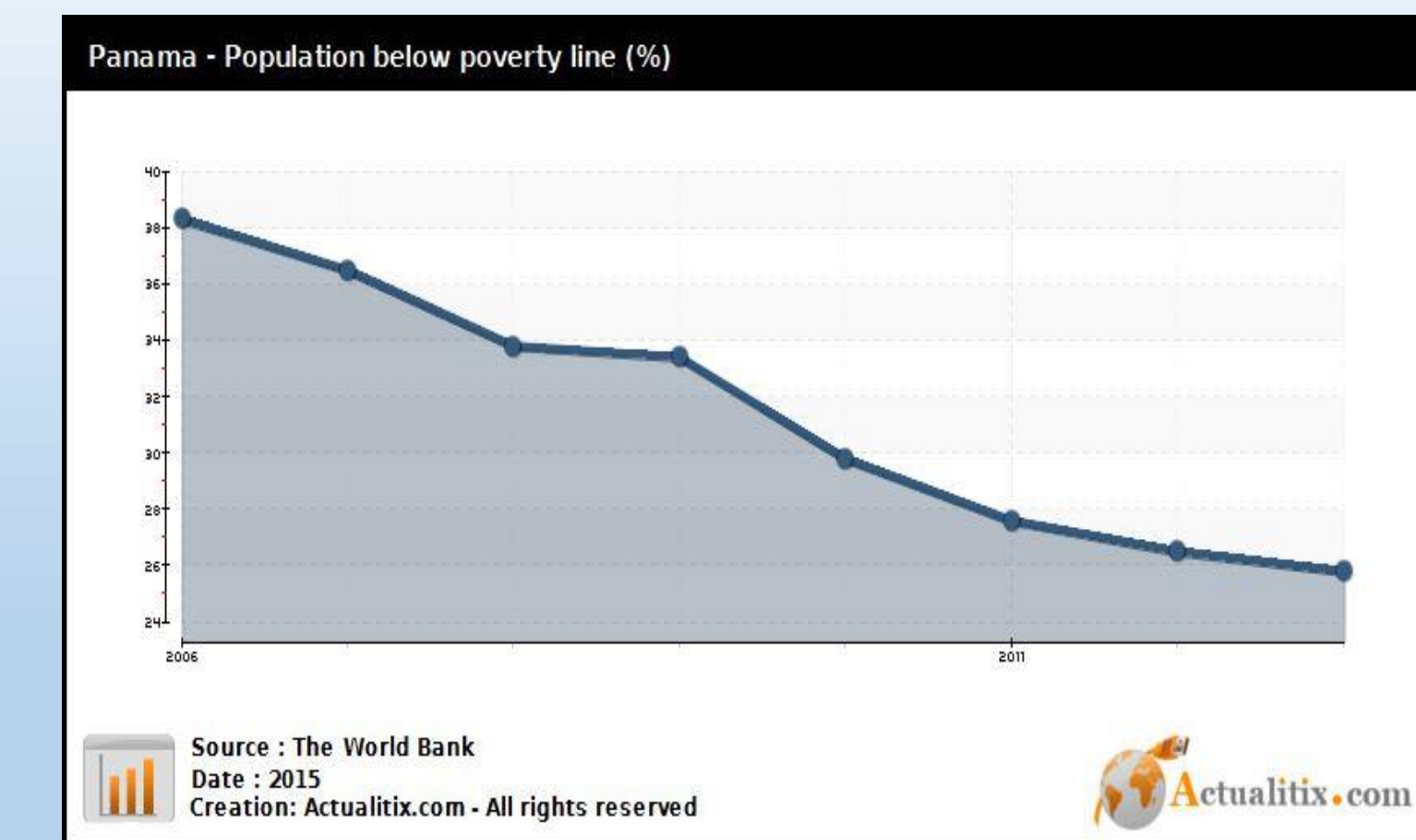
### Poor Quality System



Source: [file://hd.ad.syr.edu/01/cbf34b/Documents/Downloads/WEF\\_GlobalCompetitivenessReport\\_2014-15.pdf](file://hd.ad.syr.edu/01/cbf34b/Documents/Downloads/WEF_GlobalCompetitivenessReport_2014-15.pdf)

- According to the World Economic Forums Global Competitiveness Report 2014/2015 Panama ranks 83rd out of 144 for the quality of its educational system (World Economic Forum, 2014-2015)

### Lack of Equal Access



Source: <https://en.actualitix.com/country/pan/panama-population-below-poverty-line.php>

- Inequality in higher education is also related to economic resources. Freire, Nunez and Tejeiro (2012) explained how education in disadvantaged regions does not take poor students interests into account and provide them with inexpert educators (Freire Seoane, Nunez Flores, & Tejeiro Alvarez, 2012).

## Conclusion:

A stronger focus on quality, access and resources are key to a competitive higher educational system in order to support the Panamanian economic growth.

## Recommendations:

- Implementing new accreditation parameters to include students associations, teaching quality and research (Ferreyra, Avitabile, Botero Alvarez, Haimovich Paz, & Urzua, 2017 ).
- Reaching the budget percentage recommended by UNESCO to make an investment for modifying the current educational model (Herrera, Torres-Lista, & Montenegro, 2018)
- Providing access to higher education in terms of diversity, quality and resources (Ferreyra, Avitabile, Botero Alvarez, Haimovich Paz, & Urzua, 2017 ).

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