





Regional focus

Latin America

The nations of Latin America have set an ambitious agenda to lift educational standards to ensure students are prepared for life and work in the 21st Century.

ACER works closely with Latin American countries, particularly Mexico, to assist governments and institutions with the implementation of educational reform.

In 2010 ACER is undertaking an Evaluation of Secondary Curriculum Reform in Mexico (ESCRiM) for the Secretaria de Educacion Publica (the national Ministry of Education in Mexico). The project involves an evaluation of curriculum reform that the Secretaria de Educacion Publica (SEP) Ministry of Education developed in 2006 and which has now been rolled out across the nation. The evaluation, which will focus on mathematics, science and Spanish, aims to find out whether teacher practice has changed as a result of the curriculum reform and to consider the role professional development has played in assisting teachers.

To support ESCRiM, ACER is also working with SEP to develop a test for students in grades 8, 9 and 10 that

incorporates items from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This national testing project, SEP-ISA, will allow SEP to compare Mexican students' achievement with data gathered from PISA 2006 and provide a progress monitoring tool.

Since 2002 ACER has provided consultancy services to Chile's Ministry of Education. The current work involves the development of a standards-based curriculum and assessment system in the South American country. The project's focus is on refining outcomes frameworks for mathematics, science, social studies and English. ACER is also providing assistance to align the national monitoring program, Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación (System for Measuring the Quality of Education, or SIMCE), with the standards and to set cut scores on the SIMCE tests.

ACER has also provided assistance to the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education (ICFES),

through a sub-contract with ALMA MATER (Network of Public Universities in the Coffee-Growing Zone). The 2008 project involved providing technical assistance in defining a set of labour competencies required to write assessment items, the developments of tools to evaluate these items and training and accreditation of test developers, item writers and reviewers. Senior researchers from ACER spent two weeks in the capital, Bogota, to deliver the training workshops.

The commitment of Latin American countries to measuring and improving education standards is also indicated by the number of states participating in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Several Latin American nations are involved in PISA 2009 and PISA 2009 Plus, including Brazil, Chile, Panama, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela and Costa Rica.