

In this issue... 



Cooperation is vital

Working together to
improve learning



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Cooperation between key international education organisations is helping education systems to understand the impact of education reforms, and compare the achievement of their students with other participating countries and economies, as **Richa Jain** explains.

The role of ACER's international work on education monitoring, assessment and evaluation has never been more important. ACER has, for many decades, worked extensively in designing and delivering technically rigorous assessment programs around the world. The experience of working in a variety of contexts has equipped ACER with the substantial understanding and expertise required to deliver assessment programs suitable in global, regional and national contexts.

Following years of cooperative work in global education monitoring, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and ACER formalised a partnership in research on learning assessment. This reflects our shared interest in promoting the ideal of quality learning for all. The two organisations will continue to work together to produce common, coordinated and sustainable learning assessments across the world.

The partners are currently developing a global measurement scale for describing and quantifying student progress in reading and mathematics to measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and other improvements in education.

Simultaneously on a regional level, ACER is collaborating with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization to develop the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM).

SEA-PLM is a regional assessment to measure the performance of Year 5 children in reading, writing, maths and global citizenship in the education systems of member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

ACER is also conducting an analysis of existing assessments to understand how they can best meet the needs of educational systems in developing countries.

ACER has undertaken a study commissioned by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

Development and the World Bank to review major international, regional and national learning assessments to identify the key requirements to ensure these assessments enable the measurement of education quality in developing countries.

ACER's growing international work has prompted expansion in the organisation's capacity. As ACER's global operation grows, the organisation continues to expand its facilities and staffing in India, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

In this issue

In this issue of *International Developments* we explore collaborative efforts by ACER and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics to develop a global scale that benchmarks student performance in reading and mathematics against a common measure. This project aims to support global efforts to meet the fourth goal of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning – by 2030. We also report on analysis of assessments around the world to identify how best to operate large-scale assessments in developing countries.

This issue of *International Developments* also looks at ACER's work on the development of an internal monitoring and evaluation system of citizen-led assessment in Mali; research investigating preschool education for children in the Philippines; an audit of the curriculum materials of 11 Southeast Asian countries to inform the development of a regional assessment framework; analysis for UNICEF of the major impediments to children's learning in Eastern and Southern African schools; and research on the relationship between school-related factors and achievement outcomes for students in Afghanistan. ■