



Regional focus

India and Bangladesh

ACER India expands operations

ACER India increased the size of its workforce in 2011 and now boasts more than double the number of staff employed in 2010.

The expansion increases the capacity of ACER India in terms of data analysis with a focus on international achievement studies, state monitoring programs and evaluation studies, as well as in terms of publication and marketing.

The increased capacity means ACER India is well placed to independently undertake educational research and development work in India and beyond.

International assessment conference

ACER India and the Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in 2011 conducted an international conference, 'Development in Assessment: Scope of assessment in teaching and learning,' in Delhi.

Kapil Sibal, Union Minister Human Resource Development and Communication and Information Technology, Government of India inaugurated the conference.

Given assessment reforms like the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) scheme introduced by the CBSE in 2011, the main aim of the conference was to highlight assessment needs in Indian schools and address assessment best practices. Presenters at the conference addressed:

- research on developmental assessments
- best assessment practices
- the use of assessment to monitor teacher effectiveness to encourage school improvement
- how to develop support systems for using assessments in the classroom, and

- policy changes in the new educational framework for improved assessments.

ACER India Manager Ratna Dhamija explained the conference was undertaken to support CBSE's agenda to strengthen school-based assessment and implement CCE in schools at the primary, middle and secondary level.

'CBSE is in the midst of reforms, particularly in the areas of assessment,' Dhamija said. 'The CBSE has, through its various interventions, brought about many initiatives in the area of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.'

The conference followed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between CBSE and ACER in Melbourne in April 2010 to collaborate on programs and initiatives that apply international best practices in educational research and assessment to support educational development.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

ACER has been working with the Indian Government since 2007 to help strengthen its national assessments. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – in Hindi, 'Education for All' – is a large, World Bank-sponsored reform project and part of the Indian Government's plan to provide universal elementary education through community ownership of the school system.

ACER was commissioned to prepare a technical note for the project, which includes advice on increasing learning under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan project as well as strategies to boost school attendance.

Primary school curriculum reform in Bangladesh

The World Bank has engaged ACER to work with the Directorate of Primary Education in Bangladesh following recent primary school curriculum reform.

After a national sample assessment of students in Grades 3 and 5 was conducted by the Directorate of Primary Education in 2006, ACER stepped in to provide advice and quality assurance of the national primary assessment.

ACER's consultancy involved providing short-term practical support to the Directorate of Primary Education in delivering an improved assessment program in 2010 and identifying long-term strategies to support capacity-building within the system.

The practical nature of the consultancy work focused on delivering a world-class, system-wide assessment program for Bangladesh primary education. Further assistance is being provided to improve the Bangladesh education system at the secondary level as well.

ACER is working with the government to develop a national Secondary School Quality Learning System Assessment (SSQLAS) that will measure student learning in secondary and higher-secondary schools, and in

turn evaluate the performance of the education system.

As well as monitoring the health of the secondary education system, the SSQLAS will provide data for policy makers, provide feedback for curriculum development, build local capacity and enable comparisons with relevant international standards.

ACER is providing expertise and skills to the Bangladesh National Learning Assessment Board with the aim of embedding a world-class assessment culture in the country.

Interactive teaching in Bangladesh

ACER India, in collaboration with Dhaka-based RTM International, has evaluated the extent to which trained teachers understand and use interactive teaching, in particular:

- the extent to which teachers understand interactive teaching
- the extent to which teachers use interactive teaching in their classrooms, and
- the problems teachers encounter in using interactive teaching.

