

Improving Learning

ACER India

Strengthening education
systems in South Asia





Contents

- About us 03
- Our work 04
 - Our expertise 04
 - Project highlights 05
- Student assessment 06
- Professional learning 06
- Networks and publications 07
- Partners 07

About us

Since 1930, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has had a well-established reputation as a provider of reliable support and expertise to education policymakers and practitioners. Our mission is to create and promote research-based knowledge, products and services that can be used to improve learning across the lifespan. We are an independent, not-for-profit, global research organisation with more than 400 staff in offices across Australia as well as in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

Over the last 90 years, ACER has worked with national governments and agencies to implement international, national, and sub-national assessments that reliably diagnose the strength of education systems and inform educational planning. Today, we support 21 countries in national assessment and are a recognised partner in all areas of large-scale assessment – both regionally and nationally – for United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

ACER is widely renowned for its work on large-scale international assessment, including the design, development, and implementation of the first five cycles of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In addition, we have supported, managed, and implemented the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), and the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS).

The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Centre, a long-term partnership between ACER and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), is committed to defining, measuring, and understanding learning, and improving learning outcomes for children and young people. We also partner with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) to provide sustained specialist support for the building of capacities and measurement of progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 4.

As a key member of the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML), ACER is the lead technical adviser for development of a common description of Minimum Proficiency Levels in reading and mathematics to enable countries to report national or regional level student results against SDG indicators. We are also a technical partner of the Brookings Institute for the Optimizing Assessment for All (OAA), and actively involved in the UNESCO Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP).

A photograph of two young boys of South Asian descent. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. They are positioned behind a white vertical bar that runs from the top to the bottom of the page. The boy in the foreground is wearing a green jacket and yellow pants. The boy behind him is wearing a red shirt. The background is plain white.

ACER India is a wholly owned not-for-profit subsidiary of ACER established in 2005 to provide services in the South Asian region. ACER India undertakes commissioned work in early childhood and school education, in partnership with national and state governments, international development agencies, schools, and non-profit organisations to help improve learning outcomes. Our high-performing team of national and international educational researchers provides expert support in programme evaluation, learning assessment, test development, data analysis, educational research, and capacity development.

Our work

Millions of South Asian learners are part of the global learning crisis, with learning achievements significantly impacted due to long school closures in the region after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. ACER is committed to supporting South Asian countries as they plan pathways out of this learning crisis, through technical support in building resilient learning assessment systems, local systemic capacities, programme evaluation, and data management and analyses. ACER focuses on achieving foundational learning in the early years; improving classroom instructions and learning; and building effective education systems to monitor and improve learning of all students.

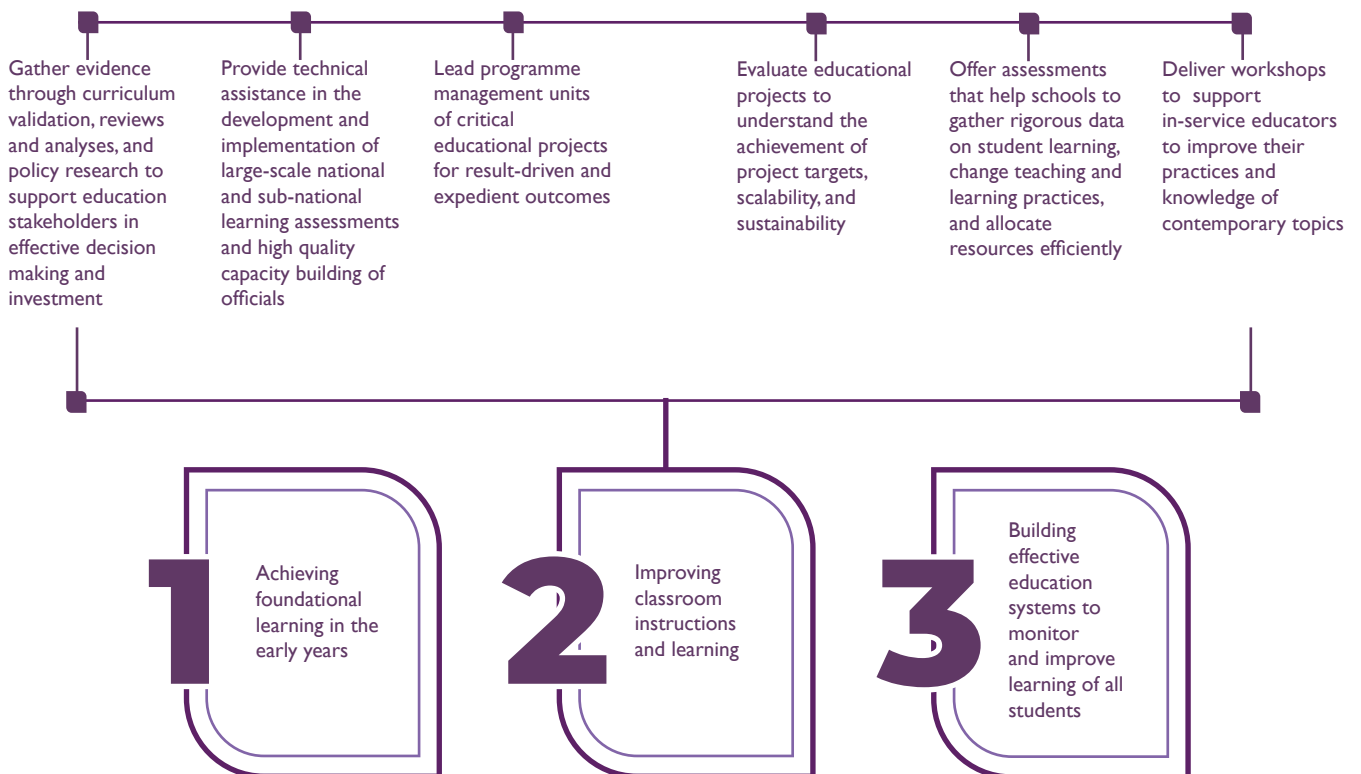
Our aim is to reduce learning disparities and improve learning outcomes in low-and middle-income countries worldwide. We use international standards and evidence-based scientific approaches, drawing from our multi-country experience to improve assessment systems and teaching and learning practices. Over the last five years, we have contributed to improvements in the quality of learning in over 40 countries through more than 120 education projects.

40
countries

120
education projects

We also undertake research to promote and engage in evidence-based dialogue on particular themes and support collective efforts to meet SDGs. In 2020-2021, ACER India carried out research on inclusive education in collaboration with UNESCO and the GEM Centre. In addition, we have been knowledge advisors for a UNICEF platform that will provide resources and tools for improving assessment practices in South Asia.

Our expertise



Project highlights

Bangladesh

Our expertise was used to conduct the Learning Assessment for Secondary Institutions (LASI) which helped inform policy by identifying nation-wide student abilities.

Bhutan

Critical components of our engagement in Bhutan include: development of a National Education Assessment Framework (NEAF), capacity building through a consultative approach, and support to a National Education Assessment (NEA) in numeracy and literacy for Grade 3.

India

ACER India is leading the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE) which will provide support to the board over a duration of three years.

In five other states, we have built systemic capacities in learning assessment and introduced high quality test item development techniques and item-response theory as a part of the assessment systems.

We have also evaluated the USAID-funded READ Alliance programme which addressed the foundational literacy needs of early grade learners.

ACER India has an ongoing long-term agreement with UNICEF for programme evaluations in South Asia, and Eastern and Southern Africa, in countries served by their respective regional offices.

Nepal

ACER India has supported examination reform in Nepal by introducing standardisation and higher order thinking skills in school assessment at the end of basic education.

Jordan

We reviewed professional development courses in the context of charting a pathway for licensing 80 000 public in-service teachers in the country.

Rwanda

We have recently completed a baseline study for the Learning through Play (LtP) programme undertaken by the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) that will bring to light the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of school teachers, school leaders, parents/ caregivers, and officials related to play-based learning.

Zambia

In 2021, we completed the evaluation of a remedial learning programme and a girls' education programme, results of which will be critical in determining the effectiveness and scalability of the programmes.

Student assessment

Two of our flagship international student assessment programmes – International Benchmark Tests (IBT) and Assessment of Languages Competence (ALC) – are available for schools in India. IBT helps schools understand how well students are performing in comparison to other students nationally and to international test-takers. Teachers can use IBT results to analyse performance differences between grades, identify questions and concepts that are challenging for individual students and groups, and plan what students need to make progress in their learning.

■ Subjects

English, mathematics, science, and reasoning

■ Classes

3–10

■ Duration

60 minutes for each test

■ Format

40 to 45 multiple-choice questions in each subject

■ Mode

Online

The IBT programme offers three different kinds of testing options: IBT Mains, IBT-on-Demand, and IBT@Home. IBT post-assessment gap-analysis workshops help schools understand IBT data, identify learning gaps, and plan interventions. Assessment data coupled with workshops support the improvement of learning outcomes of individual students, groups, and schools in the long-term.

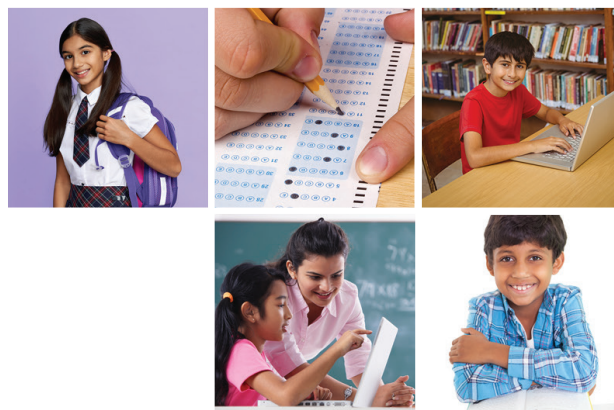
IBT

International Benchmark Tests

ALC

Assessment of Languages Competence

ALC helps schools to measure and monitor the learning of language learners from beginner to advanced levels in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek, and Spanish.



Professional learning

ACER offers a range of research-based courses for school leaders, teachers, academics, and other educational professionals in India. Workshop activities provide participants hands-on opportunities to implement what they have learnt in the workshop sessions. All our workshops are guided by ACER's global professional learning quality principles.

We offer two kinds of enrolments in our professional learning courses. First, individual educators can join short online courses that consist of live instructions and activities.

These courses cover a range of areas – different kinds of assessment, reporting of student outcomes, 21st century skills, and online teaching and resources – that support teachers in their everyday classroom transactions.

Second, we design bespoke workshops for schools – online, face-to-face, or blended – based on the professional development needs of our client schools.

How we design bespoke workshops

Identify the needs of the partner school

Consult with the partner to select the topic of the workshop

Deliver workshops online, face-to-face, or through a blended approach

Assess participants through activities

Provide certificates of participation

Offer post-workshop mentoring support

Networks and publications



Founded in 1959, the Australian College of Educators (ACE) is the longest serving professional body for educators in Australia. ACE India membership provides educators opportunities for professional learning, access to resources and high profile conferences and events, automatic subscription to ACE publications, peer-peer learning through mentoring and special interest groups, and a chance to contribute to ACE online forums and discussion papers.

Teacher

Our online magazine, *Teacher*, publishes informative and empirical articles, videos, infographics, and podcasts from India and around the world. Our articles help educators reflect on their own practices and modify instructions in conformity with new research and tested pedagogies.



Discover contains the latest news and research insights from ACER's work in education and development, assessment, literacy, numeracy, STEM, digital literacy, 21st century skills, professional learning, and much more.

Partners

- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- Brookings Institution
- Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment, Royal Government of Bhutan
- Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), Bangladesh Government
- Directorate of Education, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi
- Network for Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- People's Action for Learning Network (PAL)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



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