**PLANNING MEETING OF THE AUTHORITIES** OEA/Ser.W/XIII.6

**CIDI Ministerial Process – Education** CIDI/CIE/RPA/doc. 17/23 rev.2 add.2

February 9, 2023 14 June 2023

Washington, D.C. Original: Spanish

**2022-2025 WORK PLAN**

**OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (CIE)**

**ANNEX II**

**SYSTEMIC APPROACH FOR BUILDING RESILIENT EDUCATION SYSTEMS**

**HEMISPHERIC PROGRAM ON   
CRITICAL LITERACY AND DIGITAL EDUCATION IN CONTEXTS OF CHANGE (LICED)**

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**Introduction**

In the 2022-2027 Inter-American Education Agenda (IEA), adopted at the Eleventh Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education on November 10 and 11, 2022, the OAS member states’ education ministers set out their commitment to the global goals and targets agreed upon in the [2030 Agenda](https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda) by defining specific hemispheric actions to support its implementation.

The IEA is a forum for political dialogue and decision-making based on the principles of collaboration, intersectorality, and interculturalism, which is strengthened and implemented through inter-American cooperation and through coordinated and interconnected efforts with other international organizations and regional and subregional agencies, and its goal is to ensure educational continuity and the right to education for all.

Through its [Plan of Action, “Towards Building a New Hemispheric Education Pact in Contexts of Change,”](https://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=V.14.1.CIDI/RME/doc&classNum=8&lang=e) and in response to the challenging situation posed by the onset of the global health crisis, the ministers of education focused on establishing a framework for action for capacity-building to help ensure the continuity of education across the different modalities and levels of the education system, prioritizing attention for the most affected or disadvantaged sectors.

[Target 4.5 of Sustainable Development Goal 4](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/), to which the member states are committed under the 2030 Agenda, clearly identifies the need to eliminate gender disparities in education and to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for vulnerable segments of the population, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations, among others.

Several recent publications offer an interesting framework for the region’s discussions. A publication from the [Konrad Adenauer Foundation](https://www.kas.de/documents/7851262/8887001/LIBRO+INTERNET+Y+PANDEMIA+EN+LAS+AMERICAS+VF.pdf/4a2051a3-c28a-f978-1343-5a9e4168d6ee?version=1.0&t=1608242281728), *Internet and Pandemic in the Americas* (Ford and Weck, 2021), presents a broad range of reflections on the pandemic in the region. Similarly, the section on public policy and regulatory actions in [*Opportunities for digitization in Latin America during COVID-19*](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45360/OportDigitalizaCovid-19_es.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y), a 2020 CAF-ECLAC publication, highlights decisions relating primarily to internet service providers in some of the region’s countries. Of its ten recommendations, only one addresses the health and education sectors and productive development. In their publication [*Education and technology: The challenge of sustainability in Latin America*](https://fundacionceibal.edu.uy/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/FCEIBAL_Ed-and-Tech-Challenge-of-Sustainability-in-LA_V4.pdf) (2022), the Ceibal Foundation and IDRC-CRDI Canada embark on an unavoidable debate but nevertheless consider only some of the views of multilateral organizations in the region with macro-level opinions and views. A recent post by the World Bank (2021) identifies four areas to address in [narrowing the digital divide.](https://blogs.worldbank.org/latinamerica/poor-digital-access-holding-latin-america-and-caribbean-back-heres-how-change-it)

A recent study by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) revealed that more than 244 million people in Latin America do not have access to the internet. The study, which focused on 24 countries, found that 71% of the urban population had alternatives for connectivity, compared to less than 37% in rural areas. One clear example is the very interesting approach enshrined in the [Index of Significant Rural and Urban Connectivity](https://repositorio.iica.int/bitstream/handle/11324/12896/BVE20108887e.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y). The purpose of this index is to measure connection quality based on the information available in official statistics and other existing indexes (the Broadband Index of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Mobile Connectivity Index of the GSM Association (GSMA), and the ITU General Connectivity Index used by the International Telecommunication Union).

Reports, publications, and other documents on the subject continue to be abundant, ubiquitous, perhaps even excessive. In contrast, the challenge remains the same: how to avoid repeating the formulas, implementations, programs, and projects that, after more than 20 years of action in the region, came up against an undeniable reality in 2020. Faced with the urgent need to use and integrate technologies into training processes to guarantee educational continuity, the systems were still unprepared to respond to the crisis. Back in the 1980s, UNESCO’s [Mac Bride Report](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/80?ln=en) (*Many Voices, One World*, 1980) had highlighted the risk of focusing the framework for progress on the use of educational technologies as mere tools that aggravate inequalities.

A similar comment was also made in the [Plan of Action of the Second Summit of the Americas](http://www.summit-americas.org/chileplan.htm), held in Santiago, Chile, in 1998, which emphasized that:

“the Hemisphere’s commitment to education is reflected in the sweeping reform processes encompassing all levels of educational systems, and is based on broad consensus with respect to the problems confronting education and the shared commitment and effort of societies as a whole to overcome them. These processes are based on the principles of equity, quality, relevance, and efficiency. Equity is defined as the creation of conditions that ensure that all people have the opportunity to receive quality education services, thereby significantly reducing the effects of inequalities based on socio-economic status, disability, and ethnic, cultural, and gender discrimination. Quality implies the achievement of high levels of cognitive development, skills, capabilities, and ethical attitudes. Relevance is defined as the ability of an educational system to meet the needs and aspirations of society as a whole, taking into account its social, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. Lastly, efficiency is defined as the provision of adequate resources, used optimally, in order to enhance educacional achievements.’

Therefore, the Governments, fully recognizing and respecting national sovereignty and the responsibilities of the institutions of our respective countries with regard to education, reiterate the commitment of [the Miami Summit](http://www.ftaa-alca.org/Summits/Miami/declara_s.asp) to ensure, by the year 2010, universal access to and completion of quality primary education for 100 percent of children and access for at least 75 percent of young people to quality secondary education, with increasing percentages of young people who complete secondary education, and assume responsibility for providing the general population with opportunities for life-long learning. If these objectives are met, we are confident that we will provide our people with the tools, skills, and knowledge necessary for and suited to the development of capabilities that ensure better conditions of competitiveness and productivity required by modern economies, thus allowing our people to contribute as worthy citizens to their respective societies.”

Today, several decades after those commitments, gradually making the reduction of that gap a reality in the region requires adopting an approach that goes beyond the solutions of the past, which—certain recognizable achievements notwithstanding—have also proven to be limited in their scope and sustainability, especially with the widening educational gaps of the type caused by the COVID-19 pandemic: approaches that allow the adaptation and adoption of innovative management and educational learning methods that are more consistent with contemporary post-digital society, lifelong learning, and the use of disruptive technologies and open educational resources that can benefit society as a whole and close cultural and economic gaps.

Making this a reality requires, above all else, the member states’ irrenunciable and unwavering commitment to pursue the region’s educational agenda in order that guarantees the right to education for all.

At the Ninth Regular Meeting, the authorities of the Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE) defined the pillars that are to guide the IEA: post-pandemic educational recovery and repair; student mobility and the mutual recognition of studies by the region’s countries; professional development and interconnected teacher training among the countries of the region; the use of new technologies in education; the relationship between education, employment, and national development; the development of healthy school environments; and, finally, research linked to the contextual problems of education systems. They also stated their intent to develop a work plan focused on promoting forums for discussion and support on issues such as the post-pandemic reactivation of the education sector, the safe return to on-site classes, the recovery of learning, innovation and the digital education agenda, and educational inclusion for vulnerable children and adolescents, including such groups as persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and those in situations of human mobility. It is hoped that these issues can be transformed into concrete actions through the establishment of this Program.

**Hemispheric Program on Critical Literacy and Digital Education in Contexts of Change (LICED). Goals and Objectives**

If there is one concrete fact that the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, it is that the digital divide is a tangible, genuine, and significant reality. One basic element among the various challenges is the digital divide: not only as regards connectivity and access to devices but also, in most cases, as regards the dearth of available and accessible educational content. For example, according to a recent [report by UNICEF](https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/29431/file/Children-with-disabilities-Report_Advance.pdf) (2021), children with disabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean total some 19 million. During the current COVID-19 pandemic, the existing challenges and inequalities have been exacerbated. Although the use of technology was one of the strategies deployed to address school closures in the Americas, the digital divide revealed the limitations of a traditional approach focused exclusively on infrastructure and devices.

A study of 12 of the region’s countries by the [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45939/5/S2000549_en.pdf) (ECLAC) reports the following findings: 81% of households in the highest income quintile (fifth quintile) have an internet connection, while the corresponding figures for households in the first and second quintiles are 38% and 53%, respectively.

Promoting a culture of digital accessibility is an ongoing process that must be based on concrete data about regulations, laws, programs, initiatives, common factors and differentiating elements, constructive contributions, and the challenges faced by the public policies and programs in place in the region.

UNICEF and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO), in their [Study of digital policies in education in Latin America](http://ceppe.uc.cl/images/contenido/publicaciones/Unicef-Unesco.pdf) (Soletic and Kelly, 2022), offer a pedagogical perspective in their analysis of the advances and discontinuities of ICT policies in the region’s education systems and of the role played by technologies and pedagogical approaches, and they conclude by identifying some lessons learned and changes needed to manage the wholesale integration of technologies into education systems.

The report [Challenges and opportunities in incorporating technologies into educational practices. An analysis of inspiring cases](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375589.locale=en) (Carina Lion, 2019, UNESCO-IIPE) explores strategies for incorporating ICTs into schools in six of the region’s countries and recommends public actions for political decision-making on social and digital inclusion in education. This document is part of the series produced by the Information System on Educational Trends in Latin America (SITEAL). SITEAL is an online observatory project that provides a database of education policies and regulations, research on education policies, and statistics. These are used to produce documents that systematize and interpret the information in order to monitor the situation of education in the Latin American region.

Special mention should be made of crosscutting, multidimensional analyses of the interplay between education and technology; the need to understand how political and public policy positions determine the place and role given to technology and, accordingly, to its integration in the classroom; and, of course, the pedagogical assumptions that, in one way or another, define conceptions of teaching, learning, and educational systems. Finally, two types of elements should be emphasized in the recommendations made: (1) efforts for social inclusion, addressing gaps and accessibility, and (2) efforts for digital inclusion, addressing citizenship, practices, curriculums, and competence. In this way, it is essential to guarantee the support and adjustments required by students in their educational path, in order to respond to their particularities and the diversity of the context in which they develop.

Investments in technology for education systems have increased steadily in the region over the past 20 years. Those investments do not necessarily yield the same levels of significant impact on teachers’ teaching processes or on student learning outcomes. The evidence—augmented by the even deeper gaps emerging in the post-pandemic period—seems to show that programs and projects focused on the provision of equipment or software do not by themselves resolve the digital divide.

This hemispheric program proposes reflecting on and analyzing, from a framework of critical literacy, the impact of digital technologies in the pedagogical and educational transformation of education systems that include all education community sectors and actors. Accelerating digital accessibility processes for all people without exception, based on their diversity, including the most disadvantaged, in order to reduce the digital and educational gap in key areas.

In keeping with the lines of work established by the authorities of the CIE in their methodology and building on the current contexts, the proposed outcomes and learnings are the following:

1. Create a space where countries can exchange successful initiatives to help advance frameworks for action and public policies by encouraging and supporting the design and implementation of post-pandemic public policies.
2. Support the transformation mechanisms that education systems need in order to address widening inequality gaps through technical cooperation and capacity-building.
3. Generate the necessary inputs for public policy decision-making and programmatic action through a line of research on key issues.

**Expected outcome: Regional Guidelines and Hemispheric Protocol on Education in Digital Environments (PH-EED)**

**Topics and areas of action**

* + **Integration of technologies into the region’s teaching and learning processes and education systems, creation of a repository of the Americas**

This topic encompasses inclusion policies for access, support for educational trajectories and teacher training processes, as well as proposals for the incorporation into the curriculum of competencies related to the integration of technologies.

* + **Good use of the internet, coexistence, prevention of violence and prevention of possible digital crimes and hate speech in digital media**

This topic deals with policies and programs for the prevention of violence and hate speech in digital media and the mechanisms that can be deployed to reinforce basic learning that has not yet been consolidated. These actions must be evidence-based, built on the analysis of previous successful implementations, and highlight the challenges encountered in implementation.

* + **Training for teachers in digital skills, promoting evaluation and research in educational practices**

This line of action provides an overview of how to promote and strengthen the development of policies and programs that promote critical literacy within a framework of access to, permanence and educational achievement in the framework of quality, inclusive, and equitable education.

The main areas of action will be determined in accordance with the following components:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Research component:** | |
| 1. Inventory of existing research projects and research institutions in related areas within the region.  2. Identify good practices in the countries of the region that have formally established or approved virtual education at the primary and secondary levels.  3. Implementation and strengthening of existing monitoring and evaluation programs.  4. Publication on priority issues identified through the implementation of the Critical Literacy and Digital Education in Contexts of Change (LICED) program. |
| **Professional development and educational resources component:** |
| 1. Regional distance-learning course for teachers and school administrators: The Critical Literacy and Digital Education in Contexts of Change (LICED) program.  2. Virtual repository of policies, programs, guidelines, and tools on digital education in the education sector.  3. Educational resources on digital education policies in the education sector. |
| **Technical assistance and exchange program:** |
| 1. Portfolio of promising initiatives and policy brief series.  2. Technical assistance missions and documentation of in-country experiences.  3. Knowledge-sharing workshops on policies and practices. |

**Expected outcomes**

By the end of 2025, policies will have been analyzed and/or strengthened to promote resilient education systems in terms of recovery, repair and reactivation of the education sector that are committed to overcoming the gaps generated in education through the use of technologies and networks.

**Human and financial resources**

The OAS and the authorities of the CIE and its working groups will join efforts to mobilize resources for the implementation of this Hemispheric Program, including contacts with potential donors. They will also seek to establish timely partnerships and fundraising efforts with various development organizations and relevant agencies of the inter-American system, safeguarding those commitments from conflicts of interest.

**Designation of officers**

It is recommended that the teams be made up of up to three officials responsible for public policies and programs on the subject and/or in charge of advising on issues related to access, monitoring of academic paths, and dropout prevention.

**Contact officer**

Ministries are requested to submit details of their designated officials to:

* Cecilia Martins: [education@oas.org](mailto:education@oas.org) and [cmartins@oas.org](mailto:cmartins@oas.org).

CIDED00320E01