

# **ASSESSMENT IN THE PANDEMIC:**

How to Diagnose Learning Losses to Inform  
the Recovery Effort

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This report was produced as part of the Recovering Schooling and Learning after COVID-19 partnership between the World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Dialogue (IAD). The goal of this partnership is to support the implementation of initiatives promoting higher levels of education and learning recovery in the region.

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# List of abbreviations/acronyms

<b>ACE</b>	Educational Quality Agency ( <i>Agencia de Calidad de la Educación</i> )	<b>IDB</b>	International Development Bank
<b>ANEP</b>	National Public Education Administration ( <i>Administración Nacional de Educación Pública</i> )	<b>IEA</b>	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
<b>ASER</b>	Annual Status of Education Report	<b>INEE</b>	National Educational Assessment Institute ( <i>Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa</i> )
<b>BJAT</b>	Belize Junior Achievement Test	<b>INEEd</b>	National Educational Assessment Institute ( <i>Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa</i> )
<b>BNCC</b>	National Basic Common Curriculum ( <i>Base Nacional Comum Curricular</i> )	<b>INEP</b>	National Educational Research Institute ( <i>Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais</i> )
<b>CAEd</b>	Public Policy and Educational Assessment Center ( <i>Centro de Políticas Públicas e Avaliação da Educação</i> )	<b>IQ</b>	Intellectual Quotient
<b>CAPE</b>	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>CCSLC</b>	Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence	<b>LLECE</b>	Latin-American Education Quality Assessment Laboratory ( <i>Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación</i> )
<b>CIESAS</b>	Center for Research and Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology ( <i>Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social</i> )	<b>MEJORDU</b>	National Continuous Educational Improvement Commission ( <i>Comisión Nacional para la Mejora Continua de la Educación</i> )
<b>COVID</b>	Coronavirus Disease	<b>MIA</b>	Independent Learning Assessment ( <i>Medición Independiente de Aprendizajes</i> )
<b>CPEA</b>	Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment	<b>MINEDUC</b>	Ministry of Education ( <i>Ministerio de Educación Nacional</i> )
<b>CREER</b>	Growing with Multigrade Rural Schools in Peru ( <i>Creciendo con las Escuelas Rurales Multigrado del Perú</i> )	<b>MINEDUCYT</b>	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology ( <i>Ministerio de Educación, Ciencia, y Tecnología</i> )
<b>CSEC</b>	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate	<b>NGSA</b>	National Grade Six Assessment
<b>CXC</b>	Caribbean Examinations Council	<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>DEMRE</b>	Department of Educational Assessment, Measurement, and ( <i>Departamento de Evaluación, Medición, y Registro Educativo</i> )	<b>PAES</b>	El Salvador Aptitude Test ( <i>Prueba de Aptitudes de El Salvador</i> )
<b>DGEC</b>	Directorate of Quality Management and Assessment ( <i>Dirección de Gestión y Evaluación de la Calidad</i> )	<b>PDT</b>	Transition Test ( <i>Prueba de Transición</i> )
<b>DIA</b>	Comprehensive Learning Assessment ( <i>Diagnóstico Integral de Aprendizajes</i> )	<b>PERCE</b>	First Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study ( <i>Primer Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo</i> )
<b>EAES</b>	Higher Education Admission Examination ( <i>Examen de Admisión a la Educación Superior</i> )	<b>PIRLS</b>	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
<b>ECE</b>	Student Testing Census ( <i>Evaluación Censal de Estudiantes</i> )	<b>PISA</b>	Program for International Student Assessment
<b>EGMA</b>	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment	<b>PLANEA</b>	National Learning Assessment Plan ( <i>Plan Nacional para la Evaluación de los Aprendizajes</i> )
<b>EGRA</b>	Early Grade Reading Assessment	<b>PSE</b>	Primary School Examinations (PSE) and the Belize Junior Achievement Test (BJAT)
<b>ENEM</b>	National Middle School Examination ( <i>Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio</i> )	<b>PSI</b>	Problem-Solving and Inquiry
<b>ERCE</b>	Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study ( <i>Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo</i> )	<b>PSU</b>	University Admission Test ( <i>Prueba de Selección Universitaria</i> )
<b>GRADE</b>	Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development, and Evaluation	<b>SAEB</b>	Basic Learning Assessment Mechanism ( <i>Sistema de Avaliação da Educação Básica</i> )
<b>IAD</b>	Inter-American Dialogue	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>IBE</b>	International Bureau of Education	<b>SEA</b>	Learning Assessment Mechanism ( <i>Sistema de Evaluación de Aprendizaje</i> )
<b>ICCS</b>	International Civic and Citizenship Education		
<b>ICFES</b>	Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education ( <i>Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior</i> )		
<b>ICT</b>	Information & Communication Technology		

<b>SEN</b>	Mexican Education System ( <i>Sistema Educativo Mexicano</i> )
<b>SENESCYT</b>	National Higher Education Information Agency ( <i>Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior</i> )
<b>SEP</b>	Public Education Secretariat ( <i>Secretaría de Educación Pública</i> )
<b>SERCE</b>	Second Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study ( <i>Segundo Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo</i> )
<b>SIMCE</b>	Education Quality Measurement Mechanism ( <i>Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación</i> )
<b>SNEPE</b>	National Educational Assessment Mechanism ( <i>Sistema Nacional de Evaluación del Proceso Educativo</i> )
<b>TaRL</b>	Teaching at the Right Level

<b>TERCE</b>	Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study ( <i>Tercer Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo</i> )
<b>TIMSS</b>	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
<b>UCE</b>	Curriculum and Assessment Unit ( <i>Unidad de Currículo y Evaluación</i> )
<b>UGEL</b>	Local Education Management Unit ( <i>Unidad de Gestión Educativa Local</i> )
<b>UMC</b>	Learning Quality Assessment Agency ( <i>Oficina de Medición de la Calidad de los Aprendizajes</i> )
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>WB</b>	World Bank

# INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound effect on education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), which experienced the most prolonged period of school closures worldwide. Ramifications have affected both the educational trajectories and learning opportunities of all students but particularly—and disproportionately—those in more vulnerable situations. Prior to the public health emergency, countries in the region were already affected by significant learning gaps. While learning poverty, defined as the percentage of the 10-year-old population unable to read and understand a simple text, was already at 53 percent and estimated to rise to 63 percent, new data show a rise to 70 percent (World Bank, 2021).

Educational assessment is a basic tool in the launch of a long process of measuring educational lags and learning recovery following a crisis. This report aims to analyze the assessment strategies implemented during the pandemic, highlight good practices, and offer recommendations to continue to support future diagnostic and recovery efforts.

This report was produced as part of the Recovering Schooling and Learning after COVID-19 partnership between the World Bank (WB) and Inter-American Dialogue (IAD). The goal of this collaboration is to support the implementation of initiatives that promote higher levels of education and learning recovery in the region.

This collaboration will result in the publication of two documents. This report is the first. It provides information on standardized learning assessment instruments and formative assessment initiatives implemented during the pandemic. The second report systematizes evidence on regional and international remedial programs for learning recovery.

This report consists of three parts. The first part offers a broad characterization of national, regional, and international standardized assessments, key trends, and projections for 2022. The first section of the first part analyzes changes introduced into national assessments, while the second focuses on regional and national assessments. Each section in the first part concludes with the main trends for each group of assessments as well as their outlook for the future. The second part describes and analyzes a selection of both governmental and non-governmental formative assessment initiatives that illustrate a variety of models that can contribute to learning recovery efforts. This part is divided into four sections, each focused on one of four experience-defining analytical themes: (i) focus on content; (ii) alignment with recovery programs; (iii) the role of the teacher; and (iv) partnerships and funding on which these programs depend. Last, the third and final part offers four policy recommendations emanating from the research and the subsequent workshop.

# METHODOLOGY

The research and analysis presented in this report were guided by the following questions:

1. What happened in 2020 and 2021 regarding the implementation of: (i) national, regional, and international standardized learning assessments; and (ii) formative assessment instruments?
2. What changes and innovations have been introduced since the outbreak of the pandemic?
3. What is the outlook for forthcoming assessment administrations?
4. What role does each type of instrument play in the process of diagnosing learning losses and gaps with a view to a post-pandemic scenario of recovery and resilience?

The study gathers and analyzes information on learning assessments at standard primary and secondary education levels in education systems in the region.<sup>1</sup> Among the assessments mentioned, the report focuses on the following types of assessments:

## Standardized assessments (Part 1):

- Examinations for certification for a course or educational level (primary or secondary) or selection or admission to higher education. This group includes assessments whose stakes are high, and outcomes associated with their results are “hard”<sup>2</sup>.
- Assessments for monitoring purposes, whose stakes may be high and outcomes hard (for example, in cases where educational institutions use results for accountability reports or incentives associated with results); or their stakes may be low and their outcomes “soft”, insofar as the results are used to diagnose or monitor different indicators within the education system.

This classification by assessment purpose is made solely to facilitate the description and analysis of assessment

instruments. The first part of this report will also distinguish between the scope of the different instruments (national, regional, or international).

## Formative assessments (Part 2):

- These include assessments designed centrally and rolled out at the classroom level as well as diagnostic measures that form part of broader pedagogical intervention programs.
- In this report, formative assessments are characterized by their objective of gathering data to inform recovery and feedback actions in the short term periodically and regularly with an emphasis on the role of the teacher but also that of the authorities.

The data used to inform this study was gathered between November 2021 and January 2022. The research methodology was largely based on a search and review of public documents and official communications from education authorities and assessment entities.

To document formative assessment cases and experiences, the review of public information was supplemented by consultations with specific actors, including seven interviews with key sources responsible for the cases analyzed. The preliminary findings of the research were presented in a workshop, in which a group of assessment experts and leaders from the region validated the results and offered a series of recommendations based on their own experience.

Due to the length of the research period and the methodology based on reviewing public information, the study’s findings have certain limitations. In most cases, no validated information on the cost of the initiatives mentioned was identified. In addition, in some cases (indicated in the document), the exact number of students assessed was not confirmed, which may compromise comparability between initiatives.

# 1. STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

## National, Regional, and International Assessments implemented during the Pandemic

The characteristics of the instruments and strategies involved in standardized assessments make them the most appropriate tools for measuring learning on a large scale, especially at national and regional levels. Since they are standardized, they use the same design and procedures to manage, adjust, and report results. Their results can therefore be interpreted as reliable indicators of students' learning.

For these reasons (among others), standardized learning assessments can be used to estimate learning losses and gaps. This requires instruments designed to enable comparability over time. In turn, the information gathered, compiled, and supplemented by other data can guide the design of interventions that advance learning recovery and improvement. Likewise, the characteristics of assessment devices will be key to supporting their implementation and for generating valid and reliable information that constitutes further input that can be used to inform educational practice policymaking in general and, more particularly, learning recovery programs (e.g., remedial interventions).

Section 1 discusses the role of the implementation, discontinuation, or modification of large-scale national, regional, and international educational assessments during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021. It is organized into two subsections. The first analyzes **national** learning assessments, drawing on information from official sources (see Annex 1), while the second looks at regional and international learning assessments implemented in countries in the region (see Annex 2). For both national and regional assessments, a distinction is drawn between:

- **Examinations for certification purposes** at primary and secondary levels, **and examinations for the purpose of selection or admission** of students to higher education, where assessment tools indicate that students have (or have not) acquired the knowledge and competencies stipulated for that grade level and may (or may not) therefore access the next stage.

- **Assessments for monitoring purposes** to analyze information related to educational systems, the results of which may inform discussions about learning achievements and challenges.

### A. NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

The analysis below is based on a survey of 25 national learning assessments<sup>3</sup> in 20 countries in the region<sup>4</sup> (see Annex 1).

#### IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS IN 2020 AND 2021

In 2020, most countries in the region decided to postpone or discontinue national learning assessments. Of a sample of 25 assessments, 22 were scheduled to be implemented that year<sup>5</sup>.

However, only seven of these were implemented, representing approximately 32% of the instruments surveyed, while the remaining fifteen (68%), were discontinued or postponed (see Map 1). For the distribution and breakdown of assessments by implementation status in 2020, see Annex 3.

**MAP 1. NATIONAL INSTRUMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN LAC COUNTRIES IN 2020**

Source: Authors' diagram based on official sources of information from the ministries of education.



The following year, however, there was an inversion between the percentage of national assessments discontinued or postponed and the percentage of those implemented.

In 2021, only one of the total of 25 national assessments surveyed was not scheduled to be implemented<sup>6</sup>. Of the remaining 24, nine were discontinued or postponed, representing 37% of total assessments to be implemented that year. The remaining 15 were implemented, representing 63% of the national assessments to be implemented that year (see Map 2; for the distribution and

breakdown of assessments by implementation status in 2021, see Annex 4.)

Of the 16 countries that had planned to implement at least one national learning assessment administration in 2020 and 2021, three (19%) failed to implement any national assessment during the pandemic<sup>7</sup>.

**MAP 2. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN LAC REGION IN 2021**

Source: Authors' diagram based on official sources of information from the ministries of education.



**MAIN TRENDS IN NATIONAL ASSESSMENT ASSESSMENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC**

Three trends stand out from the preliminary analysis related to the factors influencing the implementation (or suspension) of assessments each year. There are also commonalities both in assessment components in which changes and innovations were introduced (or planned) and in those that remained unchanged.

The first trend relates to the purpose of national assessments. A second trend concerns continuities and ruptures in assessment characteristics. Finally, a

third trend relates to factors shared by assessments not administered in 2020 or 2021.

For each of these trends, a case study is provided that takes a more in-depth look at how the trend played out in specific contexts.

**Trend 1:** Assessments for monitoring purposes were postponed or discontinued in 2020 while national assessments for certification or admission and selection purposes were held in order to not to affect students' educational trajectories.

The previous section presented the distribution of all national assessment administrations and revealed a large difference between the number of assessments implemented in 2020 (around 32 percent) and that implemented the following year (63 percent).

This first trend concerns the proportion of assessments implemented each year for certification, admission, or selection purposes (high-stakes) relative to the proportion of those administered for monitoring learning (mostly low-stakes).

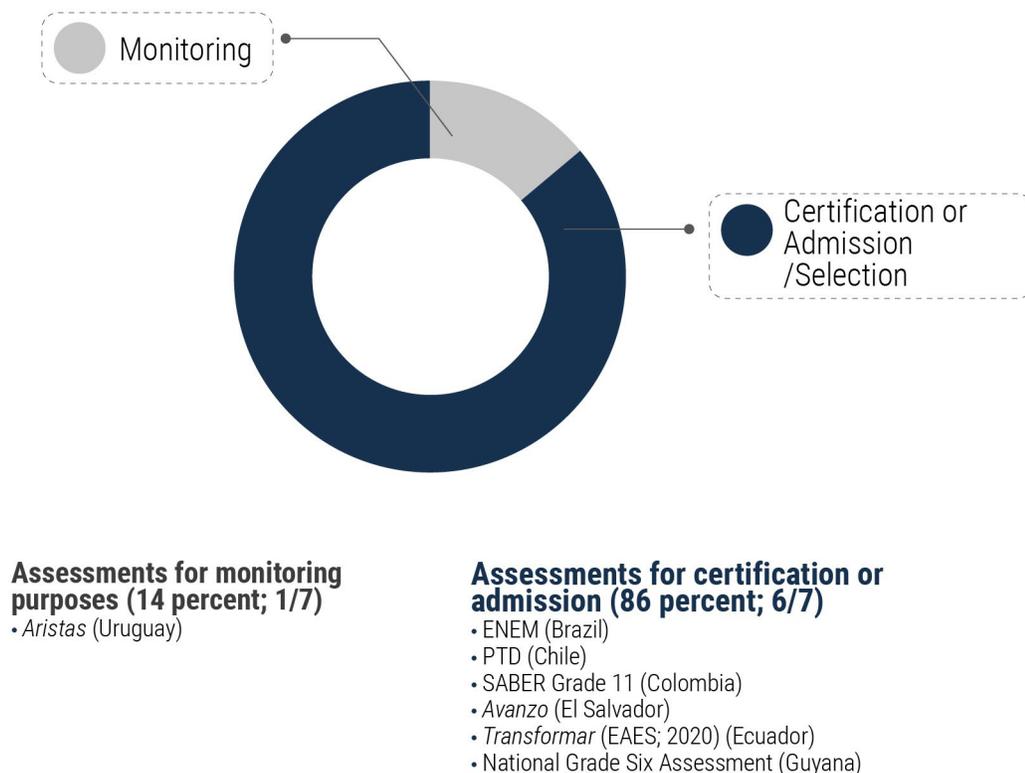
In 2020, which was characterized by the closure of schools in a large proportion of the region's education systems, there was a trend toward postponing or discontinuing assessments for monitoring purposes and attempting to

maintain high-stakes assessments that directly affect the continuity of student paths in the formal education system (both for the certification of studies and for admission to the next level of education).

In 2020, six out of seven (86 percent) of assessments were implemented for certification or admission or selection purposes, while the remaining assessment (14 percent) was implemented for monitoring purposes (see Chart 1). In 2021, however, which was characterized by the partial reopening of schools, the gap between the two groups of assessments (certification or admission and monitoring) was reduced, with 53 percent (8/15) of assessments implemented for certification and admission purposes (with high stakes) and 47 percent (7/15) for monitoring (see Chart 2).

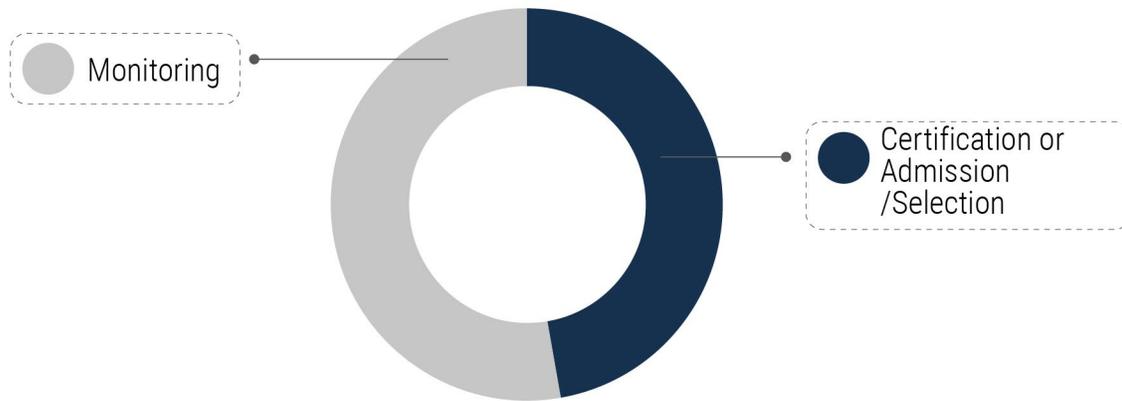
**CHART 1. DISTRIBUTION OF ASSESSMENTS IMPLEMENTED IN LAC IN 2020, BY ASSESSMENT PURPOSE**

Source: Authors' diagram based on official sources of information from the ministries of education.



**CHART 2. DISTRIBUTION OF ASSESSMENTS IMPLEMENTED IN LAC IN 2021, BY ASSESSMENT PURPOSE**

Source: Authors' diagram based on official sources of information from the ministries of education.



**Assessments for monitoring purposes 53 percent (8/15)**

- *Aprender* (Argentina)
- SAEB (Brazil)
- SABER Grades 3, 5, and 9 (Colombia)
- *Ser Estudiante* (Ecuador)
- *Prueba para Graduandos* (Guatemala)\*
- *Pruebas diagnósticas* (El Salvador)
- *Evaluaciones nacionales de desempeño estudiantil* (Honduras)
- *Crecer* (Panama)

**Assessments for certification or admission purposes (47 percent; 7/15)**

- ENEM (Brazil)
- PDT (Chile)
- SABER Grade 11 (Colombia)
- FARO (Costa Rica)
- *Transformar* (ex-EAES) (Ecuador)
- *Avanzo* (El Salvador)
- National Grade Six Assessment (Guyana)

\* Note: While the assessment was high-stakes before the pandemic, in 2021, the instrument was a low-stakes sample survey with optional participation.

**BOX 1. ANALYSIS OF URUGUAYAN CASE OF ARISTAS (2020)**

Aristas 2020 is an exceptional case, being the only low-stakes assessment implemented in 2020.

Some factors were conducive to implementing the assessment in 2020:

The combination of two types of relevant factors may explain the case: (i) factors related to external conditions (resumption of in-person learning and access to technology); and (ii) factors related to features of the instrument itself (sample survey, digital format, in-person administration).

**Features of assessment instrument**

- **Sample survey:** The Aristas assessment instrument is a sample survey, not a census. Participating students were a small group of third- and sixth-grade students randomly selected so that the sample would be representative of the total population of these grades. In 2020, 5,524 third grade and 5,800 sixth grade students were included in the sample out of total rolls of 48,234 and 47,836, respectively.

- Digital format and in-person implementation: Aristas tests are in digital format, not paper. This feature simplifies the logistics of administering these instruments and dovetails with their in-person format to create favorable conditions for implementation.

**External conditions**

- Early resumption of in-person learning: Uruguay was one of the LAC countries where schools reopened relatively early in 2020. This reopening took place in stages: in-person teaching resumed for rural schools in April and for all schools in June.
- Widespread access to technology: The results of the Aristas 2020 assessment show that only 10 percent of third and sixth graders assessed reported having no access to a computer or other electronic device during the pandemic. This percentage is among the lowest in the region.

**Results of Aristas 2020**

Given that *Aristas 2020* was the only diagnostic assessment implemented in 2020, it will be interesting to examine both its academic and socio-emotional results.

In addition to being the only instrument available for public access, this diagnosis establishes a precedent for reflecting on some of the dimensions future remedial actions should address in this context.

Similar achievement levels to 2017



Compared to the previous edition (2017), aggregate academic achievement results, in terms of average scores, were similar.

Inequality gaps increased



Between students with higher and lower socio-economic and cultural resources, both for academic achievement and for socio-emotional skills (relating to others, self-control, and emotional regulation).

Attendance and technology are key factors



Class attendance and the use of Plan Ceibal platforms contributed to better achievement, after controlling for the effect of socio-economic and cultural variables.

**Trend 2:** *In both 2020 and 2021, modifications were made to the instrument administration format and additional information was gathered.*

This trend concerns the set of assessments implemented between 2020 and 2021. On the one hand, there were continuities in the sense of usual factors remaining with minor or no changes in most cases; on the other hand,

there were changes, and innovations introduced in the implementation of assessments.

In general terms, the number of continuities outweighed the number of ruptures. The factors that remained stable include: (i) subject areas assessed and target groups; and (ii) in-person implementation. Here, it is important to clarify that while in some cases the assessments

focused on prioritized contents, the subject areas that were commonly assessed before the pandemic remained constant in most cases.

Meanwhile, notable changes or innovations included: (i) collection of additional information regarding teaching and learning during the pandemic (e.g., study method during the pandemic, frequency of coursework, socio-emotional skills, among others); and (ii) replacement of the paper

format with digital or mixed formats (digital and paper). This factor can be potentially consolidated in future implementations.

The diagram below summarizes continuities, changes, and innovations in assessments administered during the pandemic (see Diagram 1).

**DIAGRAM 1. CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES IN NATIONAL ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS ADMINISTERED IN 2020 AND 2021**

CONTINUITIES	CHANGES AND INNOVATIONS
<p><b>ASSESSED SUBJECTS AND TARGET GROUPS</b></p> <p>Modified only in SABER 359 (Colombia) SABER 3°, 5°, 9° also assessed students in 7°, where Environmental Education was introduced (albeit unrelated to the pandemic context) and <i>Aprender</i> (Argentina), which was to be implemented at the secondary level in 2021 but was implemented at the primary level</p>	<p><b>MIXED OR DIGITAL FORMAT</b></p> <p>Change in instrument format in ENEM (Brazil), SABER 359 (Colombia), <i>Graduandos</i> (Guatemala), <i>Avanzo</i> (ex-EAES, El Salvador), and <i>Transformar</i> (Ecuador)</p>
<p><b>IN-PERSON IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <p>Modified only in <i>Transformar</i> (Ecuador), where the framework (already implemented in digital format) was implemented from homes</p>	<p><b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION GATHERED ON TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING THE PANDEMIC</b></p> <p><i>Aprender</i> (Argentina), ENEM (Brazil), <i>Aristas</i> (Uruguay)</p>

**BOX 2. ANALYSIS OF COLOMBIAN CASE OF SABER ASSESSMENT, GRADES 3, 5, 9, AND 7**

SABER grades 3, 5, and 9 was the assessment instrument that underwent the most change in 2021. This is a low-stakes annual sample assessment. The following aspects were subject to the greatest changes or innovations: Áreas evaluadas: se introduce una evaluación en educación ambiental, además de Ciencias Naturales.

- **Assessed subjects:** An assessment in Environmental Education was introduced in addition to Natural Sciences.
- **Target groups:** Grade 7 was included with a pilot test.
- **Format:** Digital, using school equipment and with additional provision where required. On the other hand, the paper format of the questionnaires, which contained additional information, was maintained.
- **Use of results:** The results of the grade 7 test will be used in a first school trajectory follow-up study. This involves assessing and monitoring the family, institutional, and social contexts of the student over time and in transit from primary to secondary levels. For this reason, it will be implemented every two years..

**Trend 3:** Cases of non-implementation in 2020 or 2021 were due to public health reasons and to a lesser extent technical reasons.

This trend involves several shared reasons why seven national assessments were not implemented in four countries in 2020 or 2021. These cases are: SIMCE in Chile; Evaluaciones Nacionales y Evaluaciones Diagnósticas in the Dominican Republic; ECE and EM in Peru; and PSE and BJAT in Belize.

Public health conditions were an explanatory factor across the set of cases that discontinued implementation. In

addition, technical factors related to difficulty ensuring the validity, reliability, and even comparability of the information gathered played a role in Chile, Peru, and Belize. These reasons stem from the prevalence of exceptionality brought about by pandemic-induced distance learning, potentially affecting student performance in assessments.

Except for Belize (PSE and BJAT tests), the remaining cases reported that assessments with annual frequency will be implemented in 2022.

### BOX 3. ANALYSIS OF CHILEAN CASE OF SIMCE

The SIMCE assessment was among those not implemented in 2020 or 2021. The two reasons given were: (i) public health conditions; and (ii) the technical requirements of validity and reliability of the assessment could not be maintained if coverage could not be guaranteed.

In contrast to the trend seen across most education systems in the region, in Chile, the national assessments regularly implemented gave way to the emergence or strengthening of alternative assessment surveys with different characteristics. One example is the creation of the Comprehensive Learning Assessment (DIA) platform.

The main characteristics of DIA together with their evolution between 2020 and 2021 are set out below:

The DIA platform includes three assessment instruments:

- **Diagnosis:** How students place at the start of the school year.
- **Intermediate monitoring:** How students are progressing.
- **Year-end assessment:** How learning progressed.



Based on DIA results in 2020 and 2021, Chile's Education Quality Agency will provide a new evaluation system for public institutions to address learning gaps..

## IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS PLANNED FOR 2022

Based on the review and analysis of official sources of information carried out prior to January 2022, most LAC countries plan to administer at least one—if not all—national learning assessment (see Map 3).

### MAP 3. PROJECTED IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS IN 2022, BY COUNTRY

Source: Authors' diagram based on official sources of information from the ministries of education.



## B. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

### IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS IN 2020 AND 2021

The Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (ERCE) of the UNESCO Latin-American Education Quality Assessment Laboratory (LLECE) was not planned to be administered in 2020 or 2021, having been administered in 2019. This assessment measures learning achievements in students attending education systems in the region for diagnostic purposes and with low stakes.

However, high-stakes assessments (also known as “examinations”) developed by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) were to be implemented in the region in both 2020 and 2021.

The Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA) was the only assessment implemented at the primary level. This test is taken by students exiting the primary level to certify a set of literacies, including: mathematical, language, civic and scientific.

At the secondary level, students completing the basic secondary phase (generally Year Three) and adults who

have already completed it take the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC), which assesses knowledge, general skills, attitudes, and values in up to seven areas, with each student having to demonstrate proficiency in at least five. Students completing the upper secondary phase (generally Year Five) take the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) to gain certification from that level. Students wishing to pursue higher education take the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE).

All assessments by the Caribbean Examination Council were implemented in 2020 and 2021 but not in all Council member countries. However, each education system together with CXC made independent decisions regarding the implementation of each assessment and postponement of dates. The epidemiological criterion took precedence over other reasons for postponing or canceling the implementation of any assessment in any of its administrations.

While all tests aim for certification of learning, in some cases, the consequences of using their results are “harder.” In addition to certifying or accrediting certain forms of learning or competencies, they are used to continue on an academic or vocational trajectory (e.g., CSEC) or to transition from secondary to higher education (CAPE).

**TABLE 1. IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS IN 2020 AND 2021**

Source: Authors based on LLECE-UNESCO and CXC assessments data.

	ERCE	CPEA	CCSLC	CSEC	CAPE
IMPLEMENTATION 2020	N/A	Implemented in all countries except Granada	Implemented in all countries except Granada	Implemented	Implemented
IMPLEMENTATION 2021	N/A	Implemented	Implemented	Implemented	Implemented
PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Panama, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Peru (latest edition, 2019)	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago*			

\* Took part in one or more examinations depending on the year.

N/A: not applicable

Anguilla (UK), the Cayman Islands (UK), Monserrat (UK), the Turks and Caicos Islands (UK), the British Virgin Islands (UK), Saba (Netherlands), Suriname (Netherlands), and Sint Maarten (Netherlands) are excluded.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS IN 2020 AND 2021

No international assessments were planned for 2020 due to the frequency of the relevant assessment administrations.

PISA and PIRLS were scheduled to be administered in 2021. PISA administration was postponed to capture issues in the post-pandemic period, while PIRLS was implemented in person and with the option of choosing between digital and paper formats. In addition, a modification was made to the allocation of instruments based on the scores obtained in previous administrations.

**TABLE 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS IN 2020 AND 2021, BY ASSESSMENT YEAR**

Source: Authors based on OECD and IEA assessment data.

	PISA	ICCS	PIRLS	TIMSS	ICILS
PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (LATEST ADMINISTRATION)	Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, México, Panamá, Perú, República Dominicana, y Uruguay (2018)	Chile, Colombia, México, Perú y República Dominicana (2016)	Brasil y Chile (2021)	Chile (2019)	Chile y Uruguay (2018)
IMPLEMENTATION 2020	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C
IMPLEMENTATION 2021	No se aplicó*	N/C	Se aplicó	N/C	N/C

N/A: not applicable.

\* The PISA study was to be implemented in 2021 but was postponed to 2022 due to the pandemic. Participating southern hemisphere countries participated in the 2022 PISA pilot assessment in 2021.

## TRENDS IDENTIFIED IN INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

A few trends can be identified from a survey of regional and international assessment frameworks. However, for international assessments (PISA, ICCS, PIRLS, and TIMSS), these trends predate the pandemic but have persisted despite it.

**Trend 1:** Use of technology to innovate and strengthen assessment instruments and results processing

All assessment frameworks have tended to incorporate: a) an adaptive design according to the level of complexity of group responses (TIMSS, PIRLS); b) interactive items (PISA, TIMSS);

c) digital format (PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS; the latter offered a mixed format in 2021); and/or d) the inclusion of open-answer items that add nuance to correction mechanisms to more comprehensively assess how students respond to instructions (TIMSS and PISA with rubrics).

**Trend 2:** Inclusion of new subjects in assessments

New subjects were included: creative thinking (PISA); trends in civic and citizenship practices including populism, authoritarianism, and SDG 4 (ICCS); and problem-solving and inquiry (PSI) (TIMSS), and computational thinking, programming and digital citizenship (ICILS).

## OUTLOOK FOR FUTURE ADMINISTRATIONS

According to publicly available information from the entities that develop regional and international assessments, these are expected to be implemented in 2022, 2023, and 2026.

### *Regional Assessments*

- ERCE: An in-depth qualitative study will be developed in some countries from 2022. A qualitative study is planned to shed additional light on factors behind 2019 ERCE results.
- According to official sources from the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), no changes or modifications have been specified for upcoming administrations of CPEA, CCSLC, CSEC, and CAPE tests.

### *International Assessments*

- The next PISA administration is scheduled for 2022, with results to be released in December 2023. Creative thinking will be assessed. Open and interactive items will be included along with a new visual design.
- The next ICCS administration is scheduled for 2022. It is expected to expand on themes related to SDG 4 (climate change) and trends toward populism and authoritarianism.
- The next PIRLS administration is scheduled for 2026. A new test framework will be introduced by level based on previous results.
- The next TIMSS edition is scheduled for 2023. It is expected to be in digital format with an adaptive design.
- The next ICILS administration is scheduled for 2023. A new option to assess themes related to computational thinking, programming and digital citizenship.

## C. SUMMARY AND FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Most countries in the region have at least one national assessment for monitoring purposes with the capacity to identify achievements and challenges in the education system to ensure learning. In 2020, however, those countries that also have national examinations for certification and

selection purposes prioritized the implementation of the latter over the former.

From 2021, assessments for monitoring purposes resumed in most countries in the region. The information provided by these assessments is still being analyzed and, in many cases, the findings are pending publication. As a result, data on the pandemic's impact on learning and gaps between different student groups are still scarce and emerging.

Given the scale and capacity to produce comparable data over time, large-scale assessments their scale and capacity to produce comparable data over time, had they been prioritized, these assessments administered for monitoring purposes could have accounted for the effects of the pandemic on education systems to inform the planning of subsequent education cycles. The trend, however, seems to indicate that from 2022 on, there will be greater use of these tools and, it is to be hoped, of their results. One remaining challenge is to assess whether and how the data gathered from these assessments will be used for educational planning for the coming years and beyond.

National assessments are relevant—albeit insufficient—tools for diagnosing learning losses during a pandemic. There is a preference for developing additional information-gathering resources to create a broader picture from the mere snapshot provided by assessment results. As part of this trend, qualitative studies based on results are being developed or planned at both national and regional levels to expand or supplement the information obtained from standardized assessments.

Last, innovations are expected for the coming administrations of international assessments, mostly related to the inclusion of technology in the various processes involved in learning assessments. The next question for the future is whether the public health emergency brought about by the pandemic will affect the administration of standardized assessments and whether they will be amended accordingly.

## 2. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

### Sample Cases and Analytical Axes

Formative assessments have become more relevant in the last decade, evolving into a critical part of the educational ecosystem in countries in the region. The urgent process of recovery in response to the loss of learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of formative diagnoses. In addition, given delays in the application of multiple national tools discussed in the previous section, formative assessments will play an increasingly critical role in the coming years. The category of formative diagnoses includes both assessments designed centrally and distributed to classrooms and diagnostic exercises that are part of broader pedagogical intervention programs. In this report, formative assessments are characterized by their objective of informing short-term recovery and feedback actions on a routine basis, with an emphasis on the role of the teacher but also on behalf of the authorities.

To illustrate the proliferation of this type of effort and its role as part of post-pandemic recovery, this section cites and analyzes nine cases of formative assessment in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The principal criteria for the selection of these cases were geographic representation, the diversity of the sectors and implementing entities (governmental and civil society), and their scale and functions within the educational ecosystem. Beyond their geographic diversity, four initiatives originate for the most part in governments, three from civil society, and two depend on close collaboration between governmental and non-governmental entities. Four of the initiatives were implemented for the first time during the pandemic or in response to it. Some of the cases illustrate the innovative use of computer systems and integrated assessment platforms, while others offer examples of tests aligned with effective remedial approaches or teacher training programs for the best application of diagnostic assessment methodologies (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3. GENERAL INFORMATION ON CASES SELECTED**

Source: Authors

ASSESSMENT	COUNTRY	MAIN IMPLEMENTING ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION DATE	SCALE AND SCOPE (2021)
<b>DIALECT AND DIAMAT; COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING DIAGNOSTIC (DIA+)</b>	Chile	Ministry of Education	First application in 2021	64,333 children assessed (33,839 in Dialect, 30,833 in Diamat)
<b>EARLY GRADE READING ASSESSMENT (EGRA) AND EARLY GRADE MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT (EGMA); TUTORIALS</b>	Colombia	Carvajal Foundation	Since 2017 and twice a year	16,000 children assessed
<b>DIAGNOSTIC AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS</b>	Brazil	Ministry of Education and Public Policy and Educational Assessment Center (CAEd)	Launched in 2021	No official data published to date
<b>NATIONAL CONTINUOUS EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION (MEJORDU); DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS</b>	Mexico	Public Education Secretariat (SEP) and National Continuous Educational Improvement Commission (MEJORDU)	Launched in 2021-2022 school year	516,000 students from more than 2,470 elementary schools

ASSESSMENT	COUNTRY	MAIN IMPLEMENTING ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION DATE	SCALE AND SCOPE (2021)
<b>INDEPENDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT (MIA)</b>	Mexico	Independent Learning Assessment	Since 2014	300,000 children assessed
<b>PAUSAS EVALUATIVAS (INTERIM ASSESSMENTS)</b>	City of Buenos Aires, Argentina	Department of Primary Education, City of Buenos Aires Government	Since 2016 and annually except for 2020	31,400 children from 3rd and 6th grades assessed in math
<b>GROWING WITH MULTIGRADE SCHOOL IN PERU (CREER) PROJECT</b>	Peru	GRADE	2019-2021 (Phase 1); 2022 (Phase 2 start and implementation)	Training in 40 multigrade schools (1-4 teachers per school)
<b>DIAGNOSTIC IQ TEST PLATFORM</b>	Dominican Republic	Inicia Foundation, Ministry of Education	Sole application 2021	30,000 students assessed
<b>LEARNING ASSESSMENT MECHANISM (SEA)</b>	Uruguay	National Public Education Administration (ANEP)	Since 2011 (3rd-6th grades), annually; Secondary school grades included since 2014	Open to public and private schools

To analyze and compare the above cases, four key axes were defined: i) the content focus of instruments; alignment with remedial approaches; iii) role of teachers in implementation and use; and iv) key partnerships and funding. In the analysis presented below, these axes make it possible to classify the nine initiatives and to assess their viability in

the regional context as well as their potential for scalability. In addition, within the four dimensions, recommendations, and key messages for the formative assessment agenda are identified in the post-pandemic era based on the highlighted experiences.

**DIAGRAM 2. FOUR ANALYTICAL AXES**

<b>Assessment domains</b>	<b>Alignment with Recovery Programs</b>
Is the test aligned with expected or with actual learning?	Are general orientations or recovery programs aligned with test results?
<b>Teachers' Role</b>	<b>Partnerships and Funding</b>
What role do teachers play in developing, applying, amending, analyzing, and using the information?	What axes support the development, application, and scalability of the test

## A. AXIS I: ASSESSMENT DOMAINS

The effectiveness of any learning diagnostic depends on an appropriate definition of the content to be assessed. In general, learning assessment is built on learning expectations resulting from the current curriculum in each country (as in the case of standardized assessments) or on synthesis at the regional level (as in the case of the Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study – ERCE). On the other hand, some assessments are generated without any explicit relationship to the curriculum, such as the PISA instruments, which define their own levels of achievement and qualifications (OECD, 2000), or assessments managed by civil society in various countries of the global South (Hevia and Vergara-Lope, 2019).

One key focus of assessments has been one of the main areas of dispute in educational debates, especially in reference to specific formative and diagnostic assessments. The distinction between the assessment of basic learning versus learning expectations or curricular requirements dates back to the period before the pandemic and is tied to the discussion of curriculum building (Coll and Martín, 2006). In recent decades, many educational reforms have focused on adjusting the curriculum, seeking to ensure key or basic learning (UNESCO-IBE, 2015). In

many countries, it was reported that the curriculum was highly extensive and detailed, making its actual application difficult and leading to learning lag (Pritchett, 2013). Therefore, having an assessment better adjusted to basic learning, rather than to curriculum content was the primary need of institutions such as Pratham, the developer of assessments such as ASER in India (Banerji, 2013).

The proposal to assess basic learning beyond curricular proposals gained strength with the development of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, and in particular the development of SDG 4.1.1, which requires the creation of minimum standards. In the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, discussions led to the identification of ERCE Level II as the technical indicator that could measure this basic learning (UNESCO, 2019). In contrast, some of the initiatives analyzed in this study emphasize the importance of prioritizing the measurement of basic learning in key academic areas to generate standardized results with prioritized and immediate goals and not limited by the age classification imposed by national curricula. However, activities aligned to curricular bases can be used to support the work of teachers by structuring their remedial actions around curricular expectations they must meet (see Table 4).

**TABLE 4. CONTENT DOMAINS OF ANALYZED INITIATIVES**

Source: Authors

	<b>FOCUS ON CURRICULUM LEARNING OR LEARNING EXPECTATIONS</b>	<b>FOCUS ON REAL OR BASIC LEARNING</b>
<b>DIALECT AND DIAMAT: DIA+</b> <i>Chile</i>	Language arts and math skills in grades 1-2	
<b>EARLY GRADE READING ASSESSMENT (EGRA) AND EARLY GRADE MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT (EGMA): TUTORIALS</b> <i>Colombia</i>		Basic competencies in language arts and math, grades 2-5
<b>MINISTRY OF EDUCATION/ CAED: DIAGNOSTIC AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS</b> <i>Brazil</i>	Math, Portuguese, and English curriculum up to grade 6.	From grade 6 to 9 (secondary school), tests such as the National Basic Common Curriculum (BNCC) focus on thematic areas organized by achievement level, not by grade

	FOCUS ON CURRICULUM LEARNING OR LEARNING EXPECTATIONS	FOCUS ON REAL OR BASIC LEARNING
<b>NATIONAL CONTINUOUS EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION (MEJORDU): DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS</b> <i>Mexico</i>	Language arts and math curriculum, by grade, from 2nd grade in primary school to 3rd grade in secondary school	
<b>INDEPENDENT LEARNING MEASUREMENT (MIA)</b> <i>Mexico</i>		Basic learning in reading and math
<b>PAUSAS EVALUATIVAS (INTERIM ASSESSMENTS)</b> <i>Argentina</i>	Language arts and math curriculum for grades 3 and 6, with English test added in 2021	
<b>DIAGNOSTIC IQ TEST PLATFORM</b> <i>Dominican Republic</i>	Language arts and math curriculum, one in primary school, the other in secondary school (12 and 20 items, respectively)	
<b>LEARNING ASSESSMENT MECHANISM (SEA)</b> <i>Uruguay</i>	Curricula in multiple areas of study for all primary and middle school grades	

Note: The CREER Project does not have its own instrument but rather a training course for the application of formative assessment models.

Inevitably, this debate became more relevant during the pandemic crisis, beyond which learning recovery will require a substantial remediation effort in many cases independent of or unaligned with the grades or age groups targeted before the pandemic. In response, there have been significant discussions in some countries about the need to have a priority curriculum based on the idea of creating assessments that could shape this prioritized learning as it becomes central.

Regarding the analyzed initiatives, most initiatives implemented by national or regional governments still seek to measure achievement in relation to pre-determined curricular objectives. In several cases, no significant changes were made to the content of formative tests despite the pandemic, such as the SEA platform instruments or the Pausas Evaluativas (interim assessments) in Buenos Aires, which continue to be aligned with the study plans determined by subject and grade. In the case of Brazil, for example, a new platform was launched for the formative and diagnostic assessment

of learning in response in particular to the most recent changes in the national basic curriculum.

In contrast, in certain contexts such as Chile and Colombia, access and learning gaps drove discussions about the suitability of the national curriculum objectives. In Chile, activities available through the Learning Online (*Aprendo en Línea*) platform and corresponding tests on the DIA platform were adapted in 2020 to a prioritized national curriculum. In 2021, the DIA+ platform began to offer diagnostic exercises aligned with the Basic Reading and Arithmetics (*Leo y Sumo Primero*) national plan, which includes modules and activities for grades 1 and 2 (during the pandemic, these were also included in *Aprendo en Línea*). In the context of this national plan, DIA+ offers two broader formative assessment instruments with a focus on basic competencies in reading and math by age group, namely Dialect and Diamat (UCE, 2021). Although the automated analytical report on the results aligns with the basic objectives of Chile’s national curriculum, the objective of the tests is to generate an early diagnosis of

the students' skills in grades 1 and 2 of primary school. The instruments measure achievement levels, and Dialect uses the Lexile scale, an international standardized scale, to categorize the complexity levels of texts readers can read and understand. In 2021, the platform was made available to 5,000 schools (both public and subsidized), and 64,333 students took at least one of the tests.

In contrast, in the context of the pandemic, the initiatives developed by civil society had to emphasize basic learning to address the most significant gaps when these occur.

In general, these initiatives are also associated with the measurement of the impact of specific pedagogical programs. MIA continues to be an active proponent of diagnostic assessment of fundamental learning, principally in math and reading. Similarly, the Carvajal Foundation uses adapted versions of EGRA and EGMA to identify students with the greatest lag in language arts and math and include them in its tutoring program in parallel to its primary curriculum. EGRA and EGMA facilitate a rapid initial diagnosis and offer the option of measuring progress at the end of the program in a standardized manner (Devtech, 2021).

**BOX 4. CHALLENGES IN DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT OF BASIC LEARNING: THE MIA PROJECT, MEXICO**

Mexico's MIA Project, a citizen-led assessment instrument, comes under the responsibility of the Center for Research and Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology (CIESAS) and Universidad Veracruzana.

The assessments conducted by this project measure basic learning, rather than learning expectations, in the domains of reading, (reader fluency and inferential comprehension) and basic arithmetic (number identification, arithmetic operations, and problem solving).

They have three main objectives: first, to measure learning gaps, or any lag in learning relative to expectations regarding age and school grade; second, to prepare diagnoses for each child, seeking to identify the child's effective learning level beyond their age, attendance, or other characteristics; and third, to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction for the recovery and acceleration of learning.

Instruments consist of a reading test with six focal areas: syllables, words, pronunciation, history, comprehension I, and comprehension II, and a math test consisting of nine focal areas: identification of two-digit numbers, addition without transformations, addition with transformations, subtraction without transformation, division, problems with visual support, problems without visual support, and additions of fractions.

These instruments can be applied to learners aged 5 to 17 and can be implemented in homes, schools, or community centers. Due to their simplicity, these instruments may be administered by teachers, tutors, or trained volunteers. The instruments are administered orally, one-on-one, and are applied up to but not beyond the items' subjects are able to answer. The results are collected with pencil and paper or digitally, identifying the percentage of accuracy for each item, and can be grouped in summations for statistical purposes.

Before the pandemic, these assessments were administered to almost 20,000 children in six southeastern Mexican states (Veracruz, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatán, Quintana Roo, and Puebla). In 2020, the instruments were administered in several southeastern states in order to measure learning gaps (Velásquez-Durán, Vergara-Lope, and Hevia, 2021). Thanks to these measurements, it was possible to estimate learning losses resulting from the pandemic in Mexico in two southeastern Mexican states (Hevia et al., 2022).

At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, teachers administered these instruments to about 34,000 children in primary grades 3 and 6 in rural areas of Tabasco and about 289,000 children in primary grades 2 and 4 in Nuevo León. In addition, the tests were administered to about 2,500 participants in learning camps in Guerrero.

In practice and especially in the context of recovery, the curricular focus and basic learning focus do not truly conflict. In the majority of cases analyzed in this section, the curricular learning approaches all include basic learning in some way. The key difference is in the prioritization of certain aspects of learning over and above curricular objectives. That is, some assessments are centered on learning expectations according to the national curriculum while others focus on assessing actual learning in a real-world context. Although all initiatives assess some aspect of basic learning, only some focus specifically on generating data regarding this learning.

Finally, the objective of all the initiatives is to provide information in real time to teachers or guardians in order to focus teaching on the learning realities of each student. Nonetheless, to shape recovery efforts, the adaptation and prioritization of content to be assessed must be considered essential, especially in governmental initiatives. In cases in which the prioritization of curriculum and content was chosen, the objective is to support the work of teachers, making test administration easier and facilitating data analysis for immediate decision-making. For certain civil society initiatives, the use of formative assessments to measure basic learning as opposed to learning expectations is essential in the context of recovery, especially where gaps are severe and no longer match the ages or grades outlined in the national curriculum.

## B. AXIS II: ALIGNMENT WITH RECOVERY AND ACCELERATION PROGRAMS

Especially in the context of learning recovery, the value of formative assessment instruments depends on their accurate alignment with learning recovery efforts. The guided and effective use of test results through aligned pedagogical approaches can not only empower educational actors to adapt their actions and address gaps, but also promote their interest in implementing the test itself. This is especially true when the assessment is administered through new digital platforms unknown to both teacher and students at times of heavy workloads and high work-related stress (Vaillant et al., 2022).

In the cases analyzed in this study, two main strategies for alignment with remedial efforts are observed (see Table 5). In general, governmental initiatives or initiatives with a broad scope focus on supporting rapid, large-scale diagnoses aligned with orientations pre-designed or standardized by teachers or students. Smaller-scale efforts generated by civil society generally result in building formative assessment instruments based on pre-existing pedagogical or remedial strategies.

**TABLE 5. RECOVERY FOCUS IN SELECTED CASES**

Source: Authors

	INITIATIVES	PROVIDING INFORMATION TO TEACHERS/SCHOOLS	SPECIFIC RECOVERY ACTIONS
GOVERNMENTAL EFFORTS	DIA+, SEA, MEC-CAEd Tests	Teachers/schools receive results automatically, in order to analyze the data Returns at the school level, for use of the results in teacher training.	Guidelines for teachers and workshops.
	PAUSAS EVALUATIVAS (INTERIM ASSESSMENTS), MEJOREDU DIAGNOSTIC TESTS	Digital system for unloading and documenting data (one-way) <sup>8</sup> , and tests repository Teachers correct and use the students' responses directly.	Guidelines for teachers.
CIVIL SOCIETY EFFORTS	MIA, EGRA AND EGMA/ TUTORING, PROJECT CREER	Organizations collect, systematize, and return the information to teachers and schools.	Tutoring, Camps with <i>Teaching at the Right Level</i> focus, and/or teacher trainings.

Large-scale governmental efforts offer a spectrum of options to produce pedagogical guidelines aligned with formative tests. In Chile and Uruguay, for example, the DIA and SEA platforms integrate digital systems that make it possible for students to complete the test on the platform itself and automatically generate diagnostic reports based on the results. On these platforms, teachers can consult guidelines aligned with curricular plans by grade and subject in order to design their own remedial actions. DIA+ also generates personalized paths for students addressing

those areas with the greatest deficiencies. In Brazil, the new Ministry of Education assessments platform developed by CAEd has a functionality similar to that of DIA+ or SEA. Designed for teachers, this platform offers a variety of instruments by subject area and grade and offers the opportunity to compare results against the objectives set by the National Basic Common Curriculum (BNCC).

**BOX 5. COMPARABILITY AND CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT: CAED DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT IN BRAZIL**

The new assessment platform now used in Brazil was developed based on a tender for services opened by the Ministry of Education and won by CAEd. The platform was launched in 2021, and although it was in design before the pandemic, the crisis accelerated the process. CAEd was responsible for the development of the tests as well as for the technological design of the platform.

The objective of the platform is to create a national repository of formative assessment instruments aligned with the BNCC and support the effective use of the data by teachers. Simultaneously, since it is a centralized system, the platform is capable of collecting diagnostic data in real time and of generating comparability by level (with controlled access by the relevant authorities) within the same school or at the municipal, state, or national level.

One of the main challenges of developing this platform involved creating new formative assessment instruments aligned with the national curriculum for secondary education. In the primary grades, the tests are grouped by grade and subject matter. Beginning in 6th grade, the curriculum is built around areas or themes of study and not necessarily by grades, with the structure based on the concept of *Teaching at the Right Level* (TaRL). To reflect this distribution, the platform offers different tests within each area depending on different achievement levels.

Although it does not offer specific activities with related results, the platform is highly sophisticated and has various functionalities to support teachers in designing their own remedial actions. Initially, teachers choose and print the tests, administer them, and upload their students' responses to the platform. The system scores responses and analyzes and synthesizes the results for teacher use. One of the most innovative functions of the platform is that it maps the results of each class against curricular objectives and thus makes it possible to visualize students' progress against the course of study. The system also identifies critical areas for support for key competencies within each unit and subject and alerts teachers to areas that must be reinforced. The platform includes a repository of training materials, including modules with videos, for use by teachers.

To promote the use of this new tool, the Ministry presents it as a critical part of the national assessment ecosystem, and has introduced it as an initiative to be included in projects and partnerships that are already underway. It is expected that the use of the platform will grow in the coming months (Ministry of Education, 2021).

In the case of MEJOREDU's formative assessments and Pausas Evaluativas (interim assessments) in Buenos Aires, digital platforms are a teacher resource and do not necessarily offer integrated systems for automatic scoring or analysis. The instruments developed by MEJOREDU can be administered through various media (print, digital, group administration), and teachers receive guides for identifying areas of achievement and designing didactic sequences that seek to improve learning expectations (MEJOREDU, 2021). The case of Buenos Aires is similar, but teachers have the additional role of documenting and uploading test results to the online platform for administrative use at the level of the City education department and decision-making.

In the case of MIA, although the project originates in civil society and focuses more on basic than on curricular learning, it offers significant scope in educational systems in various federated entities. The instruments developed by MIA have been administered in over six Mexican states, in some cases by teachers in collaboration with government,

and in others through their own efforts in conjunction with civil society and trained volunteers. In both implementation models, one of the focal areas of MIA consists of the programs that accompany the tests (e.g., TaRL camps) and teacher training emphasizing remedial efforts (Hevia and Vergara-Lope, 2016). Some civil organizations operating in the area such as *Escuela Nueva* in Colombia and the *Glasswing* Foundation in El Salvador are adapting these instruments in some of their recovery interventions.

On a smaller scale, and originating in civil society, the analyzed initiatives include very complete and promising remedial approaches. The CREER project focuses its training on teachers and supports them in understanding how the formative assessment criteria proposed in its program are aligned with competencies maps and learning and progressions standards, within its national curricula. In Colombia, the Carvajal Foundation is implementing an annual tutorials program for students with the greatest learning gaps based on the results of an initial administration of EGRA and EGMA.

**BOX 6. CARVAJAL FOUNDATION TUTORIALS PROGRAM, COLOMBIA**

Since 2017, the Carvajal Foundation has been implementing its model of tutorials in public schools in Colombia. The program was designed as part of the Aula Global project and was positively assessed in a study conducted by Harvard University and Vanderbilt University, which measured its impact on 5,000 children in eight public schools (Carvajal Foundation, 2020).

The intervention begins with the administration of EGMA and EGRA tests to students in a classroom or school. The Carvajal Foundation uses a version of EGRA and EGMA adapted by the Luque Foundation to Castilian Spanish and the Colombian context. Test administrators must be trained to use the test. So that the model may function, the Carvajal Foundation contracts with a team of administrators and trains them through an online course to be completed in one week. The tests take about 25 minutes per child. The results are presented in percentages and make it possible to identify any small group of students with the greatest gaps.

In the remedial program, 24 tutorials are offered in one-hour sessions, twice a week, with 8-10 students, and within a school day. The tutors who will lead the sessions are also contracted and trained by the Carvajal Foundation. At the end of the year, the EGRA and EGMA tests are given again to evaluate student progress and the impact of the tutorials.

During the COVID-19 crisis, administration of tests and tutorials was done online and individually. The model was redesigned to adapt it to a virtual modality, and some 12,000 administrations were completed remotely, most of them using WhatsApp video. In addition, a significant effort was made along with the Colombian Ministry of Education to connect with students who do not have internet access, in some cases by printing and distributing the necessary guides. At the end of 2021, the initiative was being implemented in the same schools, both remotely (30 percent) and in-person (70 percent). In the future, the Carvajal Foundation hopes to maintain remote administration, initially to justify its investment in adapting the model but also to strengthen digital literacy and autonomous work by students and thus promote distance learning.

The Tutorials program is only one part of the model. This intervention has two axes: i) identifying and supporting students with the greatest learning gaps through its tutorials; and ii) simultaneously training teachers with methodologies for Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) in the classroom. Teacher training is short (24 hours) and generally cost-effective. In addition to ensuring a better transition of students to their classrooms following the tutorials, the training axes also aid in connecting with teachers and promoting their interest in participating in the initiative.

Given the success of the initiative in Colombia, the International Development Bank (IDB) financed a pilot of the model in Venezuela (Devtech, 2021). Initially, the course developed by test administrators and tutors was implemented.

The level of alignment with specific recovery programs depends on the different priorities and objectives of the tests. For initiatives aiming to create a large-scale and rapid diagnostic, the creation of a personalized program aligned with its instruments is less viable. The cost of complex and personalized remedial programs is much higher than the creation of indicative routes both in terms of financing and capacity. According to the analyzed experiences, the main cost of programs of tutorials aligned with formative assessments is the contracting and training of administrators and teachers, including the trainers themselves. For example, for the Carvajal Foundation, the average cost per student in its program of tutorials is USD 40-45.

In addition, in the context of the pandemic, in many educational systems, existing human capacity has been overloaded and exhausted. In some cases, it has been a challenge to find new trainers to train or motivate teachers to adopt additional recovery programs as well as new formative assessments. Nonetheless, remedial approaches offering non-governmental (or not strictly curricular) initiatives such as those analyzed here provide possible models to be explored for their large-scale implementation (see Table 6). It is possible to develop a synthesized and remedial model based on the national curriculum, and with relevant objectives and activities specific to the results of the tests.

**TABLE 6. AXES I AND II, COMPARED**

Source: Authors

	GUIDELINES	ALIGNED REMEDIAL PROGRAMS
<b>FOCUS ON CURRICULUM AND COURSE OF STUDY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DIA+ tests</li> <li>• SEA tests</li> <li>• MEJOREDU tests</li> <li>• Pausas Evaluativas (interim assessments)</li> <li>• CAEd diagnostic tests</li> <li>• IQ Test Platform</li> </ul>	
<b>FOCUS ON BASIC LEARNING</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MIA</li> <li>• EGRA and EGMA, Carvajal Foundation Tutorials</li> <li>• CREERProject</li> </ul>

### C. AXIS III: TEACHERS' ROLE

Throughout the crisis, the role of the teacher has been even increasingly central to learning facilitation and recovery efforts. Included in their many tasks is the responsibility for being the principal implementers of formative assessment tools, and in many cases the first users of the data collected by these tools. During the pandemic, they have also been in charge of documenting the collected data used in administrative decision-making by the authorities. The demands of the teaching system have created a work overload and with this the challenge of motivating staff to apply new assessments, as well as remote learning tools, and effectively use the results (Vaillant et al., 2022). Training and supporting teachers in this role are therefore critical to ensuring that formative assessment tools meet their goals.

The magnitude of the initiative, along with the sector that implements it, generally determines the teacher's level of involvement in formative assessment efforts.

On the one hand, in governmental initiatives, teachers have been key players in implementing tests, and in some cases also in their scoring, analysis, and documentation on digital platforms. When using the CAEd platform, the SEA platform, or the MEJOREDU system, teachers may choose the tool they wish to implement for each subject and grade of interest. There is even the option to build your own instrument with questions available on the SEA+ platform. The two DIA+ tests are unique and predetermined and do not offer options to choose from. Both the CAEd tests and the Pausas Evaluativas (inter assessments) require teachers to print the instruments and administer them to their students. This option is also available in the MEJOREDU system while the SEA or DIA+ platforms require the tests to be completed online. With printed instruments, teachers must generally score them or manually upload the responses into an online system that makes possible an analysis and the production of reports as well as the collection of information at the national level for decision-making (see Table 7).

**TABLE 7. TEACHERS' ROLE IN CASES EXAMINED**

	CHOOSE INSTRUMENT	ADMINISTER INSTRUMENT MANUALLY	SCORE ANSWERS MANUALLY	ANALYZE RESULTS MANUALLY	ENTER DATA INTO SYSTEM	USE DATA TO CREATE NEW STRATEGIES
<b>DIALECT AND DIAMAT (DIA+)</b> <i>Chile</i>	x	x	x	x	x	✓
<b>EGRA &amp; EGMA, TUTORIALS</b> <i>Colombia</i>	x	✓ (tutors)	✓ (tutors)	x	x	✓
<b>CAED DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS</b> <i>Brazil</i>	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓
<b>MEJORDU DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS</b> <i>México</i>	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
<b>MIA</b> <i>Mexico</i>	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
<b>PAUSAS EVALUATIVAS (INTERIM ASSESSMENTS)</b> <i>Argentina</i>	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
<b>IQ DIAGNOSTIC TEST</b> <i>Dominican Republic</i>	x	x	x	x	✓	x
<b>SEA</b> <i>Uruguay</i>	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓

In contrast, some civil society initiatives include teachers in the assessment processes, but these generally have greater additional technical support. In the case of the Carvajal Foundation and some MIA projects, both test administration and the implementation of remedial approaches depend on the recruitment and training of tutors or volunteers in addition to teacher support. On the one hand, MIA instruments are intentionally sensitive and easy to administer, which makes it possible for them to be used by various (trained) stakeholders, not only by teachers (Hevia and Vergara-Lope, 2016). On the other hand, EGMA and EGRA administration requires highly specific training, which generally frees teachers from this task. Implementing entities included in the initiatives and led not by teachers but by tutors generally have direct support strategies for teachers to support the use of the information resulting from the implementation. In addition to MIA and Carvajal Foundation training, the

CREER Project focuses on the development of a training course for teachers, with a key axis centered on formative assessment (see Box 7).

In most initiatives, it is considered that given its crucial role, it is imperative to support the administration of the diagnostic assessment with training for the teachers and educational technicians involved. Within the spectrum of training options, in the cases studied, pre-administration guidance seminars, including extensive training and direct support, are offered for the direct implementation of remedial programs. In larger-scale experiments such as SEA, MEJOREDU, or DIA, seminars aiming to guide teachers before test administration or in the use of the platform and analytical reports are offered. The CAEd platform includes integrated training modules to support teachers in the interpretation and use of results (Ministério da Educação, 2021).

#### **BOX 7. TRAINING FOR EFFECTIVE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: CREER PROJECT, PERU**

With financing from the Old Dart Foundation, GRADE initiated the first phase of the CREER Project in 2019. The principal objective of the Project is to strengthen the abilities of teachers and associated educational technicians who work with rural, multigrade, and monolingual schools in Peru, with a focus on teaching for diversity. One of the two axes of the project consists in supporting teachers in their pedagogical practices with a course in formative assessment training.

The first phase of the project focuses on collecting information about the staffing needs of schools, developing the course based on this information, and piloting it with a group of teachers. The second phase, which was initiated in 2022, is intended to implement the course in 40 schools (with a maximum of 4 teachers per school) and extend it to specialists and officials of the Cajabamba and Jaén Local Education Management Units (UGEL), as well as to the Cajabamba Regional Department of Education. The project is being conducted in Cajabamba Department, specifically in Cachachi (Cajabamba Province) and Bellavista (Jaén Province) districts.

GRADE developed this course based on a previous project in which it advised the Ministry of Education in developing a new curriculum with an emphasis on formative evaluation and learning and progress standards. Part of the consultation consisted in strengthening the abilities of ministerial technicians in formative curricular assessment. The CREER course is aligned with the curriculum developed at the national level and seeks to connect new formative assessment models with learning abilities and standards outlined in curricular webs. It is a rigorous course lasting a little over three months and includes two sessions per week, with additional synchronous meetings and asynchronous activities.

Course content seeks to link teaching for diversity and heterogeneity regarding achievement levels as well as individual experience with formative assessment techniques. Course modules cover various methodologies such as the development of assessment criteria aligned with the curriculum and the realities of the classroom or the creation of links between formative and summative assessment. Additionally, it seeks to promote the experiential development of abilities through practical activities and active dialogue.

The long-term objective of the Project is to create a training model that can be replicated in order to strengthen the use of formative assessments. In addition to expanding their partnerships in order to implement this course in specifically Peruvian contexts, GRADE is currently working to compress the model and make it more cost-effective.

Not all the initiatives that depend on teachers for their proper administration provide training or direct support, especially those of the greatest scope and scale. The cost of a training course like that of CREER is high and not necessarily viable on a national or regional scale. Nonetheless, training courses within these models can be synthesized and applied in different contexts, as has been done in Venezuela with the Carvajal Foundation model.

Beyond training, a key challenge faced by all initiatives, especially in the context of the pandemic, is how to demonstrate to teachers the usefulness and potential offered by these new instruments or platforms in support of their teaching and in strengthening the learning of their students. However, there is a concern that teachers may resist a new assessment tool due to its possible implications related to job security if results are not optimal and because it involves assigning them one more task without any clear benefit to their practices (El Diálogo, 2021b).

In the experiments examined, various models of incentives and efforts to motivate teachers to participate are proposed, which are especially significant for non-mandatory non-governmental initiatives or those recently established. The Carvajal Foundation, for example, only shares the test results with classroom teachers and school principals and aggregates unidentifiable information with the Ministry, which alleviates concerns about the implications of the test. On the other hand, the Foundation seeks to create a close relationship with teachers to emphasize the value of their investment of time through initial training, a space for exchanges, and qualitative assessment groups so that they may offer feedback at the end of the process. This approach is key to developing measures for correcting any possible gaps in trust and empowering teachers, including in large-scale cases where it is not possible to implement mechanisms for exchanges and qualitative feedback.

In a way, any differences in the role of teachers are due to the different priorities and objectives inherent in the tests. For initiatives such as Pausas Evaluativas (interim assessments) and the CAEd platform, there is generally a dual objective: not only of informing pedagogical efforts but also of collecting information at the national level for decision-making. The second objective depends on the large-scale administration of the test and the collection of representative and immediate data, which limits the time and resources that can be dedicated to offering close support to teachers. In contrast, since they lack an institutional objective, smaller-scale initiatives can

be focused on the use of tests for the sole benefit of the teacher and students.

Framing tests as a process of teacher support including by governments from the beginning may turn out to be critical in promoting staff interest. For example, the formative nature of the MEJOREDU tests is centered on the process of positive and direct feedback to teachers and students: that is, the tests have the dual objective of not only collecting data for the authorities but also of being used by teachers (Miranda, 2021). To foster greater and better use of tests and associated remedial programs, some implementing institutions emphasize the importance of prioritizing the most important objective within these strategies, namely their role in supporting and empowering teachers.

## D. AXIS IV: PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING

In most of the region, countries did not have the technical or financial capacity necessary to deploy a learning diagnostic with the efficiency and scope needed to support teachers and students in their remedial actions during the COVID-19 crisis. For this reason, in recent months, a proliferation of partnerships and collaborations between the public and private sectors has been observed, including with civil society (El Diálogo, 2021c). This type of collaboration has been highly beneficial to the government but also to stakeholders in the education ecosystem who sought to broaden the scope of their projects. Non-governmental entities have greater flexibility and agility, direct experience in the field, and in certain cases, greater technical capacity while the government has direct access to the public education system along with the power to mobilize it. In the future, partnerships should continue to be a source of innovation and improvement for educational initiatives, especially diagnostic assessment efforts.

In all the cases examined, we identified models of partnerships between the public and private sectors. On the one hand, governments request support from organizations with greater technical capacity in developing new digital instruments or digital platforms to support their diagnostic assessment objectives. Collaborations are formed through services tender calls, long-term collaboration contracts, or one-time requests, as was the case with the IQ platform. In the case of Brazil or DIA+, the education authorities contracted research centers and companies to develop instruments, design, and operate platforms. In Chile, they

collaborated with Colegio y Universidad de los Andes, while in Brazil they worked with CAEd.

In addition to the provision of technical and one-time services during the pandemic, civil society organizations also sought to broaden their access to the system during the pandemic through partnerships with the public sector to address gaps caused by the crisis, especially

in more vulnerable contexts. MIA, for example, operates in six Mexican states and collaborates closely with the authorities in each one in administering their instruments in schools and with organizations such as UNICEF in implementing learning camps. Meanwhile, the CREER Project depends on its relationships with UGELs to provide its training course not only through teachers but also with technicians in regions and local districts.

**BOX 8. LEVERAGING TECHNICAL CAPACITY IN CIVIL SOCIETY: NEW NATIONAL DIAGNOSTIC TEST ON IQ PLATFORM, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

The IQ platform was born in 2014 from a project of the Inicia Foundation. Since then, the platform has been offered free of charge as an open digital resource supporting secondary students in their preparation for national university entrance tests. Until 2020, the platform mainly offered a simulation that assessed the user against the curriculum for the national test and based on the results created a personalized route with activities selected to reinforce areas in which the student had failed.

When the pandemic arrived, the function of the platform was expanded. First, IQ began to use the platform as an open and curated repository, with all of the content aligned to the tests that had been developed. In addition, virtual interactive spaces were opened to support students and teachers in real time. In a number of these projects, they collaborated with the Department of Quality Assessment of the Ministry of Education in supporting their efforts to offer online classes.

During the 2020 and 2021 academic years, the Department sought to deploy a learning diagnostic and develop diagnostic tests in language arts and math for primary and secondary schools. The greatest challenge was to ensure that the test reached all students and to collect data rapidly and effectively. To this end, the Department requested the use of the IQ platform to make these tests available to students at the end of the academic year. IQ, which has established itself as a recognized and accessible instrument in recent years, supports this effort through its technical capacity.

Thanks to this collaboration, 30,000 students were assessed in both subjects in 2021. The principal objective of the survey was to facilitate decision-making at the national level. Teachers also had access to the test data but only as an overview and without disaggregated details.

The post-pandemic learning recovery agenda provides a unique opportunity to justify continued investment in innovative models and public-private partnerships created during the crisis. Within all three axes, various areas were identified in which government initiatives could benefit from the formative assessment models developed by civil society organizations:

- First, education authorities should assess the importance of prioritizing the curriculum and focus on the fundamental learning diagnostic in the post-pandemic context. Within civil society, there are several scalable non-curricular efforts with instruments that could complement the current strategies of governments.
- Second, in civil society and the private sector in general, models have been designed since before the pandemic for promising and demonstrably effective remedial programs. Beyond offering guidelines, governments have the opportunity to adapt and synthesize parts of these models to support the actions of teachers in the classroom during this period.
- Third, to continue involving teachers in formative assessment initiatives and incentivize their collaboration, all initiatives could benefit from more effective training and support models.

## E. IMPLEMENTATION AND REPLICABILITY

Beyond the individual effectiveness of each of these initiatives, it is important to consider the factors that can facilitate or limit their implementation and replicability depending on the context and educational objectives. The estimated cost of the initiatives is only one of the cross-cutting factors to be considered since it is determined by the characteristics of each model.<sup>9</sup> Based on the analysis presented, three key characteristics were identified: (i) staff training and contracting; (ii) means of administration; and (iii) aligned pedagogical activities.

**Contracting technical staff** (tutors or administrators), or the training of volunteers and teachers, is one of the principal costs of any formative assessment initiative. Even more than in cases of governmental initiatives, models implemented in civil society require additional support from contracted staff since they are not generally deployed as an obligation for teachers within the system. In addition, when complex instruments are used (such as EGRA or EGMA in Colombia) or when instruments have been created in-house (such as those created by MIA in Mexico), these organizations must support administrators and teachers with the training necessary to ensure the appropriate use of instruments. Initiatives that also incorporate associated pedagogical programs require even more comprehensive training or the contracting of more and better-prepared technicians, which contributes to a high total cost. For example, in the current model of the Carvajal Foundation (Colombia), given the need to contract and train tutors, the cost is high at USD 40-45 per student.

In contrast, governments have teacher networks available to them in their public systems to implement large-scale initiatives (such as the SEA, CAEd, DIA+, Pausas Evaluativas [interim assessments], and MEJOREDU tests) as well as various points of entry for deploying the necessary training or orientations. In general, training sessions for the implementation of these assessments are shorter, standardized, and less costly and focus on understanding the interface between the platforms used. Nonetheless, some government platforms could benefit from training models used in civil society, which provide much more direct support and can help ensure the effective use of the instruments. CREER (Peru), MIA (Mexico), and the Carvajal Foundation (Colombia) are working to make their courses simpler and more flexible to make them both effective and replicable for teachers (or tutors) on a large scale.

**Means of administration** of assessments is a second factor that can determine the viability of their implementation, depending on the context. For example, in countries where the connectivity coverage for education is not high enough, online platforms will not be as effective. In Chile or Uruguay, where coverage rates are among the highest in the region, platforms such as SEA or DIA can integrate formative assessments within an automated system to provide thorough follow-up of students' trajectories. In the case of the CAEd platform in Brazil, the platform is used as a repository and provides downloadable tests to be printed by students to later upload their responses again into the system. This hybrid model, similar to that of MEJOREDU or Pausas Evaluativas (interim assessments), only requires that teachers but not students have access to devices and the platform.

The development of an automated platform in addition to a universal education connectivity strategy and the ICT training that accompanies it requires a significant initial investment. Nonetheless, in some contexts, automated assessment platforms can be a sound long-term investment and contribute to an integrated ecosystem, as is the case with CAEd and in Chile and Uruguay. There is also the option to form partnerships with already-developed platforms. For example, in the Dominican Republic, the Ministry of Education developed the diagnostic test and contracted for the one-time use of an already existing platform, the IQ Platform.

Finally, depending on the assessment strategy objective, the option to offer aligned pedagogical actions can be highly valuable. In general, the analyzed governmental initiatives are oriented towards how teachers are to use the results but do not offer specific actions to respond to gaps each student may present. Depending on the context, it may be preferable to adopt a large-scale initiative or instrument with general and standardized orientations and, simultaneously, to focus the efforts of aligned recovery programs on the most left-behind groups. For example, though probably more costly, the Carvajal Foundation and MIA tutorial models may be more viable in addressing gaps seen in specific groups, especially as part of the post-pandemic recovery process.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS:

One of the major challenges facing all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is how to gather pertinent, real-time information on the current position, progress, and setbacks in learning to inform educational improvement methods. Above all, how can this information be fed into the development of schools' educational policies and practices in the coming months and years to recover the learning losses incurred during the pandemic and thus move toward more resilient and sustainable scenarios for improving educational quality?

From this study, which included conversations with various actors in education systems in the region, four key messages emerge that point to several courses of action. The first recommendations concern actions that can be taken in the short term to address the immediate challenges posed by the crisis before broader planning strategies are offered for the medium to long term. From the outset, it will be necessary to consider and tailor messages according to the varying starting points, degrees of progress, context, and means of each country.

1. As a first step, **education ministries should prioritize diagnostic assessments/assessment strategies (formative or otherwise)** to gain an accurate and up-to-date understanding of students' learning losses after two years during the pandemic.

To support the necessary actions as part of the recovery process, it will be vital to prioritize diagnostic assessments via national monitoring mechanisms or training over assessments for other purposes. Diagnostic assessments provide a baseline for planning and measuring the impact of recovery strategies. In most cases, it will be necessary to create or adapt instruments that meet the objectives of the diagnostic, which may present some technical challenges. For example, the use of new assessments with adapted content may limit the comparability of results with those from previous assessments. For this reason, opting for assessments tailored to the current period can delay the return to standardized frameworks as well as that more comprehensive information regarding the consolidation

of curricular objectives. However, the cost of not establishing a priority diagnostic strategy may be very high.

However, it will not suffice to merely offer such diagnostics. Rather, they should be used to create baseline data, prioritize investments in learning recovery, and adopt an evidence-based approach to educational improvement. This study surveyed innovative rapid-diagnostic models. Based on these experiences, key characteristics can be identified for the development and implementation of effective diagnostics:

- Formative assessments should prioritize fast and accessible implementation and analysis. Their instruments and results should be easy for teachers and leaders to access, understand, and operationalize. For example, they should not contain highly technical language.
- Diagnostic instruments, whether formative or otherwise, should focus on basic learning (or at least on a prioritized curriculum). This approach simplifies and streamlines the implementation of the instrument as well as the analysis of its results. Moreover, in the context of the crisis, it may more accurately measure the gaps and achievement levels that must exist outside corresponding grades or curriculum goals.

When it comes to the development and rollout of diagnostics, civil society organizations and actors outside the public sector can be key allies for ministries. First, many organizations have experience in developing formative diagnostic evaluations (see, for example, the work of MIA, which has developed a toolkit for determining students' proficiency in reading and math) along with platforms for administering these (especially in difficult contexts, as in the Carvajal Foundation administering EGMA and EGRA by WhatsApp or the IQ Platform in the Dominican Republic). Second, non-governmental actors can support the development of training for educational staff, the provision of guides for the use and interpretation of results, and the design of remedial teaching materials to address identified gaps.

2. It is both possible and necessary to **optimize the information gathered through national (and even regional) instruments** administered over the last two years to inform recovery actions even if they lack specific diagnostic purposes.

In countries where national assessments are already being administered such as entrance or exit tests that have resumed or continued during the pandemic, governments should now be thinking about how to leverage the information provided to inform decision-making in the context of recovery. In several cases, the data gathered will be comparable over time, including results obtained before the pandemic, which may make their analysis and use highly valuable.

Even where assessments are not diagnostic, policymakers should consider how their results could be used to inform the educational response to the pandemic. For example, university entrance tests (ENEM in Brazil, CAPE in the Caribbean) are by definition non-formative and do not support remedial actions since they measure students' knowledge and competencies upon completion of their secondary studies. However, an analysis of the data with a focus on the potential impacts of the pandemic could reveal important information. If the data point to a drop in the number of participants, the implication could be that fewer students are considering higher-level studies and entering the labour market/ transitioning from school to work instead. In such a case, among possible actions, broader provision of vocational education could help ensure their successful integration into work.

It bears repeating that these data should be used quickly and efficiently. To this end, non-governmental actors may have an important role to play. For example, inviting academic experts to collaborate in data analysis may speed up the process and ensure that the information is used to design immediate actions.

3. Formative diagnostic assessment strategies should **empower teachers by directly involving them and providing the relevant training** to ensure the effective application and use of the information collected.

For all assessment efforts but particularly formative assessments, the role of the teacher is key. It is not just the success of initiatives that depends on the active role of teachers: if governments cannot count on the support and collaboration of teachers, no diagnostic effort will succeed. Teachers and associated educational staff should therefore be full partners in all conversations and processes from the outset. Authorities should be receptive to their concerns about the implications of assessments and seek mutually agreed solutions.

In addition, to maximize the use of formative assessments in the classroom, teachers require specific knowledge and skills in order to apply and interpret these instruments. Here again, civil society actors can be important allies as many organizations already have significant experience in this area. The design of training and shadowing schemes will be critical to ensuring that teachers can front these assessment and recovery processes.

To ensure that teachers use the tests to improve their actions, it is vital that they not be suspicious of their objectives. While data must inform decision-making at all levels of the system, the primary goal should be to empower teachers to address gaps. If the emphasis is not placed on the role of the teacher, governments risk forgoing their involvement due to concerns over the implications of the implementation.

4. Finally, all assessment efforts in the context of pandemic recovery should contribute to the development of **better learning assessment mechanisms for the long term**.

When designing and implementing new diagnostic strategies, progress must be consolidated to ensure enduring change over time. In the long term, all assessment efforts should be brought together under a common system with the following characteristics:

- **Integration.** In the medium to long term, it will be imperative to bring together the information generated by multiple frameworks with different objectives and perspectives on the education system in order to answer questions on various scales and educational levels. To this end, it will be useful to leverage available technology and advances made during the pandemic in the design of currently interoperable systems. In most recently developed platforms, the various levels within the education system can be linked by transferring

data from the classroom to ministries and vice versa. In addition, it is possible to centralize information from formative and summative assessments and create relevant connections.

- **Comprehensiveness.** To meet all the needs of the education ecosystem, the assessment system should incorporate multiple measurement instruments with different objectives and approaches. While formative diagnostic assessments have gained relevance and value in the current context, other national frameworks continue to play a key role within an interlinked system.
- **Sustainability.** To maintain the system over time, it is important to have institutions or institutional entities with sufficient political will and technical capacity. To this end, it is strategic to invest in the synergies and partnerships created during the pandemic between governments and actors outside the public sector, including civil society.

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# Annexes

## ANNEX 1. COUNTRIES AND NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORKS INCLUDED IN THE SURVEY

Source: Authors based on data from LLECE-UNESCO, CXC, OECD, and IEA

COUNTRY	ASSESSMENT	ASSESSING AGENT	FREQUENCY	COVERAGE	PURPOSE	STAKES
<b>ARGENTINA</b>	<i>Aprender</i>	Assessment Secretariat of the Ministry of Education	Annual (biennial for each level)	Census	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)
<b>BELIZE</b>	Primary School Examination (PSE)	Ministry of Education	Annual	Census	Primary level certification	High
	Belize Junior Achievement Test (BJAT)	Ministry of Education	Annual	Census	Monitoring	Low
<b>BOLIVIA</b>	No national learning assessment framework developed					
<b>BRAZIL</b>	Basic Education Assessment Mechanism (SAEB)	National Educational Research Institute (INEP), Ministry of Education	Biennial	Census	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)
	National Secondary Education Examination (ENEM)	National Educational Research Institute (INEP), Ministry of Education	Annual	N/A	Admission/selection for higher education	High
<b>CHILE</b>	SIMCE	Educational Quality Agency (ACE)	Annual	Census	Monitoring	High
	University Entrance Test (PDT – ex-PSU) and Entrance Test from 2023	DEMRE – University of Chile	Annual	N/A	Admission to higher education	High
<b>COLOMBIA</b>	SABER tests grades 3, 5, & 9	Colombian Institute for Education Assessment (ICFES)	Annual	Census. Sample Survey carried out in 2021 due to pandemic	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)
	SABER tests grade 11	Colombian Educational Assessment Institute (ICFES)	Annual	N/A	Admission to higher education	High

COUNTRY	ASSESSMENT	ASSESSING AGENT	FREQUENCY	COVERAGE	PURPOSE	STAKES
<b>COSTA RICA</b>	FARO	Directorate for Quality Management and Assessment (DGEC)	Annual	Census	Certification at primary and secondary levels	High
<b>CUBA</b>	No national learning assessment framework developed					
<b>ECUADOR</b>	<i>Ser Estudiante</i>	National Institute for Educational Assessment (INEVAL)	Annual	Sample	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)
	<i>Transformar</i> examination (replaces <i>Ser Bachiller</i> EAES)	SENESCYT	Annual	N/A	Admission to higher education	High
<b>EL SALVADOR</b>	Diagnostic tests	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MINEDUCYT)	Biennial (latest administration: 2014; demonstrated 2017-2019 achievement)	Census in 2021, 2008, and 2005. Remainder are samples	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)
	AVANZO (replaces PAES)	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MINEDUCYT)	Annual	Census	Secondary level certification	High
<b>GUATEMALA</b>	<i>Graduandos</i>	Ministry of Education of Guatemala (MINEDUC)	Annual	N/A	Secondary level certification*	High*
<b>GUYANA</b>	National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA)	Ministry of Education of Guyana and Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)	Annual	Census	Primary level certification	High
	Grades 2, 4 & 9 National Assessments	Ministry of Education of Guyana and Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)	Annual	Census	Primary level certification	High
<b>HONDURAS</b>	National Student Performance Assessments	Secretariat of Education	Annual (assessment years vary)	Census or sample	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)

COUNTRY	ASSESSMENT	ASSESSING AGENT	FREQUENCY	COVERAGE	PURPOSE	STAKES
<b>MEXICO</b>	Prior to the pandemic and for reasons unrelated to it, no standardized assessments have been planned since 2020 (PLANEA SEN and <i>Escuelas</i> until 2019)					
<b>PANAMA</b>	CRECER	National Directorate of Educational Assessment, Ministry of Education	Annual since 2016	Sample	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)
<b>PARAGUAY</b>	National Educational Assessment Mechanism (SNEPE)	National Institute for Educational Assessment (INEE)	Triennial	Census	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)
<b>PERU</b>	Student Assessment Census (ECE)	Office for Learning Quality Measurement (UMC)	Annual	Census	Monitoring	High (used for accountability reports)
	Student Sample Assessment (EM)	Office for Learning Quality Measurement (UMC)	2001, 2004, 2013, 2018, 2019	Sample	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)
<b>DOMINICAN REPUBLIC</b>	National Assessments	Directorate for Quality Assessment	Annual	Census	Secondary level certification**	High
	National Diagnostic Assessment	Directorate for Quality Assessment	Annual	Census (since 2017)	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)
<b>URUGUAY</b>	<i>Aristas</i>	National Institute for Educational Assessment (INEEd)	Triennial	Sample	Monitoring	Low (diagnostic use of results)
<b>VENEZUELA</b>	No national learning assessment framework developed					

Notes: \* In 2021, the instrument consisted of a sample survey and participation was optional.

\*\* Also administered at primary level for adults.

**ANNEX 2: REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORKS INCLUDED IN THE SURVEY**

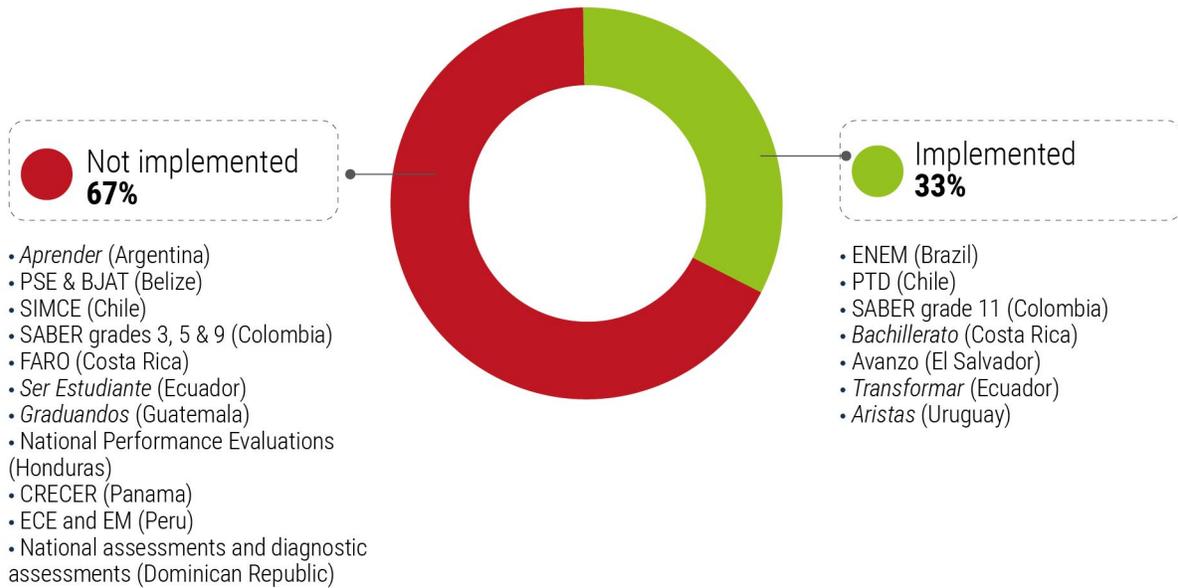
Source: Authors

ASSESSMENT	ASSESSING AGENCY	SCOPE	FREQUENCY	LAC COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN LATEST ADMINISTRATION
<b>CPEA</b>	Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)	Regional	Annual	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Saba, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago*
<b>CCSLC</b>	Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)	Regional	Annual	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Saba, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago*
<b>CSEC</b>	Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)	Regional	Half-yearly	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Saba, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago*
<b>CAPE</b>	Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)	Regional	Half-yearly	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Saba, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago*
<b>ICCS</b>	IEA	International	2009, 2016	Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Dominican Republic (last edition 2016)
<b>PIRLS</b>	IEA	International	Five-yearly	Brazil and Chile (last edition 2021)
<b>TIMSS</b>	IEA	International	Four-yearly	Chile (last edition 2019)
<b>ERCE</b>	LLECE-UNESCO	Regional	PERCE 1997 SERCE 2006 TERCE 2013 ERCE 2019	Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay (latest administration 2019)
<b>PISA</b>	OECD	International	Triennial	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay (last edition 2018)
<b>PISA-D</b>	OECD	International	Only one edition (between 2014 and 2016)	Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay

\* Excludes Anguilla (UK), Cayman Islands (UK), Monserrat (UK), Turks &amp; Caicos Islands (UK), British Virgin Islands (UK), Saba (Netherlands), Suriname (Netherlands), and Sint Maarten (Netherlands).

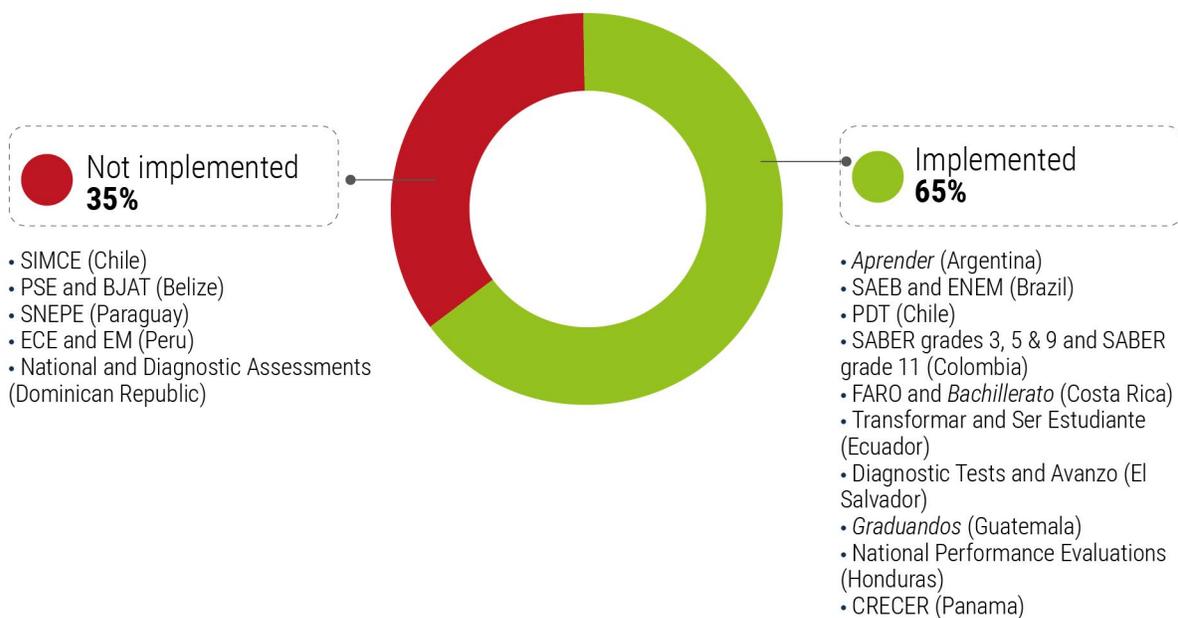
**ANNEX 3: DISTRIBUTION OF NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORKS, BY IMPLEMENTATION STATUS (2020)**

Source: Authors



**ANNEX 4: DISTRIBUTION OF NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORKS, BY IMPLEMENTATION STATUS (2021)**

Source: Authors



## NOTES

1. Special needs, young people, and adult categories, as well as technical subjects or specializations in different subjects (e.g., arts, sciences, among others) are excluded.
2. The distinction between “high-stakes” and “low-stakes” assessments appears in the literature in relation to different classifications and relates to the purpose of the assessment and the “hard” or “soft” nature of its outcomes (Ravela, 2006). Assessments with “hard” outcomes are those whose results directly affect students and their educational trajectories or institutions in case, for example, of score-based incentives. Assessments with “soft” outcomes are characterized by information gathered for diagnostic purposes or for monitoring students’ learning progress and exclude instruments whose results may affect students’ school paths or that may assign incentives to educational personnel or institutions.
3. *Aprender* (Argentina), PSE and BJAT (Belize), SAEB and ENEM (Brazil), SIMCE and PDT (Chile), SABER grades 3,5, 9 and Colombia), FARO (Costa Rica), *Ser Estudiante* and *Transformar* (Ecuador), *Graduados* (Guatemala), *Evaluaciones nacionales de desempeño estudiantil* (Honduras), *Crecer* (Panama), SNEPE (Paraguay), ECE and EM (Peru), NGSA and Grade 2,4, and 9 Assessments (Guyana), *Evaluaciones nacionales y evaluación diagnóstica nacional* (Dominican Republic), *Avanzo* and *Pruebas diagnósticas* (El Salvador), and *Aristas* (Uruguay).
4. Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela.
5. In 2020, there were no plans to implement three of the national assessment instruments: *Sistema de Avaliação da Educação Básica* (SAEB) in Brazil, *Pruebas Diagnósticas* in El Salvador, whose periodicity is biennial, and *Sistema Nacional de Evaluación del Proceso Educativo* (SNEPE) in Paraguay, whose periodicity is triennial.
6. The *Aristas* assessment was not implemented in Uruguay in 2021 because its frequency is triennial and it had been implemented in 2020.
7. These were Belize, Peru, and the Dominican Republic. In the case of Paraguay, the SNEPE assessment was not scheduled to be implemented in 2020 and is therefore excluded from the group. However, all three countries developed alternative strategies to the planned national assessment administrations.
8. In the case of MEJOREDU, sufficient information was not recorded in order to verify if the system returns the collected data, once analyzed, to teachers and/or schools.
9. Due to the duration of the research period and the methodology based on a review of public education, in the majority of cases, no validated information was identified regarding the cost of highlighted initiatives.



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