**ELEVENTH INTER-AMERICAN MEETING OF** OEA/Ser.K/V.14.1 **MINISTERS OF EDUCATION** CIDI/RME/doc.9/22

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VIRTUAL

**REPORT TO THE ELEVENTH INTER-AMERICAN MEETING OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION**

**Report of the Technical Secretariat following the mandates from the Tenth InterAmerican Meeting of Ministers of Education**

The report of the Technical Secretariat to this Ministerial Meeting, focused not only on the major results achieved in compliance with the Plan of Action of Antigua and Barbuda, approved at the X Meeting of Minsters of Education in 2019, and Work Plan of the CIE 2019-2022 but also on the actions taken to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and SEDI's programmatic activities that have also contributed to the implementation of the Inter-American Education Agenda.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 26th -just a few days after the pandemic was declared-, the CIE Technical Secretariat supported Ministries of Education with a Virtual Space containing more than 15,000 resources on educational programs, free training courses, a series of videos examining the issues expressed as priorities by the authorities, and a space dedicated to exchanging the official actions that Ministries of Education have taken to promote educational continuity.

The report is divided into 3 sections: The Hemispheric Action Plan for the Continuity of Education (PHACE), the Intersectoral collaboration, and SEDI´s programmatic activities. All these actions served as a baseline for the systematization of programs, lessons learned, and shared experiences that contributed to defining the Inter-American Educational Agenda 2022-2027

1. **Hemispheric Action Plan for the Continuity of Education** (known by the Spanish-language acronym PHACE).

The 2019-2022 CIE Work Plan was the result of the virtual planning meeting held in February and its subsequent meetings until the end of April 2020. It is worth mentioning that on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic, decision that had a significant impact on our education systems.

In that regard, the CIE officers worked on PHACE, a strategy to adapt the activities and projects described in the Work Plan, so that the continuity of education can be guaranteed.

With the approval and adoption of PHACE, as part of the CIE work Plan 2019-2022 on July 2020, SEDI’s work in education reached a major milestone in the progress made in the implementation of the Inter-American Education Agenda under this context of change.

Education became the first sector to include an action-oriented Plan to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through a hemispheric instrument within the policy dialogue Ministerial process.

PHACE become an efficient and responsive mechanism that allowed Ministries of Education to adjust, in different stages, the activities agreed on, and to incorporate additional specific actions in addition to those defined in the Work Plan. All these with the goal of ensuring the continuity of learning at the different levels of the education system and to focus attention on those most disadvantaged by the current circumstances.

This unique process has allowed Ministries of Education, high level officials and policy makers to learn and reconvene aspects of policies implemented by their peers in the region to address the crisis, and to identify practices that could be immediately applied in their own countries. Specific requests were made to receive support under PHACE:

1. Global Forum on Education Futures: Re-imagining the building of resilient and change-responsive education systems (August 12, 2020)

This activity brought together educational leaders and decision-makers at a symposium that set the tone in the development of new visions for education in the post-pandemic world. The forum contributed to the advancement of action plans to support educational transformation. One request made at the forum was the creation of an agreement or hemispheric Pact for education involving society, communities, the private sector, and states. That request is framing today’s meeting as a continuation of and open and truthful policy dialogue on education.

1. Dialogue and exchange of experiences on evaluation in the context of COVID-19 (October 8, 2020)

Organized under the leadership of Colombia, this activity arose from the need to adapt curricular structures to ensure the continued provision of home-based education services. Through this meeting, the countries gained an overview of the actions taken by their counterparts in the other countries of the region.

1. Exchange of experiences and reflection on the return to face-to-face education (December 4, 2020)

Led by Ecuador, this activity was aimed at high-level risk management officials, technical authorities coordinating strategies for the return to face-to-face education in the COVID-19 context, pedagogical policy coordinators, and coordinators of educational research teams. This exchange followed the need to address important challenges, including the stable and continuous access to internet connections in rural areas; access to technological equipment; the high percentages of students without access to connectivity; ensuring the quality of education in its different modes (face-to-face, hybrid, and distance); developing protocols; and ensuring the continuity of education services.

1. Towards a culture of digital accessibility: educational experiences and challenges for people with disabilities during the pandemic (December 9, 2020)

This activity was led by Costa Rica in collaboration with Argentina and Colombia. It aimed high-level education officials responsible for inclusive education and accessibility and was intended to facilitate the sharing of the educational experiences and voices of students with disabilities and their families, as well as of professionals in the area, with a focus on students and teachers with disabilities.

1. Dialogue and exchange of experiences on School Coexistence (March 24 and 31, 2022)

Organized under the leadership of Colombia, these exchanges allowed an in depth revision and re-thinking of local experiences to prevent risk situations that affect school coexistence; Its recommendations set the tone for the development of a comprehensive approach to strengthen and broadly improve their educational rights in school environments, in a world that is preparing for a post-pandemic setting. Success factors and challenges in the implementation of policies and interventions in the promotion of healthy and harmonious coexistence inside and outside the educational centers were at the core of this policy dialogue space.

1. **The Intersectoral collaboration**

T**he Intersectoral collaboration** among the education, labor, and health sectors has been ongoing since 2015. Some of the activities carried out were:

1. Intersectoral workshop “The skills of the future” (May 16 and 17, 2019)

This activity was organized under the leadership of Chile with support from the International Labour Organization. A better understanding on the challenges that rapid technological change and the transformation of the world of work are posing within education and training systems was the main issue at hand and trends and methodologies for the development of the skills of the future were discussed. As a result, several regional-level actions were suggested, including working towards equivalence in National Qualifications Frameworks and designing a pilot program for regionwide student mobility.

1. Cooperation agreement between the Organization of American States and the Internet Society (October 2021)

The Organization of American States (OAS) and the Internet Society (ISOC) signed a cooperation agreement to promote capacity-building within and among OAS member states through training, research, and analysis on matters related to the internet industry. As part of this agreement, in December 2021 a Comprehensive Capacity Building Program was launched that included virtual courses, tools, and resources to support more than 200 officials responsible for designing and enacting policy in Ministries of Education and Labor from OAS member states through an increased understanding of basic internet principles, including its essential properties, how it is governed, and issues of online privacy and security.

1. Health and Education Intersectoral dialogues

Putting policies and mandates into action is at the core of the work we do. Following the guidelines and request made by the Inter-American Task Force (IATF) a strategic alliance of inter-American organizations and associated international institutions and agencies led by the Pan American Organization (PAHO), to promote the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in the Americas through collaboration across various sectors of government. The work of the IATF has proven to contribute to garnering greater political commitment for multi-sector interventions.

Following the NCD resolution by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), which reinforces country commitments for a multi-sector NCD response, The Inter American Committee on Education engaged in the processes of multisectoral action. AS a result, an after a 2-year process of fruitful and effective collaboration I’m thrilled to announced that in October 12th, this year **the Inter American Program on healthy food and physical activity policies in school environments was officially launched.**

This capacity building and technical assistance program aims to support countries who wish to advance their policy and programming in drafting plans, offer training and facilitate experiences and proven implementations on monitoring and evaluation on the topics at hand.

Again, this is a clear example on how to transform policy into sustainable action; moving from a mandate and topic derived from an Inter-American Task Force to the grassroot work in our communities. It shows the commitment and concrete action in a program that is built upon three core elements: Research, capacity building and technical assistance and cooperation. Those core elements reflect the actions requested by Member States during the previous virtual policy dialogues held between 2020 and 2022.

As mentioned at the beginning of the report, all these actions served as a baseline for the systematization of programs, lessons learned, and shared experiences that defines the Inter-American Educational Agenda 2022-2027 that we have before us today.

Governments have identified challenges and the core topics they will focus on the transformation of education in the contexts of change. This regional positioning captured in the Draft Declaration and Draft Plan of Action, to be adopted at this virtual Ministerial meeting will constitute our beacon to support the right of education for all in the Americas.

1. **SEDI's programmatic activities**

The CIE Technical Secretariat, the Department of Human Development, Education, and Employment, carries out activities **in four programmatic areas**, that have also contributed to the implementation of the Inter-American Education Agenda.

SEDI's programmatic activities are aligned with the priorities established by the Member States. We work in collaboration with key partners, which allows us to enhance our programs to deliver concrete results and opportunities to the citizens of the Americas.

This week, the **Inter-American Teacher Education Network, ITEN** organized its annual Virtual Seminar: Quality Teachers, Quality Future (on November 08-09, 2022). The Seminar focused on the design and implementation of effective policies, programs, and practices in teacher education in the Americas, in anticipation of this Eleventh Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education.

This two-day virtual exhibition space offered the opportunity for Ministries and other partner institutions from OAS Member States to showcase their initiatives on teacher education to over 10,000 educators and leaders from the region.

As background, during the Sixth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education, the CIE was entrusted with strengthening the professional development of teachers through the Inter-American Teacher Education Network. (ITEN)

Since then, ITEN contributes achieving the goals of the Inter-American Education Agenda providing technical assistance to educational leaders in the hemisphere, promoting knowledge exchange among member states.

That is why, over 17 years, ITEN has supported more than 300,000 teachers to improve their practices and build their leadership skills, impacting more than four million students in the region.

Educational leaders and institutions are crucial in transforming the education systems in the region. To support them in this challenge, ITEN has become a key partner by providing a platform for collaborative work to hundreds of institutions and awarding more than $1,000.000 USD for the implementation of innovative programs that seek to equip teachers with 21st century competencies.

This work has only been possible thanks to the support of OAS Member States, particularly through the generous contribution of the United States Mission, which has invested more than USD $7 million to finance ITEN’s activities over the past 10 years.

**ITEN, in collaboration with the Educational Portal of the Americas, and with the ProFuturo Foundation,** have also provided technological equipment to 92 primary schools in the Caribbean and trained over 6,500 teachers on innovation in the classroom and mathematics in partnership.

We have also offered 4,000 scholarships in Peru to train teachers on methodologies for learning in virtual environments. Through the collaboration with the ProFuturo Foundation, we have sought to promote further collaboration on education between governments and civil society organizations (CSO) to improve digital education in Latin and Central America.

So far, we have engaged with more than 80 civil society organizations that have participated in our activities. In this sense, we produced and disseminated two studies:

“Civil Society Organizations and their contributions to educational continuity in a pandemic scenario” with the participation of 68 CSOs from 16 countries, and

“Post-pandemic educational reconstruction and the use of technologies in the progressive return to school” with the participation of 30 CSOs from 12 countries.

These studies allowed Member States to identify possibilities for intersectoral coordination and that have provided useful inputs for this Ministerial Meeting and the implementation of the Inter-American Education Agenda.

Our most recent initiative is the creation of a hemispheric map of best practices on digital education and new technologies implemented in the Americas since the outbreak of the pandemic. This activity seeks to contribute to the visibility of actions developed in schools promoted by civil society organizations, management teams or teachers of the Americas in supporting children and teenagers return to face-to-face schooling. This includes about 170 good practices from 17 countries.

Finally, through **the OAS Scholarship and Training Programs** this year were awarded more than 3,000 needs-based scholarships, in partnership with various regional and international institutions, to citizens in 34 member states. 96% in online modality.

56% were assigned to men and 44% Women.

Through partnerships with key institutions, such as STRUCTURALIA and Formato Educativo in Spain, and Marconi International University in the United States, we offered over 11,000 scholarships.

Also, through the Professional Development Scholarship Program, a total of 7 courses, were selected to begin between March and June of 2023. in the areas of renewable energy; disaster risk management, green recovery, sustainable tourism and local development in rural areas, and on Inclusive Education.

The Academic Scholarship Program received applications from 28 member states in response to the 2022 Call for Scholarship Applications. 6 scholarships offer were accepted for undergraduate studies and 24 for graduate studies.

Academic Scholarships are awarded for the last two years of undergraduate studies for citizens of the English-speaking Caribbean member states and Suriname, while graduate scholarships are awarded for studies leading to master's, doctoral, and/or graduate research to citizens of all OAS member states.

Scholarship recipients receive up to US$10,000 per academic year, for a maximum of two academic years, to pursue studies at reputable academic institutions in OAS member states in the onsite, online, or blended modalities.

**The Leo S. Rowe Pan American Fund** is an educational loan program of OAS that helps citizens from Latin America and Caribbean OAS Member States finance their studies or research in accredited universities across the United States by awarding interest-free loans of up to US$15,000 dollars. In 2022 awarded 100 international students from the region to cover tuition and living expenses. 79% enrolled in graduate studies (master’s or PhD), 48% were women and 100% on-site (traditional) studies.

Special thanks to the Ministries of Education of Antigua and Barbuda – Chair of the CIE 2019-2021 –, Argentina, Barbados, Chile, Costa Rica and Colombia – as active members of the working groups for this period –, whose leadership was essential to achieve these results. The Secretariat acknowledge the new leadership for the period 2022-2025 to Argentina as Chair of the CIE and Ecuador as Vice Chair of the same.

The Secretariat also appreciates the commitment and the partnership with PAHO, UNESCO, ILO, and other international organizations, which will continue to be crucial in the road ahead.

The Technical Secretariat, at the OAS Executive Secretariat for Integral Development, reaffirms its commitment to inter-American solidarity, dialogue, and cooperation, which are urgent and indispensable instruments to **building resilient education systems**.

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