

APRIL 2022

# COLOMBIA

## Capturing Quality Education Data to Improve Learning Outcomes

### Introduction

Colombia has significantly increased its investments in education over the last two decades, producing modest gains in its international standardized test scores. Yet in 2015, nearly 40 percent of students failed to reach baseline proficiency.

The structure of the country's education system has made it difficult to address these challenges. Since 1991, the government has sought to decentralize schools to give them flexibility to meet the needs of a diverse population. However, such a system has increased the difficulty of ensuring uniform quality of curriculum and pedagogy for all 57,000 schools.

Colombia needs a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to gather data on schools that can be used to design and target effective interventions. Its current system is made up of 150 disconnected systems within its education ministry, so both individual schools and national and subnational governments lack a broader view of school health and policies needed to address schools' needs.

The World Bank's Results in Education for All Children (REACH) Trust Fund supported the development of a coordinated information system in Colombia to monitor the quality of schools. The system sought to gather data that could be easily accessed and used by practitioners and policy makers to make better-informed decisions on a daily and long-term basis aimed at improving learning outcomes.

### Intervention

To set up Colombia's School Monitor (Monitor Escolar) required defining its purpose, data to be included, and presentation format. The project team hosted focus groups with national, regional, and local stakeholders and end users; conducted a literature review on factors affecting education quality; and did a quantitative analysis on the relationship between these factors and education quality in Colombia.

The team then drew up a list of variables impacting learning in Colombia. It sought input from school directors, teachers,



*The Results in Education for All Children (REACH) Trust Fund under the World Bank Group seeks to help countries strengthen their education services by focusing initiatives on results. The IMPACT series describes how results-based projects funded by REACH influence learning, education systems, and policy making.*

students, and families through surveys to rate school performance, resulting in a list of 604 indicators measuring school performance in a range of categories and subcategories.

The broadest categories include: context of education (incorporating subcategories such as household education level); school inputs (subcategories including infrastructure); and school dynamics (subcategories including school environment). Each subcategory contains another layer of subcategories, under which specific indicators are aggregated.<sup>1</sup>

The survey results fed into a central database and were organized with hard data, such as test scores, on a dashboard. Designed to be comprehensive and user-friendly, the dashboard allowed schools to view and customize data. Education officials could view similar data on the schools and also conduct analyses aggregated to local, regional, and national levels.

The team piloted the project in 2018 with seven schools and data from 5,055 surveys. In 2019, it scaled up to 30 schools, using data from 37,343 surveys.

## Impact

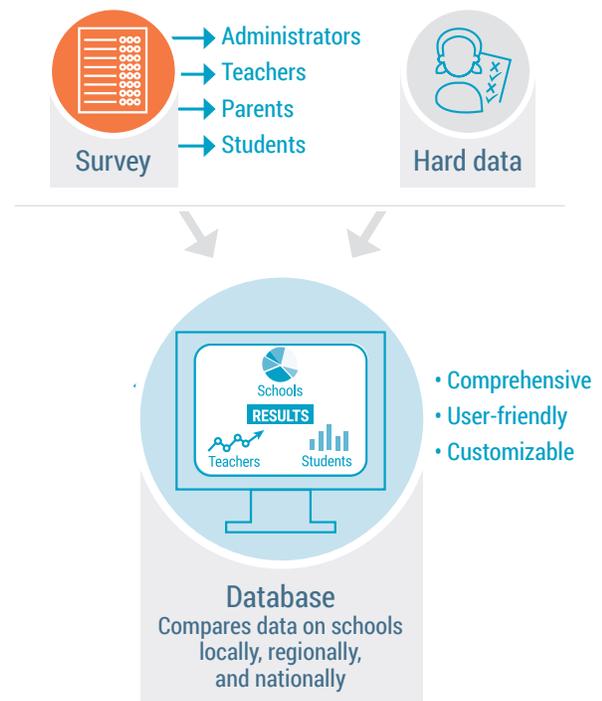
This intervention created a monitoring and evaluation tool to lay the groundwork for future education results in Colombia. The system can help schools identify their strengths and weaknesses and develop improvement plans, and serve as a key source of information for evidence-based policy making.

The School Monitor demonstrated its potential during the pandemic in 2020, when Colombian schools suspended in-person learning. Working with local nongovernmental organizations, the team adapted the system to collect information on how families, schools, and local governments were responding. The Monitor provided information on ability to continue the learning process and parental engagement and support at home, among other factors. The project shared the data with local governments so they could narrow the connectivity gap and tackle challenges linked to school reopening. The data spotlighted the disproportional impact on the most vulnerable students, influencing policy discussion on Colombia's response to the crisis.

The team is working with Bogotá to adopt the Monitor as the basis for a new, multidimensional system for evaluating education quality in the capital, and has discussed setting up monitoring systems with other countries in the region and Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Thus, under the "school dynamics" sphere, one dimension is "teachers and learning practices," under which one area is "homework," under which is the indicator, "% of students state that in most classes teachers correct their homework's mistakes to help students learn from them."

## Creation of Colombia's School Monitor (Monitor Escolar)



## RESULTS IN EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN (REACH) RESOURCES

For more information on the REACH Cameroon intervention please refer to the RBF Education EVIDENCE note, "Can School Grants and Teacher Incentives be Used to Increase School Access and Improve Quality?" on the REACH web page.

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