

Strengthening Capabilities & Evaluation: Opening Paths to Improve Education

Innovation & Improvement

Giulianna Mendieta
Daniela Dorantes
Eduardo Backhoff
Francisco Miranda

Voices & Life Experiences

Javier Gomá (Spain)
Silvia Montoya (Canada-UNESCO)
Juan Villoro
Agreements to Help Children
from Migrant Agricultural
Workers' Families

Special Supplement:
*A radiography of the Middle-
Term Program of the National
System for Educational
Evaluation, 2016-2020*

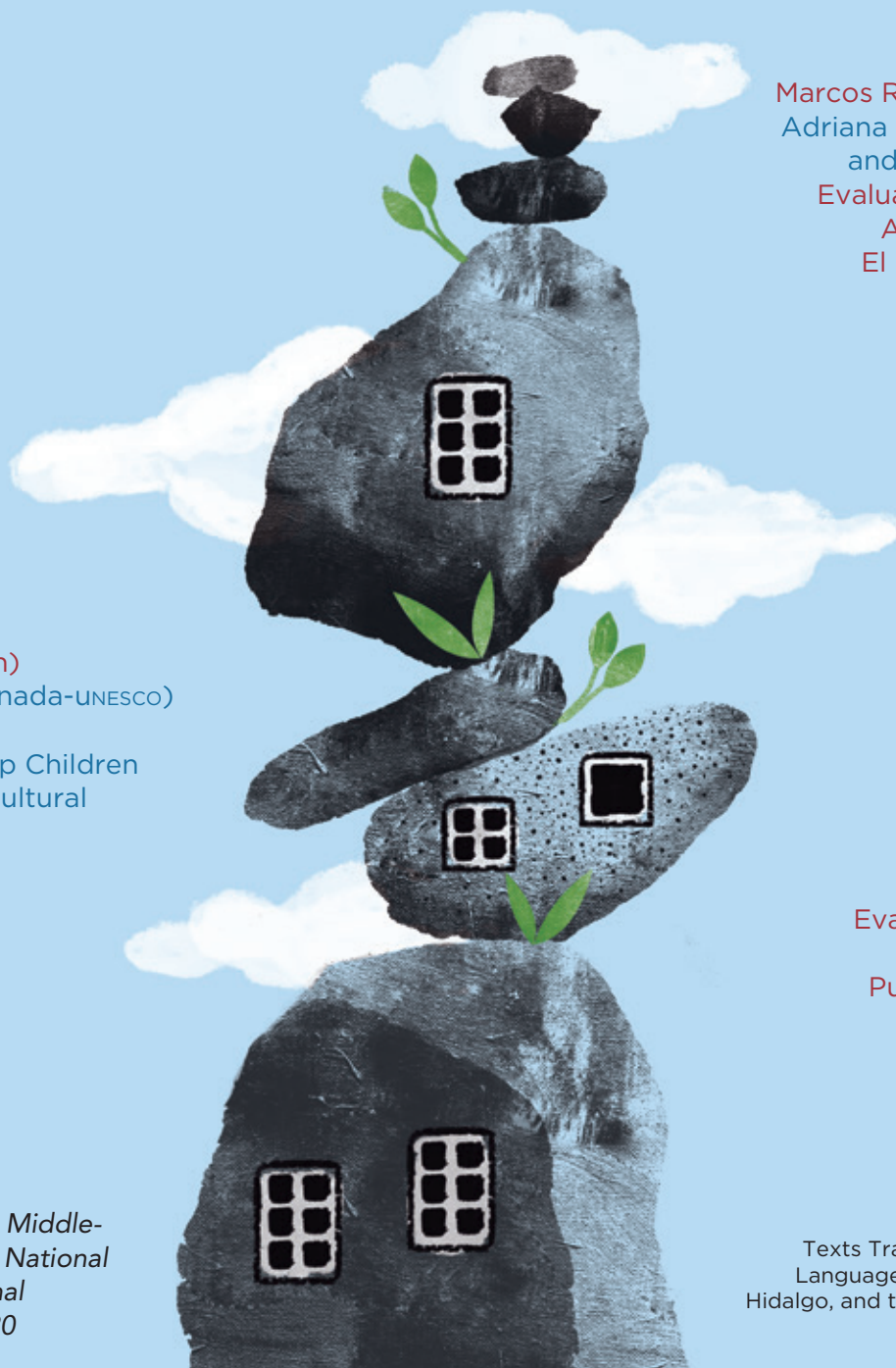
International Experiences

Marcos Roggero (Argentina)
Adriana Viteri, Pablo Orrego
and Martín Icaza (LLECE)
Evaluation Institutes from
Argentina, Colombia,
El Salvador, Honduras,
Paraguay and Perú

The Work at the SNEE

Francisco Ayón
Joel Ramírez Díaz
David Aguilar
Evaluation Teams from
Baja California Sur,
Puebla and Zacatecas

Texts Translated from the Otomi
Language, as Spoken at Sierra de
Hidalgo, and the Tojoloabal Language
from Chiapas.





The logbook

National Educational Evaluation Policy Gazette in Mexico

Year 3. No. 8 / July - October, 2017

IN OUR OWN HAND

- 2** Strengthening capacities and evaluation: paving the way for improving education

FROM THE DESK

- 3** In back of the Scenes: Who Are Behind the Evaluation Instrument?

THE SPECIAL GUEST

- 6** To Set the Example: To Form Ourselves as Individuals, Not Only to Specialize Ourselves
Javier Gomá

OUR VOICE

- 9** Brief Memoir of the National Policy for Educational Evaluation: Achievements & Challenges of Its Protagonists

VOICES FROM THE CONFERENCE

THE STATES

- 14** The Mesostructure: The Unseen People, How Do They Work?
- 17** The Experience in the National System for Educational Evaluation: Learnings and Challenges from Three Secretaries of Education

OUR VOICE

- 19** Institutional Capabilities & Good Governance: Key Commitments of the National Educational Evaluation Policy

NAUTICAL LETTER

- 24** Instructions for Following-Up 170 Evaluation Projects

SPECIAL REPORT: IMPROVEMENT IN MEXICO & THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

- 25** Who Open the Paths for Educational Improvement?

REPORT

- 26** Seen from Below: An Overview of the Institutional-Evaluation Systems in Latin America in the Words of the Teams That Run Them

URBAN CULTURE CHRONICLE

- 29** Iguanas & Dinosaurs. Latin America as an Utopia of Backwardness
Luis Villoro

BACKGROUND ARTICLE

- 32** Local Institutional Capabilities for Educational Evaluation: Two Approaches

- 36** An X-ray of Latin America's Evaluation Institutes
Marcos Roggero

DOSSIER: MYSTIQUE, IMPROVEMENT & EVALUATION

WITHOUT A PASSPORT

- 39** The Run-up to 2020: Can Education for Sustainable Development Be Evaluated?
Silvia Montoya

OTHER PERSPECTIVES

- 41** Collective Building: A Distinctive Focus for Regional Evaluation

ROADMAP

- 44** The Strengthening of Local Capabilities Within the Frame of the Follow-Up Strategy for Educational Improvement Guidelines
Giuliana Mary Mendieta Melgar
Dora Daniela Dorantes Salgado

IN THE CLASSROOM

- 47** Not the End; Just the Beginning: Interstate Agreements On Education for the Children of Migrant Agricultural Day Laborers

Visit the *Gazette* digital version in the INEE web at: www.inee.edu.mx

National Educational Evaluation Policy Gazette in Mexico, Year 3, No. 8, July - October, 2017, is a publication of the National Institute for Educational Evaluation by the Educational Policy and Regulations Unit, under the care of the General Direction for the Coordination of the National Educational Evaluation System.

Barranca del Muerto No. 341, Col. San José Insurgentes, Del. Benito Juárez, C.P. 03900, City, México. Tel. (+01 55) 5482 0900.

Coments: Laura Athié, Responsible editor
(lathie@inee.edu.mx / gacetapnee@inee.edu.mx)



INEE
<http://www.inee.edu.mx>



INEE Youtube
<http://goo.gl/fHRDvC>



Twitter
[@INEEMX](https://twitter.com/INEEMX)



PNEE's Microsite:
<http://www.inee.edu.mx>



INEE Facebook
<http://goo.gl/axitPa>

Strengthening capacities and evaluation: paving the way for improving education

We want to strengthen local capacities for evaluating education and disseminating evaluation result, since we have to ensure that the said capacities serve to improve the compulsory education provided by the Mexican Education System.¹

Eduardo Backhoff, president of the Board of Governors of the INEE

It's extremely important to share and discuss the experiences about the definition of educational quality with other countries and identify its components in order to evaluate and follow up on policy aims to achieve them.²

Teresa Bracho González, member of the INEE's Board of Governors

This is unique: for the first time ever, an autonomous authority has been created to balance the other forces that govern Mexican education. A powerful driver of improvement in the education system.³

Gilberto Guevara Niebla, member of the INEE's Board of Governors

Among other things, the INEE draws up State-level Programs for the Evaluation and Improvement of Education – instruments that show us the state of education at the local level, coordinate evaluation efforts, help us to formulate evidence-based policy, guide decision-making, and let us move ahead.⁴

Margarita Zorrilla Fierro, member of the INEE's Board of Governors

A good school can lessen the impact of socio-economic and cultural factors and make a difference. To do this, it must have academic leadership, teamwork, a planning-and-evaluation culture, an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and a good relationship with the community.⁵

Sylvia Schmelkes del Valle, member of the INEE's Board of Governors

On many occasions, and in many forums, we have clearly explained what the INEE does and what it hopes to achieve. Below I mention some of the reflections and convictions that have guided our daily work as members of the Board of Governors of the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (Spanish acronym: INEE) – one that we have shared at different times, and in different ways, with people involved in education in Mexico who have participated in the great collective effort to shape the National Educational-Evaluation System and endow it with content. We believe that the efforts of every one of these people are important and that, when added up, they constitute a great opportunity for change that would not be possible without the effective, well executed work that continually strengthens their capacities.

We engage with them in the great debate about the right of Mexico's children and youths of both sexes to receive high-quality education from suitable, better trained teachers, learn contents that are meaningful and relevant to their lives, and attend schools that are in good condition, with adequate facilities and furniture – in other words, decent schools where they can acquire competencies for life that will enable them to fulfill their dreams.

Underlying this debate is a great social movement to which those of us who work in the field of education –ranging from

the INEE to the federal and local education authorities, civil society, teachers, consultants, school principals, parents and each of the government officials and experts on education who play a part in the National Education System– belong. It is, of course, a debate about the National-Evaluation-Policy base that has given rise to the current 2016-2012 Medium-range Program of the National System for the Evaluation of Education (Spanish acronym: PMP SNEE) for the purpose of making good on the right to universal high-quality education that is enshrined in Article 3 of the Mexican Constitution.

How have hundreds of officials and specialists in 32 of our country's states, along with experts from the INEE, managed to perform such an enormous task? What things did they have to learn and how did they do so? And what new feats will they have to perform in the future? This 8th edition of the *Gazette* attests to the ground covered so far due to the know-how of those whose hard, effective work enables educational evaluation to succeed, and thus each of its pages constitutes a roadmap for learning, recapitulating and surmounting difficulties.

Since one of the main goals of the PNEE is that of strengthening institutional capacity, we must start by acknowledging failures and gaps, but also by recognizing progress and lauding the efforts of all those –ranging from the National Education Authorities to those at the state level– who liaise, carry out research, build, analyze, submit evaluation proposals and record evaluation results – i.e. the people who designed the State-level Evaluation-and-improvement Programs that make up the 2016-2020 PMP SNEES and will make enable it to be implemented in the different states, the gaps that they will have to fill and the efforts that they will need to coordinate.

What training in evaluation is needed? Which institutional-strengthening strategies are required? To answer these questions, in this edition of the *Gazette*, we recount the experiences in Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay and Peru, as well as describing the local experiences in Mexican states such as Baja California, Jalisco, Nayarit, Puebla, San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas, the paths taken, and



FROM THE DESK

how they have been travelled in the search for high-quality education.

Also, we not only explain how the different evaluation systems in Latin America function and summarize the experiences and opinions of specialists from Argentina, Canada, Chile and Spain who are helping our country, and many others, to comply with their commitment to implement the United Nations Sustainable-Development Agenda for 30, but also include, for the first time since we were granted our autonomous status, a small account of the development of the National Educational-Evaluation Policy, describing the successes of those responsible for it and the challenges still facing them.

We might say that this edition presents the voices of those who *make* evaluation, not only throughout Latin America, but also elsewhere - the voice of those who, like ourselves, believe in a national project that spurs us to unceasing action, and in schools where Mexican children and youths of both sexes can receive a better education and grow. This is our dream – a Mexico where every citizen can find opportunities and build a better life because s/he has received a high-quality education that has been designed based on the results of our evaluations. And it is precisely to this end that we strive to increase both our own capacities and those of the people who support us in this task.

Dear Reader, your opinions and experiences are expressed in these pages as well as our own. We hope that you will find them here. €

- 1 Signing of the Cooperation Agreement between the INEE and the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez in May, 2017.
- 2 International Seminar on Strategies for Fostering Educational Quality, December, 2016.
- 3 “Transición en el *inee*”, article published in *Educación Futura*, April, 2017.
- 4 Presentation of the State-level Program for Evaluation and Educational Improvement in the state of Zacatecas, January, 2017.
- 5 First anniversary of the Red Estatal de Cuerpos Académicos y Grupos de Interés de las Escuelas Normales Públicas del Estado de Guanajuato, June, 2016.

In Back of the Scenes: Who Are Behind the Evaluation Instrument?

We might not know their names, but they are those who go to the schools and work with the state teams; they are those who speak with teachers and public officers, those who research and make evaluation instruments making INEE’s task possible. These are the people who keep an eye on the national educational issues and find a way to solve them. They don’t appear on the pictures, but they are the ones who make it possible for many things to change.

Kissi, Moisés, Yoselin, Jersson, Martha, Oscar, and Tania are part of the educational mesostructure and represent various areas of the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: INEE). This *Gazette* is dedicated to them, to those who studied at public schools and who, today, strengthen their own abilities and improve the abilities of others day after day; and it is also dedicated to those who carry out similar jobs in the Mexican states and in all Latin-American countries.

Our Wish: For Many to Know that INEE Also Evaluates the System

39-year-old Tania Calderas Romero is Project Chief at INEE’s Evaluation Unit for the National Educational System, the Sub-Directorate in charge of developing the Evaluation of Basic Teaching & Learning Conditions (Spanish acronym: ECEA) for the higher secondary-education level. In this area:

“We examine the reference framework and the standards that are being generated to determine the ECEA (Evaluation of Basic Teaching & Learning Conditions) questions as well as the normativity, thought in terms of the real conditions at schools and the different modalities at each level. We work designing exams related to various indicators, we make interviews at schools, and we



carry out a pilot assessment. Parallel to this, we work on a standardization with the other INEE’s ECEA team, devoted to primary and preschool levels, in order not to drift too far apart from each other. We also support and keep in touch with the assessment area to offer feedback for the evaluation application protocols. Because of this, I have traveled to many schools throughout the country and this truly powerful experience has enormously informed me and it has given me a clear idea about our role here. Going to those schools makes me reminisce the days when I was going to school, especially when I speak with people and I listen to them as they talk about this project, which deals with issues related to a multidimensional school reality. This is a very enriching experience, because you get to know many different ways of life. And we always try to take that into account when we make the evaluation instruments; that is to say, we try for them to reflect the reality of all the people who, at the end of the day, we have an impact on.”

Tania—a psychologist who studied at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Spanish acronym: UNAM) and then got a master’s degree on Humanistic Psychotherapy at Universidad Vasco de Quiroga, in Morelia, Michoacán—offers this point of view on her work:

“When the results of my work are published, I feel truly hopeful. The project I work on stirs my passion and it is a very important one, because it places evaluation from a different point of view. I’d like for more people to know the Institute is not only devoted to evaluate achievements, or to evaluate teach-

ers, but we are also focused—and know the importance and value—on the system, on what educational authorities and the system itself do. For example, I have found many programs with a high level of economic investment but without enough information to understand schools in a comprehensive way. There are thousands of schools with water fountains which do not work simply because there is no water; or with unserviceable antennas; or with computers that are rotting away or packed in their boxes. This is the reality of our country—we have investments which have no impact in terms of real improvements on basic learning conditions. We lack information in terms of what is being used, what is needed where, and where are the points in which the authorities could have a more effective role to foster change.”

Tania, born in Mexico City and mother of two daughters—3 and 5 years old—says: “When my daughters ask about my job, I tell them that I work to improve schools so other children, like them, can have better conditions to study.”

Our Joy: To See an Initiative that Begins in Each State

29-year-old Jersson Arnulfo Guerrero Nova is a Project Chief at the General Directorate for the Coordination of INEE’s National Educational Evaluation System (Spanish acronym: SNEE) and he is also in charge of coordinating the National Project for Educational Evaluation & Improvement for Multigrade Schools (Spanish acronym: PRONAEME). According to his experience:

“To work here is a challenge because we have to face unprecedented tasks. We have to be ingenious in order to communicate the theoretical complexity to teams of public officers with a lot of experience at the local level. This forces us to truly understand what we do in order to communicate it in a simple way to those who will adapt it and apply it. Clearly, we are not going to simply tell local specialists what to do, because they are the ones who build the evaluation projects which will be implemented from 2016 to 2020 through the Middle-Term Program for the SNEE. This entails their appropriation of the projects in order to involve all relevant actors and to achieve serious, pertinent, and well-grounded evaluations.”

For him—an Economy alumnus from the National University of Colombia and with a master’s degree on Governance & Public Af-

fairs by the Latin American Social Sciences Institute (Spanish acronym: FLACSO), Mexico campus—the publication of PRONAEME (developed throughout one year by public officers from 28 states) is:

“A personal joy, seeing that these initiatives—which arose from local contexts—can be relevant in terms of such a beautiful participation form as the SNEE Conference, that they can be heard at an autonomous institute without having to face political pressure. In here, someone raised his hand and other 26 people also raised their hands and said, ‘I, too, face those problems.’ Thanks to it, this multigrade project can be the starting point for the states to begin solving issues which have not been quite visible yet.

Our Hope: To Reach as Many Actors as Possible

35-year-old Martha Cruz Morales is a Project Chief at the Directorate for the Evaluation of Educational Policies & Programs of the General Directorate for Educational Improvement Guidelines of INEE’s. She says:

“My work is very relevant. In the case of the guidelines, we evaluated and followed-up educational services aimed for indigenous children at the basic-education level. All this information was given to the Guidelines Directorate in order for them to analyze it and support its definitions. When the corresponding guidelines were published, I felt very happy about it because they reflected a part of the work—and all the information—we collected and systematized as a team. In technical terms, a guideline is a policy recommendation; but, if I had to explain the concept to a child, I’d say it is an advice, a guide, a direction which tells you which is the key subject to work on in relation to a specific issue.

Martha studied Law at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, and a Master’s degree on Administration & Public Policies at Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (Spanish acronym: CIDE). Her parents only finished their primary school.

“When they ask me what I do at my job, I tell them, for example, about the issues we deal with in relation to indigenous education, or the problem of dropouts at the high-school level. I explain this to them in terms of the problems we analyze and sometimes I also ask their opinion. They worry because I don’t see them often and they think Mexico City is a monster of a city. They ask me: ‘How can you work there?’ But when I tell them

I like what I do, that I feel happy doing it, that these three years have been like studying at a second school, that I keep learning and I get paid for it, that I can see all the things we achieve; well, then, they feel happy”

In relation to this learning process, Martha explains:

“The contact I’ve had with the realities in the states has been through public officers, teachers, and educational authorities. Through them, I have been able to realize that these realities have similarities. I think that being such a diverse country is a challenge, because aside these coincidences there are also differences and that makes it complicated to offer general solutions. The main challenge is to understand”

Our Ideal: For Our Work to Help the Country

36-year-old Kissi Guzmán Tinajero is Sub-director of Language & Communication & Social Sciences at the Evaluation Unit for the National Educational System of INEE’s:

“My role is to coordinate the development of these tests in terms of achievements—from their theoretical basis to their implementation—to realize to which degree Mexican students have appropriated, or acquired, the knowledges and the abilities in the national curriculum. The idea is to render visible to which degree the right to quality education is being complied with. We also participate at some technical councils: we present results and see to what degree teachers and directors are using the information generated at INEE. Teachers from the various states participate during the process for making the tests, this allows us to get an idea about what is going on at schools. We have found a lack of information. We need to generate a new vision and to identify how far our tests can go and what is their purpose.”

Kissi studied Psychology at UNAM’s Psychology Department and has a Ph.D. degree on Education & Development issued by that same university. From her point of view:

“Our purpose when we spread information is to offer a supplementary vision to, for example, PLANEA (National Plan for Learning Evaluation). When they ask us, directly or in writing, ‘What do I do with it if 70% of my students are at level 1? What does this mean? Where, and how, do I move forward to?’ The issue of *how* implies many things. For them, it is clarifying to show them a question in a test and tell them all the analyzes they can

do with it; for example, in terms of teaching strategies. That is to say, beyond the results themselves they can see how the tests are built, under which framework they were made, and, from there, some strategies can be derived.”

For Kissi:

“It may sound a bit idealistic to say it, but I do believe my work helps the country. Each time I prepare some material, or I write a document, I think about the impact it will have, about what I have to offer, for example, to systematize an evaluation instrument, to guarantee its validity and to enable the voice of the association—and not mine as the test coordinator—to prevail. I like to establish a commitment and to help in some way. It sounds idealistic, but it is the truth.”

Our Satisfaction: To See Our Work Is Turned into Facts

33-year-old Juan Moisés Moreno Guzmán is a Project Chief at the Directorate for Guidelines for the Improvement of INEE’s Institutions & Policies:

“What I do is educational research for building guidelines. I got here three years ago and I have participated in the construction of the Guidelines Model, the guidelines for the education for children and teenagers who have a background as children of migrant agriculture workers. I have also participated in the guidelines for indigenous education; and, now, in the guidelines for middle-higher education. It is very satisfying to see the results of your work, the grain of sand you contribute with to lessen the issues affecting those who are the most vulnerable among those who are the most vulnerable, as Sylvia Schmelkes calls the children of migrant agriculture workers. So, it is a great satisfaction to see events such as the agreement signed by six states to support these children. One feels happy to see one’s research becoming an established fact.”

Juan Moisés studied Political Sciences & Public Administration, and went on to get a master’s degree on Governance & Public Affairs at unam. His work experience includes the Planning & Evaluation Area, at the National Council for Educational Development (Spanish acronym: CONAFE):

“There, I had the opportunity to get to know the children who used our services and to hear, first hand, their necessities, their expectations, and the things they were interested on. It is sad, yes, but it also gives you hope to see those children smiling, when

they see you and know you are there to do something for them to have a better education. When my parents ask me what I do at my work, I tell them we establish lines to contribute for a better-quality education. They understand this subject and support me, they tell me to do things right and to persevere because I can contribute for the situation of migrant workers and indigenous peoples to change. So, they tell me to make my best. I have a three-year-old girl, she is very young and already knows I work at INEE because I’m always telling her about it and she has come here to visit. I tell her I work helping children and she smiles.”

Our Motivation: When We Know Results Foster Improvement

32-year-old Yoselin Márquez Gutiérrez is a Subdirector at the Directorate of Guidelines for the Evaluation of Policies & Institutions at INEE’s General Guidelines Directorate:

“I have participated in some of the guidelines, issuing them is one of the Institute’s main functions. We also develop the satisfaction surveys, to know what’s the teachers’ perception and their degree of satisfaction in relation to the evaluation process. We begin with the entry and promotion surveys and, now, we also have a survey for each evaluation process for the National Teachers’ Service. Surveys are a very enriching instrument because they allow us to know what teachers think. By the analysis of the information, we realize perceptions are very different in each state of the federation. The perception in Mexico City is not the same as in Colima, for example.”

Yoselin studied Educational Sciences at the Autonomous University of Hidalgo, and she specialized on Educational Policies and Management at FLACSO. She also has a master’s degree issued by the Educational Research Department at the Center for Advanced Research & Studies of the National Polytechnic Institute (CINVESTAV).

“It is very satisfying to know that our results are not only kept in an internal document, but they are transformed in instruments which allow educational authorities to take decisions in order to improve evaluation processes. This is enriching and it motivates us to think about developing other ideas to help the various states in the federation. The best a citizen can make is to use this information. Teachers can see that his or her answers produce results, that his or her

opinion is there. And educational authorities are able to say: ‘I can improve this or that so teachers have better conditions for their evaluation.’ Thus, when we design the surveys we always think about the teacher, we hope they will want to answer the surveys, we hope we can help making them more sensitive, we want them to feel the need to express what they live and to then take their voice to the authorities. We always think about the questions being relevant for teachers, and about which are the questions we can ask in order to truly improve the process. We want to see the points teachers consider will make an improvement in the evaluation.”

In relation to her family and work-related context:

“My parents are happy about it, because I tell them what I do and what I feel working at INEE. They tell me: ‘It is good that you are somewhere you can develop professionally within the field you studied, because it is hard to find such opportunities in our country.’ They feel relaxed and proud, because their daughter has the opportunity to develop professionally within the field I have always liked—education.”

Our Conviction: To Work from the Institution that Will Be the Main Pillar for the Educational Reform

30-year-old Óscar Rodríguez Mercado is a Project Chief at INEE’s Coordination for Directorates at the States of the Mexican Federation (Spanish acronym: CDINEE).

“I contribute by mapping the main actors within the educational system at each state. I am convinced that in order for the Educational Reform to bear fruits it is necessary to take into account those actors, to understand how the educational service is operated and offered in each state. From here, I try to contribute to educational improvement because I think the points of view of the states have to be integrated within the national project.”

Óscar studied Political Sciences at the Autonomous University of Nayarit, and a master’s degree on Sociology at Instituto Mora. From his point of view:

“The educational system is formed by many actors; that is to say, all of those who interact, directly or indirectly, within it. And although the main thing is for children to achieve learnings which will help them in their professional and personal development, I think I work for everyone. Sometimes one chases somewhat romantic dreams, but the

contribution to the country has to be a comprehensive one. I don't think I work for someone specifically, but for all of those who play a part within the educational system. I have always been convinced that in order to contribute towards a better country, a better society, one has to begin with oneself. I am very happy about working at INEE and trying to give the best of me to see the results we expect in terms of education."

Being a member of a family with many teachers in it, including his own parents, Óscar explains:

"They know about my work and I have to say there's a bit of tension about it. That's because they, as many other people, are ill-informed. They don't know what the Educational Reform is, or what are the tasks of the Institute and the actions we have taken to improve the quality of the educational system. They think that INEE will just evaluate them and fire them. So, I work with my own family trying to clarify things for them, to answer their questions. Somehow, I'm their adviser and I offer them support in this situation. When they have an evaluation, or when they need some advice in relation to it, they come to me and I try to inform them about the procedures they have to follow. I have devoted myself to clarifying those issues to them. And when I tell them clearly what I do, they feel happy about me being here, trying to do something for the sector they work in, or where they used to work in the past." €

Interviews: Lizbeth Torres and Laura Athié



Know more about INEE's guidelines at:
<http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/proyectos/directrices>



Discover what is it that ECEA evaluates and how it works: <http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/proyectos/ecea>



Visit the PLANEA space at the INEE webpage: <http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/planea>

Would you like to share your experience as a public servant within the educational evaluation? Write to: gacetapnee@inee.edu.mx

THE SPECIAL GUEST

To Set the Example: To Form Ourselves as Individuals, Not Only to Specialize Ourselves

"Life is very long—says **Javier Gomá Lanzón, from Madrid, in an interview for the *Gazette*—and what we have to achieve is to fall in love with it so life becomes worthwhile living, people have to be convinced that the most important is not only to be free but to use, in an exemplary way, the space of expanded freedom", says one of the most renown contemporary philosophers and the creator of the Theory of Exemplarity.**

The spectrum of roles among those who develop and foster educational evaluation in Mexico, and in any other country in the world, is broad. Therefore, in everyday professional practice, is not only necessary to train to attain the capabilities needed for evaluating. Rather, from Javier Gomá's perspective of the Theory of Exemplarity, "it is necessary to arrive to a moral acceptance of our contingency and its limitations, which is only fully experienced by those who progress from the aesthetic to the ethic stage."

Javier Gomá Lanzón (Bilbao, 1965), a Spanish essay writer and philosopher, considered as the Ortega y Gasset of current times and director of the Juan March Foundation, talks about the view we must hold regarding schools and education. How to self-evaluate? How to think about education in terms of the project for a whole country? What do we have to strengthen?

Gomá—who "suggests a concept of authority not based on coercion but, rather, on persuasion, which can only be grounded on some kind of exemplarity because each man (and each woman) is an example to those who surround him or her" 2—says we have to understand that this is, above all, a moral attitude.

According to your Theory of Exemplarity, how should we think in terms of our own training as part of the teams which evaluate, form, and design policies?

For millennia, society has been hierarchical and based on the principle of authority.

For example, fifty or a hundred years ago one could say to one's children: "You'll do this because I say so; or, you'll do this because I am your father." And, in a latent way, that phrase had a lot of accumulated power because it was backed by religion—one of the commandments in God's Law is "honor thy father and thy mother"—and, therefore, consciousness was an accomplice to this ruling. And there was also the law, because the father was authorized to administer punishments, even violent ones. And there was social costume too, which established the predominance of adults over young people.

Thus, tradition, costumes, religion, society, law, and even economy—because the *pater familias* had the complete control over property—conspired. Today, as an expressive example of the change in this situation, at least in the European West, a transformation has occurred as consequence of the advancement of the principle of equality— "nobody is more than anybody else." All hierarchies are suspicious, and all usage of coercion must be based on a higher principle. Maybe it is precisely because of this that exemplarity becomes urgent.

Being a parent is no longer a biological fact with many rights and prerogatives; rather, parenthood and any authority, in general—parents, professors, or political positions—must have legitimacy in their "exercise," so this is no longer just a biological fact but, above all, a moral one. And the parent will get the child's obedience if he or she uses paternal rights in an exemplary way, generating consensus, which persuades rather than coerces.

This could be easily extended to educational or political authorities. But, what is the problem? The problem is that, throughout the last three centuries, dominant culture has been a culture of liberation. Since the 18th century, the biggest motto of the modern subject is to be free, sincere, authentic; above virtue, sincerity and all that supports the sphere of freedom in face of

traditional oppressions: Philosophy and, above all, the philosophy of suspiciousness.

Within the realm of morality, transgression helps us question the truths and the customs we receive. Within the realm of aesthetics, avant-garde experimentation helps us relativize artistic tradition. Everything has conspired for the sphere of individual freedom to broaden in an almost infinite way and, as a consequence, any limit restricting our individual freedom has been put into question, delegitimized, and criticized.

Any limitation to this supreme concept is considered as alienation, impoverishment, subjugation, domination. And this makes for education to be a difficult task.

Because in a city, or a classroom, with millions of liberated people who consider that any rule limiting freedom is authoritarian, coactive, alienating, oppressive, it is very difficult to convey education, and one of the principles of education is to acquire civilization, which always entails assuming, positively, some limitations to freedom—accepting rules which make coexistence possible.

How can a government think about a project for a country upon the basis of an education based on exemplarity? How should, then, an educational policy be designed?

As soon as the main issues of a country, or a cultural time, are dealt with, many different perspectives can be taken. One of the perspectives is that of rulers, within the term of a legislative period; another one is the long-term perspective which could be offered by philosophical meditation.

Before, we spoke about the limits of freedom and we mentioned that one of the pending moral tasks is the positive appropriation of some limits which do not impoverish but enrichen us and do not represent a restriction to our freedom but, rather, constitute us as individuals. One example of this is language, because it is a social construct.

From the point of view of the liberation principle, every social construct is alienating. However, here, in the case of language, we see an example of some social rules which once they are learnt and followed do not impoverish but allow to move from a first, almost animalistic, stage without *logos*, without language, without thought and discourse, to the richness of language through grammar, which is a social construct.

When I speak, I use words which I did not invent but I took, as a loan, from that flowing current that is our common language, Spanish. I wish there were founders of words and meanings—in particular, philosophy, which represents a higher stage of language consciousness—contributing so future generations can take, as a loan, the words, or meanings, which we sow today, and for that language to help coexistence, to have a meaningful life. With this, I want to say that there are issues to which one always arrives too late, because they are long-term issues. How does the classroom issue can be solved? For sure, there must be a way for it—there are legislative and organizational measures related to teachers or the contents of classes, but there are measures related to a very long term, because they have to do with mentalities.

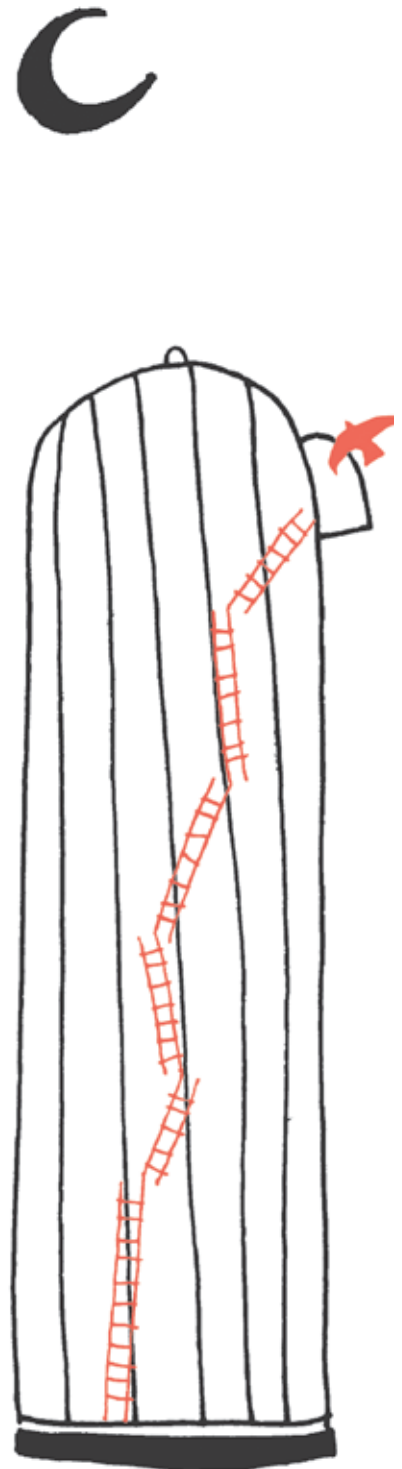
How do we shape the consciousness of young kids? I don't have an answer to that for the following Monday, but maybe I do have one for the following 25 or 50 years. What we have to do now is to work for a long-term solution.

For me, education has a double finality. School and university should contribute, first, towards training competent professionals who are capable, on the one hand, to earn their living in a decent, honest way, and, on the other, to contribute towards the enriching of society.

But, as Kant said, we have to make a distinction between dignity and price. We have to be able to create professionals who develop services to which a price is assigned, so they can earn their living doing it.

But, alongside the training of professionals, there is a second end—training citizens who are conscious of their dignity, which resists everything, including the price. I like to say dignity is that which obstructs, that which resists even the general interest and the general good. This double mission has to be combined in such a way that the young person is proficient at an art, or a trade, so he or she is able to make a work, or to offer a service, in a correct way; but, at the same time, he or she must acquire knowledge which make him or her conscious of something which resists all notions of utility—the consciousness of our own dignity as individuals, as citizens.

If I had to decide which are the two great teachings that a student must get as he or she passes through the classrooms, they would be, firstly, not just knowledge but also love of



knowledge. When the fire of love is lit inside the heart of a student, the student will go—moved by this fascination—way beyond than what any teacher might teach him or her.

The second lesson are rules of coexistence. Not coactive rules which impoverish and which are only accepted by the child through an incomprehensible discipline, but those that constitute us as individuals and which any person must accept, must appropriate, in a positive way, as an element which constitutes his or her individuality.

At the classroom, children must learn that there are some limits to his or her freedom, to his or her spontaneity, to his or her sincerity, to his or her arbitrariness, to his or her instinctive tendency. And those limits are not impoverishing or restrictive, but expanding, enriching, uplifting—that is a great attribute of civilization. And, of course, teachers have to convey this through their own example, becoming guides and not just professors.

So, what do we have to do, as society and as government?

I have to point out that some of society's problems cannot be solved even through the coercion of law—because, how can the law force someone to be a decent person? or through reforming institutions in the short term, nor with a better system for organizing educational management, although all of these are very important and, of course, contributing factors.

However, there is a residue that is difficult to solve—we all are the inheritors of a tradition and we are formed in a universe of concepts, ideas, emotions, and customs which we inherit in a total way.

When we inherit these, as evidences of a way of life, almost without realizing it, there is always an ideological residue regardless of the laws, or administrative, educational, and organizational measures one adopts.

Another example similar to language, which I mention in my book *Aquiles en el Gineceo*, derives from presenting the normality of *living and growing old* which is experienced by all mortals, by that *individual as any other* who you and I are, one out of many, understanding this within the anonymity of mass societies. We can present the normal and irrelevant experience of living and growing old under a sublime light.

And that's because there is no higher quest, there is no literature dealing with a

higher subject than the mere fact that we are mortal beings; and having a dignity of infinite origins and being, nonetheless, exposed to the indignity of a final destination which is the grave, beyond any religious believes, or hopes, that one may have.

What is true is that there is, today, a dramatism; and Alexander the Great's is no higher than that of a kid who wants to go beyond the more or less precarious situation of his teenage years. To convince them that their lives, in its most fundamental aspects, is the acceptance of their mortality means passing from the aesthetic to the ethic stage; it is passing from the *Gynaecium* of Troy, from the *Gynaecium* of Skyros, to the battlefield in Troy.

That step, taken by all men and women in the world, also equalize us to the great Homeric hero, the best of all men. That is to make youths understand that their lives are also part of that almost-epic greatness, even within the anonymity of mass societies; to recover concepts such as the sublime, or the ideal, to present under an enormous perspective the destiny of each and any one of us and that huge existential and experiential enterprise which is the acceptance of one's own mortality, that could contribute towards one looking for greatness, or the sublime, or grandiosity, necessarily outside one's own life, outside what one has lived.

Coming from that idea, what's the starting point for us to conceive our own abilities and competences? Which kind of society do we see and which kind of society we should give form to?

That question could have different places to be answered. Before the 18th century, we used to live in a society which we could call "collectivist," in which the individual was part of something which transcended him or her. After the 18th century, the individual began being conscious of his or her infinite dignity and, since then, began demanding the right to broaden the sphere of personal freedom.

Thus, the subject, the moral issue which is pending today, the society I would like, is not so related to my term of liberation, but to that of emancipation, understanding emancipation not as the fact of being free but as an intelligent, social, responsible, and emancipated use of that—already broadened—sphere of freedom.

And this use doesn't have to do with the fact we already live in society, because the

largest part of people lives in urban centers. It is not about living in society, but to live socialized, with an urbanized heart; it is not only about living in urban centers, but to live with an urbanized heart, with urbanized sentimentalities. And, thus, sometimes I have used the concept of elegance. "Elegance" is rooted in a word which means "to choose." And the pending moral task is to be elegant, in the sense of learning to choose, to take civilized elections which dignify us within that sphere of an already-broadened freedom.

It is not just about being free, but about having instructions for using that freedom because that is the condition of morality, but not morality itself. Without freedom, one cannot be a complete moral agent. But what makes us moral agents is not that freedom, but the use we give to it.

And, today, the pending moral task is to use that broadened sphere of freedom upon the basis of *good taste*, which is the education of the heart which makes us choose, spontaneously, that which is good, not because of fear to punishment or a principle of virtue, but because of a natural inclination of the heart towards that which is good—even when no one sees you—out of respect for oneself, of dignity.

This second moment, which is not about broadening freedom but to use freedom in an emancipated way, is precisely where I insert the concept of exemplarity. Therefore, which is the society I aspire to? It is one in which people are convinced that the important thing is no longer just being free, but using that space of broadened freedom in an exemplary way.

Within this framework, what about public servants, young people, teachers?

I would insist on this concept of falling in love, and not so much on professional performance and that short-sighted vision about what you will be in two, three, four years. Fifty years ago, in Spain at least, life expectancy was around 65 or 70 years and people would retire from work at 75; thus, one would die working. Today, the opposite is true—you retire at 65 and die at 80. Life is very long. What we have to achieve is that kind of falling in love, or enthusiasm, which makes life worth living. It is not just about what science gives us by adding years to our lives, but to add more life to our years.

OUR VOICE

This has to do with developing that wisdom which offers consciousness, dignity, enthusiasm, profundity, meaning to life and, thus, it makes life more worthwhile living. I would invite them to think about their own life with that infinite ambition of seeing it as the greatest adventure that has ever existed—literature, philosophy, art, nor any other discipline has ever been able to offer a chant to anything higher than the adventure of learning to be a mortal being and to live with dignity, profundity, joy—and, even, we hope, with happiness.

I also like to make the distinction between intelligence and wisdom. The former is the ability that gives you means to achieve an end; while the latter entails a good choosing of ends. Hopefully, schools and teachers will help kids to be intelligent but, above all, hopefully, they will help them to be wise and to choose, in their lives, those ends that will offer them the opportunity to live life with enthusiasm, intensity, consciousness, and intelligent happiness. €

Interview: Laura Athié

- 1 «In modern culture, we don't have a place to think and feel the sublime». Interview with Juan Claudio Ramón. *Jot Down*. Contemporary culture mag. March, 2014 <https://goo.gl/wSPNrU>.
- 2 Javier Gomá, *Teoría de la ejemplaridad*. Tiempo de hoy, Saturday printed edition, October 16, 2010. <http://www.tiempodehoy.com/cultura/teoria-de-la-ejemplaridad>.

To read about Javier Gomá's Tetralogy of Exemplarity:



Imitación y experiencia (2003), *Aquiles en el gineceo* (2007), *Ejemplaridad pública* (2009), *Necesario pero imposible* (2013): <https://goo.gl/B4rTpM>

Brief Memoir of the National Policy for Educational Evaluation: Achievements & Challenges of Its Protagonists

An unprecedented story for education in Mexico began in 2013 with INEE's autonomy after the Educational Reform. It seemed impossible to overcome some of the challenges opened by the beginning of the National System for Educational Evaluation. Today, the result is seen in 170 Projects of Educational Evaluation & Improvement. Who were the originators of this enormous task and which is the path still to be trodden?

The Historical Challenge & the Contemporary Answer

Eduardo Backhoff, president adviser of INEE's Governing Board identifies educational evaluation as one of the historical unresolved matters in Mexico and it offers an outline of the stage previous to the Institute's autonomy:

"Although the issue of big-scale learning evaluation has been dealt with throughout the world since the 1960s, in Mexico it began in 1995 with the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), but the results were never disseminated because of a governmental decision not to send a pessimistic message to the population. Thus, we could say this really began in 2000, with the participation in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Since then, the country takes part in this triennial measurement. This doesn't mean no other study was made before that, but since these large-scale evaluations began—including the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: INEE) and Public Education Secretariat (Spanish acronym: SEP) proj-

ects—the current evaluation movement was originated."

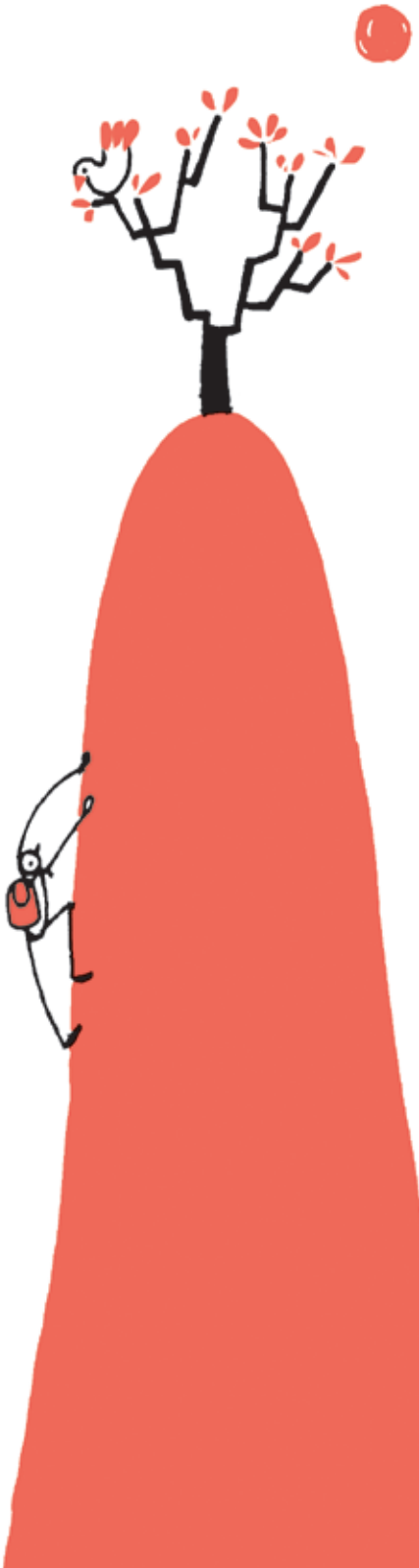
Backhoff continues:

"INEE was created in 2002. Two years later I had the chance to head its Directorate for Proofs & Measurements and to bring specialists on evaluation for learning assessments. We faced a problem of a great magnitude. For the first time, we had the task of evaluating both the national and the state educational systems and we didn't have specialized human resources or experience. So, what did we do? We hired people familiarized with evaluation and we trained them in processes such as elemental statistics and psychometry. We also invited foreign specialists to train us under the following system: They would develop the tasks in front of us and teach us how to do them; then, in a second moment, we would do them ourselves under their supervision; and, in a third moment, we would do them with a minimum advise from them. This allowed us to learn, in four years, the best evaluation practices at a large scale, which offered us a relevant background to perform all kinds of evaluations. This happened between 2004 and 2008. Then on, the decentralized INEE began training its own personnel in the various areas of the Institute."

After offering this background, Backhoff defines the current status:

"We have evolved as an institute. Before, we used to make studies which offered an idea about what was going on in some schools, but they didn't help to evaluate the whole country. Now, our evaluations on the educational offer comprehend infrastructure, materials, and various other school elements. This means that INEE's attributions and capacities have broadened. Therefore, we have to be very effective to incorporate new procedures and make our people, INEE's people (about 800 people), have a basic knowledge on the evaluations under our responsibility not only to reproduce techniques, or methodologies, but to build our own and use them at the Institute."

Then came the 2013 Educational Reform, after which—explains Gilberto Guevara Niebla, adviser for INEE's Governing Board—there are three important aspects that must be taken into consideration for the evaluation:



“First, INEE’s autonomy was decreed and the Institute was empowered to evaluate all SEN aspects, which turned the Institute into a counterbalance to the SEP. Second, the beginning of the National System for Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: SNEE), under the leadership of the Institute itself, through its Unit for Educational Normativity & Policy (Spanish acronym: UNPE), formed by educational federal secretaries, undersecretaries, and coordinators, as well as the heads of the educational institutes in the states, and the heads of units and INEE’s advisers. Third, beyond learnings, INEE must evaluate plans, policies, programs, and actions developed within the Reform to the Teachers’ Professional Service (SPD), and the programs known as Escuelas al Cien (Schools at 100%), Programa de Escuelas de Tiempo Completo (Full-Time Schools Program), Escuela al Centro (Schools at the Center), Servicio de Asistencia Técnica a la Escuela (Service for School Technical Assistance), Nuevo Modelo Educativo (New Educational Model), Reforma a las Escuelas Normales (Teachers’ Schools Reform), etcetera. Also within the frame of the Reform, two subjects about which the INEE had no previous experience are structured: to participate in the evaluation of teachers, and to evaluate the policies and programs launched by federal and state educational authorities.” After this story narrated by Guevara Niebla, INEE began its great task. The aim was to define a route with a special characteristic—each evaluation would be aimed towards improving the educational system, it would take into account the voice of local educative authorities, and it would look for projects to rise upon the basis of educational gaps which, at each state, are hinders to making the right to quality education a fact. Everything had to be done within the frame of a system which, in spite of being announced since the 1990s, never before was able to function.¹

Defined as an “organic, articulated set of institutions, processes, instruments, actions, and elements which have as their finality educational improvement and the right to quality education with equity, in agreement with the Law of the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: LINEE), the National System for Educational Evaluation can be conceived as the element which puts in order the ideas of many actors who participate in the construction and the action of the National

Policy for Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: PNEE): Educational secretaries, undersecretaries, and federal coordinators; as well as state educational institute directors and INEE’s advisers and heads of units. All of them would dialogue, question, vote, and take decisions to guide the PNEE, the instrument which guides the evaluative public action of INEE and the state and federal educational authorities.

Sylvia Schmelkes del Valle, adviser for INEE’s Government Board, describes what this meant:

“The mandate to coordinate the SNEE implied putting together the reference framework for all the evaluation projects of all the educational authorities and even the INEE itself. That is, it was necessary to give it a direction, a purpose, and a middle-term view. That was new for us and for the secretaries of education in the federative entities, who are the ones who, today, form the SNEE Conference—at the beginning it was formed by regional representatives and they hadn’t been much involved in educational evaluation neither. Thus, inviting them to participate meant, on the one hand, giving a body to this framework and, on the other, to establish the specific contents of the evaluations which each would perform. It was in face of these challenges that the State Programs for Evaluation and Improvement (Spanish acronym: PEEME) arose. That suggestion, posed by Francisco Miranda López, head of UNPE, was a fundamental one because, among other reasons, it activated state governments to design evaluations and intervention projects upon the basis of the evaluations’ results. This gave a body, and a content, to the SNEE.”

On this respect, Francisco Miranda López says:

“We had two alternatives to drive the System forward; the first one was to design the processes here, in Mexico City, and then tell the federative entities how, and under which terms, they had to operate them. But this centralist path implied underpinning the fragility of the educational evaluation area. The other path to follow was a decentralized process which entailed a greater degree of cooperation and participation from the states in the design, implementation, and follow-up of the SNEE strategy. We decided to follow the second alternative because we see this matter in the middle and in the long term, and we think that strengthening local capabilities in terms of evaluation is the best. This, of course,

makes possible decision-taking which leads to educational improvement. Along this federalist path, we have faced various challenges and I think we have overcome them.”

This decision opened new paths and new challenges and demanded facing formative lags in terms of evaluation, as Schmelkes del Valle says:

“The process was not at all easy. We had to communicate what a PEEME was, what an evaluation project was. This implied training state teams in the methodology to apply the design and put it into practice, to interpret results and put them to good use. On the other hand, they were very excited because we were building a system in a federalist way. In Mexico, at least within the educational sphere, nothing is built in a federalist way. This, small as it still is, and with all its weaknesses, is the first thing that has been built together with the states.”

Teresa Bracho, adviser of INEE’s Government Board, adds another piece to understand the context at that moment:

“In 2014, when the Teachers’ Professional Service (Spanish acronym: SPD) began operating, many states decided to turn the evaluation areas into SPD areas. Also, many people who was commissioned to evaluation tasks had to go back to their functions and that emptied the evaluation areas.”

Schmelkes del Valle synthesizes what was learnt at INEE during this federalist process:

“We learnt what should be done and what shouldn’t be done in the states—what we could rely on, what we had to strengthen, and what we had to reinforce through alliances. On the other hand—although we already knew that the states were different—we were able to call disparities by their names. We also learnt that our function—capabilities development—is one of the transversal axes within the PNEE; it is important to offer accompaniment to the states within this process. And now we have an INEE at each state, which would be fundamental for the development of the PEEME and for the way we think about the evaluation for educational improvement. We also learnt to build based on a policy, to establish mandates, and to translate this into a methodological approach to put together the projects to form the Middle-Term Program.”

The Challenge of the Present & Building the Future

Margarita Zorrilla, adviser to INEE’s Government Board, analyzes the upcoming tasks within the process for building the various PEEMES in order to consolidate the PNEE:

“On the one hand, INEE had to strengthen local capabilities, because you can’t develop the SNEE if you don’t drive your peers

forward at the same time. On the other hand, the Sistem was conceived as a conceptual umbrella upon which personnel could be trained so they could strengthen the relation between evaluation and educational improvement. The PEEMES have been the correct strategy. But, now, we have to move forward to a more articulate view: ¿How are we going to train the personnel and which is this training going to be like?”

Adriana Aragón Díaz, general director for the Coordination of the National System for the Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: DGC SNEE), part of INEE’s UNPE, talks about this same issue:

“How to strengthen the capabilities of our target population, that is, middle-level officers, the mesostructure, and INEE’s directorates at each state? Each time they have to face technical rigor, they ask: “A reference framework, what is that?” Now we have a guide for that kind of situation and, of course, we offer permanent accompaniment. The guide proposal is for them to answer some questions and put their answers in a document which, little by little, becomes a reference framework. In terms of methodology, it could be said that this has to do with: Theory-Method-Action.

In parallel, there is a more specialized training, given at certified specialization courses, which, since 2015, has trained a large

Actions for Strengthening Evaluation Capabilities at the INEE and the 32 Federative Entities

Program	Objective	Institution	Beneficiaries
1. Certified Course on Educational Evaluation	To form professional-technical teams with the capability to design and build instruments to evaluate school learning and educational practices. To use these results with the goal of contributing towards improving teaching-learning processes	Psychology Department of the National Autonomous University of Mexico	First generation (2015): 41 officers Second generation (2016): 71 officers
2. Special Certified Course on Educational Evaluation Policy & Management	To promote the training and professionalization of directive and operative teams for the educational administrations of the federal and state educational systems, in terms of management of educational evaluation processes.	Latin American Social Sciences Institute, Mexico	First generation (2015-2016): 83 officers Second generation (2016-2017): 104 officers
3. Certified Course on Educational Management Evaluation	To train people in terms of evaluation, so they have technical knowledge and are able to use methodological tools to evaluate school management in diversified contexts and to contribute with these results towards educational improvement, grounding their evaluation work on a deep ethical and professional basis.	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, regional Buenos Aires headquarters	First generation (March, 2017): 143 officers Second generation (May, 2017-currently ongoing): 82 officers

Source: Inventory of Training Activities by Federative Entity. General Directorate for Training & Certification, UNPE, INEE. Updated, June, 2017.

number of officers. These educational programs are developed by the General Directorate for Training and Certification, part of INEE's UNPE, in coordination with the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the Latin American Social Sciences Institute, Mexico, and, this year, also with the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (Spanish acronym: IIEPE), through their regional Buenos Aires headquarters. We also decided to invite certified evaluators of the Teachers' Professional Service because of their base training on evaluation. Vocabulary is an example of change. More and more, we hear them speaking and appropriating terms such as *gap*, because they had to explain such terms to their secretary."

To contextualize the importance of this training, Aragón Díaz establishes a reference:

"In 2014, we had our first inventory. This showed us that officers responsible for the evaluation areas used 66% of their time to set up logistics for distributing the national evaluation instruments. At the highest point in the development of the Enlace tests, covering all school grades but first, 110 state evaluations were registered. We asked ourselves: 'What are those 'state' evaluations about? Are they really 'state' evaluations?' We found out that, above all, these evaluations were Knowledge Olympic Games. They were considered as 'state evaluations' because the questions are made in the states. Then, there was experience on making learning-and-achievements questions. They would also make reports on teachers' reports. At INEE's Coordination Council for Federative Entities (Spanish acronym: CONVIE), we found many officers with expertise on structuring the logistics of the evaluations."

As Aragón Díaz explains, the next was to explain, summon, and train:

"For formulating the PEEMES we summoned up operational teams rather than educational secretaries or undersecretaries. The first impression of these officers was: 'What are we doing here? Why were we summoned if we are not the responsible ones for the evaluation area?' As initial diagnoses, they presented statistics on the problems of the state in terms of averages. Upon that basis, we talked about how to see the problems in a different way and how to work with guides which would simplify processes and channel the elaboration of, for example, indicators.

Jonathan Muñoz Pérez, states liaison officer, talks more about the relevance of these guides, which were accompanied with "workshops, talks, and others way to approach the subject of the relevance of evaluation in the state":

"These guides for building the PEEME allowed to deepen into the function of evaluation, the role of evaluation results, as well as the dissemination and use of the results, etcetera. This means we homologated knowledge. It is true that some state areas have long trajectories in terms of evaluation elaboration, but this is not a general situation. When you don't have a common ground, evaluation areas are subjected to political developments. Besides, training and knowledge are lost with personnel rotation."

After that, the stage of putting into practice what was learnt began. As Aragón Díaz says:

"In 2016, as we planned evaluation projects with the state teams, it was clear that results dissemination was not in the minds of state or national officers. I mean, institutions did issue evaluation results, but there was not always a follow-up on them. Today, we have 40 state projects which define their own aims, how far they want to go, and the kind of follow-up they will offer. This is relevant because it confirms that responsible officers catalyzed that the knowledge and the issues at each educational level could be transformed into projects."

According to Aragón Díaz, there is also a visible change in relation to the work of the highest-level officers:

"In April, 2016, we had the presence of 17 educational secretaries at SNEE's Conference. At that session, local problems were presented using the term 'gap'. At the last session of the Conference, two thirds of the secretaries participated, ratifying the issues which would later become the PEEME axes."

Teresa Bracho, adviser for INEE's Government Board, sums up the spirit which should encourage the following steps:

"INEE has to share knowledge. The PEEMES are an example of it—they make it necessary for the Institute, evaluation experts, assessment specialists, and local experts to share their knowledge. That's how they were built and that's how they should be implemented."

The Local Sphere as the Axis for the Federal Sphere

Upon the theoretical learning and conceptualization of the PEEMES—which form the 170

Projects for Educational Evaluation & Improvement (Spanish acronym: PROEME) that form the PMP SNEE 2016-2020—there were a lot of regional paths to tread, each with its own local characteristics. Those who—from INEE—guided local experts in the PEEMES' design and accompanied them throughout their implementation talk about this fruitful path and the new routes that it opened.

Juana María Islas Dossetti, liaison officer, works in the Northwest States—Durango, Nuevo León, Coahuila, San Luis Potosí, and Tamaulipas—since December, 2015.

"First, the liaisons were afraid, uncertain, and very committed. It has to be mentioned that, with the exception of just a few states, before the PNEE and the SNEE, state teams only managed evaluation logistics or application. During the elaboration of the PEEMES, we proposed for them to define and design the evaluation processes. Throughout these two years, many capabilities have been strengthened, specially in terms of identifying educational issues that could be associated to the evaluation. Until now, most my liaisons are still the same. What are their profiles? I work with general directors of evaluation at the states, as well as with level directors, coordinators, or with heads of programs and projects and even with educational services undersecretaries. These are people holding important offices. Among other things, they support the coordination in their states for the development and implementation of the PEEME. Now, we have to strengthen these liaisons so they design evaluation processes which are technically solid and valid. This will guarantee a correct interpretation of the results and pertinent decision-making."

Islas Dossetti describes the characteristics and the reason for PROEMES in her region:

"Most are related to their dissemination and use. At the beginning, I worried a lot and I said: 'I have too few evaluation PROEMES,' but this was so because the region would use what was already in existence, which hadn't been done before. In terms of innovation, Durango positioned so much multi-grade schools' evaluation that their concern became one of SNEE's national projects. Also, in spite of government changes in Coahuila, or Durango, new governments offer stability in the teams which worked on the PEEMES and continuity in the projects."

Islas Dossetti puts into dimension what educational liaisons have done:

“They have done an extraordinary work. I’d tell them to believe in what they do, to believe that it will really contribute towards relevant improvements. They have to recognize that what they have done is part of an unprecedented experience in Latin America. We have searched and we can’t find any other similar experience. The PEEMES are a very interesting element of political innovation. And they are the ones who made them possible.”

Also, Adriana Araceli Lejarza Pérez, liaison officer in charge of the northwest region—Baja California, Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, and Sonora—has kept the same liaisons in four of these states throughout the whole process. As she says, these liaisons have only changed in Chihuahua. That is particularly relevant because these are, mostly, middle-level officers. In her experience, it was clear the enthusiasm felt in the states at the possibility of developing their PEEMES:

“For example, at first, Sinaloa wanted 10 projects, they wanted to research and evaluate everything in order to have information. The northwest region is the one with more evaluation projects, with a total of 31. And these are just five states. At this moment, all teams have the support of their corresponding Education Secretary, and some have even established agreements with universities. In terms of unprecedented projects, Chihuahua has two which are completely unique within the totality of the PMP SNEE: One is devoted to special education, and the other to see what is the effect of monolingualism on indigenous children’s educational achievement. In the case of Baja California, some school-specific (4 or 5 schools) gaps were identified, showing a pronounced difference in relation to the other subsystems.”

Óscar González Ramírez, liaison officer, is in charge of the western region—Colima, Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Querétaro. Once the PEEME stage of design is finished, he sees two challenges:

“The first challenge is lack of resources. There are projects which can be hindered by a lack of human and financial resources. For example, at the design stage we only needed 4 or 5 people in a team to define lines of work. But during the implementation stage teams have to be larger in order to tackle the tasks. This means that it is necessary to promote a commitment from local educational

authorities to form and strengthen these teams, financially and in human terms. The other challenge is not to lose the political will that has been placed on the PNEE and the PEEMES. Educational secretaries have to be well informed and committed within their evaluation areas and with the projects defined for their states.

State teams are already formed and they keep their commitment and their knowledge. By having the support of their authorities, and resources, they will be able to have larger, better-organized teams. It is important to keep on promoting high-level commitment. We work very closely with the team, but the support and commitment of local educational authorities is always needed.”

Mariana Rojas Bautista, liaison officer for the central region—Hidalgo, Puebla, and the Federal Administration of Educational Services in Mexico City—identifies three challenges which “were made evident during the design of the PEEMES and there is a risk that they will pass onto the implementation phase”:

“It is necessary to implement a better institutional coordination between educational authorities. There are cases, such as the one of basic education, in which they are not working together with the middle-higher education level. The dissemination of the PEEMES in the state allowed for the authorities, at both levels, to coordinate, unify actions and, even after a change in government, to express in their PROEMES the needs of both educational levels. Another difficulty is the capability of teams to process quantitative information; that is, for analyzing the 23 indicators which we suggested for the construction of the PEEMES. This is a very weak link, because if there is no capability to analyze—in statistical terms—the indicators, it is very difficult to build projects or to implement programs. Also, evaluation areas have huge workloads and are very absorbed by their operational tasks; so, perhaps they won’t have time to plan, or think about, what will happen after the evaluations.”

In the case of these risks, Rojas Bautista lists the tools that the INEE can share “through courses and training for state areas, according to specific needs”:

“There are many state areas which are far advanced and in no need of courses to process data, but, rather, on how to use the data and to structure dissemination models. We have to make related courses and a more

specific study on which are the opportunity areas to elaborate focalized programs or actions. It is also necessary to promote the work in the states at a regional level. INEE can generate spaces and gatherings so the states can talk about their problems, experiences, and good practices.”

Marcos Huicochea Sánchez, liaison officer, and one of the specialists who follow up the south-southwest region—Oaxaca, Veracruz, Campeche, and Yucatán—points out that it is not possible to control the liaisons who move within a system:

“The structural issue does not depend on the teams, it is over their reach. Rotations, changes of administration and teams, all of it generates lack of certainty. INEE has to sensitize decision-makers in the states in order to make them conscious to the fact that we need public officers in a continuous and certain capacity. This will generate more benefits for the state itself.”

Jonathan Muñoz Pérez, the other liaison to the south-southeast region—Tabasco, Chiapas, Guerrero and Quintana Roo—states three issues which must be taken care of when integrating state teams: Profiles, differentiated leaderships, and the size of the teams.

“Since there are different profiles within the evaluation areas—social workers, accountants, people who finished their middle-higher education—we don’t have a minimum standard for the people we work with. This depends a lot on the reality at each state; but, in general terms, there is no standardized job-profile diagram. In terms of differentiated leaderships, many of the leaders in these areas think that their evaluation work only has to do with the application of the SPD or PLANEA. They don’t motivate work teams to take other courses. And, also, the teams are small, 5 or 7 people, which sometimes is not enough. Summing up, in the states, the role of the evaluation areas is not clear; however, the work made by INEE has helped to outline some paths forward.”

After the trajectory shared by the INEE and the states, and with the 32 PEEMES as proof that it is possible to achieve educational federalism, Miranda López specifies:

“The first part of the challenge was to have working plans in the states. Now, the challenge is having the PEEMES just as they are programmed and for them to yield the expected results. That’s where lies the huge challenge which encompasses the support,

accompaniment, and technical counseling needed by educational authorities and state teams to implement their PROEMES and generate collective learnings. We are sure that, if we fulfill the established goals and the states perform their tasks in a technically solid way and with well-defined commitments, this will have an effect on the improvement of educational quality and equity. If this works, we could say that we took a huge step in the history of educational evaluation in our country.” €

Interviews: Laura Athié and Lizbeth Torres Alvarado

- 1 In 1985, SEP informed about the creation and development of the conceptual model and the methodology for implementing the National Evaluation System, through which there would be a follow-up to the implementation of the main lines of educational evaluation. [...] The 1989-1994 Educational Modernization Program established that “in order to support the modernization actions in the sector, the National System for Educational Evaluation has to be integrated as a convergence point for all the actions carried out in the country in order to have information to allow, at a local level, to rationalize the functioning of the system in a timely and effective way; and, at a national level, to guide the educational policy (SEP, 1989: 179-183). (Guiding Document for the National Educational Evaluation Policy. INEE, 2015. Pgs. 13 and 14).

Know more about the SNEE at:



Las Pautas para el acompañamiento de los Programas Estatales para la Evaluación y Mejora Educativa, at the blog of the INEE Gazette: <https://goo.gl/rFpiaw>



The microsite of the PNEE at the INEE webpage: <http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/pnee-peeme>



The five Navigational Charts in the collectors' editions of the INEE Gazette, here: <http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/blog-de-la-gaceta-noviembre-anteriores>



Multi-Grade Project in the Gazette N. 5: “Contexto, diversidad y evaluación educativa: ¿Hacia una educación justa e incluyente?”, at: <https://goo.gl/4E2EMg>

VOICES FROM THE CONFERENCE THE STATES

The Mesostructure: The Unseen People, How Do They Work?

Their labor strengthens the Conference of the National System for Educational Evaluation. They face local realities directly, and that's why the *Gazette* gives a voice to those who work for the evaluation within the entities. Since the National Policy for Educational Evaluation became the main axis for educational improvement, to strengthen institutional capacities is a challenge and “there is no better strategy than consolidating teams,” as it is said, in interviews at Baja California Sur, Puebla, and Zacatecas.

It is important to retrieve the input at each federal entity, their knowledge on the different actors of the system and how they interpret and use the evaluations' results. This constitutes an asset to improve education in the whole country.

Margarita Zorrilla, Advisor for INEE's Governing Board¹

History & Context of the Evaluation in Mexico

The evaluation of education was configured in Latin America as a benchmark for educational reform at the end of the 1980's. In 1994, Mexico created its first national system for the measurement of the educational achievement (INEE, 2015). Twenty years later, the country strengthened it through the creation of the National System for Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: SNEE) and became a Latin American pioneer in the construction of a National Policy for Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: PNEE).

Today, the SNEE is the institutional frame in which educational authorities at all levels develop, in an articulated way, the evaluation function. The PNEE, on the other



hand, advises and distributes this function, among the constituents of the SNEE, in accordance with the needs of the educational services. The goal is to have an impact in the improvement of education through the work of the 32 state areas of educational evaluation.

Until now, four periods can be identified within educational evaluation in Mexico, defined on the basis of the policy-administrative organization of the National Educational System (Spanish acronym: SEN):

- The centralized-closed model of the 1970s up to the late 1980s. External educational evaluation acquired an accrued weight within the educational policy of the country, but it was only designed and implemented by the Public Education Secretariat (Spanish acronym: SEP) under a federal framework. The information was used discretionally on the basis of political considerations, not on the basis of public policy (INEE, 2015).
- The decentralized-closed model—late 1980s to late 1990s. Stemming from the 1993 constitutional reform, the delivery of basic and pedagogic education services was transferred to the federal entities, which caused SEP to maintain just normative and regulatory functions, like the exclusive attribution of the SEN evaluation. The results of the evaluations were known only to educational authorities and weren't used for decision-making (INEE, 2015).
- The decentralized-open model: from 2000 to 2013, the evaluation function was allocated to the states, the INEE was created and, for the first time, the results of the evaluations for educational achievement were made public (INEE, 2015).

Today, the evaluation areas still have the possibility to develop evaluation exercises within their states; but, also within the frame of the SNEE, they find themselves in the process of strengthening their institutional capabilities and have developed, hand in hand with the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: INEE), their own State Programs for Educational Evaluation & Improvement (Spanish acronym: PEEME) in accordance with the gaps in mandatory education that each entity identified as priorities. Although many have suffered

structural transformations, the objective of these areas is aimed at making better use of the results of the evaluations and having an active participation in the design and implementation of improvement interventions.

What Do the Educational Evaluation Areas Do?

Some of the shared tasks that they declare to be carrying out are the following: *i)* The design and building of instruments and models for evaluation; *ii)* Coordination of the enforcement of state, national, and international evaluations of students, teachers, and other components of the SEN in accordance with the normativity established by the General Directorate for the Evaluation of Policies of SEP, the INEE, and the National Organization for the Professional Teaching Service (Spanish acronym: CNSPD); *iii)* The analysis of the results of the evaluations and the generation of reports according to level of achievement, school, locality, municipality, school zone, margination level, etcetera; *iv)* The dissemination of results of the tests applied in order to inform authorities, schools, and society, allowing thus for those results to serve as a resource for decision-making towards educational improvement; *v)* The development of indication systems that allow the assessment of the quality of the state educational system; *vi)* The design of strategies to favor educational improvement and each of the evaluation processes; *vii)* To be a link for the processes of certification and re-certification for the evaluators of the teaching performance, and *viii)* Systematically check the evaluation tests applied at the different levels of mandatory education, and to issue technical recommendations to the federation's evaluation authorities.

The SNEE, the PNEE & the PEEME: Their Impact on States' Evaluation Areas

From 2013—starting from the enactment of the Educational Reform that mandated the creation of the SNEE under INEE's coordination—to this date, an important process of strengthening of the areas can be observed. Margarita González Inojosa, from the Directorate for Educational Evaluation Management in Puebla, tells us:

“The area of evaluation in the entity has been strengthened due to the importance that external and internal evaluations of students' learning have obtained, as well as the teaching performance evaluation; but,

also, because on the basis of the quantitative analysis that we carry out on the results of the evaluations, elements are brought forth for decision-making related to policies and the necessary measures for educational improvement at school centers.

It is important to say that the definition of objectives, axes, and general policy directions, as well as the courses for action and the PNEE 2020 perspective, provide a clearer vision of the functions the assessment area must perform, and they also allow us to focus on its future actions. On the other hand, the elaboration of the Educational Evaluation & Improvement Projects (Spanish acronym: PROEME) has favored a closer collaboration with the different academic areas of SEP, and it has allowed for the improvement, strengthening, and consolidation of the institutional capabilities of the evaluation area by contributing more experience to the parties involved in the elaboration of evaluation projects.”

As for Esteban Hernández Gaspar, head of the Educational Evaluation Department at the Secretariat of Education of the State of Zacatecas, he comments:

“The SNEE has significantly favored a more accurate decision-making process, for the educational labor is being directed on the basis of evaluative actions which are articulated within the frame of the national evaluation policy and oriented towards the conditions of improvement and suitability within mandatory education. We also feel strengthened under the PNEE direction.

With this, we contribute towards the construction of an evaluation system under the principles of educational improvement, equity, justice, diversity, and participation, bridging inequality gaps and counting on the participation of all parties involved. Finally, the PEEME is a key element for developing institutional proposals for evaluation in the entity, and that will have an impact on the improvement of the educational processes and on the learning results of the students at the mandatory education level. All these instruments set standards to guarantee the rights of girls, boys, and young people to a quality education with equity.”

Ana Jhadyra Urias Villavicencio, head of the Department of Evaluation & Monitoring of the Public Education Secretariat in Baja California Sur, asserts:

“Without a doubt, our area has been strengthened, since, stemming from the SNEE, the importance of evaluation has been put on

the table as a fundamental tool for contributing to educational improvement. Thus, we can achieve our reason for being, which is that every girl, boy, or young person, no matter where they live, can achieve learning. On the other hand, the creation of the PEEME has positioned the area of evaluation as a fundamental area to bolster actions to use and communicate the results as well as the knowledge of the basic conditions for teaching and learning, both at the basic and middle-higher education levels.

Even more, we have increased our institutional capabilities, having participated in the Certification Course on Educational Evaluation of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Spanish acronym: UNAM), as well as in the Specialty in Policy & Management of Educational Evaluation, imparted by the Latin American Social Sciences Faculty [like UNAM's certified course, they were both developed in coordination with INEE]. We also have certifications as evaluators of teaching performance at the basic education level. All these processes have provided fundamental formative elements for the evaluation area."

Main Challenges

"To generate legitimacy, trust, and credibility in educational evaluations, as much as socializing a vision of their usefulness. Additionally, strengthening the internal evaluations of the educational institutions, as well as the work in relation to educational management and technical support. All of these are agents of change and improvement within the frame of the System for Technical Support for Schools, School Technical Boards, and the School Area.

The third challenge is to generate more dialogue with all the educational actors in Zacatecas, which will allow the analysis and exchange of successful proposals and experiences to generate educational improvement. Another challenge has to do with the professionalization of the actors within the field of education. That is, training, following up, and evaluating teaching-learning processes, starting with teachers, directors, supervisors, and technical-pedagogical advisors, considering the characteristics of the State, where different regions have different conditions and needs. A labor of increased commitment and social participation is needed to have an impact on the infrastructures of our schools," tells us Esteban Hernández Gaspar, from the evaluation area in Zacatecas.

"For the state of Puebla," as Margarita González points out, "the challenges are centered around carrying out, in an efficient and effective manner, all the evaluations related to the performance of teachers, directors, and technical advisors, as well as the other elements of the educational system—and also around educational programs—to verify their pertinence and viability, and to validate that the evaluation processes are applied in the state and offer feedback for them. The same goes for the designing and selecting of tools that allow for the analysis of the results of evaluation and their possible uses for educational improvement; to foster among all the actors a culture of educational evaluation, and to have personnel with a pedagogical profile that supports the counseling work.

In the case of Baja California Sur, I also consider that the biggest challenge is to strengthen the academic area, with the integration of work teams formed to face all things related to evaluation. We must succeed in reaching the school areas and each and every one of the educational facilities in the entity. We need to strengthen evaluation culture, and we need to reconsider the strategy of having the evaluation area managing the offices for the application of evaluations for the Teaching Professional Service. Finally, one more challenge is the consolidation of the College for the Evaluation of Basic and Middle-Higher Education, which was conformed on the basis of the PEEME in Baja California Sur," tells us the director of the evaluation area."

How Do They Contribute to Educational Improvement?

Esteban Hernández, Margarita González and Ana Jhadyra Villavicencio coincide in saying that the main contribution to educational improvement from their areas is based upon the elaboration and implementation of the PEEME as a managing instrument that will promote the evaluation and the use of its results.

"Their final orientation is to reduce educational inequalities, strengthen professional development, and favor the management and operation of schools. The PEEME is our navigation chart in which projects, intentions, goals, and actions are established, in order to tend to the specific priority needs of the educational institutions of basic and middle-higher education in the State. We have used it as a benchmark of our educa-

tional policy and, therefore, as the guarantor for the right to a quality education for the children and young people from Zacatecas. Thus, its implementation and monitoring will be the result of collaborative and equally responsible teamwork of all the actors within the state educational system," as Esteban Hernández, from Zacatecas, indicates.

Institutional Strengthening

"To consolidate the structure and functions of the evaluation area must be the main strategy. On that basis, we must professionalize the personnel of the area and strengthen the bonds with the areas and technical teams of the State Secretariat of Education, develop better information systems, speed up dissemination mechanisms for the results of the evaluation, and establish mechanisms for the analysis, discussion, and usage of the results of the evaluation for the improvement of school management and teaching practices to impact the students' learning, as well as tending to the increase in the number of schools and teachers being evaluated," sums up Margarita González Inojosa.

The 32 educational authorities of the states pointed out, in an exercise in self-diagnosis in their PEEME, their commitments towards institutional strengthening looking forward to 2020. They single out the following needs:

- The INEE must function as a regulatory and articulatory body for the evaluation processes in order for these to have validity and credibility.
- Generate alliances with INEE for feedback and counsel in the elaboration of methodological proposals for evaluations, construction of indicators, as well as strategies for the use and dissemination of the results, and supervision for the administration of evaluation instruments.
- To work extensively to have an effective use and communication of the results of the evaluations in order for them to be assets for the elaboration of educational policies, and therefore, for educational improvement.
- To develop programs for the formation of skills and capabilities for educational evaluation at the levels of authorities, the mesostructure, and even teachers.
- To consolidate a state policy for edu-

cational evaluation with technical, political and financial viability that takes into consideration the main educational needs or gaps.

- To promote a culture of educational evaluation.
- To have trained personnel, specialized in dealing with databases, indicators, evaluation results analysis, elaboration of evaluation projects, and all the necessary actions to guide the state educational system towards continued improvement.

“I would like to add that I feel fortunate for taking a part in these changes at the national and state levels, and for this strengthened vision that it is not enough to evaluate the educational system, but that evaluation will have to be reflected on educational improvement. Each one of us, from our wonderful area of evaluation, has a lot to contribute until each of our children and young ones learn what they have to learn,” concludes Ana Jhadyra Villavicencio. €

- 1 March 2, 2017, first regular reunion of the Federative Entities Coordination Council (CONVIE)

Bibliography

INEE (2015). *Documento rector de la Política Nacional de Evaluación de la Educación*. Mexico: INEE. Retrieved at: <https://goo.gl/zUpkWo>



Supplements on the PNEE and the SNEE in the *Gaceta de la Política Nacional de Evaluación Educativa en México*: <https://goo.gl/q5tJeL>



PNEE's microsite in the INEE webpage: <http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/pnee-peeme>



For detailed information on the state evaluation areas, see *Así Vamos*, pp. 46-47, N. 4, Year 2, *Gaceta de la PNEE del INEE*: <https://goo.gl/aCv999>

VOICES FROM THE CONFERENCE THE STATES

The Experience in the National System for Educational Evaluation: Learnings and Challenges from Three Secretaries of Education

When we observe the new SNEE configuration, three strengths can be perceived: collaborative federalism, integrity in evaluation, and educational improvement based on an evaluation cycle that goes beyond just measuring. In an interview, the heads of the Education Secretariats of Nayarit, Jalisco, and San Luis Potosí comment on their experiences and expectations in this new phase for education in Mexico.

San Luis Potosí faces one of the most sensitive public problems in matters of education: Low learning rates among its students at the basic and middle-higher education levels. “Our challenge, undoubtedly, is to improve this,” comments Joel Ramírez Díaz, Secretary of Education in that state. “Such is the information coming out of educational evaluation, data and parameters that enable us to identify gaps, which will later become insights into the educational policy being developed in each locality and federal entity in the country. The desire of the citizenry is that these insights and gaps transcend into clear actions and strategies that enable Mexican girls, boys, and teenagers to have access to quality education, one that is relevant, equitable, and entails a safe platform for their personal and professional development.

This is the purpose of the evaluation that seeks to incorporate the recently formulated National System for Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: SNEE). With the 2013 Educational Reform, the SNEE reinvents itself and—from the Coordination Board of the National Institute for Educational Evalua-

tion (Spanish acronym: INEE)—aspires to be a government body that is the guarantor of quality education.

From the perspective of the secretaries, three new strengths can be perceived. In principle, SNEE is a government body that articulates and builds from a collaborative federalism. On the other hand, it presents comprehensive evaluation exercises that go beyond the measurement of achievement in learnings and teaching performance to incorporate spheres and aspects that were not traditionally evaluated in our country. Finally, it promotes two phases—the use and dissemination of the results of the evaluation and the educational interventions for improvement.”



Francisco Ayón López, Secretary of Education in Jalisco, comments:

“I’ll tell you what was happening before in terms of evaluation. A program was generated, which had very specific goals and topics. The measurements came from the central part of the country, then descended to the states and we had a national organization where the governance of the National Educational System (Spanish acronym: SEN) was 80% centralized and vertical. On the other hand, the exercise of government contemplated systematic mechanisms for monitoring the evaluation, but few processes were given the required follow-up.

Now, with the scheme that places schools at the center, and with the National Educational Evaluation Policy (Spanish acronym: PNEE), it is necessary to undertake a change in our way of working and a cultural change of greater relevance. This must be aimed at providing the appropriate assistance to our reason for being, which are the boys and the girls, so teachers can devote most of their time to teaching.

This is what happened in Jalisco starting from the construction of the State Program for Educational Evaluation and Improvement (Spanish acronym: PEEME). It doesn’t only describe a general panorama of basic and higher-middle education in our state, it also establishes targets and goals, and it has the purpose of consolidating educational evaluation as the main generator of knowledge about the system and as a tool to build a solid sector policy. Participating in its elaboration were local authorities, directorates for evaluation, the Coordination Board of the Professional Teaching Service, middle-higher education institutions, supervisors, directors, and technical-pedagogical advisers. With that, we seek to reinstall inter-governmental coordination around the educational issue as a frame in which every one of the services that the state of Jalisco offers is represented.

Truth is that it is a fundamental change that people who are at the forefront of schools can voice their point of view and generate their own solutions. All of this within that backbone-frame that INEE itself is proposing.

However, in this context, SNEE, PNEE, and PEEME have challenges. The main one is the use and dissemination of the evaluations’ results, which has to do with the specific situation at each facility.

In the case of the National Plan for the Evaluation of Learning (Spanish acronym: PLANEAL), for instance, we need teachers, directors, and supervisors to make use of the results and know that this test is not made to punish, but to improve. What we want is for each facility to be able to have an impact in the situation of the quality of their education, and set goals for the short, medium, and long terms. On the other hand, we have as our purpose to provide strategic information for each and every teacher in Jalisco, in accordance with his or her level of performance.

Finally, I believe the topic of education has to come out of the political spheres; what we are generating is a platform and a government plan, we are going to leave a proposal for the medium and long terms that has to do with concrete measurements of educational quality, with the percentages of teachers and directors that can get in through public competition tests, among many other matters. I do believe that it is fundamental to determine: ‘Our goal in such sub-system and such level is this, over 15, 20, or 30 years,’ so a benchmark is available on which we can build. What we can’t do is to reinvent the country every six years.

We also need to generate vertical axes, and one of them has to do with the educational evaluation itself and with INEE as the governing body of it. Another has to do with the strategic planning of the states and the INEE itself.”

Joel Ramírez Díaz, Secretary of Education of San Luis Potosí, coincides:

“The history of education in Mexico documents milestones that characterize the governance of the National Education System (Spanish acronym: SEN), understood as the different forms of coordination and communication that develop between the actors and sectors involved in the educational process—the federal government, local educational authorities, INEE, the union, schools, teachers, parents, civil society, and the legislative branch. To this day, we can identify phases that go from centralism in decision-making to decentralization toward the states and the construction of a new educational federalism.

In this stage, we are re-defining the construction of public educational policies based on mechanisms of collaborative participation

from the states, on evaluation for improvement, and on a new context dictated by the SNEE, which will undoubtedly enable us to advance towards an improvement of educational quality.

Another success is the SNEE Conference, which has become a space for interlocution between federal and local authorities over the management of the educational evaluation. It is valued as an opportunity to learn from the others, but also as a table where one debates, has conversations, and medium and long term policies are re-directed. The horizontal relation that is generated within the Conference, as well as having the possibility to express and listen to convergent and divergent realities, strengthens autonomy and enables us to create regional alliances, on top of proposing transverse actions for recurring problems. The experience of such processes of a horizontal, enriching, and cooperative relation in the context of the current Educational Reform furthers federalism, and this is very important.

One more positive action is the strengthening of technical capabilities of educational authorities and technical evaluation teams in the federal entities. All of it enables us to materialize evaluation policies that will be implemented within the state through the PEEME, and the four projects that derive from it, all of them centered on the dissemination and usage of the results of educational achievement and the professional teaching service.

But there are challenges, and among the main ones are: *i*) to strengthen the inter-institutional coordination by means of participatory methodologies; *ii*) to form high-level technical teams that contribute to the design of strategies and favor monitoring, as well as the follow-up and evaluation of processes and results in a systematic way, and *iii*) to generate a real evaluation culture.”

Finally, David Aguilar Estrada, Secretary of Education in Nayarit, concludes:

“On the lessons learned, I can comment on the lack of communication and articulation in the past stages. Today, we have transformed that into a strength, because we try for the problems and solutions in education to be defined in a collaborative manner.

Thus, we have a participation logic in all the structure of hierarchy—supervisors, department directors, sector directors, man-

agers, the secretary, etcetera. The fact we are permanently involved and meet constantly generates a strength to make it so that those who know the problems are the ones working on the design of pertinent solutions.

Under this work scheme we understand the exercises in evaluation. First, it is necessary to recognize that evaluations are like a parameter that helps us know where we are, where we are wrong; and, on that basis, to build and develop solution strategies in a collaborative manner. This is how the PEEME in the entity was conceived, as a standard for evaluation and improvement.

This implies challenges. Among them, that the personnel in the evaluation areas must be consistent with the number of needs or tasks. On the other hand, those who develop evaluations must be the best interdisciplinary and technical teams. Finally, that administrative tasks are not an obstacle to keep evaluating, planning, and improving. Our intention is that this way of working is also present in the implementation of the New Educational Model, in the effective supervision and continued training of teachers.

Lastly, it is important to be careful that evaluation does not become a desk job, but an empathetic endeavor aiming to strengthen and improve that which is being evaluated. In the case of teachers, for instance, it is necessary to see the weaknesses of the teacher working in the classroom in order to perform an intervention that will strengthen him or her. That's what the evaluation is—a tool to know how we are and where we want to go. €

Interviews: Lizbeth Torres Alvarado

To know more on the SNEE, the PNEE, and the PEEME:



Leading Document of the National Policy for the Evaluation of Education: http://www.inee.edu.mx/images/stories/2016/PNEE/PNEE_2016.pdf



Standards for the follow-up of the State Programs for Educational Evaluation and Improvement: <https://goo.gl/rFpiaw>

OUR VOICE

Institutional Capabilities & Good Governance: Key Commitments of the National Educational Evaluation Policy

One of the main goals of the National Educational Evaluation Policy lies on strengthening institutional capabilities which, for the authors, “are key elements to guarantee the success of public policies.” Thus, based on the deficits and potentialities at the local and the federal levels, they lay out various possible fronts to guarantee the right to quality education for all.

EDUARDO BACKHOFF ESCUDERO

INEE's President Adviser
backhoff@inee.edu.mx

FRANCISCO MIRANDA LÓPEZ

Head of INEE's Normativity and Educational Policy
fmiranda@inee.edu.mx

Most analysis on public policies repeatedly say that the most successful ones are those which—upon the basis of recognizing the problem, or the set of problems, which they will focus on—manage the available resources in the most efficient way to produce the best results.

Other approaches to promote deep changes in National States recognize that financial and human resources are key elements for the implementation of public policies. Therefore, more efficiency and efficacy presupposes the existence of sufficient budgets, professional equipment, and pertinent normative frameworks in order to move forward towards mitigating or solving social problems associated to social wellbeing (Cunill and Ospina, 2003; Longo, 2002, 2004, 2005; Longo and Ramió, 2008; Atrio and Piccone, 2008).

Also, some studies developed by international organisms such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (Stein, Tommasi,



Echebarría, Lora and Payne, 2006; Franco and Scartascini, 2014) have proven that, on the one hand, some characteristics of the policies can play a role as important, or more, than the detail of the contents of such policies. On the other hand, it has also been discovered that various characteristics of the processes for the elaboration of public policies and of the political institutions play a fundamental role when trying to promote a more cooperative elaboration.

Likewise, within the sphere of institutions, the capability to act, organize, manage, and mobilize resources is crucial for their public efficacy. Necessarily, building this capability is related to the formal and informal norms which regulate its action and to the personal talents and the collaborative synergies institutions can deploy as they fulfill their substantial functions.

In this brief document, we try to expand this reasoning which links together institutional capacities and good governance with the current National Educational Evaluation Policy (PNEE), that guides the way of the National System for Educational Evaluation (SNEE) and coordinates the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE). It is assumed that the success of this policy will depend on the initiatives deployed to strengthen institutional capabilities, specially within the local sphere.

Characteristics of Public Policies

In a recent study, coordinated by BID, it is said that the most successful public policies at the international level are those with a series of ideal characteristics: stability, adaptability, coherence, coordination, implementation quality and effective application, orientation towards public interest, and efficiency (Stein, Tommasi, Echebarría, Lora and Payne, 2006; Franco and Scartascini, 2014). These characteristics determine the quality of the policy, as well as its credibility and its capacity to obtain the expected results.

Stability means how constant a policy can be through the pass of time. This doesn't imply an absence of change, but, rather, that the modifications have to do with economic circumstances and not governmental changes or political crises. *Adaptability* has to do with how adjustable policies can be when they fail or when circumstances change; that is, how much can a policy be modified in order to optimally attend non-expected scenarios.

The terms *coherence* and *coordination* refer to, on the one hand, the degree to which a new policy is congruous with the already-existing policies and, on the other hand, to the effective coordination of the actions of the various people responsible for formulating policies which work within the same area of public intervention. *Quality of implementation* and *effectiveness of application* are basically linked to the existing relation between what is established on the policy and what is actually done, and the coherence within the public action to reach the established ends. This depends fundamentally in the decree to which those in charge to formulate policies have incentives and resources to invest in the capabilities of such policies.

Efficiency is the way in which a policy takes into account the use of scarce resources to the fullest in order to assure the biggest possible social benefits. And, finally, the *orientation towards public interest* has to do with the degree to which policies promote common wellbeing and provide a public service.

Institutional Capabilities

Related literature allows to affirm the existence of a high correlation between institutional capabilities and good governance, the latter associated to the coherence and effectiveness of public policies. Thus, compared international evidence allows to say that those countries with more capable bureaucracies, an independent judicial power, and institutionalized congresses and political parties tend to have more stable, adaptable, coherent, efficient, and sensitive-to-public-interest policies (Scartascini and Tommasi, 2012; Scartascini, Stein and Tommasi, 2013). Therefore, governmental capabilities are a fundamental condition to have better public policies.

In institutional terms, these capabilities also have a first-level role. According to Tobelem (1992), the System for the Analysis & Development of Institutional Capacity (SADCI) is a useful frame when it is needed identify the current level of institutional capability in order to carry out specific actions and to evaluate the obstacles and the weakness to be removed or eliminated, and to establish the required actions and plans.

The SADCI is relevant to define a temporal dimension as a reference towards the future, which allows its prospective application. This leads not only to identify the problems in the management of its strategies and

actions within the specific context of their implementation and the results achieved, but also to find the positive elements as an area of opportunity.

In consequence, the SADCI can be applied to know the deficits in the capabilities of everyday management within an organization and to evaluate results. That is to say, the object of the study is not just a specific policy, program, or project, but, rather, the usual management of the institutions in charge of such policies, programs or projects.

The product of this methodology is the identification of the Institutional Capacity Deficits (DCI); its classification due to possible causes, and the formulation of a Component of Institutional Development (CDI), understood as an answer for organizational strengthening and intervention to overcome deficits (Oszlak and Orellana, 2001).

The analysis begins by assuming that there is a gap, in the institutional capability, between what institutions want to achieve and what they actually do achieve. In general, within this gap we find obstacles and issues which, for different reasons, hinder or impede carrying out the implementation of the different required tasks.

This analysis framework is centered around determined actors and their deficits; that is, around the lack of capabilities to fulfill objectives. Table 1 defines the areas, and the factors, which are usually taken into consideration for the analysis of the institutional capacity deficits.

Each of the possible deficit sources is evaluated in terms of the identified activities and tasks. In all cases, the followed procedure entails registering upon the base of the data offered by key informants those facts or situations, existing or expected, which could compromise the project's fate or, at least, the possible execution of a task.

Thus, the effects offered by the institutional effects can be separated from those which depend on the decision and capabilities of the organizations in charge of public policies.

Summing up, this kind of analysis of institutional capabilities based on the identification of deficits begins by identifying the processes—as individually separated as possible—that an office must perform in order to carry out a public policy, the actors with whom it must coordinate for its execution, and the restrictions imposed by the norma-

Table 1. Areas & Factors of Institutional Capacity Deficits

a. Laws, norms, and general “rules of the game.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normative Obstacles: Laws, decrees, or legal vacuums which expressly block certain actions, or which do not expressly enable the involved authorities in order for them to carry these actions out. • Cultural factors, socially accepted interaction standards which restrict or determine the execution of the tasks. <p>Example: Norms for freezing the number of open positions, which stop hiring personnel, or subcultures reluctant to innovations.</p>
b. Interinstitutional Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The totality of institutions interrelated for executing a program and the areas of superposing competences. • The analysis of this deficit allows to determine the needs in terms of actions which depend on agreements (in terms of resources, supports, etcetera) with other organizations when these agreements are a requisite for fulfilling a task. <p>Example: Agreement to regularly provide information or services; agreements with the States to implement actions.</p>
c. Internal organizational structure and functions distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the intra-organizational area: Wrongful distribution of tasks or not having a formally established responsible unit. <p>Example: Having no resources or no structural presence.</p>
d. Deficits related to financial and physical capabilities of the executing agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of resources available to the executing organizations, or agencies, and the needs for additional specific supplies expressed in physical or financial terms. <p>Example: Inexistent, or in-need-of-construction infrastructure works, or the need to broaden the coverage of goods and services.</p>
e. Deficits related to personnel policies and reward systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel policies, in general, and remuneration policies, in specific, are highly relevant. They become especially important in the case of agents performing managing or technical tasks within the organization. <p>Example: Aspects linked to the application of norms related to competitions, performance evaluation, career promotion, salary incentives, etcetera.</p>
f. Deficits related to the individual capability of those who take part in the agencies involved in the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Done through individual evaluation. • To establish, task by task, who is (was or will be) responsible for the products, or results, of each task. • To establish their hierarchal category, degree of knowledge, and whether this is sufficient, as well as the level of information they manage, and their motivation and abilities.

Source: Self elaboration, based on: Oszlak and Orellana, 2001.

tive framework. Upon this basis, each of the identified deficits for the application of a policy is examined.

The SNEE and the PNEE from the Perspective of Institutional Capabilities

The advancements on the PNEE and the SNEE can be analyzed under the light of the conceptual references in terms of institutional capabilities, good governance, and characteristics of public policies. Many of these conceptual references take into account several of the fundamental commitments defined in the PNEE *Guiding Document*, as well as in the already-developed actions and goals, and in those defined in the SNEE middle-term program which must be developed, in its first implementation stage, from 2016 to 2020. Now, we will point out some of them:

a) Cooperative Federalism

Within the frame of cooperative federalism, the PNEE focused its glance on the reality at each state, redesigning the way to think ed-

ucational public policies and establishing a systemic perspective on evaluation—methodologically plural, diverse, and enforced through successive approximations which allows all involved actors to participate within a path directed to improve educational quality and equity. Also, the Middle-Term Program of the National System for Educational Evaluation (PMP SNEE) 2016-2020 followed a path of coordinated construction from the local to the national spheres, with a participative vision by educational authorities—both federal and local—and the INEE.

b) Gradual Advancements & Long-Term Consolidation

The INEE has outlined a long-term route in order to consolidate and guarantee the improvement function—through evaluating and guaranteeing the right to quality education—through the SNEE. The perspective of the INEE is to advance in three differentiated stages, each lasting four years, throughout twelve years. These stages are: start; consolidation, and sustainability.

The first stage, the start, which began in 2016, defines that, through determining evaluative needs, the educational authorities will define—through participative exercises—an action program in order to achieve—using mechanisms of coordination and collaboration—the defined goals. This entails that SNEE members will contribute towards the training of human resources—in order to perform evaluations of components, processes, and results of the educational system, at the local and national level, with the technical rigor established by INEE—and through training in competences of analysis, communication, and using the results of state and national evaluations; that is to say, “to learn by making.”

The second stage, defined as the “consolidation” stage, aims to begin—upon the basis of the knowledges acquired during the implementation of the programs and with human resources familiarized with the various processes, methodologies, and scopes of the evaluations performed during the previous stage, and through the existence



of a national bank of successful questions and practices related to the dissemination, use, and improvement of the evaluation—a new era of projects involving, in a participative way, local and federal authorities, as well as the INEE, throughout its formulation, implementation, financing, evaluation, and follow-up. This will demand agreements related to the evaluative and educational improvement programs in order to make possible to deal with the needs of the SNEE members.

The third stage, already within the “sustainability” area, foresees the continuity in the design and implementation of educational evaluation and improvement projects related to the components, processes, and results of the educational system and it aspires to have these projects developed with the collaboration of evaluation specialists in the majority of the states in the country. From the perspective of INEE, this route is the best option to break away from the lack of equality in the distribution of institutional capacities which prevails within the context of the educational evaluation. Sustainability will also be reflected on the monitoring of the impact of the improvement on educational quality and equity, which will have to be executed through key indicators that will be assumed by all.

c) Commitments for Institutional Strengthening

In order to make viable the implementation of the projects and actions related to the evaluation, dissemination, use, and intervention defined in the PMP SNEE 2016-2020, INEE—within the framework of the SNEE—has identified various actions that have to be taken in order to encourage and facilitate the achievement of the expected goals and results. These actions result in the compliance with its functions in terms of regulating, guiding, accompanying, and offering advice for the technical staff responsible for the evaluation projects.

d) Institutional Mechanisms of SNEE’s Management & Governing

In order to contribute towards the development of the coordination processes of the National System for Educational Evaluation, it will be important to consolidate and strengthen spaces for the analysis and building of the agreements developed thus far between federal and local educational authorities and the Institute, such as the SNEE Conference, the Coordination Council with the Federative Entities (CONVIE) and the Regional Reunions with the Educational Authorities.

Besides using these spaces to the fullest, and strengthening them, it will be necessary to move forward in the definition of other in-

stitutional mechanisms to deepen the SNEE collegiate nature and to privilege a horizontal logic of joint collaboration and work.

The latter requires moving forward towards closer relations between not only SNEE’s main elements (federal and local educational authorities, decentralized public organizations, and the INEE), but also between all the main actors and institutions involved in their execution. It will be necessary to establish inter-governmental networks to build agreements and consensuses, to define competences, and to implement and follow up the execution of the tasks and actions involved in each of the PMP SNEE 2016-2020 projects. Following this working perspective, the following will be promoted:

- Strategies for institutional cooperation and articulation, among the SNEE members, guaranteeing a strict respect for the established legal competences for each of them.
- Working groups that guarantee the effective collaboration and exchange between INEE and the federal and local educational authorities.
- Coordination mechanisms to enrich the PNEE and the way the SNEE functions.
- Networks to promote technical cooperation and accompaniment processes.
- Collaboration for exchange with the

National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL).

- In the next issue of the PMP SNEE 2016-2020 and the eventual implementation of the projects it establishes, it will be necessary to prove if the PNEE characteristics yield the expected results: Improving the quality of educational services. Also, the capabilities of the government and the organizations in charge of operating the evaluation processes will be tested.

By Way of Conclusion

Both at the macro-systemic level and at the level directly related to the educational system and the SNEE, institutional capabilities are key elements to guarantee the success of public policies. The fundamental conclusion that can be derived from the experience on the formulation of the policies for social wellbeing and development—and educational policies are part of it—is that a usual element of success has to do with strengthening the capabilities of actors, the dynamization of their interaction systems, and the organizational competence in order to be able to perform the actions defined in its design and implementation.

For the PNEE, its main commitment is to improve the performance of the National Educational System through the application of evaluations and through promoting the use of their results in order to develop policies and interventions which allow to significantly move forward towards offering quality educational services which are also pertinent and equitable within the national and the local context. Within the framework of the SNEE, the finality of the evaluation policy is for educational authorities—under the coordination of INEE—to develop these efforts in a systematic and comprehensive way.

Under this perspective, the PNEE pursues for these two functions—evaluation and educational improvement—to develop efficiently, with technical efficacy pertinent to the needs and contexts, and with a high level of social effectivity. For this to happen, it has developed a route for its construction, a governing model, and a middle-term programmatic horizon for its execution.

In methodological and coordination terms, and from the perspective of the strategic and tactical actions for the educational evaluation and improvement, one of PNEE's main purposes lies on strengthening insti-

tutional capabilities emphasizing the local sphere. Thus, upon the basis of recognizing the real deficits and potentialities in relation to the institutional capabilities to guarantee the right to an education of quality for all, there are several aspects which must be covered, among which the following stand out:

To create new institutional rules to develop technically strong evaluations and differentiated ways for their use in order for the actors to take decisions to improve educational equity and quality.

To develop—in coordination with the higher-education institutions in the country—programs for training high-level human resources which allow to take care of the evaluation needs in relation to the various components, processes, and results of the system.

To generate mechanisms for offering permanent counsel and technical accompaniment by INEE in order to strengthen and grow local capabilities at the beginning of the PNEE.

To strengthen an institutional model of governance based on abiding by the law and developing various mechanisms for social cooperation and institutional coordination.

To develop solid mechanisms to coordinate evaluations and decision-making related to educational policies through emitting guidelines for transforming the system and strategic fields in the sector.

To generate a new evaluative culture based on the generation of capabilities, recognizing local problems and needs, and making accurate interventions, with a participative character, for educational improvement. €

References

- Atrio, Jorge L. and Piccone, M. S. (2008). De la Administración Pública a la Gerencia Pública. El porqué de la necesidad de gestionar la transición. *Revista del CLAD*, October, n. 42, 22 p.
- Cunill, N. and Ospina, S. (2003). *Evaluación de resultados para una gestión pública moderna y democrática*. Caracas: CLAD.
- Franco, M. and Scartascini C. (2014). *La política de las políticas públicas: Re-examinando la calidad de las políticas públicas y las capacidades del Estado en América Latina y el Caribe*. New York: BID.
- INEE (2015). *Documento rector de la Política Nacional de Evaluación de la Educación*. Mexico City: INEE.

Longo, F and Ramió, C. (eds.) (2008). *La profesionalización del empleo público en América Latina*. Barcelona: CIDOB.

Longo, F. (2002). *Marco analítico para el diagnóstico institucional de sistemas de servicio civil*. Washington, USA: BID.

Longo, F. (2004). La calidad de los sistemas de servicio civil en América Latina y el Caribe: una metodología de evaluación. *Revista del CLAD*, February, n. 28.

Longo, F. (2005). *Diagnóstico Institucional Comparado de Sistemas de Servicio Civil*. Final Synthesis Report. Retrieved at: <https://publications.iadb.org/handle/11319/2767>

Oszlak, O. y Orellana, E. (2001). *El análisis de la capacidad institucional: aplicación de la metodología SADC*. Disponible en: <https://goo.gl/e3srZo>

Scartascini, C., Stein E. and Tommasi, M. (2013). Political Institutions, Intertemporal Cooperation, and the Quality of Policies. *Journal of Applied Economics*, 16(1): 1-32.

Scartascini, C. and Tommasi, M. (2012). The Making of Policy: Institutionalized or Not? *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(4): 787-801.

Stein, E., Tommasi, M., Echebarría, K., Lora, E. and Payne, M. (2006). *La política de las políticas públicas. Progreso económico y social en América Latina. Informe 2006*. New York: BID.

Stein, Ernesto, Mariano Tommasi, Koldo Echebarría, Eduardo Lora y Mark Payne (Coords.) (2006). *La política de las políticas públicas. Progreso económico y social en América Latina. Informe 2006*. New York: BID.

Tobelem, A. (1992). *Sistema de Análisis y Desarrollo de la Capacidad Institucional (SADC). Manual de Procedimientos*. Buenos Aires: Mimeo.

NAUTICAL LETTER

The 130 Educational Evaluation & Improvement Projects developed in 2016 are the first step in the Middle-Term Program, 2016–2020, of the National Educational Evaluation System. This Program comprehends other 40 evaluation projects at the regional, national, and international levels. Now, the challenge is to strengthen these projects and to monitor them. Here, we show the dimension of the challenge.

What Is the PMP SNEE 2016-2020?

The Middle-Term Program of the National Educational Evaluation System (Spanish acronym: PMP SNEE) 2016–2020 is the instrument of the National Educational Evaluation Policy (Spanish acronym: PNEE) which articulates 170 educational evaluation and improvement projects at the regional, state, national, and international levels. All of these projects have well-defined timetables, commitments, actions, and objectives. In each case, the responsibilities of the National Educational Evaluation System (Spanish acronym: SNEE) members involved are defined (see Table 1).

To guarantee compliance with the cycle of evaluation/usage/spreading of the results/educational improvement, the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (Spanish acronym: INEE) carries out three relevant actions for implementing the PMP SNEE: *a)* evaluations regulations; *b)* institutional strengthening and technical support; and *c)* monitoring and following up. This latter point is of the utmost significance

in order to give an account of the projects and the advancement of the SNEE's Middle-Term Program.

Monitoring and Following Up of PMP SNEE 2016–2020

INEE will be in charge of documenting the development of the projects of the PMP SNEE 2016–2020 through the Platform for

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOLLOWING-UP 170 EVALUATION PROJECTS

monitoring and following up the National System for Educational Evaluation.

This platform began working in January, 2017, with three central objectives:

1. To establish a database with the relevant information of each project: name, educational gap being attended, purpose, actions, indicators and goals, implementation timeline, evaluative impact, and educational impact.

2. Trimestral and annual follow up of each project's chronogram.
3. To be a source of reference on the implementation of projects in other entities to socialize good practices and to get the feedback and support of the teams of INEE and the states.

Also, the platform has the following purposes:

- To gather evidence to provide an account of compliance in relation to actions, goals, and indicators.
- To generate alert systems to avoid educational authorities being delayed in relation to their actions and goals.
- To deploy institutional-strengthening strategies which offer support to educational authorities in order to avoid delays in projects' implementation.
- To keep close communication between INEE and educational authorities.

How Does the Platform Work?

Each person in charge of a project has access to the Platform to capture implementation advancements. The General Coordination Directorate of the National Educational Evaluation System (DG SNEE) at INEE, analyzes the percentage of advancement and issues comments on it:

- On time: projects with actions that have to begin being implemented. An alert for educational authorities is issued.
- Completed: projects with actions, goals, and indicators satisfactory complied.

Table 1. Projects Included in the PMP SNEE 2016–2020

Category*	Projects					
	State	National		Multigrade	International	Total
		SEP	INEE			
Educational Achievement	31	2	1	-	4	38
Teachers, directors, technical-educational supervisors and advisers	34	3		2	2	41
Educational curriculum, materials and methods	2	--	4	3	--	9
School organization and learning management	30	4	--	1	--	35
Educational offer conditions	11	--	1	1	--	13
Information policies, programs, and systems	22	2	8	2	--	34
Total	130	11	14	9	6	170

Source: SNEE's Middle-Term Program, 2016-2020.

- At risk: projects with actions or goals with deadlines that possibly won't be complied with in a satisfactory way. The dg snee gets in touch with the educational authority to produce an action plan which allows it to resolve lags.
- Behind Schedule: projects with actions not complied with on time and satisfactorily. The dg SNEE gets in touch with the educational authority to generate an institutional strengthening plan.

What Will this Follow-Up Generate?

INEE will make advancement reports for evaluation and educational-improvement projects, and for the PMP SNEE institutional strengthening actions.

As a result of this monitoring, INEE will build management and results indicators to account for the development of projects and the advancement of the PMP SNEE 2016-2020. €



Would You Like to Know More?
 Unload *Pautas para el acompañamiento de los PEEME*: <https://goo.gl/rFpiaw>



Get to know the Guidelines for the production and the follow-up of the PMP SNEE:
<https://goo.gl/bLs9UL>



Visit the space for the monitoring and follow-up system at the PNEE MICROSITE:
<http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/pnee-peeme>

SPECIAL REPORT: IMPROVEMENT IN MEXICO & THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Who Opens the Paths for Educational Improvement?

Source: *Documento rector de la Política Nacional de Evaluación de la Educación*. INEE: 2015.

There are seven evaluation institutes in Latin America. The first ones were created in 1937 (Brazil) and 1968 (Colombia), the rest within the first decade of the 21st century. Chile and Brazil (1988) were pioneers in the construction of their national educational evaluation systems. It is in this decade that educational evaluation was configured as a central and common reference for educational reforms in Latin America. The achievement of learnings and teachers' performance have been the main evaluation axes over which the strategies for improvement are defined (INEE, 2015).

August 2017: Mexico is the only country in the region that has defined its National Educational Evaluation System (SNEE) with the objective of evaluating components, processes, and results of the National Educational System. It has included strategies for the use and dissemination of information and educational interventions to complement the cycle of the evaluation, and has defined the SNEE Medium-Term Program on the basis of a collaborative federalism.

Within it, 170 evaluation projects have been integrated, of which 130 are at the local level. They all seek to contribute towards the improvement of educational quality and to guarantee the right to education.

The challenges in the majority of the countries in the region have to do with the interpretation of the results of the evaluation and with insufficient dissemination mechanisms both at the national level and in each of the schools.

Seen from Below: An Overview of the Institutional- Evaluation Systems in Latin America in the Words of the Teams That Run Them

The *Gazette* interviewed six members of the country-level evaluation teams that are working to gather data on their national education systems about the problems and progress they are witnessing with regard to the actions taken by the INEE and the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education, in line with the Education Agenda up to 2030, to support them.

*Education, as a basic human right,
is the key to peace and sustainable
development in the world.*

Irina Bokova
General Director of UNESCO

The road we have to travel in order to make good on the right to high-quality education is long and winding. The first step of the journey is to have educational-evaluation systems that provide evidence of progress, backsliding and changes in the education systems. In this regard, how far have the countries of Latin America got in designing and implementing their national evaluation systems, and what are their expectations as we move towards 2030?

Argentina Is Perfecting and Redesigning Its System

Augusto E. Hoszowski is a Methodology Coordinator in the Educational-evaluation Secretariat of Argentina's Ministry of Edu-

cation and Sport, which is responsible for carrying out periodic systematic evaluations of education institutions and policies and learning outcomes, as promoting an evaluation culture via the Federal Evaluation Network for Educational Quality and Equity (Spanish acronym: REFCEE).

In Argentina we have an educational-evaluation system that periodically carries out standardized surveys, as well as administering the evaluations that form part of the Program for International Student Assessment (Spanish acronym: PISA) and of the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (Spanish acronym: LLECE). The current Spanish name of this operation is APRENDER (English: Learn) and the results of the said evaluation, carried out in October of last year, had very big repercussions nationwide.

Since we believe that evaluation must serve as a tool for improving the education system, diminishing inequality and fostering equity, we keep data about schools and students confidential – i.e. rather than globally divulging the results of the tests, we give each school its specific results, doing this in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, which seeks to provide teachers, school principals, students and relatives, as well as the authorities, with tools that they can use to identify problems and shortfalls in the education system and take steps to remedy them.

It bears pointing out that the evaluation system is currently being redesigned and perfected, a process that is being carried out at the behest of the Educational-evaluation and the whole education system in order to promote evidence-based change that enables both specialists and society as a whole to ascertain what the status quo is and what we need to do to improve. Of course, this change brings challenges, the main one of which is to get across the message that evaluation is not a control mechanism, but, rather, something designed to ascertain how we are doing and how we can improve. The second challenge consists in turning all the information that is gathered into input that helps teachers and school principals to make improvements, for which purpose we need to strengthen the evaluation teams

at the central and local levels. We need to work very hard to strengthen our technical capacity and be able to analyze and interpret the information that is produced and find ways in which it can result in concrete actions that lead to improvements in teaching practices.

The precise challenge we face in the area of educational improvement is to detect shortfalls both in teaching practices and also in the education system. Another challenge is to help teachers and school principals to evaluate their own institutions and determine which aspects of their daily practices they need to change in order to achieve



small incremental improvements that translate, bit by bit, into big ones, since changes in the education system occur in the long term, rather than the short or medium terms.

Colombia Is Currently Redesigning Its Tests and Revising Its Structural Model

Andrés Gutiérrez is the Director of Evaluation of the Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education (Spanish acronym: ICFES), which is responsible for improving education and offers educational-evaluation services at all levels as well as promoting research into the factors that affect quality. The ICFES is a nationwide decentralized government entity with ties to the Colombian Ministry of Education.

We have been doing evaluation in Colombia since 1968, being governed by the National Standardized Evaluation System, which comprises a series of cross-section evaluations called *Pruebas Saber* (“Knowledge Tests”) that cover elementary and secondary education, in addition to which two series of tests respectively named *Saber Técnico y Tecnológico* (Saber TYT) and *Saber PRO* are administered. The aim is for a third-grade student to have follow-up until s/he enters university. We want to have a longitudinal information system that makes it possible to take informed decisions based on student follow-up so as to create more focused public policies.

At the same time, our evaluation system is dynamic and adjusts to the changes that occur in education. Right now, we are facing a reformation of the primary- and secondary- level curriculums, as a result of which the tests and our entire structural model will be modified.

Furthermore, this year we want to go one step further, enabling students to receive their evaluation results so that the education system can support them based on the latter.

Progress-wise, we want to make evaluation a tool for giving feedback both to young people and to the system, rather than a government intervention. To that end, we are also improving our reports so that, adopting an evidence-based model, we will be able to provide not only schools, but also the subsystems that involve the entire educational-evaluation process, with global performance ratings. In this way, both schools and teach-

ers will be able to know which subsystems have shortfalls and which ones need to be strengthened. It should be stressed that we don't want the curriculum to be bypassed or distorted, with teachers only teaching the contents that we evaluate. What we want is to provide feedback to students, teachers, school principals, schools and the system as a whole, and to be able to support the teaching process based on knowledge about students' weaknesses and strengths. We also face the challenge of linking all these things to the student's socioeconomic conditions and the factors associated with achievement, for which purpose we are carrying out surveys. This is important for policy design, since it enables small changes to be made that combine to bring about big transformations. It's a matter not just of buying computers or improving infrastructure, but also of being on good terms with the school and treating students with respect, as well as having a good classroom ambiance with less noise and much more effective teaching-learning time, and eliminating discrimination. Current studies show that schools that make these small changes get much better evaluation results. Ultimately, all these things should make Colombia a better educated nation by 2015. That is our goal.

El Salvador is Building a National Evaluation System

Mario Roberto Ramírez Chávez is El Salvador's National Director of Secondary and Tertiary Education and General Coordinator of In-service Teacher Training, bearing witness to his country's acknowledgment that educational evaluation helps to create a high-quality, student-centered educational model with broad coverage.

In El Salvador, we have been working since last year on a proposal put forward by the National Evaluation System regarding the different spheres of evaluation – i.e. evaluation of learning outcomes, evaluation of institutions, evaluation of schools, evaluation of teachers, and evaluation of higher education, among other things. Currently, this system is at the formal budgeting stage, though the area where most progress has been is that of learning-outcome evaluation, since such assessment has always been a mandatory part of our system.

One of the challenges we face is that of creating installed capacity in our institu-

tions, since we are ignorant about many of the things that need to be done. We need to increase our technical capacity nation-wide, in all the areas and environments pertaining to the National Evaluation System, so as to develop and implement government policies on evaluation

As we approach 2030, we have two spheres of action – the international one, since, at the global level, we are being asked to develop evaluation parameters, which we are doing jointly with our Ministry of Education, and also the internal one, since the Ministry has nine strategic core areas that we have to evaluate, which is precisely why we need to increase our installed capacity, both technical and technological, in the aforesaid core areas, on which we have been working since 2009, in order to be able to evaluate them.

To this end, we have created certain conditions at the national level, via the National Education Board –which includes representatives of private enterprise, NGOs, unions, the Ministry of Education, embassies and international organizations – so as to get a general overview of this area. For example, speaking of 2030, we have almost doubled our national education budget because, among other things, we have to increase coverage at the secondary level, since it is not as extensive as our country needs, as well as funding more early-childhood education, evaluation, pre-service teacher training and infrastructure. This is why we have created the Plan for an Educated El Salvador (Spanish: *Plan El Salvador Educado*), which envisages several years of institutional development and requires a big budget. Since our assignment of funding is not optimally efficient, we need to prioritize the strategic actions that we need to take each year. Teacher training and early-childhood education –both of which constitute the first strategic core areas targeted in our plan- are probably the highest priorities.

Honduras Is Currently Developing a National Evaluation System and a System for Certifying Educational Equality

José Luis Cabrera is a member of the General Curriculum and Evaluation Department of Honduras, which is responsible for implementing educational policy in the area of evaluation, as well as for evaluating students and teachers nation-wide and pro-

ducing information that supports decision-making, increases the quality of education, and fosters human development throughout the country.

Wilmer Antonio Andrade is a member of the Honduran Ministry of Education.

In Honduras, we evaluate three things: the academic performance of students in the first to ninth grades in the areas of Spanish and Mathematics; teacher performance, which we have been evaluating for the last three years; and the performance of students in the final year of secondary education. We also make use of the National System for Evaluating and Certifying Educational Equality (Spanish acronym: SINEACEE), but the latter still needs to be regulated and fully consolidated, above all because it is very big and mandates the setting up of entities ranging from A National Evaluation Council (Spanish acronym: CONEVAL) with three commissioners to an evaluation institute that would have its own structure and be responsible for external evaluations, with regard to which the system also focuses on the authorization and certification of both public and private schools.

It bears pointing out that all the processes that are already underway have to do with achieving the goals of the educational aims for 2030, though we still haven't achieved those set for mathematics, although this process has now been started. This year, we'll evaluate grades 1 to 9 at the municipal level, which were last evaluated in 2015, in order to ascertain the progress achieved nation-wide, but this time using a municipal benchmark. There is an institution in our country called MIDE (Spanish acronym for *Mejorando el Impacto de la Educación*, which translates into English as "Measuring the Impact of Education"), which is sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which funds the technical part of the end-of-grade performance tests. This year, the administration of the technical-capacities part of this Project is being transferred to the Ministry of Education's General Curriculum and Evaluation Department, which will assuredly make these evaluations more viable in terms of technically qualified staff.

Our aim for 2030 is to have finished setting up the institute and establishing the rules, not for the purpose of failing or stigmatizing teachers and students, but, rather,

in order to take decisions that will lead to improved educational quality.

Paraguay Is Currently Setting Up a National Educational-Evaluation Institute

Lourdes Almirón is the head of the Department of Measurement and Analysis of the Department for the Evaluation of Educational Quality of Paraguay's Ministry of Education and Science, which supports the latter entity to carry out its mission of ensuring that all Paraguayans have access to high-quality education throughout their lives as both a citizen's and human right.

While we are currently setting up the National Educational-Evaluation Institute of Paraguay (Spanish acronym: INEEP) as part of the Ministry of Education and Science (formerly the Ministry of Education and Culture), the National System for the Evaluation of the Educational Process (Spanish acronym: SNEPE) was established in 1995, and it was at that point that we really began to assess educational quality, with country-wide evaluations in the different elementary-school grades (i.e. grades 1 through grade 9) and also in the third year of upper-secondary education, after which students begin university studies.

Besides being responsible for country-wide evaluations, the SNEPE administers the evaluations pertaining to the LLECE and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

As for challenges, though we started evaluating in 1995, our biggest challenge is to disseminate the information stemming from the results and promote its use. For example, in 2015 we administered a general evaluation, for the first time, to all the children and youths who were finishing the cycle. Although we didn't achieve 100% coverage, it was a good experience, and now we face the challenge of examining and disseminating the results. The idea is to carry out extensive dissemination campaigns based on this experience and set up joint discussion groups that include the 17 Offices for the Coordination of Educational Supervision in order to make use of this information and design policies to improve the learning outcomes of our children and youths.

In line with aforesaid aims, the intention is that the INEEP envisage taking action in the three great areas of education – learn-

ing outcomes, teaching and institutions, thus lighting the way for us in our endeavor to support and foster educational improvement by jointly establishing common aims so that all the evidence that is gathered can be pooled in order to come up with an overall solution.

Peru Is Developing an Evaluation Plan for 2020

Luis Mejía is a member of the Peruvian Education Ministry's Office for the Measurement of Learning-outcome Quality, which is responsible for planning, designing, implementing and administering the evaluations of learning outcomes in elementary-level students, as well as producing statistics and benchmarks for the purpose of designing, and giving feedback on, education policies.

Since 2007, we in Peru have been carrying evaluations in the second grade of our primary schools and the fourth grade of our intercultural bilingual primary schools (IBS), where our students learn to read and write both in Spanish and in their indigenous language. Since 2015, we have also been carrying out general evaluations in the second grade of our secondary schools and the fourth grade of our regular primary schools.

One of our challenges consists in carrying out evaluations in our IBS, since we have no exact framework for the latter. We have put together an overview based on the questionnaires that were administered in 2007 and certified the said schools since then, but we still need to make improvements. For example, the evaluation was originally planned for the second year of primary in all the primary schools in Peru, but the problem is that the same test could not be used in the aforesaid IBS because the children there don't become more or less proficient in Spanish until the fourth grade. Thus, it was decided to administer bilingual tests in Spanish and an indigenous language in that grade, and I think that we have managed to produce versions with seven indigenous languages to date.

One of our medium-term is to develop an Evaluation Plan by 2020. We are currently working to draw up a timeline and a list of all the evaluations, grades and areas that can be surveyed or examined.

For example, we are thinking of more or less bypassing the second grade of primary

school, where sample-based evaluations are now used rather than the general ones that were formerly administered, because we want to focus more on the fourth year of primary school and the second grade of secondary school.

Going towards 2030, we are evaluating educational level, and the Elementary Education Offices (EEOs) are responsible for drawing up the performance-improvement guidelines and setting up agreements with both Peruvian and international institutions aimed at promoting training via workshops and other channels. €

Interviews: Lizbeth Torres Alvarado



Secretaría de Evaluación Educativa del Ministerio de Educación y Deportes de Argentina: <https://www.argentina.gov.ar/educacion/evaluacioneducativa>



Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación (ICFES): <http://www.icfes.gov.co/quienes-somos/mision-y-vision>



Comisión de Investigación Educativa en la Dirección Nacional de Educación Básica, Ministerio de Educación en El Salvador: <https://www.mined.gob.sv/>



Dirección General de Evaluación de la Calidad Educativa (DIGECE), Secretaría de Educación en Honduras: <http://transparencia.se.gob.hn/index.php/direccion-eval-de-calidad>



Dirección de Evaluación de la Calidad Educativa en la Dirección General de Planificación Educativa, Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias de Paraguay: <https://www.mec.gov.py/cms/?ref=295589-despacho-de-la-ministra>



Oficina de Medición de la Calidad de los Aprendizajes del Ministerio de Educación de Perú: <https://www.minedu.gob.pe/p/ministerio-mision-vision.php>

SPECIAL REPORT: IMPROVEMENT IN MEXICO & THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

URBAN CULTURE CHRONICLE

Iguanas & Dinosaurs. Latin America as an Utopia of Backwardness

Villoro, one of the most renowned Mexican writers, tells here, at the *Gazette*, about his childhood school days. This author—who has received over a dozen awards, including the Heralde (2004), Xavier Villaurrutia (1999), Internacional de Periodismo Rey de España (2010), and Iberoamericano de Letras (2012)—describes how he recreated an archetype of himself in order to survive classes, tests, and evaluations in a culture to which he didn't belong.

JUAN VILLORO

When I was four years old, I found myself facing a dilemma that would mark the rest of my life. At the Mexico City German School, I took a test which I don't remember anymore, but that test made me stay in the A Group; that is, the Germans

group. In nine years, I just took one class in Spanish—National Language. At our math classes, we had to solve problems like this: «At the basement of Udo's grandma, she has five flasks filled with apples she grew at her orchard. She is planning to cook *apfelstrudel* with the apples. If she needs an apple and a half for each cake and she has 15 apples in each flask, how many cakes can Udo's grandma cook? ». This revealed not only an impossible math quiz, but it also unveiled other enigmas—In Mexico, houses have no basement, grandmas don't grow apples in their orchards, and they certainly don't cook *apfelstrudel*. For me, school fulfilled the purpose of making knowledge seem an insurmountable form of difficulty. And, since the first language I read and wrote was German, knowing something meant to know it in foreign. This extravagant education had two results—I liked nothing better than Spanish, and I detest all national-identity reductionist ideas.

The origin of my school afflictions had its roots in a regulation of our School, which perhaps was induced by our Mexican Secretariat of Public Education in order to avoid racism and segregation in the classrooms.

My premiere in the classrooms of knowledge happened in 1960, when the Second World War was still feeding the main action films. During the War, the German School closed its doors because of its National Socialist affiliation, and some spoke about a



mythical basement where they'd keep the Third Reich files. As many other bilingual schools, ours always had an outside group. After the War, fear of pan Germanism and a wish to keep up appearances were the causes why in each German classroom there were two or three Mexicans, in order for cultural blending to be guaranteed. Throughout nine years, my low grades were tolerated by teachers because, at the end of the day, I was a representative of that vernacular race which was not only unaware of the art of turning feelings into *apfelstrudel*, but also of the declinations of the dative and phrases with the verb at the end. There were days in which teachers would approach me to consult me as if I were an oracle of popular traditions—Your grandmother uses marihuana to rub her legs? Is it true that you people laugh during vigils? At parties, any of your uncles take out a gun and begins shooting away to express his joy? Why do housemaids leave without giving notice? Why do policemen ask for alms? Why do plumbers get the day right, but not the month, when they are called to help in a flooding house? Mexican life, tumultuous and incomprehensible, surrounded the School and it would enter in it through these questions, posed to all the representatives of folklore at each classroom. As time passed by, the complexity of subjects increased; by the time I was eleven, I felt the obligation not only to explain, but also to defend, Aztec human sacrifices. Since I was the representative of The Other, nothing benefited me more than oddity. The spicier our chilis were, the better my reports sounded. Teachers enjoyed the gruesomeness of their adoptive country. Their demand for exoticism made me describe an exaggerated motherland in which my cousins would have tequila mixed with gunpowder for breakfast, my aunts would pierce their bodies with agave thorns—in order to punish themselves because of mischievous thoughts—and bleed all over the house as if they were posing for a Frida Kahlo painting, my grandfather had been executed by a firing squad during the Revolution and the only inheritance left by him was a glass eye which I would use, as a marble, to play.

«*Ach so!*», would say the teacher after hearing that I hadn't made the homework because I had spent the whole day eating a huge sugar skull with my name on it. Outlandishness was always convincing.

Those years complying with the expectations held at school turned me into a magical realism author. However, when I actually began writing stories, I never thought I had to be stereotypically Mexican. And, again, the European glance remind me about the existence of literary patriotisms.

International writers' gatherings tend to become comedies of cultural misunderstandings. Once, I participated at a congress in Germany and I met one of the many Helmut who believe Latin America means the opportunity of being joyfully irresponsible. First thing we knew about him was that he had liberated himself of the European condemnation to punctuality. He had us waiting for an hour at the airport, while we were on the verge of fainting because of jet-lag. Throughout the following four days, Helmut shared with us, at the most inconvenient times, a Japanese tequila in a pyramid-shaped bottle. And he forced us to sing *Cielito lindo* at the end of each reunion. I don't even have to say we made fools of ourselves. We arrived late everywhere, but Helmut would introduce us with defying impertinence, as if Europe owed the invention of chocolate to us. Our host was fed up with the affronts suffered by Latin America, that sun-stroked jungle in which having a head is only bearable thanks to aspirins, which come from Germany. When we hinted to him that we were under the vague impression that our informality had been a tad excessive, he stared at us with a carefully-rehearsed Che-Guevara gesture and reminded us we didn't have to hold ourselves accountable to colonial rationalism. What the audience expected from us was magic. With the best possible intention, Helmut turned our stay there into a hell in which we behaved just as those over-the-top characters I used to come up with at the German School.

Exoticism exists to satisfy a foreign glance. One of the most serious, and subtle, results of eurocentrism is that in its search for «authenticity» it favors quaintness. We are not in front of Kipling's or Conrad's characters where the White, or the Western, is above the Aboriginal—we are in face of something more complex. For the sake of respecting diversity, some European postcolonial discourses fall into a peculiar fundamentalism of folklore. Third-World novels, films, engravings, and installations become mere vehicles for national identity. From

this perspective, the narratives of otherness are significant as documents—an Argentinean trapped inside an elevator, or a depressed Bolivian at a Kentucky Fried Chicken, only deserve to have a story if, in a direct or symbolic way, they relate to the rich repertoire of that which is «Latin American»; that is, the pre-established notions designed in Europe.

The «rhetoric of guilt», as Edward Said called it, has been the cause of a curious turn in eurocentrism and now the respect for the other involves new, and more complex, distortions. Friday no longer submits to Robinson; rather, he sells beads to him and teaches him shamanic meditation. The aboriginal is not an inferior being, but a different one. However, he is forced to be univocally different, the custodian and guarantor of otherness. Friday is not expected to add and subtract with more precision than Robinson, but to indoctrinate him with transcendental, unknown, and seductively prelogical forms of knowledge. Thus, Friday's myth experiences an anthropological turn—his superiority is based on his strangeness.

Attracted by singularity, many self-righteous spirits scorn the illustrated route followed by Alexander von Humboldt and refuse to touch with reason a territory which they'd rather keep as incomprehensible. In the name of diversity, Latin America is seen as a plant nursery for local colorfulness. On the other hand, in Latin America it doesn't matter if a Swedish draftsman reflects his Scandinavian condition in each of his lines. Right from the start, we are used to art travelling and getting mixed; our imagination's geography assumes, at least, two different shores—the culture of one's origins and the many things that come from abroad.

For three years, I worked in East Berlin as a cultural attaché for my country and, at a certain point, I was commissioned to organize an exhibition of serigraphs made by Sebastián, who has used the legacy of Josef Albers and the Bauhaus school. The director of the gallery saw these constructivist pieces with a huge amount of skepticism: «I like them, but, what is Mexican about them?», he asked. Overwhelmed by despair, I told him the triangles were references to the arches in Mayan pyramids and the rectangles to Aztec fretwork; and the colors referred to the heavenly directions in Pre-Columbian cosmogony. The curator changed his mind—Sebastián was a genius.

But eurocentrism is not the only responsible for the folklore produced in Latin America. Due to the demand for art with a legitimate Latin pedigree, some artists make sure to offer autochthonous productions. Gabriel García Márquez and Alejo Carpentier didn't conceive a strategy to dazzle foreign critics—their work is the natural result of their literary endeavor. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The Lost Steps* represent pinnacles of Spanish language and powerful reinventions of reality. Nothing would be as miserly as haggling away their merits. However, undeniably, under the shadows of these Ceiba trees of fiction, many «*tutti-fruti pens*» —to use Cabrera Infante's term—have flourished, wanting to repeat a successful formula and to draw by numbers the excessive landscape of the Americas. This situation is fit for a farce of crossing authenticities. In my novel, *Materia dispuesta (Malleable Matter)*, a Mexican theater company is invited to an European tour. Before leaving, the promoter recommends them—in order to succeed overseas—to look *more Mexican*. Thus, the actors spiral down into identity vertigo: How can they disguise themselves as themselves? The director hires some Caribbean percussionists, who are not Mexican at all but who will look wildly autochthonous in Europe. And the actors subject themselves to tanning sessions in order to become worthy representatives of the «bronze race». In an act of cultural transvestitism, in the novel, the actors become a new tribe of infrared skins, pigmented so they won't be a disappointment to foreigners. We are facing the most absurd *artificial authenticity*.

Each audience is entitled to its own passions and nothing would be as arbitrary as suggesting a tyranny of good taste. In a world which has invented forms of satisfaction ranging from Gregorian chants to eatable underwear, it is not particularly lurid that Latin America is asked, by European readers, to deliver generals who live 168 years, jaguars with jade eyes, or nymphs levitating over mangroves. What is bad is for Latin America to submit to these pre-conceptions—magical realism as an explanation for a world that knows no other logic.

The Empire of Time

Contact with Latin America poses no direct threat for the European citadel. Migratory

perils are elsewhere—Russians who can sky all the way from Moscow to Berlin in the winter of their discontent, Arabs in search of refuge and jobs, prosper Chinese men willing to go to Paris and reserve half a million rooms. Latin America is further away and it gets there inside the ever-changing and ever-colorful packages filled with coffee beans or Salsa records. Such remoteness' consequence is that, within the field of culture, Latin America satisfies an odd need of European imagination—the utopia of backwardness. In a globalized world, there is nothing more suggestive than a reservation where remote traditions are kept. Whereas Americans travel to hotels where they can feel that Chichén-Itzá is just as Houston, only with pyramids; Europeans tend to be sybarites for authenticity. Curiously enough, this appetite for the original stuff can lead to an archeological hedonism in which poverty and injustice become forms of quaintness. The ordinary jungle inhabited by iguanas is seen as the fascinating habitat of dinosaurs, a Jurassic Park which allows for an excursion into the past.

Both on travelling guides, where drinking our tab water is not recommended, and on Hollywood mega productions, in which «the Mexican» is someone with a prototypical moustache who laughs loudly as he kills his best friend, Mexico is like a thematic park outside of time, a boiling melting pot already forgotten in those nations where ethnicities and races are only known because of the Benetton publicity.

One of the safest business in current days would be building a Disneyland of Latin backwardness in which guests could get to know dictators, guerrilla fighters, drug dealers, members of the only political party which held power for 71 years, women who have heart attacks when they make love and are later resurrected smelling of sandalwood, bullfighters who chew glass, children who sleep in gutters, fortune tellers who enter into a trance to discover the Swizz bank accounts of the President.

This is a new form of colonialism, not dependent on the control of space but in the control of time. In this Latin-American theme park, the past is not a component of history but a determination of the present. Anchored, clinging to a fixed identity, our countries provide old trinkets for a continent which reserves to itself the usage of modernity and the future.

It is worthwhile pointing out that this demand for a culture with the dizzying smell of guavas is not based on European egotism but, rather, on a peculiar distortion of the «others», on the need of having a controlled form of barbarism within their imagination. In Roger Bartra's book, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass*, the author studies the role played, in Medieval Europe, by the myth of the savage, the hair-covered homunculus who—dominated by its basest instincts—spiced up chivalric romances, the troubadours' repertoire, and the Gobelins, featuring princesses in danger and affirming—by sheer contrast—the superiority of the civilized man. According to Bartra, the discovery of America had the effect of dissolving this tradition. In face of «real savages», it was no longer needed to have legendary characters tying damsels to trees. The European could size himself against Incas or Aztecs. Taking into account all due nuances, it is within this line of thought that we find the overvalue of Latin-American cultural backwardness.

Throughout nine years, I lifted myself out from predicaments at the German School by turning ordinary iguanas into theme-park dinosaurs. My childhood was an exotic country, doubly. I fretted over *apfelstrudel* which I only ate in my imagination, and over a folklore I had to deliver at the classroom. This was no exemplary education, but it certainly allowed me to know that the only true motherland is that which one assumes without having to pose for an external glance. €

* This text is reproduced with the author's authorization. The *Gazette* wants to thank Editorial ERA for its support in the reproduction of the text.



Know more about Juan Villoro:
www.juanvilloro.com

Local Institutional Capabilities for Educational Evaluation: Two Approaches

In 2014, FLACSO Mexico and INEE subscribed an agreement to address a field of educational research which has been little-explored in our country—the analysis of the institutional capabilities in the areas of state evaluation. At the same time, INEE has kept on looking into this subject in face of the construction of the National Policy for Educational Evaluation. What do the findings of these two experiences show?

The 2013 Educational Reform entailed a new instrumentation of actions at both the local and the federal level. The implementation of the National System for Educational Evaluation (SNEE) and the National Policy for Educational Evaluation (PNEE) demanded a previous diagnostic to know state governments' institutional capabilities to comply with the tasks assigned to them.

Thus, in order to have a diagnosis which would allow to define actions in face of the attributions of the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE), two exercises were performed. The first one, in 2014, was a pilot study in three federative entities (Baja California, Querétaro, and Campeche) under the charge of the Latin-American Social Sciences Institute (FLACSO), Mexico. The second one, in the same year, was in charge of the General Directorate for the Coordination of the National System for Educational Evaluation, ascribed to INEE's Unit of Educational Normativity & Policies.

In this sense, the functions and responsibilities related to the current norm require that all actors with the mandate to comply with the dispositions have the institutional,

material, and financial capabilities to develop educational evaluation with methodological and scientific rigor.

Evaluation Before the Reform

Before 2013, the strategic agency related to educational evaluations—although it was ruled by the Public Education Secretariat (SEP)—had a high degree of decentralization in terms of decision-making.

Some state governments included the evaluation of the basic and middle-higher levels within their educational agenda, and developed the capability to articulate with the national educational objectives and goals, as well as to design and build systems and instruments for quantitative and qualitative data gathering, storing, systematization, management, and usage for designing public policies based on evidences. In other cases, the entities only added, to their governmental agenda, compliance with national evaluations and took little care, or no care at all, about designing exercises of their own.

However, after the Reform, a transformation had to happen; in particular, in terms of the corresponding strategic agenda and in face of the construction of the National Policy for Educative Evaluation (PNEE) which, from the point of view of INEE, implied the design of the State Programs for Educational Evaluation and Improvement (PEEME) upon three approximations which allowed all involved actors to participate in a route oriented towards the improvement of education quality and equity:¹) Going from the *national to the local* spheres on the basis of the definition of the general working guides; 2) passing from *the local to the national, or regional*, spheres on the basis of the definition of local needs and the formulation of evaluative projects to tend to those needs and incorporating the projects in the national agenda and in the regional agendas; and, finally, 3) passing to the *school sphere* as the necessary space for the concretion of educational evaluation and improvement; that is to say, for the compliance with the goal of an education of quality with equity for all.

Necessary Capabilities after the Reform

Institutional capabilities have to do with potential future behaviors with the idea of reach-



ing the objectives and goals of the educational public policy. In this sense, and upon the basis of various methodologies, the FLACSO (2014) exercise analyzed five central elements:

1. Achievement of objectives and goals
2. Institutional Operation
3. Normativity
4. Institutional Resources
5. Human Resources and Professional Development

Thus, the institutional capability of a program or an organization includes, among other elements, the legal norms which originated it and give sustainability to it, as well as governance, and administrative and organizational arrangements.

Precedents & Finalities¹

In September, 2013, INEE entrusted two research teams with the task of carrying out the studies *The Universe of Institutions Devoted to the Evaluation of Basic Education in Mexico* and *The Universe of Institutions Devoted to the Evaluation of Middle-Higher Education*. The first study was devoted to the basic level in five federative entities, Mexico City, State of Mexico, Jalisco, Puebla, and Veracruz; while the second was devoted to the middle-higher level, and it also included the state of Nuevo Leon.

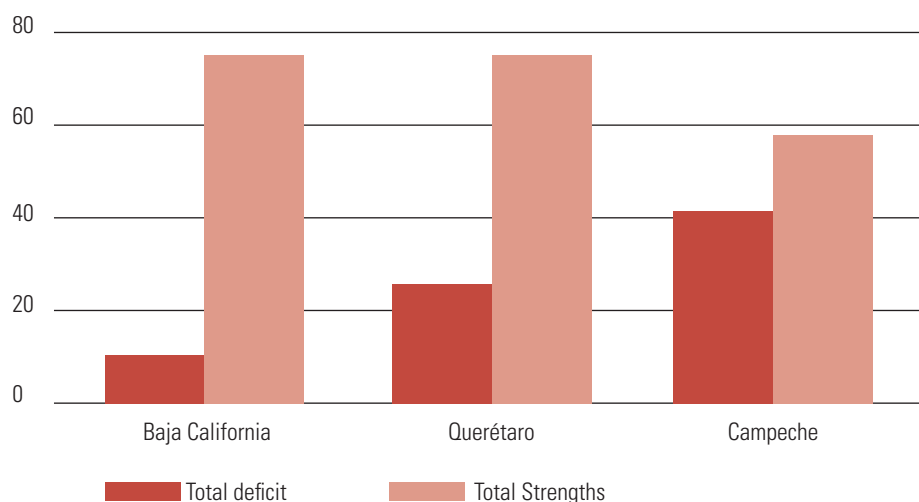
The finality was to elaborate a descriptive and analytical inventory of state educational evaluation institutions and organisms—public and private—with attributions in this matter or devoted to develop evaluative products within the various components of the basic and middle-higher educational system. The Institute offered FLACSO to broaden this work in order to gather data from all the federative entities in the country.

After this agreement, it was possible—besides elaborating a typology to classify the normative frames for mandatory education—to establish a database to feed INEE's Information System, develop a reference frame on the institutional capabilities of entities in face of the evaluative tasks dictated by the Educational Reform, and to offer a methodological strategy to identify them.

Methodology & Technical Instrument

A technical instrument was designed, structured in four dimensions which englobe the main characteristics and allow to identify the capabilities presented by state areas, in

Graphic 1. Institutional Capabilities by Entity



Source: FLACSO Mexico, with data derived from the diagnosis of institutional capabilities, 2014.

terms of evaluation, that can be strengthened in the middle and the long term: Political and context dimension, normative dimension, organizational dimension, and technical dimension.

This instrument was applied through semi-structured interviews, face to face with those responsible of the areas of educational evaluation at the basic and middle-higher levels. This instrument has 40 questions (5 closed, 10 open, and 25 mixed) grouped within four different dimensions:

1. **Political and Context.** It examines the characterization of the context and its impact on the organization and the precision of what is being evaluated. It explores aspects related to the current frame for educational policy, involved social and educational actors, as well as the uses and the dissemination of evaluation results in the states. It allows to know the institutional configurations and the organizations to execute the evaluation processes.
2. **Normative.** It explores the level of knowledge that state governmental areas have about the legal instruments which regulate the evaluation task in relation to their knowledge and application, as well as some questions on the Reform.

3. **Organizational.** It reviews technical capabilities, as well as financial, experience-related, and those related to the academic profile of the evaluative teams, as well as the number of its members.

4. **Technical.** The relevance of exploring this dimension is related to a mandatory characteristic for all evaluations: They have to be systematic exercises, with historical-series referents, so the results can be solid and can be used for decision-making.

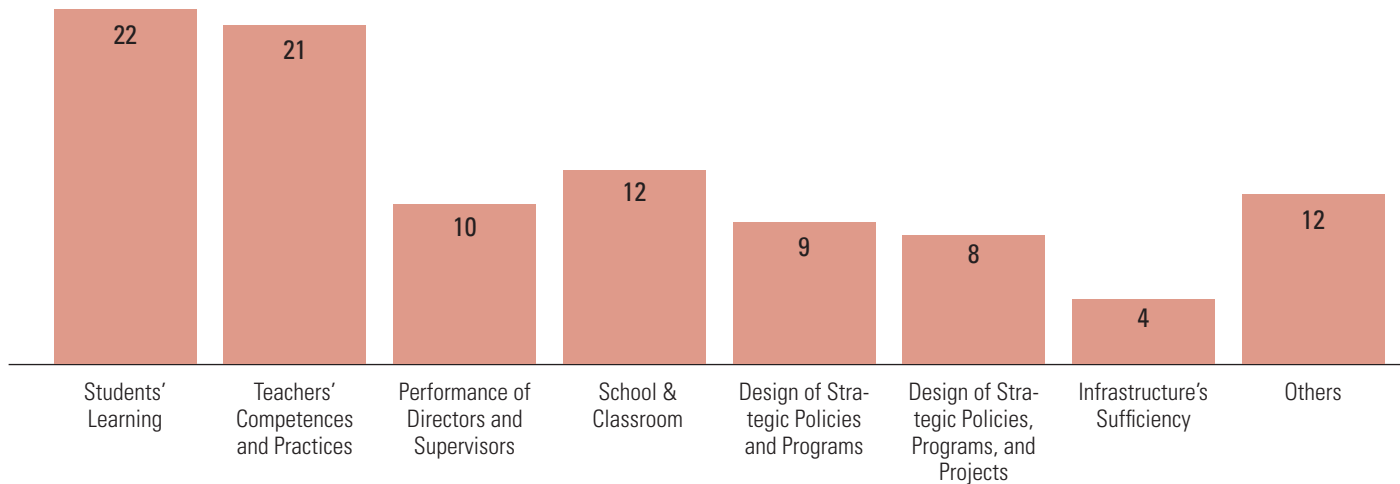
FLACSO: Main Findings

The systematization of the interviews reported a differentiated panorama, the state institutions in charge of the evaluative task show three kinds of institutional capabilities: consolidated, with potential to be consolidated, and limited and scarce.

Thus, it was identified that those responsible for the areas of educational evaluation have—three out of ten—*deficits* within the four previously mentioned dimensions.

Baja California shows characteristics of consolidated institutional capabilities (with the lesser degree of local deficits and exercises); Queretaro has a potential for consolidation (higher deficit than Baja California), and Campeche is limited and scarce (higher deficit level in the pilot analysis).

Graphic 2. Sorts of Local Evaluations



Source: INEE (2015). Report on the profile of the Evaluation State Areas. *Documento rector de la Política Nacional de Evaluación de la Educación*.

A fundamental difference lies on the technical capability to develop local evaluative exercises in a systematic way, with historical series of data and using results to design state interventions to improve educational quality; also, that the issue has been kept within the local educational strategic agenda (see Graphic 1). In an entity, there can be additional resources for educative evaluations, or academically and professionally solid technical teams, but if the government doesn't take this issue into its strategic agenda the results will be little, or not at all, useful for decision making and the design of educational public policies.

Analysis by Dimensions

Political and Context Dimension: It is considered necessary to clarify the evaluation dimensions in order to establish clear INEE policies, as well as to use them and offer a follow-up. Two of the pilot entities (Queretaro and Baja California) didn't have guiding instruments for strategic planning; and in one entity (Queretaro) there were no evaluative instruments. It can be pointed out that the results of evaluations are used and disseminated in these three states. Also in these three states, the National Educational Workers Union (SNTE) was identified as an actor that tries to have an impact on the issue of evaluation. Also, they declared a lack of recognition for the evaluative labor.

Normative Dimension: Regarding the knowledge and application of the federal and

state norm which regulates the evaluative endeavor in the state, there were reports in these states indicating that the applicable normativity was known and, in some cases, used. In this regard, in Queretaro and Campeche there were no guidelines for bidding evaluative exercises. And Campeche had the fewer number of normative instruments.

Organizational Dimension: An insufficient number of staff members in the area in charge of the evaluations for mandatory education was identified, as well as insufficient incentives and performance indicators. Those responsible for the institution manifested no deficit in terms of the profiles of team members; however, they stated their desire for central authorities to support them with capacitation and professionalization outlines according to the obligations, objectives, and goals set out in the new normativity. For area-responsible people, it is enough for them subalterns to have postgraduate studies and a solid career. It was also identified that the entities do not count with additional resources.

Technical Dimension: In two entities, there was no state systems for evaluation indicators and in one entity (Campeche) there were no diagnoses, reports, or records of the evaluations in terms of instruments, manuals, and working documents. This can be due to the lack of support given by first-level administrative areas.

INEE's Diagnosis for Building the PNEE²

In 2014, in face of the process for building the PNEE, the General Directorate for Coordinating INEE's National Educative Evaluation System (DGC SNEE) was developed and it applied a *Questionnaire on the Profile of the Evaluation State Areas* (AEE).

Some of the findings in this questionnaire, which can be seen in more depth in the *Guiding Document for the National Educative Evaluation Policy* (DR PNEE), indicate that:

- 23/33 Evaluation State Areas (AEE) were created between 1993 and 2000.
- The AEE are constituted by 33 area directors and their teams (663 officers).

About the Profile of AEE Members

- 26/33 area directors have postgraduate studies; 30/33 have been working for over 10 years in the education sector.
- 15/663 team members have Ph.D. studies; 132 master's degrees; and 364 graduate studies; 152 finished their middle-higher education.

About the Experience Regarding State Evaluations

- Only 7/33 AEE declared no evaluation carried out by state initiative since their creation (Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Puebla, Sonora, Sinaloa, and Veracruz).
- The AEE reported to have carried out, at least in one occasion, an evaluation

related to some of the characteristics of the National Educational System components (see Graphic 2).

Seven competences were identified: 1) Application of evaluation instruments; 2) elaboration of technical reports of the evaluation; 3) results analysis; 4) elaboration of evaluation instruments; 5) results dissemination; 6) planning strategies for fieldwork, and 7) planning evaluation instruments.

About the AEE Activities

- 66% of its members' main activity is operative an only 5% engage in evaluation activities; 21% are devoted to data analysis and 8% carry out management activities.

About the Distribution of Financial Resources for the Evaluation Processes

- 16/32 AEE have a labeled budget from the State Expenditures Budget in order to deal with the evaluation processes.

About Internal and External Coordination

- At a local level, the outstanding post, because of how frequently they are mentioned, goes firstly to the basic and middle-higher education and planning undersecretaries, or homologous organizations. There is also a relation with the directors and those in charge of the educational levels.
- At a federal level, the worthiest of mention is the relation between most of the AEE and SEP's General Directorate for the Evaluation of Educational Policies, followed by the National Coordination for Teachers' Professional Service (CNSPD), and, thirdly, the Undersecretary for Policies Planning & Evaluation. At a second level, we have the INEE's Units of Educational Normativity & Policies, of Planning, Coordination & Communication, and Evaluation of the National Educational System.

Final Considerations

Today, four years after the beginning of the Reform, the 32 educational entities have a first evaluation exercise built with an *ex profeso* methodology designed by INEE: The State Programs for Educational Evaluation & Improvement (PEEME), which form the Middle-Term Program for the National Sys-

tem for Educational Evaluation 2016-2020. Now, it is necessary to move forward towards the integration of professional teams to consolidate needed institutional capabilities in face of this huge task. €

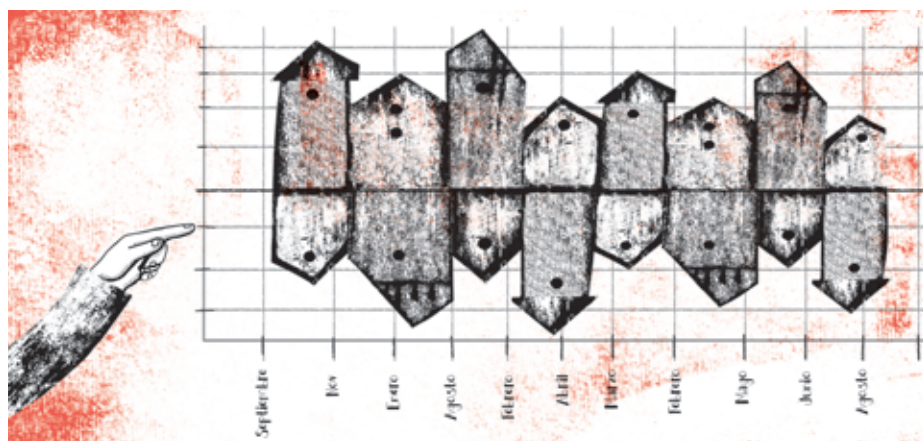
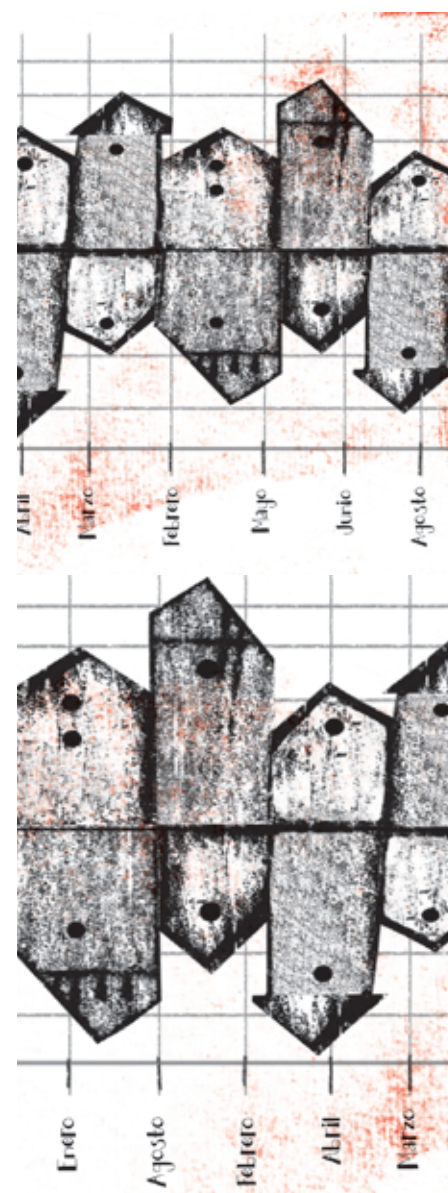
- 1 Information derived from the collaboration agreement INEE-FLACSO 2014: Completion of the descriptive and analytical inventory of the public and private institutions and organizations devoted to educational evaluation within the federal and states spheres with faculties in this area and which develop evaluative products at the various components of the basic-education and middle-higher educational system. Methodological, practical, and operative proposal for the 2015 application of the institutional capabilities questionnaire to realize the educational evaluation corresponding to the state authority. Final report. December 2014. Study coordinated by: Lorenzo Gómez-Morin Fuentes. Research team: Úrsula Zurita Rivera, Regina Méndez Tirado, Yoalli Navarro Huitrón, Nora Gabriela Rangel Santana, Carlos Jonathan Molina Téllez, and Mauricio Reyes Corona.

- 2 Source: Guiding document for the National Educative Evaluation Policy, INEE, 2015.

Bibliography

FLACSO (2014). *Reportes Nacional y Estatales sobre las Instituciones Públicas y Privadas Dedicadas a la Evaluación Educativa de la Educación Obligatoria. Informe Convenio INEE-FLACSO*. Mexico: FLACSO.

INEE (2015). *Documento rector de la Política Nacional de Evaluación Educativa*. Mexico: INEE. Retrieved at: http://www.inee.edu.mx/images/stories/2016/PNEE/PNEE_2016.pdf



An X-ray of Latin America's Evaluation Institutes¹

Why set up an institute to evaluate education? The author of this article examines the reasons for the springing up of educational-evaluation institutes in Latin America, analyzing the experiences of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay from an organizational viewpoint and drawing conclusions as to how other institutes should be designed.

MARCOS ROGGERO

Universidad Católica de Córdoba (UCC),
Argentina
roggeromarcos@yahoo.com.ar

Evaluating Educational Quality

There are many ways of promoting educational quality, but one that seems intuitively convincing and possesses explicatory power is based on the principle of inclusion, which implies stages centered on the main objective of enabling children and youths to enrol in school and stay there, with the next aim being that of promoting high-quality teaching and good student performance. In this order of things, the educational-evaluation institute is the place where high-quality education is spearheaded, with political will and education authorities' negotiating capacity determining just how high the said quality will be.

In the current regional literature, the institutes, and evaluation in general, are seen as administrative instruments used to drive and control change in order to achieve set objectives. Seven Latin American evaluation institutes – those of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay have been analyzed for this article.

The Context in which the Institute is Set Up

Mexico's National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (Spanish acronym: INEE)

The INEE was set up in response to demands for transparency and information about educational results, in a context where there were no mechanisms whereby reliable, user-friendly, timely information about examination results could be made available. Founded in 2002 by order of the president, it operated as a government-controlled entity until 2012, when it became autonomous within the framework of the Educational Reform carried out by President Enrique Peña Nieto.

Uruguay's National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (Spanish acronym: INEED)

The INEED was created within the framework of General Education Law No. 18.437, which was passed by the Uruguayan Parliament in 2008, being set up to meet the needs to have independent information about the state of education that could enrich the debate about, and the formulation and follow-up of, educational policy.

Brazil's Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (Portuguese acronym: INEP)

Set up in 1937 as a special research agency of the Brazilian Ministry of Education, the INEP was restructured in 1997 within the framework of the reform aimed at making the country's enormous education system more streamlined. Currently, all the programs and projects implemented by the Ministry of Education are supported by diagnoses and recommendations arising from the statistical studies and evaluations that are carried out by this institute.

Chile's Agency for Educational Quality

After education had become a top priority in 2006 as a result of the so-called "Penguin Revolution", a Presidential Advisory Council on Education was set up and an Agreement for the Quality of Education signed by the heads of Chile's political parties. The Agency for Educational Quality was set up

under the Quality-Assurance Law (Law No. 20,529) that was passed in 2011.

The Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education (Spanish acronym: ICFES)

The ICFES was set up in 1968 as the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education, charged by the universities with developing and implementing a student-selection examination. It later underwent a series of changes until it became responsible for evaluating the quality of the different educational levels. Finally, under Law No. 1324/2009, parameters and criteria were established for the organization of the educational-quality-results-evaluation system, guidelines were issued for the fostering of an evaluation culture, and the Institute was transformed and made responsible for the SABER (i.e. Systems Approach for Better Education Results) evaluations.

Ecuador's National Educational-Evaluation Institute (Spanish acronym: NEVAL)

Having come into existence in 2012 within the framework of a series of important reforms, as of 2007, the NEVAL started to develop a solid state-level structure in order to achieve the aims set forth in the 2006-2015 Ten-Year Plan, which included the fostering of an inclusive, intercultural vision with a focus on rights and obligations in order to strengthen training in citizenship and the fostering of unity in diversity in Ecuadorian society.

The Peruvian Institute for the Accreditation and Evaluation, of Quality in Elementary Education (Spanish acronym: IPEBA)

Founded in 2003, the IPEBA is part of the National System for the Evaluation, Accreditation and Certification of Educational Quality (Spanish acronym: SINEACE), which is responsible for evaluating elementary and technical-manufacturing institutions, while both university and non-university tertiary-level education is evaluated by other bodies. The SINEACE is a set of structured, functionally integrated entities, guidelines and processes pertaining to evaluation, accreditation and certification for the purpose of guaranteeing institutional quality levels.

Aims

The aims of Mexico's INEE are clear: it is responsible for evaluating the quality, performance and results of the National Education System at the pre-school, primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary levels.

One of the aims stated by Uruguay's INEED is that of "contributing to debate about, and the formulation of, educational policy" in Uruguay "based on relevant, rigorous information". Its purpose is to support the government agenda, which means that it is concerned not only with the quality of the education that is received, but also with informing statements about education.

The aim of Chile's Agency for Educational Quality is to ensure that "every student has access to a high-quality education that enables him/her to maximally fulfil his/her potential".

Peru's IPEBA is also concerned with equality, asserting that standards are one of the tools that help to achieve the quality and equality that are so yearned for in the education system, which must ensure that all the country's children and youths, must achieve basic learning outcomes, regardless of their socio-economic or cultural context. However, besides being responsible for evaluation, it also concerns itself with accreditation and certification not only in elementary education, but also at the higher and university levels.

Another of the institutions' aims is that of supporting the formulation of educational policy. For example, one of the aims of Brazil's INEP is to support the formulation of educational policy by creating diagnostic evaluations and, based on the results thereof, making recommendations about the evaluation of higher education,

For its part, Ecuador's INEVAL devotes itself almost exclusively to producing information and evidence and doing everything that is necessary to obtain them, including designing instruments, developing methodologies and systems, etc.

Functions

Most of the institutes that were analyzed are responsible for designing, implementing and managing their country's educational-evaluation system, and most of them also administer a mix of national and international evaluations.

Though the national evaluations, which are created at the country level, tend to use benchmarks that take stock of the pecu-

liarities of each particular education system, nevertheless, besides reflecting the complexity of education, in some cases they satisfy the need to withstand the pressures and interests of the groups involved in educational evaluation, such as unions, universities, opinion leaders, etc.). Hence, we can say that the creation of evaluation benchmarks is of a dual nature, being both technical and political, and having to be not only rigorous, but also, and above all, controllable.

Organizational Structure

All the institutes that were analyzed have a collegiate entity, variously called a Board of Managers, a Board of Directors, or a simply Board, at their pinnacle, with different processes for appointing members, different numbers of members (on average, 5) and different entry requirements.

Mexico's INEE has the most complex organizational structure of all the institutes, and, like the rest, forms part of the National Educational-Evaluation System, with its outstanding entity being the Conference, which is the mechanism for sharing information about –and experiences of– educational evaluation, and also the forum where agreement is reached on the guidelines that govern the functioning of the system and specific collaborative and coordination activities for the purpose of achieving its aims as set forth in the law.

Uruguay's INEED is managed by a Board of Directors with seven members whose personal and professional backgrounds and knowledge of educational evaluation ensure that independent criteria are established and that the institute functions in an independent, objective and impartial manner.

On the other hand, in institutes such as Colombia's ICFES, Chile's Agency and Brazil's INEP, separation from the civil service and the political authorities is not required, but, on the contrary, proscribed. The nine members of the governing body of Brazil's INEP are split into ex-officio members, who are representatives of specific bodies that form a part of the national education system in their own right, and appointed members. The five members of the governing body of Chile's Agency for Educational Quality are appointed by the Ministry of Education after being selected in accordance with the requirements of the Senior-Government-Management (i.e. civil-service) System.



The Board of Directors of Colombia's ICFCES consists of five members and its chairman is the Minister of Education or his/her representative, who is required to have recent experience of government administration.

Working Teams

Generally speaking, the people who work in the institutes are academic specialists or people who have held specialized government posts, but it might be said that there is a difference between the members of the governing bodies and the people who work in the operational units. In the case of the former, the stress is placed on their career path and social prestige, while, in the case of the latter, there is a strong emphasis on technical and academic training, with most of those chosen having completed postgraduate studies. This is due to the specific nature of the institutes, which, in order to function, need human resources that are trained in methodology and in the analysis and evaluation of government policy, as well as having knowledge about education.

Independence, Autonomy and Funding

Irrespective of their particular organizational structure, all the institutes share the same a set of distinctive values –i.e. rigor, excellence or objectivity– on which their prestige scientific and methodological prestige rests, and whose inculcation, it might be said, constitutes the first stage of the training process, which also places secondary stress on credibility, reliability, cooperation, or commitment to the public and have to do with the institute's relationship with other organizations – especially with educational organizations and, in general, organizations that influence public opinion. They endeavor to produce information that is conclusive, guides decision-making, and influences the government policy on education, either by confirming the direction that the latter is moving in, or by questioning it.

Two values that would appear to be at the top of the scale are Independence and transparency. As far as political Independence is concerned, it should not be forgotten that all the institutes described above have been set up by legal mandate, the idea behind this legal underpinning being that there is a consensus among legislators that guarantees their impartiality and autonomy, and increases their chances long-term survival. Likewise, the said institutes have their own assets and a legally mandated budget.

Finally, it can be said that there is a certain degree of political tension between independence and impact, the point being that the independence from political entities should not be excessive, since if it is, there is a risk that the latter will not take stock of the evidence supplied by the institute in the desired way.

Roles

The role assigned to the institutes determines the way they operate, and even their design and constitution. Based on our analysis, we can classify the institutes' roles as follows:

- a. Organizing – i.e. seeking to control and supervise the education system in the face of decentralization and school autonomy.
- b. Producing evidence – i.e. exclusive devotion to guidelines and diagnostic studies, without any participation in public debate or decision-making.
- c. Influencing – i.e. seeking to have an impact on decision-making by making recommendations and monitoring educational policy.
- d. Enlightening – i.e. informing the government agenda by defining the terms of public debate.
- e. Protecting – i.e. shielding the Ministry of Education and the government in general from criticism and questioning of the government's agenda and its educational policy.
- f. Reforming – i.e. spearheading educational reforms via structural changes.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that educational evaluation is not a substitute for educational policy, and, indeed, is a public policy *per se*, so that it must be treated as such, paying attention to the different variables that play a part in the formulation of public policy – e.g. definition of the problem, identification of the most important lines of action and the networks and communities involved, and, above all, the engendering of political will. €

References

Martín, E. and Martínez Rizo, F. (Coordinators) (2015). *Avances y desafíos en la evaluación educativa*. Colección Metas Educativas 2021. Spain: Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos (OEI) and Fundación Santillana.

Roggero, M. (2009). *Políticas públicas y largo plazo. El programa social mexicano Progresa-Oportunidades*. Córdoba: Universidad Católica de Córdoba (EDUCC).

----- (2011). *Calidad educativa y calidad docente en Argentina. Problemas y soluciones*. Buenos Aires: Fundación Agropecuaria para el Desarrollo de Argentina (FADA). Downloaded at:

http://fundacionfada.weebly.com/uploads/9/8/5/0/9850131/_o_calidad.pdf

1 A special thanks to Mercedes Gianola and Soledad Giménez for their efforts at gathering information in the field.



For further information about the INEE and its functions, evaluations and programs, please download Supplement 3 of the INEE Gazette, entitled *Pautas para el acompañamiento de los Programas Estatales de Evaluación y Mejora Educativa* ("Guidelines for Supporting the State-level Evaluation and Educational-improvement Programs") at: <https://goo.gl/rFpiaw>

For further information about the institutes mentioned in this article, please visit the following sites:



Agencia de la Calidad de la Educación: <http://www.agenciaeducacion.cl/>



Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación (ICFES): <http://www.icfes.gov.co/>



Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación (INEE): <http://www.inee.edu.mx/>



Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (INEED): <http://www.ineed.edu.uy/>



Instituto Nacional de Estudios e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (INEP): <http://portal.inep.gov.br/>



Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (INEVAL): <http://www.evaluacion.gob.ec/>



Instituto Peruano de Evaluación, Acreditación y Certificación de la Calidad de la Educación Básica (IPEBA): <http://www.sineace.gob.pe/etiqueta/ipeba/>

DOSSIER: MYSTIQUE, IMPROVEMENT & EVALUATION
WITHOUT A PASSPORT

The Run-up to 2020: Can Education for Sustainable Development Be Evaluated?

Countries sign agreements due to shared aspirations, but how easy is it to realize these aims? In the interview transcribed below, **Silvia Montoya**, the Director of UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, proposes strategies for monitoring the countries that have committed to the Sustainable-Development Aims, saying: "We're at risk. There are complaints about the evaluation data, because we haven't been able to show that they're useful".

High-quality Education, the Fourth Sustainable-Development Goal

We at UNESCO consider that we have a focus on capacity and lifelong learning, with a strong equality component. This means taking stock of the geographic location and socioeconomic level of population groups, as stipulated in the fourth Sustainable-Development Goal (SDG).

The focus on Education for all includes the many skills and contents that help to develop all-round citizens, which means managing cognitive and socioeconomic dimensions that enable the student to participate as a full member of the group, with knowledge about the setting up of regional, national and global projects. This is our composite view of what education entails.

Mexico's Achievements

Mexico, which is one of Latin America's most advanced countries in the area of educational quality, is making, and has already made, a big effort to include these different dimensions. Indeed, it is a leader in the region because it has a comprehensive view of the educational processes that prioritize equity, the inclusion of indigenous populations, and cultural issues.

What Do We Mean by "Sustainable Development"?

Sustainable development –i.e. development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs– has become the main paradigm for long-term world development. It consists of three pillars: economic development, social development and protection of the environment.

Source: UN, 1987.

The SDGs make it clear that investment in education is a universal agenda, and not just a concern of the developing countries. Tackling socioeconomic problems or problems of ethnic diversity means coming up with answers. In this respect, a country such as Mexico or such as the developed countries that have inflows of refugees or migrants need to tackle the cultural differences among their population groups and develop effective, flexible learning systems that take stock of them.

In order to design educational policies, it is necessary to take the aforesaid difficulties which affect both speaking and writing skills and also young people's cycle into account so as to be inclusive.

Hence, education-policy design should take stock of diversity and also try to be specific. There are indeed many needs, including socioeconomic issues, catering for diversity and, of course, finding sufficient resources, so that we are clearly overrun, but we must draw up the agenda for endowing education with diversity.

It should be acknowledged that Mexico has made a big effort, both at the federal level and in several states, to find educational-policy solutions and seek out better channels for communicating information about these topics. In this regard, the National Educational Evaluation Institute (Spanish acronym: INEE) has played a central role in increasing the demand for information, keep the different groups updated and provide input for the design of better educational policies. While things are moving in the right direction, a lot

of us feel frustrated at not seeing any immediate progress in this matter such as impacts society as a whole, in the way and with the celerity that we would like, but the reality is that the demand is enormous.

Essential Educational Benchmarks

Although a debate is underway about using a single yardstick that combines the different components, there are currently three benchmarks for creating a framework that enables us to understand and follow up on these issues, and identify gaps, so as to focus resources and efforts. Obviously, the first of these is the benchmark pertaining to children's enrolment in school or initiation



in some other learning system. While there is criticism about formal education systems and the new types instruction available to deal with changing technology that requires us to update certain aspects of the curriculum, the reality is that, since the education system continues to be the place where children can acquire knowledge and learn how to socialize, the second benchmark would pertain to completing elementary education. There should also be a benchmark pertaining to learning outcomes, in order to monitor achievement of the aims that education systems set for themselves when planning schools, training teachers and school principals, and responding to social needs.

If I could add three more benchmarks, I would include ones that have to do with things such as access to pre-school education, which is especially important for poorer groups, or ones pertaining to socio-emotional aspects. Moreover, we need the equality yardsticks with breakdowns proposed in the SDG, since it will be clearly being impossible to increase the provision of universal learning if we do not identify the priorities and the population groups in most need.

However, if I had to skimp on the understanding that countries are limited in their ability to gather together all the benchmarks that they would like to have, given the cost of doing so and the shortage of human capital with the appropriate training I would wish, at least, to be able to ascertain how the education system is functioning using the three basic benchmarks pertaining to entry to, completion of, and learning outcomes in, elementary education.

Monitoring in the Countries Committed to the SDGs

It is interesting that the SDG agenda is a response to the one of the demands on multilateral and global organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, OECD and UNICEF that has been made by the countries, which have decided that benchmarks and goals are necessary. The aforesaid global educational yardsticks are contained in the SDGs, and each country should decide, depending on its educational-policy priorities, which ones it deems to be most pertinent or urgent. For example, if Mexico deems early education to be its priority, it should focus its resources and energy on this area over the next four or five years, supporting its aims with the conclusions reached in debates about educational

policy at the government level and discussions with researchers and social activists.

We at UNESCO must support and aid the countries, supplying them with ways to quantify the benchmarks, data sources, advocacy and capacity development. For their part, the countries should hold dialogues with their societies and ensure that all those involved are committed to the same educational priorities in order to subsequently ascertain what they need in terms of funding, human capital and support from multilateral agencies. This is the only way that they will be able to progress towards greater sustainability in the area of educational statistics and further achievement of their goals.

Institutional Capacities for Achieving the Goals

Once the priorities have been set, it is necessary to confirm that there are sufficient institutional capacities to achieve the educational-policy goals. The starting point is institutional capacity; there should be consensus among all those involved about the said priorities – i.e. when seeking to answer the question, “If you had to establish educational-investment priorities, which area would you focus on?”, non-government opinions should also be taken stock of. The educational agenda should set by society in general, so as to engender commitment.

The second institutional capacity has to do with the existence of coherent laws and infrastructure. For example, if the priority is early education, there should be a legal framework and enough resources to achieve it.

The third point is that the institutional policy that supports the process must be clearly established, along with organizations’ ability to implement the agenda. These are things that should be considered by each country when deciding whether it has the capacity to implement the educational policies that it has prioritized; it should discuss the issues and set up systems for sharing information and clearly communicating its educational-policy vision, as well as gathering data, structuring the evaluation and creating a statistical system in keeping with its policy aims, all of which adds up to hard work.

If it is subsequently necessary to determine how much investment in institutional and human-resource capacity is required, the technical requirements demanded by the agenda will have to be complied with.

Some countries don’t have the capacity to adopt international tests and these things should be determined be means of diagnoses, in order to put together a statistical-capacity plan with an operational focus.

How Can Information Be Used Effectively?

Here, I must level a criticism at all those of us who work in the different area of evaluation and educational-data publication, and especially those of us who promote learning and assessment via information. We tend to generate information output with the wrong user in mind, publishing data aimed at teachers, school principals, policymakers, academics or other members of the educational community, subsequently adding ample comments by ourselves.

The challenge consists in determining how many users of this information we have. We cannot use the same language for everybody. Though the information we publish should meet the needs of all the different protagonists, we can’t use the same language with an academic who wants to use a database, a parent who wants to know how to help his child, a teacher who has to face a group, a school principal who has to make different decisions, and well-intentioned NGOs and members of civil society who want to help and invest.

Since we cannot supply this information in a single format that will enable everybody to make effective use of it, we need to think about different communications channels, and different modalities, that make it more digestible; this is the challenge we face at all levels.

We are aware of users’ resistance to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and every other international or regional test. We who distribute information are responsible for this, because we haven’t managed to explain to teachers how they pool these information sources in order to use them in the classroom. Almost nobody is offering solutions to this problem.

It should not be forgotten that data have both a production cycle and a use cycle. The unhappiness about the money spent on international or country-level tests whose data are not exploited indicates that we are not efficiently managing the second of these cycles.

Shortfalls in the Use of Information

We always produce information in the belief that it will help us to ascertain how we are doing and how we can improve. We have very fertile information from the learning-evaluation system which, combined with effective use of the information from the educational data system, can result in significant improvement.

Nobody can deny that statistics are criticized and that there are complaints about the use of evaluation data, which is because we haven't managed to show that they are useful. Imagine undergoing a medical examination to see if you're anemic. Though you're neither a doctor nor a biochemist, you know you're sick when the red-blood-cell count exceeds the limit, and it's clear that you need more iron in your diet.

In the case of education, we haven't managed to convert the data into recommendations of concrete policy actions to be taken by each of the decision-makers, or convert them into a framework for specific solutions.

Many countries are now hurrying to use and interpret the yardsticks, but they forget that educational policy must first be discussed and a national vision consolidated. Only after these things have happened should benchmarks be selected, data collected, and plans for improvement and monitoring put together.

Two Recommendations for Ministers of Education

Of course, the first recommendation is that agreement should be reached about educational policies and shared priorities established. The second is that the evaluation and statistics systems be viable, well financed and immune from political pressure. This is essential for any type of monitoring of educational policy.

Indeed, UNESCO's Institute for Statistics enjoys a certain degree of independence in order to avoid being politically influenced by the debates that occur at the organizational level. Each country obviously has its own priorities, concerns and mindset, but, at the end of the day, the statistics, evaluation and monitoring systems are all there to foster improvement in learning outcomes, and this requires independence, transparency and funding.

Recommendations for the Country-level Teams

First, they should ensure that support is available, and that everybody is pursuing the same aims. Next, efforts should not be duplicated and data collection at the local, state, federal and global levels should be well harmonized. Why try to develop a local test that is the same as the country-wide test?

Finally, a good diagnosis of the institution's capacities should be available. If it is really necessary to gather data at the local level because the federal or international instruments fail to tackle certain problems, a diagnosis of legal, institutional and individual capacities should be carried out in order to put in place and implement an agenda in the different areas.

Of course a *mea culpa* is in order regarding our inability to provide the different countries and the local and district administrative offices with a clear guide to the instruments that exist at the international level to prevent efforts from being duplicated. €

Interview by Lizbeth Torres Alvarado



Readers can visit the site of UNESCO's Institute for Statistics at: <http://uis.unesco.org/>



Information about the 17 Sustainable-Develop Goals is available at: <https://goo.gl/ed8W4a>



The July 2017 report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the 17 Sustainable-Develop Goals is available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2017/>

DOSSIER: MYSTIQUE, IMPROVEMENT & EVALUATION OTHERS PERSPECTIVES

Collective Building: A Distinctive Focus for Regional Evaluation

Based on their experience, **Adriana Viteri, Pablo Orrego and Martín Icaza**, members of the technical-coordination department of the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (Spanish acronym: LLECE), who make up a technical team that interacts with Latin American ministries de education, suggest different ways of conceiving of evaluation, ranging from the regional to the local.

Providing Support and Coordination for the Fourth Comparative and Explanatory Study (Spanish acronym: ERCE)

Martín Icaza, Pablo Orrego and Adriana Viteri, who are technical assistants in the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education, described their functions as follows:

"We support a specific group of countries in all the activities that are being carried out by LLECE in the run-up to the Fourth Comparative and Explanatory Study (Spanish acronym: ERCE)," explained Icaza.

"Our work entails maintaining a close relationship between LLECE and the countries linked to UNESCO in order to acquire in-depth knowledge about the said countries," continued Orrego.



With regard to LLECE's operational structure and geographical coverage, Viteri commented:

"Currently, LLECE comprises education systems, and, in order to support the said systems, it was decided that the Laboratory's Technical-Coordination department would split the countries up into groups so that each of us, plus three technicians with specialized knowledge of education, could provide them with support and follow-up. This was done because we have a lot of countries and have to provide individualized support and focused follow-up to all of them."

She went on to describe the aims and characteristics of the data produced by the ERCE:

"Through our studies, we produce information that can, at a given moment, be consulted by decision-makers who interact with teachers, school principals –e.g. education ministers, undersecretaries, directors, coordinators– in order to implement educational policy. This is LLECE's function, and, unlike other evaluations, its tests are not designed for the purpose of drawing up ranking summaries or publishing results. They serve to produce information that gives feedback about educational policies in the region and provide teachers and school principals with information about what goes on in the classroom."

Having described LLECE's institutional framework, our interviewees talked about its approach and its initiatives and experiences.

Comparative and Explanatory Study; Distinctive Focus and Use of Results

Orrego explained that the LLECE studies concern themselves with educational improvement, since evaluation is worthless if it is not used to improve schools at the different levels:

"Now, given the demands of the educational agenda for 2030, the LLECE's have a broader working brief in response to the demands of the curricular reforms that have taken place in the Laboratory's member countries. For example, we have to update ourselves and, among other things, evaluate the contents that young people want to learn. In this regard, the things at the different study can be compared with each other, which means that the countries that took part in the Third Study will be able to compare its results with those of the Fourth Study. The different countries can

also be compared with each other, though that isn't the Laboratory's focus."

Orrego asserts that the LLECE studies are explanatory because:

"Besides measuring learning outcomes, they also evaluate the factors associated with them, which is yet another thing that distinguishes them from all the other international studies. In other words, along with the questionnaires about achievements, there is a series of questionnaires to be administered to school principals and teachers, aimed at explaining how and why the results in questions were achieved."

With regard to the distinctive focus of the studies, Viteri pointed out:

"UNESCO has a right-to-education approach that is linked to quality – i.e. since we know that the right to education can't be made good on without quality. This is the basis of the LLECE studies. Rather than merely seeing evaluation as a generator of results, we take a syncretic approach. From the outset, our curricular approach differentiates our studies from other international evaluations – i.e. we analyze each country's curriculum and include a little bit of each one in our instrument, in this way creating a regional tool based on national needs. This is important because the Laboratory's technical-coordination serves the different countries. The aforesaid approach has permeated the work of the country teams and resulted in a new way of conceiving of cooperation. This special focus means that the countries have to work together for the region to function."

However, the study alone does not suffice; its results have to be used. Icaza explained that such an emphasis is one of the Laboratory's earmarks:

"The LLECE studies stand out from the rest because the results come from, and are aimed at, the countries. Another distinctive feature is that the Laboratory is regional. Since the studies are designed based on analyses of the different curriculums, the countries identify with the results. Another thing that distinguishes us is that we are working to ensure that, when the results of the Fourth Study come out, they are widely disseminated so as to make educational improvement a reality. This will require hard work, because often the countries don't know what to do with the results when they receive them. We want them to own the results so that a regional ethos arises."

Institutional Strengthening

Viteri explained that, like UNESCO, the Laboratory has signed a working agreement with all the countries on basic issues, the first one being the implementation of the Fourth Study, which stresses the strengthening of capacities:

"For example, the work we do in Mexico, with the support of the INEE, has such an aim – i.e. to find ways to strengthen the national teams, because we don't want the institute's staff to acquire the knowledge just to do a one-off job, but, rather, to replicate their knowledge in the future and develop installed capacities within the region. Training a national evaluation team is a complex task. One success story is Ecuador, where National Educational Evaluation Institute (Spanish acronym: INEVAL has been operating since 2012, carrying out a wide range of activities. From this example, one can conclude that it is crucial that a national evaluation system and a local ministry of education be able to make policy decisions is making policy decisions that extend to other levels which ensue that an adequate management plan is implemented. Moreover, one needs to have the necessary technical capacity. Enlisting the support of international experts or sending the team to be trained in another country are actions that stem the policy-making that we've already mentioned, along with the arrangements required by different management models."

He gave some examples regarding this matter of whether local or outside training is necessary:

"Ecuador benefited from Mexico's experience. The Mexican team went there to build a national evaluation system and a national institute with a group of specialists. That's one type of model, but one cannot assert that it's the best one for other countries. There may be a model where the national teams are trained in a different way, as occurred in the case of El Salvador, Panama and other countries that are trying to set up their own evaluation institution. This is why it's important to have support not just from UNESCO, but also from other international organizations. It's a matter of a joint effort by the regions that signed the document stipulating the sustainable-development aims for 2030, and especially the fourth aim, which relates to education, regarding which the signatories undertook to provide high-quality education and lifelong learning."



Orrego added that the Laboratory's studies in this part of the world are comparable to those of the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), which is being developed in southern Africa and requires inter-country coordination:

"I mention this because, given the realities in our region, it's appropriate to set up a project with these kinds of features. The countries that have the highest crime rates in the world, with the highest levels of drug-trafficking and other problems that are inimical to the guaranteeing of the right to education are in Latin America and the Caribbean, so it's essential that the other countries step in."

With regard to the aforesaid topic, he explained:

"Inequality is regrettably a feature of our region. We at the Laboratory have seen that are countries with ample, well developed educational-evaluation mechanisms and others that are only just starting. This heterogeneity constitutes an opportunity for the study's design, because the countries have a chance to implement national models in order to find out what their own needs are. For example, many of them have developed studies to measure learning outcomes in their indigenous or migrant populations. Such complements to the Fourth Study are an opportunity for the countries to make targeted decisions in order to address their problems."

Support for Young People

As part of the agenda in the run-up to 2030, UNESCO, supported by the Chilean Foundation and a group of technical associates throughout the region, launched an initiative

called *Diles qué quieres aprender* ("Tell them what you want to learn") which consisted of asking young people between the ages of 15 and 25 to describe, in English, Spanish or Portuguese, what they want to learn and how, for the purpose informing the planning of education for 2030."

This study had two distinctive characteristics, says LLECE's group. First, the young people surveyed included both ones who were already enrolled in school and ones who were not, and, second, its first stage consisted of open questions about what the subjects wanted to learn and how, garnering 3,500 responses from children in 25 of the region's countries.

Subsequently, these questions were turned into multiple-choice ones, and a second stage added in which the respondents were asked to choose the three or four most pertinent options, garnering 65,000 answers, so that we can assert that we had a total universe of around 72,000 answers.

The results were interesting. Our initial hypothesis was that the young respondents would tend to criticize or reject the established educational model rather than their teachers and the school system, but we discovered that, instead of being opposed to the system, they accepted it, although they did ask for some improvements and additions:

Some of their answers were as follows:

– "I don't want to be told what to do in the classroom. I want to be in a classroom with a well-trained teacher who likes what she/he does and knows what she/he's doing, and with contents that will be useful to me for the next ten years, and not just today".

– "I don't just want to learn traditional

subjects".

The respondents' comments about the traditional subjects of Language, Mathematics and Science were significant:

– "I want to learn about Science, but I also want to learn about citizenship, respect, etc."

We noted that these young people were also thinking about topics such as migration, indigenous groups and globalization, among other things, and that schools are lagging behind with regard to this kind of content, and above all when it comes values and how we relate to others.

What students want, then, is to be taught how to learn, rather than studying things that they already know. They want to want to acquire skills that they can use to develop themselves over the next 10 to 15 years, above all because they can see that the world is changing fast.

Most of their learning takes place outside the classroom, via Internet and with their peers in the Street, and the ones who are more fortunate learn from their parents and siblings, which is why they want to keep the same school dynamic, while updating it to include external sources.

Underlying the "Tell them what you want to learn" initiative is UNESCO's commitment lifelong learning, and, since the said commitment needs to be shared, when we approach the Ministry of Education, it's important to stress that the Laboratory's work is part of UNESCO's activities, since the latter organization has a mandate from the different countries.

The aforesaid mandate was the first commitment that we made under the decla-

ration and framework for action pertaining to the run-up to the 2030 educational agenda, which we signed in 2015 and ratified in January of 2017, in the presence of a large gathering of ministers of education from the Buenos Aires region: thus confirming that the Laboratory is the said region's follow-up and monitoring mechanism:

The ministers tell us that UNESCO should help us to coordinate in order to achieve the aims, and we, as a regional office, and also speaking for the Laboratory, respond that this mechanism enables us to monitor, and follow up on, the benchmarks and achieve the educational goals for 2013, pointing out that the said mechanism is theirs, not ours, and hence they tell us what kind of information they need and we provide it.

This follow-up mechanism is the main

one in the region and now it's more solid because we have 19 education systems – i.e. almost the whole of Latin America. Moreover, the Laboratory is enthusiastic and is thinking of expanding, since it's a regional office for Latin America and the Latina y the Caribbean, whose diversity we must cater to at some point, step by step and gradually.

In this way, we are seeking to achieve development aim number four, pertaining to education and the Buenos Aires declaration, since, without this framework, we will not survive. In the final analysis, everything that LLECE does relates to this international commitment on the part of the different countries. €

Interviews: Laura Athié



More information about the “Tell them what you want to learn” initiative is available at: www.dilesquequieresaprender.org



You can find Mexico's nation-wide results in the Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (Spanish acronym: TERCE) via the INEE website at: <http://publicaciones.inee.edu.mx/buscadorPub/P1/D/314/P1D314.pdf>



You can consult the Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (Spanish acronym: SERCE) database at: <http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/bases-de-datos/ba-se-de-datos-serce>

DOSSIER: MYSTIQUE, IMPROVEMENT & EVALUATION ROADMAP

The Strengthening of Local Capabilities Within the Frame of the Follow-Up Strategy for Educational Improvement Guidelines

For INEE, to issue guidelines is only the beginning of a huge challenge. The authors ask themselves—How can we achieve that parents, teachers, supervisors, academics, and everyone interested in working to guarantee the right to education get to know these guidelines and discover their potential for improvement? On the basis of dissemination and managing, they propose three actions for this to happen.

GIULIANNA MARY MENDIETA MELGAR
General Director of INEE's Guidelines for Educational Improvement
mmendieta@inee.edu.mx

DORA DANIELA DORANTES SALGADO
Subdirector of INEE's Guidelines for the Improvement of Institutions and Policies
ddorantes@inee.edu.mx

In compliance to its constitutional mandate and in full exercise of its autonomy, the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE) has issued—from 2015 to this date—three sets of guidelines for educational improvement: The *Guidelines for Improving the Initial Training of Basic-Education Teachers*, in 2015; the *Guidelines for Improving the Educational Attention for Girls, Boys and Teenagers (NNA) Members of Migrant Agricultural Workers' Families*, in 2016, and the *Guidelines for Improving the Educational Attention for Indigenous Girls, Boys and Teenagers*, in 2017. Currently, the *Guidelines for Improving the Policy on Teacher's Professional Training and Development*, and the *Guidelines for Improving School Retention in Middle-Higher Education* are in construction.

For their part, the educational authorities (AE)—state and federal—gave a positive response, within the 60 natural-day period

stipulated in the INEE's law, to the three guidelines issued. This implied that the AE committed themselves to analyze and attend them within the frame of their educational planning and operation; some even annexed work plans with proposals to do it. It's pertinent to point out that the actions presented in these workplans promote, in most cases, the continuation of the strategies that had long been implemented by the educational authorities and, to a lesser degree, substantive and structural changes in policy to trigger gradual processes of improvement.

This situation derived in the need to reconsider the dissemination and follow-up actions that the Institute has carried out, and more aggressively to promote the use and attention given to the guidelines. According to Mark and Henry (2004), the instrumental use of the evaluations¹ depends on diverse factors, such as their quality, the manner in which their results are made known, as well as the information, the capabilities, and the skills possessed by the people responsible for the policies and programs that would implement the recommendations derived from the evaluations, among others.

Confronted with this, INEE has anticipated the development of a *Follow-Up Strategy of the Guidelines* that integrates mechanisms for communicating, disseminating, offering technical backup, and strengthen-

ing capabilities. The aim of this strategy is to know to which degree the AE attends to the guidelines, meaning whether or not they have been incorporated into their educational programming and planning, and, additionally, whether or not they have become a relevant asset for decision-making tending to the improvement of the quality of education and its equity.

In order to achieve this, it has been proposed to emphasize the follow-up actions in three substantive areas: *a)* Dissemination and communication; *b)* Knowledge management; and *c)* Management of issuance and response to the guidelines, which are detailed below.

a) Dissemination and Communication

Following an exercise of analysis and self-evaluation, it was concluded that while the Guidelines are a constitutional attribution of the INEE and a substantive axis of the National Educational Evaluation Policy (PNEE), it is necessary to communicate them and make them understandable to different audiences, not only to educational authorities. Therefore, this component of the follow-up strategy aims to answer the following question: How can we inform parents, teachers, supervisors, academics, civil society organizations, and anybody interested in working to guarantee the right to education in our country about the existence and potential for improvement of these guidelines?

While these other actors have no direct legal responsibilities regarding the attention given to the guidelines, they share with the INEE and the AE the desire and the mission to improve education in our country, as well as to advance towards quality and equity, which is why they constitute key allies in favoring its implementation.

Thus, one of the actions to boost the communication-and-dissemination component is the mapping and exhaustive analysis of these key actors, upon which it is possible to combine initiatives that favor establishing of alliances and joined efforts for inter-institutional coordination.

Likewise, a substantial part of the follow-up strategy includes the implementation of discussion tables and/or workshops with the school authorities, in coordination with the INEE Directorates in the federal entities, in which the guidelines will be communicated, the capabilities for their implementation will be strengthened, and the appropriation

of their aims will be promoted. This mechanism is very important for their success and sustainability, since teachers, directors, and supervisors are the most stable—and also the more permanent—actors in the National Educational System and, therefore, they could exert a greater level of influence in the promotion of educational improvement in the schools and the classrooms.

At last, but not least, it is crucial to make the key messages of the guidelines known to the media and to opinion leaders, because they have the capacity to replicate them and access multiple groups of interested actors.

b) Knowledge Management

This sphere of action has the objective to gather, analyze, and disseminate information, coming from different sources, with the purpose of providing feedback to the actions that the AE are planning to engage in and, thus, fostering the appropriation of the guidelines.

The sources of information that will be used are the following:

1. **Analysis of the workplans and/or planning in which the guidelines were incorporated** which, besides providing information on the lines of action of the AE, represents a key opportunity to provide feedback to the people responsible for their implementation and to suggest to them courses of action that are innovative and faithful to the aims of the guidelines.
2. **Sessions of technical backup with the AE**, which have three purposes: To clear doubts, clarify, and address any concerns that authorities may have on the guidelines; to guide their attention within the frame of the key aspects for improvement; and to be in possession of specific information on the process of implementation and the evidence of its progress.
3. **Implementation of follow-up questionnaires**, that will provide complementary information on the usage and value of the guidelines in the decision-making of local and federal administrations, as well as the factors that have favored or hindered their attention.
4. **Follow-up meetings**, to learn more about the guidelines, as well as to promote the exchange of experiences between the educational authorities of the federal entities.





5. Work and exchange groups in the digital platform. The INEE has arranged discussion groups so that people responsible for the attention to the guidelines can share information and exchange experiences, as well as receive additional information from the Institute.

Therefore, the purpose of these actions is that educational and school authorities know and understand the guidelines better, have more and better tools, resources, and capabilities to implement them, and be able to generate substantive changes that promote educational improvement.

Likewise, with the information obtained through these means, it will be possible to identify innovative and/or relevant practices, undertaken by educational and school authorities to resolve the educational problems identified in the documents of the guidelines.

Such practices will be made known to other educational authorities in the follow-up forums, accompaniment sessions, and the online platform, so that they can discuss their pertinence and the possibility of incorporating them to their own state planning. From the perspective of the INEE, it is fundamental to promote the exchange between federal entities in such a way that they are able to generate collaborative spaces to build proposals for the solution to common problems, or ideas and points of reference on how to optimize their work within the cycle of public policies.

Additionally, as part of that component we have provisions to elaborate, socialize, and offer follow-up to a group of indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, that will enable us to identify the degree of attention to the guidelines. In other words, to know whether the key aspects of improvement have been incorporated or not to educational planning, and if they are suitable for local contexts. This monitoring exercise will strengthen the accountability on the guidelines' contributions, as well as the elaboration of specific reports, directed to each educational authority, that will offer feedback and serve as a roadmap to promote informed decision-making.

c) Management of the Issuance and Reply to the Guidelines

This area of labor aims to possess systemized information on the process of issuing and replying to the guidelines, with the aim of complying with the transparency and accountability obligations indicated in the Federal Law of Transparency and Access to Public Information, which, in its article 72, states that the INEE must make available to the public and actualize the answers that the educational authorities submit to the Institute with regards to the guidelines issued, and the degree of compliance or attention to them. To make this process more efficient, a technological platform will be available to simplify the administrative and management processes in that respect.

Overall, the *Follow-Up Strategy of the Guidelines* reaffirms the commitment of the Institute to support, accompany, and strengthen the capabilities of those key actors responsible for the design and implementation of educational policies. Also, to promote changes and improvements in education, from the regional and local spheres, based on the use of the evidence generated by the evaluations. €

1 The *instrumental use of the evaluations* refers to the direct use of the findings of the evaluations within public-policy decisions.

References

Mark, M. and Henry, G. (2004). The Mechanisms and Outcomes of Evaluation Influence. *Evaluation*, 10(1), 35-57.



Get to know the Microsite of the Guidelines at the INEE's site: <http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/proyectos/directrices>

IN THE CLASSROOM

Not the End; Just the Beginning: Interstate Agreements On Education for the Children of Migrant Agricultural Day Laborers

Stemming from the guidelines issued by the INEE as part of the actions mandated by the National Policy for the Evaluation of Education, the agreement between the states of Sinaloa and Guerrero and the La Paz Interinstitutional Agreement pave the way for making good on the right of the sons and daughters of migrant agricultural day laborers along the Pacific Migratory Route to receive the same high-quality education as all other Mexican children and youths.

“They brought me here when I was a baby. We travel back and forth, staying about two months each time,” explains 13-year-old Valentín Montes from the state of Sinaloa, who migrates seasonally to the farmlands of the state of Baja California Sur.

“I was born in the town of Álvarez in the state of Guerrero, where we lived in house that was built half out of brick and half of wood. We came here three years ago and now we live in a room on the Cachanilla ranch. My mother and father work in the field, sometimes sowing chillies and sometimes harvesting or packing them. I attend Migrant Children’s School Number 17, where I’m in the fifth grade, and I like it because there are games and sports fields there where we can play, and before I couldn’t go to school. I’d encourage other children to enrol in school, because they can learn a lot there,” says Irma Yazmín Terrero Techale, a migrant girl from the state of Baja California Sur.

Valentín and Yazmín typify the children of migrant agricultural day laborers who find it very difficult to enrol in school and stay enrolled because they are constantly moving from one state to another. It is estimated that, while there are between 279 thousand and 326 thousand such children of school age, only 14% to 17% of them attend school.

Héctor Jiménez Márquez, Minister of Education for the state of Baja California Sur, describes the situation:

“In our state, we receive 20 thousand agricultural day laborers every year, some of who have settled here permanently so that there are now three Mixtec and Zapotec settlements in the Vizcaíno valley and people who have put down permanent roots in Los Cabos and La Paz, with the result that we need to make a coordinated effort to provide education to these ethnic groups.

These children and youths need more help in order to enter the education system, stay in it, and achieve maximal learning outcomes. They need us to make good on their right to receive high-quality education via a flexible system that satisfies their needs. This is why the National Institute for the Evaluation (Spanish acronym: INEE) issued the Guidelines for Educating the Sons and Daughters of Migrant Agricultural Day Laborers, and set up dialogues among the different educational institutions, in August of 2016, leading to the signing of two historic agreements for the provision of equitable high-quality education to the sons and daughters of migrant agricultural day laborers: the Sinaloa-Guerrero Agreement and the La Paz Interinstitutional Agreement”.

The National System for the Evaluation of Education and the INEE Guidelines

The National Policy for the Evaluation of Education (Spanish acronym: PNEE) is a basic mainstay in the running of the National System for the Evaluation of Education (Spanish acronym: SNEE). Thanks to the guidelines issued by the INEE, consisting of a set of policy recommendations aimed at guiding the making of decisions for the purpose of improving the most pertinent aspects of Mexican education, the SNEE is unique among the world’s systems for and regulating and evaluating education.

Guidelines for the education of the sons and daughters of migrant agricultural day laborers.

1. Redesign education policies based on greater government funding, planning, institutional coordination and the participation of society.
2. Ensure that there is a pertinent intercultural educational model and that suitable professional teaching staff are available.
3. Develop a Unified Educational Information System and adapt school-coordination guidelines.
4. Foster innovation, educational evaluation and the participation of society in project management.

To draw up the said guidelines, which are based on both the results of evaluations and educational research and the analysis of government actions aimed at solving educational problems, dialogues are sustained with members of society and educators, including teachers, school principals, public servants, academics and representatives of NGOs.

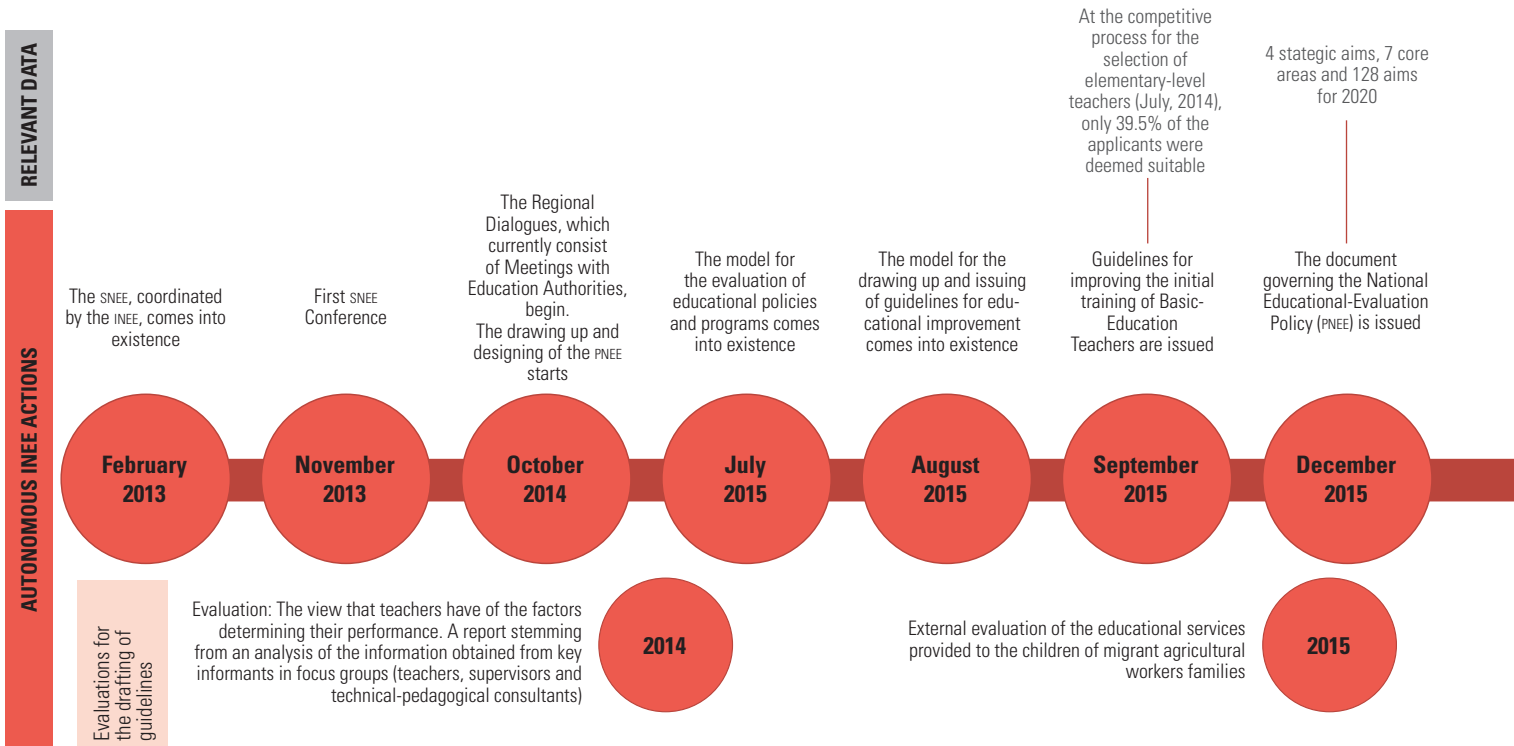
The Job of Strengthening Institutions

Within the framework of the SNEE and its 2016-2020 Medium-term Program (Spanish acronym: PMP SNEE), the actions taken to strengthen institutions set out to implement the guidelines and create forums for coordination among institutions (Article 9 of the Guidelines for the drawing up and monitoring of the Medium-term Program of the National System for the Evaluation of Education).

According to the above definition, the agreements reached between 2016 and 2017 on the Guidelines for Educating the Sons and Daughters of Migrant Agricultural Day Laborers are evidence of how a plan can be drawn up aimed at pooling efforts and strengthening institutions so as to help a highly vulnerable group of Mexicans.

The Guerrero-Sinaloa Agreement

In the city of Culiacán, on the 25th of October, 2016, representatives of the states of Guerrero and Sinaloa signed the first inter-institutional cooperation agreement with the INEE for the purpose of improving the provision of edu-



cation to the sons and daughters of migrant agricultural day laborers, and, since then, the coordinators of the Program for Educational Inclusion and Equality (Spanish acronym: PIEE) of the Mexican Ministry of Education (Spanish acronym: SEP) in the aforesaid states have kept in touch with each other.

Guillermo Franco Mora, the coordinator of the PIEE in the state of Guerrero, explains:

“Guerrero is a state that exports day laborers, mainly from its Montaña Alta region. Twice a year, these people leave their homes to work mainly on the Baja California peninsula and in the states of Guanajuato, Morelos and Sinaloa, and we’ve registered as many as 7 thousand children who migrate to these places with their families”.

The La Paz Inter-Institutional Agreement

The Inter-Institutional Agreement on the right of the sons and daughters of migrant agricultural day laborers to receive equitable high-quality education was signed by the INEE and the education authorities of the states that comprise the Pacific migration route in La Paz, Baja California Sur, on the 25th of April, 2017.

The said document envisages the following six key actions:

1. The appointment of a liaison person at the state level responsible for compiling and following up on information about the children of migrant agricultural day laborers along the migration route and for ongoing communication with the liaison person in the other state.
2. The timely reciprocal provision of the requisite information about the children of migrant agricultural day laborers so as to ensure that they receive a stable education as they pass from state to state.
3. The development of academic and administrative mechanisms to ensure that the children of migrant agricultural day laborers follow a continuous study path as they move from state to state.
4. The achievement of better coordination with the local offices in charge of the Human-development Programs, the *Prospera* social-inclusion program and the Support Program for Agricultural Day Laborers implemented by the Ministry for Social Development aimed at ensuring continuity in the support available to students and their families as they move from state to state.
5. The holding of periodic meetings, either online or in-person, for the purpose of jointly evaluating the extent of the ac-

tions taken and reporting on improvement risks and opportunities.

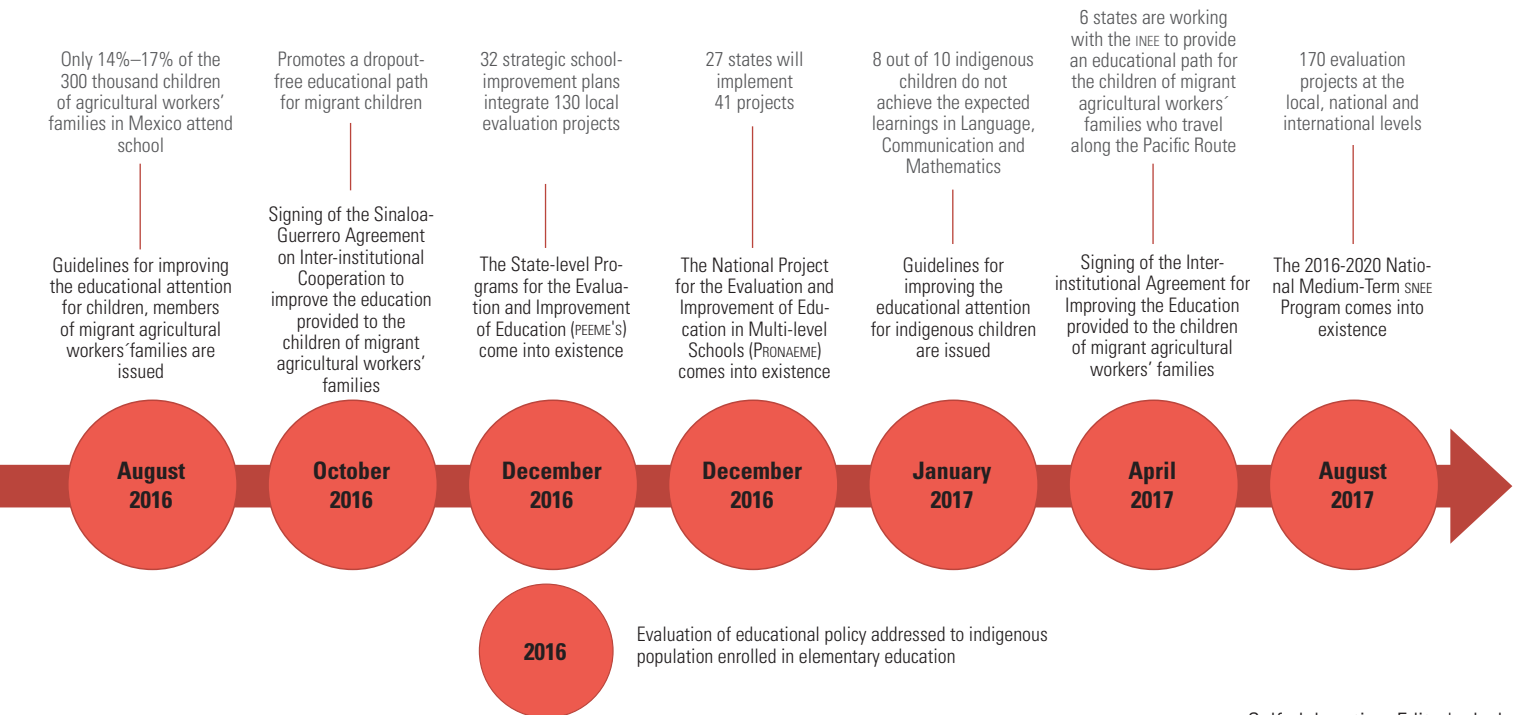
6. The provision of support for following up on the actions and results stemming from the agreement.

The INEE’s Commitment in the States

The Local State-level Offices of the INEE are crucial to the development of strategies aimed at strengthening institutions.

With regard to his local strategy, Juan Gálvez says:

“Over 20 years ago, I had the good fortune of becoming a community teacher in a rural area of San Quintín in Baja California. This experience made me realize that the education received by a lot of these children and youths is their only means of getting on in life, and so I believe that the guidelines issued by the INEE are very relevant, and that it is up to each state to create its own follow-up systems. The Local INEE office in Baja California Sur will continue to help disseminate the guidelines among the different members of the educational, political, social and manufacturing sectors, for example by creating local systems for cooperating with the National Council for the Promotion of Education.



Self elaboration. Editor's desk.

Benefits of the Agreements for Teachers and the Children of Migrant Agricultural Day Workers

Up to now, each teacher has developed his/her own tools to deal with student mobility, which means that there is no follow-up on each student's individual learning path, says Jesús Alberto Guerrero Salgado, a teacher in a school for migrant children in Vizcaíno, Baja California Sur:

"The unknown quantity in schools for migrants is the context. For example. I did my studies in a tourist community and arriving in such a place changes both the context and your life".

"The agreements that have been signed seek to create standardized tools and processes aimed at making the efforts of teachers and school principals more fruitful," says Ivette Solís Rubio, the teacher of a first-year group in Primary School for Migrant Children No. 7 in Vizcaíno, Baja California Sur:

"When the children come from different locations, we give them a diagnostic test to find out what they really know and what they still need to learn, coming up with strategies based on the results".

"Networking is essential," explains Karla Yesenia Alarcón Carrillo, a fourth- to sixth-year teacher who also is the acting principal in Primary School for Migrant Children No. 5 in Vizcaíno, Baja California Sur. "We

teachers see what the children need," she says. "For example, they need to learn to read and write, and we create our own materials so that they can achieve this and pass to the next grade. Teachers need to help each other by sharing materials, strategies and ideas".

In this context, the guidelines become an important support for teachers of boys and girls from migrant day laborers' families.

The Agreements as Promoters of Education-Policy Actions

Though the Sinaloa-Guerrero Agreement and the La Paz Inter-Institutional Agreement are, indeed, regional-cooperation plans, they also have a more humane aim, explained Julián Santiago Luna, the Assistant General Director of Educational Services for the Public Education Institute of the state of Oaxaca during the signing of the La Paz Agreement:

"It is to dispel the age-old sadness that is felt, above all, by those children who are entitled to education under the Constitution, but whose families can't afford to pay for it, that we are signing this agreement today in the Oaxacan manner – i.e. from the heart and with commitment".

Javier Mancilla Miranda, the INEE's Associate Director General in the state of Oaxaca, stated: "It is up to the INEE offices in the different states to create the working groups and mechanisms that will enable us to change the

conditions of migrant children. Our aim is to bring about the requisite government actions and ensure that the requisite institutional and inter-institutional mechanisms exist to follow up on the agreements". ☞

Interviews carried out by Lizbeth Torres during the First Ordinary Session of the SNEE Conference held on the 26th of April, 2017, and the signing of the La Paz Agreement in La Paz, Baja California Sur, on the 25th of April, 2017.

The *Gazette* wishes to thank Juan Gálvez Lugo, the INEE's Associate Director General director in the state of Baja California Sur for carrying out the interviews with the children of migrant agricultural day laborers that are transcribed in this article.



The Guidelines for the Provision of Education to the Sons and Daughters of Migrant Agricultural Day Laborers can be found at: <http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/proyectos/directrices>



Information about the INEE, the SNEE and the 2016-2020 PMP is available in the supplement entitled *Pautas para el acompañamiento de los Programas Estatales de Evaluación y Mejora Educativa* at: <https://goo.gl/rFpiaw>

The background features a soft-focus image of several pencils. Overlaid on this are several semi-transparent circles in shades of red and orange. One large orange circle is in the upper right, another large orange circle is in the lower left, and a smaller red circle is in the lower right. The text is positioned in the bottom left corner.

**National
Educational
Evaluation
Policy
Gazette in
Mexico**