



PISA for Development Brief **2**

PISA for Development: Benefits for participating countries

- Eight countries are participating in the PISA for Development (PISA-D) initiative: Cambodia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Senegal and Zambia.
- PISA-D was developed to make PISA more accessible and relevant to middle- and low-income countries.
- Through their participation in PISA-D, countries will develop the capacity to manage large-scale learning assessments and use the resulting data to inform national policies and evidence-based decision making.

The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is conducted every three years. Since it began in 2000, more than 80 countries have participated in PISA, including 40 middle-income countries and 4 low-income countries. A study of these countries' experiences in the assessment shows that while they have benefited from capacity building and from the data that emerged from the assessment, they encountered financial, technical and contextual challenges when participating in PISA. The PISA-D initiative, launched in 2013, builds on the experiences of these 44 middle- and low-income countries in PISA and is designed to make PISA more relevant and accessible to a wider range of countries.

PISA-D countries are developing and piloting enhanced PISA instruments.

PISA assesses 15-year-olds' proficiency in reading, mathematics and science and measures students' skills in applying what they have learned in school to real-life situations. Through PISA results, policy makers can gauge the knowledge and skills of students in their own countries in comparison with those in other countries, set policy targets against measurable goals achieved in other education systems, and learn from policies and practices of countries which have demonstrated improvement. This kind of international benchmarking is more relevant now than ever, given that every country in the world has signed up to the Education Sustainable Development Goal agenda.

Eight PISA-D countries (Cambodia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Senegal and Zambia) have partnered with the OECD to develop and test enhanced PISA assessment instruments that are designed to capture a wider range of performance levels and social contexts. With the exception of Panama, these countries have never before participated in PISA, but they have experience with regional or international assessments and conduct national student assessments.

While there are undoubtedly high-performing students in all of the PISA-D countries, based on the experience of the middle-income countries that have participated in PISA, many 15-year-olds in these countries can be expected to perform at the lower levels of proficiency. PISA-D's enhanced test instruments will be able to measure these students' performance in a way that ensures that the results are comparable to the main PISA results. The enhanced contextual questionnaire will also allow for a deeper understanding of how certain factors – such as the socio-economic background of students or the learning environment in classrooms – are associated with learning outcomes in different contexts.



A big challenge for PISA is to ensure that out-of-school youth are included in the assessment. An estimated 30% of 15-year-olds in PISA-D countries are not enrolled in school. The OECD and six of these eight countries are also pioneering new methods and approaches to include out-of-school youth in the assessment – a crucial first step towards addressing social exclusion.

PISA-D countries report that they have joined the initiative for several reasons but chiefly because they consider that PISA has the potential to serve as a powerful tool for evidence-based policy making in their contexts.

PISA-D countries benefit from a range of capacity-building and peer-learning activities.

PISA-D helps to build the capacity of participating countries to conduct large-scale learning assessments, and analyse and use the results to support national policies and evidence-based decision making. PISA-D countries have each established a capacity-building plan based on a detailed analysis of their ability to implement the PISA assessment. The OECD offers participating countries training on a variety of topics, including framework and item development, sampling, translation/adaptation of survey instruments, data management, coding of students’ responses, data analysis and reporting. In strengthening their own ability to implement PISA and other large-scale assessments, PISA-D countries are also improving their capacity to track their performance in relation to the Education Sustainable Development Goal, which promotes inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

PISA-D countries also engage in peer-to-peer learning with countries already participating in PISA. They exchange information about working with education stakeholders, using PISA to inform a broader national discussion about the value and standards of assessment, and preparing national reports and disseminating the assessment results. Results from PISA-D will be available in 2018.

PISA-D requires countries to develop a strategy to communicate and engage with a variety of stakeholders throughout the project. With the assessment results, PISA-D countries will have a robust data set on the skills and knowledge of their 15-year-olds. The national teams in each of the participating countries are engaging with a range of actors, including policy makers, academics, media, school leaders, teachers, parents and students, to maximise the use of these results and give new shape to national and international policy dialogues on how to improve learning outcomes and the quality of education.

References

Lockheed, M., T. Prokic-Bruer and A. Shadrova (2015), *The Experience of Middle-Income Countries Participating in PISA 2000-2015*, PISA, The World Bank, Washington, D.C./OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI:[10.1787/9789264246195-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264246195-en)

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