Australian Council for Educational Research in the International Context

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Improving learning

• The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is an independent, not-for-profit, national educational research organisation established in 1930.

• ACER’s mission is to create and promote knowledge and tools that can be used to improve learning across the lifespan.
Expertise in large scale, international assessments

• ACER leads a consortium of research organisations that manages the OECD Programme for International School Assessment (PISA). Reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy of 15-years old in 60 countries.
• Participation in and knowledge of IEA international surveys in education since 1960s, e.g., TIMSS, PISA, PIRLS
Support for national education assessment initiatives

Example: Towards a conceptual framework for evidence based policy changes based on an educational assessment programme:

- implement the assessment to gather information
- analyse the data produced
- reflect on the results and search for evidence of effectiveness
- what can be learned from the evidence?
- leading and guiding improvement

Background paper *Regional Educational Assessment Initiative for the Arab States.*
John Cresswell, ACER, 2010
Support national capacity in assessment

A two-stage project to support and enhance national capacity to review, reform, reform and re-orientate the current system of assessment in Zimbabwe.

Evaluate the degree of change, and the extent to which this can be attributed to the program.

A comprehensive program of engagement to build national capacity in student assessment, implementing an annual assessment.

Support the feedback of findings into better teaching and school-management practices.

ACER Zimbabwe Early Learning Assessment Assessment project for UNICEF.
Partnerships

• Provide support and knowledge to agencies such as AusAID and international agencies
• ACER is a partner in the new UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) initiative in East Asia and the Pacific.

_The UIS Observatory of Learning Outcomes Catalogue Component: Pilot Study_

• Efforts to place emphasis on _importance of learning outcomes_ and place it at the heart of the _Education for All_ agenda
Education cooperation and exchange

• transfer of ideas and educational opportunities
• growth of resources available for education
• impetus for improving quality by sharing experiences, observing good practices, introducing new policy approaches
• benefits of contacts and cultural understanding.

• From discussion paper prepared by ACER as background for East Asia Summit Education Ministers’ Meeting, 2011
Research and advice for local and national activities

• AusAID Education Resource Facility – ACER offers knowledge base and technical support needed to design and manage effective education assistance programs.

• For example, reviews of research and effective practice in response to requests for specific information, such as the *Literature review on language issues in education, with a focus on children learning in a language other than their home language*

• ACER Cunningham Library as a resource.
Program evaluation capacity

An example:

• **Evaluation of textbooks and workbooks. UNICEF, South Africa**

• Formative evaluation of efficiency (quality) and effectiveness (utilisation) of texts and workbooks in schools.

• Feedback on performance of language and Mathematics textbooks
ACER in an increasing international context

ACER has experience in, and is committed to providing support through developing assessment services, consultancies, research, evaluations, and professional development programs for ministries of education and a wide range of agencies and organisations in international contexts.