

Press release: OECD Reviews of School Resources: Colombia

Education will be crucial for building a post-conflict society and improving life and well-being in Colombia's rural areas

Despite progress towards improving coverage and quality, Colombia still needs to considerably improve opportunities for rural children and youth, a new OECD report highlights.

The [*OECD Reviews of School Resources: Colombia*](#) report, presented today in Bogotá by the OECD's Director for Education and Skills Andreas Schleicher and the Colombian Minister of National Education Yaneth Giha, says that the country has made education a priority in recent years and begun to implement a range of valuable strategies.

Colombia has set ambitious goals to increase access to early childhood education, foster teaching quality, extend learning time, renew school infrastructure and make education more inclusive. The peace agreement to end the country's more than 50-year-long conflict commits the country to improve education in rural areas, recognising education as a pillar for peace and rural development.

However, Colombia faces a challenging fiscal situation. Slower economic growth and efforts to reduce the structural deficit to 1% of GDP by 2022 have narrowed the space for public spending. In the coming years, Colombia therefore needs to make careful spending choices to raise quality and close persisting gaps, including between rural and urban areas.

“Colombia's schools today are Colombia's economy and society tomorrow. The recent improvements in the quality of educational outcomes show that progress is possible but far more needs to be done to keep the country on a path to shared prosperity. The country needs to invest more in its future through better preparing its children and youth, but it also needs to invest more equitably.” Andreas Schleicher said today. “Many important elements have been put in place, and Colombians need to stay the course patiently and persistently to see the fruits of these reforms”

The report recommends:

- **Allocating sufficient resources and addressing priority areas gradually.** Colombia should draw on a range of funding mechanisms to increase available resources, combined with better quality assurance and greater technical capacity at the sub-national level. Given the higher returns in the long run and the benefits for greater equity, investments should prioritise the early years. The General System of Transfers, Colombia's main funding mechanism, should be reformed and education boards should be re-established.
- **Improving school organisation and leadership and creating a more pertinent educational offer.** While rural education provides opportunities, it also presents challenges given the greater distances and lower population density. The school network needs to be organised so it provides rural students with access to good-quality education and good conditions for school management. Improving transport and boarding and fostering greater collaboration between schools will be critical. Greater poverty and lower aspirations pose particular barriers for the educational success of rural students. Education authorities need to create a more pertinent educational offer for rural youth, building partnerships with other actors and links with broader rural development strategies.

- **Establishing a more comprehensive vision of professionalism and allocating teachers more equitably.** The concept of schools as learning communities still needs to gain further ground. All teachers, including those in remote rural schools, should benefit from opportunities for collaboration. Better professional opportunities and working conditions would also help make teaching in rural and disadvantaged contexts more attractive and help address inequities in teacher recruitment. Teacher policies should be underpinned by effective stakeholder engagement, including teacher and school leader representatives as well as teacher educators.

OECD Reviews of School Resources: Colombia is available [here](#).

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