

**Timeline**  
2020

# Using Data to Inform Education Programming in Peru During COVID-19

## Abstract

*Peru's Ministry of Education (Minedu) is using data to make informed decisions about how to deliver education during the pandemic.*

IPA, Minedu, and its partners conducted a series of research activities to respond to COVID-19's education challenges. The results had concrete impacts on education policy in Peru, supporting Minedu's efforts to make informed decisions about how to deliver education during the pandemic.



## The Challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education systems across the world: in early April 2020, UNESCO estimated that 90 percent of children worldwide were out of school. Governments were tasked with determining how to deliver remote education, mitigate learning loss, and assess how their students were doing—nearly overnight. In Peru, persistent existing challenges like regional inequality and high dropout rates among vulnerable students left the country's 8 million school children particularly vulnerable to COVID-19's impacts. This is even more worrisome considering that the quality of education in the country has still large room for improvement. Peru has consistently ranked among the lowest-performing countries in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), both in reading and mathematics scores.

## The Evidence

IPA, Minedu, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) partnered to design an 8,000-person nationwide survey of parents to use as the starting point of the remote learning monitoring strategy. We also design and pilot a distance education assessment tool for preschool children.

With the World Bank, IPA and Minedu collaborated to use machine learning tools and an accompanying survey to help anticipate crucial considerations regarding the delivery and maintenance of tablets for vulnerable students. We also collaborated to update the content of a telenovela campaign to reduce school dropout that had been previously evaluated in collaboration with the Ministry.

## The Impact

These activities have already had concrete impacts on education policy in Peru.

- The nationwide survey helped Minedu learn about their remote learning strategy just weeks after its launch and validate the use of the phone survey to monitor its progress. Minedu continued using this method for monitoring the strategy through the next months, which allowed them to have updated information on areas where access to the programming was low and advise local and regional units on how to use their existing resources to improve connectivity for local students and families (e.g. contracts with local TV and radio providers with a larger presence in the area).
- The nationwide survey provided insights that helped IPA work with Minedu on the design of interventions targeting parents' and students' necessities. Heterogeneities in access to programming as well as in use and satisfaction, especially regarding radio programming, led IPA to work with the Ministry on a summer school radio program to provide math content to pre-school children in remote areas, funded by the Old Dart Foundation and the Inter-American Development Bank. Also, the insights about the

socio-emotional toll of the pandemic on parents led the team to work on an SMS campaign to provide socio-emotional support to parents.

- The nationwide monitoring efforts helped Minedu validate a strategy to bridge connectivity issues such as sending tablets to distant students, and the tablet survey and Machine Learning exercise carried out with the World Bank provided specific recommendations for distributing tablets and related materials.
- Building on the experience of the parents' survey, Minedu conducted a later survey aimed at teachers that helped to adapt teacher orientation materials to more effectively meet teachers' needs, based on the information teachers identified as lacking.