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Case Study

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The National Building the Foundations for Learning Program (CON BASE)

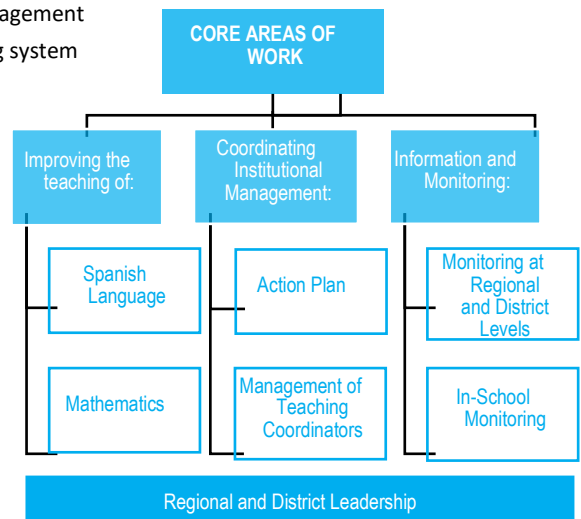
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Nationwide COVID-19 school closures from March 2020 to November 2021 furthered students’ learning losses, building on an identified learning crisis before the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2017, only 12 per cent of children in Grade 3 had reached the required levels for literacy and 27 per cent for numeracy, therefore making improving learning a priority in 2022. For students to reach the required literacy and numeracy skills by the end of third grade, the Dominican Republic’s Ministry of Education (MoE) in collaboration with UNICEF developed a national Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) model between 2018 and 2022 for lower primary to improve the quality of classroom teaching, building on a previous prototype developed pre-pandemic.

Building the Foundations for Learning Program (CON BASE) consists of three core areas:

1. Improving teacher quality
2. Coordinating institutional management
3. An information and monitoring system

CON BASE was launched in [November 2022](#) as a national MoE approach to improve the quality of teaching processes and children’s foundational learning skills and outcomes in the first three grades of primary school. CON BASE seeks to boost capacities within MoE systems and structures, especially national, regional and



district technical staff capacities focused on developing pedagogical skills for more effective teaching of Spanish Language and Mathematics. Throughout 2022, 418 district and regional technicians (in-service teacher educators) from 104 of the 122 educational districts in the Dominican Republic were provided with professional development that improved their capacities as trainers in best practices of Language and Mathematics teaching. They then worked with teachers and school management teams to develop their teaching skills to improve children's foundational learning outcomes. To support the training, [Teaching Guides](#) from Grades 1 to 3 were developed and provided to teachers, with each Guide consisting of six teaching sequences specially developed for teaching. These were complemented by Theoretical Guides that explain how the teaching and learning models were created. One is for Spanish Language and the other is for Mathematics, which can also be transferred to other contents, areas and grades. Grade 3 students who attended school remotely for most of Grade 1 and all of Grade 2 were taught by teachers trained with Reinforcement Guides. These Guides helped teachers tailor their lessons to aid in improving their students' foundational learning.

RESULTS

- The CON BASE programme has reached all the Dominican Republic's 18 educational regions and 37 per cent of the districts (46 of 122) and has guided more than 3,500 teachers and 700 educational school coordinators in 429 schools.
- At the beginning of the 2022 academic school year, more than 6,000 teachers supported learning recovery in Grade 3 using the Teaching Guides that benefited 157,784 students (77,314 girls).
- 446,934 students – 144,722 first graders (70,914 girls), 144,428 second graders (73,658 girls) and 157,784 third graders (77,134 girls) – benefitted from 26,885 teachers (6,921 first grade, 6,617 second grade, 7,208 third grade and 6,139 multi-grade schools) who received training through the CON BASE programme.

LESSONS LEARNED

- CON BASE's three-pronged model enables MoE to improve the quality of teaching in the early grades in a single program, within their systems and structures.
- Securing the support of technicians, teachers and other school staff was critical in the implementation of the CON BASE model and in ensuring their input on improving the model for teaching earlier grades.
- Teachers need to have the necessary tools, materials and instruction to understand and implement CON BASE in a way that addresses the needs of their students.
- Time, effort and understanding among all stakeholders is needed to change educational policy. Stakeholders need to collaborate to strengthen the technical capacities of the educational system, and to change practices gradually for technical teams to have the capacity to gather evidence that can improve educational processes.

NEXT STEPS

The national CON BASE programme will continue to be expanded throughout the Dominican Republic's educational system. Plans for a digital platform are underway, which will provide teachers, educational coordinators and district and regional technicians with a range of tools to improve their skills set. The CON BASE programme will undergo ongoing monitoring and evaluation which will be used to ensure ongoing positive results are obtained and to address any future challenges.