

Preface

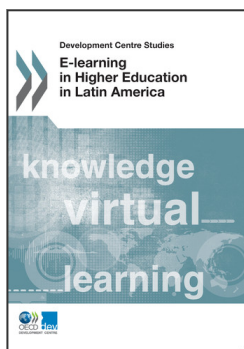
The relevance of higher education for economic and social progress is unquestionable, particularly in a globalised, knowledge-based economy. Skills are a major driver of labour productivity and of an economy's ability to sustain its competitiveness and escape development traps. Developing the right sets of cognitive and non-cognitive skills has emerged as a major determining factor for people and economies to participate meaningfully in the global economy. As stressed in the OECD Skills Strategy, "skills have become the global currency of the 21st century".

Yet higher education in Latin America faces many challenges. Access has expanded substantially in the last decade, but it is still relatively low and unequal across socio-economic groups. Quality is poor when compared with international standards, and there are large differences across higher education institutions. The link with labour markets is often weak, with significant gaps between the labour demands and the skills that higher education supplies. And the financial sustainability of higher education systems is sometimes becoming a concern in the face of increasing international competition and rising costs.

Globalisation and technological change are transforming higher education. Advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) are bringing about new opportunities and having an impact on teaching and learning methods, mainly through what is commonly known as "e-learning". New approaches are emerging, with an increasing reliance on "blended models" that combine elements of face-to-face education and online modalities in different proportions. The roles of teachers, students and universities are also being transformed. In this context, Latin America has a great opportunity to benefit from the potential advantages of these developments, and to make the most of them as a way to alleviate the challenges facing higher education.

This report aims to improve the understanding of where Latin America stands regarding the integration of ICTs into higher education and the challenges and opportunities that e-learning is bringing about. The original information, resulting from a survey of 34 Latin American universities and interviews with experts, shows that the region is integrating e-learning into higher education at a slow pace, and that pedagogic methods have not been substantially transformed. The report discusses what role public policies can play to boost the impact of e-learning in the region, as part of a broader debate on the role of higher education institutions in Latin America in a changing global context. In that sense, this report also provided relevant information for the elaboration of the *Latin American Economic Outlook 2015*, which focused on education, skills and innovation.

Mario Pezzini
Director
OECD Development Centre



From:
E-Learning in Higher Education in Latin America

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264209992-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2015), "Preface", in *E-Learning in Higher Education in Latin America*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264209992-2-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.