

Research Progress

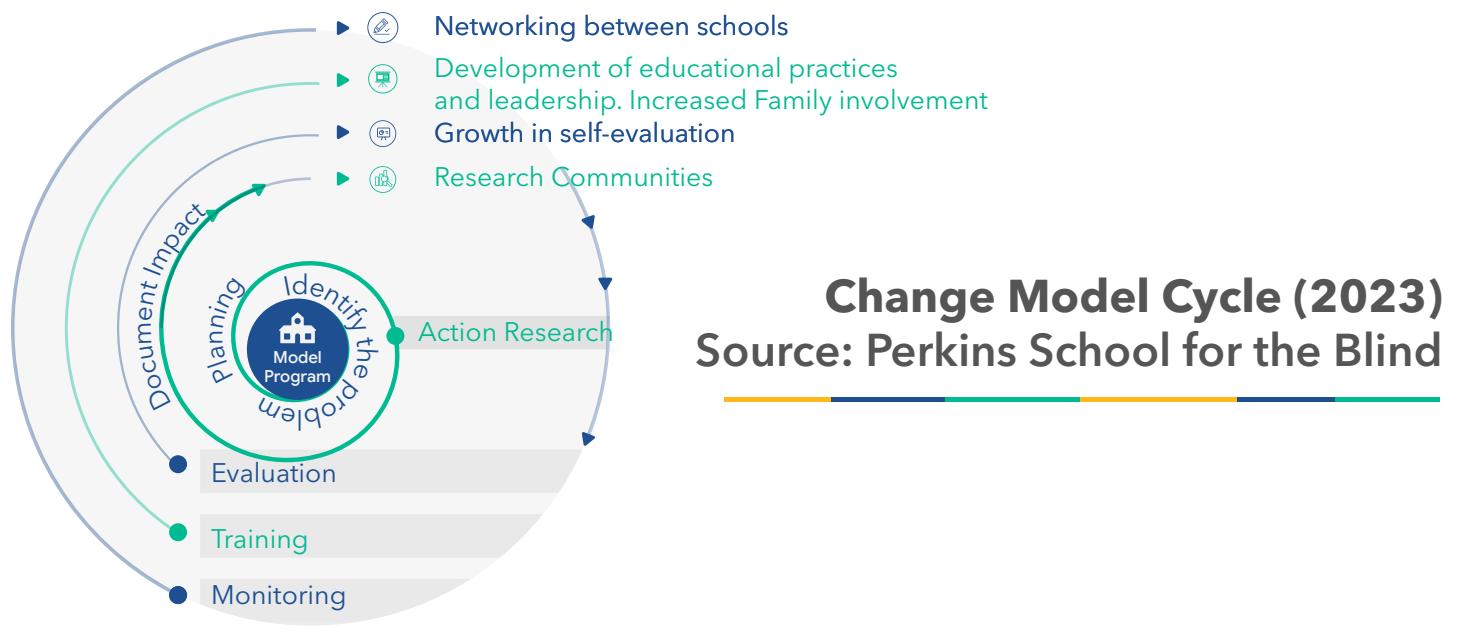


These research actions contribute to the task of analyzing, documenting, and disseminating information about the progress achieved in transforming schools in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. The work is part of the "Every Child Can Learn: Scaling Up Systemic Change for Children with Disabilities and Visual Impairment in Latin America" project, which is being developed with the support of the Lavelle Foundation. The schools participating in this project receive support from Perkins in the following areas, which characterize their working model:

Support through monitoring and evaluation. At each stage of the change process, support is provided through evaluation actions to monitor progress. Based on the results, action plans are designed to make the necessary changes for the school to become a model program. Perkins Quality Indicators (2022) enable the objectification and incorporation of evidence regarding the changes made through the evaluations conducted.

Support through Perkins Academy certification: Currently, various Perkins Academy courses are being offered, including Foundations in the Education of Learners with Multiple Disabilities and Visual Impaired or Deafblindness: Basic and Advanced Levels, and an Early Childhood Education and Care course.

Guidance throughout the process: The technical support provided in each country respects the participation of all team members in this process of change, with representation from different levels of the school's management and families. In this way, the Perkins team and the schools work collaboratively, with shared approaches and goals.



Change Model Cycle (2023)
 Source: Perkins School for the Blind



1: Change Model Cycle: this scheme shows the integration of the research work to the work model proposed by Perkins. In the center is the Model Program, defined as: " a place of constant search for improvement, a leader in self-assessment and innovation, committed to the revision of practices based on each individual's demand. It is a school with social awareness as they see themselves as a school of reference and support, a training site, a model for other schools." 2022-Rodríguez-Gil, G; Vázquez, MA. Perkins School for the Blind.

Perkins' model for change combines Evaluation, Training, and Monitoring actions to expand educational opportunities for individuals with sensory, multiple disabilities, and deafblindness. With this project, we have added action research processes to the model. In this context, research supports the design and implementation of realistic solutions to issues identified by schools as challenges faced during the change process.

This implies supporting schools with a phased plan, with some phases conducted virtually, and others in person. These various modalities can be implemented because in each school team, there are leaders who actively take on the tasks required by the research. These teams, collectively referred to as research communities, are composed of teachers, principals, regional coordinators, family coordinators, and regional representatives from each country.




The research work is organized into three stages, which repeat throughout the project. They are: Problem Identification, Documentation of Change, and Analysis of the Implementation Actions/Projection of Future Change. This cyclical approach is what ensures greater depth and specificity in the findings discovered.

1- Problem Identification: In this stage, research actions merge with the evaluation process proposed by Perkins and create spaces for reflection and analysis to identify situations to address, based on:



-  Measuring Quality: results gathered from implementation of Perkins Quality Indicators (2022).
-  Transitioning from training to action: analysis and impact of the training received and of the complementary actions to promote the process of change.

2- Documentation of Change: The recording of change takes center stage in this process. The research communities in each country have made a strong commitment to working with evidence. Evidence is defined as the set of elements that demonstrate the process and results of the change achieved through an action plan. In this way, research collects evidence as outlined by each team.

In this first year, the evidence groups exemplify:

-  Innovative practices for implementing change,
-  Evidence of the role that Perkins assumes in this process of change, and
-  Evidence of the improvement of strategies that support the change.

3- Analysis of the Implementation and Projection of Future Change: This stage has not yet been carried out. Our proposal is to convene an information exchange about the actions taken, to reflect on the changes achieved and the new challenges that have been identified. This will contribute to understanding and planning for the adjustments necessary to continue with implementation of the action plan. Among the projected actions are:

-  organize a virtual event among the different teams from the three countries (November 2023,) and
-  publish a collective publication on the main achievements and learnings (December 2023).

	BRASIL	ARGENTINA	MÉXICO
YEAR 1		School Maldonado Cano (Mendoza)	
		School Hellen Keller (Mendoza) (OS)	
		School N° 221 Tte.Gral. Eduardo Racedo (La Pampa)	
	Beira Rfo (OS) Bernardo Sayao Abrao Salamao Domingues	School Maritte Lydis (Cordoba)	CAM 18 - Tekax- Yucatán(OS) CAM 10 - Aguas Calientes CAM 25 - Alcaldía Coyoacán
		Early Education Center - Dr Jorge Alvarez (Cordoba)	
		Early Education Center - Graciela Chela Vázquez (Cordoba)	

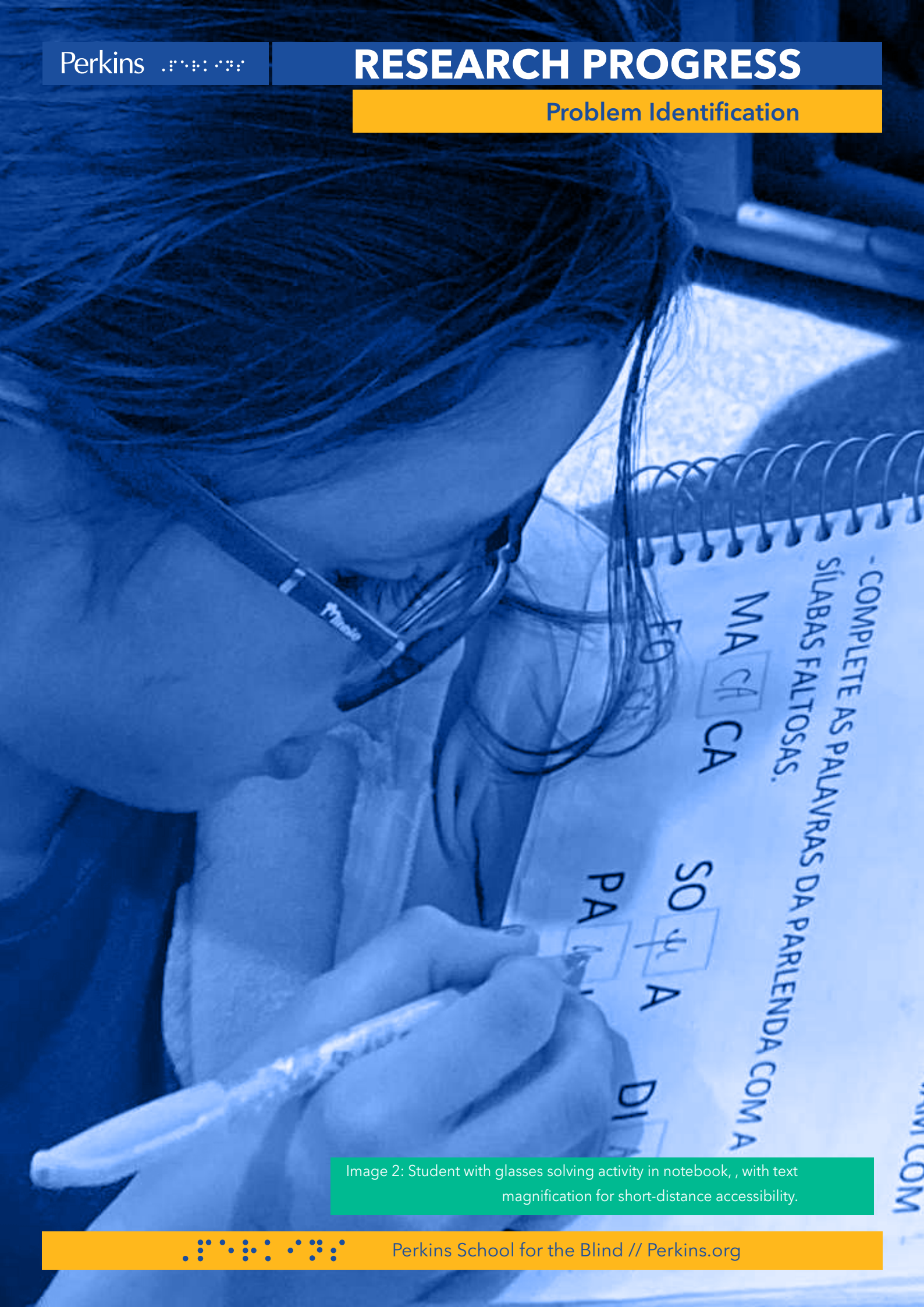


Image 2: Student with glasses solving activity in notebook, with text magnification for short-distance accessibility.

The data presented below result from the participation of three Centros de Atención Múltiple CAM (Multiple Attention Centers) in Mexico, three inclusive regular schools in Brazil, two early childhood centers, and three special schools in Argentina.

In each country, one school that participated in Perkins' project during the 2019-2022 period was chosen.

These schools no longer participate in Perkins Academy training because they completed it in the previous period, but they continue to be part of the network, with planned evaluation and advisory actions in the current period (2022-2025). This group of schools are called "Original Schools" (OS), while the rest are called "New Schools" (NS), since they joined the project in the current period.

Action research is considered the appropriate approach not only for contributing to recording and accompanying the analyses, thus assessing the scope of the changes, but also to expand the possibilities for bringing research strategies into the classroom, and generating research communities formed in the different action circuits.

As previously mentioned, in this stage research is integrated into project evaluation activities. Through implementation of Perkins indicators and subsequent follow-up, it is possible to track the impact of Perkins International Academy Training on classroom practice. This presents opportunities for analysis of and reflection on barriers, and reveals possibilities for achieving change.

Use of the Perkins Quality Indicators for project tracking and monitoring leads to learning through the reflection and decision-making that takes place during a self-assessment process and analysis of its results. These readings help schools to identify challenges and issues, and make decisions to address them, which leads to greater understanding of what the change process entails.

Analyzing the impact of training on the change process provides an opportunity for us to understand the connection between training and action in contexts that present various challenges when implementing change. Analysis reveals both the strengths and the challenging situations encountered during training.

Retrieving this information allows for feedback into a model of change, where the model program not only shares the practices it advances but also the strategies used to address the challenges faced in order to achieve each projected process.

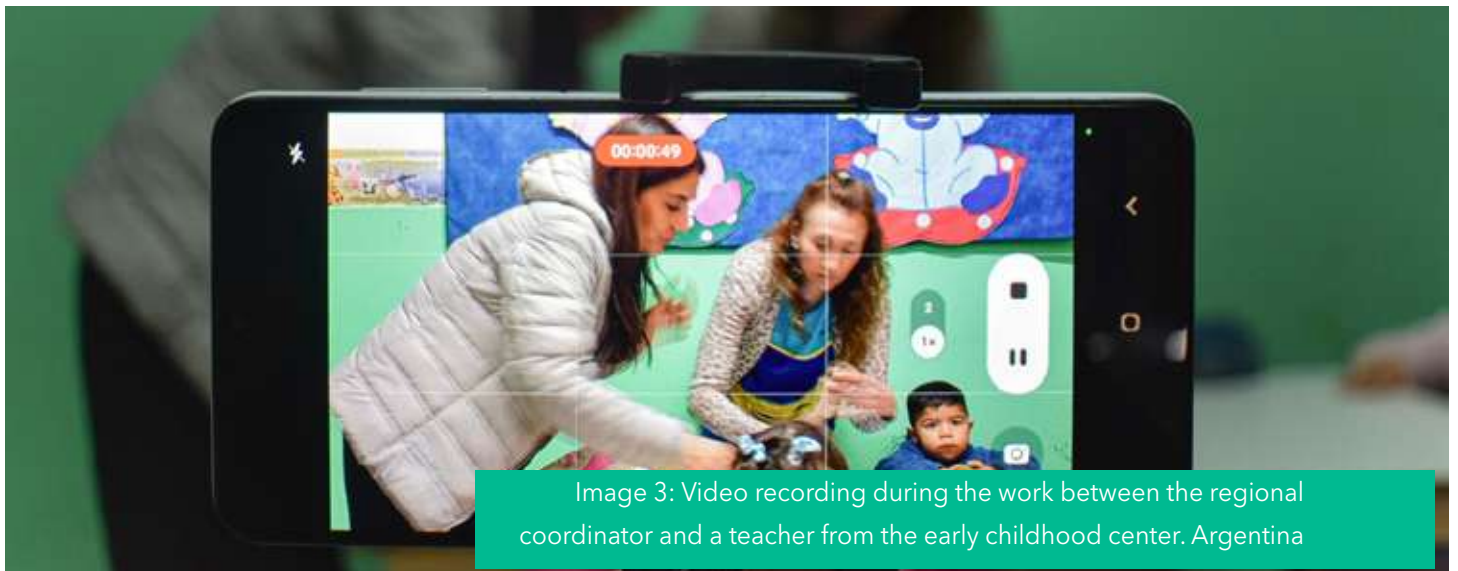
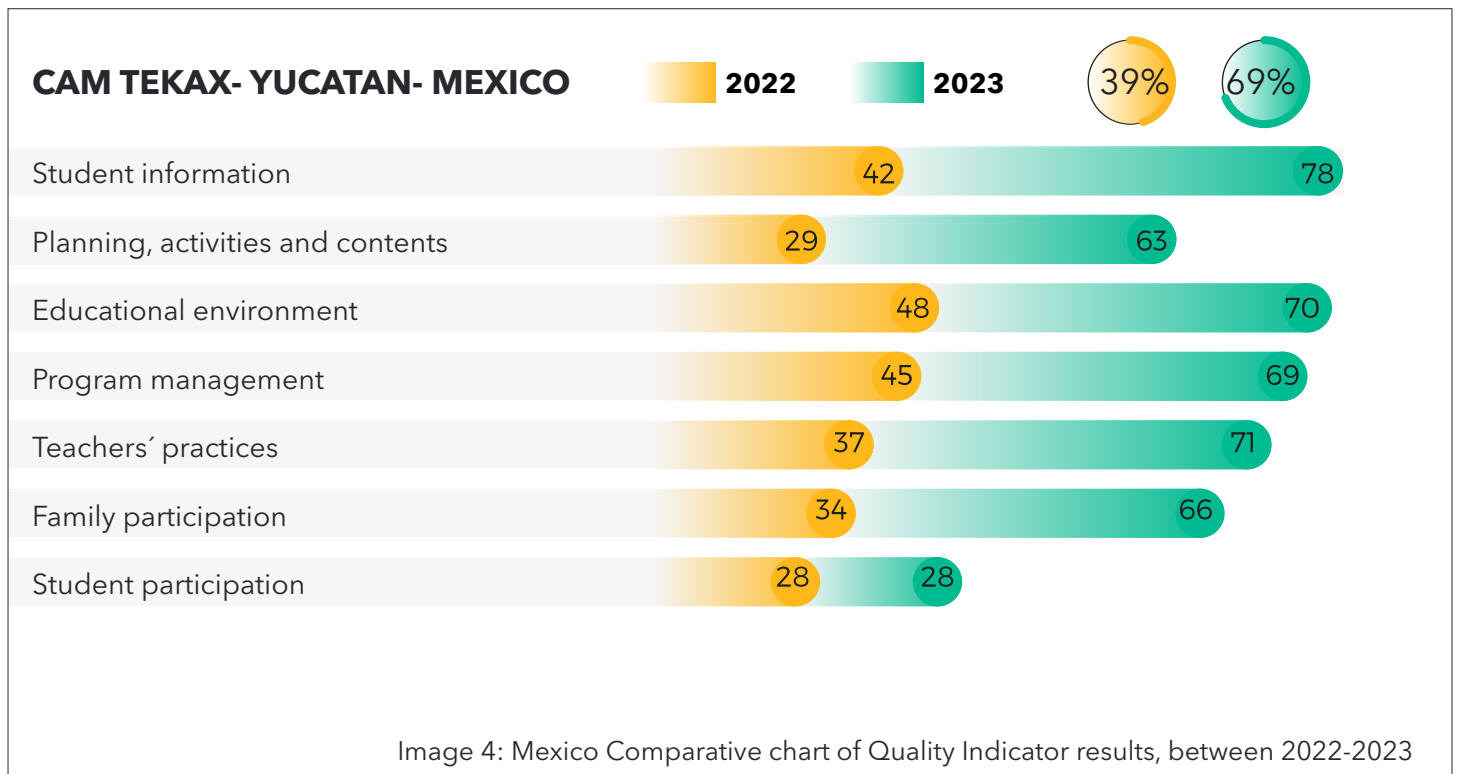


Image 3: Video recording during the work between the regional coordinator and a teacher from the early childhood center. Argentina

1.1. Measuring Quality

Results gathered from implementation of Perkins Quality Indicators (2022).

Evaluations were conducted at the beginning of the project, and in some countries, a second evaluation has already been completed at the time of this report (Mexico), one year into the project.



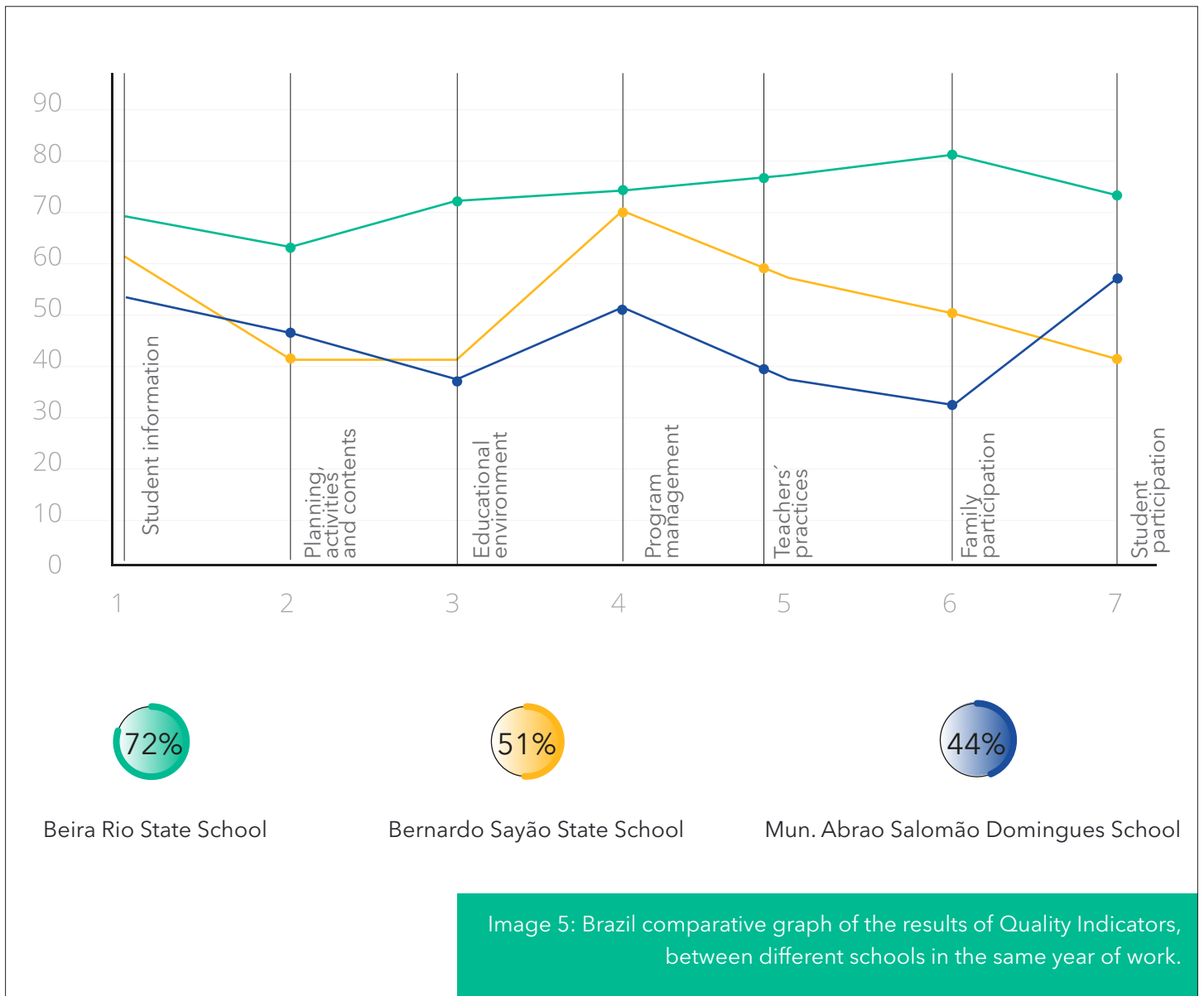
This is the first analysis conducted by the teams; a comparative analysis of the overall and category-specific scores at two different points in time to assess the extent of change. These data allow for global tracking, as well as monitoring individual aspects assessed by the evaluation tool. Common discussion points across different countries include the evidence used to rate each indicator, the relationship between training and transformation, and the actions that ensure how a practice of change achieved in one classroom can be scaled across the entire school.

In Mexico, the problems that are identified from these analyses include:

- Changes in school staff. Some teams undergo changes in their organizational structures that involve replacements and transfers of school team members, which have an impact on the evaluation between assessments.
- Lack of time. The multiple demands of the school sometimes make it challenging to implement what was planned.
- Impact of changes on student and family participation. Management, intervention in the context, and administrative processes are areas where change is seen more quickly, but there are others that require new strategies to collect evidence and achieve an impact.

Identifying these issues has allowed for planning actions to drive change. Examples of these actions include:

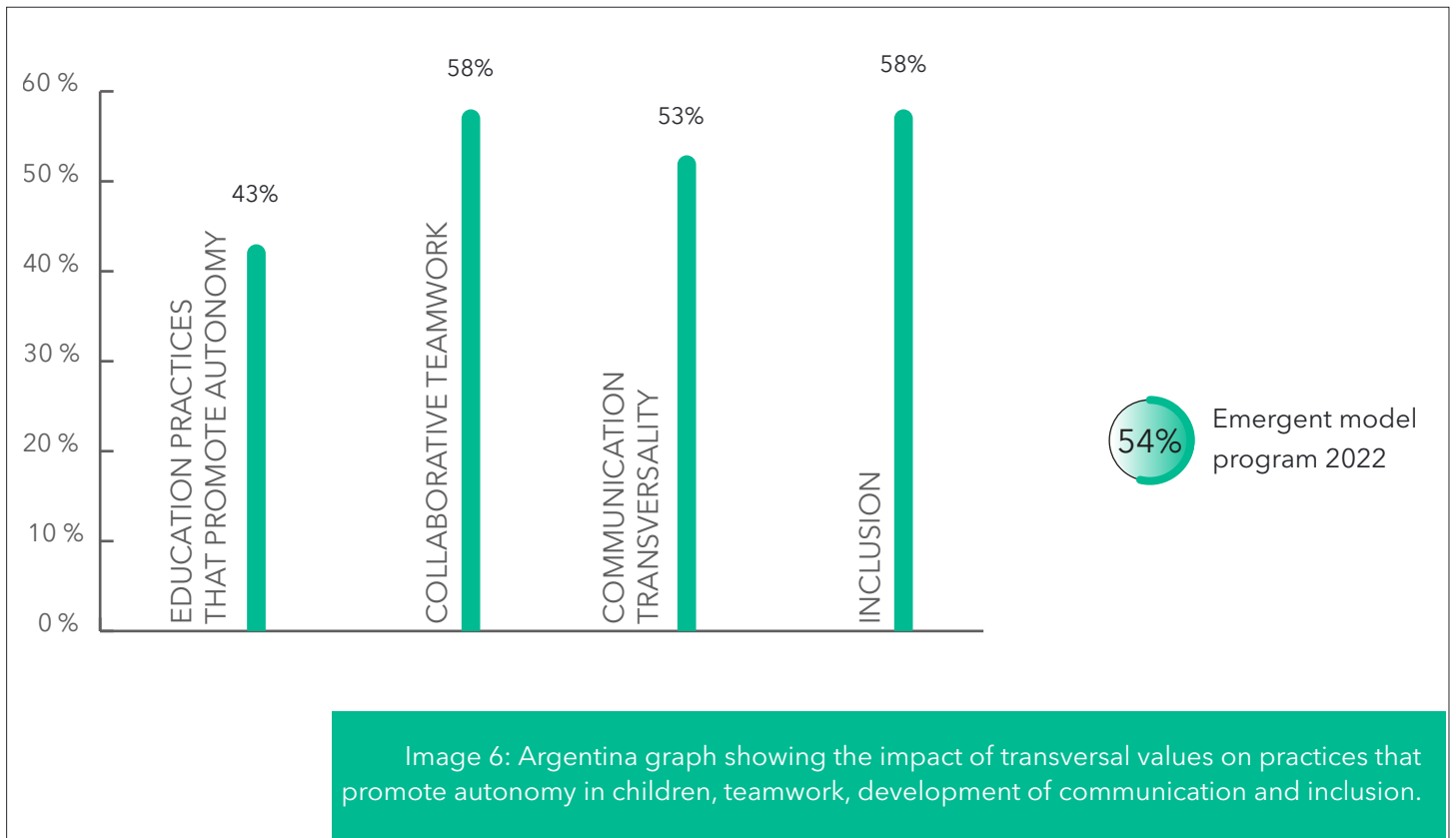
- Design training itineraries within the school, including observation and discussions to quickly disseminate the knowledge.
- Working with observation tools developed by school teams and supported by training from Perkins, which facilitate the analysis of implemented strategies and allow for the projection of changes by incorporating different levels of management in decision-making.
- Ensuring the integration of the family coordinator work carried out by Perkins with the family engagement initiatives already in place at the schools.



These comparative readings of the Perkins Quality Indicators results are also used as evidence to justify the strategies being implemented. The graph above displays the assessed level of different schools, including both original schools (OS) and new schools (NS). This allows us to observe how OS schools lead with higher scores in various categories of the Quality Indicator. These readings support the strategy of involving leading schools to share their experience and assist new schools during the training processes.

An example of this is the activity being carried out in Brazil to disseminate lessons learned to all schools by sharing training opportunities. This occurs during implementation of Individual Educational Plans for students who are part of the inclusion process in regular schools. These Plans, designed by the Department of Education with support from Perkins-trained educators, illustrate how leading schools collaborate with new schools to accelerate the impact process.

Problem Identification



Another example of incorporating quality measures in which assessment helps to identify problems and strategic solutions is research based on analyzing quality indicator results in early childhood centers in Argentina.

These programs, which are assessed using specially tailored Perkins quality indicators, allow for additional quality measures that reveal trends in education programs based on evaluation scores.

This includes impact numbers of indicators in domains related to practices taught in the Perkins International Academy training program. These include:

- Promoting practices for children that contribute to their autonomy
- Collaborative work in schools
- Ensuring communication
- Inclusive practices




Beyond the overall scores, which place the education program in this example (image 6) in the "emerging" category, the comparative readings, as illustrated in the previous graph, show the impact of values in these four domains. This contributes to a different type of analysis, providing additional input for discussing action plans and goals for the change process.

The early childhood care spaces in Argentina, with their own evaluation tools, identified "children's autonomy and the development of communication practices" as an area of need. This coincides with the results provided by the trends in Perkins' quality indicators. These indicators also offer results that can be used to individualize goals. As part of this research, work is currently taking place with the early childhood center teams to jointly review assessment tools and plan their complementary use.

Proposing a change project with its own evaluation tool helps to make the analysis of the process more objective and to reach a consensus between the Perkins team and the evaluated school on future actions to generate change.

1.2. Transitioning from training to action

In order to contribute to collective analysis and reflection that transforms practices, and also to help understand these practices and the situations in which they occur, interviews and group analyses have been conducted with the different teams regarding the relationship between training and change. This includes reflecting on:

-  the training received and its practical implementation.
-  complementary actions and strategies that support the process of change and/or development of training.
-  additional training beyond the Perkins International Academy that facilitates the process of change.

Perkins currently offers two training programs: Fundamentals in Education of Students with Multiple Disabilities and Sensory Impairments, both Basic and Advanced Levels, in all three countries, and Early Childhood Education and Care, which is only implemented in Argentina.

The first course, Fundamentals in Education of Students with Multiple Disabilities and Sensory Impairments, both Basic and Advanced Levels, is the training program with the longest history. It has been implemented for over 5 years.

COURSE		
Fundamentals in Education of Students with Multiple Disabilities and Sensory Impairments: Basic and Advanced levels		
LESSONS LEARNED	PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED	STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is complemented by disciplinary knowledge and other training programs proposed by the education departments to which the school belongs. • The content about communication and evaluation has the greatest impact on change of practices. • The training helps develop observation skills, to improve the work with families and the team work. • It inspires educators to pay attention to student's participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to deepen knowledge in some areas. • Working in contexts where students do not regularly attend school, due to health and resource problems. • Difficulty in obtaining the necessary financial resources to carry out the changes, and lack of time to complete all the planned tasks. • Urgent need to replicate training for teachers who do not take the Academy course, and generate actions that will reach the greatest number of people in the school community - both professionals and family 	<p>STUDY SESSIONS: led by the Perkins Academy graduates to be shared with the rest of the team</p> <p>MODEL IN WORK CONTEXT: Accompaniment to peer mentoring in the classroom, in which peers share examples of their work with photographs, videos, signs and good practices.</p> <p>OBSERVATIONS AND CONSULTANCY: Identification of strengths and challenges in practices.</p> <p>SHARE KNOWLEDGE WITH THE FAMILIES: Include families in implementing actions towards change so that knowledge can reach the home.</p> <p>SUPPORT DESIGN: Development of resources, planning, institutional documents to ensure participation..</p>



Image 7: Meeting of Family Coordinator and Regional Representative of Mexico and teachers from Aguascalientes, reflecting on the change process.

Cam 10 Aguascalientes- México
Junio 2023-

Physical therapist (about the Perkins Academy training)"...I fell in love with its philosophy... all children can learn, all children can communicate... from the perspective of physical therapy, I asked myself, how am I going to do it? I wondered because even though I have clinical-medical training, I am also in education...When a child with multiple disabilities arrives with sensory disabilities - auditory, visual, or a combination, and/or has expressive communication, that's when I say I have to learn. Because I have to communicate, otherwise, how is there respect for the child?"

Communication teacher (did not take the course)

I feel that Perkins came to shake things up. Although we had done some things, there were important new aspects, for example, involving families. Parents express the support they have felt with the project, feeling a little more heard. In the area of communication, it has dusted off many situations, things that were not taken into account, situations with boards, agendas, calendars. When S. entered the Perkins Academy, she shared a lot of the information she was learning, and I liked that. It allowed me to learn and investigate a little more.

The inclusion of Early Childhood Centers in this project has involved working with a new training program from the Perkins International International Academy: "Education and Care in Early Childhood." Students who are currently taking this training are workers from Childcare Centers and Nurseries. Some of them are professionals, and others are caregivers who are from the local neighborhoods, with direct access to the program sites.

These early childhood centers, which are located in outlying neighborhoods with vulnerable living conditions, aim to reach the children of the province of Córdoba, especially those who need these services most.

The diversity of students taking the training has required complementary actions by the instructor teams:

- Strengthening course introductions with topics related to evolution of the concepts of disability, society, childhood, and rights.

- Personalized support and assistance to ensure access to the platform through various means, assist with completion of required activities, address connectivity issues, and help manage study time and personal devices.

- Activities using various resources and dynamics to support the development of different thematic areas.

Implementation of the course has generated various reflections and initiatives to promote change in different centers, which are summarized in the chart below under "Lessons Learned." This process identifies problems and the strategies implemented to solve them. In this phase the centers are assessed from the perspective of the Perkins team, reflecting the support provided during this first year of work.

COURSE		
<i>Education and Care in Early Childhood</i>		
LESSONS LEARNED	PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED	STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED
<p>The practical tools provided by the training allowed for a change in the routines around interacting with children.</p> <p>The concepts we are working on are new and considered necessary by these teams. (communication-diversity-disability)</p> <p>The training proposal raised the idea that the diversity of children requires a diversity of strategies and educational proposal.</p> <p>By learning to observe the areas of assessment, strengthened the practice of conducting evaluations to detect disorders.</p>	<p>Lack of training on disabilities and disability rights in early childhood education settings.</p> <p>Urgent need to replicate training for teachers who do not take the Academy course, and generate actions that will reach the greatest number of people in the school community - both professionals and families.</p> <p>Need to implement changes that highlight diversity with the strategies and educational proposal.</p> <p>Lack of family participation in training activities that will increase their child's learning opportunities.</p>	<p>MODEL IN WORK CONTEXT: Accompaniment to peer mentoring in the classroom, in which peers share examples of their work with photographs, videos, signs and good practices.</p> <p>ADDITIONAL TRAINING: Parallel to the Perkins Academy training courses, virtual training is given on different topics.</p> <p>INTERVENTIONS IN CONTEXT: Incorporate the information from the evaluations into working plans and the organizational environment to expand the possibilities of communication and autonomy.</p> <p>WORKSHOPS: Organization of in-person workshops and virtual support for parents. The workshops cover a set agenda of agreed-upon topics.</p>



Image 8: Children of the early childhood center starting the day

Córdoba - Argentina.
August 2023

Teacher in charge of a classroom. "The course content is useful for the entire population attending the center. The tools provided allowed me to self-assess my practices and implement them in my daily routine with my students, especially when we think about the different types of materials we can use and their objectives."

Caregiver "I found the course I took to be very interesting and beneficial because I gained a lot of new knowledge. It also allows me to provide better care to the children by implementing different proposals and activities that we were given in the course. It helped correct the misconception we had that some children find it difficult to express themselves - it's not the case. All children express themselves but in different ways."

The training from Perkins International Academy, along with advice and guidance on specific topics, is carried out by the Country Representatives and Education Coordinators of each country.

They organize their work based on what the school teams demand, which is a strategy to accelerate and deepen the change and promote an impact on the different categories of the Perkins Quality Indicators, moving from focal impacts only on Perkins Academy students to reaching the entire community so that the transformation extends to the entire educational community and to other schools as well



Image 9: Student working at school with material adapted to the communicative system.

Based on the previous analysis, identification of challenges faced by each school team, and the results from early implementation of strategies to support and maintain the transformation process, documentation to showcase and share the changes is underway.

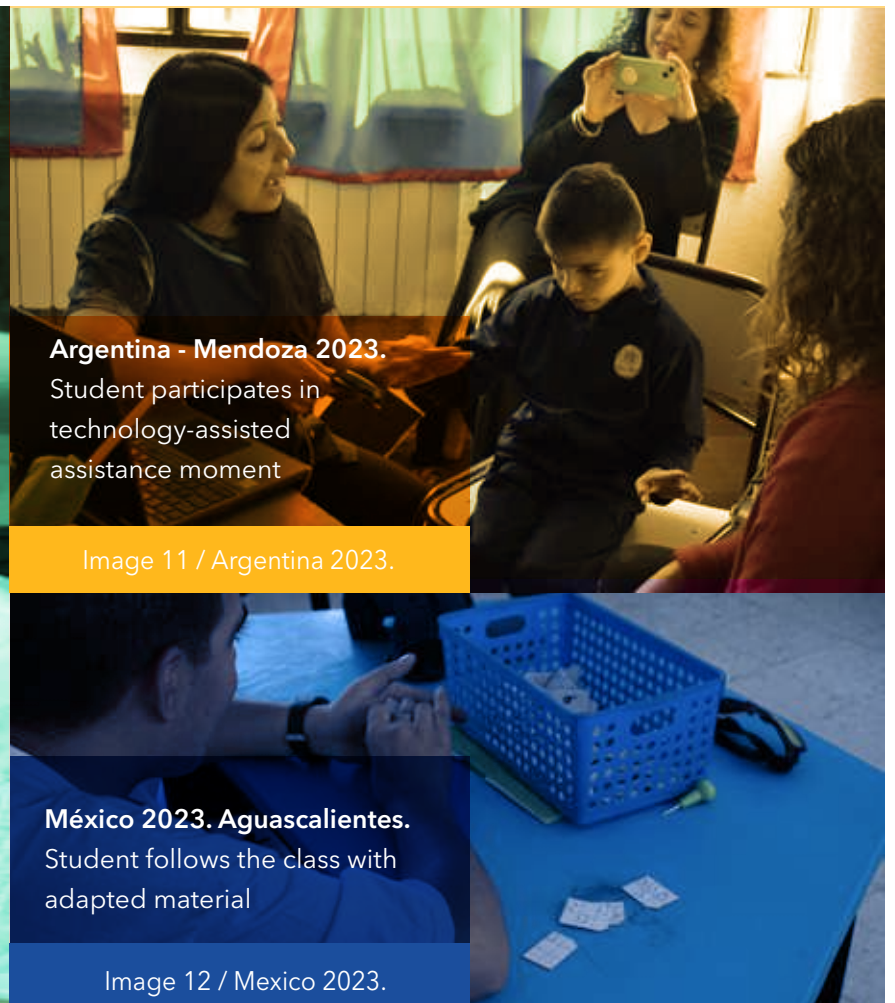
The following record of photographs recovers some scenes that are considered an active expression of the change process for two reasons:

1. they are examples of practices to be replicated
2. the impact and results shown are an example of good practice that is observable by the researcher.

The selected categories for this report are:

- Innovative practices for implementing change.
- Evidence of the role that Perkins plays in this process of change.
- Evidence of the improvement of strategies to support change.

Innovative practices for implementing change: Currently, there is a diversity of practices that show the response that schools in Latin America give to the diverse needs of children. Adaptations of resources, implementation of technology and work methodologies are some of the examples.



Documentation of change

Evidence of the role that Perkins plays in this process of change: Each member of the Perkins team collaborates in management activities, but also in impact monitoring.



Image 13

Perkins' Representative for Brazil on a monitoring visit to a school.



Image 14

Perkins' representative for Mexico sharing her vision to mother about the book she designed with anticipatory objects, to work on at home.



Image 15

Perkins' representative for Argentina on a monitoring visit to a school.

Evidence of the improvement of strategies to support change: The activities to support change are different in each school, and are proposed based on the identified challenges



Image 16

Brazil

Perkins' Family Coordinator in training session with Bernardo Sayao's teacher's team



Image 17

Mexico

Perkins' Family Coordinator in training activity with parents.



Image 18

Argentina

Perkins' Family Coordinator sharing a needs assessment activity with parents and caregivers of early childhood centers.



Image 19

Brazil

Perkins' Education Coordinator on a follow-up visit to a regular inclusive school, talking to a student about the activity he is doing.



Image 20

Mexico

Perkins' Education Coordinator accompanies a teacher and her students with counseling in the practice context.



Image 21

Argentina

Perkins' Education Coordinator sharing materials to support the work of an early childhood center teacher.



Image 22: Student saying goodbye to the camera while doing a school activity

3- NEXT ACTIONS

09**SEPTEMBER:**

Documentation of the process of change in Argentina (Mendoza, La Pampa)

11**NOVEMBER:**

Group analysis of first cycle of work - Entry of new schools into the research.

10**OCTOBER:**

Presentation of online platform to use the Quality Indicators.

12**DECEMBER:**

Dissemination through publication of Lessons Learned.