

Press Release

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All you need to know about the education systems of the Americas

A new two-volume handbook provides a comprehensive overview of education systems in North, Central and South America covering nearly all countries, including the Caribbean states. The handbook, edited by researchers from DIPF | Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education and the University of Münster, is published in English, targeting students, researchers and the public at large. The volumes comprise more than 1,200 pages offering scientifically grounded fundamental knowledge while also informing about urgent challenges.

The 70 authors of “The Education Systems of the Americas” present country chapters on historical and societal developments of the respective education systems situated in a political, economic and cultural context. The experts highlight the organisational structure, ranging from pre-school education to higher education and illustrate how the countries deal with three global challenges: (1) the handling of unequal educational opportunities, (2) the integration of information and communication technology and (3) the promotion of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, mathematics). Paying tribute to their complexity, three chapters each are dedicated to the education systems of Brazil, Canada and the United States.

“The volumes offer a well-founded piece of work useful for delving into education systems in the Americas”, illustrates Dr Sieglinde Jornitz from DIPF. “The handbook also provides a framework for international comparisons and a respective exchange”, adds Prof Dr Marcelo Parreira do Amaral from the University of Münster. Both researchers have jointly edited the handbook. Three sub-section editors supported them in identifying suitable authors for the specific chapters, i.e. Prof Dr Paul Fossum (University of Michigan-Dearborn, USA) for North America, Prof Dr Karen Thomas-Brown (University of Michigan-Dearborn, USA) for the Caribbean, and Prof Dr Vivian Weller (University of Brasilia, Brazil) for Central and South America. Either one of them also contributed articles in their own right.

Procedure and specifics

Wherever possible, the chapters were written by local experts while international expertise has also entered the handbook – particularly from Germany. The authors refer to international educational statistics and publications. During the four years of compilation, several authors faced particularly challenging circumstances such as precarious work conditions, limitations due to the Covid-19 pandemic and in some countries restricted access to literature.

A handbook is now available that presents specific features of the education systems while expanding on existing knowledge. Canada, for example, has become known as a country that is particularly successful in addressing children from diverse cultural backgrounds. One of the three chapters on Canada expands on this aspect pointing out remaining weaknesses in its education system. On the other hand, the chapter on Guatemala describes how ambitious this rather small and comparatively poor country is in developing its education system. Here, a particular emphasis is placed on determining the right to education as a human right, and especially enabling access to education for people with disabilities. By offering such insights, the handbook intends to instigate curiosity to learn about other education systems while supporting dialogue on different developments.

Publication:

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