



MEASURE AND LEARN

WHAT WORKS THROUGH BETTER LEARNING AND SCALING DATA

Systematic data on children's learning is a crucial input for the success of all prior recommendations. For example, having regular and accessible data on children's learning facilitates spreading a culture of continuous improvement across the education ecosystem. From data that are used by teachers, to data that are put into parents' hands, to data that are aggregated from each country to track global progress, information on what students are learning is an important foundation to inform action. In addition to identifying what is contributing to children's learning, a better understanding is needed on how it is doing so at large scale. This requires understanding the process by which effective ideas and approaches are adapted, spread, and taken up by more actors in more locations. To collect and use learning and scaling data:

Government and donor agencies should strengthen national student assessment systems. Data on student learning are needed to inform actions to scale effective approaches to improving learning. In many countries in the developing world today, the main source of data on student performance are project-specific achievement data or results every few years from large-scale regional or international assessments. A better approach is for governments to build the capacity of national assessment systems that are systematic, transparent, and housed in-country. This is in line with the Learning Metrics Task Force recommendation on learning data as a global good. As data are meant to be used, they should be collected and disseminated in a way that is maximally useful. For example, classroom-level data on learning can be immediately used by teachers to see the levels at which children are learning, and nationally aggregated data on learning can be used by policymakers.

The research community should improve data on scaling through a Real-time Scaling Lab. Such a forum would provide space to examine and document the process of scaling effective approaches to learning as they unfold, contributing to building a body of evidence on how to scale quality learning interventions. A laboratory-type setting would approach scaling as a learning process, encouraging self-reflection and providing more opportunities to make course corrections and adjustments. A Real-time Scaling Lab would also provide space for peer-to-peer learning among government officials, social entrepreneurs, funders, and researchers to share common experiences in their efforts to expand and deepen effective approaches and to exchange ideas and resources. It would draw on existing scaling knowledge, resources, and tools in education, development, and other disciplines more broadly.

Education actors at the global, national, and local levels should explore ways of teaching and assessing 21st-century skills—or a breadth of learning opportunities—beyond literacy and numeracy.

For education ecosystems to adapt to the needs of the future, they will need to measure their success across a broad range of learning domains. Educators are seeking ways to integrate these into their teaching, learning, and assessment practice strategies. Models need to be explored of how to guide children in the development of such skills as collaboration, critical thinking, innovation, and problem solving. The assessment of these skills poses a challenge to both measurement specialists and teachers in classrooms. The function of assessment as a tool to inform teachers' understanding of the skills as well as the competencies of their students should be a focus of innovation in the assessment space.