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Toward Universal Learning

Implementing Assessment to Improve Learning



3

Report No. 3 of 3
Learning Metrics Task Force
June 2014



Toward Universal Learning

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Learning Metrics Task Force

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution have joined efforts to convene the Learning Metrics Task Force. The overarching objective of the project is to create a shift in the global conversation on education from a focus on access to access plus learning. Based on recommendations by technical working groups and input from broad global consultations, the task force works to ensure that learning becomes a central component of the post-2015 global development agenda and to make recommendations for common goals to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for children and youth worldwide. Visit www.brookings.edu/learningmetrics to learn more.

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The Learning Metrics Task Force

Co-chairs	
Rukmini Banerji, Director of Programs	Pratham
Sir Michael Barber, Chief Education Advisor	Pearson
Geeta Rao Gupta, Deputy Executive Director	UNICEF
Member Organizations and Representatives*	
ActionAid	David Archer, Head of Programme Development and GPE Board Representative for Northern Civil Society
Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	Valérie Tehio, Project Manager, Education
African Union Commission	Beatrice Njenga, Head of Education Division
Arab League of Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)	Abdullah Hamad Muhareb, Director General
Association for Education Development in Africa (ADEA)	Dzingai Mutumbuka, Chair
Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)	Raymond Adams, Special Advisor, ACER; Professor, University of Melbourne
Campaign for Female Education in Zambia (Camfed)	Lucy Lake, Chief Executive Officer
City of Buenos Aires, Argentina	Mercedes Miguel, General Director of Education Planning
Coalition des Organisations en Synergie pour la Défense de l'Éducation Publique (COSYDEP)	Cheikh Mbow, National Coordinator and GPE Board Representative for Southern Civil Society
Dubai Cares / United Arab Emirates (UAE)	H.E. Reem Al-Hashimy, Chair and Minister of State
Education International (EI)	Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary and Vocational Training Division
Global Partnership for Education (GPE)	Jean-Marc Bernard, Monitoring & Evaluation Team Lead
Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development	Maninder Kaur-Dwivedi, Director
Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	Emiliana Vegas, Chief, Education Division
International Education Funders Group (IEFG)	Patricia Scheid, Program Officer
Government of Kenya, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Richard B. Kipsang, Permanent Secretary, Education
Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE)	Seong Taeje, President
Office of the UN Secretary General	Itai Madamombe, Global Education Advisor
Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos (OEI)	Álvaro Marchesi, Secretary-General
Queen Rania Teacher Academy	Tayseer Al Noaimi, President and former Minister of Education of Jordan
Southeast Asian Minister of Education Organization (SEAMEO)	Witaya Jeradechakul, Director
UK Department for International Development (DFID)	Ed Barnett, Education Advisor
UNDP	Selim Jahan, Director of Poverty Practice
UNESCO	Maki Hayashikawa, Chief, Section for Basic Education, Division for Basic Learning and Skills Development
UNICEF	Jo Bourne, Associate Director, Education
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Patrick Collins, Team Leader, Basic Education
World Bank	Beth King, Director of Education

(Other representatives of member organizations may participate in task force meetings.)

Working Group Chairs	
Standards Working Group	Seamus Hegarty, Chair, University of Warwick
Measures and Methods Working Group	César Guadalupe, Associate Researcher, Universidad del Pacífico, Perú
Implementation Working Group	Dzingai Mutumbuka, Chair, Association for Education Development in Africa (ADEA)

Secretariat	
Hendrik van der Pol	Director, UNESCO Institute for Statistics
Rebecca Winthrop	Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution
Albert Motivans	Head of Education Indicators and Data Analysis Section, UNESCO Institute for Statistics
Kate Anderson	Policy Analyst and Learning Metrics Task Force Technical Lead, Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution
Maya Prince	Assistant Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Statistics
Mari Soliván	Learning Metrics Task Force Project Manager, Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution
Khaled Fayyad	Project Assistant, Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution

Implementation Working Group Chair: Dzingai Mutumbuka, Association for Education Development in Africa (ADEA), Chair

Secretariat technical leads: Kate Anderson, Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution and Maya Prince, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Existing Measures Subgroup Members	
Abbie Raikes	UNESCO
Alejandro Gomez Palma	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Antoine Marivin	PASEC CONFEMEN
Camilla Addey	University of East Anglia, UK; British Council
Carol Armistead Grigsby	Consultant
Chedia Belaïd Mhirsi	National Center for Educational Innovation and Research in Education (CNIPRE)
Ina V.S. Mullis	TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center, Boston College
Jean-Marc Bernard	Global Partnership for Education Secretariat
Jennifer DeBoer	Postdoctoral Associate for Education Research
Jimin Cho	Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE)
Kateryna Shalayeva	International Development and European Law Consultant
Keith Lewin	Professor of International Education and Development
Magdalena Janus	Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University
Markus Broer	American Institutes for Research (AIR)
Michael O. Marin	TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center, Boston College
Michael Ward	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Moritz Bilagher	Programme Specialist (Monitoring & Evaluation)
Pierre Petignat	Université HEP-BEJUNE
Sangwook Park	Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE)
Santiago Cueto	GRADE (Young Lives)
Savitri Bobde	ASER Centre
Silvia Montoya	Ministry of Education, Buenos Aires City Government
Souad Abdel Wahed Selmi	University of Manouba; CIEFFA-UNESCO; National Center for Innovation and Educational Research (CNIPRE)

New Measures Subgroup Members	
Alfonso Sintjago	IT Fellow, University of Minnesota
Ann Munene	Education, Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor
Carol Armistead Grigsby	Consultant
Chizoba Imoka	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)
Christine Wallace	Girls' Education Challenge, PwC LLP
Christopher Castle	UNESCO
Epifania Amoo-Adare	Reach Out to Asia (ROTA), member of Qatar Foundation
Jacob Park	Associate Professor of Business Strategy and Sustainability
Josh Bhattacharya	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)
Jungsoon Choi	Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE)
Margaret Sinclair	Education Above All
Mary Drinkwater	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)
Steve Hughes	Global Research Committee Fellow
William G. Brozo	George Mason University; PISA/PIRLS Task Force, International Reading Association
Yolanda Patricia Hartasánchez Calle	Life Skills Innovation Advisor

Global-level Subgroup Members	
Maleyka Mekhti kyzy	The State Students Admission Commission
Abbie Raikes	UNESCO
Alejandro Gomez Palma	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Amrita Sengupta	UNICEF, West Bengal
Anjuli Shivshanker	International Rescue Committee
Anna Hakobyan	CIFF
Birgitte Birkvad	Danish Teacher Trade Unions International (DLI Brussels)
Christine Wallace	Girls' Education Challenge, PwC LLP
Christopher Castle	UNESCO
Cliff Meyers	UNICEF Thailand
Cynthia Lloyd	Population Council
Eske Copeland	Reach Out to Asia (ROTA), member of Qatar Foundation
Heather Simpson	Save the Children
Jane T. Benbow	American Institutes for Research
Jean-Marc Bernard	Global Partnership for Education Secretariat

Global-level Subgroup Members	
Jeremy Strudwick	AusAID
Joyce Kinyanjui	Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK); Opportunity Schools
Louise Zimanyi	The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development
Mary Drinkwater	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)
Michael Ward	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Minhee Seo	Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE)
Ralf St.Clair	Department of Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University
Ramya Vivekanandan	UNESCO Bangkok
Rob Weil	American Federation of Teachers, Field Programs, Educational Issues
Thomas Nelson Munghono	Doctors on Call (U) Ltd.

National-level Subgroup Members	
Abbaszade Maleyka Mekhti Kyzy	The State Students Admission Commission
Adarsh Sharma	Consultant; Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) (former)
Ajay Batra	Azim Premji Foundation and Head, Azim Premji Institute for Assessment and Accreditation
Alberto Begue	Plan International
Aliev Natig Latif Ogly	State Admission Commission
Amanda Moll	CARE USA
Anjlee Prakash	Learning Links Foundation
Anna Eremenko	The Centre of Independent Evaluation of the Quality of Education
Awadia Elngoumi	Ministry of Education, Sudan
Baela Raza Jamil	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)
Baluyeva Yelena Borisovna	Center for Education Quality Assessment and Control
Barbara Garner Koech	World Vision International
Benjamin A. Ogwo	University of Nigeria; State University of New York, Oswego
Camilla Addey	University of East Anglia, UK; British Council
Charles Oduor Kado	Kenya Primary Schools Headteachers' Association (KEPSHA)
Chedia Belaïd Mhirsî	National Center for Educational Innovation and Research in Education (CNIPRE)
Cliff Meyers	UNICEF Thailand
Denis M. Nyambane	Kenyatta University
Dipti Lal	Educational Initiatives Pvt. Ltd.
Eirini Gouleta	UK Department for International Development (DFID); George Mason University, Center for International Education
Elena A. Chekunova	Rostov Regional Institute of Education and Retraining in Education
Elena Paramzina	The Centre of Independent Evaluation of the Quality of Education
Epifania Amoo-Adare	Reach Out to Asia (ROTA), member of Qatar Foundation
Erison H.S. Huruba	Camfed International; World Education Inc. (Zimbabwe)
Ermekov N. Turlynovich	Center for Independent Evaluation of Education Quality Assessment
Faten al Maddah	CNIPRE
Fathimath Azza	Ministry of Education, Maldives
Gemma Wilson-Clark	DFID
Heikki Lyytinen	University of Jyväskylä, Department of Psychology
Ifeanyi B. Ohanu	University of Nigeria, Nsukka
Isbah Mustafa	The Aga Khan University Examination Board (AKU-EB)
Jenny Hobbs	Concern Worldwide
Joan Lombardi	Bernard van Leer Foundation
John Mugo	Uwezo
Jophus Anamuah-Mensah	Institute for Educational Research and Innovation Studies (IERIS); University of Education, Winneba, Ghana
Joyce Kinyanjui	Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK); Opportunity Schools
Juan Bravo Miranda	Agencia de Calidad de la Educación Gobierno de Chile
Julie Nacos	Columbia School of International Public Affairs
Kaldybaev Salidin Kadyrkulovich	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
Katherine Torre	Winrock International
Khalil Elaian	UNESCO
Kimberly Kerr Witte	Florida Atlantic University
Kostromtsova Veronika	Ministry of Education and Science of Chelyabinsk Region, Russia
Liliana Miranda Molina	Ministry of Education, Perú
Linda Ezeabasili Azukaego	Department of Vocational Teacher Education (Mechanical/Metal Work Technology), University of Nigeria, Nsukka

National-level Subgroup Members	
Linda Wilson	VSO Rwanda
Lyubov Drobysheva	The Centre of Independent Evaluation of the Quality of Education
Maha Sader	ECED
Marcia Davidson	Room to Read
Margaret "Peggy" Dubeck	International Development Group - International Education
Marguerite Miheso	Kenyatta University
Mariana Hi Fong De Camchong	Universidad Casa Grande; Blossom Centro Familiar
Marina Lopez Anselme	RET - Protecting Youth Through Education
Michael Fast	RTI International
Molly Hamm	The DREAM Project
Mona Jamil Taji	Queen Rania Teacher Academy
Mugyeong Moon	Korea Institute of Child Care and Education (KCCC)
Nejib Ayed	Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)
Olawale O. Olaitan	University of Nigeria, Nsukka
Pauline Greaves	The Commonwealth
Philip Hui	Living Knowledge Education Organization
Pierre Petignat	Université HEP-BEJUNE
Poorna Sandakantha Yahampath	Ministry of Local Government & Provincial Councils, Sri Lanka
Primbortova Gulzhan Serikbaevna	Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, National Testing Center
Ramya Vivekanandan	UNESCO Bangkok
Sami Khasawnih	University of Jordan (retired)
Santiago Cueto	GRADE (Young Lives)
Sarah Howie	University of Pretoria, Department of Curriculum Studies; Centre for Evaluation and Assessment in Education and Training (CEA)
Sheren Hamed	National Center for Human Resource Development (NCHRD)
Sidra Fatima Minhas	DevTrio Consultants
Silvia Montoya	Ministry of Education, Buenos Aires City Government
Souad Abdel Wahed Selmi	University of Manouba; CIEFFA-UNESCO; National Center for Innovation and Educational Research (CNIPRE)
Sung Hyun Cha	Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI)
Tatur Oleg Aleksandrovich	Department of Development of Tools for Education Quality Assessment
Tea Jun Kim	Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI)
Thomas Nelson Munghono	Doctors on Call (U) Ltd.
Trey Menefee	Hong Kong University
Usman Ali	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aaghani (ITA), Center for Education and Consciousness
Venita Kaul	Ambedkhar University
Vyjayanthi Sankar	Educational Initiatives Pvt Ltd.
William M. Kapambwe	USAID/Zambia Read to Succeed Program; Creative Associates International
Zeinep Esembaevna Zhamakeeva	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center; Kyrgyz State University

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Annex A contains a list of individuals who contributed to the report through public consultation. Annex D contains a list of participants at the 16-18 July 2013 meeting in Bellagio Italy hosted by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ARNEC	Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
CONFEMEN	Conférence des ministres de l'Éducation des États et gouvernements de la Francophonie
CoP	Community of practice
CUE	Center for Universal Education
EFA	Education for All
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
GEFI	UN Global Education First Initiative
GEQAF	General Education System Quality Analysis/Diagnosis Framework, UNESCO
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ILSA	International Large-Scale Survey Assessment
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LEG	Local Education Group
LLECE	Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación (Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education)
LMTF	Learning Metrics Task Force
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
NEAS	National Education Assessment System, Pakistan
NLSA	National Large-Scale Survey Assessment
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PASEC	Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SEAMEO	The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
ToR	Terms of Reference
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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Introduction

The Global Learning Crisis

The benefits of education – for national development, individual prosperity, health and social stability – are well known, but for these benefits to accrue, children in school have to be learning. Despite commitments and progress made in improving access to education at the global level, including Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 on universal primary education and the Education for All (EFA) goals, levels of learning are still too low. Many children and youth complete primary and secondary education without acquiring the basic knowledge, skills and competencies they need to lead productive, healthy lives.

If as a global community we are to deliver on the promise of education, we must ensure that children and youth develop the knowledge and skills they need to be productive citizens of the world. Poor quality education is jeopardizing the future of millions of children and youth across high-, medium- and low-income countries alike. Yet we do not know the full scale of the crisis because measurement of learning achievement is limited, and hence difficult to assess at the global level.

Education and the Global Development Agenda

With a new set of global development goals on the post-2015 horizon, the education community has been working to shift the focus and investment in education from universal access to access plus learning. This paradigm shift is evident in the priorities of the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative, as well as the framing of education priorities in the UN

High-Level Panel's report, *New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*; the summary from the World We Want education consultation: *Envisioning Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*; and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network's report *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development*, among others.

Why Measuring Learning is so Critical

Measurement can play a crucial role in improving the quality of education and learning. Good teachers measure learning in the classroom to adjust and individualize instruction. Effective head teachers, school administrators and school district leaders measure learning at the school and community level to target resources and improve school quality. Governments measure learning to diagnose the overall health of the national education system and develop policies to improve learning outcomes. Civil society actors, donors and development agencies use assessments to measure the effectiveness of programming and advocate for effective education policies and practices.

However, assessment should not be conducted for its own sake. Data from learning assessment should be used to refine policy and practice and ultimately lead to improvements in students' educational experiences and learning. For measurement to be effective, it must be fit for purpose. Assessment can help identify and determine the magnitude of potential problems across an education system by allowing comparison at the classroom level. Large-scale measurement can be used

to track progress in given subjects or across cohorts. It can also contribute to the development of interventions or reforms, and inform parents and the community about specific aspects of the education system.

There is general agreement that rigorous assessment of learning can take many forms. These include school-based assessments that are administered in one or more countries, internationally comparable assessments, national exams and assessments and household-based surveys. The task force recommends that multiple methods be considered when designing systems to assess learning opportunities and outcomes. Regardless of which methods are used, measurement should be conducted in a technically sound, robust manner. Weak data are misleading and result in the misalignment of policies and resources. This does not mean that measurement efforts at early stages (when validity and reliability claims are not yet clear) should be discarded, but rather, it reinforces the need to strengthen assessments and to use the information they generate with the utmost care.

The ultimate goal of measuring learning is to improve the learning experiences and outcomes of students. Measurement can be a highly effective intervention if the results are leveraged to improve policy, practice and accountability.

Building Global Consensus on Learning

A global data gap on learning outcomes is holding back progress on improving the quality of education. Only a subset of countries is measuring learning directly in several domains. Many countries, especially those with low incomes, use proxy measures to gauge education quality even though they are insufficient for evidence-based decisionmaking. There is a vast gap between the proxy indicators available on education quality and

the robust data needed to understand the full scale of the learning crisis, to target policy and address areas of need, to track progress and to hold ourselves to account.

Motivated by the global education challenges of low learning levels and the lack of robust data on learning achievement, the Learning Metrics Task Force was convened by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution with the ultimate objective of creating high-quality learning experiences for children and youth around the world. Task force members include national and regional governments, EFA-convening agencies, regional political bodies, civil society organizations, donor agencies and the private sector. The task force engaged in an 18-month-long process to address the following three questions:

1. What learning is important for all children and youth? In the first phase, the task force sought to determine whether there are key competencies that are important for all children and youth based on research, policy review and consultations. The task force agreed on a broad set of global competencies across seven domains: physical well-being, social and emotional, culture and the arts, literacy and communication, learning approaches and cognition, numeracy and mathematics, and science and technology. This Global Framework of Learning Domains and corresponding subdomains span from early childhood through early adolescence (see report *Toward Universal Learning: What Every Child Should Learn*).

2. How should learning outcomes be measured? In the second phase, the task force investigated how learning outcomes should be measured across countries. Rather than being limited by the current capacity for measurement, the task force took a long-term view, allowing for changing needs and future innovations

in technology and assessment (see report *Toward Universal Learning: A Global Framework for Measuring Learning*).

3. How can measurement of learning be implemented to improve education quality? In the third phase, the task force examined how countries assess learning and in which domains, how assessment results are used, the specific needs of countries to measure learning and the use of assessments to improve the quality of education. The task force also investigated the feasibility of a multi-stakeholder partnership that could bring together existing efforts to support countries to measure and improve learning.

This report presents the major findings of phase three in the LMTF consultation process. It describes the key technical, institutional and political supports countries need to develop and sustain robust assessments of learning that can help inform improvements in policy and practice, informed extensively by LMTF in-country consultations. It also presents considerations for post-2015 development goals and plan for the next phase of LMTF in 2014 and 2015.

For a summary of key LMTF recommendations, please see *Toward Universal Learning: Recommendations from the Learning Metrics Task Force*.

Supporting Countries in Measuring Learning

In order to implement an assessment system that is both country-owned and internationally relevant, countries (and other governmental units such as states, provinces, school districts and cities) can benefit from collaboration, sharing and support. Quality education and learning are the responsibility of multiple stakeholder groups, including governments, civil society and the private sector. Therefore, the responsibility for measuring learning should not be confined to governments alone. However, the approach to measuring learning should be driven by country actors and embedded in the formal education system.

According to a study by Darling-Hammond and Wentworth (2010), high-performing education systems such as Australia, Finland, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sweden and the United Kingdom have assessment systems which:

- align curriculum expectations, subject and performance criteria, and desired learning outcomes
- provide feedback to students, teachers and schools about what has been learnt and “feed-forward” information that can shape future learning, as well as guiding college- and career-related decision making
- engage both teachers and students in the assessment process
- focus on the quality of standardized tests rather than the quantity.

In many countries, there is a large resource gap that prevents education stakeholders from implementing a system similar to the one described above. Improving measurement of learning requires both supply-side

interventions to increase the availability of resources for measuring learning and demand-side interventions to pressure governments and other agencies to track progress and devote resources to improving learning outcomes.

On the supply side, stakeholders who participated in LMTF consultations called for improved assessment systems and evidence to drive decisionmaking, and increased transparency and accountability among diverse stakeholders at the national level, as well as the development and use of indicators for global policy and advocacy. The measurement tools used for these indicators should be available as global public goods that governments, civil society, donors and academic institutions can use to inform decisions and improve learning outcomes. Measuring learning and tracking progress over time will allow for global recognition of countries that are successful in improving levels of learning and reducing disparities between subpopulations.

On the demand side, the LMTF consultations have revealed an urgent need for better guidance on the measurement of learning. There are multiple tools available to measure learning outcomes, but government and nongovernmental actors, especially in the Global South, have pointed out that there are few available sources for obtaining unbiased advice on which tools to use and how to use the results for policymaking. Most available guidance and technical assistance is offered with a specific tool, and decisionmakers have reported needing more guidance on specific aspects of the various tools before selecting one.

Those consulted have expressed a desire to approach learning assessment as a long-term program rather than a disparate set of projects. This can be done by coordinating all actors in an open dialogue to set priorities and share resources within the country, and obtaining support from regional and international experts as needed. There is a need for a global movement to support better data to improve learning, working both at the grassroots level and at the highest levels of national and global policymaking.

Through the consultation process, at least 20 countries or regional groups expressed interest in using the LMTF recommendations to analyze and make improvements to their education systems. Task force members discussed how best to work with these interested countries, deciding that any implementation efforts must be part of a long-term process. The task force vision for implementing LMTF recommendations will require a long-term strategy and continuous adaptation of the approach in order to learn from countries and best meet their existing needs. The task force decided to invite a minimum of 10 “Learning Champion” countries, states, provinces and cities to join the LMTF in its second phase and work together with a group of regional and international experts to diagnose and improve learning outcomes, using better measurement as a key component. The immediate next steps will vary by country, but the task force decided on five principles for moving forward with Learning Champions:

1. The process should be country-driven, beginning with documentation and analysis of the current learning measurement system and including a strategy for using the assessment results to improve learning outcomes.
2. Implementation should be carried out in collaboration with existing efforts by national, regional and international organizations. In particular, regional collaborations should be leveraged to facilitate

shared learning across the region and ensure that recommendations are implemented in a culturally relevant way.

3. There should be multi-stakeholder collaboration, including through national steering committees and/or communities of practice on assessment.
4. Interested countries should demonstrate commitment through political support, devoting human resources and cost-sharing.
5. Any recommended products or services should be considered public goods, with tools, documentation and data made freely available. Quality assurance mechanisms should be in place to evaluate tools before they are shared.

The task force decided that as a next step it would be useful to develop or adapt a series of diagnostic tools to help countries assess their education measurement systems, and that existing tools such as the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) and the Data Quality Assessment Framework (IMF, adapted for use in education statistics by the UIS and World Bank, 2003) might inform such a diagnostic. Rather than categorizing countries, such a tool should describe the different characteristics of an assessment system and make recommendations for pathways to improvement. In the following sections, this report sets forth a series of illustrative guiding questions that can be used in a country to examine and analyze (with the help of outside experts if necessary) its system of measurement so as to have an accurate starting point for improving a range of attributes, from the specificities of an assessment in a particular domain to the system as a whole.

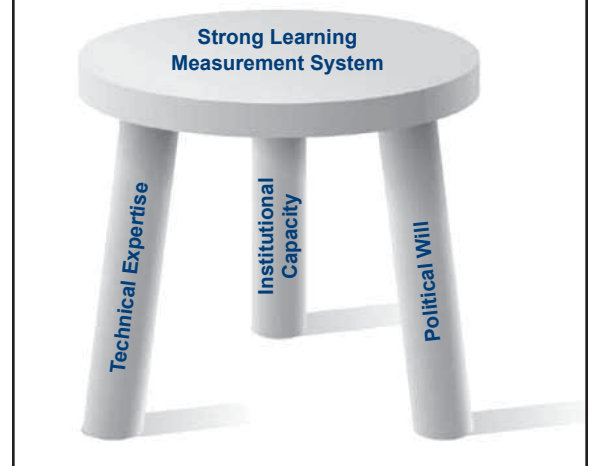
Three Key Supports

Through examining available research and consultation feedback from 85 countries, the task force identified three key supports that are necessary for a successful learning measurement system and are in high demand worldwide:

- **Technical expertise:** Countries need the technical tools and expertise to carry out quality learning assessments. A significant amount of developmental work involving multiple actors is required to generate and pilot the tools needed for countries to start tracking progress in the areas identified by the LMTE. Additionally, countries need technical experts from within their education systems to implement a large-scale assessments and provide guidelines for formative assessments.
- **Institutional capacity:** In parallel with the technical work, stakeholders involved in measuring learning must develop strong institutional capacity to build and sustain a robust system for measuring learning. This requires collaboration across multiple agencies and nongovernmental stakeholders.
- **Political will:** In order to develop and sustain efforts to improve learning, there must be political will to invest in learning measurement and translate the data into action. Political support for assessment that is used to improve learning is important at all levels, including at the school, district, provincial, national and global levels.

Taken together, these three components support a successful learning measurement system and provide an important input into a dynamic education system. The lack of any of these supports can lead to the entire system being inefficient, weak or irrelevant. This can be likened to a three-legged stool, in which the absence

Figure 1. Three Key Supports for a Strong Learning Measurement System



of any of the three “legs” prevents the entire stool from functioning.

Clarke (2012) describes an assessment system as “a group of policies, structures, practices, and tools for generating and using information on student learning and achievement.” There is a wide range of options for building an assessment system and countries should choose what is best for the national context. The task force agreed that rigorous assessment of learning may take multiple forms, including standardized assessments that are administered in one or more countries, internationally comparable assessments, national exams and assessments and household-based surveys.

Multiple methods should be considered when designing systems to assess learning opportunities and outcomes. In countries where the majority of school-age children

Box 1. Multiple Methods of Assessment

Instead of recommending a specific set of tools or methods, the task force recommends a country-driven process by which education ministries work with other key stakeholders (e.g. teachers, civil society, donors, the private sector, academia) to examine the benefits and drawbacks of the available tools and secure the technical and financial resources to implement a robust, sustainable system of assessment based on national priorities.

are in school and attending regularly, school-based assessments are the preferred way to capture learning data. In countries where enrollment or attendance are low, or a large proportion of children are served by nonformal education programs, household surveys can be useful in providing information on the learning levels of all children and youth.

Participation in internationally comparable assessments has resulted in significant policy shifts in some countries and no action by the government in others (Kellaghan et al., 2009; Baird et al., 2011). National exams and assessments are seen as transparent tools for policymaking and parental choice in some countries, yet in others they are perceived as unfair and corrupt (Transparency International, 2013). Overall, the use of learning assessment findings to improve policy and practice is not widespread, especially in developing countries (Kellaghan et al., 2009).

The following sections describe the consultation feedback, research and task force deliberations which support each of these three areas and present guiding questions for country actors to use when examining existing assessment systems.

Support 1: Technical Expertise

Aligned with the global work on developing and adapting assessment tools in the indicator areas of measurement (see LMTF report *Toward Universal Learning: A Global Framework for Measuring Learning*), countries can benefit from improved technical resources to implement these tools. Without a solid technical foundation, the results of an assessment are unlikely to be useful for improving policy and learning outcomes. In an analysis of how developing countries use national and international assessment data, Best and colleagues (2013) found that poor-quality data, lack of meaningful analysis, low capacity of technical staff and minimal dissemination of findings were commonly-cited factors leading to an assessment having no policy impact whatsoever.

The exact areas of expertise needed vary greatly by country. Kellaghan and colleagues (2009) describe four conditions that assessments must meet in order to accurately reflect student achievement and serve the needs of users:

1. The assessment has enough items to comprehensively assess the knowledge and skills within a given domain.
2. The assessment measures knowledge and skills at an appropriate level for the students taking it (i.e., it is neither too difficult nor too easy for the majority of students).
3. The assessment's ability to measure knowledge in one domain should not depend on students' abilities in other domains, which is especially important for students who are tested in a language other than the one they primarily use.
4. The assessment instruments are designed so that comparison over time is possible.

Meeting these conditions requires expertise that is tailored to each country's context and takes into account the existing achievement levels in the country, its linguistic diversity, and ultimately the information needs of teachers, policymakers and other key users of the information. At a minimum, countries need expertise in: coordination (national and regional levels); item writing; statistics; data management; translation; analysis and report writing. A cadre of qualified school liaisons, data recorders, test administrators and test scorers is also needed to successfully implement an assessment (Greaney and Kellaghan, 2008).

Participants in the Phase III consultation pointed to the lack of technical expertise as a major barrier to measuring learning outcomes in their countries. In some sub-Saharan African countries those consulted noted technical resources as the single most important need to improve the assessment of learning. As one group of participants explained, "There is not a lack of political will or resources, but rather a lack of capacity and technical skills. The group consulted agreed that if technical staff raised the profile of the need for improved measurement of learning, the political leadership would support improvements. Funding could also be mobilized from within government and from development partners. The starting point, therefore, is to build the capacity of technical staff to gather evidence on the state of learning outcomes and communicate this effectively to decisionmakers."

Many consultation participants noted the expense and consequences of bringing in international experts. One respondent explained, "There are not enough experts to make a decision for assessment in the Ministry of

Education. The principles are changed rapidly and different styles are [tried] on [at] different level[s] every semester. Because there is no long period plan, none of the plans [are] determined as...successful. So this trend is turned [in]to a circle.”

In some Southeast Asian countries, stakeholders noted a lack of staff experience in the latest assessment methods. “Policy on assessment does not innovate with the requirements of modern assessment theory. There is no... attention paid towards research on assessment in order for it to develop. The budget for research and development of new assessment techniques for educational institutions are limited. The staff lack experience on assessment.” This issue was echoed in several other countries, where those consulted said that within the education ministry, “There are not enough qualified people in the office with good experience [and] adequate education and training, (e.g. a PhD in psychometrics, measurement/evaluation would be an appropriate qualification). Most of the work is outsourced to technicians in academia.” In South Africa, stakeholders also noted this need and suggested that developing a cadre of technical experts in the African region could be a way of providing the needed expertise while also ensuring that it is culturally relevant.

Others among those consulted noted that the available assessment tools are limited to only a few domains. In Japan, for example, those consulted noted that “although areas measured at national and jurisdiction levels pertain to limited subjects within the curriculum, those have been regarded as providing sole measures of students’ scholastic ability.” The domains where there was the most frequent lack of technical skill to conduct assessments across all countries consulted are physical well-being, social and emotional, learning approaches and cognition, and culture and the arts.

Some expressed concern that the available technical tools and expertise did not extend to the populations

in greatest need. In Peru, for example, stakeholders said, “The barriers to measuring learning are more because of technical capacity, resources and complexity of the task. Peru is a large country with many isolated schools and communities that are difficult to reach in the Andean mountains and the Amazonian jungle. Peru includes many ethnic minorities that speak a variety of indigenous languages (including Quechua, Aymara and many others); it is very complex and expensive to develop examinations that are linguistically and culturally appropriate and fair for these populations.”

Other countries mentioned a need to expand their technological capacity to improve the efficiency of assessment systems. As one group in Kazakhstan noted, “Technology of monitoring of national research is constantly improving. Changes are made to the content of learning outcomes indicators in accordance with the requirement of time and in accordance with the international standards of quality of knowledge of schoolchildren. Big problems arise in computer-based testing of students due to lack of capacity and technical capabilities.” Participants in Ghana, Greece, Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria, Fiji, Peru, Uganda and other countries echoed these remarks on the lack of trained staff with technical skills in measurement.

Many of these issues extend to the classroom level. Even in countries with very high-performing education systems, there is still a lack of technical expertise for the continuous assessment of learning. In Singapore, those consulted noted, “Helping teachers and school leaders to understand both the psychometric notions of ‘assessment’ (of validity, reliability and usability of measurement of learning) and also the curricular-interactive dimensions of assessment (e.g. formative assessment/dynamic assessment, assessment for learning) can influence a student’s mastery of learning on a day-to-day basis. Teachers are less secure of

assessment of/for learning in non-academic subjects/ learning (e.g. character and citizenship)” In South Korea, “learning approaches and cognition”, “social and emotional” and “communication” domains are informally checked and observed by teachers, using checklists and running notes. Teachers consulted in South Korea reported that it is difficult to assess students’ learning approaches and cognition, and while these competencies are important they do not always see the value in measuring them.

In Zimbabwe, those consulted recommended that “continuous assessment/formative assessment and

standardization of measurement and evaluation should be taught as a course elective to ensure qualifying teachers leave colleges well-grounded for its effective assessment.”

Overall, a need for technical expertise was cited by almost every consultation participant, in low-, middle- and high-income countries alike. Based on the consultation feedback and review of existing system assessment tools (e.g. World Bank SABER-Student Assessment, UNESCO’s GEQAF), the following guiding questions can be used to diagnose the technical needs of the assessment system.

Table 1. Guiding Questions for Countries: Technical	
Breadth of learning domains assessed	• What domains or subject areas are assessed through national assessments and examinations? • What domains or subject areas are assessed either formally or informally in the classroom to improve learning? • Are additional data collected to inform policymaking, including information on child, teacher and learning environment characteristics? • How are data across various domains communicated and used for policy, programming, planning and budgeting?
Educational stages and populations assessed	• At what ages or educational stages are assessments conducted? • Are there efforts to measure learning outcomes for out-of-school children and youth? • Are there efforts, such as household surveys, to measure learning for students enrolled in nonformal, private or religious schools?
Quality of formative assessments	• Do teachers continuously assess children? Is there system-wide institutional capacity to support and ensure the quality of classroom assessment practices, such as tools or training provided to teachers? • In which subjects or domains are students assessed? • Do teachers have opportunities to share experiences and innovations in assessment? • How do formative assessments inform decisions for individual students, the school and the system?
Quality of summative assessments	• Is there a national assessment system in place? • Does the assessment meet the accepted standards of quality? • Is the assessment implemented with consistency and at regular intervals? • How do classroom assessments, portfolios, grades or marks figure in decisions regarding students?
Quality of examinations	• Is there a national examination of acceptable quality? • Are national examinations perceived as fair for all students and free from corruption? • Are additional sources of reliable evidence (e.g. teacher evaluation) used to make high-stakes decisions on student placement?
Human resources	• Are there sufficient technical experts (psychometricians, content area specialists in each domain, statisticians, policy analysts, etc.)? • If not, in what specialties is there a need for more expertise? • Are there strategies to train staff in these areas and retain them once they have received training?

At the local, national and regional levels, there are multiple actions that can be taken by various actors to improve technical expertise:

Level	Actors	Actions
Local	Teachers, headteachers, administrators, teacher training institutions	• Incorporate testing and assessment techniques into teacher training • Assess learning across a broad range of domains • Encourage local innovation in developing formative assessment tools, guided by accepted standards of quality • Provide tools, including technology and examples of good quality assessment tools
National	Ministry of Education, academia, civil society, teachers' unions	• Establish a link between national/regional/international assessments and improve instruction in the classroom • Devote resources to hiring and retaining technical staff with expertise in assessment • Share technical expertise with other countries in the region/world seeking to build capacity
Regional	Regional organizations, regional assessment bodies, offices of multilateral organizations	• Share technical expertise with countries seeking to build capacity • Link with other regional and international assessment efforts to allow for comparison of a large group of countries • Share items and assessment tools with other regions planning similar studies

Recommendations for global-level support: To support the technical capacity of countries, the task force recommended several key efforts at the global level, including:

- **Develop agreed-upon indicators in seven areas of measurement:** The task force recognizes that significant improvements in assessment capacity would be needed in many countries before all proposed indicators could be developed. In the next phase of LMTF, partner organizations will work together to develop indicators in the seven areas of measurement.
- **Develop new measures and/or tools with consultative input:** As the new measures and/or

tools are developed, and the LMTF partners are in a position to coordinate and make actors accountable in the areas they have agreed to lead. The process will continue to be inclusive and transparent and engage the end users to enhance the usability of instruments as they are developed and refined.

- **Set up quality assurance mechanisms to evaluate tools and data:** A quality assurance process can help ensure the quality of both the tools used to measure learning and the quality of data produced by countries. Countries and partners should work together on methodological development, sharing lessons learnt and implementing new global measures. At the same time, national and regional experts on assessment can work to adapt measures to national contexts.

Support 2: Institutional Capacity

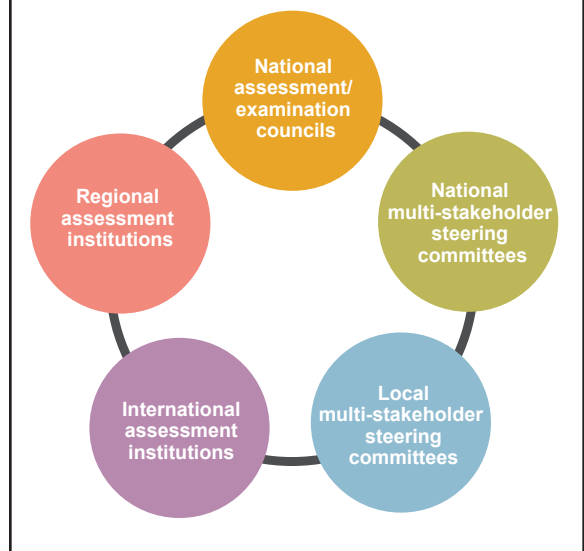
In parallel with the technical work, governments and other stakeholders involved in measuring learning must be supported by strong institutional capacity at multiple levels to use measurement to improve learning. National and local multi-stakeholder steering committees, national assessment or examination councils, regional and international assessment institutions are all institutions that can support national capacity for assessment, although some are more formalized than others.

At a minimum, most countries have some type of national assessment or examinations council. According to Ravela and colleagues (2008, p. 16), “A solid institutional structure requires independence and pluralism among government bodies and technical assistance agencies, an appropriate budget, and human resources that guarantee the unit can function to the necessary degree of technical quality.” However, the independence of the institution (i.e., whether it is a governmental, autonomous, or semi-autonomous agency) is less important than the culture of continuity and transparency associated with the assessment (Clarke, 2012). Involving diverse stakeholders in decisionmaking increases the likelihood that the results will be perceived as credible and lead to improvement in learning. When teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders in a position to act on the results of an assessment are not involved in the design and implementation, it can result in underuse of assessment results (Kellaghan et al., 2009).

According to Greaney and Kellaghan (2012), a national multi-stakeholder group, often called a steering committee or advisory group, can:

- help ensure that the assessment is perceived as credible to the government, teacher education

Figure 2. Types of Assessment Institutions



institutions, teachers' organizations, and other key stakeholders

- identify and address key policy questions to be answered by the assessment
- act as a channel of communication between key educational stakeholders
- help resolve administrative and financial problems that arise during implementation
- communicate findings in a manner that addresses possible negative reactions.

The consultation results revealed that most countries have some type of national agency devoted to the measurement of learning. Examinations councils were the type of agency most frequently listed by consultation participants. Sometimes called “examinations and assessment councils,” the primary focus of these councils is on administering national examinations.

In some countries, the council includes national assessments and guidelines for continuous classroom assessment. For example, in Uganda the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) has conducted a national assessment, referred to as the National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE), since 1996. Similar bodies exist in Kenya, South Africa, Zambia and Senegal.

Within these national councils, participation varies. In Kenya, for example, the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) includes representation from multiple departments within the Ministry of Education (e.g. curriculum development and quality assurance) and national teachers' organizations.

In some countries, there are multiple departments or units for different assessments. In Ghana, participants commented, "Each assessment has some form of governing council but we need to bring these together and look at priorities and policy options." In some environments, those consulted reported that a lack of coordination among the education ministry, donors, development contractors, curriculum developers and researchers has led to tensions and mistrust between the various actors, which ultimately decreases the credibility and impact of assessment results.

For example during a consultation of the Arab States, one country representative stated that their country does not lack the technical expertise or experience in the assessment of learning outcomes; in fact, there are centers for measurement of learning outcomes and qualified experts. However, the country-system of assessment is centralized, with no effective process to assess, monitor, evaluate or make informed decisions at the local level based on assessment outcomes.

In order to provide a platform for collaboration among the various stakeholders involved in assessment, the

Implementation Working Group proposed a national advisory group or community of practice, which could either be part of a national council or exist as an informal group. The following question was proposed to consultation participants:

Would a country-level community of practice (CoP) focused on assessment be useful in [country]? A CoP on assessment would be made up of teachers, education ministry officials, representatives of local government, civil society, academia, the private sector and others (which may include students in the higher grades, as well as representatives of opposition parties – not in government) to examine and set an agenda for improving assessment practices.¹

All persons consulted said that some type of national group focusing on these issues would be useful, whether a less formal community of practice or a formalized advisory group or steering committee. In many cases participants stated that a similar group already exists in their country, and sometimes local communities of practice have a voice in a national advisory group or steering committee .

In countries where a similar group exists, there may be barriers to its efficacy. For example, Jordan has a Royal Advisory Council specialized in education which consists of educational experts and civil society, but participants noted that the council lacks power. In Oman there is a small group, "education council," but those consulted reported that it does not directly affect policy. Civil society groups in Kenya are organizing a multi-stakeholder committee to examine learning measurement efforts within the Ministry of Education and

¹ While the working group proposed a community of practice, the definition provided was in fact closer to that of an advisory group. According to Wenger (1998), a CoP is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something in their work and learn how to do their work better through interacting regularly. An advisory group or steering committee may function like a community of practice but is tasked with making recommendations or decisions and may incorporate a broader range of stakeholders.

Table 2. Guiding Questions for Countries: Institutional	
Alignment of assessment and curriculum	• Does the formal curriculum or standards framework specify learning outcomes? • Are the measures used to assess learning closely linked to the national curriculum and standards? • Do national examinations fairly measure learning outcomes against the intended curriculum? • What learning domains are included in the assessment framework? • What educational stages or levels are included in the assessment framework? • How are assessment results used to influence teaching, curriculum modification, and assessment and examination content?
Institutional capacity for assessment	• Is there a formal institution (or institutions) responsible for assessment? • Does the institution have adequate human and financial resources? • Does the institution have responsibility and capacity for: i) national examinations; ii) national assessments; iii) guidelines for continuous assessments; iv) international or regional assessments?
Multi-stakeholder decisionmaking	• Who makes the decisions on what learning outcomes are measured? • Are teachers, students and parents included in the decisions? Do they represent all educational stages, from pre-primary through upper secondary? • Are nongovernmental stakeholders included, such as civil society, academia and the private sector? • Is there a formal group or institute that exists to build consensus on how learning is measured? • Is there national transparency and dialogue around assessment outcomes and how to use the information?
Coordination of assessment efforts	• Do the agencies and organizations involved in assessment communicate or share resources? • Does the government accept the results of assessments conducted by nongovernmental actors? • Do teachers and school leaders see the value of the assessments and are they aligned to what they are teaching? • Does the public and civil society generally accept the assessment results produced by the government? • Are efforts to assess young children and out-of-school children and youth aligned with efforts to assess children in schools?

among nongovernmental stakeholders. The education ministry and development partners in South Sudan are also convening a technical working group on educational assessment. Some consultation participants described additional committees with similar mandates, but said that often they have been inactive for a year or more, do not include nongovernmental stakeholders, or focus on curriculum and instruction but not on assessment.

Some participants suggested that an existing multi-stakeholder group – such as the Local Education Group

(LEG) or the country Education Cluster – could be expanded to include a focus on learning assessment. Others proposed that the national assessment or examination council include a wider range of stakeholders in an advisory group or steering committee.

Participants in the consultations offered ideas on what roles such a group could fulfill. As one participant in Zambia stated, “It is important to note that there should always be direct linkages between national vision, education policy and the assessment system.” Providing

At the local, national and regional levels, there are multiple actions that can be taken to improve institutional capacity for measuring learning:

Level	Actors	Actions
Local	Teachers, headteachers, administrators, teacher training organizations	• Create a local community of practice to share resources and practices on learning assessment • Align classroom or school assessments to national curriculum and standards frameworks, if available • Ask to participate on national or local government councils that make decisions on learning measurement
National	Ministry of education, academia, civil society, teachers' unions	• Adapt or create a national multi-stakeholder advisory group or community of practice focused on assessment • Connect with broader regional and international efforts to share ideas and good practices • Allocate resources to designing and implementing an assessment system aligned with national curriculum priorities
Regional	Regional organizations, regional assessment bodies, offices of multilateral organizations	• Identify good institutional practices within the region and facilitate shared learning • Share resources and assessment tools and help build capacity in other regions to collect learning data and analyze results

these linkages was viewed as a central role of this national group, in addition to connecting the education ministry with other key stakeholders.

In Greece, for example, one participant commented that a national group focused on assessment could ensure that “the assessment practices would be redefined, more domains would be included in the assessment of learning (e.g. emphasis should be placed on the physical well-being and social and emotional domains).”

In South Sudan, participants from the education ministry expressed a desire to link the curriculum to the assessment framework from the very beginning. At a consultation in Juba, a senior ministry official described the education system in its infancy, and said that together the ministry and development partners must “work together to help this baby stand up and walk.” Coordinating efforts to plan and measure learning outcomes from the beginning was seen as an important step in the process.

Participants offered suggestions on how this group could have the greatest impact. One person stated, “For international or regional actors to get involved locally implies that teachers can freely cooperate with them and explain their daily issues and needs, that the local government has reliable data to present for them to offer a plan... It is the only way to assure that a vision that does not match the realities on the ground won't be imposed and the program will be sustainable.”

Several participants in the consultation stated that in order to be successful, the national advisory group or CoP “will need to be replicated at the lower levels of provinces, districts and schools.” This was especially important for countries where the education system is devolved, such as Pakistan, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United States. Some countries already have local groups supporting assessment. In Singapore, for example, participants said, “there are currently attempts to build CoPs within schools that are trying out innovative assessment practices.”

A successful example of a multi-stakeholder collaboration was reported in Ethiopia, where the ministry and development partners co-developed a research study to collect learning outcome data using the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). Because the study was overseen by the ministry and conducted by a nongovernmental organization, there were checks and balances in place that participants attributed to EGRA outcomes being widely accepted as valid which led to an action plan being put into place to improve literacy levels. Another example was reported in Rwanda, where the education ministry is developing assessment tools at the classroom level to feed into continuous assessment. Participants reported that the Inspectorate, with support from bilateral donors, is developing the capacity for teachers to assess children while piloting and evaluating instruments at the school level.

Each country requires a different set of supports to build the institutional capacity for measuring learning. Establishing a national council or CoP on assessment is unlikely to be effective if the necessary resources are not identified to sustain such an institutional body. Therefore, it is important for country-level actors to examine the capacity of the institutions responsible for assessments, how decisions are made, and how well the assessment system is aligned with other aspects of the education system, especially the curriculum. Based on the consultation feedback and review of SABER-Student Assessment and UNESCO GEQAF, the guiding questions in Table 2 can be used to diagnose the institutional needs of the assessment system.

Recommendations for global-level support:

The immediate next steps to increase institutional capacity will vary by country, but the task force identified the following ways forward to implement the recommendations of the LMTF:

- **Countries drive change:** The process of improving institutional capacity should be country-owned and country-driven, beginning with an assessment of the current learning measurement system and including a “menu” of options for national-level support.
- **Build on existing efforts:** Implementation should be carried out in collaboration with existing efforts by national, regional and international organizations. In particular, regional collaborations should be leveraged to facilitate shared learning across the region and ensure that recommendations are implemented in a culturally relevant way.
- **Proceed through inclusive dialogue, including through national steering committees and/or communities of practice on assessment:** These committees should include teachers’ organizations, parent and student organizations, civil society organizations, academia and private sector stakeholders in addition to national education ministry participants.
- **Demonstrate commitment:** Interested countries should demonstrate commitment through political support and cost sharing.

Support 3: Political Will

A third support critical to a strong assessment system is political will. In order to develop and sustain efforts to measure learning, there must be political will to invest in learning measurement and translate the data into action. This includes both the public demand for information on learning and the government's willingness to assess and report on learning in a transparent and timely way.

Available evidence suggests that the use of national and international assessment data is not widespread, and that developing countries in particular experience barriers to using assessment data in policymaking (Kellaghan et al., 2009; Best et al., 2013). Kellaghan and colleagues offer seven reasons for this underuse and suggest actions to improve the use of results:

Reason	Action
National assessment activity is regarded as a stand-alone activity, with little connection to other educational activities.	MoE integrates assessment activity into existing structures, policy and decisionmaking processes.
Inadequate involvement of stakeholders in design and implementation of an assessment.	National assessment agency, MoE, and other decisionmakers involve all relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of an assessment.
Failure to communicate findings to all who are in a position to act.	Implementing agency makes provision in the budget to disseminate, plan activities and prepare a number of reports tailored to user needs.
Lack of confidence in the findings of a national assessment.	MoE ensures that the assessment team has the required technical competence and that relevant stakeholders are involved from the outset.
Political sensitivity to making findings public.	MoE holds regular stakeholder discussions to increase the likelihood of making findings public.
Failure to devise appropriate action following an assessment at the level of general policies.	MoE integrates national assessment activity into policy and managerial activities and reviews findings to determine implications and strategies.
Failure to devise appropriate action following a national assessment at the school level.	All key stakeholders (MoE, national assessment agency, schools, teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum authorities and textbook providers) ensure adequate communication of findings to schools, review findings and devise strategies to improve student achievement and provide ongoing support for implementation.

Adapted from Kellaghan et al. (2009), p. 23.

Many participants in the consultation noted concerns similar to those above when discussing why results are not translated into action. They also noted gaps between policies and practice, especially in devolved or decentralized education systems.

Pakistan, for example, has a complex history of education policy related to assessment, as described by one participant:

Until 2009, the National Education Assessment System (NEAS) was a key pillar of the government's national education policy that focused on improving the quality of education services and producing lifelong independent learners. However, with the passage of the 18th amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan in 2010, education was devolved to the provinces, making assessment a provincial subject. No major headway in assessment has been made since devolution in the regional centers, except in Punjab.

Some respondents noted a lack of political will to measure learning in particular domains, especially physical well-being, the social and emotional domains, learning approaches and cognition, and culture and the arts. This can result in a narrowing of the curriculum through teaching only what is measured. In several countries in sub-Saharan Africa, participants reported that while these domains may exist in the national curriculum, the ministry encourages teachers to focus only on reading and numeracy because those are the subjects that are tested.

While the majority of policies for measuring learning focus on literacy and numeracy, some countries do have policies to track other domains. In Singapore, for example, participants described “mandatory tracking and reporting of students’ performances in academic tests/

examinations and also non-academic achievements (e.g. sports/music activities).”

Political will to measure learning in a transparent way is only the first step in improving learning. As one respondent explained, “There are lots of policies, but government failure to implement those policies seems to be a vital issue.” Many of those consulted cited the lack of political will to implement the findings of assessment as a major barrier to improving learning. Participants in a regional consultation of the Arab States stated that politicians and decisionmakers are unaware of the benefits of learning assessments, and it is engrained in the culture that assessments are associated with grades/marks, or to the verdict of passage to the next grade or level. Politicians and decisionmakers would need to understand what role assessments could play in improving the quality of education and learning to support the development of new tools and increase investment in assessments.

As a stakeholder in East Africa explained, “In most of the learning assessments done, the findings have indicated that achievement of competencies at all levels is low. Most of the assessment initiatives have recommended various intervention measures. These have not been easy to implement due to constraints in funding or lack of government commitment. In some cases the recommendations have indicated a complete overhaul of the curriculum.”

Based on the consultation feedback and review of SABER-Student Assessment and UNESCO GEQAF, the following guiding questions can be useful for diagnosing various political aspects of a country assessment system.

Table 3. Guiding Questions for Countries: Political	
Public awareness and demand	• In public debates about education, is the focus typically on access or is learning part of the debate? • How is learning defined in public discourse (e.g. literacy, citizenship, STEM)? • Are there mechanisms through which citizens can advocate for better education? • Does the public recognize the value of assessment and the existing assessment systems?
Political will of government to assess and share results	• How frequently does the government implement a nationally representative assessment of learning? • After how many months are the results released? • At what levels and in which domains are the assessments conducted? • How are the results reported and promoted? • How are results used at the classroom, school, local and national policy levels?
Policy effects of assessments	• Is there a connection between assessment results and education policy? • Are there sufficient resources devoted to improving learning based on the assessments? • Are learning outcomes improving in the areas targeted through new policies? • Are there effects on practice, including curriculum, teaching, training and testing?

At the local, national and regional levels, there are multiple actions that can be taken to improve political will for measuring learning:

Level	Actors	Actions
Local	Teachers, headteachers, administrators, teacher training organizations	• Use valid and reliable tools for assessing learning and make assessment results accessible for students and families in a way that respects the students' privacy. • Use assessment results of individual children and youth to provide individualized support for their learning.
National	Ministry of education, academia, civil society, teachers' unions	• Advocate for open, transparent assessment and reporting of learning outcomes. • Advocate for education official development assistance to countries for measuring and improving learning.
Regional	Regional organizations, regional assessment bodies, offices of multilateral organizations	• Participate in or lead global efforts to improve learning and measures, especially in areas where new measures must be developed.

Recommendations for global-level support: Several actions are needed to garner political support for measurement:

- **Encourage political support at the national level:** There is a clear need to promote a culture of learning assessment among politicians and decisionmakers. Assessment data can have significant political influence within countries and beyond. National

actors, with the support of the global community, must pressure policymakers to invest in learning assessment, ensure transparency in reporting the results and use the information to implement strategies that improve learning for all children and youth.

- **Promote focus on learning at the global level:** Ensure that the measurement and improvement of learning outcomes play a key role in wider education dialogues, such as GEFI or the GPE and any new

movements arising after 2015. In short, these diverse efforts will convey a key message: to improve learning we must be able to measure and monitor its outcomes.

- **Engage civil society in a grassroots movement to measure and improve learning:** Through the global consultation process, the task force encountered tremendous efforts and interest in measuring learning among nongovernmental stakeholders. Numerous citizen-led movements are working to collect data on learning and hold governments accountable for providing quality education to all citizens. This momentum can be leveraged to ignite a global movement for learning that is responsive to diverse national contexts.

- **Garner financial resources:** Given the significant costs associated with learning assessments, there is a strong need to advocate for sustained funding while strengthening relations between governments, donors and implementing partners. Governments must see assessment as an important part of their central education services and funders and investors must do more to support countries that are struggling to finance the necessary reforms to implement task force recommendations.

The following section proposes a global multi-stakeholder partnership to support countries in building technical, institutional and political capacity for assessing learning.

A Multi-Stakeholder Partnership to Support Countries

By bringing together actors with complementary strengths and roles for a common purpose, successful multi-stakeholder partnerships can be an effective approach for addressing global development challenges. Multi-stakeholder collaborations add value beyond what any one organization could achieve on its own because they harness the collective wisdom of diverse actors to develop innovative and transformative solutions to complex problems. Having engaged in a participatory decisionmaking process, actors are likely to feel greater ownership of and support for the resulting decisions, increasing the overall sustainability of the effort.

While governments, civil society and international organizations are addressing different aspects of the global learning crisis, the task force recognizes the need for a global mechanism to coordinate these efforts and facilitate sharing of information and resources across countries and regions. The considerable complexities of achieving universal learning require a global, collaborative approach, driven by countries and supported by a strategic alliance of regional and international organizations with a shared vision of learning for all.

Thus, the task force proposed setting up an international, multi-stakeholder partnership with a focus on learning. It should be noted that the first 18 months of task force work during 2012-13 used a multi-stakeholder approach, with a diverse group of actors brought together and consulted to make collective recommendations. With the release of *Toward Universal Learning: Recommendations from the Learning Metrics Task Force* in September 2013, the task force agreed that it had

successfully accomplished its objectives as set out when it was first convened. But the group also agreed that the work should not stop there: with so much engagement and support coming out of the first phase, LMTF should sustain the momentum and make the transition into a new phase focused on implementation.

In November 2013 the task force discussed how it should reorganize itself to take on this very different set of activities. Task force members recognized that it would likely take at least two years to set up a more formal structure, which would mean defining the terms of reference, identifying a host organization, fundraising and hiring staff. While establishing this partnership may be a long-term goal, the task force feels strongly that the technical, institutional and political work required to improve learning outcomes should proceed immediately. Accordingly, the task force decided that LMTF should make the transition into this role over the next two years, from 2014 through to the end of 2015, with previous members on board as well as new partners to be invited. During this time, the task force will consider whether a more formal partnership will be needed post-2015.

Consultation Feedback

A description and prototype terms of reference (ToR) for the proposed multi-stakeholder partnership on learning were circulated for public consultation (see Annex C), and consultation participants expressed strong support for such a group. As one respondent stated, “The existence of such a group is essential in order to convince governments [to] focus on and prioritize assessment.” There is a great need for technical

expertise to help countries design, administer, analyze, and implement the findings of assessments of learning outcomes. While a number of organizations currently provide technical assistance to countries in these areas, national-level stakeholders shared the opinion that many of these organizations also promote specific measures or tools. Countries seek a go-to source for impartial guidance when considering new assessments or attempting to improve existing systems of evaluation.

None of the 700+ consultation participants disagreed with the idea of forming such a partnership, but many provided cautionary comments. There was agreement that while the multi-stakeholder partnership should fill existing gaps, it should not duplicate the efforts of existing data collection and reporting systems (e.g. UIS, GMR, UNICEF). As one respondent said, “The focus should not be on new tracking systems, but rather on getting existing systems to track new things.”

Consultations also revealed varying degrees of support for such a mechanism by region. For example, at regional consultations in sub-Saharan Africa, stakeholders agreed that a multi-stakeholder partnership would be extremely useful, especially if it could connect countries with technical assistance and capacity building without lengthy contracting processes. Participants indicated that the assistance currently available in this area is usually provided on a project-by-project basis and there are few opportunities to receive assistance in developing the overall assessment system in the long-term.

However, in other regions such as East Asia and the Pacific, participants felt that there were existing agencies, including regional organizations and regional/country offices of multilateral organizations, that were doing similar work and that a global multi-stakeholder partnership may not add value to existing efforts. As one group in Nepal stated, “The group thinks that an

advisory group may not be practicable. The government needs to develop the capacity of the staff and an expert service would be more beneficial. However, if we argue positively, the global advisory group would be helpful in guiding the assessment process and implement the findings of the assessment study in line with global society.”

Similar concerns were articulated by participants at a regional consultation in Latin America, where there was agreement that proposed functions² would be useful, but assistance through a regional body (e.g. the UNESCO Laboratorio Latinoamericano) may be more widely accepted than through an international group:

“Un riesgo de convocar un grupo de asesoramiento internacional es que este sea ajeno a la realidad socio-política de la región y los países en cuestión y que, en consecuencia, formule recomendaciones inadecuadas”.

“A risk of convening an international advisory group is that it is unfamiliar with the socio-political reality of the region, and the countries concerned, and therefore it may make inadequate recommendations.”

The task force recommends as a next step exploring possible options for linking this partnership with existing international entities or remaining independent for a short-term stage.

Key Principles and Functions

Building on the principles that proved effective in the first phase of work, the task force agreed on a few basic operating principles for a global multi-stakeholder partnership on learning:

² See Annex C for proposed functions of the multi-stakeholder partnership in the consultation document.

1. Aligned with the principles of the LMTF, the work of the multi-stakeholder partnership on learning should be participatory, inclusive and transparent.
2. A global multi-stakeholder collaboration should support processes at country and regional levels for developing capacity to implement LMTF recommendations. This includes providing feedback and guidance to countries on possible actions to improve assessment systems and sharing information on how to access technical expertise, guidance and funding.
3. Countries should drive the improvement process, selecting from a “menu” of options for national-level support.
4. The work of the multi-stakeholder partnership must build on and complement existing efforts, particularly by leveraging regional initiatives. The recommendation is not to create an entirely new, independent organization, but to support and better coordinate among current actors.
5. Regional collaborations should be leveraged to facilitate shared learning across the region and ensure that recommendations are implemented in a culturally relevant way. Regional educational organizations and regional offices of UN agencies, for example, are already fulfilling some of these roles.

The ultimate goal of the multi-stakeholder partnership would be to provide countries with the support they need to increase technical expertise, institutional capacity and political will for learning measurement, and use the results to improve education quality and learning outcomes. The purpose of such a partnership would be to improve coordination and communication between existing agencies, provide impartial guidance to countries, fill the global data gap on learning and help sustain a broad coalition of education and development stakeholders who share a common vision of learning for all. To ensure an appropriate balance of interests and be truly multi-stakeholder in composition, the partnership must have a diverse membership – from

national governments, teacher organizations, civil society organizations, student and youth organizations, bilateral and multilateral and other development partners, to the private sector, philanthropic foundations and research and academic institutions.

Key functions of such a partnership would include:

- Convening key actors to ensure better coordination between existing agencies and sharing of effective practices.
- Coordinating the development of common metrics for global learning indicators and promoting their use.
- Facilitating participatory decisionmaking among diverse stakeholders so that all interested actors have a voice in determining and implementing learning goals and metrics.
- Adapting or developing tools to help countries diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of their assessment systems.
- Supporting national communities of practice focused on assessment to garner resources and catalyze action on learning measurement.
- Serving as a global clearinghouse for measurement resources by collecting and making accessible research and tools on learning measurement; maintaining a global inventory of measurement expertise; and linking countries to resources and technical experts.
- Sustaining a broad coalition of education and development stakeholders who share a common vision of learning for all.

A multi-stakeholder partnership could provide the necessary inputs to drive action, generate resources and build consensus based on shared recognition of the importance of learning. With regard to the technical stream of work, such a partnership could help coordinate efforts between partners and communicate progress and

Box 2. Assessment as a Public Good

There was considerable debate among task force and working group members about how data are produced, managed and used. While education statistics systems and national and international data are public goods (i.e. funded with public resources to serve a public purpose), this is not always the case for learning assessments. The task force decided that it could not recommend a global measure for learning that would require countries to buy into a specific brand of assessment. For assessment data to be made a public good, these basic elements must be taken into account:

- Full documentation of studies that are funded with public resources should be publicly available. Documentation should include data sets, instruments and procedures used to generate the data.
- Informed and explicit consent by participants in the studies should be properly guaranteed.
- The body responsible for conducting the studies must have the independence to make technical decisions on what is publishable and what is not.
- Collaboration among different agencies should be promoted as a way of ensuring that a diversity of interests, perspectives and needs is embedded in the development of the studies from the outset.
- Collaboration among public and private assessment agents can take different forms, ranging from the co-development of a given study to agreement on technical procedures that would make one study comparable to another.

The task force decided that any recommended products or services used for tracking at the global level should be considered public goods, with tools, documentation and data made freely available. While certain assessment items cannot be in the public domain because doing so would invalidate the test, the education community, including assessment companies, must ensure that no country is precluded from measuring learning due to the costs associated with purchasing and administering tests.

lessons learnt across the network. At the institutional level, the partnership could help connect countries to technical and, if needed, financial support. It could also support regional organizations in bolstering country-level work by mapping expertise within the region and facilitating cross-country sharing of expertise, lessons, etc. Finally, a diverse coalition of stakeholders with a shared vision and message would be an influential

political voice for learning and assessment, with the ability to convene technical experts, civil society and policymakers and foster change in policy and practice. At the global level, the group would ensure that the measurement and improvement of learning outcomes play a key role in wider education dialogues, such as GEFI or GPE, and any new movements arising after 2015.

A Call to Action

To deliver on the recommendations developed by the LMTF, there are many stakeholders who must act to achieve the vision of improved learning. Education and learning are the responsibility of a wide range of actors, and robust measurement ensures that these actors uphold the right to learn for all children and youth. The task force offers the following next steps to carry these recommendations forward into action:

All stakeholders working in the field of education, including teachers, school leaders, local education authorities, education ministries and donors, should define and measure learning broadly, across multiple domains and educational stages. All education actors can begin to prepare for tracking in common global assessment areas by reviewing and building on their current evaluation efforts. Everyone interested in improving learning outcomes must advocate for accessible, transparent systems for measuring learning.

National governments should ensure that priorities in measurement are matched with the appropriate financing and allocate more resources to the measurement of learning outcomes and to tracking students' progress. Education and finance ministries should work together to raise and allot more funds for measurement, both large-scale and classroom-level. Governments should share experiences in measurement of learning at all stages, from assessment design to reporting, which can lead to more effective practices. Within countries, advisory groups or communities of practice should be developed or strengthened to bring together government and nongovernmental stakeholders to define priorities for assessment. Governments must pay particular attention

to reaching the most marginalized children and youth by understanding who they are, where they live and what their needs are.

Civil society groups should advocate for robust assessment systems that demonstrate the transformative power of reliable data on learning outcomes. Advocacy efforts should be targeted not only at national governments but also at parents, caregivers and communities so that they can take action to ensure their children are learning and hold leaders to account.

Regional organizations should identify good practices within countries and facilitate shared learning across countries. They should also use their political influence to advocate for better measurement of learning and create regional communities of practice to share technical and financial resources.

Multilateral agencies, especially those participating in the EFA movement (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank), should ensure that programming reflects a commitment to the measurement of learning outcomes as a step towards improving overall outcomes for all children, beyond literacy and numeracy. Efforts to track learning by international agencies must include a focus on equity, including an analysis of learning levels for various population groups (e.g. girls and boys, urban and rural children, and children living above and below the poverty line).

Donors should endorse a broad definition of learning across the seven domains, and finance the collection, analysis and dissemination of data at the country level.

Monitoring and evaluation efforts should be aligned with country priorities, carried out in collaboration with national governments, and funded as an integral part of education programming.

Assessment institutions and universities should share technical expertise and work collaboratively with a diverse group of education stakeholders to develop the new tools necessary for assessing learning. They can also help governments choose from among the available measures and methods with the help of measurement experts who are not associated with any specific assessment tool or product.

Testing companies, publishers and other private sector entities should donate employee time and financial resources to help develop innovative assessment tools, new technologies to make data collection more individualized and efficient, open source measures as public goods, and new ways of efficiently collecting and analyzing assessment data that are feasible in low-resource environments. They can also champion task force recommendations in their global and national advocacy for improved education systems and better learning outcomes.

Next Steps

As 2015 approaches, the education community continues to demonstrate its capacity for powerful and collective action to make education one of the top priorities on the global development agenda. Through this 18-month effort to build a common vision for learning and associated metrics, the education sector has demonstrated a strong capacity for collaboration and collective action. The task force has generated considerable momentum for measuring learning, and task force recommendations have gained recognition and support from youth, parents, teachers, civil society, business, governments and the international community. Participants are now calling for the education community to sustain this momentum and offer a series of next steps to help carry task force recommendations forward into action.

The task force acknowledges that it has completed its work as originally set out; however, it also recognizes the high demand from stakeholders to take advantage of the momentum and build on the interest provoked thus far. In response, the task force has agreed to make the transition into a new stage of work, with a focus on implementing the recommendations outlined in the three LMTF reports.

Sustaining momentum: LMTF 2.0

At a final meeting of the first phase of LMTF on 6 and 7 November 2013 in Washington, D.C., the task force decided to sustain the momentum built so far by embarking on a new phase (referred to as LMTF 2.0 from here on) that sets out follow-up tasks, involves an expanded set of partners and focuses on bringing task force recommendations to life, with an emphasis on improving student learning assessment systems at

country level and using assessment data to improve learning outcomes.

Time frame. The task force members decided to continue working together for two more years, running from January 2014 to December 2015. This timeframe was decided upon for several reasons, including the merits of continuing to work together as a task force to accomplish as much as possible over the next two years before the new global development and education agendas begin and the importance of allowing sufficient time to explore further the need for a formal multi-stakeholder partnership on learning to sustain the task force agenda.

Goals and results. The ultimate goal of LMTF 2.0 will be to **support the development of more robust systems for assessing learning outcomes (global, national, local³) and make better use of assessment data to help improve learning.** The task force identified five main results that it aims to achieve at the end of two years:

- 1. Technical:** Indicators in each of the areas recommended for global tracking are developed by partners.
- 2. Institutional:** At least 10 countries use task force recommendations to support country-level work on learning assessment and the use of assessment data to improve learning.
- 3. Political:** The post-2015 global development and education agendas are informed by task force recommendations.

³ "Local" refers to formative assessments in classrooms and other types of assessments used to capture the learning progress of children learning outside the formal school system.

4. Assessment as a public good: A strategy is developed for advancing an agenda in which learning data are supported as a global public interest.

5. Knowledge sharing: Actors and experts in learning assessment share knowledge and coordinate their efforts.

To achieve these results the task force will use three main strategies: open access, embedding in existing work and collaborative work among LMTF member organizations. **Open access** refers to facilitating the connection with, adaptation and use of task force recommendations and associated products to be developed by interested actors as they see fit. Among such associated products are toolkits, methodologies, and guidance notes. This requires task force partners to continue to make their work transparent and accessible, and for the Secretariat to track and share information on the diverse ways that recommendations are being taken up. **Embedding in existing work** refers to incorporating work toward the goal and key results of the LMTF 2.0 in existing efforts by education actors at the country, regional and global levels. **Collaborative work** refers to projects in which partners are encouraged to work together to take forward LMTF recommendations; this will be enhanced by the regular sharing of information on the scope of the work and its progress.

The task force decided to open up to more partners and invite additional organizations that are interested to join the effort. The task force will adapt its operating principles and organizational structure to suit the new phase of work, including the following:

1. Advisory Committee. A group of individual volunteers (approximately 10) will be selected from among the task force members to serve as the advisory committee for LMTF 2.0. The committee will be composed so as to achieve a balance of technical expertise in assessment, experience implementing policies and programs that improve learning,

geographical diversity, and sector representation (i.e. government, multilateral agencies, civil society, etc.). The primary functions of this committee will be to provide guidance to the Secretariat, present task force work to external audiences and facilitate task force meetings.

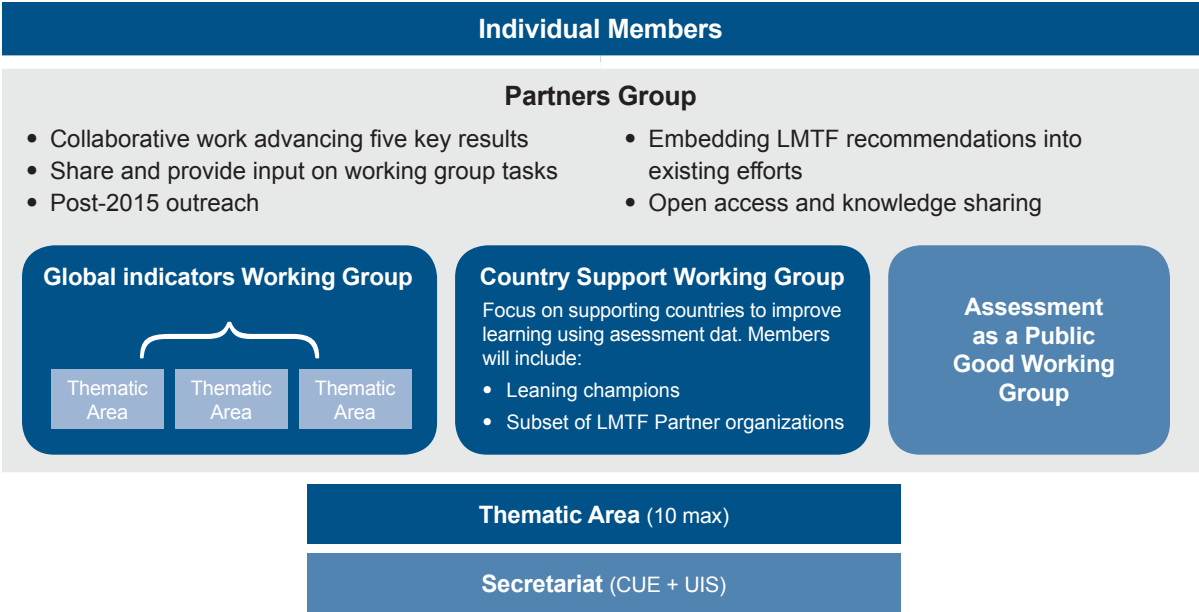
2. Partners Group. Organizations that are current task force members and new organizations wanting to join will make up the Partners Group. Partners will be actively involved in working to advance one or more of the key results listed above, including the advancement of LMTF recommendations within post-2015 discussions. Initially there will be two working groups within the Partners Group—one on indicators for global tracking and one on country-level work. A third working group on assessment as a public good will come together later. Each working group will map thematic areas where partners are working on specific activities and regularly share updates on how the work is proceeding with the Partners group. As work gets underway, partners will share their plans and ideas, particularly during the design phase, for review and input from the Partners Group.

3. Secretariat. A small and flexible Secretariat will support the overall work of the task force, with UIS coordinating the technical work and CUE at the Brookings Institution coordinating institutional and political work and the overall task force, including support for technical work where needed. An important function of the Secretariat will be tracking of LMTF-related work, connecting actors to each other and sharing information publicly.

4. Individual Members. Individuals who lack institutional backing but would like to engage in LMTF 2.0 may sign on as individual members through an online knowledge-sharing platform (to be developed) with access to updates on LMTF activities, useful links related to assessment, discussion forums and documents posted for public consultation.

Figure 3 depicts the structure of LMTF 2.0.

Figure 3. Structure of the LMTF



Conclusion

The upcoming global development and education agendas must focus on access to education plus learning, or they will fail to achieve EFA Goal 6 and GEFI Priority 2 to ensure every child’s right to quality education. With a commitment to reducing inequalities among social groups, the education community aspires to an agenda that centers around quality education and equity from early childhood through to adolescence. With its recommendations, the task force has set an ambitious global agenda for the use of assessments to improve learning opportunities for all children and youth. Clear

and precise measurement can be used to inform policy geared to improving low learning levels. The lessons learnt from the work of the task force will be invaluable to post-2015 decisionmakers as well as ministries of education as they prepare to make the paradigm shift from access to access plus learning within their own systems. As the next phase of this work gets under way, education and development stakeholders are called to join the movement to help re-imagine what is measurable in education and deliver on the promise of education as an engine for opportunity.

Annex A. Individuals Contributing to the Phase III Public Consultation Period

The following is a list of individuals who contributed to the Phase II consultation period and provided their name and affiliation to the LMTF Secretariat. This list does not include task force members, working group members or Secretariat, who also provided feedback during the consultation period. A full list of task force, Secretariat and working group members is provided near the beginning of this report. Note that individuals who participated in an in-person consultation and did not provide their name and affiliation are also counted toward the total estimate of 700 participants.

Name	Organization	Country
Farooq Wardak	Ministry of Education	Afghanistan
M. Victoria Morales Gorlery	Buenos Aires City Government; Committee on Education	Argentina
Florencia Mezzadra	Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (CIPPEC)	Argentina
Inés Aguerrondo	IIPE/UNESCO	Argentina
Marilina Lipsman	Innovación y Calidad Académica, Universidad de Buenos Aires	Argentina
Natalia Benasso	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	Argentina
Santiago Fraga	La Vicaría Episcopal de Educación	Argentina
Adriana Fernández del Rey	Ministry of Education, Buenos Aires City Government	Argentina
Estela Lorenzo	Ministry of Education, Buenos Aires City Government	Argentina
Inés Barreto	Ministry of Education, Buenos Aires City Government	Argentina
Manuel Alvarez Tronje	Proyecto Educar 2050	Argentina
Elena Duro	UNICEF Argentina	Argentina
Carlos Torrendell	Universidad Católica Argentina	Argentina
Angelica Ocampo	World Fund	Argentina
Chris Tinning	Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)	Australia
Natig Aliyev	The State Students Admission Commission	Azerbaijan
Vali Huseynov	The State Students Admission Commission	Azerbaijan
Marcellus Taylor	Ministry of Education	Bahamas
Martin Baptiste	Caribbean Development Bank	Barbados
Yolande Wright	Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)	Barbados
Roderick Rudder	Ministry of Education	Barbados
Marja Karjalainen	European Commission	Belgium
Aimee Verdisco	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	Bolivia
Carlos Eduardo Moreno	Instituto Nacional de Estudios e Investigaciones de la Educación (INEP)	Brazil
Marcelo Perez Alfaro	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	Brazil
Louise Lahaye	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	Burkina Faso
Jacqueline Nicintije	Ministry of Basic Education and Secondary Education of the Trades, Vocational Training and Literacy	Burundi
Zacharie Irambona	Ministry of Basic Education and Secondary Education of the Trades, Vocational Training and Literacy	Burundi

Name	Organization	Country
Blandine Ndikumasabo	RET	Burundi
Loïc Nsabimana	RET	Burundi
Nadège Yengayenge	RET	Burundi
Julia Cieslukowska	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	Canada
Odette Langlais	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	Canada
Ryan Legault-McGill	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	Canada
Abdulai Mbailau	Ministry of Education	Chad
Ahmat Mahamat Abdlesalam	RET	Chad
Koudja Mayoubila	RET	Chad
Patrick Loretan	RET	Chad
Atilio Pizarro	UNESCO Chile	Chile
Bruno Sibaja	RET	Costa Rica
Erica Guevara	RET	Costa Rica
Grettel Gamboa	RET	Costa Rica
Rodriguez Encargada	RET	Costa Rica
Bruno Allou	Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)	Côte d'Ivoire
Kadidia V. Doumbia	International Society for Language Studies (ISLS)	Côte d'Ivoire
Kandia-Kamissoko Camara	Ministry of Education	Côte d'Ivoire
Nathalia Feinberg	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Denmark
Ancell Scheker	Ministry of Education	Dominican Republic
Maria José Villamar	Centro Educativo Steiner Internacional	Ecuador
Maria Del Carmen Barniol Gutiérrez	Colegio Alemán de Guayaquil	Ecuador
Amelina Montenegro	Colegio Americano de Guayaquil	Ecuador
Guillermo García Wong	Colegio Americano de Guayaquil; Universidad Católica Santiago de Guayaquil	Ecuador
Jacqueline Ibarra	Logos Academy	Ecuador
Maria Ebelina Alarcón Salvatierra	Presidente Velasco Ibarra School	Ecuador
Yazmina Zambrano	RET	Ecuador
Guisella Merchán Calderón	Rosa Gómez Castro School	Ecuador
Magaly Veloz Meza	Rosa Gómez Castro School	Ecuador
Dahiana Barzola	Unidad Educativa Educa (Salinas)	Ecuador
Dolores Zambrano	Universidad Casa Grande	Ecuador
Lorena Durán	Universidad Casa Grande	Ecuador
Lucila Pérez	Universidad Casa Grande	Ecuador
Malak Zalouk	American University in Cairo	Egypt
Eshetu Asfaw	Ministry of Education	Ethiopia
Setotaw Yimam	UNICEF Ethiopia	Ethiopia
Sibeso Luswata	UNICEF Ethiopia	Ethiopia
Tizie Maphalala	UNICEF Ethiopia	Ethiopia
Allyson Wainer	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Ethiopia

Name	Organization	Country
Ana Raivoce	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment	Fiji
Raitieli Kacilala	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment	Fiji
Torika Taoi	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment	Fiji
Estelle Ladra	IIEP/UNESCO	France
Olav Seim	UNESCO	France
Qian Tang	UNESCO	France
Nicole Goldstein	DFID Ghana	Ghana
Charles Y. Aheto-Tsegah	Ghana Education Service Ministries	Ghana
Konstantina Rentzou	Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) - Greece liaison; Technological Educational Institute of Epirus, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care	Greece
Patricia McPherson	Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) Secretariat	Guyana
Priya Manickchand	Ministry of Education	Guyana
Jennifer Cumberbatch	National Centre for Education Resource Development (NCERD)	Guyana
Anouk Ewald	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	Haiti
Sandra Maribel Sánchez Rivera	Ministry of Education	Honduras
Esther S. C. Ho	Hong Kong Centre for International Student Assessment (HKPISA Centre)	Hong Kong
V. Sudhakar	Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Hyderabad	India
Letha Ram Mohan	Institute of Vocational Studies	India
Kjell Enge	J&A	India
Shaheen Shafi	Learning Links Foundation	India
Garima Bansal	Miranda House; University of Delhi	India
Sujata Shanbhag	NAAC	India
K.Rama	National Assessment and Accreditation Council	India
Pushpalatha Gurappa	Pearson	India
S. N. Prasad	Regional Institute of Education (NCERT), Mysore	India
Sulabha Natrak	Waymade College of Education, Vallabha Vidyanagar, Gujarat	India
Maryam Sharifian	State University of New York at Buffalo; Early Childhood Research Center (ECRC); Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) - Iran liaison	Iran
Mukdad H.A. Al-Jabbari	Baghdad University; UNESCO (former)	Iraq
Carol Watson Williams	Consultant	Jamaica
Cynthia Hobbs	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	Jamaica
Janet Quarrie	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	Jamaica
Winsome Gordon	Jamaica Teaching Council	Jamaica
Barbara Allen	Ministry of Education	Jamaica
Dorrett Campbell	Ministry of Education	Jamaica
Maureen Dwyer	National Education Inspectorate	Jamaica
Steven Kerr	Planning Institute of Jamaica	Jamaica
Asburn Pinnock	Sam Sharpe Teachers' College	Jamaica
George Dawkins	Shortwood Teachers' College	Jamaica
Robert Parua	UNESCO	Jamaica

Name	Organization	Country
Hyacinth Evans	University of the West Indies	Jamaica
Hitomi Hara	International Affairs Department, Japan Teachers' Union	Japan
Muhieddeen Touq	ChangeAgent for Arabic Development and Education Reform	Jordan
Caroline Pontefract	Director of Education	Jordan
Aisha Sheikh	Injaz Al Arab	Jordan
Abeer Ammouri	Ministry of Education	Jordan
Ahamad Tuweesi	National Center for Human Resource Development (NCHRD)	Jordan
Haif Bannayan	Queen Rania Teacher Academy	Jordan
Dina Craissati	UNICEF	Jordan
Abdiev Kali Seilbekovich	Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, National Testing Center	Kazakhstan
Mercury Teresa	Access Education International	Kenya
Nafisa Shekhova	Aga Khan Foundation (East Africa)	Kenya
Emily Gumba	British Council	Kenya
Gregory M. Naulikha	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	Kenya
Catherine Kiyapi	City Education Department	Kenya
Sela M. Muniafu	City Education Department	Kenya
James Njunguna	Concern Worldwide	Kenya
Victor Odera	Concern Worldwide	Kenya
Willy W. Mwangi	Empower Africa	Kenya
Charles M. Chacha	Government of Kenya, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Kenya
Emily Kamithi	Government of Kenya, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Kenya
Fidelis Nakhulo	Government of Kenya, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Kenya
Margaret Okemo	Government of Kenya, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Kenya
Mohammed M. Mwinyipembe	Government of Kenya, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Kenya
Grace Moraa	Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI)	Kenya
David Njengere	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development	Kenya
Jacklene Onyango	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development	Kenya
Evangeline Njoka	Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM-UNESCO)	Kenya
Tabitha T. Kamau	Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM-UNESCO)	Kenya
Kabiru Kinyanjui	Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC)	Kenya
Richard Wambua	Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC)	Kenya
Joseph Karuga	Kenya Primary Schools Headteachers' Association (KEPSHA)	Kenya
Lydia W. Matu	Kenya Primary Schools Headteachers' Association (KEPSHA)	Kenya
Mukirae Njihia	Kenyatta University	Kenya
Margaret Wambui Njayakio	RET	Kenya
Regina Muchai	RET	Kenya
Ronald Odhiambo Omuthe	RET	Kenya
Abel Mugenda	RTI International	Kenya
Christopher Khaemba	Teacher Service Commission	Kenya
Genevieve Wanjala	University of Nairobi	Kenya
Hellen Inyega	University of Nairobi	Kenya

Name	Organization	Country
Mary Mutisya	Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK); Kenyatta University	Kenya
Hoje Cho	Buddle Elementary School	Korea
Jongsik Jung	Chungang Middle School	Korea
Onuri Shin	Huykyoung Middle School	Korea
Jinnie Bang	Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS)	Korea
Jinmin Cho	Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE)	Korea
Mi Young Song	Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE)	Korea
Sungsuk Kim	Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE)	Korea
Sunjin Kim	Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE)	Korea
Myung-Lim Chang	Korea Institute of Child Care and Education (KICCE)	Korea
Jaeeun Shin	Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Corporation (KCOC)	Korea
Jihee Choi	Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET)	Korea
Chong Min Kim	Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI)	Korea
Hyemin Kim	Ministry of Education	Korea
Byoungryul Kim	Munjeong Middle School	Korea
Hyejin Kim	Purumi Kingdergarden	Korea
Kyungsuk Min	Sejong University	Korea
Buja Min	Sungmi Elemnetary School	Korea
Heewoong Kim	UNESCO Korea	Korea
Sungsang Yoo	University of Foreign Studies	Korea
Akylay Nasirova	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center	Kyrgyz Republic
Artur Bakirov	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center	Kyrgyz Republic
Asel Amabayeva	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center	Kyrgyz Republic
Asker Karimov	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center	Kyrgyz Republic
Dinara Dautova	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center	Kyrgyz Republic
Kukun Omorova	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center	Kyrgyz Republic
Ryskyl Madanbekova	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center	Kyrgyz Republic
Samara Mambetova	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center	Kyrgyz Republic
Taalajbek Mamatalyev	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center	Kyrgyz Republic
Uralyeva Gulsina	Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, National Testing Center	Kyrgyz Republic
Lytou Bouapao	Ministry of Education and Sports	Lao People's Democratic Rep.
Ghassan Issa	Arab Resource Collective (ARC)	Lebanon
Samir Jarrar	Arab Resource Collective (ARC)	Lebanon
Keratile Thabana	Ministry of Education & Training	Lesotho
D. Teah Nimley	Concern Worldwide	Liberia
Augustus N. Karyor	Ministry of Education	Liberia
Chapmam L. Adam	Ministry of Education	Liberia
Mick Myers	Ministry of Education	Liberia
Stanley T. Nyeekpee	Ministry of Education	Liberia
Ahmad Syarizal Mohd Yusoff	Ministry of Education Malaysia, Assistant Director, Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD)	Malaysia

Name	Organization	Country
Norita Koo Abdullah	Ministry of Education Malaysia, Documentation Centre Sector, Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD)	Malaysia
Dewani Goloi	Ministry of Education Malaysia, Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD)	Malaysia
Khalijah Mohammad	Ministry of Education Malaysia, Policy Sector, Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD)	Malaysia
Nor Saidatul Rajeah Zamzam Amin	Ministry of Education Malaysia, Policy Sector, Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD)	Malaysia
Sarifah Norazah Syed Anuar	Ministry of Education Malaysia, Policy Sector, Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD)	Malaysia
Zunaidi Harun	Ministry of Education Malaysia, Quality Sector, Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD)	Malaysia
Asmah Ahmad	Ministry of Education Malaysia, Research and Evaluation Sector, Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD)	Malaysia
Noumouza Koné	Direction Nationale Pédagogie, Ministry of Education	Mali
Cheick Oumar Coulibaly	Institut pour l'Education Populaire (IEP)	Mali
Maria Diarra	Institut pour l'Education Populaire (IEP)	Mali
Ida Jallow-Sallah	Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Education (ROCARE)	Mali
Ibrahim Ahmad Dweik	Ministry of Education	Mauritania
David Calderón	Director General Mejicanos Primero	Mexico
Eduardo Backoff	La Junta de Gobierno del INEE (Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación)	Mexico
Trindade Nahara	Ministry of Education, Mozambique	Mozambique
Bhuban Bajracharya	Asian Development Bank	Nepal
Dilli Luintel	Curriculum Development Centre	Nepal
Dinesh Khanal	Curriculum Development Centre	Nepal
Diwakar Dhungel	Curriculum Development Centre	Nepal
Ganesh Prasad Bhattarai	Curriculum Development Centre	Nepal
Tulasi Pd Acharya	Curriculum Development Centre	Nepal
Bhojraj S.Kafle	Education Review Office	Nepal
Yasu Nagaoka	JICA	Nepal
Dhir Jhingran	Ministry of Education	Nepal
Hari Lamsal	Ministry of Education	Nepal
B.R. Ranjit	Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Centre	Nepal
Ananda Paudel	National Center for Educational Development	Nepal
Deepak Sharma	National Center for Educational Development	Nepal
Yamuna Khanal	Samunnat Nepal	Nepal
Yogesh K. Shrestha	Samunnat Nepal	Nepal
Yuba Rajla Laudari	Samunnat Nepal	Nepal
Sumon Tuladhar	UNICEF	Nepal
Leotes Lugo Helin	UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia	Nepal
Jayanti Subba	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Nepal
John Kay	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN)	Nigeria

Name	Organization	Country
Lilian Breakell	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN)	Nigeria
Andrew Attah Adams	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Florence Onajite	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Isioma Edozie	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Johnson Chukwusa	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Magdalene U. Okobah	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Mary O. Nwadei	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Maureen Ororho	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Ngozi C. Okonkwo	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Nneka Onyekwe	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Ose-Loveth Lokoyi	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Patricia Arinze	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Pricillia Mbiapinen Ndur	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Roselyn Eboh-Nzekwe	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Theodorah C. Chukwuma	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Victor Chukwuwi Okocha	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Victoria N. Nwaonye	Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta-State Nigeria	Nigeria
Jide Odewale	Federal Ministry of Education (FME)	Nigeria
O. A. Ariba	Federal Ministry of Education (FME)	Nigeria
S. O. Adaba	Federal Ministry of Education (FME)	Nigeria
Eduum E. Ekanah	Federal Ministry of Education (FME), Inspectorate	Nigeria
Bridget Okpa	Federal Ministry of Education (FME), Policy Planning Monitoring and Research Department	Nigeria
Promise N. Okpala	National Examination Council (NECO)	Nigeria
Bimbola Jide-Aremo	Save the Children Fund	Nigeria
Adefunke Ekin	Tai Solarin University of Education	Nigeria
Paulina Pwachom	Teachers Research Council of Nigeria (TRCN)	Nigeria
Ngozi Awuzie	UNESCO	Nigeria
Anthony Ojo	Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)	Nigeria
Millicent King	Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)	Nigeria
Tokunbo Onosode	Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)	Nigeria
Amaka Ezeanwu	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Nigeria
Benadeth N. Ezekoye	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Nigeria
Cajethan U. Ugwuoke	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Nigeria
Chiamaka Chukwuone	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Nigeria
Felix C. Nwaru	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Nigeria
Ogbonnaya O. Eze	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Nigeria
Widad Abdallah Bahrani	National Commission for Education, Culture and Science	Oman
Aqila Nadir Ali	AFP	Pakistan
Ayesha Jabbar	Alif Laila Book Bus Society	Pakistan
Sabah Rehman	Alif Laila Book Bus Society	Pakistan

Name	Organization	Country
Aftab Ali	Bureau of Curriculum & Extension (BOC) Sindh (Jamshoro)	Pakistan
Noreen Hasan	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	Pakistan
Ismat Riaz	Consultant	Pakistan
Shelah Khan	D.O Elementary (F)	Pakistan
M. Arif	D.O Secondary (F)	Pakistan
Salman Butt	Daily Nai Baat	Pakistan
Mansoor Malik	Dawn News—Media	Pakistan
Sadia Zain	Democratic Commission for Human Development (DCHD)	Pakistan
Abdul Rehman	DFP (IS), Policy Planning and Implementation Unit (PPIU)	Pakistan
Talab Abbas	DFP, Policy Planning and Implementation Unit (PPIU)	Pakistan
Tariq Mehmoud	DFP, Policy Planning and Implementation Unit (PPIU)	Pakistan
Azmat Siddique	Directorate of Staff Development (DSD)	Pakistan
Haddyat Khan	Dunya TV	Pakistan
Hamid Naveed Khan	Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pakistan
Afshan Kiran	Government, Education Reform Assistant Secretary	Pakistan
Amjad Imtiaz	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Farhan	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Huma Zia	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Imtiaz Ahmed Nizami	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Izzat Waseem	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Kabir Alam	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Muhammad Imran Ali	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Naghmana Ambreen	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Narmeen Hamid	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Rita Kumar	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Saba Ishrat	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Saeeda Baloch	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Sehar Saeed	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Syed Taufeen	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Zara Khan	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)	Pakistan
Muhammad Jamil Najam	IDEAS ITA	Pakistan
Bisma Haseeb Khan	Institute of Development and Economic	Pakistan
Neelum Maqsood	Institute of Development and Economic	Pakistan
Shabnam Fareed	Kashf Foundation	Pakistan
Inyatullah Shah	Pakistan Association for Continuing & Adult Education (PACADE)	Pakistan
Mushtaq Ahmed	Provincial Education Assessment Centre (PEACE), Bureau of Curriculum & Extension (BOC) Sindh (Jamshoro)	Pakistan
Tanveer Ahmed Khan	Provincial Education Assessment Centre (PEACE), Bureau of Curriculum & Extension (BOC) Sindh (Jamshoro)	Pakistan
Noor Ahmad Khoso	Provincial Institute for Teacher Education (PITE) Sindh (Nawabshah)	Pakistan
Qamar Shahid Siddique	Provincial Institute for Teacher Education (PITE) Sindh (Nawabshah)	Pakistan
Yasir Barkat	Psychologist	Pakistan
Nasir Mahmood	Punjab Education Assessment System (PEAS)	Pakistan

Name	Organization	Country
Saad Cheema	Punjab Education Foundation	Pakistan
Saba Mushtaq	Reform Support Unit (RSU)	Pakistan
Muhammad Sahhir Shaikh	Reform Support Unit (RSU) Sindh	Pakistan
Saha Mehmod	Reform Support Unit (RSU) Sindh	Pakistan
Aftab Khushk	Reform Support Unit (RSU), English and Literacy Department	Pakistan
Aftab Ahmed	S.E.D	Pakistan
Naseem Haniya	Sanjan Nagar	Pakistan
Saimon Robin	Sanjan Nagar Public Education Trust (SNPET) School	Pakistan
Saleem Asghar Shahid	Senior Research Officer	Pakistan
Muhammad Islam Sidqi	SEP	Pakistan
Mohammad Ancon	Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan (SESPEB)	Pakistan
Bernadette Dean	St. Joseph's College for Women	Pakistan
Tabinda Jabeen	Teacher's Resource Center	Pakistan
Aliya Abbassi	The Aga Khan University Examination Board (AKU-EB)	Pakistan
Raana Jilani	The Aga Khan University Examination Board (AKU-EB)	Pakistan
Rooshi Abedi	The Aga Khan University Examination Board (AKU-EB)	Pakistan
Zehra Abidi	The Aga Khan University Examination Board (AKU-EB)	Pakistan
Aroosa Shaukat	The Express Tribune	Pakistan
Qauad Jamal	UNESCO	Pakistan
Mohammed Matar Mustafa	Ministry of Education, Assessment & Evaluation Department	Palestine
Alida Sierra Monitora	RET	Panama
Angela Maria Escobar C. Gerente	RET	Panama
Lizeth Berrocal	RET	Panama
Paula Andrea Uribe	RET	Panama
Eulalia Brizueña	Ministry of Education and Culture	Paraguay
Estela Gonzalez	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	Peru
Cesar Guadalupe	Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution	Peru
Mariana Alfonso	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	Peru
Tania Pacheco	Ministry of Education	Peru
Juan Fernando Vega	Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú	Peru
Jouko Sarvi	Asian Development Bank	Philippines
Anastasia Maksimova	Center for International Cooperation in Education Development (CICED)	Russia
Daria Ovcharova	Center for International Cooperation in Education Development (CICED)	Russia
Maria Demina	Center for International Cooperation in Education Development (CICED)	Russia
Olga Maslenkova	Center for International Cooperation in Education Development (CICED)	Russia
Ivan Nikitin	Eurasian Association for Educational Assessment	Russia
Anna Kormiltseva	Lyceum #13	Russia
Anna Solovyeva	Lyceum #13	Russia
Elena Dementyeva	Lyceum #13	Russia
Galina Korhova	Lyceum #13	Russia

Name	Organization	Country
Galina Shkarupeta	Lyceum #13	Russia
Irina Ivanova	Lyceum #13	Russia
Marina Tuganova	Lyceum #13	Russia
Nadezhda Khikhulunova	Lyceum #13	Russia
Svetlana Glebova	Lyceum #13	Russia
Tatyana Khabovets	Lyceum #13	Russia
Emmanuel Muvunyi	Rwanda Education Board, Ministry of Education	Rwanda
Laura-Ashley Boden	U.K. Department for International Development (DFID)	Rwanda
Dorothy Angura	UNICEF	Rwanda
Liliane Niyubahwe	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Rwanda
Tiburce Manga	ActionAid International	Senegal
Mamadou Amadou Ly	ARED	Senegal
Chérif Mohamed Diarra	Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)	Senegal
Houraye Mamadou Anne	Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)	Senegal
Mohamadou Cheick Fall	Association pour la Promotion de la Femme Sénégalaise (APROFES)	Senegal
Meissa Beye	CAREF Senegal	Senegal
Abdoul Aziz A. Diaw	Centres Régionaux de Formation des Personnels de l'Education (CRFPE) (Dakar)	Senegal
Badara Guèye	Centres Régionaux de Formation des Personnels de l'Education (CRFPE) (Dakar)	Senegal
Ibou Wade	Centres Régionaux de Formation des Personnels de l'Education (CRFPE) (Dakar)	Senegal
Dominique Mendy	CESM/Universite Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD)	Senegal
Coumba Loum	Coalition of Organisations in Synergy for the Defence of Public Education (COSYDEP)	Senegal
Fatou Seck	Coalition of Organisations in Synergy for the Defence of Public Education (COSYDEP)	Senegal
Marie Elisabeth Massaly	Coalition of Organisations in Synergy for the Defence of Public Education (COSYDEP)	Senegal
Moustapha Sow	Coalition of Organisations in Synergy for the Defence of Public Education (COSYDEP)	Senegal
Eva Quintana	Columbia University; MDG Center West Africa	Senegal
Moussa Hamani	CONFEMEN/PASEC	Senegal
Mamadou Ndoeye	Consultant	Senegal
Mamadou Diouf	DEPS	Senegal
Papa Demba Sy	Direction de l'Enseignement Élémentaire, Ministry of Education	Senegal
Demba Yankhoba Sall	Direction de la Formation et Communication (DFC)	Senegal
Boubacar Ndiaye	Direction de l'Alphabétisation et des Langues Nationales (DALN)	Senegal
Diamde Balde	Direction de l'Enseignement Élémentaire (DEE), Ministry of Education	Senegal
Malick Soumaré	Direction de l'Enseignement Privé (DEP), Ministry of Education	Senegal
Ousmane Samb	Direction de l'Enseignement Privé (DEP), Ministry of Education	Senegal
Ibrahima Diome	Embassy of Canada, Dakar	Senegal
Guedj Fall	Faculté des Sciences et Technologies de l'Education et de la Formation (FASTEF)	Senegal

Name	Organization	Country
Dame Seck	Fédération Nationale des Parents d'Elèves du Sénégal (FENAPES)	Senegal
Rudy Klaas	Hewlett	Senegal
Farba Diouf	Inspection de l'Éducation et de la Formation (IEF)	Senegal
Ibou Ndiathe	Inspection de l'Éducation et de la Formation (IEF) (Almadies)	Senegal
Mor Guèye	Inspection de l'Éducation et de la Formation (IEF) (Dakar Plateau)	Senegal
Abdoulaye Oumar Kane	Inspection de l'Éducation et de la Formation (IEF) (Grand Dakar)	Senegal
Diouleyka Ndiaye Sy	Inspection de l'Éducation et de la Formation (IEF) (Keur Massar)	Senegal
Amadou Tidiane Sow	Inspection de l'Éducation et de la Formation (IEF) (Parcelles Assainies)	Senegal
Abdoulaye Sall	Inspection de l'Éducation et de la Formation (IEF) (Pikine)	Senegal
Abdou Fall	Inspection de l'Éducation et de la Formation (IEF) (Rufisque Commune)	Senegal
Moussa Diouf	Inspection de l'Éducation et de la Formation (IEF) (Rufisque Dpt)	Senegal
Dine Diop	Inspection de l'Éducation et de la Formation (IEF) (Pikine)	Senegal
Ajhousseynou Sy	l'Institut National d'Etude et d'Action pour le Développement de l'Education (INEADE)	Senegal
Mame Ibra Ba	l'Institut National d'Etude et d'Action pour le Développement de l'Education (INEADE)	Senegal
Papa Sène	La Direction de l'Enseignement Moyen Secondaire Général (DEMSG), Ministry of Education	Senegal
Abdou Salam Fall	LARTES	Senegal
Khadydiatou Diagne	LARTES	Senegal
Latif Armel Dramani	LARTES	Senegal
Ndeye Sokhna Cisse	LARTES	Senegal
Rokhaya Cisse	LARTES	Senegal
Penda Ba Wane	L'Inspection de l'Académi (IA), Dakar	Senegal
Seydou Sy	L'Inspection de l'Académi (IA), Dakar	Senegal
Seyni Wade	L'Inspection de l'Académi (IA), Dakar	Senegal
Soulèye Kane	L'Inspection de l'Académi (IA), Dakar	Senegal
Abdou Rahim Gaye	Ministry of Education	Senegal
Baba Ousseynou Ly	Ministry of Education	Senegal
Sérigne Mbaye Thiam	Ministry of Education	Senegal
Aissatou Dieng Sarr	Ministry of Education /DPREE/CCIEF	Senegal
Mamadou Seydy Ly	Ministry of Education/DRH	Senegal
Seydou Ndiaye	National Civil Society Consortium (CONGAD)	Senegal
Vanessa Sy	PASEC/CONFEMEN	Senegal
Lena Thiam	Plan International	Senegal
Beifith Kouak Tiayab	Pôle de Dakar	Senegal
Lea Salmon	Research Laboratory on Economic and Social Transformations (LARTES-IFAN), Dakar University	Senegal
Ibra Diop	STP/CEB Dakar	Senegal
Marième Sakho Dansokho	Syndicat des Professeurs du Senegal (SYPROS)	Senegal
Bira Sall	UNESCO	Senegal
Urman Moustapha	UNESCO	Senegal
Adote-Bah Adotevi	UNESCO BRED	Senegal

Name	Organization	Country
Marc Bernal	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Senegal
Yacouba Djibo Abdou	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Senegal
Rokhaya Fall Diawara	UNESCO; Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)	Senegal
Adriana Valcarce	UNICEF West and Central Africa (WCARO)	Senegal
Aissatou Kassé	Union Démocratique des Enseignantes et Enseignants du Sénégal (UDEN)	Senegal
Mamadou Barry	Universite Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD), Le Département de Maths	Senegal
Madiana Nyanda Samba	Education For all Sierra Leone (EFA-SL)	Sierra Leone
Wei Shin Leong	National Institute for Education	Singapore
Kaley Le Mottee	Bridge Network	South Africa
Rufus Poliah	Department of Basic Education	South Africa
Marennya Dikotla	Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy	South Africa
Kim Draper	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU)	South Africa
Bertus Mathee	READ Educational Trust	South Africa
Erato Nadia Bizos	READ Educational Trust	South Africa
Francisco Gutiérrez Soto	Spanish Agency for International Development and Cooperation and for Humanitarian Assistance (AECID)	Spain
Keith Thomas	Ministry of Education	St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Ali Hamoud Ali	Khartoum University College of Education	Sudan
Kamal El Din Mohammad Hashim	Khartoum University College of Education	Sudan
Abdullah Mohamed Nasr	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Ahmed al-Tai Omar	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Ahmed Khalifa Omar	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Fayza Alsayyed Khalaf Allah Muhammad	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Ibtisam Mohammad Hassan	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Mahmoud Ibrahim Mahmoud	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Mohammed Ahmed Hamida	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Mokhtar Mohamed Mokhtar	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Nasser al-Bashir Sayed Ahmed Badri	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Taher Hassan Taher	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Tayeb Ahmed Mustafa Hbati	Ministry of Education	Sudan
Abdullah Mohammad Passion	Ministry of Education, Educational Planning	Sudan
Othman Sheikh Idris	Ministry of Education, Khartoum State	Sudan
Abubakar Haron Adam	Ministry of Education, Student Activity	Sudan
Mohamed Mohamed Othman Ahmad Abbadi	Scientific Council	Sudan
Um Selmi Al-Amin Ali	The Ministry of Education, Educational Planning	Sudan
Othman Mohiuddin Hussein	The Ministry of Education, Management Exams	Sudan

Name	Organization	Country
Ne'mat Mahmoud Al-Nur	The Ministry of Education, Technical Education	Sudan
Joshua Muskin	Aga Khan Foundation	Switzerland
Hansjürg Ambühl	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	Switzerland
Nuriddin Saidov	Ministry of Education	Tajikistan
Suleiman Y. Ame	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Zanzibar	Tanzania
Pumsaran Tongliemnak	Ministry of Education	Thailand
David Chang	UNESCO Bangkok	Thailand
Gwang-Chol Chang	UNESCO Bangkok	Thailand
Stella Yu	UNESCO Bangkok	Thailand
Bendito Dos Santos Freitas	Ministry of Education	Timor Leste
Monia Raies Mghirbi	Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)	Tunisia
Braeik Monia	Boughatfa Sijoumi	Tunisia
Chebbi Hichem	Circonscription Bougatfa-Sijoumi	Tunisia
Ayari Kamel	EP 2 mars, Mallasine	Tunisia
Ben Gaïes Med	EP 2 mars, Mallasine	Tunisia
Khiari Moncef	EP 2 mars, Mallasine	Tunisia
Farhat Khaled	EP Bab Khaled	Tunisia
Lemsi Taja	EP Bab Khaled	Tunisia
Bouagila Monia	EP Bab Khled, el Mallasine	Tunisia
Méjri Kalthoum	EP Ennajah	Tunisia
Ben Naceur Béchir	EP Ennajah	Tunisia
Mohamed Montassar Gammam	EP Ennajah el Mallasine, Tunis	Tunisia
Abdessatar Cherif	Ministry of Education	Tunisia
Fathi Ben Ayeche	Ministry of Education	Tunisia
Mongia Ouederni	Ministry of Education	Tunisia
Zohra Ben Nejma	Ministry of Education	Tunisia
Atef Gadhomi	National Center for Technology in Education	Tunisia
Katalina Taloka	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment	Tuvalu
Michael Noa	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment	Tuvalu
Alan Egbert	Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)	UAE
Beau Crowder	Dubai Cares	UAE
Mona Tahboub	Dubai Cares	UAE
Jennifer Nakayiza	AAR	Uganda
Harriet Nankabirwa Kiwanuka	Action for Community Empowerment and Development (ACED Uganda)	Uganda
John Ekwamu	Aga Khan Foundation	Uganda
Denis Mumbogwe	Annual Inter-Institution Convention (AIIC)	Uganda
Jude Nyanzi	Arise Foundation Uganda	Uganda
Rolands Roldan Tibirusya	Armour Arts	Uganda
John Nizeyimana	Bells of Hope Ministries (BoH)	Uganda
Jane Asiimwe	Butabika Mental Referral Hospital	Uganda

Name	Organization	Country
Constance Kekihembo	Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation Uganda (CDRU)	Uganda
Sarah Ochola	Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation Uganda (CDRU)	Uganda
Joan Nakirya	Firm Feet Foundation	Uganda
Gerald Ssematimba	Gomba District Youth Council	Uganda
Barbrah Namirembe	His Image Child Support Foundation	Uganda
Collins Muswane	Interlogue (U) Ltd	Uganda
Lubodole Joshua	Join Hands International	Uganda
Sally W'Afrika	King's Daughters' Ministries (KDM)	Uganda
Renson Njauh	Leadership 555 Network	Uganda
Waako Mwite Patrick	Light for All High School	Uganda
Aisha Kungu	Luzira Senior Secondary School	Uganda
Andrew Mabonga	Luzira Senior Secondary School	Uganda
Benard Abiar	Luzira Senior Secondary School	Uganda
Chris Ssenoga	Luzira Senior Secondary School	Uganda
Daniel Nkaada	Ministry of Education	Uganda
Joseph Eilor	Ministry of Education & Sports	Uganda
Charity Bekunda Rutaremwa	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	Uganda
Kiyimba Moses	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, National Council for Children	Uganda
Nalugoda Asuman	Mubende Senior Secondary School	Uganda
Imaka Isaac	National Media Group	Uganda
Rachel Nakyondwa	Omega Construction	Uganda
Lydia Nyesigomwe	Parenting Uganda	Uganda
Prince Mulangira	Philanthropia Foundation	Uganda
Dipak Naker	Raising Voices	Uganda
Willingtan Scikadde	Raising Voices	Uganda
David Ssebowa	Samaritan Hands of Grace	Uganda
George Odongo	Tangoe (U) Ltd	Uganda
Tabitha Nabirye	Tangoe (U) Ltd	Uganda
Lilian Mwebaza	Teenage Mothers Centre (TMC)	Uganda
Matthew Tabaro	The Weekly Observer newspaper	Uganda
Hellen Nakate	Tumaini Community Development Foundation	Uganda
Philly Kakooza	Twekembe Disability Development Foundation	Uganda
Fagil Mandy	Uganda National Education Board (UNEB)	Uganda
Samson Bukenya	Uganda National Gospel Artists' Association (UNAGAA)	Uganda
Ronnie Anika	Uganda Parents of Children with Learning Disabilities (UPACLED)	Uganda
Sam Mugisha	Uganda Red Cross Society (UCRS)	Uganda
Hamid Tenywa	United Nations Global Compact – Local Network Uganda	Uganda
Robert Kalagi	Why Not Talent Development Organisation	Uganda
Claire Kiiza	Wounded Pilgrim	Uganda
Faith Rose	CIFF	United Kingdom
Lucy Heady	CIFF	United Kingdom

Name	Organization	Country
Peter Colenso	CIFF	United Kingdom
Robin Horn	CIFF	United Kingdom
Shikha Goyal	CIFF	United Kingdom
Karen Devries	LSHTM	United Kingdom
Brendan O'Grady	Pearson	United Kingdom
Joseph O'Reilly	Save the Children UK	United Kingdom
Andrés Peri	Integrante del Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (INEEd)	Uruguay
Nevin Vages	Accenture	USA
Shela Ghouse	British International School-New York	USA
Jenny Perlman Robinson	Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution	USA
Tamela Noboa	Discovery	USA
Annie Duflo	Innovations for Poverty Action	USA
Carlos Herrán	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Emma Näslund-Hadley	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Gador Manzano	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Haydee Alonzo	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Javier Luque	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Jesús Duarte	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Katherina Hruskovec	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Lauren Conn	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
María Soledad Bos	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Mariel Schwartz	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Martín Moreno	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Sabine Aubourg	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Vanessa Jaklitsch	Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	USA
Arprana Luthra	Juárez & Associates, Inc.	USA
Gabriel Sanchez Zinny	Kuepa	USA
Justin van Fleet	Office of the UN Special Envoy	USA
Amanda Gardiner	Pearson	USA
Carol Watson	Pearson	USA
Claudine Wierzbicki	Pearson	USA
Daeryong Seo	Pearson	USA
Jacqueline Krain	Pearson	USA
Judi Lapointe	Pearson	USA
Judy Chartrand	Pearson	USA
Kathy McKnight	Pearson	USA
Katie McClarty	Pearson	USA
Kimberly O'Malley	Pearson	USA
Leslie Keng	Pearson	USA
Mark Daniel	Pearson	USA
Mark Thompson	Pearson	USA
Maryam Tager	Pearson	USA

Name	Organization	Country
Matt Gaertner	Pearson	USA
Mike Flynn	Pearson	USA
Paula Oles	Pearson	USA
Rob Kirkpatrick	Pearson	USA
Rod Granger	Pearson	USA
Sara Bakken	Pearson	USA
Sarah J. Larson	Pearson	USA
Scott Smith	Pearson	USA
Steve Ferrara	Pearson	USA
Teodora Berkova	Pearson	USA
Tom Cayton	Pearson	USA
Jennie Spratt	RTI International	USA
Scott N. Mitchell	Sumitomo Chemical America	USA
Julia Ruiz	The Brookings Institution	USA
Kevin Kalra	UN Global Compact	USA
Naoko Kimura	UN Global Compact	USA
Natasha de Marcken	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	USA
Sara Harkness	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	USA
Valeri Rocha	World Education	USA
Luz Mariana Castañeda	RET	Venezuela
Nguyen Duc Minh	Center for Educational Outcomes Assessment, Vietnam National Institute for Education Sciences	Vietnam
Nor Addin Aqeel Othman	Yemeni National Commission of Education, Culture and Science	Yemen
Angel Mutale Kaliminwa	Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ)	Zambia
Michael Chilala	Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ)	Zambia
Constance Chigwamba	Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture	Zimbabwe
Enock Chinyowa	Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture	Zimbabwe
J. J. Makandigona	Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture	Zimbabwe
Jemias T. Muguwe	Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture	Zimbabwe
Nathan Mafovera	Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture	Zimbabwe
Tendai Mavundutse	Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture	Zimbabwe
Zedious Chitiga	Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture	Zimbabwe

Annex B. Methodology

The Implementation Working Group convened from March through September 2013. It built on the work of Phases I and II of the project, during which the task force proposed a broad definition of learning through a framework encompassing seven domains and areas of measurement in which indicators can be derived for tracking learning globally.

The third working group addressed the question of how measurement of learning outcomes can be implemented to improve the quality of education. Working group members were recruited through an open call for applications from January through February 2013. The Implementation Working Group consisted of 125 members in 40 countries, with more than 60% representation from the Global South. The working group was chaired by Dzingai Mutumbuka, Chair of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

Previously, Mr. Mutumbuka held various senior management positions in the education sector at the World Bank. Prior to joining the bank, he held major political appointments in Zimbabwe, serving as Minister of Education and Culture (1980-88) and as Minister of Higher Education (1988-89). He has also served as the Chairman of the Zimbabwe National Commission of UNESCO since Zimbabwe joined UNESCO in 1980. Before Zimbabwe's independence, Mr. Mutumbuka served as Secretary for Education and Culture in the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (1975-80), and in that capacity was responsible for the education of all Zimbabweans in refugee camps in Mozambique.

Mr. Mutumbuka and the Secretariat facilitated the Implementation Working Group from March to July 2013. Unlike the previous phases that were organized into three subgroups – Early Childhood, Primary and Post-primary, the Implementation Working Group was made up of four subgroups. The subgroups worked virtually by completing assignments and participating in teleconferences, email discussions, and small group discussions. The working groups developed the questions in the discussion guide that was later turned into the consultation document. (See Annex C for the consultation document).

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the task force from the February 2013 meeting in Dubai, and following the drafting of the terms of reference for the third phase, the Implementation Working Group worked in the following four subgroups:

Existing measures subgroup: Specifying how existing measures of learning can be implemented to measure progress in four areas – access and completion, school readiness, literacy and numeracy. This group continued the work of the Measures and Methods Working Group with additional participants.

New measures subgroup: Developing a model for how measures will be developed for two areas: breadth of learning opportunities and competencies for global citizenship in the 21st century. The working group did not actually develop these new measures during this timeframe, but rather provided guidance on what should be included and how they might be administered.

Global-level subgroup: Investigating the feasibility of a mechanism, such as a multi-stakeholder partnership on learning, that would help countries and other education actors build capacity to measure progress in these areas and other domains of learning as determined by the country and national actors.

National-level subgroup: Developing a roadmap for countries to use for improving learning assessment at the country level, with guidance for countries at various capacity levels. This included a proposed process for national-level advisory groups or communities of practice, to be composed of ministry, academia, civil society, teachers and other relevant stakeholders.

Third Public Consultation Period

The working group disseminated the “Discussion Guide for Implementation” for public consultation between 30 April and 15 June 2013. This guide included questions related to the capacity to measure learning at the national level, what learning is tracked globally and the feasibility of a multi-stakeholder advisory group. Additionally, a prototype terms of reference (ToR) for the multi-stakeholder advisory group on learning was included to guide the consultation in considering its feasibility. The Secretariat and task force members circulated this document along with a toolkit with guidance on conducting in-person consultations, a two-page overview brief on the work of the LMTF and a PowerPoint presentation to help facilitate the consultation. The discussion guide, consultation toolkit and PowerPoint were available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish and most of the documents were also available in Russian. Members of the working group also translated the documents into other languages, such as Korean, for wider distribution.

Due to the support of task force members, working group members and the global educational community, more than 700 people in 85 countries (see Table 4 and Figure 4 below) provided feedback either by participating in an in-person consultation organized by task force members, the Secretariat and key partners, or by submitting individual feedback electronically. This phase differed from the previous two in that there was an increased focus by the Secretariat and task force members on organizing in-person public consultations at the national and regional levels and an effort to include working group members in organizing and facilitating these consultations. Figure 4 shows the geographic representation of participants in the measures and methods consultation period. Table 4 lists the countries and approximate number of participants.

Several overarching themes emerged from the Phase III consultations:

- At the country level, the consultation feedback revealed a varying capacity for measurement of learning in terms of national policies and infrastructure (including plans for prioritizing assessment of learning and types of assessments): the extent to which learning is measured in the seven domains, the presence of a country-level multi-stakeholder advisory group or community of practice, and how and which existing resources are used to track learning. Because of this variation, there was support for specific national-level recommendations and a general framework describing the different capacities for countries to assess their systems and implement the recommendations of the LMTF.
- At the global level, there was broad consensus that a multi-stakeholder body is feasible and desirable if it has the following characteristics: 1) supports countries by providing guidance to measure learning and fill the global data gap; 2) utilizes regional organizations to the extent that it is possible and effective; 3) complements and supports existing organizations; 4) comprises a diverse group of stakeholders; and

- Respondents warned of potential challenges and risks to the multi-stakeholder advisory group. These included the lack of political will, lack of accountability, lack of experts/those with extensive expertise at country-level, barriers to communication and the difficulty of using existing mechanisms. It is relevant to note that the respondents had differing interpretations of the scope and size of the body with respect to the prototype terms of reference.
- There was general consensus that enrollment and completion of primary programs and enrollment in secondary programs is being tracked within countries on a regular basis, and the majority of respondents

- Feedback demonstrated a need for a more comprehensive definition of global citizenship, and there was a suggestion to modify the definition set forth in the UNESCO Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy (1995). Additionally, the new measures subgroup identified two distinct approaches to global citizenship from developed and developing countries. There was agreement that the primary focus on assessment should be formative at the classroom level. A strong global citizenship framework could provide an opportunity to make education more relevant for all students, especially vulnerable students.

Number of participants

1-5	11-20
6-10	21+

Table 4. Countries and Participants Represented in the Phase III Implementation Consultation Period*

Region	Participating Countries	Region	Participating Countries
Eastern Africa	Burundi (5) Ethiopia (6) Kenya (37) Rwanda (6) South Sudan (25) United Republic of Tanzania (1) Uganda (48)	Central Asia	Afghanistan (1) Kazakhstan (5) Kyrgyz Republic (11) Tajikistan (1)
Northern Africa	Chad (4) Egypt (1) Mali (4) Mauritania (1) Sudan (36) Tunisia (20)	Western Asia	Iran (1) Iraq (1) Jordan (11) Lebanon (2) Oman (1) Palestine (1) Qatar (1) United Arab Emirates (3) Yemen (1)
Western Africa	Burkina Faso (1) Ghana (3) Ivory Coast (4) Liberia (5) Nigeria (40) Senegal (73) Sierra Leone (1)	Eastern Asia	Hong Kong (1) Japan (2) Korea (23)
Southern Africa	Lesotho (1) Mozambique (1) South Africa (7) Zambia (3) Zimbabwe (8)	Southeastern Asia	Lao People's Democratic Republic (1) Malaysia (8) Philippines (1) Singapore (1) Thailand (5) Timor-Leste (1) Vietnam (1)
Central America	Costa Rica (4) Honduras (1) Panama (4)	Southern Asia	India (11) Nepal (19) Pakistan (65)
Caribbean	Bahamas (1) Barbados (3) Dominican Republic (2) Guyana (3) Haiti (1) Jamaica (12) Saint Vincent & the Grenadines (1)	Australia and Oceania	Australia (1) Fiji (3) Tuvalu (2)
South America	Argentina (15) Bolivia (1) Brazil (2) Chile (1) Ecuador (14) Paraguay (1) Peru (6) Uruguay (1) Venezuela (1)	Eastern Europe	Azerbaijan (3) Russian Federation (17)
		Western Europe	Belgium (2) Denmark (1) France (3) Greece (1) Spain (1) Switzerland (2) United Kingdom (10)
		North America	Canada (3) Mexico (2) United States of America (68)

Annex C. Prototype Document

Released for Consultation Period

Learning Metrics Task Force Discussion Guide for Implementation Phase Consultation

Background

The Education for All (EFA) goals initiated in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand demonstrated a commitment to meeting basic learning needs. This commitment was restated in 2000 in the Dakar Framework for Action, in which Goal 6 states; “Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.” Despite this global commitment, at least 250 million primary school age children around the world are not able to read, write or count well according to the 2013 EFA Global Monitoring report, including those who have spent at least four years in school.

In response to this need for improving learning outcomes globally, UNESCO through its Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Center for Universal Education (CUE) at the Brookings Institution co-convened the Learning Metrics Task Force. Based on recommendations of technical working groups and input from broad global consultations, the task force aims to make recommendations to help countries and international organizations measure and improve learning outcomes for children and youth worldwide.

Phase I of the project sought to identify the learning end-goal by answering the question, what do all children and youth need to learn in order to succeed in the 21st century? Considering recommendations from a working group of experts, the task force decided in its first in-person meeting in September 2012 that indeed there are important competencies that all children and youth should master no matter where they live in the world. The first report from the task force, *Toward Universal Learning: What Every Child Should Learn*, presents a broad, holistic framework of seven learning domains, with various competencies in each, as the aspiration for all children and youth across the globe. The seven domains are:

- Physical well-being
- Social and emotional
- Culture and the arts
- Literacy and communication
- Learning approaches and cognition
- Numeracy and mathematics
- Science and technology

After identifying these domains of learning, Phase II of the project asked: how will we know whether learning is occurring under each of the seven domains? More specifically, how can we measure and track progress in learning at the global and national levels? The LMTF has listened to the voices of more than 1000 teachers, administrators, governments, civil society, donors, and other global education actors in 84 countries to develop its recommendations. The overwhelming message is that there is a need for (i) building national-level capacity for measuring learning and (ii) tracking a small set of indicators at the global level.

In the final phase of the LMTF, the task force will answer the question, how can learning measurement be implemented to improve education quality and subsequently learning outcomes? In order to answer this question, the LMTF and partners will be conducting consultations in April – June 2013 to gain information on how and what learning is being measured, on how countries use assessment results, and to understand what are the barriers to the measurement of learning outcomes.

Instructions: Please complete the discussion guide for the country in which you work. If you work in multiple countries, please complete a separate discussion guide for each country. This guide is divided into three sections—if you have limited time for the consultation please feel free to focus on only one or two of the sections. If you are not sure of the answer to a particular question, or it has been answered in a previous section, please leave the response area blank.

Discussion Guide

Name and title of facilitator: _____

Country: _____

I. Country Capacity for Measuring Learning

1. **Overall, how is learning measured in [country]?** For example,
 - a. Do national policies exist for the measurement of learning?
 - b. Does the country's strategic plan for education prioritize assessment of learning? If yes, in which areas?
 - c. What are the main types of assessments (local, national, regional, international) that are implemented?
 - d. How do teachers assess student learning against the curriculum?
 - e. Does the country have a department, commission, council, etc. focused on measurement and evaluation in education? Who makes decisions regarding measurement of learning in the country? How do these decisions get made?

2. **Does [country] currently measure learning in the seven domains identified by the LMTF (see below and Annex A)?** At what levels (pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary)? Please describe the learning measurement efforts you know of in the following domains. Please include any national, regional, or international assessments.

To help you elaborate your answer you may want to think about these measurements in operational terms – name of the measure, objective, frequency of measurement, whether it is conducted country-wide or in individual schools or districts, etc.

- a. Physical well-being
- b. Social and emotional
- c. Culture and the arts
- d. Literacy and communication—please indicate which language(s)
- e. Learning approaches and cognition
- f. Numeracy and mathematics
- g. Science and technology

2. In the domains where there is no systematic standardized measurement⁴, why is this the case? Here are a few examples. Please elaborate on these examples if relevant. Can you think of any other possible reasons?

- a. Domain not part of curriculum
- b. Lack of resources
- c. No political will to assess in this domain
- d. Social or cultural constraints to assessing this domain
- e. Lack of capacities and technical skills to assess learning in this domain
- f. Other

3. What barriers, challenges or obstacles are there to measuring learning in [country]? (e.g. no political will, no awareness of the importance of measurement, lack of capacities and technical skills, lack of funding, existing assessments not valid/reliable). Are there areas of the country where measurement is less developed than others?

4. What future efforts are you aware of for measuring learning in [country]?

5. When [country] collects data on learning, how are the results used? Here are a few examples of how data on learning has been used. Please elaborate on these examples if relevant. Can you think of any other way assessment results have and are being used in [country]?

- a. Is the information and data used to inform public policy?
- b. Are the results used to modify or adjust curriculum?
- c. Are the results used to improve teaching and learning?
- d. Are the results used to help teachers and school administrators?
- e. Are the results used to track groups of students with the aim of improving/enhancing education?
- f. Are the results used to decide which students can progress to the next levels of the education cycle?

⁴ Systematic standardized measurement refers to any effort in which the same assessment is given in the same manner to all learners.

6. Would a country-level community of practice (CoP) focused on assessment be useful in [country]? A

CoP on assessment would be made up of teachers, education ministry officials, local government, civil society, academia, private sector, and others (which may include students at the higher grades, as well as representatives of opposition parties – not in government) to examine and set an agenda for improving assessment practices.

- a. Does [country] already have a committee, council, or center that fulfills this purpose? Are there multiple bodies that fulfill this purpose? Please describe.
- b. Who should be involved in a national community of practice on learning assessment? Could you name organizations, institutions, centers, universities or other entities in [country] that you think should be involved?
- c. What resources would [country] need to create or sustain a learning assessment CoP?
- d. What are the best modes of participation in a community of practice in [country]? (Email exchange, virtual platform, conference calls, in-person meetings, etc.)
- e. How could a country community of practice be supported by international education actors (donors, testing organizations, research institutions, etc.)?

II. Tracking Global Progress in Learning

Through a global consultative process, the Learning Metrics Task Force has proposed six areas for global tracking of learning. These areas are meant to complement efforts to measure a wider set of domains at the national level as described above. Please note the following definitions according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)⁵:

- **Pre-primary (ISCED 0):** Commonly referred to as preschool or early childhood education and typically targeted at children aged 3 years until the age to start primary school.
- **Primary (ISCED 1):** Commonly referred to as primary education, elementary education or basic education. The customary or legal age of entry is usually not below 5 years old nor above 7 years old. This level typically lasts six years, although its duration can range between four and seven years.
- **Lower Secondary (ISCED 2):** Commonly referred to as secondary school, junior secondary school, middle school, or junior high school. Lower secondary typically begins after four to seven years of primary education, with six years of primary being the most common duration. Students enter lower secondary typically between ages 10 and 13 (age 12 being the most common).

⁵ UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2011). International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011. Available from: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>

1. Does [country] track the following areas of learning? These areas may be tracked by government or non-governmental organizations. If no, please specify why this may be the case in [country].

Area of Learning	Yes (please describe assessments where applicable)	No (Please describe possible reasons why not measuring)
Enrollment in pre-primary programs		
Completion of pre-primary programs		
Enrollment in primary		
Completion of primary		
Enrollment in lower-secondary		
Completion of lower-secondary		
School readiness/ready to learn upon entry to primary school		
Early grade or foundational reading		
End of primary reading comprehension		
lower secondary reading comprehension		
Mathematics and numeracy in primary		
Mathematics and numeracy in lower secondary		
Skills that meet the demands of the 21st century (e.g., higher-order thinking, collaborative problem-solving, environmental awareness, ICT digital literacy).		
The quality of learning opportunities children are exposed to		
The content or domains of learning children are exposed to		

2. What resources currently exist, and what additional resources would [country] need to improve measurement of learning?

- What resources could additionally be provided by the MoE or other government entities?
- By non-governmental actors in the country (academia, civil society)?
- By a regional organization (if applicable)?
- By international education actors (e.g. donors, private companies, research institutions)?

III. Feasibility of a Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group on Learning

The Learning Metrics Task Force has proposed a global, multi-stakeholder advisory group to support countries in measuring learning and using assessment to improve quality and learning outcomes. Please read the “prototype”⁶ terms of reference (TOR) for this group below and respond to the questions.

⁶ A prototype is an early draft meant to test a concept or idea.

Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group on Learning Prototype Terms of Reference

Problem: The latest estimates by the Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) point out that 250 million children worldwide are unable to read, write, or count well, including those who have spent four years in school. Yet due to a severe lack of data, primarily in developing countries, we have very little evidence to understand and address learning gaps. For example, while national, regional and global efforts to measure learning have concentrated on literacy and numeracy in primary school, there is widespread agreement that a broader range of skills and further education are essential for children and youth to thrive in a globalized world. In order to better identify specific challenges and develop appropriate policies to improve learning, countries must have comprehensive and accurate information on learning levels, and effective tools to assess learning.

Purpose and Functions: Countries and international organizations are addressing pieces of this overall problem. What is needed now is a means to bring these efforts together and work collectively to improve learning. This is the overarching objective of the proposed Advisory Group.

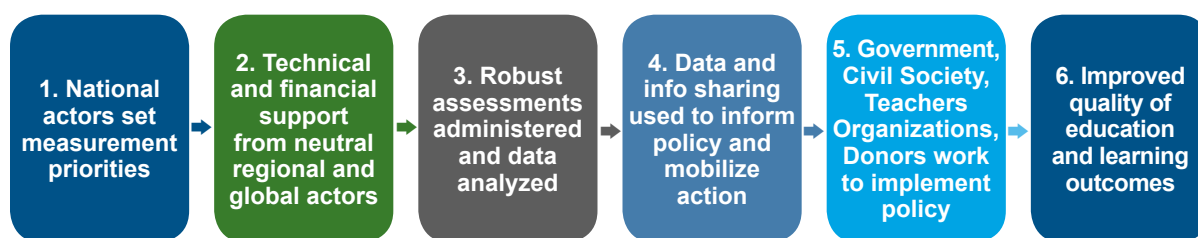
The task force and working group members suggest these possible functions and characteristics for the neutral advisory group:

- **Convening Partners:** Convene key actors including teachers organizations, global and regional organizations, assessment experts, private corporations, etc. to provide technical expertise and financial support to countries for measuring learning
- **“Center of excellence”:** House or support a global clearinghouse for best practice and research; be a repository for lessons learned and good practice
- **Policy and advocacy:** Mobilize governments and the international community to devote resources to measuring and equitably improving learning outcomes
- **Global learning metrics:** Coordinate the development of common metrics for learning indicators and promote their use
- **Standards and technical criteria:** Set standards for the design and administration of learning assessments; promoting and supporting quality standards for international, regional, and national assessments
- **Contribute to tracking progress:** Work with existing agencies (UIS, GMR) as they work to compile and report out on global education data
- **Capacity building:** Support Communities of Practice (CoPs) at national level to build capacity and develop actionable plans for measuring and improving learning; support regional education assessment organizations (e.g. SACMEQ, PASEC, LLECE).
- **Participatory process:** Facilitate a participatory process so that all interested actors have a voice in determining and implementing global metrics
- **Official mandate:** Have a recognized mandate among stakeholders

Theory of Change

The Advisory Group will be guided by a theory of change such as the one depicted below. Driven by the need to improve learning outcomes, the priorities for measurement of learning are set at the country level by a community of practice (CoP) comprised of a wide representation of stakeholders in education, such as the education ministry, teachers, school administrators, private sector, parents, civil society, academia, etc. This CoP may or may not choose to use the support provided by the advisory group in determining these priorities. Next, the country would receive technical and financial support from global and regional actors to implement assessments of learning. The data collected is used to inform policy, and the advisory group can facilitate information sharing and collaboration across countries and regions. The ultimate goal is that education quality and learning outcomes are improved through better measurement, policy, and practices. The main areas supported by the Advisory Group would be 2, 3, and 4 in the figure below.

Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group: Potential Theory of Change



Current efforts

Some components of this international body already exist or are planned. This body would not seek to duplicate these efforts but rather link them together. Regional educational organizations and regional offices of UN agencies, for example, are already fulfilling some of these roles and the Implementation Working Group will conduct a more thorough mapping of these activities.

The following list is a preliminary mapping of global and regional activities to build upon. Country-level activities are being gathered during this phase and will be incorporated into the next report.

1. Could a multi-stakeholder global advisory group help [country] improve learning measurement?

- Do you currently have any advisory group supporting you from an international level?
- How could such a group be helpful to [country]? What role would the advisory group have?
- What challenges do you see to governments accessing the type of assistance and resources this group could offer?
- What concerns do you have about such a group? What are some of the risks associated with the convening of this advisory group?

e. What types of representatives should form part of the group?

2. What other efforts are you aware of at the regional or global level that are supporting countries in measuring and improving learning?

3. Finally, do you have any other ideas on how [country or government] could be supported in making sure children are in school and learning?

Thank you for your time. Please email your responses to learningmetrics@brookings.edu by 15 June 2013 to be included in the recommendations to the task force.

Organization	Activities
Global Partnership for Education	Working with UIS, UNESCO, IEA, regional assessments and other agencies to promote exchanges of information on learning outcomes
UIS/GMR	Global education data gathering and reporting
World Bank	Providing technical assistance to countries for improving assessments systems through SABER and READ
UIS Observatory of Learning Outcomes	Gathering information on all learning assessments at the country level (including national assessments and examinations)
IIEP Portal	Gathering information to guide education ministries on collecting and using learning assessment data
International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)	Learning assessment studies in reading (PIRLS and PrePIRLS), mathematics and science (TIMSS), civics and citizenship (ICCS), and an upcoming assessment on computers and information literacy (ICILS). Plans for TIMSS-Numeracy, a less-difficult version of TIMSS, are underway for administration in 2016.
OECD	Learning assessment studies in reading, mathematics, and science (PISA) in addition to financial literacy and collaborative problem-solving. Assessments include contextual questionnaires related to learning environments and non-cognitive outcomes. A PISA for Development initiative is being implemented using expanded instruments in a modified, collaborative framework. PISA assessments are competency-, skills- and content-based.
Regional assessment consortia (PASEC, SACMEQ, LLECE)	Develop and administer regionally-comparable assessments based on national curricula.
Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States	Convened country stakeholders to develop education sector strategy, "Every Learner Succeeds," which includes agreed-upon learning outcomes for early childhood, primary, and lower secondary
Southeast Asia and Pacific Region (SEAMEO, UNESCO, UNICEF and partners)	Early childhood: UNICEF EAPRO, UNESCO, the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) and the University of Hong Kong have developed the East Asia & Pacific Early Child Development Scales for children 3-5 which are currently in the validation phase. Primary: there is an initiative underway between UNICEF and SEAMEO to develop metrics for the primary level for SEAMEO member countries, in which UNESCO may engage as well. Additionally, UNESCO is now working to set up a regional network for the monitoring of educational quality in the region which will focus on information exchange, research and potentially capacity building around assessment issues.

Annex D. Frameworks for Evaluating Assessment Systems World Bank SABER-Student Assessment Rubric (Summary)

	LATENT Absence of, or deviation from, attribute	EMERGING On way to meeting minimum standard	ESTABLISHED Acceptable minimum standard	ADVANCED Best practice
Classroom Assessment	There is no system-wide institutional capacity to support and ensure the quality of classroom assessment practices.	There is weak system-wide institutional capacity to support and ensure the quality of classroom assessment practices.	There is some/sufficient system-wide institutional capacity to support and ensure the quality of classroom assessment practices.	There is strong system-wide institutional capacity to support and ensure the quality of classroom assessment practices.
Examination	There is no standardized examination in place for key decisions.	There is a partially stable standardized examination in place, and a need to develop institutional capacity to run the examination. The examination typically is of poor quality and perceived as unfair or corrupt.	There is a stable standardized examination in place. There is institutional capacity and some limited mechanisms to monitor it. The examination is of acceptable quality, and perceived as fair for most students and free from corruption.	There is a stable standardized examination in place and institutional capacity and strong mechanisms to monitor it. The examination is of high quality, and perceived as fair and free from corruption.
National Large-Scale Survey Assessment	There is no NLSA in place.	There is an unstable NLSA in place and a need to develop institutional capacity to run the NLSA. Assessment quality and impact are weak.	There is a stable NLSA in place. There is institutional capacity and some limited mechanisms to monitor it. The NLSA is of moderate quality and its information is disseminated, but it is not used effectively.	There is a stable NLSA in place and institutional capacity and strong mechanisms to monitor it. The NLSA is of high quality and its information is effectively used to improve education.
International Large-Scale Survey Assessment	There is no history of participation in an ILSA or plans to participate in one.	Participation in an ILSA has been initiated, but there still is a need to develop institutional capacity to run the ILSA.	There is more or less stable participation in an ILSA. There is institutional capacity to run the ILSA. The information from the ILSA is disseminated, but is not used effectively.	There is stable participation in an ILSA and institutional capacity to run the ILSA. The information from the ILSA is effectively used to improve education.

UNESCO General Education Quality Framework – Assessment

Assessment

The nature and extent of learning outcomes to be achieved at different levels of the general education system, and the means through which they should be achieved, is usually articulated in the curriculum or education program. The curriculum, on the other hand, will usually receive its cue from national development goals and priorities.

Teaching and learning processes operationalize these outcomes and give them effect. Assessment verifies whether stipulated outcomes have been achieved, although it can also be an input for learning to occur and/or be directed. The extent to which stipulated outcomes have been achieved remains a dominant¹, though not exclusive signal of the quality of education, as well as of the effectiveness of curriculum implementation, teaching and learning. That is to say, assessment procedures will normally only be able to capture limited elements of learning that has occurred in specifically defined areas, for example, literacy and numeracy.

Assessment in itself is a varied education process. It varies by **purpose**, forms of assessment and area of assessment. An initial distinction has to be made between assessment for learning and assessment of learning. The former is concerned with the function of assessment as an educational process. For this, feedback to the learner is essential. Nevertheless, on a systemic level, assessment of learning is essential in order to monitor achievement of the education system as a whole. Assessment of learning on the systemic level can also result in (policy) lessons to improve systemic performance. In this sense, on this level as well, ‘assessment for learning’ can take place (although

this expression is not usually used to refer to systemic learning). To this end, such large-scale assessments usually use instruments for the assessment of factors associated with learning in addition to the actual tests, which are normally grounded in a framework such as the generic ‘CIPP’-model (Context, Inputs, Process and Product); see Figure 2. This is used, for example, by the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE).

This Analytical Tool aims to assist users in diagnosing if, and to what extent, the existing assessment system is part of the impediments to reaching the desired and/or stated goals of education quality. The paramount question in the diagnosis of our assessment systems is how assessments can contribute to improving the quality of our education system and learning effectiveness. The diagnosis addresses this paramount question by posing some key questions with regard to the assessment policies, frameworks and methods in place, the implementation mechanisms, and the systems for drawing appropriate lessons from assessment results and using the results from assessments to improve the different aspects of education processes and outcomes.

Diagnosis and analysis

Assessment policies, frameworks and methods

1. Do we have a national strategy/policy/position paper on educational assessment? If yes, how recent is it? Which educational levels (both in terms of ISCED and in terms of location (local – regional – national) and subjects are covered? Has it been evaluated?
2. To what extent is the choice of purposes, targets and subject matter for assessment (for example in national assessments) related directly to what the country thinks of as important in terms of learning

outcomes for its learners and not only in terms of what is easy to assess?

3. What criteria have been used to determine the coverage of the assessment and the level at which national assessments are conducted? Are these criteria linked to clear objectives and goals of the assessment? Is there evidence that the coverage and the levels at which the assessments are made contributed to improvement of the quality of the education system?

4. In general, to what extent is assessment in this country effective? To what ends? Is it inclusive? In what way? What evidence do we have for this? Do we know where the system stands in terms of achievement outcomes at every level?

Implementation of assessment

1. If there is an educational assessment policy has it been implemented/enacted? How do we know? At what levels is assessment implemented? What are the objectives of this?

2. Is there evidence that the implementation of the assessments is according to rules of good practice, including inclusiveness? What is this based on? [Analytical Tool on Equity and Inclusion]

3. Who implements the assessments? How does this vary by types of assessment?

4. How are tests conceptualized (i.e. how are test items developed) and what is the conceptual basis for this (for example, a curriculum/syllabus analysis or rather an orientation of 'life skills')? What psychometric methods and techniques are used to classify items, and to what extent are these item characteristics taken into account in the development of achievement tests?

Are open and closed items used? In terms of test conceptualization, is there a good mix of standardized and non-standardized testing available?

5. Are assessments also measuring "associated factors" that facilitate analysis (e.g. looking at age, gender, socioeconomic status and other background information)?

6. If applicable, how are data processed and fed into a centralized information system?

7. What is the evidence that participation in international quality assessment (LLECE, PISA, SACMEQ and others) helps us to bench mark the quality of our education system? What has been our experience and that of others of international assessments? If we have not participated, was it a deliberate decision and, if so, why?

Utilisation of assessment results

1. What mechanisms do we have for making the evaluation of the assessment results inform education policy and practice (at the classroom, school, regional and national level)? How often do we use these mechanisms? What is the evidence that we do such evaluation in a purposeful and systematic way? 2. How do we interpret the findings from evaluations of assessment results findings, and how do we make sure that educational assessments have the intended impact of improving the quality of the education system and learning effectiveness? How do we communicate our evaluation so as to focus on how we can do better? How are outcomes data linked to other variables, such as finance data, which permits rigorous analyses?

3. Are assessment results made public and to whom (for example, individual student results to parents/carers; school rankings to the general public, etc.)?

Priorities for action

1. What are the key areas to be addressed urgently to ensure that assessment contributes to the quality of our education system?
2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy and practice of school-based and national assessments?
3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?

Annex E. Consultation pictures







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P.O. Box 6128, Succursale Centre-Ville
Montreal, Quebec H3C 3J7, Canada
+1 514 343 6880
www.uis.unesco.org

B | Center for
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1775 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-797-6000
www.brookings.edu/universal-education