

# LMTF 2.0 Newsletter

May – August 2015

LMTF 2.0 is a multi-stakeholder collaboration working to improve learning outcomes for children and youth worldwide, with a specific focus on strengthening assessment systems and the use of assessment data.

## Progress on the LMTF 2.0 Results

### Technical

#### Ready to Learn:

In July 2015, the [Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes \(MELQO\)](#) core team and technical partners met in Tanzania to update the quality and child outcomes tools and meet with the Tanzanian government to discuss plans for piloting the tools. In mid-August, the MELQO team and a small group of Child Development and Learning (CDL) and Quality Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members convened in New York for further consultation and to make final recommendations on how the tools should be modified before the validation phase. The CDL measure has been field-tested in five countries to date with the support of implementing partners in parentheses: Kenya (RTI), Sudan (World Bank), Bangladesh (Save the Children), Madagascar (World Bank), and Lao PDR (World Bank). This measure consists of a direct child assessment with 21 items, taking around 30 minutes to administer, and a parent/teacher report. Items covered include socio-emotional skills, pre-academic skills such as language, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy, and areas that support learning across multiple domains, such as executive function, persistence, self-regulation, and approaches to learning.

In addition to the development of the quality measure, the MELQO team drafted a technical manual describing the work to date and outlining issues in population-based measurement. This guide will also be completed as part of the final items of Phase 1 of the MELQO project.

The work to date has sparked demand for the measures, provided deeper insight into the feasibility of use at scale and adaptation required within countries. MELQO team members are looking forward to feedback from piloting the tools in Tanzania and identifying how the measures can better inform policy and programmatic decisions.



Pre-primary classroom at a public school in Dar es Salaam.

The MELQO team understands the need to create a platform that will support feasible and actionable measurement within low-and-middle-income countries (LMIC) countries. A meeting in October is currently being planned to envision the next phase of the project.

### Institutional

#### Regional Meeting: Sub Saharan Africa

Nearly thirty people from sub-Saharan African governments, development agencies, and civil society, gathered in **Naivasha, Kenya** during June for the first regional Learning Champions meeting in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to representatives from Kenyan institutions and agencies, Learning Champion representatives came from Ethiopia, Senegal, Zambia, and Rwanda (remotely), as well as from the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the Center for Universal Education (CUE).

Dr. Belio Kipsang, the Principal Secretary of Kenya's State Department of Education, opened the meeting by commenting on the importance of cultivating home-grown solutions to the region's learning challenges. He also acknowledged the growing public-private partnerships in education



Head teachers gather at the KEPSHA Conference in Mombasa, Kenya.

and noted his appreciation of the diverse representation from both groups at the conference. Dr. Kipsang reflected on the status of education in Kenya, and the need to focus beyond examinations to assessing learning inclusive of non-cognitive domains.

Over three days, participants discussed Kenya's assessment system, reviewed the concept note for the Inter-Country Quality Node (ICQN) on teaching and learning, and further developed an assessment typology, which could serve as a learning assessment system framework for Africa countries to benchmark their progress in becoming champions in this area.

In addition, participants visited a local primary and secondary school, and households in the surrounding community where they observed and conducted household learning assessments with the Uwezo team. Together with the representatives from the student government, teachers, and parents, participants engaged in a conversation on the status of assessments in the schools. This was a unique opportunity for government officials to see and hear first-hand experiences of students, parents, and teachers in regards to learning in the classroom. The success of the visit has initiated conversations for a future household visit by senior minister officials and other government agency leaders.

## **Regional Meeting: New Delhi, India**

A key finding of LMTF was that there is significant demand from countries for rigorous, nationally relevant assessment systems that meet international standards but are responsive to national needs.

Building upon the momentum created by LMTF 1.0 and the need for a collaborative agenda on regional assessments expressed by South Asian stakeholders during the LMTF deliberations, the Center for Universal Education and Brookings India commissioned a landscape analysis study to explore the feasibility of a regional learning assessment for South Asia. Led by consultant Vyjayanthi Sankar, the study included LMTF involvement from India (Task Force members), Pakistan, and Nepal (Learning Champions), and consultations with stakeholders in both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

The study reviewed existing efforts for measuring learning in the region and explored the appetite for a regional learning assessment. It also looked into the technical, institutional, political, and financial supports that are necessary to sustain a regional learning assessment and provided recommendations on the potential challenges, risks, benefits, and costs that may be associated in developing and conducting such an assessment.

From the 25th to the 26th of June, the Center for Universal Education and Brookings India jointly hosted a stakeholders' meeting in New Delhi to soft launch the study and introduce a Brookings India book, [Accelerating Access to Quality Education](#). Participants from India, Nepal, and Pakistan attended, as well as representatives from government, civil society, UN agencies, and education experts in India.

Following the launch, attendees discussed the assessment challenges in the region and debated over how they could collaborate better to measure learning outcomes. Ultimately, it was agreed that a regional institution dedicated to assessment training and research would be the optimal way forward.



Task Force member Dzingai Mutumbuka speaks with students during a classroom visit in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

### **Regional Meeting: Buenos Aires, Argentina**

During the last week of August, the **City of Buenos Aires** hosted a technical meeting with a focus on the implementation of the LMTF's seven learning domains at the classroom level. Fifteen countries were represented at the meeting, including the Learning Champions Ontario, Zambia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Colombia, as well as others from Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Guyana, and Suriname. The participants discussed teaching, learning, and assessing the seven domains in the classroom and examined the newly developed curriculum that Buenos Aires is currently instituting, which is structured around the seven domains. The meeting attendees expressed a strong appreciation for the networking aspects of the LMTF and demonstrated an interest in strengthening the collaboration within Latin America and between Africa and Latin America.

### **Post 2015**

#### **The Lead up to UNGA 2015 and the SDGs**

During the last two weeks of September, heads of states, UN agencies, and civil society will come together at the 2015 UN General Assembly Meeting in New York City, where the Sustainable Development Goals will be adopted.

In anticipation, world leaders, education and development experts, as well as various organizations have come together over the past

several months to discuss, plan, and prepare in order to ensure that learning is included on the post 2015 agenda and that countries have the means and mechanisms to achieve the ambitious goals and targets that are to be adopted. Below are highlights from three of the major meetings that took place this past quarter:

In May, ministers, global leaders in education, policy-makers, multilateral agencies, civil society representatives, and teachers, came together for the [World Education Forum](#) in Incheon, Korea to review progress made on the Education for All goals set in 2000, to adopt the Incheon Declaration, and to reach consensus on the 2030 Framework for Action. The Framework for Action provides support for country-led action in coordinating, financing and monitoring the 2030 education agenda.

Building on the outcomes of the World Education Forum, the Norwegian government hosted the [Oslo Summit on Education for Development](#) in early July, providing global education stakeholders a platform to address the gaps in financing for education and identify mechanisms to achieve the education goal of "inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all." One of the main outcomes of the Summit included the announcement of a high-level Commission on Financing for Global Education, which will be chaired by UN Special Envoy for Education Gordon Brown and co-convened by the heads of state of Norway, Indonesia, Chile, and Malawi and the director-general of UNESCO.

Following the summit, finance ministers, heads of states, and development agencies convened for the International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to discuss the financing of all the Sustainable Development Goals. As a result, the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) was created, in which 193 countries committed to a series of measures that would enable proper financial investments to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.

## From the Desk of Lucy Lake and Katie Smith, Camfed

The LMTF has brought attention to the importance of broader learning outcomes beyond numeracy and literacy. Camfed has been able to capitalize on this attention, and has incorporated a focus on these outcomes under DFID's Girls Education Challenge (GEC) with measures to improve them: in Tanzania and Zimbabwe, this takes the shape of a new, complementary, 'wellbeing' curriculum developed with young people. In Zambia, Camfed is working with Fundacion Escuela Nueva to introduce child-centred pedagogy in rural primary schools, emphasizing wider skills including co-operation and self-esteem. These interventions are giving Camfed the opportunity to explore how the acquisition of wider skillsets interplays with improvements in numeracy and literacy.

Critically, we are disaggregating datasets by dimensions including gender and marginality, and reviewing these with Ministries to support national and district-level dialogue on the importance of improving the learning experience for all groups. This leverage extends right to the individual school level, where Camfed is sharing retention, performance, and wellbeing data – empowering teachers, students, and parents to engage with students' current outcomes and form plans to improve them, reducing reliance on a single annual reference point of national exams.

In this regard, the LMTF has provided a valuable reference point – not just in bringing broader learning outcomes centre stage, but also in making the issue of learning assessment accessible; something in which everyone can recognize their role as stakeholders. As an exciting next step, Camfed is partnering with the Ministry of Education (MESVTEE) in Zambia in its role as a Learning Champion country. The partnership aims to mainstream continuous assessment in the Zambian education system, building capacity to integrate an assessment data sharing and feedback loop down to school level – empowering stakeholders at every level in relation to learning assessment.



A Tanzanian student responding to a question in a school where Camfed is working with the government to introduce a new wellbeing curriculum. Photo courtesy of Camfed.

## In the News

Task Force members have been busy working towards the achieving the five key results. Below are a few events, reflections, and articles of progress being made:

- **FHI 360:** [The National Learning Assessments Mapping Project: An Update](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [Why media reports about learning assessment data make me cringe](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [A universal learning scale: 'Fit for purpose' instead of the 'perfect fit'](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS) and Aaron Benavot (GMR):** [Out-of-school numbers on the rise as aid to education falls short of 2010 levels](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS) and Jordan Naidoo (UNESCO):** [Do Teacher Incentives Improve Learning Outcomes?](#)
- **Josh Muskin (CUE):** [What will the Sustainable Development Goals really mean for education? \(Part I\)](#)
- **Josh Muskin (CUE):** [Quality and the SDGs: What will this really mean for education?](#)
- **Jordan Naidoo (UNESCO):** [How can we leave no one behind in education and learning?](#)
- **Patricia Scheid (Hewlett):** [What the Data Revolution Looks Like on the Ground](#)
- **Vyjayanthi Sankar (CUE):** [The need for a regional learning assessment and improving learning outcomes in South Asia \(part 1\)](#)

- **Vyjayanthi Sankar (CUE):** [The need for a regional learning assessment and improving learning outcomes in South Asia \(part 2\)](#)
- **Tamika Abaka-Wood (YAG):** [Leveraging the voices of the youth: LMTF global citizenship education youth consultations](#)

## Upcoming Events

- **In-Person LMTF Advisory Committee Meeting** – Washington D.C., September 1-2
- **UN General Assembly** – New York City, September 15 – October 6
- **UN Summit on the Post-2015 Development Goals** – New York City, September 25-27
- **Global Youth Economic Opportunities Summit** – Washington D.C., October 6-8
- **UNESCO Youth Forum** – Paris, France, October 26-28
- **2015 Global Education Summit** – Maryland, USA, November 2-4

## Opportunities to Contribute

- Want to share what your organization is doing to help achieve the five key results under LMTF 2.0? We are looking to post blogs discussing the work of the Learning Metrics Task Force on the Center for Universal Education's website. Please submit your ideas or blogs to [learningmetrics@brookings.edu](mailto:learningmetrics@brookings.edu).
- We are looking for contributions to the upcoming LMTF Final Report. Please submit ideas to [learningmetrics@brookings.edu](mailto:learningmetrics@brookings.edu).