

*In the final LMTF 2.0 newsletter, we hear from colleagues in Bangkok and Dakar and discuss the sunsetting of the LMTF and the SDG agenda.*

### **Regional Collaboration in the Asia-Pacific**

*Contributed by Ramya Vivekanandan, UNESCO Bangkok*

The Asia-Pacific region is a large and diverse group of countries and territories. It encompasses nearly two-thirds of the world's population, houses four of the world's major religions, and features 61% of the world's languages. The diversity of the region is beyond comparison, spanning from huge countries such as China and India to Small Island Developing States like Palau and Tuvalu. Some of the world's top performing economies are here, along with other countries that rank towards the bottom of the Human Development Index, as well as an increasing number of middle-income countries. As such, UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (better known as UNESCO Bangkok) which covers this region has a very complex mandate.

UNESCO Bangkok established the [Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific \(NEQMAP\)](#) in March 2013 in recognition that the quality of education and learning in particular were the key priorities for education systems across the globe and in the Asia-Pacific region. NEQMAP's work since then has focused on three strands: research, knowledge sharing, and capacity development. NEQMAP's research efforts have been multifaceted, including a systematic review on the impact of large-scale learning assessments on policy and practice in the region conducted for the network by the Australian Council for Educational Research. This work, which was recently translated into [a policy brief](#), dives into one of the most crucial issues in the domain of assessment – using learning assessment data to influence policies.



*Attendees from the most recent NEQMAP meeting pose for a photo.*

Another research area is on the assessment of the so-called 'transversal' competencies, also known as 'soft' or 21st century skills, which refer to areas such as critical and innovative thinking, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, global citizenship, and media and information literacy. This multi-country study is currently underway and expected to be published by the middle of 2016. NEQMAP research is also looking at other areas such as school-based assessment and an overall mapping of student learning assessment in the region.

To facilitate knowledge sharing between countries in the region, NEQMAP hosts annual network meetings and has established [a knowledge portal](#), which serves as a nexus for documentation on assessment, curriculum, and pedagogy in the region. NEQMAP is also providing support at the national level to selected countries. For example, in Nepal, NEQMAP hosted a recent workshop, and in Mongolia an expert was recently fielded to conduct a comprehensive review of the country's assessment system. Similar requests have been received from other countries as well, and the NEQMAP Secretariat is dedicated to addressing as many of them as possible.

The third strand of NEQMAP work – capacity development – is perhaps the most significant. In recognition of the large capacity gaps faced by most



From Senegal: the presentation of a reading lesson to the team of researchers including the Director INEADE and Joshua, the international expert of LMTF (Rebeuss school, Dakar).

of the regions' low-income countries in terms of establishing and maintaining solid assessment systems, NEQMAP has organized four regional workshops aimed at officials working on large-scale learning assessments.

NEQMAP will continue to focus on research, knowledge sharing, and capacity development, not in relation to any specific assessment model or initiative, but rather from a more general vision of helping the member states of the region to build sound systems and structures to assess learning. As the LMTF sunsets, NEQMAP stands ready to continue supporting the countries of the Asia-Pacific to enhance their education systems and ultimately to improve learning for every child.

### **LMTF In-Person Advisory Committee Meeting**

*Contributed by CUE*

As the Learning Metrics Task Force has made great progress on the tasks it set out to achieve, it is time to allow for other collaborations and initiatives to continue taking the work forward. In September 2015, the Learning Metrics Task Force Advisory Committee convened to discuss the sunset of the Learning Metrics Task Force.

The two-day meeting brought together representatives from the Learning Metrics Task Force Advisory Committee, active Task Force

members, and Learning Champion representatives to develop a strategy to sunset the Learning Metrics Task Force. Through presentations, round table discussions, and small-group discussions, the Advisory Committee was tasked with developing an action plan to sunset the LMTF and identifying other mechanisms for continuing the work after December 2015. The first half of day one brought in a larger audience for a consultation, including representatives from partner organizations involved in LMTF 1.0 working groups and new LMTF 2.0 partners. For the second part of day one and day two, a smaller subgroup of the Advisory Committee members, select Task Force members, and three Learning Champion representatives worked together to discuss possible ways of collaborating after the LMTF sunsets.

The key decisions from the meeting include:

- The Learning Metrics Task Force formally sunsetted in December 2015.
- The Secretariat will complete activities under the knowledge sharing result area by December 2015/early 2016 including newsletters, partner activity updates, virtual briefs, Advisory Committee Meetings, and in-person meetings. There will be one last in-person meeting of Learning Champions and Task Force members in February 2016.
- The Secretariat will archive the LMTF products and make sure they are accessible. A final report, case studies on Learning Champions, and a toolkit on engaging in the process will be developed and published in mid-2016.
- The final LMTF meeting (February 2016) will be an opportunity to also document and disseminate progress, specifically on the Learning Champions initiative.
- The work under the Learning Champions initiative should be institutionalized in order to continue to support country-led work. Frameworks, like the one included in the [Assessment for Learning \(A4L\)](#) concept, could be considered as a way of organizing future efforts.

- Learning Champions want to continue working together, connecting both regionally and globally. They will take this forward and will need to identify funding to do so, and potentially include new Learning Champions. There is still a need for an organization to connect and coordinate the work, which Learning Champion representatives feel should still happen under a global framework. This will be further discussed at the final LMTF meeting.

### **Deliberations on the SDG Indicator Framework**

*Contributed by CUE*

Last October, members of the so-called [Inter-Agency and Expert Group \(IAEG-SDGs\)](#) convened in Bangkok from national statistical offices around the world. They worked in collaboration with other experts in statistics and global development to collectively identify quantifiable, numerical indicators for each of the SDGs ratified last September by the United Nations member states—and for each of the 169 sub-targets that fall under those 17 goals. The final deadline for the identification of these indicators is March 2016.

After several entreaties from observer countries and civil society attendees for a more open process to decide on the final framework, expert group co-chairs announced that an online portal for giving feedback on the green, or most agreed-upon, indicators, which were previously planned to be closed to non-members, would be open for three days in late November. The results of this open consultation are now [available online](#). The grey, or least agreed-upon, indicators were also open for consultation in December 2015.

### **Discussion Document on Assessment for Learning (A4L) released**

Last December, a new discussion document, titled "[Assessment for Learning \(A4L\): An International Platform to Support National Learning Assessment Systems](#)," was been released with the goal of catalyzing debate and discussion around a global assessment platform. This discussion document was

developed as a key deliverable for one of the key result areas of the Learning Metrics Task Force 2.0, namely Assessment as a Public Good. This result area calls for “developing a strategy for how learning assessment could be supported as a global public good.” As the Task Force sunsets, this discussion document is not meant to be taken up by the Task Force itself but instead to spark thinking and discussion among relevant stakeholders on the steps needed to support assessment as a global good. You can access the document through the link above.



### **From the Desk of.... Mame Ibra Bâ**

*Director, Institut National et d'Action pour le Développement de l'Éducation (INEADE), Senegal*

As the Learning Metrics Task Force began its sunset towards the end of 2015, the Senegalese Learning Champions team was honored to host Dr. Joshua Muskin, Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Center for Universal Education, for a three day visit in December. Dr. Muskin came to Dakar to examine the work and progress of the LMTF team since the Kigali meeting in February 2015 and to share lessons critical to bringing Senegalese team closer to reaching its final objectives. The meeting was held at the Institute of Study of Action and Development of Education (INEADE) of Senegal, and the participants came from a diverse range of stakeholders, including the Senegalese technical LMTF team, the Ministry of Education, the



*Dr. Muskin and the Senegal Learning Champions team.*

Academy of Inspections of the Dakar region, the three inspectorates of Education and Training involved in research, and civil society organizations. The Senegalese LMTF team presented its achievements and future prospects to Dr. Muskin, who expressed satisfaction in the leadership and progress achieved by the LMTF local team thus far.

The meeting also highlighted the previous challenges face by the LMTF team and underscored the accomplishments in assessment during 2015 in spite of insufficient resources and technical support. The challenges Senegal faces are many: development of better information collection tools, pre-test administration, coding items, and data entry and processing; training for teachers; organization and analysis of test results as well as sharing of results; and implementation evaluation inside INEADE. Dr. Muskin, when addressing these many issues, emphasized the continuing need to bridge the gap between theory and practice and the use data to inform and support policy decisions. To provide specific ways of doing so, he suggested expanding the targeted surveyed students and teachers, and he also recommended the adoption of an inclusive strategy for the production and implementation of results.

The meeting ended by outlining the goals for 2016, and all parties involved agreed to continue working assiduously on achieving the objectives set out by the LMTF. Representatives agreed to keep working on the core areas of previous work: development of

assessment tools, implementation of lessons learned, and conduction of teacher trainings. However, based on the advice of Dr. Muskin, the group also agreed to better organize teacher trainings by dividing teachers into small learning group to maximize learning, outcomes, and efficiency. The meeting participants further agreed to organize a midterm test at the end of the school year, June 2016. After the test, the Senegalese LMTF team will publish evaluation results and share them with the different educational actors, local community stakeholders, and all the Learning Champions to demonstrate both student achievement in Senegal as well as the Senegalese Learning Champions team's progress in assessments.

This level of assistance from the LMTF has placed us on the right path to promote quality education for all Senegalese children. We are grateful to Dr. Muskin and the whole LMTF team for providing the knowledge and the tools for us to develop good continuous assessments, and we are excited to share our results with other Learning Champions. We will continue to work hard to achieve our goals, and we hope to stay connected with other experts who can advise after the sunset of the LMTF.

## **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:

- **FHI360:** [Toward More Effective Assessment Systems in Literacy – Lessons from Malawi](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [Laying the foundation to monitor learning globally](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [International Literacy Day of reckoning](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [Connecting educational agendas](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [A Roadmap to Better Data on Education Financing](#)

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- **Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [World Teachers' Day: 'Governments must take urgent action to address chronic teacher shortages'](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [Are poorer pupils doomed to fail?](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [The UIS Assessment Database and Catalogue](#)
- **Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [A Global Alliance for Learning \(GAL\)](#)
- **David Edwards (EI) and Silvia Montoya (UIS):** [Why governments have failed to fund fully qualified teachers](#)
- **Kate Anderson (CUE):** [We have the SDGs now, but how do we measure them?](#)
- **Kate Anderson and Fabiola Lara (CUE):** [Measuring progress toward SDG 4 in Kenya, Zambia, and Palestine](#)
- **Mercedes Miguel (Buenos Aires LC):** [How Buenos Aires adapted the LMTF seven domains](#)
- **Daniel A. Wagner (UNESCO):** [The Pope, the SDGs, and Literacy](#)
- **Saba Saeed (Pakistan LC):** [Addressing the Stormy Waters of Learning in Pakistan](#)
- **Patricia Scheid (Hewlett):** [Early Assessment of Learning is Critical to Achieving Quality Education Goal](#)
- **Luis Crouch (RTI):** [Applauding a new model to assess learning](#)
- **Jordan Naidoo (UNESCO):** [A Data Revolution for Education 2030](#)
- **Rebecca Winthrop (CUE):** [Assessment for Learning: An international platform to support national learning assessment systems](#)
- **Chernor Bah (YAG):** [Girls' education is the civil rights issue of our time](#)

## Important Events

- **Education World Forum** United Kingdom  
January 17-20
- **UNESCO International Conference on Education Policies for 2030** Paris, France  
January 18-20
- **World Economic Forum** Davos, Switzerland  
January 20-23
- **Second Learning Champions Forum**  
Livingstone, Zambia | February 3-5
- **LEGO Idea Conference** Billund, Denmark  
April 11-13
- **IMF Spring Meetings** Washington, DC  
April 15-17
- **CUE Research Symposium** Washington, DC  
April 18-20

## Opportunities to Contribute

- We are looking for contributions to the upcoming LMTF Final Report. Please submit ideas to [learningmetrics@brookings.edu](mailto:learningmetrics@brookings.edu).