

# SKILLS FOR A CHANGING WORLD



## Breadth of Learning Opportunities

In the last two decades, there has been a rethinking of the learning opportunities children need to thrive in their lives and careers, and to make meaningful contributions to their local and global communities. Although governments are recognizing the importance of providing students with opportunities to develop a broad range of skills, many students continue to learn in traditional school environments, where they sit at desks, passively listen to a lecture, and memorize a limited curriculum that is further reinforced through often outdated assessment practices. Teachers often receive little professional support to deliver a balanced curriculum.

As an initial step in examining the alignment within education systems and in response to recommendations from the [Learning Metrics Task Force](#) on having better tools to measure learning across all domains, the [Center for Universal Education at Brookings \(CUE\)](#) and [Education International \(EI\)](#) are developing a set of tools to measure the learning opportunities students are exposed to, from policy perspectives and as reflected in national curricula and school practices. The “Breadth of Learning Opportunities” tools will provide national governments with a resource to examine their education systems and target interventions toward certain learning domains or levels of the system.

### Why now?

The 2012 Global Education Monitoring Report estimated that more than half of the children in Africa are not learning the basics in reading.<sup>i</sup> The Education Commission’s recent report projects that only four in 10 children of school age in low- and middle-income countries will be on track to achieve minimum secondary-school level skills by 2030, the end year for the Sustainable Development Goals. In low-income countries alone, fewer than one in 10 children will be on track.<sup>ii</sup>

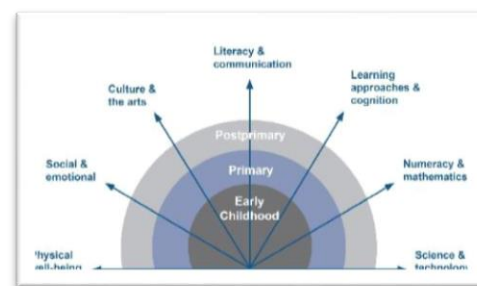
In the changing world we live in, even those minimum skills will be insufficient: the Commission

report also predicts that half of the world’s 4 billion jobs will be at risk due to automation by 2030. The increasing complexity of technology and the rise of globalization have ushered in the Information Age, and content knowledge will no longer be enough for students to succeed; they need to be equipped with the breadth of skills required to adapt to societal change and thrive in the 21st century.<sup>iii</sup>

### What are CUE and EI doing?

CUE and EI are together developing a toolkit that will help national education actors diagnose their education systems - to focus on the opportunities students have to learn the breadth of skills when they go to school. As part of the toolkit, there are three tools, which are based upon the Seven Domains of Learning produced by the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF), that examine breadth of learning opportunities at the policy, school, and teacher levels. The tools will be developed to be adaptable to country context and needs.

*The 7 Domains of Learning from the Learning Metrics Task Force*



The first tool is being developed by an international group of experts in curriculum, assessment and education policy. It will review national-level curriculum and assessment documents and examine the breadth of learning opportunities for students inherent within the curriculum. It will examine how many of the LMTF Seven Domains the curriculum covers. The curriculum tool will be completed by an

# SKILLS FOR A CHANGING WORLD



inter-agency team including government and non-governmental stakeholders.

The second tool is being developed by CUE with support from FHI360, which is intended to examine the breadth of learning opportunities for students as evidenced by school-level curriculum policies, available facilities, and government oversight of school instruction.

The third tool is being developed with teachers unions in Africa to examine breadth of learning at the school classroom and teacher level. It will survey the training given, time spent on various activities across the learning domains, the resources available, and the continuous professional development offered and the impact on students.

Together, the tools will take into account:

- Curriculum documents
- Assessment and examination frameworks
- Teacher pre-service and in-service preparation
- Learning materials
- Classroom experiences

The results from the three tools will be combined to generate a picture depicting the breadth of learning opportunities in the education system at the national and classroom levels. Education ministries can use this depiction to inform curriculum reform or review efforts.

These tools are not accountability mechanisms. They are designed to provoke reflection and action, particularly by national officials, on how the system is operating and what can be done to improve it. By reviewing the strengths and challenges in the system, from the national to local levels, this

information can help to fine-tune policies that provide broad opportunities, to suggest which interventions might be most effective, and to create policies that schools can put into practice.

## *What are the expected outcomes of the work?*

By the end of 2017, CUE and EI will have developed three tools—a tool to review the national curriculum, a tool to review the curriculum as it is implemented in schools, and a tool to review the curriculum as it experienced and implemented by teachers. These tools will be adaptable to local country context—they will not be one-size-fits-all.

To demonstrate how Breadth of Learning Opportunities tools will work, CUE and EI are partnering with a small group of countries to adapt the tools for each context. CUE and EI will then develop a companion process manual so ministries and organizations interested in the Breadth of Learning Opportunities tools have a guide for implementation.

CUE and EI will also produce a process report on the breadth of learning opportunities in the pilot countries to demonstrate how the tools function in a specific context and share the reflections of the stakeholders involved.

## *What is the desired impact of the toolkit?*

The tools are intended to contribute toward improving learning outcomes in a wide array of domains by giving national education officials the means to diagnose their education system. Ultimately, CUE and EI hope that the tools to support government interventions that increase the breadth and depth of learning around the world.

---

i UNESCO. *Youth and Skills: Putting education to work*, EFA Global Monitoring Report. Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2012.

ii The Education Commission. *The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing*

*world*. 2016.

iii Care, E. and Anderson, K. *How education systems approach breadth of skills*. The Brookings Institution, 2016.