

IIEP E-Forum

Inclusive and equitable quality education for all: Towards a global framework for measuring learning?

E-Forum, November 16-27, 2015

The IIEP Learning Portal will host an e-forum from 16-27 November 2015 to explore how learning outcomes are assessed in different regions and education systems worldwide. The [IIEP Learning Portal](#) is a new interactive platform created to help decision-makers worldwide plan for quality education and improved learning outcomes. Bringing together more than one thousand resources in a searchable database, the IIEP Learning Portal offers—at no cost to users—comprehensive, up-to-date and relevant information on learning issues, from primary through secondary education. In addition, the platform's [Monitor Learning](#) section provides resources on how to develop indicators for measuring learning and quality education, and offers information about the design and use of learning assessments.

The Global Monitoring Report *Education for All 2000 – 2015* concluded that despite positive progress, the world has not yet reached the EFA goals. While great strides have been made to increase school enrolment and gender parity, there are still 59 million children out of school globally and around 100 million children who do not complete primary education. Inequality in education has increased, with the poorest and most disadvantaged shouldering the heaviest burden. Overall, the poor quality of learning at primary level still has millions of children leaving school without basic skills.

The new Sustainable Development goals aim to *ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all*, and *to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes* by the year 2030. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy for all are the highest priority. In order to monitor achievement of these goals, there is a need to discuss a strategic framework for international assessments. This can help to ensure reliable information on the efficiency of education systems and provide comparable indicators to show development over time.

Indeed, the most recent Global Monitoring Report shows that governments have increased efforts to measure learning outcomes through national and international assessments. The Learning Metrics Task Force, convened by UIS UNESCO and the Center for Universal Education (CUE) at Brookings, has discussed how to improve learning outcomes by strengthening assessment systems and using assessment data. The first phase of their work is presented in the report: “Toward Universal Learning – A global framework for measuring learning”(2013).

The IIEP e-Forum ‘Inclusive and equitable quality education for all: Towards a global framework for measuring learning?’ builds on previous initiatives in the field by looking at existing assessments of learning outcomes, and encouraging discussion on the extent to

which these assessments meet the needs for monitoring learning outcomes in different regions and education systems across the world. The two main themes for the e-forum discussion are:

Theme 1: Large scale international assessments – one size fits all?

Large-scale international assessments are designed to gather information on learning outcomes in a way that is comparable across educational systems, and which can provide trend data for learning outcomes over time. The assessments consist of cognitive tests, accompanied by surveys of pupils and school administrators. Results are presented as comparable proficiency levels across countries. Recently, both the OECD and the IEA have started to develop modified versions of tests like PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS for developing countries.

Under this theme we will discuss to what extent existing large scale assessments can form a basis for monitoring the Sustainable Development goals regarding the achievement of basic skills for children and youth in all countries. The following questions will be discussed:

- a. How do you see the main advantages and challenges of existing international large scale assessments?
- b. How can modified versions of existing assessments (e.g. PISA for Development, TIMSS Numeracy and PIRLS Literacy) be made relevant for countries?
- c. What are the advantages of using regional approaches (e.g. SACMEQ, Pasec, LLECE) to assess learning outcomes?

Theme 2: National assessments for learning outcomes – how can they stimulate improved learning?

In the past two decades, national assessments have emerged as an important tool for providing a measure of educational achievement, and there are a great variety of national assessment programs, each with different aims and purposes. Broadly, one can differentiate between assessments that are designed for accountability at all levels, and assessments that are designed for system evaluation and development or designed to give feedback to parents and students. In both cases, the desire to measure change in achievement over time will imply specific requirements to the test design.

Under this theme we will discuss how national, regional and international assessments can act together to form a robust framework for the monitoring of learning outcomes at all levels – pupils, schools, regions and countries. The following questions will be discussed:

- a. How can national assessments and exams be designed to give feedback to pupils, teachers and schools on the quality of learning?
- b. How could international tests be used as a supplement to national assessment systems?
- c. How to ensure that every country has the necessary competence and capacity to develop and implement a comprehensive framework for learning assessment?