Learning assessments in Namibia

INTRODUCTION

Large-scale learning assessments can be used to generate performance and contextual data on student learning outcomes. They can be national, regional, or international; school based or household based. The UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO) has conducted a qualitative study to explore both how and why learning assessment data are used in six sub-Saharan African countries.

This Information Sheet provides background details for IIEP's Policy Brief on Namibia. It looks at the characteristics and setting of student assessments, presents the roles and responsibilities of the different actors, and sets out the documented uses of learning data.

KEY FIGURES (UIS, 2018)

- **Population**: 2,448,000
- **School-age children (primary & secondary)**: 651,268
- **Aged 14 years and younger**: 37%
- **Primary gross enrolment**: 124%

BACKGROUND

Namibia conducts three large-scale assessments: the National Standardised Achievement Test (NSAT), the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality Survey (SEACMEQ), and the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA).

The NSAT is funded by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC). At its inception, technical assistance came from the American Institutes for Research, supported by funding from USAID, and then by the Millennium Challenge Account. The SEACMEQ is largely financed by the MoEAC, having previously been funded by Funds-in-Trust agreements with UNESCO and the governments of Italy and the Netherlands. The EGRA was financed by the MoEAC and the European Commission.
### ASSESSMENT FREQUENCY

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<th>Year</th>
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### ASSESSMENT DETAILS

#### TEST POPULATION
- **NSAT**: Grades 5 & 7
- **SEAC MEQ**: Grade 6
- **EGRA**: Grades 2, 3 & 4

#### SUBJECTS ASSESSED
- **NSAT**: Grade 5: Maths; English  
  Grade 6: Maths; English; Natural science
- **SEAC MEQ**: Reading; Maths; Health knowledge (HIV/AIDS: teachers also assessed on this)
- **EGRA**: Pre-reading skills (letter names/sounds, phonemic awareness); Listening comprehension; Reading skills (word, invented word, and narrative reading, reading comprehension)

#### TEST FRAMEWORK
- **NSAT**: Curriculum based
- **SEAC MEQ**: Competency based
- **EGRA**: Competency based

#### BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRES
- **NSAT**: None
- **SEAC MEQ**: Learners: characteristics, home and learning environments  
  Teachers: characteristics, classroom resources, professional support  
  Principals: characteristics, infrastructure, school operation and problems
- **EGRA**: Teacher questionnaires on learner attributes and classroom factors
# ACTORS, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Centralized level

| Directorate of National Examinations and Assessment (DNEA) | Provides statistics for monitoring educational quality  
Designs NSAT together with external consultants  
Manages NSAT: collects, processes, analyses, and disseminates data  
Organizes regional training workshops on how to use NSAT results |
|---|---|
| National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) | Uses learning assessment data for planning/revising curriculum, in-service teacher training, and developing teacher materials  
Works with PAD to develop SEACMEQ questionnaires  
Designs EGRA pilot and analysed and disseminated results to regions and other stakeholders, with support from CfBT Education Trust  
Trains educators on EGRA; monitored and supported teachers in using EGRA within their regions |
| Directorate of Educational Planning and Development (PAD) | EMIS unit leads SEACMEQ studies in Namibia: developing questionnaires, implementing assessments, analysing results, disseminating data  
Uses data to set KPIs in ministerial strategic plans  
Reports on NSAT performance in annual plan reviews, comparing regions against national targets |
| Regional education directorates | Handle logistics of giving/collecting assessment materials to/from schools  
Disseminate NSAT reports to other regional actors  
Plan continuous teacher professional development activities, based on NSAT data  
Supported EGRA implementation by providing tools to schools |
PROGRAMMES AND TOOLS INFORMED BY LEARNING ASSESSMENT DATA

SEACMEQ
- Continuous teacher professional development
- Compulsory maths
- Textbook provision in core subjects
- Introduction of the EGRA

EGRA
- Development of manuals on how to teach phonics and phonemic awareness
- Revision of the literacy component of the curriculum

NSAT
- National curriculum reform
- Textbook policy
- In- and pre-service teacher education and training programmes

CONTACT
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