Toward Universal Learning

Recommendations from the Learning Metrics Task Force

September – October 2013
The Global Education Challenge

Despite major advances in enrolling millions of children into school worldwide, gains have been uneven and learning levels remain unacceptably low.

Poor quality education is jeopardizing the future of millions of children and youth in high-, medium- and low-income countries alike.

At least 250 million children of primary school age are not able to read, write or count well enough to meet minimum learning standards, including girls and boys who have spent at least four years in school.

- 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report
The Global Data Gap on Learning

We do not know the full scale of the crisis because measurement of learning achievement is limited in many countries, and hence difficult to assess at the international level. A global data gap on learning outcomes is holding back progress on education quality.

There is a critical need for robust data to:

- Understand the full scale of the learning crisis.
- Target policy to address areas of need and track progress.
About the Learning Metrics Task Force

- **Goal**: Improve the learning experiences of children and youth around the world.

- **Convening bodies**: UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution

- The task force supports the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA), and Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), and contributes to their fulfillment by:
  - Catalyzing a shift in the global education conversation from access to access *plus* learning.
  - Building consensus on global learning indicators and actions to improve the measurement of learning in all countries.
LMTF by the Numbers

- 30 member organizations
- 186 working group members
- 1,700+ participants
- 118 countries
- 18-month-process
- 3 core questions:
  1. What learning is important for all children and youth?
  2. How should learning outcomes be measured?
  3. How can measurement of learning be implemented to improve education quality?
Consultation Participants in 118 Countries
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A Global Paradigm Shift

Shift focus and investment in global education from a focus on universal access to access *plus* learning. The collection of better data on learning is central to that effort.
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Learning Competencies

Provide children and youth with opportunities to develop competencies across seven domains of learning beginning in early childhood through lower secondary.
The task force recommends a small set of learning indicators to be tracked in all countries. These indicators measure fundamental learning opportunities over a child’s educational career. Some indicators within these areas of measurement currently exist, while others need to be developed (see next slide).
## Learning Indicators for Global Tracking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Measurement</th>
<th>Description of Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning for All:</td>
<td>Combine measures of completion and learning (reading proficiency at the end of primary school) into one indicator.</td>
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<td>Age and Education Matter for Learning:</td>
<td>Measure timely entry, progression and completion of schooling, and population-based indicators to capture those who do not enter or those who leave school early.</td>
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<td>Reading:</td>
<td>Measure foundational skills by Grade 3 and proficiency by the end of primary school.</td>
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<td>Numeracy:</td>
<td>Measure basic skills by end of primary and proficiency by lower secondary school.</td>
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<td>Ready to Learn:</td>
<td>Measure acceptable levels of early learning and development across a subset of domains by the time a child enters primary school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen of the World:</td>
<td>Measure among youth the demonstration of values and skills necessary for success in their communities, countries and the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breadth of Learning Opportunities:</td>
<td>Track exposure to learning opportunities across all seven domains of learning.</td>
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Supporting Countries

Provide countries with technical, institutional and political support to strengthen their assessment systems and ultimately improve learning levels.

Set up an international, multi-stakeholder collaboration to:
• Ensure better collaboration among existing agencies.
• Fill essential gaps in support to countries.
• Help sustain a broad coalition of stakeholders with a common vision of learning for all.
Equity

Use assessment data to ensure equitable learning opportunities (shaped by a range of factors such as school conditions, teacher quality, etc.) and to reduce disparities in learning outcomes. Requires understanding the characteristics of out-of-school children and youth, and the barriers they face, as well as identifying effective strategies to reach children who are furthest behind.
Assessment as a Public Good

Measures for globally tracked indicators must be considered a public good, with tools, documentation, and data made freely available. No country should be precluded from measuring learning outcomes due to financial constraints.
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Taking Action

Stakeholders must take action to ensure the right to learn for all children and youth and advocate for accessible, transparent systems for measuring learning.
A Call to Action

All stakeholders working in the field of education should:

• Define and measure learning broadly and across multiple domains and educational stages.

• Begin incorporating measurement of learning in the areas for global tracking into existing programming and evaluation efforts.

• Advocate for accessible, transparent systems for the measurement of learning.

See *Toward Universal Learning: Recommendations from the Learning Metrics Task Force* for suggested actions for all stakeholders to help carry LMTF recommendations forward.
Looking Ahead to 2015 and Beyond

The task force has completed its work as it originally intended. But given the urgent need for change, the high demand from participants to sustain the momentum and interest gained thus far, the task force will transition to a new stage of work to carry these recommendations forward into action.

LMTF recommendations will be invaluable to post-2015 decision-makers as well as ministries of education as they prepare to make the paradigm shift from access to access plus learning within their own systems.

As the next phase of this work gets underway, stakeholders are called to join the movement to help re-imagine what is measurable in education and deliver on the promise of education as an engine for opportunity.
Join the Movement

Visit LMTF on the web at www.brookings.edu/learningmetrics

To learn how to get involved, email LearningMetrics@brookings.edu

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