United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO
INSTITUTE
for
STATISTICS

Center for
Universal Education
at BROOKINGS

SUMMARY REPORT

TOWARD UNIVERSAL LEARNING

Recommendations from the Learning Metrics Task Force

September 2013

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Learning Metrics Task Force

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution have joined efforts to convene the Learning Metrics Task Force. The overarching objective of the project is to create a shift in the global conversation on education from a focus on access to access *plus* learning. Based on recommendations by technical working groups and input from broad global consultations, the task force works to ensure that learning becomes a central component of the post-2015 global development agenda and to make recommendations for common goals to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for children and youth worldwide. Visit www.brookings.edu/learningmetrics to learn more.

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The Center for Universal Education (CUE) at the Brookings Institution is one of the leading policy centers focused on universal quality education in the developing world. CUE develops and disseminates information for effective solutions to achieve equitable learning, and plays a critical role in influencing the development of new international education policies and in transforming them into actionable strategies for governments, civil society and private enterprise. The Center for Universal Education is active in four broad areas: influencing global education to 2015 and beyond; improving education resources and learning outcomes; advancing quality education for the marginalised; and promoting collaboration between diverse stakeholders in the education sector.

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Toward Universal Learning: Recommendations from the Learning Metrics Task Force presents the full set of recommendations of the Learning Metrics Task Force, a multi-stakeholder group of 30 organizations that met from July 2012 through September 2013. The 18-month process that led to development of these recommendations is described in detail in a series of three reports under the title *Toward Universal Learning.* In the first report, *What Every Child Should Learn,* the task force identified the competencies, knowledge or areas of learning that are important for all children and youth to master to succeed in school and life. The second report, *A Global Framework for Measuring Learning*, presents a vision for how learning should be measured globally. Finally, the third report in the series will be released in November 2013 and will address how the measurement of learning can be implemented to improve education quality.

The recommendations presented herein represent the collaborative work of Learning Metrics Task Force members, three technical working groups, and more than 1,700 individuals in 118 countries around the world who provided feedback through consultation. See the technical reports in the *Toward Universal Learning* series for a list of consultation participants.

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**as of July 2013*

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CUE	Center for Universal Education
EFA	Education for All
GEFI	Global Education First Initiative
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LMTF	Learning Metrics Task Force
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
SG HLPEP	UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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Executive Summary

> *The barriers to education, and the most effective solutions, will vary by country. But the commitment to learning must be constant and unwavering.* – Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (SG HLPEP, 2013)

Education is a fundamental human right and a gateway to individual opportunity. It is also critical for addressing current and future challenges, such as climate change, rising inequality and conflict. Over the past fifteen years, thanks in large part to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary education, major advances have been made in enrolling millions of children in schools worldwide (Brookings Institution, 2011). However, despite significant progress in getting more girls and boys into school, those gains have been uneven and learning levels remain unacceptably low.

THE GLOBAL EDUCATION CHALLENGE

Evidence shows that learning levels rather than years spent in school are what drive many social and economic returns on investment in education, including employability, productivity and growth (Brookings Institution, 2011). But too often children leave school without acquiring the basic knowledge and skills they need to lead productive, healthy lives and to attain sustainable livelihoods. According to estimates in the 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2012):

- Approximately 120 million children either never make it to school or drop out before their fourth year.
- At least 250 million primary school-age children around the world 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.
- 200 million adolescents, including those who complete secondary school, do not have the skills they need for life and employment.

If as a global community we are to deliver on the promise of education to transform lives and confer social, economic, and environmental benefits to society, we must ensure that children and youth develop the knowledge and skills they need to be productive citizens of the world. As the report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons states, "We need to ensure all children, regardless of circumstance, are able to enroll and complete a full course of primary and lower secondary education and, in most cases, meet minimum learning standards" (SG HLPEP, 2013).

Poor quality education is jeopardizing the future of millions of children and youth across high-, medium- and low-income countries alike. Yet 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. Because many countries lack sufficient data and capacity to systematically measure and track learning outcomes over time, evidence-based decisionmaking and accountability become impossible. There is a critical need for robust data to understand the full scale of the learning crisis. Only then can we target policy to address areas of need, track progress and hold ourselves to account.

RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARD UNIVERSAL LEARNING

Motivated by these challenges, and with the ultimate goal of creating better learning experiences for children and youth around the world, the Learning Metrics Task Force was convened by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution beginning in July 2012. Through a highly inclusive, multi-stakeholder process, the education community has reached a consensus on the skills and competencies that are important for all children and youth to develop and a small set of indicators that are feasible and desirable to track at the global level. The global task force of 30 member organizations, working groups comprised of 186 technical experts, and more than 1,700 consultation participants from 118 countries have worked together over the past 18 months to make the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: A Global Paradigm Shift

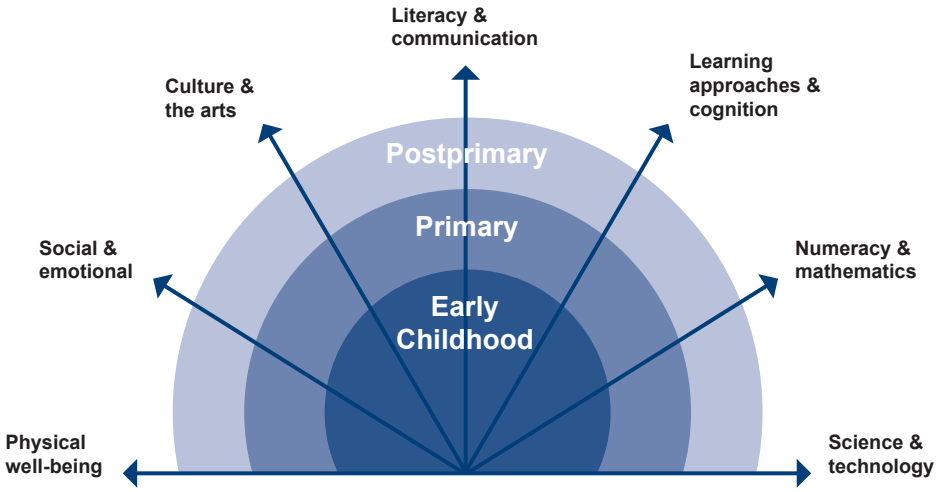
The task force calls for a global shift in focus and investment from universal access to access *plus* learning. The collection of better data on learning is central to that effort. Learning measurement can be a highly effective intervention if the results are used to improve the quality of children's learning experiences and outcomes. With a new set of international development goals on the post-2015 horizon, this paradigm shift is urgently needed to ensure that all children and youth have the opportunity to attain a high-quality education that will enable them to develop the skills and competencies required for success in their future lives and livelihoods.

Recommendation 2: Learning Competencies

All children and youth develop competencies across seven domains of learning. The task force recommends that education systems offer opportunities for children and youth to master competencies in the seven domains of learning that are essential as they prepare children and youth for their future lives and livelihoods *(see **Figure 1**)*. Education systems around the world should focus on these competencies starting from early childhood through lower secondary school. Given the many and varied areas of specialization students take on in upper secondary education and beyond, the task force decided to limit its recommendations to the lower secondary level and focus on the knowledge and skills all youth need, regardless of the future occupations and learning opportunities they pursue.

The Global Framework of Learning Domains can and should apply to the wide range of settings where intentional learning takes place, including but not limited to formal schooling, community education systems and nonformal education programs.

Figure 1: Global Framework of Learning Domains



Recommendation 3: Learning Indicators for Global Tracking

Learning indicators are tracked globally. The task force recommends a small set of learning indicators to be tracked globally (meaning in all countries). These indicators measure fundamental learning opportunities over a child's educational career. They were chosen based on an extensive review of existing measures and an effort to address all domains of learning while presenting a framework that is feasible for all countries *(see **Figure 2**)*. Some indicators within these areas of measurement currently exist, while others need to be developed. Countries will need to debate, prioritize and take action to determine precisely what they will measure in relation to their specific goals and needs.

Figure 2: Learning Indicators for Global Tracking

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

Recommendation 4: Supporting Countries

Countries are supported in strengthening their assessment systems and, ultimately, in improving learning levels. The task force recommends that countries lead, with the support of regional and international actors, a process to: diagnose the quality of their assessment systems; convene stakeholders; and assess the necessary technical and financial resources required to improve learning measurement and outcomes. This involves minimizing the gap between what is currently assessed and the country's vision for what children and youth should learn, and leveraging the wide range of actors at the national level – from parents, teachers, nongovernmental organizations to governments – who have a role to play in improving learning outcomes. At the international level, this involves developing a better mechanism for existing actors to support countries in measuring learning. The task force recommends that a multi-stakeholder collaboration be developed to do this. Technical, institutional and political support will all be needed to translate task force recommendations into action *(see **Figure 3**)*.

Figure 3: Supporting Countries

Technical	• Move forward on agreed-upon learning measures for global tracking. • Develop new learning measures for tracking within and across countries through an inclusive and consultative process. • Set up quality assurance mechanisms to evaluate tools.
Institutional	• Develop tools for self-diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses of current assessment systems. • Support communities of practice. • Promote sharing of expertise, lessons learned and examples of effective practices.
Political	• Promote a culture of measurement and effective use of assessment data. • Promote a shift in focus from access to access *plus* learning. • Engage civil society in a grassroots movement to measure and improve learning. • Mobilize financial resources for this work.

Recommendation 5: Equity

Measurement of learning must include an explicit focus on equity, with particular attention to inequalities within countries. The task force recommends that learning data be collected and used with an explicit focus on identifying and addressing inequalities, particularly within countries. All children and youth have the right to develop the skills and knowledge required to succeed in school and life, regardless of their circumstances. Measures of access and learning, along with data on child characteristics, should be used 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. This requires an understanding of the characteristics of out-of-school children and youth and the barriers they face, as well as explicit efforts to identify those children who are furthest behind and put in place strategies to accelerate their progress.

Recommendation 6: Assessment as a Public Good

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

constraints. The task force recommends that donors and the private sector help eliminate cost barriers to assessment, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Full documentation of studies that are funded with public resources should be made widely available to ensure the transparency and reproducibility of results. Documentation should include data sets, instruments and procedures used to generate the data.

Recommendation 7: Taking Action

Stakeholders must take action to ensure the right to learn for all children and youth. In the effort to build a common vision for learning and associated metrics, the education sector has demonstrated the capacity for collaboration and collective action. The task force has generated a considerable amount of momentum for measuring learning, and its recommendations have gained recognition and support from youth, parents, teachers, civil society, business, governments and the international community. Participants now call for the education community to sustain this momentum and offer a series of next steps to help carry task force recommendations forward into action.

A CALL TO ACTION

All stakeholders working in the field of education, including teachers, school leaders, local education authorities, education ministries and donors, should define and measure learning broadly and across multiple domains and educational stages. All education actors can begin incorporating measurement of learning in the areas for global tracking into their existing programming and evaluation efforts. Everyone interested in improving learning outcomes must advocate for accessible, transparent systems for the measurement of learning.

With these recommendations, the Learning Metrics Task Force sets forth an ambitious agenda for leveraging assessments to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for all children and youth. While the actions needed to improve measurement and learning depend on the contextual factors in each country, all countries are struggling with measurement in some way. Assessments alone will not improve the quality of instruction or learning environments, but reliable data on student achievement can enable policymakers and educators to develop strategies for improving learning while taking into consideration contextual factors. Transparency in assessment methods and outcomes also empowers citizens and the international community to hold leaders accountable for progress.

The lessons learned from the work of the task force will be invaluable to post-2015 decisionmakers and 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, education and development 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 transformation and opportunity.

The Global Learning Crisis

The benefits of education – for national development, individual prosperity, health and social stability – are well known, but for these benefits to accrue, children in school have to be learning. Despite commitments and progress made in improving access to education at the global level, including Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 on universal primary education and the Education for All (EFA) goals, levels of learning are still too low. Many children and youth complete primary and secondary education without acquiring the basic knowledge, skills and competencies they need to lead productive, healthy lives. According to estimates in the 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report, at least 250 million primary school-age children around the world are not able to read, write or count well enough to meet minimum learning standards, including those children who have spent at least four years in school (UNESCO, 2012). Worse still, the full scale of the crisis may not be fully known: this figure is likely to be an underestimate because measurement of learning outcomes among children and youth is limited and more difficult to assess at the global level.

If as a global community we are to deliver on the promise of education, we must ensure that children and youth develop the knowledge and skills they need to be productive citizens of the world. Poor quality education is jeopardizing the future of millions of children and youth across high-, medium- and low-income countries alike. Yet we do not know the full scale of the crisis because measurement of learning achievement is limited, and hence difficult to assess at the global level.

EDUCATION AND THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The EFA goals established in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 demonstrated a global commitment to meeting basic learning needs. This commitment was restated in 2000 in the Dakar Framework for Action, in which Goal 6 calls for: “improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills” (World Education Forum, 2000). However, there was no consensus on what those outcomes should be or how they should be measured. The MDGs initiated in 2000 also included a focus on education, with Goal 2 being the completion of primary schooling for all children and youth.

With a new set of global development goals on the post-2015 horizon, the education community has been working to shift the focus and investment in education from universal access to access *plus* learning. This paradigm shift is evident in the priorities of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative, as well as the framing of education priorities in the UN High-Level Panel’s report *New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*; the summary from the World We Want education consultation: *Envisioning Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda;* and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network’s report *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development*, among others.

The High-Level Panel's report underscores the importance of both data and measurement: once the international community has agreed on an education goal, how will we know whether we are making progress? Learning metrics are critical to demonstrating that our efforts to improve education access and quality are making an impact.

WHY MEASURING LEARNING IS SO CRITICAL

Measurement can play a crucial role in improving the quality of education and learning. Good teachers measure learning in the classroom to adjust and individualize instruction. Effective head teachers, school administrators and school district leaders measure learning at the school and community level to target resources and improve school quality. Governments measure learning to diagnose the overall health of the national education system and develop policies to improve learning outcomes. Civil society actors, donors and development agencies use assessments to measure the effectiveness of programming and advocate for effective education policies and practices.

However, assessment should not be conducted for its own sake. Data from learning assessment should be used to refine policy and practice and ultimately lead to improvements in students' educational experiences and learning. For measurement to be effective, it must be fit for purpose. Assessment can help identify and determine the magnitude of potential problems across an education system by allowing comparison at the classroom level. Large-scale measurement can be used to track progress in given subjects or across cohorts. It can also contribute to the development of interventions or reforms, and inform parents and the community about specific aspects of the education system.

There is general agreement that rigorous assessment of learning can take multiple forms. These include school-based assessments that are administered in one or more countries, internationally comparable assessments, national exams and assessments, and household-based surveys. The task force recommends that multiple methods be considered when designing systems to assess learning opportunities and outcomes. Regardless of which methods are used, measurement should be conducted in a technically sound, robust manner. Weak data are misleading and result in the misalignment of policies and resources. This does not mean that measurement efforts at early stages (when validity and reliability claims are not yet clear) should be discarded, but rather reinforces the need to strengthen assessments and to use the information they generate with the utmost care.

The ultimate goal of measuring learning is to improve the learning experiences and outcomes of students. Measurement can be a highly effective intervention if the results are leveraged to improve policy, practice and accountability.

THE GLOBAL DATA GAP ON LEARNING

A global data gap on learning outcomes is holding back progress on improving the quality of education. Only a subset of countries is measuring learning directly in several domains. Many countries, especially those with

low incomes, use proxy measures to gauge education quality even though they are insufficient for evidence-based decisionmaking. So there is a vast gap between the proxy indicators available on education quality and the robust data needed to understand the full scale of the learning crisis, target policy to address areas of need, track progress and hold ourselves to account.

The education community, through the work of the Learning Metrics Task Force, has spent the last 18 months tackling this challenge in order to consider what knowledge and skills all children need to develop and how best to measure and track learning outcomes, with the ultimate goal being quality education for all.

The Learning Metrics Task Force: Building Consensus Toward Universal Learning

Motivated by the global education challenges of low learning levels and the lack of robust data on learning achievement, the Learning Metrics Task Force was convened by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution with the ultimate objective of creating high-quality learning experiences for children and youth around the world. Task force members include national and regional governments, EFA-convening agencies, regional political bodies, civil society organizations, donor agencies and the private sector. The task force engaged in an 18-month-long process to address the following three questions:

The ultimate goal of the Learning Metrics Task Force is to improve the learning experiences of children and youth around the world. The task force situates its work within the EFA, MDG and GEFI goals 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.

1. **What learning is important for all children and youth?** In the first phase, the task force sought to determine whether there are key competencies that are important for all children and youth based on research, policy review and consultations. The task force agreed on a broad set of global competencies and developed the Global Framework of Learning Domains and corresponding subdomains from early childhood through early adolescence *(see page 19 for more detail)*.

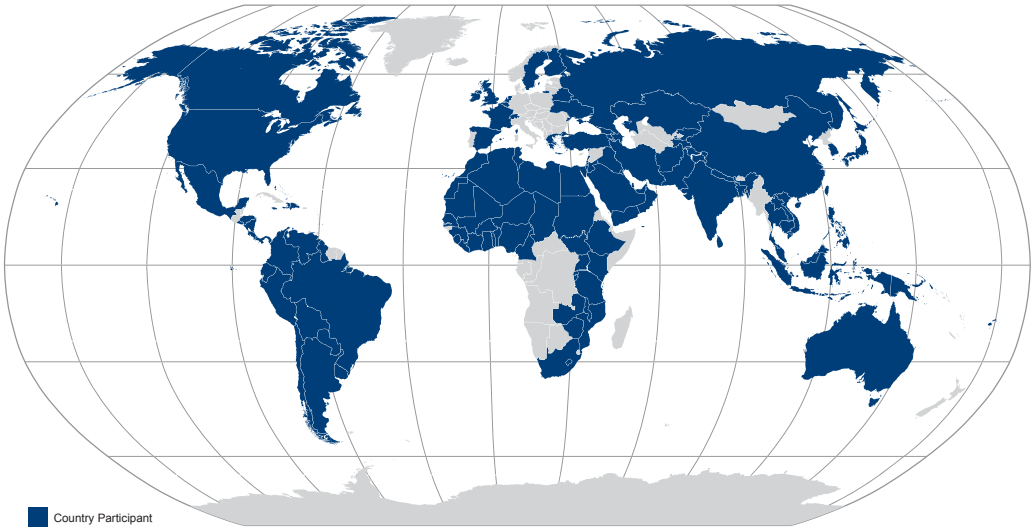
2. **How should learning outcomes be measured?** In the second phase, the task force investigated how learning outcomes should be measured across countries. In selecting areas for global measurement, the task force started by determining the feasibility of measuring within the learning domains identified in the first phase *(see Figure 5)*. Rather than being limited by the current capacity for measurement, the task force took a long-term view, allowing for changing needs and future innovations in technology and assessment. The task force recommended that a small number of indicators be tracked at the global level and presented a series of next steps to help countries improve their capacities to measure learning.

3. **How can measurement of learning be implemented to improve education quality?** In its third and final phase, the task force examined how countries assess learning and in which domains, how assessment results are used, the specific needs of countries to measure learning, and the use of assessments to improve the quality of education. The task force also investigated the feasibility of a multi-stakeholder partnership that could bring together existing efforts to support countries to measure and improve learning. The task force proposes a series of immediate next steps necessary to translate its recommendations into action.

The Learning Metrics Task Force by the Numbers

- 30 member organizations
- 186 technical working group members
- 1,700+ consultation participants
- 118 countries *(see **Figure 4**)*

Figure 4: 118 Countries Represented in the Learning Metrics Task Force Consultation Process



Recommendation 1: A Global Paradigm Shift

The task force calls for a shift in global focus and investment from universal access to access *plus* learning.

Central to this effort is the need to actively seek better data on learning. Learning measurement can be a highly effective intervention if the results are leveraged to improve the quality of children's learning experiences and outcomes. With a new set of global development goals on the post-2015 horizon, this paradigm shift is urgently needed to ensure that all children and youth have the opportunity to acquire a high-quality education that enables them to develop the skills and competencies required for success in their future lives and livelihoods.

Recommendation 2: Learning Competencies

All children and youth develop competencies across seven domains of learning. The task force recommends that:

- Education systems offer opportunities for children and youth to master competencies in the seven domains of learning that are essential as they prepare for their future lives and livelihoods.
- Education systems prioritize these competencies starting from early childhood through lower secondary school.
- Educationalists apply this framework to the wide range of intentional learning settings in which children and youth are educated, including but not limited to formal schooling, community education systems and nonformal education programs.

While the education-related MDGs focus on the completion of primary education, learning is a lifelong process. The basic knowledge, skills and competencies needed to lead a productive, healthy life go beyond literacy and numeracy skills to include areas such as social and civic values, critical thinking, culture and the arts. Accordingly, the task force proposes a broad definition of learning that encompasses seven domains with corresponding subdomains that are important for all children and youth to develop.

When Do Children Learn?

The phases of learning for a child can be delimited by stages (early childhood, primary and postprimary), schooling levels and/or age. The association between these groupings varies by region, country and even by child. In support of the notion that learning occurs along a continuum, the following table defines the stages, schooling levels and approximate age spans for these phases. The task force builds its recommendations based on the assumption that these are the spans for measuring learning outcomes. Given the many and varied areas of specialization that students take on in upper secondary school and beyond, the task force decided to limit its recommendations to the lower secondary level and focus on the knowledge and skills all youth need, regardless of the future occupations and learning opportunities they pursue. **Table 1** provides a description of the three learning stages addressed by the task force.

Table 1: Stages, Schooling Levels and Approximate Age Spans for Developing a Framework

STAGE	SCHOOLING LEVEL	APPROXIMATE AGE SPANS (YEARS)
Early childhood	Birth through school entry, including early childhood education (ISCED 0)	0-8
Primary	Primary education (ISCED 1)	5-15
Postprimary	Lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	10-19

Note: The schooling levels are based on the 1997 revision of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) (UNESCO, 1997). The age spans broadly reflect stages of child development and do not directly correspond to schooling levels.

Early Childhood Education: Around the world, 170 million children are enrolled in early childhood education programs and the corresponding gross enrollment ratio is 50 percent. However, this access is unevenly distributed, as the gross enrollment ratio in early childhood education programs in low-income countries is only 17 percent (UIS, 2013).

Primary Education: The majority (89 percent) of primary school-age children are now enrolled in school. While some children are either not enrolled in school or are enrolled in nonformal programs, the majority of children are learning in formal contexts. Even though primary education is compulsory in almost every country, there are nearly 57 million out-of-school children of primary school age, a number that has basically stagnated since 2008 (UIS, 2013).

Postprimary Education: For most children, “postprimary” refers to secondary education. It is estimated that 91 percent of children who enter primary school stay in school until the end of the cycle, and 95 percent of those

students move on to secondary school. However, for children in low-income countries, only 59 percent complete the last year of primary school; 72 percent of those students successfully move on to secondary school (UIS, 2012).

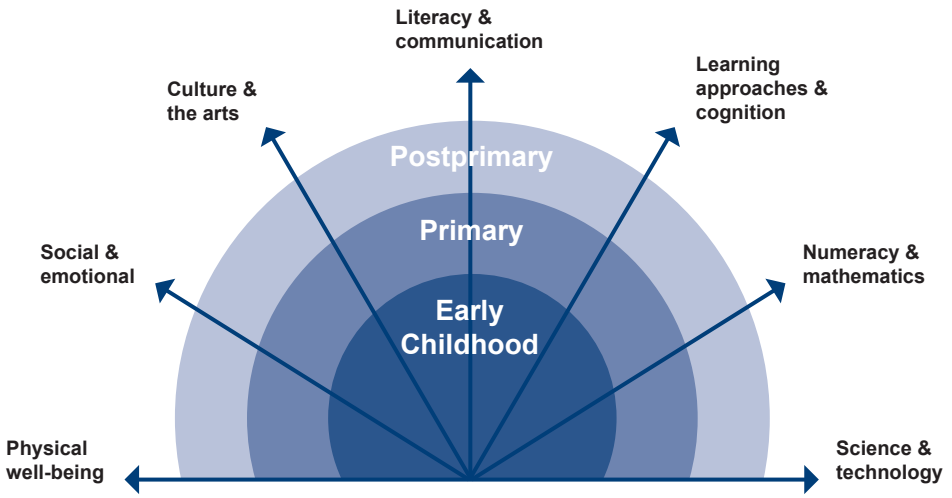
Where Are Children Learning?

The task force decided to organize its recommendations around three educational levels (early childhood, primary and postprimary), while acknowledging that intentional learning does not happen in schools alone. Many children and youth, including some of the most marginalized, learn through nonformal education programs. In high-income countries, many young children attend formal, regulated early childhood education programs; but the majority of the world's young children learn in nonformal contexts through unstructured or nonformal processes. For these children, learning typically occurs in the home and community through interaction with parents, siblings and other family members. For children who do not attend secondary school or another intentional learning program, learning after primary school mainly takes place through work, family and community experiences (i.e. nonformal, unstructured contexts) (Wagner et al., 2012). Furthermore, to make recommendations that are relevant for the next 15 years, the task force chose to use a broad definition of "school" or "classroom" as online and experiential learning programs become more prevalent.

Global Framework of Learning Domains

Given the various structures, places and times when people learn, it is a challenge to define what learning outcomes are important for all, especially at the global level. Yet based on research, existing global policies and dialogues as well as consultation with the education community, the task force sets forth a broad, holistic framework of seven learning domains as the aspiration for all children and youth around the world by the time they reach the postprimary level *(see **Figure 5**)*.

Figure 5: Global Framework of Learning Domains



While all the learning domains are applicable from early childhood through the postprimary level, some domains are more relevant than others at different stages. **Table 2** describes the domains and lists examples of the subdomains within each. The full set of domains and 105 corresponding subdomains can be found in Annex B.

Table 2: Global Framework of Learning Domains*

Domain	Description	Subdomain Examples*
Physical well-being	How children and youth use their bodies, develop motor control, and understand and exhibit appropriate nutrition, exercise, hygiene and safety practices.	• Physical health and hygiene • Food and nutrition • Physical activity
Social and emotional	How children and youth foster and maintain relationships with adults and peers. Also, how they perceive themselves in relation to others.	• Social and community values • Civic values • Mental health and well-being
Culture and the arts	Creative expression, including activities from the areas of music, theater, dance or creative movement, and the visual, media and literary arts. Also, cultural experiences in families, school, community and country.	• Creative arts • Cultural knowledge • Self- and community identity • Awareness of and respect for diversity
Literacy and communication	Communication in the primary language(s) of the society in which children and youth live, including speaking, listening, reading, writing, and understanding the spoken and written word in various media.	• Speaking and listening • Vocabulary • Writing • Reading
Learning approaches and cognition	Learning approaches describe a learner's engagement, motivation and participation in learning. Cognition is the mental process of acquiring learning through these various approaches.	• Persistence and attention • Cooperation • Problem solving • Self-direction • Critical thinking
Numeracy and mathematics	The science of numbers and quantitative language used universally to represent phenomena observed in the environment.	• Number concepts and operations • Geometry and patterns • Mathematics application • Data and statistics
Science and technology	Science is specific knowledge or a body or system of knowledge covering physical laws and general truths. Technology refers to the creation and usage of tools to solve problems.	• Scientific inquiry • Life science • Physical science • Earth science • Awareness and use of digital technology

**Subdomains listed here are by way of example only. See Annex B for the full list of subdomains across each level (early childhood, primary and postprimary).*

Recommendation 3: Learning Indicators for Global Tracking

Learning indicators are tracked globally. The task force recommends that:

- A small set of learning indicators be tracked globally. These indicators measure fundamental learning opportunities over a child's educational career.
- Countries debate, prioritize and take action to determine precisely what they will measure in relation to their specific goals and needs.
- Multiple methods be used to track competencies at the global level.

The task force considered options for measurement across the seven learning domains and their corresponding subdomains, and drew out a small set of learning indicators that were feasible and desirable to track at the global level *(see **Figure 6**)*. The task force decided that tracking learning within these areas was important for leveraging policy change and could also inform the post-2015 development agenda. These areas, described below, represent the vision of the task force for how learning could be measured across countries, with the understanding that this would require significant improvements in assessment capacity in many countries. Beyond this small set of global indicators, countries should decide which additional competencies within the global framework to measure and track based on national priorities.

Currently, indicators for global monitoring focus on measures of access and completion, literacy and numeracy skills. However, there is a high demand in many countries to track progress in other areas, such as early learning and development, problem-solving skills and critical thinking. In response, the task force selected a diverse set of indicators, some which can already be monitored while others will require additional commitment and investment to develop. Many countries are producing measures which could inform the basis for global indicators. While some measures may require additional resources and capacity building at the country level, others would require more significant investments such as building consensus on policy frameworks, concept definitions and measures needed for monitoring.

Figure 6: Learning Indicators for Global Tracking

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

Below is a detailed description of each area of measurement and the next steps recommended by the task force.

Learning for All: **Combining measures of completion and learning (reading proficiency at the end of primary school) into one indicator.**

The task force recommends developing an indicator that could gauge who is being served by the education system and who is completing the primary education cycle with minimal proficiency in reading. This indicator, proposed as a "Learning for All" indicator, combines access, completion and learning into one indicator that could be easily understood both within and outside the education sector. This indicator would require obtaining data on completion of primary education (see *Age and Education Matter for Learning*) and on reading achievement (see *Reading*) at the end of the primary education cycle; in countries where completion data are not recorded, a proxy measure could be used.

Age and Education Matter for Learning: **Measuring timely entry, progression and completion of schooling.**

Children who start school late are usually those who face more difficulties in accessing the school system. For example, they may live in rural areas and have to walk a long distance to school. Additionally, children who are older than the intended age of schooling are more likely not to complete their education since the direct and opportunity costs of going to school increase when they get older (UNESCO, 2008). In addition, they may be stigmatized by their teachers and peers, which can create a frustrating or humiliating school experience (Guadalupe, 2013).

Tracking progress in access to and completion of schooling addresses the unfinished access agenda for out-of-school children and youth. Many countries report data on access to schooling through indicators on participation by grade and education level and indicators on completion and educational attainment (UIS, 2013). However, the task force recommends that increased efforts be dedicated to improving the quality of data and collection

methods. The task force proposes the following actions:

- Develop a set of guidelines to improve data collection procedures and standards to report on progression and completion.
- Consider new approaches aimed at measuring children's opportunities to learn in school in order to better understand the quality of education provision.
- Consider new research on the measurement of access to and completion of nonformal education programs, where they are equivalent to formal schooling and are aimed at children of primary school age.

The emphasis placed on improving data on access and completion should not compromise efforts to consider the status of out-of-school children and youth. It is essential to understand who is not in school and where they live. As learning takes place both inside and outside formal school settings, household-based assessments with sound sampling and testing procedures may be useful in certain contexts to ensure that learning levels of out-of-school children are also measured and taken into account.

***Reading*: Measuring foundational skills by Grade 3 and proficiency by the end of primary education.** Children and youth must be able to communicate in their mother tongue and in the primary language of instruction. It is assumed that all education systems aspire to the goal of having all children reading competently, that is, understanding and comprehending texts instead of only decoding texts – moving from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" as students progress through the school cycle. The foundational skills necessary for learning to read are critical to functioning in modern society. They are also critical for the comprehension and analysis of complex texts through a variety of media. Assessing foundational skills typically takes place in the early grades of primary education, usually by Grade 3. Since 2005, more than 60 developing countries have measured foundational reading skills of children in the early grades of primary schooling at least once using varying sample sizes (RTI International, 2013). Additionally, at the end of primary school, most countries use some measure of reading at the national or subnational level and/or participate in regionally or internationally comparable assessments of reading skills.

Since data are currently available for both school-based assessments of foundational reading and reading skills, the task force recommends the following actions:

- Develop guidelines for the characteristics of assessment to be used for tracking outcomes globally.
- Ensure that characteristics regarding the design of assessments are transparent and accessible.
- Convene a group of experts to review and set standards for measures of reading in order to develop guidelines.
- Explore the feasibility of linking across existing cross-national assessments, including those that are household-based.

Numeracy: **Measuring basic skills by the end of primary school and proficiency by lower secondary school.** Children and youth must be able to count and understand mathematical concepts, both to make informed choices in life and to pursue advanced learning in such disciplines as science, engineering, economics, research and technology. The focus on numeracy instruction shifts from an emphasis on factual knowledge, concepts and procedures in primary school to a more targeted focus in lower secondary school on the ability to reason in unfamiliar situations, to work with complex content and to resolve multi-step problems (IEA, 2011). While the task force recognizes that early mathematical knowledge is a primary predictor of later academic achievement and future success in mathematics is related to an early and strong conceptual foundation (Duncan et al., 2007), it focuses on tracking children in the later years of primary and lower secondary school to assess their knowledge of mathematics and their ability to apply that knowledge and reason to unfamiliar situations, complex content and multi-step problems (IEA, 2011).

Many countries use some school-based measure of numeracy and mathematics at the national or subnational level and/or participate in regionally or internationally comparable assessments. The task force recommends the following actions:

- Define the process for reporting on indicators of proficiency in numeracy and mathematics, developing guidelines for the characteristics of assessments to be used, and initiating the tracking of data across countries at the lower secondary level.
- Convene a group of experts to review and set standards for measures of numeracy and mathematics in order to define the process.

Ready to Learn: **Measuring acceptable levels of early learning and development across a subset of domains by the time a child enters primary school.** The early childhood years are critical to learning and development later in life. Entry to primary school is a key milestone in a child's learning trajectory, and measuring competencies across multiple domains at this point or in the years before entry to primary school can help drive improvements in early childhood education, health, family services, and other sectors serving young children. Given the complexity of child development, a holistic measure across several domains is the best way to capture learning at this stage. This typically includes aspects of learning related to five of the seven domains: physical well-being, social and emotional, literacy and communication, learning approaches and cognition, and numeracy and mathematics.

At present, several countries and regions measure children's learning at entry into primary school or in the years immediately preceding it. While there is no single measure that has been adopted by all countries, there are options for both country-level and global measurement. To reach global coverage with one measure, additional validation and scaling are needed. The task force highlights the need to focus measurement on the first year of primary school, particularly for countries where early childhood education programs are not available or take place in nonformal educational settings. The task force recommends the following actions:

- Link measurement with other sectors such as health and child protection to develop indicators on early childhood readiness.

- Review and identify a small set of population-based measures for early learning and development that can be used globally.

Citizen of the World: **Measuring among youth the demonstration of values and skills necessary for success in their communities, countries and the world.** Beyond reading and numeracy, there is a variety of skills and values across the learning domains that children and youth need to succeed as "citizens of the world". A measure of such skills and values could include environmental awareness, collaborative problem-solving, information and communications technology (ICT), digital skills, social responsibility and other subdomains.

Measurement of these skills is already emerging, with some components being measured on a small scale. However, a new measure or composite of measures would need to be developed to track progress at the global level. To do this, the task force recommends the following actions:

- Conduct a consultation involving youth and youth organizations along with experts and other important stakeholders to reach a consensus on what it means to be a citizen of the world, and how the values and skills embedded in the definition can be measured and tracked globally.
- Collaborate with other organizations that are already making progress in measuring and defining 21st century skills and global citizenship values.
- Consider the intended curriculum when defining these skills and values, linking development of measures to the process for *Breadth of Learning Opportunities (see below)*.

Breadth of Learning Opportunities: **Tracking exposure to learning opportunities across all seven domains of learning.** The task force supports the measurement of learning outcomes in all seven domains across the different stages of learning, recognizing that it may present significant technical challenges. Documenting the breadth of learning opportunities intended by an education system could supplement the more intensive direct measures of learning outcomes. This process could examine intended exposure to learning opportunities in the seven domains through an in-depth analysis of the national curriculum, the teacher training curriculum and related materials, instructional practices as well as the content of evaluations and assessments. The task force recommends that countries also examine how the seven domains of learning are reflected in actual classroom practice. Potentially, the documentation of intended learning in a critical mass of countries could lead to the development of a tool to track the breadth of learning opportunities across countries.

The task force recommends the development of tools to better assess the coverage of the seven learning domains. These tools would be used to assess how, when and to what extent children are exposed to these seven domains in the education system. The task force acknowledges that for this tracking to be feasible, the relevant instruments would need to be developed in stages and proposes the following actions:

- Undertake desk research to understand the extent to which all domains of learning are reflected in national curricula, teacher training and assessments.
- Develop a simple measure to track the breadth of learning opportunities at the global level.

- Develop a self-diagnostic toolkit which would allow countries to assess the specific domains and subdomains that are most relevant for their context.
- Collaborate with other organizations already working on mapping curricula by learning subdomains.

The development of this measure and the self-diagnostic toolkit will also inform and be informed by activities related to development of the *Citizen of the World* measures *(see above)*, especially in how countries approach the area of noncognitive skills.

Multiple Methods of Assessment

The task force agreed that rigorous assessment of learning may take multiple forms, including standardized assessments that are administered in one or more countries, internationally comparable assessments, national exams and assessments, and household-based surveys. Multiple methods should be considered when designing systems to assess learning opportunities and outcomes.

In countries where the majority of school-age children are in school and attending regularly, school-based assessments are the preferred way to capture learning data. In countries where enrollment or attendance are low, or a large proportion of children are served by nonformal education programs, household surveys can be useful to provide information on learning levels of all children and youth. Participation in internationally comparable assessments has resulted in significant policy shifts in some countries and no action by the government in others. National exams and assessments are seen as transparent tools for policymaking and parental choice in some countries, yet in others they are perceived as unfair and corrupt.

Instead of recommending a specific set of tools or methods, the task force recommends a country-driven process by which education ministries work with other key stakeholders (civil society, donors, private sector, academia) to examine the benefits and drawbacks of the available tools and secure the technical and financial resources to implement a robust, sustainable system of assessment based on national priorities.

Recommendation 4: Supporting Countries

Countries are supported in strengthening their assessment systems and, ultimately, in improving learning levels. The task force recommends that:

- Actors at country, regional and international levels play a role in moving forward and supporting country-owned and country-driven change.
- New forms of partnership are needed – including multi-stakeholder collaboration at the global level – to effectively support countries.
- Technical, institutional and political support should be provided to translate task force recommendations into action.

The task force has generated considerable momentum for measuring learning, which must be sustained and translated into action. Countries face a range of challenges in their political, cultural and educational systems that affect their ability to measure and improve learning. For example, some countries are emerging from conflict; others have vast gender and income inequalities; and still others (e.g. small island states) have education systems so small that the technical and financial resources needed for engaging in large-scale assessment of learning are often not available within the country.

While the actions needed to improve measurement and learning depend on the contextual factors in each country, all countries are struggling with measurement in some way. There is a demand from national governments and nongovernmental stakeholders to improve learning outcomes, in part by minimizing the gap between what is currently being assessed and the country's vision of what children and youth should learn. The task force concurs that a process is needed to support countries in diagnosing the quality of their assessment systems, convening stakeholders, and assessing the necessary technical and financial resources required to improve learning measurement and outcomes.

Sustaining this momentum requires the skills and support of a broad range of stakeholders in three areas: technical, institutional and political. At the national level, stakeholders include teachers and civil society in addition to the education ministry and other government officials. At the regional level, this includes regional economic and education bodies. At the international level, stakeholders from the private sector, foundations, UN agencies, civil society, teachers' organizations, research institutions and other institutions with a global mandate must work together to carry these recommendations forward.

Technical Expertise

As detailed previously, a significant amount of developmental work involving multiple actors is required before the necessary tools are available for countries to start tracking progress in all areas. Several key efforts must be made at the global level, including:

- **Move forward on agreed-upon indicators:** The task force recognizes that significant improvements in assessment capacity would be needed in many countries before all proposed indicators could be measured. In addition, there is a universal need to support countries in the technical aspects of implementing assessments, particularly their design, administration and data analysis. Countries also need to have the right data to inform policymaking, which includes information on child, teacher and learning environment characteristics, in addition to learning outcomes.
- **Develop new measures with consultative input:** As the knowledge base for existing and emerging efforts expands, task force members and partners are in a position to coordinate and keep actors accountable in the areas they have agreed to lead. The process will continue to be inclusive and transparent to enhance the usability of instruments and indicators as they are developed and refined.
- **Set up quality assurance mechanisms to evaluate tools:** The measures and data collection procedures used by countries must meet agreed-upon standards for reliability and validity. A quality assurance process can help ensure the quality of data produced by countries.

In order to advance the measurement agenda, countries and partners must work together on methodological development, sharing lessons learned and implementing new global measures. At the same time, national and regional experts on assessment should consider how best to adapt measures to national contexts.

Institutional Capacity

In parallel to the technical work, stakeholders involved in measuring learning must develop strong institutional capacity to implement task force recommendations. At the national level, the task force vision for implementing its recommendations requires a long-term strategy and continuous adaptation of the approach in order to learn from countries and best meet existing needs. The immediate next steps will vary by country, but the task force identified the following ways forward:

- **Countries drive change:** The process should be country-owned and country-driven, beginning with an assessment of the current learning measurement system and including a "menu" of options for national-level support.
- **Build on existing efforts:** Implementation should be carried out in collaboration with existing efforts by national, regional and international organizations. In particular, regional collaborations should be leveraged to facilitate shared learning across the region and ensure that recommendations are implemented in a culturally relevant way.
- **Proceed through inclusive dialogue, including through national communities of practice on assessment:** These communities of practice should include teachers' organizations, civil society organizations, academia and private sector stakeholders in addition to national education ministry participants.
- **Demonstrate commitment:** Interested countries should demonstrate commitment through political support and cost-sharing.

Political Will

In order to develop and sustain efforts to measure learning, there must be political will to invest in learning measurement and translate the data into action. Political support for assessment is important at all levels, from that of school district to the global development agenda. Several actions are needed to garner political support for measurement:

- **Encourage political support at the national level:** There is a clear need to promote a culture of learning assessment among politicians and decisionmakers. Assessment data can have significant political influence within countries and beyond. In the case of international assessments, high scores in reading or math skills among fourth graders, for example, may not only be a source of pride for a government but can also be presented as "official" confirmation of its success in education policymaking. On the other hand, poor scores on a national assessment can be a political landmine and lead to governments refusing to release test results. National actors, with the support of the global community, must pressure policymakers to invest in learning assessment and ensure transparency in reporting the results.

- **Promote focus on learning at the global level:** Ensure that the measurement and improvement of learning outcomes play a key role in wider education dialogues, such as GEFI or the GPE and any new movements arising after 2015. In short, these diverse efforts will convey a key message: to improve learning we must be able to measure and monitor its outcomes.
- **Engage civil society in a grassroots movement to measure and improve learning:** Through the global consultation process, the task force encountered tremendous interest in measuring learning among nongovernmental stakeholders. Numerous citizen-led movements are working to collect data on learning and hold governments accountable for providing quality education to all citizens. This momentum can be leveraged to ignite a global movement for learning.
- **Garner financial resources:** Given the significant costs associated with learning assessments, there is a strong need to advocate for sustained funding while strengthening relations between governments, donors and implementing partners. Governments must see assessment as an important part of their central education services and funders and investors must do more to support countries that are struggling to finance the necessary reforms to implement task force recommendations.

Multi-stakeholder Collaboration

The task force proposes a multi-stakeholder partnership that would ensure better collaboration among existing agencies, fill essential gaps in support to countries, and help sustain a broad coalition of education and development stakeholders that share a common vision of learning for all. The task force was clear that this does *not* mean creating a new independent organization; rather, this global collaboration should work with and build upon existing efforts, notably by leveraging regional initiatives.

The partnership should include a diverse membership – from national governments, teacher organizations, civil society organizations, bilateral and multilateral and other development partners, to the private sector, philanthropic foundations and research and academic institutions. These organizations can provide the necessary inputs to drive action, generate resources and build consensus based on a shared recognition of the importance of learning.

Through its members and secretariat, the multi-stakeholder collaboration can first and foremost advocate for the importance of learning and measurement of learning outcomes, and influence policy through its convening power and shared strategic vision. As previously explained, these actions would be carried out by existing agencies, including regional organizations and regional/country offices of multilateral organizations that are currently providing these inputs and services.

Key functions of this partnership would include:

- **Develop tools for self-diagnosis:** Based on existing approaches, develop tools for countries to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of their own assessment systems. For example, the partnership can develop and disseminate guidance notes for countries on steps to improve their learning assessment systems.

- **Support communities of practice:** Support existing communities of practice to better address assessment or support new communities of practice to provide further dialogue and action on assessment. This support would largely be for country or regional initiatives through the leveraging of political and technical networks at the regional or international level.
- **Global clearinghouse for measurement resources:** To sustain the knowledge learned from other successful experiences, the task force recommends a global clearinghouse that would: collect and make accessible research and tools on learning measurement while building on existing global efforts; facilitate cross-country sharing by guiding countries to proven examples of effective practice at the country or regional level; and maintain a global inventory of measurement expertise and link countries to technical experts in the field, either by connecting them directly with championing countries or through specialized agencies or technical experts.

The multi-stakeholder partnership can take several forms. The task force recommends as a next step exploring possible options for linking this partnership with existing international entities (e.g. GPE and GMR) or remaining independent for a short-term stage. While establishing this partnership may be a long-term goal, the task force argues that the areas described above require immediate focus and encourages stakeholders to start taking action towards strengthening their assessment systems.

Recommendation 5: Equity

Measurement of learning must include a focus on equity. The task force recommends that:

- Actors at country, regional and international levels concentrate measurement efforts on identifying disparities within countries rather than comparisons across countries.
- Countries gather data on characteristics of out-of-school children and youth and develop a strategy for reaching them.

All children and youth should have an equal opportunity to learn the skills and acquire the knowledge required to succeed in school and life, regardless of the country in which they were born, the community in which they grow up, their gender, their family's income level and/or their physical or mental health status. One of the themes that emerged from global conversations concerning education as part of the post-2015 agenda is the need to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, differences in learning opportunities associated with ethnicity, sex, geography, disability, race or socioeconomic status. The SG HLPEP report, for example, asserts at the outset that the transformative shift of leaving no person behind is central to its vision; addressing inequality transcends all goals.

The task force echoes this call by asserting that a focus on learning must include a concomitant focus on equity, with particular attention to rising inequalities within countries. It recommends that learning data be collected and reported to describe progress over time and across population groups, rather than only by average achievement levels in a country. While aggregate reports on learning outcomes at the country level can be useful for international comparisons, more nuanced information is also needed to improve learning outcomes for the most marginalized children and youth. Because education is a universal aspiration and a right, measures of access

and learning at any level (global, national or subnational) should reveal information about aggregate measures of overall conditions (e.g. enrollment, achievement), as well as disparities between student subpopulations.

Out-of-school children and youth must also be considered in determining which equity dimensions a country should measure. It is important to understand the characteristics of these children and what factors led to their leaving (or never entering) school. A large proportion of out-of-school children and youth live in poverty, conflict areas and/or disaster contexts and other hard-to-reach areas. These children face daily challenges that require them to use a higher order of thinking skills to solve problems, make critical decisions, learn persistence and think creatively – skills that are essential for their survival. They must also develop leadership skills, awareness of their environment and the dangers that surround them, as well as knowledge of local culture and customs. As learning takes place both inside and outside formal school settings, household-based assessments with sound sampling and testing procedures would ensure that the learning levels of out-of-school children are measured and taken into account.

Each country or region should prioritize the groups between which it seeks to reduce disparities. Measuring and tracking progress over time will allow for global recognition of countries that are successful in improving levels of learning and reducing disparities between subpopulations. To ensure that interventions reach the most marginalized children and youth, countries must also collect data on sociodemographic dimensions, such as sex, age, urban or rural residence, socioeconomic status, mother tongue, ethnicity, citizenship status, disabilities and emergency situations. These data should be analyzed with information about inputs, such as class size, teacher qualifications, school facilities, availability of learning materials, and other contextual factors. Each country has the responsibility to identify which dimensions are particularly relevant in their own context and to design measurements and interventions that take these variables into account.

Recommendation 6: Assessment as a Public Good

Assessment of globally tracked indicators must be a public good. The task force recommends that:

- Assessment institutions make tools, documentation and data freely available.
- Donors and the private sector help eliminate cost barriers to assessment in low- and middle-income countries, especially for the indicators to be tracked at the global level.

Any recommended products or services used for tracking at the global level should be considered public goods, with tools, documentation and data made freely available. While certain assessment items cannot be in the public domain because doing so would invalidate the test, the education community, and donors in particular, must ensure that no country is precluded from measuring learning due to the costs associated with purchasing and administering tests.

There was considerable debate among task force and working group members about how data are produced, managed and used. While education statistics systems and national and international data are public goods (i.e. funded with public resources to serve a public purpose), this is not always the case for learning assessments. The task force decided that it could not recommend a global measure for learning that would require countries to buy into a specific brand of assessment. For assessment data to be made a public good, these basic elements must be taken into account:

- Full documentation of studies that are funded with public resources should be publicly available. Documentation should include data sets, instruments and procedures used to generate the data.
- Informed and explicit consent by participants in the studies should be properly guaranteed.
- The body responsible for conducting the studies must have the independence to make technical decisions on what is publishable and what is not.
- Collaboration among different agencies should be promoted as a way of ensuring that a diversity of interests, perspectives and needs is embedded in the development of the studies from the outset.
- Collaboration among public and private assessment agents can take different forms, ranging from the co-development of a given study to agreement on technical procedures that would make one study comparable to another.

Recommendation 7: Taking Action

Stakeholders must take action to ensure the right to learn for all children and youth.

Through this 18-month effort to build a common vision for learning and associated metrics, the education sector has demonstrated a strong capacity for collaboration and collective action. The task force has generated considerable momentum for measuring learning, and task force recommendations have gained recognition and support from youth, parents, teachers, civil society, business, governments and the international community. Participants now call for the education community to sustain the momentum and offer a series of next steps to help carry task force recommendations forward into action.

The task force acknowledges that it has completed its work as originally set out; however, it also recognizes the high demand from stakeholders to take advantage of the momentum and interest gained thus far. In response, the task force has agreed to make the transition into a new stage of work, with a focus on implementing the recommendations outlined in this report. The task force will meet again in November 2013 to discuss next steps, including inviting new members and refining structures to move the recommendations forward.

Conclusion: A Call to Action

Education and learning are the responsibility of a wide range of actors, and robust measurement ensures that these actors uphold the right to learn for all children and youth. The task force offers the following next steps to carry these recommendations forward into action.

All stakeholders working in the field of education, including teachers, school leaders, local education authorities, education ministries and donors, should define and measure learning broadly, across multiple domains and educational stages. All education actors can begin to prepare for global tracking of learning outcomes by reviewing and building on their current evaluation efforts. Everyone interested in improving learning outcomes must advocate for accessible, transparent systems for measuring learning.

National governments should ensure that priorities in measurement are matched with the appropriate financing and allocate more resources to the measurement of learning outcomes and to tracking students' progress. Education and finance ministries should work together to raise and allot more funds for measurement. Governments should share experiences in measurement of learning at all stages, from assessment design to reporting, which can lead to more effective practices. Within countries, communities of practice should be developed or strengthened to bring together government and nongovernmental stakeholders to define priorities for assessment. Governments must pay particular attention to reaching the most marginalized children and youth by understanding who they are, where they live and what their needs are.

Civil society groups should advocate for robust assessment systems that demonstrate the transformative power of reliable data on learning outcomes. Advocacy efforts should be targeted not only at national governments but also at parents, caregivers and communities so that they can take action to ensure children are learning and hold leaders to account.

Regional organizations should identify good practices within countries and facilitate shared learning across countries. They should also use their political influence to advocate for better measurement of learning and create regional communities of practice to share technical and financial resources.

Multilateral agencies, especially those participating in the EFA movement (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank), should ensure that programming reflects a commitment to the measurement of learning outcomes as a step towards improving overall outcomes for all children, beyond literacy and numeracy. Efforts to track learning by international agencies must include a focus on equity, including an analysis of learning levels for various population groups (e.g. girls and boys, urban and rural children, and children living above and below the poverty line).

Donors should endorse a broad definition of learning across the seven domains, and finance the collection, analysis and dissemination of data at the country level. Monitoring and evaluation efforts should be aligned with country priorities, carried out in collaboration with national governments, and funded as an integral part of education programming.

Assessment institutions and universities should share technical expertise and work collaboratively with a diverse group of education stakeholders to develop the necessary new tools for assessing learning. They can also help governments choose from among the available measures and methods with the help of measurement experts who are not associated with any specific assessment tool or product.

Testing companies, publishers, and other private sector entities should donate employee time and financial resources to help develop innovative assessment tools, new technologies to make data collection more individualized and efficient, open source measures as public goods, and new ways of efficiently collecting and analyzing assessment data that are feasible in low-resource environments. They can also champion task force recommendations in their global and national advocacy for improved education systems and better learning outcomes.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2015 AND BEYOND

As 2015 approaches, the education community continues to demonstrate its capacity for powerful and collective action to make education one of the top priorities on the global development agenda. The upcoming agenda must focus on access to education *plus* learning, or it will fail to achieve EFA Goal 6 and GEFI Priority 2 to ensure every child's right to quality education. With a commitment to reducing inequalities among social groups, the education community aspires to an agenda that centers around quality education and equity from early childhood through to adolescence.

With these recommendations, the task force has set an ambitious global agenda for the use of assessments to improve learning opportunities for all children and youth. Clear and precise measurement can be used to inform policy geared at improving low learning levels.

The lessons learned from the work of the task force will be invaluable to post-2015 decisionmakers 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 under way, education and development 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.

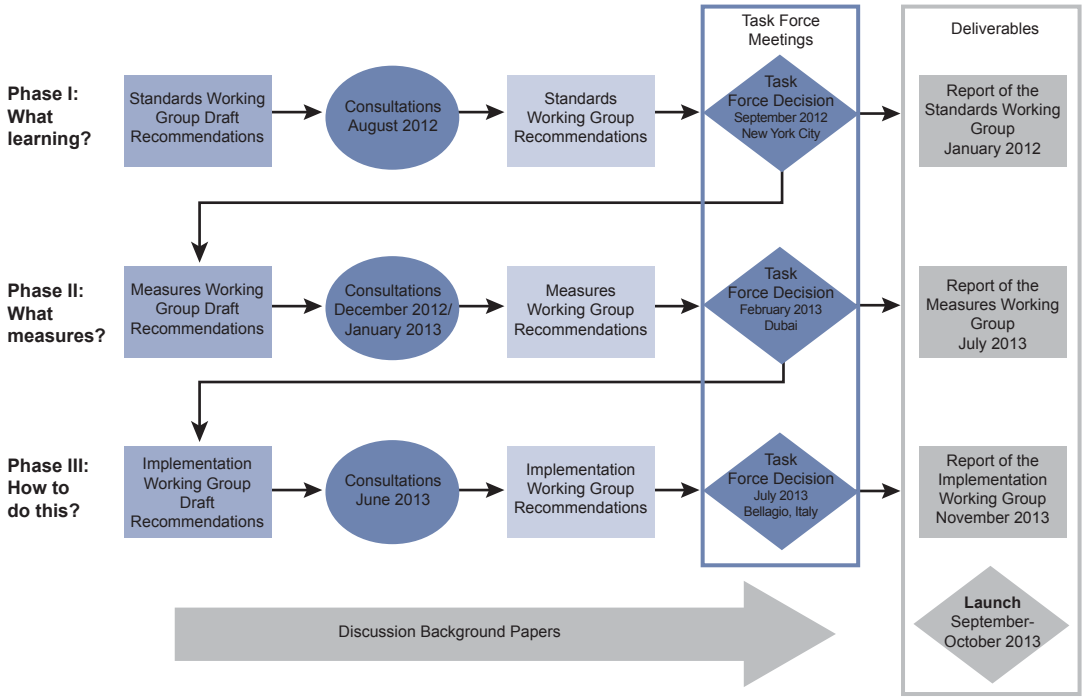
Annex A. The LMTF Process

As illustrated in **Figure 7**, each phase followed a similar structure. Members were recruited to join one of three working groups through an open application process, and three chairs were selected to lead each of the groups.

During each phase of the project, each technical working group released its preliminary proposals for consultation. Consultations were conducted both virtually and in person and included stakeholders from all over the world and across a diversity of fields. The consultation materials were released in multiple languages.

At the end of each consultation phase, the working group and secretariat analyzed and presented the findings to the task force in three meetings with the goal of putting forward a set of recommendations for each phase. The decision rationale and task force recommendations are outlined in three individual reports; the first two reports have been released and the third is scheduled for release in November 2013 (LMTF, 2013a, LMTF, 2013b).

Figure 7: The LMTF Process



Annex B. Global Framework of Learning Domains and Subdomains

Domain	Early Childhood Level	Primary Level	Postprimary Level
Physical well-being	• Physical health and nutrition • Health knowledge and practice • Safety knowledge and practice • Gross, fine and perceptual motor	• Physical health and hygiene • Food and nutrition • Physical activity • Sexual health	• Health and hygiene • Sexual and reproductive health • Illness and disease prevention
Social & emotional	• Self-regulation • Self-concept and self-efficacy • Empathy • Emotional awareness (knowledge, expression, and regulation) • Social relationships and behaviors • Conflict resolution • Moral values	• Social and community values • Civic values • Mental health	• Social awareness • Leadership • Civil engagement • Positive view of self and others • Resilience/"grit" • Moral and ethical values
Culture & the arts	• Creative arts • Self- and community-identity • Awareness of and respect for diversity	• Creative arts • Social studies • Cultural knowledge	• Creative arts • Social studies and history • Social sciences
Literacy & communication	• Receptive language • Expressive language • Vocabulary • Print awareness	• Oral fluency • Oral comprehension • Reading fluency • Reading comprehension • Receptive vocabulary • Expressive vocabulary • Written expression/ composition	• Speaking and listening • Writing • Reading
Learning approaches & cognition	• Curiosity and engagement • Persistence and attention • Autonomy and initiative • Cooperation • Creativity • Reasoning and problem solving • Early critical thinking skills • Symbolic representation	• Persistence and attention • Cooperation • Autonomy • Knowledge • Comprehension • Application • Critical thinking	• Collaboration • Self-direction • Learning orientation • Persistence • Problem-solving • Critical decisionmaking • Flexibility • Creativity
Numeracy & mathematics	• Number sense and operations • Spatial sense and geometry • Patterns and classification • Measurement and comparison	• Number concepts and operations • Geometry and patterns • Mathematics application	• Number • Algebra • Geometry • Everyday calculations • Personal finance • Informed consumer • Data and statistics
Science & technology	• Inquiry skills • Awareness of the natural and physical world • Technology awareness	• Scientific inquiry • Life science • Physical science • Earth science • Awareness and use of digital technology	• Biology • Chemistry • Earth science • Scientific approaches • Environmental awareness • Digital technology

Annex C. Working Group Members

Working group members were selected based on their individual merit and technical expertise within the scope of each working group. The working groups were comprised of technical experts, academics and practitioners around the world, and worked collaboratively to investigate existing policies related to measuring learning and to review the relevant research.

Table 3: Individuals Who Contributed to the Working Groups

Name	Organization
Aanchal Chomal	Azim Premij Foundation
Abbaszade Maleyka Mekhti Kyzy	The State Students Admission Commission
Abbie Raikes	UNESCO, France
Abdullah Ferdous	American Institutes for Research (AIR)
Adarsh Sharma	Consultant; Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) (former)
Aglaia Zafeirakou	Global Partnership for Education
Ajay Batra	Azim Premji Foundation and Azim Premji Institute for Assessment and Accreditation
Alberto Begue	Plan International
Alejandro Gomez Palma	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Alfonso Sintjago	University of Minnesota
Aliev Natig Latif Ogly	The State Students Admission Commission
Amanda Gardiner	Pearson
Amanda Moll	CARE USA
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Amrita Sengupta	UNICEF, India
Amy Jo Dowd	Save the Children
Anastasia Maksimova	Center for International Cooperation in Education Development (CICED)
Anjlee Prakash	Learning Links Foundation
Anjuli Shivshanker	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Ann Munene	World Vision International
Anna Eremenko	The Centre of Independent Evaluation of the Quality of Education
Anna Hakobyan	Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)
Antoine Marivin	Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC CONFEMEN)
Audrie-Marie Moore	FHI 360
Awadia Ali Elngoumi	Sudanese Ministry of Education
Baela Raza Jamil	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)
Baluyeva Yelena Borisovna	Center for Education Quality Assessment and Control
Barbara Garner Koech	World Vision International
Benjamin A. Ogwo	University of Nigeria; State University of New York, Oswego
Benjamin Piper	RTI International
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Boban Varghese Pual	Pratham
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Camilla Addey	University of East Anglia
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Marguerite Khakasa Miheso O’Connor	Kenyatta University
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Poor quality education is jeopardizing the future of millions of children and youth around the world. Yet 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. Moreover, this global data gap on learning poses a direct threat to the transformative power of education by making it impossible to address the most urgent areas of need through evidence-based policymaking.

To bridge this gap, the Learning Metrics Task Force brings together a wide range of education stakeholders to catalyze a shift in global education policy and investment from universal access to access *plus* learning by building consensus on three key questions: What learning is important for all children and youth? How should learning outcomes be measured? How can measurement of learning be implemented to improve education quality?

This report presents the task force's recommendations on how the measurement of learning outcomes can help to ensure quality education for all. In particular, the report presents key areas for indicators that could be used for global tracking. The recommendations are the result of extensive consultations with technical working groups and more than 1,700 individuals in 118 countries.

As the post-2015 discussions on education focus on setting new global goals, this report serves as a roadmap to leverage assessments in improving learning opportunities and outcomes for all children. Assessments alone will not improve the quality of student learning outcomes, but reliable data on learning will enable policymakers and educators to put in place the policies needed to deliver on the promise of education.

For more information on the Learning Metrics Task Force, please visit **www.brookings.edu/learningmetrics**.

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