

**Toward Universal Learning**  
 A Global Framework for Measuring Learning  
 (Report No. 2 of 3  
 Learning Metrics Task Force)

*UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution,  
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**Introduction:**

*Toward Universal Learning: A Global Framework for Measuring Learning* is the second in a series of three reports from the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Center for Universal Education at Brookings have joined efforts to convene the Learning Metrics Task Force. The overarching objective of the project is to catalyze a shift in the global conversation on education from a focus on access to access *plus* learning. Based on recommendations of technical working groups and input from broad global consultations, the task force aims to make recommendations to help countries and international organizations measure and improve learning outcomes for children and youth worldwide.

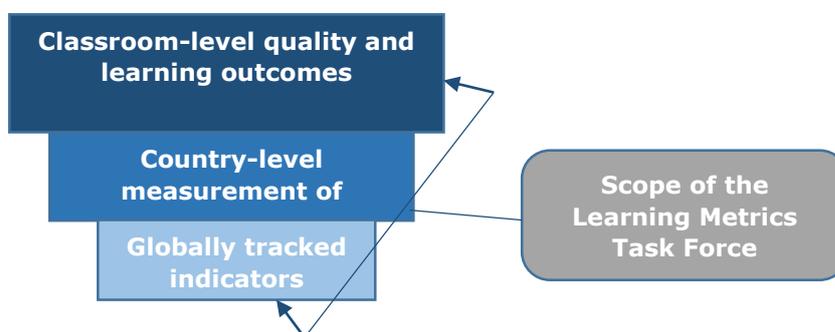
**Building Consensus on Measurement at the Global Level:**

Measurement can play a crucial role in improving education quality and learning. Effective teachers measure learning in the classroom to adjust and individualize instruction. Good head teachers, school administrators and school district leaders measure learning at the school and community levels to target resources and improve school quality. National 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.

*Large-scale measurement of learning can be used to:*

- *Identify and determine the magnitude of potential problems;*
- *Track progress;*
- *Inform interventions; and*
- *Inform parents and the community in general about the status of education and thereby inform public debates.*

Different approaches to measurement are useful for different purposes. For measurement to be effective, it must be fit for the purpose. Large-scale measurement should not be implemented for its own sake, but rather to make an impact on policy that ultimately leads to improvements in learning.

**Relationship between Classroom, School, Country, and Global-Level Measurement of Learning**

**A Global Framework for Measuring Learning**

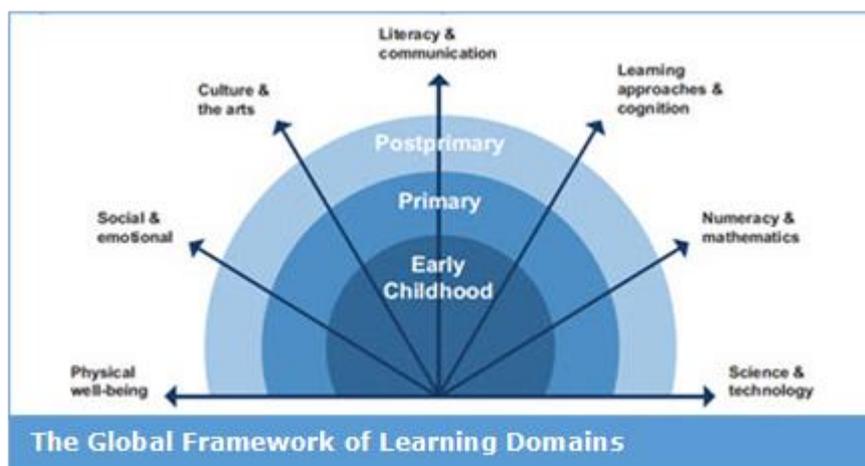
- Access to and completion of learning opportunities.
- Exposure to a breadth of learning opportunities across all seven learning domains.
- Early childhood experiences that promote development and learning in multiple domains.
- The ability to read a variety of texts.
- The ability to use numbers and apply this knowledge to real-life situations.

## Highlight

- An adaptable, flexible skill set to meet the demands of the 21st century

### Supporting National Capacity and Decision making

The task force recognizes that a system of global measurement will only be effective in improving learning outcomes if there is a strong commitment to improving national and classroom-level assessment. The Measures and Methods Working Group proposed the establishment of a global mechanism—such as an international multi-stakeholder advisory group.



**Country-Level Communities of Practice:** To drive country-level reform, the Measures and Methods Working Group proposed the establishment or expansion of existing communities of practice (CoP) as a mechanism to mobilize stakeholders to improve national assessment systems. An inclusive country-level CoP would include education ministry officials, national assessment experts, civil society groups, and organizations representing teachers, parents, students and other key stakeholders. Its role would be to review teaching and learning in the seven learning domains, propose national priorities for learning, examine the effectiveness of current measures and recommend others if needed.

**Support from the International Community:** To support country-level CoPs and track progress at the global level, the working group proposed a multi-stakeholder advisory group that would connect countries with resources and technical assistance to help. A possible function of such a group would be to coordinate with regional educational organizations decide which domains to measure, how to measure them and how to implement assessments.

### Using Data to Improve Learning Equity

All children and youth should have equal opportunity to learn the skills and 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.

### Beyond School-Based Metrics

Despite significant progress in recent decades, universal access to primary schooling is not yet a reality. A large proportion of out-of-school children and youth live in poverty, conflict and/or disaster contexts and other hard-to-reach areas. As learning takes place both inside and outside formal school settings, household-based assessments with sound sampling and testing procedures would ensure that learning levels of out-of-school children are measured and taken into account.

### Considering Multiple Methods

Regardless of which methods are used, measurement should be conducted in a technically sound, robust manner. Weak data can be misleading and result in the misalignment of policies and resources. The task force decided that it could not recommend a global goal for learning that would require countries to buy into a specific brand of assessment.

## Highlight

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### Education and the Global Development Agenda

The objectives of the LMTF include ensuring that learning is included in the post-2015 development framework and proposing indicators that can be used to track progress toward the global goals to be identified through the post-2015 process.

### Conclusion and Next Steps

Measuring learning outcomes is a crucial step in ensuring that every child, everywhere, is able to realize their right to good-quality education and become a productive global citizen. Education is everyone's responsibility, not solely that of the government. Therefore, the measurement of learning outcomes must be led and supported by everyone who has a stake in ensuring that all children learn in addition to government, including students, teachers, parents, civil society, the private sector and a variety of other actors.

In some cases, this begins with a shift in the national dialogue on education from access to access *plus* learning. In other cases, where learning outcomes are already being measured and discussed in the public forum, the national dialogue may shift to focus on learning outcomes that are relevant for a globalized economy. Regardless of the "culture of evaluation" in a given country, there are steps that the education stakeholders can take to improve the measurement of learning outcomes and ultimately to improve learning levels.

**Read the full report at the official website:** <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/towards-universal-learning-a-global-framework-for-measuring-learning-metrics-task-force-education-2013-en.pdf>

*This is a joint publication of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution.*

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