

## Highlights

# **Toward Universal Learning Implementing Assessment to Improve Learning (Report No. 3 of 3 Learning Metrics Task Force)**

***UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Center for Universal Education at  
the Brookings Institution,  
June 2014.***

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

*LMTF (Learning Metrics Task Force) (2014). Toward Universal Learning: Implementing Assessment to Improve Learning. Report No. 3 of the Learning Metrics Task Force. Montreal and Washington, D. C.: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution..*

Link: [http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/toward-universal-learning-implementing-assessment-to-improve-learning-2014-en\\_0.pdf](http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/toward-universal-learning-implementing-assessment-to-improve-learning-2014-en_0.pdf)

*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. The third report addresses how the measurement of learning can be implemented to improve education quality. .*

## **The Global Education Challenge:**

According to estimates in the 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2012):

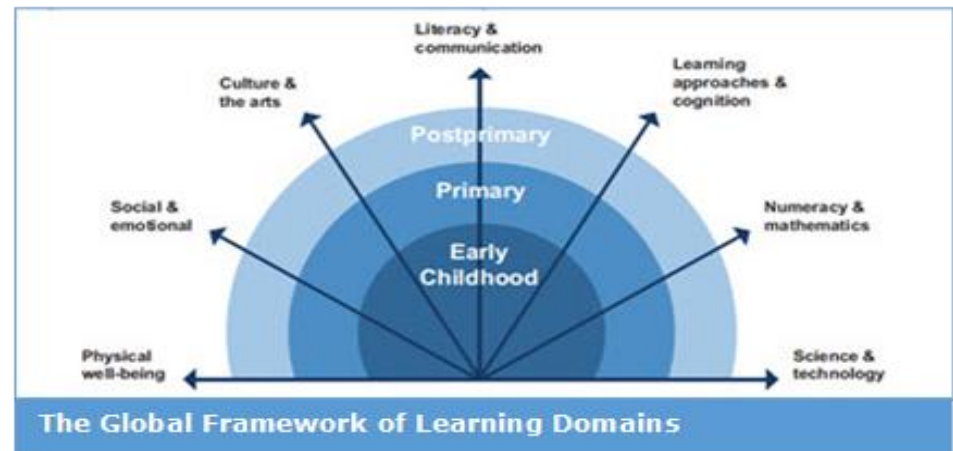
- Approximately 120 million children either never make it to school or drop out before their fourth year.
- At least 250 million primary school-age children around the world are not able to read, write or count well enough to meet minimum learning standards, including girls and boys who have spent at 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.

## **Recommendations Toward Universal Learning**

*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.*

Recommendation 2: Learning Competencies: All children and youth develop competencies across seven domains of learning: The Global Framework of Learning Domains

Recommendation 3: Learning Indicators for Global Tracking: The task force recommends a small set of learning indicators to be tracked globally (meaning in all countries).



### Supporting Countries

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Technical</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move forward on agreed-upon learning measures for global tracking.</li> <li>• Develop new learning measures for tracking within and across countries through an inclusive and consultative process.</li> <li>• Set up quality assurance mechanisms to evaluate tools.</li> </ul>                            |
| <b>Institutional</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop tools for self-diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses of current assessment systems.</li> <li>• Support communities of practice.</li> <li>• Promote sharing of expertise, lessons learned and examples of effective practices.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Political</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote a culture of measurement and effective use of assessment data.</li> <li>• Promote a shift in focus from access to access plus learning.</li> <li>• Engage civil society in a grassroots movement to measure and improve learning.</li> <li>• Mobilize financial resources for this work.</li> </ul> |

### Learning Indicators for Global Tracking

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

*Recommendation 4: Supporting countries: 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.*

*Recommendation 5: Equity: Measurement of learning must include an explicit focus on equity, with particular attention to inequalities within countries.*

*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.*

*Recommendation 7: Taking Action: Stakeholders must take action to ensure the right to learn for all children and youth.*

## **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.

## **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. 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).

## Conclusion: 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, across multiple domains and educational stages.*
- *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.*
- *Civil society groups should advocate for robust assessment systems that demonstrate the transformative power of reliable data on learning outcomes.*
- *Regional organizations should identify good practices within countries and facilitate shared learning across countries.*
- *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. 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*
- *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.*

**Read the full report at the official website:**

[http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/toward-universal-learning-implementing-assessment-to-improve-learning-2014-en\\_0.pdf](http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/toward-universal-learning-implementing-assessment-to-improve-learning-2014-en_0.pdf)