UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Observatory of Learning Outcomes (OLO)
Purpose and Implementation Strategy
Presentation overview

- What is the catalogue of student assessments?
- Why is it important?
- Sample research/policy questions
- Expected products
- Implementation strategy
What is a catalogue of student assessments?

The Observatory of Learning Outcomes (OLO) aims to systematically build a knowledge-base of information about large-scale student assessments of learning outcomes that are conducted at the national, regional and global levels. It will compile and categorize national portfolios of assessments including standardized information on assessment design, process and basic results in key subject areas.
What is a catalogue of student assessments?

- A summary of the characteristics of student assessments administered in a given country, targeting a specific population among students (and their schools and family environments), which results are used for specific purposes such as certification, policy reform in education, selection for higher level education programme, holding schools/teachers accountable or providing support, etc.

- This survey differs from traditional data collection surveys because it is not intended to collect data directly from the population of interest (students and related stakeholders).
  
  ➔ The units of interest are more assessment process oriented. For this reason, traditional statistics or indicators are not among the priority data a catalogue template is supposed to collect, but descriptive metadata related to the assessment process (or data about data).

- For the purpose of the UIS survey, the target is national and international assessments, and public examinations administered to students in primary schools and in secondary schools (general and vocational). School-based assessments are excluded.
Three types of student assessments targeted:

- **International assessment**, in which a number of countries follow similar procedures to obtain information about student learning. Current international assessments are sample-based.

- **National assessment**, defined as “a tool for providing feedback on a limited number of outcome measures that are considered important by policy makers, politicians, and the broader educational community” (Greaney & Kellaghan, 2008). In general, sample based, but also census-based! Are low stake for students but not always for teachers and schools.

- **Public examinations** are census-based (generally cover all students in a given grade or populations that verify specific requirements), are of high stake for candidates and sometimes for teachers in private schools where reputation is generally built on results from these exams. They intend to certify and select high performing students.
Why is the Catalogue important?

For the national and international community, this catalogue:

- Provides parameters for potential capacity building by identifying gaps and needs in countries with low technical capacities for conducting large scale national assessments based on international standards.

- Stimulates reform of curriculum and instruction, and the education system in general.

- Generates baseline information for the development of international student assessment studies to track student competencies, and evaluate effects of educational policies at the regional basis.

- Monitor how penetration of information and communication technologies change the assessment processes across the world.
Why is the Catalogue important (end.)?

- Helps understand disparities between males and females in the job market places and in higher education fields of studies

- Generates baseline data to explore alignment of the education systems across countries, and for linking and equating purposes

- Provides elements that can explain student performances in current international and regional assessments

- Monitor the shift from knowledge-based to competency-based assessment as an indication of effective move from teacher centered to student centered educational paradigms

- Facilitate the decision of UNESCO Member States considering whether or not to participate in particular international/regional assessment, based on their characteristics described in this catalogue (appropriateness of the assessment frameworks for the country, required technical skills, etc).
Two products:

✓ **Online catalogue**
  Survey cataloguing tools NESTAR and NADA will be explored with the aim to get the full dataset published online.

✓ **Countries reports**
  In the future, based on data and related documentations, specific studies will be conducted with the aim of producing analytical reports that provide detailed answers to the research questions to motivate this catalogue study, in collaboration with national and international counterparts.
Sample of research questions

- What educational programmes (ISCED levels and grades) do countries conduct large scale national and international assessments or public examinations?
- Why do countries conduct large scale student assessments?
- What subjects and content domains are been assessed across countries?
- How are males and females of a given country performing across assessments and subjects, and how do they compare each other? Are there predictable paths in relation to observed gender disparities (to predict presence in specific jobs or fields of studies at university)?
- Are national assessments aligned to existing national, state/provincial or territorial curricula?
- What countries can learn from each other and how data can be used to improve the education systems?
- Are 21st century skills targeted in current assessments?
- Are test instruments oriented to knowledge or skills assessments?
- How important are school/state/provincial/territorial based assessments in high-stake national assessments and public examinations?
- How are data disseminated?
Sources for the content of the current draft template of the catalogue

The OLO data collection instrument, or the Catalogue template, was built on:

1. the pilot survey lessons (pilot done in 2010-2011 in 24 countries),
2. international survey templates (ITU, SABER-WB),
3. technical reports from international surveys (PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS, PIACC, etc.)
4. and other sources.
Structure of the template

- Contact information
- List of targeted assessments: National, international and public examinations
- Scope, purpose and funding
- Test design
- Coverage and sampling
- Data processing
- Data dissemination
Implementation strategy

In order to maximize the quality of inputs, the data collection will be organized by type of assessment:

- Information from international/regional assessments will be collected in 2014 (LLECE, PASEC, SACMEQ, PIRLS, PISA, and TIMSS) by working directly with the institutions responsible for coordinating these assessments.

- At the country-level, data collectors will focus on:
  - other large-scale national assessments
  - public examinations
Next steps – 2014 activities

- Identify a focal point at the country level to support with data collection for national assessments and public examinations (not necessarily one entity)

- Conduct a hand-on training workshop for countries to initiate the data collection – planned for July 2014

- Data collection is expected to run from August – December 2014 for countries in Asia and the Pacific
  - 1st group of countries to complete the catalogue template: GPE countries and countries that have already participated in the pilot survey, 12 countries: Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, PNG, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.
Thank you!