Capacity Development Workshop – Introduction to Large-Scale Assessments of Learning

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Overview of learning assessments – Part 2
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Reflections

♦ What are the different steps/phases in conducting a large-scale learning assessment (e.g. planning including assessment and sample design, data collection, data analysis, reporting and dissemination)?

♦ What are the policy and institutional dimensions/factors regarding large-scale learning assessment?

♦ Who are the different stakeholders involved in conducting a large-scale learning assessment?
Policy Cycle

Policy Reform and Agenda for Action
Consultation and Debate
Policy Suggestions
Interpretation and Reporting
Data Collection and Analysis
Specific Research Questions
General Policy Concerns
Programme Implementation

Source: Saito (1999)
Identify general policy concerns

- Series of consultations /interviews with senior policy makers (Minister, Permanent Secretary, regional directors, senior planners, etc.)
- Ranking of policy concerns ➔ list of priorities
Develop specific research questions

♦ Translate general concerns into a set of specific research questions.
♦ Provide clear guidance concerning:
  – What indicators
  – Which units of analysis
  – What target population
  – What reference points
Collect and analyze data

- **Data collection**
  - Population and sample
  - Construct instruments
  - Training of data collectors
  - Manuals for data collection
  - Inform schools

- **Data preparation**
  - Data structure
  - Data entry
  - Data cleaning

- **Data analyses**
  - Data tables with statistics
Interpretation and reporting of the research results

- Drafting the educational policy reports
- Results are summarized.
- Relevant information in tables
Generate policy suggestions

- Policy suggestions with information on:
  - The concerned and/or responsible services (department or unit)
  - Estimation of required time
  - Costs to be procured
Consultation, discussion and debate

- Before the publication of the reports
  - Researchers consult policy makers and senior officers, present the results, and discuss the policy suggestions
  - Public debate
Policy reform and agenda for action

- Can take the form of:
  1. Consultations with the personnel, the community, experts
  2. Review of exiting planning procedures
  3. New data collection
  4. Investment in the infrastructure and the human resources
Programme implementation

- Based on the previous stages, a new programme can be implemented.
- A new cycle starts with the identification of policy concerns within the new programme.
Who are the information users (consumers)?

- Decision makers
- Regional education officers
- Planners
- Managers
- School heads
- Parents
- Teachers
- International Organizations
- General public
Classroom level (Teacher and Parents)

- Identify pupils’ successes or difficulties and the teaching responses

⇒ Results itemized by subject and pupil

**Example teachers’ question:** What are my students’ achievement on the specific sub-dimension of mathematics?

Source: adapted from Ross & Postlewaite (1988)
School level (School principals)

- Monitor progress of learning in each class
- Outcomes by class, compared to those of previous years and of similar schools

**Example school principals’ question:**
On which subjects is my school doing well compared to similar schools in the district?

Source: adapted from Ross & Postlewaite (1988)
State and provincial level (Local education officer)

- Make short-term diagnosis about problems and warrant provincial resources

⇒ Information appropriate to employ planning approaches to a large group of schools

Example provincial officer’s question:
Which schools in my province are performing well?

Source: adapted from Ross & Postlewaite (1988)
Central level (National officials)

- Make a broad policy decisions concerning past and present programmes, interventions, plans, resources, etc.

→ Information on long-term trends of education system

Example national official’s question:
What are the major factors associated with the differences between schools in my country?

Source: adapted from Ross & Postlewaite (1988)
Main messages to Ministries (2004 IIEP Policy Forum)

- Planning the Measurement Design
- Planning the Sample Designs
- Planning the Logistical Design
- Managing the Impact
- Capacity Building Needs and Modalities
Measurement Design

- MoE’s involvement in constructing test frameworks
- Justification for monitoring school systems vs. measuring change in individuals
- MoE to negotiate for testing teacher competencies
- Choosing between an international study and a regional study
- Mechanism for monitoring the acquisition of sustainable development skills
Sample Designs

♦ MoE to be aware of adv. & disadv. Of choosing between age-based and grade-based target populations

♦ Research team to estimate and apply required sample size

♦ Research team to understand and use sampling weights and sampling errors
Logistical Design

- MoE to engage in building and keeping an in-house research team
- MoE’s fully support in preparing detailed logistical plans
Managing the Impact

- Framing the important policy questions for the decision makers
- Working with Ministers and senior decision-makers to build ownership
- MoE to explore reporting mechanisms of the research results
- MoE to broaden participation of stakeholders in the discussion of research results
- MoE to understand factors to avoid time lags
Capacity Building Needs and Modalities

- Research team to receive training in advanced technical methodologies
- Research team to receive training in information brokerage skills
- Participating Ministries to apply effective training modalities (i.e., learning by doing cooperative mode)
For your country...

- For each of the assessment initiatives, describe the process taken.
- Who are involved in each process?
- What are the challenges?
- What might be the areas which require capacity building (for whom)?
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