

## Unit 7: Assessment

Understanding the nature and extent of the learning crisis, and measuring progress in addressing it, requires reliable and valid assessment of learning outcomes. In recent years much progress has been made in terms of extending large-scale internationally comparable assessment exercises to many low- and middle-income countries. Significant improvements to national and local assessment exercises have also been achieved. However, controversy surrounds the question of how to measure progress towards SDG4 and, more broadly, how to measure progress with respect to alleviating the learning crisis. Some examples of the types of assessments and measurements of learning currently available are:

- Large scale international assessments (e.g., PISA and PISA for Development)
- Regional assessments (e.g., PASEC)
- National educational assessments (e.g., NAS India)
- Citizen-led assessments (e.g., ASER)
- Other ‘shorter quicker cheaper’ types of assessments (e.g., used in programme evaluations)
- Broader indicator approaches such as the World Bank’s Human Capital Index

After completing the unit, students should:

- Know and understand the key learning assessments which inform the learning crisis and SDG4;
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of various types of large-scale assessments;
- Understand and be able to evaluate various assessment exercises in terms of their purpose(s) including in relations to any tensions and incoherences which arise from multiple purposes; and
- Be able to discuss the potential role of large-scale assessments in informing education systems reforms.

### Lectures

1. [Why assess? A brief introduction to the key issues](#) (Newman Burdett, Consultant)
2. [The purposes of assessment](#) (Newman Burdett, Consultant)
3. [Measuring learning at large scale](#) (Newman Burdett, Consultant)
4. [Large scale assessments: How can we get useful data for policy?](#) (Abhijeet Singh, Stockholm School of Economics)
5. [Designing learning by assessments for impact evaluations](#) (Abhijeet Singh, Stockholm School of Economics)

## Required Readings

- Burdett, N. 2016. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly - Testing as a Key Part of the Education Ecosystem. RISE Working Paper Series. 16/010. [https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP\\_2016/010](https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2016/010)
- Dang, H. A., Glewwe, P., Vu, K., & Lee, J. 2021. What Explains Vietnam's Exceptional Performance in Education Relative to Other Countries? Analysis of the 2012 and 2015 PISA Data. RISE Working Paper Series. 20/036. [https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP\\_2020/036](https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/036)
- Nakabugo, M.G. 2021. Uwezo Citizen-led Assessments: Inspiring Debate about Children's Learning and Holding Governments Accountable. Harding-Esch, P with Coleman, H (eds) Language and the Sustainable Development Goals. London: British Council. ISBN 978-0-86355-982-2. [https://uwezouganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/5\\_Uwezo-citizen-led-assessments\\_Web\\_FINAL.pdf](https://uwezouganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/5_Uwezo-citizen-led-assessments_Web_FINAL.pdf)
- Singh, A. 2020. Myths of Official Measurement: Auditing and Improving Administrative Data in Developing Countries. RISE Working Paper Series. 20/042. [https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP\\_2020/042](https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/042)
  - Blog: <https://riseprogramme.org/blog/combating-cheating-ideas-india-indonesia>
- Wagner, D.A. 2003. Smaller, Quicker, Cheaper: Alternative Strategies for Literacy Assessment in the UN Literacy Decade. *International Journal of Educational Research* 39.3: 293-309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2004.04.009>

## Further Readings

- Berkhout, E. et al. 2020. From Cheating to Learning: An Evaluation of Fraud Prevention on National Exams in Indonesia. RISE Working Paper Series. 20/046. [https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP\\_2020/046](https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/046)
- Bruns, B., Akmal, M., and Birdsall, N. 2019. The Political Economy of Testing in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. RISE Working Paper Series. 19/032. [https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP\\_2019/032](https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2019/032)
- Koretz, Daniel M. 2008. *Measuring up: What Educational Testing Really Tells Us*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Rossiter, J., Abreh, M.K., Ali, A. and Sandefur, J. 2021. Do High-Stakes Exams Promote Consistent Educational Standards? CGD Working Paper 581. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/do-high-stakes-exams-promote-consistent-educational-standards>
- Ward, M. 2018. PISA for development: Results in focus. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/22260919>

## Supplementary Resources

- The RISE Podcast: Armando Ali on Assessing Learning in Mozambique and the Power of Citizen Action: <https://riseprogramme.org/publications/rise-podcast-armando-ali-assessing-learning-mozambique-and-power-citizen-action>
- Pritchett, L. 2018. Testing, Testing: The 123's of Testing. RISE Blog. [https://riseprogramme.org/blog/testing\\_testing](https://riseprogramme.org/blog/testing_testing)