Findings from MELQO Institutional Assessments

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Regional Technical Workshop within the Framework of the Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes initiative (MELQO): Dakar Senegal, 27-28 July 2016

Purpose

- To understand country's existing pre-primary education policies, curricula, standards and M&E system

- Identify country's policy-relevant entry points (depending on landscape/political environment)

- Key role in adaptation process of child development and learning (CDL) and quality of early learning environments modules

- Provides deeper analysis of how modules can be used for long-term integrations

- Generate recommendations for future CDL and quality of early learning environments modules use

Overview

▶ Brookings CUE, with the MELQO core team, led an institutional assessment to supplement findings from CDL and quality of early learning environments modules

▶ Two countries have participated in institutional assessments – Tanzania and Nicaragua

▶ Positive response from partners and governments – visible need and value

▶ Independent MELQO evaluation indicated less buy-in in countries where there was no institutional assessment

Policy landscape in Tanzania

- Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT)
- Policies
  - Education and Training Policy, launched in 2015
    - Calls for quality PPE, makes one-year compulsory PPE
- Curriculum
  - National Pre-primary Curriculum (2007), revised in 2015
    - Focus on pre-3Rs skills (Reading, wRiting, aRithmatic)
    - Desired competencies include communication, recognition of the environment, pre-literacy, writing, and relationships (teachers and students)
    - Updated syllabus by TIE includes six main areas: (1) socialization; (2) communication; (3) health and protection; (4) caring for the environment; (5) artistic competencies; and (6) identifying mathematical concepts.

Policy landscape (cont'd)

- Quality Assurance and Service Delivery
  - National Basic Education Standards (2009) – calls for school inspection once every two years, ongoing school site supervision (Head Teachers, Ward Education Coordinator)
    - In 2014, only 22 percent of pre-primary classrooms were inspected

  - MoEVT Whole School Inspection Checklist (2010), Handbook for School Inspector (2010) – Guidelines for School Supervision (2010)

MELQO process in Tanzania

► Launch in July 2015 – led by UNICEF, World Bank, and MoEVT

  ❖ Government reps from MoEVT, PM's Office for Regional and Local Government (PMO-RALG), Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW), Ministry of Community Development, Gender, and Children (MCDGC), TZ Institute for Education (TIE), National Exams Council (NECTA), and non-government reps from academia and civil society

  ❖ MELQO core team, UNICEF and World Bank Tanzania Country Office representatives, MELQO working group members

► Adaptation (August 2015)

  ❖ Tools translated to Kiswahili

► Field-Testing of CDL and quality of early learning environments modules (mid-October 2015)

  ❖ Training by RTI, enumerators from DataVision (Tanzanian firm)

► Institutional interviews with stakeholders (October-November 2015)

Aligning MELQO areas with Tanzanian system

Construct measured by MELQO	Linkages to Tanzanian Quality Assurance System	
	A. National Pre-Primary Curriculum	B. Draft Quality Framework for Pre-primary
Early Language/Literacy **Foundational skills in literacy include relating oral language to written language; phonological awareness, print knowledge and oral language, as well as alphabet knowledge, listening comprehension and name writing.**	• Content area 5.1: Language: development of communication skills in everyday life. These skills are listening, speaking, writing and reading. Includes Kiswahili and English Learning Activities	• Child Competency: 2.1: Communication Speaking, listening, drawing, reading photo • Child Competency 2.2: Recognition of the Environment, Identifying objects found at home and school, names of things, names of living things, different melodies and sounds • Child Competency 2.4: Reading, Identifying concepts in print, sounds of letters, names of letters, syllables • Child Competency 2.5: Writing Recognizing foundational/initial steps of writing, recognizing shapes of letters, creating letters
Socio-Emotional Development **This construct refers to skills that facilitate children's competence in social relationships and interactions with others including peers, family members and teachers. Socio-emotional skills that can be assessed through direct assessment include social cognition and emotional knowledge. These skills may help facilitate children's social functioning in school. Parent/teacher reports of social/emotional development focus on children's social**	• Content area 5.4: Community Education: Knowledge, interpretation of how behaviour and practices affect people's environments; learning different skills to appreciate and communicate through art, instil determination, perseverance, cooperation, love, respect for society. • Content area 5.5: Values and Beliefs Prepare child on different principals including tolerance, responsibility, honesty, justice, and value of life. Includes Character and Games and Religion lessons.	• Child Competency 2.7 Relationships Performance in cooperation, self-awareness, obedience, identifying rights and responsibilities

Perspectives on measuring early learning

- Positive climate for early learning measurement, <u>timely</u> at the time of institutional assessment with launch of Education and Training Policy – MELQO could help link PPE to primary education and align priorities across stakeholder groups

- National data on PPE quality and learning outcomes is needed to see impact especially with new policies

- Global comparability not the focus – more value in learning from and sharing lessons with other countries

- Inspection and quality assurance takes place but room for improvement

Policy Landscape in Nicaragua

► Ministry of Education (MINED)

► Policies

  ❖ National Early Childhood Policy

    ❖ Emphasis on PPE quality – quality is when programs are multi-dimensional, equitable, relevant, and age-appropriateness

► Curriculum

  ❖ Curriculum Framework for Preschool (2014)

    ❖ Focus on the following areas: personal and social development, communication, and understanding of the world

► Quality Assurance and Service Delivery

  ❖ Model for Preschool Quality (2016) – under review

    ❖ Children, teachers, learning environments, families and communities, and systemic monitoring system

  ❖ Monthly in-service training (TEPSE) and inspections by municipal/departmental offices (*cuaderno de registro asistencia y evaluación, 2013*)

MELQO process in Nicaragua

- No official launch – effort led entirely by MINED with coordination support from the World Bank
  - National stakeholder group includes: reps from MINED from assessment and preschool unit, reps from academia (total 11)
  - MINED reps reviewed items prior to adaptation

- Adaptation of CDL and quality of early learning environments modules (April-May 2016)
  - Tanzanian items translated into Spanish, Colombia tool also used

- Institutional interviews with stakeholders (April 2016)

- Field-Testing (July 2016)
  - Training by MELQO international technical team, enumerators from local university (students)

Perspectives on measuring early learning

▶ Positive climate for early learning measurement – timely as MINED is hoping to build ECE M&E system, renamed modules

▶ National data on learning outcomes and quality is needed – preschool children have never been assessed

▶ Global comparability highly sensitive topic – not interested in being compared to other countries

▶ Quality assurance and inspection takes place but MELQO modules provide opportunity to improve – plans to train regional assessors

▶ Interest in dissemination of results but only nationally – results from MELQO modules will only be shared within MINED, future plans to share results through reports with MINED departmental and municipal offices

Recommendations

- Identify government agency to lead and focal point with an agency – found that process was slower when multilateral led

- Engage broad stakeholder group at the beginning AND throughout the process prior to field-testing

- Review areas of alignment throughout adaptation process to ensure government ownership and alignment with existing, most updated policies and curricula

- Design future research that can have a direct impact on system improvements

- Formulate best strategy for dissemination of results to promote improvement and involvement from stakeholders

- Determine best uses for MELQO modules depending on resources – longitudinal population-based/program-specific research or complementary tools to existing M&E system

Key questions to ask if planning to use MELQO

- Is there a unit in the government that can be involved in the first MELQO effort and has the capacity (and mandate) to continue regular measurements?

- Is there an information system in the country with which MELQO could integrate (for example, indicators of pre-school classroom quality in school census efforts, or a national education management information systems)?

- Are there other data collection efforts to which MELQO could link (e.g. education surveys or assessments such as EGRA or EGMA, household surveys, etc.)?

- Are data collectors available and sustainable? These could be local education or health officials that already inspect education facilities or assess children's development (such as district education officers, home visiting professionals, community health workers, etc.), local university students or others.

Thank you

Questions and Comments