Learning Assessment Systems: 
*The GPE Perspective* 

Ramya Vivekanandan  
Senior Education Specialist  
Global Partnership for Education (GPE)
A learning assessment system consists of the policies, structures, practices and tools to generate and use information on student learning (Clarke, 2012).

- Classroom based
- Key driver of learning
- Regulatory tool
- Key driver of teacher practice
- National/International
- Key driver of policy
National Learning Assessment Systems

- Assessments alone are not enough to improve learning
- Strong national learning assessment systems are critical to close the feedback loop from assessment to learning:
  - Better learning & equity outcomes
  - Effective learning assessments
  - Informed policy
  - Sound analyses + Monitoring
  - Improved practices
What do we know about LAS in DCPs?

- **Indicator 15 of GPE Results Framework:**

  *Proportion of DCPs with a learning assessment system within the basic education cycle that meets quality standards*

- Only 32% of DCPs have a LAS meeting quality standards as per baseline data from 2011-2015, while if we look at fragile and conflict-affected countries (FCAC), only 21% meet the standards.

- In calculating the above data and looking at the 38 DCPs in Sub-Saharan Africa, the data is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Established</th>
<th>Under development</th>
<th>Nascent</th>
<th>No information</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do we determine whether LAS meet quality standards?

• The definition and criteria for assessing the quality of learning assessment systems are guided by the framework for learning assessments developed by the World Bank’s Systems Approach for better Education Results (SABER).

• Three determinants taken from SABER are used to identify the quality of learning assessment systems in this methodology. However, we developed our own criteria to assess each of these determinants.
  1. Enabling Context
  2. Assessment Quality
  3. System Alignment

• Focus on all large-scale learning assessments (including national, regional, and international assessments) and examinations within each country
What do we know about LAS in DCPs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENABLING CONTEXT</th>
<th>Examinations</th>
<th>Large scale learning assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The assessment is offered:</strong></td>
<td>i) annually or more frequently</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) to all eligible individuals</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The assessment has been carried out:</strong></td>
<td>i) at least twice at the basic education level</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) most recently between 2011 and 2015</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment measures:</strong></td>
<td>i) language</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) math</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii) science</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iv) other subjects</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment is available at levels:</strong></td>
<td>i) primary</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) lower secondary</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A permanent agency, institution, or office conducts the assessment</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYSTEM ALIGNEMENT</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The assessment is based on official learning standards/curriculum</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT QUALITY</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a publicly available methodology/technical document on the assessment</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assessment results are made available to the general public within 12 months</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
<td>yes/no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The LAS tool is developed by the Secretariat to collect information on the learning assessment systems of the DCPs and will eventually replace the methodology used in Indicator 15 of the Results Framework, which tracks improvements in learning assessment systems.

There are two ways a country can meet the requirement:

- It must have a system or mechanism to monitor learning outcomes (part 1), or
- It must have a time-bound plan to develop mechanisms to monitor learning outcomes. (part 2)
The tool considers large scale assessment, national examinations, and classroom assessment. For *large-scale assessment (LSA)*:

- ✓ The assessment took place in the last 5 years at basic education level
- ✓ The assessment has been administered at least twice, or there is a plan and budget to administer it again in the next five years
- ✓ The assessment is based on the country's official learning standards or curriculum (criterion only applies to national assessments)
- ✓ There is a technical document on the assessment
- ✓ There is a permanent agency that conducts the assessment
- ✓ Results are made publicly available within 24 months
- ✓ Results are used to monitor learning outcomes, with disaggregation to sub-national level
For **national examinations**, the country must have at least one national examination that meets all of the following criteria:

- It is conducted at primary, lower secondary, or upper secondary education
- It is administered at least annually
- It is offered to all eligible participants
- There is a permanent agency that conducts the examination
- There is a publicly available technical document on the examination
- Results are made publicly available within 12 months
- Results are used by the central or regional administration to monitor learning outcomes at the school level
For *classroom assessment*, the country’s system for this must meet the following criteria:

- ✔ It is regularly conducted in all schools at the basic education level.
- ✔ There is a national document that provides guidelines for classroom assessment.
- ✔ Classroom assessment practices in schools are aligned with official learning standards or curriculum.
- ✔ There are formal mechanisms in place to monitor the quality of classroom assessment practices.
- ✔ Results are used by the central or regional administration to monitor learning outcomes at the school level.
The country must meet all the following criteria:

- A diagnosis of the learning assessment system identifying main challenges
- A strategy to strengthen learning assessment systems
- A strategy which specifies concrete activities, responsible party, timeline, costing, and funding source
- A strategy that proposes actions to address the challenges or issues identified in the diagnosis
Thank you! Merci! Jerejef!

www.globalpartnership.org
rvivekanandan@globalpartnership.org