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# LEARNING METRICS TASK FORCE

Project Overview and Progress to Date

March 2013

## The Current State of Learning

The benefits of education — to national development, individual prosperity, health and social stability — are well known, but these benefits are significantly greater when the children who go to school are actually learning. Despite commitments and progress in improving access to education at the global level (i.e., Education For All [EFA] Goals and Millennium Development Goal [MDG] 2), learning levels are still low. According to the 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report, at least 250 million primary-school-age children around the world are not able to read, write or count well, even for those who have spent at least four years in school.

As EFA and the MDGs sunset in 2015, and the UN Secretary-General promotes the Global Education First initiative, the education sector has a unique window of opportunity to raise the profile of international education goals and ensure that learning becomes a central component of the global development agenda post-2015. To do this, the global education community must work collectively to define global ambition on improving learning and practical actions to deliver and measure progress.

## A Global Response

In response to this need, UNESCO through its Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Center for Universal Education (CUE) at the Brookings Institution have co-convened the Learning Metrics Task Force. The overarching objective of the project is to catalyze a shift in the global conversation on education from a focus on access to access *plus* learning. Based on recommendations of technical working groups and input from broad global consultations, the task force aims to make recommendations to help countries and international organizations measure and improve learning outcomes for children and youth worldwide.

The work of the task force is consultative, open, and inclusive, with balanced representation from the developing and developed world. The project engages high-level political actors, technical experts, and practitioners in an 18-month-long global consultation process to build consensus around three questions:

- What learning is important globally?
- How should it be measured?
- How can measurement of learning improve education quality?

The task force is comprised of national and regional governments, EFA-convening agencies, regional political bodies, civil society, and donor agencies, with balanced representation from the global north and south. The group will convene from early 2012 to late 2013, with in-person meetings in September 2012, February 2013, and July 2013.

## Phase I: Seven Domains of Learning

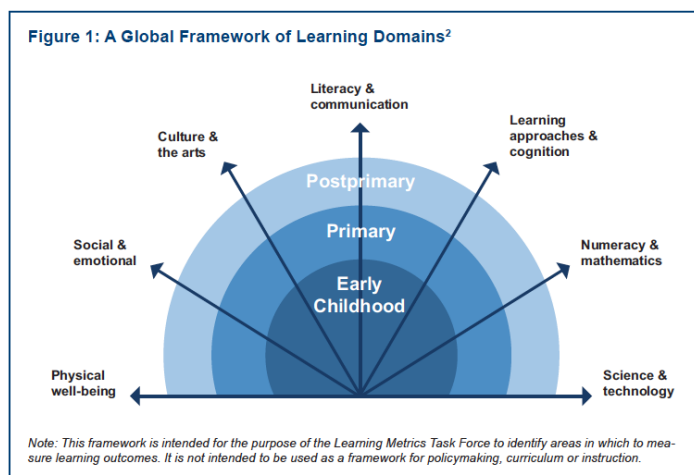
Between August and September 2012, the preliminary “Draft Competencies for Learning Outcomes: Early Childhood, Primary, and Post-Primary” were circulated for public comment, along with a consultation toolkit to help guide discussions. Thanks to a high level of interest and commitment from the education community around the world, more than 500 people in at least 57 countries provided feedback by

participating in either an in-person consultation or submitting comments electronically. This feedback has informed subsequent working group and task force discussions, resulting in the following revised framework for how learning might be measured at the global level.

Based on the expertise of 39 technical working group members, input from global consultations, and task force deliberation, seven domains and corresponding sub-domains of learning were proposed, beginning in early childhood and extending through the transition to work and life:

- Physical well-being
- Social and emotional
- Culture and the arts
- Literacy and communication
- Learning approaches and cognition
- Numeracy and mathematics
- Science and technology

The final Phase I recommendations can be found in the first report from the task force—*Toward Universal Learning: What Every Child Should Learn*. Access the report online at <http://bit.ly/1328Zni>.



### Next Steps: Phases II and III

Building on the Phase I recommendations, the Measures and Methods Working Group of 57 members in 27 countries is working now to address the second core question on how learning can and should be measured at the global and national levels. César Guadalupe, lecturer and researcher at Universidad del Pacifico in Lima, Peru, serves as working group chair. The working group’s “Prototype Framework for Measuring Learning Outcomes” was disseminated for public consultation between December 2012 and January 2013 and drew feedback from more than 500 people in at least 53 countries. The task force is now deliberating on the working group’s revised proposal and will release its final Phase II recommendations on measurement in April 2013.

The third and final working group on implementation will convene from March through August 2013. Led by Dzingai Mutumbuka—chair of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and former minister of education of Zimbabwe—this group will consider how task force recommendations on learning and measurement can be translated into action.

### Opportunities to Contribute

The task force seeks input from a wide variety of stakeholders through a global consultation process conducted online and in person. Interested stakeholders are invited to contribute by organizing a consultation and providing feedback on draft discussion papers and reports posted online.

**To learn more about these opportunities and access project resources, visit [brookings.edu/learningmetrics](http://brookings.edu/learningmetrics).**

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