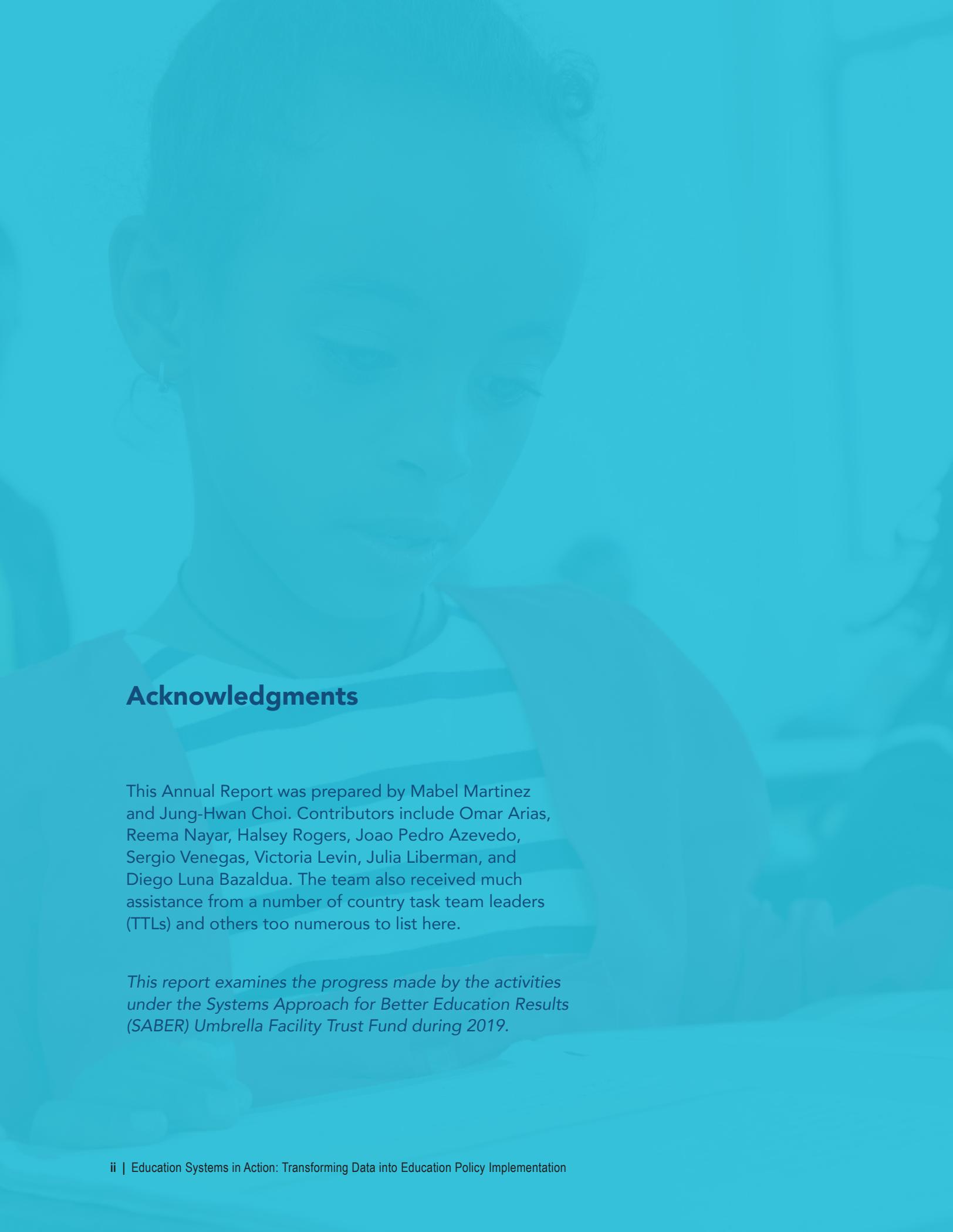


Education Systems in Action:

Transforming Data
into Education Policy
Implementation

SABER ANNUAL REPORT 2019



Acknowledgments

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This report examines the progress made by the activities under the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) Umbrella Facility Trust Fund during 2019.

Contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	1
Program Manager’s Note	2
Context	5
<hr/>	
The Magnitude of the Problem: A Global Learning Crisis	5
Call to Action	6
A New Literacy Policy Package: Focused Support to Countries in Achieving Their Learning Poverty Targets	10
SABER Umbrella Facility (SABER-UF) Activities	12
Program Highlights	14
<hr/>	
Initiatives	17
<hr/>	
1. Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO)	17
2. Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD)	27
3. Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs)	37
Financial Highlights	43
<hr/>	
Looking Ahead—Plans for Next Period	45
<hr/>	
Annexes	49
<hr/>	
Annex 1: SABER-UF Trust Fund Results Framework, January–December 2019	49
Annex 2: SABER Management	54
References	56



List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	PILNA	Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
CLO	Country Learning Outcome	PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
EPDL	Education Police Design Lab	PISA-D	Programme for International Student Assessment for Development
GCLO	Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes	SACMEQ	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
GEPD	Global Education Policy Dashboard	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
GLAD	Global Learning Assessment Database	SDI	Service Delivery Indicator
GPE	Global Partnership for Education	TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
GPF	Global Proficiency Framework	ToR	Terms of Reference
HCI	Human Capital Index	TTL	Task Team Leader
HCP	Human Capital Project	UF	Umbrella Facility
HLO	Harmonized Learning Outcomes	UIS	UNESCO's Institute for Statistics
IAEE	International Association for Ethics in Education	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IDA	International Development Association	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
LeAP	Learning Assessment Platform	WBG	World Bank Group
LLECE	Latin-American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education	WDR	World Development Report
LP	Learning Poverty		
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding		
NLA	National Learning Assessment		
PASEC	Program for the Analysis of Education Systems		



Program Manager's Note

In today's rapidly changing economy, simply attending school is not enough. To succeed at work and in life, students must develop foundational knowledge and skills through core subjects like language, mathematics, and science—and they must also learn how to solve problems, communicate effectively, and work in teams. This is essential to the development of human capital and dynamic, successful societies. Although access to schooling has experienced a dramatic increase around the world in recent decades, there remains a learning crisis. Indeed, over half of the world's children suffer from “learning poverty,” defined as the percentage of 10-year-olds who cannot read and understand a simple story, making them ill equipped for success in the changing world of work. Eliminating learning poverty is an urgent development objective critical to achieving the twin goals of the World Bank Group (WBG): ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. The learning crisis is leaving countries with large human capital deficits: many students are leaving schools or tertiary institutions without the foundational, socioemotional, digital, and technical skills needed for a world with the fast-paced changing nature of jobs.

With the recent spread of the COVID-19 (coronavirus), the education system is facing a new crisis, as more than 170 countries mandate some form of school closures impacting at least 1.5 billion children and youth. Extended school closures may cause not only loss of learning in the short term, but also further loss in human capital and diminished economic opportunities over the long term. The relevance of the global public goods being developed under the Systems Approach for Better Education Results Umbrella Facility (SABER-UF) is even greater because they can facilitate countries' efforts through the three phases of policy responses to COVID19: Coping with sudden school closures by mitigating learning loss; Managing Learning Continuity as schools reopen safely and students are brought back to classrooms; and Improving and Accelerating Learning by leveraging opportunities to build educational systems back stronger and more equitable than before the crisis.

As the largest external financier of education in developing countries and as part of its Human Capital Project (HCP), the WBG is committed to deploying its deep global and local expertise as well as its multidisciplinary and multisectoral development approach to strengthen government capacity and promote the systemic reforms urgently needed for the sustainable strengthening of education systems and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, in close cooperation and coordination with other international development partners. The activities supported under the SABER-UF to generate public goods geared toward improving education system performance are at the core of the WBG's education approach to achieve better learning outcomes and empower countries to deliver quality education for learning for all.

The SABER-UF was created in 2013 as a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) to enable partners and donors to enhance and extend the work done previously by the SABER program, which aimed to help countries strengthen their education systems through the provision of public goods designed to capture education policies and their implementation. Since its inception, and with the support of the Australian government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), SABER has assisted countries in conducting a thorough inventory of their critical education policy gaps, based on global evidence of what works to improve learning. This has resulted in a large body of tools and information that has helped countries diagnose constraints in education systems. Meanwhile, the release of the World Development Report (WDR) 2018 and the HCP has created an additional need for a streamlined version of these instruments that can be scaled up in all countries in a cost-effective way, to allow governments to holistically diagnose potential problems and implement impactful solutions.

The SABER policy intent tools had been completed and applied in dozens of countries. The new phase of the SABER Trust Fund is focused on aspects of service delivery and the generation of broader metrics of education system performance. With new commitments from the Bill and Melina Gates Foundation (BMGF) and DFID, SABER has evolved from its focus from policy domain specific to a more holistic approach in 2018, as a response to governments' greater attention to accelerating foundational learning and the WBG's new education policy approach. The year 2019 marked the first year of the new phase of the SABER program, which has progressed to develop and provide technical assistance in relation to streamlined initiatives such as the **Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLo)**, to make learning data from different assessments comparable across countries; the multidimensional **Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD)**, to assess the capacity and performance of the education systems in client countries in terms of how well their practices (or service delivery), policies, and politics are oriented toward learning and attainment for all children; and the **Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs)**, to guide the identification of the most binding constraints to learning and the selection of interventions to tackle those binding constraints in a given country context.

Moving forward, in 2020 SABER intends to continue supporting client countries in the deployment of these new initiatives at the country level to improve education system performance to achieve better outcomes, through the collection and validation of data, production and dissemination of web data, policy dialogue, country-based and regional capacity development, expansion of learning assessment coverage, and upstream support based on international good practices to inform the design of reforms, programs, or projects. These are core to the new Foundational Learning Compact (FLC), which underlies the emerging new comprehensive WBG strategic approach to help countries build strong systems that are constructed with a focus of achieving universal foundational learning.



Context

Quality education for all is at the center of the World Bank Group's (WBG's) twin strategic goals: ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity. But real returns on investments lie not only on providing education, but also on prioritizing learning and acquiring skills. Schooling is not the same as learning, even though education policy often assumes that it is. Years of schooling are accumulated, but too many students are advancing through the system without learning.

The Magnitude of the Problem: A Global Learning Crisis

Despite all the advances in schooling over the past decade, according to the WBG's World Development Report (WDR) 2018, *Learning to Realize Education's Promise*, there is a global learning crisis where many countries and communities are not achieving learning for all. Around 250 million school-aged children and youth globally still cannot read or write—although many have been to school—and 750 million adults globally have difficulty reading and/or writing, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Learning conditions and outcomes are usually much worse for the disadvantaged. In low- and middle-income countries, roughly half of students are going through school without acquiring the foundational skills that they need,¹ and this rises as high as around 90 percent for low-income countries such as Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Such high rates of learning poverty serve as an early warning that all education goals are at risk, as reported in the WBG's report *Ending Learning Poverty: What Will It Take?* Demographic trends in low-income countries are increasing the magnitude of the challenge, with an increasing number of children investing time and resources in low-quality education systems.

Enrollment gaps and high dropout rates in secondary education have exacerbated the learning crisis. Enrollment in early childhood education (ECE) is less than 50 percent on average. In low-income countries, only one in five children has access to preschool. Primary completion is not yet universal. Dropout rates in secondary education are still very high, particularly in low-income countries and among girls in some countries—as many do not find value in school and/or face financial, social, or cultural barriers. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 calls for inclusive and equitable quality secondary education and learning for all by 2030, but at the current rate of progress, by 2030 not even a target of universal basic literacy and numeracy for primary-school-aged children can be reached.

The quality of tertiary education is low, and it is extremely heterogeneous in low- and middle-income countries as well as fragmented between disconnected college and technical paths, with millions of youth investing time and resources in a low-quality education that yields low returns. As a result, two billion working age adults are not literate. The lack of learning has reduced the quality of the labor force in many countries, directly translating into a shortage of skills, including digital and technical.

The WDR 2018 explains the key causes of the learning crisis: poor service delivery in schools and communities, policies that are not aligned toward learning for all, and unhealthy politics and low bureaucratic capacity. The learning crisis is also a teaching crisis: Too many teachers

¹ Essential cognitive skills: basic literacy, numeracy and reasoning. Key socioemotional skills: conscientiousness, self-regulation, grit, optimism, perseverance, and teamwork, among others.

are not well prepared, incentivized, and supported; too many teachers and principals are not meritocratically selected and promoted; and in low-income countries, demand for new teachers is increasing dramatically. This situation is leaving countries with large deficits in human capital of their people, undermining sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

Call to Action

The Human Capital Project (HCP) and the New Global Learning Poverty Target

The WBG's Human Capital Project (HCP) is raising awareness of the costs of inaction on this learning crisis—not just for poverty reduction, but for the future prosperity of societies. The HCP gives utmost importance to attaining real learning in the classroom, within the effort of building human capital (complete education and full health) in all countries for healthier and more skilled and productive adults in the job market. Through the HCP, the WBG aims to build political commitment for reforms and investments on human capabilities through advocacy, measurement, and analytical work.

The HCP launched a Human Capital Index (HCI) in October 2018 to highlight how investments that improve health and education outcomes today will affect the productivity of the next generation of workers.² The HCI presents important variations across countries, due to differences in education outcomes, particularly shortcomings in access and, more importantly, in learning.

The WBG has been supporting HCP countries through analytical and programmatic work. The HCP Country Network provides a platform through which HCP countries can share experiences and discuss reforms to improve human capital outcomes. Many of these countries have already made progress in high-level policy making, awareness raising, and coordination across government, innovating, and improving data and analysis (see the World Bank's *Human Capital Report* in the references).

To sharpen the attention to an indicator that can serve as an early warning of whether countries are making progress toward building human capital, the WBG introduced a new global Learning Target as the education component of the HCI, which is a measure of the entire basic education system and is not as sensitive to change in the short term.



The New Learning Target

Although all foundational skills are important, reading proficiency is an easily understood metric of learning; it is a gateway to foundational learning in every other area and a marker for the quality of the education system.

To build an awareness of the problem at hand and to try to tackle it, the WBG developed new data in coordination with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) to measure the concept of Learning Poverty, which means being unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10. This new **Learning Poverty Indicator** combines shortfalls in school access and learning in one simple measure. The Learning Poverty Indicator identifies deficits in literacy and promotes action to ensure that all children and youth can acquire literacy and other foundational skills (see box 1).

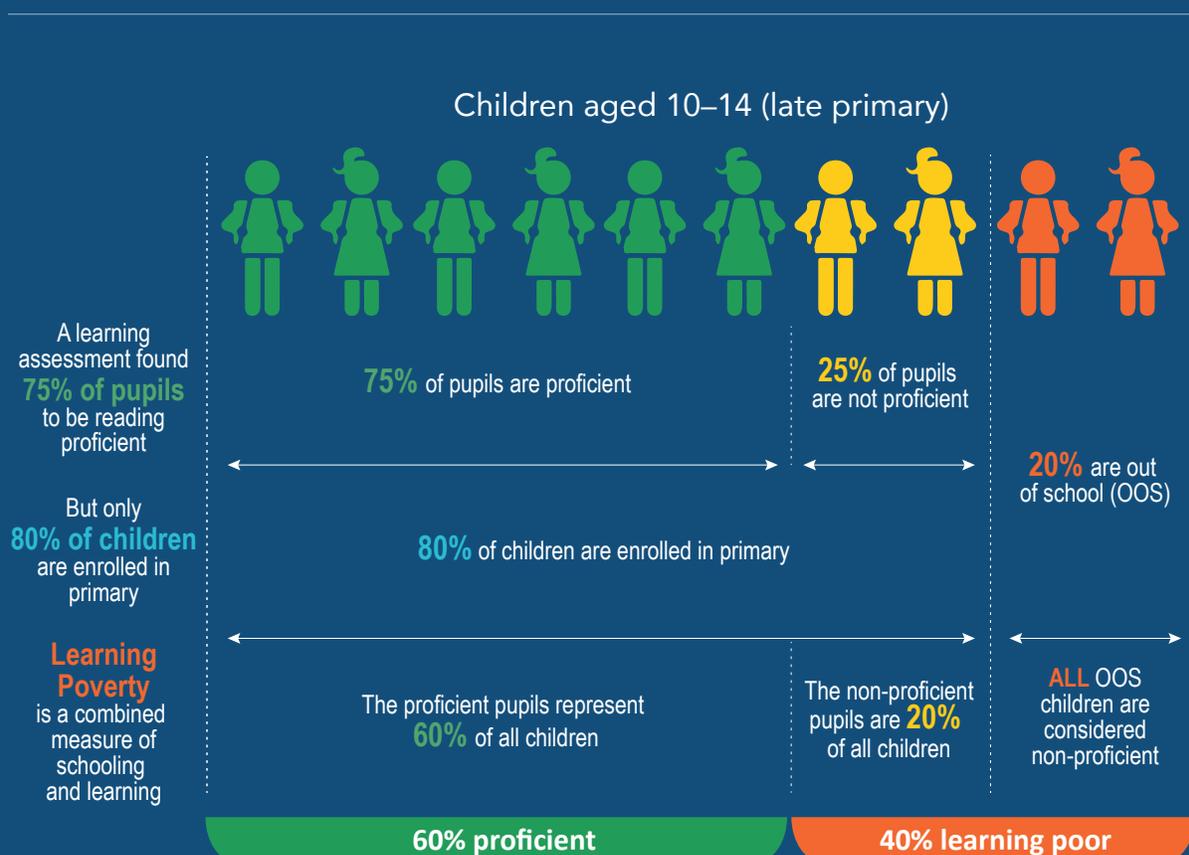
² The HCP measures the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by the end of secondary school, given the risks from poor education and poor health that prevail in the country where he or she was born.

Box 1. The Learning Poverty Indicator

One concrete indicator of foundational skills is the share of children achieving at least minimum proficiency in reading. Children who do not read by age 10—or, at the latest, by the end of primary school—usually fail to master reading later in their schooling career and will most likely fail to develop numeracy and the fundamentals of science, arts, and civics or master key socioemotional skills.

To spotlight the learning crisis, the WBG has therefore introduced the Learning Poverty indicator, which brings together schooling and learning indicators at the end of primary education in one measure: it begins with the share of children who have not achieved minimum reading proficiency (as measured in

schools), and it is adjusted by the proportion of children who are out of school and are assumed not able to read proficiently. It is therefore an early-warning indicator, focused on 10-year-olds, that can be used to track progress toward gains in Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS), that is, the HCI component that measures quantity and quality of education by age 18. The Learning Poverty indicator combines the concepts of schooling and learning at the end of primary education, building on indicators of reading proficiency and school enrollment generated in the SDG 4 reporting process. Consider the illustration below for a hypothetical country that has gaps in both achievement and attainment.



Learning Poverty is the weighted average of the share of the population below the minimum proficiency level adjusted by the out-of-school population.

Although countries have made progress in reducing learning poverty since 2000 because of increases in primary enrollment and some progress in learning, this progress has been too slow: learning poverty fell by just 10 percentage points between 2000 and 2017 and will reach 43 percent by 2030. Thus, globally business as usual will leave the world far from the goal of eliminating learning poverty by 2030, and therefore it is important to accelerate progress. To tackle this global learning crisis and to accelerate the rate at which countries ensure that all children can read with comprehension by age 10 (before the end of primary school), the WBG launched the new global Learning Poverty Target in October 2019 at the 2019 WBG-IMF Annual Meetings. The new target, which aims to reduce by at least half the share of children (in low- and middle-income countries) who cannot read and understand a simple text by age 10 by 2030, can be attained if every country matches the rapid improvers. Simulations show that this target, while ambitious, is achievable if all countries manage to improve learning as well as the top performers of the 2000–2015 period did—which means on average nearly tripling the global rate of progress.³ The new Learning Target is akin to one of the WBG’s twin goals of eradicating extreme poverty and will allow tracking of early progress in the education component of the HCI. Indeed, the HC Plans that are being developed by the WBG benefit greatly from the action motivated by the Learning Target and the resources being created by the WBG’s Education Global Practice.



WBG President David Malpass launched the WBG’s new operational global Learning Target, along with the report *Ending Learning Poverty: What Will It Take?*

³ If countries reduce learning poverty at the fastest rates seen in this century, the global rate of learning poverty would drop to 28 percent. At the global level, this implies that the rate of progress in reducing learning poverty will need to be accelerated substantially, nearly tripling from 0.6 to 1.6 percentage points per year. And in some regions, with high levels of learning poverty, countries would need to reduce learning poverty by 2.4 percentage points per year.

The WBG's Education Policy Approach

To improve the learning experience of all children and youth, the WBG's Education Policy Approach comprises actions in five fronts for financial and policy advisory support to ensure prepared and motivated learners, effective and valued teachers, resourced classrooms, safe and inclusive schools, and well-managed education systems and institutions—using technology wisely (see figure 1). This approach supports broader system strengthening. Moreover, it depicts the lines of action to operationalize the WDR 2018 report recommendations, namely, to (1) better assess learning to understand what is happening in the classroom, (2) act on evidence and make schools work for students, and (3) align the actors to make the system work for learning.

Figure 1. The Five Pillars to Help Realize the Promise of Learning for All



These five pillars also represent the areas in which countries typically must make progress to build systems that support foundational learning, including literacy, at scale and sustainably. Beyond foundational skills, these will guide the WBG's efforts to achieve learning for all. To sharpen these efforts, the WBG has set concrete goals under the new global Learning Poverty Target.

To ensure commitment and empowerment of countries to make a difference in learning, the WBG will engage countries and support them in setting their own national targets to reduce learning poverty. Although the target is defined at the global level, a national analysis and debate should define where each country stands in giving all children foundational skills. Potential intermediate targets toward the goal of universalization can be defined at the country level.

A New Literacy Policy Package: Focused Support to Countries in Achieving Their Learning Poverty Targets

The WBG has a strong global footprint in the education sector, with an active operational presence in more than 80 countries and an average of 30 new education lending projects every year, in addition to a large number of technical assistance projects and reimbursable advisory services. In many of these projects, it often partners with other international development organizations, including the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), regional development banks, and bilateral government agencies through both cofinancing and advisory services to countries. Thus, it has a unique role to play to help governments identify and prioritize the policies and investments that can shift education systems to improve learning outcomes significantly.

While the WBG supports countries in the complex and long-term task of building robust education systems that can deliver quality education at all levels for all (akin to the support to the shared prosperity goal), many of the reforms to build education systems, such as building meritocratic professions for teachers and school management, take time. At the same time, there is a need to ensure that in the short term, countries are tackling urgent actions to improve the experience of children who are in schools today and to build the foundational literacy of these children, along with other foundational skills.



To support learning in the near term, in the WBG’s operational engagements in basic education at the country level and to help countries improve foundational learning in the short term, the institution will prioritize support to an integrated **Literacy Policy Package** to complement broader systems reforms. The Literacy Policy Package includes country policies that have proven to be effective in achieving foundational literacy at scale. While the Learning Target is a global one, for concrete actions to happen in the classrooms of the world, each country has to establish its own path to eliminating learning poverty in the foreseeable future.

The Literacy Policy Package

The Literacy Policy Package comprises a set of integrated recommended interventions focused on promoting acquisition of proficiency in reading in primary school. The Literacy Policy Package includes country policies and measures that have proven to be effective in achieving foundational literacy at scale, and it should be adapted to country circumstances as short-term reforms today that will improve service delivery for the students going to school now. The Package consists of five interrelated lines of action that have proven successful in rapidly boosting literacy in several countries:



- Ensure political and technical commitment to clear goals, means, and measures for literacy, by establishing time-bound national reading goals, standards for progress with simple and explicit curricula, and monitoring student and system progress toward those goals. Specific interventions to improve performance on goals, means, and measure involve technical assessment to align the scope and sequence of learning activities in early grade reading with the evidence on how children learn to read.
- Ensure effective teaching for literacy by supporting teachers through detailed guidance, such as lesson plans in low-capacity settings, so that teachers focus on how to teach rather than on what to teach, and continuous in-school practical support through classroom observation and coaching to raise the ability of teachers to consistently deliver high-quality lessons.⁴
- Ensure timely access to more and better age- and skill-appropriate texts and readers in and outside schools that stimulate interest among children to achieve fluency.⁵
- Create a school and teachers’ mindset that all children must learn, equipping schools to support students who fall behind through explicit “teach to the right level” interventions.⁶
- Teach children in mother tongue for higher reading comprehension, and tailor instruction for learners with specific needs, which includes devising solid language policies that start in the language that children best understand, and planning adequate transitions to instruction in the indicated language or languages as students progress.⁷

For all these five lines of action, the WBG will support smart uses of technology to deliver, and it will work with countries to estimate the cost of implementing the Package to achieve their own national learning poverty targets.

4 Tablets can be used to deliver lesson plans and monitor progress. Open source software can be used for classroom observation, provide access to teaching resources, tailor feedback, and suggest corrective measures.

5 Open-source and open license leveled reading material can be delivered in print or virtually. Track and trace technology can be used to request, procure, deliver, distribute, and monitor final use of material.

6 Adaptive machine learning personalized software can be used at scale.

7 Tools for costing language policies and technical assistance for implementation will be included in this element.

SABER Umbrella Facility (SABER-UF) Activities

Improving education system performance to achieve better learning outcomes is at the core of solving this learning crisis. All the above-mentioned new efforts are highly complementary to the SABER-UF activities. Like the HCP, SABER expects to help countries improve measurement of outcomes and their drivers, diagnose key bottlenecks and make policy changes, strengthen institutions and governance, and improve program implementation.

The SABER-UF was created in 2013 as a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) to enable partners and donors to enhance and extend the work done previously by the SABER program, which aimed to help countries analyze and strengthen their education systems through the provision of public goods designed to capture education policies and their implementation. The SABER-UF was initially funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID).

SABER initially focused on assessing how well a country's education policies and institutions aligned with its education goals and benchmarked these policies against global evidence of what works. Later SABER began developing a framework for measuring and analyzing service delivery at the school level, providing a much-needed feedback loop to help countries hone their policies and institutions to better meet their education goals.

These efforts have resulted in a large body of tools and information that help countries diagnose constraints in education systems, but scaling up the use of these instruments is difficult and costly. Moreover, the release of the WDR 2018, the SDGs, the HCP, and the WBG's new Learning Target, by drawing attention to the global learning crisis, have raised the ambition for the measurement agenda on learning and its drivers. As mentioned above, there is a new momentum around the learning outcomes measurement agenda. In addition, there is an increased demand for comprehensive, streamlined, and cost-effective instruments that build on the existing SABER tools to measure the drivers of learning, and that can be scaled up to all countries to better identify binding constraints to improving learning, guide policy decisions, and monitor progress on policy efforts to address them.

To support these new priorities and as a result of new commitments from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and DFID, in 2018 the SABER program has (1) strengthened the support to make the internationally comparable learning outcome data publicly available in close coordination with UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS) and efforts under the Learning Assessment Platform (LeAP) and (2) evolved its focus from a domain-specific approach to holistic measurement efforts of the drivers of learning. With regard to the latter, the new SABER program is focused on streamlined, yet comprehensive, initiatives for (1) identifying important gaps between what the evidence suggests is effective in promoting learning and what is happening in practice and (2) providing client countries with resources they can use to identify key decision points and to monitor progress toward improving the quality of their education systems and learning outcomes in the short and medium terms.

These initiatives have the following objectives:

- To harmonize existing international, regional, and national learning assessments to make learning data from different assessments comparable across countries through the **Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO)**.
- To measure and track progress of the key drivers of learning outcomes in basic education around the world at the service delivery, policy, and politics level, with specific attention to their impact on policy dialogue and policy decision making, through the **Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD)**.
- To identify the key constraints to learning and set the priorities for policy intervention and implementation to remove such constraints in a given country, through the **Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs)**.

These objectives and their associated overarching initiatives will encourage improved measurements and use of the data to track short-term progress toward the HCI and to reduce Learning Poverty. For countries that already have the necessary data, SABER will support making better use of the data through the GCLO, by making learning data from different assessments comparable across countries. The GEPD will enable countries to monitor holistically the quality of their education systems, while the EPDLs will offer a systematic approach to guide better decision making using all relevant learning data from the GEPD and elsewhere.

These initiatives are also related to the Literacy Policy Package. The latter overlaps with the GEPD, which includes indicators that measure the quality of the education system, including those that are important for foundational skills in literacy and numeracy and thus can help achieve the Learning Target. Moreover, the EPDLs provide the link and platform to ensure that the information and recommendations resulting from the GEPD and the Literacy Policy Package are considered when setting priorities and taking action. These initiatives will be presented in more detail in the next section.





Program Highlights

During 2019, the WBG accomplished the following as a result of SABER-UF initiatives (Annex 1):

Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO):

- Updated and expanded the previous version of the Harmonized Learning Outcomes (HLO) Global Dataset, by including the Programme for International Student Assessment for Development (PISA-D) and Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) countries.
- Released PISA 2018, which provides more recent data for 80 countries and economies and the addition of two new countries, Belarus and Brunei Darussalam.
- Created the Learning Poverty database with data from 116 countries over 20 years.
- Created the Global Learning Assessment Database (GLAD) of 481 learning assessments (the Latin-American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education [LLECE], the Program for the Analysis of Education Systems [PASEC], the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS], the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study [TIMSS]).
- Improved awareness and use of data among researchers and development partners, by releasing a public GitHub Repository with the full harmonization code used to construct the GLAD and the Learning Poverty.
- Aligned the WBG database on school enrollment with the UIS database.
- Created country two-pagers on Learning Poverty for a nonexpert audience.
- Collaborated with UIS, development partners, and country candidates (Ghana, Nigeria, and The Gambia) on moving forward the discussions on conducting policy linking pilots.

- Collaborated with UIS on moving forward the discussions on the interagency Initiative to Improve Global Learning Through Data, which includes support for global public goods (e.g., Global Item Bank Platform, consumer research guides, and virtual register of development partner efforts on learning assessment).

Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD):

- Developed data collection instruments and training materials. The three instruments—School Survey, Survey of Public Officials, and Policy Survey—were developed through streamlining existing instruments, psychometric analyses, and design of new questionnaires. The team also created all necessary training and field materials. All are available in multiple languages.
- Digitized and automated procedures to save time and cost in data collection. All instruments have been programmed in Survey Solutions in multiple languages. The processing of data and the calculation of indicators is automated.
- Prepared numerous dissemination materials, including the GEPD Booklet (describing in detail the initiative, instruments, and detailed information on each of the indicators that are part of the GEPD), the GEPD Implementation Brief, and the GEPD Technical Note.
- Advanced on the phasing in of the GEPD in countries. The GEPD Instruments were pre-piloted in Peru and Mozambique in mid-2019. The phasing in of the GEPD in the initial 13 countries also started and will continue through 2020. Data collection was completed in Jordan and Peru. The remaining countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic [PDR], Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, and Ukraine) are expected to be completed in 2020 and early 2021.

Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs):

- Delivered workshop with the Democratic Republic of Congo Education Team.
- Engaged with other development partners (the International Association for Ethics in Education [IAEE], GPE, DFID, and the United States Agency for International Development [USAID]) on the design of the EPDL clinics and how-to bring alignment across other ongoing initiatives.
- Created the initial Dashboard and tools.

Initiatives

The initiatives under the SABER-UF Program in 2019 are intrinsically interrelated: the **Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes, together with the LeAP**, support improving the use, measurement, and harmonization of learning data to facilitate comparison of international, regional, and national learning assessments across countries. The **Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD)** aims to assess the capacity and performance of education systems by measuring the key drivers of learning—service delivery, policies, and politics—for countries to better monitor the quality of their education systems. The **Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs)** then offer countries a structured way to tap into all the data and knowledge that exist on the functioning of a country's education system to identify the key constraints to learning and set the priorities to guide better decision making for policy intervention and implementation in a given country.

1. Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO)

The increased recognition of the learning crisis and the impetus attained by the launch of the WBG's HCP and the global Learning Target initiatives, as well as by the need to monitor SDG 4.1, have put the agenda on globally comparable learning assessments while strengthening national learning assessment systems at the forefront. Progress on the Learning Target of halving the share of children who are unable to read can be tracked only if countries commit to systematic measurement of learning outcomes. Similarly, although the HCI released in 2018 was able to rely on the Harmonized Learning Outcomes (HLO) indicator, the latter is still missing for 31 countries and relied on nonrepresentative data for 15 countries or outdated one (that is, 2010 or earlier) for 16 countries. Finally, the efforts to monitor progress to achieve SDG 4.1 targets face the challenges of coverage and comparability of large-scale learning assessments (both international and national).

It is in this context that the WBG is committed, as a corporate priority, to supporting the availability, quality, and comparability of learning measurement among its poorest client countries under the International Development Association's 19th Replenishment (IDA19). While the longer-term and higher-level objective of WBG support in education is improving learning outcomes and thus increasing the human capital of the future workforce around the world, the first necessary step to measure whether these objectives are being achieved is intrinsically related to the existence and quality of learning assessments. This is the priority guiding the current efforts of the Education Global Practice, as reflected in both the **commitments under IDA19** and the **WBG Corporate Scorecard**. A two-pronged approach is followed, building on strengthening the global comparability of the existing data as well as on generating new data when and where measurement gaps exist.

To strengthen the global comparability of existing data, the WBG has produced the **Global Learning Assessment (GLAD)** harmonization, from which **Country Learning Outcome (CLO)** indicators have been derived, as well as the comparable learning indicators such as the **Harmonized Learning Outcome (HLO)**, **Learning Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYs)**, and **Learning Poverty (LP)**. Moreover, the WBG is working with development partners and UIS on **Policy Linking Pilots**, which will facilitate countries' reporting on global education targets using a standard-setting methodology that aligns existing national large-scale learning assessments with the global standards, as expressed in the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF).

To close the data gaps, the WBG is working together with UIS on preparing an interagency **Initiative to Improve Global Learning Through Data**, which aims to ensure that every country has regular, high-quality, and comparable learning data. Specifically, this Initiative aims to ensure that, by 2030, countries' student assessment systems can produce regular and comparable data for early primary and end-of-primary grade learning, to enable policy makers to develop evidence-based policies to improve teaching and learning, to ensure reporting on SDG 4.1.1 with an initial focus on SDG 4.1.1 (a) and (b), and to help benchmark Learning Poverty indicators. Apart from serving a donor coordination role, this Initiative would develop a set of global public goods, such as an **Item Bank Platform**, which would be used as a repository of scaled items from national and regional assessments aligned in content to the GPF. The Item Bank Platform could also be used to either create new internationally comparable large-scale assessments or be added to existing national large-scale assessments to make them comparable across countries.



Learning Assessment Platform (LeAP)

The activities under the GCLO are part of the Learning Assessment Platform (LeAP). LeAP was launched in February 2019 by the WBG to support national and international assessment efforts in its client countries.⁸ It works to improve the availability, quality, and comparability of learning data, by supporting assessment-related activities in client countries and expanding national capacity to assess learning (see box 2).

Box 2. Closing Data Gaps to Support Large-Scale Learning Assessments

Countries around the world are at different stages to create and build capacity for learning assessment systems, and thus they require support to address different needs. LeAP's goal is to further enable countries to implement assessment of student learning more efficiently and effectively through coordinated and aligned efforts across the WBG. Importantly, LeAP supports the measurement and research agenda pillar of the WBG's focus to support countries' efforts to reach the Learning Target, which is to reduce the LP rate by at least half by 2030. This pillar aims to close the data gaps and to conduct action-oriented research and innovation on how to build foundational skills.

A new Tier 2 indicator on IDA support for large-scale learning assessments reflects a corresponding shift in emphasis taking place in IDA countries. Although the IDA continues to support critical mandates in the education sector, such as hiring and training teachers (according to the IDA19 Results Measurement System [RMS]), the new indicator 10 reports "the number of Bank-supported completed large-scale assessment rounds at the primary or secondary levels." The aim of this indicator is to promote the learning assessment agenda in client countries and to support efforts to increase assessment data availability for national and international monitoring of learning outcomes and increase the frequency and transparency related to these assessments.⁹

⁸ LeAP activities are currently supported by the global-level grant of the Russia Education Aid for Development (READ) Trust Fund program.

⁹ "Completed large-scale assessment rounds" refers to rounds of a large-scale assessment, for which the results are made publicly available within two years of the assessment administration. The assessment round is counted for the year in which the data are released; if an assessment is administered during a particular year and it covers multiple grades and/or subjects, that assessment is counted as one round.

LeAP, which also benefits from a new partnership with UIS, is helping countries to strengthen their learning assessment systems and build capacity, enabling them to set targets, monitor learning, report on SDG 4.1 and learning poverty, and use assessment data to make informed choices on education policies and programs. This platform is leading the development of global public goods and the provision of technical support, financing, exchange of good practices, and knowledge advisory services to support client countries' learning assessment systems. Moreover, together with UIS, it aims to strengthen coordination of development partners' existing and future support of the learning assessment agenda.

These efforts have been encased under the **Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO) initiative**, which is the most comprehensive exercise to-date linking existing international, regional, and national learning assessments to harmonize learning data (see the World Bank's *Global Data Set on Education Quality* in the references). The GCLO is composed of the following:

- Microdata archival and harmonization: Global Learning Assessment Database (GLAD)
- Country-level indicators:
 - Harmonized Learning Outcomes (HLO) [*harmonized*]
 - Learning Poverty (LP) [*harmonized*]
 - Country Learning Outcomes (CLO) [*nonharmonized*]
 - Learning Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS), including the standardization of school enrollment data with UIS [*harmonized*] and
- Policy linking pilots.

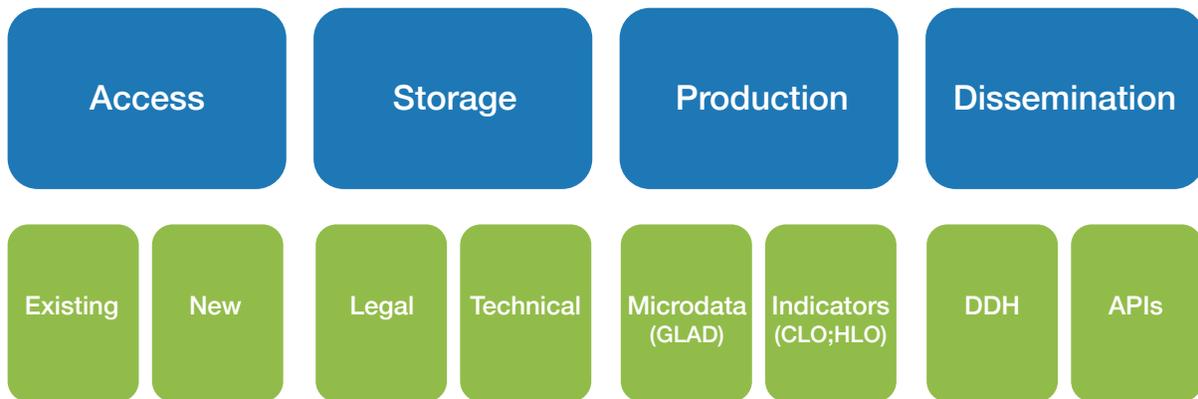
The GCLO covered 162 countries with data from 2000 to 2017 on levels of student learning in reading, mathematics, science, and problem solving from international, regional, and national learning assessments to make these data from different assessments comparable across countries. The primary input to the production of the **HLO indicator** is the **Global Learning Assessment (GLAD)** harmonization, from which the **Country Learning Outcome (CLO) indicators** are derived. The HLO constitutes the basis for one of the critical components of the HCI: the **Learning Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS) indicator**. The same harmonization process is also used to produce the **Learning Poverty (LP) indicator**.

GLAD has been established and will be expanded and maintained through a two-year program defined for 2019–2020 to update and improve the quality, coverage, and methodological soundness of the **HLO**, **LP**, and **LAYS** indicators, and to strengthen alignment between the WBG EdStats Application Programming Interface (API) and the UIS database on school enrollment. This work program has started to provide open access to the derived indicators and support methodological documentation (including the code used to compute indicators) and a series of short nontechnical notes to improve the understanding and use of data of newly derived indicators and their policy relevance by nontechnical specialists across the globe.

Highlights of Activities and Outputs

During the second half of 2019, the WBG organized the process for producing the GCLO around **four main components**: (1) access of existing and new learning assessments, (2) storage of data, (3) production and processing of both the microdata and country-level indicators, and (4) dissemination. Figure 2 illustrates this workflow and some of its main components.

Figure 2. Workflow Used to Produce the WBG’s Country Learning Indicators, Including the HLO and Learning Poverty



Access and Storage of Microdata and Indicators

In terms of access and storage, the EduAnalytics team has actively worked with internal and external partners to expand the collection of learning assessments used in this process, including both cross-national and national learning assessments (NLAs). See box 3 for the data inputs that feed into the GCLO.



Box 3. Data Inputs for the GLO

The WBG received Caribbean Secondary Education Examinations data for Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The WBG has reached out to the Minister of Education for Trinidad and Tobago to request Caribbean Secondary Education Examinations data for that country, as that will allow the development of the exchange rate between the Caribbean secondary education examinations and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and thereby the inclusion of Caribbean secondary education examination data in the database.

The WBG also received data for the First International Mathematics Study (FIMS, 1961–65), the First International Science Study (FISS, 1966–75), the Study of Reading Comprehension (SRC, 1967–73), the Second International Mathematics Study (SIMS, 1976–89), the Second International Science Study (SISS, 1979–91), and the Reading Literacy Study (RLS, 1985–94) conducted by the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The WBG is currently working on including these data sets into the HLO database. Although these additions do not add the latest data points, including these historical data will advance research into educational trends.

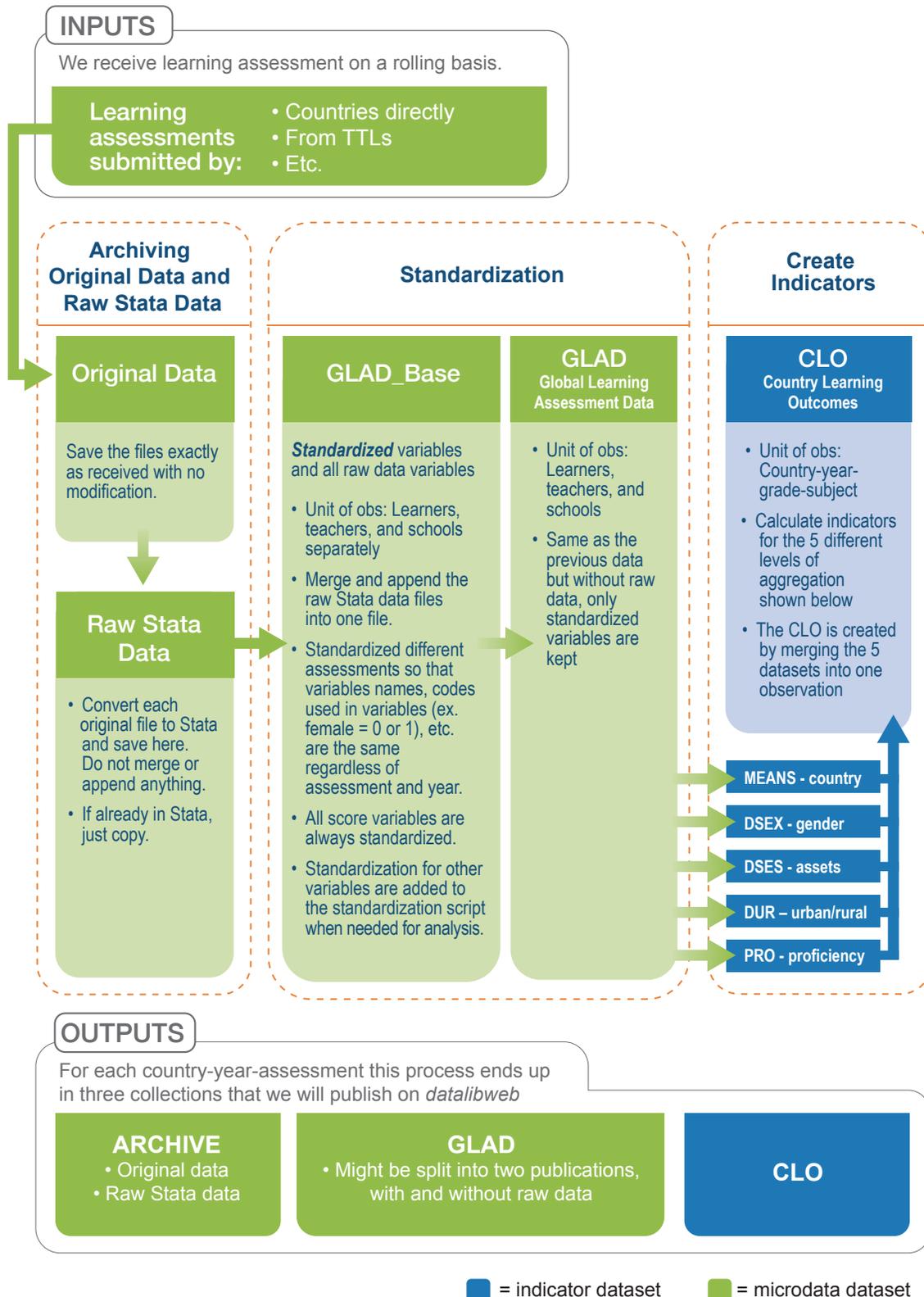
In addition, the WBG received data for the Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) for 15 Pacific Island nations (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) for the three rounds of PILNA in 2012, 2015, and 2018. Overall, the additions to the data allow the WBG to improve data for 15 countries and add 19 new countries to the dataset, expanding to a total of 183 countries/territories.

The WBG has also partnered with its recently launched LeAP initiative and has been reaching out to country teams to access and archive the microdata of NLAs. So far, the WBG has received the microdata for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, and Ethiopia. Although at this point it might not be possible to produce the HLO equivalized country-level indicators, this information can be of value for triangulation purposes, as well as for the calculation of other country-level indicators.

Production of Harmonized Microdata and Indicators

From data processing and production, the EduAnalytics team has mapped out its data flows and adopted specific standards, such as the use of GitHub, to ensure the documentation and full reproducibility of the WBG's numbers as well as the modularization of the institution's processes. The main objective of this effort is to facilitate documentation, automation, and reusability of the available information. The first step in this process has been GLAD's pilot for grades 4, 5, and 6 and a standardized way to derive country-level indicators. This secondary database, the CLO, is the primary input to the production of the HLO (see figure 3).

Figure 3. GLAD/CLO Work Process
(Data Flow for When a New Country-Year-Assessment Is Submitted)



This modularization of the WBG’s processes with the creation of the GLADs and CLOs has facilitated repurposing the WBG’s data infrastructure and systems to produce the LP indicator, ensuring consistency and comparability across different measures (such as the HLO and LP) and significant economies of scope. All the code used to harmonize the GLAD and produce the CLOs is already in the public domain through the WBG GitHub account:

- GLAD GitHub Repository (*public*): <https://github.com/worldbank/GLAD>

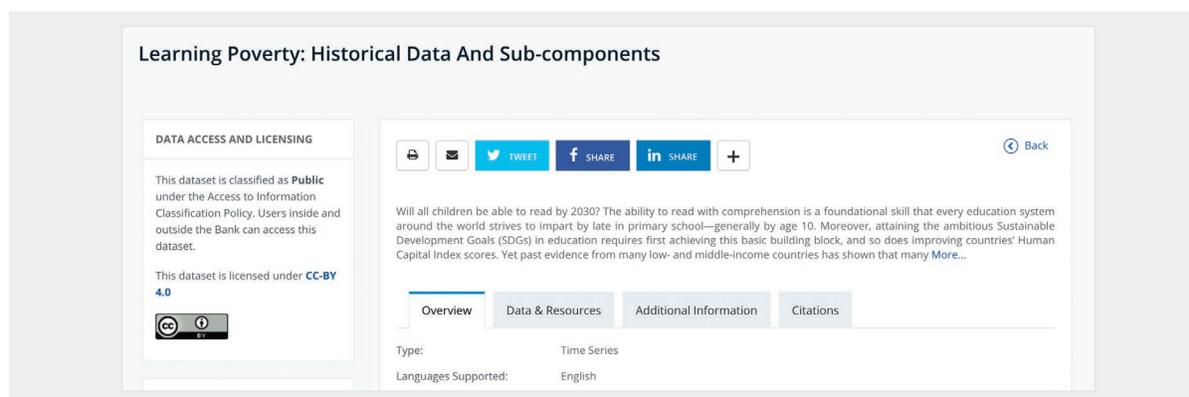
A very similar approach has been used for the computation of the HLO and LP measures, now significantly simplified, since their inputs are readily available from the same workflow. The WBG has also created GitHub repositories for both measures, to improve documentation and facilitate the reproducibility:

- LP GitHub Repository (*public*): <https://github.com/worldbank/LearningPoverty>
- HLO GitHub Repository (*private*): <https://github.com/worldbank/HLO>

The LP repository is already in the public domain, and the WBG expects to make the HLO repository available in the public domain by April 2020, at the time of the next update.

Dissemination of Microdata and Indicators

In terms of dissemination, the WBG has made both the HLO and LP indicators available through the WBG API, it has deposited the LP database in the Development Data Hub (<https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/learning-poverty>), and it has created country briefs for the LP, in which both the HCI and the LAYs are presented (e.g. for Mauritania, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/901861571223512112/SSA-AFCF1-MRT-LPBRIEF.pdf>).



Policy Linking Pilots

The Policy Linking Pilots exercise, supported by LeAP, is a critical part of the GCLO initiative, since it aims to facilitate countries’ reporting on global learning indicators using their existing data from national large-scale student assessments and aligning these assessments to global learning standards via standard-setting methodology.

The initial proposal for the assessment-related component of the SABER-UF was to support the expansion of international large-scale assessment (ILSA) coverage in Africa to reduce the global

measurement gap for learning outcomes in the region. This was intended to be accomplished through the piloting of PASEC in an English-speaking African country. However, in discussions with the BMGF and DFID, the WBG team decided instead to deploy these resources to support a collaboration with UIS on policy linking pilots.

Indeed, the WBG team has engaged with other international organizations (DFID, BMGF, Management Systems International [MSI], and Acer) under the leadership of UIS and USAID, to develop the **Policy Linking Toolkit**, a tool to support countries to set learning proficiency levels for their national assessments in line with UNESCO's GPF. This will help address the corporate priority of closing the global learning measurement gap by increasing the worldwide coverage of internationally comparable learning assessment data. Policy linking promotes the comparability of global data on education and strengthening learning assessment systems by allowing countries to use their existing national assessments or early grade reading and math assessments to report against the USAID Foreign Assistance ("F") indicators and the SDGs. With regard to the **Policy Linking Pilots**, the LeAP team has led discussions with select WBG country teams from Ghana, Nigeria, and The Gambia to determine whether these countries' assessments would be amenable to policy linking (based on test content alignment review against the GPF with subject matter specialists).

Box 4 includes the main areas of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the WBG and UIS to strengthen internationally comparable measurement of student learning and education data generation and exchange.

Progress toward Results (see Annex 1 for details on the Results Framework 2019)

The SABER-UF Results Framework has been updated for the two outputs corresponding to the GCLO's outcome "Global comparability of learning outcomes is strengthened," as follows:

Output 1: Updated and expanded version of the HLO indicator.

2019 results: The WBG included PISA-D and PILNA countries in the database and completed the GLAD of 481 learning assessments (LLECE, PASEC, PIRLS, SACMEQ, TIMSS) with data from 120 countries from 2000 to 2016. The WBG also released PISA 2018, which provides more recent data for 80 countries and economies and the addition of two new countries, Belarus and Brunei Darussalam.

Output 2: Improved awareness and use of data among government officials.

2019 results: The WBG released a public GitHub REPO (repository of data and code) with the full harmonization code used to construct the GLAD.

Discussions have been held with donors to revisit the indicators on support for large-scale learning assessments, with important linkages to skills and jobs. It is expected that the activities outlined above would produce the following deliverables:

Output 3: Implementation of Policy Linking Toolkit in two pilot countries.

2019 results: The team conducted discussions with select WBG country teams (Ghana, Nigeria, and The Gambia) on implementing policy linking pilots. Existing assessments have been requested from the governments to conduct the test content alignment review against the GPF to assess the feasibility of policy linking. Moreover, technical inputs have been provided to the Policy Linking Toolkit, developed under the leadership of UIS and USAID.

Box 4. WBG and UIS Partnership

The partnership between UIS and the WBG Education Global Practice was signed in July 2019 via an MoU and focuses on three key areas of collaboration: (1) providing support to countries in internationally comparable measurement of student learning to strengthen their learning assessment systems; (2) leveraging of the UIS-led Item Bank Platform¹⁰ to measure early foundational learning through the WBG's GEPD—discussed in the next section; and (3) supporting education data generation and exchange (national, regional, and international).

(1) Collaborate on supporting countries with tools and technical advisory support that would foster internationally comparable measurement of student learning by:

- Strengthening their capacity for design, administration, and analysis of national large-scale assessments (NLSA)
- Identifying appropriate internationally comparable items from the UIS Item Bank, incorporating them into NLSA, and analyzing the resulting data and
- Conducting pedagogical calibration or social moderation analysis to establish internationally comparable minimum proficiency thresholds across learning assessments.



(2) Leverage the UIS Item Bank Platform in the WBG's GEPD, to develop the student and teacher assessment instruments for the GEPD school survey, which would be used to evaluate teacher content knowledge and student proficiency in mathematics and reading.

(3) Support Education Data Generation and Exchange (national, regional, and international), for

- Facilitating the management, integration, and exchange of existing education data between the two institutions
- Identifying joint protocols for the ex-post harmonization of education data and further methodological work as needed and
- Developing guidelines for the ex-ante harmonization of future education data collection and further methodological validation as needed.

¹⁰ The UIS Item Bank establishes a pool of calibrated items for countries to select and incorporate into national large-scale assessments (NLSA) to generate internationally comparable data.

Output 4: Launch of interagency initiative for closing the global learning measurement gap in internationally comparable large-scale assessments.

2019 results: An MoU was signed with UIS, which focuses on, *inter alia*, providing support to countries in internationally comparable measurement of student learning to strengthen their learning assessment systems. Initial discussions were held on the potential list of global public goods that would be developed under this initiative, including the development of a Global Item Bank Platform. The initial proposal for the latter has been developed through this partnership. Initial costing of global efforts to close the learning measurement gap has been conducted by UIS, with technical inputs from the WBG team. Discussions were also conducted on the potential governance arrangements for this interagency initiative.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges

The main challenge of this effort is its financial sustainability. Seed funding has been used to start up the documentation and reorganization process. However, data curation and documentation are costly. The WBG is mitigating this risk by combining the use of new technologies such as GitHub, which significantly reduce the cost of documentation, with an active strategy to diversify the number of products that can be derived from the same platform (for example, using the same workflow to produce both the HLO and the LP measures). Costs can be shared as multiple products are developed using the same platform.

Another substantial risk is the lack of access to the microdata, especially in the context of NLAs. This is a critical issue given the WBG's interest in going beyond a simple average, as the institution unpacks this indicator across other domains such as gender, urban-rural, socioeconomic status, and geography. The WBG's strategy is to work closely with both the LeAP and the country Task Team Leaders (TTLs) to educate them and the WBG's counterparts about the importance of the dissemination of the microdata of NLAs.

Coordination with other development partners, specially UIS, to ensure alignment of country numbers and priorities in the measurement agenda, constitutes another challenge. The WBG has two strategies in place to manage this:

- The first strategy is full methodological transparency on how the WBG's numbers are being calculated using tools such as GitHub, where both the code and data are made available to everyone.
- The second strategy has been the design of an MoU between the WBG and UIS, where Education Data Generation and Exchange is one of the main pillars (see box 4). This MoU aims to contribute toward an authorizing environment under which both the WBG and UIS can work together on this agenda.

Lessons Learned

So far, the WBG has organized more than 2,500 learning assessments of multiple countries, years, grades, and subjects. It is critical to work toward the *standardization* of different elements of this process, to ensure both economies of scale and scope to strengthen the sustainability of this effort and the usage of all these data.

Learning assessment data, especially NLAs, are incredibly underutilized and poorly documented. Development partners could work more systematically in helping countries to *better document and use NLAs*.

2. Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD)

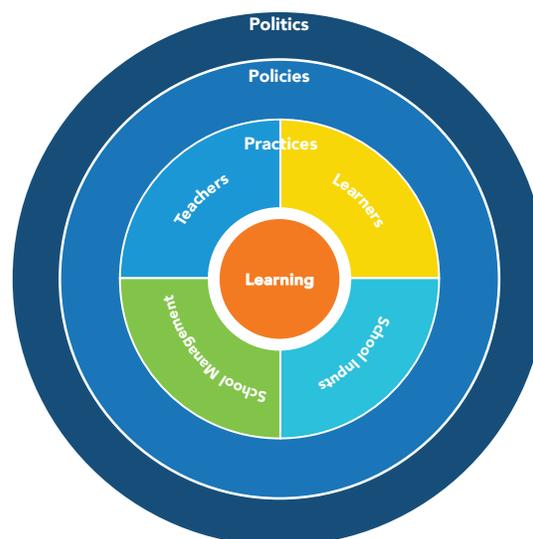
To tackle the learning crisis and improve student learning for all, countries need to know where they stand on three key dimensions: service delivery, policies, and politics. But providing such a systemwide overview requires better measurement of student learning. No single instrument pulls together data on all these areas. To fill this important measurement gap and with support from the BMGF, DFID, and the Government of Japan, the WBG launched the multidimensional Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD), which operationalizes the WDR 2018 by measuring the key drivers of learning outcomes in basic education around the world at the service delivery, policy, and politics levels. This important resource offers a strong basis for identifying priorities for investment and policy reforms that are suited to each country context, by measuring the quality of four key school-level ingredients of learning (teaching, school management, inputs and infrastructure, and prepared learners), as well as the deeper systemic drivers in policies and politics. The GEPD aims to help policy makers make real-time decisions to ensure that children are learning, by developing tools governments can use to better monitor the quality of their education systems in the short and medium terms and provide countries with new data on the most important indicators linked to better learning outcomes.

See figure 4 for the structure of the GEPD. The outcome indicators capturing learning for all (that is, learning combined with access) are at the center, ringed by indicators representing the four main school-level service-delivery factors. The next set of indicators proxies for the policies that affect each of these areas. The final set of indicators captures the political context and bureaucratic capacity of the system. The last two domains are critical to generate and sustain improvements in learning at a nationwide scale.

The GEPD is being **phased in in 13 countries across all regions**, with the goal of scaling up rapidly afterwards to all developing countries that find it useful.

The GEPD indicators and instruments have been the result of extensive collaborations across the WBG's Education, Health, Social Protection, and Governance Global Practices. The GEPD will report on 39 indicators that aim to be comprehensive (in that they holistically cover the most important drivers of learning at scale) but also focused (so that they can focus stakeholders' attention on what really is most important).

Figure 4. Structure of the GEPD





To report on these indicators, the GEPD team will rely on data collection using three instruments: a School Survey, a Survey of Public Officials, and a Policy Survey. A major objective of the GEPD project was to develop focused, cost-effective instruments and data-collection procedures, so that the GEPD can be inexpensive enough to be applied (and reapplied) in many countries after lessons from the pilots have been incorporated. The team achieved this by streamlining and simplifying existing instruments, thereby reducing the time required for data collection and training of enumerators.

Highlights of Activities and Outputs

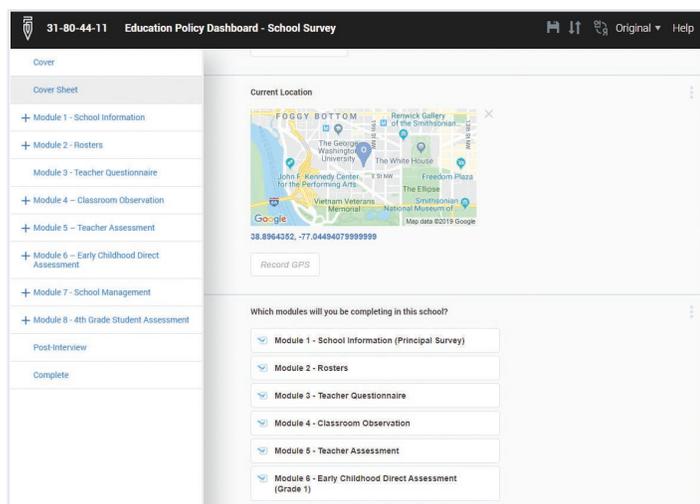
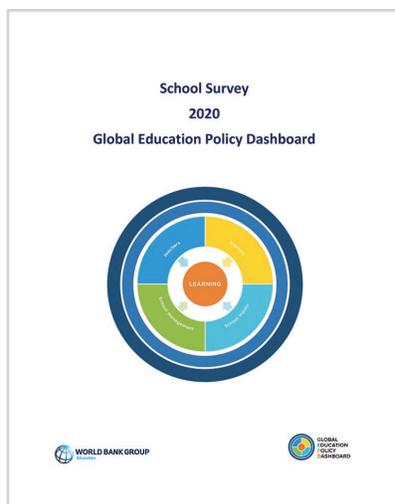
The SABER program in 2019 showed good progress to show on the GEPD project on multiple fronts, which range from the development of public goods to their deployment in the field. Some major achievements include the following:

Data Collection Instruments

The three instruments—the School Survey, Survey of Public Officials, and Policy Survey—have been developed and are streamlined, ready, and field-tested.

The School Survey has eight short modules and takes about four hours to collect per school. The development of the School Survey required the GEPD team to streamline existing instruments such as the Service Delivery Indicators (SDIs), Measuring Early Learning and Quality Outcomes (MELQOs), and SABER Service Delivery (SD). It has also involved extensive psychometric analyses, the design of new questionnaires (for school management and others), and the introduction of many innovations to reduce time and cost. The team is also working with UIS to strengthen student and teacher assessment instruments for the School Survey to evaluate student proficiency in mathematics and reading as well as teacher content knowledge, respectively.

The Survey of Public Officials includes four short modules and takes 40 to 60 minutes per interview. The development of this Survey represents the first direct application of the innovative work of the Bureaucracy Lab to a specific sector. As part of this process, new questions and indicators have been generated, and psychometric analysis was conducted on existing questions.



In the case of the *Policy Survey*, data collection is done by a consultant via legislative review (with some de facto information coming from the School Survey). To develop the Policy Survey, the GEPD team carried out extensive literature reviews and streamlined existing SABER instruments from the previous phase, such as SABER teachers.

These three surveys are available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Kinyarwanda, French, and Arabic. They are currently being translated into Urdu and Amharic.

Training Materials

The GEPD team has also created several training materials that are ready to use in various languages. These include survey manuals, logistics guides, training presentations, and agendas. The team is currently exploring the creation of online resources to allow enumerators to be trained online, which would make it possible for other partners and country counterparts to use the instruments on their own.

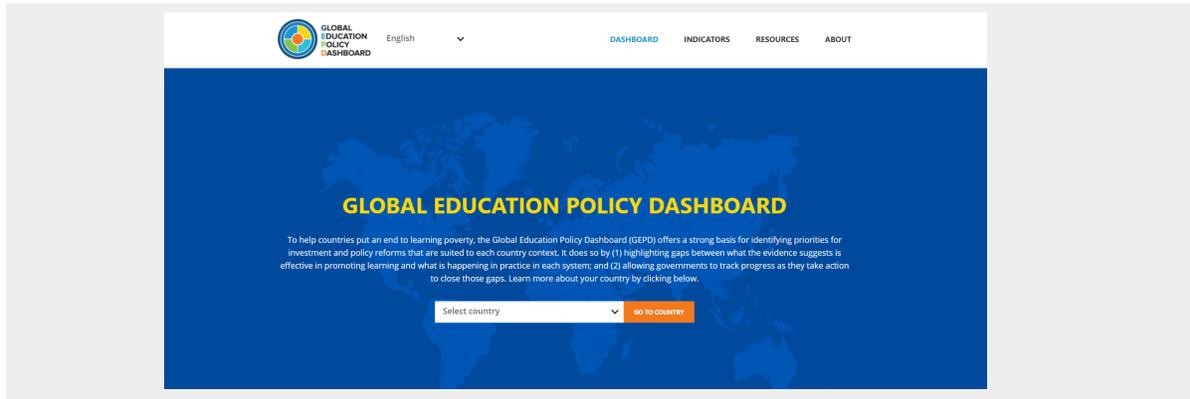
Programming and Data Processing

All instruments have been programmed in the WBG's software Survey Solutions in multiple languages. As data are collected, they are automatically uploaded to a secure server that allows the GEPD team to check the quality of the data as they come in. The processing of data and the calculation of indicators is automated. All the tools and software packages that are being used in the process going from data collection to data reporting are free and open source, which will allow for easier and faster scale up as countries and partners will be able to use the GEPD materials on their own.

Dissemination Materials

Aside from developing the necessary materials for training enumerators and collecting, processing, and reporting the data, the GEPD team has also worked on developing the materials that will be made available to enhance the usefulness of the data. One of them is a GEPD Booklet, which describes the initiative, instruments, and detailed information on each of the indicators that are part of the GEPD. This information includes the measurement approach, the literature behind it, the source, sample questions, and other relevant information. Similarly, a technical note is being

written to outline aspects of the sampling, psychometric analyses, and computation of indicators. Other documents include an R&D Brief and specific topic-based briefs. To disseminate the data collected as well as all these resources, a website containing the dashboard interface has been constructed to host all resources as well as the actual data visualization—it has been constructed in such a way that it will pull the data for the indicators directly from the WBG Indicators API, which again results in savings in cost and time.



Research and Development

The GEPD is enabling the piloting of new areas of measurement. In particular, the team is developing instruments to measure and report on each of the following:

- *Socioeconomic background*—A questionnaire has been developed and was piloted in Jordan. The goal is to explain some of the within-school differences in performance, by linking socioeconomic background with the performance on the 4th grade student learning assessment.
- *Curriculum quality*—A questionnaire has been developed and is being revised before piloting it. The questionnaire asks teachers to assess the availability, quality, and usefulness of the curriculum and textbooks used in school.
- *EdTech readiness index*—With the financial and technical support of Omidyar Network, the GEPD is prototyping an EdTech Readiness Index that could be used to inform countries of where they stand on EdTech. It will measure the extent to which education technologies, as well as the efforts of multiple actors within a larger EdTech ecosystem, are integrated with broader education system policies and practices (such as teacher training, curriculum, and infrastructure) and therefore the extent to which investments in EdTech are likely to bear fruit.
- *Socioemotional skills*—With the financial support of the LEGO Foundation, the GEPD will pilot a set of items to measure and report on socioemotional skills. The items are being developed by other members of the Global Engagement and Knowledge (GEAK) unit in collaboration with the GEPD team.
- *Calibrated learning assessments*—In collaboration with UIS, the GEPD will improve the learning assessment included as part of the School Survey to ensure that the assessments are aligned with the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF). The GPF defines the minimum proficiency levels that learners are expected to obtain in both reading and mathematics at the end of each of grades 2 through 6.

Field Work

The WBG is making efforts to connect the GEPD initiative with the work of local partners as well as government initiatives.

Pre-pilots—The GEPD Instruments were pre-piloted in Mozambique and Peru in mid-2019. These pre-pilots allowed for the refining of instruments as well as the design of appropriate logistical guides for field work.

Phasing of the GEPD—The GEPD was phased in in Peru in September 2019 (see box 5) and in Jordan in December 2019. In February 2020, the GEPD will be phased in in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Rwanda with teams currently or soon to be in the field. The GEPD team will continue to work on its phasing in in the remaining countries in coordination with the country counterparts. See box 6 for more information.

Potential additional countries—While the GEPD is working on phasing in the GEPD in 13 countries, demand has continued to grow among countries outside of that group. The GEPD team continues to present the initiative to countries that may want to participate with their own funding. Some of these cases include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Ghana, and Zimbabwe.



Box 5. Reporting Back from Peru—GEPD’s First Country

Peru was the first country where the GEPD was phased in. The collection and availability of the dashboard data are very timely for Peru, as they coincide with the preparation of two projects to support investment in human capital: a Development Policy Loan and an Investment Project Financing.

“The level of granularity and volume of data collected by the dashboard initiative helps us in identifying key bottlenecks in human capital policy areas, understand what explains these bottlenecks, and provide an in-depth analysis for the government to make evidence-based policy decisions and improve the implementation of/compliance with norms, programs, and so on.” —Renata Freitas, Senior Economist at the WBG

Although Peru has a vast availability of data, the GEPD provides much needed value added by encompassing a collection of data that have been shown to matter for learning, data supported by a robust conceptual framework and an extensive literature review that have identified areas of focus for larger improvement (much work has been done behind the design of the data collection tools to understand what was important to measure and how to measure it). The dashboard also provides data analysis and reports on important indicators, which is an important part of the work. Thus, the dashboard data help focus on what matters for learning and provide just-in-time technical support to Peru’s Ministry of Education (MINEDU).

Training of enumerators started in mid-August 2019, and data collection was completed by the end of September. The implementation did not experience major complications, so the objectives were met successfully.

Training—Forty-five enumerators and six TTLs were trained for two weeks. It took one week to apply the School Survey, and one week for the Survey of Public Officials.

Field work—Twenty teams in total went to the field. A total of 205 schools were visited and 200 public officials were interviewed. Data collection lasted five weeks.

Data—The data were processed and highlighted the main bottlenecks in Peru’s education system. In all, the set of indicators explained 78 percent of the between-school variation in learning outcomes. The data will be presented to the government in a stakeholder validation at the end of February 2020.

Uses—The data have been linked to several initiatives and will be used as baseline and to monitor progress on them. Examples include a WBG’s Investment Project Financing (IPF) and a central government initiative to modernize the decentralized bureaucracy. The government is also exploring the potential use of the GEPD instruments and methodology as part of their regular monitoring.



Box 6. Leveraging the GEPD to Maximize Benefits

For participating countries, the GEPD offers a unique source of evidence that offers much needed information on the alignment of the education system toward learning for all. But the benefits of participating go beyond simply offering evidence. The dashboard offers countries and development partners with the opportunity to link policy to evidence and build capacity along the way. Potential benefits of participating in the GEPD vary from country to country, but the three examples highlighted below offer a sense of how the dashboard is engaging with countries to maximize benefits.

Ghana—In Ghana, aside from offering valuable evidence to inform policy, the GEPD is providing a unique and timely opportunity to build capacity. As the government is embarking in the creation of its own accountability dashboard as well as a set of harmonized instruments to collect information nationwide, the GEPD is being leveraged to facilitate this process. The GEPD is informing the creation of harmonized instruments (including a harmonized classroom observation tool), the framework and indicators that will compose the national accountability dashboard, and the procedures that will be used to collect the information.

Jordan—In Jordan, the GEPD is strengthening local efforts because the data collected through the dashboard are not captured by the standard EMIS or by the school mapping system. One example is the GEPD's early-learner assessment, which assesses the literacy, numeracy, socioemotional, and executive function skills of children upon entering primary school. This indicator is being used as a baseline and for the monitoring of the newly introduced policy that added kindergarten to compulsory education. The Ministry is also using this assessment as the first input in the development of their own assessment to integrate into regular monitoring.

Mozambique—In Mozambique, the GEPD is being used as a valuable input to set priorities for the implementation of the new Education Sector Plan (ESP) by providing information on key quality aspects of service delivery and existence of policies, as well as the implementation capacity of the bureaucracy. The GEPD data are being used as baseline and as the source of monitoring information for such an ESP.

Partnerships

Over the past year, the GEPD team has also built important partnerships to strengthen the work of the GEPD. Notably, the Government of Japan contributed US\$1 million to the initiative in August 2019, which will cover part of GEPD's Phase 3 as well as additional costs associated with Phases 1 and 2. Omidyar Network has contributed US\$472,000 for the prototyping of an EdTech Readiness Index that will be piloted through the GEPD. The LEGO Foundation is covering the cost of developing a new approach for measuring socioemotional skills, which will be piloted through the GEPD initiative.

In addition, technical and strategic collaborations have also been promoted to enhance the reach and scope of the GEPD initiative. A good example of this is the work with UIS,¹¹ which is allowing the team to refine the student assessment included in the GEPD School Survey to link it with the GPF. Another partnership worth noting is the one being coordinated with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), which will allow the GEPD team to directly present the initiative and emphasize its importance to the technical staff of numerous ministries of education in Sub-Saharan Africa through a workshop being co-organized with the WBG. The team is also coordinating with the GPE to link the GEPD with the development and monitoring of Education Sector Plans.

Finally, the GEPD team is also collaborating with other teams within the WBG to strengthen coordinated efforts. Two engagements to highlight are the collaboration with the SDI team, as well as the collaboration with the Human Capital team in charge of developing the HCI Compass. The latter is closely aligned with the GEPD and simply highlights the need to monitor the GEPD indicators. In the case of SDI, the teams are coordinating to go jointly to the field in a number of countries, including Madagascar and Senegal. In the case of the HCI Compass, the framework being used for the Compass has been developed with inputs from the GEPD team. Additionally, the HCI Compass guidance note will refer to the GEPD for actual data, methodology, and description of indicators.

Progress toward Results

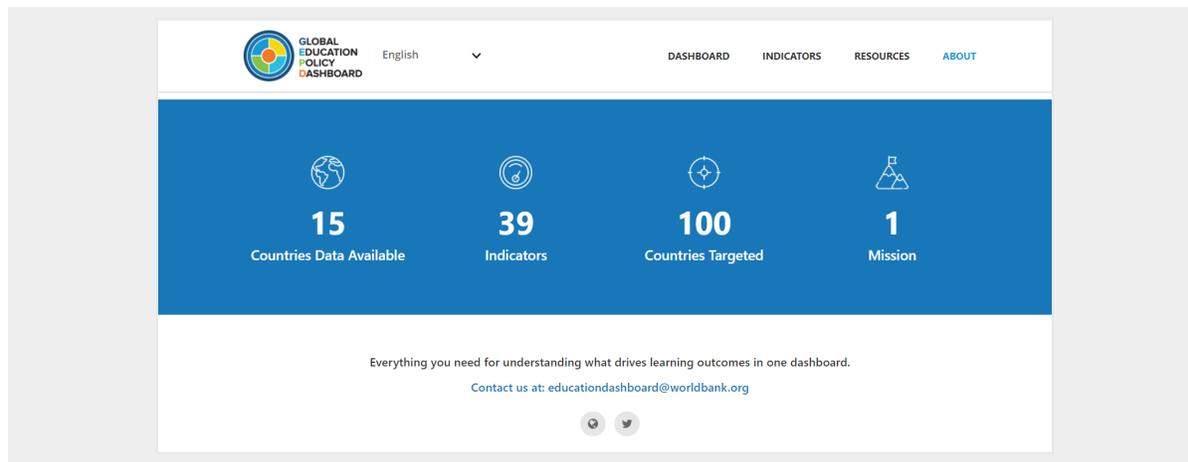
The SABER-UF Results Framework has been updated for the three outputs corresponding to the GEPD's outcome "The Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD) is being used by governments to track education system performance, and data has prompted evidence-based debate about policy direction," as follows:

Output 1: Draft the GEPD, with the complete set of indicators.

2019 results:

- Drafted a GEPD Booklet that describes all its indicators as well as the measurement approach.
- Finalized the three instruments—the School Survey, Survey of Public Officials, and Policy Survey—which are being used in multiple languages.
- Drafted a memo for each of the analytical questions outlined in the milestones to flesh out how the GEPD team is incorporating them into the work.
- Developed and tested the field manual, terms of reference (ToRs) for survey firms, data collection protocols, and other training materials in the field (most are available in multiple languages).
- Finalized the GEPD's design and developed a website to report data in different layers and to provide drill-down and comparison options. The team is now working on making the website available in multiple languages. Once data are available for two countries and the website is available in multiple languages, two Listening Labs will take place. They will be held in two locations (one middle-income country and one low-income country) in April–May 2020.

¹¹ The UIS is one of the main sources of measurement data for the WBG's Education Global Practice. The WBG has published more than 3,000 indicators provided by the UIS under the WBG's EdStats online platform.



Output 2: Pilot the GEPD in five countries with existing data and in eight countries with new data.

2019 results:

- The initial set of countries were selected (Ethiopia, Ghana, Jordan, Lao PDR, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Pakistan–Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan–Punjab, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, and Ukraine) and communicated to partners (DFID, BMGF, and the Government of Japan) in the first half of 2019.
- Pre-piloted the GEPD in Mozambique and Peru.
- Phased the GEPD in Jordan and Peru. The team expects to phase in the GEPD in six additional countries by June 2020 (Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Pakistan–Punjab, and Rwanda). The dates for the remaining countries are being coordinated with the country counterparts.

Output 3: Expand coverage to at least 15 countries during the duration of the phasing in and enable scale-up.

2019 results:

- Ongoing conversations about several countries considering cofinancing the data collection effort (Bosnia, Madagascar, and Senegal).
- Developed all training materials, which have been used in Jordan, Mozambique, Peru, and Rwanda.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges

Through the two pre-pilots in Mozambique and Peru, the GEPD team was able to identify key aspects of the *field work protocols* that could be improved to reduce time, costs, and data quality problems. These include the specification of guidelines for interviewee replacements, assessing students in a group setting, best practices for when and how to interview/assess teachers, programming of certain questions and modules, and protocol for assessing children with disabilities, among others.

The team is periodically contacted with requests for information on the GEPD. These requests come from partners, countries, and other WBG teams. The GEPD team anticipates that the requests may increase after the launch of the GEPD website, and for that reason it is working on developing *online training materials* to be able to meet that demand.

Regarding the *timeline of field work*, the phasing in of the GEPD is slower than originally anticipated. The delays in field work are primarily due to ministerial or WBG team transitions, and secondarily to coordinating with other data collection efforts. However, the timeline for SABER's Phase 2 remains largely the same, and the team still expects to complete most of the data collection by the end of 2020.

Lessons Learned

Addressing the aspects of the field work protocols that could be improved in the Peru pre-pilot has resulted in many *innovations* that enabled the team to phase in the GEPD in Peru without encountering significant problems and meeting the objective of collecting all data in less than one school day (four hours).

The pre-pilots also gave valuable feedback in terms of the length of the questionnaires being used and areas where further streamlining was needed. These lessons were incorporated before the phasing in of the GEPD in Peru. The most notable example of this process is the *streamlining of the Survey of Public Officials*, which was reduced by a third after the pre-pilots based on the experience and the feedback from the field. The GEPD team will continue to check the usefulness of the questions and other issues once data are available for more countries.

Although the developing of online training materials was originally planned for SABER's Phase 3, the team has realized that for *better implementation and faster scale up*, it needs to be brought forward. The team is exploring ways of carrying out that task in a *more cost-effective* way than originally estimated.

Finally, the GEPD team has built in some *flexibility* in the order of the activities to ensure that most of the data collection is completed in SABER's Phase 2. Whereas the original plan structured activities sequentially (field work in 2019, computation of indicators in early 2020, stakeholder validations in mid-2020), the GEPD team is now carrying out these activities in parallel to allow each country to have its own timeline. Although the expectation continues to be the completion of all data collection in the 13 countries by the end of 2020, the team has proposed to revise the Results Framework to outline that at least 10 countries will be completed in 2020 and the remainder will be completed in 2021. This is just a cautious adjustment in case

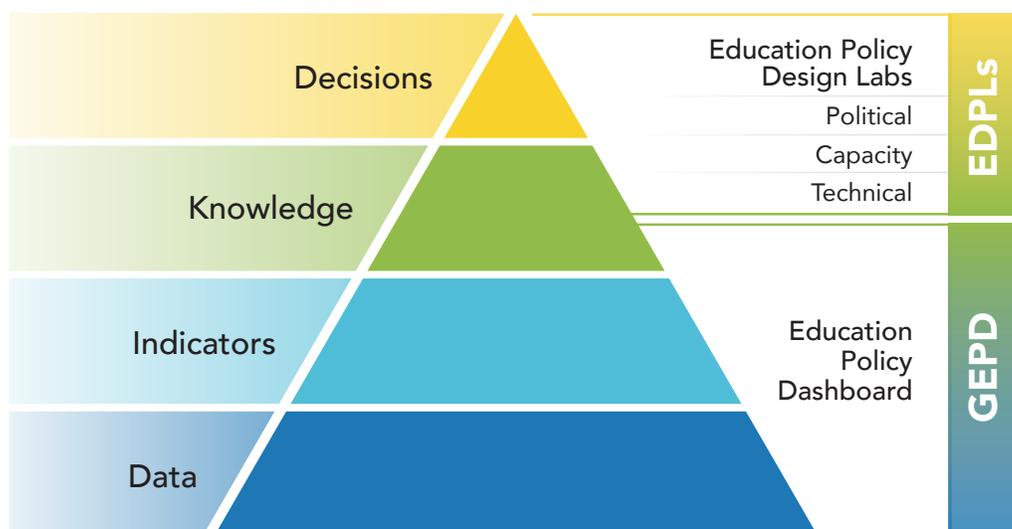
unforeseen delays arise in one to three countries in which conversations with the government are still ongoing (as of January 29, 2020).

3. Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs)

To help policy makers and stakeholders to better prioritize reforms, policies, and investments aimed at improving a country’s learning outcomes, SABER is working on the development of Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs) for governments to apply to education policy decision making. This activity will offer a systematic approach that not only identifies the most binding constraints in education systems, but also details actionable steps for decision makers to address and remove such constraints. This will be country specific and will complement the GEPD. The EPDL for each country will incorporate the best national and international available information (derived from, for example, the GEPD, HCI, and HLO) and knowledge from country and thematic education experts through system and design thinking clinics.

The EPDLs and the GEPD are interrelated initiatives: while the GEPD (showcased in the previous section) provides a parsimonious snapshot and monitoring tool of existing gaps in factors deemed necessary for learning outcomes around countries’ political commitment, quality of policies, and service delivery in education, the EPDL can be used in conjunction with available information (from the GEPD and other sources) to guide the identification of the most binding constraints to learning and the selection of interventions to tackle those binding constraints in a given country context. Figure 5 illustrates how these two activities complement one another.

Figure 5. Relationship between the EPDLs and the GEPD



Highlights of Activities and Outputs

- Developed an initial protocol for EPDL clinics, including scripted meetings and workshops. This protocol was tested with one country team, the Democratic Republic of Congo, in June 2019. The principal objective of this exercise was to identify the main binding constraints for the education sector, discuss the root causes of those, and initiate a discussion on potential priority areas for action.
- Created a case study using Fishbone Analysis to facilitate the discussion of the root causes and prioritization to tackle Learning Poverty (see figure 6).
- Created a template for what would be defined as the EPDL package. The objective of this package is to provide the team with a summary of the outcome of the EPDL clinic, including a visual representation of the discussion that took place using a Fishbone Analysis.
- Created a template for a benchmarking exercise of selected critical indicators discussed during the clinic. These indicators were organized around Tier I (outcome) and Tier II (output) and were selected due to their relevance during the clinic (see figure 7).
- Conducted system analysis of the underlying assumption of the GEPD, and created a visual representation using System Thinking tools (see figures 8 and 9 with examples).

Figure 6. Fishbone Analysis to Illustrate a Case Study

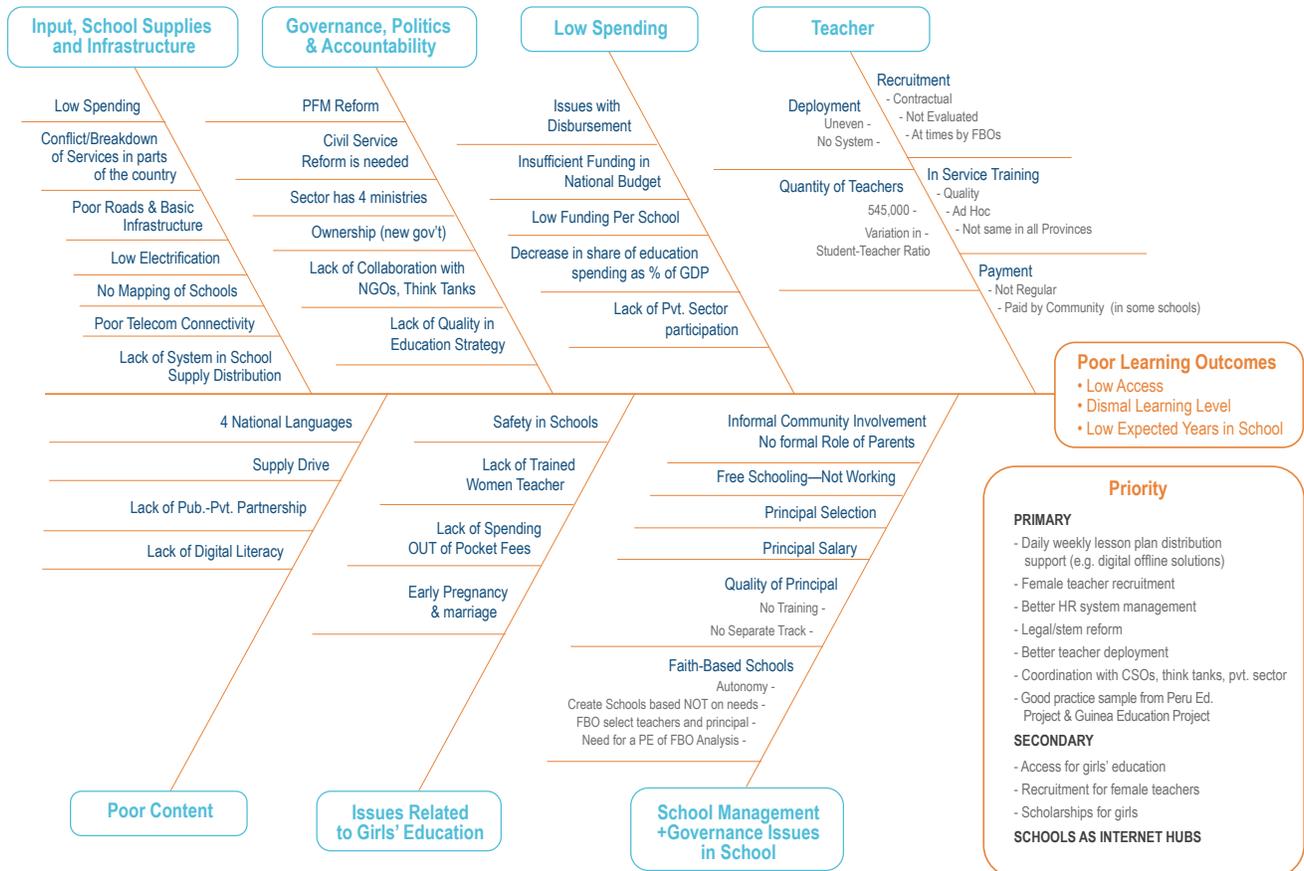


Figure 7. Illustration of Benchmarking Tools

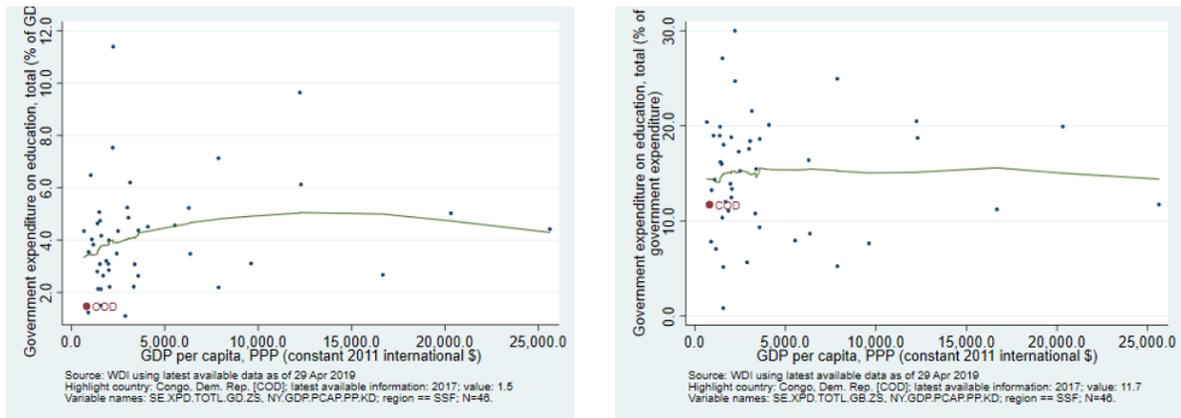


Figure 8. The Wiring: Making Explicit Links between Different Elements in the Education System

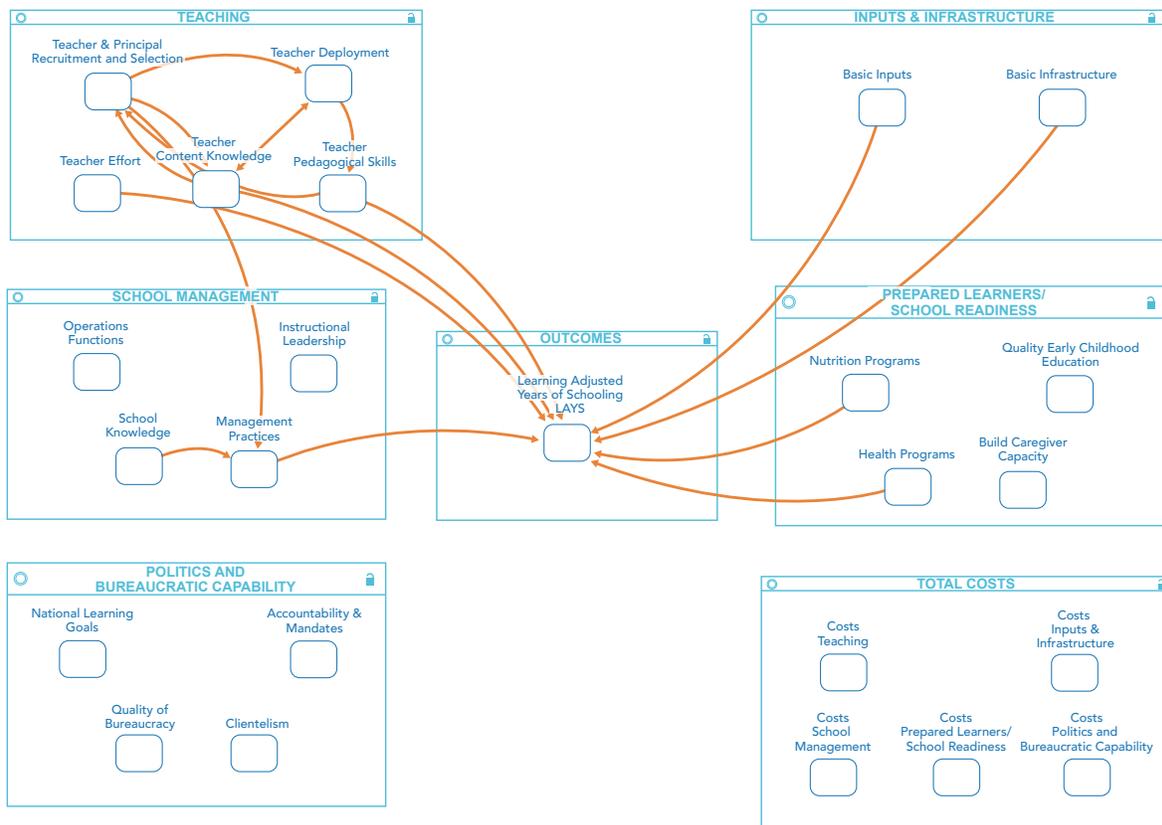
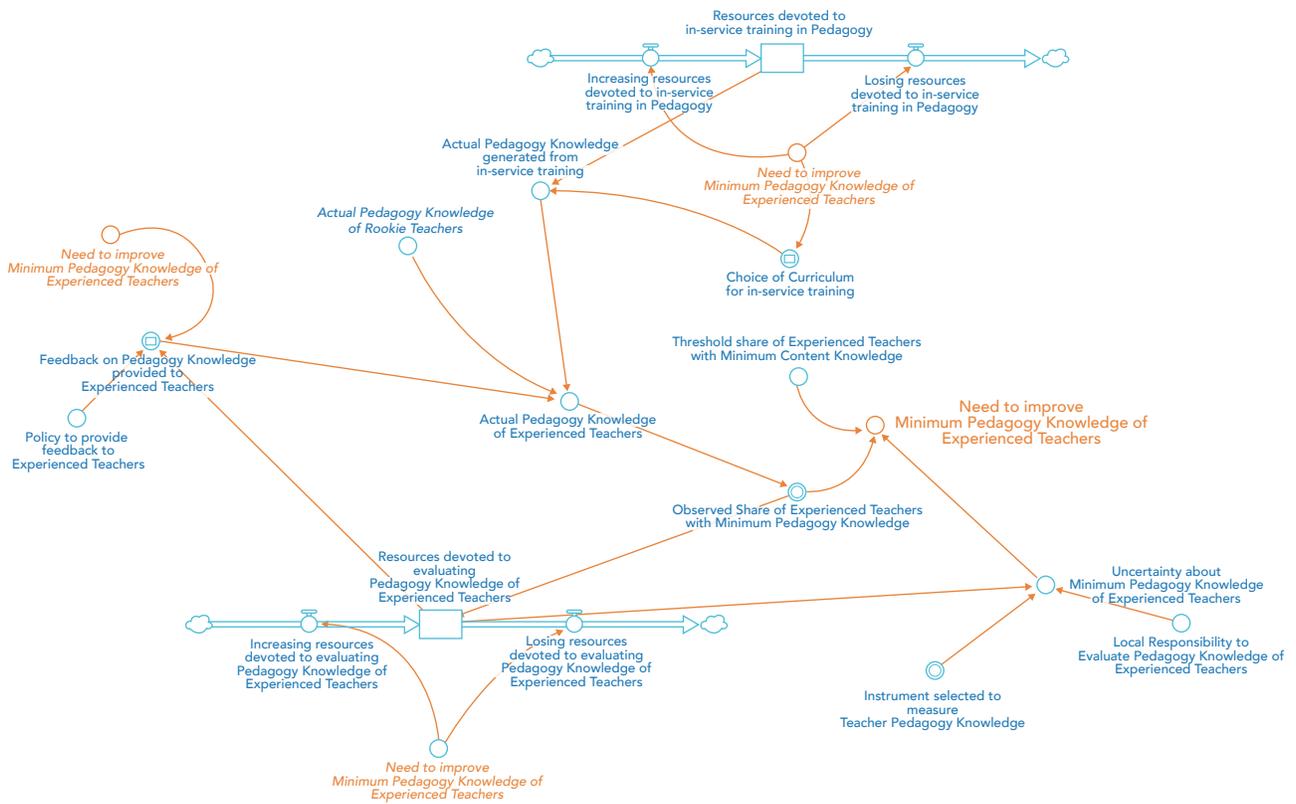


Figure 9. Building Understanding for Each Separate Element in the Education System (i.e., Pedagogy Knowledge)



Progress toward Results

The SABER-UF Results Framework has been updated for two of the three outputs (the third one does not apply) corresponding to the EPDLs' outcome "Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs) are being used by policy makers and task teams to identify binding constraints in the education systems and priority areas," as follows:

Output 1: Development of methodological guidelines and associated database with pilots from the education rapid assessment tool.

2019 results:

- Delivered a workshop with the Democratic Republic of Congo Education Team, including workshop preparation, session facilitation, and the report to the team summarizing the main agreements
- Engaged with other development partners, such as the IAEE, GPE, DFID, and USAID, on the design of the clinics and how to bring alignment across other ongoing initiatives.

Output 2: Development of an interactive dashboard.

2019 results: Initial dashboards and tools created.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges

The experience from the EPDL workshop delivered with the DRC Education Team stresses the importance of having *champions in country* that can own and lead the process of prioritization and give legitimacy to the process.

To be effective, the discussions in the context of the workshops need to be confidential, so that stakeholders feel sufficiently comfortable to have an open and frank conversation regarding the problems and solutions. However, it is quite challenging to strike the proper balance between the documentation and dissemination of the workshop findings, while preserving the confidentiality of the participants and their own views.

Lessons Learned

Teams have views on what has been done in different countries. It is critical to start the workshop by *listening to their views* and not imposing any preconceived assumption regarding what should be done.



Financial Highlights

As of January 27, 2020, the SABER UF MDTF had two donors—BMGF and DFID—who had committed to financing US\$4.88 million to support the new phase of the SABER program. From a total of US\$3.66 million of paid-in contributions during the reporting period, US\$3.65 million (almost 100 percent) has been allocated to approved initiatives (GCLO, GEPD, and EPDLs), and US\$1.47 million (40 percent) had been disbursed by January 27, 2020. An additional US\$0.3 million has been committed for implementation of program activities but not yet disbursed; thus, the available uncommitted funds as of January 27, 2020, were about US\$1.85 million (50 percent of total receipts). Total outstanding development partner commitments are US\$1.2 million. Finally, there is a financing gap of US\$0.4 million (GBP323,000), which is expected to be approved by DFID in early 2020.

The table below provides more details and the status of contributions.

Table 1. SABER UF TF—Financial Status (as of January 27, 2020)

	US\$
Funds Committed by Development Partners	\$4,877,635
BMGF	\$2,574,469
DFID	\$2,303,166
Funds Received from Development Partners	\$3,655,173
BMGF	\$1,752,007
DFID	\$1,903,166
Total Disbursements	\$1,473,902
Total Funds Committed	\$326,848
Funds Available for Commitment	\$1,854,423
Outstanding Development Partner Commitments	\$1,222,462
BMGF	\$822,462
DFID	\$400,000*

*USD based on current exchange rate—for £310K (unpaid contributions).



Looking Ahead— Plans for Next Period

The new **SABER initiatives** presented above intend to help identify critical education policy gaps by providing a framework to analyze and strengthen education systems' performance. More recently, SABER has helped harmonize learning outcomes to track the key drivers of learning and help policy makers with better decision making.

The WBG will continue to support an action-oriented agenda in research and innovation related to foundational skills, to further explore the knowledge and implementation gaps in policy interventions to improve literacy in low- and middle-income countries. Scalable impact evaluations, rapid assessments of existing evidence, and lessons from program implementation processes will be used to provide client countries with timely and evidence-based advice.



Following are the **work plans for each of the activities under the SABER-UF for 2020** in connection with the Results Framework:

Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO):

- Release TIMSS-2019, LLECE 2019, and PASEC 2019 in the fall 2020 and spring 2021. This is apart from the additions mentioned in the section on GCLO.
- Expand the GLADs to the early grades and to early secondary by including the PISA, PISA-D, and PILNA in this harmonization.
- Prepare an interagency proposal in coordination with UIS for closing the global learning measurement gap in internationally comparable large-scale assessments, which would include a comprehensive and coherent 10-year work program, a set of clearly defined public goods to be delivered (including the Global Item Bank Platform), costing, financing facility, and implementation arrangements.
- Finalize the discussions with select WBG country teams on interest in participating in policy linking pilots, conduct reviews of feasibility of policy linking for existing assessments, and identify the two countries for policy linking pilots. These two pilots will be conducted and lessons learned from them will feed into the Policy Linking Toolkit.

Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD):

- *Phase in the GEPD*—field work in the remaining countries will continue during 2020 and early 2021.
- Streamline instruments as data come in.
- Seek feedback via Listening Labs and Stakeholder Validations.
- Refine documents and website before making them public.
- Continue to work on the five R&D innovations listed earlier in the GEPD section.
- Foster partnerships, especially to secure funding for GEPD's Phase 3.
- Develop online training materials for the GEPD instruments.

Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs):

- Replicate the clinic in at least three countries for which the team will have data from the GEPD (options include Ethiopia, Jordan, Mozambique, Peru, and Pakistan-Punjab).
- Continue preliminary conversations with teams working on complex topics, such as the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, or activities that are multisectoral, such as ECD. In both cases, the WBG Education team has approached the EPDL team and would like to explore the possibility of introducing a Systems approach through the EPDLs in their operations.
- Use the Systems approach and EPDL to conduct an ex-post assessment of the root causes for the good and bad performance of selected municipalities on tackling Learning Poverty. The idea is to use some of the tools from the EPDL to elicit the root causes of, for example,

the success of places such as Sobral, which in 12 years moved from the 1,336th position among all 5,594 Brazilian municipalities to the first in terms of the Institution of Diploma Engineers (IDEB) in Bangladesh and Learning Poverty.

- Continue engagement with UNESCO's IIEP on the possibility of using the EPDL methodology as one of the tools for the upcoming Ethiopia sector plan, as part of an external partnership. The WBG is also planning an ADEA-WBG 2020 Technical Workshop for both an English- and French-speaking audience in Africa, in which the EPDL methodology will be presented.

SABER-UF is also expected to expand its activities in 2020 to include initiatives such as **Coach** and the **EdTech Policy Academy**. Coach is a protocol being developed that will help school leaders use Teach¹² data to provide teachers with targeted feedback to improve teacher practices. Coach will focus on helping teachers improve pedagogical techniques that are relevant to everyday classroom practices (such as redirecting student misbehavior or checking for student understanding). Through Coach, the WBG team will develop materials to help identify teachers' individual professional development needs and provide support to improve the quality of teacher-child interactions in the classroom.

To support countries to make more informed evidence-based decisions on the most appropriate and effective use of technologies, the WBG has partnered with DFID to launch the EdTech Hub, which will create a global "what works" evidence hub and research to answer two key questions: What works to spread and scale education technology interventions to deliver better learning outcomes for the poorest children in developing countries? and Which education technology and under what specific conditions present the greatest value for money?

To complement the knowledge and evidence that the EdTech Hub will produce in support of closing client country knowledge gaps, the WBG and DFID will launch a complementary initiative called the EdTech Policy Academy. The latter will foster technical capacity and engagement between policy makers and WBG/DFID staff to better inform and foster more and better-quality investments and implementation of EdTech projects to support effective teaching and learning policy implementations.

¹² Teach is an easily available classroom observation tool for individual professional development and for system diagnostics, which includes training materials and resources for data collection and for analyzing and presenting the data. It is the first tool to holistically measure what happens in the classroom by considering not just the time spent on learning but, more importantly, the quality of teacher practices; it captures instructional practices that nurture children's cognitive and socioemotional skills; and it was developed taking into account low- and middle-income countries and countries with high internal variance in school performance.



Annexes

Annex 1: SABER-UF Trust Fund Results Framework, January–December 2019

Output(s)	Indicator(s)	2019 Milestones	Results
OUTCOME 1: Global comparability of learning outcomes is strengthened			
OUTPUT 1: Updated and expanded version of HLO Global Dataset	Successful expansion of the HLO database to include other data sources	Inclusion of data coming from national assessments, PISA-D, Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), and other regional and international assessments	The team has updated and expanded the previous version of the HLO Global Dataset, by including the Programme for International Student Assessment for Development (PISA-D) and Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) countries.
	Creation, curation, and expansion of global Learning Poverty (LP) database	Inclusion of the global LP measure to the database Publication of country two-pagers on Learning Poverty Publication of code to replicate the LP measure	The team has created the LP database with data from 116 countries over 20 years, and country two-pagers on Learning Poverty for a nonexpert audience.
	Development of a sound and methodological system for regularly updating the HLO and for sharing the information the HLO has to offer	Successful development of a microdata curation and dissemination system. A brief will be developed to outline the current composition of the HLO data as well as the specifics of the curation and dissemination system.	The team has completed the Global Learning Assessment Database (GLAD) of 481 learning assessments (LLECE, PASEC, PIRLS, SACMEQ, TIMSS) with data from 120 countries from 2000 to 2016.
OUTPUT 2: Improved awareness and use of data among government officials	Successful development and dissemination of nontechnical HLO materials to increase use of HLO database	Development of documentation outlining nontechnical explanations of HLO methodology and data that could be disseminated with national and regional counterparts	The team has created a public GitHub REPO (repository of data and code) with the full harmonization code used to construct the GLAD (https://github.com/worldbank/GLAD).

Output(s)	Indicator(s)	2019 Milestones	Results
Proposed OUTPUT 3: Implementation of Policy Linking Toolkit in two pilot countries	Preparation of pilot	Discussions with select WBG country teams are conducted on implementing policy linking pilots Technical inputs are provided to the Policy Linking Toolkit	The team conducted discussions with select WBG country teams (Ghana, Nigeria, and The Gambia) on implementing policy linking pilots. Existing assessments have been requested from the governments to conduct the test content alignment review against the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF) to assess the feasibility of policy linking. Moreover, technical inputs have been provided to the Policy Linking Toolkit, developed under the leadership of UIS and USAID.
	Implementation of pilot	N.A.	N.A.
Proposed OUTPUT 4: Launch of interagency initiative for closing the global learning measurement gap in internationally comparable large-scale assessments	Development of a list of global public goods to be supported in this proposal	MoU with UIS for partnership on the learning assessment agenda signed	In July 2019, the partnership between UIS and the WBG Education Global Practice was signed via an MoU, which focuses on three key areas of collaboration: (1) providing support to countries in internationally comparable measurement of student learning to strengthen their learning assessment systems; (2) leveraging of the UIS-led Item Bank Platform to measure early foundational learning through the WBG's GEPD (see next part of annex table); and (3) supporting education data generation and exchange (national, regional, and international).
		Discussions on the content of global public goods that could be included in this proposal (e.g., Global Item Bank, consumer research guides, virtual register for donor efforts) initiated	Initial discussions were also held with UIS and the BMGF on the content of global public goods that could be included in this proposal (e.g., Global Item Bank, consumer research guides, virtual register for donor efforts). The team contributed to the development of the proposal for the Item Bank, which includes its objectives and goals, technical specifications, documentation protocol, item bank management, maintenance and operational costs, and item bank governance.
	Costing of efforts to close the measurement gap	Discussions on the initial costing exercise conducted	The team held discussions on the initial costing exercise conducted by UIS with the help of Acasus. The team provided technical inputs and proposals for the objective, scope, and costing assumptions involved in this exercise.
	Development of governance for the new interagency initiative	Discussions on the governance initiated	The team took part in the initial discussions on the potential governance arrangements of the interagency initiative for closing global learning measurement gap.

Output(s)	Indicator(s)	2019 Milestones	Results
	Support of the initiative by development partners	Initial interagency proposal presented to development partners to obtain feedback and support	The team contributed to the joint UIS-WBG presentation of the interagency initiative at a Partners' Meeting in London on January 20th. DFID, BMGF, and GPE attended the meeting in person, and USAID connected by phone. As a next step, meeting participants agreed to provide data on development partners' existing efforts in supporting the learning assessment agenda to facilitate the estimation of additional funding needed to close the global learning measurement gap. The initiative will also be consulted with a wider set of partners.

OUTCOME 2: Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD) is being used by governments to track education system performance, and data have prompted evidence-based debate about policy direction

OUTPUT 1: Draft the GEPD, with complete set of indicators	Successful creation of a validated conceptual framework for the GEPD, including the full list of indicators and the information that will feed into them	Document outlining the complete list of indicators, the final draft of questionnaires to be used in the field, and a reporting on the validation of instruments and indicators by the TAB and other experts. At the end of 2019, a brief will also be developed to reexamine key analytical questions surrounding the GEPD and its indicators (parsimony, predictive power, and cogency captured) using the available data.	All documents specified in the 2019 Milestones are drafted. The three instruments have been developed. They are streamlined, ready, and field-tested. Aside from developing the necessary materials for training enumerators, collecting data, and processing the data, the team has developed the materials that will be made available to enhance the usefulness of the data. One of them is the GEPD Booklet, which describes all the indicators as well as the measurement approach. Other documents that have been drafted include a GEPD Implementation Brief, an R&D Brief, and a series of memos for each of the analytical questions outlined in the milestones.
	Completion of all implementation resources for the pilot countries and other potential countries	Preparation of the GEPD implementation package, including field manual, ToRs for survey firms, data collection protocols, and other relevant resources.	The team has created several field and training materials that are currently being used in the field. These include survey manuals, logistics guides, training presentations, agendas, ToRs, and other key protocols. Most of the documents are available in multiple languages.
	Realization of a user-friendly GEPD interface and outside the WBG	Draft of the GEPD interface developed.	The GEPD interface has been developed. Its design is more complex than originally anticipated, which is why it was finalized in November 2019 and its cost had to be covered by the Government of Japan. Given the recommendations from the TAB in relation to the need for this one to remain simple and to emphasize outcomes and practices, the team opted for developing a website that would allow for the data to be reported in different layers and allowing drill-down and comparison options. The website is now being adjusted for it to be available in multiple languages. Given that this has taken a longer timeframe than originally planned, the implementation of the Listening Labs will now take place in 2020.

Output(s)	Indicator(s)	2019 Milestones	Results
<p>OUTPUT 2: Pilot the GEPD in five countries' existing data and in eight countries with new data</p>	<p>Quality of country selection process</p>	<p>Confirmation of the 13 pilot countries based on the amount of government interest for the project and its objective. The list will be reported on a memo that will include the rationale for each country.</p>	<p>The countries were agreed upon and communicated to partners in the first half of 2019. The countries were selected on the basis of them being HCP countries and showing interest in what the GEPD offers.</p>
	<p>Fulfillment of phasing in of the GEPD in 13 countries</p>	<p>Pre-pilot of the GEPD in 2 countries and plan and commence its phasing in new and data-existing countries.</p>	<p>Both pre-pilots (in Mozambique and Peru) were completed in 2019. In terms of the phasing in, the nature of the work in the data-existing countries has changed since the development of the Results Framework. Rather than reporting the available data, which would leave most indicators missing, the team has opted for conducting a Survey of Public Officials and a small School Survey to complement existing data. These additional efforts are being covered by the contribution of the Government of Japan. The implication for the Results Framework is that the timing has changed. The phasing in of the GEPD in data-existing countries was delayed since additional data collection is required. To ensure that the overall phasing in can be completed on time, data-existing countries and new-data countries are being implemented simultaneously. It is expected that three data-existing countries will be completed by June 2020 (Mozambique, Pakistan-Punjab, Madagascar), with the remaining two in the second half of 2020. For new existing countries, phasing in has begun and has been completed in Jordan and Peru, with the remaining countries planned for 2020.</p>
<p>OUTPUT 3: Expand coverage to at least 15 countries during the duration of the phasing in and enable scale-up</p>	<p>Country engagement to expand coverage</p>	<p>Guarantee that at least one of the eight pilot countries agrees to cofinance the data collection effort. Develop a short note to report the number of countries with cofinancing</p>	<p>Several countries are considering cofinancing the data collection effort, and the conversations are ongoing. These countries include Bosnia, Madagascar, and Senegal (not one of the 13 countries, but interested in GEPD). Madagascar has confirmed that it will finance the cost of the school survey.</p>
	<p>Development of cost-saving resources</p>	<p>Development of training materials that require at most one-week training</p>	<p>All training materials have been developed and have been used in Jordan, Mozambique, Peru, and Rwanda. The School Survey training lasts five days.</p>

Output(s)	Indicator(s)	2019 Milestones	Results
OUTCOME 3: Education Policy Design Lab (EPDLs) are being used by policy makers and task teams to identify binding constraints in the education systems and priority areas			
OUTPUT 1: Development of methodological guidelines and associated database with pilots from the education rapid assessment tool	Successful development of a validated methodological approach to set priorities and make policy decisions	Development of the first draft of the rapid assessment tool as well as an initial draft of the instructions to conduct the System and Design Thinking clinics.	The team developed an initial protocol for EPDL clinics, which was first tested when delivering a workshop with the Democratic Republic of Congo Education Team in June 2019. The clinic includes the workshop preparation, session facilitation, and the report to the team summarizing the main agreements.
	Completion of the piloting of the methodological approach to set priorities and make policy decisions in five countries	Application of the rapid assessment and the System and Design Thinking clinics in one country. For each country, a brief report will be developed outlining both: the results of the rapid assessment as well as the messages obtained through the clinics.	The team has been engaged with other development partners, such as UNESCO-IAEE, GPE, DFID, and USAID on the design of the clinics and how to bring alignment across other ongoing initiatives. The rapid assessment and the System and Design Thinking clinic were applied in the Democratic Republic of Congo, producing the documents already mentioned.
OUTPUT 2: Development of an interactive dashboard	Development of a library of benchmarking methods and data visualizations that can be used and reused across different country engagements	Complete overview of existing benchmarking methods and data sources to craft the approach and content for an interactive dashboard. The approach, content, and an overall description of the sources will be outlined in a report.	Initial dashboards and tools have been created.
OUTPUT 3: Enable replication of approach	Development of resources to allow replication	N.A.	N.A.

Annex 2: SABER Management

The governance of the WBG's SABER provides expert leadership, appropriate guidance, support, and the structure necessary to ensure that this initiative can achieve its overarching goals of improved education system analysis and performance. The underlying principles of this multilayered governance structure are transparency, efficiency, and technical leadership in the field.

SABER-UF Council of Funders: Membership in this group includes the donors to the SABER Umbrella Facility (SABER-UF), namely, DFID and BMGF. This group provides the broad strategic leadership and financial support necessary to sustain the SABER Trust Fund and, through a yearly meeting, ensures progress and sets directions for future strategic priorities. An annual report and results framework highlighting achievements under the activities in the UF are shared once a year and discussed with the group during an Annual Meeting of this body.

Education Systems Technical Advisory Board: This group consists of 15 experts on education performance, reform, management, and analysis. The Advisory Board serves as a barometer for the relevance and impact of the initiatives under the SABER-UF as a whole, both within the WBG's program and within the global development landscape. The last meeting was held in April 2019 to provide feedback on the proposed Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD) work program with a particular focus on alignment with operational and political realities and best technical knowledge in the field (see box 7).

Box 7. 2019 Technical Advisory Board Meeting

A Technical Advisory Board (TAB) Meeting was convened on April 8, 2019, to provide strategic guidance to the work of the WBG's GEPD Team. The meeting consisted of technical experts from the WBG, the BMGF, and DFID, as well as relevant policy makers and advocates on education performance, reform, management, and analysis from the TAB.

It was agreed that the GEPD can strengthen country efforts toward improving learning outcomes by meeting country demands for intermediate outcomes and by providing insights on where to act to improve outcomes. With regard to the scale-up of the GEPD, the TAB members raised the importance of considering appropriate comparator choice, the pace of the phasing in, and the creation of regional hubs as a way of igniting competition among participating countries. The GEPD team outlined the necessary considerations for a successful scale-up process and the implications of such an exercise for the local teams.

TAB members also suggested changes to the GEPD design and to the existing indicators and instruments, and provided further comments related to approaches of data collection, data integrity, sampling, scoring, and balance of de jure and de facto information, as well as specific comments on questions included in the surveys. The team incorporated the feedback received from this Advisory Board into the existing and future work programs as applicable, and has followed up individually with some TAB members for further clarification when needed and to share updates as the instruments, indicators, design, and field work have evolved over the past few months.

TAB members:

- Luis Crouch, Chief Technical Officer, RTI International
- Jorge Ferrao, Rector, Pedagogic University
- Pamela Grossman, Dean, Graduate School of Education–University of Pennsylvania
- Sean Harford, National Director, Education, Ofsted
- Susanna Loeb, Director, Annenberg Institute for School Reform
- Silvia Montoya, Director, UNESCO Institute of Statistics
- Karthik Muralidharan, Professor, University of California, San Diego
- Jean Philbert Nsengimana, Founder/CEO, IDEX Africa
- Ritva Reinikka, Director (Retired), Human Development–Africa Region–WBG
- Sara Ruto, Director, People’s Action for Learning Network
- Justin Sandefur, Senior Fellow, Center for Global Development
- Tarek Shawki, Minister of Education & Technical Education
- Rossieli Soares, Secretary of Education, São Paulo
- Jakob Svensson, Director, Institute for International Economic Studies (IIES)
- Miguel Szekely, Director, Centro de Estudios Educativos y Sociales
- George Werner, Former Minister of Education of the Republic of Liberia



Education Global Practice Management Team: The World Bank Education Global Practice Management Team is led by its Global Director. This Management Team provides the technical guidance necessary to ensure SABER priorities are in line with operational realities and needs within the WBG. This group’s feedback and guidance are critical for informing priorities from the country/regional perspective, and it will serve as the conduit between the teams under the SABER-UF and the country education teams. General SABER updates are provided to the Management Team by the Global Engagement and Knowledge (GEAK) Unit Manager.

SABER-UF Secretariat: This group comprises the World Bank Education GEAK and two staff members who manage SABER’s overall activities. The Secretariat’s main responsibility is to administer the program, including its day-to-day operations, portfolio, and related procedures and programs, monitoring and evaluation, communications and partner relations, and training. In addition, this group is responsible for the expansion of the SABER program, including through increased web presence, products, and SABER engagements and tools.

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