



SABER IN ACTION: CABO VERDE STRENGTHENING STUDENT ASSESSMENT

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Cabo Verde is a lower-middle-income country consisting of 10 islands located off the coast of West Africa. Approximately 88 percent of its population (0.5 million) lives on four of the 10 islands. The country has made substantial development progress and is currently the richest country in West Africa and the ninth richest in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2016, Cabo Verde's gross national income per capita was US\$2,970, almost six times what it was in 1982.

Cabo Verde has made significant progress in expanding access to education and has achieved nearly universal access to basic education in the past decade, with the literacy rate growing steadily. However, learning levels and learning outcomes remain relatively low: A national large-scale assessment conducted in 2010 of sixth-grade students found that the average score was 44 percent in mathematics and 39 percent in Portuguese.

SABER Engagement in Cabo Verde

The SABER Student Assessment team, working closely with the Ministry of Education, completed data collection in Cabo Verde in May and June of 2017 and produced a country report shortly thereafter. The SABER Student Assessment team found that there was:

- No ministerial unit devoted to assessing student performance
- No formal national assessment system to measure learning outcomes in a systematic manner
- And while there is an established assessment system in place that is used in classrooms, there is a large disconnect between what is being taught and assessed in the classroom and the official curriculum.

Finding: Students are not actually learning what they are supposed to be learning.



The SABER Student Assessment team presented its findings to the Ministry in September 2017 and is working with policy makers on ways to improve the country's student assessment as part of the Cabo Verde 2017–2021 Education Strategic Plan. Among the recommendations, the SABER Student Assessment team proposed that the government:

- Establish a semi-autonomous unit in charge of learning assessment
- Draft detailed curriculum standards that outline what students are expected to learn at various grade levels, particularly in language and math
- Improve teacher training, evaluation, and monitoring
- Consider participating in international student assessments.

SABER in Action

The SABER Student Assessment Cabo Verde country report was used in the preparation of policy operations. The Ministry of Education took SABER's recommendations and established an internal unit for student assessment, conducted curriculum reform to set up learning standards, supported formative assessment trainings for teachers, and created a holistic national learning outcome assessment system.

Thanks to SABER, Cabo Verde's Ministry of Education now has requested World Bank support in establishing a more effective system so that student assessment can be used as a tool to improve learning.

Lesson Learned

The Cabo Verde case demonstrated once again that SABER is a quick and cost-effective way to conduct very high level and broad education analysis, and its value lies not only in the country report itself, but also in the process of dissecting existing education policies. Furthermore, the successful policy implementation results in Cabo Verde highlighted the crucial need for SABER to give concrete recommendations that are intimately based on country-specific context, while retaining key parameters and standards.