



SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

4th READ Global Conference

May 12-16, 2014

St. Petersburg, Russian Federation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 4th Russia Education Aid for Development (READ) Global Conference took place from May 12-16, 2014 in St. Petersburg, Russia and focused on the theme of "*Measuring for Success: The role of assessment in achieving learning goals.*" The conference provided an opportunity to explore a variety of learning goals – for further study, work, and life – and the role that assessment plays in monitoring and achieving them. The conference also allowed the countries participating in READ to discuss their achievements under the program and how these serve as a foundation for attaining learning goals and ensuring success for their children. Each country team led a session at the conference to highlight their successes under READ. Teams also showcased their results at a READ exposition event.

In total, 122 participants from 19 countries attended the 2014 conference. They included representatives from the eight READ countries; global experts in the areas of assessment and learning; World Bank and other international agency staff; and government officials.

In the opening session, the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, the World Bank, and the country teams recognized the efforts of the many people who conceived, launched, and implemented the READ program and its activities. Since its inception, the program has provided an important link between assessment theory and practice, and helped inform policy dialogue on education quality and learning.

During the conference, international experts and country representatives shared their experiences in “measuring for success” at the classroom, national, and global levels. There were three main takeaways from this discussion:

1. **Measuring for Success:** Resources should be allocated to initiatives that make the most impact on learning. Measurement helps identify which initiatives are successful at achieving impact. Spending choices should be guided by the relative impact of initiatives on learning as opposed to just the volume of spending involved.
2. **Role of Assessment:** Assessment plays an important role in achieving learning goals. Classroom assessment by teachers is key in this regard. For teachers to effectively use classroom assessment as a tool for improving student learning, they need comprehensive pre- and in-service training on this topic that includes a focus on learning goals and how to collect evidence of student learning.
3. **Achieving Learning Goals:** Large-scale assessments are effective tools for measuring progress toward learning goals at the system level. High-quality national and international assessments allow countries to identify gaps in performance or the acquisition of key skills so that policy makers can target resources where most needed.

The conference concluded with the Russian Federation, World Bank, and READ country delegates reiterating their appreciation for the opportunity to come together to learn and share. The Russian Federation and the World Bank emphasized their commitment to supporting countries in building their capacity to measure learning; the country delegates expressed their gratitude for this support, and also praised the conference program, speakers, and discussions, which they found to be very informative and relevant.

CONFERENCE AGENDA



Sunday, May 11	
19:00–21:00	Welcome Reception
Monday, May 12	
8:00-9:00	Registration
9:00-9:45	Opening Remarks Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation and The World Bank
9:45-10:30	Keynote 1 Address (Global Perspective) “Ten things policymakers should know about learning goals and assessment” Andreas Schleicher, OECD
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break/Expo
11:00-12:15	Panel Discussion (Global Perspective) “Measuring learning goals post-2015” Jimin Cho, KICE (Republic of Korea); Isak Froumin, Higher School of Economics (Russian Federation); Robin Horn, CIFF (United Kingdom); Andreas Schleicher, OECD
12:15-13:30	Lunch
13:30-14:00	READ in Action: Trust Fund Program Highlights and Results Framework Marguerite Clarke, The World Bank
14:00-14:45	READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments Angola team

14:45-15:30	READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments Tajikistan team
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break/Expo
16:00-16:45	READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments Armenia team
16:45-17:30	READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments Zambia team
17:30-18:00	Wrap-up
Tuesday, May 13	
9:00-9:45	Keynote 2 Address (National Perspective) “How assessment is being used to monitor and attain learning goals in South Africa” Anil Kanjee, Tshwane University of Technology (South Africa)
9:45-11:00	Panel Discussion (National Perspective) “Countries and their learning goals – setting, tracking, achieving” Viktor Bolotov, Higher School of Economics (Russian Federation); William Boyle, The Evaluation Business (United Kingdom); Fernando Cartwright, Polymetrika International (Canada); Jimin Cho, KICE (Republic of Korea); Anil Kanjee, Tshwane University of Technology (South Africa)
11:00-11:15	Coffee Break/Expo
11:15-12:30	Developing and measuring national learning standards Fernando Cartwright, Polymetrika International (Canada) and Vincent Greaney, Independent Consultant (Ireland)
12:30-14:00	Lunch
14:00-14:30	READ in Action: Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS) and CISED Program Highlights and Results Tigran Shmis, The World Bank and Artem Stepanenko, CISED (Russian Federation)
14:30-15:15	READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments Mozambique team
15:15-16:00	READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments Kyrgyz Republic team

16:00-16:15	Coffee Break/Expo
16:15-17:00	READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments Ethiopia team
17:00-17:45	READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments Vietnam team
17:45-18:00	Wrap-up
Wednesday, May 14	
9:00-9:45	Keynote 3 Address (School/Classroom Perspective) “Assessing learning goals in the classroom” Ban Har Yeap, Marshall Cavendish Institute (Singapore)
9:45-11:00	Panel Discussion (School/Classroom Perspective) “Why doesn’t it happen? What’s missing?” Ban Har Yeap, Marshall Cavendish Institute (Singapore); William Boyle, The Evaluation Business (United Kingdom); Vincent Greaney, Independent Consultant (Ireland), Marina Pinskaya, Higher School of Economics (Russian Federation)
11:00-11:15	Coffee Break/Expo
11:15-12:30	Wrap-up/Concluding Remarks READ Countries, World Bank, Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-17:00	School and other Educational Site Visits
Thursday, May 15	
9:00-17:00	Workshops *Large-Scale Assessment *Classroom Assessment
Friday, May 16	
9:00-17:00	Workshops *Large-Scale Assessment *Classroom Assessment

MONDAY, MAY 12

Keynote 1 Address (Global Perspective): “Ten things policymakers should know about learning goals and assessment”

Keynote Speaker

Andreas Schleicher, Acting Director for Education and Skills and Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Secretary-General, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

In this presentation, Dr. Schleicher outlined ten things that policymakers should know about learning goals and assessment based on his extensive experience overseeing international assessments of student achievement.

Key Points

1. *Benchmark globally.* In a rapidly-changing global economy, the key to success is no longer just to improve by national standards, but to draw on the most advanced educational experiences, which can be identified only through assessment against global standards.
2. *Do not sacrifice validity gains for efficiency gains.* In today’s economy, the reproduction of subject-matter content is no longer sufficient. The world economy no longer rewards for what one knows, but for what one can do with his or her knowledge.
3. *Monitor excellence and equity jointly.* The impact that social background has on learning varies – in some countries, success in school depends significantly on where students come from, while in others, the dependency is weaker. Data show that the excellence-equity choice does not necessarily exist, and that policies and practices matter.
4. *Spend wisely to make a difference.* It is not more money, but better spending choices that make a difference (e.g., high-performing education systems consistently prioritize teaching quality over class size).
5. *Keep track of “added value”.* The country where students go to class matters more than the social class students come from. Assessments provide a data-rich resource for combatting social inequalities by offering information at the national- and school-levels to inform strategies to support learning.
6. *Believe that all children can achieve.* High-performing systems employ universal education standards and personalization as the approaches to heterogeneity in the student body, as opposed to the belief that students have different destinations to be met with different expectations.
7. *Have clear ambitious goals that are shared across the system and aligned with high-stakes gateways and instructional systems.* High-performing systems have a well-established delivery chain through which curricular goals translate into instructional systems, instructional practices, and student learning (intended, implemented and achieved).
8. *Build capacity at the point of delivery.* High-performing systems attract, develop, and retain high-quality teachers and school leaders, and ensure a work organization in which these key

stakeholders can use their potential. These systems ensure that teaching is an attractive profession.

9. *Align autonomy with accountability.* Incentive structures should be aligned for students and for teachers. Instruments should be introduced to manage and share knowledge and spread innovation, and to ensure communication within the system and with stakeholders around it.
10. *Invest resources where they can make the most difference.* Resources should be aligned with the key challenges (e.g., attracting the most talented teachers to the most challenging classrooms), and spending choices should be effective, focusing on the impact of outcomes as opposed to the volume of spending (e.g., prioritize high-quality teachers over smaller classes).

High-performing countries have ensured alignment of policies across all aspects of the system, coherence of policies over sustained periods of time, and consistency and fidelity of implementation of policies without excessive control.

Panel Discussion 1 (Global Perspective): “Measuring learning goals post-2015”

Moderator

Marguerite Clarke, Senior Education Specialist, The World Bank

Discussants

Jimin Cho, Senior Researcher - Head of Global Division, Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE) (Republic of Korea)

Isak Froumin, Academic Director, Higher School of Economics (Russian Federation)

Robin Horn, Director, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) (United Kingdom)

Andreas Schleicher, Acting Director for Education and Skills and Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Secretary-General, OECD

The panelists in this session offered different viewpoints on what all children should learn, how countries should measure these learning goals, and how global progress towards the goals can be measured.

Key Points

This panel session discussed the questions: (1) What should all children learn?, and (2) How do we measure global progress toward that learning? In regards to the first question, the discussion highlighted that, in general, children should learn a range of behavioral and cognitive knowledge and skills that lead to effective engagement in the world. However, there is not one simple answer to the ideal set of knowledge, skills, and abilities that children should acquire.

During the session, the panel recognized that various global frameworks have been developed to address this question. The panel discussed one such framework that has been proposed by the Learning Metrics Task Force convened by Brookings Institution and UNESCO Institute for

Statistics. This framework identifies seven key areas for learning, from early childhood through primary and post-primary education. These key areas include physical well-being, social and emotional, culture and the arts, literacy and communication, learning approaches and cognition, numeracy and math, science and technology.

The panel pointed out that regardless of the framework used, it is important that certain areas of knowledge and learning are emphasized at different stages of a child's development. For example, by the end of primary school, children should be able to solve age-appropriate problems, understand how to apply concepts that they have acquired in school to real world settings, be able to interact effectively and respect others, and have inhibitory control and the ability to make decisions.

The panel noted that international large-scale assessments are very effective for measuring global progress on learning goals as they allow countries to identify and track which segments of their population have not benefitted from education. They also noted that measuring outcomes at the country level allows countries to guide the education system to perform better and to evaluate the extent to which the national curriculum has been learned. Good national and international assessments allow countries to identify gaps in performance and the acquisition of basic skills in order to allow policy makers to target efforts and resources where they are needed the most. These assessments also allow countries to compare themselves and identify how to increase the number of children who have opportunities to learn.

READ in Action: Trust Fund Highlights and Results Framework

Presenter

Marguerite **Clarke**, Senior Education Specialist, The World Bank

In this session, the READ Trust Fund program manager summarized the history of the program and its achievements at the global and country levels over the past five years.

Key Points

The agreement between The World Bank and the Russian Federation for the READ Trust Fund program was signed in October 2008. The eight countries participating in the READ Trust Fund – Angola, Armenia, Ethiopia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Zambia – have gathered several times over the course of the program. During the 1st READ Global Conference that was held in Moscow, Russia in 2009, the discussion focused on goals for the program. In 2010, during the 2nd READ Global Conference that was held in Nairobi, Kenya, the countries focused their discussions on strengthening the enabling environment for assessment systems. The 3rd READ Global Conference that was held in Eschborn, Germany in 2011, as well as the regional workshops held in 2012 in Astana, Kazakhstan (for Armenia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Vietnam) and Maputo, Mozambique (for Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Zambia) focused on discussing issues common to a number of countries as

they implemented the activities outlined in their action plans. Meetings of professional networks held in 2013 also provided such opportunities.

The global-level work program that was supported under the READ Trust Fund has included the development of questionnaires, rubrics, and reports that allowed for the benchmarking of countries' student assessment systems as part of the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) program. 54 countries participated in the benchmarking exercise, which allowed countries to review the status of their student assessment systems and identify ways to further improve them. In addition, case studies of select countries were commissioned to more deeply understand the political economy of reforming assessment systems. Other products developed as part of the global READ Trust Fund program include videos, policy briefs, and a five-volume National Assessments of Educational Achievement book series.

Through the READ Trust Fund program:

- 5,000 professionals have been trained in assessment;
- 5 new national-level assessment policies were developed in READ countries;
- 8 different testing instruments and procedures, such as the EGRA in Angola and Provinha in Mozambique, were developed in READ countries; and
- 13 formal training courses have been developed.

The READ countries' progress has been tracked using indicators for the four key assessment types (classroom assessment, examinations, national large-scale assessment, and international large-scale assessment) and along the dimensions of enabling context, assessment quality, and system alignment.

Since a learning goal is likely to be part of the post-2015 global development framework, countries' participation in the READ program puts them at a great advantage in terms of already having systems in place to track such a goal.

READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments in Angola

Moderators

Michael Trucano, Sr. ICT & Education Specialist, and Emily Elaine Gardner, Education Specialist, The World Bank

Participants

Delegation Leader: David Chivela, National Director, Ministry of Education

Angola Team Members: Francisco Cavalho, Alexandre Manuel, Benvinda Ndahalaemona, Lilliana Quizela, Guilhermina Sousa

This panel discussion highlighted activities carried out under the READ Trust Fund Program in Angola. Members of the country team reflected on the challenges encountered during the

process of implementing READ-supported activities as well as on the outcomes and future plans for student assessment activities in the country.

Key Points

Through support from the READ Trust Fund program, Angola has focused on building its capacity to carry out national large-scale assessments, which has been achieved through the country's implementation of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). Prior to its participation in the READ program, Angola had never carried out a large-scale assessment exercise and did not have a dedicated assessment unit in place. Through its work on EGRA, Angola has gained extensive knowledge and practical experience in carrying out large-scale assessment activities.

Through the READ program, in-country capacity was built for carrying out large-scale assessment exercises. An Angolan team travelled to Brazil in order to learn about Brazil's experience with large-scale assessment. With support from the READ program, Angola put together a team of 15 technical experts to carry out assessment activities.

EGRA was implemented in all 18 provinces of Angola. While getting buy-in from political leaders was a challenge, it was achieved by communicating to leaders that assessment data would allow them to know what was really happening in terms of student learning across the country. At the same time, communication with teachers and local and provincial education leaders was a key part of the process, as it was made clear to these stakeholders that the assessment data was not for "grading" anyone, but for improving education in the country. The physical inaccessibility of schools in remote areas posed a challenge for implementing EGRA. Teachers in schools were also often very busy tending to several classes, which required the assessment team to take the lead on collecting data and going to schools.

Building off of its progress in national large-scale assessment, Angola was able to start developing policies in examinations and classroom assessment. For example, Angola has chosen to introduce examinations at the national versus provincial level. The country also trained teachers in classroom assessment practices.

Funding from the READ program has helped leverage financing from other resources for assessment activities in Angola.

READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments in Tajikistan

Moderators

Michael Trucano, Sr. ICT & Education Specialist, and Emily Elaine Gardner, Education Specialist, The World Bank

Participants

Delegation Leader: Rahmatulo Mirboboev, Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Tajikistan
Team Members: Savzali Jafarov, Khayrullo Mirzoaminov, Parvina Sharopova

This panel discussion highlighted activities carried out under the READ Trust Fund Program in Tajikistan. Members of the country team reflected on the challenges encountered during the process of implementing READ-supported activities as well as on the outcomes and plans for further student assessment activities in the country.

Key Points

Through the READ Trust Fund program, Tajikistan has focused on ensuring equity in access to tertiary education by reforming its examination system. Tajikistan also chose to improve the examination system in order to increase the availability of data on student learning and to address corruption issues. The Unified University Entrance Examination was introduced to meet all of these goals.

The Unified University Entrance Examination was designed in two parts. The first part assesses basic knowledge in math, history, and the Tajik language; and the second part covers a variety of specialty subjects. Items included on the examination were piloted first, and efforts were made to ensure that the difficulty level of the examination is appropriate and that it adequately measures the secondary school curriculum. Universities have the right to offer additional examinations for admission; for example, architecture schools may require an additional examination in order to better understand an applicant's creativity.

A formal policy on the examination was developed, and a public relations campaign was initiated to communicate information about the examination across the country as it was necessary to obtain buy-in for the examination from universities which had previously operated different examinations. Aspects of the examination design were discussed and agreed upon with universities as well.

The National Testing Center was established in 2008 which, as of January 2014, functions under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. The National Testing Center is involved in a number of activities related to the running of the examination, including registration, printing materials, and working with regional centers. Regional centers were organized to work in cooperation with the National Testing Center.

Additionally, a new building was built in order to meet the demands for a secure place for examination activities. In order to ensure the quality of the examination while preventing leakages, the building was designed with two sections, one section that deals with administrative issues and one section that handles other activities that require high-level security, such as examination design and printing.

A survey conducted by the World Bank shows that parents are responding well to the examination because they feel that it provides more equitable access to tertiary education.

READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments in Armenia

Moderators

Michael Trucano, Sr. ICT & Education Specialist, and Emily Elaine Gardner, Education Specialist, The World Bank

Participants

Delegation Leader: Manuk Mkrtchyan, Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Armenia

Team Members: Arsen Baghdasaryan, Zaruhi Karapetyan, Robert Khachatryan, Anush Shahverdyan, Aleksan Yesayan

This panel discussion highlighted activities carried out under the READ Trust Fund Program in Armenia. Members of the country team reflected on the challenges encountered during the process of implementing READ-supported activities as well as on the outcomes and plans for further student assessment activities in the country.

Key Points

Armenia has had a unified examination program in place for over 15 years. Armenia also has several policies in place for classroom assessment, examinations, and large-scale assessment. When Armenia joined the READ Trust Fund program in 2011, the country chose to evaluate all key areas of assessment.

One of the main areas that the READ Trust Fund program has supported in Armenia is strengthening the in-country capacity to carry out assessment activities. Prior to the READ Trust Fund program, the staff of various institutions responsible for student assessment activities had limited capacity in student assessment activities.

- Through the READ Trust Fund program, staff of the Assessment and Testing Center have been trained on key aspects of large-scale assessments.
- Efforts to institutionalize knowledge have been made through READ Trust Fund's support of the development of a Masters program in the country that would provide Masters-level education on student assessment.
- Teachers have benefitted from training on classroom assessment offered in universities and teacher training programs. Topics taught in the trainings include understanding assessment as an opportunity to provide feedback to students so that they can improve their learning.

Armenia has also implemented the ICT literacy test under the READ Trust Fund program. When data from this assessment are available, they will help inform the school curriculum so that students develop better critical skills related to information and communication technologies.

READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments in Zambia

Moderators

Michael Trucano, Sr. ICT & Education Specialist, and Emily Elaine Gardner, Education Specialist, The World Bank

Participants

Delegation Leader: Michael Chilala, Director of Examinations Council, Zambia

Team Members: James Chomba, Charity Kombe, Violet Muchelemba, Tshakazo Mzyece, William Walawala

This panel discussion highlighted activities carried out under the READ Trust Fund Program in Zambia. Members of the country team reflected on the challenges encountered during the process of implementing READ-supported activities as well as on the outcomes and plans for further student assessment activities in the country.

Key Points

Through the READ Trust Fund program, Zambia focused on improving the capacity for carrying out assessment activities in the country. The Examinations Council of Zambia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training, and Early Education through the Directorate of Standards and Curriculum, carried out the activities under the READ Trust Fund program in the country.

- Through the READ Trust Fund program, 1,000 teachers were trained to become exam setters and markers.
- Standards officers (individuals who ensure that learning standards are achieved in schools) were also trained on assessment practices.
- A module for pre-service teacher training on classroom assessment was developed. In-service training related to item-writing and the development of assessment skills was provided to teachers.
- Due to its participation in PISA for Development, Zambia has been able to benefit from training on international large-scale assessments.

Zambia worked on using the results of a national large-scale assessment of grade 5 students.

- The team developed materials with the results of the assessment that were targeted to different stakeholders. For example, short brochures and specific messages for different stakeholder groups were prepared (parents, teachers, etc.).

With the support of the READ Trust Fund, the country is able to administer two examinations - the General Certificate Examination and the School Certificate Examination.

If there is an opportunity to receive additional funding for assessment activities, Zambia would like to use additional funding to review school-based assessment.

TUESDAY, MAY 13

Keynote 2 Address (National Perspective): “How assessment is being used to monitor and attain learning goals in South Africa”

Keynote Speaker

Anil Kanjee, Professor, Tshwane University of Technology (South Africa)

In this session, Dr. Kanjee presented South Africa’s experience with developing learning goals, and the lessons that policy makers from around the world can learn from this experience.

Key Points

South Africa undertakes regular assessments of student learning through examinations and national assessments, and participates in regional and international assessments in order to “establish a world class system of assessment.” The examination system in South Africa is almost 120 years old. However, the development of learning goals in South Africa started in 2004 with the introduction of a policy framework for monitoring and evaluation for all ministries, including the Ministry of Education. The process was spearheaded by the Office of the President, with the President himself acting as the key accounting officer, and included the signing of a delivery agreement of the outcomes, indicators, and targets with all ministers. The Minister of Education’s Delivery Agreement included four key outputs and 27 indicators, 12 of which are related to learning outcomes.

South Africa has been able to successfully monitor education goals through large-scale assessments. The focus of the learning goals in South Africa is strategic, centering on the key stages of the schooling system. Planning for when the assessments are carried out takes into account, and works within the budgeting cycles of, the government timelines and when the parliament needs information. Such an approach also ensures that funding for the assessment activities is readily available. The development of learning goals in South Africa has also required time and strategic consultation. Even if no reliable data are available to use as a baseline against which to measure targets, there is a need to use the information that is available as a starting point.

A number of lessons can be drawn from South Africa’s experience in developing learning goals:

- Even if goals, targets, and indicators are clearly specified, it is important to define what is meant by key terms used to describe learning goals, such as “minimum” and “required,” and to not leave room for interpretation.

- Although the Minister of Education is accountable to the President to deliver on the learning goals, it is important for clear accountability to exist below the level of the minister. Assessment surveys are only useful if there is consensus and ownership regarding the purpose of the assessment exercise, how assessment results will be used, and by whom the assessment results will be used.
- With a dual purpose of using assessment for monitoring and evaluation (at the system level), and for intervention (at the local level), it is important to specify the scales, timeframes, instruments and uses of the results of national and international surveys at the system and local levels.
- To have a standards-based reporting process, it is necessary to go through the proper, reliable, and empirical process of standard setting (as opposed to arbitrarily defining performance levels).
- Teachers need to receive comprehensive pre- and in-service teacher training on testing and classroom assessment that includes topics that help teachers understand learning goals and indicators.

Panel Discussion 2 (National Perspective): “Countries and their learning goals — setting, tracking, achieving”

Moderator

Marguerite Clarke, Senior Education Specialist, The World Bank

Discussants

William Boyle, Professor of Education, The Evaluation Business (United Kingdom)

Viktor Bolotov, Senior Expert, Higher School of Economics (Russian Federation)

Fernando Cartwright, CEO, Polymetrica International (Canada)

Jimin Cho, Senior Researcher - Head of Global Division, Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation, KICE (Republic of Korea)

Anil Kanjee, Professor, Tshwane University of Technology (South Africa)

In this session, panel participants shared their countries’ experiences with identifying and measuring relevant learning goals using their student assessment systems.

Key Points

- In 1989, the government in England introduced a national syllabus for the first time. As a result, a number of tests were developed to assess students at different stages of the education cycle.
- Canada does not have a national assessment, but each of the 10 provinces have separate large-scale assessment programs. The purpose of the programs has shifted from denial of educational opportunities in terms of hard failures and grade retention to facilitation of education through scholarships and opportunities at the post-secondary level.

- Canada has large-scale assessments that compare groups of students and jurisdictions. One of the challenges with these assessments is their intrinsic balance between political and research motivations, where the conversation in the public sphere deviates from the information generated by the assessments to a competition between jurisdictions or demographic groups.
- Russia introduced the Unified Entrance Examination for the purpose of government certification of secondary school completion and for acceptance into tertiary education. The Unified Entrance Examination assesses how well a student performs against the secondary school standard and whether the student can study at a tertiary institution.
- Russia developed the School Achievements Monitoring assessment, which was validated at the national level and piloted in the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan. Russia also developed the ICT Literacy Test for assessing ICT competencies of 15-year-old students and evaluating the extent to which 15-year-old students are prepared to work in the digital world.
- With READ assistance, the Higher School of Economics in Russia partnered with the University of Massachusetts-Amherst to create a Master’s program for measurement in psychology and pedagogy. Russia also opened a training center to train managers on how to use assessment results.
- Korea invests heavily in teachers and in strong monitoring systems to enhance the quality of education. In Korea, the national assessments in grades 6, 9, and 11, which are administered every year, are developed based on clearly defined learning goals and standards. These assessments are intended to ensure the responsibility of schools for students’ performance, and to monitor the quality of elementary and secondary education. The national assessment is used to identify low performers and to support and monitor their progress over time.

Developing and Measuring National Learning Standards

Presenters

Fernando Cartwright, CEO, Polymetrica International (Canada)

Vincent Greaney, Independent Consultant (Ireland)

This session demonstrated how countries can use the Item and Test Analysis (IATA) computer program developed by Fernando Cartwright for carrying out pilot testing, setting performance levels, and comparing the results of national assessments of educational achievement.

Key Points

Vincent Greaney, who co-edited the World Bank’s five-volume National Assessments of Educational Achievement series, introduced the books in the series. These books cover the key aspects of national assessments of student achievement levels, from policy issues to address when designing and carrying out assessments through test development, sampling, data cleaning, statistics, report writing, and the use of results to improve education quality.

Specifically, the volumes in the series are:

- Volume 1: Assessing National Achievement Levels in Education
- Volume 2: Developing Tests and Questionnaires for a National Assessment of Educational Achievement
- Volume 3: Implementing a National Assessment of Educational Achievement
- Volume 4: Analyzing Data from a National Assessment of Educational Achievement
- Volume 5: Using the Results of a National Assessment of Educational Achievement

This session focused on the IATA computer program that is discussed in Volume 4. The program has been pilot-tested in various countries and has been modified to ensure that it provides the most modern approaches towards getting performance levels and analyzing data in a technically adequate, country-relevant, and user-friendly way.

This session discussed three aspects of IATA:

1. How to review the results of a pilot test (the purpose of which is to identify an adequate set of good-quality test items, a process that is necessary to ensure the quality of the national assessment). The same analytical procedures conducted for the pilot test can be applied for the final test.
2. How to set performance levels and determine cut-off scores.
3. How to compare assessment results.

Fernando Cartwright took the participants through the IATA computer program and demonstrated how it can be used in the development of their national assessments.

READ in Action: Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS) and Center for International Cooperation in Educational Development (CICED) Program Highlights and Results

Presenters

Tigran Shmis, Education Specialist, The World Bank
Artem Stepanenko, Director, CICED

This presentation addressed the activities undertaken by the RAS component of READ, which includes support for the development of CICED.

Key Points

The Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS) component of READ has focused on 3 areas since 2008.

The first area of focus relates to building technical institutional capacity in Russia to deliver educational aid and policy, which is what CICED does. The focus of this work is to develop experts who could support Russia's efforts in informing international education policy and assessment.

- CICED has supported experts developing assessment tools, such as the ICT literacy test and the SAM tool.
- A database of assessment experts was developed in order to better connect projects and people.

The second area of focus provides support for training and knowledge-sharing services, which has included developing two Master's degree programs. The Russian Training Center, headed by Igor Valdman, trains teachers and specialists on topics such as student assessment in Russia and internationally.

The third area of focus includes support to countries in the form of small grants and assistance by Russian experts and students.

All major outputs of the work have received international peer review.

READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments in Mozambique

Moderators

Michael Trucano, Sr. ICT & Education Specialist, and Emily Elaine Gardner, Education Specialist, The World Bank

Participants

Delegation Leader: Abel Assis, Director of Management and Quality Assurance at the Ministry of Education, Mozambique

Team Members: Tomas Dzeco, Dinis Guibundana, Trindade Nahara, Antuia Soverano, Samaria Dos Anjos Filemon Tovela

This panel discussion highlighted activities carried out under the READ Trust Fund Program in Mozambique. Members of the country team reflected on the challenges encountered during the process of implementing READ-supported activities as well as on the outcomes and plans for further student assessment activities in the country.

Key Points

Through the support of the READ Trust Fund program, Mozambique has focused on classroom assessment as a method of improving its assessment system. At the beginning of the READ program, a team from Mozambique traveled to Brazil, forming a partnership with the country around assessment activities. Through this collaboration the team from Mozambique began taking short courses at a Brazilian university and introduced a distance-learning Master's program on assessment topics.

The team from Mozambique also learned from Brazil about a centralized classroom assessment technique, the Provinha. The Provinha assesses reading in grade 3 and is administered and conducted by teachers. Mozambique decided to adapt this tool to its own context.

The Provinha was piloted in Mozambique and has been expanded to over 200 schools. It has been implemented in five provinces and five districts in the country. An impact evaluation is underway to assess the effectiveness of Provinha in improving learning, the results of which will be used to determine whether the tool will be taken to greater scale in the country. Teachers were trained in administering the Provinha, which has helped to harmonize the teaching process among different teachers.

READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments in Kyrgyz Republic

Moderators

Michael Trucano, Sr. ICT & Education Specialist, and Emily Elaine Gardner, Education Specialist, The World Bank

Participants

Delegation Leader: Dogdurkul Kendirbaeva, Deputy Minister of Education, Kyrgyz Republic
Team Members: Anara Ainekenova, Artur Bakirov, Abakir Mamytov, Mira Mykyeva, Zharkyn Ryskulova

This panel discussion highlighted activities carried out under the READ Trust Fund Program in the Kyrgyz Republic. Members of the country team reflected on the challenges encountered during the process of implementing READ-supported activities as well as on the outcomes and plans for further student assessment activities in the country.

Key Points

Through participation in the READ Trust Fund program, the Kyrgyz Republic has increased the emphasis on assessment activities throughout the system. The READ Trust Fund program came after the results of PISA 2006 and PISA 2009, in which the country ranked poorly, leading to introspection about what reforms were needed in the education system.

With READ support, the Kyrgyz Republic decided to conduct secondary analysis of their performance in PISA 2006 and PISA 2009, which led to policy reforms such as the introduction of a new curriculum that incorporates assessment strategies. All of the reforms are part of an effort to shift from a content- to a competency-based approach in the education system. Related to the curriculum reform, the Kyrgyz Republic has done a lot of work around building capacity among teachers for conducting classroom assessment activities, and has trained over 5,000 teachers.

Other activities that the Kyrgyz Republic has been involved in with the support of the READ program include the development of assessments at the primary level, improving the school leaving exam that is administered to grade 11 students, and implementing another round of a large-scale assessment.

The Kyrgyz Republic impressively carried out activities under the READ program despite a political revolution in 2010.

READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments in Ethiopia

Moderators

Michael Trucano, Sr. ICT & Education Specialist, and Emily Elaine Gardner, Education Specialist, The World Bank

Country Participants

Delegation Leader: Araya Geberegziabher Mehari, Director General at the National Educational Assessment and Examinations Agency, Ethiopia

Team Members: Abiy Kefyalew Aboret, Tegegne Tayachew Ayalew, Belay Endeshaw Gizaw, Solomon Megra, Fekadu Mogale, Arega Mamaru Yewore

This panel discussion highlighted activities carried out under the READ Trust Fund Program in Ethiopia. Members of the country team reflected on the challenges encountered during the process of implementing READ-supported activities as well as on the outcomes and plans for further student assessment activities in the country.

Key Points

Ethiopia used READ funding to support school inspection, national learning assessment activities, and examinations in the country.

At the outset of the READ program, Ethiopia conducted a self-diagnosis of its assessment system, identifying gaps, such as a policy framework and dedicated funding for assessment activities.

Through the READ program, Ethiopia was able to develop policy frameworks for school inspection, examinations, and the national learning assessment. The policy frameworks have a significant impact in the country considering the large number of primary and secondary school children (20 million).

- Ethiopia developed a framework, guidelines, and standards for school inspection, and piloted these in schools. Prior to support from the READ program, school inspection was decentralized to the nine states and two city administrations in the country. With support from the READ program, policies are in place at the central level as well. In addition, an Inspection Directorate was established under the Ministry of Education to oversee school inspection activities.
- Related to the national learning assessment and the examinations, Ethiopia implemented organizational reform that allowed for these two assessment programs to be overseen by the same agency.
- Ethiopia engaged with several experts in order to improve its examination to be in line with best practice.

Before the READ program, the national learning assessment only received donor funding. With support from the READ program, the national learning assessment has been institutionalized and is now receiving regular funding from the government budget.

READ in Action: Country Results and Accomplishments in Vietnam

Moderators

Michael Trucano, Sr. ICT & Education Specialist, and Emily Elaine Gardner, Education Specialist, The World Bank

Country Participants

Delegation Leader: Ngo Kim Khoi, Vice Chairman of the Vietnam READ Program Management Committee, Vietnam Team Members: Nguyen Cong Khanh, Nguyen Khanh Ngoc, Thanh Dan T Nguyen, Nguyen Minh Nguyet, Nguyen Thi Lan Phuong

This panel discussion highlighted activities carried out under the READ Trust Fund Program in Vietnam. Members of the country team reflected on the challenges encountered during the process of implementing READ-supported activities as well as on the outcomes and plans for further student assessment activities in the country.

Key Points

In Vietnam, the READ program has contributed to developing capacity for assessment activities in the system as well as supporting efforts at curriculum reform. Vietnam developed training programs for five stakeholder groups around assessment activities, including teachers in pre-service training, teachers who are currently in service, education managers and administrators,

and assessment specialists and Master's students. The country is considering online learning platforms in order to reach a greater number of people via training programs.

Through participation in the READ program, Vietnam worked on analyzing its examination and large-scale assessments for reliability and validity. Vietnam also participated in study tours to countries such as the United States and South Korea in order to learn about assessment activities in other contexts.

Additionally, Vietnam participated in PISA in 2012, and is using the results to inform policy in the country. Vietnam's participation in PISA has encouraged a competency-based approach to curriculum, which is influencing current reform efforts.

An area that Vietnam would like to focus on next is in building assessments to address the nine competencies that have been identified for students in new curricula.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

Keynote 3 (School/Classroom Perspective): "Assessing learning goals in the classroom"

Keynote Speaker

Ban Har Yeap, Principal, Marshall Cavendish Institute (Singapore)

In this session, Dr. Yeap presented Singapore's experience with ensuring that teachers effectively assess learning goals in the classrooms, and discussed the steps that can be taken to ensure that this happens more often and in more classrooms around the world.

Key Points

Singapore became independent from Malaysia in 1965. At that time, the Singaporean education system was not a high-performing one. Thus, Singapore sought to improve its teaching, learning, and assessment activities. Singapore's education reforms started with the revision and modernization of its mathematics curriculum and the determination of the best approaches to mathematics teaching, learning, and assessment. By 1997, these reforms were expanded to all other subjects and the country adopted the concept of "Thinking Schools, Learning Nation," which focused on using school subjects to develop thinking. In 2004, Singapore introduced the concept of "Teach Less, Learn More," which directed teachers to help student develop a range of abilities to extend their own learning. Teachers were expected to conduct assessment activities to determine if students were acquiring knowledge and whether they could use what they had learned in various situations. Singapore introduced the third concept of "Student-Centered, Values-Driven Philosophy" in 2012, the focus of which is balancing academic learning with a range of competencies, including affective competencies.

The session discussed three enabling factors and the associated key questions that have supported Singapore's goals of measuring for success:

1. Learning standards: How do learning standards affect classroom assessment?
2. Textbooks and other curriculum resources: How do teachers and students use textbooks to assess students' current level of learning and plan for subsequent learning?
3. Focus on holistic assessment: Formal testing is strongly discouraged in Primary 1 and Primary 2. This policy, introduced in 2009, is now common practice in all primary schools in Singapore. How has this explicit policy paved the way for more classroom assessment?

The session highlighted important lessons for putting in place mechanisms to ensure that quality assessment takes place in the classroom. These lessons are questions that countries should ask themselves when they are reviewing their classroom assessment policies and practices:

1. What is valued? In Singapore, classroom assessment is valued. This value is supported and communicated by leaders, reflected in how teachers are evaluated, and is consistent with the National Test.
2. What tools are available to teachers? In Singapore, tools are developed and made available to teachers to support effective classroom assessment practices, and teachers are trained on how to use these tools to affect their teaching and improve student learning.
3. What platforms provide the development of teachers' assessment skills? In Singapore, teachers are provided with pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher training that has a strong focus on classroom assessment.

Panel Discussion 3 (School/Classroom Perspective): "Classroom Assessment: Why doesn't it happen? What's missing?"

Moderator

Marguerite Clarke, Senior Education Specialist, The World Bank

Discussants

Ban Har Yeap, Principal, Marshall Cavendish Institute (Singapore)

William Boyle, Professor of Education, The Evaluation Business (United Kingdom)

Vincent Greaney, Independent Consultant (Ireland)

Marina Pinskaya, Leading Researcher, Higher School of Economics (Russian Federation)

This panel session focused on identifying barriers to effective classroom assessment practices and ways to remove those barriers.

Key Points

- For classroom assessment to be effective, it has to be reflective of the priorities and goals specified in the curricula and learning standards. Russia has identified the need for students to become independent, self-sufficient individuals. To reach this objective, the country is in the process of introducing new curricula and developing new learning standards as well as professional standards for teachers. These standards will guide the development of appropriate classroom assessment content and the introduction of relevant teacher training programs at the pedagogical institutions and universities.
- Classroom assessment can benefit from a consistent approach to teacher training and teacher evaluation. When Singapore became an independent country, teacher training and evaluation on classroom assessment was not in place. With reforms, every teacher in Singapore is now a government teacher, and all teachers study at one university. There is a close relationship between the university, the Ministry of Education, and the schools. Singapore also does not have an inspectorate system. Instead, every school does its own internal evaluation using a “School Management System” evaluation tool, with the school principal ultimately being responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is taught as it is intended.
- Classroom assessment should be complementary to, but not a replacement for, other assessment activities in the country. Schools exist within a broader societal context, where people want to know: “Are children learning”? In many countries, good schools and good teachers are those who produce good examination results. In turn, parents look for schools that produce good examination results. The challenge that needs to be addressed is how is it possible to have a good examination system that does not discourage the types of positive behaviors that are being sought from classroom assessment? Many countries are moving toward summative classroom assessments that also become part of an external examination – so-called “school-based assessment” – to certify a student’s graduation from high school, or another level of the system. Under school-based assessment, a portion of the final marks in an examination is awarded based on an assessment that is carried out in the school by the teacher. School-based assessment has many advantages: it is authentic, it is possible to evaluate a broad range of areas over a number of years, and it can increase student motivation. School-based assessment also has many issues: it changes the nature of the relationship between the student and the teacher, some teachers lack competence in assessment, some schools lack the necessary materials to carry out school-based assessment (such as in vocational subjects that require performance of tasks), teachers may be biased (for example, in terms of gender or ethnicity), there may be pressure from parents for teachers to adjust marks, and external agencies may not trust the results, preferring instead to rely on an outside examination.