Task Force 4.6; progress and draft measurement strategy

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Progress

• Meetings of TF4.6
  – 22 June and 20 September 2017

• Work undertaken
  – Development of an inventory of international and national literacy assessments and other sources of information on the literacy proficiency of the adult population
  – Preparation of a draft measurement strategy for Target 4.6.

• Other relevant developments
  – Expert group meeting of 7-8 November convened by UNESCO
Draft Measurement strategy
Context

• PIAAC is the only international assessment of adult literacy and numeracy that exists
  – World Bank’s STEP study uses the PIAAC *literacy* assessment instruments (but not *numeracy*)
  – By 2019, data from PIAAC will be available for 37 countries and data from STEP for 15 countries

• Some national assessments of adult literacy and numeracy exist
  – Use wide variation of approaches
Conceptualising literacy and numeracy

• PIAAC has well-developed and validated assessment frameworks for literacy and numeracy

• Adopt or adapt PIAAC frameworks or use or develop something else?
  – If not PIAAC, which framework?

• Writing – an element of ‘literacy’ conceived broadly, but difficult to define and measure in a comparable way across countries
Reporting thresholds

• Not an *abstract* question
  – Defined in relation to a *scale*
  – Depends on definitions, frameworks and measures

• Extreme variation across countries in the proficiency of adults in literacy
  – Does a single target make sense?

• Slow rate of change in the proficiency of the adult population
  – Approximately 2% of the 15-64 year old population is replaced each year
Percentage of adults and youth passing the PIAAC/STEP core test: selected countries and OECD average

The chart shows the percentage of adults and youth passing the PIAAC/STEP core test in selected countries and the OECD average. The data is presented for two age groups: 16-65 and 16-24. The countries included are Ghana, Laos, Sri Lanka, Bolivia, Chile, Turkey, and the OECD average. The chart indicates varying levels of test passing across different countries and age groups.
Literacy proficiency 2012/2015 and 2022 (projections), 16-65 year olds: countries in PIAAC

Expert meeting 7-8 November

• Objectives
  – Reach an agreement on an “expanded” conceptual framework for indicator 4.6.1, including domains (reading, writing, numeracy) for the global assessment framework for indicator 4.6.1
  – Explore the existing framework and/or propose the inclusion of alternative ways of measurement of the identified relevant competencies for indicator 4.6.1
  – Suggest a pragmatic action to define a minimum or fixed level of proficiency in literacy and numeracy to be reported on the indicator 4.6.1.

• Conclusions
  – Agreement on continued appropriateness of UNESCO definition of literacy
  – PIAAC frameworks represent a strong conceptual basis for measurement of literacy and numeracy
Operational questions

• Vehicles
  – Existing international survey programmes such as PIAAC and STEP
  – New international comparative programmes
  – National literacy/numeracy studies
  – Omnibus household surveys

• Frequency of observations
  – Relatively infrequent observations of adult literacy/numeracy (related to costs and the wide age range covered)
  – PIAAC has a 10 year cycle (next data collection in 2021-22 – only one before 2030)

• The number of languages
  – Which languages to cover (national language(s), widely used languages?)
  – Translation, sample sizes and costs
  – PIAAC assesses primarily in national language(s) only
Elements of a possible strategy

• Encourage countries to participate in projects such as PIAAC and STEP
• Encourage good practices in the measurement of literacy and numeracy among adults
• Review information on literacy and numeracy collected in census collections and omnibus household surveys with a view to improving data quality and comparability
• Explore the use of results from assessments of secondary school students (e.g. TIMSS and PISA) for the estimation of proficiency among youth cohorts (15-24 year olds)
A work programme

• Develop a position paper on the definition and description of the constructs of literacy and numeracy; options and issues
• Develop Reporting thresholds. Options and issues, analysis of PIAAC and STEP data.
• Review of literacy and numeracy information collected in multi-purpose household surveys – possibilities for improving data quality and comparability
• Prepare a paper identifying vehicles for the collection of information on literacy and numeracy – periodicity, costs, other constraints
• Explore the possibility of using results from assessments of secondary-school students for estimation of literacy and numeracy levels for youth cohorts.
THANK YOU