

## Aligning key initiatives in monitoring learning

Task or function	Comment	International Commission on Financing of Global Education Opportunity (“Brown Commission”)	Assessment for Learning (A4L)	CGD Paper Learning Data for Better Policy: A Global Agenda (background paper to Brown Commission)	Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML)
Define comparable learning metrics or scales, foster their usage	<p>Without some form of common scale or metrics, it is difficult to judge progress objectively. However, there are many possible approaches to comparability, requiring different degrees of consensus.</p> <p>On this score, the various initiatives agree on the importance of the issue, but only GAML (and associated documents) makes a case for a particular mechanism to resolve it. The language in some initiatives suggests some possible duplication.</p>	<p>Included in recommendations. No particular institutional mechanism recommended for resolving the issue of comparability. Thus, the idea is backed, but no confusion is created with respect to how to achieve the purpose. However, the Commission recommends age-based measurement, which is not what the SDG language calls for. This would have to be sorted out. Calls for a single indicator, which could be somewhat contentious, depending on one’s understanding of such a single indicator.</p>	<p>Grant mechanism could cover this area, though it is not a central aspect of the proposal. Proposes that A4L could be a coordinating and convening mechanism.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 3 [\$10 million]</b>            Develop and pilot a test of basic literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills for 9-year-olds, primarily administered in schools across relevant grades (parallel to PISA for 15-year-olds) to fill the gap in assessments at the early learning stage. In countries where a significant share of 9-year-olds is not in school, a survey application in a representative sample of households would be conducted, parallel to the approach used by PISA for Development.</p>	<p>Central to GAML’s purpose. There is emerging clarity as to the institutional and technical mechanisms to achieve the purpose.</p>
Set quality standards for assessment data. Standards for assessment systems capacity (like the World Bank’s <u>SABER</u> )	<p>Even if the goal were to simply report on learning to the global community, strong national systems are key. But having strong national systems that can assist in actually fostering learning, rather than just reporting on it, is itself a strong priority. Strong systems for assuring the quality of data, and the quality of data-producing systems. Guidance on these issues is a global public good with large economies of scale</p>	<p>Covered in Recommendation 2 on learning assessments; cross-references GAML.</p>	<p>Not covered directly but implicitly calls for and requires the existence of such tools.</p>		<p>Central to GAML. Proposed as part of the Data Quality Assurance Framework (DQAF). Extensive and detailed discussion documents exist. Data quality assurance frameworks could cover other data systems.</p>
Capacity building of national systems	<p>This would be key, even under the minimalist assumption that indicators are only for reporting. But such minimalist assumptions are not the case. Indicators are to be used not just for tracking, but for improving national performance and the SDGs,</p>	<p>Implicitly covered in call for a global data initiative.</p>	<p>Central aspect of the grants mechanism.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 4 [\$20 million]</b>            Develop standardized learning modules to test 9- and 15-year-olds encountered in households sampled in national surveys (e.g., income and consumption surveys) and internationally sponsored surveys</p>	<p>Discussed in considerable detail. Emerging role would be for GAML to provide coordination, brokerage of funding, direct funding, set standards. No mechanism for direct implementation discussed. UIS is generating tools to assess needs for capacity building from countries through the Catalogue of Learning Outcomes and the DQAF or Learning Assessments. Generating a data platform where information about</p>

					countries needs is centralized and can bring in many more actors as supplies.
Actual development of technical tools, most likely contracted out or in partnership with assessment industry	Linking items or a new actual global assessment, data-analytical packages, etc. Large economies of scale and global public good aspects.	Not covered, but implicitly calls on GAML.	Discussed as a possibility for funding.	<b>Recommendation 2B [\$20 million]</b> Develop reliable and valid items for cross-linking existing regional and international learning assessments. These resources could be managed by UIS.	Discussed in terms of setting overall direction, coordination.
Allocate funding to countries for improving systems or to participate in regional/international assessments, indirect support to regional and international assessments	Some poorer countries may require an incentive to participate in regional/international assessments or to participate in linking their national assessments to a global metric or scale.	Called for in education data initiative.	Covered, important part of proposal, good ideas for implementation of such grants.	<b>Recommendation 2: Help countries benchmark themselves internationally 2A [\$150 million]</b> Provide technical and financial support (approximately \$1 million each) to low- and lower-middle income developing countries opting to participate in regional and/or international assessments that are equivalent over time and globally benchmarked.	No proposed mechanism or budget specified, but principles of allocation and funding are described.
Direct support to regional assessment programmes.  Direct support to existing international assessments	Regional assessment programmes receive widespread support from countries and are therefore a logical way to think about globally-linkable assessment. Supporting such regional programmes could be made conditional on their being linkable to a global scale. No initiative discusses direct support to international assessments.	Not discussed.	Discussed/recommended, though as a secondary activity.		Not discussed.
Direct (grant) support to development of national learning assessment systems	May be needed in poorer countries to stimulate progress towards assessment systems. Could be made partially results-based.	Calls for support to national assessment systems and connotes willingness to support, does not discuss mechanisms.	Central aspect of A4L. Discussed in considerable detail, including potential mechanisms, several different types of grants (planning, implementation).	<b>Recommendation 1: Support countries to establish robust national assessment systems [\$200 million over 10 years].</b>	Funding of these aspects is discussed. Principles are outlined. But, as yet, no budget or implementation mechanism is discussed.
Coordination of the above, other comments	Clearly some degree of brokering and coordination of the above is needed, as these tasks are all somewhat dependent on each other.	Calls on UIS and its Technical Cooperation Group.	Makes various proposals that see A4L as providing a coordinating role.	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> Build on the UIS Global Alliance for Monitoring Learning to create a 10-15 year "Learning Initiative Facility" (sunset in 2030), bringing together philanthropic, donor, civil society, governments, and other groups with a core mission to improve country and global data on children's learning, and promote use of these data to inform education and other policies, practices, and programs in developing countries.	UIS and various committees would govern and coordinate.