



United Nations
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UNESCO
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FOR
STATISTICS



GLOBAL
ALLIANCE
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LEARNING

The UIS mini-LAMP

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Introduction

The simple question, “Can you read and write?”, is commonly used to produce statistics on literacy rates. In most countries, there are no other ways to measure literacy – just a self-reported question from a household survey or census. Answer “yes” and join the ranks of the so-called literates. Answer “no” and be considered illiterate.

While these conventional statistics are useful for benchmarking progress globally, they do not reflect the full spectrum of skills associated with reading and numeracy.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics’ (UIS) Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) assessment was developed to better respond to this issue and to provide sound methodology and tools to help countries, especially low and middle-income countries, monitor and improve literacy skills distribution.

LAMP is an effort to provide reliable information, especially concerning the least-skilled in a population. Through field test in 10 different countries¹, LAMP showed the complexities and challenges that a diverse group of countries face in implementing an assessment. Thus, through LAMP, the UIS gained a unique perspective on the diversity of human literacy experiences. Finally, the field test has also shown that the LAMP methodology, with the necessary adaptations, can be used across different cultures, languages and scripts.

Past experiences suggest the need to reduce the operational, technical and financial burdens of fielding LAMP without compromising the ability to compare results across countries and over time. Taking into consideration that the UIS is taking a step-by-step approach to produce (1) a paper-pencil version, and (2) a device- or computer-based version of an enhanced and shortened version of LAMP, called mini-LAMP.

Why LAMP?

All of the LAMP instruments and methodologies have been tested, validated and refined based on extensive piloting and field testing in diverse countries. As a result, LAMP:

- caters to countries at all stages of development;
- has been validated in twelve languages using five different scripts and two numeral systems; and
- yields data that can be compared across time, countries and cultures.

LAMP sheds light on:

- Real needs of countries and will allocate resources where they are most needed, using evidence based decision-making.
- Factors that influence the distribution of literacy skills, including an individual’s socioeconomic profile and the use of literacy skills at home, in the community and in the workplace.
- How to best sustain the development of skills people need to thrive in their environment.

...which in turn will help governments to:

- Improve overall educational conditions;
- Fight gender inequality;
- Alleviate poverty; and
- Promote economic development and equity.

¹ The 10 countries are El Salvador, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger, Palestine; later participants include - Jordan, Paraguay, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Lao PDR

Furthermore, countries who use LAMP tools will be able to provide comparative information to multi-lateral and bilateral donors to guide their policies and programs and to monitor progress towards international and national targets, including the SDG Target 4.6.

Mini-LAMP package

The complete LAMP is specifically designed to provide policy planners with the information required to effectively plan and implement literacy programmes. Given the new SDG 4 agenda, and the goal of reducing operational, technical and financial burden for countries, a shortened version of LAMP, mini-LAMP, has been developed by UIS. Given that mini-LAMP is envisioned to be a short module included in an existing household survey, the set of tools have been streamlined to include:

- a skills-related background questionnaire that has been adapted for use in less economically and educationally developed countries
- a pool of low-skill items that provides more discrimination in the lower regions of the scale continuum
- a set of administrative documents and guidelines to help countries who are new to implementing literacy assessment

The paper-pencil version of mini-LAMP has been produced. This version consists of

- 01_MOU_Country_UIS_template
Memorandum of Understanding between UIS and country on the responsibilities and obligations of undertaking the assessment survey
- 02_National Planning for implementation
A brief overview of the flow of work in implementing assessment survey in the country
- 03_Core background questionnaire
Approximately 15-minutes worth of core background questions on respondent self-reported skills and participation in skills-related activities
- 04_Mini-LAMP Literacy Module or Mini-LAMP Literacy and Numeracy Module
A short 17-item cognitive literacy test to assess respondent literacy skills (Prose and Document) or a short 15-item cognitive literacy and numeracy test to assess respondent literacy (Prose and Document) and numeracy skills
- 04a_Mini-LAMP Literacy Module SS or Mini-LAMP Literacy and Numeracy Module SS
The score sheet to capture the score of the paper-pencil cognitive test instrument
- 05_Mini-LAMP MA Translation Adaptation Guidelines_Literacy Module
Guidelines for translating and adapting the instruments into specific country contexts without losing the original integrity of the instrument
- 06_Mini-LAMP MA Interviewer Guidelines
Guidelines for conducting interviews to collect data in country
- 07_Mini-LAMP MA Scoring Guidelines_Literacy Module
Guidelines for scoring cognitive instrument



- 08_Mini-LAMP MA guidelines for verifying the instrument_LiteracyModule
Guidelines for preparation of data for data capture
- 09_DataAnalysisGuide
Guidelines for the use of the processing and analyses software. This software produces literacy and numeracy estimates that could generate sub-population data for reporting, especially on indicator 4.6.1
- 10_Index_software
Software that will produce literacy and numeracy estimates
- 11_SoftwareNotes
Software notes

This package has been streamlined from traditional technically-laden manuals into easy-to-read documents. UIS hopes that the tools could be used by countries who are interested in conducting a literacy assessment, but have limited technical and financial capacity. The National Planning for Implementation document provides simple guidance to help countries conceptualize and plan for the implementation of large-scale assessments, such as mini-LAMP.

The package provides a list of documents, in order of the implementation process, to guide countries toward implementing literacy assessments. The first set of documents (03 and 04) are the global public good tools, which include the core background questionnaire, literacy and numeracy cognitive tool and score sheet. These documents provide countries with a set of tools for data collection. The second set of documents (05 to 08) are the guidelines and manuals that help to guide country structure and understand each step of implementation that contributes to the collection and production of data. The third set (09 or 11) is the tool that provides countries a systematic way, after scoring and cleaning the data, to enter the responses into the provided software and produce results on adult literacy and numeracy and basic statistics to report on SDG indicator 4.6.1.

Given the varied social and economic development stages of countries, there is not one assessment tool that fits all situations and contexts. The UIS mini-LAMP is one alternative, besides the PIAAC assessment tool, to help countries produce relevant data for policy development and reporting on indicator 4.6.1.

With this set of guidelines and tools, the UIS is currently working with regional partners, and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, to establish a global support system to help countries collect data on basic literacy skills distribution and achieve the goal of reporting on indicator 4.6.1.

Interested countries should contact the UIS Learning Outcomes unit by writing to Brenda Tay-Lim at b.tay-lim@unesco.org and copy uis.lo@unesco.org for questions concerning mini-LAMP.