




United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

UNESCO  
INSTITUTE  
*for*  
STATISTICS

A photograph of two young students in a classroom. The student in the foreground is a young boy with a bright smile, wearing a light blue shirt. Behind him is a young girl with a neutral expression, also wearing a light blue shirt. They are both looking towards the camera. The background is slightly blurred, showing other students and classroom elements.

# **The Catalogue of Learning Assessments: Regional Training Workshop**

12 – 14 May, Harare, Zimbabwe

## Content (6):

---

- ❑ What is the catalogue of students learning assessments?
- ❑ Why is it important?
- ❑ Sample research/policy questions
- ❑ Expected products from this project of the catalogue
- ❑ Expectations from this workshop
- ❑ How to complete the questionnaire

# What is a catalogue of student assessments?

---

- A summary characteristics of student assessments administered in a given country, targeting a specific population among students (and their schools and family environments), which results are used for specific purposes such as certification, policy reform in education, selection for higher level education programme, holding schools/teachers accountable or providing support to teaching staff, etc.
- This survey differs from traditional data collection surveys because it is not intended to collect data directly from the population of interest (students and related stakeholders).
- The units of interest are more individual assessment process oriented. For this reason, traditional statistics or indicators are not among the priority data a catalogue template is supposed to collect, but descriptive metadata related to the assessment process or data about data!

## Target population or the universe of this survey

---

For the purpose of UIS survey, the target population includes:

- The national and international assessments, and
- The public examinations administered to students in
  - **primary schools (ISCED 1)** and in
  - **general and vocational lower secondary education programmes (ISCED 2).**

School-based assessments are excluded.

## Three types of student assessments targeted:

- **National assessment**, defined as << a tool for providing feedback on a limited number of outcome measures that are considered important by policy makers, politicians, and the broader educational community (Greaney & Kellaghan,2008) >>. In general, they are **sample based**, but also **census-based**! Are low stake for students but not always for teachers and schools.

*Some countries use both options: Australia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay, and Chile conduct census-based assessment (UIS&DFID).*

- **International assessment**, in which a number of countries follow similar procedures to obtain information about student learning outcomes. Current international assessments are sample-based. Regional assessments such as SACMEQ and PASEC are included in this category.
- **Public examinations** are **census-based** (generally cover all students in a given grade or populations that verify specific requirements), are of high stake for candidates and sometimes for teachers in private schools where reputation is generally built on results from these exams. They intend in general to certify and select high performing students.

# Hybrid assessments: EGRA & EGMA

---

Note: Early grade reading assessments (EGRA) and Early grade mathematic assessments (EGMA) are generally considered in the category of international assessments.

This is wrong in reality, given that the content and the domains assessed are country dependent even if the same grades or equivalent grades are the targets. These assessments are part of the national assessment category for the purpose of this survey.

They are called <hybrid assessments> in the literature because their frameworks appear as a combination national and international assessment frameworks.

In several countries, some aspects of the assessment process such as funding, design of the test, data processing and analysis may fall under an external body with headquarters outside the target country. For that reason, data and other descriptive information can only be provided by that foreign institution. Where applicable the country focal points should complete the template for these assessments when data are available.

## Assessments to be excluded:

---

- 1. School-based assessments and assessments organized by decentralised educational institutions which are mainly for selection purposes from one grade to another or one programme to another.
  
- 2. Tests which do not specifically target students enrolled in education programmes and which are administered to all candidates who apply for a professional certification, generally without prior enrollment to an equivalent official general or vocational educational programme. This type of test is decentralised and can be organised by unions or professional associations. Driving license exams or exams for membership to a professional association are few examples.
  
- 3. Household-based assessments of learning outcomes, even if they target children enrolled in ISCED level 1 or 2 programmes.

# Why is the Catalogue important?

---

## **For the national and international community, this catalogue:**

- ❑ Provides baseline data for the Post 2015 education agenda regarding learning outcome indicators (*alignment with current priorities of the countries, distance to achieve based on agreed targets*)
- ❑ Provides parameters for potential capacity building by identifying gaps and needs in countries with low technical capacities for conducting large scale national assessments based on international standards
- ❑ Generates baseline data to explore alignment of the education systems across countries, and for linking and equating purposes
- ❑ Generates baseline information for the development of international student assessment studies to track student competencies, and evaluate effects of educational policies at the regional basis
- ❑ Monitor how penetration of information and communication technologies change the assessment processes across the world



## Why is the Catalogue important (end.)?

---

- Monitor the shift from knowledge-based to competency-based assessment as an indication of effective move from teacher centered to student centered educational paradigms
- Provides elements that can explain student performances in current international and regional assessments
- Facilitate the decision of UNESCO Member States considering whether or not to participate in particular international/regional assessment, based on their characteristics described in this catalogue (*appropriateness of the assessment frameworks for the country, required technical skills, etc*).

## Sample of research questions

---

- ❑ What educational programmes (ISCED levels and grades) and why do countries conduct large scale national and international assessments or public examinations?
- ❑ What countries can learn from each other and how data can be used to improve the education systems?
- ❑ What subjects and content domains are been assessed across countries?
- ❑ Are national assessments aligned to existing national, state/provincial or territorial curricula?
- ❑ How the current country profiles can facilitate or hamper the regional harmonization of educational programs and students learning outcome assessments?

## Sample of research questions (end.)

---

- Are 21st century skills targeted in current assessments?
- Are test instruments oriented to knowledge or skills assessments?
- How important are school/state/provincial/territorial based assessments in high-stake national assessments and public examinations?
- How are data disseminated?

## Structure of the template (9 sections)

---

- General information
- Contact information
- List of targeted assessments: National, international and public examinations
- Scope, purpose and funding
- Test design
- Coverage and sampling
- Data processing
- Results
- Data dissemination

## Two products (public goods!), free of access

---

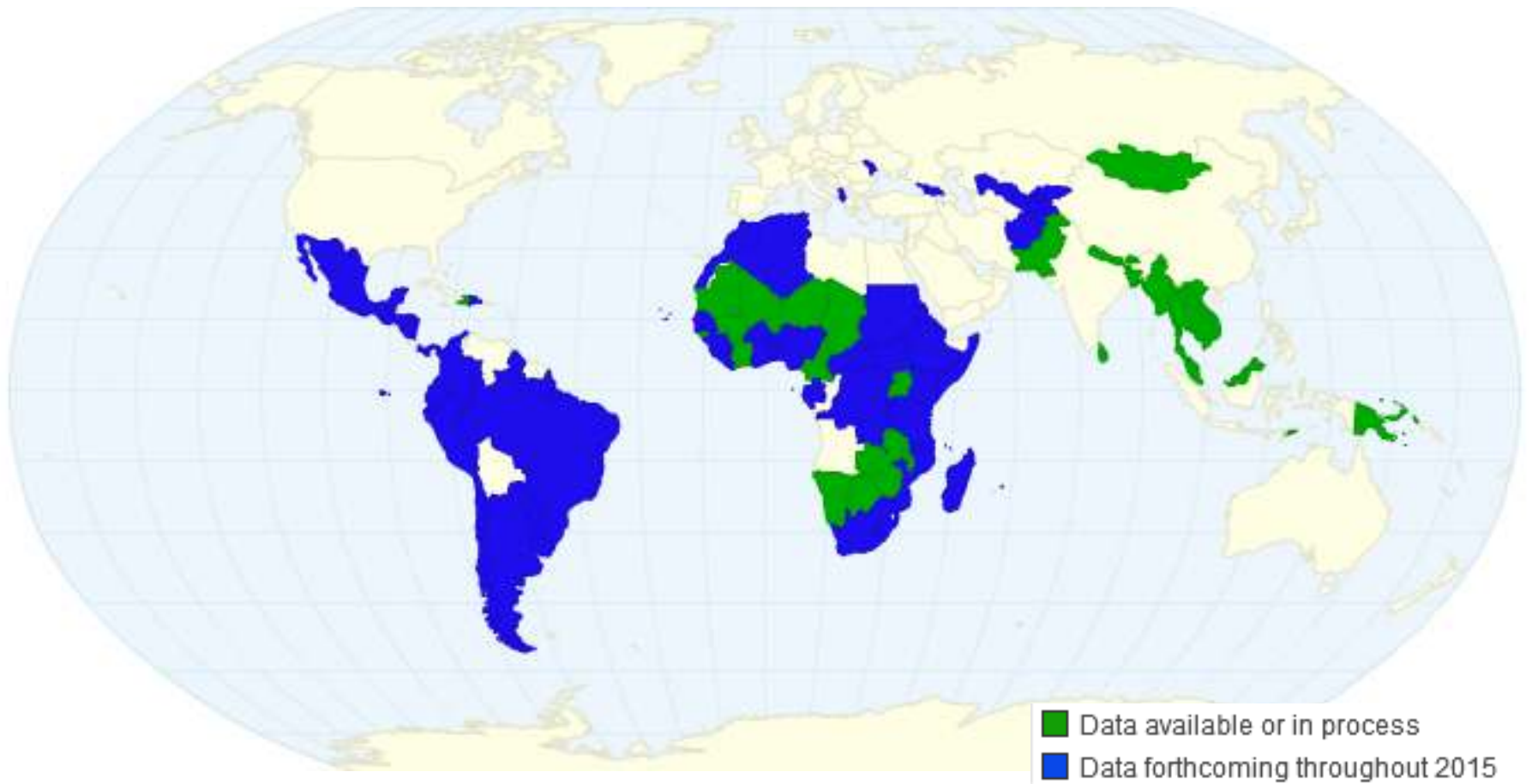
- ✓ **Online catalogue**

[http://www.uis.unesco.org/nada/en/index.php/catalogue/learning\\_assessments](http://www.uis.unesco.org/nada/en/index.php/catalogue/learning_assessments)

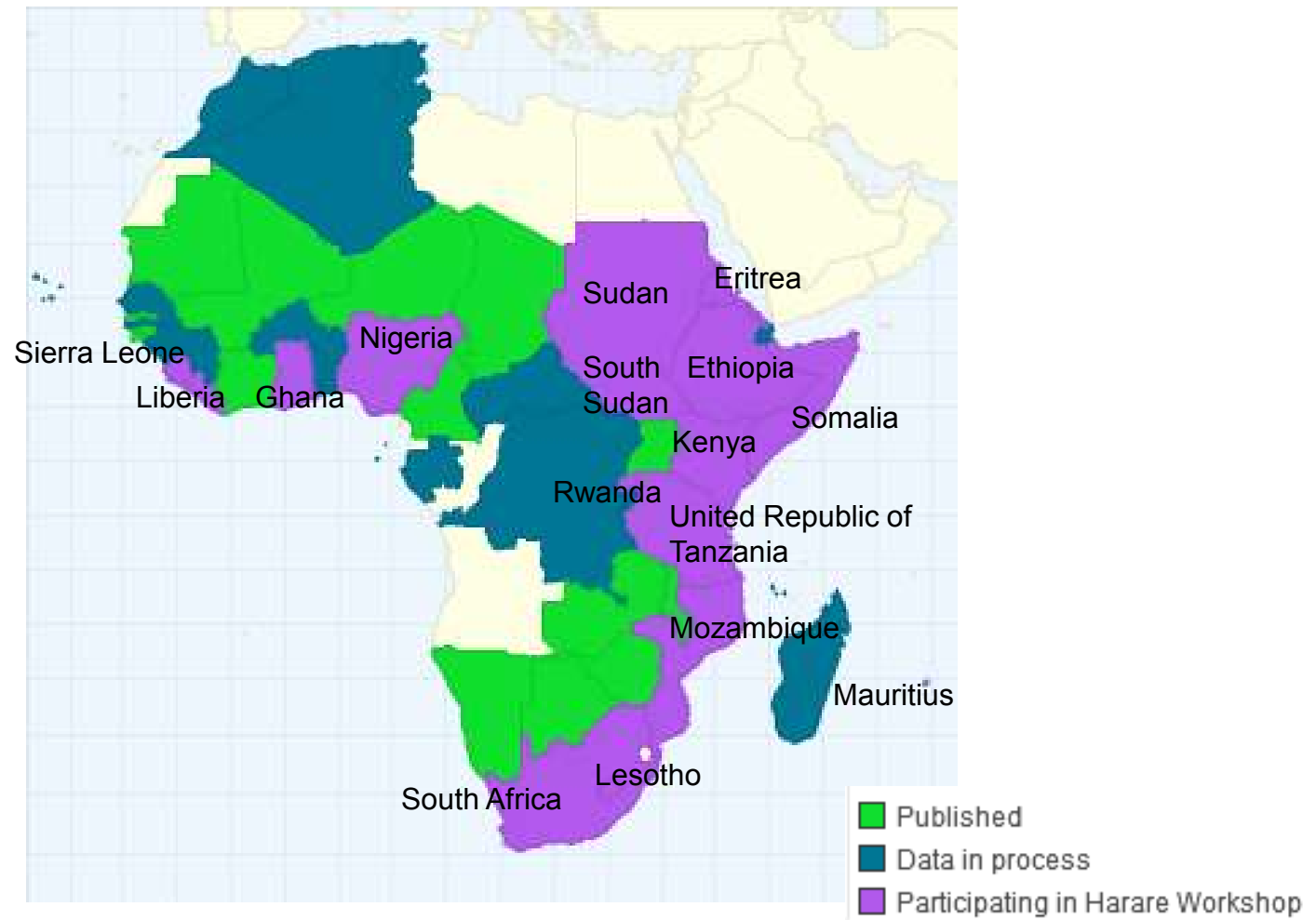
- ✓ **Countries reports**

In the future, based on data and related documentations, specific studies will be conducted with the aim of producing analytical reports that provide detailed answers to the questions that were asked to motivate this catalogue study, in collaboration with national and international counterparts.

## Catalogue coverage by end of 2015



# Catalogue Progress in Africa



## Data collection: three approaches

- National assessments and public examinations
  - Training workshops
  - Virtual communications (Skype, phone, email etc...)
  - Country-support missions
  - Support from partner organisations
- International (including regional) assessments
  - Data generated based on technical documents and reports
  - Validated by assessment organisations
- Hybrid assessments: when the metadata are only available at a foreign organisation (e.g: USAID, ACER, etc. for some EGRA or EGMA studies) UIS works directly with that foreign organisation.



In addition to metadata the following documents are required when available:

For each assessment in the scope of UIS catalogue survey:

- ▣ Assessment frameworks
- ▣ Sample of latest tests administered
- ▣ Contextual questionnaires if applicable:
  - student questionnaire
  - Teacher questionnaire
  - Principal of school questionnaire
  - Parent questionnaire
  - Etc.
- ▣ Technical reports

## What's next?

- ❑ Catalogue is updated on a regular basis with new assessments or metadata
- ❑ Expand geographical coverage
- ❑ Expand the scope to include assessments in Early Childhood Education Programmes, Upper-secondary education and those administered outside the formal school setting
- ❑ Conduct data analyses, produce country profiles and share the data widely, use the data to inform statistical capacity building needs

## Emerging figures from available data (Africa & Asia participating countries in 2014 survey)

---

Five country categories:

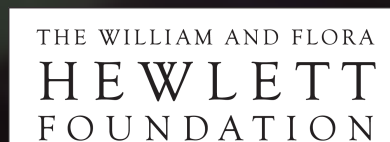
Classification variables. Existence of national assessment and participation to international assessment:

- 1) Countries involved both in national and international assessments in ISCED 1 or/and ISCED 2
- 2) Countries involved in national assessments only in ISCED 1 or/and ISCED 2
- 3) Countries involved in international assessments only in ISCED 1 or/and ISCED 2
- 4) Countries not involved in assessments but having public examinations in ISCED 1 or/and ISCED 2
- 5) Countries not involved in assessments and in public examination in ISCED 1 or ISCED 2.

## Emerging issues in national assessments (Africa & Asia participating countries in 2014 survey)

---

- ❑ School institutions involved in national assessments are not always representative: some only cover public institutions where private schools also provide educational programs in the target grades: Cambodia, Malawi, Myanmar, Pakistan, Vietnam.
- ❑ Irregularity and discontinuity in the administration of given national assessments
- ❑ When they cover the priority domains for global monitoring, learning areas assessed do not have the same definition across countries, hence distribution of test items across the main content areas and cognitive processes vary from one assessment to another even if the target population is the same.
- ❑ Proficiency levels: No clear definition of what students are able to do at each level. Most of them refer to a range of score without more explanation
- ❑ Scoring and metrics are not always comparable: standard score, percentages out of total score, percentage items correct.
- ❑ Lack of up to date assessment frameworks



Feature your assessment in the Catalogue!

Thank you!

More information about the Catalogue is available at  
[www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org)