

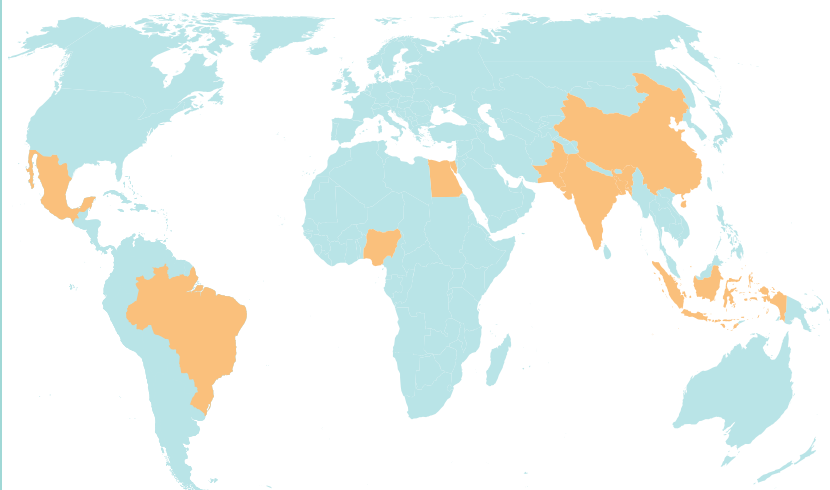
Sharing, learning, leading: The E-9 and SDG 4

A background note for the E-9 Ministerial Meeting on Education 2030

With the advent of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is time to ask how existing education partnerships can best pool their efforts with the aim of achieving the new education goal, SDG 4. One of those partnerships is the E-9 Initiative, established at the Education for All (EFA) Summit of Nine High-Population Countries in New Delhi, India, in 1993. After 2000, the E-9 countries – Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan – were represented systematically as a distinct constituency in the EFA institutional architecture.

The purpose of the E-9 Initiative has been variously defined as a collective commitment to achieve international education goals, as a network for sharing effective practices, and as a platform for promoting South-South cooperation and undertaking joint initiatives. Of these purposes, the initiative has served best as a forum for networking and exchange. It has enabled the nine countries to share and learn from their education policy experiences, with a focus on adult literacy, which was initially identified as a common challenge (**Box 1**).

The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.



The E-9 Initiative was launched in the belief that progress in these countries would contribute significantly to global progress towards the EFA goals. However, an evaluation of the initiative in 2003 argued that high population, the principal distinguishing criterion of E-9 membership, was not a defining feature of international cooperation in education. The evaluation suggested that stronger regional and sub-regional partnerships would be better placed to support the international education agenda. Regional organizations have indeed been on the ascendency, and increasingly include education as a common area of action.

The nine countries may even have less in common now than they did 24 years ago. However, their individual and collective influence has grown, concurrent with their representation in regional and global forums. More than ever, their actions and positions matter considerably for the direction and success of the global education agenda.

This note presents four areas where the E-9 could collaborate to advance the global education agenda: integrated policy and planning; financing of education; national learning assessments; and monitoring, review and reporting. Given the role of the Global Education Monitoring Report in the fourth area, this note closes with a summary of key issues from the 2016 report as they refer to the nine countries. An annex presents statistical information on key SDG4 indicators.

BOX 1

Adult literacy still divides E-9 countries

Adult literacy has been a common concern underpinning E-9 deliberations, but literacy levels vary widely among the group. A quick look at progress in adult literacy rates in the past 20 years suggests that there remains a split between four countries that are close to universal literacy (Brazil, Indonesia, China and Mexico) and the five remaining countries that are still far from this target.

In Nigeria, it even appears that there has been regression, as the population in the areas with high illiteracy grew faster than in the areas with low illiteracy, while progress in education attainment was sluggish. The most recent estimate suggests that half of adults lack the most rudimentary literacy skills (Figure 1).

E-9 COUNTRIES AND THE CHALLENGE OF SDG 4 ON EDUCATION

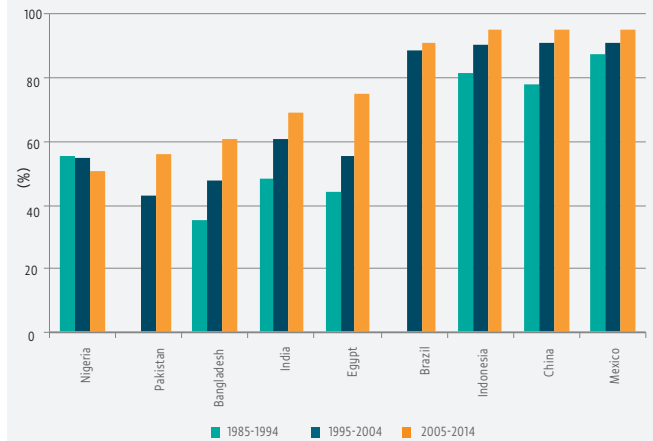
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development expands the scope of education ambition well beyond the goals that dominated the Education for All agenda, such as universal primary education, gender parity and adult literacy. It aspires to establish a comprehensive set of universal objectives including relevant learning outcomes, universal secondary education completion, equity in education along key socio-economic characteristics, and an overall orientation towards lifelong learning, including in areas such as sustainable development and global citizenship. The new agenda unites countries regardless of their income level or political orientation. It also brings to the fore the need to strengthen education systems and enrich the dialogue on the policies required to meet these objectives.

Certain aspects of systems and policies can be measured with straightforward quantitative indicators, which speak for themselves. For example, information on the existence and duration of free and compulsory education can be gleaned from official documents. In most instances, however, measures are more complex and qualitative. They require both an examination of pertinent sources and the use of expertise and proper judgement. In essence, policies are about transforming resources (the main focus of education monitoring in the past) into effective processes (rarely monitored) that produce measurable outcomes (the focus of the SDG agenda). Determining which systems and policies are effective relies considerably on the nature of the evidence collected and analysed.

Currently, education system diagnoses of countries differ widely in their objectives (they refer to different agendas and targets), scope (e.g. general vs. specific), methodology (e.g. country-driven vs. externally imposed or conducted by experts) and use (e.g. whether they lead to policy changes).

FIGURE 1:

Adult literacy rate in E-9 countries in the past 20 years



Source: UIS database

Much could be done by the E-9 to address gaps and reduce overlap among diagnostic instruments that lend themselves to comparative analyses. The four areas discussed below, which hold considerable potential for peer learning among the E-9 countries, could become part of a renewed focus by the initiative.

INTEGRATED POLICY AND PLANNING

The E-9 countries differ in the ways policy making is integrated, both vertically (e.g. the mix of central and local power in the delivery of education services) and horizontally (i.e. their capacity to bring together different ministries to formulate policy of common interest). Vertical integration, between different levels of government, involves, for example, the power of political jurisdictions to adapt the curriculum to local needs. It can also be seen in the mechanisms put in place to plan, budget and allocate resources to local authorities and schools. It depends in part on the governance structure of each country. Five E-9 countries are federal (Brazil, India, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan), two are unitary but have delegated power to regional authorities (China and Indonesia), while two are purely unitary (Bangladesh and Egypt). Success in vertical integration is often contingent on subnational governments having the capacity and the authority to plan, budget, coordinate, and oversee implementation.

Horizontal integration, between different sectors of government activity, is crucial to meet the cross-cutting, interdependent social, economic and environmental challenges of sustainable development, but many countries remain locked into sector-specific strategies and approaches.

Multisector planning initiatives are not new. Since the 1970s, programmes have aimed to reduce rural poverty by combining loans for rural economic development, for example, with strategies that address basic needs in health, sanitation and

education. But increasing recognition of the interdependence of sectors is favouring concepts such as 'systems thinking', which views the integrated whole as greater than the sum of its parts, and 'whole-of-government' approaches, which require ministries to work together.

An analysis of 25 interventions that combined health with other sectors (education, economic development, nutrition, environment) found that slightly over half produced mostly positive results. School feeding and deworming programmes, obesity interventions in schools and integrated early childhood development initiatives were some of the effective education-relevant multisector interventions.

One such integrated programme aimed to improve self-employment among the very poor through training in business skills and in health, nutrition and hygiene, in a number of countries including India and Pakistan. An evaluation that entailed 6 randomized control trials found a significant impact on all of 10 welfare outcomes: consumption, food security, productive and household assets, financial inclusion, time use, income and revenue, physical health, mental health, political involvement and women's empowerment. Cost-effective gains were sustained in 8 of the 10 outcomes, a year after programme completion.

Another example of a successful large-scale multi-sector approach comes from Nigeria. Between 2007 and 2009, conditional grants were offered at the state level targeting health, water and sanitation, electricity, and poverty alleviation. In 2010, the Conditional Grants Scheme to Local Government Areas (CGS-LGA) Track was set up to reach local governments more effectively, strengthen primary health and education systems, and help them provide priority services through a strong emphasis on local, data-driven planning. Because the funds were provided under a debt relief initiative, the Ministry of Finance was able to tag funds for pro-poor investment.

The design and implementation of the CGS-LGA Track demonstrated strong horizontal and vertical integration, prioritizing health, education, water and sanitation. Local project priorities were discussed in joint meetings between the planning unit and the other sectors. Federal, state and local sources had to provide financing. The focus was on filling financial gaps where sector-specific funding was inadequate and avoiding duplication of line ministries' projects. In some cases, such as drilling boreholes at schools or in communities, water and education officials had to agree on detailed joint plans. By 2014, the project had disbursed more than US\$300 million to strengthen MDG-focused health and education interventions in one-third of the country. An independent assessment of progress from the first round of grants found that over 80% of the more than 5,000 projects could be sustained through community efforts.

Despite such successes, most government agencies tend to formulate policy solely for their own sectors, hampering cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration. In addition, governments usually define mandates, priorities, budgets, administrative and planning processes, and monitoring and evaluation in ways that are at odds with horizontal integration. An analysis of 76 low and middle income countries showed that good cross-sector integration is the exception. Likewise, an analysis of 27 country coordination mechanisms for early childhood development showed that only 8 had established processes to coordinate budget-setting across ministries. Similar problems are common among agencies responsible for technical and vocational education and training.

FINANCING OF EDUCATION

Scrutiny of government education expenditure is justified not only because education is a fundamental right and a public good, but also because public expenditure in social sectors, aided by a fair taxation system, can play a major role in reducing poverty – a key consideration in most E-9 countries. For example, a review showed that public education and health expenditure reduced inequality in six Latin American countries more than cash transfers to households. Correspondingly, under SDG 1 on poverty reduction and the target that focuses on 'mobilization of resources ... to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions', a key global indicator calls for monitoring government spending on education, health and social protection.

Under SDG 4, the Education 2030 Framework for Action proposed two benchmarks on public financing as 'crucial reference points' (§105):

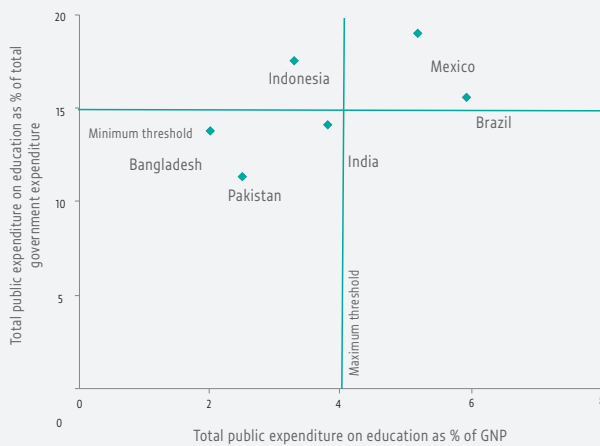
- allocate at least 4% to 6% of GDP to education, and/or
- allocate at least 15% to 20% of public expenditure to education.

The formulation of the benchmarks is not entirely clear. On one hand, it refers to ranges ('4% to 6%') but at the same time it suggests the lower limit of the range as a minimum requirement ('at least 4%'). The benchmarks are also open to two different interpretations ('and/or'). Countries may meet one target while not meeting the other.

Of the two options, the achievement of either of the two targets as a minimum condition is more appropriate because it recognizes differing national contexts. For example, poorer countries may have less capacity to mobilize domestic resources but a high commitment to spend a larger share of their budget on education. Conversely, richer countries tend to raise more domestic resources but spend a lower share of the budget on education because school age cohorts are smaller.

Among 132 of the 209 countries with data on both indicators, 35 spent less than 4% of GDP on education and allocated less than 15% of their total public expenditure on education in 2014. Of the 6 E-9 countries with data, 3 failed to reach both benchmarks (**Figure 2**). If spending is inefficient, more of it will not be the way to reach education targets. Yet it is equally the case that no country can achieve the international education targets if expenditure is very low. The purpose of these Framework for Action benchmarks is to highlight countries that spend considerably less than international norms.

FIGURE 2:
Public education expenditure as a share of GDP and as a share of total public expenditure, selected E-9 countries, 2014 or latest year



Source: UIS database

An adequate review of public expenditure should not be limited to quantitative considerations. It should extend to the three critical quality dimensions: efficiency, effectiveness and equity. Equity in education financing is often missing from global discussions. For that purpose, one SDG 4 thematic indicator is the 'extent to which explicit formula-based policies reallocate education resources to disadvantaged populations'. The objective of equity would be better served by clear and transparent criteria for allocating resources that take into account the needs of schools and students.

Funding formula mechanisms are only one of several policy tools that governments can use to help disadvantaged students and schools overcome challenges. Moreover, funding formula mechanisms may be suitable in some countries but not in others, depending on national context. What matters is whether countries make sufficient use of different policy tools, not all of which may be under the control of a Ministry of Education, to assess the extent to which they compensate for disadvantage in education (**Table 1**).

A common finding is that provision of policies and programmes addressing disadvantage in education is not integrated. Although some countries make efforts to link

social and education support programmes, it is rare that there is an integrated policy document providing information on all available mechanisms targeting disadvantage in education.

Countries that make explicit commitments in laws and strategies to address disadvantage in education may not follow them up with detailed policies and regulations. At the same time, countries tend to adopt at least one policy or programme to provide additional funding to disadvantaged students and/or schools. A wide range of interventions aim to improve demand for education, including social protection programmes such as conditional cash transfers (e.g. PKH in Indonesia), school meals (e.g. the midday meal scheme in India), scholarships (e.g. BSM Scholarship programme in Indonesia), disability benefits, universal and targeted child benefit programmes (such as Oportunidades in Mexico and Bolsa Familia in Brazil) and full or partial subsidies for education costs (e.g. the 'two exemptions one subsidy' policy in China).

To improve the supply of education, formula funding has been used to provide additional resources for students with special education needs and to cover higher operating costs of small and remote schools. There are inclusive education programmes, special training for teachers in disadvantaged schools, school rehabilitation, and education programmes targeting specific groups.

An important dimension of equity is that education outcomes depend on total (i.e. not only public but also private) education expenditure. We are used to thinking that poorer countries spend less on education: public expenditure as a share of GDP equalled 3.9% in low income countries and 4.9% in high income countries in 2014. However, this excludes private expenditure. An analysis of 50 countries in the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report showed that private households' share of total education expenditure was 18% in high income countries, 34% in middle income countries and as high as 49% in low income countries.

This does not only mean that total expenditure on education may be higher in low and middle income compared to high income countries as percentage of GDP but also that the high share of households in total (i.e. public and private) education expenditure in low and middle income countries is a cause for concern from an equity perspective. Shifting that share from households to governments is key to achieving the new education targets.

NATIONAL LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

The SDG 4 global indicators greatly expand the scope of education monitoring. The E-9 Initiative offers its member countries a promising forum in which to make a valuable contribution to this process, especially through learning assessments.

TABLE 1:**A framework to assess country commitment to equity through financing**

| Question | Elaboration |
|---|---|
| 1 Is the legal framework explicit on the obligation of the government to address disadvantage in education? | The commitment would be considered strong if the needs of several disadvantaged groups were addressed through laws, as well as specific regulations on school funding. |
| 2 a. Is the provision of universal and free pre-primary, primary and secondary education a directive principle of state policy? b. In the case of payments that can have a detrimental impact on the education opportunity of disadvantaged children, does the government offer waivers? | The commitment would range from minimum when fees exist in pre-primary, primary and secondary education to maximum if there is free universal education at each level. The commitment would be highest if there were waivers or other mechanisms to compensate for costs such as textbooks, school transport or uniforms. |
| 3 a. Are there policies to provide more resources to students from disadvantaged households? b. ...and if so what share of total public education and/or social protection spending is being reallocated... c.and what percentage of the student population does it reach? d. How are targeting decisions made... e. ...and is the success of targeting monitored and evaluated? | The commitment would be strong if there were policies that provided resources to students from disadvantaged households, such as cash transfers, grants, scholarships and in-kind incentives such as school meals. i.e. what is the depth of the intervention i.e. what is the coverage of the intervention i.e. is there any targeting, are criteria clear and can records be checked i.e. does the country have a well-developed M&E system analysing beneficiaries and feeding into policy |
| 4 a. Are there policies to provide more resources to disadvantaged schools? b.and if so what share of total public education spending is being reallocated c.and what percentage of schools does it reach? d. How are targeting decisions made... e. ...and is the success of targeting monitored and evaluated? | The commitment would be strong if schools that are disadvantaged due to their student intake, size or location get extra resources to compensate for their higher costs, through weighted per-pupil funding rules. i.e. what is the depth of the intervention i.e. what is the coverage of the intervention i.e. is there any targeting, are criteria clear and can records be checked i.e. does the country have a well-developed M&E system analysing beneficiaries and feeding into policy |
| 5 Are there policies to provide more resources to disadvantaged regions? | The commitment would be strong if decentralization of education responsibilities to lower tiers of government were accompanied by additional financial support to regions whose relatively fewer resources put them at a disadvantage. |

Source: Makarova (2016) Assessing the focus of national education financing policies on equity. Background paper prepared for the 2016 *Global Education Monitoring Report*.

Among the SDG 4 indicators, the achievement of ‘relevant and effective learning outcomes’ under target 4.1 is fundamental for the E-9 countries. The global indicator 4.1.1 is the ‘percentage of children and young people ... at the end of primary; and ... at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics’.

The 2016 *Global Education Monitoring Report* argued that three preconditions must be met in order for this global indicator to be measured: consensus on the content of the learning outcomes to be assessed; agreement on quality standards and a process to assure they are met; and a process to link information from various sources to produce a common measure.

With respect to the first precondition, global indicator 4.1.1 was classified as a Tier II indicator at the meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators in November 2016. This means that it has an “established methodology ... but data are not regularly produced by countries”. The Global Alliance to Monitor Learning, established by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, is expected to share this methodology in 2017. Countries that are members of the Technical Cooperation Group, the body that is helping develop indicators for SDG 4, have also been invited to support the work on the development of indicator 4.1.1. This includes five of the E-9 countries.

With respect to the second precondition, at a first stage, it is expected that mainly the results of cross-national assessments will inform indicator 4.1.1. At a later point, a quality assurance process will be put in place to help ensure that national learning assessments provide relevant information for the global indicator. E-9 countries have committed to different degrees in participating in cross-national learning assessments and investing in their own national learning assessments (**Table 2**).

The initiative offers a promising platform for them to debate learning assessment issues. In particular, they could formulate a position on the three preconditions for global indicator 4.1.1. Strengthening national assessments should be a priority, as they are designed from the outset to support national needs.

Several of the E-9 countries have well-established national assessment systems based on a sample of primary and secondary schools. These include the Examination of Quality and Educational Achievement (EXCALE) coordinated by the National Institute of Education Evaluation (INEE) in Mexico; Prova Brasil, coordinated by the National Institute of Studies and Research (INEP); and the National Basic Education Quality Assessment, coordinated by the Collaborative Innovation Center of Assessment toward Basic Education Quality in China. They could provide relevant advice to their E-9 peers that do not yet have a robust system in place.

MONITORING, REVIEW AND REPORTING

Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the foundation document of the post-2015 era, expresses the clear intention of member states to take a stronger role in monitoring and reporting progress. Several E-9 countries have taken significant steps to strengthen their monitoring.

Globally, countries have committed to a 'robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework' to 'track progress in implementing this Agenda' (§72). Details of these mechanisms were spelled out in a report from the UN Secretary-General on 'critical milestones' and adopted in a General Assembly resolution in July 2016.

TABLE 2:

Existence of national learning assessments and participation in cross-national learning assessments in primary and secondary education, by country

| Country | Name of assessment | Organisation responsible | Target population | Subject assessed | Year(s) |
|------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Bangladesh | National Student Assessment | Directorate of Primary Education | Grades 3 and 5 | Language, mathematics | 2006, 2008, 2011, 2013 |
| | Learning Assessment in Secondary Institutions | Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education | Grades 6 and 8 | Language, English, mathematics | 2015 |
| Brazil | Avaliação Nacional do Rendimento Escolar (Prova Brasil) (previously Avaliação Nacional da Educação Básica) | Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas | Grades 4/5, 8/9 | Language, mathematics, science | Biannually, 2005–2013 |
| | Provinha Brasil | Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas | Grade 2 | Reading, mathematics | 2012, 2014 |
| | LLECE / TERCE | | Grades 3 and 6 | Reading, writing mathematics, science | 2013 |
| | PISA | | 15 year olds | Language, mathematics, science | Every three years since 2000 |
| China | National Basic Education Quality Assessment | Collaborative Innovation Center of Assessment toward Basic Education Quality | Grades 4 and 8 | Mathematics and physical education (2015); language and arts (2016); sciences and moral education (2017) | 2007-2013 (pre-test), 2015- |
| | PISA * | | 15 year olds | Language, mathematics, science | 2009, 2012, 2015 |
| Egypt | (No national assessment) ** | | | | |
| | TIMSS | | Grade 8 | Mathematics, science | 2003, 2007, 2015 |
| India | National Achievement Survey | National Council of Educational Research and Training | Grade 3 Grade 5 Grade 8 | Language, mathematics + environmental science + science, social science | 2004, 2007, 2013 2002, 2006, 2011 2003, 2008, 2012 |
| Indonesia | (No national assessment) *** | | | | |
| | PIRLS | | Grade 4 | Reading | 2006 |
| | TIMSS | | Grades 4 and 8 | Mathematics, science | 2015 (Grade 4) |
| | PISA | | 15 year olds | Language, mathematics, science | 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 (Grade 8) |
| Mexico | Examen de la Calidad y el Logro Educativo (EXCALE) | Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación (INEE) | Grades 3, 6, 9 (variable) | Language, mathematics, science, social studies | Annually, 2004- |
| | Evaluación Nacional del Logro Académico en Centros Escolares (ENLACE Educación Básica) | Secretaría de Educación Pública | Grades 3 to 9 | Language, mathematics, science, civic education and ethics, history, geography (not in all years) | Annually, 2006- |
| | Evaluación Nacional del Logro Académico en Centros Escolares (ENLACE Media Superior) | Secretaría de Educación Pública | Grade 12 | Reading, mathematics, science | Annually, 2006- |
| | LLECE / TERCE | | Grades 3 and 6 | Reading, writing mathematics, science | 2013 |
| | PISA | | 15 year olds | Language, mathematics, science | Every three years since 2000 |
| Nigeria | National Assessment of Learning Achievement in Basic Education | Universal Basic Education Commission | Grades 4 to 6 | English, mathematics, sciences, social studies, life skills | 2001, 2003, 2006, 2011 |
| Pakistan | National Education Assessment System / National Achievement Test | Ministry of Education | Grades 4 and 8 | Language / mathematics and science / English | 2004-2008 (pilot) Annual, 2013- |

Notes: Grey rows represent cross-national assessments. White rows represent national assessments.

* China's participation in PISA includes only Shanghai (since 2009) and Beijing, Guangdong, Jiangsu (since 2015).

** Egypt has a sample-based examination in grades 4 and 8 coordinated by the National Center for Examinations and Educational Evaluation but it is not centrally administered.

*** The Indonesian National Assessment Program is currently being piloted.

Source: 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report; OECD (2013) Schools for Skills: A New Learning Agenda for Egypt; ACER (2015) 2015 Learning Assessment of Secondary Institutions (Bangladesh); OECD/Asian Development Bank (2015), Education in Indonesia: Rising to the Challenge

At the *global* level, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development is the UN platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 agenda. Its mandate is to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations on implementation. An annual SDG Report, prepared by the Secretary-General in cooperation with the UN system, supports this global follow-up and review process. A glossy variant for the wider public, prepared by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, follows the model of the MDG Report and is based on the global indicator framework. UNESCO is the reporting agency for SDG 4. Each year, the HLPF is expected to carry out at least two sets of reviews, voluntary national reviews and thematic reviews. Education is scheduled for review under the theme 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness' in 2019.

At the *thematic* level, the global follow-up and review mechanisms will 'build on existing platforms and processes, where these exist' (§74f). As the HLPF is the apex of a network of follow-up and review processes, intergovernmental bodies and forums, where in-depth analysis usually takes place, will support the thematic reviews. In the case of education, the Secretary-General's report identified the World Education Forum as the intergovernmental mechanism upon which the global follow-up and review process should build. The Forum, in its Incheon Declaration, requested 'an independent *Global Education Monitoring Report* (GEM Report), hosted and published by UNESCO, as the mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the proposed SDG 4 and on education in the other proposed SDGs'.

With the above mandate, the *Global Education Monitoring Report* is expected to have a policy impact at the national level. However, this can only be achieved when countries themselves put in place strong national 'follow up and review' mechanisms – and share an evidence-based approach to policy making. Countries need to strengthen how they document progress against their national education objectives, while aligning many of these objectives with the internationally agreed SDG 4 targets.

There are several examples of good practice among the E-9 countries. In Bangladesh, the Directorate of Primary Education has prepared an Annual Sector Performance Report since 2009. The report has been monitoring progress against the objectives of the second and third Primary Education Development Programme, which is partly funded by international donors. In India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development publishes an Annual Report measuring progress towards the government's programme objectives. Brazil publishes a monitoring report with reference to the 20 goals of the National Education Plan. They could share their experience with their E-9 peers that do not yet possess a robust system in place.

THE 2016 GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT AND THE E-9: KEY MESSAGES

The 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report, launched in September 2016, was the first in a 15-year series to monitor progress on education in the new sustainable development agenda. It focused on two issues, which resonate deeply with the needs of E-9 countries.

First, the Report looked at the numerous links and synergies between education and the other 16 SDGs. Six chapters focused, respectively, on the environment (Planet), growth and poverty (Prosperity), social development (People), peace and justice (Peace), cities (Place), and collaboration (Partnerships). Their policy recommendations suggest how education systems can contribute more effectively to sustainable development.

- Tackling systemic problems such as those targeted by the sustainable development agenda requires a wide range of actors and perspectives, so stronger efforts are needed to involve all partners, within government and outside it, at the local and national level, and across sectors.
- Most of the decisions required to tackle successfully the major challenges of sustainable development by 2030 will be taken by people who have already left school. That means that policy makers who implement the new agenda need to take seriously into account education beyond school and the notions of lifelong learning, non-formal education and training.
- Education systems need increased, predictable and equitable financing. By increasing the number of qualified and motivated teachers deployed in struggling areas, and helping reach marginalized populations most in need, such resources can ensure universal completion of primary and secondary education.
- It is vital to revisit the purpose of education, by asking what learning is needed to achieve the ambitious 2030 Agenda.
 - In developing skills policies, education systems should address medium- and long-term needs and the implications of sustainable growth. These include teaching green skills or providing workers with opportunities to retrain.
 - Civic, peace and sustainability education programmes, if effectively implemented, can help build a more equitable justice system and a fairer political system, foster less violent and more cohesive societies, increase understanding of the links between countries, and prioritize actions to address the environment challenge that is critical for the welfare of future generations.

Second, the Report looked at how the expanded scope of SDG 4 has been rapidly changing the global education monitoring landscape. While a set of monitoring indicators has been formulated, with the endorsement also of the E-9 countries as represented in the Education 2030 Steering Committee, the methodology for measuring many of them is yet to be developed. In addition, many indicators only partly cover the concepts that feature in each target. Alternative ways to measure and monitor at national and regional levels should also be explored. There is a need for open discussion and debate to help stakeholders move to consensus on establishing a monitoring approach. The Report takes a critical look at available indicators, questioning their usefulness, reflecting on the quality of sources and introducing new ways of looking at evidence.

Analysing the measurement challenges target by target can be overwhelming. To help governments, the Report identifies six key steps that they should take to strengthen national monitoring of education in the next three to five years.

- Ministries of education are not always aware of the extent of education inequality because school censuses do not produce sufficient relevant information. National statistical agencies, however, do precisely that through household or labour force surveys. Ministries of education should be more involved in the design of such surveys and the use of their results.
- Countries should establish or improve the quality of national learning assessments to ensure that progress in a range of learning outcomes can be monitored over time.
- Assessing the quality of education cannot be reduced to just monitoring learning outcomes. It should include looking at curricula, textbooks and teacher education programmes, assessing how they address tolerance, human rights and sustainability, for instance.
- Schooling alone cannot deliver all the expected outcomes from improved education by 2030; there is a vital need to focus on lifelong learning. Yet education opportunities for adults are barely monitored.
- Countries should consider adopting national education accounts to monitor education spending not only by governments but also by households. This would provide important information on whether the costs of education are shared fairly.
- Countries should exchange ideas more frequently on good practices in key education policies – not so much at the global level, where differences of context are too large, but at the level of regional and other groupings. The E-9 Initiative can be one of those forums.

It is important to note that following the decision of the Global Education Monitoring Report's international Advisory Board, the next two reports will focus on issues of major importance for the E-9 countries: accountability in education (2017) and migration and displacement in education (2018

POTENTIAL COMMON ACTION ITEMS FOR E-9 COUNTRIES

Integrated policy and planning

- Establish a peer review mechanism through which E-9 countries can learn from one another by comparing their approaches to integrated education planning, especially horizontal, multi-sector planning.
- Take a common position to champion education as a key way to achieve the other 16 SDGs while reaching consensus on the ways education needs to change to facilitate achievement of the other goals.

Financing

- Establish a peer review mechanism through which E-9 countries can learn from one another by comparing the equity focus of national education financing policies.
- Take a common position to champion the need to compensate disadvantage in education through appropriate financing policies.

National learning assessments

- Establish a peer review mechanism through which E-9 countries can learn from one another's experience of establishing a robust national learning assessment system in basic education.
- Take a common position to champion the strengthening of national assessments so that they meet quality standards and are used to inform the global indicator on basic education learning outcomes.

Monitoring, review and reporting

- Establish a peer review mechanism through which E-9 countries can learn from one another's experience of establishing a robust national education monitoring process.
- Take a common position to champion the strengthening of national monitoring, review and reporting mechanisms that communicate with the global and thematic SDG 4 mechanisms.

ANNEX: SELECTED STATISTICS FOR THE E-9 COUNTRIES, 2014 OR MOST RECENT YEAR

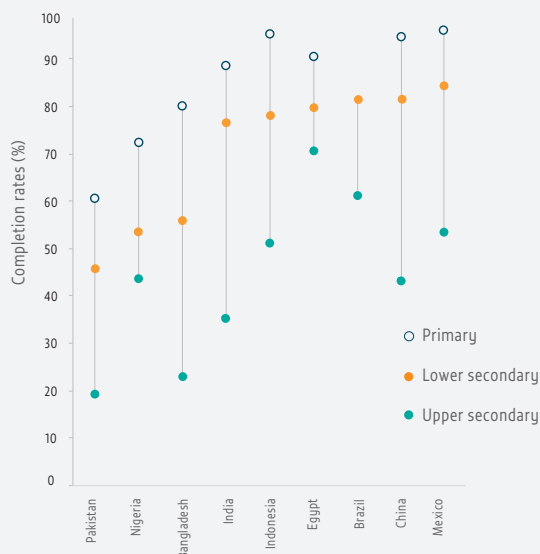
| | Target | Bangladesh | Brazil | China | Egypt | India | Indonesia | Mexico | Nigeria | Pakistan |
|---------|--|------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|--------|---------|----------|
| 4.1 | Adjusted net enrolment ratio, primary (%) | ... | 94 | ... | 99 | 98 | 93 | 98 | ... | 73 |
| | Out of school children (thousand) | ... | 950 | ... | 113 | 2886 | 2008 | 340 | ... | 5612 |
| | Primary education completion rate (%) * | 80 | ... | 94 | 91 | 88 | 95 | 96 | 72 | 61 |
| | Adjusted net enrolment ratio, lower secondary (%) | ... | 95 | ... | 94 | 85 | 86 | 86 | ... | 52 |
| | Out of school adolescents (thousand) | ... | 669 | ... | 286 | 11123 | 1937 | 1005 | ... | 5502 |
| | Lower secondary education completion rate (%) * | 56 | 81 | 81 | 80 | 76 | 78 | 84 | 53 | 46 |
| | Adjusted net enrolment ratio, upper secondary (%) | ... | 83 | ... | 77 | 52 | 70 | 58 | ... | 33 |
| | Out of school youth (thousand) | ... | 1787 | ... | 1058 | 46815 | 4032 | 2984 | ... | 10443 |
| | Upper secondary education completion rate (%) * | 23 | 61 | 43 | 71 | 35 | 51 | 53 | 44 | 20 |
| 4.2 | Gross enrolment ratio, pre-primary (%) | 32 | 86 | 82 | 30 | 10 | 58 | 69 | ... | 70 |
| | Adjusted net enrolment ratio, one year before primary (%) | ... | 88 | ... | ... | ... | 99 | 99 | ... | ... |
| 4.3 | Share of technical-vocational in secondary enrolment (%) | 3 | 4 | 22 | 21 | 1 | 19 | 17 | ... | 3 |
| | Gross enrolment ratio, tertiary (%) | 1.3 | 46 | 39 | 32 | 24 | 31 | 30 | ... | 10 |
| 4.5 | Gender parity index | | | | | | | | | |
| | ...gross enrolment ratio, primary | ... | 0.95 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.12 | 0.98 | 1.00 | ... | 0.85 |
| | ...gross enrolment ratio, secondary | 1.08 | 1.09 | 1.02 | 0.99 | 1.01 | 0.99 | 1.07 | ... | 0.79 |
| | ...gross enrolment ratio, tertiary | 0.74 | 1.35 | 1.16 | 0.90 | 0.94 | 1.12 | 1.01 | ... | 1.06 |
| | ...completion rate, primary * | 1.13 | 1.12 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 0.99 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 0.84 | 0.91 |
| | ...completion rate, lower secondary * | 1.03 | 1.24 | 1.01 | 1.03 | 0.96 | 1.07 | 1.02 | 0.72 | 0.84 |
| | ...completion rate, upper secondary * | 0.80 | 1.43 | 0.95 | 0.97 | 0.93 | 0.94 | 1.04 | 0.64 | 0.76 |
| | ...adult literacy rate | 0.89 | 1.01 | 0.95 | 0.81 | 0.75 | 0.97 | 0.98 | 0.68 | 0.61 |
| | Wealth parity index | | | | | | | | | |
| | ...completion rate, primary * | 0.70 | ... | 0.91 | 0.89 | 0.87 | 0.88 | 0.92 | 0.23 | 0.27 |
| | ...completion rate, lower secondary * | 0.40 | 0.90 | 0.71 | 0.75 | 0.76 | 0.55 | 0.67 | 0.11 | 0.14 |
| | ...completion rate, upper secondary * | 0.14 | ... | 0.49 | 0.65 | 0.39 | 0.26 | 0.35 | 0.06 | 0.07 |
| | Primary completion rate, poorest females * | 68 | ... | 89 | 87 | 82 | 88 | 92 | 14 | 16 |
| | Lower secondary completion rate, poorest females * | 28 | ... | 66 | 70 | 67 | 50 | 65 | 4 | 5 |
| | Upper secondary completion rate, poorest females * | 5 | ... | 32 | 52 | 21 | 20 | 24 | 1 | 1 |
| 4.6 | Youth literacy rate | 82 | 99 | 100 | 92 | 86 | 100 | 99 | 66 | 72 |
| | Adult literacy rate | 61 | 91 | 95 | 75 | 69 | 95 | 95 | 51 | 56 |
| 4.7 | Inclusion of sustainable development in national curriculum ** | ... | Low | ... | ... | High | None | Low | ... | Low |
| | Inclusion of global citizenship in national curriculum ** | ... | Low | ... | ... | Low | None | Low | ... | Low |
| Finance | Government expenditure on education (% GDP) | 2.0 | 5.9 | ... | ... | 3.8 | 3.3 | 5.2 | ... | 2.5 |
| | Education expenditure (% total government expenditure) | 13.8 | 15.6 | ... | ... | 14.1 | 17.5 | 19.0 | ... | 11.3 |

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database except for two sets of indicators:

(*) Those marked by one asterisk are based on the World Inequality Database on Education and have been calculated by the Global Education Monitoring Report team using the following household surveys: 2014 Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey; 2012 Brazil Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios; 2010 China Family Panel Study; 2014 Egypt Demographic and Health Survey; 2011-12 India Human Development Survey; 2012 Indonesia Demographic and Health Survey; 2012 Mexico Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares; 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey; and 2012-13 Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey.

(**) Those marked by two asterisks are based on the UNESCO Institute Bureau of Education.

FIGURE A1:
Completion rate by level of education



Source: World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE). Available at www.education-inequalities.org

FIGURE A2:
Years of education, 20-24 year olds, by wealth



Source: World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE). Available at www.education-inequalities.org

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