



Mini-LAMP

A cost-effective way to assess literacy and numeracy

Photo: Arne Hoel / World Bank

Millions of youth and adults are unable to play their full part in the social and economic life of their communities and countries because they lack the skills to read or write a sentence or make a simple mathematics calculation. While some may have missed out on schooling altogether, many have been through the education system but did not acquire these basic skills. By using accurate data, countries can better target policies and resources to help these people acquire and improve their literacy and numeracy skills while monitoring progress.

Literacy and numeracy are part of the world's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with SDG **Target 4.6** providing the mandate for action:

"By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy."

To measure progress towards this target, **Global Indicator 4.6.1** measures:

"The percentage of the population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex."

It is defined as the percentage of youth (aged 15 to 24 years) and adults (aged 15 years and older) who have achieved or exceeded this fixed level of proficiency.

Meeting specific needs of countries

The **Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP)** was developed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) to respond to the pressing need to measure literacy and numeracy. It provides a sound methodology and tools to help countries, especially low- and middle-income countries, to monitor and improve literacy skills.

LAMP was field-tested in 10 countries: Afghanistan, El Salvador, Jordan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger, Palestine, Paraguay and Viet Nam. While the testing demonstrated the value of the LAMP methodological approach, it also highlighted the challenges of implementing assessments across a range of diverse locations and linguistic settings.

Based on this experience, the UIS has created Mini-LAMP, which can be adapted to meet specific needs of countries.

Mini-LAMP sheds light on:

- » the real needs of countries;
- » factors that influence the distribution of literacy skills, including literacy practices; and
- » data needed to produce SDG Indicator 4.6 and others, including:
 - Indicator 4.3.1 on youth and adult participation in education;
 - Indicators 4.3.3 on the participation rate in technical and vocational programmes; and
 - Indicator 4.6.3 on the participation of youth and adults in literacy programmes.

Mini-LAMP provides the data to help governments and their partners to:

- » develop policies and allocate resources where they are needed most based on sound evidence;
- » improve the overall quality of education;
- » reduce inequalities; and
- » promote economic development.



Flexible options to reduce operational and financial costs

Depending on the needs of countries, Mini-LAMP can be used as a stand-alone assessment tool or integrated into a household survey. This flexible and streamlined approach enables countries to reduce the operational and technical costs associated with learning assessments.

Mini-LAMP includes:

- » A **background and self-report questionnaire** to understand the language practices of a household and the reading, writing and numeracy skills of individual household members, as well as their use of technology and educational experience. This information can also be used for other SDG 4 indicators.
- » A **literacy and numeracy module** which includes 15 test items administered by an interviewer. The module is designed to assess the fundamental level of an individual's reading and numeracy abilities and can be adapted to reflect the specific contexts of countries.
- » **Documentation and guidelines** to help countries implement Mini-LAMP and ensure quality control of the results.
- » A **software package** to produce the data needed for policymaking and reporting.

How to implement Mini-LAMP

Estimated costs

The advantages of Mini-LAMP

Mini-LAMP offers countries a range of options to meet their specific needs at each stage of implementation. The total time required to conduct Mini-LAMP can range from 11 to 24 months.

✔ **Step 1: National planning report** to help countries plan for assessment costs and decide whether to:

- » use Mini-LAMP as a standalone assessment or integrate it within a household survey;
- » conduct a pencil-and-paper assessment or a computer-based assessment;
- » focus on literacy skills or also include numeracy skills;
- » produce estimates or projections; and
- » produce results based on a continuum of skills or a defined threshold.

✔ **Step 2: Memorandum of understanding** with the UIS to access the Mini-LAMP package. The UIS can also serve as a broker between countries and donors to help secure technical assistance.

✔ **Step 3: Development work** by the country to adapt the data collection tools, software package and quality assurance procedures to meet specific needs.

✔ **Step 4: Data collection** by the country, which administers the assessment.

✔ **Step 5: Data processing, quality assurance and reporting** by the country. Mini-LAMP also includes a template to help countries produce national reports that can be adapted for policymaking and monitoring.

Table 1 presents the estimated costs for each option. The computer-based assessment is less expensive and less time consuming than the pencil-and-paper assessment.

Table 1. Estimated costs for paper-and-pencil and computer-based literacy and numeracy assessments for low income countries (in US\$)

	Sample size=1,500	Sample size=3,000	Sample size=5,000
Computer-based option			
Administering the assessment	119,350	198,450	282,350
Data production and reporting	38,200	38,200	38,200
Total cost	157,550	236,650	320,550
Paper-and-pencil option			
Administering the assessment	215,808	383,680	N/A
Data production and reporting	37,200	37,200	N/A
Total cost	252,528	420,880	N/A



More information available at on.unesco.org or [@UNESCOstat](https://twitter.com/UNESCOstat)

- ⊕ Mini-LAMP offers countries the flexibility to meet their specific needs. Countries administer the assessment directly, which means that they can adapt the tools and timelines based on their priorities and contexts.
- ⊕ Mini-LAMP is uniquely designed to focus on the lower levels of literacy and numeracy skills of youth and adult populations.
- ⊕ Countries can decide to use Mini-LAMP as a stand-alone assessment or integrate it within an existing household survey.
- ⊕ The background questionnaire and modules can be adapted to a country's unique context.
- ⊕ The assessment results can be placed on a scale that includes higher levels of literacy and numeracy, enhancing the value for reporting on overall literacy and numeracy rates.
- ⊕ The UIS can serve as a broker between countries and donors to help secure technical assistance if needed.



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