UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

International Institute
for Educational Planning

Using learning assessment data to monitor SDG 4 progress

EPA304

23 June — 27 August 2021

COURSE OVERVIEW

DATES
5 July – 27 August 2021
(8 weeks)
Orientation phase
23 June – 4 July 2021

OBJECTIVE
To analyze the quality of and equality in education, so as to monitor the progress of Sustainable Develoment Goal 4.

PARTICIPANTS
This course is designed for staff of ministries of education and planners involved in large-scale surveys aimed at guiding education policies on the quality of education. The participation of female professionals is highly encouraged.

CONTENT
- Steps in educational planning cycle and the concept of the quality of education
- Learning assessments as approaches to monitoring learning
- Use of learning assessment data for policy and planning

PRACTICAL INFORMATION
Language:
English & French

Workload:
12 hours per week

Course Fees:
USD 1600 (individual)
USD 1400 (country group of 4)

Registration:
Deadline 4 June 2021

Introduction

Recognizing that education provides a competitive edge for nations, many governments have become increasingly inclined to view the performance of their education systems as a key strategic element for improving national economic develoment. This trend, coupled with the enormous expenditures that are devoted to education, has amplified demands for enhanced scrutiny and accountability concerning the quality of education.

Following the two previous major educational conventions in Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) at the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York has refocused attention on the importance of learning and quality education to end poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change. Indeed SDG #4 aims to 'ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning' . To help enable this, it stresses the measurement of relevant and effective learning outcomes, the achievement of proficiency in literacy and numeracy, and the elimination of gender disparities in education. Monitoring and evaluation through the process of informed decision-making based on reliable eduational statistics have been identified as key strategies to achieve the internationally agreed goal of quality education for all.

Educational planners face several important questions as they work towards improving the quality and equality of their eduation systems through enhancing monitoring and evaluation. Some questions are best addressed through "qualitative / anthropological" methods, which focus on in-depth studies of the processes of education and the dynamics of interactions experienced by individual students and teachers within particular schools. But certain questions are best analyzed through empirical methods, which concentrate on the measurement of important educational outcomes and the search for generalizable relationships between educational outcomes and factors related to the composition, organization and functioning of schools. This course is mostly concerned with the latter methods.

Given the increased importance attached to measuring learning outcomes in line with SDG #4, this course is of fundamental importance for Ministries of Education.

Course objectives

To acquire skills in analyzing quality and equality in education, to better monitor progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 .

At the end of the course, participants should be able to:

— Review international debates on concepts, terms, and indicators that are associated with the educational policy discourse around the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education;
— Evaluate the feasibility of carrying out learning assessments for their country context, taking into consideration the purposes, target popula-tion, subjects tested, test frameworks, etc.
— Develop analytical skills that are required to process and interpret data about quality of and equality in education, in order to translate results into policy and planning.

Participants' profiles

This course is designed for staff of ministries of education and planners involved in large - scale surveys aimed at guiding education policies on the quality of education.
The participation of female professionals is highly encouraged.

(!) Please note that participants must have a reliable access to the internet and meet the requirements described in the Annex "Technological requirements".

Course structure and content

This online course is organized around three modules, as described below.

Module 1: Steps in educational planning cycle and the concept of the quality of education	What are the key steps that are involved in the educational policy plan-ning cycle in order to address the general concerns of senior policy-makers within the process of monitoring and evaluating the quality of education? What do we mean by the quality of education and how is this concept interpreted in countries where participants come from? What are some of the indicators of the quality of education and how can we measure them? These are some of the questions that we will be addressing in the first module.
Module 2: Learning assessments as approaches to monitoring learning and quality of education	The second module allows the participants to study how various existing (international, regional and national) assessments measure the educational achievements of students, as well as the conditions of schooling. Learning assessments allow planners and policy-makers to monitor progress towards SDG #4 and their own national goals. Some of the key questions are as follows: What are the differences between different types of assessments? What conditions are required in order to participate in a regional or international assessment? What is the best assessment for your country? How can we make the assessments more inclusive to all the students?
Module 3: Use of learning assessment data for policy and planning	The last module covers the construction and interpretation of data tabulations and graphical displays that summarize data selected from a data archive focused on the quality of education. This work aims to respond to the concerns on the quality of education through communicating the policy suggestions based on the assessment results related to the quality of education with stakeholders in order to shape agendas for action. Educational planners need to develop their capacities in this area because it forms the main interface between the process of evidence building and the informed decision-making about the quality of education. It also allows planners to monitor progress towards SDG #4 by equipping them with the tools to extract and generate meaningful data on achievement levels and parity indices.

Course calendar

The course will run from 5 July to 27 August 2021 (8 weeks), following a 12-day preparatory phase (23 June -4 July) for testing communications on the course e-learning platform and meeting other participants and IIEP instructors. Participants should spend an average of 12 hours per week on course-related work.

Learning modality

The course will rely on an interactive and practice-oriented learning approach. Throughout the course, participants will be asked to pre-pare practical exercises that will allow them to directly apply the skills acquired.

The training will be based on three learning modalities:

— Individual study of reading materials, videos and interactive presentations, participation in online discussions, and completion of individual quizzes;
— Participation in group meetings (mostly virtual), during which teams will collectively prepare group activities based on their reflections and discussions;
— Interaction with international planning experts and participants from other institutions and countries through direct collaboration and experience sharing.

One member from each team will be appointed 'group coordinator'. That person, preferably someone who works in a key position in the planning, statistics, budget and finance, evaluation or legal department, will be responsible for reminding participants of the work schedule and tasks to be completed, scheduling and organizing group meetings, and ensuring that the group work is submitted on time.

Assessment and certification

This course will be offered as one of IIEP's Specialized Courses. Participant performance will be assessed through individual assignments, group work, quizzes and participation. Performance is marked on a scale ranging from 0 to 20.

A participant who successfully meets the evaluation requirements of this specialized course obtains all the credits for this course. The credits obtained through the specialization courses can be transferred to IIEP's Advanced Training Programme (ATP). However, admission to the full ATP is conditional on the submission of a separate application process, and admission to the SCP does not necessarily guarantee a place on the ATP. Upon successful completion of the course, participants will receive an IIEP certificate of successful completion.

Participation fees

USD 1600 (individual)
USD 1400 (country group of at least 4)

Registration

The deadline for application is 4 June 2021.

Individual applications must be completed online by clicking on the following URL link: https://training.iiep.unesco.org/faces/CreationCompte.xhtml

Candidates will be informed of their selection three weeks after they have submitted their application.

Technology requirements

The IIEP Virtual Campus platform is based on the Moodle learning management system. In order to apply to this course, participants must make sure they meet the following technical requirements:

Accessibility	For information on how IIEP strives to continuously improve the accessibility of its online training, and its accessibility policies, please click on https://cvi.iiep.unesco.org/login/index.php, and then on the Accessibility link at the bottom of the page.
Browser	The IIEP platform (Moodle) is compatible with the majority of browsers: Desktop or laptop computer — Chrome — Firefox — Safari — Edge NOTE : All versions of Internet Explorer should be avoided, as should older versions of Safari (7 and older). To ensure optimal security and user experience, it is recommended to use the most recent version of your browser.
Sound card, headset, speakers	In order to listen to videos, etc., you must have a sound card in your computer and will need a headset, earphones, or speakers.
Microsoft Word and Excel	Several courses require you to download Word or Excel documents. If you do not have MS Office, you can download Open Office, a free suite of software, which allows you to open and edit MS Office files.
Adobe Reader	Participants will need a PDF viewer to open and view PDF files. You can download Adobe Reader for free at https://get.adobe.com/reader/
Internet connection	Having a high-speed internet connection will allow participants to benefit from all available resources. Minimum recommended connection speed: 500 Kbps.
Mobile devices	Although IIEP's courses are primarily designed to be followed on a personal computer, the design of site and course pages is responsive, meaning that participants can also use their smartphone or other mobile device to access courses, view videos, read and reply to forum messages, and so on.