

End of Decade Note on EFA Goal 6 Quality

For discussion of Draft Report

Presentation at 2011 EFA Coordinators' Meeting
Seoul, Korea
July 2011

Background to EDN

- EDN for EFA aims to highlight:
 - Key progress achieved since 2000; Main issues and challenges remaining; Priority areas and potential strategies to accelerate progress to reach goals by 2015
 - Builds on the Mid-Decade Assessment (2007/8) and available studies, evaluations and emerging data/information
- Objectives of this session:
 - To share key elements covered in the draft report
 - Collect critical feedback and case examples based on countries' knowledge and experiences

ATTENTION: For question prompts in red box, please note answers for discussion and feedback at the end of the presentation

EDN Goal 6

Table of Contents

- Section 1: Understanding quality of education
- Section 2: Progress, Issues and Challenges (by key areas)
 - Learning Outcomes
 - Instructional Time
 - Textbooks and Learning Materials
 - Teachers
 - Assessment Systems
- Section 3: Priority Areas and Strategies
 - Focus on outcomes, Supporting teaching and learning, School Management, targeted support for equitable outcomes.

NOTE: citations omitted in the presentation; please see report for references

Understanding Quality (1)

- In the early years of EFA movement, attention to quality of education was somewhat marginalized by heavy investments placed on expansion of access.
- In Dakar (2000), strengthened commitment to quality, with Goal 6 of the Dakar Framework for Action calls for attention to:
“improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.”
- Today, quality improvements a central concern in national education reforms- levers of societal development, protection of rights of all

Understanding Quality (2)

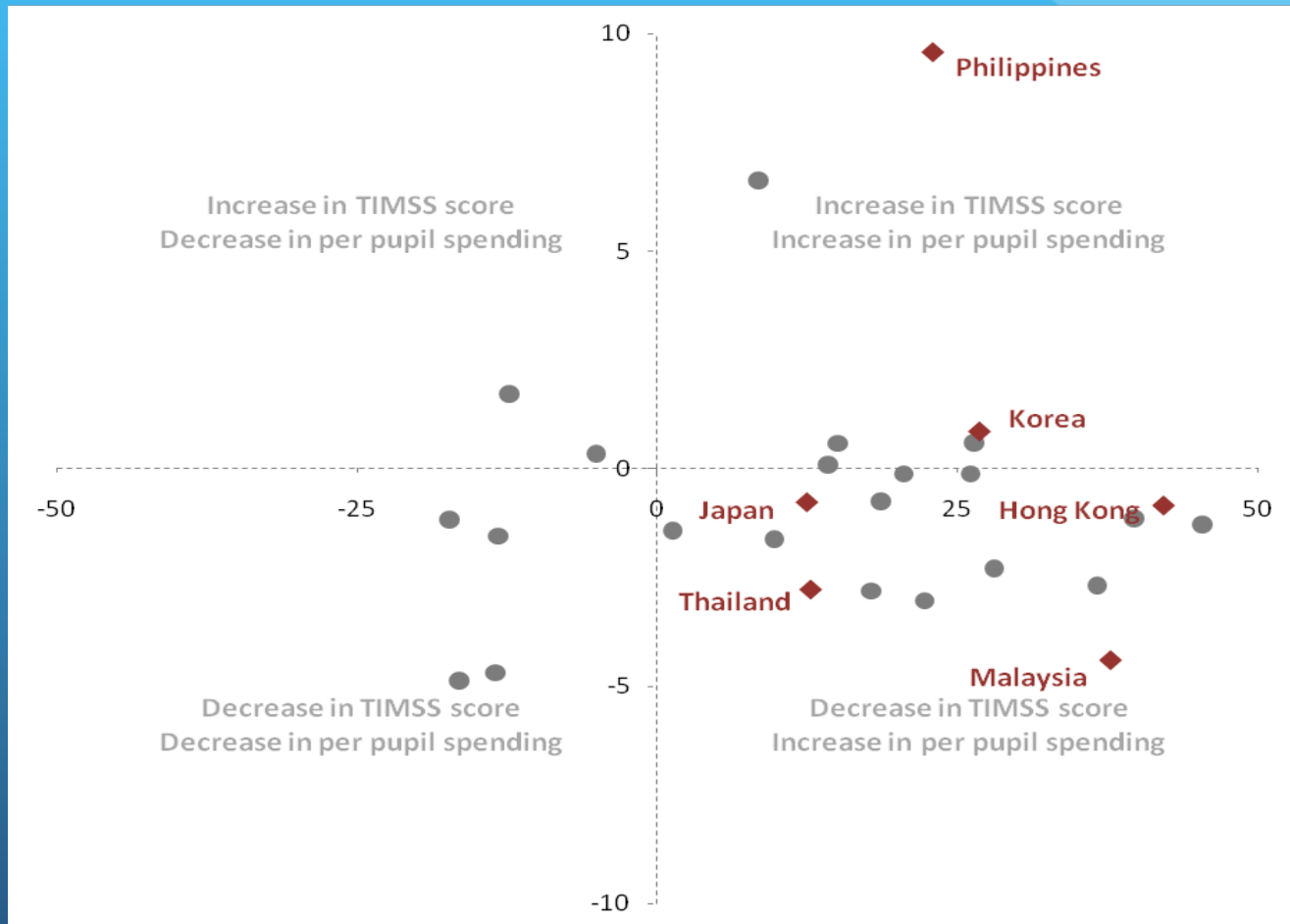
- What is *Quality* education? No universal concept or definition. Not easily quantifiable or articulated, but to most, intuitively understood
- In 2005 EFA Global Monitoring Report, The Quality Imperative, at least two key elements of quality are identified as common to most formulations of quality: Cognitive development and social and emotional development

But, how do we improve quality?

Ensuring access and increasing expenditure may help but insufficient....

Figure: Change in spending and Quality from TIMSS 1999 to 2007

Avg change in TIMSS, Grade 8 Math



Growth in per student expenditure at the primary level for TIMSS cohorts

Source: UNESCO UIS, World Bank Stats, Mullis et al (2007)
cited in draft report of SABER East Asia Conferenc (2011)

Understanding Quality ⁽³⁾

- Diverse range of frameworks proposed in literature to assess critical dimensions and elements of education that impact education quality, most of which are inspired by two main approaches:
 - “Rights-based” or “learner-centered” frameworks, such as Child Friendly Schools (UNICEF); 2006 UNESCO Framework for Quality Education
 - “Input-process-output” models, such as the 2005 EFA Global Monitoring Framework, World Bank model on school effectiveness

Scope of review under EDN

Select dimensions of quality-- based on areas identified by countries in 2010 EFA meeting -- particularly learning outcomes and teachers

- Learning Outcomes
- Instructional Time
- Textbooks and Learning Materials
- Teachers
- Assessment Systems

Quality is cross-cutting and interlinked other 5 EFA goals and all levels of education, from early childhood to lifelong learning. For coherent and efficient coverage of topics, EDN Goal 6 will focus on:

- Primary and secondary levels

Progress, Issues and Challenges:

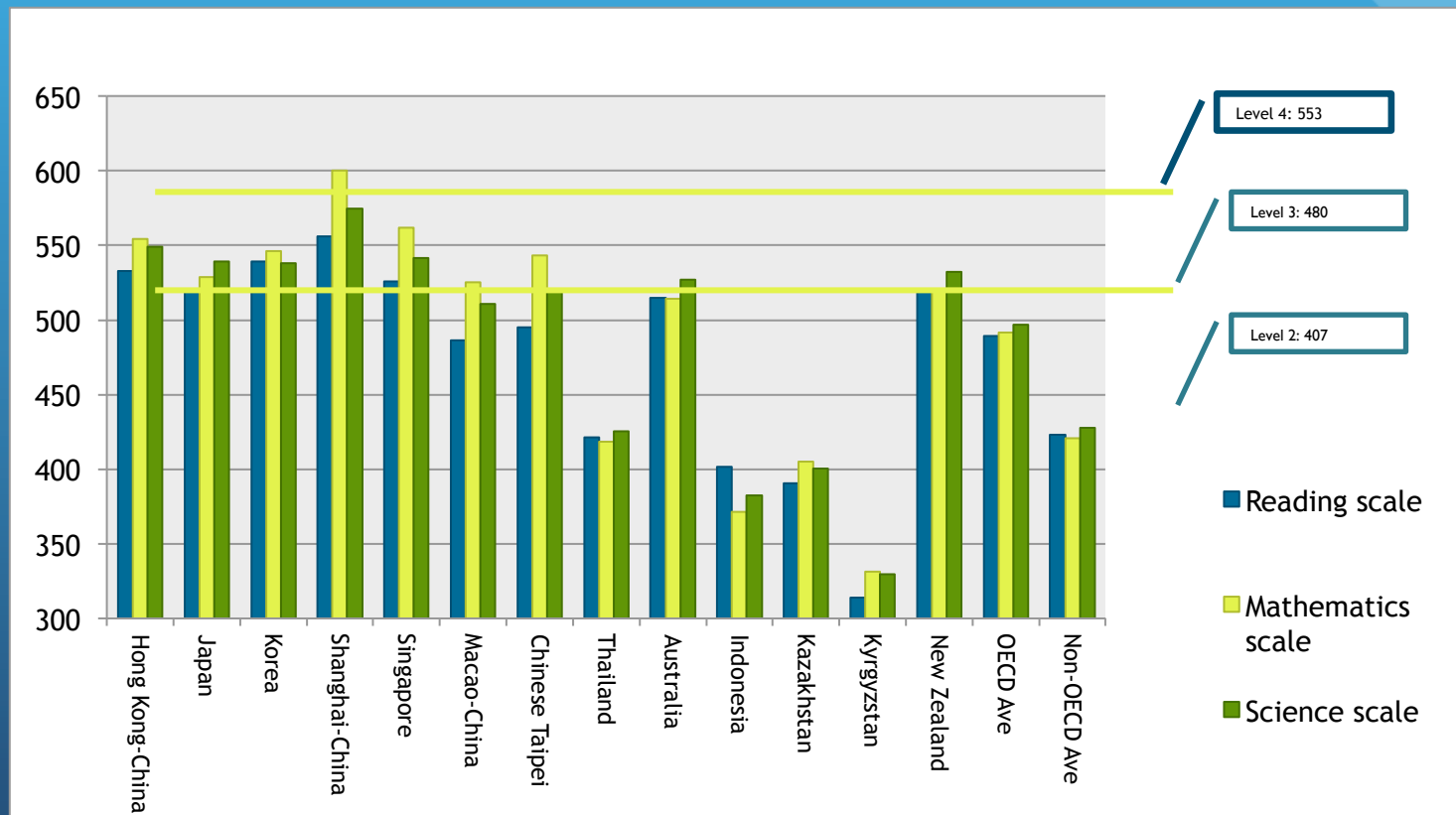
Learning Outcomes

What and how much are children learning?

Are education systems producing the desired outcomes?

Academic performance (1)

- The levels, relevance and variations in skills acquired is perhaps the most immediate measure of quality of education
- According to Int'l assessments, wide variations among participating countries in national “average” performance in key competency areas



Academic performance (2)

According to national assessments....

- Results show alarmingly low levels of learning:
 - 60 % of grade 3 students in Cambodia reading “poor” or “very poor”
 - Only half of grade 5 students in India able to read grade 2 level text
 - In Thailand, half of grade 6 and 12 failing English, Math, Science and Social Sciences
- Overall, achievement levels have remained stagnant, with modest gains in some countries
- Available data suggests limited improvements in equity in learning outcomes, in both high and low income countries.

Gaps in early grade reading

- Dismal levels of early grade reading suggests foundations are not being laid for quality learning in subsequent years.
- In Timor Leste, 70 percent of children at the end of Grade 1; 40 percent of children at the end of Grade 2 cannot read a single word
- In Tonga, 66 percent of Grade 3 children cannot read with fluency
- In Vanuatu, only 9 percent of all students tested were fluent with 83 percent average comprehension

As a result, increasing attention being paid to measure and improve early grade reading

What about non-academic outcomes?

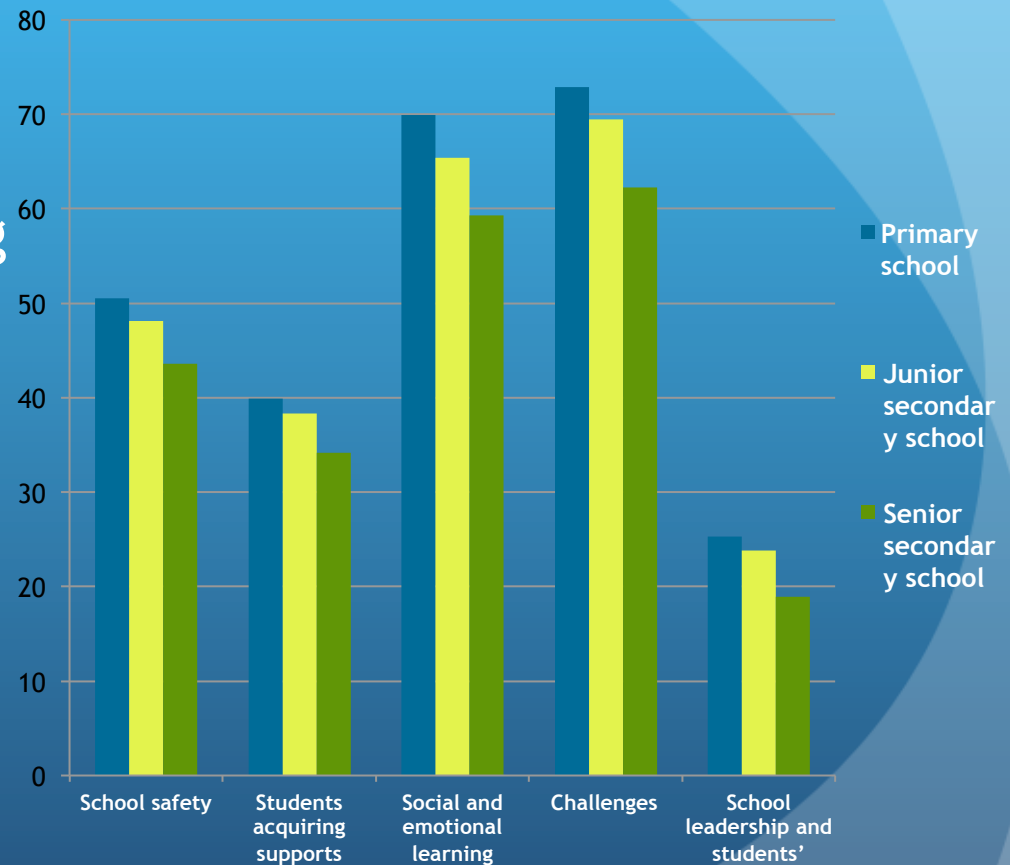
Beyond academic achievement

- Quality education produces positive outcomes beyond traditional cognitive competencies
 - Essential life skills? (discussed under Goal 3)
 - Other competencies such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication skills?
 - Social dimensions of learning such as citizenship, ethics, moral values and self-concept?
 - Evidence from developed countries show non-academic capacities also closely affect academic learning
- Compared to academic performance, relatively limited knowledge of social and emotional learning of students

E.g.) Social-Emotional Learning in China

- According to leading social emotional learning (SEL) theories, quality schools ensure that children are... Supported, Socially capable, Safe, Challenged, Participating and Leading
- In addition to grade level, wide variations in positive response by: School location, gender, grade and family background
- Also, closely related to student learning: the higher the achievement, the higher the SEL status that students display

% of students answering positive, by school level



2009 survey conducted in 8 select provinces

Key Issues and challenges

- Visible disparities in learning achievement by
 - Student/family background: gender, ECD experience, home language, income poverty, etc
 - Geographic location (urban v. urban slum v. rural)
 - Partially related to disparities in access
- Generally limited knowledge on degree of equity in distribution of learning outcomes, levels of non-academic and social and emotional learning.

Q: Do you have any data or case studies that show the levels and distribution of various types of learning outcomes in your country?

Progress, Issues and Challenges:

Instructional Time

Are children getting sufficient opportunities to learn?

Instructional time

- Statutory requirements usually in place for most countries for the general recommended benchmark of 850-1000 hours
- Actual instructional time, however, significantly lower accordingly to available data. For example,
 - Nepal: around 540 hours, half of 1000 mandated by law
 - Bangladesh: around 500 for bottom 10 % of schools and 860 for top 10%

Q: Any recent data on actual instructional time in your country?

Key issues and challenges

Significant loss in time for teaching and learning due to:

- School level factors, such as unofficial closures, late teacher postings, teacher training sessions, etc
- High levels of teacher absenteeism
- Unintended disruptions to time-on-task, such as added administrative duties for teachers, student disengagement, natural disasters, etc

Multi-grade classes and multiple-shift schools at greater risk, if teachers are not properly prepared/supported

Q: What are some of the most critical challenges to ensuring sufficient instructional time in schools in your country?

Progress, Issues and Challenges:

Textbooks and Materials

Textbooks and learning materials

- Generally low pupil-textbook ratio, especially in disadvantaged regions
- Inadequate quality of textbooks: lack of textbooks in ethnic minority languages, gender stereotyping, limited cultural relevance...
- Essential T-L resources such as classroom supplies, teacher guides, student workbooks limited, affecting classroom practices and self-learning of students
- Availability and application of ICT in education improving but challenges remain in supply/use in most disadvantaged communities
- Large income-based variations in availability of in-home reading materials, a critical complementary resource, especially in early grades

Q: Any recent data on textbooks and learning materials in your country?

Key issues and challenges

- Limited disaggregated data/information on supply and quality of textbooks (research & development)
- Issues related to production process and equity in distribution
- Development/production challenges in meeting demands of frequent curricular reforms
- Fragmentation of teacher training initiatives to ensure timely, sufficient opportunities to learn and apply skills, particularly with ICT

Q: What are some of the most critical challenges to improving provision and use of textbooks and learning materials in your country?

Progress, Issues and Challenges:

Teachers

Quality of education cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.
How “effective” are teachers in the AP region?

What makes an “effective” teacher?

- Studies show that how instruction is delivered tend to have greater impact on learning than the content of what is delivered.
- Effective teachers ensure:
 - Construction of knowledge, rather than transmit it;
 - Analysis and synthesis, rather than rote memorization;
 - Gender, culturally sensitive practices;
 - Generally, learner-centered processes, rather than teacher-centered processes.
- Elements of teacher quality are largely qualitative and systematic data is relatively limited

Q: How effective are teachers in your countries? Do you have case studies of positive teaching practices that have made an impact on the overall learning of students?

Dimensions of teacher quality

- Numerous dimensions of teacher quality that affect their practices
- Based on overall trends observed in the AP region, a select set of elements are reviewed in the EDN, including:
 - teachers' training
 - subject-matter knowledge
 - experience and motivation

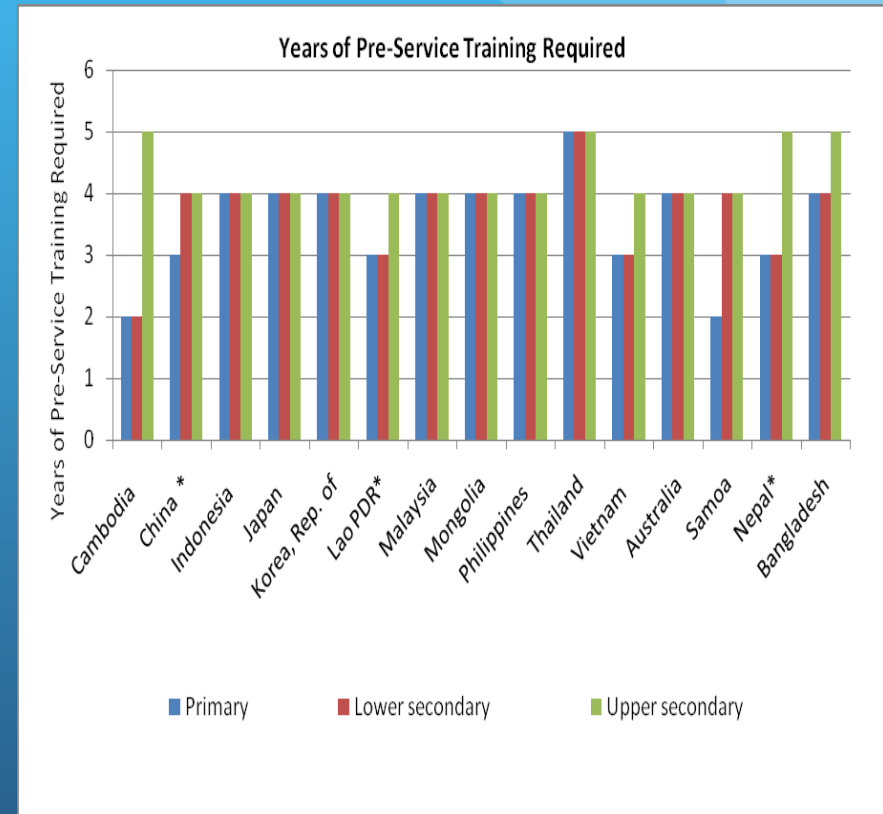
Example of framework to understanding key elements of teacher quality



Teacher policy goals, World Bank (2010)

Trained and certified teachers

- Certification requirements in place in most countries, although not always implemented due to continued challenges in recruiting sufficient number of teachers
- Proportion of trained teachers improved in some countries (Vietnam, Myanmar), while it remains insufficient in many countries (Nepal, Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan)
- However, absolute levels of training is not comparable across countries due to variations in types/quality of training



Q: Any data on proportion of trained teachers by location, school type, academic subject?

Teacher subject-matter knowledge

Findings from national assessments from select countries that obtained information on teachers' knowledge of subject matter reveal the poor levels of subject matter knowledge among teachers.

Examples:

- Thailand- more than 80 percent of secondary teachers of math, biology and computer sciences fail their students' exams (2010, OBEC)
- Indonesia- very low average score of secondary teachers in math (36) and language (51) (2008, Report by PMPTK)
- Vietnam- top 12 percent of Grade 5 students outperformed bottom 30 percent of teachers (2004, Reading and Math Assessment Study)

Q: Any data on teachers' level of subject matter knowledge in your country?
By location, school types, and subjects?

Teacher experience

- Initial teacher experience- through either clinical practices or induction phases- crucial to teachers' effectiveness
- Most countries require minimum time in classroom practice prior to entering the profession, but again, variations in types of experiences gained and the extent to requirements are met, particularly among teachers in disadvantaged schools

Teacher motivation

- Teachers who are motivated to perform makes measurable difference in children's classroom experience
- Data on levels of teacher motivation is limited, but high rates of teacher absenteeism in some countries suggests challenges remain in keeping teachers motivated to perform to the best of their ability

Q: Any information available on recent progress made in improving teachers' clinical practice or induction programs in your country? Any information in the level of motivation among teachers in your country? What affects their motivation?

Key issues and challenges

- Remaining gap between supply and demand, in some countries and regions, particularly in remote and disadvantaged communities- resulting in tradeoffs between quantity and quality
- Limited performance standards and accountability measures
- Factors that hampers capacity to attract, train and retain quality teachers, particularly in disadvantaged schools:
 - Poor working conditions: limited classroom resources, high PTR or challenging school climate, etc
 - Limited professional support: lack of quality school leadership
 - Limited teacher incentives: lack of recognition of high performance (pay, promotion, etc)
 - Weak teacher education and continuing professional development: limited balance btwn pedagogy/subject knowledge, fragmentation in CPD, incoherent initial training-CPD,

Q: What are some of the most critical challenges to improving teacher effectiveness in your country?

Progress, Issues and Challenges:

Assessment Systems

Are education systems effectively measuring the intended outcomes? Is information feeding back to improving quality?

Assessment systems

- Well-designed assessments critical to assessing success/failure of education systems, by revealing the levels of learning outcomes, equity in the distribution of learning among children of different backgrounds, and factors that lead to improvements.
- Increased attention to quality of learning has prompted countries to participate in increasing frequency in various large scale assessments (int'l and nat'l), classroom assessments, as well as improve examination policies that promote accountability for learning outcomes.

Key issues and challenges

- Assessments often measure only a limited, well-defined domain such as language and math; assessments of “non-core” subjects such as history and arts, basic competencies such as problem-solving/critical thinking skills, and social learning outcomes such as citizenship and ethics largely absent.
 - Challenge of measuring relevance and equity of education outcomes and identifying what improvements are needed
- Technical capacity limited within countries to improve reliability and validity of assessments/examinations
- Weak enabling environments at the systematic level to support assessment practices/capacity
 - Challenges in effective use of information to promote motivation for learning; improve accountability and teaching and learning practices

Q: What are some of the most critical challenges to implementing effective assessment systems in your country?

Priority Areas and Strategies

Priority areas and Strategies

1. Focus on outcomes

- National process of dialogue for consensus on **what constitutes quality outcomes** in the given context: what are the key educational, social and economic aims of education? Civic and political outcomes?
- Establish **appropriate assessment systems** to measure respective outcomes, including early grade reading and social/emotional dimensions
- Improve **information management and research and development** on what works; for example,
 - Strengthened EMIS with robust indicators for quality and disaggregated data
 - Household surveys with sufficient scope of education-related information
 - Qualitative studies on best “processes”

Priority areas and Strategies

2. Supporting effective teaching and learning

- Improve **working conditions of teachers**
 - Sufficient pay and recognition of good work
 - Provision of essential resources and conducive T-L environment
 - Strong school leaders (instructional leadership)
- Improve effectiveness of **teacher training and development**
 - Improve trainings to that they help meet competency standards (reading, pedagogy v content)
 - Induction and collaboration
 - Continuing professional development that is coherent with pre-service education.

Priority areas and Strategies

3. School management

3. Establish appropriate performance standards for improved accountability
 - Improve professional autonomy
 - Improve information sharing and community participation

4. Targeted, comprehensive policies for equitable learning

(Context does not change what needs to be done but how it should be done)

- Address demand-side barriers affecting to opportunities to learn, from policy to implementation, at all levels
- Match skills and needs for teachers and students, from training to deployment to development, in particular.
 - E.g., education for ethnic minorities

Q: Has any of the above areas resulted in positive improvements in quality of education in your country? Any other strategies that have yielded quality improvements, particularly for the benefit of marginalized children?

Discussion and comments

Thank you!

Please submit requested information to (selee@unicef.org)
by 31st August

Select questions for discussion:

1: Any recent data on actual instructional time in your country?

2: What are some of the most critical challenges to improving provision and use of textbooks and learning materials in your country?

3: What are some of the most critical challenges to improving teacher effectiveness in your country?

4: What are some of the most critical challenges to implementing effective assessment systems in your country?

5: Has any of the above areas resulted in positive improvements in quality of education in your country? Any other strategies that have yielded quality improvements, particularly for the benefit of marginalized children?