

GENERAL EDUCATION QUALITY DIAGNOSTIC /ANALYSIS AND MONITORING FRAMEWORK

This framework adopts a comprehensive and systemic approach to education. It acknowledges the reality that accountability to deliver quality education and to effectively facilitate learning lies at all levels and in all aspects of an education system.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the undeniable successes of the Education for All (EFA) agenda has been the opening of access to formal primary education. Just over the last decade (1999-2008) 52 million more children enrolled in formal primary education. Out-of-school children declined by 39 million; with South and West Asia as well as Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for over 80 percent of this decline. North America, Western Europe, East Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America are likely to reach the 2015 numeric EFA and MDG targets. Central Asia and, Central and Eastern Europe should be within close range of the target; having reached 90 percent primary Net Enrolment Rate by 2008. Access to secondary education registered modest improvement. Though with wide regional and country-level disparities, some 513 million—nearly 60 percent—of children of eligible age were enrolled by 2006. This constituted an increase of nearly 76 million since 1999. A significant number of countries are closely approximating gender parity at both the primary and secondary level. All the same the 2015 numeric target remains a challenge, especially for low income countries. 67 million children of eligible age are still not enrolled in primary schools, 74 million adolescent are out of school and some 793 million youth and adults still lack basic literacy skills.

From compelling evidence, an even more daunting challenge is that while many countries have successfully enrolled millions of learners in schools, a significant majority of them are actually not learning, at least, not to levels commensurate to their educational attainment. This is manifest in the system's failure to prepare learners for subsequent levels of education, for trainability and educability, for taking up life-long learning (LLL) opportunities on their own, for the labor market and for the world of work. The system has repeatedly been diagnosed as having weak capacity to produce graduates who can effectively meet labor market demands, function effectively in the world of work, take up current or predictable opportunities while equally meeting current challenges, demonstrate the agility to take up unpredictable opportunities and meet unpredictable challenges and contribute effectively to holistic national and global development agendas. Due mainly to current analytical approaches and instruments, hard evidence on the general education systems' effectiveness in producing graduates with appropriate dispositions, attitudes, aesthetics, life views and core values—peace, multiculturalism, respect for diversity and living together—remains scant.

Evidence further shows that the challenge of poor quality education, low learning effectiveness and low learning outcomes is deeper in low income countries, for learners from poor households and for other marginalized groups.

Poor quality and ineffectiveness challenges are also most pernicious at the basic levels of education, where the majority of learners have the highest levels of participation. Poor quality of basic education bequeaths not only poor quality to the post-basic levels but also constitutes acute exclusion of the marginalized thus aborting the social equity imperative of basic education. A stark manifestation of this reality is in the gross under-representation of learners from marginalized groups in post-basic and higher education systems, in high income jobs and lucrative work opportunities. Unlike access, inequity of education quality, of learning experiences and of learning outcomes remains a formidable challenge for both developed and developing countries.

DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS OF POOR EDUCATION QUALITY

Poor education quality has vast and dire consequences especially, though not exclusively, for developing countries. It leads to students' disengagement and dropping out of school. For those who persevere, it leads to high repetition rates and ultimately to failure to acquire requisite skills, competencies, affects and values. High dropout, repetition and failure rates result in un-affordable wastage of resources that could have been invested toward further expansion of access and quality improvement. Most importantly, failure to acquire requisite competencies denies countries the productive labor force required to lead knowledge- and technology-driven productivity growth, to facilitate shared growth, global competitiveness, social coherence, national and global peace and other broader dimensions of development—political, social, human and cultural etc. Poor education quality is one of the key factors of global inequalities and practically, one of the modern boundaries between rich and poor countries.

*Evidence shows that educational attainment is necessary but not sufficient to support growth and competitiveness.*¹ Although just a proxy measure of education quality, test scores have a statistically significant association with real GDP per capita growth with one standard deviation in test scores correlating to two per cent annual average growth in GDP per capita.² Poor quality also denies individual 'graduates' employment opportunities, the resultant earnings³ and improved quality of life. Because the majority of learners who receive poor quality education are often from marginalized and poorer segments of societies, sustaining the current levels of poor quality education not only denies developing countries the opportunity for growth but also the redistributive effects of education. Ultimately, poor education quality risks reinforcing social and income inequalities and sustaining inter-generational poverty and marginalization.

*Moreover, countries with acute social inequalities have been shown to be more prone to social unrests and political instability.*⁴ Poor education quality, therefore, is detrimental to poverty reduction efforts, social equity and inclusion, social coherence and political stability. It stands in the way of attaining poverty reduction related MDGs at an individual, national, regional and global level. At the same time, it presents obstacles to attaining the six EFA goals, each of which has education quality aspects; and particularly goals 2, 5, and 6.

RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

Both developed and developing countries are well aware of the quality crisis and its development consequences. Most of their education reform programs have education quality improvement among key strategic objectives. The global EFA agenda has also identified quality as requiring attention. Yet, the challenge persists, and the EFA quality goals are dauntingly off track. UNESCO Member States have therefore overwhelmingly called on the Secretariat to redouble its technical support to their efforts to address the global challenge of equity of quality.

Hitherto, what seems to be lacking are tools for analyzing and identifying critical constraints that prevent Member States from attaining and sustaining intended levels and equity of education quality and learning outcomes. The lack of tools is particularly so for general education (Kto12).

¹ World Economic Forum, Executive Opinion Survey 2008, 2009

² Hanushek and Wößmann, 2007

³ Hanushek and Zhang, 2006, GMR, 2005, Verspoor et. al., 2008, Marope, 2005.

⁴ World Development Report, 2007

Though contentious and inconsistently applied, higher education has fairly established quality assurance systems whose results can guide the design of targeted interventions. Technical and vocational education and training systems also have qualifications frameworks that help to standardize quality and whose applications may inform timely and targeted interventions. Beyond national and international examinations which have very limited scope and comparability, the general education system does not have a similarly strong tradition.

Weak analysis translates into serious gaps in the knowledge base required to guide the design and implementation of responsive quality improvement interventions. The *General Education Quality Diagnostic/Analysis and Monitoring Framework* is an analytical tool that seeks to strengthen Member States' capacities to build both qualitative and quantitative knowledge base required to effectively guide the design and implementation of responsive, targeted and timely education quality improvement interventions. As an analytical tool the Framework is NOT meant to 'tell' Member States what is wrong with their education systems or how to fix it. It is rather meant to help them identify what is wrong themselves and how to address it. The Framework is also meant to strengthen the monitoring of progress towards set benchmarks supported by country-specific quantitative and qualitative indicators. It is NOT meant to support cross-country comparisons, but rather to monitor country progress over time.

Part of the key sources of weak analysis has been diverse definitions of quality. Within this framework, 'quality education' is broadly conceptualized as the one which is: *effective for purpose, development⁵ relevant or responsive, equitable, resource-efficient and as denoting substantive access⁶.*

Prior and current general education quality analyses and improvement efforts have tended to focus on specific aspects of education inputs, mostly in isolation from one another. The most analyzed inputs are finance, teachers, curricula, school infrastructure and furniture, books and instructional materials. However, it is very rare that even these select aspects receive a comprehensive, articulated and interactive/iterative analysis. Likewise, processes that often receive isolated attention are assessment, management and governance. For the best part, only cognitive outcomes receive attention. Even then, cognitive outcomes have mostly been narrowly defined as test scores.

Most quality analyses have also been limited in scope and fragmented. Fragmentation has often led to inherently inconsistent and sometimes contradictory remedial interventions. It has also, often, led to uneven and imbalanced improvements of aspects of the quality. For instance curricula reforms have not always taken into account the books and instructional materials, teachers, teaching processes and assessment methods required to give them effect. Changes in student curricula have not always taken into account the teaching and learning environments where such curricula are to be implemented, or teachers who are supposed to implement such curricula. Conversely, changes to the physical teaching and learning environments have not always taken the demands of diverse curricula into account or even taken into account teachers' and learners' needs that have to be met within such environments.

⁵ Development here is broadly conceptualized as already outlined above.

⁶ Substantive access refers to effective and successful participation in education rather than token participation which does not lead to real learning outcomes. It is a construct that distinguishes access to schooling which most children have and access to education which most children don't have.

This framework adopts a comprehensive and systemic approach to education. It acknowledges the reality that accountability to deliver quality education and to effectively facilitate learning lies at all levels and in all aspects of an education system. However, the relative weight or relative effects of each aspect of an education system differs across contexts which can be national (a country) or sub-national (province, district, etc) levels. An effective use of the framework starts therefore with its adaptation to the context. These levels and parts of the system are not only mutually reinforcing but are also mutually indispensable.

Key characteristics of the framework are that it is:

- Systemic and comprehensive while allowing for specific targeting of the sub-systems. It recognizes the connectedness and complementarity of elements of system quality as well as their potential contradictions. It adopts an integrated, iterative, coordinated and comprehensive view of elements of education system quality. At the same time it allows for purposeful targeting of elements of education quality where comprehensive diagnostics identified them as the ‘missing link(s)’ in the quality chain.
- Diagnostic tool (in a set of toolkits) meant to facilitate MSs to raise critical questions about binding constraints to realizing the desired quality of their systems rather than to offer MSs with solutions to the quality challenges of their systems.
- Takes the demand side (outputs and outcomes) of education systems as a starting point to the diagnostics of education quality and addresses only the inputs and processes as requirements to deliver intended outputs and outcomes. This is a significant point of departure from the common practice where increasing inputs has often been assumed as a starting point for improving education quality.
- A flexible and contextually responsive approach rather than a ‘one-size-fits-all’. It allows MSs multiple-entry points to address their quality challenges based on their respective contexts.
- Re-asserts MSs’ technical and political leadership for determining the binding constraints to the quality of their systems: prioritize those constraints, and determine the nature and sequencing of interventions required to redress them. This is another significant point of departure from common practice where international development agencies, due to their technical capacities often take a technical leadership role in diagnosing quality constraints and identifying responsive interventions.
- Emphasizes the strengthening of MSs’ technical capacities to realize their leadership role.

THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

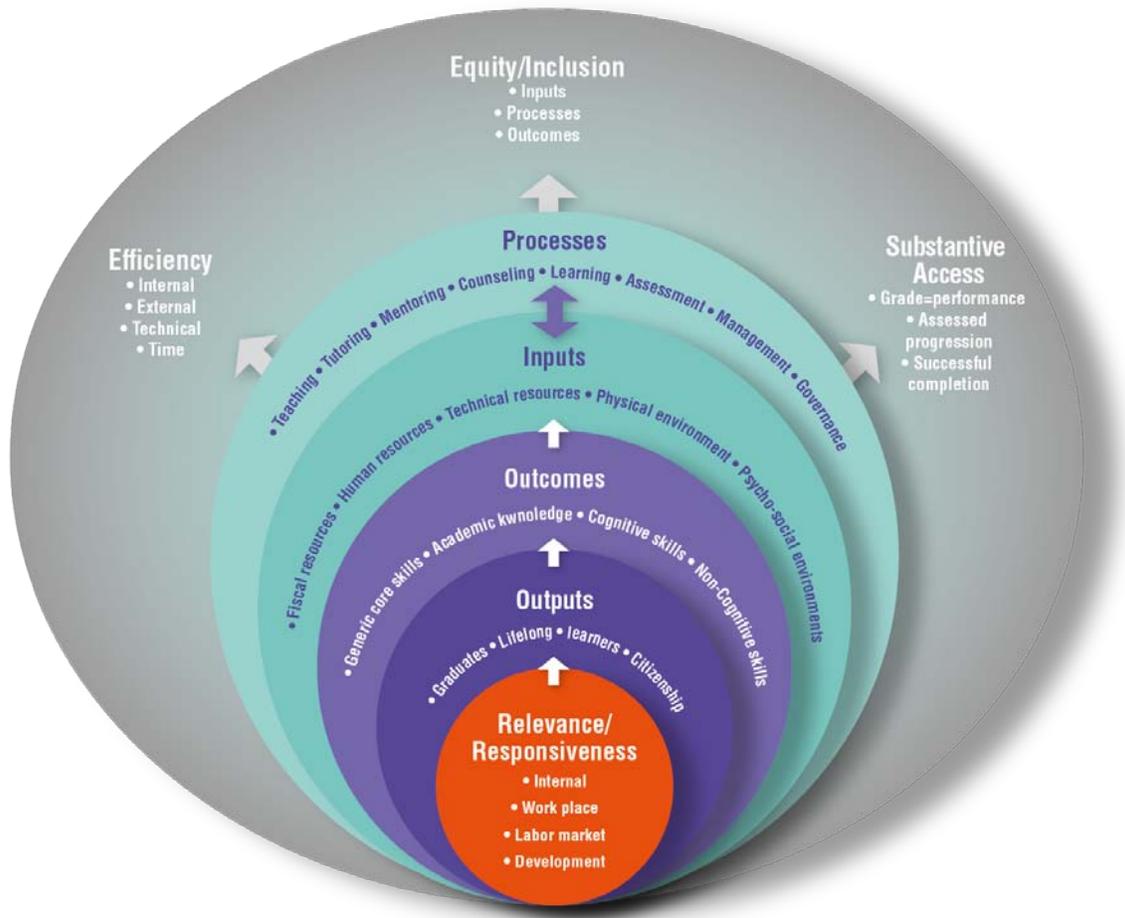
Key pillars of the framework and key building blocks of each pillar are exemplified in Figure 1 below. For example, the treatment of an input such as teachers will include elements like: their choice of the profession, admission criteria, pre and in-service training, recruitment, working conditions, management and utilization, salaries and incentives, retention and retirement⁷. A

⁷This work is already started under the TISSA initiative.

treatment of learners will include their status at entry—socio-economic background, learning readiness, health conditions, nutrition — access to health services, access to legal and social protection services, admission criteria, in-school academic and pastoral services and other support services.

Fiscal resources will be treated in terms of sources, adequacy, allocation, equity, management, utilization, efficiency and sustainability.

Figure 1: Examples of Elements of the Framework



ENVISAGED NATURE AND APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

The framework is articulated in a modular form and as a set of toolkits (12 toolkits in all) that are easy to contextualize and apply. It will be presented to MSs as a generic tool that can be adapted to their contexts. It will be accompanied by a compendium of promising practices that MSs may use as a reference materials, and as input in designing contextually responsive and targeted quality improvement interventions. In line with UNESCO’s standard setting function, the framework is meant to help MSs define national general education quality standards within their contexts and to equitably apply those standards toward a higher and equitable/inclusive quality general education. In line with UNESCO’s capacity builder function, the framework will be used

to strengthen MSs' capacity to diagnose/analyze binding constraints to attain equitable quality general education for all, to prioritize those constraints, and to develop and implement adequately responsive interventions. In line with UNESCO's laboratory of ideas function, the framework will be presented as a 'living instrument' that UNESCO and MSs will continuously update to reflect current thinking and emerging promising practices in the improvement of the quality of general education.

BENEFICIARIES AND TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience of this framework is principally policy makers who wish to improve the quality of their general education system. Other audiences include education planners and practitioners who will use the toolkits. Key beneficiaries would be countries whose capacities for identifying quality constraints of their systems and to effectively redress those constraints would be enhanced. Learners, their families and their communities are also key beneficiaries: Especially learners from poor households and other disadvantaged groups whose chances of receiving quality education and its consequent benefits will be greatly enhanced.

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: RELEVANCE / RESPONSIVENESS

1. Introduction

As outlined in the introduction this Framework perceives sustained development responsiveness / relevance as one of the integral aspects of a good quality education and training system. The world over, individuals, their families and their countries heavily invest in education not only because it is a human right, but also because of its well documented and sustainable development impact. Within this Framework, sustainable development is broadly conceived to include human, social, political, cultural, economic, values, ethics, peace, and environmental dimensions. It is also perceived as having individual and collective levels with the latter ranging from families, households, communities, districts, provinces, countries, and the universe. What constitutes sustainable development for individuals and their collectives varies substantially across geographic and temporal contexts. Because development is heavily contextual, systems that support development—e.g., education and training systems—have to necessarily be contextually sensitive and even tethered. An education and training system that fails to meet individual and collective development needs and aspirations cannot be passed as being of good quality. Yet more often than not education and training systems are castigated for their irrelevance to individual and collective needs and aspirations. Signals of this irrelevance range from the perceived or even real inability of the systems to enable learners for: effective learning at different levels of the system, acquisition of competencies commensurate to levels of educational attainment, effective functioning in the world of work and in the labor market, decent work and decent earnings, productivity and effective contribution to sustainable growth, citizenship, civic responsibility and effective contribution to social cohesion, peaceful co-existence and living together, etc. This Framework holds that inadequate understanding of the development context of an education and training system is a fundamental cause of its irrelevance to geographical and temporal development context(s), its “ineffectiveness for purpose” and therefore its poor quality. The Framework therefore takes a thorough analysis and a textured understanding of the development context(s) of an education and training system as an

inescapable starting point for determining the adequacy of education quality and the probability of learning effectiveness.

A key focus of this toolkit is to assist the user to ascertain the nature and extent of consonance/ disconnect between the education and training system and its development context(s). **The paramount question addressed by this toolkit is: Have we ensured relevance of our education system to reach the desired level of education quality and learning effectiveness?** The toolkit is meant to support the users' analysis and identification of the sources of dissonance, to prioritize them and to strengthen an analytic knowledge base for redressing the dissonance. The analysis is facilitated by posing some key questions regarding the concept of relevance in the country's specific contexts and the mechanism for its operationalization with respect to education and training currently provided.

2. Diagnosis and analysis

Country level relevance

1. How do we operationally define our concept of development? Where is the concept articulated? How and with whom is the concept shared? Where is the evidence of a shared understanding of this concept? What are the mechanisms for keeping the concept current? [**Link to promising practices**]
2. What are the key dimensions of this operational concept? Who gets involved in this operational definition? Where is the evidence of their involvement? [**Link to examples of dimensions and promising practices**]
3. Where in the country does the responsibility for operational conceptualization of development lies? How do these loci of responsibility interact with and inform the strengthening of the development relevance of education and training systems? How adequate and sustainable are the response mechanisms?
4. How is the relevance of the education and training system to our concept of development ensured and sustained? Where is the evidence of this sustained relevance?

5. How is the education system positioned to benefit from national development? How is the education system positioned among key levers of national development?

Labor market and world of work responsiveness

1. What are the mechanisms for ensuring labor market/world of work responsiveness?
[link to promising practices] Where is the evidence that these mechanism work?
[link to promising practices]
2. How do we attain and sustain labor market / world of work responsiveness? What are the key markers of labor market / world of work responsiveness? Where is the evidence of this sustained relevance? **[link to examples]**

External global level responsiveness

1. How do we ensure and sustain system responsiveness to global development challenges and opportunities? Where is the evidence of sustained global relevance?
2. How is the education system positioned to benefit from global development opportunities? How is the education system protected from global development challenges?

External individual level responsiveness

- 1 What are the mechanisms for ensuring education and training system's responsiveness to individual development needs and aspirations?
- 2 How is individual development operationally defined within school system, national, global context? **[link to examples, link to Toolkit on learners]**

Internal system level relevance

1. What are the mechanisms for fostering the system's internal responsiveness?
2. How do we vertically articulate the system? (curriculum, skills & competencies)

3. How do we horizontally articulate the system? (equivalencies)

3. Priorities for action

1. Where and which are the most formidable sources of disconnect between the country's demand side of development and the education system or supply side and how do we address them?
2. What are the most urgent steps needed to reduce disconnect and to assure adequate and sustainable responsiveness of the education and training system.

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: LIFELONG LEARNERS

1. Introduction

We live in a complex and fast-changing social, economic and political world to which we need to adapt by rapidly acquiring new knowledge, skills and attitudes in a wide range of contexts. An individual will not be able to meet life challenges unless he or she becomes a lifelong learner, and a society will not be sustainable unless it becomes a learning society. Lifelong learning has been accepted by UNESCO Member States as the master concept and guiding principle towards a viable and sustainable future. The quality of education is not only determined by formal schooling, but also by continuous provision of learning opportunities in non-formal and informal settings. A rich variety of formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities reflecting the wide range of people's talents and learning needs must be developed and made accessible to all. Social, demographic and economic factors combine to point to the need for more serious attention to be paid to youth and adult learning and education. Current developments require a constant update of skills and competences, not only with regard to the world of work but in an encompassing approach to participating in contemporary societies. Moreover, in recent years, international communities have made progress in developing the concept of 'key competences' for lifelong learning which include a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes. **[Example: EU, 2006].**

The topics of 'learner' and 'learning' for the school-aged children are addressed substantially elsewhere in the Education Quality Framework of which this toolkit is just one (see toolkits on Teaching and learning). Therefore this toolkit focuses on the issue of systematic development of learning opportunities so that learning becomes an activity accompanying people along their whole lifespan. **The paramount question**

this toolkit will assist to address is: Have we integrated life-long learning into our education system and provided ample opportunities for learning to our citizens throughout their life? The toolkit aims at facilitating an assessment of Life Long Learning systems in place or being developed in each country and the environment for such learning by raising some key questions regarding policy and practice supporting life-long learning. While the questions are not meant to be exhaustive, they will facilitate a systematic and structured discussion to identify key challenges and constraints with a view to developing appropriate strategies and actions to address them.

2. Diagnosis and analysis

Developing integrated system of Lifelong Learning

Vertical integration

1. What legislation and policy have been developed to facilitate learning at various developmental stages of individuals (infant, child, adolescent, adult and elderly)?
2. What mechanisms have been developed to ensure smooth transition between different levels of education (early childhood, primary, secondary, vocational, adult and higher)? Are the mechanisms working properly? What is the evidence?
3. How have further and higher education institutions offered flexible, convenient and relevant provision of learning opportunities to the working population? Do we know the extent of this provision, who participates and why? [**Link to Equity and Inclusion toolkit**]
4. How has the formal school system provided relevant and foundational knowledge, skills and attitudes for lifelong learning? [**Link to Curricula, Teaching and Learning Toolkits**]

Horizontal integration

1. What mechanism has been developed to create links and build synergies between learning taking place in formal and non-formal settings? How effective are the mechanisms in terms of recognizing competencies acquired through non-formal and/or informal means and settings?
2. What mechanism has been developed to promote learning in a plurality of learning spaces covering life-wide contexts across family, school, workplace, cultural and community settings? To what extent do women and other disadvantaged groups benefit from learning opportunities in these varied learning settings?
3. In what way do museums, libraries, cultural organisations, and faith-based organizations play role in facilitating lifelong learning?
4. What are the major barriers to lifelong learners and what targeted policy measures have been adopted to overcome them? Is there evidence that these targeted measures have been effective?

Best practice: Lifelong Learning & National Entitlement Card in Colleges & Universities in Scotland [[Link to Resource Bank](#)].

Developing enabling learning environments

1. What measures are being taken by villages, communities, cities and regions in our country to encourage individual citizens to become lifelong learners? What policy has been developed and implemented to ensure that there will be no exclusion in the opportunity for learning? What are the lessons learned from those efforts?
2. What mandate has media received from the government to play a major role in informing and opening up learning opportunities? What policy and strategies have been developed and implemented in exploiting the potential of mass media in providing lifelong learning opportunities? What is the evidence that media is playing that role?

3. What specific measures have been taken in ensuring the quality of open and distance learning? How effective are those measures? Has ICT been effectively integrated into formal, non-formal education and informal learning?
4. What activities and programmes such as learners' weeks and learning festivals have been organized to motivate and mobilize learners or potential learners? How effective are these programmes and activities?

Best practice: Paid education leaves in Germany [[Link to Resource Bank](#)]

3. Priorities for action

1. What are the key areas to be addressed urgently to further develop an integrated system for lifelong learning for progress towards a learning society?
2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy on the provision of opportunities and conditions for lifelong learning?
3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Introduction

Education systems are facing complex challenges, including the development of multi-sectoral policies attentive to the diversity of societal expectations and needs; sustaining a sense of identity and belonging (a common societal basis) while encouraging local cultures to maintain their identity and belongingness; and supporting individuals in acquiring and developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to learn to understand and cope with changes in a holistic way. Thus, learning outcomes must be able to satisfy these varied demands and expectations. Despite a variety of definitions to be found in country documents, the common emphasis on action-oriented knowledge and skills supported by sound values and attitudes constitutes a common denominator of what is usually understood by competencies. Competencies embed an articulation of knowledge, values, skills and attitudes that learners can mobilize independently, creatively and responsibly to address challenges and solve problems. Many international organizations have contributed to the definition and categorization of competencies while proposing different distinctions between key (core, generic or transversal/cross-cutting) competencies; basic competencies; subject-bound or specialized competencies (Acedo, C. and D. Georgescu, 2010).⁸ Terms such as capacity, attribute, skill, ability and competency are sometimes used interchangeably and have a degree of overlap in meaning. All of them are related to the individual and what he/she can achieve as well to societal expectations, needs, developments and achievements. The specificity of the notion of competency lies in implying a whole set of complementary knowledge,

⁸ In Canada/Québec, for instance, competencies are categorized as (1) Key/Cross-curricular competencies; (2) Subject-bound competencies, and (3) Life long learning competencies. In Guatemala they are divided into (1) Framework competencies; Area competencies; Subject/Strand competency; Grade competencies. In Indonesia competency standards are being developed with regard to (a) Cross-cutting competencies; and (b) Subject-bound competencies, that on their turn, are divided into standard competencies (of a more general nature) and base competencies (as illustrations or specification of the subject-bound standard competencies).

procedures, attitudes and personal skills for the individual to be able to act effectively when faced with different situations. These complementary sets of skills are referred to as life skills. [**Link to Resource Bank for detailed discussion on definition, features and categorization of competencies**]

This toolkit aims to assist MS undertake a thorough diagnosis of the learning outcomes defined in their policies and the challenges in developing curricula that address learning outcomes for quality learning. Thus, the paramount question in this toolkit is: **What are the most important learning outcomes for our learners to acquire to face today's (and tomorrow's) world?** This paramount question is addressed in this toolkit by posing some key questions regarding our conceptualization of learning outcomes, our goals of learning outcomes and the policies and approaches for making sure the learning objectives are achieved.

2. Diagnosis and analysis

Conceptualizing learning outcomes

1. How are learning outcomes (both short-term and long-term) currently understood and conceptualized in our country's context (i.e. as standards, competencies, training objectives)? Are skills and competencies used as equivalent terms?
2. To what extent the aims and objectives of educational policies adequately reflected in the learning outcomes?
3. In what ways have we used the concept of competencies as learning outcomes to contribute to creating the type of society and citizen our country wishes to pursue? Has equitable quality education been a factor in determining the desired learning outcomes?

Setting goals for learning outcomes

1. What goals for learning outcomes have been set in our country? How are these goals related to concepts and issues of equity and inclusion? Have we ensured that the learning outcome goals are linked to national development policies and programs?

2. To what extent have we been successful in identifying learning areas and cross-cutting issues which enable our learners to acquire the competencies required to face today's (and tomorrow's) world? Do our learning outcomes include key life skills and competencies that are relevant in our country's context? What is the evidence of that?
3. What is the mechanism for involving stakeholders from inside and outside the education system in the identification, prioritization and development of learning outcomes? Has the mechanism been effective? How do we know that?

Ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes

1. To what extent, does the curriculum lead learners to achieve the desired learning outcomes? Do we have evidence of that the curriculum has been a powerful tool to sustain and develop educational policies towards the attainment of learning outcomes? **[Link to toolkit on curricula]**
2. What competency-based approaches were used as a tool to effectively develop a curriculum inclusive of all learners' expectations and needs? Can competency-based approaches be a main syllabi organizer and in particular of the sequence of learning and teaching?
3. What measures have we taken to improve teachers' competencies and teacher education to support the development of learners' competencies and the achievement of effective learning outcomes? Have our measures been effective? **[Link to toolkit on teachers]**
4. How well existing assessments cover key competencies that should be measured? Have the kind of methods and instruments used to assess competencies been adequate? Have we assessed the adequacy of these methods and instruments? What have been the key challenges (e.g. technical capacity, governance, financial issue)? **[Link to toolkit on assessment]**
5. Have we provided the necessary learning and teaching environment conducive for attaining the desired learning outcomes? **[Link to toolkit on learning environment]**

3. Priorities for action

1. What changes (policies or programs) should be made in our system to reach the learning outcome goals more effectively? What strengths exist in our current system to facilitate these changes? How can they be leveraged most effectively?
2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy and practice of development of knowledge, skills and competencies relevant for our development needs?
3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: CURRICULUM

1. Introduction

Curriculum is a formal packaging of competencies that learners must acquire through organised learning experiences both in formal and non-formal settings. Good curriculum plays an important role in forging life-long learning competencies, as well as social attitudes and skills, such as tolerance and respect, constructive management of diversity, peaceful conflict management, promotion and respect of Human Rights, gender equality, justice and inclusiveness. At the same time, curriculum contributes to the development of thinking skills and the acquisition of relevant knowledge that learners need to apply in the context of their studies, daily life and careers. Curriculum is also increasingly called upon to support the learner's personal development by contributing to enhancing their self-respect and confidence, motivation and aspirations. In addition, there are many new and emerging challenges to education and demand on curriculum, such as new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs); intercultural understanding; Sustainable Development; Learning To Live Together; HIV and AIDS; Life skills; Competency development for life. Through their guiding function for education agents and stakeholders, clear, inspired and motivational curriculum documents and materials play an important role in ensuring education quality. Curriculum is implemented by teachers, and depends moreover on the quality of teaching and learning strategies, learning materials and assessment. The process of implementation of the curricula and the related issues are dealt in a number of toolkits which form the UNESCO General Education Quality Framework (GEQF) of which this Toolkit is just one. **[Link to toolkits on Teachers, Teaching and Learning]**

This Toolkit is intended to support national education authorities (i. e. decision shapers/makers; curriculum specialists; teacher trainers; assessment specialists) to carry out a critical scanning of their curriculum “system” with a view to identifying the strong elements to be built upon, as well as the weaknesses/shortcomings that hinder education quality. **The paramount question for this toolkit is whether or not the curriculum we have in place enables us to impart on our learners the kinds of competencies, values**

and attitudes we require for the type of society we envision to build. The paramount question can be addressed by assessing the alignment of the curriculum to national development goals, the effectiveness of curriculum policies as well as the development, design and planning of the curricula. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the curricula and its responsiveness to new challenges and requirements is also a critical element which needs to be assessed. The diagnosis and analysis section below raises some fundamental questions in each of the stages of the curriculum development and implementation process to support a structured discussion of the major issues of regarding curricula and the its effect on education quality. A comprehensive and much detailed follow-on question and reflections are available on demand [[Link to UNESCO Education Quality Framework Resource Bank](#)].

2. Diagnosis and analysis

Development relevance of curricula [[Link to examples of effective practice, Resource Bank](#)]

1. What does your country/community want to achieve with regard to the personal development of learners and societal well-being and advancements? And how well the curriculum reflects that?
2. What are the mechanisms for making the curricula to respond to national development policies and strategies? Is there evidence that the mechanisms work effectively?
3. How well are the key/core/cross-cutting competencies identified in the curricula aligned to education policy goals? Is there evidence that such key competencies have been at the core of curriculum development? [[Link to Skills and competencies toolkit](#)]
4. What is the extent of education stakeholders (teachers, learners, private sector, civil society) involved in developing the curriculum vision and appropriate curriculum policies? [[Link to Governance Toolkit](#)]

Curriculum planning, design and content [Link to examples of Effective practice, Resource Bank]

1. Is there evidence of curriculum development being effectively led and guided (i.e. Are there publicly-known and recognized leaders of curriculum processes; Are there guidelines developed for guiding the process of curriculum design, writing, piloting, implementation and revision?)
2. What evidence exist that the learning content is well selected and organised? (i. e. Are there broad Learning Areas and subjects; scope and sequence; balance, curriculum integration; appropriateness to age / stage of development; core curriculum and differentiated curricula) **[Link to toolkits on Teaching and Learning, Equity and Inclusion]**
3. How well are cross-cutting & emerging issues covered in the curriculum? (i.e. What are “current” issues to be addressed; How to incorporate issues such as gender equality; HR and citizenship education; ESD; LTLT – peace education, intercultural understanding; HIV and AIDS; Life skills; preparation for life and work; How to keep the curriculum open and flexible in addressing new/emerging issues...).

Curriculum implementation, monitoring and evaluation [Link to examples of effective practice, Resource Bank]

1. What is evidence that teachers and students play an effective role in implementing the curriculum (i.e. how well teachers are trained and understand the curriculum; teachers as facilitators; advisors, moderators; curriculum developers; students as participating in selecting and structuring their learning activities)
2. What is evidence that curriculum implementation is supported by enabling learning environments? What is evidence that schools make efforts to improve their learning environments? (i.e. Communication strategies; Student

- participation; Enhanced access to learning facilities and resources; Counselling; School ethos and Aesthetic) [**Link to toolkit Learning Environment**]
3. How well are assessments aligned to the goals of the curriculum? What elements pertaining to assessment have hindered curriculum implementation and hence education quality?
 4. Is there evidence of a country-wide system of monitoring and evaluation of curriculum processes? Has it been used for continuous development of the curricula? What is the evidence that evaluation of curricula and associated textbooks have influenced curriculum & textbook revision? [**Link to teaching, learning toolkits**]

3. Priorities for action

1. What are the key areas and binding constraints to be addressed urgently to achieve major improvements in the quality of our curricula?
2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy and practice of curriculum development?
3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: TEACHERS

1. Introduction

Teachers are the major pillars in the teaching and learning process. Without an appropriate focus on teachers, access, quality and equity of education for all is not feasible. The quality of teachers has been found to explain significant differences in learning outcomes. Equitable deployment of qualified teachers also has a significant bearing on the distribution of learning outcomes and thus equity (Scheerens, 2004). There are clear indications that provision of quality education tends to have a greater impact on the most vulnerable or deprived students (UNESCO, 2006) and thus providing quality teachers to all schools is one important way to address the problem of inequity. As new and more complex roles are ascribed to teachers, coherent and adequate teacher selection, preparation and continuous professional development strategies must be in place to endow those entrusted with teaching with the required knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and retain them in the profession. **[Link to the tools on Learners, Learning and Teaching].**

This toolkit focuses on teachers as a critical sub-system that can support or impede MS from achieving the goal of quality education for all. The Toolkit is one of several toolkits in the UNESCO General Education Quality Diagnostic/Analysis and Monitoring Framework (GEQF) designed to help MS to assess all aspects of their education system to improve quality and equity. This tool is particularly linked to the toolkit on the teaching and learning process hence should be used in a complementary manner. It is expected that the toolkit will serve as a guide for reflection and not as a prescription of a particular choice, or of a particular method to analyze the issue of teachers and education quality. **The paramount question to be addressed by this toolkit is to what extent the teachers sub-system has been a major factor in explaining the quality problems we face in our education system.** This question can be addressed by a thorough analysis and reflection on the systems and mechanisms we have in place for attracting suitable and motivated individuals to the teaching profession, for selection and preparation of teacher candidates, their recruitment, deployment, retention and their effective management for

the delivery of quality education. At each of these critical stages, from initial entry into the profession to the delivery of quality education, we need to pose some fundamental questions to identify the factors affecting the ability of our teachers to deliver quality education to our learners. A much comprehensive and detailed follow-up questions and reflections are available. **[Link to UNESCO Education Quality Framework Resource Bank]**. The diagnostics of the teachers sub-system will facilitate the identification of areas of strength to build on and also areas of weaknesses and gaps to address. The diagnostic and analysis of both strengths and remaining challenges should lead to the formulation of action plans focusing on the most critical challenges, if addressed, can unlock great potential for improving the education system to deliver equity and quality.

2. Diagnosis and analysis

Entry into the teaching profession

1. Who is attracted to the teaching profession and why? Do we have data on the profile of those applying for teacher training? **[Link to examples of countries which managed to attract the best students to the profession: How did they manage that?]**
2. How well do our criteria for selection into teacher training (e.g. minimum qualification, attitudes and values, motivation) and selection modalities (e.g. exam, interview) reflect the type of teachers we want to train?

Training of teachers

1. What is the profile of the teacher educators? How are they trained, recruited, remunerated? Does the financing of teacher training institutions reflect the central role teacher training plays for quality education? **[Link to Finance for quality Toolkit]**
2. How well does teacher assessment reflect the competencies expected of new teachers? Is practical training assessed? What are the modalities of assessment?

3. Has the efficiency of our teacher education programs in imparting teachers with the expected knowledge and skills been analyzed? Is there any analysis of the impact of trained teachers on students' achievements? **[Examples of how that can be analyzed]**
4. How has in-service and CPD program been effective in raising the quality standard of our teachers? Do we have evidence of that? **[Examples of how other countries do that]**

Recruitment, deployment and retention of teachers

1. What mechanisms are in place to attract and retain the best qualified people to teaching? **[Link to Financing for Quality Toolkit]** Have they been effective? What is the extent of teacher attrition in our country? Why did these teachers leave?
2. Are there mechanisms in place for the best teachers to be recognized and rewarded for their teaching? **[Link to financing for quality]**
3. Are qualified teachers deployed equitably throughout all educational levels, educational settings and in line with curriculum requirements? What are the mechanisms in place to ensure that teacher deployment is equitable and the mechanisms are applied consistently? **[Link to Equity and Inclusion toolkit]**

Management of teachers

1. What mechanisms are in place to support teachers at all moments of their career? Do they foster a feeling of motivation and promote increased performance of teachers?
2. What forms of supervision and performance evaluation are in place and how effective have they been? **[Link to Governance Toolkit]**
3. To what extent do teachers participate in planning and decision-making at all levels of the educational system **[Examples of how teacher participation improves the delivery of quality education]**

3. Priorities for action

1. What are the key areas and binding constraints to be addressed urgently to achieve major improvements in the quality of our teachers current and future?
2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for a evidence-based policy and practice?
3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?
4. **Next steps formulating guide to action:** Who does what and when? What will be the coordination mechanism to effect the changes in a cohesive and systemic way?

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1. Introduction

An environment that is physically and socially supportive influences learning in many ways and contributes to increase learners' participation, retention and achievement. Research reflects the often complex, subtle, and surprising interplay between the learner and the learning environment. Welcoming the learner – child, youth or adult – in an environment where they can feel safe and nurtured for is very important for the development of each individual and the society as a whole. Although research shows [\[Link to research findings\]](#) the meaning and value of supportive learning environments, the unequal provision within countries continues to deprive learners from educational opportunities. Addressing the issue of learning environment in a comprehensive and systematic way is even more critical in countries with limited financial resources. These scarce resources should be invested with a clear definition of what constitutes an enabling learning environment and with a clear benchmarking of progress toward attainment of that environment. Despite the wide variety of learning systems and complexity of layers of decision-making, it is critical to not lose the importance of building learning environments and integrate these aforementioned considerations in a national and local policy context.

Learning takes place in more than one location and the learning environment can be structured or unstructured and the learning in different environments can complement each other. Formal and non-formal education occurs mainly in structured environments in the form of institutions (schools, community centers, multi-media centers, learning villages/cities, etc.). Informal education on the other hand takes place in both structured and unstructured environments. This toolkit focuses on structured environments. The paramount question this toolkit aims to address is: **Have we assured every learner an environment that is both physically and psychosocially enabling to their learning and thus conducive to improving the quality of education?** Through a series of structured questions, the toolkit supports an in-depth analysis of the different aspects of

the learning environment both physical and psychosocial and also the policy context.

2. Diagnosis and analysis

Policies, instruments and process in support of a good learning environment

1. How well do existing policy guidelines and instruments ensure enabling learning environments? Are our legal frameworks consistent with the goal of creating an enabling learning environment? Do they support a rights-based approach to education (the principles of availability and accessibility for all, non-discrimination, equality of opportunity, fundamental freedoms)?
2. To what extent do education quality improvement efforts reflect the learning environment as key factors of achieving quality education for all? What key dimensions of these environments are taken into account and using what instruments?
3. What is the mechanism for participation of the education community and other groups (women, people with disabilities, etc.) in setting the criteria for a good learning environment? Has the mechanism been effective? How do we know? **[Link to Governance and Financing Toolkits]**
4. What evidence exist that current policies, legal frameworks and instruments have been effective in improving the learning environment? Are there mechanisms in place for data collection and analysis to support measures to create and sustain a good learning environment?

The physical learning environment

1. What mechanisms (guidelines, standards, norms and safety requirements) have we in place to address the selection of sites and the design and construction process of our learning places? To what extent the community, including staff, learners, and villagers is consulted in the planning and design? Have we evidence that these

standards and requirements are adhered to? **[Example: Rwanda’s “Child friendly schools infrastructure standards and guidelines]**

2. Have we ensured that our physical spaces correspond to the requirements set in our educational policies and programs (e.g. availability of laboratories to ensure the delivery of science programs; ICTs spaces, etc.)? **[Link to Tool on Financing]**
3. What concrete measures have we taken to ensure that access routes to the learning places are safe and secure for all, especially for girls and women?
4. What physical conditions exist in learning settings that may impact the health issues of concern (e.g. access to clean drinking water, proper sanitation facilities, lighting, ventilation and heating, drainage and dampness)? Do we have separate provision of sanitation facilities for girls and boys?
5. How do we ensure equitable distribution of physical learning environment throughout the country (e.g. rural versus urban)? Do we have sufficient evidence that physical infrastructure and facilities are distributed equitably in accordance with policy goals?
6. How efficiently are physical environments utilized and maintained? Is that closely monitored? What is being done to address possible poor management and maintenance of infrastructure?

The psychosocial learning environment

1. Have we put in place measures to protect our learners, such as safety and protection from violence (including corporal and humiliating forms of punishment of children): physical violence; bullying; mental/psychological violence; cyber bullying, external violence (e.g. effects of gangs, conflict situation)? Does our curriculum integrate the necessary tools against violence? **[Example: Anti-bullying programme in Finland]**
2. Have we evidence on the type, form and extent of violence on our learners? What national mechanisms for data collection, monitoring and evaluation of violence exist?
3. Have we set efficient vigilance mechanisms (national/regional/local levels) within the learning environment? **[Stopping violence in schools, UNESCO]**

guide for teachers, 2009]

4. Do we have a national policy/plan/framework in regard to health and nutrition in schools? If so, what aspects (e.g. HIV and AIDS, malaria, deworming, school feeding, etc.) does it cover? How effective is the implementation? Which specific health and nutrition issues merit more specific policies/plans/frameworks? [**Link to equity and inclusion toolkit**]
5. Do our educational policies promote effective Guidance and Counselling Programmes innovations that are sustainable, demand driven and implementable? What types of services and thematic areas are included in our Guidance and Counselling programme policy? [**Good practice: The Guidance, Counselling, and Youth Development Centre for Africa, Lilongwe, Malawi**]

3. Priorities for action

1. What are the key areas to be addressed urgently to make our learning environment conducive to delivering quality education to all our learners?
2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy on the provision of adequate and quality physical and psychosocial learning environment?
3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Introduction

An education of quality is a fundamental human right, and all citizens are entitled to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to develop as individuals and participate effectively in their country's development. What happens within the classroom is of crucial importance for the quality of education (UNESCO, 2004). Research also shows (Bernard et al., 2004) that considering the profile of the teacher alone is not sufficient to determine what is really happening in the classroom: teachers and the teaching and learning process are two separate, though closely interrelated, issues. Teaching and learning processes are not only crucial to education quality but also to equity of education. Individuals learn differently. They should be taught differently. For learners to reach their full potentials, teaching methods, approaches and assessment modalities must be well understood by those entrusted with teaching and those making decisions about education. What research also underlines is that adaptability to context matters as different countries and students may need different teaching contents (both in terms of subject matter knowledge and of medium of instruction) and different levels of structure tailored to students' profile. It is therefore important to critically assess the relevance of both current and planned objectives (in terms of the content, structure, and context of teaching and learning) to the national situation. What kind of teaching and learning can be provided is shaped/constrained by the learner and the learning environment, the teacher and the teaching culture. Research shows, (Mc Kinsey & Cie, 2010) that countries which have been successful in improving their education system followed a number of general principles but also tailored their intervention to match the current situation of their education system. **[Common characteristics of good teaching according to (UNESCO, 2004) and (Scheerens, 2004), Resource Bank UNESCO Framework for Quality Education]**

The overall objective of this toolkit is to support the analysis of how teaching and learning processes contribute to the quality and equity of general education. It is part

of a broader collection of tools designed to assess all aspects of education quality and is, most specifically, complementary to the tool on teachers. **The paramount question this toolkit raises is: Do our teaching and learning processes facilitate or impede the attainment of quality education for all our learners?** This toolkit facilitates the probing of this paramount question by posing some key questions regarding critical factors affecting and influencing teaching and learning. The participants of the diagnosis/analysis exercise will no doubt identify further follow-on question. A comprehensive and much detailed follow-on question and reflections are available from UNESCO if required [**Link to UNESCO Education Quality Framework Resource Bank**].

2. Diagnosis and analysis

The approach to teaching and learning

1. How effective have current interventions been to make our education system more learner-centered? If not what are the main obstacles to realizing a learner-centered education system, provision, teaching and learning process?
2. What is the evidence that the teaching process encourages active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process and facilitates the learner's sharing of his/her learning processes (e.g. through monitoring and questioning, feedback, and positive reinforcement)? How is learner-to-learner and learner-to-teacher interactions encouraged in the teaching and learning process?
3. What mechanisms, in education and other sectors, do we have for knowing who our learners are and their needs? How much and how effectively do teachers select and use pedagogical methods in ways that are relevant to the learners' needs and context? [**More on learners in the resource Bank, UNESCO Framework for Quality education**]

Supporting teaching and learning

1. How much are teachers guided with regard to the teaching and learning process? What guidance methods and resources have been used? Do we know if the guidance has been effective?

2. How can we strengthen teachers' capacity to adapt their pedagogical approach to learners' needs and their profiles (gender, socioeconomic background, extracurricular experiences and special learning needs)?
3. How do we support and incentivize effective teaching and learning? And how is this sustained?

Conditions for teaching and learning

1. How inclusive and tolerant is the teaching environment? Does it provide a positive atmosphere of dialogue, motivation and excitement for learning? How do we know? [**Link to the toolkit on learning environment**]
2. What steps can we take to ensure that teaching can contribute to create a classroom environment that motivates students to learn with excitement and purpose?
3. To what extent have class size, scheduling of classes including shift teaching impacted on effective teaching and learning? Has this been analyzed? [**International evidence, Link to Resource Bank**]
4. What equipment and facilities (library, laboratories, sport facilities, etc.) are there for supporting teaching and learning? Are they easily accessible to all teachers and learners? [**Link to the toolkit on learning environment**]
5. To what extent and how are ICTs being integrated in teaching and learning to achieve desired learning outcomes? Do we know if the introduction of ICTs has led to improved learning outcomes?

Monitoring learning outcomes

1. How effective is the teaching and learning process in our country? What markers are we using to determine if effective teaching and learning is taking place? How effective has been the monitoring of teaching and learning which provides us with the information required to assess and improve teaching and learning? [**Link to Assessment Toolkit**]

2. How are outcomes assessments (national or international) utilized in our evaluation of the teaching and learning process? What other assessments exist that could help understand the teaching and learning process in our country? **[Examples on improving learning: Link to Resource Bank]**

3. Priorities for action

1. What particular strengths do we have to achieve our goals with regard to effective teaching and learning? What are the problem areas hindering effective teaching and learning?
2. What are the changes we need to consider to further improve the outcome of the teaching and learning process? What other key areas beyond the classroom need to be integrated in our reform and improvement plans?
3. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy and strategy to improve the teaching and learning in our schools to achieve the goal of quality education for all?
4. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction

Learning outcomes are usually based on a curriculum / educational programme, which stipulates how the outcomes should be achieved. The attainment of these learning outcomes, as assessed, is understood to reflect, to an extent, the quality of the educational process. In addition, the feedback obtained from assessment is a useful signal both to learners and teachers on where they stand in relation to learning outcomes as defined in the curricula. Feedback from assessment also informs education policymakers and curricula developers on how effective the education system is in facilitating quality learning. It is important to highlight the difference between assessment of and assessment for learning: while the latter does have the educational function of helping learners make improvements, the former are a snapshot of their achievement, to help classify them for future learning or work opportunities. While both assessment purposes are valid under different circumstances, a diagnosis of an education system is mostly motivated by the concern for what is happening with learning and therefore, the focus is on assessment for learning. In the media, international large-scale assessments (ILSAs) of learning outcomes such as PISA, TIMSS, SACMEQ, and SERCE have gained wide-spread attention with, often, an emphasis on the final rankings. While these are undoubtedly interesting and informative, many caution against drawing too firm conclusions from such assessments as their focus is often very narrow. Therefore, in addition to looking at how quality of education can be assessed, it is also equally important to look at how to assure the right lessons are drawn from educational assessment. This toolkit aims at assisting users to diagnose if and to what extent the existing assessment system is part of the impediments to reaching the desired and/or stated goals of education quality. The paramount question in the diagnosis of our assessment system is **how assessments can contribute to improving the quality of our education system**. The diagnosis

addresses this paramount question by posing some key questions with regard to assessment policies, frameworks and methods in place, the implementation mechanisms and the systems for drawing appropriate lessons from assessment results and using the result assessment to improve the different aspects of education outcome assessment.

2. Diagnosis and analysis

Assessment policies, frameworks and methods

1. How effective our assessment policy has been to guide the choice of assessment methods suitable for testing all the desired learning outcomes?
[Link to the tools on Curricula and Competencies]
2. To what extent is the choice of subjects for assessment, for example in national assessments, relate directly to what the country thinks of as important in terms of learning outcomes and *not* what is easy to assess?

Implementation of assessment

1. What has been the criteria used to determine the coverage of the assessment and the level at which national assessments are conducted? Are these criteria linked to clear objectives and goals of the assessment? Is there evidence that the coverage and the levels at which the assessments are made contributed to improvement of education system quality? **[Link to the Resource Databank on possible advantages and disadvantages of coverage and levels of assessment]**
2. Do the assessment of competencies provide evidence regarding the achievement of effective outcomes, and how?
3. To what extent participation in international quality assessment (PISA, SACMEC and others) help us to bench mark the quality of our education system? What has been our and others experience of international

assessments? If we have not participated, was it a deliberate decision, if so why?

Utilization of assessment results

1. Do we make evaluation of the assessment results to inform education policy? How is this done and how often? Is there evidence that we do such evaluation in a purposeful and systematic way?
2. How do we interpret the findings from evaluations of assessment results findings, and how can we make sure that educational assessments have the intended impact of improving the education system? How do we communicate our evaluation so as to focus on how we can do better than on how bad it is?

3. Priorities for action

1. What are the key areas to be addressed urgently to make assessment contribute to the quality of our education system?
2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy and practice of school-based and national assessments?
3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: GOVERNANCE

1. Introduction

Governance is a critical factor in creating enabling conditions for quality learning. At the system level, governance determines what education policies and priorities will be put in place; how much funding will be available to education and how these resources will be distributed and managed; how the powers and functions of governing education will be distributed across the different layers and actors within the system and to what extent the rule of law and transparency will be maintained so that those who hold powers are accountable for their performance. At the school level, governance ensures the deployment of qualified, motivated and accountable teachers and strong leaders/managers in institutions. It ensures that learners are provided with high quality and relevant curriculum materials and they are engaged in learning and get adequate support from their teachers. Governance gives parents and local community members an opportunity to participate in decision-making and contribute to learning processes. Poor governance can contribute to poor student learning.

Education governance consists of multiple layers from the central down to the school level with various actors and stakeholders holding varying degrees of powers and influences. For quality learning, every level of the system has an important role. Hence, in trying to understand education governance one must examine the complex web of institutional/governance arrangements at the central, provincial/regional and local levels.

This toolkit is part of the overall UNESCO framework for diagnosing the quality of general education. For quality education, every element of education is important. The extent to which educational inputs contribute to an equitable, efficient, relevant and responsive quality education will depend on the overall quality and efficiency of governance and management. The toolkit aims at supporting Member States in diagnosing their governance and management at all levels of the education system.

The paramount question this tool helps to address is: **To what extent have our policies and structures for governance at different levels been conducive to deliver quality education to our learners?** The diagnosis is facilitated by raising key questions around critical elements of governance and management.

2. Diagnosis and analysis

School level governance

1. How effective are existing governance structures at school level (School Councils/School Management Committee) in helping to improve teaching and learning? What is the support mechanism in place to enable school governing bodies to shoulder their responsibilities?
2. How inclusive and participatory is the process of constituting the governance body at the school level? Does the composition of the governance body reflect local diversity and local communities' needs and values?
3. How effective are the existing mechanisms for recruiting school heads in terms of proactively identifying strong and competent educational leaders and in helping them develop and improve leadership competencies needed for quality improvement?

[Examples of good practices]

4. ***What measures are adopted to make school operations transparent and make them accountable for performance?*** Is information related to finance, teachers' work, student learning or any other aspects of management made available to parents and local community members? How effective have these transparency measures been in improving the quality of education?

Governance at the intermediate level

1. How clearly are the lines of authority and functional responsibilities between the provincial and district authorities defined and delineated so that each authority is aware of its role for quality education?

2. What kind of plans and programmes do the regional and local bodies prepare for quality education? How effective are these plans in setting the quality agenda and driving quality improvements in schools?
3. How adequately are provincial and local authorities resourced to support the schools, administrators and teachers for quality education through proper guidance, educational leadership and professional support? **[Link to the Toolkit on Financing]**
4. How are provinces/regions/districts or other bodies at the local level held accountable for their performance and results?

Governance at the national level

1. How do different actors/stakeholders participate in the policymaking process? Are there any evidence suggesting that there is a strong national ownership of and commitment to policies and programs for improvement of education quality?
2. How effective have various levels of governance been in discharging the roles and responsibilities entrusted to them? Have we done a review of our education governance? What lessons can we draw on the balance between centralization and decentralization of education governance?
3. ***Have we adequate national capacity to translate policies and strategies into plans and programs?*** How do we know that the plans and programs are implemented effectively?
4. What coordination mechanisms exist between the central and decentralized bodies to ensure the delivery of quality education? What is the extent of information sharing, consultation and joint work with various line ministries and other key stakeholders?
[Examples of good practices]
5. What mechanisms are in place to hold public officials and service providers accountable for results? How have we ensured that the accountability system takes account of quality and equity objectives? Has the media been effective in enhancing transparency and accountability in the education sector? **[Example of good practice on accountability systems]**

Monitoring and evaluation

1. ***What are the mechanisms and processes that exist in the country for quality assurance of different types and levels of education?*** Are there structures with a clear mandate for promoting quality? What aspects of quality learning form the objects of monitoring and evaluation? ***[Link to curriculum, teacher training, assessment, financing toolkits]*** How effective are these structures in assuring quality? What is the evidence of their effectiveness?
2. How effective is the existing regulatory framework in ensuring that education institutions in the non-state sector satisfy required minimum quality standard and deliver value for money to the learners? **[Examples of good practices]**
3. How far does the existing system provide accurate and up-to-date information about the functioning of the education system? Does the information system provide data on instruction and learning, examination results? What other indicators are used to refer to quality? Is information readily accessible to decision-makers/managers at different levels? Is there evidence that policymakers use the data and the analysis in their decision? **[Examples of good practices]**

Priorities for action

1. What are the key areas to be addressed urgently to further develop our governance system in the education sector to achieve quality education?
2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy on the system of education governance?
3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: EQUITY AND INCLUSION

1. Introduction

Quality education is increasingly seen as essential for creating and sustaining inclusive and equitable societies. In today's context where persistent social and economic inequities can lead to marginalization, disaffection and even conflict, and where the poor quality of education is often linked with exclusion and marginalization, there is growing attention worldwide to disparities in opportunities for quality education and rising calls to address exclusion and inequalities in education and learning. International human rights treaties prohibit any exclusion from or limitation to educational opportunities on the bases of socially ascribed or perceived differences.⁹ They include differences in gender, economic condition, ability, language, place of residence, social origin, ethnic origin, cultural background, appearance, nationality, descent, religion, parental status, health status, etc. Today, most countries have legally guaranteed the right to education for all. Yet, millions of children, youth and adults continue to experience exclusion in education in its various forms and expressions around the world. The first step toward an inclusive and equitable society entails a close and detailed look at the current situation of inequalities and exclusion in the education system. Understanding the extent and dynamics of exclusion is a crucial step for developing strategies and actions to address exclusion in education. In order to address exclusion more effectively, it is necessary to take stock of and appraise the impacts of those measures and interventions that have been taken and carried out already. Reviewing existing measures and interventions will help find out where the gaps are, what the remaining

⁹ [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (1966), [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (1966), [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#) (1965), [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (1979), [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (1989), [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (2006), [International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families](#) (1990), and [UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education](#) (1960).

challenges are, and/or what the intended/unintended impacts of those measures and interventions have been.

This toolkit aims at supporting Member States to assess the situation of inequity and exclusion in their education system and on the basis of the analysis, to review existing policies, institutional arrangements, financing and operational frameworks, and programs in order to formulate actions toward creating an inclusive and equitable society. **The paramount question that the toolkit addresses is: How well have we managed to create an equitable and inclusive education system which delivers quality education to each and all?** This tool will facilitate discussion on this paramount question through a series of questions regarding the nature and extent of inequity and exclusion, the policies and measures in place to address them and the comprehensiveness and adequacy of those measures.

2. Diagnosis and analysis

The situation of inequity and exclusion in our country

1. Do we have adequate and reliable data and information in our country which enables us to know who is excluded from education? How is this data collected, how often and how is it analyzed? **[Link to examples from Laos and Norway].**
2. Do we have evidence of exclusion in our education system? Which forms and expressions of exclusion are most prevalent in the education system in our country? **[Link to examples of various expressions of exclusion in education]**
3. Based on available information, data and analysis which groups are most likely to experience exclusion from learning and at what stages of the learning process and why? **[Link to examples of indicators of exclusion]**
4. Based on existing studies and reports, what are the key critical factors which hamper the education system to be inclusive?

Policies and strategies adopted to address inequity and exclusion

1. What are the existing policies, programs and interventions in education that are intended to address exclusion? To what extent have they been effective? What are strengths of existing measures? What are some of the limitations, gaps and/or remaining obstacles that need to be addressed?
2. What are some of the ways to fill the gaps, remove the obstacles, resolve the contradictions, and negotiate the dilemmas identified? [**Link to examples of good/innovative practices**]
3. Which other public policy areas beyond education have identifiable impacts on exclusion in education, for example health and social services? How far are measures in different areas coordinated and what has been the role of education authorities in the coordination of the various efforts aimed at addressing exclusion?

Priorities for action

1. What are the most crucial next steps and measures we need to take to advance toward an inclusive and equitable education system in the country? What is the role of different stakeholders in taking this step?
2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy to improve equity and inclusion in the delivery of quality education?
3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: SYSTEM EFFICIENCY

1. Introduction

The way resources are allocated, managed and used at different levels of the education system is an important dimension and determinant of a quality education system. Improvements in resource efficiency can free significant resources which could be utilized to address education quality. There is evidence that in many cases more resources have not meant better results in terms of education quality and learning outcomes [**Link to Resource Bank**]. The education sector needs to save resources internally by reducing various types of inefficiencies before justifying increased resources to the sector. Especially in times of austerity it will be difficult to equitably expand access while improving quality and relevance without a concerted attention to resource efficiency. Even in good times governments face multiple competing needs which have to be catered for and therefore the education sector must demonstrate efficient use of public resources to be able to justify increased allocation. Hence improved system efficiency remains a cardinal issue in any reform aimed at improving education quality and learning effectiveness. In reference to resources and their efficient or non-efficient use, focus is often on those types of resources which are easily identifiable, quantifiable and measurable. Such resources include financial, human and sometimes also management capacity [**Link to toolkits on teachers, curricula, learning environment, financing and governance**]. These are direct inputs in the teaching and learning process and they deserve the attention they receive. However, other resources in the education system like institutional and organizational also have a decisive impact on the quality of education. Ultimately a system's overall efficiency/inefficiency is judged by its internal and external efficiency. Internal efficiency measures the output and outcome of the education system while external efficiency measures the extent to which the competencies (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) acquired in school translate into private and social benefits .[**Link to Learning Outcomes Toolkit**].

This toolkit is part of the UNESCO General Education Quality Diagnosis/Analysis and Monitoring Framework. As this toolkit deals with system efficiency it relates to all the other tools in the Quality Framework as efficiency and effectiveness issues are critical in all dimensions of efforts to improve the quality of education. The aim of this toolkit is to support MS undertake a diagnosis and analysis of the efficiency/inefficiency of their education system. **The paramount question the toolkit helps to address is: How can we improve the resource efficiency in our education system so as to improve education quality and equity.** The diagnosis and analysis is facilitated by posing key questions regarding policies and strategies in place to enhance system efficiency and the monitoring and evaluation of the results of the education system.

2. Diagnosis and analysis

Policies and strategies for resource efficiency

1. How do our education policies and strategies promote and assure efficient use of resources? What are our indicators of resource efficiency? To what extent do we set resource efficiency targets and what mechanisms are there to monitor their achievement?
2. To what extent do we conduct cost-effectiveness of various measures before committing resources? How have we benchmarked the resource needs of various sub-sectors and programs?
3. To what extent is our resource allocation results-oriented than input-focused? What is the evidence of that? What adjustments have we made in our resource allocation to take account of the differential impact of various inputs (teachers, teaching material, management, monitoring, supervision, etc.) on learning outcomes? What is the evidence such consideration is taking place?
4. What incentives are there for managers at different levels to be efficient in their use of resources at their disposal? How is resource allocations linked to performance?

5. In our context, what are the key factors that drive resource efficiency/inefficiency? How do we know? If we know, what have we done to address them? Have the measures been effective?

Monitoring and evaluation of system efficiency

1. To what extent have we been able to provide the human, organizational and technical capacity to monitor and analyze resource efficiency in our education system?
2. Does the EMIS provide quality and up to date information on internal efficiency (repetition, drop-out, completion and retention rates)? What analysis of the data have we done to understand the underlying causes (in school and out of school factors) of observed internal inefficiency? What measures have we undertaken to improve the situation? Do we have evidence that the measures have been effective?
3. What is the level of external efficiency of our education system? What recent studies are available on private and social rate of returns to education? Do we know the extent of graduate unemployment? What does the evidence on rates of return and graduate employment suggest about external efficiency of education in our country?
4. What mechanisms are there to assess labor market needs for various types of skills? Do we take this into account in designing our curricula? Do we consult with labor market actors (employers and labor unions in both the private and public sectors) in shaping our education programs? [**Link to toolkit on curricula**]

Priorities for action

1. What are the key constraints which we need to prioritize in order to achieve significant gains in efficiency for improving education quality?

2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy to improve system efficiency?

3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: FINANCING

1. Introduction

The EFA 2011 Global Monitoring Report shows that education spending as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased from 2.9% in 1999 to 3.8% in 2008 in low-income countries. In more than one third of low income countries the share of education expenditure in total government expenditure exceeds 20%. Moreover, households, especially in low income countries, account for a significant share of education expenditure. International aid to education has also been very significant (about US\$ 30 billion between 2002 and 2008) of which about 90% went to low income and low middle income countries. Despite the growing investment and commitment by governments, households and donors education finance continues to experience a huge financial gap. The 2010 EFA report estimates that the financial gap to reach the EFA goals to be US\$ 16 billion annually until 2015. There is no doubt that it is important to mobilise more funds for education to achieve the millennium development goals and beyond. However, more importantly the issue of effective utilization of the already huge and growing investment in education is of critical importance if gains in education are to be sustained over the medium to long-term.

Evidence shows that more financing is not the solution to the chronic problem of low quality education in many countries. There is also evidence that education finance in many countries continues to a large extent benefit the better-off groups, especially at the higher levels of the education ladder. Thus, improving the effectiveness and equity of education expenditure is yet an untapped potential for delivering quality education for all. Quality

and equity of education outcomes hinges on a variety of factors including the level and quality of education inputs, the teaching, learning and assessment processes. The UNESCO General Framework for Diagnosis, Analysis and Monitoring of Education Quality deals with each of these education sub-systems and their inter-linkages. A well-functioning education financing system is one of the key enabling factors for the delivery of education quality for all. This assessment framework will deal with the education finance sub-system. The paramount question we raise is: **How well have we designed our education finance system to enable the achievement of equitable and quality education outcomes?** Through a set of structured questions, this framework helps countries to undertake a diagnosis and analysis of their education finance system to identify potential strengths and challenges and design appropriate policies and measures to address quality and equity issues in the education sector. The diagnosis and analysis will focus on key areas of the education finance system covering adequacy of funding, financial allocation, distribution and utilization as well as system capacity for management of education finance.

2. Diagnosis and analysis

Adequacy of funding

1. Have we properly costed our education strategic plan to determine the financial resource requirements for achieving the goals set in the plan?
2. How well is the education financing requirement projection consistent with the government's Medium Term Expenditures framework (MTEF) allocation to the education sector? Have we considered different scenarios for availability of funding and

prioritised our education programmes? Are potential efficiency gains considered to close potential financing gaps?

3. What mechanism do we have in place to estimate the amount of education spending from all sources including from households, development partners and private sector? Is there evidence that we regularly monitor that and use the information in our financial planning?

Allocation of expenditure

1. What are the criteria for determining the allocation between different education sub-sectors? Do the criteria take account of expected relative social and private benefits of the various levels of education? How transparent and participatory is the process of setting the criteria for resource allocation?
2. To what extent does the allocation encourage performance? Do we have evidence that more resources have been translated into improved learning outcome in this country? To what extent is differential performance in learning outcomes between different schools is accounted for by differences in availability of resources?
3. Have we conducted analysis of the relative effectiveness of different inputs in raising quality? To what extent does education finance prioritize these areas?

Distribution of education finance

1. Have we made sure that the criteria for allocating education finance between different districts and schools reflect our equity goal? Are the criteria applied transparently and consistently? What is the evidence to support that?

2. How do we know how much different groups (rural-urban, different income groups, regions) benefit from education at different levels of the education system? Is data available, analyzed and made available to policymakers?
3. What measures have we taken to improve equity in education finance and learning outcomes? What are the mechanisms in place to monitor the effectiveness of these measures in achieving equity in learning outcomes?

Utilization of financial resources

1. How do we make sure resource leakage in the system is kept to a minimum? Have we conducted some type of Public Expenditures Tracking Survey?
2. What incentives has school management to be cost-effective in its procurement and utilisation of different school inputs?
3. What performance based incentives are in place to achieve the most possible education outcome for the level of funding provided to the school?

Institutional capacity for managing education finance

1. Have we made sure that we have the necessary human resources and tools at all management levels to manage education finance effectively and transparently?
2. How effective is our data management on education finance at each level of the education system? Is financial data made available to all stakeholders in a transparent way?
3. To what extent have we utilized findings emerging from monitoring and evaluation to inform financing choices to improve education quality?

3. Priorities for action

1. What are the key areas to be addressed urgently to further improve our education financing system to support the delivery of quality education to learners?
2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy on the system of education finance?
3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps?