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ALIGN FOR MINIMUM PROFICIENCY

USING THE GLOBAL PROFICIENCY FRAMEWORK

INFORMATION SHEET

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WHAT IS THE “ALIGN FOR MINIMUM PROFICIENCY” PROCESS?

An “ALIGN for Minimum Proficiency” (ALIGN = Aligning Learning Inputs to Global Norms), is an evidence-based gap analysis process. This data-driven process utilizes the Global Proficiency Framework¹ as a reference for identifying whether the pedagogical supports offered to learners will ensure they meet global norms in reading and mathematics. A guiding document to apply ALIGN will be made available to USAID Missions and its country partners to support carrying out a gap analysis.

An ALIGN process focuses on four pedagogical components that lie within the jurisdiction of Ministries of Education: curriculum and standards, teaching and learning resources, teacher training, and assessment.

ROLE OF THE GLOBAL PROFICIENCY FRAMEWORK (GPF) IN THE ALIGN PROCESS

The [Global Proficiency Framework \(GPF\)](#) is a universal starting point and fresh lens to consider what countries need to do to ensure all children and youth achieve minimum proficiency. The GPF outlines the minimum knowledge and skills international research suggests learners should be able to demonstrate, for both reading and mathematics, at each grade level, from grades one to nine, regardless of where they live in the world or the language in which they are learning. The GPF is based on trends identified in 73 national reading assessment frameworks and 25 national curricula, and 115 national mathematics assessment frameworks and 53 national curricula, and was refined through several USAID partner country pilots. The GPF can provide a common goal that all those intervening in learning could work toward, and a common lens that countries and program implementers can use to examine whether the supports offered to learners are sufficient to allow them to develop the requisite knowledge and skills.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF COMPLETING AN ALIGN PROCESS?

The ALIGN process is a powerful tool for developing strategies to improve learner performance in reading and mathematics, whether the inquiry is focused on the formal education system, non-formal education system, stable or crisis-affected context. It can identify, for example:

- Whether current pedagogical supports are sufficient for learners to develop minimal knowledge and skills in both disciplines.
- Critical areas of misalignment that may be compromising learners’ performance.
- Data-informed opportunities to improve learner performance, including through leveraging existing resources; transforming existing supports, strategies, or policies; or adding new ones.
- More realistic short- and medium-term learning targets in reading and mathematics, as well as measures to reduce learning inequality.

¹ Other frameworks (e.g., TIMSS, specific countries) may be utilized in addition to the GPF, depending on the Ministry of Education’s interests.

THE FOUR PEDAGOGICAL COMPONENTS

An ALIGN process can focus on one or more components that contribute to learner performance:

- 1) **Curriculum** – It can examine whether the curriculum standards and the curriculum itself address critical reading and mathematics knowledge and skills learners must develop to become autonomous readers and mathematical problem solvers. It can also examine whether the proposed progression of learning aligns with the global evidence base on how reading and mathematics learning develops over time.
- 2) **Teaching and learning materials** – It can identify whether the activities proposed are sufficient to ensure learners develop critical reading and mathematics knowledge and skills. It also identifies if the sequencing of activities aligns with research on reading and mathematics learning progressions.
- 3) **Teacher training** – It can determine whether pre-service, in-service, and school-based continuous professional development programs introduce teachers to: a) the critical reading or mathematics knowledge and skills learners need to develop, including how these develop or progress over time; b) evidence-based instructional practices that foster development of these knowledge and skills and how to implement them effectively; and c) how to assess learner performance on key knowledge and skills.
- 4) **Assessment** – It can identify whether classroom-based, sub-national and national assessments measure learner performance on critical knowledge and skills.

There is a natural intrinsic hierarchy in the components—generally reviewing curriculum and standards to assess degree of alignment should precede looking at other components. Countries or programs that have already aligned certain components to global research findings or trends may want to focus the ALIGN process on remaining components.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR LAUNCHING AN ALIGN PROCESS

The ideal moment to consider an ALIGN is when decision-makers are committed to identifying and addressing factors contributing to learner underperformance. Initial discussions with decision makers interested in embarking on the process should focus on the following:

- Breadth of components to be addressed
- Target populations (e.g., formal or non-formal system; specific grade levels and/or programs)
- Optimal timing to examine different components
- How the process will be managed (centrally, provincial/sub-regional education leadership, etc.)
- Resources available and required to support the ALIGN process and to implement recommendations that may arise from the ALIGN process
- Desired outcome of the ALIGN process (possible interim goals)