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USE OF LEARNING ASSESSMENT DATA IN THE PLANNING CYCLE CASE STUDY – GHANA

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Prepared by Alberto Begue-Aguado

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| BECE | Basic Education Certificate Examination |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DQMSE | District Quality Monitoring System for Education |
| EGMA | Early Grade Mathematics Assessment |
| EGRA | Early Grade Reading Assessment |
| EMIS | Education Management Information System |
| ES | Evaluating System |
| ESA | Education Sector Analysis |
| ESP | Education Strategic Plan |
| GALOP | Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project |
| GES | Ghana Education Service |
| GNECC | Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition |
| GoG | Government of Ghana |
| GPE | Global Partnership for Education |
| IIEP | International Institute for Educational Planning – UNESCO |
| ILSA | International Large-Scale Assessment |
| JHS | Junior High School |
| MoE | Ministry of Education |
| NaCCA | National Council for Curriculum and Assessment |
| NEA | National Education Assessment |
| NEAU | National Education Assessment Unit |
| NER | Net Enrollment Rate |
| NESAR | National Education Sector Assessment Review |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NIB | National Inspection Board |
| NSAT | National Standards Assessment Test |
| NTC | National Teaching Council |
| PBME | Policy, Planning, Budgeting, and Monitoring and Evaluation |
| PPP | Public-Private Partnership |
| SHS | Secondary High School |
| SRIM | Statistics, Research, Information, and Monitoring |
| TIMSS | Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study |
| WASSCE | West Africa Secondary School Certificate Examination-Senior High School |

I. INTRODUCTION

In its World Development Report 2018,¹ the World Bank warned of a “learning crisis” in global education that already affects millions of children and youth in low and middle-income countries.² Without learning, education cannot be utilized as an instrument to combat poverty, and children and youth will not have access to better life opportunities.

The newest data released by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics show that 202 million children and adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa are not reaching minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics, even though two-thirds of them are enrolled in school.³

The Education 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 4 in particular widened the range of focus from access to education (Millennium Development Goal 2) to a more comprehensive approach that includes equity and learning for all.⁴ The use of learning assessment systems and learning data are therefore key elements of the expanded agenda.

In the context, USAID joined the research project initiated by UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) on the use of learning assessment data in the educational planning cycle.⁵ The aim of the six-country study in sub-Saharan Africa is to generate context-specific knowledge on the use of learning assessment data in planning processes. USAID and IIEP are making the findings available to national decision makers, so that learning assessment data can inform educational planning cycles, including strategy choice, resource allocation, and the monitoring of plans. This qualitative study employs a multi-case study design and will provide an in-depth analysis of national assessment systems in selected sub-Saharan African countries. The last part of this study is the development of a toolkit to support countries and USAID Missions to conduct studies on the use of learning assessment data in the educational planning cycle. This toolkit will be complementary to the recently launched toolkit Analysis of National Learning Assessment Systems,⁶ created by the Global Partnership for Education to help countries to analyze their national learning assessment systems with the aim to inform the education sector planning processes.

¹ World Bank, “World Development Report 2018: LEARNING to Realize Education’s Promise,” 2017, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2018>

² World Bank, “World Bank warns of ‘learning crisis’ in global education,” September 26, 2017, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/09/26/world-bank-warns-of-learning-crisis-in-global-education>

³ UIS, “More Than One-Half of Children and Adolescents Are Not Learning Worldwide,” UIS factsheet No. 46, 2017, September 2017, <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs46-more-than-half-children-not-learning-en-2017.pdf>

⁴ Target 4.1 sets the following goal: “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes” with two indicators: 4.1.1, which references the proportion of children and young people a) in Grade 2 or 3, b) at the end of primary education, and c) at the end of lower secondary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in i) reading and ii) mathematics, by sex; and 4.1.2., which references the administration of a nationally representative learning assessment a) in Grade 2 or 3, b) at the end of primary education, and c) at the end of lower secondary education.

⁵ The study is based on the methodological guidelines developed by IIEP.

⁶ Global Partnership for Education, “Analysis of National Learning Assessment Systems,” October 2019, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/toolkit-analysis-national-learning-assessment-systems-anlas>

2. OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GHANA

Ghana is a new lower middle-income country, and the Government of Ghana (GoG) is aware of the important role of education in the socioeconomic development of the country over the decades to come.

The right to education is guaranteed in Article 25 of the Constitution of Ghana of 1992, which is very strong in terms of human rights protections. The Constitution also includes references to the importance of the consideration of all the regions of Ghana, of children with disabilities, and gender issues. However, the right to education is not mentioned in the new Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2030.

The education system in Ghana includes free and compulsory basic education, with two years of pre-primary (called kindergarten), six years of primary education (PI–P6), and three years of junior high school (JHS). In September 2017, the Ministry of Education (MoE) started a new policy of free senior high school (SHS), which is now part of the basic education level and includes technical and vocational schools.⁷ Free compulsory universal basic education was introduced in 1995 in order to provide nine years of free basic school by 2005. However, successive governments have failed to fully implement this policy as promised, and there are still 453,000 out-of-school children (aged 6–14) in the country (MoE, 2018b: 16). Despite significant progress in access in recent years, the Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) is still only 75 percent for kindergarten and 91 percent for primary education.

The education system also faces major challenges related to poor learning outcomes, as evidenced by a variety of learning assessments conducted in Ghana over the last few years. This is underlined by the education sector analysis, with “only 2 percent of P2 pupils able to read at an appropriate grade level in terms of fluency and comprehension” (MoE, 2018b: 55). Significant disparities exist in the education system, mainly related to variables such as location and wealth. A new competence-based curriculum was recently developed, and it will include learning standards.⁸

3. MAIN STAKEHOLDERS IN EDUCATION POLICY IN GHANA

The Education Act 778 of 2008 is the main legal framework for the education sector in Ghana, and it laid the foundations of the current education system. All education subsectors are within the purview of the MoE, consisting of 22 agencies, including the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), the National Inspection Board (NIB), the National Teaching Council (NTC), and the largest agency, the Ghana Education Service (GES), which is the implementing agency under the mandate of the MoE and “responsible for the co-ordination of the approved national policies and programming related to pre-tertiary education” (Education Act, Article 4).

A Pre-Tertiary Education Bill 2019 and an Education Regulatory Bodies Bill 2019 were being processed by the Parliament when this study was conducted. They will regulate the decentralization of the

⁷ The MoE has implemented free SHS in the three northern regions that have the greatest challenges over the past five decades and more.

⁸ The previous curriculum was from 2012.

education sector and set the mandate for the Education Service (to replace the Ghana Education Service) and the regulatory agencies.

The National Education Assessment Unit (NEAU)⁹ has the mandate to design and conduct national learning assessments: National Education Assessment (NEA), Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA). For the analysis of results, the NEAU has always had the support of external technical assistance. Until recently, the NEAU was a semi-autonomous agency (reporting to the GES Director General), but it is now under the NaCCA.

The Education Regulatory Bodies Bill 2019 sets the objective of NaCCA “to develop national curriculum and assessment standards for pre-tertiary educational institutions.” NaCCA is in charge of monitoring assessments, school-based assessments, and of course examinations. The bill stipulates that a national assessment system for pre-tertiary will be developed. There is no mention of the existing assessments (see below). The NEAU is entirely funded by USAID, except for salaries. With only four people working at this agency, it is inadequately staffed to carry out its mandate and all the assessments. Staff have been trained by RTI and Social Impact.

The Directorate for Statistics, Research, Information, and Monitoring (SRIM) is in charge of the Education Management Information System (EMIS). A new EMIS is in progress to consolidate all data in the education sector, including examination results, but not learning assessment data.¹⁰ The Division of Policy, Planning, Budgeting, and Monitoring and Evaluation (PBME) is in charge of developing and monitoring the education strategic plans.

The new Pre-Tertiary Education Bill 2019 intends to be “an Act to provide for a decentralized pre-tertiary education system.” Regional education directorates and district assemblies will progressively assume more responsibilities in education.

The main donors in the education sector in Ghana are USAID, the World Bank, DFID, UNICEF, and JICA. Ghana has been a member of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) since 2004, and has received several grants totaling US\$95 million.

Every year in August, the entire education sector organizes the National Education Week, a joint sector review where the authorities and stakeholders analyze education sector performance and discuss how to improve sector results. The last one, in August 2019, focused on “Reforming the Education Sector for Effective Service Delivery: Embracing Innovations” and included discussions on evidence and assessments.

⁹ Called Assessment Services Unit until September 2013.

¹⁰ The project document of the Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project (GALOP) mentions that “Ghana has an underutilized education management information system (EMIS) with poor data utilization, sharing and feedback mechanisms.”

4. DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING ASSESSMENTS IN GHANA

Intended Use of Learning Data per IIEP Guidelines

During the study data collection in the fall of 2019, there is no evaluation policy or national framework to design, conduct, or use learning assessments in Ghana. The new education bills do not include any reference to this framework.

Ghana has recently put in place a National Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum Framework, locally developed with quality assurance by Cambridge Education. It was launched in April 2019 and was rolled out in September 2019 for kindergarten and primary education. In the curriculum framework, there is a section on assessments with a proposal on how the new National Standards Assessment Test (NSAT) should substitute and be different from the NEA, EGRA, and EGMA.¹¹ Those assessments are sample based, whereas NSAT will be census based: every two years, every student will be evaluated in P2, P4, and P6, JHS Form 2, and SHS Form 2, and tracked over time.

Several informants have mentioned that a National Assessment Framework would be outlined soon based on the curriculum framework, which already includes references to assessments but not explicitly to standardized assessments or evaluations. A former MoE official said, “Now that we have a curriculum framework, and will have an assessment framework, we need to conduct standardized assessments to be able to see where we are going.” According to the former Executive Secretary of NaCCA: “The assessment framework is very important as it will be a policy that will organize exams, classroom assessments, national as well as international large-scale assessments. Performance standards should also inform all assessments.” According to the curriculum framework, assessments “will also provide information on aid resource allocation and provision of targeted intervention” (MoE, 2018d: 48), and more importantly it establishes that “stakeholders will also find such data useful for making policy decisions.”

There is also a reference to the role of district assemblies and how NSAT shall serve as the quality monitoring mechanism for the districts, with two purposes:

“1) It is an assessment intended for school-level diagnostic use. Designed as a multiple choice and constructed-response exam, the assessment measures how well learners can complete core standards within the subjects and 2) It is an accountability tool developed for use by District Education Directorates. In this way, it is a tool designed to enable districts to improve teaching and learning in schools by providing rapid and actionable information to guide institute interventions, and for collecting information about school and learner performance. NSAT is to be used routinely to monitor schools in the districts and as a reliable source of collecting progress data on learners in the districts” (MoE, 2018d: 48).

Finally, the curriculum framework also points out that “There is no policy document that addresses the country’s participation in ILSAs [International Large-Scale Assessments], and until such time that an

¹¹ “The National Standards Assessment Test (NSAT) shall be introduced in place of the existing National Education Assessment (NEA), the National Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), and the National Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA)” (MoE, 2018d: 47).

appropriate policy is put in place, it makes sense for policymakers to focus on consolidating any gain(s) that came with the implementation of the revised curriculum.”

Learning Assessments Used in Ghana

Learning assessments are conducted in Ghana at different levels: examinations, national assessments, and international assessments.

At the end of JHS (grade 9), students take a Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) for school cycle completion and admission to senior high school. The West Africa Secondary School Certificate Examination-Senior High School (WASSCE) is administered to students at the end of SHS. BECE was first administered in 1990 and WASSCE was first administered in 1993.

The National Education Assessment (NEA) measures performance against the national curriculum in English and mathematics, and it is the only national and institutional assessment. It is a classroom-based multiple-choice written test conducted in P4 and P6 over three days by test administrators and monitors trained by the NEAU through a cascade system, and supported by USAID. Completed test answer sheets are sent to the Regional Education Office, who scan the tests and send them to NEAU. NEA was conducted in 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2016, and 2018.

In 2005, the MoE defined the NEA competency and proficiency cut-off scores in terms of percentage correct. “Proficiency” is defined as an (individual) test score with at least 55 percent of the items correct. “Competency” is defined as an (individual) test score with at least 35 percent of the items correct (MoE, 2018c: 7). The NEA 2018 findings report shows that “19-25 percent of pupils met the NEA criterion for proficiency (scoring 55 percent and above) across grades and subject areas and that 35-48 percent of pupils scored below minimum competency (35 percent or below)” (MoE, 2018c: v). This report points out that the difference in standard deviations is not significant, but in terms of percentage of pupils reaching the different competency levels, the difference is significant, as shown in Table 1. In 2016, for example, 29.3 percent of students were below minimum competency in English in P4, with this figure rising to 44 percent in 2018.

TABLE 1. Results for P4 and P6 (%)

| Competency levels | P4 English | | P4 Math | | P6 English | | P6 Math | |
|--------------------------|------------|------|---------|------|------------|------|---------|------|
| | 2016 | 2018 | 2016 | 2018 | 2016 | 2018 | 2016 | 2018 |
| Below minimum competency | 29.3 | 44.0 | 45.2 | 48.0 | 28.4 | 47 | 29.2 | 35 |
| Minimum competency | 33.5 | 32.0 | 32.8 | 33.0 | 33.7 | 28 | 45.9 | 44 |
| Proficiency | 37.2 | 25.0 | 22.0 | 19.0 | 37.9 | 25 | 24.9 | 22 |

SOURCE: DATA FROM NEA 2016 AND NEA 2018

Results are not comparable with NEA in previous years, as the methodology changed in 2016, with enhancements in the test content to adapt it to the new curriculum.¹² This is the first year that pupils were administered the test in P4 (P3 was included in the test in previous years).

The first EGRA and EGMA were conducted in 2013 by the Ghana Education Service/NEAU with the support of USAID and RTI International, following a recommendation of the National Education Sector Annual Review (NESAR) 2012 to promote the use of data as the driver for advancing the education sector goals. The purpose of these assessments was to provide data that could be translated into an evidence base to inform policy decisions and interventions.¹³ The EGRA showed that 98 percent of the pupils at the end of P2 could not yet read with comprehension, either in national languages or in English, with 50 percent being unable to recognize a single word. Regarding EGMA, “pupils were doing reasonably well on the most procedural items such as number identification, addition level 1, and subtraction level 1.” However, the performance was much lower in more conceptual items, e.g., 70 percent of the pupils were unable to answer a single subtraction level 2 item. In 2014, there was a benchmarking process to determine: “1) The benchmark value for the indicator for each identified subtask in reading and mathematics, 2) The percentage of pupils that would be meeting that benchmark in five years, and 3) The percentage of pupils who would be scoring zero on that indicator in five years” (USAID, 2014: 2). For instance, the correct letter sounds read per minute in the 2013 study were 10 in Ghanaian language and 9.6 in English, and the benchmark was set at 40 and 35, respectively. The correct isolated words per minute were 3.7, and 9.2 and the benchmark was set at 40 and 45, respectively. For comparison, in the Ghana Learning Baseline Report 2017 (see below), pupils could read 8 letters in a Ghanaian language and 10 in English, with an average of 2.5 words per minute, whereas 77 percent were unable to read a single word and 37 percent unable to produce a single letter sound in the Ghanaian language of instruction (USAID, 2018: 10).

EGRA/EGMA were also conducted in 2015 with the support of USAID, and then in 2017 (baseline) and 2019 (endline) by the Ghana Learning activity. The EGRA and EGMA, adapted into 11 local languages and English, were administered nationwide to primary 2 pupils.

As mentioned above, the MoE intends to move from sampling with NEA, EGRA, and EGMA to census-based assessments with the new NSAT in P2, P4, P6, JHS form 2, and SHS form 2. NEAU will lead the process with other units participating, like the Basic Education Division of the GES.

In order to respond to the NEAU’s mandate of empowering districts to improve school monitoring, a District Quality Monitoring System for Education (DQMSE) was proposed in the NESAR 2017. DQMSE is a tool developed with support of USAID, based on a simplified EGRA but collected at P3 in each school. It provides district-level data about how pupils and schools are performing. It was piloted in 2018 in 12 districts in Greater Accra by the Ghanaian NGO Education Assessment and Research Center with the support of USAID, but only scaled up to the Northern Regions.

¹² As explained in the NEA 2016, “The most recent primary school curriculum was developed in 2012, yet this curriculum had not been fully disseminated by the time of the 2013 NEA. Thus, the 2013 NEA was based on the previous curriculum. The 2016 NEA was based on the 2012 curriculum for the first time” (page 3).

¹³ U.S. Agency for International Development, “Proposing Benchmarks for Early Grade Reading and Mathematics in Ghana,” n.d. https://www.globalreadingnetwork.net/sites/default/files/eddata/Ghana_Benchmarking_Activity_report_May_2014.pdf

Ghana has participated in one International Large-Scale Assessment, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), in 2003, 2007, and 2011. The assessed levels were P4 and JHS Form 2. “Ghana’s 2007 TIMSS scores in mathematics and science were much better than in 2003 but they remain lower than almost all other countries participating in the assessment” (Darvas and Balwanz, 2014: 81). In 2011, Ghana was last in the ranking of countries. The GoG subsequently decided to pull out of TIMSS.

NEA is based on Ghana’s official curriculum, while EGRA, EGMA, and TIMSS are international standardized tests.

At the time of the study, Ghana does not participate in PISA for Development, but the MoE does not rule out the possibility of applying in the next round, following the capacity-building component for 2020.

Who Is Leading, Conducting, and Funding Learning Assessments?

In the past, the Ghana Education Service conducted some learning assessments, for instance the EGRA 2013. The NEAU, under NaCCA, has the mandate to lead and conduct all the learning assessments with the support of GES.

All learning evaluations/assessments are funded by development partners,¹⁴ but several informants have highlighted that MoE staff were involved in most of the phases, in the design, the data collection, and to a lesser extent in the data analysis.

Currently, all standardized learning assessments in Ghana are funded (and often technically led) by USAID and its partners. USAID has funded NEA since 2011,¹⁵ as well as all EGRAs and EGMAs.

Besides the funding, USAID is providing technical assistance for NEA and EGRA/EGMA. The NEA 2018 Report of Findings mentioned that USAID/Partnership for Education’s Evaluating Systems (ES) Activity “prepared prototypes of the tests, including full protocol and summary data on each item and its characteristics” (page 4). NEAU was supporting the processes but not leading them from a technical point of view.

The USAID Ghana Partnership for Education: Learning activity (known as Ghana Learning) supported Ghana’s educational institutions over five years, 2014–2019 (\$72 million), with the goal of improving, expanding, and sustaining learning outcomes for Ghanaian primary students. It supported the early grade reading and literacy improvement activities implemented by the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service, with the support of FHI360 as implementing agency. It was designed “to support mother tongue and phonics-based instruction through pedagogy model” (USAID, 2019: 8). EGRA/EGMA 2017 (baseline) and 2019 were funded under this activity, with impressive results in the midline 2019: a more than ten-fold increase in average words read per minute (from 0.64 to 6.90) and an increase in the

¹⁴ USAID and World Bank funded the first learning assessment in the 1990s.

¹⁵ The NEA program has a “regular (continuous and predictable) funding, albeit allocated by non-government sources (specifically, USAID). Funding covers assessment design and administration, data analysis (which is generally carried out by a contracted USAID supplier who conducts the analysis with the Government of Ghana) and reporting, long- and medium-term planning of program milestones, and staff training. Funding does not cover research and development activities. There are no courses or workshops to provide teachers with the opportunity to learn about the NEA” (World Bank, 2013: 9).

number of letter sounds read per minute from 6.24 to 25.54 (USAID, 2019: 2). According to the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC), the Ghana Learning activity has also mobilized communities to understand the importance of learning.

Funding for participation in TIMSS has come from World Bank loans.¹⁶ After the World Bank support to TIMSS ended, Ghana did not participate in the study. Actually, TIMSS is not referenced anymore in education documents, and there is not a single reference to it in the new ESP or in other recent MoE documents. The World Bank had also supported the Criterion Reference Tests and Performance Monitoring Tests in the early 1990s, before NEA was created.

“The World Bank loan facility allocated for participation in TIMSS covered all activities, including international participation fees, implementation of the assessment exercise, processing and analyzing data collected from implementation, reporting, and disseminating the assessment results in Ghana, and attendance at international expert meetings for the assessment exercise” (SABER; 56).

The new Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project (GALOP) is funded by the GoG (\$385 million), the World Bank (\$150 million), and the GPE (\$24.4 million). This project will improve the quality of low-performing basic education schools and strengthen education sector accountability in Ghana. GALOP will help in the consolidation of data and the improvement of coordination among NaCCA, NIB, and the NTC. It will fund the new NSAT, assessing all students in P2, P4, P6, and JHS Form 2. The World Bank will cover the cost of P2, and the GoG will have to fund the assessments at the other levels. Several informants mentioned that the GoG is having financial issues in carrying out the assessment for P2, which raises the issue of sustainability.

The New Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project (GALOP)

“The proposed project would initially support scale up of the P4 assessment to all students in public schools to ensure baseline data and performance indicators are available to measure results. Teacher content knowledge will also be assessed through the marking of sample P4 assessment answer scripts. This will provide information for the design of targeted continuous professional development programmes. The scale up of the P4 assessment will be complemented with capacity building in item response theory and test item bank development, development of operational guidelines for national assessments and linkages between assessment databases and EMIS, which will provide important implementation lessons for the scale up of national assessment at other grades. Provisions for a simplified school-readiness assessment will also be incorporated in the national assessment strategy. It will also have provisions to ensure students with special education needs are assessed along with their peers. The purposes, levels, timeframes, and funding for the various assessments would be carefully thought through, costed, and formalized within a national learning assessment strategy. Capacity building for NaCCA, National Education Assessment Unit, GES, and MOE would aim to strengthen sustainability of undertaking such assessments. This subcomponent would be implemented by MOE in collaboration with GES and NaCCA” (World Bank, 2019: 13).

¹⁶ “To date, funding for participation in ILSAs has been provided by loans, such as a 13 million USD ten-year loan facility from the World Bank for Ghana’s participation in TIMSS 2003, 2007, and 2011. This loan facility covered all core activities of the ILSA as well as research and development” (World Bank, 2013: 11).

GALOP will support the development and rollout of a national learning assessment strategy and learning assessments every two years. Therefore, the role of GALOP is also crucial in the development of the new learning assessment framework, as both processes will run in parallel. The implementation of GALOP will be mainstreamed in the MoE and the GES. Other components include in-service training, strengthening decentralized systems of school support, teaching and learning materials, and the development and implementation of an accountability for learning framework (focus on inspection).

Examinations in Ghana (BECE and WASSCE) are funded by the MoE with contributions from parents.

Despite the contributions from the GoG expected in GALOP, there is still an overdependence on donors to fund and technically assist with implementing learning assessments.

Analysis of Variables Influencing Learning Outcomes

In terms of the variables influencing learning outcomes in Ghana, NEA provides a gender analysis and disaggregation by private/public schools. A former NaCCA official declared that “The demographic information around the assessments is minimal.” NEA 2018 includes an analysis of scores disaggregated by demographic variables (school type—public or private, location—urban or rural, deprived areas), regional variations, qualification of teachers, and textbook-to-pupils ratio. The report highlights the correlation between low learning outcomes and deprived districts, and the strong association between learning outcomes and trained teachers and private schools. These data are in EMIS, but the two sets of data cannot be combined to do correlations.

EGRA/EGMA include a more detailed analysis: the demographic information of students includes sex, age category, repeaters, attended preschool or kindergarten, language of instruction spoken at home, and reading materials and habits at home. It also includes information on the availability of teachers in speaking the language of instruction. Reading at home, having access to teaching and learning materials in and out of school, and having attended preschool or kindergarten were linked to better outcomes (MoE, 2014b: 91).

Several informants agreed that there are no rigorous analyses to back these assessments to know why those variables are influencing learning outcomes.

Learning Data Dissemination

The acting director of NEAU was candid in his responses regarding the learning data dissemination. “From 2005 to 2009, the reports remained on the shelves.” At that time, according to him, funding was the only trigger to use them. In 2011, NEA was disseminated at the regional level, and in 2013 at the district level as well. For NEA 2016, USAID printed 40,000 booklets that were widely distributed at the districts and schools, but this assessment was representative only at the national and regional levels, and therefore its use was very limited.

The report of NEA 2018 mentions that “dissemination activities should allow for both presentation and discussion so that stakeholders can give feedback on lapses in learning outcomes or inequities” (page viii). NEA results are disseminated within 12 months after the assessment is administered (World Bank, 2013: 9), and some actors considered that this is not quickly enough. There is also a criticism about NEA being conducted only every two years rather than on an annual basis.

One development partner commented that dissemination tends to be national and regional (not local), and it is passive. No action is taken after the reports are shared and discussed, likely because of the lack of resources, and in some cases because of lack of knowledge to fully understand the data in the reports.

Development partners have no difficulties in accessing learning data, but CSOs only get access to the learning assessment reports, and not as easily to the raw data. An important step to improve the use of data is the data storage. There is no central point to gather data, and some CSOs have mentioned that the MoE is reluctant to share learning assessment data with them. One organization mentioned that raw data are provided in a PDF file, which appears to be a common practice in Ghana.

A forum to disseminate learning data seems to be the National Education Week (held every year in August).

5. INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

Institutional and Legal Factors

In the 1987 education reform, access improvement was the priority. Access was increasing, classrooms were filling up, and with this came the need to improve learning. In 1992 Criterion Reference Tests were set by the Curriculum Research Division, supported by USAID and the World Bank. Then Performance Monitoring Tests were conducted by the Inspectorate Division. In the early 2000s, the MoE decided to have one big assessment: the National Education Assessment (NEA) was created in 2004, and assessments were conducted every two years, in 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2011. Reading at the primary level was a challenge, and in 2013, in addition to the NEA, EGRA and EGMA were brought on board for P2. A former MoE official said that “EGRA and EGMA brought us to another level of assessments.” It was especially important at a moment when Ghana was doing well on overall education indicators (inclusive education, education policy, two years of kindergarten as basic education, free and compulsory basic education since 2005...), but not doing so well on learning outcomes.

As in many countries in the region, Ghana is in the middle of a profound process of decentralization. A provision on the decentralization of basic education has been included in the new Pre-Tertiary Education Bill 2019. This bill proposes empowering district assemblies that will be responsible for infrastructure, equipping schools, and establishing new schools. Second cycle schools will remain a responsibility of the MoE and the Ghana Education Service. Schools and school management committees will be empowered and will support data collection, including for learning assessments.

According to high-level officials, the main goal and top priority of the Minister of Education is to improve learning outcomes. The Assistant to the Minister said that “with competing priorities and limited resources, the Minister really thinks in terms of improving learning outcomes,” and he stated that “we are now more committed than before, more committed to assessments not only for showing it to the international community but really for results and to improve learning outcomes.” This commitment seems to have materialized as a significant investment in GALOP, in which context the national learning assessment framework will be designed and conducted. “We have spent a lot of money to improve the curriculum, so now we need to invest in assessments, and we need to see the results of the reforms,” he added. The Director of SRIM stated that the use of learning assessment data has improved under the new Minister, with more attention being paid to data when the MoE makes major decisions.

Strategic Planning in the Education Sector

The ESP 2003-2015 included activities related to learning outcomes such as “Review current approaches/tests to evaluate learning outcomes at primary and JHS levels by developing learning standards and learning targets with particular emphasis on P1-P3” (MoE, 2002: 26). NEA 2005 and 2007 were used in the ESP 2010-2020, as well as BECE and WASSCE pass rates. The ESP pointed out that “It is evident (...) that learning outcomes are generally low at basic and secondary levels and that there has been no significant improvement in quality since 2002” (MoE, 2012: 9). However, the focus at that time was more on access, and the strategic framework did not make any references to learning assessments.

EGRA and EGMA were not conducted in Ghana before 2013,¹⁷ and so the first references appear on the new ESP 2018-2030. NEA results are also mentioned. The indicators proposed for basic education include the percentage of P2 pupils achieving mastery in the early reading test (EGRA) and numeracy test (EGMA) and the percentage of P4 and P6 pupils achieving proficiency in English (NEA), as well as the percentage of pupils scoring more than 50 percent in all four core subjects (BECE).

The ESP includes the SDG 4.6.1 related to the “proportion of the population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional a) literacy and b) numeracy skills, by sex” (MoE, 2018a: 98). It is measured through the WASSCE though, not through EGRA or NEA.

NEA, EGRA, EGMA, and the exams BECE and WASSCE were used in the elaboration of the education sector analysis (ESA) done in 2018. A CSO representative admitted that learning outcomes were included in the discussions to develop the ESA.

At NESAR 2017, it was recognized that “Gains in learning achievement have not kept up with gains in access – achievements in basic schools in reading, writing, and mathematics should be stronger” (MoE, 2017: 5). Development partners committed in that meeting to continue focusing on “Learning achievement and rigorous assessment.”

Actors: Capacity, Commitment,¹⁸ Opinions, and Perceptions

Most informants agreed that there is an overdependence on external support for funding but also for technical assistance. Most of the MoE staff lack an education background, and despite capacity building activities, attrition has been a major concern.

At the national level, some discussions happen at a technical level, although there is still only a limited dissemination of the information, with divisions working in silos. According to GNECC, the capacity of decentralized levels to use learning assessment data is a major challenge. And, as a MoE official pointed out, “the further you go, the data is not used at all.” Therefore, capacities to produce and use learning assessments still need improvement.

¹⁷ In many countries in the region, the turning point was 2015. The focus was on access until 2015 (Millennium Development Goal #2), whereas afterwards, the focus was more on learning (Sustainable Development Goal #4).

¹⁸ This report is using USAID’s Journey to Self-Reliance framework with its emphasis on strengthening commitment and capacity of local actors to build country’s self-reliance:
https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/J2SR_Fact_Sheet.pdf

USAID has supported the MoE to disseminate the learning assessment reports district by district, but the district levels do not have the capacity to use those data. As an MoE official mentioned, “It is not enough just to give them the data.” Likewise, CSOs do not have a good understanding of learning assessment data, and there is an urgent need for capacity building and awareness raising, so they are able to do better advocacy.

In terms of commitment, an important associated factor is the lack of consistency between donor-funded projects and education policies; for instance, the Ghana Learning activity collects their own learning data for 100 districts (out of 216), with not much interaction with NEAU or other agencies, according to some informants.

All levels need to be further trained. According to the Director of SRIM, the MoE has scattered plans for capacity building but no long-term plans nor specific training on learning assessment.

Budget and Resources Allocated to the Education Sector

The education budget in Ghana has been steadily increasing in absolute terms. The share of the government budget allocated to education (excluding debt service) decreased, from 27 percent in 2011 to 21 percent in 2013, but increased to 23 percent in 2015, and the new ESP increased this percentage to almost 24 percent for the next three years. The education expenditure as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product remained above 6 percent in previous years, but will decrease to 4.5–4.7 percent over the next few years. Neither the ESP 2018–2030 nor the Education Sector Medium-Term Development Plan 2018–2021 include any reference to the resources to be invested in improving learning assessments in Ghana.

The current financial scenario is greatly influenced by the cost of the free senior high-secondary policy, which implies an increase of 54 percent in absolute terms in three years (from 26 percent of the education budget in 2018 to 29 percent in 2021), while the budget to increase access to basic education will increase by only 9 percent in absolute terms, decreasing from 21 percent to 20 percent of the education budget (MoE, 2018a: 84).

As noted above, all standardized learning assessments are funded by donors and implemented by implementing partners. An ex MoE official said: “There is always a counterpart funding.” The financial effort made by the GoG to fund the free SHS policy does not suggest that learning assessment will receive extra funds, but the GALOP project includes a significant contribution by the GoG, so there is room for optimism.

There is agreement among high-level MoE staff that the GoG should invest more resources in learning assessment data. An ex MoE official declared that “If you want to conduct an assessment across a representative sample of students, it costs money, but it needs to be done, prioritizing, analyzing, and making good use of the results.” Several informants highlighted the importance of having resources to be able to respond to the deficiencies identified in the learning assessment reports. Moreover, improving the production and use of learning assessment data will require investing in new assessments for P2, P6, and JHS Form 2 in the context of GALOP, improving the central storage of learning assessment data at the MoE, and funding capacity strengthening at central and decentralized levels.

Actual Practices Observed on Assessing Learning Outcomes

An official of the PBME division mentioned that, “we work with data to ensure policies are informed by data.” There is a tradition of considering learning assessment data to inform planning efforts in Ghana. In the 2007 educational reform, a committee was put together to advise on the reforms and they were informed by learning assessments. They proposed continuous and classroom-based standardized assessments. The reform recommended doing one formative assessment at the end of each month, and they produced a teachers’ handbook on continuous assessment.

The generalized perspective at the MoE is that learning outcomes had a large presence in the elaboration of the current ESP 2018–2030. CSOs have a less positive perspective. These organizations are critical of the inclusion of learning assessment data in planning documents and especially of the use of learning assessment data to inform the decisions taken in the planning processes.

According to all informants, actors in the education sector are aware of NEA and EGRA/EGMA, but some of them, especially at the decentralized levels, are not using these. Opinions are divided regarding the use of learning assessment data by the MoE to inform decisions on policy and planning issues.

There is consensus that the development of the curriculum was informed by learning assessment data, and according to the former executive secretary of NaCCA, the MoE realized that there were few concepts on reading and phonetics in the previous curriculum. The change to introduce this was informed by EGRA. According to the SABER Country Report 2013, TIMSS results were also used to inform curriculum improvement. Activities on teacher in-service training and “National Framework for Developing Supplementary Readers for Kindergarten to Primary Level” have also been informed by EGRA and NEA results.

There is also consensus that the MoE decided to move from sample-based to census-based learning assessments based on the lack of representativity of learning assessments (NEA, EGRA/EGMA), and that the GoG is determined to co-fund the required investments (in the context of GALOP, co-funded by the World Bank and the GPE).

According to several informants, the free SHS policy was not informed by learning assessment data but it was oriented by a political will to respond to a commitment contained in the Manifesto of the ruling party. The Director of Statistics, Research, Information, and Monitoring (SRIM) could not say if learning assessment data were used in the development of the new ESP.

Learning assessment data have also been used in planning efforts linked to accountability. The NEA 2018 Report highlighted the use of this assessment “to hold leaders and managers accountable.” However, in practice, the lack of a learning assessment framework is linked to low levels of accountability, especially by civil society organizations. Moreover, in a time of decentralization where districts are getting more responsibilities, NEA and EGRA/EGMA are only representative at national and regional levels. The new NSAT will also be representative at district and school levels.

UNICEF, with the Ghana Center for Democratic Development and the Centre for Social Policy Studies (University of Ghana), compiles the District League Table, mentioned by several informants as the source of information on learning outcomes at the district level. They take the results of BECE pass rates from EMIS. According to the last report of 2018/2019, “The BECE represents the education

quality and learning achievement in a district.” The World Bank Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP 2014-2021) uses the WASSCE and not standardized assessments to measure learning outcomes.

Ghana is launching a pilot public-private partnership (PPP) in basic education, which focuses on improving “the quality of education delivered through contracting out the operation of public schools to not-for-profit organisations and is another pillar of the reform agenda” (MoE, 2018a: 23). According to several informants, these PPPs were informed by the bad results in learning assessment data.

Several informants mentioned that learning assessment data were used to inform externally funded programs, and there was agreement that the USAID Ghana Learning Program was informed by the data provided by EGRA 2015 and NEA 2016.

An interesting approach was proposed by an MoE official, who said “We do well at the aggregated level to inform macro policies. I am not sure we do well in going beyond aggregated data to do an analysis to inform targeted interventions. We don’t do this very well.” For instance, the data that only 2 percent of pupils are reading at a proficient level is considered at the macro level but there is no further analysis of learning assessment data, nor specific actions taken at local level. According to several informants, learning assessment data are not helping to make recommendations in specific areas.

In an interesting contrast between perception and reality, the same official who said in our interview, “the Minister is using NEA to make decisions,” said a few minutes later, “Generally, the system is not very receptive to the use of learning assessment data,” and, “Key decisions are not always informed by data.” Several officials mentioned that interventions cannot be targeted if samples are not representative. A former MoE official in charge of NIB declared that, “We know that a factor for quality is data.” However, that person also said that, “Learning assessment data is not used directly for the work of NIB in primary education.”

Regarding the level of data use from standardized evaluations and assessments, we have identified potential reasons linked to lack of ownership, utility and relevance, capacity, and awareness (or lack thereof) of the importance of these data.

Regarding **utility and relevance**, there are several elements to consider:

- The lack of a national assessment framework prevents clarity on the intended purpose of using learning assessment data.
- NEA and EGRA/EGMA are sample-based and not representative at the district or school levels and therefore not very useful to plan interventions at the local level. A former official at NaCCA said, “We can now make general statements, but we cannot provide more details. The MoE requires more specific information. If you want to adapt interventions, you need information by school.”
- In the same sense, access to data and how the data is packaged has to be meaningful to actors at the local level, including inspectors, supervisors, and teachers. However, dissemination at local levels is deficient, and learning assessment data are not speaking to teachers nor district officials, so are not useful to improve practice and capacities.

- Some informants complained that learning data are not made available every year before the school year, but that seems to imply a narrow view of the use of learning assessment data, as the changes are not significant from one year to the next.
- From the responses given by representatives of both MoE and CSOs in the northern regions, we can conclude that learning assessment data is not the main concern in the poor areas that focus on basic materials and teacher training.
- The extension of basic education to secondary education has not been accompanied by the inclusion of these educational levels in learning assessments, but the new curriculum framework mentions assessments for junior and senior high school (MoE, 2018d: 31).

Regarding **capacity**:

- There is consensus that there is lack of capacity to fully understand learning assessment results. It is clear to all informants that local levels have greater capacity challenges. As a civil society representative said, “there is limited capacity to transform data into information,” and this also affects the sense of ownership and use of learning assessment data, especially by district officials and teachers.
- This can also be linked to the fact that learning assessment reports are not user friendly and include technical terms not easily understood by all actors in the education system, in particular at the local levels.
- At the local level—and this is especially relevant as the district assemblies and district departments of education will be getting more and more responsibilities in education—there is no capacity to produce learning assessment data. However, as there is no learning assessment framework, the role that district levels will have in the design, implementation, and analysis of learning assessments is not clear.
- There is a clear need to build skills to produce and use data. The MoE has trained small groups of officials in research for data collection, but it seems that most of the training in capacity development is being done by development partners and civil society organizations. Some local NGOs are training district officials on learning outcomes. It is a time-consuming process, with not much support from the authorities at the national level. They are planning to also train parent-teacher associations, teachers, and supervisors.
- Learning assessments are donor driven and were introduced by several externally supported projects. “There is limited learning assessment data when external support is not available” (ex MoE official).

Regarding **awareness**:

- There is significant awareness about learning assessment data at the central level (more at the MoE than at GES), but NEA or EGRA, for instance, were not mentioned by any of our informants at the decentralized levels. When asked about the data needed for the work at the district level, an informant responded, “the enrollment figures in all the schools, catchment areas, gender issues, and data on all logistics that need to be supplied to all the schools.” There was no mention of learning data. This happened with several informants, including a director at the MoE who during the interview kept talking about quality programs in the system, the ones the person knows more specifically and systematically, speaking about other reforms in the system without

making a link to learning assessments or their data. This is likely connected to the (lack of) utility of learning assessment data for them.

- It seems that many actors are still not familiar with learning assessments and/or are not aware of the importance of learning assessment data. Frequently, informants respond to questions about learning assessment data in terms of their knowledge or involvement in exams, and less frequently refer to NEA or EGRA.
- Most of the informants, including high-level staff at the MoE, were not aware of whether or not NEA was conducted in 2018.
- The shift from a focus on access to quality was done a few years ago, but the focus on learning outcomes is still new for many actors.
- According to several informants, the USAID Learning activity seems to have been a good way to approach learning assessment data for people in the education sector, to raise awareness of the importance of collecting and using learning assessment data.

In terms of the **infrastructure**, connectivity is a barrier, as large parts of the country are not connected to the Internet. The trend in Ghana, as in other countries in the region, is to collect the data with online tools.

A good number of informants mentioned the importance of data in the MoE, and in particular learning data, but while there seem to be one or two champions in some divisions or organizations, there is no culture of evidence institutionalized in the MoE. An M&E officer said that he and most of his colleagues used learning assessment data, but that in general, evidence is not strong in the education system and the use of learning assessment data has not always been politically convenient. He thinks that with the new Minister, the system is changing rapidly at the highest level. Education actors seem to appreciate decisions that are informed by data, so some informants think that it is becoming more widespread. An indicator of this could be that most of the informants mentioned NESAR as the forum to show the evidence in the sector. An MoE official mentioned that even politicians are starting to respect technical people when they provide evidence. The rise of a culture of evidence is linked to the use of learning assessment data to inform policies. A CSO representative said, “Civil servants will have an incentive to use data if they are used for evidence-based policies.”

Politicization of data: According to the Director of NEAU, “Results are sensitive but in Ghana there is no politics in dissemination of results.” However, the NEA 2016 report was published late because of the elections. Jophus Anamuah-Mensah, one of the interviewees, mentioned the lack of political commitment of the leadership and the political use of results as some of the main challenges for effective use of assessment data.¹⁹ He proposed the inclusion of TIMSS results in national plans, which did not happen. The current Minister is more data oriented, but still decided on free SHS without taking into consideration quality/learning aspects. There are new elections in 2020, but this time informants do not expect the government to delay the results of learning assessments.

¹⁹ Jophus Anamuah-Mensah (2013), Human development learning week: Panel on TIMSS & PIRLS, Ghana’s participation in TIMSS, February 6.

Factors Facilitating or Impeding the Use of Learning Assessment Data

Facilitating factors to the use of learning assessment data include:

- The current government demonstrated commitment to using learning assessment data which is evident from references to learning assessment data in all the key planning documents, as shown above.
- According to several informants, the Minister of Education wants to use data to support everything he is doing. As an informant said, “It takes a leader to support the use of data.” However, as shown above, some actors also criticized the politicization of learning assessment data.
- The MoE has the support of development partners and CSOs in the production and use of learning assessment data, which at the same time they often produce and fund.
- There is apparently a political will in favor of learning assessment data, but so far learning assessments have been funded by external resources and the change promoted by the current government is oriented more toward funding free SHS. At the same time, the funding committed for GALOP gives hope for future progress.

Barriers to the use of learning assessment data include:

- There is consensus that there is no total resistance to learning assessment data, although there is some reticence and a lack of motivation and engagement. Data are often not easy to understand and nor useful, leading to a lack of motivation in some actors in the education system.
- The lack of a declared intention on the use of learning assessment data leads to people not seeing the relevance of it.
- Some people might be afraid of data due to lack of knowledge.
- A challenge is that data are scattered through different divisions, agencies, and development partners, who hold the data and do not always disseminate it in the best way, as mentioned above. The new EMIS will solve this problem only partially, as it will create a platform for sharing information, but it will only include learning assessment data from BECE and WASSCE.
- Learning assessment data are not available for all the stakeholders, as shown above. This is a significant barrier, in particular for CSOs.
- Another significant barrier to the use of learning assessment data is the unavailability of resources to implement the recommendations of learning assessment reports, which is demotivating for many actors.
- Moving to a census is appreciated by all actors, but budget implications can be a barrier.

6. POLITICAL ECONOMY

The New Patriotic Party Manifesto 2016, proposed by the ruling party during the last electoral campaign, said “We aim to shift the structure and content of our education system from merely passing examinations to building character, nurturing values, and raising literate, confident, and engaged citizens who can think critically.” In the section on education, there are two very general references to quality of

education, but there are no references to learning assessments. Several informants mentioned that the Minister of Education attaches a lot of importance to the use of data, but at the same time, there are officials who think learning assessment data are used to justify already-made decisions.

This is the case of the decision to make senior high secondary free for all Ghanaians, a political decision included in the Manifesto and not informed by learning assessment data. A CSO mentioned that the MoE had no special interest in quality aspects but just in increasing the capacities to accommodate the expected massive influx of students in SHS. The full magnitude of the financial implications of free SHS is still to be seen.

As mentioned above, the results of NEA 2016 were delayed because of the elections. 2020 is also an election year, and an MoE official mentioned that the Ministry will not do an EGRA or EGMA because of the potential bad results.

The GoG faces the challenge of how to translate global goals (mainly the Education 2030 Agenda) into national goals, plans, targets, and indicators. There are significant implications since Ghana, like many African countries, has been focusing exclusively on improving access to education for two decades while Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasizes learning and equity at all educational levels. This leads to a challenging relationship with donors, who increasingly push the GoG to accept their agendas and results-based management approach.

There is no involvement from other sectors of the GoG in the area of learning assessments. Due to the fact that donors pay for all learning assessments, there have been no financial implications for the public treasury. The new financial commitment of the GoG under GALOP could change this.

As learning assessment data are barely used to influence decision-making processes, learning assessments are not a battlefield for political actors. However, there is discomfort among some informants because of the lack of sovereignty in learning assessment-related decision-making.

This research could not identify specific interests and needs of stakeholders at the national and local levels that affect the production and use of learning assessment data.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING PRACTICES IN LEARNING ASSESSMENT DATA USE IN GHANA

There has been some progress in the learning assessments conducted in Ghana, and there is a positive trend to move toward a single and representative standardized learning assessment, the new NSAT. The improvements in learning outcomes as noted by the USAID-funded Ghana Learning activity are also encouraging.

These are some recommendations to the Government of Ghana and to USAID/Ghana to address gaps and bottlenecks regarding the use of learning assessment data.

Recommendations for the Government of Ghana

Regarding capacity

- Actors in the system should be trained in how to better utilize learning assessment results.
- It is necessary to improve the central storage of learning assessment data at the MoE, maybe integrating the results of standardized assessments in EMIS.
- The MoE should promote the strengthening of the NEAU's capacities and autonomy, also increasing the public funds for this agency.

Regarding commitment

- Develop the national learning assessment framework as soon as possible, which should include a clear purpose for the use of learning assessment data and mechanisms to ensure that results from learning assessment are used to inform decision making in the MoE.
- Prioritize learning assessment data within the financial framework of the education sector, and increase national resources allocated to learning assessments in order to achieve sovereign evaluations and overcome the unpredictability of external support. The commitment to GALOP must be materialized. The increase of the budget allocated to learning assessments will require transparency regarding how resources are transformed into results.
- The GoG should promote a shared culture of evidence and evaluation. As a first step, it should create a dissemination policy for learning assessment results. The purpose of assessments must be clearly communicated to all stakeholders so that the results are discussed at all levels. The EMIS can be a powerful tool for learning assessment data dissemination. Summaries of learning assessment reports could be translated into national languages to facilitate use by local actors.
- The GoG should promote a more extensive use of learning assessment data (and related indicators) in performance reports, joint sector reviews, and education strategic plans.
- The GoG should fashion learning assessments not only as instruments for measuring learning outcomes in Ghana but also as a means for better understanding the variables/factors that influence learning as well as the remedial programs that can ameliorate learning deficits.
- Similarly, it is critical to translate learning assessment data into action. The recommendations in the learning assessment reports must be more specific, and they must allow for the transformation of learning results into concrete actions. Moreover, learning assessments must be meaningful for actors at all levels, including districts and schools. Decentralized levels should be more involved in all steps, from design and analysis to reporting. In order to facilitate this, the MoE must improve capacities at the regional and local levels for the monitoring of learning outcomes. The MoE could start identifying the gaps in capacities related to learning assessment data internally and among stakeholders through a capacity needs assessment.
- Finally, it is crucial to encourage capitalizing on practices related to learning assessments so that they can be scaled up.

Recommendations for USAID/Ghana

Regarding **capacity**

- USAID could support the MoE in strengthening capacities at all levels, particularly at the NEAU and local levels.
- USAID could explore the use of national CSOs as an entry point to improve learning assessments in Ghana and to increase awareness regarding the importance of learning assessment data.

Regarding **commitment**

- USAID should promote a support process that addresses the design and implementation of learning assessments with a learning-by-doing approach, wherein the development partners work together with the MoE for a number of years, transferring competencies and incorporating an exit strategy.
- USAID should promote at all levels a heightened awareness of the importance of learning assessments.
- USAID can support the GoG in responding to the urgent need to anchor a culture of evaluation in the country.
- USAID should support the MoE in making a case in favor of learning assessments so that more funds can be channeled in that direction by the Ministry of Finance.
- USAID could promote quantitative and qualitative secondary analyses on the variables/factors that contribute to improved learning outcomes.

8. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Key Informants Interviewed

| Organization | Position |
|--|---|
| Ministry of Education | Director Statistics, Research, Information, and Monitoring |
| | Director PMBE |
| | Principal Planning Officer (M&E) |
| | Assistant to the Minister of Education |
| | Regional Director-Eastern Region |
| | Acting Director National Education Assessment Unit |
| Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition | National Coordinator |
| Northern Network for Education Development | Coordinator |
| Center for Democratic Development | Research Analyst |
| IDP Foundation, Inc | Country Director |
| Perkins International | Regional Coordinator |
| Innovations for Poverty Action | Senior Education and Implementation Manager |
| USAID | Senior Education Specialist |
| UNICEF | Chief of Education |
| World Bank | Senior Education Consultant |
| UNESCO | National Education Program Officer |
| FHI360 | Chief of Party and team |
| MoE retired officials from planning/evaluation | National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Former Executive Secretary |
| | National Inspection Board Former Executive Secretary |
| | Ghana Education Service Former Acting Director |

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed

Anamuah-Mensah, Jophus (2013), Human development learning week: Panel on TIMSS & PIRLS, Ghana's participation in TIMSS, February 6.

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