PISA FOR DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKSHOP

3 DECEMBER 2020, WEBINAR

Summary of the meeting

The PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) for Development (PISA-D) International Technical Workshop took place on 3 December 2020 as a virtual event. The meeting confirmed how the learning needs and outcomes of those children who are not enrolled in school and that had hitherto remained beyond the radar screen of exams and assessments, and thus beyond the reach of informed policy intervention, were now, as a result of PISA-D, no longer beyond the reach of large-scale learning assessment. The meeting also confirmed that recent advances made in developing learning assessment tools for different age groups offer a suite of tools to address the information needs related to the different age groups targeted for the Education Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) monitoring through the life cycle. These tools have the potential to be administered as part of household surveys to close SDG 4 learning assessment data gaps, especially in low-income countries.

The meeting showed that the implications of the PISA-D results were significant for the participating countries and the status of global progress towards the achievement of the Education SDG. When the actual skill levels of the out-of-school population, rather than estimates, are taken into account, the low-and-middle-income countries especially are even further behind the SDG 4 benchmarks for reading and mathematics. The meeting concluded with a set of next steps for taking forward PISA-D and other learning assessment modules in the context of household surveys. These next steps involve a range of agencies, including UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, IEA and the OECD, together with countries in a programme of work designed to ensure that, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, "no one will be left behind" when it comes to learning assessment data.

The chairs for each session of the meeting were, in order of sessions: Tue Halgreen, OECD; Yuri Belfali, OECD; and Silvia Montoya, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). Representatives of the following attended the meeting remotely: countries participating in PISA and PISA-D; countries interested in the assessment of learning and skills through household surveys; development partners; institutional partners; international contractors; civil society; academic institutions; research institutions; and independent experts.

A video recording of the event and the presentations made in each session are available at this site.

The Workshop was held as a webinar and marked the closure of the PISA for Development (PISA-D) project. The Workshop built on the outcomes of the PISA-D initiative, in particular the project's piloting of a PISA assessment delivered in households, and the workshop convened by the World Bank in Washington from 3-4 February 2020: "Learning through the Lifecycle in Multi-Topic National Household Surveys: options for low-income countries." The agenda for the International Technical Workshop comprised, in the first part, information sharing and discussion about the PISA-D household survey pilot and lessons learnt and, in the second part, review and discussion of a roadmap for taking forward learning and skills assessment in household surveys. The OECD, UNESCO (UIS and UIL), UNICEF, IEA, the World Bank, and other concerned agencies, are developing the roadmap jointly.

> *A range of national and international products and publications that are listed below informed the first part of the Workshop:*
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> *PISA in Focus*
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> *National reports for Guatemala and Honduras*
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> *International Database*
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> *Technical Report*
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> *Project Completion Report*
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> *Initial blog*
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> *Andreas Schleicher blog*
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> *Panama blog*
>
> *DEV blog*

Introduction and scene setting

1. The Chair of the first session, Tue Halgreen, introduced himself, welcomed the participants to the Webinar, and thanked them for attending this important and concluding meeting of the PISA-D initiative. In his opening remarks, the Chair expressed the OECD's commitment to making PISA more accessible to and relevant for Low-and-Middle-Income-Countries (LMICs) in support of the monitoring and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal for Education - SDG 4. The Chair also remarked on the importance of PISA and the PISA-D project for monitoring the performance of education systems globally, especially in respect of quality and equity, in support of the achievement of SDG4.

2. The Chair rehearsed the objectives of the Webinar (as above) and explained that the event was structured in two parts, with, after the first scene-setting session, a session of ninety minutes dedicated to the results of PISA-D and the experiences of the participating countries in the out-of-school assessment, including a questions and answer segment. The Chair further explained that there would be a final session of ninety minutes devoted to the collection of learning and skills assessment data in household surveys.

3. The Chair drew the participants' attention to the OECD's Workshop web pages and explained that all the presentations made during the event would be uploaded there, together with a Summary Record of the proceedings (this document) and a video recording of the event. The Chair also explained how the first session was designed to set the scene for the Workshop and to provide important global context for the project and its results.

Item 1. Presentation by Andreas Schleicher, OECD

4. The Chair introduced the three panel members for the first session and gave the floor to each of these in turn. The first presentation, by Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills at the OECD, set out the principal drivers and rationale for the development and implementation of the PISA-D out-of-school assessment. Mr Schleicher explained how the learning needs and outcomes of those children who are not enrolled in school had hitherto remained beyond the radar screen of exams and assessments, and thus beyond the reach of informed policy intervention. Mr Schleicher then described how PISA-D had changed this through its proven cognitive and contextual data instruments, its effective delivery platform through tablet computers, its approach to sampling and survey operations; the PISA-D pilot has shown that out-of-school youth are no longer beyond the reach of large-scale learning assessment.

Item 2. Presentation by Marguerite Clarke, World Bank

5.	The second presentation, by Marguerite Clarke of the World Bank examined the extent of the learning crisis and showed how learning assessment data is missing for the poorest countries and the most excluded children and young people, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Ms Clarke emphasised that the first step towards tackling the learning crisis is to assess learning and to make learning salient through the use of information and metrics, such as provided by PISA and PISA-D. Ms Clarke confirmed that in the World Bank's view, PISA-D had delivered test questions that 15-year-olds in emerging and developing economies can actually answer; a test that emerging and developing economies can afford; and a test that contributes to learning for all. Ms Clarke highlighted the growing demand for learning assessment data that responds to the new realities post-COVID-19, informs the investments and policy reforms needed to realise SDG 4, and contributes to a shared understanding of how education technology can help make education systems more equitable, effective and resilient, ensuring that learning happens for everyone, everywhere.

Item 3. Presentation by Silvia Montoya, UIS

6.	The third presentation by Silvia Montoya, Director UIS, situated PISA and PISA-D in the context of the SDG 4 monitoring framework. In particular, Ms Montoya highlighted how PISA and PISA-D data was being used by UN Member States and the UN system to measure progress against global indicator 4.1.1.c:

- Proportion of children and young people: at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex.

7.	Ms Montoya presented data on primary and secondary completion rates and the proportion of out-of-school youth by country and by region and showed how globally almost one third of children are not completing primary and secondary education and are not learning even basic skills before they drop out of school. Ms Montoya praised the PISA-D initiative for showing how the out-of-school youth are no longer beyond the reach of large-scale learning assessment and confirmed that the data from the initiative will be included in the UIS and UN SDG 4 databases.

Item 4. International context

8.	The Chair closed the first session by noting the importance of this context, in particular the global learning crisis and the SDG 4 framework, for understanding the rationale for the PISA-D initiative, especially the out-of-school assessment, and the achievement of the project's outputs.

The results of PISA-D and country experiences of data collection and reporting

9.	The Chair of the second session, Yuri Belfali, introduced herself and explained the subject for discussion. The Chair said that the second session focused on the results of the PISA-D out-of-school assessment and the country experiences of data collection and reporting. The Chair introduced the five panel members for the second session and gave the floor to each of these in turn.

Item 5. Presentation by Edgar Noriega, Guatemala

10.	The first presentation, by Edgar Noriega, Ministry of Education, Guatemala, outlined the reasons why Guatemala participated in the out-of-school youth assessment, the country's experiences of implementing the assessment, its analysis of data and preparation of a national report and what the results mean for the country. Mr Noriega highlighted the challenges faced by Guatemala in identifying and locating the target population and concluded that the effort was worthwhile because the country now has a rich source of data for understanding the educational status of all 15-year-olds in the population, not just those enrolled in school. Mr Noriega highlighted the need to incorporate the out-of-school assessment data

into the system-wide monitoring of the Ministry of Education so that it informs policy choices more effectively.

Item 6. Presentation by Vilma Reyes, Honduras

11.   The second presentation, by Vilma Reyes, Ministry of Education, Honduras, explained how the out-of-school assessment data had helped to shine a light on a previously ignored and marginalised population – the most disadvantaged children. Ms Reyes reviewed Honduras' experience of implementing the out-of-school assessment and highlighted security issues for the interviewers as a particular challenge in data collection. Ms Reyes also pointed out the high level of effort required to obtain the necessary number of completed cases, which involved multiple visits to households. Some key findings highlighted by Ms Reyes were that there were no significant gender differences in the performance of the out-of-school youth on the test and practically all of the dropouts had repeated primary school grades prior to leaving school. Ms Reyes confirmed that the launch of Honduras' national report on 1 December 2020 had been successful and the report's recommendations provide a challenging agenda for reform of the education system to make it more inclusive.

Item 7. Presentation by Nadia de Leon, Panama

12.   In the third presentation, Nadia de Leon, Ministry of Education, Panama, explained that her country combined its participation in PISA 2018 with the PISA-D out-of-school assessment to avoid "blind spots": i.e. to avoid basing its comparison with other countries in PISA solely based on the students who attend school. Ms De Leon pointed out that without data on the out-of-school youth, her country could draw incorrect interpretations of its PISA 2018 data, such as those that compare Panama's results with those countries in which more than 95% of 15-year-olds are covered by PISA. Moreover, Ms De Leon said that Panama wanted to understand the true progress of educational improvements since its last participation in PISA in 2009 and to gain a better understanding of educational inequality in the country and the extent to which policies pursued since then had been inclusive. With regard to implementation of the assessment, Ms De Leon confirmed that a total of 2 055 completed cases were achieved in Panama utilising a combination of random and convenience samples. Ms De Leon also confirmed that the Panamanian out-of-school assessment sample in PISA-D is representative of the country's rural areas and *comarcas* only.

Item 8. Presentation by Veronica Heilborn, Paraguay

13.   In the fourth presentation, Veronica Heilborn, Ministry of Education, Paraguay, emphasised how the out-of-school assessment required considerable time and effort to understand, adapt and implement. In particular, Ms Heilborn highlighted the challenge faced by the Ministry of Education in terms of its lack of experience in large-scale household surveys and the limited availability of census data. Ms Heilborn showed how Paraguay had to visit 25 000 households to achieve 814 completed cases and this greatly increased the cost of the assessment. Ms Heilborn concluded that the benefits of the out-of-school assessment out-weighed the costs as for the first time Paraguay had policy relevant learning assessment data on the most disadvantaged young people in the population. Ms Heilborn said that on the basis of the PISA-D data, the Ministry of Education in Paraguay now knew who the out-of-school children are, their skill levels, why they failed to enrol or dropped out of school and what measures may prevent further dropouts and mitigate the situation of the out-of-school youth.

Item 9. Presentation by Massar Diop, Senegal

14.   The fifth presentation, by Massar Diop, Institut National d'Études et d'Action pour le Développement de l'Éducation (INEADE), Senegal, set out the rationale for the country's participation in the PISA-D out-of-school assessment. Mr Diop said that Senegal was seeking to understand the learning levels of out-of-school youth and the barriers to schooling that exist in the country and to also build capacities to conduct large-scale learning assessments, and analyse and use the results to support national policies and evidence-based decision-making. Mr Diop shared some of the key findings from the assessment. These findings included: how the majority of Senegalese youth are performing at PISA Level 1 and below in reading as well as in mathematics; that there was no major difference in scores between

girls and boys; on average, students in school out-performed out-of-school youth by the equivalent of less than one year of schooling; the main barriers to schooling are financial and distance to nearest school; 30% of young people surveyed never enrolled in formal schooling; the out-of-school are mostly in the lowest quintile of the PISA socio-economic index; and out-of-school youth are more susceptible to poor health and life dissatisfaction. Mr Diop also showed how the out-of-school assessment data and analysis is informing education policies in Senegal with an emphasis on closing infrastructure gaps for increased access to schooling; improving the quality of instruction; and the promotion of policies that emphasis equity and effective communication with key stakeholders such as parents regarding the importance of education.

Q&A

15.   A question and answers session followed the presentations during which the panel members confirmed that almost all of the tests carried out in the out-of-school assessment in all five countries were administered in households. The panel members also confirmed that across the five countries almost 90,000 households had to be visited in order to achieve 7 200 completed cases. The panel members also confirmed that the tablets used the Microsoft operating system and did not require real time internet connectivity. In addition, panel members responded to a question that the Main Survey data collection took place from July 2018 to January 2019 and on average, the countries were in the field for about three to four months. In response to another question, the panel members discussed whether, if there was the opportunity to re-do PISA-D, would they sample only the out-of-school 14-16 year-olds or all 14-16 olds from sampled households. The panel members noted that the performances of the two groups (the in-school and the out-of-school) were compared in PISA-D. However, the panel members concurred with a participant's comment that the out-of-school assessment might have benefited by including both in-school and out-of-school populations in the survey for the following reasons: (i) who is out of school is always fluid; (ii) the conditions for taking the assessment at school and home differ; and (iii) the cost of identifying those who are out of school is high.

Item 10. Presentation by Michael Ward, OECD

16.   The Chair invited Michael Ward of the OECD to outline the next steps for the PISA-D out-of-school assessment initiative. Dr Ward presented the following three options for scaling up the out-of-school assessment that the OECD was taking forward:

- First, the out-of-school assessment piloted in PISA-D would be offered as a stand-alone international option as part of a future PISA cycle (starting with PISA 2025) – for experienced PISA participants with low rates of coverage of their 15-year-old populations.

- Second, the out-of-school assessment piloted in PISA-D would be offered as an international option as part of a future PISA cycle (starting with PISA 2025) – for experienced PISA participants with low rates of coverage – and could be linked to a national household survey. In this option, the national household survey would facilitate the identification and location of the assessment sample, thus reducing in-country costs. The linkage would provide mutual benefits with PISA enriched by the contextual data from the household survey and the household survey enriched by the assessment data.

- Third, a short (15-20 minutes) PISA test (based on the instrument used in PISA-D) would be integrated with a multi-topic household survey. The purpose of this short test would be solely to discriminate whether the respondent (14-16-year-olds who are in-school or out-of-school) are above or below PISA Level 2 in reading and mathematics – the SDG 4 benchmark. This household survey may be linked to a future PISA cycle or be a completely separate study and the participating country would not necessarily have to be a PISA participant. As later discussed in the final session of the workshop, this version of the

PISA-D assessment would be targeted at low-income countries in particular to help close learning assessment data gaps.

17.   The Chair closed the session by making the connection between the next steps for PISA-D and the work programme being developed by the OECD, UNESCO (UIS and UIL), UNICEF, IEA and the World Bank and other concerned agencies regarding measuring learning through the lifecycle in multi-topic national household surveys, which was the topic of the next session.

Measuring learning through the lifecycle in multi-topic national household surveys

18.   The Chair of the fourth session, Silvia Montoya, Director UIS, re-introduced herself and explained the subject for discussion. The Chair said that the final session focused on measuring learning through the lifecycle in multi-topic national household surveys as a means of closing learning assessment data gaps in low-income-countries especially. The Chair explained that closing these data gaps was critically important for the monitoring and achievement of SDG 4 by 2030. The Chair introduced the seven panel members for the session and gave the floor to each of these in turn.

Item 11. Presentation by Joao Pedro Wagner de Azevedo, World Bank

19.   The first presentation, by Joao Pedro Wagner de Azevedo, World Bank, set the scene for the presentations that followed. Mr De Azevedo explained how recent advances made in developing learning assessment tools for different age groups offer a suite of tools to address the information needs related to the different age groups targeted for SDG 4 monitoring through the life-cycle:

- Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI) 2030 for early childhood (SDG global indicator 4.2.1)
- Foundational Learning Skills (FLS) for 7-14 years old (4.1.1.a)
- Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (LaNA) for end of primary school (4.1.1.b)
- PISA-D for 14-16 years old/end of lower secondary education (4.1.1.c)
- mini-LAMP for adults (4.6.1).

20.   Mr De Azevedo explained that with some variation, these tools have been tested and validated, and come in reasonably sized modules that make them amenable to an implementation model coordinated with that of a household survey. Mr De Azevedo further explained that following the workshop at the World Bank in February 2020, agreement had been reached between the agencies concerned regarding the principle of marking pragmatic choices and the programme for integrating the modules in household surveys had been proposed and supported as a formal activity under the SDG Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML) Technical Cooperation Group at their respective 7th meetings in October 2020. In addition to the learning assessment modules in household surveys, Mr De Azevedo also showed how consideration was being given to measurements of learning delivered over telephones.

Item 12. Presentation by Claudia Cappa, UNICEF

21.   The second presentation, by Claudia Cappa, UNICEF, revolved around the ECDI 2030, which is a population-level data collection instrument that can be integrated into existing national data collection and monitoring efforts. Ms Cappa explained that the module captures the achievement of key developmental milestones by children aged 24 to 59 months and generates internationally comparable data to track progress towards SDG global indicator 4.2.1. Ms Cappa said that ECDI 2030 can also be used to measure disparities and inform early childhood policies. Ms Cappa showed how ECDI 2030 had been developed and the tools that were available to support its use.

Item 13. Presentation by Manuel Cardoso, UNICEF

22.   In the third presentation, Manuel Cardoso, UNICEF, presented the FSL module and how it might be integrated with household surveys to measure progress against SDG global indicator 4.1.1.a. Mr Cardoso explained how FSL measured minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics in early grades of primary education. Mr Cardoso showed how the assessment worked and confirmed that it provides valid, reliable and fair results and had been proven in field tests carried out in Belize, Costa Rica, Ghana and Kenya.

Item 14. Presentation by Dirk Hastedt, IEA

23.   The fourth presentation, by Dirk Hastedt, Director of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), showed how LaNA was an effective instrument for measuring proficiency in reading and mathematics at the end of primary school (4.1.1.b). Mr Hastedt showed how LaNA had been designed for countries where TIMSS and PIRLS are too difficult - LaNA was based on the TIMSS and PIRLS frameworks for use in measuring achievement in the regions below the low benchmarks. Mr Hastedt explained that LaNA includes background instruments to help inform education policy and a shorter version of the cognitive instrument could be easily adapted for inclusion in household surveys. The shorter assessment would focus on what percentage of respondents demonstrate minimal proficiency (approaching the low benchmark), rather than covering the whole range of abilities.

Item 15. Presentation by Michael Ward, OECD

24.   In the fifth presentation, Michael Ward, OECD, showed how the PISA-D out-of-school assessment instruments that had been discussed in the earlier sessions of the workshop were being used as the basis for a shorter test of reading and mathematics. Dr Ward explained that work was under way in the OECD to finalise a 15-20 minutes test that would have a sole purpose of discriminating whether the respondent (14-16-year-old youth) is above or below the minimum level of proficiency in reading and mathematics specified in global indicator 4.1.1.c (equivalent to Level 2 in PISA). Dr Ward said that this shorter PISA test would be ready for use in early 2021 and is designed to be delivered as a paper-based or tablet-based assessment integrated with a household survey. He also said that the OECD is looking forward to contributing to the joint work of the agencies represented in the panel on measuring learning through the lifecycle in multi-topic national household surveys.

Item 16. Presentation by Nicolas Jonas, UIL

25.   The sixth presentation, by Nicolas Jonas, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), focused on the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) and how this is being developed as a module for integrating with household surveys. Mr Jonas showed how LAMP had been developed and piloted in 10 countries and is being used to measure progress against global indicator 4.6.1. Mr Jonas then explained how a shortened version of LAMP (Mini-LAMP) had been developed by UIS and UIL for use as part of household surveys. He said that Mini-LAMP included a background and self-report questionnaire to understand the language practices of a household and the reading, writing and numeracy skills of individual household members, as well as their use of technology and educational experience. Mr Jonas further explained that Mini-LAMP also included a literacy and numeracy module comprising 15 test items administered by an interviewer. He said that the test is designed to assess the fundamental level of an individual's reading and numeracy abilities and can be adapted to reflect the specific contexts of countries.

Item 17. Presentation by Gero Carletto, World Bank

26.   In the seventh presentation, Gero Carletto, World Bank, showed how the coalition of partners represented in the panel and other concerned agencies has agreed to engage in developing a coordinated strategy to move from aspiration to implementation of learning assessments integrated with household surveys. Mr Carletto said that the following next steps had been agreed for implementation during 2021:

- First, preparation of a stock-taking document on the learning assessment tools presented in the session, including advantages and disadvantages of each instrument.

- Second, development of a concrete roadmap for improving learning data collection in household surveys together with research and development of the learning assessment modules presented in the session.

- Third, development of a Guidelines document that describes how the set of learning assessment modules will practically be integrated with household surveys.

- Fourth, identification of 2-3 countries to pilot the approach(es), and develop a strategy to jointly fundraise to get implementation off the ground and for the eventual scale-up through to 2030.

Item 18. Q&A

27.   A brief questions and answer session followed the presentations during which the panel members agreed with a comment from the floor that countries would need to be guided through the various assessments that had been presented. The panel members explained that the Guidelines document would go some way towards helping countries to choose the right fit for their priorities. However, the aim of the modules is to provide measurements covering the life-cycle and these should be seen as a complete package of instruments.

28.   In response to another question, Mr De Azevedo said that the World Bank had recently looked at data from 109 countries and 16 rounds of learning assessments in the past 20 years (such as PISA, PISA-D, PIRLS, TIMMS). He said that it is remarkable to see how much learning inequality remains within schools (67%), even after considering gender, socio-economic, and urban-rural differences (47%). Mr De Azevedo further explained that bringing a richer household and longitudinal perspective to education can potentially help us strengthen our understanding of what drives learning inequality. He said that participants could learn more about this at the following link:

- https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/learning-all-within-country-learning-inequality

29.   Responding to a further question, Manuel Cardoso said that household-based measurement of learning outcomes complements rather than replaces school-based assessments and it does this in three ways: first, by providing a universal measurement for all (whether in-school or out-of-school); second, by facilitating synergy across sectors (education with health, child labour, child discipline, etc.); and third, by promoting equity.

Closing

30.   On behalf of the OECD, Michael Ward reviewed the outcomes of the workshop and concluded that all of the objectives set for the event had been achieved. Dr Ward expressed the OECD's warm appreciation to the Chairs, panellists and presenters for their contributions to the workshop and thanked the participants for joining the event and asking their interesting questions. Dr Ward took the opportunity to also thank all those who had made PISA-D possible, including the participating countries, the development partners that supported the project, the international contractors, institutional partners and OECD colleagues. In closing the workshop, Dr Ward explained that the OECD Secretariat would issue a Summary Record of the Proceedings, this document, and make all the presentations available to all the participants at this site within two weeks.