OVERVIEW OF POLICY LINKING WORKSHOPS, MAJOR OUTCOMES AND LEARNING OF THE WORKSHOPS

The Policy Linking is a methodology for Measuring Global Learning Outcomes (policy linking for short) is a low cost, quick, easy-to-implement method that allows countries to link existing national reading and/or math assessments to a common scale. The Global Proficiency Framework or GPF) is used as common scale to set the benchmarks for producing and reporting SDG4.1. The indicators- *Proportion of children and young people: (a) in Grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex.*

The national assessments are not comparable across countries due to different curriculum objectives, coverage, assessment frameworks and items used for national assessments. It also depends on school entry age and structure of education etc. However, the outcomes from the national assessment are linked through policy linking can be compared, aggregated, and tracked over time. After successfully completion of the workshop, which has major three tasks to complete, the country will be able to use results from linked national assessment(s) to report SDG4.1 indicator(s). It also allows identifying where the greatest learning gaps exist so that targeted interventions can be implemented to those areas and/or population(s) most at need. Currently, the revised GPF and toolkit are publicly available to conduct the workshop.

Major outcomes of the workshops

Setting benchmarks: The process of setting benchmarks during the workshops includes alignments of items used in national assessment with Global Proficiency Framework. It enhances the knowledge of the participants on various areas of item development, curriculum objectives and benchmarking. The policy linking are implemented **to produce and report SDG4.1 indicators** in various parts of the world largely supported by different development partners mainly, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the World Bank Group and USAID to produce and report SDG4.1. More than ten countries have already organized the Policy Linking workshops, produced, and reported for SDG4.1 focusing on different grades and levels of education. Some countries are on the pipeline to implement Policy Linking for this year and next year.

Enhancing capacity: Most important part the workshop is the **capacity enhancement of the teachers, curriculum and assessment specialist** by providing opportunities to analyze content and coverage of the items used in the national learning assessment. It has provided international prospective of constructs and sub contracts through Global Proficiency Framework. It has helped to understand the strength and weakness of used items and help to develop new relevant quality items for next round of assessments. The results of the benchmarking was helpful for setting national benchmarks and improving learning level by enhancing teaching and learning process.

Increasing familiarity with GPF: The workshop has provided opportunities to **assess the closeness of national assessment with GPF**. It encourages the countries to develop items in lining with GPF but not forgetting national curriculum objectives and provides guidance to improve theirs learning objectives- curriculum and assessment framework in future. Many countries has already decided to use GPF as one of the main reference documents while developing new curriculum and/or new items for learning assessments. The GPF was also helpful to define MPL for next round of national assessments.

Identifying gaps in GPF and Policy Linking toolkit: The workshops have provided opportunities to identify the areas where it needs some improvement, elaboration etc. It includes the use of national assessment, which had used classical theory and Item Response Theory (IRT), properly explaining three hypothetical students while setting benchmarks, including a "workflow" in the toolkit to explain teacher's inputs to final benchmark step-by-step and use of polytomous items as the Policy Linking Toolkit is designed for dichotomous item.

Main Leaning from pilot implementations:

Quality control mechanism to incorporate learning from the pilots: Need a mechanism-taskforce within the existing mechanism (within UIS and brining experts) and suggest for the improvement based on the knowledge and lesson learned from the workshops, review and evaluations. The taskforce will review the toolkit, GPF and outcomes of the workshops-benchmarks. It will institutionalize the pilot work effectively. If necessary based on the time spent on the work, the taskforce members will be remunerated.

Training of local content facilitators: Need to provide enough training of local content facilitators by adopting the context, qualifications, background and knowledge, especially on Angoff method of local content facilitators. Similar approach needs to adopt for data entry work.

Agreeing basics at the beginning: with Agreeing on sharing raw data and disclosing items in the workshop to all etc are some of the pre-condition of organizing the workshop and finalizing the report.

Preparing workshop: Brining /managing the panelists, per subject around 20 for sending, scoring, aligning forms, translation of forms and GPF, descriptors, adopting local technical words- domain- sub domain or construct– sub constructs etc.

Organizing virtual workshop: technically- unstable internet connection, if the teachers are participating from their respective home, bring at sub-nation level is also challenge to provide all others forms, exercise other. Receiving filled forms from the panelist on time-alignment, first and second round to present the results.