



CONCEPT NOTE

KIX Observatory Webinar: Strengthening Learning Assessment Practices and Policies in Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic

Background

Learning assessments provide schools and teachers with an understanding of what the students are learning, and how to adopt measures that promote effective teaching. However, school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, complicated traditional methods of measuring student progress, and all the 40 GPE partner countries have faced numerous challenges in assessing learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some challenges included:

- Lack of guidelines on how to monitor and assess student learning during prolonged school closures, coupled with education systems that were poorly prepared to respond to the need for assessment during crises and beyond the classroom.
- Limited access to innovative instruments for assessment during emergencies, for example, the use of digital tools and the adoption of education technology for learning and assessment.
- Limited capacities of teachers and students to manage distance learning and adopt technology in learning and assessment.
- Absence of baseline information from which to gauge learning loss.
- Inadequate provisions for assessing vulnerable groups such as girls and boys in difficult circumstances and/or children with special learning needs. Armed conflicts like those in Nigeria and natural disasters also contributed to the disruption of education and assessment delivery.

This KIX Webinar, on learning assessment practices during school closures and after their reopening, will bring together education' policymakers, planners, and key stakeholders to exchange on the challenges, lessons learned and policy actions needed to improve learning assessment practices during a crisis.

ADEA's response

Before, and since the beginning of the pandemic, ADEA, through the KIX Observatory, has been organizing a comprehensive series of studies on the [impact of COVID 19](#) on Africa's educational systems. Learning assessments has been a cross-cutting thematic in many of ADEA's advocacy and knowledge exchange events and programs, where ADEA called on African governments, civil society, the private sector, and development partners to collaborate in measuring learning loss and adopt innovative ways to lead learning recovery. As school systems continue to reopen, ADEA shared solid evidence-based recommendations from its last report which practically explain the enhancement of teachers' training and well-being would enable them to better respond to students' academic losses, but also to their socio-emotional wellbeing. However, to assist teachers to support learning recovery, there is a need to understand the extent of instructional time loss and learning gains resulting from

protracted school closures. This was a core focus of this last report from the KIX Observatory, which investigated the responses of schools and teachers to support learning recovery.

Today, most sub-Saharan African countries have or are in the process of developing a national policy covering the assessment of learning. Only 11 countries (23%) stated that they do not have such a policy. For most countries, the issue of assessment appears to be a component of their overall education policy or strategic development plans for the education sector. ADEA, together with other technical and development partners has played a leading role in the development of these assessment policies, but national efforts remain insufficient. More technical and institutional support – in particular, discussions between peers and other stakeholders involved in the KIX Observatory project, are therefore desirable to improve the situation.

Objectives of the Webinar

This webinar on learning assessment in Africa seeks to meet the following objectives:

- Take stock of the current state of national learning assessment systems in order to have an overall view of changes in selected GPE countries.
- Share ideas on emerging trends in evidence and best practices to improve learning assessments and outcomes during and after the COVID-19 period.
- Exchange on current policies, programs, and innovative actions to support education decision-makers and practitioners in leading learning recovery initiatives.

The expected outcome of the webinar is to promote the sharing of knowledge and experiences around practical and innovative solutions to effectively reduce learning loss and enhance learning assessment during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group sessions will reflect on the questions below:

1. What were the most common national trends in assessment practices before and/or during COVID in the selected six countries (Burundi, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Senegal, and Zambia)?
2. How to understand and respond to the impact of COVID interruptions in educational pathways that lead to learning loss?
3. How to assist teachers and education leaders to support students in their learning recovery journey?
4. What are the learning assessment practices that merit further examination in specific studies at the regional level, as well as positive experiences that prove effective in supporting the learning process?

Approach/Methodology

The discussions will be driven by guiding questions based on innovative experiences and success stories. The nature and diversity of the issues and challenges related to the theme make it essential that, as far as possible, all types of partners and stakeholders contribute to the discussions and the implementation of the results. Based on the challenges and needs shared by the participants, ADEA would offer support on how to enhance learning recovery processes by collaborating with relevant experts, providing evidence, and facilitating learning across countries.

Expected participants

The webinar will bring together senior officials from ministries in charge of education, African Union's International Center for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), African Population and

Health Research Center (APHRC), KIX Africa Hubs, technical and financial development partners, private sector representatives, international and regional organisations and CSOs, teacher unions, ICQNs and country representatives.

Date and time

17th May 2022 | 12:00 pm – 13:35 pm GMT

Outcomes

- Policymakers have clear evidence for how to recover the catastrophic learning losses and prevent a lost generation.
- Government officials understand the need to build on the lessons learned during school closures by supporting parental engagement and leveraging existing technology.
- School leaders understand the need to adjust instruction to support the learning needs of children and focus on important foundational skills.

Conclusion

After the severe¹ learning losses due to school closures, students would need intensive support to get back on track, teachers would need access to quality training and resources, and education systems would need to be transformed to effectively adapt to the current scenario.

¹ A recent estimation predicts a [USD \\$17 trillion](#) loss in lifetime earnings among today's generation of schoolchildren if corrective action is not urgently taken.