Data Must Speak (DMS)
Global Initiative

Introduction
UNICEF
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Globally, education systems regularly collect large amounts of data from schools. However, too often these data aren’t actively used to improve learning or education management.
Launched in 2014, and co-funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GRA, KIX), Hewlett Foundation and NORAD.

DMS aims to strengthen the use of data to:

i. Enhance governance and management of education systems
ii. Enhance social accountability and demand for high-quality education at local level
iii. Improve global knowledge regarding what works, or not, for community participation and the use of data for **improved equity and learning**.

Active in 17 countries, 13 of which are in Africa:
- Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire*, Ethiopia*, Ghana*, Madagascar, Mali*, Namibia, Niger, Tanzania*, Togo, Zambia (*=research only)
Overview

**Implementation Modality**

- **Demand from the Ministry of Education** / set up national technical team
- **Baseline analysis**
- **Consultations** to identify priorities for support in the light of the needs.
- **“A-la-carte” activities** selected for implementation
- **Action plan** implemented directly by the Ministry of Education

**Guiding Principles**

- Flexibility and national ownership
- Sustainability
- Synergy
- A “learning-by-doing” approach
- Peer-to-peer (South-South) Learning
- Scalability and replicability
Common “A la carte” Activities

- **Strengthening EMIS** and data harmonization
- **Developing indices and formulas** to support government resource allocation and decision-making
- **Developing profile cards/dashboards** to feed user-friendly education data back to regional, district, and school level for decision-making
- **Simplified school report cards** for community engagement and social accountability to improve education
**Examples: Indices**

**Nepal:** The *Equity Index* captures disparities in education outcomes (access, survival and learning) across different socio-demographic groups (gender, location, dalit/non-dalit, disability, wealth, mother’s education).

**The Philippines:** *Teacher Hardship Index* using criteria based on a survey of teachers (see pie chart). Teachers from the 15% of public elementary schools and 7% of public secondary schools (those in most difficult context) will benefit from the Special Hardship Allowance.
Example: Profile Cards / Dashboards

- Prepared for regional, district, other sub-administrative units, school, and community level

- Highlight results of key indicators pertaining to:
  - Learning outcomes
  - Progression/repetition/dropout
  - Enrollment and characteristics of learners
  - Teachers and physical facilities
  - Learning materials and financial resources

- Provide comparisons of performance against:
  - National standards
  - National/regional/district averages
  - Equity considerations

- Used to prioritize financial and pedagogical support
DMS Knowledge Generation Activities

• Development of **community engagement guidelines** with UNICEF C4D colleagues
  • Guidelines
  • Practical implementation guide
  • Toolbox

• **Evaluation** related to DMS priorities

• **Knowledge sharing** through webinars, publications, and posters
What have we learned so far?

• Analysis of community engagement in 6 countries found that community participation is associated with:
  • Reduction of dropouts
  • Improvement of exam pass rates
  • Better learning environment (including better Nutrition, WASH and heath in school facilities)

• A 2018-2019 formative evaluation of DMS across five countries found:
  • DMS has improved access to information about education services and outcomes, though there have been some bottlenecks in the transfer of DMS processes and ownership from central to lower levels
  • Evidence to suggest that the availability of increased information through the school profile cards has
    • Increased community understanding of school priorities and needs / raised awareness of the generally low levels of learning / led to greater community participation in decision-making in some school districts;
    • Not yet translated into actual power to hold schools and school districts more accountable for results, or for providing the resources required for the schools to function well
  • Indices were successfully developed and incorporated into government planning and budget allocation
Impact evaluation in Zambia to measure the effect of community trainings on the content and use of the community-friendly school profiles (2018-2019)

- Positive impacts on intermediate outcomes
  - Increased understanding of the profile cards among parents/caregivers (75% vs 50%)
  - Increased knowledge among educators/PTAs about the status of their school and improvement areas
  - Increase in parents/caregivers’ participation in at least one PTA meeting (8 pp)
  - Qualitative reports of using profile cards to set priorities, increased motivation among teachers and students, greater willingness by community members to contribute financially

- No significant impacts (within one year) on longer-term outcomes

- Identified a need to address gaps in community capacity to engage in school improvement planning as well as issues of distrust/inequity within community participation structures
• Same Guiding Principles (DNA) as for the other DMS components & also focused on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

• Objective: Finding out and understanding positive deviant behaviors/practices in best performing schools and ways to scale them in more schools

• Methodologies: Quantitative research, Behavioral science, Implementation research, & Scaling science

• Co-funded by Internal UNICEF resources (global and country level), Hewlett Foundation, KIX (IDRC/GPE), NORAD, Schools2030, and Jacobs Foundation

• Tapping on UNICEF unique field presence (900 education staff) and their trusted partnerships w/ Ministries

13 participating countries in Africa, Asia & Latin America
What is Positive Deviance?

It is an innovative methodology used to understand what makes certain schools perform better than others even though they operate in the similar context & with the same resources, by analyzing their behaviors and practices.

Argentina – By improving the relationship between communities and schools, students are much more likely to graduate primary school

*Dura, L. & Singhal, A. (2009)*

Namibia – Students learning outcomes improved when head-teachers act as role-models and foster a strong team spirit

*UNICEF (2015)*

U.S.A – When receiving positive feedback from teachers, parents, and friends, students with learning disabilities are much less likely to drop-out

*Singhal, A. (2013)*
Domains of Practices/Behaviors under Study

- School Leadership; Relations between Teachers & School Leaders; Teachers & Teachers
- Classroom Practices
- School/District Relations & Dynamics
- School & Community Relations & Dynamics
- Teachers & Students Relations & Dynamics
Co-Creation & Co-Implementation from the Outset

A participatory research project from and for ministries’ officials, school leaders, teachers, communities, and children
Co-Creation & Co-Implementation from the Outset

Ensure **buy-in** from the outset

Improve **research uptake**

Research is **contextualized**

Linking research to policy - answering national education priorities

- Ministry of Education (central & decentralized)
- Teachers & School Leaders
- Local & International Academics
- Development Partners & CSOs
- Communities, Parents
Stage 0
Global Methodological Review

Stage 1
Analysis of resources and context associated with school performance
[Quantitative Research]

Stage 2
Identification of Positive Deviant Schools and School Typology
[Quantitative Research]

Stage 3
Understanding School-level Positive Deviant Behaviors/Practices
[Behavioral Science]

Stage 4
Investigating Levers for Optimum Scale
[Participatory Implementation Research & Scaling Science]

Stage 5
Country-level Knowledge Use & Global Mobilization
Valuing Country-Level Capacity and Solutions

Grassroot solutions to national education issues

- Strengthening in-country technical capacity to manage education data and generate evidence
- Leveraging national existing datasets to analyze the education ecosystem
- Listening to schools to identify local positive deviant behaviors and practices in their context
Thank you!

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