Target Practice?
A Framework for Establishing Learning Goals

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About the Presentation

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Outline

• Definitions: goal, indicator, performance standard
• What are the USAID standard reading indicators?
• How can we measure these indicators?
• What are the steps for establishing performance standards with partner countries?

Definitions: Goal

• **Objective that a program, system or agency plans to achieve.**
• Sample goals:
  – 90% of children in the country receive polio vaccine by age 2
  – Improved reading for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015
  – All children can read with comprehension by the end of grade 2
Definitions: Indicator

- A metric used to monitor or evaluate the achievement of the goal/objective over time.
- An indicator can include specification of quantifiable targets and measures of quality.
- Example:
  - Proportion of students who can read and understand the meaning of a grade-level text by the end of two years of primary schooling

Definitions: Performance standard

- An established norm or requirement that provides clear and consistent understanding of what children are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.
- Example from U.S. “Common Core” standards for education:
  - Grade 2: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
    - Read on-level text with purpose and understanding.
    - Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
    - Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary
Putting all the terms together

- A **goal** in the U.S. is to have all children reading by the end of grade 3.
- The proportion of pupils meeting **basic level** proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP (a test used in the U.S.) is an **indicator** of progress toward achieving that goal.
- The **basic level performance standard** for 3rd grade requires that students “locate relevant information, make simple inferences, and use their understanding of the text to identify details that support a given interpretation or conclusion.”

Measuring against the indicators requires:

- Clear performance standards for reading with understanding
- Data on student performance against those standards
- Assessment results from a sample that is representative of the target population
- If trying to demonstrate change: results from at least two, preferably three points in time (beginning, middle, end) from both treatment and control populations
USAID standard indicators (27 and 28)

- Proportion of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate they can read and understand grade-level text
- Proportion of students who, by the end of the primary cycle, are able to read and demonstrate understanding as defined by a country curriculum, standards or national experts

Source: 2011 USAID Education Strategy Implementation Guidance

- The Global Partnership for Education and the United Nations are developing similar indicators in consultation with many education stakeholders—deliberately set up so that local performance standards would drive the global indicators, rather than the other way around

Steps for standard setting

1. Curriculum alignment
   - Alignment: Does the existing early grade curriculum align with the 5 key reading competencies?
     - If yes, determine if any if any enhancement required. Proceed to Step 2.
     - If no, realign/adapt curriculum to emphasize/include reading, working with what is already there.
   - Is there mastery of phonics, decoding and comprehension in the upper primary grades?
     - If yes, consider broadening review to reading-across-the-curriculum. Proceed to Step 2.
     - If no, plan for remediation.
Steps for standard setting, continued

2. **Discrepancy analysis**
   
   – Are there gaps between existing curriculum and global or other relevant country standards?
   
   – Is the upper primary grade language curriculum consistent with reading requirement in other subjects, especially science and mathematics?
     
     • If *yes*, identify gaps and determine whether/which to address.
     
     • If *no*, proceed to Step 3.

Steps for standard setting, continued

3. **Reality check**
   
   – How do student reading outcomes (EGRA, national exams, international tests) compare?
     
     • If no data, conduct rapid Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)-type assessment, gather qualitative information (talk to teachers, students, parents, subject matter specialists, etc.).
   
   – What are the contextual factors that affect reading? (e.g. language complexity/transparency, schooling resources, teachers, student language fluency, socioeconomic status)
   
   – Are global standards appropriate for the context? Are they doable?
   
   – What is realistic and manageable for the country?
Steps for standard setting, continued

4. Establishment of performance standards and benchmarks

– What are the expectations for targeted grades? (e.g. early grades—wpm, vocabulary, punctuation, prosody, levels of comprehension and application)
– What constitutes mastery/proficiency? What are other relevant cut points?
– Where can country expect to be in two years, five years, etc.?

Steps for standard setting, continued

5. Target setting

**Method 1:** Estimate the average oral reading fluency score for children who comprehend well (at least 80% comprehension or higher)

**Method 2:** Find trend of scores of children who comprehend

**Method 3:** Average scores of the high-performing pupils/schools with low socioeconomic status (i.e., poor pupils/schools that perform well on reading test)
Questions?