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Review of World Bank Support for Student Assessment Activities in Client Countries, 1998–2009

Julia Liberman and Marguerite Clarke



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1818 H Street NW
Washington DC 20433
Telephone: 202-473-1000
Internet: www.worldbank.org

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFR	Africa
APL	Adaptable Program Loan
DFID	U.K. Department for International Development
EAP	East Asia and Pacific
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
EMENA	Europe, Middle East, and North Africa
GNI	Gross National Income
HIC	High Income Country
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICR	Implementation Completion Report
IDA	International Development Association
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LIC	Low Income Country
MIC	Middle Income Country
MNA	Middle East and North Africa
NEAS	National Education Assessment System
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
READ	Russia Education Aid for Development
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SAR	South Asia Region
SIL	Specific Investment Loan
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WBI	World Bank Institute

About the Series

Building strong education systems that promote learning is fundamental to development and economic growth. Over the past few years, as developing countries have succeeded in building more classrooms, and getting millions more children into school, the education community has begun to actively embrace the vision of measurable learning for all children in school. However, learning depends not only on resources invested in the school system, but also on the quality of the policies and institutions that enable their use and on how well the policies are implemented.

In 2011, the World Bank Group launched Education Sector Strategy 2020: Learning for All, which outlines an agenda for achieving “Learning for All” in the developing world over the next decade. To support implementation of the strategy, the World Bank commenced a multi-year program to support countries in systematically examining and strengthening the performance of their education systems. This evidence-based initiative, called SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results), is building a toolkit of diagnostics for examining education systems and their component policy domains against global standards, best practices, and in comparison with the policies and practices of countries around the world. By leveraging this global knowledge, SABER fills a gap in the availability of data and evidence on what matters most to improve the quality of education and achievement of better results.

SABER-Student Assessment, one of the systems examined within the SABER program, has developed tools to analyze and benchmark student assessment policies and systems around the world, with the goal of promoting stronger assessment systems that contribute to improved education quality and learning for all. To help explore the state of knowledge in the area, the SABER-Student Assessment team invited leading academics, assessment experts, and practitioners from developing and industrialized countries to come together to discuss assessment issues relevant for improving education quality and learning outcomes. The papers and case studies on student assessment in this series are the result of those conversations and the underlying research. Prior to publication, all of the papers benefited from a rigorous review process, which included comments from World Bank staff, academics, development practitioners, and country assessment experts.

All SABER-Student Assessment papers in this series were made possible by support from the Russia Education Aid for Development Trust Fund (READ TF). READ TF is a collaboration between the Russian Federation and the World Bank that supports the improvement of student learning outcomes in low-income countries through the development of robust student assessment systems.

The SABER working paper series was produced under the general guidance of Elizabeth King, Education Director, and Robin Horn, Education Manager in the Human Development Network of the World Bank. The Student Assessment

papers in the series were produced under the technical leadership of Marguerite Clarke, Senior Education Specialist and SABER-Student Assessment Team Coordinator in the Human Development Network of the World Bank. Papers in this series represent the independent views of the authors.

About the Authors

Julia Liberman is an Education Specialist in the Human Development Network at The World Bank. She works on the SABER-Student Assessment initiative and provides support to countries to improve their assessment systems under the Russia Education Aid for Development (READ) Trust Fund program. Prior to joining the Bank, Ms. Liberman held human capital development and management positions with various public and private companies. She also participated in founding a company that prepares students to take standardized tests. Ms. Liberman received an MBA from the Johnson School of Management at Cornell University. She also received a Master of Industrial and Labor Relations degree with a concentration in Human Resources and Organizations from the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University. Ms. Liberman is fluent in Russian.

Marguerite Clarke is a Senior Education Specialist in the Human Development Network at the World Bank. She leads the Bank's work on learning assessment, including overseeing the SABER-Student Assessment knowledge initiative and providing support to individual countries to improve their assessment activities and uses of assessment information. She also heads the global work program on student assessment under the Russia Education Aid for Development (READ) Trust Fund program. Under READ, she is responsible for developing evidence-based tools and approaches for evaluating and strengthening the quality of student assessment systems. Prior to joining the Bank, Marguerite was involved in research, policy, and practice in the areas of higher education teaching and learning, higher education quality, and student assessment and testing policy at universities in Australia (University of South Australia) and the United States (Brown University, Boston College). She also worked as a classroom teacher in the Chinese, Irish, Japanese, and U.S. education systems and received a national teaching award from the Irish Department of Education in 1989. A former Fulbright Scholar, she received her PhD in Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation from Boston College (2000) and is on the advisory board of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics Observatory for Learning Outcomes.

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Abstract

As more and more countries—both developed and developing—have become interested in collecting information on student learning, there has been a concomitant growth in the demand for strong student assessment systems. The World Bank is at the forefront of efforts to support developing countries in the strengthening of their student assessment systems. This paper provides an overview of the World Bank's support for assessment activities in its client countries between 1998 and 2009. The paper highlights key lessons learned from this experience and offers guidance to development staff and country teams for the more effective design and implementation of assessment activities in education projects.

Review of World Bank Support for Student Assessment Activities in Client Countries, 1998–2009

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Introduction

Around the world, country governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders are working together to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. While attainment of this goal is extremely important, it is not enough. Children not only must have access to an education, but they also must have access to a *quality* education that results in *learning*. Such learning should include knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable children to become active and productive participants in society. With the global shift to this dual focus on access and learning, it has become more important than ever that countries put in place mechanisms to determine whether and to what extent children enrolled in school are learning. Such mechanisms include various forms of student assessment that allow for the collection, analysis, and use of data on student learning and achievement at the classroom, subnational, national, and even international levels.

The World Bank's development strategy for the education sector has continually emphasized the need for measurement of student learning and achievement as a key input to helping client countries achieve desired educational, economic, and social outcomes (World Bank 1995). For example, the World Bank's 1999 *Education Sector Strategy* noted the importance of encouraging countries to "develop good national assessment systems" (World Bank 1999), and its 2005 *Education Sector Strategy Update* reiterated the need "to systematize capacity building for learning assessments and to help countries develop reliable, timely statistics about student learning" (World Bank 2005). The World Bank's most recent education sector strategy continues this emphasis on efforts to support developing countries in building stronger and more effective student assessment systems as a key part of the development of their overall education systems (World Bank 2011).

This paper provides an overview of the World Bank's support for student assessment activities in client countries between 1998 and 2009.¹ The paper aims

¹ The World Bank's EdStats tool was used to identify World Bank education projects that supported student assessment activities. The first year for which project information is available in EdStats is 1998.

to inform Bank staff, client country governments, and other development partners about key trends in this support based on an analysis of World Bank–supported education projects conducted over the 12-year period. The paper identifies lessons learned from these projects and offers guidance on more effective design and implementation of assessment activities in education projects. An earlier World Bank study by Linda Larach and Marlaine Lockheed conducted a similar review of Bank support for student assessment activities in client countries between 1963 and 1993.² This current paper references, and makes comparisons to, findings from that earlier report.

Summary of Findings

Between 1998 and 2009, the World Bank provided support for 355 education projects in its client countries, 306 of which were under the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/International Development Association (IBRD/IDA) and Special Financing product lines. Of those 306 projects, 166 included support for student assessment activities. As shown in Table 1, these assessment-related projects were spread across the six geographic regions covered by the Bank³ and included both low-income countries (LICs) and middle-income countries (MICs).⁴ Among the six regions, ECA countries were the most likely to receive support for student assessment activities, with 81 percent of education projects in the region including support for assessment. This represents a shift from the time of the Larach and Lockheed review, when the greatest proportion of assessment-related projects could be found in the LAC region.

Based on the limited available data, financial commitments for assessment activities on the part of donors and country governments were quite substantial during this time period, with 37 percent of the total project amount typically

² The Larach and Lockheed (1993) report examined 445 education projects as well as five noneducation projects with education components (specifically, social sector development projects), and collectively referred to these projects as education projects. Our review looks only at education projects managed by the Education Sector Board at the World Bank. The decision to review only Education Sector Board–managed education projects for this report was based, in part, on the need for a consistent point of comparison, particularly in light of changes in sector codes over time. At the same time, it is still possible to compare the trends identified in the current review with those identified by the Larach and Lockheed report, given that 99 percent of the projects reviewed by Larach and Lockheed were purely education projects.

³ The World Bank uses the following regional categorizations: Africa (AFR), East Asia and Pacific (EAP), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), South Asia (SAR), Middle East and North Africa (MNA), and Europe and Central Asia (ECA).

⁴ The analysis by income classification looked at LICs, MICs, and high-income countries (HICs). To be classified as a LIC, MIC, or HIC, a country needs to meet a certain gross national income (GNI) threshold. The income classification categories are determined by the World Bank. Additional information can be found at <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications>.

allocated for support of assessment activities.⁵ This is a significant increase from the time period reviewed by Larach and Lockheed when, on average, less than 2 percent of overall project commitments was for assessment activities. Based again on the limited available data, actual disbursements, both for projects supporting assessment activities and for the assessment activities themselves, closely followed the upfront financial commitments.

Projects that supported student assessment activities were almost evenly split between LICs (90 projects) and MICs (76 projects). Projects in both LICs and MICs primarily focused on supporting countries' efforts to put in place better "enabling contexts" for carrying out assessment activities in the form of appropriate policies, institutional arrangements, and trained staff. MICs tended to focus equally on assessment activities at the primary and secondary levels whereas LICs were more likely to focus on assessment activities at the primary level. Large-scale assessments of national achievement levels were by far the most common type of assessment to be supported. This is a shift from the time period examined by Larach and Lockheed when World Bank education projects typically supported activities related to high-stakes public or external examinations.

Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) and Implementation Completion Report (ICR) evaluations of assessment activities under closed projects allow us to derive some useful lessons that can be applied to future projects. These include the importance of establishing stakeholder buy-in and roles and responsibilities upfront; the need for explicit, transparent, and consistent engagement of key stakeholders throughout the project cycle; and the importance of planning for continuity and sustainability of the assessment-related activities and reforms after project closing.

The rest of this paper addresses these findings in detail.

⁵ This calculation is based on information from 109 (out of the 166) projects that had financial information for their assessment components/subcomponents.

Table 1: World Bank Education Projects Providing Support for Student Assessment Activities, 1998–2009

<i>Projects that support assessment activities</i>	AFR	EAP	ECA	LAC	MNA	SAR	LIC	MIC	Total
Number of Education Projects	77	32	43	74	29	51	162	144	306
Number of Education Projects Supporting Assessment Activities	41	12	35	34	12	32	90	76	166
<i>Countries receiving support for projects that include assessment initiatives</i>	AFR	EAP	ECA	LAC	MNA	SAR	LIC	MIC	Total
Percentage of Countries with Education Projects (out of Countries that Qualify for Bank Funding)	13%	11%	12%	17%	18%	41%	20%	12%	15%
Percentage of Countries with Education Projects Supporting Assessment	59%	41%	83%	47%	43%	67%	61%	54%	58%
<i>Commitments for projects that support assessment (US\$ million)</i>	AFR	EAP	ECA	LAC	MNA	SAR	LIC	MIC	Total
The World Bank	2,119	743	1,335	2,749	748	4,145	6,690	5,147	11,837
Borrowing Country's Government	4,870	210	2,469	1,712	700	30,945	33,174	7,733	40,907
Multilateral/Bilateral Organizations	1,683	31	31	25	341	1,976	3,781	306	4,086
Lending Country Governments	167	56	13	0	38	109	318	65	382
Other	1,011	0	175	0	154	2,157	3,175	322	3,497
Total Funding	9,850	1,039	4,022	4,486	1,980	39,332	47,137	13,573	60,710
<i>Commitments for assessment activities</i>	AFR	EAP	ECA	LAC	MNA	SAR	LIC	MIC	Total
Total (Bank and other) Commitments for Assessment Component/Subcomponent (US\$ million)	1,034	43	127	583	350	10,504	11,593	1,048	12,641
Number of Projects Supporting Assessment Activities	41	12	35	34	12	32	90	76	166
Number of Projects with Information on Commitments for Assessment Activities	25	7	22	30	10	15	56	53	109
Percentage of Project Commitment Allocated for Assessment Component/Subcomponent	14%	7%	4%	14%	22%	61%	46%	12%	37%
Percentage of Projects with Sufficient Information for Calculation of Commitments for Assessment Activities	61%	58%	63%	88%	83%	47%	62%	70%	66%
<i>Projects' support for participation in international assessments</i>	AFR	EAP	ECA	LAC	MNA	SAR	LIC	MIC	Total
Support participation in TIMSS	0	2	13	2	4	0	3	18	21
Support participation in PISA	0	1	14	1	3	0	3	16	19
Support participation in PIRLS	0	1	5	1	1	0	1	7	8
<i>Projects' support for quality/performance drivers</i>	AFR	EAP	ECA	LAC	MNA	SAR	LIC	MIC	Total
Enabling Context	34	9	33	27	8	18	67	62	129
System Alignment	25	7	24	22	11	21	60	50	110
Assessment Quality	21	6	20	17	6	18	49	39	88
<i>Projects' support for assessment at levels of education</i>	AFR	EAP	ECA	LAC	MNA	SAR	LIC	MIC	Total
Primary	36	9	26	27	9	27	78	56	134
Secondary	18	4	30	20	8	12	38	54	92
Tertiary	2	2	0	2	1	2	4	5	9

(Table continues on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

<i>Projects' support for assessment types/purposes</i>	AFR	EAP	ECA	LAC	MNA	SAR	LIC	MIC	Total
Classroom Assessment	18	2	23	9	9	16	45	32	77
Large-scale Assessment	27	9	28	27	8	28	70	57	127
Examinations	24	3	20	9	4	11	38	33	71
<i>Years of project approval</i>	AFR	EAP	ECA	LAC	MNA	SAR	LIC	MIC	Total
FY98	4	1	3	3	0	5	10	6	16
FY99	5	1	3	2	1	1	7	6	13
FY00	4	1	3	1	2	2	7	6	13
FY01	1	0	3	4	1	2	4	7	11
FY02	5	0	2	5	1	1	6	8	14
FY03	3	0	3	5	1	1	6	7	13
FY04	3	1	3	3	1	5	9	7	16
FY05	2	2	5	2	2	2	8	7	15
FY06	2	2	3	2	1	4	7	7	14
FY07	7	1	3	2	0	5	14	4	18
FY08	2	1	2	3	1	1	4	6	10
FY09	3	2	2	2	1	3	8	5	13

Source: Authors.

Methodology

Three sources were used to identify all World Bank education projects approved between 1998 and 2009: the World Bank EdStats tool, the official list of education projects approved between fiscal 1963 and fiscal 2010 and managed by the Education Sector Board, and the World Bank Operations Portal.⁶ From this overall set of projects, those that provided support for activities aimed at developing student assessment systems were identified and extracted for further analysis. Detailed information about these projects was entered into an Excel database.⁷ Types of information recorded include the following:

- general information, such as the project name, year of approval, and project ID
- details on support, if any, for participation in international assessments—specifically, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)
- type of assessment activity supported by the project (for example, *classroom assessments* for providing real-time information to support

⁶ EdStats: <http://go.worldbank.org/ITABCOGIV1>. For more information on education projects approved between fiscal 1963 and fiscal 2010 and managed by the Education Sector Board, please contact the Bank's Education Advisory Service at eservice@worldbank.org. Operations Portal: <http://go.worldbank.org/GXY6NXX1J0>.

⁷ This database is available at <http://go.worldbank.org/DWZB0TMTS0>.

teaching and learning in individual classrooms; *examinations* for student certification and selection decisions; or *large-scale assessments* for monitoring overall system performance and accountability) as well as the level of the education system involved (primary, secondary, tertiary)

- aspect of assessment-system strengthening targeted by the project (for example, the *enabling context*—the broader context in which the assessment activity takes place and the extent to which that context is conducive to, or supportive of, the assessment; *system alignment*—the extent to which the assessment activity is aligned with the rest of the education system; or *assessment quality*—the psychometric quality of the instruments, processes, and procedures used for the assessment activity)

Projects with components or subcomponents that supported student assessment activities were the primary focus of the review. ICRs for closed projects were reviewed to determine whether the planned assessment activities were actually completed. This information was entered into the database. In reviewing the ICR evaluations, key recurring lessons were identified. These lessons are synthesized later on in this paper.

The information in the database was analyzed by region as well as by country income classification. For the analyses described in this paper, income classification for the year of project approval by the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors was used.

It is important to point out that the goal of this paper is to provide an overview of World Bank support for student assessment activities in individual client countries between 1998 and 2009 and to highlight general trends in that support. In so doing, the paper pulls together a large amount of data and presents it in a summarized and easy-to-digest form. The paper does not offer an in-depth analysis of the factors behind these trends. Such an analysis would require a level of generalization and conjecture that extends beyond the limitations of the available data. The last section of this paper identifies additional areas for possible future study.

Detailed Findings

The proportion of World Bank education projects that include support for student assessment activities has remained constant over time, suggesting an ongoing focus among client countries in further developing their student assessment systems.

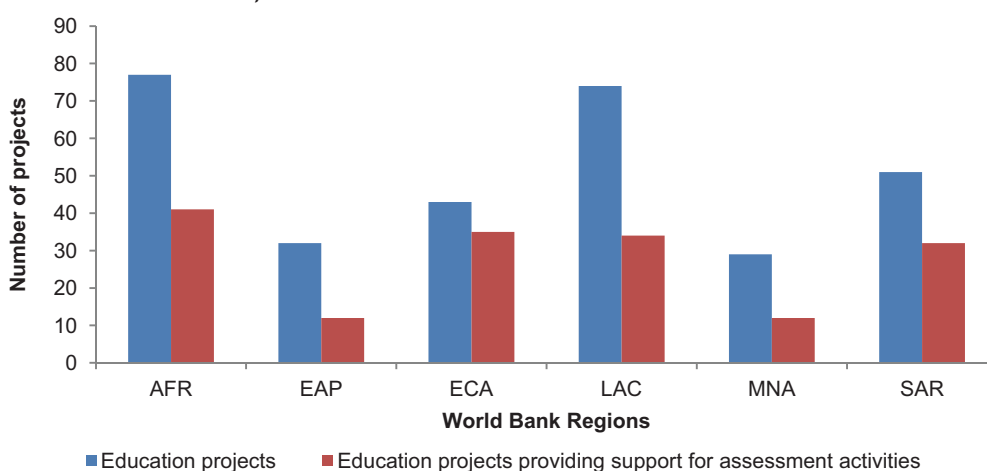
Regions

Between 1975 (the first year in which a subcomponent to support student assessment was incorporated into a World Bank project) and 1993, the World Bank provided support for student assessment activities in 90 projects across 55

countries. The greatest number of these projects was in the AFR (30 projects) and Asia (25 projects) regions, although LAC had the highest proportion (33 percent, or 19 out of 58) of education projects that provided support for assessment activities.⁸

From 1998 to 2009, the Board of the World Bank approved funding for 355 education projects to be implemented in 109 Bank client countries. These projects fell under one of four product lines: IBRD/IDA (300 projects), Special Financing (6 projects), Recipient Executed (27 projects), and Institutional Development Funds (22 projects). This report focuses on the 306 projects under the IBRD/IDA and Special Financing product lines for which we have the greatest amount of information. Of these, approximately half, or 151 projects, were in two regions: AFR and LAC. EAP and MNA had the smallest number of education projects during this time period. Of the 306 education projects under the IBRD/IDA and Special Financing product lines managed by the Education Sector Board, 166 supported some form of student assessment activity.⁹ Approximately the same number of assessment-related projects was supported in AFR, LAC, ECA, and SAR, while EAP and MNA had the smallest number of projects that provided support for student assessment activities during this time period (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of World Bank Education Projects that Supported Student Assessment Activities, 1998–2009



Source: Authors.

⁸ At the time of the Larach and Lockheed report, the Bank used four regional classifications: Africa; Asia; Latin America and Caribbean (LAC); and Europe, Middle East, and North Africa (EMENA).

⁹ All ICRs for completed projects managed by the Education Sector Board between 1998 and 2009 were reviewed to identify projects that introduced support for an assessment activity following original project approval. Through this review, three such projects were identified: Uruguay’s Second Basic Education Quality Improvement Project (P041994), Cape Verde’s Education and Training Consolidation and Modernization Project (P055468), and Tajikistan’s Education Reform Project (P057953). It appears that introducing an assessment activity into a project after project approval is possible, although it has not been done very often.

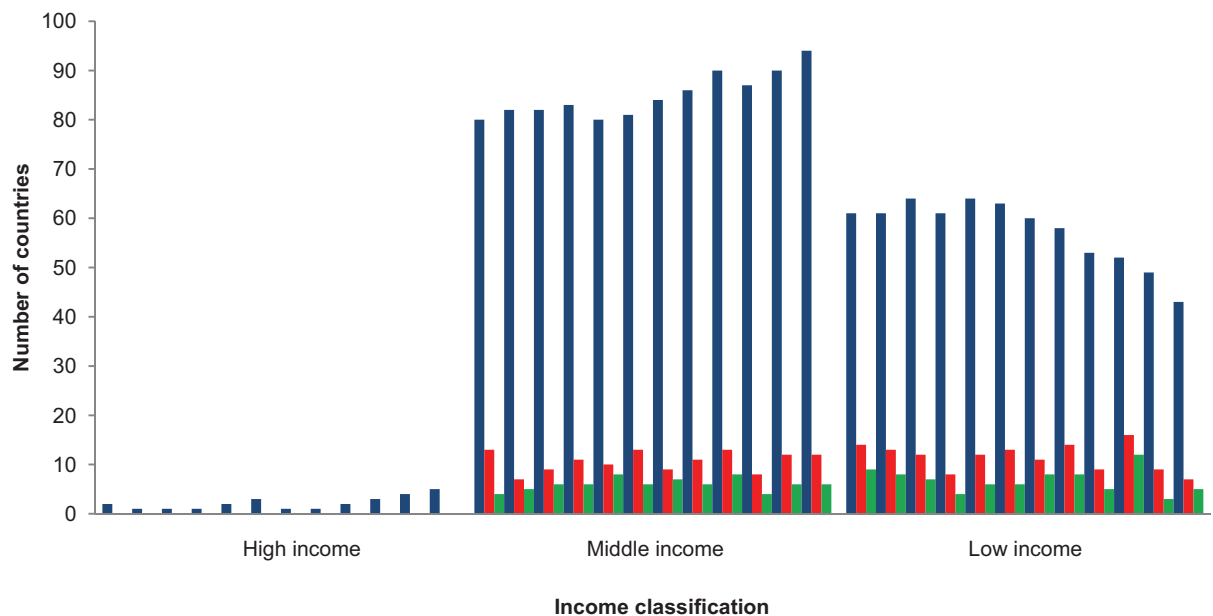
ECA had the largest proportion of education projects (81 percent) supporting some form of student assessment activities. Nearly all ECA countries are former socialist economies with impressive educational legacies, including high average levels of educational attainment. As these countries have transitioned, their education systems have needed to adjust to the new demands of free market economies. Student assessment reform has been a key ingredient in this adjustment process.

Country Income Classifications

Education projects supporting assessment activities were relatively evenly split between LICs (90 projects) and MICs (76 projects) (Figure 2).

Approximately 12 percent of the MICs that qualified for World Bank funding had a Bank-supported education project in place between 1998 and 2009; 20 percent of the LICs qualifying for World Bank funding had an education project in place during the same time period. Of those countries with education projects, 54 percent of MICs and 61 percent of LICs had projects that supported student assessment activities.

Figure 2: Countries with World Bank Education Projects that Supported Student Assessment Activities, by Income Classification, 1998–2009



Source: Authors

Note:

Blue bar = Countries that qualify for Bank funding.

Red bar = Countries with education projects.

Green bar = Countries with education projects supporting student assessment activities.

For each country income classification, the blue, red, and green bars closest to the origin represent fiscal year 1998, and the blue, red, and green bars farthest from the origin represent fiscal year 2009, with bars in the middle representing continuous fiscal years from 1998 through 2009.

The number of MICs that qualify for Bank funding has increased over time while the number of LICs has decreased. Yet even as countries transition to higher income classifications, they have continued to seek assistance from the Bank to develop their education systems in general, and their student assessment systems in particular.

As a percentage of total commitments for education projects supporting student assessment activities, commitments for student assessment activities have continued to increase over time.

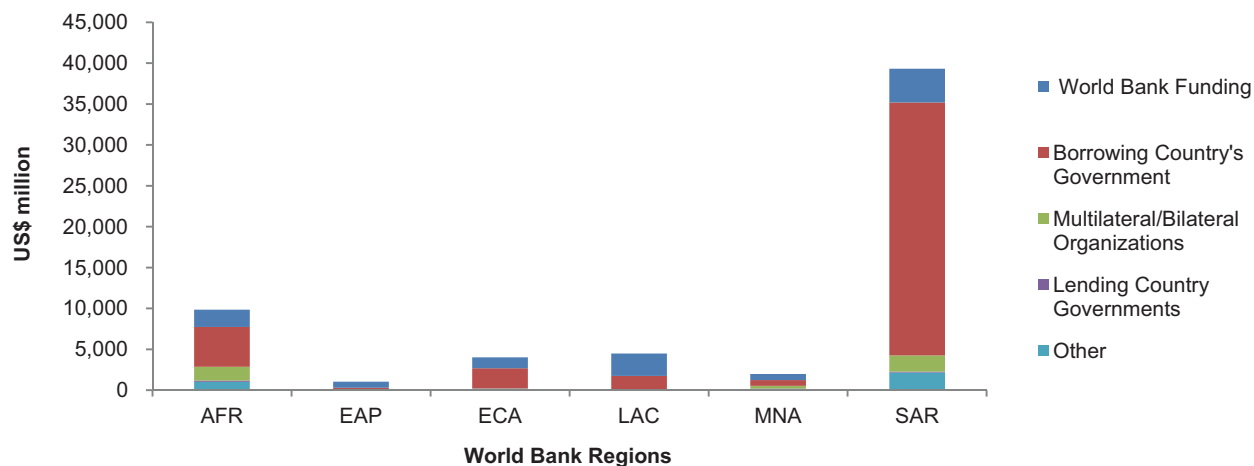
Between 1998 and 2009, the World Bank made over \$11.8 billion in financial commitments towards education projects that supported student assessment activities.¹⁰ Although—after borrowing country governments—the Bank appeared to be the largest funder of assessment activities in developing countries during this time period (based on the 166 Bank education projects supporting student assessment activities that we reviewed), numerous multilateral and bilateral donors, including the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the U.S. Agency for International Aid (USAID), also contributed sizeable amounts (over \$4 billion).

Overall, between 1998 and 2009, at least \$60 billion was committed by the various multilateral and bilateral organizations, country governments, and private foundations toward education projects that, at least in part, supported the development of countries' student assessment systems. Projects in LICs received 78 percent of these commitments (approximately \$47 billion) and projects in MICs received 22 percent (approximately \$14 billion). In terms of regional comparisons, commitments for education projects that supported student assessment activities were greatest in SAR and lowest in EAP and MNA (Figure 3).

Information on specific financial commitments for assessment-related activities was available for 109 (66 percent) out of the 166 projects reviewed. For those 109 projects, 37 percent of the project commitments typically was allocated for assessment activities. Both the number of projects that include specific financial information on assessment activities as well as the size of the commitment for those activities have increased since the time of the Larach and Lockheed report.

¹⁰ The World Bank used a variety of lending instruments for these education projects. Specific Investment Loans (SIL) were the most commonly used, followed by Adaptable Program Loans (APL). This is consistent with the Bank's overall portfolio distribution by the different lending instruments (World Bank, 2009a). The lending instruments finance projects through credits, loans, and grants. The majority of education projects in LICs were financed by credits (particularly in AFR and SAR, where almost all education projects were financed through credits). Education projects in MICs, however, were primarily financed by loans, with LAC countries receiving the highest number of loans.

Figure 3: Funding Allocated to World Bank Education Projects that Supported Student Assessment Activities, 1998–2009

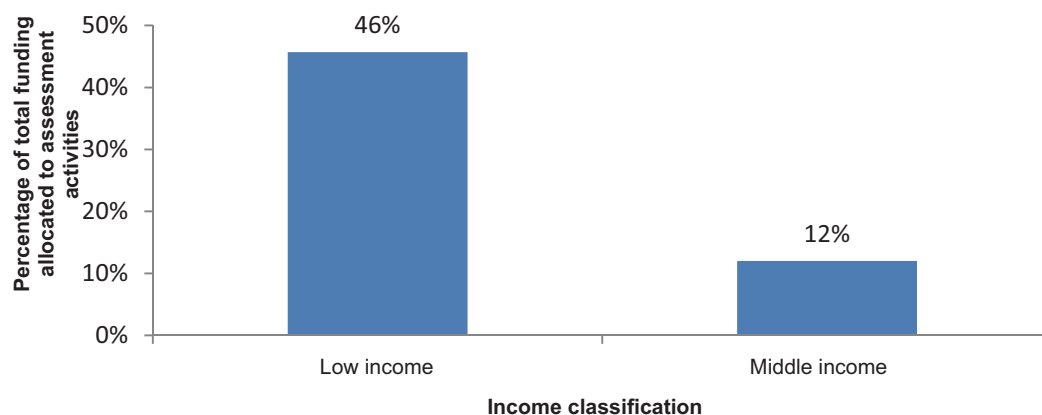


Source: Authors.

Only 23 (26 percent) of the 90 projects reviewed by Larach and Lockheed had budget figures for student assessment activities. For those 23 projects, on average, less than 2 percent of the project cost (and in turn, allocated commitments) was for assessment initiatives.

LICs received substantially more financing for education projects that included support for assessment activities than MICs, and a much larger percentage of the financing received by LICs went towards actual assessment activities (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Commitments for Student Assessment Activities, by Country Income Classification, 1998–2009

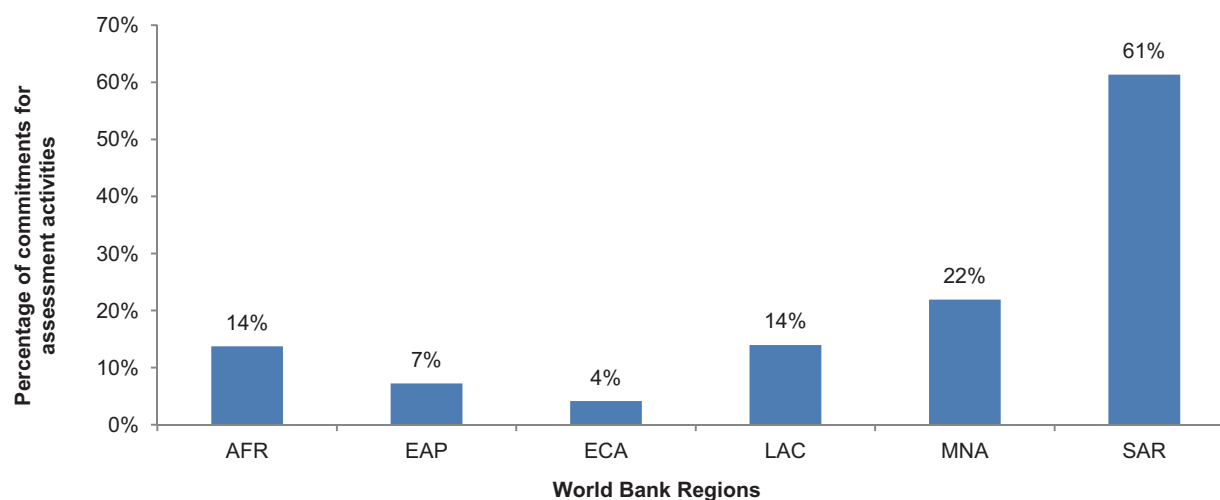


	Low Income	Middle Income
Number of projects supporting assessment activities	90	76
Number of projects with information on commitments for assessment activities	56	53
Percentage of projects included in calculation of commitments for assessment	62%	70%

Source: Authors.

Looking at the available data by region, projects in SAR and MNA had the highest proportion of commitments allocated for assessment-related activities, with 61 percent and 22 percent, respectively, of total project commitments allocated to supporting assessment activities (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Commitments for Student Assessment Activities, by Region, 1998–2009



Commitments for assessment activities	AFR	EAP	ECA	LAC	MNA	SAR	LIC	MIC	Total
Percentage of Project Commitment Allocated for Assessment Component/Subcomponent	14%	7%	4%	14%	22%	61%	46%	12%	37%
Number of Projects Supporting Assessment Activities	41	12	35	34	12	32	90	76	166
Number of Projects with Information on Commitments for Assessment Activities	25	7	22	30	10	15	56	53	109
Percentage of Projects with Sufficient Information for Calculation of Commitments for Assessment Activities	61%	58%	63%	88%	83%	47%	62%	70%	66%

Source: Authors.

Over time, donor (both World Bank and other) commitments for education projects supporting assessment activities have been relatively flat except for spikes caused by funding allocations for a few large projects, primarily in India and Pakistan.

Actual financing closely followed planned financing for education projects supporting student assessment activities.

In order to understand how much financing actually was provided for projects supporting assessment activities, 81 ICRs of closed projects were reviewed for financing data. Overall, actual financing from all sources for closed education projects supporting assessment activities closely followed the initial financial commitments for those projects, with 93 percent of planned financing, or approximately \$26 billion of the \$28 billion of upfront commitments, disbursed (Table 2).

Table 2: Financial Commitments and Disbursements of Closed World Bank Education Projects that Supported Student Assessment Activities, 1998–2009

	The World Bank	Borrowing Country's Government	Multilateral/Bilateral Organizations	Lending Country Governments	Other	Total Funding
Commitments (US\$ million)	6,091	17,386	1,628	115	2,564	27,783
Disbursements (US\$ million)	5,969	18,172	1,636	87	44	25,907

Source: Authors.

Borrowing country governments provided 70 percent, or \$18 billion, of the approximately \$26 billion total financing for education projects supporting assessment activities. The World Bank provided the next largest amount of financing, with approximately \$6 billion contributed to education projects supporting assessment activities.

Analyzing closed education projects by country income classification, LIC governments committed the highest amount of financing at the project appraisal stage (67 percent of total allocation) and provided the greatest amount of financing by project completion (77 percent of total actual financing). MICs, on the other hand, were allocated and received approximately equal proportions of financing from the World Bank and from their own country governments (Table 3).

Table 3: Committed and Actual Financing of Closed World Bank Education Projects that Supported Student Assessment Activities, 1998–2009

		The World Bank	Borrowing Country's Government	Multilateral/Bilateral Organizations	Lending Country Governments	Other
LICs	Committed financing (US\$ million)	14%	67%	7%	1%	12%
	Actual financing (US\$ million)	15%	77%	8%	0%	0%
MICs	Committed financing (US\$ million)	46%	50%	2%	0%	2%
	Actual financing (US\$ million)	45%	53%	2%	0%	0%

Source: Authors.

Actual financing closely followed planned financing for student assessment activities.

Of the 81 closed projects for which ICRs were available, 64 provided information on the upfront financing commitments for assessment activities, and 34 of those also included information on the actual financing of assessment activities.¹¹ For

¹¹ Fifteen of 39 closed education projects in LICs, and 19 of 42 closed education projects in MICs, provided information on committed and actual financing for assessment activities. Six of 15 closed

these 34 projects, the actual financing closely followed financial commitments. Specifically, 10.3 percent of planned financing was committed to assessment activities, and 9.8 percent of financing was actually disbursed to complete project assessment activities.

LICs were allocated and received the highest amount of financing for assessment activities. In terms of regional comparisons, countries in AFR received the most financing for assessment activities, although the greatest amount of financing for assessment activities was initially committed to countries in SAR.

There are distinct patterns and trends in the types of student assessment activities supported in World Bank education projects between 1998 and 2009.

Level of the Education System

Overall, most education projects provided support for assessment activities at the primary level. Support for assessment activities at the secondary level was the next most popular area of focus. Few projects (nine in total) provided support for assessment activities at the tertiary level.

In MICs, education projects that supported assessment activities were equally likely to focus on assessment activities at the primary or secondary levels, while projects carried out in LICs were more likely to provide support for assessment activities at the primary level.

In almost all regions, the project focus was on supporting assessment activities at the primary level. In ECA, however, the main focus was on supporting assessment activities at the secondary level.

Quality Drivers

A great variety of assessment-related activities was supported by World Bank education projects between 1998 and 2009. Despite this variety, all of the activities had the ultimate goal of strengthening the country's assessment system in one of three areas—the enabling context, system alignment, or assessment quality—with an eye to thereby improving the quality of the information on student learning and achievement being produced by that system.

education projects in AFR, 1 of 3 closed education projects in EAP, 9 of 18 closed education projects in ECA, 7 of 21 closed education projects in LAC, 4 of 5 closed education projects in MNA, and 7 of 19 closed education projects in SAR provided information on committed and actual financing for assessment activities.

Box 1: Quality Drivers of an Assessment System

Enabling context: The enabling context refers to the broader context in which the assessment activity takes place and the extent to which that context is conducive to, or supportive of, the assessment. It covers such issues as the legislative or policy framework for assessment activities; institutional and organizational structures for designing, carrying out, or using results from the assessment; the availability of sufficient and stable sources of funding; and the presence of trained assessment staff.

System alignment: System alignment refers to the extent to which the assessment is aligned with the rest of the education system. This includes the degree of congruence between assessment activities and system learning goals, standards, curriculum, and pre- and in-service teacher training.

Assessment quality: Assessment quality refers to the psychometric quality of the instruments, processes, and procedures for the assessment activity. It covers such issues as design and implementation of assessment activities, analysis and interpretation of student responses to those activities, and the appropriateness of how assessment results are reported and used.

Source: Clarke (2012).

Across most regions, and in both LICs and MICs, project support was primarily focused on enabling context-related activities, followed by system alignment activities. This is consistent with the Larach and Lockheed finding that the focus in the projects they reviewed was on improving the “institutional quality” aspect of the assessment system. Improving the quality of the instruments and procedures used in assessment exercises continued to receive the least support in these assessment-related projects.

Types of Assessments

Projects also supported at least one of three types of assessments: classroom assessments, examinations, or large-scale, survey-type assessments.

Box 2: Types of Assessments

Classroom assessments, also known as continuous or formative assessments, are those carried out by teachers and students in the course of daily activity in order to provide real-time information to support teaching and learning in individual classrooms.

Examinations, which are typically standardized, are high-stakes assessments used to make decisions about individual students, particularly with regard to progression through the education system (for example, promotion to the next grade level, graduation from high school, and entrance to university).

Large-scale, survey-type assessments are used to inform education policy and practice by providing information on performance at the system level and related contributing factors. These assessments may be subnational, national, or international in nature.

Source: Clarke (2012).

Overall, large-scale assessments were the most common type of assessment activity to be supported in education projects across both LICs and MICs, and across all regions—except for MNA, where classroom assessment was the primary focus of project support. In contrast, Larach and Lockheed found that at least 33 percent of Bank projects with assessment activities provided support for activities related to examinations, with Africa and Asia having the largest number of such projects (46 and 44 percent of their education projects, respectively) at that time. Only 21 percent of the projects reviewed by Larach and Lockheed supported large-scale assessment activities focused on monitoring overall student performance, with EMENA and LAC having the most such projects. However, Larach and Lockheed also noted that support for large-scale assessments was increasing and support for examinations was declining. It is now evident that the trend that Larach and Lockheed observed in the early 1990s has continued through to the present day, and that the focus on examinations, while still important, is no longer the main priority.

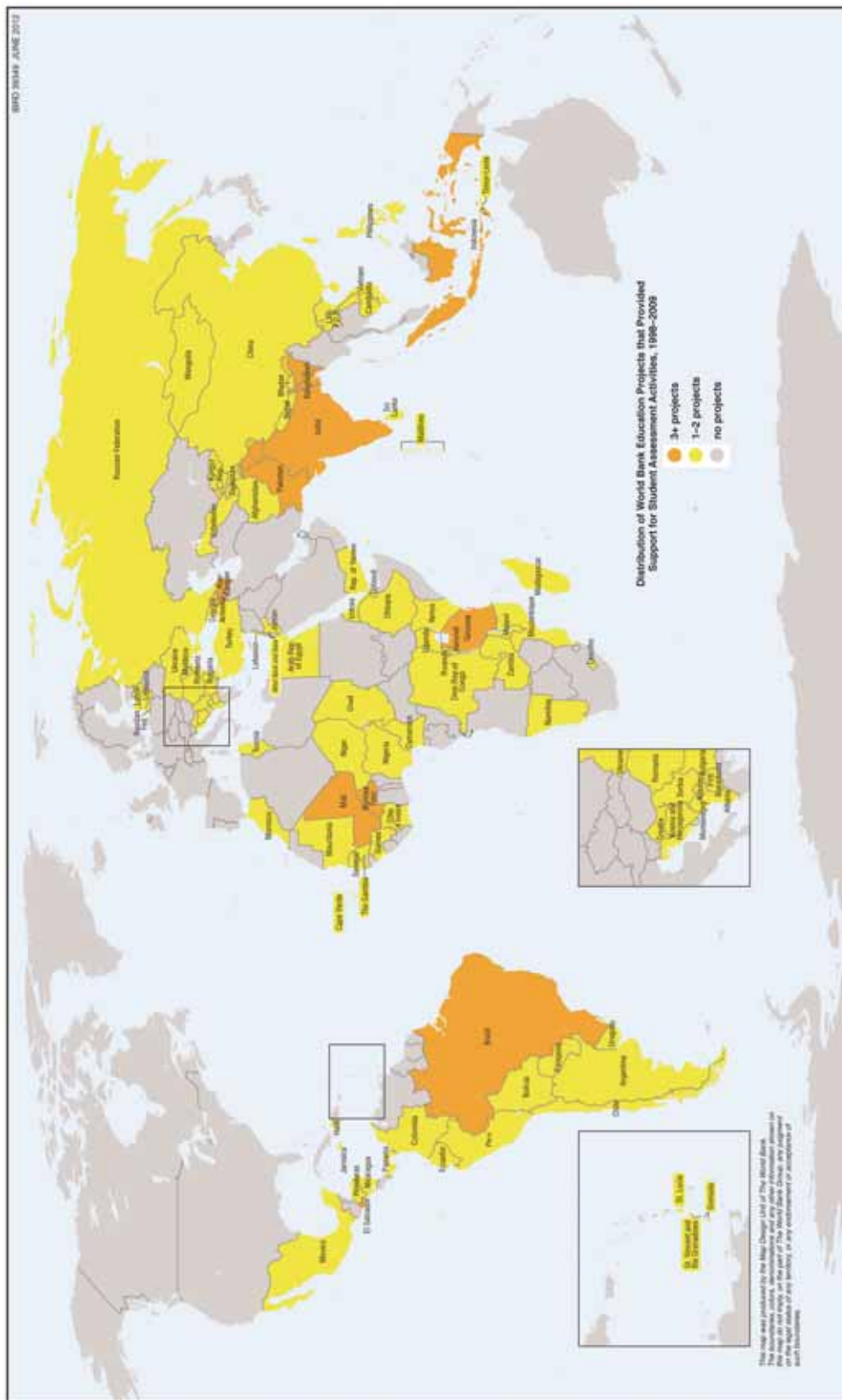
Project support for assessment activities also included support for country participation in international large-scale assessments. This support was most common for countries in the ECA region. No countries in AFR or SAR received support for participation in international large-scale assessments. Across all regions, MICs were more likely than LICs to receive support for participation in international large-scale assessments.

With regard to support for participation in specific international large-scale assessment exercises, a similar number of education projects supported country participation in TIMSS or PISA; far fewer projects supported participation in PIRLS.

There are distinct regional patterns and trends in the types of student assessment activities supported in World Bank education projects between 1998 and 2009.

While most countries had one or two education projects supporting student assessment activities during this time period, some countries had three or more projects. The latter set of countries could be found in every region of the Bank, except for the MNA region (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Distribution of World Bank Education Projects that Supported Student Assessment Activities, 1998–2009



Source: Authors.

Note:

Light grey = Countries with no World Bank education projects.

Yellow = Countries that had one or two World Bank education projects that provided support for assessment activities.

Orange = Countries that had three or more World Bank education projects that provided support for assessment activities.

Trends in the Africa Region

Of the 77 education projects in the AFR region approved by the Board of the World Bank between 1998 and 2009, 41 (spread across 26 countries) supported some form of student assessment activity. Most of these projects provided support for assessment activities at the primary level (36). Just under half (18) provided support for activities at the secondary level. Only two provided support for activities at the tertiary level. Large-scale, survey-type assessments were the most common type of assessment activity to be supported, closely followed by examinations. This represents a change since the 1980s and early 1990s, when a sizeable portion of assessment-related support in AFR was for public examinations used for student selection and certification decisions. No country in AFR has received support for participation in an international large-scale assessment, such as TIMSS, PIRLS, or PISA. In the AFR region, assessment-related projects typically focused on helping countries put in place the enabling conditions for an effective assessment system, including creating or strengthening assessment units in ministries of education and providing some form of staff training.

Trends in the East Asia and Pacific Region

Between 1998 and 2009, the World Bank supported 32 education projects in the EAP region, 12 of which included assessment activities. The main focus of these 12 projects, which were spread across eight countries, was supporting countries to develop their policy, institutional, and human resource environments for the successful functioning of their student assessment systems. System alignment and assessment quality issues also were a focus for many of the projects. The support provided under these 12 projects mainly focused on developing assessment systems at the primary level. Additionally, most of the assessment-related project support was directed towards large-scale assessment activities. Although minimal, participation in international large-scale assessments also was supported, with one project in Mongolia supporting participation in TIMSS and another project in Indonesia supporting participation in TIMSS, PISA, and PIRLS.

Trends in the Europe and Central Asia Region

In the ECA region, of the 43 projects approved by the Board of the World Bank between 1998 and 2009, 35 supported student assessment activities. Spread across 21 countries, these projects focused on supporting countries to build their policy, institutional, and human resource environments for the successful functioning of their student assessment systems. Alignment of assessments with other aspects of the education system also received some support, as did activities focused on improving the quality of the assessment instruments. Projects mainly provided support for assessment activities at the secondary level. While significant support also was provided for assessments at the primary level,

no project provided support for assessment at the tertiary level. Projects provided the most support for large-scale assessments, followed by classroom assessment and examinations. A total of 19 projects also supported participation in one or more of the three largest international large-scale assessments—TIMSS (13 projects), PIRLS (5 projects), and PISA (14 projects).

Trends in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region

Out of 74 projects in the LAC region managed by the Education Sector Board from 1998 through 2009, 34 supported assessment activities across 19 countries. These activities primarily focused on further developing the enabling context for student assessment systems in these countries. Project support most frequently focused on assessments at the primary level, followed by support for assessment activities at the secondary level. Projects primarily supported large-scale assessments of student achievement levels, which is consistent with the trend that LAC was experiencing from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. Significantly fewer projects provided support for classroom assessment or examinations. Projects also provided support for countries to participate in international large-scale assessment exercises, with two projects, one in El Salvador and one in Uruguay, supporting participation in TIMSS; a project in Uruguay supporting participation in PISA; and another project in Nicaragua supporting participation in PIRLS.

Trends in the Middle East and North Africa Region

In the MNA region, of the 29 projects managed by the Education Sector Board from 1998 through 2009, 12 supported assessment activities. These projects, spread across eight countries, focused on helping countries to align their assessments with other aspects of their education systems. Projects provided similar amounts of support for assessment at the primary and secondary levels. Classroom assessment was the most frequently supported assessment activity under these projects, followed closely by large-scale assessments. Participation in international large-scale assessments such as TIMSS, PISA, and PIRLS also was supported. TIMSS was the most frequently supported international assessment, with two projects in Jordan, one project in Djibouti, and one project in Tunisia providing support for participation in this assessment.

Trends in the South Asia Region

Between 1998 and 2009, of the 51 projects managed by the Education Sector Board in the SAR region, 32 supported the development of student assessment systems. These projects, spread across eight countries, primarily supported activities focused on improving the alignment between assessment and other aspects of the country's education system. The projects also provided a fair amount of support for developing the enabling context for assessment activities in these countries as well as for improving the quality and use of assessment instruments. Most of the 32 projects supported assessment activities at the

primary level; fewer than half supported activities at the secondary level. Projects mainly provided support for large-scale assessment activities, followed by classroom assessment. No support was provided for participation in international large-scale assessments.

Challenges

Although many World Bank education projects that provided support for assessment activities achieved their goals in this area (for an example of one such project in Pakistan, see Box 3), it was not uncommon for projects, by their closing, to have planned assessment-related activities that either were not implemented or had not implemented as well as intended due to a variety of challenges faced during project implementation.

Box 3: The Pakistan National Education Assessment System Project

The Pakistan National Education Assessment System (NEAS) project focused on addressing all three quality drivers of a country's student assessment system. The project primarily focused on strengthening the enabling context to ensure institutionalization and sustainability of the NEAS, and also engaged in activities to improve system alignment and assessment quality. The development objectives of the NEAS project were to: (i) design and administer assessment mechanisms; (ii) establish administrative infrastructure and capacity for assessment administration, analysis, and report writing; and (iii) increase stakeholder knowledge and acceptance of assessment objectives and procedures.

Enabling context. By the end of the project, a good administrative infrastructure had been established at the National and Provincial levels from a zero baseline. National and Provincial management committees had been established to provide advice and support decision making in the NEAS. All operating costs related to the conduct of the assessments were being financed under the governments' regular budget. A detailed review had been conducted of the options available for institutionalization, including options for establishing the NEAS as a credible and autonomous institution, and a Task Force had been set up for this purpose. A medium-term, capacity-building program and implementation plan had been developed. A document presenting the Government of Pakistan's long-term vision for assessments and quality of education also had been drafted. Partnering relationships had been established with one international and two national institutions. This partnership substantially contributed to the development of national capacity to offer specialized courses in assessments. Forty people completed a Masters degree in education, 33 received short-term training of 3–4 months, 168 persons were offered World Bank Institute (WBI) courses conducted in Pakistan, and 1,680 were trained through various workshops conducted in the country.

System alignment. By the end of the NEAS project, the new curriculum had been translated into measurable learning competencies as an input to future NEAS assessments to be based on this curriculum.

Assessment quality. Disseminating assessment findings was an integral part of the NEAS project. Four rounds of large-scale, sample-based student assessments (for grades 4 and 8) and one round of equating studies (for two subjects in grade 4) were successfully completed and shared with stakeholders. The four rounds of assessment contributed to raising awareness and increasing stakeholder knowledge about assessments. Based on the national assessment's findings, NEAS prepared, with the support of education experts, a set of recommendations for education policy makers and implementers. These recommendations were widely shared with all relevant education stakeholders for review and implementation.

Sources: World Bank (2003, 2009b).

The types of challenges typically faced by such projects (based on IEG and ICR evaluations) span three categories: operational, political, and technical. Examples of typical challenges under each category include the following:

Operational issues

- **Lack of clear and strong leadership** in the country to provide authority, vision, and direction to support the implementation of assessment activities
- **Lack of up-front prioritization of the specific work to be done to implement assessment activities** as well as delays in putting in place the necessary implementation and partnering arrangements
- **Misalignment between project indicators and project inputs** pertaining to assessment activities
- **Poor selection and management of consultants** for effective and timely project implementation
- **No or inappropriate budget provision for implementation of assessment activities**, leading to insufficient funds for covering all aspects of the planned assessment work

Political issues

- **Minister of education changing four times** during the lifespan of the project
- **Unforeseen threats to a country's national security** that prevented international consultants and firms from providing continued project support
- **Teachers union opposition** to student assessments and evaluations
- **Parental pressure** that prevents or slows the introduction of new assessments
- **National election** preventing the carrying out of an assessment exercise

Technical issues

- **Limited capacity of staff** responsible for participating in the implementation of assessment activities, which was not accounted for in project preparation
- **Inappropriate design and use of assessments** for achieving stated assessment goals
- **Use of assessments that are not relevant** for a particular country
- **Unclear technical guidelines and standards** for carrying out student assessment activities
- **Lack of data** against which to judge whether assessment objectives have been achieved

Recognizing and mitigating the risks associated with these common challenges during project preparation may help avoid or reduce the impact of similar issues in future projects and ensure more effective implementation of assessment activities.

Good Practices

Completed projects were reviewed to identify common factors that contributed to successful project implementation. The evidence base for identifying such factors is greater today than at the time of the Larach and Lockheed report. Of the 98 closed World Bank education projects that supported some form of assessment activity between 1998 and 2009, 68 have ICRs that are a rich source of lessons learned. In contrast, at the time of the Larach and Lockheed report, only 23 Project Completion Reports were available for 26 closed projects.

The identified good practices cover the project lifespan, from preparation through implementation and completion.

Project Preparation

Identify key stakeholders and ensure that they are directly involved in project preparation. The design of the collaboration between the partners involved in project preparation (and, ultimately, implementation) should be consistent with national challenges and concerns as well as with the needs and priorities of the country. The partnership can include many groups, such as government, civil society, donors, and the private sector.

Include assessment-related objectives in the project results framework. Because assessment initiatives, and the capacity-building activities associated with those initiatives, are typically important project objectives, they need to be incorporated into the results framework. Thus, key assessment-related output and outcome indicators, as well as their respective baseline and target values, should be identified. These indicators must be monitored throughout project implementation and reported on at the end of the project.

Set realistic targets for score increases. Student assessment results are often used as indicators to gauge improvements in education equity and quality as a result of project-supported interventions. To ensure that the use of assessment results for gauging progress in these areas is reasonable and appropriate, it is important to identify and set realistic, measurable, and verifiable targets based on the test scores or score gains. It also is important to ensure that scores have been equated over time, that any proficiency levels have been validated, and that the population of students assessed is comparable over time.

Obtain consensus and buy-in from stakeholders on key assessment-related objectives. To ensure both the short- and long-term success of the assessment initiative, there needs to be broad consensus among the key stakeholders about

objectives. Stakeholders must participate in setting and delivering the assessment-related objectives. It also is important to determine who will be responsible for collecting, analyzing, and reporting information on results as clear responsibilities will help ensure accountability. An important stakeholder in this discussion is the country government, as its ownership of the project is vital in order for it to be implemented successfully. The government's commitment should include a plan or agreement on the allocation, management, and timelines of fund disbursements, including triggers for release of tranches specifically for assessment work to ensure that implementation of assessment activities is not hindered by delay or misallotment of funds. Another important stakeholder group is teachers. Teacher representatives should be included in the design phase of any project that will support assessment. Otherwise, during project implementation, teachers may fear the assessment initiatives because they do not understand their intended purpose or because they worry that the assessment will be used unfairly as an instrument of accountability. Buy-in from this stakeholder group is especially important as teachers' commitment to newly introduced assessment activities is essential if these activities are to positively impact learning. Although ownership and sustainability are promoted by stakeholder consultation and participation during the early stages of project preparation, stakeholder participation at all stages of the project is imperative for optimizing results.

Evaluate the existing infrastructure and implementation capacity for carrying out assessment-related activities. It is important to evaluate local capacity to accomplish assessment-related goals within the proposed project timeframe and budget. This includes identifying and addressing any institutional constraints and capacity-building requirements. Examples of key infrastructure include physical space and, especially for large-scale assessments and examinations, the necessary information technology management to facilitate accurate and efficient processing of student assessment information. It also is important to identify what additional or back-up infrastructure will be needed to ensure that the project can still be carried out even in the event of changes in government, staffing, or other major events. Additionally, it is important to conduct an evaluation of existing capacity to conduct student assessment activities in the country. While a country may be willing and committed to develop many areas of its student assessment system, activities supported by the project should take into account the given capacity to carry out such activities in the country. It is possible that the required capacity can be built with the support of the project; however, it is necessary to first understand the country's existing capacity limitations to evaluate which assessment activities the project can realistically support.

During Project Implementation

Develop local capacity, particularly in areas where local staff will be required to continue assessment activities after the closing of the project. “No matter how many high-powered international consultants are made available, a project cannot succeed without sufficient numbers of capable middle-level managers” (Boissiere et al. 2007); therefore, attention must be paid to deepening and broadening the capacity of local management and staff to carry out assessment activities. This capacity development will help ensure sustainability of the assessment-related changes post project completion. Building the capacity of teachers in developing or using newly introduced assessment approaches is also important. It therefore may be useful to develop handbooks and kits for teachers on developing (if applicable), using, and understanding student assessments and assessment results.

Regional and international study tours, as well as partnerships with local and international universities and centers of expertise, can, if used judiciously, help build local human capital and provide access to international human capital. Study tours can expose the future country experts to key national and international best practices and help them form critical links for continued exchange and learning.

Include representative samples of schools and students in large-scale assessment exercises. While not every student has to participate in a large-scale assessment exercise, it is necessary to have a sample of students that is representative of the target population. This sample must be large enough to provide information that is valid and reliable for policy makers. Using a sample of students versus complete coverage of the population offers reduced costs associated with gathering and analyzing the data, reduced requirements for trained personnel to conduct the fieldwork, improved speed in most aspects of data summarization and reporting, and greater accuracy due to the possibility of more intense supervision of fieldwork and data preparation operations.

Disseminate assessment results to key stakeholders in a timely manner. Assessment findings must be reported and acted upon by key stakeholders, including policy makers, administrators, and teachers. Findings should be communicated and acted upon as soon as possible following data collection because long delays reduce the usefulness of the assessment exercise. The time frame for communicating results will differ by the type of assessment and its purpose. Regardless of assessment type, the reporting, whether it is in written or oral form, should be clear, concise, and comprehensive so that it is understood by the audience for which it is intended.

Following Project Completion

Develop a plan for ensuring sustainability after project completion. In order to ensure that the project has lasting impact, it is important to plan ahead of time for who or what organization will continue to promote and work on the

assessment agenda introduced or supported by the project. Therefore, it is necessary to prioritize post-project sustainability upfront when planning for how to develop a country's student assessment system, given that following project completion there will be fewer resources, both fiscal and human capital, to support the project. Sustainability of the assessment system at the national/subnational level is essential to ensure lasting impact, and it is therefore necessary to identify the right next steps and define their ownership.

These examples of challenges and good practices in implementing student assessment activities in World Bank education projects provide lessons that Bank staff and country teams can use to inform the design of future projects that support the development of student assessment systems. In addition to learning from these past experiences, Bank staff and country teams also can draw on a new set of tools that has been developed by the World Bank's SABER-Student Assessment team to assist in policy dialogue on student assessment as well as in the design and preparation of new projects incorporating support for student assessment activities.¹² These tools, which draw on the latest evidence for what matters most for student assessment systems,¹³ and include a set of standardized questionnaires, rubrics, and a country report template, provide an evidence-based and structured approach to discussing the strengths and weaknesses of any assessment system, possible next steps and priorities for reform, and reasonable medium- and long-term targets for achieving change.¹⁴

Conclusion

This paper addressed some key trends and issues in World Bank support for student assessment activities in client countries between 1998 and 2009.

Although the information provided is instructive, there is a need for additional research and analysis to support the ongoing information needs of Bank staff and client countries in this area. For example, additional lessons could be learned from analyzing World Bank support for student assessment activities

¹² The tools were developed under the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) program, which helps countries systematically examine and strengthen the performance of their education systems to achieve learning for all. The SABER-Student Assessment domain, one of the subsystems within the SABER program, is a World Bank initiative to benchmark learning assessment policies and systems in developed and developing countries around the world, with the goal of promoting stronger assessment systems that contribute to improved education quality and student learning. The SABER-Student Assessment domain is supported by the Russia Education Aid for Development (READ) Trust Fund, a program that is executed by the World Bank in close consultation with the Russian Federation. The READ Trust Fund supports strengthening the capacity of countries' institutions to assess student learning and to use the information from assessments to improve teaching and learning.

¹³ For a review of this evidence base, see Clarke (2012).

¹⁴ Additional information on the SABER-Student Assessment tools can be found at the SABER-Student Assessment webpage: <http://go.worldbank.org/DWZB0TMTS0>.

through other funding modalities, including recipient-executed projects and trust fund programs. It also would be valuable to learn from the experiences of other donors and global agencies in this area. In addition, regional and country-specific analyses would add considerable richness to our understanding of what works in what context. No doubt, as the dialogue on student assessment continues to evolve, so too will the need for identification and in-depth evaluation and analysis of good practices in designing and implementing student assessment projects and other reforms in support of improved education quality and learning outcomes.

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Annex. List of World Bank Education Projects Providing Support for Student Assessment Activities, 1998–2009

Region	Country	Project Name	Project ID
AFR	Burkina Faso	BASIC EDUCATION SECTOR PROJECT	P000309
AFR	Burkina Faso	BASIC EDUCATION SECTOR PROJECT (additional financing)	P110642
AFR	Burkina Faso	POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT	P098956
AFR	Burundi	EDUCATION SECTOR RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT	P064557
AFR	Cameroon	EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT	P075964
AFR	Cape Verde	EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONSOLIDATION AND MODERNIZATION PROJECT	P055468
AFR	Chad	EDUCATION SECTOR REFORM PROJECT	P000527
AFR	Congo, D.R.	AN EDUCATION SECTOR PROJECT	P086294
AFR	Côte d'Ivoire	EDUCATION AND TRAINING SUPPORT PROJECT	P035655
AFR	Eritrea	ERITREA EDUCATION SECTOR INVESTMENT PROJECT	P070272
AFR	Ethiopia	EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	P000732
AFR	Ethiopia	FIRST PHASE OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (GEQIP)	P106855
AFR	Gambia	THIRD EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM	P035643
AFR	Gambia	THIRD EDUCATION SECTOR PROJECT	P077903
AFR	Guinea	EDUCATION FOR ALL PROGRAM	P050046
AFR	Kenya	EDUCATION SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT	P087479
AFR	Kenya	FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION SUPPORT PROJECT	P082378
AFR	Lesotho	SECOND EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (PHASE II) IN SUPPORT OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM	P081269
AFR	Lesotho	SECOND EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM	P056416
AFR	Madagascar	EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P001559
AFR	Malawi	EDUCATION SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT I	P070823
AFR	Mali	EDUCATION SECTOR EXPENDITURE PROGRAM IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE TEN-YEAR EDUCATION PROGRAM (PRODEC)	P040650
AFR	Mali	IMPROVING LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS	P058770
AFR	Mali	SECOND EDUCATION SECTOR INVESTMENT PROGRAM	P093991
AFR	Mauritania	EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE TEN-YEAR EDUCATION PROGRAM	P071308
AFR	Mozambique	EDUCATION SECTOR STRATEGIC PROGRAM (ESSP)	P001786
AFR	Mozambique	HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECT	P069824

Region	Country	Project Name	Project ID
AFR	Namibia	FIRST EDUCATION AND TRAINING SECTOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM	P086875
AFR	Niger	BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT	P061209
AFR	Nigeria	LAGOS EKO SECONDARY EDUCATION PROJECT	P106280
AFR	Nigeria	SECOND PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT	P066571
AFR	Rwanda	HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P045091
AFR	Senegal	QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL PROGRAM IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE TEN-YEAR EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM (PDEF)	P047319
AFR	Senegal	QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL PROJECT (APL 2)	P089254
AFR	Tanzania	HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT I PROJECT	P002789
AFR	Tanzania	PRIMARY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PROJECT	P071012
AFR	Tanzania	SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HIGHER EDUCATION APL PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM	P098496
AFR	Tanzania	SECONDARY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	P083080
AFR	Tanzania	ZANZIBAR BASIC EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P102262
AFR	Uganda	POST PRIMARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING ADAPTABLE PROGRAM LENDING (APL I) PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE UGANDA POST PRIMARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM	P110803
AFR	Zambia	BASIC EDUCATION SUBSECTOR INVESTMENT PROGRAM (BESSIP)	P003249
EAP	Cambodia	EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P059971
EAP	Cambodia	EDUCATION SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT	P070668
EAP	China	GUANGDONG TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROJECT	P096707
EAP	China	HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM PROJECT	P046051
EAP	Indonesia	BETTER EDUCATION THROUGH REFORMED MANAGEMENT AND UNIVERSAL TEACHER UPGRADING PROJECT (BERMUTU)	P097104
EAP	Indonesia	MANAGING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR RELEVANCE AND EFFICIENCY PROJECT	P085374
EAP	Indonesia	WEST JAVA BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT	P039644
EAP	Lao People's Democratic Republic	SECOND EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P078113
EAP	Mongolia	RURAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT (READ) PROJECT	P096328
EAP	Philippines	NATIONAL PROGRAM SUPPORT FOR BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT	P094063
EAP	Timor-Leste	EDUCATION SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT	P095873
EAP	Vietnam	SCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM	P091747
ECA	Albania	EDUCATION EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY PROJECT	P078933
ECA	Albania	EDUCATION REFORM PROJECT	P069120

Region	Country	Project Name	Project ID
ECA	Armenia	EDUCATION FINANCING AND MANAGEMENT REFORM PROJECT	P008281
ECA	Armenia	EDUCATION QUALITY AND RELEVANCE PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR REFORM PROGRAM	P074503
ECA	Armenia	SECOND EDUCATION QUALITY AND RELEVANCE PROJECT (APL II) IN SUPPORT OF THE EDUCATION QUALITY AND RELEVANCE (APL) PROGRAM	P107772
ECA	Azerbaijan	EDUCATION REFORM PROJECT	P057959
ECA	Azerbaijan	EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE EDUCATION REFORM PROGRAM	P070989
ECA	Azerbaijan	SECOND EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE EDUCATION REFORM PROGRAM	P102117
ECA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P058512
ECA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	EDUCATION RESTRUCTURING PROJECT	P079226
ECA	Bulgaria	A FIRST SOCIAL SECTORS INSTITUTIONAL REFORM DEVELOPMENT POLICY LOAN (SIR DPL I)	P094967
ECA	Bulgaria	EDUCATION MODERNIZATION PROJECT	P055158
ECA	Croatia	EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P086671
ECA	Georgia	EDUCATION SYSTEM REALIGNMENT AND STRENGTHENING PROGRAM	P055173
ECA	Georgia	EDUCATION SYSTEM REALIGNMENT AND STRENGTHENING PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM REALIGNMENT AND STRENGTHENING PROGRAM (APL 2)	P098217
ECA	Kosovo	EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROJECT	P069516
ECA	Kosovo	INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATION PROJECT	P102174
ECA	Kyrgyz Republic	RURAL EDUCATION PROJECT	P078976
ECA	Latvia	EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P049172
ECA	Lithuania	EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P070112
ECA	Macedonia	EDUCATION MODERNIZATION PROJECT	P066157
ECA	Macedonia	EDUCATION REHABILITATION PROJECT	P038391
ECA	Moldova	QUALITY EDUCATION IN THE RURAL AREAS PROJECT	P090340
ECA	Montenegro	EDUCATION REFORM PROJECT	P084597
ECA	Romania	RURAL EDUCATION PROJECT	P073967
ECA	Russian Federation	EDUCATION REFORM PROJECT	P050474
ECA	Russian Federation	E-LEARNING SUPPORT PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EDUCATION MODERNIZATION PROGRAM	P075387
ECA	Serbia	REPUBLIC OF SERBIA EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P075189
ECA	Tajikistan	EDUCATION MODERNIZATION PROJECT	P069055
ECA	Tajikistan	EDUCATION REFORM PROJECT	P057953

Region	Country	Project Name	Project ID
ECA	Turkey	BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM	P009089
ECA	Turkey	SECONDARY EDUCATION PROJECT	P066149
ECA	Ukraine	EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN UKRAINE PROJECT	P077738
ECA	Uzbekistan	BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT	P094042
ECA	Uzbekistan	BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT SECOND PHASE OF AN ADAPTABLE PROGRAM LOAN IN SUPPORT OF THE EDUCATION REFORM PROGRAM	P107845
LAC	Argentina	RURAL EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT- PROMER	P070963
LAC	Bolivia	MUNICIPALITY OF LA PAZ: SECONDARY EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION PROJECT	P083965
LAC	Brazil	ACRE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P107146
LAC	Brazil	BAHIA EDUCATION PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PROGRAM	P059565
LAC	Brazil	BAHIA EDUCATION PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE BAHIA EDUCATION PROGRAM	P070827
LAC	Brazil	CEARA BASIC EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P059566
LAC	Brazil	FIRST PROGRAMMATIC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SECTOR REFORM LOAN	P080746
LAC	Brazil	FUNDESCOLA IIIA (THIRD SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT) IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE FUNDESCOLA PROGRAM	P057653
LAC	Brazil	PERNAMBUCO EDUCATION RESULTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT	P106208
LAC	Brazil	PERNAMBUCO INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT: EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P069934
LAC	Brazil	SECOND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - FUNDESCOLA II	P050763
LAC	Chile	LIFELONG LEARNING AND TRAINING PROJECT	P068271
LAC	Colombia	CUNDINAMARCA EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P077757
LAC	Colombia	UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION PROJECT	P052608
LAC	Ecuador	SUPPORT FOR THE STRATEGY OF INCLUSION AND QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT	P087831
LAC	El Salvador	EDUCATION REFORM PROJECT	P050612
LAC	El Salvador	EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN SECONDARY EDUCATION (EXITO) PROJECT	P078993
LAC	El Salvador	SECONDARY EDUCATION PROJECT	P041680
LAC	Grenada	(OECS) EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE OECS EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	P077759
LAC	Haiti	EDUCATION FOR ALL PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE EDUCATION FOR ALL PROGRAM	P099918
LAC	Honduras	EDUCATION QUALITY, GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING PROJECT	P101218
LAC	Honduras	HN/COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION PROJECT	P007397

Region	Country	Project Name	Project ID
LAC	Jamaica	REFORM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION PROJECT II	P071589
LAC	Mexico	BASIC EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT (PAREIB) PROJECT	P040199
LAC	Mexico	BASIC EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PHASE II	P057531
LAC	Nicaragua	NICARAGUA - EDUCATION PROJECT (PASEN)	P078990
LAC	Nicaragua	SECOND BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT	P050613
LAC	Panama	SECOND BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT	P052021
LAC	Paraguay	EDUCATION REFORM PROGRAM IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PROGRAM	P073526
LAC	Peru	RURAL EDUCATION PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM	P055232
LAC	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	OECS EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE THIRD PHASE OF THE OECS EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	P086664
LAC	St. Lucia	FIRST PHASE OF THE MULTI-COUNTRY ORGANIZATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES (OECS) EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE OECS	P077712
LAC	Uruguay	SECOND BASIC EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P041994
LAC	Uruguay	THIRD BASIC EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P070937
MNA	Djibouti	SCHOOL ACCESS AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, PHASE II	P086994
MNA	Egypt, Arab Rep.	HIGHER EDUCATION BNHANCEMENT PROJECT	P056236
MNA	Egypt, Arab Rep.	SECONDARY EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT	P050484
MNA	Jordan	EDUCATION REFORM FOR KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY I PROGRAM	P075829
MNA	Jordan	SECOND EDUCATION REFORM FOR THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY PROJECT	P105036
MNA	Lebanon	GENERAL EDUCATION PROJECT	P045174
MNA	Morocco	BASIC EDUCATION REFORM SUPPORT PROGRAM	P043412
MNA	Tunisia	FIRST PHASE OF THE EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (EQIP)	P050945
MNA	Tunisia	TUNISIA EDUCATION PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (EQP)	P082999
MNA	West Bank and Gaza	EDUCATION ACTION PROJECT	P065593
MNA	Yemen, Rep.	BASIC EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P076185
MNA	Yemen, Rep.	SECONDARY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AND GIRLS ACCESS PROJECT	P089761
SAR	Afghanistan	EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	P083964
SAR	Afghanistan	EMERGENCY EDUCATION REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P077896
SAR	Bangladesh	POST-LITERACY AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P050752
SAR	Bangladesh	PRIMARY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P009550
SAR	Bangladesh	PRIMARY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT II	P074966

Region	Country	Project Name	Project ID
SAR	Bangladesh	PROPOSED PROGRAMMATIC EDUCATION SECTOR ADJUSTMENT CREDIT	P077789
SAR	Bangladesh	PROPOSED SECOND PROGRAMMATIC EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT CREDIT	P084567
SAR	Bangladesh	PROPOSED THIRD EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT CREDIT	P102541
SAR	Bangladesh	REACHING OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN PROJECT	P086791
SAR	Bangladesh	SECONDARY EDUCATION QUALITY & ACCESS ENHANCEMENT PROJECT	P106161
SAR	Bhutan	EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P074114
SAR	Bhutan	SECOND EDUCATION PROJECT	P009574
SAR	India	ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROJECT	P055459
SAR	India	RAJASTHAN SECOND DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT	P055455
SAR	India	SECOND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROJECT (SSA II)	P102547
SAR	India	THIRD DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT	P038021
SAR	India	UTTAR PRADESH THIRD DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT	P050667
SAR	Maldives	THIRD EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROJECT	P055944
SAR	Nepal	SECOND HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECT	P090967
SAR	Nepal	THE FIRST PHASE OF THE BASIC AND PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAM	P040612
SAR	Pakistan	EDUCATION SECTOR ADJUSTMENT CREDIT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB PROVINCE	P083228
SAR	Pakistan	FIRST SINDH EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY CREDIT	P100846
SAR	Pakistan	FOURTH PUNJAB EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT POLICY CREDIT	P101243
SAR	Pakistan	NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT SYSTEM	P077288
SAR	Pakistan	NORTHERN EDUCATION PROJECT	P037834
SAR	Pakistan	PROPOSED THIRD PUNJAB EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY CREDIT	P097636
SAR	Pakistan	PUNJAB EDUCATION SECTOR PROJECT	P102608
SAR	Pakistan	SECOND EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY CREDIT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB PROVINCE	P090346
SAR	Pakistan	SECOND NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE DEVELOPMENT POLICY CREDIT	P097471
SAR	Pakistan	SECOND SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAM PROJECT	P037835
SAR	Pakistan	SINDH EDUCATION SECTOR PROJECT (SEP)	P107300
SAR	Sri Lanka	EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	P084580

As more and more countries—both developed and developing—have become interested in collecting information on student learning, there has been a concomitant growth in the demand for strong student assessment systems. The World Bank is at the forefront of efforts to support developing countries in the strengthening of their student assessment systems. This paper provides an overview of the World Bank's support for assessment activities in its client countries between 1998 and 2009. The paper highlights key lessons learned from this experience and offers guidance to development staff and country teams for the more effective design and implementation of assessment activities in education projects.

Julia Liberman, *Education Specialist, Human Development Network, the World Bank*

Marguerite Clarke, *Senior Education Specialist, Human Development Network, the World Bank*



The Russia Education Aid for Development Trust Fund is a collaboration between the Russian Federation and the World Bank that supports the improvement of student learning outcomes in low-income countries through the development of robust student assessment systems. Visit the READ website at www.worldbank.org/readtf for additional information.