



# REPORT ON GROUP DISCUSSIONS SESSION 14 AND 20

## Group I

Chair: Sue Thomson

Rapporteur: Serara Moahi

Iman Awadie

Josef Basl

Nurcan Ateşok Deveci

Janez Justin

Giorgi Martashvili

Paul van Oijen

Elena Papanastasiou

Chew Leng Poon

Anu Toots

## Session 14:

# Working with International Study Data at Country Level


### Discussions Questions:

1. How do national study centres use study data beyond the international report?
2. The IEA secretariat has been supporting (capacity building) national study centres through training seminars, the research conference etc.; What else would be useful in promoting and supporting countries / study centres to conduct secondary analysis of national data sets?

# How do national study centres use study data beyond the international report?

Challenges that limit focus and investment in secondary analysis of data following beyond the international report include:

- Preoccupation with comparisons of a country's ranking with other similar systems by significant stakeholders such as politicians
- Some systems focus on PISA results more than on TIMSS (perhaps due to regional political considerations)
- Some education systems are decentralised, studies are therefore conducted by different substructures
  - leading to unconsolidated data sets, and different sources of information,
  - Decentralisation also serves as a barrier to dissemination of information from international studies –no proper coordination or ownership of dissemination activities such as organising workshops for education structure or teachers at national level,
  - There are multiple actors in the provision of in-service training—this would hinder communication of a common message across the different regions , provinces or constituencies




There is a lot of variability in the context of the systems participating in TIMSS studies. Such differences might reflect different needs and approaches to what study centres could do following the international report.

Some Ministries are more interested in Rank—particularly where the results could be linked to some government intervention to improve learner performance.

An example was given of a system where a non-governmental organisation has taken over the TIMSS national report writing, -- making it possible for external pressure to be applied on government to make some changes that would lead to improvement of the quality of learning.. Consequently, in 2003 the curriculum was changed to be more learner centred, promoting creative thinking and the use of open ended questions in tests.


# Beyond the release of the international report

- National Stud Centres conduct secondary analysis of their data ( e.g.. one centre is already working on 18 papers on the TIMSS 2011 data)
- Some centres work profiles of students, look at trends, examine possible explanation for low performance.
- Low performance attracts the most interest in further investigation since governments interest would be on finding solutions to address low performance
- Some centres prepare and distribute reports for to schools . Reports provide insight into attributes of successful schools
- Mathematics educators show interest in the data and use the information to review Mathematics learning and teaching materials.

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- Results also motivate policy changes
  - There are instances where scientists in some countries work with IEA data to conduct secondary analysis,
  - In other systems University Academics are the most skeptical
  - In others NRCs work better with government officials in analysing and writing reports— one state revised its curriculum as a result of the collaboration with the NRCs in reporting TIMSS data
  - Teachers are given an opportunity to discuss TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS results in a workshop setting—This allows study centres to review previous results, show new results and discuss upcoming studies , assessment framework, share released items and generally motivate teachers in the preparation of students for upcoming testing sessions.

# What the IEA Secretariat can do to promote and support countries / study centres to conduct secondary analysis of national data sets

- Introduce internships and attachments in association with the DPC for more intensive training on the use of more advanced statistics, HLM, IDB analyser and other secondary analysis techniques
- The international report should adopt the use of summaries, short series of thematic reports such as boy-girl differences. This would make TIMSS reports more accessible to different target audiences. Continuous publication of short reports could be maintained following publication of the main report though admittedly there will be challenges with time

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- In some systems study centres have engaged subject experts through subject panels or committees in discussions of results. Such information has been used for curriculum reviews, teacher preparation and development of instructional materials

A general observation:

- Governments act /react when results are bad--- in those circumstances there is intensive intervention, curriculum is changed, more emphasis on specific skill areas in which learners had the most difficulty with. Focus on innovation is heightened, and there is more focus on attainment of national targets.



# Session 20


## Topic: Early Childhood Education and Assessment

### Discussion prompts:

1. How easy is it to define the provider population? Is a list of providers available?
2. Are there any hot topics in ECE that you have interest in?
3. Does the proposed assessment model look right, including the three optional assessments?
4. Is there anything else that should be taken into consideration

# Defining provider population- Is there a list of providers ?

- There are complications mainly due to different contexts and types of providers across systems– so there will be a problem of consistency in defining the provider population
- The way ECE is structured also differs across systems – the challenge here would be in defining the target population –
  - Definition of ECE: some systems Kindergarten , preschool with the last year of pre-school compulsory
  - Access to pre-school is limited to part of the population - not all families can afford it.
  - No centralised data base of providers, How to handle unregistered providers

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- In some systems there is no centralised registration of providers, local authorities register and regulate provision of ECE—so sampling of providers may have to be made within each region.
  - There needs to be clarity in the handling of the diversity of provision across systems
  - A suggestion was made to look at the way in which the definition of the provider population was handled in the OECD ECE study, -- and the statistical techniques used for sampling

# Hot topics

- The parent questionnaire should collect information on the number of children in the family and child order ( of the participating child)
- There is interest in children who are not enrolled in ECE programmes—for comparison
- Some Countries are interested in inclusion of children who do not attend pre-school—non attendance of formal pre-school may not mean absence of ECE for some children, there may be homeschooling provided by highly qualified parents or grandparents.

# Proposed Assessment Model—Optional Assessments

- The model may be too costly to implement particularly the assessment component
- The assessment of children in ECE may not be acceptable in some systems
- ECE practices differ across systems
- Comparisons across systems will not be easy
- What is the rationale for making this a comparative study, what is the purpose of international comparisons?
- What is the value addition for participation in countries where ECE information is already available?
- Is it possible to handle the Policy Study as a standalone ?
- Why is the study period so long—It is a descriptive study
- Some countries are uncertain about the use of the information from the study hence the indecision regarding participation in the study at this point

# Anything else that should be taken into consideration?

- There has to be some value addition for participation in the study since some systems already have information on ECE... perhaps if results are linked to TIMSS and PIRLS or a longitudinal study from ECE—TIMSS/PIRLS grade 4—grade 8— and so on
- Some systems need clarity on the purpose of the study and the use of information generated from the study
- There is a possibility that if child assessment is **NOT OPTIONAL**, this could keep some countries out
- There needs to be clarity on handling of language differences will be handled
- Handling of the policy component as a stand alone study