



OXFORD UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment and education quality in Sub-Saharan Africa: Prospects & Pitfalls

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Oxford University Department of Education Public Seminar

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The Education for All Goals (EFA), agreed to at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, recognised that quality is at the heart of education, and effective assessment policies and practices that positively impact on student learning is core to improving quality, particularly for the poor and marginalised. Since Dakar, there has been a significant increase in the number of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries that have invested in developing their assessment systems. However, there is limited information on the efficacy of such investments.

Reflecting on the role of assessment in enhancing education quality, this presentation first reviews the different meanings and understanding of the concept of education quality with specific reference to the context of SSA. The presentation then reviews how selected SSA countries have gone about improving their assessment systems, highlighting the impact on quality and equity. It pays particular attention to the case of South Africa focussing on the genesis of assessment policy and practice in the post-apartheid era. The presentation concludes by reviewing challenges for future policy and practice highlighting the research gaps for developing effective assessment systems to improve learning in SSA.