



## Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) – Umbrella Facility

Sponsor: The World Bank's Human Development Network (HDN)

Timeframe: FY13-FY16 (3½ years: July 2012 to December 2015)

Amount: US\$24.0 million

### Strategic Alignment and Results Focus

**Objectives:** SABER-UF will help developing countries accelerate *Learning for All* by strengthening their education system policies and institutions.

**Strategic Alignment:** SABER-UF is fully aligned with the World Bank's *Education Strategy 2020*, endorsed by the Bank's Board in April 2011. The Education Strategy commits the World Bank to build a high-quality knowledge base to help countries strengthen their education systems to increase learning for all. The World Bank launched the SABER initiative as a central component of this effort. Under SABER, the Bank is formulating and administering an array of new system diagnostic tools to evaluate the quality of countries' education policy and institutional framework in core policy areas such as teacher policies, student assessment policies, and workforce development policies. These tools generate rigorous, systematic, and comparable data on education policies in countries around the world. The new policy data and evaluations make possible better-informed sector dialogue on the design of reforms and programs and help countries understand what policies matter most to accelerate learning for all. Moreover, the SABER system tools collect these policy data in a parsimonious way -- quickly, inexpensively, and efficiently. SABER-UF will support several important innovations for the initiative. First, it will focus on helping countries and their development partners use SABER tools and data to design and monitor reforms, programs, and projects that achieve better education results. Second, it will support the development of new SABER tools to track and improve policy implementation. Third, it will strengthen the capacity of country policymakers and development practitioners to use SABER's systems approach, tools, and data to strengthen their education systems.

**Results:** A robust results framework will be designed to guide SABER-UF's implementation with credible development objectives and outcome indicators. The main results that SABER-UF will contribute to are:

- Public access to systematic and comparative data on the strength of countries' education policies and the quality of policy implementation;
- Awareness and utilization of SABER policy data and the systems approach by countries and development partners in sector analysis, dialogue, and planning;
- Improved effectiveness of education sector operations through the integration of SABER data into their design, monitoring, and outcome frameworks; and
- Strengthened capacity of development partners and country education policymakers to collect policy data and use SABER tools to improve education systems and increase learning for all.



## Activities Supported

### Window 1 (Global Program) activities would include:

- Development, prototyping, piloting, and publishing of SABER tools and knowledge products;
- Support, analysis, and quality assurance of SABER data collected at the country level;
- Development and maintenance of an open global knowledge and data platform for SABER;
- Cross-country research and dissemination to demonstrate how SABER tools and data can be used to inform global- and country-level dialogue about improving education policy and policy implementation;
- Design and delivery of a capacity-building program on how to use SABER tools and data in sector analyses, sector policy dialogues, program designs, and program monitoring; the program would target Bank and partner education policy staff and would link with the World Bank's Education Staff Development Program and with capacity-building programs of other global development partners.

### Window 2 (Regional Program) activities would include:

- Support for the use of SABER for policy dialogue and upstream design at country and regional levels;
- Collection and monitoring of country-level SABER data;
- Support for the operationalization of SABER to improve countries' education systems and results;
- Support for building capacity within countries (among government officials, researchers, civil society and local development practitioners) to understand and use SABER tools and data;
- SABER workshops and conferences.

## Efficient Governance

**SABER-UF Council:** A SABER-UF Council, comprising representatives of the SABER-UF donors and the Education Director of the World Bank, would provide upstream feedback on the overall strategy for SABER-UF and on the criteria for the eligibility of countries and the prioritization of policy domains. It would meet annually to review progress on SABER-UF in accordance with the Results Framework.

**Education Sector Board** SABER-UF's priorities and country ownership would be ensured by the Education Sector Board, which would integrate the management of SABER-UF into its regular oversight responsibilities. The Board would take collective decisions, in an open and transparent manner, on how to apply the criteria to allocate funding across the SABER-UF windows and would oversee the strategic relevance and quality of SABER-UF.

## Cost Effective Management and Administration

SABER-UF activities will be included in the annual regional and Education Anchor work programs, and monitored using the standard Bank reporting and budget systems. A small program management team would be housed in the Education Anchor, just as other global initiatives of the Sector Board are housed in the Anchor. An integrated annual report would be produced by the SABER-UF Program Management Team of the Education Anchor.

## Transparent Multi-Year Allocation of Funds

Funds would be allocated by the Education Sector Board in a transparent and open manner in accordance with the agreed criteria, and renewed annually. Once SABER-UF is fully effective, no other trust funds would be sought to finance SABER global and regional work.



## SABER-UF Concept Note

### The World Bank Human Development Network's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) – Umbrella Facility

#### 1. Overview

The World Bank is seeking to establish an umbrella facility to support the further development and consolidation of its hallmark program, *Systems Approach for Better Education Results* (SABER). The goal of SABER is to help developing countries accelerate Learning for All by strengthening their education system policies and institutions. To pursue this goal, SABER is formulating and testing new knowledge and system diagnostic tools to measure, monitor, and provide advice to countries on how to reform education system policies and institutions to achieve and sustain better outcomes for all learners. These system diagnostic tools are built on a foundation of evidence generated by research and impact evaluations, a thorough examination of the policies, programs, and projects of well performing or rapidly performing systems, and lessons from successful reforms and practices in countries around the world.

SABER was conceived at the same time as the new Strategy was being prepared. The design and testing of SABER's system diagnostic tools have been supported by partnerships with key donors (i.e., Russia, the UK, the Netherlands, Korea, and Australia), as well as by researchers, decision makers, and other actors. The SABER program today covers eight core education policy domains that span the breadth of education systems: early child development, the teacher system, the student assessment system, the education management information system, the education finance system, school autonomy and accountability, school health and feeding, and workforce development. While the SABER tools across these domains are in varying stages of development, there are already more than 120 countries in which data on one or more SABER domains have already collected and analyzed. The SABER-Teachers domain, the first to be launched, has already collected data and prepared country reports for 42 countries.

In terms of value added, SABER -UF will finance the further development of SABER program in a number of crucially important aspects. First, it will help support the use of SABER in country dialogue and in the design and monitoring of government or donor-financed programs to strengthen education systems, including through results-based approaches. Second, it will deepen and consolidate the current set of SABER tools by improving their validity and reliability and by extending their coverage to additional countries and to other relevant policy areas. Third, it will extend SABER by developing new tools to cost-effectively measure the quality of implementation of the policies assessed by SABER tools. Fourth, it will develop and carry out SABER-related training programs to strengthen the professional competencies of Bank education sector staff and counterparts from development partners and countries. Finally, it will support the public goods aspect of SABER as a consolidated vehicle for encouraging donors to work together under a common organizing framework and through the development of an open global knowledge and data platform to make SABER system-level data and analytics readily accessible to all. The anticipated funding level for SABER-UF is \$24 million to cover the period from 2012 through 2015.



## 2. Strategic Alignment of SABER-UF with the Education Strategy

SABER-UF is fully aligned with the World Bank's Education Strategy 2020, which was endorsed by the Bank's Board in April 2011. The Education Strategy's overall goal is to improve learning for all. The strategy emphasizes that, to improve learning for all, countries need to have well functioning education systems to enable, support, and sustain good policies and effective programs and interventions that are capable of delivering better and more equitable gains in learning outcomes over time. In particular, it emphasizes the importance of employing a *systems approach* to help countries strengthen their education systems and to build the evidence base for sector work, program design, and the appraisal of reforms, such as those undertaken by the World Bank, GPE, and other development partners. In this context, the Bank's SABER program develops and launches system tools to assess the quality of the policy and institutional framework of education systems in selected education system policy domains to facilitate better informed sector dialogue, better formulation of education reforms and programs, and better education results. One of the key features of SABER is that the tools have been designed to collect these policy data in a parsimonious way, that is, quickly, inexpensively, but rigorously.

## 3. How is SABER Innovative?

The SABER program is a major innovation for the Bank in that it provides tools to operationalize the systems approach by developing practical tools that can be used to assess how different subsystems of the education system work, how they are connected with one another, and how to identify potential leverage points to improve system performance and results across different policy. The systems approach embodied through SABER permits a country to have a clear diagnosis of the policies they have in place, to compare their system with other countries' systems, and to benchmark their policies and institutions against what research and evidence suggests matter most for improving learning for all.

SABER shows education leaders and policymakers what is inside the black box between education inputs and outcomes so that they can use evidence to strengthen their education systems. And SABER is part of a broader movement to improve the quality of services provided or overseen by government. Education systems in many countries are historically most effective at handling inputs, such as the amount of money spent on education, and the quantities of schools built and teachers supplied. In recent years, they have become more effective at the management of the education system's outputs and outcomes—most notably enrollments, but increasingly also school completion and even learning in some cases. But knowing inputs and outcomes is not enough: research shows that the amount of spending on education explains only a small part of any gains in learning outcomes. What matters even more is how efficiently resources are used to improve learning, which depends fundamentally on the quality of the education system's policies and their implementation.

SABER tools to date focus on defining and assessing the intended policies and their related institutional framework, on a domain-by-domain basis. The SABER program provides the first detailed, articulated, and disaggregated world-wide database of education policies and institutions that allows countries to assess their policy frameworks against comparator countries, as well as against top and rising performers internationally.



#### 4. What Domains of Education Policy does SABER Examine to Date?

SABER's aim is to produce a detailed catalog and assessment of policies and institutions in all the major areas of education policy in countries across the world as a tool for improving education outcomes. SABER is currently focusing on the education policy areas – “policy domains” – that are the most important to, or incur the greatest costs for, the largest number of country education systems globally. The policy domains under development are:

- (1) Teacher System
- (2) Education Financing System
- (3) School Health and Nutrition Policies,
- (4) Student Assessment System
- (5) Accountability and Autonomy Policies
- (6) Early Childhood Development
- (7) Workforce Development
- (8) Education Information Systems

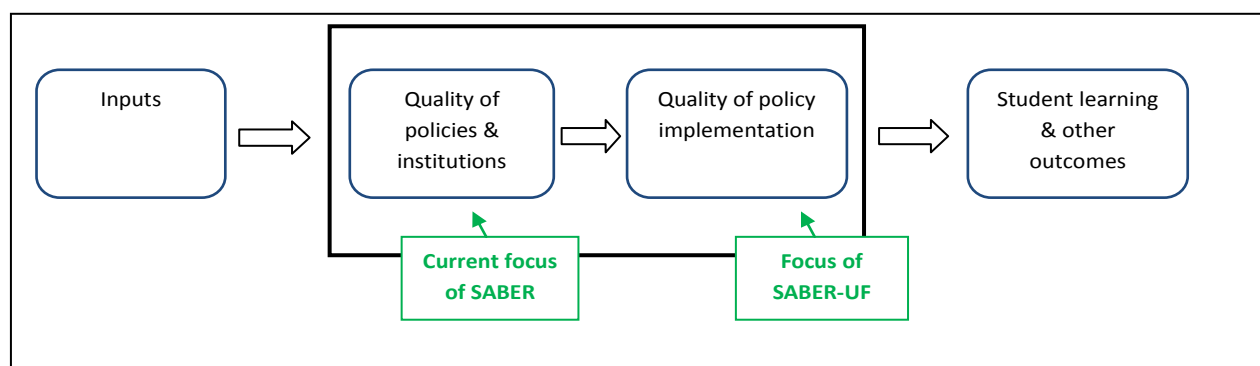
#### 5. How Will SABER-UF Complement SABER?

**Operationalizing SABER in Countries.** One of the most significant challenges to the SABER program is to help World Bank staff and other development practitioners to deliver the results of SABER assessments to country counterparts in such a way as to inform the policy dialogue, provide systematic, cross-country lessons, and stimulate reforms. SABER-UF will support country teams to translate the SABER analysis into know how to stimulate reform and program design at the country level. It will support the development of workshops, training activities, and tools to help Bank staff, and staff from other development agencies, to use SABER data and information in projects and programs. SABER-UF will also develop guidelines to help these country teams use SABER tools, including newly developed policy implementation tools (see subsequent paragraph), as sources of evidence-based intermediate indicators of policy quality that can be used as disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) for results-based lending. These indicators may be particularly appropriate to results based financing because they are under the control of the government and are expected to contribute to accelerated learning for all. Along these lines, one of the key contributions of SABER-UF would be to strengthen the quality of GPE's in-country (local education group-led) upstream review of education sector plans and of programs financed by the GPE-fund.

**Policy Implementation.** As described above, SABER focuses on the rigorous measurement of the intended policies of education systems. This is a major undertaking in itself as it has never been done in any systematic way before. Nonetheless, it is well known that education outcomes depend not only on the quality of the intended policies but also on how well good policies are implemented. To complement SABER's focus on the quality of education policies and institutions, SABER-UF will build knowledge and tools around the implementation of policies assessed under SABER (see figure, below). Part of this effort will be to connect the SABER policy framework indicators with data from surveys that measure implementation and service delivery. This would include ongoing parallel initiatives such as the DFID-funded Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund and the World Bank's Africa Service Delivery Indicators program. SABER-UF will also undertake the development of new



tools to collect implementation data linked to the very indicators that the SABER policy tools assess but which existing surveys do not measure adequately or systematically. The innovative aspect behind this effort is to develop these measures to collect these critical implementation indicators in a low cost and rapid, but rigorous way. Development of these tools will take experimentation, will require validation using traditional, expensive survey tools, and may entail trial and error. These are all elements which do not lend themselves to routine World Bank funding tied to IDA or IBRD research, operations, and results, such as country sector work and program preparation and appraisal.



**New Policy Framework Tools.** SABER-UF will also be able to finance the development of new tools for some of the more challenging and complex areas. Domains that may be considered under SABER-UF financing may include a SABER tool for Curriculum and Standards, for Upper Secondary Education, or for Secondary Skills Education; as well as a system-wide SABER tool that could integrate all of the policy domains into a higher order tool to help countries and development practitioners make more informed decisions about which policy domains to prioritize. Another area of potential interest for SABER-UF financing would be the tailoring of existing SABER policy framework tools to challenging country settings such as fragile or conflict affected countries.

**Capacity Building.** SABER-UF will support the design and execution of capacity building programs on SABER for partner country policymakers and for development agency staff, including ensuring linkages with the World Bank's Education Staff Development Program and capacity building programs of other globally-active development partners. Currently, the World Bank's SABER program has no mechanism to design professional development programs, or implement them, for country policymakers and development partner professionals.

**Open Knowledge and Data Platform.** Finally, SABER-UF would be able to finance a knowledge and data platform. The core of this effort would be to develop an online, open data platform to make available all of the analytic work behind SABER, and to collect, store, publish, present, and allow user access to and manipulation of country education policy data collected under SABER.





## 6. Evolution of SABER Funding from Stand-Alone to Umbrella Facility Funding

In addition to its own administrative funds, the World Bank has relied on the generosity of partner institutions to fund most of the start-up and incubation costs of SABER to date. These up-front costs have been significant since the tools for the policy domains have required basic research and analysis, the formulation of comprehensive “What Matters Most” papers, consultation with international experts in the field, development, field testing, and piloting of data-collection instruments, design and testing of data-entry templates, rubrics for assessing policy frameworks, and preparation of SABER country reports. The largest global partnership programs that have supported SABER to date are DFID’s *Partnership for Education Development* (PFED) and Russia’s *Russia Education Aid for Development* TF Program (READ). Other trust funds that have supported SABER at the regional level include the Netherlands BNPP program, Korea’s KTF program, and Australia’s AusAID Pacific Facility II program.

These trust fund programs and partnerships have been accompanied by relatively high administrative burdens, both for the individual donors and for the Bank itself, since each of these programs requires a separate trust fund arrangement, trust fund program management, and trust fund legal agreements. Each has its own governance structure, own monitoring system and results framework, and unique annual report and reporting process. In addition, each requires a constant effort on the part of the Bank to keep the donors informed of progress and to undertake additional fund mobilization with each donor.

Due to the “public good” nature of the SABER program, it is essential and sensible to seek the establishment of a more strategic and reliable approach to resourcing the development, application, and utilization of SABER as an instrument of systematic policy reform to improve educational outcomes and learning for all. SABER-UF will guarantee predictable funding for SABER, which would facilitate better planning and execution. It will also provide common reporting, which would raise the transparency of the overall SABER program. Finally, it will support more coordinated fund raising within the Bank and with donors, allowing donors to align their contributions with strategic priorities and agreed results.

## 7. Organization and governance of SABER-UF

SABER-UF will employ several mechanisms to assure donor involvement, good governance, country ownership, appropriate communications, transparency, and quality assurance.

**SABER-UF Council.** The Bank will establish a SABER-UF Council comprising representatives of the SABER-UF donors and the Education Director of the World Bank. The Council will have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Provide upstream feedback on the overall strategy for SABER-UF, the criteria for the eligibility of countries and criteria for prioritization of policy domains;
- Meet annually to review progress on SABER-UF in accordance with the SABER-UF Results Framework;
- Provide feedback to the Education Sector Board on the Council’s review of progress;
- Participate in periodic discussions on technical topics of interest related to the SABER policy domains with the Education Sector Board;
- Promote SABER in donor and client countries;



- Serve as a “sponsor” for SABER, furthering the name and visibility of SABER and mobilizing political and additional financial support for SABER-UF;

**Education Sector Board for SABER-UF Program Leadership.** The Education Sector Board, comprising manager-level representatives from the Bank’s regions, WBI, DEC, IFC, and HDNED, and chaired by the Bank’s Education Director, will be the main decision-making body for SABER-UF. The Education Sector Board will allocate funds and oversee activities for SABER-UF based upon the criteria for the eligibility of countries and the prioritization of policy domains, and the rules of the game for transparent utilization of the funds. SABER-UF’s priorities and country ownership would be ensured by the Education Sector Board, which would integrate the management of SABER-UF into its normal SABER oversight responsibilities. The Education Sector Board will take collective decisions, in an open and transparent way, on the application of the criteria for allocation of funding across the SABER-UF windows, oversee the strategic relevance of SABER-UF programs and products, provide quality assurance, and assure the integration of SABER tools into country strategy documents, sector work, country sector dialogue, operations, and country partnerships. SABER-UF activities will be included in the annual regional and Education Anchor work programs, and monitored using the standard Bank reporting and budget systems.

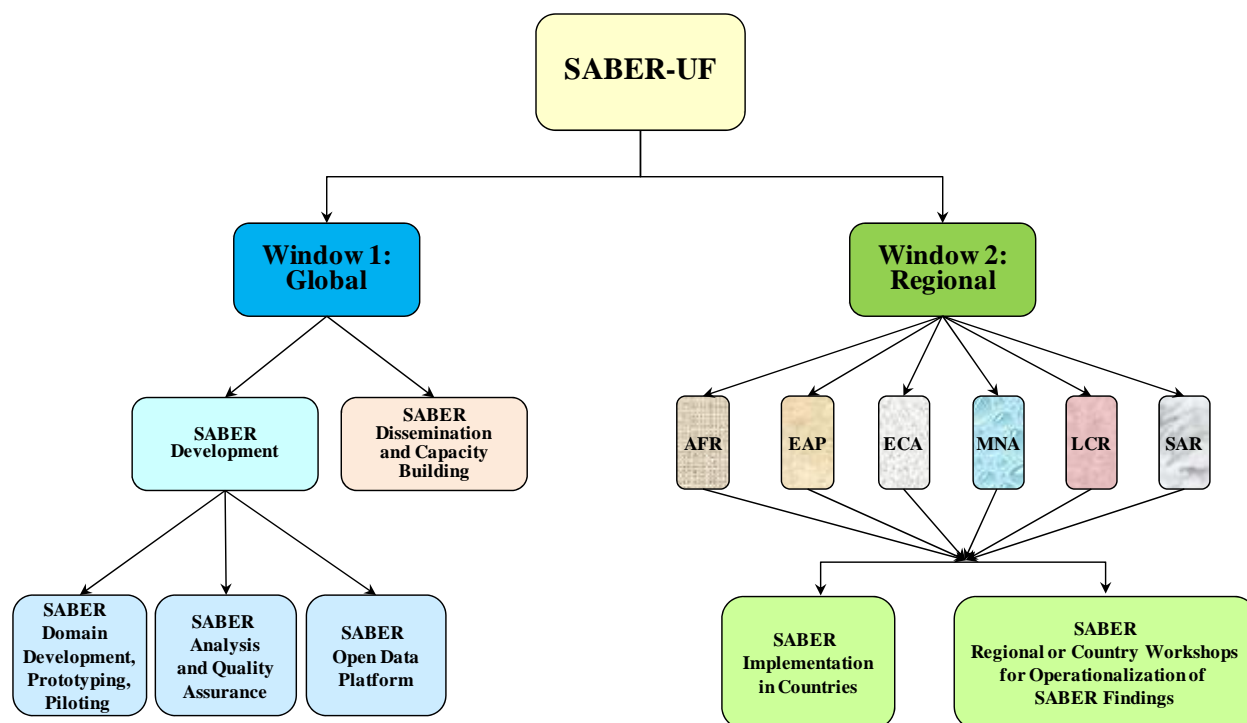
**HDN’s Education Anchor (HDNED) for SABER Program Management.** In line with its program management responsibility for the SABER program in the Bank, HDNED will:

- Maintain the dialogue between the Education Sector Board and the SABER-UF Council
- Keep the Education Sector Board up to date on SABER and SABER-UF execution
- Convoke an external expert group to provide
- Support regional education managers to ensure quality assurance of SABER country proposals for SABER-UF funding, including alignment with the Education Strategy 2020 goals, the SABER strategic objectives, and the monitoring indicators in the SABER-UF.
- Monitor and report on SABER-UF to the donors.
- Arrange and administer an internal formative evaluation of the SABER-UF
- Handle financial and day-to-day program administration

## 9. SABER-UF Activities, Windows, and Allocation of Funds

SABER-UF funding would be divided across 2 Windows, allocated by the Education Sector Board, and reviewed by the Education Sector Board annually. SABER-UF would be a hybrid trust fund, with financing to support both Bank- and recipient-executed activities. SABER-UF would take advantage of the Bank’s well functioning and robust accounting and financial reporting systems. Notional shares of SABER-UF funding across the two windows, and the eligible activities under each window, is depicted in the figure below.





**Window 1 (Global Program): 60 percent notional allocation (including program management).**

- Development, prototyping, piloting, and publishing of SABER tools and knowledge products;
- Support, analysis, and quality assurance of SABER data collected at the country level;
- Development and maintenance of an open global knowledge and data platform for SABER;
- Cross-country research and dissemination to demonstrate how SABER tools and data can be used to inform global and country-level dialogue about improving education policy and policy implementation;
- Design and delivery of a capacity-building program on how to use SABER tools and data in sector analyses, sector policy dialogues, program designs, and program monitoring; the program would target Bank and partner education policy staff and would link with the World Bank's Education Staff Development Program and with capacity-building programs of other global development partners.
- Program management.

**Window 2 (Regional Program- Country Demand-Driven Selection): 40 percent notional allocation.**

Allocation of funding within Window 2, that is, across the countries, would be determined by the regional education sector managers on the basis of their work program requirements and agreements and in accordance with agreed criteria and country demand. The following activities may be financed:

- Support for the use of SABER for policy dialogue and upstream design at country and regional levels;
- Collection and monitoring of country-level SABER data;
- Support for the operationalization of SABER to improve countries' education systems and results;
- Support for building capacity within countries (among government officials, researchers, civil society and local development practitioners) to understand and use SABER tools and data;
- SABER workshops and conferences.



#### **10. Transition from Stand-Alone TFs to the SABER-UF**

Currently, as presented above, current SABER activities have been supported by a variety of trust funds at the level of the Education Anchor and several trust funds and partnership programs at the regional level. These programs expire in FY13 and FY14. Rather than design follow-on programs for SABER activities in these partnerships, all future SABER-related funding from donors will be directed to SABER-UF. In particular, once it is operational, SABER-UF would represent the only avenue for donors to fund the activities specified above for the two windows.

#### **11. Integration in Regional Work Programs to Avoid Substitution of BB.**

Allocations of funding to support country activities (Windows 2) would have the requirement that country programs would incorporate SABER-UF funding into fully-financed country and regional WPAs for ESW or the preparation of new operations. This would assure that SABER-UF funds would not be used to substitute for Bank Budget funds.



## Annex: SABER-UF Results Framework.

The SABER-UF results framework is built on and extends the results framework and objectives of the Education Strategy 2020.

Result	Indicator	Means of Verification
Public access to systematic, accurate and comparable data on the quality of countries' education policies and the quality of implementation of those policies;	Number of new SABER tools for assessing policy intent and launched	World Bank Data Systems in HDN Anchor, reported in SABER-UF Annual Report
	Number of new SABER tools for assessing policy implementation launched	
	Availability of a fully operational, open knowledge and data platform to share knowledge, tools, and data globally.	
Awareness and utilization of these data by countries and development partners in sector analyses, policy dialogue, and planning processes;	Number of education investment projects using new SABER tools or data in preparation, design or results frameworks	HDN Education Year in Review fiscal year reports
	Number of "development policy" or "results-based" education operations using SABER assessments or indicators as triggers	
Greater effectiveness of Bank- and other partner-financed education programs through the integration of SABER data into their design, monitoring, and outcome frameworks;	Proportion of education operations using SABER that are rated as satisfactory or higher during implementation or at closure	World Bank ISRs and ICRs
More informed global discussion and debate about strengthening education systems to increase learning for all in countries;	Number of capacity building programs delivered to development partners, country counterparts, and Bank staff Number of events, initiatives, or campaigns to promote SABER globally, regionally, or for countries	World Bank Data Systems, reported in SABER-UF Annual Report

