
[Morocco is set to launch its third national assessment of students' learning outcomes](#)

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Quality of education

Educational measurement

The [Instance Nationale d'Évaluation](#) (INE), the body of the [Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation, de la Formation et de la Recherche Scientifique](#) responsible for evaluating the education and training system, is set to launch the third round of the National Programme for Student Learning Assessment (PNEA) in 2019. Launched in 2008, the aim of this programme is to assess the knowledge, skills and competencies of Moroccan students in order to improve the quality of their learning outcomes.

The PNEA 10 years on: trends and developments

2008 PNEA: awareness of the urgent need for reform

The first PNEA assessment took place in 2008. It assessed students' competencies in languages, sciences and mathematics in the 4th and 6th year of primary school, and the 2nd and 3rd year of lower secondary school. The results, which revealed the low level of skills of Moroccan students, led to an increased national awareness of the extent of the challenges of improving educational equity and quality. These results acted as a catalyst for the [Programme d'Urgence de l'Éducation Nationale \(PUEN\) 2009-2012](#), a sectoral strategy that aimed to breathe new life into the reform put forward by the [Charte Nationale d'Éducation et Formation](#) (CNEF).

2016 PNEA: the introduction of computer-aided testing

With the [Vision stratégique 2015-2030 pour une école de l'équité, de la qualité et de la promotion](#), the PNEA has become an indispensable tool for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the new reform.

In 2016, a second round of assessments was carried out amongst students in the first year of high school; corresponding to the core curriculum of the qualifying secondary cycle. The range of skills assessed was extended to include history-geography in addition to languages, mathematics and

sciences. This assessment targeted 581 secondary schools, i.e. 36,000 pupils.

A major innovation of the 2016 PNEA assessment was its offline administration: the tests and questionnaires were made available to all participating schools on USB keys, meaning that students, teachers and school principals could respond on a computer. Although this approach requires that all participating schools have a multimedia centre with computer workstations, it has several advantages. In addition to making savings in terms of printing and data entry, offline testing makes it possible to sidestep internet access problems, as well as providing results in a timely manner with a reduced margin of error.

2019 PNEA: clearer governance

As of 2019, the PNEA will be carried out every four years. Having a fixed assessment cycle will allow for comparisons of internal efficiency of the education system over time. Moreover, the PNEA will now target students in the last year of primary school (6th year of primary school), and the last year of compulsory schooling (3rd year of secondary school). In total, 34,500 students in 600 primary schools (18,000 primary school pupils) and 550 middle schools (16,500 middle school pupils) will take part in the assessment.

The Moroccan Government is thus giving priority to the primary and secondary school cycles (i.e. compulsory schooling), those levels in which inequalities and learning delays tend to take root.

Optimising data usage and dissemination

An assessment adapted to the national socio-educational context

Despite some teething problems, the PNEA has entered its maturation stage and is now widely used as a tool for managing, monitoring and assessing the 2015-2030 Strategic Vision. It differs from the international assessments (TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA) (1) in which Morocco participates in that it is based on Morocco's national curriculum unlike the international assessments which employ a hypothetical curriculum common to all participating countries. This enables the results to be interpreted within the context of Morocco's national schooling system.

PNEA: a veritable mine of information

The main debate of assessment programmes relates to the reliability and representativeness of the results. In addition, the degree and relevance of their subsequent analysis is essential to the orientation and effectiveness of political decision-making processes.

The PNEA employs a three-stage probabilistic sampling plan (schools, classes, students) stratified by region, type of institution (public/private) and environment (urban/rural) making it possible to compare the learning outcomes of students in different regions of the country, as well as the performance of public education compared to private education.

In addition to the subject-based tests, contextual questionnaires are used to collect a wealth of information ranging from the socio-demographic characteristics of the students, teachers and school principals, to socio-educational environment characteristics (school climate, educational and management practices, and social and school-related problems).

The PNEA this enables a breakdown of the results using a range of context variables (gender, age,

repetition rates, parents' educational level, etc.), all of which are key factors in the quality of learning. While previously PNEA analyses tended to focus on quantitative analysis, in the future more emphasis will be placed on analysing the internal efficiency of the education system.

Progressive ownership of the assessment results

Support from all educational stakeholders involved in the PNEA is a key condition for success. These stakeholders include managers at the central and decentralized levels (regional and provincial education authorities), as well as administrative and teaching staff. Their support is essential for implementing the lessons learned from the assessments.

2023 PNEA: rolling out the assessment to all students at the end of the primary cycle

In collaboration with the Moroccan National Department for Education, the INE is looking at the technical and financial feasibility of rolling out the PNEA to all students in the last year of primary school as recommended in a recent OECD report - [Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Morocco](#). Adopting such a proposal would enable the assessment of the performance of institutions and teachers thus increasing the accountability of educational stakeholders, as well reinforcing accountability mechanisms.

(1) Morocco took part in TIMSS in 2007, 2011 and 2015, in PIRLS in 2011, 2006, 2011 and 2016, and in PISA in May 2018 for the first time.

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